

**THE SCARCE SOUTH ATLANTIC 1982 HMS *FEARLESS* NAVAL PARTY 2160 AND GULF WAR 1991 HMS *GLOUCESTER* OPERATIONS OFFICER MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES GROUP**



SOUTH ATLANTIC 1982, WITH ROSETTE 'LT I MCLAREN HMS *FEARLESS* R'. AN OFFICIAL REPLACEMENT, GULF 1990-91, 1 CLASP, 16 JAN TO 28 FEB 1991, WITH MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES EMBLEM 'LT CDR I MCLAREN RN', OMAN, SULTANATE PEACE MEDAL, BRONZE, WITH OMANI CROWN EMBLEM ON RIBAND

M.B.E. *London Gazette* 15 June 1996 – Lieutenant Commander Ian McLaren, Royal Navy

M.I.D. *London Gazette* 29 June 1991 – Lieutenant Commander Ian McLaren, Royal Navy, 'In recognition of service during the operations in the Gulf'

During the Falklands War, Lieutenant Ian McLaren served aboard *HM Fearless*. After the battle of Goose Green, designated Naval Party 2160, McLaren, along with three naval ratings from *Fearless* were given command of *MV Monsunen* which was to work under orders of 5 Infantry Brigade. See Page 26 of the following: <https://www.fiassociation.com/newsletter/FIA-NL-107.pdf>

*HMS Fearless* (L10) was a Royal Navy amphibious assault ship that served from 1965 until 2002

Built by Harland and Wolff in Belfast, and commissioned in late 1965, *Fearless* and her sister *HMS Intrepid* had an internal dock which was accessed through a stern door; vehicles could be loaded by ramps to the vehicle deck in port while landing craft could be guided in at sea – the ships could partially submerge and flood their docks to allow access by small vessels. Along with her relatively-

spacious flight deck, this made her an ideal HQ ship to host the staff of both the Commodore Amphibious Warfare (Cdre Michael Clapp) and the Commanding Officer of 3 Commando Brigade and head of the Landing Forces Task Group, Brig Julian Thompson, as well as an element of the designated landing forces for Operation Corporate, the retaking of the Falklands. Although something of a veteran by the time she joined the task force *Fearless* had been fitted with modern satellite communications systems, making her a formidable asset in the campaign. The assault ship was the venue for a strategy meeting including Task Force commander Rear Admiral Sandy Woodward at Ascension on 16 April before the Carrier Battle Group pressed on south, leaving the amphibious group to carry out training, storing and restowing and preparing for the forthcoming landings.

*Fearless* and the rest of the Amphibious Group left Ascension on 7 May, joining the carriers of the Task Group off the Falklands around 11 days later. *Fearless* was quickly in the thick of the action in San Carlos Water, successfully landing her embarked forces on 21 May and subsequently undertaking tasks such as ferrying Welsh Guards around the coast. One of her landing craft, LCU F4, was lost to Argentine bombers while on a dangerous mission, transferring Army vehicles from Goose Green to Fitzroy, killing six of her crew. Foxtrot 4's coxswain, C/Sgt Brian Johnston, was one of the victims; just two weeks earlier he had won the Queen's Gallantry Medal for taking his vessel alongside the stricken frigate *HMS Antelope* and rescuing more than 100 sailors, despite raging fires and an unexploded bomb on the warship. *Fearless* sailed north for the UK a week and a half after the Argentine surrender on 14, arriving back in the UK in mid-July.

### **THE GULF WAR**

During the Gulf War of 1991, the now Lieutenant Commander McLaren and an Air Warfare and Missile Specialist, served as Operations Officer of *HMS Gloucester* and was Mentioned in Despatches, almost certainly for the part he played in the shooting down of a the Silkwork Missile fired at *USS Missouri*.



Guided Missile Destroyer; Sheffield / Type 42 class

*Gloucester* served in the Gulf War in 1991 under the command of Commander (later Rear Admiral) Philip Wilcocks where her most notable action was the firing of a salvo shot of Sea Dart missiles to shoot an Iraqi Silkworm missile that was threatening the US battleship *USS Missouri* and allied minehunters; the first successful missile versus missile engagement at sea in combat by any Navy. The ship also survived attacks from two naval mines and conducted numerous boardings using her boarding party consisting of Royal Navy and Royal Marine personnel. The ship's Lynx helicopter also engaged seven Iraqi warships. She spent the longest period upthreat of any coalition warship. As a result of her endeavours, her captain (Commander Philip Wilcocks) and flight commander (Lt Cdr David Livingstone) were decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross; the operations officer and flight observer were both mentioned in Despatches. After this service *Gloucester* was rebranded with her nickname of "The Fighting G".



Condition GVF. Mounted as worn. The South Atlantic medal and official replacement marked 'R' after naming, the recipients original medal having been stolen in the mid 1980's. Despite this, a scarce group.