

LAST RN SHIP TO LEAVE MALTA

In late September Prince William visited Malta for the island's 50th anniversary of its independence. This reminded one PNROA member, Peter Sampson, that 50 years earlier he had been serving on board the T Class submarine HMS Turpin. This was the last RN vessel to be based in Malta and prompted Peter to forward these fascinating images relating to Turpin's departure from Malta in November 1964 for decommissioning in Gosport. HMS Turpin was a T class submarine, built in Chatham Dockyard, and entered service towards the end of the War.



HMS Turpin leaving Malta in November 1964

In December 1944 she left Chatham for workup and trials out of Holy Loch, but on 20 Jan 1945 collided with HMS Sidon, sustaining some damage. Both boats were running at periscope depth at the time. After repairs, on 26 Mar 1945, she sailed for her first war patrol, which was conducted off Kors Fjord, near Bergen in Norway. She was then prepared for service in the Far East in Devonport and leaving on 12 Jun 1945 She arrived in Australia in early August 1945, but in the event had no further active role during the War.

In the early 1950s various modification were made to Turpin to enable her to conduct operations against Soviet submarines by making her faster and quieter. She subsequently carried out patrols in the Barents Sea, including the penetration of Soviet naval bases to carry out reconnaissance. In 1958, while in the Caribbean, cracks were discovered in her main engines, which lead to her being towed home for repairs by the tug Samsonia.

Turpin spent her final commission based in Malta and returned to Gosport in November 1964 to decommission and to enter the Portsmouth Reserve. She was subsequently sold to the Israeli Navy in

1966 and renamed INS Leviathan. After refit in Portsmouth she departed for trials and workup by the Israelis in early May 1967. She left Scotland on 25 May 1967 bound for Haifa, but tragedy struck during the passage through the Irish Sea when two Israeli sailors were washed off the casing and drowned. Leviathan arrived in Haifa on 12 Jun 1967, the day after the Six Days War ended. She was eventually scrapped in 1978.

Peter Sampson/Robin Dwane



A young Sub Lt Peter Sampson (2nd right), Turpin's Electrical Officer, in talks with the Israelis.



Another view of HMS Turpin sailing from Malta