

President's Musings – December 2018

We wish you all a very merry Christmas and a healthy and safe New Year!

Our 'End Of Year Celebration Meeting' proved very successful this year. CMDR Max Speedy enthralled his audience with his experiences of the Vietnam Conflict as 2ic of the RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam.

Our first meeting for 2019 will be held at the Waverley RSL on Monday February 25.

We have been very fortunate to obtain a copy of the History of the Royal Australian Navy Volume II, which I have pre-viewed. To open our year I have selected for you the third chapter of this excellent presentation, entitled 'Ban Zai' which covers the conflict with Japan until August 1945. The footage includes the loss of HMA ships Sydney, Perth, Armidale, Yarra, Canberra, fall of Singapore, formation of our WRANS, Kokoda, MacArthur in Australia, the home front, etc. until the cessation of hostilities. *The reason I selected this chapter for you was that we still have veterans amongst our number who actually fought in these campaigns, and I want to honour them and remember those amongst our membership who were also there, and who have since passed over the bar. 'Lest We Forget!'*

Navy Week was most enjoyable this year, and congratulations to all concerned. HMAS Warramunga II has always been special to me personally since Jenny and I saw her launched at Williamstown on May 23 1998. It was a real pleasure this year to have a ship inspection and enjoy the ship's hospitality at the reception. As reported previously the Waverley RSL hosted us to lunch, together with the ship's XO and Warrant Officer. All very pleasant!

Also most enjoyable was the CO's reception on board HMAS Cerberus. Captain Mike Oborn is a great host. The function was held in the Seamanship School and 'Beating the Retreat and Ceremonial Sunset' were held on the wharf outside facing Hanns Inlet. It was a delightful setting and as it got dark the lighting proved to be excellent. So well-lit was it that I was able to take some good photos, and it is with pleasure that we share them with you.



I have just received my copy of Ian Pfennigwerth's Bravo Zulu Volume II, 1975-2014. Have you ordered yours yet?

To illustrate just what you are missing, I include another excerpt!

From Bravery Awards-2006-2014 Page 680

On 19 March 2007, HMAS *Farncomb* was conducting a dived open-ocean transit when debris fouled her casing and propeller. The submarine surfaced and a team was deployed to clear the obstructions. The weather worsened and the men were recalled, but a large

wave washed over the submarine and swept five into the sea. Recovering them was a difficult and protracted operation, requiring ninety minutes of effort in bad weather. Three of *Farncomb's* crew, Sonar Operator Petty Officer Greg Langshaw from Wagga Wagga NSW, Petty Officer Marine Technician Rohan Pugh from Subiaco WA and Leading Seaman Cook Stephen Rowell risked their own lives by swimming with lines to rescue their fellow crewman. They were dashed against the submarine's hull during the rescue and Greg Langshaw suffered broken ribs. For their acts of bravery at night in open sea, and in bad conditions, all three were awarded bravery medals in August 2009. As Chief of Navy remarked: 'Their courage and actions are worthy of the highest admiration of us all.'

Yours Aye!

Rex Williams.