

10 March 2011

The attached weights for Navy service have been based mainly on material obtained by the attached letter.

The Australia Ships listing Crew Member numbers was obtained from the internet.

The ammunition weights were obtained by speaking to navy personnel over the years.

Put together by Heather Graham (Advocate VVPPAA) and Dennis Hanmer (Pension Officer, VVPPAA and also former member of Australian Navy)

Navy Weights

	Approx Weight/type of container	Number of items lifted	Lifts per Day/week/month	Total days of lifting	Total Weight lifted
Food					
Potatoes	68kg/bag				
Onions	35kg/bag				
Pumpkin	50kg/bag				
Eggs (30dz to a box)	45kg/box				
Carrots	40kg/bag				
Cabbage	35kg/bag				
Flour	35kg/bag				
Rice	35kg/bag				
Milk	200kg/drum				
Beer (2 carton lift)	26kg/cartons 2 cartons carried at a time 13kg ea				
Canned Veggies	35kg/box				
Canned Dry Goods	25kg/box				
Dripping	25kg/can				
Meat					
Beef	45kg/box				
Pork	35kg/box				
Lamb	35kg/box				
Chicken	40kg/box				
Mince	45kg/box				
Frozen Goods					
Peas	40kg/carton				
Carrots	40kg/carton				
Beans	40kg/carton				
Corn	40kg/carton				
Mixed Veg	40kg/carton				
Miscellaneous					
Oxy Bottles (Full)	35kg				
Acetylene (Full)	35kg				
Toolbox with accessories	50kg				
Kitchen Utensils					
Lge Pots (8-10 gal) Water 4.5kg per gallon	36 - 45kg				
Lge Tea Urns (insulated and full)	35kg				
Ammunition					
Box 303 Shells	25kg/box				
4 belts to box	45kg/box				
5" shells	36kg/box				
4 ½" shells	35kg				
Cordite	25kg				
MK 10 Mortar	77kg				
Torpedo	1500-1800kg				

20 SEP 2010

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20th September 2010

Heather Graham
VVA
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Dear Heather,

In response to your request for victualling practices for Australian warships.

I will give you an estimate of the stores requirements for 1968-69 onboard HMAS Sydney the ship victualled daily for at least 1,280-1,300 ships company and troops per mission to Vung Tau in South Vietnam, the fluctuations depended on whether the ship carried her squadron complement of Wessex helicopters.

One thing should be pointed out that Navy and Army victualling procedures differ in that the Army operated under what was known as a Ration Messing System. The Navy operated under the Replacement Allowance for Commissioned Officers and General Messing for Senior and Junior Sailors.

This meant that with the Army if they had 100 men for a steak meal, that's all they provided, if 104 showed up, 4 went without, I speak from personal experience having been accommodated with the Army in Darwin 1970-71, it was be in the first 100 or go without.

With the Navy you always covered 10% over the numbers shown on the books, this usually covered those who sneaked back for seconds, plus the Navy policy was that if a sailor fronts up for a meal it had to be provided. So for the purpose of the figures you require I will use 1300 men per day and this may underestimate the actual number catered for or stores carried.

In RAN warships the following meals were provided:
Breakfast - Lunch - Afternoon Tea - Dinner - For personnel on defence watches another meal was provided at 11 pm(2300) known as Supplementary Messing.

Onboard the average sailor/soldier daily would be provided with the following:
Bread 25% of a standard loaf to cover 3 meals + afternoon tea.
Bread rolls when available would be one per man.
Rice 50 grams Flour 100 grams Sugar 100 grams Eggs 2 Meat 400 grams
Butter/Marge 8 grams Seafood 3 grams Bacon 2 grams Milk .25 litre Poultry 600 gram
Frozen vegetables 320 grams Fresh vegetables 1 kilogram (50% potatoes)
Fresh fruit 300 grams, it all depended on the daily menus.

Total: a conservative 1.89 kilograms per man per day this total excludes: bread, eggs, poultry, seafood, 660 grams of frozen and fresh vegetables.

To feed 1,300 per day on only 9 of the 13 items listed would require at least 2,257 kilograms per day, at least 2.257 tonnes. A Sydney to Vung Tau back to Sydney mission taking 30 days would require at least 68 tonnes for 9 items of provisions. Omitted are dry goods such as soups, fruit(for deserts), condiments, salt and seasonings, other fresh victuals such as cheese, cold meats(ham, devon for example). The omitted items would make up at least another 400 kilograms per day bringing the 30 day requirement to 69.7 tonnes. When the ship arrived at Vung Tau the units ashore the Navy Diving Team, Royal Australian Air Force, Royal Australian Navy Helo Flight and several Army units this would require the transfer of at least 30 cases of frozen meat mainly steak + 25 cases of tomato sauce, another + tonne, bringing one single mission total to exceed 70.7 tonnes.

A ship was always to be stored to full operational capacity on sailing. HMAS Sydney an aircraft carrier converted to a troop carrier was required to sail with not less than 14 days of fresh provisions, not less than 60 days of frozen food and not less than 90 days dry goods. These regulations are laid down in the Royal Australian Navy, Manual of Victualling ABR 93, which was still in force into the 1980s. I called a fellow victualling sailor who I served with in the 1960s to check whether these stats are correct, he confirmed them as correct.

On at least two occasions in 1969 HMAS Sydney's freezer room stocks were completely emptied being were shut down for maintenance periods. These store ships required for a full replenishment for meat and frozen vegetables. It took 12 to 14 hours non-stop labour just for the meat freezer, it had to be done in one day (at least 58.5 tonnes) to stop the meat thawing, plus bring the freezer temperatures back down, as quickly as possible. The ship had three main freezer rooms plus 3 main cool rooms, as well as well over a dozen dry stores.

The daily totals are based on the stores issued for cooking they do not show what was lost in waste from the ship's butcher shop such as bone mass and fat, plus vegetable peelings from potatoes, pumpkin, cabbage, lettuces etc., nor fresh provisions that had to be jettisoned that were either found not suitable for consumption shortly after storing or deteriorated in the tropics, flies breeding in the bags of potatoes out of Sydney were a constant problem a loss of 10% through maggot infestation was not uncommon during the summer months.

On the missions to Vung Tau HMAS Sydney would store fresh fruit and vegetables from a replenishment ship whilst underway, this vessel would carry the stores from Singapore for the purpose.

So working on a conservative 200 tonnes for a full storing, with a crew of 700 of which 140 were officers and senior sailors who were not required to carry out manual duties and over 100 junior sailors who were not available because of watch keeping or long leave leaving less than 460 sailors at the most for storing.

If each individual sailor carried an equal weight from the wharf, up the gangway, down at least one ladder bay and into a storeroom, he would carry up hill and down hill over 4 tonnes of stores each. The major storing was usually achieved within 4 days, Day 1 frozen meat, Day 2 frozen vegetables, milk Day 3 dry goods and Day 4 perishables.

Some of the dry storerooms were located as low as 6 deck in November section, imagine a sailor sometimes with an awkward 1 hundredweight of salt (50.803 kg all deadweight) on leaving the wharf would have to climb the gangway(located on 1 deck in Golf section) at least 60 feet (20 metres) long, walk along 1 deck, stepping over seven hatch conings at least 18" or 450mm high, dodging fixtures and other sailors all the way(350 feet, 115 metres) then down 6 sets of steel ladders (60 feet, 20 metres) by this time he has moved with great difficulty only one 50.802 kg sack of salt 470 feet or 150+ metres up and down in confined spaces, after which he would happily return 470 feet to pick up another bundle.

Attached I have enclosed a diagram of HMAS Sydney showing the storeroom layout.

In the 1960s O.H. and S. were a foreign language, these were not considered within the Defence Forces until the late 1970s, even then not fully implemented.

	In 1969	1980
A bag of potatoes weighed	150 lbs (68 kg)	20 kg
A bag of pumpkin	112 lbs (50.802 kg)	20 kg
Frozen meat	104 lbs (48 kg)	25 kg
Fresh milk (not including the weight of the stainless steel drum)		
	10 gallons (45 litres)	25 litres

The meat was by far the major problem with handling, it was frozen and very awkward to handle at an average of +100 lbs. The firm used by the Navy at that time was Playfairs Meats, they had been the supplier since pre-World War One. So the weights can be checked should anyone wish to dig deeper. The potatoes are still available from the Flemington Markets in the 150 lb sacks, the Navy no longer orders the large sacks. The milk in 10 gallon drums required two sailors to get one up the gangways, one with a hand on the shoulder of the one in front to stop him tripping backwards on the rungs, they then had to get over two hatch conings, then down three sets of steel ladders into 4 Foxtrot coolrooms, it was very painful work, sometimes one sailor carried out the task alone, even more painful, the milk is now delivered in cardboard 1 litre containers in plastic crates.

Apart from Victualling stores sailors were required to store every item that keeps a ship operational, examples ammunition, medical, engineering, sanitary, cleaning, clothing, beer, electrical, canteen and aviation needs. When alongside the HMAS Sydney was storing something for some department every day.

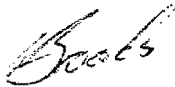
Storing was sometimes but not always made easier if we could utilise what was known as the Bailey Bridge. This Bridge was a fixture purpose built for storing aircraft carriers, if HMAS Melbourne was alongside we had to do with our cranes only when available or just hand over hand, man to man passing the stores onboard, this was not possible with loads exceeding 25kg, the man who took it from the wharf had to carry it the full distance. Garden Island had a conveyer belt unfortunately it could only be used for smaller vessels such as destroyers and frigates.

The late 1960s into the 1970s were difficult times to replenish ships, Group Pay was implemented in 1967-68 the resentment amongst sailors of different branches was quite evident, why would a sailor on the lowest pay store food for a sailor of the same rank on a higher pay, many did everything possible to avoid storing, quite often helped by their heads of departments, this made it even more difficult for those who actually did the work. Then the Dockyard Employees/Unions supporting protests against the Vietnam War, although not openly declaring it would strike at the drop of a hat, so their support with Dockyard equipment such as cranes was little to nothing. When young men were mentally straining and busting a valve in these frustrating conditions to serve Australia its no surprise accidents and physical trauma followed.

My knowledge is based on professional experience within the Victualling Branch, leaving the Navy with the rank of Chief Petty Officer in 1985. Onboard HMAS Sydney apart from general stores receipts I was responsible for the ship's ledgers, and compiling orders and payments to contractors. On two other ships I was responsible to maintain all Victualling-Logistical requirements both in Australian and Foreign waters.

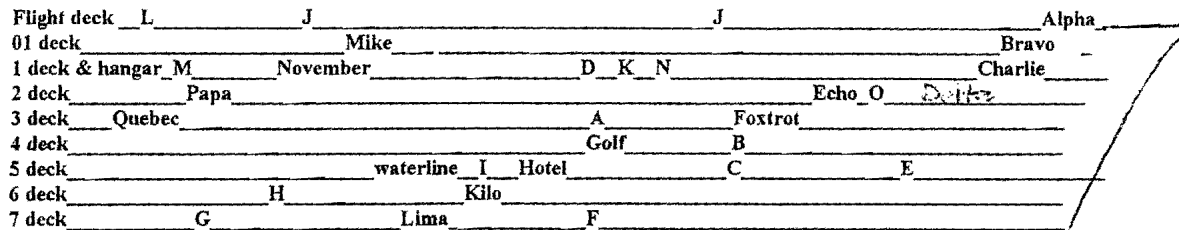
Heather I realise this is long winded but I hope it clears some of the obstacles you are facing, should you wish to enquire further, please call.

Yours sincerely

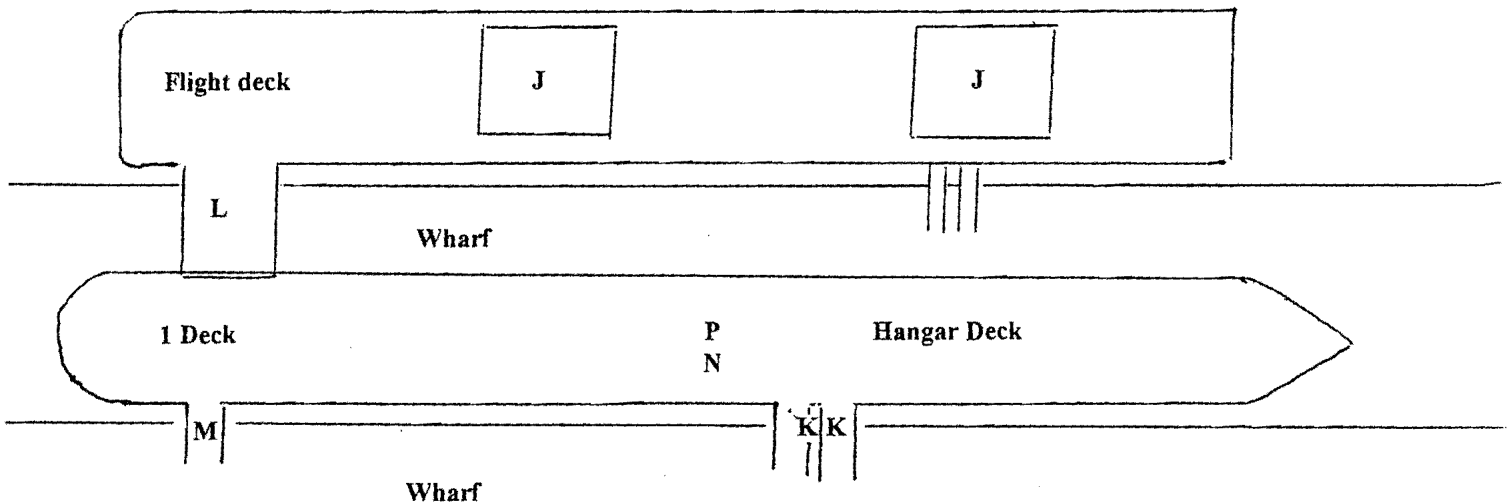


Barry Brooks

Layout of HMAS SYDNEY's storerooms



- A MAIN FREEZE ROOMS
- B DRY STORES
- CCOOL ROOMS
- D POTATO STORAGE/BUTCHER SHOP
- E DRY STORES
- F CANTEEN STORES/BEER STORES
- G, H & I DRY STORES
- J AIRCRAFT LIFTS
- K MAIN GANGWAYS FOR STORING AND SAILORS
- L BAYLEY BRIDGE WHEN AVAILABLE
- M OFFICER'S GANGWAY
- N BOMB STORE LIFT TO F
- O CANTEEN
- P ACCESS PLATE FOR ACCESS TO 2 DECK GOLF SECTION ABOVE FREEZERS



To store frozen meat

from 1 deck to 3 deck access hatch

2 wooden planks to slide the carton down to 2 deck

1 wooden plank to slide it into the fridge flat on 3 deck

On 2 deck at the bottom of the wooden planks 2 sailors would catch the cartons, pass them to another chain of sailors, who would slide them down to 3 deck where a chain of sailors would catch and store them in the freezer, a full store would take over 12 hours for meat alone.

Australian Ships

Crew Numbers

HMAS Anzac	220
HMAS Derwent	250
HMAS Duchess	320
HMAS Japarit	38
HMAS Parramatta	250
HMAS Queenborough	220
HMAS Vampire	320
HMAS Vendetta	320
HMAS Yarra	250
HMAS Hobart	330
HMAS Brisbane	330
HMAS Perth	330
HMAS Sydney	680 Sailor
	600 Troops
HMAS Melbourne	1350