

## HMAS *Launceston* J179/B246/A120



**Namesake:** City of Launceston, Tas  
**Builder:** Evans Deakin & Co  
**Laid down:** 23 December 1940  
**Launched:** 30 June 1941  
**Commissioned:** 9 April 1942  
**Decommissioned:** 23 March 1946  
**Motto:** Progress With Prudence

**Battle honours:**

Pacific 1942–45  
 Indian Ocean 1942–44  
 East Indies 1944  
 Okinawa 1945

**Fate:** Transferred to Turkish Navy

**Turkey**

**Name:** Ayancik  
**Renamed:** TCG Hamit Naci  
**Fate:** Withdrawn from service, 1965

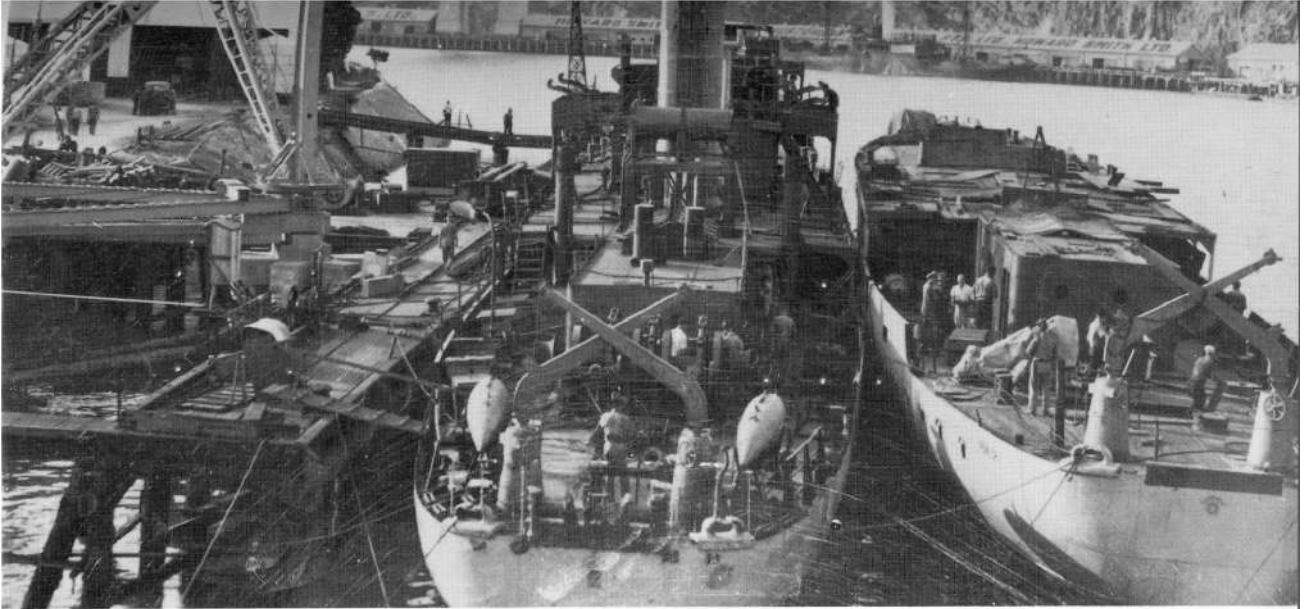


**Displacement:** 650 tons (standard), 1,025 tons (full war load)

**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) at 1,750 hp

**Complement:** 85  
**Armament:** 1 × 12-pounder gun, 3 × Oerlikons (1 later removed), 1 × Bofors (installed later), Machine guns, Depth charges chutes and throwers

Ordered for the British Admiralty and commissioned by RAN, HMAS *Launceston* was laid down at Evans Deakin & Co Ltd, Brisbane, Queensland on 23 December 1940. She was launched on 30 June 1941 by Mrs Forgan-Smith, wife of the Premier of Queensland, and was the first RAN warship to carry the name of the city in the north of Tasmania at the junction of the North Esk and South Esk rivers where they become the Tamar River.



*How they all began - two corvettes under construction at Evans Deakin shipyards, Brisbane. Launceston is on the left and Ipswich on the right. (Photo courtesy "Dutchy" Holland)*

*Launceston* commissioned at Brisbane on 9 April 1942 under the command of Lieutenant Commander Percy G Collins RANR(S).



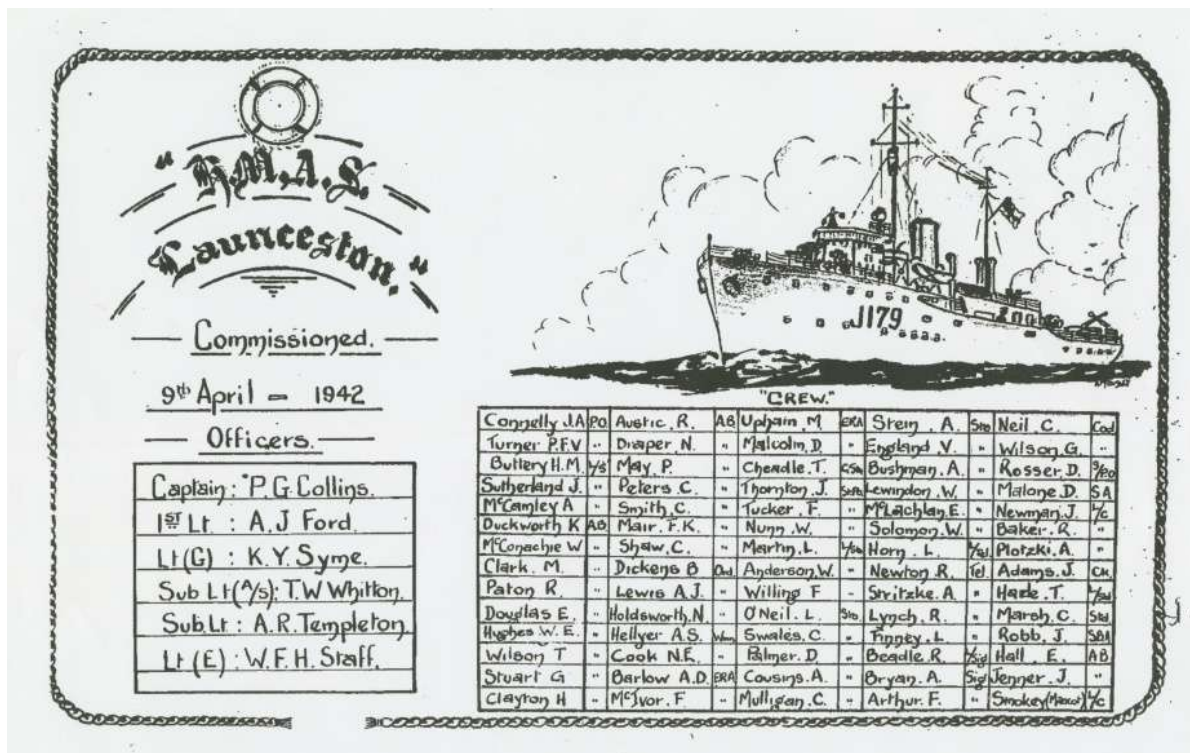


*HMAS Launceston steamed an impressive 136,064 miles during her wartime commission.*



*The crew and ship's mascot of HMAS Launceston.*

On completion of trials *Launceston* was employed on escort duty around the coast of Australia until she left for Colombo in September 1942 to join the Eastern Fleet. She was then engaged in escorting convoys in the Indian Ocean and on 11 February 1944, aided by her sister ship HMAS Ipswich and the Indian sloop HMIS Jumna, destroyed the Japanese submarine RO-110 off the east coast of India. *Launceston* continued her escorts between Aden and Hormuz, Khor Kuwai, Bombay and Karachi and also between Chittagong and Vizagapatam and Bombay.







AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

ART21799

*Before the war, naval vessels made cruises to overseas ports to 'show the flag'. Australian ships on overseas stations added to this by 'showing the kangaroo'. Most ships have a cut-out kangaroo at their masthead, the sign of a 'wallaby ship'. Alongside the dockyard wall is HMAS Cairns with HMAS Launceston at anchor in Bombay Harbour, India (Showing the Kangaroo by Frank Norton, AWM ART21799).*



Some of the Launceston crew when the ship arrived in Fremantle in September 1944. It had travelled more than 100,000 miles since its departure two years earlier and had seen action in the Persian Gulf and rescued survivors from a torpedoed merchant ship off the Sri Lankan coast. Neg: War 709

Returning to Fremantle for refit in September 1944, *Launceston* remained in the Fremantle area on anti-submarine patrols until February 1945 when she proceeded to Manus, escorting en route. She then participated in the capture of Okinawa (March-May 1945). After the end of hostilities she was based at Hong Kong for minesweeping and patrol duties.

*Launceston* arrived at Brisbane on 29 October 1945 and then paid official visits to the town of *Launceston* from 16 to 25 December, and Hobart on 28 December, where she was the flagship for the Hobart Regatta. She proceeded to Sydney, arriving on 11 January 1946.



*Members of HMAS Launceston's crew*







*HMAS Launceston as she appeared after being equipped with radar, visible at masthead.*



**The Mercury (Hobart, Tas) Wed 19 Dec 1945:**

**Corvette's Dash Through Gale With Sick Stoker**

On her first visit to her name port, the corvette HMAS *Launceston* made a dash of 130 miles through a stiff south-westerly gale to get medical attention for Stoker Ray Sheridan, of Devonport, who became ill on Monday night. It was thought that Sheridan had appendicitis. His condition had improved last night, but he was admitted to the Regimental Aid Post in *Launceston* after examination by Dr G. T. H. Harris when the ship berthed.

After a refit at Sydney, *Launceston* paid off about mid-March 1946, having steamed 136,064 miles. She recommissioned in the Royal Navy and on 21 May 1946, as HMS *Launceston*, sailed for Colombo in company with her sister ships *Gawler* and *Pirie*. All were destined for transfer to the Turkish Navy. As a unit of the Turkish Navy, *Launceston* originally bore the name *Ayancik*.

Sold into civilian service and renamed *Hamit Naci* in 1965, after the late Hamit Naci (1854-1937), a retired Naval Officer who founded the National Maritime Trade Captain and Carki School (today's ITU Maritime High School), which was the first civilian Maritime School in Turkish history. Converted possibly to a training ship then later a passenger ship.



*Hamit Naci ex Launceston*



*Photo of the Hamit Naci ex Launceston in the background*

Last operated by the Baltic Shipping Company of Denmark under the Turkish flag as a passenger ship. Fate Unknown. Listed by company as Decommissioned or lost.