



Call the Hands



Issue No. 78

September 2023

From the President

It is a pleasure to bring you the 78th edition of Call the Hands and associated occasional papers. As always, we have tried to cover Australian naval history across a number of decades. It is particularly pleasing to present a personal perspective on HMAS *Vendetta*'s deployment to Vietnam in 1969-70 by Lieutenant Commander Bjarne (Barney) Kristensen. At the time Barney was serving as an Able Seaman Weapons Mechanic in *Vendetta*. His story is Occasional Paper 169. From the Society's perspective such accounts by individuals are very welcome as they provide additional perspectives to those recorded in official naval histories. Everyone who served has career highlights or important memorable events which define their career in the Service. Recording and preserving these individual accounts is a long-held goal of the Society. So please, if you have a story to tell and share with others, please put pen to paper and contact us.

The second occasional paper (170) is a previously published account which describes the need for a gun relining program to service the eight-inch guns of the RAN's County Class Cruisers during World War Two. It is a classic example of 'necessity is the mother of invention'.

Several stories in this edition relate to the Pittwater and Broken Bay area to the north of Sydney. This area has been used by the RAN for training and practice torpedo firings since 1941. Our video of the month provides an insight into the training and employment of WRANS in the 1950's. It is well worth viewing to appreciate the dramatic changes in attitudes and the range of female employment over seventy years.

On Society matters I thank all of you who have renewed your membership in recent weeks. We trust this is because our services are valued and hope that you will tell others about the Society. As with any successful organisation, we aim to expand and provide a broader range of services. As the recruitment of new members is fundamental to growth, please tell others with an interest in naval history to come aboard.

As we emerge from winter, interest in the already well subscribed tours and cruises conducted by the Society is growing. To sustain these activities, we do need additional volunteers with an interest in becoming a cruise commentator or tour guide to contact the office. The volunteers already involved in guiding and commentating thoroughly enjoy the experience and interaction with our visitors. Members will find in the September edition of *The Buzz* an interesting personal description of tour guiding.

Finally, we understand that many of the Society's events are conducted during business hours and that a number of members are unable to participate due to their employment commitments. A case in point is the monthly Zoom presentation by exceptional speakers on a wide range of interesting subjects. The majority of these presentations are recorded and posted to the Societies [YouTube channel](#). Please take advantage of this service.

Kind Regards,

David Michael



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Illegal Salvaging of WWII Wrecks

Over the past ten years WWII sunken warships in the South China Sea have fallen victim to large scale scavenging for scrap steel and other valuable metal. The situation is that serious that several warships have already disappeared. This illegal activity continues with the most recent reported incident occurring in May 2023 when the Malaysian coast guard detained a Chinese bulk cargo ship carrying unexploded shells that may have been looted from United Kingdom Royal Navy World War II wrecks HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse*.



*Chinese salvage ship
suspected of raiding U.K.
Royal Navy WWII wrecks.
Malaysian Maritime
Enforcement Agency Photo*

The more than 40 wrecks being targeted are located mainly in Malaysian and Indonesian territorial waters. They include warships of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States and Japan. Sadly, a survey in 2015 of the wreckage of six warships and a submarine that have lain on the bottom of the Java Sea since 1942 were missing and authorities were at a loss to explain the disappearance. The vessels – including three Dutch ships, six British ships, and a US submarine – all sank during the Battle of the Java Sea in World War II, when allied forces suffered a huge defeat at the hands of the Imperial Japanese Navy off the coast of Indonesia.

Progress to develop international law on the protection of wrecks of WWII has been slow and it continues to have limited effect. At the international level, the existing rules cannot guarantee the protection of such [shipwrecks](#). Similarly, the laws and policies of the States in whose waters the shipwrecks are found are also generally inadequate. In addition, as the coastal States concerned generally lack the capacity to protect such shipwrecks, bilateral arrangements have to be made to achieve any form of protection. An alternative measure may be joint efforts at regional level to combat the regional criminal network behind the illegal scavenging.

Further Reading: John Grady, Authorities Detain Chinese Ship Suspected of Salvaging U.K. WWII Wrecks, USNI News, available at [Link](#)

Pittwater Torpedo Firing Range and RAN Clearance Diving School Annex

The RAN operated a torpedo range at Taylors Point in Pittwater, Sydney from 1941 to 1983. It was used to test the firing ability and the range of torpedoes before they were issued to submarines. The purpose designed building included a torpedo carrying crane and a ground floor railway to provide optimum movement of torpedos to the firing station.

5,059 torpedoes in total were fired from Taylors Point in Pittwater. Navy launches cleared small craft from the firing area, a large red warning flag was unfurled from the firing shed and a siren sounded. Three pontoons were positioned in the water from which the speed and accuracy of the torpedo's course were registered and relayed back in the firing tower. The torpedoes were then retrieved by a patrolling launch. In 1983 the firing station and outer wharf were removed and the centre was converted for diving training for the RAN Diving School located at HMAS Penguin.



RAN Torpedo firing range jetty at Taylors Point, Pittwater, NSW. AWM image

Since 1984 the Pittwater Annex has been an integral part of RAN diver training. Initial training and initial dives are conducted at HMAS Penguin prior to the course relocating to the Pittwater Annex for more advanced training.

Today the Pittwater Annex is used for Maritime Tactical Operations, Mine Countermeasures and conduct of the Clearance Diving Acceptance Test.

Source: Godden Mackay Logan HMAS PENGUIN Initial Heritage and Environment Review – Draft Report 2008, available at: <https://rancda.com/history/photo-albums/1960-1980/>

Further Reading: Pittwater's Torpedo Wharf, published by Pittwater Online News, available at: <https://www.pittwateronlinenews.com/Pittwater-Torpedo-Wharf-Bill-Fitzgerald-Tributes.php>

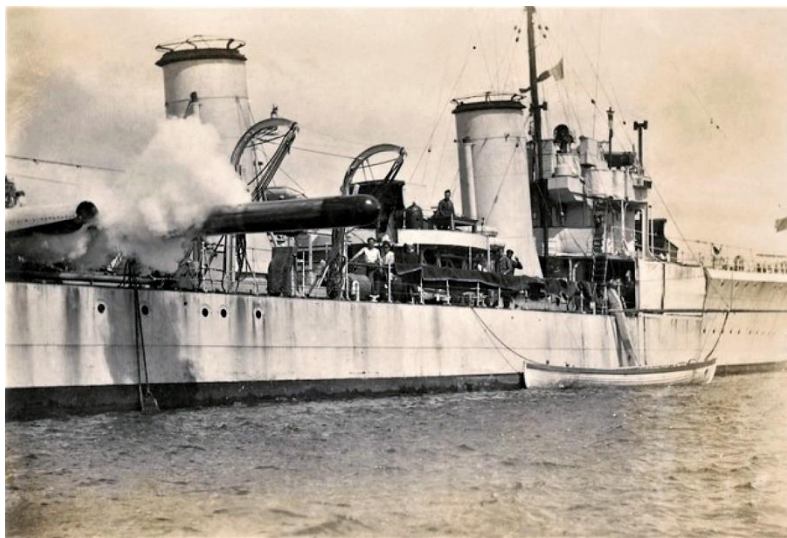
Torpedo Practice: Fisherman Startled

A story from the Sydney Morning Herald, Friday 20 September 1929, page 12:

Three fishermen had a thrilling experience at Pittwater on Wednesday afternoon, when an 18ft Whitehead torpedo sped past their launch and buried its head in the sand nearby.

Harold Holloway was with his two companions, Charles Mace and Bill Williams, overhauling the engine of their launch, which was moored close to Inner Palm Beach. Suddenly he heard a hissing noise and saw a long grey object speed past and run in on the sand.

Although the torpedo contained no explosive, had it struck the side of the launch, which it missed by only a few feet, it would probably have crushed the side of the boat. The beaches near Pittwater are periodically utilised by the Royal Australian Navy for torpedo practice, and on this occasion the torpedo was fired by HMAS Swordsman, more than a mile away. Later the torpedo was recovered by a party from the destroyer, who towed it back to their ship.



HMAS *Swordsman* firing torpedo in the Pittwater, north of Sydney.
RAN image.



HMAS *Tattoo* recovering a torpedo after practice in Broken Bay in 1933.
Sourced from Sydney Morning Herald Newspaper, 20 October 1933

Navy Department's View

The fact that torpedoes fired "by the destroyer *Swordsman* in Pittwater sometimes behave erratically is not taken seriously by the Navy Department." It was explained yesterday that after being overhauled at Garden Island the torpedoes are subjected to the most rigorous tests before being issued to the commissioned ships of the fleet. That each torpedo is worth £2500 is a sufficient explanation. "The intention of sending *Swordsman* to The Pittwater is to find any defects and remedy them," said an officer yesterday.

"The fact that one or two torpedoes behave strangely rather justifies our investigations. These are carried out on the same lines as those adopted at the Royal Navy's testing station in Scotland."

The Federal Navigation Department draws attention to the warning that shipping should not come within certain limits in Pittwater while the tests are in progress. Signals are exhibited at Barrenjoey Lighthouse and by *Swordsman*.

Lion Island and Australian Little Penguins

Lion Island located at the mouth to the Hawkesbury River inside Broken Bay has been witness to the passage of many RAN warships and other activities over time. South of Lion Island in Pittwater was the site of the torpedo firing range used for testing weapons produced at the Neutral Bay factory during WWII. It is also linked to the mystery of the fate of the Japanese midget submarine, M24 after it's unsuccessful attack on allied shipping in Sydney Harbour. There is evidence that in the period after the attack on the night of 31 May – 1 June, M24 turned north to draw attention

away from the mother submarines waiting to the south of Sydney. After loosing power and becoming derelict, M24 was sighted on numerous occasions between the 8th and 9th of July drifting near the Hawksbury River mouth.



Lion Island viewed from the south with Umina Beach and Brisbane Water in the background.

Since 1956 Lion Island has been a protected Fauna Reserve administered by the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service. It is home to the largest population of Australian Little Penguins in the Sydney area.

In 2018 85% of the island was burned, after a lightning strike but luckily the penguins nesting area was not damaged. The nesting area is under a large area of lantana, an invasive weed. Normally this lantana would be high on the list to be removed from a national park but because the penguins call it home, it is protected. The lantana is stopped from spreading over the whole island but not totally removed. Because of the fire damage, to the island, the NPWS were concerned the penguins would be vulnerable. A plan was put in place to provide some extra homes for the penguins. The NPWS went to local Men's Sheds and asked for help with making portable but solid new penguin houses. The idea was to make the houses out of light weight concrete. This would mean that they were durable and easy to transport.

The answer from the Men's Sheds? Too hard, not something we can do. Who came to the rescue? A women's shed- Fix It Sisters Shed. They produced the artificial burrows in light weight concrete, no problem.

In May 2019 the new homes were installed on Lion Island by a mixed group of NPWS staff, Floating Landcare workers and Fix It Sisters staff. These homes were used as a test case. They have worked very well and are now being installed in other locations along the coast. This gives the Little Penguins a helping hand. The design of the burrows makes it hard for predators to attack the nesting penguins. It is hard for goannas to get their head in and around to eat the contents. Landing on Lion Island is only possible on the south side. All the rest of the island is cliffs. The island gets its name from the shape, it looks like a seated lion.



Left Boxes of new penguin homes, ready to go, on the barge.

Right, Burrow. Cap on top is to allow scientists to check on penguins.



'The cruiser HMAS Shropshire today faces a breaker's yard

The warship Jap guns couldn't sink

Australia's "Old Ironsides" once went six hours at sea with an enemy mine clinging to her bows.

AT midnight on a dark October night in 1944, a haggard officer of the watch clambered up to the bridge of the Australian cruiser, HMAS Shropshire, as it steamed through the Pacific at full speed.

Below him, several petty officers and seamen anxiously looked over the starboard side of the cruiser's bows.

A drifting Japanese mine was caught in the ship's paravane. One big wave and the mine would hit the ship and blow up the bows.

The men grimly watching the mine bobbing up and down in the water, waited for the order from the bridge. If the cruiser changed course the mine would release itself. Then it could be blown up.

But dramatically, no order came. Australia's "Old Ironsides" might be blown to smithereens, but the mine would have to stay for the next few hours.

The Shropshire on this bleak yet historic night was steaming toward the island of Leyte in the Philippines.

She was escorting troopships — along with the American Fleet — carrying an invasion force to Leyte in the first move to drive the Japanese out of the Philippines.

General MacArthur's dramatic promise, "I will return," was about to be fulfilled, yet the whole operation depended on the element of surprise.

And if that mine blew up, the Japanese occupation forces would have their big guns trained out to sea before the landing craft had been lowered over the side.

So Old Ironsides forged ahead, the mine alternately drifting a few inches nearer the hull, then a few inches away again.

For six long and weary hours the lives of the 1100 sailors aboard were in dire peril. Yet the cruiser's luck held.

In the early light of dawn, the staccato crack of Japanese shore batteries opened up as American mar-

ines surged on to the beach.

The invasion had begun. The silence was broken.

The skipper of the Shropshire promptly gave the order to change course and the mine released itself. A gunner blew it up when it was a safe distance from the ship.

But the cruiser's job was unfinished. Despite the surprise attack, the Japanese quickly mobilised their defences.

US Marines were falling like flies under a hail of bullets from machine-gun posts spreadeagled just off the beach.

The Shropshire moved closer to shore and opened up a heavy bombardment on the shore batteries. In half an hour only a smouldering ruin remained of the Japanese fortifications.

American infantry in their thousands followed the Marines on to the beach. The battle for Leyte was all over bar the shouting.

Today, the Shropshire, a rusting, empty wreck of a once lusty sea warrior, lies in Athol Bight, a small Harbor inlet off Taronga Park Zoo.

Here, she has rotted, since November, 1949, her decks no longer spick and span, her guns useless, manned by a skeleton crew of one chief petty officer and six seamen.

The ship the enemy couldn't sink is a grimy hulk, yet some of the affection in which she was once held by her crew brought memories flooding back this month.

A big American shipbuilding firm announced that it wants to buy Old Ironsides for scrap following a statement by Australian Navy authorities that the 25-year-old cruiser will be dismantled and her hulk offered for sale.

They are ready to tow it to America, even though this would cost £50,000.

A Sydney shipbroker said he would tender for the Shropshire on behalf of the American firm.

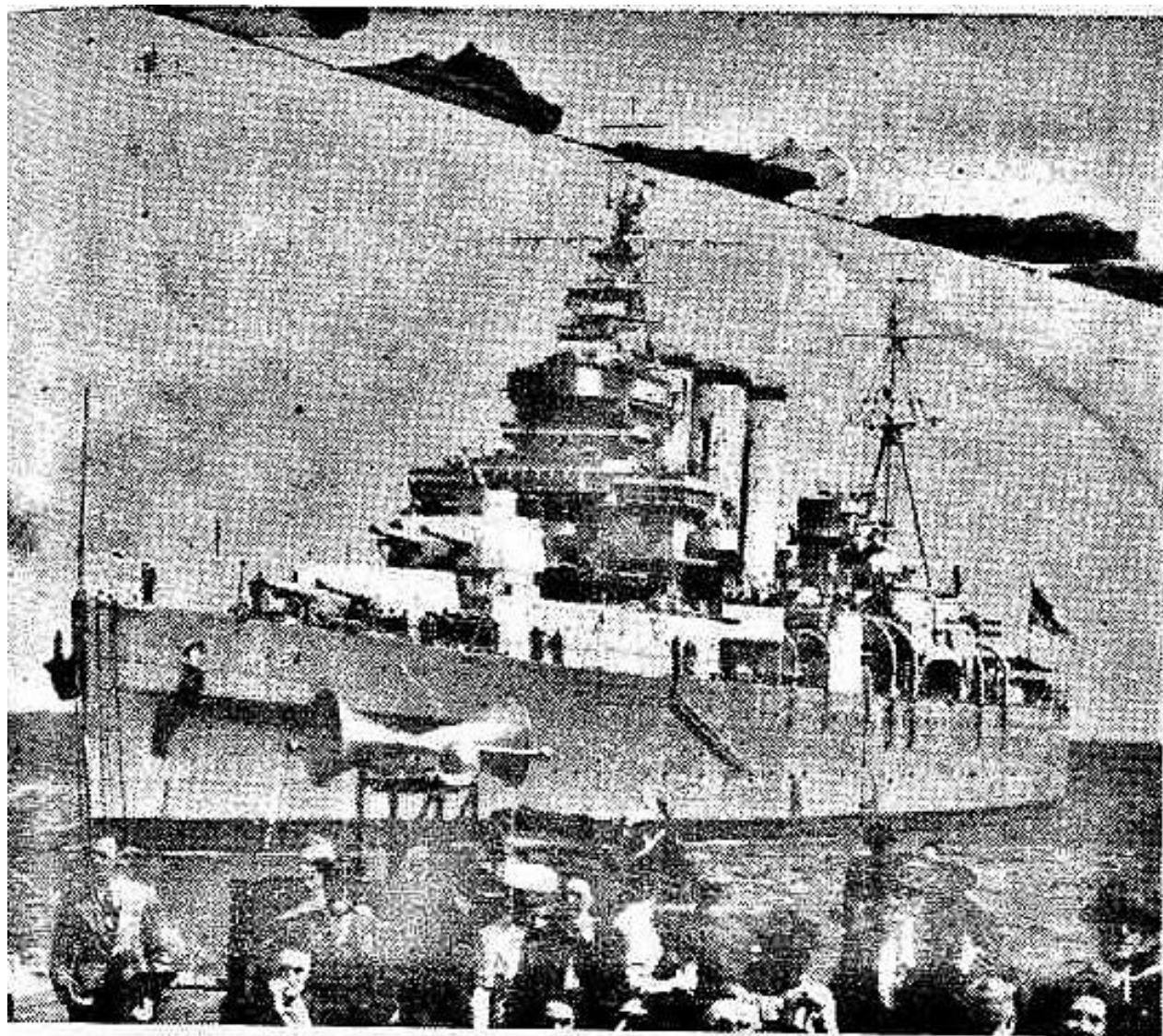
But ex-members of Old Ironsides' crew, men who survived the Leyte landing and other Pacific battles, are protesting that their old ship be given a decent burial off the Australian coast she once helped to defend.

The official Navy reply to their protests is that the Shropshire is obsolete and uneconomical to refit. So she must go to the breakers.

But one of her ex-crew said, "We took her over from the Royal Navy in 1943. She was really outdated then, except that she had the best radar in the Pacific.

"Maybe she never figured in any spectacular battles like the Sydney or the Australia, but she did a good job during the war.

"And we made her a happy ship. I don't think any man who served



Above is a picture of HMAS Shropshire in all her wartime glory. Today she is a rusting hulk in one of Sydney Harbor's inlets.

aboard her can bear to think of the old lady going to the scrapheap. She deserves something better."

More than 100 of the men who once manned Old Ironsides will meet this month for a reunion to toast the Shropshire's health.

They may even ask the Navy again to send her to the bottom off the Australian coast.

Some of the ex-crew members served aboard her not only at Leyte, but right from the time she became an Australian ship until the end of the war.

After the landing at Leyte, for example, Old Ironsides helped the Americans at Corregidor in Manila Bay, cover-firing the landing of US Marines.

A few days later she again ran

the gauntlet of enemy guns in pumping more than 100 tons of high explosives into Japanese ammunition dumps in another landing in the Pacific.

At Balikpapan, Borneo, in July, 1945, the Shropshire once again covered the landing of American assault troops. In this encounter, two Japanese kamikaze pilots tried to crash their planes on the cruiser's deck.

Finally, she was in Tokio Bay when Japan's leaders boarded the American ship Missouri to sign an unconditional surrender.

But her sailing days have long been over.

And it looks certain that the shell of Old Ironsides will end in a breaker's yard — despite the protests of the men who manned her.—J.M.●

Fairey IID in the RAN

The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) had operated aircraft from its larger ships during World War I and many naval personnel had seen the advantages of naval air power during the war. In 1919-20 the RAN took steps to form its own naval air service but met with opposition from within the Government and the Australian Air Corps, an interim force formed from the remnants of the Australian Flying Corps, that pushed for a single independent air force for Australia. While this debate continued the RAN continued with plans to purchase seaplanes and in July 1920 staff at the Australian High Commission in London selected the Fairey IID seaplane as the most suitable aircraft for Australian conditions.

In early April 1921 the Australian Government announced its intentions to purchase 12 Fairey IID seaplanes from the Fairey Aviation Co Ltd UK for the sum of approximately £45,000. Financial constraints reduced the actual order to only six aircraft, with additional engines, spares and specialist tools with a contract value of £23,000 pounds. The six aircraft were given serial numbers ANA-1 to ANA-6; with ANA standing for Australian Naval Aircraft.

They were manufactured at the Fairey Aviation Works, in Hamble Southampton during the period May-September 1921 and the first aircraft ANA-1 was accepted at Hamble by Mrs Mary Hughes, wife of Australia's Prime Minister on 12 August 1921. The last aircraft was delivered in early September and all six were then prepared for delivery to Australia. This involved disassembling the aircraft which were then crated and loaded onto the Australian Commonwealth Line steamer SS *Boonah* and shipping them to Australia. *Boonah* departed the United Kingdom in late September and arrived in Australia in early November 1921.

By then the formation of an RAN Air Service had been quashed by the formation of the Australian Air Force on 31 March 1921 (with the Royal prefix added on 31 August 1921). The six aircraft were delivered with the marking 'ANA' on the fuselage and rudder and accepted by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) who renumbered the aircraft as A10-1 to A10-6. Due to defence spending cutbacks and a shortage of trained personnel in the new RAAF only one aircraft was reassembled and used for training. The remaining five were placed in storage but by mid-1923 all the aircraft had been assembled.

Fairey A10-3 flown by Wing Commander Stanley Goble and Flight Lieutenant Ivor McIntyre completed the first around Australia flight during April-May 1924; covering over 8500 miles in 90 flying hours over an uncharted course and in face of numerous difficulties. The flyers were awarded the 1924 Britannia Trophy, and the contemporary press classed the flight "the finest in the history of aviation."

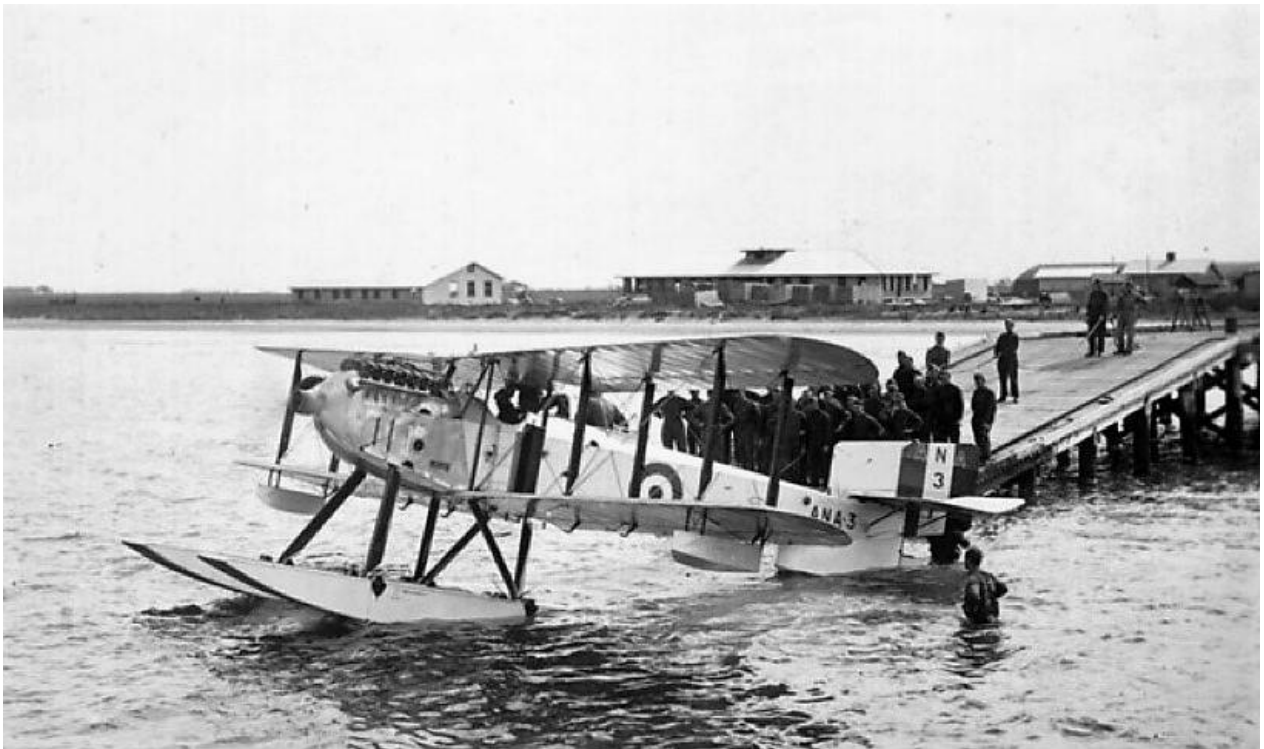
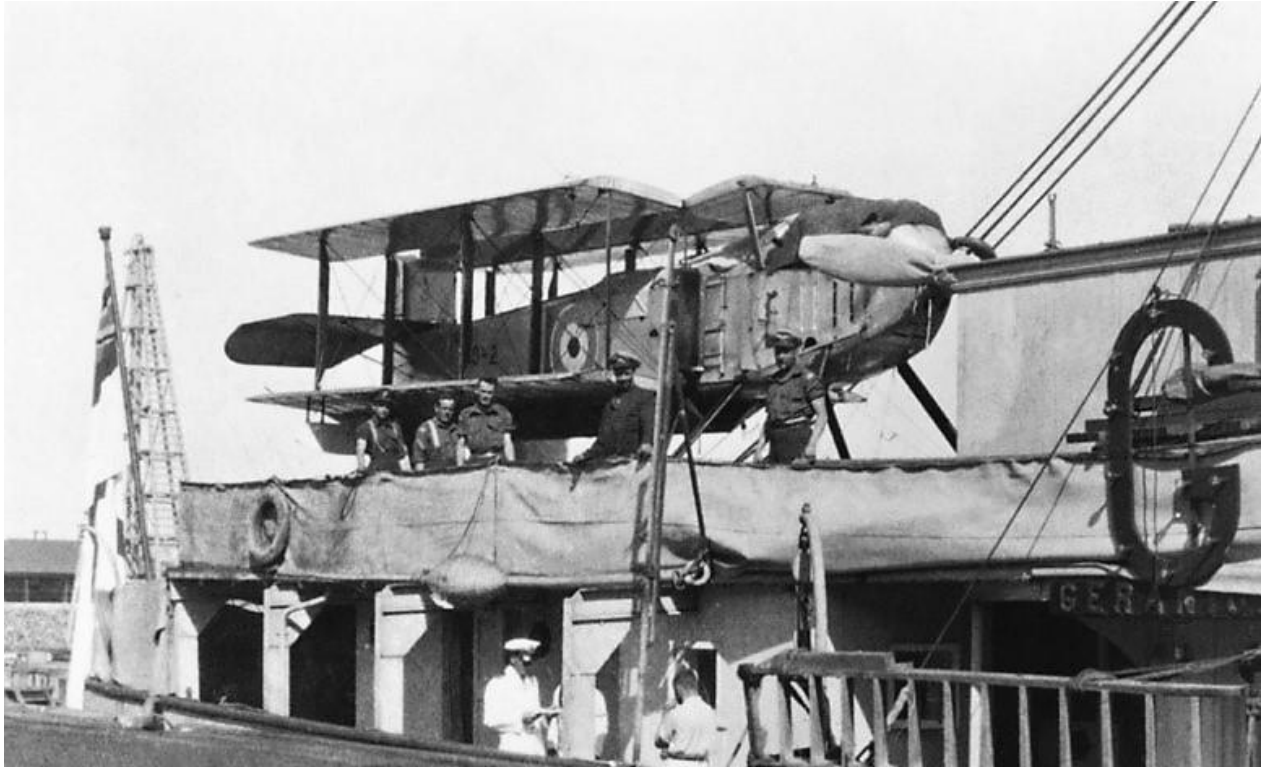
In late 1924, A10-2 operated in Queensland waters supporting survey work being conducted by the survey vessel HMAS *Geranium*. The aircraft was flown, in stages, from Point Cook to Townsville and then embarked in *Geranium*. The aircraft was of substantial assistance in identifying channels in the Great Barrier Reef for survey and also locating isolated shoals. In 1925 a Fairey IID was allocated to surveying duties with the RAN in north Queensland waters but this time the aircraft were based ashore at Townsville. The seaplanes operating in support of the RAN were known as 101 Flight.

Co-operation tasks were also carried out with naval units and during 1925-1927 Fairey IID aircraft would operate from Eden to provide support to RAN warships conducting exercises off the east coast.

The Fairey IID was popular with their aircrew but they were quite difficult to maintain and when used in tropical and sub-tropical areas their performance was significantly degraded. By the end of 1925 three of the six had crashed or were damaged beyond repair. They were converted to spare parts to keep the other three aircraft operational. Due to a lack of spare parts, funding and qualified maintenance personnel, the remaining three aircraft were unserviceable by late 1927

and were disposed of in 1929.

The Fairey IIID embarked in HMAS Geranium during the Great Barrier Reef survey of 1924.



A Fairey IIID at RAAF Base Point Cook in 1923 still wearing its ANA serial number

Photo of the Month



HMAS *Vendetta* I - flashing up boilers and getting ready for sea while serving in the Mediterranean in 1940. Gordon Hill Collection

News

Tomahawks for the RAN

The acquisition of some of the most powerful and technologically advanced weapons systems the ADF has fielded will enhance Australia's ability to target enemies at longer ranges.

More than \$1.7 billion will be invested in long-range strike missiles and other guided weapons, capabilities the Defence Minister Richard Marles said. The ADF needed "to be able to hold an adversary at risk further from our shores".



Australia will become one of only three nations to possess a Tomahawk long-range strike capability when it purchases more than 200 of the cruise missiles from the United States for the Royal Australian Navy's Hobart-class destroyers. The Tomahawk missiles, costing about \$1.3 billion, have a range of 1500 kilometres.

Indian Navy submarine visits Western Australia

The Royal Australian Navy hosted the Indian submarine *INS Vagir* during a visit to Fleet Base West, Western Australia in August. The visit was the first time an Indian submarine had visited Australia.

During *Vagir's* deployment, basic, intermediate and advanced-level anti-submarine exercises are scheduled. In addition, an RAN submarine and Indian Naval P8I aircraft are scheduled to exercise with *Vagir*. This deployment will further augment the cooperation and synergy between IN and RAN.



The Indian Navy media release said that:

"The ongoing deployment is a testament to the reach and sustenance of IN submarines. The extended range deployment is the maiden deployment by an IN submarine to Australia and showcases the capability and professional acumen of the IN to undertake sustained operations at extended ranges from the base port for prolonged durations."

This Month in History

September 1800	A battery of two guns was established on Garden Island, to protect Sydney from a French attack. The garrison of 12 Marines was commanded by Henry Hacking.
September 1900	A force of 600, drawn from the Australian Naval contingents, assembled at Tientsin for the attack on Chinese Boxer fortifications at Peking.
September 1910	HMAS PARRAMATTA and HMAS YARRA having been commissioned into the Australian Navy's Commonwealth Naval Forces left Portsmouth, England, for Australia, escorted by HMS GIBALTAR.
September 1915	The RANBT suffered its second fatality in two days of heavy shelling, at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli Peninsula. CPO E. C. Perkins was killed, and later buried in Hill 10 Cemetery at Suvla Bay.
September 1920	Flinders Naval Depot was commissioned as a training establishment for the RAN. It was officially renamed HMAS CERBERUS in December 1962.
September 1929	HMAS CANBERRA ran aground at Broome, WA. Damage was minor, and the cruiser re-floated herself.
September 1935	The first Seagull MK V amphibian was embarked in HMAS AUSTRALIA. HMAS SYDNEY also carried a Seagull A2-2.
September 1940	While proceeding to Brisbane from Sydney, enroute to New Caledonia, HMAS ADELAIDE (I) collided with SS COPTIC of the Shaw Savill and Albion Line. Although both ships avoided major damage, this collision resulted in a court case in 1947 when the owners of COPTIC sued the Commonwealth for £35,000 damages.
September 1942	HMAS STUART re-embarked the Australian 2/10th Battalion, and eight Japanese POWs, from Normanby Island, Papua New Guinea. The prisoners were survivors of the Japanese destroyer YAYOI, sunk off the island by American bombers on 11 September.
September 1947	HMAS WARRNAMBOOL sank after striking an Allied laid mine near Cockburn Reef, QLD. Two of the ship's complement were killed in the initial explosion, and a third was drowned. Twenty-six sailors were injured. Survivors were picked up by HMAS SWAN.
September 1951	HMAS ANZAC fired her guns in war for the first time when she engaged enemy targets at Haelu, in western Korea.
September 1956	In the first of the only two offensive actions undertaken by Royal Australian Navy ships during the Malayan Emergency (1948-60), HMA Ships ANZAC II and TOBRUK I bombarded terrorist positions south of Jason Bay in Johore State.
September 1962	The first flight of an RAN Wessex was by LCDR John Salthouse and took place in Yeovil, England (near the Westland Factory).
September 1968	HMAS ATTACK completed a two-month operation shadowing the Russian trawling vessel VAN GOGH, in the Gulf of Carpentaria.
September 1971	HMAS BRISBANE sailed from Vietnam, thus completing the RAN's four-year involvement in the war.
September 1984	HMAS ONSLOW became the world's first conventionally powered submarine to be upgraded to guided missile capacity, on completion of a \$39 million conversion at Cockatoo Dockyard, Sydney, when Harpoon sub-surface to surface UGM48 missile capability was installed.
September 1989	VADM Sir John Collins, KBE, CB, RAN, (Retired), died in Sydney. His naval career stretched from 1913 to 1955, and he was the first RAN graduate to reach the position of Chief of Navy. He also served as the Australian High Commissioner to New Zealand, from 1956 to 1963. In 1988 he had been named in the Bicentennial List of 200 Great Australians.
September 1998	HMAS TORRENS was decommissioned at HMAS STIRLING, after a career lasting 27 years. TORRENS was the last of the six River class destroyer escorts, which commenced service in the RAN during the 1960's, and early 1970's. TORRENS was sunk as a target in June 1999, by a Mk 48 torpedo, fired from HMAS FARNCOMB, (Collins class submarine).
September 2002	HMAS ADELAIDE II arrived in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, for a good will visit.
September 2017	HMAS Hobart III, lead ship of the Hobart Class Air Warfare Destroyers commissioned.

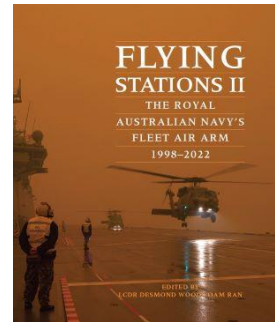
The entries selected for publication this month are randomly generated from an extensive database of historic naval events. The absence of a significant event is in no way intended to cause offence. The objective is to provide a cross section of events across time. The Society's website enables you to 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/>

For the Books Worms

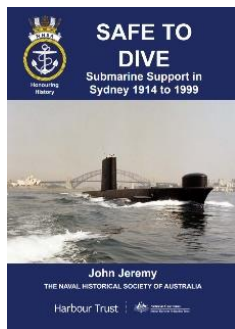
FLYING STATIONS (II) FAA History

Since its launch by VADM Tim Barrett on 21 October 2022 Flying Stations (II) the Story of the RAN Fleet Air Arm 1998 – 2022 has been sold from the FAA Museum at HMAS Albatross.

The book can also be purchased online and mailed to customers from the publisher, Avonmore Press. Orders can be placed via this [LINK](#).



Book Review: 'Safe To Dive, Submarine Support in Sydney 1914 to 1999'



This book which tells the story of the support of Australia's submarines in Sydney from the arrival of *AE1* and *AE2* in 1914 to the decommissioning of HMAS *Platypus* in 1999 has been recently reviewed by John Mortimer. John's review is available via this [LINK](#).

Orders for printed or digital version can be placed through the Society's online shop via this [LINK](#).

The Yachties Australian Volunteers in the Royal Navy 1940-45

by Janet Roberts Billett

Thanks to Military History and Heritage Victoria for the following overview of this exceptionally well researched book.

Recruited under the Dominion Yachtsmen Scheme, their war service in the northern hemisphere was as diverse as it was dangerous.

Most sailed in convoy duties in the Battle of the Atlantic and some in the Arctic run to Murmansk in Russia.

A small group distinguished themselves in Rendering Mines Safe.

The majority served in Combined Operations, which included daring coastal raids, the amphibious landings in the Mediterranean and Normandy, covert operations, and mine sweeping.

Later in the war, Yachties also served in the Royal Australian Navy in South East Asia and the Pacific, contributing to victory with bravery, dash and loyalty to country and Empire.

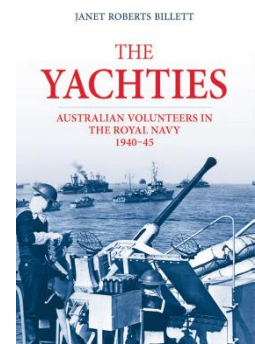
As a group they are the most highly decorated Australian volunteers.

A saga of daring exploits by Australian Yachtsmen Scheme volunteers who served as officers in the Royal Navy and saw action in some of the most dangerous theatres of the war at sea, including the Atlantic convoys, the Arctic supply run to Russia, covert operations and the Allied landings.

At home, their European war service attracted little attention and soon slipped from memory-a couple of hundred 'Yachties' no longer fitted the national narrative.

But the astonishing fact is that they received about 30% of the RAN's officer awards in WWII.

Copies can be obtained from Australian Scholarly Publishing via this [Link](#).



Video of the Month – Women in the Navy

Royal Australian Navy Video

[Women in the Navy - YouTube](#)

Duration: 15min 22secs.

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 across the length and breadth of the Royal Australian Navy in a wide variety of roles both at sea and ashore.



Australian Department of Defence Video

[ADV Reliant delivers stores to Manus Island, PNG](#)

Duration: 2mins 34 secs.



In this video the Pacific Support Vessel, ADV *Reliant* works with HMPNGS *Cape Gloucester* to transfer vehicles to Lombrum Naval Base, Manus Island.

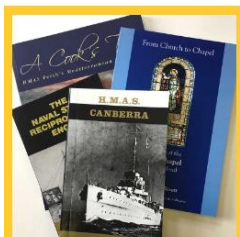
Occasional Papers

- Occasional Paper 169 - HMAS *Vendetta* and Commander Eric Eugene Johnson RAN
- Occasional Paper 170 - The Eight Inch Gun Relining Programme

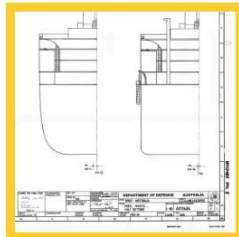
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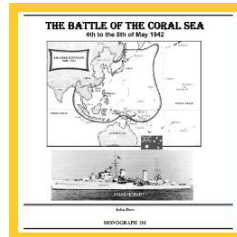
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