

Basic Detail Report



00047905

Title

RAN officer's uniform button

Date

1911 - 2000

Medium

Brass

Dimensions

Overall: 7 g, 25 mm

Name

Button

History

This collection of uniform buttons includes buttons that belonged to RAN uniforms worn by members of the Harrington family; they were donated by Rear Admiral Simon Harrington, who retired from the Navy in 2002 after nearly 40 years service. His sea postings included command of the frigates CANBERRA and ADELAIDE; he also commanded the Naval College at Jervis Bay. Promoted to Rear Admiral in 1997, he became Support Commander (Navy). As such he was the naval member ex officio of the Council of the Australian National Maritime Museum until 1 March 1999. Rear Admiral Harrington's final posting was as Defence Attaché in Washington. In 2003 he was appointed to the Repatriation Commission in Veterans' Affairs for 3½ years. In November 2007 he was appointed to the Council of the Australian War Memorial. RAdm Simon Harrington's father was Sir Wilfred Hastings ('Arch') Harrington (1906-1965) who was also a RAN Admiral. The Queensland industrialist W. F. Harrington - a partner in the Maryborough-based company John Walker & Co. Ltd. - was 'Arch' Harrington's grandfather. 'Arch' Harrington's father was Hubert Harrington, a Maryborough solicitor. Charles Harrington - a RAN surgeon commander- was Arch's brother; he was posted MIA (presumed dead) while serving in HMAS PARRAMATTA, which sank after being torpedoed by a German submarine off Tobruk in November 1941. In 1920 'Arch' entered the Royal Australian Naval College, Jervis Bay, where he excelled scholastically. In 1924 he went to sea as a midshipman in H.M.A. Cruisers, BRISBANE and ADELAIDE. Later that year Harrington was sent to Britain for training with the Royal Navy; he joined the Mediterranean Fleet, serving in the battleship, H.M.S. MALAYA. Back in Australia in 1928, he was promoted lieutenant and subsequently served in R.A.N. ships until 1933 when he returned to Britain on appointment to the cruiser, H.M.S. CORNWALL, which was deployed to the China Station for three years. Home again in 1936, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-commander and then served as executive officer of H.M.A.S. SWAN. On 30 August 1939 Harrington took command of the sloop, H.M.A.S. YARRA. In August 1940. YARRA sailed for Aden and deployed in the Red Sea Force. In the campaign against Iraq (in May 1941) YARRA supported troops occupying the west bank of the Shatt al

Arab. When the British moved against Persia on 25 August, YARRA sailed down the Shatt al Arab from Basra to Khorramshahr. That morning she sank the sloop, BABR, captured two gunboats in the Karun River, and landed troops. On 29th August at Bandar Abbas she saved the burning Italian ship, HILDA, and took her in tow. In November-December 1941 YARRA was back in the Mediterranean, escorting convoys supplying Tobruk. By January 1942 she was in the Far East. On 5 February, near Singapore, the ship suffered superficial damage when the Japanese made an air-raid on the convoy she was protecting. Harrington was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for his command of the YARRA. He relinquished his command on 10 February 1942 and was transferred to H.M.A.S. AUSTRALIA in March as executive officer. From July 1944 he commanded the destroyer, H.M.A.S. QUIBERON, chiefly in operations in Netherlands East Indies waters. Harrington was promoted captain in 1947 while attached to the Department of Defence, Melbourne. His command of the destroyer, H.M.A.S. WARRAMUNGA, from April 1948 to January 1950 included a three-month deployment to Japanese waters. He attended the Imperial Defence College, London, in 1952 and spent the next two years in the Admiralty's Naval Equipment Department at Bath. Home again, he commanded the aircraft-carrier, H.M.A.S. SYDNEY, from 1955 and was appointed C.B.E. in 1957. As rear admiral (March 1957), Harrington was flag officer in charge, East Australia Area, in 1957-58, second naval member of the Naval Board (responsible for personnel) in 1958-59, and flag officer commanding H.M. Australian Fleet from 1959. On 24 February 1958 he was promoted vice admiral and succeeded Sir Henry Burrell as Chief of Naval Staff (C.N.S.) in Canberra. Harrington was elevated to K.B.E. in 1963 and retired on 24 February 1965. Sir Wilfred Harrington died on 17 December 1965 in Canberra Community Hospital. According to his wish, he was buried at sea off Port Jackson.