



Call the Hands



Issue No. 65

July 2022

From the President

With our President David Michael roaming parts of Western Australia this month, it is my pleasure to pen a few words on his behalf for this edition of *Call the Hands*.

Our volunteers continue to be very active in our temporary home in the Naval Heritage Centre at Garden Island and remotely, thanks to the benefits of modern technology. Repairs to the Boatshed are nearly complete and we hope to return there shortly.

Our program of Harbour tours has proved to be very popular, with cruises to mark the 80th anniversary of the Japanese midget submarine attack on Sydney Harbour winning high praise. The west-of-the-Bridge cruises are also doing well, being booked out for most of this year. The program for 2023 is being developed.

With the President absent in WA, it was my pleasure on Sunday 19 June to play a small part in a ceremony to present and dedicate a new White Ensign at St Johns Church in Birchgrove, NSW, to replace one originally presented to the Church on 18 June 1944. The original Ensign was showing the signs of 78 years age. It had been presented to the Church to recognise the contribution made by the people of the Parish to the Sydney shipbuilding industry and the Royal Australian Navy and, in particular, the service of the Rector, the Reverend Arthur Rix who, between 1927 and 1952 participated in the launching of some 62 ships, most for the RAN — from HMAS *Albatross* in 1928 to HMAS *Voyager* in 1952.

It was a beautiful Sunday morning, if a bit chilly, and St Johns was attended by about 100 people for the usual Sunday morning service conducted by the Reverend Canon Peter Yeats followed by the laying-up of the old White Ensign and the dedication of the new in a naval ceremony conducted by Royal Australian Navy Chaplain Catherine Wynn-Jones. The Commanding Officer of HMAS *Kuttabul*, CAPT Viktor Pilicic CSC RAN accepted the old Ensign for safe keeping and the new Ensign was brought forward by a RAN Colour Party for blessing and dedication in a simple but moving service.

Following the service a generous morning tea was enjoyed before NHSA members and guests enjoyed a short bus tour around Balmain before lunch at a local hotel. Overall it was a unique event and a great success.

Members will shortly receive a membership renewal notice. As requested by a number of members, a three-year membership option is now available.

Kind Regards

John Jeremy
Vice President



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of Australia

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ADV Reliant update

The ship is now on its way to Australia and is expected to arrive at Fleet Base East, Sydney, on 15/7/2022.

To be based in Brisbane, the ship is a key part of Australia's enhanced regional engagement policy. The ship is expected to spend 250-300 days per year on station.



NUSHIP for PNG

The Maritime Element of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force has a new ship- HMPNGS Cape Gloucester. The ship is a landing craft, similar to the two LCH provided by Australia at independence, one in 1975 and one in 2014 as a training ship. The ship was provided as Australian aid, partly to assist with the upcoming National elections in PNG, under the Combined Capability Assessment Program. The ship was built in Malaysia and comes with maintenance and training support from Australia. She is similar to ships already in commercial service in PNG, so support and training should be available, locally. Cost was reported as AUD 4.9 million. She was officially inducted into service on 10 June 2022 in Port Moresby, with Australian and Papua New Guinea representatives present.



HMPNGS Cape Gloucester

Other support for the PNG elections is being provided by more than 130 ADF personnel, on the ground and C130J, C27J and C17 aircraft, assisting.

Short history of the Landing Craft Heavy

HMA Ships, Balikpapan, Brunei, Labuan, Tarakan, Wewak, Betano, Buna, Salamaua. Built by Walkers Limited, Maryborough, Queensland.

Eight ships were originally ordered by the Australian Army, only one ship actually served with the army Balikpapan, from 1971 till 1974, when she went to the navy. The rest were commissioned in the RAN, In 1973.

Buna and Salamaua were transferred to PNG at independence in 1975. These two ships served until 2021, when they were taken out of service. Therefore Cape Gloucester was needed. Labuan served with the RAN from 1973 till 2014, she was then transferred to PNG, as a training ship. She was renamed, Lakakamu. Australia provided the ships commanding officer and chief of the boat.

Five ships, Brunei, Tarakan, Wewak, Betano, Balikpapan, were transferred to the Philippines Navy in 2015-16 and still serve, so nearly 50 years after first use, 6 are still afloat remarkable. Basic specifications- displacement, tons- 358 light. 503 full load.

Dimensions-length, 44.5 metres, beam 10.1 metres, draught 2 metres.

Crew 16, speed 10 knots with 2 Caterpillar 3406E diesels. These replaced the original GM Diesels 12-71 in 2005

HMAS Derwent Daily Orders 20 Oct 1978

HMAS DERWENT
at Sea
20th October, 1978

DAILY ORDERS FOR FRIDAY 20th OCTOBER 1978

DSS POSN SCHULTZ
DSN ABSN WINLAV
DSV ABSV STACEY
DLWES LSETS KALETA
1st DWES ABET DRANEY
2nd DWES ABET BALE
3rd DWES

Sunrise 0528 Sunset 1832

DRESS: No 8's Night clothing No 4's

ROUTINE: Daily Sea

0001-0600 Operation Awkward
A/R Sail in company with WAIKATO and HEWITT for Phase 2

NOTE: The ship will remain at defence watches until further notice.

NOTES:

1. Beard Growing Competition

Prior to the next granting of leave all newly grown beards will be reviewed with the following prizes being awarded.

- a. Open section for most luxuriant growth:
First Prize - Free beer issue and a kiss from the Chief Stoker
Second Prize - Free beer issue and two kisses from the Buffer, POFC BARNES (The Bat)
- b. Restricted Section for the scruffiest growth:
First Prize - Free razor and bottle of after shave
Second Prize - Free razor and three days nines.



(W. BURROUGHS)
Lieutenant Commander, RAN
Executive Officer

Resurfacing the past

More than 20,000 ships sank during World War II. One man is on a mission to map them all — and is uncovering untold stories along the way.

[Resurfacing the past \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)

Paul Heersink, a mild-mannered Program Manager at Esri Canada by day, has taken on the extracurricular task of mapping every sunken ship of the Second World War. Driven by personal interest, he has spent the past eight years combing through various primary and secondary sources, and vetting locations, dates, and causes, in order to create the most comprehensive dataset of its kind.

"[Some sources] had latitude and longitude, and some had a Google map with a pin for a single ship...so that made me think, wouldn't it be good to put everything together on one map and see what kind of patterns there are?"— Paul Heersink

With more than 14,500 mapped records, the dataset unlocks new possibilities for analysis and visualization. And to encourage exploration and discovery, Paul has created a data-driven dashboard, which automatically updates as he adds new ships to the dataset.

This dashboard illuminates patterns and stories across all scales of the naval theatre — from the fate of an individual ship like the Kinugawa Maru, to the arc of a particular battle, to the progress of the entire war_



Vice Admiral Sir J A Collins

John Augustine Collins was born in Deloraine, Tasmania, on 7 January 1899. He was the son of the late Dr MJ Collins and Mrs Collins, and a brother of Dale Collins, the Australian novelist. He was one of the first Cadet Midshipmen to enter the Royal Australian Naval College, after it had been opened at Geelong in 1913, and even at that early stage of his career his high intelligence and ability and his qualities of leadership were apparent. He 'passed out' of the College at the end of 1916, while Britain and her Allies were still at war with Germany and was sent to England as a Midshipman to serve with the Royal Navy's Grand Fleet.



It was while he was serving with the Grand Fleet that he decided to specialise in gunnery, and in 1923 he distinguished himself by winning the Commander Egerton Memorial Prize, which was founded in memory of Commander FG Egerton RN, who was mortally wounded in 1899 in the defence of Ladysmith. This prize is awarded annually to the naval officer of the Royal Navy, or any Navy of the Commonwealth, who, when qualifying as a gunnery lieutenant in England, wins the highest marks in practical gunnery.

As later events proved in the Mediterranean in the Second World War, Admiral Collins' specialised knowledge of gunnery was to stand him in good stead. After his return to Australia, he held various appointments as a gunnery officer, including the appointment of Squadron Gunnery Officer, in which he was responsible for the whole Squadron's gunnery training and efficiency.

Later he commanded the destroyer HMAS Anzac (I); after that he did a Naval Staff Course, followed by two years at the Admiralty in War Plans, then became Assistant Chief of Staff at Navy Office, Melbourne. When the Second World War broke out, he held, as well as that appointment, the post of Director of Naval Intelligence. He went to sea again in November 1939, this time in command of HMAS Sydney (II). He did not know then that his ship was to bring greater renown upon himself by sinking Bartolomeo Colleoni in the Mediterranean than her famous namesake won in the war of 1914-18 by destroying the German raider Emden at Cocos Island.

Apart from sinking Bartolomeo Colleoni, Sydney chased her sister ship, Giovanni Delle Bande Nere, until the Italian vessel, having greater speed, escaped.

Sydney won numerous other honours. In bombarding Bardia in the middle of 1940 she was the first British warship to open up an attack on an Italian colony during the Second World War, and she was the first vessel to make her way through the heavily mined Straits of Otranto. She sank the Italian destroyer Espero and took part in several other engagements, including the Battle of Calabria. It was for his ability in commanding Sydney in the Mediterranean and especially for his destruction of Bartolomeo Colleoni that Captain Collins was awarded the Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB).

Shortly after his return to Australia in Sydney he was appointed Chief of Staff to Commander-in-Chief, China. For his work in that post, he was mentioned in dispatches. Later he became Commodore Commanding the British Far Eastern which was based on Java, with the rank of Commodore 2nd Class. It was in recognition of the work he did then that Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands conferred upon him the honour of Commander in the Order of Oranje Nassau. In 1943 Collins went to England to assume command of the cruiser HMAS Shropshire which the British Government had presented to the Commonwealth Government to replace HMAS Canberra after she was lost during the Battle of Savo Island. Shropshire, under the command of Collins, took part in the fighting throughout the Pacific.



In June 1944, in further recognition of his valuable services, he was made a Commodore 1st Class and given command of the Australian Squadron which at that time was operating with the US 7th Fleet.

On 21 October 1944 while taking part in the American landings in the Philippines, Collins' flagship, HMAS Australia, was attacked by a Japanese aircraft which struck and severely damaged the bridge. The captain of Australia (Captain EFV Dechaineux) and thirty others were killed, and sixty-four, including Collins, were wounded. Commodore Collins was subsequently evacuated to Australia and for his work in the South West Pacific was made an Officer of the United States Legion of Merit.

On recovering from his injuries, Collins was temporarily appointed Naval Officer-in-Charge, Fremantle. In July 1945 he resumed command of the Australian Squadron in HMAS Shropshire and was present in Tokyo Bay in August 1945 when the Japanese capitulated. He was later present in USS Missouri during the signing of the instrument of surrender in September. In November 1946, he relinquished command to Commodore HB Farncomb and left for England to attend the Imperial Defence College.

Soon after Collins had proceeded to England, on 7 January 1947, the Minister of the Navy announced that both he and Commodore Farncomb were to be promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral; thus, becoming the first graduates of the RAN College to attain flag rank. On 24 February 1948, Collins was appointed First Naval Member of the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board and Chief of the Naval Staff, a post which he retained until he retired on 23 February 1955.

He was promoted Vice Admiral on 10 May 1950, and in the King's Birthday Honours List of 1951 he was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE). He later served as Australia's High Commissioner to New Zealand between 1956-1962. Sir John died peacefully aged 90 on 3 September 1989 and was commemorated with full Naval honours. In recognition of his service to the RAN the Collins Class of submarines was named in his honour.

Article originally published in the Greenbank NAA June 2022 Newsletter

ML 817's New Guinea Operations

Warship camouflage came in some weird and wonderful forms during WW II. But for one of the smaller ships of the RAN it was a case of using the genuinely 'real thing' – applied amid exciting and dramatic circumstances.

The vessel was ML 817, the first of the Fairmiles to go to New Guinea when, in 1943, the war was raging along the New Guinea coastline and these small sub-chasers were to prove invaluable for anti-submarine patrols, convoy escort work, coastal surveillance, harassment of Japanese barge traffic and many other exciting assignments.

Australia went on to build 35 Fairmiles which really were the forerunner of today's Navy patrol boats. Built by Lars Halvorsen & Sons Pty. Ltd. at Green Point Naval Shipyard in Sydney to an English design, ML 817 commissioned under the command of Lt. Athol Townley who, earlier, had played a key role in sinking one of the Japanese midget submarines that had raided Sydney harbour.

After working-up trials, ML 817 went to New Guinea. With Port Moresby being raided frequently by bombers of the Japanese Air Force, ML 817 spent considerable time by day and by night on anti-submarine patrol along the sealanes approaching Port Moresby harbour. ML 817 made frequent trips on the convoy run from Moresby to Milne Bay helping escort supply ships. They were trips on which ML 817's crew members were ever-conscious of the big Japanese air and navy base so close, at Rabaul.



The vessel then became based at Milne Bay and its CO, promoted to Lt. Cdr. Townley, found his ship assigned to the Milne Bay — Oro Bay convoy run through the treacherous reefs on that section of the poorly-charted New Guinea coastline. Townley and his ship's company saw several air raids on Oro Bay.

With specially built mufflers fitted over the Fairmile's exhaust outlets in the funnel, ML 817 became engaged on a series of raids along the Japanese-occupied New Guinea coast, observing Japanese barge traffic, harassing the supply barges and doing a great deal of surveillance work.

In search for Japanese activities, ML 817 even found herself on one occasion virtually 'up the river' – with not enough room on either side to turn the vessel, necessitating the ship having to extricate itself stern first, as crewmen held their breath expecting 'all hell' would break loose from the jungle on either side at any moment.

On September 1, 1943, ML 817 was assigned to the United States 7th Fleet Amphibious Force (Task Force 76) for the AIF assault on the Japanese at Lae and Salamaua.

It was ML 817's task to ensure that the many vessels detailed for the landing of the 9th Div. AIF at Bula Plantation, were shepherded safely from their several dispersal areas along the coast, to the assault rendezvous.

Commander G. Branson of the Royal Navy, who was NOIC New Guinea, travelled aboard ML 817 with Lt. Cdr. Townley – and also aboard was Lt. A.A. Joel, later to become Sir Asher Joel. Townley took ML 817 out of Buna at dawn on September 3, steaming for Morobe, further up the coast. In Morobe harbour, he placed ML 817 alongside the RAN corvette HMAS *Shepparton*. No sooner were the lines between the two vessels secured, than 36 enemy aircraft (nine Mitsubishi bombers and 26 Zero fighters) swept in from the south-west and pattern-bombed both vessels. Starting from 200 yards on the port quarter, the bombs fell in a direct line to a point 300 yards off the starboard bow of ML 817 and HMAS *Shepparton*.

Although the bomb blasts had thrown him onto his face on the quarterdeck, Lt. Cdr. Townley raced to the bridge and his crew engaged the planes with anti-aircraft fire.

Cdr. Branson later wrote: 'So quickly did Townley and his crew react to the situation that by the time I had re-boarded across to ML 817 from HMAS *Shepparton*, the lines holding the two vessels had been let go. ML 817's Midshipman, with blood streaming down his face from a shrapnel wound, was at his action station directing gunnery fire as ML 817 cleared from HMAS *Shepparton*.'

Crew members later told of sickening thuds as bomb-metal crashed through ML 817's side and embedded itself into a cupboard, followed by salt water and seabed sand as the churned-up ocean cascaded through the hole in the ship's hull. ML 817 and HMAS *Shepparton* had been all but swamped by 36 100-kilogram bombs. Both vessels were well straddled. ML 817 had 42 punctures and significant holes in her hull. Lt. Cdr. Townley put a new meaning into the word camouflage that day. With his vessel's port engine propeller inoperative and with the starboard engine able to make a speed of only three knots, he maneuvered ML 817 close to a small island. The vessel's hull had been twisted and the propulsion and other machinery thrown out of alignment. Crew members went ashore and hacked down jungle until the vessel was camouflaged. Then, under cover of darkness, Townley took ML 817 laboriously down the coast to Buna for a temporary patch-up, then on to Milne Bay. With no slipway facilities available at Milne Bay, it was decided ML 817 should be towed back to Sydney for repairs.

Typical of the man, Lt. Cdr. Townley decided to stay on in New Guinea. He assigned ML 817 to a young skipper just arrived with one of the new Fairmiles, which he himself took over.

ML 817 was towed across the Coral Sea to Townsville by the tanker *Trinity* in a convoy of ships, then towed down the east coast to Sydney by the corvette HMAS *Deloraine*. ML 817 was repaired and she did return to New Guinea and operated on escort and patrol work right up into Dutch New Guinea areas until late 1944.

Townley, meanwhile, went on to more exciting 'excursions' with his sub-chaser and later commanded a whole flotilla of RAN Fairmiles. After the war he became member for Denison in Federal Parliament and held several key portfolios, including that of Minister for Defence at the

time of his sudden death in 1963.

Photo of the Month



American Submarines at Fremantle's North Wharf 1945

Fremantle had a key role as the largest submarine base in the Southern Hemisphere during the Second World War. The first United States submarines arrived at Fremantle in 1942, and over the next 3 years, the port accommodated more than 170 submarines from the United States, British and Dutch navies.

A submarine repair facility was established by the United States Navy on North Quay in 1943. Today, the remnants of the support structures of the anti-submarine boom net winch installation at the entrance to the harbour can still be seen on North Mole and South Mole. This maritime defence system became operational in December 1940 and was constructed from a buoyed wire net with a central gate that opened via a winch off North Mole. The winches allowed for anti-submarine nets to be raised to keep out enemy submarines and lowered to allow authorised vessels to pass.

Of the US submarines operating from Fremantle, eight were lost on patrol while a further ten formerly based at Fremantle subsequently were lost while on patrol from another base. One Dutch and one British submarine were also lost while operating out of Fremantle.

News in Brief

HMAS Canberra Memorial Service

The crew of HMAS Ararat took the opportunity while deployed in the south-west Pacific on Operation Solania to hold a memorial service over the resting place of HMAS Canberra 1.

Canberra 1 was sunk on August 9, 1942, during the WW2 Battle of Savo Island, with the loss of 84 hands.

The memorial service, at the end of May, was a moving occasion for Ararat crew member Able Seaman Gilbert Jackson.



His grandfather served in HMAS Shropshire, which was acquired from the Royal Navy following the loss of Canberra.

"I'm proud that my grandfather served in the Shropshire. He certainly did his bit. My grandfather was part of a generation whose like we may never see again," Able Seaman Jackson said.

"Having now served in HMAS Canberra III myself, our family connection to the Canberra-Shropshire Association spans two generations.

RAN Deployments

Five Royal Australian Navy ships will set sail from Australia over the next three weeks for regional presence deployments throughout the Indo-Pacific region.

HMA ships Canberra, Warramunga and Supply will participate in Exercise Rim of the Pacific 2022 (RIMPAC 22), in and around the Hawaiian Islands.

HMA ships Sydney and Perth, supported by HMAS Supply, will work with regional partners and participate in Exercises Pacific Vanguard and Pacific Dragon.

Exercise RIMPAC 22 runs from June 29 to August 4 and will see around 25,000 personnel from 26 nations participate, with the Australian Defence Force (ADF) also deploying two RAAF P-8A Poseidon aircraft, mine warfare and clearance diving capabilities, and a joint landing force



Video of the Month

[Why is a Frigate a Frigate \(and not a Destroyer or a Corvette\) - YouTube](#)



Occasional Papers

- Occasional Paper 140 - The Factors that Led to the Formation of the RAN in 1911
- Occasional Paper 141 - The Tradition of Colours and Sunset

This Month in History

July 1852	VADM Sir W. R. Creswell, KCMG, KBE, 'Father of the RAN', was born at Gibraltar where his father was the postmaster.
July 1911	HRH King George V granted the title of "Royal" for the Royal Australian Navy and it's Permanent Commonwealth Naval Forces and the Royal Australian Naval Reserve. RADM Sir William Rooke Creswell CNF, recently promoted to Flag Rank on 1st March 1911, was First Naval Member of the Naval Board of the now redesignated RAN. He was Australia's first Admiral (although ex RN) to occupy the position.
July 1914	LEUT A. M. Longmore, an Australian serving with the RNAS, made the first successful aerial torpedo drop by a naval pilot from a Short Folder seaplane.
July 1917	Boats from HMAS Sydney I rescued survivors when HMS Vanguard blew up at Scapa Flow on 9/7/1917. Two of Sydney's crew, Stokers Robert Thomas Houston and L.W. Roberts , were onboard HMS Vanguard and died in the explosion.
July 1925	While HMAS Brisbane was at Hong Kong, there was a major landslide in the Po Hing Fong district which destroyed many homes and killed 73 people. Warrant Officer Shipwright Robert Cargin from <i>Brisbane</i> was ashore at the time visiting friends and took part in the rescue operations; he was later awarded the Bronze Lifesaving Medal of the Venerable Order of St John of Jerusalem for 'conspicuous gallantry for saving life at imminent personal risk in connection with the Po Hing Fong disaster at Hong Kong'
July 1935	HMA Ships AUSTRALIA and BRISBANE represented the RAN at the Jubilee Review of HRH King George V, at Spithead, England.
July 1940	HMA Ships SYDNEY STUART, VAMPIRE, and VOYAGER participated in the Battle of Calabria. The signal, 'Enemy battle fleet in sight,' was hoisted for the first time in the Mediterranean since the Napoleonic Wars. HMAS NESTOR was launched at Fairfield's Yard, UK. HMAS AUSTRALIA left the Dakar force and proceeded to the Clyde.
July 1943	HMAS HOBART was torpedoed by the Japanese submarine I-G011, while steaming to Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides. Seven officers and six ratings were killed, and six officers and one rating wounded. HOBART was extensively damaged, and after temporary repairs at Espiritu Santo proceeded to Sydney for repairs. The torpedo which struck HOBART was fired at a range of 10 miles.
July 1953	HMAS Anzac (II) returned to Sydney after an absence of 305 days. Of these, 228 were spent at sea, 40 of them on patrol in the Korean War combat areas. During the entire period she steamed 57,865 mile
July 1963	A Sea Venom crashed into Sydney Harbour following a collision with another Sea Venom during a fly-past.
July 1968	The Women's Royal Australian Naval Service Reserve, (WRANSR), was formed.
July 1973	The bow and stern sections of the WWI torpedo boat destroyer HMAS PARRAMATTA, were salvaged from a mud bank on the Hawkesbury River, where she had run aground in 1934. The sections were transported by sea and land to the City of Parramatta for inclusion in memorials to the ship.
July 1983	RAN Fleet Air Arm Squadrons VF805, (Skyhawk fighter-bombers), and VS816 (Grumman Trackers), were disbanded.
July 1999	The Collins class submarine HMAS WALLER, was commissioned. WALLER was laid down at The Australian Submarine Corporation, Adelaide, and launched on 14 March 1997.
July 2004	HMAS BRISBANE was handed over to the Queensland Government in a ceremony at Fleet Base East, Garden Island, Sydney. The ship left Sydney Harbour, under tow, for the last time three days later. The Queensland Government plan was to sink the ship off the Sunshine Coast, (near Mudjimba Island), where she would become a dive wreck.
July 2013	808 Squadron was recommissioned at HMAS Albatross to fly the MRH-90 Taipan
July 2015	HMAS Tobruk II decommissioned

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/>