

CALL THE HANDS

Issue No.35

October 2019

From the President

Welcome to this 35th edition of Call the Hands and an Occasional Paper. Occasional Paper 64 looks at the life of the former HMCS Protector to the present. Occasional Paper 65 continues the HMCS Protector theme with coverage of the service of six *Protector* sailors following their return from the Boxer Rebellion.

September and October this year are significant for the 80th Anniversary of the outbreak of WWII in (3 Sept 1939) and the 75th anniversary of Battle of Surigao Strait (23-26 Oct 1944). From a personal perspective I have been profoundly impressed by individual efforts to expand community understanding of Australia Naval history. Two of our not so young Society members continue to make huge personal contributions which supplements Society work.

Examples include, Rear Admiral Guy Griffiths Rtd who gave a comprehensive Interview on radio for the WW2 80th anniversary and prior to this, he delivered a presentation to the August 'Malay at War' conference in Kuala Lumpur. Another long-standing Society member, David Mattiske has for several years been lobbying the Government of Australia to ensure a significant commitment is made to commemorating the Leyte Gulf battles. David was also instrumental in working with the Australian Embassy and the Philippines Government to install a memorial overlooking the Surigao Straits. We understand DVA and the ADF will make significant contributions to the Leyte anniversary later this month.

Like Guy Griffiths, David Mattiske is a WW2 veteran. David was serving in HMAS Shropshire in 1944. The Australian Ambassador to the Philippines, Ms Amanda Gorely, in her 2017 Australia Day address said,

'Australian David Mattiske was a 17 year old able seaman in the WWII Philippines campaign in the Leyte Gulf and the Battle of Manila Bay. Remarkably, at 92 years of age, David still travels regularly to the Philippines to participate in commemorations at Palo Leyte and Surigao Strait. He is one of the few remaining Australian survivors of this campaign in which 92 of his comrades perished. The strong collaboration between the Australian and Philippines defence forces today can be traced back to the shared sacrifices of our soldiers over the years.'

These remarkable individuals represent the living history of Australia-Philippines relations, but they, along with all of you, are also a vital part of our modern relationship."

We are indeed indebted to such remarkable individuals and volunteers.

David Michael

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/>



The Naval Historical Society of Australia

ABN 71 094 118 434

Patron: Chief of Navy

The Boatshed, Building 25,
GARDEN ISLAND NSW 2011
Phone: 02 9359 2372 / 2243
(Tuesdays and Thursdays)
Fax: 02 9359 2383

E-Mail
secretary@navyhistory.org.au
www.navyhistory.org.au

In this Edition

Page	
1	From the President
2	Cry Havoc!
4	80th Anniversary of WWII: Rear Admiral Guy Griffiths Rtd: Feature Interview
4	75 th Anniversary of Leyte Gulf: 23-26 October 1944
5	Launch of HMAS Otama - Youtube Video
6	Darwin ShipLift and Marine Industry Project
7	WRANS have a day at Sea Newspaper article
8	Photo of the Month
9	News in Brief
10	This Month in History
11	Readers Forum
13	Occasional papers
13	Society Matters

Cry Havoc!

Brian Luttrell entered the RANVR in September 1939; a short while later he was off to war as an Ordinary Signaller in HMS Kanimbla. More than two years elapsed before his ship returned home.

Amongst his memorabilia of these times are the first two editions (from 1941) of the ship's magazine Cry Havoc which has kindly been shared with us by his daughter Mrs Dawn Binnings. Her father died in 1982.

HMAS Kanimbla I – a short history

The motor vessel *Kanimbla* was an interstate passenger liner built by Harland & Wolf at Belfast in 1935 for the well known Melbourne shipping company McIlwraith & McEacharn of Scottish ancestry. *Kanimbla* is named after a remote but pretty district in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales with the derivation coming from an aboriginal word meaning fighting ground.

The ship was requisitioned in 1939 and converted in Sydney as the Armed Merchant Cruiser HMS *Kanimbla* with a largely Australian crew under the command of Captain Frank Getting, RAN. Initially she was involved in patrol work on the China and East Indies stations. In 1943 she had a further conversion in Sydney as a Landing Ship Infantry and was transferred to the RAN. She operated in the Pacific until the end of the war and was not handed back to her original owners until 1950. With changing trade conditions in 1961 this fine ship was sold to the former enemy, the Japanese Toyo Yusen Line, and renamed *Oriental Queen*, operating as a cruise ship until sold for breaking up in 1973.

The following pieces of general interest are taken from the ship's magazine.

Editorial – first edition

McIlwraith and McEacharn Ltd. presented the Ship's Company with £A20, from this the Canteen Committee, which administers the fund, has decided to present each member of the Ship's Company with a copy of our first issue. Our thanks to McIlwraith and McEacharn.



SBLT Brian Luttrell RAN

A poem with apologies to John Masefield:

Sea Fever

Must I go down to the seas again
To that endless war routine?
To the rains that pelt and the winds that howl
And the waves of rolling green?
To the calls of the pipe and the bugle's blast
Disturbing our restless sleep?

For to do the job 'till the danger's past'
Means an endless watch to keep.
I must go down to the seas again
For there's more than sea that draws,
There's a job to be done and a war to be won,
I must fight for so just a cause.
But there's still one thought that we all retain,
As o'er the seas we roam
Though the world is wide and there's much to be seen
There's still no place like home.

Kanimbla's Motto – second edition

In the very early days of the War when *Kanimbla* had only just been taken over and there was still a lot of China furniture in the cabins, the Master of the vessel and her temporary Commander were discussing over an excellent lunch (not taken up on repayment) the question of a suitable crest and motto for the ship.

Various more or less ribald suggestions were made by the Mate and some sweetly romantic ideas were put forward by the Providor's pretty secretary who used to honour us at lunch and keep the young officers in clean tunics. Presently the Master said it would be a pity if the old hungry dog was not included in the crest (referring to the lion rampant in the house flag of McIlwraith, McEacharn). This brought sparks from the Providor as it was intended to, and a hot argument ensued on the evergreen subject of a 'ha'porth of tar'.

But the word dog had started an idea germinating in the Commander's brain. Twenty-five or more years ago in most Gunrooms in the Navy, the 'Dogs of War' were an established institution. In those days when a midshipman's pay was 1/9 a day and a sub-lieutenant's 5/- everyone dined on board six nights a week out of sheer necessity, apart from leave restrictions during wartime.

Under these circumstances it was not unusual for the 'young gentlemen' to get a bit obstreperous at times. When the Sub of the Mess wished to remove any particularly riotous member he would usually cry, 'Dogs of War, out Mr. So and So', at which order the most powerful snotties would seize Mr. So and So and eject him forcibly by the nearest exit. Sometimes in particular noisy Gunrooms Duty Dogs of War were told off for the week by the Sub of the Mess.

And thus when the Commander heard that the McIlwraith lion was nicknamed 'the hungry dog' on the coast (this had no connection with McIlwraith's food – we were eating roast duck at the time) the suggestion was put forward that the hungry dog should become the dog of war under the White Ensign, for her job as an AMC would be to fall upon the King's enemies and banish them from the seas.

William Shakespeare's 'Cry Havoc and let loose the dogs of war' was an obvious apt way of expressing the thought in our midst and so 'Cry Havoc' was carried for the ship's motto by general acclamation. The crest is the same as that on the boat's badges, i.e., the lion rampant encircled by a rope grommet.

Note by Editor NHR: Some expressions used above are no longer in common usage such as:

- Providor = see also Provedore a ship's agent proving provisions, usually fresh food.
- Ha'porth of Tar = a ships company perception of 'excessive savings' made against ships' provisions – the lowest value being a ha'porth or half a penny worth (less than one cent).

Monetary values of 1/9 and 5/- refer to 1 shilling and 9 pence and 5 shillings – about 17 cents and 50 cents respectively.

80th Anniversary of WWII: Rear Admiral Guy Griffiths Rtd: Feature Interview and Video

In support of commemorative the recent 80th anniversary of the outbreak of World War 2 Rear Admiral Guy Griffiths Rtd recorded a video for the Department of Veterans Affairs and on 3 September he was interviewed by Radio 2GB. Thee is interesting interviews can be accessed via the following links.



Radio 2GB interview: <https://www.2gb.com/special-feature-interview-with-an-incredible-veteran-on-the-80th-anniversary-of-wwii/>

Department of Veterans Affairs video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-6CZOcmM3M>

75th Anniversary of Leyte Gulf: 23-26 October 1944

The series of sea battles at and around Leyte Gulf in October 1944 marked a turning point in the Pacific war. Is was a decisive battle in which the entire and still powerful Japanese Navy was committed. The Japanese force was attempting to destroy the vast American fleet of more than 660 vessels supporting the strategically critical amphibious landings on Leyte’.

The Royal Australian Navy's contribution to the huge American naval force which took part was significant. Units included in the Force were the County Class heavy cruisers HMA Ships Australia and Shropshire, the Tribal Class destroyers HMA Ships Arunta and Warramunga, the River Class frigate HMAS Gascoyne, Landing ships Westralia, Kanimbla and Manoora and Harbour Defence Motor Launch (HDML) 1074.

On 18 October 1944 RAN sailors were involved in laying channel markers and shoal water buoys in San Pedro Bay at the head of Leyte Gulf. Two days later, the three landing ships landed more 2,800 troops on Panaon Island to the south, while four ships took part in the bombardment of the main landing beaches at Tacloban and Dulag on Leyte Gulf’s western shore.



The battle of Surigao Straits on 25 October 1944 was significant as this was the last clash between capital ships. During this engagement the allied force including older American battleships crippled the Japanese Squadrons attempting to break into Leyte Gulf. This battle gave the Allies a decisive victory. However, the liberation of the Philippines was not complete until July 1945.

Further Reading:

The Royal Australian Navy at Leyte Gulf October 1944, Kingsley Perry available at <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/the-royal-australian-navy-at-leyte-gulf-october-1944/>

Leyte: HMAS Shropshire and HMAS Arunta in the Battle of Surigao Strait, John Date, available at, <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/leyte-hmas-shropshire-and-hmas-arunta-in-the-battle-of-surigao-strait/>

60 Years On - Leyte Gulf 1944, Jozef Straczek, available at <http://www.navy.gov.au/history/feature-histories/60-years-leyte-gulf-1944>

Launch of HMAS Otama - Youtube Video

HMAS Otama was launched at Greenock, Scotland on 3 December 1975 by Princess Anne.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMfV-hDBTyY>



Builder:	Scotts Shipbuilding and Engineering Company
Laid down:	25 May 1973
Launched:	3 December 1975
Commissioned:	27 April 1978
Decommissioned:	15 December 2000
Motto:	"Unseen We Seek"
Nickname(s):	One of the "Mystery Boats" The "Gucci Boat"
Status:	Awaiting preservation by the Western Port Oberon Association. Arrived in Western Port Bay, Victoria in 2002, where she is moored while waiting for the approval and development of the museum

Darwin Ship Lift and Marine Industry Project



Site of Planned ship lift facility at Darwin's East Arm

The Ship Lift Facility will enable the maintenance and servicing of Defence and Australian Border Force vessels, along with commercial and private vessels, including from the oil, gas and marine industries.

The project will drive local industry, create local jobs and help to consolidate Darwin's position as a hub for marine maintenance and servicing.

The Darwin Ship Lift Facility will be designed to meet the needs of the general maritime sector and the current and long-term needs of the Department of Defence and the Australian Border Force, while supporting local jobs and economic growth in the Territory.

It is estimated around 100 workers will be employed throughout the facility's construction phase, and once operational the facility will be a catalyst for the development of a marine maintenance and servicing industry, and the creation of many new jobs.

The common user ship lift facility will include:

- a 103m ship lift capable of lifting vessels up to 5,000 tonnes
- 26m width
- four wet berths (wharves)
- 20ha of hard stand area for ship repair and maintenance works.

The ship lift will have the capacity to lift vessels such as the new fleet of offshore patrol vessels procured by the Australian Defence Force.

Territory-owned and headquartered Paspaley Group is partnering with the Territory Government in the \$400 million project. The agreement between the Territory and Paspaley will result in the ship lift being constructed on Territory Government-owned land, operated by Paspaley under a 10-year renewable agreement. The facility will operate on a commercial basis under a legislated open access regime to ensure fair and equal use for all customers. Pricing and access will be overseen by the independent Utilities Commission.

The next steps are the finalisation of a project development agreement with the Paspaley Group and attaining all relevant environmental approvals. A Territory Government procurement process will be undertaken to award an



An artist's impression of the new ship lift at East Arm. Image sourced from NT News 21 Sep 2019

engineering, design and construct tender. It is envisaged that this contract will be awarded in late 2020, enabling construction to commence during 2021.

Construction is anticipated to take two years, enabling the facility to be operating in early 2023.

Source: Northern Territory Government, Department of Trade, Business and Innovation, <https://business.nt.gov.au/investment-and-major-projects/major-projects-in-the-northern-territory/ship-lift-and-marine-industry>

Animation available at; <https://www.ntnews.com.au/business/darwins-big-ship-lift-facility-moves-a-step-closer-as-nt-government-pledges-100-million/news-story/a65d7248aa65942819568e4b6552533e>

Newspaper Clipping

Canberra Times 23 September 1960

WRANS HAVE A DAY AT SEA ON AUSTRALIA'S FAST ANTISUBMARINE FRIGATE H.M.A.S. QUIBERON



Members of the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service had a day at sea on the fast anti-submarine frigate, H.M.A.S. Quiberon. Recently the entry age for girls joining the W.R.A.N.S. was lowered from 18 to 17. The girls have been doing special training. They made history recently with their first all-girl pin-nace.

Photo of the Month



HMAS DIAMANTINA (I) as survey ship 1978 at Port Adelaide

HMAS *Diamantina* was ordered as part of Australia's shipbuilding program during the Second World War. *Diamantina* commissioned at Hervey Bay, Queensland, on 27 April 1945 under the command of Lieutenant Commander Maurice G Rose RANVR. She served in the South West Pacific during the final stages of World War Two

Following a period of almost 13 years in Reserve, *Diamantina* recommissioned on 22 June 1959 as an Oceanographic Research Ship, under the command of Lieutenant Commander Bruce D Gordon RAN. She then commenced oceanographic survey duty, mainly off the Western Australian coast and in the Indian Ocean and Java Sea. She carried scientists from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) during most of these surveys, but also assisted the Australian Army Survey team on the north west coast of Australia. In February 1960, scientists aboard *Diamantina* discovered a fissure in the ocean floor west of Cape Leeuwin which dropped to depths of over 4000 fathoms. Now known as the Diamantina Trench, it is believed to be the deepest recorded water in the Indian Ocean.

Diamantina paid off on 29 February 1980. As the last of the war time frigates still in service with the Royal Australian Navy, she had steamed 615,755 miles since first commissioning

Diamantina is now on permanent display in Brisbane at the [Queensland Maritime Museum](http://www.qm.qld.gov.au/museum) and restored to her World War II outfit of weapons.

HMAS *Diamantina* (I) Full History, available at: <http://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-diamantina-i>

News in Brief

Australian Guided Missile Destroyer leads 9-ship task group on its maiden deployment

The first of the three Royal Australian Navy air warfare destroyers, HMAS Hobart, is leading a nine-ship task group on a deployment across North and South East Asia.

In addition to being the first ever operational overseas deployment for the lead ship in the class, the deployment is also the navy's largest this year. Departing on 26th September from Sydney, the lead element of the task group will participate in bilateral and multi-national activities over the next four months. Accompanied by Anzac frigates HMAS Parramatta and Stuart as well as a navy submarine, HMAS Hobart will lead the first task group element to Japan for an International Fleet Review.



HMAS Stuart will later join the Armidale class patrol boat HMAS Ararat, the replenishment ship HMAS Sirius, and the hydrographic survey ship HMAS Leeuwin during their deployment to South East Asia.

The Anzac frigate HMAS Arunta will then join Sirius in exercises with a range of regional partners including Malaysia and Indonesia. Minehunters HMAS Gascoyne and HMAS Diamantina will participate in international exercises for the final element of the Task Group.

HMAS Melbourne's final home coming.

27th September marked the end of an era as HMAS Melbourne arrived in Sydney Harbour at the end of its final voyage.

The guided missile frigate docked at the Garden Island naval base for its decommissioning after 27 years of service.

Melbourne is the last of the navy's six Adelaide-class guided missile frigates in service, "The Adelaide-class guided missile frigates have formed the backbone of our navy operations for decades and Melbourne has played a vital role, sailing more than 900,000 nautical miles since her commissioning in 1992," Rear Admiral Mead said.



The navy's phasing out of the Adelaide-class is part of a refresh of its fleet, with two of three new Hobart-class DDGs already in service.

HMAS Melbourne will decommission during a ceremony at Garden Island on 26th October 2019.

This Month in History

October 1817	The RN adopted the 9,000 item flag signalling system compiled by CAPT Frederick Marryat, RN. The system was adapted from the French Navy manual. It was first demonstrated in Australia by HMS WARSPITE, in 1826. CAPT Marryat achieved lasting fame as the author of Mr. Midshipman Easy.
October 1888	Plans for a protected cruiser for the Victorian Navy were prepared by Sir William Armstrong & Co., England, and placed before the Victorian Government. The 1040 ton ship was designed to carry three 6-inch breech loaders, four 6lb guns, six 3lb guns, and six Gatling guns, in addition to two 18-inch torpedo tubes. The ship was never built.
October 1913	RADM Sir George E Patey, RN, assumed command of the Australia Station from ADML Sir George King Hall, RN, as the Station's last RN commander-in-chief.
October 1917	HMAS SWAN attacked a submarine disguised as a fishing schooner off Corfu. SWAN dropped depth charges, but the submarine dived and escaped, leaving her mast and sails on the surface.
October 1928	HMAS AUSTRALIA, (cruiser), departed Wellington, New Zealand, to take up her position as rescue vessel for Captain Charles Kingsford Smith's trans-Pacific flight. Two Australian destroyers were also deployed as wireless relay stations.
October 1939	The auxiliary minesweeper HMAS TONGKOL, was commissioned. TONGKOL was laid down in 1926. She was requisitioned for the RAN, from her owner, Mr A. A. Murrell, Sydney, on 4 October 1939.
October 1942	HMAS NIZAM and HMS FOXHOUND, (destroyers), were fired at by the STEPHEN A DOUGLAS, (ammunition carrier). NIZAM and FOXHOUND were rendezvousing with the ammunition carrier to escort her into Cape Town, and were mistaken for German submarines.
October 1948	The RAN took command of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force naval shore establishment Kure, Japan. The base, then known as HMS COMMONWEALTH, became HMAS COMMONWEALTH.
October 1951	A Sea Fury piloted by LEUT C. M. Wheatley, RAN, (from HMAS SYDNEY, aircraft carrier), was hit by flak, and crashed into the sea of Chinnampo, South Korea. Wheatley was picked up by a patrolling helicopter and taken to the main Allied airbase at Kimpo.
October 1960	HMAS WOOMERA, (ammunition ship), was lost when dumping obsolete ammunition at sea, off Sydney Heads. A violent explosion, followed by a fierce fire, caused WOOMERA to sink in a few minutes. Two of the crew were killed in the explosion, but the other 25 were picked up by HMAS QUICKMATCH, (frigate).
October 1963	The Australian Government placed orders for two Oberon class submarines with Scott's Shipbuilding, Scotland.
October 1971	HMAS DIAMANTINA, (oceanographic research vessel), represented Australia at the Christmas Island Territory Day celebrations.
October 1980	The Russian Ship, STOROZHEVOY, (guided missile frigate), shadowed HMA Ships MELBOURNE, (aircraft carrier), and PERTH, (guided missile destroyer), in the Indian Ocean. A Tracker SE2 aircraft from MELBOURNE also sighted the Soviet assault ship IVAN ROGOV in the area.
October 1982	Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II opened the RAN base in Darwin, NT.
October 1988	The International Bicentennial Fleet, with over 50 warships from 16 nations moored in Sydney Harbour, was reviewed by the Duke and Duchess of York, embarked in HMAS COOK
October 1993	HMA Ships TOBRUK, (landing ship heavy), and SUCCESS, (auxiliary oiler replenishment), depart Townsville with stores and ADF personnel for Operation Lagoon in Bougainville.
October 2001	HMAS Kanimbla II departed for the Middle East as part of the maritime force assigned to Operation SLIPPER.
October 2005	A State Funeral was held at HMAS CERBERUS for Mr Evan Allen, who was the last RAN veteran from WWI, and also the last member of the Australian forces to see active service during WWI. Mr Allen joined the RAN in March 1914, and trained onboard HMAS TINGIRA, (Boys Training Ship), before seeing overseas service in HMA Ships ENCOUNTER and SYDNEY. He continued to serve in the RAN during the inter-war period, and nearly lost his life when swept overboard from HMAS AUSTRALIA during a storm in the North Atlantic in 1928. During WWII he saw active service onboard HMAS MORETON BAY and as pier-master at HMAS LADAVA. He again escaped death when he was posted to join HMAS AUSTRALIA in late 1944, but missed a connecting flight by only a few hours. The man he was meant to relieve was killed during the Kamikaze attack on AUSTRALIA at Lingayen Gulf, in early 1945. Evan retired from the RAN in 1947, after 33 years service, having attained the rank of Lieutenant, and became a farmer in southern Victoria.

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

Garden Island: Heritage Walking Tours

By Colin Randall, NHSA Tour Guide and Researcher

We had four persons on the inaugural tour of the Garden Island Hill today in perfect weather. One of the visitors on the Tour was a lady named Teresa. She said the first job she ever had was in administration in Building 15 on the Hill and had worked on Garden Island for four and half years leaving in late 1984. Teresa brought with her parts of her photograph album with photographs of her in her office and on the paths on the Hill.

She commented as follows:- Our working hours were 7 hours and 21 minutes. We had 40 minutes for lunch and since the cafeteria was not so good brought her lunch each day and had it on the hill. On special occasions they would, with permission, get an aqua taxi and go to Watsons Bay for lunch. She came on the bus each day and remembered that the bus came onto the island and she usually got the 4.30 pm bus.

Amongst her personal photographs she had a large colour photograph of the dockyard (aerial photograph from helicopter, she said) that was presented to her as a leaving present.

At the conclusion of the tour Teresa presented the photograph to the Society. An interesting visit.
Colin

By Editor: Heritage Walking Tours of Garden Island northern end are now conducted on one Sunday monthly. Dates and details are available on the [Society website](#) or through [Eventbrite](#).



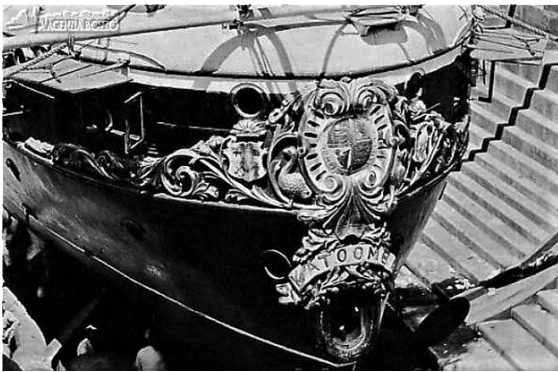
The Naval Tradition of using a Kangaroo began in the 1800s

Thanks to John Vaughan for the following.

An Australian tradition started with the Royal Navy aboard [HMS Australia](#), an armoured cruiser which commissioned in 1886. It was the use of bold Kangaroo finials atop the masthead.



Another first for our Kangaroo was as a Figurehead of the Royal Navy's [HMS Kangaroo](#) as she proudly featured a large and prominent Kangaroo Figurehead. She was built in 1852 and had served as a hospital ship in the Crimean War. From 1865 she was used as a watch vessel on Stangate Creek, on the River Medway.



HMS Katoomba featured an Emu and Kangaroo on her stern. HMAS Parramatta I and HMAS Warramunga (i) both had prominent Kangaroo finials above the truck on their Jackstaff and HMS Hood had a live Kangaroo mascot aboard when this great RN ship visited Vancouver in 1924.

The now traditional red Kangaroo on the funnels of HMA Ships was a later tradition started by HMAS Queenborough in 1955. The first locally designed flag in Australia, the Bowman Flag of 1806 featured both the Emu and Kangaroo and had a direct

naval association celebrating the Royal Navy's great victory at the battle of Trafalgar in 1805 which saved British Australasia from interference by Napoleon.

If anyone has more information please let me know. John Vaughan john@australianaconcepts.com.au

Further Reading: [The Origin of RAN Squadron and National Insignia](#), John Perryman, Sea Power Centre Australia



The Swimmer/Sapper attack at Vung Tau 23 May 1969

Received from David Smith, ex United States Navy

I read with interest the article about the swimmer Sapper attack at Vung Tau in 1969.

I was the sentry onboard USS Hickman County along with one other that spotted the swimmers in the water. Although 50 years ago I remember it quite well. I and a gunner's mate had just returned to the ship when I happened to look overboard and noticed a swimmer in the water. The gunner's mate said swimmer Sapper. We were not carrying arms but there was a deck mounted 50 cal. So we loaded it and proceeded to fire at them. As I recall we hit two and a third was captured. I remember you guys coming and taking the C4 off the ship and pier, also one of your interrogators talked to the captured one. We left the next day to go up the Mei Kong and never really talked about it again. I was never offered a bronze star or anything else.

This is the first I have seen anything about it and I appreciate seeing it mentioned on line.

Thank you,
David Smith



Captured Swimmer/Sapper, Jake Linton

By Editor: The story referred to was authored by Commander Jake Linton, BEM, MCD, RAN Rtd. It is available at, <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/the-swimmer-sapper-attack-at-vung-tau-23-may-1969/>

Occasional Papers in this edition

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

- Occasional Paper 64 - HMCS Protector – 1900 to the Present
- Occasional Paper 65 -Sailors, Soldiers and Two Wars

Society Matters

Volunteering with the Society

The Naval Historical Society of Australia is seeking volunteers to assist with all aspects of its role in preserving and promoting the history of the Royal Australian Navy.

The Society relies on the work of volunteers, men and women, for all of its day-to-day operations – both at the National office as well as the interstate Chapters.

Volunteers with IT skills to assist with general administrative processes such as membership, sales orders, digital imagery and website content on a regular basis in the Boatshed (head office) are sought at present. Work is also available in areas such as research, publishing, promotion, IT, sales, marketing and tour guiding.

A service background is useful but not critical. Many volunteers from diverse backgrounds bring specialist technical and professional skills, some are retired, and yet others are willing to lend a hand to whatever needs doing.

For those seeking interesting work in great surroundings or can assist from home, we would like to talk with you.