

# Call the Hands

Issue No. 69

November 2022

## From the President

Welcome to this month's edition of *Call the Hands* and occasional papers. The Annual General Meeting scheduled for next week is a reminder that the end of 2022 is approaching and is also an opportunity to reflect on achievements throughout the year despite the inconvenience of a six-month office relocation and the trauma of removals. I look forward to reporting on the year and outlining plans for 2023 at the AGM. As a source of Christmas gifts before we shut down on 15 December, you might consider visiting the Society's online [shop](#).

This month's occasional papers followed requests for assistance. Steve Chaplin who recounts his experiences during the 1973 apprehension of Taiwanese fishing boats illegally fishing in Australian waters (OP 149) was enquiring about 'gangway incident logs' and whether they were retained as official records as are ships monthly 'reports of proceedings'. In conversation with volunteers Steve mentioned his experience in HMAS *Acute* which was a story worth telling. The second paper, OP 150 on Palm Island and its links to wartime events followed an ABC Television request for assistance. These are examples of how you can assist the Society and how the Society can assist you. If you have a story to share, we would like to know. In return our volunteers will assist you to the maximum extent possible. If there is an aspect of Australian naval history you consider needs greater emphasis, please contact our research team. Your contact with the Society is mutually beneficial.

Unfortunately, informal ships records such as the gangway incident log which could provide additional information on historic events are not retained in the National Archive of Australia.

As you will appreciate, volunteers willing to attend the Boatshed in Sydney on a regular basis to assist with a variety of tasks remain central to the success of the Society. With age and health issues catching up on some volunteers, there is an urgent need for new blood. The interesting work, pleasant environment and camaraderie all combine to reward our regular volunteers. If you or someone you know can assist, please visit the [website](#) for more information. With recent Defence approval to recommence history and heritage tours of Garden Island in Sydney we are also seeking volunteers to train as [tour guides](#).

Two Garden Island tours are offered, a Dockyard [Heritage Tour](#) and [Northern Hill and Garden Tour](#). These, along with our two off base tours, [Bradleys Head](#) and [Sub Base Platypus](#) plus the cruises, are important not only for enhancing understanding of naval history but as sources of income for the Society. They are interesting and pleasant outings particularly for organised groups. Please assist by advising others that bookings for Garden Island tours are now open.

Finally, our Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 8 November. For members, please join us on line or attend in person if you can. It is not too late to register.

Kind regards,  
David Michael



Naval Historical Society  
of Australia

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## United and Undaunted

*Each month the Naval Association of Australia (QLD) commemorates the actions of Royal Australian Navy personnel at the Jack Tar Memorial at South Brisbane Memorial Park. On 27th October 2022 the focus was on the unsung heroes of the Royal Australian Navy Clearance Diver Branch.*

By Jayne Keogh, Naval Association of Australia, Queensland Branch

The Clearance Diving Branch of the Royal Australian Navy is a bit 'cloak and dagger'. The reason their actual work being unknown is because that is how they want it to be; they are trained to be invisible.

Affectionately nicknamed 'bubbliies', the Clearance Divers (CD) branch of the Royal Australian Navy carries out all diving tasks, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and 'special operations'.

Originally formed as ships' divers in WW2 to work on damaged propellers and hulls, they evolved into mine disposal, counter terrorism, behind enemy lines reconnaissance, covert operations and disaster assistance. Much of their work is highly classified, even today, their veterans are very measured in what is disclosed, given the Official Secrets Act.

CDs have performed in every conflict Australia has been involved in since the Vietnam War, and it was in this conflict that their outstanding performance came to the attention of our the US allies, winning the Meritorious Unit Citation as well as other medals and decorations.

The task that faced the Australian Naval Clearance Diving teams in Vietnam was complex and dangerous. In many cases the visibility in the water was zero due to mud, or darkness, but the CDs are trained to disable EODs blindfolded, and no two devices are the same. The North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong attacked and disrupted Naval and merchant shipping with mines and underwater obstacles, often planted by sappers known as swimmers.

On one infamous night in 1969 such an attack by swimmers was thwarted by the CD team led by Able Seaman Jeff Garrett of Karragarra Island. *The swimmers intended to attack USS Hickman County, MV Heredia an ammunition ship with 8000 tons of explosives and two tankers supplying power to military facilities. Fortunately, an eagle-eyed sentry on Hickman spotted the swimmers and then all hell broke loose with MPs on the wharf and ships company firing into the water and dropping grenades. The RAN CD team was on the scene in 45 minutes, immediately shutting down all fire and cleared the pier.*

*'It wasn't such a good idea to be randomly shooting at anything given the presence of live mines in the area' wryly commented Jeff Garrett.*

Garrett entered the water, ignoring the presence of enemy swimmers in the vicinity and found a metal container suspended between the pier and MV *Heredia*. While he was out of the water reporting this information, a small explosion was heard beneath them. Garrett once more re-entered the water to find that the 40lb improvised device had actuated, but fortunately, the main charge, had not detonated. Shortly later, while the team searched the pier for evidence of more mines, another VC swimmer was captured and taken prisoner. They then located a Soviet BPM-2 limpet mine attached to the pier, the first undetonated one to be seized in the Cold War period. For his role in saving hundreds of lives and allied ships, Jeff was Mentioned in Despatches and nominated for the US Bronze Star.

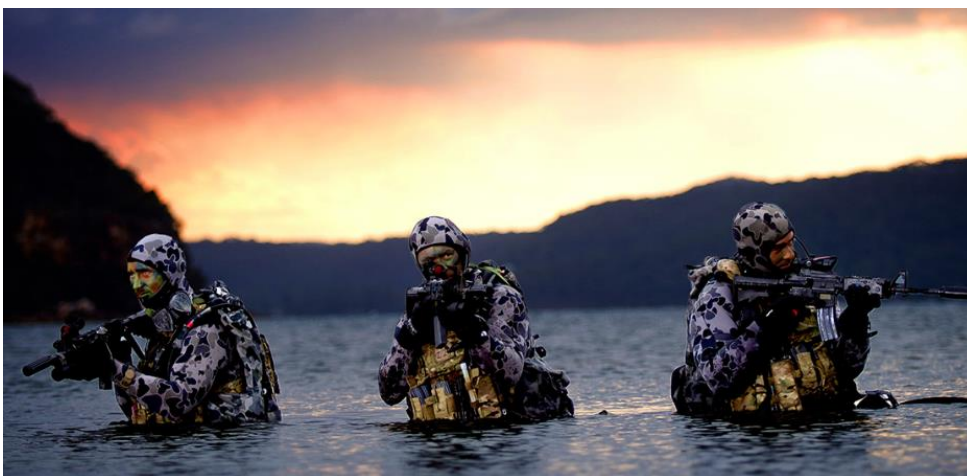
Another highly decorated CD is retired Commander Peter Tedman DSM, OAM of Bulimba who led a Clearance Diving contingent to East Timor as part of the International Force East Timor (INTERFET). 'After the elections the political situation was very unstable, with rebel Indonesian militia massacring many Portuguese speaking, Catholic Timorese in villages near the border,' said Tedman 'We were responsible for mine clearing the port of Dili to allow the passage of military and humanitarian aid.'

They also completed a clandestine beach reconnaissance into the militia held province of Oecussi in preparation for a landing to reequip an SAS team that had been inserted into the rebel area. The divers launched from HMAS *Success* disguised as a merchant ship and commenced their survey of the seabed. As they neared the shallows a militia Jeep patrol with spotlights suddenly appeared on the beach, but thankfully the group was invisible, as trained.

AB Brown was decorated with a Commendation for Gallantry for risking his own life by covering his Commanding Officer as the vehicle passed and Commander Tedman was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for operations in East Timor.

The CD team also work closely with civilian disaster response in Australia and overseas. They were tasked with a particularly dangerous and unpleasant task in the aftermath of the 2011 Brisbane flood. The river was alive with sharks, snakes, stingrays, rubbish and rotting dead animals. It had flooded into the heritage listed South Brisbane dry dock, floating the WW 2 HMAS *Diamantina* off her blocks in the Queensland Maritime Museum.

'It was no easy task to reposition a 2000 ton Frigate, especially working in zero visibility muddy toxic soup,' said Peter. 'In that situation you literally can't see anything, you just feel your way and hope for the best!' The Naval Association of Australia (QLD) will commemorate the unsung heroes of the Royal Australian Navy Clearance Divers in a ceremony on 27th October at 10.30 at the Jack Tar Memorial at South Brisbane Memorial Park (next to Ship Inn), all welcome.



Royal Australian Navy Clearance Divers conducting a surveillance exercise, RAN image

## Former HMAS *Otama*'s Final Voyage

The former HMAS *Otama* has been owned by the Western Port Oberon Association since 2001. The Association's plan was to preserve her as a museum vessel. Unfortunately, numerous submissions to establish the Victorian Maritime Centre at Hastings failed and *Otama*'s material condition continued to deteriorate. In mid-2021 Parks Victoria declared *Otama* an environmental hazard and ordered its removal from Western Port. With support from Defence acquisitions this has now occurred.

On 13 September the semi-submersible vessel, *Rolldock Sun* hired by the Department of Defence arrived in Western Port Bay to uplift *Otama* for transfer to Henderson, WA and breaking up. Passage to WA commenced on 19 September.



Ex HMAS *Otama* on *Rolldock Sun* in Westernport Bay September 2022, Jamie Bardy image



Former RAN vessels *Otama* and *Sirius* at Henderson, WA, October 2022

### Videos:

[HMAS \*Otama\* being loaded on the \*Rolldock Sun\* - YouTube](#)

[HMAS OTAMA sad farewell #oberon, #henderson, #otama - YouTube](#)

## HMAS Quickmatch – A Personal Account of Construction

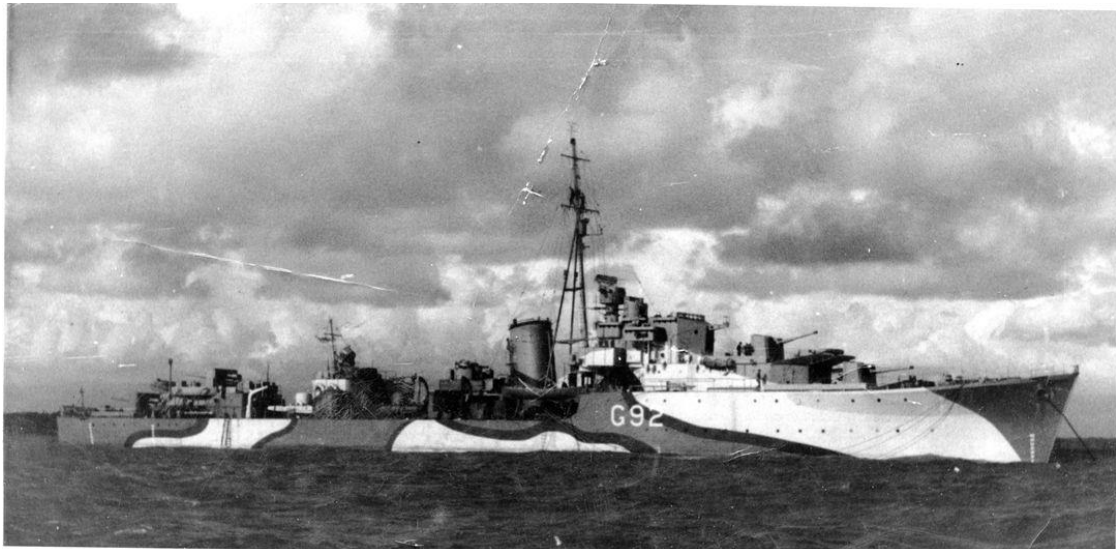
Farnsworth, Lieutenant-Commander (E) R. T. RAN

Arriving in Liverpool on a really foul day early in January 1941, with drizzling rain and a biting wind, my first feeling was one of depression, and I started a fit of shivering that was not to stop for some two months.

London was bitterly cold, and I was thankful to find that *Quickmatch* was building in the Isle of Wight; at least it was a bit nearer to the Equator. Funny to think of heat now!

Alas, this proved to be merely a fond hope, there was a snowstorm in progress when I arrived at Cowes and about two feet of snow on the roads. No! I did not stop shivering. People said that it was a cold winter certainly, in fact you didn't often see snow in Cowes; and anyhow, they supposed my blood was a bit thin! It was!

J. Samuel White and Co. Ltd. proved to be a small firm doing a staggering amount of work. There were three 'Q' destroyers in hand, *Quentin* fitting out, *Quiberon* and *Quickmatch* still on the slips, as well as an SGB and two Hunts. 'Yours is that rusty looking job,' I was told, and saw our floating palace of today as a lot of ribs sticking up from the ways with the bow and stern plating missing, and she did look rusty – very!



Nobody seemed to be interested in her at all, and when I walked round, I could only see about half a dozen men who seemed rather bored with a bit of plating that they were riveting to the frames. But by some peculiar agency, and it still remains a shipbuilding mystery to me, one could see her growing day by day. As no work could be done by night on the hull, I suppose these bored gentlemen just whipped plates on when nobody was looking! In the shops, our engines were still in a very elementary stage, and here again, it never ceased to astonish me the way in which a lot of rough pieces of metal rapidly became a boiler or a turbine. The office I was given had no central heating, but there was a stove that didn't work and filled the office with smoke – and I was still shivering heavily.

The Isle of Wight, up to this time, had received no damage from the activities of the Hun, beyond a few craters in deserted parts of the island, but it had had a grandstand view of the blitzes on Portsmouth and Southampton, so that Cowes remained intact. What a funny little town Cowes is, or rather was! The impression one got was that Queen Victoria, as far as the inhabitants were concerned, was still alive, and might be down for a weekend at any time. They are an insular lot on the island and a trip to the 'mainland' is quite firmly 'going foreign'. I heard one old man in a Newport pub one night say that it was the first time he had been into the town for five years – his farm was about seven miles away.

Food was plentiful if a bit dull; one certainly did not go hungry; but an honest-to-goodness grilled steak of proper size became my idea of heavenly manna before very long, especially with all this shivering.

England was at this time in rather a mixed frame of mind; Pearl Harbour had occurred and the Americans were now in the show; Hong Kong, Singapore, Prince of Wales and Repulse had gone. At home, the 'Battle of Britain' had been won, raids were infrequent and, in general, slight. Nobody thought for a second that we could ever lose, but it looked a long struggle ahead; although, as I said, the war had not come to Cowes – it did!

One morning there was a burst of firing from the hill behind Osborne, a few heavy 'crumps', and then the sirens went. Two fighter bombers, 'hit and run' raiders, had done their stuff. Not very much damage was caused in this show. A bomb exploded in White's pattern store and that burnt quickly and efficiently, another landed in the plate shop, bounced out into the road, and exploded there. The Polish destroyer Blyscawyka, then refitting just above the fitting-out wharf, had a narrow escape when a bomb burst at the end of her gangway and lifted it over the ship, taking her mast with it. Only one man was killed in the ship, but she certainly saved White's with her steady and accurate Bofors firing.

About a week later, on May 5th, Cowes 'got it'. The raid started at about 2300 with a string of flares down the river, and bombs and incendiaries rained down until about midnight, by which time the town was well on fire. Jerry came back at about 0400 just as the fires were under control and gave us another hour's worth. Next morning there was just a shambles. Nearly all the township had been wrecked, more or less, but by some miracle the shops, and ships fitting out at J. S. White's, were not seriously damaged. As a result we commissioned about six weeks later than we should have done, which, after all, was not too bad. I have never been so badly scared in my life as I was that night, and the people of Britain have had my heartiest admiration ever since. If bombs are going to be falling I would much rather be at sea – Yes! even if they are falling around me.

*Quickmatch* had been launched on 11th April and during the blitz was lying at the fitting-out wharf outside Quiberon, the latter by this time being well on the way to completion. Work was dislocated for about a week, and then things started to happen to 'our' ship. Boilers and turbines began to be wheeled out of the shops, and were lifted on board, bits and pieces of all sorts were dropped and pushed into their appointed places in the gaping and rusty-looking hull, so that I and my staff began to don overalls in earnest, and to go about looking worried. Not that it made much difference but it kept us happy, and we do know quite a few rivets personally now. Meanwhile, spring had arrived. To my mind, there is no country in the world where spring makes such strong magic, and the Isle of Wight is a deliciously magic place when trees and hedges begin to show that lovely new green, and the sun appears occasionally. Above all, I suddenly found that I had stopped shivering.

At the end of August, our finishing date was given as the 14th of September. 'Impossible', we said, and remembering the state the ship was in then, I still don't know how it was done. On the morning of Saturday 12th September, I remember walking round the ship with the Captain and First Lieutenant. There was hardly any corticene laid, the mess decks to our eyes had only just begun to get their fittings, and the machinery spaces – I shudder even now! Monday morning dawned warm and sunny, and we went down to the ship. Well, if I have ever seen a miracle, this was it. Those of you who joined that day will remember how spotless she was, and how well everything was in its place. 'Jimmy', I know, would give a great deal to see his mess-decks in that state again!

The 'final inspection' party went round, and at about 1100 the White Ensign was broken at the mainmast. *Quickmatch* was in commission. So ended a period that I shall always look back on as one of the most interesting and enjoyable of my life. We then started in real earnest to 'make things go' on our own, but that is another story, and one that you know all about!

## Photo of the Month



HMAS *Otama*  
Commissioned      27 April 1978  
Decommissioned    15 December 2000

Built in Scotland, *Otama* was the last of six Oberon class submarines to serve in the RAN.

*Otama* was one of two 'Mystery Boats' fitted with additional surveillance and intelligence-gathering equipment. It routinely deployed on classified operations to obtain intelligence on vessels of interest in Australian waters and the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

## News

### Austal turning retired Australian patrol boat into autonomous trials testbed

Australian shipbuilding major Austal has received a decommissioned Royal Australian Navy Armidale-class patrol boat (ACPB) to use it for the testing and evaluation of autonomous and remotely operated systems.

The former HMAS Maitland is currently at Austal Australia's Henderson shipyard, where it is undergoing the 'modification phase' of the Patrol Boat Autonomy Trial (PBAT), a collaboration between Austal, Trusted Autonomous Systems Defence Cooperative Research Centre and the Royal Australian Navy Warfare Innovation Navy (WIN) Branch. The trial will establish robotic, automated and autonomous elements on a patrol boat, providing a proof-of-concept demonstrator, for optionally crewed or autonomous operations for the RAN into the future.



Following the arrival of the vessel in Henderson, Western Australia, the re-named 'Sentinel' has entered the trial's modification phase. In this stage, the vessel will be fitted with a variety of monitoring and control systems and technologies that enable autonomous and remote operations. Austal expects the vessel to be registered under Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) jurisdiction as a domestic commercial vessel from July 2023 to enable sea trials to begin in October 2023.

### Navy Day Victoria

The return of Navy Day Victoria on October 9, after a pandemic hiatus, coincided with the 80th anniversary of HMAS Castlemaine's commissioning in Williamstown.

The people of Hobsons Bay were treated to a wet winching display from an MH-60R Seahawk and musical entertainment from the Royal Australian Navy Band.

An Air Force PC-21 Roulette put on an aerial display and flyover, while Navy technical trades, Defence Force Recruiting and the Australian Navy Cadets kept people occupied on the ground.



The day culminated in a ceremonial sunset ceremony on board Castlemaine, one of 60 corvettes produced by Australian shipyards during WW2.

Hundreds of visitors passed through Castlemaine during the day, getting a taste of life on the old corvette and seeing the work of the HMAS Castlemaine Association volunteers, who are restoring the ship to her previous glory.

## Video of the Month

This video was produced in the 1950's and offers a unique insight into the embryonic Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS). Much has changed since then and today women are employed in a wide variety of roles in the Royal Australian Navy both at sea and ashore.

[Women in the Navy - YouTube](#)



## What's new on the Website

In addition to recordings of monthly Zoom presentations, occasional papers and this newsletter, new documents and plans are added to the shop on a regular basis. For example, Historical Booklet 157 which describes *Operation Biting*: The Naval story of the Bruneval Raid 27-28 February 1942.

### Historical Booklet 157: The Bruneval Raid of 27-28 February 1942



In this booklet, first published in 1985 just prior to his death, Captain Frederick Norton Cook, D.S.C., R.A.N. Rtd provides details of a combined operation, *Operation Biting*. At this time in 1942 the then Commander Norton was commanded a naval commando training base. The key objective of *Operation Biting* was to capture the secret parts of a German radar set desperately needed by Britain and her allies as superior German radar had seriously interfered with bomber raids on Europe. To find a solution or to neutralize the radar the allies had to have one to see how it worked. The radar was situated on 300-foot cliffs at Bruneval in France near the mouth of the River Seine.

Visit the [website shop](#) to purchase a digital or printed copy.

## The Fourth Australian DDG

The fourth Australian DDG, was the ex US Navy's USS *Goldsborough*, DDG 20, which served for 30 years from 1963 to 93. The ship was acquired from the US and towed from Pearl Harbour to Australia in December 1993 a passage of 8 weeks. The purchase price was \$US 2,337,462. How such an exact price was calculated is a mystery and pretty steep for an old ship to a friend? The reason for Australia acquiring this ship was to set up Australian based training facilities for DDG sailors as the US Navy had ceased operating this class of ship. The RAN could no longer send sailors to the US for specialist training which had been an expensive exercise in any case. The ships Combat Information Centre (CIC) consoles and the fire control equipment were removed and installed in Building 67, at Garden Island Sydney. This formed the CSMS, Combat Systems Maintenance School.

During the equipment recovery operation the ship became DDG 40. Very unofficially, with the missing number, from the RAN side number sequence; 38, 39, 41, painted on the bow. This action was viewed with great displeasure by the RAN's hierarchy. The ships guided missile launcher system (GMLS) was also removed, refurbished and used in an RAN FFG. Many other valuable and hard to source parts were also salvaged to support ongoing RAN DDG's operations.

### DDG 20's Service History

DDG20 was built by the Puget Sound Bridge and Drydock Company in Seattle, Washington State and was commissioned in 1963 as USS *Goldsborough*. *Goldsborough* served 30 years with the US Navy, almost all in the Pacific. The ship was almost identical to the RAN DDG's. The only significant difference being the Ikara anti-submarine missile system, in place of ASROC in the US ships of this class. The ship had seven deployments to the Vietnam gunline. On Dec 19 1972, she was hit by shore based gunfire. A hole 5 feet wide was blown in her upper deck. Three sailors were killed and others injured. In November 1982 the ship had another sailor killed when the ship was struck by Hurricane Iwa, near Hawaii. The only casualty during this storm.

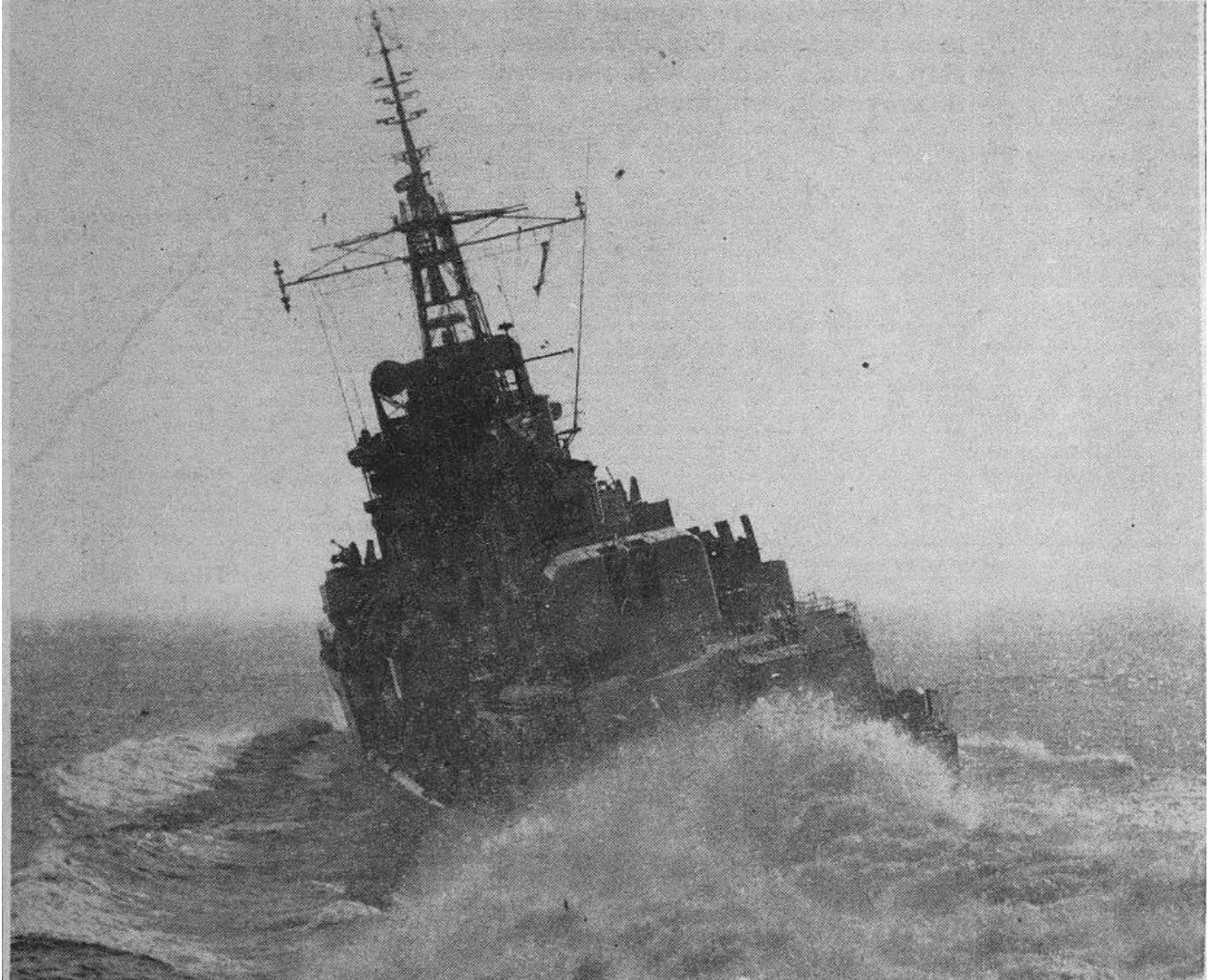
Of note was the ships' role in the Gemini 4 program. After being fitted out for capsule recovery it participated in the recovery of Apollo 11. In an embarrassing moment on 24 November 1965 the ship attempted, unsuccessfully, to sink a pier with an anti-submarine torpedo, an accidental discharge. She was decommissioned from the US Navy and stricken on 29 April 1993.



USS Goldsborough DDG-20 off San Diego, California in February 1986

### Final Tour

Following its stay in Australia the ship was demilitarised and the hulk of the ex-USS *Goldsborough* was towed to Goa, India for scrapping in December 1994.



The Royal Australian Navy this week took delivery of the Daring Class destroyer H.M.A.S. Vampire. The £7 million destroyer is seen above doing a 90-degree turn at 35 knots. The Minister for the Navy (Senator Gorton) accepted the destroyer on behalf of the R.A.N. He signed the papers in a ceremony on the quarterdeck while the vessel was cruising 10 miles off Sydney Heads. The Navy named Vampire after one of its most famous fighting ships which Japanese bombers sank near Singapore in 1942. VAMPIRE, Australia's third Daring Class destroyer, is shown at the end of a speed run. The vessel was entirely built and fitted out at Cockatoo Dockyard.

Editor's Note:

HMAS *Vampire* I was in fact lost off Batticaloa on the east coast of Ceylon, now Sri Lanka.

## Occasional Papers

- Occasional Paper 149 - HMAS Acute Nor West Patrol 1973
- Occasional Paper 150 - Palm Island World War Connections

## This Month in History

November 1884	HMQS GAYUNDAH sailed from Newcastle upon Tyne, England, for Brisbane, QLD. The ship was under the command of CAPT Henry Townley Wright, RN, for the voyage.
November 1899	The Naval Brigade from HMS POWERFUL, a flagship of the Australia Station, fought in the Battle of Graspan against the Boers in South Africa.
November 1911	The Australian Blue Ensign was hoisted in HMA Ships PARRAMATTA and YARRA at Port Phillip, VIC to accompany the joint use of the Royal Navy's White Ensign by Royal Australian Navy ships. The RN White Ensign replaced Australia's national flag flown since 1901 as the Naval Ensign.
November 1916	HMAS Pioneer paid off at Sydney. Thereafter she was used as an accommodation ship at Garden Island until 1922. In May 1923 she was handed over to Cockatoo Dockyard by the Disposals Board. In 1924 she passed to the control of Commonwealth Shipping Board and during the same year the work of stripping her down to a bare hull was begun. Pioneer's hull was later bought by HP Stacey of Sydney as scrap.
November 1925	LEUT R. C. Casey, RAN, a 1916 entry to the Royal Australian Naval College, was lost when HM submarine M1 was lost with all hands off Devon, England.
November 1936	HMAS VENDETTA was despatched from Sydney to search for the 32 foot launch VIKING, missing between Sydney and Lord Howe Island. Although five steamers and numerous smaller craft joined in the search, no trace of the missing vessel was ever found.
November 1940	HMAS ORARA picked up three boatloads of survivors from the mined merchant ship CAMBRIDGE, off Wilsons Promontory, VIC.
November 1944	HMAS SHROPSHIRE narrowly evaded torpedoes fired by USS ABNER READ off Leyte. Minutes before, the destroyer had been turned into a fireball when a Japanese kamikaze aircraft crashed into her.
November 1949	The RN Fourth Submarine Flotilla was commissioned at Sydney to provide a submarine training facility for personnel of the RAN and the RNZN. The first submarines to join the flotilla were HMS TELEMACHUS and HMS THOROUGH.
November 1952	On this day, 16 November 1952, the Battle class destroyer, HMAS Anzac (II) (Captain GGO Gatacre, DSC, RAN), came under fire from North Korean shore batteries in the vicinity of Cho Do. During the ensuing engagement, Anzac, assisted by HMS Comus and HMCS Crusader, fired 174 rounds of counter-battery fire. The shore batteries were silenced 23 minutes after the first rounds were fired. Approximately 50 rounds of enemy fire were observed to fall near Anzac during the engagement.
November 1959	HMAS DIAMANTINA obtained samples from the sea floor at a depth of 5,706 m off Bali.
November 1964	The RAN Nursing Service, (RANNS), which had been disbanded in 1948, was re-formed. Initially 21 registered nurses were commissioned, and they commenced duty at HMAS PENGUIN and HMAS CERBERUS. The RANNS continued as a separate service until amalgamated with the RAN in June 1985.
November 1973	Skyhawk A4G (889) crashed due to catapult failure while launching from MELBOURNE during multinational exercise near Singapore. SBLT Barry Evans remained in the aircraft while the ship passed overhead, freed himself underwater and was picked up by helicopter.
November 1983	The Wessex celebrated 21 years of service in the RAN and the occasion was marked with a flypast of RAN Wessex, Iroquois and Sea King helicopters as well Royal Navy Sea Harriers from the visiting HMS Invincible.
November 1990	HMA Ships BRISBANE and SYDNEY sailed from Sydney to relieve HMA Ships ADELAIDE and DARWIN in the multi-national naval force in the Gulf of Oman.
November 1997	HMAS Moresby decommissioned, having steamed 1,170,421.7nm (or 2,167,620.9km) in 88,241.8 hours underway. She retired as the oldest ship in the fleet at 33 years of age and was the last to feature teak decks.
November 2014	HMA Ships Tarakan, Labuan and Brunei were decommissioned. In July 2015 Tarakan and Brunei were gifted to The Philippines.
November 2021	HMAS Stalwart III was commissioned at Fleet Base West

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/>

## **Volunteering with the Naval Historical Society**

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 a unique environment.

## **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!

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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.

<https://navyhistory.org.au/>

or

**Phone:** (02) 9537 0035, Tuesday or Thursday

## Zoom Presentation Recordings on YouTube Channel

For members unable to participate in the Society's monthly Zoom presentations please remember that they are recorded and can be watched at a later date on the Society's [YouTube Channel](#).

They can be accessed either through the Society's [Research/videos page](#) or search in YouTube.

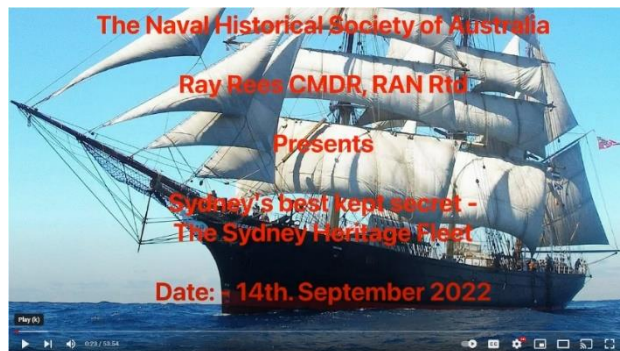
The recordings are generally posted two weeks after the live presentation. However, as publication is at the discretion of the presenter, not every recording will be published.



### Sydney's best kept Secret – The Sydney Heritage Fleet

The September presentation by Commander Ray Rees RAN Rtd on the Sydney Heritage Fleet is now available on line via this [link](#).

In this presentation he described the organisation's long history of acquiring, restoring, and operating a wide selection of ships and boats from early Sydney and beyond. With the oldest vessel in the fleet dating back to 1874, sail, steam, and diesel propulsion systems are all represented.



The fleet has at least six ex-navy support vessels in its inventory, vessels that would have otherwise been lost to Sydney, the RAN, and our maritime history.

The Sydney Heritage Fleet's aim is to maintain a fleet of more than ten heritage vessels and contribute to the preservation of Australian maritime history. You can learn more about the Fleet at <https://www.shf.org.au/explore-the-fleet/about-us/>

### HMS HOOD – The 'Empire Cruise' of the British Special Service Squadron

The October presentation by Nigel Rogers addressed the history of HMS *Hood* from its construction through to its eventual loss at the Battle of the Denmark Strait in May 1941. The 1924 'Empire Cruise' of HMS Hood was also covered in detail. The cruise included port visits to all major Australian cities, including Fremantle in February 1924, ninety-eight years ago.

This recording is available to members only. It can be accessed via the Members area of the [website](#).

