

# Basic Detail Report

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**Title**

Japanese warships in Sydney Harbour

**Date**

January 1924

**Primary Maker**

Samuel J Hood Studio

**Medium**

Glass plate negative

**Name**

Photograph

**History**

Three ships of the Imperial Japanese Naval Squadron departed Yokusuka for a South-east Asian and Australian training cruise of nearly 7,000 miles on 27 November 1923. They arrived back in Japan on 5 April 1924. Sailors and officers of the Japanese Naval Squadron were welcomed with a great deal of hospitality and fanfare during their visit to Australia. The local press reported on their daily activities in detail. In Sydney, the ships moored east of Garden Island and at Athol Bight. Crowds gathered at Farm Cove to witness the landing of Vice Admiral Saito Shichigoro and his fellow officers on the 24 January 1924. Admiral Saito hosted a party of 450 invited guests on the ships and an open day was held for the public to view the ships. Admiral Saito also lent the Lord Mayor of Sydney a film showing the devastation wrought upon the city of Tokyo and the port city of Yokohama by an earthquake in September 1923. Public screenings of the film attracted large crowds. The Japanese sailors visited an array of local attractions including Taronga Zoo, the Blue Mountains, White Bay Power Plant, University of Sydney, Vaucluse House and La Perouse. Some of the Japanese sailors played a baseball match at Leichhardt oval against sailors from the RAN and a number of officers attended a tennis party at the Victoria Barracks in Paddington. The squadron departed Sydney bound for New Zealand on 30 January 1924. Imperial Japanese Navy training squadrons visited Australia on a number of occasions between 1878 and 1935. Their expeditions were called en yo kokai "distant ocean cruises" and the several warships that usually comprised the squadrons were called renshu kantai or "training squadrons". Learning the various skills of operating a man of war was the main purpose of the cruises, though the opportunity to experience life in other countries was also considered important for young prospective officers. The Japanese Navy also allowed male members of the general populace to take part in these cruises. The Japanese population were informed of the activities and culture of the countries the ships visited through articles in newspapers, magazines and books.