



National Bosun's Call



Vol 5 No 5

Once Navy, Always Navy

June 2025

ADV *Reliant* to the rescue



Left: ADV Reliant anchors off the coast of Lata during the Eastern Border Outpost Hydrographic Survey in Temotu Province, Solomon Islands.

Photo ; Defence

On 09 May 2025, ADV *Reliant* was en route to a port visit in Suva, Fiji, when it altered course to respond to a search and rescue request from a distressed German-flagged yacht 'Lucky Jonny'. *Reliant* retrieved the four sailors, then towed the yacht back to Suva Harbour and completed its planned delivery of humanitarian stores.

Photos: LCDR B.J. Glover RAN



National Newsletter of the
Naval Association of Australia

DVA—Aids, equipment and modifications through the Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP)

Last updated 20 June 2023

Moving to a new address

You may take portable aids and equipment to your new address.

You cannot remove fixed items that are installed at your current address and reinstall them at your new address. If you need to make modifications at your new address, see your GP for a referral to an occupational therapist who will help you with this.

Contact the supplier of the items to let them know:

- you are moving and what items you will be taking or returning
- your new address.

This will help with any repairs or replacements of the item that you take to your new address.

Moving into residential aged care

You may take some portable aids and equipment to your aged care home. Speak with them first to find out what items you can take, because they may already have the aids and equipment you need.

If you take any of these items with you when you move, we will continue to repair them.

The aged care home is responsible for repairing or replacing the aids and equipment they provide.

Travelling in Australia and overseas

You may take portable aids and equipment with you.

If you use oxygen, contact the supplier for portable oxygen supplies.

If you're travelling by plane, contact your airline as they may have special requirements for some equipment.

We can cover the costs of aids, equipment or modifications while you're overseas if both of the following apply:

- You have an accepted service-related injury or condition ([contact us](#) if you don't know what this is).
- A health professional has assessed that you have a clinical need and it relates to your accepted injury or condition.

War widowers and dependants cannot receive aids, equipment or modifications from us while they are overseas.

To find out more and about claiming costs, refer to [medical care while overseas](#).

Saving on energy costs

To help with energy costs to run essential medical equipment, you can claim the annual [Essential Medical Equipment Payment](#). You can claim this if we provided you with one or more of the following pieces of equipment:

- ◇ home dialysis machine
- ◇ home ventilator
- ◇ home respirator
- ◇ home enteral or parenteral feeding device
- ◇ oxygen concentrator
- ◇ heart pump
- ◇ suction pump
- ◇ infant apnoea monitor
- ◇ nebuliser (if you use it daily)
- ◇ positive airways pressure device (PAP)
- ◇ phototherapy equipment
- ◇ airbed vibrator
- ◇ electric wheelchair
- ◇ insulin pump.

Duplicating items

You cannot duplicate items.

If you request items through us, you can't make the same request through:

- ◇ The [National Disability Insurance Scheme \(NDIS\)](#)
- ◇ [Home Care Packages](#)
- ◇ [Commonwealth Home Support Programme](#)

Further details are available in the DVA website

The Naval Association of Australia Inc Patron-in-Chief His Majesty, King Charles III
ABN 56 653 989 978

Editor: Peter Cooke-Russell Contact peter.cookerussell@gmail.com

Overview of Pension Supplement—The NAA is a member of ESORT

Dear Members,

At a previous meeting, the Department of Veterans' Affairs discussed a way to provide some further information to Members about the indexation of the pension supplement. Please see below for updated advice on these matters.

ESORT Action Item – Supplementary advice to be provided to members out of session on the pension supplement indexation.

Overview of Pension Supplement

The Pension Supplement is regular extra payment, paid on a fortnightly basis, to help with utility, phone, internet, and medicine costs provided to eligible income support recipients. The Pension Supplement is not a unique DVA payment. Services Australia also pays eligible recipients of Age Pension and certain other social security payments under the Social Security Act 1991 (SSA) an identical Pension Supplement payment.

The Pension Supplement administered by DVA is paid under the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 and is payable to eligible recipients of:

- Service Pension (Age, Partner, and Invalidity)
- Veteran Payment
- Income Support Supplement (ISS)

A pensioner does not need to apply for Pension Supplement. If they are eligible, the allowance is paid automatically to the same payment destination

as their income support payment. The amount of Pension Supplement a person will receive depends on whether they are single or in a couple.

A pensioner does not need to apply for Pension Supplement. If they are eligible, the allowance is paid automatically to the same payment destination as their income support payment.

For War Widow(er)s who receive ISS, the Pension Supplement is not paid separately, rather it is included with the ISS payment.

The Pension Supplement was created on 20 September 2009 by consolidating the former GST supplement, pharmaceutical allowance, utilities allowance and telephone allowance into a single payment.

Indexation

The combined pension couple rate of the Pension Supplement and the Pension Supplement minimum amount are indexed to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) each 20 March and 20 September. The 'not a member of a couple' rate of Pension Supplement (i.e. single and illness separated) is set to be 66.33% of the combined partnered rate, while the partnered rate is set at 50% of the combined partnered rate.

CPI indexation is consistent with indexation of the allowances that were consolidated to become the single, Pension Supplement, that is, all those allowances were indexed by CPI only.

If you have any further questions please direct them to the ESCORT Secretariat - ESORT.Secretariat@dva.gov.au

Rates

The annual rates of pension supplement, minimum pension supplement amount and pension supplement basic amount are calculated as percentages of the combined couple's rate.

The maximum rates of Pension Supplement, are set out below (as of 20 March 2025):

Recipient type	Maximum Fortnightly Rate
Single	\$83.60
Partnered (each)	\$63.00
Illness separated	\$83.60

There are three components of the Pension supplement, set out below (as at 20 March 2025):

Component	Amount (single/illness separated)
Basic pension supplement	\$29.00
Minimum pension supplement	\$45.00
Remaining pension supplement	\$9.60
Total (Maximum Fortnightly Rate of Pension Supplement)	\$83.60

The basic amount of pension supplement is taxable. The minimum and remaining pension supplement amounts are tax-exempt.



Australian Defence Force Retirees Association Inc.

No. A0108026R

We represent the interests of Defence Force Retirees regarding their Superannuation
 www: <https://www.adfra.org/>
 Email: admin@adfra.org

DFRDB UPDATE – APRIL 2025 Senate Finance and Public Affairs Refer- ences Committee Inquiry

On the 11 February 2025, the operation and appropriateness of the superannuation and pension schemes for current and former members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) was referred to the Finance and Public Administration References Committee for inquiry and report by 5 August 2025.

We forwarded a submission to the Inquiry but could not circulate it until it had been accepted by the Committee.

You can download our submission from the Submissions page on the Inquiry website or read it by clicking here.

We understand that the Defence Force Welfare Association has been granted an extension of time, and there may be others. But the small number of submissions from Ex-service Organisations is disappointing.

We hope to receive an invitation to appear before the Committee where we may be able to present additional information.

Jim Hislop OAM
 President

Executive Summary of the submission

Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits (DFRDB) is an unfunded defined benefit scheme founded on the recommendations of a Joint Parliamentary (Jess) Committee. Introduced in 1973 as part of revised conditions of service in the armed forces, its purpose was to arrest the exodus of personnel and attract and retain a young, fit, volunteer combat force.

However, the men and women subject to the provisions of the scheme, who risked their lives and dedicated decades to serving their country, while making compulsory, uninvested contributions to the DFRDB Scheme from their already modest pay in the Defence Force, were betrayed by public servants, Governments, and the Parliament when the benefits they were promised were substantially reduced by the provisions in the governing legislation, Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits Act 1973 (DFRDB Act).

Serving Defence Force members were led to believe that, under the new DFRDB Scheme, if they served for a minimum of 20 years, they would receive a lifetime retirement benefit based on their final salary and years of service. And they could choose to commute—receive an interest-free advance of their future retirement benefit—repayable through a proportionate reduction of their ongoing retirement benefit over their life expectancy.

But Treasury and the Government Actuary equated the unfunded DFRDB scheme with the hybrid funded public sector scheme and the earlier Defence Forces Retirement Benefits (DFRB) scheme and determined that the repayments had to be for life and that interest had to be added. This false equivalence with the public sector and DFRB schemes has resulted in significantly lower benefits for DFRDB recipients. It fundamentally altered the commutation provision set down in the Jess Committee's recommendations and significantly reduces members' benefits over their lifetimes, where the longer they live, the greater the reduction.

Interim benefit increases in 1974 and 1976 perpetuated the false equivalence by applying the increases to a notional five-sevenths of DFRDB benefits and applying the increases to the residual benefits of the members who commuted, effectively adding interest to the repayment of their advance.

In 1977, the DFRDB Act was amended to include automatic benefit adjustments. The adjustment method excludes from adjustment a part of members' benefits determined by outdated 1960-1962 Life Expectancy Factors, reducing benefits from the date of retirement until death. As was the case with the 1974 and 1976 interim increases, for members who commuted, it adds interest to the repayment of their advance.

Contrary to the Jess Committee's recommendations, the adjustments were linked directly to the Consumer Price Index, which the Committee had rejected because it did not adequately reflect changes in general community standards. The Department of Defence, responsible for the DFRDB Scheme, obscured the provisions that reduce members' benefits within incomprehensible legislation, misled Ministers and Parliament regarding the intent and impact of the legislation and manipulated parliamentary scrutiny to secure its approval.

The passage of DFRDB legislation through Parliament was a classic example of the bureaucracy deceitfully usurping the authority of Parliament and treating elected representatives and the subjects under their administration with disdain.

Defence deceived serving members by providing information that obscured the true effect of the DFRDB Act, ensuring that members remained unaware of its real effect until long after retirement. The much clichéd 'generosity' of the DFRDB scheme is a myth, created and perpetuated by public servants.

The surviving ex-service men and women still subject to the DFRDB Act, call upon the Finance and Public Administration References Committee to conduct a thorough, impartial investigation and lay the groundwork for amending the DFRDB Act to eliminate the benefit reduction measures therein and restore the promised benefits.

Understanding the Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits Scheme

The Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits (DFRDB) Scheme is a defined benefit superannuation scheme that was available to members of the ADF between 1972 and 1991. Subject to scheme rules, upon retirement members will generally be eligible for an indexed pension plus an optional "Commutation Benefit" of up to 5 times their annual pension amount, and an additional lump sum of their "Productivity Benefit".

Commutation is a lump sum pre-payment of part of a member's future retirement benefit. By taking this option, a member can elect to commute (that is, exchange) a portion of their future retirement pension for a lump sum. The purpose of commutation is to allow members the flexibility to receive a lump sum if required, depending on their financial situation at the time of discharge, and to assist the member in resettling into civilian life.

The decision to access commutation is voluntary. An important consideration is that if a member chooses to commute part of their pension, this will result in a permanent reduction in their annual pension based on their life expectancy. The pension entitlement will not increase if the member outlives the life expectancy used to determine the reduction in their pension. Permanently reducing the pension recognises that members who elect to commute will obtain a long-term advantage from the immediate use of their lump sum, depending on what they choose to do with the amount.

Reviews

As a result of advocacy by veterans and veteran groups, the DFRDB scheme has been reviewed on several occasions in recent years. Most recently the Commonwealth Ombudsman (in 2019) and the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Reference Committee (in 2021) both considered the scheme.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman recognised the beneficial nature of the scheme, and that benefits are being paid correctly. However, it also concluded that the Department of Defence had historically provided DFRDB members misleading information regarding commutation, which led some members to believe incorrectly that their pension would increase once they reached their life expectancy factor age.

In addition to the commutation concerns, some veteran groups have proposed changing the life expectancy tables or reviewing indexation arrangements for the DFRDB. There have been a number of changes to the indexation methodology for this scheme following the recommendations of the *Review into Military Superannuation Arrangements*.

Since 2014, DFRDB pensioners over the age of 55 receive twice-yearly adjustments using the higher of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the Pensioner Beneficiary Living Cost Index (PBLCI), which provides a similar basis to how indexation is treated for the Age Pension. In some circumstances, the indexation adjustment may not be applied to the full pension amount. Those interested in learning more can find an example of how this calculation is applied in *A summary of the Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits Scheme* (page 14 of this book) which can be found at www.csc.gov.au.

With regards to changes in life expectancy factors, it would not be feasible to adjust one component in isolation without considering the rest of the scheme. Changes to the life expectancy tables could leave most members worse off, as the other key element of the scheme, the commutation factor, would also need to be updated and this would likely affect the pension amount an individual receives.

Further, the Commonwealth Ombudsman made note of the life expectancy tables in its investigation into the administration of the DFRDB scheme. The Ombudsman concluded that as the scheme's drafters did not include a provision to update the tables from time to time, it would suggest the tables were meant to be used as a static commutation factor. This is consistent with the static commutation factors used in the civilian Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme. If you would like to find out more about the recent reviews into the DFRDB, the Senate Committee and Ombudsman reports can be found on their respective websites.

Compensation

Members of the DFRDB scheme who believe they have suffered a financial detriment due to being provided misleading information are encouraged to lodge a claim under the Scheme for Compensation for Detriment caused by Defective Administration (CDDA). Defence has tailored the claims process to help focus on the issues critical to the determination of the claim and provides members access to a case manager to assist with the process.

Women in Maritime Security (WIMS) program.



Chief Petty Officer Boat-swain Mark Gibbs from HMAS Kuttabul conducts a tour of Fleet Base East for the Women in Maritime Security (WIMS) program

*Photos:
CPOIS Helen Frak*

The third iteration of the Women in Maritime Security (WIMS) program has brought together 17 women from the Navy, Coast-guard and Foreign Affairs in Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam for a two-week program in Australia. The program has three linked goals: law of the sea and maritime security, leadership and linkages. The program aims to enhance the participants' expertise in law of the sea and maritime security issues, build their leadership and management skills, and develop a network of emerging women leaders in maritime security across South East Asia.



Australian Maritime Weapons and Tactics Conference



Left: Commander Australian Fleet, Rear Admiral Chris Smith, AM, CSM, RAN (left), talks with United States Navy and Royal Navy personnel at the inaugural Australian Maritime Weapons and Tactics Conference at HMAS Watson in Sydney, New South Wales

Photos:
LSIS Daniel Goodman



The inaugural Australian Maritime Weapons and Tactics Conference was held on 05-09 May 2025 at HMAS Watson. Fleet Commander and Director General-Fleet Lethality and Force Generation awarded the prize to the member who submitted the winning problem statement which was wargamed during the WEPTAC week. AUSMAR WEPTAC is inclusive and we are ready to professionally partner with colleagues who share our vision and can offer valuable expertise

Right: Commander Mark Linden, CSM, RAN receives an award during the inaugural Australian Maritime Weapons and Tactics Conference



ADF Cadets Tri-Service Leadership Summit

Thirty high-performing senior Australian Navy Cadets, Australian Army Cadets, and Australian Air Force Cadets from across Australia attended the third annual ADF Cadets Tri-Service Leadership Summit in Canberra from 16 to 18 May 2025. Cadets engaged in leadership development activities, participated in the Last Post Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial, and undertook the Leadership Reaction Course at the Majura Range focusing on tri-Service collaboration. They also had the opportunity to engage with senior leadership from the Australian Defence Force during the summit.

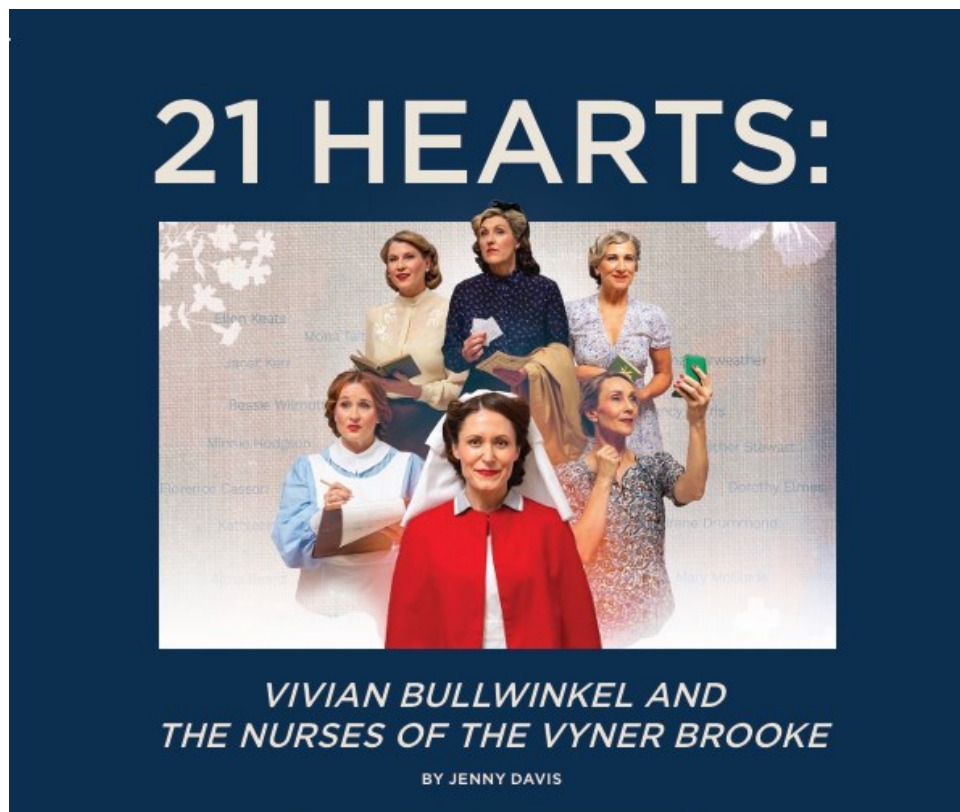


Left: Cadets participate in a formal dinner with Lieutenant General Susan Coyle, AM, CSC, DSM (third from left) at the Royal Military College - Duntroon Officers' Mess, during the ADF Cadets Tri service Leadership Summit

Photos : Defence

Right: Chief of Personal Lieutenant General Natasha Fox, AO, CSC shares her leadership experience with cadets at the ADF Cadets Tri-Service Leadership Summit





A compelling Australian story of hope, courage and resilience.

PERFORMANCES FROM
24 July – 3 Aug

LOCATION
Australian War Memorial Theatre



**A LIVE PRODUCTION
BY THEATRE 180**

PRESENTING PARTNER



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs



The deeply moving production tells the compelling story of Lieutenant Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel and her fellow nurses, honouring their courage, service, and the tragic events of the Banka Island massacre during the Second World War. Through the power of live performance, the audience will experience a uniquely personal and shared connection to Bullwinkel's remarkable life and legacy, and the vital contributions of Australian women in wartime. This is a heartfelt story of service and survival that resonates deeply with audiences (recommended for those aged 12 years and over).

After three sell-out seasons in Western Australia, the 2025 season at Australian War Memorial will mark the production's East Coast debut and is a special feature event within our broader commemorative program marking the [80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War](#).

Performances will be held from 24 July to 3 August across 14 matinee and evening sessions. A Q&A session with the cast will follow the 11am performance on 31 July. As the first major performance to be hosted in the Memorial's new theatre, this theatrical production represents a new chapter in creating contemporary and meaningful opportunities to connect audiences with past events and periods in our military history.

Student, concession, and group discounts are available. For information or to book tickets, please visit www.awm.gov.au/21-hearts. Early booking is recommended due to limited seating. This is an opportunity not to be missed.

Ticket prices are listed on Page11

A Book, a Documentary and the Personal Commitment to Megan

by Kathryn Spurling

On Saturday 19 July 2025 a documentary titled *Fire at Sea*, will be screened as part of the *Melbourne Documentary Film Festival*, in the *Nova Cinemas*, Carlton, Victoria. The documentary is the culmination of a three-year, self-funded undertaking by filmmaker David Jenkins (*Ghetto Media*), and myself. The documentary is based on my book '*Fire at Sea: HMAS Westralia 1998*' and dedicated to the four RAN personnel who perished in the engine room fire; the survivors, and their families.



I met Midshipman Megan Pelly, whilst teaching at ADFA. She was an inspiring young woman and relayed to me how excited she was to be graduating in December 1997 and *finally starting my real navy career*. I shook Megan's hand after she and her class marched off the ADFA parade ground for the last time and wished her well. Five months later, on 5 May 1998, Megan died in the engine room of HMAS *Westralia*. The tragedy that killed Megan and three others; Petty Officer Shaun Smith, Leading Marine Technician Bradley Meek, and Marine Technician Phillip Carroll, shook the nation and the Navy.

The ship should never have been purchased. It was a single hull tanker which the Australian Government was attempting to ban. The British Royal Fleet Auxiliary had banished it to a Scottish mud-bank because a sister ship had caught fire after a fuel leak and this tanker was deemed 'a lemon'. *Westralia* was used as an RAN replenishment ship. The ship crest motto was 'Faithful and Bold', but

the crew nicknamed it 'Rusty and Old'.

For the family of Midshipman Megan Pelly this was particularly harsh because it was alleged Megan had contributed to her own death because as a Supply Officer under training, she should not have been in the engine room. Those of us acquainted with Megan knew she would never have disobeyed RAN Standing Orders. It was only when the Pelly family engaged the assistance of former ACT Attorney General, Bernard Collaery, that the truth finally emerged. Dogged determination resulted in a coronial inquest in 2003. A fierce contest for the truth ensued before it was admitted that Midshipman Megan Pelly was illegally ordered into the engine room to act as a hydrant sentry, in case a fire broke out. A fire and explosion occurred, and she was not evacuated. Megan died where she was ordered to stand, deep in *Westralia*'s engine room.



I felt compelled to write '*Fire at Sea: HMAS Westralia 1998*'. Still Megan, survivors and families needed their story told to a wider audience.

I approached David Jenkins (*Ghetto Media*). It took an enormous amount of fortitude, but we completed the documentary *Fire at Sea*. Three survivors, Bernard Collaery and Christine and Lyndon Pelly, offered emotive interviews. ABC newsreel footage, personal photographs and David's magic in 3D imagery and animation offered powerful imagery. It is testimony to the power of the story that *Melbourne Documentary Film Festival* has selected the documentary for screening, on Saturday 19 July.

Further information and tickets for the screening can be purchased after 2 June through the *Nova Cinema website*

www.cinemanova.com.au/events/melbourne-documentary-film-festival

or

Melbourne Documentary Film Festival website
<https://www.mdff.org.au/home>

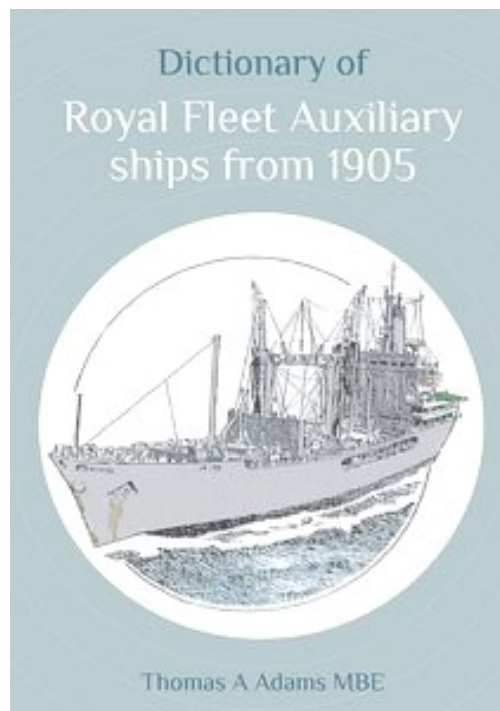
Dictionary of Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships from 1905

Thomas A. Adams, MBE

- Foreword by Commodore David Eagles, CMMar
Commodore of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary
- A comprehensively researched reference work
- Details over 430 RFA vessels including 33 war and marine losses, plus 53 entries showcasing class backgrounds

Royal Fleet Auxiliaries are distinctive in the maritime world civilian-crewed Merchant Navy ships owned by the Crown working under naval orders. This Dictionary showcases both the famous and the often overlooked ships that have supported the Royal Navy during its prominence in the twentieth century. This comprehensively researched reference work presents a detailed guide to vessels, that in both peace and wartime were essential in the wide field of British maritime history those that did battle in the Atlantic, Arctic, Mediterranean and Pacific Oceans and for the Falklands. This is a record of those ships along with details of marine and war losses from the traditional tankers taken up from commercial trade to the ships of today that are designed for the sophisticated and critical role of sea-going logistics support.

Comprehensively researched from official records, the ships are technically detailed from the Admiralty's policy and planning through to their engineering, aviation decks and defensive armament. Where appropriate there is a summary of service and for the historical researcher each entry provides a list of the sources used by the author. The easy-to-read detail is supported by an abundance of photographs and drawings. Uniquely there is an appendix of 67 entries detailing those miscellaneous ships that are commonly but erroneously classed as RFAs. This authoritative work fills an important gap in shipping literature with no previous publication on these ships coming close to including the level of detail provided.



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21 HEARTS

AWM 24 July—3 August 2025

Contacts

0414 345 381

info@theatre180.com.au

awm.gov.au

When

from 24 July to 3 August 2025

Where

Australian War Memorial Theatre, Fairbairn Avenue, Campbell

Price

Adult	\$65
Concession	\$60
Child	\$35
Group	\$57

Accessibility

Disabled access available, contact operator for details.

ADV Reliant bolsters Pacific partners

29 April 2025

Australia's Pacific Support Vessel, Australian Defence Vessel (ADV) *Reliant*, has departed Darwin on its second deployment of 2025, responding to needs and requests made by our Pacific partners.

ADV *Reliant* and her crew, including a RAN liaison officer, will spend the next three months visiting Pacific island countries delivering vital stores and equipment as part of Australia's ongoing commitment to the region.

During the deployment, ADV *Reliant* will deliver humanitarian assistance and disaster relief stores to Fiji and protective equipment to His Majesty's Armed Forces of Tonga to support their contribution to Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025.

ADV *Reliant* is deployed for up to 300 days a year utilising a multi-crew system to provide vital support such as search and rescue, maritime surveillance, transport of essential cargo, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Chief of Joint Operations, Vice Admiral Justin Jones, RAN said ADV *Reliant* supports the com-

bined response by Australia and Pacific island countries to regional challenges.

"We recognise our region experiences concurrent threats and disasters, having impacts on multiple nations at various scales of severity," he said.

"The Pacific family is best placed to respond to the needs of our region."

"The Pacific has a proud record of working together across common security concerns, which will continue long into the future," Vice Admiral Jones said.

ADV *Reliant* will also deliver essential spares and stores to Fiji, Tonga and Tuvalu needed to support the operation of their Guardian-Class Patrol Boats delivered through the Pacific Maritime Security Program.

ADV *Reliant*'s previous deployment saw the delivery of firetrucks to Kiribati, emergency service supplies and infrastructure support to Tonga, and humanitarian. During earlier deployments, the ADV *Reliant* has also conducted hydrographic survey taskings to support safe navigation in vicinity of Pacific island ports.

USS Blue Ridge returns to Port Jackson after an absence of 39 years



Left: USS Blue Ridge berthing at Garden Island, Sydney in May 2025

Below: USS Blue Ridge as she was pictured in the commemorative publication of the Fleet Review held in October 1986 marking the 75th Anniversary of the naming of the RAN on 11 October 1911.

Below: (L-R) U.S. Coast Guard Attaché, Captain Amanda Ramassini, Commanding Officer USS Blue Ridge, Captain Nick DeLeo, Sydney Consul General Christine Elder and Commanding Officer HMAS Kuttabul, Captain Rebecca Levitt, RAN, talk on the wharf after USS Blue Ridge berthed alongside Fleet Base East in Sydney

Photos: Defence



USS *Blue Ridge* (LCC 19), the command ship of the U.S. 7th Fleet, visits HMAS *Kuttabul* as part of a voyage to forge relationships with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific. The *Blue Ridge* and embarked U.S. 7th Fleet staff conduct regular Indo-Pacific patrols to deter aggression, strengthen alliances and partnerships, and advance future warfighting capabilities

Defence



STOP PRESS**Officer of the Order of Australia (AO)**

awarded to

Mr Naguib Kaldas APM,

For distinguished service to international and transnational law enforcement, to counter-terrorism leadership, to multiculturalism and, as Chairman, of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicides, 2021-2024



THE
KING'S BIRTHDAY
2025 HONOURS LIST

After-hours telehealth GP service

Welcome to Ochre Anytime, your dedicated video telehealth service catering to the healthcare needs of anyone residing in Australia. With Ochre Anytime, quality care is just a video call away, ensuring that you can access trusted doctors from the comfort of your chosen location.

Opening hours:

Monday to Friday: 6.00pm – 8:00am the following day

Saturday, Sunday & public holidays: 9.00am – 8:00am the following day

Appointments with Ochre Anytime connect you with experienced doctors who practice within Ochre medical centres, ensuring a continuation of the high standards of care synonymous with Ochre Health. For existing patients, accessing your health records during a consultation is seamless, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of your medical history.

We offer both standard consultations for single issues, or complex consultations for patients with multiple issues to discuss.

At Ochre Anytime, we prioritise the well-being of our community by bringing healthcare to your fingertips, combining comfort, and convenience with the assurance of quality medical care. Book your telehealth appointment today and experience healthcare designed around your lifestyle.

Patients will need a device with a camera and microphone, such as a smartphone, tablet, or computer, and a stable internet connection for their telehealth consultation.

If you are experiencing issues accessing the Ochre Anytime service, please call [1800 478 353](tel:1800478353) or fill in our online support form on our website: <https://ochrehealth.com.au/ochre-anytime/>

Lodge your DVA claims via MyService

22 May 2025

MyService makes it easy to manage your business with us. You can even lodge your claims online.

The following video explains how:

Whether it's lodging and tracking claims, applying for DVA-funded mental health treatments, or booking transport for medical appointments, MyService has you covered. You can also request a decision review, update your personal details, and access your digital Veteran Card all in one place.

If you haven't signed up yet, it's quick and easy to get started. Watch our [How to register with MyService instructional video](#) for a step-by-step guide on how to register, and you'll be set up in no time.

Once you're registered, take a moment to explore all the features MyService has to offer.

MyService has been designed with veterans in mind to save you time and effort. For a detailed overview of how MyService can support your DVA experience, including video tutorials and step-by-step instructions, visit the [MyService page](#).

Related articles:

- [Streamlining compensation claims processing | Department of Veterans' Affairs](#)
- [Updates to MyService | Department of Veterans' Affairs](#)

DVA Contacts

DVA Contact numbers

- Provider invoicing & billing enquiries: [1300 550 017](tel:1300550017)
- Provider enquiries: [1800 550 457](tel:1800550457)
- Transport bookings: [1800 550 455](tel:1800550455)
- [Veterans' Affairs Pharmaceutical Advisory Centre](#) (VAPAC): [1800 552 580](tel:1800552580)

Hearing or speech impairment assistance

- If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the [National Relay Service](#) (NRS):
- Talk To You (TTY) users phone [1800 555 677](tel:1800555677) then ask for 1800 838 372
- Speak and Listen users phone [1800 555 727](tel:1800555727) then ask for 1800 838 372
- Internet relay users connect to the [NRS](#) then ask for 1800 838 372

Claims Processing

A snapshot of April 2025:

- DVA received 7,591 claims in April bringing the total for the financial year to date (FYTD) to 82,358 claims – 15.9 per cent higher than the same period last year.
- DVA made 8,026 determinations and has finalised 83,064 claims in the FYTD, 0.4 per cent more than the equivalent period last year.
- 72,545 claims were with an officer for processing and 9,406 claims were yet to be allocated for processing.
- The average time taken to process a MRCA IL claim was 303 days in the 2024-25 FYTD (1 July 2024 to 30 April 2025), compared to 373 days in the corresponding 2023-24 FYTD.

Please [contact us](#) or an [advocate](#) if you have any questions about submitting a claim. More information about [making a claim for a service-related condition](#) and [eligibility for benefits and pay-](#)

Information on health services may be obtained from DVA. The contact numbers for health care providers requiring further information or prior financial authorisation for all States and Territories are listed below:

PHONE NUMBER:

Telephone: [1800 VETERAN \(1800 838 372\)](tel:1800VETERAN)

International callers:

[+61 2 6289 1133](tel:+61262891133)

POSTAL ADDRESS FOR ALL STATES AND TERRITORIES:

Health Approvals & Home Care Section department of Veterans' Affairs

GPO Box 9998

BRISBANE QLD 4001

DVA WEBSITE:

<http://www.dva.gov.au/providers/allied-healthprofessionals>

DVA email for prior financial authorisation: health.approval@dva.gov.au

The appropriate prior approval request form can be found at: <https://www.dva.gov.au/providers/servicesrequiring-prior-approval>

CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT

For information about claims for payment visit: www.dva.gov.au/providers/how-claim

Claim Enquiries: 1300 550 017
(Option 2 Allied Health)

Claims will take a variety of times to complete based on whether or not the claim is prioritised for allocation to a decision maker and the complexity of the claim itself. For example, if the service of the individual crosses two or more Acts or contains a lot of health conditions and injuries or both. This results in some claims being decided faster than the average time, while some claims take longer.

For any condition, to make the claiming process smoother, follow these 3 steps:

- **Step 1:** Get your medical practitioner to confirm your diagnosis.
- **Step 2:** Supply the documents you need to;
- **Step 3:** Check if you are already eligible for free health care and treatment.

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