



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 – 4 INCH (NAVAL)

Description

- The 4 inch naval gun was widely used by Australia, US and UK from the late 1800s, throughout WWI, WWII, Korean War and into the 1960-70s. On larger warships, the 4" gun was often a secondary gun; on medium and smaller warships (e.g. destroyers, corvettes), it was often the main armament (The 4" gun was still in use on HMAS *Wagga* until it was retired in 1960). The 4-inch gun was also a deck gun for RAN and RN submarines (RN until 1974). The US 4"/50 calibre Mk 9 gun was the standard gun for US destroyers through WWI and the 1920s and on some submarines during WWII. Many Australian, US and UK merchant ships were fitted with the 4" gun during WWII; it was also used as an anti-aircraft gun on some warships and as a coast defence gun in Australia.
- Many variants of the 4 inch projectile have been developed – both '*Breech Loading*' (BL) and '*Quick Firing*' (QF). The more common types of projectiles likely used in Australia included the following:
 - **High Explosive** (HE) – '*Common*' (gunpowder), '*Common Lyddite*' & '*High Capacity*' (HC); normally contained a nose and base fuse and explosive main charge.
 - **Armour Piercing** (AP), **Semi Armour Piercing** (SAP) – naval AP and SAP projectiles were often base-fuzed and contained explosive or a shaped charge.
 - **Illumination** (Illum), **Signal** (Star) and **Smoke** (Smk) - usually contain a fuze, burster or expelling charge and potentially hazardous chemicals or incendiary compositions.
 - **Practice or Target Practice** (Prac or TP) - normally contained a nose fuse and low explosive (gun powder) and/or smoke composition.
- Frequently used by Australian, US and UK naval and coast defence forces in maritime areas but also occasionally fired onto Australian shorelines for practices. Large quantities of 4 inch munitions were stored at Australian, US 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 1.5m).

Technical Data

- Mmunition length : approx. 1000-1200 mm (depending on type)
- Projectile length : approx 400-475 mm (depending on type)
- Projectile Diameter : approx maximum 100-102 mm (approx 4 in)
- Projectile weight : approx 13.2 (AA) - 17.4 kg (SAP)
- Fuse/Burster : Nose/base fuse and bursting charge which may be easily detonated
- Filling : HE - approx 520-2200 g explosive (e.g. Lyddite, Amatol, TNT, Expl D)
Others – various incendiary, smoke or chemical compositions
- Identification : 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 - RAN sailor loading the 4 inch gun of the troopship *Ormiston* during gunnery practice (AWM ID number 073490)

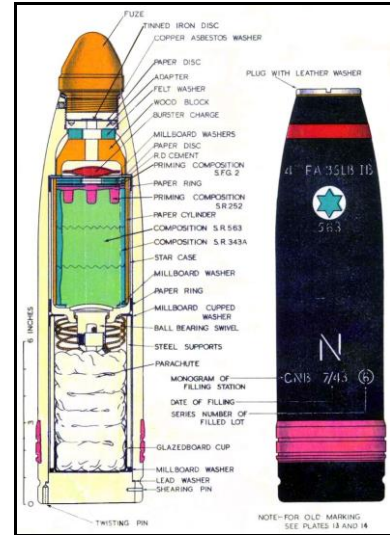


Figure 2 - British 4" star shell – 1943

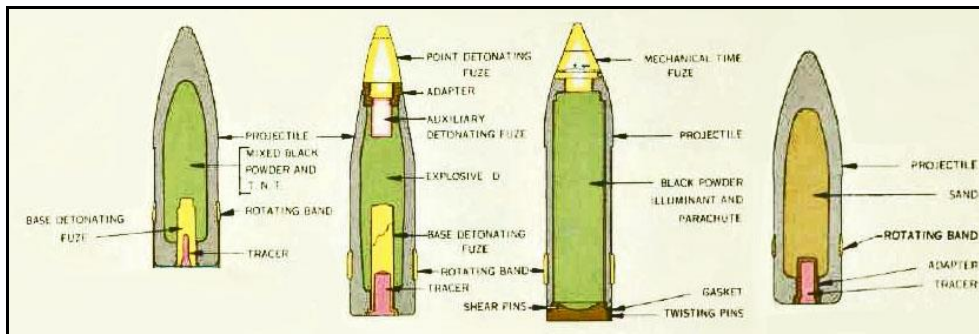


Figure 3 - US 4"/50 cal. projectiles (L to R) 'Common', 'High Capacity' (HC), Illum, Target



Figure 4 - HMAS Australia firing 4" QF Mk XVI Twin AA gun - 1943 (AWM ID number 029555)



Figure 5 - HMAS Sydney II Debris Field Unexploded projectiles - possibly 4-inch (AWM ID number P09281.836 & P09281.840, © Australian War Memorial, licensed under CC BY-NC)



Figure 6 - Personnel of Fort Pierson, Hobart Coast Artillery manning the 4-inch gun – 1943 (AWM ID number 051471)