Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery, Gosport, Hampshire, England War Graves

Lest We Forget

World War 1

THOMAS WILLIAM HICKSON

STOKER P. O. H.M.A.S. SYDNEY

DIED

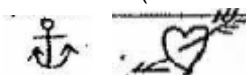**9TH NOV. 1915   AGED 35**

Thomas William HICKSON

Thomas William Hickson was born 11th March, 1880 at Clapham, Surrey, England to parents George & Elizabeth Hickson (nee Newson).

The 1881 England Census recorded Thomas W. Hickson as a 1 year old, living with his parents at 20 Westbury Street, Clapham, London. His parents were listed as George Hickson (Brewer's Labourer, aged 23, born Chislett, Kent) & Elizabeth Hickson (Char Woman, aged 23, born Lewisham, Kent).

The 1891 England Census recorded Thomas W. Hickson as an 11 year old, living with his family at 49 Head Raod, Clapham, London. His parents were listed as George Hickson (Brewer's Labourer, aged 33) & Elizabeth Hickson (Laundress, aged 37). Thomas was the one of five children listed on this Census (listed in order as per Census) – Thomas, Elizabeth Hickson (aged 9, born Clapham, London), George Hickson (aged 7, born Clapham, London), Charles Hickson (aged 5, born Battersea, London) & Albert Hickson (aged 10, born Clapham, London).

Thomas William Hickson joined the Royal Navy on 29th March, 1901 for a period of 12 years. He was 5ft 9 ½ inches with brown hair, blue eyes & a fresh complexion. Thomas had a tattooed anchor on his left forearm & a heart with an arrow on his forearm.   He was given a service number of 297016 (Portsmouth).

Symbols as marked on his Royal Navy Register Card:

Thomas William Hickson was assigned to H.M.S. *Duke of Wellington* as Stoker 2nd Class on 29th March, 1901.

The 1901 England Census recorded Thos. Wm. Hickson as a 21 year old, single, Stoker with the Royal Navy. He was listed as part of the crew of H.M.S. *Duke of Wellington* which was stationed at Portsmouth on the night of Sunday, 31st March, 1901.

Stoker 2nd Class Thomas William Hickson was transferred to H.M.S. *Australia* on 29th November, 1901. He was appointed Stoker on 1st April, 1902 still with H.M.S. *Australia.*

Thomas William Hickson married Bertha Bryant on 25th December, 1902. Their marriage was registered in the December quarter, 1902 in the district of Brentford, Middlesex.

Stoker Thomas William Hickson was transferred to H.M.S. *Venus* on 7th February, 1903 to 29th May, 1903.

Thomas Stanley Hickson, son of Thomas & Bertha Hickson, was born on 15th March, 1904 at Isleworth, Middlesex.

Stoker Thomas William Hickson was transferred to H.M.S. *Firequeen* on 3rd September, 1904 then transferred to H.M.S. *Formidable* on 1st October, 1904. His rank was reported as Stoker 1st Class on 1st July, 1906 on H.M.S. *Formidable.* Stoker 1st Class Hickson was transferred to H.M.S. *Victory* on 20th October, 1906 then to H.M.S. *Terpischore* on 10th November, 1906.

Bertha Hilda Minnie Hickson, daughter of Thomas & Bertha Hickson, was born on 23rd June, 1907.

Stoker 1st Class Thomas William Hickson was transferred to H.M.S. *Hindustan* on 25th April, 1908 & promoted to ___ Leading Stoker on 1st April, 1909.

Rose Marian Hickson, daughter of Thomas & Bertha Hickson, was born on 30th April, 1909

Elizabeth Hickson, mother of Thomas William Hickson, died in 1909 in the Wandsworth district, England.

___ Leading Stoker Thomas William Hickson was transferred to H.M.S. *Victory II* on 5th October, 1909 then transferred to H.M.S. *Fisgard* on 19th October, 1909, where he was promoted to Leading Stoker on 11th March, 1910.

Thomas William Hickson passed educationally for Stoker Petty Officer on 4th March, 1910.

Leading Stoker Thomas William Hickson was transferred to H.M.S. *Victory II* on 12th March, 1910 then transferred to H.M.S. *Ariadne* on 20th August, 1910.

Horace Hickson, son of Thomas & Bertha Hickson, was born on 28th October, 1910.

The 1911 England Census recorded Thomas Hickson as a 31 year old, married Leading Stoker with the Royal Navy. He was listed as part of the crew of H.M.S. *Diadem* which was stationed at Portsmouth on the night of Sunday, 2nd April, 1911.

The 1911 England Census also recorded Thomas Hickson as a 31 year old, married Leading Stoker with the Royal Navy living with his wife & children at 2 Cyprus Cottages (a four roomed dwelling), Prinsted, near Emsworth, Westbourne, Sussex, England. Thomas & his wife Bertha Hickson (aged 29) had been married for 8 years & had 4 children – all listed on this Census – Stanley Hickson (At School, aged 7, born Isleworth, Middlesex), Bertha Hickson (aged 3, born Prinsted, Sussex), Rose Hickson (aged 2, born Prinsted, Sussex) & Horace Hickson (aged 5 months, born Prinsted, Sussex).

Leading Stoker Thomas William Hickson was posted to Abon Kir (?) on 4th April, 1911 & was promoted to Stoker Petty Officer on 7th October, 1911.

Stoker Petty Officer Thomas William Hickson was transferred to H.M.S. *Hampshire* on 5th December, 1911 then transferred to H.M.S. *Victory II* on 3rd August, 1912.

Grace Murial Hickson, daughter of Thomas & Bertha Hickson, was born 15th August, 1912.

George Hickson, father of Thomas William Hickson, died in 1912 in the Wandsworth district, England.

Stoker Petty Officer Thomas William Hickson was transferred to H.M.S. *Vernon* on 14th September, 1912 until 28th March, 1913 where he was transferred to Shore as his time had expired.

Thomas William Hickson joined the Royal Australian Navy on 29th March, 1913 for a period of 5 years. He was 5ft 9 1/2inches with brown hair, blue eyes & a fresh complexion. He had a tattoo on both forearms. His next-of-kin was listed as his wife – Bertha Hickson

Thomas William Hickson was posted to London Depot as Stoker Petty Officer from 29th March, 1913. He was posted to H.M.A.S. *Sydney* on 27th June, 1913. Stoker Petty Officer Thomas William Hickson was part of the crew involved in the H.M.A.S. *Sydney*'s sinking of the SMS *Emden* on 9th November, 1914.

Annie Margaret Hickson, daughter of Thomas & Bertha Hickson, was born May, 1914.

H.M.A.S. Sydney

HMAS Sydney was a Chatham-class light cruiser of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). Laid down in 1911 and launched in 1912, the cruiser was commissioned into the RAN in 1913.

Sydney arrived in Albany, Western Australia on 19 September 1913, after completing her maiden voyage. The cruiser operated off eastern Australia until March 1914, when she sailed to Singapore to meet the two new Australian submarines AE1 and AE2. The three vessels reached Sydney in May, and the cruiser was reassigned to patrols along the eastern coast.]

When World War I started, Sydney was north-bound to join Admiral George Patey and the battlecruiser HMAS Australia. The ships were quickly assigned to protect the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force, which was used to capture German colonial assets in the region; Sydney participated in operations against Rabaul and Anguar Island in September. In October, Sydney and sister ship HMAS Melbourne left Patey's squadron for Sydney, where they joined the escort of the first convoy delivering Australian and New Zealand soldiers to Egypt. The convoy sailed around the southern coast of Australia to Albany, then departed on 1 November for Colombo.
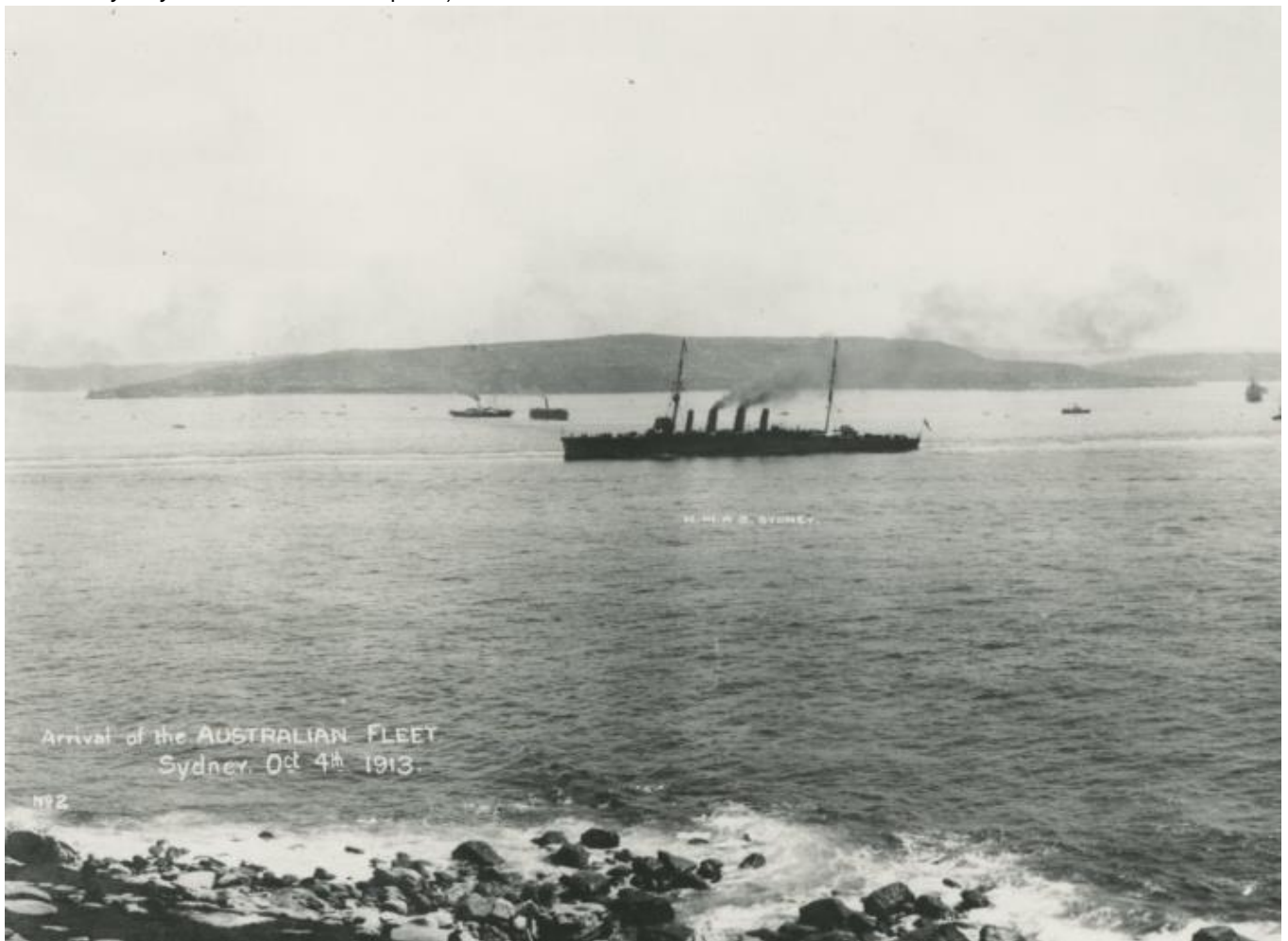
On the morning of 9 November, the communications station at Direction Island, in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands group, was captured by the German light cruiser SMS Emden. Before capture, the station was able to transmit an SOS,

which was received by the troop convoy, and Sydney was ordered to investigate. Emden's wireless operators had overheard the distress call and the orders to Sydney, and prepared to meet the Australian warship.

Sydney's first indication of Emden's location was when the German ship began to fire at a range of 6 nautical miles (11 km; 6.9 mi). The Australian warship was able to fire for effect after two salvos, destroying Emden's three funnels, foremast, wireless and steering gear, and setting the engine room on fire. The German ship beached herself on North Keeling Island, and Sydney went after the supporting collier Buresk, but the ship had already commenced scuttling, and the Australian warship returned to Emden. The Germans were still flying their war ensign, but pulled it down after Sydney transmitted an instruction to surrender, then fired two salvos when no response was forthcoming.

In the course of the engagement, Sydney had fired some 670 rounds of ammunition, with around 100 hits claimed. She had meanwhile been hit sixteen times; three of her crew were killed and thirteen were wounded. 134 German personnel were killed, with the rest of the ship's company were captured by Sydney (apart from a shore party, which commandeered the schooner Ayesha and escaped) and were delivered to British forces at Valletta, Malta. After leaving Malta, the Australian cruiser proceeded to join the North America and West Indies Station, arriving in Bermuda on 6 January 1915.

(H.M.A.S. *Sydney* information from Wikipedia)

HMAS *Sydney* entering Sydney Harbour for the first time 4 October 1913. *(Photo from Royal Australian Navy)*

Stoker Petty Officer Thomas William Hickson was admitted to the Ship's sick Bay from 15th July to 20th July, 1915 with "*aneurism abdominal a*orta". He was discharged to the Naval Hospital at Bermuda & on 4th October, 1915 listed to be invalided back to England. Stoker Petty Officer Thomas William Hickson was recorded on his Naval Service Card as being posted to London Depot (as opposed to being crew on a Ship) from 6th August, 1915.

Stoker Petty Officer Thomas William Hickson was invalided to England on H.M.S Berwick on 18th October, 1915 & admitted to the Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar, Hampshire, England on 29th October, 1915.

Stoker Petty Officer Thomas William Hickson died on 9th November, 1915 at The Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar, Hampshire, England from "*ruptured Aortic aneurysm 4 ½ months*".

A death for Thomas W. Hickson, aged 35, was registered in the December quarter, 1915 in the district of Alverstoke, Hampshire, England.

Stoker Petty Officer Thomas William Hickson was buried in Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery, Gosport, Hampshire, England – Plot number E. 23.33 and has an "Admiralty Cross" headstone, provided by the Admiralty. His death is still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Petty Officer Stoker T. W. Hickson – service number 7991, H.M.A.S. "Sydney", Royal Australian Navy. No family details are listed.

Stoker Petty Officer Thomas William Hickson was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal.

Six medals belonging to Stoker Petty Officer Thomas William Hickson - 1914/15 Star, British War medal, Victory Medal, H.M.A.S. *Sydney* medal, H.M.A.S. *Sydney* S.M.S. Emden & Mexican Dollar were auctioned by Dix, Noon, Webb on 12th February, 1997 & were sold for £700.

Stoker Petty Officer T. W Hickson is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 1.

Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Stoker Petty Officer T. W. Hickson is remembered on Royal Australian Navy WW1 Memorial, located at HMAS Cerberus Protestant Chapel of St Mark, Nelson Road, Crib Point, Victoria.

HMAS *Cerberus* Protestant Chapel of St Mark, Crib Point, Victoria *(Photos courtesy of Karen Standen)*

(2 pages of Stoker Petty Officer Thomas William Hickson's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives

———— ✦ ————

Thomas William Hickson with his wife Bertha (& assuming left to right Thomas Stanley, Rose & Bertha)

———— ✦ ————

Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery, Gosport, Hampshire, England

During both wars, Gosport was a significant sea port and Naval depot, with many government factories and installations based there, as well as the Haslar Naval Hospital. No 5 Squadron Royal Flying Corps were based at Gosport just before the outbreak of the First World War and during the Second World War the town acted as base to No 17 Group Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy Light Coastal Forces.

Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery, which was attached to the Naval Hospital of 2,000 beds, contains 772 First World War graves, 2 of which are unidentified. Most are scattered throughout the cemetery, but the 42 officers and men of HM Submarine "L.55" whose bodies were brought back from the Baltic in 1928 lie together in a collective grave and their names appear on a Screen Wall Memorial.

The Second World War graves number 611, 36 of them unidentified. A number of the graves are scattered throughout the cemetery, but the majority lie together in one or other or five groups, the largest of which contains more than 350 burials, the smallest 25.

There are also 10 Foreign National war burials and 9 non world war service burials here. There are 5 War Graves relating to Australia – 2 from World War 1 & 3 from World War 2.

Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery has many graves which are marked by 'Admiralty Crosses' as they are known. These are headstones provided by the Admiralty after the war. The Admiralty was the authority responsible for the command of the Royal Navy until 1964. The photo below shows the standard Portland stone Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstones on the left & the 'Admiralty Crosses" on the right.

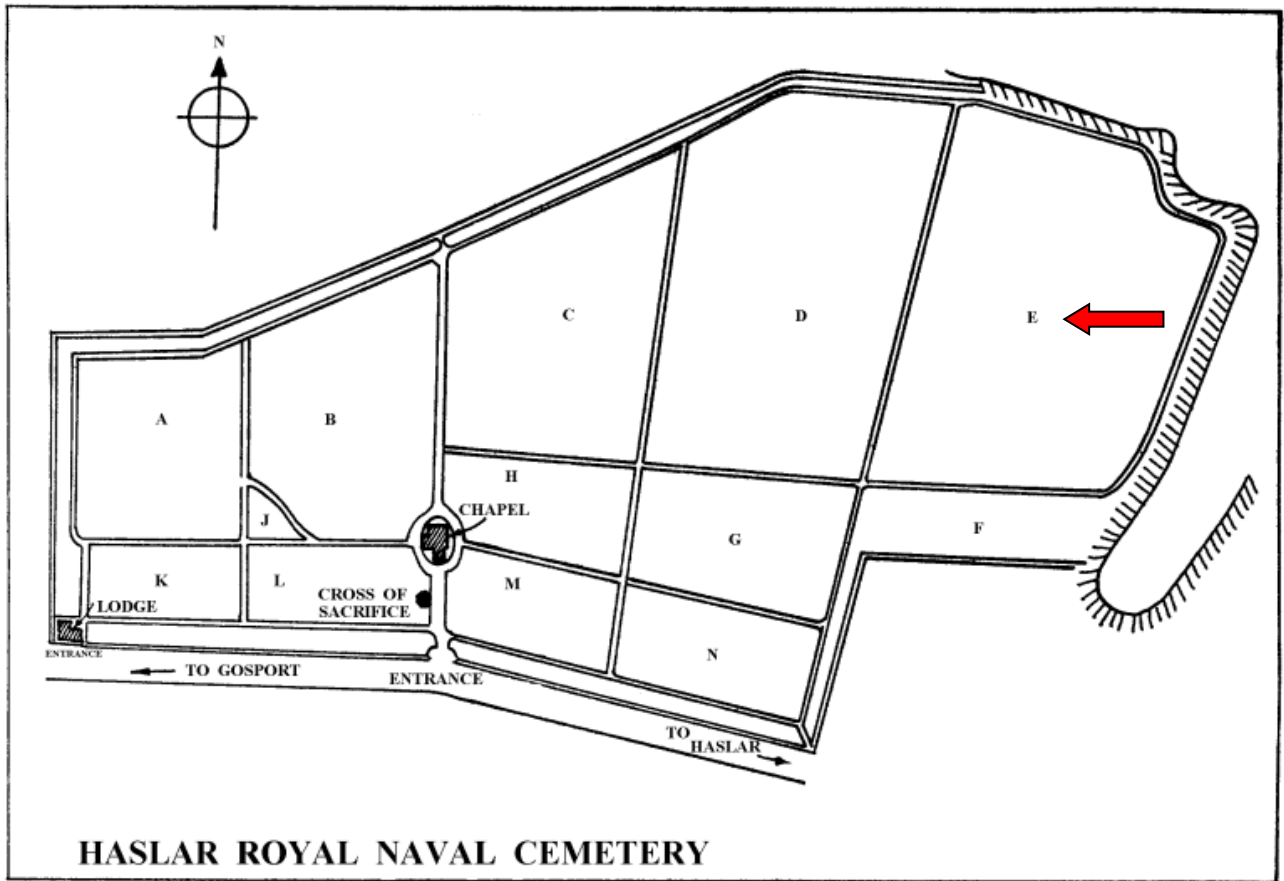*(Information & photo below from CWGC)*

Photo of Stoker Petty Officer Thomas William Hickson's Admiralty Cross in Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery, Gosport, Hampshire, England.

(Photos courtesy of Peter Bennett Private Collection)

HASLAR ROYAL NAVAL CEMETERY