

HMAS Fremantle – J246/M246



Namesake: City of Fremantle, WA
Builder: Evans Deakin & Co
Launched: 18 March 1942
Commissioned: 24 March 1943
Decommissioned: 25 January 1946
Recommissioned: 10 December 1952
Decommissioned: 22 June 1959

Motto: "Incorruptible"

Battle honours:

Darwin 1943

Pacific 1943–45

Fate: Sold for scrap in 1961



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

Speed: 15 knots 28 km/h; 17
 mph

at 1,750 hp

Complement: 85

Armament: 1 × QF 4-inch (102
 mm)

Mk XVI gun

Depth charges

chutes and throwers

HMAS *Fremantle* was laid down at Evans Deakin & Co Ltd, Brisbane, Queensland on 11 February 1942. She was launched on 18 August 1942 by Mrs J Curtin, wife of the Prime Minister, and was the first RAN warship to carry the name of the major Australian port city in WA, located at the mouth of the Swan River.

Fremantle commissioned at Brisbane on 24 March 1943 under the command of Lieutenant Albert N Boulton RANR(S).



Fremantle performed important escort work during her wartime service, chiefly in northern Australian waters.



HMAS Fremantle shortly after commissioning in the RAN

On completion of her trials in April 1943, *Fremantle* was assigned duty as an escort vessel on the east coast of Australia. At this period Japanese submarines were active in Australian waters and in the month preceding *Fremantle's* first operational duty, seven ships had been sunk in coastal areas

In August 1943 *Fremantle* left the east coast and proceeded to Darwin where she was based as an escort vessel, operating mainly between Darwin and Thursday Island until April 1945. During this period of 21 months in northern waters the tide of war was steadily receding from the Australian theatre and her duties were confined mainly to routine uneventful merchant ship protection.

In June 1945 she arrived at Manus to begin a period of escort and guard ship duty in the New Guinea area which occupied the ship until the end of hostilities.

On 31 August 1945 *Fremantle* arrived at Hong Kong and while based there as a unit of the 21st Minesweeping Flotilla, took part in a series of clearing sweeps in Chinese waters.

On 18 November 1945 she entered her name port *Fremantle* for the first time en route from Hong Kong to Melbourne.



Fremantle paid off into Reserve in Melbourne on 25 January 1946

Fremantle recommissioned at Melbourne on 10 December 1952 under the command of Lieutenant Commander George C Rance RN. On 8 March 1953 she reached *Fremantle* and commenced service as a training ship for the Western Australian area. In this role, until the scheme was abandoned, *Fremantle* introduced large numbers of National Service Trainees to naval life afloat.



Fremantle pushes into heavy swell



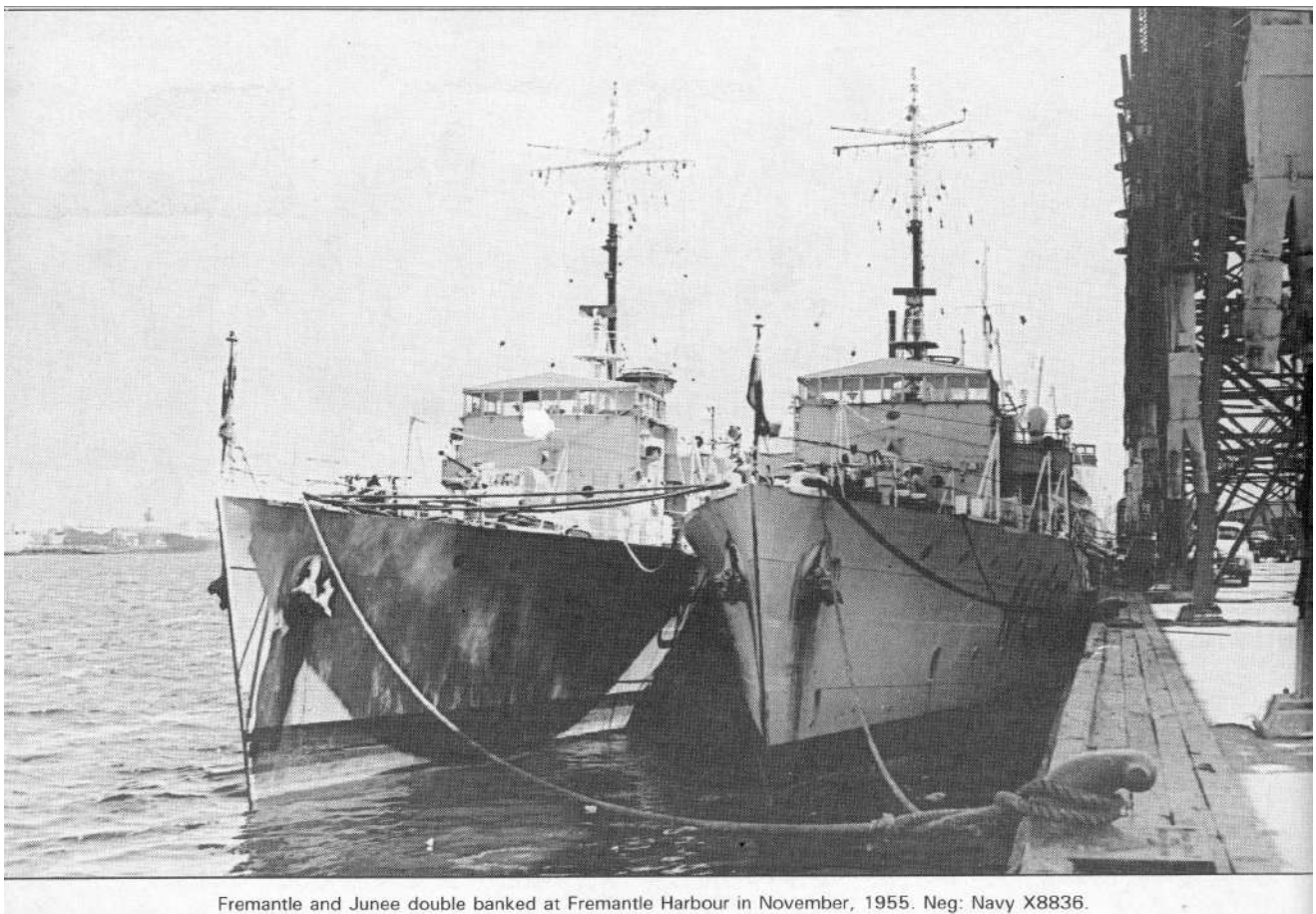
SPECTATOR SPORT: The crew of the *Fremantle* line the deck during the minesweeping exercise off Geraldton. Neg: Navy T6787

On February 14 1955, the two RAN Corvette minesweepers *Fremantle* and *Junee* snatched 17 fisherman from rough seas in one of the largest post war rescue operations off the Western Australia coast. The cray fishing and processing boat *Shelley Boy*, radioed *Fremantle* at 0645 was taking on water and could not stay afloat.

The *Junee* was despatched at 0750 from Rottnest Island and *Fremantle* followed at 0900 from Gage Roads.



•FREMANTLE en-route to the sinking *Shelley Boy*. Photos courtesy of WA Newspapers Ltd.



In addition to her training duties, *Fremantle* also acted at times as a fisheries protection vessel with the Japanese Pearl Fleet in the Arafura Sea, and on survey and general fleet duties in the Western Australian area.

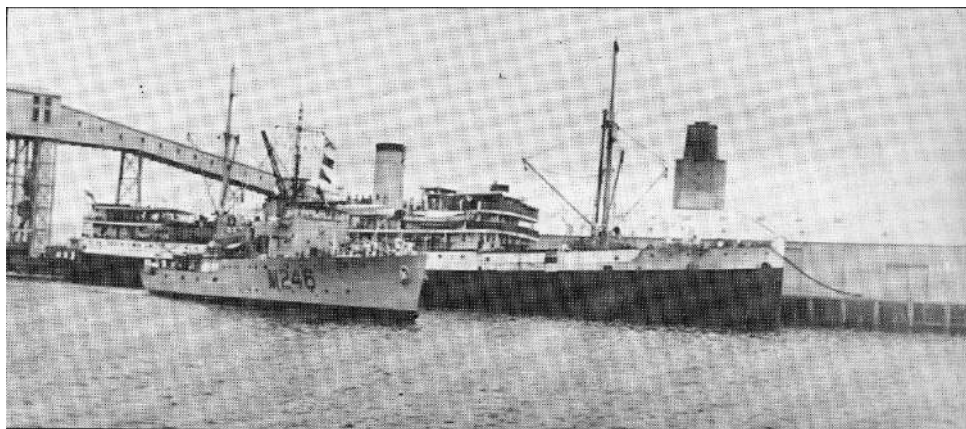


HMAS Fremantle returning to home port 1957

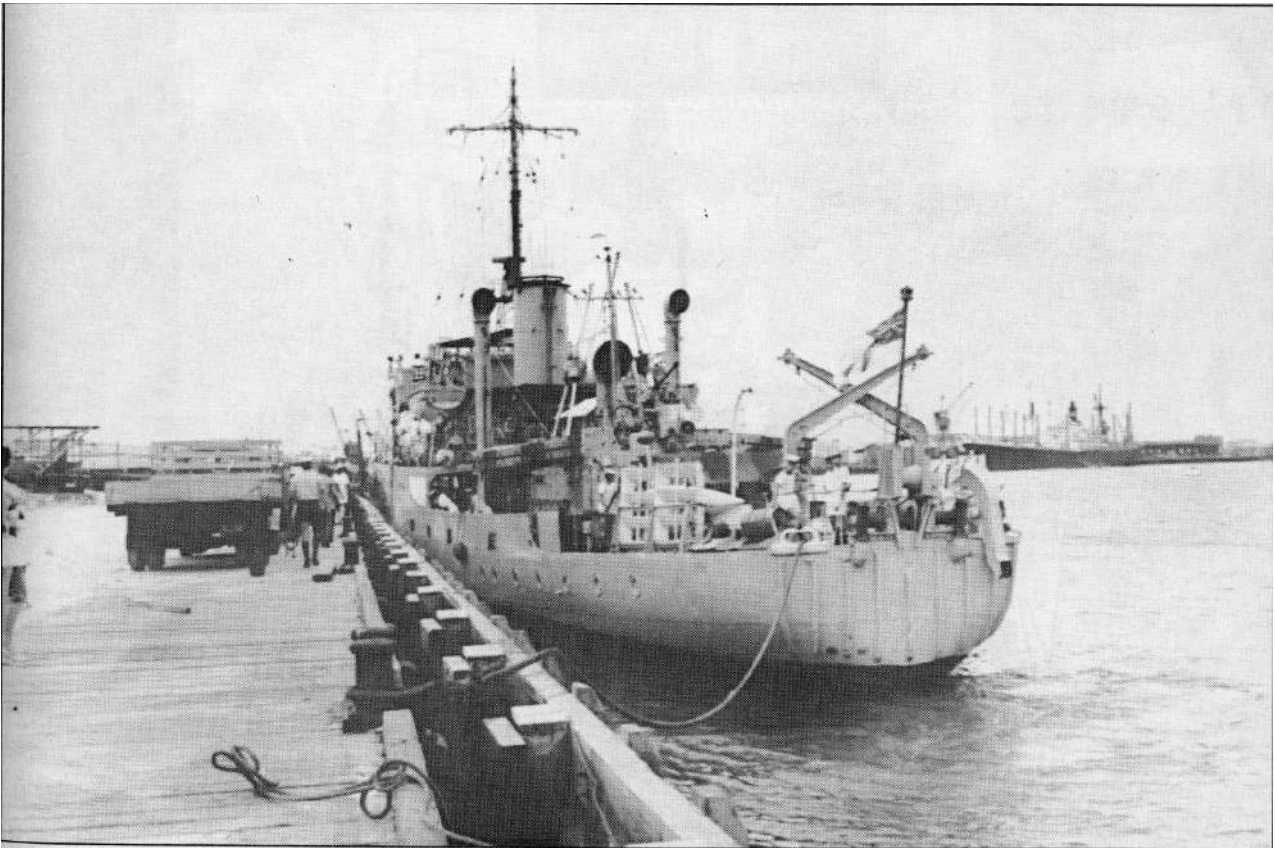


Fremantle tows SDB into port. Neg: Navy C5111.

In April an 18 year old youth stole SDB1325. Fremantle Harbour boat Lady Mitchell caught the runaway boat and handed over to HMAS Fremantle to tow back to Fremantle.



Entering Fremantle Port 1959



The *Fremantle* finally berths after encountering rough seas in the Bight during a voyage from Port Lincoln, South Australia. She berthed two days late on February 23, 1959. Neg: Navy 64d.



HMAS Fremantle with Junee ahead



HMAS Fremantle flying her decommissioning pennant in Sydney

Fremantle finally paid off at Sydney for disposal on 22 June 1959. She had steamed 113,654 miles since recommissioning in 1952. In all, including her war time service, she had steamed 190,776 miles.

Fremantle was sold on 6 January 1961 to Kinoshita (Australia) Pty Ltd to be broken up.

20 February 1962, departed Sydney under tow by tug *Benton Maru* and was broken up in Japan.