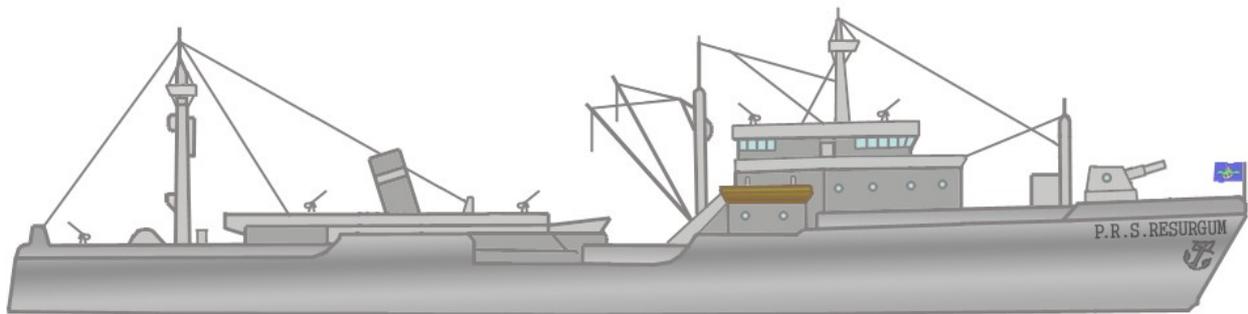


THE PORONGURUP RANGERS SHIP RESURGAM



The *PRS Resurgam* was originally a long range Japanese fishing trawler/factory ship named the *Ishi Maru*. It was one of the many ships to limp in to King George Sound at the war's conclusion, and - like many of them - ended up sunk into the mud of the "shipyard" at the northern end of Oyster Harbour.

From around 2050 onwards, the trading and fishing fleet of the nascent Porongurup state was increasingly harried by piracy. Numerous small groups of raiders had established themselves in the bays, islands and coves along the coast to the east, and although the Porongurup Rangers were able to attack some of their bases from land, they lacked the shipping to make co-ordinated strikes from the sea. A number of raids were carried out from borrowed and commandeered fishing boats, but the effect was minimal. Around 2060, with the attacks getting worse yearly, the Rangers and Government began to consider construction of a specialised warship to tackle the piracy problem once and for all.

The main obstacle was obtaining enough steel for armour plating the hull. Some pirates groups had access to pre-war technology such as rockets and torpedoes, and although their effectiveness was severely compromised by age, they were still powerful enough to destroy a wooden or fibreglass hull. Debate over the armour problem dragged on until mid 2062 when two events brought the issue to a head.

In late July a pirate group attacked the settlement of Two People's Bay, just down the coast from Albany. Twenty five of the townsfolk were killed, and most of the major buildings put to the torch. It was quickly agreed that something had to be done as soon as possible, or the raiders would be attacking Albany next. A series of retributive strikes against the raiders was hurriedly launched and the Rangers began a longer term project to locate and chart all the pirate bases between Porongurup and the pre-war town of Esperance.

It was during one of these charting missions in October that a group of Rangers stumbled over the rusting hulk of a Royal Australian Navy cruiser beached on one of the islands of the Recherche Archipelago. Almost immediately it was realised that this wreck could provide all the steel plate needed to outfit a medium sized vessel, and plans were set in motion to recover it.

In early November a fleet set out from Albany and a team of workers and engineers spent the next two months stripping the ship of anything that could be salvaged. Their camp was attacked by pirates (who had no doubt figured out their intentions) on several occasions, but the large security detachment was able to defend the base with minimal losses. The fleet returned to Porongurup in early January 2063, carrying all the armour and equipment necessary for the project.

Meanwhile a second group of engineers had been assessing the hulks in the 'shipyard' to find one suitable for recovery and conversion to a warship. In the end they decided on the *Ishi Maru* - it was the right size, the superstructure was in excellent condition and the large holds (designed for storing thousands of tons of frozen fish) provided plenty of room for the twin high pressure steam engines deemed necessary to move several tons of steel armour at useful speed. The ship was hauled out of the mud in April, and the next year was spent converting it from a rusted hulk into a reasonable approximation of a late 19th century light cruiser.

The ship was launched on March 3rd 2064. It was christened *Resurgam*, Latin for "I rise again", a double reference to both the wreck of the *Ishi Maru* being recovered from the mud and to the re-establishment of civilisation the ship was built to assist. It underwent trials and modifications for the next two months, and commenced active service in May.

Within two years the *Resurgam* had definitively crushed all but the smallest lingering shreds of pirate activity along the coastline in both directions. Its speed, armaments and armour plate easily outclassed anything the raiders could bring to bear, and one by one their ships and bases were destroyed. The pirate threat was officially declared eliminated in April 2066, and the *Resurgam* assigned to patrol duties to prevent further outbursts of piracy.

One of the decisive factors in the *Resurgam's* superiority was that the engineers on the project were able to use parts salvaged from the RAN vessel to re-construct two banks of naval artillery and install them on the new ship. They also designed a variety of easily manufactured naval shells that could be used in the guns, including incendiary shells, armour piercing shells, high explosive shells and even parachute flares. While these weapons possessed only a fraction of the power of the original guns, they were more powerful than anything the pirates and raiders could muster, and remain unrivaled even today.

Fully crewed and fully stocked with supplies and fuel the *Resurgam* can patrol for two weeks without having to stop into port. Its full crew complement is 45, although it can be operated by a skeleton crew of five if necessary. Under optimum conditions it can reach speeds of 20 knots, making it the fastest vessel in the Southwest. The Porongurup Rangers maintain two full crews at all times, and rotate them between the ship and Forts on a monthly basis. Regular voyages are made up and down the coast in both directions to keep the crews trained and (in recent years) to keep an eye on the Warlord Realms.

Following the success of the *Resurgam* project, leftover parts from the RAN vessel were used to armour three smaller vessels in 2068. These converted fishing vessels, named "Defender", "Decisive" and "Defiant" (known collectively as the "D Ships") proved

just as successful as their larger sister and were assigned to customs inspections and patrolling King George Sound and surrounding waters, a role they fulfill to this day. Each is fitted with one scaled down, swivel mounted version of the naval guns on the *Resurgam*, firing the same shells, although with a shorter range.

Each D Ship is 10 metres long and carries a crew of five with room for an equal number of passengers. When fully stocked they can patrol for several days without needing to land, but are usually not out of harbour for more than 24 hours at a time. Under optimum conditions they can reach speeds of up to 14 knots.