

## L 51 Kanimbla [Newport Mod] - 2001 2x LCM-8, 2x LARC-5

### Australia

Type: LPD - Amphibious Transport Dock

Vessel

Max Speed: 20 kt

Commissioned: 2001

Decommissioned: 2011

Length: 159.2 m

Beam: 21.2 m

Draft: 5.8 m

Crew: 231

Displacement: 8000 t

Displacement Full: 8770 t

Propulsion: 6x Alco 16-251 Diesels



### Sensors / EW:

- Type 1007 - (1988, KH 1007) Radar, Radar, Surface Search & Navigation, Max range: 177.8 km

---

### Weapons / Loadouts:

- 20mm/85 Mk15 Phalanx Blk 1 Burst [300 rnds] - Gun. Air Max: 1.5 km.

---

Because of the Navy's emphasis on speed, it was mandated that this class be able to sail at 20kts to keep up with task forces. To accomplish this; they required the unique horns and fold-down 110' ramp as bow doors could not withstand that speed.

These ships carried 500 tons of vehicles (29 M-60 tanks, or, 41 trucks for example) and many troops. A large helipad (but no hangar) could land all Navy and Marine Corps types. A stern ramp allowed drive-through loading. Two 36' LCPL's were embarked, and four pontoons could be strapped to the hull.

As built they had two open 3" mounts; later replaced by a single Phalanx. The Mk63 radars were removed from all ships in 1984. It was planned to add AN/SLQ-34 jammers and SRBOC decoy launchers, this was canceled after the Cold War ended.

Other uses for the ships were found; USS Newport acted as a mothership for the Pegasus-class PHMs, and in 1979 USS Barbour County was used as an experimental mini-tender to USS Los Angeles (SSN-688). In 1973, USS Cayuga delivered civilian fire trucks to Nicaragua after an earthquake; in 1979 she supported a census of the remote Western Caroline Islands in the Pacific. In 1982, USS Barbour County was used as an intelligence ship off the Soviet coast with ECM vans parked on the flight deck.

## **L 51 Kanimbla [Newport Mod] - 2001 2x LCM-8, 2x LARC-5**

In March of 1982, USS Newport participated in a joint exercise with Somalia. While docked at Berbera, the ship experienced an engine room fire which was repaired.

Annual operating costs were \$12 million. It was planned to keep Fresno, Tuscaloosa, Boulder and Racine in maintained reserve until 2009. This was canceled and their final disposition is pending; Boulder was cleared for scrapping/SINKEX use in 2008 and the other three in December 2009. Taiwan wants no more of the class, and Israel and Venezuela declined transfers. LaMoure County was also slated to be held in reserve after decommissioning, however she ran aground off Chile in 2001. A diver's inspection found the shafts were destroyed and the hull severely damaged. It was judged uneconomical to repair her and she was sunk as a target off the Chilean coast.

Combat Service: Almost the entire class participated in the Vietnam War, many of them serving multiple tours. Frederick, Peoria, and Barbour County also supported operation Eagle Pull in Cambodia. San Bernadino, Peoria, Frederick, Barbour County, and Tuscaloosa participated in Operation Frequent Wind in April 1975; the final evacuation of Saigon. Manitowoc, Sumter, and Barnstable County supported US activities in Lebanon during the 1980s. Barbour County and Barnstable County participated in the 1982 invasion of Grenada. Fourteen units were involved in Desert Storm in 1991. Spartanburg County and Barnstable County supported early-1990s operations in Somalia; the last combat for the class.

Original Author: Jason W. Henson