



# CALL THE HANDS

Issue No.28

March 2019



Welcome to the March 2019 edition of Call the Hands.

1 March 2019 was the 77th anniversary of the tragic loss of HMAS *Perth* and USS *Houston*. Therefore, it was pleasing to note that on 28 February the Australian War Memorial (AWM) conducted a Last Post Ceremony to commemorate the sacrifice of Captain Hector 'Hec' MacDonald Laws Waller. Captain Waller was the Commanding Officer of HMAS *PERTH* when it was sunk in the Sunda Strait. He was listed as missing, presumed killed and was posthumously mentioned in dispatches. The AWM ceremony was important as very few ceremonies commemorate the service of individual members of the RAN.

As usual we are grateful to readers for their feedback and those who submit research enquiries thereby leading volunteers to interesting subjects for research. On most occasions pertinent facts emerge to assist the enquirer. On other occasions, leads prove to be fictitious. The USS *Chicago* story in our readers forum is an example of the latter.

The two Occasional Papers accompanying this edition highlight the importance of shore bombardment, also known as naval gunfire support (NGS), as a capability in surface combatants. In the Royal Australian Navy's context, NGS has been used infrequently in hostilities since World War 2. However, it has been applied with great effect on the occasions it has been required. Sixty eight years ago RAN units assigned to the United Nations Forces in Korea conducted NGS on a regular basis as did those participating in the Vietnam War from 1967 to 1971. NGS was most recently used by HMAS *Anzac* (3) on 21 March 2003 during the War on Iraq. *Anzac*'s action was in support of British Royal Marines conducting an amphibious assault to capture the key oil installations and shipping docks located on the Al-Faw Peninsula. Occasional Paper (OP) 47 provides details of this action whilst OP 48 describes the history of HMAS *Anzac* (2) and her role in the Korean War.



Hector Macdonald Laws Waller (1900-1942), by Joshua Smith, 1957, AWM ART27505

The March 2019 edition of our flagship magazine the *Naval Historical Review* will be mailed to members on 7 March and posted to the NHSA website members page at the same time. Exclusive access to the most recent 8 editions of the *Review* is maintained for members only. After 24 months *Review* stories are posted to the website. New members not only benefit from access to the most recent editions but several other products as outlined on the [website](#). If not a member you are invited to take advantage of [membership](#) which at \$30 or \$45 per annum represents value for money.

Finally, the Society's Facebook page hosts a wealth of interesting posts which are worthy of attention. Follow us at <https://www.facebook.com/navalhsa>



David Michael  
President



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## HMAS Success Decommissioning

On Saturday 29 June 2019, after 33 years of dedicated service HMAS Success will conclude her service with the Royal Australian Navy at a traditional decommissioning ceremony at Fleet Base East.

The Australian White Ensign will be lowered, folded and handed to the ship's Commanding Officer for the last time. The Commanding Officer will then present the Ensign to the Commander Australian Fleet, Rear Admiral Jonathan Mead, for safekeeping. HMAS Success is the largest ship built entirely in Australia for the Royal Australian Navy. She is the last remaining HMA ship built in Australia by Cockatoo Dockyard Pty Ltd and is the largest ship ever built in the port of Sydney.

In 2015 HMAS Success was deployed as part of Joint Task Force 633 for Operation MANITOU, providing logistic support to coalition navy ships operating in the Middle East Region. In 2014, she was deployed to assist in efforts to locate missing Malaysian Airlines Flight MH-370 in the Southern Indian Ocean. HMAS Success has been awarded battle honours twice for her successful maritime security operations in Kuwait (1991) and East Timor (1999-2000). Since commissioning in 1986, HMAS Success visited more than 50 countries, steamed over a million nautical miles and conducted over 3000 replenishments at sea with navies from around the world.

[Navy Video](#): A Joint Task Group comprised of HMA Ships *Canberra*, *Newcastle* and *Success* departed Fleet Base East on 17 February 2019 for respective deployments of up to four months.



HMAS Success sails from Sydney 17 February 2019 in company with HMAS Newcastle RAN Image



## Iconic HMAS Australia 1 Gig to be Preserved

An ex HMAS Australia 1 gig has been lying abandoned and neglected in a Tasmanian paddock near Coles Bay for several decades. Being out in the open in a low rainfall area full of litter it has been at risk of loss by bush fire. The gig is significant as it is one of the few craft from an 1860 design left in existence.

The Society has recently learned that the fragile gig has been recovered to Hobart and is stored on a purpose-built cradle awaiting transport to Spectacle Island in Sydney where it will be professionally preserved. In a future edition we will provide a detailed story on the history of the gig.



Abandoned HMAS Australia 1 gig at Coles Bay Tasmania, February 2014. NHSA image



HMAS Australia 1 gig ready for transport to Sydney February 2019  
David Glasson Image



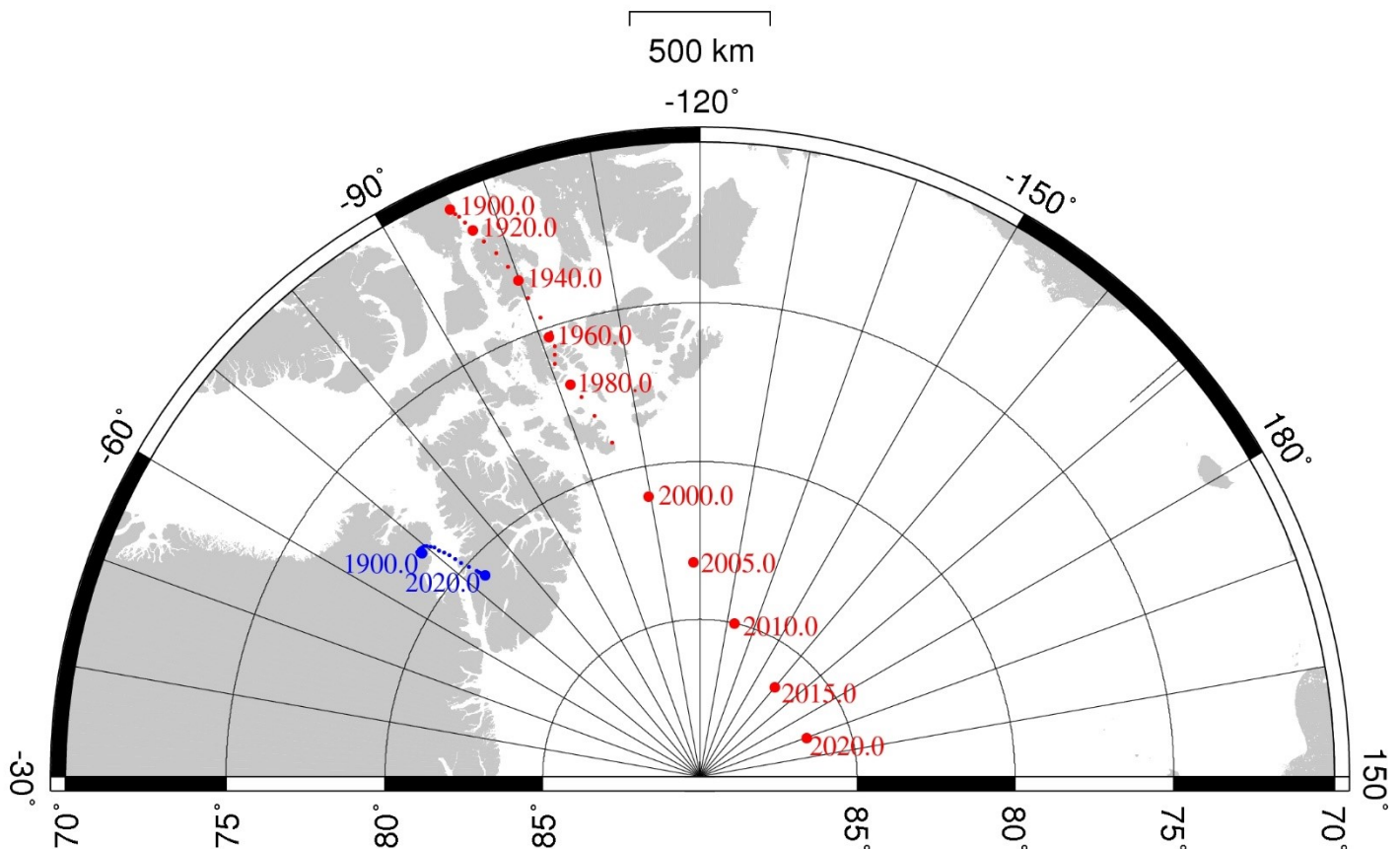
HMAS Australia 1 with ships boats slung on very high davits adjacent the main mast and funnel. RAN Image

## Shifting North Magnetic Pole Forces Unprecedented Navigation Fix

Rapid shifts in the Earth's north magnetic pole are forcing researchers to make an unprecedented early update to a model that helps navigation by ships, planes and submarines in the Arctic, scientists said. Compass needles point towards the north magnetic pole, a point which has crept unpredictably from the coast of northern Canada a century ago to the middle of the Arctic Ocean, moving towards Russia.

"It's moving at about 50 km (30 miles) a year. It didn't move much between 1900 and 1980 but it's really accelerated in the past 40 years," Ciaran Beggan, of the British Geological Survey in Edinburgh, told Reuters on Friday. A five-year update of a World Magnetic Model was due in 2020 but the U.S. military requested an unprecedented early review, he said. The BGS runs the model with the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Beggan said the moving pole affected navigation, mainly in the Arctic Ocean north of Canada. NATO and the U.S. and British militaries are among those using the magnetic model, as well as civilian navigation.

The wandering pole is driven by unpredictable changes in liquid iron deep inside the Earth. An update will be released on January 30, the journal Nature said, delayed from January 15 because of the U.S. government shutdown. "The fact that the pole is going fast makes this region more prone to large errors," Arnaud Chulliat, a geomagnetist at the University of Colorado Boulder and NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information, told Nature. Beggan said the recent shifts in the north magnetic pole would be unnoticed by most people outside the Arctic, for instance using smartphones in New York, Beijing or London. Navigation systems in cars or phones rely on radio waves from satellites high above the Earth to pinpoint their position on the ground. "It doesn't really affect mid or low latitudes," Beggan said. "It wouldn't really affect anyone driving a car." Many smartphones have inbuilt compasses to help to orientate maps or games such as Pokemon Go. In most places, however, the compass would be pointing only fractionally wrong, within errors allowed in the five-year models, Beggan said.





## AUSTRALIA'S FLAGSHIPS

Flagships of the Australian Station, which dates, from 1859 when Commodore William Loring, C.B., hoisted his flag in H.M.S. Iris are:—

**H.M.S. ORPHEUS:** Third flagship of Commodore W. F. Burnett, C.B., 21 guns, wrecked on Manukau Bar, N.Z., February 7, 1863 with the loss of 190 lives.

**H.M.S. CURACOA:** (Sir William Wiseman (Bart.) 23 guns, 1863-66.

**H.M.S. CLIO:** (Commodore F. H. Stirling) 22 guns, 1870-73.

**H.M.S. PEARL:** (Commodore J. G. Goodenough, C.B., C.M.G.) 21 guns, 1873-75.

**H.M.S. WOLVERINE:** (Commodore A. H. Hoskins, C.B., Commodore J. C. Wilson, Commodore J. E. Erskine, 21 guns, 2,431 tons, 1875-1882.

**NOTE:** Wolverine ended the era of unarmoured single screw composite sloops and corvettes on the Australian station.

**H.M.S. NELSON:** (Commodore J. E. Erskine, Rear-Admiral G. Tryon, C.B., Rear-Admiral A. Fairfax, C.B.) cruiser, 7,630 tons, 1882-87.

**NOTE:** Nelson represents the experimental transitional group of ironclads.

**H.M.S. ORLANDO:** (Rear-Admirals H. Fairfax, Rt. Hon. Lord Charles Scott, C.B., Nathaniel Bowden-Smith, C.A. Bridge), cruiser, 5,600 tons, 1887-97.

**H.M.S. ROYAL ARTHUR:** (Rear-Admirals H. H. Pearson, Sir Lewis Beaumont, K.C.M.G., Vice-Admiral Sir Arthur Fanshawe, K.C.B.), unarmed cruiser, 7,700 tons, 1897-1902.

**H.M.S. EURYALUS:** (Vice-Admiral Sir Arthur Fanshawe, K.C.B.), cruiser, 12,000 tons, 1902-05.

**H.M.S. POWERFUL:** (Vice-Admirals Sir William Fawcett, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., Sir Richard Poore (Bart.) K.C.B., Sir George F. King-Hall, K.C.B.), cruiser, 14,200 tons, 1905-10.

**NOTE:** First ship of the 'Powerful' class, 4 'stacker' armoured cruisers.

**H.M.S. DRAKE:** (Vice-Admiral Sir George F. King-Hall, K.C.B.), cruiser, 14,100 tons, 1910-13.

**H.M.S. CAMBRIAN:** (Admiral King-Hall) cruiser 4,360 tons.

**NOTE:** Last flagship of the Royal Navy Squadron on the Australian station.

**H.M.A.S. AUSTRALIA:** (Vice-Admiral Sir George Patey, K.C.V.O., Rear-Admiral C. Pakenham, K.C.B., A. Levenson, C.B., Sir Lionel Halsey, K.C.M.G., J. S. Dumaesq), Battle cruiser, 19,200 tons, 1913-22.

Scuttled 1924 in accordance with the Washington Treaty.

**H.M.A. SHIPS, MELBOURNE, SYDNEY,** (Rear-Admirals Dumaesq, A. P. Addison, G. F. Hyde, Commodore T. E. Wardle D.S.C.) light cruisers, Melbourne 5,600 tons, Sydney, 6,830 tons, 1922-24, 1927-28. Melbourne, broken up 1929, Sydney was lost November, 1941.

**H.M.A.S. AUSTRALIA:** (Rear-Admirals G. Hyde, R.A.N., E. R. G. Evans, D.S.C., 1929-31; Rear-Admirals J. G. Grace, V. A. Crutchley, V.C., D.S.O., J. A. Collins, C.B. R.A.N., H. B. Farncomb, C.B., D.S.O.,

R.A.N.), heavy cruiser, 10,000 tons, 1942-52. Scrapped 1955.

**H.M.A.S. CANBERRA:** (Commodore L. S. Holbrook, Rear-Admiral R. C. Daglish, W. T. Ford, C.B., R. H. Lane-Poole, C.B., W. N. Custance, C.B.) heavy cruiser, 9,850 tons, 1931-39. Sunk, battle Savo Island, August, 1942.

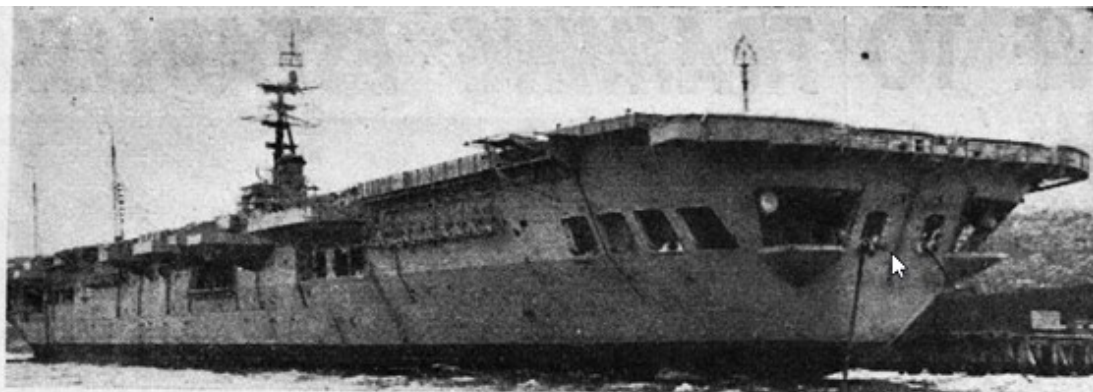
**H.M.A.S. PERTH:** (Rear-Admiral J. G. Grace, 1940, light cruiser, 7,000 tons, Sunk battle of Bantam Bay, Java, March, 1942.

**H.M.A.S. HOBART:** (Commodores J. A. Collins, C.B., R.A.N., H. B. Farncomb, C.B. D.S.O., R.A.N.), light cruiser, 7,000 tons, 1945-46.

**H.M.A.S. SHROPSHIRE:** (Commodores J. A. Collins, C.B., R.A.N., H. B. Farncomb, C.B., D.S.O., R.A.N.) heavy cruiser, 9,830 tons, 1945-46. Scrapped 1953.

**H.M.A. SHIPS SYDNEY and VENGEANCE:** (Rear-Admirals J. Eccles, C.B.E., J. W. Eaton, D.S.O., D.S.C., R. R. Dowling, C.B.E., D.S.O., R.A.N., H. M. Burrell, C.B.E., R.A.N.) light fleet aircraft carriers, 14,000 tons, 1949-56.

**H.M.A.S. MELBOURNE:** (Rear-Admiral R. Dowling, C.B., D.S.O., Rear-Admiral H. M. Burrell, C.B.E., Rear-Admiral D. H. Harries, C.B., C.B.E., Rear-Admiral G. G. O. Gatacre, C.B.E. D.S.O., D.S.C., and bar, Rear-Admiral W. H. Harrington, C.B.E., D.S.O.



H.M.A.S. MELBOURNE — Flagship of the R.A.N.

## Video of Interest: Australia's Future Frigate

On 28 June 2018 the Government of Australia announced that BAE Systems was the preferred tenderer for the Future Frigate project. This project will deliver nine Hunter Class guided missile frigates (FFGs) commencing in the late 2020s.

Known as the BAE System's Global Combat Ship – Australia, the Hunter Class is expected to be one of the most advanced anti-submarine warships in the world. The Hunter Class will be built in Australia by ASC Shipbuilding at the Osborne Naval Shipyard in South Australia. The Hunter Class will replace the eight Anzac class frigates, which have been in service since 1996.



Artists Impression: Hunter Class FFG  
BAE Systems Image

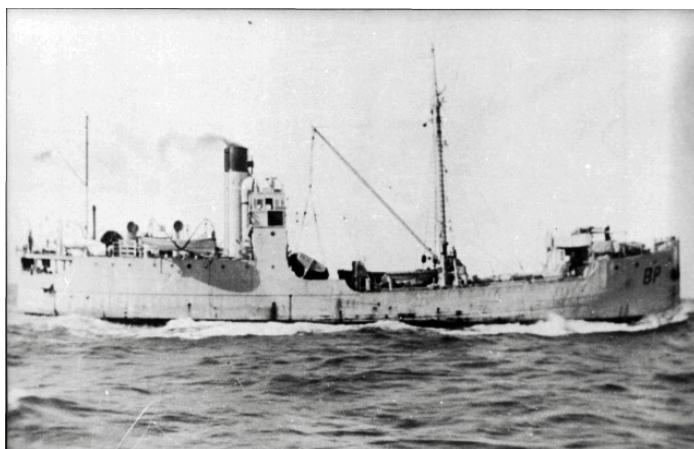
Visit the [Navy website](#) for more information on the Hunter Class.

This promotional video produced BAE Systems provides an overview of the ships design and capabilities. The video can be accessed through [YouTube](#) or the [RAN Facebook](#) page.

## SS Birchgrove Park (ex-HMAS Birchgrove Park)

The last real shipwreck to occur in the Sydney area was the loss of the SS *Birchgrove Park* on 2 August 1956. The *Birchgrove Park* was lost off the far northern beaches of the City in a terrible storm while on a regular trip from Newcastle to Sydney. Of the 14 crew members the Captain and nine others perished in this tragedy.

Built in Scotland and launched in November 1930 the *Birchgrove Park* was a collier of 640 tons and was 47 metres long and 10 metres wide. Constructed of steel and powered by a coal powered boiler and a triple expansion cylinder steam engine turning a single screw, the *Birchgrove Park* represents the end of an era, that of coal transport to Sydney by ship.



The ship arrived in Sydney in January 1931 and entered service, first working from Bulli but then Newcastle. At times, it seems the Birchgrove Park also carried blue metal from the quarries at Kiama.

On 9 May 1941, the ship was requisitioned by the Royal Australian Navy for conversion into an auxiliary minesweeper and commissioned on 22 August 1941. Fitted with two Oerlikon heavy machine guns and a large 12 pounder gun, *Birchgrove Park* was then recommissioned in 1942 as a stores carrier. In August 1943 *Birchgrove Park* arrived in Port Moresby and for the next two years served various New Guinea ports. In April 1945 the *Birchgrove Park* was paid off but on 25 July 1945 she was recommissioned as a tender. In December of the same year she was finally paid off and returned to R.W. Miller and Co. in February 1946. She went back to her regular Newcastle/Sydney run, although from all reports, by early 1956 her condition had deteriorated to such an extent where she was soon expected to be scrapped. However, the Sydney Morning Herald reported on 4 August 1956 that the Miller had been surveyed in July 1956 and issued with a certificate of seaworthiness.



Colliers like *Birchgrove Park* were known as 'sixty milers'. Although sixty milers did not disappear from service till mid-1993, in reality they were doomed from the late 1950s or early 1960s. Instead of having power stations in the middle of the city (eg Pyrmont, Balmain, White Bay and Bunnerong), a decision was made to replace these old dinosaurs by constructing the new super-stations on the coalfields themselves. This did away with a reason for the small colliers to ply their loads the short distance from Wollongong and Newcastle to Sydney. The other reason for transporting coal to Sydney was to replenish the bunkers of international coal-powered vessels. These had, of course, by now mostly switched over to diesel or oil powered engines.

**Further Reading:**

Michael McFadyen, SS Birchgrove Park (ex-HMAS Birchgrove Park),  
available at [https://www.michaelmcfadyenscuba.info/viewpage.php?page\\_id=9](https://www.michaelmcfadyenscuba.info/viewpage.php?page_id=9)

## **Conference: Malaya at War and Battle Field Tour**

The first ever "Military Conference" held in South East Asia is to be conducted in Kuala Lumpur 10-11 August 2019. The programme which focuses on the World War 2 Malayan Campaign and Malayan Emergency will include a range of excellent speakers including Rear Admiral Guy R. Griffiths, AO DSO DSC RAN (Rtd), Patron of the HMS Repulse Survivors Association.

Full details are available on the War History Sites website, <http://www.warhistorysites.com/events-activities/>. Bookings can also be made on line.

Following the conference attendees have an opportunity to participate in a six night – seven day tour of the Malay WWII & Emergency battle places. The programme is NOT for PROFIT and very inexpensive.

ORGANISED BY  
WAR HISTORY INSTITUTE

**MALAYA AT WAR CONFERENCE**  
10 - 11 August 2019  
Royale Chulan Hotel, Kuala Lumpur

**MALAYA AT WAR HISTORY TOUR**  
12 - 18 August 2019

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**Photo of the Month:**



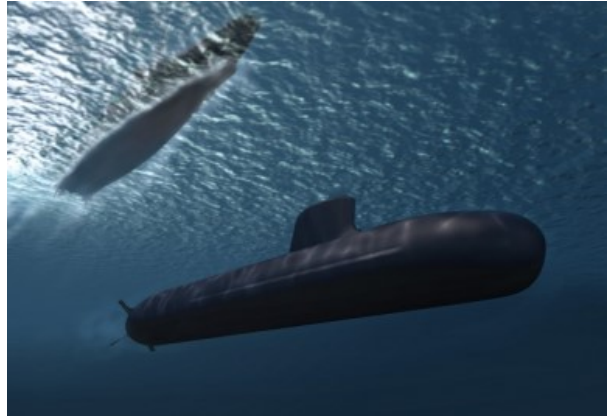
HMAS Moresby at Port Kembla, 6 October 1995



## News in Brief

### Agreement signed for new submarines

Naval Group has signed a strategic partnering agreement (SPA) with the Australian Government for the A\$50bn (\$35.42bn) Australian Future Submarine programme. Under the programme, Naval Group will help to build and deliver 12 Attack-class submarines for use by the Royal Australian Navy. Naval Group was chosen by the government as its partner for the Attack-class submarine programme in April 2016 following a competitive evaluation process. The first Attack-class submarine, to be named HMAS Attack, is expected to be delivered in the early 2030s.



### Third Royal Navy Dreadnought-class SSBN named HMS Warspite

The Royal Navy's third Dreadnought-class nuclear deterrence submarine will be named HMS Warspite, the First Sea Lord announced on February 25. The boat will take her place in the Fleet in the 2030s, alongside HMS Dreadnought, Valiant and a fourth, as yet unnamed, submarine, each carrying Trident nuclear missiles on deterrence patrols for three months at a time. She'll be the eighth warship to bear the name, tracing her history back to the final years of Elizabeth I's reign. Most famously, the sixth Warspite, a Queen Elizabeth-class battleship, earned more battle honors than any other single warship in Royal Navy history.



### Australian landing ship HMAS Choules deploys to Southwest Pacific

Royal Australian Navy landing ship HMAS Choules started a month-long deployment to the Southwest Pacific where it will take part in maritime and land training activities with regional partners. Choules' deployment to Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu will contribute to a continuous Australian presence in the Southwest Pacific region. Choules departed Townsville with 210 officers, sailors and soldiers on board, after embarking equipment, stores and tools for delivery across the Southwest Pacific region.



### Collins-class submarine upgrades may be needed

Royal Australian Navy Chief Vice-Admiral Mike Noonan has stated that Collins-class submarine upgrades on the entire six-strong fleet may be needed to extend their life until the French-designed replacements arrive. In a Senate estimates hearing, Noonan said that the Department of Defence (DoD) was carrying out an assessment of how many Collins-class submarine upgrades would be needed to keep them in service until the mid-2030s. Noonan was quoted as saying: "We're expecting that we will upgrade at least five, and the work around determining the scope of the upgrade has begun but has not yet been fully decided."



## This Month in History

March 1801	LEUT John Murray, RN, in HMC brig LADY NELSON, explored and took possession of Port Phillip. He named the bay in honour of the first Governor of NSW, CAPT Arthur Phillip, RN.
March 1859	The Australia Station was established as a separate command. The Station was defined in a minute from the Admiralty: "Australia Station:- Bounded on the North by the Parallel of 10 degrees of South Latitude, on the East by the Meridian of 170th degree of West Longitude, on the South by the Antarctic Circle, and on the West by the Meridian of 75th degree of East Longitude". Ships from the Australia Station were involved in operations from Malaya to the west coast of America and the Pacific islands.
March 1915	HMAS PIONEER joined RN forces blockading the German cruiser KONIGSBERG in the Rufigi River, East Africa.
March 1921	The RAAF was formed as a separate service, (created from the Australian Flying Corps, which was an Army unit formed in 1914). From then until 1948, when the Fleet Air Arm was formed, all pilots and aircraft maintenance staff in RAN warships were provided by the RAAF. The RAN however continued to provide observers, (navigators), and telegraphist air gunners, (known as TAG's).
March 1936	The Seagull amphibian aircraft, from HMAS AUSTRALIA, (cruiser), was damaged when it fell from a crane at Malta. AUSTRALIA was on exchange duties with the RN at the time.
March 1940	HMS RAMILLIES, (battleship), was refitted at Garden Island Naval Dockyard, Sydney. A. G. Cameron was appointed to the post of Australian Minister for the Navy.
March 1942	A boat from HMAS PERTH, (LEUT Thode), surrendered to the Japanese at Tjilatjap, 16 days after the sinking of the cruiser in the Battle of Sunda Strait. The party of 10 survivors had set sail for Australia, but contrary winds and a shortage of food and water caused them to turn back to Java.
March 1945	HMS ILLUSTRIOUS, (aircraft carrier), became the first ship to enter the Captain Cook Graving Dock at Garden Island, Sydney. ILLUSTRIOUS was heavily damaged in operations off Okinawa. HMAS WARREGO, (sloop), completed a survey of Japanese-held Subic Bay, Philippines, in preparation for an assault by US amphibious forces.
March 1953	The first rescue operation by a helicopter of the RAN was affected when an injured lighthouse keeper was rescued from Point Perpendicular Lighthouse, NSW.
March 1958	HMAS Sprightly (Tug) was decommissioned. 805 Squadron recommissioned at NAS Nowra with de Havilland Sea Venoms for service in HMAS Melbourne
March 1962	The former cruiser HMAS HOBART departed Sydney under tow for breaking up in Japan.
March 1969	The Daring class destroyer HMAS VENDETTA, (CMDR E. E. Johnson, RAN), carried out naval gunfire support duties in operations off the coast of Vietman.
March 1975	First Sea King delivered to RAN FAA
March 1980	AB J. Stewart was lost overboard from HMAS BRISBANE, (guided missile destroyer), 120 miles north-west of Honolulu, and was picked up 12 hours later by USS JOSEPH STRAUSS. AB Stewart stayed afloat by inflating a discarded plastic garbage bag. A large shark swam around him for the last two hours of his ordeal.
March 1992	The RAN officially adopted the Slouch Hat, (termed Wide Brimmed Hat), as an item of uniform for all ranks. It had for many years, at least since World War I, been used by RAN personnel operating in tropical areas such as New Guinea.
March 2006	HMA Ships MANOORA, (landing platform amphibious, CMDR A. J. Rourke, RAN), WARRAMUNGA, (ANZAC class guided missile frigate, CMDR D. W. Jordan, RAN), and NORMAN, (mine countermeasures ship, LCDR T. J. Watson, RAN), along with personnel from the Clearance Diving Teams, supported Operation Acolyte, the ADF operation to provide security and support to the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne.

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

### Snake Buckle Clasp

A recent research query sought advice on an ornate clasp found in the Victorian goldfields. The clasp featured a snake and anchor. The enquirer wrote:

*"I know it is a Snake Buckle used to fasten a military sword belt, however after searching the net through many sites and images I have not been able to find one quite like this with an anchor on it."*

*I suspect its origins are 1800-1900s British Colonial, Napoleonic, or early Royal Navy or Australian Colonial Navy due to the anchor."*

After some investigation and contact with experts in the United Kingdom the following response was received from John McGrath.

*"What a wonderful find. I have not seen anything quite like this but I suspect it is from the belt of an 1805 pattern sword. The survival rate of such things is, of course, quite low and the best of which I can find a photograph is attached."*

*The regulations of the time for all officers in all orders of dress read: Narrow, black leather waist belt, S-hook connection, two unequal slings, sling buckles with lions' heads. The belt illustrated conforms with this. These regulations changed in 1825 and the whole sword pattern changed in 1827. However, there was a lot of personal variation back then so my best guess is from an 1805 pattern sword, there or thereabouts. It may also have been a reused item when lost."*



Images are taken from his book: Comfort. Sim, Naval Swords & Dirks  
(London: Sim Comfort Associates, 2008) Vol. 2, pp. 265 – 269.

## USS Chicago and Lion Mythology

The following research inquiry was received from Terrence Popravak of Washington state, USA

*"Dear NHSA Team,*

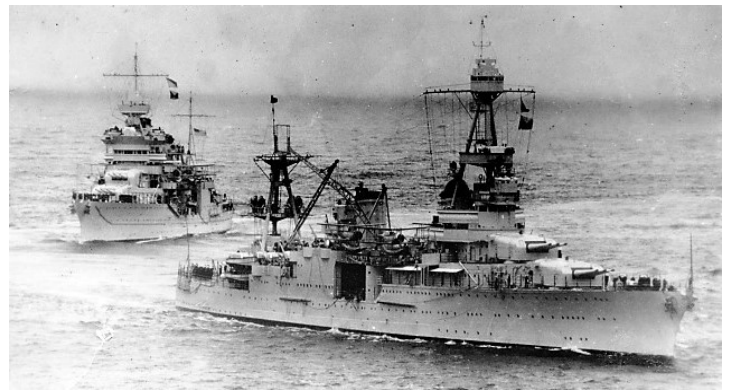
*G'day and greetings from the American Pacific Northwest! I'm a historian and author working on a book project related to World War II and there is an Australian connection. I wonder if you might help me identify information resources in Australia to help tell this story.*

*The book is about the US Navy heavy cruiser USS Chicago (CA-29). This warship made a pre-war visit to Oz in early 1941, and a year later was assigned duty as part of the ANZAC Squadron, saw action in the Coral Sea, the submarine attack on Sydney Harbor, and then at the start and finish of the Guadalcanal campaign. She was refitted in drydock at Sydney in May, 1942 and later that year repaired in drydock in Sydney after receiving battle damage at Guadalcanal.*

*As part of the research for this, I wonder if you have knowledge of any archival or other holdings of documents, photographs or other information of pertinence to USS Chicago. Appreciate your help and/or any recommendations.*

*Sincerely, Terrence G. Popravak, Jr, Vancouver, Washington, USA*

*P.S. I've even tried contacting the Sydney Zoo to see if there is still an outstanding debt for the lion Chicago supposedly inadvertently dispatched during the Sydney Harbor fracas, but they haven't answered me."*



USS Chicago and Portland entering Sydney RAN

## Reply by John Smith, Senior Researcher

*"Needless to say, there is a lot of information in Australia on the May 31 1942 midget submarine raid and USS CHICAGO's involvement. She has been accused of damaging a fort in the harbour with her gunfire. We haven't heard the story about the lion and I am chasing it up for you.*

*CHICAGO's refit in May 1942 was at Cockatoo Dockyard from 15 to 24 May for docking, repairs and the fitting of 12 Oerlikon guns. She subsequently went back to Cockatoo from 29 August to 19 September 1942 for substantial repairs after damage sustained in the battle of Savo Island. This included installing a new temporary bow.*

*If you have any specific queries, we will try to answer them for you. Incidentally in Australia we don't regard 1941 as pre-war. It started in 1939 for us.*

*Yours, John Smith"*

## After contact with Taronga Park Zoo the following was received from Anthony Bobbermein in relation to the possible dispatch of a lion.

*"Looking through some news clippings from the period that we have in our historical collection, I have been unable to find any mention of such an occurrence.*

*Nor is there any mention in the book which is the definitive history of Taronga Zoo - "Beauty and the Beasts" by Ronald Strahan, which does mention other animal deaths during the war period (none from ordnance, I can confirm).*

*During this time (1940s), most of the big cat enclosures were actually subterranean pits (unfortunately for the animals), making the chances of an animal being hit by gunfire remote in the extreme.*

*Whilst I cannot categorically rule out such an occurrence, in my opinion we definitely put this one down to urban myth.*

*Regards, Anthony Bobbermein, Records and Archives Manager, Taronga Conservation Society Australia"*



## **In a later communication Terrence Popravak provided additional comment on the source of the source of the Lion myth**

*"I've only found one written source for this lion incident, in a 2001 historical novel by Sandy Shanks about Chicago's Captain Howard Bode, *The Bode Testament*, on pages 82-83. But I've heard the lion story long before I ever saw the novel, though I can't recall a particular source for it. Perhaps running this story in the newsletter will evoke an informative response.*

*The novel elaborates a little on the story, stating it was a humorist (unidentified, nor any indication of print or radio) who came up with the quip that the only casualty inflicted by Chicago's gunfire was a lion in the Sydney zoo, and further embellished the story adding that Captain Bode was requested to secure a replacement through the Lend-Lease program. See the discussion in the following link to below: [The Bode Testament](#). While the lion story is humorous, and appears to be urban legend, it seems that discovery of the third Japanese midget submarine M24 off the coast of Australia north of Sydney in 2006 offers the possibility that the submarine was damaged in Sydney Harbor, although the state of the wreck, lost plating on the conning tower, etc., cannot confirm any obvious battle damage. Still, this midget was unable to return to its mother submarine I-24 for some reason, so maybe Chicago's gunners (1.1-inch anti-aircraft guns most likely in my estimation) actually did inflict some damage on the enemy in the harbor fight on that wild night in May of 1942."*

Sincerely, Terrence Popravak, Jr. Vancouver, WA USA

<https://gunmoll874518426.wordpress.com/>

## **Occasional Papers in this edition**

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

- Occasional Paper 47, HMAS Anzac (III) Naval Gunfire Support on 21 March 2003
- Occasional Paper 48, The History of HMAS Anzac (II)

## **Society Matters**

### **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. 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/>

### **Subscription**

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