



CALL THE HANDS



Issue No.25

November 2018

From the President

Welcome to this November 2018 edition of *Call the Hands* and accompanying Occasional Papers through which I hope you gain insight into some small but significant historic Australian naval events from the human dimension. Occasional Paper 39 on the resignation of Lieutenant Commander Paul Hirst, a member of the 1913 Pioneer Class of the Royal Australian Naval College, examines his command of HMAS Toowoomba in 1942 and relationship with RANC class mate Commodore John Collins. Occasional paper 40 on the first use of Penicillin in Australia is based on an ABC 7.30 Report broadcast in August 2018. Society volunteers and the Westmead Children's Hospital Heritage Committee further researched the actions of Surgeon Lieutenant Leo Harrison in 1943. Harrison is central to this intriguing story. As a consequence, the history of Penicillin and antibiotic use in Australia has been re-written.

Recent RAN commissioning ceremonies; [822X Squadron](#) at HMAS Albatross, Nowra on 25 October and [HMAS Brisbane III](#) in Sydney on 27 October serve to remind us that the Royal Australian Navy is writing its history on a daily basis. The Society congratulates all who have worked to introduce these 'state of the art' capabilities into the RAN and personnel, who in the coming years, will operate them.

Looking back, as we approach the 100th anniversary of the end of World War 1, we acknowledge the RAN's role in that conflict, service of 5075 personnel and sacrifice of 171 who died on duty.

Many stories presented in *Call the Hands* are triggered by research questions received by the Society or information provided by readers. The HMAS *Nizam* and Vice Admiral Creswell stories are the occasional papers good examples. If you have information on an issue you consider worthy of sharing please contact the Society.

[Vice Admiral Sir William Rooke Creswell](#) is well recognized as the founding father of the RAN through his advocacy for an Australian naval force and latter command of the RAN as First Naval Member of the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board from 1 March 1911. Of equal importance was the readiness of Australian fleet units for active service when war began in August 1914. This was remarkable as less than twelve months had passed since arrival of the Fleet in Australia. Without the efforts of Creswell, the new Australian fleet would not have been the strongest Commonwealth naval force in the Pacific. Its presence effectively influenced the German East Asiatic Cruiser squadron to abandon the Pacific.

David Michael
President



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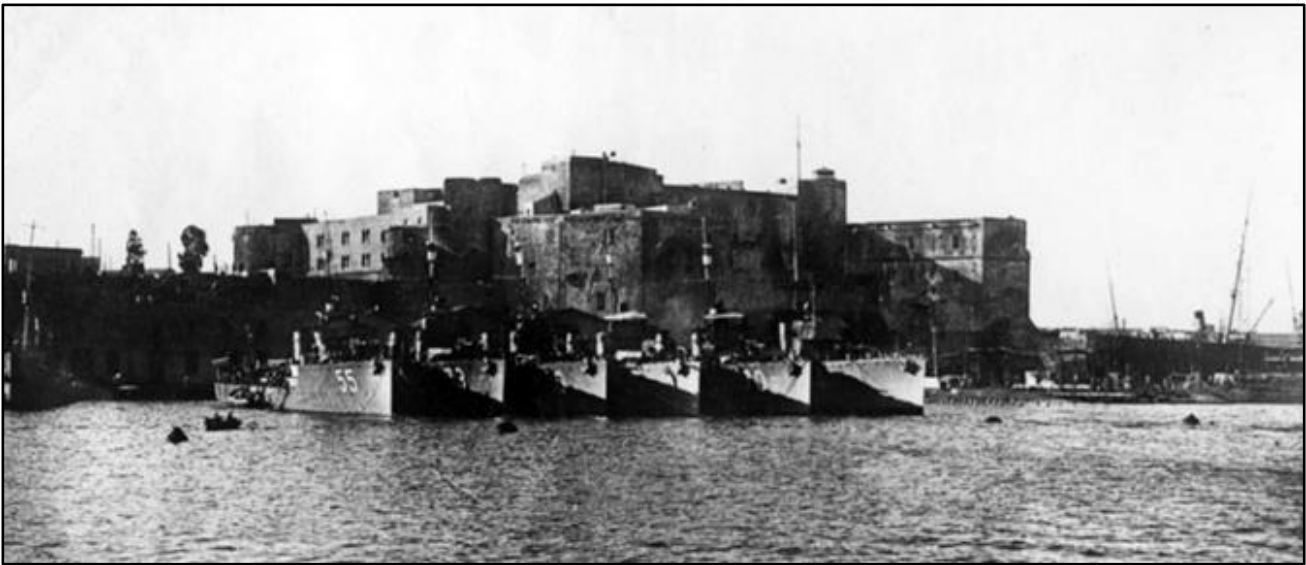
100TH Anniversary of the end of World War One

The newest navy in the world at the beginning of the War, *The Royal Australian Navy*, had by the end of World War One served at sea, on land and underwater. It served in the Pacific, Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic with distinction, tragedy and commitment to duty.

- The first task of the RAN was to protect Australian ports, shipping and trade routes.
- On 1st August 1914, the day war with Germany was announced, a young RAN midshipman signaled Fort Nepean in the Port of Melbourne that a German merchant ship was trying to escape internment. A shot fired across its bow stopped its escape. The first shot of the war.
- The RAN was tasked to disrupt German activities in the Pacific including New Guinea, Nauru and Samoa. The capture of Rabaul by the Australian Naval and Military Force was the first combined sea and land operation for the RAN.
- Able Seaman Williams' death by sniper fire at Rabaul was the first Australian casualty.
- The disappearance of *AE1* and the presumed loss of 35 men was the first RAN vessel loss and the largest loss of life in a single incident during the whole of WWI for the RAN.
- HMAS *Australia*, Flag ship of the RAN throughout the war, while anxious to pursue the German Pacific Fleet, was ordered back from Samoa to protect Australian waters. The German fleet went on to shell Tahiti before sinking two RN vessels at the Battle of Coronel and finally itself being sunk by the Royal Navy during the Battle of the Falklands.
- RAN vessels escorted the first ANZAC forces sent to Egypt in 1915.
- HMAS *Sydney* while on escort duty responded to an emergency call from Cocos Islands and on encountering the German Cruiser SMS Emden engaged the enemy. The battered Emden finally was beached and shelling only stopped when the German ensign was run down.
- With the destruction of the German Pacific Fleet and the German raider, RAN vessels if not tasked on troop convoy escort duty were incorporated into the Royal Navy.
- Submarine *AE2* in April 1915 was the first submarine to breach the Dardanelles and caused havoc in the Sea of Marmara until it was attacked by a Turkish torpedo boat, severely damaged and scuttled. Its crew were saved but then captured by the Turks. Four crew members died while prisoners of war with remainder released after the Armistice of 1918.
- *1st Royal Australian Naval Bridging Train*, commanded by Cmdr. Leighton Bracegirdle, undertook multifarious work including building and maintaining wharves on Gallipoli, managing stores and building light rail while operating distilling plants to provide fresh water to the troops. Returned to Egypt, it operated pontoon bridges in the Suez Canal Zone. Elements participated in the unopposed landing at El Arish in the Sinai before the eventual disbandment in 1916. The *1st RANBT* was the most decorated unit of the RAN during WW1.
- The obsolete HMAS *Pioneer* was part of the blockade of German East Africa, firing more rounds in action than any other RAN vessel during the war.

- HMAS *Australia*, was part of the RN Grand Fleet in the North Sea blockading the German High Seas Fleet. Along with HMAS *Melbourne*, returned from the West Indies, it spent the remainder of the war in an atmosphere of monotony and frustration at not seeing action.
- Eleven RAN volunteers took part in the attack on Zeebrugge and Ostend to sink block ships in the harbours and thus deny the use of the ports to German U Boats.
- The Australian Torpedo Boat Destroyer Flotilla blockaded the Adriatic and were part of the forces known as the Otranto barrage. The Australian ships were absorbed into the 5th British Destroyer Flotilla as part of a force which ultimately numbered more than 200 vessels including 35 destroyers and submarines
- 5075 personnel served in the RAN in 63 vessels (22 STUFT) with the loss of AE1 and AE2.
- The personal tragedy of war was for 171 died: 13 killed in action; 13 accidentally killed; 36 missing presumed dead; 86 died of illness; 4 died as prisoners of war and 19 drowned.

Further Reading: In All Respects Ready: Australia's Navy in World War One by Dr David Stevens



Australian Torpedo Boat Destroyer Flotilla at Brindisi, 1918



HMAS *Melbourne* (I) wearing her wartime dazzle pattern camouflage

The 1929 Cruise of Albatross

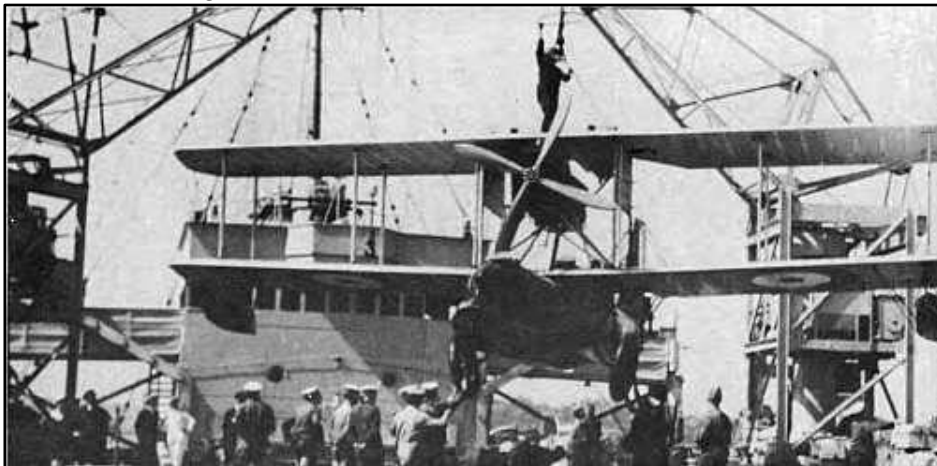
The 1929 cruise of the seaplane carrier, HMAS *Albatross*, to New Guinea, New Ireland and New Britain was unique in that it was the first overseas demonstration of Australian naval air power. The cruise was in fact a vice regal visit to the Pacific outposts by Their Excellencies, the Governor-General, Lord Stonehaven, and Lady Stonehaven. *Albatross* and her aircraft made a profound impression on the natives of the area who flocked down from remote mountain villages in thousands.



THE NAVAL BOARD DECISION to use the seaplane carrier in preference to the two new eight-inch cruisers, Australia and Canberra, for the vice regal Pacific cruise was dictated by both economic restrictions and the need for the new carrier to carry out a long cruise with aircraft embarked. Lord and Lady Stonehaven boarded *Albatross* at Sydney on July 3 1929, and sailed north the same day.

Good sea conditions made the passage pleasant and visits were made to Brisbane, Dunk Island, Lizard Island and Thursday Island. Their Excellencies, Captain Feakes reported, enjoyed the voyage through the Inner Passage of the Barrier Reef and spent many hours on deck watching the islands and reefs at close range. Port Moresby, the first port on the itinerary, was reached on July 10. A full programme of official and unofficial functions had been arranged by the Administration. The ship provided a guard of honour for the Governor-General. Ship's officers were guests to the dinners and the official ball. The ship's company was granted generous leave and were guests to a display of native dancing held at the Port Moresby racecourse. *Albatross* responded by a cocktail party on board and a display of flying by the ship's Seagull III flying boats. The latter excited the hordes of natives who crowded every vantage point and paddled out into the harbour in their canoes.

On the 14th *Albatross* visited Samarai during which the Governor-General paid a two-hour visit to the district officer's residence. At this small port the seaplane carrier was surrounded by a fleet of native canoes loaded to the waterline with natives and goods for trade.



Bringing a Seagull aboard HMAS *Albatross* at Rabaul, 1929

Next day the ship visited Salamau. When she was two hours from the port two of the flying boats were lowered into the sea and flew ahead as advance guard. Salamau was followed by a two-day visit to Madang and Alexishaven. Kavieng on the northern tip of New Ireland was visited on the 22nd. During the two-day stay the crew visited nearby plantations and mission stations.

A full week was spent in Rabaul's beautiful harbour. As this was the administrative centre Lord and Lady Stonehaven stayed at the official residence ashore. The ship's programme called for intensive flying operations and flights were made along the coast to nearby islands. Photographs taken during the exercises were later passed on to the RAN Hydrographer.

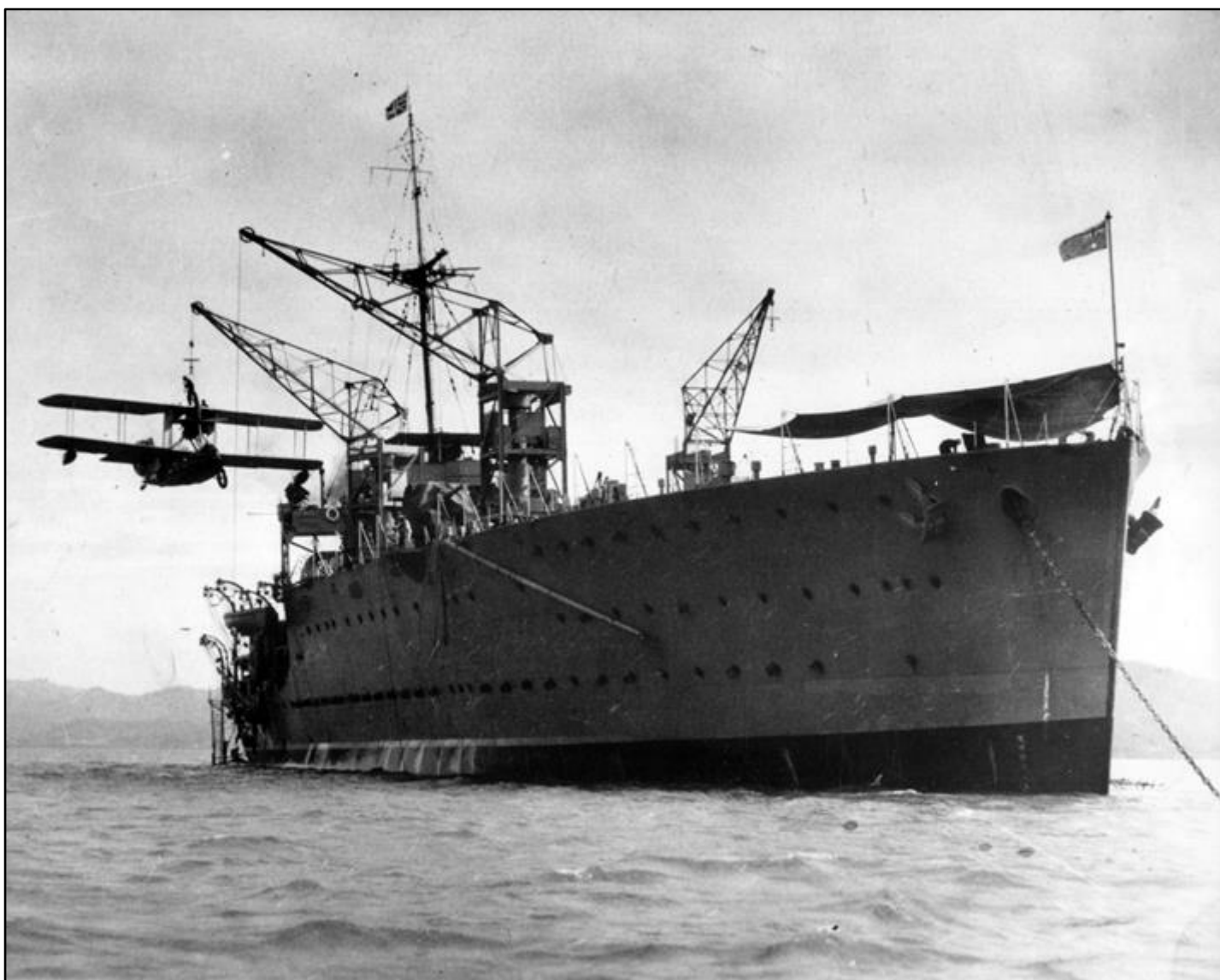
A special commemorative service was held on August 8, the fifteenth anniversary of the Royal Australian Navy's attack on Rabaul in World War I. A detachment from the ship marched through the town's streets and Lord Stonehaven made an inspired speech on the Empire's dependence on the Navy.

At each port native police boys and tribal chiefs were invited aboard to inspect the marvels of a modern fighting ship. The natives called *Albatross* 'the mother bird' and her aircraft 'the chickens'. Newspapers of the period described the cruise as the most successful flag-showing cruise for many years and indeed it was.



The voyage back to Sydney was accompanied by the same fine weather which had marked the whole cruise. Before leaving the ship, Lord Stonehaven addressed the ship's company which was assembled on the aircraft deck, and complimented them on their fine seamanship.

From the September 1974 edition of the *Naval Historical Review*

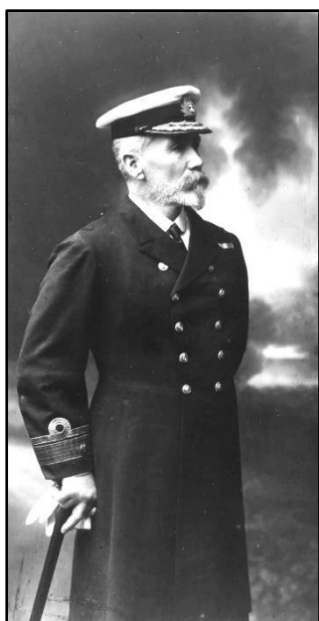
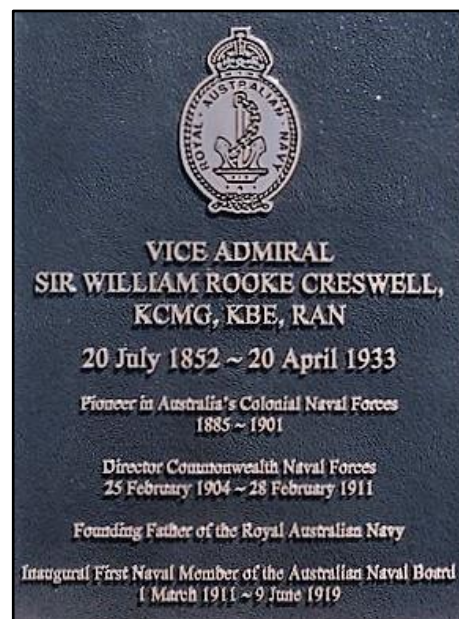


Vice Admiral Sir William Rooke Creswell; Grave Restoration

On Friday 19 October a commemoration service and unveiling ceremony was conducted at VADM Creswell's grave site at Brighton Cemetery, Melbourne. The service conducted by Chaplain Kate Lord from HMAS *Cerberus* concluded a project initiated by Commander John Goss to refurbish the Creswell family grave. Vice Admiral Creswell who was a pioneer in Australia's Colonial Naval Forces and recognised as the founding father of the Royal Australian Navy, is buried alongside his wife Adelaide.

On learning of the graves poor condition in 2017, Commander Goss secured funding and had it repaired and cleaned. With the assistance of Mr John Perryman, Director of Strategic and Historical Studies in Canberra wording on a new plaque to be sited on a plinth between the two graves officially recognises William Rooke Creswell for his enormous contribution to Australia and Navy.

Attendees at the ceremony included Commodore Greg York, Senior Naval Officer Victoria, Mrs Elizabeth Savior, granddaughter of VADM Creswell, Captain Michael Oborn, CO HMAS *Cerberus* and Commander Andrew Hugh, CO Recruit School.



Rear Admiral Creswell following his appointment as the First Naval Member of the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board



Gathering of the descendant Creswell family members with Naval Officers. (L to R) Captain Michael Oborn, CO HMAS *Cerberus*, Commander Andrew Hugh CO Recruit School, Commodore Greg York, SNO VIC and Commander John Goss AM, RANR

Further Reading: [Biography: Vice Admiral Sir William Rooke Creswell](#)

HOW OUR NAVY FIGHTS FROM TURRET & PLANE

By Our Special Representative on board a cruiser of the Royal Australian Naval Squadron during recent war exercises, with permission of the Naval Board, and the Ship's Captain.

To be inside a gun turret, under conditions of modern naval battle, would make the plain civilian realise the grim and complete efficiency with which maritime warfare must be conducted.

The civilian recorder is not catapulted from the warship in a plane, but, he can. see it happen. It is a Jules Verne episode which broke the necks of early experimenters.

Come inside the turret. Each of the four-gun turrets on the larger cruisers of the Australian Squadron weighs more than 100 tons. Steel-encased within each turret is some £50,000 worth of intricate machinery. Herein is the real "business end" of the big guns, and the main armament of the most formidable warships of their type afloat to-day. Inside the turret there is no floor, no space to stand upright, no "room" such as we might have imagined from the sleek exterior of the turret; only a maze of machinery amid which our eyes discern the twin breeches of the two guns.

Immediately behind them is the mechanism that lifts the shells from the depths of the ship, and feeds them into the breech. Another that handles bags of cordite and rams them home behind the shell in an operation that takes only a few seconds before the breech-case thuds back into position. It needs about 70 men to operate this one turret. There are 18 with us up top, in the turret proper. There are 50 more down in the shell-room and magazine; others attending to machinery below.

We are controlled from the bridge. Shut in our steel cell we shall know nothing of the progress of the battle outside. We shall not even hear the sound of individual guns. Inside we feel only the recoil, and a dull vibration as several dozen pounds of cordite burn within a split second, and hurl a 260lb. shell up to 15 miles or more.

"Prepare to engage the enemy," is sounded throughout the ship. The signal comes through a speaking tube to the captain of the turret crew, perched high in the centre of the machinery. The crew itself comprises four men to each of the two guns.

The bridge, in turn, has based its instructions on a whole host of trigonometrical calculations. In our cell we feel only a faint jerk as the turret revolves. Our machinery works with clockwork precision- a gargantuan clock in which the ticking is replaced by a deafening clank and thud as steel arms and wheels and pistons juggle their tons of steel and high explosive. We are firing now at the rate of more than two rounds a minute, despite the roll and pitch of the ship.

The order to "Cease fire" comes. The steel trap-door is 'opened to let us out.

The hiss of foam at our bows, and the thrum of the wind brings us suddenly back to the chaotic external world which has created that marvel of method, purpose, and precision—the warship's gun-turret.

The next thing we see in the Navy is the catapulting of planes from a warship. It is a physical and a psychological strain. Neither the human, body nor brain was designed for this crazy business of being shot

into space like an arrow from a bow. One "veteran" pilot of 23 confessed an overwhelming desire to recite limericks in the split second between the signal for release and the jerk forward: into thin air. Another, that he cultivated the first, stages of psychological contempt for such sudden acceleration by spending a small fortune on the "big dipper."

As soon as the plane crew is seated and ready, a directing officer, controlling the catapult crew, waves a flag with a rotary motion. The motion becomes faster and faster as a signal to the pilot to rev up his engine.

The pilot raises his hand. This indicates that he is satisfied with the engine, which is now revving at full bore. The D.O. drops his flag. The starting gear is released. Forward shoots the plane, perhaps drops a few feet as she leaves the end of the -platform, then gathering speed from her propeller, soars gracefully into the wind.

The moment that the plane first jerks forward is the critical one for pilot and companions. They must hold their heads firmly back against the head rests. Way back in the experimental days many United States Navy air pilots, had their necks broken by the sudden jerk.

Even to-day a man with a short, muscular neck is generally considered more suitable for training.

SEAGULL Amphibians are equipped to give a -good account of themselves, apart from their reconnaissance duties, they mount Lewis guns and carry bombs, mainly for possible use against submarines on the surface. The sturdy duralumin hull enables the flying-boat to land in seas that would be fatal to seaplanes, which ride the water on floats. The Fleet Air Arm controversy has been deferred "for the duration." Point Cook graduates can look forward to the pleasures of catapulting for many years to come.



HMAS *Shropshire* 8in guns broadside
RAN Image



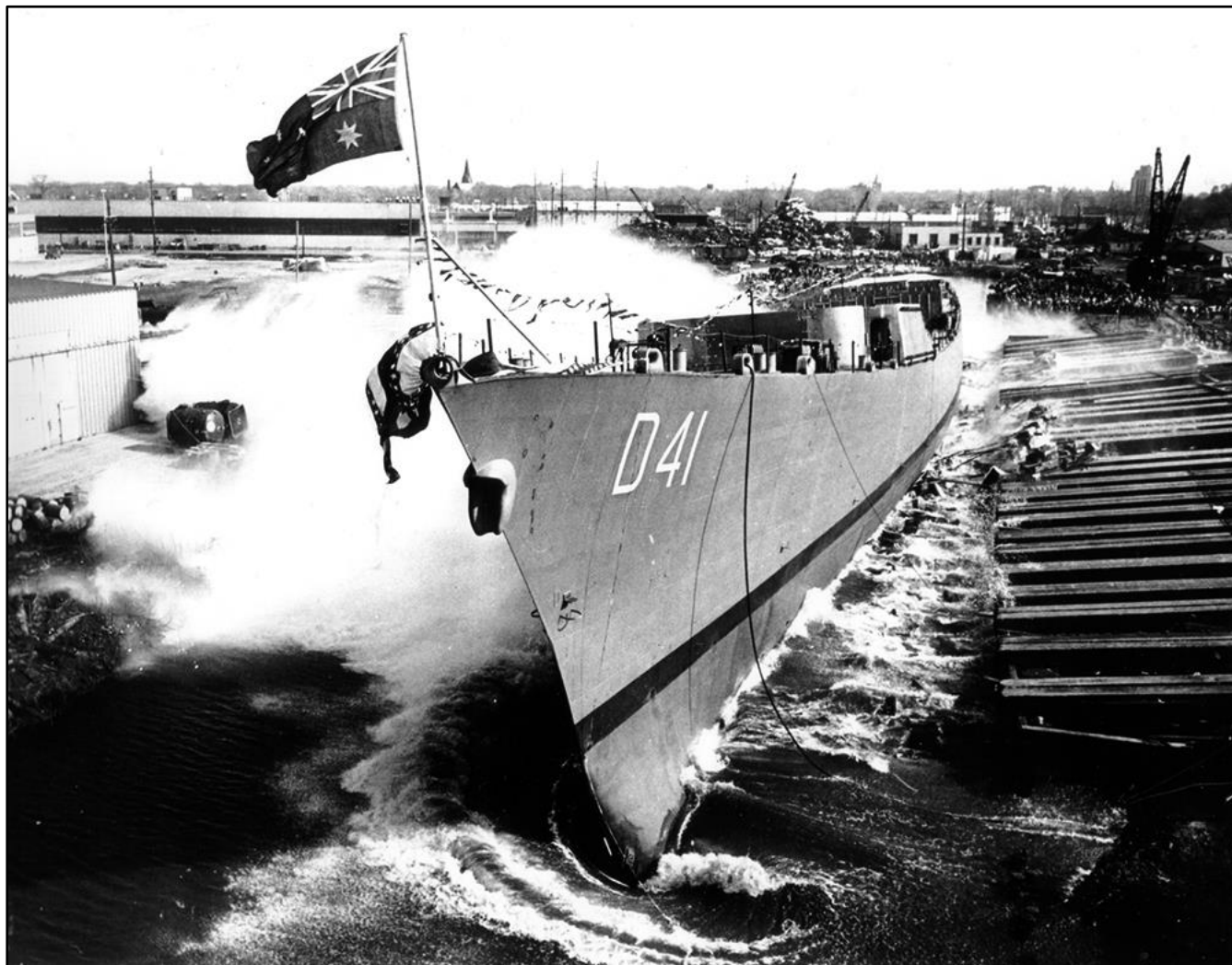
HMAS *Shropshire* fires broadside, Lingayen Gulf Feb 9 1945

RAN Image

Photos of the Month:

HMAS Brisbane

HMAS *Brisbane* (II) was the third of three improved Charles F Adams class guided missile destroyers (DDG) built in the United States for the RAN. She had a service life of 34 years; commissioned on 16 December 1967 and decommissioned 19 October 2001.



HMAS *Brisbane* (II) CHARLES F. ADAMS CLASS DDG launched 1966 at Defoe Shipbuilding Company, Bay City, Michigan
RAN Image

Feature Video: [Keeping the Fleet at Sea](#)

This video was recently screened for Society members in NSW during a presentation on the 'Ammunition Pipeline' in Sydney by former RAN Armament Depot Manager Mr Robert Curran. It is a World War 2 propaganda short, produced for the Department of Information. It shows work of the Royal Australian Navy Supply Base. Features naval victualling stores and dockyards.

Note: Many other videos of interest are available through the [Societies website research page](#).



News in Brief

New Squadron Commissioned

The Royal Australian Navy hosted a commissioning ceremony at HMAS *Albatross* on 24th October 2018 to mark the formal transition of the Naval Unmanned Aircraft Systems Unit (NUASU) to 822X Squadron. This is a major milestone in the Royal Australian Navy's capability to operate unmanned aerial systems in the maritime domain.

822X Squadron is the fourth operational squadron in the RAN Fleet Air Arm. The squadron will operate the Insitu ScanEagle, a small, long-endurance, low-altitude aircraft and the Schiebel S-100 Camcopter, which can carry payloads such as electro-optics and infrared sensors.

This is the first time the Squadron number 822 will be used by a Navy Squadron. The X indicates the developmental nature of the Squadron. The motto of 822X Squadron is 'See the Enemy'.



HMAS *Canberra* hosts first of class trials for ARH Tiger helicopter

Royal Australian Navy landing helicopter dock HMAS *Canberra* has hosted first of class trials (FOCT) for the army's ARH Tiger helicopter. A team from the Aircraft Maintenance and Flight Trials Unit (AMAFU) spent the last seven weeks embarked in HMAS *Canberra* evaluating the helicopters operational limits. FOCFT is a critical process in enabling helicopters to operate to and from flight decks. Designed to define the safe environmental conditions for ongoing operations, a FOCFT also includes aviation facilities assessments, equipment calibration and evaluation of the interface between a particular helicopter type and class of ship.



Tasmania turns down retired frigate gift

Former Australian Navy frigate ex-HMAS *Darwin* will not be turned into a dive wreck off the coast of Tasmania as the island state's government decided not to accept the Commonwealth's gift. While the frigate was offered for scuttling off the East Coast for free, the Tasmanian government figured out it would have to pay over AUD12 million to prepare and establish the ex-HMAS *Darwin* as a dive wreck.

The Department of State Growth further found that it would cost approximately \$600,000 per annum to monitor and manage the dive wreck site that would not be covered by dive permit receipts. "We thank the Commonwealth for their offer, however, the costs associated with the project have rendered it financially unfeasible," the Tasmanian government said. Ex-HMAS *Darwin* was commissioned in July 1984 and decommissioned in December 2017 and offered as a gift to the Tasmanian government in August 2018.



This Month in History

November 1869	HMS PHOEBE, (corvette), arrived at Port Phillip with ADML Hornby's Flying Squadron. A midshipman in the vessel was William Creswell.
November 1884	RADM George Tryon, CB, RN, was appointed Flag Officer Commanding the Australia Station. His flagship was HMS NELSON.
November 1900	AB J. Hamilton, of the New South Wales Marine Light Infantry, died at Tung Chao in China. He was the first sailor to die in an Australian expeditionary force overseas.
November 1914	HMAS PIONEER, (cruiser), lost her fore-topmast and suffered other damage in heavy seas, while escorting the first troop convoy in the Indian Ocean. PIONEER returned to Fremantle for repairs.
November 1916	The Australian transport BERRIMA, (ex-HMAS BERRIMA, armed merchant cruiser), was torpedoed by a German submarine off Portland, England. BERRIMA was empty, having unloaded 1600 troops at Plymouth two days before. The vessel was beached and later salvaged.
November 1925	LEUT R. C. Casey, RAN, a 1916 entry to the Royal Australian Naval College, was lost when HM submarine M1 was lost with all hands off Devon, England.
November 1930	HMAS TORRENS, (torpedo-boat destroyer), was sunk off Sydney Heads, when being used as a gunnery target for HMA Ships AUSTRALIA and CANBERRA, (cruisers).
November 1940	The cruiser HMAS SYDNEY, (CAPT J. Collins, RAN), joined in a raid into the Strait of Otranto, with HM Ships ORION and AJAX, (cruisers), NUBIAN and MOWHAWK, (destroyers), as a subsidiary raid to the Battle of Taranto. They sunk 4 merchant ships, without damage to any of the raiding force.
November 1944	Engaged in Operation Battleaxe, HMA Ships VENDETTA, SWAN and BARCOO, provided gun support for the Australian landing at Jacquinot Bay, New Britain. HMAS CONDRAMINE, (frigate), was launched at the State Dockyard, Newcastle.
November 1951	LEUT K. E. Clarkson, DFM, RAN, was killed in action when his aircraft failed to pull out of dive during an attack on North Korean transports. His death was the first operational casualty during the deployment to Korean waters of HMAS SYDNEY, (aircraft carrier).
November 1958	The Daring class destroyer HMAS VENDETTA, (CAPT R. J. Robertson, DSC, RAN), was commissioned. VENDETTA was laid down in Williamstown Dockyard, VIC, on 4 July 1949, and launched on 3 May 1954. Mrs Nancy Waller, (Wife of CAPT H. M. L. Waller, DSO, RAN), performed the launching ceremony.
November 1962	725 Squadron commissioned to fly Wessex ASW helicopters
November 1964	The RAN Nursing Service, (RANNS), which had been disbanded in 1948, was re-formed. Initially 21 registered nurses were commissioned, and they commenced duty at HMAS PENGUIN and HMAS CERBERUS. The RANNS continued as a separate service until amalgamated with the RAN in June 1985.
November 1968	RAN's Helicopter Flight commenced operations at Bearcat Base in Bien Hoa province, Vietnam.
November 1974	The Australian White Ensign was lowered for the last time in Papua New Guinea. The RAN base, HMAS TARANGAU, and HMA Ships BUNA, SALAMAU, AITAPE, LAE, and MADANG were transferred to the Papua New Guinea Self-Defence Force. HMAS BASILISK, (shore establishment at Port Moresby), was re-commissioned under CMDR P. Paffard, RAN.
November 1980	The FFG-7, (Adelaide), class guided missile frigate HMAS ADELAIDE was commissioned in Seattle, USA. ADELAIDE was laid down in Todd Shipyard, Seattle, USA, and launched on 21 June 1978.
November 1985	HMAS CANBERRA, (guided missile frigate), shadowed the Russian ship FRUNZE, (guided missile cruiser), in the South China Sea. FRUNZE was on passage to Cam Ranh Bay.
November 1985	HMAS YARRA, (destroyer escort), was decommissioned into reserve. YARRA was sold 1991, and broken up in 1992.
November 1985	HMAS OVENS, (Oberon class submarine), made the first of the RAN's sub-surface firings of the UGM48 Harpoon anti-ship missile. This was also the first Harpoon firing from a conventional submarine. A direct hit was scored on a distant, small remotely-controlled surface target on the US Navy's Pacific Missile Range Facility near Hawaii, USA.
November 1993	HMAS SYDNEY, (guided missile frigate), completed her second tour of duty, and departed the Damask Operations Area in the Middle East for Australia.
November 2001	HMAS PERTH, (former guided missile destroyer), was sunk as a dive wreck at Seal Rock, Albany, WA. The scuttling charges were fired by a former member of the crew of the earlier HMAS PERTH, (cruiser), which had been sunk in 1942 at the Battle of Sunda Strait.
November 2006	Loss of an Australian Army Blackhawk helicopter which crashed while attempting to land on the aft flight deck of HMAS Kanimbla II. It was lost over the side of the ship, resulting in the deaths of two of the ten onboard. Kanimbla was deployed as a part of Operation QUICKSTEP, the ADF contingency operation to evacuate Australians from Fiji in the face of an emerging coup.
November 2014	HMAS Canberra III, lead ship of the Canberra class Amphibious Assault Ship (LHD), commissioned

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

Nature's Fury

The incidents described in the next three stories remind us of just how devastating the sea and weather can be and the even greater risk when they occur during periods of conflict.

HMAS Nizam Hit by Giant Wave in Mediterranean 21 October 1941

A recent research query from Joy Dalglish highlighted the tragic loss of life which occurred on HMAS Nizam during the third quarter of 1941 while HMAS *Nizam* participated on the Tobruk Ferry run. During this period Nizam made 14 trips and experienced; near misses and damage from both enemy action and a collision with a wreck in Tobruk harbour. Later in October and November 1941 *Nizam* took her place as part of a screening force for Malta convoys.

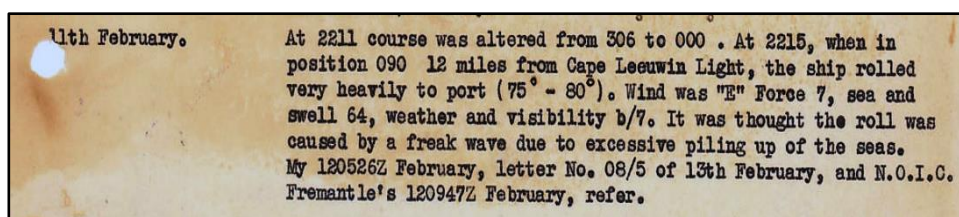
On 21 October 1941 Nizam was part of a convoy which came under a German dive bomber attack while evacuating Australian infantry 'Rats of Tobruk' to Alexandria. Twenty fully kitted troops were swept overboard during evasion manoeuvres, six being lost at sea and never recovered. The official report stated;

'On 21 October 1941 Nizam encountered a further mishap whilst engaged in the relief from Tobruk of 2/24th Australian Infantry Battalion soldiers of the 9th Australian Division in the so called 'Tobruk Ferry Service':

At 9.40 a.m. a tragedy suddenly occurred. The troops were sitting on the gear around the decks while the destroyer ploughed on at top speed. Suddenly, and without warning, a large wave came aboard and washed twenty of our men overboard. Against the navy's standing orders, the destroyer stopped to rescue the men, who were swimming fully-clothed and without lifebelts. Six men were lost, believed drowned. Five drowned and one died of injuries.'

HMAS Nizam Disaster off Cape Leeuwin

In February, 1945 HMAS *Nizam* experienced another tragedy when a freak wave struck the ship off Cape Leeuwin, Western Australia as the ship was making her way to Fremantle. Ten sailors were swept overboard as the ship rolled heavily and their bodies were never recovered. The huge sea from the starboard quarter caused the ship to keel over an estimated 75 to 80 degrees, burying the whole of her port side in blue water. Moving at 21 knots the water swept down the ships upper deck sweeping boats, davits and sailors overboard.



Extract of HMAS Nizam's Report of Proceedings for February



Monument near Cape Leeuwin commemorating 10 HMAS *Nizam* sailors lost

Further Reading

[HMAS Nizam Official History](#), Sea Power Centre Australia

Image supplied by Diane Watson / Graeme Saunders / Glen Yeomans

How typhoons at the end of World War II swamped U.S. ships and nearly saved Japan from defeat

Thanks to John Vaughan for drawing attention to this [Washington Post story](#) of 16 July 2015

'This story describes how in 1945 two typhoons hit and seriously damaged scores of U.S. Navy ships engaged in the last battles of World War 2, killing more than 800 Americans.'



Occasional Papers in this edition

Included with this edition of Call the Hands are the following occasional papers: -

- Occasional Paper 39_LCDR Paul Hugill Hirst - Compelled to Resign
- Occasional Paper 40 Secret History of the First Australian to be given Penicillin

Society Matters

Drivers Wanted with a **Light Rigid Driving Licence**

This is an unusual request but the Society needs at least two Sydney based volunteer drivers to assist with Garden Island history tours on Thursday mornings. This requirement arises due to the imminent cessation of ferry services to Garden Island generally used by tour groups. Visitors will be driven from Circular Quay to Garden Island in 22 seat buses for which a 'light rigid' driving licence is necessary. The commitment is from 0900 to 1300 Thursdays.

If you can assist or know of another that can help please contact the Society

Phone: 02 93592372

E- Mail: secretary@navyhistory.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

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