



# CALL THE HANDS



**NHSA DIGITAL NEWSLETTER**  
**Issue No. 3      November 2016**

## From the President

Welcome to the November edition of Call the Hands which continues to be well received. I am grateful to subscribers who have provided positive feedback, drawn attention to particular events and commemorations and provided content for this and future editions. This experience has provided confidence to expand the distribution. For example, all Naval Association of Australia sections and sub sections received a copy of the October edition.

In addition to business as usual activities by volunteers such as the sale of Society products (DVDs, ships plans and books) and the conduct of Garden Island history tours, steady progress has been made on improvements projects such as website enhancement. For example, the enhanced website will feature podcasts of presentations to members and books published by the Society. An e-commerce capability and member's section will also be provided.

Communications with members continues to improve with the update of members' e-mail addresses completed and new address groups created. Of concern to the Society is the number of outstanding membership renewals which fell due on 1 July. If this was an oversight on your part, please attend to your renewal soon as soon as possible. The issue of reminders is an expense the Society does not need. As an incentive for on time payment, a discount will be introduced in 2017.

For those planning a Garden Island History tour in 2017, please note the cost will increase to \$20 per head. <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/garden-island-tours/>.

Finally, it is a great pleasure to welcome David Stratton as Editor of Call the Hands. David is a long serving life member of the Society who previously provided the Society with IT and other support services. David shares the view that it is your Society and that it is only as good as the contributions members make. Thus, factual stories and anecdotes which have not been published elsewhere are welcome at any time. We are keen to hear from you.

David Michael  
President

31 October 2016



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## From the Editor

I am excited that I have an opportunity to help the Society and to share with our readers great stories and information through the new *Call The Hands* Newsletter. When the first of these newsletters arrived in my email I thought it was a great concept and was pleased that the Society was adopting a new tack in communicating and embracing members and other people interested in Naval History. The newsletter should be seen as 'your' newsletter not 'ours' so please send through any stories, photos or events that you would like to share. The email for contributions is [callthehands@navyhistory.org.au](mailto:callthehands@navyhistory.org.au).

David Stratton  
Editor

## Christmas Tragedy in Three Acts

*Original story was in Sydney Morning Herald 24 December 1966, and reproduced 24 December 2015.*

The scene begins as 30 dozen bottles of beer are dropped in Darwin Harbour while being loaded onto HMAS *Moresby*. Navy divers fail to find them. Act two: Divers Gordon Withnall and David Langley find the beer. Act three: They are told by Customs they can keep the beer if they pay \$1.40 a gallon and prove ownership. Duty is cheap but ownership impossible, so they throw it all back.

In 1966 HMAS *Moresby* was a relatively new ship having been commissioned only two years previously. Of a handsome design she was the pride of the Hydrographic Service which beforehand had made do with a number of older converted ships. She spent much of her 35 years of active service conducting surveys off remote north and west coasts of the continent.

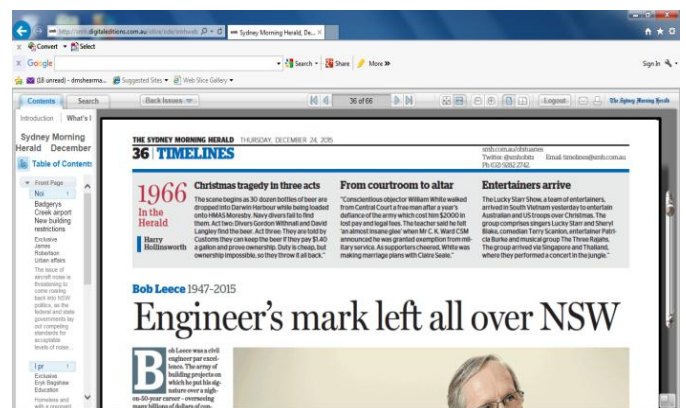
We must remember that bottles of beer in 1966 were still in imperial measurement and more than twice the size of the present day stubby. While metrication in Australia began in 1966 with the conversion to decimal currency it took much longer to change all the older units of measurement and beverages, including beer which was not metricated until 1974.

Bottles of beer prior to metrication were most likely 1/6th of an imperial gallon or 26.667 imperial fluid ounces equal to 758 ml. A carton of beer contained a dozen bottles or 2 gallons. Currently a stubby holds 375 ml and a full-sized or long neck bottle 750 ml. So our canny customs officers appear quite correct in their estimation of duty payable in decimal currency based on a quantity in an imperial measurement. Assuming the divers recovered the total lost consignment the amount owing would be \$84.00.

## Featured Web site: Navy Victoria Network

Navy Victoria Network (NVN) offers you the chance to find out about all Navy happenings in Victoria. It is a website designed by a small team of ex-Navy personnel who are keen to find a way to ensure people interested in Navy goings-on can be kept informed about matters of interest.

The site can be found at <http://navyvic.net>. The site also offers an app for anyone who wants to use their smartphone or tablet. A great way to stay in touch with naval news in the area.



## Featured Museum: Lithgow Small Arms Factory

The Lithgow Small Arm Factory which will be known to many serving and ex-service personnel was Australia's first high precision mass production facility. The museum is located on the original Small Arms Factory site and houses a collection that showcases Australia's industrial history in both technical and human terms. It includes a fine firearms display.

**Links:** <http://www.lithgowsafmuseum.org.au/index.html> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqP3jNReCQg>

## Upcoming Presentations

Invitations to November presentations in Sydney have been received from the Military History Society of NSW and Australian National Maritime Museum.

12 Nov 16: The Sinking of the Corvette HMAS ARMIDALE on 1st December, 1942 by Dr Kevin Smith. Entry is free. RSVP is essential by Wednesday 9 November 2016 as numbers are restricted

<http://militaryhistorynsw.com.au/upcoming-guest-speaker/>



17 Nov 16: False Flags (the story of German raider operations around Australia in WWII) by author Stephen Robinson Find out how Nazi 'pirates' brought World War II to our doorstep...and the fight to stop them. Cost: Members \$10, Adults \$20

<http://www.anmm.gov.au/whats-on/events/false-flags>



## Featured Book

**Cockatoo Dockyard: my story : a short history of Cockatoo Island and other anecdotes by Don Dinnie**

Don Dinnie, a member of the Naval Historical Society, spent most of his working life on Cockatoo Island. He worked for 48 years and nine months, starting as a Shop Boy and ending his time there as Chief Turbine Engineer. He also lived on the island with his family for nearly 25 years. His work on the island included considerable time as Plant Maintenance Engineer, a role which ensured that he has a detailed knowledge of every aspect of the Island Dockyard and its work. His book offers a fascinating insight to living and working on Cockatoo Island during a long period during which he and the Island experienced great change.

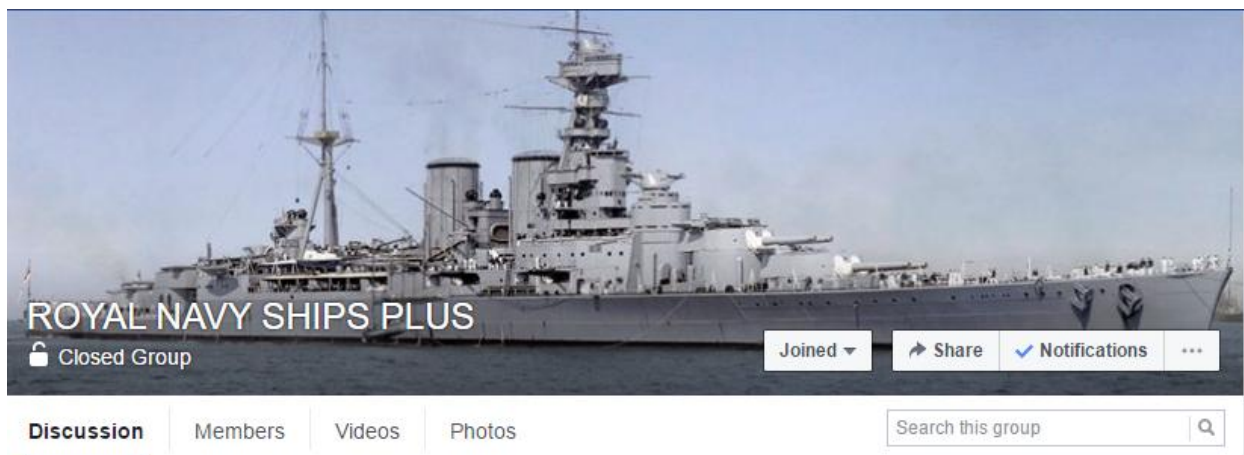
## Operation DAMASK - HMA Ships BRISBANE and SYDNEY

Society member Hugh Hyland has contributed a story about the fast tracked preparation of HMAS Brisbane and Sydney for the second Gulf War deployment in 1991. The full story is attached to this newsletter.

## Facebook

A lot of people don't like Facebook or think it is useful but did you know that there are hundreds of groups on Facebook dedicated to naval topics. Groups are setup by people with a particular interest and allow members to share thoughts or photos. The groups are a great way to make new friends and have some lively debates over what ship is shown in a photo. To find a group open Facebook and use the search box.

Below is the page of a group interested in the Royal Navy



## News in Brief

- After an extensive five month deployment in south-east Asia, HMAS *Sheean* returned to Fleet Base West, in Rockingham, Western Australia in early October.
- In October the first of class flight trials for the CH-47F Chinook aircraft wrapped up onboard amphibious ship, HMAS *Adelaide*.
- In October Royal Navy clearance divers travelled to Orkney for the duty of changing the White Ensign on the wreck of HMS Royal Oak. Each year they are given permission to dive down to the wreck and change the White Ensign marking the sacrifice of those who gave their lives.

A story on the loss of HMS Royal Oak is available on the NHSA website:

<https://www.navyhistory.org.au/sinking-of-h-m-s-royal-oak-at-scapa-flow-by-u-47/>

- The last remaining vessel to land armour on to the Normandy beaches will be given a permanent home in Portsmouth. Landing Craft Tank 7074 will take pride of place in the city's D-Day Museum as part of a multi-million revamp of the memorial/attraction for the invasion's 75th anniversary.
- The US Navy's newest and most technologically advanced warship, USS Zumwalt (DDG 1000) was commissioned into active service on Saturday 15 October in Baltimore. Zumwalt, the lead ship of a class of next-generation multi-mission destroyers, features a state-of-the-art electric propulsion system, wave-piercing tumblehome hull, stealth design, and the latest warfighting technology and weaponry available.

## This Month in History

November 1801 – Henry Hacking appointed Pilot at Port Jackson

November 1918 – HMA ships Australia, Sydney and Melbourne at surrender of German Fleet

November 1939 – HMAS Koala launched at Cockatoo Island

November 1941 – HMAS Sydney lost in action with Kormoran

November 1975 – HMAS Anzac sold out of service for breaking up

## Photo of the Month



HMAS Vampire off the NSW South Coast 14 March 1986 – photo by david Stratton

If you have a photo to share please send it to [callthehands@navyhistory.org.au](mailto:callthehands@navyhistory.org.au)

## Southern Hemisphere Dry Docks

During a showing of the recently revised Society video for groups undertaking historical tours of the Garden Island Dockyard in Sydney the traditional debate about the largest dock in the southern hemisphere reopened. Was/is the Captain Cook Graving Dock the largest? As the answer to this question varies depending on the parameters used, readers can make up their own mind. In terms of length Captain Cook's best place was only ever second. In terms of volume, it was first for only a year until the Sturrock Dry Dock in Cape Town was completed in 1945. Thus, it is safe to say the Captain Cook Graving Dock was the largest in the Southern Hemisphere when completed. These are the statistics.

Dry Dock	Country	City	Completed	L	W	D	Volume (cubic metres)
Selborne Graving Dock	South Africa	Simon's Town	1910	231	36.58	13.7	115.7K
Prince Edward Graving Dock	South Africa	Durban	1925	352	33.5	12.6	148.5K
Garden Island, Sydney	Australia	Sydney	1944	346	41.6	13.0	187.1K
Sturrock Dry Dock	South Africa	Cape Town	1945	360	45.1	13.7	222.4K

## Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Details
2 Nov 2016 Wednesday	Inaugural meeting to re-establish an ACT Chapter of the Society.	Time:1730 Legacy House, 33 Geils Court, Deakin
12 Nov 16 Saturday	Military History Society of NSW Presentation  The Sinking of the Corvette HMAS Armidale on 1st December, 1942	Time: 1400 to 1500 Anzac Room, 99 York St Conference and Function Centre, Sydney
17 Nov 16 Thursday	Australian National Maritime Museum Presentation  False Flags (the story of German raider operations around Australia in WWII)	Time:1400-1600. Australian National Maritime Museum 2 Murray Street Sydney, NSW 2000
19 Nov 16 Saturday	Commemoration of the loss of cruiser HMAS Sydney	<b>The City of Greater Geraldton</b> Memorial Service at Geraldton.  <b>The Shire of Carnarvon</b> Memorial Service at Carnarvon.
22 Nov 2016 Tuesday	NHSA AGM	Time: 1100 Combined Services RSL Club, Barrack Street, Sydney
27 Nov 16 Sunday	Naval Association of Australia - Parramatta Memorial Sub-Section  Commemoration of the loss of sloop HMAS Parramatta	A march, a Memorial Service and a luncheon in Parramatta
21 Feb 17 Tuesday	NHSA Presentation  A perspective on Cockatoo Island and ship building.	by John Jeremy, NHSA Vice President and former CEO of Cockatoo Dockyard

## Trivia Corner

1. Which was the first RAN warship to have red kangaroos on the funnel?
2. Which was the first RAN warship to transit the Panama Canal?

The answer to these questions will be provided in next month's newsletter.

## Subscription

Should you become aware of others who wish to receive *Call The Hands* they should be advised to register by e-mailing the Society at [callthehands@navyhistory.org.au](mailto:callthehands@navyhistory.org.au).

For those wishing to unsubscribe, simply e-mail the editor at [callthehands@navyhistory.org.au](mailto:callthehands@navyhistory.org.au)