



CALL THE HANDS

Issue No. 38 February 2020



From the President

Welcome to the first edition of Call the Hands for 2020. Eleven editions of this free newsletter are produced by Society volunteers each year. We aim to bring you a mix of contemporary and historic Australian naval stories. I trust you will enjoy it and provide feedback which is always appreciated, particularly if you provide information which is not readily known in the community.

The year, 2020 is the Naval Historical Society of Australia's 50th anniversary year which we share with the Captain Cook Graving Dock in Garden Island Sydney which celebrate its 75th anniversary on 24 March. The Society is working with the Royal Australian Navy and Thales Australia which operates the dock, to ensure the occasion is appropriately commemorated. More information on these anniversaries will be shared with readers in the coming months.

Extracts from the diary kept by Petty Officer Roy Norris during his service in HMAS Perth during WW2 are reproduced in our first story. In addition to his diary the Society holds original water colour paintings made by Roy made during his service in the Mediterranean. Digital copies of his paintings are available on request.

The Occasional Papers accompanying this newsletter cover a diverse range of subjects from the First Fleet Ships Garden to Satellites and the RAN's Spitfire aircraft in the middle. I trust you find them of interest.

Included with this mailing are answers to the quiz questions distributed in December 2019. We hope you had some success.

If you live in Sydney, the Society always welcomes new volunteers who can make a regular commitment of their time and energy to work on an interesting range of activities in our waterfront office in Garden Island Dockyard. It is a wonderful place to work. Further information on volunteering is provided on page 12.

Naval personnel, ships and aircraft were kept busy supporting the response to catastrophic bush fires in South Eastern Australia throughout December and January. The Society salutes their efforts as well as those of all the emergency service organisations which worked together to protect communities and property.

Yours aye,

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/>



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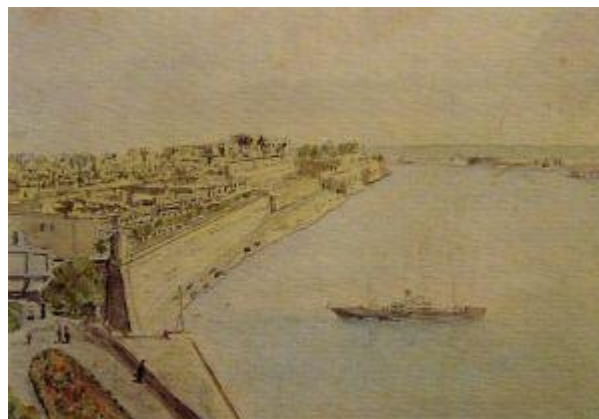
HMAS Perth: Malta – Hell in Grand Harbour

Roy Norris was one of the commissioning crew of HMAS *Perth* and served during *Perth's* deployment to the Mediterranean in 1941. Norris kept a diary and recorded the events he and the *Perth* experienced. He was also a talented artist and painted a number of watercolours of scenes from the Med.

In 2005, the Society published the diary under the title, “A Cook’s Tour”. The book is a substantial and unique historical reference. This extract demonstrates Norris’s skill for story-telling, and relate some of the key events in the Mediterranean campaign

We arrived at Malta on Tuesday 14th January 1941 just at dawn.

Valletta is a wonderful sight. We entered Grand Harbour and went alongside opposite to the *Illustrious* which certainly shows plenty of exterior signs of the damage she received on the 11th. The *Gallant* (destroyer) is also here with her entire forecastle blown off while in another dock the *Decoy*, another destroyer, has the stern missing. According to reports the *Illustrious* suffered over 150 casualties and terrific damage done from four direct hits from heavy calibre bombs. The loss of the *Southampton* has not been admitted yet by England though they admit the ship has been hit. Such is war!



Valletta, Malta

We were due to sail again that night but once again our plans were changed and after having received a draft of RN ratings on board – 150 all told – they had to pack up again and go to the *Orion*. Reports have it that the success of the convoys in getting through OK, to which we contributed our little bit, will bear very important fruit. Despite the heavy losses it is considered small price to pay. All I can say is that it must have been a very important convoy if that price was small.

On Wednesday January 15th I went ashore with Bland to see Valletta. What a day. For five hours we walked and walked. We spent three pence each, a great expense! We wanted to go over the *Illustrious* but I'd heard enough tales from others who'd viewed her. They are still getting bodies out of her and according to reports the stench of blood and death is too horrible! Reports have it that 8 1000lb bombs hit her, 35 planes destroyed and steering damaged. She had to come into harbour steering by her engines. She withstood seven hours bombing by wave after wave of German dive-bombers – one of the severest poundings one ship has ever withstood.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

128081

HMS *Illustrious* and HMAS *Perth* under German air attack in Grand Harbour, Malta.

We ourselves had only just left her a little while so we escaped the trouble by the skin of our teeth. Soon after noon two torpedo-carrying aircraft appeared but their torpedos passed harmlessly astern. Then the main attack of three squadrons came over wave after wave. It appears that they came at an opportune moment for them (the Germans) as it was a total surprise, The *Illustrious* R.D.F gear having developed a fault at the time and most of her planes being below deck with the lift open. A lucky bomb fell into the lift causing most of the damage that was done to the interior of the ship. However, she managed to make Malta OK. She will live to fight again.

January 16th a Thursday was almost curtains for us. I never want to go through the 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours of hell we endured on that sunny afternoon in Grand Harbour Valletta. About 1000 an aircraft alarm was sounded off but nothing came of it. W.K liberty run went ashore at 1300 but rather than endure Bland's company again I decided to stay on board – **much** to my regret. About 1400 the alarm sounded and in about 15 minutes it started. Wave after wave of bombers came over and concentrated their attack on the corner of the dockyard where we were. As they approached the *Illustrious* and *Perth* put up a barrage. There must have been a solid wall of steel in the air but it seemed to have as much effect on the planes as if we were playfully hurling paper darts at them. The *Illustrious* had the appearance of a solid wall of flame. Tons of steel must have been hurled into the air, the din was appalling, a continuous roar of 4.7", 4", .5 multiple pompom, all contributed to the Hell's inferno of fire and noise. Risking the full strength of this incredible barrage, which it seemed it was impossible for them to penetrate, they appeared to converge from all sides and diving in rapid succession they held their bombs till the last moment.

The *Illustrious* received three hits and bombs rained about us in rapid succession making the ship shudder with the nearness of the explosions. Just astern of us the *Essex*, an ammunition ship with 4 to 5 thousand tons of H.E on board, was hit by a bomb, which went down the funnel wrecking the engine room and killing 30 to 40.

After about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour there was a lull and the *Essex* was seen to have dense clouds of smoke pouring out of her. The floating crane alongside the *Illustrious* was also afire but so far we had escaped though sticks of

bombs had fallen too close for comfort. Five minutes and they were back to the attack with more vigour than the first raid. The fiendish din was renewed and the ship shook and trembled as the hail of bombs fell on every side of her. Just towards the end of this raid the ship gave one conclusive jump as if we'd fired all our armament together the lights went out and we thought we'd got our issue that time but by a miracle they had missed by **inches**. It hit the edge of the wharf depending again on our guns crews and the Almighty to protect us. God must have been on our side this day for once again we were missed in the hail of death. They swept on to bomb the city and sweep the streets with machine guns. A children's refuge was wiped out in another blast – just a mangled mass of flesh and wreckage. One woman was seen running about frantically screaming with the upper half of her child in her arms.



Painting of HMS Illustrious at Malta 1941 by Edwin Galea

Our medical party rushed to the *Essex* to get out her casualties and our fire party to fight the fire. A panic then started – a buzz that the *Essex* was going up. They piped us all ashore – not that it would have been of much use. The fire is eventually put out – it had been confined to the engine room and positively wrecked it, killing all who had been sheltering. Only a bulkhead saved it from going up and taking Valletta with it. Our lads did a great job of work in putting out the fire and getting out the bodies. After a while we all trooped back on board again and made preparations for going to sea. All of our hands who happened to be ashore did not lose much time in returning on board. That same night at sunset colours was sounded off on the *Illustrious* just as though nothing had happened. That is something, which makes this British Empire great. A small thing in itself no doubt but it only goes to show what Hitler's up against. After all the Hell of the afternoon – colours!

We did not lose much time in getting away from Malta. As soon as steam could be raised we were out and into a very rough piece of weather too. Starting off at 30 knots we very shortly had to reduce speed to about 17 knots. Some unknown damage had been done aft. The two after turrets were out of action, there was a great deal of water and oil in nearly every compartment aft. For two days they bailed and mopped out store rooms etc. Many buzzes were current as to the extent of damage and hopeful creatures even had the audacity to start buzzes of a return to Australia. "Such stuff as dreams are made" – still it was beautiful wishful thinking even though we knew how impossible that was. My own pessimistic view is that they'll send a diver down; say "She's right" – and off we go again.

The only consolation is that we can't have a much worse experience without getting blown to atoms and then we'll be beyond caring. We arrived at Ras-el-Tin and tied up alongside the *Ajax* at 1600 on Saturday January 18th. The Captain cleared lower deck and gave a speech to the effect that we were very lucky to be back in Alex with so little damage done. He also has the idea that the hand of God must have reached down to protect us that day.

Video of the Month: HMAS Sydney (3): Troop Transport

The Vung Tau Ferry: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8u_alWYqrA



Photo of the Month:



The RAN operated two HS748 aircraft. The first HS748 arrived at Nowra in June 1973 having been ferried from the United Kingdom by RAN personnel. The second aircraft arrived in August 1973 and both were allocated to 851 Squadron. The installation of electronic counter-measures (ECM) equipment was delayed until 1978 and both aircraft were flown to the United States in late 1977 to have the equipment installed and returned to Australia in mid-1981. The HS 748 worked on the east coast where they simulated a hostile electronic warfare environment. The two HS 748 aircraft ceased operations with the RAN on 23 June 2000 and were sold.

Report of Proceedings for HMAS Advance - January 1968

H.M.A.S. ADVANCE,
at Sydney.

9 February, 1968.

THE FLAG OFFICER COMMANDING,
H.M. AUSTRALIAN FLEET,
FLEET HEADQUARTERS,
GARDEN ISLAND.

(Copy to: Commander Mine Warfare and Patrol Forces)

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - JANUARY, 1968.

Reference: R.I. Appendix 29 (A).

Forwarded in accordance with the reference the Report of Proceedings of HMAS ADVANCE for the month of January, 1968.

2. At 1330K on Tuesday 23 January, HMAS ADVANCE having completed trials to the satisfaction of the Principal Naval Overseer (Queensland) was accepted and signed for by myself on behalf of the Royal Australian Navy. On completion of the acceptance, ADVANCE proceeded to Walkers Limited wharf at MARYBOROUGH securing alongside at 1540K.
3. ADVANCE was commissioned at 1200K the following day, Wednesday 24 January, alongside Walkers Wharf, Maryborough. The Service was conducted by CANON GRAYSON and MONSIGNOR LYONS in the company of about 50 official and private guests. On completion of the ceremony I invited Mr. H.J. DAVIES, M.L.A. to inspect the ship in company with Dr. W.L. HUGHES of Walkers Limited.
4. The Ship remained alongside Walkers Wharf until Saturday 27 January. On this date the Ship's Company were victualled out to shore and destoring and defuelling were completed in preparation for slipping.
5. At 0900K on Sunday 28 January ADVANCE was slipped at Walkers Limited to inspect for underwater damage caused by the recent grounding in HERVEY BAY. The inspection revealed no damage and the ship unslipped at 1000K on Monday 29 January.
6. The remainder of Monday was spent restoring and refuelling in preparation for passage to Sydney. The Ship's Company were victualled back on board a.m.
7. At 1000K on Tuesday 30 January, HMAS ADVANCE sailed from Maryborough. A Pilot was embarked for clearing the Mary River and Great Sandy Strait. At 1145K the pilot was dropped and course set for Sydney.
8. Apart from one LME left at Maryborough Base Hospital with acute Iritis, the general health of the Ship's Company has been satisfactory. Conduct and Morale has been satisfactory with a noticeable improvement on finally getting to sea.



G.D.R. Hammer
G.D.R. HAMMER,
LIEUTENANT, R.A.N.
CAPTAIN.

52 Years on, the former HMAS Advance continues to attract great interest alongside the Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney. ANMM image.

WRANS Chief To *Demobilise*

Girls who had served with the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service found it hard to settle down because, to them, civilian work seemed unimportant after their war work.

Many had wanted to make the WRANS a permanent career.

So said WRANS director, Chief Officer Sheilah McClemons, of Claremont, who returned to Perth today for demobilisation after more than four years' service.

Chief Officer McClemons enlisted in Western Australia as a writer. Her present rank is the equivalent of a naval commander or army colonel.

She will resume work as a barrister in this State. Said she: "There is no place like W.A., and although I have been away so long, I have never wanted to live anywhere but here."

When Chief Officer McClemons joined the WRANS, 800 were in that service. She eventually commanded 3,500 women.

She worked unceasingly for WRANS to be permitted to serve overseas, but the nearest she got to that dream was to see them reach Darwin.

The only woman service leader to go to London with the Australian Victory Contingent, last April, she led the women's section.

During an Australia-wide tour of lectures on suitable jobs after demobilisation, she was able to advise many girls who had joined the WRANS direct from school.

It was because of her concern for their civilian life future that she remained the last of the three women's service leaders to be demobilised.

Only 30 girls will be left in the WRANS. They will do communications branch work.

She added: "When I joined the Navy I was staggered by its efficiency. I soon found that R.A.N. men expected WRANS as their equals in efficiency and did everything they could to better conditions for the girls."

First Officer Sheila McClemons, WRANS
1943, Painting by Nora Heysen. AWM image



News in Brief

Australian Navy's training centre expansion at Randwick complete

St Hilliers has successfully completed the Royal Australian Navy's training systems centre expansion at Randwick Barracks. The \$24m training facility extension has concluded in time for the first Navy training course set to begin this week. A two-storey extension of the current Navy Training Systems Centre has resulted in developing almost 3,500m² of extra floor space.



The new facility will provide training for crews of the RAN's two new Supply Class auxiliary oiler replenishment ships. It will also be used by the Military Operational Speciality Code (MOSC) personnel and will house specialist training rooms and equipment.

These works are the first to be completed under the Navy Capability Infrastructure sub-programme, which involves approximately \$2bn of new facilities and infrastructure works to be delivered across Australia over the next seven years. The first supply-class vessel HMAS Supply is scheduled to enter service this year and will reach its full operational capability in 2022. The second vessel, HMAS Stalwart, is also expected to enter service in 2022. The two new vessels will replace HMAS Success and HMAS Sirius.

Royal Australian Navy establishes new warfighting agency

The Royal Australian Navy has opened a centralized warfighting agency, designed to enhance the navy's lethality in times of conflict.

The new Maritime Warfare Centre merges the Royal Australian Navy Test and Evaluation Authority (RANTEA) and Australian Maritime Warfare Centre (AMWC) into a centralized body to support current and future capabilities to fight and win at sea.



Director of the Maritime Warfare Centre, Captain David Frost said the center will provide expanded Test and Evaluation, Tactical Development and Operational Analysis throughout the Capability Life Cycle.

"The First Principles Review and the National Naval Shipbuilding Enterprise has driven Navy to re-think how they provide warfighting support. Continuous shipbuilding requires continuous design, testing, and tactical development, and Navy is evolving to meet this challenge," Captain Frost said.

Captain Frost said the amalgamation of RANTEA and AMWC will take the Royal Australian Navy warfighting to the next level. "We will continue to apply scientific, engineering, and deep warfare experience to understand what our ships, submarines, and aircraft are capable of, and how we can get the most out of them when called upon", Captain Frost continued. "We will establish Test and Tactics Development Teams that will support Navy Programs from inception to completion. They will plan, collect and analyse data that will inform critical decisions about current and future systems."

In parallel, warfare program and operational analysis teams will collaborate with agencies to develop plans across sea control, littoral, integrated air and missile defence and information warfare domains. According to Frost, these plans will provide the battle rhythm for all trials, ensuring "the right systems are tested at the right time to support the right decisions". The Maritime Warfare Centre is located at Garden Island, Sydney.

Last Month in History

January 1882	HMS WOLVERINE, (screw corvette), was presented to the NSW Government as a "royal gift". The ship was used for training the NSW Naval Brigade.
January 1901	The gunboat, HMCS PROTECTOR, (CAPT William Creswell, RN), arrived back in Port Adelaide after 153 days away, serving in China from September to November 1900, during the Boxer rebellion.
January 1913	The Town class light cruiser, HMAS MELBOURNE, (CAPT M. L'Estrange Silver, RN), was commissioned. Mrs F. F. Braund, (Daughter of Mr R. Barr-Smith), performed the commissioning ceremony. MELBOURNE was laid down in Cammell-Laird Yard, UK, and launched on 30 May 1912.
January 1915	HMAS MELBOURNE, (cruiser), pursued an unidentified merchant ship off Havana, Cuba. MELBOURNE fired four shots at the vessel before it stopped. The ship proved to be a neutral Dutch vessel
January 1922	ADML Anthony Monckton Synnot was born at Corowa NSW, and entered the RAN in 1939. He was Chief of Defence Force during the period 1979 to 1982, and is one of the few RAN trained officers to reach the rank of full Admiral. His brother, Timothy Monckton Synnot also served as an officer in the RAN, reaching the rank of Commander.
January 1928	The Fleet Air Arm was abolished by Parliament, and the RAAF was directed to provide air support to the RAN. This decision was overturned in 1948 with the re-establishment of the Fleet Air Arm, and the purchase of the aircraft carriers HMAS SYDNEY and HMAS MELBOURNE.
January 1930	The Australian Government agreed to the transfer of HMA Ships PARRAMATTA and SWAN, (torpedo boat destroyers), to the NSW Government for use as accommodation ships for civil prisoners. The vessels were never put to this use. The State Opposition Leader, Mr J. T. Lang, moved a successful rescission vote in Parliament, claiming the convict system had been abolished in NSW in 1842.
January 1940	A rating in HMAS STUART, (destroyer), wrote: "I always count those early months in the Mediterranean before Italy came in as the worst period of the war. The Australian destroyers operated in exceptionally cold weather and high seas. Lifelines were rigged and the decks were buried in green water. Below decks was a chaos of floating clothes and gear".
January 1943	First training course for WRAN officers began at Flinders Naval Depot.
January 1948	HMAS MILDURA, (corvette), was decommissioned and placed in reserve at Careening Bay, WA. She was later re- commissioned in 1951 as a training ship for National Servicemen, and undertook this task until 11 September 1953, when she was paid off again into reserve. MILDURA was finally sold for scrap in 1956.
January 1951	The flagship, HMAS AUSTRALIA, led the international fleet gathered in Sydney Harbour to celebrate Australia's Golden Jubilee. The fleet consisted of;- HMA Ships:- CONDAMINE, CULGOA, GLADSTONE, LATROBE, SHOALHAVEN, SYDNEY, and TOBRUK. HM Ships; TELEMACHUS, and TACTITIAN HMNZ Ships; BELLONA, TAUPO, and HAWEA.SAN Ship; TRANSVAAL HMCS ONTARIO. INS RAJPUT. Pakistani ships SHAMSER and SIND.
January 1958	725 Squadron commissioned into the RAN at NAS Nowra as a fleet requirements and communications unit flying a range of aircraft. (Was previously a RN Sqdn number). 724 Squadron becomes an all-jet squadron flying Sea Vampires and Sea Venoms. With the decision to operate just one carrier instead of two as originally planned, the need for 851 Squadron declined and the unit was decommissioned at NAS Nowra
January 1963	The Australian Cabinet approved a contract with Scott's Shipbuilding and Engineering Company Ltd., of Greenock, Scotland, to build eight Oberon class submarines for the RAN. The order was later reduced to six.
January 1968	The Attack class patrol boat, HMAS ADVANCE, (LEUT G. D. R. Hammer, RAN), was commissioned in Maryborough, QLD. Mrs George, (Wife of the Third Naval Member), performed the commissioning ceremony. ADVANCE was laid down in Walker's Yard, QLD, and launched on 16 August 1967.
January 1975	RAN Clearance Diving Team 2 recovered bodies from vehicles under the collapsed span of the Tasman Bridge at Hobart. The divers worked under difficult conditions in murky water.
January 1988	A RAN Hydrographic Party under the command of LCDR. D. Bryce, RAN, departed for Antarctica to carry out surveys and update charts on the approaches to Mawson Base.
January 1996	The use of Morse key for sending messages formally ceased in the RAN after 85 years, to be replaced with modern communication systems. Visual Morse (or flashing light), however, still remains in use
January 2004	The submarine HMAS DECHAINEAUX becomes the first RAN vessel to use the new Naval Ammunition Wharf at Twofold Bay, NSW. The facility was built to replace the previous ammunition storage depots in Sydney and Point Wilson, VIC.
January 2011	808 Squadron recommissioned into the Fleet Air Arm at Nowra to fly the MRH-90 Taipan

This Month in History

February 1861	A naval brigade of 74 officers and ratings from HMS FAWN, (screw corvette), was despatched from Sydney with a military contingent to put down lawlessness amongst miners at Lambing Flats, NSW.
February 1873	CAPT John Moresby, RN, HMS BASILISK, (wooden paddle sloop), discovered Port Moresby, New Guinea. He named it in honour of his father, ADML Sir Fairfax Moresby.
February 1907	The Royal Edward Victualing Yard, (REVV), at Pyrmont, Sydney, was opened. This establishment was the storehouse for the RAN's clothing and provisions. The yard was closed in the early 1980's, but later became the home of the Naval Support Command from 1995 to 2002.
February 1912	The Commonwealth Naval Forces commenced the building of a naval training depot at Hanns Inlet, VIC. It was commissioned as Flinders Naval Depot in September 1920.
February 1917	SBLT R. S. Dallas, an Australian serving with the RNAS, shot down a German Aviatik aircraft over France. Dallas was flying a Sopwith triplane.
February 1920	Major S. J. Goble, the RAN's representative on the Commonwealth Air Board, recommended the adoption of Admiral Jellicoe's proposals for an Australian Naval Air Service. The proposals allowed for one squadron of ship-borne seaplanes, a squadron of fighters, a squadron of torpedo bombers and 11.5 squadrons of flying boats.
February 1934	The hulk of HMAS SWAN, (former torpedo boat destroyer), sank during a gale on the Hawkesbury River, NSW. Her sister ship PARRAMATTA was blown ashore onto a mud flat where the wreck remains to this day.
February 1940	HMAS HOBART, (cruiser), embarked eight Midshipmen at Aden for transfer to the battleship HMS RAMILLIES. One of the midshipmen was HRH Prince Philip of Greece, later to become the Duke of Edinburgh.
February 1941	Three sailors from the minesweeper HMAS LISMORE drowned in Jervis Bay. They were returning to the ship in one of the ship's boats that was swamped in heavy seas. Those who lost their lives were ERA Edward Dunn, AB John Irving, and AB Tom Lee.
February 1945	The air/sea rescue vessels, (search and rescue craft), HMA Ships AIR FAITH, (LEUT R.R. Lewis, RANVR), and AIR TRIAL, (SBLT V.G. Maddison, RANVR), were commissioned. These vessels were built (along with all sister vessels), in Canada and the United States between 1943 and 1945, and transferred to the RAN under the Lend-Lease Agreement
February 1952	Union action meant that no tugs arrived to pull HMAS Sydney out of Fremantle harbour on her departure. In response, the ship initiated an action known as Operation PINWHEEL. The Sea furies of 805 and 808 Squadrons simply started the engines of the aircraft sitting on Sydney's flightdeck to pull herself clear. Sydney had arrived in Fremantle on 22/2/1952 on her return from Korea in the middle of industrial unrest on the waterfront.
February 1957	723 Squadron recommissioned with five Sycamore helicopters, two Austers and two Firefly target tugs
February 1965	HMAS Ibis and Teal return to Sydney after 17 months serving with the Far East Strategic Reserve as part of Australia's commitment to Commonwealth support for Malaysia during the Indonesian Confrontation
February 1970	RAN Clearance Diving Team 3 completed a nine-day search-and-destroy operation in the Phu Cuong area of Vietnam. The team destroyed three enemy bunkers and a large quantity of ordnance. Three Viet Cong soldiers were killed in the operation.
February 1976	The Australian Naval Board flag was lowered for the last time. The flag's design dated back to the 17th century. The Defence Reorganisation Act gave the Chiefs of Staff direct control over their respective services.
February 1985	HMAS ATTACK, name-ship of the RAN's Attack class patrol boats, sailed from Sydney streaming a 38.7 metre paying off pennant. The patrol boat was transferred to the Indonesian Navy as a gift.
February 1990	The Navy tug MOLLYMAWK capsized after colliding with HMAS TOBRUK in the Fleet Base at Sydney.
February 1994	HMAS NIRIMBA, the RAN's Apprentice Training School at Quaker's Hill, west of Sydney, was decommissioned.
February 2001	805 Squadron recommissioned at NAS Nowra with Kaman Super Seasprite helicopters
February 2006	The Armidale class patrol boats HMA Ships LARRAKIA, (LCDR Anthony Powell, RAN), and BATHURST, (LCDR Andrew Quinn, RAN), were commissioned in Cairns, QLD. Both ships were laid down in Austral Ships, Cairns, QLD.

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

The November 2019 edition of *Call the Hands* reported on events in the Philippines to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Battles of Leyte Gulf and Surigao Strait.

Society member, David Mattiske who served in HMAS Shropshire during the Philippines campaign 1943-45, has provided the Society with a copy of his visit report on the 2019 commemoration. In fact, this was the fifth visit led by David to Leyte and Surigao for commemorations. The objectives of his visits have been to;

- represent Australian Forces involved in the Liberation of the Philippines;
- build on good relations between Australia and the Philippines established previously and
- honour the Australians who gave their lives during this campaign.

A feature of David's report was a description of the new Battle of Surigao Strait Memorial and Museum site at Punta Bilar which overlooks Surigao Strait. The Memorial which is now a designated Historic Site has three levels of viewing platforms and has quickly become the focus of Surigao history.

A feature of the memorial is a wall which stands as a permanent remembrance of the crew of HMAS Shropshire, and acknowledgement of David's efforts over many years in making the memorial a reality. The wall bearing a quotation from David Mattiske during his 2018 visit was unveiled during the visit.



Battle of Surigao Strait Memorial



Ken Orr, Deputy President Southport RSL Sub Branch and David Mattiske at the BoSS Memorial, the new wall remembering HMAS Shropshire.

Australian Naval History Podcast Series in Top 10

Congratulations to Vice Admiral Peter Jones and others at the Naval Studies Group at UNSW Canberra. Their [Australian Naval History Podcast](#) series has been rated #5 in the Top 10 of naval podcasts on the internet. Peter wrote, 'Podcast ahead of us are mainly produced by the US Navy or US Naval Institute. Many thanks for your support and contribution to the series to date.' The ranking was conducted by [Feedspot](#). Visit their site to hear others in the Top 10.



HMAS Sydney (2): Memorial Cruise: 16-21 November 2021

Thanks to Adrian Burns for alerting the Society to this cruise opportunity. Adrian is seeking expressions of interest from individuals interested in joining this 5-day cruise from Fremantle to Fremantle via Geraldton and the wreck sites of HMAS Sydney and SKS Kormoran. You can register your interest and receive an information pack by visiting the [Travel Associates](https://www.travelassociates.com/hmas) website, <https://www.travelassociates.com/hmas>. Adrian Burns may also be contacted for information about the program by e-mail, hmassydney280@gmail.com.



Occasional Papers in this edition

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

- Occasional Paper 70 - The ships garden: Garden Island
- Occasional Paper 71 - Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) – Entering Troubled Waters
- Occasional Paper 72 - Spitfires in the RAN

Society Matters

Support to Navy: History Essay Prize

Twice a year the Society provides a prize for the best researched naval history assignment presented by a New Entry Officers Course (NEOC) course member and graduate. NEOC courses are conducted at HMAS Creswell, Jervis Bay. In November 2019 Lieutenant Melissa Chen, RAN, was presented with the Prize by Captain Edward (Ward) Hack, AM, RAN Rtd representing the Society. Her essay was of such quality that it will be published in the March 2022 edition of *The Naval Historical Review* available to members of the Society.



Join the Society and receive *The Naval Historical Review*

Joining the Society is easy and inexpensive. The principal benefit is receipt of four editions of the Society's magazine *The Naval Historical Review* published in March, June, September and December. Membership based on digital or printed options are available, for \$30 or \$45 respectively.

Join online through the Society's shop. <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/shop/>

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 now being sought. 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.

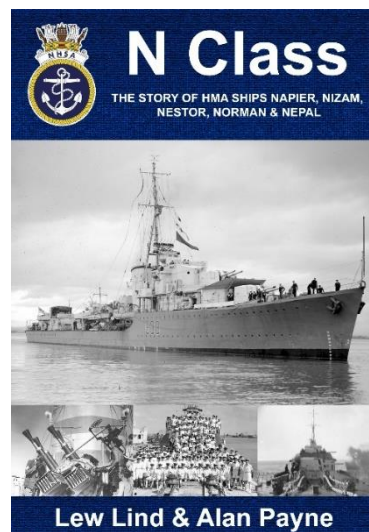
For those seeking interesting work in great surroundings or can assist from home, we would like to talk with you. Phone: 02 9359 2243 (Tuesday or Thursday) or e-mail: secretary@navyhistory.org.au.

'N' Class Destroyers: Book Republished

The 'N' Class Destroyers book first published by the Society in 1974 has been republished in three electronic formats and is now available for sale in the Society's online shop. This story of HMA Ships Napier, Nizam, Nestor, Norman and Nepal takes readers through the story of each ship from commissioning, through extensive service during World War II until late 1945. The missions described cover the full spectrum of destroyer operations in the period.

The book is priced at \$15 for E-pub and Kindle versions and \$10 for a pdf version.

Download through the [Society's shop](https://www.navyhistory.org.au/shop/). <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/shop/>
More books will be republished in the coming months.



Garden Island Dockyard Heritage Tour

This heritage tours commences with a video on the history of Garden Island. Visits are then made to buildings which are now over 100 years old, the Captain Cook Graving Dock and other important sites rarely seen by the public.

At \$20 pp they are great value.

Details are available at
<https://www.navyhistory.org.au/garden-island-tours/>



Promote these tours with friends and colleagues
and you assist the Society.

Northern End of Garden Island Tour



Heritage tours of the Hill and its unique history are conducted monthly on a Sunday morning. Visitors travel via ferry from Circular Quay.

At \$25 pp they are great value.

Book on line;

<https://www.navyhistory.org.au/shop/>

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