

LIFE BEFORE SCUTTling - HISTORY OF THE EX-HMAS ADELAIDE



The HMAS Adelaide II, now known as the Ex-HMAS Adelaide, was a long-range escort frigate (Adelaide Class) with roles including area air defence, anti-submarine warfare, surveillance, reconnaissance, and interdiction.

The ship is 138.1 metres long, with a beam of 14.3 metres and an original displacement of 4,200 tonnes. The hull is made of steel and the superstructure of aluminium alloy.

The ship was built in the United States of America and was the first of six Adelaide class guided-missile frigates to be delivered to the Royal Australian Navy. The ship was launched in 1978, commissioned on 15 November 1980 and decommissioned on 19 January 2008.

While in service, the ship's company was 221 and she accommodated up to two S-70B-2 Seahawk helicopters and was fitted with two sets of Mk 32 triple torpedo tubes to provide a counter to submarines. The ship was propelled by two General Electric LM2500 gas turbines driving a single controllable pitch propeller, achieving a speed of 30 knots.

The principal weapon systems consisted of:

- 76mm Rapid Fire Gun
- Harpoon Anti-ship Missiles
- SM2 Surface-to-Air Missiles
- Evolved Sea Sparrow Surface-to-Air Missiles
- Mk 41 Vertical Launch System
- Mk 13 Missile Launcher
- Phalanx Close-in Weapons System
- Nulka, Pirate, Seagnat and Lescut decoy systems
- 2 Mk 32 triple torpedo tubes Mk 46 torpedoes

Heights were about 12m to the main deck, 18m to the bridge, 24m to the top of the foremast (the mast closest to the bow), and 39m to the top of the mainmast.

The Ex-HMAS Adelaide participated in the 1990/91 Gulf War, in peacekeeping operations in East Timor in 1999 and 2006, and was deployed to the Arabian Gulf in 2001 and 2004.

The ship was also involved in the high profile search and rescue of solo yachtsmen Thierry Dubois and Tony Bullimore from the Southern Ocean in 1997.

Five former warships have already been scuttled as dive sites in Australia:

- ex-HMAS Swan and ex-HMAS Perth in Western Australia (in December 1997 and November 2001 respectively)
- ex-HMAS Hobart in South Australia (November 2002)
- ex-HMAS Brisbane in Queensland (July 2005)
- ex-HMAS Canberra in Victoria (October 2009)

The 'Adelaide' name will live on with the third HMAS Adelaide due to be commissioned with the Royal Australian Navy in June 2015. It will be the second of two Canberra Class Amphibious Assault Ships.



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