

# CALL THE HANDS

NHSA DIGITAL NEWSLETTER

Issue No.21

July 2018

## From the President

Welcome to the July edition of Call the Hands. I trust you will find it interesting and informative. Accompanying this edition are two Occasional Papers.

The first occasional paper is an extract from the memoirs of LEUT Geoffrey Dobbin RANR (S) Rt'd which focuses on Vice Admiral Sir Edmund Walter Anstice, RN KCB. Following WWII the then Captain Anstice was loaned to the RAN as Director of Naval Aviation Planning. His efforts contributed significantly to the development of the Fleet Air Arm.

As June and July mark significant anniversaries for HMAS Hobart (I) and (II) and Society volunteers were recently treated to a tour of HMAS Hobart (III) the second paper reminds us of the distinguished service of these ships and the outstanding capabilities of HMAS Hobart (III). As Hobart enters a new phase of work up and trials which will thoroughly test its air warfare capabilities the Society wishes Captain John Stavridis and his ships company every success in the coming months.

Continuing the naval aviation theme, we acknowledge the Government of Australia's decision to recognise the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) Helicopter Flight Vietnam (HFV) with the award of the Unit Citation for Gallantry on 1 June 2018. The RANHFV, was integrated with the US Army 135th Assault Helicopter Company in both utility and gunship configurations and served with valour from 1967 to 1971. Five Navy personnel died whilst serving with the RANHFV and 22 were wounded in action.

Once again, I thank members and subscribers for their feedback and contributions. Many of the stories we present emerge from research questions put to Senior Researcher, John Smith from individuals and institutions all around the world. Sadly, another valued volunteer and researcher, Ian (Peter) Wrigley, RAN MBE VRD, crossed the bar on 6 June. Ian is fondly remembered for his service to the Society and Australia in many roles including support to the HMAS Watson Warfare Faculty. A podcast of Ian's experience with aircraft direction in HMAS Australia II during World War II is available on the [Society's website](#).

As renewal of Society membership fell due on 1 July, members will be offered a much reduced subscription if they opted to receive the quarterly magazine, *Naval Historical Review* in digital format. Increased printing and postal costs and environmental considerations contributed to the decision to reduce the membership fee from \$45 to \$30 per annum for the digital option. Now is a good time to [become a member](#).

The June 2018 edition of the *Naval Historical Review* will be distributed to members in the coming days. It includes eleven previously unpublished stories on subjects as diverse as Health Services, WWII submarine service, the Women's Emergency Signalling Corps and Rear Admiral Claude Cumberlege. Cumberlege, during his seven years with the RAN, a century ago, commanded just about every ship in the Australian Fleet and had an immense influence on the officers and men he served with.

David Michael  
President



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**Annual HMAS Kuttabul Commemoration**

On 1 June 2018 personnel at HMAS Kuttabul conducted a service to commemorate the 76th anniversary of the Japanese midget submarine attack in Sydney Harbour, which claimed the lives of 27 service personnel - two British, six Japanese and 19 Royal Australian Navy members - in 1942.

In a small but solemn service, representatives of the consulates of Japan, the United States and Great Britain joined with students from St Vincent's College to lay wreaths at the base of the M-21 midget submarine wreckage on display in the Royal Australian Navy Heritage Centre in Garden Island, Sydney. Society member and editor of the Naval Historical Review, Walter Burroughs delivered the keynote address.



Commander Walter Burroughs, RAN (rtd), addresses guests  
RAN Image

**HMAS Adelaide Evacuation Exercise with HMAS Cerberus Sailors**

On 21 March 2018 over 100 recruits from the Royal Australian Navy Recruit School assumed the role of evacuated civilians during a non-combatant evacuation exercise aboard HMAS Adelaide in Westernport Bay. The recruits were screened for simulated medical conditions before being transported from HMAS Cerberus via Landing Helicopter Dock Landing Craft (LLC) to HMAS Adelaide for further screening. The exercise tested HMAS Adelaide's ability to evacuate a large number of people from ashore and safely transport them to the ship where they can receive medical care.



Nursing Officer Lieutenant Paula Evans screens a Recruit participating in a non-combatant evacuation exercise aboard HMAS Adelaide Evacuation Exercise, 21 March 2018 RAN Image



Two LHD Landing Craft pass each other near the wharf at HMAS Cerberus as they transport recruits role-playing as civilian evacuees to HMAS Adelaide in Westernport Bay. RAN Image

## Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam Honoured

The extraordinary gallantry in action displayed by members of RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam in South Vietnam from October 1967 to June 1971 has been recognised by the award of a Unit Citation for Gallantry.



The recommendation for the RAN HFV to be awarded the Unit Citation for Gallantry was accepted by Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove following an inquiry by the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal. The report on the Inquiry into Unit Recognition for the RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam can be viewed on the [Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal website](#).



AN-HFVRAN UH-1 Iroquois Helicopter operating in Vietnam. Defence Image

### Further Reading

A Bloody Job Well Done: The History of the Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam 1967-1971 by Steve Eather.

### Podcast links: Australian Centre for the Study of Armed Conflict and Society

- [The RAN Helicopter Flight in Vietnam: Preparations to deploy and Operations](#)
- [The RAN Helicopter Flight in Vietnam: Command and Logistics](#)
- [The RAN Helicopter Flight in Vietnam: Families back home and the legacy](#)



## Mascot Nancy Bentley RAN o/n 00001

Nancy Bentley, aged six, was the first female to be enlisted into the RAN. Her story from "Ships Belles" by Shirley Fenton Huie, The Story of the WRANS 1941-85, makes interesting reading.

In 1920 Nancy lived with her parents in Port Arthur when she was bitten on the wrist by a whip snake. The nearest doctor was many miles away, but as luck would have it several navy vessels were anchored in the bay, amongst them HMAS Sydney. Her father put a tourniquet on her arm and hurried aboard Sydney by fishing boat, where he approached the Captain for immediate medical help. In those days women were only allowed on board Navy ships on social occasions, but recognising that this was a life and death situation, Nancy was taken on board down to the sick bay and treated by the ships doctor.

Once the immediate danger was passed, the doctor explained that she could not be moved for several days. So to comply with Naval Instructions in KR&AI, Nancy had to be formally enlisted in the RAN. With the official rating of mascot and official number 00001, Nancy spent 8 days in the RAN being cared for by the ships company who doted on her, and visited daily by her parents to bring fresh cows milk. Dressed in proper little Navy dress with cap and scarf, Nancy was awarded a Good Conduct Badge on November 20.

Fully recovered, she was discharged with a Service Certificate describing her character as 'very good', her ability as 'exceptional' and reason for termination 'required by her parents.' She returned to Port Arthur with so many boxes of chocolates she had to be carried ashore.

The crew of Sydney kept in touch with Nancy for years, and in 1986 during the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations, she was made a life member of the Sydney Association.



Standing: Surgeon Lieut. Brennan, Rev. Mr Trigge (Chaplain, HMAS Sydney)  
Seated: Bishop Hay (Hobart), Captain H.P. Cayley with Nancy

A.S. 450.

**CERTIFICATE of the Service of**  
*Miss Nancy Bentley*  
in the Royal Australian Navy.

The owner of this Certificate is to be put off if the man is discharged with a "Bad" character or with a "Good" character or if specially directed by the Naval Board. If the owner is not, the fact is to be noted in the Quarterly Ledger.

Port Division—	<i>Melbourne.</i>	Official Number—	<i>000001.</i>
Date of Birth	<i>Port Arthur</i>	Recent known Relative or Friend (S. included in Name, and Address)	<i>Mrs Bentley Port Arthur Tasmania</i>
Where Born (State or Country)	<i>Tasmania</i>	Usual place of Residence	<i>Port Arthur Tasmania</i>
Trade brought up to	<i>Nil</i>	Religious Denomination	<i>Church of England</i>
Can Swim	<i>Not tried</i>		
Engagements		Marks, Crops, &c.	
Date of actual Volunteering	Commencing Date of Engagement	Period Engaged for	Date Released or Forfeited
<i>15<sup>th</sup> November 1920</i>	<i>15<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1920</i>	<i>Until Feb. 24.</i>	
Description of Person		Marks, Wounds, and Scars	
On entry as a boy	<i>5' 2"</i>	<i>Light Brown</i>	<i>Blue Eyes</i>
On advancement to man's rating, or on entry if under 25 years of age ...			
On re-entry, or on entry if over 25 years of age ...			
Further description if necessary ...			

C.M.73—2048—(1 P.)—5/1917.

## BAE Systems picked to build Australia's nine Future Frigates

BAE Systems has won a bid to build a fleet of nine frigates for the Royal Australian Navy the Australian prime minister Malcolm Turnbull announced the decision on June 29<sup>th</sup>.

Once in Royal Australian Navy service, the frigates will be referred to as the Hunter-class. According to the navy, the class name was specifically chosen for the alternate interpretation of a 'hunter' personifying the role of the frigates as a submarine hunter, with the term embodying the pursuit of prey.

In a signal to all navy personnel, Royal Australian Navy Vice Admiral Barrett said the class name was chosen to reflect the tradition of naming RAN ships that promote Navy's bond with the Nation. In this case, the first three ships of the Hunter class will carry the names of three major Australian regions, all with strong historical maritime and naval ties.



The first batch of three will be named:

- HMAS Flinders (II)  
(SA region named for explorer Captain Matthew Flinders – first circumnavigation of Australia and identified it as a continent);
- HMAS Hunter  
(NSW region named for Vice-Admiral John Hunter – first fleet Captain and 2nd Governor of NSW)
- HMAS Tasman  
(state and sea named for explorer Abel Tasman – first known European explorer to reach Tasmania, New Zealand and Fiji).

BAE Systems was selected over its Spanish rival Navantia who proposed an upgraded F-100 frigate design and Italy's Fincantieri who offered the FREMM frigate.

The project to build a total of nine Aegis-equipped frigates is worth an estimated A\$35bn and will replace the existing fleet of Anzac-class frigates. BAE Systems will soon commence negotiations with Australia's defense department on the initial design part of the contract, which is expected to be in place by the year end, with production expected to commence in 2020.

The frigates will be built at the federal government-owned shipyard ASC in Osborne, South Australia. In June 2017, ASC Shipbuilding and Austal announced they were teaming up for the construction of the Future Frigates.

The winning design is the export version of the Type 26 frigate currently being built for the Royal Navy. BAE Systems refers to the design as Global Combat Ship – Australia, or GCS-A for short.

According to the company, this is the world's first bow-to-stern digitally designed anti-submarine warfare (ASW) warship. "It offers technologically superior ASW capability with the flexibility to undertake the full range of maritime operations," a BAE Systems brochure says.

The GCS design is 149,9 meters long, displaces 6,900 tons and carries a 24-cell Mk41 vertical launch system. The Australian frigates will be fitted with CEAFAAR 2 phased array radar and the Lockheed Martin-built AEGIS combat system.



## Newspaper Article

Evening News (Sydney, NSW : 1869 - 1931), Wednesday 24 October 1883, page 3

### **Garden Island.**

The necessary improvements to Garden Island, to fit it for a naval depot, on a scale commensurate with the importance of its being the depot for H.M.S. fleet on the Australian station, will shortly be commenced. A contract for the works has been accepted, and the improvements will comprise—First, the erection of a stone wall all round the Island, taking in the reef, the inside of which will be filled up with the material from a portion of the hill on the southern end, which will be levelled for the erection of buildings. The whole of the reef will then be reclaimed, and the wall which will encircle the island will be on a level of 4ft above high water mark. A wharf will be built on the western side of about 300ft in length by 30ft wide, on which trams and cranes will be fixed for the purpose of raising heavy guns, machinery, and war material. The water alongside will be deepened to 26ft, so that when necessary the men-of-war can be berthed alongside. Two or three boat slips will be built, so that the smaller craft can be hauled up when necessary for cleaning and repairs. Ample storage accommodation will also be provided on the island. At Woolloomooloo Bay, between the western end of Cowper Wharf and Ireland's boat sheds, commissariat stores are to be erected, having a frontage to a wharf 240ft in length by 30 in breadth, alongside of which there is to be 18ft of water. It is generally understood that the fleet in Australian waters will shortly be greatly increased, and that when Commodore Erskine's term of service has expired that the Lords of the Admiralty have decided to raise it to the importance of an Admiral's station.

**Photo of the Month:**



HMS Illustrious in Captain Cook Dock, Garden Island, March 1, 1945.

## News in Brief

- The Australian government announced it is investing AU\$1.4 billion in the acquisition of six MQ-4C Triton unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). The UAS will be acquired through a cooperative program with the US Navy. Australia is buying the UAS to complement the surveillance role of the P-8A Poseidon aircraft through sustained operations at long ranges as well as being able to undertake a range of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance tasks.



- PARIS — Thales has sealed a deal worth AU \$230 million (U.S. \$169 million) to boost the sonar capability on the Australian Navy's six-strong fleet of Collins submarines, drawing on teams working in Britain, France and Australia. "Australia's strategic priority on enhancing its submarine capability will be supported by Thales through major upgrades of the sonar system on all six Collins class submarines," the electronics company said in a June 14 statement. Thales' work is part of a total AU \$542 million project to install a modular cylindrical array, based on sonar 2076 submarine technology developed by its British unit, the company said. That modular array replaces a cylindrical array installed in the 1980s. A new flank array from the Thales French unit will replace the existing system.

- About 25,000 naval personnel and 52 ships and submarines from 26 countries will participate in this year's Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise, which begins on Wednesday June 27<sup>th</sup>. RIMPAC, the world's largest international maritime exercise, includes rehearsal scenarios that cover disaster relief, amphibious operations, anti-piracy work, missile shots, mine clearance, maritime security, anti-submarine warfare and air defense operations, according to a statement released by U.S. 3rd Fleet. During the course of the exercise, a series of live-fire events are scheduled, including: a long-range anti-ship missile (LRASM) shot by a U.S. Air Force aircraft; a surface-to-ship missile shot by members of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force; and a naval strike missile (NSM) shot by the U.S. Army from a launcher on the back of a palletized load system (PLS), marking the first time a land-based unit is participating in a RIMPAC live-fire event. Australian ships are: HMAS Adelaide (L-01), HMAS Melbourne (FFG-05), HMAS Rankin (SSG-78), HMAS Success (OR-304) and HMAS Toowoomba (FFH-156)



- AFTER more than 40 years of service, HMAS Tobruk has begun retirement by being eased into her new home off the picturesque Fraser Coast in Queensland. Built in the late 1970s and a jewel in the Royal Australian Navy's crown as its first purpose-built amphibious heavy-lift ship, Tobruk will take on a new life as a diving attraction. She was scuttled on Friday after nine months of planning on its second attempt after bad weather prevented it earlier in the month. The 127-metre vessel sank slowly into calm waters under a clear blue sky. Authorities expect the wreck to appeal to divers of all levels, with her upper deck set to settle around 18m deep and the internal deck 25m. The site is set to be ready for divers in about a month, pending safety checks. The Queensland government expects the attraction to bring in around \$5 million worth of tourism to the Wide Bay region a year.



## This Month in History

July 1795	A new form of signalling called semaphore was introduced into the RN. The system was devised by the Reverend Lord George Murray.
July 1900	The Victorian Naval Brigade Contingent, for the Boxer Rebellion, sailed from Melbourne in the transport SALAMIS.
July 1905	The naval prison at Garden Island, Sydney, was completed. It provided accommodation for 12 prisoners.
July 1911	HRH King George V granted the title of "Royal" for the Royal Australian Navy and its Permanent Commonwealth Naval Forces and the Royal Australian Naval Reserve. RADM Sir William Rooke Creswell CNF, recently promoted to Flag Rank on 1st March 1911 was First Naval Member of the Naval Board of the now redesignated RAN. He was Australia's first Admiral (although ex RN) to occupy the position.
July 1915	HMA Ships CHALLENGER PIONEER, patrolled the east coast of Africa to prevent supply ships reaching the German cruiser, KONIGSBERG, trapped in the Rufigi River.
July 1925	A US Naval Squadron consisting of US Ships CALIFORNIA, COLORADO, IDAHO, MARYLAND, MISSISSIPPI, TENNESSEE, and WEST VIRGINIA, arrived at Sydney for a goodwill visit.
July 1935	HMA Ships AUSTRALIA and BRISBANE, (cruisers), represented the RAN at the Jubilee Review of HRH King George V, at Spithead, England.
July 1936	VADM Sir George Francis Hyde was promoted to Admiral. He was the first seagoing officer of the RAN to achieve the rank.
July 1940	HMAS HOBART, (cruiser), landed 687 officers and men of a Punjabi battalion at Berbera, to reinforce British Somaliland.
July 1940	HMA Ships SYDNEY, (cruiser), STUART, VAMPIRE, and VOYAGER, (destroyers), participated in the Battle of Calabria. The signal, 'Enemy battle fleet in sight,' was hoisted for the first time in the Mediterranean since the Napoleonic Wars. HMAS NESTOR, (destroyer), was launched at Fairfield's Yard, UK. HMAS AUSTRALIA, (cruiser), left the Dakar force and proceeded to the Clyde.
July 1944	The British Government offered an aircraft carrier and two cruisers to the RAN. The carrier was of the Colossus class, and the cruisers of the Tiger class. The offer was not accepted on the grounds of inability to man the vessels.
July 1955	HMA Ships ARUNTA and WARRAMUNGA, (destroyers), were despatched to Singapore, on the first permanent deployment of naval forces in South-East Asia.
July 1959	HMS TELEMACHUS, (submarine), returned to Sydney after an exercise in which whales were tagged from the submarine. Professor Dawbin, of Sydney University, fired the tags into the whales, using a specially designed gun.
July 1965	The Perth class, (Charles F Adams, DDG), guided missile destroyer HMAS PERTH, (CAPT I. H. Cartwright, RAN), was commissioned. PERTH was laid down in Defoe Shipbuilding Co, Bay City, Michigan, USA, on 21 September 1962, and launched on 26 September 1963. Lady Beale, (Wife of the Sir Harold Beale, Australian Ambassador to the USA), performed the launching ceremony.
July 1968	The Women's Royal Australian Naval Service Reserve, (WRANSR), was formed.
July 1973	The bow and stern sections of the WWI torpedo boat destroyer HMAS PARRAMATTA, were salvaged from a mud bank on the Hawkesbury River, where she had foundered in 1934. The sections were transported by sea and land to the City of Parramatta for inclusion in a memorial to the ship. The patrol boat HMAS ARDENT, (LEUT J. Riley, RAN), rescued the crew of the fishing trawler ALECIA, which foundered and sank off South Babel Island, VIC.
July 1980	The first WRANS midshipmen passed out of the Royal Australian Naval College.
July 1989	A Wessex helicopter crashed on the flight deck of HMAS SUCCESS, (CAPT G. V. Sloper, RAN), while the tanker was on passage to Darwin. No personnel were injured, but the aircraft was subsequently written off due to damage.
July 2002	HMS NOTTINGHAM, (Type 42 destroyer), ran aground on Wolf Rock at Lord Howe Island, and suffered significant damage to her hull and electrical systems. The ship was only saved from foundering by the excellent damage control skills of her crew. RAN and RNZN clearance divers later flew to Lord Howe Island, to assist in stabilizing the vessel, before she was towed to Sydney for repairs. Eventually, the vessel was placed onboard a heavy lift ship, in Sydney, and returned to the United Kingdom for extensive repairs. Four of NOTTINGHAM's officers, including the Commanding Officer, were court-martialed in 2003, and found guilty of various offences leading to the grounding. After extensive repairs NOTTINGHAM returned to service in July 2004.
July 2004	HMAS BRISBANE, (former guided missile destroyer), was handed over to the Queensland Government in a ceremony at Fleet Base East, Garden Island, Sydney. The ship left Sydney Harbour, under tow, for the last time three days later. The Queensland Government plan was to sink the ship off the Sunshine Coast, (near Mudjimba Island), where she would become a dive wreck.

The Society's website enables you to look up any event in RAN history. Searches can be made by era, date look up or today. The latter appears on the home page. The others are accessed via the Research page.

<https://www.navyhistory.org.au/research/on-this-day/>

## Readers Forum

### Captain Cook Graving Dock: Site Selection

Thanks to David Stockman for highlighting the following little-known facts. Originally posted by Ash Moore on Old Sydney Album Facebook page, 13 June 2018.

In May 1940 and the Australian Government accepted the recommendation of Sir Leopold Savile, Civil Engineer in Chief to the British Admiralty, that Garden Island be the site for the Royal Australian Navy capital ship dock. When completed the Captain Cook Graving Dock was the largest in the Southern Hemisphere.

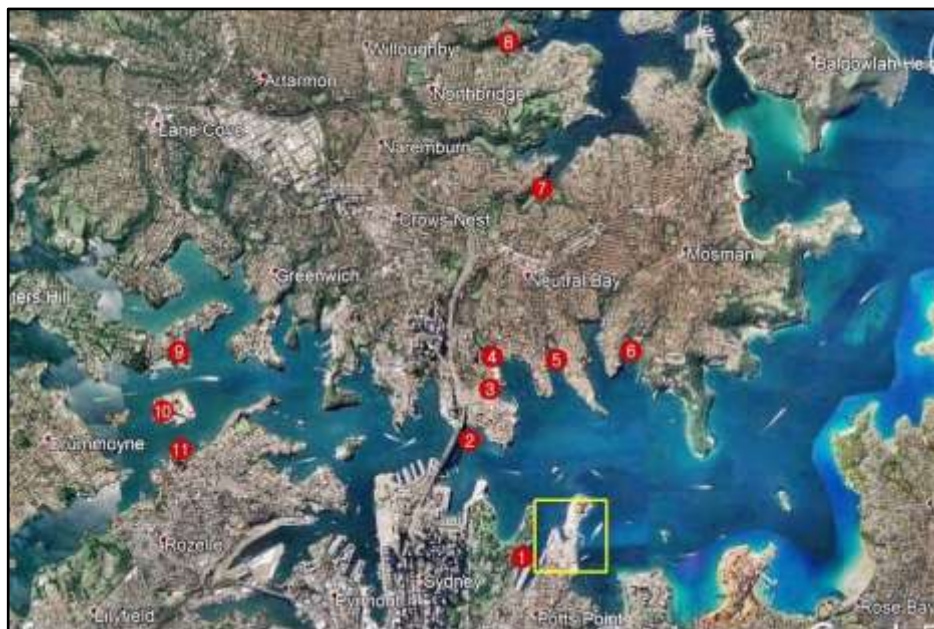
Savile had inspected some 16 possible sites around Australia for the dock and apart from Garden Island there were 11 other sites in Sydney. It's interesting to see where they were and I'm sure there is story behind each one.

They were:-

- 1) Between Woolloomooloo Wharf and Domain
- 2) End of Jeffery St, North Sydney
- 3) Careening Cove
- 4) Neutral Bay.
- 5) Shell Cove
- 6) Little Sirius Cove
- 7) Willoughby Bay.
- 8) Sailors Bay.
- 9) Morts Dock. Woolwich
- 10) Cockatoo Island
- 11) Near Cockatoo Island.

What would Sydney be like today had any one of these sites been selected.?

It's not just the sheer size of the dock, but also the associated area to accommodate wharves, cranes, workshops etc. The north side of the harbour could have been changed forever.



Aerial view of Sydney showing alternative locations  
The Yellow square is Captain Cook Dock, Garden Island.

Further Reading: [Captain Cook Graving Dock](#), March 2005 edition of the Naval Historical Review

## Society Matters

### Society Library

The Society maintains an extensive research library of naval books and other publications which are available to members and volunteers conducting research and writing for the Society. It also facilitates responses to numerous requests for information from the public. Members have access by prior arrangement with the Society.

Phone: 02 93592372, E-mail: [Secretary@navalhistory.org.au](mailto:Secretary@navalhistory.org.au)

### Naval Historical Review

Become a member to receive quarterly copies of the Naval Historical Review the Society's flagship magazine. <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/membership/>

### Tours of Garden Island, Sydney

Tours of Garden Island provided by Society volunteers on Thursdays are very popular with organized groups and retired naval personnel and their families. Tours of 1.5 to 2 hours which take in historic sites and buildings in the Dockyard including the Captain Cook Graving Dock are preceded by an introductory video in the Boatshed, Garden Island. Groups and individuals generally arrive by ferry from Circular Quay but arrangements can also be made for groups arriving by coach. The cost is \$20 per person. Should you be interested in booking a tour start by visiting the website, calling or e-mailing the Tour Coordinators.

Phone: (02) 9359 2243) Thursdays only

E-Mail: [tours@navyhistory.org.au](mailto:tours@navyhistory.org.au)

Website: <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/garden-island-tours/>

### Call The Hands 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](mailto:callthehands@navyhistory.org.au). Current subscribers can unsubscribe by emailing the same email address. If you know of someone who wishes to receive *Call the Hands* by post there is a cost to mail of \$25 per annum for 11 editions.

### Further Reading

There are hundreds of articles online at our website. Visit <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/> for more stories and information