The Royal Australian Navy in 15 Objects
Object 1
A Telescope from Victorian sloop *Victoria*.

19th Century single draw telescope with removable lens cap (REL34389.002) acquired from HMCS *Victoria* - a steam sloop operated by the Victorian Government from 1856-1878. The body of the telescope is a circular tapered brass tube bound in stitched leather cladding with a gloss black surface finish. There is also a single brass draw tube. The internal end of the draw tube is marked "VI" There is one tear in the stitching of the cladding close to the draw tube and major scuffing of the leather, which runs the length of the barrel. The front lens mounting and forward part of the telescope is finished in either patinated brass or polished metal with a varnished surface. The rear of the telescope tube and draw tube is similarly finished. At the rear of the telescope a metal circular dust cover fitting is missing. An inscription on the draw tube has been partially effaced but the donor confirms that it should read 'HMCS Victoria' of which the 'Victoria' is still visible. The full inscription reads: 'HMCS Victoria T. Gaunt Optician Sydney and Melbourne'. Exactly how this telescope was positioned when it was in use is unclear. As the length of the telescope is over one metre when extended it is uncertain how one person could have held it comfortably. However there are no fittings attached to the body of the telescope to indicate that it was fixed to a support.

This telescope was used for navigational purposes by officers in *Victoria*. The ship was ordered in London by the Victorian Government on 19 July 1854 to be a specialised warship. The vessel was launched on 30 June 1855 and set sail from Plymouth on 8 March 1856, arriving at Port Phillip Bay on 31 May. It saw initial service under the control of the Port Phillip Police Department as an Armed Police Vessel from 1856 - 1859 before passing to the direct control of the chief secretary of the colony. In 1860 the Victorian Government placed *Victoria* at the disposal of the governor of New Zealand for twelve months following the outbreak of the second Anglo-Maori war. On April 24 1860 the Victoria sailed from Hobart with 124 troops and arrived in New Zealand on 1 May signifying the start of the first overseas military operation by an Australian unit. *Victoria*'s duties included troop transportation, evacuation of civilians and a bombardment of suspected blockade running schooners at the Makau River. On 19 December men from the *Victoria* formed part of a naval brigade which saw action at Kairau before taking part in the action at Matarikoriko on 29 December. On 29 January 1861 troops re-embarked in *Victoria*. The vessel set sail for Australia in March of that year. *Victoria* was decommissioned in 1864, but returned to survey duties from 1865-1869 and 1873-1877. It was briefly refitted as a warship in 1878 but was decommissioned after six months eventually passing out of government service in 1882. *Victoria* was chartered for service as an excursion steamer before being sold in 1888 and broken up at Williamstown in 1895.

Location: The Australian War Memorial.