



DEFENCE UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE WEBSITE ORDNANCE INFORMATION SHEET

**ALL UXO MAY BE HAZARDOUS IF DISTURBED
DO NOT TOUCH – TAKE A PHOTO – MARK THE LOCATION – CALL THE POLICE**

PROJECTILE – 12 POUNDER (NAVAL)

Description

- The 12-pounder (12 pr) naval gun was used by Australia, NZ, UK and other nations from the 1800s, throughout WWI & WWII into the 1950s. Types produced range from navy field guns and boat guns (1800s to WWI; a 12 pr was deployed with the Australian naval force that captured parts of PNG at the start of WWI), coast defence guns (WWI to the 1950s), land-based anti-aircraft guns (WWI & II) and on many capital ships, cruisers, destroyers and submarines (WWI & WWII).
- The 12 pr was most prolific during WWII – it was fitted to Australian destroyers, corvettes and auxiliary ships (tugs, cargo vessels, survey ships and minesweepers). Often the 12 pr performed dual roles as the ship's main armament against submarines and torpedo boats and as an anti-aircraft gun.
- The 3 inch 20 cwt projectile was also used by or in Australia. This munition (1914: 12.5 lb/5.7 kg; 1916: 16 lb/7.3 kg) is very similar in size, shape, appearance and operation as the 12 pr but is not specifically described in this data sheet.
- Many variants of the 12 pr projectile have been developed – both '*Breech Loading*' (BL) but primarily '*Quick Firing*' (QF). The types of projectiles likely used in Australia include:
 - **High Explosive** (HE) – '*Common*' (gunpowder), '*Common Lyddite*', '*Common Lyddite*' with internal night tracer (for anti-aircraft use) and '*Common Pointed*' (CP); normally contained a nose and/or base fuse and explosive main charge.
 - **Shrapnel** (Shrap) - usually contain a fuze, burster charge and 200+ bullets/pellets.
 - **Star** - usually contain a fuze, burster or expelling charge and potentially hazardous chemicals or incendiary compositions.
- Regularly fired by Australian naval and coast defence forces into maritime areas and possibly onto Australian shorelines for practices. 12 pr munitions were stored at Australian and UK navy depots in Australia during and after WWII – many were disposed onshore and offshore after WWII. UXO are more likely to be encountered offshore (e.g. during fishing or dredging activities) but may also occasionally be found onshore near naval ammunition depots or at onshore naval live firing ranges (on the surface or buried up to 1.0m).

Technical Data

- Projectile length : approx 220-320 mm (depending on type)
- Projectile Diameter : approx maximum 76 mm (approx 2.98-3.02 in)
- Projectile weight : approx 4.8-12.8 kg (WWI ~5.7 kg; WWII ~7.5 kg; heaviest ~12.8 kg)
- Fuse/Burster : Nose/base fuse and bursting charge which may be easily detonated
- Filling : up to approx 500 g explosive (e.g. Black Powder, Lyddite, TNT, etc)
Others – various incendiary, smoke or chemical compositions
- Identification : Normally cast iron/steel. Hazardous variants of the projectile are often painted yellow, green, black or grey with bands of yellow, red, green or blue. **Caution – this munition has been widely used by various countries over a long period of time - other colours may have been used or colours may have faded over time. Treat all found munitions as dangerous.**

Images

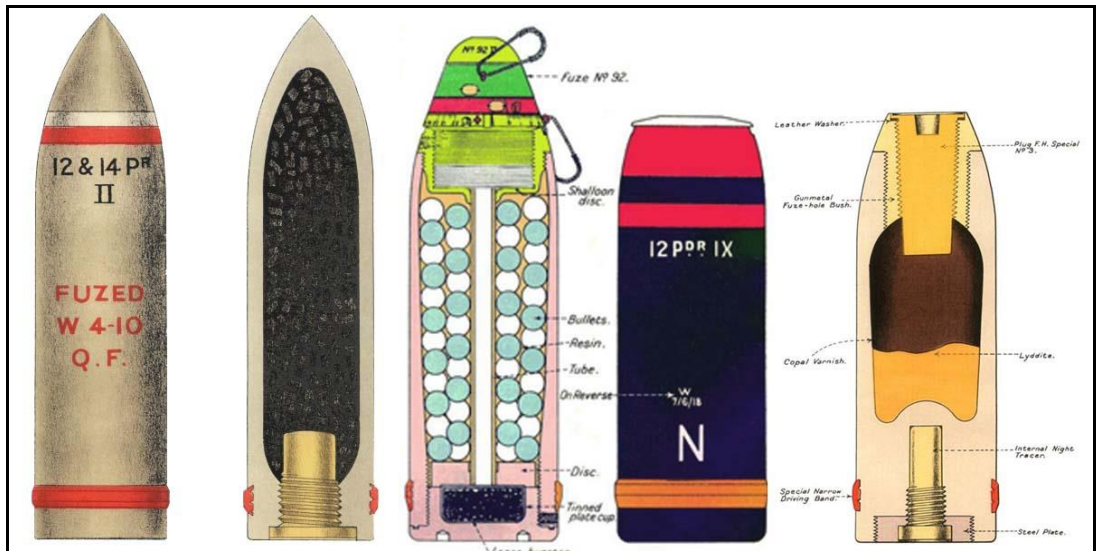


Figure 1 - Various 12 pr projectiles (LtoR): QF Common Pointed (CP), QF CP cutaway, Sharpnel cutaway, Shrapnel (no fuze), QF Common Lyddite (no fuze)



Figure 2 - Loading 12 pr Mk V gun – WWII



Figure 3 - 12 pr gun fixed coastal defences - Fremantle, WA – 1943 (AWM ID number 028983)



Figure 4 - Auxiliary Anti-Submarine vessel HMAS Tambar firing 12 pr gun off Brisbane, Qld, 1940 (AWM ID 304890)