

VICTORIA

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### President's Report

It is with pleasure that the Victoria Chapter of the Naval Historical Society of Australia welcomes our new Senior Naval Officer Victoria, Commodore Greg Yorke, CSC, RANR to our 'Garden State'. We look forward to meeting him.

Our year began in February when we enjoyed listening to the XO HMAS CERBERUS, CMDR Matthew Hoffman RAN sharing his passion for our Submarine Service. On 26 March our Speaker is Pamela Nicholls, a WWII WRAN who enlisted in 1943, spurred on to join upon the bombing of Darwin. Pamela was posted to HMAS HARMAN initially, and after training, her initial job was to monitor radio traffic from the Imperial Japanese Navy ships and submarines, in conjunction with Bletchley Park in the UK. Allied intelligence had broken the Japanese Naval Code and the job done by Pamela and her colleagues was essential to the war effort. Commissioned later in the war, Pamela's story is well worth hearing. Join us at Waverley RSL. Why not enjoy a meal in the Warramunga Restaurant? Check out the NHSA or Navy Victoria websites for further information.

Our April meeting in on the 30th, and not on 23 April as you would expect. The RSL has another function on that night. However the recording we have for you is well worth waiting a further seven days for; ANZAC VOICES GALLIPOLI, From those who were there!

ANZAC VOICES is the story of Gallipoli, told by those who lived through it; regular troops, senior commanders, stretcher bearers, signal operators, a nurse and a Turkish General, as well as Australia's official war correspondent. An ABC Classics CD 481-1626, it is a two disc set, and we will hear disc one on the 30th. Recorded between 1953 and 1990, the compelling and deeply emotional first-hand accounts drawn from the ABC Archives recall in graphic detail the circumstances and events of the Gallipoli Campaign, from the innocence of enlistment to the horror of the landing and for those who lived to tell their story - the bitter relief of homecoming.

Our May Speaker is yet to be advised. However I suggest you keep the 28th free! For June we have a DVD entitled WWI; the War to End all Wars. This is a three disc set and from Disc three we feature chapter 9 which is entitled 'Changing tide'. It depicts an American slant on events and when you get used to the narrator distorting the word Admiralty, and Australia's exploits not getting a mention, it has some excellent footage of Jutland and the U Boat campaign, plus the German Spring offensive in 1918 and the Austria/Italy conflict of 1917. America's entry to the war is covered, and in all it is an interesting presentation, well worth watching.

### Naval Museum

When was the last time you visited our Naval Museum at HMAS Cerberus? If it has been a while, you will be very pleasantly surprised as WO Marty Grogan and his team have embarked on a course of continuing improvement, employing the latest trends and adding new attractions. Have you seen the Vietnam Art Gallery or the German Governor's Flag that was liberated during the 1914 Bitia-Paka campaign in German New Guinea? What about the HMAS Lonsdale Room that celebrates our Navy Bands and their music. Then there's the contribution of the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service, plus plenty more to enjoy.

WO Marty Grogan OAM RANR is the man to talk to on 0417 377 763. Cerberus is normally classified as 'Safe Base Charlie' and access is not as easily obtained as in previous years. However, it can be arranged!!! Marty will explain it to you when you contact him. A number of Probus Clubs have already taken advantage of getting a bus load together, and making a day of it with Marty as their host!

Rex Williams

### 'Green Ghost' painting for new HMAS Hobart

Commanding Officer HMAS Hobart, Captain John Stavridis, RAN, and the Ship's Sponsor, Nicola Hodgman, stand beside the painting 'Green Ghost passes the baton' which was presented by former HMAS Hobart (II) sailor, now artist, Mr Randall Wilson, at a ceremony held in the Hobart Town Hall, Tasmania.

The new guided missile destroyer was visiting her namesake city for the first time with a busy schedule of activities over the Royal Hobart Regatta long weekend. Over 180 officers and sailors from the ship marched to Town Hall to exercise their right to Freedom of Entry to the city.

Hobart also opened her hatches to the public during an open day at Princes Wharf with the local community invited to step aboard Australia's newest Fleet unit.

The painting depicts all three ships of the name, with Hobart (II) in the background, and Hobart (I) on the far horizon.



# THE BUZZ

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NEWSLETTER OF THE NAVAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

## FROM THE PRESIDENT - March 2018

The ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus once said, *There is nothing permanent except change*. We in the modern world and Naval Historical Society in particular, are not immune. If anything, the pace of change has accelerated. Fortunately, from the Committee's perspective the changes being made in the Society are essential improvements for the good of members and the community alike. Major changes which have occurred in recent weeks or are planned for the coming weeks and months include;

- the launch of the Society's new website,
- the issue of a member's area 'log on' to all members with an e-mail address and
- plans to digitise the Naval Historical Review (NHR).

The new website was launched (activated) on 13 February and formally commissioned by Society Patron and Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Tim Barrett, AO, CSC, RAN at an event on Cockatoo Island 22 February 2018. Details of this landmark event are covered elsewhere in this edition of The Buzz. Why a 'landmark event'?

Because the Chief actually signed a commissioning order. Why Cockatoo Island? Because the Grant for development of the enhanced website was conditional on the World Heritage listed Cockatoo Island site being featured by the Society. We went even further and created 14 other naval heritage site pages. This important new resource is a credit to the volunteers who researched and compiled the content in these pages.

Another feature to the website is a new 'Members Area'. Here members will be able to manage their details, renew membership, view an image gallery, access the library catalogue, access recent editions of The Review and important documents. Most importantly members can share their story through this page. Please give this serious consideration. All who have served have had unique experiences that need to be recorded and shared. We are offering an easy way to do this. Recognising that this change may be a concern for some, we have included in this mailout a page describing what to expect in the coming days.

Receiving the NHR in digital format each quarter is an option you will need to consider mid-year. Why is the Society doing this? There are two reasons; a growing proportion of members prefer this format and simple economics. Printing and mailing the Review is the Society's largest expense each year. Driving costs down is preferable to putting up membership fees. In June we will be outlining each option and asking for your preference. One advantage in the digital format will be 'full colour' as opposed to a coloured cover only.

In February the Society put in place a closer working relations arrangement with the Naval Officers Club (NOC). NOC members will receive *Call the Hands* each month. The NOC will also extend invitations to NHSA members from time to time. Look out for the first, a Coral Sea Commemoration and lunch at the Australian National Maritime Museum on 5 May 2018. Details will be provided by e-mail.

Similarly, a member's visit to the RAN's newest ship, HMAS Hobart is scheduled for Tuesday, 19 June. Make a note in your diary. Details will also be advised by e-mail.

Finally, the Society's postal address has changed. Our physical location in The Boatshed is unchanged although repeated attacks by white ants are doing their best to unsettle us. Another challenge mid-year will be building works on the reconfigured Oil Wharf. Much of the north end of Garden Island will become a building site with ferry services suspended and heavy vehicles carrying fill past The Boatshed. Although this is potential threat to guided tours of Garden Island (a major source of revenue) the Committee expects contingency plans to be agreed with Navy in the coming months.

As always, the Committee is pleased to hear your concerns, improvement suggestions and feedback on any aspect of Society operations. We can only improve if you tell us where.

David Michael  
President

## FOR THE DIARY: Events, exhibitions & conferences

### NSW Presentations 2018

**Subject:** Guardians of Sunda Strait  
**Speaker:** A talk by Lindsey Shaw  
**Details:** Tuesday, 17 April 2018 from 1730.  
**Where:** Chatswood RSL, 446 Victoria Ave, Chatswood, NSW, 2067

#### Details:

This presentation will address the ships employment prior to and during World War II, the Battle of Sunda Strait, survivor experiences as prisoners of war and the condition of the wrecks of HMAS Perth and USS Houston which lie in relatively shallow water.

Times for all meetings are 1730 for 1800

### VIC Presentations 2018 - Fourth Monday of the month

**Subject:** Naval Intelligence in WWII  
**Speaker:** Pamela Nichols  
**Details:** 26 March 2018  
**Where:** Waverley RSL, 161 Coleman Parade, Glen Waverley (Melways 71C3)  
See page 4 for additional details.

### WA Presentations 2018 - Third Monday of the month

- 19 March at Seminar Room, 57 Lisle Street, Mt Claremont.

### ACT Presentations 2018- First Monday of the month

- Monday, 5 March and 2 April 2018 at Legacy House from 1730.

### VOLUNTEERING WITH THE SOCIETY

New volunteers are sought to progress NHSA current and future activities at Garden Island, Sydney. While most positions required are ongoing some are 'one off' tasks such as developing content for the new website to be launched later this year. A current need is for an IT Operations Support person to assist two days a week maintaining the present system and assisting with updating both hardware and software amongst other things. The reason most volunteer is the Island's old Boatshed, one of the most unique and interesting places to work in Sydney. They commute to Garden Island by a short ferry or bus ride from the CBD. For those seeking interesting work in great surroundings, we would like to talk to you. Please contact us by phoning 02 9359 2243 on either Tuesday or Thursday to arrange a visit and learn more.

Reminder: For a great historical day tell your friends and other groups about the NHSA's Garden Island tours. Call 02 9359 2243.

**Old warship fires original WWII guns**

Taken at the recent ASEAN Naval Review, held in late during November 2017 the accompanying image depicts one of the world's oldest naval ships, the 73-year old Cannon class destroyer escort (DE), now training ship, Pin Klao, firing her original American WWII era 3-inch Mk22 guns as part of the celebrations. The old DE is now one of only two such ships remaining in service in early 2018. Pin Klao began life as the USS Hemminger in May 1944 and was transferred to Thailand in July 1959.



How long this veteran remains active is anyone's guess. Who said ships have to be paid off after 25 or 35 years?

Photo courtesy Mr. C. F. Chan

**Last S-70B-2 Seahawk retired**

The RAN's final Seahawk S-70B-2 helicopter was retired at HMAS Albatross on 1 December 2017. No. 872 ('Christine') was then moved to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra for eventual display.



Bravo model Seahawks, all 16 of them, proved great and versatile assets to the Fleet Air Arm, able to lift heavy loads, flying the AWE at official events, performing search and rescue, anti-submarine warfare and surface warfare duties. And they undertook all these missions with power to spare and in relative crew comfort.

The S-70B-2 helicopters entered RAN service from 1989, with the last helicopter delivered in 1992. Two others of the type have been preserved, 870 for display at the FAA Museum from 2015, and 878 (above), placed at the front gate of NAS Nowra on 16 November 2017.

**Patricia Cam remembered**



Representatives of the RAN and Northern Territory community paused on 22 January to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the sinking of HMAS Patricia Cam and the loss of nine lives.

In 1943, almost a year after the initial air raid on Darwin, a Japanese seaplane bombed and sank Patricia Cam as she sailed from Milingimbi to Elcho Island. In addition to her 19 crew the auxiliary minesweeper was carrying a missionary and five Yolngu men. After the opening barrage, the seaplane returned to drop its second bomb and strafe survivors in the water with machine gun fire. It then landed, captured the missionary at gunpoint and flew off.

Two sailors and two Yolngu men died in the attack, while two more sailors clinging to hatch covers floated away and were not seen again. The remaining 18 men clambered onto a life raft and reached Gurraka Island that night. A hunting party from the Wessel Islands arrived by canoe on 25 January and took the ship's CO, LEUT Sandy Meldrum, to get help, walking 56-ks through rock and scrub with his rescuers reaching Coastwatch Station at Jensen Bay on the 26th. HMAS Kuru rescued them on 29 January.

**New NHSA Website 'launched'**

At an event on Cockatoo Island 22 February the Chief of Navy, Vice-Admiral T. Barrett, AO, CSC, RAN launched a new website for the Society. CN congratulated the Society for its initiative and highlighted the importance of understanding the RAN's rich history which includes the ultimate sacrifice made by so many naval personnel since Federation. The new website was made possible with a Community Heritage Icons grant from the Department of Environment.

President, David Michael described the new website as a rich source of Australia's naval history which informs readers, researchers and students about historic events, heritage sites, the people and ships which make Australian naval history. If it is not on the site, directions show the way or the Society's research service is available to assist.



From left; Mr Norman Rivett, Captain David Michael RANR, Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Tim Barrett, AO, CSC, RAN, Rear Admiral Guy Griffith AO, DSO, DSC, RAN, Rtd, were present at the website launch for the Naval Historical Society, at Cockatoo Island.

The venue was selected due to Cockatoo Islands significance as a World heritage listed site with a rich indigenous, convict and naval shipbuilding and repair history.

The Island, along with 14 other naval heritage sites are new features of the website. Each heritage site page provides an overview of the heritage significance of the site, its history and links to related sites. Detailed archival information unavailable elsewhere about ship construction, refits and dockings on the Island are a feature of the Cockatoo page.

Pages on Garden Island provide detailed and accurate material found nowhere else and covers its entire history from 1788. The Garden Island time line provided is unique. In addition to written content, Society video documentaries provide armchair tours through its history.

Members benefit through an exclusive, protected area providing access to the latest Society publications as well as the opportunity to reach others and publish their own stories.

More than 2,000 stories are publicly accessible through the website.

In addition to showcasing the new website this event was an opportunity to thank the Department of Environment, the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, the RAN and many Society volunteers who have contributed to its development.

This third new generation website, evolved from two previous sites, is indicative of the continuous success and growth achieved by the Naval Historical Society from its humble beginning in Garden Island 47 years ago.

Through its global reach and local services such as public guided tours of Garden Island the Society continues to provide excellent support to Navy and the Community.

**Darwin's 33 year career ends**

The guided missile frigate HMAS Darwin, the fourth of her class to be delivered to the RAN received a grand farewell on 9 December when her AWE and ANF were lowered for the last time. The ceremony was conducted alongside Fleet Base 5 (FB5) at Garden Island in the presence of former crew and hundreds of family members. Darwin will now be de-stored to await her fate; scrapping; to be sunk as an artificial reef or resale.

The President of the NHS, CAPT David Michael RANR attended the event and said, "the decommissioning of any Fleet unit is a sad time for all connected with that ship". "Lets hope Darwin can continue to serve the nation in another role, just like her older sisters, the former HMAS Adelaide and HMAS Canberra".

(right) Crew aboard HMAS Darwin's present the AWE before folding it for safe-keeping by the Commander Australian Fleet for a future commissioned ship of the same name. ABIS Craig Walton.



**Models on view**

Models of various RAN ships over the years. The new LHD HMAS Canberra, with helicopters spotted on her flight deck dominates the overall scene, and in the centre, Fleet units from the Great War include HMAS Australia, accompanied by the Town class light cruiser HMAS Melbourne (rear) and the River class torpedo boat destroyer HMAS Yarra in the foreground. In the far background is one of the RAN's original two County class heavy cruisers.



**From facebook**

Interesting view of the Great War light cruiser HMAS Sydney being broken up at Cockatoo Island about 1929. Courtesy E.W. Searle.



**ex HMAS Curlew up for sale**

The former RAN minesweeper, later minehunter Curlew has been placed on the sales list for \$300,000. Curlew is currently berthed alongside located at the Margate Marina, south of Hobart and must be moved or face demolition. Naval photographer Paul Charlton took this photo on 29 October 2017. Unfortunately there has been little real interest shown to date, with 'inside info' suggesting she might be obtained for a bargain by anyone prepared to move her elsewhere.



**Scuttling planned for 2018**

The Sunshine Coast Daily recently reported that the Queensland State Government was looking for expressions of interest from experienced dive charter operators to operate trips to the soon-to-be-scuttled former landing ship heavy (LSH) HMAS Tobruk.

Tobruk is due to be scuttled off Burrum Heads in the Fraser Coast region, with the hope that will attract thousands of divers from around Australia and overseas. The LSH has undergone many preparations for scuttling with the main aim of making the ship safe for divers.

Representatives of the local tourism industry are keeping their fingers crossed that Tobruk will become as successful as the former guided missile destroyer HMAS Brisbane, scuttled off the Sunshine Coast almost 13 years ago.



(right) HMAS Tobruk arrives in Sydney for the last time, 25 June 2015.

Photo: ABIS Bonny Gassner.

**Another Moresby ?**

The Department of Defence has put the call out to contractors for the construction of a new hydrographic survey ship. Known as project SEA 2400 Phase 1, the new vessel is expected to replace and expand upon the RAN's current hydrographic and oceanographic capabilities. The final contract will comprise a hydrographic/oceanographic survey ship, based on either designs already in-service, or a modified variant of an in-service design. Possible names could be Moresby, Flinders or Cook.

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**SOCIETY OFFICIALS:**

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