

Ex-Japanese fishing vessel, WWII commando raider

Built in 1934 in Japan and originally named *Kofuku Maru* (Happiness or Good Fortune), *Krait* collected fish from fishermen and ports around the Rhio Archipelago and took the catch to the Singapore markets. It took food, water and other supplies to the fishing fleet.

Confined to port early in World War II, the boat was used by Captain Bill Reynolds to evacuate hundreds of civilians to nearby Sumatra. It was soon proposed that the vessel be used as part of a covert operation. Renamed *Krait* (after a deadly species of snake) its most famous hour came in 1943 when a 14-strong company of British and Australian army and naval personnel set out on a daring commando night raid on shipping in the Singapore Roads.

Codenamed Operation Jaywick, *Krait* was disguised as a Japanese fishing boat and successfully taken to within 20 miles of Singapore itself. Three pairs of operatives in folboats (folding canoes) attached limpet mines to and blew up or damaged seven

Japanese tankers and freighters totalling some 37,000 tonnes.

Krait then operated out of Darwin as a coastwatch and intelligence support vessel in Indonesia. Commissioned HMAS *Krait* in 1944, the vessel witnessed the Japanese surrender at Ambon in September 1945 and after the war was handed to the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit.

Krait was bought by a British sawmiller for the Borneo timber trade – and renamed *Pedang* (Sword). In the late 1950s two Australians recognised *Krait* whilst on a timber-related business trip. A public appeal followed and the *Krait* Trust Fund was formed to purchase the vessel and return it to Australia – which it did successfully in 1964. The vessel was operated by the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol for patrol, search and rescue, boating courses and school visits. It was transferred to the Australian War Memorial in 1985 and has been cared for by ANMM since 1987.

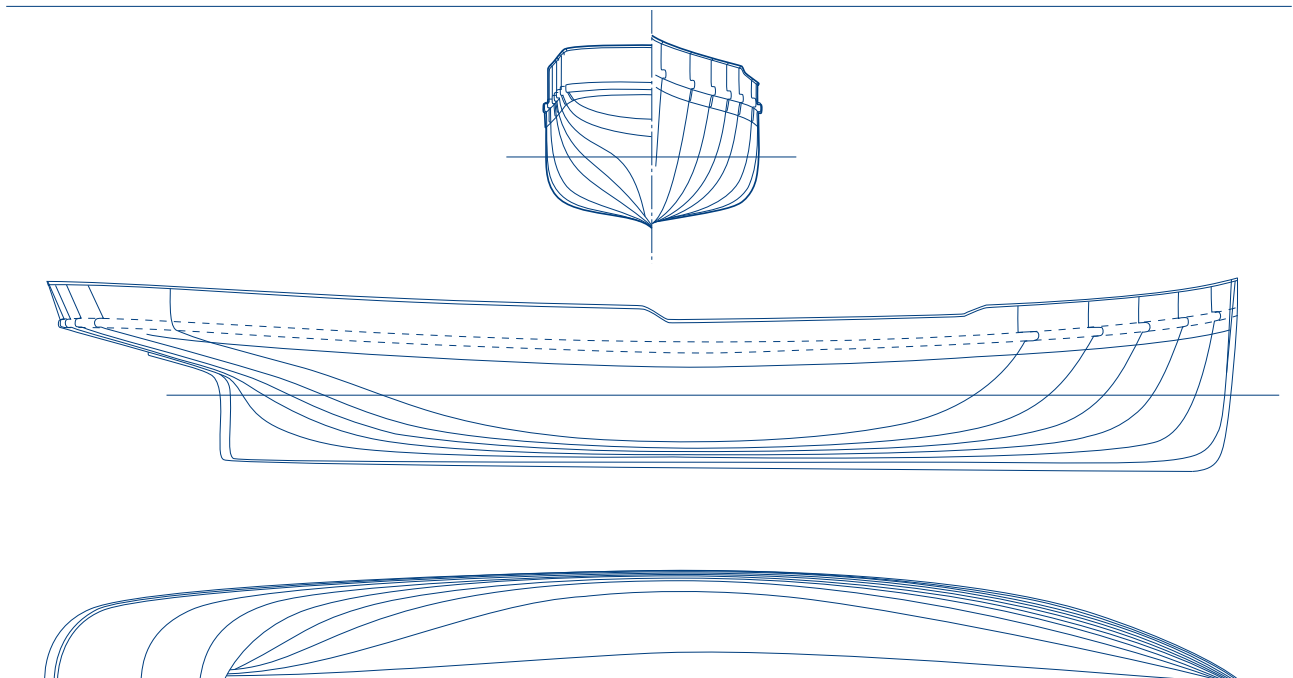


Specifications

Built 1934

Length	21.33 m
Breadth	3.35 m
Draught	1.5 m
Displacement	35.27 tonnes
Construction	Carvel timber, teak planking
Engine	6-cylinder Gardner diesel 85 kW

Lent by the Australian War Memorial



Front: Training on Sydney's Pittwater 1942 Reproduced courtesy Australian War Memorial
Above: Plans reproduced courtesy Department of Defence ANMM Collection