

## HMAS *Townsville* – J205/B251/A124



**Namesake:** City of Townsville, QLD  
**Builder:** Evans Deakin & Co  
**Laid down:** 16 November 1940  
**Launched:** 13 May 1941  
**Commissioned:** 19 December 1941  
**Decommissioned:** 5 August 1946  
**Motto:** "Bold and Ready"

**Battle honours:**  
 Darwin 1942  
 Pacific 1942–45  
 New Guinea 1944

**Fate:** Sold for scrap in 1956



**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 × 4-inch gun  
 3 × 20 mm Oerlikons  
 Machine guns  
 Depth charges  
 chutes and throwers

HMAS Townsville was laid down in the yard of Evans Deakin & Co Ltd, Brisbane on 16 November 1940. She was launched by Mrs PE McNeil, the wife of the Third Naval Member, on 13 May 1941.



*Left: An article from a local newspaper announcing the launch of Townsville in Queensland. Right: Mrs McNeil, wife of the Third Naval Member, christens the ship as the launching lady.*



*A miniature presentation bell given to Townsville's launching lady Mrs PE McNeil.*



*Left: Cannon Birch, Naval Chaplain, dedicates the vessel. Right: Townsville after launch. Note the vessel dressed with flags, this is the naval ceremonial tradition of 'dress ship'.*



*Many witnessed the launching of Townsville at Evans Deakin & Co Ltd, Brisbane.*

*Townsville* was commissioned at Brisbane on 19 December 1941 under the command of Lieutenant Commander John Abbott, RAN (Emergency List).



*HMAS Townsville at sea early in her commission.*

*Townsville* began her operational career in February 1942 escorting Darwin to Thursday Island convoys. She was in harbour when the first and most destructive of more than 50 air raids on Darwin took place on 19 February 1942.

Operations under the Darwin command continued until 28 July 1942 when *Townsville* proceeded for Sydney to take up escort duties on the east coast of Australia. It was an anxious period for those charged with the protection of coastal shipping. Six groups had already fallen victim to Japanese submarines operating in Australian waters.



*Corvettes were small, compact vessels capable of a variety of tasks. They were often referred to as 'Maids of all Work' by those who served in them.*

On 13 August 1942 *Townsville* assumed responsibility for her first east coast convoy, bound from Sydney for Melbourne. It was the first of many she was to shepherd through dangerous waters on a two year tour of duty on the Australian coast. It included the period of the maximum Japanese effort against the Allied supply line. Twelve ships were sunk off the Australian coast with the loss of more than 150 merchant seamen. Only one ship, the 4800 ton Iron Knight, was lost in a convoy under *Townsville's* protection.



*Townsville in Sydney 1943 alongside a sister ship*



*Townsville displaying her newly applied disruptive pattern camouflage paint work. The dark areas at either end of the ship were applied to make the corvette appear small than she was.*

On 31 May 1944 *Townsville* departed Brisbane to begin a period of escort and patrol duties in New Guinea waters. Five months were spent in operations from Milne Bay to Morotai, including Madang, Hollandia, Langemak, Wakde, Noemfoor and Manus.

Returning to the mainland in November 1944, *Townsville* carried out a series of minesweeping operations before returning to Milne Bay on the last day of the month. She remained in New Guinea waters operating on patrol in mainly the Morotai/Biak area until June 1945, when she proceeded to Melbourne for refitting. The refit was in progress when hostilities ended.

In the post war period *Townsville* operated as a unit of the 20th Minesweeping Flotilla in the New Britain area and in Australian home waters.



*Left: Townsville nested with one of her sister ships HMAS Bunbury in the Morotai area, 2 June 1945.*



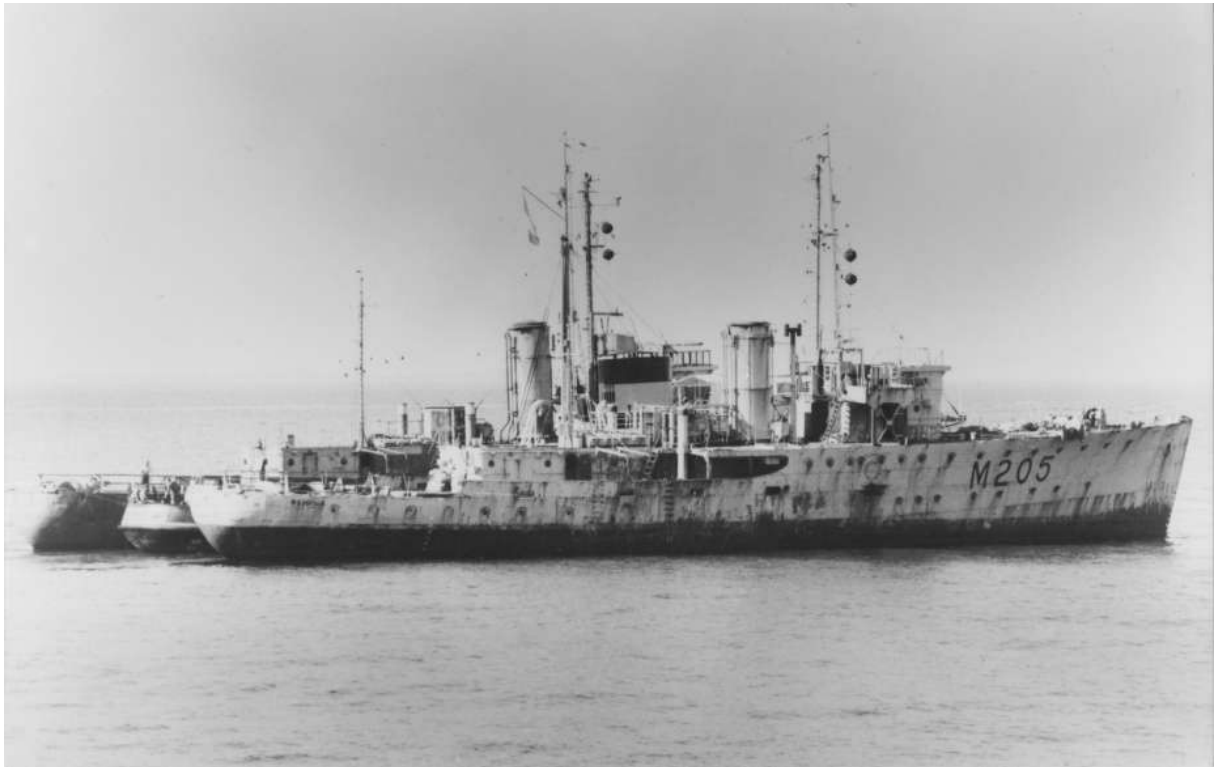
She paid off into Reserve at Fremantle on 5 August 1946. In more than four and a half years of seagoing service *Townsville* steamed 155,450 miles.



*Townsville* was sold on 8 August 1956 to the Hong Kong Delta Shipping Co for breaking up.



*On slipway in Fremantle December 1956*



*L to R. Horsham, Tug Oostze centre, Townsville outboard ready for towage to Hong Kong  
17Jan 1957*



*The crew of the Dutch tug Oostzee waving goodbye from the Townsville on towing day*

