

**Queensferry Cemetery,  
Edinburgh, Scotland,  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**OSCAR HAROLD NIXON**

**SIGNALMAN**

**H.M.A.S. "AUSTRALIA"**

**ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY**

**25TH MARCH, 1915 Age 17**

*Erected By His Shipmates*

*As A Token Of Their Respect*

## Oscar Harold NIXON

Oscar Harold Nixon was born on 19th December, 1897 at Warialda, NSW to parents Richard Nixon & Jessie Douglas Nixon (nee Cavanagh). His birth was registered in the district of Warialda in 1898.

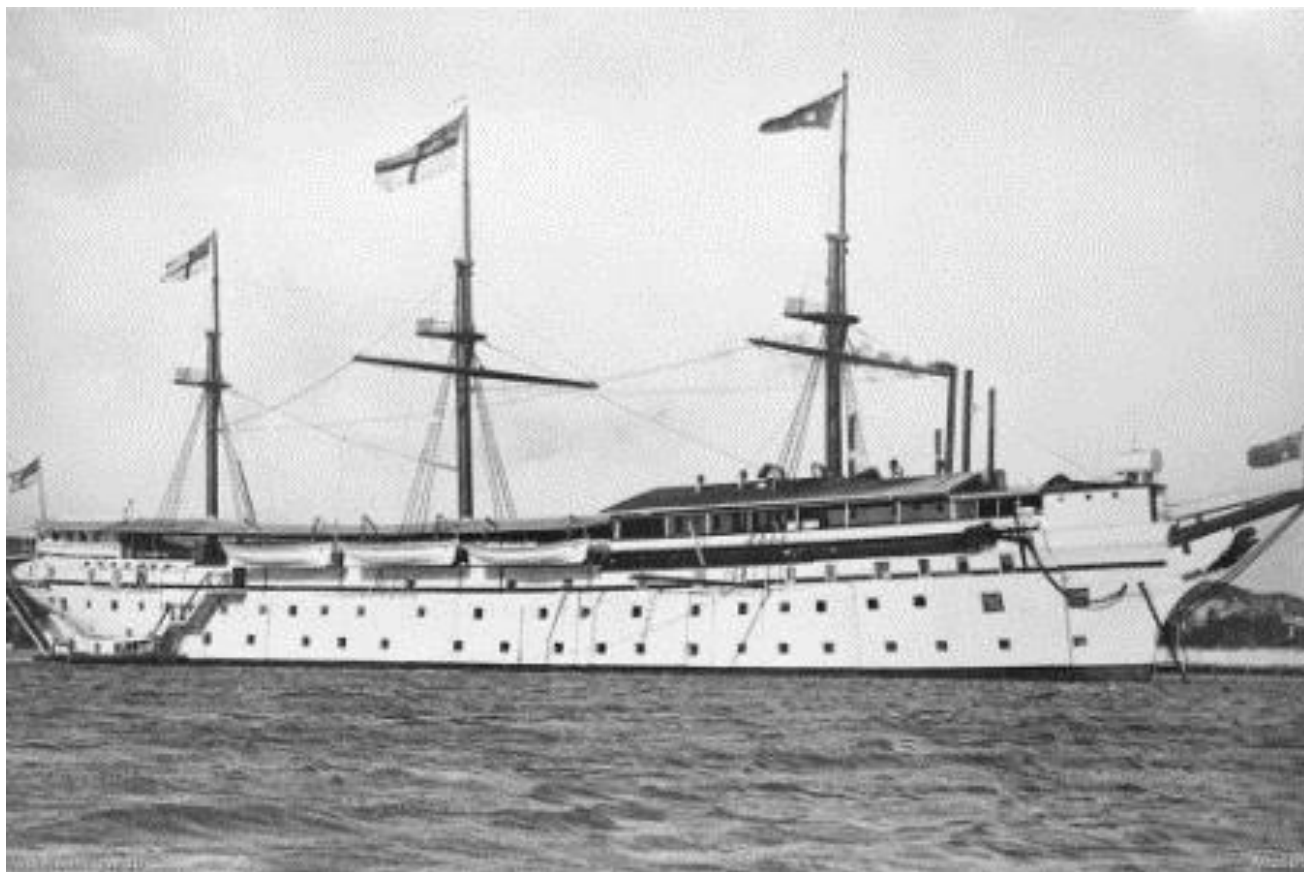
Oscar Harold Nixon enlisted with the Royal Australian Navy at Sydney on 2nd December, 1912 for a period of 7 years from the age of 18. His service number was 2250 & his next-of-kin was listed as his father – Richard Nixon of Public School, Tipperary near Young, NSW. Oscar Nixon was 5ft 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  in tall, with brown hair, grey eyes & a dark complexion. No distinguishing marks, wounds or scars.

Oscar Harold Nixon joined H.M.A.S. *Tingira* on 2nd October, 1912 as Boy 2nd Class. He was promoted to Signal Boy on 13th July, 1913.

### H.M.A.S. *Tingira*

H.M.A.S. *Tingira* (an aboriginal word for "open sea") was a training ship commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy. Previously the *Sobraon* carried cargo and passengers between Australia & the United Kingdom once a year between 1866 & 1891. The *Sobraon* had been purchased by the NSW Government in 1891 & was used as a reformatory or Nautical School Ship for wayward boys until 1911.

The Royal Australian Navy refitted the *Sobraon* & was commissioned on 25th April, 1912 as H.M.A.S. *Tingira* & moored in Rose Bay, Sydney. Up to 250 boys between the ages of 14  $\frac{1}{2}$  and 16 could be trained at any time, although the trainee complement rarely exceeded 200. Between 1912 and 1927, 3,158 boys were trained for naval service. As *Tingira* was immobilised, the steam yacht HMAS *Sleuth* was attached to the training ship as a tender, and used to provide seagoing experience to recruits.



H.M.A.S. *Tingira* moored in Rose Bay, Sydney in 1912

Signal Boy Oscar Nixon was transferred to H.M.A.S. *Sydney* on 14th December, 1913.

### **H.M.A.S. *Sydney***

H.M.A.S. *Sydney* was a Chatham class light cruiser that was launched in 1912 & commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy in 1913. H.M.A.S. *Sydney* arrived in Albany, Western Australia on 19th September 1913, after completing her maiden voyage from Glasgow, Scotland. 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, 1914 and the cruiser was reassigned to patrols along the eastern coast.



**H.M.A.S. *Sydney* 1914**

Signal Boy Oscar Nixon was transferred to H.M.A.S. *Australia* on 21st March, 1914. He was promoted to Ordinary Signaller 2nd Class on 19th December, 1914.

### **H.M.A.S. *Australia***

H.M.A.S. *Australia* was launched in 1911, and commissioned as flagship of the Royal Australian Navy (R.A.N.) in 1913. On completion she sailed for Australia and, on 4 October 1913, led the cruisers and destroyers of the fleet unit into Sydney Harbour to public acclaim.

With the outbreak of the First World War, *Australia* became the flagship of the force that captured the German colonies in the southern Pacific. She led a force which captured Rabaul on 13th September, 1914 before proceeding to Samoa.

In late December, 1914 *Australia* received orders to sail to England via the Pacific and reached Devonport on 28th January, 1915. En route she captured and sank von Spee's supply ship *Eleonore Woermann* off South America. From Devonport *Australia* proceeded to Rosyth in Scotland, where in February, 1915 she became flagship of the 2nd Battle Cruiser Squadron, flying the flag of Rear Admiral Sir William Pakenham, KCB, MVO. The squadron, as initially formed, comprised *Australia* and her two sister ships, HMS *New Zealand* and HMS *Indefatigable*.



**H.M.A.S. *Australia* 1914**

Ordinary Signalman 2nd Class Oscar Harold Nixon died on 25th March, 1915 at Rosyth, Fife, Scotland from Pneumonia, aged 17 years & 8 months. (Source: Australian War Memorial – Roll of Honour.)

Ordinary Signalman Oscar Harold Nixon was buried in Queensferry Cemetery, Edinburgh, Scotland – Plot number 567. He has a private headstone, erected by his shipmates & his death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Ordinary Signalman Oscar H. Nixon – service number 2250, aged 17, of H.M.A.S. “Australia”, Royal Australian Navy. He was the son of Richard and Jessie Nixon, of Bodalla, New South Wales. Born at Warialda, New South Wales.

Ordinary Signalman 2nd Class O. H. Nixon 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. He is one of 117 “boy soldiers” and “boy sailors” who have been identified among the 61,000 names on the Roll of Honour for the First World War.



*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

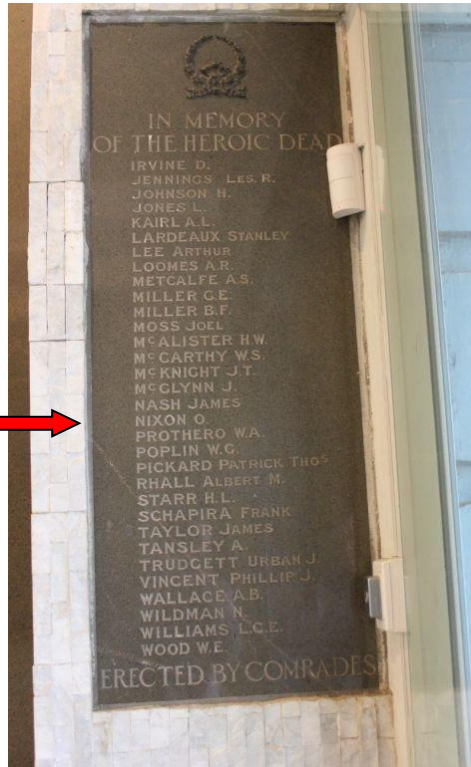
O. Nixon is remembered on the Soldiers Memorial Clock Tower located as the central feature of the Young Shire Council Town Hall and Council Chambers located on Boorowa Street, Young, NSW.



**Soldiers Memorial Clock Tower, Young**

*(Photos from Monument Australia – Peter F. Williams/Chris McLaughlin/Roger Johnson)*





O. Nixon is remembered on the St. John's World War One Memorial Stained Glass window, located in St. John's Anglican Church, Cloete Street, Young, NSW.



**St. John's World War One Memorial Stained Glass Window, Young**

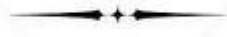
*(Photos from Monument Australia –Arthur Garland)*

Ordinary Signalman O. H. Nixon 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)





## **Newspaper Notices**

### **Death on H.M.A.S. *Australia***

#### **ORDINARY SIGNALMAN OSCAR NIXON**

A message from H.M.A.S. *Australia* announces the death from pneumonia, on March 25th, of Ordinary Signalman Oscar Nixon, of Tipperary, near Young N. S. Wales.

The above brief message was received at the Witness Office yesterday morning and when the sad news contained therein was made known to residents around town, the most genuine sympathy was expressed for Mr and Mrs Nixon, of Tipperary Public School, in the bereavement caused by the passing away of their son. The deceased lad some few years ago held a position in the Young Branch of the Government Savings Bank, but when the Royal Australian Navy was constituted he entered as a cadet on H.M.A.S. *Tingara*, where he got on so well that he qualified for the rank of Signalman. When war broke out, however, he was transferred to H. M.A. S. *Australia*, and was, so far as is known on that ship until his death. He was a quiet lad, with high educational attainments, most courteous and obliging to his friends and loved by his comrades. In his home life, he was a most dutiful son and the blow to the sorrowing parents is one which comes with greater force by reason of the fact that their son's short life was closed thousands of miles away on the ocean's broad expanse, and beyond their reach to offer a word of comfort, when the tide of life was ebbing. Truly, never morning wore to evening but some heart did break, and as the days of war are passing, the poet's words are brought more and more home to us. The death of even one of His Majesty's Soldiers or Sailors from our own town makes us realise the awfulness of the world drama now being enacted, and the sorrow and desolation it is bringing to not only one, but thousands of homes in the stricken countries where not many months ago happiness and peace reigned. Oscar Nixon, though pneumonia claimed him as its victim, died no less for the honor of his country and the glory of this fair land of Australia than if a bullet from an enemy's gun had sped his soul to eternity. For his courage in going forth to battle we will honor his name, and to the sorrowing parents extend our deepest sympathy in the bereavement caused by the death of their sailor son.

"Oh, who shall lightly say that Fame.

Is nothing but an empty name!

Whilst in that sound there is a charm

The nerves to brace, the heart to warm

As, thinking of the mighty dead,

The young from slothful couch will start,

And vow, with lifted hands outspread,

Like them to act a noble part?"

(*Young Witness*, NSW – 1 April, 1915)





**OSCAR NIXON**

Signalman H.M.A.S. *Australia* died March 25th, from pneumonia, aged 17 years and 3 months. The deceased was a son of Mr and Mrs R. Nixon, of Tipperary Public School, Young.

(*Young Witness*, NSW – 16 April, 1915)

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## Queensferry Cemetery, Edinburgh, Scotland

Queensferry Cemetery, Edinburgh, Scotland contains 180 First World War burials, almost all of them naval. There are also eight burials of the Second World War. There are 11 War Graves from World War 1 belonging to members of the Royal Australian Navy.

*(Information & photos from CWGC)*



*(Photo courtesy of Allan Noble - 2020)*



Photo of Signalman Oscar Harold Nixon's private Headstone in Queensferry Cemetery, Edinburgh, Scotland. His headstone was erected by his shipmates.



*(Photo by Welshwanderer – Billion Graves)*