

HMAS *Tamworth* – J181/B250/A124



Namesake: City of Tamworth, NSW
 Builder: Walkers Limited
 Laid down: 25 August 1941
 Launched: 14 March 1942
 Commissioned: 8 August 1942
 Decommissioned: 30 April 1946

Motto: "Strong in Adversity"

Battle honours:
 Pacific 1942–45
 Indian Ocean 1943–

44
 Fate: Sold to RNN

Netherlands
 Name: Tidore
 Commissioned: 30 April 1946
 Decommissioned: December 1949

Fate: Sold to TNI-AL
Indonesia

Name: Pati Unus
 Commissioned: December 1949
 Decommissioned: 1969
 Fate: Disposed of



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) at 1,750 hp

Complement: 85
 Armament: 1 × 12-pounder gun (later replaced by 1 × 4-inch 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. *Tamworth* was constructed at Walkers Ltd, Maryborough, Queensland laid down 25 August 1941. Launched 14 March 1942 by Mrs Horsburgh, wife of a Director of Walkers Ltd. *Tamworth* commissioned at Maryborough on 8 August 1942 under the command of Lieutenant William H Deans RANVR.



Following trials and working up exercises in the Hervey Bay and Sydney areas, *Tamworth* proceeded to Melbourne early in November as one of the escorts of a convoy. From Melbourne she sailed later in the month for Port Adelaide and thence to Fremantle.



1942: PORT BOW VIEW OF THE CORVETTE HMAS *Tamworth* (J181). SHE IS ARMED WITH A 12 POUNDER AA GUN FORWARD. NOTE THE 20 MM OERLIKON AA GUN IN THE BRIDGE WING. THE CAMOUFLAGE PATTERN CONSISTS OF TWO DARK GREY COLOURS, PROBABLY MS1 (THE DARKER) AND MS2 AS WELL AS A LIGHTER GREY ON THE UPPER SURFACES, POSSIBLY MS4.



HMAS Tamworth's ship's company, Fremantle, January 1943.

Back Row: Titch McKenzie, Dave Bishop, Stripey May 'Bagga', Wally Jardine, Coder Ron Barnes, Stoker Snow Hill, Vic Jackson, SBA Bob Chambers, Coder 'Snowy' Cooley, Harry Nance, L/SIG. Keith Miller, SIG Bob Emery, Bernie Pask.

2nd Row: Butch Quilter, Bluey Hennessy, QO Len Madden, Stoker Bob Viner, TEL Jock Sutherland, SIG Max Underwood, TEL Ken Wiltshire, Asdic Dick Jeffs, Jack Clayton, 'Tug' Wilson, Mick Matthews, Rex Black, 'Pop' Flewellen, 'Bugs' Tom Page.

3rd Row: Supply Bennett, Jack Larsen, Norm Murray, L/S Jack Carey, Asdic Jock Streher, Stoker Jim Kirkman, L/S Len Purtell, Asdic HSD Graham Barnes, Len Hartley, Stoker Fred 'Stand' Easy, 'Butch' Roger Fretwell, A/B Frank Harle, Stoker-Writer Alan 'Speed' Whitmore, Jack Wheary, Supply Doug Plunkett.

Front Row: STOPO Tony Morrisey, ERA Nobby Hall, ERA Tod Sloane, ERA Bill Woollams, ERA John McLaren, Sub Lieutenant Fred Bailey, Lieutenant Fred Baker, Lieutenant Bill Deans - Commanding Officer, Engineering Lieutenant C Quearns, Sub Lieutenant 'Robbie' Robinson, Chief Stoker 'Pop' Jenkins, PO (Buffer) Farmer McLeod, PO Digger Hurst, ERA Andy Mitchell, Supply Theo Griffen.

On 27 January 1943 *Tamworth* sailed from Fremantle, escorting the tanker SS Athelduke to Diego Garcia. From Diego Garcia she proceeded to Colombo to join the British Eastern Fleet, with which she was to serve for some two years on Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf convoy escort duty.

While *Tamworth* was escorting a convoy on 5 October 1943, about 140 miles north of Cape Guardafui in the entrance to the Gulf of Aden, a German submarine of the 'Monsoon Group', then operating in the Indian Ocean, torpedoed the Norwegian tanker *Anna Knudsen*. Fortunately the ship did not sink and she was assisted to Aden by *Tamworth*.



Anna Knudsen



Tamworth wearing her wartime disruptive pattern camouflage paint scheme.

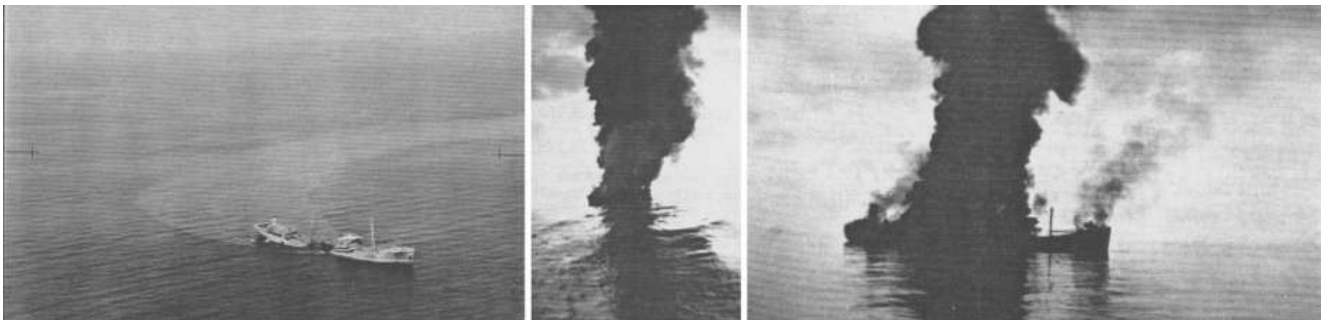
Although the Bathurst Class were designed as minesweepers, during most of the war they operated not in this capacity but as escort and combat vessels. The convoy escort task presented the vessels with a challenge which would have been more appropriately met by long range frigates, had they been available in sufficient numbers.

Tamworth's experience of 16-23 February 1944 well illustrates this. On the afternoon of 16 February convoy 'PA 69' sailed from the Persian Gulf for Aden, having as escorts *Tamworth* (Senior Officer, Escort) and the Indian ship HMIS *Orissa*.

The voyage was uneventful until the early hours of 23 February, when the convoy was attacked by the German U-boat U-188 in the entrance to the Gulf of Aden. Three tankers were torpedoed in the attack. The United States ship EG Seubert was sunk. The British vessel *San Alvaro* caught fire, and as it was considered that she might not sink and would thus become a danger to navigation, she was sunk by *Tamworth* by depth charges and gunfire.

The Norwegian tanker *Erling Brøvig* was abandoned in a sinking condition. In the early afternoon of 23 February *Tamworth* set course for Aden with 133 survivors aboard and entered Aden during the evening. Telegraphist Jock Sutherland recorded the action in his diary as follows:

Another action packed trip! At 03.30 hours, 23-2-1944 a terrific explosion instantly followed by action Stations. Before we had time to close up there were two or three more violent explosions. At least two of our convoy had been hit, one the 'EG Stewart' blew up a little later, the other, 'San Alvaro' beginning to blaze fiercely.



L-R: The *Erling Brøvig*, EG Seubert and *San Alvaro* following the attack by U-188.

On 17 July 1944 *Tamworth*, her sister ship HMAS *Ipswich*, the destroyer HMAS *Napier* and the tanker SS *American Arrow* sailed in company from Addu Atoll for Australia.

On 21 October 1944 *Tamworth* departed Fremantle to re-join the Eastern Fleet, where she sailed in company with *Ipswich*, *Napier*, the latter's sister ship HMAS *Nepal* and the tanker SS *British Fusilier*. *Tamworth* arrived at Colombo on 4 November 1944.



Officers and ratings from *Tamworth* photographed in Fremantle, August 1944. Two months later it sailed for Colombo with *Ipswich*. Neg: War 706.



Left: Cleanliness was an important part of everyday life in the RAN's small ships and clothes were routinely hung out to dry on the upper deck. Right: Able Seaman RA Rickard photographed with a constable of the Ceylon Police Force, circa November 1944.

Shortly afterwards *Tamworth* became a unit of the 22nd Minesweeping Flotilla (constituted on 24 November 1944), and the British Pacific Fleet (formed on 22 November 1944).

On 26 January 1945 the ship departed Trincomalee for Fremantle, arriving on 9 February.



HMAS Tamworth, circa 1945. Note the British Pacific Fleet pennant number preceded by the letter B on her hull. She is also equipped with Type 271 radar, mounted as a 'lantern' at the base of her foremast while at the top of the foremast can be seen her Type 291 radar aerial.

In March 1945 *Tamworth* proceeded to the United States naval base at Manus Island in the Admiralties Group, to take up duty in the Pacific. Until the end of hostilities on 15 August 1945 she was mainly engaged in escort duty between Manus and the Philippines.

In June, with her sister ship HMAS *Goulburn*, she escorted the floating dock AFD 18, towed by the tug HMAS *Heros* and the salvage vessel HMS *Salvestor*, from Darwin to Milne Bay in the final stages of its voyage from North Africa to Manus for use by the British Pacific Fleet.

During September 1945 *Tamworth*, with other units of the 22nd Minesweeping Flotilla, was based at Hong Kong for minesweeping duty and anti-piracy patrols. On 28 September at Morotai, she reverted to Australian operational control. The following day she sailed for Australia.

A short period of service in Australian waters followed, including training duties in the Bass Strait area towards the end of the ship's service.



Tamworth nested outboard of her sister corvettes *Bendigo* and *Ballarat* at Williamstown, January 1946.



Tamworth's 'little wardroom', February, 1946.
Left to right: C.T. McElroy, D. Joyce, K.H. Baum, N.H. Campbell, G.L. Taylor

Tamworth paid off at Sydney on 30 April 1946, having steamed over 125,000 miles.



The same day she was transferred to the Royal Netherlands Navy and renamed *Tidore*.

She departed for Makassar and from there to Kupang. On 16 July 1946, the corvette left from Dutch Timor and was called *Hr.Ms. Tidore*.

Till end 1949, *Hr.Ms. Tidore* participated in the battle against Indonesian nationalists and fulfilled the same duties as her sister ships.



In Dutch service carried the Pennant numbers **B250, MV24, PK4, P9**.

On 28 December 1949 the corvette was transferred to the Indonesian navy as *KRI Pati Unis*. Pennant Number 256.



KRI Pati Unis

The *KRI Pati Unis* remained in Indonesian service till 1969 after which she was sold to be scrapped.