

Australia's War: 80 years ago this week

28 July 1941



Medical Services

- During the Damour action more exhaustion and fear states were seen. Many of the men were sent to the rest station of the 2/13th Field Ambulance at Ez Zib, where they came under the care of Major Gwyn Williams, who was a psychiatrist by training.
- Early in the campaign Colonel Johnston wanted to have a field ambulance under corps control, particularly to undertake the running of a rest station. The moral effect on men, especially those with exhaustion states, was much better when they were sent to a neighbouring unit to rest, rather than being passed by stages to a hospital from which they made a slower return. The advantages of the units being able to have men treated for minor complaints and not to lose them on the "X list" need no stressing, especially as the station could hold up to 650 men when fully established.
- Ambulance Trains. The service available on the Palestine railway was very satisfactory. The method by which patients were taken to Amman by train and thence by ambulance car (photo Austin K2 Ambulance) to British hospitals in Jerusalem had to be modified, as the Arabs along the road from Amman to Jerusalem indulged in sniping at traffic.



AUSTRALIAN AMBULANCE CROSSING BRIDGE
CONSTRUCTED ACROSS THE LATANI RIVER BY AN
ENGINEERS UNIT TO REPLACE BRIDGE BLOWN UP BY
THE RETREATING FRENCH. (NEGATIVE BY F. HURLEY).

Medical Services

- Treatment of compound fractures. the problem of immobilisation of the lower limb in particular was difficult.
- Men reached the C.C.S. at Nazareth with extemporised splints which could not maintain immobility of the limb. A rifle was sometimes used to secure the limb. A Thomas splint (photo) is much better, but the conditions were not always favourable for applying it. It would be difficult to apply a Thomas splint properly in a stony wadi without light.
- The advice of Colonel Hailes, the Consulting Surgeon , established a principle, that it was better for a surgeon to aim at immobilisation when the patient had a journey before him than to be concerned with details of alignment.
- Hailes stated that in advance of the R.A.P. enough traction could be used to bring the boot heels level, the boots bound together and rigidity obtained by using a rifle on the uninjured side.
- At the R.A.P. application of a Thomas splint was desirable.
- In the field rapid evacuation and immobilisation were the necessities, so that resuscitation and further measures might be applied at a dressing station as soon as possible.



Medical Services

- Originally a luxury passenger liner, the Oranje, on her maiden voyage, was trapped in Batavia (modern Jakarta) capital of the Netherlands East Indies when the Germans invaded the Netherlands.
- The Dutch government, not wanting her services to be wasted, offered the Oranje to the Australian and New Zealand governments for use as a hospital ship.
- Her conversion was completed in Sydney, and paid for entirely by the Netherlands government. They also paid to staff, run and maintain the ship.
- The Oranje was the fastest medical ship in the world at the time, capable of reaching 26 knots.
- She sailed under the Netherlands' flag and was staffed by medical officers of the Royal Netherlands Army in the Indies. In 1941 there was only a small contingency of New Zealand and Australian staff that included a Consulting Physician, Consulting Surgeon, two Commanding Officers, two Senior Nursing Sisters and 12 other ranks.
- On 2nd July the ship was ready and left Sydney for the Middle East via Singapore. The first trip from the Middle East was made in August 1941, when 431 Australians were brought back to Australia under admirable conditions of comfort and medical care. Some 670 patients could be carried and 850 in emergency.



The Dutch hospital ship Oranje off the Western Australian coast in 1941, shortly after the completion of its conversion as a hospital ship.

Medical Services

- At the end of 1940 the following base hospital beds were available in capital cities: Brisbane 200, Sydney 240, Melbourne 240, Adelaide 150, Perth 200, Hobart 200. In civil and repatriation hospitals 340 additional beds were available in Sydney and 395 in Melbourne, and smaller numbers in other cities. 4,000 camp hospital beds in Australia were also available.
- About 32,000 hospital beds were needed in Australia when the risk of Japanese attack appeared to be at its height in 1942.
- Convalescent depots and convalescent homes were also needed in greater numbers as hospitals grew.
- A saving of "acute" beds could be effected by sending men to less elaborate units for convalescence.
- The need for convalescent depots was great in the early years, yet they did not have a high priority compared with that of field and hospital units. This led to the adoption of the expedient course of using sites like showgrounds, which were usually not suitable for the purpose and had the added drawback of being near the temptations of towns.
- A further result was that there was a greater call on convalescent homes, for which the Red Cross Society was responsible. These homes were intended for men who needed some degree of comfort and personal, rather than medical care, and no organised methods were adopted, other than diversional therapy, to harden the men and return them as early as possible to their units.
- For the latter purpose the convalescent depot is adapted, by reason of its selected staff and its military atmosphere.

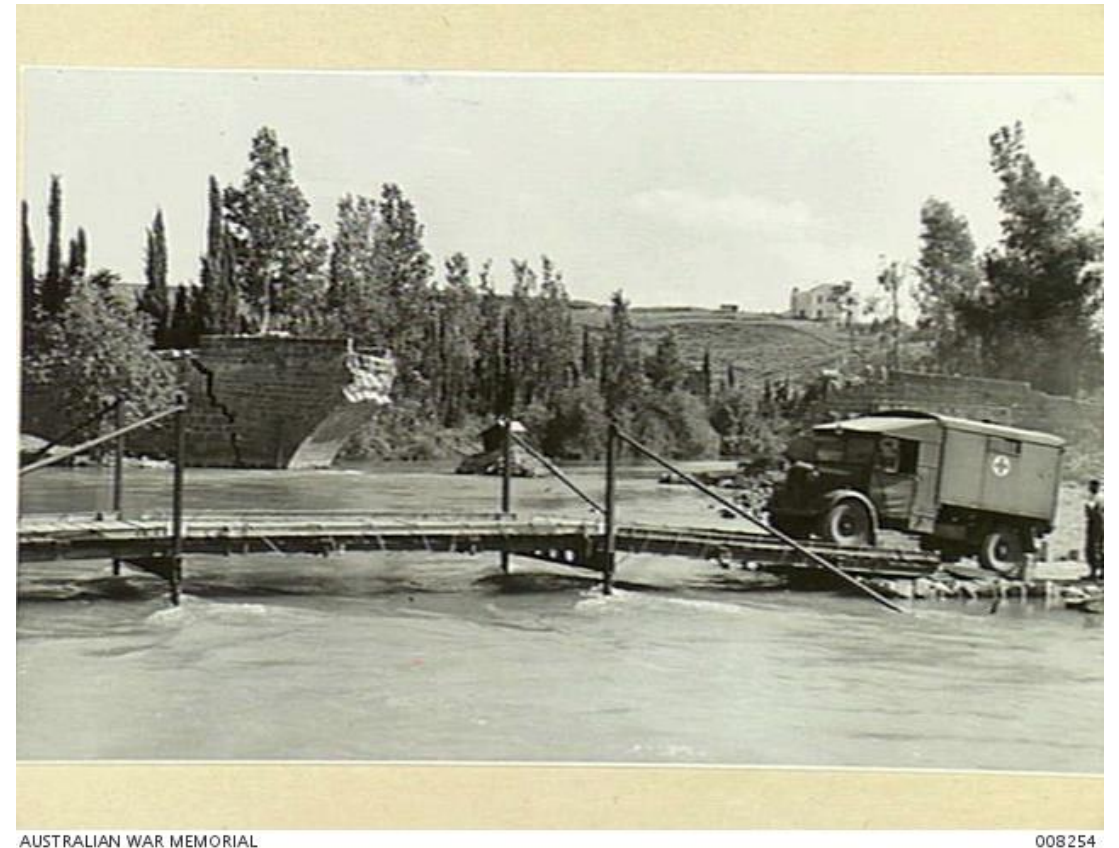


Concord Military Hospital.

(Department of the Interior)

Frank Hurley

- A few times in this story we have seen photographs like this one taken by Frank Hurley.



AUSTRALIAN AMBULANCE CROSSING BRIDGE
CONSTRUCTED ACROSS THE LATANI RIVER BY AN
ENGINEERS UNIT TO REPLACE BRIDGE BLOWN UP BY
THE RETREATING FRENCH. (NEGATIVE BY F. HURLEY).

4/5 Feb - Libya, Desert

- Frequently Hurley's work tells an interesting story.



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).






Frank Hurley

- He had followed the 6th Division in the first Libyan campaign and was in Syria during the campaign there.
- I have only recently become aware of Hurley's earlier extensive and adventurous career.



A VIEW OF THE MAIN COAST ROAD ALONG WHICH THE ADVANCE OF THE BRITISH FORCES WAS MADE IN THE PUSH TO BEIRUT. (NEGATIVE BY F. HURLEY).

Frank Hurley

- Frank Hurley first came to prominence as the photographer on Shackelton's 1914 expedition to Antarctica.
 -  Voyage of the Endurance
 -  Planned trans-Antarctic route
 -  Voyage of the Aurora to Antarctica
 -  Retreat of the Aurora
 -  Supply depot route



Frank Hurley

- HMS Endurance left South Georgia on 5 December 1914.



Frank Hurley (taken on board Endurance)

Frank Hurley

- Became frozen fast 19 January 1915.
- HMS Endurance trapped in Antarctic pack ice (photo by Frank Hurley).



Frank Hurley

- Ship sinks, camp on ice floe 21 November 1915.
- Shackleton looking overboard at Endurance being crushed by the ice.



Frank Hurley

- After drifting North and West camped on the ice for five months the ice floe broke in two. Shackleton ordered the crew into the lifeboats and to head for the nearest land on 9 April 1916.
- The exhausted men landed their three lifeboats at Elephant Island 14 April 1916.
 - — Drift of Endurance in Pack Ice
 - — Drift on pack ice after Endurance sinks.



Frank Hurley

- Elephant Island was an inhospitable place, far from any shipping routes; rescue by a chance discovery was very unlikely.
- Shackleton decided to risk an open-boat journey to the 720-nautical-mile-distant South Georgia whaling stations, where he knew help was available.
- The strongest of the tiny 20-foot lifeboats, christened James Caird, was chosen for the trip.
- The James Caird was launched on 24 April 1916. During the next fifteen days Shackleton and five others sailed it through the waters of the southern ocean, at the mercy of the stormy seas, in constant peril of capsizing.
- On 8 May the cliffs of South Georgia came into sight, but hurricane-force winds prevented landing. The party was forced to ride out the storm offshore, in constant danger of being dashed on the rocks.



Launch of the James Caird from the shore of Elephant Island.

Frank Hurley

- The following day, they were able to land on the unoccupied southern shore. After a period of rest and recuperation, rather than risk putting to sea again to reach the whaling stations on the northern coast, Shackleton decided to attempt a land crossing of the island.
- Shackleton travelled 32 miles with two others over extremely dangerous unexplored mountainous terrain for 36 hours to reach the whaling station at Stromness on 20 May.
- Voyage of the James Caird



Frank Hurley

- Shackleton immediately sent a boat to pick up the three men from the other side of South Georgia while he set to work to organise the rescue of the Elephant Island men.
- His first three attempts were foiled by sea ice, which blocked the approaches to the island.
- He appealed to the Chilean government, which offered the use of the Yelcho, a small seagoing tug from its navy.
- Yelcho, commanded by Captain Luis Pardo, and the British whaler Southern Sky reached Elephant Island on 30 August 1916, at which point the men had been isolated there for four and a half months.
- Shackleton quickly evacuated all 22 men.



"All Safe, All Well", allegedly depicting Shackleton's return to Elephant Island, August 1916. A photograph of the departure of the James Caird in April was doctored by photographer Frank Hurley to create this image

Frank Hurley



Frank Hurley



Frank Hurley



Frank Hurley



Frank Hurley

- My pictures were taken in early December.
- Shackeltons crew were marooned there over the winter.
- This guy, who was driving the boat when I took these pictures, took part in a recent recreation of the voyage of the James Caird.
- They did it in a replica of the original boat using only the navigation instruments available to Shackelton and his crew.



Frank Hurley

- After being marooned in the Antarctic in 1915 and 1916, in 1917, Hurley joined the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) as an honorary captain, and captured many stunning battlefield scenes during the Third Battle of Ypres.
- 1st Australian Division near Ypres, 1917 (photo by Frank Hurley).



Frank Hurley

- Hurley returned to the Antarctic in 1929 and 1931, on Mawson's British Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition.
- Hurley served again as an official photographer with Australian forces in the second world war.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

005411

TOBRUK - PAMBO MORRISON, ALAN ANDERSON AND DAMIEN PARER OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC UNIT TAKE A LOOK AT A BOMB CRATER LEFT BY THE R.A.F. IN TOBRUK. (NEGATIVE BY F. HURLEY).

24

28 July 1941 - Libya

- Morshead told Blamey in a letter written next day (28th July):
- The troops are in wonderful heart, their morale never higher—the nightly raiding parties and fighting patrols, as well as the daylight carrier sorties, have contributed to this.
- Then the marked improvement in rations and canteen stores and the gifts of the Comforts Fund have also helped.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL 007478
SALVATION ARMY AND AIF PERSONNEL LOADING COMFORTS FUND ITEMS FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THE TROOPS; FROM LEFT TO RIGHT BRIGADIER MCILVEEN (SALVATION ARMY), MAJOR MAWSON (SALVATION ARMY), SERGEANT LINDREA (AIF), LANCE CORPORAL LANE (AIF) AND ADJUTANT JOCK GEDDES (SALVATION ARMY). (NEGATIVE BY F. HURLEY 28 April 1941.)

29 July 1941 - Brisbane

TOUR OF AUSTRALIA BY MR. MENZIES; MEETING STALEMATE

From Our Special Representative

CANBERRA, Monday.—The Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies) will begin an Australia-wide tour almost immediately. He will visit Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, and, if possible before Parliament resumes on August 27, Tasmania. Announcing this to-night (following the party meeting at which he met with some criticism), Mr. Menzies denied that the tour had any political significance.

Full-Time Militia Call-Up

NEW call-up plans for the war period, announced by the Minister for the Army (Mr. Spender) last night, provide for a quarter of the Australian militia, giving full-time service for the duration of the war and half spending six months in camp each year instead of two three-month periods.

All militia units will be fully equipped for war, so that they could go on active service at short notice.

Men for continuous service will be largely officers, N.C.O.'s specialists, and administrative staff.

The new plan, which, in general, operates from camps beginning on October 1, aims at strengthening home defences, improving training, and avoiding interruption to industry.

30 July 1941 - Brisbane

Freight Ship Keel Laid Here To-day

The keel of one of 60 9000-ton standard freight ships to be built in Australia in five years will be laid by the Minister for the Interior (Senator Foll) at a Brisbane dockyard at 11 o'clock this morning.

BRISBANE BLACK-OUT AUGUST 17

Brisbane's first trial black-out on Sunday, August 17, will be under full emergency conditions.

Householders and others who flouted instructions would be liable to National Security Act prosecution, the Minister in charge of A.R.P. (Mr. Hanlon) said last night.

"We want co-operation, not coercion, but if people will not help us to help them, drastic steps must be taken," he said. "This test is to establish Brisbane's vulnerability under raid conditions, and it is not going to be spoilt by a thoughtless few."

Mr. Hanlon said the black-out, which would last about two hours, would be confined to the Greater Brisbane area on the south side of the river.

A second test of the northern metropolitan area would follow.

For the period of the black-out, householders must keep all lights under control.

House lights could be used, but windows must be screened and all apertures sealed to prevent lights being visible from the outside.

30 July 1941 - Melbourne

Most secret
sources
A.C.H.B.0721/29Z

5. JAPANESE SITUATION - Orders were issued on 28th July by ~~the~~ Japanese Admiralty to the effect that merchant ships may enter any port in N.E.I. but only British or U.S. ports if specifically ordered and in the meantime they were to remain 50 miles outside any such port of destination.

Launo (N)

Percival (M)

De O'Connell (A)

Sam
C.O.I.C.
30/7/41

31 July 1941 - Melbourne

Admty.1658B/29

5. RAIDER ACTIVITY - D/F indications on 25th and 29th July point to the presence of a raider in the southern Indian Ocean probably in the area between the Kerguelen and Amsterdam Islands.

Comment - The following is a list of possible raider

- 2 -

indications in the Indian Ocean area since 1st June:-

- (1) "MAREEBA" and "VELEBIT" are presumed sunk about 26/6 about in position 8°N 88°E;
- (2) D/F indications on 17th and 21st July considered to be possibly communication between a German raider and her supply ship possibly arranging to transfer prisoners from the "VELEBIT" and "MAREEBA";
- (3) The British ship "CROMARTY" (4,974 tons - 10 knots) has not yet been reported arrived at Capetown from Fremantle where she was due on 16/7. She was reported overdue on 20/7.

C. in C. E.I.
1942Z/13

Admty.1911B/22/7

S.O.(I) Capetown
1015/20B

31 July 1941 Washington

- The United States intercepted and decoded a message from the Japanese Foreign Minister, on 31st July 1941 to the Ambassador in Berlin, telling him to explain to Hitler why Japan was moving south instead of against Russia.



Matsuoka visits Hitler (March 1941)

July 1941 - Australia

- In July the naval shipbuilding program was again expanded by the inclusion of 12 additional corvettes (bringing the total up to 60) and six of a new and larger type known as frigates.
- The Australian corvettes were of 650 tons, mostly armed with a 4-inch gun and light anti-aircraft guns, and had a speed of 15.5 knots. They were named after Australian towns.
- The Australian frigates were of 1,420 tons, armed with two 4-inch guns and light anti-aircraft guns, and with a speed of 20 knots. They were named after Australian rivers.
- As the beginning of a program for merchant ship building, orders were placed for eight ships, each of 9,300 tons deadweight. The keel of the first of these, the River Clarence, was laid at Cockatoo Island Dockyard on the 29th July 1941.
- In July approval was given to the building of a naval base at Fremantle.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

009324

SYDNEY. FIRST MERCHANT VESSEL - "RIVER CLARENCE". KEEL LAYING CEREMONY. THE PRIME MINISTER WATCHES A DOCKYARD EMPLOYEE DRIVE A RIVET HOME. 29 July 1941.

July 1941 - Australia

- The naval building program called for an increase in the numbers of officers and men in the R.A.N. to man the ships as they commissioned. This applied not only to the vessels intended for the R.A.N., but also to the twenty corvettes being built for the Admiralty, as it had been agreed that the R.A.N. would man these.
- In addition, while Mr Menzies was in Britain early in 1941, it was proposed to him that the Australian Navy might be prepared to man a further three "N" class destroyers, making a flotilla of eight of this class. This was agreed to in July 1941, when it was estimated that a regular monthly intake of 400 recruits would achieve an expansion sufficient to meet all manning requirements then visualised.
- All recruits were, as a wartime measure, entered through the Royal Australian Naval Reserve, and signed on for the duration of hostilities instead of the customary twelve years engagement. There was no shortage of applicants, and recruiting offices in all States had waiting lists.
- Naval pay ranged in the Seaman Branch from 1s 9d a day for an Ordinary Seaman, 2nd Class, under 17 years of age, to 7s a day for an Able Seaman and 11s a day for a Chief Petty Officer, with slightly higher rates for tradesmen.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

0261 59

FLINDERS NAVAL DEPOT, VICTORIA. 1942-08. NEW RECRUITS HAVE TO LEARN TO HANDLE A BOAT. STOKERS CARRYING OUT BOATWORK.

July 1941 - Australia

- In July Admiral Colvin retired owing to ill health.
- Colvin's successor, Vice-Admiral Royle (photo), was a British officer of wide experience, both operational and administrative.
- He knew the Japanese, having been British Naval Attache in Tokyo 1924-1927.
- He specialised in naval aviation, and had commanded aircraft carriers in peace and war; his immediately preceding appointment was as Fifth Sea Lord where he represented the Royal Navy's aviation interests.
- He came to Australia a sick man, temporarily mentally exhausted from a period of considerable strain overseas.



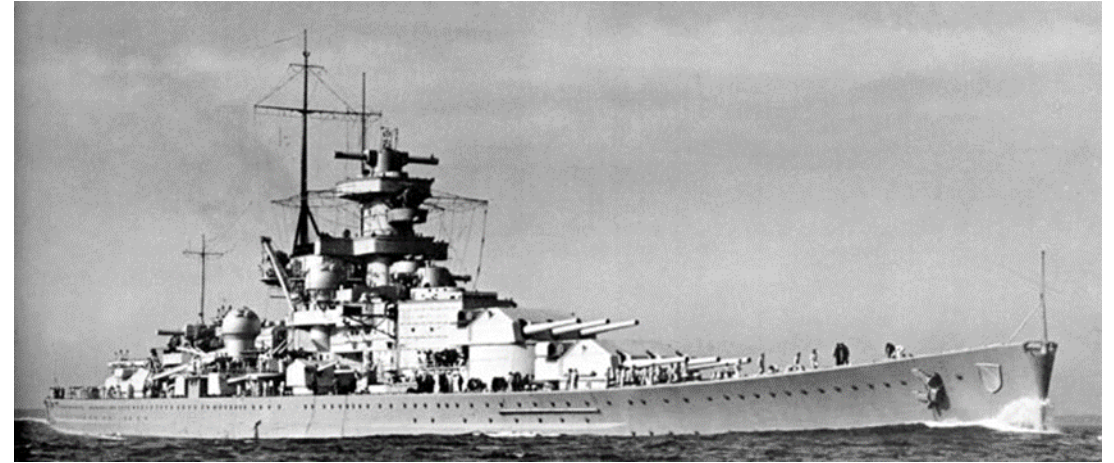
July 1941 - Syria

- At the end of July the garrison of Syria consisted chiefly of I Australian Corps with headquarters at Aley.
- Under its command were the 7th Australian Division in the Tripoli area, the miniature Free French Division and 5th Indian Brigade round Damascus and Nebek and the 6th British Division at Baalbek.
- Only the 7th Australian Division was complete, but the 6th British Division's lack of technical units was remedied by attaching to it a number of Australian units: the 9th Divisional Cavalry, 2/9th and 2/11th Field Regiments, the 2/1st Anti-Tank Regiment, 2/15th Field Company, and two companies of the 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion.
- The Corps was given the task of defending against an attack through Turkey by a German force of eleven divisions plus airborne troops, the maximum force that it was calculated that the Turkish roads and railways would support.
- The 7th Division set about digging a fortress at Tripoli.



July 1941 – Atlantic Map

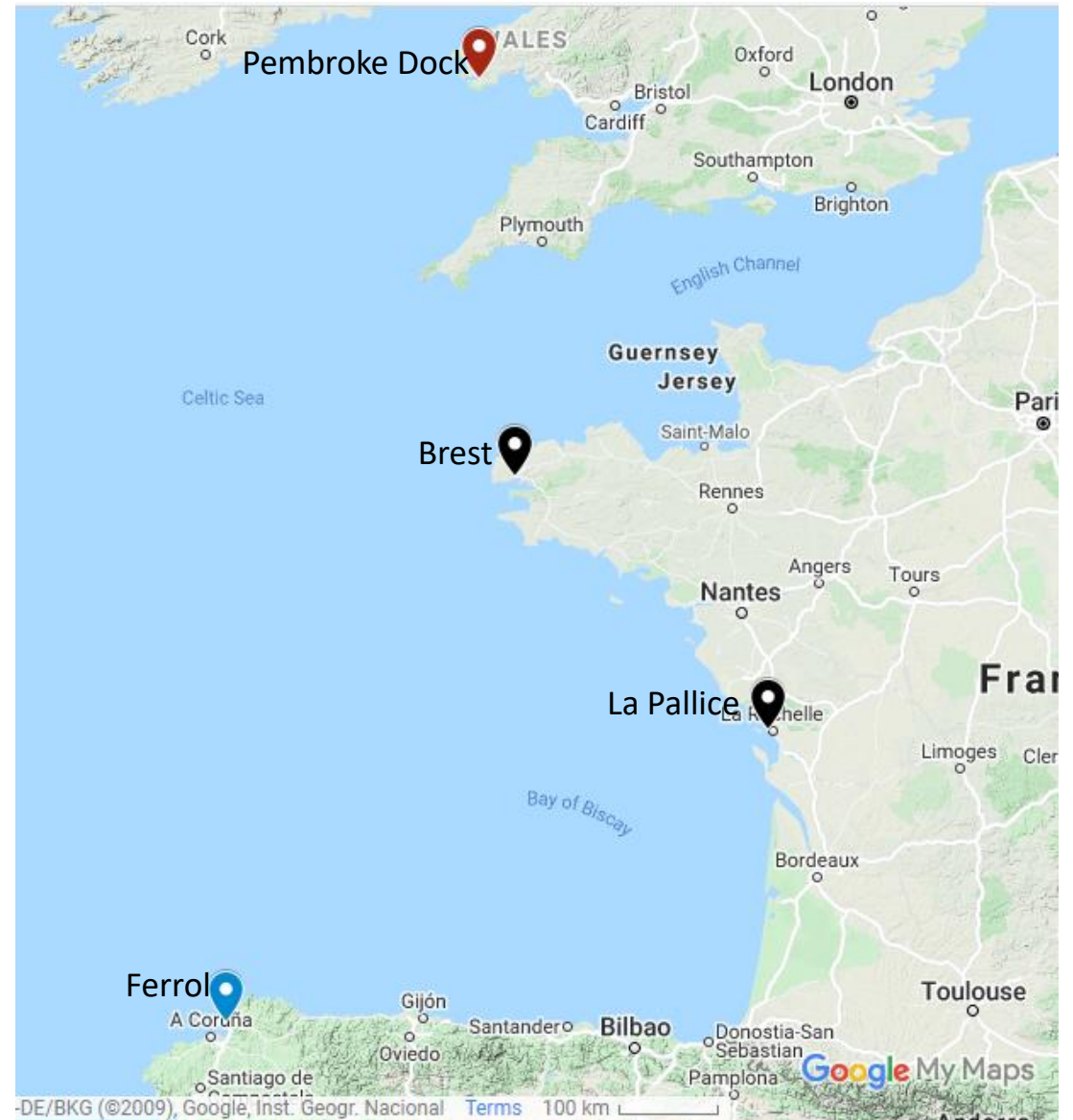
- On the night of 21st-22nd July the Scharnhorst slipped out of Brest and all aircraft in No. 19 Group were required to search for her.
- No. 10 was ordered to maintain a patrol off Cape Finisterre to detect any move against the Sierra Leone convoy route, and a reconnaissance was also made of Ferrol, the principal naval base in northern Spain where the battle cruiser might have found cooperation or asylum.
- When early on 23rd July Scharnhorst was identified in La Pallice all Coastal Command aircraft were employed on close watch off Brest and La Pallice, the Sunderland patrols during darkness being moved closer to the coast.
- Despite laborious air patrols Scharnhorst returned undetected to Brest the following night.
- All three ships, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen were in dry dock at Brest by the end of the month, and any immediate threat of departure was thus slight.



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.

July 1941 - Atlantic

- Despite a recurrence of maintenance difficulties due to contaminated petrol, in the improved weather of July 1941 No. 10 pilots were able to increase their operational effort by a considerable margin, the total of 664 hours being the highest since the record achievement in June 1940.
- Patrols over the Bay of Biscay were maintained both by day and night, but these searches were disappointing, for although two enemy submarines were sighted, one on the night of 4th-5th July and the other on 31st July, in each case the U-boat had dived before any attack could be pressed home.
- Before the end of the month aid was required for a convoy bound for Gibraltar which had been intercepted by several U-boats west of Ireland. Sunderlands from Pembroke Dock attempted but failed to escort this convoy whose position was some 600 miles distant but uncertain as it had changed course in an attempt to elude the submarines.



July 1941 - Atlantic

- Air-sea rescue duties and two flights to the Middle East further restricted the effort which the Sunderlands could maintain on Bay patrols.
- A Sunderland on 9th July was diverted from patrol to search for a dinghy belonging to a missing Hudson from No. 206 Squadron.
- Thurstun located the dinghy and in difficult conditions attempted to alight and pick up the survivors. He made a safe alighting but his port-outer engine was torn away by the force of the impact and the port float was broken.
- The Hudson crew were taken into the Sunderland which began to taxi towards the English coast at 4.30 p.m. During the night the destroyer, Brocklesby, which had sailed from Plymouth to tow the Sunderland home, arrived.
- Brocklesby then received orders to proceed to the reported position of a U-boat so embarked both aircraft crews and sank the Sunderland by gun fire.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

128371

BAY OF BISCAY. 1944-08-28. A SUNDERLAND AIRCRAFT PILOTED BY FLIGHT LIEUTENANT TILLEY OF NO. 10 SQUADRON TAKING OFF AFTER RESCUING SURVIORS OF A WELLINGTON WHO WERE SHOT DOWN BY A U-BOAT THE PREVIOUS DAY. SEE THE EFFECT PRODUCED BY THE IMPACT OF THE HULL ON THE HEAVY SWELL.

1 August 1941 - Britain

- On 16th June a second R.A.A.F. Spitfire squadron had begun to form at Baginton in Warwickshire. Again the commanding officer, Squadron Leader Brothers, his two flight commanders, and all ground personnel were supplied by the R.A.F., while the majority of pilots were Australians trained under the Empire Air Training Scheme.
- By the beginning of August No. 457 Squadron R.A.A.F. was fully operational and moved to Jurby on the Isle of Man. From Jurby and the neighbouring airfield at Andreas patrols and convoy escorts were flown in the Irish Sea, monotonous routine flying unrelieved by any contact with the enemy.
- To an increasing extent 457 acted as a school squadron for Spitfire pilots, and besides training a number of Canadians and Englishmen it supplied operational R.A.A.F. pilots to keep No. 452 fully manned, and also sent some pilots to the Middle East.



July/August – North Sea

- 29 July - The cargo ship Adam's Beck (2,816 GRT, 1941) was bombed and damaged in the North Sea off the mouth of the Tyne by Luftwaffe aircraft. She sank the next day.
- 1 August - Trident, a cargo ship (4,317 GRT, 1917) was bombed and damaged in the North Sea 4 nautical miles off the mouth of the Tyne by Luftwaffe aircraft. She sank the next day.
- 6 August – Seven cargo ships and a naval tug in Convoy FS 559 ran aground on Haisborough Sands, Norfolk and were all wrecked. 11,614 GRT of shipping were lost.
- 7 August - The MMS-class minesweeper HMS MMS 39 (255/295 t, 1941) struck a mine in the Thames Estuary and sank.
- 8 August - Convoy FN 503: The cargo ship Cordene (2,345 GRT, 1924) was bombed and sunk in the North Sea (53°00'32"N 1°48'30"E) by Luftwaffe aircraft. All crew were rescued.
- 9 August - The Norwegian cargo ship Dagny 1 (1,392 GRT, 1916) was bombed and damaged in the North Sea (61°40'N 6°10'W) by Luftwaffe aircraft. She was taken in tow by HMT Leicester City (Royal Navy) but sank the next day with the loss of six of the 74 people on board.



2 August 1941 - Washington

- On Saturday, August 2, President Roosevelt jauntily informed hovering reporters that he was going fishing. He boarded the presidential train at Union Station in Washington, D.C., and rode northward.
- The following day, at the Navy Submarine Base in New London, Conn., Roosevelt was lifted aboard the 165-foot presidential yacht, Potomac. His guests for the “fishing trip” included one of his most admired friends, the beautiful Princess Martha of Norway, and Prince Karl of Sweden, but no reporters.
- The yacht sailed down the River Thames and into an Atlantic sunset. The president described his objective as “serious fishing.” The Potomac was later spotted cruising off Martha’s Vineyard, and then FDR’s visitors were put ashore. The yacht then headed out for the open sea and disappeared from sight.
- In Washington, reporters suspected that something unusual was afoot because Undersecretary of State Welles; General Marshall and Admiral Stark, had all abruptly disappeared on vacations or undisclosed official business. No one in the capital outside the highest levels of the administration knew where the president was or what he was up to.
- “Franklin loved little mysteries of this kind,” his wife, Eleanor, said later.



Crown Princess Märtha (2nd from right) in 1944, with (from left to right) her husband Crown Prince Olav, Princess Juliana of the Netherlands, Eleanor Roosevelt (center), and Thomas J. Watson

2 August 1941 - Egypt

- The meeting of the Commanders-in-Chief on 2 August (Blamey standing in for Auchinleck) decided that a relief of the Tobruk garrison by the 6th British Division and the Polish 1st Carpathian Brigade would be carried out during the moonless periods of August and September, two brigade groups being relieved each period.



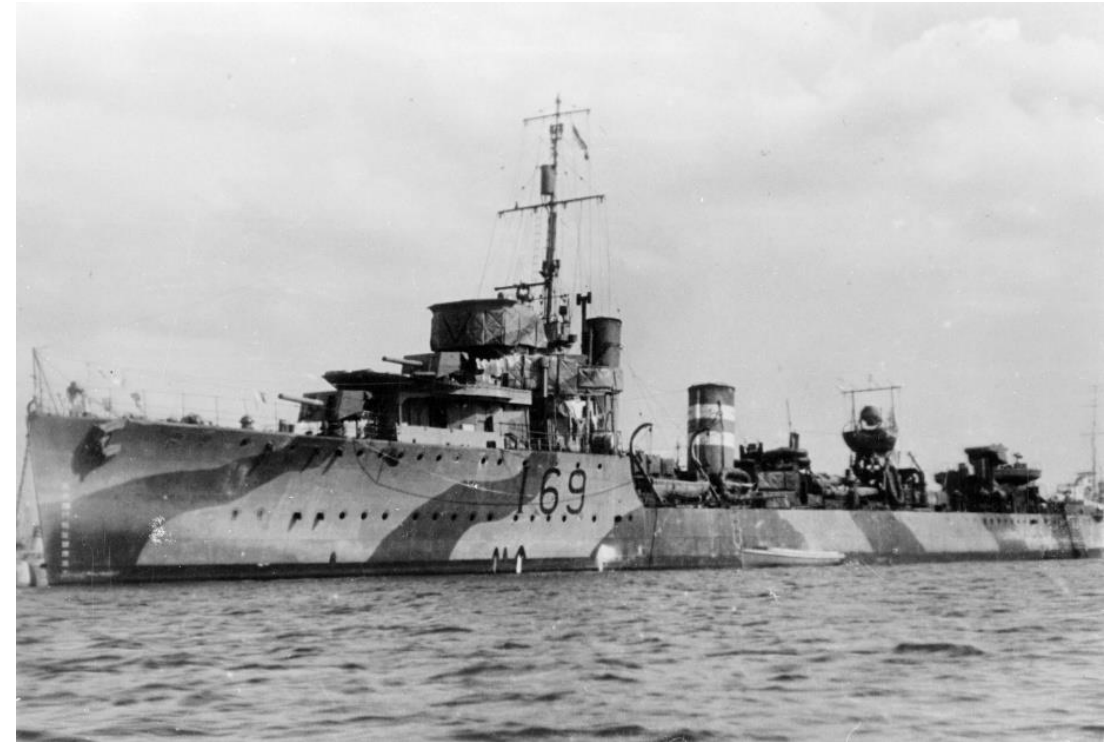
AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

SUK14941

Group portrait of Air Marshal Tedder, (AOC-in-C) of RAF Middle East (left), Lieutenant General Sir Pierre van Ryneveld, CGS South African Forces (centre), and Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Blamey, Deputy C-in-C Middle East.

3 August 1941 - Mediterranean

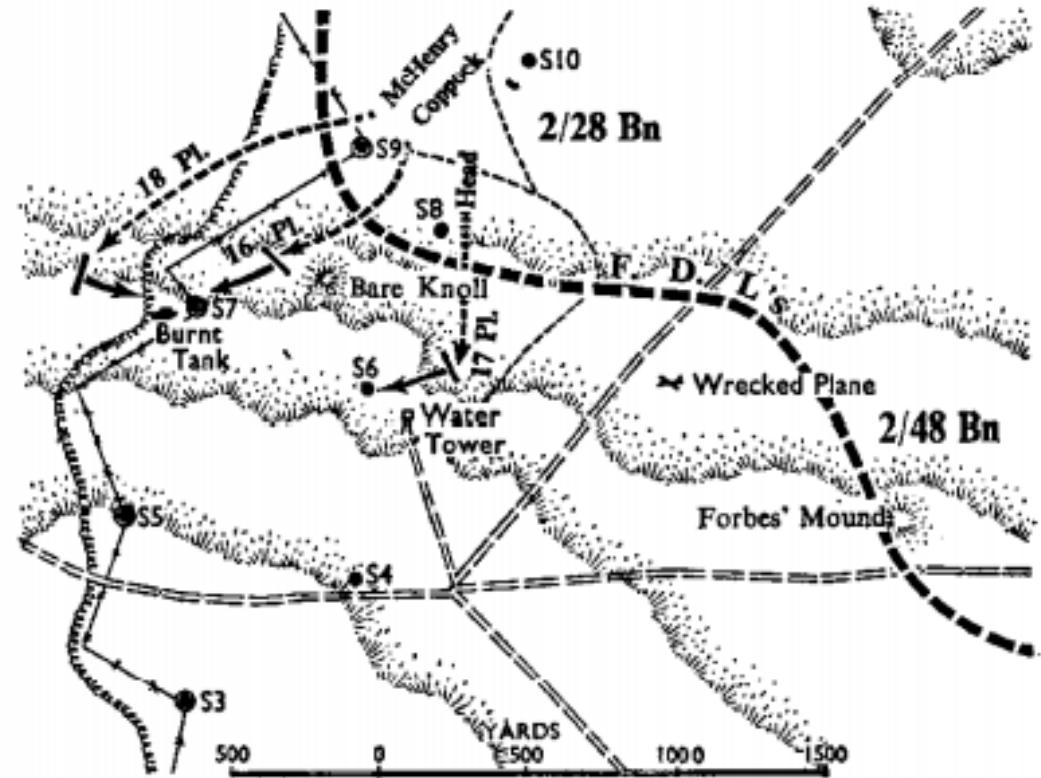
- Vendetta made her final Tobruk run on 2nd-3rd August. She had embarked for passage 4,263 troops, 220 prisoners of war and carried 616 tons of stores and ammunition into Tobruk.
- Thereafter she was employed on convoy work, mainly between Syria, Egypt, and Cyprus.
- She sailed from Alexandria on the 20th October for Singapore, where she arrived on the 8th December 1941.
- She had departed Sydney on 14 October 1939. The old destroyer was now in dire need of a major refit. The operations on the Tobruk run, when she had been compelled to operate at maximum speeds, had taken its toll of her engines and she was in little better shape than her sister ship Vampire, which had been forced to withdraw at the end of May.



Vendetta, circa August 1941

2 & 3 August 1941 – North Africa

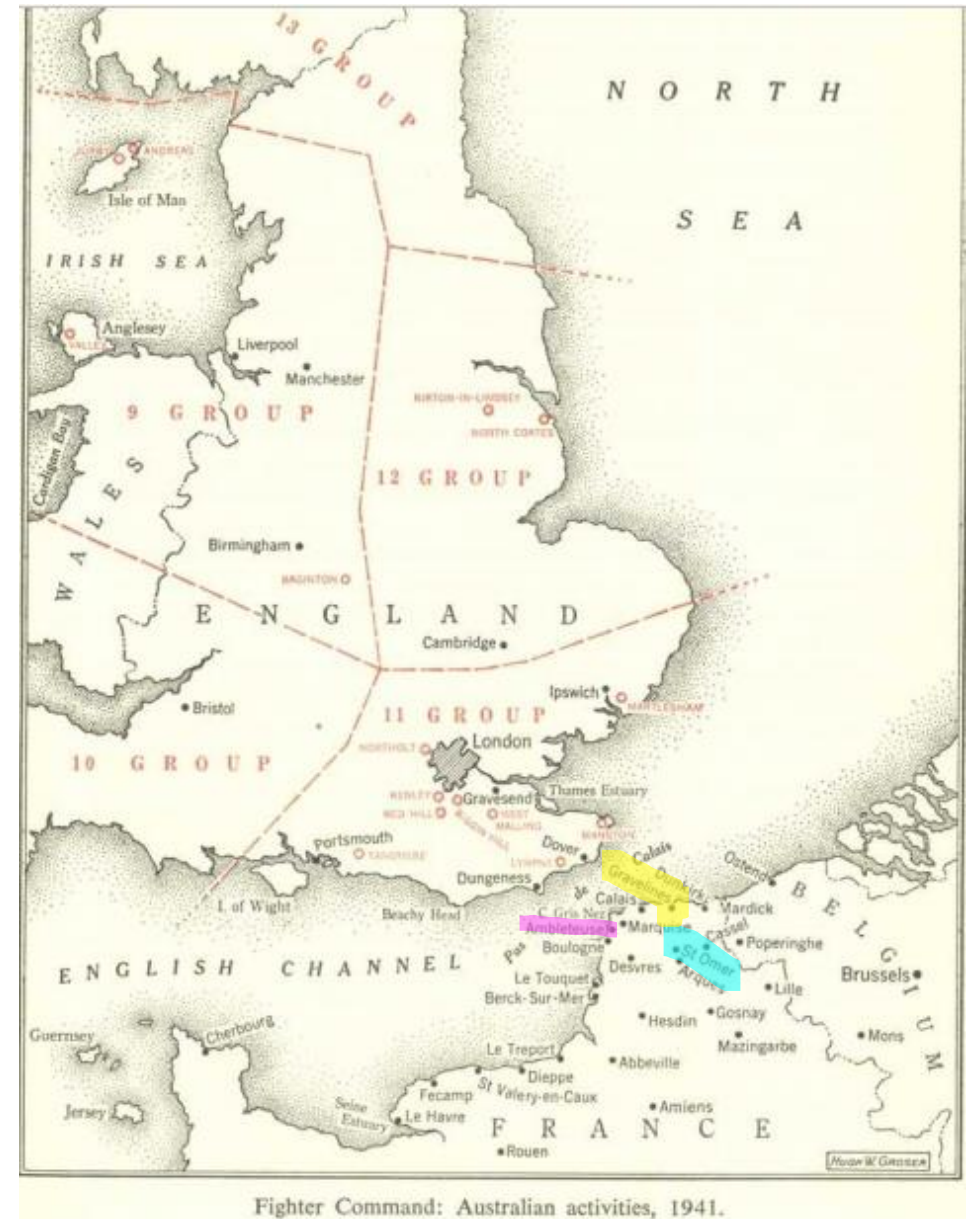
- On the nights of 2nd and 3rd August the Tobruk Garrison made two attacks on posts at the two corners of the salient.
- Each attack was in company strength but supported by sixty guns.
- Both attacks failed with very high casualties. In one 101 out of 143 infantry became battle casualties with 29 dead. In the other 83 out of 135 men were killed, wounded or missing.



The 2/28th Battalion attack, 2nd-3rd August

3 August 1941 - France

- On 3rd August No. 452 led No. 602 on an evening sweep in the Gravelines- St Omer- Ambleteuse area.
- At 7.20 p.m. five Me-109F's made a very spiritless attack on the leading section, but Finucane and Pilot Officer Eccleton* each claimed to have shot down one of the enemy.
- Soon afterwards another eighteen Messerschmitts were seen milling around in a loose circle and Finucane led the squadron to attack, himself claiming another enemy aircraft probably destroyed, but other individual combats were inconclusive and the Australians finally withdrew.
- *F-O W. D. Eccleton, 402232; 452 Sqn. Clerk; of Darlinghurst, NSW; b. Levin, NZ, 22 Feb 1916. Killed in action 19 Aug 1941.



- 4 to 10 August

10 PAGES—2c

ST. MARY'S, Sunday.—Despite the danger on the northern horizon, the A.E.F. was not getting all the recruits it needed, said the Army Minister (Mr. Spengler), addressing a recruiting rally on North to-day.

4 August 1941 - Brisbane

2 WAGGA R.A.A.F. MEN KILLED IN CRASH

MELBOURNE, Sunday. — When a single-engined training plane failed to come out of a spin at Mangolap, Riverina, this afternoon, two R.A.A.F. men serving at Wagga training school were killed. They were:

Flying Officer Stanley Norman Prowd, 25, single, of Windsor, Victoria, and

Aircraftman George McKinley Fraser, 20, single, of Bexley, N.S.W.

AUSTRALIANS IN R.A.F. CASUALTIES

LONDON, August 4.—A casualty list issued by the Air Ministry includes the names of the following Australian members of the R.A.F.:—

Missing, believed killed in action.—Pilot-Officer J. Barry and Leading-Aircraftsman W. T. R. Crago.

Missing.—Sergeants R. L. Barrett, A. F. R. Barton, W. M. McQuilty, W. M. Symmons, and Pilot-Officer S. L. St. Vincent Welch, and J. B. Sheridan.

Missing, believed killed on active service.—Flying-Officers A. H. Brewin, G. D. Robinson, Flight-Lieutenant A. R. Stevenson, Sergeant R. S. Gildea, and Corporal A. T. Thompson.

Died on active service.—Pilot-Officer D. McDaniel.

4 August 1941 - Melbourne

- With the risk of a Japanese war increasing the War Cabinet appointed a General Commanding Home Forces. They wanted a high-ranking officer with active service in the current war.
- Sir Ivan Mackay was appointed GOC Home Forces effective 1 September 1941. His task was to prepare the Militia to repel a Japanese invasion.
- General Mackay had commanded the 6th Division AIF in the victory in Libya and the defeat and withdrawal in Greece.



The GOC Home Forces, Lieut-General Sir Iven Mackay

4 August 1941 - Egypt

- On 4th August Blamey telegraphed Auchinleck again to say that, after further discussion with Admiral Cunningham and Air Marshal Tedder, he had agreed that the relief would be deferred till September, when a greater scale of air protection would be available.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

000305

4 August 1941 - Washington

- It may be that Roosevelt froze all Japanese assets merely to disconcert them and that he did not intend the flow of oil to Japan to cease completely.
- The president then departed Washington on 2 August for Newfoundland to meet secretly with Churchill.
- While he was gone Dean Acheson (photo), Assistant Secretary of State, used the President's order to impose a full trade embargo, thus stopping the shipment of oil to Japan.
- If this had not been the president's original intention he may have decided on his return that it would appear weak and appeasing to reverse the de facto oil embargo.



5 August 1941 - Brisbane

- A White House press release, handed to reporters on Friday, July 25, at Poughkeepsie, NY (near the President's home at Hyde Park), announced the issuance of Executive Order No. 8832, signed July 26, 1941, freezing Japanese assets in the United States.
- "This measure, in effect, brings all financial and import and export trade transactions in which Japanese interests are involved under the control of the Government, and imposes criminal penalties for violation of the Order."
- "The administration of the licensing system with respect to Chinese assets will be conducted with a view to strengthening the foreign trade and exchange position of the Chinese Government."
- Executive Order:
- BY VIRTUE Of the authority vested in me by section 5 (b) of the Act of October 6, 1917 (40 Stat. 415), as amended, and by virtue of all other authority vested in me, I, Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, do hereby amend Executive Order No. 8589 of April 10, 1940, as amended, by changing the period at the end of subdivision (j) of Section 3 of such Order to a semicolon and adding the following new subdivision thereafter:(k) June 14, 1941 —China, and Japan.

More Moves Against Japan Likely Soon

Courier-Mail Special Service and Australian Associated Press

THERE are indications that fresh economic moves against Japan are likely shortly.

A ban on the export of cotton to Japan is expected to be recommended by the United States' Economic Defence Board.

The United States Administration is reported to be arranging to obtain data on which to base additional economic measures against Japan if the diplomatic policy requires it.

Abnormally large re-exports of sugar from the Dutch East Indies to Thailand, where Japan is a big buyer, have resulted in Malaya introducing a quota system fixed at 100 per cent. of the average of the re-exports in 1939-40.

Economic pressure by the democratic powers on Japan is increasing, says The Times' diplomatic correspondent.

President Roosevelt's order regarding motor fuels and oils constitutes a heavy blow to Japan.

90,000 Troops Now Overseas

SYDNEY, Monday.—Australia had at overseas stations upwards of 90,000 troops, the equivalent of five or six divisions, said the Army Minister (Mr. Spender) at Manly to-night.

The total of men overseas would increase substantially in the future, he said. He was taking the necessary

5 August 1941 - Atlantic

- At first light on Tuesday, August 5, 1941, the Potomac eased close to the heavy cruiser USS Augusta off Martha's Vineyard, and Roosevelt was hoisted aboard. He joined Welles, Marshall, Stark, and other leading advisers for a top secret mission.
- The Augusta was the flagship of Admiral Ernest J. King, commander of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet.
- The cruiser and four escorting destroyers steamed north eastward, through fog-shrouded fishing banks. The flotilla dropped anchor on Thursday, August 7, in Placentia Bay, a desolate cove on Newfoundland's southeastern coast, near the fishing village of Argentia.
- Sleet began to fall, and two days of miserable weather followed.



The USS Potomac was built in 1934 as the Coast Guard cutter Electra. The 165-foot vessel, displacing 416 tons with cruising speeds of 10 to 13 knots, was commissioned as a U.S. Navy vessel in 1936, renamed the USS Potomac, and served as Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Presidential Yacht.

6 August 1941 - Washington

- On August 6th the Japanese special envoy in Washington, presented a proposal for a general settlement.
 - Japan would undertake not to advance further into South East Asia, and offered to evacuate Indo China on settlement of “the China incident”.
 - In return the United States were to renew trade relations and help Japan to obtain all the raw materials she required from the South West Pacific.



Japanese Ambassador Admiral Nomura (left) and Special Envoy Kurusu (right) meet Secretary of State Hull on 17 November 1941.

7 August 1941 - Melbourne

EAST of Australia Station

Admty.0105B/5/8

N.Z.C.I.B.
Intelligence Summary
No.22

5. It is reported that "LE TRIOMPHANT" Free French light cruiser, has left Great Britain for Tahiti on a special mission. "LE TRIOMPHANT" has been instructed that if war breaks out in the Far East after her arrival within the limits of the N.Z. Station she is to make for Wellington and place herself under immediate operational service control of the N.Z.N.B. and under the strategic control of the C. in C. China.

Comment - No warship is at present stationed at Tahiti or in its vicinity and it is known that the French there feel that their defence has been neglected and that they have certain fears of a Vichy French coup assisted by the "AMIRAL CHARNER" (sloop) stationed at Saigon or the "DUMONT D'URVILLE (Sloop) now at Madagascar. The visit of "LE TRIOMPHANT" may help to make more stable a very unstable political situation.

7 August 1941 - Melbourne

C.O.I.S.0911/5Z

Most secret sources

5/8

C.O.I.S.0911/5Z

10. Japanese Situation - Japan's mobilisation is reported to be continuing. About 700,000 reservists have been called up, the majority being sent to Korea or Manchukuo. It is estimated that 500,000 men have been called up in Japan during June and July for eventual service in Manchukuo. Preparations, possibly to attack U.S.S.R., should be completed this month.

C.O.I.S.0911/5Z

13. N.E.I. - Dutch regulations for the freezing of Japanese credits have caused a stoppage of all trade with Japan.

Glenn (N)

[Signature] (M)

AS Bradshaw (A)

C.O.I.C.

7/8/41

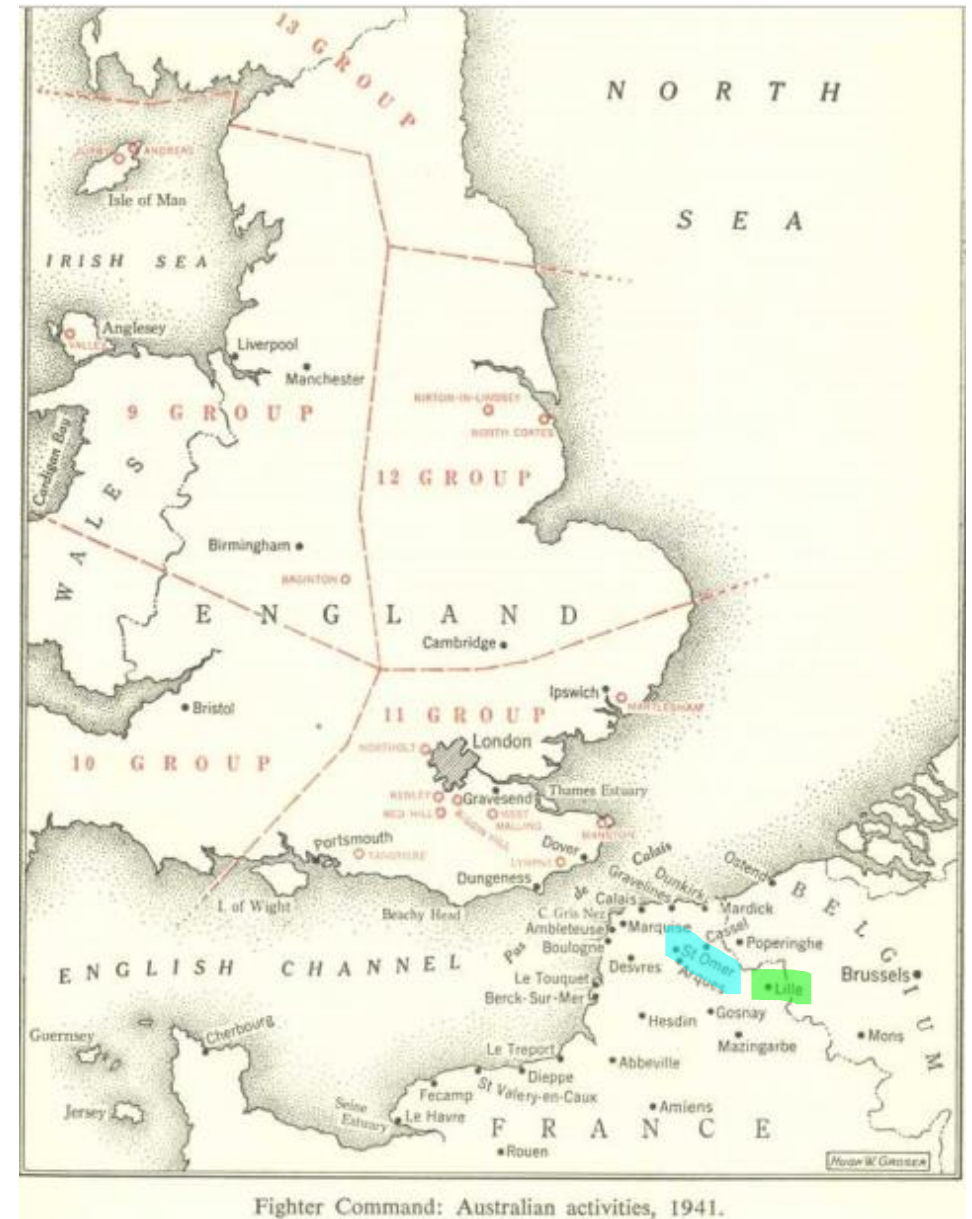
7 August 1941 - Egypt

- Mr Menzies was perturbed that he had received no response from Mr Churchill to his telegram of 20th July.
- He telegraphed again on 7th August, asking for an early reply. After mentioning the Australian War Cabinet's concern at the Tobruk garrison's decline in "health resistance" and recalling that all three Australian divisions had latterly been much engaged in operations —the 9th at Tobruk continuously since March—he concluded:
- "As fresher troops are available I must press for early relief of 9th Division and re-assembly of Australian Corps."
- The text of this message was telegraphed to General Blamey, who hastened to reassure the Australian Prime Minister.
- "Policy agreed to and plans prepared," he replied. "As scale air protection available not yet sufficient have felt obliged to agree to postponement to September, which will also give advantage of longer nights."



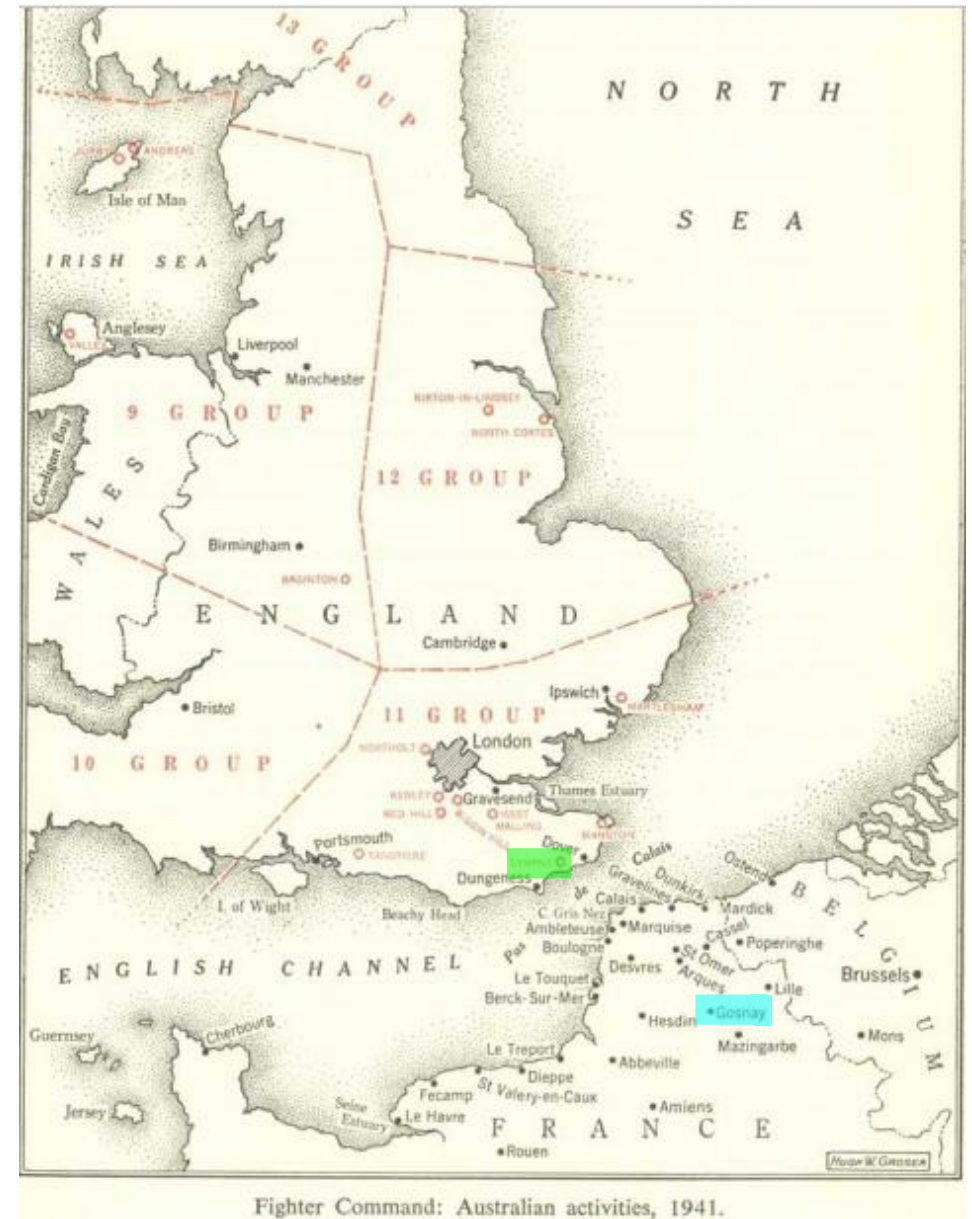
7 August 1941 - France

- On 7th August No. 452 engaged in two successful Circuses. In the morning the Australians were part of the close escort of six Blenheims attacking **St Omer**,
- and in the afternoon part of the high cover to a similar force bombing an electric power house at **Lille**, and though they themselves had no combats, the target-support squadrons in each case achieved victories.



9 August 1941 - France

- On 9th August No. 452 was detailed as part of the target-support wing for an attack on Gosnay.
- Flying at 19,000- 20,000 feet throughout, the Australians were split up by attacking enemy formations as soon as they crossed the French coast at Mardick at 11.11 a.m. Red and Yellow sections led by Finucane and Pilot Officer Thorold - Smith were first engaged by about thirty Me-109's, after which dog-fights developed all over the sky and a total of 100 enemy aircraft were estimated to be in action against the whole wing.
- A confused but lively combat continued all the way to the target and back to the French coast, No. 452 claiming five enemy aircraft destroyed for the loss of three Spitfires and damage to another, which, although it had its airscrew shot away, successfully reached Lympne in Kent.
- Finucane whose prompt reaction and leadership during the initial attack gave the starboard sections (Red and Yellow) a great tactical advantage, shot down one Messerschmitt and shared with Thorold-Smith and Sergeant Chisholm in the destruction of two more. Chisholm also joined Pilot Officer Lewis in shooting down a fourth aircraft and Pilot Officer Truscott accounted for the fifth.



Fighter Range

- The question of fighter range arose in connexion to circus operations in 1941. Only increased range could confer the operational initiative upon the British fighters.
- Sir Charles Portal, Chief of the Air Staff (photo), was convinced that increased range could only be provided at the expense of performance and manoeuvrability.
- “The long range fighter” he told the Prime Minister on May the 27th 1941 “whether built specifically as such or whether given increased range by fitting extra tanks will be at a disadvantage compared with the short range high performance fighter”



Fighter Range

- Action this Day
- Prime Minister to CAS 2 June 1941
- I am glad you are pressing on with this vital business [of lengthening the range of fighters]. Anyone can see you will have to pay in gunfire and manoeuvrability for the advantage of range but this may be well worthwhile.
- I do not regard your last sentence as exhaustive. Machines must be modified so as to enable us to fight at particular points in daylight both by bombers and fighters. This is particularly true of the Aegean archipelago where we ought to be able to bomb the Cretan and Dodecanese aerodromes by daylight under fighter protection. We have got to adapt machines to the distances which have to be traversed.
- Again, now that so much of the German Air Force is moving east and France is largely weakened, we ought to attempt daylight raids into Germany for bombing on a severe scale. For this the range of our fighters must be extended.
- If this is not done you will be helpless in the West and beaten in the East.



Fighter Range

- Next day (June the 3rd) replying to Churchill's urging that fighter range must be increased, Portal (portrait) repeated his conviction, that long range fighters could never hold their own against short range fighters and were suitable for "regular employment only in areas where they will not be opposed by enemy short range fighters"



9 August 1941 - Atlantic

- On 9 August 1941, the British battleship HMS Prince of Wales steamed into Placentia Bay, with Churchill on board, and met the American heavy cruiser USS Augusta, where Roosevelt and members of his staff were waiting.
- Once they met, Churchill and Roosevelt were silent for a moment until Churchill said, "At long last, Mr. President." Roosevelt replied, "Glad to have you aboard, Mr. Churchill."
- Churchill then delivered a letter from King George VI to Roosevelt and made an official statement, but a movie sound crew that was present failed to record it despite two attempts.



The Royal Navy battleship HMS Prince of Wales off Argentia, Newfoundland, after bringing Prime Minister Winston Churchill across the Atlantic to meet with U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt. U.S. Navy, photographed from USS Augusta (CA-31).

9 August 1941 - Atlantic



President Franklin D. Roosevelt entertained at dinner for British Prime Minister Winston Churchill aboard the U.S. cruiser Augusta on Aug. 9, 1941, somewhere in the Atlantic. AP

Mediterranean

- 28 July - The Italian cargo ship Federico C. (1,466 GRT, 1920) was torpedoed and sunk in the Mediterranean Sea west of Calabria (39°28'00"N 15°52'30"E) by HMS Utmoot.
- The Italian coaster Montepioni (742 or 747 GRT, 1917) was torpedoed and sunk in the Tyrrhenian Sea 12 nautical miles (22 km) north of Cape Comino, Sardinia (39°51'N 13°46'E) by HMS Olympus (Royal Navy). It sank the next day. HMS Olympus was an Odin-class submarine, a class originally designed for the Royal Australian Navy to cope with long distance patrolling in Pacific waters. Two boats (Otway and Oxley) were originally ordered for the Royal Australian Navy, but transferred to the RN in 1931 because of the poor economic situation in Australia. Three modified boats were built for the Chilean Navy as the Capitan O'Brien-class submarines in 1929.
- 2 August - The Adua-class submarine Tembien (686/843 t, 1938) was rammed and sunk in the Mediterranean Sea off Tunis, Tunisia (36°12'N 12°40'E) by HMS Hermione (Royal Navy) with the loss of all 42 crew.
- 3 August - The Italian coaster Elisa (216 GRT, 1903) was bombed and sunk in the Mediterranean Sea off Benghazi, Libya by Royal Air Force aircraft.
- 6 August - The Italian cargo ship Bombardiere (613 GRT, 1918) was torpedoed and sunk in the Mediterranean Sea 6 nautical miles off Fregene, Lazio (41°47'N 12°06'E) by HNLMS O 24 (Royal Netherlands Navy).
- The Italian cargo ship Nita (6,813 GRT) was torpedoed and sunk in the Mediterranean Sea 20 nautical miles south west of Lampedusa (35°15'N 12°17'E) by Fairey Swordfish aircraft of 830 Squadron, Fleet Air Arm.
- The Italian coaster Margherita Madre (296 GRT) was torpedoed and sunk in the Mediterranean Sea 15 nautical miles (28 km) off Anzio, Lazio (41°23'N 12°38'E) by HNLMS O 24 (Koninklijke Marine).

Mediterranean

- 28 July - The lighter LCT 8 was bombed and sunk in the Mediterranean Sea off Bardia, Libya by Luftwaffe aircraft with the loss of eight crew.
- 29 July - An LCT Mk 1-class landing craft tank (372 t, 1940) was bombed and sunk by Junkers Ju 87 aircraft off Sidi Barani.
- 30 July - The Grampus-class submarine HMS Cachalot (1,810/2,157 t, 1938) was rammed and sunk in the Mediterranean Sea by Generale Achille Papa (Regia Marina) with the loss of one crew member. Survivors were rescued and taken as prisoners of war.
- 3 August - The tanker, Desmoulea (8,120 GRT, 1939), already disabled by a torpedo attack in January, was bombed and severely damaged at Suez, Egypt by Heinkel He 111 aircraft. She was subsequently used as a hulk.
- The Belgian cargo ship Escaut (1,087 GRT, 1938) was bombed and sunk in Attika Bay, Suez, Egypt by Heinkel He 111 aircraft with the loss of three crew.
- 7 August - The French tug Amiral Lacaze (332 GRT) was bombed and sunk at Famagusta, Cyprus by Luftwaffe aircraft.

Mediterranean



- Thanks for your attention
- Hopefully back at USC next week.