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**THE THREE-HEADED DOG**

Newsletter of the  
Naval Historical Society of Australia Inc.  
Victoria Chapter

July, 2021 Volume 42 – No 46

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**HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH SAILS ALONG THE SUEZ CANAL  
EN ROUTE TO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA**

BRITAIN'S LARGEST AIRCRAFT CARRIER HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH HAS SAILED THROUGH THE SUEZ CANAL FOR THE FIRST TIME AS IT CROSSES FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN TO THE RED SEA AS PART OF ITS MAIDEN DEPLOYMENT.

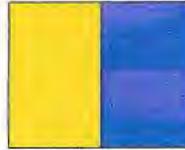
The Three Billion Pound Vessel, affectionately dubbed 'Big Lizzie' was pictured sailing through the strategic Egyptian waterway recently accompanied by her Carrier Strike Group which includes two Type 45 destroyers, two Type 23 frigates and two support vessels.

Among them are HMS DEFENDER and the Dutch frigate HMLNS EVERTSEN, two vessels which were involved in recent confrontations with Russian forces in the Black Sea. Also present is the American destroyer USS The Sullivans.



**HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH sails through the Suez Canal for the first time during her maiden deployment alongside her Carrier Strike Group.**

## PRESIDENT'S REMARKS -



**Flag Kilo** (I wish to communicate with you)

It was great to see 30 members and guests enjoying Robert Hadler's outstanding presentation on 26 June. His overview of the mutiny in HMAS *Australia* I in 1917 and the murder in *Australia* II in 1942 encouraged quite a few attendees to purchase his books. These provide a deeper understanding of the impact of these events, which partly shaped the way our forces were commanded in subsequent coalition operations, plus insights into the poignant family dimensions of these stories.

As advised, our next guest speaker on Monday 26 July will be CAPT Ainsley Morthorpe CSM RAN (CO *Cerberus*), who will talk about Captain James Stirling RN, and provide some fascinating insights into how Captain Stirling's previous career and experience shaped his ideas of a European settlement in WA and the strategic thinking surrounding the location.

Thereafter our guest speaker list for the remainder of the year is now as follows:

- Mon 23 Aug – “Adventures in Antarctica” – (Captain Jorgen Berg)
- Mon 27 Sep – “Exploration and Hydrography in the Arctic” (Roger Buxton)
- Mon 25 Oct – Sydney-Emden battle and aftermath (John Redman)
- Mon 22 Nov – Christmas Function (Guest Speaker – CDRE Greg Yorke CSC RAN)

On a recent short visit to Whyalla in South Australia, I took the opportunity to look over the former RAN Bathurst Class corvette HMAS *Whyalla*. Built in 1942, *Whyalla* was the first of four Bathurst class ships built at the BHP shipyard in Whyalla.

Some of our members would recall that following her decommissioning in 1946, she was purchased by the Victorian Public Works Department, and after some modifications, was re-named the *Rip* and worked as a channel and lights maintenance vessel operating out of Queenscliff in Port Phillip Bay until 1984.



I only recently learned that our Chapter has a special link to the vessel.

Her Chief Engineer was Derek Moore, seen here playing with his daughter and son (our member Derek jnr), with the *Rip* in the background at Frankston.



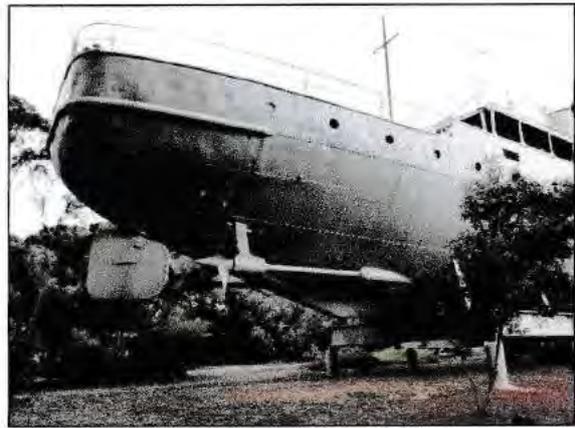
When the Whyalla City Council became aware that the ship was to be sold as scrap, successful negotiations resulted in the Council purchasing her for \$5,000. (Ultimately the move to Whyalla cost \$560,000!).

She steamed from Melbourne to Whyalla under her own power in 1984. Onboard was our Derek Moore, who signed on as a stoker for his Dad who was the Chief Engineer for the ship's final voyage. Job well done Derek!

Whyalla was brought ashore on a purpose-built cradle that was dragged up the old slipway on which she had first been launched. She was then lifted onto a multi-wheeled trailer and hauled slowly to her present site, before being lowered onto the supporting concrete plinths. (This YouTube video shows how this was achieved [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4CAIQU\\_PV0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4CAIQU_PV0) )



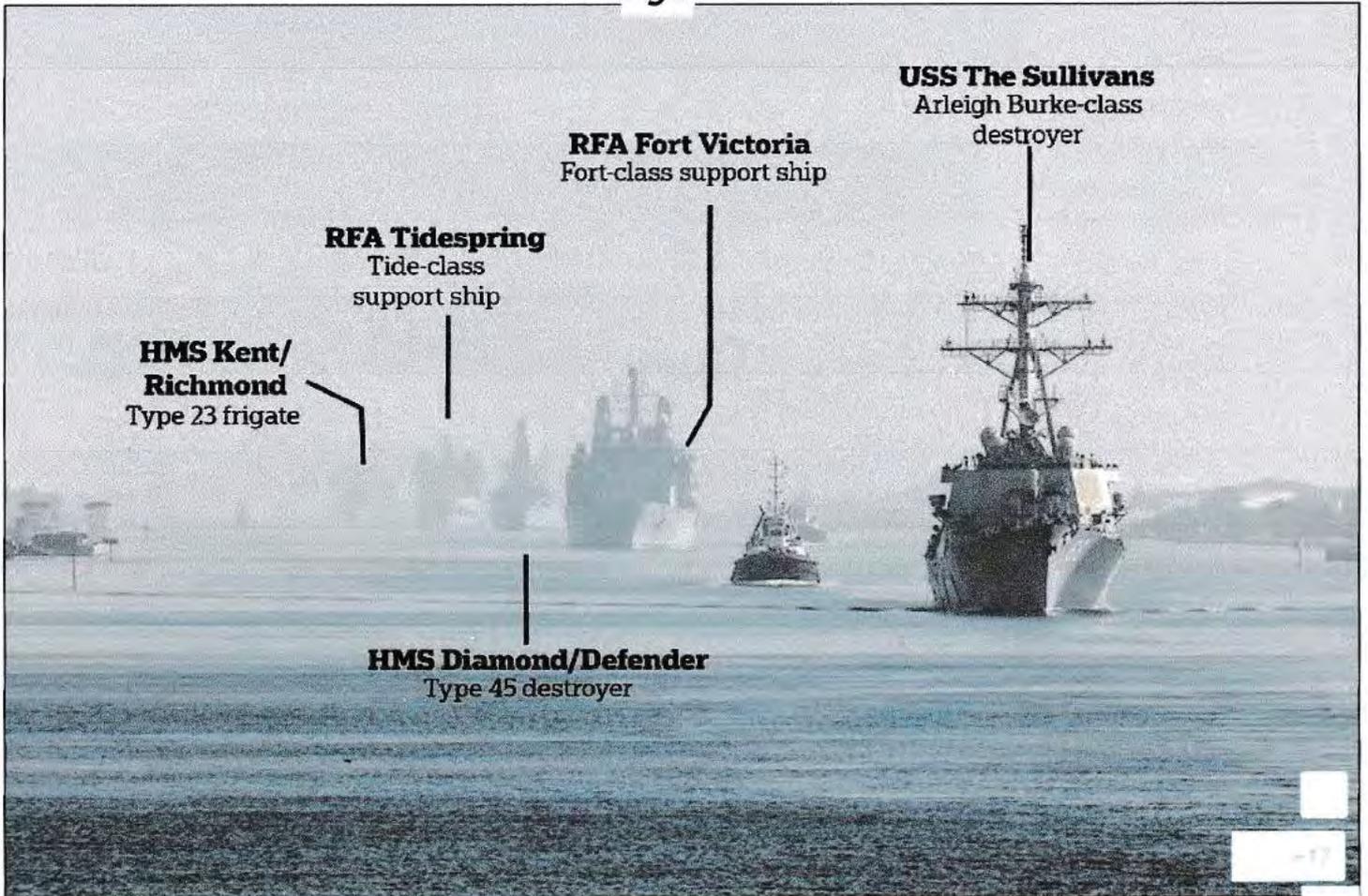
She is now the centre piece of the Whyalla Maritime Museum which opened in 1988 with considerable Navy fanfare at its site 2 km from the waterfront. While the ship lacks the memorabilia we find in *ex-Castlemaine* at Williamstown, it nonetheless gives visitors a good sense of what life was like in these small ships and the important roles they played in WWII, thanks to the enthusiastic lady providing the guided tour. A lack of volunteer maintainers and limited funding will always present challenges for those charged with its upkeep. Even so, a visit to the ship and adjacent museum is definitely worthwhile for anyone passing through Whyalla.



On a social note, I've heard of a strong possibility that a Tri-Service Ball will be held in Melbourne this year, on Saturday 13 November. While the venue is not yet clear, this may provide a great opportunity for those who like to "trip the light fantastic" or simply enjoy the music, food and atmosphere. So those interested might wish to note this in their diaries – we may even look to book a NHSA table or two!

In advance of a Reinvigoration Strategy Workshop I'll be attending on 24 July (looking at means to address reducing memberships of Navy Associations), and as always, I'd welcome ideas to help strengthen our organisation, increase our membership and to better serve our members – [andrewmackinnon0404@gmail.com](mailto:andrewmackinnon0404@gmail.com).

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Part of the carrier group accompanying the Queen Elizabeth is pictured sailing through the canal on Tuesday, including a destroyer, two British warships, and two Royal Navy support vessels



'Big Lizzie', as she is affectionately known, crossed to the Red Sea from the Mediterranean having completed 'phase one' of her voyage which saw her carry out drills alongside French carrier Charles de Gaulle and strike ISIS targets



F-35 fighter jets are seen on the deck of the Queen Elizabeth as they pass a sign reading 'welcome to Egypt'. Two squadrons are stationed on board - one British and one American



Royal Navy support ship RFA Fort Victoria (left) sails behind USS The Sullivans (centre) which is led by the Queen Elizabeth (right) on the voyage through the Suez Canal



**USS The Sullivans is seen ahead of RFA Fort Victoria as the vessels sail through the Suez Canal on Tuesday**



**Dutch frigate HNLMS Evertsen, which was involved in recent confrontations with Russian forces in the Black Sea, is seen sailing through the Suez Canal as part of the carrier strike group**

## **VALE - Dr. Victor Raymond (Ray) Leonard PM 4055**



### **ARMIDALE'S LAST SURVIVOR DISEMBARKS**

Victor 'Ray' Leonard, the last survivor of the corvette HMAS ARMIDALE 1, sunk in action in 1942, has died in Victoria. ARMIDALE was lost in a fight for survival against Japanese aircraft on December 1, in the Timor Sea.

Most of ARMIDALE'S sailors, and those Dutch soldiers she had taken off Timor, died with the ship. But 49 of the 149 on board survived. Dr Leonard was among those who made it back to Darwin.

He continued to serve in the RAN until December 5, 1945 by which time he was a 24 year-old Able Seaman.

### **FAIR WINDS AND FOLLOWING SEAS RAY**

Read his story [https://bit.ly/Armidale's last survivor disembarks](https://bit.ly/Armidale's%20last%20survivor%20disembarks)

His funeral Service was held at Le Pines Funerals, 741 High St., Kew East on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June. The Service can be viewed within 90 days of the Service by 'cut and paste' the following link.

<https://admin.oneroomstreaming.com/email/forward/423d5d8f6f>

You are invited!

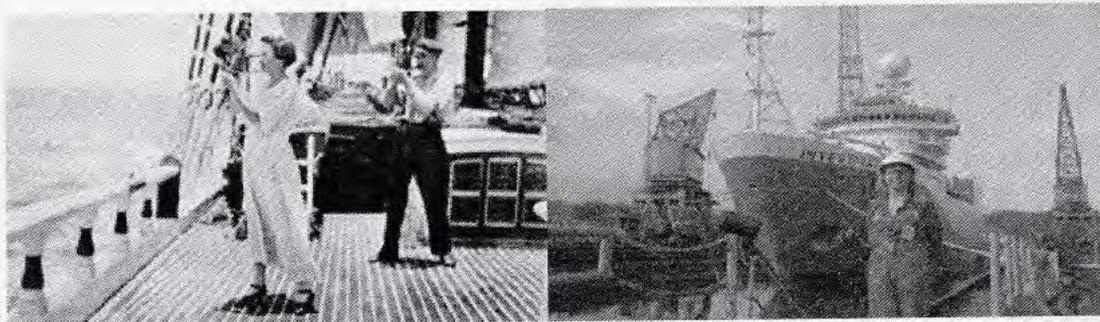
## Women in the Maritime Sector – Past, Present & Powerful

This MMHN Forum will be informative, celebratory and inspirational - a collaboration between Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network and Her Place Women's Museum Australia

To be opened by Hon. Melissa Horne

Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Fishing and Boating

The diverse and influential presence of women in all aspects of maritime endeavour today is impressive. This presence has not always been the case – or was it? There is wide acknowledgement that immense social and economic benefit flows when we harness all the talent available to us. Is this happening in relation to the maritime industry? Be prepared to be astounded - we were!



Photographer unknown

Tami Moate CSIRO

1. **The heritage perspective:** Dr Liz Rushen AM - historian, author, MMHN Board member

2. **Presenting the current situation:** A diverse cross-section of maritime sector *Women of Influence* drawn from the public and private sector will discuss their career trajectories, current roles - and as far as possible - help us to chart the voyage ahead in the maritime sector for women.

3. **MMHN Discussion Agenda:** Questions from the floor.

<b>When:</b>	11 August 2021	<b>Time:</b> 4.30pm-6.30pm
<b>Where:</b>	Her Place Women's Museum, Clarendon Terrace, 210 Clarendon Street, East Melbourne 3002	
<b>Directions:</b>	Victoria Parade trams, Clarendon Street stop; Wellington Parade trams, Jolimont stop or train to Jolimont Station	

**Due to COVID-19, numbers are limited**

**Please RSVP by 6 August: [info@mmhn.org.au](mailto:info@mmhn.org.au)**

It is time now to renew your membership if you haven't renewed it yet!

If you are not yet a member, we invite you to join now

Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network

The membership form is available on <https://www.mmhn.org.au/>

# THE THREE-HEADED DOG

Newsletter, Victorian Chapter, Naval Historical Society of Australia Inc.  
Newsletter Vol. 18, No 2, March 1997



The Chapter meets at the English Speaking Union, 146W, Toorak Road, South Yarra, on the 4th Monday of the month at 7.30 p.m.

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## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I have been pondering on the fact that, in the history of the Royal Australian Navy, not one of its members has been awarded the Victoria Cross. This does not apply to either of our sister services.

The story of the corvette, *HMAS ARMIDALE*, sunk by Japanese aircraft off Timor on the 1st December 1942 comes to mind. The hero was Ordinary Seaman Teddy Sheehan, who was a few days short of his 19th birthday and hailed from Latrobe in Tasmania. Frank Walker, in his book "HMAS ARMIDALE, the Ship That Had to Die" tells his story.

Sheehan had only been in the navy for a few short months. The Japanese, having crippled *ARMIDALE*, turned their attention onto the survivors in the water, aircraft streaking in low on the water with guns blazing. Sheehan could see his shipmates being ripped to bits, he not being wounded could have sought shelter near the bridge, or taken his chances by diving overboard, but he scrambled back to one of the Oerlikon 20m.m anti-aircraft guns abaft the bridge and strapped himself into the gun's harness. Already the ship was sinking, and it took but three minutes from the time the first torpedo struck for *ARMIDALE* to sink. Sheehan must have known he was doomed to go down with his ship. He fired a stream of 20m.m shells at the staffing Japanese aircraft bringing one down into the sea. He was wounded in his chest and back. The ship was sinking with water lapping his feet, but he still kept firing. The ship plunged down with the water rising past his waist - but he still kept on firing.

*ARMIDALE* and the young man who loved her had kept on fighting beyond the end. He had not acted on orders: "Abandon Ship" had already been ordered, but Sheehan chose to try and destroy some of the enemy and thereby save some of his shipmates.

Surely, this was valour above and beyond the call of duty, but he was only recognised with an award of a posthumous Mention in Despatches!

At long last, Sheehan, and his peerless bravery will live on by the naming of one of our Collins-class submarines *HMAS SHEEHAN*!

Also, perhaps, Lieutenant-Commander Robert Rankin RAN, Commanding Officer, *HMAS YARRA*, in March 1942 (when *YARRA* was sunk in action against the overwhelming odds of a Japanese cruiser task force leaving only thirteen survivors from *YARRA*) should have been a recipient of a Victoria Cross. But that, is indeed, another story.

MAC GREGORY

## THE NAVAL COLONEL

By Hugh Jarrett

In Nelson's day it was the custom to award senior senior naval officers a Colonelcy in the Royal Marines in recognition for distinguished service.

Today, it seems very appropriate to draw attention to the fact that the Honorary Colonel of the 1st Commando Regiment, Australian Defence Force is a naval officer. He is Commander Peter Collins, RFD, QC, RANR.

Peter Collins started his armed services association at the Waverley College, NSW, in the School Cadet Corps where he rose to the rank of Warrant Officer Class 1.

In 1964 he joined the University of NSW Regiment and later transferred to the University of Sydney Regiment as Sergeant. He was commissioned in 1969 at the age of 19 years and developed a keen interest in military history and whilst in the Sydney University Regiment he researched the French defeat in Indo-China, sourcing and translating from the French records.

In 1969 he transferred to the 1st Royal NSW Regiment (Commando) where he qualified as a parachutist, later that year he transferred to the Reserve of Officers and in 1972 he completed his courses at Sydney University, graduating Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Law.

From 1973 to 1976 he was employed by ABC-TV reporting on defence issues.

In 1975, he was commissioned Lieutenant RANR and was trained at Garden Island in the Naval Control of Shipping. He also produced and directed the film, 'ANCHORMAN' for RANR recruiting and public relations purposes and served as Public Relations Officer for Exercise Kangaroo Two (1976) and Exercise Anchorman (1978).

In 1978 he was appointed to Naval Intelligence and promoted Lieutenant-Commander in 1987. He served in Maritime Headquarters during Operation Desert Storm in 1991.

Otherwise he has had a normal Reserve Officer's career with annual fortnight spells in the fleet or training establishments.

He was appointed a Queen's Counsel in 1992 and transferred to the Naval Legal Panel and was appointed as Staff Officer to the Director of Naval Reserves, being promoted Commander in 1994 and awarded the Reserve Force Decoration in 1995.

Commander Collins was appointed Honorary Colonel of the 1st Commando Regiment on 10 August 1995 and is the second RAN officer to be so honoured, the first being the late Commodore Eric Johnston AO, AM, OBE, who was very proud to be the first Honorary Colonel of the North West Mobile Force.

Peter Collins is also the Leader of the Opposition in the NSW Parliament. Quite a politician!

SOURCE : 'COMMANDO' The Official Newsletter of 2 Commando Association Inc. August 1996.

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### MORE ENGLISH AS IT IS ABROAD

In a Budapest zoo :

Please do not feed the animals. If you have any suitable food, give it to the guard on duty.

In a Leipzig lift :

Do not enter the lift backwards, and only when lit up.

In a Zurich hotel :

Because of the impropriety of entertaining guests of the opposite sex in the bedroom it is suggested that the lobby may be used for this purpose.

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8

# #AusNavy

People are posting about this



Chief of Navy Australia

5h ·

This year we celebrate 100 years of Communications training at HMAS Cerberus and the development of new technologies that continue to ensure #AusNavy information shared between ships & shore establishments remains protected and secured.

#YourADF participated in a parade that was held where the original signal training school opened in 1921.



179

3 comments 19 shares

## HMAS Yarra (I)



HMAS *Yarra* (I) was one of six 'River' Class Torpedo Boat Destroyers built for the Royal Australian Navy during the period 1909-16. During World War I they formed the Australian Destroyer Flotilla. Sister ships were HMA Ships *Huon* (I), *Parramatta* (I), *Swan* (I), *Torrens* (I) and *Warrego* (I).

She was commissioned as HMS *Yarra* at Greenock on 10 September 1910 under the command of Lieutenant TW Biddlecombe CNF and departed Portsmouth on 19 September

1910 as a Royal Navy ship for the voyage to Australia, and proceeding via Suez in company with her sister ship *Parramatta* (I) and escorted by HMS *Gibraltar*, arrived at Broome, Western Australia, on 15 November, where the two destroyers passed to the control of the Australian Government.



Hoisting the flags presented by Mayoress and Ladies of Richmond, Victoria, to the Commonwealth Destroyer *Yarra*.

In the period of 1911-14 *Yarra* (I) served in Australian waters, forming with her sister ships *Parramatta* (I) and *Warrego* (I) the destroyer component of the Australian Fleet.

During the opening phases of World War I, *Yarra* (I) operated with the fleet (Vince Admiral Sir George E. Patey) in the search for and as a counter to Admiral von Spee's Pacific Squadron. Late in 1914 she took part in the capture of German possessions in the South West Pacific.



<b>Class</b>	River Class
<b>Type</b>	Torpedo Boat Destroyer
<b>Pennant</b>	D79
<b>Builder</b>	Denny Brothers, Dumbarton, Scotland
<b>Launched</b>	9 April 1910
<b>Launched by</b>	Mrs Moore, wife of the Premier of Western Australia
<b>Commissioned</b>	10 September 1910
<b>Decommissioned</b>	30 September 1929
<b>Dimensions &amp; Displacement</b>	
<b>Displacement</b>	700 tons
<b>Length</b>	245 feet
<b>Beam</b>	23 feet 3 inches
<b>Draught</b>	8 feet 6 inches
<b>Performance</b>	
<b>Speed</b>	26 knots
<b>Propulsion</b>	
<b>Machinery</b>	Parsons turbines
<b>Horsepower</b>	12,000
<b>Armament</b>	
<b>Guns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 x 4-inch QF gun</li> <li>• 3 x 12-pounder QF guns</li> </ul>
<b>Torpedoes</b>	3 x 18-inch torpedo tubes
<b>Awards</b>	
<b>Battle Honours</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RABAUL 1914</li> <li>• ADRIATIC 1917-18</li> </ul>

**HMAS YARRA (I)** departed Portsmouth on 19th September 1910, commissioned in the Royal Navy for the voyage to Australia and proceeding via Suez in company of her sister ship PARRAMATTA and escorted by HMS GIBRALTAR arrived at Broome, Western Australia, on 15th November, where the two destroyers passed to the control of the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board.

In the period 1911-14 YARRA served in Australian waters forming with sister ships PARRAMATTA and WARREGO (commissioned 1st June 1912) the destroyer component of the Australian Fleet.

During the opening phases of World War I, YARRA operated with the Fleet (Vice Admiral Sir George E. Patey) in the search for and as a counter to Admiral von Spee's Pacific Squadron. Late in 1914 she took part in the capture of German possessions in the South West Pacific.

Some of her complement with sailors from HMAS PARRAMATTA were landed at Kabakaul (New Britain) to take part in operations ashore against the German forces. YARRA was present at the formal surrender of German New Guinea to the Australian forces at Rabaul on 13th September 1914. YARRA remained in New Guinea waters after the departure of the Fleet (AUSTRALIA, MELBOURNE and SYDNEY) on 17th September 1914 and in company of PARRAMATTA and WARREGO supported consolidation of the Australian occupation of the former German territories in the area.

In December 1914 all three destroyers proceeded up the Sepik River and in January 1915 visited Morobe, Finsch Harbour and other points on the coast, cruising also to neighbouring island groups including the Admiralties.

On 5th February 1915 the destroyers finally left Rabaul to return to Australia. For several months after the return from New Guinea, the Australian Destroyer Flotilla (Commander C. Cumberlege, RN, in WARREGO) remained in Australian waters. On 27th April 1915 the Flotilla left Williamstown on a three month 'familiarisation' cruise of the eastern Australian coast line which included visits to Jervis Bay, Sydney, the Barrier Reef and Queensland ports.

On 23rd August 1915 the destroyers returned to Sydney for refit. On 19th October 1915 the Flotilla left Sydney to serve on 'blockade' duty in Malayan, East Indian, Indo China, Borneo and Philippine waters. Based on Singapore and Sandakan (Borneo) YARRA served on 'Far East Patrol' until 8th May 1916 when she departed Sandakan to return to Australia. At the close of June 1916 YARRA was assigned to Australian coastal patrol duty O PARRAMATTA having returned from 'Far East Patrol' in mid July, joined YARRA at Melbourne on 31st August 1916 on completion of her refit at Sydney.

WARREGO returned to Australia at the end of September 1916 and after long refit began coastal patrol duty in late January 1917. In May 1917 following a request made by Admiralty the Australian Government agreed to the transfer of the Australian Destroyer Flotilla to the Mediterranean. Consequently YARRA, PARRAMATTA and WARREGO were withdrawn from coastal patrol to refit at Sydney and their Australian built sister ships HUON (completed February 1916) TORRENS (completed July 1916) and SWAN (completed August 1916) then serving on Far East Patrol were ordered to refit at Singapore.

The Australian based destroyers left Sydney on 9th June 1917 and proceeding north about to the Cocos Islands were joined there by the 2nd Division from Singapore on 7th July and Commander W.H.F. Warren, RAN (PARRAMATTA) took command of the Flotilla.

Following a period of training based on Malta, the Australian Flotilla was sent to Brindisi on the 'heel' of Italy for anti submarine patrol duty. On this work it was the destroyers' responsibility (in cooperation with British and French destroyers), to prevent the passage of enemy submarines through the Adriatic Narrows into the Mediterranean and to give safe transit to the passage of Italian transports to and from Albania.

The Australian destroyers commenced Adriatic Patrol duty in mid October 1917. During the early period of their tour of duty the enemy whose submarines were based on Pola at the head of the Adriatic was fairly active and detection and the subsequent hunt was a common occurrence. Later, however, the enemy effort diminished and eventually the patrol became 'routine uneventful steaming' HUON, PARRAMATTA and YARRA were fitted with captive observer balloons whose object was to detect the lurking submarine while another destroyer stood by ready to act as 'killer'.

In April 1918 the Australian destroyers became part of the British 5th Destroyer Flotilla (Captain G.E. Chetwode, CB, CBE). As a result Commander A.G.H. Bond, RN, who had succeeded Commander Warren (drowned in Brindisi Harbour) became

in command of a Flotilla for personnel, pay, medical treatment and 'good organisation and conduct of the vessels' only.

Adriatic operations ended for YARRA on 17th October 1918 (a year almost to the day after her first patrol) when with TORRENS and the British destroyers of the 5th Flotilla she left Brindisi for Mudros and thence with the Allied Fleet passed through the Dardanelles into the Sea of Marmora to Ismid. From Ismid, YARRA was sent to the Black Sea where she visited (December 1918) Batum, Novorossiisk and Sebastapol.

On 28th December 1918 she departed Ismid in company of HUON, SWAN and PARRAMATTA to proceed to Malta and thence to Plymouth where she arrived on 8th January 1919.

On 6th March 1919 she departed Plymouth for Australia in company of MELBOURNE, HUON, PARRAMATTA and WARREGO joined by SWAN and TORRENS at Malta. The ships reached Darwin on 26th April, PARRAMATTA and YARRA under tow having exhausted their fuel.

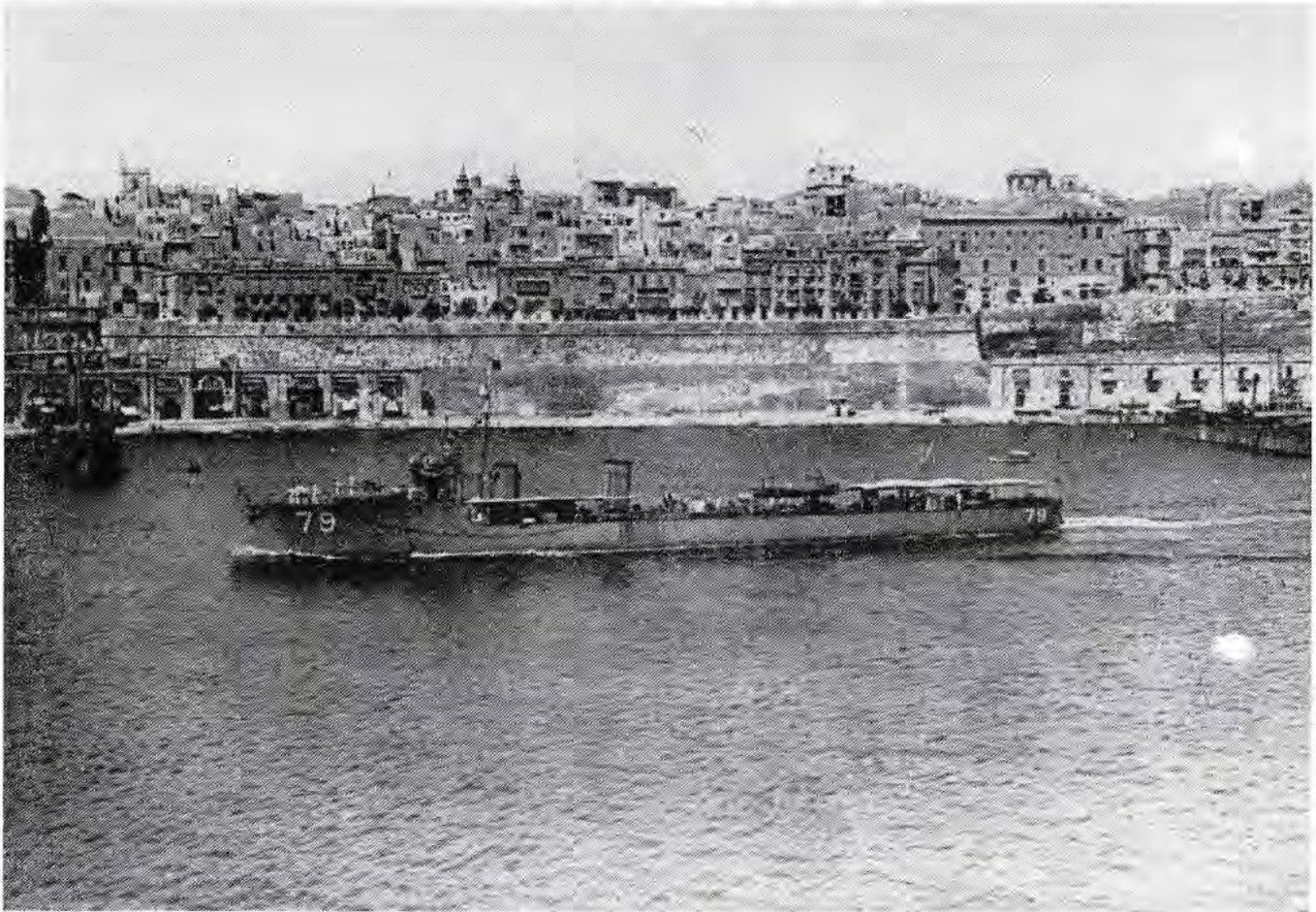
The remainder of YARRA's sea going service was spent in Australian waters used as required for RANR training.

On 30th September 1929 she was transferred to the control of Cockatoo Dockyard for breaking up.

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7/16/2021

HMAS Yarra (!) | Royal Australian Navy



HMAS Yarra in Grand Harbour, Malta.

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MITCHAM VIC 3132

# THE THREE-HEADED DOG

THE NAVAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA INC.

VICTORIA CHAPTER

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Warships from Australia, Japan, South Korea and the US successfully completed Exercise Pacific Vanguard on July 9, the first time the annual quadrilateral event had been held in Australian waters.

HMAS Brisbane, JS Makinami, ROKS Wang Geon and USS Rafael Peralta sail in company during Exercise Pacific Vanguard. Photo: Leading Seaman Daniel Goodman

