



Call the Hands



Issue No. 80

November 2023

From the President

Once again it is my pleasure to welcome you to this 80th edition of *Call the Hands* and accompanying occasional papers. Publication has been delayed this month due to my absence in Japan while our editor, David Stratton has been busy drafting its contents. Coincidentally, David's first article on the World War II Naval Warfare Review Documents makes mention of the Divine Wind or *Kamikaze* which captured my attention during the holiday.

The word *Kamikaze* came to prominence following the conquest of China and Korea in the 13th century when Kublai Khan, the first emperor of Mongolia and Yuan Dynasty developed plans to subjugate Japan. Japan had refused his demands to submit. Twice in 1274 and 1281 massive fleets carrying thousands of troops were dispatched to invade Japan. Both failed due to both Japanese preparedness and the aid of the weather. Having been twice saved by timely typhoons, Japanese people looked upon their intervention as miracles thanks to the Shinto doctrine of reverence to nature and its power. They referred to these two typhoons as *Kamikaze*, or divine winds. This same belief was later manipulated in militaristic propaganda in the years leading up to World War II.

Both occasional papers this month relate to the Navy in regional Queensland. OP 173 on the Navy and the Fraser Coast had its origins in a volunteers visit to Hervey Bay. The HMAS Magnetic story (OP 174) followed the recent unveiling of a commemorative plaque in Townsville. This plaque marks the location of this strategically important World War 2 base which played an important role in supporting the Allied counter offensive. I am grateful to Keith Owen from the Townsville Maritime Museum for contacting the Society. As records and images of HMAS Magnetic are scarce, the Museum would value input from anyone who can assist with information and images. This will help a planned exhibition on the Base. Please see page six for more details.

On page thirteen you will find an appeal for financial support to protect two ship models and to enhance the website with a new section on marine art. Whilst I appreciate many people in the community are finding rising inflation and interest rates stressful, the Committee believes that many of our members and subscribers may be able to donate to these causes. Any assistance will be gratefully received. On the opposite end of the spectrum, we are offering Christmas specials on Society products and services. Page fourteen provides the details. Do take advantage of this offer.

David Stratton, has also been busy developing the Society's Google Earth Project which presents key RAN events through the medium of the Google Earth Application. David's initiative and massive contribution to the Society cannot be overstated. Details are on page seven.

Finally, in mid-October members will have received their notice of the Annual General Meeting. The AGM is scheduled for 3:30PM on Thursday 23 November at the Anzac Memorial, Sydney. Please [register](#) to attend in person or by Zoom. For non-members, perhaps it is a good time to join and have your say. New members are always welcome. Just visit the [website](#). Joining is quick and real value for money, starting from \$35 per annum.

Kind regards,
David Michael



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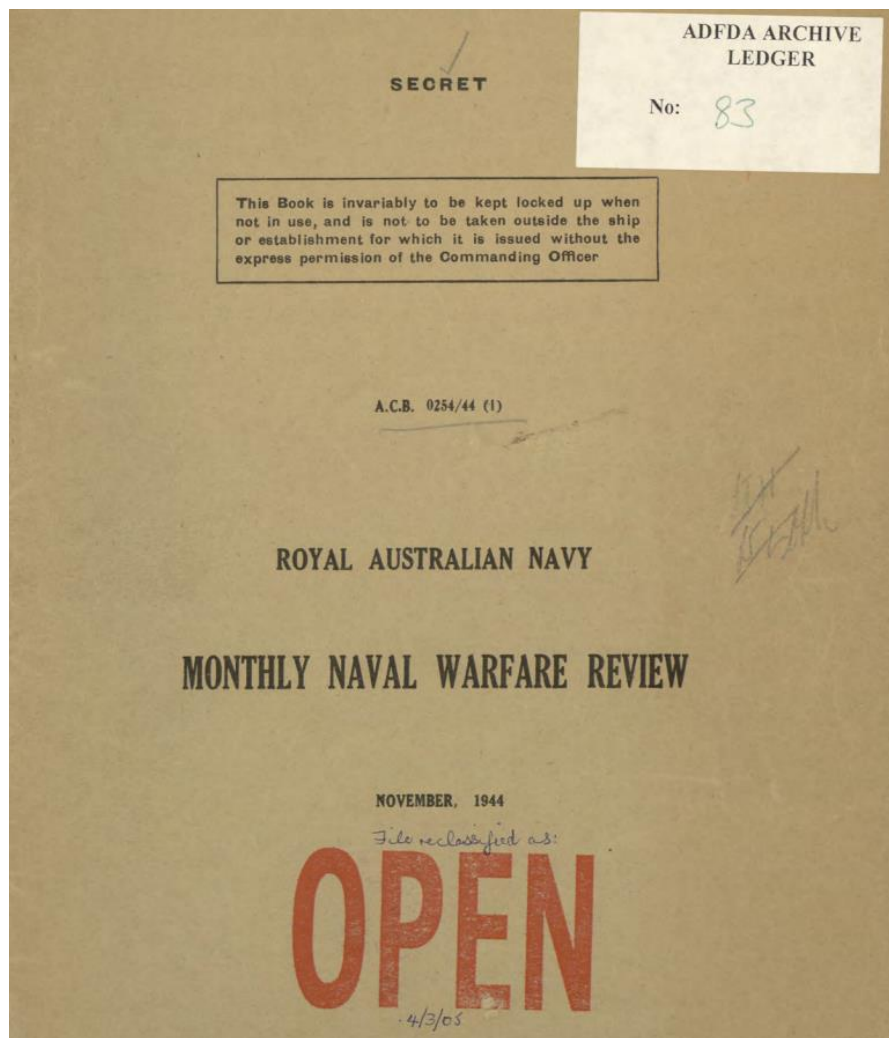
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World War II Naval Warfare Review Documents

These declassified monthly naval warfare reviews contain an appreciation of the progress of the naval war in the Pacific and South East Asia during 1944-45. Included in each review are sections concerning intelligence, tactics, incidents and lessons learned. A number of them are available online at <https://www.navy.gov.au/media-room/publications/ran-monthly-naval-warfare-review-wwii>.

Below are the first few pages from the November 1944 document. The complete document can be read online.



SECTION I.CURRENT EVENTS IN SOUTH WEST PACIFIC1. INVASION OF THE PHILIPPINES.

The landing on Leyte on 20th October employed most of the assault craft available in the Pacific area. Leyte was chosen because an Allied occupation of that island would effectively split the Japanese forces in the Philippines and also because of the potential air strips in Leyte Valley.

The Japanese forces on the island were estimated to be about 24,000 but a force of approximately 70,000 U.S. troops were to be landed in order to minimize the possibility of failure. This force was landed on D-Day in the amazingly short time of two hours. As much encouragement as possible had previously been given to guerrillas who had been equipped by parachute and who were believed to number about 4,000.

After a rehearsal at Hollandia on October 12th, the force sailed from that port the next day and arrived of Leyte Gulf early on the 20th. One of the most important operations connected with the landing was the buoying of dangerous shoals in Leyte Gulf before the arrival of the assault force. The Australian Survey Group commenced this work on the 17th - three days before the landing - and were completely successful in their mission.

H.M.A. Ships "AUSTRALIA", "SHROPSHIRE", "ARUNTA" and "WARRAMUNGA" formed part of the escort force for the assault ships. During the approach and a few hours before zero hour, "SHROPSHIRE" picked up a mine in her paravanes and had to leave it there for some time to avoid giving warning of the approach of the force. During the previous two days minesweepers had accounted for 189 mines in the approaches to Leyte Gulf but it was considered that several mines remained unswept and an incident such as "SHROPSHIRE'S" was not unexpected.

"AUSTRALIA" and "SHROPSHIRE" were detached from the assault force just before the anchoring position was reached. They joined up with the inshore bombardment force consisting mainly of battleships and heavy cruisers.

It is much regretted that H.M.A.S. "AUSTRALIA" suffered heavy casualties early on 21st October when a Japanese plane crashed into the port side of her foremast. The pilot of this plane

may have been one of the "Kamikaze" (Divine Wind) special attack corps now being extensively publicised in the Japanese news broadcasts. The bridge and director personnel were severely burned by flaming petrol and a number of officers and ratings were killed instantly or later died of wounds.

H.M.A. Ships "SHROPSHIRE" and "ARUNTA" later took part in the early morning action in Surigao Strait near Leyte Gulf on 25th October. "ARUNTA" delivered a torpedo attack from 7,000 yards and engaged with gunfire while "SHROPSHIRE" fired 32 eight-inch broadsides at the main force from ranges between 14,000 yards and 16,000 yards. Neither ship suffered damage or casualties.

2. BOMBARDMENT OF MOROTAI BY TASK GROUP 75.2.

Task Group 75.2 consisting of "AUSTRALIA" (Flagship), "SHROPSHIRE", "ARUNTA", "WARRAMUNGA" and the U.S. destroyers "MULLANY" and "AMMEN" left Humboldt at 2245I on 11th September for the operations off Morotai as part of Task Force 75.

The Task Group rendezvoused with Commander Attack Force and Echelon M1 on the 13th. Escort carriers provided anti-submarine patrols for the force. At 0500 on the 15th, Task Group 75.2 was detached from the main force to take up bombardment positions.

After "WARRAMUNGA" had engaged and set on fire two barges close inshore, "MULLANY" and "AMMEN" commenced bombardments from positions about 3,000 yards south of Mitita Island and Point Gila respectively. No sign of enemy activity in the target areas could be observed.

At 0650 the two cruisers commenced bombardments in indirect fire from positions about 1 mile east of Point Gila. Spotting was provided by planes from "NASHVILLE" and "PHOENIX". As the first spotting correction received by "AUSTRALIA" was "Up 50 yards" there appears to have been no difficulty in finding the target area. The two Australian destroyers carried out an A/S patrol to the eastward of the cruisers during the bombardment. It is of interest to note that the cruisers fire had to be interrupted on two occasions because 8-inch shell fragments were endangering "FLETCHER" which was about 1000 yards from the beach. All shells were falling inland in the target area but, when the range was increased by 400 yards, "FLETCHER" still reported that she was being near-missed by fragments.

Unusual Commissioned Ships

RHNS *Olympias*

Members will recall the December 2022 edition of The Naval Historical Review in which we featured the Greek museum ship RHNS *Georgios Averoff* and the Greek navy. Commissioned into the Royal Hellenic Navy in 1911 the armoured cruiser *Averoff* remains in commission today. An equally surprising and unusual feature of the Greek Navy's list of commissioned warships has to be the *Olympias*. *Olympias* is a modern replica of an ancient Athenian trireme, the famous oared ships with their dangerous rams.



RHNS Olympias, replica Athenian trireme. Courtesy, Greek Ministry of Defence

Ship Specifications

Length- 36.9 metres.

Beam- 5.5 metres.

Draught- 1.25 metres.

Displacement- 47 tonnes.

Propulsion- 2 large square sails, 170 oarsmen.

Speed- maximum, with oars, 9 knots.

Continuous with crew taking turns to row, 2.15 knots.

Crew- as an ancient warship 200.

Armament- 10 spearmen, 4 archers, Bronze bow ram.

Estimated original ramming speed 16 knots but not possible with the reconstruction, because of excess weight.

Olympias was commissioned on 26 August 1987, in Piraeus. She was financed by the Hellenic Navy and private donors. The ship was constructed to be as close as possible to her predecessors which were called Triremes and designed to be fast attack, light displacement vessels. The bow ram for example is a copy of an original that is in the Piraeus archaeological museum. The ram weighs 200 kg.

The ship is long and thin and subject to bending. To counter this, the ship is also pre-tensioned in the same way as the original. This is done with a cable running from bow to stern beneath the deck. This stops the ship bending and increases the hull rigidity. As original hemp style ropes were not economical a steel wire rope was used. This cable is called a hypozomata - bracing rope. Originally this cable would be retensioned after each voyage by pulling the ship ashore and resetting the cable. The ship is constructed of Douglas fir with tenons of Virginia oak. The keel is of Iroko (African Teak) hardwood.

Sea trials of *Olympias* were conducted to compare the performance of this modern reconstruction with those recorded in ancient records. They were consistent. In one trial a volunteer crew of 170 managed to achieve a speed of 9 knots and a 180 degree turn in 2.5 ship lengths with a time of one minute. Not bad for a scratch crew?

Olympias visited the UK in 1993, not under her own power, to celebrate 2,500 years of democracy. Finding a volunteer crew for that journey would have been a big call! In 2004 the ship was used to transport the Olympic flame from Keratsini to Piraeus, ahead of the Greek Olympic Games.

HMAS Magnetic, Appeal for Help


Recent communications between the Society and the Maritime Museum of Townsville relating to a plaque on the site of HMAS Magnetic which existed in Townsville during WW2 led to the provision of Occasional Paper 173 by the Museum's Community Liaison Volunteer Mr Keith Owen AM. It has been published with this edition of *Call the Hands*.

Subsequent to installation of the plaque, the Museum is considering a permanent stand-alone exhibition dedicated to HMAS Magnetic.

To this end, the Museum is seeking assistance from the community to provide images, records and any other information on HMAS Magnetic and its attached vessels.

HMAS MAGNETIC

'Find the way'



This is the approximate site of HMAS Magnetic which operated between 1942 and 1946. It was one of many shore-based depots established along the coast during the Pacific War.

HMAS Magnetic was a strategic centre during the War in the Pacific. Its activities covered communications, inspection of ships entering port, and a service centre for allied warships and commercial vessels. As such, it demonstrates the vital role played by Townsville during the war.

The Depot consisted of 50 buildings including offices, workshops, stores, and accommodation for the Base's 500 personnel. There was a supply jetty in Ross Creek with refuelling facilities. An accommodation block for the Women's Royal Australian Navy Service (WRANS) was located along the Strand in the vicinity of the Tobruk Pool.




HMAS Magnetic played a crucial communications role. WRANS served in "Y" Section of the Base located on Castle Hill which intercepted signals sent by enemy ships and submarines. The signals received were in code which the WRANS would transcribe into a Japanese phonetic script called "katakana".

Although HMAS Magnetic was a shore base, it had its own channel inspection and escort boat, named HMAS Magnetic which meant there were two HMAS Magnetics – one a ship and one a shore establishment.


The boat would meet, board, inspect and clear vessels to enter the Port of Townsville. HMAS Magnetic assisted the arrival of the 1756 vessels which called at Townsville during 1943 and 1944.

For those who served.


Scan for more information:




Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs




RSL




maritime
museum of townsville




City of
Townsville



Establishment of HMAS Magnetic during the war. Photo: Mrs. M. J. (Maggie) Jones, Townsville, 1945.



WRANS in uniform. Photo: Mrs. M. J. (Maggie) Jones, Townsville, 1945.



Aerial view of HMAS Magnetic. Photo: Mrs. M. J. (Maggie) Jones, Townsville, 1945.

The attached vessels included; HMAS *Magnetic* which operated as a channel inspection and escort vessel and HMAS *Vigilant*. Prior to requisitioning by the RAN on 22 December 1941 *Magnetic* was named MV *Pagrus*.

Vigilant whose history is relatively well documented operated out of Darwin for much of WW2. She is believed to have been based in Townsville for a period in late 1943.

In addition to the provision of records and images relating to HMAS Magnetic the base, the Museum would appreciate images of both vessels in Townsville or other locations.

If you can assist, please contact Mr. Keith Owen.

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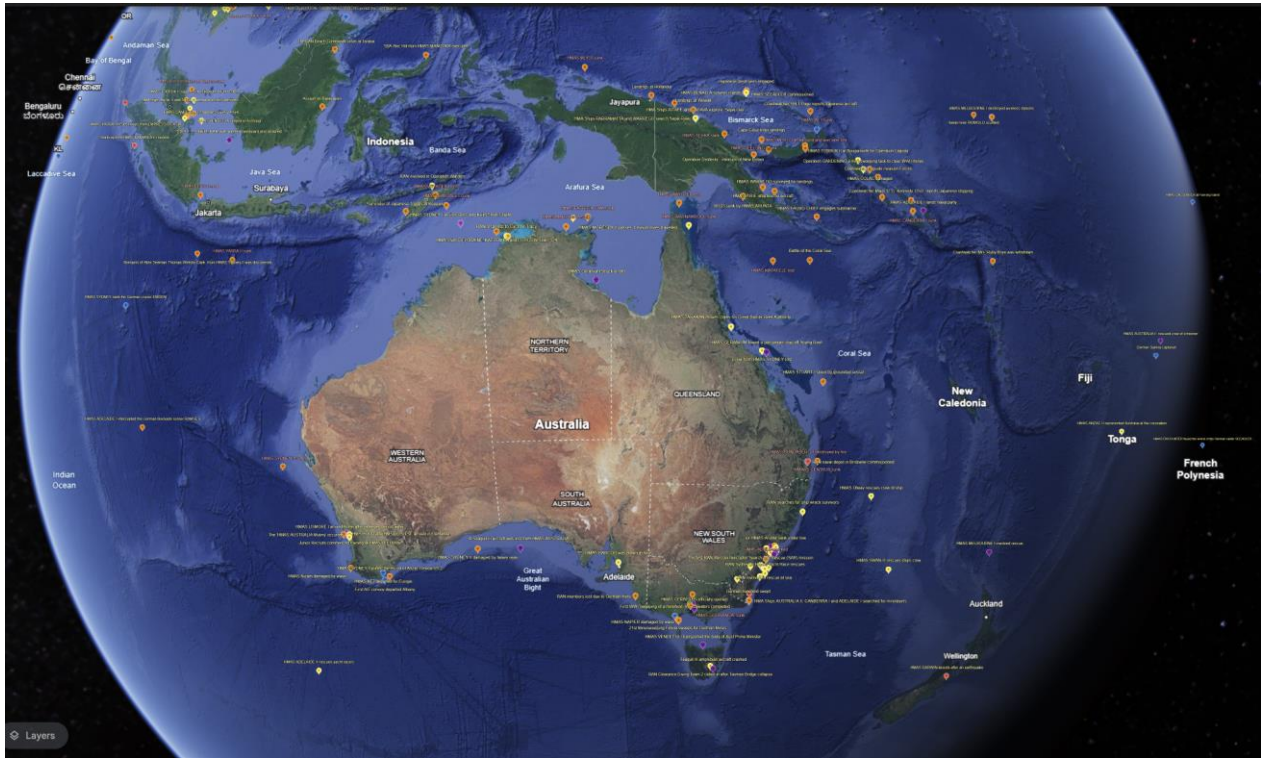


HMAS Vigilant at Maryborough in 1951

NHSA Google Earth Project

NHSA Volunteer David Stratton has developed a Google Earth map which shows events from the history of the Royal Australian Navy.

It is a great way to see the various places around the globe that the RAN has operated in, during the last century.



Click on this link to view the google earth map.

<https://earth.google.com/web/@3.70591909,0,24.74890502a,14815521.56418088d,30y,0h,0t,0r/data=MikKJwoICiExUIJBV3VxbFJoSWWhjNk8wWHdQMkItaIVpR01vU1NzejAgAToDCgEw>

You can click on the events and find out more information about the event.

Please let us know if you think that there are notable events that we should add.

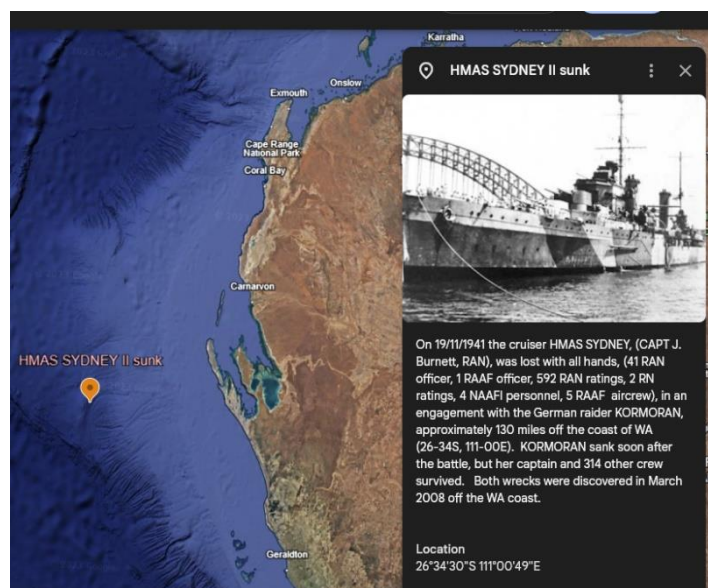


Photo of the Month



HMAS Stuart (II) received an unexpected welcome when she arrived in Singapore on 2 May 1972 to relieve HMAS Torrens. As she steamed into the ANZUK Naval Basin with her Piper playing atop the gun turret, the pipes and drums of 6 Bn, the Royal Australian Regiment on Torrens' upper deck broke into a medley of Scottish tunes

ANZUK was a tripartite force formed by Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom to defend the Asian Pacific region after the United Kingdom withdrew forces from the east of Suez in the early 1970s. The ANZUK force was formed in Singapore on 1 November 1971 under Rear Admiral David Wells and disbanded on 31 January 1974.

Further Reading

Colin Campbell, ANZUK: What was it?, Canberra : Camp Bell Publishing, 2020.

Sea Power Centre Australia, Biography of Rear Admiral David Charles Wells, available at, <https://www.navy.gov.au/biography/rear-admiral-david-charles-wells>

News

US Unmanned Surface Vessel Division in Sydney

The US Navy's Unmanned Surface Vessel Division One's (USVDIV-1) unmanned surface vessels (USVs) *Ranger*, *Mariner*, *Seahawk* and *Sea Hunter* arrived in Sydney for a scheduled port visit on 24 October ahead of their participation in bilateral exercises with the RAN.



Along with the USVs, the Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS *Oakland* also arrived in Sydney. All five US Navy vessels are employed in the ongoing US Pacific Fleet exercise Integrated Battle Problem (IBP) 23.2 to develop concepts of operations for future unmanned programs and to further integrate USVs into routine operations alongside manned surface combatants.

End of an Era at West Head Gunnery Range

Recently more than 100 people attended the West Head gunnery range at Flinders, Victoria, for the final firing and decommissioning of the 76mm medium calibre gun, marking the end of more than three decades of service at the range. The RAN has transitioned to the 5-inch (127mm) and future training will be delivered through virtual-reality simulation and onboard training, so the decommissioning of the 76mm gun represented the end of 64 years of Navy shore-based medium calibre live-fire training.

The Royal Australian Navy assumed responsibility for the West Head gunnery range in 1958 and has been operating the site as Navy's live-fire gunnery training facility for close range and medium calibre gunnery ever since. It continues to operate two Typhoon weapon systems, a Mini Typhoon system and five 12.7mm machine guns.



This Month in History

November 1900	The former South Australian gun boat HMS PROTECTOR, was decommissioned at Hong Kong, and adopted her former prefix HMCS.
November 1914	HMAS PIONEER lost her fore-topmast and suffered other damage in heavy seas, while escorting the first troop convoy in the Indian Ocean. PIONEER returned to Fremantle for repairs.
November 1916	The Australian ship WARILDA was converted to a hospital ship at Garden Island, Sydney. In February 1918 the ship was torpedoed by a German submarine in the English Channel, but the torpedo failed to explode. On 3 August the ship was torpedoed again off Le Havre, and sank with a loss of 123 lives, many of whom were wounded soldiers.
November 1927	RAFA Biloela paid off. She was sold to John Hven of Norway in 1931. In 1932, she was renamed Wollert, in 1937 renamed Ivanhoe, and then Yoh Hsing and finally Cree. She was sunk by enemy submarine action on 21-11- 1940.
November 1940	The cruiser HMAS SYDNEY, (CAPT J. Collins, RAN), joined in a raid into the Strait of Otranto, with HM Ships ORION, AJAX, NUBIAN and MOWHAWK as a subsidiary raid to the Battle of Taranto. They sunk 4 merchant ships, without damage to any of the raiding force.
November 1943	LEUT J.Plunkett-Cole, RAN, assumed command of HMAS NEPAL, (destroyer). Plunkett-Cole was the only RAN officer to command all four N class destroyers in the Australian Squadron.
November 1948	First CAC CA-16 Wirraway delivered to the RAN. Seven Wirraways were acquired by the RAN as training and general fleet support aircraft during 1948 – 1951 and then an additional ten in 1952-53 which were operated by 723 and 724 Squadrons at the Naval Air Station, Nowra until they were disposed of in 1957.
November 1952	Aircraft from HMAS SYDNEY (III) were in action spotting the fall of shot for the US Navy battleship USS New Jersey off the coast of Korea. SYDNEY completed her third patrol on this day, her strikes having made inoperable all of the railway lines in her target area.
November 1962	725 Squadron recommissioned flying the first two Westland Wessex 31A helicopters delivered to the RAN for ASW training and support to 817 Squadron, the Fleet Air Arm's (FAA) front line Wessex Squadron.
November 1967	PO R. A. Donne, (RAN Clearance Diving Team 3), was wounded by shrapnel while making safe a 75-mm recoilless rifle round, wired as a booby trap, at Vung Tau, Vietnam.
November 1970	HMAS Adroit on SAR duties in company with HMAS Aware assisted in an attempt to salvage a ditched helicopter from HMAS Albatross after a Westland Wessex (HAS.31A N7-201 881) crashed on 23/11/1970. While being towed into Jervis Bay the aircraft sank.
November 1976	HMAS STUART was dispatched to rescue survivors from the oil exploration barge PERENTIE. Two of the barge's crew of five were picked up.
November 1984	The last of the Australian-built Fremantle class patrol boats, HMAS BUNBURY, was launched at Cairns, QLD.
November 1991	HMAS WOLLONGONG operated with Solomon Islands maritime forces in the joint maritime surveillance exercise <i>Weather Eye</i> off Honiara.
November 1998	The Royal Australian Navy's first female pilot, Sub Lieutenant Natalee McDougall, RAN, graduated from the Australian Defence Force helicopter training facility after 17 months of intensive classroom and practical training at RAAF Base Fairbairn. She joined 723 Squadron the following January.
November 2001	HMAS PERTH was sunk as a dive wreck at Seal Rock, Albany, WA. The scuttling charges were fired by a former member of the crew of the earlier HMAS PERTH which had been sunk in 1942 at the Battle of Sunda Strait.
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/>

Video of the Month

A wartime video of the British Pacific Fleet in Sydney Harbour in 1945

[British Navy In Sydney \(1945\) - YouTube](#)

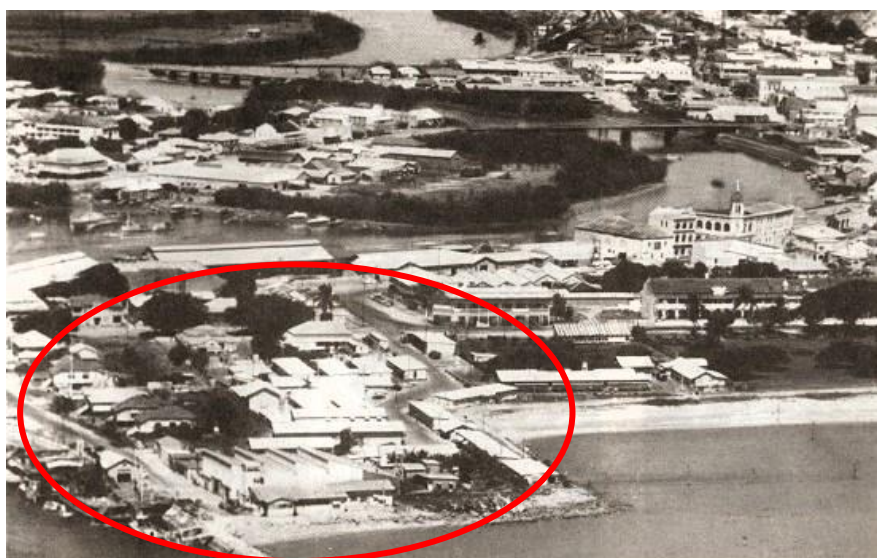
Duration: 1min 55seconds.

Includes footage of HMS *King George V* and HMS *Illustrious* entering the Captain Cook Graving Dock.



Occasional Papers

- Occasional Paper 173 - HMAS Magnetic
- Occasional Paper 174 - The Queensland Fraser Coast and Royal Australian Navy historical ties



HMAS Magnetic, in Townsville during World War II.

Donations Appeal: Models and Website Enhancement

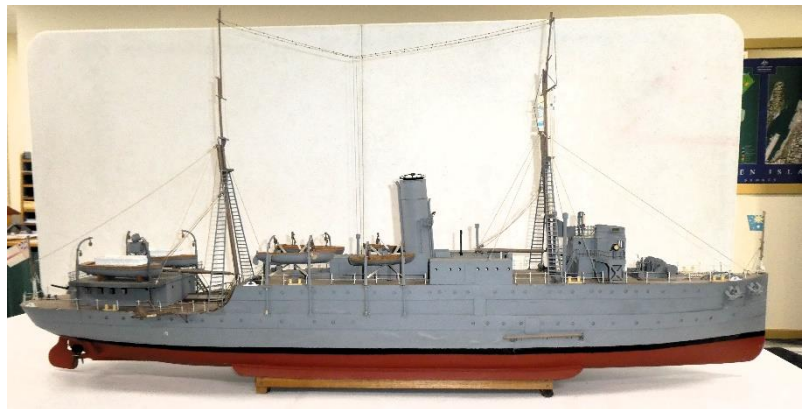
Although the Society is in good financial health, it has been a long-standing policy to seek external financial assistance for the acquisition of such things as equipment and services with large 'up front' capital costs. For example, in recent years televisions and the printing of books have been generously funded by Chatswood RSL and Defence industries, Thales Australia and BAE Systems.

There are two current requirements for which the Committee recently decided to seek member support. These requirements are for two protective ship model display cases and the addition of a page to the Society's website for a gallery of marine art featuring the Royal Australia Navy. If you are in a position to assist the Society with these projects, your generosity will be greatly appreciated.

Ship Models

The Society recently received two magnificent ship models built by former Society President, Vince Fazio. The models are of HMAS *Platypus* (I) and HMAS *Sydney* (II).

Vince's daughter Amanda, gifted the models to the Society on sale of the family home earlier this year. The models are now on display in the Boatshed (Society's office) but like all models, need the protection of a display case. The cost of a base and Perspex case for these 1.5M long vessels is in the order of \$700 each. We have been fortunate to receive voluntary help to make the timber bases for the cost of material. What is now required is \$1,500 approx. to manufacture Perspex or glass cases.



New Marine Art Web Page

This exciting website innovation is intended to bring the depth and breadth of Australian naval history to the community through the medium of art. Through their work, artists attempt to convey their perception of the time, circumstances and emotions of the event they portray, yet another dimension for understanding history. This new, searchable website page will feature hundreds of works by a large number of artists and include details of the painting and artist. The estimated cost of this website upgrade is \$1,800. Again, the Committee would greatly appreciate the support of members and subscribers to assist with the funding of this initiative.



The Arrival of HM Australian Fleet, Sydney Heads, 4 October 1913. Painting by Percy Frederick Seaton Spence (1868-1933), courtesy of [Royal Collection Trust](#)

Please Donate

Your donation will be gratefully received any of the following channels;

Bank transfer to: BSB: 642 170 Account number: 100218624

Website Link: <https://navyhistory.au/shop/donate/>

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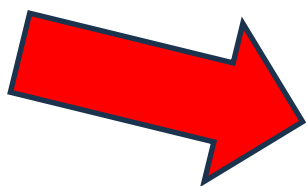
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