

# Basic Detail Report

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**Title**

View of HMAS AUSTRALIA (II) as flagship for the Anniversary Regatta on 26 January 1948

**Date**

1948

**Primary Maker**

Samuel J Hood Studio

**Medium**

Emulsion on acetate film

**Name**

Negative

**History**

The Anniversary Regatta was first held in 1837 after a group of citizens from Sydney decided to celebrate the landing of the First Fleet on 26 January 1788. The regatta consisted of rowing and sailing races and always had a flagship, usually a merchant ship or passenger liner - in this case, HMAS AUSTRALIA (II). This social and sporting event was very popular with the public who took picnic refreshments to the foreshore and attended balls and recitals in the evening. HMAS AUSTRALIA (II) was a County Class heavy cruiser built by John Brown & Co Ltd of Clydebank, Scotland and launched in March 1927. AUSTRALIA was commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy on 24 April 1928, and four months later departed Portsmouth arriving in Sydney on 23 October. The vessel spent six years with the Australia Station, and in December 1934 sailed for England. AUSTRALIA served with the British forces until July 1936, and later returned to Australia. The ship remained in Australian waters, with the exception of cruises to New Zealand and New Guinea between April and July 1937. On 24 April 1938, AUSTRALIA was paid off into Reserve, but was recommissioned in August 1939. During World War II, the ship's complement increased from 679 to 848, and AUSTRALIA conducted operations in the Indian and South Atlantic Oceans acting as a convoy escort and protecting shipping routes. The ship also served in the Battle of the Coral Sea, the Guadalcanal invasion, the Battle of Leyte Gulf and allied landings at Lingayen Gulf. On 21 October 1944 AUSTRALIA was damaged when a Japanese fighter plane collided with the ship, killing the commanding officer Captain E F V Dechaineux and several others. Whether or not it was a kamikaze attack has been the subject of much speculation. After attacks in January 1945, AUSTRALIA underwent a major refit in the UK and stayed there for the remainder of the war. AUSTRALIA returned to Sydney on 16 February 1946. The cruiser was mainly used as a training ship, and was eventually sold for scrap in January 1955 and broken up at Barrow-in-Furness, UK in 1956.