



Call the Hands



Issue No. 59

December 2021

From the President

Welcome to the Society's 59th edition of Call the Hands and accompanying occasional papers. The occasional papers are available to members through the members website page. These papers are made available to the community after twelve months. I trust you find them of interest.

Since publishing the November edition of Call the Hands Australians have commemorated the loss of two RAN ships during the dark days of November 1941. Services were conducted across the country. On 27 November 1941 HMAS Parramatta was torpedoed by German submarine U-559 off Libya while supplying the Australian garrison in Tobruk. This occurred just eight days after the loss of HMAS Sydney on 19 November during its battle with the German auxiliary cruiser, Kormoran off Western Australia. Amongst the many speeches delivered during these commemorative events is that given by Commodore Ivan Ingham AM RAN in Geraldton on 19 November. It can be accessed via this [link](#).

Occasional Paper 127 circulated with this newsletter describes the commitment, persistence and science; behind the search for HMAS Sydney II. I am indebted to Commodore Bob Trotter OAM RAN (Rtd) for providing this paper and to Commander Greg Swinden RAN for his paper on the history of HMAS Nepal, an N Class destroyer which served gallantly from May 1942 until October 1945.

Whilst a key role of the Society is to support the RAN, it is regularly assisted by Navy. During November both the Fleet Commander and Chief of Navy lent personal support to the Society. On 13 November Vice Admiral Michael Noonan, AO, RAN attended a 50th anniversary dinner hosted by the Society's WA Chapter and delivered the keynote address. On 25 November Rear Admiral Mark Hammond RAN officiated at a triple book launch in Sydney. We are most grateful to them both for giving their valuable time.

Finally, we acknowledge the long and dedicated service of John Perryman, the Director of Strategic and Historical Studies who retired on 6 December after more than forty years of service both in uniform and the Australian Public Service. John has been a prolific author and has contributed to a wide range of historical publications. We wish him well in his retirement.

As the festive season commences, the Committee, volunteers and office bearers in the Chapters wish you and your family a happy and healthy Christmas and New Year. We look forward to serving you again in 2022.

David Michael



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Christmases Past ...

1789

Entry in New South Wales Colonial Diary: 'West to south-west winds. Temperature 90 degrees. A turtle carried in HMS *Supply* from Lord Howe Island, served at the Governor's table.

1811

Governor Lachlan Macquarie and Mrs. Macquarie celebrated Christmas in HM Colonial Ship *Lady Nelson* on passage from Hobart to Newcastle. 'My poor Elizabeth has suffered a great deal from the seasickness', recorded the Governor.

1916

A Spartan Christmas was the lot of torpedo boat destroyer HMAS *Huon* in Malayan waters: 'On patrol – dirty weather – had bully beef and biscuits and some duff knocked up by ourselves'. (Extract from a stoker's diary.)

1917

HMAS *Huon*, torpedo boat destroyer, transported the Greek Prime Minister, M Venizelos, and his staff, from Taranto to Piraeus. A crewman wrote: 'As we passed the British cruisers, they gave us three cheers for going to sea on Christmas Day'.

1918

Commander W. Burrows assumed command of the Australian Torpedo Boat Destroyer Squadron.

1939

Destroyer HMAS *Stuart* was battling heavy seas off Corsica. Christmas fare was a piece of cake and a glass of beer.

Christmas Day on cruiser, HMAS *Perth* was heralded by the playing of the hymn 'Christians Awake' over the ship's PA system. The menu for Christmas dinner was: soup, roast turkey, York ham with French beans, green peas, roast and boiled potatoes, Christmas pudding with brandy sauce, fresh fruit and nuts.

1940

Destroyer, HMAS *Napier* at Scapa Flow recorded a 'coldly sober Christmas'. The fare was turkey, apple pie and ice cream. A disappointed sailor wrote: 'Never even spliced the main brace – never will forget it'.

Destroyer HMAS *Waterhen*, off the Libyan coast, sank the Italian supply schooner, *Tireremo*

Diritto west of Bardia. From a prisoner, the destroyer learned that the schooner was carrying Christmas mail and comforts.

1942

The Brisbane-based US submarine *Grayback* sank four Japanese supply barges with gunfire off New Georgia.

1943

A Japanese coastwatcher on Cape Ward Hunt reported TF74, HMA Ships *Australia*, *Shropshire*, *Warramunga* and *Arunta*, and US Ships *Helm* and *Ralph Talbot* heading towards Cape Gloucester.

The Brisbane-based US Submarine *Peto* reconnoitered Boang Island in the Solomons and landed a party of coastwatchers.

1944

HMAS *Warramunga*, Tribal Class destroyer, in the Philippines, served the following Christmas menu: Breakfast: fresh fruit, tea and coffee, cereal, fried eggs and bacon: Dinner: roast turkey and ham, beans and peas, plum pudding and brandy sauce, fruit trifle and jelly, nuts and beer; tea: Christmas cake, nuts, iced fruit juice: Supper: giblet soup, cold roast pork and ham, potato salad and mayonnaise, iced fruit juice.

Frigate HMAS *Gascoyne* rescued 1300 troops from the burning transport *Sommelsdijk*, torpedoed by Japanese aircraft off Leyte.

The German submarine *U682* torpedoed and sank the US Merchant ship *Robert J Walker* off Jervis Bay.

1969

RAN Chaplains Reverend L. Breslan and Reverend A. Batt celebrated Mass and Holy Communion in HMAS *Vendetta*, some six miles off the coast of Vietnam.

1970

HMAS *Perth*, guided missile destroyer withdrew from the firing line off Vietnam and celebrated Christmas Day in Hong Kong. During the day, the ship was visited by the Minister for the Navy, Mr. D J Killen, MHR.

1974

HMAS *Arrow*, patrol boat, Lieutenant R.G. Dagworthy, RAN, foundered during Cyclone Tracy in Darwin Harbour. Two members of the ship's crew were lost. HMAS *Attack*, Lieutenant De Graff, was blown aground and damaged. Naval Headquarters was destroyed during the cyclone.



Royal Australian Navy Communications Branch

On Thursday 28th October 2021 the Naval Association of Australia conducted a ceremony to honour the Royal Australian Navy Communications Branch in a ceremony at Southbank, Brisbane. We are grateful to the NAA Queensland for the following extract from the media release concerning the ceremony.

By Jayne Keogh

In the Navy, nothing much happens without communication signals. Signals within ships, between ships, ships and the shore bases, even signals between combatants.

Famous Signals

11.48 am Oct 21 1805

“England expects that every man will do his duty” Admiral Lord Nelson sent up in message flags inspiring his fleet to defeat the French. Every Trafalgar Day on every Navy ship in the Commonwealth the ‘Colours’ of Union Jack and White Ensign are hoisted followed by this same flag sequence.

1331 8th May 1945

“Germany has surrendered unconditionally. Cease fire has been ordered from 2301(Central European Time) Eight May.” Was sent by Commander of the US Tenth Fleet by Marconigram, by radio telegraphy to the Atlantic Fleet, an original copy in the QMM collection.

The top deck methods of flags and semaphores were very visual, to be seen by all, including the enemy, but everything changed when Morse Code was invented. Communication went below decks, controlled by sailors tapping away, sending, receiving and listening, typing, radios squawking, printed messages run to the Captain on the bridge. It was a secret language of codes, protecting secret conversations in locked rooms. The Communicators became integral to Naval Intelligence.



In April 1903 the first successful ship shore wireless transmission in the southern hemisphere was sent between HMQS *Gayundah* and a shed in the grounds of St Mary's Kangaroo Point. It was instigated by Captain Creswell, regarded as the 'Father of the Australian Navy' with equipment he brought back from the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. Both sites had bamboo poles attached to normal aerials for added height. A Memorial to Navy Communicators is now on the site.

Semaphore Skills retained by CPO CIS Daniel Hill onboard HMAS Anzac, RAN image

In the Royal Australian Navy, the Communications Branch morphed from this experiment, but as late as 1914 flag messaging was still integral. In the first Naval engagement in WW1 when HMAS *Sydney* engaged with the cruiser *Emden* the Captain refused to cease fire on the sinking German ship because they had not dropped the battle Ensign.

WW2 saw the expansion of women into the Navy due to their role in Communications with the establishment of the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS). Telegraphists were the first to be recruited and played a huge role in radio telegraphy in the war in the Pacific. The first females to join the Communications Branch were trained by the legendary Mrs Mac [Florence Violet McKenzie] of the Women's Emergency Signalling Corps.

In WW2 the reliance on cryptography increased to counter the early successes of German communication signal intelligence and intercept, and the submarine war against the Allied supply lines in the Atlantic. The need for tactical radio silence became paramount. Following the United States' entry into the war in 1941, new codes, signalling procedures and manoeuvring instructions had to be mastered by Communications personnel.

The RAN operated successfully as an element of the US Task Forces operating throughout the Pacific. The USN extensively used Radio Telephony (R/T) to manoeuvre the large and widespread formations by voice over early tactical communication frequencies. Successful integration of the Anglo-American fleets in the Pacific theatre contributed to the successful outcome of the war in the Pacific and a close relationship that continued after the war.

This relationship continued throughout the twentieth century in conflicts in Korea and Vietnam. By the 60s and 70s the Branch, based at HMAS *Harman* in Canberra, was part of a world-wide Defence communications management organisation that had counterparts in the US, Canada, NZ and the UK.

As in the past, the Communicator's job continues to expand and change in the digital age. The communicator's job skills now include the management and operation of visual communications, fleet work, radio, Communications Security (COMSEC), Operational Security (OPSEC), multiple information system domains, boarding operation communications, combat survivability voice and board markers, military satellite communications and broadband satellite communications.



'Splice the Main Brace'

HMY *Britannia* to HMAS *Torrens* 11th October 1982 This means 'A tot of rum for all the sailors!'



Able Seaman Cryptologic Linguist Meagan Foster using the ship's big eyes while HMAS *Anzac* is berthed at Port Fujairah, UAE August 2012. RAN image

The Esther Williams Trophy

An odd item in the Naval Heritage Collection which is currently displayed in the RAN Heritage Centre Garden Island is the Esther Williams Trophy. The trophy is a framed picture that was the centrepiece of an unofficial inter-navy competition between the wardrooms of the RAN, the RN plus the Canadian and US navies.

Originating in HMAS *Nepal* during World War Two, it was a framed photograph of the film star that had been surreptitiously inscribed to have come from the star to Lieutenant Lindsay Brand, an officer of the ship. It was jealously guarded and mounted above his bunk, but later mysteriously disappeared, only to later be discovered in another ship, reportedly to 'protect Esther's honour'.

This started an unofficial competition that became so intense, that specific rules had to be applied to prevent efforts that might have led to bloodshed.

The competition expanded to four navies over two decades, during which the picture changed ships more than 200 times.

It was retired in 1957, being stored in the Navy Historical Collection on Garden Island, which later moved to Spectacle Island.

But that was not the end of it – it was once again 'borrowed' from Spectacle Island in 1997 by officers from the guided missile destroyer HMAS *Brisbane (II)*. It was temporarily reunited with its original owner, Lindsay Brand in 2004, the fourth time since 1943. He was amazed that the tradition had again been reinstituted.



Too protect the original poster Naval Heritage Collection staff reframed it in October 1977



Following the death of Esther Williams in June 2013 at the age of 91, the trophy was officially retired. The last unit to capture 'Esther' was RAN Clearance Diving Team Four, which presented the trophy to HMAS *Stuart* for the voyage to its final destination, the Royal Australian Navy Heritage Centre.



HMAS St Giles

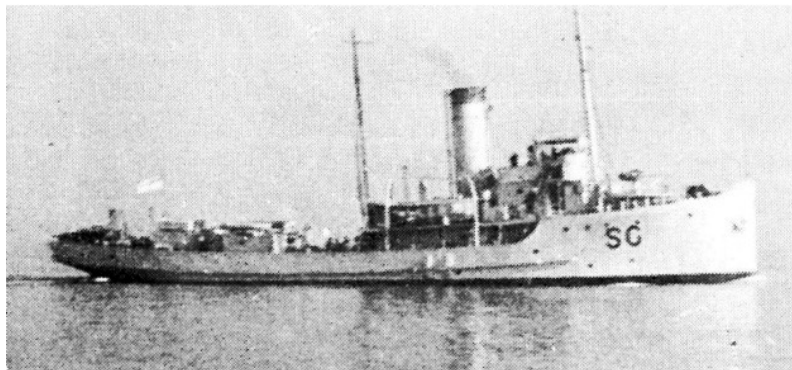
Media stories following the announcement on 19 November 2021 of Able Seaman Thomas Welsby Clark as the unknown sailor from HMAS *Sydney II* were accompanied by an image of Thomas Clark in uniform wearing a HMAS *St Giles* cap tally. At this time, he was serving as a Submarine Detector in *St Giles* which was an anti-submarine training ship based in Sydney. The following is the service history of HMAS *St Giles*.

A steel steam tug, *St Giles* served two commissions in the Royal Australian Navy between 1940 and 1942 and 1945 and 1946.

St Giles was built by Ferguson Shipbuilders, Glasgow in 1919 for the British Admiralty as a Rescue/Saint class ocean tug. In 1922 she was purchased by J. & A. Brown & Company of Newcastle, New South Wales, and steamed to Australia where it was later acquired by the Waratah Tug and Salvage Co Pty Ltd, of Sydney in 1931.

Following the outbreak of World War II, *St Giles* was requisitioned by the RAN in 1939 and commissioned on 15 January 1940 following modification to heighten its forecastle at Garden Island Dockyard. This modification provided improved sea-keeping qualities. *St Giles* was first employed as an auxiliary patrol vessel and target towing vessel. It was later converted into an auxiliary anti-submarine vessel until decommissioned in May 1942.

St Giles was recommissioned on 23 August 1945. During this second commission it served as a tugboat in Australian and New Guinea waters and finally paid off from the RAN in March 1946. After return to its owners in 1947 *St Giles* continued in commercial service until sold for scrap and broken up in 1956.



HMAS St Giles

TONNAGE:	380 gross
LENGTH:	41.3 m
BEAM:	8.8 m
DRAUGHT:	4.1m
HORSEPOWER:	208
SPEED:	12.5 knots.

Reference: Australian Ships of War, John Bastock 1975

Video of the Month

The band of HMAS Brisbane DDG 41, 1994 somewhere in the Philippine Sea.

[HMAS Brisbane band perform Proud Mary - video taken from HMAS Westralia](#)



Society Office Bearers: 2022

The Committee elected during the 2021 Annual General Meeting to manage the Society for the coming year is as follows.

President:	David Michael
Vice President:	John Jeremy
Hon Secretary:	David Blazey
Hon Treasurer:	Nick Horspool
Editor NHR:	Walter Burroughs

Committee Members

Peter Brigden
Ian Phillips
Tony Townsend
Noel Phelan
Mark Lee

Colin Randall stood down from the Committee but continues as a volunteer archivist and project manager. We are most grateful for Colin's service on the Committee as well as his abundant energy, enthusiasm and initiatives as a regular volunteer. He has contributed much to the success of the Society over the last four years.

Boatshed Holiday Closure

Readers are reminded that the Boatshed will not be manned as we take a break for the holiday period. The Boatshed will close on Thursday 16 November and reopen on Tuesday 11 January.

As usual there will be no January edition of *Call the Hands*. We look forward to bringing you more interesting stories from February 2022.

Photo of the Month



Cockatoo Island 1969

Cockatoo Island from the north west in July 1969. HMAS *Sydney* is at the Cruiser Wharf, Ship 224, the destroyer escort *Torrens* (launched in September 1968) is being fitted out at the Bolt Shop Wharf, HMAS *Vendetta* is at the Destroyer Wharf at the end of her refit prior to deploying to Vietnam, the Army LSM *Harry Chauvel* is in the Fitzroy Dock, the two patrol boats in Timber Bay are HMAS *Attack* and HMAS *Ardent*, HMAS *Melbourne* is in the Sutherland Dock, the floating crane *Titan* is at the Coal Wharf and the patrol boat *Archer* is at the Plate Wharf.

The first Naval Dockyard of the Royal Australian Navy

Cockatoo Island is the largest Island in Sydney Harbour and is located at the junction of the Parramatta and Lane Cove Rivers, about 3.7 km west of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. It has a unique place in the history of Australia, starting with early European occupation as a penal settlement then operating as a shipbuilding, ship repair and general engineering establishment for 134 years. Today, Cockatoo Island is a UNESCO world-heritage listed site in the custody of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, a self-funding agency created by the Australian Government to protect and improve public access to former defence and Commonwealth sites around Sydney Harbour.

Additional information can be found on our website at <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/naval-heritage-sites/cockatoo-island>.

News in Brief

HMAS *Stalwart* (III) Commissioned

The Royal Australian Navy commissioned the second Supply-class auxiliary oiler replenishment (AOR) ship at Fleet Base West, Rockingham, Western Australia on 13 November 2021.

HMAS *Stalwart* will provide logistics replenishment to ships at sea, while also having the ability to support the Joint Force on a wider scale. *Stalwart* is the third Royal Australian Navy vessel with this name. Further information on the these ship is on the following page.



Exercise *Annualex* 2021

Royal Australian Navy (RAN) vessels have finished nine days of maritime warfare training with four nations; Canada, Germany, Japan and USA during *Annualex* 2021. *Annualex* is a yearly naval training event led by JMSDF. Naval forces from around the world are invited to participate in the event in an effort to strengthen enduring relationships while sharpening naval proficiencies at all levels. This year's exercise took place in the Philippine Sea, off the southern coast of Japan.



Two Royal Australian Navy (RAN) vessels HMA Ships *Brisbane* and *Warramunga* joined the United States Navy, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, Royal Canadian Navy and German Navy to practice maritime communications, flying operations, replenishments at sea, anti-submarine and anti-air warfare.

HMAS *Gascoyne*

Friends and families of HMAS *Gascoyne* recently lined the wharf at HMAS *Waterhen* to welcome it back after a successful three-month deployment. *Gascoyne*'s 45 crew left Sydney on 30 August 2021, and spent time circumnavigating Australia to conduct vital route surveys of Australia's most important and strategic waterways.

In October, *Gascoyne* visited its ceremonial homeport, Exmouth in Western Australia and spent a number of days participating in local events. Following the Exmouth visit, *Gascoyne* joined in the mine countermeasure exercise, Exercise *Dugong* 2021 and played a key role in countering a simulated adversary who was attempting to block the Port of Fremantle and Indian Ocean accesses.



HMAS *Stalwart* in the RAN

HMAS *Stalwart* (III)

The second of two Supply Class Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment (AOR) ships *Stalwart* III along with sister ship, HMAS *Supply* will sustain RAN Fleet units during extended deployments. In addition to replenishing ships of the RAN *Stalwart* can supply other ADF units with fuel, water, food, ammunition, and a variety of other cargo for extended periods.



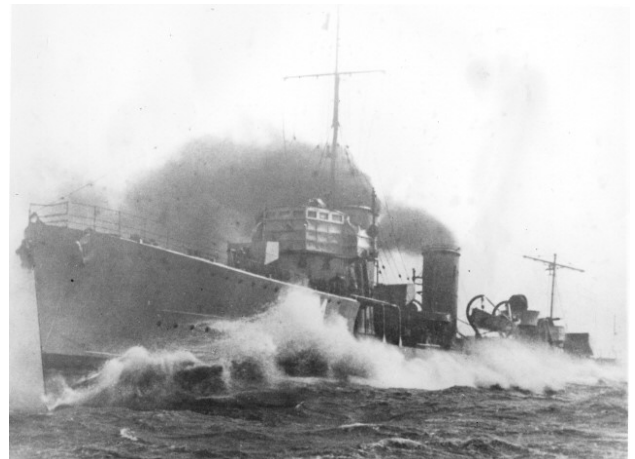
HMAS *Stalwart* (II)

The largest ever naval vessel wholly designed and built in Australia, HMAS *Stalwart* (II) commissioned on 9 February 1968. Built at Cockatoo Island it served as an escort maintenance ship until decommissioned on 9 March 1990. Fitted out as a mobile base facility, *Stalwart* greatly increased Navy's self-sufficiency and scope for 'afloat support'. It enabled frigates and destroyers to operate for long periods away from home port. Alongside, *Stalwart* was able to supply such essential services as fresh water, steam, electricity and telephone communication. It was decommissioned on 9 March 1990.



HMAS *Stalwart* (I)

Stalwart was one of 55 S Class destroyers built for the British Admiralty under the Emergency Shipbuilding Program of World War I. She commissioned into the Royal Navy (RN) as HMS *Stalwart* in April 1919. She was not long in commission, when she and her five sisters were gifted to the Royal Australian Navy as replacements for the RAN's obsolete River Class destroyers. She recommissioned into the RAN as HMAS *Stalwart* at Devonport, UK on 27 January 1920,



Post-war cuts to defence spending saw a number of RAN vessels decommissioned. *Stalwart* was the only one of the S Class destroyers not to be temporarily decommissioned in the early 1920s. However, she was the first of the S Class to decommission permanently on 1 December 1925. Having made only one visit to New Guinea in June-July 1924 *Stalwart* spent the rest of its sea-going career in Australian waters until sold for breaking up on 4 June 1937.

Further Reading:

Sea Power Centre Australia, [HMAS *Stalwart* \(I\) History](#)

Sea Power Centre Australia, [HMAS *Stalwart* \(II\) History](#)

This Month in History

December 1855	The steam war sloop HMVS VICTORIA, (CAPT Lockyer, RN), sailed from the Thames on her maiden voyage to Australia.
December 1907	The Prime Minister of Australia, Alfred Deakin, announced that Australia would purchase 9 C-class submarines, and 6 torpedo boat destroyers, over three years, to be built, manned and maintained by Australia.
December 1911	SBLT A. M. Longmore, RN, an Australian serving in the RN, successfully landed a Short S27 aircraft fitted with airbags on the Medway River, England.
December 1916	A spartan Christmas was the lot of HMAS HUON in Malayan waters:- 'On patrol-dirty weather -had bully beef and biscuits and some duff knocked up by ourselves'. (Extract from a stoker's diary.)
December 1929	HMAS Swordsman decommissioned and was placed into reserve. She was eventually sold for breaking up on 4 June 1937.
December 1934	HMAS Australia (II) sailed for England, with His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester embarked, on exchange duty with the Royal Navy, her place on the Australia Station being taken by HMS Sussex. Proceeding via New Zealand, Fiji, Balboa and Kingston, Australia (II) reached Portsmouth on 28 March 1935
December 1939	CMDR S. H. K. Spurgeon, RAN, was awarded the DSO for conspicuous service in anti-submarine operations while commanding HMS ECHO in the North Sea. CMDR Spurgeon was the first Australian decorated for gallantry in WWII.
December 1944	HMAS Lismore arrived at Fremantle, her first call at an Australian port since leaving Darwin for Singapore on 20 March 1941. Her absence of 3 years, 8 months and 13 days from Australia was longer than that of any other Royal Australian Navy ship of World War II
December 1954	HMAS QUEENBOROUGH was re-commissioned as an anti-submarine Frigate. During conversion she became the first ship of the RAN fitted with Type 170 Asdic and the Mk 10 Limbo mortar.
December 1961	RAN Clearance Divers operating from HMAS KIMBLA, and the diving tender WALRUS, salvaged vital parts of a Viscount civil airliner, which had crashed with the loss of 15 lives into Botany Bay, NSW.
December 1967	HMAS PERTH sank four and damaged four, enemy supply craft near Dong Hoi, Vietnam. Later, on the same day, PERTH fired on three barges alongside a pier at Song Giang, setting fire to the pier and one barge. The US 199th Light Infantry Brigade was successfully withdrawn by the RAN's 135th Assault Helicopter Company, (LCDR. N. Ralph, RAN), from a well defended Vietcong bunker position.
December 1974	HMA Ships BRISBANE and FLINDERS were the first ships to arrive in Darwin, to commence work as part of Operation Navy Help, the cleanup and rebuilding of Darwin following the devastating effects of Cyclone Tracy. FLINDERS surveyed the entrance to Darwin Harbour to ensure the safe passage of the RAN Task Group, and BRISBANE landed work parties to commence the massive job of cleaning up the devastated city.
December 1985	HMAS STALWART made an emergency voyage to Macquarie Island for ANARE to land Christmas stores for the staff, when the Antarctic supply ship NELLA DAN developed defects.
December 1992	HMAS Tobruk II departed from Townsville for Somalia as a part of Operation SOLACE, the Australian Defence Force's contribution to the US-led operation to bring peace and humanitarian relief to the war torn African nation
December 2000	HMAS OTAMA was decommissioned. OTAMA, was the last of the RAN's Oberon class submarines to be decommissioned.
December 2007	The first two MRH-90 Taipan were accepted into service in Brisbane
December 2018	HMAS Gascoyne II returned to Australia after completing the longest voyage undertaken by a vessel of its class. Gascoyne, along with sister ship, HMAS Huon, had visited ports and exercised in the Republic of Korea, Japan and the Philippines. Gascoyne and Huon steamed in excess of 4,000 nautical miles during the voyage and were the first Australian Mine Warfare vessels to travel to the Republic Of Korea

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/>

Occasional Papers

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

- Occasional Paper 127 - Commitment Persistence and Science Behind the Search for HMAS Sydney II
- Occasional Paper 128 - HMAS Nepal

Society Matters

In addition to the Society's 2021 AGM conducted on 18 November Society members were involved in several other important events in addition to a triple book launch event.

We are grateful to WA Chapter President, Nigel Rogers for the following reports.

WA Chapter 50th Anniversary Dinner

Sixty-four people, which included partners of members of the Naval Historical Society – WA Chapter, attended a spectacular Formal Anniversary Dinner at the Weld Club in Perth on Saturday November 13th 2021. The Guest of Honour was the Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Michael Noonan, together with Flag Lieutenant Matthew Dodds and Warrant Officer of the Navy, Deb Butterworth. The Dinner celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the NHSA Society and to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the loss of HMAS Sydney II and all of the ships company. The Chief of Navy in his address, gave a moving account of the loss of HMAS Sydney II, followed by a brief and very positive summary of the RAN into the future, and the importance of the RAN's role in maintaining Australia's maritime security. Nigel Rogers, then on behalf of the President of the NHSA Society, David Michael, read out the President's address on the history of the Society, and how it will move forward, with great optimism, into the next fifty years of its history. The Chief of Navy was extremely gracious in taking the time to circulate and to talk with all guests attending the dinner and to particularly spend time talking with Captain Pat Rodriguez, 91 years of age, and who is in poor health. The Chief of Navy also talked with Commander Bill Ritchie, 92 years of age, who is the local Patron of the WA Chapter.



Above is Captain Pat Rodriguez RANR (Rtd) (2nd from right) with Chief of Navy, Flag LEUT and WO of the Navy, 13 Nov 2021

Loss of HMAS Sydney (II) Eightieth Anniversary Commemoration: WA Chapter

President of the NHS WA Chapter, Nigel Rogers and Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, Dr Heather Rogers, attended the HMAS Sydney II Commemoration Ceremonies in Geraldton, WA, on Friday November 19, 2021.

This involved a busy schedule of events on November 19th, that included attending a Commemoration Service at 10:00am at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in Geraldton. This is the burial place of the 'Unknown Sailor', who earlier that morning had finally been identified, and it was announced he was in fact, Able Seaman Thomas Welsby Clark from Queensland. Nigel and Heather then visited the Geraldton Museum that contained an excellent exhibition on HMAS Sydney II. This was followed by attending an outstanding theatre play / film

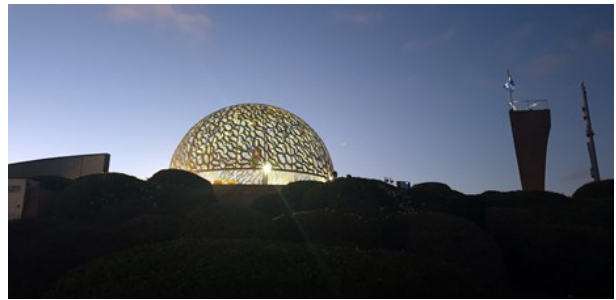
production of 'Sydney II – Lost and Found' produced by Theatre Company 180.

Those attending the Commemoration Service at the HMAS Sydney II Memorial, then met at the Queen Elizabeth II Community Centre in Geraldton, before heading up to the Commemoration Service itself that commenced at 5pm. The main address at the Commemoration was given by Commodore Ivan Ingham – Senior ADF Officer in Western Australia, who represented the Chief of Navy. He spoke passionately and movingly of the loss of HMAS Sydney II and all her company 80 years ago. A large number of wreaths were laid by numerous organizations, schools and all branches of the Australian Defence Force.

Nigel and Heather laid a wreath on behalf of the Naval Historical Society of Australia. The flowers in the wreath reflected the colours of the Society and an inscription in the center of the wreath read as follows: 'IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE SHIP'S COMPANY OF HMAS SYDNEY II WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR AUSTRALIA. 19TH NOVEMBER 1941'.



Floral Tributes



HMAS Sydney (II) Memorial at Geraldton, WA

Book News

Society volunteers have been busy in recent months writing, publishing and launching new books as well as continuing the process of converting previously published works to e-format.

Books Launched

A triple book event attended by Committee members, Navy, Thales Australia and BAE Systems was conducted in Sydney on 5 November 2021. The guest of honour, Rear Admiral Mark Hammond, Commander Australian Fleet officiated to launch the NHSA 50th Anniversary Book, *The History of Ikara* and Australia's Colonial Navies. The event also celebrated authors Angus Britts and Ross Gillett.

For Angus, his *Ikara* book was his third. His previous books were published by the U.S. Naval Institute Press. For Ross, this second edition of *Australia's Colonial Navies* and the Society history which he edited add to the many titles he has to his name. We thank them for allowing the Society to publish them and delighted to report strong demand for all three books.



Angus Britts and Ross Gillett with RADM Mark Hammond RAN, Fleet Commander 5 November 2021

Book Reviews

The Society is grateful to the Australian Naval Institute (ANI) for reviewing two of the Society's recently published books. The reviews can be found on the ANI website by clicking on the links below.

Ikara: Australia's Cold War Wonder Weapon

by Angus Britts reviewed by Mr John Mortimer.

[Read the Review online](#)

Australia's Colonial Navies

by Ross Gillett reviewed by Commander Greg Swinden RAN.

[Read the review online](#)

Commodore Sam Bateman Book Prize

The 2021 inauguration of the [Commodore Sam Bateman Book Prize](#) by the Australian Naval Institute provided an opportunity for the Society to nominate both the *Ikara* and Australia's *Colonial Navies* books for consideration. The Prize to be awarded annually commencing in 2021 aims to recognise excellence in published books making a major contribution to the study and understanding of naval and maritime matters. The Prize is named in perpetuity after Commodore Sam Bateman AM RAN a founding member of the ANI and recognizes his dedication to raising awareness of naval and maritime matters in society.



Award Announced: 8 December 2021

The winner was announced today in an on-line ceremony by Captain Simon Bateman, son of the late Commodore Sam Bateman. The 2021 recipient of the Prize is Teddy Sheean VC – A Selfless Act of Valour written by Dr Tom Lewis and published by Big Sky Publishing.

The Judging Panel also gave Honourable Mentions to three books. They were A Scottish Blockade Runner in the American Civil War by John F Messner (Whittles Publishing) and two written by Angus Britts. They are *Ikara: Australia's Cold War Wonder Weapon* (Naval Historical Society of Australia) and *A Ceaseless Watch; Australia's Third-Party Naval Defense, 1919-1942* by (US Naval Institute Press). All provided fresh and well told historical stories that are relevant to contemporary naval and maritime affairs.

Congratulations to Dr Lewis who will give the Commodore Sam Bateman Book Prize lecture in Canberra in early 2022.

Congratulations also to Angus Britts on being recognized by the Judging Panel for his excellent work in writing the history of *Ikara* and *A Ceaseless Watch; Australia's Third-Party Naval Defense, 1919-1942*.