

HMAS *Kiama* – J353/M323



Namesake: Town of Kiama, NSW
Builder: Evans Deakin & Co
Laid down: 2 November 1942
Launched: 3 July 1943
Commissioned: 26 January 1944
Decommissioned: 3 April 1946
Battle honours:
 Pacific 1944–45
 New Guinea 1944

Fate:
 Transferred to RNZN

New Zealand
Acquired: 5 March 1952
Decommissioned: 19 August 1976
Renamed: HMNZS *Kiama*
Reclassified: Training ship
Pennant number: M353
Fate: Paid off for disposal



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
 steam engine

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

Complement: 85
Armament: 1 × 4-inch HA gun

HMAS *Kiama* was laid down at Evans Deakin & Co Ltd, Brisbane, Queensland on 2 November 1942. She was launched on 3 July 1943 by Mrs Lawson, wife of the Minister for Transport and was the first RAN warship to carry the name of the NSW coastal town, 120 kilometres south of Sydney in the Illawarra region.

Kiama commissioned at Brisbane on 26 January 1944 under the command of Lieutenant Samuel J Bensen RANR(S).

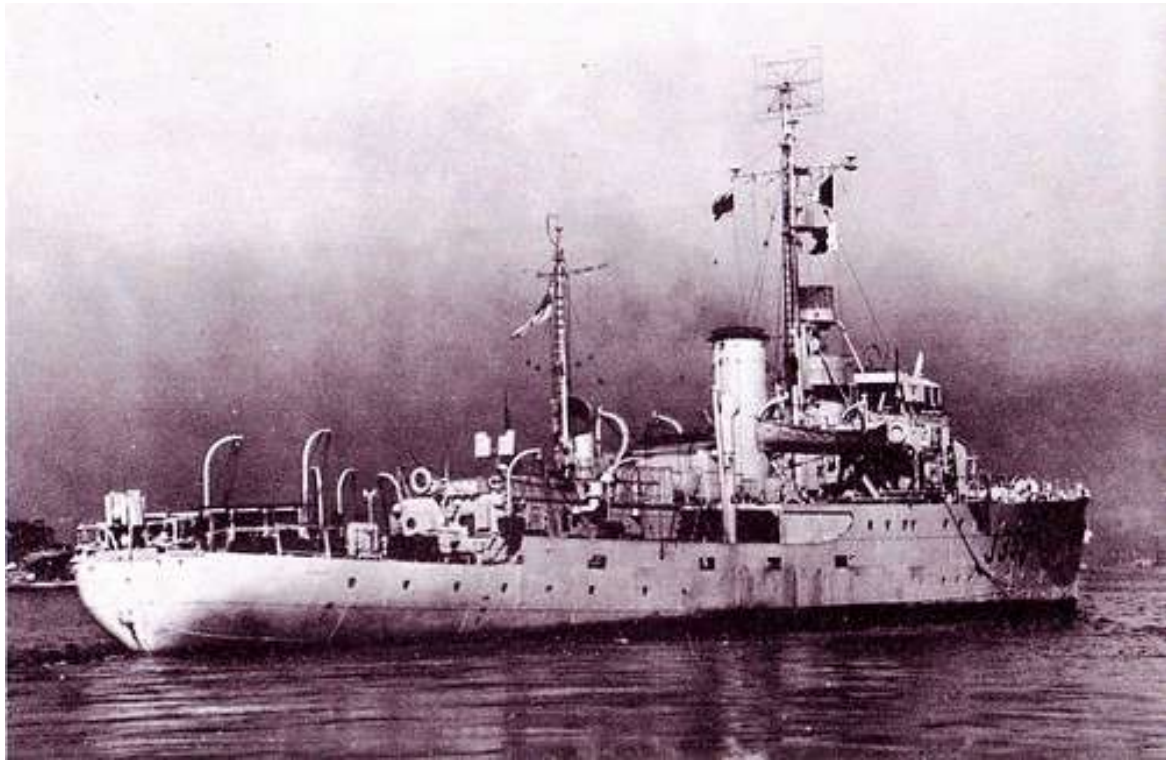


Kiama began her operational wartime career in March 1944, when she arrived at Milne Bay for service in New Guinea waters. The first three months of duty were almost entirely occupied in escorting New Guinea coastal convoys. In June 1944, she was engaged on anti-submarine patrols in the Solomon Sea. In July 1944, New Guinea convoy duties were resumed.

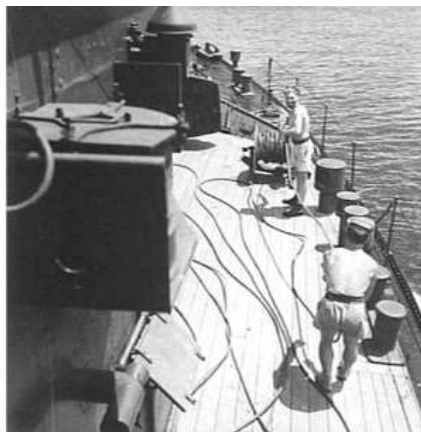


Kiama taking on stores and provisions during World War II

In September 1944 *Kiama* was engaged in troop transport operations between New Guinea and New Britain and on the New Guinea coast. In October 1944 the escorting of convoys was resumed and continued almost without break to the end of the year. At the close of 1944, *Kiama* had, with the exception of a brief visit to Cairns, served continuously in New Guinea waters for a period of more than eight months. During that time the ship steamed some 30,000 miles and was at sea for more than 3000 hours.



Kiama in Sydney 1944



Left: Engineer Lieutenant JD Davidson and the ship's parrot (AWM 078150). Middle: Ratings checking the rewinding wire ropes on the winch drum. (AWM 078158) Right: The Officer of the Watch aboard Kiama. (AWM 078159)

On 21 December 1944 *Kiama* arrived in Sydney. On Christmas Day the ship's company was recalled from leave to go to the assistance of the American ship *Robert J Walker*, which had been torpedoed and was sinking off the New South Wales coast. Anti-submarine patrols followed until the close of the year. On 3 January 1945 *Kiama* reached Adelaide and commenced a period in refit.

Kiama resumed service in February 1945, arriving at Fremantle on the 14th of the month. She spent the next two months in Western Australian waters exercising with American submarines based at Fremantle. On 7 May 1945 she arrived at Port Moresby to begin a further period of service in New Guinea waters. Later in May she carried out a series of coastal bombardments of eastern Buka Island and north eastern Bougainville areas. Bombardments of the same area were repeated in June 1945.



Left: His Royal Highness, the Duke of Gloucester, Governor-General of Australia, coming in on a launch at Motupena Point for an inspection of 3 Division Area, circa July 1945. L-R: unidentified; unidentified; His Royal Highness, the Duke of Gloucester; Lieutenant-General VAH Sturdee, General Officer Commanding First Army; unidentified; Lieutenant-General SG Savage, General Officer Commanding 2 Corps. HMAS Kiama can be seen in the background (AWM 093678). Right: The bridge and mast of Kiama, as seen from the forecastle. (AWM 078155)

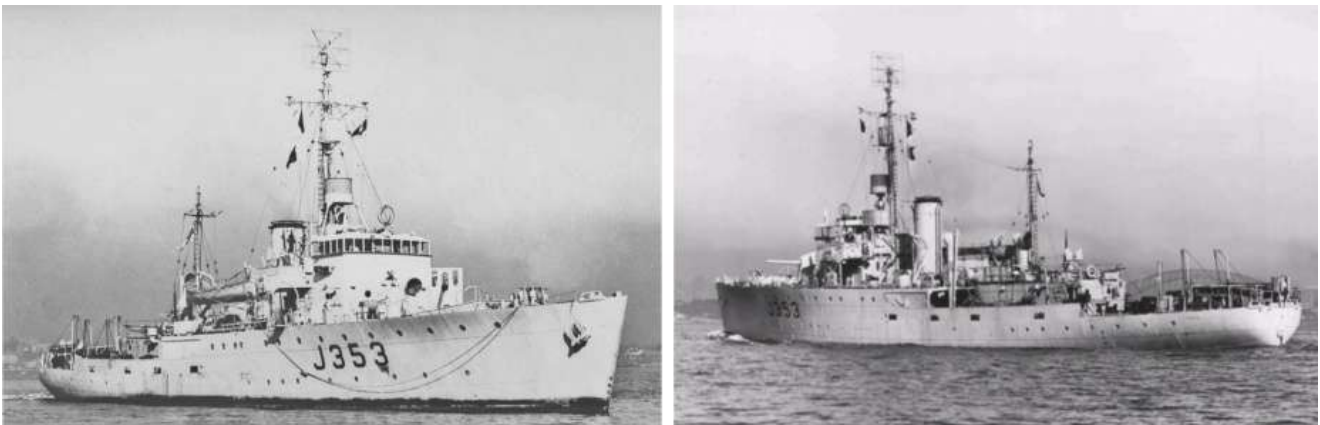
In July 1945 *Kiama*, at Torokina, embarked His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester for passage to Mutupina Point in the Solomon Islands. Later in the month she was troop carrying between Torokina and the Treasury Islands.



A navy church service being conducted on board HMAS Kiama in Bougainville, circa July 1945. The service was conducted by Chaplain FO Hulme-Moir, Headquarters 2 Corps. Personnel from HMAS Lithgow and HMAS Dubbo also attended the service. The organist was Lieutenant-Colonel RR Winton, deputy assistant director of medical services, Headquarters 2 Corps. (AWM 093765)



Left: An Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit Administrative Headquarters was set up at Kavieng with Captain FNW Shand, Angau district officer in charge, to operate in New Ireland and surrounding smaller islands. A RAN detachment from Kiama, shown, marching to the flagpole site for the ceremony of hoisting the Australian Flag, circa October 1945. (AWM 098434) Right: An Australian RAN rating from Kiama about to hoist the Australian Flag on a Japanese rigged flagpole at the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit Administrative Headquarters. Officers of the AIF, RAN and RAAF are in the background. (AWM 098347)



HMAS Kiama in Sydney Harbour during World War II

At the close of July, *Kiama* left New Guinea for Brisbane, where she arrived on 5 August. On 24 August 1945 *Kiama* returned to New Guinea waters and for the next five months was occupied with troop and store carrying, sweeping and general duties. On 29 January 1946 she arrived in Sydney and paid off into Reserve on 3 April 1946. In her two years and two months of service *Kiama* steamed 60,882 miles and was underway for 6369 hours.

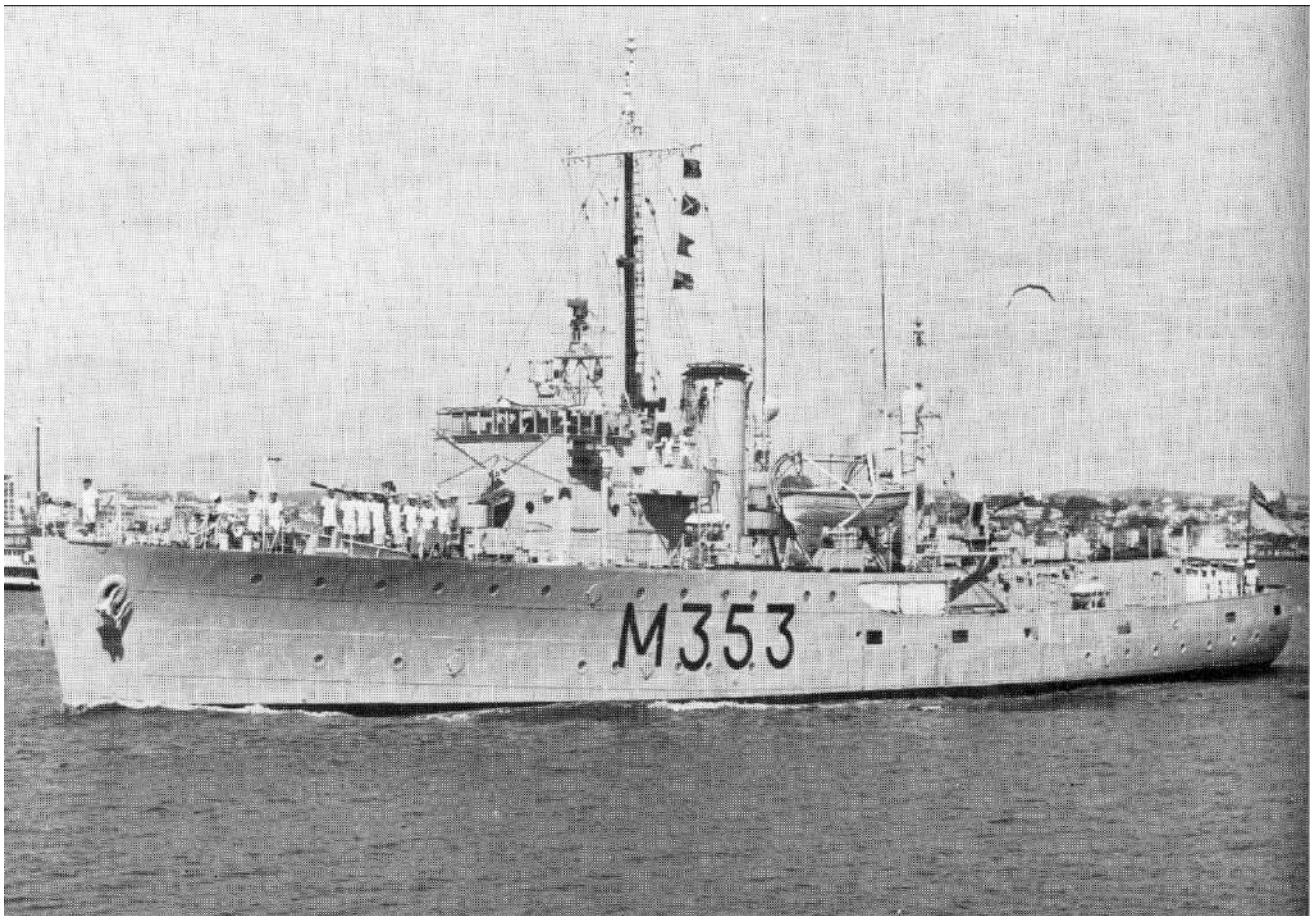




Kiama's Officers



On 24 April 1952, without again being brought into seagoing commission, *Kiama* was transferred to the Royal New Zealand Navy. Departed for Auckland 1 May 1952, arriving 7 May 1952.



HMNZS Kiama entering harbour

Kiama paid off 7 May 1952. Delivered to Mason Bros. Eng. Co. for refitting at the Western Viaduct 19 May 1952. Delivered back to Navy 7 Nov 1952 and placed in Reserve. Recommissioned in August 15 March 1966 after conversion to a training ship.



HMNZS Kiama



HMNZS Kiama alongside at Kiama, NSW, during a visit to Australia, 1966.



HMNZS Kiama in rough seas

July 1973 arrived Auckland Naval Base and prepared for layup in Operational Reserve. May 1974 brought out of Operational Reserve by the RNZNVR for a 6 week exercise, then returned to Operational Reserve. She paid off from the Royal New Zealand Navy on 19 August 1976.

During this time members of the Maritime Trust of Australia removed parts of the ship and sent them to Melbourne for reinstalling on the museum ship HMAS *Castlemaine*.

31 August 1978 Listed for disposal. Sold November 1977 to Pacific Scrap Metal Ltd and broken up Auckland 1978.



HMNZS Kiama Sydney Harbour 1966

