

SHIPS NAMED HOBART

In May 2015, the first of the RAN's new destroyers was launched in Adelaide. Upon commissioning, the ship will be called HMAS *Hobart* (III), lending its name to the class of vessel and proudly perpetuating the name of Hobart in the RAN.

The first *Hobart* was a modified *Leander* class light cruiser originally commissioned in the Royal Navy (RN) as HMS *Apollo* on 13 January 1936. She served on the North American and West Indies Stations, and was due to transfer to the RAN as HMAS *Hobart* on 6 October 1938 at Devonport; however, owing to the mobilisation of the British Fleet on 28 September in response to the Munich Crisis, she commissioned on that date under the command of Captain Robert Stewart, RN. She arrived in Australia at the end of 1938 and made her first visit to Hobart from 17 to 28 February 1939. She was engaged on various patrols and exercises, and at the outbreak of World War II was on patrol in Bass Strait.

On 14 October 1939 *Hobart* sailed for service on the East Indies Station. She performed escort duties in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, and fired her first shots of the war on 12 June 1940 when she engaged three Italian aircraft conducting a raid on Aden. She landed British reinforcements at Berbera, British Somaliland, on 1 August 1940 and acted as the operational headquarters for the evacuation of Berbera two weeks later. She also landed a QF 3-pounder Hotchkiss gun and three-man crew for service with the Army as an anti-tank gun-crew.

Hobart carried out escort and patrol duties in the Red Sea until October 1940, returning to Australian waters in December. She performed further escort duties until June 1941. *Hobart* joined the Mediterranean Fleet in August 1941 where she was engaged in support of the campaign in the Western Desert, the reinforcement of Cyprus, operations against Syria and in a series of Mediterranean sweeps.

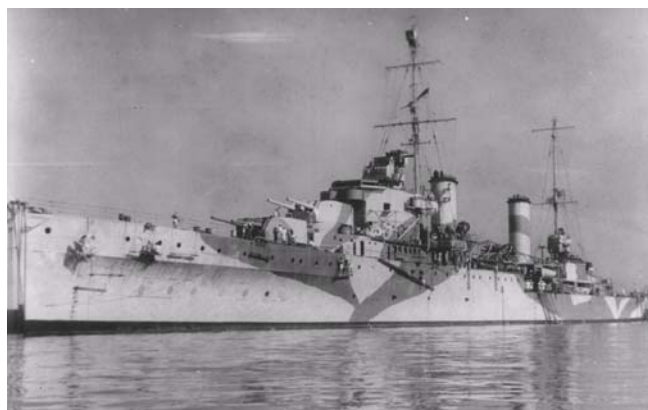
Hobart transferred to Far East waters after Japan's entry into the war where she withstood some of the heaviest bombing of her career. On one occasion when operating as a unit of a combined strike force, *Hobart* and her consorts were attacked 13 times. Her commanding officer, Captain Harry Howden, RAN, wrote 'the bombs fell close enough for me to see the red flash of their burst and to feel the heat of their explosions across my face.'

A bombing attack prevented her from taking part in the disastrous Battle of the Java Sea but she did participate in the Battle of the Coral Sea where she was targeted by eight Japanese torpedo bombers and 19 heavy bombers on 7 May 1942. The naval force she was part of was without fighter cover but escaped damage by evasive action, shooting down three of the enemy aircraft. She later formed part of the cruiser covering force for the American landings at Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands in August 1942.

On 20 July 1943, *Hobart* was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine whilst en route to Vanuatu. Thirteen officers

and sailors were killed and another seven injured. She made it to Espiritu Santo under her own power the following day and was later escorted to Sydney. She arrived on 26 August for extensive repairs which kept her out of service until December 1944.

Hobart rendezvoused with the British Pacific Fleet at Manus in February 1945 and was part of the force covering the Allied landings at: Cebu, Philippines, in March; Tarakan, Borneo in April; Wewak, New Guinea, in May; Brunei in June; and Balikpapan, Netherlands East Indies, in July. She was among the Australian ships present for the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay on 31 August.



HMAS Hobart (I) in her WWII camouflage paint scheme.

Following the end of hostilities, *Hobart* spent three periods in Japanese waters in support of the Commonwealth Occupation Forces. She returned to Sydney in August 1947 and paid off into reserve on 20 December 1947. From 1953 to 1956 *Hobart* underwent an extensive refit and modernisation at Newcastle State Dockyard to convert her to a training ship, but was not again brought into seagoing service. On 5 February 1960 it was officially announced that she had been added to the list of obsolete RAN ships for sale as scrap. On 22 February 1962, *Hobart* was sold to a Japanese firm for breaking up.

HMAS *Hobart* (II) was one of three *Perth* class guided missile destroyers (DDG) built in the United States for the RAN. She was commissioned at the Boston Navy Yard on 18 December 1965 under the command of Captain Guy Griffiths, DSC, RAN. Following sea trials and exercises in US and Canadian waters, *Hobart* arrived in her namesake city on 1 September 1966. She berthed in her home-port of Sydney for the first time on 7 September 1966.

Hobart undertook three deployments to Vietnam and served on the 'gunline' as part of the US Seventh Fleet, providing naval gunfire support, and undertaking plane guard and escort duties with US aircraft carrier striking groups. She also provided support to US Marine and airborne divisions, and to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

On 29 July 1967 *Hobart* went to the assistance of USS *Forrestal* after the aircraft carrier suffered a major fire on board causing numerous casualties, and on 17 June 1968, during the ship's second deployment, two members of *Hobart's* crew were killed and several others injured when a US Air Force jet mistakenly fired three missiles at the ship. *Hobart* was awarded a US Navy Unit Commendation for 'exceptionally meritorious service' as an element of the US Seventh Fleet during her first deployment.



*HMAS Hobart (II) underway in the waters off Vietnam
(Bevin Stringer)*

She participated in the inaugural RIMPAC exercises, the first of many for *Hobart*, in October 1971 and the following year visited Southeast Asia, another regular destination for *Hobart*, and the United States where her 5-inch gun mounts were updated.

Hobart participated in Operation NAVY HELP: DARWIN after Cyclone Tracy devastated the city over Christmas 1974, arriving Darwin on 3 January 1975. Over 100 men were landed ashore, working on a two day rotational basis undertaking clearing and rehabilitation tasks before being relieved by their shipmates. She departed Darwin on 18 January 1975. In August that year she became the first RAN vessel to berth at the new West Australian Naval Support Facility before undertaking an Indian Ocean deployment. She was the first RAN vessel to visit the Republic of the Maldives before visiting Iran, Pakistan, India, Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand.

On 17 May 1976 *Hobart* began Operation PHINEAS FOGG, a round-the-world deployment during which she represented Australia at the International Naval Review in New York. She joined 47 other ships from 20 navies for the event in New York Harbor on 3 and 4 July before returning to Sydney on 3 September 1976. Later that year she began an extended refit which involved a complete weapons system update and conversion from using furnace fuel oil to diesel oil.

In May 1981 *Hobart* celebrated the steaming of half a million miles since commissioning before departing for a north-west Indian Ocean deployment in July. On 29 September 1982 *Hobart*, in company with other RAN and Royal New Zealand Navy ships, escorted the Royal Yacht, *Britannia*, into Brisbane for the beginning of the XII Commonwealth Games.

A major refit was carried out in 1984-85 before she departed Sydney in July 1985 to participate in the 75th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Navy in Vancouver. On 24 January 1986, *Hobart* featured in the fleet entry that marked the beginning of the RAN's 75th Anniversary celebrations, and later in the year once again visited Southeast Asia. In late September and early October she joined in the international Naval Assembly and Review celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the granting of Royal Assent to the Australian Navy. In January 1988 *Hobart* took part in the Bicentennial Australia Day celebrations and in May she sailed to Apia, where the ship's company attended Western Samoa's independence celebrations. Later in the year she participated in the Bicentennial Naval Salute and Review.

A \$100 million refit and modernisation began in 1989 and lasted until late 1991. The Ikara anti-submarine missile system was removed, accommodation refurbished, the guided missile launching system modernised and the ship fitted with the Vulcan Phalanx close-in weapons system. In October that year *Hobart* took part in the 50th Anniversary Fleet Review of the Royal New Zealand Navy and the following May took part in the 50th Battle of the Coral Sea Commemoration Fleet Entry and Review.

Hobart remained a regular participant in fleet exercises both in Australia and overseas, and was a regular visitor to Asian, Pacific and New Zealand waters, over the final decade of her commission. In August 1998 she left Sydney on her final Southeast Asian deployment during which she visited Jakarta, Manado, Singapore, Phuket, Penang, Lumut, Kuantan, Bangkok and Ujung Pandang.

By May 1999 *Hobart* attained the distinction of having steamed one million nautical miles since commissioning - the third RAN ship to do so.

In February 2000, the destroyer paid her last visit to her namesake city, Hobart, and in March visited New Zealand and the South West Pacific for the last time. On 12 May 2000 *Hobart* was decommissioned. Among the guests present at the ceremony was Lady Hay who had launched the ship 34 years earlier. *Hobart* was sunk as a dive wreck in Yankalilla Bay, South Australia.

In 1967 *Hobart* was awarded the coveted Duke of Gloucester Cup for being assessed as the most efficient unit of the RAN fleet. She was to win this cup on seven further occasions: 1970, 1975, 1979, 1982, 1988, 1992 and 1994.

HMAS *Hobart* (III) will be the first of three *Hobart* class destroyers. The new ships will provide air defence for the fleet, land forces and infrastructure in coastal areas. They will be equipped with an advanced air defence system capable of engaging enemy aircraft and missiles at ranges in excess of 150km.

The destroyers will also carry a helicopter for surveillance and response to support key warfare areas. The surface warfare function will include long range anti-ship missiles and a naval gun capable of firing extended range munitions in support of land forces. They will also conduct undersea warfare and be equipped with modern sonar systems, decoys, surface-launched torpedoes and an array of effective close-in defensive weapons.

