



Call the Hands



Issue No. 60

February 2022

From the President

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2022 as the festive season rapidly fades in our wake.

Let us start the year by paying respect to three fine veterans and Society members who passed away during December. They were; Mr David Henry Mattiske, OAM, Captain Redmond 'Pat' Rodriguez, AM, RANR Rtd and The Honourable Dr Raymond Moyle Northrop QC PhD (Hon), LL.M. A summary of their service is available on the [website](#). Sadly, as the years pass so do the veterans who served our country and made the history which we write and read about today. They all have our utmost respect and gratitude.

Accompanying this issue are two quite different occasional papers. The first by John Ingram describes his service on the Fleet Commander's Staff in 1964. John was the Duty Fleet Staff Officer on the night of 10 February 1964 when HMAS Ships *Melbourne* and *Voyager* collided off Jervis Bay. His experience that day reminds us that when tragedy strikes all are affected and that good training, experience and instinct combine to determine our response.

Occasional paper 130 by Walter Burroughs, long term editor of the Naval Historical Review, provides a well-researched story of the RAN's first Fleet Commander, Admiral Sir George Patey. The paper describes the man and his period in command from March 1913 to September 1916. Of particular interest is the 1914 pursuit of the German East Asiatic Squadron by the fledgling RAN. Patey who had brought his fleet to a high state of readiness prior to the outbreak of war was ready in all respects for operations in the Pacific and Indian oceans.

Society goals and objectives for 2022 will suffer a setback in the coming weeks as we undertake an urgent move from the Boatshed. Please bear with us during this period of transition to temporary accommodation. There is more detail on page 12.

The good news is that the Society now offers several additional interesting tours and cruises which we believe will be very popular with both organised groups and individuals alike. You can assist greatly by telling others, particularly your social groups about them. Bookings are easy through the [website](#).

You can assist the Society in other ways. Firstly, by alerting us to potential Zoom presenters with a naval story to tell. While the 2022 schedule is filling out with many interesting [events](#) we still need more. Don't forget yourself. Your story may well be of great interest to other members. If you are not a presenter then send us a factual story or anecdote of interest to others.

We look forward to you joining us on a tour or cruise and for the monthly Zoom presentations as we bring you many more interesting stories throughout the year.

Stay safe,

David Michael



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Timing of Gun Salutes

By John Smith, Senior Researcher

Gun salutes have been fired by warships over hundreds of years for many reasons. In the navy, the period between guns being fired is five seconds which can be measured by two methods:

1. Drawing a "watch, stop, gun salutes for the timing of" from naval stores. This makes you responsible for it; you mustn't drop it or damage it and you have to wind it up.
2. Far more reliable is the Gunner's chant of

"If I wasn't a gunner I wouldn't be here FIRE ONE.
If I wasn't a gunner I wouldn't be here FIRE TWO."

And so, on depending on the number of guns to be fired.

However, method [2] above was made redundant by the Admiralty in 1956. In that year confidential admiralty order no. 1 of 1956 was issued, its contents being subsequently adopted by the RAN. Basically, it made many changes to officers' responsibilities and titles. One of the changes was that senior sailors who became officers were no longer warrant officers [read gunners] but were placed on the Special Duties List. Thus, a gunner became a sub lieutenant special duties big G little g dagger. This could not be used as the old chant which would now take about ten seconds. As a later development the old gunner's duties of bullet grocer have been taken over by the maritime logistics branch. So should the chant now become

"If I wasn't a maritime logistics officer, I wouldn't be here FIRE ONE"

This takes more than five seconds. Thus, progress and change are ruining gun salutes.



Above: Field gun crew firing salute at ceremonial divisions to mark 80 years of naval training at HMAS Cerberus in 2001



Right: Able Seaman Boatswains Mates Justin Fairhall and Paul Wosomo return a 13 gun salute to Chilean Navy Sail 3 November 2016

Navy Chopper Rescues RAAF Sabre Jet Pilot

Navy News March 1963

Another Royal Australian Navy "first" was recorded last week when one of the Navy's new Westland Wessex helicopters went to the rescue of an RAAF pilot who had ejected at 4,000ft from his disabled Sabre jet fighter near Goulburn. The rescue was the first by a Westland Wessex helicopter in Australia. The Navy helicopter crew consisted of the pilot, LCDR Benny Mathews; co-pilot Commander (Air) H E Bailey and Surgeon Commander Brian Treloar all from Nowra flying Wessex N7-200.

The Sabre, piloted by Acting Group-Captain A T Mather, a World War II DFC winner, crashed into a field 13 miles from Goulburn exploding as it hit the ground on 11 March 1963. The following story of the helicopter's rescue was told by CMDR. Bailey. At 3:41 pm the helicopter was over Manuka Oval rehearsing for the fly-past to salute the Queen at Canberra. From a Winjeel trainer plane acting as a link between air control and the Sabres, the helicopter crew heard over their radio that one of the Sabre pilots was having trouble and it looked as though he would have to eject.



Four minutes later as the helicopter passed over Ainslie they heard that the pilot had ejected in the vicinity of Inverloch. When the helicopter crew heard this, they called Fairbairn Air Base and told control that they had a Surgeon Commander in the chopper. Their assistance was immediately accepted and Fairbairn gave the helicopter crew the approximate position the pilot had ejected.

The helicopter covered the 25 miles in 20 minutes and came down alongside the plane wreckage north of Lake Bathurst but searched unsuccessfully for a victim. Bystanders told the pilot that the Sabre pilot ejected about two miles away. They took off and landed at a farmhouse, where they were met by two ferocious dogs before quickly moving off again to the next farmhouse.

They landed in a paddock where they found Group Captain Mathers sitting on a veranda with a glass in his hand. As there were no refreshments for the helicopter crew, they took off with Group Captain Mathers and flew him back to Fairbairn Base sickbay. Commander Bailey said the Sabre wreckage was spread over three paddocks. It was fortunate that where the crash occurred it was grassy with only a few trees otherwise the chopper could not have set down. The Westland Wessex helicopter is one of the 27 which the RAN are obtaining to build up its anti-submarine defences.

Later, FOICEA received the following message from the Air Officer commanding RAAF:-
"I am deeply appreciative of the prompt action of the crew of your Wessex helicopter in locating and picking up the pilot of a crashed Sabre, in the Canberra area on Monday. Would you please convey to the crew the gratitude of the rescued pilot and my personal thanks for the highly commendable manner in which they accepted and executed the task."

Unexploded WWII Ordnance Recovery 1969

The following story is based on an ABC Eyre Peninsula, item by Jodie Hamilton posted 9 June 2021 and available at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-06-09/royal-australian-navy-110-years-unexploded-ordnance-port-lincoln/100152192>

In the late 1960s, abalone fisherman Neil Williams was diving off Taylor Island, near South Australia's Port Lincoln when he discovered a haul of World War II ammunition. The ammunition was located in the passage between Taylor Island and the mainland which experiences significant tidal movement.

Later research by a local ammunition collector, Peter Wyschnja revealed that the 25-tonne shipment of ammunition lying at a depth of around 25 metres was dumped in 1946 following World War 2. This surplus ammunition was previously stored in depots just north of Peterborough, at Terowie and at Gladstone. It was to have been dumped in deep water beyond the continental shelf. The ordnance had been loaded at Port Germein on the norther shore of Spencers Gulf but due to sea sickness and other reasons was dumped in the mouth of the Gulf. The dumped ordnance included four different types of artillery fuses, live three-inch mortars and also live PIAT (Projectile Infantry Anti-Tank) bombs.

An element of Clearance Diving Team One embarked in HMAS Banks was tasked with the recovery and disposal of the ammunitions in November – December 1969. In his 2021 interview with the ABC ex CDT One Clearance Diver Tom McNab said,

"The Passage area had huge tidal movement, so the recovery job was difficult. We started off with buckets collecting the bits and pieces and we found it was crazy. We were going to take too long so we ended up using a wicker basket and a winch. We'd lower the divers down and they'd fill up the basket and we'd hoist it up. "We had double the amount of lead (weights) — we had lead boots, with double the amount of lead. Our back weight pockets were full of lead balls, 14 ounce lead balls, and then we had our front weight pockets with as much weight as we could get in to work in the tide.



In his reports of proceeding for November and December 1969 Lieutenant D. Moore, commanding HMAS Banks reported experiencing poor weather; rising winds and a strong bottom surge which forced Banks to cease diving operations and shelter at times. The task was undertaken between 22 November and 6 December. HMAS Banks had in company AWB 403 which was rigged as a diving boat.

In all the divers recovered 18 tonnes of ordnance which was dumped on the 100 fathom line south of Spencers Gulf.

Video of the Month

[HMAS Voyager/Melbourne Collision](#)

Sea Power Centre Australia



On the night of 10 February 1964, during night flying operations, the RAN's flagship the aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne (II) was in collision with the Daring Class destroyer HMAS Voyager (II). Voyager was cut in two and 82 men were killed in what was the RAN's worst peacetime loss of life. This extract from the Royal Australian Navy production "The History of the Royal Australian Navy Volume Three, 1945-1975" examines the events that led to the collision as well as its terrible aftermath.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnTM_YqgUs&t=237s

Duration 4 Minutes



Westland Wessex Helicopter

Westland Wessex helicopters served for over 27 years in the RAN from late 1962 until the end of 1989. It operated as the front-line ASW aircraft from 1962 until replaced by the Westland Sea King from 1975. Its role in later life was as a utility and SAR helicopter for the fleet and in a counter-terrorism role for the Australian Army. It also provided critical service in disaster relief and as an aid to civil authorities.

As an example of the latter, the RAN response to the 1974 Cyclone Tracy disaster in Darwin included a herculean effort by Fleet Air Arm personnel after the general recall. By 1600 on Christmas Day ground crews had worked tirelessly to bring seven aircraft out of suspended service ready to join HMAS Melbourne by the afternoon of the 26th. After arrival in Darwin on 1 January 1975 HMAS Melbourne anchored off and the Wessex went to work immediately moving personnel and stores. During the following 16 days HT725 Squadron aircraft moved 7,825 people and 239,702 lbs of stores. A magnificent achievement.



Wessex helicopter formation. RAN image



Further Reading

Kim Dunstan, The Revolutionary Westland Wessex, published by the FAAAA available at:
<https://www.faaaa.asn.au/heritage/heritage-wessex/>

Sea Power Centre Australia, Westland Wessex 31A available at:
<https://www.navy.gov.au/aircraft/westland-wessex-31a>

Photo of the Month

HMVS Gordon



Gordon was a 12 ton 'turnabout' 2nd class torpedo launch, ordered in February 1885, and built at the JS White & Co shipyard at Cowes, Isle of Wight, for the Victorian Navy at a cost of £3,250. Her hull was constructed of mahogany and she had a double rudder configuration with one forward and one aft to aid in manoeuvrability. She was shipped to Melbourne, Victoria as deck cargo, on board the SS Angerton, leaving Gravesend, England on 22 December 1885 and arriving in Melbourne on 11 February 1886. The vessel was named in honour of General Charles George Gordon who had been killed at Khartoum, in the Sudan, in January 1885.

She carried two sets of dropping gear for 14-inch torpedoes and a three barreled Nordenfeldt machine gun mounted forward. *Gordon* successfully completed her sea trials in April 1886 attaining a speed of 14 knots in a run from Gellibrand Point to Point Cook. She was also able to complete a full circle in 40 seconds turning in twice her own length. *Gordon* initially had a crew of seven but this was increased to 11 in 1897.

Based at the Williamstown Naval Depot, *Gordon* and the other Victorian Navy torpedo boats *Lonsdale*, *Nepean*, *Childers* and *Countess of Hopetoun* operated in Port Phillip Bay as part of the defence for the port of Melbourne. The torpedo boats conducted regular exercises within Port Phillip Bay. During the annual Easter exercise period they routinely operated in the vicinity of Swan Island where day and night 'attacks' were conducted against HMVS Nelson which represented an 'enemy' raider. Due to her length and tonnage *Gordon* was restricted in her usage during bad weather. In 1901 *Gordon* became part of the Commonwealth Naval Forces and continued to operate from Williamstown Naval Depot as part of the defensive forces within Port Phillip Bay. She remained active as a torpedo boat, under the command of Chief Gunner John Blair, but was also used for target towing, patrol, training and transport duties. On 10 July 1911 *Gordon* became part of the Royal Australian Navy, as a non-commissioned tender (support vessel) by which time she was restricted to basic training, transport and target towing duties.

News in Brief

Austal Starts Sea Trials of Royal Australian Navy First Evolved Cape-Class Patrol Boat

In December 2021 Austal Australia commenced sea trials of the first of six Evolved Cape-class Patrol Boats under construction for the Royal Australian Navy. The Evolved Cape-class patrol boats include modifications determined through the extensive in-service experience of the two RAN and eight Australian Border Force Capes, operating throughout Northern Australia waters.



Austal Australia was awarded a A\$324 million contract to design and construct six evolved Cape Class patrol boats for the RAN. They are on track to deliver this first vessel in the first quarter of 2022, with the remaining five Evolved Capes in various stages of construction at the company's shipyard in Henderson, Western Australia.

HMAS Adelaide delivers vital aid to Tonga

HMAS Adelaide arrived in Tonga on January 26 with humanitarian and medical supplies, engineering equipment and helicopters to support logistics and distribution as Australia continues its support in partnership with the Tongan Government following the volcano and tsunami.



[HMAS Adelaide Arriving in Tonga - YouTube.](#)

Occasional Papers

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

Occasional Paper 129 - A Personal Reflection Service on the Fleet Commander's Staff, 1964

Occasional Paper 130 - Admiral Patey Our First Fleet Commander

Please note that occasional papers are normally made public on the Society's website one year after release. As Occasional Paper 130 was previously published it is already available. It can be accessed [here](#) as a post. Alternatively, a [PDF version](#) is also available for downloading.

From March 2022 occasional papers from the previous year will be released monthly.

This Month in History

February 1859	Boats from HMVS VICTORIA rescued the crew of the sailing vessel B. NORRIS, which caught fire and sank in Port Phillip.
February 1893	During a flood the gunboat HMQS PALUMA (CAPT G. Pirie, RN), the steamer ELIMANG, and the hulk MARY EVANS, were washed up high and dry in Brisbane's Botanical Gardens. The same disastrous flood carried away three bridges across the Brisbane River and swept 12 other ships out to sea.
February 1915	The flagship pennant of the Second Battle Cruiser Squadron was hoisted in HMAS AUSTRALIA at Rosyth, Scotland.
February 1917	SBLT R. S. Dallas, an Australian serving with the RNAS, shot down a German Aviatik aircraft over France. Dallas was flying a Sopwith triplane.
February 1929	Six Seagull Mk III amphibian aircraft embarked in seaplane carrier HMAS ALBATROSS at Melbourne.
February 1936	HMAS AUSTRALIA exercised with 'Queen Bees', unmanned radio-controlled Moth aircraft, in the Mediterranean. HMA Ships AUSTRALIA and SHROPSHIRE exercised together for the first time off Alexandria, Egypt.
February 1940	HMS KANIMBLA, largely manned by the RAN personnel, arrived at Yokohama to release German technicians captured by HMS LIVERPOOL on a Japanese ship. The Japanese liner ASAMA MARU had departed San Francisco on the 6/1/1940 with 51 German seamen from the crew of German liner COLUMBUS. On the 21/1/1940 HMS LIVERPOOL stopped her 35 miles off Nojima Zaki near Yokosuka and removed 21 German technicians. After strong protests from Japan and Germany nine were finally released.
February 1943	HMAS WARRAMUNGA picked up survivors from the merchant-ship STARR KING, torpedoed and sunk by the Japanese submarine I-21 east of Sydney.
February 1948	VADM Sir John Collins was appointed as Chief of Naval Staff, thus becoming the first RANC graduate to reach the Navy's highest position.
February 1954	HMAS AUSTRALIA moored at Garden Island Naval Base, fired 1000 rockets to welcome Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, to Sydney.
February 1963	HMAS QUIBERON was accidentally rammed by the South Vietnamese escort ship KY-HOA, at Saigon. QUIBERON'S starboard side was opened to the sea and KY-HOA required docking.
February 1967	RAN Clearance Diving Teams commenced operations in Vietnam.
February 1969	The former HMAS ARUNTA, (Tribal class destroyer), sank north of Sydney while under tow to Japan for breaking up. While it was never proven the rumour at the time was that former members of ARUNTA's World War II crew had sabotaged the ship to prevent it reaching Japan to be scrapped.
February 1975	Grumman S2E Tracker 853 ditched after night flying when doing a Bolter (missed wire and going around again) from HMAS Melbourne. The 4 crew were all rescued unhurt. This was the only RAN Tracker lost during flying operations.
February 1982	The Australian Government announced it intended to purchase the aircraft carrier HMS INVINCIBLE as a replacement for HMAS MELBOURNE. The carrier was to be renamed HMAS AUSTRALIA. However, as a result of the Falklands War between Britain and Argentina the purchase was delayed. When negotiations were later recommenced the Government in Australia had changed and made a decision to cancel the purchase.
February 1989	The Lee Enfield .303 rifle completed a century of service. It was last used in the RAN on an official occasion at the Anzac Day Ceremony in Canberra in 1985.
February 1992	CMDR Carolyn Brand, RAN, became the first female officer of the RAN to command an operational base when she took command of HMAS WATERHEN, (A shore base in Sydney).
February 2001	The Collins class submarines HMA Ships DECHAINEUX, (CMDR S. P. Davies, RAN), and SHEEAN, (CMDR W. H. Wiltshire, RAN), were commissioned in a joint ceremony in Adelaide. Both submarines were laid down in the Australian Submarine Corporation Yard in Adelaide. DECHAINEUX was launched on 12 March 1998. SHEEAN was launched on 1 May 1999, with Mrs Ivy Hayes, (Sister of OS Terry Sheean), performing the launching ceremony.
February 2006	HMA Ships WOLLONGONG II and BUNBURY II decommissioned at HMAS Coonawarra, Darwin

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/>

Research Questions

SY Aurora

The following is a research Query was received on 17 December 2021.

I hope you can help me.
I am looking for the name of the vessel in the attached photo of a Cockatoo Island drydock. End 1800 beginning 1900. Looking at her hull she has a reinforced bow and her configuration length/depth is out of the normal. Looks as she was built for regions with ice or even polar winters. Can you help me?

Response

The ship is Sir Earnest Shackleton's steam yacht Aurora.

As recorded in my book *Keeping the Ships at Sea – Ship Repair at Cockatoo Island 1857-1991* (Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, 2013) on page 48, it was a memorable docking:

“One of the tasks that year was the docking and repair of Sir Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic expedition ship, the steam yacht Aurora. On 30 October 1914 Professor Edgeworth David, of Sydney University, had sought the support of the government to refit Aurora at the Commonwealth Naval Dockyard, free of charge or at the lowest-possible cost price. The work was estimated to cost £500.

The Prime Minister approved the request and the Naval Board instructed King Salter to carry out the work, but did not inform him of the estimated cost or impose any cost limit. The ship was taken in hand on 5 November 1914 and, under the supervision of her captain, Lieutenant Mackintosh, the necessary work to put the ship in a properly seaworthy condition was completed as rapidly as possible to enable the ship to sail for Antarctica to meet Shackleton's expedition in the Ross Sea.

Unfortunately, by completion of the work, the total cost had risen to £3,938 4s.1d. Treasury balked at meeting the cost and the Treasurer referred the matter to the Joint Committee of Public Accounts on 2 December 1915. The Committee reported in May the following year concluding that the Naval Board should take responsibility for their failure to properly instruct the General Manager of the dockyard.”

John Jeremy
Vice President



HMAS Warramunga Nick Names: Little MO and Munga

The following query was received for a sailor currently serving in HMAS *Warramunga* (II)

'I was hoping you can assist me with a question. I have been doing some reading regarding the story of how HMAS *Warramunga* (I44) became known as 'Little Mo'. Reading your [article](#), it states that 'The Munga' was the preferred name. But I am interested to hear how it got the nickname Little MO, reading multiple different articles it states that Little MO conducted patrols and bombardments, and regularly acted as an escort to USS *Missouri* (Mighty MO) I hope you might be able to shed more light on how *Warramunga* (I) got the name Little MO.'

Response

We get many queries and I thought yours would stump us, but no - read on. We can only find one record of *Warramunga* escorting *Missouri*.

In February 1951 she was for two days on her screen.

With respect to "little MO", we found the following quote:

"On ANZAC DAY 1952 *Warramunga* was on the screen of "USS *Iowa* "for the bombardment of Chongjin. *Iowa* carried out a steady rate of fire with her 16-inch guns from dawn until late in the afternoon and very accurate fire it was. *Warramunga* steamed closer inshore helping the other destroyers in the squadron silence the enemy's shore defences. *Warramunga* picked up the nickname of "Little Mo" after this operation but the nickname of the Munga was still the favourite one."

Hope this helps.

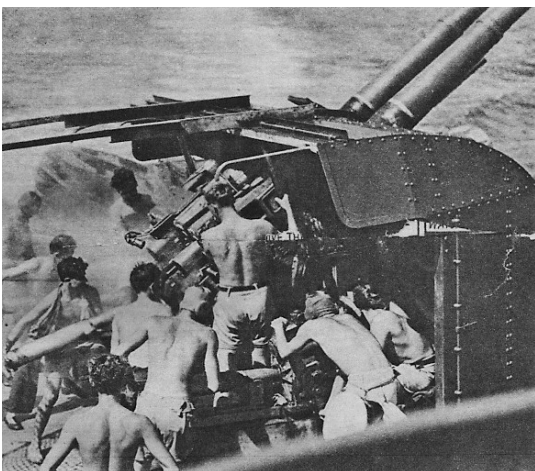
John Smith

Senior Researcher

By Editor

It remains a mystery what the name 'Little MO' has in relation to USS *Iowa* or that particular bombardment. If readers can assist with this connection to Mighty MO we would like to hear from you.

Reference: Harry Adlam, *HMAS Warramunga, the Second of the Australian Built Tribals 1942 – 1963*, published in the December 1977 edition of the Naval Historical Review, available at [NHSA website](#).



HMAS *Warramunga* 4.7 inch gun crew



Warramunga manoeuvring at speed

Society Matters

Urgent Boatshed Evacuation for Major Repairs

Having settled back into the Boatshed after shutdown and holding great expectations for a constructive year, the Society's plans for 2022 have suffered a major setback. With little notice, Defence has directed the Society to vacate Building 25 to allow major structural repairs to the building. Termites which have damaged many buildings on the Island over the decades are the culprits. Their work on the Boatshed has made it unsafe. Fortunately, with no public access to Garden Island, available space in the RAN Heritage Centre will be our temporary home for an estimated six months. Naturally, serious disruptions are expected to communications and services in the coming weeks.

Please be patient as our volunteers work with Defence staff during the transition.

Tours and Cruises

Throughout 2021 volunteers developed and trialed three new tours and cruises which will now be conducted on a regular basis. This initiative will help offset lost revenue from traditional Garden Island Heritage tours which remain in abeyance due to the pandemic.

These events are ideal for groups wishing to learn about the RAN's history in Sydney since 1788, how Navy has operated and how it has been supported.

The maiden Navy in Sydney Harbour cruise will be conducted on 25 February and subsequently on the last Friday of the month.

Please tell others particularly those in social and other groups with an interest.

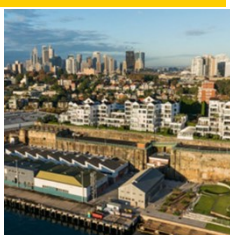
[Details on the website.](#)

Book Now

Submarines in Sydney: Sub Base Platypus Tour

Hear about the RAN's story of torpedoes, submarines, submariners & the men and women who supported them. Tour conducted monthly.

[Info for organisers](#)



Sydney Harbour in War and Peace: Bradleys Head Tour

Learn about the naval history of Sydney Harbour from 1788; the earliest defences, role of the Royal Navy, colonial navies and the RAN since 1911.

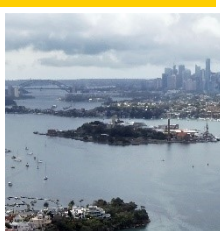
[Info for organisers](#)



Navy in Sydney: Cruise: West of the Bridge

Learn about Royal Australian Navy activities and support facilities in Sydney Harbour such as Cockatoo and Spectacle Island from 1788 to the present.

[Info for organisers](#)



Sydney under Japanese Attack 1942: 80th Anniversary Cruise

This cruise highlights the events of 31 May 1942 when three Japanese midget submarines entered Sydney Harbour to attack Allied warships.

[Info for organisers](#)

