

1970's

During the 1970's the Fleet Air Arm transitioned into a new era of fixed wing flying with the introduction of the new Invincible Class aircraft carriers. It was business as usual on global operations, however, closer to home the Search and Rescue crews were having a challenging decade.

In 1974, eleven men from the Danish coaster 'Merc Enterprise', which had capsized in hurricane force winds 25 miles south of Plymouth, were rescued by Royal Navy Sea Kings. In 1978 Sea Kings from Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose performed one of the most dramatic air/sea rescues of all time, hovering within inches of the towering legs of the oil rig 'Orion'.

WESTLAND SEA KING HC Mk 4

Role

Troop carrying

Entered Service

1979

Weight Empty

Empty: 6202kg

Loaded: 9525kg

Maximum Speed

144mph

Weapons

General Purpose Machine Gun



KEY EVENTS

1970 February:

First Royal Navy hovercraft BHN7 has trials at RNAS Lee-on-Solent.

1970 July:

Royal Navy rum ration abolished.

1970 November:

Flag Officer Naval Air Command moves to RNAS Yeovilton from RNAS Lee-on-Solent.

1974:

HMS Hermes evacuates British subjects from Cyprus during the Turkish invasion.

1975 May:

34 Harrier FRS1 aircraft ordered.

1977 May:

HMS Invincible launched. The first Royal Navy carrier built with a ski ramp.

1978 November:

First deck landing on *HMS Hermes* by Sea Harrier.

1978:

Last Royal Navy Phantom aircraft catapulted from *HMS Ark Royal*. The end of conventional fixed wing flying in the Royal Navy.

1979:

Sea Kings from RNAS Culdrose assist in rescue operations after disaster hits Fastnet race.