

Transcript of collection relating to the Second World War service of Able Seaman John Foster Roy Primmer

Collection ID PR00813

Transcriber: Mark Hume, 2022.

Transcript of the Australian War Memorial collection relating to the Second World War service of Able Seaman John Foster Roy Primmer. The collection consists of a pocket diary recounting his experience as a crew member of HMAS Sydney covering the period from January 1940 to January 1941. John Primmer was lost at sea when the Sydney was sunk in November 1941

The transcriber's notes are at the end.

---

### January

1st

In harbour, Sydney.

2nd

In harbour, Sydney.

3rd

4th

In harbour, Sydney.

5th

6th

In harbour, Sydney.

8th

1330 Left Sydney en route to Jervis Bay.

2020 Arrived Jervis Bay.

9th

1800 Left Jervis Bay to meet New Zealand Convoy of 2nd AIF.

10th

0330 Sighted Ramilles and Canberra.

1220 Sighted New Zealand Convoy.

1500 Joined up with convoy from Sydney.

The Convoy comprised of ten transports & four warships those being Ramilles in lead Australia & Canberra on either flank & Sydney bringing up the rear.

11th

0340 Left Convoy and proceeded to Jervis Bay.

1315 Arrived Jervis Bay.

12th

0630 Left Jervis Bay for rendezvous with Leander off Sydney Heads.

1430 Met Leander & did a Sub Calibre shoot.  
1930 Entered Sydney Harbour & secured to buoy.

13th  
In Sydney Harbour.

14th  
In Sydney Harbour.

15th  
In Sydney Harbour.

16th  
Slipped and proceeded on patrol.

17th  
0400 Did dawn attack on Sydney heads.  
0830 Entered Sydney harbour.  
1715 Liberty men recalled.  
1930 Slipped and proceeded to sea to pick up battle practice target which had broken adrift and was menacing navigation. Away in cutter all next day to salvage target that went aground on reef.

18th  
Recovered target that went aground on reef near Manly.  
1430 Entered harbour.

19th  
In harbour Sydney.

20th  
In Sydney harbour.

13th

14th  
In Harbour

15<sup>th</sup>  
0830 Proceeded to sea for Gunnery practice, thence to Bunbury about 100 miles south of  
Freemantle

16<sup>th</sup>  
1800 Anchored off Bunbury  
2100 Sailed for Freemantle

17th  
Arrived back in Freemantle.

18th  
In harbour.

19th  
In harbour.

20th  
In harbour.

21st  
In harbour.

22<sup>nd</sup>  
Left Freemantle for Carnarvon  
Carried out four inch shoot at sleeve target towed by an aircraft.

23<sup>rd</sup>  
At sea, very hot.  
1900 Arrived at carnarvon

24th  
At Carnarvon, fishing parties went away and brought back enough fish for ships Companies supper.

25th  
Weighed anchor & proceeded to better fishing spot about 40 miles up the bay Sharkes bay is the name of place.  
Left sharks bay, en route to Freemantle once more.

26<sup>th</sup>  
At sea, good weather, extremely hot.

27<sup>th</sup>  
Arrived in harbour. Reserves went on leave.

28<sup>th</sup>  
In harbour.

29th  
In harbour

30<sup>th</sup>

## February

1st  
0900 slipped and proceeded to sea en route for Portland (Vic)  
Albany WA thence to Fremantle

2nd  
At sea

3rd  
0900 Met Canberra & anchored off Portland.  
1000 Admiral came aboard.  
10:15 Proceeded to sea for shoot.

1600 Returned to Portland.

2000 Left Portland & proceeded to sea en route for Albany.

4th

At Sea

5th

At Sea

6th

1400 Arrived at Albany & proceeded to Fremantle.

7th

0630 Left Albany & proceeded to Fremantle.

8th

1015 Arrived at Fremantle. Hottest day here for 17 years.

9th

In harbour.

10th

In harbour.

11th

12th

In harbour.

21st

22nd

In Sydney harbour.

23rd

24th

In Sydney harbour.

25th

26th

In Sydney harbour.

27th

28th

In Sydney harbour.

29th

0945 Slipped and proceeded to sea for shoot Governor General & big wigs aboard.

Dropped two depth charges. First time I've seen them go off.  
1115 Entered Sydney harbour & secured to buoy.

30th  
In Sydney harbour.

31st  
In Sydney harbour.

### March

1st  
In harbour.

2nd  
In harbour.

3rd  
4th  
In harbour.

5th  
Reserves returned from leave. Proceed to sea on patrol.

6th  
At sea on patrol.

7th  
At sea

8th  
0700 arrived back at Freemantle harbour.

9th  
In harbour.

10th  
In harbour.

11th  
In harbour.

12th  
In harbour.

13th  
Slipped & proceeded to sea for 4" & 6" shoot. Also .5 m. gun shoot at sleeve target, after which we left for Busselton.

14th  
1200 Arrived at Busselton anchored two miles off shore.

2100 Left Busselton proceeding back to Freemantle.

15th

1000 Arrived back in Freemantle.

16th

In harbour.

17th

In harbour.

18th

In harbour.

19th

Left Freemantle. Proceeded on Patrol.

20th

At sea.

1230 Arrived off Cape Naturalist.

21st

0700 Arrived in Gage Roads came to anchor.

22nd

In harbour. Good Friday.

23rd

In harbour.

24th

1100 Left harbour. Proceeding to meet MV Duntroon which is carrying troops.

25th

At sea.

26th

0645

Arrived back in Freemantle refuelled & stored ship.

27th

In harbour.

28th

In harbour.

29th

30th

In harbour.

31st

1100 Slipped & proceeded to sea to provide cover for MV Manunda which is carrying troops to Fremantle.

April

1st

At sea, Rendezvous with Manunda at 1000

2nd

At sea, Parted company with Manunda when near Fremantle and proceeded to provide cover for Empress of Britain 42,348 tons.

1725 met Empress approx. 200 miles North West of Fremantle.

3rd

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

4th

2310 Met Aquitania, escorted her to Fremantle.

5th

0800 Just off Fremantle harbour, when we received orders to proceed with Empress of Britain to Cape Leeuwin.

1700 Leeuwin sighted, parted company with Empress, proceeding back to Fremantle.

6th

Arrived back in Fremantle.

7th

Slipped and proceeded to sea to escort Aquitania as far as Cape Leeuwin.

8th

Arrived back in harbour.

9th

In harbour.

10th

Left harbour, proceeded on patrol.

11th

On patrol.

12th

On patrol.

13th

0600 Anchored in Gage roads.

Queen Mary anchored just off Fremantle Harbour, she several hours before us.

14th

0900 Received orders to intercept Danish oil tanker Anglo Marsh (?)

1315 Sighted tanker & escorted her back to Fremantle.

1815 Arrived back in harbour.

15th

In harbour.

16th

In harbour.

17th

In harbour.

18th

Slipped and proceeded to meet 2nd contingent of AIF south of Albany.

Distanced steamed since outbreak of war to date 13,014.

19th

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

20th

At sea with convoy.

21st

Convoy which consisted of Dumnera, Strathaird, Ettrick Newralia & Neuisa went into harbour one by one. Ramillies, Sydney, Adelaide, Yarra, Swan anchored outside. At 1615 Ramillies and Sydney went in and secured to oil.

22nd

We left Fremantle with convoy at 1400.

23rd

At sea good weather Sydney in lead of convoy.

24th

With convoy.

25th



Anzac Day. Sydney paid tribute to AIF by steaming round convoy flying the signal "RAN congratulates the 2nd AIF on Anzac Day".

26th

Position of convoy

	O Sydney	
	O Ramillies	
O Dumnera	O Ettrick	O Strathaird
O Newralia		O Neuisa

27th

At sea arrive in the vicinity of Cocos Is. tomorrow.

28th

Ship sighted. Hands went to Action Stations.

Ship was French Cruiser "Suffren" we slowed down & and she came right up on our stern & we gave her a line with orders in a sealed tin.

After signalling "good luck" etc we turned and headed back to Australia.

29th

At sea weather very hot.

30th

Very hot.

May

1st

Received orders to proceed to Singapore at 15 knots arriving there Sunday. Oil & then proceed to Colombo at 28 knots.

2nd

At sea, en route to Singapore.

3rd

At sea

1300 Sighted coast of Java & Sumatra. Historic volcanic Is. of Krakatoa on our port beam. Met Dutch patrol which escorted us through mine fields.

1845 Met British submarine "Rainbow" which gave us our orders.

1915 Entered Sunda Straits

4th

Off Carimata Islands. Very heavy tropical rains throughout the day.

5th

0200 Crossed the Equator

1300 Entered Singapore harbour, refuelled, left for Colombo at midnight.

6th

At sea very hot.

7th

At sea having lots of sunbaking.

8th

1100 Coast of Ceylon sighted.

1845 Entered Colombo Harbour.

9th

In harbour at Colombo.

10th

Germany invaded Holland & Belgium.

1100 Proceeded to sea to intercept Dutch passenger liner.

11th

Returned to Colombo & secured to bouy.

12th

After church C in C of East Indies inspected us.

1700 Rendezvous with the third contingent of the AIF in vicinity of Cocos Islands.

13th

At sea very hot.

14th

0600 Crossed the Equator.

15th

At sea.

16th

0200 Sydney ordered to proceed back to Colombo.

17th

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

18th

Arrived back in harbour & secured to buoy.

19th

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

[p.20]

20th

At sea en route to Aden speed 27 knots.

21st

At sea

22nd

1600 Entered Aden harbour. HMS Gloucester & aircraft carrier "Eagle" in harbour.

2200 Left harbour & took up position with Gloucester & Eagle.

23<sup>rd</sup>

At sea en route to Port Said in Red Sea.

11 Australian Cruiser Hobart sighted & joined up with us.

24th

0010 Hobart parted company & left for Port Sudan.

1000 Gloucester parted company temporarily for Suez.

25th

1000 Entered the Jubal Straits.

1720 Passed a flotilla of "K" class destroyers.

1845 Anchored off Suez.

2015 Weighed & proceeded through canal en route to Port Said.

26th

0600 Passed through Canal met Gloucester at Port Said.

Left for Alexandria

1800 Entered Alexandria harbour & secured to buoy.

27th

In Alexandria Harbour Australian Destroyers also in port.

Sydney joins 7th Cruiser Squadron Comprising Orion (flag) Neptune, Sydney, Gloucester, Liverpool, Leander.

28th

In harbour. Tons of work to be done as ship in a dirty condition. We were at seas for 32 days out of 33.

29th

In harbour. Cleaning ship.

30th

In harbour.

31st

In harbour.

June

1st

In harbour

2nd

In harbour

3rd

In harbour for a couple of hours Mediterranean Fleet ordered to sea for exercises  
7<sup>th</sup> Cruiser Squadron & 10<sup>th</sup> destroyer squadron or flotilla.  
Leander departed for Red Sea.

4th

Entered harbour & secured at Y4 berth. Swimming over side permitted.

5th

In harbour.

6th

1130 Orion, Neptune, Gloucester & Sydney proceeded to sea for exercises.

2315 Returned to harbour.

7th

In harbour.

8th

9th

In harbour.

10th

Italy declared war against allies.

1000 Britain at war with Italy we proceeded to sea.

11th

Orders are to bombard important base in Libya at dawn.

12th

Orders cancelled, proceeding to rendezvous with Battle Fleet.

1300 Left fleet & commenced sweep towards Ionian islands.

13th

1210 Rendezvous with Battle Fleet

1615 Submarine detected. Sydney drops two depth charges. Black oily patches come to surface. Sydney gets first kill.

14th

Reports received Aussie destroyers sank 2 submarines Stuart & Decoy also sank sub Reports [...]

HMS Calypso sunk by sub off Greece 1 Officer & 30 ratings missings.

Enemy minefields discovered 15 miles off Alexandria.

Returned to harbour.

15th

In harbour. French Battleships & French cruisers & destroyers in company.

1530 Air Raid warning all clear 30 minutes later

16th

In harbour. Air Raid warnings three times during the day.

Planes were sighted shore batteries Shot one Italian bomber down

17th

In harbour.

18th

0945 Air Raid warning.

19th

In harbour.

20th

1130 Orion Neptune Sydney and French battleship Lorraine also 4 destroyers proceed to sea. Proceeding to bombard Italian base in Libya at dawn tomorrow.

21st

0630 Arrive off coast of Libya opened fire on Fort Bardia Sydney concentrated on Fort firing 148 rounds of Direct Action shells. Lorraine blew up oil tanks. Orion & Neptune also did considerable damage. Fort was one mass of flames when we left. The dagoes were taken by surprise & only had time to fire a couple of rounds at us before fleeing.

Our plane was up spotting & was attacked by three Italian fighters. It escaped however and just managed to get back to one of our bases, where she folded up on landing. There were no casualties.

Returned back to Harbour.

22nd

In harbour.

0115 Enemy bombers made an attack on the fleet in Alexandria harbour. About 30 bombs were dropped, one falling 50 yards from Sydney no damage was done to ships but 2 persons were killed & 20 injured ashore.

1200 Raiders reappeared, but were driven off by intense barrage set up by the fleet & shore batteries. I was asleep when it started but woke up & went up to have a look it was a swell fireworks display.

23rd

In harbour four air raid warnings during the day.

24th

In harbour Air raid warnings but no attacks.

[p.25]

25th

In harbour.

26th

In harbour

27th

1100 7<sup>th</sup> Cruiser squadron sailed to provide submarine cover for convoy.

28th

Three Italian destroyers RCT Espiro, Ostro, Zeffiro reported to be in vicinity. In less than an hour they were sighted we immediately went to action stations. Gloucester & Liverpool moved out on our port bow approx. 5 miles & opened fire at 22,000 yds. Sydney, Orion & Neptune continued on westerly course, moving into battle formation with Sydney leading. Sydney opened fire with for' turrets at 1845 yds followed by Orion & Neptune as soon as accurate firing was obtained. The three of us altered course to enable firing with both fore & aft turrets. At 1904 it was seen that smoke screens were being made by the enemy & our own fire was temporarily suspended at 1910. The destroyers emerged from screen firing torpedoes which were easily detected by our lookouts & cruisers altered

course to avoid them. Up to this stage enemy salvos were falling short, but now they began to go over us, with an occasional close one. Sydney again opened fire with considerable success, our shots hitting the stern of "Espero" wiping out her after gun & damaging her steering gear. Another salvo laid open her foc'sle, starting a fire between decks. Several minutes later a salvo from the for'd guns passed into "Espero's" engine room, wiping out engine room staff all but one (we found out later) was blown through a hole in the ships side. The Espero was now out of control & heading strait towards us. We altered course & opened up with our 4" guns. The Espero magazine then blew up taking bridge & everything with it & the destroyer was now ablaze from stem to stern. Decreased fire & moved in close to pick up survivors. Shortly after Espero sank, her depth charges exploding as she disappeared. We picked up 47 survivors some of whom were terribly burnt & mutilated. [p.26] They were all well treated & they seemed to be glad to be out of it all. We couldn't stay to pick up all the survivors, we were in dangerous waters and we had to leave a cutter behind. B turret firing 170 rounds & so ending our first sea action. Espero was laid down in 1928 1300 tons speed 36 knots & was armed with 4 4.7 guns & 6 torpedo tubes she had over 140 officers & men but at the time she was carrying approx. 60 soldiers for a garrison in Libya.

29th

Two Italian sailors died & were buried at sea.

30th

1345 Rendezvous with convoy off Island of Crete.

1500 Enemy reconnaissance aircraft sighted but was driven off by gunfire

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

July

1st

2030 Arrived back in Alex harbour & secured to bouy. Prisoners were landed, they appeared sorry to go, they weren't such a bad lot.

2nd

In harbour refueled.

3rd

In harbour.

4th

The French fleet here in Alexandria prepared for sea against Admirals orders. All of our fleet were ordered to open fire if any French ship should try to leave harbour. We were at Action stations all day long, there would have been hell to pay if the French fleet tried to leave harbour.

Whilst at action stations air raid took place on the fleet 5 enemy aircraft dropped 20 bombs doing considerable damage ashore. One bomb dropped just off our port bow. One French cruiser also opened fire upon raiders.

2100 French ships come to agreement.

5th

In harbour.

6th

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

Royal Sovereign, Malaya, Eagle, Gloucester, ten destroyers proceeded to sea.

2000 Air raid several bombs dropped raiders driven [...] by gunfire.

[...] 7th Cruiser squadron proceeded to sea.

8th

At sea.

9th

Were in company with battle fleet met with Italian fleet at 1500. Enemy first sighted by Sunderland bombers which sent us information of their course & number of ships etc. They had been to Libya with a convoy & were to their base in Italy. Our fleet altered course [to] head them off.

So at 1500 the enemy were brought to action quite close to the Italian coast. The Italian fleet consisted of two battleships, six 8" & 6" cruisers and a large number of destroyers. We opened fire at extreme range, approx. 22,000 yds. Sydney opened fire on a large ship thought to be an 8" cruiser, but it turned out to be a battleship, range closed to 11,000 yds the turrets were now firing very rapidly we could hear the whine of shells overhead some bursting quite close to us. One Italian battleship was hit by a 15" shell from HMS Warspite. The Italian then made smoke screens & ran from us following a confused action between light craft ensued, but it was at extreme range with enemy retiring. Action was sufficiently close to the Italian coast for enemy to make best use of their air force. Heavy bombing took place but no hits were registered in any of our fleet.

British casualties – nil

Italian casualties – 29 killed, 69 injured

With loss of one destroyer & one battleship damaged.

10th

At sea numerous air raids throughout the day bombs fell all around us, shrapnel flew all over our decks & A & B turrets no damage was done. Coast of Sicily sighted.

Torpedo bombers from Fleet Air Arm from Eagle took off and attacked Italian fleet in Augusta harbour. One cruiser was hit by a torpedo, also a supply ship all planes returned safely.

11th

1020 Reconnaissance plane sighted

1425 Nine enemy bombers attacked & dropped bombs off our port quarter also Neptune & Gloucester had close shaves.

1700 Three enemy bombers flew over barrage set up by fleet was so intense so they buzzed off & one out of formation & flew off with long trail of black smoke pouring from it. Hope he didn't get home.

12th

Returning to Alexandria when the bombers found us again had 24 raids today. Gloucester was hit on her bridge the bomb killing 10 Vampire was hit by splinters 1 warrant gunner killed. Had many close



shaves & many tons of bombs were dropped around us. It was the worst day I have ever experienced. We were all nervous wrecks when we arrived in port. During the past five days we have been bombed 45 times.

13th

In harbour.

14th

In harbour.

15th

1305 In harbour Air raid AA defences went into action & drove off the raiders before they could do very much damage.

16th

Entered floating dock

2220 Air raid many bombs dropped around us in dock you could hear them whistling through the air. Raid lasted an hour.

17th

Left dock & made fast to bouy.

18th

0430 Left Alexandria with 4 destroyers for Gulf of Athens to hunt for Italian subs & Merchant ships.

19th

0800 Two enemy cruisers reported, so proceeded to intercept them

0830 Enemy chasing three of our destroyers so we opened fire at extreme range keeping up a continual fire Bande De Louvre being our first target we smashed all her upper decks to pieces and the Bartolomeo Colleoni suffered what was to be the others fate by forging ahead by 1015 the Colleoni was on line way to Davy Jones locker the other one hightailing it over the horizon

1100 Gave up the chase as she was too fast for us.

During this action we were hit by an enemy shell in the foremost funnel no other damage was done.

Only one casualty one man slightly wounded by fragment of shell after hitting the funnel.

500 odd survivors picked up by the destroyers whilst carrying out this rescue work they were bombed by Italian aircraft. hitting her amidships. We were well ahead and had to turn back and escort her into Alexandria at a very slow speed.

20th

1030 Returned to Alexandria refuelled & ammunitioned ship

1245

1500

2000 Air Raid warnings a few bombs dropped but raiders were driven off.

21st

1000 Air raid warnings

1300

22nd

In harbour The war correspondent or 2 AIF came aboard & took photo of damage done during our action.

23rd

Painted ship Camouflaged

1830 Air Raid warning

24th

Two air raid warnings during the day raiders were driven off by fighters before they got this far.

25th

0410 Air Raid Bombs dropped one hitting a small merchant vessel & blew off its stern right off many incendiary bombs were dropped on the town & harbour & many fires were started. One very heavy bomb landed off our starboard bow, the concussion blowing in many windows of Ras-el-Tin Palace & also blew part of the palace wall down. A.A. defence didn't go into to action because searchlights couldn't pierce the clouds and it was very difficult for the searchlights as the full moon was out. Raid lasted 1 hour.

26th

In harbour. Two air raid warnings during the day.

27th

0200 Left Alexandria in company with Battlefleet for Aegean Sea to cover a convoy.

1820 Bombers raiders fleet, many bombs dropped no hits registered.

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

28th

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

1930 Bombers attacked us, quite a number of bombs dropped, splinters hit ship damaging starboard wing of our aircraft. Our AA guns finally drove them off. At dusk we sighted the tanker, the crew of which abandoned ship in two life boats immediately they saw us. Neptune opened fire with her 4" guns, their sixth salvo hit her amidships causing an explosion which ignited the petrol. By this time it was dark and the blazing petrol could be seen burning over an hour later, when we were on our way back.

She was Greek tanker "Hermione"

Carrying 300 tons of aero petrol & 200 tons of oil to Rhodes Is which is an air base in the Dodecanese.

29th

On our way back to Alexandria one enemy aircraft sighted, we did not open fire as she was at too great a height we increased speed to 28 knots to pass the Island of Crete in the darkness.

30th

1200 Arrived back in harbour. Refuelled & took on 4" ammunition.

1720 Air Raid no bombs were dropped but shore opened fire on the enemy bombers. One enemy aircraft was shot down by Ras-el Tin batteries.

31st

0530 Left Alexandria. Destination unknown in company with Orion, Neptune & two destroyers.

1700 Bombers attacked us, many bombs fell all of which were directed at Sydney. The raiders came out of the sun no one knew they were around until the bombs fell.

1900 Seven enemy bombers attacked us all the bombs fell around Sydney. These dagoes seem to be able to pick us out from the other ships & they have sworn to get us at any cost.

1910 Three planes this time bombs fell all around Sydney once again.

2130 Low flying aircraft spotted by destroyers Orion opened fire

A couple of Chaps broke down today nerves could not stand it this makes four now, one chap taken ashore to asylum.

### August

1st

At sea in Aegean Sea

0700 Enemy aircraft sighted too high for A.A. guns probably just shadowing us.

1730 Italian planes still shadowing us.

1900 We increased speed to 21 knots.

2nd

At sea en route back to Alexandria no enemy aircraft sighted today. Expect to arrive in harbour during the dog watches.

1900 Entered harbour and secured to buoy.

3rd

In harbour

Gloucester went out and did a trial shoot she's all ready for another action now.

4th

In harbour. All quiet these last few days.

5th

In harbour.

1730 Air Raid warning. All clear after half an hour.

6th

In harbour.

2430 Air raid several bombs were dropped but all fell out to sea.

7th

In harbour.

1920 Air raid alarm

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

8th

In harbour.

9th

Ship is being de-magnetised so as magnetic mines wont have any effect on us.

10th

In harbour

0100 Air Raid warning up to date we have been in 182 air raids both in harbour and at sea.

11th

In harbour. All very quiet.

12th

0645 Sydney & Neptune accompanied by four destroyers left Alexandria, proceeding on submarine patrol.

13th

At sea no aircraft sighted allday. Things are unusually quiet.

2300 signal in Italian from a merchant vessel picked up by DF Gear.

0130 Hands went into first degree of readiness whilst passing through the dangerous straits of Kasso.

14th

At Sea

1515 Torpedo passed by our starboard side. Destroyers tried to pick up submarine but failed. We carried having two destroyers behind to see if they could find it. (But failed)

1930 Returned to harbour & secured to buoy.

15th

In harbour

1015 HMS Kent 10,000 ton County Class cruiser arrived in Alexandria.

2150 Air Raid. Many bombs were dropped one fell between us and the orion about 40 yards away. Raid lasted until 0015.

One small boom defence vessel was hit & sunk by a bomb one rating killed & 16 were injured (Their first sinking)

16th

In harbour.

1000 All destroyers put to sea

1030 Warspite, Malaya, Ramillies proceeded to sea accompanied by "Kent" Warspite reports heavy bombing attacks by italian planes during the day.

17th

In harbour

Battleships bombarded Fort Bardia & Capruzzo over 300 rounds of H.E. fired

1015 Battleships & destroyers returned to harbour.

18th

In harbour.

Ships have been trying out new aircraft traps in harbour. They comprise of ordinary box kite attached to very thin wire. Each ship has one & they are put up all day to trap dive bombers.

19th

In harbour.

20th

In harbour.

1910 Air Raid Warning

1930 Raiders Passed.

21st

In Harbour.

1430 Air Raid Warning

1450 All Clear

22nd

In harbour.

0355 Air Raid. Many bombs were dropped. A.A. Batteries did not go into action because of low clouds.

No damage done.

0445 All clear.

23rd

0100 Air Raid Bombs were dropped on town.

0150 All clear.

0200 Air Raid. Bombs fell near R.A.F aerodrome.

0345 All clear.

1000 Sydney proceeds to sea to provide cover for destroyers & "Ladybird" gunboat whilst they do a bombardment.

24th

At sea.

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

1900 Returned to Alexandria & secured to buoy.

25th

In harbour.

Went ashore & saw big three engine Italian bomber Savoia type which was shot down last Thursday.

26th

In harbour.

0345 Air Raid. Bombs fell over by R.A.F Aerodrome ships and shore batteries went into action.

0545 All clear. 0600 Air Raid Warning. 0610 Raiders Passed.

H.M. Destroyer Hostile reported sunk by stray mine whilst convoying in vicinity of Malta. One officer & five ratings reported killed.

27th

In harbour.

28th

In harbour

Several air raid warnings throughout day and night.

0900 Eagle & destroyers proceed to sea.

1600 Eagle & destroyers return to harbour.

29th

In harbour

0500 Air Raid Warning

0515 Raiders passed

2000 All watches of hands fall in prepare for sea.

30th

0400n Sydney in company with battleships aircraft carriers & destroyers slip & proceed to sea.

We are going to do some operations with the Gibraltar fleet, probably bombard the Italian Island of Pantelleria.

31st

At sea

During the morning "Gladiator" fighters from the Eagle that shot down a Italian reconnaissance plane which was shadowing the fleet.

1900 An enemy force consisting of two battleships three cruisers & eight destroyers reported by our aircraft patrol about 100 miles away.

## September

1st

At Sea.

1500 left fleet & proceeded with a small convoy towards Malta.

2nd

Last night ten warships got past Pantelleria thus proving Mussolini claim that he had the middle Med blocked wrong. The ships were HMS Valiant (battleship) Illustrious (aircraft carrier) Coventry & Calcutta two anti-aircraft cruisers & six destroyers.

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

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

1115 (Enemy aircraft sighted) Gloucester & Liverpool opened fire on them but they turned out to be our own.

1545 Italian bombers raid fleet. Bombs directed at battleships & Aircraft Carriers. Raiders driven off by A.A fire & fighters no hits registers.

1745 Destroyers dropped depth charges on submarine.

1905 Bombers over again this time bombs falling astern of Orion

1920 Five enemy aircraft over again, this time two of them were brought down in flames first time I have seen them brought down the two A.A. ships got them.

Five fighters (fulmars) got two more of them & out of five only one of them got away.

3rd

At sea

Today completes the first year of war. Cant say I am looking forward to the next over here.

2200 Sydney Orion Ilex & Herwood part company with fleet & proceeded towards the Islands of Dodecanese. We are to bombard aerodrome southern end of Scarpanto Is. in the Dodecanese Group at dawn tomorrow.

4th

At sea

0500 Sydney & destroyer Ibex part company with Orion & Herewood their objection is at the northern end of Island.

0615 Sydney opened fire, range about 2 miles firing direct action shells.

0645 Bombardment completed during bombardment two Italian motor torpedo boats made a dash at us but Ibex let fly two broadsides with her four point seven guns set one flying in the air a burning wreck & the other one badly damaged probably sinking before getting back to its base.

Sydney aircraft was over the aerodrome spotting for us & observation reports much damage done to hangars & drome itself while we were doing our bombardment all aircraft from A/C carriers Eagle and Illustrious bombed Italian naval & air bases at Rhodes Is.

They continued bombing attack all morning.

0800 action alarm everybody went to their action stations. Ships sighted proved to be our own, Malaya, Eagle & A/C carriers & destroyers. We had a dummy funnel rigged to make us look like Italian cruisers & it even fooled our own ships & at the same time we thought they were Italians. Our skipper was going to have a go at them battleships or no battleships.

1100 Three Italian bombers raid fleet bombs landed all around Illustrious. no hits were obtained.

Raiders driven off by A.A. fire

1140 Ibex drops depth charges large oil patch came to surface.

1145 Another air raid by three more Italian bombers AA fire forced them to break formation bombs fell miles away.

5th

0730 Fleet returns to Alexandria

6th

In harbour

1300 Air Raid Alarm. Anti Aircraft guns go into action & drive raiders off no bombs were seen to drop.

7th

In harbour

8th

In harbour

0700 Slipped from bouy & 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 any bombs.  
2045 Air Raid bombs dropped no damage done to ships raiders driven off by AA fire.  
2150 All clear.

9th  
In dock.  
All quiet.

10th  
0745 left dock & proceeded to bouy.  
2100 Air Raid warning.  
2140 All clear

11th  
In harbour.  
1120 Air raid warning Italian reconaissance plane over. It was engaged & shot down by a bristol  
Blenheim bomber fighter of RAF.  
1130 All clear

12th  
In harbour  
Three air raid warnings during the afternoon

13th  
In harbour  
0320 Kent, Liverpool & Gloucester accompanied by six destroyers proceed to sea.  
2200 Air Raid warning.  
2230 All Clear.  
2240 Air Raid Warning.  
2315 All Clear.

14th  
In harbour.  
0000 Air Raid Warning  
0100 All Clear evidently the raiders couldn't make up their minds whether to com or not. Once they  
got to within twelve miles of Alexandria then turned back.

15th  
In harbour.  
One air raid warning during the forenoon only lasted for several minutes.  
1500 Illustrious, Valiant, Orion & destroyers proceed to sea.

16th  
In harbour.

17th  
0300 Air Raid warning.



0330 All Clear.

1115 Air Raid warning.

1130 All Clear.

1500 Slipped from bouy & proceeded into floating dock.

2200 Air Raid warning sirens sounded off but no raiders appeared.

18th

2000 Left dock & proceeded to bouy.

19th

In harbour

0830 Orion, Illustrious, Valiant, Liverpool, Gloucester & destroyers return to harbour Kent badly damaged by an aerial torpedo & is being towed in.

1000 Kent returns to harbour extent of damage unknown.

20th

In harbour.

Casualties on Kent total 36 killed & fifty odd injured many rating were trapped when W.T. doors were closed some were drowned in oil fuel when tanks burst.

1930 Protector proceeds to sea for burial of dead sailors.

21st

In harbour.

0410 Air Raid Bombs fell near oil tanks some fell into sea searchlights & AA batteries went into action.

0500 All Clear. Nine people were injured damage of no importance.

0700 Slipped & proceeded to C2 berth.

22nd

In harbour.

0430 Air Raid searchlights picked up the raiders. Such an affected barrage put up that the enemy retired without unloading their bombs.

23rd

In harbour.

24th

1330 Sydney slips & proceeds to sea we are looking for suspicious merchant vessels believed to be French trying to get to France.

25th

At Sea.

2300 Alarm. Low flying aircraft spotted these alarms lasted until 1.30 AM. We had six inch guns loaded with close barrage shells. The aircraft did not answer or challenge & we weren't going to be caught like the Kent.

26th

0300 Entered Alexandria harbour & secured to bouy.

27th

In harbour.

0700 HMS. York arrives York is an 8,000 ton cruiser same type as the Exeter which fought in River Plate battle & is armed with 6. 8" guns & 4 – 4 inch guns AA. She has joined 3rd Cruiser Squadron.

28th

In harbour.

29th

0015 Valiant Warspite Illustrious cruisers & destroyers slip & proceed to sea Liverpool & Gloucester are carrying troops Destination unknown.

1215 Italian reconnaissance plane shot down by fighters from Illustrious.

1500 Bomber raid fleet. Many bombs fell around Battleships & A/C Carriers none were hit one plane shot down by gunfire.

1530 Bombers again raid us. There were five of them & they all let go their bombs at once about 40 fell in one big heap again no hits.

30th

At sea

1200 Enemy force consisting of a number of cruisers & destroyers reported to be about 80 miles away we are trying to close in on them.

1315 Another report comes in the Italian fleet consists of four battleships, eleven cruisers & seventeen destroyers. too many for us so we turned away. Our force consists of a battleship 1 A/C carrier 5 cruisers & 9 destroyers, so they outnumbered us two to one also two of our cruisers were carrying troops for Malta & we couldn't risk them.

## October

1st

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

2nd

On patrol in Aegean Sea.

2000 We are proceeding towards enemy coast of Stampalia which we are going to bombard at midnight. Stampalia is base for Eboats & submarines. There is also a seaplane base.

2348 Opened fire at 19,000 yards each turret firing ten rounds rapid. It took us 1 ½ minutes to complete bombardment, after which we withdraw at high speed to dodge any E boats which may have been sent out to attack. Results of bombardment are not known.

Orion & Sydney each fired 40 rounds of 6" H.E shells.

3rd

1900 Returned to Alexandria.

During these last operations four enemy aircraft were shot down three by fulmar fighters of F.AA and one by gunfire of fleet. Two submarines surrendered one after being chased for 12 hours by H.M.A.S. Stuart the other after being damaged by damaged by gunfire from H.M.S Havoc & Hasty. The two submarines were scuttled.

4th

In harbour.

5th

In harbour.

Ship is being fitted with anti mine gear

One rating was badly injured today when sling holding big reel of cable broke. He was the only one who was injured during the "B Collioni" action.

HMS Ajax arrived last night she is a ship same class as the Orion & has fought in the Graf Spee Battle.

6th

In harbour.

7th

In harbour

2300 Air raid warning

2315 All clear.

8th

0900 7th CS proceeds to sea to do a 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, we'll give them some curry.

The fleet consists of 4 battleships, 2 aircraft carriers, 6 cruisers & 20 destroyers & two A.A. ships.

We expect to be at sea for about six days

9th

At sea

Destroyers made three depth charge attacks during afternoon, we don't know the results yet.

Everything else quite our fighters are keeping the bombers away.

10th

At sea

Destroyers make more depth charge attacks during the day. The place seems lousy with subs.

CinC seems determined to drag the dago fleet out this time at present we are passing Malta on our way up towards Sicily. We're hoping Musso will send his precious ships out any way & will see what they really are made of!

11th

At sea.

There were several more depth charge attacks last night & again today. Don't know the results up to date.

1600 Arrived off Malta. Destroyers proceed into harbour to refuel.

Last night Ajax surprised three Italian Torpedo boats laying mines. In the ensuing engagement two T.B.'s were sunk, the other made off at high speed.

Ajax was hit by several small calibre shells, the damage being very small 13 ratings were killed and some 20 odd injured.

12th

At sea

0745. Three enemy destroyers reported by one of our aircraft patrols. 7th & 3rd cruiser squadrons immediately take up chase One destroyer was put out of action & abandoned. We passed Italian sailors swimming in the water, very nearly ran some down as we took up the chase after the other two. The Gloucester & Liverpool opened up fire but they were out of range. Aircraft from the of the fleet air arm dive bombed them but reported no hits. After hours chase action had to be broken off & we returned to the fleet. H.M.S York sank the abandoned destroyer by gunfire after 5th salvo. direct hit was scored in magazine & she blew up.

1230 Enemy bombers raided fleet dozens of bombs dropped including many incendiaries no hits were scored. Fleet put up terrific barrage but the enemy aircraft flew right through it to drop their bombs, then carried on. Our fighters took up the chase after them.

1330 Fleet bombed again several near misses but no hits. many tons of bombs were dropped. (Ajax disabled the destroyer the night before & it was being towed by another Iti destroyer when we came across them. The tow was slipped & the destroyer made off at high speed.)

1500 Three Italian 8" Cruisers & three destroyers reported heading towards British convoy 7th & 3rd CS leave fleet at full speed to intercept them. We expected to reach convoy same time as the Italian. 1615 Convoy sighted but no Italian. They evidently missed the convoy & we missed them owing to bad visibility & rain.

Proceeds on to cover Convoy.

13th

At sea. All quite during the day.

0800 Fleet joins convoy.

2000 Orion & Sydney stationed 10 miles rear of convoy.

14th

At sea.

1130 Destroyers make depth charge attack about 20 charges were dropped.

1345 Fulmar fighter FAA. Crashed while landing on Illustrious. Both occupants were rescued.

1800 Enemy torpedo bombers raid fleet Liverpool hit damage not yet known.

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

15th

1300 Sydney proceeds to Alexandria & secured.

0030 just as Warspite, Valiant & Illustrious were entering harbour, they were attacked by torpedo bombers but they were driven off by AA fire. Everything in harbour let fly Pom Poms, flaming onions, 4" & there was a hell of a clatter while it lasted.

0130 All clear is sounded.

Valiant is reported to have been hit by two bombs, but this is not official as yet.

16th

In harbour.

1930 Air Raid a single enemy aircraft came over dropping his bombs on south side of harbour.

Damage was nill as his bombs fell in open space.

2030 All clear sounded

2040 Air raid again a single aircraft but he was driven off by A.A. fire before reaching the harbour.

Another raider came low down & tried machine gunning the searchlights with no effect. Fighters took to him & he was driven off.

2130 All clear.

17th

In harbour.

Two air raid warnings during the evening.

18th

In harbour.

H.M.S Kent left dock during the forenoon & secured alongside wharf.

19th

In harbour.

0140 Air Raid warning searchlights were in action but there were no planes & no A.A. fire.

20th

In harbour.

2010 Air Raid warning searchlights were in action but no aircraft were seen & there was no A.A. fire.

21st

In harbour.

0220 Air Raid. Enemy aircraft dropped several bombs in vicinity of aerodrome there was no damage done. Owing to brilliant moonlight & clouds, aircraft could not be seen although they were heard passing overhead. Several blind barrages were set up & appeared to drive the raiders off.

0415 All clear sounded.

22nd

In harbour.

23rd

In harbour.

0420 Air raid some bombs were dropped in vicinity of aerodrome. Raiders were driven off by gunfire & fighters. There was one casualty ashore.

0600 All clear.

24th

In harbour

25th

0400 Air Raid. One aircraft picked up by searchlights & were driven off by gunfire no bombs were dropped.

0420 All clear.

0600 Orion, Sydney & destroyers Juno & Jarvis proceeds to sea on contraband control. We are to proceed up to the Dardanelles. The rest of the fleet is following behind in case we run into anything & require assistance.

26th

On patrol.

Three merchant vessels were stopped this afternoon. Two were allowed to proceed. The third was allowed to proceed after a boarding party from Jarvis had inspected her cargo.

27th

On patrol.

0700 A neutral oil tanker was stopped & after a boarding party from Jarvis inspected her she was allowed to proceed.

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

28th

At sea.

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

1800 Entered Harbour.

29th

0000 Fleet proceeds to sea.

We are proceeding to prevent a seaborne attack on Greece & at the same time are covering a convoy to Crete.

30th

At sea.

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

31st

At sea.

At present we are off the coast of Greece we have passed several towns & 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 FAA fighters during the forenoon.

0530 Warspite Illustrious York part Company.

2nd

At sea.

1400 four Italian torpedo bombers attacked us dropping two tin fish, these both missed however & planes were driven off by AA fire Sydney let fly with 6 inch barrage.

2330 Entered Alexandria harbour.

3rd

In harbour.

4th

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

2100 Arrived Port Said.

5th

We are taking troops aboard & are taking them to Crete. We have been loading their gear on all day. There are also trucks & two Bofor guns.

1530 Troops embarked there are 450 of them Royal Artillery.

1600 Left Port Said.

6th

1330 Opened fire on two aircraft, they proved to be our own so after two rounds we ceased fire.

1500 Arrived Suda Bay secured alongside jetty. Troops & stores disembarked.

1815 moved out of jetty & anchored in bay.

It appears that we are leaving our aircraft here, as it has left the ship.

7th

In Suda Bay

1030 Convoy consisting of two tankers, Brisbane Sta, two small armed merchant vessels arrive.

1045 Sydney proceed alongside oiler.

1200 Sydney slips from oiler & proceeds to sea. On the way out we passed another convoy 10 ships proceeding in to Suda Bay.

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

8th

At sea.

9th

At sea.

Fighter aircraft from F.A.A. shot down an enemy reconnaissance aircraft during the afternoon.

10th

At sea.

1000 Reinforcements join fleet they are the battleship "Barham" & cruisers Berwick & Glasgow & four destroyers.

1230 Five enemy bombers attack the fleet. Bombs fell near stern of Sydney & one bomb which did not explode fell a few yards off our bows. The other bombs fell well wide of all ships.

Another reconnaissance plane was shot down this afternoon.

11th

At sea.

One Italian Reconnaissance plane was shot down by FAA fighters this morning.

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

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

2200 We approach Taranto straits. All shipping sighted will be presumed hostile & sunk.

12th

0116 Alarm sounds. Convoy of five ships & two destroyers sighted & we opened fire immediately on the leading ship. Several shells damaged her. We then shift target onto second & third ships setting one on fire & sinking another. The Italian destroyers open fire with guns & torpedoes with no result. Sydney fired two tin fish but these missed. 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 nil. B turret fired 101 shells. RDF reports showed that enemy aircraft hunted frantically for us. One got within two miles of us without seeing us.

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

0900 Joined 3rd C.S.

0930 Joined fleet three Italian aircraft shot down in flames today by fighters. Two of them were large flying boats.

13th

At sea all quite

14th

0500 Entered Alexandria secured to bouy.

1930 Air Raid warning.

1945 All clear.

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

15th

In harbour.

1200 Sydney proceeds alongside to embark troops 320 are coming aboard York & Glasgow are also embarking troops.

1530 troops embarked.

1600 Sydney Glasgow, York, Berwick & Gloucester proceed to sea we are taking the troops to Greece & proceeding at 30 knots.

16th

1400 Arrived at Greek Port of Pireaus which is 12 miles from Athens. Crowds gave us & troops a great welcome 1500 Troops & stores disembarked.

1700 Shifted berth. The other four cruisers proceeded to sea. Sydney is remaining overnight.

17th



In Pireaus Harbour

Orion & Ajax arrived during the early hours of morning with convoy. Orion & Ajax anchored off harbour while convoy proceeded in.

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

18th

At sea.

0800 Passed convoy which consists of ten large ships escorted by destroyers & one AA ship.

1700 Joined with the convoy.

52 persons were killed & 79 injured in raids on Alex last night.

19th

At sea.

20th

Entered Alexandria harbour & secured to bouy.

21st

In harbour.

Went ashore & had a look at damage done by bombs in last Monday nights raids 17 houses were destroyed by one bomb.

22nd

In harbour.

23rd

0530 Fleet proceed 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 sub.

24th

1000 Arrived Suda Bay. Destroyers top up with fuel.

1200 Single enemy aircraft flying at great height dropped several bombs which fell very close to Ajax.

No damage done to ships & there was no AA fire.

1300 Left Suda & proceeded westward Berwick joins us.

1700 Passed exact spot where Collioni went down.

25th

At sea.

0800 Mine sighted Destroyer sinks it with rifle fire.

26th

At sea.

At dawn bombers of FAA took off & bombed Tripoli in Libya results not known yet.

Since we arrived in the med Sydney has fired 2,656 6" shells in actions.

27th

At sea.

Our forces west of Pantelleria today contacted an enemy force of 2 battleships & a large no of cruisers & destroyers at extreme range but dagoes once again refused to fight & retired at high speed. One enemy cruiser was damaged by torpedo from torpedo bomber aircraft.

28th

At sea.

1300 We opened fire at a plane but it proved to be one of our own. Our shells burst uncomfortably close to the plane & the pilot got a bit annoyed & sent the following signal "you lot of blind \_\_\_!!! nice fellows!

29th

At sea.

30th

1560 Sydney & Orion enter Alexandria & secure to bouy.

HMS Manchester & Southampton arrive. They are 10,000 tone cruisers mounting 12 six inch guns.

### December

1st

In harbour.

1400 HMS Woolich repair ship arrives.

2nd

In harbour.

3rd

In harbour.

4th

In harbour.

5th

0700 Orion, Sydney Ajax proceed to sea for exercises

100 4" practise shoot at sleeve target carried out.

1300 6" shoot carrier out Breda guns were also tested during the day.

1830 Returned to harbour.

6th

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

7th

0730 Arrived Suda Bay & anchored.

1400 Left Suda Bay.

8th

1100 Arrived at Pireaus & secured alongside.

Leave was given I went ashore for the evening. There was great rejoicing as news came through that the Greeks had captured the important town of Argyoiastas in Albania we were carried around the streets shoulder high.

9th

In Pireaus Harbour.

1100 Orion proceeds to sea.

British Colonial & French have started their drive in the western desert today. Reports state that 4,000 prisoners have been taken already.

10th

1600 Ajax & Sydney proceed to sea on patrol.

Sidi Barrani falls into British hands this afternoon 2,000 more prisoners taken.

11th

At sea on patrol.

12th

1300 Arrived Suda Bay.

1600 Ajax & Sydney proceed to sea again

The Itis are in general retreat in western desert over 20,000 prisoners taken. The Iti's are being attacked three ways land, sea & air.

13th

1030 Arrived Pireaus & secured alongside.

14th

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

15th

1000 arrived Suda Bay & refueled

1200 Leave Suda & Proceed to sea.

Fighting continues in desert with the Italians in retreat. Our forces have penetrated over the Libyan border. Estimated prisoners over 30,000.

16th

0900 Ajax & Sydney arrive Pireaus & anchor in midstream

1030 Orion arrives with convoy.

1100 Ajax & Sydney proceed to sea.

We are proceeding at 25 knots to Suda Bay.

1500 Arrived Suda Bay. Oiler comes alongside.

17th

0300 Left Suda & Proceeded to sea to convoy to Malta.

18th

At sea

1000 Joined the BattleFleet.

Tonight we are making another raid up the Adriatic Battleships are bombarding Velona & F.A.A. & R.A.F. are joining in the fun. Cruisers & destroyers standing by in case on attack by surface craft.

2100 Entered straits of Otranto

19th

0015 Battleships carry out bombardment. Everything went off smoothly no enemy craft encountered.

0500 Returned through straits of Otranto.

20th

0015 Alarm sounded ship sighted but it proved to be enemy hospital ship. We allowed her to proceed unmolested.

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

0900 Opened fire on enemy reconaissance plane.

21st

1410 Sydney leaves 7th CS & proceeds to Suda Bay

2300 Arrives at Suda Bay. Recovered aircraft & fuelled.

0300 Left Suda & proceeded to Malta for refit.

22nd

At sea e route to Malta.

1400 Enemy aircraft sighted we did not fire as plane did not come close enough.

23rd

1100 Arrived Grand Harbour & proceeded alongside H.M.A.S. Stuart.

Xmas mail waiting for us.

24th

1600 Slipped & proceeded into dock for refit Expect to be in for about 2 or three weeks.

25th

Xmas Day

Had dinner & fun ashore & onboard.

26th

In dock.

27th

In dock.

28th

In dock.

29th

In dock.

1045 Air Raid. All hands left ship & entered shelters on Dockyard. 5 Enemy aircraft flew over but dropped no bombs our fighters (Hurricanes) were in the air but did not contact enemy.

1120 All clear.

30th

In dock.

1145 Air Raid.

3 bombers escorted by fighters flew over & dropped bombs on Lugia aerodrome no damage done as bombs fell in the open our fighters were again in the air & cleared the raiders off.

31st In Dock

Distance Sydney steamed in four years up to the outbreak of war was 57,477 miles.

Distance steamed since outbreak of war up to Dec 31st 1940 73,405 miles.

26th May { Total no of 6" shells fired by Sydney in action in medd 2,769

11th Jan {

Total A.A 4" 1,240. Right of B fired 368.

January 5th 1941

Left dock & secured alongside

Wed. Jan 8th

1600 Sydney & Stuart proceed to sea. We expect to join C in C at noon tomorrow.

Thurs. Jan. 9th

Fleet sighted Perth being with them C in C tells us we're going home. Yippee!

1240 with Aussie flag at the foremast we leave the fleet & proceed towards alex.

Friday Jan. 10th.

2100 arrive Alexandria & secure to bouy

Sat. Jan. 11th.

1600 left Alex proceeded towards Pt Said

Sun Jan. 12th.

0300 arrived Port Said & proceeded into Suez Canal

1100 ship stopped owing to sandstorm

Visibility very bad.

1600 we get under weight again

2100 arrive at Suez & proceed alongside tanker for fuel

21:30 slip & proceed to sea. We are now chasing convoy which left this morning. We are escorting it to Mombassa then proceeding to Fremantle.

Monday 13th.

At sea.

Tuesd. 14th.

0800 Convoy sighted

0830 Sydney joins convoy which consists of 10 large ships. The escort consists of 1 large cruiser Carlisle & two destroyers Kimberly & Kandahar and us. We're in tropical ring once again.

Wed. 15th.

Sydney accompanied by Empress of Canada leaves convoy & proceeds in direction of Aden

21:30 arrived Aden & secured to buoy passed HMAS Yarra going in.

Thursday 16th.

HMAS Parramatta in Aden

0745 Sydney and Empress slip & proceed to sea. We are proceeding at 20 knots to rejoin convoy.

Friday 17th.

At sea in Indian Ocean. Broke into three watches again.

Saturday 18th.

0745 Action alarm sounded ship sighted. Closer inspection proves her to be a neutral oil tanker Swedish.

She is allowed to proceed.

Sunday 19th.

At sea.

1220 crossed the equator.

---

#### Transcribers Notes

Roll of Honour	Second World War Panel 8.
Ramillies	HMS Ramillies was one of five Revenge-class super-dreadnought battleships built during the First World War. Continued to serve until January 1945, when she was withdrawn from service.
Australia	HMAS Australia a heavy cruiser of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). She became involved in the response to the Abyssinia Crisis of 1936. Australia served throughout the Second World War and as part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan,

Canberra	HMAS Canberra, named after the Australian capital city of Canberra, was a Royal Australian Navy heavy cruiser during the Second World War. Was lost On 9 August 1942, during the Battle of Savo Island.
Leander	HMNZS Leander was a light cruiser which served with the Royal New Zealand Navy during the Second World War in the Pacific and Indian Oceans as well as the Mediterranean.
Liberty men	Those on shore leave
Cutter	One of the ships small boats
Empress of Britain	Ocean liner built by John Brown in Scotland and launched in 1930. Used as a troopship. She was sunk by U32 on the 28 Oct 1940 off the coast of Donegal, Ireland.
Aquitania	Ocean liner built by John Brown in Scotland and launched in 1913. Used as a troopship and hospital ship in both world wars. Scrapped in 1950.
A.S.	Anti-submarine.
Suffren	French heavy cruiser launched in 1927. Served with Free French forces in the Mediterranean and on convoy escort.
Sunderland	Flying boat built by Short Brothers of Belfast.
Espiro, Ostro, Zeffiro	Italian The Turbine-class destroyers built in the 1920s. All were sunk during the Second World War.
Warspite	HMS Warspite was one of five Queen Elizabeth-class battleships. Participated in the Battle of Jutland during the First World War. Served until decommissioned in 1945. <i>Warspite</i> achieved one of the longest-range gunnery hits from a moving ship to a moving target in history, hitting <i>Giulio Cesare</i> at a range of approximately 24 km (26,000 yd)
Bartolomeo Colleoni	An Italian Giussano-class light cruiser, launched in 1930 and served during the Second World War. It was named after Bartolomeo Colleoni, an Italian military leader of the 15th century. She was sunk at the Battle of Cape Spada early in the war by HMAS Sydney.
Dog watch	'dog watches' – the first dog watch is from 16.00 until 18.00 and the last dog watch is from 18.00 until 20.00.
Gladiator	British biplane fighter. Built by the Gloster company. It was used by the Royal Air Force and the Fleet Air Arm.
Fulmar	British carrier-borne reconnaissance aircraft/fighter aircraft. Built by the Fairey company.
Eagle	Early aircraft carrier of the Royal Navy originally to be battleship before conversion.
Illustrious	Aircraft carrier built for the Royal Navy before World War II.
Bristol Blenheim	A British light bomber or fighter. Was one of the first British aircraft with an all-metal stressed skin.
E boat	Fast attack craft of the German Navy during Second World War
Dago/Wop/Iti	Derogatory terms for Italian
Bofors guns	A type of 40mm anti-aircraft gun.
Pantelleria	Italian island in the Strait of Sicily
Suda Bay	Suda Bay is on the northwest coast of the island of Crete
Pireaus	Port city of Athens Greece
Right of B	Assumed right gun of B turret