

Basic Detail Report



ANMS0068[023]

Title

American four masted barque

Date

c 1910

Medium

Black and white photographic print on paper

Dimensions

Overall: 69 × 103 mm

Name

Photograph

History

George Leatham Roberts joined HMAS TINGIRA at the age of 15 with the rank of Boy Sailor 2nd class. He served in the Royal Australian Navy from 12 September 1914 to 30 September 1915 when he was invalided out. Tragically, Roberts drowned a month later in the harbour near his home in Mosman. The Australian National Maritime Museum holds in its collection a range of material relating to Roberts and his time in TINGIRA, including personal effects, clothing, and nautical equipment. TINGIRA (from an Aboriginal word for 'open sea') was originally the clipper ship SOBRAON, built by Alexander Hall of Aberdeen and launched in 1866. In 1891 the NSW Government purchased SOBRAON to replace the VERNON - a floating reformatory for boys. SOBRAON underwent a series of modifications and became an Industrial School Ship, or Nautical School Ship, for underprivileged boys. In 1911 the New South Wales Government decided to dispose of the nautical type of reform in favour of a land based system. In 1911, the SOBRAON was purchased by the Commonwealth Government of Australia, and on 25 April 1912 TINGIRA was commissioned as the first naval training ship in the Royal Australian Navy. It became the training ship to thousands of young boys who chose the Navy as a career under the Department of the Navy's boy enlistment scheme. The first intake of boys took place between 1 and 28 June 1912, and at the date of TINGIRA's decommissioning in 1927, some 3,168 young boys underwent their initial training on board. In 1929, TINGIRA was bought by W M Ford, a prominent boat builder and floated outside his boatshed in Berry's Bay. Ford died in 1935 and in 1936, Major Friere and Mrs Ankin negotiated to purchase TINGIRA for the sum of £2,600. A company was formed to convert the ship into a floating museum, but because of financial difficulties this development failed. TINGIRA was purchased by Karlo Selvinen who finally broke her up in Berry's Bay in 1942. [Source: Naval Historical Society of Australia; www.navyhistory.org.au]