

# Basic Detail Report

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**ANMS1490[004]**

**Title**

Aerial view of a King George V class battleship and two Royal Navy aircraft carriers at Garden Island Naval Dockyard, Sydney Harbour

**Date**

1945 - 1946

**Medium**

Photographic print on paper, black and white

**Dimensions**

Overall: 158 x 209 mm,

**Name**

Photograph

**History**

The British Pacific Fleet (BPF) was the final wartime Royal Navy deployment to Pacific Ocean, seeing action against the Japanese during the final phase of the Second World War. It was active between 1944-46, with its main base being in Sydney. Significant campaigns that the fleet participated in were the Battle of Okinawa and naval bombardments of the Japanese islands in 1945. The fleet itself comprised a mixture of battleships and aircraft carriers, supported by smaller warships and auxiliary vessels. The photos in this collection mainly show the fleet during Victory in the Pacific (VP) Day on the 15th of August 1945, after the Japanese had unconditionally surrendered. VP Day was a significant moment in Australia's history as it meant the end of the war. The Royal Australian Navy served within the British Pacific Fleet, operating under the British Commonwealth operational force. The presence of the BFP was also a clear show of military power in the theatre, even though the United States Navy had a formidable – indeed, overwhelming – dominance in the Pacific after the end of the war. Britain believed that it was essential to be seen on the frontline of its most eastern provinces during the war. Furthermore, Britain still wanted to show that it had a presence by staying based in Australia from 1945-46. There were 274 ships in the fleet during its time based in Australia, which included the following: 4 King George V class battleships, 6 armoured aircraft carriers, 4 light fleet carriers, 10 maintenance carriers, 10 cruisers, 40 destroyers, 29 submarines, 64 escorts, 30 auxiliaries and 79 vessels of the fleet train that were essential to keep the fleet operational without stopping. Not all these vessels were in Sydney harbour at once. In 1946 the aircraft carrier HMS Victorious undertook transported approximately 700 Australian war brides to join their new husbands in Britain.