

CALL THE HANDS



Issue No.22

Aug 2018

From the President

Welcome to this August 2018 edition of *Call the Hands* and accompanying Occasional Papers. I trust you will find them interesting. The occasional paper on HMAS *Voyager* (I) paint schemes is interesting as this subject is not regularly addressed by naval historians. The paper highlights the significant effort expended on the science of camouflage during World War 2. For those with a deeper interest in paint, the additional reading on Royal Navy paint schemes during WW2 demonstrates the passion of ships modelers and others researching a subject for which few primary sources remain.

I am most grateful for readers' feedback, particularly when they have been personally involved in an event. The short article in July on the RAN Helicopter Flight in Vietnam was an example, as was the 1955 date HMA Ships *Arunta* and *Warramunga* were dispatched to Singapore on the first permanent deployment of naval forces in South-East Asia. The latter also highlights the Society's need for more volunteers to maintain contemporary records. History is being created on a daily basis.

We are fortunate to have several volunteers assisting from afar over the internet but we have a current need for new volunteers in our Garden Island office to maintain regular services. To this end we would be pleased to hear from Sydney based readers with time to give (one or two days a week or fortnight). We are flexible. There is a range of important roles to interest you. You don't need to be a historian, just motivated to join a great team. Please see page 15 for more information.

The Society acknowledges the retirement of Vice Admiral Tim Barrett AO, CSC, RAN on 6 July as Chief of Navy and Patron of the Naval Historical Society of Australia. We thank him for his support as patron and wish him well in retirement. As a history enthusiast, we look forward to continuing the relationship. The new Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Michael Noonan AO, RAN has been invited to continue the tradition as Society Patron. Admiral Sir Victor A. T. Smith was our first in 1970. We look forward to a continuing close relationship with Vice Admiral Noonan and his staff.

Congratulations to the Save Motor Launch 1321 team in Darwin on the recovery of MV *Rushcutter*, (HDML 1321) from Darwin Harbour. Regular readers will be aware that this important vessel served with distinction in New Guinea waters during World War 2. [The March 2017 story on HDML 1321](#) by Walter Burroughs is now available on the Society's website.

Finally, a subject of current research interest is HMAS *Toowoomba* in March 1942. A number of defects affecting its operational availability set in place a chain of events we hope to publish in the coming months. Any information available on this matter will greatly assist our researchers.

David Michael
President



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The Great White Fleet down under

On 20 August 1908 110 years ago this month, well over half a million Sydneysiders turned out to watch the arrival of the United States (US) Navy's 'Great White Fleet'. This article, which also covers the fall-out resulting from that visit has been reprinted from the RAN website: navy.gov.au/history/featurehistories. There are also interesting parallels that can be drawn between the geo-political situation in 1908 and the present day.

For a city population of around 600,000 this was no mean achievement. The largest gathering yet seen in Australia, it far exceeded the numbers that had celebrated the foundation of the Commonwealth just seven years before. Indeed, the warm reception accorded the crews of the 16 white painted battleships during 'Fleet Week', was generally regarded as the most overwhelming of any of the ports visited during the 14 month and 45,000 mile global circumnavigation. The NSW Government declared two public holidays, business came to a standstill and the unbroken succession of civic events and all-pervading carnival spirit encountered in Sydney (followed by Melbourne and Albany) severely tested the endurance of the American sailors. More than a few decided to take their chances and stay behind when the fleet sailed!

One man undoubtedly well pleased with the visit's success was Australia's then Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, who had not only initiated the invitation to US President Theodore Roosevelt, but had persisted in the face of resistance from both the British Admiralty and the Foreign Office. By making his initial request directly to American diplomats rather than through imperial authorities Deakin had defied protocol, but he was also taking one of the first steps in asserting Australia's post-colonial independence. His motives for doing so were complex. He was, after all, a strong advocate for the British Empire and Australia's place within it, but he also wished to send a clear message to Whitehall that Australians were unhappy with Britain's apparent strategic neglect.

The security of the nascent Commonwealth might still ultimately depend on the Royal Navy's global reach, but the ships of the small, rarely seen and somewhat obsolescent Imperial Squadron based in Sydney did not inspire confidence. As an officer in the US flagship, observed during the visit: 'These vessels were, with the exception of the *Powerful* [the British flagship], small and unimportant... Among British Officers this is known as the Society Station and by tacit consent little work is done'.

Equally galling to local opinion, the passage of the unpopular Naval Agreement Act, 1903 had meant that although Australia contributed £200,000 per annum for its upkeep, the Squadron could be withdrawn in times of danger to fulfil imperial priorities. To many commentators this simply represented taxation without representation, but for those looking deeper the implications were rather more disturbing. During even a transitory enemy cruiser raid, Australian commerce might face the choice of being driven into harbour or destroyed, while local ports could readily be threatened and held to ransom.



The Great White Fleet arrives at Sydney, 20 August 1908. (US Naval Historical Center)

Feeling both isolated and vulnerable, it was easy for the small Australian population to believe that Britain was ignoring its antipodean responsibilities. The 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance (renewed in 1905), which had allowed the Royal Navy to reduce its Pacific presence, did little to alleviate these fears. Remote from the British Empire's European centre, Australians had no confidence that their interests, and in particular their determination to prevent Asiatic settlement, would be accommodated in imperial foreign policy. Japan's evident desire for territorial expansion, its decisive naval victory over the Russians at Tsushima in 1905, and its natural expectation of equal treatment for its citizens all seemed to reinforce the need for Australia to explore alternative security strategies.

Staunchly Anglophile, Deakin was not necessarily seeking to establish direct defence ties with the United States, but more than a few elements in Australian society were prepared to see in America the obvious replacement for Britain's waning regional power. A new and evidently growing presence in the Pacific, the United States possessed a similar cultural heritage and traditions, and as even Deakin took care to note in his letter of invitation: 'No other Federation in the world possesses so many features [in common with] the United States as does the Commonwealth of Australia' Attitudes towards Asiatics, and more particularly hostility towards Japan, seemed likewise to be shared, particularly after a rise in Japanese immigration to the US West coast sparked riots in California and the passing of discriminatory legislation.

President Roosevelt had initiated the deployment of the US Atlantic Fleet to the Pacific - the first such movement of great battleships - to test his Navy's professionalism, arouse popular interest in and enthusiasm for the navy, and demonstrate that the United States had arrived as a world power. Wanting foreign nations to accept that the fleet should from time to time gather in one ocean just as much as it should in another, Roosevelt claimed publicly that the cruise was not directed against Japanese interests. Nevertheless, for most Australians the visit became an unmistakable expression of Anglo-Saxon solidarity; an 'essentially peaceful' mission, but simultaneously 'an armed assertion that the White Race will not surrender its supremacy on any of the world's seas'. Unsurprisingly, the epithet 'Great White Fleet' only came into popular usage during the visit to Australia, and referred as much to race as it did to paint schemes. No British battleship, let alone a modern fleet, had ever entered Australasian waters. So, with the arrival of the American vessels locals were treated to the greatest display of sea power they had even seen. While the public admired the spectacle's grandeur, for those interested in defence and naval affairs it was an inspiration. This too was a part of Deakin's plan, for although he was a firm believer in Australia's maritime destiny, where defence was concerned national priorities still tended towards the completion of land rather than maritime protection. The Prime Minister's own scheme for an effective local navy was making slow progress, and like Roosevelt he recognised the need to rouse popular support.

In this, the visit of the Great White Fleet played a crucial role, for it necessarily brought broader issues of naval defence to the fore, and made very plain the links between sea power and national development. Americans clearly had a real sense of patriotism and national mission. Having been tested and hardened in a long and bitter civil war they were confident that the United States was predestined to play a great part in the world. Australians, on the other hand, still saw Federation as a novelty and their first allegiance as state-based. One English traveller captured well the prevailing mood. 'Australia', he wrote, 'presents a paradox. There is a breezy buoyant Imperial spirit. But the national spirit, as it is understood elsewhere, is practically non-existent'.



US Navy bluejackets coming ashore at Melbourne, 29 August 1908. (US Naval Historical Center)

Aiming to foster both national unity and spirit, Deakin (a Victorian not overly popular in Sydney) used the Great White Fleet's visit to demonstrate the community of feeling between the two nations as well as provide context for his own vision for a recognisably 'Australian' navy, one which he felt must be capable of announcing the nation's entry as a credible player on the world stage:

'But for the British Navy there would be no Australia. That does not mean that Australia should sit under the shelter of the British Navy - those who say we should sit still are not worthy of the name Briton. We can add to the Squadron in these seas from our own blood and intelligence something that will launch us on the beginning of a naval career, and may in time create a force which shall rank amongst the defences of the Empire.'

Deakin's party lost power before his plan could be set fully in motion, but he had laid the groundwork and established many of the essential elements. Most importantly, he had obtained Admiralty agreement to allowing full interchange of personnel between the British and Australian naval services. Without such unfettered access to technology and doctrine a local fleet would most likely become a wartime liability; with it the Australian Navy would achieve major economies in infrastructure and training.

In February 1909 the new Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher, placed orders in Britain for three 700 ton destroyers, the first of up to 24 similar vessels which would allow Australia to take responsibility for its own coastal defence. The unsettled nature of local politics always made the completion of this plan unlikely, but in the event it was overtaken by a far more daring scheme. In July, the British First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir John Fisher, proposed that Australia acquire a 'Fleet Unit'. Comprising a battlecruiser, several supporting light cruisers, and a local defence flotilla of destroyers and submarines, the 'Fleet Unit' represented an ideal force structure; small enough to be manageable by Australia in times of peace, but in war capable of efficient action with the imperial fleet. Moreover, alone it would be strong enough to deter all but the most determined adversary in local waters.

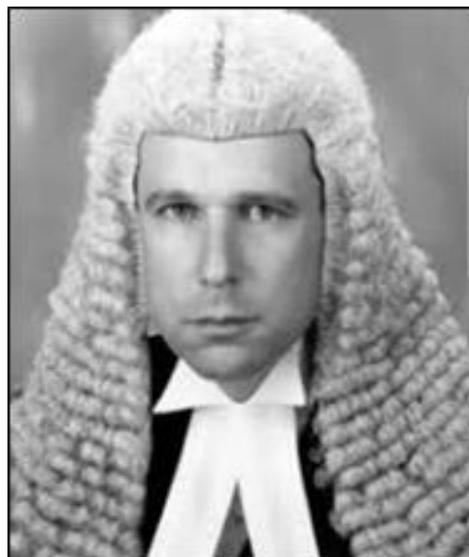
The Director of Commonwealth Naval Forces, Captain William Creswell, had argued for years that the nation's 'sea efficiency' was 'the first and most urgent call upon responsible authority'. Australia now stood poised both to accept this responsibility and to take an active part in the collective security of the Empire. 'In my judgement', Defence Minister Joseph Cook argued before the House, 'we are in these proposals, beginning, almost for the first time, to realise the promise of Federation...we shall turn over a new leaf in the book of our evolution. Our tutelary stages are past, our time of maturity is here'.

Parliament accepted the proposals and great efforts were thereafter expended to ensure that the navy would be a thoroughly and recognisably Australian force. On 4 October 1913 the first flagship, the battlecruiser HMAS *Australia* (I), and her escorts sailed into Sydney Harbour to a welcome no less enthusiastic than that accorded the Great White Fleet five years before. Just ten months later the fleet set out to face the harsh test of a brutal global war and its professionalism was not found wanting. For a newly acquired navy it was a remarkable achievement, and one which owed much to Deakin's foresight.

Sir Laurence Street AC, KCMG, KSTJ, QC

Laurence Street, born on 3rd July 1926, lied about his age in order to join the RANR as an Ordinary Seaman when only 17. He was promoted Midshipman (1944-45), Sub-Lieutenant (1945-47) and served overseas as a seaman officer in an Australian corvette attached to the British Pacific Fleet in the latter stages of World War II. He left the Navy in 1947 and studied law as had both his father and grandfather before him. Admitted to the NSW Bar on 9 February 1951, LW Street established a large practice, particularly in equity, commercial law and admiralty.

His next involvement with the Navy came in the aftermath of the collision between HMAS *Melbourne* and HMAS *Voyager* off Jervis Bay on 10 February 1964. Navy was well experienced in the administration of summary justice in the ordinary course of events, but the Royal Commission into the collision exposed deficiencies in the provision of legal advice at the higher levels of command. Vice Admiral Sir Hastings Harrington, RAN, then Chief of Naval Staff, summoned Sub Lieutenant L.W. Street, QC, RANVR (Rtd) to see him. Street emerged from this meeting as a Commander (Special Branch) RANVR, with the designation of Senior Officer Naval Reserve Legal Branch. His initial task was to establish three Legal Panels formed predominantly from RANR officers and some retired Naval personnel. A close relationship was quickly established between the Reserve Legal Branches of the three Services. Apart from other benefits, this was of value in pursuing the unifying philosophy which culminated in the Defence Force Discipline Act of 1982.



It was envisaged from the outset that Officers from the Reserve Legal Branch would be available to appear in Courts Martial and other Inquiries and proceedings involving the Navy, that they would be available to provide general advice to the Navy as well as to individual Naval personnel. Indeed, the Branch grew to become a source of advice, both at sea and ashore, on the international law complexities of peace time and wartime Naval operations. Multinational involvement in the seas to the North of Australia was seen to have particular importance in that regard. CMDR Street retired from his position as Senior Officer of the Branch on his appointment to the NSW Supreme Court Bench in October 1965

Meanwhile his legal career continued to prosper; he was appointed Chief Justice of NSW on 28 June 1974, and shortly afterwards became Lieutenant-Governor. Indeed, three generations of the Street family have occupied the positions of Chief Justice and Lieutenant Governor of NSW during the 20th century. His service was rewarded with the appointments of AC, KCMG and K St J, before retirement on 1 November 1988.

Sir Laurence Street died on the night of 21 June 2018 and was honoured with a state funeral at the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall on 5th July. Amongst the eulogies, the Prime Minister had this to say: "As Prime Minister, I offer the thanks of the Government and our nation for the life of Laurence Street; a life of service to Australia, beginning as a young man in the Royal Australian Navy in wartime and for so many years in the law, most indelibly as Chief Justice of this state.



As a barrister he was as eloquent as he was erudite, as formidable as he was fashionable. Laurence had movie star good looks, coupled with a charisma, charm and intellect, a humility, a humanity that swept all before him. His lineage as the third of his line to be Chief Justice did not appear to burden him. He wasn't lofty or snobbish. His nickname Lorenzo the Magnificent was well earned."

Navy helps Bofors gun find a new home

A 40/60 Bofors gun has found a new home at the Aviation Heritage Museum after a combined effort from Navy, the Aviation Heritage Museum and the Western Australian Museum to prepare the gun for display.

The gun was donated to the WA Museum some years ago and was held in the museums collectible storage facility. The Aviation Heritage Museum made a request of the Western Australian Museum to display the gun however, the gun whilst being inoperable required some work to bring it up to standard for display purposes. Navy was contacted by the Western Australian Museum and work commenced on the gun at Fleet Support Unit West.

It is likely that the gun saw its final days on a Fremantle class patrol boat after beginning life in 1955.

The Bofors gun was once common across the Fleet and provided outstanding service to the RAN. It was a very simple weapon to operate and was easy to maintain. The 40/60 Bofors gun began service within the RAN in 1945 with the last three 40/60 Bofors guns firing for the final time at West Head Gunnery Range at HMAS *Cerberus* on 19 July 2007.



Facilities Manager Fleet Support Unit-West, Petty Officer Marine Technician Submarines Jamie Saunders, kneels beside the restored Bofors 40/60 gun at the Aviation Heritage Museum in Bull Creek, Western Australia.

With a breech capacity of eight rounds and taking four round clips, the gun could achieve a rate of fire of 120 rounds per minute and a range of 5000 yards. Ammunition retained a contact fuse and a tracer making it easy to aim.

At one stage nearly all RAN ships carried some form of Bofors 40mm gun. The Battle Class Destroyers HMAS *Anzac* (II) and HMAS *Tobruk* (I) retained up to 12 Bofors guns, while the early River Class Destroyer Escorts originally fitted a twin mounting in lieu of the Seacat Missile System.

Daring Class Destroyers HMAS *Vampire* (II), HMAS *Vendetta* (II) and HMAS *Voyager* (II) mounted two twin and two single 40/60 Bofors guns. The carriers HMAS *Sydney* (III), HMAS *Vengeance* (I) and HMAS *Melbourne* (II) mounted up to eight single and eight twin guns, which included a twin gun being mounted forward of the island on the flight deck. Fremantle Class patrol boats were the last in the RAN fleet to mount the Bofors.



HMAS Bataan Bofors mounting AWM image

Article from Navy News June 2018

HMAS *Quickmatch* – Medical Rescue – 1944

Author: Max Hayles

On September 30th 1944, HMAS *Quickmatch* was emergency destroyer in Trincomalee harbour, Ceylon moored at buoy D13. Steam for full speed was at thirty minutes' notice. Near midnight, a signal was received to put to sea to rendezvous with HMS *Statesman*, an 'S' Class submarine, to take off their First Lieutenant who had been taken ill with severe appendicitis. The sub was said to be approximately 150 nautical miles North of the Nicobars, in the Bay of Bengal.



As a signalman, my next watch on the bridge was the Middle Watch, but I was woken at 2300 for sea duty, and took position on forecastle with Aldis lamp for slipping the cable from the buoy. We proceeded to sea at 0015 at 25 knots, and later increased to 29 knots. After 30 hours steaming, the submarine was not in the rendezvous position, according to our Navigator. We searched around at 15 knots, but the submarine found us first and fired a red flare at 0510, Oct 2nd, 30 degrees on starboard bow. The required challenge was made and *Statesman* made the correct reply.

All hands were on deck, the forward port whaler was manned. It included myself with the obligatory pair of semaphore hand flags and an Aldis lamp complete with heavy battery on leather strap around my neck. Due to the heavy swell running, the Captain slewed *Quickmatch* around to create a slick, and released some oil, whilst the whaler was lowered to the waterline. The coxswain waited until the crest of a wave swept under us and yelled to two seamen to slip to falls. Unfortunately, only one slip opened and we found ourselves hanging at about 45 degrees until the next swell swept through and then we were away. Meanwhile *Statesman* had surfaced and was wallowing heavily in the swell. By the time the seamen had sorted themselves out, positioned their oars, and started rowing, the whaler had been swept some distance away from the submarine, and the going was pretty tough. I had positioned myself on the deck in the bow, sitting in about a foot of water.



HMS Statesman

Then we were alongside the submarine, where several of its crew were on deck including the First Lieutenant who was firmly encased in a stretcher. The big problem was that with the submarine's bulbous sides, we could not really get alongside. Time and again we were carried up on a swell, only to collide heavily with the bulge and slither sideways back into an angry swell. Our seamen struggled to gain control by fending off, with oars flailing everywhere. In trying to help I was struck heavily in the back by the butt end of an oar. At one stage, the handle end of an oar became firmly jammed in one of the submarine's flooding slots and had to be dodged by the crew until it could be recovered. With the whaler rising and falling several feet, sometimes the oar would crash into the boat, or be overhead of the crew.

Attempts to keep alongside were impossible, and there was a risk of the whaler being destroyed, so it was decided that the only way to get the sick man on board was to throw him broadside on into the whaler. Two of our biggest and strongest seamen stood up in the boat, whilst two others tried to hold on to them. On the count of three, the First Lieutenant was thrown bodily, caught successfully, and laid across two thwarts. His case of personal effects was thrown to me, which I caught. We threw a bag of bread to the submarine's crew, and then we were away. We all returned to the ship soaking wet. The boat was hoisted aboard and after a change of clothes, we resumed our watch duties. *Quickmatch* turned into the wind at 11 knots to make things as smooth as possible and the First Lieutenant was operated on immediately. When it was all over, we turned for Trincomalee at 22 knots, and arrived at 0630 next day. Our patient was OK, but we missed a trip to Aden as escort to the battleship, HMS *Valiant*.

Max Hayles; HMAS *Quickmatch* – Medical Rescue – 1944; published [Naval Historical Review June 2007](#)

NAVAL VETERAN TO RETIRE AFTER

Master at Arms Stanley Williamson, who has served on "practically every ship in Australia" will retire this week after 35 years in the R.A.N.

Awarded the long service good conduct medal in 1943 and a bar to it in 1958, Master Williamson received the British Empire Medal in 1951 for long and meritorious conduct.

Discussing his retirement, yesterday, Master Williamson said he had only two regrets. One was that he had reached retiring age. "My other regret is that my retirement means that I will no longer be able to be Father Christmas at the parties held for children at the various depots in Sydney and Canberra," he said.

"I've been Father Christmas for 9 years."

On Monday afternoon, at a

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farewell party, members of the Chief and Petty Officers' Mess reversed the role of Father Christmas and presented Master Williamson with an electric jug. During the party, Master Williamson gave his Father Christmas costume and beard to his successor, Master At Arms L. Dalton.

Highlights of Master Williamson's naval career include being aboard the cruiser "Sydney" when it took part in the historic battle with the Italian cruiser Bartolomeo Colleoni, which it sank.

Another was the occasion when he was chosen as one of the 36 members of the naval contingent to attend the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth.

His naval life began in 1925, when he joined the boys' training ship, H.M.A.S. Tingira, under Commander

Garcia. In 1926 he joined the cruiser, H.M.A.S. Brisbane and then transferred to H.M.A.S. Melbourne.

He served on the "Sydney" from 1935 to April, 1941, leaving four months before it was sunk. During the war, he also served on H.M.A.S. Australia, H.M.A.S. Moresby, H.M.A.S. Bungaree and H.M.A.S. Kanimbla.

Since the war, he has served in shore depots in New Guinea, Darwin, Brisbane, Sydney and Harman.

Photo of the Month:



HMAS Otama, Port Kembla 1982

News in Brief

A first

HMAS Parramatta recently became the first Australian Anzac-class frigate to receive new A bracket¹ bearings while still afloat. The one-of-a-kind operation was carried out to avoid impacting the ship's mast upgrade schedule. Worn bearings usually means the ship must be dry-docked for the replacement to take place.

Navy Clearance Divers commenced work on the task by removing the covers from Parramatta's hull. A video link between the divers and the surface allowed site engineers to monitor and supervise the work. Following that, preliminary work to prepare for the replacement of the bearings was undertaken, and the actual removal and replacement was carried out a few days later.



Garden Island: Critical Infrastructure: Improvements

The Australian Department of Defence and the Indigenous Affairs Ministry have launched the new Bayinguwa Delivery Team joint venture (JV) between Pacific Services Group Holdings (PSG Holdings) and Lendlease Engineering. The JV has been launched to carry out the A\$213m (\$157.15m) Bayinguwa critical wharf works project at the Garden Island Defence Precinct, the Royal Australian Naval Base in Sydney. The Garden Island Bayinguwa Delivery Team will be responsible for managing the demolition of two deteriorated wharves² and constructing a single new wharf in their place. The Bayinguwa wharf project is expected to begin in September and expected to be completed in February 2022.

Rimpac Divers

Royal Australian Navy Clearance Divers have been afforded the opportunity to see the USS Arizona from a perspective few people in the world would get to experience. As part of integration activities being conducted on the island of Oahu, Hawaii, during RIMPAC, Australian divers visited the wreck of USS *Arizona* with the US National Parks Service and Royal Canadian Navy.

Lieutenant Commander Post, who dived the wreck, said the team was allowed to shine torches through open portholes in the hull in order to inspect for degradation. "It was an eerie feeling, knowing that the last people who moved inside the ship were probably close to our age more than 75 years ago. "Looking through the porthole, I could see ladder bays and bulkheads, and I guess just behind that the grave-site of any number of US servicemen." The Australian Clearance Diving contingent at RIMPAC is a mix of Clearance Divers from both east and west coasts of Australia, posted to Navy's Mine Clearance Diving Squadron and Australian Clearance Diving Team Four.



¹ An 'A' bracket, so named for its shape, supports the propeller shaft between the propeller and hull (stern tube)

² The deteriorated wharves to be replaced are the North and South Cruiser wharves and Oil Wharf.

This Month in History

August 1869	Fort Denison in Port Jackson, Sydney, was garrisoned by the NSW Naval Brigade.
August 1900	HMCS PROTECTOR, (CAPT W. R. Creswell, RN), sailed from Adelaide to China, to participate in quelling the Boxer Rebellion.
August 1903	The first Marines Corps formed in Australia were the New South Wales Marine Light Infantry, recruited as the Third Contingent to join New South Wales' volunteers in South Africa. The unit sailed in the transport SALAMIS for China.
August 1908	The American 'Great White Fleet', 16 warships plus auxiliaries, under the command of ADML Charles Sperry, USN, arrived in Sydney, and remained there until 27 August, when they sailed for Melbourne. The Prime Minister Alfred Deakin deliberately breached protocol by bypassing British authorities and despatching a timely invitation direct to Washington. It worked as intended, a direct challenge to Britain that there were alternatives to Australia in forming it's own navy, outside a British alliance.
August 1914	The message conveying the news of the outbreak of war with Germany was received in Australia at 12.30pm. The disposition of ships of the RAN, at the declaration of WWI, was: HMAS AUSTRALIA (battle-cruiser), steaming north from Sydney; HMAS MELBOURNE (cruiser), steaming south from Sydney; HMA Ships SYDNEY (cruiser), WARREGO and YARRA near Thursday Island; HMAS PARRAMATTA (destroyer), nearing Townsville; HMAS PROTECTOR on passage from Melbourne to Sydney; HMAS ENCOUNTER and submarines AE1 and AE2 at Sydney; HMAS PIONEER at Port Phillip, VIC; HMAS GAYUNDAH on passage from Sydney to Brisbane.
August 1918	HMA Ships HUON and YARRA, (torpedo boat destroyers), collided in the Adriatic. HUON was severely damaged, and was withdrawn from further war service.
August 1934	A Seagull amphibious aircraft from HMAS AUSTRALIA, (cruiser), blown from its cradle and wrecked, in a gale in the Great Australian Bight.
August 1940	At the request of the army HMAS HOBART, (cruiser), sent ashore 3 volunteers in Somaliland to man a 3-pounder Hotchkiss saluting gun. The sailors were PO H. Jones, AB H. C. Sweeney, and AB W. J. Hurren. The gun was in position at Tug Argan Gap. In a losing struggle they were taken prisoner, unharmed, and later resurfaced in April 1941 when the British captured Massawa. All three were later awarded MID.
August 1943	HMAS HOBART, (cruiser), underwent temporary repairs at Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides after being torpedoed by a Japanese submarine. Four of HOBART'S officers, and nine other ranks, were killed.
August 1950	HMAS AUSTRALIA, (cruiser), made a high speed dash in severe winter weather to Heard Island, to rescue a gravely ill scientist.
August 1951	HMAS BATAAN, (Battle class destroyer), fought a gun duel with enemy batteries on the west coast of Korea.
August 1955	LEUT J. R. Bluett and LEUT P. McNay, (of 805 Squadron, RAN Fleet Air Arm), shot down a pilotless Auster aircraft, three miles to seaward off Sydney. The aircraft took off without its pilot from Bankstown Airfield, and flew over Sydney for two hours. Bluett and McNay, flying Sea Furies, fired a burst each into the Auster, which crashed in flames into the sea.
August 1964	USN nuclear-powered ships ENTERPRISE, LONGBEACH, and BAINBRIDGE, visited Australia.
August 1967	HMAS OXLEY, (Oberon class submarine), the first of eight to be built in Greenock, Scotland for the RAN, arrived in Brisbane.
August 1967	Four members of Clearance Diving Team 3 participated in an unsuccessful assault on strong enemy positions on the banks of a channel near Nui Truong Phi, Vietnam. The force was carried in five motorised junks escorted by patrol boats. As it neared the landing place it came under intense enemy fire. The divers blew up two US patrol boats previously captured by the Viet Cong, before the force was withdrawn. AB D. C. Trompp was wounded in the action and became the first RAN casualty in the Vietnam War.
August 1976	First Officer J. Baker, WRANS, became the first officer of the WRANS to be selected for the Royal Naval Staff College course at Greenwich, England.
August 1982	The Government of the United Kingdom was advised that no further action would be taken on the potential purchase, for the RAN, of HMS INVINCIBLE, (aircraft carrier).
August 1992	HMAS DARWIN, (guided missile frigate), arrived on station in the Arabian Gulf for her 115 day deployment. In this patrol she was to board 296 merchant ships passing through her Patrol area.
August 1994	The landing platform amphibious HMAS KANIMBLA, was commissioned. KANIMBLA was previously the USS SAGINAW (THSS), which had been commissioned into the USN in 1971.
August 2004	15 sailors from HMNZS ENDEAVOUR, (tanker), were injured during a life boat drill that went awry, while the ship was berthed at Fleet Base East, Sydney. During a regular test of the lifeboats, one of the boats accidentally plunged 10 metres into the harbour. Personnel from HMA Ships MANOORA, (landing platform amphibious), and SYDNEY, (guided missile frigate), were involved in the rescue of the New Zealand sailors, and two were later transferred to Balmoral Naval Hospital for further treatment.

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/>

Readers Forum

Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam Honoured

Thanks to the several readers who clarified the reading reference provided with this story in the July edition of CTH. There are two books on the subject as follows;

- "A Bloody Job Well Done: The History of the Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam 1967-1971." edited by Commander Max Speedy DSC RAN Retd and Captain Bob Ray MBE RAN Retd and published by Canprint in 2008.
- "Get the Bloody Job Done: The Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight-Vietnam and the 135th Assault Helicopter Company 1967-1971." Written by Steve Eather and published by Allen & Unwin in 1998.

The Navy website also provides a short history of the [RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam](#)

Thanks to Steve Youll also for pointing out that the image caption is more correctly "RAN Iroquois Helicopter Crews and Army Personnel Training in Australia prior to Deploying to Vietnam." Personnel undertaking pre-deployment training did so at Beecroft Head, Holsworthy Army base and Tianjara, West of Nowra. The photograph used is most likely to have been taken at Holsworthy.

Cockatoo Island 1856-57



"Mrs Allan Macpherson, 'Cockatoo Island: Scenes in New South Wales' (1856-7), Mitchell Library,, State Library of New South Wales, PXA 3819."

Thanks to Michael Owen in the Northern Territory for providing this image of Cockatoo Island.

Michael also noted, 'in one of the Society's publications an [image of HMS Pelorus](#) on Sydney Harbour – she was wrecked in Port Essington and resurrected in a remarkable feat of naval ingenuity that was documented by Owen Stanley of the *Britomart* which was a full sister to the *Beagle*. I'm putting together a page to commemorate Admiral PP King's 200th anniversary of the discovery of Port Essington in 1818 & the *Pelorus* gets a good mention - <http://www.pastmasters.net/victoria-settlement.html> - you can't keep a good ship down.'

This Day in History: May not July 1955

From Peter Poland

Dear Editor,

I have to dispute the entry that says HMAS *Arunta* and HMAS *Warramunga* were despatched to Singapore in July 1955. Year yes month no.

How do I know? I was the Navigating Officer of *Warramunga* and I was on the bridge at 1730 on Monday, 23 May as we passed Cape York on our way to Singapore to be part of the Far East Strategic Reserve. Why do I know the time so precisely? Because in 1987 I looked at *Warramunga's* log book for May in the War Memorial's archives. And why did I do that? Because in 1968, on a visit to England, I saw a family scrap book which had an article about the British India Steam Navigating Ship *Quetta* striking *Quetta Rock*, a submerged pinnacle of rock off Cape York in February 1890, slicing its hull open and sinking in about four minutes. I remembered plotting the track up through the Barrier Reef and reading about *Quetta Rock*, named after the ship, in the Pilot and seeing the wreck site marked on the chart but why was it here in the family scrap book? It turned out that my great-uncle, Dr Harry Poland, was the ship's doctor, and some of the ship's crew who were rescuing survivors, found his body floating - he was a large man - and buried him on nearby tiny *Aconieh Island*. This was the first I knew about him coming to Australia. Further research told me that members of my family in England sent money to Thursday Island and a fine headstone made in Deptford so that he could be disinterred and reburied on Thursday Island where his headstone stands today, the only known grave of the 134 people who were drowned. I have visited all these places and there is much more to this story which was published in *AFLOAT* March 2005 with the title 'Looking for great uncle's grave'. It should have been 'graves' as he did have a third one!

It is not really naval history but if you would like to publish it that would be OK by me.

By Editor: The Society's entries for 'This Day in History' are based on the book "Navy Day by Day: Historic Naval Events in Australia and Abroad" written by the late Lew Lind.

Occasional Papers with this Edition

Included with this edition of *Call the Hands* are the following occasional papers;

- Occasional Paper 32; HMAS *Voyager* (I) or What's in a Coat of Paint
Deals with the many paint schemes applied to *Voyager* during its short life.
- Occasional Paper 33 HMAS *Cerberus* – Early History and Observations
Includes quotes by many eminent persons about *Cerberus* and its location

Occasional Papers and past editions of *Call the Hands* are available on the [Society's website 'research' page](#) along with more than 1200 other stories.

Society Matters

Society Library

The Society maintains an extensive research library of naval books and other publications which are available to members and volunteers conducting research and writing for the Society. It also facilitates responses to numerous requests for information from the public. Members have access by prior arrangement with the Society.

Phone: 02 93592372, E-mail: Secretary@navalhistory.org.au

Naval Historical Review

Become a member to receive quarterly copies of the Naval Historical Review the Society's flagship magazine. <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/membership/>

Tours of Garden Island, Sydney

Tours of Garden Island provided by Society volunteers on Thursdays are very popular with organized groups and retired naval personnel and their families. Tours of 1.5 to 2 hours which take in historic sites and buildings in the Dockyard including the Captain Cook Graving Dock are preceded by an introductory video in the Boatshed, Garden Island. Groups and individuals generally arrive by ferry from Circular Quay but arrangements can also be made for groups arriving by coach. The cost is \$20 per person. Should you be interested in booking a tour start by visiting the website, calling or e-mailing the Tour Coordinators.

Phone: (02) 9359 2243) Thursdays only

E-Mail: tours@navyhistory.org.au

Website: <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/garden-island-tours/>

Call The Hands 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. Current subscribers can unsubscribe by emailing the same email address.

Volunteer with the Society in Sydney

The Naval Historical Society is seeking volunteers for duties at the central office at The Boatshed, Garden Island. An assistant Research Officer has recently resigned at 94 years of age, and five other regular attendees are over eighty years of age. New faces are required to gradually become involved in the many responsibilities such as research, including the day to day requests for information, filing and maintenance of records, managing office input to the website, assisting in IT support, developing new projects, sales and marketing, maintaining records, setting up digital imagery, collecting and writing articles for publication, and many more interesting and varying aspects of the work of the Society.

The Society ideally needs Sydney based self-starters who have basic IT skills, and are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays on a fairly regular basis. The facilities are comfortable, and the workplace within a very friendly and interesting dockyard and naval environment.

Anyone who is interested is requested to contact the President, David Michael, or the Secretary, David Blazey, phone 02 9359 2243/2372 or email secretary@navyhistory.org.au.