

HMAS *Gawler* – J188/B241/A115



Namesake: Town of Gawler SA
Builder: Broken Hill Pty Co Ltd
Laid down: 24 January 1941
Launched: 4 October 1941
Commissioned: 14 August 1942
Decommissioned: 5 April 1946
Motto:
 "Serve With Pride"

Battle honours:
 Pacific 1942
 Indian Ocean 1942–45
 Sicily 1943

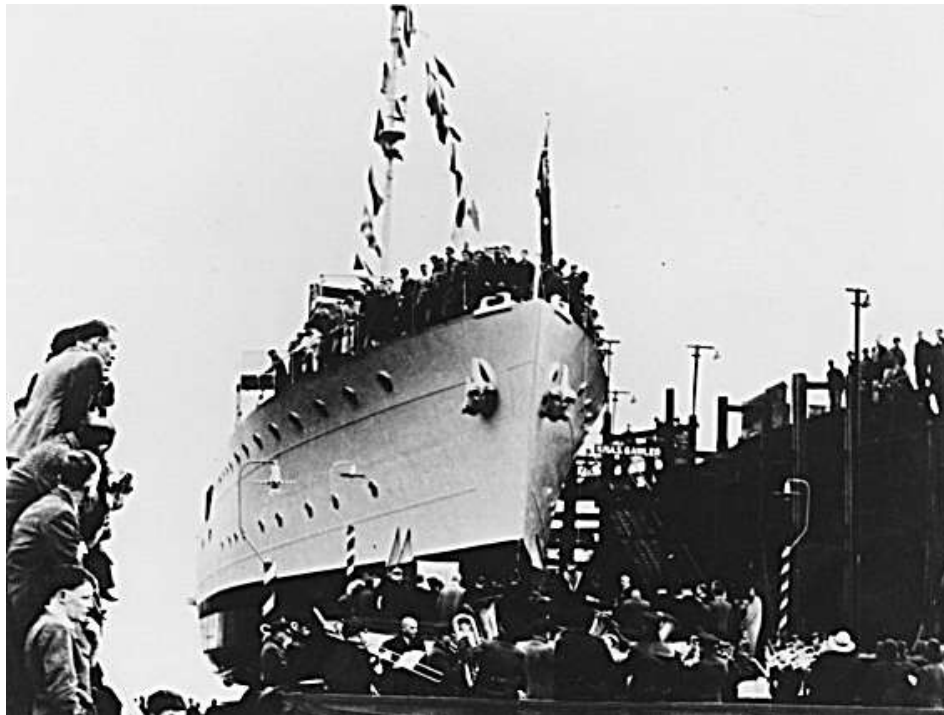
Fate: Transferred to the Turkish Navy

Name: Ayvalik
Acquired: 5 April 1946
Commissioned: 1946
Decommissioned: 1963
Fate: Withdrawn from service



Displacement: 650 tons (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, 2,000 hp
Speed: 15 knots (28 km/h;
 17 mph)
Complement: at 1,750 hp
 85
Armament: 1 × 12-pounder gun
 (later replaced
 by 1 × 4-inch gun)
 3 × 20 mm Oerlikons
 (later increased to 5,
 then reduced back to 3)
 1 × 40 mm Bofors
 (installed later)
 Machine guns
 Depth charges chutes
 and throwers

HMAS *Gawler* was ordered for the British Admiralty and commissioned by RAN. She was the first RAN warship to carry the name of *Gawler*, a country town located in South Australia. She was laid down at Broken Hill Pty Ltd, Whyalla, South Australia on 24 January 1941 and launched on 4 October 1941 by Lady Ruby Dugan (née Abbott), wife of the Governor of Victoria. Lady Dugan also launched HMAS *Geelong*, also a Bathurst Class corvette, on 22 April 1941 at the Melbourne Harbour Trust, Williamstown, Victoria. Lady Dugan holds the distinction of being the only woman to launch two RAN corvettes.



Launching of HMAS Gawler, 4 October 1941.

Gawler commissioned at Whyalla on 14 August 1942 under the command of Lieutenant Commander William John Seymour RN (Emergency).

Following completion of her working up period and trials in September 1942, *Gawler* proceeded to Fremantle. After a brief period of local anti-submarine patrol duty she was sent to join the British Eastern Fleet at Colombo. From January to April 1943 she served as an escort vessel to Indian Ocean convoys.

In mid-May 1943 *Gawler* proceeded to the Mediterranean where, with sister ships HMA Ships *Ipswich*, *Lismore* and *Maryborough*, she formed the 21st Minesweeping Flotilla. However, her service in the Mediterranean, from May to October 1943, was mainly confined to escort duty. In July 1943 she took part in the invasion of Sicily. In August *Gawler* entered the Atlantic to rendezvous with a Mediterranean bound convoy for which she acted as part escort. *Gawler* returned to the Indian Ocean at the end of October 1943 and re-joined the Eastern Fleet, having steamed 52,000 miles on war service.



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

Following further Indian Ocean convoy escort duty, *Gawler* spent January and February 1944 refitting at Durban. Escort duty was resumed in April 1944 and thereafter, until January 1945, she was constantly in service escorting convoys between Indian ports and between India and Aden.

On 26 January 1945 *Gawler* detached from the Eastern Fleet and departed from Ceylon to return to Australia. After a long refit was completed at Adelaide in April 1945, the ship then proceeded to the United States Navy base at Manus, in the Admiralty Islands, where she became an operative unit of the British Pacific Fleet.



HMAS Gawler alongside.

In September 1945 *Gawler* proceeded to Hong Kong where, in company with several sister ships attached to the British Pacific Fleet, she spent several weeks on minesweeping and on anti-piracy patrol duties. On 17 October 1945 she arrived at Morotai Island and thereafter until the end of the year was one of a group of Australian warships engaged in surveillance of previously enemy occupied territory in the Moluccas and adjacent areas.

Gawler returned to Australia in February 1946. She paid off at Sydney on 5 April 1946 having steamed 129,845 miles.

A black rectangular sign with the text "H.M.A.S. GAWLER" in bold, yellow, sans-serif capital letters.

15 May 1946 *Gawler* sailed for Colombo in company with her sister ships *Launceston* and *Pirie* from Sydney. All were destined for transfer to the Turkish Navy.

She recommissioned as HMS *Gawler* on 21 May 1946 and shortly after was transferred to the Turkish Navy, renamed *Ayvalik*.

Withdrawn from service in 1963, her name then being transferred to her sister ship *Antalya* (ex HMAS *Geraldton*). Broken up in Turkey.