

History of the Navy Victoria Network (NVN)

At social gatherings, functions and ceremonies where we commemorate past events or celebrate an anniversary, an unmistakeable sense of pride at having served in the Navy becomes very evident. It reminds us all of the highs and lows of our service careers, re-kindles old friendships and reminds us of the camaraderie and bonds formed through the sharing of good times and bad. It is uplifting to the spirit and helps to generate that sense of common unity/community which is so vital to our enjoyment of life.

The aftermath of WW2 saw the establishment of a large number of ex-Service ship and unit associations who enjoyed getting together and perpetuating the camaraderie of Navy life.

Inevitably this number has dwindled over the years. Many thrived for over half a century and some have survived to the present day, held together by stalwart men and women mostly now well over the age of 80.

Some, sadly have slipped beneath the waves and disappeared virtually without trace: others, such as The Scrap Iron Flotilla and the HMAS Westralia Association, are battling to remain afloat.

It would be to the mutual benefit of all of us in the Navy family in Victoria if we could develop a more cohesive and co-operative network. Doing so could provide the facility to keep struggling associations going for as long as possible and explore ways to make future generations of Australians aware of the deeds, achievements and contribution those ships and units have made to the Australia we cherish today.

To this end the Naval Commemoration Committee Victoria (**NCCV**), the Melbourne Naval Centre (**MNC**) and the Navy Victoria Network (**NVN**) are now working together to better provide for the needs of the entire Navy family in Victoria – those who have served in the past, those currently serving, and the families of both.

Since WW2 the **NCCV**, on behalf of ship and unit associations, has done a superb job in directing its efforts to commemoration activities, memorial structures and services; it has striven to ensure these are supported, appropriately hallowed, preserved and respected. It has now expanded its activities to try to build a data base of the ex-Navy community in this state and an up-to-date list of key personnel in each existing organisation. More detail about its activities can be found in its bulletin *The Rogue's Yarn*.

The **MNC** is an umbrella body established after WW2 to see that monies raised for the benefit of ex-Navy personnel in Victoria are used for the purposes laid down in its by-laws: in essence this means that they must be used for the welfare of Navy personnel in this State. Through careful investment it has now established a situation where it has income which enables it to assist Navy organisations in financing equipment required and administrative costs for the mounting of

functions and activities benefitting Navy and ex-Navy personnel **IN VICTORIA**. It meets quarterly in February, May, August and November and applications for assistance must be submitted by the middle of the preceding month.

The **NVN** was established in 2011 and its mission, in broad terms, is to inform. Its website (www.navyvic.net) contains information about forthcoming events such as ship visits, commemoration services, scheduled reunions and so on. It draws attention to Naval matters of general interest such as RAN policy changes announced by Chief of Navy; the scope of its coverage is expected to increase as it evolves. Since its inception it has attracted considerable interest and it is now providing facility for individual ex-Navy associations in Victoria to have their own page on the NVN web-site. It would welcome input from the Returned and Services League, the Naval Association, the Navy League and the Naval Officers Club in their endeavours to disseminate information to a wide audience.

Through the combined, co-ordinated efforts of the organisations described above it is confidently expected that the Navy family in Victoria will enjoy improved capability to keep abreast of matters of interest. Readers are encouraged to 'spread the word' about what is going on in this regard and to encourage contact and communication with the **NCCV**, **NVN** and **MNC** if assistance is required to pursue worthwhile goals for the Navy family in Victoria.