



BROADSIDE

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Editorial



The major upgrade of HMAS Cerberus, at a cost of \$466M has yielded surprises at many levels. All serving Navy and ex-Navy men and women would be astounded by the changes taking place. A relatively small part of the overall project, under the guidance of CMDR Cameron Eastman OAM RAN took place on 29MAY21 where a number of roads at HMAS Cerberus were named, some renamed. The protocol of naming these roads covered various aspects of Navy history, such as: names of Warships identified with Victoria towns, individuals of historic significance and most importantly individuals who contributed so much to the reputation of the Royal Australian Navy.

Our focus is on one of these newly named Cerberus roads, that of 'Dickson Circuit'.

Seldom is a road named after a person who is still with us, however, Commodore Jim Dickson AM MBE RAN Retd is a stand out person who has earned that rare honour. He has made a momentous contribution to the Navy and Victoria in particular as: Naval Officer Commanding Victoria, Commanding Officer HMAS Cerberus, Commodore Navy Training and then as an esteemed member of the wider Victoria community.



CDRE Jim Dickson unveiling the nameplate 'Dickson Circuit'. Jim is pictured with his sister Natalie Speed and niece Penny and CMDR Cameron Eastman OAM RAN

Events Calendar

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



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](#).

28 Jun – Naval Historical Society meeting – all welcome

30 Jun – HMAS Waterhen commemorative service

04 Jul – Reserve Forces day

06 Jul – FESR Commemorative service

14 Jul – Soundwaves concert

23 Jul – Recruit School Graduation

28 Jul – Naval Historical Society meeting – all welcome

31 Jul – The Cube concert Wodonga – RAN Jazz ensemble

04 Aug – Soundwaves concert

08 Aug – Op Pedestal service

09 Aug – HMAS Canberra service

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>



Since leaving the Navy, Jim has been instrumental in providing a voice for Veterans and their families as: President – Melbourne Naval Committee; Mornington Peninsular Legatee; patronage of Ship/Branch Associations (particularly the HMAS *Sydney* Association and the Naval Commemoration Committee of Victoria); and other more formal avenues of influence to Government. As President of the Melbourne Naval Committee (previously titled ‘Centre’) he and the Board had a direct impact on many Navy orientated organisations through financial support and mentoring to secure an appropriate outcome.

Further to the Veteran related organisations Jim has been involved with the: National Heart Foundation, Boy Scouts and Corps of Commissionaires. For a time he was Executive Director of the Open Family Foundation (dealing with street kids). He participated for seven years as a member of the Police Board of Victoria and held Chairmanship of the National Heritage Foundation (computerizing genealogical records). If that wasn’t enough, Jim was appointed a part-time Services member of the Veterans’ Review Board (VRB)

Jim has also made a significant contribution to the Order of Australia Association, Frankston Mornington Peninsular Regional Group as a member, committeeman and Chair.

It could be said that Jim’s capacity and capability as a notable citizen stems from an extensive and professional grounding that commenced in 1950, at HMAS *Cerberus*.

Jim is one of that incredible cohort of ex-Naval Officers who launched their career as Junior Entry Cadet Midshipmen, 13 year olds - not to diminish from the 15 year old entry scheme.



Jim as a 13 year old Junior Entry Cadet Midshipman with class mates of 1950.

VIDEOS.....

- *Navy Shipbuilding Outplacement*
- *ADF arts-based program aids recovery*
- *Family’s joy as HMAS Anzac returns from last-minute redeployment*
- *Navy Indigenous Development Program*
- *Maritime aircraft control on HMAS Ballarat*
- *Invictus Games Gold Coast swim camp*
- *Exercise Sea Explorer*
- *HMAS Ballarat refuels at sea with USS Big Horn*
- *Video: Day 3 At MADEX 2021*
- *Video: Day 2 At MADEX 2021 – CIWS-II, KVLS-II and DSME submarines for the Philippines*
- *MADEX 2021 Day 1 - ROK Navy’s CVX Light Aircraft Carrier with HHI and DSME*
- *Unmanned Aerial Tanker Refuels Super Hornet in Successful First Test*
- *Austal hosts christening of U.S.S. Canberra*

PODCAST.....

Policy, Guns and Money: Taiwan, climate change and the cost of defence

NEWS.....

China military watch
As the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party approaches, the world is watching closely to see what China does as it tries to realise President Xi Jinping’s ‘China dream’ and achieve ‘national rejuvenation’.

The Russian Navy’s latest ‘Special Mission’ submarine, K-329 Belgorod, has put to sea for the first time.

The New Mystery Submarine Seen in China: What We Know

Female officers in the U.S. Navy have been serving on multiple platforms

It was as a Cadet Midshipman that Jim not only pursued his academic and seafaring credentials, but as a senior Cadet he incurred responsibility for assisting to develop leadership and self-discipline across the College student body.

We understand there were occasions when Jim was directed to run a well-worn path, or circuit around and between several Naval College buildings, when the College was at HMAS *Cerberus*. As a third year Cadet he inherited a custom of despatching his juniors on that same circuit around the College – a learning experience for the betterment of his juniors!

Jim was educated at Naval College, HMAS *Cerberus* for four years. Seventy years on, running that circuit is not now considered a punishment, but more a gratifying experience! The experience of that circuit, now named in Jim's honour, *Dickson Circuit* is a reminder of days gone by. Those days were in the shadow of World War Two and the Korean conflict, which commenced mid 1950 during Jim's first year at the College. Underpinning mental/education and physical training criteria was motivation from knowing that being a Naval Officer was all about bringing Warships to life. History shows us that Jim succeeded in his career as a Naval Officer over a period of forty years.

Jim has expressed an often overlooked view that the sea is a lifeline to Australia. In recent years, he has spoken of how Navy as guardian and protector of Australia's maritime environment was appreciated, respected and supported in a way that doesn't happen today. Jim has been unswerving with his advocacy for Navy, or more importantly the men and women who serve and those that have served. His own career embraced many milestone events, his promotion to Commodore was due recognition of his talent, dedication and professionalism. The following outlines his Navy career over a forty year career.

(the following is mostly extracted from his bio at the HMAS Sydney website)

Jim had a highly satisfactory start to his career, given only half of his initial class of 28 graduated at the end of 1953. In the 1950s the RAN was almost a carbon copy of the Royal Navy, reinforced by RAN College graduates joining up with Royal Navy contemporaries from Dartmouth. After Jim graduated, much of the next 5 years was to undergoing training cruises with the RN. Returning to

throughout the Submarine Force for more than 10 years now.

"The Royal Navy ship is conducting innocent passage through Ukrainian territorial waters in accordance with international law." said UK MoD in the tweet.

Seventeen men and women graduated from the Royal Australian Navy Indigenous Development Program (NIDP) today, celebrating with family and friends at Munro Martin Parklands, Cairns.

The Captain Cook Graving Dock at Sydney's Garden Island, built during World War II, has been recognised as a National Engineering Landmark by Engineers Australia.

While a change is coming for a Defence People Group branch that supports ADF members and families, there won't be any changes to the nationwide services it provides.

*The Royal Navy's newest Offshore Patrol Vessel HMS *Spey* was commissioned into the Fleet today during a ceremony alongside the Ross-shire town of Invergordon.*

*Deploying to South-East and north-east Asia for two months was a memorable experience for the crew of HMAS *Parramatta* – but nothing beats the feeling of coming home.*

*Austal Australia has delivered the eleventh Guardian-class Patrol Boat (GCPB) to the Australian Department of Defence on June 18. The vessel, the RKS *Teanoai II*, was then gifted by the Australian Government to the Government of the Republic of Kiribati at a certificate signing ceremony held at Austal Australia's Henderson shipyard.*

*HMAS *Ballarat*'s ship's canteen is one of the busiest compartments on the ship,*

Australia as a Sub Lieutenant he earned his Bridge Watchkeeping Certificate in 1958, whilst serving in the Bathurst Class Corvette HMAS *Cootamundra*. In 1959, he served in HMAS *Tobruk*, the Battle Class Destroyer and was deployed to the Far East Strategic Reserve. His first shore posting in 1960 was to HMAS *Leeuwin*, the Junior Recruit Training Establishment (JRTE). He valued his time at *Leeuwin* and being involved in developing the JRTE scheme in particular.

After *Leeuwin*, Jim was appointed for specialist navigation training returning to the RN, at HMS *Dryad*. The following two years were on exchange service in the RN, he was part of the commissioning crew of HMS *Tartar* in 1962, after which *Tartar* was deployed to the West Indies. During his time in *Tartar*, the ship frequently patrolled the Bahamas, off Cuba and was involved in hurricane relief operations in Trinidad and Tobago.

Returning to Australia Jim took up a posting as Assistant Fleet Navigator in the HMAS *Melbourne*. It was not long before Jim had his first command, the Ton Class Minesweeper HMAS *Gull* with a 24 person Ship's Company, during the end of the Malay Confrontation. Jim's performance in *Gull* was recognised with being honoured as a Member of the Order of the British Empire. His citation read:

'By his leadership, thoroughness and conscientious regard for the welfare of his men, his ship achieved high efficiency and successfully performed all duties assigned to her'.

He then moved to HMAS *Perth* as Navigator during her first deployment to Vietnam, 1967-68. After a Staff Course with the RN in 1969, he was posted to HMAS *Sydney* as the Navigator. At this time, *Sydney* had been converted to a troop carrier, deploying on frequent occasions to Vietnam through 1970. Then back to HMAS *Melbourne* as Fleet Navigator.

In 1972, now Commander Dickson was posted as Executive Officer, RAN College. The College had returned to Captain's Point, Jervis Bay. He took command of HMAS *Yarra* in 1975 through to 1976, *Yarra* was principally engaged in work up and trials off Australia's east coast. Next he was off to the USA for the Naval War College course at Newport, Rhode Island. Now a Captain, Jim took up residency in Canberra, ACT in charge of the Naval Combat Data System (NCDS) Centre, Fyshwick.

especially as the Fleet embraces contactless, COVID-safe port visits.

One hundred and seventy three proud graduates of the Royal Australian Naval College (RANC), dressed sharply in winter ceremonial uniforms, have marked the end of five months of training.

VETERANS and their families are being encouraged to get moving and increase their physical activity, with \$200,000 in funding available nationally to assist community groups and ex-service organisations with planning and hosting Veterans' Health Week events in October 2021.

DEFENCE has reached a key milestone in its commitment to reconciliation, achieving the Australian Government's Indigenous participation target of three per cent across the Australian Defence Force and Australian Public Service.

The Australian War Memorial is commissioning a work of art to recognise and commemorate the suffering caused by war and military service.

HMAS Ballarat has been refuelled during a rendezvous with two United States Navy ships during its Regional Presence Deployment. Ballarat met up with guided missile destroyer USS Curtis D. Wilbur and replenishment oiler USNS Big Horn after the Anzac-class frigate's transit of the Luzon Strait.

Maritime Warfare South at HMAS Cerberus has hosted Defence work experience students for the first time, with 20 local teenagers getting to try out some of Navy's newest training facilities.

Exercise Sea Explorer has concluded with about 1800 ADF personnel taking part and for the first time the tactical deployment of M1A1 Abrams tanks was exercised in amphibious operations.

Taking command of HMAS Brisbane ('Steelcat') from November 80 to October 82 – during which the ship had deployments to the Indian Ocean in 81 and the Pacific-Far East in 82. This proved to be his last sea posting, as his proposed posting to the RN aircraft carrier HMS *Invincible*, set aside by the



Jim when Commanding Officer, HMAS Brisbane.

Federal Government.

Invincible was to be purchased from the UK as a replacement for the ageing *Melbourne*.

The years 82-87 he spent in Canberra, mostly as a Commodore, first as Director of Public Information for Defence (DPI) and later as Director General Naval Policy and Plans (DGNPP). These challenging postings being separated by attendance at the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) in London in 1985. At the college he was privileged to study with many senior officers from countries world-wide. Jim was honoured as a Member of the Order of Australia for his superior contribution as DGNPP.



Commodore Jim Dickson AM MBE RAN, with wife Anthea, son Geoff and daughter Alex after his Investiture to receive the insignia as a Member of the Order of Australia

In 1988 Commodore Dickson assumed the dual postings of command of *Cerberus* and Naval Officer Commanding Victoria

The benefits and diversity of careers available to women in the ADF were on show at the Women in Defence Careers Expo in Darwin on Saturday.

U.S. aircraft carriers are already facing risks from hypersonic weapons that are now entering the inventory of American adversaries and the Navy has developed early defenses for the threat, the head of the U.S. Missile Defense Agency said last week before the Senate.

For a second time, the Philippine government has paused plans to terminate part of its Mutual Defense Treaty with the U.S.

The Royal Navy has delivered 75 tonnes of crucial aid to Commonwealth citizens whose lives have been thrown into turmoil by a volcano.

Defence has committed \$6 billion to refit all six Collins Class submarines amid ongoing concerns over the FOC timeline for the future Attack Class fleet.

China is stepping up its aircraft carrier program on all fronts with the emergence of a stealth fighter mock-up at a naval test facility, suggesting that China intends to operate the type on its ships.

As the U.S. attempts to pivot its national security focus to the Pacific, the situation in the South China Sea continues to grow more complex.

The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and the United States (US) Navy are this week acknowledging the 10-year anniversary of mateship on the MH-60R Seahawk Romeo Multi-Mission Helicopter Program.

A new-look Autonomous Warrior (AW) series is tapping into Australian industry to discover new and disruptive technologies that could transform Navy capability.

(NOCVIC). Late in 1989 he acquired a third 'hat' as Commodore Training – establishing a national Training Command. He resigned from the Service in October 1990 and settled in Victoria.

Jim and his wife Anthea settled at Mount Eliza, Mornington Peninsula. Jim enjoys home, his grandchildren, garden and several outdoor activities. We are indeed fortunate to have Jim and Anthea live and contribute so actively in our community.

Get to know Jim as he reflects on his time serving in Korea and Vietnam as well as the changing tide of opinion back home and the tragedy of war: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGrl2Th_ce4

Yours Aye!
NVN Team



If you know of any of our Navy family that has crossed the bar, please don't hesitate to [contact us](#). 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.

- † CPORS M.R. Higgins, R93353, 23 June 2021. Aged 75.
- † AB V.R. Leonard, PM4055, 20 June 2021. Aged 97.
- † Mobi I.M. Birch, R105497, 19 June 2021. Aged 68.
- † WOSV K.J. Kenyon, R94276, 16 June 2021. Aged 73.
- † NS A.R. Fletcher, R43292, 16 June 2021. Aged 70.
- † CAPT M.J. Toohey, O.64793, 15 June 2021. Aged 74.
- † CERA I.H. Woollard, R42300, 14 June 2021. Aged 78.
- † WOMTH R.C. Norrish, R57977, 13 Jun 2021. Aged 81.
- † WOCOYN D.V. Harper, R36570, 12 June 2021. Aged 90.
- † CPOUC J.V. Cole, R62002, 11 June 2021. Aged 75.
- † LEUT G.A. Le Pavoux, O.42229, 11 June 2021. Aged 79.
- † WRTEL B.A. Pearce, WR/1030, 11 Jun 2021. Aged 97.
- † LCK R.L. Temple, R62930, 09 June 2021. Aged 74.
- † CMDR E.S. Bell, O.1397, 04 June 2021. Aged 88.
- † NS1 E.A. Noble, R42185, 04 June 2021. Aged 79.
- † CERA A.G. Hollard, R42685, 03 June 2021. Aged 73.
- † CPOATA3 P. Birkinhead, R96435, 01 June 2021. Aged 69.
- † LCDR R.G. Honor, O.558, 30 May 2021. Aged 91.
- † CMDR D.G. Street, O.103157, 27 May 2021. Aged 68.
- † CAPT D.E. Oner, O.1895, 23 May 2021. Aged 90.
- † SURG. CDRE M.S.L. Garvan, May 2021.
- † LCDR M.J. Stubbs OAM, O.65341, 21 May 2021. Aged 72.
- † AB J. Le Lacheur, PA5061, 15 May 2021. Aged 94.

Lest We Forget

The laundry in HMAS Ballarat is a lot more colourful these days thanks to a range of personalised laundry bags.

Australia's 2020 defence strategic update identifies the northeast Indian Ocean as a priority area as part of our immediate region, but it's also where our security relationships are the least developed.

Australia is currently undertaking the greatest peacetime recapitalisation of its defence force in the nation's history, and if the prime minister, defence minister and Home Affairs secretary are to be believed it couldn't come a moment too soon.

The crew of HMAS Ballarat has successfully conducted training with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force ship Murasame during the Regional Presence Deployment.

The proposed U.S. Navy shipbuilding budget for fiscal 2021 contains only good news for China. The threat of a larger U.S. Navy has disappeared.

HMAS Ballarat's crew felt the full force of eight United States Navy EA-18G Growler electronic warfare aircraft when they flew overhead during the ship's Regional Presence Deployment last month.

Indigenous artist Garry Purchase has left his mark around Sydney's Garden Island Defence Precinct with a series of bright, hand-painted murals in offices and open spaces.

New satellite images released Thursday show the sunken hull of what earlier this week was one of Iran's largest warship, IRIS Kharg an Ol-class replenishment oiler, caught fire on the evening of June 1.

HMAS Parramatta joined Royal Brunei Navy ships Darulehsan and Syafaat for shared training during a recent visit to

Last survivor of Armidale dies

By Tom Lewis



Dr Victor 'Ray' Leonard, the last survivor of the corvette HMAS Armidale, sunk in action in 1942, has died in Victoria.

Armidale was lost in a fight for survival against Japanese aircraft on 1 December in the Timor Sea. Her end was distinguished not only by the resolve of her ship's

company, who fought their ship to end, but also by the bravery of 18 year old Ordinary Seaman Teddy Sheean, who returned to his 20mm Oerlikon anti-aircraft gun after the Abandon Ship order had been given. He died with the ship, and 78 years later, on 1 December 2021, a long fight to have Sheean's bravery recognised with a Victoria Cross succeeded. Ray was a part of that fight.

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. They took to the shattered boats and Carley floats in the tropical seas, and for several days, battled for survival, seeing many of those on board die. Ray was amongst those who made it back to Darwin.

Ray had only been in the Navy for a year and a month. It had been a fierce and bloody fight, but it did not deter him. He stayed on in the force until 5 December 1945, now an Able Seaman and aged 24. He had been born in Elsternwick, Victoria, and it was to Victoria he returned, and where he spent most of the rest of his life. He trained in psychology; completed a doctorate, and later went on to become the chief psychologist with the Department of Veterans Affairs. He was married to Beryle for more than 75 years, with who he had several children, and who survives him.



Ray Leonard, back left, in an informal picture of several of Armidale's crew.

Ray Leonard was always a strong supporter of the campaign to see the original Mention in Despatches awarded to Teddy Sheean to be upgraded to a Victoria Cross. He was delighted when the award was made last year.

In the last few weeks of his life, the Chief of the Navy sent a letter to Ray to tell him of how greatly his service had been appreciated by his country. It was read out to Ray, who was most touched.

Brunei.

It has taken 77 years for Britain's Normandy heroes to be honoured with a proper, national memorial in the place where they fell.

The 79th HMAS Kuttabul memorial service was held at Garden Island on Sydney Harbour to remember the 27 lives lost in a World War II Imperial Japanese Navy midget submarine attack in 1942.

Retired Chief Petty Officer butcher Joe Alexander, one of the few remaining Butcher Branch sailors to serve in the Navy, recently visited the old butcher's shop in the soon-to-be demolished former victualling and clothing stores building at HMAS Cerberus.

Guy Griffiths was just a teenager when the warship he was serving in as a young midshipman was sunk in a devastating air attack by Japanese bombers during World War II.

Russian Navy's Project 955A / Borei-A class ballistic missile submarine Knyaz Oleg began sea trials on May 30, Russian TASS reported.

The Navy's newest support ship, HMAS Supply, made her first visit to her ceremonial home port of Eden, NSW on May 29.

Naval Historical Society of Australia (Victorian Chapter)
President's June Report - Flag K is now available to [download.....](#)

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

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

Our Navy Hero for June is: Chief Petty Officer Stoker Alfred James Wrench, 17718, BEM MID



Alfred James Wrench (1904-1987), seaman, was born on 4 May 1904, at Airly in the Central Tablelands of New South Wales. He was the son of George Wrench, a miner, and his wife Anna (nee Knight).

Wrench joined the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) as a Stoker 2nd Class in July 1926. He completed marine technical training at HMAS Cerberus and the fleet repair ship HMAS Platypus, before being deployed as a qualified Stoker on the cruiser HMAS Melbourne.

His early career was typical of many technical sailors during the inter-War period: he gained his auxiliary watchkeeping certificate in 1929, stokehold watchkeeping certificate in 1936, and oil fuel and internal combustion engine certificates in 1938. With a very good character and superior technical ability, Wrench was promoted Leading Stoker in 1933 and then Stoker Petty Officer in 1936. He married Madge Marion Harris on 2 July 1932 at St

Mary's Cathedral, Hobart.

At the outbreak of World War II in September 1939 Wrench had the technical and leadership skills that the RAN required. He was posted to the old destroyer HMAS Waterhen and travelled with her to join the British Mediterranean Fleet. Wrench served in the Mediterranean for the first two years of the war. He was promoted to Chief Stoker in October 1940, the highest non-commissioned rank in his branch at that time, and transferred to HMAS Vampire.

He participated in the Greece and Crete operations, the Malta convoys, and the 'Tobruk Ferry', which supplied the Australian garrison at Tobruk.

His full story can be found at: <https://navyvic.net/heroes/wrench.html>