

Basic Detail Report



00020013

Title

Warship launch at Mort's Dock, Balmain

Date

1941

Primary Maker

Samuel J Hood Studio

Medium

Emulsion on nitrate film.

Name

Nitrate negative

History

HMAS WARRNAMBOOL was part of the Commonwealth Government's wartime shipbuilding programme. Built and launched at Mort's Dock, Sydney, it was commissioned in the RAN at Sydney on 23 September 1941 and put under the command of Lieutenant Eric J Barron RANR(S). WARRNAMBOOL became engaged in patrols in Bass Strait before proceeding to northern Australian waters and was in Darwin when the first Japanese air raid occurred on 19 February 1942. It was responsible for rescuing survivors of the US Army transport ship DON ISIDRO and came under fire from Japanese bombers itself. The remainder of 1942 saw WARRNAMBOOL stationed in northern waters assisting in troop transport, evacuations and rescue missions. In September, WARRANAMBOOL was transferred to an anti-submarine and convoy protection role on Australia's east coast. In 1945, the vessel returned to Darwin where she was based for the remainder of 1945 and was present at the Japanese surrender at Koepang, Timor, on 11 September 1945. After the war, WARRNAMBOOL undertook mine clearance work in Solomons and New Guinea waters, followed by similar operations in the Great Barrier Reef area. On 13 September 1947, the vessel struck a mine resulting in the death of four crew. While an attempt was initially made to tow WARRNAMBOOL clear of the minefield, it was unsuccessful and the vessel eventually sank. It remains in place today as later salvage operations were considered ill advised due to the condition of the ship being submerged for so long.