



# CALL THE HANDS



Issue No. 47 November 2020

## From the President

Welcome to the Society's 47th edition of Call the Hands (CTH) and accompanying occasional papers.

Now in its fifth year, Call the Hands and the occasional papers were introduced as an additional service to members and to attract new members. They are circulated as a free service to more than 2,000 readers and posted on the Society's website. Although the number of new members drawn to the Society through *Call the Hands* is not known we welcome all new members. Membership is inexpensive and easily obtained through the [website shop](#).

The Society benefits from close relationships with a variety of RAN units and like-minded organisations. For example, this month and next we present papers by volunteers from the Australian National Maritime Museum and published in their own magazine *All Hands*. OP 95 'Grandfather was a Cableman' by Fairlie Clifton provides insight into the network of intercontinental undersea cables which remain fundamental to modern communications.

Now in its 50th anniversary year, Society members are currently compiling a book on our own history. This book will be a collection of short stories about activities, events and significant members. One such member was Lieutenant Commander Mackenzie (Mac) Gregory whose RAN service is a fascinating story. An abbreviated version of Mac's story will be included in our book. Occasional papers 94 is a longer version by Victorian Chapter President, Rex Williams.

OP 96 on RAN encounters with the big rivers of Papua New Guinea was triggered by the passing of Commodore Sam Bateman RAN (Rtd) on 18 October. A leading maritime strategist over several decades, Sam Bateman was a prolific author of books and academic articles, on a range of maritime strategic issues. In recent times he also participated in an Australian Navy History podcast series on the [RAN in PNG](#). As a LCDR, Sam Bateman in command of HMAS Aitape in company with HMAS Ladava steamed 230 miles up the Sepik River in 1969.

I trust that you find them of interest. As always, your feedback and contributions are welcomed.

Kind regards,

David Michael

### Support the Society

Although Call the Hands is a free service to the community, produced by volunteers there are costs. Our objective is simply to promote understanding of Australian naval history. Voluntary contributions are essential to deliver this service to readers. If you value our work **please consider a donation**. <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/donate/>



## The Naval Historical Society of Australia

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### Volunteering in the Society is not for Wimps!

An initiative to mark the Society's current 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year is the production of a book on the history of the Society. The book will take the form of a collection of articles by a range of authors. The following piece to describe what volunteering with the Society is actually like hits the mark. "Explaining what is required of a volunteer in the Society is no easy task, as variety is more the norm than one track monotony. One plans their day of things to do, only to find that there is even more to be done and in areas not previously considered.

Sure, there are some tasks that require specific background knowledge, but it is amazing the number of our volunteers that are doing things never previously considered. Variety is one of the main attractions in working with our office.



Tony Townsend,  
Membership Secretary

Prior skills and knowledge quickly find their niche, and new concepts and procedures fast become commonplace. One of our people has been producing video documentaries without any prior experience, whilst another has been turning earlier publications into eBooks. Researching answers to information requests is a constant task as is the management of our archive. The one guarantee is that boredom does not exist in the Society's office!

The Society also caters for those seeking to assist from home. There are a number of tasks that can be covered off-premises, providing there is

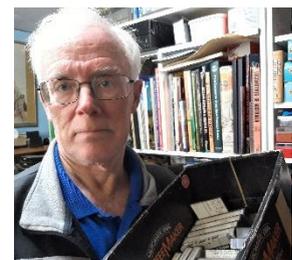
access to a computer and if possible, a scanner. Any specific interests or knowledge can be put to good use – we are a very diverse entity, with volunteers assisting with proof-reading, story development, brochure

design and many other items.

It has been said that Society volunteers do not have time for dementia – they are too busy!"  
Join the fun – contact us now!

### Podcast Volunteer Sought

Long standing member and volunteer Kevin Brown who resides in Tasmania has been busy in recent months converting recordings of presentations given to Society members in the 1970s to digital (MP3) format. A volunteer with an interest in audio recordings is now sought to record intros and outros to these recordings in preparation for posting to the Society's website. If you have an interest in audio and time to assist please e-mail the Society, [secretary@navyhistory.org.au](mailto:secretary@navyhistory.org.au). We would like to hear from you.



Kevin Brown, Society  
volunteer.

## Echoes of Voices from Overseas

“Hello, Western Australia, here we are on the deck of a cruiser somewhere in the Middle East, I may not tell you exactly where ...”

In 1941 an ABC Field Recording Unit went aboard the cruiser HMAS Perth to record messages to be broadcast on the Voices from Overseas program, and this is how the broadcast began. Official Photographer George Silk captured many images of Perth's crew over several months in 1941, and photographed the recording session.

Next the cheerful voice of Patrick Kelly, a stoker in Perth, can be heard sending greetings and reassurances to loved ones back home: “We’re doing all right over here and our chins are up, so don’t worry.” Kelly enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy in 1935, aged 20. By 1940 he was in the Mediterranean, where Perth would see heavy action around Greece, Crete, and Syria.

Speaking on behalf of several Western Australians, Kelly signs off: “We’re all hale and hearty and in the pink, so everything’s right. So, au revoir ’til we see you. Goodbye.”

Patrick Kelly was one of 357 Australians who died when Perth was sunk by the Japanese on 1 March 1942, during the battle of Sunda Strait.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

023734

In 1942 the ABC lent the original Voices from Overseas discs for copying and subsequent sale to aid the Red Cross in their fundraising efforts. Relatives and friends were invited to the Myer Emporium, where they could order their copy of a loved one’s recording. For many families this short-recorded message would become their most tangible reminder of someone they lost, a way of ensuring his voice lived on.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

023739

This fragile metal-core disc was recently donated to the Australian War Memorial’s Sound Collection by Patrick Kelly's niece making certain that his voice would be preserved for future generations to hear. Listening to this young man's voice 70 years after he died is a reminder of the sacrifice made by him and by so many other Australians.

Listen to the digitised audio of this recording:

<https://www.awm.gov.au/sites/default/files/S05248-Patrick-Kelly1.mp3>



## HMAS Aitape

HMAS Aitape commissioned under the command of Lieutenant WSG 'Sam' Bateman, RAN at HMAS Moreton in Brisbane on 13 November 1967. She was one of twenty Attack Class patrol boats ordered for the RAN in November 1965. Promoted to LCDR Sam Bateman, remained in command until 04 January 1970.

Soon after commissioning *Aitape* was base ported at HMAS Tarangau in Lombrum, Manus Island where it arrived on 3 January 1968. There she was warmly welcomed by local officials and residents and her crew was treated to a welcoming 'sing-sing' on the wharf.

*Aitape* was later joined by HMAS Samarai in April, HMAS Lae in July, HMAS Ladava in December and HMAS Madang the following year in March 1969. Together they formed the PNG Division of the patrol boat force.

*Aitape* and her sister boats followed a routine program of patrols, exercises and maintenance while also providing training for PNG sailors. She would regularly visit remote locations and local coast watchers which included visits to the British protectorate of the Solomon Islands. Public relations was a major aspect of *Aitape's* duties, not only being visible but imparting a positive impression of both the RAN and Australia upon local communities.

With the impending independence of Papua New Guinea in 1975, the service of the PNG Patrol Boat Squadron in the RAN, along with their base at HMAS Tarangau, was coming to an end. On 14 November 1974, HMA Ships *Aitape*, *Ladava*, *Lae*, *Madang*, *Samarai* and *Tarangau* decommissioned as units of the RAN and recommissioned flying the new White Ensign of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) Maritime Element.

After many years of service in the PNGDF *Aitape* was decommissioned and later sunk as a dive wreck near Port Moresby Harbour in 1995.



HMAS Aitape alongside the wharf at HMAS Tarangau, circa February 1970. RAN image



HMAS Tarangau on Manus Island, PNG, circa March 1972, the home of the PNG element of the Australian Patrol Boat Squadron. RAN image.

Reference: HMAS Aitape, <https://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-aitape>

## Zoom Presentation: 24 November 2020

### The Sydney / Kormoran Battle and Locating the Ships

Tue 24 Nov, 10:00 am -11:00 am  
Zoom webinar,  
by Gillian Lewis & Noel Phelan

#### Overview

The 19<sup>th</sup> November was the 79<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle between HMAS Sydney II and HSK Kormoran a German armed raider. They came within point blank range where whoever fires first accurately will inflict serious damage on the other. The element of surprise is everything here. Both ships sink with 318 survivors from the *Kormoran* and no survivors from the 645 men on *Sydney*. Lots of questions were raised about what really happened. Both ships were found in 2008 and some of the questions were answered. A world class memorial was built at Geraldton to honour the 645 Australians lost.

#### Presenters

Gillian Lewis and Noel Phelan are volunteer speakers at the Australian National Maritime Museum. Gillian retired after a sales career at CSR and has a special interest in the loss with all hands of HMAS Sydney II.

She comes from a family with a history in the merchant and Royal Australian Navies.

Noel started life as a science and mathematics teacher then spent 25 years at IBM in various technical and management positions. In retirement Noel has been a volunteer with both Marine Rescue and Rural Fire Service. He is currently a volunteer at NHSA organizing the speaker's program.

Please put the date in your diary.

A reminder with the following ZOOM link will be sent a week before the presentation.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88546648259>, Webinar ID: 885 4664 8259

### Video of the Month

The Sepik River is the longest river in New Guinea and is regarded as one of the great river systems of the world. Re-live the voyage of the Attack Class patrol boats HMA Ships *Aitape* and *Ladava* as they made their way 230 miles up the Sepik River in 1969

<https://www.navy.gov.au/history/videos/navigating-sepik>



Lieutenant Commander Bateman who was in command of HMAS Aitape and he passed away recently aged 82. His biography is available online at

<https://www.navy.gov.au/biography/commodore-sam-bateman> and his obituary at <https://navalinstitute.com.au/obituary-commodore-sam-bateman-am-ran/>

## Big Wave of Destruction

A voyage from Fremantle to Cocos Islands to farewell the Royal Yacht SS Gothic at the successful end of Queen Elizabeth II's first visit to Australia ended badly when two of the escort ships collided during a Replenishment at sea (RAS).

On 5 April 1954 after HMA Ships *Vengeance*, *Anzac I* and *Bataan*, an Australian-built Tribal-class destroyer, handed over the escort duties to the cruisers HM Ships *Colombo* and *Newfoundland*, *Bataan* was low on fuel and needed to refuel. Consequently, orders were received to take on fuel from *Vengeance*.

Former Chief Radio Electrician Bill Robertson, who was on board *Bataan* at the time, believes the collision was caused by a rogue wave which lifted *Bataan's* bow and turned the ship towards *Vengeance*, when there was less than 10 tonnes of fuel left to transfer. "The change in heading couldn't be controlled by the quartermaster in time to avoid a collision," he said. "The Venturi effect, so dreaded when two moving vessels are so close together, held *Bataan's* port side in contact with *Vengeance's* starboard side. "There was an imminent danger *Bataan* would roll over and be sucked under *Vengeance*." Mr Robertson said, as *Bataan* slowly slid aft, each time *Vengeance* rolled to starboard, her AA platforms came down on *Bataan's* port superstructure. "Then the port side of the PO's Mess, the 'B' gun deck and the Bofors platform on the port side of the bridge were all crushed," he said. "I remember thinking the noise sounded like the damage was going to be expensive."

According to Mr Robertson, only the quick thinking of the Commanding officer of *Bataan*, CMDR Glenn Fowle saved the ship. "He ordered, 'hard a' port, full ahead together'," he said. "This forced our bow into *Vengeance* while kicking the stern out. "When *Bataan* had pushed itself out to about 45 degrees, the CO ordered full astern together, which separated the ships but didn't do the bow any favours. "At the time of the incident I was on the starboard side of the bridge with a lifejacket in one hand and a roll of toilet paper in the other, somewhat unsure which had priority."

There were no casualties during the collision, which left *Bataan's* keel twisted. *Bataan* paid off at Sydney in October 1954, having steamed 279,395nm after commissioning in May 1945. The ship was sold for scrap in May 1958, to Mitsubishi Shoji Kaisha Ltd of Tokyo, Japan

### Reference:

Originally published in the Australian Navy News on 14 July 2016



HMAS *Bataan* tries in vain to avoid a collision with HMAS *Vengeance* during a RAS in 1954.

## From the Archives

Between the first and second World Wars, a period of austerity, the Royal Australian Navy was making use of radio-controlled targets for gunnery practice as the following images show.

The first image from the Society's archive shows a High-Speed Battle Practice Target Boat (HSBPT) alongside Garden Island Sydney in the 1930s.

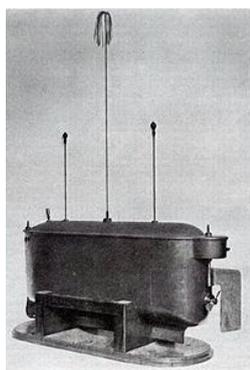


The second image from the NSW State Archives shows a HSBT at a mooring with the three-funneled HMAS Australia in the background. Also, in the photo is HMAS Adelaide (outboard of *Australia*) and in the middle ground behind the HSBT is the steam tug *Wattle*



High-Speed Battle Practice Target Boat at Garden Island 02 August 1939. NSW State Archives

Some research into early radio-controlled vehicles revealed that as early as 1898 Nikola Tesla had demonstrated a radio-controlled boat.



Tesla's U.S. Patent 613,809 'Method of an Apparatus for Controlling Mechanism of Moving Vehicle or Vehicles.'

### By Editor

If you have more information about these target vessels the Society would like to hear from you. Please e-mail us at, [archivist@navyhistory.org.au](mailto:archivist@navyhistory.org.au).

## Photo of the Month



A Skyhawk readies for launch from HMAS Melbourne, RAN image

The McDonnell Douglas A4G Skyhawk was a carrier-borne light attack fighter bomber. Delivered to the RAN in 1967, the Skyhawk was flown by VF 805 Squadron until the Squadron decommissioned with the cessation of fixed wing flying in the RAN in 1982. Skyhawk aircraft were regularly embarked HMAS Melbourne (II) from 1968 until November 1981. The Skyhawks were both formidable and versatile aircraft with the ability to carry large weapon pay loads and an in-flight refueling capability enabled them to significantly extend their radius of action.

### Further Reading

Introduction of the A4 Skyhawk into the RAN Fleet Air Arm 1967/1968, John Da Costa, December 2011 edition of the Naval Historical Review, available at, <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/introduction-of-the-a4-skyhawk-into-the-ran-fleet-air-arm-19671968/>  
805 Squadron History, available at, <https://www.navy.gov.au/history/squadron-histories/805-squadron-history>  
Skyhawk: History in Photographs, FAAAA, available at, <https://www.faaaa.asn.au/skyhawk-history-in-photographs-page-2/>

## News in Brief

### HMAS Arunta exercising

Vessels belonging to the US, Japanese and Australian navies gathered in the South China Sea for trilateral naval exercises. The US Navy's Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS John S. McCain (DDG 56) joined the Royal Australian Navy's (RAN) HMAS Arunta (FFH 151) and the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force's (JMSDF) JS Kirisame (DD 104) on October 19. These exercises marked the fifth time in 2020 that Australia, Japan, and the U.S. have conducted operations together in the 7th Fleet area of operations.



### NUSHIP Supply arrives in Australia

The first of the RAN's two Cantabria/Supply class auxiliary oiler replenishment (AOR) vessels, NUSHIP Supply II, has arrived at Garden Island in Western Australia after its delivery voyage from Navantia's shipyards in Ferrol, Spain where it was built. The arrival of *Supply* follows the successful completion of its builder's sea trials in August.

*Supply* will be equipped with additional equipment while in Fremantle, including its Phalanx close-in weapons system (CIWS), a communications suite, its Typhoon remote weapons stations, and its combat system. It will replace HMAS *Success* in service on the east coast when it is commissioned in 2021, while the follow-on NUSHIP *Stalwart III* will replace the Navy's west coast AOR, HMAS *Sirius* in 2022.



### HMAS Hobart Home

HMAS *Hobart* and her more than 230 crew members have returned home to Sydney, marking the end of the Royal Australian Navy's largest and most challenging deployment this year.

The Air Warfare Destroyer, along with HMA Ships *Canberra*, *Stuart*, *Arunta* and *Sirius*, began Regional Presence Deployment (RPD) on 5 July, deploying from Darwin.



Over three months, the five-ship Task Group exercised with 11 nations across South East Asia, enhancing Australia's ability to operate with partner nations during security challenges and times of humanitarian crisis. The warships also took part in the world's largest maritime exercise (RIMPAC), in Hawaii. Commander of the Task Group, Captain Phillipa Hay, CSC, RAN, said the mission had been "enormously successful", and was achieved during a pandemic through hard work and "true blue Australian strength of character".

## This Month in History

November 1869	HMS PHOEBE, (corvette), arrived at Port Phillip with ADML Hornby's Flying Squadron. A midshipman in the vessel was William Creswell.
November 1897	RADM Hugo L. Pearson, RN, was appointed Flag Officer Commanding the Australia Station. His flagship was HMS ROYAL ARTHUR.
November 1914	HMAS PIONEER, (cruiser), lost her fore-topmast and suffered other damage in heavy seas, while escorting the first troop convoy in the Indian Ocean. PIONEER returned to Fremantle for repairs.
November 1917	The prolific naval author, James Edmond MacDonnell, was born in Mackay, QLD. He joined the RAN in 1934, and served until 1948, reaching the rank of Acting Gunner, (Warrant Officer). During the war he served in HMA Ships CANBERRA, NEPAL and NIZAM and these provided the settings for many of his books. During a 30-year writing career he produced over 200 fiction books, with most concentrating on the RAN. He died at Kuluin, QLD, on 13 September 2002.
November 1918	HMAS PARRAMATTA, (torpedo boat destroyer), entered the Black Sea. PARRAMATTA was employed as a dispatch boat between Sevastopol and Constantinople.
November 1927	The Sydney Harbour ferry GREYCLIFFE, was run down and cut in two by the Royal Mail Steamer TAHITI, off Bradley's Head, Sydney. Several vessels including the RAN launch SAPPHIRE were used to rescue survivors. 40 passengers were killed in the disaster, among them a number of RAN Personnel, including Surgeon LCDR J. Paradise, RAN, who had boarded the ferry at Garden Island only a few minutes before.
November 1936	HMAS VENDETTA, (destroyer), was despatched from Sydney to search for the 32 foot launch VIKING, missing between Sydney and Lord Howe Island. Although five steamers and numerous smaller craft joined in the search, no trace of the missing vessel was ever found.
November 1940	HMAS SYDNEY and HMS MOWHAWK attacked an Italian convoy of four merchant vessels and two destroyers, north of Otranto. All four merchant ships were sunk, and the destroyers were driven off. When SYDNEY rejoined the Mediterranean Fleet, the C-in-C, ADML A. B. Cunningham, signalled:- 'Did you have a wild Australian night?'
November 1944	HMAS GASCOYNE, (frigate), shot down a Japanese kamikaze aircraft aimed at HMAS SHROPSHIRE, (cruiser), in Lingayen Gulf. HMA Ships VENDETTA, BARCOO, and SWAN, bombarded Japanese positions at Wide Bay, New Britain.
November 1948	First CAC CA-16 Wirraway delivered to the RAN. Seven Wirraways were acquired by the RAN as training and general fleet support aircraft during 1948 – 1951 and then an additional ten in 1952-53 which were operated by 723 and 724 Squadrons at the Naval Air Station at Nowra until they were disposed of in 1957.
November 1953	HMAS VENGEANCE, (aircraft carrier), was commissioned at Devonport, England. The ship served as a unit of the RAN until 25 October 1955, when she was returned to the RN. VENGEANCE was transferred to the Brazilian Navy, and renamed MINAS GERIAS in 1956.
November 1959	HMAS DIAMANTINA, (oceanographic survey ship), obtained samples from the sea floor at a depth of 5,706m off Bali.
November 1964	The RAN Nursing Service, (RANNS), which had been disbanded in 1948, was re-formed. Initially 21 registered nurses were commissioned, and they commenced duty at HMAS PENGUIN and HMAS CERBERUS. The RANNS continued as a separate service until amalgamated with the RAN in June 1985.

November 1966	As the floating crane "Falcon" was lifting a Tracker S2E, Bu No 151646, from the Pymont wharf on to a lighter, a sling broke and the aircraft fell into Sydney Harbour. Navy divers later attached slings to the aircraft which was raised after spending four hours immersed. The S2E had been obtained as an incomplete and damaged airframe, having ditched into Long Island Sound during a pre-delivery test flight from the Grumman factory. The S-2E never flew again after this accident and it was acquired by the R.A.N. with the specific intention of cutting it up to provide components for training purposes. It had had arrived in Sydney on 7/11/1966 on the freighter "Australian Surf". Given that this aeroplane was ditched prior to delivery and spent another four hours on the bottom of Sydney Harbour it is noteworthy for probably having spent more time in the water than in the air!
November 1969	The Daring class destroyer HMAS VENDETTA, (CMDR E. E. Johnston, RAN), withdrew from the gun-line off Tuy Hoa in Vietnam, in the face of increasing gales, fog and rain. She sailed to Taiwan for maintenance and restoring.
November 1974	HMA Ships <i>Aitape</i> , <i>Ladava</i> , <i>Lae</i> , <i>Madang</i> , <i>Samarai</i> and <i>Tarangau</i> decommissioned as units of the RAN and recommissioned flying the new White Ensign of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) Maritime Element. HMAS Basilisk was re-commissioned under CMDR P. Paffard, RAN to provide administrative support for RAN personnel serving with the Papua New Guinea Defence Force.
November 1983	The Wessex helicopter celebrated 21 years of service in the RAN. The occasion was marked with a flypast of RAN Wessex, Iroquois and Sea King helicopters as well Royal Navy Sea Harriers from the visiting HMS Invincible.
November 1988	Principal Anglican Naval Chaplain John Jones, retired after 22 years of service in the RAN, to become Rector of Sydney's historic St. Philip's Church.
November 1998	The Royal Australian Navy's first female pilot, Sub Lieutenant Natalee McDougall, RAN, graduated from the Australian Defence Academy's helicopter training facility after 17 months of intensive classroom and practical training at RAAF Base Fairbairn. She joined 723 Squadron the following January.
November 2004	A Seahawk helicopter from 816 Squadron, en-route from Perth, WA, to Nowra, NSW, on completion of an exercise in Western Australian waters, was diverted to take personnel from the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), to a remote site some 120 miles south of Kalgoorlie, WA, to treat a seriously injured patient. The patient was located in an area where RFDS fixed wing aircraft were unable to land. After being treated at the site, the patient (found to have a broken pelvis, a broken leg, and internal bleeding), was airlifted to Perth. In a separate activity on the same day, HMAS LEEUWIN, (hydrographic survey ship), stopped to render assistance to the yacht WILD FORTUNE, which was experiencing engine problems north east of Bali.
November 2016	After an earthquake on Nov 14 HMAS Darwin arrived at Kaikoura, New Zealand on 16 November in company with HMNZ Ships <i>Te Kaha</i> , <i>Endeavour</i> and <i>Canterbury</i> , USS Sampson, and HMCS Vancouver. Working parties were sent ashore to assist in restoring essential services such as electricity and water. Welfare checks were carried out as well as basic reconstruction tasks and clean-up tasks

The entries selected for publication this month are randomly generated from an extensive database of historic naval events. The absence of a significant event is in no way intended to cause offence. The objective is to provide a cross section of events across time. The Society's website enables you to look up any event in RAN history. Searches can be made by era, date look up or today. The latter appears on the home page. The others are accessed via the Research page. <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/research/on-this-day/>

## Readers Forum

### HMAS Jeparit

Judith Longhurst recently wrote to the Society enclosing an Australian National Lines Christmas card from 1964 or 65. Her late husband, Captain Digby Longhurst, had been a Marine Pilot in Tasmania and also for Hydrographer's Passage on the Great Barrier Reef. His seagoing career was with the Australian National Line beginning in 1958, when Sydney was his home port. After Captain Longhurst retired in 2007 they remained interested in what became of all ANL's ships. Mrs Longhurst's reason for sending the card was that it featured a photograph of M.V. Jeparit on her maiden voyage to Melbourne.



### Support for Australian Forces in Vietnam

MV Jeparit was built by Evans Deakin & Co, Brisbane. She was laid down in 1962 and launched in 1964. Between 1966 and 1972 it transported supplies to Australian military forces in South Vietnam under both civil and military ownership.

In 1966 the vessel was chartered by the Department of Shipping and Transport to carry supplies for the Australian forces engaged in the Vietnam War. However, after five voyages some merchant seamen refused to man the vessel. To overcome this difficulty, crew members who were prepared to continue to serve in Jeparit were supplemented by a Royal Australian Navy detachment. Thus, on 9 March 1967 a party of eighteen sailors, under the command of Lieutenant Robert Winter RAN, embarked in *Jeparit*. The ship remained under the command of her Merchant Navy master, Captain JW Nelson and sailed from Sydney for Vietnam on 11 March 1967.

Following Jeparit's 26th round voyage to Vietnam (her 21st with the Royal Australian Navy detachment embarked), further industrial trouble developed and it was decided to commission *Jeparit* into the Royal Australian Navy. Accordingly, the vessel commissioned as HMAS Jeparit on 11 December 1969 under the command of Commander Richard Bourke RAN. The following day the ship's master, Mr AAC Philip, was granted a commission as a Commander in the Royal Australian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RANVR) and assumed command from Commander Bourke. Jeparit's first voyage under the White Ensign began on 19 December 1969 when she sailed from Sydney for Vietnam. However, she continued to be manned, by a mixed Merchant Navy/Royal Australian Navy crew.

*Jeparit* decommissioned on 15 March 1972 and returned to service with ANL. In 1979 it was sold to a Greek shipping company and renamed *Pleias*. She continued in civilian service under several names before being broken up in 1993.



*Jeparit* transported a wide variety of stores, including such varied items as canteen stores, ammunition, stores for civil aid and Centurion tanks. During her 43 voyages in support of Australian operations in Vietnam, *Jeparit* steamed over 410,000 miles and carried some 175,000 dead-weight tons of cargo.

## Research Question received from Ross Lowe

I work for the Storage Team at the State Library of Victoria. During the Melbourne lockdown many of us who would usually be onsite have been redirected to work from home projects. One of these projects is to update incomplete/insufficient image descriptions for various online collections held by the SLV. The attached image was taken aboard H.M.A.S Sydney (III) in about 1949 (also viewable here <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/425139>). It carries the description 'Cleaning spidkins', which is neither descriptive nor useful. No one in the project group had any luck finding the word 'spidkin' in any glossary or dictionary, maritime or otherwise. The general consensus seems to be that it is a miss-entered term from a hand written original.



The Society's response:

Ross,

They are spitkids which were made of aluminium [rust free] and placed around the upper deck as rubbish collectors including presumably in the past for people to spit in.

The fact that they are being polished by electric buffs indicates that the ship is about to suffer an admiral's inspection and everything is being highly polished.

Yours,

John Smith  
Senior Researcher

## Occasional Papers in this edition

Included with this edition of Call the Hands are the following occasional papers: -

- Occasional Paper 94 – Lieutenant Commander Mackenzie (Mac) Gregory
- Occasional Paper 95 – Grandfather was a Cableman
- Occasional Paper 96 – RAN Encounters with Papua New Guinea's Big Rivers

## Society Matters

### 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/>.

### Annual General Meeting: 17 November 2020

Members are reminded that the 2020 AGM is scheduled for Tuesday 17 November at 11 am Sydney daylight saving time. This will be conducted as a Zoom webinar for which prior registration is required.

Members are encouraged to participate and register via the following link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_GA1tKy0BSDyCChSIU8cHQA](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_GA1tKy0BSDyCChSIU8cHQA).

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. All relevant documents including the audited accounts for financial year 2019-20 can be accessed via the members page of the Society's website. Please support your Committee by participating.

### Coming Zoom Presentations

Tuesday 24 November, *The HMAS Sydney / HSK Kormoran Battle and Locating the Ships*, presented by Gillian Lewis and Noel Phelan.

Join the meeting via this link, <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88546648259>

Meeting ID: 885 4664 8259

Wednesday 9 December, *The Sinking and Salvage of Costa Concordia*, presented by Noel Phelan.

Join the meeting via this link, <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81846392489>

Meeting ID: 818 4639 2489

Find out more through the website Events page, <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/events/>.

### 75 Years of Service: The Captain Cook Graving Dock, Sydney

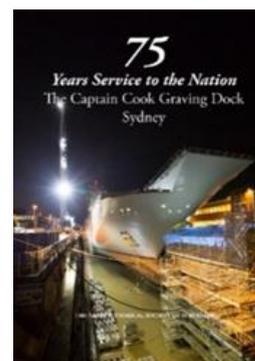
This story of the Captain Cook Graving Dock commemorates the 75th anniversary of its opening on 24 March 1945 by the then Governor General of Australia, His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester. In addition to details of construction, this book provides detail about the opening ceremony, the Civil Constructional Corps members who laboured on the project, the war artists who captured the mood of the time and dock operations since 1945.

Available for purchase through the Society's website in two formats.

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