

# Basic Detail Report

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## HMAS Castlemaine

**Vessel number**

HV000421

**Date**

1942

**Primary Maker**

Melbourne Harbour Trust

**Description**

The BATHURST Class was designed in Melbourne Australia at the Navy Office in the late 1930s, anticipating the likelyhood of war and the need for a locally built armed vessel. They were initially termed Local Defence Vessels (LDV) but this soon became minesweeper, however they were also commonly known as corvettes, such was the varied duties they performed. The class formed a significant section of the RAN during the war. HMAS CASTLEMAINE was built by the Melbourne Harbour Trust at Williamstown in Melbourne during 1941- 42. It was launched on 7th August 1941 and then commissioned on 17th June 1942. It initially served as an escort vessel off the eastern coastline. HMAS CASTLEMAINE was then transferred to northern Australian waters, before moving on to serve in New Guinea, the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean and the China Sea at different periods in the war. As well as being an escort vessel its duties included minesweeping, survey work and transporting troops or supplies. In November 1942 it joined sister ship HMAS ARMIDALE in an operation off Timor, north west of Australia. HMAS ARMIDALE was sunk by Japanese aircraft during this operation, and shortly after in December HMAS CASTLEMAINE was engaged by enemy aircraft while performing convoy duty between Thursday Island and Darwin. One ship was hit but HMAS CASTLEMAINE's anti-aircraft gunfire was able to repulse the attack. The ship was refitted twice during the war, firstly in Sydney in 1943 then again Adelaide in 1944. On 29 August 1945 it arrived in Hong Kong and was engaged in mine clearance operations with the 21st and 22nd Minesweeping Flotillas until early October 1945. It then made a long passage home, via Morotai, Thursday Island and Townsville before arriving in Melbourne where it was paid off on the 16th December 1945. HMAS CASTLEMAINE remained laid up with the Reserve Fleet at Geelong until the mid 1950s when it was put back into service as an immobile training vessel for engine room artificers. It was based at HMAS Cerberus in Flinders at Westernport, Victoria. It was taken out of service in 1971, and in 1973 the ship was gifted to the Maritime Trust of Australia. It returned to Melbourne and was eventually berthed at Gem Pier in Williamstown. The rusty hull had been stripped bare of most items, and over a number of years volunteers refitted the hull with parts gathered from other sisterships being scrapped in Australia and New Zealand. In 2010 HMAS CASTLEMAINE remains at Gem Pier in good condition and open to the public on weekends and public holidays. The vessel has been refitted to interpret its wartime arrangement, and also includes a display of a variety of minesweeping equipment. Prepared with assistance from the Register of Australian and New Zealand Ships and Boats compiled by Mori Flapan; [www.boatregister.net](http://www.boatregister.net)

**Dimensions**

Vessel Dimensions: 56.69 m x 9.45 m x 2.51 m, 660 tonnes (186 ft x 31 ft x 8.25 ft, 649.44 tons)