

## **AMMA JOURNAL VOL 9 ISSUE 2**

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### **Book Reviews**

#### **Proud Echo 3**

by  
Ronald McKie

On the evening of 28th February 1942, the Australian light cruiser, PERTH, and the American heavy cruiser, HOUSTON, having survived the disastrous Battle of the Java Sea, sailed from the port of Batavia to force a passage through Sunda Strait to the Indian Ocean, where they hoped to join with other Allied naval units. During the night they encountered a strong Japanese convoy, moving in to invade Java, and, after a fierce engagement with an overwhelming force of cruisers and destroyers, were both sunk. Many of the men in HMAS PERTH were killed during the action, and others perished in the sea. Many of those who reached the coast of Java died later as prisoners of war. Of a ship's company of 682, only 229 lived to return to Australia.

Ronald McKie, piecing together the accounts of individual survivors, has vividly covered the events of the battle and of the days that followed. Written in 1953, Proud Echo is a painful but stirring reconstruction of the Battle of Sunda Strait. It admirably depicts the courage and devotion to duty of the men of the two ships. It also provides a unique insight into the war-time operations of HMAS PERTH and her courageous Commanding Officer, Captain H.M.L. (Hec) Waller, DSO, RAN, who lost his life during the battle. Captain Waller's bravery and leadership has been recently recognised with the commissioning of HMAS WALLER, a COLLINS class submarine.

This book, long out of print, is well worth looking for in military and second-hand bookshops.