

CALL THE HANDS

Issue No.23

September 2018

From the President

Welcome to this September 2018 edition of *Call the Hands* and accompanying Occasional Papers. I trust you find them interesting. As regularly happens, many stories published are inspired by feedback from readers or research queries received by the Society. We greatly value this Interaction.

Occasional Paper 34 is about the Paddle Steamer Weeroona which was the last of the Port Phillip Bay paddle steamers. She was built in 1910 to service the resorts of Port Phillip. Large, spacious and licensed to carry 1900 passengers she suited the needs of the US Navy which acquired her in 1942 for use in the Pacific Ocean.

Occasional paper 35 this month incorporates two personal accounts by survivors of the sinking of HMAS Parramatta (II) off Tobruk on 27 November 1941. One is a shipmate's letter to the mother of Ordinary Seaman Lyall J. Smith who was lost when the ship sank. The second by Able Seaman F.W. Tysoe is an account of his experience following the sinking.

I thank the Ipswich and West Moreton sub section of the Naval Association for their report on a visit to Maryborough. Their report highlighted the importance of Walkers Limited located in Maryborough as an internationally recognized, heavy engineering company of great importance in Australian naval history.

I also thank the several people who responded to our call for more volunteers to assist the Society in Sydney. Their services will make a huge difference and relieve pressure on existing volunteers. As always, more are still needed.

Looking to the future, Society researchers and writers are conscious to focus more closely on recent history and technological developments which will impact navies in the future. One such subject is that of unmanned vessels or 'autonomous ships', meaning those with a high level of automation and self-governance in their operation obviating the need for direct human intervention, are now being tried and tested, in commercial and military applications.

These vessels are likely to be an attractive option for fleet managers as new technology further reduces manpower and associated costs. Autonomous ships may well herald the next maritime revolution with as great an impact as the move to containerization of cargoes. Naval applications are already evident in the fields of surveillance, hydrographic surveys and mine countermeasures, with potential for a growing number of further initiatives.

As it is our intention to explore this subject further and stimulate community interest, possibly through an essay competition we would welcome your initial thoughts on the practical application of autonomous vessels in a naval environment and associated challenges.

David Michael
President



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Personal stories bring WW1 100 days of victory back to life

The stories of those who made the ultimate sacrifice to deliver victory in the closing days of World War 1 are being brought back to life for the centenary. Commonwealth forces lost 120,000 men and women during the '100 days to victory' on land, in the skies and at sea.

Historians at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) have picked 120 accounts, stories and biographies – one for every 1,000 dead during the period – to represent the breadth and depth of the sacrifice and suffering during the run up to the Armistice

The Royal Navy lost men daily – on the Western Front with the Royal Naval Division of sailor-soldiers and Royal Marines – and its more natural environment at sea; some 32 Naval Service personnel died on the very last day of the war alone, November 11 1918.

Most of the dead are remembered in Commonwealth War Graves cemeteries and memorials and for the centenary of the war's end, the commission wants them to be more than mere names carved in stone – hence its historians have plundered the archives for what it calls the 'Road to Peace' initiative.

'We hope it will help humanise this period of history and inspire people to visit both well-known and off-the-beaten-track commission cemeteries and memorials where these men and women are remembered' Max Dutton, Commonwealth War Graves Commission historian.

Among the lesser-known naval stories to be published by the commission is the fate of Josephine Carr – the first Wren to die as a result of enemy action. She drowned when the liner RMS *Leinster* was torpedoed off Dublin on 10 October 1918. With Germany negotiating for peace at the time, the sinking drew international condemnation on a par with the loss of the *Lusitania*.

The Road to Peace stories will be shared across the CWGC's digital channels on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, with one story appearing daily and a more in-depth feature weekly.

The initiative ends on 11 November 2018 with accounts featuring 11 people killed on the war's last day.

To read the accounts, follow CWGC at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuyv7WCJv_NYL04eKG3oyVA

<https://www.facebook.com/commonwealthwargravescommission>

By Dawn's Early Light

By Commander John van Gelder, RAN (Rtd)

It is doubtful if there is anything in the world more complex than the human mind. In our passage through life we are all subjected to experiences which have an impact on our lives, and indeed, may have a profound influence on our future courses of action. I do not think it is unique that certain events which have had a strong impression on our minds can recur in our thoughts at reasonably frequent intervals.

Not long ago a nephew of mine, whom I had not seen for some years, said to me quite unexpectedly '*What were your most exciting moments whilst you were flying in the Navy?*' The question took me aback and I think I mumbled something about it all being exciting.

Reflecting on the question later I knew exactly how I should have answered. In the Fleet Air Arm there would not be any pilot who could say that they had not experienced some hairy moments and brief periods of high drama whilst flying. But human nature being what it is these moments are generally relegated to the back of the mind as unpleasant thoughts. Well, hopefully anyway, and my answer to the question is not related to any frightening or dangerous event.

I am not sure I have the literary skill to answer the question adequately. However, the event which has had a profound effect on me and the vision of which comes to my mind so frequently occurred many years ago in 1955. At the time I was a pilot of 817 Squadron RAN, equipped with Fairey Firefly aircraft embarked in HMAS Sydney.



Fairey Firefly AS Mk 6, 817 Squadron RAN. Probably in February 1955 aboard the aircraft carrier HMAS Sydney. The aircraft is taxiing to the catapult prior to launch for rocket projectile firing. The aircraft is armed with four rocket projectiles with 60lb concrete heads. (Pilot and photo: John van Gelder)

On 12th March 1955 I was programmed for an early take off. Incidentally, a pilot's Flying Log Book is a wondrous thing. Do you know what you were doing at a precise time nearly fifty years ago?

From memory on the morning of the 12th the ship was in a position some twenty or thirty miles east of Twofold Bay off the south coast of New South Wales. Having had an early breakfast followed by the usual pre-flight briefing my observer, Joe Tidey, and I emerged from the island onto the flight deck. The vision that greeted us could not be described as a pretty sight. Although not pitch black it was very dark, with a complete overcast of deep stratus cloud with a cloud base of perhaps 1200 feet.

After external pre-flight checks we manned our Firefly, serial No. WB 507, Squadron side No. 202, started the engine, carried out the usual engine and system checks and were directed from the deck park to the catapult. It was from the time of arrival on the catapult that the vision of the scene becomes so vivid in my memory. Once an aircraft arrives on the catapult, various actions both outside and inside the aircraft happen very quickly indeed. A wire stop is attached to two hooks on the fuselage of the aircraft and engaged with the catapult shuttle whilst a tang on the aircraft at the rear of the fuselage below the rudder is attached to the hold back stop and secured with a steel shear ring. Meanwhile inside the cockpit constant checks are made on the aircraft systems, particularly engine temperatures and pressures, propeller pitch setting, trim settings, locking the tailwheel, and lowering the flaps to take off position. All these actions take place in a period of perhaps thirty seconds.

It was during this short time period that the visual scene and probably the emotional atmosphere had such a marked impact on my memory. My Log Book records the take off time as 0550. As I raised my head from looking at the red glow of the instruments inside the cockpit my vision automatically adjusted itself to distant vision as I looked through the forward windscreen. It was still quite dark due to the almost complete cloud cover but on the distant horizon to the east the cloud bank had broken to reveal a thin sliver of light. At least it would not be an instrument take off. The ship was on a roughly easterly heading with about ten knots of wind and a long low swell giving a slow but noticeable pitching motion.

As I looked ahead the sea appeared almost black for some miles but lightening and turning to a dull silver nearer the horizon and that small gap between sea and cloud. The cloud bank itself was uniformly dark slate grey except a tinge of light closer to the horizon. The colour of the cloud blended beautifully with what little I could notice of the sea surface and certainly matched the drab grey of the carrier's flight deck. Much closer to me was the centrepiece of the whole scene. Directly in front of me was a V12 Rolls Royce Griffon 74 engine of about 2250 horsepower. Illumination for the scene was provided by six exhaust stubs on either side of the engine cowling. The flames from the stubs varied from an ice blue surrounded with a tinge of red until dissipating into a light glow. The overall effect was enhanced by the subdued reflection of the aircraft's navigation lights and the torch wands of the flight deck personnel, with the result that the propeller seemed to be bathed in an aurora of light.



Fairey Firefly AS Mk 6 of 723 Squadron HMAS Albatross (Photo: John van Gelder)

One could describe the scene as 'magic'. I doubt that this thought occurred to me at the time! With final cockpit checks made in accordance with the check list board held up by the Flight Deck Officer – 'Throttle Friction', 'Take Off Flap' etc, it was time to go to take off power. As the FDO wound you up with his green wand the throttle was advanced to take-off power; a final internal check of engine revs (2,750 RPM), oil and boost pressures OK, left hand clenched behind the throttle, a thumbs up to the FDO, head back against the headrest, right hand behind the control column.

Down goes the green wand, a 4G kick from the catapult and in the blink of an eye one is airborne at 100 knots or so over the bow of the ship. Undercarriage up, flaps up in stages, reduce to climbing power and climb away at 125 knots to operating height, which in this case was about 1000 feet. The purpose of the flight was to search for a yacht apparently missing off the south coast. I do not recall whether we located the missing yacht but we did return to HMAS *Sydney* and landed on at 0750. It must have been a busy day as we were airborne again at 0945 for an Army Cooperation exercise.

Some impressions in life stay with us forever and as I have said previously it may have been a long time ago but the memories are still vivid.

Author Commander John van Gelder, RAN (Rtd) – published in Naval Historical Review June 2004

Nursing Memories of HMAS Penguin

By Christina Heath

Christina Heath (nee King) served in the RAN Nursing Service first in a permanent role and later on a part-time basis in a reserve capacity for over 30 years. She therefore provides a unique insight, especially to Balmoral Naval Hospital at HMAS Penguin from its peak capacity through to its closure.

For serving personnel, HMAS *Penguin* was the 'jewel' of the RAN crown. One of five Sydney Harbour foreshore naval bases, she is perched high on Middle Head overlooking Hunter's Bay and the sparkling waters of Middle Head and Balmoral Beach. With accommodation overlooking yachts, easy access to Balmoral Beach, national parkland and the bright lights of Mosman and Sydney city, it is the epitome of the dreams of most young people. In early 1977 when I served at *Penguin* as a RAN Nursing Service (RANNS) Officer on my first posting, I certainly considered myself fortunate.



I was sent to Penguin not to nurse, for which I thought I had joined the Navy, but to do a scuba diving course to prepare me for the tropical reefs of Papua New Guinea! The two-week diving course was sandwiched between my RANNS entry Junior Officer's Administration Course (JOAC) at HMAS *Cerberus* and my future hospital posting at PNGDF Lombrum, Manus Island in Papua New Guinea. Each day at *Penguin* we practised diving skills in the open-air, saltwater swimming pool, birth-place of the 'Australian Crawl'. However, the magic of that pool did not rub off on me.

After a while I decided to leave the scuba diving to the men, preferring to stay with my new snorkelling skills, which I considered much safer.

They proved quite adequate for me in the ensuing months in PNG when I spent some wonderful hours snorkelling amongst the coral reefs and tropical fish – so vibrant in those northern waters. I thank *Penguin* for the skills allowing me those remarkable memories.

Manus Island off Madang is only 70 miles long, and the PNGDF base of Lombrum was then linked to the town capital of Lorengau by 20 miles of dirt road – the major road of the island. In 1977-1978 the two RANNS Officers were the only two single white girls on the island, and along with the two RAN Medical Officers we worked at the base hospital at Lombrum with two civilian PNG Registered Nurses and numerous PNGDF

Medic staff, caring mainly for the native community. For better communication RAN personnel were encouraged to learn Pidgin English. Patients would walk or canoe miles to attend the 'Hausick' where we attended to basic and emergency surgery, delivered babies, and cared for the common diseases of leprosy, TB, malaria, and tropical ulcers. Working long hours at times, days off were our own. If not snorkelling I would ride off through the palm trees on my Suzuki RV90 motorbike to Lorengau to see the markets, pick through the seashell stalls there and watch the islanders going about their business. It was an idyllic lifestyle, measured and tranquil – quite a contrast to that of my homecoming.

Later in 1978 I was posted back to *Penguin* to take up clinical shift working duties as a Senior Sister RANNS (equivalent to Lieutenant), working between the Medical and Surgical Wards of Balmoral Naval Hospital – the major RAN hospital. I was accommodated in the Wardroom of the base F with the other single officers of the time from *Penguin* and HMAS *Platypus*.

Ward work was extremely busy dealing with the pre- and post-operative surgical, and the multitude of medical patient conditions. Recently I found an old ward patient list of an after-hours shift I did around that time, crumpled up in an old navy raincoat pocket. It was a reminder of the hospital and the cases we treated. The top hospital Surgical Ward consisted of 38 beds. At the start of the shift only seven were vacant. The lower hospital Medical Ward consisted of 28 beds and at the start of the shift only one bed was vacant. So that day I was the Duty Nursing officer responsible for 59 hospital patients. In the Surgical Ward, the condition of patients ranged from orthopaedic complaints (fractured ankles, femurs, tibia/fibulas, knee injuries and back pain/strains), to general surgical problems (pre- and post-appendicectomies) and general post-emergency conditions (pneumothorax, sciatica and haematoma).

In the Medical Ward patient complaints ranged from headache and viral illnesses (tonsillitis and bronchitis, glandular fever, and hepatitis), to stomach ulcers, skin conditions, and convulsions. As the Army base was within close proximity on Middle Head, one or two patients were Army personnel.

In the 1970s, Medical and Surgical Ward were in quite separate buildings (implied above by 'top hospital' and 'lower hospital'). Both had two floors. The Surgical Ward complex, at the top of the base near the gangway entry, housed on its upper floor the operating theatre with its anaesthetic and recovery room, and underneath the X-Ray, Pathology, Pharmacy, Outpatient, Dental, and Administrative Services. Down some 200 concrete steps from the top hospital, Medical Ward housed the Physiotherapy and Specialist Departments. Staff and patients called the connecting hill 'Cardiac Hill' and often used it for cardiac testing.

Cardiac Hill was definitely the quickest way between ward blocks, and could keep personnel quite fit. Patients when admitted to/discharged from Medical Ward Block were driven between levels. Discharge procedures always included a visit to MOIC (Surgeon Captain in Charge of the Hospital). However, staff collecting linen, picking up and delivering documents, and delivering pathology were not so lucky and had to 'hop it', as did the RANNS Officers on their afterhours rounds.

In 1979 I became the Medical Ward Nursing Officer-in-Charge, working with the Medical Officer in Charge of the Ward; firstly, Surgeon Lieutenant Noel Williams, and then Surgeon Lieutenant Bob Green (who became Surgeon Captain Green). I worked happily in this position until early 1981 when I transferred to the reserve listing and left full-time RAN life. For me this time in charge of the Medical Ward was the 'icing on the cake' of my naval years. It was extremely busy each day, but the Medical Officer and I worked with some wonderful Medics – WRANS and sailors. Civilian support workers too helped create some special moments.

Surgeon Captain's inspection rounds occurred monthly. Piped into each of the hospital blocks, the Surgeon Captain, accompanied by the hospital's Senior Nursing Officer, Senior Sailor and the civilian contract cleaners' manager, inspected every cupboard, bed, kitchen, work, office and recreational area for tidiness, cleanliness, maintenance and upkeep problems, taking about a half hour to cover Medical Ward. One of my particular memories is of a Senior Nursing Officer of my time wearing white gloves, and each month running them along ledges with great gusto. She often focussed her search for dust on the staircase – a known hot spot – and each time dust was discovered Carlos, the Chilean cleaning manager, was crestfallen.

Besides the above recollection, there are two other vivid memories from that time. One was formed early in 1979, the day of an accident on board HMAS *Melbourne* at Garden Island. Under the command of Commodore David Martin at the time, chains of a winch on the ship flipped back causing injury to a number of sailors. Soon a convoy of ambulances transported the injured across the Sydney Harbour Bridge to the Balmoral Naval Hospital, with the less injured arriving at the Medical Ward. Without announcement, at about 1500 hours, Commodore Martin himself rushed through the front doors of Medical Ward right next to my office. I caught a flash of gold from his uniform as he crossed my line of vision to see 'his boys'. His concern and compassion were greatly appreciated by his sailors who admired him such that they would walk over hot coals for him if needed. On retirement the Queen herself honoured him with a knighthood and as Rear Admiral Sir David Martin, he was later the Governor of New South Wales. Loved and respected, he died in office after giving his name to the Sir David Martin Foundation – Caring for Young Australians.



Medical Staff, Balmoral Naval Hospital

My last particular nursing memory stems from the relationship that the civilian Dr Brodziak had with Medical Ward. Once a fortnight this elderly, eminent, kindly ex-Army WWII veteran Consultant General Physician would do afternoon rounds with the Medical Ward Surgeon Lieutenant. Not only were the years in which he did this for the RAN the closing years of his medical career, but they occurred when the role of the General Consultant Physician was swiftly being overtaken by the new roles of the various specialist doctors. Tradition was that on the afternoon Dr Brodziak attended the ward, the Nursing Officer-in-Charge served him and the Medical Officer afternoon tea with Silver Service. It was very elegant and traditional and other worldly, in the hustle and bustle of busy ward life. The last day Dr Brodziak attended his rounds was a sad one, and he left that afternoon a solitary figure having completed many loyal years of connection with the Services.

After transferring to the Reserves in 1981, I returned and worked at *Penguin* three times – for two short periods 1981 – 1986, and one extended part-time service 2005 – 2007. By 1986 the Medical Ward was incorporated into a joint Medical/Surgical Ward in the Upper complex; a new impressive theatre suite adjoining the ward was completed allowing more major surgery; the hospital was accredited; and flow-through of patients had increased with shorter hospital stays. The Balmoral Naval Hospital was at its peak with full RAN staff.

I saw changes when I returned to the hospital some 20 years later. There were civilian nurses and doctors supplementing RAN health personnel and numerous patients were being treated at civilian hospitals. The Balmoral theatres were running, but few operations were performed. While I was there, the last operation was carried out. On 10 October 2006 with ABMED Heath Jones, I post-operatively attended the very last patient. After I left in 2008 the hospital closed to make way for a Health Centre. Current in-patients were sent for a time to Holsworthy Hospital and then transferred to the newly opened 'RAN Ward' of St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst – today Sydney's RAN hospital facility.

I shall always remember *Penguin* with her fine Balmoral Naval Hospital, which was such a part of the base where I spent many happy years. Significantly I chose *Penguin* for my wedding celebrations. In 1986 I was married there beneath the trees in front of the Wardroom.

2018 Goldrick Seminar

Co-convened by the Royal Australian Navy, the Australian Naval Institute, the Submarine Institute of Australia and the Australian Centre for the Study of Armed Conflict and Society (ACSACS), UNSW Canberra the 2018 Goldrick Seminar will This year address shipbuilding and its contribution to navy strategy.

For full details go to the [ACSACS website](#)

DATE 17 September 2018
VENUE Adams Auditorium, Australian Defence Force Academy, Northcott Drive, Campbell
TIMING 0830–1630
COST \$75.00 for ANI Members. \$85.00 for non-members.
\$145.00 for Seminar attendance + ANI membership to 30.06.19 (includes morning tea and lunch)



Australian Naval History Video Series 3

The first episode of Season 3 of the acclaimed *Australian Naval History* video & podcast series has been released. In this episode an international panel discusses the creation of the Royal Australian Navy. It is available via the University of NSW Canberra website,

<https://www.unsw.adfa.edu.au/australian-centre-for-the-study-of-armed-conflict-and-society/podcast/creation-royal-australian-navy>

A new episode of the series will be released weekly. Season Three includes episodes on the RAN in Papua New Guinea, the RAN mine warfare in World War II, Cockatoo Island Dockyard, the naval war in northern Australia during World War II, the story of HMAS *Adelaide* in New Caledonia, codebreaking in World War II, HMAS *Sydney* in the Korean War, the Tobruk Ferry Service and the relocation of HMAS *AE1*.

HMAS *Ovens*, the Canberra Times, Saturday 18 Oct 1969, Page 3

HMAS Ovens enters port



The first sighting of HMAS *Ovens*

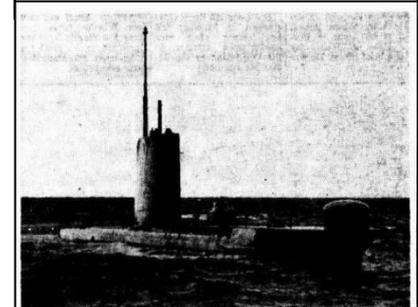
The Royal Australian Navy's newest submarine, the 2,030-ton HMAS *Ovens*, arrived in Sydney from England yesterday, after approaching submerged.

The \$10 million submarine is the third of four Oberon class vessels the RAN is buying.

Two others, HMAS *Oxley* and *Otway*, are already in service with the navy.

Ovens surfaced off the Heads early yesterday morning then moved to Watson's Bay for customs and quarantine clearance. The submarine's crew comprises seven officers and 55 men.

Ovens is named after John Ovens, the explorer who discovered the Murrumbidgee River and the Monaro District in 1823.



The crew prepare to enter harbour.

Photo of the Month:



HMAS *Hobart* and *Brisbane* at Garden Island 22 December 1983
Photographed from the bridge of HMS *Invincible*

News in Brief

New Zealand Navy to acquire dive and hydrographic support vessel

The Government of New Zealand has given approval for the acquisition of a dive and hydrographic support vessel to be used by the Royal New Zealand Navy. Owned and operated by Norwegian company Østensjø Rederi, the MV Edda Fonn multi-role offshore support vessel will provide new capabilities to the New Zealand Navy fleet. The total project budget for acquiring, upgrading and introducing the vessel into service is valued at NZ\$103m (\$68.99m). “The vessel features new advanced capabilities such as a 100t salvage crane, a remotely operated vehicle, and a contemporary dynamic positioning system.” The offshore support vessel is due to be delivered to the Royal New Zealand Navy at the Devonport Naval Base in May. MV Edda Fonn has been designed to replace the legacy ships HMNZS Resolution and HMNZS Manawanui, which were decommissioned from service in 2012 and 2018 respectively. Once delivered, final modifications on the ship will be carried out in New Zealand and the vessel is expected to be in service by November next year.

Keel laid for Royal New Zealand Navy's future HMNZS Aotearoa

Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI) has begun the construction of the Royal New Zealand Navy's (RNZN) future fleet replenishment tanker, HMNZS Aotearoa (A12). The start of construction was marked by a keel-laying ceremony, which was held at HHI's shipyard in Ulsan, South Korea. The event involved the laying of more than 500t of keel blocks in the dry dock for the multi-purpose vessel.



HMNZS Aotearoa is set to be launched early next year and will be deployed from Antarctica to the Arabian Gulf in order to provide logistical support to both New Zealand and coalition maritime, land and air units. HMNZS Aotearoa is intended to replace the RNZN's ageing HMNZS Endeavour vessel, which is scheduled for decommissioning in the near future.

The 173.2m-long vessel is slated to have a displacement capacity of 26,000t and a range of 6,750 nautical miles (nm), while accommodating a core crew of 64 personnel. The ship's company will be assembled, trained and prepared to operate the vessel over the coming year in time for its scheduled delivery to the navy in January 2020.

Legendary naval pilot immortalised at Edinburgh Airport

More than 14 million passengers each year will be reminded of the Royal Navy's – and nation's – most accomplished pilot with a statue dedicated to Captain Eric Brown at Edinburgh airport. No man flew more aircraft – 487 different types – during his career both as a naval flier and test pilot, and no-one has taken off from a carrier more times (2,407) or touched back down again (2,271 times).



Captain Brown, who died two years ago at the age of 97, was born in Leith in 1919, studied German at Edinburgh University and learned to fly with Edinburgh University Air Squadron before joining the Fleet Air Arm. The university air squadron association was determined to mark the aviator's achievements with a statue at the site where he learned to fly (today's international airport occupies the former RAF *Turnhouse*) – a bronze statue partially funded by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity with £14,000 and unveiled by the Duke of York, himself a naval aviator, in the presence of RN and RAF veterans, today's generation of students and local Sea Cadets.

This Month in History

September 1861	HMVS VICTORIA, (CAPT W. H. Norman, RN), rescued the crew of the bark FIREFLY from a reef in the Sir Charles Hardy Islands off Queensland. The two vessels were searching for the ill-fated Burke and Wills trans-Australia expedition.
September 1867	HMVS CERBERUS, (turret ship), was laid down at Palmer's Yard, Plymouth, England.
September 1900	HMCS PROTECTOR was commissioned as HMS PROTECTOR at Hong Kong
September 1908	The 'Great White Fleet' arrived in Albany, WA, and remained until 18 September. Albany was an important coaling stop for the Fleet.
September 1910	The River class destroyer HMAS YARRA was commissioned, Commanding Officer LEUT Thomas. W. Biddlecombe, CNF, (ex RNR), from South Australia.
September 1914	HMAS ENCOUNTER, (cruiser), shelled German positions at Toma, New Britain. This was the first occasion a ship of the RAN had fired on an enemy. HMA Submarine AE1, (LCDR T. F. Besant, RN), was lost with 2 officers and 32 ratings, while patrolling off the Duke of York Island. The cause of the submarine's loss was never established. HMAS WARREGO, (torpedo boat destroyer), captured the German steamer NUSA at Kavieng.
September 1916	HMAS MELBOURNE, (cruiser), joined the Second Light Cruiser Squadron for operations in the North Sea. The squadron was based at Rosyth, Scotland.
September 1929	HMAS CANBERRA, (cruiser), ran aground at Broome, WA. Damage was minor, and the cruiser re-floated herself.
September 1939	CDRE Wilfred Rupert Patterson, CBE, RN, was appointed to command His Majesty's Australian Squadron, his flagship was HMAS CANBERRA, (cruiser). He replaced RADM Wilfred Custance who was in the grip of a fatal illness.
September 1941	The auxiliary boom defence vessel HMAS KARA KARA, was commissioned. KARA KARA was laid down in Saltney, England, in 1926. She was requisitioned for the RAN, from her owners, Sydney Ferries Ltd, on 27 February 1941.
September 1943	Z Special Force, (Operation Jaywick), operatives enter Singapore Harbour in kayaks, and planted limpet mines on seven Japanese merchant ships. They then escaped undetected, to rendezvous with HMAS KRAIT. The raid was a complete success, with 37,000 tons of Japanese shipping sunk or damaged.
September 1945	HMAS STRAHAN was damaged by a mine explosion while sweeping a minefield off the China coast. The ship returned to Hong Kong for repairs.
September 1952	HMAS ANZAC, (Battle class destroyer), fired her 1000th round against enemy targets in Korea.
September 1962	First Wessex helicopter delivered to the RAN FAA
September 1963	The 16th MCM Squadron with 6 Bird class minesweepers deploy as part of Operation GARDENING, a minesweeping task to clear a channel into Tonolei Harbour in Bougainville, where US aircraft had dropped a large number of magnetic mines in 1943. This was the RAN's biggest minesweeping operation for 16 years.
September 1968	851 Squadron recommissioned at NAS Nowra as a training and transport squadron flying Grumman Trackers and Dakotas
September 1974	HMAS BOMBARD, (LEUT R. Cook, RAN), completed the first circumnavigation of Australia by a patrol boat.
September 1975	HMS ODIN, the last Royal Navy submarine to serve with the Australian Submarine Flotilla, sailed from Sydney.
September 1981	CAPT Morton Moyes, OBE, RAN, the last survivor of Mawson's Antarctic Expedition of 1911-1914, died in Sydney. Moyes was the first Instructor Officer to be promoted to Captain in the RAN.
September 1985	The first official rum issue made in a ship of the RAN in 30 years, was made to the crew of HMAS HOBART, (guided missile destroyer), at Victoria, British Columbia. HOBART was representing Australia at the 75th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Navy
September 1996	HMAS SWAN, (destroyer escort), was decommissioned at HMAS STIRLING, WA, after a career spanning 26 years. She was later gifted to the West Australian State Government, and sunk as a dive wreck in Geographe Bay
September 2004	The mine-hunter HMAS DIAMANTINA, (LCDR Peter Bartlett, RAN), returned to Sydney after six weeks service in the Solomon Islands, as part of Operation Anode. During her deployment her ships company helped dispose of 230 pieces of WWII ordnance, ranging from hand grenades to 250 pound bombs. They also assisted in repairing medical equipment at the hospital at Taro.
September 2006	HMAS Westralia II decommissioned. Since commissioning, Westralia (II) had steamed more than 457 908 nautical miles and transferred more than 400 million dollars worth of diesel. Following her decommissioning she was jointly acquired by the AGR and Helix Energy Solutions groups with the intention she be converted into a Floating Production, Storage and Offloading vessel.
September 2017	HMAS Hobart III, lead ship of the Hobart Class Airwarfare Destroyers, commissioned

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

NAA Visit to Maryborough, Queensland Rekindles Interest in Walkers Limited

Paul Andrews of the Ipswich & West Moreton sub section of the Naval Association Australia provided a report on his sub sections recent visit to Maryborough which is steeped in history and boasts three museums and other features of historic interest including a monument commemorating all naval ships built at Maryborough including the HMAS Diamantina at the Queensland Maritime Museum. In all Walkers Limited on the Mary river built 37 naval ships. Thirty-one of these were for the RAN built between 1940 and 1974.

By Editor: The history of Walkers Limited as a significant engineering company located in the bush is a remarkable one. In recognition of this, Walkers was inducted into the Queensland Government's Business Leaders Hall of Fame in 2017. Walkers History is available as a [podcast on the Queensland State Library's website.](#)

Formed in 1867, Walkers originally supplied gold mining equipment for operations around Gympie. It then expanded to support sugar industry and later branched into shipbuilding and locomotive construction. For more than 100 years Walkers was recognised as one of Australia's leading builders of naval ships, barges and dredges. The company built 68 ships between 1877 and 1897, when the shipyard closed.

Ships built for the RAN by Walkers Limited in Maryborough included; 1 Bay-class frigate, 2 River-class frigates, 7 Bathurst-class corvettes, 7 Attack-class patrol boats, 8 Balikpapan-class landing craft heavy, 1 Koala-class boom defence vessel and 2 Explorer class general-purpose vessels.



Monument to Walkers Limited in Maryborough, Monuments Australia image

Rare Photograph of HMAS Voyager and MB 168

From Leyland Wilkinson

Call The Hands (August 2018), shows a picture of HMAS Voyager, taken from across the Dock construction 23rd March 1942, also shows a small launch passing by down her starboard side.

I believe this to be another rare find, one of the District Naval Officer Boats (DNO), probably MB168 (built circa 1937). The Dockyard had difficulty in finding photographs of these boats, when tasked with the refurbishment of MB172, for the National Maritime Museum (ANMM). Please see attached a photo of MB168, (now part of the Naval Heritage Collection), taken in a similar location in 1975.

Best Regards,



MB 168 (NHC) escorting Governor of NSW, Australia Day 2009



MB 172 (ANMM) and MB168 (NHC) escorting Governor of NSW, Australia Day 2009

Water Tender *Ripple*

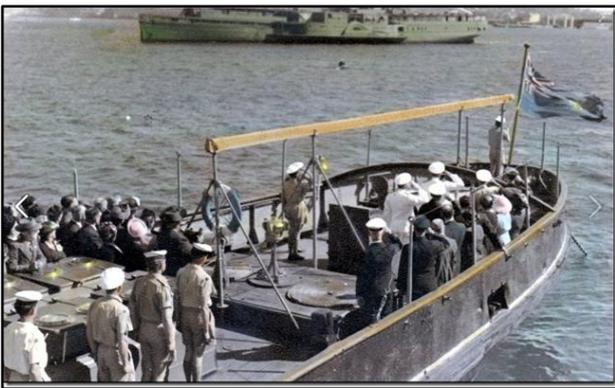
Thanks to the Ex Naval Cadets of TS SIRIUS Association – more commonly known as the Sons and Daughters of Sirius, the NHTA has been given some details of a vessel named *Ripple*. Some of our more senior members may well remember her.

Although not formally commissioned, *Ripple* served within the RAN Auxiliary Service as a water-tender for 34 years. She was manned by civilians, serving through both world wars, and then had a life as a training ship at the Training Depot at Snapper Island in Sydney Harbour.



In the course of this long career *Ripple* was always a welcome sight alongside RAN ships after a long cruise. A 390 ton (200 ton gr) steel, steam-driven tank vessel, *Ripple* was built by Foster and Minty at Balmain in 1904, with engines supplied by Plenty and sons of the UK. She was acquired by the RAN on July 1, 1913 and replenished RAN ships with fresh water until she paid off after WW11, and was declared for disposal.

In 1949, however, the Training Depot at Snapper Island acquired her as a training ship, until she was again returned for disposal in 1951, just two years later. She was sold for breaking up soon after. This picture taken circa 1949 shows Sea Cadets parading on the after deck for the raising of the ensign.



CIRA 1949 - Sea Cadets parade on deck of the *Ripple* for the raising of the ensign

By Editor: An enquiry by the Sons and Daughters of Sirius seeking the identity of the paddle wheeler in the background of the image above led to the accompanying occasional paper on PS *Weeroona*.

Occasional Paper 33, HMAS *Cerberus* Early History and Observations: Correction

Thanks to readers who noted the incorrect caption to a photo of the Gunnery School Administration Building in Occasional Paper 33. We incorrectly titled it the Drill Hall.



Drill Hall, HMAS *Cerberus*, 1941

RAN Image

Occasional Papers With this Edition

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

- Occasional Paper 34 is about the Paddle Steamer Weeroona
- Occasional paper 35 incorporates two personal accounts by survivors of the sinking of HMAS Parramatta (II) off Tobruk on 27 November 1941.
- Occasional paper 36 is a letter by Stoker Mechanician James (Jim) Ashwood of HMAS *Sydney* (3) to his sister Nancy dated 8 May 1949

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. Additions to the collection are always welcomed from people downsizing or who simply no longer require their books.

If you are in this situation and would like to assist by donating books on Australian naval history please contact our librarian. We would be particularly grateful for copies of books from the series published by the Naval Historical Society in its early years entitled "Ships of the Royal Australian Navy". This series included books on HMA Ships; Sydney, Hobart, Parramatta, Adelaide, Yarra, Canberra, Perth and Australia. It also included volumes on the WW2 Fremantle submarine base, WRANs, Clearance Diving Branch, N Class destroyers and the scrap iron destroyers.

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Naval Historical Review

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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/>

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