

HMAS *Dubbo* – J2521/M251



Builder: Mort's Dock
Laid down: 13 October 1941
Launched: 7 March 1942
Commissioned: 31 July 1942
Decommissioned: 7 February 1947

Motto: "Fight to the Finish"

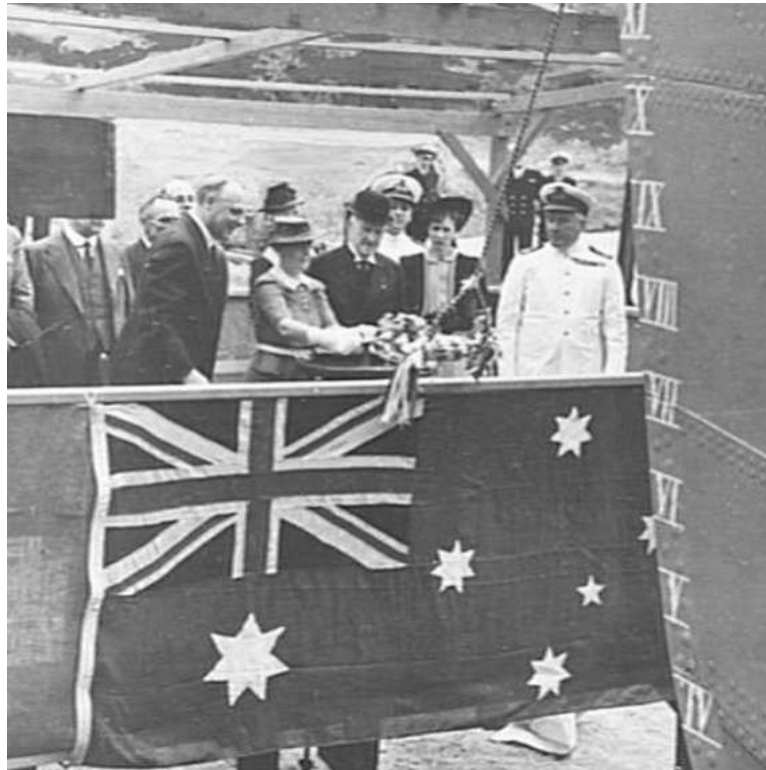
Battle honours:
 Pacific 1942–45

Fate: Sold for scrap in 1958



Displacement: 650 ton 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
Speed: 15 knots (28 km/h; 17
 mph)
 at 1,750 hp
Complement: 85
Armament: 1 × 4-inch gun,
 3 × Oerlikons,
 Machine guns,
 Depth charges chutes
 and throwers

HMAS *Dubbo* was laid down at Mort's Dock Engineering Company, Balmain, Sydney, NSW on 13 October 1941. She was launched on 7 March 1942 by Mrs EB Serisier, Mayoress of *Dubbo*, and was the first RAN warship to carry the name of the city in the Orana Region of NSW. By the war's end Mort's Dock had constructed 14 of the sixty Bathurst Class corvettes.



Official group at the launching of Dubbo. (AWM 011738)



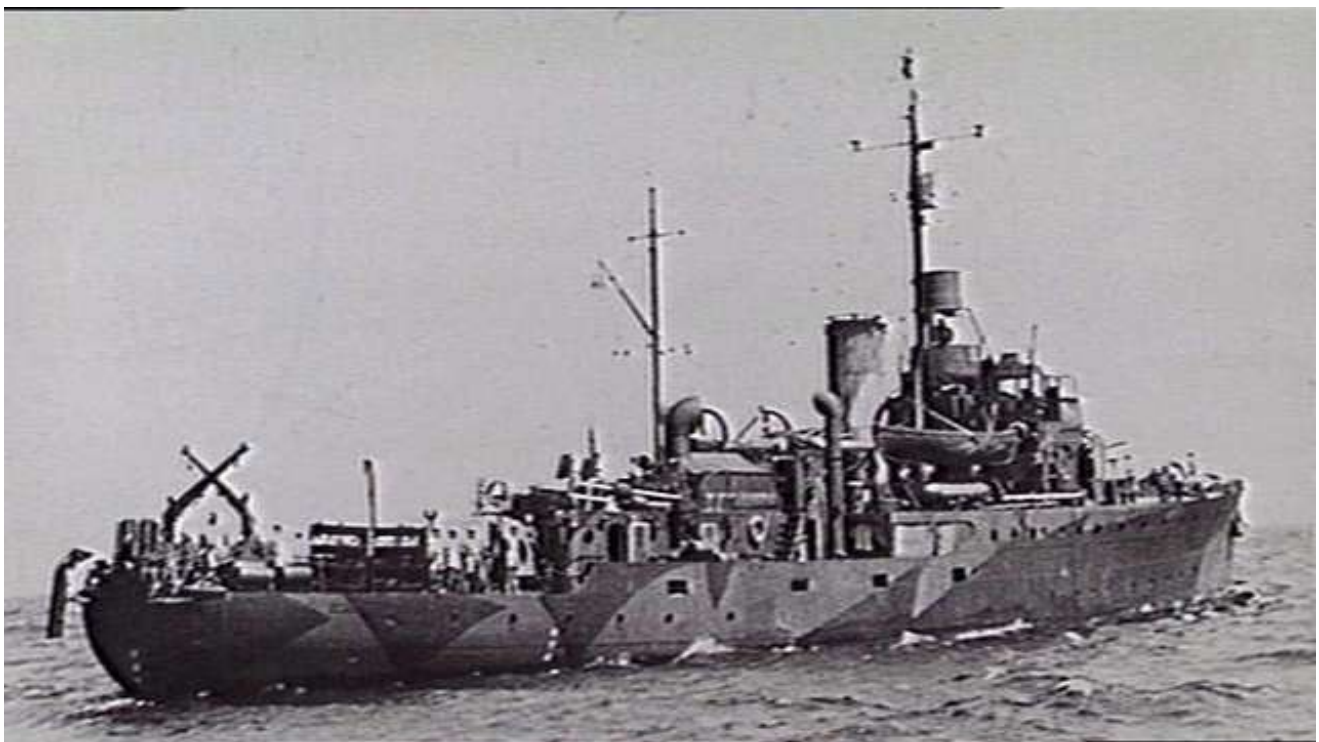
Launching of HMAS Dubbo (AWM 011737)

Dubbo commissioned at Sydney on 31 July 1942 under the command of Lieutenant Arthur Geoffrey William Thomas RANR(S).



HMAS Dubbo wearing her disruptive pattern camouflage paint during World War II.

Dubbo began her seagoing career attached to the escort and anti-submarine group based on Fremantle and remained on this duty until March 1945, a period of two and a half years during which she steamed some 77,000 miles on routine patrols and escort work.



Dubbo 1943

11 June 1945 a rescue operation was mounted by *Dubbo* after *Wallaroo* sank after colliding with the *Henry Gilbert Costin* during the early hours of 11 June 1945, west of Fremantle.

“A RAAF Catalina had located the survivors and wreckage and, after dropping self-inflating life rafts, flew to where *Dubbo* was ploughing into rising seas off Rottnest Island and informed us of the position. Sometime later *Dubbo* came across the first group of survivors, on the rafts. The Skipper, Norman Weber, a top seaman, wisely continued on to those in greater need in the water, but had the bridge personnel to wave to the occupants of the rafts to reassure them that they had been seen.

When *Dubbo* finally reached the area, *Wallaroo* was gone and its crew, scattered over a wide area, were clinging to anything that floated. The Skipper took us slowly in their midst, stopped engines and allowed *Dubbo* to drift down to those in the water.

Scrambling nets were off the side and it was just a matter of hauling them aboard. This was repeated a number of times. Several we fished for by trailing grass lines astern.”

There was no enemy activity except for the cruise of a single German submarine, U-862, which entered Australian waters in late 1944. Homeward bound in February 1945, U-862 torpedoed and sank the American ship *Peter Silvester* west of Fremantle and *Dubbo*, as one of a search group, spent ten days unsuccessfully searching for survivors.

On 21 March 1945 *Dubbo* arrived at Darwin from Fremantle, remaining there as guard ship until 4 April when she sailed for New Guinea waters, reaching Port Moresby four days later. Thereafter until the close of hostilities *Dubbo* took an active part in operations supporting the Australian land forces in New Guinea and the Solomons.

On 25 April she fired her first hostile shots, when in company of HMA Ships *Swan* and *Colac* she bombarded Japanese positions on Muschu Island, off the New Guinea coast, in support of the Australian Sixth Division in its drive against Wewak. In May she took further part in the New Guinea operations, bombarding Wewak on 2 May and Kairiru Island the following day.



Left: Members of the 6th Australian Division marching to the beachhead to board HMAS *Dubbo* and HMAS *Colac* in preparation for the amphibious assault on the Wewak Peninsula, But Beach, New Guinea, circa May 1945. (AWM 018495) Right: Members of the 6th Australian Division prepare to embark on HMAS *Dubbo* from landing barges during training exercises preparatory to the attack on Wewak Peninsula, circa May 1945. (AWM 018485)



Left: Members of the 6th Australian Division embarking on Dubbo from landing barges during training exercises preparatory to the attack on Wewak Peninsula, New Guinea, circa May 1945. (AWM 018484) Right: Crew of the Bofors 40mm gun on Dubbo which played a conspicuous part in the operation on Wewak Peninsula, circa May 1945. L-R: J MacDermott, R Lindsay, J Johnson, Pat Smith and KW Lee. (AWM 018488)

On 10 May she embarked troops at But and landed them at Dove Bay, east of Wewak, the following day. Fire support to the land forces continued throughout the month. *Dubbo* succeeded in destroying a number of Japanese gun emplacements while under fire herself, and though she suffered no damage, Japanese shells frequently fell too close for comfort.



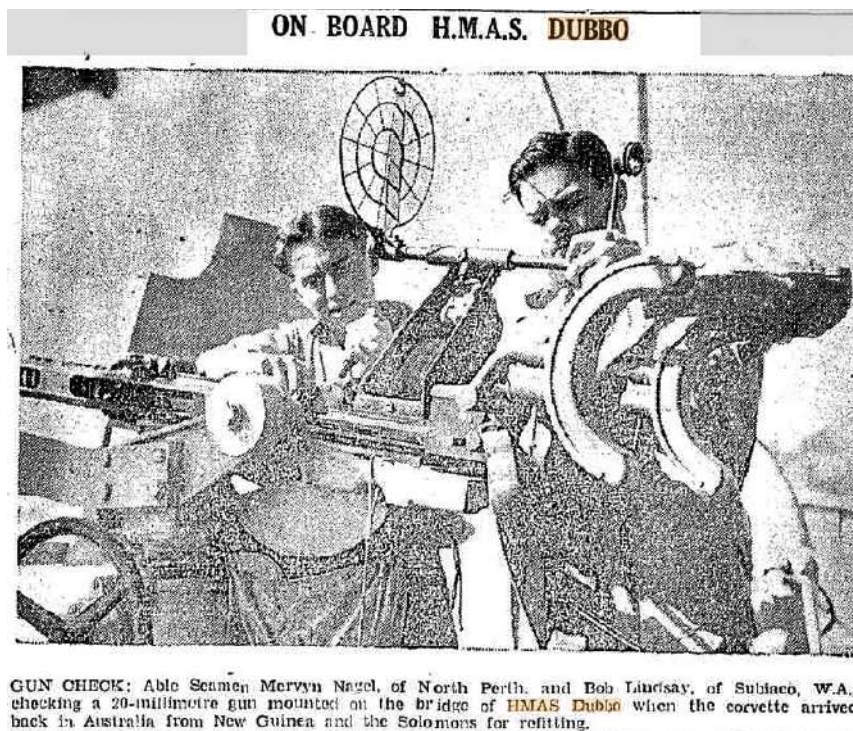
Left: Members of the crew of Dubbo assisting 6th Australian Division troops into the landing barges for the successful assault on the Wewak Peninsula, New Guinea, circa May 1945. (AWM 018496) Right: Members of the crew of Dubbo after the amphibious operations on Wewak Peninsula, New Guinea, circa May 1945. (AWM 018486)

In June 1945 *Dubbo* proceeded to the Solomons, where she resumed her role of support to the Australian land forces with a series of bombardments of Japanese positions on Buka Island and the Bougainville coast. On 28 June she carried out her final bombardment of the war when she heavily shelled Japanese positions at Manahan. On 10 July *Dubbo* departed Torokina for Brisbane, bringing her war service to a close. In all operations her guns had fired 5000 rounds, and she had no casualties from enemy action.



HMAS Dubbo. (Allan C Green, State Library of Victoria)

In August 1945 *Dubbo* returned to the Solomons area where she carried out preliminary minesweeping operations. Similar duties in New Britain waters kept her fully occupied during September. In October she returned to Australia to begin a long refit at Brisbane.



September 1945



HMAS Dubbo (Allan C Green, State Library of Victoria)

In January 1946 the ship joined the 20th Minesweeping Flotilla and for the next four months was engaged on minesweeping operations in Australian waters.

On 29 April 1946 she entered Sydney Harbour for the last time as a seagoing ship. In her four years of service *Dubbo* steamed 104,923 miles. She paid off into Reserve at Sydney on 7 February 1947.

On 20 February 1958 she was sold for scrap to Mitsubishi Shoji Kaisha Ltd, Tokyo. In June 1958 the Japanese salvage vessel *Tokushima Maru* departed Sydney for Japan with *Dubbo* and another former RAN vessel, the repair and maintenance vessel *Platypus*, in tow.

H.M.A.S. DUBBO