

## Hec Waller Memorial (Benalla)



Hec Waller Benalla7.jpg



Hec Waller Benalla4.jpg



Hec Waller Benalla.jpg



Hec Waller Benalla2.jpg



Hec Waller Benalla3.jpg



Hec Waller Benalla8.jpg



Hec Waller Benalla5.jpg



Hec Waller Benalla6.jpg

### Location

Bridge Street BENALLA, BENALLA RURAL CITY

### Municipality

BENALLA RURAL CITY

### Level of significance

-

### Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

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Hermes Number 191832

Property Number

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## **Veterans Description for Public**

On 13 March 2010, a memorial to Hector Macdonald Laws (Hec) Waller, DSO and Bar was unveiled in his home town of Benalla. Hec Waller (4 April 1900 - 1 March 1942) was a senior officer in the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). In a career spanning almost thirty years, he served in both world wars. At the helm of HMAS Stuart in the Mediterranean from 1939 to 1941, he won recognition as a skilful ship's captain and flotilla commander. He then transferred to the South West Pacific as captain of the light cruiser HMAS Perth, and went down with his ship against heavy odds during the Battle of Sunda Strait in early 1942.

Born in Benalla, Victoria, Waller entered the Royal Australian Naval College at the age of thirteen. After graduating, he served with the Royal Navy (RN) in the closing stages of World War I. Between the wars, he specialised in communications and was posted as signals officer to various British and Australian warships. He gained his first sea-going command in 1937, as captain of HMS Brazen. In September 1939, he took charge of HMAS Stuart and four other obsolete destroyers that together became known as the "Scrap Iron Flotilla". In 1940, these were augmented by other ships to form the 10th Destroyer Flotilla, supporting Allied troops in North Africa.

Waller was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and Bar, and twice mentioned in despatches, for his achievements in the Mediterranean. He assumed command of HMAS Perth in October 1941, taking part in the Battle of the Java Sea shortly before his final action in Sunda Strait. He received a third mention in despatches posthumously, and in 2011 came under formal consideration for the award of the Victoria Cross (VC) for his performance as Perth's captain. The submarine HMAS Waller is named in his honour.

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*