

= Roy Dowling =

Vice Admiral Sir Roy Russell Dowling , KCVO , KBE , CB , DSO (28 May 1901 ? 15 April 1969) was a senior commander in the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) . He served as Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) , the RAN 's highest @-@ ranking position , from 1955 until 1959 , and as Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) , forerunner of the role of Australia 's Chief of the Defence Force , from 1959 until 1961 .

Born in northern New South Wales , Dowling entered the Royal Australian Naval College in 1915 . After graduating in 1919 he went to sea aboard various Royal Navy and RAN vessels , and later specialised in gunnery . In 1937 , he was given command of the sloop HMAS Swan . Following the outbreak of World War II , he saw action in the Mediterranean theatre as executive officer of the Royal Navy cruiser HMS Naiad , and survived her sinking by a German U @-@ boat in March 1942 . Returning to Australia , he served as Director of Plans and later Deputy Chief of Naval Staff before taking command of the light cruiser HMAS Hobart in November 1944 . His achievements in the South West Pacific earned him the Distinguished Service Order .

Dowling took command of the RAN 's first aircraft carrier , HMAS Sydney , in 1948 . He became Chief of Naval Personnel in 1950 , and Flag Officer Commanding HM Australian Fleet in 1953 . Soon after taking up the position of CNS in February 1955 , he was promoted to vice admiral and appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath . As CNS he had to deal with shortages of money , manpower and equipment , and with the increasing role of the United States in Australia 's defence planning , at the expense of traditional ties with Britain . Knighted in 1957 , Dowling was Chairman of COSC from March 1959 until May 1961 , when he retired from the military . In 1963 he was appointed a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order and became Australian Secretary to Queen Elizabeth II , serving until his death in 1969 .

= = Pre @-@ war career = =

Roy Russell Dowling was born on 28 May 1901 in Condong , a township on the Tweed River in northern New South Wales . His parents were sugar cane inspector Russell Dowling and his wife Lily . The youth entered the Royal Australian Naval College (RANC) at Jervis Bay , Federal Capital Territory , in 1915 . An underachiever academically , he excelled at sports , and became chief cadet captain before graduating in 1918 with the King 's Medal , awarded for " gentlemanly bearing , character , good influence among his fellows and officer @-@ like qualities " . The following year he was posted to Britain as a midshipman , undergoing training with the Royal Navy and seeing service on HMS Ramillies and HMS Venturous . By January 1923 he was back in Australia , serving aboard the cruiser HMAS Adelaide . He was promoted to lieutenant in March . In April 1924 , Adelaide joined the Royal Navy 's Special Service Squadron on its worldwide cruise , taking in New Zealand , Canada , the United States , Panama , and the West Indies , before docking in September at Portsmouth , England . There Dowling left the ship for his next appointment , training as a gunnery officer and serving in that capacity at HMS Excellent .

After his return to Australia in December 1926 , Dowling spent eighteen months on HMAS Platypus and HMAS Anzac , where he continued to specialise in gunnery . In July 1928 , he took on an instructional role at the gunnery school in Flinders Naval Depot on Western Port Bay , Victoria . He married Jessie Blanch in Melbourne on 8 May 1930 ; the couple had two sons and three daughters . Jessie accompanied him on his next posting to Britain commencing in January 1931 . He was promoted to lieutenant commander on 15 March , and was appointed gunnery officer on the light cruiser HMS Colombo in May . Dowling returned to Australia in January 1933 , and was appointed squadron gunnery officer aboard the heavy cruiser HMAS Canberra that April . The ship operated mainly within Australian waters over the next two years . In July 1935 , Dowling took charge of the gunnery school at Flinders Naval Depot . He was promoted to commander on 31 December 1936 . The following month , he assumed command of the newly commissioned Grimsby @-@ class sloop HMAS Swan , carrying out duties in the South West Pacific . Completing his tenure on Swan in January 1939 , he was briefly assigned to the Navy Office , Melbourne , before returning to Britain in

March for duty at HMS Pembroke , where he awaited posting aboard the yet @-@ to @-@ be @-@ commissioned anti @-@ aircraft cruiser , HMS Naiad .

= = World War II = =

Dowling became executive officer on HMS Naiad when the ship was commissioned in 1940 . Following service with the British Home Fleet , the cruiser transferred to the Mediterranean Station in May 1941 , where she took part in the Battle of Crete . She was involved in action against German torpedo boats on the night of 20 / 21 May . On 22 May , after engaging a German destroyer with HMAS Perth , Naiad was severely damaged by air attack . Following repairs , she became flagship of the 15th Cruiser Squadron and conducted shore bombardments in support of Allied troops during the Syrian campaign in June and July . She also escorted convoys resupplying Malta . In December , Naiad participated in the First Battle of Sirte against Italian naval forces . On 11 March 1942 , she was torpedoed by a German U @-@ boat off the Egyptian coast , and sank in just over twenty minutes . Dowling remained in the water for an hour and a half before being rescued by a destroyer .

Having survived Naiad 's sinking , Dowling returned to Australia and was appointed Director of Plans at the Navy Office in July 1942 . In September the following year he was made Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff (DCNS) and raised to acting captain ; his rank became substantive in June 1944 . As DCNS , he was involved in planning the post @-@ war Navy 's composition , which for the first time was to include aircraft carriers . He defined the functions of maritime power in October 1943 as :

- (i) Maintenance of our lines of sea communications ,
- (ii) Destruction of the enemy 's lines of sea communications ,
- (iii) Attack on the enemy 's strategic positions in combined operations with Army and Air Force ,
- (iv) Defence of our bases .

In November 1944 , Dowling was given command of the light cruiser HMAS Hobart , which had been undergoing repair and refit in Sydney since being torpedoed by a Japanese submarine in the Solomons on 20 July 1943 . Dowling took her on her shakedown cruise to Melbourne on 30 December , before embarking for the South West Pacific Area in February 1945 . The following month , Hobart supported the US forces that recaptured Cebu during the liberation of the Philippines . She bombarded Tarakan Island prior to the Allied invasion on 1 May and , later that month , covered the Australian 6th Division 's operations at Wewak . The cruiser supported the Allied landings on Brunei in June , and on Balikpapan in July . For his " outstanding courage , skill and initiative " during these operations , Dowling was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) , gazetted on 6 November 1945 .

= = Post @-@ war career = =

Dowling joined the Australian contingent at the surrender of Japan in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945 . Following the cessation of hostilities , Hobart became flagship of HM Australian Squadron , and Dowling flag captain and chief of staff to Commodore John Collins , the squadron commander . The war had taken a toll on Dowling 's health , and he required leave before commencing his next appointment in May 1946 as Director of Ordnance , Torpedoes and Mines at the Navy Office . Rear Admiral James Goldrick , in the Australian Dictionary of Biography , observed that Dowling " was thrust into the highest positions of the RAN largely as a result of the heavy casualties of World War II " . When John Armstrong ? the only similarly qualified and more senior Navy captain ? was pronounced unfit for seagoing duty , Dowling was given the chance to command Australia 's first aircraft carrier , HMAS Sydney , commissioned in England on 16 December 1948 . In April the following year , two months after the ship 's belated acceptance into service due to teething troubles , Dowling embarked Sydney for Australia with two squadrons of fighters aboard . In June 1950 , he was promoted to commodore and appointed Second Naval Member and Chief of Naval Personnel , serving in this capacity until the end of 1952 . His term coincided with the outbreak of the Korean

War , and resultant increased demands on manpower . Dowling was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 1953 New Year Honours , before travelling to London to attend the Imperial Defence College . Raised to rear admiral in July 1953 , he returned home to take up the post of Flag Officer Commanding HM Australian Fleet that December , serving through the following year . He had to preside over cutbacks to operations brought on by government stringency after the end of the Korean War .

On 24 February 1955 , Dowling succeeded Vice Admiral Sir John Collins as First Naval Member , Australian Commonwealth Naval Board , and Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) . He was promoted to vice admiral on 7 June , and appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) in the Queen 's Birthday Honours two days later . On 15 June , he joined fellow chiefs of staff Lieutenant General Henry Wells and Air Marshal John McCauley , Prime Minister Robert Menzies , and senior government members in approving a draft directive for the role of the Far East Strategic Reserve (FESR) ; this made Commonwealth forces available for the fight against communist insurgents in Malaya , as well as for the security of Malaya and Singapore against external aggression . The Navy 's contribution to the FESR was to be at least two destroyers or frigates on an ongoing basis , as well as a yearly visit by an aircraft carrier . The destroyers HMAS Arunta and HMAS Warramunga , already in the region on an exercise , were immediately committed , and Dowling flew to Singapore to personally announce the plan and the reasons for it to the ships ' crews .

Dowling was an early advocate for the establishment of an Australian submarine fleet ; in 1963 , after several false starts , the first of six Oberon @-@ class submarines was ordered . As part of a general Western trend that viewed with alarm the increasing capability of the Soviet Navy 's surface fleet , Dowling also worked to improve the offensive power of the Fleet Air Arm . In March 1956 , he went so far as proposing purchase of nuclear weaponry for the RAN 's De Havilland Sea Venoms . During much of Dowling 's remaining time as CNS , faced with the obsolescence of HMAS Sydney and in accordance with its two @-@ carrier policy , the Navy tried unsuccessfully to acquire a new and larger aircraft carrier to augment HMAS Melbourne . Believing in the maintenance of traditionally close ties between the RAN and the Royal Navy , he worked to coordinate his policies as CNS with those of Britain 's First Sea Lord , Earl Mountbatten . Taking into account the provisions of the ANZUS treaty and the absence of suitable supplies from Britain , the RAN began to turn reluctantly towards the United States in terms of strategy and equipment , as Dowling explained to Mountbatten :

We now find ourselves at the crossroads because we very much doubt whether the United Kingdom can provide us with what we want in the future . We have no wish to become Americans but there is a strong belief in this country that the sensible course of action for Australians is to acquire war equipment from the United States now . Our very telling reason is of course that , certainly in a global war , our salvation in the Pacific will depend chiefly on the aid of that country . For that we are not less loyal members of the Empire .

Other issues facing the RAN during Dowling 's term as CNS were its relegation ? since the beginning of the 1950s ? to third place behind the other armed forces in terms of Federal budget allocations , its replacement by the RAAF as the country 's first line of defence , and a shortage of manpower . Dowling himself considered " separation from families , lack of houses , over employment , high wages and overtime payment in civvie street " as the causes for the Navy 's inability to attract and retain personnel ; the Allison Report in 1958 resulted in various improvements to service conditions , which helped reduce wastage . The RANC had moved to Flinders Naval Depot in 1930 , and Dowling was pleased to be able to oversee its return to Jervis Bay in 1958 , the year before he relocated the office of the CNS to Canberra .

Dowling was appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE) in the 1957 New Year Honours , and completed his term as CNS on 23 February 1959 . On 23 March he took over from Sir Henry Wells as Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) , a role foreshadowing that of the latter @-@ day Chief of the Defence Force . He was succeeded as CNS by Vice Admiral Henry Burrell . Happily surprised by his appointment as Chairman of COSC , Dowling hoped to transform the position such that it would exercise command authority over the service chiefs , but in this he was to be disappointed . The position 's rank remained the same as the

heads of the Army , Navy and Air Force , and was only responsible for putting their views on military matters to the Minister for Defence . Other setbacks during his tenure included the Defence Department 's decision ? rescinded after his term ? to disband the Fleet Air Arm , and the Federal government 's failure to back him when he announced at a SEATO press conference in March 1961 that Australia was prepared to intervene militarily in the second Laotian crisis should it become necessary . In September 1959 , during the first Laotian crisis , the Australian government had authorised Dowling to commit " an infantry battalion , a squadron of RAAF fighters , air transport , and two RAN destroyers " to support US and SEATO forces , but no intervention took place .

= = Later life = =

Dowling retired from the military on 27 May 1961 and was succeeded as Chairman of COSC by Air Marshal Sir Frederick Scherger . Though keen to secure a diplomatic appointment , nothing was offered to him and , as a practising Anglican , he instead busied himself with church affairs in Canberra . In July 1962 , the government gave him responsibility for organising Queen Elizabeth II 's upcoming royal tour . In this role he was required to liaise with the state governments to plan the Queen 's itinerary , and to become a member of the royal household for the duration of the tour , the first time an Australian tour planner had been given such close access to a visiting monarch . He was rewarded with appointment as a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (KCVO) as of 27 March 1963 , and became Australian Secretary to the Queen on 1 November the same year . Dowling was also the Australian Red Cross Society 's Canberra chairman from 1962 to 1967 ; at the time he took over the chairmanship , Lady Dowling was acting president of the organisation , in the absence of Lady William Oliver . Roy Dowling died of a heart attack on 15 April 1969 in Canberra Hospital . He was given a naval funeral at St John 's Church , and cremated . His wife and five children survived him .