



Call the Hands



Issue No. 86

June/July 2024

From the President

Welcome to this 86th edition of *Call the Hands*. After eight years of publishing monthly editions this is the first of our bimonthly program which will provide five editions per year. The new issue dates are provided on page ten. As always, any feedback on the articles published is welcome particularly if you wish to share it with other readers. Similarly, alerting us to new matters which are not on the public record is greatly appreciated.

Given the current worsening relationships between many nations across the globe and leadership concerns in some, the fear of conflict escalating across regions is very real for many people. With this in mind, the main story in this edition looks back at the factors which contributed to Allied success in World War Two and questions whether western nations are prepared for and have the capability to expand if major conflict emerges in the future.

For those following the development of submarine capability in Australia and its AUKUS allies, the link to the British Telegraph story on page 2 will be of interest. The story provides insight into submarine operations during the Cold War and notes that those same tactics apply today as do the skills and attributes of submariners.

At this time of year many members on a one-year subscription will be receiving a renewal notice. We look forward to your renewal. It is easy to do particularly via the [website](#). Membership rates have not increased this financial year. For readers who have not yet joined, now is a good time to start receiving the full benefits of membership including the quarterly magazine and invitations to Society events.

In mid-May space was provided in the Society's Garden Island office (Boatshed) for members of the Navy's History & Heritage team after they vacated the RAN Heritage Centre. After a significant rearrangement of the office layout to accommodate three extra workstations, Society volunteers and our Defence colleagues have become comfortable with the arrangement. There are also mutual benefits.

The major ongoing task for the History & Heritage team is packing up heritage items located in the Spectacle Island repository for transport and storage at a yet to be determined location. The RAN Heritage Centre (museum on Garden Island) collection has also been packed. However, the larger items (boats, guns and periscope) remain in place. The Navy's long-term vision for the Heritage Collection is a purpose-built repository and new museum at Westernport, Victoria. Many items will also be loaned to museums in areas connected with a particular ship or event.

Thank you for your support. I trust that you will find this edition of interest.

Kind regards,
David Michael



Naval Historical Society
of Australia

Naval Historical Society
Garden Island Defence Precinct
Building 25
Locked Bag 7005
Liverpool NSW 1871

Web www.navyhistory.au
Email secretary@navyhistory.au
Phone +61 2 9537 0034
ABN 71 094 118 434
Patron Chief of Navy

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Submarine Operations: Insights from the Cold War and considerations for today

A British Telegraph Newspaper story published 30 June 2024 entitled '[My father, the silent Cold War captain, proved how vital our nuclear subs were and are](#)' is insightful as a tribute to Captain Richard Sharpe OBE, 1936-2024 who commanded HMS *Courageous*, a Churchill class nuclear-powered attack submarine from 1974 to 1977 and why nuclear powered submarines remain important to maritime nations today.

The article describes a typical patrol for a submarine employed in an intelligence role, the need for state-of-the-art systems, long endurance, and submariners with "an intense and admirable professional focus". It also touches on the advantages and disadvantages of drone or remote warfare and suggests that "SSNs will be with us for a while despite their eye-watering expense".



HMS *Courageous*, SSN06 served from 1971 to 1992. She is now a museum submarine at the Devonport Naval Heritage Centre, UK. Royal Navy Photo

Reference:

Tom Sharpe, [My father, the silent Cold War captain, proved how vital our nuclear subs were and are \(telegraph.co.uk\)](#) published in UK Telegraph, 30 June 2024.

Video of Interest:

Devonport Naval Heritage Centre, [HMS Courageous short introductory video](#).

Learning From History: Logistics then and now. Could we do it again?

In June-July 1944 significant turning points were achieved by the Allies in both the European and Pacific theatres during World War 2. Success in D-Day landings on Normandy and on Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands was only possible after months and even years of planning and preparation to ensure sufficient trained personnel were available with the equipment they required, and that equipment was in good condition. Success was a product of good logistics and most importantly, control of the sea and air.

The following paragraphs consider the lessons learned from these remarkable operations and the Herculean logistics effort that made them possible. They draw on stories published by the Naval Review ^[1] and the US Naval History and Heritage Command^[2].

Operation Overlord: D-Day Landings, 6 June 1944

As people around the world reflected on the 80th Anniversary of D-Day, the 6 June edition of the [The Naval Review](#) included a story entitled 'Operation Overlord – Three, of many, lessons...' Whilst acknowledging that there are hundreds of lessons learned from the Second World War, the story highlights three important lessons to reflect on when considering such operations as Overlord if a war is to be won. These are Ordinary People, Logistics and Control of the Sea.

In a major conflict a countries professional forces are unlikely to be enough. The recruitment and training of ordinary people is essential. An example quoted is the current Ukraine – Russia war in which everyday people are now fighting. Outstanding logistics enabled the D-Day landing. It was made possible because of American industrial might, a war economy beyond the range of enemy bombing and most importantly, sea control, without which victory is near impossible.

The Naval Review story states that turning of the tide of WW2 "in favour of the Allies in 1943 enabled the continuous and then prodigious logistic support necessary to hold the Eastern Front, enable steady progress on the much narrower Southern Front and ultimately get the Western Front moving. There is a catchy phrase used today to explain the Red Sea scrap with the Houthis – 'no ships, no shopping', in the 1940s it was no ships, no support! This oft forgotten lesson – sea control was the key to winning the War both in Europe and in the Pacific."



Allied soldiers, vehicles and equipment swarm onto the French shore during the Normandy landings, June 1944. Photo: Regional Council of Basse-Normandie / U.S. National Archives / Library of Congress / US Army Archives.

Operation *Forager*: The Battle of Saipan, 15 June–9 July 1944

Like Operation *Overlord*, the Battle of Saipan required enormous logistics support and sea control to achieve victory.^[2]

Victory over Japan in Saipan was a decisive point in the Pacific War. “Japan’s National Defence Zone, demarcated by a line that the Japanese had deemed essential to hold in the effort to stave off U.S. invasion, had been blown open. Japan’s access to scarce resources in Southeast Asia was now compromised, and the Caroline and Palau islands now appeared to be ready for the taking.

As historian Alan J. Levine points out, the capture of the Marianas amounted to a “decisive break-in” on the level of the nearly concurrent Allied breakthrough at Normandy and the Soviet breakthrough in Eastern Europe, which portended the siege of Berlin and the destruction of the Third Reich, Japan’s principal ally.”

“The Navy’s involvement bookended the operation: naval vessels and personnel ferried marines and soldiers to the beaches and then, after ground combat was over, took leading positions in the administration of the occupation.

The logistical demands of the invasion of Saipan were dizzying. Planners had to see to it that 59 troopships and 64 LSTs could land three divisions’ worth of men and equipment on an island 2,400 miles from the base at Guadalcanal and 3,500 miles from Pearl Harbor.”

Location map, Saipan, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Photo: saipanliving.com



Could we do it today?

People around the world with an interest in history and understanding of geopolitical issues now regularly express concern with the direction Great Power competition is taking. They perceive an increased risk of Great Power conflict as the number of conflicts worldwide since 1946 has peaked. Whilst Great Power rivalry has been the norm for centuries, there is concern that current ideological, political, diplomatic, economic, and military trends have similarities with those in the decades leading to the First and Second World War.

In a worst-case scenario of conflict between major powers, questions about the capability of Defence forces to expand and sustain operations will be asked. Do countries such as Australia, the UK and USA have the industrial strength and depth to be logistically self-reliant in a future major conflict? Recent news commentary on the operational availability of some modern warships creates doubt about the preparedness and sustainability of modern navies.

Examples of current concerns about support for modern warships and their availability in both the USA and Australia are considered in the following paragraphs. These are drawn from US Naval Institute News (USNI News) stories ^[3-5] published in recent months.

Critical Logistics Elements; infrastructure, spares and technical skills

The importance of maintaining sufficient critical infrastructure such as docks and dockyards for the repair and construction of warships was recently demonstrated by the delayed docking of USS *Boxer* (LHD-4) in San Diego. The USNI News reported on the complications for the US Navy caused by the lack of a dry dock for *Boxer* in April 2024^[3].

Today, three months later *Boxer* remains moored in San Diego undergoing in water repairs to its starboard rudder after the US Navy decided in late April to proceed with repair to the enormous rudder using divers. The estimated time for repair was two months.

As concerning as the lack of sufficient critical infrastructure in the USA is the fact that *Boxer* has been dogged with engineering issues since it completed an extensive modernization period in 2022. US Navy officials have blamed contractor performance and quality assurance for the delay in the deployment which was supposed to start in January.



USS *Boxer* (LHD 4). Photo: United States Navy.



Rudder repairs to USS *Wasp* (LHD-1). Photo: United States Navy

In Australia, the situation with the RAN's replenishment ships HMAS *Supply* and *Stalwart* has parallels with the woes of USS *Boxer*. The USNI Story of 21 June 2024^[5] notes that both AORs are now out of service. In the case of *Supply* since March 2023 and *Stalwart* from early June 2024.

The period required for *Supply*'s repairs may extend into 2025. The main problem is a defective propellor shaft. This and other defects acknowledged by the Spanish ship builder, Navantia, have been accepted as it's liability and will be repaired under warranty. Notwithstanding, the lack of heavy engineering infrastructure in Australia to manufacture such a critical item as a propellor shaft is a matter of grave concern.



HMAS *Stalwart* berthing at HMAS *Coonawarra*, Darwin, 10 May 2024. Photo: Royal Australian Navy

Whilst lead times of months for spares supplied from the other side of the world may be just acceptable in peace, a delay of this magnitude in a period of conflict is not.

It is essential for both countries to learn from recent support difficulties and improve logistics performance to ensure operational requirements are achieved.

References:

1. Naval Review, [Operation Overlord - and some lessons for today](#) published 6 June 2024.
2. Naval History and Heritage Command, [Operation Forager: The Battle of Saipan: 15 June–9 July 1944](#), published 11 June 2019.
3. Sam Lagrone, [Lack of Free San Diego Dry Docks Complicates USS Boxer Repair](#), published by USNI News 19 April 2024.
4. Sam Lagrone, [Navy Elects to Fix USS Boxer Rudder with Divers, Repair Could Take 2 Months](#) published by USNI News 30 April 2024.
5. Dzirhan Mahadzir, [Royal Australian Navy Down Two Replenishment Oilers As Ships Go In For Repairs](#), published by USNI News 21 June 2024.

Twins Were Pioneers of the RAN

The following story was first published in the December 1972 edition of the Naval Historical Review. It summarizes the careers of the Creer twin brothers who were pioneers of the Royal Australian Navy and saw service in both World Wars.

The twins, Reginald and Herbert Creer first joined the Navy in 1894, and were still serving 50 years later, at the end of WWII.

The twins had remarkable parallel careers as naval officers, beginning in the very first ships delivered to the RAN in 1911, and including simultaneous command of Australian warships. For a period of 11 weeks in 1921, they had command of sister ships of the RAN's destroyer flotilla (*Success* and *Swordsman*), an event that is also claimed for Captain G. J. and Commander A. A. Willis, who commanded two Australian Daring Class destroyers.

The Creer brothers, who were born in Sydney in 1881, began their naval careers at the age of 13, when they became midshipmen in the newly formed Naval Brigade of NSW. In 1900, Reginald was promoted to Sub- Lieutenant in the Brigade, and went off to the Boxer War, while brother Herbert was serving as a cadet in the sailing ship, *Mount Stewart*.

Changed Services

The twins changed uniforms for the Boer War and were officers in Australian Commonwealth Horse Battalions.

They were among the first group of 12 officers selected to form the Royal Australian Navy when it was established in 1911. Herbert was appointed as navigating officer to HMAS *Yarra*, while his



The Creer brothers, at an Anzac Day reunion.

brother had the same job in HMAS *Parramatta*. In the First World War they served in the cruisers *Melbourne* and *Pioneer*.

After the War, they had their own commands before being demobilised in 1926, at the age of 45. Herbert had three years as Captain of the destroyer ANZAC, taking over from his brother Reginald when he was appointed to command the training ship, *Tingira*.

For the next 14 years, Herbert commanded a private yacht in Britain, while Reginald was master of a merchant ship on the China Coast.

At the age of 58, in 1940, the brothers joined the Royal Navy as Commanders, and were given assignments in Southeast Asia.

Reginald had command of a Gunboat Flotilla on the China Station, and Herbert had the Gunboat Command in Shanghai. Reginald was captured when Japan entered the War and spent the rest of the campaign in Japanese prison camps.

Bangka Massacre

Herbert took his flotilla to Singapore, where he was a Port Defence Officer when the Japanese began their drive south. He was ordered to leave Singapore on the last ship to escape from the colony. One of his final jobs in Singapore was to supervise the embarkation of the Australian nurses, who were to become the victims of the Bangka massacre.

He was then assigned as Camp Commandant of a staging camp in Colombo, and later to the command of naval establishments in India.

After four years and a half a century at sea, the twins went into retirement.

Further Reading

Jean Fielding, [Reginald Charles Creer \(1881–1958\)](#), a shared entry with Herbert Victor Creer published in the Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 8 , 1981.

The Tobruk Run

The following story by Commodore Rodney Rhoades DSC RAN Retired was first published in the Naval Historical Review in December 1979.

While I was in command of HMAS *Vendetta* in 1940-41, she ran a record number of trips to Tobruk. If my memory serves me right, we went into that port no less than thirty-nine times during the period of its investment. The main purpose of these trips was to take in badly needed stores such as ammunition, spare gun-barrels, medical supplies and mail, and bring out the wounded.



HMAS *Vendetta*. RAN Photo

For a long period, the ships of the 10th Destroyer Flotilla of which we were a unit did the run "solo". The pattern was to leave Alexandria early in the morning after loading the night before and steam the 350 miles at high speed to arrive at Tobruk about midnight, unload stores and embark the wounded and depart a couple of hours later.

We then sped back at full speed to Mersa Matruh halfway along the coast towards Alexandria, put the wounded ashore there and sailed again in the afternoon with fresh stores for Tobruk, where we unloaded, embarked wounded and then sailed for Alexandria at about 0200. It was no picnic as you could imagine, as we were the target for bombers and submarines, to say nothing of mines and we had many a narrow escape.

After a number of these "solo" runs, it appeared to me that it was time we did the run in pairs, so as to be able to give one another support when attacked and in the event of one ship being hit, her consort could pick up survivors.

I pondered this idea for a while and one morning I went to see the Chief Staff Officer to the Rear-Admiral (Alexandria), who ran the port and gave us our sailing orders for work on the coast. I explained the situation to him and then heard a voice from over a partition say, "When you have finished tearing up my Chief of Staff, come in and see me." "Who is that?" I said sotto voce. "The Admiral," the Chief of Staff replied.

Well, in I went, and he asked me who I was. I told him and repeated my plea to work the run in pairs. He said, "Are you frightened?" and I said, "My bloody oath I am at times, sir." He laughed heartily, shook hands and said, "I will go and see the Commander-in-Chief." This he did forthwith and from that day on we worked in pairs. That C-in-C was no fool.

Almost at once the scheme paid off. HMS *Defender*, commanded by Lieutenant Commander Gilbert Farnfield, RN and one of four RN destroyers in our 10th Flotilla sailed from Tobruk about 1 am on the 11th July 1941. At about 0500 on the way back to Alexandria, somewhere off the coast north-east of Bardia, we were bombed. Defender's back was broken and she lay helpless with her engine-room completely flooded.

I closed her, picking up one of her ship's company, who had been blown overboard. He was very grateful. When I ranged up close alongside Defender and asked her Captain by megaphone how things were, he replied cheerfully, "Mustn't grumble. Can you take me in tow?"

I got on with the job, but hardly had I got her moving slowly towards Alexandria when we were attacked again. I had to slip the tow and engage the bomber. This went on all the forenoon. Tows parted and were replaced until we were down to towing her with just Defender's cable directly on to our towing clench. This feat was achieved by backing the ship down stern first till Defender's razor like bows were only a foot away, when my First Lieutenant, Lieutenant John Smallwood, RN (an Australian officer who had joined the RN and was on loan to the RAN), personally put the towing shackle on to our clench. A remarkable feat of strength.

On we went dead slow and at last got her moving through the water at five knots. *Defender* started to break up amidships. When I stopped, I was dragged back by the heavy cable and had to go full speed ahead and part the cable otherwise I would have damaged my propellers on her

sunken midships section, now well under water. It was the only cable I was to see part in my long naval career, and it made a noise like a gun.

All that remained was to take off her passengers and crew, some of whom I had already embarked. We got the lot including the ship's cat, so there we were with 650 men on board (many wounded), very little fuel and two halves of a ship to sink. One torpedo and a few well placed rounds and down she went. We turned away and steamed for Alexandria.



HMS *Defender* sinking. AWM Photo

Shortly after we got going I was intrigued to hear a sing-song had started up down aft, so I rang the Quarter deck and asked the First Lieutenant what all the merriment was about. He rang back and said the *Defender* had brought over four barrels of rum and had broached one. I told him to impound the lot and tell everyone we were far from out of the wood. I am glad to say my own ship's company did not get involved. We kept it under lock and key till we had a short self-refit in Haifa when I had it issued to our chaps. Phew. It was strong stuff. My own tot, broken into three with ginger ale, put me to sleep for the afternoon.

With all of *Defender's* ship's company on board, we were very top-heavy, and I had to put all hands below decks. We arrived in Alexandria with only ten tons of fuel left.

The Commander-in-Chief Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham (later Admiral of the Fleet Lord Cunningham of Hyndhope) sent me the following signal, "Congratulations, well tried. Bad luck." This incident confirmed the wisdom of working in pairs and many lives would have been lost if it had not been adopted.

In the official history of the Royal Australian Navy reference is made to *Vendetta* and the Tobruk Run:

"In all, the Australian destroyers made a total of 139 runs in and out of Tobruk during the period of the regular 'Ferry'. Vendetta held the record with 39 individual passages into Tobruk, 11 from Alexandria and 9 from Mersa Matruh; and from Tobruk 8 to Alexandria and 11 to Mersa Matruh. From the end of May until the first week in August she was without intermission on the Tobruk shuttle service and carried 1,532 troops to Tobruk; brought 2,951 away, including wounded and prisoners of war; and transported 616 tons of supplies into the port."

Film of the Month: Interview with Judith Follett WRANS

The Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS) was formed in 1941 because of manpower shortages in the Australian Navy during World War Two. The work of these trailblazing women is little remembered today, but they were involved in vital communications work during the War.

This interview with Judith Follett of the WRANS was recorded in 2001 for a family history. Judith worked in high stakes naval intelligence from 1942 to 1945, identifying enemy vessels by their morse code: "A gentleman from MI5 told us that we were never to explain our work to a living soul, or we'd be shot... and as far as I know, that work has never been described", Judith said.



[In Which She Serves: An interview with Judith Follett WRANS \(youtube.com\)](#)

Duration: 10 Minutes

Call the Hands Publication Dates

In April we advised that the publication of *Call the Hands* would be reduced from 11 editions to 5 editions per year and that the number and frequency of occasional papers would reduce.

Annual publication dates are now: March, May, July, September and November.

Stories which are too long or not suitable for the *Naval Historical Review* will be published as occasional papers.



Readers are reminded that should you miss one of our monthly presentations via Zoom they are recorded for later viewing. Most are posted to the Society's [YouTube channel](#) while others are made available through the [members area](#) of the website.

The most recent presentations posted are,

The Australian Navy at Gallipoli presented by Noel Phelan, 17 April 2024

The History of the New Zealand Navy presented by Desmond Woods OAM, 15 May 2024

Soon to follow

Bloody Shambles - Force Z, Java Sea. Sunda Strait 1941 -1942, by Kez Hasanica, 19 June 2024

Fall of Singapore Additional Information

Our thanks to WA Chapter President, Nigel Rogers for providing the following in response to questions during his presentation on the Fall of Singapore and in particular the loss of ships and related crew/civilians in addition to the large loss of life on HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse*.

He advised that the ships concerned were essentially those involved in the evacuation of people from Singapore and were largely attacked by the Japanese Airforce. A [table extracted from 'Spotlight on Singapore'](#) by Denis Russel-Roberts provides details.

In relation to the question on why was the loss of the severely damaged/bombed water supply system regarded as so critical in relation to putting further pressure on Percival to surrender.

a) As we know you can survive without food for a while but not for very long without water,

particularly in a tropical climate such as Singapore before dehydration sets in.

b) The damaged water supply that was left became contaminated and this leads of course to disease spreading including cholera and typhoid. This was beginning to break out in Singapore.

In relation to a question on why [Lieutenant General Gordon Bennett](#) was not made overall Allied Commander the following is added. Although Bennett had shown courageous leadership in the field in WW1 and elsewhere, he had a very 'prickly' and argumentative temperament that was deemed to make him unsuitable for working in a team with the other Senior Allied and British Commanders. General Sturdee, Chief of the General Staff of the Australian Army, also did not get on with Bennett. Bennett's escape from Singapore and leaving his troops behind further tarnished his career and reputation.

Photo of the Month



RAN N16 Westland Sea King Mk.50A

On 23 October 1974 the Australian Sea King Flight UK was formed at RNAS Culdrose, Cornwall. The flight was responsible for the acceptance of the aircraft before handing over to Australia.

On 2 February 1976, 817 Squadron became operational with the aircraft and the Sea King Flight was paid off.

The first Sea King N16-118(907) completed life of type extension program (LOTE) on 23 May 1996 and last aircraft N16-918(922) completed on 7 July 1997 when the program successfully wrapped up. This program allowed all remaining aircraft to be in service until 2011.

The Sea King celebrated 25 years of service with the RAN on the 2 February 2001 and retired from RAN service in December 2011.

News

HMAS *Anzac* decommissioned

HMAS *Anzac* was the lead ship of the Anzac Class frigates in use with the Royal Australian Navy, since its launch in September 1994 and commissioning in May 1996.

Representatives attended a decommissioning ceremony at the ship's home port of HMAS *Stirling* in Perth on 18 May 2024. HMAS *Anzac* is the third Royal Australian Navy ship to carry the name.



HMAS *Anzac*, FFH 150, was named in recognition of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corp and attended both the 90th and 100th remembrance services in Gallipoli.

Former HMAS *Sirius* recycling completed

One of the largest vessels in Australian history, HMAS *Sirius*, has been recycled. After 15 years' service as a Royal Australian Navy fuel tanker – and two years since her decommissioning at HMAS *Stirling*, Perth, in December 2021 – the ship has now become scrap metal. *Sirius* is the largest vessel to be dismantled in Australia, with industry partner Birdon Group carrying out the process at the Australian Maritime Complex facility near Perth.



HMAS *Sirius* (centre)

This Month in History - June

June 1899	HMS PIONEER later HMAS PIONEER, was launched at Chatham, England.
June 1916	Fleet Surgeon A. C. Bean, RN, was appointed as Director of Medical Services, RAN. In 1917 his title was changed to Director of Naval Medical Services, and under his leadership the RAN Medical Service was created.
June 1919	HM Ships GERANIUM, MARGUERITE, and MALLOW arrived in Australia to sweep for mines. They were later gifted to Australia.
June 1925	Commonwealth Navy Order 137 of 1925 was promulgated establishing a Fleet Air Arm for the RAN and inviting applications from officers to undergo a four-year Long Air Course. The first iteration of the Fleet Air Arm was short-lived, however, and it was disbanded by Commonwealth Navy Order 1 of 1929, promulgated on 8 January 1929. That order stated that the RAAF was to provide all naval aircraft and the personnel to fly and maintain them while the RAN would provide observers and telegraphist air gunners. A dedicated Fleet Air Arm was reinstituted in the RAN in 1948
June 1933	The hulls of HMA Ships PARRAMATTA and SWAN were sold by public auction for £12 each.
June 1939	The Government acquired 357 acres of land at Brown's Hole near Nowra, NSW. Operating as a Royal Naval Air Station during WWII, the site later commissioned as HMAS Albatross
June 1940	LCDR A. W. R. McNicoll, RAN, who was serving in HMS KANDAHAR, disarmed eight torpedoes in the captured Italian submarine GALILEO GALELEI, off Aden. The submarine had been forced to surrender by the trawler HMS MOONSTONE.
June 1945	LEUT E. M. Howitt, RANVR, was awarded the US Legion of Merit for services in the Philippines, while on loan and serving with US patrol boats. With his knowledge of the local coastline, they sank 20 Japanese supply and troop barges, two auxiliary ketches and a torpedo boat.
June 1948	The RAN Nursing Service, (RANNS), which had been formed in October 1942, was disbanded. 57 uniformed nursing sisters had served in the RANNS during WWII. Civilian nurses were employed to provide care to RAN personnel from this time.
June 1950	The Chinese merchant vessel SANTOS, ex-HMAS ORARA struck a mine and sank with a heavy loss of life in the mouth of the Yang Tse River, China. ORARA was a popular coastal steamer on the Australian seaboard, before being requisitioned by the RAN. Her wartime motto was 'As they sow, so shall we sweep'.
June 1959	The Daring class destroyer HMAS VAMPIRE, (CAPT E. J. Peel, DSC, RAN), was commissioned at Sydney. VAMPIRE was laid down in Cockatoo Island Dockyard Sydney, on 1 July 1952, and launched on 27 October 1956. Lady Slim, (Wife of the Governor-General Sir William Slim), performed the launching ceremony. VAMPIRE was decommissioned on 13 August 1986, and transferred to the Australian National Maritime Museum in 1991, as a permanent exhibit.
June 1968	Three members of 723 Squadron, Lieutenant P.C. Ward, Petty Officer D.J. Sanderson and Naval Airman Mechanic Airframes and Engines (NMAE) R.K. Smith, were lost when their Iroquois crashed over the cliff at Beecroft Head Firing Range and fell into the sea while on a range clearing flight.
June 1969	HMAS BRISBANE fought a fire in the merchant ship SINCERE, at Singapore. When the fire raced out of control, she took off the ship's crew.
June 1977	HMAS MELBOURNE launched two of her Wessex helicopters, each carrying a World War II cannon, from a position off Crete, and delivered the pieces to the newly built Cretan-Australian War Memorial at Stavromenos.
June 1984	A flight of Grumman Tracker aircraft flew over the decommissioned HMAS MELBOURNE to mark the end of fixed wing aircraft in the RAN's Fleet Air Arm.
June 1991	HMAS Westralia (II) returned to Australia on completion of her participation in Operation DAMASK II.
June 2001	HMAS KANIMBLA arrives in the Solomon Islands to commence peacekeeping duties as part of Operation Trek. She was later relieved by HMAS MELBOURNE in July 2001. HMAS Anzac (III) departed for operations in the Middle East region
June 2018	HMAS Tobruk II was sunk as a dive wreck in the Great Sandy Marine Park, between Bundaberg and Hervey Bay, Queensland.

This Month in History - July

July 1857	HMS PELORUS, (screw steam corvette), was commissioned at Plymouth, England, under CAPT Frederick B. P. Seymour, RN. PELORUS was flagship of the Australia Station in 1860, and during that year participated in the Battle of Taranaki in New Zealand. In this battle, CAPT Seymour was seriously wounded while leading a naval brigade of 600 men against the Maori defences.
July 1884	The Admiralty requested the services of either HMQ Ships GAYUNDAH or PALUMA for survey duties in northern waters. PALUMA was selected and converted for the purpose.
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 1917	An observer aloft in a balloon from HMAS HUON sighted an Austrian submarine on the surface in the Adriatic Sea. HUON closed the distance, but the submarine submerged and escaped.
July 1925	While HMAS Brisbane was at Hong Kong, there was a major landslide in the Po Hing Fong district which destroyed many homes and killed 73 people. Warrant Officer Shipwright Robert Cargin from <i>Brisbane</i> was ashore at the time visiting friends and took part in the rescue operations; he was later awarded the Bronze Lifesaving Medal of the Venerable Order of St John of Jerusalem for 'conspicuous gallantry for saving life at imminent personal risk in connection with the Po Hing Fong disaster at Hong Kong'
July 1936	HMA Ships AUSTRALIA and SYDNEY were attached to the Mediterranean Fleet during the Abyssinian crisis.
July 1940	HMAS SYDNEY was straddled by a stick of bombs while operating with the Mediterranean Fleet. The C in C, ADML A.B. Cunningham, recorded in his journal: 'On this day I saw the SYDNEY, which was in company, disappear in a line of towering pillars of spray as high as church steeples, to emerge unharmed'.
July 1943	HMAS NIZAM picked up two rafts of survivors from the merchant ship CORNISH CITY, in the Indian Ocean.
July 1951	HMAS Murchison was in action off the coast of Korea, destroying Chinese vehicles while on a coastal patrol. Murchison remained on patrol until 4 August bombarding shore installations, troop concentrations, gun emplacements and store dumps firing some 1,100 rounds of 4-inch ammunition.
July 1959	HMS TELEMACHUS returned to Sydney after an exercise in which whales were tagged from the submarine. Professor Dawbin, of Sydney University, fired the tags into the whales, using a specially designed gun.
July 1963	A Sea Venom crashed into Sydney Harbour following a collision with another Sea Venom during a flypast.
July 1968	The Women's Royal Australian Naval Service Reserve, (WRANSR), was formed.
July 1975	HMAS HOBART represented Australia at the United States Bicentenary Celebrations at New York. Fifty ships of 30 nations participated in the ceremonial entry into the port.
July 1979	The WRAN officer rank titles were replaced with male officer rank titles. The Navy began training its WRAN officer cadets at RAN College at Jervis Bay with their male counterparts
July 1984	HMAS COOK located the wreck of the Japanese submarine I-24, some 37 miles off Darwin. I-24 was the first Japanese vessel sunk by the RAN. She was sunk by HMA Ships DELORAINIE, KATOOMBA, and LITHGOW on 20 January, 1942.
July 1991	HMAS PERTH rescued the pilot of a Singapore Air Force F-16 aircraft, which crashed into the sea after a mid-air collision.
July 2002	HMAS Manoora II arrived in the Port Phillip Bay after return from Persian Gulf
July 2012	HMAS Anzac (III) deployed to the Middle East region for Operation SLIPPER.

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/>