



CALL THE HANDS

Issue No. 49 February 2021



From the President

Welcome to this 49th edition of *Call the Hands*. This monthly newsletter now in its 5th year was created as a service to the community and members. In its 50th year, the Society which is an 'all volunteer' 'not for profit' organisation remains dependent on revenue from membership. If you appreciate *Call the Hands* you will enjoy our quarterly magazine the *Naval Historical Review* received by members. [Please consider joining the Society](#). It is easy to do online and excellent value for money at \$30 per annum. As an incentive to Subscribers we offer a \$10 discount until 28 Feb 21. Use coupon number '01-21' in the online shop to take advantage of this offer.

It has been a busy start to the year with volunteers working on several projects including two new books; the history of the Australian designed Ikara missile and our own 50 year history. We continue to convert previously published books into e-format and have almost completed a new video documentary. You will read about the newly developed history tour of Sub Base Platypus in this edition and in the coming months, two additional 'off base' tours. Our traditional history tours of the Garden Island Dockyard remain in abeyance due to Defence policy in relation to the COVID pandemic.

Prominent in this edition are the monthly Zoom presentations which are recorded when possible for later posting to the Society's website. There is a link to the first-rate January presentation by Bob Trotter and details of others scheduled this first half year.

Volunteers in the Boatshed appreciated the company of Gap Year Midshipman, Lloyd Skinner for two weeks late last year during which he researched and wrote several stories. Two are presented this month as occasional papers. We wish him well as he commences studies at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

Finally, as NUSHIP *Supply* was welcomed to Australia in January it is timely to remember the service of HMAS *Supply* (I) which provided diverse and distinguished service to the RAN from August 1962 to December 1985. Prior to her renaming, the ship served as RFA *Tide Austral* for seven years and HMAS *Tide Austral* for a short period before arrival in Australia. Similarly, we recall the iconic, small 168-ton brig HMS *Supply* of the First Fleet which is now recognized as the ship which founded and sustained Australia in its formative years.

Kind regards,

David Michael



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HMAS Australia arrives in Australia after commissioning in the UK

HMAS Australia commissioned at Clydebank on 24 April 1928, two months before her sister ship HMAS Canberra, under the command of Captain Francis HW Goolden RN. HM King George V visited HMAS Australia on the morning of 17 July 1928 and was received with a Royal Guard and Band. The King inspected the upper and main decks taking time to speak with a number of Australia's ship's company.

Following a period of trials HMAS Australia departed Portsmouth on 3 August 1928 and proceeding via Montreal, Quebec, Halifax, Boston, New York, Annapolis, Kingston, Balboa, Tahiti, Wellington and Brisbane, reached Sydney on 23 October 1928.



HMAS Australia visiting Wellington, New Zealand on 8/10/1928 on her journey to Australia after commissioning in the UK on 24/4/1928.

H.M.A.S. AUSTRALIA

Arrival of New Flagship in Brisbane

RECORD VOYAGE FROM NEW ZEALAND

After a stormy and record breaking voyage from Wellington to Brisbane H.M.A.S. Australia, the new flagship of the Royal Australian Navy, berthed at the Hamilton Cold Stores wharf on Monday evening. The cruiser left Wellington at midnight on October 12 and reached the Pile Light in Moreton Bay at 5.5 p.m. on Sunday night. Although she encountered very rough weather she maintained a cruising speed of 24 knots per hour and established a record for the trip.

Although the flagship was announced to arrive at the wharf at 4 p.m. tidal difficulties arose and, after Moreton Bay was reached, speed was slackened to allow the tide to make so that it would be advantageous for the turning at the wharfrage.

The District Naval Officer (Lieutenant-Commander E. S. Mutton) boarded the cruiser from a pinnace at Lytton.

Pilot M. B. Neill went on board at Cape Moreton and assisted in bringing the flagship to berth. He had nothing but praise to offer for the way the ship was handled in the river. "She came in splendidly" he said.

The time taken from Wellington to Brisbane, 2 days 17 hours, is a record for the trip, as the fastest time previously recorded was approximately 4½ days. The ship carried 27 bags of mail matter for Brisbane. On the trip south the cruiser will attempt to steam from Sydney to Melbourne in 17½ hours.

WAITING CROWD.

From 5 p.m. onwards there was a steady stream of sightseers on to the wharf and when they were cleared as the vessel approached they grew impatient at being held in check, in spite of the fact that they could watch the manoeuvring of the vessel alongside the wharf. It was an interesting business to watch especially when the Coast gun went off with a bang and sent a rope hurtling through the air right up on to the cold stores roof. It was hastily gathered in by waiting naval men, and the big hawsers that secure the ship to the wharf were hauled ashore. Then followed a period of pulling and tugging by the midshipmen before everything was made safe. The public was then allowed on the wharf.

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DISEMBARKATION.

It was found that the latest and most modern of the world's battle cruisers did not have on board such a thing as a gang plank. At first a rough plank was lowered and some of the more impatient of the men on board, who were overjoyed at putting their feet on Australian soil again after many months' absence, risked their necks by half sliding, half slipping down this improvised gangway, clinging for dear life to a rope stretched from the wharf to the ship. The waiting crowd derived much amusement from their hazardous landing.

But the reputation of the ship's carpenters was at stake. Soon another substantial plank was lowered and a rough but solid gangway was constructed, and the task of disembarkation became an easy one.

It was unfortunate that the berthing took place just after dark. But some idea of the dimensions of the vessel could be gained by the lights on the ship which peeped from every porthole from stem to stern. The closer it came to the wharf the more the crowd gasped at the great mass of grey ironwork. It is 630 feet long, with a 65 feet beam, and is capable of a speed of 31½ knots per hour, though in the trials it did over 34. The full crew numbers 779 men, of whom 52 are officers. The cruiser was completed at Clydebank, Scotland, commissioned on April 24, 1928, and left Scotland for Australia on August 1.

ADVENTURE IN MID-ATLANTIC.

The trip across the Atlantic was extremely stormy and rough. The ship had one thrill on the way across. With mountainous seas running a man was swept overboard from the middle of the forecastle. With such seas it was impossible to lower a boat and the man was drawn in close to the vessel and was soon swept astern. The ship was turned and a long rope was thrown overboard. Even this did not help much. Finally a rope ladder was lowered over the side of the ship and a lieutenant climbed down to help the half-drowned man to safety. The ship was tossing and rolling in the tremendous seas, but the lieutenant clung desperately to the ladder. Three times the waters completely covered

clung desperately to the ladder. Three times the waters completely covered him and appeared almost to tear him away from the ship. But he managed to get his grip firmly on the collar of the rescued one and they were both drawn up to safety. It was the most exciting incident of the voyage.

The naval men in America went out of their way to make the Australians' stay there enjoyable. Their policy was, "You gave us a good time in Australia, we want to do the same by you." Exceptionally warm was the welcome accorded them at Chesapeake Bay.

Montreal, Quebec, Halifax, Boston, Jamaica, Panama, Tahiti, and Wellington were the other ports of call during the trip. More rough weather was experienced in the last stage of the journey.

The Australians have had a great opportunity to see the other side of the world, but to a man they are glad to be home again. One bright midshipman declared that he had seen New York once and that was enough. "If it wasn't for the buildings it would be like a desert," he declared. "As for Broadway, it's only a little street with a lot of lights."

Rear-Admiral G. F. Hyde, C.V.O., C.B.E., and Captain F. H. W. Goolden, R.N., were soon ashore after the vessel berthed.

THE THIRD AUSTRALIA.

H.M.A.S. Australia is the third ship of that name in the British Navy. The first of the name, H.M.S. Australia, was in the list of ships of the Royal Navy from 1886 to 1905. The second was H.M.A.S. Australia, the first flagship of the Royal Australian Navy, commissioned in 1913. It served in the Pacific Ocean in 1914, and with the Grand Fleet from 1915 until the end of the great war. She was towed out and sunk off Sydney Heads in 1924.

AUSTRALIA'S NAVY.

H.M.A.S. Australia, with her sister-ship H.M.A.S. Canberra (completed and commissioned on July 9, 1928) was built to the order of the Government of Australia in replacement of two pre-war cruisers—H.M.A. ships Sydney and Melbourne, which have now been placed out of commission. The ships of the Royal Australian Navy now in full commission are therefore: H.M.A.S. Australia, Canberra, Brisbane, Platypus (seagoing depot ship), Anzac (fleet leader), Swordsman and Success (destroyers), Otway and Oxley (submarines), Moresby (surveying vessel), and Marguerite (sloop for training of naval reserve ratings).

A seaplane carrier (H.M.A.S. Albatross) is now almost completed at Cockatoo Island, Sydney, and will shortly be commissioned. Two cruisers

(H.M.A. ships Adelaide and Sydney) and a number of destroyers are in reserve.

OFFICERS OF THE CRUISER AUSTRALIA.

The following is a complete list of the officers of H.M.A.S. Australia:
Rear-Admiral G. F. Hyde, C.V.O., C.B.E., R.A.N.,—Rear-Admiral Commanding, H. M. Australian Squadron.
Captain F. H. W. Goolden, R.N.,—Flag Captain, and Chief Staff Officer.
ADMIRAL'S PERSONAL STAFF.
Paymaster Lieutenant Commander J. B. Foley, R.A.N., Admiral's Secretary.

Lieutenant J. B. Newman, R.A.N.,—Flag Lieutenant.

WARDROOM OFFICERS.

Engineer Commander P. J. N. Hogan, R.A.N.

Paymaster Commander E. W. Trivett, R.A.N.

Commander J. F. B. Caralake, R.N.
Engineer Commander T. W. Ross, R.A.N.

Surgeon Commander A. S. Mackenzie, R.A.N.

Commander R. G. Duke, R.N.
Chaplain Reverend W. H. Henderson, R.A.N.

Engineer Commander L. J. P. Carr, R.A.N.

Lieutenant-Commander E. D. B. McCarthy, R.N.

Lieutenant-Commander M. H. A. Kelsey, D.S.C., R.N.

Lieutenant-Commander H. L. Howden, R.A.N.

Paymaster Lieutenant-Commander A. J. White, R.A.N.

Lieutenant-Commander J. A. Collins, R.A.N.

Lieutenant-Commander R. B. M. Long, R.A.N.

Lieutenant (E) O. F. McMahon, R.A.N.

Lieutenant W. L. Murmann, R.N.
Paymaster Lieutenant E. H. Leitch, R.A.N.

Lieutenant (E) C. C. Clark, R.A.N.
Lieutenant G. S. Stewart, R.A.N.

Surgeon Lieutenant (D) J. E. Richards, R.A.N.

Lieutenant (E) L. S. Dalton, R.A.N.
Lieutenant A. E. Buchanan, R.A.N.

Surgeon Lieutenant C. A. Downward, R.A.N.

Paymaster Lieutenant P. Perry, R.A.N.

Lieutenant F. R. James, R.A.N.
Lieutenant D. M. Hole, R.A.N.

GUNROOM OFFICERS.

Paymaster Sub-Lieutenant B. F. Blackwell, R.A.N.

Sub-Lieutenant W. H. Harrington, R.A.N.

Sub-Lieutenant J. Plunkett-Cole, R.A.N.

Sub-Lieutenant N. A. Mackinnon, R.A.N.

Sub-Lieutenant A. G. Lewis, R.A.N.
Paymaster Sub-Lieutenant E. D. Creal, R.A.N.

Paymaster Cadet L. B. Hodgman, R.A.N.

The Adelaide Class FFG: 360 Degree View

The Australian War Memorial (AWM) 'On Closer Inspection' has a series of 360 degree immersive experiences.

Using the link below you can explore HMAS Sydney IV.
[The Adelaide Class FFG | Australian War Memorial \(awm.gov.au\)](http://awm.gov.au)

This AWM initiative allows the viewer to explore the RAN's Adelaide class FFG frigate and take a closer look at HMAS Sydney IV both inside and out. Click on pop up icons to see archival photos, watch videos, hear audio recordings, and uncover the stories behind one of the most capable warships in Australian Navy history.



Designed for long-range escort roles and equipped to undertake air defence, anti-submarine warfare, surveillance, and reconnaissance duties the Adelaide class FFG was considered by many to be one of the most capable warships in the Royal Australian Navy's history.



HMAS Sydney (IV)

Further Reading:

Sea Power Centre Australia, HMAS Sydney (IV) History, available at <https://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-sydney-iv>

Video of the Month

The Department of veterans Affairs has recorded stories from many former Australian Military Service Men and Women. The complete series is available here [Department of Veterans' Affairs - YouTube](#)

One story is about former Society President Rear Admiral Guy Griffiths AO, DSO, DSC, RAN Rtd.

Guy Griffiths was born in Sydney on 1 March 1923 and grew up in the Rothbury–Pokolbin district in the Hunter Valley, NSW. He entered the Royal Australian Naval College as a Cadet Midshipman in January 1937. After graduation from the college in late 1940, he was posted to the Royal Navy for further training and joined the battlecruiser HMS Repulse in March 1941 as a midshipman.

His story is available online here: [Veterans' stories - Guy Griffiths - YouTube](#)

History Tours

Located in the Garden Island Dockyard, Sydney for more than fifty years, the Naval Historical Society of Australia has since the year 2000 conducted of Garden Island history tours. These tours have been An important source of income for the Society which is a 'not for profit' 'all volunteer' organisation, has been the. These have been in abeyance due to COVID since March 2020.

New History Tour: Sub Base Platypus

Following a successful pilot tour of Sub Base Platypus in January Society guides will now conduct regular tours of the Neutral Bay site now managed by the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust. The tour covers more than just the Neutral Bay Gas Works, Torpedo Factory, and HMAS Platypus which occupied part of the site over the decades but extends to address Australia's submarine history and links with Sydney including the 1942 Japanese midget submarine attack in Sydney Harbour. A major theme in this tour is the lives of people who worked there.



Please tell others about this great opportunity to learn about the proud history of Australia's submarine force.

Next Tour

Tour of Sub Base Platypus, Wednesday 17 February
Will focus on the 1942 Japanese midget submarine attack.

Bookings can be made through the [Society's website](#) or [Eventbrite](#).



Zoom Presentations

January Presentation Q and A

On 22 January 21 Commodore Bob Trotter OAM RAN Ret'd. presented an enthralling talk entitled 'Iron Men and Tin Fish – The Fremantle and Albany Submarine Bases – SW Pacific Submarine Command'. This presentation addressed submarine operations conducted from Fremantle in the period 1942 to 1945 when Fremantle was the second largest submarine base in the World.

Subsequent to his presentation Commodore Trotter provided the following answers to questions submitted on the day.



View the presentation via this link.

[Ctrl click here](#)

Q and A

Q1. Average number of boats based in Fremantle

A1. There is no short answer here. The Submarine Repair Unit (SRU) was established to refit 3 submarines simultaneously and by 1944 was achieving 4 simultaneously. The waterfront generally consisted of two Submarine Tenders and which included elementary schools, Radar School, Command Attack Teacher, Convoy College. Between patrols, the submarines would be cycled through refitting (including dry docking), training schools, degaussing (removing the submarine's magnetism as a defence against mines), work up then back on patrol. Submarines often started and finished at different bases (Fremantle, Brisbane, Pearl Harbour & Subic Bay after the Philippines were retaken). Each of the two Tenders would typically have 3-5 Submarines nested at various stages of the patrol to patrol turnaround. Over a 17 month period 230 submarine dockings occurred at the Floating Dock. There are no equivalent figures for the Slipway.

Q2. Patrol length in days

A2. The longest was by Guitarro which departed from Fremantle and ended the patrol at Hawaii 83 days later. 68% of all patrols from Australia lasted more than 40 days. (Information provided by research conducted by Fleet Commander RADM Mark Hammond AM)

Q3. Endurance range of US submarines

A3. The Fleet boats (Gato Class and later Classes) had fuel for 11,000 nm at 10 knots.

February Presentation: Monday 15:

LHD and LSD — The Evolution of Australia's Amphibious Ships

The February presentation is scheduled for Monday 15 February. Society Vice President John Jeremy will discuss how the recently-acquired LHDs HMAS Canberra and Adelaide have provided the ADF with a greater capability to conduct amphibious operations than at any time in the last 100 years. They are changing the role of the RAN as we face an uncertain century. These large ships have evolved from the ships developed during World War II to retake Europe from the occupying German forces. Many different types of ships, unknown before the war, were developed for this purpose.

This presentation tells the story of the development of some of them — the ancestors of our new ships. The work done by the ship designers and shipbuilders in the desperate days of World War II not only established the pattern for today's capable and useful naval ships, it also introduced concepts for roll-on roll-off cargo handling which are now common throughout the merchant fleets of the world.

Diary Details: Monday 15 February: 11AM Sydney Time

Join the meeting using this link.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83714589936?pwd=VEJjVXJhMm9oUms4dU1XUElwRG1UQT09>

Meeting ID: 837 1458 9936

Passcode: 795328

You will also receive an invitation one week prior.

Society Matters

Member Zoom Presentations

All members and subscribers can now join our monthly from any location. The Program runs in parallel with the physical attendance meetings traditionally conducted in Perth, Melbourne and Canberra. The 2021 first half year program has been circulated with this edition of Call the Hands. An invitation is issued with the joining link during the week prior.

Australia Day Honour for Senior Society Member: David Mattiske, OAM

Congratulations to long standing Society member, David Mattiske on the award of an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) on Australia Day 2021. The award recognized his service to veterans and their families, and to the community. David has worked tirelessly for decades to ensure recognition of the RAN's involvement in World War 2 battles in the Philippines.

He served in HMAS Shropshire during WW2 which participated in the Battle of Surigao Strait and is noted as the last occasion battleships engaged in combat at sea.



Readers may recall stories published in Call the Hands in [November 2019](#) and [February 2020](#) which covered the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Surigao Strait and memorial initiated by David Mattiske.

The 2019 Community Maritime History Prize

In December 2020 the Naval Historical Society was announced as the winner of the 2019 Australian National Maritime Museum's Community Maritime History Prize. The strong field of nominations canvassed a wide range of topics, including fishing, Pacific exploration, colonial history and biography.



The prize was awarded to the Society for its website, <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/>

The Museum's Signals Magazine announcement stated,

'the winner demonstrates some of the many ways in which the sea and maritime influences have been central to shaping Australia, its people and its culture'.

It went on to say,

'the website launched in 2018, features events of interest, a research service, profiles of naval heritage sites, information on guided tours and membership, a members' page and access to more than 2,000 articles. Uncluttered and easy to navigate, the website provides an excellent resource for anyone interested in many aspects of naval history.'

Occasional Papers

In this edition

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

- Occasional Paper 99 - HMAS Tarakan fire Jan 1950
- Occasional Paper 100 - Operation Estes
- Occasional Paper 101 -RAN Torpedo Factory, Neutral Bay

Policy Change

Please note that from March 2021 occasional papers will be distributed to members only in line with policy for the Society's quarterly magazine the Naval Historical Review. Papers will however be posted to the Society website after 12 months. To continue receiving the most recent editions subscribers may wish to apply for [membership of the Society](#) through our online shop.

Photo of the Month



Two members of the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS)
Fire squad carry out a drill in Melbourne, January 1943

News in Brief

HMAS Supply home

The Royal Australian Navy's new auxiliary oiler replenishment ship, NUSHIP *Supply*, has arrived at its homeport of Garden Island, Sydney. It is one of two new auxiliary oiler replenishments that will provide combat and logistics support to the Royal Australian Navy's fleet.

Supply is the second ship to carry the name and the first Navy vessel to be equipped with the newest generation of Saab Australia's 9LV Combat Management System.

Due to commission into service later this year, *Supply* and her sister ship NUSHIP

Stalwart will carry fuel, dry cargo, water, food, ammunition, equipment and spare parts to provide operational support to deployed naval or combat forces based far from ports for long periods.



FAA Award

The Fleet Air Arm has been recognised for its contribution to Operation Bursa with the awarding of the Australian Service Medal with the Counter Terrorism/Special Recovery clasp.

Operation Bursa ran from 1980 to 1990 and had elements of 723, 816 and 817 Squadrons provide air support to Special Forces protecting offshore oil rigs against potential terrorist attack.

"The operations were real seat-of-the-pants flying," Captain Whittaker said.

"Particularly in the Wessex – looking through today's flight safety and risk management prism, those operations in the 1980s would never be conducted now.

"This was before such technology as night vision goggles or GPS. It involved six Wessex aircraft flying in formation at low level, over water, at night, with nothing more than strategically placed cyalume glow sticks attached to the aircraft for formation keeping.

"Just being on recall at short notice-to-move was in itself a challenge. This was pre-mobile phones and the squadron duty officer had the latest technology, a pager, meaning he had to call lots of landline numbers in the event of a call out. Some people remember being in the Roxy Cinema in Nowra and squadron recall announcements being made during the movie."



L to R, CAPT Mal Wright, Rtd; CAPT Vic Battese, Rtd; CDRE Peter Ashworth, Rtd; CDRE Don Dezentje RAN; CAPT Andrew Whittaker RAN; CDRE Vince Di Pietro Rtd and CAPT Marcus Peake Rtd

This Month in History

January 1843	LEUT Charles B. Yule, RN, of HMS BRAMBLE, discovered and named Heron Island.
February 1884	HMVS CHILDERS, (torpedo boat), ran out of coal off the coast of Portugal and was forced to lay-to until found by the steamer Pathan which supplied her with enough coal to reach Gibraltar. To avoid a similar situation on the run from Malta to Alexandria she was diverted to Crete, and so became the first Australian warship to visit the Greek naval base at Suda Bay.
January 1901	The gunboat, HMCS PROTECTOR, (CAPT William Creswell, RN), arrived back in Port Adelaide after 153 days away, serving in China from September to November 1900, during the Boxer rebellion.
January 1909	15 sailors from HMS ENCOUNTER, (cruiser), were drowned when the ship's pinnace was rammed by SS DUNSMORE off Garden Island, Sydney. The men were on their way ashore to conduct a range shoot at Malabar when the incident occurred. All those killed were later buried in a communal grave in the Naval Section of Rookwood Cemetery.
February 1914	The E class submarines HMA Ships AE1, (LCDR T. F. Besant, RN), and AE2, (LCDR H. H. G. D. Stoker, RN), were commissioned in Portsmouth, England. AE1 and AE2 were laid down in Vickers Yard, Barrow-in-Furness, England. AE1 was launched on 22 May 1913, and AE2 on 18 June 1913. AE1 and AE2 departed Portsmouth on 2 March 1914, for Australia.
January 1915	HMAS AUSTRALIA docked at Rosyth, Scotland, after reaching British waters by way of Cape Horn.
January 1918	PO P. J. Kempster, DSM, died when HM Submarine G8 was lost in the North Sea. Kempster was an RAN rating on loan to the RN and had been awarded the DSM in 1917 for his bravery and devotion to duty while serving in G8.
January 1923	HMAS PENGUIN paid off for disposal. She had served as a depot ship at Garden Island since commissioning into the RAN in 1913. On 9 May 1923 she was towed to Cockatoo Island and handed over to the Commonwealth Shipbuilding Board. She was transferred to the Commonwealth Shipping Board in August 1924 for final disposal. Breaking up was completed at Cockatoo Island in April 1925 and the hull sold to Mr HP Stacey of Sydney.
February 1929	Six Seagull Mk III amphibian aircraft embarked in seaplane carrier HMAS ALBATROSS at Melbourne.
January 1936	HMAS AUSTRALIA in Alexandria, Egypt, fired a 70 gun salute on the occasion of the funeral of HM King George V.
January 1940	The first Australian and New Zealand troop convoy of the Second World War, US 1, sailed from Sydney for the Middle East. The escort consisted of HMA Ships CANBERRA and SYDNEY and HMS RAMILLIES
January 1942	Coastwatcher SBLT C. L. Page, RANVR, reported 22 Japanese heavy bombers passing over Tabar Island bound for Rabaul.
January 1945	The Battle of Lingayen Gulf, 5 to 9 January. HMA Ships AUSTRALIA, SHROPSHIRE, ARUNTA, WARRAMUNGA, GASCOYNE and WARREGO were engaged. HMA Ships AUSTRALIA and ARUNTA were hit by Japanese aircraft. A Zero carrying a large bomb dived on ARUNTA from low altitude but clever manoeuvring caused the aircraft to miss and plunge into the sea within metres of the destroyer's steering gear room on the port side. ARUNTA was holed and damage was caused to her steering motors. Stoker PO R.A. Hand and AB H.L.E. Sellick were killed. In the same attack a second aircraft dive was made vertically into HMAS AUSTRALIA's upper deck, amidships on the port side. The explosion killed 25 and wounded 30 of the cruiser's crew. A fire set by the explosion was soon extinguished and reports indicated damage was slight and fighting efficiency was not greatly impaired. HMA Ships GASCOYNE, (frigate), and WARREGO, (sloop), and the USS BENNION engaged two Japanese destroyers in a running battle near Luzon. The faster enemy destroyers withdrew and escaped. HMAS Platypus left Sydney to proceed to New Guinea for service as a Repair and Maintenance Vessel.
February 1947	HMAS Dubbo paid off into Reserve at Sydney. On 20 February 1958 she was sold for scrap to Mitsubishi Shoji Kaisha Ltd, Tokyo. In June 1958 the Japanese salvage vessel Tukushima Maru departed Sydney for Japan with Dubbo and another former RAN vessel, the repair and maintenance vessel Platypus, in tow.
January 1950	HMAS Tarakan was berthed alongside Garden Island, Sydney, making good defects prior to departure for New Guinea when an explosion occurred aft under the mess decks, resulting in the deaths of seven sailors and one dockyard tradesman. A further 12 sailors and one dockyard tradesman were injured. The ship was extensively damaged. Tarakan did not return to seagoing service and on 12 March 1954 she was sold on behalf of the United Kingdom Ministry of Transport to EA Marr & Sons Pty Ltd, of Mascot, Sydney, for breaking up.

February 1956	Sea Venoms were formally accepted into RAN service. 808 Squadron had reformed in the United Kingdom on 23 August 1955 and was the first RAN Squadron to be equipped with Sea Venoms. The Squadron embarked in HMAS MELBOURNE, which had recently commissioned and completed her work up in British waters, in March 1956 and arrived in Australia in April.
February 1964	HMAS MELBOURNE, (aircraft carrier), and HMAS VOYAGER, (destroyer), collided in a night exercise off Jervis Bay. VOYAGER sank with a loss of 82 lives. The GC was awarded posthumously to CPO Jonathon Rogers, DSM, for conspicuous bravery in rescue following the collision. The subsequent inquiries and two Royal Commissions into the cause of the collision shook the RAN to its foundations.
January 1968	The Attack class patrol boat, HMAS ADVANCE, (LEUT G. D. R. Hammer, RAN), was commissioned in Maryborough, QLD. Mrs George, (Wife of the Third Naval Member), performed the commissioning ceremony. ADVANCE was laid down in Walker's Yard, QLD, and launched on 16 August 1967.
January 1969	HMS TRUMP, (submarine), the last of the British submarines on loan to the RAN for training, sailed from Sydney to return to the UK. TRUMP was credited with making the last torpedo attack on an enemy vessel by a British submarine during World War II.
February 1975	Grumman S2E Tracker 853 ditched during night flying when doing a Bolter (missed wire and going around again) from HMAS Melbourne. The 4 crew were all rescued unhurt. This was the only RAN Tracker lost during flying operations.
January 1978	During squadron exercises on 11 January involving HMA Ships Barbette, Barricade and Bombard, an Aztec Piper aircraft on charter to the RAN and assisting with the exercise collided with Bombard's mainmast and foremast, and crashed into the sea. Both of the aircraft's civilian crew were killed. The remainder of the exercise was cancelled and <i>Barbette</i> resumed patrol operations on 28 January.
January 1983	LEUT G. A. Ledger, RAN, piloted an Iroquois helicopter in a hazardous night operation to rescue 13 passengers trapped in four cable cars over Keppel Harbour in Singapore, during a heavy monsoon storm. The passengers had become trapped after the cable was damaged by the boom of a floating crane being towed down the harbour. LEUT Ledger was then on exchange with the Singaporean Air Force, and was awarded the Military State Commendation of Singapore.
February 1989	The Lee Enfield .303 rifle completed a century of service. It was last used in the RAN on an official occasion at the Anzac Day Ceremony in Canberra in 1985.
January 1991	During Operation DESERT STORM HMA Ships SYDNEY and BRISBANE formed part of the air defence screen around Battle Force Zulu, in the Arabian Gulf, which included up to three USN aircraft carriers.
February 2001	The Collins class submarines HMA Ships DECHAINEUX, (CMDR S. P. Davies, RAN), and SHEEAN, (CMDR W. H. Wiltshire, RAN), were commissioned in a joint ceremony in Adelaide. Both submarines were laid down in the Australian Submarine Corporation Yard in Adelaide. DECHAINEUX was launched on 12 March 1998. SHEEAN was launched on 1 May 1999, with Mrs Ivy Hayes, (Sister of OS Teddy Sheean), performing the launching ceremony.
January 2020	Amphibious ship HMAS CHOULES arrived in Western Port, Victoria having evacuated 1,117 residents and holidaymakers from Mallacoota, after the devastating New Year's Eve bushfires

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/>

Operation Bursa: Australian Service Medal (ASM)

Former and serving RAN Fleet Air Arm personnel who believe they are eligible to apply for the Operation Bursa ASM will find useful guidance on the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia (FAAAA) [website](#).



For readers seeking more information about Operation Bursa visit this [FAAAA web page](#).

The NHSA also published a short [occasional paper \(89\)](#) in September 2020 on Operation Bursa.