

THE FURPHY

ARMADALE SUB-BRANCH OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

January 2024 Edition



**1 Commerce Ave, Armadale, WA 6112
PO Box 697, Armadale, WA 6992**

Ph: (08) 9497 1972

email: secretary@armadalersl.com.au

Website: www.armadalersl.com.au

Social media: [Facebook](#)

General Meetings:

Second Sunday of the month at 1030hrs

Annual General Meeting:

Second Sunday of September

Committee Positions

Armadale Sub-Branch Committee	
President	Mr Ken Hepburn
Vice President	Mr Hans van de Velde
Secretary	Ms Carol King
Assistant Secretary	Mr Mike Fairweather
Treasurer	Mrs Cheryl Cowie
Assistant Treasurer	Vacant
Warden	Mr Graeme Cowie
Warden	Mr Mick Quinn
Membership Officer	Mr Tom Rynn
Committee	Mr Bob Giles
Committee	Mr Keith Northcott
Committee	Mr Geoff Scott
Advocate / Welfare Officer	Mr Brent Errington
Bar Manager	Mr Mike Fairweather

ADVOCATE / WELFARE

Brent Errington “Erro” is available as follows:

Operating out of RAAFA on Mondays and Fridays

between 0900 – 1230hrs and also at

Armadale RSL Sub-Branch between 1000-1400hrs on Thursdays

Contact Details: *Mobile: 0407 449 150*

e-mail: welfare2@armadalersl.com.au

Diary Dates for January

<i>Day</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Time</i>
Sunday	7 th	Social Committee Meeting	1100
Sunday	14 th	Management Committee Meeting	1100

The Armadale RSL Sub-Branch do not hold a General Meeting in January

**HAPPY
NEW YEAR
2024**



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hi Folks,

Happy New Year to all and I hope everyone has a good year.

METRONET will be with us all year, so far it has not caused any major concerns, hope it stays that way. The Secretary will keep you informed of what they are doing around the club.

It is good to see that there was an increase in 2023, of younger people joining as Social Members, I hope this continues, as this is the future of the RSL.

There will be no General Meeting in January 2024 and the next First General Meeting for 2024 will be on Sunday 11th February 2024.

The executive and committee will be planning on how we can expand what the club provides for members during 2024.

Regards,

Ken Hepburn

President

Returned Services League Armadale Sub-Branch
Ph: (08) 9497 1972. M: 0428 001 949

email: president@armadalersl.com.au
Website: www.armadalersl.com.au

Secretary's Notes

Hi Everyone,

I guess it's the time of the year to reflect on a number of achievements during 2023.

We have been well occupied behind the scenes which is transparent to most members so thought I would share with you some of the highlights.

- All old minutes and filed paperwork (some documentation dating back to 1993) has been scanned and archived off onto our RSL electronic server which has freed up a lot of space in our offices by getting rid of the hard copies.*
- As those who attend our General Meetings are aware, a huge amount of hours were spent over the past year challenging the ANZ bank through the Australian Financial Complaints Authority. This has now come to a conclusion with the ruling resulting in the ANZ Bank paying the Sub-Branch an amount of \$2,500 for "inconvenience" caused. This was a full and final offer which we have accepted.*
- The closure of Club Inc. has been at best a nightmare. On numerous occasions, RSLWA stated they would provide resources to assist us in that regard. Due to a large number of staff resignations at Head Office, we opted to liaise directly with Racing, Gaming and Liquor to progress this ourselves. I am unable to find a polite word to describe the process so will just use the word "challenging" as it's the best I can come up with at this point in time. We are nearing the end of this process, however once the Sub-Branch license is granted there will be a period of time where the Executive will need to follow through with other activities before actually closing the Inc. side of the business for example, setting up new accounts with CUB and Lion, plus various direct debits along with changing over the EFTPOS transactions into the Sub-Branch bank account along with ensuring that Bepoz is synchronised all of which will take a bit of time. Hopefully this will all be in the background so as not to cause any inconvenience to our members.*
- I have been working with Erro to scan and archive off Welfare and Advocacy documentation which is now redundant. This is now filed on our Server which is accessible to the Welfare Advocate only. This activity has now been completed and has cleared up more filing cabinet storage space for his use.*

- *Another project of this type will be undertaken in the New Year to scan and electronically file many boxes of paperwork which are out in the storage shed and also many more archive boxes full of paperwork that is currently taking up a large amount of space in the Treasurer's Office.*

I apologise to members that an amount of \$300 had to be invested in a new (more efficient) paper shredding machine, however I must say it's one of the best Christmas presents I have ever received !

On a personal note, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all those hard-working volunteers who spend hundreds of hours each year keeping the Sub-Branch "alive".

In general, I prefer not to name anyone in particular, however on this occasion I would like to say a huge thank you to Stormy for everything he does behind the scenes for all our members. I'm sure many of you would not be aware that he looks after ordering all the drinks for the bar, entering all purchases into Bepoz, monitors the costs and increases them if required (reluctantly). Stormy jumps behind the bar on a purely voluntary basis as required, including on the nights where pool competitions have been held. He also carries out general maintenance around the hall and surrounds and even found time this year to build the new storage shed amongst many other things.

To the other Committee members, (including our tiny Social Committee) thank you for your contribution and efforts during the year. We have a really great team and the support given to each other is exceptional.

Thanks to the members for supporting us this past year and I hope you will all continue to do so during 2024.

Carol King

Sub-Branch Secretary



After dogfighting Spitfires over El Alamein, Egypt this Bf-109 belonging to Gerhard Mix took hits to the engine forcing him to belly land in the desert and be captured

Membership Update

as at 31st December 2023

Service Members: 181

Affiliate Members: 52

Social Members: 84

Total: 317

Renewal notices for Service Members have been despatched to members via email in the first instance and by ordinary mail to those not on email.

If members have changed email without notifying RSL, then a 'bounce-back' will entail a delay in receiving notices.

All members who pay via the Sub-Branch will receive a receipt and I will follow up with RSLWA for Membership Card.

Affiliate and Social Members pay directly to Sub-Branch.

Any member who has a query with membership please contact Membership Officer.

Wishing all members and their families a Happy Christmas and a rewarding 2024.

Cheers,

Tom Rynn

Tel: 0439 934 285

E-mail: tomrynn@bigpond.com



January Service Members:

Antrobus	Mr	Tom	12/01	Beel	Mr	Jim	09/01
Bishop	Mr	Geoff	09/01	Brown	Mr	Christopher	04/01
Clark	Mr	Gregory	02/01	Cole	Mr	Allan	06/01
Eddington	Mr	Ronald	15/01	Librizzi	Mr	Joe	01/01
McDonald	Mr	Michael	24/01	Nice	Mr	Ian	13/01
Paul	Mr	Volker	03/01	Power	Mr	Michael	03/01
Sarti	Mr	Ross	08/01	Tippett	Mr	John	08/01
Welch	Mr	Eric	06/01	Whittick	Mr	George	16/01
Wilson	Mr	Ian	09/01				

January Affiliate Members:

Hodge	Mr	Barry	25/01	Kirkpatrick	Mr	William	08/01
Lankford	Mr	Colin	10/01				

January Social Members:

Mills	Ms	Teena	19/01	Northcott	Mrs	Sharon	09/01
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*If anyone has been missed off the list, please advise
Tom Rynn (Membership Officer)*

*These members may collect a free drink of their choice
during the month*

We hope you have a very special Birthday

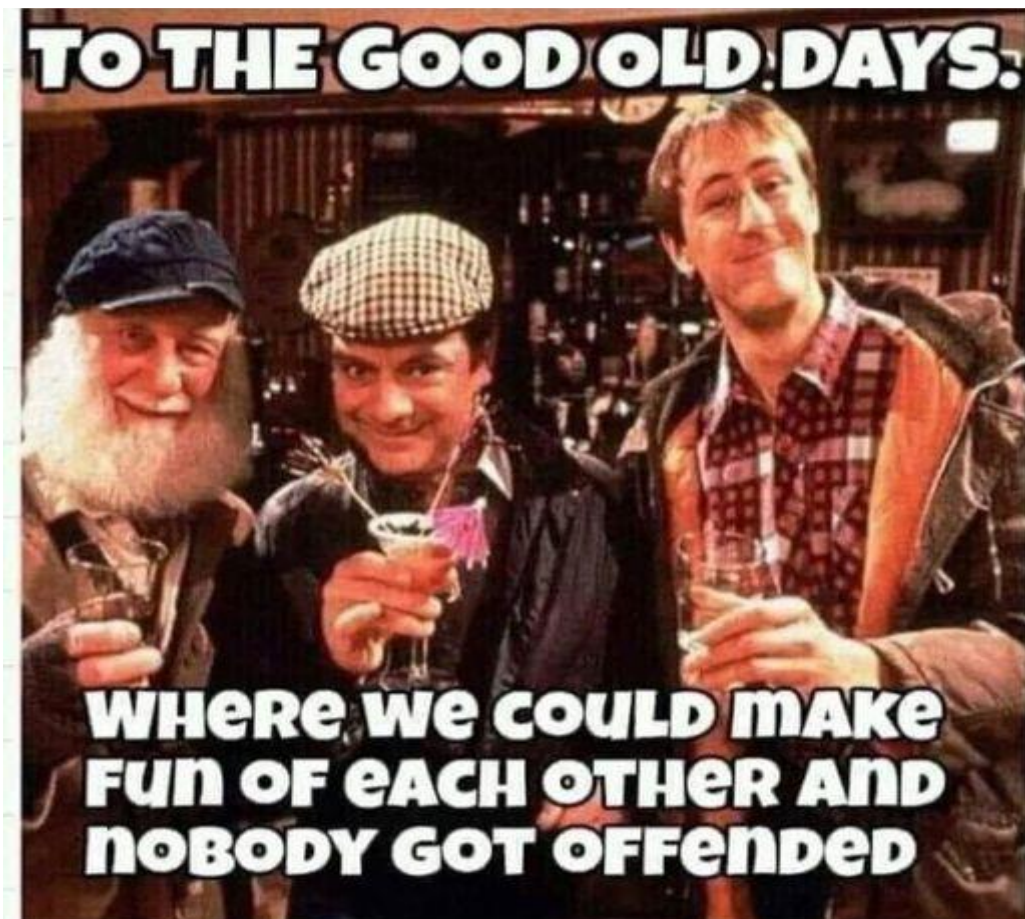
Bar Manager's Report

G'day All,
We have just finished another year.

The bar has done well throughout and I hope the new year builds from last year.

Hopefully we can get the Cascade Kegs soon, C.U.B stated that they will be available in this new year, one can only hope.. lol.

Stormy....



Byford Rail Extension - Update



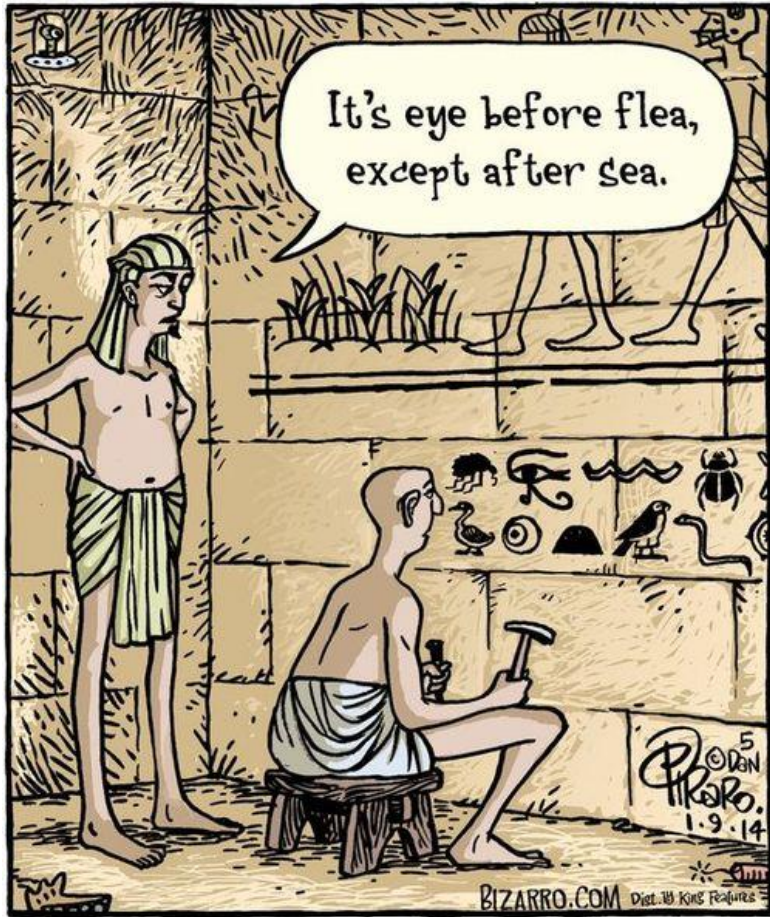
///METRONET



The MetCONNX team wishes you a peaceful and joyful break over this holiday season.

Thanks to your support and commitment, we have achieved some amazing outcomes this year, with the promise of many more to come.

We look forward to your continued support in 2024 and sharing project highlights with you as the Byford Rail Extension come to life.





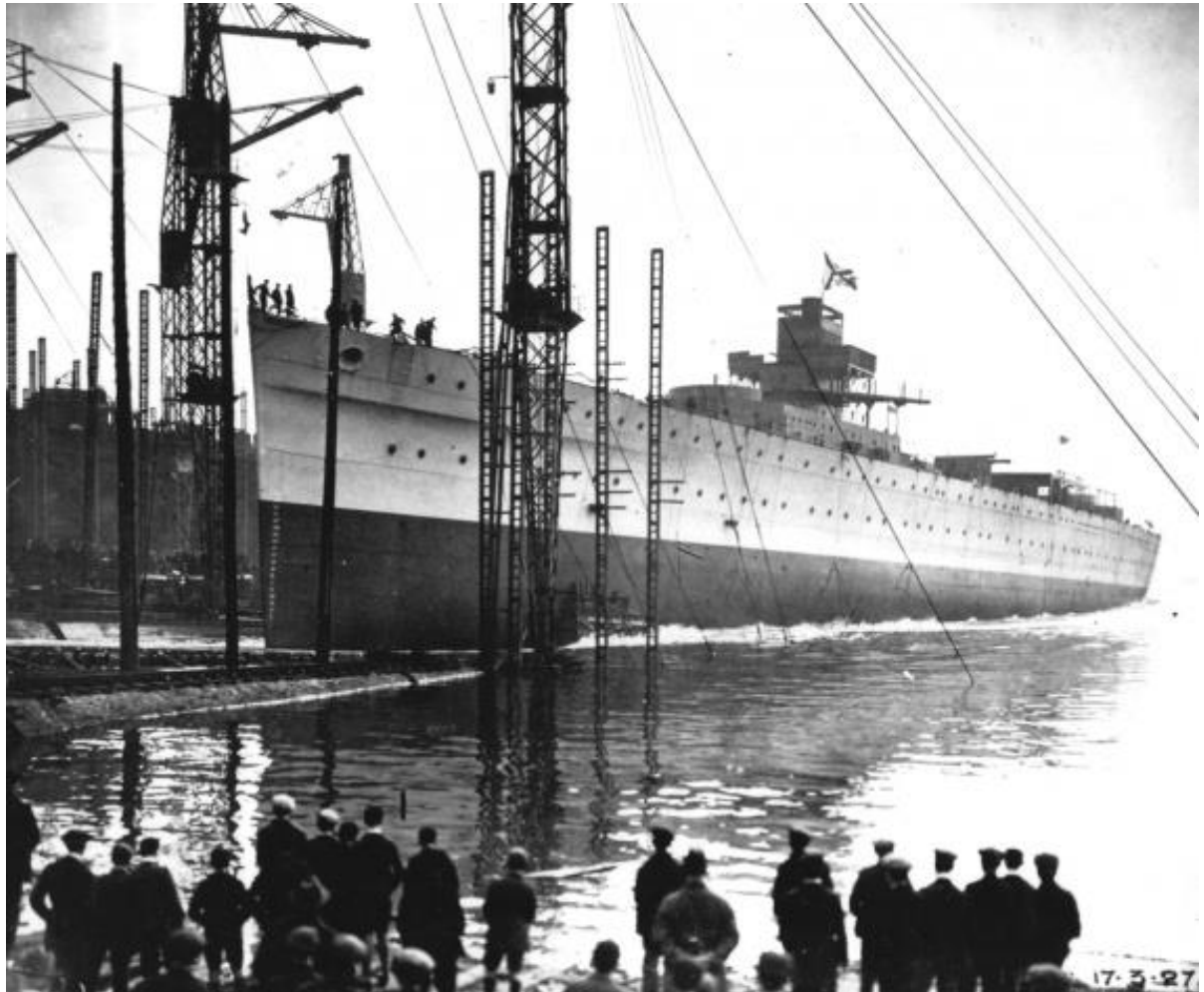


HMAS Australia (II)

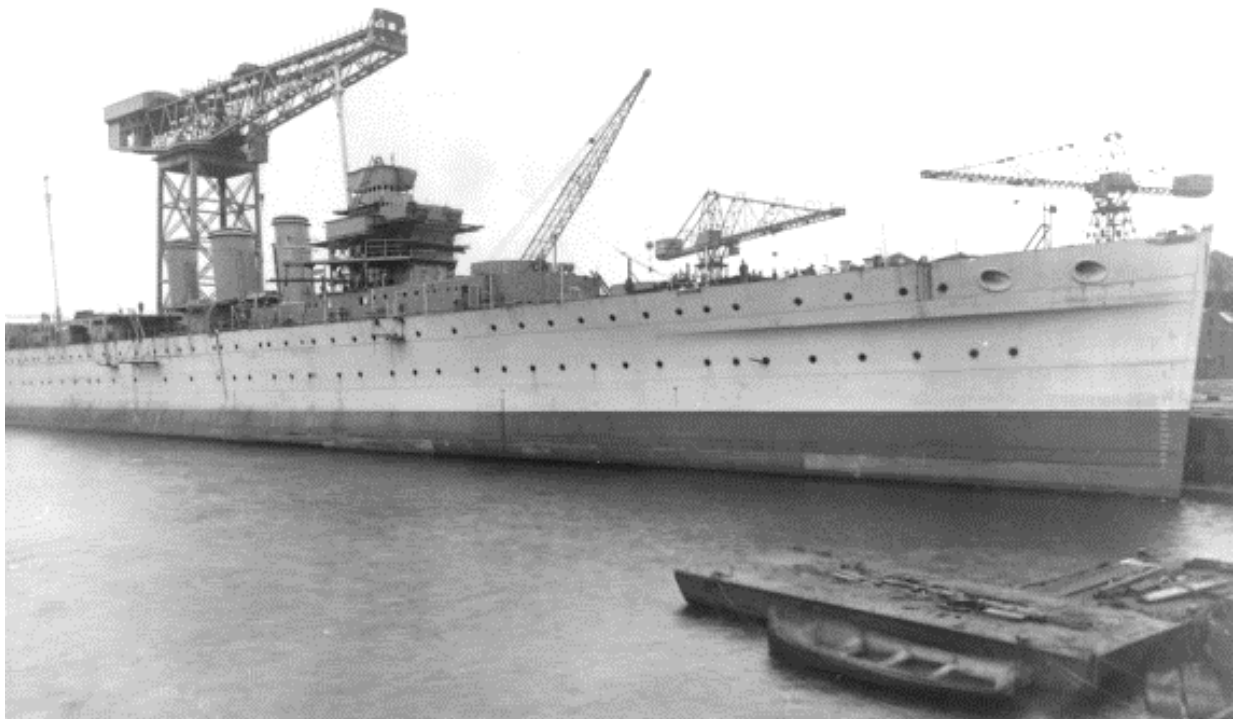


HMAS *Australia* (II) was one of two 10,000 ton County Class heavy cruisers ordered by the Australian Government as part of a five year naval development program begun in 1924 and completed in 1929.

She was built to the Kent Class design of County Class cruisers, her sister ships being HMAS *Canberra* and HM Ships *Kent*, *Berwick*, *Cornwall*, *Cumberland* and *Suffolk*.



HMAS Australia's launching – 17th March, 1927



HMAS Australia fitting out. Visible here are her three original 'short' funnels. The height of these were later increased.

She commissioned at Clydebank on 24 April 1928, two months before her sister ship HMAS *Canberra*, under the command of Captain Francis HW Goolden RN. HM King George V visited *Australia* on the morning of 17 July and was received with a Royal Guard and Band. The King inspected the upper and main decks taking time to speak with a number of *Australia's* ship's company.

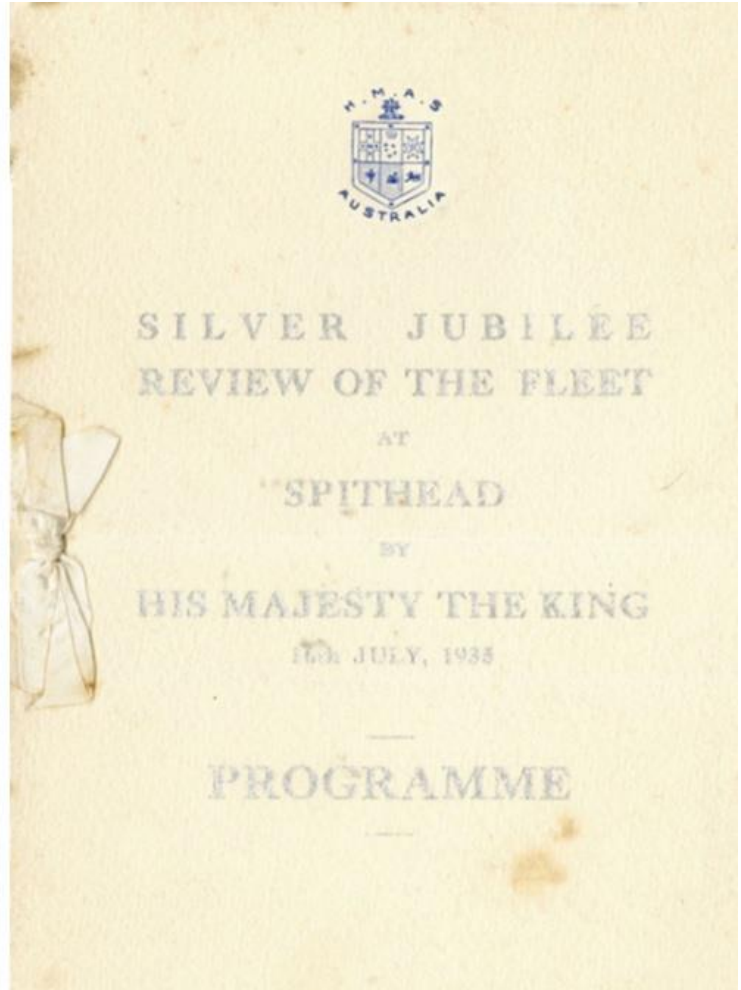


HM King George V during his visit to Australia, 17 July 1928.

Following a period of trials *Australia* (II) departed Portsmouth on 3 August 1928 and proceeding via Montreal, Quebec, Halifax, Boston, New York, Annapolis, Kingston, Balboa, Tahiti, Wellington and Brisbane, reached Sydney on 23 October 1928.

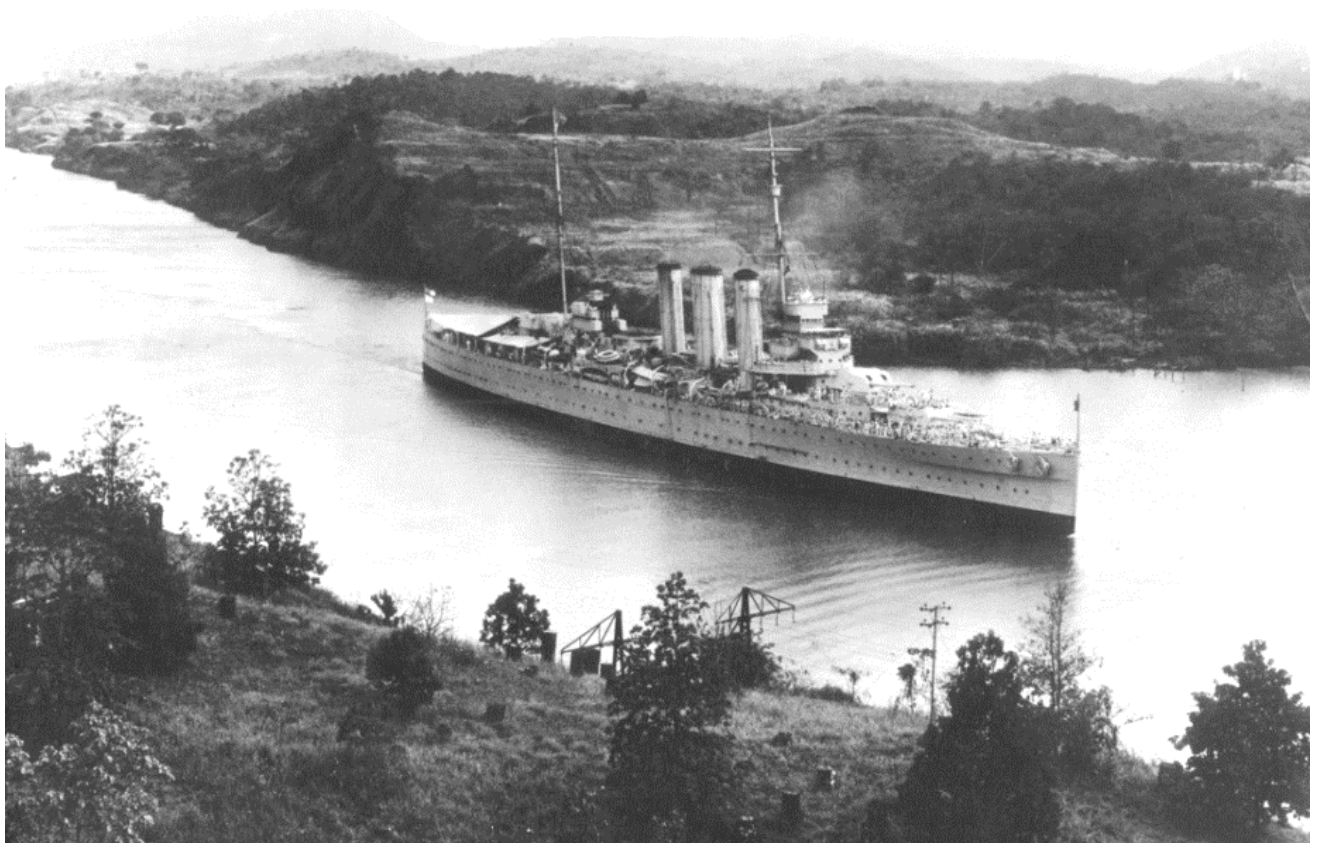
She spent the first six years of her commission on the Australia Station, mostly in home waters. In 1932 she cruised to various Pacific Islands and in 1933 she visited New Zealand.

On 10 December 1934 she sailed for England, with His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester embarked, on exchange duty with the Royal Navy, her place on the Australia Station being taken by HMS Sussex. Proceeding via New Zealand, Fiji, Balboa and Kingston, *Australia* (II) reached Portsmouth on 28 March 1935.

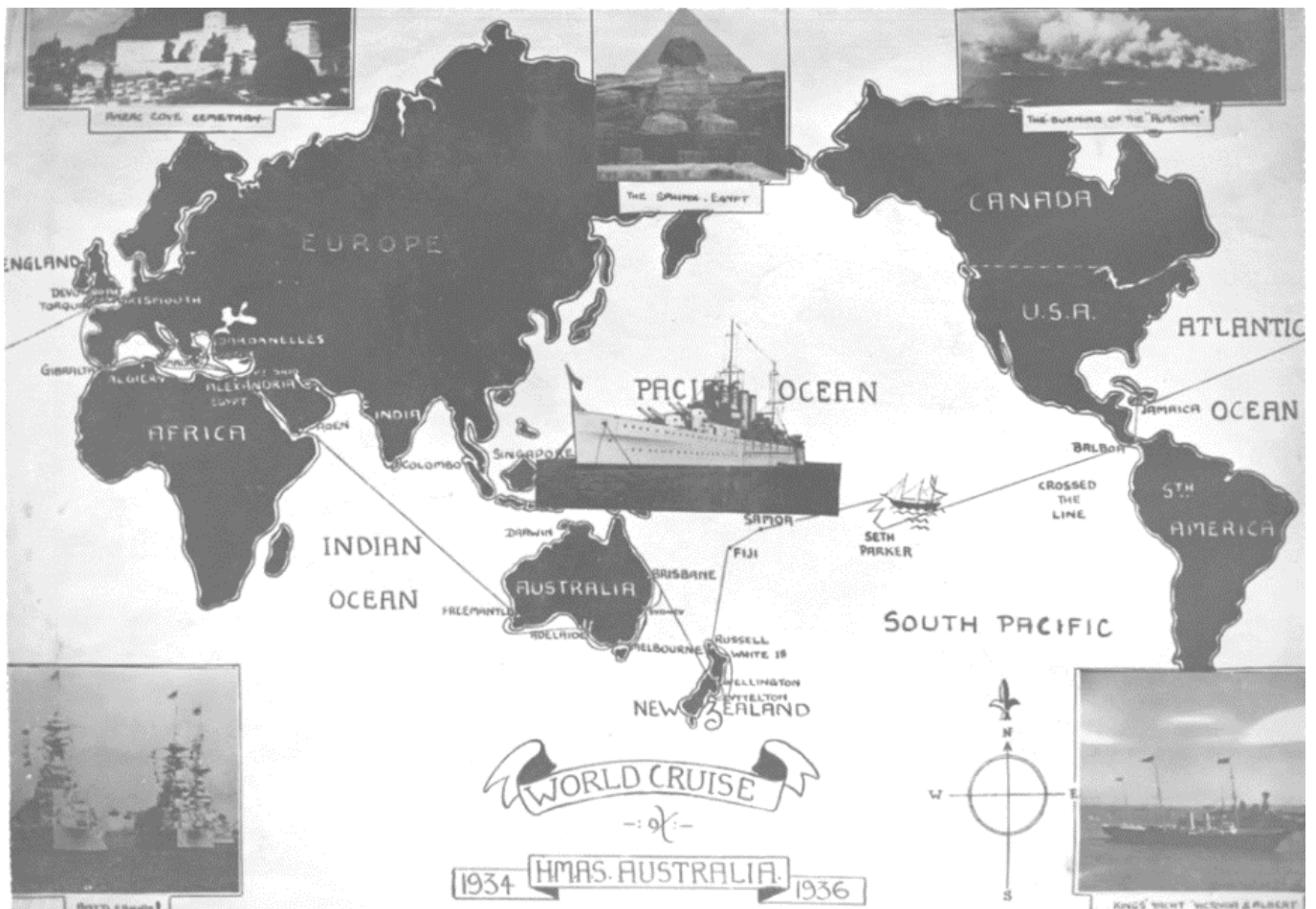


In May 1935 *Australia* (II) proceeded to the Mediterranean where she served with the British forces until July 1936. She returned to England during the period of 21 June 1935 to 12 September 1935 to take part in the July Jubilee Review at Spithead.

On 14 July 1936 she departed Alexandria to return to Australia via Aden and thence direct to Fremantle. She arrived in Sydney on 11 August 1936 after an absence of 615 days on exchange service. Apart from a visit to Melbourne in November 1936, *Australia* (II) spent the remainder of the year at Sydney and Jervis Bay.



HMAS Australia transiting the Panama Canal, circa 1935.



A postcard depicting Australia's world cruise between 1934-1936.

Australia (II) spent the first three months of 1937 in home waters and in April cruised to New Zealand visiting Wellington, Otago and Auckland. In July she proceeded on a northern cruise to Queensland ports, New Guinea and New Britain, returning to Sydney on 10 September. In November she made her annual visit to Melbourne, which, except for a brief cruise to Hobart in February 1938, brought her peace time seagoing activities to a close. She paid off into Reserve on 24 April 1938.



HMAS Australia Ratings proceeding on shore leave during one of their many port visits.

Australia (II) recommissioned at Sydney on 28 August 1939 under the command of Captain Robert R Stewart RN. The first nine months of World War II were spent on the Australian coast and on one occasion she investigated a doubtful report of an 'unknown raider'. Between May and July 1940 she was employed on convoy escort duties, initially between Fremantle and Capetown and later between Capetown and Freetown on the African west coast.



HMAS Australia II in Sydney Harbour.

As part of the Dakar Squadron in July 1940, *Australia* (II), in company with HM Ships *Hermes*, *Dorsetshire* and *Milford*, was patrolling off the French West African coast, observing the French fleet. During this month *Australia* (II) fired her first shot in World War II when she was attacked by an enemy bomber. On 9 July she joined a convoy for the United Kingdom and for the rest of the month she was patrolling off Norway in the vicinity of the Faeroes with the 1st Cruiser Squadron, at one time engaged in a search for the German battleship *Gneisenau*. The patrol continued throughout August.

September 1940 found *Australia* (II) involved in Operation MENACE and patrolling off Dakar, French West Africa, shadowing French cruisers *Gloire*, *Montcalm* and *Georges Leygues*. The object of Operation MENACE was to install General de Gaulle and a Free French force in Dakar thereby evicting the existing Vichy government and forestalling any possible German occupation.

The optimistic belief that the population of Dakar would welcome de Gaulle proved to be ill-founded and shore batteries opened fire on the fleet. *Australia* (II) escaped damage, but *Cumberland* and *Foresight* were both hit.

Australia (II) with *Fury* and *Greyhound* attacked a French destroyer which was set ablaze from end to end. On the following day, 24 September, *Australia* (II) was engaged in a general fleet bombardment of French ships and forts and was twice subjected to high level bombing attacks by French planes. On 25 September *Australia* (II) and *Devonshire* moved in towards Dakar to attack French cruisers. During the engagement which followed *Australia* (II) received two hits aft and her Walrus spotting aircraft was shot down. Fifteen minutes after engaging the French ships the British cruisers withdrew. In 13 minutes *Australia* (II) had fired 15 salvos.

In October 1940 *Australia* (II) was patrolling off the Azores and escorting troop ships between Gibraltar and the United Kingdom. On 29 October, in the Orkney/Shetland area, *Australia* (II) succeeded in rescuing nine crew members of a Sunderland Flying Boat, despite Force 10 winds and very high seas. The remainder of 1940 was spent docked in Liverpool for a refit. During December the city was subjected to a period of heavy air raids. On one occasion a large bomb fell between the ship's side and the dock wall and incendiaries fell on board but were quickly extinguished. The catapult wire was damaged and square port windows in the Captain's cabin broken. The bombing proved too much for both ship's cats who deserted, and the ship's company apparently missed out on their Christmas poultry that year when the ducklings were incinerated in the contractor's premises which were burnt out.

After a period escorting convoys to Freetown, Durban, Suez and Colombo, *Australia* (II) finally arrived back in Sydney on 24 March 1941. Between April and November the ship was on duty in the Indian Ocean and on 6 November carried out a reconnaissance of the Crozet Islands. She returned to Sydney in December and became Flagship of the Australian Squadron and two months later, in February 1942, Flagship of ANZAC Squadron, having Noumea as its operational base.



Left: A rating polishes one of Australia's gun tompons. Right: An imposing view of two of Australia's three funnels. The forward funnel would later be damaged during the hotly contested fight for the Philippines.

In March and April 1942 *Australia* (II) operated in the South West Pacific in support of United States naval forces attempting to halt further Japanese southward expansion. On 22 April the Naval Command in the South West Pacific Area was reorganised and renamed. ANZAC Squadron became Task Force 44 with *Australia* (II) as Flagship, and on 5 May Task Forces 11, 17 and 44 united as one, Task Force 17.

The Battle of the Coral Sea (7 May 1942) saw *Australia* (II) as Flagship of the Support Group (Task Group 17.3) attacking enemy transports and light cruisers reported to be heading for Port Moresby through Jomard Passage. The Support Group was attacked by eight torpedo bombers and nineteen high level bombers on this date.



Australia wearing her disruptive camouflage paint scheme.

On 7 August 1942 *Australia* (II) led the escort of nine transports and six store ships containing the forces for the landing at Guadalcanal. She remained in the area until the end of August 1942, during which period she was subjected, with the remainder of the forces, to frequent heavy air attacks.

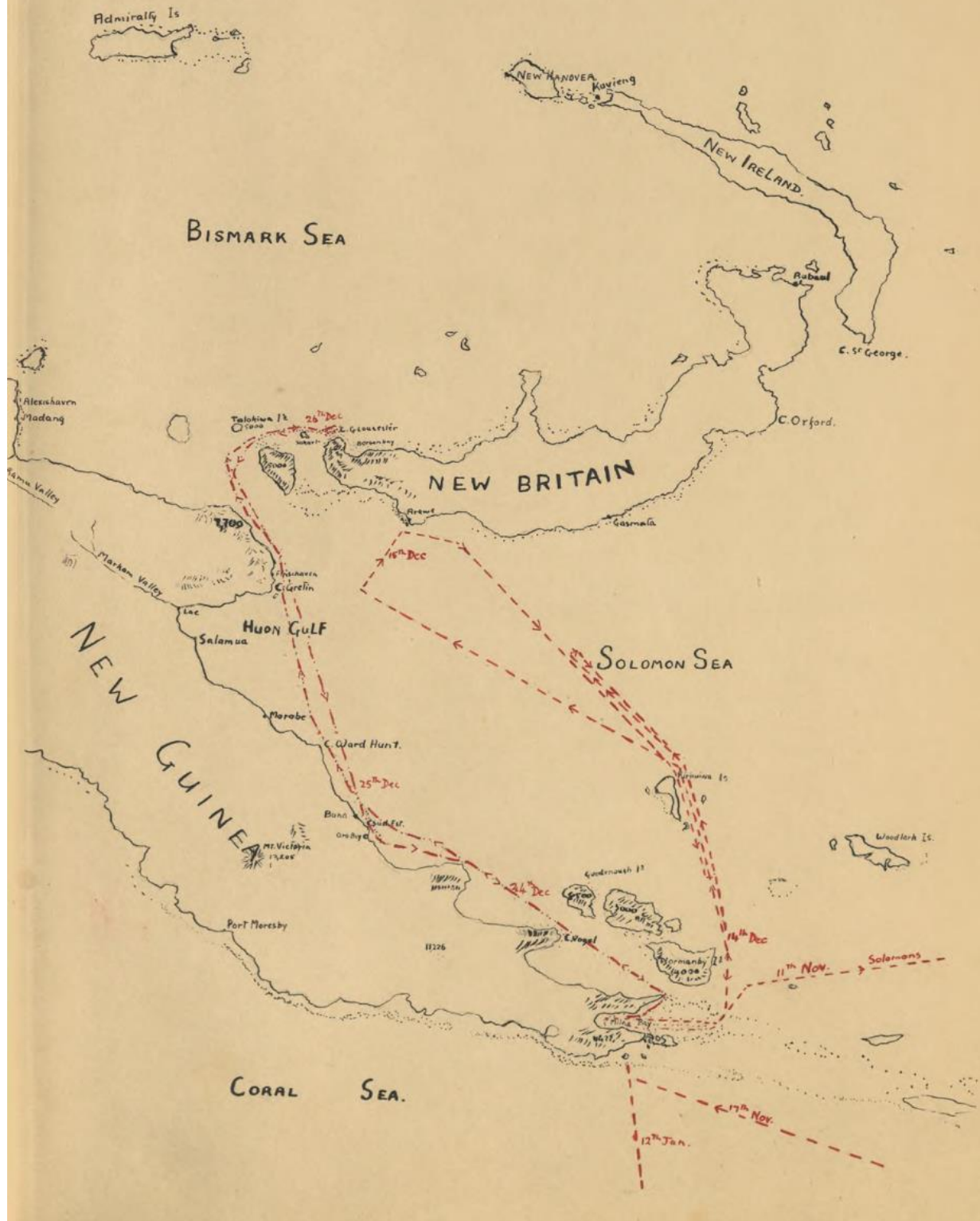
The early months of 1943 were spent in support of the Coral Sea Group and patrolling the east coast of Australia. On 11 April *Australia* (II) received a report of a Japanese landing on the south east shore of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Although subsequent investigations proved negative, it appeared likely that the Japanese were either establishing fuel caches for submarines or aircraft or both, or landing small parties of men as commandos or coast watchers.



*Back Left to Right: Clive Douglas (Photographer), Flying Officer Davis (Pilot) ,
Lieutenant Gerrett (Navigator), Gordon Poole (Fitter 2A), Arthur Litt (Clerk) Middle Left to
Right: Ray Bennett (Fitter 2E), Bluey Ross (Fitter 2H), Eric Payne (Armourer) Front Row:
Eric Atkins (Mess AB), Vic Davis (TAG).*

TRACK CHART
H.M.A.S. AUSTRALIA
NOV 1943 JAN 1944.



Excerpt from the journal of Midshipman (later Rear Admiral) Andrew Robertson.
(Robertson Collection)

From November 1943 to September 1944, *Australia* (II) was involved in bombarding enemy held islands in the South West Pacific, prior to allied assaults, from Cape Gloucester in the New Britain area to Morotai in the Netherlands East Indies.

The Battle for Leyte Gulf

On 20 October 1944, General MacArthur's Philippines invasion force, comprising some 550 ships and covered by Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet, arrived off Leyte Island in the central Philippines.

Australia's contribution to this famous amphibious operation was Commodore John Collins' Task Force 74, including HMA Ships *Australia*, *Shropshire*, *Warramunga* and *Arunta* attached to the US Seventh Fleet. Also present were the Landing Ships Infantry (LSI) HMAS *Westralia*, *Manoora* and *Kanimbla* carrying troops of the US 21st Regimental Combat Team; the frigate *Gascoyne*, and the auxiliaries *Bishopdale*, *Poyang*, *Yunnan* and *Mekur*.

By 09:00 on 20 October hundreds of small boats and destroyers headed for the beaches of Leyte, accompanied by a tremendous bombardment from the accompanying battleships and cruisers. *Australia* and *Shropshire* passed through the battle line as the small boats approached and opened fire on assigned targets. At 10:00, after the landing, *Shropshire*, *Arunta* and *Warramunga* shelled set targets and carried out intermittent bombardments throughout the day.

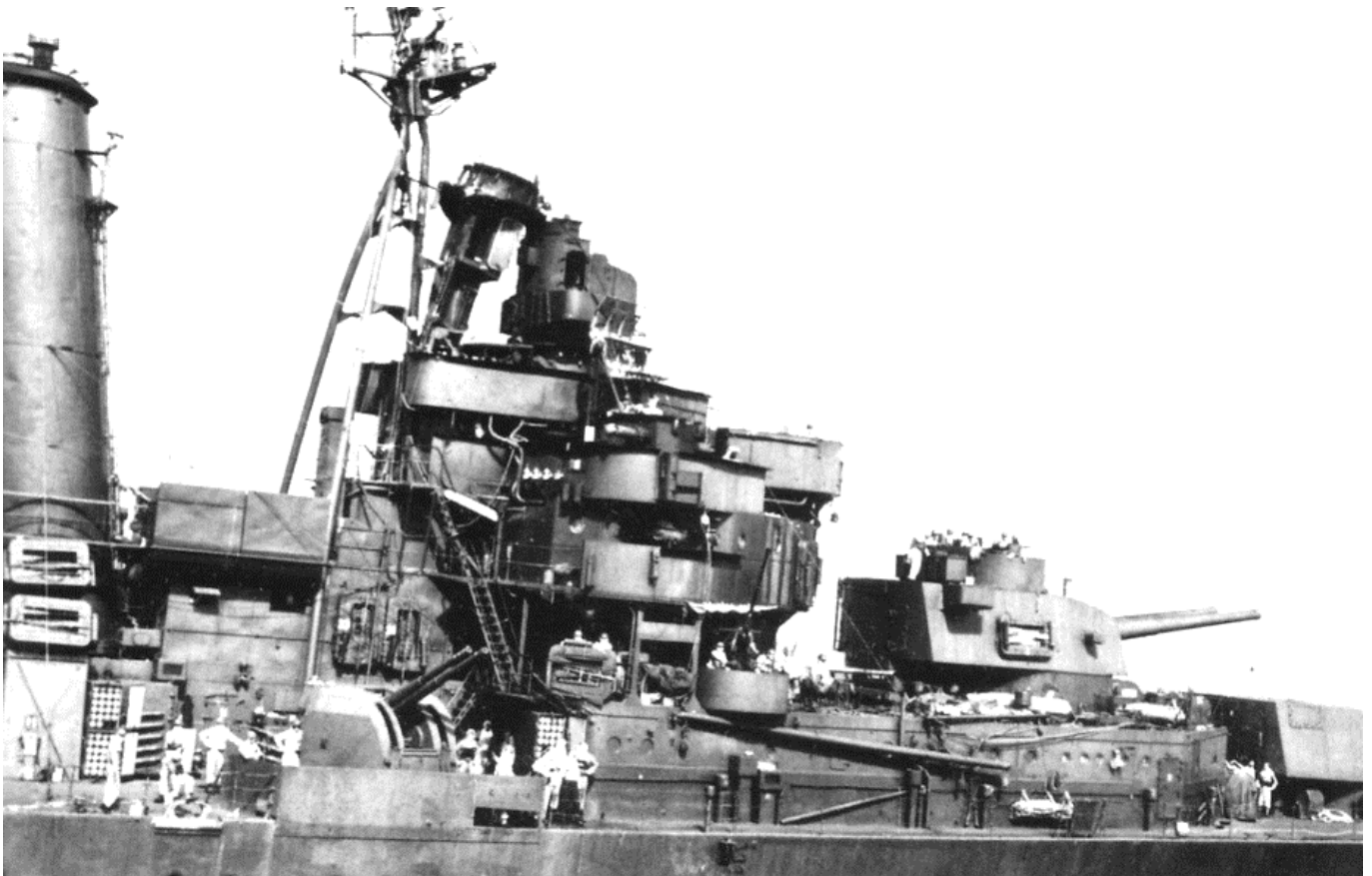


One of Australia's gun's crews during a lull in the action.

The following morning at 06:05 HMAS *Australia* (II) was hit by a Japanese suicide aircraft. Australia's Commanding Officer, Captain Dechaineux and 29 other officers and ratings were killed or died of wounds and Commodore Collins and a further 64 were injured. Command of the Australian ships consequently passed to Captain RF Nicholls in *Shropshire*. Nicholls recalled the attack in the following report:

During the dawn stand-to, a low-flying aircraft approached from the land between Australia and Shropshire. It was taken under fire and retired to the westward. Observers in Shropshire report that the aircraft was hit and touched the water but recovered. It was then turned east again and although under heavy fire, passed up the port side of Australia and crashed into the foremast at 06:05. There was a large explosion and an intense fire was started in the air defence position and bridges. Type 273 radar hut and lantern fell on to the compass platform; both HA Directors and DCT [Director Control Tower] were put out of action and the port strut of the foremast was broken. The fire was brought under control very quickly and by 0635 the large quantity of wreckage on the compass platform and ADP had been cleared away. Commodore JA Collins suffered burns and wounds; Captain EFV Dechaineux and Commander JF Rayment were mortally wounded...

Whether this was the first deliberate kamikaze attack on an Allied ship remains the topic of debate. After this action *Australia* (II) was escorted by HMAS *Warramunga* (I) to Manus Island and thence to Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides for repairs. Captain JM Armstrong, RAN, subsequently assumed command on 29 October.

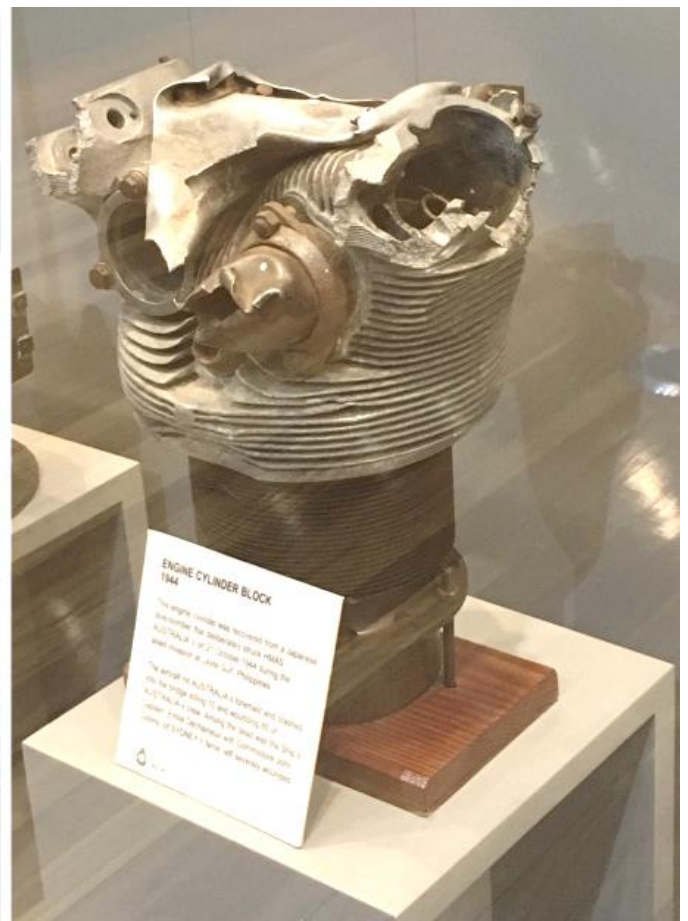


The damage to Australia's bridge and foremast following the aerial attack of 21 October 1944



Left: Captain EFV Dechaineux who, along with 29 officers and sailors, was killed in the Japanese dive bomber attack of 21 October 1944. Right: Lieutenant DJ Hamer, RAN was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for gallantry, skill and devotion to duty while serving in HMAS Australia during the successful assault operations in the Lingayen Gulf, Luzon Island

By 5 January 1945 she was back in action in the Lingayen Gulf covering the allied invasion of Luzon Island. Here she was subjected to repeated suicide attacks, this time there was no doubt of the kamikaze nature of the Japanese planes. *Australia* (II) was hit on 5, 6, 8 and 9 January, losing three officers and 41 ratings killed and one officer and 68 ratings wounded. This was the ship's last action in World War II. After repairs in Sydney, *Australia* (II) sailed for the United Kingdom via the United States on 24 May 1945 for a major refit, arriving at Plymouth on 1 July. She was still in the United Kingdom at the end of the war.



Left: Captain JM Armstrong, RAN in conversation with Mr SM Bruce, the Australian High Commissioner to England, in July 1945 following the ship's arrival at Plymouth. Visible in the foreground is the propeller of one of the Japanese kamikaze aircraft that struck Australia during the bitter fighting in the seas surrounding the Philippines. Right: One of the aircraft relics now preserved and on display at the RAN Heritage Centre, Sydney.

After a somewhat leisurely voyage home via the Cape of Good Hope, *Australia* (II) arrived at Fremantle on 25 January 1946 and Sydney on 16 February where she paid off into Reserve.

Apart from a three month deployment in Far Eastern waters between September and November 1947, *Australia* (II) spent the next three and half years in home waters, paying a goodwill visit to New Zealand in March 1948 and a brief visit to New Guinea in 1949.



HMAS Australia, Culgoa and Arunta berthed at Princes Pier Melbourne 4 April 1947.

Australia (II) spent the last five years of her active commission as a training cruiser, visiting New Zealand on three occasions with the Australian Squadron, from 24 February to 31 March 1950, mid September to 6 October 1952, and a brief visit in October 1953.

From 1 to 14 August 1950, *Australia* (II) was engaged in a mercy mission to the Australian Antarctic base at Heard Island where a member of the staff, Dr Serge Udovikoff, was ill. Apart from the uncomfortable conditions created by gale force winds that gusted up to 65 knots, sleet, snow and hail, the ship experienced feed water difficulties due to the increased prevalence of plankton in the sea. Use of ship's water was restricted to drinking and teeth cleaning and no one was allowed to wash. Weather conditions were no better

when *Australia* (II) arrived at Heard Island, but when a reasonable break occurred the cutter was lowered and Dr Udovikoff eventually brought on board for the journey to Fremantle.

In May 1951 the Governor of New South Wales, Lieutenant General Sir John Northcott, was embarked for Jubilee celebrations at Lord Howe Island. In July of the same year the ship paid a brief visit to New Caledonia and also visited New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomon Islands. During her visit to the Solomon Islands a ceremony was held to commemorate the sinking of her sister ship,

HMAS *Canberra*, on 9 August 1942 in the Battle of Savo Island. A wreath was laid by 31 year old Able Seaman Harold Watts, then serving in *Australia*, who as a young Ordinary Seaman had survived the sinking of the heavy cruiser in 1942.



HMAS Australia's ship's company on the occasion of a visit from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, March 1954.

In the final year of her career, *Australia* (II) was awarded the Duke of Gloucester's Cup and carried out both Royal and Vice Regal duties.

When Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness The Duke Of Edinburgh visited Australia in February and March 1954, formed part of the naval escort for the Royal Yacht *Gothic* and HMNZS *Black Prince*. During the Royal Visit to North Queensland, Her Majesty and His Royal Highness visited *Australia* (II) for an hour.

After all officers were presented, the ship's company marched past in single file and the Royal Party inspected and talked to 20 selected senior and 20 junior ratings.



Her fighting days behind her Australia swings peacefully at a buoy in Sydney Harbour, circa 1954. (Courtesy Ian Collis)

On 4 May 1954 the Governor-General, Sir William Slim, Lady Slim and their staff were embarked for a voyage to the Coral Sea, the Great Barrier Reef and the Whitsunday Passage. *Australia* (II)'s 8-inch guns were fired for the last time on 6 May 1954 and 'possibly for the last time in any of the Queen's navies'. While in the Coral Sea, a disabled Dutch LCT was taken in tow for Cairns.

Australia (II) paid off for disposal on 31 August 1954, having steamed 477,301 miles in the period since August 1939. She was sold as scrap to British Iron and Steel Corporation (Salvage) Ltd on 25 January 1955. *Australia* (II) was towed from Sydney by the Dutch tug *Rode Zee* on 26 March 1955 and was broken up at the Thomas Ward Shipbreaking Yard at Barrow-in-Furness, England, between 1955 and 1957.



Australia arriving at Barrow-in-Furness for breaking up, 5 July 1955



Left: One of HMAS *Australia*'s 8-inch gun barrels on display in the grounds of the Australian War Memorial Canberra. Right: A similar barrel as fitted to the ship when in commission. Each barrel weighed 17.3 tonnes and could fire a 116kg projectile 26.7kms. The life of each barrel was 550 rounds.



This plaque, commemorating the 87 men killed while serving aboard HMAS Australia (II), is located at the Australian War Memorial



The HMAS Australia (II) ship bell is held at St Mark's Chapel, HMAS Cerberus.



**RETURNED SERVICES LEAGUE
ARMADALE SUB-BRANCH**

Your RSL