

## Attack class patrol boat

By the 1960s Australia was closely involved in events in the Asia-Pacific region, and was no longer depending on a British strategic presence close to the north in Malaya and Singapore. The effect of this on naval strategy was a greater commitment to improving surveillance and control of our enormous coastline, especially the northern approaches.

The 20 Attack class patrol boats built for the Royal Australian Navy between 1967 and 1969 reflected this greater regional concern. Their work included control of illegal fishing, smuggling and immigration, search and rescue, and occasional inshore survey work. HMAS *Advance* – the third of the class – was built by Walkers Ltd of Maryborough, Queensland and commissioned in 1968.

The Attack class reflected a stage in the development of high-speed patrol boat design, which had moved away from short-range, petrol-driven timber craft to medium-range diesel vessels. The hulls were of steel while the superstructures were of aluminium. They were lightly armed for small-scale encounters, with one 40 mm Bofors gun and two 0.5-inch machine guns to put warning shots across the bows of a suspect vessel.

These patrol boats drew upon designs from Britain and the USA. They used much British equipment, such as the Paxman main engines, but they also foreshadowed the RAN's increasing swing to US equipment with American generators. An Australian modification was the use of readily available commercial components in some of the fitout. This was because of their need to operate in remote northern waters far from military bases, where their best supply source might be the hardware store of an isolated coastal town.

*Advance* served out of Darwin in patrol boat squadrons until 1980. In that time it helped shadow a Russian fishing boat suspected of spying, dispersed large numbers of illegal foreign fishing boats, weathered Cyclone Tracy in 1974, assisted in hydrographic surveys of the northwest coast, and featured in the popular ABC-TV series *Patrol Boat*.

When the Attack class was superseded by the larger Fremantle class patrol boat, *Advance* became a training ship for the Naval Reserve. Decommissioned in 1988, *Advance* was transferred to the Museum in operational condition.

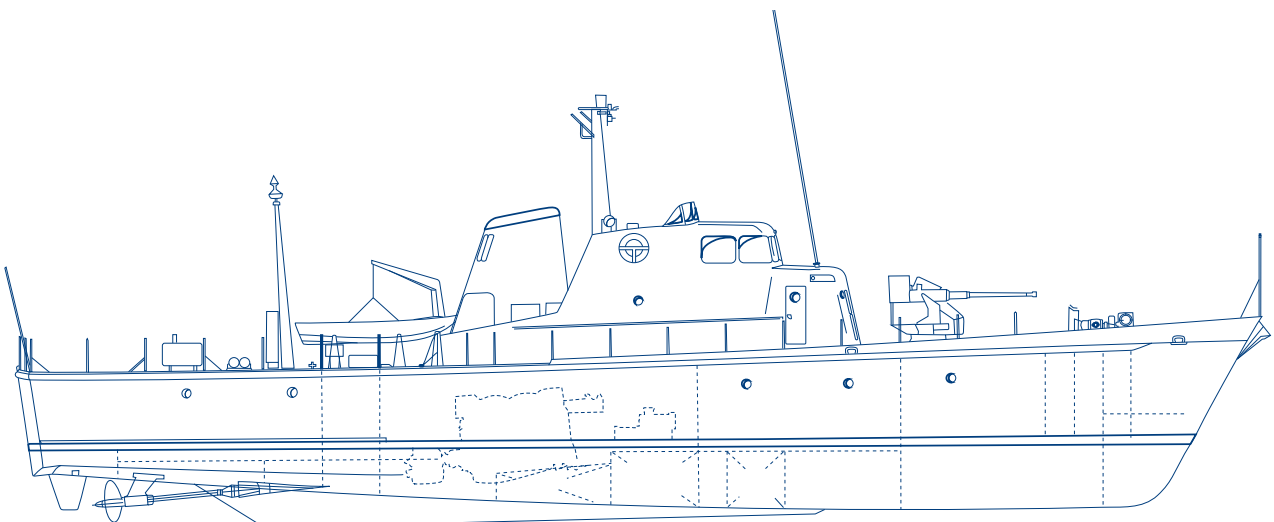


## Specifications

Commissioned 1968

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Length       | 32.8 m  |
| Breadth      | 6.1 m   |
| Draught      | 2.2 m   |
| Displacement | 148.3 tonnes  |
| Engines      | Two Paxman V16 Ventura turbo-charged diesels 2611 kW, twin screws |
| Speed        | 21 knots (3 officers, 16 sailors)                                 |
| Complement   | 19  |
| Builder      | Walkers Ltd of Maryborough, Queensland                            |

ANMM Collection



Front: HMAS *Advance* at speed Photographer ANMM  
Above: General plan Reproduced courtesy Department of Defence