

## HMAS *Gympie* – J238/M238



Namesake: City of Gympie, QLD  
 Builder: Evans Deakin & Co  
 Laid down: 27 August 1941  
 Launched: 30 January 1942  
 Commissioned: 4 November 1942  
 Decommissioned: 23 May 1946

Battle honours  
     Pacific 1943–45  
     New Guinea 1943–44

Fate:  
 Sold for scrap in 1961



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,

Speed: 2 shafts, 2,000 hp  
 15 knots (28 km/h;  
 17 mph) at 1,750 hp

Complement: 85  
 Armament: 1 × 12-pounder gun  
 (replaced by  
 1 × 4-inch HA gun)  
 3 × Oerlikons  
 (later reduced to 2)  
 1 × Bofors  
 (installed later)  
 Machine guns  
 Depth charges  
 chutes and throwers

HMAS *Gympie* was laid down at Evans Deakin & Co Ltd, Brisbane, Queensland on 27 August 1941. She was launched on 30 January 1942 by Mrs Deakin, wife of the Joint Managing Director of Evans Deakin & Co Ltd and was the first RAN warship to carry the name of the town in Queensland, located 160 kilometres north of Brisbane.

*Gympie* commissioned at Brisbane on 4 November 1942 under the command of Lieutenant Commander Charles William John Patterson, RANR.



*HMAS Gympie, circa 1943. (AWM 041266)*

Following trials, *Gympie* assumed duty as a convoy escort vessel on the north east coast of

Australia, which kept her constantly in service until February 1944. From January to June 1943 Japanese submarines were making their final attempt to halt the flow of Allied shipping to the forward areas.

Eleven ships were sunk in Australian waters but none while under escort by *Gympie*. She did, however, render assistance to the torpedoed American ship *Peter H Burnett* in January 1943. One of the convoys for which she was escort, TN 192, also ran into trouble on 18 December 1943 when seven of the eight merchant vessels in the convoy, along with one of the other escorts, HMAS *Gladstone*, ran aground on Bougainville Reef on the Great Barrier Reef at just after 9:30pm.

*Gladstone* re-floated herself within the hour and, along with the third escort, HMAS *Stawell*, the three ships took up station just off the reef until daybreak. The vessels *Colorado*, *Ambrose Bierce* and *City of Fortworth* had all managed to free themselves by dawn and, with HMA Ships *Lithgow* and *Castlemaine* arriving to assist, and with her own starboard propeller damaged, *Gladstone* detached at just after 7:00am to escort the trio back to Cairns.

*Gympie*, along with *Lithgow*, *Stawell* and *Castlemaine*, began disembarking troops from the stricken vessels at just after 9:00am. All the troops were transferred by 11:30 that morning and the remaining ships were quickly re-floated suffering varying degrees of damage.



HMAS *Gympie*

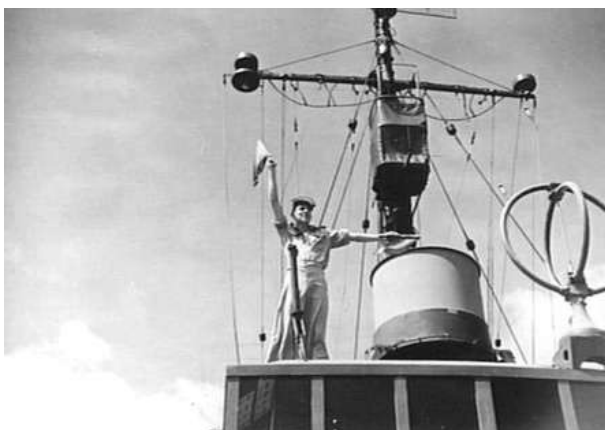




*HMAS Gympie wearing her wartime disruptive pattern camouflage paint*



*Gympie 1943*



*Left: A signalman transmits a message by semaphore from Gympie's bridge. (AWM 076749)  
Right: Signalmen bending on flags and receiving messages aboard Gympie. (AWM 076751)*



*Ship's crew 1944*



*Gympie officers 1944*



Following a refit in Brisbane in February 1944, *Gympie* proceeded to the New Guinea theatre of operations. There for the next year she was engaged on escort duty and on anti-submarine patrols. By this time, however, the tide of war was receding northwards and while it was constant and arduous work under tropical conditions it was mainly uneventful.



*Left: Lieutenant NK Wallis, RAN, in his cabin aboard Gympie. (AWM 076752) Middle: Lieutenant NK Wallis, Commanding Officer of Gympie, nursing the ship's mascot. (AWM 076748) Right: Lieutenant WV Woods, RANVR, Sea Transport Officer of Aitape, aboard Gympie. (AWM 076753)*

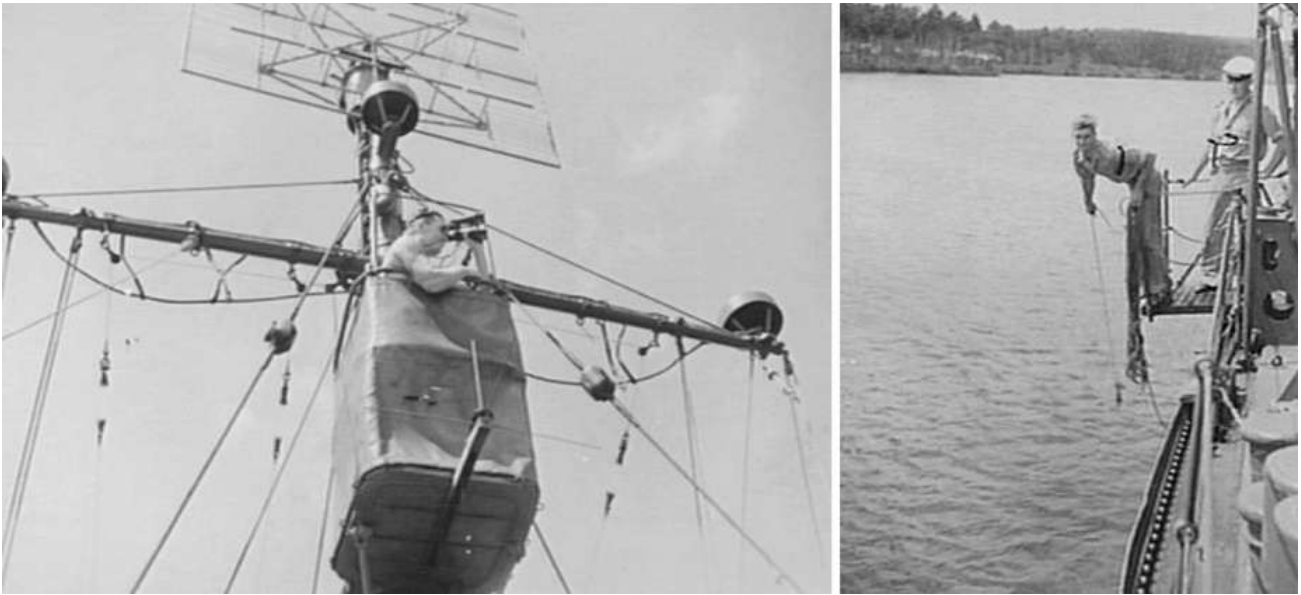
At the end of February 1945 *Gympie* left New Guinea waters and proceeded to Melbourne for refit. From there she went to Fremantle in May 1945, and on to Darwin in July. From Darwin she escorted several small craft to Morotai.

On 23 September 1945 *Gympie*, in company with her sister ships, HMA Ships *Warrnambool*, *Parkes*, *Gladstone* and *Katoomba*, arrived in Dili in Portuguese Timor. Following the arrival on 24 September of HMAS *Moresby*, a ceremony was held ashore on that day to mark the restoration of Portuguese control in the territory. *Gympie* was represented at the function by an officer and five ratings.



*Gympie transported about fifty Javanese and Timorese slave labourers to Koepang, Timor, circa October 1945. They were released from Japanese internment and aboard the vessel they are eating what was probably their first decent meal in years. (L: 120069, M: 120068, R: 120071).*

On 3 October 1945 *Gympie*, in company with HMA Ships *Moresby*, *Hawkesbury* (I), *Katoomba* and *Gladstone*, were present at Koepang in Portuguese Timor for the surrender of the 48th Japanese Division. A naval detachment, formed from all the ships, was landed for the occasion. A period of survey work in the Koepang area and the Daboe and Aroe Islands followed.

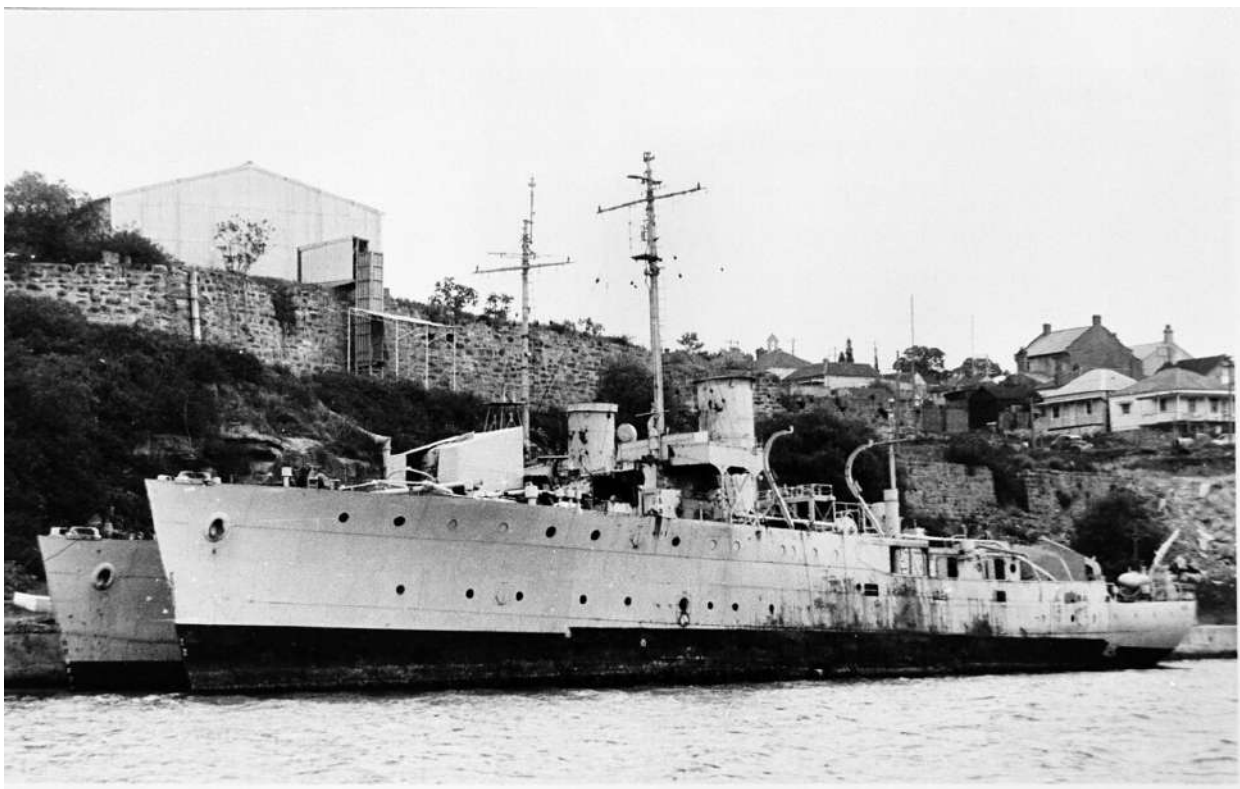


*Left: A rating on the lookout from the crow's nest of Gympie. (AWM 076750) Right: The quartermaster 'swinging the lead' (taking a manual depth sounding) aboard Gympie as she enters the bay. (AWM 076746)*

On 9 November 1945 in Darwin the SS *Tullahoma* collided with HMAS *Gympie* with the latter at anchor. The impact was slight and damage negligible.

On 1 January 1946 the ship arrived at Brisbane. She paid off into F Reserve at Brisbane on 23 May 1946, after having steamed over 100,000 miles.

On 4 November 1947 *Gympie's* sister ship, HMAS *Lithgow*, sailed from Brisbane with *Gympie* in tow for Sydney, where they arrived on 7 November 1947. *Gympie* was sold on 6 January 1961 to Kinoshita (Australia) Pty Ltd to be broken up.



*Gympie outboard of Horsham in Sydney for breaking up*



*At Rozelle Bay, Sydney for breaking up 1962-63*

