

# HMAS YARRA COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY – 1100 - SUNDAY 5 MARCH 2023



On the first Sunday of March at 1100 each year, a commemoration service is held at the HMAS Yarra National Memorial on The Strand at Newport in honour of HMAS Yarra II, which was lost during enemy action on 4 March 1942 with only 13 survivors. This year's event will take place at 1100 on Sunday 5 March.

**Background.** When war broke out in the Pacific in early 1942, Yarra was involved in various convey escort tasks. On 3 March, she was escorting a small convoy through the Sunda Strait in Indonesia, in an attempt to evade the Japanese and reach Fremantle. The convoy comprised the SS *Anking* (Depot Ship), SS *Franco* (Tanker) and MMS 51, (Motor Minesweeper), while Yarra was also carrying surviving crew of the Dutch Merchant Ship *Parigi*.

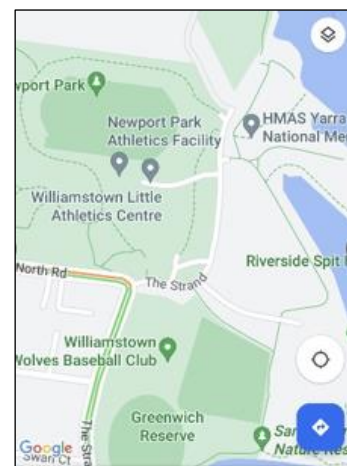
Around sunrise on 4 March, Yarra first sighted an approaching and powerful Japanese naval force. After making an enemy report, Yarra's Commanding Officer (Lieutenant Commander Robert Rankin RAN) ordered his convoy to scatter. He turned towards the enemy ships, laying a smoke screen and preparing his much smaller 4-inch guns for action against what was clearly an overwhelming enemy force.

After an action lasting only a few hours, Yarra and all the convoy had been sunk. The total number of servicemen lost from all ships is unknown. After some five days adrift in the Indian Ocean, the 13 survivors from HMAS Yarra were rescued by the Dutch Submarine KXI. Of Yarra's total complement of 151, 138 men (including the Commanding Officer and all other officers) were killed in the action or died subsequently on the rafts.

HMAS Yarra received a Unit Citation in 2013 for her incredible earlier rescue efforts in Singapore Harbour and for her final battle against overwhelming odds.

This event is admirably assisted by HMAS Cerberus, Cadets from TS Voyager, Hobson's Bay City Council and the Williamstown Rotary Club. Music is supplied by the Hyde Street Youth Band.

**It continues to ensure that the memory of HMAS Yarra and her crew will always be remembered.**



**Public attendance at this ceremony is most welcome.**