



Call the Hands



Issue No. 63

May 2022

From the President

Welcome to the Society's sixty third edition of Call the Hands and accompanying occasional papers. The occasional papers are available to members through the members website page. They then become available to the community after twelve months.

With ANZAC Day 2022 behind us and the Battle of the Coral Sea anniversary upon us, it is timely to reflect on the international security situation and what appears to be a rapidly changing and deteriorating environment. ANZAC Day as always, reminds us of the courage and sacrifice of those who have served in Australia's Defence forces for more than 120 years. Due to its timing, the Battle of the Coral Sea commemoration is to some extent overshadowed by ANZAC Day. However, the significance of that Battle to Australians and its importance as a demonstration of the value of our alliance with the United States should not be underestimated.

The occasional papers span three quite different subjects which remind us of the critical need for effective leadership (Admiral Togo) and the importance of professionalism, courage and resilience as demonstrated by the ship's company of HMAS Murchison in the Han River in 1951. And as previously noted, the value of reliable alliance partners is also fundamental to the security of middle powers such as Australia.

A persistent and unavoidable feature of military service is 'risk'. Unfortunately, it can never be fully mitigated as much as those in command may wish. Leading Seaman Noel Shipp who paid the ultimate sacrifice 53 years ago in Vietnam as a member of the RAN Helicopter Flight reminds us of the inherent risk of proceeding in harm's way. The naming of a recruit training division in his honour reminds us of such risks.

Now in our third month of temporary accommodation as renovation work is carried out on our historic Garden Island boatshed office Society volunteers continue with most routine support activities. The lack of library access and slow internet speeds are a continuing frustration. We do hope the builders who optimistically forecast a June completion date are right. July/August may be more realistic.

In addition to the Society's library and archive which are invaluable resources readers are reminded in this edition of the wealth of material which can be accessed by our award-winning website. Please enjoy a surf around the website.

Finally, I thank our many willing volunteers who contribute to the success of recently launched history tours on and around the shores of Port Jackson. They are being very well received. Details are on the [website](#).

Kind regards,

David Michael



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of Australia

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In this Edition

Page	
1	From the President
2	Defence scientists give a voice to the 'silent Anzac'
3	NHSA Resources at your Disposal: Podcasts, Videos, Youtube and Facebook
5	Leading Seaman Noel Ervin Shipp, RAN 31 MAY 1969
6	Return of the First Squadron
8	Video of the Month
9	SS John Oxley, Sydney Heritage Fleet
10	Photo of the Month
10	Occasional Papers
11	News in Brief
12	This Month in History

Defence scientists give a voice to the 'silent Anzac'

Petty Officer Henry Kindler recalls the sad ending to Australia's first attempt to establish a submarine service.

"I stood by the conning tower to warn the captain, to make sure that AE2 would sink fast. He just got on deck when she took her final dive. For a few seconds, I could see her moving through the water like a big, wounded fish, gradually disappearing from sight. I felt sorry to see AE2 come to such an end but she had died fighting."

AE2's mission was to "run amok" and torpedo transports bringing Ottoman reinforcements to the Gallipoli battlefields. She operated for five days before mechanical faults forced her to the surface, where she was damaged on April 30, 1915 by the torpedo boat Sultanhisar and was eventually scuttled by her crew, all of whom were captured. The submarine then lay unseen until 1998 when she was discovered, intact.



Near 100 years later, the boat lying in 72 metres of water in the Sea of Marmara, was the only neglected Gallipoli battlefield until a diverse team of Australian, Turkish and US submariners, scientists, divers and historians and Defence Scientists came together to record, preserve and tell the story of the wreck.

The 'Silent Anzac' project, which came to fruition in July 2014, relied heavily on technology developed by the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO), as it was then called. The team was led by DSTO's Dr Roger Neill, the expedition's science director, who led the automation and unmanned maritime systems unit at DSTO. He described the wreck as "an underwater time capsule that has not been opened since 1915". The challenges he faced were formidable, including custom designing and building a high-definition underwater camera that would fit through a 100mm opening at the main hatch and lighting to show the way. They even needed to work out a wrapping for the cabling to protect against the aggressive conger eels that live in the area.

After filming, the Defence scientists installed a cathode protection system around the wreck to control corrosion, as well as a marker buoy to protect it from shipping traffic, anchors, and fishing nets. To protect the AE2 against further corrosion, the DSTO scientists worked with Dr Ian MacLeod of the Western Australian Museum, a specialist in preserving shipwreck sites. The ingenious cathode protection system involved placing one-tonne zinc arrays around the boat, which will become an anode, linked to a



zinc plate on the side of the wreck. Copper cables link the two. As zinc is more reactive than iron, it gives off its electrons more readily, so the electrons take the easy path and the zinc corrodes in place of the iron. Zinc electrons flow into the iron hull and the iron electrons stay where they are, preserving the ship.

One of the most significant discoveries of the exercise was a portable wireless telegraph pole and antenna wire, the existence of which had long been the subject of discussion of military historians. It is most likely that it was this telegraph which transmitted the message to Army headquarters that AE2 had torpedoed an Ottoman gunboat at Çanakkale,

The Turkish Government continues to ensure maintenance of the buoy laid over the AE2 in a gesture of friendship between old enemies.

Source: [Defence News](#), 26 April 2022

NHSA Resources at your Disposal

In addition to the more than 2,000 individual stories published on the Society's website there are other valuable resources for people whose preferred mode of learning is listening or viewing as opposed to reading. Investigate our podcasts and videos which can be accessed via the ['Research' web page](#).

Podcasts

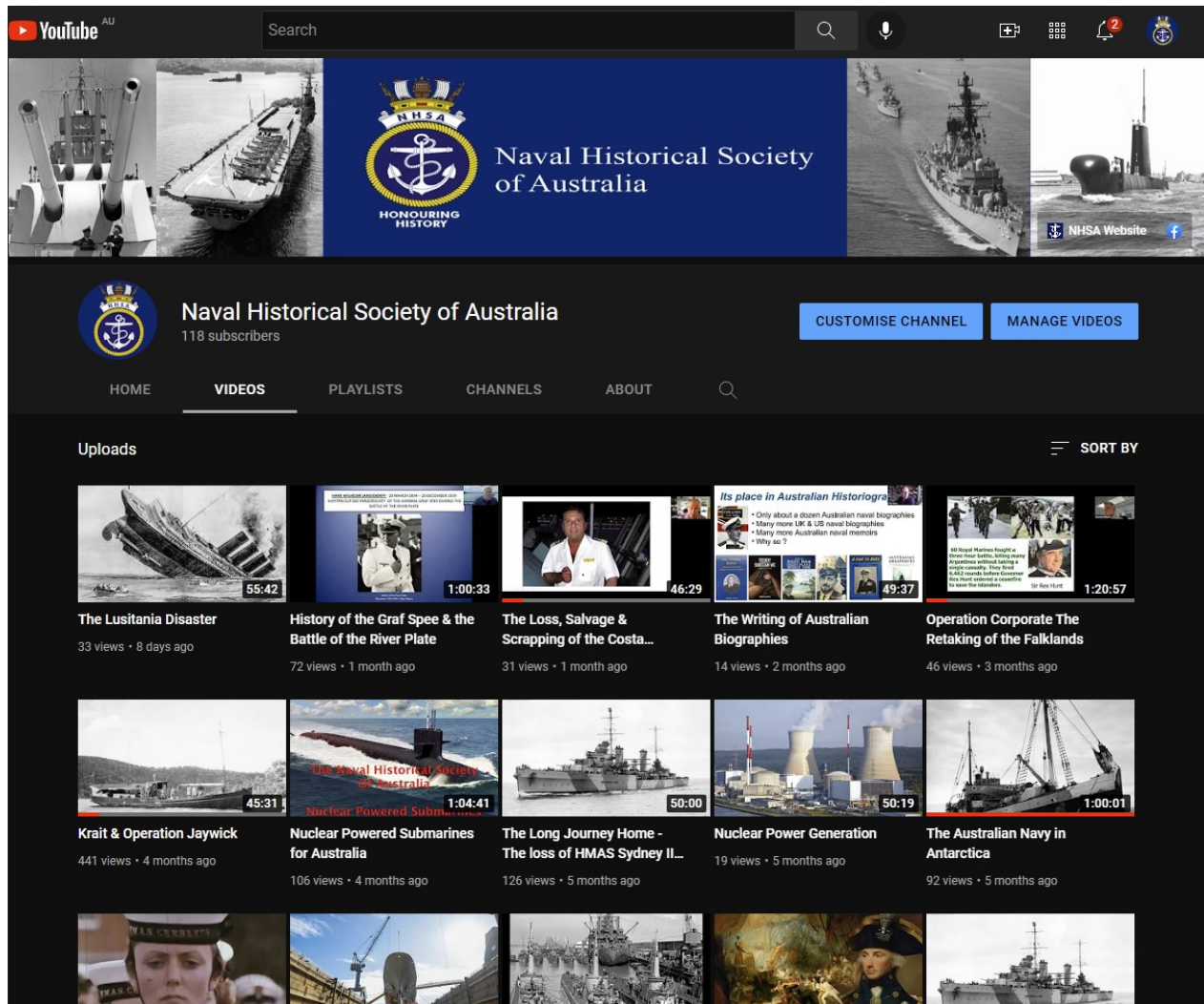
Many of the fifty [podcast recordings](#) are of presentations delivered to members in the Society's early years. These are invaluable, firsthand accounts by speakers directly involved in the many historical subjects described. For example, [Ruby Boye \(Jones\)](#) speaking about her service as a coast watcher in the Solomon Islands during WW2.

Youtube Page

The recently created Society Youtube Channel grows monthly as Zoom presentations are added. Visit our website [Video page](#) to view our collection of videos and click on the Youtube icon at the top of webpage to access Youtube.

To access the Youtube channel directly see the next page.

[Naval Historical Society of Australia – YouTube](#)



Facebook

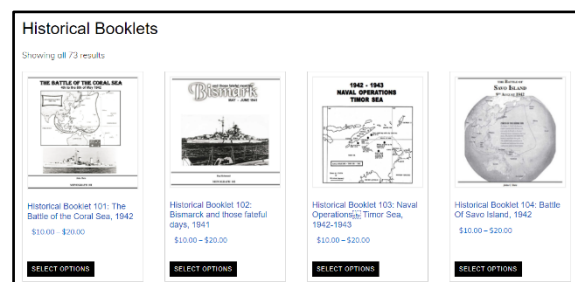
More than 4,000 people now follow the Society on Facebook. On our page you will find additional resources not necessarily found on the Society's website or other traditional sources.

[Facebook Link](#)



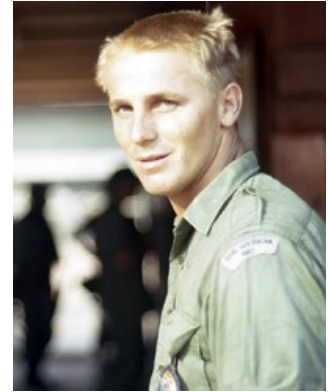
Historical Booklets

On sale through the [Society's online shop](#) are more than seventy historical booklets available for download as a PDF (\$10) or printed and posted for \$20. These booklets which cover a wide array of Australian and other naval subjects are well worth a browse.



Leading Seaman Noel Ervin Shipp, RAN 31 MAY 1969

Leading Aircrewman (LACM) Noel Ervin Shipp was born in Brisbane on 24 December 1944 and joined the RAN on 10 January 1963 as an Underwater Control rating. Shipp transferred to the Aircrewman category in July 1967 and was posted to the RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam (RANHfV) in September of the following year.



He arrived in Vietnam in September 1968 with the second contingent of the RANHfV. The unit was initially located at Camp Blackhorse, 58 km east of Saigon. Two months later it relocated to Camp Martin Cox (Bearcat), 32 km north-east of Saigon. At this time it was the base camp for the US 9th Infantry Division into which the RANHfV was integrated.

Operating as a door gunner, Shipp completed more than 25 missions into hostile territory in the fight against communist aggression. On 20 November 1968, he was awarded the US Air Medal for Valour, for distinguished meritorious achievement in US and Australian aircraft.

On 31 May 1969, 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 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.



In August 2013 the RAN honoured Shipp by naming a recruit school division and accommodation block at HMAS Cerberus after him. The ceremony was held in true naval fashion with senior officers, retired former Fleet-Air-Arm members and civilian guests, including Shipp's widow Gloria and his son. Commodore Nye conducted proceedings, complete with the first Shipp Division recruits on parade.

The crew of Shipp's 'Taipan' Gunship pose with Warrant Officer 2 Bob Enders, US Army (centre) who was to witness the helicopter's last desperate moments. L-R: WO1 Steve Martin US Army (Co-pilot), Captain Mike Phillips (Aircraft Captain), WO Enders, Leading Aircrewman Noel Shipp and Specialist 4 Byron Bowden, US Army.

Source

RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam Role of Honour available at <https://www.faaaa.asn.au/heritage/heritage-ran-helicopter-flight-vietnam/ranhfv-roll-of-honour/>

Further Reading

SPC-A, Biography Leading Air Crewman Noel Ervin Shipp, available at, <https://www.navy.gov.au/biography/leading-air-crewman-noel-ervin-shipp>

Return of the First Squadron

As reported by the *Queenslander*, Saturday, 24 May 1919

The first section of the Australian Fleet to return to the Commonwealth after the signing of the armistice reached Brisbane on Friday, 16 May 1919. It comprised the cruiser HMAS Melbourne (Captain Watson, R.N.) and a flotilla of six destroyers, under Commander Burrows. The destroyers included H.M.A Ships *Swan*, *Torrens*, *Parramatta*, *Warrego*, *Huon* and *Yarra*. They rounded Kangaroo Point on the Brisbane River in that order, while *Melbourne* proceeded to South Brisbane to be in readiness for coaling.

The *Queenslander* reported: *Parramatta* and *Warrego* berthed at the Kennedy wharf, *Swan* and *Torrens* at the Naval Stores, and *Yarra* and *Huon* at the Short-Street wharf. Within ten minutes of touching the wharf at the Naval Stores the destroyers there were filling their oil tanks, and the others will also fill up there in turn. After leaving Port Darwin the ships had one fairly rough night at sea, before arrival at Thursday Island, and the night before last, after leaving the Barrier, they had a few hours of bad weather, otherwise the voyage in Australian waters has been pleasant.

It was in 1914 that the Australian destroyers *Warrego*, *Yarra*, and *Parramatta* were in commission, and their first job, after some patrol work along the coast, was to join in the attack on Rabaul and the capture of German New Guinea, in company with H.M.A S. Australia, several cruisers, and HMA Submarines AE1 and AE2.

In September 1915, *Parramatta*, *Yarra*, and *Warrego* were sent north, as the Pacific was then clear of enemy ships. They went to Sandakan, British North Borneo, and patrolled the Indian Ocean as far eastward as Saigon, in Cochin China.

In 1916 the three destroyers built in Sydney were completed and placed in commission. September of that year found *Huon*, *Torrens*, and *Swan* in the Java seas, under Commander A. G. H. Bond, where they took on the patrol work, while the other vessels came to Australia for an overhaul and refit. Afterwards those three were on patrol duty off the south-west corner of Australia.

In June 1917, the whole flotilla of six destroyers made a rendezvous at Cocos Island, and thence went to the Mediterranean. They formed one unit, under Commander W. H. F. Warren, R.A.N., as Commander D. October of that year found them with their base at the Italian port of Brindisi. They inaugurated the famous Adriatic barrage across Otranto Straits, of which some interesting details recently appeared in this journal. The work was very arduous, for German submarines at the time were numerous, very active and daring. There was no dull time there. The Adriatic barrage was the biggest factor in reducing the submarine menace in the Mediterranean.

A great loss was sustained when Commander Warren, who had earned the Distinguished Service Order for his services in the Mediterranean, died at Brindisi on 13 April 1918.

After October 1918, the Australian destroyers became scattered, and were mainly employed on escort duty. On 12 November *Parramatta*, *Yarra*, and *Torrens* proceeded up the Dardanelles with the Allied fleet, when Turkey had surrendered. *Yarra* and *Torrens* were attached to H.M.S. Liverpool and had the interesting experience of being the first two destroyers to have ever crossed the Black Sea under the white ensign. They visited Sebastopol, and then went to Batoum, on the Black Sea, where they remained till an army of 60,000 British troops was landed there to unravel the tangle created by the Armenian and Bolshevik troubles.

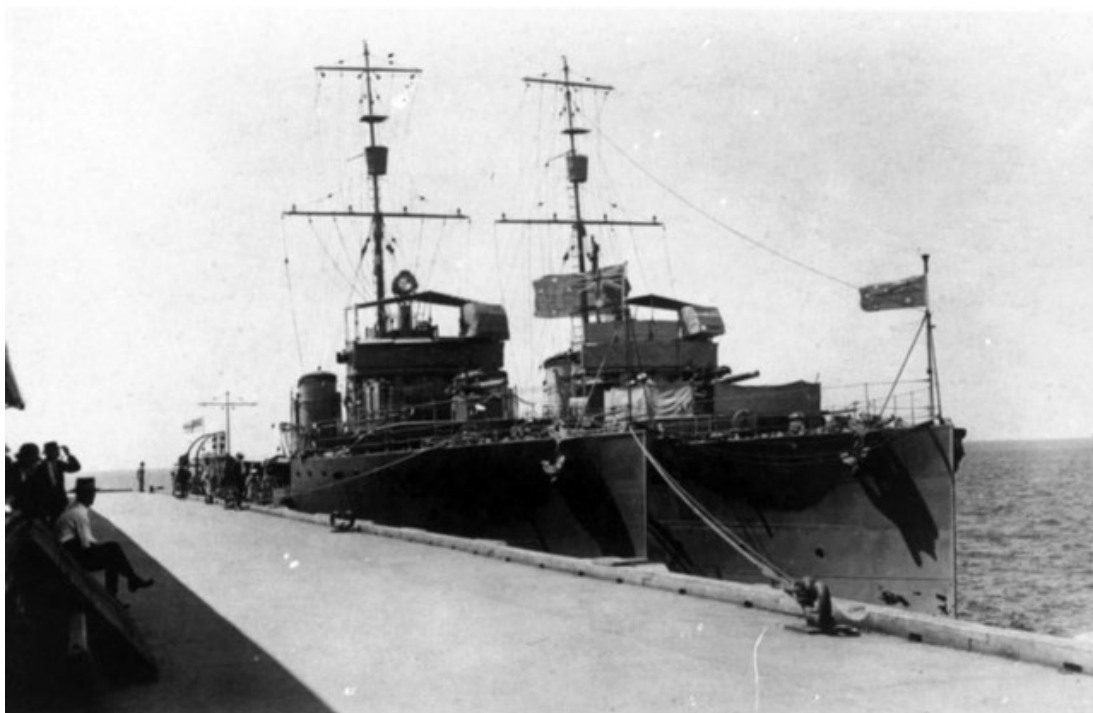
Christmas Day, 1918, found the flotilla, with the exception of *Warrego* and *Torrens*, at Ismid, in the Sea of Marmora, with orders to proceed to England for a month's leave prior to returning to Australia. The two absent vessels joined them before reaching Malta, whence the whole flotilla

proceeded to England, with Commander Burrows as Commander D.

It will be remembered that the cables announced that after passing Gibraltar the destroyers ran into extremely bad weather. The ships become separated and badly damaged, but all reached Devonport safely on 16 January 1919. After refitting the flotilla departed homeward bound, and called enroute at Gibraltar, Port Said, Aden, Colombo, Singapore, Port Darwin, Thursday Island, Townsville, and Brisbane - an all-British route.

It may be recalled that *Parramatta* and *Yarra* were built in England, and the voyage out was regarded in naval circles as a record for vessels of that class. The crews were given "hard living" money in addition to their ordinary pay. It is satisfactory to learn now that the present voyage out has been regarded as very pleasant, and that in itself tells how the men have risen to the occasion when called upon.

The destroyers *Parramatta*, *Yarra* and *Huon* have logged 132,000 miles during the war, and *Huon*, *Torrens* and *Swan* 98,000 miles since they were commissioned in 1916.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

BN0287

HMAS Torrens and a sister ship in Australia, 1919

As a mark of appreciation for what the men and ships had achieved was expressed by the crowds at Petrie's Bight and a variety of other places by waving handkerchiefs, while over a dozen ships, decked with bunting, indulged in a great deal of unmelodious whistle blowing. *Melbourne* and her flotilla of destroyers farewelled Brisbane on Monday afternoon, the 19th, after their three-day stopover. The warships steamed down the river, leaving behind them, and taking with them, pleasant recollections of their brief visit.

Vernon Parker Oration & Annual Dinner, 19 May 2022

Bookings are open to the Australian Naval Institute's annual oration and dinner. The speaker will be the British High Commissioner to Australia, Her Excellency Victoria Treadell CMG MVO. This event will be held at the Hotel Realm Barton ACT. Bookings can be made via the following link.

<https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing?eid=883549&>.

For further details contact: admin@navalinstitute.com.au or Phone: +61 (0) 2 6290 1505

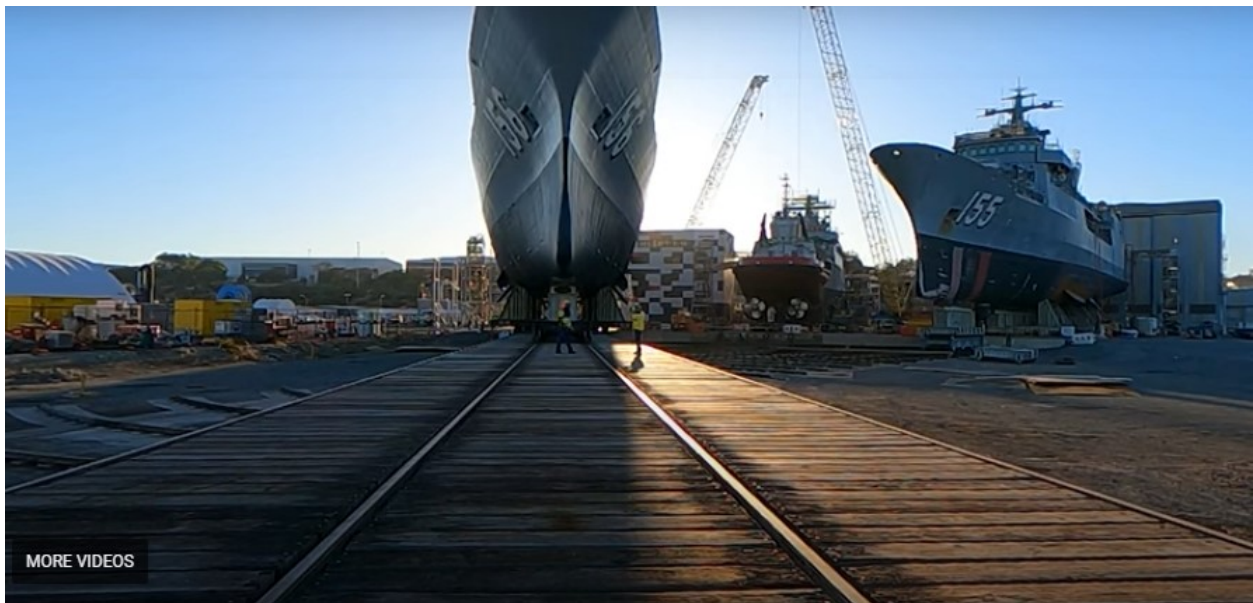
<https://navalinstitute.com.au/events/major-events/>

Video of the Month

The Royal Australian Navy's Anzac-class frigate HMAS Toowoomba recently returned to the water at Henderson, Western Australia, after an 18-month maintenance period.

HMAS Toowoomba, nicknamed the *Purple Pony*, is the fifth of the navy's eight Anzac-class frigates to undertake the Anzac Midlife Capability Assurance Program (AMCAP).

[WATCH: Australia's frigate Toowoomba hits the water again after AMCAP upgrade - Naval Today](#)



SS John Oxley, Sydney Heritage Fleet

For the last 25 years, steamship *John Oxley* has sat atop Sydney Heritage Fleet's floating Sea Heritage Dock at the Fleet's Rozelle Bay workshops in Sydney, undergoing restoration. Alongside, since 1998, has been the 1912 Sydney Harbour ferry *Kanangra* awaiting her turn on the Dock.

In early April 2022 an operation, at Garden Island, Sydney *John Oxley* was floated off the Dock and re-launched. *Kanangra* – the only remaining Sydney ferry that operated before the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge 90 years ago took her place on the Sea Heritage Dock for the start of her hull restoration.

SS *John Oxley* was built by Bow McLachlan of Paisley in the Clyde area, Scotland and launched 20 July 1927. She was delivered to the Government of Queensland Harbours and Marine Department which utilised her as a pilot boat in Moreton Bay and as a buoy and lighthouse tender along the Queensland coast.



On Friday 1 April 2022, tugs manoeuvre *John Oxley* and *Kanangra* from their SHF Rozelle Bay workshop berths, ready for the tow of *John Oxley*, on the Heritage Dock, to Garden Island for refloating.

During World War II, she was requisitioned by the Royal Australian Navy and commissioned as HMAS *John Oxley* on 28 January 1943. Fitted with a 20mm Oerlikon anti-aircraft gun mounted on the stern she was employed as an examination vessel. She returned to her former duties in 1946, and converted from coal to oil fuel that same year.

John Oxley continued to serve as a pilot tender, lighthouse and buoy tender until 1968 when she was decommissioned and acquired by the Sydney Heritage Fleet in August 1970.



John Oxley, on the SHF's Sea Heritage Dock, in the Captain Cook graving dock at Garden Island

Source: Australian Maritime Museums Council Newsletter dated 8 April 2022

Photo of the Month



In October 1948, 15 RAAF Supermarine Spitfires were transferred to the RAN and trucked to Nowra for use as deck handling training aids.

The Spitfire's were taxied around the dummy deck at Nowra and used to train ground handling staff.

The aircraft are known to have carried numbers in the "AH" range (E.g. AH.4) for Aircraft Handling but ties to their RAAF/RAF serials is not known.

After the end of the useful lives, the aircraft were all used on the fire ground in the 1950's and remains reported to have been bulldozed into the ground.

Occasional Papers

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

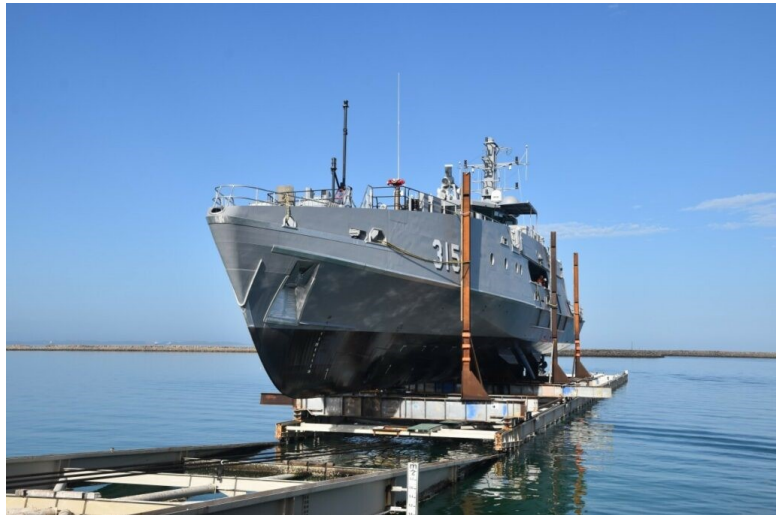
- Occasional paper 135 - Was Heihachiro Tōgō Japan's Horatio Nelson?
- Occasional paper 136 - Gun Battle on the Han
- Occasional paper 137 – Battle of the Coral Sea

News in Brief

Australia's Department of Defence will order two more evolved Cape-class patrol boats from Austal Australia, according to the announcement made by Prime Minister Scott Morrison on 18 April.

The two new vessels are in addition to the six evolved Cape-class patrol boats that are currently being delivered by Austal Australia for the Royal Australian Navy.

The evolved Cape-class patrol boat is an evolution of Austal's Cape-class patrol boat platform, first developed for the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, now Australian Border Force (ABF) in 2013. With eight Capes delivered to the ABF between 2013 and 2015 and an additional two Capes delivered to the Royal Australian Navy in 2017, there are now ten Cape-class patrol boats operating around Australia.



Just days after his 99th birthday, Rear Admiral (retd) Guy Griffiths recently visited HMAS *Hobart* at Fleet Base East to speak to the crew about his career and recently published biography.

Commanding Officer of HMAS *Hobart*, Commander Andrew Pepper, welcomed Rear Admiral Griffiths aboard and said it was a great opportunity for the ship's company to learn from a leader who served in three wars.

Rear Admiral Griffiths is the former chief of naval personnel and past commanding officer of HMAS *Hobart* II. Rear Admiral Griffiths joined the battle cruiser HMS *Repulse* as a midshipman in 1941. The ship was later sunk by the Japanese near Malaya and he was rescued.



He served on a number of ships leading up to the Korean War and was promoted to lieutenant commander in HMAS *Anzac*. In 1965, he commanded the guided-missile destroyer HMAS *Hobart* and received the Distinguished Service Order in 1967 after the ship saw action in Vietnamese waters. He retired from Navy in 1980 after 43 years' service, having held a series of senior appointments.

This Month in History

May 1884	Tasmania's only warship, an unnamed 2nd class torpedo boat known as TB1, arrived in Hobart.
May 1900	CAPT William Rooke Creswell was appointed Naval Commandant of Queensland.
May 1913	ADML Sir Victor Alfred Trumper Smith, AC, KBE, CB, DSC, RAN, (1913 - 1998), first graduate of the Royal Australian Naval College to reach the rank of Admiral, was born at Chatswood, NSW.
May 1916	On the occasion of the Battle of Jutland HMAS Australia was returning to Scapa from Devonport, having departed at 10 a.m. on 31 May. She arrived at Scapa at 6:30 a.m. on 3 June
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 1936	HMAS ANZAC was sunk as a target off Sydney Heads.
May 1941	Six ratings from HMAS YARRA disguised as Arab fishermen, carried out a daring reconnaissance of Maqil, Iraq. This was in preparation for Operation Scoop, which was the British invasion of Iraq to prevent the country siding with Germany
May 1945	While towing the 30-ton ketch STINGRAY from Coconut Island to Thursday Island, HMAS WATCHER [commanded by Commissioned Officer from Warrant Rank Francis G. Squire RANR [S] grounded one mile off Harvey Rock Light. The ship was a total loss but there were no casualties
May 1956	First Gannets delivered to RAN FAA
May 1960	Whilst in the China Sea HMAS MELBOURNE lost an XA359 Gannet aircraft. The aircraft lost an engine whilst being catapulted and ditched ahead of the ship. LCDR Rowland was the pilot, and LEUT's Horton and Findlay observers. Rowland was rescued by the SAR Sycamore helicopter, Horton and Findlay by HMS CAVALIER, and later transferred to MELBOURNE.
May 1964	The Minister for the Navy, Mr. F. C. Chaney, announced the dispatch of the HMA Ships HAWK and GULL to Singapore, for operations during the Indonesian-Malaysian confrontation.
May 1968	The Attack class fast patrol boat HMAS ARCHER, (LEUT A. V. R. Horne, RAN), was commissioned. ARCHER was laid down at Walker's Yard, Maryborough, QLD, in July 1967, and launched on 2 December 1967. Mrs V. A. T. Smith, (Wife of RADM Smith), performed the launching ceremony. ARCHER was transferred to the Indonesian Navy in 1974, and renamed KRI SILIMAN.
May 1970	The Naval Historical Society of Australia was formed.
May 1977	HMAS VENDETTA made a high-speed dash to provide aid for 28 Vietnamese refugees, in a disabled vessel, drifting in the South China Sea.
May 1980	HMA Ships ATTACK, ADVANCE, and BUCCANEER, (patrol boats), commenced offshore oil rig patrols in Bass Strait. The patrols were organized to prevent terrorist attacks on the oil rigs
May 1988	Wreckage from a RAN Sea Venom aircraft, which crashed into the sea off Nowra on 20 May, 1959 was recovered by a CSIRO research vessel.
May 1992	The former HMAS STUART sailed for Singapore to be broken up.
May 1998	A massive fire broke out in the engine room of HMAS WESTRALIA then operating off the Western Australian coast, which led to the deaths of four RAN personnel. Those killed were MIDN Megan Pelly, RAN, PO Shaun Smith, LS Bradley Meek, and AB Phillip Carroll. An enquiry into the accident revealed that the Navy had allowed inappropriate flexible fuel hoses to be fitted to the engines during a recent refit, and that one of these leaked and sprayed vaporized fuel onto the hot engine, which caused a huge fireball to engulf the engine room.
May 2001	HMAS DARWIN arrives in the Solomon Islands to undertake peacekeeping duties as part of Operation Trek. She was later relieved by HMAS KANIMBLA, Landing Platform Amphibious (LPA) in June.
May 2019	Keel laid for HMAS Arafura, lead ship of 12 Arafura-class offshore vessels

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/>