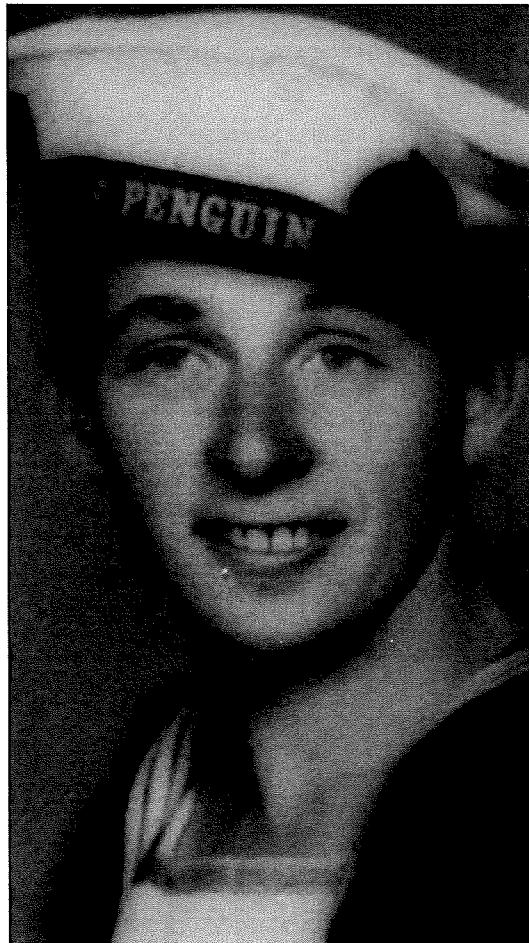


DIARY OF
CLAUDE ROBERTSON BIBB
RAN
SHIP SYDNEY

DIARY OF EVENTS FROM THE TIME HMAS SYDNEY LEFT AUSTRALIA
UNTI, SHE RETURNED HOME

JANUARY 1940-DECEMBER 1940

TO FEBRUARY 9TH 1941 HOME



SYDNEY - BARTOLOMEO COLLEONI

ACTION JULY 19th 1940

On July 18th at 0230 H.M.A.S. SYDNEY accompanied by five destroyers Ilex, Hypenion, Nero, Hasty, Havoc left Alexandria to proceed to the Gulf of Athens to prey on Italian shipping and submarines if any in that vicinity. All day we headed in a generally north westerly course, seeing and hearing nothing. This was unusual and we became suspicious at the absence of Italian bombers which always greeted us with a rain of bombs as soon as we were clear of coast, especially in the vicinity of the Island of Crete. That night we slept at our action stations with the idea that it was going to be a quick trip next day. Being Friday was considered our lucky day as the two previous Fridays the Sydney had been in action without a scratch and again Friday the 19th was very lucky for us indeed.

About four of our destroyers about 8a.m. which were at their stations well ahead reported they had come in contact with two Italian cruisers south west of us and were being overhauled at high speed. In receiving this call our speed was increased from 20 knots to full ahead. A later signal from the destroyers stated that they were under fire from enemy. So our Captain

decided to contact the enemy full knowledge of the risk he saw.

At 8:30 am the Sydney sighted the enemy. The Australian Flag was hoisted at the fore, and in we went. The Italians had opened fire, by this time, but their salvos were going well over Sydney. We held fire until 19,000 yards. The enemy shells were still going over the top, one could hear them screeching over us. Sydney opened fire on the foremost cruiser (The Giovanne Delle Bande) Here we later found out our first salvo falling short. Our next struck her forward turret making a terrible mess of it, putting it out of action. Several other salvos fell around her striking her bridge, and sending her fighting top over the side. During this time the Sydney was under fire from both enemy cruisers. The second cruiser B.C. seeing her sister ship suffer so much damage took up station in front of her acting as a shield and make smoke at times her shell fell horribly close to us. Sydney shifted targets on to second cruiser and concentrated on her. Mean while the destroyers opened fire on their 4.7" guns, but the range was too great and their shells fell short. The range had us closed from 19,000 to 13,000. Our speed was $30\frac{1}{2}$ knots. We pumped about 20 salvos into her most of them hitting the broadside struck her under the foremost funnel and she stopped. This enabled us to fire broadside after

broadside into her smashing her turrets, her aircraft and catapult slid overboard. Her decks were shambles / we were firing S.A.P shells, which pierced her sides and exploded internally. After one particular broadside her bows broke off, the ship was enveloped in steam and smoke. She began to sink slowly. Her crew was seen jumping over her mangled side into the sea. The Captain decided she was done for and ordered the destroyers to finish her off, which they did, by firing two tin fish into her. She listed to starboard, turning over slowly, until she slipped beneath the waves in a cloud of steam. Several of the torpedoes missed their mark and exploded against the cliffs of Crete. The battle was fought very close to the shore and spectators could be seen watching from the cliff tops.

The Sydney now increased her speed and was racing after the other cruisers. We seemed to be overtaking her. She opened fire at us with her after turrets, but her shots went wide off their mark falling off our port bow. We opened fire and our fire silenced her after turrets. The Italians put every ounce of speed they could get on and gradually began to draw away from us, so the Captain decided to give up the chase, and return to harbour. The only damage we sustained was on steel which hit our foremost funnel. One side of the

Funnel had a huge hole in it the other side was pitted with small holes from the schrapnel. Also several boats were holed by splinters. Cinema machine was put out of action.

Seeing it was the end of the battle everyone went to stand easy all having a good look at the damage, splinter hunting all at once, enemy bombers unknown to us arrived overhead, straddled us with heavy bombs. Everyone dashed for cover, no-one being hurt. We had several bombing raids that day about 3.30 p.m. a signal was received from 'Harock' stating that while picking up survivors she was damaged by enemy bombs much to the disgust of Italian Sailors. Harock reported she was holed beneath the water line. The boiler room flooded but the bulkheads were holding - she could only make 24 knots at the most.

We returned picked her up and escorted her back to harbour after being bombed several more times by bombers this morning. H. M. A. S. Liverpool flying the flag of V. A 7th C. S. came out to meet us. When we arrived at Alexandria Liverpool stood to one side to allow us to enter harbour first. Her crew lined up on upper deck and gave us a rousing cheer as we passed bringing to us the realisation that we had done something out of the ordinary. As we passed

down the lines of ships in the harbour they all gave us a cheer making us feel rather proud of ourselves.

Right gun of B. Turret fired 140 rounds of S. A. P. Left gun of B. Turret 136 rounds of S. A. P. at the 105th round, right gun ran red hot and wouldn't run out into the firing position, so we had to push it from behind.

DIARY OF EVENT FROM
H.M.A.S. SYDNEY - LEFT
FROM AUSTRALIA UNTIL
RETURNED HOME

1940 - 9th February 1941

1ST January . In harbour

2ND " " "

4th " " "

6th " " "

7th " " "

8th January

1330 - Left Sydney to Jarvis Bay.

2020 - Arrived Jarvis Bay.

9th January

1800 - Left Jarvis Bay to meet New Zealand
Convoy of 2ND A.G.F.

10th January

0330 - Sighted "Ramilles" - Canberra.

1230 - Sighted New Zealand Convoy.

1500 - Joined up with convoy from Sydney.

The convoy comprised of ten transports
and four warships, those being "Ramilles"
in lead, "Australia", "Canberra" on either
flank and the Sydney bringing up the
rear.

11th January - At sea.

0340 - Left convoy - proceeded to Jarvis Bay.

1315 - Arrived Jarvis Bay.

12th January

0630 - Left Jarvis Bay for rendezvous with "Leander" of Sydney Heads.

1430 - Met "Leander" of Sydney Heads and did a sub calibre shoot.

1930 - Entered Sydney Harbour - secured to buoy.

13th January - In harbour

14th " " "

15th " " "

16th January

1715 - Slipped from buoy and proceeded on patrol.

17th January

0400 - Did dawn attack on Sydney Heads

0850 - Entered harbour

1215 - Liberty men recalled.

1930 - Slipped and proceeded to sea to pick up battle practice target which had broken adrift and was menacing navigation. I missed the ship but about 50 of us were sent outside the heads by tug at 0200 to pick up ship.

18th January - Recovered target which went aground on rocks around Manley.

1430 - Entered Harbour

19th January - In harbour

20th " " "

21-22nd " " "

23rd " " "

24/25th " " "

26/27th " " "

28th " " "

29th January

0945 - Slipped and proceeded to sea for shoot. Governor General and big-wigs aboard. Dropped two depth charges. First time I've ever seen them go off.
1115 - Entered harbour secured to buoy.

30th/31st January

In harbour

1st February

Proceeded to sea enroute for Portland (Vic) Albany W.A. then Freemantle.

2nd February

At Sea

3rd February

0900 - Met "Canberra" - anchored off Portland.
1001 - Admiral came aboard.
1015 - Proceeded to sea for shoot.
1600 - Returned to Portland.
2000 - Left Portland and proceeded to sea on route to Albany.

4th/5th February

At Sea.

6th February

1400 - Arrived at Albany. Leave given to badgmen.

17th February

0620 - Left Albany, proceeded to Freemantle.

8th February

1015 - Arrived at Freemantle. Hottest day here for seven years.

9th February - In harbour

10/11

"

"

"

12/13/14

"

"

"

15th February

0830 - Proceeded to sea. Gunnery practice thence to Bunbury, 100 miles south of Fremantle.

16th February

1800 - Anchored off Bunbury

2100 - Sailed for Fremantle.

17th February

Arrived back in Fremantle.

18th February - In harbour

19/20th " " "

21st " " "

22nd February

Left Fremantle for Carnarvon. Carried out 4" shoot at sleeve target towed by our aircraft

23rd February

At sea. Very hot

1900 - Arrived at Carnarvon.

24th February - At Carnarvon fishing parties went away and brought back enough fish for ships company's supper.

25th February - Weighed anchor, and proceeded to better fishing spot about 40 miles up the bay. Shark's bay name of place.

Amused myself all afternoon digging baby turtles out of sand. Left Shark bay enroute to Fremantle once more.

26th February - At sea. Good weather - hot

27th " - Arrived at harbour. Reserves went on leave.

28/29th February - In Harbour

1st March - In harbour

2ND March - In harbour

3RD/₄TH " " "

5TH March. Reserves returned from leave.

Proceeded to sea on patrol.

6TH/₇TH March - At sea on patrol

8TH March

0700 Arrived back Freemantle harbour

9TH/₁₀TH In harbour

11TH/₁₂TH " "

13TH March

Slipped and proceeded to sea for 4TH-6TH shoot

Also 5" m gun shoot at sleeve target, after which we left for Busselton

14TH March

1206 - Arrived at Busselton. Anchored two miles off shore.

2100 - Left Busselton proceeding back to Freemantle.

15TH March

1000 Arrived back in Freemantle.

16TH/₁₇TH/₁₈TH In harbour

19TH March

Left Freemantle proceeding on patrol.

20TH March

At Sea

1230 Arrived at Cape Naturalist.

21ST March

Arrived in Page Roads came to anchor

22ND March - In harbour

Good Friday.

23RD March

1100 - Left harbour. Proceeding to meet

M.V. Duntroon which is carrying troops.

25th March - At sea

26th "

0643 - Arrived back in Fremantle. Refilled
shored ship.

27th/28th/29th/30th March - In harbour

31st March

Slipped and proceeded to sea to provide cover
for M.V. Manunda which is carrying troops
to Fremantle.

1st APRIL - At sea.

1000 - Rendezvous with Manunda.

2nd April - At Sea

Parted company with Manunda when near
Fremantle and proceeded to provide
cover for Empress of Britton 42,348 tons

1725 - Met Empress approx 200 miles N.W.
Fremantle.

3rd April

0000 Parted company with Empress and
proceeded to provide cover for Aquitania.
44,786 ton

4th April - Met Aquitania escorted her to
Fremantle.

5th April

0800 - Just of Fremantle harbour when we
received orders to proceed with Empress
to Britton to Cape Leewards.

1700 - Leewards sighted parted company with
Empress proceeding back to Fremantle.

6th April.

Back in Fremantle

7th April - Slipped and proceeded to sea to
escort Aquitania as far as Cape Leewards.

8th April - Back in harbour.

9th " - In harbour

10th " - Left harbour on patrol.

11th/12th " - On patrol.

13th April

0600 - Anchored in Page Roads.

Queen Mary anchored just off Freemantle Harbour. She arrived several hours before us.

14th April

0900 - Received orders, proceed and intercept Danish oil tankers Anglo Mearsh.

1315 - Sighted tanker escorted her back to Freemantle.

1815 - Arrived in harbour

15th/16th/17th - In harbour

18th April - Slipped and proceeded to meet 2nd contingent of A.G.J. south of Albany. Distance steamed since outbreak of war to date. 13,014

19th April

Met convoy for which we provided A.S. cover.

20th April - At sea with convoy.

21st " - Convoy which consisted of Dunnera, Strathaird, Ettrick, Heuralia and Herisia went into harbour one by one. Ramilles, Sydney, Adelaide, Ifassa and Swan anchored outside.

1015 - Ramilles and Sydney went in and secured to oil.

22nd April.

1400 - We left Freemantle with convoy.

23rd April

At sea. Good weather. Sydney in lead of convoy.

24th April

With convoy

25th April

Anzac Day. Sydney paid tribute to A.I.F. by steaming around convoy flying the signals R.A.N. congratulates the second A.I.F. on Anzac Day.

26th April

Position of Convoy

O Sydney

O Ramilles

O Dunera

O Stratford

O Ettrick

O Meralia

O Heura

27th April.

At sea. Arrive in vicinity of Coca Islands to manna.

28th April

Ship sighted. Hand's went into action stations. Ship was French cruiser Suffren

We slowed down and she came right up on our helm and we gave her a line with orders in a sealed tin. After signalling "Good Luck" we turned and headed back to Australia.

29th/30th April

At sea. Very hot.

May 1st

Received orders to proceed to Singapore at 15 knots arriving Sunday. Oil then proceed to Colombo at 218 knots

2nd May - At sea enroute to Singapore

3rd May " "

1300 - Sighted coast of Java and Sumatra. Historic Volcanic Island of Krakatoa on our port beam. Met dutch patrol boat which escorted us through the mine fields.

1845 - Met British submarine, 'RAINBOW' which gave us our orders.

1915 - Entered Sunda Straights

4th May

Off Carimata Islands. Very heavy tropical rains throughout the day

5th May

0200 - Crossed the equator.

1300 - Entered Singapore Harbour. Refuelled left for Colombo at midnight

6th May - At sea. Very hot.

7th May - " " Having lots of sunbaking

8th May

1100 - Coast of Ceylon sighted.

1845 - Entered Colombo harbour.

9th May

In Colombo harbour

10th May

Germany invades Holland, Belgium

1100 - Proceed to sea intercept Dutch passenger liner

11th May

1730 - Returned to Colombo and secured to buoy.

12th May - After church Cin C of East Indies

1700 - Rendezvous with third contingent of the A.F.F. in vicinity of Cocos Islands.

13th May - At sea. Very hot.

14th May

0600 - Crossed the equator.

15th May - At sea

16th May

0200 - Sydney ordered back to Colombo.

17th May

1600 - For the third time in a fortnight crossed the equator.

18th May

Arrived back in harbour and secured to buoy.

19th May

1000 - Left Colombo. Sydney ordered to join Red Sea Squadron at Aden. Speed

27 knots

20th - At sea on route to Aden

21st May - At sea.

22nd May

1600 - Entered Aden Harbour. H.M.A.S. Gloucester and aircraft carrier "Eagle" in harbour.

2200 - Left harbour took up position with Gloucester and Eagle.

23RD May

At sea on route to P^r Said in Red Sea.

1700 - Australian cruiser Hobart sighted joined up with us.

24th May

0010 - Hobart parted company for P^r Sudan.

1000 - Gloucester parts company temporarily for Suez.

25th May.

1000 - Entered Jubal Straits

1720 - Passed Flottilla of "K" destroyers.

1845 - Anchored off Suez.

2015 - Weighed and proceeded through canal enroute to P^r Said.

26th May

Passed through canal. Met Gloucester at P^r Said. Left for Alexandria harbour, secured to buoy

27th May

In Alexandria Harbour. Australian destroyer also in port. Sydney joins 7th cruiser squadron comprising - Orion (flag) Neptune, Sydney, Gloucester, Liverpool, Leander.

28th May

In harbour. Lot of work to be done at sea for 32 days of 33.

29th May

In harbour cleaning ship.

30th May " " " "

1st June - In harbour

2nd June " " " "

3RD June

Mediterranean Fleet ordered to sea for exercises. 7th cruiser squadron and 10th destroyer squadron. Leander parts for Red Sea.

4th June

Entered harbour and secured at 7th berth.

Swimming over side permitted.

5th June

In harbour

6th June

1130 - Orion Neptune Gloucester and Sydney to sea for exercises.

2315 - Returned to harbour

7th/8th/9th June

In harbour

10th June - Italy declares war against allies.
0100 - Britain at war with Italy. We proceed to sea.

11th June

Orders to bombard important base in Libya at dawn.

12th June -

Orders cancelled, proceeding to rendezvous with battle fleet.

1300 - Left fleet commenced sweep towards Ionian Islands

13th June

1210 - Rendezvous with Battle Fleet.

1615 - Submarine detected. Sydney drops two depth charges. Black oily patches come to surface. Sydney get her first "kill"

14th June

Reports received. Aussie destroyers sank two submarines. Stuart and Decoy also sink submarine. H.M.S. Calysho sunk by submarine of Greece. One officer and thirty ratings missing. Enemy minefields discovered 15 miles off Alexandria. Returned to harbour.

15th June

In harbour. One French battleship. Four French cruisers in company.

1530. Air raid warning. All clear 30 minutes later.

16th June

In harbour. Air raid warning three times during day. Planes were sighted. Batteries shot one down.

17th June - In harbour.

18th June - Air raid warning.

19th June - In harbour

20th June

1130. Orion. Neptune. Sydney and French battleship and Lorraine also four destroyers. Proceed to sea. Proceeding to bombard Italian base in Lybia at dawn tomorrow.

21st June

Arrive at coast of Lybia.

0630. Opened fire on East Bardia. Sydney concentrated on fort, firing 148 rounds of D.A. shells. Lorraine blew up oil tanks. Orion and Neptune also did some considerable damage. Fort was one mass of flames when we left.

The Italians were taken by surprise

and only had time to fire a couple of shots from their guns before fleeing. Our plane was up spotting and was attacked by three fighters. It escaped however and just managed to get back, to one of our bases, where she folded up on landing. No casualties. Returned to harbour.

22nd June

In harbour

0115. Enemy bombers made attack on fleet in Alexandria. About 30 bombs were dropped falling 50 yards from Sydney. No damage done to ships, but two persons were killed and twenty injured.

0200. Raiders reappear, but were driven off by intense barrage set up by ships and shore batteries. I was asleep when it started, but woke up and went to have a look. Swell fire-works display.

23rd June

In harbour. 4 Air raid warnings but no attack, during day.

24th/25th/26th June

In harbour 24th June Air raid warning
25th/26th June in harbour

27th June

1100 - 7th Cruiser Squadron sailed to provide submarine cover for convoy. Three Italian destroyers R.C.T. Espero, Astro, Jeffino, reported to be in vicinity. In less than an hour they were sighted, we immediately

went into action stations. Gloucester went into action and Liverpool moved out on our port bow approx 5 miles and opened fire at 22,000 yards. Sydney, Orion, Neptune continued on westerly course, moving into battle formation with Sydney leading.

Sydney opened fire with forward turrets at 1845 and 18,000 yards, followed by Neptune, Orion. As soon as accurate firing was attained the three of us altered course to enable firing with both fore and after turrets.

At 1904 it was seen that smoke screens were being made by enemy and our was temporarily suspended at 1910. The destroyers emerged from screen firing torpedos which were readily detected by our lookouts, and ships altered course accordingly to avoid them. Up to this stage enemies salvos were falling short, but they now began to go over us, with occasional close one. Sydney again opened fire with considerable success, our shots hitting the stern of Espero, wiping out her after gun and damaging her steering gear. Another salvo laid open her foresteer, starting fire between decks.

Several minutes later a salvo from the forward guns passed into Esperos engine room wiping out engine room, staff all but one who (we found out later) was blown through the hole in the ships side. The Espero was now out of control and heading straight towards us. We altered course and opened up with 4" guns. The

Espero's magazine then blew up. Taking bridge and crew with it and the destroyer was now alight from stem to stern. We ease fire and moved in close to pick up survivors.

Shortly Espero sank, her depth charges exploding as she disappeared. We picked up 47 survivors. Some who were terribly burned and mutilated. They were well treated and seemed to be glad to be out of it all.

We couldn't stay to pick up all the survivors we were in a dangerous position, so we cut adrift a cutter with food aboard and left.

B turret fired 170 rounds, so ended our first real action. Espero was laid down in 1928. 1,300 ton. Speed 30 knots. She had over 140 officers and men, but at the time she was carrying 60 soldiers (approx) for garrison in Libya.

29th June

Two Italian sailors buried at sea.

30th June

1345 - Rendezvous with convoy of Island of Crete.

1500 - Enemy reconnaissance plane sighted driven off by gunfire.

1630 - Ten enemy aircraft attacked us, dropping bombs all round Sydney, Orion, Neptune. Neptune hit by splinters which damaged her aircraft, so it was catapulted off as petrol was spraying everywhere from holed tanks. Also three men were injured by splinters. This is our first bombing attack at sea.

1st July - Arrived back in harbour, secured to

buoy. Prisoners landed. They seemed sorry to go. They weren't such a bad lot.

2nd / 3rd July

In harbour

4th July

The French fleet prepared for sea, against Admirals orders. All our ships ordered to open fire if any French ship should leave harbour. We were at action stations all day long and scared (French) properly. There would have been hell to pay if French had tried to leave.

While at action stations air raid took place on fleet 5 planes dropped 20 bombs doing some damage on shore.

One bomb dropped off our port side. One French ship opened fire with us at the raiders.

2100 - French ships come to agreement.

5th / 6th July

In harbour Distance steamed since outbreak of war up to date

Distance steamed - 37,690 miles

Days at sea - 155

Days in harbour 147

7th July

Royal Sovereign, Malaita, Eagle, Gloucester
Ten destroyers to sea.

2000 - Air raid. Several bombs dropped, raiders driven off by gunfire.

2200 - 7th Cruisers Squadron to sea.

8th July

At sea

9th July

We in company with battle fleet met Italian fleet at 1300. Enemy first sighted by Sunderland bombers which sent us information of their course and number of ships ect. They had been to Lybia by convoy and were returning to base in Italy. Their fleet took a course to head them off. So at 1300 enemy was brought into action quite close to Italian coast. Their fleet consists of two battleships. Six 8 v 6" and a large number of destroyers. We opened fire at extremest range, approx 22,000 yards. Sydney opened fire on a large ship thought to be a cruiser, but it turned out to be a battleship. Range close to 11,000 yards.

* We in B Turret firing very rapidly. We could hear the whine of shells overhead, some bursting around us. One Italian battleship was hit by 15" shell from Warspite. The Ipio then made smoke screens and ran. Us following a confused action between light craft ensued, but it was at extreme range with enemy retiring. Action was sufficiently close to Italian coast for enemy to make best of their airforce. Considerable bombing took place, but no hits registered.

British casualties - nil

Italian - 29 Killed 69 injured with the loss of one destroyer and one battleship damaged.

10th July - At sea

Numerous air raids during day. Bombs fell all around us, schrapnel flew all over deck and A.B. turrets. No damage done. Coast of Sicily sighted. Torpedo bombers of F.A.A. from Eagle took off and attacked Italian fleet in Augusta Harbour. One cruiser hit by torpedo also a supply ship. All planes returned.

11th July

1020. Reconnaissance plane sighted

1425. Nine enemy bombers attacked and dropped bombs off Sydney's port quarter, also Neptune and Gloucester had some close shaves.

1700. Three enemy bombers flew over, barrage was set up, one plane broke formation and flew off with long trail of black smoke pouring from it. Hope the dirty dog didn't get home.

12th July

Returning to Alexandria when bombers found us again. Had 24 raids today.

Gloucester hit on bridge. Killed ten.

Vampire hit by splinters. Officer killed.

Had many close shaves and many tons of bombs were dropped.

* It was the worst day I've ever experienced. We were all nervous wrecks, when we arrived in port. During the past Five Days we were BOMBED more than 45 times.

13th/14th July

In harbour

15th July - In harbour
" "

1305 - Air raid A. A. Defences went into action and drove off raiders before they could do any damage.

16th July

0700 - Entered dock

2220 - Air raid many bombs dropped. I was duty A. A. Defence watch. Saw bombs exploding, heard some whistling down, (didn't wait to see them bust) Raid lasted an hour.

17th July

1300 - Left dock and made fast to buoy.

18th July

0430 - Left Alexandria with 4 destroyers for Gulf of Athens to hunt for Italian Suto^v merchant ships.

19th July

0800 - Two enemy cruisers reported, proceeded to intercept them

0830 - Enemy sighted. We opened fire.

1015 - By this time Bartolome's Collioni on her way to Davy Jones Locker, the other one high tailing it over the horizon.

1100 - Gave up the chase, she was too fast for us. Sydney was hit by shell in foremost funnel. No other damage done. Only one man slightly wounded by fragment. 500 survivors picked up by destroyers. Whilst carrying out this job (Italian planes) they were bombed by " " Luckily no hits obtained.

20th July

Returned to Alexandria. Oiled and amm, ship.

1245

1500

2000

} Air raid warnings. Raiders passed

21st July

1000

1300

} AIR RAID WARNINGS

22nd July. In harbour. The war correspondent of O.I. £ came aboard and took photos of damage during action.

23rd July

Raid ship - Camouflage.

1380. Air raid warning.

24th July

Two air raid warnings during day. Raiders driven off by fighters before got this far.

25th July

0410 - Air raid. Bombs dropped one hitting small merchant vessel and blew stern off.

Many incendiary bombs dropped on town and harbour and quite a few fires started.

One very heavy bomb landed just off our starboard bow, the concussion blowing in many windows of Ras-et-Lin Palace.

A. A. defence didn't go into action because search lights went into action

because search lights couldn't pick out raiders wing to very bright moonlight and low flying clouds. Raid lasted hours.

26th July.

In harbour. Two air raid warnings during day.

27th July

0200 - Left Alexandria in co. with Battle Fleet for Argcon Sea, to cover convoy.

1820 - Bombers raided Fleet. Many bombs dropped. No hits registered.

1920 - Sydney had a very close shave when 5 bombers dropped their bombs. Sydney was obscured by smoke and water which went higher than our masts and the upper deck was strewn with bomb splinters. We all thought we were hit as explosions were deafening. This is our closest shave to date. One seaman was injured by shrapnel.

28th July

Sydney and Neptune left fleet to intercept a Greek tanker carrying petrol from Italy to the Dodecanese Island. Italian plane kept shadowing us all afternoon.

1930 - Bombers attack us, quite a number of bombs dropped, splinters hit ship, damaging wing of aircraft. Our A. A. guns drove them off. At dusk we sighted the tanker the crew of which abandoned ship in two lifeboats immediately they saw us. Neptune opened fire with 4" guns. The 6th salvo caused an explosion which ignited the petrol. It was dark by this time and the petrol made a huge blaze which spread as each drum burst. We could still see her burning one hour after, when we were on our way back. She was the Greek tanker "Hermoine" carrying 500 tons of aero petrol and 200 tons of oil to Rhodes Island and its air

It's (Italians)

base in Dodecanese.

29th July

On our way back to Alexandria one aircraft sighted. We didn't open fire as she was too great a height. Increased speed to 28 knots to pass island of Crete in the darkness.

30th July

1200 - Arrived back in harbour. Oiled ship and took in 4" ammunition.

1730 - Air raid. No bombs dropped but shore batteries opened up. One plane shot down by Ras-el-Jin battery.

31st July

0530 - Left Alexandria. Destination unknown in company with Orion. Neptune and three destroyers.

0700 - Bombers attacked us, many bombs fall all of which were directed at Sydney. The attacks came out the sun, didn't know they were there until bombs fell.

1900 - Seven enemy bombers attack all the bombs fell around Sydney. These It's seem to be able to pick us out from the other ships and they've sworn to get us.

1910 - Three planes this time, bombs fell around Sydney again.

2130 - Low flying aircraft reported by destroyers. Orion opened fire.

* A couple of chaps broke down today. Nerves can't stand it. This makes 4 now.

1st August

At sea again. Aegean sea.

1700 - Enemy aircraft sighted. Too high for A.A guns. Probably just watching our movements.

1730 - Italian plane shadowing us, still.

1900 - Increased speed 27 knots.

2ND August.

At sea on route to Alexandria. No aircraft seen today. Expect to arrive during dog watches.

1900 - Entered harbour. Secured to buoy.

3RD August.

In harbour. Gloucester went out and did trial shoot. Shes all ready for action again.

4th August

In harbour. All quiet these past few days.

5th August In harbour

1720 - Air raid warning. All clear after half an hour.

6th August

In harbour.

2430 - Air raid. Several bombs dropped fell at sea.

7th August.

In harbour

1920 - Air raid alarm.

1945 - All clear. Our fighters were up over the harbour, no enemy planes sighted.

8th August

In harbour

9th August

Ship is being de-magnetised so a magnetic mines won't have any effect on us.

10th August

In harbour.

0200. Air raid warning. Up to date we have been in 182 air raids both in harbour and sea.

11th August

In harbour. All quiet.

12th August

0645. Sydney and Neptune accompanied by 4 destroyer left Alexandria, proceeding on submarine patrol.

13th August

At sea. No aircraft sighted all day. Things are unusually quiet.

2300. Signal in Italian from merchant vessel picked up by D'Zglain.

0130. Hands went into first degree of readiness while passing through Straits of Kaso.

14th August

At sea.

1515. Torpedo passed by starboard side of hubian. Destroyers tried to pick up submarine, but failed. We carried on leaving two destroyers behind to see if they could find it.

1930. Returned to harbour, secured to buoy.

15th August

In harbour

1015 H.M.S. Kent 10,000 ton bount class cruiser arrived.

2150. Air raid. Many bombs dropped. One fell between Sydney and Orion about 50 yards away. Raid lasted until 0015. One small boom defence vessel was hit.

by bomb and sunk. Rating killed and 16 injured. Their first hit.

16th August

In harbour

1030 - Warspite, Malafai and Ramilles proceed to sea, accompanied by "Kent". Warspite reports heavy bombing attacks by Italian planes during the day.

17th August

In harbour

Battleships bombarded. Fort Bardia and Caprizzo over 300 rounds of shells fired

1010 Battleships and destroyers returned to harbour.

18th August

In harbour

Ships have been trying out new aircraft traps today. They comprise of ordinary box kite attached to very thin wire. Each ship has one and they are put up during air raids to trap dive bombers ect.

19th August

In harbour.

20th August

In harbour

1910 Air raid warning

1930 Raiders passed.

21st August

In harbour

1430 - Air raid warning

1450 - All clear

22nd August. - In harbour.

0555 - Air raid many bombs dropped. A.A. batteries did not go into action because of low flying clouds. No damage done. All clear.

23rd August.

0100 - Air raids. Bombs dropped on town.

0150 - All clear

0200 - Air raid. Bombs fell near R.A.F. aerodome

0340 - All clear.

1000 - Sydney proceeds to sea to provide cover for destroyers and "Gunboat" whilst they do bomber deterrent.

24th August. At sea

0815 - Met R.A.F. fighter escort. They are escorting us back to Alea in case any Italian bombers come in.

1900 - Returned to Alexandria, and secured to buoy

25th August

In harbour. Went ashore saw big three engine Italian bomber Savoia type which was shot down by R.A.F. last Sunday.

26th August

In harbour. Air raid. Bombs fell over by R.A.F. aerodome. Ships and shore batteries went into action.

0545 - All clear

0600 - Air raid warning.

0610 - Raiders passed. H.M. destroyer "Hastile" reported sank by stray mine whilst conveying in vicinity of Malta. One

One officer and four ratings reported killed

27th August

In harbour

28th August

In harbour several air raid warnings, throughout last night and early this morning. 1600 "Eagle" and destroyers returned to harbour.

29th August

In harbour

0100 Air raid warning.

0515 Raiders passed.

2000 All watches off hands fall in and prepare for sea.

1st September

At sea. Left fleet and proceeded with small convoy toward Malta.

2nd September

At sea. Last night 10 ships got past "Pantelleria" thus proving Mussolini's claim that he had the middle Mediterranean blocked, wrong. The ships were H.M.A.S. Valiant (battleship) Illustrious (aircraft carrier) two anti-aircraft ships, and six destroyers.

0800 The two a.a. ships proceeded into Malta to refuel.

1100 Valiant into Malta to refuel. Meanwhile the rest of the fleet is cruising around waiting for them to rejoin squadron.

1115 Gloucester, Liverpool open fire on aircraft, but it was one of their own.

1545 Italian bombers raid fleet. Bombs directed at battleships and $\frac{1}{2}$ carriers.

Planes driven off by A.A. fire. No hits registered.
1245 Destroyers do depth charge attack against submarine.

1905 Bombers over again. Bombs falling astern of "Orion".

1920 Five bombers over again, this time two shot down, one aflame crashed into sea. This is the first time I've seen a plane shot down. I got a big kick out of it. Serve them right, with two A.A. ships we'll get our own back now. Our fighters got two more of them, so out of five only one got away.

3RD September

At sea. Today completes the first year of war. Can't say I'm looking forward to the next few years.

2200 Sydney, Orion, Islex, Herwood part company and proceed toward Island of Searpanto in Dodecanese Group. We are to bombard aerodrome on Southern end of Island at dawn tomorrow.

4th September

At sea

0500 Sydney and destroyer Islex part company with Orion and Herwood. Their target is northern end of Island.

0615 - Sydney opened fire, range about two miles firing D.A shells

0645. Bombardment completed. During bombardment two motor torpedo boats made a dash at us, with her 4" guns. Set one M.T.B. on fire. It quickly

sank, and badly damaged the other one. It probably sank before getting back to base.

Sydney's aircraft was over the aerodrome spotting for us, from observers report much damage was done to hangars and dome itself. While we were doing bombardment all aircraft from ac carrier's "Eagle" and "Illustrious" bombed its Naval and air base at Rhodes Island. They continued bombing attacks all morning.

0800 Action alarm.

Everyone to action stations. Ships sighted proved to be our own. Hialaya, Eagle, cruisers, destroyers. We had part of a dummy funnel rigged to make it look like Italian cruisers and it fooled our own ships and at the same time we thought they were Italians. Our skipper was going to have a go at them battleships or no battleships.

1110 Three Italian bombers raid fleet. Bombs directed at "Illustrious". No hits obtained. Radaris driven off by fire.

1140 Ilex drops depth charges. Large oil patches come to surface.

1145 Another raid by more bombers. A.A. fire forced them to break formation, bombs fell no place

5th September

0730 Ship returns to Alexandria

6th September

In harbour

1300 Air raid alarm. Aircraft batteries go into

sank, and badly damaged the other one. It probably sank before getting back to base. Sydney's aircraft was over the aerodrome spotting for us, from observers report much damage was done to hangars and dome itself. While we were doing bombardment all aircraft from the carriers "Eagle" and "Illustrious" bombed its Naval and air base at Rhodes Island. They continued bombing attacks all morning.

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5th September

0730 Ship returns to Alexandria

6th September

In harbour

1300 Air raid alarm. Aircraft batteries go into

action and drive raiders off. No bombs dropped.

7th September

In harbour

8th September

In harbour

0700 Slipped from buoy and proceeded to floating dock for repairs to rudder.

1745 Air raid. Two planes over city, but were driven off by A.A. fire before they could drop bombs.

2043 Air raid bombs dropped. No damage to ships. Raiders driven off by A.A. fire.

2150 All clear

9th September

In dock all quiet.

10th September

0745 Left dock, proceeded to buoy.

2100 Air raid warning.

2140 All clear.

11th September

In harbour. Italian reconnaissance plane over. It was engaged and shot down by Bristol Blenheim bomber, R.A.F.

1130 All clear

12th September

In harbour. Three air raid warnings this afternoon.

13th September

0320 In harbour. Kent, Liverpool, Gloucester accompanied by six destroyers proceed to sea.

2200 Air raid warning

2230 All clear

2240 Air raid warning

2315 All clear

September 14th

In harbour

0000 Air raid warning

0100 All clear. Evidently the raiders couldn't make up their minds whether to come over or not. Once they got within 12 miles of Alexandria they turned back.

15th September

In harbour. One air raid warning during the forenoon. Only lasted several minutes.

1500 Illustrious, Valiant, Orion destroyers proceed to Docea.

16th September

In harbour

17th September.

0300 Air raid warning.

0330 All clear

1115 Air raid warning.

1130 - All clear

1500 Slipped from buoy and proceeded into floating dock.

2220 Air raid warning Sirens sounded off, but no raiders appeared.

18th September

2000 Left dock

19th September

In harbour, Illustrious, Valiant, Liverpool, Orion, Gloucester, destroyers return to harbour. Kent damaged by torpedos is being towed in.

1000 Kent returns to harbour. Extent of damage unknown.

20th September

In harbour. Casualty on Kent total 36 killed and 50 injured. Many ratings were trapped when W. T. doors were closed. Some were drowned in oil when tank burst.

1930 Protector proceeds to sea for burial of dead sailors.

21st September

In harbour

0410 Air raid. Bombs fell near oil tanker some fell into sea. Searchlights & A.A. batteries went into action.

0500 All clear. No persons were injured damage of no importance.

0700 Slipped and proceeded to C2 berth.

22nd September.

In harbour. Air raid. Searchlights picked out the aircraft and ships & shore batteries put up such an effective barrage that the enemy retired without loading his bombs.

23rd September

In harbour

24th September

1130 Sydney slips and proceeds to sea.

We are looking for suspicious merchant vessel believed to be French is believed to be trying to get to France.

25th September

At sea. low flying aircraft spotted. These alarms lasted until 1:30 a.m. We had 6" guns loaded with close barrage shells

The aircraft didn't answer our challenge,
we weren't going to be caught like the Kent.

0300 Entered Alexandria and proceeded to buoy.

0700 In harbour. H. M. S. York arrives.

York is an 8,000 ton cruiser of the same
type as Exeter which fought in River Plate
Battle is armed with 6 x 9" guns & 4" H.A. Guns.
She has joined 3rd G Squadron.

28th September

In harbour

29th September

Valiant, Warspite, Illustrious cruisers
and destroyers slip and proceed to sea.
Liverpool, Gloucester are carrying troops.
Destination unknown.

1215 Italian reconisance plane shot down by
fighters from Illustrious.

1500 Bombers raid fleet. Many bombs fall round
battleships and carriers. None were hit. One
plane shot down by ships gunfire.

1530 Bombers again raid us. There were five
of them. They all let go thier bombs at
once (90) About 40 fall in one big heap.
Again no hits.

30th September

At sea. Enemy force consisting of a number
of cruisers, destroyers reported to be 80 miles
away. We are trying to close in on them.

1315 Another report comes in. The Itali Fleet
was divided in two. This time there are four
battleships, eleven cruisers and 17 destroyers,
too many for us, so we turned away.

Our force consists of 2 battleships and 9c

carriers, 5 cruisers and 9 destroyers, so they outnumbered us two to one. Also 2 of our cruisers were carrying troops for Malta, we couldn't risk them.

October 1st

At sea

1915 Orion and Sydney leave squadron and proceed on patrol up around Gulf of Athens, and Dodecanese Islands. A bombardment may be carried out tomorrow night if conditions are favourable.

2nd October.

On patrol in Aegean Sea.

2000 We are proceeding towards enemy base of Stampalia, which we are going to bombard at midnight. Stampalia is a base for E boats and submarines.

There is also a seaplane base.

02438 Opened fire at 19,000 yards. Each turret firing 10 rounds rapid after which we withdrew at high speed, to dodge any E boats which may have been sent out to attack. Results of bombardment are not known. Orion and Sydney each fired 40 rounds of 6" shells.

October 3rd

Returned to Alexandria. During these last operations four enemy aircraft were shot down. Three by falcon fighters of F. A. A. one by gunfire of Fleet. Two submarines surrendered, one after being hunted for 12 hours by H. M. A. S. Stuart the other being damaged by gunfire from H. M. S. Haroe and

Hasty. The submarines were scuttled.

4th October

5th In harbour

Ship is being fitted with antimagnetic mine gear. One rating was badly injured today.

When sling holding big reel of cable broke.

He was the only one injured during the "B. Calleani" action. H. M. S. Ajax arrived last night. She is a ship of 6,000 tons same type as Orion and she fought in the Gulf Spec Battle.

6th October

In harbour

7th October

In harbour

2300 Air raid warning

2316 All clear

8th October

7th C. S. proceeds to sea to practice shoot at B. P. T.

1145 Shoot carried out.

1300 Joined fleet and are proceeding to sea, to provide cover for convoy. The whole of our fleet is out, just let us get close enough to these "Wops" now we'll give them some curry. The fleet consists of 4 Battleships, 6 cruisers, 20 destroyers 2 A. F. ships. We expect to be at sea for about 6 days.

9th October

At sea. Destroyers made three depth charge attacks during day. The place seems lousy with submarines. Cand C seem

determined to drag the "dago" fleet out this time.

We don't know the results yet. Everything else quiet, our fighters are keeping the bombs away.

10th October

At present we are just passing Malta on our way to Sicily. Were hoping Mussolini will send his precious ships out anyway and we'll see what stuff they are really made of.

11th October

At sea. There were several more depth charges attack last night and again today. Don't know results as yet.

1600. Arrived off Malta. Destroyers proceed into harbour to refuel. Last night Ajax surprised three Italian Torpedo boats laying mines. In ensuing engagement two T.B. were sunk. The other made off at high speed. Ajax was hit by several small shells, the damage practically nil. 13 ratings killed, some 20 injured. Three enemy destroyers reported by our aircraft patrols. 7th & 3rd C.S. immediately take up chase. One destroyer put out of action and abandoned. Ajax disabled the destroyer. The night before and was being towed by another Italian destroyer, when we came on the scene. Tow was slipped and the destroyer made off at high speed. We passed Italian sailors swimming, very nearly ran some down as we took up chase after the other two. The Gloucester, Liverpool

opened fire, but they were several miles ahead of us. We were firing at extreme range. Aircraft of the F A A dive bombed them but reported no hits. After hours chase action had to be broken off and we returned to fleet. H.M.S. York sank the abandoned destroyer by gunfire. After the 5th salvo direct hit was scored in mag'. She blew up.

1230 Enemy bombers raided fleet. Dozens of bombs dropped, including many incendiaries. No hit registered.

1500 Three Italian Cruisers, three destroyers reported heading towards British Convoy 7th & 3rd C.R. Squads leave fleet at full speed to intercept them. We expect to reach convoy at about same time as 'His'

1615 Convoy sighted, but no Italians. They evidently missed to convoy. We missed them owing to bad visibility and rain. Proceeded with convoy.

13th October

At sea. All quiet during day.

0800 - Fleet joins convoy.

2000 - Orion, Sydney stationed 10 miles in rear of convoy.

14th October

At sea

1300 - Destroyers make depth charge attack. About 20 charges were dropped.

1345 - Fulmar fighter with A.A. crashed while landing on Illustrious. Both occupants rescued.

1900 - Torpedo bombers raid fleet. Liverpool hit

forward by top and caught fire. Petrol stowed forward caught fire and did more damage than torpedo. Fire was checked before it got to B turret, but A turret is hanging over side. She is very badly damaged and is at present being towed back to harbour by Orion. Many ratings feared to have lost their lives.

15th October

1300. Sydney returns to Alexandria and secures.

0030. Just as Warspite, Valiant, Illustrious were entering harbour they were attacked by T bombers but they were driven off before dropping their fish. Everything in the harbour let fly, pompoms 4" flaming onions, there was one hell of a clatter for a while.

0130 All clear sounded. Valiant is reported to be hit by two bombs, but not official as yet.

1930 In harbour. Air raid. A single enemy plane came over dropping his bombs on south side of harbour. Damage nil as bombs fell in open place.

2030 - All clear sounded.

2040 - Air raid. Again single plane but was driven off by A.A. fire before reaching harbour. Another raid raider came low and tried machine gunning the searchlights with no effect. Fighters took to him and he was driven off.

2120 All clear

17th October

In harbour. Two air raid warnings during evening.

18th October

In harbour. H.M.C Kent left dock during the forenoon and secured along-side wharf.

19th October

In harbour.

0140 Air raid warning. Search lights were in action, but there were no planes and no A.A. fire.

0150 All clear.

20th October

2010 - In harbour. Air raid warning. Search lights were in action but no planes were seen, there was no A.A. Fire.

21st October

In harbour

0220 Air raid. Enemy aircraft dropped several bombs in vicinity of R.A.F. drome.

There was no casualties and no damage was reported. Owing to brilliant moonlight and clouds, planes could not be seen although they were heard passing over the harbour, several blind barrages were set up and seemed to drive the raiders off.

0415 All clear sounded.

22ND October

In harbour

23RD In harbour

0420 Air raid. Some bombs were dropped in vicinity of R.A.F. drome. Raiders were driven off by gunfire and fighters. There was one casualty ashore.

0600 - All clear

24th October

In harbour

25th October

Air raid. One plane picked up by search lights and driven off by gunfire. No bombs dropped.

0420 All clear

0600 Orion, Sydney, destroyer Juno, Janus proceeded to sea on contraband patrol

We are to proceed to sea on contraband control. We are to proceed up toward the Dardanelles. The rest of the fleet is following behind in case we run into anything and require assistance.

26th October

On patrol. Three merchant vessels were stopped during this afternoon. Two were allowed to proceed after a boarding party from Jervis had cargo inspected.

27th October

On patrol

0700 A neutral oil tanker was stopped and after a boarding party from Jervis inspected her, she was allowed to leave.

1030 Arrived at a point 10 miles from the Dardanelles. From here we could plainly see the Australian and New Zealand War Memorials on the slopes overlooking Anzac Cove where our troop did there bit 24 years ago.

28th October

At sea.

0700 . We learned that a state of war exists between Greece and Italy. We are now proceeding back to Alexandria at 26 knots.

1800 . Entered harbour

29th October

0000 . Fleet proceeds to sea. We are proceeding to prevent sea borne attack on Greece at the same time covering a convoy to Crete.

30th October

At sea. All quiet except for several depth charge attacks made by destroyers.

31st October

At sea. At present we are off the coast of Greece. We have passed several towns and it looks as though we are just letting the Greeks know that the British Fleet has arrived to lend a hand.

November 1st

At sea. One Italian bomber was shot down, by F. A. A. fighters during the forenoon.

0530 . Waspite, Illustrious and York part company.

2nd November

At sea.

1400 Four Italian torpedo bombers attacked us dropping two tin fish. These both missed however and planes were driven off by gun fire.

Sydney let fly 6" barrage

2330 Entered Alexandria Harbour.

3rd November

In harbour

4th November

1030 Ajax and Sydney to sea. We are proceeding to Port Said at 30 knots.

2100 Arrived at P^c Said

5th November

We are taking troops to Crete. We have been loading thier gear on all day. There are also two trucks, two Bofar guns.

1530 Troops embarked. There are 450 of them.

6th November

1130 Opened fire on two aircraft. They proved to be our own, so after two shots we ceased fire.

1500 Arrived at Suda. Barfs secured along side jetty. Troops and stores disembarked.

1815 Moored out from jetty and anchored in the bay. It appears that we are leaving our aircraft here, as it has left the ship and the aircraft men have landed with stores and supplies.

7th November

In Suda Bay

1030 Convoy consisting of two tankers, Brisbane Star, two small armed merchant vessels, have arrived.

1045 Sydney proceeds alongside oiler.

1200 Sydney slips from oiler. On way out passed another convoy of 10 ships proceeding into Suda.

1700 Joined the fleet. We are now proceeding to Malta, where we will meet more reinforcements.

8th November

At sea

9th November

At sea. Fighter aircraft of F. A. A. shot

down an enemy reconnaissance plane during afternoon.

10th November

At sea. Reinforcements join fleet. A battleship "Bartham" cruisers "Berwick" - Glasgow and four destroyers.

1230 Five enemy bombers attack the fleet. Bombs fell near stern of Sydney and one bomb which did not explode, fell a few yards off our bows. The other bomb fell wide of ships. Another reconnaissance plane was shot down this afternoon.

11th November

At sea. One Italian reconnaissance was shot down by F. A. A. fighters this morning.

1430 Sydney, Ajax and two destroyers part company with fleet.

1500 Orion joins us. We are proceeding up into the Adriatic sea to make a raid on convoys and shipping from Italy to Albania.

2200 We approached Taranto Straits. All shipping sighted will be presumed hostile and sunk.

12th November

0116 Alarm sound Convoy of five ships and two destroyers sighted. We open fire immediately on the leading ship, severely damaging her. We then shift target on two the second and third ship, setting one on fire and sinking one. The Italian destroyers open fire with guns and torpedoes with no result. Sydney fired two tin fish but these missed their objective. Ajax and Orion also were successful and when we left

three ships had been sunk, one was burning, the other severely damaged. One destroyer is also believed to have been severely damaged or sunk. Our casualties and losses nil. B turret fired 101 shells. R.D.F reports showed that enemy aircraft hunted frantically for us, one got within two miles of us without seeing us.

0900 Joined 3rd CR squadron.

0430 Joined fleet. Three Italian aircraft shot down in flames today by fighters. Two of them large flying boats

12th November

Last night torpedo bombers of F.A.A. raided Tranto harbour, sinking two battleships, damaging a third, sinking two cruisers, two auxiliary cruisers. We lost three aircraft.

13th November

At sea. All clear

14th November

0500 Entered Alexandria. secured to buoy.

1930. Air raid warning.

1945 All clear. We were on the alert all night as enemy aircraft were trying to get the Alise, but each time they came over we set up a 'blind barrage' turning them back. No bombs were dropped.

15th November

In harbour

1200 Sydney proceeds along side to embark troops 320 coming on board. York and Glasgow are also embarking troops.

1530 Troops embarked.

1060 Sydney, Glasgow, York, Benbowick, Gloucester, proceed to sea. We are taking troops to Greece. proceeding at 30 knots.

16th November

1400 Arrived at Greek port of Piraeus which is 12 miles from Athens. Crowds gave us troops a great welcome.

1000 Troops and stores disembarked.

1700 Shifted berth. The other four cruisers proceed to sea. Sydney is remaining over night.

17th November

In harbour, "Piraeus", Orion, Ajax arrived leaving early hours of this morning with convoy. Orion anchored off harbour while convoy proceeded in.

1500 Orion, Ajax and Sydney proceed to sea, to cover convoy to Greece.

18th November

At sea.

0900 Passed convoy which consists of ten large ships escorted by destroyer and one A.A. ship.

1700 Joined up with convoy. 52 persons were killed and 79 injured in raids on Alex, last night.

19th November

At sea.

20th November

Entered Alexandria harbour and steamed to busy.

21st November

In harbour. Went ashore and had a look at damage done by bombs in last Monday night raid. 17 houses destroyed of one bomb.

22ND November

In harbour

23RD November

0530 Fleet proceeds to sea to cover convoy to Malta, also more reinforcements are coming through.

1800 Eagle opens fire on what is believed to have been a submarine.

24TH November

1000 Arrived at Suda Bay. Destroyers top up fuel.

1200 Single enemy bomber flying at great height dropped several bombs which fell close to Ajax, no damage done to ships and there was no A. A. Fire.

1300 Left Suda and proceeded westward. Berwick joins us.

1700 Passed over exact spot where 'Calleoni' went down.

25TH November

At sea. Mine sighted. Destroyer sinks with rifle fire.

26TH November

At sea. At dawn bombers from A. A. took off and bombed Tripoli. Results not known yet. Since we arrived in Mediterranean Sydney has fired 2,657 6" shells in actions.

27TH November

At sea. Our forces engaged them at extreme range, but daggers once again

refused to fight and retired at high speed. One enemy cruiser was damaged by torpedoes by Torp bomber aircraft.

28th November

At sea

1300 We opened fire at a plane, but it proved to be one of our own. Our shells burst around uncomfortably close to the plane and the pilot got a bit annoyed, sent the following signal. You lot of blind ... !!! Nice fellow.

29th November

At sea

30th November

Sydney and Orion enter Alexandria and secure to buoy. H.M.A.S. Manchester and Southampton arrive. They are Town class cruisers of 10,000 tons mounting 12 6" guns.

1st December

In harbour

1400 H.M.A.S. Woolich, repair ship arrives.

2nd/3rd/4th December

In harbour

5th December

0700 Orion, Sydney, Ajax proceed to sea, for exercises.

100 4" practice sub-calibre shoot carried out. Bruda guns were also tested during day.

1830 Returned to harbour.

6th December

0730 Orion, Sydney, Ajax proceed to sea to cover convoy to Greece.

7th December

1200 Arrive Suda Bay and anchored.

1400 Left Suda.

8th December

1800 Arrived at Piraeus and secured along side. Leave was given. I went to Athens for the evening. There was great rejoicing as news just came through that the Greeks had captured important town of Hrgyoiast as in Albania. Carried through the streets shoulder high.

9th December

In-Periois Harbour

1000 Orion proceeds to sea.

British Colonial and French troops have started thier drive in Western Desert today.

Reports state that 14,000 prisoners have been taken already.

10th December

1600 Ajax, Sydney proceed to sea patrol.

Side Barrani fall into British Hands this afternoon. 2,000 more prisoners taken.

11th December

At sea on patrol

12th December (Thursday)

1300 Arrived at Suda Bay.

1600 Ajax, Sydney proceed to sea again. The Itis' are in general retreat in Western Dessert.

Over 20,000 prisoners taken. The Itis' are being attacked three ways, land, sea, air.

At sea.

13th December

1030 Arrive at Pireadus and secure alongside.

14th December

1600 Ajax and Sydney again proceed to sea to cover convoy.

15th December

1000 Arrive Suda Bay and refuel.

1200 Leave Suda and proceed to sea. Fighting continues in desert with Italians in retreat. Our forces have penetrated over the Lybian border. Estimated no. of prisoners over 30,000.

16th December

0900 Ajax and Sydney arrive Piraeus and anchor in midstream.

1030 Orion arrived with convoy.

1100 Ajax and Sydney proceed to sea. We are proceeding 25 knots to Suda Bay.

1500 Arrived at Suda. Oiler comes alongside.

17th December

Left Suda and proceeded to sea to cover convoy to Malta.

18th December

At sea.

1000 Joined the fleet. Tonight we are making another raid up into the Adriatic. Battleships are bombarding Valona. Italians main sea port in Albania and F. A. A. and R. A. F. are joining in the fun. Cruisers and destroyers are standing by in case of attack by surface craft.

2100 Entered straits of Otranto.

19th December

0015 Battleships carry out bombardment.

Everything went off smoothly, no enemy craft encountered.

0500 Returned through straits of Oranto.

20th December

0015 Alarm sounded. Ship sighted. It proves to be enemy hospital ship. We allow to proceed unmolested.

0800 Hospital ship again sighted. Gloucester has a closer look, but again allows her to proceed.

0900 Opened fire on enemy reconnaissance plane.

21st December

Sydney leaves 7th C.S. proceeds to Suda Bay.

2300 Arrived Suda Bay. Recovered and refueled.

0300 Left Suda and proceeded to Malta for refit.

22nd December

At sea, enroute to Malta.

1400 Enemy reconnaissance plane sighted, we did not open fire, as plane did not come close enough.

23rd December

Arrived Grand Harbour and proceeded alongside. Xmas mail was waiting for us. Sent cables home.

24th December

Slipped and proceeded into dock for refit. Expected to be in for 3 or 4 weeks.

25th December

Christmas Day. Had a good dinner and fun aboard.

26th/27th/28th December

In dock

29th December

In dock Malta. Air raid. All hands left ship and entered shelters in dock yard.

5 enemy aircraft flew over but dropped

no bombs. Our fighters were in air but did not contact enemy.

1120 All clear sounded

30th December

In dock. Air raid 3 bombers escorted by fighters flew over and dropped bombs on Lugia airdrome. No damage done as bombs fell in open. Our fighters were again in the air and chased raiders off.

31st December

In dock.

Distance Sydney steamed in 4 years up to the outbreak of war up to December 31st 1940

73,405 miles

← May 26th Total number of 6" shells

11th Jan by Sydney in action in Mediterranean 2,769

1940-1941 Total 4" A. A. 1,240

Right of B fired 368

January 5th 1941

Left dock secured. Along side.

January 8th Wednesday

1800 Sydney and Stuart proceeded to sea.

We expect to join C and C at noon

tomorrow.

January 9th Thursday

Fleet sighted, Perth being with them.

C and C tell us we were going HOME.

YIPPEE !!

1240 With AUSSIE FLAG at the fore we

leave the fleet and proceed toward

Alexandria.

January 10th

2100 Arrive Alexandria and secure to buoy.

January 11th Saturday 1941

1600 Left dock Alexandria and proceeded to
Pt Said.

January 12th Sunday

0300 Arrived Pt Said and proceeded into Suez

1100 Ship stopped owing to sand storm. Visibility
bad.

1600 We get underway again.

2100 Arrive at Suez, proceed along side of tanker
for fuel.

2130 Slip and proceed to sea. We are now
chasing convoy, which left this morning.
We are escorting to Mombassa then
proceeding to Freemantle.

13th January Monday 1941
At Sea

14th January Tuesday

0800 Convoy sighted

0830 Sydney joins convoy which consists of
10 large ships. The escorts consist of 2
J. Destroyers, 1 small cruiser and Sydney.
Were in Tropical sea once again.

15th January Wednesday 1941

Sydney accompanied by Empress of
Canada, leaves convoy and proceeds
in direction of Aden.

2130 Arrived Aden and secured to buoy.
Passed H. M. A. S. Faris going in.

16th January Thursday

H. M. A. S. Paramatta in Aden.

0745 Sydney and Empress proceed to sea,
proceeding at 20 knots to rejoin convoy.

17th January Friday

At sea, Judion Deean Break into three watches again.

18th January 1941 Saturday

0745 Action alarms sounded. Ship sighted. Closer inspection proves her to be a neutral oil tanker. She is allowed to proceed.

19th January. Sunday

At Sea

1220 Crossed the equator.

20th January

H.M.S. Ceres sighted.

1010 Ceres takes over the job as escort. Sydney turns back again.

21st January

We are heading towards Mogdishu, capitol of Italian Somaliland. We are to attack any shipping in the harbour, or on the roads outside.

1800 Arrived at Mogdishu, no shipping sighted.

We move closer to the coast, but no shipping seen anywhere. Reluctantly we have to withdraw. Ships operating from Mogadishu are suspected to be supplying raiders in Indian ocean.

22nd January 1941 Wednesday

At sea enroute to Seychelles Island where we are to refuel. Expect to arrive a.m. Friday.

23rd January Thursday

1200 Action alarm sounded ship sighted, but closer inspection proves her to be the 'Clan Cameron' one of our own.

24th January Friday

- 1000 Arrived at Pt Victoria, Seychelles Island.
- 1015 Tanker comes along side. During fore noon a signal was received from a merchant vessel saying she was being attacked by raiders. Position 200 miles from here.
- 1330 Fuelling finished.
- 1345 Sydney proceeds to sea increasing speed to 30 knots wereafter raid.

Saturday 25th January 1941

Hands remained at action stations overnight but there was no sign of any shipping.

25th January Saturday

Aircraft joined in the search but without result. We are returning to Seychelles.

27th February Monday 1941

0830 Arrives at Seychelles and refuelled.

1345 Proceed to sea. We are proceeding to Freemantle at 20 knots. Expect to arrive at a.m. 4th February 1941.

Tuesday 28th to 5th February. Enroute to Freemantle.

We struck very bad weather three days out from Freemantle, the ship was making about 4 knots, through the water.

"FREEMANTLE TOMORROW AT 0630"

5th February 1941

0630 Arrived at Freemantle and secured alongside. W.A. waters. 90 go on leave.

1600 Proceeded to sea, next stop Sydney.

9th February 1941

1010 Arrived Sydney and anchored at Watsons Bay

1000 Move up harbour and secured along side Circular Quay "HOME AT LAST"

10th February 1941

Ships Company marched through city to
Civic Reception at Town Hall. All hands off

" 14 DAYS LEAVE "

Claude Robertson Bibb

Born July 1921

Volunteered May 1938

Commencement Time 29th July 1939

Sydney 1939 - 1941

18th February 1939 28th July 1939

29th July 1939 11th July 1940

12th July 1940 3rd May 1941

Passed professionally for Leading Seaman 22/2/45

" " " " Petty Officer 31/12/47

Discharged May 1948 as Leading Seaman.

H M A S SYDNEY

ALEXANDRIA

EGYPT

1940

DIARY FROM JANUARY

1ST 1940 - FEBRUARY 10th 1941