

HMAS *Glenelg* – J236/M236



Namesake: Town of Glenelg, SA
Builder: Cockatoo Island
Dockyard:
Laid down: 2 March 1942
Launched: 25 September 1942
Commissioned: 16 November 1942
Decommissioned: 14 January 1946
Motto: "Staunch In Defiance"

Battle honours:
 Pacific 1942–45
 New Guinea 1943–44

Fate:
 Glenelg was paid off into reserve in Fremantle on 14 January 1946. She was sold to the Hong Kong Rolling Mills on 2 May 1957 for breaking up as scrap.



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

HMAS *Glenelg* was laid down at Cockatoo Docks and Engineering Co Ltd, Sydney, NSW on 2 March 1942. She was launched on 25 September 1942 by Mrs Evatt, wife of the Minister for External Affairs, and was the first RAN warship to carry the name of the beachside suburb of Adelaide, SA.



Glenelg commissioned at Sydney on 16 November 1942 under the command of Lieutenant Alfred Frederick Summerfield RANR(S).

The early months of the *Glenelg*'s career were spent escorting convoys from Queensland ports to New Guinea. In May 1943 she began operating as escort for Sydney to Brisbane convoys. In December she began a refit.

In January 1944 *Glenelg* returned to the New Guinea area and remained there in constant service on patrol and escort duties until the end of the year. In the early period she operated on patrol off Milne Bay and the entrance to China Strait and later escorted shipping to Langemak, Manus, Saidor, Morotai, Hollandia, Madang and Cape Gloucester.

A considerable period was spent on patrol in Dutch New Guinea waters. Constantly operational, *Glenelg* covered a wide area, steaming 42,000 miles and being some 10,000 hours under way.



Left: Chief Petty Officer Coad, RAN, relaxes onboard *Glenelg*. Middle: Sub Lieutenants Lunan, RAN and Doegan, RAN, on the deck of *Glenelg*. Right: Stoker Theiler looks at the hills as he relaxes onboard.



HMAS Glenelg. (Allan C Green – State Library of Victoria)



HMAS Glenelg. (Allan C Green, State Library of Australia)

Since the Allied forces were at this period in control of the sea and air in the New Guinea area, most of the period passed without action. Nevertheless, in October 1944 *Glenelg* was able to render signal aid to a sorely harassed American patrol at the mouth of the Woske River near Maffin Bay, Dutch New Guinea. On 20 October the ship, proceeding close inshore, observed the American detachment under severe mortar fire.

An appeal for assistance to evacuate wounded met with a ready response from volunteers to man *Glenelg*'s whaler and it was quickly despatched under Lieutenant WH Pennington. Swamped by heavy surf the waterlogged boat was beached by her crew, and its bottom boards used as improvised stretchers to carry the wounded to the American held river bank.

Meanwhile, on a request for bombardment support, *Glenelg* opened fire with her 4-inch gun. Under cover of this fire (31 rounds), which effectively silenced the Japanese mortars, the American party was able to withdraw to cover with all wounded, leaving five dead on the beach. Lieutenant Peebles (United States Army), the senior surviving officer, was emphatic that the fire laid down by *Glenelg* and directed from the open beach by Lieutenant Pennington and Signalman Greet, was the decisive factor in the successful withdrawal.



Crossing the Line 1944



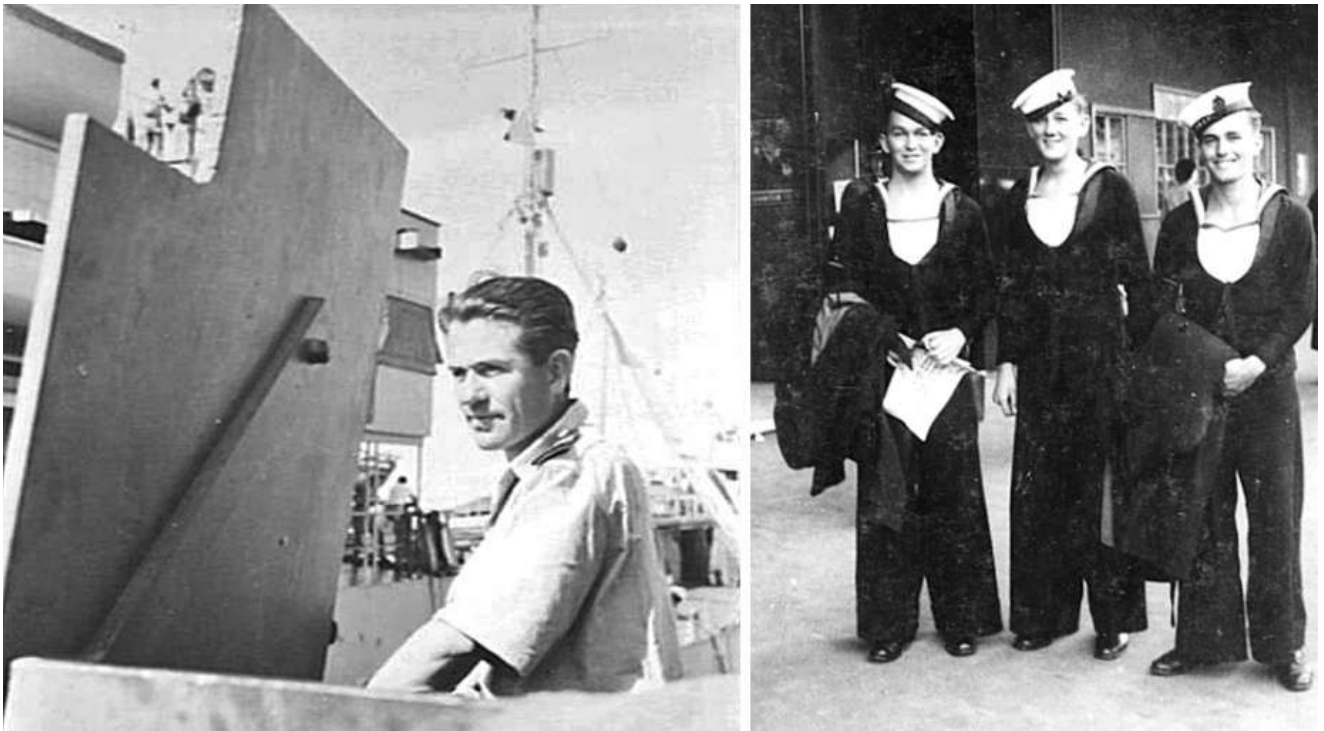
Group portrait of the ship's company aboard Glenelg. (AWM 084703)



Glenelg's 4" gun motif



Glenelg's Oerlikon gun motif



Left: Lieutenant Commander Robson, RANVR, the Commanding Officer of Glenelg, on the bridge (AWM 078131). Right: Informal portrait of three sailors from Glenelg on leave at George Street, Sydney, NSW, circa 1943. L-R: Able Seaman Thomas Daniel Sprod, Able Seaman Wesley Jack Diekman and Able Seaman Wallace Milford Beames. (AWM

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In December 1944 *Glenelg* returned to Australia and arrived at Melbourne on 2 January 1945 to commence a refit, which was completed in February.

On 16 March she departed Sydney for Manus to resume operational duty. The remainder of the period to the close of hostilities was taken up chiefly by escort of Morotai and Biak convoys. In early August she escorted a convoy to Leyte Gulf in the Philippines and spent some time in the Borneo area.

On 12 August, three days before hostilities ended, *Glenelg* entered Darwin Harbour. She had steamed 103,027 miles on active operational duty. In September 1945 *Glenelg* took part in the reoccupation of Ambon and remained in the Celebes area during the following month. On 1 November she departed Ambon for Fremantle, via Morotai, Townsville, Sydney, Melbourne and finally *Glenelg*, after which she had been named.



Japanese POWs on the decks of Glenelg, during their evacuation to Bougainville soon after troops of the 31/51st Australian Infantry Battalion took over Nauru Island, circa September 1945. (AWM 117341, 117331 and 117332)



Left: Japanese POWs unloading stores from Glenelg on Ambon Island, soon after members of the 33rd Infantry Brigade took over the area, circa September 1945. (AWM 118232). Right: Able Seaman M E Tanner, RAN, HMAS Glenelg, while on guard duty passes a guard set by the Japanese authorities to keep local natives away from their area on Ambom Island, circa

September 1945. (AWM 118229)



Left: Locals of Ambon Island in their canoes clustered around Glenelg, which brought members of the 33rd Infantry Brigade to the area to take over from the Japanese (AWM 118227). Right: Able Seaman M E Tanner, RAN, HMAS Glenelg, is the centre of interest among natives of Ambon Island, while undertaking guard duty on the wharf. (AWM 118233)



Rescuing Dutch internees from Menado September 1945 in Glenelg's Motor boat



Australian POWs, after their release from Ambon Island following the Japanese surrender awaiting to join Glenelg. The POWs were given a warm reception and provided with all possible comforts, circa 1945.



Left: Les Hohl of Toowoomba, Queensland, and Jim Rogers of St Kilda, Victoria, reading their first Australian newspapers after their release as prisoners of war from Ambon. They are waiting to board Glenelg to proceed to Morortai on the first stage of the journey home to Australia. (AWM 019301). Middle: Australian POW, Corporal Clarry Blackney of Essendon, Victoria, on the deck of Glenelg en route to Moorati. He is writing a letter home. (AWM 019308). Right: Australian POWs relaxing on the deck reading newspapers. Their malnourished and emaciated physical condition is evidence of their treatment by the Japanese. L-R: back row: Bert Jones, Rex Hattersley, Don Baker, C Blackney, H Goodwin; front row: Jim Ellis, Russ Lavery, S Proud, Warrant Officer M Ryan. Many of those released were initially too ill from disease and malnutrition to walk. (AWM 019307)

Glenelg paid off into Reserve at Fremantle on 14 January 1946. At the end of November 1945, while en route from Melbourne to *Glenelg*, the ship had steamed 110,019 miles since commissioning.

On 2 May 1957 *Glenelg* was sold for breaking up to Hong Kong Rolling Mills Ltd of Hong Kong. 25 November 1957 departed Fremantle along with *Katoomba* and *Parkes* towed by tug Bustler.



HMAS Glenelg in reserve with her sister ships, HMAS Parkes and HMAS Katoomba in Fremantle, WA. With tug Bustler

