

# CALL THE HANDS

Issue No. 8

May 2017

## From the President

Welcome to the 8th edition of Call the Hands, a newsletter for Society members and the broader Navy Family. If you feel others will enjoy it please pass it on. Our objective is to increase understanding of Australia's naval history in the community through publication of Call the Hands and through the Society's website. To this end I am pleased to report two examples of success in this endeavour during April.

Firstly, after publicising the East Arnhem Regional Council's invitation to attend a commemoration ceremony for the loss of HMAS Patricia Cam on Anzac Day, I was delighted to hear that word of this event had reached members of ERA William Moffat's family and that 5 members of the family intended participating. William Moffat was one of three sailors and five civilians killed as a loss of the bombing of Patricia Cam. A detailed story about HMAS Patricia Cam is currently being researched by Walter Burroughs for publication in the June edition of The Naval Historical Review.

A second wonderful experience was a response from Erika who received Issue 6 and responded to my call for volunteers to assist with Society initiatives. Erika's remoteness from Sydney is not an impediment to the value she adds by working over the internet. Her contribution is making a significant difference. Should you have time to give and an interest in volunteering, please contact the Society for options.

Finally, this month we celebrate the 47th anniversary of the Naval Historical Society of Australia which was formed in Garden Island on 25 May 1970. Over the years it has continued to grow and provide important services to the community and Navy. With Chapters in four states; NSW, VIC, ACT and WA there is ample opportunity for non-members to attend periodic presentations arranged by the Society. Details are in the following pages and on the website. Feel free to attend. We would also like to hear from you about presentations and other events of interest to members.

David Michael

## From the Editor

Welcome to our new subscribers and thanks again to readers who alert us to stories of interest and provide stories, images and other information. Please keep them coming.

I would like to thank members of the Netherlands Institute of Military History (NIMH) in the Ministry of Defence who took time out to contact us after publication of the story about the Evacuation of Tjilatjap, Java in Issue 6 of Call the Hands. I hope you find their animation of the Battle of the Java Sea in this edition of interest.

This edition includes links to videos and podcasts as well as stories on the Society and other websites. I trust you can easily access these. It is done simply by hovering your mouse over the link in blue font. Then hold down 'CTRL' on your keyboard while clicking with your left mouse button. The linked web page should then open.

29 April 2017



## The Naval Historical Society of Australia

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## 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/>

## Tours of Garden Island, Sydney

Tours of Garden Island provided by Society volunteers on Thursdays are very popular with organized groups, retired naval personnel and their families. Tours of 1.5 to 2 hours which take in historic sites and buildings in the Dockyard including the Captain Cook Graving Dock are preceded by an introductory video in the Boatshed, Garden Island. Groups and individuals generally arrive by ferry from Circular Quay but arrangements can also be made for groups arriving by coach. The cost is \$20 per person. Should you be interested in booking a tour start by visiting the website, calling or e-mailing the Tour Coordinators.

Phone: (02) 9359 2243) Thursdays only  
E-Mail: [tours@navyhistory.org.au](mailto:tours@navyhistory.org.au)  
Website: <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/garden-island-tours/>

## Coming Presentations: Naval Historical Society

Date	Event	Details
22 May 17	NHSA Presentation, Melbourne Achieving recognition for Australians who enlisted through the WW2 Dominion Yachtsmen Scheme.	at Waverley RSL, Glen Waverley by Jan Roberts Billett., Historian Non Members welcome but please call 03 98508497
5 June 17	NHSA Presentation, Canberra Four members to speak on their current naval history projects (TBC)	at Legacy House, Deakin Non Members welcome but please notify attendance to <a href="mailto:simoncullen.sc@gmail.com">simoncullen.sc@gmail.com</a>
20 June 17	NHSA Presentation, Sydney False Flags : Disguised German Raiders of World War II	at Combined Services Club, Barrack Street by Mr Stephen Robinson Non Members welcome but please call 02 93592372
15 August 17	NHSA Presentation, Sydney The Flag's Up. The story of significant events in the first 20 years of the South Head Lookout Post from 1790 to 1809'	at Combined Services Club, Barrack Street by Commander Peter Poland, Non Members welcome but please call 02 93592372

## Coming Events: Other Organizations

6th & 7th May	Historical Aircraft Restoration Society Air Show: Wings Over Illawarra, 2017 Includes static displays of naval aircraft	at Albion Park, NSW Details at: <a href="http://hars.org.au/">http://hars.org.au/</a>
13 May 2017	Military History Society of NSW: Presentation The Japanese Mini-Submarine Attack on Sydney Harbour	at 99 York St, Conference and Function Centre, Sydney Speaker: Noel Phelan Bookings at: <a href="http://militaryhistorynsw.com.au/upcoming-guest-speaker/">http://militaryhistorynsw.com.au/upcoming-guest-speaker/</a>
30 May 2017	The Institute for Defence and Security Studies NSW: Lunchtime Lecture National Security: Border Protection	at Sydney Mechanics School of Arts Theatre , Level 1, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney Speaker: TBA Details at: <a href="http://www.rusinsw.org.au/site/Activities.asp">http://www.rusinsw.org.au/site/Activities.asp</a>
27 June 2017	The Institute for Defence and Security Studies NSW: Lunchtime Lecture Battle of the Coral Sea	at Sydney Mechanics School of Arts Theatre , Level 1, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney Speaker: Lt Col Peter Sweeney Details at: <a href="http://www.rusinsw.org.au/site/Activities.asp">http://www.rusinsw.org.au/site/Activities.asp</a>

## Significant Commemorations and Events

- 4 May 17      Dominion Yachtsmen Scheme Plaque Dedication Ceremony, Australian War Memorial<sup>1</sup>
- 5-8 May 17    75th anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea
- 1 June 17      75th anniversary of the loss of depot ship HMAS Kuttabul
- 16 June 17    75th anniversary of the loss of destroyer HMAS Nestor

## Battle of the Java Sea: Animation

Recent correspondence between the Society and Netherlands Institute of Military History (NIMH) in the Dutch Ministry of Defence drew attention to an initiative by the Institute to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> Battle of the Java Sea. To this end the Institute of Military History created an animation of that battle in Dutch. However, due to the great international interest an English edition was made and placed this on its Youtube channel.

Readers should find this of interest. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4w-vUjEuNq>

Allied Ships from the Netherlands, UK, USA and Australia suffered a crushing defeat by a significant Japanese invasion force making for Java in February 1942.

The Imperial Japanese Navy inflicted serious losses on the Allies on 27 February 1942, and in successive engagements over successive days. The aftermath of the battle included the smaller but also significant Battle of Sunda Strait. These defeats led to Japanese occupation of the entire Netherlands East Indies. At the time, the battle was the largest surface ship engagement since the Battle of Jutland in 1916.

## Website of the Month: RAN Corvettes Association

This website contains a wealth of information about these small ships and the personal stories of men who served in them. <http://cecopaint.wixsite.com/ranca-nsw>

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<sup>1</sup> References to The Dominion Yachtsmen Scheme 1940-45 include:  
HMAS Rushcutter and Australia's submarine hunters, 1939-1946 / edited by G.R. Worledge, and  
King-Hall Navy History Conference paper delivered by Janet I. Roberts Billett, in Canberra, July 2009  
[http://www.navy.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Jan\\_RB\\_-\\_The\\_Dominion\\_Y'smen\\_Sch\\_1940\\_.pdf](http://www.navy.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Jan_RB_-_The_Dominion_Y'smen_Sch_1940_.pdf)

## Society Assistance to Navy

The Society remains ready to assist Navy and HMAS Kuttabul in particular, as opportunities present. Current support is being provided in the form of key note speakers for 75th anniversary commemorations conducted on Garden Island, Sydney.

On 9 April immediate past president, Captain Paul Martin, OAM, RAN Retd delivered the HMAS Vampire commemorative address. Paul was a previous Commanding Officer of HMAS Vampire II now on display at the Australian National Maritime Museum. His address is circulated with this edition of Call the Hands as Occasional Paper 7.

In June Captain Chris Skinner RAN Retd will deliver the HMAS Kuttabul address and Commander Walter Burroughs RAN Retd the HMAS Nestor commemorative address. Walter is the editor of the Society's flagship magazine, The Naval Review.

### 75th Anniversary of the loss of HMAS Vampire: 9 April 2017



**Captain Paul Martin, OAM, RAN Retd**



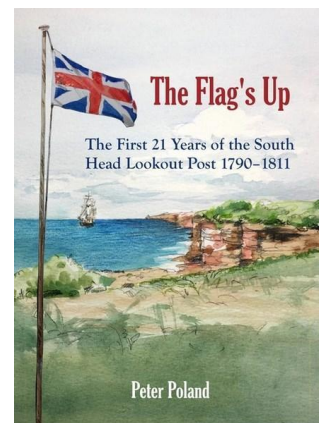
**RAN Band Members: Garden Island**

## Newly Published Book: The Flag's Up

In Australia's early years English, Dutch, French, American and Russian ships anchored alongside convict vessels in Sydney's peaceful harbour. They carried Matthew Flinders and other famous navigators, political prisoners, daring escapees, Aborigines and Maoris making their first international journeys, and Governors to and from their difficult postings.

The South Head Lookout Post which recorded these arrivals and departures has been manned since January 1790. This illustrated book reveals the first years and the various voyages that began and ended on the shores of the bright young Sydney colony.

Author Peter Poland, a member of the NHSA was born in the UK to a naval family and joined Dartmouth Royal Naval College at the age of 13. During his 30 year naval career he served 2 ½ years with the Royal Australian navy. Peter commanded 4 ships including the frigate HMS Zest, which he brought into Sydney Harbour in 1968. Peter retired from the Royal Navy in 1971 as a Commander and brought his family to Australia.





## Flanders Memorial Garden dedicated at Australian War Memorial

The soil walked on by thousands of World War I troops has been incorporated in a new memorial garden opened at the Australian War Memorial on Tuesday 4 April 2017. In addition to soil from battlefields in Belgium and the Tyne Cot Cemetery soil was collected by the RSL from significant sites around Australia. The Naval Historical Society and Navy assisted with the identification of a site in Garden Island from which soil was taken.

More Information is available in this ABC podcast during which the Director of the Australian War Memorial Dr Brendan Nelson spoke to ABC Radio host Dan Bouchier about how the project happened and who the garden commemorates.

ABC Podcast: <http://www.abc.net.au/radio/canberra/programs/breakfast/dr-brendan-nelson-flanders-fields-memorial-garden-awm/8413864>



Soil collected from Garden Island: Cowper Wharf Road: Adjacent WW1 Memorial Departure Gate



Flanders Memorial Garden at Australian War Memorial

## News in Brief

- On 31 March 2017 HMAS Melville rescued over 400 stranded guests and staff from Daydream Island off Queensland, after tropical cyclone Debbie hit the region. HMAS Choules arrived in the area shortly after and provided equipment and supplies to supplement the work started by HMAS Melville.
- HMAS Darwin sailed from Fleet Base West for the last time on 3 April 2017. HMAS Darwin is the Royal Australian Navy's oldest warship in commission. Darwin had been home ported at Fleet Base West from 18 December 1993 to 21 April 2006 when it relocated to Fleet Base East. HMAS Darwin is expected to decommission later this year.
- 19 April HMAS Ballarat took part in exercises with People's Liberation Army – Navy Type 054A frigate Huangshan after concluding a visit to Zhanjiang port. The exercises conducted in the South China Sea, included surface target firing, a search and rescue exercise, communication exercises and a formation activity with aerial photography.
- On 20 April Dutch shipbuilder Damen announced the RAN's Multi-role Aviation Training Vessel (MATV) MV Sycamore completed sea trials. MV Sycamore was built at Damen's Vietnam shipyard and will now be prepared for her maiden voyage to her home port of Sydney, Australia, where she is expected to arrive at the end of May.

Sourced from NAVALTODAY.COM

## This Month in History

25 May 1889	The foundation stone of the Royal Naval House, Sydney, 'Johnnie's', was laid by Lady Carrington. More detail at: <a href="https://www.navyhistory.org.au/history-of-johnnies-royal-naval-house-1876-1980s/">https://www.navyhistory.org.au/history-of-johnnies-royal-naval-house-1876-1980s/</a>
08 May 1913	The Minister for the Navy approved the formation of the Naval Dockyard Police.
09 May 1917	The Australian Government agreed to send HMA Ships WARREGO, PARRAMATTA, YARRA, SWAN, TORRENS, and HUON, to European waters.
10 May 1918	HMAS MELBOURNE, (cruiser), embarked a Sopwith Camel aircraft. More detail at: <a href="https://www.navyhistory.org.au/australian-naval-aviation-part-1/4/">https://www.navyhistory.org.au/australian-naval-aviation-part-1/4/</a>
02 May 1923	The observer branch was formed to enable officers to qualify as pilots and observers.
21 May 1940	Government approved the building of the Captain Cook Graving Dock in Sydney.
20 May 1941	The Battle of Crete commenced, and lasted until 31 May, 1941. HMA Ships PERTH, STUART, VAMPIRE, VENDETTA, VOYAGER, WATERHEN, NAPIER and NIZAM, were all involved.
4-8 May 1942	The Battle of the Coral Sea More detail at: <a href="https://www.navyhistory.org.au/the-battle-of-the-coral-sea-may-4-8-1942/3/">https://www.navyhistory.org.au/the-battle-of-the-coral-sea-may-4-8-1942/3/</a>
10 May 1943	HMAS MAROUBRA was sunk by enemy action.
14 May 1943	HMAHS CENTAUR, (hospital ship), was sunk by a Japanese submarine, off Queensland coast near Brisbane. Of the 332 crew and medical staff onboard, 268 were killed in the attack or later drowned. More detail at: <a href="https://www.navyhistory.org.au/the-tragedy-of-the-centaur/">https://www.navyhistory.org.au/the-tragedy-of-the-centaur/</a>
01 May 1945	RAN Beach Commando's first action when landed with the first wave of troops at Tarakan. Telegraphists J. R. Brady and W. F. Ryan were killed, and Signaller C. Ikin was wounded. More detail at: <a href="http://www.navy.gov.au/history/feature-histories/ran-beach-commandos">http://www.navy.gov.au/history/feature-histories/ran-beach-commandos</a>
01 May 1964	Government announced the dispatch of the HMA Ships HAWK and GULL to Singapore, for operations during the Indonesian-Malaysian confrontation. More detail at: <a href="https://www.navyhistory.org.au/confrontation-the-campaign-widens-ran-participation-1964-66/">https://www.navyhistory.org.au/confrontation-the-campaign-widens-ran-participation-1964-66/</a>
25 May 1964	HMAS DERWENT launched a Seacat missile, the first guided weapon fired by the RAN. More detail at: <a href="http://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-derwent">http://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-derwent</a>
31 May 1969	Leading Air-crewman N. E. Shipp, (RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam), was killed in action when the aircraft in which he was door gunner was hit by enemy fire caused it to crash and burst into flames. More detail at: <a href="http://www.navy.gov.au/history/squadron-histories/ran-helicopter-flight-vietnam-history">http://www.navy.gov.au/history/squadron-histories/ran-helicopter-flight-vietnam-history</a>
05 May 1971	The 8th Contingent of the RAN's Clearance Diving Team 3 returned to Australia, thus ending the diving team's four years of service in Vietnam.
18 May 1980	China's first Inter Continental Ballistic Missile landed in the Pacific Ocean north west of Fiji. This was observed by HMA Ships VAMPIRE, and JERVIS BAY and a fleet of eighteen Chinese warships.
30 May 1980	Attack Class patrol boats commenced offshore oil rig patrols to prevent terrorist attacks.
30-31 May 1990	Minister of Defence, Bilney, announced female members of the RAN now able to serve in all Australian warships, except submarines and approval given for females to undertake the same work as their male counterparts, with the exceptions of service in submarines, and as clearance divers.

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/>

## Video of the Month

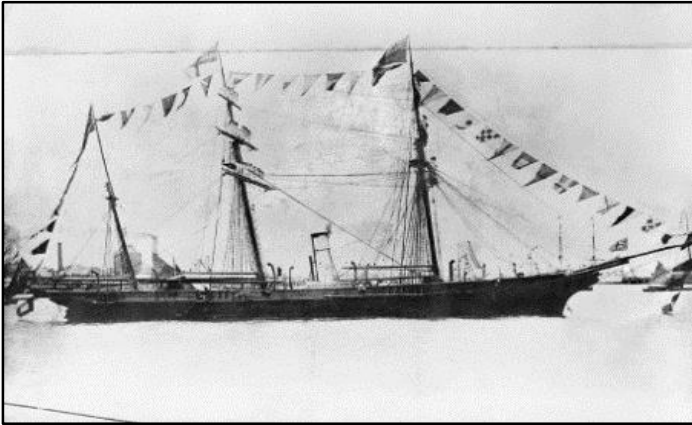
### The Scuttling of Australia's First Flagship HMAS Australia

This National Film and Sound Archive footage from 12 April 1924 shows the first flagship of the Royal Australian Navy slipping beneath the surface off Sydney Heads. It marked the end of a spectacular career. Her scuttling was preceded by a procession of the remainder of the Australian Fleet, and hundreds of patriotic citizens in private vessels. She was also decorated with wreaths and honoured with a 21-gun salute.



This video holds additional interest as it shows other units of the 1920s RAN which had reached its highest peace time strength on 3 May 1920. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLthUPfmUB8>

## Image Gallery: This Month in History



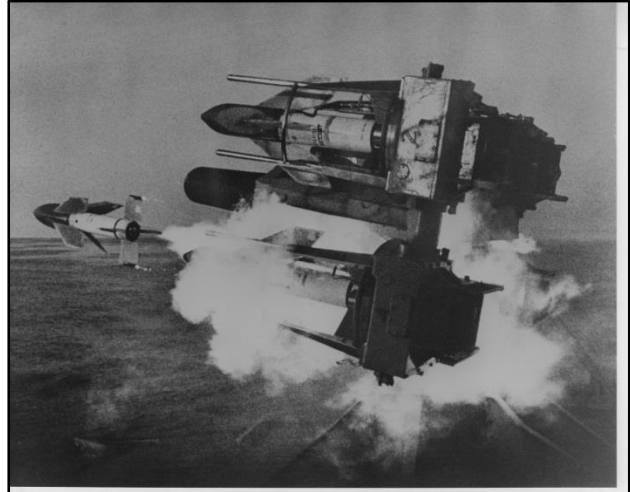
Her Majesty's Colonial Steam Sloop Victoria, dressed for the visit of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh in 1867



Royal Naval House, Grosvenor Street Sydney, 1 January 1970  
Photograph by Tim Collis-Bird, Copyright Owner: Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority



Sopwith Camel 2F1 launch WW1



Seacat Missile Launch  
Photograph: Royal Australian Navy



HMAS Maroubra at Milingimbi  
Naval Historical Collection Photograph



HMAS Maroubra on fire 10 May 1943  
Naval Historical Collection Photograph



## HMAS Maroubra: Sunk 10 May 1943

The cutter HMAS Maroubra was requisitioned for the RAN, from her owners, the Australian Petroleum Co Ltd, on 20 March 1942. She was laid down in Brisbane in 1930.

Maroubra was commissioned as an auxiliary minesweeper on 21 September 1942 and employed as a supply ship stationed at Milingimbi in support of the RAAF base located there. Milingimbi is a remote island 445km east of Darwin off the remote Arnhem Land coast.

Maroubra was sunk at Milingimbi during a Japanese bombing attack on 10 May 1943. A Beaufighter plane was also destroyed on the ground and an Indigenous man killed during the raid.

Subsequent to the attack, half a squadron of Spitfires was sent to Milingimbi. These 5 aircraft were able to respond to a follow up attack the next day by 9 Japanese Zeroes. Two or possibly three enemy planes were reported as downed or two others damaged.

## Photo of the Month



**'The Fleet's in' Sailors going Ashore in Sydney for Leave:  
HMAS Canberra in background**

If you have a photo to share please send it to [callthehands@navyhistory.org.au](mailto:callthehands@navyhistory.org.au)

## Trivia Corner

1. Major refits of HMAS Ships Australia (2) and HMAS Canberra (1) dramatically changed their appearance. What was this configuration change?

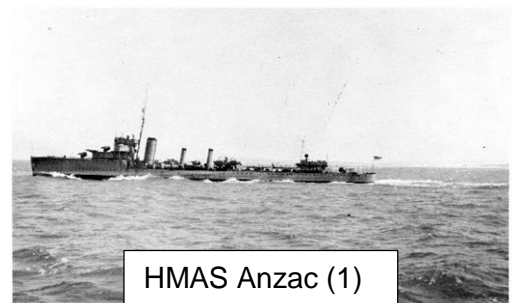
The answer to this question will be provided in next month's newsletter.

Answer to last month's question:

Q. Which RAN Destroyer had three funnels?

A. HMAS Anzac (1)

For more detail go to <http://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-anzac-i>



HMAS Anzac (1)



## The Fleet: 3 May 1920

On 3 May 1920 the RAN achieved its highest peacetime strength since inception in 1911. The following is the order of battle at that time.

<b>Battle cruiser</b>			<b>Sloops</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Tonnage</b>	<b>Speed (knots)</b>	Mallow	1219	16.5	
Australia	19,507	25	Marguerite	1269	16.5	
<b>Light Cruisers</b>			Geranium	1269	16.5	
Sydney	5486	25.5	Una(ex Komet)	1460	16	
Melbourne	5486	25.5	<b>Gunboats</b>			
Brisbane	5486	25.5	Protector	934	14	
Encounter	5894	20	Fantome	1087	13	
Adelaide (under construction)	5181	25.5	<b>Torpedo Boats</b>			
<b>Destroyers</b>			Countess of Hopetoun	76		
Anzac	1331	34	<b>Depot Ship</b>			
Tasmania	1092	36	Penguin	4572	11	
Swordsman	1092	36	<b>Training Ship</b>			
Success	1092	36	Tingira (ex-Sobraon)	2165		
Stalwart	1092	36	<b>Accommodation Ship</b>			
Tattoo	1092	36	PIONEER	2235		
Parramatta	711	26	<b>Other Units</b>			
Yarra	711	26	<b>Name</b>		<b>Tonnage</b>	<b>Speed (knots)</b>
Warrego	711	26	Cerberus	Coast defence	3220	9
Torrens	711	26	Kurumba	Oiler	4041	12
Huon	711	26	Biloela (under construction)	Collier	5684	11
Swan	711	26	Franklin	Yacht		12.5
<b>Submarines</b>						
<b>Name</b>	<b>Tonnage</b>	<b>Speed (knots)</b>				
J1 J2 J3 J4 J5 J7	1848	19 surface 9.5 submerged				
<b>Submarine Tender</b>						
Platypus	3531	15.5				

Source:

The Navy Day by Day: Historic Naval Events in Australia and Abroad, by Lew Lind

## Subscription

Should you become aware of others who wish to receive *Call The Hands* they should be advised to register by e-mailing the Society at [callthehands@navyhistory.org.au](mailto:callthehands@navyhistory.org.au).

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