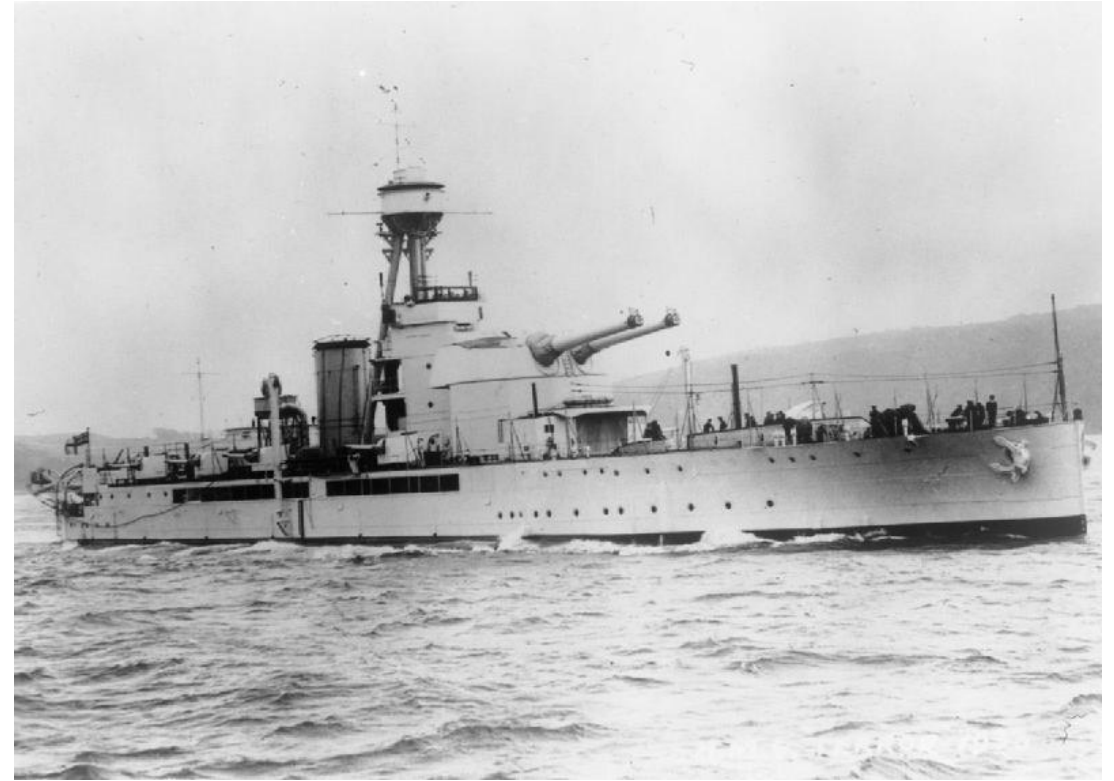


THEY (WHO) SEEK TO ESTABLISH
SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT BASED ON
THE REGIMENTATION OF ALL HUMAN
BEINGS BY A HANDFUL OF INDIVIDUAL
RULERS... CALL THIS A NEW ORDER.
IT IS NOT NEW AND IT IS NOT ORDER.



17 February 1941 - Benghazi

- To assist with the defences, HMS Terror, escorted by Stuart and Vampire, reached Benghazi on the 17th.
- The old monitor was the main defence of the port against air attack but was unable to cope with the rising scale of the German onslaught.



Royal Navy monitor HMS Terror underway in
Plymouth Sound

17 February 1941 - Cairo

- On 17 February Wavell told General Freyberg (portrait) that his New Zealand Division would be the advanced guard of the Imperial Force.
- The troops would disembark at either Piræus or Volos, move up to a defence line in Macedonia, and, when the Australians arrived, withdraw into Force Reserve for movement north to hold the Monastir Gap or possibly the front north-east of Salonika.
- Freyberg afterwards said:
- 'The decision to go to Greece was taken on a level we could not touch....
- I was never in a position to make a well informed and responsible judgment....
- Wavell told me our Government agreed....
- Wavell had established the right to deal direct with the New Zealand Government, without letting me know what was happening....
- We should have cabled them.'



17 February 1941 - Cairo

- Major-General Bernard Freyberg was born in Surrey in 1889 and brought to New Zealand at the age of two. He attended Wellington College, where he was prominent as a natural athlete, a magnificent swimmer.
- In 1912 he had left for North America and did not reappear until 1914, when he became an officer in the Hood battalion of the Royal Naval Division. With that formation he took part in the expedition to Antwerp.
- He won the Distinguished Service Order at Gallipoli for an individual exploit 'as gallant as it was picturesque.' On the night of 25–26 April he had swum ashore to a beach in the Gulf of Xeros and lit oil flares to divert the attention of the Turks from the landings made elsewhere on the peninsula.
- This was typical of his service throughout the war, at the end of which he was 29 years of age and an acting Major-General in command of 29 Division.
- He had won the Victoria Cross for most gallant conduct at Beaucourt in 1916, been awarded two bars to his DSO, been mentioned in despatches six times and wounded nine times.
- In 1916–18 he had commanded a battalion or a brigade in almost all the great battles on the Western Front: on the Somme, at Arras and Bullecourt, at Third Ypres, on Passchendaele, in the German offensive in Flanders in 1918. And on the morning of Armistice Day he had been leading the pursuit.
- He joined the Regular Army, this time as an officer in the Grenadier Guards. He rose to command 1 Battalion, The Manchester Regiment, from 1929 to 1931, to be Assistant Quartermaster-General, Southern Command, 1931–33, and General Staff Officer, 1st Grade, at the War Office, 1933–34. In July 1934 he was promoted major-general, the youngest to hold that rank in the British Army.
- But in spite of this record he was no conventional soldier. As the friend of Sir James Barrie he was familiar with the world of authors and playwrights; he had made two determined attempts to swim the Channel; as a Conservative candidate he had fought an unsuccessful election campaign; and he had written 'A Study in Unit Administration' for the guidance of regimental officers.

18 February 1941 - Singapore

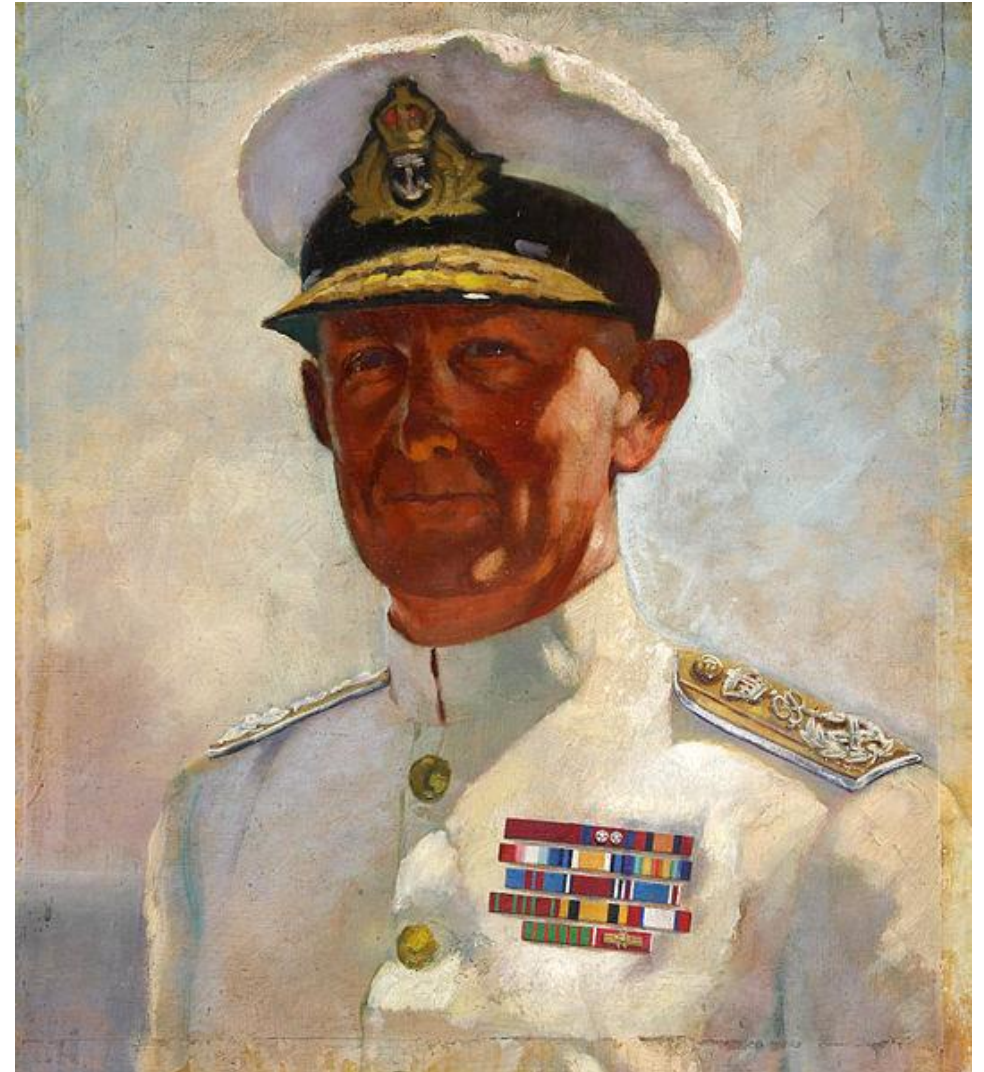
- On 2nd February the 22nd Brigade AIF boarded the 81,000 ton Queen Mary in Sydney.
- She sailed with Convoy US9, Queen Mary, Aquitania, Mauretania, Nieuw Amsterdam, which left Fremantle 12 Feb 1941 escorted by HMAS Canberra.
- Queen Mary detached for Singapore on 16 February escorted by H.M.S. Durban.
- They landed at Singapore on 18 February.
- The other three ships carried AIF and NZ troops for the Middle East. They were to be trans-shipped at Bombay to keep the big ships out of the war zone off the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea



RMS QUEEN MARY in Sydney Harbour, 1941. ANMM Collection 00045046.

18 February 1941 - Libya

- Because the army could not furnish anti-aircraft defences for both ports Cunningham (portrait) refused General Wilson's proposal to make Benghazi the main supply base instead of Tobruk, but agreed to run convoys there provided there was sufficient anti-aircraft protection available while ships were unloading.
- Two ships of the first convoy—all the port could handle at the time—reached Benghazi on the 18th February. But adequate anti-aircraft protection was not available, and the withdrawal of aircraft to reinforce Greece had left only one fighter squadron in western Cyrenaica.
- Enemy dive bombing attacks intensified, and it was decided to sail the two ships back to Tobruk.



18 February 1941

- General Blamey, on being given the outline of the plan to send a force to Greece, on 18 February, suggested that the matter should be referred to the Australian Government.
- He was told that the proposal had already been discussed with Mr Menzies, the Prime Minister of Australia, who had just passed through Cairo on his way to London.
- General Wavell had found him 'very ready to agree to what he suggested.'
- Wavell originally intended that the battle-tried 6th Australian Division, already in Cyrenaica, should be the western-frontier force's infantry division and that the Australian contingent for Greece should comprise the 7th and 9th Divisions. Blamey now insisted, however, that the 6th Division should be one of the two to go to Greece, for he was determined that the contingent for so hazardous an expedition should be formed of his best-trained troops.

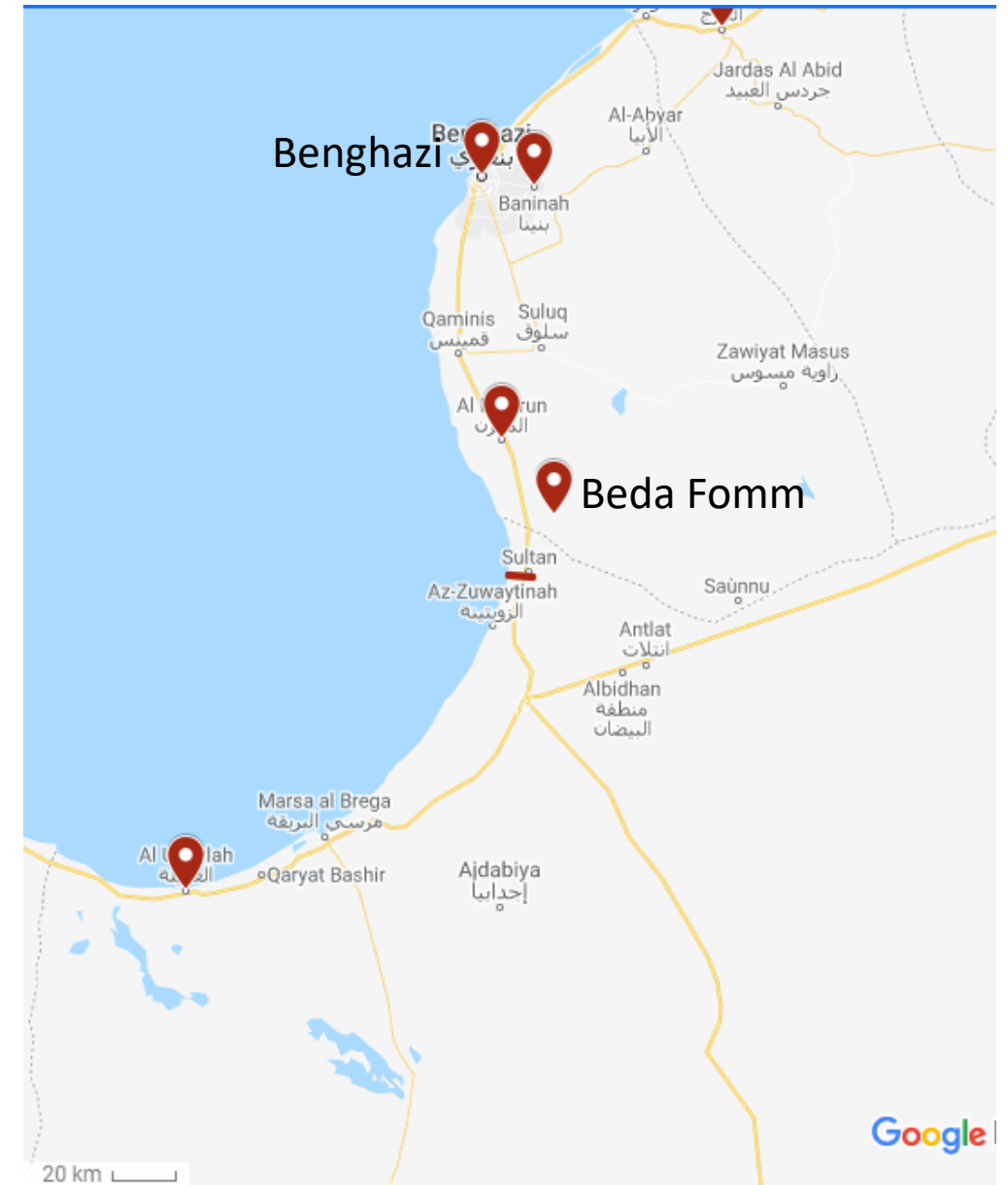


18 February - Libya

- Since the 18th, when the 7th Armoured Division had begun to move back to Egypt, the force in the forward area had been the 17th Australian Brigade group. From it had been subtracted two of its three battalions and to it had been added the King's Dragoon Guards (a newly-arrived armoured car regiment). It included a battery of the 2/3rd Field Regiment, two batteries of light anti-aircraft artillery, two companies of Free French troops and some ancillary troops, and was directly under the command of I Australian Corps.
- The other battalions of the brigade remained in the Barce-Benghazi area under the command of the 6th Australian Division.
- In support was the 3 Armd Bde, of the 2 Armd Div; in addition three units of the 7 Armd Div—3 Hussars, 6 Royal Tanks and 1 RHA—remained in Cyrenaica.

18 February - Libya

- Savige, at the suggestion of Blamey, had advanced the defensive line to Marsa Brega where the front was partly covered by a marsh which was an effective obstacle to tanks.



18 February - Libya

- Every day enemy aircraft (sometimes a single machine and sometimes as many as twenty-five) attacked vehicles and encampments along the road.
- They flew low and were briskly engaged by the gunners and the infantrymen who, in the first seven days, believed that they shot down seventeen between them.
- Some units had now equipped themselves with captured anti-aircraft guns.
- Savige's first problem was to organise his supply line in such a way that it would be reasonably free from air attack.
- With this object he established a collecting point well forward.
- To it corps vehicles delivered rations by night and from it unit vehicles collected their loads and carried them forward also in darkness.
- Before daylight the dumps at the collecting point were camouflaged and all wheel marks removed by a broom-like contraption attached to the rear of a vehicle.

18 February 1941 - Libya

- On 18th February three Hurricanes (No 3 RAAF) attacked a force of approximately twelve Junkers 87 (photo) near Marsa Brega.
- The Stukas dived quickly from 1,000 feet to fifty feet and scattered but not before one had been shot down and eight damaged.



19 February 1941 - Libya

- On the 19th three Hurricanes found nine Ju-87's again bombing British troops and in an immediate attack Flight Lieutenant Perrin shot one down.
- Perrin and Gatward were then attacked by several Messerschmitt 110's (photo) which appeared without warning, Gatward being shot down and killed.
- At this point Perrin, finding himself alone, attacked and set on fire the nearest enemy machine, but while attacking a second Messerschmitt, his own aircraft was hit in the petrol tank.
- He continued attacking until his ammunition was expended, and then, too low to bale out, he crash-landed in flames.
- As he ran from the aircraft one of the enemy continued to fire at him but, he escaped serious wounds and was later picked up by a British patrol.



19 February – Libyan Coast

- The convoy left Benghazi in the evening of the 19th February, and Stuart, hurrying from Tobruk to join the escort, of which Voyager also formed part, was dive-bombed and machine-gunned in four separate attacks by four Heinkel aircraft, but suffered only minor structural damage from near misses.

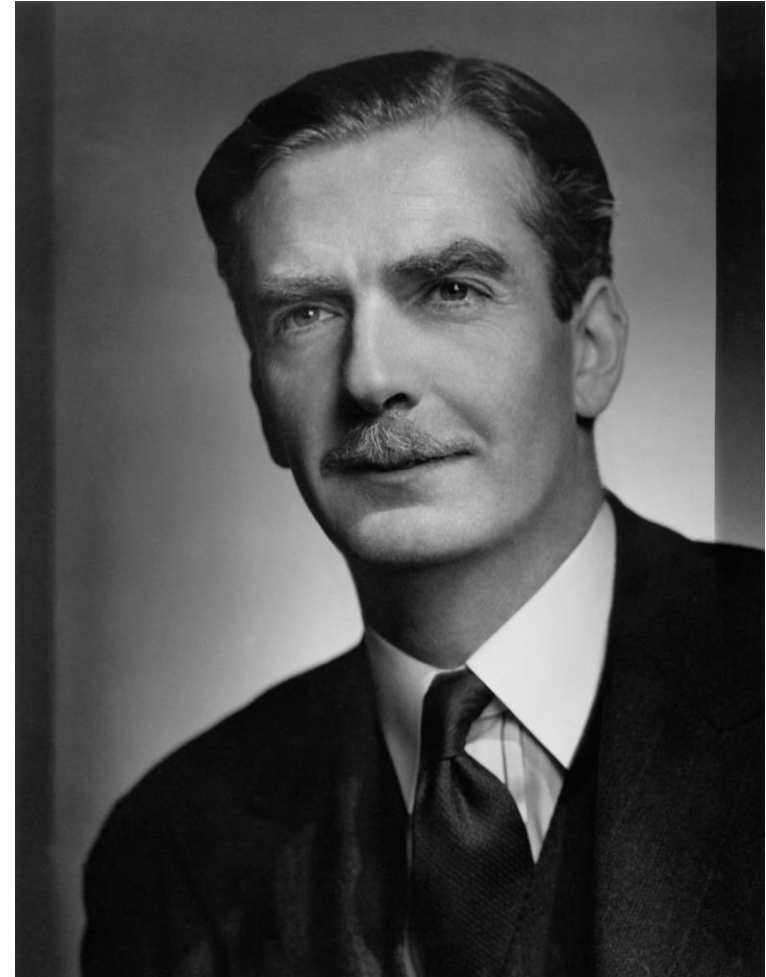


Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-317-0043-17A
Foto: o. Ang. | September 1939

Heinkle 111

20 February 1941 - Cairo

- Eden and Dill arrived in Cairo on the 19th, having been delayed by bad weather.
- There, almost immediately, Eden received a telegram from Churchill: 'Do not consider yourselves obligated to a Greek enterprise if in your hearts you feel it will only be another Norwegian fiasco. If no good plan can be made please say so. But of course you know how valuable success would be.'
- At a meeting there on the 20th Wavell described the force he could make available and (in spite of his doubt that an adequate force could be got there in time) advised proposing to the Greeks that an attempt be made to defend Salonika.
- After this meeting Eden cabled to Churchill that his present intention was to tell the Greeks of the help they were prepared to give them and urge them to accept it as fast as it could be shipped. "There is a fair chance that we can hold a line in Greece," he wrote.



Eden

20 February 1941 - Libya

- On 20th February a troop of the Dragoon Guards exchanged fire with German armoured cars—the first seen in Africa.
- Enemy air attacks were extended to Tobruk and to British troops forward in the Agedabia area, and by 17th February No. 3 Squadron RAAF was being called on for some assistance.
- During the following three days twenty-five sorties were flown in six patrols over the forward area and on two occasions enemy aircraft were encountered.
- The Naval trawler HMT Ouse (462 GRT, 1917) struck a mine in the Mediterranean Sea off Tobruk and sank with the loss of 12 of her 21 crew.



German eight wheeled armoured car.

20 February 1941 - London

- Menzies had heard something of the plan to help Greece from Wavell before his departure from Egypt but apparently first gave close attention to its details after he reached London on 20th February.
- Menzies in the course of a statement in London on 21st February, expressed hopes for peace in the Pacific and of reaching agreement and friendly relationships with Japan.



Menzies with Churchill, London 1941

20–21 February 1941 - Cairo

- The replies from Eden on 20–21 February stated that after discussions in Cairo it had been decided to offer the fullest possible support to Greece.
- The argument was that if Greece was not successfully supported Turkey might not fight—and that would mean that Yugoslavia might not fight.
- That being so, the only way to prevent Hitler's gradual absorption of these states and to build up a Balkan front was to help Greece with everything that was available.
- They all admitted that it was 'a gamble to send forces to the mainland of Europe to fight Germans at this time. No one can give a guarantee of success, but when we discussed this matter in London we were prepared to run the risk of failure, thinking it better to suffer with the Greeks than to make no attempt to help them.
- That is the conviction we all hold here. Moreover, though the campaign is a daring venture, we are not without hope that it might succeed to the extent of halting the Germans before they overrun all Greece.'
- We might have to play the cards of our 'evacuation strong suit' but the stakes are big, so big that intervention was safer than inactivity.
- The forces available were not strong; at the very most Lustre Force would have no more than three and a half divisions; and they could not all be deployed until mid-June. Moreover, there would be problems of supply which would tax the resources of the Navy and a weakness of air cover that could never be remedied.

21 February - Libya

- The pilots of scouting aircraft reported increasing but still small activity on the enemy's side of the Tripolitanian frontier.
- On 21st February a pilot reported a column of sixteen vehicles, including three eight-wheeled, and therefore German, armoured cars whose crews wore a bluish uniform different from anything he had seen in Libya before.
- But at this stage the staffs farther back would not believe that a substantial German-Italian force was assembling at the front.



German eight wheeled armoured car.

22 February 1941 - Singapore

- The Anglo-Dutch-Australian conference assembled at Singapore under the presidency of Brooke-Popham on the 22nd February, and sat until the 25th.
- Naval representatives were Vice-Admiral Layton, Commander-in-Chief, China Station; Admiral Staveren, Chief of the Naval Staff Netherlands East Indies; and Rear-Admiral Crace, Rear-Admiral Commanding the Australian Squadron, as leader of the Australian and New Zealand delegation. Present as observers were Captain Archer Allen, U.S.N., and Captain Purnell, U.S.N., Chief of Staff of the United States Asiatic Fleet.
- The agreement reached by the conference (subject to ratification by the respective governments and involving no political commitments) was for mutual assistance in the event of Japanese attack.
- Because of the uncertainty of America's attitude, planning was on the basis of Anglo - Dutch-Australian action without active American cooperation. It was considered that an invasion of Australia and New Zealand could be ruled out initially, and that the probable Japanese course would be an attack on Singapore via Indo-China and Thailand; but that the possibility of an alternative move against Borneo and the Netherlands East Indies must be taken into account.
- In the event of an attack on Singapore the Dutch would assist with air support and the operation of submarines in the South China Sea; Australia would help with the provision of army units, and an air striking force at Darwin, to reinforce Ambon and Koepang.
- In the event of the attack being against Borneo and the Netherlands East Indies the above Australian support proposed for Singapore would assist in making the passage of the northern line of Dutch possessions as difficult as possible.

22 February 1941 - Singapore



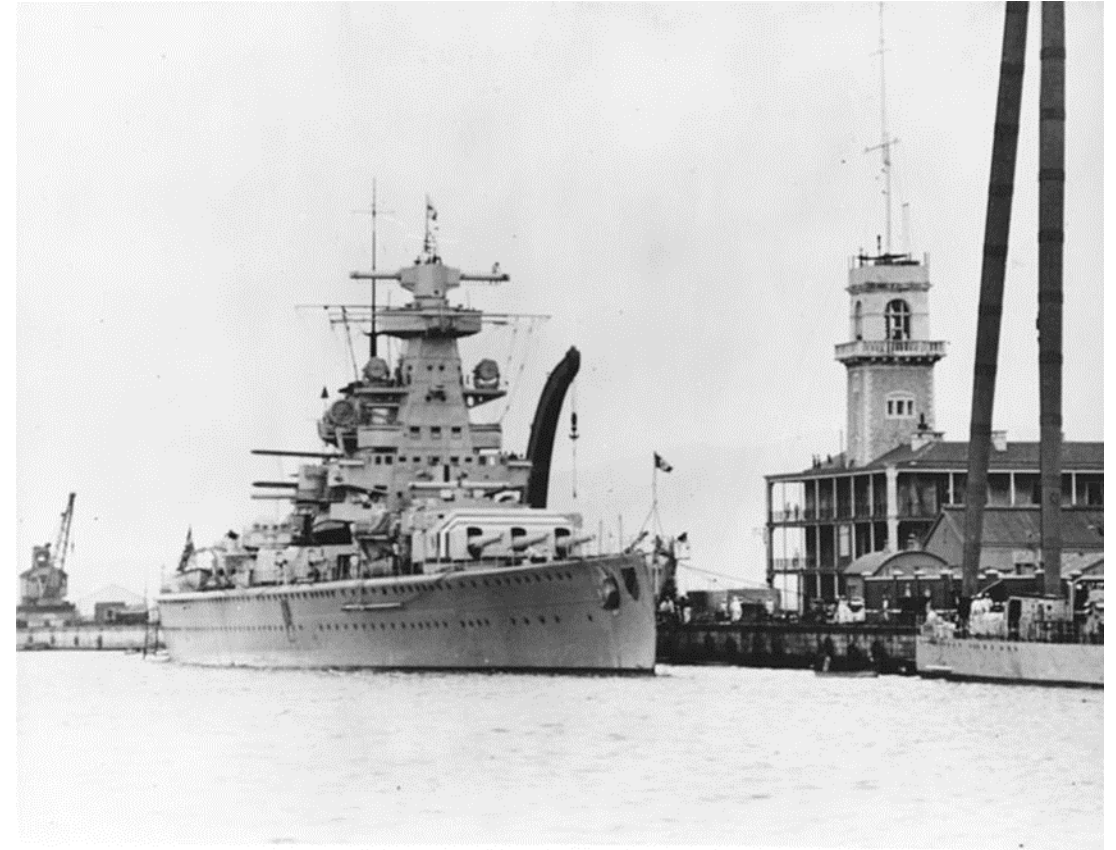
Feb 1941 – Indian Ocean

- 19/2 the 6,994 ton oil tanker British Advocate on passage from Abadan to U.K., via Table Bay and Cape Town was captured by Admiral Scheer and taken as a prize at 07.10S. - 45.30E., west of the Seychelles.
- 20/2 The cargo ship SS Grigorios C. II (2,546 GRT, 1919) was captured and scuttled in the Indian Ocean west of the Seychelles by Admiral Scheer. All 27 crew were rescued and made prisoners of war.
- 21/2 The cargo ship Canadian Cruiser (7,178 GRT, 1921) was shelled and sunk in the Indian Ocean (6°36'S 47°18'E) by Admiral Scheer. All crew were rescued and made prisoners of war.
- 22/2 The cargo ship Rantau Pandjang (2,542 GRT) was shelled and sunk in the Indian Ocean (8°24'S 51°35'E) by Admiral Scheer with the loss of two crew. Survivors were taken as prisoners of war.
- Canadian Cruiser and Rantau Pandjang, managed to send distress signals before Admiral Scheer sank them.



19-22 February 1941 – Indian Ocean

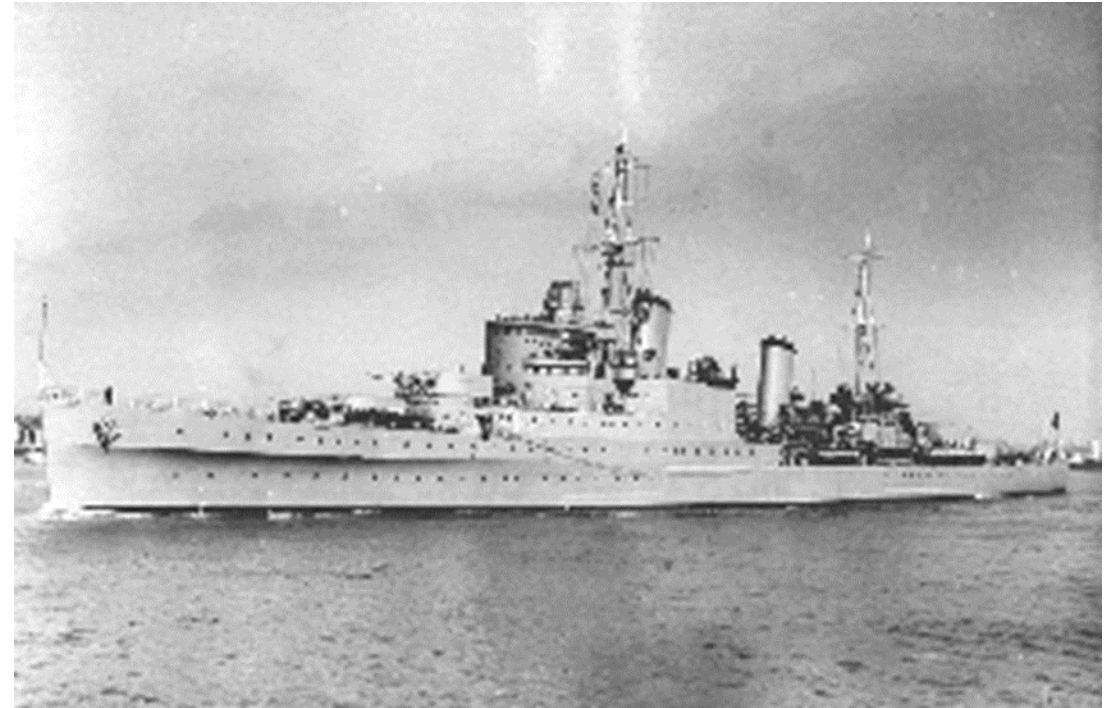
- Admiral Scheer was a Deutschland-class heavy cruiser (often termed a pocket battleship) completed in November 1934.
- The ship was nominally under the 10,000 ton limitation on warship size imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, though with a full load displacement of 15,180 long tons (15,420 t), she significantly exceeded it.
- Armed with six 28 cm (11 in) guns in two triple gun turrets, Admiral Scheer and her sisters, Deutschland (subsequently renamed Lutzow) and Admiral Graf Spee, were designed to outgun any cruiser fast enough to catch them. Their top speed of 28 knots (52 km/h; 32 mph) left only a handful of ships in the Anglo-French navies able to catch them and powerful enough to sink them.
- Propulsion:
 - Eight MAN diesel engines, Two propellers Speed: 28.3 knots
 - Range: 9,100 nmi at 20 knots
- Armament:
 - 6 × 28 cm (11 in) in triple turrets
 - 8 × 15 cm (5.9 in) in single turrets
 - 8 × 53.3 cm (21.0 in) torpedo tubes



The German cruiser ("pocket battleship") Admiral Scheer in port at Gibraltar, circa 1936. Note the Spanish Civil War neutrality markings (red, white & black stripes) painted on her forward gun turret.

19-22 February 1941 – Indian Ocean

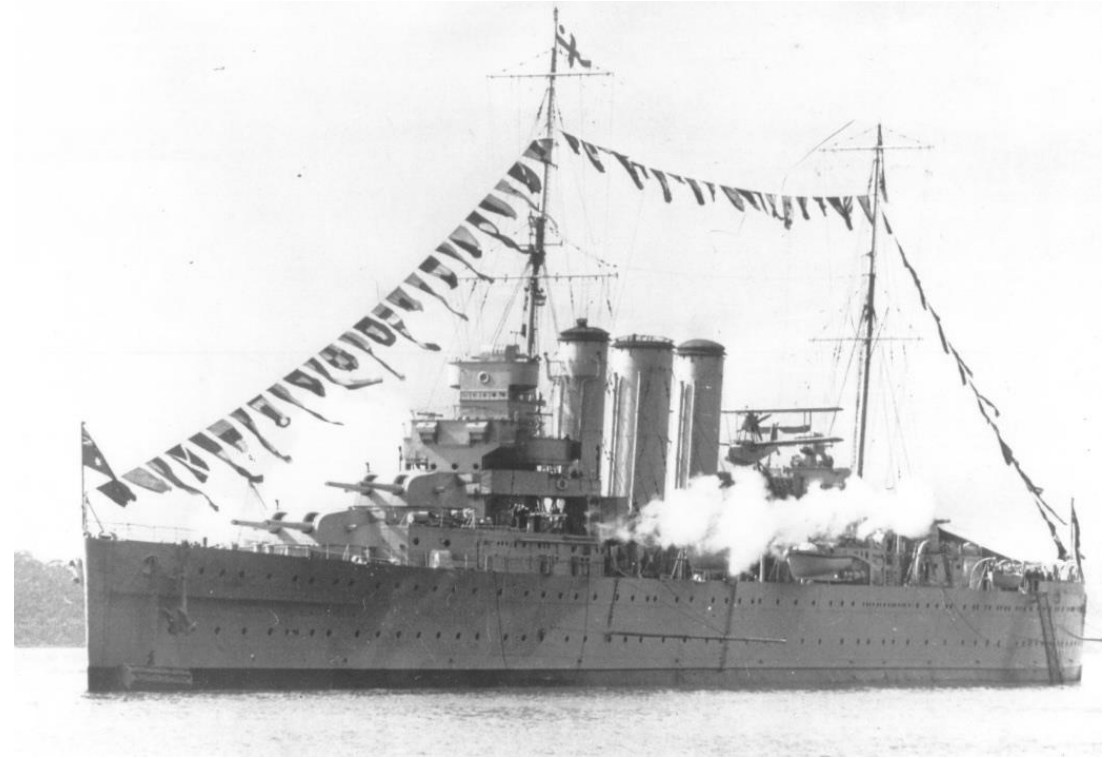
- On receipt of Canadian Cruiser's alarm the CinC, East Indies (Admiral Leatham), made dispositions to intercept the raider and strengthen the cover of convoy WS.5B.
- In Mombasa were Hermes, and Capetown. 100 miles north-west of the convoy was the cruiser Enterprise. Shropshire was off the coast of Italian Somaliland supporting the army with a bombardment of Brava.
- The cruiser Glasgow was in the vicinity of Canadian Cruiser's position and was told to investigate immediately.
- Enterprise was instructed to proceed to cover convoy.
- Emerald, Hawkins, and Capetown were disposed to hunt the raider.
- On the morning of the 22nd, the distress message from the Rantau Pandjang was received from a position some 300 miles south-east of Canadian Cruiser's.



HMS Glasgow 12 six inch guns max speed 32 knots.

22 February 1941 – Indian Ocean

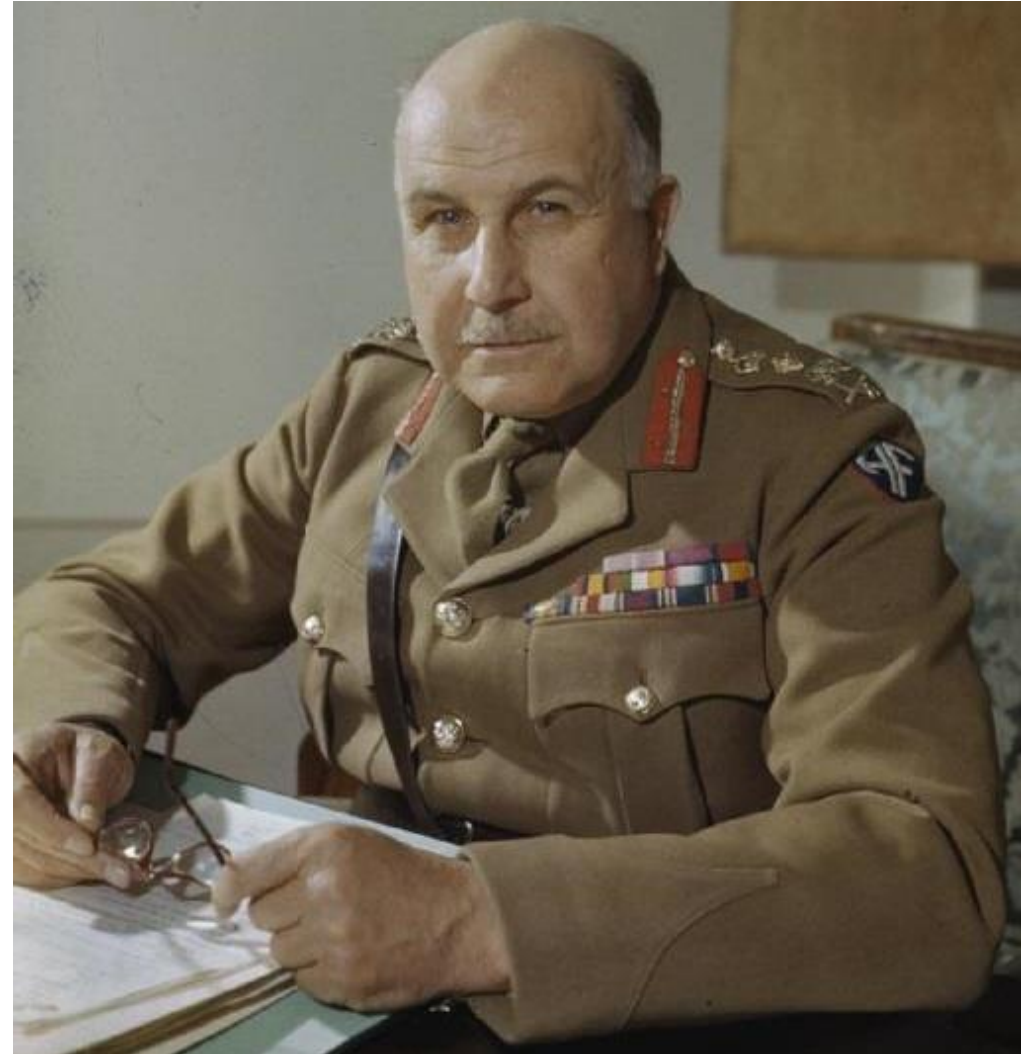
- Then, shortly after noon, Glasgow reported that her aircraft had sighted a "pocket battleship" in position 8 degrees 30 minutes south, 51 degrees 35 minutes east, and that she was chasing to the south-east.
- H.M.A.S. Canberra was at this time on passage to the Maldives from Colombo, where she had arrived on the 20th after escorting convoy US.9 from Fremantle and handing it over off Colombo to HMS Leander for escort to Bombay.
- Canberra intercepted Glasgow's signal at 4.40 p.m. on the 22nd, and shortly after was directed by Leatham to proceed towards the Seychelles and join the hunt, which had by now been strengthened by Hermes and Shropshire.
- Later in the day Leatham was told by the Admiralty that Australia also could be used, and she was directed to turn convoy WS .5B (proceeding northwards at its best speed) over to Hawkins, and to take part in the search.
- After four days of fruitless search the hunting group dispersed on the 26th February.



HMAS Canberra dressed overall and firing a gun salute in Sydney Harbour, circa 1938. Canberra had 8 eight inch guns and a max speed 31.5 knots as did her sister ship Australia, they were both launched in the 1920s.

22 February 1941 - Egypt

- On the 22nd General Wilson was told that he would command the expedition to Greece.
- Wilson had been GOC British troops Egypt and then Military Governor of Cyrenaica during the Compass operations.
- All his First World War service had been as a staff officer, latterly with the New Zealand Division.



22nd February 1941 - Greece

- On the 22nd the delegates reached Athens.
- Before the military talks opened Koryzis assured the British envoys that in any circumstances Greece would resist German aggression.
- At a meeting attended by the British and Greek political and military leaders Eden said that Britain could offer three infantry divisions, the Polish Brigade, one armoured brigade and perhaps a second armoured brigade—a total of 100,000 men with 240 field guns, 202 anti-tank guns, 32 medium guns, 192 anti-aircraft guns and 142 tanks.
- The British force would arrive in three instalments: first, one division and one armoured brigade; second, a division and the Polish Brigade; third, a division, and a second armoured brigade if required. Perhaps five additional air squadrons would be added by the end of March and two of those already in Greece would be re-equipped with Hurricanes. (Actually one of the two single-engined fighter squadrons in Greece was already being equipped with Hurricanes)

22nd February 1941 - Greece

- General Papagos explained that the Greek army east of the Axios River in the area south of the Bulgarian frontier, included four divisions.
- Papagos added that if the Yugoslavs were willing to fight it would be fatal to them for the Greeks to abandon **Salonika** because the Yugoslav Army could only be supplied through that port.
- However, if Yugoslavia was neutral or allowed the German Army to march through her territory, only fortress troops should be left in eastern Macedonia and a line through the **passes of Olympus, Veria and Edessa** should be manned. To withdraw the Greek troops to this line would require at least twenty days.
- After such a withdrawal there would be thirty-five Greek battalions in the Vermion-Olympus line, and a motor division in reserve at **Larisa**. He considered that eight divisions with a ninth in reserve would be needed to hold the proposed line.



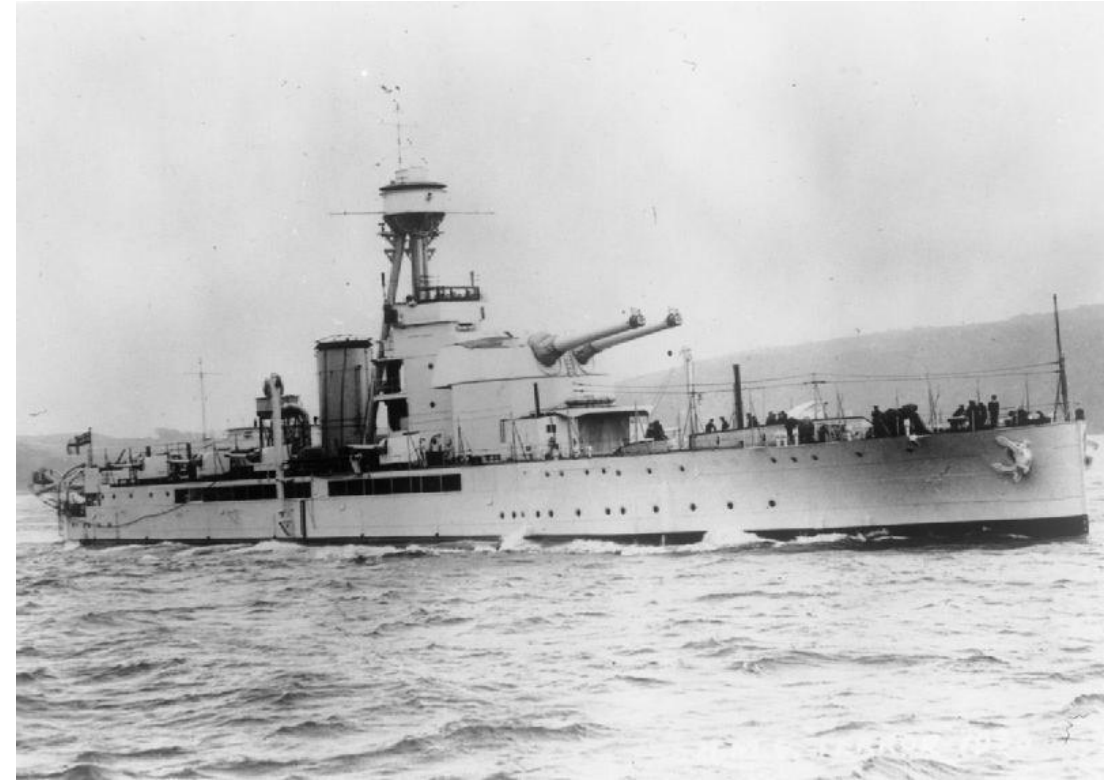
22nd February 1941 - Greece

- Dill and Wavell considered that this Greek force—comprising, after certain new formations had been raised, five or six divisions, together with the four (or their equivalent) from Egypt—"appeared to offer a reasonable prospect of establishing an effective defence against German aggression in the north-east of Greece".
- It was decided that Eden should send a telegram to Prince Paul of Yugoslavia seeking his views on the threat to Salonika, and
- it was agreed that "preparations should at once be made and put into execution to withdraw the Greek advanced troops in Thrace and Macedonia" to the Vermion-Olympus line.
- At the conference, which continued until 3 o'clock in the morning, the Greek leaders finally agreed to accept the British offer.
- The Greeks welcomed the appointment of General Wilson to command the British force.



22 February 1941 - Benghazi

- The air attacks on Benghazi reached their maximum on the 22nd February, when Terror suffered severe damage from a near miss.
- She was sailed at dusk for Tobruk. Cunningham told Wavell and Longmore that "in view of the scale of air attack, inadequate defences, and damage to H.M.S. Terror, I have withdrawn H.M. Ships from Benghazi"
- Terror did not reach Tobruk. Dive-bombed and mined leaving Benghazi, she was the victim of a final dive-bombing attack at 10.30 a.m. on the 23rd February off Derna.
- Her back was broken, and after a fruitless attempt to tow her she was abandoned and sunk.



Royal Navy monitor HMS Terror underway in
Plymouth Sound

22 February 1941 - Libya

- Out of the morning haze, at ten o'clock on Saturday, 22 February, 15 planes swept low in three waves, machinegunning a New Zealand RMT convoy returning from dumping petrol at Magrun.
- Three trucks were hit and one driver, Steve Tripp, was slightly wounded.
- These planes, tenacious, daring, meant business. The bold, black swastika was making its first appearance over Africa.



22 February 1941 - Atlantic

- On 22 January 1941, Scharnhorst and Gneisenau left port for the North Atlantic.
- They were detected in the Skagerrak and the heavy units of the British Home Fleet deployed to cover the passage between Iceland and the Faroes.
- The Germans' radar detected the British at long range, which allowed them to avoid the British patrols, with the aid of a squall.
- On 22 February, the pair spotted an empty convoy sailing west, which dispersed at the appearance of the battleships. The pair sank five ships, including two large tankers.



The battleship Scharnhorst. She and her sister ship Gneisenau had 9 eleven inch guns a max speed of 31 knots and a 14 inch thick armor belt.

22 February 1941 - Atlantic

- On 22nd February Hodgkinson, of No. 10 Squadron RAAF, attacked a U-boat and forced it to dive giving time for the convoy, which he was escorting, to steam clear of the danger area.
- Hodgkinson's attack, which owing to an electrical fault was made with only part of the normal bomb load, was unsuccessful,
- but he quickly homed the corvette Periwinkle, which attacked with depth-charges while the Sunderland flew off to report to the convoy.
- Menzies visited No. 10 Squadron that day.



No. 10 Squadron Sunderland sets out on patrol in 1941.

23 February - Libya

- On the 23rd the staffs of Cyrenaica Command and 1 Australian Corps were still expressing the opinion that an attempt to retake Benghazi was unlikely,
- but that day air attacks on Savige's troops were intensified.
- Despite the temporary attachment of a flight of No. 73 Squadron R.A.F. to assist the No 3 RAAF, by the third week in February the navy declined to send further supply ships to Benghazi until the air defences had improved.
- All supplies for forward army units now had to come overland from Tobruk, and lack of transport made it necessary progressively to reduce the strength of the force in western Cyrenaica.

February 1941 - Alexandria

- Perth reached Alexandria early in the morning of the 7th February and thereafter until the 23rd she remained in port, docking and repairing damage sustained at Malta.



Perth underway after her February 1941 refit.

1941 American Naval Build up

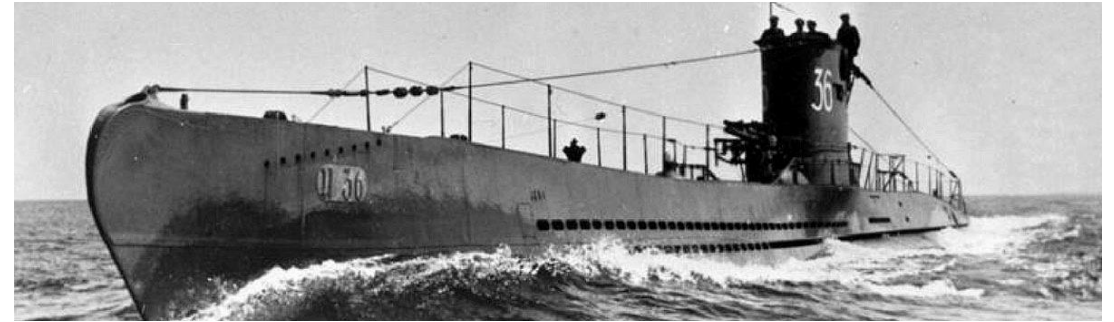
- On July 19, 1940, just after the fall of France the Vinson-Walsh Act (the Two-Ocean Navy Act) had increased the authorized strength of the Navy by 70 percent in combatant ships and authorized the building of 100,000 tons of auxiliary vessels, and the expenditure of \$300,000,000 to construct miscellaneous craft, munitions and facilities.
- Early in 1941, Congress now authorized an increase of 75 percent in the authorized personnel strength of the Navy and Marine Corps.



Representative Carl Vinson

23 February 1941 - Sea

- The situation at sea must have been of great concern. The Scharnhorst and Gneisenau and the Admiral Scheer remained at large after doing significant damage. Hipper was back in Brest but might break out again.
- The Admiral Scheer, loose in the Indian Ocean close to the supply lines to the AIF, must have been a particular concern to Australia.
- Apart from the surface raiders 15 Allied ships were lost this week to Uboats, 6 to bombing and 5 to mines.



U 36 a type VIIA Uboat.

23 February 1941 - Mediterranean

- The cargo ship Silvia Tripcovich (2,365 GRT, 1926) was torpedoed and sunk in the Mediterranean Sea off Kuriat Island, Tunisia (33°34'N 11°45'E) by HMS Upright (Royal Navy).



HMS UPRIGHT, 2nd from left, with other submarines of the Flotilla alongside the parent ship in Holy Loch.

February 1941 - Britain

- Early in September 1940 the Germans had switched the air attack on Britain to night bombing. The RAF initially had no capacity to intercept these raiders.
- From November 1940 to February 1941, although some 12,270 enemy sorties were flown over Britain, Fighter Command was able to claim only 13 enemy aircraft destroyed, almost all the interceptions being achieved by visual means and then only as a result of endless patience and perseverance.
- During these months a group of thirty New Zealanders flew with the few Blenheim and Defiant squadrons that were the mainstay of the aerial night defence.
- Flight Lieutenant Trousdale, who had been with a Spitfire squadron during the Battle of Britain, now flew as flight commander with No. 255 Defiant Squadron, a unit which, by February 1941, included 15 New Zealanders among its complement of 36 aircrew.
- One night early that month Trousdale was on patrol in the Humber area, with Sergeant Chunn as his gunner, when an enemy aircraft, identified as a Heinkel 111, was sighted.
 - As the Defiant closed the range Chunn opened fire, which was returned as the Heinkel dived away.
 - Trousdale followed it down, his gunner meanwhile registering further hits until the enemy machine plunged into the sea.
- Two more bombers were claimed by New Zealand gunners during February.
- On the 4th a Dornier 215 was shot down in flames by Sergeant Jonas of No. 151 Squadron.
- A few nights later a Heinkel 111 was destroyed over the Humber by Sergeant Fitzsimmons of No. 255 Squadron.

February 1941 - Britain

- Powered by a merlin engine but carrying an extra man and a hydraulic turret the Defiant's performance was modest.
- The second man was unable to operate a radar so they had no future in the era of AI Radar equipped interceptors.
- Maximum speed: 304 mph at 17,000 ft
- Cruise speed: 175 mph at 15,000 ft
- Range: 465 mi
- Endurance: 1.78 hr
- Service ceiling: 31,000 ft
- Time to altitude: 8.5 min to 15,000 ft



Boulton Paul Defiant Mk I.

February 1941 - Melbourne

- In January 1941 the Joint Planning Committee completed its review , its proposals being broadly the establishment of a Central War Room in Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, for the exclusive use of the Chiefs of Staff; a C.O.I.C. as adjunct thereto; the establishment of Area Combined Headquarters at Melbourne, Fremantle, Darwin and Townsville (replacing Port Moresby); and of Combined Defence Headquarters and C.O.I.C's for each Army Covering Force Area in which defended ports were situated, these including the four A.C.H. ports above.
- Recommended by the Defence Committee, these proposals were approved by the War Cabinet in February 1941 and were put into effect.
- The function of the Area Combined Headquarters was to ensure naval and air cooperation in trade defence in the focal areas, i.e. for South West Australia at Fremantle, South East Australia at Melbourne, North East Australia at Townsville and North West Australia at Darwin.
- The object of Combined Defence Headquarters was to coordinate the operations of the naval, military and air forces allotted for the defence of areas including a defended port.
- Because of its geographical situation and the area it controlled (which included New Guinea, New Britain, New Ireland and the Solomons) Townsville A.C.H. became the most important outside Melbourne, and was made senior to Darwin.
- Wing Commander Garing, RAAF, Chief of Staff to the Air Officer Commanding North Eastern Area (Group Captain Lukis, RAAF) who had recently returned to Australia from operational service in Britain, established at Townsville an A.C.H. Operations Room on the British model which became the criterion for all other Area Combined Headquarters in Australia and New Zealand.
- Lieut-Commander Feldt, the head of the Coastwatcher service, also relocated from Moresby to Townsville.

4/5 Feb - Libya, Desert

- The rest of the force made fair progress until towards dark and then encountered what were known as “thermos bombs” dropped from Italian aircraft. These bombs resembled the thermos flask in appearance, did not go off when they hit the ground but were exploded by touch after that.
- More info on thermos bombs.



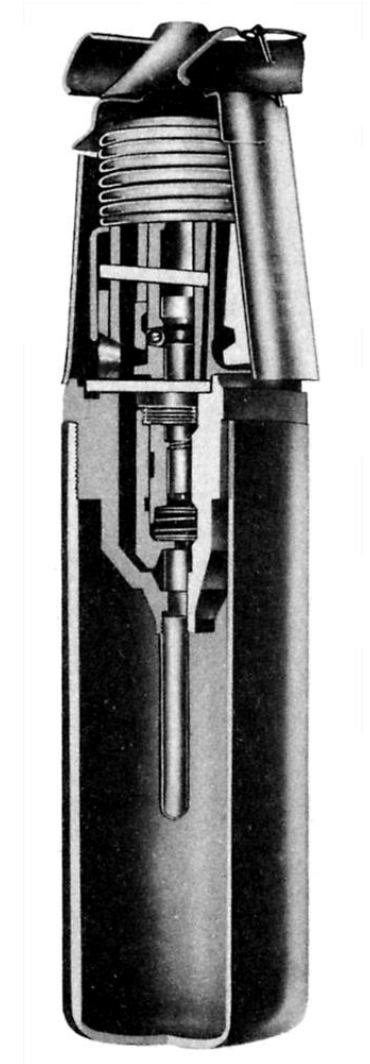
AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

007575

TOBRUK. A LIME JUICE BOTTLE SERVES AS A COMPARISON WHEN ESTIMATING THE SIZE OF A THERMOS BOMB, THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT THE BOMB CONTAINS 2 OR 3 POUNDS OF T.N.T. WHICH IS LIKELY TO BE EXPLODED BY A MINOR VIBRATION SUCH AS A CLOSE FOOTFALL. (NEGATIVE F. HURLEY).

More on Thermos Bombs

- Thermos bomb was the informal name for the AR-4, an air dropped anti-personnel mine used by the Italian Air Force during World War II.
 - Large numbers were used against Malta and in the Middle East.
 - It was named for its superficial appearance to a Thermos bottle, a popular brand of vacuum flask.
 - The bomb was a cylinder 31 centimetres (12 in) long and weighing 3.68 kilograms (8.1 lb).
 - It could be fitted with a very sensitive motion-sensitive fuze that would detonate if any attempt was made to move it, and could be lethal in the open up to around 35 metres (115 ft) away.
 - Because of this, unexploded Thermos bombs were normally destroyed where they fell, either by attaching a long piece of string to them and giving it a jerk, or detonating a small explosive charge next to them.
- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| • Mass | 3.68 kg |
| • Length | 12.3 inches |
| • Diameter | 2.75 inches |
| • Filling | TNT |
| • Filling weight | 0.67 kg |
| • Detonation mechanism | Anti-handling dev |



Thermos Bombs



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

007566

TOBRUK. THE EXPLOSION OF A THERMOS BOMB.
(NEGATIVE BY A. ANDERSON).



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

007522

TOBRUK. LAYING A FUSE TO EXPLODE AN ENEMY
THERMOS BOMB. THIS BOMB FAILED TO EXPLODE ON
IMPACT, BUT IS LIKELY TO GO OFF AT ANY SLIGHT
TOUCH. A PIECE OF GELIGNITE IS TO BE EXPLODED
BESIDE IT TO FINISH IT OFF. TWO BRITISH SOLDIERS
LT. N.A. WELHAM-JONES; AND CPL. F. FRIEDMAN
(LATE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION). (BY ANDERSON).

Visuals

- I am often disappointed by how few photographs and how little video there is of these events.
- This photo gives some indication of why that is the case.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

005665

DERNA. THE PHOTOGRAPHIC UNIT TAKES A SHOT AT
GENERAL MACKAY. (NEGATIVE BY D. PARER).

- [RAAF in Western Desert: early shots | Australian War Memorial \(awm.gov.au\)](http://awm.gov.au)
- [Menzies at Plymouth | Australian War Memorial \(awm.gov.au\)](http://awm.gov.au)
- No. 3 Squadron RAAF ground crew performing maintenance and arming Gloster Gladiators with .303 ammunition and light bombs. Shot of No. 84 Sqn RAF Bristol Blenheim Mk 1's in flight. Shots of Gladiators flying past airfield. Gloster Gauntlet prepares for take off.
- On 22 March, 1941, the Right Honourable R G Menzies KC, Prime Minister of Australia, visited the RAF Station Mount Batten, Plymouth, England and addressed personnel of No 10 Squadron, RAAF.

- Major E T Fulton's home movies of army service in Middle East with the 2/1 Field Regiment AIF and in New Guinea | Australian War Memorial (awm.gov.au)

- 64 Minutes
- 6 Division North Africa, Greece and Palestine.
- New Guinea forward reconnaissance with Coastwatcher patrols, ANGAU and Z special units.
- Borneo, Brigadier Porter accepting surrender of Japanese Officers.
- Has subsequent commentary.

- Thanks for your attention