



Newsletter

Incorporating NCCV's newsletter Rogues' Yarn

Navy Victoria Network

July 2014

Volume 4 Edition 8

Editorial

NVN current membership: 950

As reported in earlier NVN Newsletters and in the Rogues Yarn, between August 2014 and November 2018, Australians will commemorate the centenary of our nation's involvement in World War One (WWI), including the heroic Anzac landing at Gallipoli, the bloody battles in France and Belgium, the exploits of the Light Horse in Palestine, Naval commitments on the seven seas and other actions undertaken in numerous places far from both home and family. These "Centenary of Anzac" commemorations will kick-off with three official activities at the beginning of August. The NVN team takes this opportunity to encourage our readers to make an attempt to attend one or more of these free public events.

The first public event will be a wreath laying commemoration at the Shrine of Remembrance at 2pm on Monday 4 August 2014.

The second public event will occur that night at Melbourne Town Hall with a commemoration to mark a huge WWI rally held in August 1914. Anyone interested in attending this event should register at: www.anzaccentenary.vic.gov.au/remembrance/commemorativeweek/

The third public event will be a commemoration at the Point Nepean National Park, to mark the first shot fired in the British Empire at the start of WWI (commencing at 11am, Tuesday, 5th August 2014). For information visit: www.thefirstshot.com.au or www.anzaccentenary.vic.gov.au

Because of the little known but fascinating story

Calendar Events

(see calendar for details of all events)

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27 Jul – Korean Veterans wreath laying

28 Jul – WRANS Annual General Meeting at the Bentleigh RSL

28 Jul – NHS meeting (all welcome)

August – Anzac Centenary events for August are listed below

13 Aug – Soundwaves concert – Matinee @ 1400, evening at 1900.

18 Aug – Vietnam Veterans Day

24 Aug – RAN band at Malvern Town Hall

25 Aug – NHS meeting (all welcome)

ANZAC Centenary Events

3 Aug – Salute to the Nunawading Volunteers 14 – 18

3 Aug – St John's Anglican Church Toorak "The Lights Are Going Out"

4 Aug - Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Shrine of Remembrance

4 Aug - Melbourne Town Hall WWI Commemoration

4 Aug-12 Oct – Shrine of Remembrance – Centenary of the First World War (1914-19) Travelling Exhibition

5 Aug – First Shot Commemoration, Fort Nepean

surrounding the “First Shot”, and Navy’s role in it, this Newsletter will focus on this event in the hope that readers will feel sufficiently motivated to make the ‘pilgrimage’ down to Point Nepean (past Portsea on the Mornington Peninsula) on Tuesday 5 August to witness this, the first of many “Centenary of Anzac” commemorations over the next four years.

According to the history books, the whole world was fairly certain that Britain was going to declare war on Germany at 11 pm (British time) on the evening of 4 August 1914 when the deadline for a German withdrawal from Belgium (at midnight German time) would expire. Although this would have been 9 am the following day (5 August) in Australia, with communications technology being very basic at that time, we now know that it actually took over 3.5 hours for the telegraphy message to get through to the right people in Australia.

So, on the morning of 5 August 1914 when Australia was expecting to hear that Britain had declared war (and in the knowledge that such a declaration would mean that Australia, as a member of the British Empire, would also be at war with Germany), the Australian Government and senior Military Officers were keen to ensure that the German freighter *S.S. Pfalz* (which had apparently embarked members of the German Embassy in Melbourne on 4 August), should not escape from Port Phillip Bay to the open sea before this expected notification had been received.

Having hurriedly departed from Port Melbourne on the morning of 5 August, it was thus left to RAN personnel on the “examination ship” *Alvina* to delay the *Pfalz*’s progress by taking as much time as they possibly could when examining the ship’s papers and its cargo off Portsea. When they eventually ran out of excuses to delay the ship’s progress any longer, the *Pfalz* was allowed to proceed at approximately 12.30 pm, only minutes before the expected message confirming that war had been declared finally reached Australian authorities in Melbourne. By the time this message had been relayed down to Fort Queenscliff, which controlled the gun emplacements surrounding the entrance to Port Phillip, the *Pfalz* was already steaming towards the heads.

Now this is where it becomes particularly intriguing. Whilst there is no doubt that the officer in charge of Fort

6 Aug – Launch of book: *We Fought The Good Fight* – Echuca Moama’s Anzacs

8 Aug – Launch of “Our Anzacs: A Scrapbook of Brunswick in the Great War”

8 Aug – The Australian Red Cross in the Great War - Exhibition Opening

8 Aug – At Home with the War: The Great War in Victorian Private Life - lecture by Dr Bart Ziino

9 Aug – Conference: *The Other Face of War*

16 Aug – Back to Caulfield P.B. Lawrence Stakes Day

17 Aug – Launch of Richmond and Burnley Historical Society World War I project, ‘Answering the Call.’

22 Aug – World War I: Love and Sorrow

Latest News

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A ‘Night In’ for White Ribbon

Defence members and guests came together for a night of trivia challenges at the HMAS Cerberus Wardroom on 24 July 2014 to hold a White Ribbon Night In. [More.....](#)

Twenty three indigenous Australians graduate from the first Navy-run Defence Indigenous Development Program [More.....](#)

HMAS Cerberus Welcomes Country
HMAS Cerberus gathered its people to recognise the traditional owners of the Cerberus land – [More.....](#)

Those who preserve conquer
2014 has been marked by many important anniversaries for the RAN, [More.....](#)

End of an era – the LCHs’ long goodbye – [More.....](#)

Queenscliff (LTCOL Eric Harrison) immediately telephoned the message (via underwater cable) through to Fort Nepean to stop the *Pfalz*, it also appears that a signalman at Fort Queenscliff simultaneously sent a similar message by flashing light (aldis lamp) to Fort Nepean. Part of this message was observed by a young Naval Officer (Midshipman Stan Veale) on board the "examination ship" *Alvina*. When he read the words "war declared" (or something similar), according to Stan Veale's account, he immediately hoisted Flag Romeo in accordance with their operating procedures, which was the locally designated signal for "stop the ship". As a 6 inch shell was, shortly thereafter (at 12.45 pm), fired across the bows of the *Pfalz*, the Navy personnel in *Alvina* always believed that it was their flag signal (not the telephone call) which caused Gun Emplacement No 6 at Fort Nepean to fire the "First Shot" of WWI.

Although the remaining records of this event are so flimsy that nobody can possibly verify the exact sequence of events that led to the firing of the "First Shot", there is no doubt that this single shot achieved its objective. After a brief struggle on the bridge between the German Captain and the Australian pilot (Captain Robinson), the German Captain surrendered and the *S.S. Pfalz* was taken into captivity.

There is also no doubt that, of all the hundreds of millions of rounds of all calibres that were fired over the next four long, hard, sad years by the member nations of the British Empire, in a war whose grim ferocity consumed and affected so very many Australian lives, the shot fired from Gun Emplacement No 6 at Fort Nepean at 12.45 pm on 5 August 1914 was the very first.

Highlighting the Navy's involvement in this historic event, the re-enactment of the firing of the "First Shot" at 12.45 pm on Tuesday 5 August will be preceded by Sailors 'flashing' the "war declared" message and then hoisting Flag Romeo on the main mast. We will also have the spectacular Navy Band there to entertain us, the Federation tri-Service Guard, a bi-plane "fly past", some WWI 're-enactors' in period uniforms and many other activities to entertain us on the day. And afterwards, guests will be invited to inspect the new and enhanced improvements at Fort Nepean, which will better present and explain this unique episode in Australian history to new generations unfamiliar with what happened right on Victoria's doorstep in 1914.

Joint Statement – Minister for Defence and Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China – [More.....](#)

Defence Minister David Johnston hails closer Australia-Chinese Defence ties – [More.....](#)

The Melbourne Town Hall WWI Commemorative Event
Have you registered to attend this free public event to commemorate 100 years since the beginning of the First World War? [Learn more, register and print your e-ticket online](#)

'Fearless' filming at Fleet Base East
Headlines were created when Royal Australian Navy (RAN) Clearance Diver Able Seaman Paul De Gelder was attacked by a shark in Sydney Harbour in 2009, [More.....](#)

AMC / LSI Association of Victoria
The AMC / LSI Association of Victoria is the latest association to take advantage of NVN's offer to have their web pages inserted on the NVN's website. Visit their website at <http://amclsi.navyvic.net>

NAIDOC Week honoured at Australian War Memorial – [More.....](#)

Defence Minister hails defence science and technology accord with Japan – [More.....](#)

Defence High Frequency communications system upgrade leads to improved communications – [More.....](#)

International Ships to Join the Albany Convoy – ships from Japan and New Zealand will join RAN vessels in the Albany Convoy Commemorative Event in October. [More.....](#)



Naval Commemoration Committee of Victoria

Rogues' Yarn



DIARY NOTES

**Services at the Shrine
of Remembrance**
[Everyone welcome]

**RAN Recruits
EMMS Division
Wreath Laying
Sanctuary**
27JUL14@1030

**Centenary of the
commencement of the
First World War**
1400@4AUG14

**Vietnam Veterans
Day 18AUG14
March@1130**
**Wreath laying @1200
at the Cenotaph**

**RAN Recruits
SHIPP Division
Wreath Laying
Sanctuary**
31JUL14@1030

Next NCCV meeting
12AUG14@1030 at
Melb Naval Centre.

All Ship/Unit/Branch
Associations are
encouraged to be
represented!

**Since light travels
faster than sound,
some people appear
bright until you hear
them speak.**

The First Shot—WWI

On the 5th August 2014 it will be a hundred years since the 'first shot' was fired from Fort Nepean, Melbourne. This incident occurred only hours after war was declared on Germany in 1914. Whilst the world was preparing for the worst, measures were in place prior to the declaration of war that prove beneficial on that fateful day. The image below is reputed to be the actual gun emplacement that fired the first shot.



The shot was fired across the bow of the SS PHALZ, a German freighter audaciously departing Port Phillip Bay



If we step back in time, we are led to believe the Skipper of the PHALZ had advice that war was probably going to be declared, however, he had insufficient coal aboard to journey to the South Pacific where they had access to coal supplies. He made the decision to

load as much coal as possible before leaving the port of Melbourne. When he had sufficient coal aboard, they embarked a Port Phillip Pilot, Captain Robinson and commenced the journey from Victoria Dock towards the Rip. As they journeyed down the Bay, the examination vessel, SS ALVINA manned by the RAN (with Stan Veale aboard) intercepting the PHALZ to verify that their papers were in order. Things were in order and the PHALZ was allowed to proceed. Apparently, only minutes after the examination, a message that war had been declared was flashed across the channel, Fort Queenscliff to Fort Nepean. The signal was not being actioned and it was not until the ALVINA hoisted flag Romeo that Fort Nepean fired a shot across the bow of the PHALZ. When this occurred, the Pilot immediately ordered the vessel to stop engines, but the Skipper had other ideas and struggled with the Pilot with the intention of continuing on their journey. The Pilot, Captain Morrison won out and the vessel did stop, proceeded to Portsea where the crew was arrested and resided at Her Majesty's pleasure for the remainder of the War. The PHALZ was seized and became HMT BOORARA and ironically took part in the 2nd Australian convoy transporting troops to the European battlefields. On Tuesday, 5th August a service will be conducted to commemorate the occasion of the first shot. This will be at the old OCS Portsea, Point Nepean. The Governor of Victoria will be present and an open invitation exists to anyone with an interest to attend. For more information look under events at www.anzaccentenary.vic.gov.au



Disclaimer

Articles contributed are the Author's thoughts only. An article may be edited to meet the space available.

Melbourne Naval Centre

MNC is an organization that has provided much needed funds to Ship Associations over many decades. In need of financial or administrative support, contact the MNC.

Navy Victoria Network

The NavyVIC website is there for all to see, in particular it is for Navy Associations to provide information on their activities to the wider Navy Community. An opportunity not to be missed - Log on to <http://navyvic.net/>

President's Report

As we approach the commencement of the centenary of ANZAC we have a lot to be thankful for. Everyone on the planet has a connection in some way to that tragic time. Virtually every family member alive at the time was directly or indirectly involved, not necessarily fighting for the Allies. The blessing is that our forebears managed to survive those calamitous times. Now is the time for us to reflect on what occurred and the courage demonstrated by so many to defend their way of life so we might enjoy ours. The main story in this edition points to the 'first shot' fired, only hours after declaration of war. Whilst the records inform us that at the start there was a sense of euphoria, focused on the desire to fight for mother England, this was short lived as the disastrous consequences of the war became evident to family and friends. Time to respond to the several critical occasions that warrant our participation, such as the 'first shot' at Point Nepean, departure of the Victoria Contingent of the ANMEF from Flinders Street Railway Station, service to remember the Battle of Bitia Paka

and the first Australian Serviceman casualty of the War, followed by a service commemorating the Loss of HMAS AE1. Each of these critical occasions have been and will continue to be advised to create as much interest as we can summon. The legacy of each of these occasions warrants our support, because they gave it their all at a time of extreme duress.

We continue to support the pilgrimage of RAN Recruits to the Shrine of Remembrance at the end of week three of their eleven week training period. It seems their experience at the Shrine of Remembrance has proved most beneficial as they discover the relevance of their own career path in defence of Australia. We pass on our condolences to Flora at the recent loss of Les Kennedy, our Immediate Past President who died on Monday, 7th July. Les did many great things, one as the project manager responsible for the Australian POWs Memorial at Ballarat. Lest we forget.

Yours aye, Terry Makings

Battle of Bitia Paka - First Man Down!

After the first shot, we have the departure of the Victorian Contingent of the ANMEF and then the Battle of Bitia Paka on Thursday, 11th September when the first Australian Serviceman was shot. A commemorative service will be held exactly 100 years since the actual skirmish and loss of our first Servicemen at Bitia Paka in WWI. Imagine the excitement of volunteering to join the expeditionary force in Victoria, travelling by train to Sydney to board the ex-P&O liner HMT BERRIMA, then heading off to some foreign land. A familiar scenario, unaware of the objective set by the British to take control of the German owned communication station at Bitia Paka. This comms station was a lower power station, although there had been an intention to upgrade the equipment to give greater coverage to German interests across the Pacific. Given the war environment the Bitia Paka communications station was a key facility in support of the German East Asiatic Squadron, under command of Admiral Spree. The approach of the Australian Warships caused the East Asiatic Squadron to flee across the Pacific in search of coal and supplies. Meanwhile the ANMEF stopped off at Palm Island, Queensland to undertake crucial training. This was also to allow other activities involving a New Zealand military excursion to occur at



Samoa. BERRIMA sailed in company with HMAS SYDNEY and HMAS ENCOUNTER, HMAS AORANGI a supply ship also attending. The task force left Palm Island on 24 AUG 14, sailing to Port Moresby. By this time the task group comprised the Battle Cruiser AUSTRALIA, cruisers SYDNEY and ENCOUNTER, three destroyers, along with AE1 and AE2. The ANMEF now totalled approximately 3,000 including Australian soldiers earlier stationed at Port Moresby. After the offensive it became known that the German force consisted of 61 regular and reserve Officers and soldiers, joined by 240 native police. Even so, only two parties of 25 sailors from the ANMEF were sent ashore as the initial force. These groups were successful, but six men were lost. Sadly, three days later AE1 was also lost with all hands.

Victorian Contingent

On Sunday 17th August, a ceremony will be held at Flinders Street Railway Station to mark the departure of the Victorian contingent of the Australian Navy & Military Expeditionary Force for Sydney. This occasion will be supported by a Navy Guard, the Navy Band and others as we remember a special day when more than one hundred sailors and five hundred soldiers set off for an offensive that was to become the Battle of Bitia Paka. The Guard & Band will march from the Concert Hall, St Kilda Road across Princes Bridge to Flinders Street Railway Station. A short service will be held prior to a small contingent of sailors boarding a steam train and then travel to Northcote. On arrival, passengers will disembark and walk a short distance to the Darebin RSL where they will enjoy light refreshments. This occasion is special as it will recount the departure of AB Billy Williams, Northcote resident and the first Australian Serviceman to make the supreme sacrifice in World War One. Everyone is welcome to witness the ceremony at Flinders Street Railway Station. There is a likelihood that you can travel by steam train to Darebin, however, you will need to catch the tram back to the city.

VAMPIRE

HMAS VAMPIRE left its safe berth at the Australian Maritime Museum on Tuesday, 22JUL14 to be docked at Garden Island for a short refit. VAMPIRE paid off in 1986 after a rather subdued history, but as one of the RAN's finest gun ships. The keel was laid on 1 July 1952 at Cockatoo Island Dockyard, followed by the commissioning on 23 June 1959. AMM has cared for VAMPIRE since being decommissioned, albeit after a stint at the reserve wharf at Bradley's Head.



Navy Victoria Network

The Naval Commemoration Committee of Victoria (NCCV), the Melbourne Naval Centre (MNC) and the a few keen ex-Navy individuals teamed up to establish the Navy Victoria Network (NVN). The NVN was established in 2011 and its mission, in broad terms, is to inform. NVN contains info about forthcoming events such as ship visits, commemorative services, scheduled reunions and so on. It draws attention to Naval matters of general interest such as: RAN policy changes. Since its inception it has attracted considerable interest and it also provides a facility for individual ex-Navy Associations, enabling them to have their own page on the website.



The effectiveness of NVN will be increased as Ship, Unit and Branch Associations provide more advice about their functions, meetings and contact details. This will inform others who have an interest and will increase their likely participation in these activities. It will also help to avoid conflict between events. Office bearers, please help keep the Navy community informed of your activities as this may improve your membership and general support of events.

Sembawang 1975

How many remember the good old days, here we see a large number of Warships berthed at Sembawang. Those were the days, a thousand sailors roaming around Singapore looking for those elusive rabbits. Below you can see DDGs, Darings, DEs, Fat Ships with a collection of RN Warships to make up numbers. If recollections are correct, this was a pre-cursor to Timor with a show of strength by Australia and the Brits to add a bit of colour and movement. MELBOURNE was moored on the other side of the Island.



ANZAC Centenary

On the 4th August there will be a public commemorative service at the Cenotaph, Shrine of Remembrance to signify the centennial of the declaration of War in Europe. This service will be held at 1400 and will be followed by the announcement of the completion of the construction of the Galleries of Remembrance in the newly constructed auditorium in the Education Centre. The launch of the Shrine of Remembrance centenary touring exhibition titled '*Australia will be there: Victorians in the First World War (1914-19)*' will also be officially launched in the Eastern Gallery of the newly refurbished Visitor Centre.

The 'First Shot' commemoration service has already been noted, front page. The next main occasion will be the departure ceremony at Flinders Street Railway Station, on Sunday 17AUG14. More information relating to what is likely to occur is at page 2. We then need to prepare for the Battle of Bitia Paka, to be held at the Cenotaph, Shrine of Remembrance on Tuesday, 11SEP14. This marks the loss of Australia's first servicemen in WWI.

ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY!



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Items of special interest

Reception. The Communication Branch and WRANS Associations recently held their combined reception at the Melbourne Naval Centre. The occasion was well attended, demonstrating the benefit of inviting a wide range of likely participants. BZ to the Comms and WRANS for the opportunity.

Bus to Pt Nepean. The bus that was originally planned to assist those wishing to travel to Pt Nepean for the first shot service has been cancelled.

Acknowledgement of Country. Captain Stephen Bowater OAM RAN, Commanding Officer HMAS CERBERUS extended an invitation to the Navy Community to share the experience of unveiling a plaque 'Acknowledging Country' and the first owners of Australia. Those attending then attended Ceremonial Divisions, followed by a morning tea. A great experience and celebration of country.

War Graves. Sites registered as war graves, where a family chose to construct private memorials upon the grave site, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission is only responsible to ensure the deceased's name remains legible at the grave site. In the event that the name becomes illegible, a small plaque inscribed with the casualty's service emblem

and service details will be placed on the grave. The Commission has no responsibility for refurbishing the grave site, that rests with the family.

HMAS CANBERRA. We routinely encourage greater interest in participating in the work of 'any' Association. If you have a connection to CANBERRA or SHROPSHIRE why not contact their Office Bearers through the following website: <http://www.hmascanberra-shropshire.asn.au>

HMAS SIRIUS. We congratulate CMDR Mike Oborn CSM RAN, XO HMAS CERERUS on his pending appointment as CO, HMAS SIRIUS. Mike is a great supporter of the Navy Family in Victoria and his next job is a testament to how his work has been perceived. Mike will succeed CMDR Darren Grogan CSM RAN, the son of our very own V/Pres WO Marty Grogan OAM RANR.

Navy Ball. A prompt to all Presidents/Secretaries, please avoid scheduling an activity that will be in conflict with the Navy Ball planned for Saturday 17OCT15. Best to put this date in your diary now and endeavour to advise all constituents/members that this is a crucial commitment that should not be diminished by other commitments - thank you!