

Edwin Gerald Martin - Details of War Service

Edwin Gerald Martin (1897-1978), the grandson of John Coleman and Bridget Carrucan, had a distinguished war career which encompassed both the First and Second World Wars.

- 22.08.1897 Edwin Gerald Martin was born in Ballarat, Victoria
- 1912 Joined the senior cadets at Ballarat 70B
- 1912 Entered on a six years' apprenticeship with Cowley's foundry as a boilermaker.
- 17.08.1916 At the age of 18 years 11 months with the years of his apprenticeship still left to complete, he enlisted as a private in the Australian Imperial Forces in Melbourne; at that time he was living with his parents as 45 Lal Lal Street in Ballarat East; he was enrolled in the 21st Rfn Unit in the Eighth Battalion
- 02.10.1916 Embarked for active service abroad on the "Nestor" in Melbourne
- 16.11.1916 Disembarked in Plymouth
- 21.11.1916 Marched out to Fovent
- 20.01.1917 Sick to Parkhouse Hospital
- 09.02.1917 Marched from hospital into the Second Training Battalion in No 5 & 6 Camps at Durrington
- 13.03.1917 Proceeded overseas from the port of Folkestone to France from the Second Training Battalion
- 15.03.1917 Marched into First Australian Divisional Base Depot, Estaples
- 01.04.1917 Joined the Eighth Battalion in France
- 31.5.1917 Contracted trench fever
- 01.06.1917 Admitted to the First ADR Station with trench fever
- 17.06.1917 Embarked for England
- 18.06.1917 Admitted to Bath War Hospital with trench fever (slight) and Pyrexia (fever)
- 28.08.1917 Discharged from hospital on furlough and to report to the Training Depot, Cedford on 11.09
- 11.09.1917 Reported to the Training Depot, Cedford on 11.09
- 22.09.1917 Marched out to the Overseas Training Bde, Longbridge Deverill
- 20.10.1917 Proceeded from Longbridge Deverill overseas to France via Southampton
- 21.10.1917 Marched into the First Australian Divisional Base Depot, at Le Havre
- 01.11.1917 Rejoined the Eighth Battalion
- 27.01.1918 Proceeded on leave
- 16.02.1918 Rejoined unit from leave
- 24.06.1918 Admitted to 2nd A.F.Ame with influenza
- 01.07.1918 Transferred to 10th Conv. Depot
- 09.07.1918 Discharged from hospital to base depot; offence cault (1) breaking out of camp (2) drunk in town
- 12.07.1918 Award deprived of 21 days' pay by Lieutenant-Colonel C. Myles
- 21.07.1918 Rejoined the Eighth Battalion
- 25.08.1918 Wounded (gassed)
- 25.08.1918 Admitted to the 2nd A.F.Ame, gassed
- 28.08.1918 Invalided to U.K. wounded and embarked for England
- 30.08.1918 Admitted to Beaufort War Hospital in Bristol, gassed
- 09.09.1918 Transferred to the third Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford

- 07.10.1918 Discharged from hospital to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth
- 26.10.1918 AWL from Sutton Veny for six days from 26.10 to 1.11
- 05.11.1918 Award 12 days' F.P. the total forfeit 18 days' pay by Major A.N. Aitken
- 22.11.1918 Marched out to the Overseas Training Brigade, Longbridge Deverill
- 25.01.1919 Embarked from England on the "Ceramic" to return to Australia
- 23.03.1919 Disembarked in Melbourne
- 24.06.1919 Discharged from the AIF at Melbourne as being medically unfit with the disability of having been gassed.

There is a story that, when he returned to Ballarat after being demobbed, Ted Martin and another local returned serviceman were invited by an elegant Ballarat lady to tea as a sign of her gratitude to them for fighting for their country. When they sat down to tea at the table groaning with cakes and other good things, she pointed to various items and told them not to eat them because she was keeping them for Sunday tea. If they would like to have some, they were welcome to come back them.

Not much has been recorded about Ted's immediate post-war life. But he must have recovered enough from his war injuries to be able to join the Royal Australian Navy.

- 01.06.1920 Entered the Royal Australian Navy, exactly one year after his discharge from the Army. He started with a contract for seven years and was sent first to the "Cerberus" In the initial period he was on the "Cerberus" the "Brisbane", the "Penguin", the "Marguerite" and then the "Brisbane" and the "Cerberus" again.
 - 19.01.1926 Stationed at the London Depot and was there for eighteen months, returning to Australia.
 - 1927(??) Married Lillian Edith Martin (Nig) at St Peter's Church, Eastern Hill, Melbourne
 - 01.06.1927 Taking leave, he and Nig went to England for their honeymoon. Since he was stationed in Sydney, they made their home at Ford Street, Mona Vale.
 - 03.08.1927 Rejoined the Australia for eight months and for the next twelve years served again on the "Australia" (twice), the "Adelaide", the "Cerberus", the "Penguin" (three times) , the "Sydney", the "Vendetta", the "Waterhen" and the "Sydney".
- During this time Ted had an impeccable record, his character rating being always "very good" and between 1922 and 1925 he was granted the first, second and third good conduct badges. Moreover, he undertook various courses to improve his skill as an engineer. His naval records give him the highest rating for his ability.
- 19.06.1931 Completed the Advanced Engineering Certificate, gaining a result of 80%.

Just before the outbreak of the Second World War, the effects of the gassing in the First World War were beginning to weaken him and he retired, only to be recalled when war was declared in September 1939. From 01.09.1939 to 27.12.41 he was on the "Australia", serving through the Battle of Britain. On 26.03.1941 he was mentioned in dispatches for his "skill, courage and devotion to duty". Thereafter he was on various other vessels until the end of the war. He was discharged on 16.11.1945.

At the end of the war he was suffering badly from shell shock and it was the care of nursing by Nig that brought him through. As part of his rehabilitation, it was deemed suitable for him to take on some part-time work. He worked at the Ford Pill factory and his engineering skills were so great that he greatly improved their output. Indeed, the firm was keen for him to stay there as long as he wished.

Ted and Nig moved back to Victoria to be near Nig's ageing mother at Doncaster. Having lived in an idyllic setting at Mona Vale, they did not wish to live in an urban setting. Therefore, they bought a house in a rural setting in Burke Road, Upper Ferntree Gully, not far from the Dandenong Ranges.

Unfortunately, their only child died, but they were very popular with their nephews and nieces in Melbourne.

Nig died on 29.10.1975 and Ted on 12.11.1978

Honours and Awards (Index to Recommendations:
Second World War, Korean War, and Malayan Emergency)

YOUR SEARCH RETURNED 2 RECORDS.

	Martin, Edwin Gerald
Service Number:	12460
Service:	RANR
Award:	British Empire Medal
	Martin, Edwin Gerald
Service Number:	
Service:	RAN
Award:	Mention in Dispatches

Service record

Name	MARTIN, EDWIN GERALD
Service	Royal Australian Navy
Service Number	12460
Date of Birth	22 Aug 1897
Place of Birth	BALLARAT, VIC
Date of Enlistment	1 Jun 1920
Locality on Enlistment	Unknown
Place of Enlistment	SYDNEY, NSW
Next of Kin	MARTIN, LILIAN
Date of Discharge	31 Oct 1945
Rank	CH ERA
Posting at Discharge	HMAS Rushcutter
WW2 Honours and Gallantry	British Empire Medal
Prisoner of War	No

Contact details for service records are available at Defence Service Records. On occasions the full service history of an individual will not be displayed. For further information, see Service

=====

NAME

MARTIN, Edwin Gerald

R.A.N.R

Award B.E.M.

Reg.No. 12460

Rank Chief ERA

Recommended by Governor-
Promulgated in *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* on

C.

H. File
L.A.NP

N/id

Promulgated in *London Gazette* on **2/7/41**

H. File BAN

11.0.

On

N/101) Outstanding zeal and. devotion to duty. Received from Secretary of Sta

Citation (G.

Insignia received from London by Commonwealth Navy: Board 1/1/42. ~ H. File

Insignia presented by **Rear**

Admiral

Muirhead—

Gould,

D.S.C,

HMAS "RUSHCUTTER"

On 27/5/42.

C. H. File OVERSEAS/i.

Other Awards

2876.

NAME

MARTIN, Edwin Gerald

Award.M.I.D.

Reg.No, -

Rank CHIEF E.R A Service R.A.N.

Recommended by Governor-General on

Promulgated in *London Gazette* on

Promulgated in *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* on

H. File)R.A.N N/101)Skill,

RAN N/102.

Insignia presented by

At On

C. H. File R.A.N. N/101

C. H. File

LA. N. IT/1•02—1 15~

BRIEF HISTORY ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY 1919 - 1939

1919

Submarine Depot Ship Platypus and six J Class Submarines join the R.A.N. Australia, Melbourne, Sydney and the Destroyer Flotilla return to Sydney. Sloops Marguerite, Geranium and Mallow transferred to the RAN. Admiral Lord Jellicoe arrives in Australia to report on Naval Defence. Rear Admiral Creswell retires from the Naval Board. Rear Admiral J.S. Dumaresq, the first Australian born officer hoists his flag in Command of the Australian Fleet.

1920

Destroyers Anzac (leader), Tasmania, Tattoo, Swordsman, Success and Stalwart commissioned into the RAN. Flinders Naval Base (later 'Depot') officially opened. Encounter paid off. HRH Prince of Wales reviews a fleet of 29 ships in Port Phillip. Naval Brigade becomes Royal Australian navy Reserve.

1921

Williamstown Naval Depot closed down. Australia Paid Off. RAN Survey Service begins.

1922

Washington Naval Treaty signed limiting the size and strength of the worlds navies the RAN suffers due to classification of being under the British navy.

1923

Eight ships only in commission. Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne, three destroyers, one sloop and one depot ship. Imperial Conference suggested that the RAN build or aquire four cruisers, six submarines and patrol vessels over a period of 13-14 years.

1924

Australia scuttled off Sydney in accordance with Washington Treaty. Four J Class Submarines sold. Yarra paid off. Adelaide joins Royal Navy as first exchange cruiser. RAN adopts five year program calling for two heavy cruisers, two submarines and one seaplane carrier. RN special service squadron (Hood, Repulse and five light cruisers visit Australia - sailed accompanied by Adelaide.

1925

Moresby commissioned for Survey work. Heavy Cruisers Australia and Canberra laid down. Submarines Otway and Oxley laid down. Stalwart paid off. Melbourne on exchange service with HMS Delhi.

1926

Recruiting of boys into RAN ceased. Seaplane Carrier Albatross laid down at Cockatoo Dock. Torrens paid off.

1927

Submarines Otway and Oxley Commissioned. Geranium paid off ending her career as a survey ship. Tingira paid off to become coal hulk in Sydney Harbour.

1928

Australia and Canberra 8" Cruisers commissioned. Sydney, Tasmania, Swan, Warrego, Huon and Parramatta paid off. Melbourne paid off in Portsmouth England and sold as scrap.

HMAS Vendetta

V & W Class Destroyers

Displacement (tons): 1,100 Standard, 1,470 Full Load
Dimensions (feet): 312.1 x 29.6 x 9.8
Propulsion: Brown Curtis Turbines, 27,000 hp, 2 shafts
Yarrow Turbines (Voyager)
Parsons Turbines (Waterhen)
Max. Speed (knots): 34
Armament: 4 x 4-inch, 1 x 2 pdr. pom-pom,
1 x Vickers MG, 4 x.303 Lewis MGs,
6 x 21-inch torpedo tubes, DCR

Complement: 127

No.	Name	Commissioned	Notes/Fate
I68	Vampire (I)	11/10/33	Trans'd from RN. Sunk in Indian Ocean 8/4/42.
I69	Vendetta (I)	11/10/33	Trans'd from RN. Decomm'd 27/11/45. Sold 20/3/46.
I31	Voyager (I)	11/10/33	Trans'd from RN. Total loss after running aground on Timor 23/9/42.
I22	Waterhen (I)	11/10/33	Trans'd from RN. Sunk in Mediterranean Sea 30/6/41.

Note: Vampire built by J. Samuel White, UK, Vendetta built by Fairfield Shipbuilding, UK, Voyager built by Alex Stephen, UK. and Waterhen built by Palmers Shipbuilding, UK.

HMAS Australia Association

as at 7/4/99

HMAS Australia II - Flagship of the RAN - Kent Class Heavy Cruiser Completed - 1928 Paid Off - 1954
Displacement - 15250 tons fully loaded Armament: 8 x 8 inch; 8 x 4 inch; 2 multiple Pom Pom
mounts; 12 Bofors and 10 Oerlikon A.A. Guns; 8 x 21 inch torpedo tubes; 1 Walrus Amphibian
Aircraft

HMAS Australia held one of the most notable fighting records of any Australian War Ship. In addition she had the longest life of any Australian War Ship - 1928-1955. A 10000 ton eight inch guns heavy cruiser, Australia saw war service on the fringes of both the Arctic and the Antarctic, experienced the Liverpool blitz while in dry dock, was present at both Dakar operations against the French fleet and escorted the famous Cunarders Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth carrying Australian troops to and from the Middle East. She was the Australian flag ship at the Battle of the Coral Sea the Battle of the Solomon's (Guadalcanal) both in 1942.

At eight landings on New Guinea and the Dutch East Indies during 1943 and 1944.

As Commodore Collins Flag Ship in October 1944, Australia was in action at the Battle of Leyte Gulf (Philippines) - the biggest naval battle in World History - during which she suffered heavy casualties from a Japanese Kamikaze air attack. After extensive repairs at an American navy Pacific base she was back in action in January 1945, this time as Commodore Farncomb's flag ship where she again suffered heavy casualties from Kamikaze aircraft being hit on five occasions over a period of five days. Australia was the first allied war ship to be attacked by deliberate Japanese Kamikaze aircraft. She finished the war as the most Kamikazied ship in the allied navy.

=====

R.A.N. Cruisers in WW2 - The Heavy Cruisers

by Paul Clayton

=====

A total of seven cruisers served with the RAN during World War II, all designed and built in Great Britain. These were the "Chatham" class light cruiser HMAS Adelaide, the "County" class cruisers Australia, (flagship) and Canberra, the "Amphion" Class cruisers Sydney, Perth, Hobart and the "County" Class cruiser Shropshire, transferred from Britain in 1943 as replacement for war losses Sydney, Perth, and Canberra.

=====

Between the Wars

During WW1 the RAN had a battle-cruiser, 3 "Chatham" light cruisers and 3 older cruisers transferred from the RN. HMAS Adelaide was launched in July 1918, too late for service. The Washington Treaty, age, and harsh economic conditions saw them all broken up, sunk or laid up in the 20's. The new force of cruisers took some time to acquire.

On 5th March 1925 the Australian Government approved the construction of 2 Kent Class heavy cruisers. HMAS Australia was launched at Clydebank, Scotland, on 17th Mar 1927, followed on 31st May by HMAS Canberra. They were commissioned in April and July 1928 under RN Captains. In 1932 the RAN was at its numerical lowest. Only Australia and Canberra, a WW1 destroyer and a seaplane carrier were in commission. Australia served with the Mediterranean Fleet in the 1930s.

HMAS Australia as commissioned. Original tall funnels; crane, catapult and aircraft not yet fitted. Official RAN photograph.

The County Class Heavy Cruisers - General Specifications at Outbreak of WW2

The RN's first genuine post-war cruisers were designed by Sir E.H. Tennyson d'Eyncourt. Subject to the 10,000 ton limit of the Washington Treaty, they sacrificed some protection and firepower to achieve unrivalled radius of action - vital for trade protection duties around the Empire. Moderate bulges over much of the hull protected against torpedoes and they were sub-divided to afford protection against flooding. The 13 ships of the County Class were built in three subgroups.

"Kent" Group

Australia (laid down 3/27), Berwick (3/26), Canberra (5/27), Cornwall (3/26), Cumberland (3/26), Kent (3/26), Suffolk (2/26)
 Displacement: 10,570 - 10,900 tons; Armament: 4x2 8", 4x2 4" (some 4x1) AA; Speed: 31.5 knots; Complement: 685.

"London" Group

Devonshire (10/27), London (9/27), Shropshire (7/28), Sussex (2/28)
 Displacement: 9830-9850 tons; Armament: 4x2 8", 8x1 4" AA; Speed: 32.2 knots; Complement: 700

"Dorsetshire" Group

Dorsetshire (1/29), Norfolk (12/28)
 Displacement: 9925-9957 tons; Armament: 4x2 8", 4x2 4" AA; Speed: 32.2 knots; Complement: 710.
 HMAS Australia HMAS Canberra HMAS Shropshire
 Laid Down 26th Aug 1925 9th Sep 1925 24th Feb 1927
 Builder John Brown & Co, Clydebank, Scotland John Brown & Co, Clydebank, Scotland William Beardmore, Dalmuir, Scotland
 Launched 17th March 1927 31st May 1927 5th July 1928
 Commissioned 24th April 1928 9th July 1928 (9/29 RN) 20th April 1943
 Fate Paid off: 31st August 1954 Sunk: 9th August 1942 Paid off: 16th July 1954
 =====

Australia (II) has a special place in naval memory. In her 27 years of service, she steamed over 600,000 miles. She served in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans, from the tropics to the icy Arctic Ocean and the fringe of the Antarctic. She was flagship under several distinguished RN and RAN Flag Officers and was the only Australian warship to experience kamikaze hits. Her proud record is unlikely to be eclipsed. She and the "gift ship" Shropshire are the only RAN WW2 cruisers whose names are not carried by a current ship of the Fleet. However, three of her Captains and Flag Officers are commemorated in the names of the new Collins Class submarines Collins, Farncomb and Dechaineux.

Specifications for HMA Ships Australia, Canberra, Shropshire

Displacement	10,000 tons std; actual 9830-9870; rose to over 11,000 by 1944.
Length (oa)	630 ft 4 in (Australia); 630 ft 1 in (Canberra); 632 ft 9 in (Shropshire)
Beam	68 ft 4 in (Australia); 68 ft 3 in (Canberra) ; 65 ft 8 in (Shropshire).
Draught (max)	21 ft 8 in (Australia) ; 21 ft 4 in (Canberra); 22 ft 7 in (Shropshire)
Machinery	Machinery Brown/Curtis HP(Australia & Canberra) and Parsons LP geared turbines; 8 Yarrow superheated boilers; 80,000 SHP, 4 shafts. Shropshire - all Parsons machinery.
Speed	31.5 knots; 32.5 knots (Shropshire)
Endurance	Approx. 13,000 miles at 12 knots; 2,900 miles at max. speed.
Fuel	Fuel oil: 3378 tons; Aviation spirit 1160 gallons
Armament	4 x 2 8-inch (150 rounds per gun); 8x1 4-inch AA replaced by 4x2 4" (Australia/Canberra); 2 x quad 21-inch TT (removed 1942/5 Australia/Shropshire); depth charges on rails (chutes - Shropshire).
Other armament	4 x 2 pdr Pom Poms; 4 x 3 pdr Hotchkiss; 4 x.303 Vickers mg; 12 x.303 Lewis mg (8 by WW2); Hotchkiss guns removed by WW2; Shropshire - 1943: 7x20mm twin Oerlikon, 4x20mm single Oerlikon; 2x8-barrel Pom Poms 12x2" projector rockets atop A turret; 1945: 5 single Bofors; 2x8-barrel pom-poms
Armour	Belt: 4"; deck: 1"; turrets: 3" (Australia)
Aircraft	One Seagull III - later Seagull V - on catapult (Australia lost 4 aircraft - 1 shot down at Dakar, 3 through crashes)
Modifications (Australia)	1938-9 major rebuild: 4-inch armour belt added, bridge and upper works altered, 4 twin replace single 4-inch mounts;

1942: torpedo tubes removed, 2 quad mach. guns removed, 7 single 20mm Oerlikon added, new radar set fitted;
 1943: tripod masts fitted;
 1944: spotter plane and catapult removed, 7 single 20mm replaced by 7 twin 20mm Oerlikons;
 1945: 8 single 40mm Bofors replace 20mm AA weapons, X turret removed after Lingayen Gulf.
 Modifications (Shropshire) 1941: 2x8-barrelled pop-poms fitted;

1942: single 4-inch mountings replaced by 4 twins, 7 single 20 mm Oerlikon fitted;
1942 (later): 3 more 20mm added; 1942-43 refit for RAN: 2 quad. mach. guns removed, four single 20mm removed and 7 twin 20mm fitted, aircraft fittings removed;
1945: torpedo tubes removed; all 20mm mountings removed and 11 single 40mm Bofors added.
Compliment Designed for 685; this varied considerably and rose to over 1000 at war's end.

Text copyright Paul Clayton, 1998. Last modified: 09-Mar-1998

Illustrations of HMAS's Canberra and Shropshire reproduced with kind permission of Paul Webb

=====
WW2 - The Early Days
=====

World War Two was in fact two conflicts with quite separate origins which eventually coalesced to create the first total conflict spanning the globe.

War in Europe began somewhat hesitantly in September 1939 with Germany invading Czechoslovakia and Poland. Germany invaded Norway and although the Norwegian military forces were relatively weak, her natural defences and the British stunted the Nazi advance. The lack of airfields within Norway and its distance from Britain meant that the RAF could not provide air cover to the ground troops. Britain's Fleet Air Arm stepped in to provide almost the sole air cover using Skua, Sea Gladiator and Swordfish aircraft operating from HM Ships Ark Royal, Furious and Glorious.

As in the First World War, Australians continued to serve with the British Armed Forces, many with distinction but a significant difference in this conflict was that many served as Australian Armed Force personnel on loan to the British.

Italy entered the war. France capitulated with the Vichy government agreeing to terms with the conquering Germans. Britain stood alone in Europe and could not risk having the relatively modern French Navy under German control. Offered a chance to surrender or face destruction, the French who were anchored in Dakar Harbour chose to fight. Aircraft from Hermes damaged the Richelieu with the battle cruiser Strasbourg being later scuttled at Toulon Naval base. HMAS Australia participated in that abortive raid on Dakar Harbour with Flight Lieutenant George Clarke, RAAF, Lieutenant Commander (O) Francis K. Fogarty, RAN, and Petty Officer C. Bunnett, RAN, being killed when the Walrus they were flying was shot down by a Vichy French fighter.

Italy struck against allied shipping in the Mediterranean, inflicting great damage on the Malta convoys. Britain had to keep her sea lanes open by holding Malta. During the darkest days of the war in the Mediterranean, Lieutenant Commander Gerald Haynes, RAN, commanded Royal Naval air squadron 828 which flew Albacores out of Malta attacking enemy shipping in the Mediterranean.

HMS Ark Royal was torpedoed on 12th November, 1941, sinking the next day in the Mediterranean. There was an Australian on board who would later become known as the father of Australia's Fleet Air Arm, Lieutenant V.A.T. Smith. As an RAN observer he was appointed to several RN ships flying Swordfish aircraft. In 1939 he was attached 821 Squadron and HMS Ark Royal. He participated in the search for the Graf Spee and led a daylight torpedo attack on the Scharnhorst. Shot down twice in the Mediterranean, he returned to Australia to serve aboard USS Chicago. In 1942 he was HMAS Canberra's Flight Observer, flying Seagull V's and surviving the ship's sinking in 1943. He later helped produce a draft for the formation of the Royal Australian Navy's Fleet Air Arm. After the war, he rose through the ranks of the RAN, eventually retiring as a Vice Admiral and Australia's Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee.

On 11th November 1940, the British validated the offensive use of seaborne air power by attacking the Italian fleet sheltering in Taranto. Two aircraft were lost but the Italians lost two battleships and another was severely damaged. A West Australian, Lieutenant C.S. C. Lea, RN, participated in this raid which became a watershed in naval air power at sea. The Italians moved their fleet further away from Malta, easing the pressure on the British supply lines. Taranto was a huge success for the British but the tactic would later be used against its American ally with devastating effect.

War crashed onto the Pacific on Sunday December 7, 1941 with Japan annihilating US battleships anchored in Pearl Harbour. They employed tactics very similar those used in Taranto.

Aircraft development during the late 30s and early 40s had been nothing short of spectacular. The relatively poor performing Seagull and Walrus aircraft onboard the Australian ships were extremely vulnerable to the land- and carrier- based fighters. Yet early in the war, they performed an important surveillance service being flown from the cruisers and Armed Merchant Cruisers (AMCs) Manoora and Westralia. As the war progressed, they were removed from Australian ships as carrier-borne aircraft assumed their tasks.

Without naval air power the allies failed to stem the Japanese advanced in the Battle of the Java Sea, who had air support from the carrier Ryujo. Following the devastating attack on Darwin in February 1942, the carriers Akagi, Kaga, Hiryu and Soryu moved into the Indian Ocean. Towards the end on 1942, the war in Europe began to turn in favour of the Allies. Landings throughout the coastal Mediterranean happened at such a pace that by the end of 1943 the allies were in control, with Italy concluding a truce. Essential to many of these landings was the provision of naval air cover as land-based aircraft did not have suitable airfields available to them.

The Italian carrier Aquila was nearly complete when the allies landed at Salerno. The German carriers Graf Zeppelin and Peter Strasser never saw battle. The Germans had stunningly used the U-boat only to have their surface and submarine fleet exposed to allied air attack because of the refusal by Luftwaffe to allow the development of a naval arm. The only Axis navy to successfully develop carrier warfare, Japan was the most dangerous and adventurous. An effective German aircraft carrier fleet could have changed the war's outcome. Early in 1942, the Japanese were planning to invade Port Moresby in New Guinea but on May 7 the Americans stalled their advance in the Battle of the Coral Sea. This was the first true battle between opposing aircraft carriers. On June 4, the fierce 11 hour Battle of Midway was a milestone victory for the Allies in the Pacific.

During 1943, the US had stepped up its military industrial capability to a point where they had built 33 fast carriers and innumerable escort carriers. The Americans put nearly 90,000 aircraft into the Pacific campaign alone compared with Japan's total production of 32,000. Battles to regain the Gilbert and Marshall islands began in November 1943. At Truk, the Japanese lost 250 aircraft and 41 ships (mostly merchantmen) for the cost of 17 US aircraft. Moving towards Japan itself, the US took the Marianas with the battles at Saipan and Guam.

As well as serving in the RN. Australian naval aircrew also served with the RAAF. Paulgrave Ebdon Carr, RAN, who had already participated in the landing at Guadal Canal and the battle of Save Island, became the driving force behind the RAAF's Catalina operations in New Guinea. In September 1943, he was shot down over the Celebes (Salawesi) and spent the rest of the war as a prisoner of the Japanese.

Despite its massive industrial muscle, the United States still found itself short of carriers in the Pacific. HMAS Victorious sailed to Pearl Harbour to join USS Saratoga's Battle Group. Renamed the USS Robin, it embarked US built Wildcat and Avenger aircraft, and with the Saratoga swept the Solomon Islands. Resuming her former name, HMS Victorious returned to Europe towards the end of 1943 and in early 1944 her aircraft participated in the attack on the Tirpitz.

As the war in Europe crawled to a close, the British began reinforcing the US effort in the Pacific. In July, 1944 they began destroying the oil fields and refineries on Sumatra and in early 1945, the carriers Indomitable, Victorious, Illustrious and Indefatigable cooperated with the US Fifth fleet in its battle to take Okinawa. It was here under the Kamikazi onslaught that the true benefit of the British ships with their steel decks were proven. Whilst the Japanese aircraft crashed through the American carriers wooden decks exploding in the hangars below, they hardly created a dent in the British ships. With the British move into the Pacific, the Royal Navy based air squadrons at the Nowra Air Station in October 1944. It operated as a Royal Naval Station, (HMAS Nabington), until it was returned to RAAF control in 1946.

The Japanese Navy's last gasp came on 7th April, 1945 when the Yamamoto was sunk. The war ended with the dropping of the atom bomb on August 6, 1945.

=====

A major reconstruction of Australia was nearing completion as WW2 broke out. After 17 months out of commission she took 2 months to work up ready for service. Canberra and Australia patrolled the near sea lanes in pursuit of raiders, and escorted convoys across the Tasman Sea and Indian Ocean.

In July 40 Australia was diverted from convoy escort at Freetown to join a fleet assembled to pressure the French Fleet in Dakar. Australia covered the force attacking the battleship Richelieu. Based at Scapa Flow for a time, she joined the RN in the North Sea and the Atlantic, at one time hunting for the Gneisenau. Returning from an operation in the Arctic Ocean in August her seaplane attempted an abortive bombing attack on Tromso, Norway. September 1940 was an eventful month. On 19th Australia sighted and shadowed 3 Vichy cruisers some 250 miles south of Dakar and travelling north. On the next day Australia intercepted and forced Gloire into Casablanca. On the 23rd Australia's gunfire forced 2 destroyers back into Dakar and later she caught the destroyer L'Audacieux trying to enter the port and reduced her to a wreck. On 24th Australia fired on 2 battleships and a cruiser at Dakar, observing hits and a fire on the cruiser but the return fire from shore batteries was uncomfortably close. Later in the day Australia was attacked and had bombs fall within 50 yards on two occasions. On the following day Australia was hit by 2 shells from the Richelieu.

=====

Volumes 142 Lord Caldecote, U.K. Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, to Sir Geoffrey Whiskard, U.K. High Commissioner in Australia

Circular cablegram Z268 LONDON, 27 September 1940, 3.40 a.m.

IMMEDIATE MOST SECRET AND PERSONAL

My telegram of 26th September Circular Z.No.265. [2] Following is message from Prime Minister [3] for Prime Minister's [4] most secret and personal information.

You will have seen from the Secretary of State's message sent through the High Commissioner in telegram of 25th September Circular Z.258 [5] that we decided to break off at Dakar.

Situation there was changed by arrival of French cruisers from Toulon which eluded our naval forces and entered Dakar. There is no doubt that apart from their own fighting power these vessels brought some tough Vichy personnel to grip the garrison and townsfolk and man the batteries effectively. Having deposited this very important contingent at Dakar, French cruisers tried to go to Duala. They were intercepted by the navy and two agreed to return to Casablanca. The other two went back into Dakar. On this serious change it seemed advisable to abandon the enterprise but our Commander on the Spot [6] and General de Gaulle [7] pleaded to be allowed to test defences and morale of garrison on which all depended. We authorised them therefore to act as they thought best. It became clear after second day's operations that

resistance of fortress and of French ships including heavy guns of Richelieu was most formidable. Resolution was torpedoed by a submarine and is making her way to Freetown. H.M.S. Cumberland was hit in engine room by a large shell and is now in Bathurst. Both these ships will take some time to repair. H.M.S. Barham and H.M.A.S. Australia were hit without affecting their fighting efficiency. H.M.S. Dragon and H.M.S. Inglefield were slightly damaged. We sunk two French submarines which attacked us capturing crew of one. One destroyer was set on fire by H.M.A.S. Australia. It seems likely that Richelieu sustained further damage but we have no proof yet. In view of new proportions which operation had assumed Commander on the spot now advised discontinuance. In the circumstances we did not think it right to throw our troops on shore as we might thereby have been tied down and committed to a

prolonged operation not against the Germans but against the French. This would have been detrimental politically to de Gaulle and also to our general position with the Vichy Government. Operation has miscarried through mischance and misfortune of prior arrival of French cruisers and reinforcements. Ships must return soon to the Mediterranean. Troops also have other tasks. We decided to cut loss which is appreciable but should not be viewed out of proportion to scale of events. I am sorry not to have a better tale to tell.

1 The Prime Minister's Dept inward cablegram register (FA:A3642,

1) gave the date of receipt as 27 September.

2 Dispatched 26 September. See file AA:A1608, A41/1/1, xiii.

3 Winston S. Churchill.

4 R. G. Menzies.

5 Document 139.

6 Vice Admiral H. D. Cunningham.

7 Leader of the Free French movement.

[AA:A1608, A41/1/1, xiii]

=====
On Dec. 21st Australia was refitting in dry dock at Liverpool when a 1600kg aerial mine fell alongside but failed to explode. She was, however, damaged in a bombing raid on the following night. In Jan 1941 Australia escorted a troop convoy to the Middle East via Cape of Good Hope. On Feb 22nd Australia was detached to join Canberra and a strong force (including HMS Shropshire) hunting Admiral Scheer recently sighted in the Indian Ocean. During 1941 Australia's patrol and escort duties took her from Australian waters as far north-west as Aden, west to several African ports, south to the Kerguelen Islands (where search parties found evidence of recent German raider presence), east to New Zealand and north to Singapore. She was returning to Australia from South Africa when Japan entered the war.

=====
Ahoy - Mac's Web Log, Mackenzie J Gregory

German Bombers rain bombs down on Liverpool. A close run thing for HMAS Australia, December 1940

Introduction

After HMAS Australia had been part of the Naval operation at Dakar, West Africa in September of 1940, we returned to the United Kingdom via Gibraltar, and a short stint with Force H there.

At Dakar we had collected two shells fired by French Cruisers in that port, although we did not suffer any casualties to our personnel, we needed to enter dry dock for repairs.

During our time in dock, Liverpool was subjected to severe German bombing raids over several nights in November / December.

Brocklebank Graving Dock Liverpool

This old dock built in 1904 is 88 feet long and 36 feet deep.

However, there are no cranes available at the docksides, so, on entering dock, all the shores that need placing both sides, (from the dock sides to the ship's sides, to ensure the ship is held both tightly and upright on the dock base block) must be placed by hand, an arduous and time consuming task.

We entered this dry dock on Friday the 22nd of November 1940, for a range of repairs and maintenance jobs to be undertaken.

Lord Haw Haw

William Joyce, was an Englishman who had forsaken his country, and defected to Germany to become a radio propagandist for the Nazi cause, the British people had christened him Lord Haw Haw!

The famous Liver Building with the Liver Birds on top of each Tower

Dominating the Liverpool docks is a large, well known, Insurance Company building, called the Liver Building. Conspicuous on its towers, one each side, are two quite large stone statues of Liver Birds, a mythical bird that did not fly.

In December, one evening during his normal broadcast, Lord Haw Haw announced:

"We know HMAS Australia is docked in Liverpool, tonight our bomber raids and our bombs will really make those Liver Birds fly."

Air Raids

On the 26th of November, Liverpool was struck by a very heavy air raid, about 1900 (7 PM) off went the Air Raid Warning Sirens, and the All Clear did not sound until 0430 (4.30 AM) the next morning. Private property took a pounding, but this time the docks remained unscathed.

Prior to this blitz on Liverpool, we took the precaution to partially flood up the dock, thus, when incendiary bombs fell upon our upper deck, personnel especially detailed for the task, would rush up, and quickly dispose of the burning incendiary, with a swift kick over the side into the water in the dock. I had spent some time on this duty during earlier raids.

Now, over three successive nights the 20th, 21st, and 22nd. of December, Liverpool took a pasting, thousands of small incendiary bombs were dropped by the first wave of German attacking aircraft, they were designed to set up fires to then guide the follow up bombers loaded with High Explosive bombs.

A great deal of damage was sustained, the famous St Georges Hall gutted by fire, and many city landmarks destroyed. Along the miles of docks, an overhead or elevated railway operated, in a number of places, this line was put out of action by bombs destroying sections of this rail line.

During the air raid on the following night, Australia continued to be LUCKY. A 500 pound bomb exploded on the port side of our dock putting the dock gates out of action, splinters did some damage on board, but we did not have any casualties. On the 20th of December air raid, a very heavy bomb fell between the starboard side of the ship, and the dockside, it partially exploded, with no apparent damage to us.

In due course, we flooded up and undocked with the aid of four tugs, there is very little room to manoeuvre in the Mersey River as you move out of the dock stern first, probably quite impossible without the able assistance of the Liverpool Tug Service. The next ship was nursed into Brocklebank Dock, the water pumped out, and to everyone's surprise, sitting on the bottom, very much alive, was a 3,500 pound aerial torpedo, still liable to explode at any moment. (only its tail charge had exploded when it dropped alongside us in the dock.)

Action was immediate, quickly flood up the dock, open the dock gates, call up the tugs, and get that ship out of danger as soon as possible. The dock gates quickly shut, the dock pumped dry once more, now members of the Bomb Disposal Squad were called to undertake the unenviable task of rendering our monster safe.

These Bomb Disposal Personnel performed magnificent feats in the course of their duties. I had seen in Liverpool, a land mine, which, when descending on its parachute, had its lines caught up on a huge gasometer. There it was, trapped, but swinging in the breeze between two gasometers, just waiting for that extra swing to take into a holder filled with explosive gas, and blow up with a mighty roar and devastation to the local scene.

A Bomb Disposal expert was calmly perched in the bucket of a mobile crane, going about his business of delousing this land mine. I hurried away, thankful I did not have that task to perform.

A number of Australian Reserve Naval Officers were in the forefront of the bomb and mine disposal business in England, and subsequently became very decorated for the work they carried out.

Conclusion

Once again my ship had proved to be charmed, when ashore throughout these devastating air raids, all our personnel managed to make it safely back to the ship.

To quote from Gill's Volume 1. History of the Royal Australian Navy 1939- 1942.

"Morale was high, especially when encounters with the enemy were frequent."

Post war, William Joyce, aka Lord Haw Haw, was tried for treason, and then hanged.

Liverpool overhead Railway I acquired it in Liverpool when I went back in 1993, for the 50th. Anniversary of the Winning of the Battle of the Atlantic.

Copyright © 1984/2002 THE NAVAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA, INC and Mackenzie J. Gregory All rights reserved

=====

The Pacific War

In early 1942 all surviving RAN cruisers were in Australian waters. On 4th Feb whilst escorting Aquitania to Java, Canberra sighted a submarine but it dived before the troopship cleared Canberra's course. Australia and Canberra formed the nucleus of "Anzac Squadron", later TF44. Canberra was unavailable during the Battle of the Coral Sea (May 4-8 1942) as she was still undergoing a minor refit and radar installation. Australia, flagship of the cruiser support group (TG17.3) which blocked the advance of Japanese troop transports bound for Port Moresby, came under heavy air attack on the 7th, and at

one stage disappeared from view when completely ringed by near misses from a straddle of 20 500-lb bombs. The Allied ships were also unsuccessfully attacked by B17s which claimed severe damage to heavy "IJN" units.

Guadalcanal

In July 42 Australia and Canberra joined the Allied fleet preparing for Operation Watchtower (the capture of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands). On 7th Aug they provided gun support for the landings. A coastwatcher warned the fleet of approaching air attack and Canberra's PA announced "The ship will be attacked by 24 torpedo bombers at noon. All hands will pipe to dinner at eleven o'clock". On the 8th the assembled ships came under heavy air attack. A "Betty", hit and burning from repeated Oerlikon fire, just cleared Australia and crashed barely a hundred yards beyond her. A torpedo aimed at Australia was intercepted by the unfortunate USS Jarvis which had chosen that moment to pass Australia on her starboard side.

The Push North

In March 1943 TF74 was formed for the push north to the Philippines. Australia was flagship of TG74.1 - 2 cruisers and 2 destroyers of the RAN, and 3 USN destroyers. In April 1943 Capt. Collins commissioned HMAS Shropshire; she transferred to the RAN in June and joined TG74.1 at the end of October for operations out of Milne Bay. Prior to her arrival the RAN had only 2 operational cruisers - Australia and the veteran Adelaide. In July Australia was in the Solomons when a torpedo fired at long range from submarine I-GO11 narrowly missed her and struck Hobart causing extensive damage. In Dec. Australia and Shropshire provided bombardments to support Allied landings at Arawe and Cape Gloucester on New Britain. In Jan 44 Australia returned to Sydney for overdue maintenance, new 8-inch gun barrels, new radar and anti-aircraft weapons. Shropshire, with the flag of RADM Crutchley, covered landings in the Admiralty Islands and attacked gun emplacements near Hollandia, New Guinea.

On 22nd March, Australia (again flagship) destroyed Japanese barges during a coastal sweep near Tanahmerah Bay. During April and May TG74.1 covered landings at Sawar, Wakde Island and Biak. During the bombardment of an airfield at Mokmer, a Liberator released a bomb near Shropshire. She had already been operating with one shaft out of action and the new minor damage aggravated existing engine troubles, so she was sent to Sydney for repairs. During her absence Australia and DDs engaged Japanese DDs in a running battle in the Biak - Seeadler area, and shelled Japanese positions on Noemfoor Island. Shropshire returned in July to join Australia at landings at Aitape and in bombardments at Halmahera and Morotai in September. The RAN was heavily involved in the Aitape landings - about 13% of all RAN personnel were there.

Commodore "Red" Merson, RAN, remembered an incident (recorded by Iris Nesdale in "Action Stations") which occurred at Seeadler Harbour when he was a young Lieutenant. A cruiser of TF74 (either Australia and Shropshire) radioed a Logistics Request ahead of its arrival. The list included water, fuel, provisions etc, and on this occasion a ton and a half of coke (for the blacksmith's foundry). The ship anchored and was approached by a small tug towing 3 barges. The USN Lieutenant came aboard and said "Gee, I wish you Orr-stralians would learn to deal in dozens. We could only get together a ton at this short notice." A ton of coca-cola is a lot of coca-cola!

Shropshire, Australia and 6 other RAN ships were in TF77 at the Battle of Leyte Gulf (20th - 27th Oct 1944). On the 21st Australia sustained 30 dead (including Capt. Dechaineux) and 64 wounded (including Cdre Collins) when a dive bomber hit the foremast and wrecked the bridge. On 24th she retired under escort to Manus Island for repairs. Shropshire claimed a share in the sinking of a battleship in the Battle of Surigao Strait - the last great surface fleet battle. She was on the right flank of VADM Berkeley's cruiser force, formed across Surigao Strait as part of the defence against the approaching powerful Japanese force. In the ensuing battle, Shropshire opened fire at 9 miles, closing to 7 miles. Her first 8 broadsides (of 8 by 8-inch) were fired in 2 minutes - a record rate, especially for her 16 year old turrets. In all she fired 32 broadsides, claiming 16 hits on the IJN battleship Yamashiro. It was not all one-sided: Shropshire was near missed by 2 broadsides of 14-inch shells which fell short, and 4 which passed over. On Nov 1st Shropshire had a close escape when she barely evaded torpedoes released from a sinking USN destroyer which blew after a kamikaze hit.

Australia, repaired at Espiritu Santo and with AA capability strengthened, was ready for the Lingayen Gulf landings. Again she bore the brunt of RAN casualties - hit by kamikazes on 5th, 6th, 8th (twice) and 9th Jan 1945. Three hits were relatively minor, but the other two resulted in 44 officers and men killed and

69 wounded. The second kamikaze carried a 15" or 16" British naval shell from Singapore fitted with an impact fuse. The crew could read the identification numbers on the base plate of the shell. Australia was forced to retire with her fore funnel smashed, a large hole in her port side, steering reduced, several boilers shut down and bulkheads flexing alarmingly. She took no further part in the war. She served in a variety of roles until her final decommissioning in Aug. 1954. In 1955 she was sold off and towed to the UK for breaking up.

A contemporary comment on Australia's condition:

"Jap carrier be damned! It's the Australia."

Cartoon by "Olly" (Able Seaman L.H. Olsen, RANR).

Appeared in "HMAS Mk IV", published for the R.A.N. by Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1945.

=====
World War II

=====
V & W Class Destroyers

Displacement (tons): 1,100 Standard, 1,470 Full Load
 Dimensions (feet): 312.1 x 29.6 x 9.8
 Propulsion: Brown Curtis Turbines, 27,000 hp, 2 shafts
 Yarrow Turbines (Voyager)
 Parsons Turbines (Waterhen)
 Max. Speed (knots): 34
 Armament: 4 x 4-inch, 1 x 2 pdr. pom-pom,
 1 x Vickers MG, 4 x.303 Lewis MGs,
 6 x 21-inch torpedo tubes, DCR
 Complement: 127

No.	Name	Commissioned	Notes/Fate
I68	Vampire (I)	11/10/33	Trans'd from RN. Sunk in Indian Ocean 8/4/42.
I69	Vendetta (I)	11/10/33	Trans'd from RN. Decomm'd 27/11/45. Sold 20/3/46.
I31	Voyager (I)	11/10/33	Trans'd from RN. Total loss after running aground on Timor 23/9/42.
I22	Waterhen (I)	11/10/33	Trans'd from RN. Sunk in Mediterranean Sea 30/6/41.

Note: Vampire built by J. Samuel White, UK, Vendetta built by Fairfield Shipbuilding, UK, Voyager built by Alex Stephen, UK. and Waterhen built by Palmers Shipbuilding, UK.

=====
1929

Albatross commissioned. Depression era begins. Survey work ceases. Compulsory training ends. Moresby and Marguerite (Reserve Training Ship) paid off. General reduction in ships and personnel. Brisbane and Swordsman paid off. Sydney handed over to shipbreakers.

1930

Yarra, Parramatta, Warrego and Swan handed over to ship breakers for dismantling. Torrens stripped and sunk by Canberra as practice target. Only four ships in commission - Australia, Canberra, Albatross and Anzac. Recruiting ceased. Naval College transferred from Jervis Bay to Flinders Naval Depot.

1931

Anzac paid off - replaced by Tattoo. Huon sunk as target. Submarines Otway and Oxley returned to RN.
Personnel reduced to 3,239.

1932

RAN Recruiting resumed. Cadet entries to Naval College resumed. Mallow and Marguerite dismantled at Cockatoo Dock. First RAN College officers reach Commander rank. H.B. Farncomb and J.A. Collins. Total personnel reaches lowest point, 3,121

1933

Survey ship Moresby re-commissioned. Stuart, Vampire, Voyager, Vendetta and Waterhen commissioned into the RAN on loan from the Royal Navy replacing obsolete ANZAC and "S" and "T" Class destroyers.

1934

HMS Sussex attached to Australian Squadron in exchange for HMAS Australia.

1935

Cruiser Sydney (ex Phaeton) sommissioned. Brisbane recommissions for passage to UK and disposal, Marguerite and Mallow sunk as targets. Anzac sold for scrap. Geranium scuttled off Sydney Heads.

1936

Cruisers Sydney and Australia join RAN Squadron after Mediterranean Service. Sloop Yarra, built at Cockatoo commissioned.

1938

Cruiser Hobart (ex Apollo) commissioned.

1939 WW11 Declared Sep 3rd.

Cruiser Perth (ex Amphion) commissioned. World War Two begins. RAN Strength; two eight inch cruisers, four six inch cruisers, five destroyers, two sloops,. Personnel 5,440 Permanent, 4,819 Reserves.
Destroyers sail for Singapore and Mediterranean.

Back to Start

1909-1918

Next Page

The years of World War Two

This page belongs to The Gun Plot© Web Site. If you have been taken to this orphan page from a search engine or a link from another website and do not see the full site menu frame on the left of screen click here to reload The Gun Plot© Home Page.

=====