

# CALL THE HANDS

Issue No. 43 July 2020

## From the President

As 25 June 2020 marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of commencement of Korean War which cost the lives of 340 Australians, this edition of *Call the Hands* has a Korean War theme. Nine RAN destroyers and frigates participated in the three-year war which is certainly not forgotten. This edition is accompanied by two occasional papers and includes a variety of links to podcasts and interesting videos.

Occasional Paper 84 compiled by Martin Linsley builds on a list of RAN personnel embarked in Royal Navy ships deployed during the 1956 Suez Crisis. It takes an Australian perspective and provides insights into some interesting aspects of the conflict. Occasional Paper 85 by Brooke Twyford, an Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) volunteer, provides a different perspective on an old work boat serving Navy on Sydney Harbour. The Society enjoys a healthy relationship with ANMM Volunteers which includes the exchange of stories.

Also included are two excellent podcasts. The first by World War 2 veteran Ray Leonard, the last survivor of HMAS Armidale lost in 1942. The second podcast, by Bill Fitzgerald who joined the RAN in 1946 as an early member of the Clearance Diving Branch, formed in 1951, describes the range of difficult and dangerous task undertaken by members of his Branch.

In celebration of the Society's own 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary the June edition of our flagship magazine, the *Naval Historical Review* carried a mix of new stories and a selection of previously published stories across five decades. One such story, written by former Society President, Captain William (Bill) Cook will be familiar to members. It is referenced after the 'Video of the Month'. The videos which describe Antarctic operations were located by curious volunteers after publication Bill's story about HMAS Wyatt Earp's 1947-48 Antarctic deployment. Following a distinguished war service Bill then served in the 402-ton Norwegian built *Wyatt Earp* as First Lieutenant for its short but adventurous RAN commission.

Finally, I acknowledge the work of *Call the Hands* editor, David Stratton who also manages Society social media. In recent months David has added hundreds of entries to the 'This Day in History' database which is now up to the present and accessible through the website.

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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## Korean War Seventieth Anniversary

On 25 June 1950 North Korean Forces crossed the 38th Parallel and invaded the South. Soon after Royal Australian Navy ships were deployed as part of a United Nations force commanded by General Douglas MacArthur of the United States Army. The first ships deployed were HMA Ships Shoalhaven and Bataan. At the time HMAS Shoalhaven and *Warramunga* were committed to the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan. HMAS Bataan was on passage to Japan to relieve *Shoalhaven*. Seven other ships participated until hostilities ceased with the Armistice on 27 July 1953.



HMAS Murchison saw extensive operational service during the Korean War and was involved in the Naval Battle of Han River in September 1951.



Crew members play cards, smoke and enjoy hot drinks before lights out in the stoker's mess aboard HMAS Bataan. The men are (left to right) Able Seaman Arnold Anderson, Leading Seaman Frank Seymour, Able Seaman Harold Hoogwerf, Able Seaman George Sewell and Able Seaman Malcolm Stott.  
AWM Image: HOB3419

## RAN ships in the Korean War

HMA Ship	Type	Dates	Captain
Sydney	Aircraft Carrier	31 August 1951 – 22 February 1952	Capt D. H. Harries
ANZAC	Destroyer	06 August 1951 – 17 October 1951 06 September 1952 – 26 June 1953	Cmdr J. Plunkett-Cole Capt G. G. O. Gatacre
Bataan	Destroyer	10 June 1950 – 06 June 1951 17 January – 25 September 1952	Cmdr W. B. M. Marks Cmdr W. S. Bracegirdle
Tobruk	Destroyer	31 August 1951 – 23 February 1952 03 June 1953 – 12 February 1954	Cmdr R. I. Peek Cmdr I. H. McDonald
Warramunga	Destroyer	14 August 1950 – 29 August 1951 17 January 1952 – 08 August 1952	Cmdr O. H. Becher Cmdr J. H. Ramsay
Culgoa	Frigate	14 March 1953 – 26 June 1953	Lcdr R. Clarke
Condamine	Frigate	04 July 1952 – 10 April 1953	Lcdr R. C. Savage
Murchison	Frigate	09 May 1951 – 17 February 1952	Lcdr A. N. Dollard
Shoalhaven	Frigate	27 June 1950 – 22 September 1950	Cmdr I. H. McDonald

Source: Government of Australia, Department of Veterans Affairs, ANZAC Portal available at, <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/korean-war-1950-1953/korean-war/armed-forces-korean-war/royal-australian-navy-korean-war>

## Further Reading

- The Korean War, by Petar Djokovic, published by the Sea Power Centre-Australia, available at <https://www.navy.gov.au/history/feature-histories/korean-war>
- HMAS Bataan, The Last of the Australian Built Tribal Class, Naval Historical Review December 1980, available at <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/?s=hmas+bataan>
- Out in the Cold: Australia's involvement in the Korean War, AWM Exhibition, <https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/korea/>
- AWM Social Media, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CBcC1IClgWN/?igshid=mjyixrruno3>



## Background to the Korean War

War was inevitable given the turbulent decades which followed the demise of the 500-year Joseon Dynasty in 1897 and first Sino-Japanese War in 1895. At this time Korea's special relationship with China also ended. Instead of Korea being contested by China and Japan, Korea became the subject of a contest between Russia and Japan with the last Queen favouring Russia to deflect Japan's growing power over Korea. The Queen was assassinated in 1895.

In 1910 after a turbulent decade, Korea was annexed by Japan and a harsh period of colonial rule ensued until Japan was defeated in 1945. Although the Allies hoped for an independent post war Korea, agreement between the United States and Russia in 1943 resulted in the division of Korea at the 38th parallel. When Japan surrendered, the Soviet Union already had soldiers on the peninsula. The United States deployed forces one month later.

The US appointed leader in the South, Lee Sung Man was a strong but unpopular anti-communist determined to unify the peninsula by invading the North. As the United States did not agree with this policy, limited military support was provided to South Korea before 1950. This allowed North Korean forces to drive so far south early in the war.



A flak-damaged Firefly aboard Sydney.

## Life on the Line Podcast - Bill Fitzgerald Legendary RAN Clearance Diver

In this 'Life on the Line' episode Angus Hordern interviews the first Australian Clearance Diving Chief, 90 year old Bill Fitzgerald. Bill joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1946. Bill shares his stories about mine disposal and large quantities of ordnance, nuclear exposure, and fixing dams, submarines and ships, during his pioneering career in the Navy.

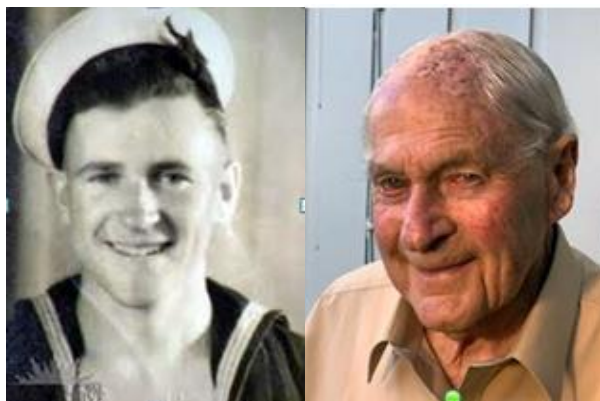
Available at:

<https://lifeontheline.podbean.com/e/79-bill-fitzgerald/>



## Sinking of HMAS Armidale: Survivor Ray Leonard tells his Story

For ANZAC Day 2020, Ray Leonard now a 97 year old, living at home in Melbourne recorded a 20 minute video in which he described his ordeal as a survivor of HMAS Armidale which sank rapidly following a Japanese air attack on 1 December 1942. Ray was a 19-year old Ordinary Seaman at his action station on the bridge of HMAS Armidale when the ship was hit by two torpedoes from 13 Japanese aircraft south of Timor. HMAS Armidale was part of a three-ship operation to relieve the Australian troops in Portuguese Timor. At the time of the attack the Ship's Company was 83 and she had embarked 66 Netherlands East Indies Commandos. Of these, 40 members of the ship's company and 60 troops lost their lives.



The Society is grateful to Ray, his daughter Carol Reid and the Commando Association of Australia for producing this very important oral history. The 20 minute video is available via the following Dropbox Link, [https://www.dropbox.com/s/n79ddhcealq42hc/IMG\\_0105.mov?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/n79ddhcealq42hc/IMG_0105.mov?dl=0).

### Further Reading

The Sinking of HMAS Armidale: 1 December 1942, Occasional Paper 9 published July 2017, available at, <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/wp-content/uploads/THE-SINKING-OF-HMAS-ARMIDALE-ON-1st-DECEMBER-1942.pdf>

The Loss of HMAS Armidale, by John Sullivan, published in the Naval Historical Review September 1983, available at <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/the-loss-of-hmas-armidale/6/>

The Fate of HMAS Armidale (I), YouTube Navy Channel Video, available at, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdQGiyQoBal&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdQGiyQoBal&feature=emb_title)



HMAS Armidale in Port Moresby during WW2, RAN image

## Video of the Month



An Australian Landing Ship Tank, LST3501, arrives at Heard Island in late 1947 to establish an Australian base, for both strategic and scientific purposes

<https://aso.gov.au/titles/documentaries/antarctica-1948/clip1/>

This first film about Australia's attempts to build bases in the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic describes two voyages – one to Heard Island by the LST 3501, the other by HMAS *Wyatt Earp* to the Antarctic coast, returning via Macquarie Island

<https://aso.gov.au/titles/documentaries/antarctica-1948/clip2/>

On board HMAS *Wyatt Earp*, the crew attach floats to the Kingfisher aircraft, ready for flight, but the weather is too bad

<https://aso.gov.au/titles/documentaries/antarctica-1948/clip3/>

### Further Reading

HMAS *Wyatt Earp* – Antarctic Research 1947-1948, by Cook, W.F., MVO, Captain, RAN (Rtd), Naval Historical Review, December 1978 edition available at,

<https://www.navyhistory.org.au/hmas-wyatt-earp-antarctic-research-1947-1948/>



## HMAS Warramunga - Report of Proceedings

Second Korean War Tour - 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> May 1952

Thursday 15th. May.

0513 Proceeded to YANGDO.

0820 Proceeded on CHONGJIN patrol in company with OWENS.

1107 Bombarded sampan concentration using airspot - 34 rounds - two destroyed, several damaged.

1400 Bombarded 2 gun positions south of CHONGJIN - 55 rounds - both areas well covered.  
Bombarded railway in CHONGJIN - 26 rounds indirect - results not known.

1420 Returned to YANGDO.

1805 Alongside OWENS for turnover of duties as Commander Task Element 95.22 from OWENS to WARRAMUNGA.

2020 Cast off and proceeded.

Night spent carrying out YANGDO DEFENCE PATROL and illuminating approaches - no enemy activity.

Friday 16th. May.

0440 Left YANGDO to rendezvous with replenishment Element.

0545 Alongside U.S.S. MT. KATMAI - received 700 4.7" shell and 700 4.7" cartridges. Also a quantity of dunnage for YANGDO.

0850 Ammunitioning completed - cast off and proceeded alongside U.S.S. MISPELLION.

0916 Secured alongside - received 239 tons oil fuel.

1105 Cast off and proceeded to YANGDO - transferred dunnage - conference with Island Commander.

1430 Bombarded sampan concentrations between YANGDO and MUSA DAN - 26 rounds - several sampans damaged.

1810 Bombarded railway embankment South of SONGJIN - 8 rounds - no visible damage.

2000 Alongside U.S.S. ENDICOTT for turnover of duties as Commander Task Element 95.22 from WARRAMUNGA to COMINDIV 11 in ENDICOTT.

2150 Turnover completed - cast off.

Night spent carrying out YANGDO DEFENCE PATROL and illuminating approaches.

55  
26  
81

## Photo of the Month



HMAS Warramunga - continuous shore bombardments necessitated frequent ammunitioning between patrols. Image: Royal Australian Navy

During the 24 months between August 1950 and August 1952 HMAS Warramunga was deployed for all but four months. The bulk of this period was spent conducting operational patrols and operations in Korean waters. A regular activity was harassment of the enemy ashore on the mainland by bombardment with 4.7 inch ammunition.

### Further Reading

HMAS Warramunga (I) history, available at <https://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-warramunga-i>



## News in Brief

### **Third ANZAC-class Frigate gets her new mast as part of AMCAP upgrade**

The Royal Australian Navy's third ANZAC-class frigate HMAS Warramunga has passed a significant milestone in her Anzac Class Midlife Capability Assurance Program (AMCAP) at Henderson Shipyard, Western Australia, with the installation of a new mast. The new mast was designed to accommodate the SEA 1448 Phase 4B – Long Range Air Search Radar, as well as provide an improved Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) capability. Both of the new radar systems were designed by Canberra-based company CEA Technologies



### **Royal Australian Navy's Entire Amphibious Force Operating Together for the First Time**

In a first, all three amphibious vessels of the Royal Australian Navy, HMAS Canberra, HMAS Choules and HMAS Adelaide, sailed together in formation. This was the first time that the two LHDs and the single LSD of the RAN have operated together at sea. The event occurred during Force Integration Training off the east coast of Australia. The Australian Defence Force was conducting maritime task group training off Australia's east coast and northern waters ahead of resuming major activities in the second half of the year.



### **Frigate returns after six month operational deployment**

HMAS Toowoomba has returned to her home port at Fleet Base West, Western Australia, following a successful deployment on Operation MANITOU. Despite family and friend numbers on the wharf being limited due to current distancing requirements, Toowoomba was very much the guest of honour as the Navy band played a medley of welcome home tunes. Toowoomba's crew has spent the past 119 days at sea without having the usual chance of taking some time off during a port visit," he said. HMAS Toowoomba shared tasking between the Combined Maritime Force conducting counter-narcotics operations as part of Task Force 150, and conducting maritime security operations in the Straits of Hormuz with the International Maritime Security Construct. During the deployment, Toowoomba seized more than 3000 kilograms of illegal narcotics during boarding operations.



## This Month in History

July 1852	VADM Sir W. R. Creswell, KCMG, KBE, 'Father of the RAN', was born at Gibraltar where his father was the postmaster.
July 1884	HMQS MOSQUITO, (2nd class torpedo boat), was launched in the UK.
July 1905	The naval prison at Garden Island, Sydney, was completed. It provided accommodation for 12 prisoners.
July 1914	LEUT A. M. Longmore, an Australian serving with the RNAS, made the first successful aerial torpedo drop by a naval pilot from a Short Folder seaplane.
July 1918	The first dentist appointed to the RAN, LEUT M. L. Atwill, joined HMAS AUSTRALIA, (battle-cruiser), in England. Surgeon LCDR(D) D. Austin, was later appointed Senior Dental Officer, RAN, at HMAS PENGUIN, Garden Island.
July 1925	A US Naval Squadron consisting of US Ships CALIFORNIA, COLORADO, IDAHO, MARYLAND, MISSISSIPPI, TENNESSEE, and WEST VIRGINIA, arrived at Sydney for a goodwill visit.
July 1935	HMA Ships AUSTRALIA and BRISBANE, (cruisers), represented the RAN at the Jubilee Review of HRH King George V, at Spithead, England.
July 1940	LCDR O. Becher, RAN, was awarded the DSC for conspicuous gallantry in the evacuation of troops from Namsos, Norway, while serving in HMS DEVONSHIRE.
July 1943	The invasion of Sicily, (Operation Husky), began. Among the escort ships for the troop convoys were HMA Ships CAIRNS, CESSNOCK, GAWLER, GERALDTON, IPSWICH, LISMORE, MARYBOROUGH, and WOLLONGONG, (corvettes). Over the ensuing three months, all eight were involved in dangerous convoy escort work, which saw them under frequent attack by German aircraft. In September, CAIRNS, CESSNOCK, GERALDTON, MARYBOROUGH, and WOLLONGONG, returned to the Indian Ocean for service there. GAWLER, IPSWICH, and LISMORE, conducted convoy escort duties to Cyprus and Lebanon, before returning to the Indian Ocean in November 1943.
July 1946	The landing ships tank Mark III, LST 3008, LST 3014, LST 3017, LST 3022, LST 3035 and LST 3501 were loaned to the RAN by the RN. They were designated the 10th (Australian) LST Flotilla.
July 1952	The Commander of 805 Squadron was killed flying a Sea Fury during an aerobatic practice session at RANAS Nowra. While rehearsing a formation roll with three other Sea Furies, at about 3 pm Lieutenant Commander Hare (P) RAN was killed when the wing tip of his Sea Fury struck the runway at high speed. The resulting impact with the ground shattered the aircraft, killing Hare instantly.
July 1958	HMAS VENETTA, accidentally rammed the caisson of the Albert Dock, at Williamstown Dockyard, VIC, where she was being built. The damage incurred put back her completion date by at least three months. The ship was commissioned on 26 November 1958.
July 1962	The first Japanese warships to visit Australia since WWII, arrived at Sydney. The Squadron comprised of Japanese Ships TERUZUKI, ARIAKE, YUGURE, and HARUSAMU, (destroyers).
July 1968	The Women's Royal Australian Naval Service Reserve, (WRANSR), was formed.
July 1970	First Macchi MB-326H was delivered to RAN FAA.
July 1978	HMAS VENETTA, (destroyer), represented Australia at the Solomon Islands Independence Day celebrations, at Honiara.
July 1982	The Gunnery School at HMAS CERBERUS was closed.
July 1988	RADM Peter Sinclair directed the Combined Exercise Agreement Force of RIMPAC 88, from Pearl Harbour. The force was composed of 45 ships, 200 aircraft and 50,000 sailors, airmen and marines.
July 1992	The RAN's Seahawk Helicopter Introduction and Transition Unit was commissioned as HS 816 Squadron, equipped with RAN S-70B-2 Seahawk helicopters. This squadron was originally formed in 1940, and served in the Mediterranean and Norway.
July 2002	HMA Ships ARUNTA, and DARWIN, (frigates), undertook a concurrent replenishment with the Spanish warship SPS MARQUES DE LA ENSENADA, in the Gulf of Oman. ARUNTA was about to commence duties in the Persian Gulf, and DARWIN was on her way home to Australia.
July 2005	HMAS Brisbane (II) was scuttled 4.2 miles off Point Cartwright on the Queensland coast.
July 2006	The Armidale class patrol boat HMAS ALBANY was commissioned in Albany, Western Australia.
July 2013	808 Squadron was recommissioned at HMAS Albatross to fly the MRH-90 Taipan.

The entries selected for publication this month are randomly generated from an extensive database of historic naval events. The absence of a significant event is in no way intended to cause offence. The objective is to provide a cross section of events across time. 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

### Captain Richard Gerard Fennessy DSC RAN

In March 2020 the Society was contacted by the Royal Navy Instructor Officer's Association seeking agreement to the inclusion of a story of Instructor Captain Richard Gerard Fennessy DSC RAN to be included on its new website. The story was first published in the September 2014 edition of the Naval Historical Review. Naturally, the Society was pleased to assist with the extraordinary story which concerns a country schoolmaster who mainly served through WW II in one ship in which he won the DSC and afterwards rose to become the first RAN Instructor Captain and Director of Naval Education.

Links:

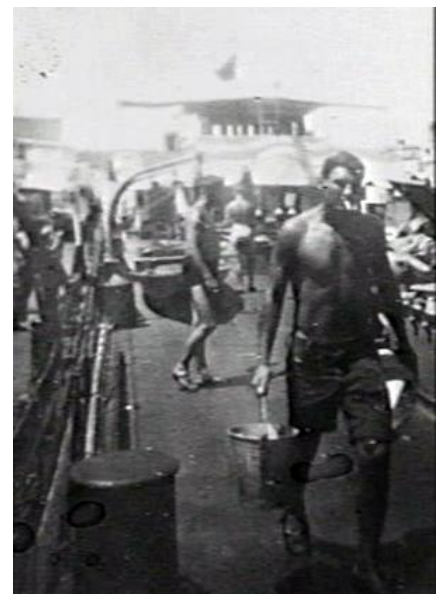
- Royal Navy Instructor Officer's Association: <http://www.rnioa.org.uk/stories.shtml>
- Naval Historical Society of Australia: <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/?s=fennessy>

### Operation Hush Hush

The daughter of Arthur James Collins who participated in the highly secret and dangerous mission, Operation Hush Hush in 1940 recently contacted the Society and provided a number of her late father's personal collection to the Society archive. Her father was one of seventeen RAN volunteers who participated in the mission blow up the Iron Gates Gorge pass in Romania.

After ships in the Mediterranean Fleet were directed in January 1940 to call for volunteers for what may have been a one-way trip HMAS Stuart and HMAS Voyager called for volunteers. Six men from each ship were to be selected. Reports from other sources also indicate that HMAS Vampire was involved. The plan was to man an old river boat for a secret journey up the river Danube in to blow up the Iron Gate and block the river to German traffic. The mission was unsuccessful.

At the time Able Seaman Arthur Collins was in the crew of HMAS Voyager then at Malta.



Able Seaman Arthur James Collins in civilian clothes during Operation Hush Hush. Image Collins Family Collection

### Further Reading

- Historical Booklet 169: Operation Hush Hush, One of World War II's Most Secret Operations available at <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/shop/historical-booklet-169-operation-hush-hush-one-of-world-war-iis-most-secret-operations/>

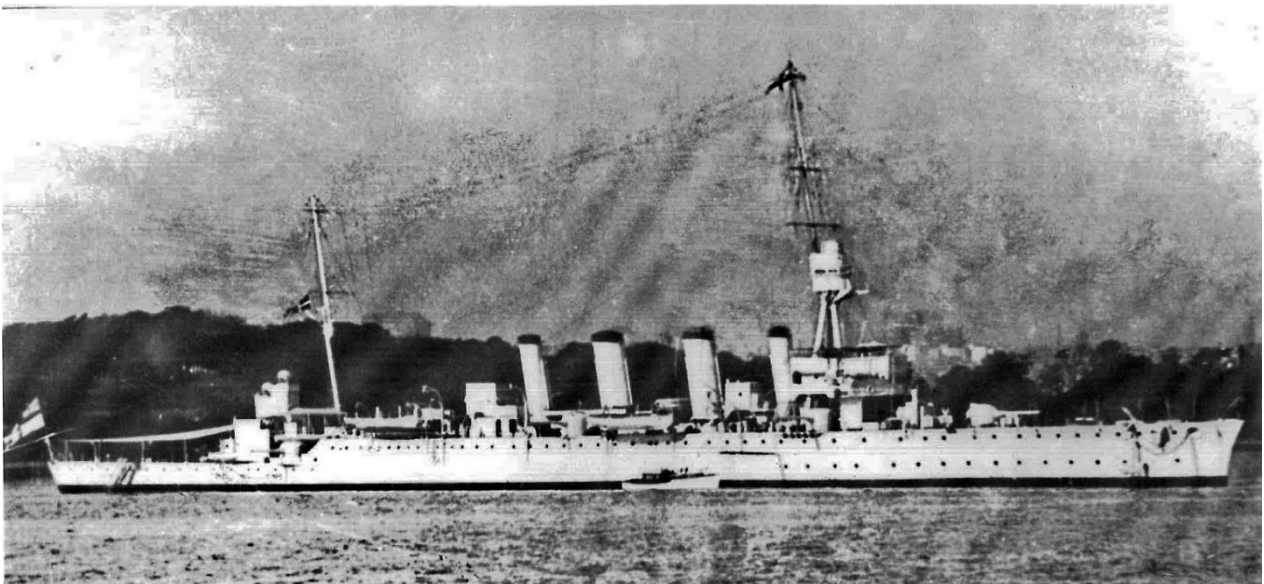


## HMAS Melbourne (I) Pinnacle Restoration

Our thanks to John Goss for advising that the Admiral's pinnacle known as 'Janet' from HMAS Melbourne (I) is undergoing restoration by the Bay Steamers Maritime Museum (tug Wattle) in Melbourne. The pinnacle was built in 1922 at Garden Island.



Pinnacle under restoration: Image Bay Steamers Museum



Admiral's Pinnacle alongside HMAS Melbourne (1)

## Occasional Papers in this edition

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

- Occasional Paper 84 - Operation Musketeer
- Occasional Paper 85 - A Curious Spectacle

## Society Matters

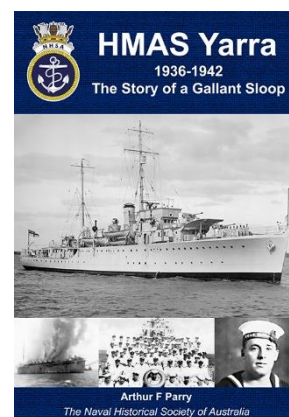
### Naval Historical Review

Become a member to receive quarterly copies of the Naval Historical Review the Society's flagship magazine. <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/membership/>.

## New Books

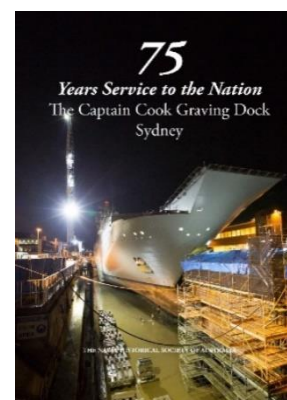
### HMAS Yarra 1936-1942, The Story of a Gallant Sloop

Between 1936 and 1942, HMAS Yarra and her crew served Australia in peace and war, in Australian waters, the Red Sea, the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf and finally South East Asia. Yarra was lost on 4 March, 1942 in a valiant fight against overwhelming odds, in defence of the ships she was escorting. All but 13 of her complement of 151 perished in this action. Arthur Parry, who served in Yarra during all of her overseas service up until mid-February 1942, made a promise to his crewmates to tell their story, and this book is the culmination of that promise.



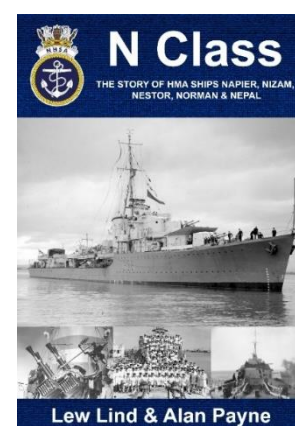
### 75 Years of Service: The Captain Cook Graving Dock, Sydney

This story of the Captain Cook Graving Dock commemorates the 75th anniversary of its opening on 24 March 1945 by the then Governor General of Australia, His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester. In addition to details of construction, this book provides detail about the opening ceremony, the Civil Constructional Corps members who laboured on the project, the war artists who captured the mood of the time and dock operations since 1945.



### N Class - The Story of HMA Ships Napier, Nizam, Nestor, Norman & Nepal

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.



### Purchase Online

These books are all available for purchase through the Society's website in a variety of formats. <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/shop/>

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