



World War 2 Remembered



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World War 2 Remembered is dedicated to members of our community who served their country in war, and to those who offered their support at home.

Reliving the Memories

World War 2 Remembered Oral History Project

Listen to interviews with people who served in World War 2 and have a connection to the local area. The interviews explore the lives and memories of four servicemen, and were conducted by oral historian Frank Heimans.

This project was supported by a grant from the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Interview of Frank McGovern OAM



Francis Joseph (Frank) McGovern was born in Paddington, attending school in Edgecliff and Darlinghurst. He joined the Navy reservists in 1938, training at the Rushcutters Bay depot in the evenings and on Saturdays. When war was announced Navy reserves were mobilised immediately and Frank became a seaman gunner on the ship *Westralia* for about 18 months. Returning to Australia after duties in the Indian Ocean, Frank joined the *Perth* on patrol with a convoy in the Pacific. In early 1942 the *Perth* was torpedoed near Java – against the odds, Frank survived his time as a prisoner of war, returning to Sydney on 17 September 1945.

Frank was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) on 26 January, 2019 for services to Veterans and their families.

[Access to the audio file is available online.](#)

Interview of John Wright



John Wright was working as an apprentice during the construction of the Air Force station at Bradfield Park (now Lindfield) in the early years of World War 2. In 1942, released from the work at Bradfield Park, it was inevitable that John, aged about 19, would sign up with the Air Force. John joined the RAAF 11-RSU (Repair and Salvage Unit), which formed up at Mt Druitt in December 1942, and served for three and a half years spending the majority of his time in the Pacific theatre, including New Guinea and Borneo.

John Wright has lived in Rose Bay all his life, attending Rose Bay Public School and The Scots College. After returning from the war, John worked in the building supplies and hardware business established by his parents in 1919 – the Eastern Suburbs Lime and Cement Store, Rose Bay. He now volunteers at the Powerhouse Museum.

[Access to the audio file is available online.](#)

Interview of Morris Zamel



Morris Zamel was 17 years old when he joined the army at the outbreak of World War 2 becoming a Sergeant at the age of 19. As an instructor, Morris coached commandoes in the Army in self-defence and the use of armaments, training men who would eventually go to New Guinea and Kokoda.

Morris reminisces about his war days – including training in Centennial Park and his involvement in entertainment for the troops.

[Access to the audio file is available online.](#)

Interview of Phil O'Sullivan OAM



Phil O'Sullivan was involved in the war effort early in his apprenticeship as a fitter and turner and motor mechanic, making parts for machine guns as well as the boom net across Sydney Harbour. Phil shares his memories of his war experience including the shelling of the Eastern suburbs as well as the day that the Kuttabul was hit by a torpedo from a Japanese submarine.

Phil was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) on 10th of June, 2013 for service to the Waverley region through a range of sporting and community organisations.

[Access to the audio file is available online.](#)

Stories from Woollahra

World War 2 brought conflict closer to home, and residents of the Woollahra municipality had many reminders that the country was officially at war.

At War Again

Australia, by declaration, entered the conflict now known as World War 2 on 3 September 1939 – on the same day, and in unity with, Great Britain. Together with New Zealand, Australia was one of only two non-European nations to enter the war from its outset, and both countries remained actively involved when the documents of formal surrender were signed on 2 September 1945 - one day short of six long years of conflict.

“Fellow Australians, it is my melancholy duty to inform you officially, that in consequence of a persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Great Britain has declared war upon her and that, as a result, Australia is also at war. No harder task can fall to the lot of a democratic leader than to make such an announcement.”
— R G Menzies, Australian Prime Minister, 1939.

Twenty-one years after the Allied victory of 1918, the Australian people found themselves again confronting the prospect of war. The six-year war which engaged Australia between 1939 and 1945 delivered a very different experience from its 1914-1918 precursor. On the home front it was in every sense a more intrusive event, with one exception: the death toll among serving Australians was significantly less, reducing the number of families destined to suffer the emotional and material impact of war-time bereavement.¹ This outcome, of course, could not have been predicted by those who faced anxious years of waiting for the safe return of family members, and nor does it recognise the suffering of those returnees, and their families, whose futures were dogged by war-induced trauma or physical disability.

War toll aside, what most distinguished the two conflicts was the fact that Australia, through the second part of World War II, could no longer trust in geographical separation to safeguard the nation. From December 1941, Australia lay on the edge of an active theatre of war, with Australian external territories soon undeniably within the area of operations, and Great Britain in no position to exercise the protective function expected by its southerly dominions. It would be a slow awakening,

¹ In terms of Australian war-time losses, deaths of servicemen in World War I stands at 60,000 from the AIF alone, while in WWII deaths across all services stands at 35,000. [ABS - War Casualties](#) . For Japan, Germany the Soviet Union and the Jewish people the losses in WWII were, however, tragically high.

however, before Australians reached a clear appreciation of their country's predicament, and the Australian government waged its own war on the home front to combat complacency.

The initial stages – and life went on

In September 1939, within the Woollahra community, local sentiment and understanding of the war-time situation mirrored the public attitude in Australia as a whole. Bruce Crosson – a Rose Bay teenager when war broke out - notes in his essay 'The War and Woollahra,'

"Changes were mostly marginal, and life went on without a great deal of concern for the conflict half a world away"

— As I remember: recollections of World War II ...Syd., WHHS, 1995 p. 5

It was different in official circles. Even before the inaugural meeting of the Australian War cabinet, held on 27 September 1939 at Victoria Barracks in Paddington, much had happened in the bare month since the declaration. Australian naval and air forces had swiftly mobilised for overseas service. The raising and equipping of ground forces, and the question of their most useful deployment was in active planning, in consultation with Britain. At this level of operation, the possibility of Japan entering the war and threatening the further reaches of British interests was already factored into the myriad considerations for best allocating Commonwealth resources.



Image: First meeting of the Australian War Cabinet, 27 September 1939. Australian War Memorial: ID 042822.

Amongst its earliest actions, the Australian government introduced legislation designed to strengthen its authority for war time circumstances.² Pilloried by opponents as an act enabling the Government '*to pass any laws it liked and disregard existing laws*'³ – the *National Security Act* granted the government the means to introduce the many restrictions and requirements imposed upon the Australian populous as the war situation deteriorated, and which would come to shape life at home.

A growing threat in the Pacific

Apart from evidence of Japan's increasing military strength, there were multiple indicators to be drawn from Japanese foreign relations over the 1930s to justify Allied wariness. Prime among these were the occupation of Manchuria in 1931, and Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1933 – the latter pre-dating Nazi Germany's detachment from the organisation.

On 27 September 1940, Japan became a signatory to the former 'Pact of Steel' between Germany and Italy, re-drafted as the Tripartite Pact. The arrangement redefined the Axis alliance and provided for mutual assistance should any one of its signatories come under attack by a power not already engaged in the war. During the period leading up to this, Japan had been exercising what has been described as her 'peaceful penetration' of south-east Asia⁴, establishing strategic bases by agreement with compliant authorities, rather than through combat.

While Allied and American intelligence-gathering forewarned of the likelihood of Japanese aggression, the events of 7 December 1941 took the world, and Australia, by storm. While the date is remembered in the main for the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour, which brought the formerly neutral America into the war, it also marks the first Japanese bombardment of the strategically vital Allied naval base on Midway, and the beginning of an assault on Hong Kong which led to the surrender of the British colony in less than a fortnight. The following day saw the Japanese invasion of Thailand and the beginning of campaigns against the British-held territories of Malaya and Singapore, the American stronghold of The Philippines, and the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia).

² [*National Security Act 1939*](#) – received assent 9 September 1939.

³ Maurice Blackburn quoted in Long, Gavin *The Six years war : a concise history of Australia in the 1939-45 war* Canb., AWM, 1973 p. 12.

⁴ Long, Gavin *The Six years war* p.37

Thus in two days, the Japanese initiated the removal of the Allied-held buffers which had stood between the Australian home-front and direct exposure. This was accomplished in a matter of weeks.

Place on a 'real wartime footing'

"The events of Sunday, December 7, 1941 changed things a lot – the community was hurriedly put on a real wartime footing"

— Bruce Crosson. As I remember: recollections of World War II ...Syd., *WHHS*, 1995 p. 5

Driven by a new urgency, the war became the primary focus of government purpose. The provisions of the National Security Act were now drawn upon to create, over time, a myriad of regulations to enforce the observation of necessary precautions, such as the 'black-out' conditions designed to hinder enemy aircraft and submarines from sighting their targets.

Conscription had been avoided in Australia during World War 1, due to the opposition of the people (expressed through two unsuccessful War referenda on the subject) coupled with the government's reluctance to introduce the measure without popular support. Now, with her fighting force abroad, and an enemy progressing with alarming speed southwards, conscription was introduced without public consultation. The terms of compulsory service extended to deployment anywhere within the defined 'south-west Pacific zone': Australia, New Guinea, the Philippines, and the Netherlands East Indies.

Non-conscripted members of the workforce were subject to labour controls to combat the shortage of man power, removing the choice which Australian workers were accustomed to exercising over their employment.

In time, both public and private property was sacrificed to the war need, and large houses came to accommodate servicemen, pleasure craft were taken to form the 'Hollywood Fleet' patrolling harbours and ports, and public parks and facilities fell victim to military need above public enjoyment. Authorities meanwhile exerted control through a system of rationing over the purchase and sale of necessities better used in the cause of the war effort than by individuals.

In August 1942, Australian Prime Minister John Curtin⁵ challenged the people's tolerance further, by announcing:

"I ask you to reconcile yourselves to a season of austerity, to make your habits of life conform to those of the fighting forces."

— Hasluck, Paul. *The government and the people* p270

Whereas rationing measures concentrated on apportioning necessities, austerity measures targeted expenditure on the unnecessary - extravagances such as entertainment, alcohol, and luxury goods. Curtin's strategy was to adjust the national frame of mind to fit the hour.

Not only in the headlines but in the highways and byways could be read the story ...

There were physical changes taking place in the local area, too which served as reminders of the new reality. Air raid shelters were added to private gardens and public places – some were pre-fabricated structures sold for installation below ground level, while other provisions were little more than trenches, but all shared the same disadvantage of filling with water after rain. A shelter dug in Robertson Park Watsons Bay by the Vaucluse Council was particularly disadvantaged in this regard, having been built over 'a prominent spring', according to local resident Vince Marinato.

"Some six feet deep and four feet wide it ran along half the length of Military Road alongside the pub and it was shaped like a number of large joining 'Ws'."

— Marinato, Vincent *The Shop on the wharf* p. 96

In his reminiscences, Marinato goes on to relate that the air raid shelter proved a hazard to locals leaving Watsons Bay pub after dark, a number of whom forgot its existence and ended up at the bottom of the trench. It was a relief to the community when it was filled in.

In preparation for explosions, shop display windows were boarded up and domestic windows criss-crossed with adhesive tape to limit the danger of flying shards of shattered glass. Sand bags were used to reinforce walls and dampen the force if struck by bombardment, and sand was also distributed for use as a fire retardant in the event of incendiary bombs.

⁵ Curtin had assumed the position of Prime Minister on 7 October 1941 and remained in the role until his death in 1945.



Image: Volunteers with the Woollahra branch of the National Emergency Services distribute sand bags. Woollahra Libraries Digital Archive PF002977.

Historian Paul Hasluck observed of all these visible precautions,

"Gradually too, as the realisation of danger grew, the aspect of the cities changed ... Not only in the headlines but in the highways and byways could be read the story of expectation of coming raids, and perhaps invasion.

— Hasluck, Paul *The government and the people* p. 64

The entry of Japan into the war in 1942 introduced a real threat to civilian lives, homes and livelihoods, with the fear of enemy invasion and the unwelcome prospect of engagement on Australian soil. In the course of everyday civilian life, a new sense of vulnerability tempered, but did not overwhelm, the famously relaxed national attitude.

Vince Marinato, in summing up this period of his life, wrote:

"Thinking back on those times and all that has been said and written, it was an age of pride, comradeship and a sense of a job well done. With all its sadness and laughter one feels that to have missed out on being part of it would have left a huge gap in one's life"

— Marinato, Vincent *The Shop on the wharf* p. 97

Sources

As I remember : recollections of World War II by members of the Woollahra History and Heritage Society and the Eastern suburbs division of the Legacy Club of Sydney. Syd., WHHS, 1995

Hasluck, Paul *The government and the people* Canb., AWM, 1970

Long, Gavin *The six years war: a concise history of Australia in the 1939-1945 war.* Canb., AWM/AGPS, 1973

Marinato, Vincent *The Shop on the wharf : recollections of people and happenings in Watsons Bay during the first seven decades of the twentieth century.* Syd., Wild & Woolley, 1996

Shelling of the Eastern Suburbs

"I feel it is my duty to report that history was made last night when Woollahra was shelled from the sea. The defence authorities report that the shelling was carried out by submarine."

— Mayor of Woollahra, Mayoral Minute, Minutes of Woollahra Council, 8 June 1942
p. 207



Badly damaged rear of the house at 4 Bradley Avenue, Bellevue Hill, 1942. Image: Australian War Memorial No: 012594.

Alderman Keith Manion was the Mayor of Woollahra in the year of the Japanese shelling of Sydney, and the author of the Mayoral Minute that recorded the broad detail for posterity.

11/1942.

ORDINARY MEETING.

8th JUNE, 1942.

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF WOOLLAHRA HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, OCEAN STREET, WOOLLAHRA, ON MONDAY, THE 8th DAY OF JUNE, 1942.

PRESENT: HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR (ALDERMAN K.D. MANION) AND ALDERMEN GRANT HANLON, M.B.E., C.W. DAVIES, J.D.L. GADEN, A.E. SMITH, THE HON. HUGH LATIMER, M.L.C., G.S. GRIMLEY, J.P., R.R. THORNTON, L.H. MOORE, L.S. SNIDER and L.E. DUFF.

M I N U T E S.

The Minutes of the last Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on the 25th May, 1942, were taken as read and confirmed.

A P O L O G Y.

An apology was received and accepted for the non-attendance of Alderman Hugh C. Foster.

MAYOR'S MINUTES.

His Worship the Mayor submitted the following Minutes, viz:-

1. NATIONAL EMERGENCY SERVICES AND WAR DAMAGE.

I feel it is my duty to report that history was made last night when Woollahra was shelled from the sea. The Defence Authorities report that the shelling was carried out by submarines.

The Chief Warden reports the following incidents in the Municipality during the raid:-

<u>Incident.</u>	<u>Location.</u>	<u>Missile.</u>
1.	26 Manion Avenue	Unexploded
2.	4 and 6 Bradley Avenue	Exploded
3.	3 Flumer Road	Exploded
4.	Cnr. Small and Fletcher Streets	Exploded
5.		
6.	81 Beresford Road	Unexploded
7.	68 Streatfield Road	Shell fragment
8.	4 Salisbury Road	Electric wires down
8a.	4 Salisbury Road	Electric wires down
	67 Balfour Road	Exploded
	9 Bunyula Road	Exploded
	Golf Links	(2) Unknown

MINUTES - Ordinary Meeting, 8th June, 1942.
Mayor.

Page 207.
Town Clerk.

I can assure the Council that the members of the National Emergency Services performed splendid work and this first actual active service operation proved the efficiency of the service and reflects credit on all those responsible for its organisation and training. The work of all the auxiliary services was carried out admirably. With great relief I report that only one person suffered injury.

This morning I inspected, with the Chief Warden, Alderman L.H. Moore, all the sites of the incidents and the Civilian Aid Officer, Alderman L.E. Duff, personally contacted all personnel affected by the damage to properties.

I have also conferred with representatives of the War Damage Commission and arranged for prompt attention to be given to their claims.

(Considered with detailed reports by the Chief Warden and the Civilian Aid Officer for Woollahra.)

AGREED that the Mayor's Minute be received and adopted.

2. NATIONAL EMERGENCY SERVICES EXPENDITURE.

I submit herewith letter just received from the Town Clerk of Randwick inviting this Council to be represented at a deputation from representatives of the Councils of the Municipalities of Waverley, Vaucluse, Woollahra, Botany, Mascot and Randwick to wait on the Hon. the Premier of New South Wales with a view to obtaining a refund of the expenditure incurred by the Councils in connection with National Emergency Services.

It is proposed that a meeting of two delegates from each of the Councils mentioned be held at the Randwick Town Hall at 8 p.m. to-morrow, Tuesday, 9th instant, to discuss the matter and arrange for the deputation.

I recommend that this Council be represented and that two delegates be appointed.

RECEIVED - AGREED that the Mayor and Aldermen L.H. Moore and L.E. Duff be appointed this Council's delegates, and that they be authorised to make representations to have the question of reimbursement of Civilian Aid Service expenditure included in the matters to be dealt with by the conference.

PETITION.

TWENTY-ONE RESIDENTS OF NEW SOUTH HEAD ROAD, BAY STREET AND MANNING ROAD, DOUBLE BAY:

Bringing the following matters under notice, viz:-

- (1) For many months past a Night Club known as "Ciro's" has been carrying on business in New South Head Road in the vicinity and in close proximity to the residences and places of business of the petitioners.
- (2) At this Night Club each night congregate persons who carry on dancing and revelry to the accompaniment of a great deal of unnecessary noise, and such noise is amplified by electrical means and so considerably augmented and rendered more objectionable.

MINUTES - Ordinary Meeting, 8th June, 1942.
Mayor.

Page 208.
Town Clerk.

Also present at the Council's meeting of the 8 June – an ordinary meeting, part of Council's regular schedule - was Alderman Lyle Moore (Chief warden for the local district) Alderman Leslie Duff (Civilian Aid officer) and Alderman Reginald Thornton, duty warden on 7 June, whose shift had officially ended just before the shelling, but who turned back for further duty when the sirens sounded soon after⁶.



Alderman Reginald Thornton, warden on duty on the night of 7 June, 1942. Image: Woollahra Libraries Digital Archive, PF001486.

These men – and no doubt others of the 12-man Council – had been galvanised into practical action by the events of the early hours and their aftermath, inspecting sites of damage and liaising with authorities on behalf of owners and residents of affected property. Council's headquarters, then at 90 Ocean Street Woollahra where the meeting of 8 June was held in the upstairs chamber, also housed on the ground floor

⁶ An account of Reginald Thornton's actions on 7-8 June 1942, supplied by his son Graham in an interview 18.3.2010, in Jones, Terry and Carruthers, Steven *A Parting shot : shelling of Australia by Japanese submarines, 1942* Sydney, Casper, 2013 p. 33

the wardens' control room for the district. Here the duty warden maintained a central point of communications for the warden posts dotted across the municipality, an arrangement which placed the Council administration at the centre of these and related operations.



90 Ocean Street, Woollahra, which housed the Woollahra administration until 1947. Woollahra Libraries Digital Archive PF006360/0980.

For all those involved in the efforts carried out on the night of the Sydney shelling, and in its immediate wake, the event no doubt appeared the harbinger of much to come, from further raids to full-scale invasion. Hindsight allows us to conclusively dismiss their apprehension.

Escaping lightly – Sydney and Woollahra Municipal Council

As Australia's then most populous city, capital of its largest economy and accorded a tacit seniority as the Federation's oldest European settlement, Sydney might well have been considered a prime target for swift and decisive humiliation by Japanese forces, such as Japan had proved capable of delivering elsewhere. In fact, Sydney escaped lightly in the war of the Pacific. The sum total of military assaults was a raid on her harbour by three Japanese 'midget' submarines on the night of 31 May/1 June 1942, and the shore bombardment which made history for Woollahra a week later.

Of these, the harbour raid resulted in the sinking of an RAN depot ship, HMAS *Kuttabul*, and the deaths of twenty-one young sailors sleeping aboard when she sank⁷. The shore bombardment resulted in isolated damage to private property and public roadways, minor injuries to several residents, and the death of a USAAF pilot responding to orders. Neither event occasioned the loss of civilian life, nor created any effective disruption to daily routines or the national war effort.



HMAS Kuttabul after the explosion, 1942.

⁷ The HMAS *Kuttabul*, a former harbour ferry requisitioned and converted into a barracks ship for sailors, fell victim to one of two torpedoes released from midget submarine *M-24*, when Sub Lieutenant Katsuhisa Ban took inaccurate aim at the cruiser *USS Chicago*. The former ferry was broken in two by the blast unleashed when the torpedo made contact with the harbour floor near Garden Island, where *Kuttabul* was moored. Aside from 21 dead, at least 10 sailors were injured.

The events of 8 June – Sydney

When Terry Jones and Steven Carruthers set out to compile the most detailed and meticulously researched account yet published of the bombardment (*A Parting shot*, Casper, 2013) they discovered gaps and inconsistencies within even official record gathering, and in the realm of personal anecdote, a need to dismantle myth before they could assemble facts. The authors concluded that despite their research, some aspects of the night seem destined to remain the topic of debate and ongoing conjecture unless credible new sources emerged.

What is well established from multiple sources about the events in Sydney is that shortly after midnight on the morning of the 8 June 1942, a Japanese I-class submarine, *I-24*, under the command of Hanabusa Hiroshi, fired ten rounds from a position some six miles off Malabar.

Estimates of the time taken to deliver the shells differ. The Official war history puts the duration at five minutes, based on sightings of gunfire in the relevant location by HMAS *Adele* at 12.15am, and a conclusion of fire at 12.20am.⁸ A conflicting estimate based on reports from shore observation posts, and quoted in Jones' and Carruther's *A Parting shot*, suggests an assault that lasted for between two and four minutes.⁹

The *I-24* had surfaced shortly before midnight to carry out this assignment, the shells from which would land chiefly in the suburbs of Rose Bay and Bellevue Hill, with all but one of the ten falling within the boundaries of the municipality of Woollahra. The beam from the Macquarie Lighthouse, a landmark adopted by the municipality as a symbol of the area and its administration, had given critical assistance to the crew of *I-24* in the orientation of its assault.

⁸ Gill, G Hermon *Royal Australian Navy, 1942 – 1945*. Canberra, AWM, 1968 p. 78

⁹ Jones, Terry and Carruthers, Steven *A Parting shot* p. 38



Badly damaged rear of the house at 4 Bradley Avenue, Bellevue Hill, 1942. Australian War Memorial No: 012595.

The events of 8 June – Newcastle

The Eastern suburbs bombardment was one-half of a 'paired' assault, in line with Japan's noted *modus operandi*. A week earlier, the midget-submarine raid on Sydney Harbour had mirrored a midget-submarine raid on the Madagascan port of Diégo-Saurez, carried out by the Japanese the day before the Sydney Harbour attack.¹⁰

The action which was paired with Sydney's shore bombardment was closer to home. At 2.15am, a little over 2 hours after *I-24* had fired ten shells on Sydney, a second of the Japanese I-class submarines, *I-21*, under the command of Matsumura Kanji, surfaced in Stockton Bight and fired on the city of Newcastle. Estimates of the number of shells fired at Newcastle varies from thirteen to thirty-four,¹¹ including an unknown number of 'star shells' fired to provide illumination rather than inflict

¹⁰ The motive for the attack on strategically important Diégo-Saurez had been clear and specific – pre-empting Japanese interest, the British had seized the port from Vichy France on 5 May 1942, securing its continuing availability to the Allies. The motive for attacking Sydney was a reconnaissance report of 'battleships and cruisers' in the harbour. Gill, G Hermon *Royal Australian Navy, 1942-1945* pp. 65.

¹¹ The lowest number is derived from early newspaper reports; the highest from David Jenkins' *Battle surface: Japan's submarine war with Australia 1942-1945*, Syd.' Random House, 1992 p. 251, based on an arguably misunderstood account from Japanese sources. Jenkins' tally is discussed by Terry Jones and Steven Carruthers in *A Parting shot, shelling of Australia by Japanese submarines, 1942* Sydney, Casper, 2013 pp. 147-148.

damage. The official war history sets the figure at twenty-four rounds, fired over twenty minutes, the attack ceasing once fire was returned from the shore.¹²

The onshore response came from Newcastle's Fort Scratchley, which would end the war as the only Australian shore establishment to have fired on an enemy warship off the Australian coast. The damage in the northern steel city was similar to Sydney's toll – no deaths, negligible injuries, some property damage and nuisance disruption to operations at Newcastle's steelworks.

A few minutes of high tension – a view of the Sydney shelling from the sea

The submarine *I-24* which shelled Sydney in 1942 was part of Japan's *Eastern Advance Detachment*, a squadron made up of three B-1 Scout submarines and two C-1 Attack submarines, commanded by Captain Hankyu Sasaki. The large craft variously carried 'midget' submarines (*I-22*, *I-24* and *I-27*) or reconnaissance planes (*I-21* and *I-29*).

The mission assigned to the squadron when it left Japan in April 1942 was to launch midget submarine operations to locate and destroy large naval targets of the enemy (nothing smaller than a cruiser), to disrupt sea-based enemy supply lines and to engage in shore bombardments.¹³ The raid on Sydney Harbour fell into the first of these categories, with a number of worthwhile targets in the Harbour confirmed during a reconnaissance flight by Susumo Ito before the decision to launch the attack was made.

The shelling of Sydney's east fell into the last category of these orders. It has been observed that the Japanese submariners typically reserved shore bombardment for the close of a campaign.¹⁴

Mochitsura Hashimoto, who was the torpedo officer on the *I-24*, provides some insight into the likely feelings of the crew and commander of *I-24* as Commander Hanabusa Hiroshi positioned *I-24* ready for the assault.¹⁵ Mochitsura's explanation of

¹² Gill, G Hermon *Royal Australian Navy, 1942 – 1945*. Canberra, AWM, 1968 pp. 77- 78

¹³ Jones, Terry and Carruthers, Steven *A Parting shot* pp. 189-190.

¹⁴ *Op.cit.* p. 209

¹⁵ In 1945, Mochitsura had been the Commander of the *I-58* which had torpedoed and sunk the *USS Indianapolis*. Terry Jones and Steven Carruthers drew from the transcript of his evidence into a post-war inquiry into the sinking to gain insight into Japanese submarine operations *A Parting shot* pp. 209f

the inherent risks faced by crew in the exercise of gunfire on a shore target allows us to imagine the sense of dread as the moment of fire approached.

The first risk was posed by the inevitable time taken to load and fire the submarine's deck gun - time which could allow shore batteries to effectively make sightings, calculate range and return fire. The second was the catastrophic risk that, in the event of an emergency dive, the ammunition hoist hatch – able to be closed or adjusted only from the outside – would be imperfectly sealed at submersion.

Jones and Carruthers point out that Commander Hanabusa had first-hand experience of the dangers of this exercise as he approached the execution of the Sydney bombardment. Five months earlier, on 25 January 1942, he had been forced to crash dive to escape fire returned from a US base, having discharged only five of an intended seven shells at targets off Midway Atoll. As it happened, the US base had been forewarned by Allied intelligence before the January attack, but in June 1942, as he faced an unprepared and unsuspecting Sydney, Hanabusa could not have known about their advantage, and may have anticipated a similarly swift counter attack.¹⁶

He need not have worried. On 8 June, the submarine's ten shells were fired before Sydney deployed searchlights, let alone retaliated. Orders complete, the *I-24* retreated out of range, no doubt to the overwhelming relief of Commander and crew.

A disturbance in suburbia - the shelling as seen from the land

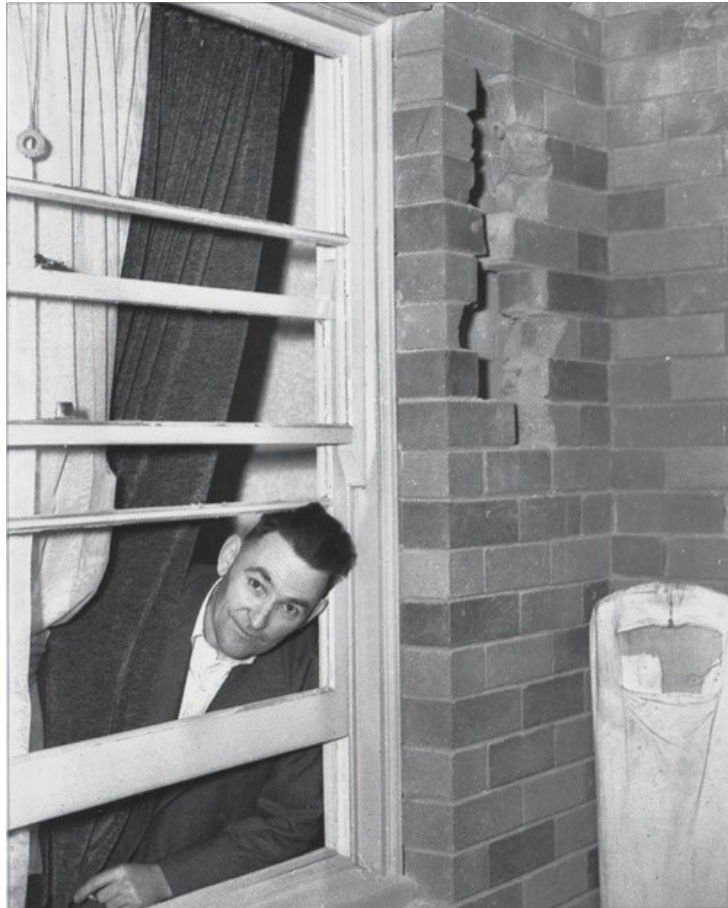
Onshore, it was a rude awakening on many levels for the residents of areas where the *I-24*'s ten shells came to rest. Their arrival was unsettling even when, as was most common in this event, the shells failed to explode, landing with a heavy thud and often burrowing into the soil to a depth of up to six feet. The loud whistling of their delivery was remarked upon in multiple accounts – often described as a 'screaming'.

The three shells which exploded left significant craters on impact, while the associated blast inflicted damage on adjacent buildings. While there was no wholesale destruction, the sight of the partial ruin of Nos 4 and 6 Bradley Avenue, Bellevue Hill would have provided a sobering indication of the force of an explosive weapon – a demonstration outside the experience of most residents of these peaceful suburbs.

¹⁶ *Op. cit* pp.209-210

While there has been a certain amount of debate and inconsistency in accounts, it has been reasonably well established that the following places and outcomes of the shelling are accurate to the events of that day:

Shell	Location	Outcome
1	26 Manion Avenue, Rose Bay	Unexploded
2	3 Plumer Road, Rose Bay	Exploded
3	67 Balfour Road, Rose Bay	Unexploded
4	81 Beresford Road, Rose Bay	Unexploded
5	9 Bunyula Road, Bellevue Hill	Unexploded
6	4 and 6 Bradley Ave, Bellevue Hill	Exploded
7	Cnr Small and Fletcher Streets Woollahra	Exploded
8	Woollahra golf links, Rose Bay	Unexploded
9	Royal Sydney golf links, Rose Bay	Unexploded
10	34 Simpson Street, Bondi	Unexploded



Shell damage in the southern wall of 26 Manion Avenue. Australian War Memorial 012583.

Reports of an eleventh shell having landed in Olola Avenue Vacluse were unable to be substantiated at the time, and were later discredited. Residents of the locality in June 1942 were confident that there was no truth to this rumour, and after more was understood about the submarine operation it became clear the area would have been beyond the range of *I-24*'s known position and firing capability.

Jones and Carruthers suggest the confusion arose from the misinterpretation of an accurate communication received at 12.22am from a warden at a Vacluse post, and recorded in the log book of the *National Emergency Services*. The message reads simply 'a bombardment from the sea, now in progress.'¹⁷ The municipality of Vacluse, while host to defence bases, key military installations, and the strategically significant entrance to Sydney Harbour, escaped the war unscathed.

As the shells fell in the early hours, residents reacted with confusion and disbelief. While panic was minimal, neither was there an orderly response. In many cases bewilderment and denial kept residents in their houses rather than their shelters – and neglectful of the brown-out restrictions, to the consternation of wardens. Tales

¹⁷ *Op.cit* pp.260-261

were told of residents who would not leave their homes without first conducting time-wasting searches for important documents or treasured possessions.

One story of indecisive action leading to a distressing and potentially dangerous situation was told by Elsie Moore to *The Sun* newspaper.

"I heard four shells come over and I decided that if there were any more I would go to the air-raid shelter. The fifth came but it was so cold out that I changed my mind. Next moment the world seemed to crash about my ears as the sixth shell exploded on the road below."

— Quoted from *The Sun* in *A parting shot* p. 47

Mrs Moore's bedroom in an enclosed veranda in *Yallambee Flats*, was strewn with shattered glass, broken bricks, shards of road bitumen and other debris from which she sustained minor injuries and no doubt considerable shock.

While many were slow to react, others had no warning to heed. At *Grantham Flats* at the southern end of Manion Avenue, home by chance to three wardens, notification arrived via the first shell, which pierced the double-brick outer wall of the building's southern elevation. The shell continued on a crazy path via the Hirsch family's flat, piercing internal walls before coming to rest, unexploded, on the building's common staircase.

The five occupants, including an eighteen month old and an elderly woman, were showered with debris as they slept, but all escaped unscathed apart from Edward Hirsch. An electrical engineer who had fled Europe pre-war to find a safe haven for his family, he now found himself on the other side of the world as the only civilian casualty registered from the Japanese attack.

Amidst citizen chaos, the local services appear to have carried out their work with calm efficiency.

"I can assure the Council that the members of the National Emergency Services performed splendid work and this first actual active service operation proved the efficiency of the service and reflects credit on all those responsible for its organisation and training. The work of all the auxiliary services was carried out admirably."

— Mayor of Woollahra, Mayoral Minute, Minutes of Woollahra Council, 8 June 1942 p. 208

Failings exposed

Not all services received such accolades. While it had little effect on the ultimate outcome of the events, the unpreparedness of Sydney – her people and her defences - was revealed by the Japanese attacks, and Sydney's light escape must be seen as in many ways a matter of chance, coupled by enemy action which was never intended as part of a fully-fledged assault.

Perhaps the most criticised was the failure at the highest level of naval command in Sydney to heed reports of an unidentified aircraft over the harbour at 4.20am on 30 May, and to consider its potential significance as a reconnaissance flight. In Diego-Saurez, a similar sighting had led to Allied defences taking action, moving the anchorage position of likely targets. In Sydney, a number of important Allied naval assets were left open to destruction had the midget-submarine raid been carried out more successfully by the enemy.¹⁸

With the May 31 attack underway, defence communications within the port of Sydney were shown to be generally deficient, with runners despatched to give key orders which could not be delivered by telecommunications. Also questionable was the deliberate decision to allow ferries to run as usual, in the hope that this general activity might deter the submarines from surfacing until daylight - but thereby putting civilian life in danger.

Despite the harbour raid delivering what should have been a 'wake up' to Sydney defences, similar confusion confounded the counter operations on 8 June. Admittedly, the speed at which *I-24* fired her rounds from a cautious position gave the onshore guns little time to react. Nevertheless, any lost opportunity is regrettable when viewed in the context of the havoc wrought by Japanese submarine activity in Australian waters during the Second World War. This was frequently disruptive of supply lines, and resulted in a heavy loss of life among merchant seamen.

A more immediately distressing example of unpreparedness on 8 June was the manning of the US Army Air Force squadron of fighter aircraft, based at Bankstown aerodrome. Despite the fact that the entire Allied command assumed that, if attacked, Sydney would be bombed from the air, there was only one member of the fighter aircraft crew available on base when counter action was ordered. Squadron Commander Lieutenant George Cantello crashed soon after take-off – his death believed to have been a consequence of his haste to become airborne as the sole responder. The loss of this twenty-seven year-old serviceman was the only death recorded as a result of Japan's sea bombardment of Sydney.

¹⁸ Gill, G Hermon *Royal Australian Navy*, pp. 64f



1st Lieutenant George Leo Cantello, Commanding Officer of the 41st Pursuit Squadron, USAAF, based at Bankstown Aerodrome, lost his life as a result of the selling of Sydney AQM p05600.001.

As for Japan's *Eastern Advance Detachment*, the results of the two attacks on Sydney were disproportionate to the Japanese losses, all of which arose from the Harbour raid: six skilled sub-mariners and their craft, and a reconnaissance float-plane whose pilot and 'spotter' survived the rough landing.

The bombardment in context - Sydney's light escape, Japan's muted success

To place the two attacks on Sydney during World War 2 into proportion, we need only make comparisons with the casualties, damage and deaths suffered in attacks on other parts of the Australian mainland during the conflict, and the fact that some areas were attacked multiple times - Darwin, Broome and Townsville among them.

The most extreme comparison is with Darwin which, on 19 February 1942 suffered two major air raids, in which an estimated 683 bombs were dropped, with between 250 and 320 deaths resulting, and between 300 and 400 casualties inflicted. Ten

ships were sunk, twenty-three aircraft destroyed, and great damage to other military assets and civilian property exacted. Moreover, this was only the beginning of repeat assaults, with Darwin and areas surrounding the town the subject of 62 further raids.

Broome also suffered. In one of three raids carried out on the port, a strafing attack in March 1942, some eighty lives were claimed - the death toll inconclusive given the unknown number of refugees from the Netherlands East Indies sleeping aboard Flying Boats destroyed at anchor.

Put into context, Sydney's escape was indeed light, but it does not follow that the attacks were totally without achievement for the Japanese, at least when viewed in terms of the likely motive for the shore bombardment, once understood by historians.

While the objectives and targets of the midget submarine raid on Sydney Harbour were obvious to Allied observers, the reason for the shore bombardment was more mystifying. Many targets for the shelling were put forward over time as the primary one – and each discounted. With time and distance from the events it has been concluded that there was no single target or objective, and it has been noted that Tokyo Radio on the day of the bombardment referred to Japanese submariners using their guns to 'blaze haphazard' at Sydney and Newcastle.¹⁹ This description provides a vital clue to the real intention.

History was denied the chance to form a cohesive understanding of the wartime plans and decisions of the Japanese command with the almost wholesale destruction of official documentation of the period. However, testimonies and statements presented at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East in the late 1940s provided new insight. Subsequently, personal reminiscences and direct accounts emerged from former Japanese servicemen, each giving fresh perspectives on the overall rationale.

Two survivors of the submarine detachment, Mochitsura Hashimoto from *I-24* and Susumo Ito, the reconnaissance pilot operating from *I-21*, are quoted in Jones and Carruther's *A Parting shot* in frank commentary that suggested the psychological impact of the attack was always the main purpose of the shore bombardment, and the likelihood of striking a specific target understood to be very low.

Japan had an appreciation of the uses of psychological warfare, and while her "Tokyo Rose" broadcasts were considered clumsy propaganda by young American servicemen of the 1940s, the broadcasts showed a degree of sophistication in their execution which suggests the effort was believed to be worthwhile. The Sydney bombardment provided an opportunity to deliver fear through direct, 'serious' military

¹⁹ Jones, Terry and Carruthers, Steven *A Parting shot* p. 258

action to what was no doubt assumed to be a suggestible civilian population, and with it an illusion that worse was to come.

As for the threat of a real invasion, a sworn statement of wartime Japanese Prime Minister Hideki Togo at the time of his testifying at Ichigaya, was that it was realised as the war progressed that Japan lacked the resources to mount and sustain an invasion of Australia.²⁰ It was hoped that, rather than by military conquest, Australia might be persuaded in a newly realigned post-war world to adjust her vision to accord with Japan's 'New Order and Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity'. However, Japan calculated that an Australia flagging in morale, and needlessly frightened of a phantom invasion, would be a less focused, committed and useful support to the Allied forces. The explicit aim of promoting a mass evacuation from centres with an already depleted workforce was another likely part of the plan, as a means of further undermining the war effort.

In this regard the effects of the bombardment were mixed. There are many examples of Sydney residents who sent their children to stay with country relatives, and housing prices were said to have fallen dramatically – although in this respect it is difficult to separate the specific effects of the bombardment from the general dampening effects of the war. Complementing vacancies in Sydney property, areas such as the Blue Mountains noted a swelling of the population, supporting the idea that Sydneysiders moved to escape further raids.

However, there was no organised or official undertaking to relocate women and children out of the coastal belt of New South Wales, and many Sydney residents were determined to stay. War historian Paul Hasluck saw the threatening events of the first half of 1942 as awakening Australia to 'a fuller realisation that it was a nation at war' - but suggested it was an awakening with a positive result.

"The major effect of bad news was ... to stiffen the resolution of the people to face and to survive the perils of war. In the camps, at their work, on ARP patrol or in their homes they were a happier and a more closely knit people than they had been since war began. They knew they were standing on their own ground. They waited for the Japanese to come."

— Hasluck, Paul *The Government and the people, 1942-1945*. Canb, AWM, 1970 p. 69

Mrs Maisie McEachern, with her husband in military camp and both sons serving abroad, was living alone when the rear of her Bellevue Hill house was blasted into rubble by shell no 6. She refused to move out from the remaining section of the

²⁰ Gill, G Hermon *Royal Australian Navy, 1939 – 1942*. Canb., AWM, 1957 p. 643

ruins, even on the night of the shelling. 'My house is still standing. I don't see why I should go elsewhere.' was her reply to the suggestion.²¹

Woollahra's moment

While militarily irrelevant and mercifully unsuccessful if measured purely on a scale of physical damage inflicted, the June 1942 bombardment of Sydney nevertheless made a significant impression upon the small population of wartime Woollahra. Of the ten shells which fell, nine landed within the municipal boundaries, three of which exploded. Forty years later, when Woollahra Library embarked on an Oral History project to capture the memories of residents across a diverse range of local topics, it was a rare interviewee in a position to remember that event who had no personal story to tell. Accounts of the incident also intersperse a series of World War II recollections published by the Woollahra History and Heritage Society in 1995 to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, and feature in individually published biographies of eastern suburbs residents. Here are three stories of varied experience from Woollahra:

A diversity of reactions...

Some slept through

Not everyone experienced the 'rude awakening' which the *I-24* set out to deliver.

Two who slept soundly were Bellevue Hill resident Nina Barden and her husband, a serviceman home on leave from the army. Nina wrote of their experience in 1995,

"I can well remember the night that Sydney was shelled by the Japanese submarine – or rather the next morning. I heard someone walking past my home in Vivian Street Bellevue Hill say, 'What do you think? We were bombed last night'. So I said to my husband, who was sleeping, 'Wake up Darling, we were bombed last night'... We were indeed startled to find that several flats in Rose Bay had been hit, as well as a home nearby, No 4 Bradley Avenue"

— Barden, Nina 'A War bride', *As I remember: recollections of World War II* p.32

Overshadowed by a family loss

For one local family, a moment of personal grief that was quite unrelated to the enemy attack, would distinctly lessen its impact. Eighteen year old Vince Marinato

²¹ *Op.cit.* quoted by Jones and Carruthers p. 51

had been summoned home by his family from militia service in Singleton, in regional New South Wales, with the news that his grandmother was dying. He reached the family home, *Rosaria*, in Watsons Bay shortly before midnight, to find his grandmother had died before his arrival, and went to pay his respects by her side in the front bedroom of the family's Marine Parade house.

"Peace was rudely interrupted by shell bursts, followed shortly after by the piercing wail of air-raid sirens – it was the night that Sydney's eastern suburbs were shelled. I walked out onto the veranda listening to the shells whistling in the night. People were running along Marine Parade.

The house cellar had been heavily sandbagged and it was the street's unofficial air-raid shelter. I remember one elderly neighbour arriving, her hair done up in curlers and in her dressing gown with her jewellery box under one arm and a loaf of bread under the other. I vaguely remember somebody, maybe Tony Bagnato or Uncle Ossie, calling out for me to go into the shelter.

I spent the remainder of that cold early June night in lonely vigil by my grandmother's bedside, the only lights visible to me were the four candles at each corner of her bed. I fell asleep in the chair beside her."

— Marinato, Vincent *The Shop on the wharf* p. 97

A chance meeting

Marie Dyer was a Bondi teenager in June 1942. In 1998, in a compilation of eastern suburbs reminiscences, she recalled the Japanese bombardment of Sydney in these terms,

"They peppered the eastern suburbs with mostly unexploded missiles, one of which fell a few streets from my home..."

but her attention was reserved for another event,

"In a fraction of some second between 8:14am and 8:15am on the bright summer morning of August 6th, 1945, a bomb containing the destructive force equivalent to 20,000 tons of TNT exploded over the Japanese city of Hiroshima. It released the forces of heat and radiation onto the 260,000 people estimated to be in the city on that day."

— Dyer, Marie 'I still have his photo' in *I remember, I remember* p. 6

Dyer had visited Hiroshima in 1948, 'two years and eight months' after the atomic bomb had been dropped. While she had in August 1945, in Australia, '*rejoiced with the rest of the world at the end of the fighting*', the visit to the ruined city would haunt her.

“This once thriving industrial city was a maze of torn, twisted buildings, rubble, collapsed bridges and mile upon mile of newly erected barracks to accommodate the thousands who had been left homeless. Petrified trees stood as ghost sentinels to the effects of the conflagration. It was feared that not a blade of grass would grow for 75 years.”

— Dyer, Marie ‘I still have his photo’ in *I remember, I remember* p. 6

Buying fishing tackle soon after in nearby Iwakuni, Dyer was provided with a chance meeting which tied together for her the two war-time events. The shop’s owner, in conversation through an air force interpreter, was revealed to be Susumi Ito, the pilot of the reconnaissance plane which had identified the targets in Sydney Harbour before the May 31 midget submarine raid.

The two felt an eerie connection with the realisation that, at one point in the early hours of May 30 1942, as two young people on opposing sides of a war, ‘Mr Ito had probably flown over my Bondi home.’

Fifty years after the meeting, when she shared her memories in a Woollahra Council publication, Marie Dyer still held the picture of a brave young Japanese reconnaissance pilot, and hoped that fate might provide an opportunity for them to meet again to reminisce.

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Flying Boats at War

“Flying off the water and sailing into the sky.”

— *'The Flying Boat Days'*, Peter Phillips



An RAAF launch with medical equipment and stores heading for a Catalina at Rose Bay which will fly to Singapore for Australian ex-prisoners of war. Argus Newspaper Collection of Photographs, State Library of Victoria H98.103/3845.

Since July 1938, flying boats had been alighting on and taking off from the waters of Rose Bay. Those first flights connected Sydney to Singapore for £195, and Rose Bay became Australia's first international airport. By the time of World War 2, the airways were shared between the private and military sectors. Flying boats used in a variety of operational roles by the Royal Australian Air Force and other Allied nations. After the war the use of flying boats for military and commercial operations declined as the war had brought with it new airports and aviation technology. The service ceased operations in Rose Bay in 1974.

Background and history

Design

Flying boats were a luxurious and extremely modern way for about 15 people to travel. They paired adventure with novelty, especially in the interwar years. There were several different spaces within a flying boat that allowed the journey to be as enjoyable as the destination. The main cabin and smoking cabin had reclining seats. Staff treated the passengers to an in-flight service, one cabin crew for each 5 passengers. Overnight stays were spent at luxurious resorts. The alighting requirements, to float on water and keep propellers well above the water, allowed for an oversized interior that enabled passengers to be surrounded by luxury.

“Getting up out of his chair, a passenger could walk about and, if he had been seated in the main cabin, stroll along to the smoking cabin for a smoke, stopping on the way at the promenade deck with its high handrail and windows at eye level to gaze at the world of cloud and sky outside, and the countryside or sea slipping away below at a steady 150mph.”

— Wilmot Fysh, former Managing Director of Qantas²²

The ability of flying boats to alight on calm waters was a great advantage. Prior to World War 2, the world lacked many airports and early aircraft frequently needed to land to refuel. Journeys across Australia or internationally became feasible. Designed to carry mail, these aircraft had a swollen fuselage that floated. A letter could get from Rose Bay to Southampton in only 10 days, a quarter of the time it would take to get there by sea. In comparison to land-based airplanes prior to World War 2, flying boats had larger capacity and were faster.

The Kangaroo Route

“The harbourside suburb of Rose Bay was selected as the site for Australia’s first international airport, primarily because it was a large bay with calm water located close to the city.”

— Matthew Holle, curator of the 2008 *Flying Boats* exhibition, Sydney Living Museums²³

²² <https://www.seaplanes.com.au/history>

²³ 'Flying Boats : Sydney's golden age of aviation' <https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/stories/flying-boats-sydneys-golden-age-aviation>



Official opening of the thrice-weekly air service to England, Rose Bay Flying Boat Base, 4 August 1938. Qantas Airways Ltd. Woollahra Libraries Digital Archive pf000411.

The Rose Bay Flying Boat Base was established on the northern half of Lyne Park. The first flight was by COOEE - VH-ABF on 5 July, 1938. The last commercial flight was on 10 September, 1974. Subsequently, the base was dismantled and the area reverted to public park.



Rose Bay Flying Boat Base, c1938. Woollahra Libraries Digital Archive pf004885.

Boats flew out of Rose Bay to a variety of destinations and Rose Bay was the Australian terminus for the Empire Air Mail Scheme - the idea of having mail delivered within the British Empire by air had been conceived by the chairman of Imperial Airways, Sir Eric Geddes. In the 1930s, the *Empire* flying boats were concentrated on mail deliveries between Australia and England with only a dozen or so passengers tagging along on each flight that could carry up to 2 tons of freight.

Rose Bay to Southampton was the primary route, through Singapore and Bangkok, Calcutta, Alexandria and Marseilles. This path was nicknamed the “Kangaroo Route” as flying boats hopped from location to location, refuelling as needed.²⁴ The first boat that alighted in Rose Bay came from the Rochester Seaplane Works in the United Kingdom. The Short Brothers were responsible for early crafts and had the motto “We don’t build planes that float, we build ships that fly.”²⁵ Qantas Empire Airways flew part of the way and Imperial Airways flew the rest. By 1939, war was looming and an alternative route to Europe through Africa was flown.

On 24 May, 1941, after four months abroad including in the Middle East, Britain, Canada and the United States, Australian Prime Minister Menzies arrived in Rose Bay by flying boat, where he gave a broadcast outlining the seriousness of the situation in Europe, and its impact on Australia.

“The war has assumed a most deadly and grave character, and its winning will ask more of us than anybody dreamed of two years ago.”

— Prime Minister Mr Robert Menzies, 24 May, 1941²⁶

At War in the “Black Cats”

Like most Allied nations, the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) operated a number of different flying boats. For the first couple of years of World War 2, they flew reconnaissance missions and as patrol across Australia and Papua New Guinea in *Empire* flying boats. Some private aircraft (C Class *Empire* flying boats) were transferred to the RAAF at the beginning of the war from private companies.

²⁴ https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/rose_bay_airport

²⁵ Peter A.R. Phillips *The flying boat days: the early aviation history of Lord Howe Island* Henley Beach, SA: Seaview Press, 2002, pg 37

²⁶ ‘War Assumed Deadly and Grave Character’. *The Telegraph*, May 24, 1941, p. 3 (second edition) from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article186643940>

Over 150 *Catalinas* were used by Australia during World War 2 between 1941 and 1945, being the only aircraft that could reach Japan and other islands in the Pacific. *Catalinas* had a remarkable range of 5,000 km flying below 5,000 feet.

With their range and reliability, the RAAF used these crafts in a variety of offensive ways. Flying boats regularly ran air-sea rescue missions and patrols. With their versatility, they could bomb and lay mines over water targets or near the shore, and went into battle against submarines. They flew at low altitudes and military pilots often flew them at night.

In December 2019, the Australian War Memorial's "Catalina Week" exhibition paid tribute to the 'one of the RAAF's most important – but often forgotten – aircraft types, the aircrew who flew them and the ground personnel who maintained and prepared them'.

"Originally purchased as patrol and maritime reconnaissance aircraft for Australian and New Guinean waters, by mid-1942, RAAF Catalinas were pressed into service as long-range bombers. They were the only available aircraft capable of reaching distant Japanese airfields and bases in New Guinea and the islands, often flying 18 hours or more on hazardous missions at low altitude to reach their targets. Since these operations were mostly carried out at night, the aircraft involved were painted in dark colours and became known as "black cats". The long-ranging black cats with their motto "First and furthest" became part of RAAF legend."

— Australian War Memorial²⁷

Flying boats and their crew helped evacuate servicemen and civilians from places like the East Indies. Over 170 airmen died during *Catalina* missions as members of the RAAF 11, 20, 42 & 43 squadrons.

One example of the importance of these vessels was seen the night before the Battle of Ceylon. On 5 April 1942, a lone *Catalina* spotted a Japanese fleet of ships and reported it to allied forces before being shot down. The surprise element was taken from the battle and although the Japanese considered Ceylon to be a victory, it was the first formidable stance taken against that fleet.²⁸

"... we were saved from this disaster by an airman on reconnaissance who spotted the Japanese fleet and, though shot down, was able to get a message through to Ceylon which allowed the defending forces there to prepare for the approaching assault; otherwise they would have been taken by surprise."

²⁷ 'Catalina Week' <https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/events/catalina-week>

²⁸ <http://www.armouredcarriers.com/battle-for-ceylon-hms-indomitable-formidable>

— Sir Winston Churchill

Towards the end of the war, a flying boat was used in support of fund raising through the 3rd Victory Loan²⁹ - eligible subscribers (£100 or more) were given the opportunity to participate in a 'joy flight' from the Rose Bay flying boat base.



A group of civilians on the wharf at the flying boat base at Rose Bay, waiting to be ferried out to the Short Sunderland aircraft (in background) for a joy-flight. The aircraft, captained by Flight Lieutenant Manger was making a tour of Australian states in support of the 3rd Victory Loan and, during each stop on the tour, took eligible subscribers of 100 pounds or more to the loan, for a joy-flight. 31 May 1945. Image: Australian War Memorial VIC1263.

²⁹ 'Make your money fight : Patriotic saving in the Second World War', Reserve Bank of Australia Museum <https://museum.rba.gov.au/exhibitions/make-your-money-fight/>



Civilians leaving the Short Sunderland aircraft and boarding a RAAF launch (RAAF 011-29) to be ferried back to the wharf at the Rose Bay flying boat base after being taken for a joy-flight. 31 May 1945. Australian War Memorial VIC1264.

Qantas non-stop to Ceylon

Boats left Rose Bay for Singapore and some domestic locations even after the declaration of war in 1939, but by February 1942, Japan occupied most of South East Asia and the service to Singapore was forced to stop. The facilities at Rose Bay were used as an RAAF base where technicians repaired and overhauled allied vessels.

Qantas also kept open the only Australian civilian air link across the Indian Ocean using the *Liberator* and *Catalina* models. The Qantas *Liberators* were the first planes that had a painted 'flying kangaroo' symbol. Airmail continued to move from Perth to Ceylon (Sri Lanka).³⁰

In 1943 the RAF sent five *Catalina* aircraft to Qantas on the condition that they open a route from Perth to Ceylon. As the world's longest and regular non-stop service for 271 flights, it covered over 5600 km. Airmail was copied onto microfilm, and the flying boats stripped of any unnecessary weight. Limited crew flew the missions in

³⁰ 'The golden age of flying boats in Australia'. *Club Marine Magazine*, Volume 19, Issue 6. <https://www.clubmarine.com.au/exploreboating/articles/19-6-The-Golden-Age-Of-Flying-Boats-In-Australia>

complete radio silence navigating with only a map, compass and the stars. The service lasted for two years and around 800 passengers witnessed two sunrises during the trip. Upon arrival, they obtained a certificate to the 'Secret Order of the Double Sunrise.'

The end of the war

On 16 September 1945, nine *Catalina* boats cruised into Rose bay with former prisoners-of-war from Japanese camps at Changi, receiving a warm welcome from the public. Catalinas also flew to Singapore with stores and medical equipment for Australian ex-prisoners of war.



Released Eighth Division men coming ashore by barge from the Catalinas at Rose Bay, Sydney 16 September 1945. Argus Newspaper Collection of Photographs, State Library of Victoria. H98.103/4220.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

116746

Members of 8th Division, Ex-Prisoners of War of the Japanese at Changi, arrived at Rose Bay Flying Boat Base by Catalina Aircraft. Shown, a group of the ex-prisoners in the RAAF launch ready to go ashore. 24 September 1945. Australian War Memorial, 116746.



Men loading a No. 1 Flying boat, ready to fly to Singapore with stores and medical equipment for Australian ex-prisoners of war. Argus Newspaper Collection of Photographs, State Library of Victoria c1945 H98.103/3846.

After the war, flying boats rapidly became obsolete. Thousands of airports were built across the globe during and after the war, providing the facilities for new pressurised aircraft that could fly higher and farther. Flying boat flights to London resumed in May of 1946, but in 1955 Qantas discontinued its flying boats, selling all remaining craft to Ansett flying Boat Services, Rose Bay.

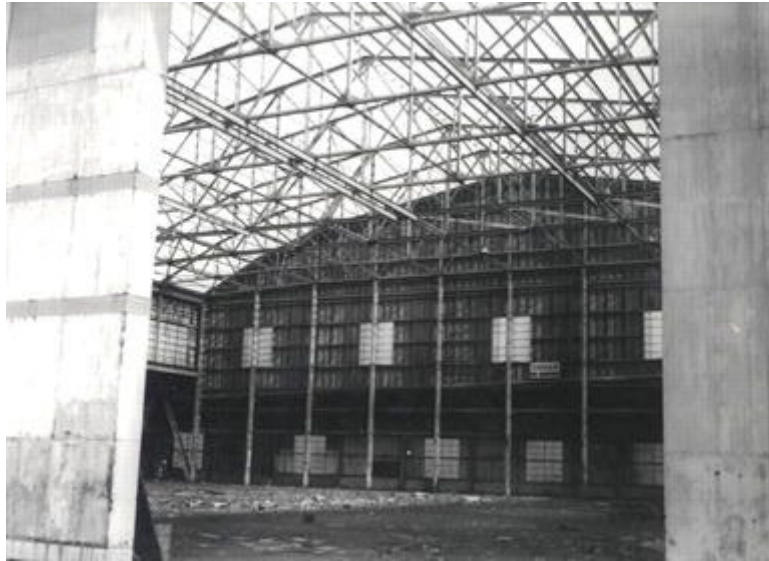
Flying boats continued to service east coast destinations including Pacific Islands (operated by Trans Oceanic Airways 1947-52), New Zealand (Tasman Empire Airways 1940s), Hayman Island and Lord Howe Island (Ansett until 1974), all from Rose Bay.³¹ The last flying boat gently touched down in Sydney in 1974, the same year Lord Howe Island finally built an airstrip.



Rose Bay Flying Boat Base, 1974. Woollahra Council Foreshore Study November 1974. Woollahra Libraries Digital Archive pf006360/0301.

The flying boat hangars were dismantled in 1977 and the area reverted to public park.

³¹ Crosson, R.B. *'The Flying Boat Era'* Woollahra History and Heritage Society, Woollahra Heritage Briefs #2, 1991.



Rose Bay Flying Boat Base - partly dismantled hangar, 1977. Image: West, Allan. Woollahra Libraries Digital Archive pf005814.

A memorial plaque was installed at Lyne Park in 1988, commemorating fifty years since Qantas Airways (in conjunction with Imperial Airways) commenced flying boat operations from Rose Bay.



Since 2005, a seaplane tourist service has operated from Lyne Park flying refurbished de Havilland Beavers and turbo-prop Cessna Caravans.³²

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³² Sydney Seaplanes <https://www.seaplanes.com.au/today>

Personal Stories

Memories of the war years contribute to our understanding of an episode which would produce countless individual stories in many different languages, from both allied and axis sides, from the heart of the conflict or the distance of home, set down in diaries and letters, published as books, captured in images and rewritten for screen - or simply told, one-to-one, as reminiscences shared. Seventy-five years afterwards, these stories are still told, embargoed material continues to be sporadically released, and new interpretations emerge.

Andrew Coroneo

Andrew Coroneo was born in Armidale, NSW, his parents coming from the Island of Kythera, Greece in the early 1900's when very young. After the war he lived in Vacluse attending Vacluse Public and Randwick Boys' High Schools, then Sydney University. He worked as a pharmacist and later owned a travel agency in Woollahra.

[This recollection is an extract, reproduced with permission, from '*As I remember : recollections of World War II by members of the Woollahra History and Heritage Society and the Eastern suburbs division of the Legacy Club of Sydney*', published by the Woollahra History and Heritage Society (WHHS) in 1995.]

My earliest recollection of World War II is the series of military convoys grinding noisily up the New England Highway outside my family home in Marsh Street, Armidale moving north to Queensland.

To a six to seven year old boy at the time, the excitement of motorised field guns, American camouflaged half-tracks and trucks - these were very distinctive in shape and colour - driving past one's humdrum country home in such large numbers was almost unbearable. I cannot be sure, but the convoys seemed very frequent, sufficiently for me to be counting the total number of vehicles each time, to see how much numerically larger the next convoy would be - I think the record was around 200 separate vehicles.

At about the same time, I remember the visits to our home on their way to Moree from occasional military leave of cousins Spiro (Bill) and George Gengos - a recently retired doctor. The memory of Bill's striking RAAF pilot's uniform is still vivid in my memory of childhood. In recent years, I think of that handsome young man often - the only member of our family to have sacrificed his life in either World War for our 'adopted' country. Bill Gengos was lost over Tobruk, while serving with 108 Squadron RAF, on secondment from 458 Squadron RAAF. It was a sad loss to his

loving family and to the New South Wales legal profession which he had looked forward to join.

In 1943, the Alex Coroneo family moved to Scone, where my cinema exhibitor father purchased the historic former Bank of NSW building in Liverpool Street - at an earlier time this was the town's main street. This is still owned by the Theo Coroneo family, successors to my father as operators of the Civic Theatre. This former bank building previously had been owned by the Australian Army and I remember my mother gathering up several boxes of live ammunition of various calibre before setting to, as she said "to clean up the building for human habitation". A 'pre-ordained' military discipline remains strongly in my memories of this wonderful house and home in Scone.

Then the Allies invaded Europe. It was my daily duty to run over the railway crossing next door and the 100 yards up to the corner of the Post Office to post our mail and buy the daily newspapers from the adjacent newsagency. On the front page appeared an outline map each day of the Allied Armies' advance across Europe on both the Eastern and Western Fronts towards Berlin. With boyish excitement, I would run home to announce "We've captured Rheims!" or "We've totally surrounded Dusseldorf!" Little did I realise then of the enormous cost in human lives and suffering. Uppermost in my thoughts was a childish anticipation of success - a Nintendo game of my generation, really - as each European town and city and river and national border was predictably surrounded and overrun by a deepening wave of solid black ink. The occasional unsuspected city would resist capture for several days and I recall clearly that, on such days, all my willpower and concentration were called into play.

Soon after the Japanese attack on Sydney Harbour and following shelling of the Eastern Suburbs, my father fortunately purchased our family home in Village High Road, Vacluse from a business friend who was in the course of rapidly and somewhat un-valorously removing his famous cake shop from Castlereagh Street, Sydney to Katoomba. Of course, the Coroneo family moved into occupation of the Village High Road house from Scone only after all hostilities in the Pacific had ceased!

My final recollection of the war is of playing in my very early teens in the filled-in gun emplacements near the cliff edge at what is now very peaceful and scenic Christison Park, Vacluse. With judicious scraping away of the sand-fill, it was possible to squeeze under the surrounding circular concrete overhang of the gun-pit and thence wriggle into the adjoining magazine rooms. Some years ago, I sought to relocate these simply-covered-over gun emplacements, the adventure ground of my youth. This was unsuccessful no doubt due to Woollahra and Waverley Councils' very effective landscaping and plantings of native vegetation - peacetime camouflage!

Andrew Coroneo, a WHHS member, was born in Armidale, NSW, his parents coming from the Island of Kythera, Greece in the early 1900's when very young. Since the war he has lived in Vaucluse attending Vaucluse Public and Randwick Boys' High Schools, then Sydney University. He worked as a pharmacist and now owns a travel agency in Woollahra.

Peter Poland

Peter Poland joined the Royal Navy as a Cadet, in January, 1946. As a Lieutenant, he served 2 1/4 years with the Royal Australian Navy returning to England in 1957 married to a 6th generation Australian. In 1968, he commanded the frigate *HMS Zest* which visited Sydney. Leaving the Royal Navy in 1971 he and his family migrated to Australia where he worked in the retail industry until 1987.



Peter (far right) with (from left) his mother, brother Patrick and father Commodore A. L. Poland.

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For someone who was a small boy - 7 to 13 years old - in England at the time, World War II brings back a myriad of memories. When war was declared in September, 1939, my family was on holiday in North Devon, not far from the home of my father's mother who was 82 at the time. Leaving my brother, me and our nanny with her, my parents raced back to Kent and packed up the rented house we lived in near Chatham. They were sure Chatham, being a large naval port would be heavily bombed.

Soon afterwards, my father went off to war - he was an officer in the Royal Navy and had fought in World War I. From late 1939 to early 1946, I only saw him for a total of about five months. My mother rented a house for us in the next Devon village to my granny's. Soon both of my granny's came and lived with us there - my father's mother because of her age and my mother's mother because she lived in Portsmouth, another naval port, which the Germans started bombing.

I spent the war years either in North Devon or at boarding school in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, apart from a few months in 1943 when I went on school holidays to the Isle of Man. My parents lived there for a year when my Dad was in command of a naval training establishment which had taken over a former holiday camp.

Time during those six years is a bit of a blur but themes and particular events can still be easily recalled.

Boarding school

When I started in May, 1940, the school had been evacuated to a stately home in the Cotswolds but soon after moved back to Cheltenham. Being near Bristol and Gloucester, we had a lot of air-raid warnings, mostly at night. The school had built bunks for us boys in the basements amongst the central heating pipes and when the sirens went we all trooped down there from the dormitories carrying our gasmasks.

The only bombs that dropped near the school were incendiaries - we used to race out to the school grounds in the morning to try and find their unburnt tail fins. These and things like chunks of shrapnel and bullet cases were great 'swops'! I was in the sick bay - scarlet fever or measles, I think - on the only occasion when Dad was able to come and see me at school. I was really proud of him in his uniform. Only later did I learn he had just brought his ship *HMS Black Swan*, back from Norway where a

bomb had gone right through the stem of the ship without exploding but making a large hole in the hull, luckily missing the propeller shafts.

Travelling to and from school

This was done by train, sometimes on my own. The trains were always crowded and usually ran late. I remember sitting in one for hours outside Bristol, delayed because of heavy bombing there. Travelling from Cheltenham to the Isle of Man in 1943 was an adventure. Up to London by train - escorted from Paddington to Euston stations by a favourite uncle - changing trains at Preston, Lancashire at 9 pm - finding oneself alone in a deserted part of the blacked out station - panicking about missing the train and the steamer - at last a porter - a night in a hotel at Fleetwood - to sea the next day - violently sea-sick crossing the Irish Sea - hope to die - home with Mum and Dad and brother Patrick at last.

The wireless

I do not remember listening at school - too busy doing preps, I suppose, but it was a regular feature at home. We always listened to the news, sometimes good, sometimes bad. Then there were the King's Christmas speeches, Mr Churchill, laughing about Lord Haw Haw's latest lies and the wonderful variety programmes, particularly Tommy Handley's ITMA (It's That Man Again) with "Zis is Funf (the spy) speaking"; Colonel Chinstrap, "I don't mind if I do" and Mrs Mop "Can I do you now Sir?" and signing off with TTFN (Ta Ta for now). At least we could laugh.

The campaigns

'Five inches of Bath water' to save fuel; 'Dig for Victory' - most autumns, I collected conkers (horse chestnuts) for pig food and once spent a weekend from school picking up potatoes on a farm - never again! 'Warships Weeks' and 'Wings for Victory' - the National Savings Campaigns and the posters of the horrid swastika covered 'SQUANDER BUG'. 'Careless talk costs lives - be like Dad, keep Mum'. The face on the wall (Chads) with the words below 'Wot - no bananas?' And the salvage drives. They would make today's recycling look pathetic. Everything was salvageable - paper, clothes, old tyres, saucepans, you name it, it could be used. My mother, who was the area head of the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) ran a salvage shop where people brought things. I used to help sometimes when on school holiday and I remember her debating whether a pair of really beautiful, and probably valuable, bound books should be sent off for pulping.

Rationing and the precious coupon books

I do not remember ever going hungry but some foods like butter almost disappeared. Sweets and chocolate became a great treat. Fortunately, we had a large garden and grew lots of vegetables and fruit and the hedgerows were full of wild blackberries. Mum made lots of jam. One time she ran out of jam jars so I volunteered to find some. She was horrified to learn, after she had filled them, that I had taken them off the graves in the churchyard. My Mum was too resourceful to throw them out so we still enjoyed that jam! How she coped with two growing boys and with clothes rationing, I have no idea. We got into real trouble if we lost or tore anything.

German aeroplane

Near our home in North Devon was a RAF aerodrome used by Beauforts attacking German ships and submarines in the Western Approaches. One night we heard this plane circling and circling. German aeroplanes had a different engine noise and this noise was not a usual one. We all wondered when the siren would go or the bombs start dropping but nothing happened and the noise eventually died away. We learned later that there had been a heavy raid on Cardiff, Wales and this plane had lost its bearings. On his return flight, thinking he had crossed the English Channel rather than the Bristol Channel, the pilot landed on what he thought was an airfield in France and was surprised to find his plane surrounded by armed RAF airmen.

The Isle of Man

It was like a holiday from the war except that all the seaside boarding houses and hotels were surrounded by high barbed wire fences and full of German and Italian internees. We used to walk by to get a glimpse of these 'enemies'. One glorious sunny day, I bicycled around the Manx TT motor-bike route with some other boys. We imagined we were roaring down the hills. Fortunately there were hardly any vehicles on the roads because of petrol rationing.

Food and other parcels

One day, we got a food parcel from Australia. Amongst the welcome tins was a large one marked 'Custard Powder' (Yuk!). Because Mum felt the war and rationing would last a long time she had created a hoard of tinned and other foods for 'a rainy day' - the custard powder joined them. After rationing ended, she needed some custard powder so she opened the tin to find that it was full of dripping which had been like gold during the war!

Another parcel full of thick, blue, woolly socks, gloves and scarves knitted by a group

of naval wives in Adelaide arrived. When Dad saw them he said, "Oh dear, what am I going to do with them, I'm off the Mediterranean". I think he sent them to one of his friends serving in the North Atlantic.

The American invasion

Suddenly there were American soldiers everywhere - the North Devon beaches were ideal for invasion practice. All the kids in the village greeted every GI they met with "Got any gum, chum?" On Sundays in Cheltenham, we collected what was to us a fortune by cycling round to all the public 'phone boxes and pressing the refund button B - the Americans telephoning their girlfriends did not bother to collect if their call was not answered.

Planes, tanks and guns

Most of us boys became expert at identifying planes, tanks or guns but sometimes we were baffled. Playing sport at school one day an aeroplane flashed overhead making an incredible noise. We stopped playing and stared, one boy calling out, "Its got no propeller!" Little did we realise we were witnessing aviation history - Frank Whittle developed the jet engine at the nearby Gloster Aircraft Factory and this was one of its early flights.

News from Dad

Letters arrived spasmodically but to great excitement. Mostly they were funny little photo-reduced Airgraphs addressed from 'At Sea' or 'In the Desert' - Dad was in Tobruk all during the 1941 siege in charge of the ships running in supplies and reinforcements . Because of censorship, he could tell us very little of what he was doing and it was only much later that I learnt the full extent of the action he saw. On his way to Suez via South Africa, he sent us a parcel from Mombasa with, of all things, fresh limes in it. By the time it reached England, the over-ripe limes had obliterated most of the address so the parcel travelled the land before reaching the right place. The contents were mostly useless.

My proudest moment of the War

One day I was promoted from the Village ARP (Air Raid Precautions) Messenger Boy to First Stirrup Pumper when they found, during a practice, that I could pump water higher than anyone else. What they did when I was away at school, I do not know.

I was fortunate. Britain was not invaded. I was not bombed or evacuated nor was anyone close to me killed or injured. Because both my parents had no siblings, the only member of our immediate family who was in real danger was my father and because the Navy was his 'job', it probably had less impact on us than others. When I learnt later of the horrors that some had to endure, I realised how lucky I had been. Even so, I still feel a surge of pride when I hear recordings of Winston Churchill's speech which ends with the words "this was their finest hour". In my small way I was there.

Peter Poland, a WHHS member, joined the Royal Navy as a Cadet, in January, 1946. As a Lieutenant, he served 2 1/4 years with the Royal Australian Navy returning to England in 1957 married to a 6th generation Australian. In 1968, he commanded the frigate *HMS Zest* which visited Sydney. Leaving the Royal Navy in 1971 he and his family migrated to Australia where he worked in the retail industry until 1987.

Robin Hutcheon

The war years brought marine engineer Robert Hutcheon and his family to Sydney, where his Shanghai-born son Robin completed his education and took the first steps in a 40-year career in journalism. Based in Hong Kong from 1953 with the China Mail and then the South China Morning Post, Robin met and married fellow journalist Beatrice Greaves (Bea), became a father of three, rose to the position of Editor-in-Chief and made time to publish a number of books.

Retiring from the world of newsprint in 1986, Robin was drawn back to Sydney's eastern suburbs, where he has continued to write and publish and participate in the life of the local community.

Robin offers this personal account of Sydney under attack in 1942.

Mr Lawson's Vaucluse Bomb Spotters

In 1942 I was a 14-year old schoolboy, recently arrived from China where I was born. My brothers and I attended Scots College and in the early months of 1942 we joined other local schoolboys in a locally based team of bomb spotters, under the leadership of "Mr Lawson". We had regular meetings at his home, where we were taught to identify Japanese war planes and how to plot the fall of bombs and shells in Sydney Harbour.

Other members of the Vaucluse Bomb Spotters included boys from Scots and Sydney Grammar including Neville Downs, “Winky” Harris, Terry McCullough, and my elder brother Ian.



Main School Block, Scots College c1930s. Image: Woollahra Libraries: PF004537.

We had two concrete pill boxes situated at either end of Nielsen Park beach from which we had basic plotting equipment, and were issued with steel helmets and gas masks and had I/D passes. But as we lived in Balfour Road, Rose Bay, we had to rely on public transport or our bicycles to get us to Nielsen Park.

Responding to a harbour attack on pushbike, 31 May 1942

On the night the midget submarines entered Sydney Harbour, we were alerted and set off for Nielsen Park, but got only as far as Kambala Girls' School when the 'All clear' sounded. My elder brother Ian had just turned off the gas for a worried resident nearby. When 'All clear' sounded he returned and turned the gas on again. We then rode home, having failed to reach our destination in time.

Bomb spotting closer to home, 8 June 1942

Living in Balfour Road we were prepared for our second call out, as one of the shells fired by the Japanese submarine off Bondi Beach flew over our roof and landed at the junction of Plumer Road and Balfour Road, causing only superficial damage to a block of flats.

Another shell landed above our home in Balfour Lane.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

012590

Examining the aftermath in daylight, Plumer Road, Rose Bay, 8 June 1942. Image: Australian War Memorial No: 012590.

Having no bombs to spot or shells to track, our VBS had no other battle honours.

My father, Robert Rae Hutcheon, was a local ARP warden, but apart from the shelling had no further call-out.

A footnote:

The above mentioned “Winky” Harris became a noted gynaecologist and was on study leave in London in 1958 when my wife gave birth to my eldest son, Stephen. We were then visiting family and friends and staying in Croydon. Dr Harris was on duty the night Bea, my wife, gave birth at the appropriately named Mayday hospital. Despite difficulties, my son was safely delivered and my wife survived. I was grateful for the wartime contact which helped my wife and I through this difficult time.



Robin and his wife Bea after their firstborn's christening, London 1958. Image: Hutcheon Family photographs.



Robin, Bea and eldest child Stephen in Hong Kong, c1960. Image: Hutcheon Family photographs.

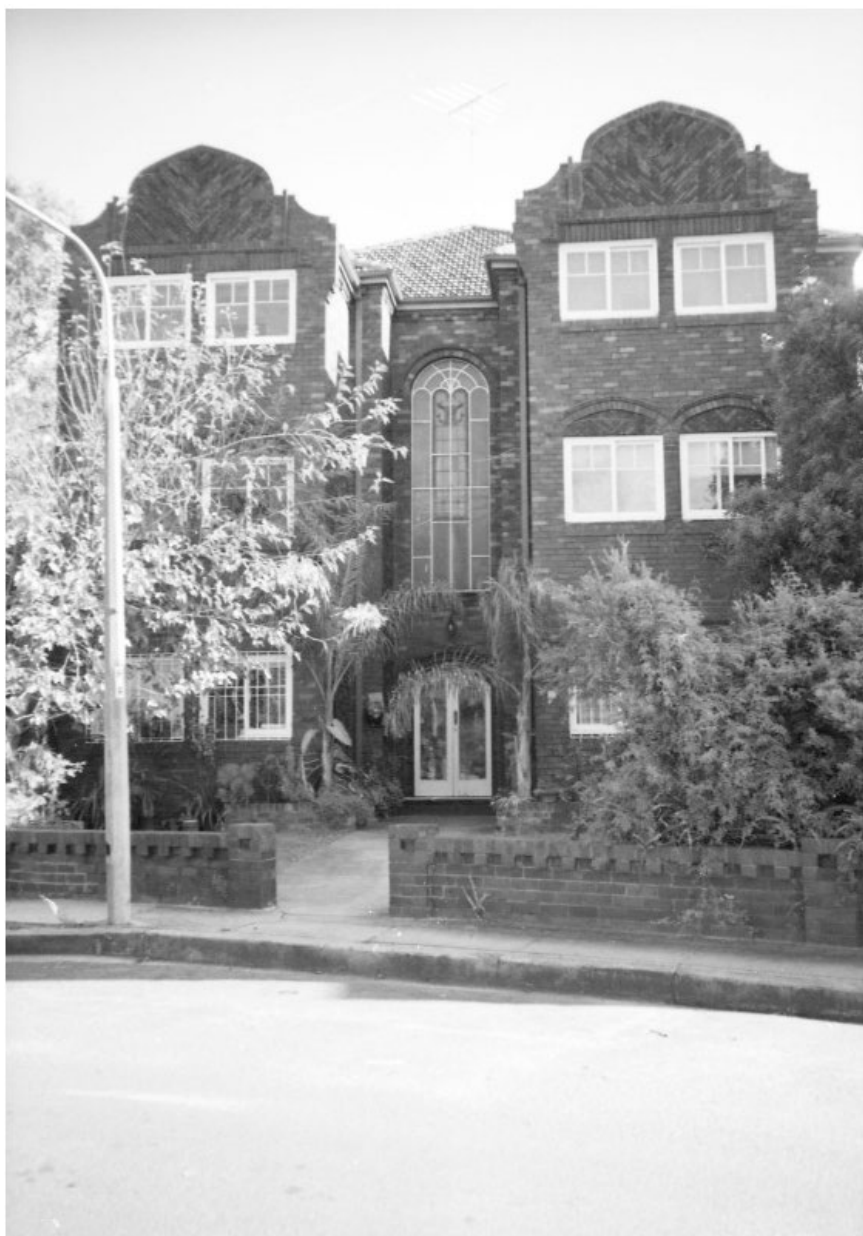
World War 2 Gallery



Small St, Woollahra.



National Emergency Services drill in September, 1940.



26 Manion Avenue, Rose Bay, 1992.



Released Eight Division prisoners-of-war coming ashore by barge from the Catalinas at Rose Bay, 16 September 1945.



Royal Motor Yacht Club motor cruisers in Sydney Harbour during World War 2.



National Emergency Services drill in September, 1940.



National Emergency Service vehicle with three female volunteers during World War 2.



Second World War exercises at Rose Bay, 27 September 1940.



Rose Bay, NSW. Crash Launch RAAF 08-97 at its mooring.



Magazine for #2 gun, Signal Hill, Watsons Bay, 1993.



HMAS Perth gun turret, 1941.



A group of civilians leaving the Short Sunderland aircraft.



Frank McGovern OAM, c1940.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

116746

Members of 8th Division, Ex-Prisoners of War of the Japanese at Changi, arrived at Rose Bay Flying Boat Base by Catalina Aircraft.



Signal Station and staircase leading down to fortifications in Signal Hill, 2018.



Laings Point, Watsons Bay, World War 2 defences, 1958.



Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser, GCB, KBE, RN, inspects men of the 2nd Minesweeping Flotilla in Watsons Bay, Sydney, 20 November 1944.



Volunteers with the Woollahra branch of the National Emergency Services distribute sand bags from the top of a vehicle.



Alderman Reginald Thornton.



First meeting of the Australian War Cabinet, 27 September 1939.



Alderman Lyle Moore c1941, Woollahra's Chief Warden.



Alderman Keith Manion, Mayor of Woollahra June 1942.



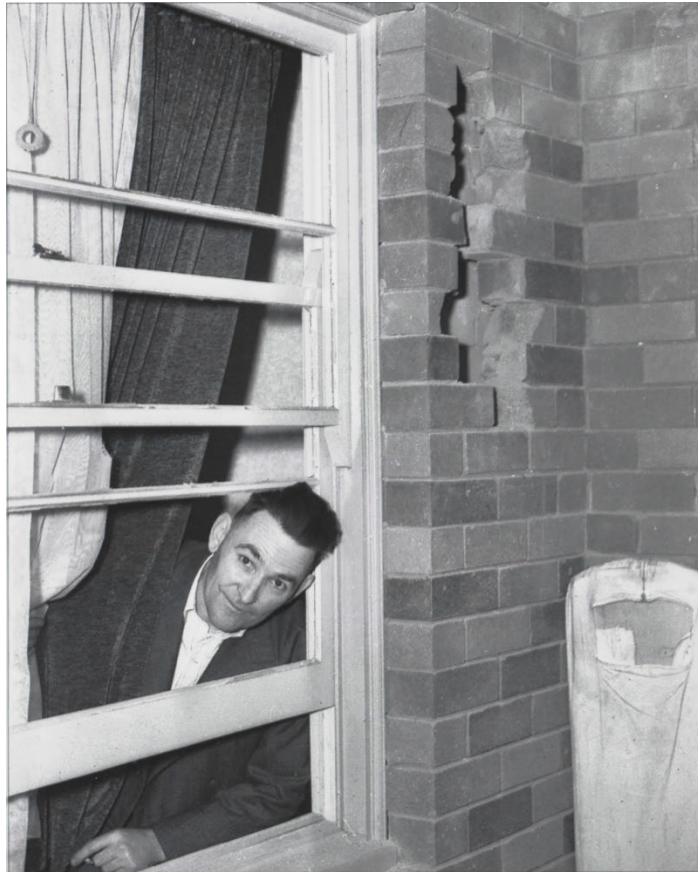
A meeting of Woollahra Council in the upstairs Chambers, 90 Ocean Street, late 1930s.



The Ocean Street building (1975) which housed the Woollahra administration until 1947.



Badly damaged rear of house at 4 Bradley Avenue, Bellevue Hill.



Shell damage in the southern wall of 26 Manion Avenue.



Badly damaged rear of house at 4 Bradley Avenue, Bellevue Hill.



Watsons Bay wharf during World War II.

Watsons Bay wharf during World War 2.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

012422

HMAS Kuttabul after the explosion, 1942.



Naval ship moored at Watsons Bay wharf during World War 2.



Ambulances pictured in New South Head Road, Rose Bay.



Elevated view of a group of civilians on the wharf at the flying boat based at Rose Bay, waiting to be ferried out to the Short Sunderland aircraft.



1st Lieutenant George Leo Cantello, Commanding Officer of the 41st Pursuit Squadron.

Researching Australian War Records

The following is a selection of helpful online resources for researching Australian military service in World War 2. Many of the sites also provide information on other conflicts.

Australian War Memorial

The [Australian War Memorial](#) maintains an extensive archive as well as a museum and shrine. The memorial's website provides guidance on using the extensive collections.

[Australian War Memorial - understanding the memorial's collections](#)

[Australian War Memorial - researching a person](#)

[Australian War Memorial - researching an event](#)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The [Commonwealth War Graves Commission](#) databases record the details and commemoration location of every casualty from the First and Second World Wars for which the Commission is responsible.

[Commonwealth War Graves - Find Records](#)

Department of Veterans' Affairs

The [Department of Veterans' Affairs](#) maintains nominal rolls and service records, as well as providing information about war graves and memorials.

[Department of Veterans' Affairs - Records and military history](#)

National Archives of Australia

The [National Archives of Australia](#) holds Army, Navy and Air Force service records. This includes service records for World War 1 and World War 2.

[The National Archives of Australia - Defence and war service records](#)

[Army - World War 2](#)

TROVE

The National Library of Australia's TROVE enables users to search for books, journals, photographs, digitised newspapers and other material held by a range of Australian libraries, archives and cultural institutions.

[TROVE](#)

WW2 Red Cross Missing Wounded and Prisoner of War Enquiry Cards

[University of Melbourne Archives](#) has digitised the Red Cross WW2 Missing Wounded and Prisoner of War Enquiry Cards which can be viewed on the [Digitised Items Catalogue](#). The collection reference number is: 2016.0049.

The AIF Project (World War 1)

The AIF database is drawn from a range of official sources, including personal files on the National Archives website, and Embarkation and Nominal Rolls on the Australian War Memorial website. A number of Australians served in both World War 1 and World War 2.

[The AIF Project - Search](#)