

Basic Detail Report



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Title

Launching of WARREGO II at Cockatoo Island dockyard

Date

10 February 1940

Primary Maker

Samuel J Hood Studio

Medium

Emulsion on nitrate film.

Name

Nitrate negative

History

From the Sydney Morning Herald, 12 February 1940: "ESCORT SHIP LAUNCHED. H.M.A.S. WARREGO. Two New Keels Laid. H.M.A.S. Warrego, an escort ship, was launched by Mrs. Menzies, wife of the Prime Minister, at Cockatoo Island on Saturday, and the keels to two other naval vessels were laid by Mr Menzies and the Minister for the Navy, Sir Frederick Stewart. Ferry sirens shrieked, cheers rang out, and the Northern Suburbs band struck up "Advance Australia Fair" when the Warrego, flying the Australian flag and the white ensign, slipped gracefully into the water. Applause greeted Mrs Menzies when she broke a bottle of Australian champagne over the vessel and said, "I name this ship Warrego. I congratulate the workmen who have so skilfully and faithfully constructed her. May she prove a valuable addition to the Royal Australian Navy and may God's protecting care be over all who voyage in her." The launching ceremony was preceded by a brief service, in which prayers were offered for those who serve at sea and a dedicatory hymn was sung. At a later function on board the showboat Kalang the chairman of directors of Cockatoo Docks and Engineering Co Pty Ltd, Mr G. F. Davis, proposed a toast in honour of H.M.A.S. Warrego coupled with the name of Mrs Menzies. MRS MENZIES'S HOPE Mrs. Menzies, replying, said: "I hope that no word or act of ours will prolong this dreadful war, and that nothing we can do or think will disturb the peace of the world in the years to come." Mr. Menzies, in proposing "The Builders" (Cockatoo Docks and Engineering Co.), congratulated all those who had been associated with the building of the Warrego. The managing director of the company, Mr Norman Fraser, who acknowledged the toast, said that the company, working day and night, had managed to keep up to its naval programme. Sir Frederick Stewart, in proposing "The Keels Newly Laid" said all earnestly hoped that, long before the keels had been converted into ships, the need for the new vessels for offensive purposes would have passed. Sir Thomas Gordon, Australian representative of the British Ministry of Shipping, expressed the hope that the time was not far distant when the keels of many big merchant ships would be laid in Australia." HMAS WARREGO was a Grimsby class sloop of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). Laid down at Cockatoo Island Dockyard in Sydney on 15

May 1939, WARREGO (the second RAN ship to carry the name) was launched on 10 February 1940 by Mrs Pattie Menzies, wife of the Prime Minister, and commissioned into the RAN on 22 August 1940. WARREGO was engaged in mine sweeping operations in Australian waters during 1940; and then sailed to Darwin in 1941 for anti-submarine and escort duties. On 19 February 1942 Japanese planes attacked Darwin. WARREGO miraculously avoided damage during the attack. She sailed to Sydney for a refit in May 1942. WARREGO then participated in various anti-submarine patrols and escort convoys from Townsville to New Guinea, Thursday Island to Darwin, and later Onslow to Darwin. After a refit in Brisbane in 1943, she resumed convoy duties as well as survey duties in New Guinea in 1944 and the Philippines in 1945. WARREGO also contributed to the successful Australian troop landing at Borneo in July 1945. After World War II WARREGO conducted surveys off Tasmania and Queensland until 1949 when she was returned to Sydney. WARREGO was recommissioned in June 1951 and undertook various survey operations in Australian waters until she was decommissioned in August 1963. WARREGO was sold two years later, and broken up in 1966 at Rozelle Bay, Sydney. HMAS WARREGO (II) earned the following Battle Honours - Darwin 1942, Pacific 1941-45, New Guinea 1942, Lingayen Gulf 1945, and Borneo 1945.