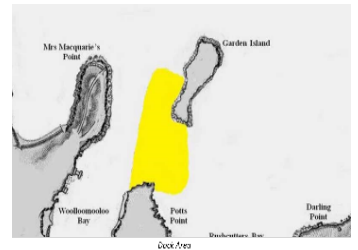


The history and operation of Garden Island

Just 16 days after the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 Garden Island became part of Australia's naval history. The island was selected for the ship's company of HMS SIRIUS to grow fresh vegetables, a dietary priority after a lengthy sea voyage to prevent scurvy.



The island was joined to Potts Point in 1941. Millions of tons of fill were required to reclaim a large part of the Harbour.



The material for the reclamation was extracted from a quarry at Balls Head using very basic tools during WW II.



A major building program was conducted in the late 18th century and early in the 19th century. A barracks was built as accommodation for sailors when their ship was alongside. The sailors slept in hammocks.



The chapel was opened in 1902. It is located in part of the Rigging House. The remembrance chapel was added in 1996. Special wall plaques remember Navy personnel placed on walls regardless of rank. The chapel has many magnificent stained glass windows depicting Navy ships and important Navy events.

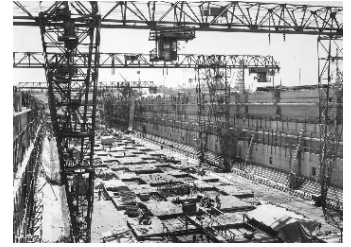


To reclaim the Harbour a coffer dam was built to hold back the seawater. Then the area was dewatered by pumping so excavation for the dock could commence.

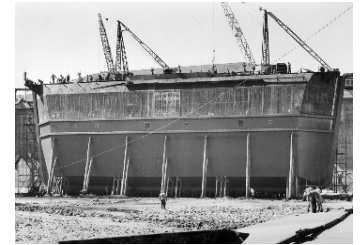


The history and operation of Garden Island

The construction of the dock was the second largest project – larger than the Harbour Bridge. The Snowy Hydro project was the largest. Over 4,000 men were employed at the peak of the project. Work was done 24X7. The dock had its own power station to provide power to the massive pumps and the island facilities.



A caisson is the “gate” that opens and closes the entrance to the dock. It can float or be sunk in place. When it sinks it locks itself into the walls of the dock. There are two caissons that can divide the dock in two allowing two or more ships to be docked simultaneously.



Before a ship is docked the dock is emptied and blocks placed to support the particular ship. Docking is a complex operation to ensure the ship sits on the blocks correctly.



Tunnels were built under the island as air raid shelters during WW II. After the fall of Singapore with its huge naval base and the bombing of Darwin both Garden Island and Cockatoo Island were seen as possible targets by the Japanese.



The first ship to use the dock was HMS ILLUSTRIOUS a British aircraft carrier badly damaged by kamikaze planes. This was before the official opening by the Governor General.



The Hammerhead crane took 7 years to build - 1944 to 1951. It could lift 250 tons. This capacity was required to lift gun turrets and other heavy machinery off warships. It was the largest crane in the southern hemisphere. Demolished in 2013.

