

PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS FEBRUARY 2017

Both Marty Grogan and I have met our new CO Cerberus and SNO Vic recently. Our departing SNO, Captain Steven Bowater, convened a meeting at Cerberus for President's etc of the 'Navy Family' in Victoria to meet with his successor Captain Tim Standen, and the newly appointed XO, CMDR Matthew Hoffman, for us all to meet and greet, and fill them in re our activities and objectives. It was an excellent initiative, and most enjoyable.

You will have an opportunity to meet Captain Standen this month! Tim will join us at Waverley RSL on Monday February 27th and be our Speaker. Check out the flyer in this THD for details.

Our Speaker for our March meeting is Major General Mike O'Brien, and he will tell us of an Australian invention which is claimed to be 'The World's First Guided Missile'!! The Brennan Torpedo story, is a tale of how Australian know-how and tenacity successfully overcame all obstacles, to become a standard harbour defence throughout the British Empire for more than 15 years.

Over the coming decades our Navy will undergo its most significant period of recapitalisation since World War 11, with new submarines, frigates, air warfare destroyers (Hobart Class), offshore patrol vessels etc. Indeed it is an exciting time!

Navy is justifiably proud of our Canberra class LHD's. They are the largest ships ever built for our Navy. These 27,000 tonne amphibious assault ships can deploy over 1000 personnel and their equipment, landing ashore via landing craft or helicopters. In addition to two operating theatres, the LHDs have an 8 bed Critical Care Unit, resuscitation, and a variety of wards, pathology, radiology, X-ray, pharmacy and dental facilities.

Of considerable interest is the variants of ships which serve the LHD Concept. I refer you to an excellent article available on the internet entitled 'Top 10 Amphibious Assault Ships' compiled by Military-Today.com. Check it out on http://www.militarytoday.com/navy/top_10_amphibious_ships.htm

In relation to the Royal Navy the article only lists HMS Ocean, but not HMS Bulwark. Bulwark's sister ship HMS Albion has just completed a multi-million pound capability upgrade in Plymouth, and she recently embarked her crew for the first time since 2011. Contractor for the HMS Albion upgrade is Babcock. They have undertaken a large package of system, maintenance and engineering upgrades allowing the ship to be regenerated after a long lay-up period in Devonport. The major package of work will see in excess of 110 improvements incorporated. It is dominated by an improved propulsion system and combat systems compared to her sister HMS Bulwark. To date, 1.2 million man-hours of work have been needed to ready the 20,000 tonne HMS Albion for operations. Her new combat computer brain will manage the upgraded weapons and sensors, which includes a more capable surveillance radar and improved defensive weapon system.

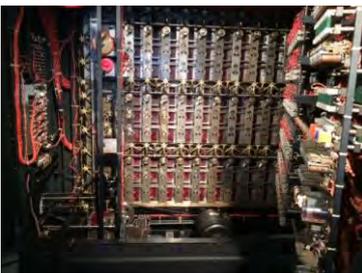


I note with interest the statement that when Albion is operating in warmer climates it will be made easier for the ship with new cooling for the propulsion system. Given the problems found with the Daring class destroyers, this would appear to be a wise move?

REX'S ODYSSEY PART 13-THURSDAY JULY 28th 2016

Whilst in London, I was staying at Bankside House, London School of Economics, located just behind the Tate Modern in Southbank. I recommend it. A benefit was that I just had to walk across the Millennium Bridge and I could attend Evensong at Saint Paul's. Magic!! Great Pubs in Bankside too!

Bletchley Park is only a one hour train trip from London via London Euston. A 2-3 minute walk from the station will find you at Bletchley Park. As you enter, the Visitor's centre is to your right in block C, where there is an introductory exhibition 'Secrets Revealed'. In the same building is 'Secrecy and Security, Keeping Safe on Line' Exhibition. Also not to be missed is 'The Road to Bletchley Park, The Start of Modern Code breaking in WWI'.



As you exit Block C you will see the Bletchley Park Memorial, and on the left side there is a beautiful park, complete with a lovely lake. To your right is Block B and you won't want to miss the Museum. It includes Enigma machines, plus a reconstructed Turing-Welchman Bombe in an Exhibition entitled 'The Life and works of Alan Turing'. The Bombe is demonstrated regularly. There is a Bletchley Park timeline and 'From intercept to Action', a reconstructed Y station. Also featured is 'The Japanese Challenge', Stories of life in the Park and Lorenz: Hitler's "Unbreakable" cipher machine.

In block C there is the National Radio Centre, and you continue past blocks A and E until you come to a group of Code breaking huts, numbers 1, 8, 6 & 3. In huts 3 and 6 you 'Experience how it felt to work in these huts in Top Secret during WWII'. Hut 8 was the German naval Codebreaking Hut which features the wartime office of Alan Turing, head of Hut 8; plus some interactive enjoyment for children and adults, 'Brilliant Minds!' A Polish Memorial is seen as you leave this group of huts! The next block of huts are the Turing-Welchman Bombe huts and in huts 11 and 11A we have 'Bombes through the eyes of their WRNS operators' and in 11A The Development of the Turing Welchman Bombe. (Bombe was the name of the electro-mechanical machine used to decipher 'Enigma'. Google *the Bombe* and you will find some U tube presentations of the machine in action.)

To the left of the Polish Memorial you will see Bletchley Park Mansion. It is a lovely building, Edwardian in style.

The Mansion includes: the wartime offices of CMDR Denniston, the first Head of the GC&CS (Government Code and Cypher School); The Library; Early days of the GC & CS ; The 'Imitation Game' an exhibition in the ball room featuring the film including sets etc; and a display honouring Gordon Welchman, 'Architect of Ultra Intelligence'.



YOURS AYE!!

REX WILLIAMS