

AMC LSI Association of Vic

Armed Merchant Cruiser / Landing Ship Infantry

M: 0412 390 686
 amclsivic@gmail.com
 ABN 64 106 175 155
 www.amclsi.navyvic.net



Patrons: Bruce Candy & Hiram Ristrom

President
 Chris Harvey
 1/129 Surrey Road
 Blackburn Vic 3130

ANZAC DAY SPECIAL EDITION 2018.



We all gathered near the corner of Elizabeth and Flinders Street, Melbourne on the morning of Anzac Day: members unfolded our banners in the sunshine, our Veterans chatted with shipmates and other members of our navy family. Time always goes fast on Anzac Day and before we know it, it was time to step off, it was 9.10am.

Anzac Day in Melbourne is a very special day for all of us, particularly this year as the Royal Australian Navy led the parade. Leading the Melbourne march were a well know father and son, both currently serving in our Royal Australian Navy; Captain Darren Greville Grogan CSM RAN and his father WOWTR Martin Greville Grogan OAM, RANR.



In the middle of the photo with the Grogan boys at the Shrine of Remembrance is Norm Tame WWII Veteran, served on HMAS Australia II, HMAS Kanimbla and HMAS Sydney III. Norm laid a wreath on behalf of HMAS Australia, at the Battle of Coral Sea Day Service at the Shrine of Remembrance Melbourne on May 6 this year.

We are all very proud of Norm Tame.

Mission Statement

To honour and remember those who served with the AMC/LSI including but not limited to HMAS WESTRALIA, KANIMBLA, MANOORA & ASSAULT.



MELBOURNE ANZAC DAY MARCH APRIL 2018



Jack Austin, Nev Phillips, Hiram Ristrom & Bill Tattersall.



Gordon Graham

Ron Williams

SYDNEY

SYDNEY



George & Denise Hinton & CPO Peter Cannon.



President Manoora Association of Vic
Graham Robinson

Fiona & Melissa

ANZAC
or
Anzac

Melbourne



John Mc Kernan



Mission Statement

To honour and remember those who served with the AMC/LSI including but not limited to HMAS WESTRALIA, KANIMBLA, MANOORA & ASSAULT.

The Kamikaze attack's of Leyte & Lingayen Gulf.

Towards the end of 1944 the Japanese Command became increasingly desperate. And the decision was made to employ suicide bombers against American and Australian warships for the first time. A Japanese Naval Officer, Captain Motoharu Okamura, Commanding Officer of the Tateyama Base in Tokyo said: " I firmly believe that the only way to swing the war in our favour is to resort to crash-drive attacks with our planes."

One of their ultimate weapons was a squad of young men called Kamikazes; some as young as 14 years, who were trained to deliberately crash their air-craft into enemy ships. A Flight Instructor named Takeo Tagata was training pilots in Taiwan for suicide missions. They were known as the Special Attack Unit.

HMAS Australia II was the first to suffer a Kamikaze attack, which occurred on October 20th, 1944 as it was taking part in an Allied invasion in the Philippines. The Kamikaze plane approached from the stern and crashed into the foremast and bridge causing an explosion and fire and killing Captain Dechaineux, Commander Rayment and 23 Crew. 8 officers and 56 ratings were severely wounded; Commodore Collins was one; later Vice-Admiral Sir John Collins.

The first Kamikaze attack to sink a ship were 24 volunteer pilots from 201st Navy Air Group who attacked the US escort carrier *St Lo* on the 25th October 1944. She sank within a hour and 100 Americans were killed. More than 5,000 Kamikaze pilots died in the Leyte Gulf battle taking out 34 ships.

Kanimbla, Manoora & Westralia all experienced Kamikaze attacks in the last years of the war. On the 14th November 1944 at 7.20am, one Kamikaze dived to attack **HMAS Manoora** and in a few minutes was spinning down in flames and crashed into the water. Allied fighters swung into action, and the men on *Westralia* and *Manoora* watched a dog-fight over land.

On the 8th January 1945 in Lingayen Gulf, the aircraft carrier **USS Kitkun Bay** was hit by two Kamikaze aircraft. **HMAS Westralia** was soon firing with all her anti-aircraft armament 4-inch guns, 40mm bofors and 20mm Oerlikon, endeavouring to shoot down the Japanese aircraft approaching the convoy from port quarter on steady course. The aircraft then banked steeply and came down in a steep dive aiming at **Westralia's** bridge. Repeated hits by all guns caused the aircraft to dive and crash astern. Discipline at all gun positions was excellent, and undoubtedly saved the ship; the suicide bomber dropping two bombs which both missed the ship. The plane exploded when it fell into the sea.

Once again, **HMAS Australia** was attacked by Kamikaze who came down in a blaze and tore into the forward funnel which was almost cut in half; **HMAS Australia** was attacked 7 times in all with the loss of 69 killed and 120 wounded in the Leyte and Luzon operations. One Ordinary Seaman, dreadfully wounded in the head stood by his gun until the enemy was only fifty feet away and then, giving it the full force of the eight barrel pom-pom, blowing the plane to pieces.

Monday the 8th January 1945, shortly after 1905 hours while the convoy was moving at 12 knots in a calm sea, coming in high on the port quarter was a Japanese Zeke dive bomber loaded with two bombs; **Kanimbla** was its target. All ships guns on the portside, and aft, were blazing away. As the Kamikaze plane came through the flak, and going into a steep dive, it seemed to be directed right at **HMAS Kanimbla**.

A.B Edward Buckeridge fired short bursts as the plane dived down. The port Pom Pom ammunition became jammed. **AB Bruce Bailey DSM** acted promptly, and courageously leapt forth and grabbed the shell, and unjammed the gun. The Kamikaze dropped the first of its bombs entering the sea some 100 yards away causing no damage. **Sig. Alan Roberts** turned to **Tel Peter Sherman** and said " I was shit scared then as the plane kept coming down", to which Sherman replied " you weren't the only one, me too! and everyone else".

Sources; Internet, NLA Trove, National Archives of Australia-Report of attack by enemy Aircraft. Books; HMAS Australia - A Lucky Ship by Des Shinkfield, Cry Havoc by Peter Sherman, Spearheads of Invasion by Swan, Taken by Storm by Mervyn Eather & Bill Galmes and HMAS Mk. IV fourth book 1945.



PARACHUTES - JAPANESE

by *Bruce Candy*

On the 22nd April 1944 the Invasion landing of Hollandia New Guinea South West Pacific took place. On board HMAS Westralia C61, L/Smn Joseph Hugh Hicks PM 4803 coxswain of landing craft W-9 was short of a crew member and AB Bruce Carne Candy PM 6374, who was on the forward Oerlikon 20mm gun locker was told to report to W-9 as a member of the landing craft ferrying assault troops onto the beaches at Humbolt Bay where the main enemy base of Hollandia was situated.

The Bay had been reinforced by Japanese troops who had parachuted onto the beach the day before the invasion by the US 7th Fleet, leaving parachutes all over the bay. Allied bombers, navy cruisers and destroyers had kept up a heavy fire of high explosive shells onto the landing beaches, and US Navy fliers (Hellcats) strafed the enemy on the morning of the landing.

W-9 landing craft had just disembarked her US assault troops in the bay, when the coxswain of W-9 L/Smn Joe Hicks yelled at AB Bruce Candy, *"Candy go get me a bloody Jap parachute"*. Bruce was very reluctant to leave the landing craft as the order had been given not to leave their boats while beached and "no souveniring". Joe Hicks yelled again at Bruce *"to hell with the order, I am captain of this ship now do as you are told and go get me a parachute, That's an order"*. So Bruce went ashore reluctantly and picked up a Japanese parachute and brought it back to W-9 landing craft.

Joe was not happy, he wanted more, and he yelled out in that loud voice *"Candy, go get me another"*. So once again Bruce bravely went ashore and picked up one more Japanese parachute and brought it back to the landing craft W-9 and dropped it into the bottom of the craft. Once again the voice of Joe Hicks came booming back into Bruce Candy ear, *"another Candy"*, and another it was. Bruce had to run and jump back onboard the landing craft as Joe Hicks was backing off the beach. On getting back to the ship, HMAS Westralia, the eagle eye of Lieutenant Penglase fixed on the unauthorised souvenir sitting in the bottom of the landing craft.

Penglase : *CANDY what have you got there;* **Candy reply:** *Japanese parachutes Sir;* **Penglase:** *CANDY are they your parachutes;* **Candy Reply:** *No not mine Sir;* **Penglase:** *"Right I WILL have one"*.

It didn't take long for crews on landing craft from HMAS Kanimbla and Manoora to catch on. Japanese parachutes ended up in private collection, museums and RSL. They were even made into wedding dressers, shorts, shirts and women's underwear. Imperial Japanese parachutes are made of silk, and don't require particular care or storage and are very cool to the skin.



HMAS WESTRALIA

L/Smn Joe Hicks

AB Bruce Candy

Mission Statement

To honour and remember those who served with the AMC/LSI including but not limited to HMAS WESTRALIA, KANIMBLA, MANOORA & ASSAULT.

Surgeon LCDR James Stuart GUEST, RAN, AM, OBE. 1916-2015



Jim was born in Mildura on 11th July 1916, the only child of Edith and James. He attended Mildura High School and Geelong College. He went on to the University of Melbourne where he resided at Trinity College. He graduated in Science (1938) specialising in zoology, then entered medicine and graduated in 1941, when he was appointed as a junior medical staff at Royal Melbourne Hospital.

In 1943 Dr Jim Guest enlisted in the Royal Australia Navy as a medical officer and served in HMAS Westralia from 1943 to 1946. Westralia had an operating theatre where Jim, and senior surgeon Douglas Leslie each performed surgery during amphibious assault operations in the South West Pacific, from Arawe (New Britain), Hollandia (New Guinea), Panaon, Lingayen, Tarakan, Labuan and Balikpapan in (Borneo) under the command of General Douglas MacArthur, US 7th Fleet. Jim received an OBE for his service during WW2. *[Jim's notes mention Brian Sergeant as the only other doctor (at least at the start of his time onboard), he was a radiologist from Melbourne].*

During this time, Jim needed a particular type of surgical retractor; he asked the ship's engineer to fashion the instrument, which is still in the museum at the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. On a return voyage to Milne Bay on the 28th January 1944, HMAS Westralia was attacked by a Japanese light bomber that emerged from a cloud and dived on the ship from out of the sun. It dropped a 250 lb. bomb which hit the forward well deck. Able Seaman Maurice Fair a member of the 20mm Oerlikon gun crew was severely wounded in the armpit. AB Bruce Candy who, was just going off duty from the 20mm gun came to his aid and applied a life belt to the wound to help stop the bleeding. Dr Jim Guest who ran from the sick bay quickly treated the wound of AB Maurice Fair and saved his life. *(According to Jim's notes, he and SBPO [Sick Bay Petty Officer] Alan Farquhar were the ones who ran from the sick bay to help Fair.)*

On a visit in 1944 to a native village of Tobati, built over the water of Lake Sentani (Dutch New Guinea) Jim was horrified by what he saw of the health and conditions of the natives living here. For many years after the war he contributed to rehabilitation of Ambon by providing medical assistance as a member of Gull

Force Medical Aid Team (1972-1984). Jim was an Honorary Naval ADC to the Governor of Victoria (1969-1982) and in 1982 was awarded an AM for distinguished service to medicine and the community. In 2013 he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Melbourne.

Sources: Photos: Guest Family, wreath laying Ceremony 2014 & HMAS Westralia 1943.

Internet: Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, NAA & Trove newspapers.

Information: Sibella Guest and Family, Dr Jim Guest Note book.

Books: Spearheads of Invasion by W. N. Swan 1953.



“ Our annual wreath laying ceremony at the Shrine of Remembrance is on Saturday 8th Of December which is the 75th ANNIVERSARY of the landing at Arawe New Britain 1943. Further details will be advised in our next newsletter. Please write this date in your diaries, ”

8th December 11am, Sanctuary, Shrine of Remembrance.



Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS) 1941 - 1984



During World War 2 over 3,000 women served in the Royal Australian Navy (**WRANS**) First established in April 1941 as the Women's Emergency Signalling Corps (**WESC**) with fourteen women working at HMAS Harman as wireless telegraphists, coders and clerks a non-combat branch near Canberra. The women performed outstanding roles in the WRANS; some were employed as drivers, education officers, mechanics, harbour messengers, stewards, cooks, medical and intelligence freeing up men for the sea combat role. With the outbreak of war in the Pacific, the Australian Government and the Navy Board approved the **Women's Royal Australian Naval Service** with 580 personnel on 24 July 1942

The response from the recruitment drive was unexpected with over 1,000 volunteers in 1942 and the RAN established the first officers training course for women at Flinders Naval Base on the 18th January 1943. **WRANS** were not permitted to serve on ships at sea in a combat area. **Lieutenant Ruby Boye BEM** was the only **WRAN** to serve in a combat zone as a radio operator on Vanikoro Island (Solomon Islands). She was appointed as a **Coastwatcher** in 1939 by the RAN and broadcast weather and shipping reports four times a day. **Ruby** was on duty during the battle of Savo Island in August 1942, when HMAS Canberra, US Quincy, Astoria and Vincennes were lost at the US Guadalcanal landing. She was awarded the British Empire Medal for her service. The **WRANS** was disbanded in 1948, but re-established on the 18th June 1950 and granted permanent status. They campaigned to expand the service restrictions on married (1969) and pregnant (1974); non-combat deployment women (1975) were removed and in 1978, all **WRANS** received equal pay and, in 1985, all female personnel were integrated into the **ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY**.



Florence Violet McKenzie, OBE, WESC.



Florence Violet Granville was born 28 September 1890 in Melbourne of English-born parents. Her mother was widowed in 1894 and remarried George Wallace. Florence was educated at the Girls Public High School, Sydney, enrolled in science at University of Sydney in 1915; but unable to continue because of financial difficulties within the family. Florence studied electrical engineering at Sydney Technical College, graduated in 1923 with a diploma, and bought a radio repair shop and experimented with television. In 1924 Florence became Australia's first woman certificated radio telegraphist, the first woman member of the Wireless Institute of

Australia, and the only woman in Australia to hold an amateur wireless licence.

In 1924 Florence married Cecil Roland McKenzie, an Electrical engineer. In 1934, she founded the Electrical Association for Women. She published the first electricity cook book, EAW Cookery (1936) and the Electric Imps (1938) and wrote articles on electrical safety and corresponded with Albert Einstein. In 1939 she joined the Australian Womens Flying Club, becoming its Treasurer and training women in Morse code. She saw the need to train women as wireless operators and decoders in the Armed Forces and, in 1939, she formed the Women's Emergency Signalling Corps. When WW II started she had trained nearly a thousand people and went on to train another thousand. But the Australian War Council didn't want women in the armed forces. It took until April 1941 for the Navy board to accept fourteen of Florence's Signal Operators in the Royal Australian Navy, with her persuasion.

Affectionately known as "Mrs Mac", Florence stood only 5ft tall. She trained at school over 12,000 men in Morse code, visual signalling and international code. In 1950, Florence Violet McKenzie was appointed OBE. **Sources; Internet, NLA Trove, National Archives.**





We wish you a "Very Happy Birthday" from the Committee and Member's of AMC/LSI Association of Vic.

March; **Frank Byrne, John Peck, Gerry Miller, Danny Bolton.**
 April; **Ian Gardner, Ken Ray, Kelvin Smibert, Bob Hutchieson, Goffers Graham, Stanley Price.**
 May; **Frank Birmingham, Kevin, Brown, Steve Gooch, Bruce Brown.**
 June; **Keith Overton, Jack Wighton, Ron Feben, Pat Phillips, Brian Sullivan, Hiram Ristrom, Bill Galton, Keith Krause.**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION

We wish to thank you and acknowledge the Following generous donations received from our members.

- * Brian Sullivan.
- * In Memory of Keith.
- * Goldie Bovis in Memory of Ronald Bovis, NBC.
- * Hiram Ristrom.
- * Chris Harvey.
- * Doug Hooley to HMAS Cerberus Museum.
- * Robert Elliot.



VALE



We regret to advise of the passing of the following Veterans. Our sincere condolences go to their Family, friends and shipmates.

AB Max Ray Sluggett, Hamilton Vic.
Stoker Kevin Mobbs, Qld.
AB Harry Peers, Bentleigh Vic.
PO John Laughton, JP, Cranbourne Vic.
Lois Clark wife of Tom, S.A.



If you wish to donate to AMC/LSI Association of Vic you can send a cheque to:

1/129 Surrey Road Blackburn Vic 3130 or transfer funds to Westpac Bank.

Account No 42 2541 BSB No 033 070

In description box state donation and your name please.



Hiram in the Navy is a humble story about a young man's experience in the Royal Australian Navy during WW2 and his dedication and involvement with the navy fraternity thereafter. The book is dedicated to Hiram and his comrades who served in HMAS *Assault, Kanimbla, Manoora* and *Westralia*. They were all in it together and it's from their shared experience in the Navy that a profound and unique camaraderie arose. The storyline is written within the broad framework of world and local events that impacted countless lives. Included in the book are RANR records, photos, maps and a summary of the relevant landing operations conducted in the South West Pacific Area.

Hiram was officially presented with a limited edition at HMAS Cerberus Museum on 25 May 2018 by CMDR Terry Makings AM RAN Rtd, National President, Naval Association of Australia. The publication is held in the archives of the HMAS Cerberus Museum, Sea Power Centre, Naval Heritage Collection, the National Library of Australia and State Library of Victoria. You can download pdf version from: <http://www.navyvic.net/associations/amclsi/memoirs.html> or order hard copy \$40 + P&H Phone Gaye Lewis 0421 331 643

A Note from the President

I would like to ask our Veterans to write your Navy memoirs or recollections during your service. A set of stories or details of your work place onboard ship, landing craft number and crew members you worked with; your action station or what ever day life onboard was like. And I would also like a photo of yourself in the Navy uniform.

I do have a small collection of memoirs (from 2 to 51 pages) from 6 veterans of HMAS *Westralia, Kanimbla, Manoora* and *Assault* and my aim is to hand them over to **WO Marty Grogan OAM, RAN, Manager of the Museum at HMAS Cerberus** to be part of **Naval Historical Society Collection** with your help and permission.

Address to

Chris Harvey President of AMC/LSI Association of Vic

1/129 Surrey Road Blackburn Vic 3130 Email : amclsvic@gmail.com 0412 390686



ACKNOWLEDGMENT : This newsletter has been a collaboration of team work from the AMC/LSI Association of Vic Committee Mary-Beth Hosking, Carol Zeuschner, Mac Hay, Max Tozer, Robert Lewis, Hiram Ristrom and Chris Harvey.



HMAS GOORANGAI

“LOST WITH ALL HANDS”

Commemoration Service

When: **SUNDAY 18th NOVEMBER**
 Where: **QUEENSCLIFF AT OCEAN VIEW RESERVE 2018.**

Organised by



The Naval Commemoration Committee of Victoria
 “Perpetuating Gallant Ships and Brave Men”

Program

11:15 am Marchers fall in, King Street Queenscliff.
 11: 30 am Service commences Ocean View Reserve.
 12.30 pm Lunch RSL King Street (Must Book) \$30

Dress: Medals Please

Contact: Jan 9786 5371, jandy5@optusnet.com.au
 Chris 0412 390 686 or online banking to NCCV,
 BSB 633 000, A/C 146712294 with Name and
 number of attending.

naval.commemoration.committee@gmail.com



SEAFARERS' MEMORIAL SERVICE

The 111th Service
 will be held at
St Paul's Cathedral
Sunday 21st October 2018
 commencing at 10.30 am

**Please diarise
 this important event.**

Commemorating the end of World War 1



17 July HMAS Warramunga Lunch, Waverley RSL, Tuesday 11.30am, ring Paul 0421 107 952.
 9 August Battle of Savo Island, sinking of HMAS Canberra, Shrine of Remembrance Thursday 11am.
 11 September Bitia Paka Wreath Laying Service, Tuesday 11am, Sanctuary Shrine of Remembrance.

