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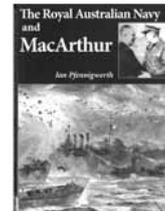
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BOOK REVIEW

The Royal Australian Navy and MacArthur

by Captain Ian Pfennigwerth, PhD, RAN (Retd)

Rosenberg Publishing Pty Limited: Dural, NSW; 2009; 208 pp.; ISBN 978-1-87705-883-7; RRP \$49.95 (paperback); Ursula Davidson Library cal no. 740 PFEN 2009.



This is a very professional work. It follows the author's previous books, *A man of intelligence: the life of Captain Eric Nave RAN (Retd)*, which covered Australia's naval intelligence; *The Australian cruiser Perth 1939 – 1942*, which tells the story of HMAS *Perth* in the early days of World War II from its successes in the Mediterranean to its sinking in the Dutch East Indies; and *Tiger territory: the untold story of the Royal Australian Navy in Southeast Asia from 1948 to 1971*, a period which overlapped Pfennigwerth's own operational service in the Royal Australian Navy.

The Royal Australian Navy and MacArthur is very well researched. It records the part played by the men and women of the Royal Australian Navy between 1942 and 1945 in the eventual defeat of Japanese forces and their expulsion from the territories they had captured in Papua, New Guinea, New Britain, the Philippines and Borneo. It focuses particularly on the Australian contribution to the Allied campaign against the Japanese in the South-West Pacific Area under the overall command of General Douglas MacArthur.

By 1945, MacArthur's forces had advanced from Papua to the Philippines and Borneo, an achievement based on 22 amphibious assaults. While soldiers and marines did the ground fighting and MacArthur's air

forces eventually ruled the skies, it was the ships of the United States and Australian navies that delivered the troops, equipment and supplies to the battle fronts and supported them there.

There is comment about MacArthur's style of leadership, his sidelining of some Allied Land Force commanders and also his failure to give proper recognition to the importance of Allied control of the sea. There are chapters on the development of the Royal Australian Navy, the naval command organisation, cruisers and destroyers, sloops and frigates, corvettes and motor launches. Other chapters cover the part played by the hydrographers, convoys and convoy signalmen, coast watchers, naval beach commandos and landing ships. Throughout, there are very good illustrations and interesting comments and reminiscences from crew members and those who took part in the operations described. It has an excellent bibliography, notes and an index.

I commend this book to readers who wish to know more about the contribution of Australia's navy to the Pacific war or who seek another perspective on the idiosyncratic part played by MacArthur in the eventual Allied victory.

David Leach