

## HMAS *Bathurst* J158



Namesake: City of Bathurst ,NSW  
 Builder: Cockatoo Island  
 Dockyard  
 Laid down: 10 February 1940  
 Launched: 1 August 1940  
 Commissioned: 6 December 1940  
 Decommissioned: 27 September 1946  
 Motto: "Strike Hard"

Battle honours:  
     Indian Ocean 1942-44  
     Pacific           1945

Fate: Sold for scrap on 21 June 1948

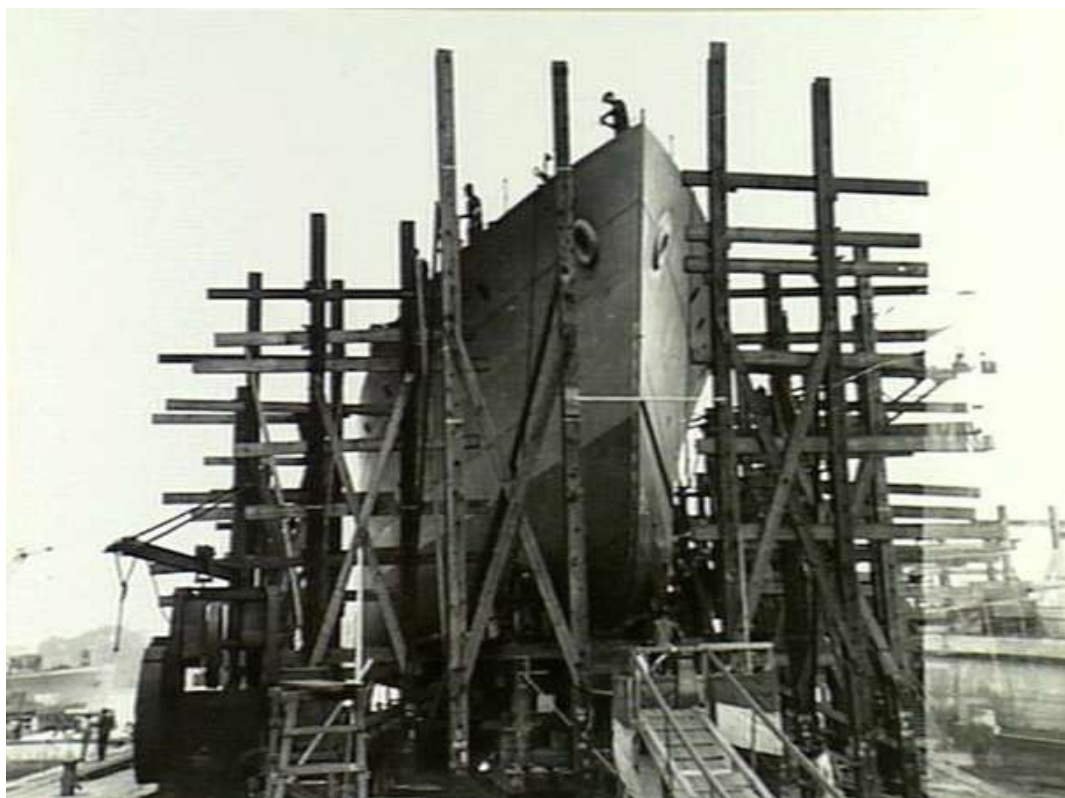


Displacement: 733 tons (standard),  
                   1,025 tons (full war load)  
 Length: 186 ft (57 m)  
 Beam: 31 ft (9.4 m)  
 Draught: 8.5 ft (2.6 m)  
 Propulsion: triple expansion engine,  
                   2 shafts, 2,000 horsepower  
 Speed: 15 knots (28 km/h;17 mph)  
                   at 1,750 hp  
 Complement: 85  
 Armament: 1 × 12-pounder gun  
                   2 × Oerlikons  
                   1 × Bofors  
                   Machine guns  
                   Depth charges chutes & throwers

Ordered for the British Admiralty and commissioned by RAN, HMAS *Bathurst* was laid down at Cockatoo Docks and Engineering Co Ltd, Sydney, NSW on 10 February 1940. The first of 60 built in Australia, *Bathurst* gave her name to the entire class of vessel. She was also the first RAN warship to carry the name of the regional city in the central tablelands of NSW, located 200 kilometres north west of Sydney. She was launched on 1 August 1940 by Mrs Doyle, wife of the Engineer Manager, Garden Island Dockyard.



*Laying the keel of the first Australian Corvette, HMAS Bathurst, at Cockatoo Island Dockyard.*



*Bathurst on slipway*



*HMAS Bathurst takes to the water at Cockatoo Island Dockyard on 1 August 1940.*



*HMAS Bathurst undergoing sea trials prior to commissioning. Note the Red Ensign flying from her mainmast indicating that she is still in the hands of the builders and yet to be handed over to the RAN.*





HMAS *Bathurst* commissioned at Sydney on 6 December 1940 under the command of Lieutenant Commander AV Bunyan RANR(S).



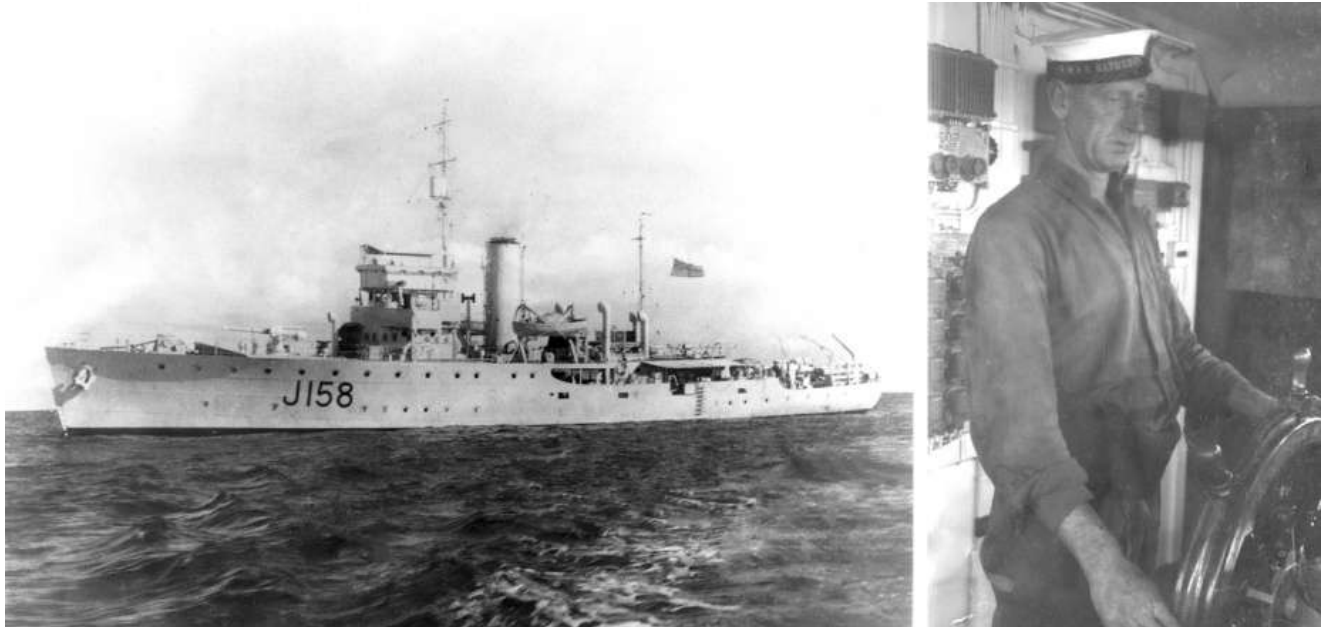
06.12.40: HMAS *Bathurst* commissioned

14.12.40: Left Sydney for Melbourne via Westernport

19.12.40: Anchored off Rosebud and Dromana in Port Phillip, prepared the minesweeping gear including eye splicing the sweep wires. These are four stranded, including the especially hardened cutting strand. All tucks required to be pulled through by block and tackle.

*Bathurst* began her career in January 1941 as a unit of the 21st Minesweeping Flotilla (RAN), operating on the east Australian coast. In March 1941 she left Australian waters for Malaya, where she operated as a patrol vessel based on Singapore until 26 May 1941.

On 3 June 1941 she arrived at Colombo and there joined the Eastern Fleet for escort and patrol duties. At the close of June, *Bathurst* entered the Red Sea, spending a month in those waters before docking at Alexandria on 4 August 1941.



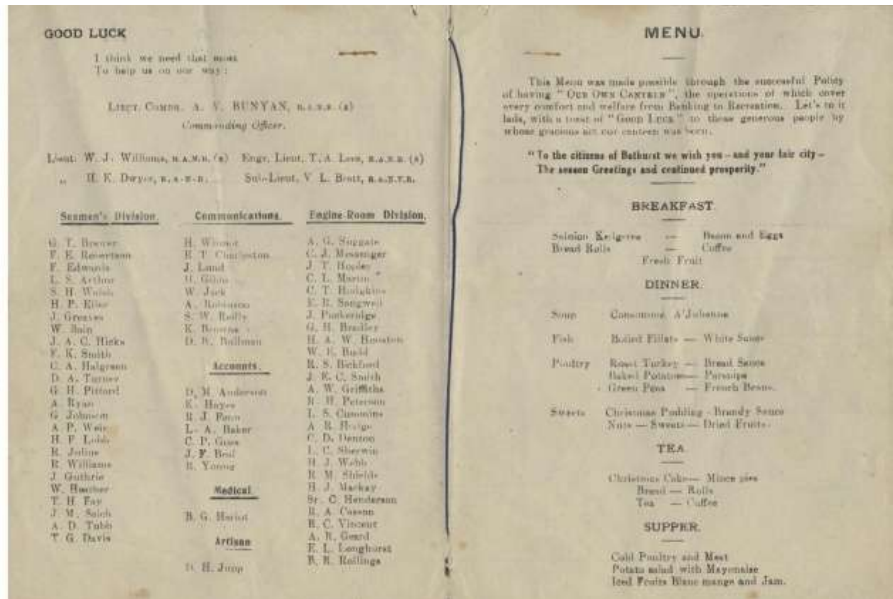
*Left: Image of HMAS Bathurst at sea. Right: Informal portrait of Able Seaman Walter Ernest Anderson at the helm of Bathurst. AB Anderson enlisted in the RAN in January 1914 and was aboard HMAS Sydney during her battle with the German light cruiser SMS Emden on 9 September 1914. He survived the First World War and re-enlisted in the RAN in 1940 serving aboard HMAS Bathurst before his discharge in January 1942. The ship's wheel of HMAS Bathurst is held at the Australian War Memorial. (AWM P11597.001)*

On 25 August 1941 *Bathurst* returned to Aden, and then began a period of three and a half months on patrol in the Gulf of Tajura (French Somaliland), with the mission of preventing dhow traffic and blockade maintenance of the African coast. On 18 October 1941 she captured the French launch *Heron*, and dhows on 5 September and 14 November 1941.

Red Sea patrols ended on 16 December when *Bathurst* proceeded to Colombo, arriving on 29 December. Throughout 1942 she was based on Colombo for escort and patrol duties in the Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea. On 18 October 1942 Lieutenant Commander Bunyan was relieved by Lieutenant Commander C MacDonald RANR(S), after almost two years in command. At this stage of her career *Bathurst* had steamed 70,000 miles and escorted more than 1,000,000 tons of shipping without loss.

Convoys between Bombay, the Persian Gulf and Aden kept *Bathurst* almost constantly at sea during the period of January to August 1943. Interspersed with anti-submarine patrols she escorted 28 convoys safely across the Arabian Sea.

In September 1943, with 102,000 miles steaming behind her, she began refitting at Colombo. Convoy escort duty between Colombo and Bombay resumed in November, and the year closed with *Bathurst* at sea en route for Calcutta.



*Christmas Day was an important celebration for ships deployed on far-flung operations away from family and friends.*



*HMAS Bathurst (I)'s main mast flying the Australian National Flag and multiple White Ensigns.*

Escort duty between Colombo to Bombay continued into 1944. At Bombay on 14 April *Bathurst* played a worthy role in the rescue and salvage work that followed the explosion of the munition ships *Fort Strikine* and *Jalapadma*. Fifteen ships were gutted by the resulting fires and large numbers of the local population killed and injured.

On 7 August 1944 *Bathurst* reached Colombo after escorting her last Indian Ocean convoy. Three weeks later, on 29 August, she sailed for Australia, ending almost 3½ years on Indian Ocean-Red Sea service. On 20 September 1944 she entered Fremantle harbour.

Australian coastal anti-submarine patrols kept *Bathurst* in home waters until April 1945 when she proceeded to New Guinea waters. At this stage of the Pacific War, with the Philippines in American hands, there remained only routine patrols for her until the end of hostilities in August 1945.

The war ended, *Bathurst* proceeded to the Far East as a unit of the 21st Minesweeping Flotilla (eleven Australian minesweepers) attached to the British Pacific Fleet. Based on Hong Kong the Flotilla carried out sweeping operations on the Chinese coast until mid-November 1945.

On 9 December 1945 HMAS *Bathurst* returned to Sydney, bringing her seagoing career to an end. She had steamed 160,165 miles. On 27 September 1946 she was placed in Reserve for disposal. 12 November transferred to Disposal Pool, ship berthed Shell Cove. HMAS *Bathurst* was sold on 21 June 1948 to T Carr and Co. of Sydney as scrap.



*Bathurst at Rozelle Bay*

On 16 June 1950 *Bathurst* sank at moorings in Sydney. She was refloated in November 1950, then broken up.

### **The Herald Mon 19 Jun 1950:**

Rainwater Fills Old Corvette and Sinks Her

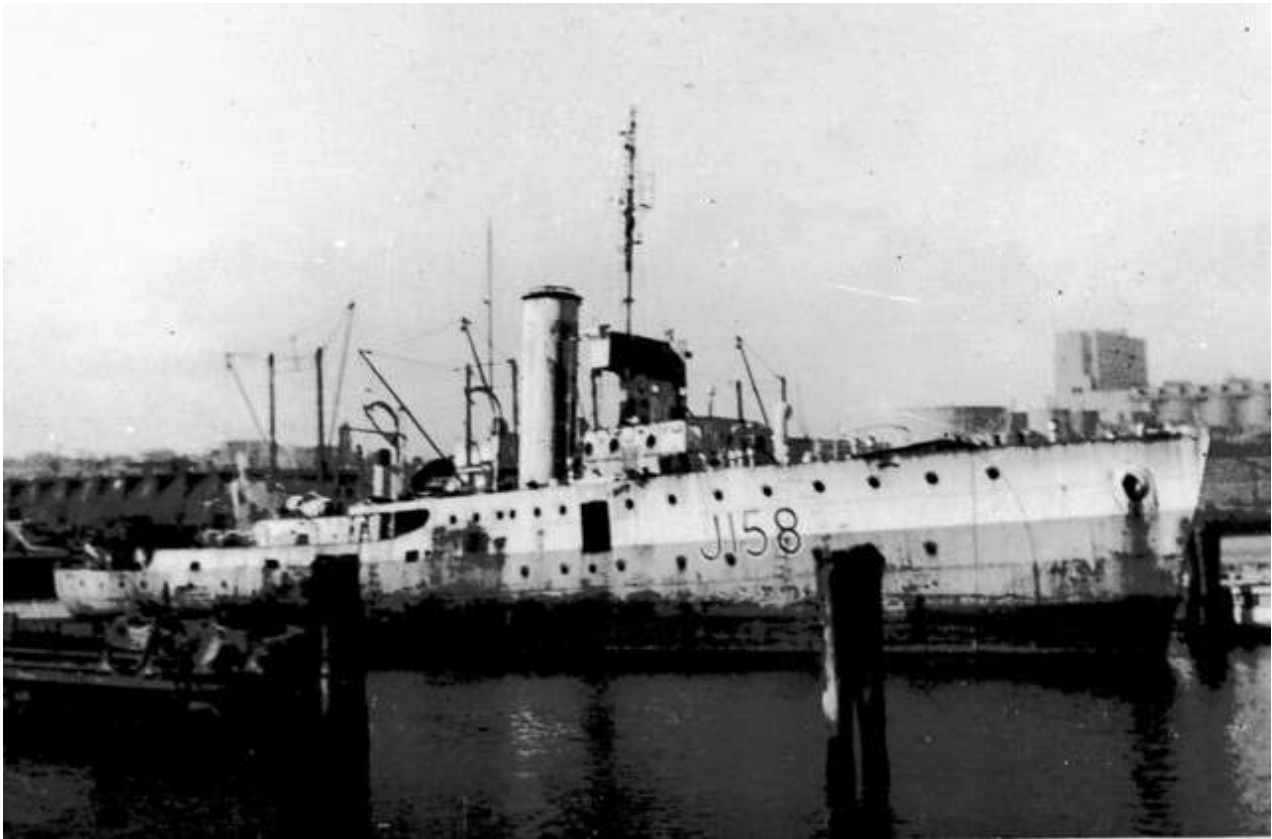
SYDNEY, Monday. —The old corvette HMAS *Bathurst* filled up with rainwater and sank in Rozelle Bay today. The *Bathurst* sold to an Ultimo firm for breaking up was tied up at the lighter berths in the bay and was being dismantled.

The torrential rain of the last two weeks entered through decks opened up for dismantling and gradually filled the hull.

When the *Bathurst* first took a list the water rushed to the vessel's stern and the corvette sank in 16ft. of water.

With the stern submerged, the bow is now pointing skyward.





*Bathurst at Rozelle Bay, ready for the breakers.*



*Sunk in Rozelle Bay with tug Boray and salvage barge alongside*





*Zovember 1950, re-floated ready for the breakers*



*Bathurst being broken up in the Parramatta River 1950*