

PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS JUNE 2017

Our May meeting was well attended and it is pleasing to find so many of us making use of the Warramunga Restaurant prior to our meeting. A lovely meal and a drink followed by an excellent speaker is all rather pleasant. It was great to share Jan's video of the 'Yachties' special day in Canberra, and to also hear further stories about these very brave men! 'Bravo Zulu' Jan! You certainly won't want to miss Doug Jenkin's account of his adventures in 1952 whilst serving in HMAS Culgoa, this month.

Recently I revisited the Galleries at the Shrine. Prime objective was to view the exhibition on the life and times of Field Marshall Thomas Blamey. Controversial he may have been, he certainly was an excellent war leader. Whilst there I visited the 'Cruisers' Display which contains artifacts of our colleague of fond memory, LCDR Mac Gregory RAN. Mac's Midshipman's Dirk, his Cap, and the binoculars he managed to retain from when he was sunk in Canberra, are all on display. I took a number of photos whilst viewing the displays, of which we share a few. I will certainly be revisiting the Shrine on July 22nd!!!

'NERVES AND STEEL' The Royal Australian Navy in the Pacific, December 1941-September 1945: a Shrine special exhibition which opens at the Shrine on July 22nd and continues until July 2018!

Neil Sharkey, the Exhibitions Curator at the Shrine of Remembrance writes: 'When Australians think of the war against Japan they usually reflect on the role played by our soldiers in bloody actions in Malaya, New Guinea and Borneo. These land campaigns were however, only aspects of a much wider conflict, fought across the vast Pacific Ocean. The upcoming Shrine of Remembrance special exhibition *Nerves and Steel: The Royal Australian Navy in the Pacific, explores the war in the Pacific as an essentially Naval struggle*. Imperial Japan's defeat ultimately hinged on the destruction of its powerful navy and the severing of sea communications between Japan and its far flung Asian and Pacific conquests.

The major actors in history's greatest naval conflict were the immense fleets of Japan and the United States but the RAN played a significant and active role in concert with the Americans. *Nerves and Steel* celebrates the achievements of RAN sailors between December 1941 and September 1945 and how they contributed to the ultimate Allied victory. *Nerves and Steel* features paintings on loan from the Australian War Memorial, original memorabilia from the Shrine's own collection and still living veterans-HMAS *Perth* survivor, David Manning, and a former corvette gunnery officer James Paizis.'

STOP PRESS: In concert with Nerves and Steel there will be Panel Discussion featuring Veterans who took part in the Pacific War. We will share their individual stories and be able to ask them questions as well !! Full details at a later date but be sure to keep Wednesday 9th August free!

In 2006, Jenny and I flew to Hawaii where we embarked in Carnival Spirit for a cruise around the islands and subsequent voyage to Vancouver. Moored along -side her in Honolulu was a four masted, iron hulled sailing ship rather worse for wear. Her name is 'Falls of Clyde'. I was intrigued by this vessel and determined to learn of her story:

Falls of Clyde was built in 1878 in Port Glasgow, and for the next 26 years she bore the Red Ensign. Purchased by the Matson Line she sailed to Honolulu in 1899 and registered under the Hawaiian flag, later registered as an American flag vessel. From 1899 to 1907 she made over 60 voyages

between Hilo, Hawaii and San Francisco, carrying general cargo and passengers. In 1907 she was converted to an Oil tanker. When I first viewed her she was owned by the Bishop Museum in Hawaii, however subsequently ownership was transferred to a not for profit group 'Friends of the Falls of Clyde'. The 'Friends' failed in their attempts to have her dry-docked and subsequently repaired.

In August 2016 a group based in Glasgow launched the 'Save Falls of Clyde'-International campaign, with a view to have her returned to Scotland. They are currently seeking to raise \$359,000 to cover the cost of shipping. Once relocated to Scotland it is planned to restore her to sailing condition.

We in Australia are so fortunate to have Polly Woodside in Melbourne, and the James Craig in Sydney. We wish the Friends of Falls of Clyde all the best in the endeavours.

It is with sadness that we report the 'Passing over the Bar' by our long time friend and colleague Clive Wood on April 27th. A Warramunga man through and through, his whimsical smile will be missed at our meetings. Our deepest sympathy goes to his wife and family.

Ian Shackleton is sorely missed from amongst us, having been hospitalised for some time. Frank Cronin has visited Ian at the Maroondah Hospital and states than Ian would enjoy receiving a visit.

YOURS AYE!!

REX WILLIAMS