

[19/08/01 HMAS BRISBANE - A Capital Gift for Queensland](#)

The Liberal-National Government will gift a 34 year Naval veteran of the Vietnam and Gulf Wars to the people of Queensland, the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, Bruce Scott, announced today. Mr Scott announced the gifting of HMAS Brisbane to Queensland, as the last of the Royal Australian Navy's guided missile destroyers sailed up the Brisbane River on her final goodwill visit to the city that shares her name.

"HMAS Brisbane has proudly served Australia throughout more than 30 years distinguished Naval service and holds the distinction of being the only RAN unit, currently in commission, to have served in two wars," Mr Scott said.

"HMAS Brisbane had two tours off Vietnam and was part of the Australian task force during the 1990/91 Gulf War.

"She made her first visit to the City of Brisbane, marked by a Freedom of Entry March, in 1968 and I am proud to say this five day visit, her last as a commissioned ship of the RAN, will not be her last to Queensland waters.

"In view of HMAS Brisbane's unique military history and significance to Queensland, the Minister for Defence, Peter Reith, has asked the Premier of Queensland to examine options for the preservation of HMAS Brisbane as a floating memorial. If this is not viable to the Queensland Government the obvious choice is for HMAS Brisbane to be sunk as a dive-wreck.

"The Queensland Premier has already indicated his strong support to sink HMAS Brisbane off Queensland's Sunshine Coast for use as a recreational dive-wreck, and I am also aware of other parties who have indicated a willingness to preserve the ship on and above water. The Australian War Memorial in Canberra has also expressed an interest in obtaining items of equipment and structure from HMAS Brisbane."

Mr Scott said he was conscious of the high costs involved in preserving a warship and indicated that if preservation of the whole ship was not feasible, then the Commonwealth would seek to remove significant parts of the vessel for the Australian War Memorial and City of Brisbane, with the hulk being sunk as a recreational dive wreck off the Sunshine Coast as originally proposed by the Queensland Premier.

"This is the first time that a gift of this type has been presented to Queensland by the Federal Government and it is fitting that all options be thoroughly considered before HMAS Brisbane's final resting-place is determined."

An announcement on whether HMAS Brisbane is to be preserved after naval service, or sunk as a dive-wreck, will be made in the next few months, Mr Scott said.

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MEDIA BACKGROUNDER: HMAS BRISBANE- DDG 41

HMAS BRISBANE, a Charles F. Adams Class DDG, was built by the Defoe Shipbuilding Company in the USA, and commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) on 16 December 1967.

Although its main task is air defence of the fleet, the ship has also significant surface and shore bombardment gunnery and anti-missile capabilities. The air defence system is based on the Standard Missile System and its associated high-definition radars for medium-range anti-air warfare (AAW). Supporting the ship's onboard missile system are two five-inch (127mm) automatic rapid fire guns, machine guns, two sets of anti-submarine torpedoes and, for self-defence, the ship can be fitted with a pair of Vulcan close-in-weapon systems (CIWS) to provide protection against missiles, such as Exocet.

BRISBANE has maintained its capability over its 34 years of service to Australia through a series of upgrades and modernisations that have enabled the ship to remain in frontline service until decommissioning in October 2001. The improvements made to BRISBANE over time include a new RAN-designed communications system, the fitting of a chaff decoy system to confuse incoming missiles, an improved Naval Combat Data System, upgraded gunnery and radars, the capability to launch Harpoon anti-ship missiles, the fitting of military satellite communications (SATCOM), an Electro-Optical Tracking System (EOTS) and new rigid inflatable boats.

BRISBANE is the second Australian ship to bear the name, the first being a First World War light cruiser, which

served the RAN from 1916 until its disposal in 1935.

In 2001, BRISBANE decommissions and will celebrate its 34 years of service with a number of ceremonies, the 'Freedom of Entry' march on 18 August being one of them. BRISBANE first exercised its right on the 18th October 1968, being the first ship to exercise this honour. BRISBANE has since exercised this right in five subsequent marches. During its 34 year service BRISBANE visited its namesake city no fewer than 23 times, has steamed over one million nautical miles and experienced numerous tours of duty in South East Asian and Pacific region. Highlights have included two tours of Vietnam in 1969 and 1971, where she served with distinction, Cyclone Tracey clean-up operations, attendance at the Queens Silver Jubilee in Great Britain in 1977, and two deployments to the north-west Indian Ocean in 1981 and 1984 in support of USN Operations during the Tanker War in the Persian Gulf. More recently the ship conducted operations with the Multi National Naval Forces in the Persian Gulf conflict. HMAS BRISBANE remains the last RAN ship to have fired its guns in anger in Vietnam, and is the only RAN unit currently in commission to have served in two wars.

While BRISBANE is the last steam powered ship in the RAN, its decommissioning will herald the passing of the Guided Missile Destroyer class that, in the 1960s, embraced new technology and brought the RAN into the missile age.

Number: 41
Name: BRISBANE
Laid Down: 5 February 1965
Launched: 5 May 1966
Commissioned: 16 December 1967
Builder: Defoe Shipbuilding Co, USA
Displacement: 4,720 tonnes
Length: 133.2 metres
Beam: 4.3 metres
Armament: Two 5-inch rapid fire guns, Standard anti-air missile system, two Vulcan Phalanx close-in-weapon systems, two triple-mount torpedo tubes, .5-calibre machine guns.
Machinery: Two GE geared steam turbines driving two shafts, producing 70,000 shaft horsepower.
Speed: 35 knots
Ship Company: 313 (normal)
Cost at build: \$45 Million including spares and ammunition

© Media Release Hon Peter Reith MP, Minister for Defence, Leader of the House of Representatives, Canberra.
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