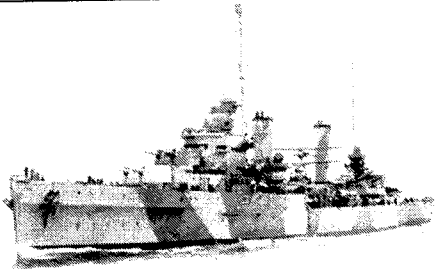

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SERVICE HISTORIES of ROYAL NAVY WARSHIPS in WORLD WAR 2
by Lt Cdr Geoffrey B Mason RN (Rtd)
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**HMAS SYDNEY -
Leander/Perth-class Light
Cruiser**

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above left and below - HMAS Sydney
(NP/Bruce Constable/Mark Teadham, click photographs for enlargements)

H. M. A. S. SYDNEY

Modified LEANDER" Class cruiser ordered under the 1932 Estimates from Swan Hunter at Newcastle upon Tyne on 10th February 1933 and laid down on 8th July that year. Although launched as HMS PHAETON on 9th October 1934 as PHAETON this was changed in 1935 to SYDNEY after the decision to transfer her to the Royal Australian Navy. Build was completed on 24th September 1935 and she commissioned that day for RAN service.

Battle Honours

1940	"EMDEN" 1914	CALABRIA
MEDITERRANEAN 1940	CALABRIA 1940	
52 *	"KORMORAN" 1941	KOREA 1951-

(Note: Awarded after WW2)

Heraldic Data

None is available in the Admiralty List



Details of War Service

1939

September Deployed with RAN Western Force based at Fremantle for trade defence in Indian Ocean.

October Deployed on patrol duty off NW Australia for interception of



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commerce raiders.
to
November

December Escorted troop convoy carrying 2nd Australian Imperial Force on
passage to the Middle East
until relieved by HM Australian Cruiser ADELAIDE on 12/12/39.
Passage to Sydney for routine docking.
15th Under refit in Sydney.

1940

January Resumed operational duty on completion.
11th Escorted military convoy US2 with HM Australian Cruiser
AUSTRALIA from
to Jervis Bay arriving on 12/1/40.

February
6th Relieved HMAS AUSTRALIA as Western Force cruiser for Trade
Defence duty off
Western Australia.

March Trade defence and interception duty in continuation.

April
1st Transferred to East Indies Station.
19th Deployed with HM Australian Cruiser ADELAIDE and HM
Battleship RAMILLIES for
Trade defence and convoy escort duty.
28th Detached to join military convoy US3 for Indian Ocean passage.

May
1st Detached from US3 to take passage to Singapore to refuel.
8th Arrived at Colombo and Joined Squadron.
12th Sailed to rejoin US3 but ordered to return to Colombo prior for
transfer to 7th Cruiser Squadron
in Mediterranean Fleet.
18th Passage to Aden.
22nd Joined HM Cruiser GLOUCESTER and HM Aircraft Carrier
EAGLE for passage through
Red Sea.
26th Joined Squadron at Alexandria.

June Carried out exercises and worked-up with HM Cruisers
GLOUCESTER, ORION, NEPTUNE
and LIVERPOOL of 7th Cruiser Squadron..
(Note: CinC Mediterranean had arranged extensive programmes of
exercises in anticipation of
the entry of Italy into hostilities.)
12th Deployed for an offensive sweep and reconnaissance off North
African coast and in Aegean Sea.
21st Bombarded Bardia with French battleship LORRAINE, HMS
NEPTUNE, HMS ORION and
HM Destroyers DAINTY, DECOY, HASTY and STUART (RAN).
28th Deployed with Squadron and joined by HM Cruisers CALEDON
and CALCUTTA for the
cover of convoys in Aegean Sea.
Engaged Italian destroyers attempting to attack a convoy and sank
Italian ESPERO.
(For details see ENGAGE THE ENEMY MORE CLOSELY by



Corelli Barnett, THE BATTLE
FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN by D. Macintyre and Naval Staff
History (HMSO - 2002).

July

- 6th Deployed to covered Aegean convoys.
- 7th Transferred to provide cover passage of Convoys MS1 and MF1 from Malta with ships of Squadron and HM Australian Destroyer STUART.
- 8th Under Italian air attacks.
- 9th Took part in Battle of Calabria during which Italian Fleet disengaged.
(For details see above references).
- 18th Carried out Anti- submarine sweep and shipping search with HM Destroyers ILEX, HERO and HASTY in Gulf of Athens.
- 19th In action with HM Destroyers HYPERION and HAVOCK against 2 Italian cruisers on passage between Tripoli and Leros. Cruiser BARTOLOMEO COLLEONI was sunk by the destroyers. Engaged and hit BANDE NERE which then withdrew. Return fire damaged one funnel slightly. (For details see above references).
- 27th Joined HMS NEPTUNE to meet HM Battleships MALAYA, WARSPITE, RAMILLIES and H M Aircraft Carrier EAGLE. Came under air attack.
- 28th Intercepted and sank Greek tanker ERMIONE.

August

- 28th Deployed with 7th Cruiser Squadron in eastern Mediterranean. Covered Fleet units during bombardments of seaplane base in Gulf of Bomba and Bardia harbour.
- 30th Part of Force "F" for cover of passage of HM Battleship VALIANT, HM Aircraft Carrier ILLUSTRIOUS, HM Cruisers CALCUTTA and COVENTRY from Gibraltar to join Fleet at Alexandria and also passage of convoy MB to Malta (Operation HATS).

September

- 1st Remained with convoy MB when it was threatened by Italian major warships, which withdrew when Fleet units responded.
(For details see above references).
- 3rd Adopted disguise of Italian cruiser and bombarded airfield at Scarpanto with HMS ORION, HM Destroyer DECOY and HM Destroyer ILEX. In action with E-Boats sinking one and damaging another.
- 6th Routine docking at Alexandria.
- 24th Patrolled off Cyprus and covered HM Netlayer PROTECTOR near Beirut.
- 28th Deployed with Fleet units to cover passage of HMS GLOUCESTER and HMS LIVERPOOL taking troops to Malta
- 30th Patrolled off Malta.

October

- 1st Detached with HMS ORION to bombard airfield at Stampalia in



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Dodecanese.
 9th Deployed with Fleet to cover passage of Malta convoy MB6.
 25th Carried out Aegean sweep including Dardanelles area and supported convoys with HMS ORION, H M Destroyer JERVIS and HM Destroyer JUNO.
 28th Patrolled with HMS GLOUCESTER, HMS ORION and HM Cruiser YORK off Crete during Italian invasion of Greece.
 (For details of naval operations in Greece and Crete see ENGAGE THE ENEMY MORE CLOSELY by Corelli Barnett and Naval Staff History).

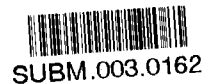
November
 5th Embarked troops and stores for passage to Suda Bay with HMS AJAX.
 7th Joined Fleet to cover Malta convoy MW6 and transfer of HM Battleship BAHRAM.
 HM Cruiser BERWICK, HM Cruiser GLASGOW and three Fleet destroyers of Force "F" from Gibraltar to join Fleet (Operation COAT).
 11th Detached with HMS AJAX, HMS NUBIAN and HMS ESKIMO to join HMS AJAX in offensive sweep in Adriatic and a bombardment of Valona.
 12th Night attack on Italian convoy off Brindisi sinking four ships and damaging an escort.
 Rejoined Fleet west of Crete.
 15th Embarked troops and made fast passage to Pireaus at 30 knots with HM Cruisers BERWICK, HMS GLASGOW and HMS YORK.
 25th Covered transit of HM Battleship RAMILLIES, HMS BERWICK and HMS NEWCASTLE to western Mediterranean and the transit of HM Cruisers MANCHESTER and SOUTHAMPTON with 3 Fleet destroyers in Force "F" from Gibraltar to join Fleet.
 (Operation COLLAR).
 26th Covered HMS EAGLE during air strike on Tripoli.

December
 Based at Suda Bay for convoy defence and interception of Italian convoys.
 17th Offensive sweep in Adriatic and covered Convoy MW2 with Fleet units.
 (Operations MC2 and MC3).
 20th Detached from covering duty and returned to Suda Bay.
 23rd Under refit in Malta (Mileage steamed in 1940 - 60,000).
 30th Relieved by HM Australian Cruiser PERTH in 7th Cruiser Squadron and released from Mediterranean Fleet for return to RAN.

1941.

January
 8th Passage to Alexandria escorted by HMAS STUART.
 12th Sailed from Suez for Sydney.
 24th Diverted at Seychelles to search for the German commerce raiders ATLANTIS and PINGUIN reported NW of islands.

February
 Resumed passage to Sydney



March Under refit in Sydney.

April On completion deployed for Convoy escort in Australian waters.
 14th Embarked delegation for ABDA conference and took passage to
 Singapore.
 18th Passage from Singapore to Australia.

May Escorted troop convoy from Fremantle to Sunda Strait and
 returned with single
 empty ship.

June Escorted convoy from Sydney to Fremantle.

July Deployed on escort of convoys between New Zealand and
 Australia.

August Escorted convoy from Sydney to Auckland and returned to Sydney
 via Suva.

September
 4th Escorted Convoy US12A from Australia to Colombo and returned
 independently.
 22nd Escorted Convoy US12B from Melbourne to Sunda Strait.
 Returned independently.

October Local convoy defence in continuation.

November
 11th Escorted troopship ZEALANDIA from Fremantle on passage to
 Sunda Strait.
 17th After relief by HM Cruiser DURBAN returned independently.
 18th Diverted to search for German raider KORMORAN.
 19th Intercepted KORMORAN 300 miles off western Australian and
 closed when identity given was
 known to be incorrect.
 Soon after first exchange of fire shells from the enemy ship hit
 Bridge structure and damaged
 the main armament fire-control director.
 Fires were started and although guns had to be used in Local
 Control obtained several hits on
 KORMORAN.
 The raider fired two torpedoes, one of which hit forward.
 SYDNEY was disabled and unable
 to move or to fight effectively.
 Fires became uncontrollable.
 Owing to the extent of damage inflicted by SYDNEY the enemy
 ship was abandoned after
 scuttling charges had been set.
 The resultant explosions caused extensive fires that soon reached
 magazines.
 KORMORAN then disintegrated.
 315 survivors were later rescued and taken to Australia where they
 became POW.
 HMAS SYDNEY was last seen ablaze and it is assumed she sank
 with no survivors.
 Some wrecked life rafts were found a few days later. (Casualty
 List - note on casualties)

further formatting is needed, but the data is being made available without delay