

Noteworthy and of historic significance (for two reasons)

The last major group of Royal Navy ships to visit Malta was in 1978, just a few months before closure.

Reason 1 - Group 6 Deployment under Rear Admiral Martin La Touche Wemyss, flying his Flag in the cruiser HMS Tiger [MMWS] commanded by Captain G.M.K. Brewer Royal Navy and consisting of:-

Captain J.M. Webster Royal Navy	[GMLU]	HMS Cleopatra
Commander P.C. Phipps Royal Navy	[GDCA]	HMS Rhyl
Commander R.N. Woodward Royal Navy	[GNID]	HMS Amazon
Commander R.F. Cobbold Royal Navy	[GHQX]	HMS Mohawk
Commander P.J. Grindal Royal Navy	[GHRA]	HMS Zulu
Captain J.G.M. Coull Royal Fleet Auxillary	[GRMH]	RFA Regent
Captain R.B. Matthews Royal Fleet Auxillary	[GYXM]	RFA Grey Rover

visited Malta en-route home from the Far East having executed what was in effect, a Silver Jubilee showing the Flag tour of East of Suez countries.

All eight ships entered Grand Harbour with Tiger and the RFA's at buoy's and the frigates at buoy's in Dockyard Creek.

I was the FCRS on Admiral Wemyss's Staff embarked in HMS Tiger.

Reason 2 - The day of sailing had been well published, and since it was to be the last departure of a large group of ships, all Grand Harbour viewing areas were crowded. From Senglea to Kalkara [Ricasoli Point] and from Lascaris to St Elmo Point few spaces were left vacant.

Mohawk was moored in Dockyard Creek ahead of Rhyl, waiting to slip after Tiger had cleared ahead of her. Rhyl slipped early forcing Mohawk to slip early and move out into Grand Harbour where her passage was blocked by Tiger. Once into Grand Harbour, Mohawk attempted to turn to port and then to fall in line astern of the column. Unfortunately Mohawk got it wrong and finished up on Customs House steps with the port anchor ready to let go hanging over the jetty almost hitting a enthusiastic photographer. This was the only time in 180 years of British naval presence in Malta that a dghajsas was seen to aquaplane! Mohawk suffered damage to her bows just above the water line but was able to proceed under reduced speed and manoeuvring which prevented the ship taking part in exercises en-route to Gibraltar and thence home to Devonport. The damage was confined to the space below the paint locker and there was a small charge for being allowed to look down into "Neptunes Grotto" which was put into the guide dogs for the blind charity. Mohawk's Commanding Officer Commander Richard Cobbold Royal Navy eventually attained the rank of Rear Admiral. One lasting memory for those watching must have been of the ratings lining Tiger's flight deck taking several paces backwards as Mohawk plunged towards Tiger, and of RFA Regent giving Mohawk three cheers as they sailed past.

Flag Officer Malta/Commander British Forces Malta, Rear Admiral Cecil sent a suitable signal to our boss Rear Admiral Weymss.

As the very last GROUP of Royal Navy warships to leave Malta and Grand Harbour, we certainly did it in great STYLE!!

Note: The internal happenings in HMS Mohawk and the observations made from the ship after the events describe above, were kindly made known to me by the Radio Supervisor of the ship, Radio Supervisor David Askew. Thank you David for sharing this information.