

HMAS Echuca – J252/M252



Namesake: Town of Echuca,
 Victoria
Builder: HMA Naval Dockyard
Laid down: 22 February 1941
Launched: 17 January 1942
Commissioned: 7 September 1942
Decommissioned: August 1946
Recommissioned: January 1947
Decommissioned: 28 June 1948

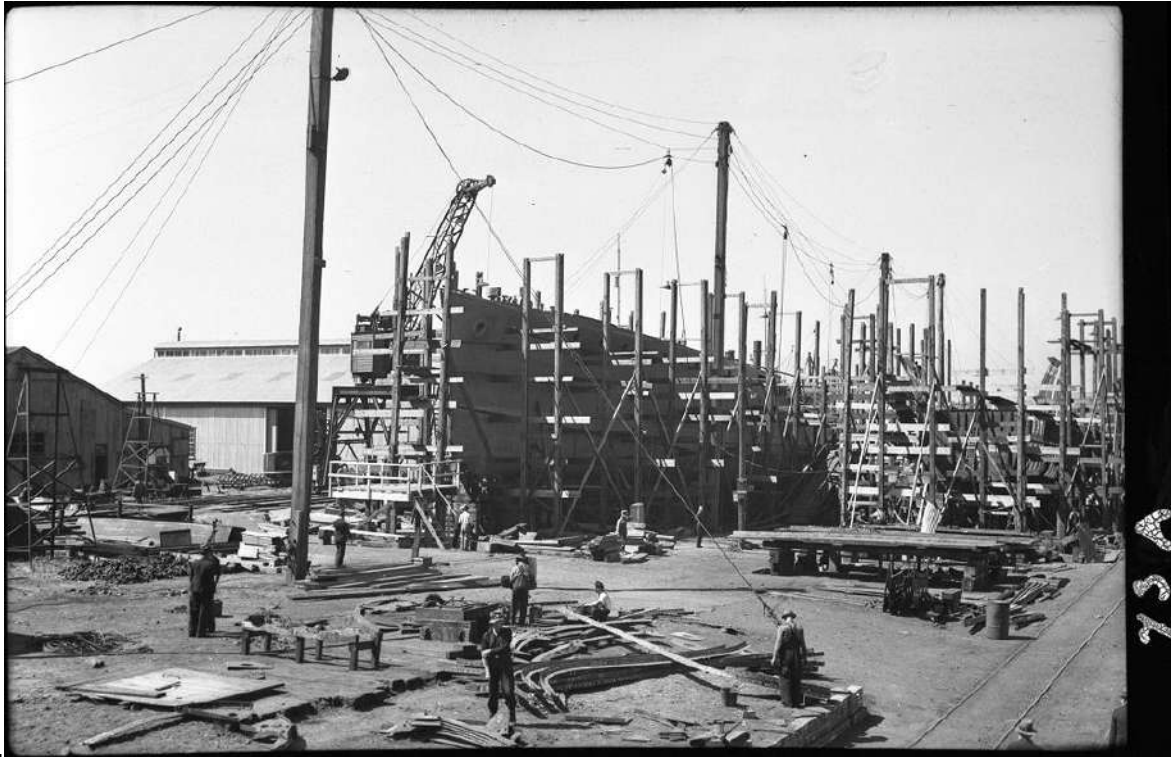
Battle honours:
 Pacific 1944–44
 New Guinea 1943–44

Fate:
 On 5 March 1952, Echuca was transferred to the Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN). She was commissioned into the RNZN in May 1952, and received the prefix HMNZS. The corvette remained in service with the RNZN until 1967, although from 1953 she was classified as being in reserve. She was sold to Pacific Scrap Limited of Auckland for scrapping on 11 April 1967.



Class & type: Bathurst-class corvette
Displacement: 650 tons standard
 1,025 tons full 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 ihp
Speed: 15 knots
 (28 km/h; 17 mph)
 at 1,750 hp
Complement: 85
Armament: 1 × 4-inch gun
 3 × 20 mm Oerlikons
 Machine guns
 Depth charges
 chutes and thrower

HMAS *Echuca* was laid down at Melbourne Harbour Trust Dockyard, Williamstown, Victoria on 22 February 1941. She was launched on 17 January 1942 by Lady Royle, wife of the First Naval Member, and was the first RAN warship to carry the name of the town located on the banks of the Murray River and the Campaspe River in Victoria.



Echuca under construction

HMAS *Echuca* commissioned at Melbourne on 7 September 1942 under the command of Lieutenant Commander Ronald A Nettlefold RANR.





HMAS Echuca displaying her distinctive disruptive pattern camouflage paint scheme. Most of the RAN's Bathurst Class corvettes adopted a variety of camouflage patterns during the war.

Echuca served as an escort and anti-submarine patrol vessel on the east coast of Australia and in New Guinea area from October 1942 to August 1944, during which time she steamed 59,000 miles.

In August 1944 she proceeded to Darwin where she passed to the operational control of the United States 7th Fleet Survey Group, Task Group 70.5. *Echuca* operated on survey duties in northern Australian waters until October 1945.

Then she proceeded from Darwin to Brisbane to replace minesweeping gear prior to joining the 20th Minesweeping Flotilla to take part in the RAN post war minesweeping program. Following brief sweeping operations in Australian waters *Echuca* proceeded with the Flotilla to New Britain and the Solomon Islands.

In August 1946 *Echuca* returned to Australia for paying off into the Reserve Fleet at Sydney. She returned to service in January 1947 for further minesweeping duty with the 20th Minesweeping Flotilla and until October 1947 was engaged in mine clearance on the Barrier Reef, Queensland.

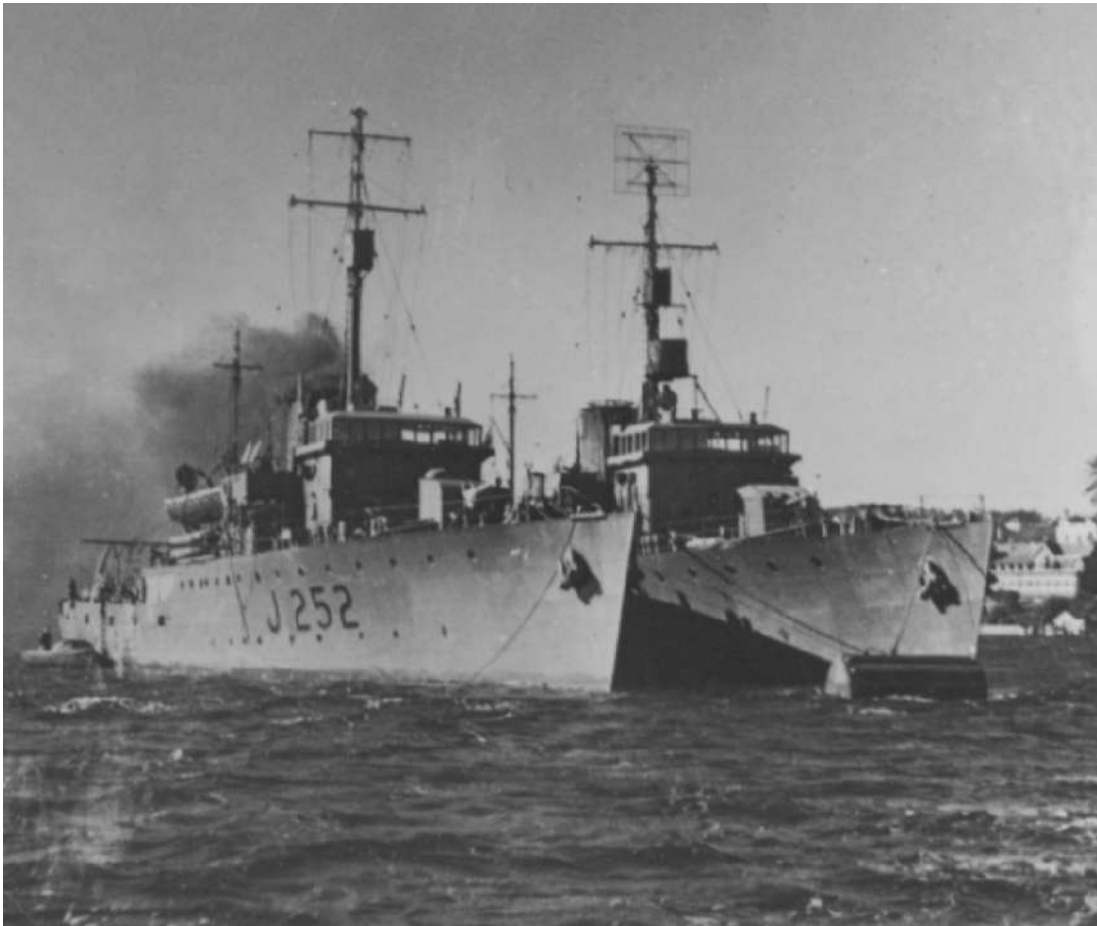
In November 1947 *Echuca* towed her sister ship HMAS *Inverell* from Brisbane to Sydney. *Echuca* was paid off into F reserve at Fremantle on 29 June 1948. On 23 April 1952 the tug HMAS *Reserve* took *Echuca* in tow at Fremantle, and conveyed her to Melbourne, arriving on 3 May 1952.



HMAS Echuca alongside the East Wall at Garden Island, circa 1944.



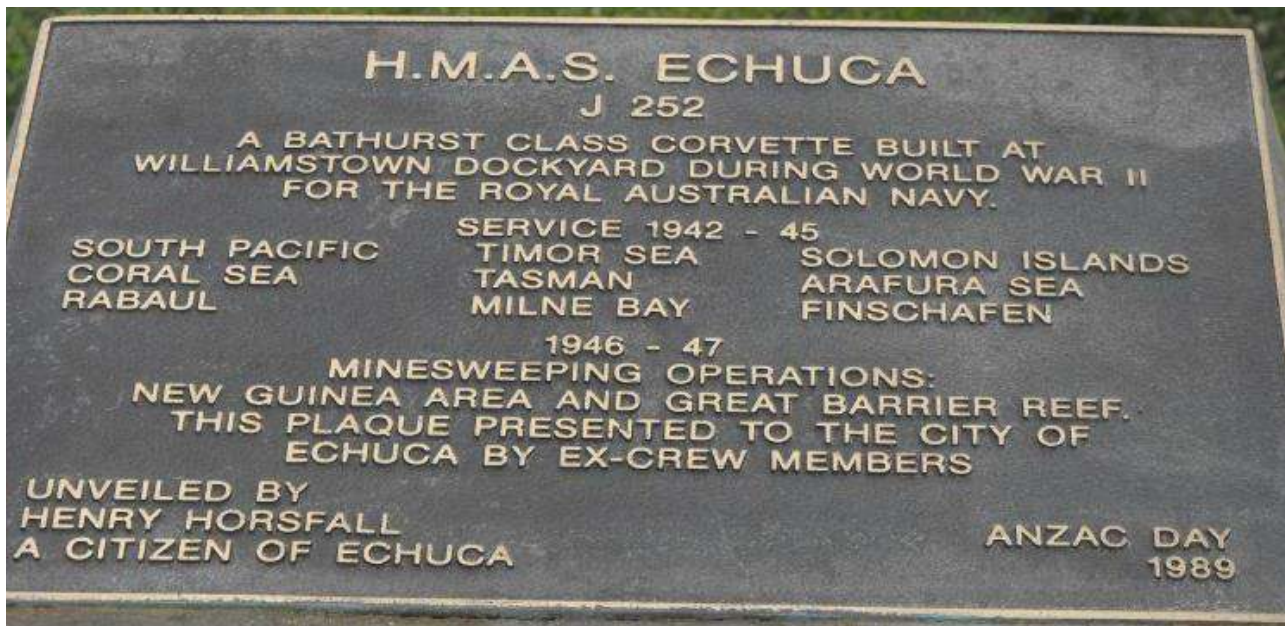
HMAS Echuca. (Allan C Green, State Library of Victoria)



HMAS Echuca in Sydney Harbour alongside one of her sister Australian minesweepers



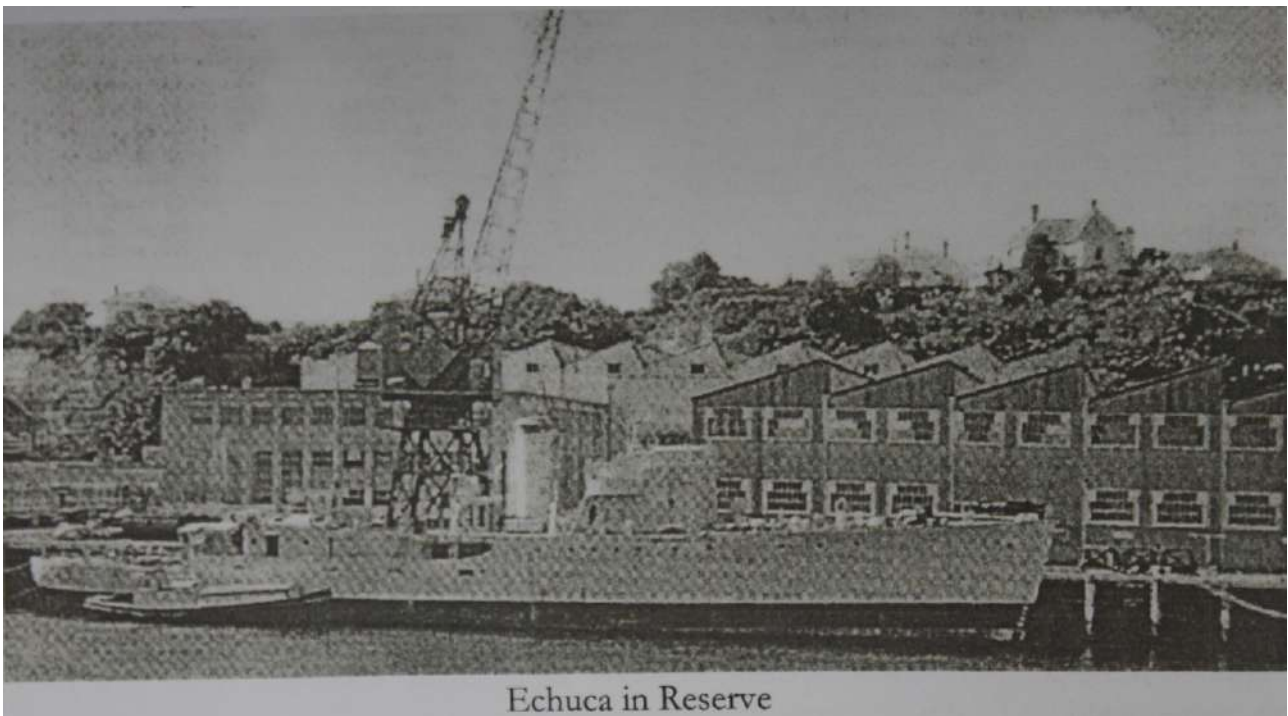
HMAS Echuca flying her decommissioning pennant at the end of her commission. (Allan C Green, State Library of Victoria)



The corvette undertook a refit at Williamstown Dockyard before being transferred to the Royal New Zealand Navy, having steamed some 123,000 miles during her RAN service.

Commissioned 7 June 1952 HMNZS *Echuca* in Melbourne. Departed for Auckland 14 June 1952. Arrived 25 June 1952. Departed for Port Chalmers arriving 8 July 1952 for a refit by Stevenson & Cook and paid off.

Recommissioned 24 March 1953 after refit and underwent 3 Days of trials. HMNZS *Echuca* arrived Auckland 1 April 1953 and then placed into Reserve. Her only action was to provide steam power in a salvage task at Auckland in 1957. From 1958 into 1961 *Echuca* proceeded to be modernized slowly and was never finished. She never went to sea again.



Echuca in Reserve

For disposal 1966. Sold 11 April 1967 to Pacific Scrap Ltd. Broken up at the Western Viaduct and Meola Creek.