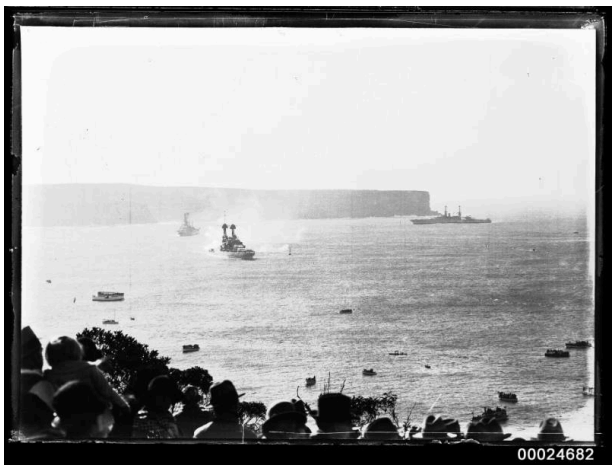
Basic Detail Report



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Title
Three US warships in Sydney Harbour

Date
c 1925

Primary Maker
Samuel J Hood Studio

Medium
Emulsion on glass

Name
Glass plate negative

History
Seventeen years after the visit of the Great White Fleet to Australia in 1908, the United States Navy's Pacific Fleet undertook a goodwill tour to Australia and New Zealand. While the epic 1908 tour saw 23 US Navy vessels enter the ports of Sydney, Melbourne and Albany, the 1925 tour saw a record breaking total of 56 - the largest single foreign naval fleet ever received in Australia. After undertaking annual manoeuvres off Hawaii, the Pacific Fleet proceeded to Australia on 1 July, and divided its vessels and 25,000 officers and crew into two groups. On 23 July, 43 of the vessels arrived to wind and rain at Port Phillip, Melbourne, and 13 arrived to sunshine and blue-skies at Sydney Harbour. As the nation’s capital at the time, Melbourne’s Port Phillip hosted the largest contingent including the battleships US Ships SEATTLE (the flagship of the Pacific Fleet), PENNSYLVANNIA, OKLAHOMA, and NEVADA; the light cruisers TRENTO, RICHMOND, MARBLE HEAD and MEMPHIS; LUNDLOW and BURNS of the mine division; destroyers OMAHA, MELVILLE, DECATUR, SOMMERS, STODDERT, FARQUHAR, THOMPSON, KENNEDY, PAUL HAMILTON, McDERMONT, SINCLAIR, MOODY, PERCIVAL, J F BURNES, ALTAIRS, LITFIELD, YARBOROUGH, SLOAT, WOOD, SHIRK, KIDDER, MERVINE, CHASE, ROBERT SMITH, MULLANY, MacDONOUGH, FARENHOLT, SUMMER, MARCUS, SELFRIDGE, MELVIA; and the repair ship MEDUSA. With its deep harbour, Sydney hosted eight of the fleet's largest ships, including the battleships US Ships CALIFORNIA, COLORADO, TENNESSEE, MARYLAND, WEST VIRGINIA, NEW MEXICO, MISSISSIPPI and IDAHO, the destroyer ARCTIC, the supply ship BRIDGE, hospital ship RELIEF, and three oil tankers. The battleship, WEST VIRGINIA acted as the radio control vessel for the navy tour. Just before the Pacific Fleet left Honolulu, Admiral Robert E Coontz (who visited Australia in 1908 as executive officer aboard USS NEBRASKA in the Great White Fleet) made a speech that was relayed to local listeners by stations 2FC & 2BL in Sydney. After the voyage to Sydney it made several other broadcasts directed to Australia. On 1 August, a small contingent of vessels left Melbourne to visit Hobart, and five days later the remaining vessels visited the ports of New Zealand. Four sections of the fleet entered four different NZ ports simultaneously - with 14 destroyers at Lyttelton and 15

at Dunedin while eight battleships visited Auckland and nine arrived at Wellington. The visit of the United States Pacific Fleet renewed the Australian-American alliance established by the Great White Fleet visit in 1908.