



Call the Hands



Issue No. 77

August 2023

From the President

Welcome to this 77th edition of *Call the Hands*. In this edition we have a mix of stories across recent decades with the most recent concerning the commissioning of the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) USS Canberra (II) in Sydney on 22 July. Occasional Paper 167 also addresses the LCS Program to deliver 34 ships in two variants. Of these vessels the lead ship of each variant has already decommissioned.

Occasional paper 168 intended to recognize the turning point of the War in the Pacific, eighty years ago in 1943. The RAN had lost thirteen Fleet units in the previous year, 1942. The paper examines new ship acquisitions and the modifications required to existing ships to fulfil different roles in the remaining years of World War 2.

I am grateful for the assistance of Vice President, John Jeremy who worked with our Call the Hands editor, David Stratton to publish the July edition during my absence. David also administers the Society's [Facebook page](#). It provides a wealth of information and images for our more than 4.5K followers. It is worth visiting as is our [Youtube channel](#) which hosts the recordings of monthly presentations to members. The most recent presentation is on the HMAS Sydney versus SMS Emden battle. The video will be posted to YouTube in the coming week.

It is a sad honour to recognize veterans who cross the Bar. On pages 5 and 6 ex-Warrant Officer Alfred James Marquis is recognized as the last surviving Royal Australian Navy beach commando who served in WW2. Another veteran of the little-known RAN Yachtsman's Scheme features in the video of the month (page 7). For those not yet aware a wonderful book entitled *The Yachties Australian Volunteers in the Royal Navy 1940–45* by Society member, Janet Roberts-Billett was recently published. Copies can be purchased from bookshops and various online sellers.

Finally, our members are the life blood of the Naval Historical Society. Thank you to those who have already renewed their membership for 2023-24. If you have not yet renewed, please help by doing so in the coming week.

Kind Regards,

David Michael

Membership Renew / Join Now

Members who have not yet renewed are invited to do so by 14 August when your access to the members area will cease.

Renewing now via the [shop](#) is easy as your details will be prefilled.

If you prefer to [send the form](#), a copy is available on the last page.

If you are not already a member it is great value for money.
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Commissioning of USS Canberra

The historic commissioning of USS *Canberra* in Sydney on Saturday 21 July 2023 and the joint Freedom of Entry ceremony in the nation's capital were powerful symbols of the mutual defence alliance between Australia and the United States of America. While the mutual defence agreement; the Australia, New Zealand, and U.S. Security (ANZUS) Treaty has only been in existence since 1951, the defence forces of both countries have fought together in every war since World War I. In addition to focussing on shared values, preservation of the world order and maintenance of peace in the Indo Pacific region, the many speeches during the commissioning ceremony naturally reflected on the Battle of Savo Island and the loss of HMAS *Canberra* (I). Similarly, the distinguished service of USS *Canberra* (I) so named at the direction of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942 was addressed.

A recording of the commissioning ceremony which was lived streamed is available via the link below as is the impressive entry of USS *Canberra* escorted by HMAS *Canberra* into Sydney on 18 July 2023.

Amongst the many highlights during the ceremony was the gifting of a star-spangled kangaroo by Chief of Navy Australia, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond to the USS *Canberra* which was received on behalf of the crew by the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Michael M. Gilday. The kangaroo is mounted on the ships side aft of the bridge wing.





The Red Kangaroo, Hammond said, was originally adopted by the Royal Australian Navy to distinguish it from the Royal Navy. Gifting the symbol to *Canberra*, was Australia's way of making an "indelible mark" on the historic commissioning ceremony. "There will always be an Australian sailor or officer posted to this ship," he said. "An Australian Navy lieutenant is part of the ship's company today and all of you, when you look to the superstructure you will see your own special Australian kangaroo."



USS Canberra arrives in Sydney 18 July 2023, Austal image

Videos

Videos of USS Canberra's arrival in Sydney and the commissioning ceremony can be accessed via the following links;

- [‘USS Canberra arrives in Sydney, Australia for Commissioning’](#), Austal, duration 2:15.
- [USS Canberra \(LCS 30\) Commissioning on 22 July 2023](#), Defense Now, duration 1:30:50.

Decision to Name and Commission USS *Canberra* (I)

The correspondence at senior levels of the United States Government over a six-week period in September and October 1942 which resulted in a new American cruiser being named *Canberra* makes interesting reading. This correspondence was first published by the Naval Historical Society in the September 1996 edition of the *Naval Historical Review* in a story entitled ['The Naming of USS "Canberra" – 1942'](#).

USS *Canberra* (CA-70/CAG-2)

USS *Canberra*, a heavy cruiser (CA-70), was laid down on 3 September 1941 as *Pittsburgh* but renamed *Canberra* on 16 October 1942. She was launched on 19 April 1943 and commissioned on 14 October 1943. Post war she was decommissioned and was placed in reserve in March 1947 until 4 January 1952. She was then modernised and converted to a guided missile heavy cruiser (CAG-2). Following the refit in which her after 8" turret was replaced with terrier anti-aircraft missile launchers she recommissioned on 15 June 1956. USS *Canberra* (CAG-2) was reclassified back to CA-70 on 1 May 1968. She was decommissioned on 2 February 1970, and stricken on 31 July 1978.

A complete history of USS *Canberra* (I) can be found on the [Dictionary of American Fighting Ships](#) maintained by the US Naval History and Heritage Command.



USS Canberra (CAG-2) underway 3 March 1961

Passing of ex-Warrant Officer Alfred James Marquis

Taken from an Australian Defence News article

The death on 12 July 2023, of ex-Warrant Officer Alfred James Marquis believed to be the last living Royal Australian Navy beach commando, is the end of an era.

Private Nicholas Marquis reflects on the colourful life of his grandfather, Alfred 'Rusty' Marquis, one of the first Warrant Officers of the Navy, who died on July 12, at 97.

Known by everyone as 'Rusty', his friends knew him as a sailor, warrant officer, father and overall, a true gentleman.

But to me, he was Grandpa.



Born in Katanning, WA in 1925, he enlisted in the RAN reserves at 17 and three months old.

In 1945, he first saw action during the assault on Tarakan, Borneo.

Able Seaman Marquis, then of B Commando, was in a landing craft speeding towards the enemy shore. Seeing a young sailor cowering in the corner of the craft, Grandpa told him to "get a grip" as they were about to hit land.

On exiting the craft, the unit's job was to place flags where ammunition, stores and men would head as they stepped ashore, while providing covering fire. Then, their job was to keep the beach clear of enemy as the rest of the landing ships arrived.

At the time, Naval commandos were seen as the elite – trained in advanced first aid, escape and evasion, unarmed combat and vehicle skills ranging from Jeeps to amphibious DUKWs.

A piece of this history is now in the Australian War Memorial's War in the Pacific section. A RAN ensign hangs on the wall, my grandfather's name inscribed in the top right: "*To Cappy. From RAN Commando 'B'*" inked into the flag's lower left canton.

Grandpa would recall when this flag was handed to the Salvation Army from his unit in appreciation of the support and service that Captain Clifford 'Cappy' Radford gave at Tarakan.

He deployed to Japan in late 1945 and would tell stories of what the country looked like after the atomic bombings.

Deciding to stay in the regular Navy, Grandpa volunteered for the Fleet Air Arm and deployed to Korea between 1953 and 1954 fixing aircraft on *HMAS Sydney*.

Grandpa was qualified on propeller, jet and rotary aircraft across a service career covering six ships, several shore bases and four air squadrons.

With family service stemming back to World War 1, it was only fitting that the baton was handed down to son, Craig and then to me, his grandson.

On December 17, 2021, the 50th anniversary of the re-establishment of the warrant officer rank was held in Nowra.

Grandpa was among the first sailors to be promoted to warrant officer in 1971 and attended the event with fellow ex-WO Robert 'Bob' Brown.

Held by the Keith Payne VC Veterans Group, this anniversary brought a new spark of life to my then 96-year-old grandfather.

Each Monday morning for the past year and a half, Grandpa waited for his mate Bob to go for the group's weekly walk, ending at a local café.

Grandpa said each time the deck was scrubbed bits of dust and bone would every now and then appear for weeks.



Chief Petty Officer Alfred James Marquis on the deck of HMAS Melbourne in 1970.

The stories I have are endless; most will be kept in my heart. One that he loved telling was about attending the world's longest burial – one that might still be going today. Two old sailors were cremated and their wish was to be spread at sea. After the on-board ceremony, as the ashes were being tipped overboard, a wind picked up and blew them back on deck. Grandpa said each time the deck was scrubbed bits of dust and bone would every now and then appear for weeks.

Most people grow up hearing stories of their grandparents and live vicariously through their memories. I was lucky to have almost 30 years with someone who was well respected, in not only the south coast community where he lived in for more than 60 years, but by everyone he met.

I'll miss the birthday cards with a simple 'have a beaut day' written on the inside; feeding kookaburras from his back door with my grandma while the grandchildren raided his fridge for his box of chocolates, and later in life, his beer.

Victoria Cross recipients Keith Payne and Willie Apiata, along with George Cross recipient Michael Pratt, attended the funeral at Worrigea, a suburb of Nowra on July 21.

With the recent death of my grandfather comes a lot of memories and the revelation of so much more family history. A picture can tell a thousand words, but a thousand photos wouldn't show the life this man lived.

Defence News - [Honouring 'Rusty', the last Navy beach commando](#)

Video of the Month - Veterans Story



<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLKfFVbmmE6iyVVxuPgFSINvMXgyM21NaQ>

At the outbreak of World War II, the Admiralty accepted the Australian Naval Board's offer to provide personnel to serve with the Royal Navy.

Douglas Gilling was one who signed on under what was known as the Yachtsman's Scheme, essentially the 'loan' of 500 Australian reservists to the Royal Navy. Enlisting in Sydney on 23 June 1941, he was soon in England where he was trained at the RN Barracks, Portsmouth.

His first posting was to HMS *Berkeley*, a Hunt class destroyer. Passing the sailor he was replacing, on the gangplank, Douglas was surprised to see it was an old school mate from Sydney. He said it took months to be accepted on board *Berkeley* as the only Australian, but a fonder memory of life in the Royal Navy was the daily rum issue.

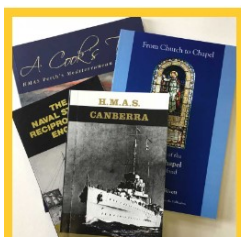
On his 21st birthday, Douglas was given an additional rum ration and passed out, to be stowed by his mates in a deck locker, out of sight of his superiors. *Berkeley* was sunk during an air attack on 19 August 1942, while supporting the Dieppe landing. At the time, Douglas was an ammunition loader on a 4-inch gun. A bomb went off on the deck and Douglas was blown into the scuppers, still with a four-inch shell in his hands.

Later in the war, Douglas served in motor launches and was discharged on 4 March 1946. After the war he became an architect and was later a Life Fellow of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

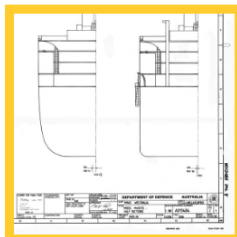
Society's Online Shop

A large variety of publications, ships plans, documentaries etc. are available in our shop.

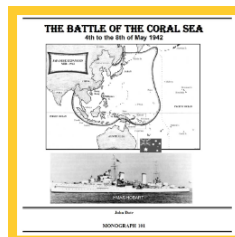
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Books (8)



Ships Plans (66)



Historical Booklets (54)

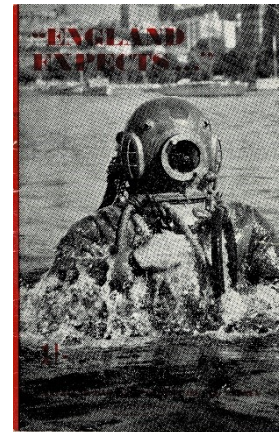


Video (5)

From the Archive - Trafalgar Day Garden Island Exhibition 1954

In recent years, for a variety of reasons including the COVID pandemic, the Royal Australian Navy has had limited opportunity to conduct public open days. Fortunately, in February and March 2023 the RAN was able to conduct open days around the country and now has plans for larger scale events in 2024. A review of the 1954 Trafalgar Day (21 October) program for Displays and exhibitions by RAN ships and establishments revealed a most impressive event. The page below is from the Navy League of Australia (NSW) and White Ensign Club thirty-two-page program for the day which was sold for one shilling.

[Link](#) to the full 1954 program without advertisements.



TRAFALGAR DAY PROGRAMME -- TIME TABLE

1. DIVING.
2. FLOATING DOCK.
3. KING NEPTUNE LANDS AND PROCEEDS TO HIS COURT.
4. MAIN WORKSHOPS.
5. H.M.A.S. "WARRAMUNGA" — Torpedoes and Squid Firing.
6. NAVAL FILMS.
7. APPRENTICES.
8. H.M.A.S. "MURCHISON" — Fires Depth Charges.
9. AVIATION.
10. RADAR.
11. SEAMANSHIP.
12. A.B.C. DEFENCE.
13. T.A.S. TORPEDOES & MINES — Scientific Display and W/T Transmitter.
14. LORD NELSON'S SIGNAL HOISTED GARDEN ISLAND SIGNAL STATION.
15. PARADE TO COMMEMORATE VICTORY OF TRAFALGAR.
16. CRANE RIDES.

17. H.M.A.S. "VENGEANCE."
18. DISPLAY BY NATIONAL SERVICE TRAINEES.
19. FERRY LANDING.
20. H.M.A. SHIPS "WARREGO" AND "BARCOO" IN DRY DOCK.
21. FIRST AID.
22. HISTORICAL DISPLAY.
23. LOST CHILDREN.
24. LADIES' REST ROOM.
25. "RENDERING MINE SAFE" — This demonstration will be televised with equipment supplied by A.W.A.
26. DISPLAY AND DEMONSTRATION OF RADIO EQUIPMENT AS SUPPLIED BY S.T.C.
27. FIREFIGHTING.
28. SUBMARINE PERISCOPE (located at south end of Captain Cook Dock). REFRESHMENTS.

<p>12.45 p.m. H.M.A. Dockyard open to visitors.</p> <p>1.00 p.m. Diving Display commences. (1).</p> <p>1.30 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Vengeance" open to visitors.</p> <p>1.30 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Murchison" fires depth charges (8).</p> <p>1.30 p.m. Firefighting Demonstration (27).</p> <p>1.40 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Warramunga" Fires Squid (5).</p> <p>1.50 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Warramunga" Fires Torpedoes (5).</p> <p>2.00 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Murchison" Fires Depth Charges (8).</p> <p>2.00 p.m. Physical Training Display by National Service Trainees (18).</p> <p>2.10 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Warramunga" Fires Squid (5).</p> <p>2.20 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Warramunga" Fires Torpedoes (5).</p> <p>2.30 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Murchison" Fires Depth Charges.</p> <p>2.40 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Warramunga" Fires Squid (5).</p> <p>2.45 p.m. His Excellency the Governor General arrives by barge. (Ceremonial landing). Admiral Lord Nelson's signal hoisted, Garden Is. Signal Station (14).</p> <p>2.46 p.m. Lord Nelson's Prayer.</p>	<p>2.47 p.m. His Excellency inspects the Guard from H.M.A.S. "Albatross" Naval Air Station, Nowra.</p> <p>2.55 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Murchison" Fires Depth Charges (8).</p> <p>3.02 p.m. Fly Past by aircraft from the Fleet Air Arm (East to West).</p> <p>3.05 p.m. Firefighting Display — Rescue of Pilot from burning aircraft (27).</p> <p>3.05 p.m. "King Neptune" lands at Fitting Out Wharf (3) and proceeds to the Royal Court in Captain Cook Dock (3).</p> <p>3.10 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Warramunga" Fires Squid (5).</p> <p>3.15 p.m. King Neptune establishes His Court (3).</p> <p>3.15 p.m. Fly Past by aircraft from the Fleet Air Arm. (East to West).</p> <p>3.20 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Warramunga" Fires Torpedoes (5).</p> <p>3.20 p.m. Parade to commemorate "Victory of Trafalgar" (15).</p> <p>3.35 p.m. Physical Training Display by National Service Trainees (18).</p> <p>3.45 p.m. His Excellency visits the Court of King Neptune (3).</p>	<p>3.45 p.m. Firefighting Demonstration (27).</p> <p>3.55 p.m. His Excellency the Governor General departs by barge.</p> <p>3.55 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Warramunga" Fires Torpedoes (5).</p> <p>4.05 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Warramunga" Fires Squid (5).</p> <p>4.15 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Murchison" Fires Depth Charges</p> <p>4.15 p.m. Physical Training Display by National Service Trainees (18).</p> <p>4.20 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Warramunga" Fires Squid (5).</p> <p>4.30 p.m. King Neptune leaves His Court.</p> <p>4.40 p.m. King Neptune embarks in His Royal Barge (3).</p> <p>4.40 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Murchison" Fires Depth Charges (8).</p> <p>4.50 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Warramunga" Fires Squid (5).</p> <p>5.30 p.m. H.M.A.S. "Vengeance" closed to visitors.</p> <p>5.30 p.m. Admiral Lord Nelson's signal hauled down (14).</p> <p>5.40 p.m. "God Save The Queen."</p> <p>(DIVING DISPLAY WILL OPERATE CONTINUOUSLY THROUGHOUT THE AFTERNOON.) (Television will operate at frequent intervals.)</p>
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Right, HMAS Tobruk firing of Squid anti-submarine mortar. Below, Squid launcher.



Photo of the Month



The de Havilland Sea Venom 53 was a British designed and built two seat fighter all weather in service with the RAN from 1956 – 1966; replacing the piston engine Hawker Sea Fury. The RAN purchased 39 of these aircraft.

808 Squadron, reformed in the United Kingdom on 23 August 1955, was the first RAN Squadron to be equipped with Sea Venoms which were formally accepted into RAN service on 27 February 1956. The Squadron embarked in HMAS *Melbourne*, which had recently commissioned and completed her work up in British waters, in March 1956 and arrived in Australia in April. Sea Venoms were also later operated by 805 and 816 Squadrons embarked in HMAS *Melbourne*.

A total of 11 of the 39 Sea Venoms crashed or were damaged beyond repair with nine aircrew killed. The phasing out of Sea Venom from RAN service began in mid-1966. It was replaced in frontline service by the A4 Skyhawk, although 724 Squadron continued to operate four Sea Venoms as target towing aircraft up until June 1973.

News

HMAS Sydney

After completing fleet training in the Western Australian Exercise Area, HMAS *Sydney* V transited north up the west coast of Australia to pay respects to the 645 Australians who lost their lives in the battle between HMAS *Sydney* II and the German Raider HSK *Kormoran*.

This was the first time *Sydney* V has been able to make the journey to the final resting place of *Sydney* II.



On November 19, 1941, *Sydney* II was returning to Fremantle from the Sunda Strait when she sighted a merchant ship claiming to be the Dutch *Straat Malakka*. As she closed to 1000 yards off the beam, the German naval ensign was hoisted by the *Kormoran* and she opened fire on *Sydney*'s port side with the full force of the *Kormoran*'s armament. *Sydney* returned fire, inflicting a fatal blow to the *Kormoran*, before suffering a torpedo hit to the bow which caused her to fall astern and expose her starboard side to the German ship's guns. *Sydney* was kept afloat by her remaining crew for a further four hours before succumbing to the damage and the rising seas.

HMNZS Te Mana

HMNZS *Te Mana* (F111) arrived off the Australian coast on July 24th ahead of exercises that will include the first firing of the ship's new Sea Ceptor missile system. In 2022 *Te Mana* returned home to Aotearoa New Zealand after completing a lengthy upgrade in Canada. The deployment to Australia forms the final link in a lengthy chain that will result in the ship being re certified for combat operations.

Te Mana left Devonport Naval Base on July 17th for a five month deployment that will take it from Australia up into Southeast Asia. During its deployment *Te Mana* will be accompanied by HMNZS *Aotearoa* (A11) which is scheduled to arrive in Australia next month. Together, they'll undertake a range of at sea training activities with the Royal Australian Navy, before deploying to Southeast Asia for exercises with Five Powers Defence Arrangements countries.



This Month in History

August 1875	CDRE James Goodenough, RN, commander of the Australia Squadron 1873-75, died from wounds sustained from poisoned arrows, fired by Santa Cruz Islanders.
August 1909	British Admiralty's hard-nosed opposition to the idea of Dominion navies suddenly changed. Admiralty now expressed the opinion that each Dominion should have 'a distinct fleet unit' comprising a battle-cruiser, three light cruisers, six destroyers, and three submarines, plus auxiliaries to be manned by Australians. This gave support for Australian moves to create an Australian Navy blue-water force.
August 1914	HMAS PIONEER captured the German merchant vessel THURINGEN, off Fremantle, WA.
August 1918	HMA Ships HUON and YARRA collided in the Adriatic. HUON was severely damaged, and was withdrawn from further war service.
August 1922	The light cruiser HMAS ADELAIDE, (CAPT J. B. Stevenson, RAN), was commissioned. ADELAIDE was laid down in Cockatoo Island Dockyard, Sydney, in January 1915, and launched on 27 July 1918.
August 1936	HMAS Australia (II) arrived in Sydney after an absence of 615 days on exchange service in company with HMAS Sydney. Together they made a long-awaited entry through Sydney Heads and into Port Jackson where their arrival was viewed from the shore by thousands of citizens who had turned out to see them. As the ships slowly made their way through the channel they were saluted with the sound of ferry whistles as she made her way to buoys off Garden Island.
August 1940	Engaged in the Battle of Tug Argan Gap, HMAS HOBART landed her 1.3kg Hotchkiss saluting gun, mounted on a temporary carriage, to stiffen the British line near Berber. A crew of three volunteers, PO H. Jones, AB H.C. Sweeney, and AB W.J. Hurran, manned the gun, and fought alongside the troops until the position was captured by the overwhelming Italian forces. The gun crew was taken prisoner, until 1 April 1941, when British troops captured Eritrea.
August 1942	Engaged in the Battle of Savo Island, the cruiser HMAS CANBERRA, (CAPT F. E. Getting, RAN), was mortally damaged in a surprise night sortie by ADML Mikawa's Cruiser Squadron. CANBERRA was hit by torpedoes and point-blank gunfire. 10 officers and 74 ratings, including her commanding officer, were killed. CANBERRA was sunk by American destroyers when the extent of her damage was realised. The US Ships ASTORIA, QUINCY, and VINCENNES were also lost in the battle.
August 1948	Naval Air Station HMAS Albatross was commissioned on 31 August 1948
August 1955	808 Squadron recommissioned at the Royal Navy Air Station (RNAS) Yeovilton in the south of England. Then equipped with de Havilland Sea Venoms, the Squadron participated in the RAN's new carrier, HMAS Melbourne's flying trials in England. 816 and 817 Squadrons commissioned at the Royal Naval Air Station at Culdrose to fly the Fairy Gannet
August 1967	HMAS HOBART with US Ships ST PAUL and BLUE, were fired on by North Vietnamese coastal batteries near Cap Bang, Vietnam. Enemy shells landed within 50 metres of the Australian destroyer.
August 1972	HMAS Parramatta gained the distinction of being the 1000th vessel to enter the Captain Cook graving dock in Sydney since it opened in 1945.
August 1980	HMAS FREMANTLE, the first of 14 Fremantle class patrol boats ordered for the RAN, arrived in Sydney at the end of her 14,509-mile maiden voyage from England.
August 1992	HMAS OTWAY became the first RAN submarine to fire Mk48 torpedoes against a manned submarine, when she fired on the US Submarine NEW YORK CITY, during RIMPAC exercises.
August 2004	The mine-hunter HMAS GASCOYNE, (LCDR Dean Schopen, RAN), returned to Sydney after seven weeks service in the Solomon Islands, as part of Operation Anode. During the deployment, her crew helped to destroy several pieces of WWII ordnance, including a Japanese 250-pound bomb, and several US 5-inch shells. Many of these items were close to local villages.
August 2018	The outstanding service of the Royal Australian Navy's Helicopter Flight Vietnam (RANHFV) was recognised with the presentation of the Unit Citation for Gallantry at a ceremony conducted by the Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove and former Chief of Navy Vice Admiral Tim Barrett at the Australian War Memorial.

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/>

Occasional Papers

- Occasional Paper 167 - Littoral Combat Ship Program an Overview
- Occasional Paper 168 - The Royal Australian Navy in the Pacific War

Readers Forum

USS Canberra Commissioning

Received from David Chessum

I know the media keep repeating the claim that this is the first time a US Navy warship has commissioned outside of the USA, but I am surprised you repeated this in a recent e-mail to members. The USN has commissioned other warships in foreign countries. For example, in the 1920s, the USN had six river gunboats (including the ill-fated *Panay*) built in Shanghai for service on the Chinese rivers, all of which commissioned in the Far East.

Editor's Note

David was thanked for his input. We don't always get it right but do our best. USS *Panay* commissioned in September 1928 served as a patrol vessel on the Yangtze River until sunk by a Japanese air attack on 12 December 1937 in an incident claimed by Japan as a case of mistaken identity.

Further Reading

Naval History and Heritage Command, USS *Panay* History, available at, <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/museums/nmusn/explore/photography/ships-us/ships-usn-p/uss-panay-pg-45-pr-5.html>

Naval History and Heritage Command, The *Panay* Incident, 12 December 1937
<https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/wars-conflicts-and-operations/world-war-ii/1941/prelude/panay-incident.html>



USS *Panay* underway in China 30 August 1928

Safe To Dive, Submarine Support in Sydney 1914 to 1999: Feedback

Received from Jim Dennis

John,

Needless to say, I really enjoy having a copy of your 'Safe To Dive' close by and thought that you might be interested in an aspect of the electrical facilities concerning that for shore charging when alongside at HMAS Platypus. Shore charging facilities assumed major importance because of strong local objections when "T" boats were forced to berth there in bad weather instead of at HMAS Penguin. It seems that their engines produced a particularly penetrating noise when lightly loaded in the later stages of battery charging.

Apparently the HMAS Platypus project team which visited the UK in 1964 was advised that Oberons had facilities for shore charging and left it at that. Incidentally, none of the RN Submarine Depot Ships had facilities for charging the 440 volt battery arrangements of Oberons. By a stroke of luck my first posting on completion of the Officers Submarine Training Course around August 1964 was to standby HMS *Opportune* building at Scotts in Greenock with the RAN boats to follow. This would normally have been a prize posting for an experienced RN Submarine Electrical Engineer Officer but there was no one to spare because of the demands of their nuclear program. As the only WEEO on the Course I landed the job.

HMS *Opportune* commissioned just after XMAS 1964 and I was kept pretty busy with both the general duties side of submarine life and learning the realities of the technical aspects of my job. During my standby period I had met CMDR Jack Euston of the Naval Representatives Staff in London and learned about the shore charging plans for Platypus and it soon became obvious to me that the facilities on board for shore charging in an operational submarine were totally unacceptable with large cables cluttering hatches and main passageways and no proper onboard monitoring facilities. Fortunately, my experience in General Service with shore supply systems suggested a solution to the problem and when I discussed this with Jack Euston, I received strong encouragement to draft a proposal to put to the Admiralty in Bath.

Basically, my idea was to bring the shore charging cables on board through the generator room hatch and connect them to the submarine's 440 Volt main power system. This only required what I felt was a fairly straight forward modification to the port generator breaker by fitting two changeover links either in the breaker itself or in a box close to it. This arrangement then simply connected the breaker to the generator or the shore supply as required. Not only that, it also provided an important safety device between the shore and submarine main power systems.

Fortunately, the Admiralty agreed with my proposal and we managed to get it fitted in Oxley before we left UK. In practice it worked perfectly when trialled at Platypus although there were some problems with the supply side of things in the early stages. In fact, some of them persisted until I was posted to Director of Submarine Requirements staff in Navy Office and pursued the matter.

It was very gratifying to receive, soon after our arrival back in Australia in August 1967, a very nice cheque from UK with a letter explaining that this was to cover a payment from the Admiralty Patents Division plus an award from the Herbert Lott Trust Fund. This went a considerable way towards buying a block of land close to the Lane Cove River on which we later built the house we still live in today.

Regards,
Jim

1964 Newspapers Extracts: Neutral Bay Submarine Base

Canberra Times, Saturday 14 November 1964

Neutral Bay 'best of eleven sites'

Eleven different sites off the New South Wales coast were investigated before Neutral Bay was chosen for the new submarine base, the Minister for the Navy, Mr. Chaney, said yesterday. But the R.A.N, torpedo establishment at Neutral Bay was the most suitable because it could be developed at the least cost to meet the needs of the four Oberon class submarines being made in Britain. The Neutral Bay installations would cost about half those at a similar base elsewhere in the Sydney Port area.

Mr. Chaney said the following sites had been considered: Balmoral, Watsons Bay, Athol Bight, Garden Island, Shark Island, Woolwich Dock Area, Port Stephens, Botany Bay, Jervis Bay and Port Kembla area. Mr. Chaney said housing and amenities for the families, crews and base staff needed for the operation of the submarines was considered. Special attention had been paid to ensure that the noise and exhaust nuisance would not upset the residents of the area, he added

Tribune, Wednesday 2 December 1964

Protests against submarine base

SYDNEY: North Sydney Municipal Council recently unanimously decided on "vigorous opposition" to the selection of Neutral Bay as a submarine base. At its monthly meeting last week Mosman ALP branch also condemned the proposed base. Speakers said that either the Federal Government could not be seriously concerned over a threat to Australia's security, or it acted with incredible disregard of the safety of hundreds of thousands of people who live or work within a few miles of the proposed base. In a letter to the press Mosman Branch secretary O. Neumann said "Many speakers at the meeting asked what would happen in the case of a "near miss" with densely populated areas all round."



North Shore Gas Works, Neutral Bay circa 1935-1945, Milton Kent Image



HMAS Platypus Circa 1980, RAN image



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