

HMAS Geraldton – J178/B242/A116



Namesake: City of Geraldton, WA
Builder: Poole & Steel
Laid down: 20 November 1940
Launched: 16 August 1941
Commissioned: 6 April 1942
Decommissioned: 14 June 1946
Motto: "Fortune to the Brave"
Battle honours:
 Pacific 1942
 Indian Ocean 1942–45
 Sicily 1943

Fate: Turkish Navy:
Name: TCG Antalya
Commissioned: 24 August 1946
Renamed: TCG Ayvalik (1946)
Decommissioned: 1975



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: 85
Armament: 1 × 12-pounder gun (replaced by 1 × 4-inch gun)
 1 × 40 mm Bofors (installed later)
 3 × 20 mm Oerlikons (later 6, then 4)
 Machine guns
 Depth charge chutes and throwers

Ordered for the British Admiralty and commissioned by RAN, HMAS *Geraldton* was laid down at Poole and Steel Ltd, Sydney, NSW on 20 November 1940. She was launched on 16 August 1941 by Mrs McKell, wife of Premier of New South Wales and was the first RAN warship to carry the name of the coastal city in the mid-west region of WA, located 424 kilometres north of Perth.

Geraldton commissioned at Sydney on 6 April 1942 under the command of Lieutenant Commander Harold Mayo Harris RNR.



For a short period after commissioning *Geraldton* was employed on patrol duties off the east coast of Australia. She then left to join the Eastern Fleet, departing Fremantle on 26 July 1942, escorting the tanker *Bahrein* to Addu Atoll, where she arrived on 8 August, before proceeding on to Colombo. Two of her sister ships, HMA Ships *Bathurst* and *Lismore*, were already serving with the Eastern Fleet, and more of her sister ships arrived in the following months from Australia.

On 25 August *Geraldton* conducted an unsuccessful search for survivors of the *Harmonides*, which had been sunk by a submarine. On 6 September 1942 she sailed from Bombay escorting her first Persian Gulf bound convoy.

Returning from Aden with a convoy on 29 September 1942, *Geraldton* attached, without any tangible result, a strong submarine contact in the Gulf of Oman. She continued to escort convoys to and from the Persian Gulf throughout the remainder of 1942. Convoys were predominantly from Colombo and Bombay to Basra, Aden and the Persian Gulf. One such convoy, escorted by *Geraldton* and HMIS *Bengal* in November 1942, comprised 27 ships.



HMAS Geraldton steams into Sydney Harbour, circa 1942.

In May 1943 *Geraldton* was transferred temporarily to the Mediterranean, forming the 22nd Minesweeping Flotilla with her sister ships HMA Ships *Cessnock* (I), *Cairns* (I) and *Wollongong*.

While serving in the Mediterranean theatre *Geraldton* participated in Operation HUSKY, the Allied invasion of Sicily, which commenced on 10 July. Three days later, *Geraldton* was on patrol off Sicily.

Geraldton continued convoy escort duty for the remainder of her stay in the Mediterranean. In August 1943 she entered the Atlantic Ocean to rendezvous with a Mediterranean bound convoy for which she acted as one of the convoy escorts.

She returned to convoy work in the Persian Gulf in October 1943, and continued this work between Aden and Bombay and numerous other ports en route to and from the Persian Gulf, until her return to Australia in early 1945.

In November 1944 she was assigned to the 22nd Minesweeping Flotilla, British Pacific Fleet. *Geraldton* sailed with the Flotilla from Trincomalee, for Australia, on 26 January 1945. She arrived in Fremantle on 9 February.

Following gunnery modifications in Melbourne, *Geraldton* underwent a refit in Fremantle which commenced in March 1945. She returned to the Australian east coast in June.



HMAS Geraldton at Melbourne 1945

After four months service in Australian waters, *Geraldton* departed Sydney on 20 June 1945 for service in northern waters, escorting elements of the British Pacific Fleet Train to Manus, Eniwetok and Leyte Gulf.

Following the cessation of hostilities, *Geraldton* departed Leyte on 5 September for Hong Kong, arriving four days later. She was present at Hong Kong for the Japanese surrender ceremony there on 16 September 1945 and supported the transfer of prisoners of war and internees, after which she was engaged on anti-piracy patrols in the Hong Kong area.

On 11 October 1945 *Geraldton* departed Hong Kong for Australia with the remainder of the 22nd Minesweeping Flotilla, arriving in Brisbane on 29 October for docking and leave. She departed Brisbane on 16 December for the passage to Western Australia, visiting Newcastle, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Glenelg en route.

The West Australian (Perth) Thu 17 Jan 1946:

H.M.A.S. *Geraldton*

Geraldton, Jan. 16.—The corvette H.M.A.S. *Geraldton*, which has been here on a goodwill visit since Saturday, left this morning at 10 o'clock on the return journey to Fremantle. Prior to the ship's departure the commander (Lt.-Commander R. Powell) addressed signals to the Mayor (Dr. J. McAleer), the *Geraldton* station of the Missions to Seamen and to the *Geraldton* sub-branch of the R.S.L expressing appreciation of all that had been done for the entertainment of the officers and men during their stay in port.

On arrival at Fremantle H.M.A.S. *Geraldton* will be placed in charge of a care and maintenance crew.

Geraldton arrived in Fremantle on 17 January 1946, and there she remained until sailing for Singapore on 8 May 1946.



Geraldton wearing her British Pacific Fleet pennant number, April 1946.



Departing for Singapore May 1946

24 August 1946, the ship was sold to the Turkish Government and renamed *Antalya*. After her sister ship *Ayvalik* (ex HMAS *Gawler*) was withdrawn from Turkish Navy service in 1963, *Antalya* was renamed *Ayvalik*. Decommissioned 1975 and broken up.