



CALL THE HANDS



Issue No.30

May 2019

From the President

Welcome to the May 2019 edition of *Call the Hands*.

As usual, we have some interesting Occasional Papers accompanying this edition of *Call the Hands*. Paper No. 52 addresses the 1918 influenza pandemic which cost so many lives and is, perhaps, a timely reminder for us today to get our dose of flu vaccine. No. 53 goes far afield to tell the story of Petty Officer Fredrick Harold Harvey and Colombian Naval Service and in No. 54 John Smith sets the record straight on the history of the Church Pennant.

Society volunteers and visitors cannot help to have noticed the vacant wharves at Fleet Base East in recent weeks. Sydney based ships are busy on deployment in places ranging from the Indian Ocean, to north Asia and the south-west Pacific. Amongst those ships are three which will be decommissioned this year after decades of service to the RAN — HMA Ships *Success*, *Newcastle* and *Melbourne*. *Success*, built in Sydney and commissioned in 1986, is the first French-designed ship to be built for the RAN and was built as a result of a project to replace the fleet tanker HMAS *Supply* which began as long ago as 1966. She will be replaced by another HMAS *Supply* which is currently fitting out in Spain.

HMAS *Melbourne* and HMAS *Newcastle* were also built in Australia, at Williamstown in Victoria, and are the last pair of the RAN's original six US-designed FFG 7 class guided missile frigates. This class of gas turbine-propelled ship was originally intended as a reasonably inexpensive ocean escort and the design was criticised for its single screw and modest armament. Nevertheless, it proved to be outstandingly successful with 71 ships built for the US Navy, Spain, Australia and Taiwan. In addition to the RAN ships, survivors of the class continue to serve in the navies of seven nations.

HMAS *Success* and the FFGs have served Australia well and have earned a proud place in the history of the RAN. The RAN will continue to have a relationship with France as our new submarines are built, but the FFGs may well be the last US-designed warships in the fleet for many years with the return to a British design for our new Type 26 Hunter-class frigates. Even though the first of class, HMS *Glasgow*, has yet to be launched, with the selection of the design by Canada the number of ships to be built to this design is already 32 — perhaps one day the class may rival the success of the numerous Type 12 and FFG 7 classes. The RAN is facing a challenging future as our new ships enter service to write their own histories in an increasingly uncertain world.

John Jeremy
Vice President

Support the Society

Although *Call the Hands* is a free service to the community, produced by volunteers there are costs. Our objective is simply to promote understanding of Australian naval history. Voluntary contributions are essential to deliver this service to readers. If you value our work **please consider a donation.** <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/donate/>



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Australia integrates AWD destroyer with F-35A during Diamond Shield

The Royal Australian Air Force-organized exercise Diamond Shield provided an opportunity for the Australian Navy's second air warfare destroyer HMAS Brisbane to integrate and operate with the fifth-generation F-35A fighter jet for the first time.

Brisbane embarked three Fighter Controllers from the Fleet Fighter Control Element for operations off the coast of Newcastle.

In addition to destroyer Brisbane, the air force exercise was joined by frigate HMAS Melbourne.



Throughout the exercise, Brisbane and Melbourne contributed to high-end air warfare activities which tested the crew and expanded collective understanding of complex warfighting scenarios. Fighter controllers had the opportunity to control a range of assets including F/A-18F Super Hornets and EA-18G Growlers, with up to 30 assets airborne at any one time. Brisbane's participation in Diamond Shield formed part of her deployment readiness work up as she prepares to conduct weapon firing and certifications in the United States later this year.

Further integration of the Royal Australian Navy's new destroyers into complex air environments will be a critical pathway to realizing the full potential of the Hobart-class in the future. "Achieving the first integration of the destroyer capability with the fifth generation Joint Strike Fighter is of particular significance," HMAS Brisbane commanding officer, Commander Josh Wilson, said. "The opportunity to integrate cutting edge air and maritime assets in a high end warfighting scenario is rare and proved an invaluable experience for the Brisbane team," Commander Wilson added.



Ex-HMAS Tobruk dives start eight months after scuttling

The first dives of the ex-HMAS Tobruk started in March 2019, more than eight months after its botched scuttling off the Wide Bay coast in south-east Queensland.

The project to turn the former navy vessel into an artificial reef and world-class dive site has been plagued with delays from the beginning when the scuttling was rescheduled twice due to unfavourable weather conditions.

When the ship was eventually scuttled in late June 2018 it tipped onto its side. In October the Queensland Government decided not to right the ship, citing the costs and potential damage. It instead announced a \$1-million marketing plan to promote the experience. The government contractor has since modified the ship to improve access, light and safety. The first dives were scheduled to begin in February but were again delayed due to dangerous conditions from Tropical Cyclone Oma.

The former transport vessel was decommissioned in 2015 after 35 years' service. Four years later it has officially been opened to divers. The top side, the port side is in about 12 metres of water.



Big wave of destruction

A voyage from Fremantle to Cocos Islands to farewell the Royal Yacht SS Gothic at the successful end of Queen Elizabeth II's first visit to Australia ended badly when two of the escort ships collided during a RAS.

On 5 April 1954 after HMA Ships Vengeance, Anzac I and Bataan, an Australian-built Tribal-class destroyer, handed over the escort duties to the cruisers HM Ships Colombo and Newfoundland, Bataan was low on fuel and needed to refuel. Consequently orders were received to take on fuel from Vengeance.

Former Chief Radio Electrician Bill Robertson, who was on board Bataan at the time, believes the collision was caused by a rogue wave which lifted Bataan's bow and turned the ship towards Vengeance, when there was less than 10 tonnes of fuel left to transfer. "The change in heading couldn't be controlled by the quartermaster in time to avoid a collision," he said. "The Venturi effect, so dreaded when two moving vessels are so close together, held Bataan's port side in contact with Vengeance's starboard side. "There was an imminent danger Bataan would roll over and be sucked under Vengeance."

Mr Robertson said, as Bataan slowly slid aft, each time Vengeance rolled to starboard, her AA platforms came down on Bataan's port superstructure. "Then the port side of the PO's Mess, the 'B' gun deck and the Bofors platform on the port side of the bridge were all crushed," he said. "I remember thinking the noise sounded like the damage was going to be expensive."

According to Mr Robertson, only the quick thinking of CO Bataan CMDR Glenn Fowle saved the ship. "He ordered, 'hard a' port, full ahead together'," he said. "This forced our bow into Vengeance while kicking the stern out. "When Bataan had pushed itself out to about 45 degrees, the CO ordered full astern together, which separated the ships but didn't do the bow

any favours. "At the time of the action I was on the starboard side of the bridge with a lifejacket in one hand and a roll of toilet paper in the other, somewhat unsure which had priority."

There were no casualties during the collision, which left Bataan's keel twisted. Bataan paid off at Sydney in October 1954, having steamed 279,395nm after commissioning in May 1945, and was sold for scrap in May 1958, to Mitsubishi Shoji Kaisha Ltd of Tokyo, Japan



YANGTSE RIVER INCIDENT

BRITISH WARSHIP BOMBARDED

HONG KONG, April 20.—The British sloop Amethyst suffered heavy casualties and ran aground after being fired on midway between Nanking and Shanghai at 9.30 a.m. today.

The British Embassy here announced it received this signal from the sloop which gave its position as east of Kuan, a small village on the north-bank of the Yangtse. No further details have been received from Amethyst. British destroyers, Consort from Nanking and Black Swan from Shanghai, are speeding to the scene.

Reuter's Nanking correspondent says a spokesman for the Chinese naval headquarters at Chinkiang announced it was believed Communist artillery sunk the Amethyst. A gunboat sent from Chinkiang to rescue the Amethyst has failed to find the warship.

MERCY MISSION

Amethyst was described as being on a humane and peaceful mission to Nanking where she was to relieve Consort in providing protection for Britons in the threatened city.

According to naval standing orders Amethyst is believed to have a large Union Jack on both sides of the vessel.

It is thought in Nanking the vessel came under heavy artillery fire about 10 miles east of Kuan, about 30 miles downstream from Chinkiang, opposite the Communist-occupied island of Kulyang.

CHINESE VERSIONS

HONGKONG, April 20.—According to Reuter's Nanking correspondent a spokesman for the Chinese Second Naval squadron headquarters at Chinkiang said that Nationalist air reconnaissance planes had been ordered to search the lower Yangtse for traces of the vessel. He said the Amethyst came under a Communist bombardment at 8 a.m. today between Kowan and Sankiangyin, two Yangtse north bank strongholds recently captured by the Communists. Communist fire came from the direction of a small place called Suma and was witnessed by the Nationalist 5th Army on the south bank.

According to officers of the 51st Army after she was hit the vessel stopped and hoisted a white flag. After a short while the Amethyst got under way again, sailing west in the direction of Nanking, but Communist artillery units immediately re-opened the bombardment. The fate of the vessel from that time was unknown.

Reuter's Shanghai correspondent states first reports of the casualties aboard Amethyst are about 20 killed and wounded.

The heavy cruiser London, with Vice-Admiral A. Madden, second-in-command of the British Eastern Fleet aboard, which arrived from Hongkong on a routine visit, proceeded straight upstream without entering the harbour.

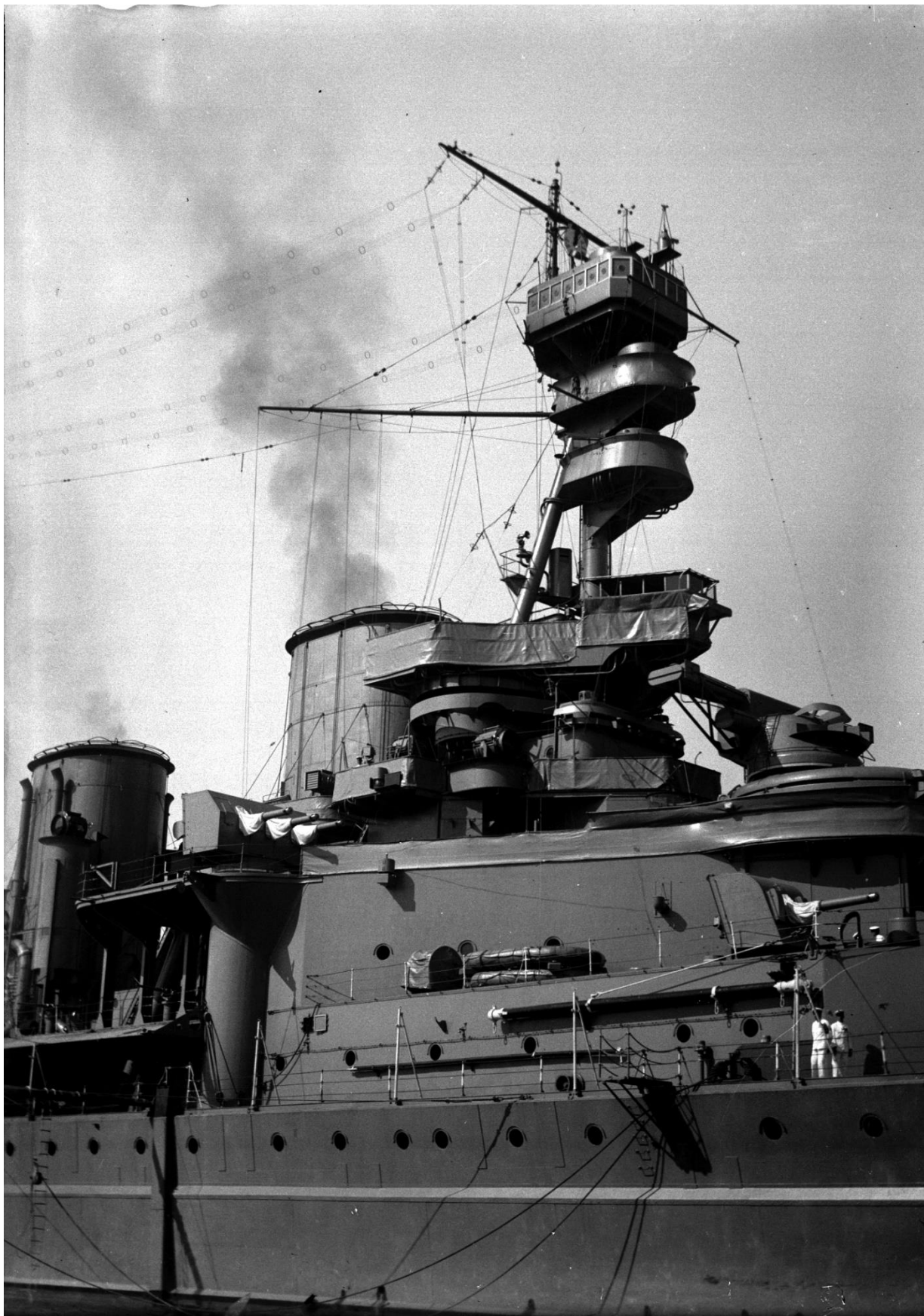
British naval authorities in Nanking doubt the 51st Army story that Amethyst hoisted a white flag during the bombardment. They think the sloop ran up another White Ensign in an endeavour to indicate her identity. Reports from Chinkiang late this afternoon said two thirds of Amethyst was submerged.

ANOTHER ATTACK

LONDON, April 20.—The Admiralty announced that the destroyer Consort came under heavy fire from field artillery when she was steaming down the river from Nanking to the assistance of Amethyst. The statement added: She has replied effectively to the fire H.M.S. London, a 10,000-ton county class cruiser, is expected at Shanghai from sea this afternoon and will go up the river with least delay. Black Swan is also proceeding up the river from Shanghai to the assistance of Amethyst.

A naval statement issued at Hongkong said Consort suffered no casualties when fired on Amethyst was aground in the Yangtse in a position approximately 30 miles east of Chinkiang.

Photo of the Month:



HMS Repulse, Sydney 1924

News in Brief

New search fails to find HMAS Vampire

Two Royal Australian Navy ships have finished an intensive underwater search for World War II destroyer HMAS Vampire I, without success. New data has been collected but the wreck's final resting place off the Sri Lankan coast remains unknown.

HMAS Vampire sank during a Japanese air raid on 9 April 1942, but the ship's precise location has never been identified. Nine Australian sailors died in the attack. Roughly 150 square miles of the sea floor was scanned based on new information from local sources, accounts of survivors and photographic records from the battle in which Vampire was lost. The hydrographic survey ship HMAS Leeuwin and the mine hunter HMAS Diamantina spent a week searching the area.



New Zealand Navy tanker Aotearoa hits the water

Future HMNZS Aotearoa, the largest ship ever built for the Royal New Zealand Navy, was launched at Hyundai Heavy Industries's Ulsan shipyard in South Korea on April 24. Aotearoa now begins six months of fit out before her formal naming ceremony in Ulsan, South Korea, attended by the Governor-General of New Zealand and Aotearoa's ship sponsor, Dame Patsy Reddy.

The commissioning of the ship will take place at the Devonport Naval Base in Auckland in early 2020. Once in service, Aotearoa will operate as a fleet tanker, a supply ship and will have the ability to produce 100 tonnes of fresh water each day.



Australian researchers find wreck of ship sunk by Japanese sub

Researchers have located the wreck of an Australian freighter sunk by a Japanese submarine during World War II, 77 years after it was lost. The lost ship was located by maritime archaeologists using CSIRO research vessel Investigator.

The SS Iron Crown, a 100-meter long ore freighter, was sunk by a Japanese submarine on June 4, 1942 while travelling through Bass Strait with a cargo of manganese ore. The heavily loaded freighter was hit by a torpedo from the submarine and sank within 60 seconds.

There were 43 crew from the Australian Merchant Navy on board the ship and 38 lost their lives in the attack. Locating the wreck after 77 years of not knowing its final resting place will bring closure for relatives and family of those that were lost at sea, as well as for Australia's maritime community.



This Month in History

May 1843	The first war vessel built in Australia, the schooner ELIZA, (119 tons schooner), patrolled the estuary of the Derwent River, TAS, to put down smuggling, and prevent the escape of convicts from the colony. ELIZA was built at Port Arthur, TAS.
May 1913	The Minister for the Navy approved the formation of the Naval Dockyard Police. The initial strength was one Chief Warrant Officer, one Sergeant, nine Senior Constables, and 29 Constables.
May 1917	The Japanese ship HIRADO, (cruiser), was docked at Cockatoo Island, Sydney. During the year the Japanese ships CHIKUMA, YAHAGI, NISSHIN, and KASUGA, operated in Australian waters.
May 1930	HMA Ships PARRAMATTA and SWAN, (former destroyers), were anchored in Cowan Creek near the Hawkesbury River, (north of Sydney), in preparation to become accommodation for prisoners from civil jails. Before this scheme could be commenced, the NSW Government was pressured to abandon the idea due to an outcry from the public, who considered the plan reminiscent of the convict prison hulks of the 18th and 19th Century.
May 1940	The Australian Government approved the building of the Captain Cook Graving Dock between Potts Point and Garden Island Navy Base, Sydney.
May 1945	HMA Ships NAPIER, NEPAL, NIZAM and NORMAN, (destroyers), screened the escort carriers STRIKER and RULER, and the fleet oilers WAVE KING and WAVE MONARCH, in the Okinawa area.
May 1955	The last flying operations took place in HMAS SYDNEY, (aircraft carrier). The ship was then converted to a training ship, and by the mid 1960's had been further converted into a fast troop transport, to convey Australian troops to South East Asia and Vietnam.
May 1960	Whilst in the China Sea HMAS MELBOURNE lost an XA359 Gannet aircraft. The aircraft lost on engine whilst being catapulted and ditched ahead of the ship. LCDR Rowland was the pilot, and LEUT's Horton and Findlay observers. Rowland was rescued by the SAR Sycamore helicopter, Horton and Findlay by HMS CAVALIER, and later transferred to MELBOURNE.
May 1964	The Daring class destroyer, HMAS DUCHESS, (CAPT I. M. Burnside, RAN), was commissioned. DUCHESS, (as HMS DUCHESS), was laid down in John I Thornycroft & Co Ltd, Southampton, England, on 2 July 1948, and launched on 9 April 1951. DUCHESS served with the RN 1952-1964, and was made available to the RAN as a temporary replacement for HMAS VOYAGER.
May 1967	The Minister for the Navy, Mr. D. Chipp, commended HMAS PERTH, (guided missile destroyer), on the rescue of a seriously ill scientist at Macquarie Island. PERTH steamed through heavy gales to reach the base.
May 1970	The Naval Historical Society of Australia was formed.
May 1979	The initial engagement period for General Entry Sailors was reduced from nine to six years.
May 1986	HMA Ships STALWART, FLINDERS, BRUNEI, and BETANO, were dispatched to the Solomon Islands to render assistance, following a cyclone in the area.
May 1991	Sea King helicopters from 817 Squadron, (RAN), rescued 38 people cut off by flood waters on the NSW south coast. The Squadron was later awarded a NSW Police Commendation for the operation.
May 1999	The Huon class mine hunter coastal HMAS HUON, was commissioned. HUON was laid down in ADI Yard, Newcastle, NSW, and launched on 12 July 1997.
May 2001	HMAS JERVIS BAY, (fast transport), was decommissioned in Hobart, TAS. Known as the 'Dili Express', she had carried 6,600 troops, and 3,200 pallets of stores, to East Timor during her two year career.
May 2011	HMAS Manoora II decommissioned

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.

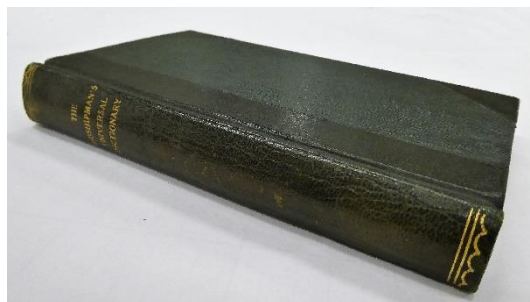
<https://www.navyhistory.org.au/research/on-this-day/>

Readers Forum

Nautical Terms

The Society has been most fortunate in receiving as a donation from one of our volunteers a copy of the 1805 edition of THE MIDSHIPMAN'S DICTIONARY.

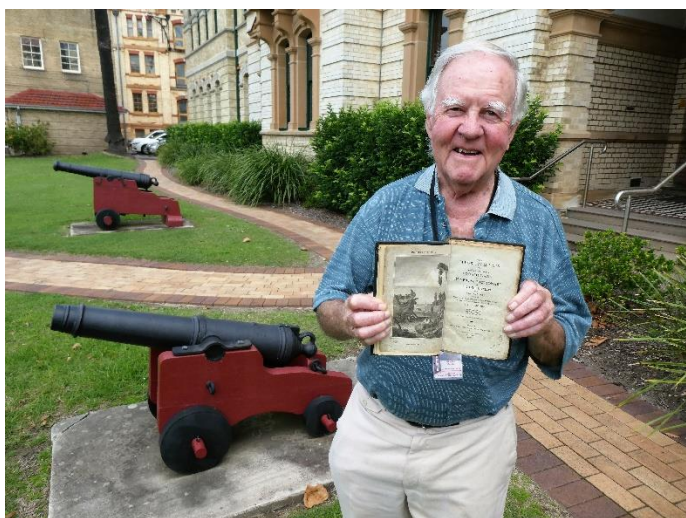
Surely this or a similar book must have been on the desks of C. S. Forester, of Hornblower fame, or Patrick O' Brian, of Jack Aubrey fame, to ensure that they used the correct terms in their books.



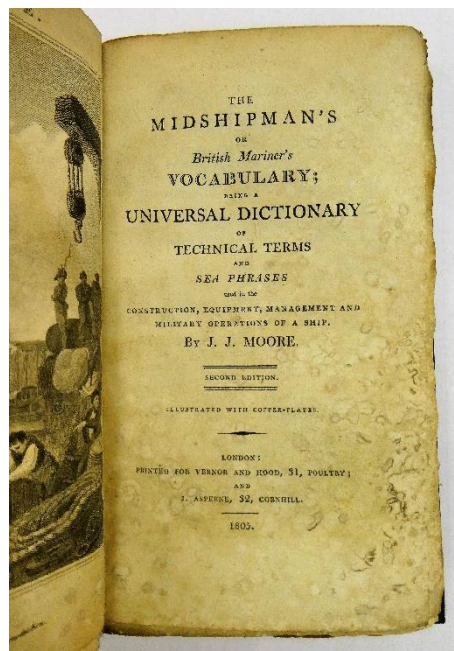
The following are some of the entries in the Dictionary which caught my eye.

- BANIAN-DAYS. Denotes those three days in the week on which the sailors have no flesh meat served out to them. [I had always thought that banyans were picnics ashore.]
- LUBBER. A contemptuous term given by sailors to those who knew not the duty of a seaman.
- PISS-DALE. A place set aside on each side of a ship of war for the people to piss in, to prevent the decks being wetted in other places.
- PORT. Is a name given, on some occasions, to the larboard or left side of the ship. This word appears intended to prevent any mistakes happening from the similarity of sounds in the words starboard and larboard, particularly when they relate to the helm, where a misapprehension might be attended with very dangerous consequences. Accordingly, the word larboard is never used in conning.
- YOUNKER. A general name for a stripling in the service.

Members may view this wonderful book and search for other interesting terms by contacting our librarian. As it is a valuable book, it cannot be taken out of the office.



Gordon Ramsay, Society Archivist with the Midshipman's Dictionary he donated to the Society



By Editor: Gordon's generosity in gifting this rare and wonderful book to the Society is greatly appreciated.
BZ

Occasional Papers in this edition

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

- Occasional Paper 52 - The RAN and the 1918-19 Influenza Pandemic
- Occasional Paper 53 - Petty Officer Fredrick Harold Harvey and Colombian Naval Service
- Occasional Paper 54 - The Church Pennant

Society Matters

Volunteering with the Society

In March we sought the assistance of a volunteer with an interest in converting books published by the Society to e-Book format. We were delighted with the response from Canberra based member, Dave Long who has made a great start on this project. We soon hope to have a range of books available in the online shop.

Marketing Opportunity

For the financial health of the Society the conduct of guided tours and sale of Society products is fundamental. Marketing is a key part of this. If you are available to assist either from home or by attending at the Boatshed in Sydney a few hours a week promoting the Society will make a great contribution. If you can assist please contact us.

Society Events

Visitors are welcome. Details are provided on [the website](#) or contact Chapter points of contact.

ACT: 22 April TBA

VIC: 29 April *History of the RAN Volume II Chapter 3 'Ban Zai'*

NSW: 28 May *No VCs for the Royal Australian Navy*

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/>.

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. Current subscribers can unsubscribe by emailing the same email address.

Garden Island Tours

Garden Island historical tours are the life blood of the Society. Without tour income the Society would struggle. At \$20 pp they are great value.

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