



Call the Hands



Issue No. 90

April/May 2025

From the President

Welcome to this edition of *Call the Hands* which is dedicated to John Christopher Jeremy, AM (4 July 1942 to 18 April 2025). John crossed the bar on Good Friday after a short battle with cancer. Along with his service as Society Vice President, John served numerous other organizations in a wide variety of roles including committee positions, editing journals and newsletters and on the water serving his fellow yachtsmen. He is sorely missed by fellow volunteers of the Naval Historical Society. Members may read a comprehensive tribute to John in the June 2025 edition of the *Naval Historical Review* to be published in June 2025.

Given that John Jeremy's served almost his entire working life on Cockatoo Island we have included in this edition the story of the iconic floating crane 'Titan' which was managed by the Cockatoo Island Dockyard in support of the RAN in Sydney for more than seventy years from 1919. Similarly, occasional paper 193 provides a summary of ship building at Cockatoo Island between 1870 and 1986. Many of the 290 ships built were for naval service including the last and largest ship HMAS *Success* built on his watch as Managing Director and CEO.

With the anniversary of Anzac fresh in our minds and the Battle of the Coral Sea anniversary on 8 May, it is timely to remind ourselves of the great risks taken by servicemen and women be it in peace or war. The stories of people and events in this edition from WW1 to the present include incidents in which lives have been lost through enemy action, peace operations and accident. Regardless of the cause, the impact on families and friends is the same. Included are stories about the WW1 Albert Medal recipient, Captain Arthur Bagot, the loss of aircrew in 11 of 39 RAN Sea Venoms lost between 1956 and 1966 and the action endured by the ships company of HMAS Quiberon during service in the Mediterranean in 1942. Finally, on 2 April 2005 nine ADF lives were lost when Sea King helicopter (callsign 'Shark 02'), crashed on the Indonesian island of Nias while on a humanitarian support mission.

Occasional paper 192 provides an insight into the activities and character of RAN Bridging Train members during its service at Suvla Bay in support of the Gallipoli Campaign in 1915. The imagery of lifelike scenes in a diorama of the Bridging Train are striking. The diorama created by fellow NHSA and Australian National Maritime Museum volunteer, Geoff Barnes toured Australia in 2015 but is now in need of a permanent home. Page 14 refers.

Finally, thank you to those who ordered a copy of 'HMAS *Melbourne*, 25 Years and Beyond' which will be launched in Sydney on 9 May. We have been delighted with the interest and take up of the pre-printing order opportunity. This book remains available in the Society's [website shop](#) along with many other Society publications. Please also look at the book clearance sale advertised on pages 17 and 18. The various book combinations are designed to assist you by maximizing value from the now very expensive postal rates.

Kind regards,
David Michael



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Arthur Gerald BAGOT GC, DSC, MID

Arthur Gerald Bagot was born on 26 April 1888 in Adelaide, South Australia. He was the sixth of ten children to Christopher Michael Bagot, a sheep farmer and station owner, and Eleanor Mary (née Hawker). The family home was in Largs Bay. Bagot belonged to a distinguished family: he was a great-grandson of Admiral Edward Hawker and of pastoralist Charles Hervey Bagot, a grandson of settler and politician George Charles Hawker, and a first cousin of Lanoe Hawker, a flying ace and Victoria Cross recipient of the First World War. As Bagot's father had died in 1899, the remaining family moved to Canada in 1907 and settled near Vancouver, where they were to largely remain until 1925.

In 1916 Bagot joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve from Canada for service in the First World War. Commissioned as a temporary sub-lieutenant on 10 September he embarked for the United Kingdom that month and, on arrival, was appointed to the Motor Launch Division of the Dover Patrol. Bagot spent two years in Motor Launches on mostly anti-submarine and defensive duties within the Dover fleet, which was tasked with defending the southern end of the English Channel between Dover and Dunkirk. He was attached as an additional officer to the light cruiser HMS *Attentive* from April 1917 for service aboard ML 283 and promoted temporary lieutenant on 10 September 1917.



On 12 April 1918, the engine room of another ML 356 exploded at Dunkirk quay, and the forward petrol tanks burst into flames. As others proceeded to flee the scene Bagot, along with Lieutenant Robin Hoare, realised the fire was threatening the aft petrol tanks and the depth charges located on board the launch. Jumping in a dinghy, the pair rowed out towards the blaze. Bagot and Hoare removed the depth charges from the burning vessel.

For their actions during the engagement, both Bagot and Hoare were awarded the Albert Medal. The announcement and accompanying citation for the award was published in the London Gazette on 20 August 1918, reading:

Admiralty, 20th August, 1918.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the award of the Albert Medal for Gallantry in Saving Life at Sea to Lieutenant-Commander Keith Robin Hoare, D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N.V.R., and Lieutenant Arthur Gerald Bagot, D.S.C., R.N.V.R. The account of the services in respect of which the Decoration has been conferred is as follows:

On the 12th April, 1918, an explosion took place in the engine-room of H.M. Motor Launch 356, and the forward tanks burst into flame. The Officer and some of the crew were blown overboard by the explosion, and the remainder were quickly driven aft by the flames, and were taken off in a skiff. By this time the flames were issuing from the cabin hatch aft, and there was much petrol burning on the surface of the water. It was then realised by the crews of adjacent vessels that the aft petrol tanks and the depth charge were being attacked by the fire, and might explode at any moment. At the moment when others were running away, Lieutenant Hoare and Sub-Lieutenant Bagot jumped into their dinghy, rowed to the wreck, got on board, and removed the depth charge, thereby preventing an explosion which might have caused serious loss of life amongst the crowd of English and French sailors on the quay.

Appointed second-in-command of Motor Launch 283, Bagot was in action at the First Ostend Raid on 23 April 1918. Throughout the operation, the launch conducted duties of rescuing officers and men from HMS *Brilliant* and *Sirius*.^[4] Praised for his "great coolness under fire" during the engagement, Bagot was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. The notification of the award was published in a supplement to the London Gazette on 23 July 1918.

On 28 August 1918, Bagot was Mentioned in Despatches for "valuable services in action ... off the enemy coast".^[15] In March 1919, he was promoted to the substantive rank of lieutenant, which was made retrospective to 15 February 1918.^[16] Two of Bagot's elder brothers also served in the First World War: Christopher, a Boer War veteran, was an officer in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, while John rose to captain in the 13th Australian Light Horse Regiment and was Mentioned in Despatches.

Following the conclusion of the war, Bagot re-settled in Canada for a few years. Returning to Australia, he took up a mixed farming property near Piawaning, Western Australia, during 1925. In 1938, Bagot married Noel Irene Harris. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Bagot enlisted in the Citizens Military Force on 25 April 1942. Posted to the 9th Battalion, Volunteer Defence Corps, he served in Australia with the unit until his discharge on 15 October 1945, with the rank of captain.

On retiring, Bagot and his wife moved to Perth in 1962. In 1971, owing to the decline in status and significance of the Albert Medal, the British Government announced that the decoration would be abolished and living recipients would henceforth be regarded as holders of the George Cross. The change came into effect from 21 October, and living recipients were accordingly invited to exchange their medals. All six Australian Albert Medal recipients living at the time opted to accept the offer and were invited to attend an investiture ceremony at Buckingham Palace to receive their new insignia. Bagot was not fit enough to travel to London, and requested the medal be forwarded to him by registered mail. The medal was subsequently sent to the Governor of Western Australia, who presented it to Bagot on 26 November 1972.

Aged 91, Bagot died on 12 November 1979.



Albert Medal (L) courtesy Royal Museums, Greenwich and George Cross (R).

Floating crane 'Titan'

Titan was a floating crane that operated in Sydney Harbour from 1919 until 1991. She was fabricated in Carlisle in the United Kingdom and then sent to Cockatoo Island Dockyard in Sydney for assembly before entering service with the Royal Australian Navy.

Titan was fabricated in the United Kingdom during World War I by Cowans, Sheldon & Company of Carlisle, then transported to Australia in parts for assembly at Cockatoo Island Dockyard, Sydney. Ordered on 5 October 1916, construction at Cockatoo commenced on 7 March 1917. The crane was launched on 5 December 1917. However, during construction, the 40-ton lead screws for the crane's jib arm were lost when the merchant ship *Africa* was torpedoed. The crane could be used in a limited capability, although it was not until 1919 that replacement screws of sufficient quality were acquired. Titan was completed on 3 December 1919. On completion, the crane was handed over to the RAN.

Titan's main purpose was to provide heavy lifting services for Cockatoo Island Dockyard; installing ships' boilers and propulsion equipment, transporting heavy machinery to and from the island, and launching small craft. The crane also saw use unloading heavy deck cargo from ships, assisted in the construction of power plants, bridges, and other structures around Sydney Harbour and the attached tributaries, and was occasionally used for the salvage of vessels sunk in the Harbour. Early in her career, the crane was used throughout the entire Harbour, but the barge's poor seakeeping ability made it dangerous to tow the crane across Sydney Heads, and she was later banned from operating north and east of Bradleys Head.



The floating crane Titan, being towed under the Sydney Harbour Bridge with the foremast of HMAS Sydney in 1929. The mast is to be installed at Bradleys Head.

A modernisation of Titan began in the late 1960s. During the modernisation, the RAN decided that the crane was surplus to requirements and suspended the upgrade in 1975. Cockatoo Island Dockyard saw the value of keeping Titan in service, and continued the upgrades, including replacement of the steam-powered system with diesel generators.

In 1989, surveyors refused to renew the crane's port craft licence because of the age of the vessel; in particular, rivets used during the pontoon's construction were showing signs of wear-and-tear. The dwindling need for the crane's services and the cost of completely refurbishing the craft saw the dockyard remove Titan from commercial service in 1991. Approval for short-term projects was granted over the following two years, including the unloading and reloading of the locomotive Flying Scotsman during its visit to Australia, and the dismantling of a shore-based crane at Cockatoo Island.

After the closure of Cockatoo Island Dockyard in 1991, the Australian Government decided to sell Titan. She was initially sold in April 1992 to a New Zealand company, which originally intended to return her to service. However, there was no longer any demand for the crane's services in Sydney, and Titan was on-sold to the Singapore-based Wirana Shipping Corporation in December 1992. Although Titan was listed for protection under the Protection of Moveable Cultural Heritage Act 1986, permission to export the crane to Singapore was approved on the condition that she return to Sydney by July 1995. The crane left Sydney Harbour on 23

December 1992, towed by Wirana's *Rapuhia*, a former research vessel. Although *Rapuhia* was physically capable of towing the crane, she was unregistered, and several safety certifications had expired or lapsed.

10 minutes before 23:00 on 24 December, observers aboard *Rapuhia* felt the ship jerk, and noticed that the navigational lights on Titan were no longer visible; further inspection found that the tow-line had snapped, and the barge was found nearby, having rolled over. The official report states that *Rapuhia* towed the barge south to a suitable area for scuttling, but several people involved in the salvage and scuttling operation claim that the towing cable wrapped around the propeller shafts, and both *Rapuhia* and Titan drifted without control until divers cut the cable free. The crane arm fell off while the pontoon was inverted.

The barge was moved to a point 3.7 km south-east of Camden Head. After several days of inspection, it was determined that the remains could not be salvaged, and plans were made to scuttle her. A combination of a lift balloon and the cutting of holes in the bilges allowed the barge to be brought from an inverted position to roughly 90 degrees from vertical, before she was scuttled on 29 December at 09:00, sinking in 33 metres of water 31.664267°S 152.873330°E. Subsequent investigation by the Australian Department of Transport and Communication found that several rivets had failed on the starboard side of the pontoon, causing it to take large volumes of water. This loss of stability, combined with ocean and water conditions, plus the stresses of the tow, resulted in Titan rolling over and capsizing.



Titan in August 1989 at Cockatoo Island, Photo by Tom Strasser

de Havilland Sea Venom F.A.W. MK 53

The de Havilland Sea Venom 53 was a British designed and built two-seat fighter all weather (FAW) in service with the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) from 1956 to 1966; replacing the piston engine Hawker Sea Fury. The RAN purchased 39 of these aircraft.

The Sea Venom was the naval version of the Venom NF.2 two-seat night fighter. The necessary modifications for use on board aircraft carriers included folding wings, a tail-hook and a modified and strengthened undercarriage. The 808 Squadron, reformed in the United Kingdom (UK) on 23 August 1955, was the first RAN Squadron to be equipped with Sea Venoms which were formally accepted into RAN service on 27 February 1956. The squadron embarked in HMAS *Melbourne*, which had recently commissioned and arrived in Australia in April 1956. Sea Venoms were operated by 805 and 816 Squadrons embarked in *Melbourne* during exercises in Southeast Asia, while serving as part of the Far East Strategic Reserve. They also operated on escort duties for the fast troop transport HMAS *Sydney* to Vung Tau Harbour, Vietnam during 1965 and 1966. The aircraft's main role was to provide 24 hour fighter protection for the fleet from enemy aircraft while on operations.

Flying the Sea Venom required significant skill and ability. Two 808 Squadron aircrew were killed in the UK on a training flight in [January 1956](#). A total of 11 of the 39 Sea Venoms crashed or were damaged beyond repair with nine aircrew killed. Most of the crashes were at Nowra but two occurred at sea from *Melbourne* due to equipment failure. A Sea Venom was lost, with [both](#) aircrew killed, on 8 August 1956 when the catapult failed to effectively launch the aircraft. Nearly ten years later (on 28 April 1966) a Sea Venom crashed into the Philippine Sea, with the observer killed, when the tail hook failed on landing and the aircraft lost power; being lost over the side of the carrier. Another was lost off the east coast in May 1959 while on a photo reconnaissance training flight and another crashed into Sydney Harbour, on 5 July 1963, following a collision with another Sea Venom during a flypast.



The Sea Venom began to be phased out of RAN service in mid-1966 and was replaced by the US McDonnell Douglas A4 Skyhawk, although 724 Squadron operated four as target towing aircraft up until June 1973. A number of Sea Venoms were sold for scrap or used for firefighting training at Nowra. A few became museum exhibits.

Source: [De Havilland Sea Venom F.A.W. MK 53 | Sea Power Centre](#)

Further Reading: [Australian Naval Aviation Roll of Honour](#).

HMAS *Benalla*

HMAS *Benalla* was one of 60 Australian minesweepers (commonly known as corvettes) built during the Second World War in Australian shipyards as part of the Commonwealth Government's wartime shipbuilding program. Twenty were built on Admiralty order but manned and commissioned by the Royal Australian Navy. Thirty-six (including *Benalla*) were built for the Royal Australian Navy and four for the Royal Indian Navy.

Although nominally a minesweeper, *Benalla* was fitted during construction for survey duties and did not carry minesweeping gear. 'X' Deck was extended to accommodate a large chart room. Occasionally, if its program permitted, *Benalla* combined convoy escort duty with passage to another operating area.

Benalla commissioned at Melbourne on 27 April 1943 under the command of Acting Lieutenant Commander Leslie N Morison RANR(S).



On 19 May 1943 the ship departed Melbourne for Sydney, where it arrived on 22 May. After completion of trials *Benalla* was assigned to duty in northern waters. It sailed from Sydney for Brisbane, on 2 June 1943, with an ammunition lighter in tow and arrived at Brisbane on 6 June. On 15 June it sailed for Townsville, arriving on 18 June. En route to New Guinea waters to take up survey duties *Benalla* was one of the escorts for a convoy of six ships (three for Milne Bay and three for Port Moresby), which departed Townsville on 20 June 1943. HMAS *Katoomba* (I) was the second escort. When the convoy split *Benalla* and *Katoomba* escorted the Milne Bay and Port Moresby sections respectively. *Bunbury* joined the convoy from Cairns and accompanied *Benalla* to Milne Bay.

On 30 June 1943 *Benalla* and HMAS *Shepparton* were units of the naval force supporting the landing by United States troops on Kiriwina Island. Landings on that island and Woodlark Island, both in the Trobriand Group, were unopposed, there being no Japanese troops on the islands. Following this operation *Benalla* was based at Milne Bay for survey duties. During July-September 1943 a Survey Group comprising *Benalla*, *Shepparton*, HMA Ships *Stella* and *Polaris* and other small craft carried out preparatory work for Australian landings at Lae, Salamaua and Finschhafen. *Benalla* continued its survey work based at Milne Bay until early

December. On 9 December 1943 the ship arrived at Sydney to undergo a refit.

Benalla sailed from Sydney on 29 January 1944 and returned to survey duties in New Guinea waters. During March and April 1944, the ship participated in surveys of Seeadler Harbour (in the Admiralty Island Group) following the capture of the islands by United States troops. In August it returned to Brisbane for a refit lasting two months.

On 11 October 1944 *Benalla* sailed for Hollandia, from where it sailed for the Philippines on 29 October as part of the escort for 20 United States liberty ships. Arriving at Leyte Gulf on 4 November 1944 *Benalla* joined the frigate HMAS *Gascoyne* for survey duty in San Pedro Bay before returning to New Guinea waters in December where it continued survey work. Christmas Day 1944 was spent at Nuakata Island.



HMAS *Benalla* (right) with HMAS *Castlemaine* (rear) and HMAS *Sleuth* (left) off Darwin in 1944.

Benalla arrived at Darwin on 6 January 1945 to take up duty with a Survey Group on the Australian north-west coast. This work occupied it for four months and on 3 May it sailed from Darwin for Fremantle, where it remained until July. On 20 July *Benalla* arrived at Darwin to resume survey duty.

Benalla sailed from Darwin on 7 September 1945 as a unit of the Australian/Dutch force ordered to Koepang for the ceremony of surrender of all Japanese forces in Timor. The ships arrived at Koepang on 11 September and at noon that day the Japanese commander signed the instrument of surrender aboard the sloop HMAS *Moresby*.

After returning from Timor, *Benalla* resumed survey duty in the north-western area. On 2 November 1945 it departed Darwin and proceeded to Fremantle. It paid off into reserve at Fremantle on 28 January 1946.

Benalla remained at Fremantle until 25 March 1955, when the tug HMAS *Sprightly* sailed for Melbourne with *Benalla* in tow. The ships arrived at Melbourne on 4 April and *Benalla* remained in reserve but was later transferred to Geelong. While still remaining in reserve the ship was towed from Geelong to Sydney by *Sprightly*, departing Geelong on 21 January 1956 and arriving at Sydney on 25 January.

On 20 February 1958 *Benalla* was sold for scrap to Mitsubishi Shoji Kaisha Ltd of Tokyo. The Japanese salvage vessel *Tokushima Maru* sailed from Sydney on 25 April 1958 with *Benalla* in tow and in due course it was broken up for scrap in Japan.

Source: Seapower Centre Australia, HMAS *Benalla* (I) History, available at <https://seapower.navy.gov.au/history/units/hmas-benalla-i>

HMAS Quiberon – Extracts from Report of Proceeding from 16th November to 3rd December, 1942.

After commissioning on 6 July 1942 HMAS Quiberon served in the North Atlantic on convoy duty and in the Mediterranean Sea until January 1943. The following extracts from its Reports of Proceedings during the period demonstrate its very active war service.

Saturday 28th November, 1942

Ship was in action from midnight onwards against bombers; a fair number of bombs were dropped, some very close to Force "Q".

During the forenoon there were more raids and the few fighters left at Bone in Algeria had their hands full to deal with the raiders. At 1330 HMAS *Quiberon* slipped and proceeded to assist HMS *Quentin* who was hunting a U Boat.

On arrival *Quentin* reported that the U Boat had surfaced out of control and gone down stern first and contact had been lost. After a search of 25 minutes *Quiberon* made contact and this contact was confirmed by *Quentin* as a submarine.

Quiberon attacked after a careful investigation during which there was slight closing doppler, pronounced "whistle effect" and an irregular sound of hammering as if someone was trying to shut a W/T door or hitting the hull.

After *Quiberon* attacked whistle effect and the hammering ceased and a huge bubble of air which smelt of fuel and later a gradually spreading film of diesel oil which eventually covered several miles. *Quentin* then carried out a further attack and more oil came to the surface. Samples of oil were taken and confirmed it was diesel oil and a thicker crankcase oil. Unfortunately, *Quiberon* and *Quentin* had to be recalled to take part in an operation with Force "Q" and could not wait for bodies etc. to be washed out. Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham made a signal confirming the "kill".

Returning to Bone at 1700 one JU 88 was shot down into the sea by a Spitfire.

At 1715 a fairly heavy raid was made on Bone aerodrome and the runway was badly damaged and big fires were burning. It is believed that 6 JU 88s were shot down.



HMAS Quiberon

Force "Q" sailed at 1730 to intercept an Italian convoy. This operation was cancelled later and Force "Q" was ordered to proceed to Algiers.

During the night enemy aircraft flew over the Force and several were actually sighted but no attempt was made to attack Force "Q".

Tuesday 1st December

Force "Q" arrived at Bone at 0800. 4 JU 88s flew over the harbour at 0845 and one was shot down. Bone had a heavy raid last night but there does not appear to be much damage. Destroyers fuelled from RFA *Brown Ranger*.

At 1730 Force "Q" sailed to intercept a convoy between Sicily and Tunis.

Wednesday 2nd December

Speed 27 knots through a supposed enemy minefield. At 0055 Force "Q" made contact and went into action. *Quiberon* was following HMS *Argonaut*.

At 0059 sighted an enemy destroyer break through smoke screen and turn to fire torpedoes; *Quiberon* increased to 25 knots and turned to engage. Fire was opened at 5000 yards and second salvo hit as did successive salvos at 0101. Enemy destroyer (SIRIO class) was badly damaged and turned into smoke screen.

Two "E" boats attacked out of the smoke screen and fired torpedoes; these were avoided by going hard over, but passed uncomfortably close.

Quiberon then rejoined the line passing a blazing troopship which was sunk. There were about 1000 – 1500 men struggling in the water and *Quiberon* passed through them at 25 knots, I judged them to be Italians.

At 0117 *Quentin* and *Quiberon* sank another troopship which had already been fired at by the cruisers. At 0147 sighted a destroyer lying on her beam ends. Three salvos were fired into her bottom but it is not known if she sank.

Total bag for the night three destroyers and four merchant vessels, two of which were troopships.

At 0627 at dawn a torpedo bomber attacked Force "Q" and *Quentin* was torpedoed. HMAS *Quiberon* circled *Quentin* and eventually decided that as *Quentin* was sinking we should endeavour to "cut our losses". I went alongside *Quentin* and removed 8 officers and 174 ratings. During the time alongside I was bombed and cannoned. *Quiberon* got clear just as a stick of bombs fell where she had been; the explosions were under my forecastle. Ship went on to 33 knots and was attacked six more times by LLB, D/B and one abortive attempt by T/B aircraft. Sticks of bombs all fell fairly close but thanks to good gunnery and high speed I was able to alter course as necessary after seeing the bombs begin to fall.

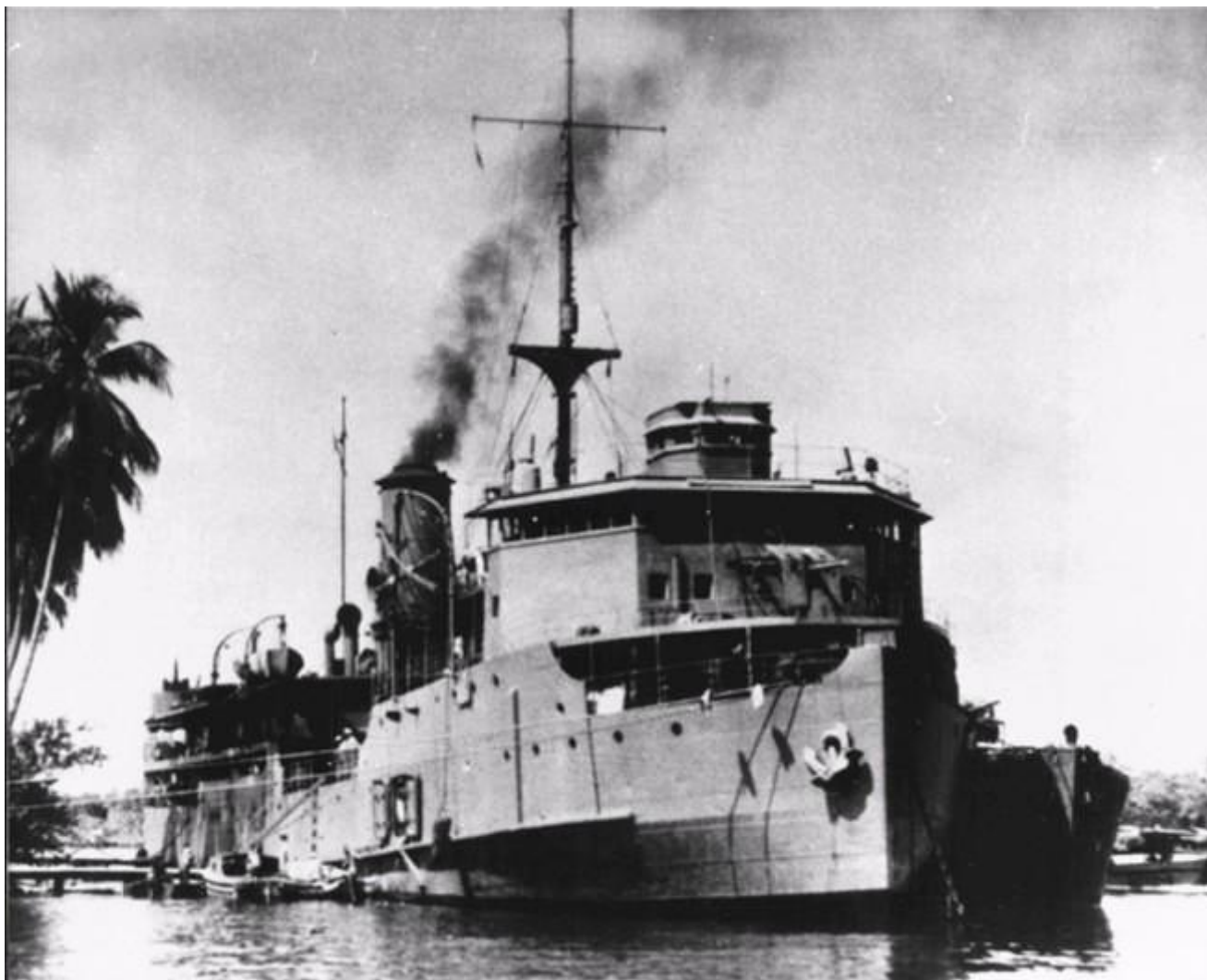
Quiberon arrived Bone at 0930 and secured alongside HMS *Sirius* who took over care of *Quentin's* survivors.

Force "Q" sailed for Algiers at 1645.

Thursday 3rd December

Arrived Algiers without incident, fuelled and secured to *Princess Beatrix* (troopship) in harbour.

Photo of the Month



HMAS Ping Wo

HMAS *Ping Wo* was a 3,105 tons former Indo-Chinese river steamer that was commissioned into the RAN during World War II. The Chinese name translates to "Equitable Harmony".

Built in 1922 for the Indo-China Steam Navigation Company, the vessel was initially requisitioned for service with the Royal Navy in December 1941 as a water carrier. After the fall of Singapore, the vessel sailed to Batavia (now Jakarta) and with a mixed complement of RN and RAN reservists and civilian Chinese seamen, was engaged in the 62-day tow (at an average speed of three knots) of the disabled HMAS *Vendetta* from the Javan port of Tanjung Priok to Fremantle, Western Australia and subsequently part of the way to Melbourne via Albany. This tow was the longest ever involving an RAN warship.

After this, *Ping Wo* was paid off by the RN on 19 May 1942 and then chartered and commissioned into the RAN on 22 May 1942. As HMAS *Ping Wo*, the vessel sailed to the east coast of Australia and was initially used as a tender at the joint Australian-United States amphibious training centre at HMAS *Assault*, Port Stephens. *Ping Wo* was later used as a stores ship and from January 1945 as a repair and works depot vessel in the New Guinea theatre of operations, winding up as the RAN administrative headquarters at Madang.

After the end of naval operations in New Guinea, *Ping Wo* was paid off and returned to her owners in Hong Kong on 24 June 1946.

News

Shark 02 Commemoration

On 2 April 2025 commemoration ceremonies were held at Russell Offices in Canberra and at HMAS *Albatross* in Nowra, NSW for Shark 02 which crashed 20 years ago.

Shark 02 was part of a two-aircraft flight from HMAS *Kanimbla* when the flight controls failed, causing the nose of the aircraft to pitch down, leading to an impact with the ground.



At the time the ADF was helping with disaster relief efforts following the Indian Ocean earthquake and subsequent tsunamis that devastated the region. Nine died and Leading Seaman Shane Warburton and Air Force Corporal Scott Nichols were seriously injured and survived the crash.

Reference: RANFAAA report, [Loss of Sea King Shark 02](#)

HMAS *Sydney* conducts live fire exercise with the Army

HMAS *Sydney* recently conducted live-fire training ahead of its participation in Exercise Bersama Shield in Malaysia and Singapore. HMAS *Sydney* fired its 5-inch gun, in support of an Army joint fires team that acted as spotters for the activity at the Shoalwater Bay Field Training Area.

While joint live-fire training between Navy and Army is rare, it is important for supporting coastal land manoeuvres. The training allowed participants to physically see and feel the difference in how the rounds landed, the effects of terrain on the round and how the movement of the firing vessel created a difference in the fall of shot.



Video of the Month

An AWM promotional short film on the RAN Fleet Air Arm's 724 Squadron.

This film opens with an aerial shot of the South Coast of NSW with Sea Venoms of 724 Squadron on aerobic manoeuvres followed by 724 Squadron at their base HMAS Albatross, Nowra. Ground crew servicing Sea Venoms. 724 Squadron pilots at a briefing. Sea Venoms jet engines started up with cartridges. Sea Venoms unfold wings, taxi on tarmac and take off in formation. Firing rockets and canons on coastal headland target range. An air sea rescue boat stands by. Aerial shots of various aerobic manoeuvres such as loop the loop and barrel rolls. Sea Venoms landing in formation at HMAS Albatross.



[Click here for the film](#)

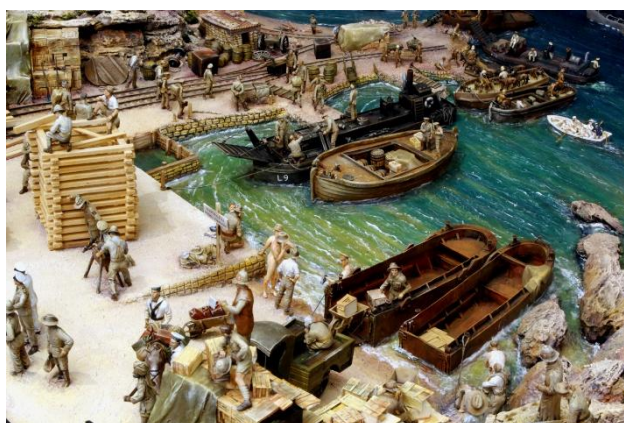
Duration: 6mins 18.

Occasional Papers

- Occasional Paper 192 - Exploring a diorama -The RAN Bridging Train at Suvla Bay during the Gallipoli Campaign
- Occasional Paper 193 - Ship Building at Cockatoo Island 1870 to 1986.

Diorama in need of a home

Occasional paper 192 tells the story of the RAN Bridging Train at Suvla Bay during the Gallipoli Campaign. The diorama featured in this story was built in 2015 and toured with an Anzac exhibition to a number of Australian museums. It was later put into storage as it was considered too large to be re-used in the proposed reconfiguration of the naval galleries at the Maritime Museum. It could now be donated to any organization that might want to display it. Geoff Barnes, who built the diorama, would very much like to see it go back on display.' If you are aware of possible interest in acquiring the diorama please contact the Society.



This Month in History - April

April 1860	HMVS VICTORIA sailed from Melbourne for service in the Maori War, in New Zealand. This was Australia's first commitment of forces overseas.
April 1900	CAPT Hector McDonald Laws Waller, DSO and Bar, RAN, one of Australia's greatest naval commanders, was born at Benalla, VIC.
April 1914	LEUT A. M. Longmore, an Australian serving with the Naval Wing of the Royal Flying Corps, flew the First Sea Lord, Winston Churchill, on his first flight in a Maurice Farman seaplane.
April 1915	The submarine HMAS AE2, (LCDR H. Stoker, RN), penetrated the Dardanelles while the first ANZAC troops were storming ashore at Gallipoli. After evading Turkish warships and mines, she broke through into the Sea of Marmara with orders to "Run Amok Generally" behind the enemy lines. AE2 sank a Turkish gunboat with a torpedo during her passage of the Dardanelles.
April 1924	HMAS AUSTRALIA was ceremoniously scuttled off Sydney Heads as part of the Washington Treaty, which limited fleet sizes, (the RAN was included as part of the RN under this treaty). The scuttling was observed by the remainder of the Australian Fleet, and hundreds of patriotic citizens in private vessels.
April 1930	HMAS HUON was sunk as a target, off Sydney Heads, by HMA Ships AUSTRALIA (II) and CANBERRA, (cruisers).
April 1940	HMAS WESTRALIA captured Norwegian steamer FERNLANE (4310grt) north of Australia and sent her under a prize crew to Singapore.
April 1944	LEUT M. H. Shean, RANVR, commanding a midget submarine, successfully laid charges in Bergen Harbour, Norway. A floating dock was severely damaged and the merchant vessel BARENFELS was sunk in the attack. Shean was awarded the DSO.
April 1948	HMAS BARCOO was blown ashore at Glenelg Beach SA, during a gale. She was later re-floated without damage.
April 1952	723 Squadron recommissioned at Naval Air Station Nowra as a Fleet Requirements Unit. Commanded by Lieutenant Jeff Gledhill, the squadron was equipped with two Hawker Sea Fury, a Douglas Dakota, a Supermarine Sea Otter and a Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation Wirraway.
April 1962	HMAS PARRAMATTA joined her sister ship YARRA deploying to the Far East where the two ships relieved HMA Ships QUICKMATCH and VAMPIRE in the British Commonwealth Strategic Reserve. During that deployment PARRAMATTA's crew took part in the SEATO exercise SEA DEVIL before visiting Japan in company with other RAN vessels.
April 1968	The Oberon class submarine HMAS OTWAY, (LCDR G. R. Dalrymple, RAN), was commissioned. OTWAY was laid down at Scott's Yard, Greenock, Scotland, on 29 June 1965, and launched on 29 November 1966. Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent, performed the launching ceremony.
April 1975	The patrol boat HMAS AWARE, (LEUT G. Sproule, RAN), apprehended four Taiwanese vessels, and one Indonesian vessel, that were fishing in Australian territorial waters near Dampier, WA.
April 1982	RAN personnel joined the Multi-National Force and Observers, operating on the Sinai Peninsula, to enforce the separation of Egyptian and Israeli forces. The RAN provided Iroquois helicopters, (which had been transported to the Middle East by HMAS TOBRUK), to patrol the peninsula. The RAN presence ceased in 1986, but a small Army detachment remained.
April 1990	HMAS CURLEW, the last of the RAN's Ton class minesweepers, was decommissioned at HMAS WATERHEN, Sydney after 28 years of service and 38 years to the day after her keel had been laid. She had steamed more than 400,000 nautical miles in 40,000 hours underway. Curlew remained in the Reserve Fleet until she was sold on 17 June 1991.
April 1997	Ex-HMAS VAMPIRE was transferred outright, as a gift from the Australian Government to the Australian National Maritime Museum, in Sydney.
April 2001	HMAS JERVIS BAY conducts her last re-supply run from Darwin to Dili, in support of the UN peacekeeping mission in East Timor.
April 2011	HMAS ADELAIDE II was scuttled as a dive wreck off Avoca, New South Wales
April 2021	HMAS Supply II was commissioned in Sydney

This Month in History - May

May 1863	The NSW Naval Brigade was formed. The strength of the Brigade at its first parade was 20 officers and men.
May 1912	LEUT A. Longmore, (an Australian serving with the Naval Wing of the Royal Flying Corps), and LEUT Samson, were the first pilots to fly aircraft at a Spithead Review. Longmore flew a monoplane, and Samson a 'hydro-aeroplane'.
May 1914	The RAN's first two submarines, AE1 and AE2, arrived in Sydney after a record voyage from England. Within a year both submarines had been lost on active service, with AE1 lost during the campaign in German New Guinea, and AE2 lost in the Sea of Marmora during the Gallipoli Campaign.
May 1918	HMAS MELBOURNE embarked a ship's Sopwith Camel aircraft, while at Rosyth, Scotland. To launch the aircraft, the cruiser had been fitted with a special platform, built on the top of some of the ships gun turret.
May 1924	The turret ship HMAS CERBERUS, (which had been renamed PLAYTPUS II), was sold for 80 pounds, and taken to Williamstown Dockyard for dismantling. The hulk was later sunk as a breakwater at Black Rock, in Port Phillip Bay, Melbourne. CERBERUS had commenced service with the Victorian Navy in 1871, and had become part of the Australian Navy in 1901.
May 1930	The Royal Australian Naval College at Jervis Bay, NSW, was closed as a cost cutting measure, due to the effects of the Great Depression. The College was re-opened at Flinders Naval Depot, VIC, (HMAS CERBERUS), in June 1930, and was to remain on this site for the next 28 years.
May 1940	Destroyers VENDETTA, VOYAGER and WATERHEN departed Malta as escorts for HMS WARSPITE and arrived at Alexandria on the 10 May.
May 1943	HMAS LATROBE suffered heavy air attacks off the south coast of New Guinea.
May 1951	HMAS BATAAN sailed from Hong Kong for home after eleven months service with the United Nations in Korean waters. BATAAN was enroute to Japan for her sixth post-war tour of duty with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force when the Korean War began on 25 June 1950.
May 1969	Leading Air-crewman N. E. Shipp, (RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam), was killed in action. Five miles west of Dong Tam, Dinh Tuong province, Shipp was door gunner in the lead gunship escorting troop-carrying helicopters of the 11th Regiment, 7th ARVN Division. Because the troop-carrying helicopters came under heavy ground fire in the vicinity of the landing zone the US gunships were ordered in to suppress enemy fire. In order to engage the enemy more closely with his M60 machine gun, Shipp hung out from the helicopter, which was encountering intense fire. During the course of the action his helicopter was hit, crash landed and burst into flames. LACM Noel Shipp, who was the only Australian in the crew was seen to continue firing at the enemy until the moment of impact.
May 1979	The initial engagement period for General Entry Sailors was reduced from nine to six years.
May 1985	The Fremantle class patrol boat HMAS WOLLONGONG, (LCDR I. Gulliver, RAN), was extensively damaged when she ran aground at Gabo Island during a storm. LCDR Gulliver was court-martialed, and found guilty of negligence in grounding his ship. WOLLONGONG was later repaired and rejoined the fleet in late 1986.
May 1991	HMAS PERTH arrived at the port of Pireaus, Greece, to take part in the 50th Anniversary commemorations of the Greece and Crete Campaigns. During her time in the Mediterranean, she embarked a number of RAN and AIF veterans of the campaigns.
May 2003	HMA Ships ANZAC III and DARWIN returned to Australia from the Middle East region. They were the Navy's 23rd and 24th ship deployments to the Middle East region since 1990
May 2011	HMAS TOOWOOMBA II departed Australia for the Middle East region under Operation SLIPPER. It was Navy's 50th individual ship deployment to the Middle East region since 1990.

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/>

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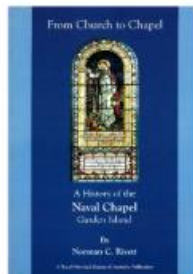
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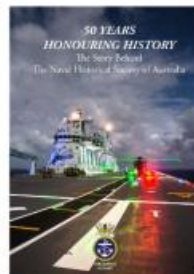
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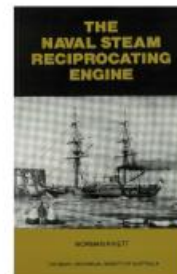
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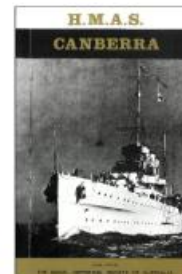
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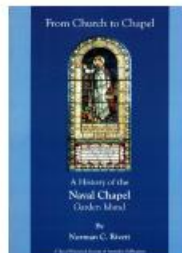
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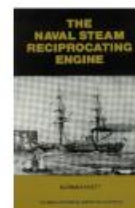


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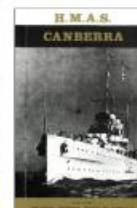
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