

ADMIRAL SIR ROBERT SWINBURNE LOWRY, KCB (4 MARCH 1854 – 29 MAY 1920)



Sir Robert Swinburne Lowry, 1915
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Born 4 March 1854 the son of Lieutenant General Robert William Lowry and educated at the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth. As a Midshipman, he was one of three men in *HMS Invincible* to be awarded the Royal Humane Society Bronze award for saving life off the coast of Gibraltar. Lowry was made a lieutenant in the Royal Navy in 1875, Lowry was promoted to the rank of Captain on 30 June, 1896.

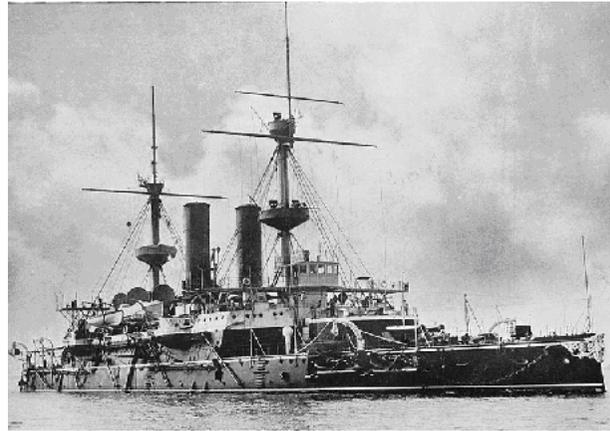
From February 1890 RSL was in command of *HMS Undaunted*, part of the Mediterranean Fleet, under the captaincy of Lord Charles Beresford. In April 1891, *HMS Undaunted* and *HMS Melita* went to the aid of the French cruiser *Seignelay* when she ran aground off Jaffa. In recognition of this assistance, the French government presented Lord Charles Beresford, Captain of *HMS Undaunted*, with a beautiful Sevres vase, while the Commander (Robert Swinburne Lowry) of the *Undaunted* was presented with two smaller Sevres vases.

In 1900 he was in command of the pre-dreadnought battleship *HMS Ramillies*, flagship of the second-in-command of the Mediterranean Fleet and in May 1902 he was appointed in command of the battleship *HMS Hood*, also serving in the Mediterranean and later in the Home Fleet. In December

1905, he was appointed to command the battleship, *HMS Russell*, remaining in command until November 1906. He became naval aide-de-camp to the King in 1905.



HMS Ramillies



HMS Hood



HMS Russell

Lowry was promoted to the rank of Rear-Admiral on 17 October, 1906, becoming Rear Admiral Channel Fleet in April 1907 and President of the Royal Naval War College at Portsmouth in November 1907. He was made Commander of the 5th Cruiser Squadron in November 1908, and appointed Commander of the 2nd Cruiser Squadron in February 1909.

He was further promoted to the rank of Vice-Admiral on 6 March, 1911 and to Admiral on 13 December 1913, becoming Commander-in-Chief, Rosyth, Senior Officer to the Coast of Scotland, in July 1913 and serving in that role into World War I and until 1916.



Rosyth Dockyard in WWI

On the occasion of the King's birthday he was appointed an Ordinary Member of the Second Class, or Knight Commander, in the Military Division of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (K.C.B.) on 3 June, 1913. He retired 19 August 1917 to his home at Wickham Lodge at Wickham in Hampshire.



The Character of the Man, (an anecdote)

According to Captain Humphrey H. Smith:

“Lowry, the Flag Captain, was a deeply religious man, whose profound faith in Providence kept him cool, cheerful, and collected under all circumstances. Nothing could ever rattle him or upset his equanimity, and both his physical and his moral courage were infinitely great. He was very strong, very active, and extremely keen on fishing and shooting. Whenever he landed or came off to the ship in his gig he would, if he was not in uniform, make his coxswain steer the boat, while he pulled the stroke-oar, and a mighty good oar he could pull.

I once saw him handle a case of insubordination in an original way that led to the very best results. In those days it sometimes happened that a hasty-tempered young man, who felt either restless or aggrieved under naval discipline, would strike a superior in order to be dismissed the Service, even though such dismissal would be accompanied by a sentence to imprisonment with hard labour.

A young ordinary seaman on board the *Ramillies*, who had been going wrong for some time, finally put the hat on his previous misdeeds by refusing, in unpardonable language, to obey an order given him by the captain of the forecastle.

He was therefore brought up before the Commander, who forwarded the case to be investigated by the Flag Captain. The ordinary seaman appeared at "Captain's Defaulters" under the charge of an escort of Marines. Lowry, having heard the evidence of the captain of the forecastle and various witnesses, asked the ordinary seaman what he had to say in his defence. The man made no reply, but he stepped out and struck Lowry as hard as he could in the chest.



Of course the escort of Marines sprang to seize him, but before they could do so Lowry with his open right fetched the ordinary seaman such a terrific blow that the latter fell down and spun round and round like a top. At the same time Lowry remarked, with a chuckle: "Ha, ha! I can hit harder than you." The ordinary seaman was then removed, and kept a prisoner until the following day, when he was again brought before Lowry. "You have been making a fool of yourself," said Lowry. "Now, if I let you off, will you promise not to make a fool of yourself again?" "Yes, sir," replied the man. He was let off, and he kept his promise."

ADMIRAL LOWRY IN WICKHAM

Lowry moved to Wickham by 1911 and lived with there wife Dame Helena Macgregor Lowry and their daughter Violet. He died in 1920 and was buried on the 2nd June in St Nicholas Churchyard, Wickham. His wife lived at Wickham Lodge until her death in 28 Dec 1948. She is buried with her husband.



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