**The Naval Association of Australia (NAA) Remembrance Ritual for use at Funeral of a Deceased Member**

**Remembrance Ritual for use at the Funeral of a Deceased Member.**

Serial 1. `The call has come for our shipmate (insert Name) and we meet to pay our last tribute to him/her.

`We know that the time comes to each of us when the Supreme Commander calls us from our earthly service but, however we may be prepared for this, we feel sorrow when there is another gap in our ranks.

`(insert name) was one of that long line of those who have served their Sovereign and their country in the Naval Service and have made their personal contribution to the great traditions of that Service.

Oral delivery of the member’s Service Record. Service Records.

[**Find and view a navy service record online**](https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/defence-and-war-service-records/royal-australian-navy-service-records) **(move the mouse over the highlighted text to open the site)**

All navy service cards (series [A6769](https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Guest.aspx?Location=SNRSeriesDetail&Key=A6769) and [A6770](https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Guest.aspx?Location=SNRSeriesDetail&Key=A6770)) have been digitised and are available to view online.

Visit [RecordSearch](https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au). Use the 'NameSearch' function to search for the member. Select 'Navy personnel records' from the dropdown menu.

Use the [help](https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/HelpRecordSearch.aspx) tab in RecordSearch if you have any questions.

`There is no fear now as (insert name) embarks on the unknown sea, for he/she is in the care of the Great pilot, and we who remain wish him/her a safe voyage and firm anchorage in that final harbour where storms and tempest are no more.

`I ask you to join me, reverently, in a silent tribute to (insert name) and his/her departed shipmates.’

Serial 2. Bugler (if in attendance) sounds the Alert.

Serial 3. Ode to be recited.

Serial 4. Bugler sounds `Last Post’.

Serial 5. One minute’s Silence.

Serial 6. Lest we Forget.

Serial 7. `Reveille’.

Serial 8. The Ode (which may be varied to reflect circumstances of the occasion and the wishes of the bereaved).

Serial 9. The Naval Prayer:

`O Eternal Lord God, who alone spreads out the heavens, and rules the raging of the sea, who has compassed the waters with bounds until day and night come to an end; be pleased to receive into your Almighty and most gracious protection us your servants, and the Fleet in which we serve or have served. Preserve us from the dangers of the sea, and from the violence of the enemy; that we may be a safeguard to our gracious Sovereign King Charles III and a security for those who pass on the seas upon their lawful occasions, that the inhabitants of our land may in peace and quietness serve our God, and that we may return in safety and enjoy the blessings of the land, with the fruits of our labours and with thankful remembrance of your mercies to praise and glorify your Holy Name.’

Amen

Serial 10. Presentation of the Australian National Flag and Bereavement Pin(s)

Serial 11. Pall Bearer Escort.

**Options - Odes**

Option 1– Verse 1 – The Naval Ode and Verse 3 – The Ode of Remembrance

Option 2– Verse 2 – The Ode to the Naval Veteran and Verse 3 – The Ode of Remembrance

Option 3 – Verse 1 – The Naval Ode and Verse 2 – The Ode to the Naval Veteran and Verse 3 – The Ode of Remembrance

**Verse 1– The Naval Ode**

They have no grave but the cruel sea

No flowers lay at their head

A rusting hulk is their tombstone

A’fast on the ocean bed

**Verse 2 – The Ode to the Naval Veteran**

In naval service their duty lay

At sea and ashore in peace and in war

Wounds seen and unseen deeds known and unknown

Now at rest we pray the memories with us stay

**Verse 3 – The Ode of Remembrance**

They shall grow not old as we who are left grow old

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,

**WE WILL REMEMBER THEM**

**(repeated by others present)**

**Lest we forget**

**(repeated by others present).**

**Use of the Australian White Ensign**

Requests for approval to purchase and use the Australian White Ensign (AWE) can be submitted directly to the Royal Australian Navy via email to navy.mlo@defence.gov.au. Approvals will only be given to those with a Navy nexus, for example, RSLs, memorials, museums.

Requests for approval to use the Australian White Ensign (AWE) as a pall at a funeral can be submitted directly to navy.bereavement@defence.gov.au or indirectly via the funeral company. If known, please include as much information about the member such as their full name, service number/PMKeyS number, and dates of service.

**Free issue of Australian flags**

The Australian National Flag, the Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag can be obtained free of charge by contacting the electorate office of your [local Senator or Member of the House of Representatives](https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Guidelines_for_Contacting_Senators_and_Members)

**Australian National Flag protocols**

As Australia’s foremost national symbol, the Australian National Flag should be used with respect and dignity. The Australian National Flag protocols, which can be found in the [*Australian Flags booklet*](https://www.pmc.gov.au/australian-flags-booklet), will assist you when flying or using the flag, including as part of flag-raising ceremonies.

[**Bereavement Pins**](https://www.navy.gov.au/webform/navy-bereavement-pin) **(Move the mouse over the highlighted text to open the linked document)**

**Explanatory Note** – The Naval Ode focuses on the happenings an engagement with the enemy at sea, the dangers of the sea itself, and an incident resulting in the loss of life at sea. As evocative as the Ode may be, the verse does not address the passing of a naval veteran who has served and returned ashore on completion of their service.

The Ode to the Naval Veteran may be used to complement the other Odes on those occasions when commemorating those who have lost their life at sea and those who are “returned” Naval veterans and to pay our respects to all who have served in the Navy, be it in war or in peace.

**Burial at sea**

Who in Defence is to be contacted for a Burial at sea Request?

**The families of deceased ADF personnel, and Royal Navy personnel, may request to commit the ashes of their family members to the sea, on service land, or to the air. Details regarding making these requests may be obtained by contacting**[**Defence Member and Family Support**](https://www.defence.gov.au/members-families/)**(formerly Defence Community Organisation - DCO).**

What is burial at sea?

Burial at sea is the disposal of [human remains](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cadaver) in the ocean, normally from a ship, boat, or aircraft. It is regularly performed by navies and is done by private citizens in many countries.

Burial-at-sea services are conducted at many different locations and with many different customs, either by ship or by aircraft. Usually, either the [captain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_%28nautical%29) of the ship or aircraft or a religious representative (of the deceased's religion or the state religion) performs the ceremony.

The ceremony may include burial in a casket, burial sewn in sailcloth, burial in an urn, or scattering of the cremated remains from a ship. Burial at sea by aircraft is only done with cremated remains.

**Notes**

Below is a list of religions that allow burial at sea, with some details of the burial.

**By religion**

**Christianity**

In Christianity, the practice is accepted. It has specific liturgies for burial at sea.

**Catholicism**

Officially, the [Roman Catholic Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church) prefers normal [casket](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coffin) burials over cremations, but does allow for burials at sea of whole or cremated remains. The Church defines burial at sea as sinking remains in a worthy container to the sea bottom and final resting place. Burial at sea in a [casket](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coffin) or in an [urn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urn) is acceptable and not prohibited, but viewed as not preferable and should not be commonplace.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burial_at_sea#cite_note-1) Cremated remains are subject to the condition that the ashes are entombed in an mausoleum urn niche, columbarium, or buried on land or sea. Catholics believe it is not proper to scatter or pour the cremated remains over the sea, water, or on the land. According to the Roman Catholic Church this action does not give due respect to the remains of the deceased, nor does it allow for the closure, healing of family and friends, and prayers for the deceased. Likewise, they see that the custom of housing the remains with family or friends and not placing the deceased in the ground does not offer loved ones a specific and sacred place to visit the deceased's remains. Visiting the deceased in a holy place provides believers with a space to offer prayers, commune with those who have gone before them in faith and reminds them to await the resurrection of their own bodies. For burials at sea, the committal prayer number 406§4 is used in the funeral liturgy.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burial_at_sea#cite_note-2)

**Protestantism**

The [Anglican Communion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican_Communion) has detailed procedures for burial at sea. The [ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ship) has to be stopped, and the body has to be sewn in [canvas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canvas), and suitably weighted.

At the burial of the dead at sea, the same [office](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canonical_hours) from [the Book of Common Prayer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Book_of_Common_Prayer) as used for burial on land may be used; only instead of the words:[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burial_at_sea#cite_note-CoE-4)

We therefore commit [his] body to the ground, earth to earth, ... in sure and certain hope of the resurrection of the body

the form of words used is:

We therefore commit [his] body to the deep, ... in sure and certain hope of the resurrection of the body, when the Sea shall give up her dead ...

[Anglican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican), and other, [chaplains](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaplains) of the [Royal Navy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Navy) also bury cremated remains of deceased naval personnel at sea. Scattering of cremated remains is discouraged, not least for practical reasons.[[*citation needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

Many [Lutheran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lutheranism) naval veterans and seamen prefer to be buried at sea. In those cases, either the casket or urn is set to sea, or ashes scattered. The procedure is similar as that with the Anglican church. Some parishes have specific consecrated sea areas where ashes can be sprinkled.

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| **Hinduism** |  |

Traditionally, the deceased are cremated, the bones and ashes are collected, and the ashes/remains are immersed in the [Ganges River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganges_River) if possible or in any other river if not.

**Islam**

The sacred texts of [Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) prefer burial on land, "so deep that its smell does not come out and the beasts of prey do not dig it out". However, if a person dies at sea and it is not possible to bring the body back to land before decay, or if burial at land becomes impossible, burial at sea is allowed. A weight is tied to the feet of the body, and the body is lowered into the water. This would preferably occur in an area where the remains are not immediately eaten by scavengers.

In the [Sunni](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunni) [Fiqh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiqh) book [*Umdat al-Salik wa Uddat al-Nasik*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umdat_al-Salik_wa_Uddat_al-Nasik), the condition for sea burial is:

It is best to bury him (the deceased) in the cemetery ... If someone dies on a ship and it is impossible to bury him on land, the body is placed (O: tightly lashed) between two planks (O: to obviate bloating) and thrown into the sea (O: so that it reaches shore, even if the inhabitants are non-Muslims, since a Muslim might find the body and bury it facing the direction of prayer (qibla)).[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burial_at_sea#cite_note-5)

**Judaism**

According to [Jewish law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halacha), dead people must be quickly buried and [burial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bereavement_in_Judaism#Burial) requires covering in earth.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burial_at_sea#cite_note-6) If for some reason the body of someone deceased aboard a ship causes an immediate life threat to those aboard the vessel the commandment to protect innocent life or [pikuach nefesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pikuach_nefesh) overrides nearly all commandments including the command to bury the dead, as any appropriate actions to ensure safety of surviving crew are required to be taken which may include jettisoning a body at sea without burial. However, attempts would later be made to recover and bury when possible, without life hazard.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burial_at_sea#cite_note-8)

**By country**

**Australia**

Burial at sea within Australian [territorial waters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territorial_waters), exclusive economic zone and continental shelf is covered by the *Environmental Protection (Sea Dumping Act) 1981* administered by the federal Department of the Environment. A permit is required for burial of bodies at sea. Permits are usually only granted in cases of a strong connection to the sea, such as long-serving navy personnel. The body must not be embalmed or placed in a casket; it may only be sewn into a shroud. The burial must be in water deeper than 2,000 metres (6,600 ft) and not interfere with shipping, fishing or undersea communications. Australian Defence Force vessels engaged in armed conflicts or emergency situations are exempt from these requirements.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burial_at_sea#cite_note-13)

In today’s navy, ships are normally able to make landfall quickly, or use their embarked helicopter to transport a body to land for repatriation. Consequently, burials at sea are uncommon and the ceremony is rarely conducted. In the event that circumstances were such that a burial at sea became necessary it would first require authorisation from the Chief of Navy (or the relevant service chief of the deceased), the Chief of Joint Operations, or a higher authority.

A practice related to burials at sea is that of having ones ashes spread at sea. Many former sailors often request that, following their death, their ashes be committed to the sea. It is not unusual for some to request that their ashes be committed at the site where their old ship has been sunk, or from a current ship bearing their former ship’s name.

**Enclosures:**

1. Template Female (Cruel Sea) Naval Funeral Service
2. Template Female Naval Veteran Naval Funeral Service
3. Template Male (Cruel Sea) Naval Funeral Service
4. Template Male Naval Veteran Naval Funeral Service
5. [Crossing the Bar](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CGraham%20Thomas%5CDocuments%5CCrossing%20the%20Bar.docx) – the Poem