



NAVAL HISTORY

“The maintenance of the maritime well-being of the nation”

is the principal objective of the Navy League of Australia

Patron:
Governor of Victoria

President:
LCDR Roger Blythman
RANR RFD RET'D

Snr Vice President: Frank
McCarthy

Vice President Secretary: Ray
Gill

PP: Treasurer: Special Events:
CMDR John Wilkins OAM RFD
RANR

BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

From the 4th May to the 8th May 1942, the United States Navy together with the Royal Australian Navy engaged the Japanese in the first naval battle in history where opposing fleets were never in visual contact.

The month of May 2016, marks the 74th anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea.

The R.A.N.'s cruisers HMAS Australia and HMAS Hobart participated in the Battle of the Coral Sea, together with units of the United States navy including the United States aircraft carriers USS Yorktown and USS Lexington.

The Battle of the Coral Sea may well have been the turning point of the Japanese threat against Australia.

THE LOSS OF THE A.H.S. "CENTAUR"

May 14th 2016 marked the 73rd anniversary of the loss of the hospital ship "Centaur".

The sinking of the Australian hospital ship "Centaur" resulted in the loss of 268 lives. A Japanese submarine off the Queensland coast torpedoed the "Centaur" at 0400 hours on 14th May 1943.

The 64 survivors of the sinking were rescued 36 hours later by the USN destroyer USS MUGFORD.

"Centaur" a motor passenger ship of 3275 tonnes owned by the Ocean Steamship Company Limited, and registered at Liverpool England, had formerly been in the West Australia-Singapore trade. She was made available by the Ministry of War Transport for conversion to a hospital ship in January 1943, for use in the New Guinea area.

The "Centaur" was converted to a hospital ship at the Williamstown Naval Dockyard Melbourne in early 1943. She left Melbourne on her maiden voyage as an Australian hospital ship on 12th March 1943.

NAVAL HISTORY C'TND

It was on "Centaur's" second voyage to New Guinea when she was 2 days out from Sydney that she was attacked by a unit of the Japanese first submarine squadron and sunk, resulting in the biggest individual loss of life from a Japanese torpedo suffered in Australian waters during the war.

Those who perished in the "Centaur" were 45 members of the ship's crew including the Master Captain G.A. Murray and 233 medical personal including 11 nurses.

Many of the medical personnel were members of the 2/12 field ambulance.

Until 6.1/2 years ago the exact location of the wreck of the "Centaur" was unknown, however, world-renowned shipwreck hunter David Mearns found the wreck, via sonar tracking, on December 20th 2009 at a depth of 2059 metres, 48km east of the southern tip of Moreton Island.

LOSS OF HMAS KUTTABUL

In the last few hours of May 31st and the early hours of June 1st 1942, now 74 years ago, Japan brought World War 2 to Sydney, when Japanese midget submarines entered Sydney Harbour to attack allied shipping.

HMAS KUTTABUL, a converted Sydney Ferry being used as a naval accommodation vessel, was sunk with the tragic loss of 21 lives. The Dutch submarine K9 was damaged in the attack, and the Japanese midget submarines were subsequently destroyed.

VISIT TO MELBOURNE BY HMAS SUCCESS

A recent visitor to Melbourne was the RAN'S replenishment ship HMAS Success under the command of Captain Justin Jones with LCDR. Peter Russell as Executive Officer.

HMAS SUCCESS Pendant No.304 arrived in Melbourne Friday morning 6th May 2016 from Sydney, where the ship has been engaged recently in exercises and training along the Australian East Coast with a port visit to Newcastle plus time in Jervis Bay included. In addition to the Navy League welcome, SUCCESS was also welcomed by many Melbourne family and friends of the ships company.

HMAS SUCCESS, an auxiliary oiler replenishment ship, is based on French Durance class design. She was built by the Cockatoo Island Dockyard Pty. Ltd., in Sydney. The ship is 157.2 metres in length with a beam of 21.2 metres and is crewed by 205 navy personnel.

SUCCESS was launched in 1984 and commissioned into the RAN in 1986, she has a speed of 20 knots and at 15 knots has a range of 9600 nautical miles,.

On boarding HMAS SUCCESS, on her first visit to Melbourne in four years the Leagues Graeme Furlonger, Allan Paull and Frank McCarthy were conducted on a tour of the ship during which time we left a small gift from the League with the Commanding Officer as a memento of the visit.

In the course of a Wardroom chat we were advised that HMAS SUCCESS will remain in the fleet for six more years.

On the 9th August 1980 the Minister for Defence, Mr. Jim Killen, participated in the Keel Laying Ceremony of "SUCCESS". In March of 1984, the ship was launched and 30 years ago on 23rd April 1986 HMAS SUCCESS was commissioned into the RAN.

An eventual replacement for HMAS SUCCESS, or for that matter for RAN'S second tanker HMAS SIRIUS dependent upon which is required first, will be a Spanish Navantia designed and built tanker similar to the Cantabria Class with RAN modifications.

The lead ship of her class, SPS CANTABRIA under the command of CMDR Jose Nieto spent nine months in Australian waters during 2013 between the months of February and November, as a replacement for HMAS SUCCESS whilst SUCCESS was undergoing maintenance.

CANTABRIA of course at that time was also being assessed and evaluated for the role a ship of her class will play in the RAN.

The first of possibly two new Spanish built tankers for the RAN is expected to be completed by the end of 2019.

During this brief visit to Melbourne by HMAS SUCCESS, Senior members of the ships company engaged in the 2016 commemorative service of the “Battle of the Coral Sea” which was held at Melbourne’s Shrine of Remembrance. Representative of the ships company, with a little help from the Navy League, were also able to attend the Collingwood Vs Carlton AFL football match during the visit.

The 30 year old HMAS SUCCESS returned home last year 2015 to Fleet Base East in Sydney following a six month deployment to the Middle East on operation “Manitou”. During that period SUCCESS was assigned at various times to six different task forces: CTF150, TF53, TF54, NATO T508, Australia’s JTF633 and French TF473.

The ships biggest logistics customer was EUNAVFOR TF465.

SUCCESS was the first RAN ship to be force-assigned to a NATO Operation, “Ocean-Shield”, Reporting to Maritime Command Headquarters at Northwood in London.

SUCCESS was also the first RAN ship to integrate into a French Carrier battle group TF473.

As if the breadth of the ships activities could not stretch any further, in the approach to the Suez Canal having represented Australia at Centenary of Anzac Commemorations in Greece, the ship was given the task to provide escort and force protection to a US Nuclear Submarine during its transit of the Suez Canal and the Straits of Gubal.

HMAS SUCCESS sailed from Melbourne 9th May 2016 returning to Sydney for further maintenance, to be followed by additional exercises off the East and Northern Coasts of Australia for the remainder of 2016.

The exercises will include “Exercise Kakadu”.



HMAS SUCCESS ARRIVING AT PORT MELBOURNE



HMAS SUCCESS ARRIVING AT STATION PIER



HMAS SUCCESS BERTHING AT PORT MELBOURNE



HMAS SUCCESS MIDSHIPMAN SIMING



HMAS SUCCESS COMMANDING OFFICER CAPTAIN JUSTIN JONES WITH THE LEAGUES ALLAN PAULL AND FRANK MCCARTHY



VICTORIA-TASMANIA DIVISION

Tasmania Established 1900, Victoria October 1915

2016-2017 ANNUAL DUES

Please forward annual payment of **\$35.00** to Hon. Secretary R Gill by 30th June and that will assist our Honorary Officers responsible for the administration.

Payment can be made direct by internet banking into our account....

BSB 033 389 ACCOUNT NO; 107631 WESTPAC

Or POST to

P.O. BOX 2340 MOUNT WAVERLEY 3149

Please ensure reference name is included.

We hope you are enjoying Navy League's quarterly journal "The Navy"

We hold occasional Welcome Luncheons for visiting ships and special events

Depending on ship arrivals so please let our Secretary Ray know if you are

Interested in being notified of these events and we will update our records.

To contact Secretary phone 9884 6237 if you/or a friend would like to attend events or need advice or email...raydotgill@optusnet.com.au

AS IT WAS

Once again we invite you to join us as we take a look at more recent naval history, at items that involved, or caught the eye of Navy League over the years on our "Keep Watch" brief. This time we go back 10 years as we browse through our records and reports to May 2006 we note that it was around this time, we reported on the following: -

1. HMAS STUART IN MELBOURNE
2. SOLOMON ISLANDS UNREST
3. NEW CN FOR RN
4. SEARCH FOR HMAS SYDNEY (II)

HMAS STUART VISITS MELBOURNE

The Anzac Class Frigate HMAS STUART FFH153 paid a visit to Melbourne during April.

The 3600 tonne Frigate arrived on 19th April 2006 and was docked at Tenix for repairs to A damaged propeller.

AS IT WAS C'TND

SOLOMON ISLANDS UNREST

Following the April elections in the Solomon Islands unrest has again erupted to the extent that members of the Australian Federal Police Force, together with Australian Defence Force personnel have been deployed to the region to enforce law and order and to engage in peace keeping duties. Included in the ADF deployment were the RAN vessels HMAS TOWNSVILLE and HMAS ARMIDALE.

HMAS TOWNSVILLE is one of the remaining Fremantle Class Patrol boats from an original fleet of 15 armed with a 40-60 general purpose Bofors gun plus machine guns and a crew of 24.

HMAS ARMIDALE is the lead ship of her class of Patrol boats of a planned fleet of 14. Her main armament is a 25mm bushmaster gun plus machine guns and a ships company of 21.

NEW CHIEF OF NAVY FOR ROYAL NAVY

There has been a change of First Sea Lord in the RN recently, with Admiral Sir Alan West handing over to Admiral Jonathon Band, who was Commander-in Chief Fleet.

Admiral West represents the generation of Naval Officers who commanded warships during the Falklands War. He was awarded the DSO., after his ship the Frigate, HMS ARDENT, was lost to enemy Argentine Action in San Carlos Water.

NLA Vic Div, members may perhaps recall the 2005 Creswell Oration with the presence of Vice Admiral Chris Ritchie AO., RAN., and back then a member of the Leagues advisory council.

Following his presentation of the Oration, Vice Admiral Ritchie welcomed Admiral West to Melbourne at Melbourne Airport. This was followed with them both visiting Nuship Toowoomba at the Tenix Williamstown Dockyards.

During the Falklands War of 1982, Admiral Band was then Flag Lieutenant to the then Commander-in-Chief Fleet, Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse, thus providing Admiral Band with the opportunity of studying the workings of High Command. Admiral Band will no doubt face a busy period over the next three or more years working on such tasks as the ongoing introduction of the proposed two new carriers HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH and HMS PRINCE OF WALES, plus endeavouring to obtain further astute class submarines, deciding upon the type 23 Frigate replacement and overseeing the introduction of the type 45 destroyers to the RN Fleet.

The current edition of the Leagues magazine April-June 2006, reports on the recent launching of the first of the 7000 tonne type 45 destroyers HMS DARING.

For your further general information the "D" Class ships to follow DARING are to be named HMS'S DAUNTLESS, DIAMOND, DRAGON, DEFENDER and DUNCAN.

And so well done and best wishes to the Royal Navy's Admirals Sir Alan West and Sir Jonathan Band.

HUNT FOR HMAS SYDNEY (II)

The NSW Government will put \$250,000 towards a new search for the missing World War II warship HMAS SYDNEY which was sunk by the German Raider HSK KORMORAN on November 19th 1941.

No trace has ever been found of the Sydney or her 645 crew, sunk off the West Australian Coast. The search will also try to find the KORMORAN, which also sank after the engagement with the Sydney.

The search area covering up to 1450 square nautical miles at depths between 2000 to 4000metres has been determined in the main from accounts of the German KORMORAN survivors.

ALFRED GRAVING DOCK WILLIAMSTOWN

With the recent Government announcements that Naval shipbuilding in Australia will be focused predominantly in South Australia and Western Australia, it raises the question of what's to become of the Williamstown Dockyard if BAE fail to receive or obtain naval shipbuilding subcontracts.

It is unfortunately likely, under those circumstances, that the Williamstown Dockyard area would then be redeveloped, which raises the further question of what then would transpire in regard to the heritage listed Alfred Graving Dock situated within the area of the BAE dockyard?

The Alfred Graving Dock has now been operational since 1874 when the first ship to enter the dock was the HMVS NELSON, a training ship of the Victorian Navy.

As early as 1853 the Williamstown Harbour Master, Captain Charles Ferguson, had recommended the construction of a Graving Dock capable of taking vessels up to 3500 tonnes. He drew up preliminary plans and proposed a site, the exact location of which was finally decided upon in 1863. Later planning adjustments substantially increased the tonnage capacity and capabilities of the Dock.

It was two years later in 1865 that the American Confederacy ship "SHENANDOAH" arrived in Melbourne and she made use of the existing Government Patent Slipway at Williamstown for necessary maintenance work to the vessel.

Prior to the completion of the Graving Dock, His Royal Highness Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, after whom the Dock was named, laid a memorial stone on January 4th 1868, he was visiting Australia as the Captain of HMS GALATEA.

It was a great day for the Dockyard and the event received wide coverage in newspapers of the day.

Upon completion of the Dock in 1874 one of the newspaper reports detailed that "The Graving Dock, now completed and in actual use, is one of the greatest public works in the Southern Hemisphere. It will prove a great convenience to ships visiting our Port, and confirm Melbourne in the position she has already attained – that, namely, of the commercial metropolis of Australia and the South Pacific. Adding that though 342,000 pounds was a very large sum of money to outlay for the Dock, there is no reason to hope that in the prestige, as well as the more solid advantages which it will confer upon the Colony we shall be well rewarded for the outlay".

The general approximate dimensions of the Dock are length 480 feet, width of entrance at high water 77 feet, depth at high water 26 feet.

It would indeed be a great pity to see the end of naval shipbuilding at the Williamstown Dockyard should that eventuate and indeed a great shame if indeed one of the Colony's great engineering accomplishments of the 1800's, the heritage listed Alfred Graving Dock, were to also disappear.

Membership

Any person with an interest in maritime affairs, or who wishes to acquire an interest in, or knowledge of, maritime affairs and who wishes to support the objectives of the League, is invited to join.

OBJECTIVES

The principal objective of the Navy League of Australia is "The maintenance of the maritime well-being of the Nation" by:

- Keeping before the Australian people the fact that we are a maritime nation and that a strong Navy supported by maritime elements of the Air Force and Army and other Government Maritime agencies are indispensable elements of our national well-being and vital to the freedom of Australia.
- Promoting defence self-reliance by supporting maritime research, defence industry, Australian shipping, ship-building, port and transport infrastructure and off shore resource exploration and development.
- Promoting and encouraging the interest and training of youth in the sea.

ACTIVITIES

The Navy League of Australia works towards its objectives in a number of ways:

- By including in its membership leading representatives of the many elements which form the maritime community.
- Through soundly- based contributions by members to journals and newspapers, and other media comment.
- By publishing *The Navy*, a quarterly journal reporting on local and overseas maritime happenings, past, present, and projected.
- By organizing symposia, ship visits and various other functions of maritime interests throughout the years.
- By supporting Australian Navy Cadets, and assisting in the provision of training facilities.

Member participation is encouraged in all these activities.

POLICY

The policy of the League can be found at the back of *The Navy*.

Joining the League

To become a Member of The League, you do not need to have had any previous maritime experience. You merely need an interest in maritime affairs. Simply complete the Application Form below, and post it, together with your first annual subscription of \$35.00 (which includes the four quarterly editions of The Navy), to the Hon Secretary of the Division of the Navy League in the State in which you reside, the address of which are as follows:

New South Wales Division: GPO Box 1719, Sydney, NSW 2001.
Victorian Division: PO Box 2340, Mt Waverley, Vic 3149.
Queensland Division: GPO Box 1481, Brisbane, QLD 4001.
South Australian Division: PO Box 3008, Unley, SA 5061.
West Australian Division: 3 Prosser Way, Myaree, WA 6154.

If you live in Tasmania, please post the form to the Hon Secretary of the Victorian Division. If you live in the Australian Capital Territory or the Northern Territory, please post the form to the Hon Secretary of the New South Wales or South Australian Division respectively.

Subscriptions are due on 1 July in each year, and your membership will be current to 30 June immediately following the date on which you join the League, except that if your first subscription is received during the period 1 April to 30 June in any year, your initial membership will be extended to 30 June in the following year.

THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA		
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP		
To: The Hon. Secretary The Navy League of Australia		
Division _____		
I wish to join the Navy League of Australia, the objectives of which I support, and I enclose a remittance for \$35.00 (including \$3.18 GST) being my first annual subscription to 30 June next.		
Name: [Mr] [Mrs] [Ms] [Rank] _____		
<small>PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY</small>		
Street _____		
Suburb _____	State _____	P/code _____
Phone _____	Mobile _____	
Email _____		
Signature _____		Date _____
<small>Subscriptions are due on 1 July in each year and your membership will be current to 30 June immediately following the date on which you join the League, except that if your first subscription is received during the period 1 April to 30 June in any year, your initial membership will be extended to 30 June in the following year.</small>		