



# BROADSIDE

April 2024

Volume 14 Edition 4

## Editorial



### **Our Guest Editor: Dr Tom Lewis OAM**

*Dr Tom Lewis OAM is the author of 20 books. A veteran of the Royal Australian Navy, he was decorated with the Order of Australia Medal for services to military history. He served in Iraq as an intelligence analyst and the commander of a US Forces unit. His books mostly deal with World War II, but also cover the actuality of battlefield behaviour in Lethality in Combat, and Middle Ages warfare in Medieval Military Combat. His most recent work is Attack on Sydney, a study of the failures in command combating the midget submarine attack of 1942.*

### **How to further recognise Australian naval heroes**

Australia's naval heroes have not received the attention they deserved since the formation of the Royal Australian Navy, over more than a century ago.

Several fought so bravely, they should have received a Victoria Cross, but did not. Some were recognised with minor honours – some with nothing at all. This article proposes a method for giving them more recognition.

Some of our naval heroes have achieved fame which has endured in a permanent and visible way. WWII men John Collins, Emile Dechaineux, Hec Waller, Harold Farncomb, Robert Rankin, and Teddy Sheean have all had submarines named after them. Sheean especially is now a household name, having received a long overdue Victoria Cross in 2020, 78 years after his gallant last stand on the corvette HMAS *Armidale*.

It is worth noting though, that Australian naval personnel have been somewhat short-changed by the arrangements which were in place for World War II in regard to bravery honours and awards.

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### **Events Calendar**

(see [Calendar](#) for full details)

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**03 May** – 1230 – HMAS Castlemaine service – Shrine Sanctuary

**05 May** – 12:00 – Battle of Coral Sea Service – Shrine Cenotaph

**09 May** - 10:30 - DFSM 'At Home' concert - Simpson barracks

**22 May** – 11:00 – Battle of Leyte Gulf – Memorial Tree and Plaque Dedication – Shrine of Remembrance

**22 May** - 14:00 & 19:00 - Soundwaves Concert - HMAS Cerberus

**25 May** - Battle of Crete & Greek Commemoration - Shrine

**27 May** - NHSA meeting - Waverley RSL

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In those days to recommend decorations within the RAN was very difficult – more so than in the (parent British) Royal Navy, with more restrictions on Australian ship commanders as to what their members could be recommended for.

There were only two classes of posthumous award in WWII: the Victoria Cross and the Mention in Despatches. Posthumous foreign awards were not permitted and RAN gallantry awards were determined by the British Admiralty.

It should further be noted that this situation was unique to the RAN: the Army and the Royal Australian Air Force had their bravery decorations processed through the Australian system – a much easier and more favourable situation than one being processed by the British Admiralty in a country fighting for its life against Germany. In summary we can conclude that if this unfair situation had not been in place, the RAN may well have received other Victoria Crosses – and the argument that more ships should be named after heroic Australians made all the easier.

Only one other Australian naval veteran has had a vessel named after him. In a departure from tradition and usual practise, the country's last veteran of World War I had his name bestowed on HMAS *Choules* in 2011. Claude Choules started his naval service in the Royal Navy, in his case in 1916. He came to Australia on loan in 1926 and decided to transfer to the RAN. He was a member of the commissioning crew of HMAS *Canberra* in 1928 and in 1932 became a Chief Petty Officer (Torpedo) and anti-submarine instructor.

During WWII Choules was a Torpedo Officer in Fremantle and the Chief Demolition Officer on the west coast. He transferred to the Naval Dockyard Police after the war so that he could continue to serve, finally retiring in 1956. Although he gave sterling service, the

His Majesty's Australian Navy ships we have now	His Majesty's Australian Navy ships we could have
HMAS <i>Collins</i>	HMAS <i>Bracegirdle</i>
HMAS <i>Dechaineux</i>	HMAS <i>Cliff</i>
HMAS <i>Waller</i>	HMAS <i>Darling</i>
HMAS <i>Farncomb</i>	HMAS <i>Emms</i>
HMAS <i>Rankin</i>	HMAS <i>Goldsworthy</i>
HMAS <i>Sheean</i>	HMAS <i>Gosse</i>
HMAS <i>Choules</i>	HMAS <i>Howden</i>
HMAS <i>Creswell</i>	HMAS <i>Humphries</i>
HMAS <i>Stirling</i>	HMAS <i>Mould</i>
	HMAS <i>Rogers</i>
	HMAS <i>Syme</i>
	HMAS <i>Kessack</i>
	HMAS <i>McNicoll</i>
	HMAS <i>Reid</i>
	HMAS <i>Rhodes</i>
	HMAS <i>Smith</i>
	HMAS <i>Upton</i>
	HMAS <i>Taylor</i>
	HMAS <i>Wadsley</i>
	HMAS <i>Waldman</i>

## Latest Videos, Podcasts and News Headlines

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<https://navyvic.net>



### VIDEOS.....

- *Rabbitohs 2024 Anzac Day Jersey*
- *National Defence Strategy 2024*
- *Training for the skies*
- *Crew of HMAS Yarra open their doors*
- *Sailor of the Year Program*



### NEWS shorts.....

*The ADF will be better equipped to defend Australia's north thanks to \$14 billion to \$18 billion in funding for resilient bases under the 2024 Integrated Investment Program. Infrastructure improvements at Cocos (Keeling) Islands airfield will better support maritime surveillance operations by P-8A Poseidon aircraft. Development of the Defence estate across Darwin and Townsville will address force posture requirements and enhance an integrated, focused force, as outlined in the 2024 National Defence Strategy.*

*From the Mornington Peninsula to the shores of Gallipoli, Able Seaman Musician Laura Campbell will represent the ADF at the Anzac Day dawn service at Anzac Cove, Turkiye. "Growing up I usually made Anzac biscuits and attended the services at school," she said. "I remember trying to imagine what the war would have looked and felt like while the bugle call was played."*

*Long-range strike capabilities and advanced targeting systems will receive \$28 billion to \$35 billion in the coming decade under the 2024*

use of his name seems more to testimony he was one of the final servicemen resident in Australia who saw WWI service.

Only seven naval servicemen have had vessels named after them, the Collins-class being the beginning of that practise. However, there have been shore bases named after people, as opposed to rivers, states, and places, which constitute most of the rest of the many hundreds of vessels which have seen service.

For example, HMAS *Creswell* is named after the “founding father” of the RAN, William Rooke Creswell, originally of the RN, but a fierce advocate for Australia to have its own force, back in the days when the states were so afraid of foreign attack that they had formed separate colonial navies. HMAS *Stirling* honours the name of Captain James Stirling RN, the officer who landed on Garden Island in 1827. Two years later he founded the first European settlement in Western Australia. Such large shore bases are commissioned as ships in navies, so we should include these two sterling servicemen with the group.

Why not extend this practise a lot further? The newly evolved Cape-class patrol boats, for example, are all named after prominent capes around the country. Why not change these into ships named after people? Or give a future class of vessels such titles? For some reason, we seem reluctant to do this. The Americans, by contrast, have hundreds of ships named after people, and even the RAN’s parent navy – Britain’s Royal Navy – has had a lot.

There are many heroes of our own force to choose from.

## Francis Emms



*Francis Emms, in his best uniform, probably in the mid-1930s. (Lewis Collection)*

Francis Emms was a ship’s cook who performed valiantly at his Action Station when the first Japanese air raid struck Darwin. On board the small ship HMAS *Kara Kara*, he manned his machinegun until he fell, wounded from the strafing of the circling Zeroes. He refused to leave his post to be treated until the enemy had broken off the action. He later died of his wounds.

*Integrated Investment Program. The largest portion, \$12 billion to \$15 billion, will go to bolstering Navy’s sea-based strike capability, including the acquisition of Tomahawk cruise missiles. These will arm Hobart-class destroyers, Hunter-class frigates and, potentially, Virginia-class submarines, allowing them to hold targets at risk at longer ranges.*

*Standing on the hallowed shores of Gallipoli, representing a nation and playing at the Anzac Day dawn service is one of the biggest stages an ADF musician can play on. For Able Seaman Musician Jessie Bartlett, the significance hits close to home as she discovered a rich family history with four brave ancestors, who were wounded and ultimately sacrificed their lives during World War 1.*

*When we say “lest we forget” we mean it, we will remember them, we do remember them. Today, consistent with this commitment, we remember seven Australian Army soldiers whose identities have now been restored, some 108 years after their deaths.*

*Austal Australia and WA-based autonomous systems SME Greenroom Robotics have successfully completed sea acceptance trials, including endurance trials, of the remote and autonomously operated vessel Sentinel.*

*The passing of the foreign aid package through the US House of Representatives also signals a step forward for the AUKUS nuclear submarine deal. The funding package included the ‘Indo-Pacific Security Supplemental’. It means the lower house has now approved a \$US3.3 billion spend to match what Australia is putting in to help*

## Ronald Taylor

Ronald “Buck” Taylor was in an action very like that involving Teddy Sheean. In March 1942 HMAS *Yarra* and her three merchant vessels were attacked by a Japanese surface flotilla. *Yarra*, a sloop, had fire capacities far below the enemy both in weight of shell fired and in range. Nevertheless, she charged the enemy as her captain, Lieutenant Commander Robert Rankin, ordered the ship to engage. Ron Taylor kept his gun firing, ignoring the order to abandon ship. He died without leaving his post.



Leading Seaman  
Taylor of the  
*Yarra* (RAN)

Several RAN members have been awarded the George Cross – the second highest honour for bravery, just not “in the face of the enemy” – in WWII. Mine warfare demanded the highest examples of cold-blooded courage and four of the Navy’s best took that bravery into everyday operations in mine warfare defusing and disposal: Leon Goldsworthy, George Gosse, John Mould, and Hugh Syme – the latter two also receiving the George Medal.

## Jonathan Rogers



CPO Jonathan Rogers  
GC DSM

Jonathan “Buck” Rogers – the nickname comes from a popular science-fiction character – was a hero from HMAS *Voyager*, tragically rammed by the aircraft carrier *Melbourne* in 1964 off Jervis Bay. Chief Petty Officer Rogers united those trapped in the forward section of the destroyer, still afloat, before after some time its inexorable flooding with water sent it to the seabed. Rogers is a George Cross recipient; he already held the Distinguished Service Medal for ‘coolness and leadership’ under enemy fire during an action off Dunkirk, France, on the night of 23/24 May 1944.

The George Medal was given to others:

- 🎖️ Petty Officer John Humphries.  
Awarded the Medal on 17 February 1942, the citation reading “For skill, and undaunted devotion to duty in hazardous diving operations”.
- 🎖️ Lieutenant Geoffrey John Cliff, RANVR.  
Awarded the Medal in 1942 “for work undertaken defusing mines in London”.

*expand submarine construction in the United States.*

*In February 1943, 16-year-old Don Kennedy from Manly, NSW, jumped on board the Norwegian tanker MT Seirstad and cruised out of Sydney Harbour. It was the start of a short but perilous career in the Merchant Navy. He spent the first 17 months at sea helping transport oil and fuel to allied tanks, ships and planes fighting in World War 2 (WW2).*

*A booby trap detonated and collapsed the Bapaume town hall in France on March 25, 1917, killing Lance Corporal Jules Schuller and 23 other people. Two years earlier, Lance Corporal Schuller survived a gunshot wound at Gallipoli before re-joining the 20th Infantry Battalion in France.*

*Three Royal Australian Navy officers completed the US Navy’s 15-month nuclear submarine training program, and will now be assigned to Virginia class submarines based at Pearl Harbour. The trio spent the last two months learning alongside sailors from the US Navy on the fundamentals of operating nuclear powered submarines, Defence has confirmed.*

*Conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines and infrastructure will receive \$53 billion to \$63 billion over the next decade as part of Australia’s investment in developing a Navy with enhanced maritime, air and land strike capability.*

*In a bright spot for Australian defense procurement, an important domestic defense program, the first Ghost Shark autonomous submarine prototype, has come in early and on budget. “The first prototype was delivered one year early and on budget, and all three will be delivered by June 2025.*

- 🎖️ Lieutenant James Kessack, RANVR.  
A mine clearer, he died in the execution of his duty on 28 April 1941.
- 🎖️ Lieutenant Commander Alan McNicoll RAN.  
Received the Medal “for gallantry and undaunted devotion to duty. In 1940 in the captured Italian submarine *Galileo Galilei*, McNicoll removed the inertia pistols from eight corroded torpedoes.”
- 🎖️ Lieutenant Howard Dudley Reid RANVR.  
First awarded “for gallantry and undaunted devotion to duty in mine disposal between December 1940 to January 1941”. Secondly, “for mine disposal in Glasgow in August 1941”.
- 🎖️ Lieutenant Nelson Smith RANVR.  
Awarded “for gallantry and undaunted devotion to duty. In March 1941, rendered safe eight bombs in London.”
- 🎖️ Lieutenant Keith Upton RANVR.  
As a mine clearer, “showed the highest courage, devotion to duty and remarkable ingenuity; his initiative and gallantry marking him out among the personnel of this special section”.
- 🎖️ Lieutenant Herbert Wadsley RANVR.  
First awarded the Medal in 1940 “for mine disposal in London”. A bar was awarded in 1942 “for bomb and mine disposal in Portsmouth in 1941”.
- 🎖️ Lieutenant Commander Neil Waldman RNR.  
Commanding minesweepers in North Africa, including the port of Tripoli, where the Medal was awarded “for great bravery and undaunted devotion to duty”.

There are many others who could join a list of possible Navy people after whom a ship or base could be named.

Ordinary Seaman Ian Rhodes, a RAN Volunteer Reserve sailor, was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal for courage in action on 23 May 1941, when HMS *Kashmir* was sunk during operations to defend Crete. Posted to the RN, Rhodes was part of the crew for the aft port Oerlikon gun. With the water rising around the weapon as the ship sank, and under fire from German aircraft which strafed the ship and survivors already in the sea, Rhodes climbed up to the weapon on the other side of the ship and commenced returning fire, shooting down an aircraft. For his courage in action, he was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal, the award for gallantry second only to the Victoria Cross for sailors, and the only Australian sailor to receive the decoration through both world wars.

*A human jawbone discovered in the Arizona desert was recently identified as remains of U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Everett Leland Yager. The issue? No one knew it was missing.*

*The size of the U.S. Navy’s fleet and the debate over how to increase it took center stage at a Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee hearing Tuesday. In particular, senators expressed concern after a recent study found multiple important shipbuilding programs are running years behind schedule.*

*The Australian Government has released the inaugural National Defence Strategy (NDS) and 2024 Integrated Investment Program (IIP). As set out in the 2023 Defence Strategic Review, the current strategic environment demands a new approach to defending Australia and its national interests.*

*U.S. Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro today told lawmakers his service is out at least \$1 billion in critical munitions because of recent operations in the Middle East, a shortfall the Pentagon is banking on a congressional supplemental to help replenish.*

*The king of Jordan today defended his military’s actions over the weekend in apparently intercepting some of the Iranian missiles and drones that overflew Jordanian airspace on their way to targets in Israel, saying his lands will not be a “theater of war” for any side.*

*The new attack submarine design the United Kingdom and Australia will share through the AUKUS trilateral arrangement is in a “mature” state and will be finalized in the next year or two, leaders said this month.*

Harry Howden was one of the Navy's best fighting captains. Howden's command of the cruiser HMAS *Hobart* in WWII was characterised by the energy and aggressiveness of a captain who resembles the famous General Patton in his willingness to engage with the enemy. Mercurial but meticulous, he was much respected and even worshipped by his ship's company. As a fighting captain he was known for his high-speed handling of *Hobart*, and commanded her in much action through the war until brought down by sickness.



Warwick Bracegirdle  
DSC & 2 Bars RAN

Warwick Bracegirdle, a gunnery officer, was perhaps the best product of that branch the RAN ever produced. He served through WWII where as a lieutenant he was awarded a Distinguished Service Cross for "whole hearted devotion to duty and high personal courage" – particularly during an air raid at Piraeus, Greece, when towing an ammunition lighter away from a burning ship, which exploded nearly killing him and another officer.

Appointed to the heavy cruiser HMAS *Shropshire*, Bracegirdle developed a burst method for firing heavy guns in Anti-Aircraft work. He was later awarded a bar to his DSC and twice mentioned in dispatches. He served on after the war and then in the Korean conflict where he commanded the destroyer HMAS *Bataan*. For his Korean War service Bracegirdle was awarded a second bar to his DSC – thus the equivalent of being awarded the medal three times – and the United States Legion of Merit.

The career of Stanley Darling, sinking U-Boats, and then quietly retiring from combat to take on the mere matter of a Sydney-to-Hobart yacht race year after year, reads like a Boy's Own adventure tale. Serving in Europe, he was appointed in command of the frigate HMS *Loch Killin* as part of Captain Frederic 'Johnnie' Walker's 2nd Escort Group of anti-submarine frigates. This group of six frigates became renowned as a deadly and greatly feared submarine killer group in the Atlantic campaign. Darling's frigate was accredited with sinking three U-Boats in the war – an unusually high score in a war where most ships never had an anti-submarine attack confirmed as a kill.

For some reason the Royal Australian Navy has been loath to carry the practise forward of naming ships and bases after men. (Many of the Victoria Cross holders of the country – 96 Army and four RAAF –

*Venture capital-backed US defense contractor Anduril Industries and top South Korean shipbuilder HD Hyundai Heavy Industries have announced a strategic partnership focused on designing and producing autonomous naval systems.*

*Three men stranded on an uninhabited Pacific island survived for more than a week and used palm fronds to spell out "HELP" on the beach, leading to their rescue by Navy and Coast Guard aviators who spotted the sign from several thousand feet in the air.*

*A U.S. carrier strike group led by the USS Theodore Roosevelt has held a two-day joint exercise with its allies Japan and South Korea as U.S. President Joe Biden met for talks with leaders from Japan and the Philippines at the White House.*

*British naval vessels are set to receive new laser weapons within a few years' time that will make shooting down a missile or a drone as affordable as a pint of ale in central London. The technology goes by the name of DragonFire, developed by MBDA in conjunction with Leonardo UK and QinetiQ.*

*Australia's government must provide a more thorough and public explanation of why it has committed to the AUKUS plan to buy nuclear powered submarines and reassess how it and the United States manage their alliance, top experts on US-Australian defense tie said at a conference this week.*

*Two former Royal Navy ships now serving with the Ukrainian Navy will be a frequent sight in the waters off the South Coast as they operate from their new temporary home in Portsmouth Naval Base.*

are remembered in rest stops on the Hume Highway: there has yet been no arrangement made yet for Teddy Sheean's name to be added to them.) But there is no real reason why this is not the practise, and it is not unusual in navies. In what might be termed our two closest allied navies – that of Britain, and that of the United States of America – have in general, shown a different attitude towards granting its armed forces' members' decorations, and recognizing their service, than we have.

For example, the USA has named ships after military personnel with an enthusiasm not often imitated by other countries. This can even border on the unusual: one WWII vessel was named USS *The Sullivans*, to commemorate the five Sullivan brothers from Iowa who had asked to serve together, and who had all been killed when their cruiser USS *Juneau* was torpedoed in 1942. A warship of the name was commissioned the following year.

The practise of naming ships after people was developed from the early days of the US Republic, and practiced prolifically ever since. Presidents of the United States have featured strongly, and recently a new aircraft carrier named after President George HW Bush, a WWII veteran, was commissioned.

In general, the US practise sees vessels named after a person who has died, but this is not always the case. Foreigners have also been named: USS *Winston S Churchill* was commissioned by President Carter, for example, who in an example of the previous point had a Seawolf submarine named after him – he is the only US president to have qualified on submarines. Another US president who served in the Navy was "JFK" – the aircraft carrier USS *John F Kennedy* is named after him.

In Australia, no prime minister has ever served in the Navy, although several have in the Army and RAAF. One-quarter of Australia's prime ministers enlisted for military service at some point in their lives. This includes four who saw active service: Stanley Bruce, John Gorton, Earle Page and Gough Whitlam. Two – Bruce and Gorton – were wounded during active service.

US Army forces bases are also prolifically named after serving personnel. The writer was interested to see a firing range in Iraq, on which he practiced shooting twice a week in 2006 during the war, was named after a recently deceased soldier who had died in combat, in that very same conflict.

*HMAS Coonawarra recently embarked on a voyage of transformation – an initiative aimed at optimising key areas, notably the galley and junior sailors' and other ranks' (JSOR) mess. With the support of funding through Navy Logistics and Navy Support Force HQ, the JSOR's mess received a \$2.1 million 'refresh' in record time, with a dual focus on operational efficacy and wellbeing.*

*A group of senior medical administrators and specialists from five major NSW hospitals recently participated in an insightful clinical tour on board HMAS Adelaide. The unique visit, led by the Maritime Operational Health Unit (MOHU), offered health leaders an inside look into the advanced medical facilities supporting Navy personnel, and highlighted the strong collaborative partnerships between military medical teams and NSW Health.*

*According to the commander of U.S. submarine forces, the Australian-United Kingdom-United States agreement means "more subs forward" to deter Chinese territorial ambitions in the Indo-Pacific.*

*Royal Navy patrol ship HMS Tamar joined forces with authorities in Fiji and the Royal New Zealand Navy to help tackle illegal fishing in the South Pacific. The warship – on a long-term deployment to the region with her sister HMS Spey – scoured Fijian waters on the lookout for illicit activity.*

*The head of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said on Tuesday that he was "very, very concerned" about China's aggression toward Philippine forces near disputed islands in the South China Sea. The Chinese coast guard has repeatedly clashed with Philippine patrol vessels near the Philippines-occupied Second Thomas Shoal.*

Fort Lee, in Virginia, is named for Robert E Lee, the Civil War Confederate leader. Fort Benning in Georgia is named for Henry Benning, a State Supreme Court associate justice who became one of Lee's subordinates. Fort Sam Houston, a US Army installation in San Antonio, Texas, is named in honour of Sam Houston, the first (and third) president of the Republic of Texas, whose victory at the Battle of San Jacinto secured the independence of Texas from Mexico.

US Air Forces bases follow the tradition. Dyess Air Force Base, for example, is named in honour of Lieutenant Colonel William Dyess, a Bataan Death March survivor.

Australia's parent Navy in Britain has also been prolific in naming warships after people. Perhaps the first vessel named after a person dates from 1418, when Britain's King Henry V paid the Bishop of Bangor five pounds for christening the largest warship of the time, the *Henri Grace A Dieu*, which translated as Henry By Grace Of God. This certainly reminded the general public that he was appointed by divine right, an important topic around that time.

A brief sample of other ships in the Royal Navy includes many named in the long war between France and Britain which culminated at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. Towards the end of the war, the RN began to name more ships for people, including contemporary names. The Nelson class of 120 gunships also included vessels named for military people: HMS *Howe* – after Admiral Richard Howe – and *Saint Vincent* – named after Lord St Vincent – after Admiral of the Fleet John Jervis, after whom Jervis Bay is named; and one named after royalty, the *Prince Regent*. There were major warships named for military men: *Wellington*, *Wellesley* – both named after the Army general who was the victor of Waterloo – *Duncan*, *Cornwallis*, *Benbow*, *Barham*, *Drake*, *Hawke*, *Melville*, and *Pitt* after the prime minister.

It would be likely that the RAN will continue the names of the seven people who have ships afloat named after them. The usual practise sees the more notable names continued – for example there have been four HMAS *Sydney*'s so far. Some names are seemingly destined to be only used once. For example, HMAS *Wyatt Earp* will be unlikely to be used again. This vessel, purchased from trade, served in WWII under a different name, but then was used in her original duty of Antarctic supply under her earlier title. As the name commemorates a well-known American West lawman it would be unlikely. However, like many others, HMAS *Tasmania* has only been used once. It is worth noting there is considerable enthusiasm for Navy to

*A national campaign is being launched today to share the benefits of employing ex-service personnel in the civilian workplace. The Australian Defence Force is an incredible training ground for personnel, but when they leave service, many report having difficulty translating their skills from the ADF to the civilian workplace.*

*On February 20 the Australian government finally released its blueprint for the non-submarine part of the RAN, entitled Enhanced Lethality Surface Fleet. The document claimed that the number of surface combatants will be substantially increased to 26 platforms – eventually.*

*The robot's video feed showed an innocuous-looking cardboard box, but from intelligence gathered, Chief Petty Officer Thomas Buchanan knew it was time to put on a bomb suit. Earlier that day, the Mine Warfare and Clearance Diving Task Group headquarters tasked clearance diving elements to clear a wharf in preparation for ships coming alongside.*

*Vice Admiral David Johnston will lead Australia's armed forces as chief of the defence force. On his appointment Vice Admiral Johnston said, "I am very conscious of the responsibility that comes with the role, the strategic environment in which we face ourselves, and most particularly the responsibility I have to the extraordinary men and women in the Australian Defence Force and the families who support them."*

*With undersea technology moving towards robotic and autonomous systems, it's an exciting time to be in mine warfare, according to Able Seaman Grayden Ash. The autonomous underwater vehicle*



continue using old names, with many “ship associations” advocating for their cause.

In conclusion, there are a host of alternative names – those of its heroes – which the RAN could use to name ships. By doing so it would not only commemorate the past, but also celebrate the actions which its personnel are sometimes called upon in battle – and therefore show that their actions are laudable and to be emulated. This action, of changing the practise of naming ship after people, should be argued for until it becomes reality. In the words of the motto of the submarine *Sheean* – Fight On.

Yours Aye!  
NVN Team

## OUR APRIL HERO

### Vice Admiral Sir Henry Mackay BURRELL KBE CB MiD



*Vice Admiral Burrell shares with Vice Admiral Creswell a sense of strategic vision for Australia and its Navy. Although he commanded two successive destroyers in WWII, it was perhaps his first major shore appointment in America that sparked his breadth of understanding and vision for the role and future of the Royal Australian Navy. He understood more than most, acknowledging it often, the debt the RAN owes to its Royal Navy*

*heritage. Yet when it was necessary he steered the acquisition of new ships to American models, with consequent benefits for his country. Resolute in fighting for what he perceived as right, he fought hard – and succeeded – in getting a 1959 decision to disband the Fleet Air Arm reversed. He has been described as one of the first “dinkum Aussie” Admirals, and remains one of the most influential Flag Officers in the RAN’s history.*

Vice Admiral Sir Henry Mackay Burrell, KBE, CB, was a senior Commander in the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). He served as Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) from 1959 to 1962. Born in the Blue Mountains, Burrell entered the Royal Australian Naval College in 1918 as a 13-year-old cadet. His first posting at sea was aboard the cruiser HMAS *Sydney*. During the 1920s and 1930s, Burrell served for several years on exchange with the Royal Navy, specialising as a Navigator. During World War II, he filled a key liaison post with the US Navy, and later saw action as Commander of the destroyer HMAS *Norman*, earning a Mention in Despatches.

[Continue reading this fascinating life story.....](#)

*(AUV) operator put his skills to the test during Exercise Dugong, using sonar data from the Bluefin-9 and -12 systems to search and identify mine threats.*

*The Government is investing over \$83 million to deliver vital Defence infrastructure upgrades at HMAS Stirling in Western Australia. Ensuring the Australian Defence Force has fit-for-purpose facilities and infrastructure is critical for its capability and preparedness.*

*Six warships and four aircraft from Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and the United States conducted a joint patrol in the South China Sea on Sunday following Chinese harassment of Philippine Navy resupply missions in the region.*

*The Royal Australian Navy has laid sea mines for the first time in nearly 50 years during Exercise Dugong 24. The mine warfare and clearance diving activity, from March 4-22, was designed to test a combined force from Australia, New Zealand and the US against a realistic mine threat.*

*In the quiet Torres Strait shadows, where the sun paints stories on coral reefs, Leading Seaman Edmund Tomsana found himself torn between a love of his ancestral home and mysterious attraction of city life. Born on the island of Moa, north of Thursday Island, Leading Seaman Tomsana moved to Townsville to finish high school.*

*Communicating underwater is no easy feat – and the process becomes even more complex when the communication needs to be secure. In the underwater domain, radio signals don’t transmit far, optical sensors only travel efficiently for about 50m and underwater acoustics suffer from noise, interference, echoes and delays in transmission.*

## Remembrance Services

3 May – 12:30 – HMAS Castlemaine Service – Shrine Sanctuary

5 May – 12:00 – The Battle of the Coral Sea Commemoration – Shrine, Second World War Forecourt

22 May – 11:00 – Battle of Leyte Gulf – Memorial tree and Plaque Dedication – Shrine of Remembrance

For information on all Shrine ceremonies:

Phone: 03 9661 8100

Email: [ceremonies@shrine.org.au](mailto:ceremonies@shrine.org.au)



If you know of any of our Navy family who has crossed the bar and don't appear on our list below or Memorial Wall on our website, please don't hesitate to [contact us](#). If possible, list their Rank, Name, Number, the date of their passing and their age.

- † EMAW K.E. Doncon, R55188, April 2024. Aged 86.
- † CERA B.L. Stephens, R42093, 23 April 2024. Aged 84.
- † POASE G.N. Wise, R51262, 19 April 2024. Aged 86.
- † ERA C.M. Kelson, R42939, 17 April 2024. Aged 75.
- † LEUT C.A. Dakin, A39448, 12 April 2024. Aged 94.
- † LCDR R. Patton, 12 April 2024.
- † CMDR A.E. Vidler, O.2483, 12 April 2024. Aged 78.
- † CPOTEL L.G. Taylor, R/28976, 05 April, 2024. Aged 97.
- † CDRE T.H. Cox AM, O.2039, 04 April 2024. Aged 77.
- † CMDR A. Hickling, 02 April 2024. Aged 87.
- † CPORS B.J. Cleary, R53773, 01 April 2024. Aged 86.
- † CPOUC J.T. Gubbins, R28222, 29 March 2024. Aged 95.
- † CDRE P.M. Mulcare, O.792, 29 March 2024. Aged 85.
- † WOSTD P.L. Frost, R59491, 29 March 2024. Aged 78.
- † LSCOX M.L. Adams, R94873, March 2024. Aged 74.
- † CMDR R.A.G. Herron, O.525, 25 March 2024. Aged 87.
- † CPOMTP3\*SM G.J. Gilbert, R50642, 23 March 2024. Aged 87.
- † CMDR W.B. Hamlyn, O.2155, 08 March 2024. Aged 83.
- † SAP1 C.R. Godden, R42367, 02 March 2024. Aged 79.

*All of the above names now appear on the special [Memorial Wall](#) of our website.*

**Lest We Forget**

*Relations between Australia and Thailand were enhanced through a port visit by Anzac-class frigate HMAS Warramunga. Warramunga visited the Royal Thai Naval Base at Sattahip, near Pattaya City, south of Bangkok for a six-day visit as part of a three-month Indo-Pacific regional presence deployment.*

*Several of the U.S. Navy's top shipbuilding programs are running one year to three years behind schedule, as the service and the industrial base grapple with workforce and management challenges.*

*As the hearings for the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide conclude, the Government remains focused on supporting veterans' transition to civilian life. One of the key factors to having a successful transition is finding fulfilling civilian work post service.*

*The sole survivor serving aboard the USS Arizona during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor has died. Lou Conter, one of the last living ties to that date of infamy, passed away this morning at his home in Grass, Valley, California, Pacific Historic Parks confirmed. He was 102. Starting his shift as quartermaster at 7:45 a.m. on Dec. 7, 1941, Conter had barely rubbed the sleep from his eyes when the Japanese assault began a mere three minutes later. At exactly 8:09 a.m., the hull of the USS Arizona was struck by a 1,760-pound Japanese armor-piercing bomb.*

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