



BROADSIDE

February 2021

Volume 11 Edition 2

Editorial

HMAS Perth wreath laying service – 1st March 2021

In this month's newsletter we pause to commemorate the anniversary of one of the most significant events in the history of the Royal Australian Navy. On 1 March 1942, the Australian light cruiser HMAS *Perth* was sunk in the battle of the Sunda Strait with the loss of more than 350 members of her crew.

On the 28th of February, HMAS *Perth* and the heavy cruiser USS *Houston* were making for the southern coast of Java after the fall of Singapore only two weeks earlier. *Perth* and *Houston* were the only large Allied ships to have survived the Battle of the Java Sea the day before. They had retreated to Tanjong Priok, where they arrived on 28 February.

The two ships attempted to resupply, but fuel shortages meant that *Perth* took on only half her normal fuel capacity, and a lack of shells left the cruisers with what little ammunition was left over from the previous day. *Perth*, *Houston*, and the Dutch destroyer *Evertsen* had been ordered to sail for Tjilatjap via the Sunda Strait.

Late that evening of the 28th, they encountered the Japanese 'western invasion convoy' at the northern entrance to the Sunda Strait. The convoy was escorted by a large Japanese flotilla of two light cruisers, eight destroyers and a minelayer, supported by another four cruisers, an aircraft carrier and further destroyers.

Heavily outnumbered, soon running low on ammunition and changing course constantly to avoid attacks from every direction, the Australian and American crews fought desperately against impossible odds. Together *Perth* and *Houston* sank a Japanese transport and a

Events Calendar

(see [Diary of Events](#) for full details)

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NOTE: Due to COVID-19, it is advisable to check with the coordinators to confirm whether the event you were planning to attend is still going ahead.

We will endeavour to keep the Diary updated as news comes to hand.

At present the Shrine of Remembrance is closed, but ceremonies are still being conducted and they are live streamed on the Shrine's [Facebook page](#).

01 Mar – HMAS Perth / USS Houston Service

01 Mar - Father of the Navy service, Brighton cemetery

07 Mar - Sorrento Festival, RAN Big Band in attendance

5-9 Mar - HMAS Melville visit, TBC

21 Mar - Ballarat Jazz club, RAN Jazz group

23 Mar - RAN Band Variety Concert

1-5 Apr - HMAS Leeuwin visit, TBC

11 Apr - HMAS Vampire

25 Apr – ANZAC Day

Latest Videos, Podcasts and News Headlines

The full articles of the news items listed below can be found on our website:

<https://navyvic.net/news/news.html>

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minesweeper, then severely damaged a further three transports. But under the immense weight of Japanese numbers and superior firepower, the end was inevitable. Japanese ships launched 85 torpedoes during the brief engagement.

Perth suffered her first hit from a Japanese shell at 11.26 p.m. At midnight, with ammunition running low, displaying immense courage and strength of character, *Perth's* Captain, 'Hec' Waller, ordered his ship to try to force a way through.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

HMAS Perth during the Battle of the Sunda Strait

Soon after midnight the first torpedo struck. With her crew reduced to firing practice shells and illumination star shells, a second torpedo hit *Perth* shortly afterwards, Captain Waller ordered "Abandon ship". *Perth* was hit by two more torpedoes before finally sinking at 25 minutes after midnight on the 1st of March.

The action was all over in just under an hour from the time the first round struck.

Of the 686 men on board HMAS *Perth*, more than half - over 350 officers and ratings - perished in this, her last action. Of the 320 survivors captured by the Japanese, one-third died during their long ordeal as prisoners of war.

Together, we remember the brave seamen of both vessels, as well as those of the other Allied warships - Australian, British, American and Dutch sailors - who were lost in the series of engagements in the Java Sea while attempting to repel large Japanese invasion forces.

VIDEOS.....

- *Able Seaman Cooper Blackwood's Recovery Story*
- *Naval News Monthly Recap - January 2021*
- *Facts about NUSHIP Supply (Part 1)*
- *Personnel on board HMAS Adelaide play trivia*
- *The Updated Australian National Anthem*

NEWS.....

On the health advice of Australian authorities due to the ongoing threat of COVID-19, Anzac Day services overseas will not go ahead as normal in 2021. This includes the Australian and New Zealanded Anzac Day services in Turkey and the Australian services in France.

Sailor a testament to Defence values Operation Bursa was only really known by those engaged in it at the time – the secretive counter-terrorist operation raised to recapture any of the strategically important oil rigs in Bass Strait if taken by terrorists.

Sixty-one crew members and 110 surviving family members of USS Pueblo (AGER-2) are entitled to more than \$2.3 billion in damages suffered in the capture of the intelligence-gathering vessel in 1968 in international waters off Wonsan, North Korea, a federal judge in Washington, D.C., ruled this month.

Russia's latest super-sized submarine, Belgorod, has been a conundrum for interested observers. While its existence is far from secret, Moscow has gone to great pains to keep certain key details out of the public domain.

HMA Ships Gascoyne and Diamantina flexed their mine-hunting muscles this week during the first phase of their Fleet Certification Period in Jervis Bay. The Huon-class minehunters have been conducting mine-hunting and



In September 1944, US submarines torpedoed a convoy of Japanese cargo transports in the South China Sea – unaware that POWs were aboard, including Perth men. Left to die by the Japanese, prisoners clung desperately to wooden rafts. US submarines Pampanito, Sealion, Barb and Queenfish rescued 159 oil-sodden, exhausted, starved and dehydrated Allied POWs, sharing their clothes, food and bunks with them.

Image: [US Naval History and Heritage Command](#).

A service will be held at the Shrine of Remembrance, on 1st March 2021 commencing at 11:00 am to recognise the ships that have borne the name HMAS *Perth*, and those who have served in them.

There have been three ships with the name HMAS *Perth*. The second sailed from 1965 until 1999 and deployed to the Vietnam War. The third HMAS *Perth* is an Anzac Class frigate built in Victoria and currently serving in the Royal Australian Navy.

Battle of the Sunda Strait
 Commemoration Service - 1100 on Monday 1MAR21
 Sanctuary, Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne
 Due to C19 restrictions, if you wish to attend
 please email naval.commemoration.committee@gmail.com




HMAS Perth D29
Lost in Action
Along with USS Houston CA30



laying exercises, as well as putting their crews through their paces in engineering, damage control and ship handling exercises.

HMAS Canberra has left Australia's biggest dry dock this week after its first deep level maintenance since her commissioning in 2014, and with a fresh coat of Haze Grey paint.

The U.S. Navy is collecting proposals for a new autonomous glider drone that can collect data — such as water temperatures over time — as a way to improve how it hunts for enemy submarines.

Sailors from the U.S. Navy's Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit (MDSU) 2 are currently in Minnesota for ice diving training, cutting through about two feet of ice to reach the water and donning their thickest drysuits while they rehearse operations in air temperatures of -22 degrees and 36-degree water temperatures.

A massive effort to rescue nearly 1,000 cold-stunned sea turtles at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi all started with a base resident wanting to help a couple of injured birds. Dozens of base retirees, Coast Guardsmen, sailors, soldiers and spouses joined agencies like the National Park Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife, the Texas Sealife center and others to help save the turtles.

The U.S. Navy will not tolerate extremism in the ranks and announced its plans for a 60-day stand-down to get that message to everyone in the service.

Drugs worth £11m will never reach the streets – or fund terrorist activities – after the Royal Navy swooped on traffickers twice in two days in the Middle East.

NUSHIP Stalwart's crew celebrated its formation last month, marking the occasion by donning their ship's caps and badges and hosting a

The service is likely to be held in the Shrine's Sanctuary, unless COVID restrictions dictate otherwise. We recommend you monitor the website <https://www.shrine.org.au/hmas-perth-national-association-victorian-branch>. The service will also be webcast live and also streamed on Facebook and the Shrine of Remembrance website.

Melbourne Naval Committee – Grants Available!

On a number of previous occasions, this Newsletter has advertised the assistance that is available to individuals and ex-naval associations from the Melbourne Naval Committee (MNC). Now that COVID restrictions appear to be lifting and life is gradually returning to normal, the MNC is again seeking applications for financial assistance.

Just to remind you, the MNC is a not for profit charity that provides support to Victorian-based serving and ex-Navy personnel, Navy Ship and Branch Associations to:

- Provide a central meeting place for men and women who have served in the RAN, RN, or an allied Navy in order to perpetuate a spirit of comradeship and mutual assistance throughout the Naval Services;
- Arrange, facilitate, or promote recreation, amusement and education for the men and women who are serving or have served in the Naval Services; and
- Support other groups and organisations in Victoria that provide for the wellbeing of currently serving and ex-Navy members.

Recent examples of grants awarded to associations include reimbursing the cost of conducting a reunion for veterans and their families, through to offsetting the administrative expenses of running an association.

If in doubt about your eligibility, contact the [MNC Secretary](#).

Mission to Seafarers

Also, if your association is thinking of somewhere to meet in the city, either routinely or for a special occasion, you can do so free of charge at the Mission to Seafarer's building in Docklands. It is well served by public transport and you cannot beat the price of a beer over the bar.

Meeting rooms are available (including the upstairs Navy-themed 'River Room'). Catering can be organised through the Mission' or from a plethora of nearby restaurants that deliver. Arrangements can also be

barbeque for families of the ship's company.

Australians can be assured that Defence's data is safe. The safeguarding of Defence's data is of the utmost priority for my Department. Defence has comprehensive security controls in place at the Global Switch Ultimo data centre to protect against compromise by a foreign power or other malicious actor. Control and access of the Defence data stored at Ultimo remains under full operational control of the Australian Government. All of the most sensitive data was removed from this facility in May 2020.

YOUNG Australians have returned to sea in STS Young Endeavour to develop their confidence and resilience, with measures put in place to deliver the program in a COVID-safe way.

The management and operation of refuelling services at HMAS Coonawarra in Darwin were this month handed back to Navy personnel from contractors. The move is part of an ongoing transformation of the base and the Larrakeyah Defence Precinct.

The technical skills of six Navy Fleet Cyber Unit personnel have were put to the test during the annual TechNet International Capture-the-Flag Challenge. Hosted in January, the unit competed against 54 teams from across the globe, including Canada, New Zealand, the UK, and the US.

The unprecedented government investment in the National Naval Shipbuilding Enterprise and associated infrastructure continues at a rapid pace at the Western Australian Henderson shipyard.

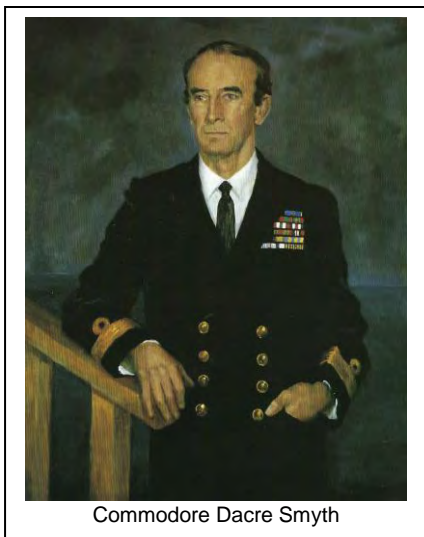
Two generations of sailors were brought together last month when Honorary Secretary of the Hobart Association John Withers OAM visited HMAS Hobart. Mr Withers, a

made to use the kitchen to 'self-cater' your event.

The Mission welcomes any Navy orientated Associations to use their gardens, BBQ area or rooms for reunion lunches on Anzac Day, however, pre-booking is essential. And currently serving or retired Navy personnel are welcome anytime to catch-up with colleagues for a drink or coffee at the Mission's bar.

Bookings for Anzac Day or for a meeting room can be made through Daria Wray (Mission to Seafarers' Events Manager) via:
email: events@missiontoseafarers.com.au or
phone: (03) 9629 7083 (normal working hours)

Naval Heroes



Our naval hero for February, Commodore Dacre Smyth had what can only be described as a stellar naval career which began in 1940 and ended with his retirement in May 1978. He served at sea in both WW2 and Korea and late in his career he served as Naval Officer in Charge, Victoria and Commanding Officer of HMAS *Cerberus* at Flinders Naval Depot, the RAN's major training establishment.

Dacre Henry Deudraeth Smyth was born in London on 5 May 1923, the son of British military hero General Sir Nevill Smyth, who won a Victoria Cross under Lord Kitchener at the Battle of Omdurman in Sudan in 1898. Dacre joined the RAN in September 1940 and after six months training at the Royal Australian Naval College, was posted as a Midshipman to the heavy cruiser HMAS *Australia*, joining in Sydney in May 1941. *Australia* subsequently became Flagship of the Australian Squadron and was Flagship of the Support Group during the Battle of the Coral Sea.

Later and when just 21, he took part in the D-Day landings at Normandy, France. On 6 June 1944, his ship HMS *Danae* operated off Sword Beach bombarding German shore batteries.

In 1977, he was made an Officer of the Order of Australia. In 1994, on the 50th anniversary of D-Day, he was made an officer in the French

former Leading Seaman Radio Operator who served in Hobart II from 1969-71, toured the guided missile destroyer while it was alongside Fleet Base East in Sydney on January 29.

Joseph Hall walked into Causeway Alterations at the beginning of January with a strange request. The 96-year-old veteran still had his original U.S. Navy uniform that he wore when he enlisted in 1941. He wanted to be buried in it, but it no longer fit. Could someone there make a new one?

Xi Jinping's control over the China Coast Guard, together with a new law that authorises the coastguard to use force against foreign ships in places China defines as its own, is a big change that has so far attracted far less attention than it deserves.

Able Seaman Boatswains Mate Cooper Blackwood sustained a serious injury to his C5-C6 vertebrae in January this year after diving into a swimming pool in Bali during the reduced activity period. The injury left him paralysed from the chest down. ([his story is on video on our website](#))

*Five fire trucks are on the way to Papua New Guinea (PNG) on board HMAS *Choules* after being donated by the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service (QFES).*

APPLICATIONS for the 2021-22 Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program are now open and organisations are encouraged to apply for funding to support their commemorative projects and activities.

Defence Force School of Signals – Maritime Communication and Information Systems Wing students have rolled up their sleeves to help Victorian veterans with their gardening and yard duties. After a call to Australian veterans' charity Legacy, 20 intermediate course

Order National du Merite for his service at Sword Beach and in 2004 he was granted the Legion d' Honneur from former French president Jacques Chirac at the 60th anniversary of D-Day.

Commodore Dacre Smyth AO RAN (Ret'd) passed away in 2008 at his Toorak home aged 85.

His full naval biography can be found on our website:

<https://navyvic.net/heroes/smyth.html>

Note: Content for this editorial was sourced from the Australian War Memorial, Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance, and the Royal Australian Navy official websites

Yours Aye!
NVN Team.



If you know of any of our Navy family that has crossed the bar, please don't hesitate to let us know (webmaster@navyvic.net). We will list their names in perpetuity on our special [Memorial Wall](#) on the website. If possible list their Rank, Name, Number, the date of their passing and their age.

- † ERA H.W. Jones, R42323, 22 February 2021. Aged 76.
- † NAA R.J. Hibberd, 42838, 16 February 2021. Aged 73.
- † EMC J.R.J. Hutchison, R65226, 15 February 2021. Aged 73.
- † WOETP W.J. Landers, R108906, 14 February 2021. Aged 66.
- † STO MECH E. Farrowell, R38678, 14 February 2021. Aged 89.
- † ROS T.P. Helion, R65223, February 2021. Aged 72.
- † Tiffany D.A. Henderson, R43582, 13 February 2021. Aged 69.
- † WTR R.J. Berry, R105703, 10 February 2021. Aged 68.
- † LCDR L.F. Coy, 06 February 2021. Aged 92.
- † LCK D.R. Baker, R59419, 04 February 2021. Aged 76.
- † WRAN TEL S.E. Johnson, WR84522, 03 February 2021. Aged 84.
- † LSRP R.J. Jeffries, R105505, 29 January 2021. Aged 68.
- † POEMWR R.L. Jeffery, R96194, 27 January 2021. Aged 69.
- † CPOQMG R.G. Holden, R63253, 26 January 2021. Aged 73.
- † Stoker W.N. Morris, 34164, 23 January 2021. Aged 91.
- † AB L.A. Oakley, PM1918, 23 January 2021. Aged 101.
- † Surg. CAPT K.R. Delaney, 22 January 2021. Aged 81.

Lest We Forget

students based at HMAS Cerberus, volunteered to help tidy gardens across Frankston, Mornington, Chelsea Heights and Patterson Lakes in Melbourne.

What's up with the Royal Australian Navy's weapons program? Last month, Defence Minister Linda Reynolds put out a media release announcing a boost to Australia's maritime security. Its focus was the navy's weapons program.

PARTNERS of Australian Defence Force (ADF) members will receive simpler and faster access to employment support and opportunities through improvements to the Partner Employment Assistance Program.

The Andrews Labor Government has welcomed the appointment of naval veteran Stephen Bowater as incoming Chairperson of the Shrine of Remembrance Trustees. A veteran of more than 40 years' service, Captain Bowater was most recently the Executive Director of the Royal Australian Navy's Commander Shore Force and takes over from Air Vice-Marshal Chris Spence who is stepping down after a nine-year term.

Submarine HMS Talent has put the world's most advanced torpedo through its final trials – including firing the lethal weapon at itself.

Historians need help reuniting relatives with a unique piece of wartime Royal Navy history spanning the Atlantic. They hope to trace the descendants and relatives of every sailor hosted by a New York family during World War 2.

In recent years, China has taken a dim view of Australian naval and air activities in the South China Sea. Australia is considered an intruder, an external power that has no right to deploy into the area.

An artificially grown sapphire the size of a fist will be at the heart of

All Darings Reunion 2021 and other FESR Ships

Hosted by HMAS Duchess Association



G'day Shipmates,

The dates and location are now confirmed for the inaugural All Darings and other FESR Ships reunion 2021.

LOCATION:

The activities of the reunion are centred around Coffs Harbour, NSW. Coffs Harbour Ex Servicemans Club will be providing all meals except Saturday Lunch BBQ, which will be at and provided by TS Vendetta, and the meals there will require a small payment.

PROGRAM:

The details as they stand at the moment are:

Friday afternoon	Coffs Harbour RSL	1st October 2021, 1600 registrations
Friday night M&G Dinner	Coffs Harbour RSL	1st October 2021, 1800 till late
Saturday Lunch BBQ	TS Vendetta	2nd October 2021, From 1100
Saturday night Dinner	Coffs Harbour RSL	2nd October 2021, 1830 for 1900 table
Sunday farewell Breakfast	Coffs Harbour RSL	3rd October 2021, 0600 until 1000

ACCOMMODATION:

As far as accommodation options are concerned, there are so many choices that attendees can probably shop around and do as good a deal as a bulk booking. Enquiries last Monday revealed no shortage of rooms to reserve, Ibis for instance have 65 rooms available.

THE LIMITATIONS:

With the uncertainty of Covid 19 casting a cloud, no dancing is permitted during the event, and decisions are still being made re: music. Also, some limit to numbers might be applied, but it is still intended to have tables of 8. It won't be possible to book tables for your specific group until at least the end of August, but this isn't expected to pose a problem. Menus are being worked on with the Club at this time, but will be advised as soon as possible.


REFUND & PAYMENT POLICY:


- Deposit \$50.00pp, payable by **1st April 2021**
- Full payment \$200.00 or balance \$150.00 due by **8th August 2021**.
- Full refunds for cancellations if applied for by **31st July 2021**.
- Partial refund for cancellation until **15th September, 2021**.
- Refunds not possible after 15th September, except...
- **Covid19 cancellation of event by legislation of governing bodies – full refund except cost of rabbits bag.**


More information will be distributed as it comes to hand.

Yours Aye, Bowie

 **HMAS Duchess Association**

 **Email.**

 **Landline.**

 **Mobile.**

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Australia's early warning defence system.

The Royal Navy is set to receive three world-class autonomous minesweepers to work on mine disposal operations and reduce the risk to sailors on these dangerous missions.

HMS Queen Elizabeth has assumed the role of Fleet Flagship as the Royal Navy moves closer to deploying the world's most technologically advanced carrier strike group.

Royal Australian Navy vessels are set to be fitted with new advanced anti-ship missiles as part of a \$1 billion investment announced by Defence Minister Linda Reynolds.

The contract to deliver a submarine rescue system for the Navy's Collins and Attack Class submarine fleet has been axed by the Department of Defence. Defence has confirmed it has terminated Phoenix International's \$255 million contract, signed in 2018, to deliver a new sovereign air transportable Submarine Rescue Service capability to the Royal Australian Navy's current and future submarine fleet.

Navy League of Australia (Vic-Tas Div) [February newsletter.....](#)

Naval Historical Society (Victorian Chapter) [President's February Musings.....](#)

Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network – [February update.....](#)

FlyBy – A periodical of the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia. [February issue.....](#)

Visit our [website](#) or [Facebook page](#) for more news articles not included in this newsletter.