Osmondwall Cemetery,

Kirkwall, Scotland

War Grave

Lest We Forget

World War 1

7553   LEADING SEAMAN

D. A. PEEBLES

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

H.M.A.S. "AUSTRALIA"

24TH JULY, 1915   Age 37

David Alexander PEEBLES

David Alexander Peebles was born on 24th February, 1880 at Dundee, Scotland to parents David and Esther Peebles.

The 1881 Scotland Census listed David Peebles as a 4 year old, living with his family at 224 Hawkhill, St. Peter, Angus, Scotland. His parents were listed as David Peebles (China Merchant & Broker, aged 33, born Dundee) & Esther Peebles (aged 32, born Dundee). David (junior) was one of three children listed on this Census – John Peebles (aged 6, born Dundee), then David & Isabella Peebles (aged 2, born Carmylie). Also listed was Mary Peebles (Mother of David (senior) Peebles, aged 69, born Dundee).

The 1891 Scotland Census listed David A. Peebles (junior) as a 15 year old Millworker – Shifter, living with his family at 72 Hilltown, Dundee, Angus, Scotland. His parents were listed as David A. Peebles (Blacksmith, aged 40, born Dundee, Forfarshire) & Esther Peebles (aged 39, born Dundee, Forfarshire). David (junior) was one of four children listed on this Census – John S. Peebles (Millworker – Shifter, aged 17, born Dundee, Forfarshire) then David, Isabella Peebles (Scholar, aged 13, born Dundee, Forfarshire) & Agnes Peebles (Scholar, aged 5, born Dundee, Forfarshire). Also listed with the family was a Boarder – John Johnston (Jute Preparer, aged 75, born Ireland).

David Alexander Peebles was an 18 year old Mill worker when he enlisted with the Royal Navy. His service number was 185546. He was 5ft ¾ inches tall, with brown hair, grey eyes & a fair complexion and had "D.D." tattooed on his left forearm. On 24th February, 1898, at the age of 18 years, David Alexander Peebles signed on for a period of 12 years.

David Alexander Peebles served in *Caledonia* as Boy 2nd Class from 27th August, 1895. He was rated as Boy 1st Class on 21st May, 1896. Transferred to *Edinburgh* as Boy 1st Class on 24th November, 1996; *Pembroke I* on 20th January, 1897; *East of India* on 12th February, 1897; *Jupiter* on 8th June, 1897. He was rated as Ordinary Seaman while serving in *Jupiter* on 24th February, 1898. Transferred to *Pembroke I* on 23rd June, 1898; *Champion* on 1st November, 1898; *Pembroke I* on 13th May, 1899; *Severn* on 20th September. 1899 & rated as Able seaman while serving in *Severn* on 21st June, 1900; *Pembroke I* on 30th August, 1902; *Wildfire* on 26th November, 1902; *Pembroke* on 18th June, 1903; *Seylla* on 23rd September, 1903; *Pembroke I* on 2nd July, 1904 & rated as Leading Seaman on 1st September, 1904. Transferred to *Irresistible* on 1st December, 1904 & rated as P.O. on 1st January, 1905; *Pembroke I* on 27th November, 1906; *Wildfire* on 17 April, 1907 & rated as P.O. (O.S.) ? on 1st December, 1907; *Pembroke* on 12th December, 1907; *Royal Arthur* on 13th January, 1908; *Robin* on 4th March, 1908 & rated as Able Seaman on 21st January, 1909; *Flora* on 15th February, 1909; *Terrible* on 7th September, 1909; *Pembroke I* on 16th October, 1909 & rated as Leading Seaman on 26th October, 1909; *Endymion* on 16th December, 1909; *Pembroke I* on 23rd February 1911 to 25 February, 1910.

The 1901 Census, taken on Sunday 31st March, 1901, listed David Alexander Peebles as Able Seaman, aged 21, born St. Andrews, Dundee, on board His Majesty's Ship *Severn*. The Commander was Charles William Stares Leggatt.

David Alexander Peebles signed an agreement with the Royal Australian Navy on 26th January, 1913 for a period of 5 years. He was given the service number of 7553. David Peebles stated he was born at St. Andrews, Fifeshire, Scotland. He was 5ft 2 ½ inches tall, with brown hair, grey eyes & a fair complexion and had "D.P." tattooed on his left forearm.

David Alexander Peebles was listed at London Depot as Leading Seaman on 26th January, 1913 until 20th June, 1913. He was transferred to *Australia* on 21st June, 1913. Leading Seaman David Peebles was assessed on 31st December, 1913, 31st December, 1914 & on his date of death – 24th July, 1915 & on all occasions his ability was rated as Superior.

A birth was registered for David A. Peebles in 1914 in the district of Annandale, Sydney, NSW, Australia to parents David A. & Mary H. Peebles.

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*. From then until 22 April 1916, *Australia* (I) was based at Rosyth accompanying the Battle Cruiser Fleet on a succession of sweeps, patrols, and convoy escort tasks across the length and breadth of the North Sea. The enemy was rarely if ever seen, and a shot at a suspected submarine on 30 December 1917 marked the only occasion when she subsequently fired in anger.

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

Leading Seaman David Alexander Peebles died on 24th July, 1915 at Scapa Flow, Scotland from Heart failure.
(Source: Roll of Honour, Australian War Memorial)

Leading Seaman David Alexander Peebles was buried in Osmondwall Cemetery, Kirkwall, Orkney Islands, Scotland – Plot number D. 71. He has a private headstone which was erected by his shipmates. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Leading Seaman David Alexander Peebles – service number 7553, aged 37, of H.M.A.S. "Australia", Royal Australian Navy. He was the son of David and Esther Peebles; husband of Mary Peebles, of 3, Stewart Lane, Balmain, Sydney, New South Wales. Born at Dundee, Scotland.

Leading Seaman David Alexander Peebles 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.
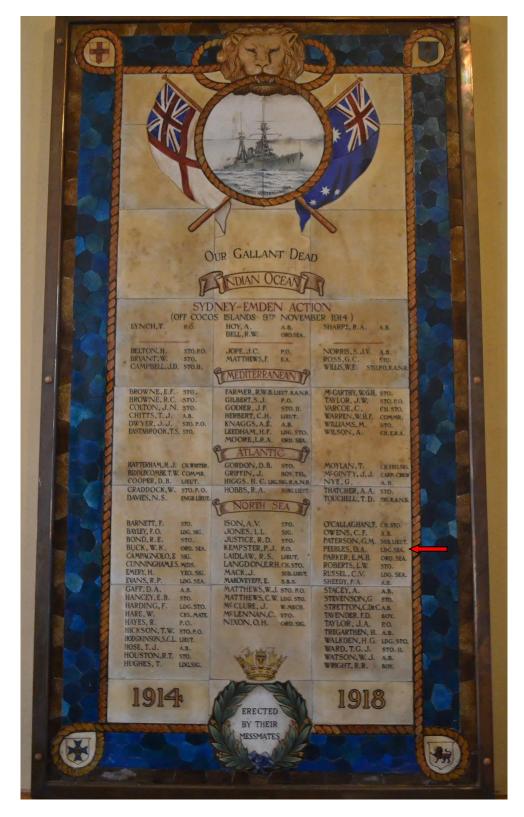

Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Leading Seaman D. A. Peebles 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 *(Photo courtesy of Karen Standen)*

(Photo courtesy of Karen Standen)

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour) & National Archives

Osmondwall Cemetery, Orkney Islands, Scotland

Osmondwall Cemetery, Orkney Islands, Scotland contains 42 Commonwealth War Graves, all but one are from World War 1. Most of the graves are found in the newer (East) part, Rows B to E, in a War Plot, which is marked by a war Cross. The remainder are to be found in the older part. There is only one burial for the Australian Forces.

The cemetery was used by the Navy in 1914-15, before Lyness Cemetery was begun. It now belongs to the County Council.

(Information & photos from CWGC)

Osmondwall Cemetery, Orkney Islands, Scotland

Leading Seaman David Alexander Peebles' Private Headstone

Photo of Leading Seaman David Alexander Peebles' Private Headstone that was erected by his Shipmates in Osmondwall Cemetery, Orkney Islands, Scotland.

(Photo courtesy of Martin Briscoe)