HMAS *Bundaberg* – J231/M231

Builder	Evans Deakin Ltd, Brisbane
Laid Down	7 June 1941
Launched	1 December 1941
Commissioned	12 September 1942
Decommissioned	26 March 1946

Battle Honours
    PACIFIC 1942-45
    NEW GUINEA 1943–44

Fate:
The ship was sold for scrap on 6 Jan 1961 to Kinoshita (Aust) Pty Ltd.

Displacement	650 tons
Length	186 feet
Beam	31 feet
Draught	8 feet 6 inches
Speed	15 knots
Crew	85
Propulsion	Triple expansion, 2 shafts
Horsepower	2,000
Armament	1 x 4-inch gun Machine guns 1 Bofors (later) 3 x Oerlikons (later 2) Depth charges and throwers

HMAS *Bundaberg* was laid down at Evans Deakin & Co Ltd, Brisbane, Queensland on 7 June 1941. She was launched on 1 December 1941 by Mrs Hurwood, wife of a Director of Evans Deakin Ltd and was the first RAN warship to carry the name of the Queensland city situated on the Burnett River, 385km north of the state capital, Brisbane.

Commissioning Pennant

Bundaberg commissioned at Brisbane on 12 September 1942 at Fitting out basin, Brisbane under the command of Lieutenant Commander Neville D Pixley, RANR.

Lieutenant Commander Neville Pixley, MBE, RANR, Commanding Officer of HMAS Bundaberg on the bridge of his command.

On completion of her trials in October 1942, *Bundaberg* was assigned to operational duty as a convoy escort vessel on the east coast of Australia between Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

Until the end of 1942, the enemy were comparatively inactive in Australian waters, but in January 1943 the Japanese launched their third and final submarine campaign on coastal shipping in an attempt to disrupt the flow of war materials to the forward areas. Between January and May 1943, during which period *Bundaberg* was almost constantly at sea, eleven ships were lost off the coast. Only four of these, however, were in convoy at the time of attack, one of which, the United States vessel SS *Portmar*, was being escorted by *Bundaberg*.
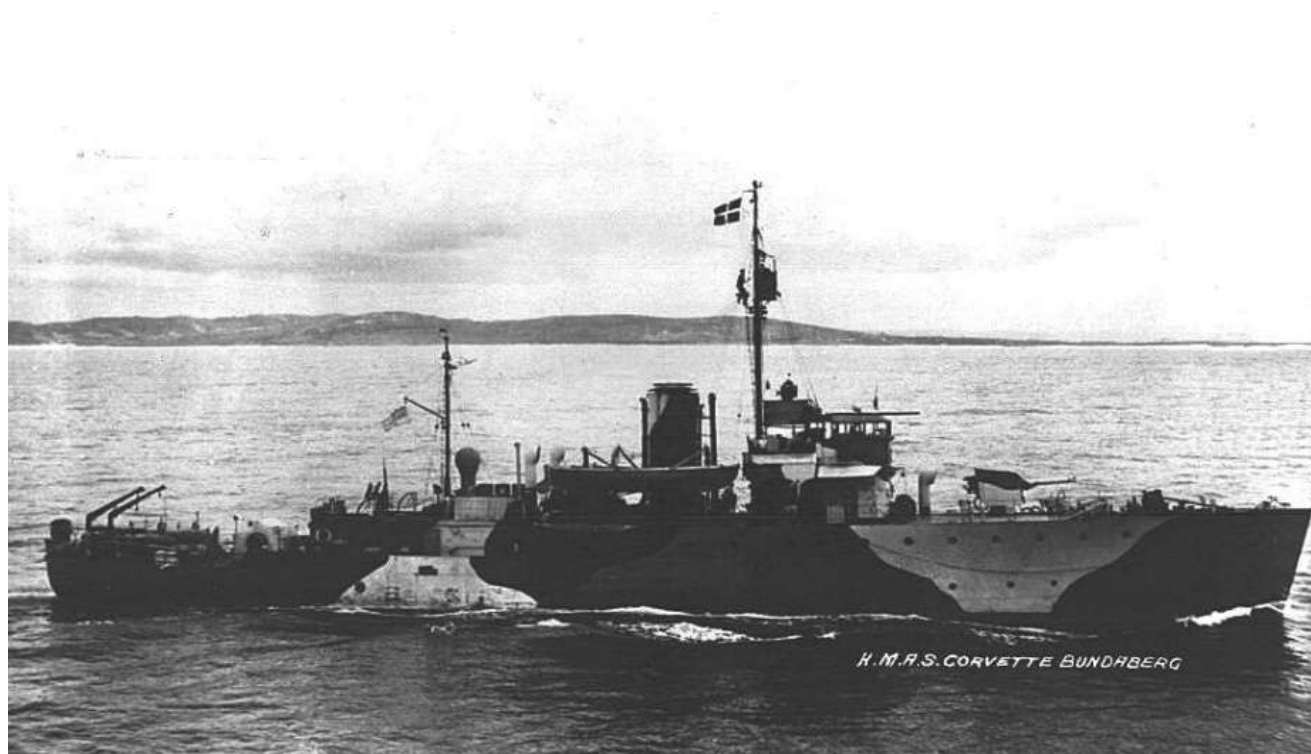
Officers of *Bundaberg*'s wardroom pose for a formal photograph onboard.

An official portrait taken of Bundaberg's ship's company early in her commission.

In December 1943 *Bundaberg* began escorting convoys from Cairns to Port Moresby and Milne Bay. After nearly three months of this duty which were mainly uneventful, she transferred to the operational control of Commander Task Force 74 (Australian Squadron) for service in New Guinea waters. Thereafter until she returned to Australia in September 1944 for refit, she was engaged on escort, anti-submarine patrol and bombardment assignments in support of military operations ashore in the New Guinea theatre.

Crew members from Bundaberg holding a Japanese dropping flag which was found in the jungle near Madang, circa April 1944. The flag, covered with Japanese characters, is used to indicate the dropping site for messages and equipment provided by aircraft. L-R: Tom Twentyman, Jack Carey, Bill Sheehey, Nick Brown, Bob Gray, David McArtney, John Orme, Max Daniels, Jim Hope, Dusty Miller, Will Westbrook, Bruce Foster, Arthur Marks, Clarrie Hawken and Sid Stapleton (sqautting in front of the flag). (AWM 073021)

During this period (April to August 1944), *Bundaberg* bombarded Japanese positions on Alim Island (Admiralties), took part in the landings on Sek island, and gave general support to the campaign which ended with the capture of the Admiralties and the establishment of an Allied base at Manus Island. In addition she carried out anti-submarine patrols in the Solomon Sea, off Hollandia, off Alexishafen and in the Sepik River area. Escort duties were a continuing commitment during this period which included the escort of troop transports from
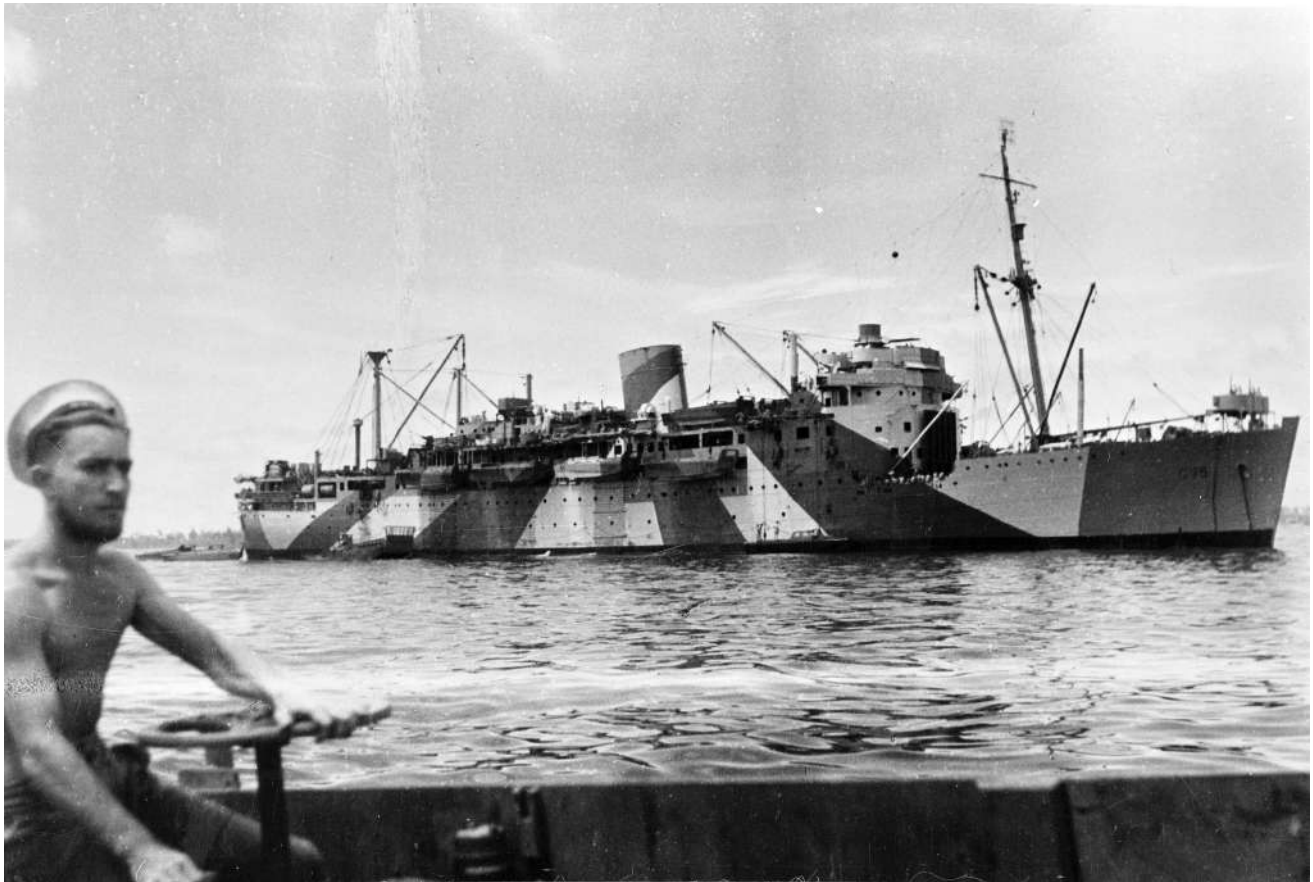
Finschhafen to Madang.

Left: Informal portrait of Lieutenant Commander ND Pixley, RANR (left), Commanding Officer of Bundaberg and his brother (right) Commander NS Pixley, RANR, Port Director of Langemak Area, aboard Bundaberg, circa 1944. (AWM 073024). Right: Official war correspondents on the bridge of Bundaberg bound for Alexishafen from Sek Island, circa April 1944. L-R: Mr Roy Macartney, Mr John Scarlet, Commander NS Pixley, RANR and Mr Fred Aldridge. (AWM 073023)

Bundaberg secured alongside remnants of Alexishafen wharf after disembarking troops and ammunition to assist in the capture of Sek island. Picture was taken in Alexishafen, New Guinea, circa April 1944

In July 1944 *Bundaberg*, assisted by her sister ship HMAS *Whyalla*, succeeded in refloating the Australian Landing Ship Infantry HMAS *Kanimbla* which had gone ashore at Cape Cretin, New Guinea.

Following a refit in Adelaide during September and October 1944, *Bundaberg* returned to New Guinea and for the next six months was engaged on escort and anti-submarine duties between Mios Woendi, Biak and Morotai. In May 1945 she returned to Australia for another refit but by mid-June was back in New Guinea waters to resume duty in the Biak and Morotai areas. There she carried out patrol and escort duties until the end of hostilities.

In September 1945 *Bundaberg* proceeded to Borneo where she took part in the recovery of Allied prisoners of war. She was also present at Kuching (Borneo) with her sister ship HMAS *Kapunda* for the official surrender ceremony of the Japanese forces in the area on 9 September.

On 28 October 1945 she arrived at her namesake town in Queensland where she was given an official reception by the citizens. *Bundaberg* paid off at Brisbane on 26 March 1946, having steamed 112,199 miles since commissioning.

Daily Mercury (Mackay Qld) Mon 29 Oct 1945:

> BUNDEBURG Sunday. — The corvette HMAS BUNDABURG arrived from Brisbane this afternoon flying the white pennant, which implied the ship would go out of commission on reaching Brisbane and the personnel would be paid off. The ship is in command of Captain J. MacDonald. One thousand people lined the banks of the river and gave the ship a tumultuous welcome. The ship will remain at *Bundaberg* until Thursday.

Decommissioning Flag

Bundaberg paid off, 26 March 1946 into F class Reserve. On 4 November 1947 *Bundaberg*, under tow by her sister ship HMAS *Katoomba*, departed Brisbane for Sydney, where the vessels arrived on 7 November. *Bundaberg* remained in Reserve at Sydney.

The ship was sold for scrap on 6 January 1961 to Kinoshita (Aust) Pty Ltd. Depart Sydney 26 February 1962 under tow along with HMAS *Bunbury* by the tug *Benton Maru*. She was broken up in Japan April 1968.