The HML Crow was one of half a dozen D-class Sky Destroyers built to serve in the turbulent air over the North Atlantic. This involved strengthening the hull, replacing the standard turbines for this class of vessel with more robust boilers, and provision of more durable steering gear. These changes cost the Crow its capacity to launch aerial torpedos (to the delight of the vessels’ crews, who dreaded the prospect of preparing them under stormy and icy conditions). The ship’s builders also intended, if the modifications proved successful, to export the design to countries adjacent to the Scandinavian Union. Unfortunately, the Class D proved too light to withstand high Beaufort scale conditions, and in strong winds developed a nasty pitching motion that earned the vessel the nickname “Cormorant” (a diving seabird). The vessels were transferred from the Atlantic to the Channel Fleet in 1903. The additional maneuverability that resulted from the changes to the design, however, proved ideally suited to dealing with the newer generations of light French leviathans such as the Grenouille.

D-class Destroyer

Dimensions: 155 ft. x 35 ft. x 40 ft. (excluding funnels & masts)
Complement: 68
Weight: 980 tons
Engines: Quadruple-expansion, producing 15,500 shaft hp (max. speed 41 knots)
Fuel: (coal) normal 95 tons; max 135 tons
Armament: 4-3” QF