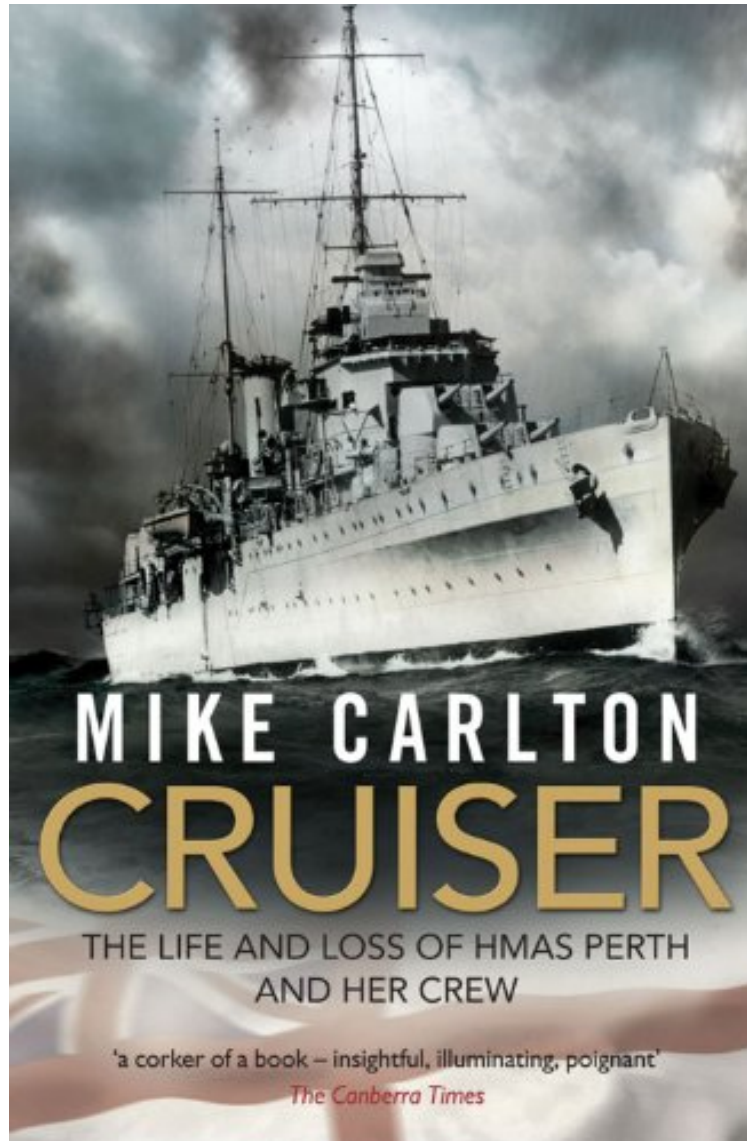


(Download pdf) Cruiser: The Life and Loss of HMAS Perth and Her Crew

Cruiser: The Life and Loss of HMAS Perth and Her Crew

Mike Carlton

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Mike Carlton : Cruiser: The Life and Loss of HMAS Perth and Her Crew before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cruiser: The Life and Loss of HMAS Perth and Her Crew:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A very long but great read By Joe Cns First Class - comprehensive detailed account of the HMAS Perth from it's inception into the RAN through the start of World War II covering the service in the Mediterranean eventually it's battles with the Japanese Navy when Japan entered the war and the eventual final battle when the Perth in company with the USS Houston went down with all guns blazing against

overwhelming odds. The surviving crew members of the Perth and Houston were captured by the Japanese and became POWs. Their story is an epic account on its own as they managed to cope with appalling conditions on such horrors as the Burma Railway with some being transported to Japan on rust bucket ships to work in coal mines. Many were killed when some of these vessels were sunk by Allied submarines who had no way of knowing that these ships were carrying Allied POWs in stinking conditions in their holds. Footnote: The Captain of the USS Houston was rightfully awarded posthumously the Congressional Medal of Honor as both ships went down fighting to the end against overwhelming odds until they eventually ran out of ammunition but for some reason the Australian government was able to award VCs to the Army and the RAAF but NOT the RAN which could only be awarded by the Admiralty in London so Captain Hec Waller of the Perth did not receive a much deserved posthumous VC - but then no member of the RAN has ever been awarded a VC while VCs have been awarded to Royal Navy personnel under similar circumstances. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. War at Sea, as seen from the Deck Plates! By Glenn L. Smith This reviewer is a retired naval officer with twelve years enlisted service, four as a warrant officer, and thirteen as a commissioned officer in the US Navy. Sunda Strait, February 28, 1942. This narrow passage of water that separates the Indonesian Islands of Java and Sumatra and connects the Java Sea to the Indian Ocean was the site of one of the most vicious, point-blank surface battles of WWII. On this night, a major Japanese landing was underway at nearby Banten Bay. Covering the multitude of troop ships and landing craft was a formidable force of a light carrier, two heavy and three light cruisers, a minelayer, plus twelve destroyers. The presence of the Japanese ships was not known to a small task unit consisting of the Australian light cruiser HMAS PERTH, and American heavy cruiser USS HOUSTON, who were trying to escape the Java Sea and make their way ultimately to safety in Australia. Both vessels had recently been engaged at the Battle of the Java Sea. PERTH was pretty much intact, but HOUSTON's after 8" battery was completely out of action. By the end of the night, both PERTH and HOUSTON would rest forever on the bottom in Sunda Strait, about one mile apart. Gallant ships together in battle, and together in eternity. One could easily make the argument that HMAS PERTH saw more action in more places than any ship in WWII. So much action, in fact, that it takes a book of 706 pages to adequately tell the story of this fine fighting ship and her crew. Author Carlton has given us a highly readable account of this ship from beginning to its end. There are several things about the author's approach and style that appeals very much to this reviewer. Among them are: * The narrative is mainly from the viewpoint of the ship's ratings (enlisted men). Most naval histories of WWII focus on the ship's captains and higher command officers who frequently have an agenda. The men on the deck plates simply wanted to get the job done and come home to Australia to their loved ones. Mr. Carlton taps into the wealth of dairies kept surreptitiously to help paint a picture of the lives of the men from the mundane preparations for battle, the horror of the battles themselves, and the aftermath of survival and incarceration at the hands of brutal captors. * In descriptions of battle, there is no attempt to sanitize what happens, Mr. Carlton makes it plain that a battle at sea is gruesome. * While the focus of the book is on one ship, HMAS PERTH, the author carefully frames the story with enough detail on what is going on in the bigger picture; he catches the sweep of war in the Mediterranean and Pacific extremely well. * Those who remained on the home front are not forgotten; the mothers, wives, girlfriends and sisters have their stories woven into this telling. Unfortunately, most Australian men had already gone off to war, so they did not have much of a role on the home front. * The book is Australian, through and through. It is always told through the prism of Aussie eyes, rather than from a British or American perspective. The above make this a most satisfying book, and it may well be the best book on war at sea during WWII that this reviewer has read. It certainly was the most enjoyable. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An Excruciatingly Well Researched History By Barry Connell Mike Carlton has written a history of "Perth" and her ship's company which deserves to be regarded as definitive. His research into facts is superb, and, unlike many other writers, he has made great efforts to understand naval terminology, routines and habits, making few, if any, of the mistakes which tend to annoy those of us who have served at sea. For all that though, it is his ability to portray the lives and feelings of the sailors of "Perth" that really makes this book stand out. This is no dry tome of naval history, this is a very readable story of young, proud men, proud of their ship, proud of their young and largely (by the Brits) derided navy, and proud of themselves. Carlton has brought to life the spirit and energy which has made the Royal Australian Navy one of the world's best, while reviving the proud echo of a ship and her men which has largely been forgotten by the Australian public. Congratulations Mike Carlton on bringing us such a great dit.

Of all the Australians who fought in the Second World War, none saw more action nor endured so much of its hardship and horror as the crew of the cruiser HMAS Perth. Most were young—many were still teenagers—from cities and towns, villages and farms across the nation. In three tumultuous years they did battle with the forces of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, the Vichy French, and, finally, the Imperial Japanese Navy. They were nearly lost in a hurricane in the Atlantic. In the Mediterranean in 1941 they were bombed by the Luftwaffe and the Italian Air Force for months on end until, ultimately, during the disastrous evacuation of the Australian army from Crete, their ship took a direct hit and thirteen men were killed. After the fall of Singapore in 1942, HMAS Perth was hurled into the forlorn campaign to stem the Japanese advance towards Australia. Off the coast of Java in March that year she met an

overwhelming enemy naval force. Firing until her ammunition literally ran out, she was sunk with the loss of 353 of her crew, including her much-loved captain and the Royal Australian Navy's finest fighting sailor, 'Hardover' Hec Waller. Another 328 men were taken into Japanese captivity, most to become slave labourers in the infinite hell of the Burma-Thai railway. Many died there, victims of unspeakable atrocity. Only 218 men, less than a third of her crew, survived to return home at war's end. *Cruiser*, by journalist and broadcaster Mike Carlton, is their story. And the story of those who loved them and waited for them.

About the Author Mike Carlton is one of Australia's best-known broadcasters and journalists. In a 40-year career, he has been a radio and television news and current affairs reporter, foreign correspondent, radio host and newspaper columnist. He was an ABC war correspondent in Vietnam in 1967 and 1970, and for three years was the ABC's Bureau Chief in Jakarta. He also reported for the ABC from London, New York, and major Asian capitals. In television, he was one of the original reporters on the ABC's groundbreaking *This Day Tonight* in the 1970s. Mike turned to talk radio in 1980, first at Sydney's 2GB, and then for four years in London at *Newstalk 97.3FM*, where he won a coveted Sony Radio Academy award in 1993 for Britain's best talk breakfast program. In television, he reported and hosted *Indonesia: A Reporter Returns*, a three-part documentary for SBS in 2008. He has recently retired from the Radio 2UE breakfast program in Sydney and has returned to writing a column for the Saturday edition of the *Sydney Morning Herald*.