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“Operation Heritage”

and the Land Down Under



On the afternoon of February 17, 1966, Hornet and four destroyers of Antisubmarine Warfare Group ONE sailed from Tokyo Bay to begin an eleven day journey through the great naval battlefields of World War II in the Pacific. The officers and men of Hornet, McCain, Epperson, Nicholas and Fletcher, having just returned from Seventh Fleet operations in the South China Sea, paid tribute to their comrades in arms of a generation before who had halted Japanese aggression, then liberated its victims in a great naval advance northward. Revisited were the landmarks of that advance—Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal, Coral Sea and others—indelible names in history. Remembered were those who fought and died for that advance.

On March first, the voyaging ships arrived in Sydney, Australia for a goodwill visit of six memorable days. Homeward-bound on the seventh, the Hornet, after a brief combined exercise with the Royal Australian Navy, completed “Operation Heritage” with a ceremonial tribute to her predecessor, Hornet CV-8, which was sunk in nearby waters during the struggle for Guadalcanal in 1942. This album records Hornet’s unique cruise.



Tokyo Bay

Ha-Ha Jima & Chi-Chi Jima

Iwo Jima

Saipan-Tinian

Truk

Equator Crossing

New Britian & New Guinea

The Solomon Slot

Guadalcanal

Coral Sea

Sydney

CV-8 Memorial

18 February



A Hornet tracker takes a look at Ha-Ha Jima of the Bonin Island chain 500 miles south of Japan.

A generation ago Hornet aircraft attacked Chi-Chi Jima, then an important Japanese inner-defense island. A cliffside structure quickens the memory of this now desolate Pacific rock.



21 February

We remembered Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz as we traversed the waters of his great victories.



“The rich legend which characterized his duty spanned over a half a century of service to the nation. His wise decisions and selfless devotion during the crucial years of World War II stand as the basis of our great strength in the Pacific today. The Pacific command has lost a gallant shipmate.”

ADMIRAL U.S.G. SHARP
COMMANDER US FORCES PACIFIC



*The Marines return
to Iwo Jima.*

19 February

On the 21st anniversary of the marines' landing on this historic island, Hornet marines reenacted the classic Mt. Suribachi flag raising as present day naval power steams in the background.

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*Modern Marines
land by air.....*



*.....And
traditionally
by the sea.*

*The 556 foot
climb up volcanic
Suribachi.*



*Remnants of a
great struggle*



*Capt. Dahlquist's
peaceful invaders*

20 February



“today is Epperson day...in honor of a brave man and a fine ship.”

At the memorial on Saipan honoring those United States Marines who gave their lives there in June 1944, Fireman John Joseph Brown of USS Epperson places a wreath in memory of the brave young man for whom his ship is named, Private Harold G. Epperson. In the great amphibious assault against the Japanese stronghold, Epperson saved the lives of two compatriots when he threw himself on a live grenade. For this unusual heroism, Epperson was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

USS Epperson



Carrier power in war....



A World War II carrier strike force assembles. Tinian, taken from the Japanese by amphibious and carrier-based aircraft attacks in July 1944, was the staging base for history's first atomic bomb thirteen months later.

....and in peace.



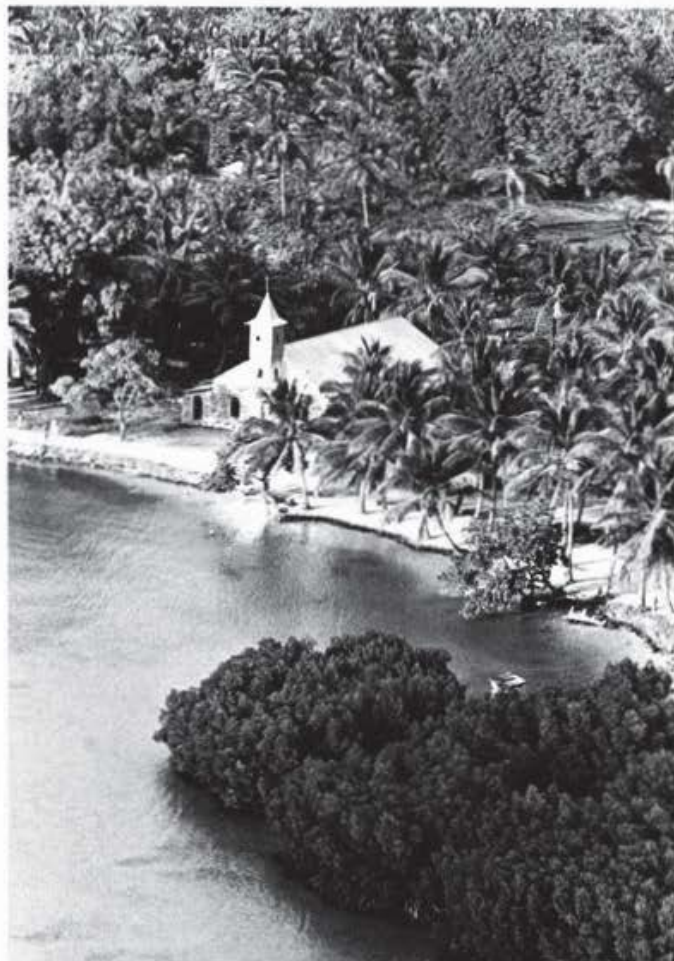
Hornet steams off Tinian during "Operation Heritage."

22 February



“Impregnable Truk”: a shattered myth

The Truk archipelago, Japan's most important air base and anchorage in the central Pacific, was neutralized in February 1944 in a massive raid by the combined carrier and surface forces of the U.S. Fifth Fleet. An old picture finds a Japanese Cruiser in desperate evasion of the American strike. Today, a dormant fighter strip and a tranquil shoreline village meet the visitor's eye.





*The expressions
of a Free
Pacific*



25 February

GUADALCANAL



This southernmost of the Solomon Islands was the scene of a six-month struggle for territorial control. The Japanese, having succumbed to an American invasion in August 1942, sought to recapture the island and its valuable Henderson Air Field. The sustained effort of the under-supplied American Defense Forces gave us our first territorial victory in the South Pacific.

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Destroyers revisit the "Slot"

Destroyers Fletcher and Nicholas, the Navy's oldest active Tin Cans, steam down the "Slot" of the Solomons. Both had brilliant combat records in the campaign to secure these islands.



24 February

*Lae, New Guinea:
a pilot revisits an
old battlefield*



LCDR E. P. Aurand strafed and caused to run aground a Japanese merchantman near Lae in 1944. Her bow still visible above the sands of time, the fallen target was inspected by the now Admiral Aurand and an Australian Naval Officer.

*Rabaul, New
Britain: Japan's
southwestern
Pacific
headquarters,
now a prosperous
provincial capital*



26 February

*Commemoration of the great allied victory in
the Coral Sea.*



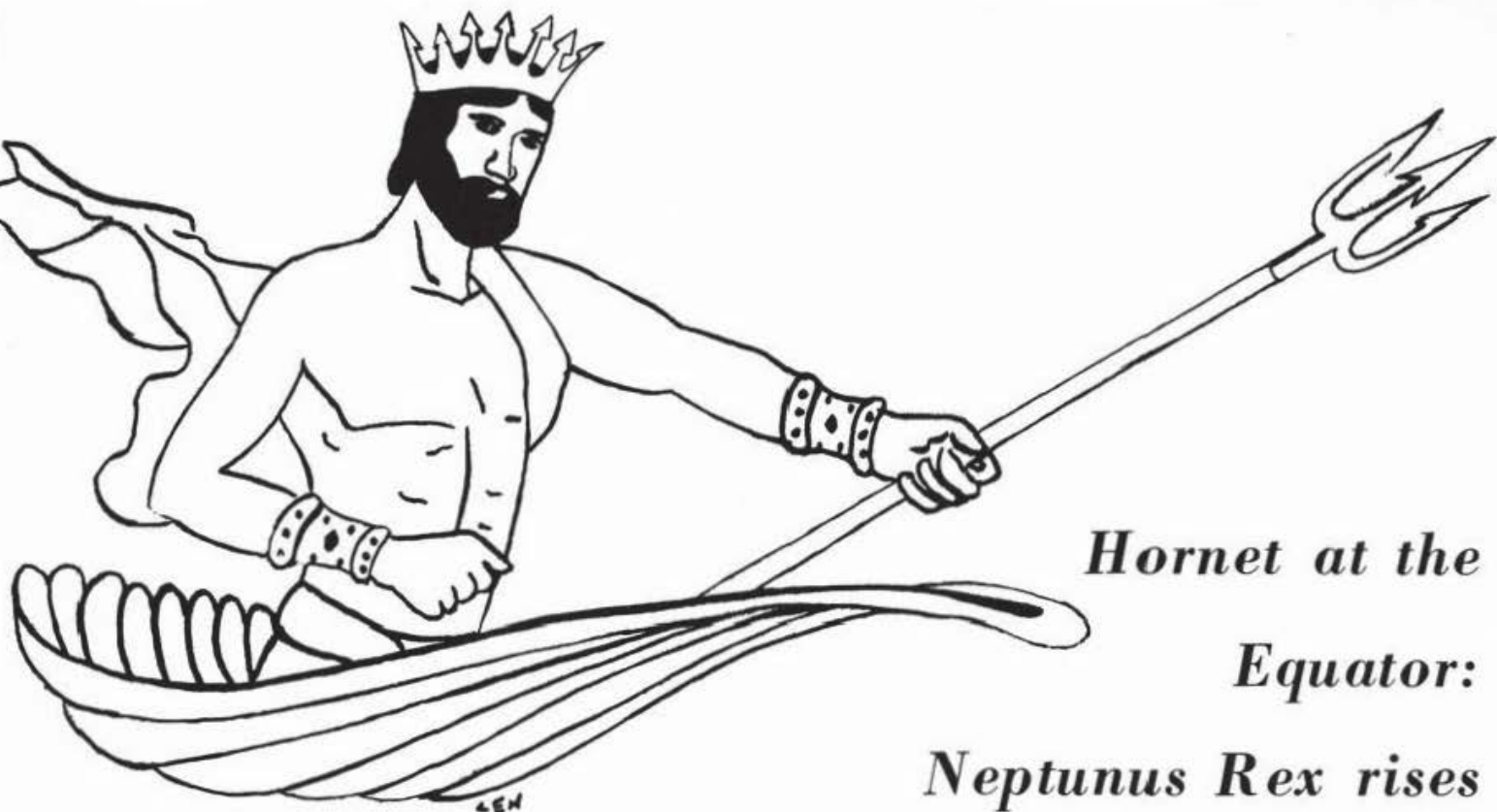
In May 1942, the combined naval forces of the United States and Australia halted the Japanese southward advance in the Battle of the Coral Sea. For the first time in naval history, opposing warships—carriers—never came within visual sight of each other. Naval air power had arrived.



A wreath is offered to the sea.

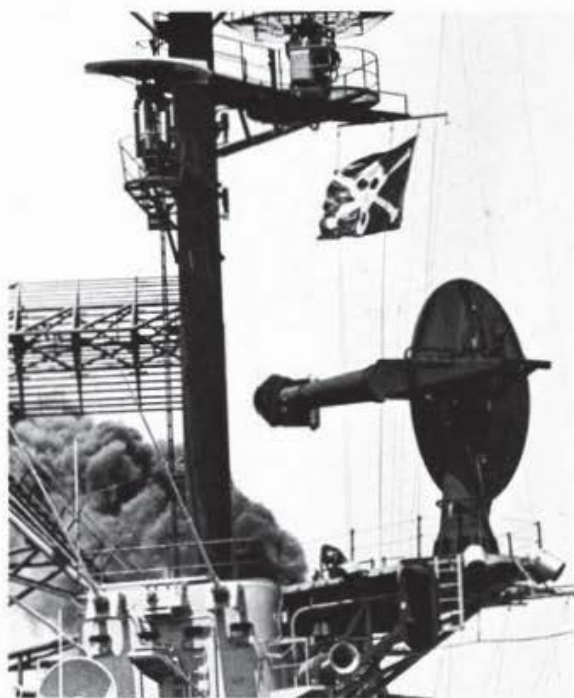
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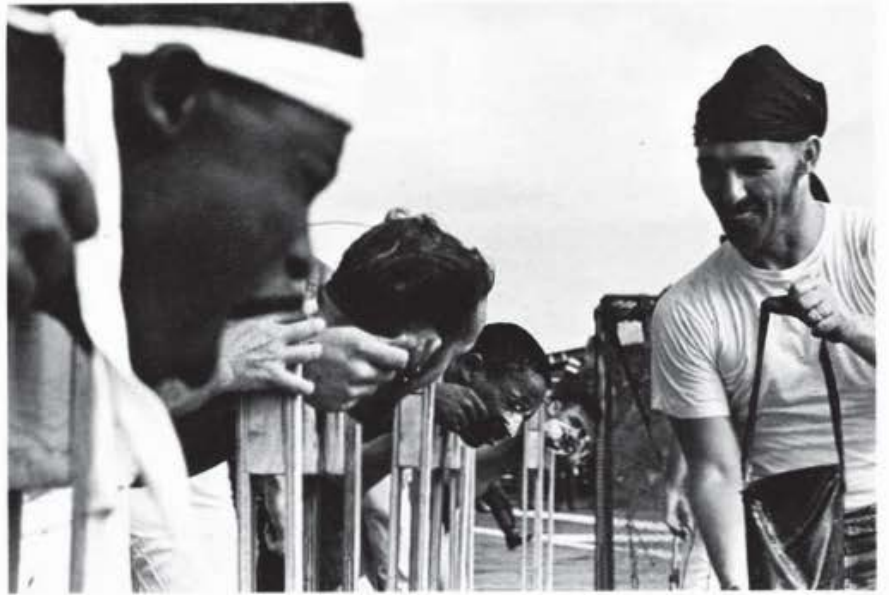
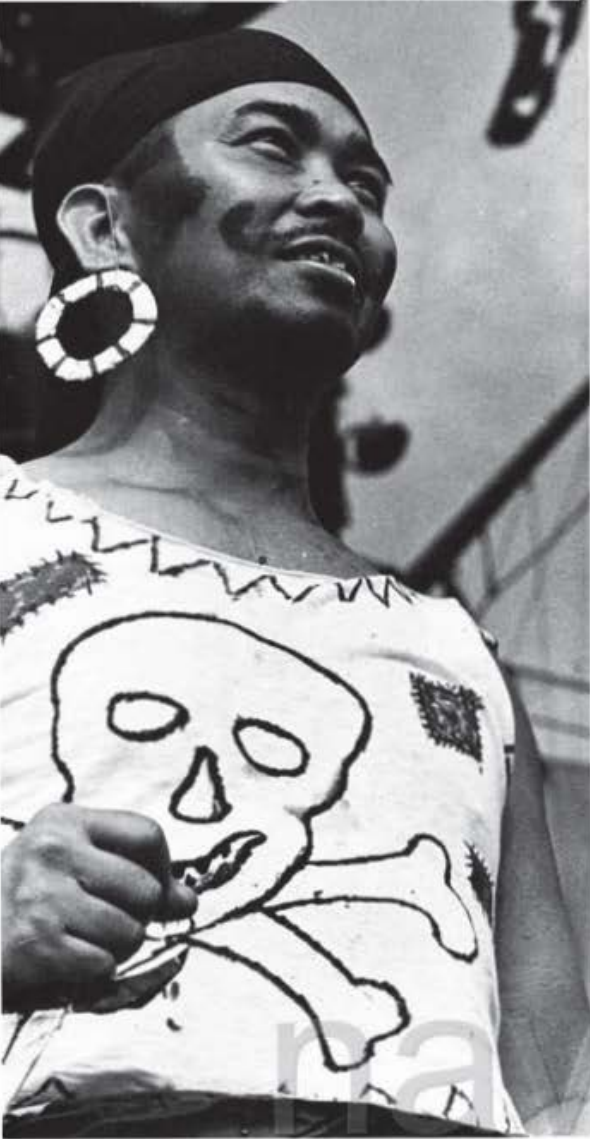


*Hornet at the
Equator:
Neptunus Rex rises
from the mysterious depths*

The traditional initiation ceremony in which the Shellbacks admit the Pollywogs into the Solemn Mysteries of the Ancient Order of the Deep was colorful, bizarre, and, for most, painful. Below, Davy Jones, King Neptune's envoy, reviews Hornet pollywogs the day before as the skull and crossed bones fly from the mast.



Shellback Justice





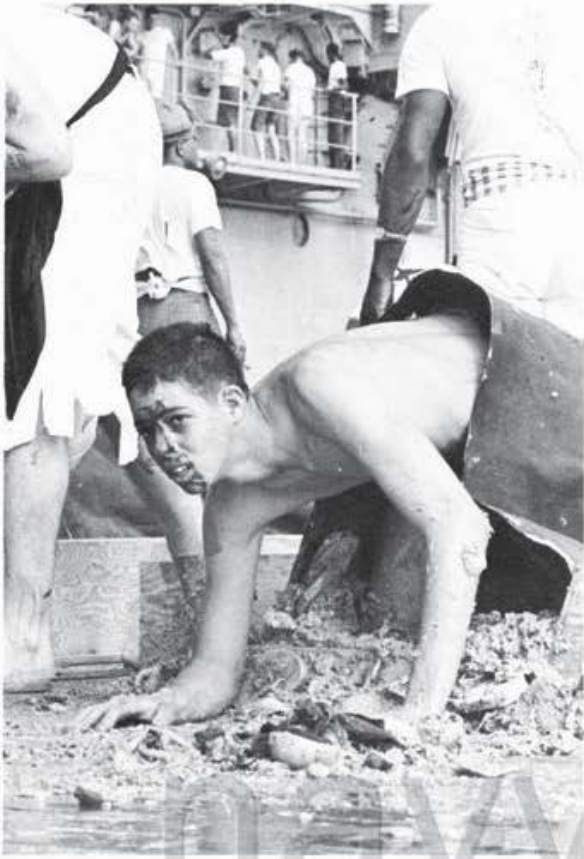
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For both young and old, there is no mercy.



*Hornet grows
a beard*



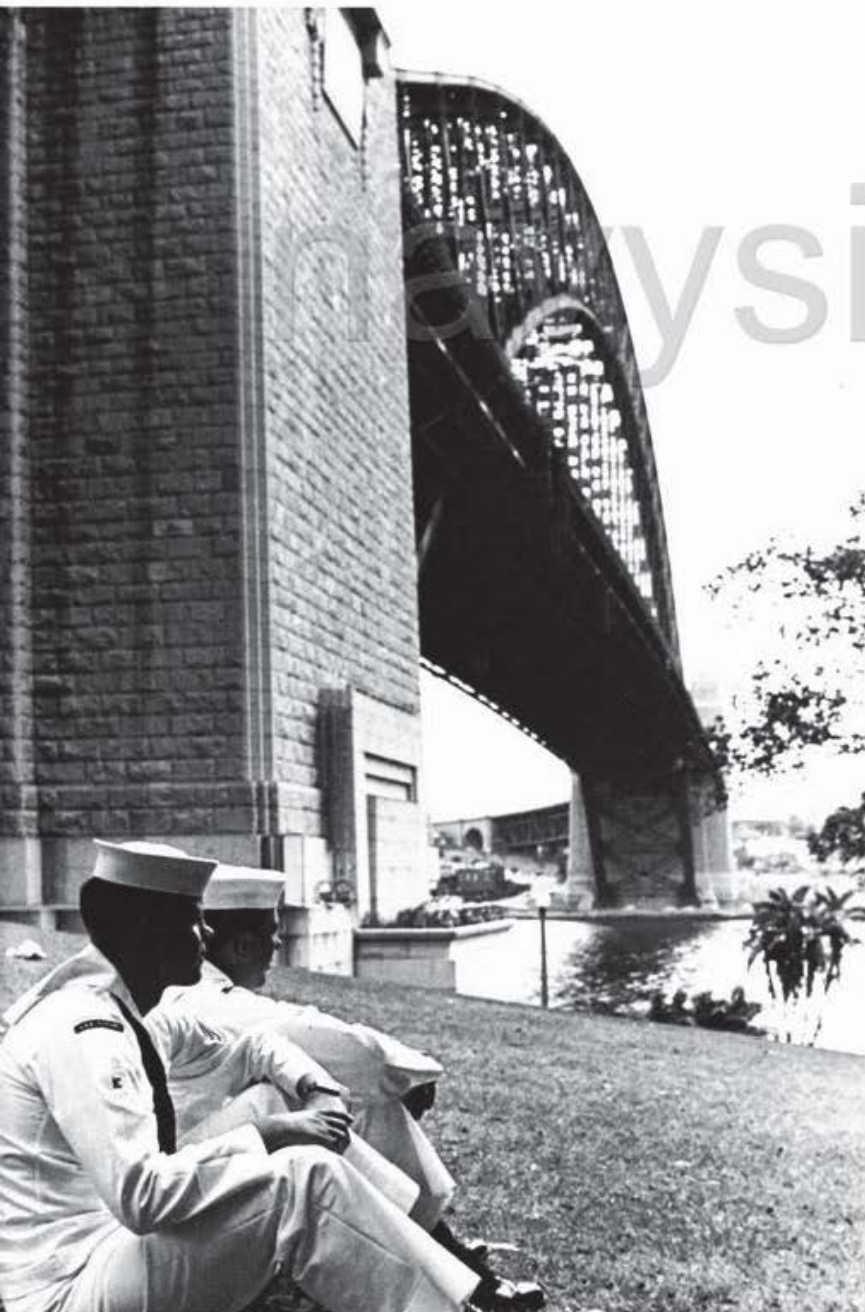
Black beard Ken Hess, Aerographer, wins first prize.

Hornet arrives in Sydney on 1 March

Hornet enters Sydney Harbor. Already the charms of the city are apparent: the gentle tautness of the Sydney Bridge, Sydney's unfinished symphony of form, the Opera House, and the ancient mid-harbor fortress.



*Sights
of
Sydney*





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“Hey Yank!” was the cry. “Can I help you in anyway....buy you a beer....how about a friendly chat.”

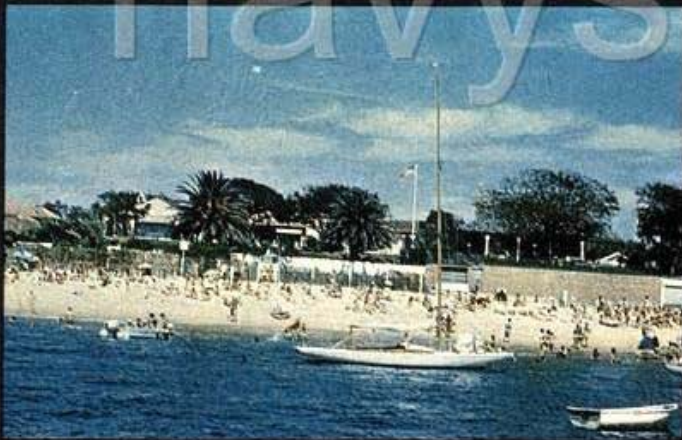


Only in Australia....





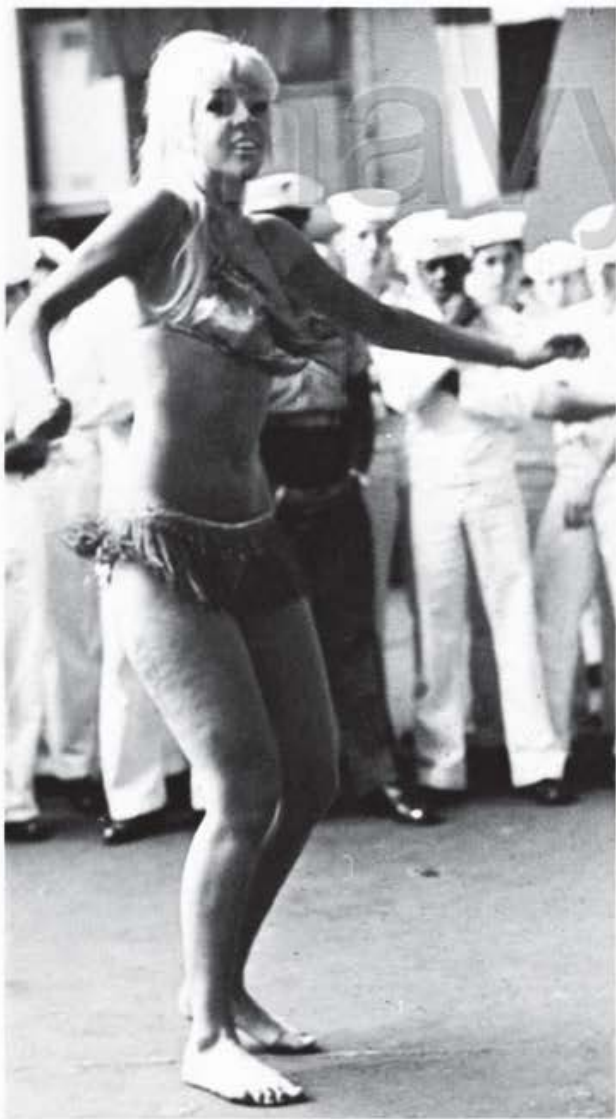
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“Miss Pretzel”

HMAS Melbourne joins USS Hornet



Four units of the Royal Australian Navy joined Hornet for a 36-hour antisubmarine warfare exercise in waters east of Sydney.

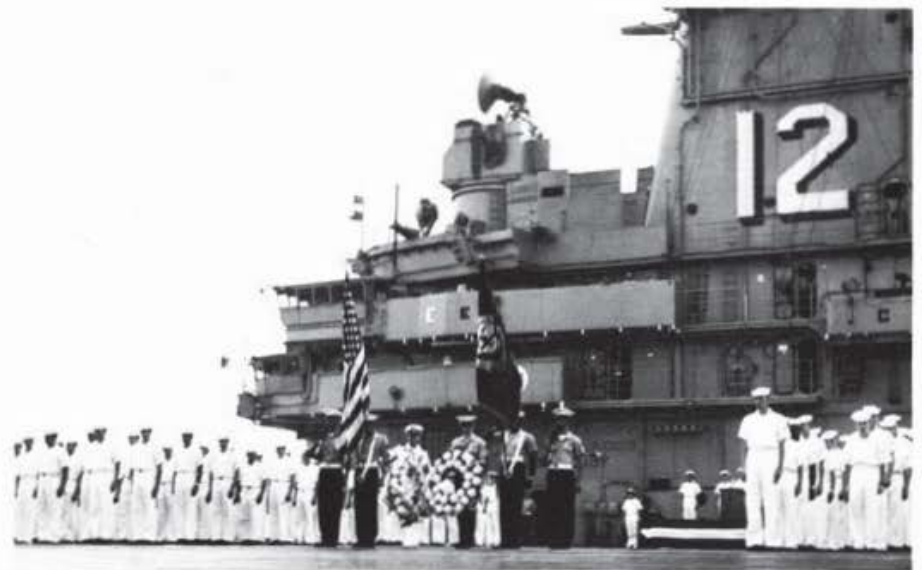


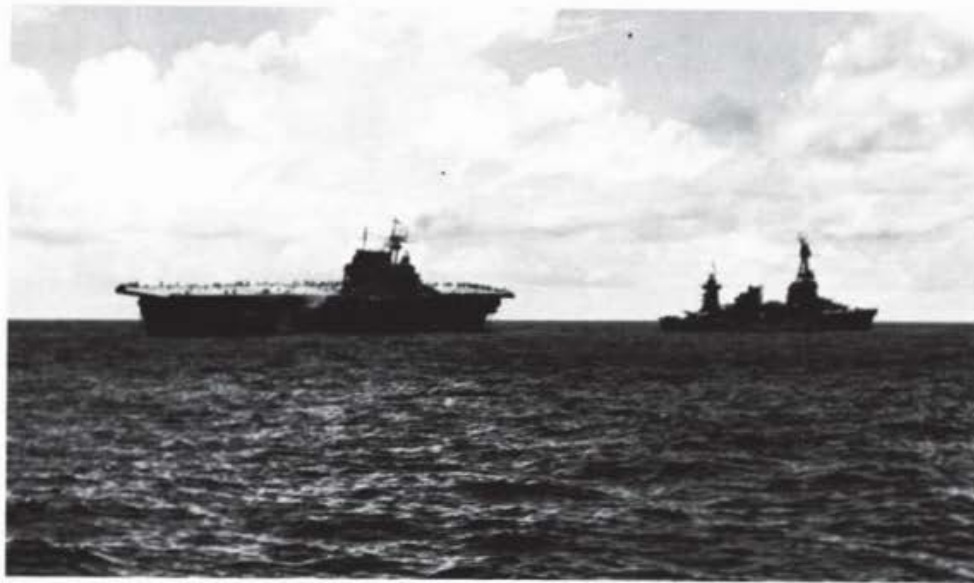
11 March

Hornet CV-8 Memorial



Hornet CV-8, the seventh United States navy ship to bear the name, was sunk during the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands on October 26, 1942. From her decks were launched Col. James Doolittle's famous "Tokyo Raiders" on their historic mission in April 1942. She was a brilliant performer in the early years of the war before she was overwhelmed by the Japanese while defending our foothold at Guadalcanal. She is pictured on the next page listing before going down.





*“A Hornet with
a memorable
sting...”*

A NAVY MAN

You proudly donned the uniform,
To serve the Blue and Gold,
And off you went, to meet the sea,
Like sailing men of old.

Like other lads, made men too soon,
You sailed the ships of war,
And when the smoke of battle cleared,
Returned to homeland's shore.

You've braved the icy northern winds,
And felt the tropic sun,
As you walked the decks of mighty ships,
With pride in every one.

A tribute to the flag you serve;
With gallant loyalty . . .
And fortitude and courage
Of the men who guard the sea.

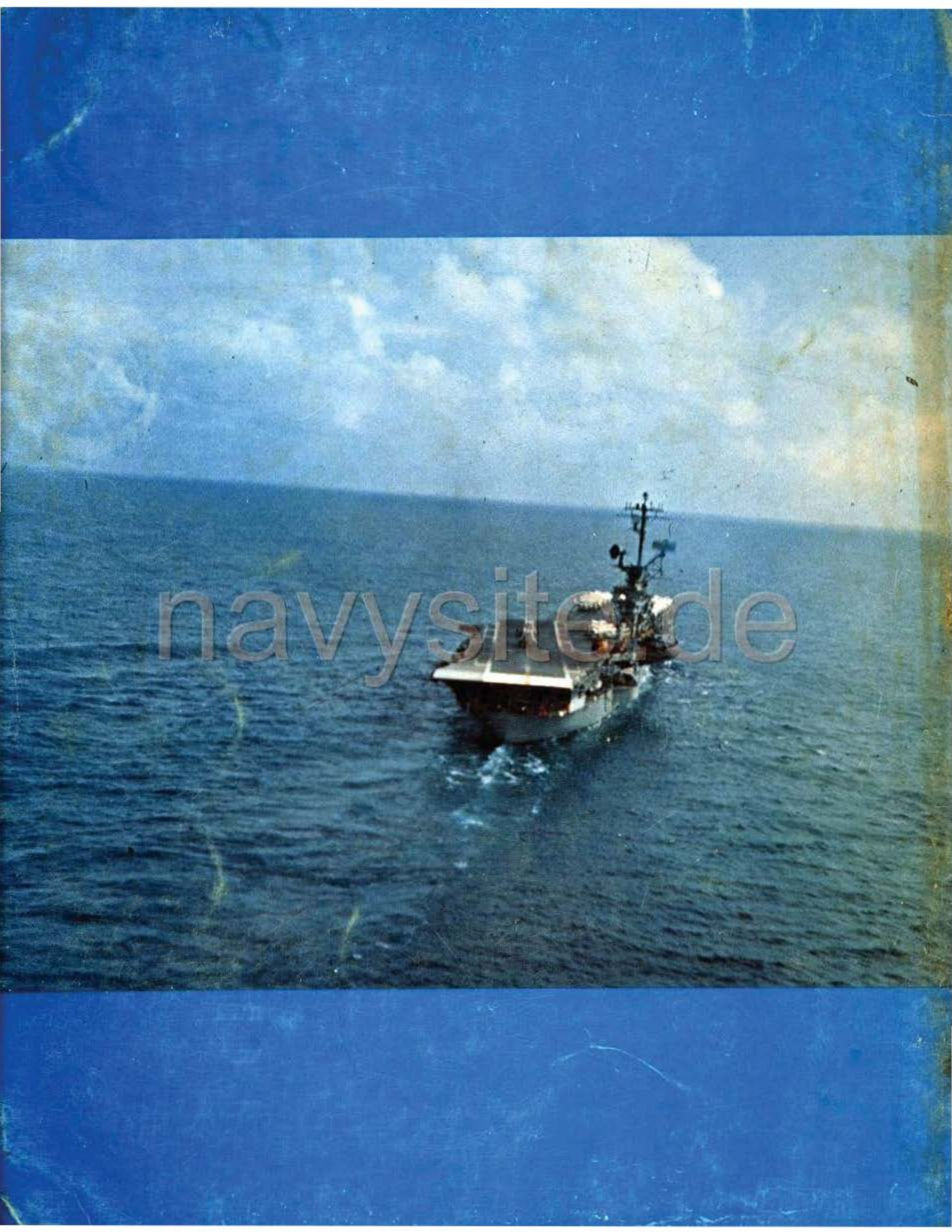
ROMA J. CARUTHERS



A tribute to Australian hospitality as Hornet sets sail for home.



“Tie my kangaroo down, sport.”



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