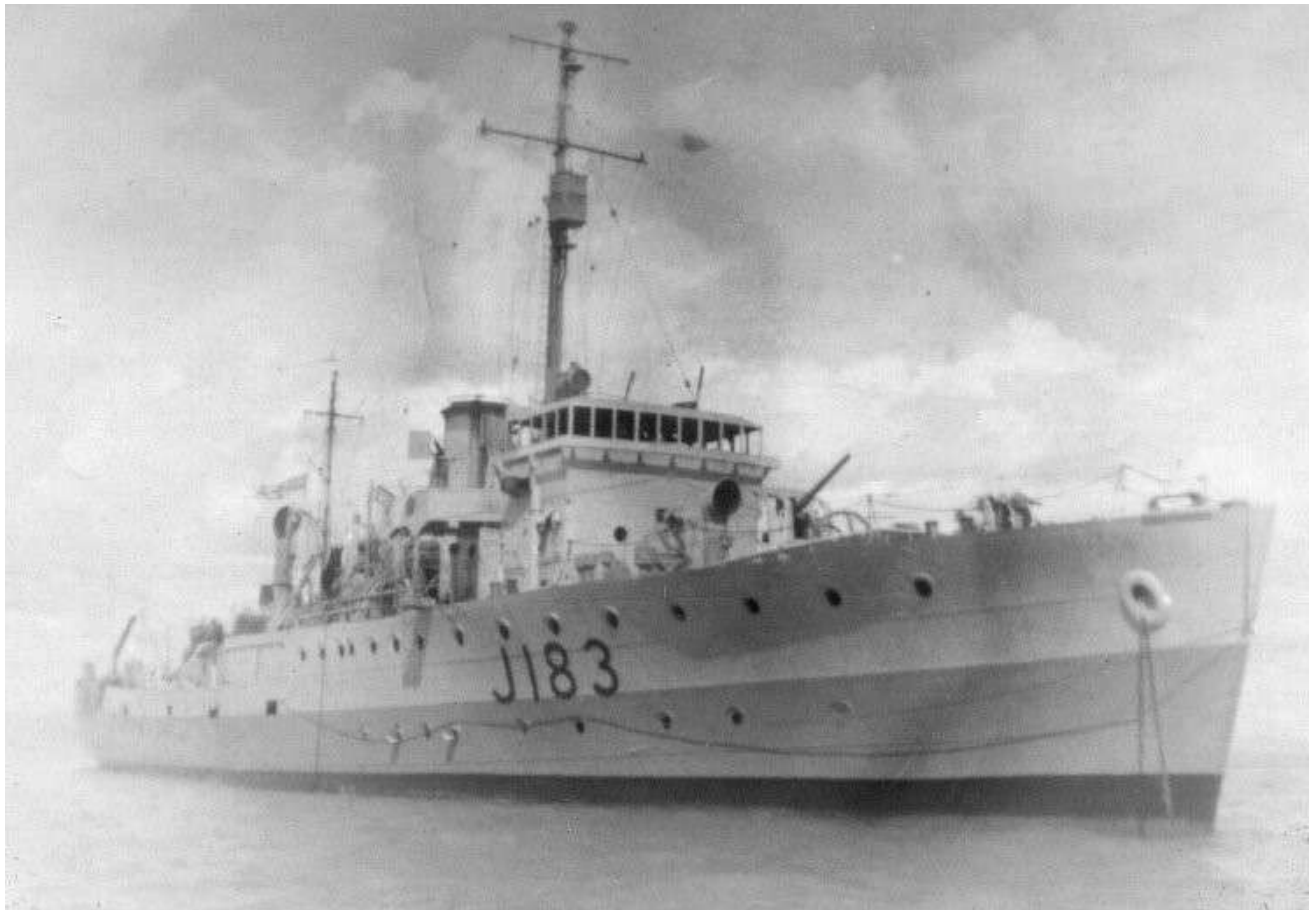


HMAS *Cairns* – J183/B239



Class: Bathurst Class
 Type Australian Minesweeper
 Builder Walkers Ltd, Maryborough
 Laid Down 31 March 1941
 Launched 7 October 1941
 Commissioned 11 May 1942
 Decommissioned 17 January 1946

Battle Honours

PACIFIC 1942-45
 INDIAN OCEAN 1942-45
 SICILY 1943
 OKINAWA 1945

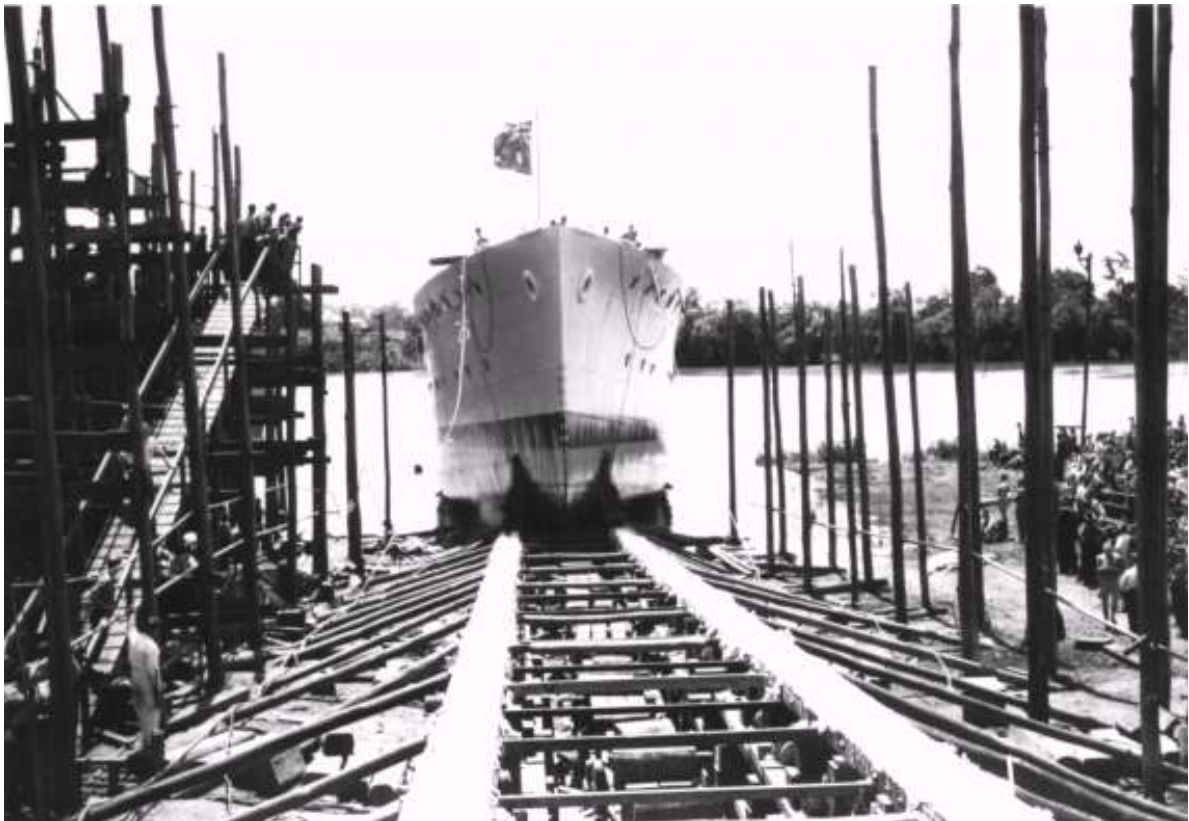


Displacement	650 tons
Length	186 feet
Beam	31 feet
Draught	8 feet 6 inches
Speed	15 knots
Crew	85
Propulsion	Triple expansion, 2 shafts
Horsepower	2,000
Armament Guns	1 x 12-pounder gun 1 x Bofors (later) Machine guns 3 x Oerlikons (later)
4)	Depth charge and
chutes throwers	

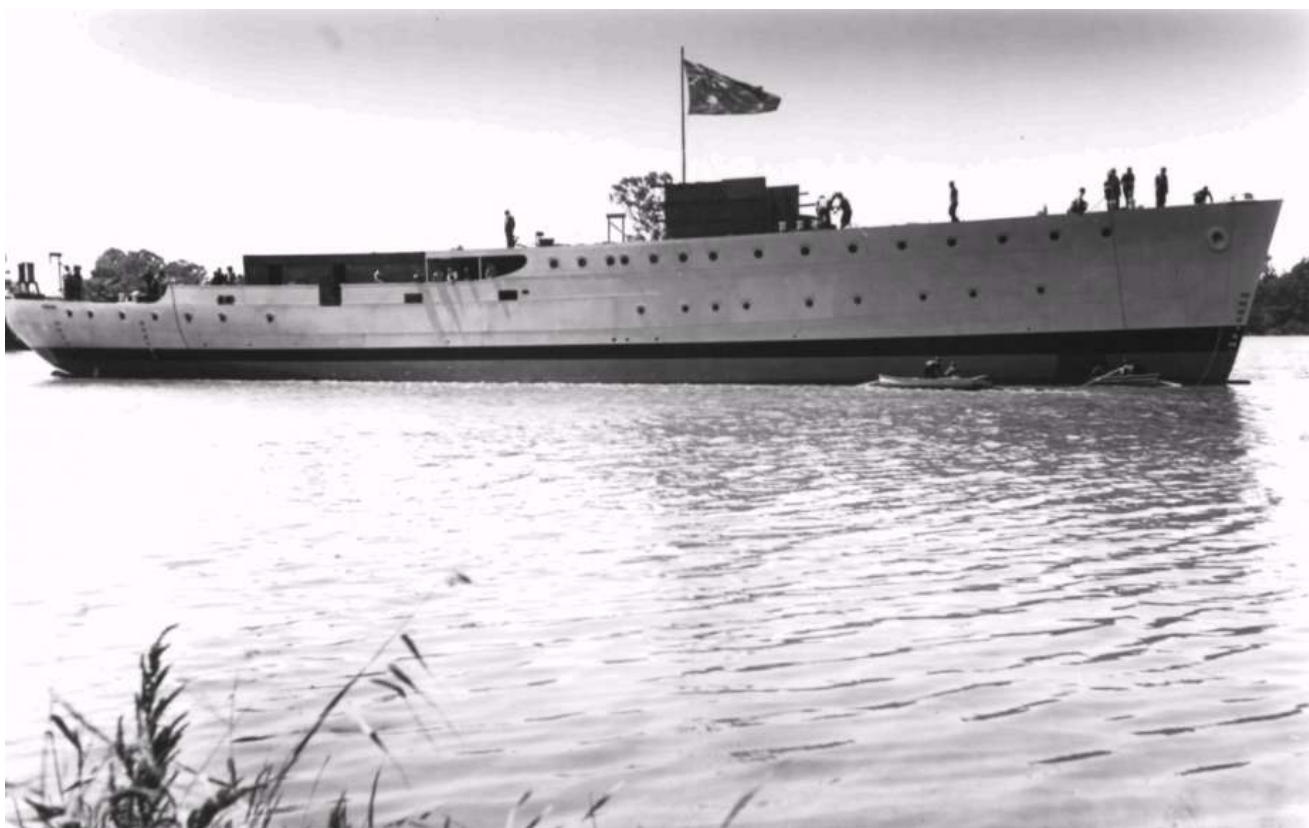
Ordered for the British Admiralty and commissioned by RAN, HMAS *Cairns* was laid down at Walkers Ltd, Maryborough, Queensland on 31 March 1941. She was launched on 7 October 1941 by Mrs Weber, wife of Works Manager, Walkers Ltd and was the first RAN warship to carry the name of the city in North Queensland. Cairns is a popular tourist destination because of its climate and access to the Great Barrier Reef.



HMAS Cairns was launched on 7 October 1941 by Mrs RD Weber, wife of the Works Manager, Walkers Ltd.

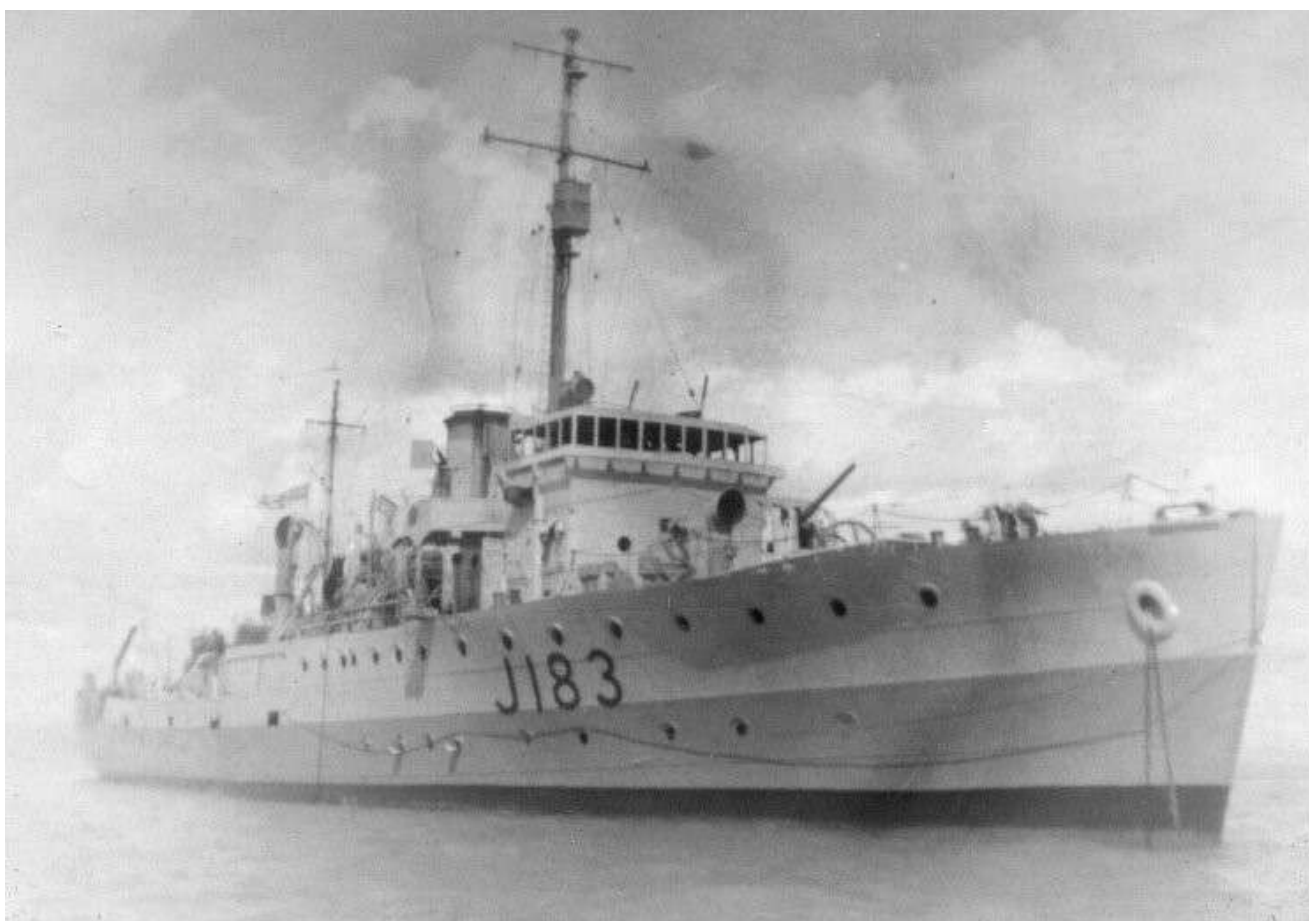


HMAS Cairns takes to the water for the first time.



HMAS Cairns afloat and ready for the process of fitting out.

Cairns commissioned at Maryborough on 11 May 1942 under the command of Lieutenant Edward Macmillan RANR (S).



Once operational *Cairns* was briefly employed as a patrol ship and convoy escort covering 5 convoys on passage between Newcastle NSW and Melbourne; the first round trip was with convoy CO.13 sailing from Newcastle on July 26th, the return convoy OC.13 arriving back at Newcastle on August 1st. On August 9th she made the same round trip with convoy CO.17 and OC.17 arriving back at Newcastle on August 16th. On arrival at Melbourne with CO.20 on August 23rd she was ordered to Fremantle, Western Australia.

In October she was allocated for service with the Eastern Fleet. *Cairns* and sister ships *Ipswich* and *Maryborough* sailed from Fremantle on October 16th; *Cairns* and *Ipswich* were bound for Kilindini, Kenya, *Maryborough* for Colombo, Ceylon. On November 14th *Cairns* joined the East Africa Patrol Flotilla at Kilindini, and, in company with her sister ship *Wollongong* covered the first day of passage for the outbound Aden convoy KA.4.

On 14 November 1942 *Cairns* arrived at the fleet base at Kilindini, Kenya, to begin a period of Indian Ocean patrol and escort duties. In mid-1943 she was transferred temporarily to the Mediterranean. While serving in that theatre, *Cairns* and her sister ships, HMA Ships *Cessnock*, *Geraldton* and *Wollongong*, were at Sicily on 13 July, three days after the start of the Allied invasion.

They had gone to the island as part escort of a convoy from Alexandria. They spent the day carrying out an endless chain patrol of the beach and saw an American Liberty Ship blown up in an air raid. *Cairns* got through the Sicilian invasion with only a scratch from falling ack-ack shells. She attacked two submarines and survived numerous air attacks.

One of the first corvettes to operate in the Atlantic, the *Cairns* took over a convoy of 86 ships from an American escort. The convoy was spotted by German reconnaissance planes, but a torpedo bomber attacked a convoy of enemy ships by mistake. One of the crew said that the *Cairns* was in 14 raids in 24 hours.



Rough seas in Red Sea, May 1943

Cairns returned to the Indian Ocean in September 1943. The ship's work in the Indian Ocean was mainly uneventful convoy escort duties, but on 11 February 1944 she was a unit of the escort of a convoy which was attacked by the Japanese submarine RO-110.

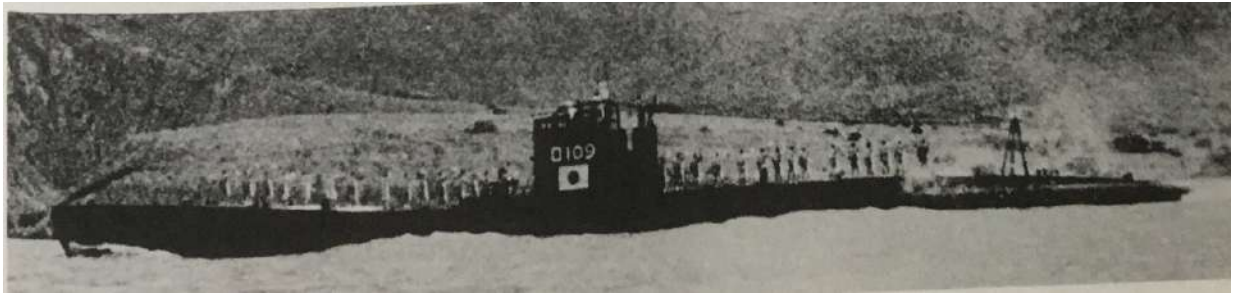
After one ship, *Asphalion*, had been torpedoed, a concerted attack by *Cairns* and sister ships *Launceston* and *Ipswich*, and the Indian sloop HMIS *Jumna*, destroyed the submarine.



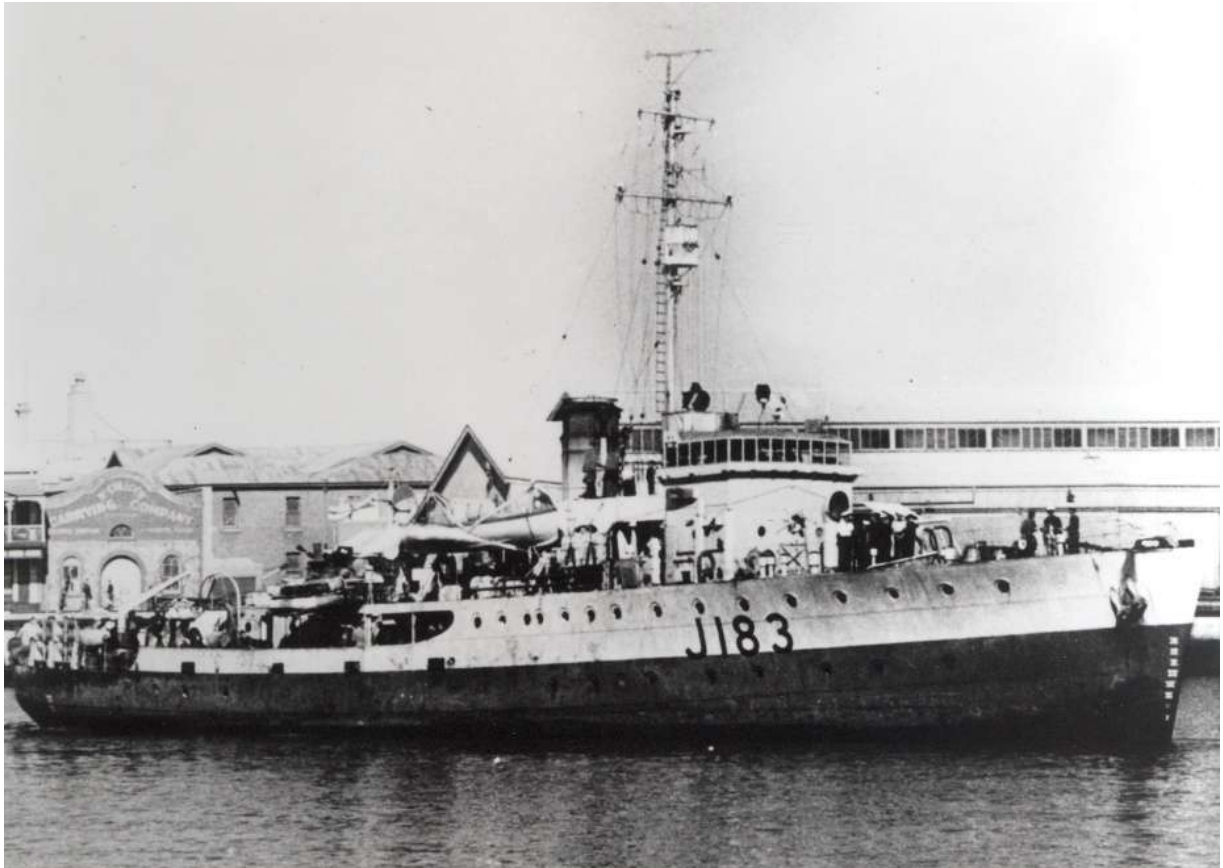
A depth charge exploding in the ship's wake.



Members of the crew of Cairns, circa 1944. (Argus Newspaper Collection of Photographs, State Library of Victoria)



Sister submarine to RO-110, sunk by Cairns and sister ships after convoy attack



15 Oct 1944 HMAS Cairns in Bombay

Following a refit at Adelaide from May 1944, *Cairns* re-joined the Eastern Fleet in July 1944 and, based on Colombo, resumed escort duties, mainly between Indian ports and Aden at the entrance to the Red Sea.

In January 1945 *Cairns* returned to Australia to begin operations with the British Pacific Fleet. After a brief period in home waters she reached the New Guinea theatre in late March to begin escort duties between Manus and Leyte in the Philippines.

During March to May she was one of the Australian units operating with the British Pacific Fleet for the invasion of the island of Okinawa (Operation ICEBERG). At the end of these operations *Cairns* proceeded to Fremantle for refit.

HMAS *Cairns* was in dockyard hands when the Japanese surrender was announced, on completion of her refit she was allocated to the 21st M/S Flotilla at Hong Kong. She called at Manus on September 25th, sailing again the following day. At Hong Kong she assisted in clearing mines in Chinese waters, a task that continued until December. On release from the M/S Flotilla she returned to Australia in December 1945 for paying off at Brisbane 17 January 1946.

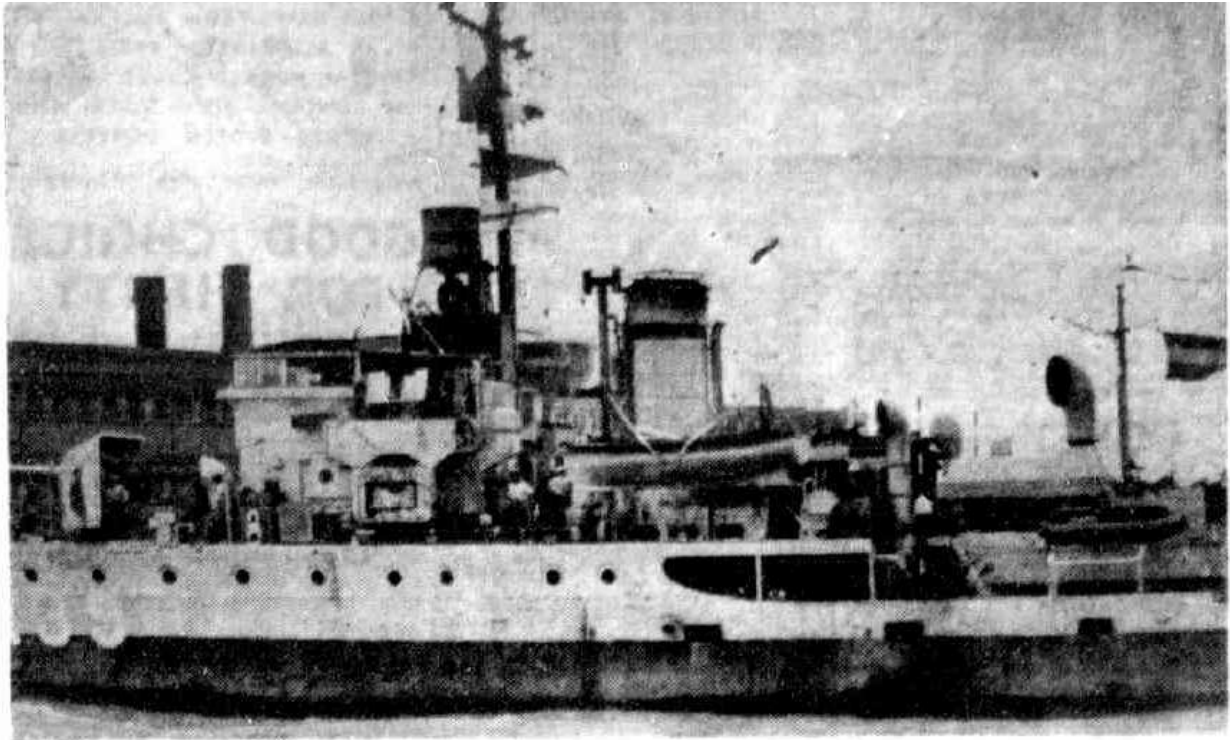


On 17 January 1946 HMAS *Cairns* was retired from Australian services and introduced into the Royal Netherlands Navy as Hr.Ms. *Ambon*. On 7 March of that year the corvette left for Makassar on Celebes (today's Sulawesi).

The Sun (Sydney) 27 Feb 1946:

Corvette On Loan Sails For Batavia

MELBOURNE. Wednesday. — With 60 cases of beer stacked on deck and about 30 tons of food and Red Cross supplies below, the corvette HMAS *Cairns*, on loan to the Dutch Navy. The ship arrived yesterday under close secrecy and secrecy was observed in loading in case of demonstrations by hostile waterside elements.



MOVING DOWN THE YARRA with the Dutch flag at the stern and 60 cases of Australian beer on deck "HM" (formerly **HMAS Cairns**) is bound for Java with 30 tons of food and Red Cross supplies. The ship was lent to the Dutch Navy in January. She arrived yesterday under close secrecy and the crew worked all night to load the cargo and sail as quickly as possible.

On 6 April H.M.S. *Cairns*, was first transferred to the Indonesian Navy in loan, which later on bought the vessel and named it KRI *Banteng*, pennant Number 255.

The Herald (Melbourne) Sat 27 Apr 1946:

Indonesian Pirates Use Motor ships in NEI

DARWIN. — Two former Japanese motor ships, manned by Indonesian extremists, are plundering and terrorising smaller islands in the Netherlands East Indies, according to the captain of the Dutch warship Ambon. He is Commander P. Cool, who has a roving commission to sail around the islands and try to locate and capture the pirates, as he describes them.

He said a number of islands had already been invaded, people killed and villages ransacked. Commander Cool believes that the Indonesian crews are not even been politically conscious, but just bad men who had turned pirates. They are known to have raided Talardj Rmpea Island, south of the Celebes, and a number of smaller ones. They are obviously selecting places where there is not much likelihood of armed resistance.

Commander Cool believes that the extremists took the ships forcibly from eastern Java before the arrival of the Allied forces. Before the war piracy was common around the smaller Islands in the NEI. The Ambon was formerly the Australian corvette HMAS *Cairns* which was sold to the Dutch recently. She still has the Australian flag and the word "Australia" painted on the crow's nest. Concurrently with the rounding up of the raiders Commander Cool is attempting to get to Merauke to evacuate prisoners and Internees still held there.

From the 1st of June, 1946, the name of the ship officially became Hr.Ms. *Ambon*. The Dutch vessel fought in the Indonesian independence struggles when she supported landings of Dutch marines on Madura, Sumba, Bali, Lombok and Flores.

On 1 November, 1946 the ship ran aground on a reef south east of Timor and took three days before she became afloat again. On return in Surabaya her commander Lieutenant at Sea First Class P. Cool was relieved from his function.

Till the end of 1949 Hr.Ms. *Ambon* carried out patrol missions and showed the flag in the East Indian waters. From time to time floating mines were disarmed, but there was never any real minesweeping mission ordered. During Netherlands service she carried the pennant numbers **B239, MV21, PK1, and P6**.



BANTENG (ex-Ambon, ex-Cairns)
HANG TUAH (ex-Morotai, ex-Ipswich)

PATI UNUS (ex-Tidore, ex-Tamworth)
RADJAWALI (ex-Banda, ex-Wollongong)

1951, Indonesian Navy, Official.

In 1968 KRI *Banteng* was sold to be scrapped.