

CALL THE HANDS

Issue No. 5

February 2017

From the President

Welcome to the fifth edition of Call the Hands and 2017. It is a newsletter for Society members and the broader Navy Family. During the coming year the Society intends keeping you up to date and well informed about events of historical and contemporary interest. We will continue uploading stories from the Society's journal; the *Naval Historical Review* published over forty years to our website. It is a wonderful resource.

Articles published in *Call the Hands* are often triggered by research queries received through the website or by phone. The nature of queries is deep and wide with many from family history researchers. Our research service is outlined at <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/research/>.

During 2017 a number of significant 75th anniversary commemoration events for RAN ships lost during World War 2 will be conducted. To this end the Navy flyer accompanying this newsletter seeks community assistance to locate and notify survivors and their families of the commemorative events Navy will be hosting. David Michael

From the Editor

Welcome to the February edition of 'Call the hands'. Throughout 2017 we aim to develop the format of Call the Hands and transition it into HTML format. We will continuously refine the format and content based on your feedback. Thanks for your personal stories and perspectives on particular events or aspects of Australian naval history. We appreciate hearing from you. Feel free to contribute stories and photos, particularly of people (with names) at work. Our gallery is heavily weighted towards platforms. The email for contributions is callthehands@navyhistory.org.au.

David Stratton

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The Navy Memorial located on Bradley's Head, Sydney commemorates all who have served in the RAN.

A Memorial walk is also located on this site commemorating RAN ships lost in War.



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Member Presentations: February

February presentations are as follows;

Canberra	6 February	Australian Argonauts by the Author, Vice Admiral Peter Jones AO DSC RAN Rtd
Sydney	21 February	Ship Building on Cockatoo Island by John Jeremy
Melbourne	27 February	An Introduction to CO HMAS Cerberus by Captain Tim Standen CSC RAN

For full details visit the Society website, <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/>

ACT Chapter of NHSA: Retrospective

Following re-establishment of the Societies ACT Chapter on 2 November 2016, Mr Donald Hannan a long term Society member, contacted the President to provide background information of the early days of the ACT Chapter and to transfer a number of documents and items in his possession. Donald who is now retired on the NSW south coast was the convener and inaugural president of the ACT Chapter.

Donald led the Chapter for six years and recalls that fellow members who joined him in the task of establishing the Chapter were; Eddy and Rosemary Rodwell, Frank Adamic and Ron Wright. Their meetings were held in the Dug-out Bar at the Ainslie Rex Hotel.

After establishing the Chapter and a regular program of activities Donald initiated a major project to establish the HMAS Canberra Memorial. As one would expect, numerous bureaucratic obstacles had to be overcome during the project. Location, design, funding and getting agreement from all stakeholders were the primary obstacles. After several years of effort and good support from the Chief of Naval Staff and HMAS Shropshire Association of Australia the Memorial was completed with a cruiser anchor provided from Naval Stores. Following closure of the ACT Chapter in 2004 the ACT Section of the Naval Association of Australia accepted responsibility for the memorial and conduct the annual HMAS Canberra Memorial Service.

The items Donald returned to the Society included sketch of the Memorial used during the Projects life and an honour board in the shape of the original HMAS Canberra crest.



A.C.T. CHAPTER LAUNCHED

Federal President, Mr L.J. Lind addresses the inaugural ACT Chapter meeting on 29 March 1974.

From L to R: Vice Admiral H.D. Stevenson, Admiral Sir Victor Smith. Mr Lind, Mr D. Hannan, Mr F Adamik and Mr R. Wright

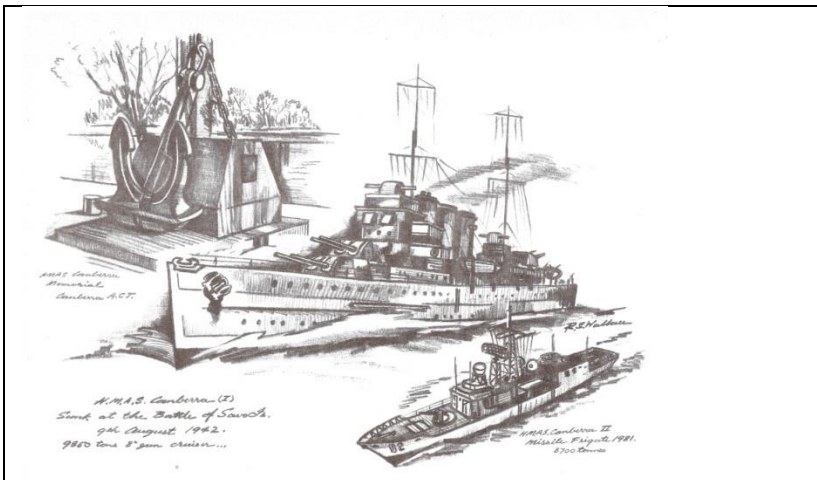


ACT Chapter Inaugural President, Donald Hannan and David Michael with HMAS Canberra Crest (honor board), 30 November 2016

HMAS Canberra Memorial

Dedicated on 9 August 1981 the Anchor memorial commemorates HMAS *Canberra* and those who served in her. On 9 August 1942 HMAS *Canberra* was lost in action in the Solomon Islands at the Battle of Savo Island, some 1800 kilometers off the North Queensland coast. Eighty four crewmen lost their lives. Crippled in a short but ferocious engagement with a force of Japanese cruisers in the early hours of the morning, the ship was abandoned and sunk at 8 a.m. by allied vessels before they withdrew from the area.

Located on the shore of Lake Burley Griffin near the Carillon the memorial was unveiled by the Chief of Defence Force Staff, Admiral Sir Anthony Synnot KBE, AO, RAN. The memorial incorporates a five-ton anchor and chain, of the type normally carried by a naval cruiser. A number of approaches were made to ACT Government Agencies to have Aspen Island on which the Carillon stands renamed Savo Island. However, the Society's efforts fell on deaf ears. This issue may be something for the new ACT Chapter to follow-up.



Early sketch of the HMAS Canberra Memorial



HMAS Canberra Memorial,
ACT Photograph by Glen
Yeomans / Russell Byers

Indian Naval Ship Betwa: Un-docking Accident

On 6 December the Brahmaputra class guided missile frigate INS Betwa, commissioned into the Indian Navy in 2004, was seriously damaged in an undocking accident at the Mumbai dockyard.

The 3,850 ton Betwa (length 126m) tipped over after an apparent failure of the dock blocks killing two sailors and injuring 14 others. With the main mast broken away the frigate is now lying on its side in the dock. It is not clear yet how the ship will be recovered.



INS Betwa



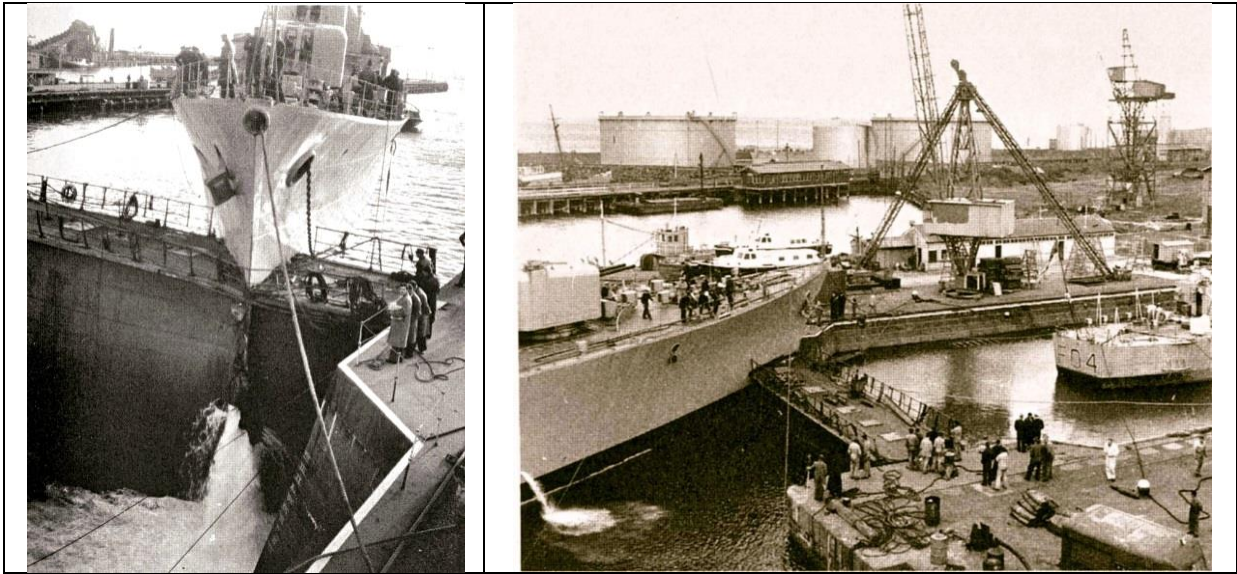
INS Betwa on its side Un-docking in Mumbai

Over the last three years the Indian Navy has suffered several major accidents including; groundings, engine room fires and loss of the Kilo-class submarine, INS Sindhurakshak which sank after an explosion alongside in Mumbai with the loss of all onboard.

RAN near miss Docking Disaster

The RAN's closest call with a dock disaster involved HMAS Vendetta on 18 July 1958 before her commissioning. Whilst leaving her berth at Williamstown Dockyard, she rammed the dry dock caisson gates, and remained trapped there for five hours. Disaster was only narrowly averted. The frigate, Quickmatch, was under refit in the drydock, and if the dock gates had collapsed, she would have been swept aside by the torrent of water. Dockyard workers reacted swiftly to the emergency by flooding the dock, thus taking the pressure off the weakened caisson.

Ref: <http://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-vendetta-ii>



Nuship Vendetta collision with Williamstown Naval Dockyard caisson: 18 July 1958

Photo of the Month



HMAS Perth on floating dock at Marine Complex Common User Facility: Henderson WA. Department of Defence image

Arctic Star Presentation: Lieutenant Commander Ken Brown RAN Rtd

During divisions at HMAS *Cerberus* on 25 November 2016, 95 year old Ken Brown was presented with the Arctic Star by His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC.

This award recognized Ken Brown's service during World War II for operational service north of the Arctic Circle in HMAS *Nestor*. During this period *Nestor* was part of a six cruiser and destroyer escort for HMS *Hood*. *Hood* and her escorts had been tasked to search for the German Battleship *Bismark* which was causing havoc in the North Sea and waters around Iceland.

Occasional Paper 5, circulated with this newsletter provides a summary of Ken Brown's service in the RAN.



The Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC, Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Tim Barrett, AO, CSC, RAN, Commanding Officer HMAS *Cerberus*, Captain Stephen Bowater, OAM, RAN, and Mr Ken Brown a World War II veteran who was presented with a British award - the Arctic Star.

Royal Australian Navy Image: LSIS Nina Fogliani



The Arctic Star is awarded to those who served in areas above the Arctic Circle during World War II. It commemorates service in the Arctic Convoys and is designed primarily for the ships of the convoys to North Russia and their escorts.

The Arctic Star is granted for operational service from 3 September 1939 to the 8 May 1945 inclusive.

The history of HMAS *Nestor* is available at: <http://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-nestor>

HMAS *Norman* and *Nepal*: Arctic Veterans

In October 1941 HMAS *Norman* carried out one of the most unusual tasks during the war years. She was tasked with embarking Sir Walter Citrine and a Trade Union Delegation in Iceland for passage to Russia. The story of the Archangel operation which was highly classified at the time and strategically critical to the course of the war will be published in the March 2017 edition of the Naval Historical Review (available to members). In the March 2017 edition we are also publishing a little known story of a sister ship, HMAS *Nepal*'s, involvement in a voyage into these bleak northern waters.

Rear Admiral Sir David James Martin KCMG, AO: Honored at HMAS Creswell

On conclusion of the New Entry Officer's Course graduation parade at HMAS Creswell on 1 December 2016 the 6th New Entry Officer's Course Division was named, Martin Division. Lady Suzanne Martin, OAM, was in attendance and expressed sincere gratitude for the honor.



Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Tim Barrett, AO, CSC, RAN, with Lady Suzanne Martin, OAM, during the official naming of the 6th New Entry Officer's Course Division, Martin Division, at HMAS Creswell.

Royal Australian Navy Images: ABIS Sarah Ebsworth



New Entry Officer Course 55 Passing Out Parade at HMAS Creswell, 1 December 2016

The Passing out Parade marks the conclusion of the New Entry Officer's Course at HMAS Creswell. The day is the culmination of nineteen weeks of hard work and represents the completion of their non-specialist initial officer training. New entry officers parade as a guard on the Quaterdeck and march past the Reviewing Officer in ceremonial uniform.



Sir David Martin's biography is available on the Australian Dictionary of Biography website, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/martin-sir-david-james-14938>

His Naval Career is detailed on the RAN website at:
<http://www.navy.gov.au/biography/rear-admiral-sir-david-james-martin>

Naval College Divisions

On 1 March 2013, Vice Admiral Ray Griggs AO CSC RAN, Chief of Navy announced new Naval College division names. These four naval officers names had previously been used at the Recruit School, HMAS Cerberus. They were Waller, Rankin, Moran and Getting. They replaced divisional names at HMAS Creswell which had strong connections to Australian history. In announcing the change VADM Griggs stated that it was time the RAN's unique and distinct history forged through 112 years of service to the nation, was best commemorated by honoring Australian officers who have served with distinction. The fifth Creswell Division added by VADM Griggs was named after the great engineer, Vice Admiral Sir William Clarkson. Clarkson saw Active service in the Boxer Rebellion and played an often unheralded role in the early development of the Australian Navy. His drive and passion enabled much of our early success through a first rate support organization.

Further information is available at: <http://www.navy.gov.au/news/renaming-divisions-ran-college-and-ran-recruit-school>

This Month in History

19 February 1942 — Bombing of Darwin

Related Articles available at <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/> include;

- Some Truths About Darwin and the Air Raid – 19 Feb 1942
- HMAS Platypus & The Darwin Raid – 1942
- HMAS Platypus in Darwin during blitz 19 February 1942

Use the search tool to locate them.

Naval Studies Group News

New Project: Australia's Naval Leaders

The Naval Studies Group at The Australian Centre for the Study of armed conflict (ACSACS) has embarked on a significant project to publish a book entitled, '*Australia's Naval Leaders: The Chiefs Of Naval Staff 1901-1997*'. This work will not be a collection of biographies but focus upon their time as Chief of Naval Staff. The work will focus on the problems and challenges that each admiral faced as well how they led, set goals and priorities and what they achieved. It will also aim to address the strategic, political, financial, social and bureaucratic contexts in which they operated. With a publication date of June 2018 the writing team has a challenging task.

Rear Admiral James Goldrick: Honoured

Each year The Society for Nautical Research based in the UK presents an award for the best book on an aspect of maritime history. After judging 19 works the Society James Goldrick was chosen as the 2016 winner for his book, *Before Jutland: The Naval War in Northern European Waters, August 1914 - February 1915*, published by the Naval Institute Press. Congratulations James.

His book is available at; <http://www.amazon.com/Before-Jutland-Northern-European-1914-February/dp/1591143497>

Trivia Corner

Which was the first RAN ship to have radar installed?

The answer to this question will be provided in next month's newsletter.

Answers to last month's questions:

1. Q In 1932 during the Great Depression the RAN could muster only three ships in full commission. Which ships were they?

A There were actually four if HMAS Tattoo is included. She was in and out of commission throughout her life but was actually in commission in 1932.

HMAS Australia (2) Heavy cruiser 1928–1954

HMAS Canberra Heavy cruiser 1928–1942

HMAS Penguin Depot ship 1929–1941

HMAS Tattoo Destroyer 1920–1933

Further Reading: *The Decline of Australian Naval Deterrence 1919-1939*, Lieutenant Commander Glenn Kerr, RAN. Available at: <http://www.navy.gov.au/history/feature-histories/decline-australian-naval-deterrence-1919-1939>

2. Q What was the Squadron number of the RAN's first fighter squadron?

A 805 Squadron was formed in 1948 and operated Hawker Sea Fury fighter aircraft

Subscription

Should you become aware of others who wish to receive *Call The Hands* they should be advised to register by e-mailing the Society at callthehands@navyhistory.org.au.

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