

Type of Warship

A warship is a naval ship built primarily for naval warfare. They usually belong to the Navy of a country. They are different from merchant ships as warships typically carry only weapons, ammunition and supplies for their crews, while the former is not armed and carries supplies necessary for trade and commerce.

This article will give a brief history of warships before elaborating upon the types of warships available in the 21st century.

The information from this article will be useful in the upcoming IAS Exam (GS 3).

Brief History of Warships

The ancestors of today's warships can be the galleys and triremes of Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire. Being narrow and long, they were manned by oarsmen (always consisting of slaves and prisoners of war) who engaged in ramming, which would enable boarding action.

Development of on-ship artillery lent a new dimension to ancient naval warfare, where coastal cities/towns could be besieged with them. Gradually, ramming fell out of fashion and boarding was still in use until the late 14th century.

The development of cannons made ships much heavier to be moved by oars alone, hence warships began to rely on sails. Sails in fact made them more manoeuvrable and, with the canons onboard, could shoot down boarding parties at distance.

By the middle of the 17th century, warships were carrying increasing numbers of cannon on their broadsides and tactics evolved to bring each ship's firepower to bear in a line of battle

The development of these ships soon enabled European colonialism and eventual domination of the major oceans by them.

In the 19th century, the industrial revolution led to the development of steam engines and once fitted into warships, sails began to be phased out.

From the 1850s, the sailing ships of the line were replaced by steam-powered battleships, while the sailing frigates were replaced by steam-powered cruisers.

The British Royal Navy, before World War I broke out, developed a type of battleship known as Dreadnoughts, which bristled with armour and huge guns, making it a mainstay in other navies of Europe. By now, the ships were powered by petrol instead of coal used in steam engines.

Torpedoes and submarines were also consequently developed to counter such massive warships. The development of aircraft and their military versions made airpower important. Soon, the outbreak of World War II saw the arrival of a new type of warship - the Aircraft Carrier. Today, major naval powers of the world still have at least one or more aircraft carriers, and they act as flagships of many navies around the world.

Types of Warships in the 21st Century

Modern warships are generally divided into seven main categories, which are:

- Aircraft carriers
- Cruisers
- Destroyers
- Frigates
- Corvettes
- Submarines
- Amphibious assault ships.

A brief explanation about these types of ships will be given below:

1. Aircraft Carriers: An aircraft carrier is a warship that serves as a seagoing airbase, equipped with a full-length flight deck and facilities for carrying, arming, deploying, and recovering aircraft. Typically, it is the capital ship of a fleet, as it allows a naval force to project air power worldwide without depending on local bases for staging aircraft operations.

2. Cruisers: A cruiser is a type of warship. Modern cruisers are generally the largest ships in a fleet after aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships, and can usually perform several roles.

As of 2021 only two countries operate vessels formerly classed as cruisers: the United States and Russia, and in both cases the vessels are primarily armed with guided missiles.

3. Destroyers: A **destroyer** is a fast, manoeuvrable, long-endurance warship intended to escort larger vessels in a fleet, convoy or battle group and defend them against powerful short range attackers. At the start of the 21st century, destroyers were the global standard for surface combatant ships.

Most destroyers are armed with guided missile systems.

4. Frigates: A frigate is a type of warship, having various sizes and roles over time. In the 17th century, a frigate was any warship built for speed and manoeuvrability, the description often used being "frigate-built".

In modern navies, frigates are used to protect other warships and merchant-marine ships, especially as anti-submarine warfare (ASW) combatants for amphibious expeditionary forces, underway replenishment groups, and merchant convoys.

5. Corvettes: A corvette is a small warship. It is traditionally the smallest class of vessel considered to be a proper warship.

The warship class above the corvette is that of the frigate, while the class below was historically that of the sloop-of-war.

The modern types of ship below a corvette are coastal patrol craft, missile boats and fast attack craft. In modern terms, a corvette is typically between 500 tons and 2,000 tons, although recent designs may approach 3,000 tons, which might instead be considered a small frigate.

6. Submarines: A submarine (or sub) is a watercraft capable of independent operation underwater. Submarines are referred to as "boats" rather than "ships" irrespective of their size.

Most large submarines consist of a cylindrical body with hemispherical (or conical) ends and a vertical structure, usually located amidships, which houses communications and sensing devices as well as periscopes.

7. Amphibious assault ships: An amphibious assault ship is a type of amphibious warfare ship employed to land and support ground forces on enemy territory by an amphibious assault.

Modern ships support amphibious landing craft, with most designs including a well deck. Coming full circle, some amphibious assault ships also support fixed-wing aircraft, now having a secondary role as aircraft carriers.

Warships of the Indian Navy

The following table gives details about the types of warships currently in active service in the Indian Navy:

Types of Indian Navy Warships	
Category	Name
Submarines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• INS Kalvari (S21)• INS Khanderi (S22)• INS Karanj (S23)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• INS Sindhuvijay• INS Sindhughosh (S55)• INS Sindhudhvaj (S56)• INS Sindhuraj (S57)• INS Sindhuratna (S59)• INS Sindhukesari (S60)• INS Sindhukirti (S61)• INS Sindhuvijay (S62)• INS Sindhurashtra (S65)• INS Shishumar (S44)• INS Shankush (S45)• INS Shalki (S46)• INS Shankul (S47)
Aircraft Carrier	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• INS Vikramaditya• INS Vikrant (Currently undergoing sea trials, to be inducted in 2022)
Destroyers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• INS Kolkata (D63)• INS Kochi (D64)• INS Chennai (D65)• INS Delhi (D61)• INS Mysore (D60)• INS Mumbai (D62)• INS Rajput (D51)• INS Rana (D52)• INS Ranvir (D54)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• INS Ranvijay (D55)
Frigates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• INS Shivalik (F47)• INS Satpura (F48)• INS Sahyadri (F49)• INS Talwar (F40)• INS Trishul (F43)• INS Tabar (F44)• INS Teg (F45)• INS Tarkash (F50)• INS Trikand (F51)
Corvettes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• INS Kamorta (P28)• INS Kadmatt (P29)• INS Kiltan (P30)• INS Kavaratti (P31)• INS Kora (P61)• INS Kirch (P62)• INS Kulish (P63)• INS Karmuk (P64)• INS Khukri (P49)• INS Kuthar (P46)• INS Kirpan (P44)• INS Khanjar (P47)

