



Call the Hands



Issue No. 68

October 2022

From the President

Welcome to the Society's sixty eighth edition of Call the Hands and the accompanying occasional papers. I trust that you will find them of interest.

The splendid pageantry on display in the United Kingdom during September as the world farewelled Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second impressed us all. Readers may recall commentary during the funeral procession describing the history of the gun carriage which carried the Queens coffin. The commentary explained why it was pulled by sailors, a tradition which had its origin during the funeral of Queen Victoria on 2 February 1901. As it is a fascinating story this edition of CTH provides two perspectives on that day.

Two of the occasional papers this month relate to the composite clipper ship *Sobraon*, later commissioned into the RAN as HMAS *Tingira*. Ross Gillett in OP 146 looks at training in *Tingira* while Lorraine Fildes in OP 147 addresses the period in which *Sonoran* served as an industrial training ship for boys and a famous trainee, Bernard Kieran.

Events associated with the 75th anniversary of the Fleet Air Arm celebrated in July this year continue with a Fleet Air Arm Seminar '75 Years & Beyond' scheduled for Friday 21 October as well as the release of '*Flying Stations (II)*', a new book recording the history of the Fleet Air Arm from 1998-2022. It will be essential reading for all with an interest in the Fleet Air Arm (FAA).

I am grateful for feedback received from Commander Ian (Max) Speedy, DSC, RAN RTD concerning the Society's website and his proposal for improvement. Such feedback is always welcomed. As many readers will know Max Speedy and fellow RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam (RANHFV) veteran Captain Robert Ray, MBE, RAN co-authored a first-hand account of the RANHFV's operations during the Vietnam War entitled 'A Bloody Job Well Done'. Max was the 2iC of the 2nd Contingent (1968/69). His story on the Unit Citation for Gallantry awarded to the RANHFV published in the [September 2018 edition](#) of the Naval Historical Review reminds us of the great contribution by the FAA to Australian Defence Force operations in peace and war over seventy five years. We salute all who have served in the FAA throughout its distinguished history.

Finally, I am pleased to report that the first Garden Island history tour in almost three years was conducted on 29 September for attendees of an international Defence seminar. With the precedent established it is our expectation that Defence approval to once again provide these tours to the public will be forthcoming in the near future. These tours along with the popular Sydney Harbour history cruises are essential to the Society's financial health.

Kind regards,
David Michael



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of Australia

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Townsville Naval Base HMAS Magnetic to be Recognised with New Memorial

A little-known naval base operating 80 years ago will be commemorated with a new memorial. Commissioned on 1 September 1942, HMAS *Magnetic* was a shore based naval depot in Townsville, Queensland. *Magnetic* covered all RAN activities in the Townsville area, although the main facilities were on Magnetic Island located 8 kilometres off the coast of Townsville.

Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence and Herbert MP Phillip Thompson said HMAS Magnetic would be honoured with a new plaque on the original site.

Maritime Museum of Townsville managing curator Robert De Jong said HMAS Magnetic had a rich history and a sizeable proportion of its staff consisted of Women's Royal Australian Naval Service officers and ratings. "HMAS Magnetic was a shore based naval depot in Townsville - one of the many new naval stations that sprang up along the Australian coastline during the Pacific War," Mr De Jong said.

"The primary functions of Magnetic were communications, Port Examination Services and as a service centre for Allied warships. Townsville was an important staging post for Australian and US personnel, and the port saw many supply and troop ships carrying personnel and materials north during the New Guinea campaign. "It played an extremely important role so we're extremely grateful for Phil's support to obtain the funding for the project, which will hopefully help the community better understand our local military history."

"The base was located between Sir Leslie Thiess Drive and Ross Creek. The plaque will be erected at a suitable spot inside this area."

Further Reading

[Townsville Naval Base HMAS Magnetic to be Recognised with New Memorial \(magneticcommunitynews.com\)](http://magneticcommunitynews.com)

[HMAS Magnetic History | Royal Australian Navy](#)

Air - Sea Rescue Craft: World War 2

Stationed throughout the North Sea and English Channel were air sea rescue buoys which played an important role during World War II. There were two different designs, both English and German.

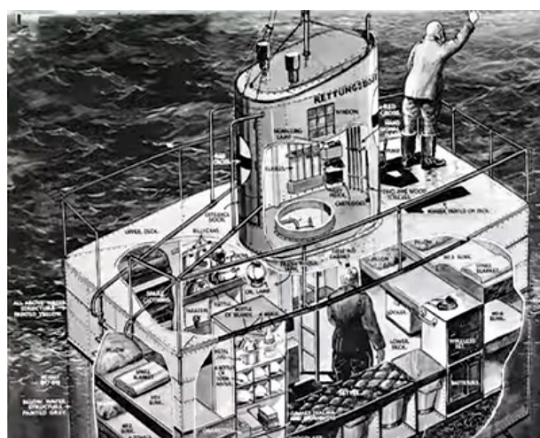
Their role was to provide emergency shelter for the crews of downed aircraft and stranded sailors. They contained vital equipment and supplies, including food, drinking water, bunks, towels, washing gear, books and playing cards. These comforts were more to reduce the shock of their ordeal than to prepare them for a long stay. Stranded men were able to radio for assistance ensuring that a fast rescue vessel would be sent out.

The German Luftwaffe developed and deployed the first floating rescue buoys called Rettungsboje in 1940 and anchored them in the English Channel.

The British equivalent, the Air-Sea Rescue Float used a boat-shaped hull of welded steel. Sixteen were constructed and deployed under the main routes bombers took to and from continental Europe. They were equipped with cooking facilities, signal flags, a radio and six bunks. Food, blankets, clothing, drinking water and first-aid were also supplied.



British: Air – Sea Rescue Craft (ASR-10) on display at [Scottish Maritime Museum](#), Edinburgh



German Luftwaffe rescue buoy

Further Reading

Rettungsbojen: The Floating Rescue Buoys of The Luftwaffe available at:
<https://www.amusingplanet.com/2020/04/rettungsbojen-floating-rescue-buoys-of.html>

Youtube Video WWII Rescue Buoys - Secret 'Floating Hotels' of the English Channel available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fDnSQoneiE>

Fleet Air Arm Seminar - 75 Years & Beyond Friday 21 October 2022



To celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the RAN's Fleet Air Arm the Australian Naval Institute and the Fleet Air Arm Association will hold a half-day Seminar to discuss the FAA's achievements to date and its exciting future.

This seminar will be conducted at the
**Fleet Air Arm Museum,
Friday 21 October 2022.
8:30 AM - 11:30 AM (AEST)**

The Fleet Air Arm Museum is located just outside the entrance to HMAS Albatross at 489A Albatross Rd, Nowra Hill, NSW 2540.

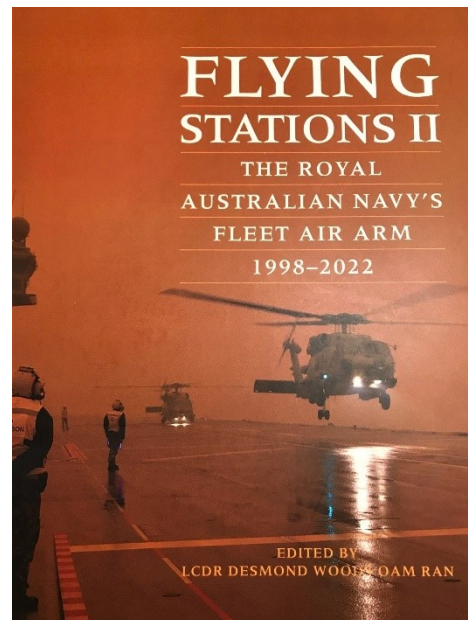
Free registrations is now open. At
<https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing?eid=947140&>

New Book: *Flying Stations (II)*, The Royal Australian Navy's Fleet Air Arm 1998-2022

Following the Fleet Air Arm Seminar, VADM Tim Barrett will launch this new book at 11:30hrs in the main exhibition area of the Museum. This book entitled *Flying Stations (II)* edited by Lieutenant Commander Desmond Woods OAM RAN is a sequel to *Flying Stations (I)* published in 1997 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Fleet Air Arm. It is a beautifully illustrated volume which captures the spirit of the Fleet Air Arm from the perspectives of its history, aircraft and people during the period from 1998 to 2022.

It is published by the RAN Fleet Air Arm in conjunction with Avonmore Books, Kent Town, South Australia 5071, (ISBN 978-0-6452469-5-7).

Copies can be ordered through the Director Fleet Air Arm Museum, Mr Stuart Harwood stuart.harwood@defence.gov.au.



Book Review

Flying Stations (II) has been favourably reviewed by Commander David Hobbs MBE RN (Ret'd), former RN FAA pilot and highly regarded naval historian and author of many books on naval aviation. His review is available on the NHSA website

<https://www.navyhistory.org.au/flying-stations-ii-the-royal-australian-navys-fleet-air-arm-1998-2022-book-review/>

British Tradition Royal Navy sailors hauling gun carriages in state funeral processions

The following story was sourced from [a Facebook post](#) on 18 Sep 2022 by the Didcot Railway Centre: living museum of the Great Western Railway (GWR).

We are pleased to read in the newspapers that the gun carriage carrying the coffin of Queen Elizabeth II at the state funeral procession on Monday 19 September will be hauled by Royal Navy sailors.

Most news reports correctly state that the tradition dates back to Queen Victoria's funeral on 2 February 1901. However, they fail to mention the Great Western Railway's role in supplying the ropes for the sailors to rig to the gun carriage on the occasion. This drawing of the bluejackets hauling the Queen's coffin that day was published in the Penny Illustrated Paper on 9 February 1901, with the ropes clearly visible.

On 2 February 1901 the weather was extremely cold and the hawsers for the gun carriage to be used for the procession from Windsor railway station to the Castle had frozen. The horses intended to pull the gun carriage were also affected by the intense cold and had become restive and possibly dangerous during the wait for the delayed funeral train to arrive. It was at this point that the GWR played its essential part in what has become a tradition for subsequent state funerals.

The Duke of Portland, who was Master of the Horse at Queen Victoria's funeral, recalled what happened in a letter published in The Times on 28 January 1936 at the time of King George V's funeral:

"Owing to the lateness of the train which conveyed Her Majesty's coffin from Paddington to Windsor the horses attached to the gun-carriage had become cold. When the word of command 'Walk ... March' was given, the leaders twice reared up, and then fell back on the other horses, which caused all six to fall down.

"My recollection is that Admiral Sir Michael Culme-Seymour was in command of the large Naval Guard of Honour drawn up on the spot. As soon as Sir Michael saw what had occurred he called out to me in his usual resonant voice, 'All right, my boys will soon straighten out this mess.' He at once ordered them to go into the station and the station master procured ropes (from the communication cords of carriages). Sir Michael then ordered them to fall in and draw the gun-carriage from the station to the entrance to the Castle grounds at the end of the Long Walk and up the slope. It was a most touching and effective procession and, in my opinion, much more impressive than would have been the official procedure."

Thus, with inspired improvisation and the help of the GWR, began the tradition which the Royal Navy has claimed ever since of hauling the coffin at funerals of the monarch.

The ropes on the carriages were the external communication cords to alert the guard in an emergency. Our brake 3rd carriage No 416, built in 1891, still carries this system, so remember to take a look at it next time you visit Didcot Railway Centre.



Bluejackets hauling the Queen Victoria's coffin, 2 February 1901

Queen's Coffin Was Transported on a 123-Year-Old Gun Carriage

As noted in the previous story, Queen Elizabeth's coffin was transported on the gun carriage first used to carry Queen Victoria's coffin in 1901. It was subsequently used to carry the coffins of King Edward VII, King George V, King George VI, Winston Churchill, and Lord Mountbatten.

Further detail is available in the Town and Country Magazine story by Norman Vanamee published: 19 Sep 2022. It is available at

<https://www.townandcountrymag.com/society/tradition/a41275692/queen-elizabeth-coffin-funeral-gun-carriage/>



Queen Elizabeth's coffin hauled by Royal Navy sailors, 19 September 2022. Image by Chris Jackson, Getty Images.



Cortege at the state funeral of Sir Winston Churchill, 30 January 1965

FIRST AUSTRALIAN NAVAL JET SQUADRON

*808, 816 and 817 Squadrons
formed at Culdrose*

THE FIRST three jet and turbo-jet squadrons for the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Australian Navy were officially formed at the R.N. Air Station, Culdrose, near Helston, Cornwall, on August 23.

They are 808 Squadron equipped

squadrons on August 23 was marked by a ceremony attended by the High Commissioner for Australia (Sir Thomas White, K.B.E., D.F.C.), arriving at the air station at 11.00 a.m. in a Sea Devon aircraft of the Royal Navy.



A de Havilland Sea Venom

with eight Sea Venoms and 816 and 817 Squadrons each operating six Gannets. Manned completely by officers and ratings of the Australian Navy, the squadrons go to Australia in March of next year in H.M.A.S. Melbourne, the new aircraft carrier for the R.A.N., now building at Barrow-in-Furness.

In Australia they will be disembarked to the Naval Air Station at Nowra, New South Wales, headquarters of the Australian Fleet Air Arm formed since the end of World War II.

The formation of the new

Also present were the Flag Officer Air (Home), Vice-Admiral Caspar John, C.B., and the Flag Officer Flying Training, Rear-Admiral Guy Willoughby, C.B., who was the Fourth Naval Member (the Naval Air Member) of the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board from 1948-50.

The High Commissioner addressed the squadrons and took the salute at a march past. After lunch a token number of Sea Venoms and Gannets flew over the airfield. The High Commissioner was escorted by Sea Venoms for the start of his return flight to Northolt.

Photo of the Month



Flying Suit Patches worn by members of the RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam

The Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam (RANHFV) was specially formed for service in support of allied forces during the Vietnam War. Mr Allen Fairhall, Minister for Defence, announced the formation of this unit on 14 July 1967. The new flight was to be integrated with the United States Army 135th Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) flying the ubiquitous Iroquois helicopters in both the utility and gun-ship configurations.

The first contingent of pilots, observers, naval airmen and support staff was assigned to 723 Squadron Naval Air Station (NAS) Nowra in July 1967 under the command of Lieutenant Commander Neil Ralph, RAN. The flight consisted of eight pilots, four observers, four aircrewmen, 24 technical sailors and six support staff comprising of cooks, stewards, writers (clerks), medics and storemen. Following an eight week period of training, the first contingent arrived in Vietnam on 16 October 1967 and was quickly integrated with the 330 personnel of the 135th AHC. As a result of this unique relationship between the RAN and the US Army, the unit was officially designated 'EMU', for Experimental Military Unit. This was fitting, given that the emu is a native Australian bird, and in some ways comical as the emu cannot fly.

The 135th AHC was based at Vung Tau and organised to operate two troop lift ('slick') platoons, each with eleven UH-1Ds, a gunship platoon with eight UH-1Cs, a maintenance platoon with a single UH-1D and a headquarters platoon. Six of the gunships were equipped with mini guns, rockets and machine guns. The remaining two were fitted with the 40mm grenade launcher system (mounted in a ball turret under the nose of the helicopter) rockets and machine guns. The role of the 135th AHC was to provide tactical air movement of combat troops, supplies and equipment in air-mobile operations. This included augmentation of army medical services, search and rescue and the provision of a command and control aircraft capability to supported units.

Further Reading

- [RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam History | Royal Australian Navy](#)
- [Our Heritage: The RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam - Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia \(faaaa.asn.au\)](#)

Australia's first Hunter-class frigate to be operational in 2031

The expected time frame for the first of the Australian Navy's Hunter-class frigates is 2031, acting Prime Minister and defence minister Richard Marles revealed. Defence minister Marles unveiled the information during the visit to BAE Systems' shipyard in Govan, Glasgow, where British Type 26 frigates are being built. The minister visited the shipyard to see the progress on the first Type 26, HMS Glasgow. To remind, BAE Systems received a £3.7 billion contract in 2017 for the construction of the first three vessels. Australia's Hunter-class frigates are based on the design of the Royal Navy's Type 26s.



Marles stated that while the expected time frame for British Type 26 frigates to be operational is 2028, the expected date for Australian Hunter-class frigates is 2031. He also noted that “We’re obviously working with BAE Systems to see whether we can get that date sooner, but we are looking at that as the date for the first and we hope that we can get the subsequent ships in the program in the water as quickly as possible.”

Meanwhile, Australia's defence shipbuilding program continues to make progress at Osborne Naval Shipyard in South Australia with the completion of the first steel block of the Hunter-class frigates in August this year. There are 22 blocks in each Hunter class frigate. The first prototype block, known as Block 16, weighs more than 140 tonnes and its construction involved the expertise of 35 different trades, including engineers, boiler makers, welders, fabricators and project managers. This first prototype block (without any Hunter class design changes) would form part of the middle of the ship where there are accommodation spaces.

The Hunter-class ships will have a 8,800-tonne full load displacement and will be approximately 150 metres long. They will be equipped with an advanced anti-submarine warfare capability, a 24-cell Mk 41 vertical launch system (VLS) for long-range strike weapons such as the Tomahawk, VLS for Sea Ceptor anti-air missiles, a 5-inch gun, and will be capable of landing a Chinook helicopter on its flight deck.

Over the coming period, the Hunter program will continue constructing the second and third prototype blocks.

Video of the Month

When the people of New South Wales built a memorial for those who died during the Great War they chose to make it a memorial to the Anzacs from New South Wales, not a memorial to the Australian & New Zealand Army Corps, or ANZAC. On the Memorial website is a short interesting video explaining: 'ANZAC': ACRONYM OR PROPER NOUN? There is also an article regarding the Anzac V ANZAC question.



Access to the video and article is available via

<https://www.anzacmemorial.nsw.gov.au/our-stories/our-stories/anzac-acronym-or-proper-noun>

Occasional Papers

- Occasional Paper 146 - HMAS Tingara - early naval training
- Occasional Paper 147 - The State Funeral Gun Carriage
- Occasional Paper 148 - Nautical School Ship *Sobraon* and Bernard Kieran - one of the great early Australian swimmers

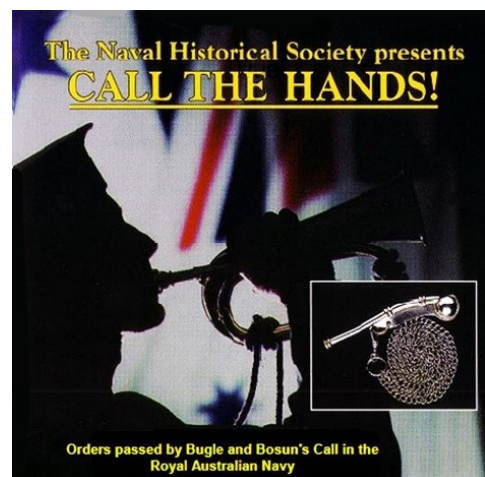
Namesake Audio Recording: 'Call the Hands' is not to be missed

This unique product in the Societies [website shop](#) is well worth considering. If you have heard the pipes and bugles being played on ship, do you know what they mean?

The history of the Bosun's Call or Whistle goes back to the times when it was the only method other than the human voice for passing orders to men on board ship.

This professionally-produced recording available for download as an MP4 recording (\$15) or a mailed USB (\$25) has an excellent commentary and outstanding sound reproduction. It covers a wide range of calls.

Close your eyes and you're back on board ship!



This Month in History

October 1789	The first boat built in the colony of NSW, the ROSEHILL PACKET, was launched in Sydney Cove. The boat builder was R. R. Read, the ship's carpenter of HMS SIRIUS.
October 1870	HMVS CERBERUS met a gale while on passage from Chatham to Plymouth, England. Officials at the Admiralty were concerned at the seaworthiness of the ship, following the loss of HMS CAPTAIN, a similar type of vessel. LEUT Panter, RN, reported the ship sailed like 'a half-tide rock'. On arrival at Plymouth, the crew promptly deserted.
October 1911	The existence of the new Australian Navy was formally advised when the Naval Board issued an historic order promulgating the designation 'Royal Australian Navy'. The order also directed that the permanent naval forces of the Commonwealth and for the ships of the Navy to be designated 'His Majesty's Australian Ships', and that all ships and vessels of the Royal Australian Navy were to fly at the stern the White Ensign as the symbol of authority of the Crown, and at the jack staff, the flag of Australia.
October 1916	PO Stephen Gilbert of HMAS AE2, died of typhus while a POW in the Turkish POW camp at Belededik.
October 1917	HMAS SWAN attacked a submarine disguised as a fishing schooner off Corfu. SWAN dropped depth charges, but the submarine dived and escaped, leaving her mast and sails on the surface.
October 1923	HMAS PARRAMATTA was dispatched to Wilsons Promontory, VIC, to fight bushfires.
October 1933	The Australian Destroyer Flotilla, HMA Ships STUART, VAMPIRE, VENDETTA, VOYAGER and WATERHEN, departed Chatham and, proceeding via Suez, reached Singapore on 28 November, Darwin on 7 December and Sydney on 21 December 1933.
October 1939	The Australian merchant ship TREVANION was sunk by the German pocket battleship GRAF SPEE, in the South Atlantic. TREVANION was the first Australian ship sunk in WWII.
October 1942	The first Australian-built Fairmile motor launch, ML 813, was launched at Lars Halvorsen Yard, Sydney.
October 1944	HMAS GEELONG was sunk in a collision with the US tanker YORK, off Langemak, New Guinea.
October 1951	A Sea Fury piloted by LEUT C. M. Wheatley, RAN, (from HMAS SYDNEY, aircraft carrier), was hit by flak, and crashed into the sea off Chinnampo, South Korea. Wheatley was picked up by a patrolling helicopter and taken to the main allied airbase at Kimpo.
October 1960	HMAS WOOMERA was lost when dumping obsolete ammunition at sea, off Sydney Heads. A violent explosion, followed by a fierce fire, caused WOOMERA to sink in a few minutes. Two of the crew were killed in the explosion, but the other 25 were picked up by HMAS QUICKMATCH. While in the sea the survivors were attacked by albatrosses.
October 1967	The first contingent of the RAN Helicopter Flight, led by LCDR N. Ralph, RAN, arrived in Vietnam. The flight operated with the US 135th Assault Helicopter Company, and flew Bell Iroquois helicopters as troop carriers and gunships in support of ground operations.
October 1974	RAN Clearance Divers completed the disposal of 5,096 pieces of WWII ordnance in Papua-New Guinea.
October 1980	The Russian destroyer, STOROZHEVOY shadowed HMA Ships MELBOURNE and PERTH in the Indian Ocean. A Tracker SE2 aircraft from MELBOURNE also sighted the Soviet assault ship IVAN ROGOV in the area.
October 1988	An International Bicentennial Fleet with over 50 warships from 16 nations moored in Sydney Harbour was reviewed by the Duke and Duchess of York, embarked in HMAS COOK. An estimated 2 million people witnessed the historic review.
October 1993	A Sea King helicopter from HMAS TOBRUK was shot at and sustained two hits by small arms fire in the tail, while conducting a routine reconnaissance flight near Kieta, Bougainville, as part of Operation <i>Lagoon</i> . The aircrew suspected that PNG Defence Force soldiers were responsible for the shooting.
October 2001	HMAS KANIMBLA II departed for the Middle East as part of the maritime force assigned to Operation SLIPPER.
October 2005	A State Funeral was held at HMAS CERBERUS for Mr Evan Allen, who was the last RAN veteran from WWI, and also the last member of the Australian forces to see active service during WWI

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/>

Do you seek or enjoy any of the following interests?

Making a difference

Enjoy the company of like-minded people

Working in a team

Have skills to contribute

Enjoy learning and new challenges

Enjoy history

Have an interest in the Navy

Wish to experience the unique environment.

READ ON!

The environment in which our volunteers work

A recently refurbished open plan heritage building (former boatshed) located in a working naval dockyard rarely experienced by the public.

The office is adjacent Navy's flagship museum with which the Society works closely.

Provides insight into daily life in the Navy and historic dockyard.

Support and training from the team of friendly regular volunteers.

Looking at different ways to interest and inform the public about the Navy, past and present

A diverse range of activities (routine and special) is progressed during office hours, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Every day is different!

SO?

If you have time and skills to contribute and wish to make a difference, then volunteering with the Naval Historical Society may be for you.

The Society is a non-profit, all volunteer organization established in 1970 to promote understanding of Australian naval history. With more than six hundred members, fifty volunteers and several thousand followers the Society provides a diverse range of services and activities in which volunteers will find their niche.

If this resonates with you it is time to contact the Naval Historical Society.
We look forward to hearing from you.

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