

Basic Detail Report



00045251

Title

W Ottway & Co Ltd sighting telescope

Date

1944

Primary Maker

W Ottway & Co Ltd

Medium

Leather, bronze, glass

Dimensions

Overall: 720 x 70 mm

Name

Telescope

History

W Ottway & Co was established in 1840 at Orion Works, Ealing in London. By the late 19th century they were well established opticians manufacturing a wide range of different scientific instruments. According to Ottway's catalogue in 1899 they were manufacturers of 'Naval and Military Gunsighting, Telescopes, Theodolites, Tacheometers, Levels, Miners' Dials, Prismatic Compasses, Heliographs, Equatorials, Driving Clocks, Filar Micrometers, Coelostats, Transits, Mirrors, Flats, Naval, Military and Astronomical Telescopes, Prismatic Binoculars, Sextants, Auto Collimators, Star Image Collimators, Focometers, Clinometers, Clinometer Testing Instruments, Spectrometers, Spectroscopes, Ships' Electric Logs, Workshop Microscopes and Optical Measuring Tools, Brass Copper and Nickel Silver Mandrel Drawn Tubes.' The company was one of the first factories to be bombed by German aircraft in the Battle of Britain - on the night of 28 September 1940, causing fire and damage to the property in Ealing. They were also contractors for the Admiralty, War Office, India Office, Crown Agents for the Colonies and were commissioned to provide surveying, measuring, and astronomical equipment to these departments. By 1966 the company had become a subsidiary of Hilger & Watts Ltd and finally closed in 1968. A broad arrow mark above the manufacturer's details on the telescope indicates that it originated from the War Office. The arrow mark was originally used by the Board of Ordnance, which issued ordnance and other stores to the both the Army and the Navy. This government organisation was abolished in 1855 although the arrow mark continued to be used for a time by the War Office, which took over the duties of the Board. HMAS MELBOURNE was a modified Majestic class light fleet aircraft carrier that was launched in 1945 at the Vickers Armstrong Ltd shipyard at Barrow-in-Furness, England. Originally built as HMS MAJESTIC, the carrier underwent extensions and was commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy in 1955. The ship's

duties included deployments in the FESR (Far East Strategic Reserve), ANZUK and SEATO. Sadly MELBOURNE had an unfortunate career and was involved in the collision and sinking of both HMAS VOYAGER in 1964 and USS FRANK E EVANS in 1969. These tragic events resulted in the loss of eighty-two Australian and seventy-four American lives. HMAS MELBOURNE was decommissioned in 1982 and after a period of idleness in Sydney Harbour it was sold for scrap in 1985. The initial plans to break up the ship in 1985 were not entirely completed until 2002.