

HMAS *Kapunda* – J218



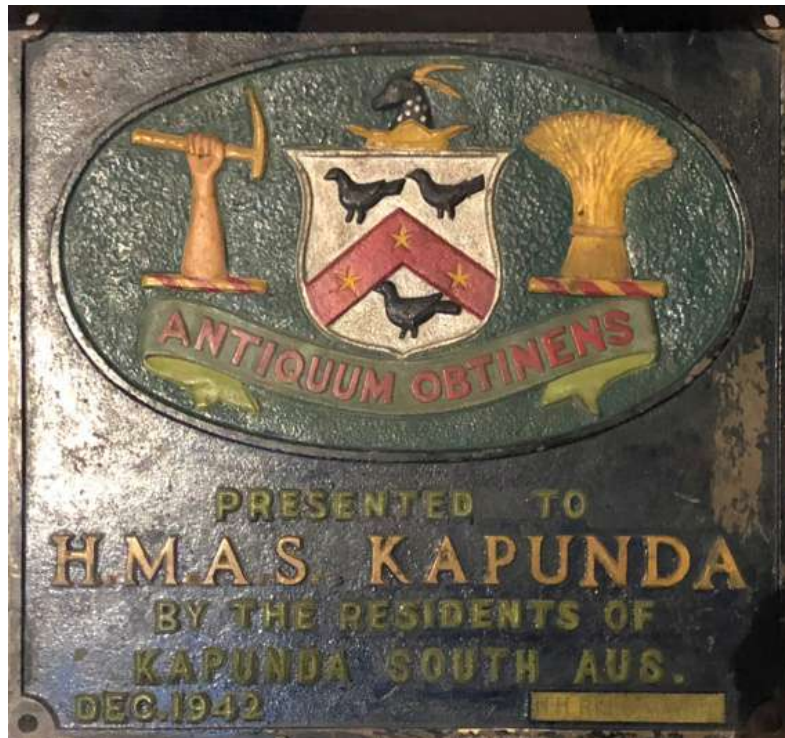
Namesake: Town of Kapunda,
SA Builder: Poole & Steel
Laid down: 27 August 1941
Launched: 23 June 1942
Commissioned: 21 October 1942
Decommissioned: 14 January 1946
Motto: Protect And Avenge

Battle honours:
 Pacific 1942–44
 New Guinea 1943–44
Fate: Sold for scrap in
 1961



Displacement: 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, 1,800 hp
Speed: 15.5 knots
 (28.7 km/h; 17.8 mph)
Complement: 77
Armament: 1 × 4-inch gun
 3 × 20 mm Oerlikon
 guns
 Depth charge
 chutes and throwers

Kapunda was launched 23 June 1942 at Poole & Steele by Mary Lily May Quirk, member for Balmain in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. *Kapunda* commissioned at Sydney on 21 October 1942 under the command of Lieutenant Commander DA Menlove DSO RANR(S).

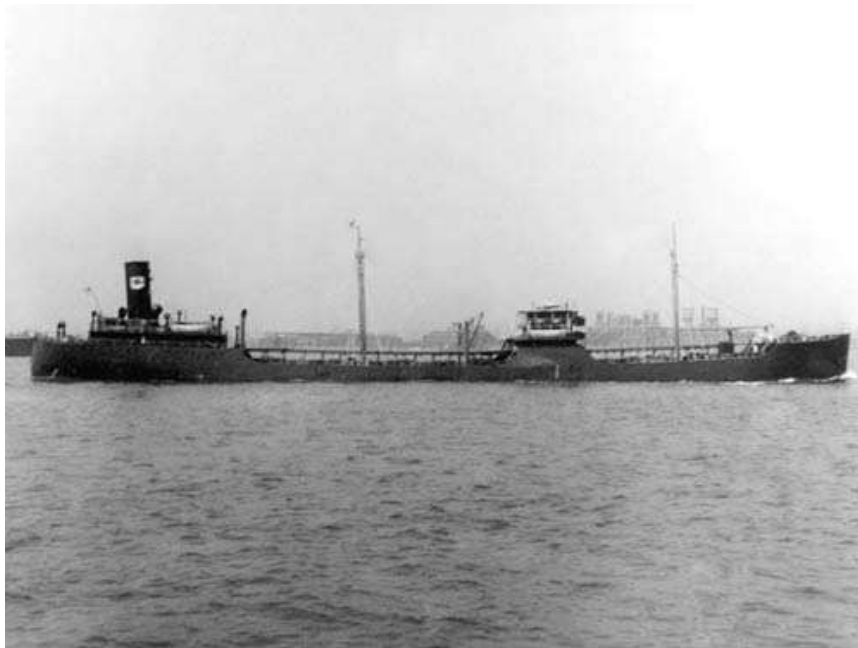


A plaque presented to the crew of HMAS Kapunda from her namesake city in December 1942. It now forms part of the WWII display in the Australian War Memorial, Canberra



Kapunda began operational duty as a convoy escort vessel on the east coast of Australia, between Sydney and Brisbane. Until January 1943 the enemy were not active, but in that month Japanese submarines began their second sortie into Australian waters. Attacks on coastal shipping followed and eleven ships were lost before the enemy finally abandoned their attempt to halt the flow of supplies to forward areas.

In March 1943 *Kapunda* began escorting convoys from Queensland ports to Port Moresby and Milne Bay in New Guinea, a duty which kept the ship almost constantly at sea for the following twelve months. No ships were lost while under escort by *Kapunda*. She was, however, concerned in the rescue on 18 January 1943 of survivors from the torpedoed and badly damaged tanker *Mobilube* off Sydney which sank in shallow waters, but was later raised and towed into Sydney.

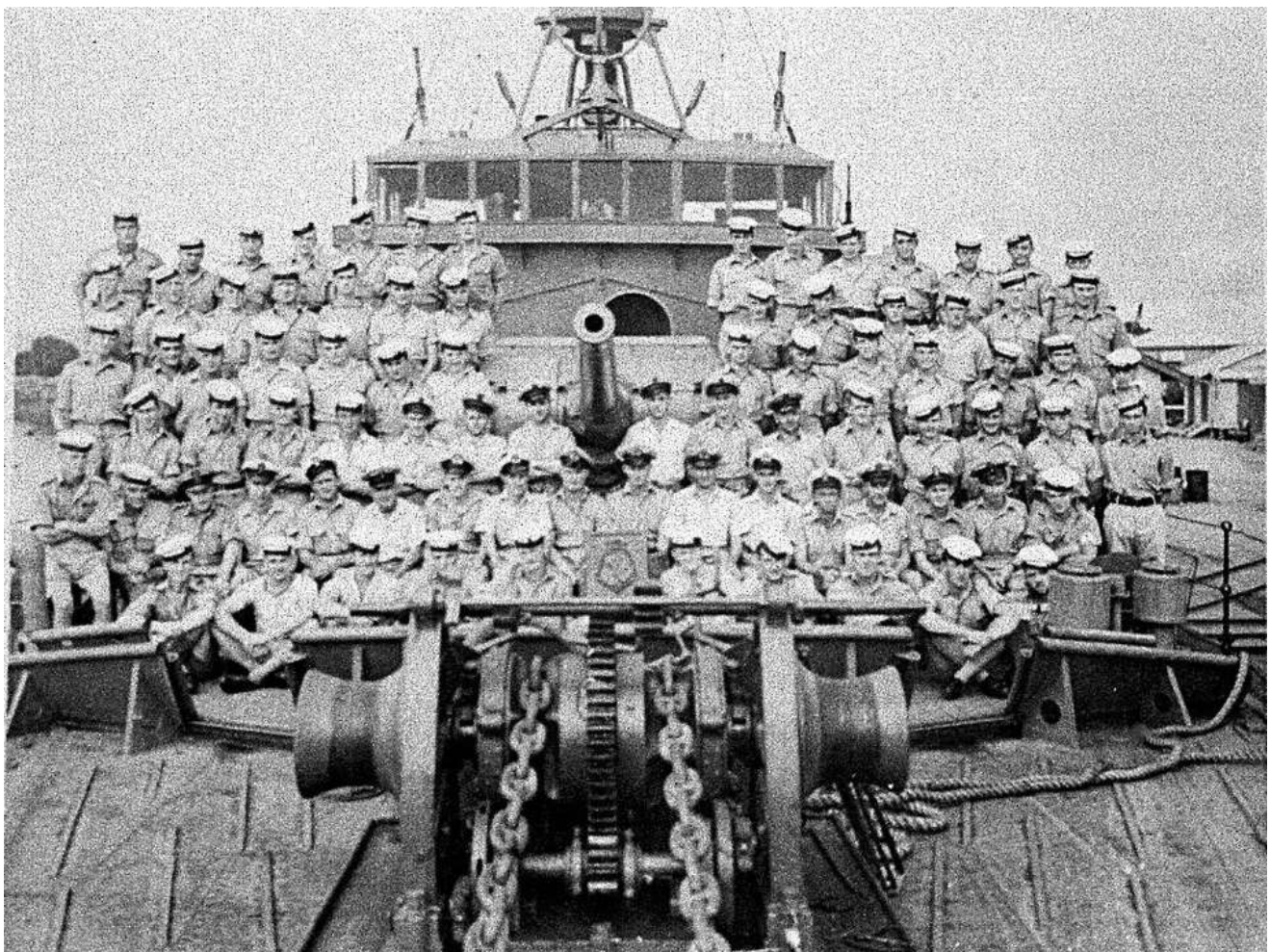


Survivors from the Mobilube

On 26 January 1943 at Sydney, the Mayor of *Kapunda*, Councillor Rees, on behalf of the residents of *Kapunda*, made a presentation to the ship comprising five pewter mugs for the wardroom, four irons and four toasters for the mess decks, and a bronze plaque.



Kapunda at Townsville 1943



Kapunda crew

In the same month *Kapunda* experienced her first engagement with the enemy when a flight of eight Japanese bombers escorted by twelve fighters attacked the Milne Bay bound convoy she was escorting. Her fire and that of her sister ship HMAS *Bendigo* diverted the attackers from their targets and the bombs fell harmlessly into the water.



Left: Signaller Petty Officer William Coley Bradbury, RANR, is cutting Signaller Roderick William Campbell's hair. Bradbury is cutting hair in the port waist section of Kapunda. (Roy Hodgkinson. AWM ART21727)

Centre: Drawn in the sick bay of Kapunda. It is an order that all personnel who have been swimming in the harbours will report to sick bay to have their ears attended in order to prevent infection. The patient, Leading Supply Assistant L Lopsely, is holding the kidney tray. On the left is Sick Berth Attendant Malcolm Gregory 'Doc' Williams. (Roy Hodgkinson, AWM ART21358)

Right: Although routine orders forbid the peeling of potatoes, this has to be done in forward areas owing to the rough handling of potatoes in transit. Drawing done in the waist of Kapunda. L-R: Able Seaman Emmet Joseph Orchard Dwyer, Able Seaman John Walter Coop, Cook Eli Arthur Landow and Able Seaman Robert Victor Hall, all Royal Australian Naval Reserves. (Roy Hodgkinson, AWM ART22768)

On 12 April 1943, in New Guinea waters, an enemy formation of thirty-seven aircraft attacked MV *Gorgon* (below), one of the ships of *Kapunda*'s convoy.



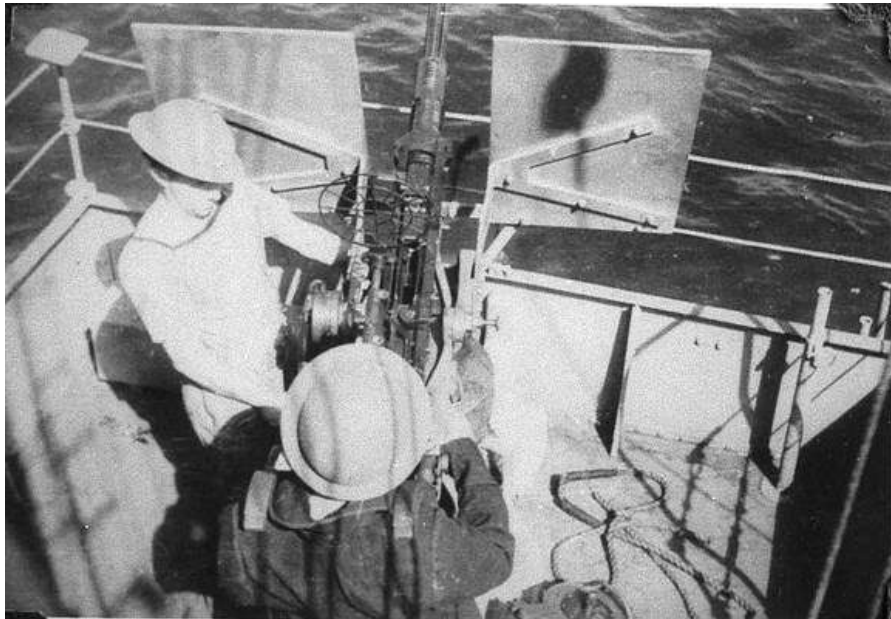
One of the planes was shot down by Oerlikon fire from *Kapunda* and another hit by anti-aircraft fire from the merchant ship, but the others pressing home the attack scored several hits, setting *Gorgon* on fire. *Kapunda*'s Commanding Officer, however, took his ship alongside the burning vessel, put firefighting parties aboard, and after a long struggle subdued the flames and brought the damaged ship safely to port.



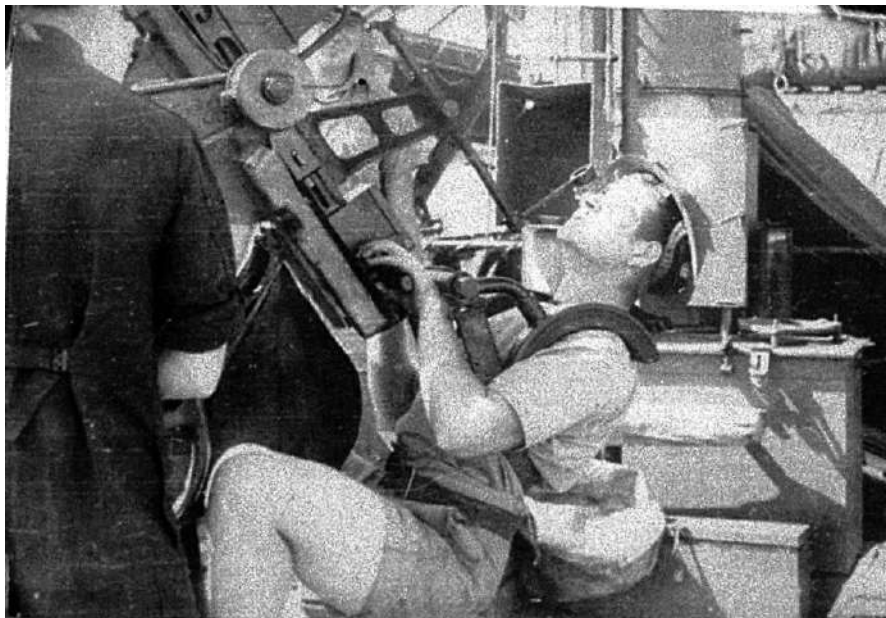
Bomb damage on MV Gorgon



Kapunda's Captains Table



Oerlikon Gunners Bridge Wing & Aft gun





Crew asleep at Gun

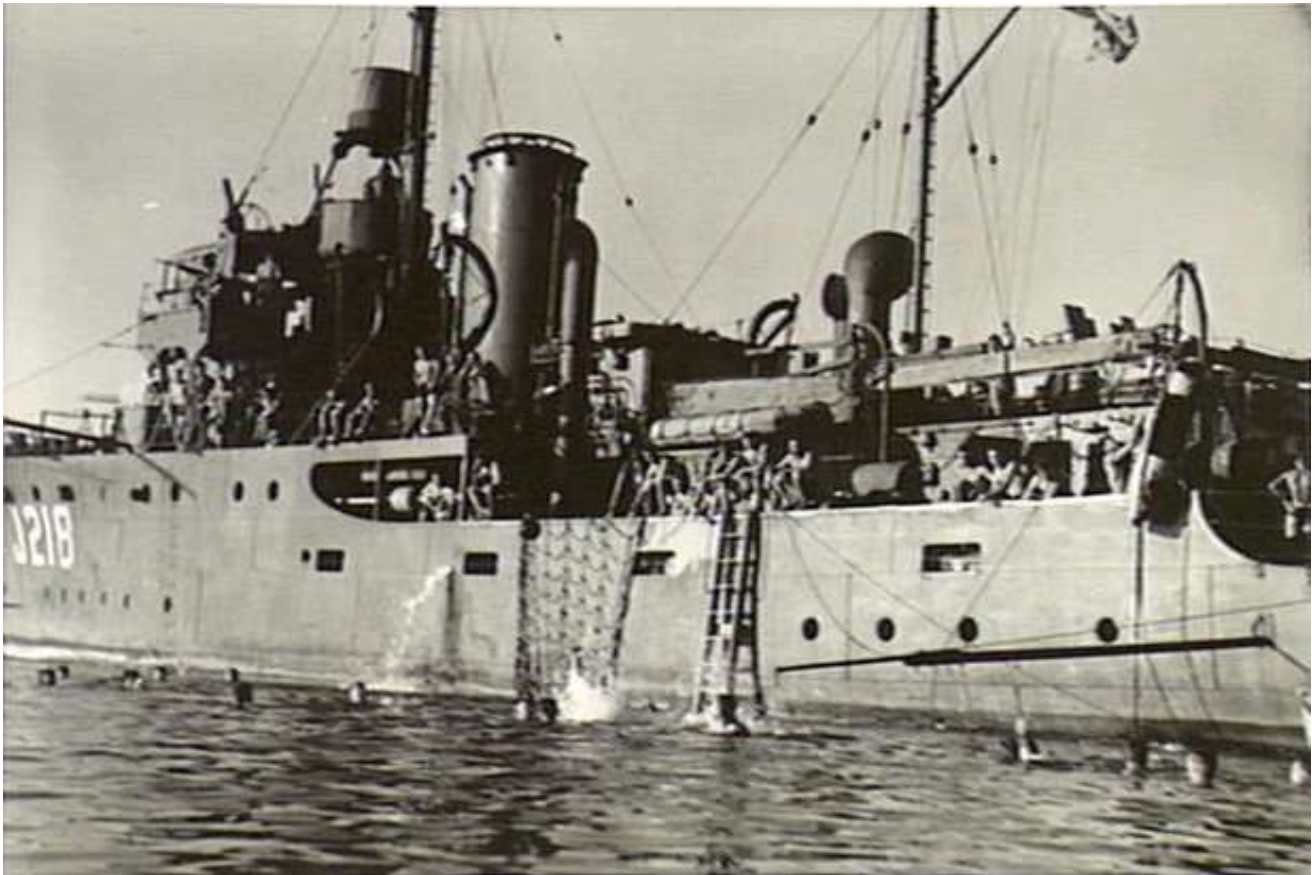


Filling 4" ready use locker

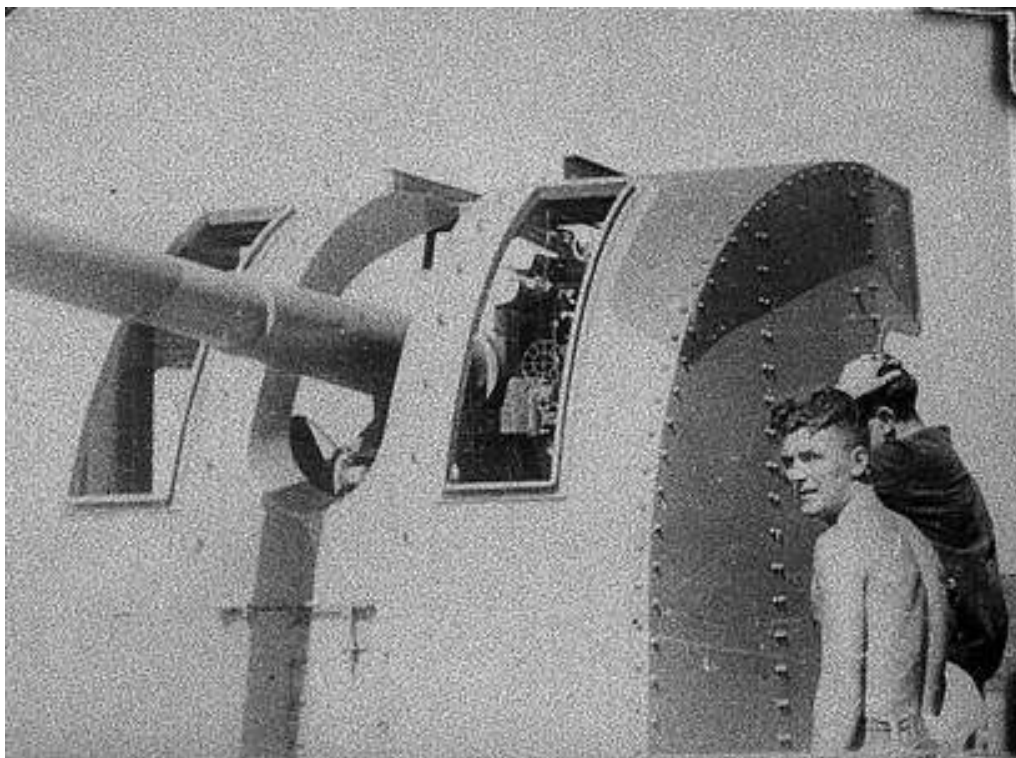


Firing on Karker Island 1944

On 1 April 1944 *Kapunda* arrived at Lae in New Guinea to begin operations in New Guinea waters. Thereafter until the ship returned to Sydney for refit in October 1944, she was engaged in the forward areas escorting, patrolling, including in the Solomon Sea, and furnishing bombardment support to Australian troops ashore.



May 1944 at Madang. Water polo match against crews from MIs



Kapunda main gun



Lt Jackson, CO Lt Dixon, Lt Simon

The refit at Sydney was completed on 20 November and on 2 December *Kapunda* returned to New Guinea. Operational mainly in the Morotai and Biak Island areas she resumed patrol, bombardment and escort duty. In June 1945 she proceeded to Darwin for docking and then returned to Morotai for escort duty to Borneo. On 29 July, en route to Balikpapan in Borneo, *Kapunda* steamed her 100,000th mile since commissioning.



31 August 1945. HMAS Kapunda (one of two escort ships) pulled up alongside the starboard side of SS Joseph E. Carrigan

Kapunda assisted with steering *Joseph E. Carrigan* to Labuan after it hit a mine en route to Borneo. One officer was killed instantly when a lifeboat fell on him and several other men were wounded in the resulting explosion.

Following the end of the hostilities, *Kapunda* assisted with the evacuation of Allied prisoners of war from Kuching where she was also present for the official surrender ceremony of the Japanese forces in the area. Major General Yamamura signed the instrument of surrender on board *Kapunda*.



Naval guard on Kapunda waiting to receive Brigadier TC Eastick DSO, ED, Commanding Kuching Relief Force, as he comes aboard to receive the surrender of Major General Yamamura, the Japanese representative. (Left: AWM 041069, right: AWM 041068)

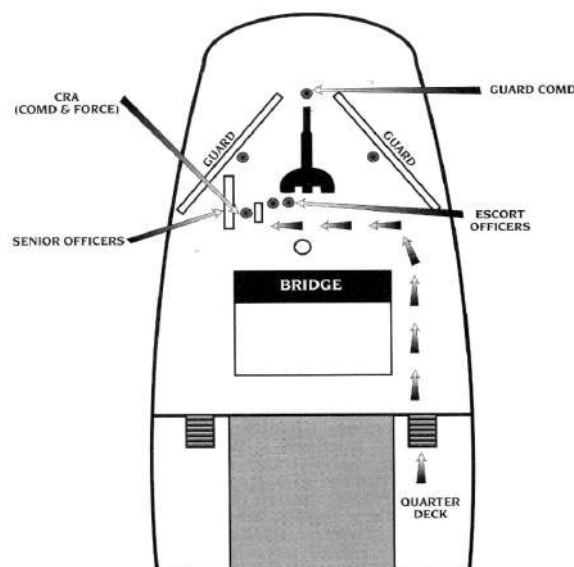


Left: Major General Yamamura signing the instrument of surrender on Kapunda. (AWM 116174). Right: The surrender ceremony captured by war artist Douglas Watson. (AWM ART25662)



The Allied terms of surrender insisted that all Japan's officers and senior NCOs were to relinquish their swords. Many of these may now be found on display in museums and memorials around Australia.

**Diagrammatic Layout
Official Surrender on HMAS *Kapunda***

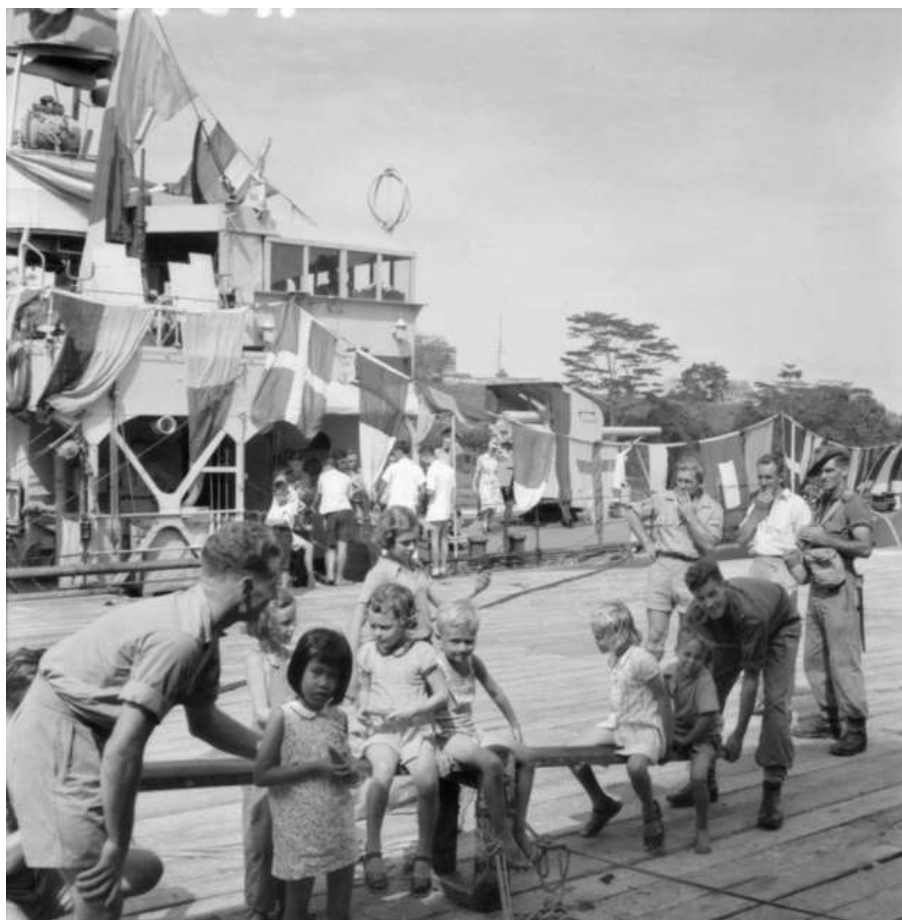


11 September 1945



Left: An afternoon tea party was held on Kapunda for mothers and children who had been interned at the prisoner of war camp Kuching, circa September 1945. (AWM 118701)

Right: Japanese prisoners of war being moved from an ambulance to Kapunda. The prisoners, captured at Madang Airfield, are being transferred from the 111th Casualty Clearing Station to the 106th Casualty Clearing Station at Langemak Bay. Wounded Australians were moved with the Japanese. (AWM 073382)



Kapunda at Sarawak 14 September 1945



Kapunda at anchor in Ranai Bay circa 1945. (AWM 120645)

When her work connected with the re-establishment of British authority in Borneo was completed, *Kapunda* returned to Australia, reaching Sydney on 17 November 1945. This marked the end of her seagoing career after four years of war service during which she had steamed 110,177 miles and had been nearly 12,000 hours under way.





Kapunda Sydney 1945

Kapunda paid off into F Reserve on 14 January 1946.

Declared for disposal on 30 December 1960 and sold for scrap to Kinoshita (Australia) Pty Ltd on 6 January 1961. Departed Sydney 21 May 1962 along with *Cowra* and *Rockhampton* by tug *Benton Maru*. Broken up in Japan 1962.

