

TRAWLER BUILT AT SWANSEA

A trawler, built for Mr. R. M. McLellan, of Sydney, designed by Mr. A. C. Barber, naval architect, of Sydney, and built by Mr. J. L. Boyd, of Swansea, will be launched on Saturday afternoon.

The vessel is 60 feet long, with a 16ft. beam, depth of 17ft. 6in., 7ft. 10in. draught, and of approximately 75 tons. The boat is constructed mainly of local hardwoods. The 12in. by 12in. ironbark keel, was supplied by Mr. J. Thomas, of Mandalong. The keel and keelson are fastened with 7-8in. gunmetal screw bolts. The ribs are ti-tree, joined with oak dowels, and the planking of blue gum is secured by gunmetal dumps. The deck is of beech.

After the launching, the vessel will be fitted with a mast, wheelhouse, cool room, and accommodation for the crew. It will then be towed to Sydney to be fitted with trawling gear, and a Lister Diesel engine of 120 horse-power.

On completion of this vessel, Mr. Boyd has an order to build a trawler 65ft. long.

NEW BOAT LAUNCHED.

Koonya, an auxiliary cruiser, was launched yesterday from the yard of C. A. M. Fisher, La Perouse. Built to the designs of Mr. A. C. Barber, naval architect, the new ship, which is owned by Mr. Harry Maxwell, is 31ft 6in overall, with a beam of 9ft, and a draught of 4ft 9in. It is designed for coastal cruising, but will make an appearance in the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club's fleet next year.

WOODEN SHIPS.

NAVAL ARCHITECT'S DEFENCE

START OF GREAT INDUSTRY.

Mr. A. C. Barber, A.M.I.N.A., naval architect to Messrs. Kay, MacNicol, and Co., referred yesterday to recently published criticisms on the Commonwealth Government's scheme to construct wooden vessels of Australian hardwoods. Mr. Barber was the architect of 12 of the vessels for which contracts have been let, six being under construction by the Wallace Power Boat Company, Ltd., of Sydney, and six by Messrs. Kidman and Mayoh, of Sydney.

Regarding the financial aspect of the question as to whether the present contracts should be proceeded with, Mr. Barber said that since the estimates on which the contracts were based were drawn up the cost of many of the materials had doubled in price. On the present rates, and those which were likely to prevail during the period of construction, it was not probable that any unreasonable profit would accrue to the contractors.

"As regards the alleged unsuitability of wooden vessels to compete in the maritime trade of the world," said Mr. Barber, "one might reflect for a few moments on the vast quantity of perishable goods which were imported to this country in the early days, when there was no other method of sea transport than in wooden hulls.

"It has been contended that the hardwood vessels will be leaky and unsuitable for cargo other than timber and coal. There are few people in this country who have given more than a passing thought to hardwood vessels, and it is manifestly absurd to compare them with the softwood vessels built in America, as the strengths of the two woods are in the proportion of six to one. In other words, when hardwood vessels are carefully designed they are almost as strong and more durable than steel. The question of water tightness of a vessel depends chiefly on the care taken thoroughly to caulk the seams, and if this is done by hand, as set out in the specification, there should be no necessity for recaulking the Australian vessels to any extent for a period of from six to seven years. In America the vessels have latterly been caulked by

period of from six to seven years. In America the vessels have latterly been caulked by pneumatic tools, in order to save labour and time, with the result that the work has had to be gone over by hand at the end of the voyage. The specification of the Australian vessels calls for six threads of oakum in each seam. This amounts to filling the seams of the planks completely with this special water-resisting material, and is on an average of three times more than is usually found in American-built vessels coming to this port.

"The design of 12 of the vessels about to be constructed is rather unique, as they have double bottoms, similar to the present-day steel vessels, and are designed on the most scientific methods known to naval architects, and, therefore, apart from the great advantages of being constructed of specially selected Australian hardwoods, cannot be compared with the soft wood vessels of America. 'Tween decks have been fitted for a specific purpose, firstly to make the vessel more rigid, and thereby eliminate the racking strains which take place in a vessel's hull at sea; secondly, as a separate floor space for carrying general cargo, and thereby giving the ship's master a better opportunity to load his cargo to the best advantage. One of the reasons why the American vessels strain and leak is that there are not any 'tween decks. Lloyd's rules require 'tween decks to be fitted, or other adequate compensation in lieu of them. The vessels to be built in Australia have received Lloyd's highest standard of classification, viz., 100 A1 for 12 years.

"The statement has been made that the specification calls for velvet upholstered easy chairs for the engineers. This is not correct. The cabin's accommodation is of the plainest, and is strictly in accordance with the Commonwealth Navigation Bill.

"The completion of the Government's wooden shipbuilding programme, which will involve the expenditure of over £1,000,000, must have far-reaching effects, including that of stimulating the trade and industry in Sydney to an appreciable extent. It behoves those who have the interests of the State at heart to make this industry a success and a stepping-stone to greater things in the development of Australia's mercantile marine."



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HMAS Patricia Cam

A wooden motor vessel built by G. Beattie at Brisbane Waters, NSW, *Patricia Cam* began life as a tuna fishing boat for Cam & Sons Pty Ltd of Sydney. The minelaying activities of German Surface raiders in 1940-41 highlighted the shortage of suitable vessels to keep Australian sea lanes clear of this threat and *Patricia Cam* was requisitioned as an auxiliary minesweeper. She commissioned on 3 March 1942 under the command of Lieutenant John A. Grant, [RANR\(S\)](#).

On 8 March 1942 *Patricia Cam* sailed from Sydney and headed north. Arriving in Darwin on 5 April, she was employed as a general purpose vessel, which included store carrying and in May salvage on the wreck of the American ship *Don Isidoro*. The transportation of personnel and supplies around the north and north-western coastline continued throughout 1942.

Joining *Patricia Cam* in January 1943, her new First Lieutenant, Sub-Lieutenant John Leggoe, [RANVR](#), had this to say about his new home:

Patricia Cam was really nothing more than a vast wooden hold with an engine room right aft. The low after superstructure consisted of two cabins, mine and one shared by the engine-room artificers (ERAs) and the coxswain, a tiny wardroom mess just big enough to take a table and a couple of benches, and the galley. On the deck above were the wheelhouse and chartroom and the Captain's cabin. Above the wheelhouse was a compass platform and just forward of the wheelhouse was the mainmast. Right forward on the forecastle was a tall foremast carrying the topping lift for an enormous boom which was used for working cargo at the various coastwatching and mission stations around the coast. The wick on the forecastle was driven by a rowdy diesel engine which was also used for weighing the anchor. A point-five machine gun, which swayed from side to side on its mounting, seemed to be something of an afterthought. The ship's company consisted of eight seamen, three stokers, a cook, a steward, a telegraphist, a coxswain and three ERAs they lived in a fairly capacious but cockroach-ridden forecastle. When the tropical rain squalls of the Wet swept over



Type
Build
Com
Deco
Fate
Displ
Leng
Bean
Drau
Spee
Crew
Macl

the ship the forecastle leaked like a sieve. The crew, a magnificent bunch clad only in brief shorts and tanned like bronze statues, lived most of their time on top of the huge hatch.

Guns

Othe

Battl

Early on the morning of 13 January 1943 *Patricia Cam* sailed from Darwin, once again carrying stores and passengers for several outlying missions. On 19 January she left Goulburn Island for Millingimbi Mission. Arriving on the afternoon of the following day she then departed on 22 January for Elcho Island. In addition to her crew she carried the Reverend Leonard N. Kentish, Chairman of the Methodist five aboriginal passengers. One of the latter, Paddy from Millingimbi, was a native pilot; one of a number of coa navigation among the uncharted reefs and shoals.

Enemy reconnaissance floatplanes, based at Dobe in the Aru Islands and colloquially known as 'Floatplane Joe' along Australia's northern coast. With no radar, ships relied on the eyes and ears of their lookouts for warning. , was in position 11° 19' South, 136° 23' East on a course for Wessel Island, a plane was seen and heard by sev point of releasing a bomb. The aircraft, a three seater twin-floatplane from the Japanese Naval Air Arm's 734th engine shut down, passing over *Patricia Cam* from stern to stem at no more than 100 feet above the mast.

The bomb landed amidships in the centre of the cargo hatch and exploded in the bottom planking. *Patricia Cam* the ship's company were sitting on the forward hatch when the explosion occurred and were thrown down the h again by the inrush of water. Both ship's boats were destroyed but the life-raft remained intact. One sailor, Ordri with the ship.

While the survivors were bunched in a small area the plane returned and dropped its second bomb, killing AB E passengers. The plane then continued to circle for about half an hour, the rear machine gunner regularly firing i scoring any hits. The plane then flew away to the northward, but returned five minutes later and alighted on the beckoned for someone to swim over. No one accepted the invitation and the plane taxied in a circle closer to w some floating hatch covers. Threatened with a revolver, Mr Kentish was ordered to swim over to the aircraft and board. The plane thereupon took off and finally disappeared to the north.

After the departure of the plane the injured were placed on the raft, while most of the remaining survivors gathe Ordinary Seaman Andrew A. Johnston and Chief ERA William R. Moffitt, remained at some distance still clingin swim to the remainder, they were not seen again after nightfall and were presumed lost. The main group of sun were unable to make headway against a strong current which swept their raft south. After a hard pull with make rocky islet about two miles west of Cumberland Strait at 0330 on 23 January. Stoker Percival J. Cameron died c of the aboriginals later in the day.



Survivors of Patricia Cam at Darwin

Paddy and the other surviving passenger succeeded in lighting a fire within a few minutes of landing and this was ample fresh water but the only food was provided by shellfish and an edible root shown to them by the two aboriginal natives from Wessel Island arrived by canoe and took the commanding officer, Lieutenant A.C. (Sandy) Meldrum. Supplied by his rescuers with food and water, he faced an agonising 35 mile march through the rock and scrub and staggered into the Coastwatching Station at Jensen Bay at 2100 on 26 January. Already, however, a RAAF Beaufort had sighted the box raft drawn up on the beach and the frantically waving survivors, who had written in large letters "plenty water". Food and a first aid kit were dropped off the following morning. The survivors were rescued by HMAS Darwin two days later.



Patricia Cam beach message which read, 'PATCAM - Bombed - No Food - Plenty Water'

Reverend Kentish's fate remained unknown until after the war. Investigations by the Allied Occupation Force in prisoner at Dobe until 4 May 1943 and then beheaded. Interrogations of former Japanese naval personnel ever Maugan had carried out the execution. Following his arrest and trial this officer was hanged at Stanley Gaol, Hc

Commanding Officers

Commanding Officer	Assumed Command
Lieutenant John A. Grant, RANR (S)	March 1942
Sub-Lieutenant George F. Stooke, RANVR	June 1942
Lieutenant Alexander C. Meldrum, RANR (S)	October 1942

Further Reading

1. John Leggoe, *Trying To Be Sailors*, Perth, St. George Books, 1983.

COFY.

Commanding Officer, H.M.A.S. "PLATYPUS".

21st. August, 1943. PP.202/9/3614.

Commanding Officer, H.M.A.S. "PENGUIN".

SUPPLY OF PLANS ETC. OF H.M.A.S. "PATRICIA CAM" BY
A.C. BARBER, NAVAL ARCHITECT.

The attached account for £49-7-0 for supplying set of blue prints, etc. of "Patricia Cam" has been received in H.M.A.S. "Platypus".

2. From the file attached - which is incomplete, it would appear Acting Commander J. Donovan, R.A.N., then in Command of H.M.A.S. "Platypus" may have knowledge of the circumstances leading to their supply. As it is possible that it may not have been intended to incur cost to obtain these plans, no Finance Authority to cover cost of purchase would exist.

3. It is requested that Lieutenant Commander Donovan may report any circumstances that he may recollect connected with the supply of these plans.

(Sgd) G.L. CANT.

A/Commander, R.A.N.

H.M.A.S. "PENGUIN".
(H.M.A.S. "GASCOYNE".)
at Morts Dock, Balmain.
14th September, 1943.

The Commanding Officer,
H.M.A.S. "PENGUIN".

Submitted:

I do not think that my letter to Mr. Barber, of which I have not a copy, could reasonably be interpreted as a Service Order to supply a set of plans at a price of 47 guineas. There was no financial authority obtained as it was never intended to incur any expense.

The contingent circumstances, which may be of interest was as follows. "PATRICIA CAM" was at that time a tender to "PLATYPUS" operated by N.O.I.C. Darwin. I was in considerable doubt as to whether she was sufficiently strongly constructed for anything other than local duties particularly in the "wet" or bad weather season. She had been built for Cam and Sons Pty. Ltd., Trawler Owners of Sydney and had been transferred from their ownership to H.M.A.Navy. I heard from the Engineer Officer of "CASTLEMAINE" (I forget his name) who had joined the Navy from the employ of Red Funnel Trawlers, that when "PATRICIA CAM" was under construction, Mr. Cam insisted on incorporating some of his own ideas so extraordinary that the Naval Architect, Mr. Barber withdrew from supervision of her construction. Engineer Officer "CASTLEMAINE" expressed the opinion that if I wrote to Mr. Barber he would probably inform me as to these circumstances of her construction and agree that I mention his name in my letter to Mr. Barber. Mr. Barber in his reply made no mention of this incident but informed me of the duty for which she was designed and also included a set of plans which were ultimately landed to N.O.I.C. Darwin on transfer of "PATRICIA CAM" to "MELVILLE".

(Sgd) J. DONOVAN.

Lieutenant Commander.