

THE WHITE ENSIGN MAGAZINE

WHITE WATCH ISSUE 26/2

JOURNAL OF THE NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA



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THE SENIOR SERVICE, THE SENIOR OFFICERS

THE SENIOR ROLE

Senior Naval Officers at
the head of the Australian
Defence Force

ISSN 2208-5998



9 772208 599006

WHITE ENSIGN MAGAZINE

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ADVERTISING

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEXT WEM
RED WATCH EDITION 2024

Closing Date for submissions 13 NOV 26
Planned publication* 4 DEC 26

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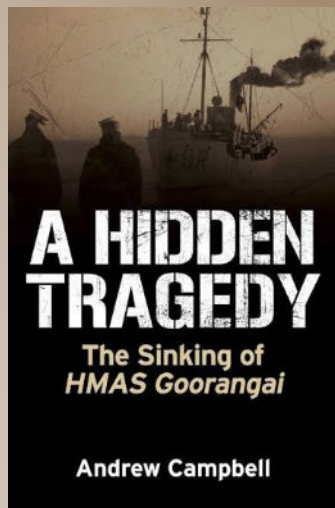


BOOK REVIEW

A HIDDEN TRAGEDY

The Sinking of
HMAS Goorangai

BY ANDREW CAMPBELL



Andrew Campbell's A Hidden Tragedy is more than a historical expose; it is a structured commentary on the ethics surrounding memories and the dangers of historical abolition. By painstakingly reconstructing this long-forgotten event, Campbell implores the reader to confront the seemingly uncomfortable truth that history is often edited by those with ill-informed vested interests, with selective recollections creating a portrayal which tends to favour conventionality over responsibility, leaving many valid points of view unheard.

This book's main argument is that silence immortalises inequity, which, at this point in time, resonates emphatically in today's climate of historical revisionism. Around the world, debates rage over monuments, textbooks, and national identity, demonstrating how the past remains a relevant domain for present ideologies. Campbell's story reinforces the fact that by acknowledging forgotten tragedies is not simply an academic exercise; it is essentially a moral necessity. By failing to do so risks repeating systemic failures. Societies who ignore their past are almost certain to repeat these misunderstandings.

Furthermore, the human experiences threaded into this narrative raises it beyond abstract theory. The personal accounts cited throughout the text confirm the consequences of neglect, reminding readers that historical amnesia is not benign, it has real victims whose personal suffering is made worse by calculated abolition. Within this context, A Hidden Tragedy aligns with the present-day requirements of truth and resolution by advocating transparency as an essential prerequisite.

Dr. John R Carroll, PhD, MPHA

Author of Out of Sight, Out of Mind - the RAN in Vietnam, 1965-72 (2013 & 2020).



COVER STORY

As of July 2026, six senior naval officers have been in charge of the Australian Defence Force as the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF), alongside previous equivalent roles.

The position of Chief of the Defence Force rotates notionally among the three armed services (Navy, Army, and Air Force). Out of twenty total appointments in the history of the top ADF role, 10 have come from the Army, 6 from the Navy, and 4 from the Air Force.

Admiral Mark Hammond took command as the latest naval officer to head the ADF in July 2026.

FROM THE
EDITOR

The White 2026 edition of the White Ensign Magazine (WEM) is a special edition for me for several reasons. It comes with a tinge of sadness. but pride for me personally, after 10 years as Editor of the WEM.

I announced at the recent National Council meeting in Canberra that I will stand down as Editor after this edition of the WEM. I have a number of personal challenges that preclude me from offering my full commitment to maintaining the standard we have now achieved with the NAA flagship publication. Consequently, I have decided to step down as Editor, but remain on the WEM committee to continue to pursue potential articles and possible sponsors/advertisers.

Our very capable Art Director and Sub-editor, Darren Rush, has volunteered to become the Editor and he has the perfect pedigree. He has been with me for the last 10 years at the WEM. He is the producer of the National Bosun's Call and the Secretary of the ACT Section. Darren is a dynamic creator of digital material and is a perfect fit for the role of Editor. His nomination was endorsed at the recent National Council meeting.

Finally may I thank all of our readers for their support and encouragement over the last 10 years. It has been both a pleasure and great pride for me to serve our members.

Russell Pettis
Russell Pettis AM, Editor

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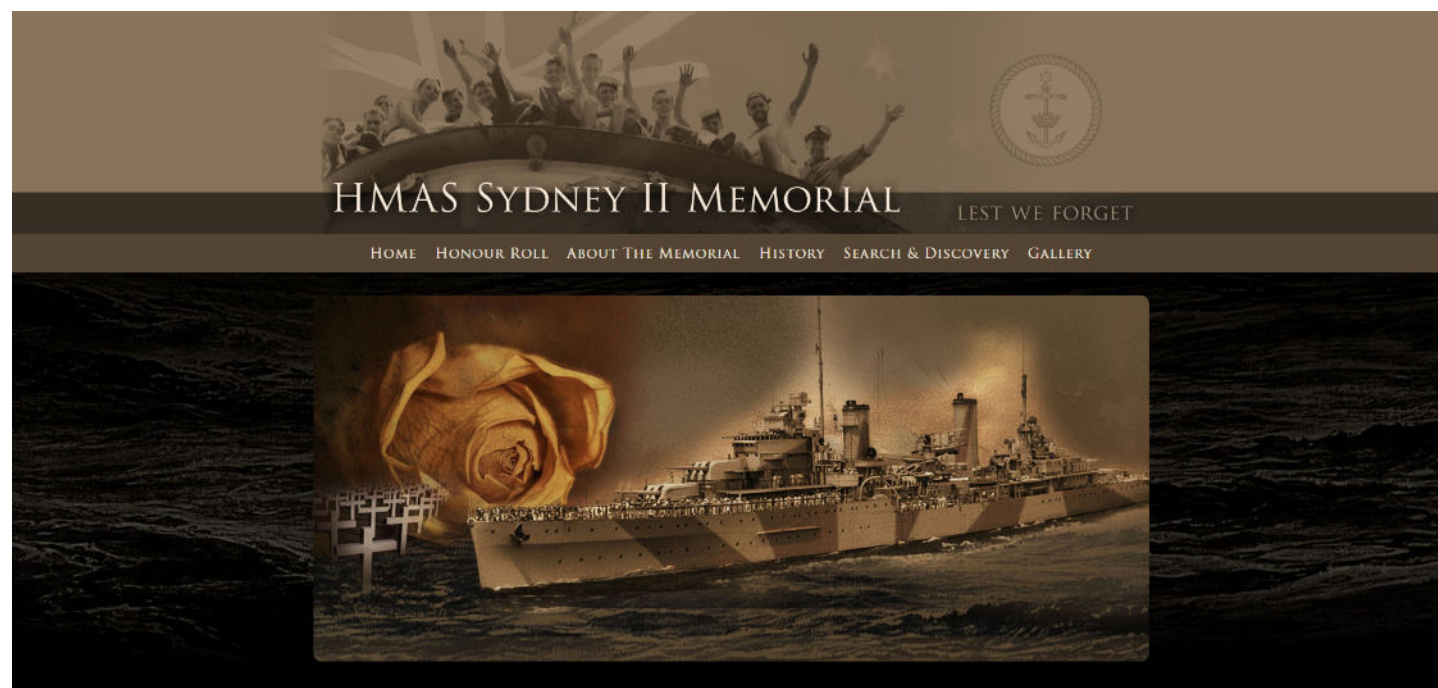
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Above: The early headquarters of the Royal Australian Navy was the Navy Office located in St Kilda Road, Melbourne. It served as the center of Australian naval administration from the formation of the Royal Australian Navy in 1911 until defense administration moved to Canberra in 1964.

Below: Navy Headquarters is located within the Russell Offices complex in Canberra, ACT, serving as the core strategic and administrative command center for the Royal Australian Navy.



A New Digital Home for HMAS Sydney (II): Inside the HMAS Sydney II Memorial Website Redesign

For decades, the story of HMAS *Sydney* (II) — and the extraordinary effort to find her final resting place — has lived across two separate online homes: the HMAS *Sydney* (II) Virtual Memorial and the Finding Sydney Foundation website. That has now changed. The two sites have been amalgamated into a single, high-definition platform, rebuilt from the ground up for long-term digital preservation, modern accessibility, and richer community engagement.

The redesign is more than a technical refresh. It's a considered effort to ensure that the legacy of the 645 men who served and were lost aboard HMAS *Sydney* (II) remains accessible, discoverable, and meaningful for generations to come.

One Platform, One Story

Previously, anyone wanting the full picture of HMAS *Sydney* (II)'s history — from her service record to the search efforts that eventually located the wreck — had to navigate two distinct websites. The remastered site consolidates this naval history into one unified platform, presenting culturally sensitive content and interactive tributes in a single, cohesive experience. It's designed not just for today's visitors, but as a durable archive for the future.

Underscoring that commitment, the redesign introduces a formal **Website Content Archiving and Retention Policy**, ensuring the site's long-term accessibility, authenticity, and integrity as a historical record.

Built for Everyone:

Accessibility at the Core

A major focus of the redesign has been Web Content Accessibility. The new site includes:

- Descriptive alt text for images
- High colour contrast and resizable plain text
- Consistent layouts, descriptive headings, and visible focus indicators for keyboard navigation — without keyboard traps
- Optimised interactive elements for touch devices, with alternatives to complex gestures
- Removal of flashing content, and the ability to pause moving elements

These improvements are built on clean HTML and have been verified through initial testing, resulting in a more predictable and inclusive experience for screen reader users, low-vision users, and anyone navigating the site with assistive technology.

Honouring Every Sailor:

A Richer Honour Roll

The Honour Roll — the heart of the memorial — has received some of the most significant enhancements:

- **Visual icons for content discovery.**
Each sailor's entry now displays clear icons indicating what material is available for them, such as photographs, family stories, media clippings, and other records, making it easy for visitors to see at a glance what they can explore.
- **Filtering by content type**
Users can now filter the Honour Roll by a specific type of material — photographs, for example — to dynamically generate a list of every sailor with that content available.
- **Direct links to Service Records.**
Individual sailor profiles now link directly to the National Archives of Australia, giving visitors access to each crew member's official Service Record from their dedicated page.
- **Seamless profile browsing.**
A new "next profile" navigation feature lets users move between sailor profiles without needing to return to the main Honour Roll index.
- **More faces, more stories.**
The site has added 160 new profile photographs, doubling the previous collection from 160 to 320 out of 645 sailors. Where a historical portrait isn't available, rank-specific silhouette placeholders have been enhanced to maintain visual consistency across the Roll.

The Last Sailor

The website now includes detailed historical content on the "Known Sailor" — the last crew member identified — with context and research reproduced courtesy of the Sea Power Centre – Australia, whose formal permission allowed their copyrighted material to be shared on the site.

Deeper Research, Richer Media

The redesign also expands the resources available to researchers, students, and family members alike:

- A Final Report, added to the Search & Discovery section, providing contextual detail on the search

efforts and the sequence of events that led to finding the wreck.

- A new collection of books and publications, including links to relevant academic work such as Curtin University's large-scale 3D reconstruction of the wreck site.

- An expanded Media Gallery, now featuring a broader range of imagery covering crew members, the ship itself, search operations, memorial ceremonies, and related historical material — including newly added ROV videos and images from the wreck site.

- An improved Timeline, tracing HMAS *Sydney* (II)'s journey from commissioning through to her final engagement.

Looking Ahead

Together, these changes mark a significant step forward for how HMAS *Sydney* (II)'s story is preserved and shared. By combining accessibility, historical depth, and thoughtful design, the redesigned memorial website ensures that the sacrifice of her crew — and the remarkable journey to find her — remains within easy reach of anyone who wishes to remember.

HONOUR ROLL

AN UNKNOWN MAN FROM HMAS SYDNEY

Not all of HMAS *Sydney*'s 645 men went down with the ship and were lost.

On 6 February 1942, over two months after HMAS *Sydney*'s loss, a Carley float containing the body of one of her men was seen drifting off Flying Fish Cove, Christmas Island; the float was recovered and the body later interred in the Old European Cemetery with full military honours. Some weeks later the Island was occupied by the Japanese for the duration of the war. The grave was never more than a mound of earth that gradually disappeared under material washed down from the escarpment above and any means of identifying the man, including the exact location of his grave, was lost until successfully investigated more than sixty years later.



Senior Naval Officers as Chief of the Defence Force

by Dr John R Carroll PhD

The Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) has primary responsibility for the command of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). The role arises from Section 10 of the Defence Act 1903, with the Chief of the Defence Force commanding the ADF under the direction of the Minister for Defence.

The Chief of the Defence Force is also the principal military adviser to the Minister and provides advice on matters that relate to military activity, including military operations. Between 1976 and 1984 the position was known as Chief of the Defence Force Staff. Before 1976 the position was known as Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee, which began in 1958.

Before 1958 there was no CDF or equivalent; a Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) existed but no separate position was established as its senior officer. Instead, the senior service chief served as Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC). They had no operational command and were only serving in an advisory capacity.

Precursors to the Position of CDF



Vice Admiral Sir John Augustine Collins KBE, CB, RAN, was one of the Royal Australian Navy's most distinguished officers and the first graduate of the Royal Australian Naval College (RANC) to attain flag rank. He entered RANC in 1913, one of twenty-eight cadet midshipmen in the very first intake. Collins graduated in 1916 and was appointed as a Midshipman in January 1917. He then went on to serve with the Royal Navy Grand Fleet during the final stages of the First World War. Collins specialised in gunnery and was awarded the prestigious Commander Egerton Memorial Prize for outstanding practical gunnery performance. He was promoted to Sub Lieutenant in September 1918 and, as World War 1 drew to a close, Collins joined the destroyer HMS *Spenser*, as gunnery control officer.

Inter-war Service. Collins held a variety of gunnery and staff appointments in the RAN. He was promoted Lieutenant Commander in December 1927, he then joined the recently commissioned heavy cruiser HMAS *Australia*, which was fitting out at Clydebank, Scotland. After serving in the cruiser for two years as squadron gunnery officer, Collins was given command of the *Marksman* class destroyer HMAS *Anzac*. This appointment was in clear recognition of his potential for higher rank and the RAN's desire to further advance his professional development. In June of 1932 Collins was promoted to Commander. In 1933 he joined the Admiralty Plans Division, where he was responsible for Imperial port defences.

In 1935 Collins was appointed Executive Officer of the recently commissioned light cruiser HMAS *Sydney*. *Sydney* was assigned to the Mediterranean Fleet and did not arrive in Australian waters until August 1936. Promoted to Captain in December 1937, Collins became Assistant Chief of Naval Staff and Director of Naval Intelligence at Navy Office, Melbourne. The period in Navy Office and his earlier service in the Mediterranean prepared Collins well for his next operational appointment, that of Commanding Officer of HMAS *Sydney*.

Second World War. Collins assumed command in November 1939, and in May 1940, *Sydney* once again joined the Mediterranean Fleet. During June-July 1940, *Sydney* took part in the bombardment of Bardia, Libya, sank the Italian destroyer *Espero* and fought in the Battle of

Calabria. On 18 July, *Sydney*, in company with the destroyer HMS *Havock* conducted a sweep off the Cretan coast while providing support to four Royal Navy destroyers. The very next morning the destroyers encountered two Italian light cruisers, *Bartolomeo Colleoni* and *Giovani del Bande Nere*. Collins decided to maintain radio silence while closing for battle. This tactic proved decisive. *Sydney's* appearance caught the Italians by surprise, and in the ensuing engagement *Colleoni* was crippled and sunk, with *Bande Nere* escaping the action by her superior speed. For his leadership during this action, Collins was appointed as a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB).

HMAS *Sydney* returned to her namesake port in February 1941. Collins had only three months remaining in command, but in that time *Sydney* took the First Naval Member, Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin to a conference in Singapore. It was here that it was decided that Collins would be appointed Assistant Chief of Staff to Vice Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton, Commander-in Chief, China (based in Singapore). Collins took up his new duties in June 1941.

Far East and Pacific Commands. Following Japan's entry into the war in December 1941, Collins became Commodore Commanding China Force, operating from the Dutch East Indies (Current day Indonesia). He organised evacuations from Batavia before its fall to the Japanese in March 1942. Upon his return to Australia he was appointed Senior Naval Officer Western Australia. In 1943 Collins was appointed Commanding Officer of the heavy cruiser HMAS *Shropshire*, replacing the loss of HMAS *Canberra* after she was sunk by Japanese forces during the Battle of Savo Island. In May 1944, Collins was appointed Commodore 1st Class and given command of Task Force 74, and the Australian Naval Squadron,

flying his broad pennant in HMAS *Australia*.

Leyte Gulf and the Japanese Surrender. On 21 October 1944, Collins was seriously wounded during a Japanese Kamikaze attack on HMAS *Australia* in the lead up to the Battle of Leyte Gulf. He did not return to duty until July 1945. Collins represented the RAN at the Japanese surrender ceremony on the battleship USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945.

Chief of Naval Staff (CNS). Collins was promoted Rear Admiral in January 1947. On 24 February 1948, he became the first RAN trained officer to become CNS. The Prime Minister of the day, Ben Chifley, was adamant that an Australian should lead the RAN. Collins served as CNS from 1948 until 1955. He oversaw post-war modernisation, administrative reforms, and the deployment of Australian naval forces during the Korean War. In 1951, Collins was promoted Vice Admiral and appointed as a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE). The *Collins* class submarines and HMAS *Collins* were named in his honour.

Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC)



The First Naval COSC was Vice Admiral Sir Roy Russell Dowling, KCV, KBE, CB, DSO. He served as Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), the

RAN's highest-ranking position from 1955 until 1959, and as COSC from March 1959 until May 1961.

Dowling entered the Royal Australian Naval College (RANC), Jervis Bay, in January 1915, as a cadet midshipman. After graduating in 1919, he served in several RN and RAN ships and later specialised in gunnery. In 1937 he was appointed in command of the sloop HMAS *Swan*. Following the outbreak of WW2, he saw active service as executive officer of the RN cruiser, HMS *Naiad*, surviving her sinking by *U565* on 11 March 1942, south of Sidi Barrani, Egypt. On his return to Australia, Dowling served as Director of Plans and later Deputy Chief of Naval Staff before being appointed in November 1944 as commanding officer of the light cruiser HMAS *Hobart*. The ship's exploits in the South West Pacific earned him the Distinguished Service Order (DSO).

On 16 December 1948, Dowling was appointed Commanding Officer of the *Majestic* class light fleet aircraft carrier HMAS *Sydney* III. He became Chief of Naval personnel on 16 June 1950 and was promoted to Commodore and appointed Second Naval Member, serving in this capacity until the end of 1952. Promoted Rear Admiral in June 1953, Dowling was then appointed as Flag Officer Commanding Australian Fleet.

On 24 February 1955, Dowling succeeded Vice Admiral Sir John Collins as First Naval Member Australian Commonwealth Naval Board (ACNB) and Chief of Naval Staff (CNS). In the 1957 New Year's Honours List, Dowling was appointed KBE and completed his term as CNS on 23 February 1959. On 23 March, he was appointed as Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC), a role foreshadowing that of the Chief of the Defence Force.



The Second Naval COSC was **Admiral Sir Victor Alfred Trumper Smith, AC, KBE, CB, DSC**. Promoted to Vice Admiral in April 1968, Smith was appointed CNS. In November 1970, he was appointed as COSC and promoted to the rank of Admiral, becoming the first member of the RAN to achieve this rank.

Smith entered the RANC (HMAS *Creswell*) as a cadet midshipman in January 1927. He attended RANC for three-and-a-half years before receiving a further six months' training at HMAS *Cerberus*. In January 1931, Smith was appointed to the heavy cruiser HMAS *Canberra*, and in May he was promoted to Midshipman. In July 1932, Smith was appointed to HMS *London* for service with the Royal Navy's Mediterranean Fleet. Promoted to Sub-Lieutenant, he returned to England where he undertook several qualifying courses until October 1934. He then returned to *Canberra*, serving in the cruiser until March 1936, when he was promoted to Lieutenant and appointed to the heavy cruiser HMAS *Australia*.

Having nominated to specialise in naval aviation, in March 1937 Smith proceeded by sea to England to attend the RN's Naval Observers Course. On graduation, he was appointed to No. 825 Squadron, Fleet Air Arm (FAA), aboard the fleet aircraft carrier,

HMS *Glorious*, serving in the Mediterranean. He remained in *Glorious* until August 1939 when he was returned to England to attend a meteorological course. However, due to the outbreak of hostilities heralding WW 2, the course was abandoned, with Smith then being appointed to the new fleet aircraft carrier HMS *Ark Royal*.

In 1940, Smith participated in aerial operations off Norway with *Ark Royal*, before being appointed to No. 821 Squadron based at Royal Navy Air Station (RNAS) *Halston*. The squadron's aircraft conducted patrols and bombed land targets before disembarking at RNAS *Halston*, where they continued anti-submarine patrols between Orkney and Norway. On 21 June, with Smith as lead observer, six Swordfish biplanes from 821 Squadron participated in an unsuccessful torpedo attack on the German battleship *Scharnhorst* off the Norwegian coast, while subjected to heavy anti-aircraft fire. No hits by aerial torpedo were registered, but only four aircraft managed to return safely to land. For his actions during the attack, Smith was awarded a Mention in Despatches (MiD).

In August, Smith was appointed to FAA 807 fighter squadron aboard the seaplane/aircraft carrier HMS *Pegasus*. This converted merchant ship was utilised protecting convoys transiting Western Approaches against German *Condor* aircraft. In February 1941, the squadron was embarked in the aircraft carrier HMS *Furious*, which was tasked with the protection of shipping off the African coast. In April, 807 joined *Ark Royal* in which Smith served until the carrier was sunk off Gibraltar on 30 November by *U-81*. During this period Smith had been shot down twice, and on each of these occasions he was rescued by an escorting destroyer. In the New Years Honours List for 1942, Smith he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) 'for outstanding zeal, patience and cheerfulness and for setting a

wholehearted example of devotion to duty.'

Following the sinking of *Ark Royal*, Smith returned to Australia, where he was appointed as liaison officer to the United States Navy heavy cruiser USS *Chicago*. He served in this role until May, when he was appointed to HMAS *Canberra* as the observer for her *Seagull* aircraft. Smith served in the cruiser until she was sunk by Japanese naval forces during the Battle of Savo Island during the Guadalcanal landings of 9 August 1942. On his return to Australia, he was appointed to the Amphibious Training School, HMAS *Assault*, for a short period before his appointed return to England to stand by *Canberra*'s replacement, HMAS *Shropshire*.

Promoted to A/Lieutenant Commander in March 1943, in July Smith was appointed Air Staff Officer to the escort carrier HMS *Tracker*, which was operating in the North Atlantic escorting Russian convoys. During this period, the *Seafire* and *Swordfish* aircraft aboard *Tracker* managed to assist in the sinking of two German U-boats and shoot down six German long range *Condor* bomber aircraft.

Confirmed in the rank of Lieutenant Commander on 16 March 1944, Smith was appointed as the Air Planning Officer on the staff of Flag Officer, British Assault Area for the Normandy landings, Rear Admiral J W Rivett-Carnac, DSC, RN. Smith was next appointed Air Planning Officer on the staff of Vice Admiral J W Rivett-Carnac DSC, RN, British Pacific Fleet, retaining this position until October 1945.

At war's end, the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board (ACNB) sent Smith to the Admiralty in London, to obtain guidance and advice that would assist in the planning and formation of a Fleet Air Arm (FAA) for the RAN. He returned to Australia in January 1947 and assumed duties as a member of the RAN's aviation

planning staff. Government approval for the formation of the FAA was granted in July, with Smith being promoted to Commander in December. The RAN's FAA was officially established on 28 August 1948, and as a tribute to Smith, he became widely known as the 'Father of the Fleet Air Arm.'

In January 1950, Smith was appointed Executive Officer of HMAS *Sydney* III and served in the ship during its six-month deployment in Korean waters between August 1951 and February 1952. It was during this time that the FAA embarked aircraft from 808 and 817 Squadrons. These were conducting operations over Korea, marking the first time *Sydney* III was in action. In April 1952, Smith was appointed to head the advance party at the former RAAF air station at Schofields, commissioned as HMAS *Nirimba* in April 1953. Smith left this position in July to become Director of Air Warfare and Training at Navy Office, Melbourne, and was promoted Captain in early January 1954.

On 28 June 1955, Smith was appointed Captain of the 1st Frigate Squadron, in command of HMAS *Quadrant*, before assuming command of HMAS *Queenborough* on 10 April 1956. On 14 January 1957, he was appointed in command of HMAS *Albatross*, the naval air station at Nowra, NSW. He served in this position until November 1959, when he was selected to attend the Imperial Defence College, London.

Following twelve months in London, Smith returned to Australia, and on 8 January 1961, he was appointed in command of the light fleet aircraft carrier, HMAS *Melbourne*. After eighteen months in command of the flagship, he was promoted to Acting Rear Admiral in 1962. This rank was confirmed in 1963, with Smith serving as Second Naval Member

of ACNB. In the Queen's Birthday Honours of that same year he was awarded the Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE).

Smith's next appointment was as Fourth Naval Member, which lasted twelve months. On 30 January 1966, he was appointed as Flag Officer Commanding HM Australian Fleet before assuming the office of Deputy Chief of Naval Staff. Promoted to Vice Admiral in April 1968, Smith was appointed Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), and in June he was awarded a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB). The following year (1969) Smith was knighted as a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE).

On 21 November 1970, Smith was appointed Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee and promoted to the rank of Admiral, becoming the first member of the RAN to achieve that rank. In mid-1975 he was awarded the newly established Companion of the Order of Australia (AC), in the Queen's Birthday Honours, before retiring after almost forty-nine years naval service.

Before the official ceremony marking his retirement, Smith contacted the current CNS's secretary to enquire what musical salute would be played at the parade to mark his retirement. He was informed that the designated tune was *Rule Britannia*. Smith said he did not think that was appropriate for an Australian admiral. When the secretary repeated that it was the musical salute laid down, Smith quietly explained that he didn't care if the band played *Pop Goes the Weasel*, but if they did play *Rule Britannia* he would walk off the parade. On the day, as Smith departed, the musical salute being played was *Advance Australia Fair*.

Chief of the Defence Force Staff (CDFS)



The First and Only Naval Chief of the Defence Force Staff (CDFS) was **Sir Anthony Monckton Synnot, KBE, CBE, AO**. Promoted to Vice Admiral on 23 November 1976, Synnot was appointed as CNS. On 21 April 1979, he was promoted to Admiral and became the Chief of Defence Force Staff (CDFS), a position he held until his retirement on 28 April 1982. This was the first attempt at an official unified command.

Synott joined the Royal Australian Navy as a special entry cadet midshipman in March 1939. He did his initial training in England, where among his fellow trainees was the future Duke of Edinburgh and the late Rear Admiral Sir Brian Murray. On passing out from the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, he graduated as midshipman in October 1940. In seven months of stringent training and study, Synott had achieved 1st class results in Seamanship, Navigation, Torpedos, Signals, Anti-Submarine and Gunnery.

Synnot was promoted to Sub-lieutenant on 1 December 1940. His first ship was the heavy cruiser HMAS *Canberra*, before he went on to serve in the destroyer HMAS *Stuart* at the battle of Matapan and the evacuation of Australian troops from Greece and Crete. He also

saw service with the Royal Navy in the battleship HMS *Barham* and the *Tribal* class destroyer, HMS *Punjabi*, which was sunk following a collision in bad weather with the battleship HMS *King George V* on 1 May 1942. Synnot had received his Watchkeeping Certificate in *Punjabi* some two weeks earlier.

Promoted to Lieutenant in April 1942, Synnot served for two-and-a-half-years in the Australian manned destroyer HMAS *Quiberon*, in which he was the executive officer/first lieutenant. During his service in *Quiberon*, the ship was employed on North Atlantic convoy duty as well as being involved in North African landings. On 7 November 1945 Synnot completed the RN's Long Gunnery Course at HMS *Excellent*, Whale Island, Portsmouth, qualifying as a specialist gunnery officer. There then followed appointments on the staff of gunnery schools, as a gunnery officer afloat in HMAS *Sydney* III, and staff duties at Navy Office, Melbourne, and later as an instructor at HMS *Excellent*.

Synnot was promoted to Lieutenant Commander on 1 April 1950 and Commander on 31 December 1954. On 7 July 1956, he was appointed commanding officer of the *Tribal* class destroyer HMAS *Warramunga* during the Malay Emergency, and later during its time as guard ship for the yachting on Port Phillip Bay during the Melbourne Olympics, November/December of that year.

On 30 June 1960, Synnot was promoted to Captain and was appointed commanding officer of the *Daring* class destroyer HMAS *Vampire* on operations in south-east Asian waters, which included transiting the Long Tau shipping channel in company with the frigate HMAS *Quickmatch*, during a 'visit' to the South Vietnamese port of Saigon in late January 1962. Synnot was to later report that: 'In January 1962, HMAS *Vampire* under my command visited Saigon in company with

HMAS *Quickmatch*. There is no doubt that Vietnam was on a war-footing at this time, and we were required to take all necessary precautions.'

In July 1950, Synnot was the sole naval member of the Bridgeport mission to Malaya, whose job it would be to provide advice to the Australian Government on any assistance afforded to the British, then engaged in the early stages of the Malay Emergency. Synnot's separate report discussing the possibility of naval support was the precursor of an involvement in Malaya/Malaysian affairs, which led into him being seconded on loan to the Malayan Government to command the Royal Malayan Navy from July 1962 to March 1965, during Confrontation (*Konfrontasi*) with the armed forces of Indonesia. Synnot's tact, judgment and energy contributed to his success in this complex environment.

On 14 December 1965, Synnot was appointed to command the fast troop transport, HMAS *Sydney*, for two voyages to South Vietnam during *Operation Hardihood 1 and 2*, April-May 1966, carrying 357 troops from 5 RAR and their equipment on the first voyage, and twelve 9 Squadron RAAF helicopters on the second. On one of these occasions, he successfully brought *Sydney* alongside at Garden Island without the use of tugs. His ship handling skills received a loud cheer from all upper deck members of the ship's company.

On 10 January 1967, Synnot was appointed to command the light fleet aircraft carrier HMAS *Melbourne* during the introduction of the A-4 *Skyhawk* and S-2 *Grumman Tracker* aircraft. In the words of Vice Admiral Sir Richard I Peek, 'the flagship never had a better, more efficient and more loved Captain.' (At the time this comment was made Richard Innes Peek was Rear Admiral, Flag Officer Commanding HMA Fleet).

During 1968, Synnot attended the Imperial Defence College in London returning to Canberra on completion. In 1971, he was promoted to Rear Admiral and appointed Second Naval Member and subsequently Deputy Chief of Chief of Naval Staff (DCNS). On 1 January 1942, Synnot was appointed to be an 'Ordinary Commander of the Military Division of the said Most Excellent Order' (CBE). In March 1973, his last sea-going command was as Flag Officer Commanding Australian Fleet (FOCAF).

Returning to Navy Office Canberra in 1974, Synnot served as Director joint staff on Defence Force Staff, and then as Assistant Chief of the Defence Force Staff (ACDFS). He was prominent in organising relief operations after Darwin was devastated by Cyclone Tracy on 25 December 1974. Synnot took only his essential staff to the headquarters of the Canberra based National Disaster organisation, where he quickly marshalled all available naval and air units, while his calm decisiveness ensured efficient, smooth coordination of relevant civil authorities.

Synnot was promoted to Vice Admiral and appointed Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) in November 1976. That same year he was appointed as an 'Officer of the Order of Australia' (AO) in the Queen's Birthday honours. While CNS, he ensured the RAN developed an awareness of decision-making processes within the Australian government and administration. He emphasised good planning and staff work, and improved systems and relationships between the military and public service arms of the Department of Defence. He also recognised the essential need to buy two U.S. built guided missile frigates (FFGs) as a prudent initial measure. Synnot also consistently advocated for an Australian in-country shipbuilding effort, which eventually came to fruition,

On 30 December 1978, Synnot was appointed to be an 'Ordinary Knight Commander of the Military Division of the said Most Excellent Order' (KBE). In April 1979 Synnot was promoted to Admiral and became Chief of the Defence Force Staff (CDFS), a position he held until his retirement in 1982. He was reputed to be one of the most highly respected officers ever to serve in the Australian Defence Force. He had a presence that simply commanded, without raising his voice or using theatrics. With strategic foresight and determination, he started a program to greatly improve the equipment capability of the Australian armed forces that would enable Australia to play a significant military role as a leader in the Asia-Pacific region.

Chief of Defence Force (CDF)



The First Naval Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) was Admiral Alan Lee Beaumont, AC, RAN. Beaumont was promoted to Rear Admiral in June 1987 and assumed the duties of Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (A/CNS). He was appointed to the post of Assistant Chief of Defence Force (Personnel) on 5 December 1988 and was appointed as an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in the 1989 Queen's Birthday Honours

list. Promoted to Vice Admiral on 11 September 1989, Beaumont assumed the appointment of Vice Chief of the Defence Force, serving in this position until October 1992. For his distinguished service in this position, Beaumont was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) in the Australia Day Honours List of 1992, becoming the first person to receive three awards of the Order of Australia. Beaumont was promoted to Admiral on 17 April 1993 and commenced his appointment as CDF. Beaumont retired from the Royal Australian Navy on 6 July 1995.

Beaumont entered RANC, HMAS *Creswell*, at Jervis Bay in 1948, one of thirty-six cadet midshipmen. He graduated First Class in October 1951 and was awarded the Otto Albert Memorial Prize for Seamanship. On 30 December that year he was loaned to the RN for service and training. On 1 September 1952, he was promoted Midshipman. On 1 January 1954, he was promoted Sub Lieutenant. On 1 February 1956, he was promoted Lieutenant. On completion of a torpedo antisubmarine course with the RN during 1959-60, Beaumont undertook exchange postings with both the RN and the USN.

As a junior officer, he served in HMA ships *Australia*, *Bataan*, *Shoalhaven*, *Vengeance*, *Fremantle*, *Queenborough* and *Quickmatch*. His RN service was in HM ships *Maidstone*, *Armada* and *Lewiston*. Shore appointments included HMAS *Cerberus*, HMS *Vernon* and HMAS *Watson*, Navy Office (Canberra), and the USN Anti-Submarine Warfare School, San Diego. On 1 February 1964, Beaumont was promoted Lieutenant Commander.

In early 1969, Beaumont was appointed to the *Charles F Adams* class guided missile destroyer (DDG), HMAS *Brisbane* for the destroyer's first deployment to Vietnam, 20 March to 13 October

1969. He was promoted Commander while serving as Executive Officer during the ship's deployment with the US Navy as gun line support for troops ashore in Vietnam. He had commanded the minesweeper HMAS *Ibis* in 1962, and he had also obtained further command experience in the destroyer escort HMAS *Yarra* in 1972-73, and the destroyer HMAS *Vampire* in 1978-79. On 30 June 1978, Beaumont was promoted Captain.

His staff appointments included Director of Underwater Weapons, Follow-on Destroyer Project Officer, Director of Naval Plans, Director General Naval Plans and Policy and President of Officer Selection Boards. He was also Director General, Defence Force Administrative Policy, and Assistant Chief of Defence Force (Policy) at Australian Defence Force Headquarters. In the Australia Day Honours for 1982, Captain Alan Lee Beaumont, RAN, was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) 'For service to the RAN particularly as Director of Naval Plans.'

In January 1987, Beaumont was appointed as Chief of Staff to Flag Officer Commanding Support Command. He was promoted to Rear Admiral on 29 June 1987 as Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Development), then to Assistant Chief of the Defence Force (Personnel) in December 1988. In the Queen's Birthday Honours for 1989, Rear Admiral Alan Lee Beaumont, AM, RAN, was appointed as an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO), 'For service to the RAN, particularly as the Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Development).'

Promoted to Vice Admiral in September 1989, he assumed the appointment of Vice Chief of the Defence Force. He served in that position until October 1992. In the Australia Day Honours for 1992, Vice Admiral Alan Lee Beaumont AO, RAN, was appointed as a Companion of the Order of

Australia (AC), 'For service to the Australian Defence Force, particularly as Vice-Chief of the Defence Force.' In so doing, he became the first Australian to achieve three awards in the Order of Australia.

Beaumont was promoted Admiral in April 1993 and commenced his appointment as Chief of the Defence Force. He was the first head of the combined Australian Defence Force who did not get there after a period as Chief of his particular service. He also happened to be senior to each of the present service Chiefs. Admiral Beaumont's non-conventional path to the top defence job could be seen as symbolic of the attempt to weld the three forces into a coherent entity, free of the 'tribalism' that has seen service prerogatives presented in the past in isolation from the total need.



The Second Naval Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) was Admiral Christopher Alexander Barrie, AC, RAN. In 1990 Barrie was appointed as a Defence Adviser to the Indian Navy, New Delhi, India. Following this appointment, he was promoted to Commodore and from 1991 to 1992 served as Director RAN Surface Warfare School and Commanding Officer of the shore establishment HMAS Watson. From 1992 to 1995 he was appointed as Deputy Maritime Commander and Chief of Staff at Maritime Headquarters, Sydney for which the then Commodore

Barrie was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the Australia Day Honours List 1994. 'In recognition of service to the RAN, particularly as Deputy Maritime Commander and Chief of Staff Maritime HQ.' On promotion to Rear Admiral, Barrie served from May 1996 to June 1997 as Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (DCNS), before being appointed Vice Chief of the Defence Force from 1997 to 1998. In recognition of these last two appointments, Vice Admiral Barrie, AM, was appointed as an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. 'For distinguished service to the ADF as Deputy CNS and Vice Chief of the CDF. On 4 July 1998, Barrie was promoted to Admiral and assumed the post of Chief of the Defence Force (CDF). He held this position until his retirement from the RAN on 3 July 2002. For his eminent service to the ADF, he was appointed as a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) in the 2001 Australia Day Honours List.

Barrie entered RANC, HMAS Creswell, at Jervis Bay in 1961, one of thirty-six Normal Entry and six Matriculation Entry cadet midshipmen. During his early naval training, Barrie completed a period of operational service in HMAS Melbourne as a midshipman (under training) when his ship was acting as escort to the troop transport HMAS Sydney from 31 May to 22 June 1965, during Operation Hardihood 1. He was then appointed on loan for service and training to the Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth and HMS Excellent at Portsmouth for Sub Lieutenant courses.

Upon his return to Australia in December 1967, Sub Lieutenant Barrie was appointed to the Charles F Adams class guided missile destroyer (DDG) HMAS Brisbane (under training). During the seven-month period of Brisbane's first deployment to Vietnam, 20 March to 13 October 1969, Barrie was promoted to Lieutenant (under training). In

December 1969, Barrie was appointed, in command of the Attack class fast patrol boat, HMAS Buccaneer. During 1971-1972, Barrie was appointed on an exchange posting to the RN Whitby class or Type 12 frigate, HMS Eastbourne, in which he served as Operations and Navigating Officer.

On his return to Australia, Barrie served in the Charles F Adams class guided missile destroyer, HMAS Perth, as ship's Navigating Officer (N), from June 1973 to June 1975. On 2 January 1976, he promoted Lieutenant Commander and was appointed to the Daring class destroyer HMAS Duchess as (N). He also had the additional responsibility as the Training Officer. Barrie also served during 1980 as Executive Officer/First Lieutenant of the Daring class destroyer HMAS Vampire. In 1983, Barrie was promoted Commander and appointed as Commanding Officer of the modernised and completely refurbished destroyer escort HMAS Stuart, which was recommissioned into service on 29 July 1983. In January 1984, Stuart became the first of her class to be home ported in Western Australia.

Ashore, Barrie qualified as a navigation sub specialist through the RN's Long N (1970-71) and Advanced N Courses (1975). In addition, he earned qualifications from the Australian Army Staff College Queenscliff (1977); the Joint Services Staff College (1980); the RAN Staff College, where he served on the Directing Staff (1981-82); and the International Fellows Program of the National Defence University, Washington DC (1986-87). Barrie also held the positions of Director, RAN Tactical School (1985-86). Force Development Planning Staff (1987-89). He also served on a diplomatic appointment as a Defence Adviser New Delhi, India (1990-91) and afterwards as Director RAN Surface Warfare School and Commanding Officer HMAS Watson (1991-92). After this, he served as Deputy Maritime

Commander and Chief of Staff at Maritime HQ, Sydney (1992-1995) In March 1997, Barrie went on to serve as Vice Chief of the Defence Force, before his promotion to Admiral and assuming the appointment as CDF on 4 July 1998.



The Third Naval Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) was Admiral David Johnston, AC, RAN. In July 2007, on promotion to Commodore, he joined Fleet Headquarters as Commodore Flotillas. Here he was responsible for planning maritime operations and the operation and training of Navy's ships submarines and diving teams. In November 2008 he assumed the role of J3 (Director General Operations) at Headquarters Joint Operation Command. This role encompassed the operational level execution of all ADF operations both overseas and within Australia. In October 2010, Johnston deployed to Operation Slipper in the Middle East area of Operations as the Deputy Commander Joint Task Force 633. He supported the Commander JTF in providing national command oversight of all ADF elements conducting maritime, land and air operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and adjacent maritime areas. He was awarded a Commendation for Distinguished Service in this role.

Promoted to Rear Admiral in June 2011, Johnston assumed the role of Deputy Chief of Joint Operations Command. While performing this role, he commanded the ADF Joint Task Force that supported the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2011, and the visit by the President of the United States later that year. In December 2011, Vice Admiral Johnston was appointed Commander Border Protection Command. He held this responsibility until December 2013. As commander of this multi-agency organisation, he was responsible for the civil maritime security of Australia's maritime domain, using resources from both the ADF and the then Australian Customs and Border Protection Service. On promotion to Vice Admiral in 2014, he was appointed Chief of Joint Operations in May 2014 and Vice Chief of the Defence Force in July 2018. On promotion to Admiral in July 2024, Johnston was appointed Chief of the Defence Force.

Johnston entered the Royal Australian Naval College (RANC) HMAS Creswell, at Jervis Bay, New South Wales, as a cadet midshipman; one of fifty-three Junior Entry cadets entering naval service in 1978. After four years of intensive training, both ashore and at sea, Johnston graduated from Creswell as a seaman officer, nominating to specialise as a Principal Warfare Office (PWO). He then undertook further training at sea and at HMAS Watson, later qualifying as a PWO, rising to the rank of Lieutenant in the mid to late 1980s.

Throughout the intervening decades, Johnston subsequently served as Commanding Officer of the Oliver Hazard Perry class frigates HMAS Adelaide and HMAS Newcastle. The latter command included deployment during Operation Quickstep at Fiji in 2006. His staff appointments included command and control specialist staff positions in

Australian Defence Force (ADF) headquarters, Operations Manager at Sailors' Career Management, and later, as Director Joint Plans in Strategic Operations Division, where he developed the military response options for consideration by the government. In Johnston's own words:

In my own career I'd say I'd say some key events would include the first Gulf War; I'd been in the Navy at that stage for 12 years. It was something of a shot across the bow in Navy terms of the reality of missile age conflicts. It returned us from - I'd spent much of my seagoing time in the South Pacific and in Southeast Asia - for ships to be redeploying into the Gulf War environment. Really shook Navy to lift its preparedness and ability to operate in a genuine combat environment with genuine risks associated with it. Then like many, we found ourselves dealing with consequences of counterterrorism, particularly in Afghanistan, the rise of counterterrorism in Iraq and then subsequently with Daesh. Changing nature of how military contribution expected of Defence and all the way through that equally important to where we find ourselves now through that period in the 90's and early 2000's. Bougainville as an issue, East Timor rose, Solomon Islands, so a reminder of our own region and particularly the proximate part of the region is where there's a high expectation of what Australia and its defence force can do, that all merged together to bring me to the experiences that I've brought back both as Chief of Joint Operations, really at the end of our Afghanistan campaign and our reorient back into the Indo-Pacific region as we call it now. Through my time as the Vice Chief relearning, I'd done a capability job when I was a Lieutenant Commander, major equivalent of what it is to try to do forced design for the future or helping for the type of responsibilities that I perform now.

In 2012, Johnston was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) (Military Division). In 2018, he was appointed as an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) (Military Division), and in 2022 he was appointed as a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) (Military Division).

On 13 April 2026, the Prime Minister announced that Johnston will retire in July and be succeeded by Admiral Mark Hammond, AO, RAN.



The Fourth Naval Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) is Admiral Mark David Hammond AO, RAN. In April 2026, it was announced that Hammond would succeed Admiral David Johnston as Chief of the Defence Force in July 2026. At the time of this announcement, Hammond was serving as Chief of Navy and had been since July 2022.

Hammond originally joined the RAN in 1986 as a sailor and went through recruit training as a member of Rankin Division. On satisfactory completion of twelve weeks of recruit training, he completed further service training as an electronics technician. It was during this time that he was assessed as a suitable candidate for officer and was subsequently commissioned as a midshipman.

Hammond then attended the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA), University of New South Wales, Canberra. He graduated in 1990 with a Bachelor of Science degree, and as a direct consequence he was promoted to Sub-Lieutenant and then went on to complete further seamanship and navigation training in ships of the fleet before volunteering for submarines. He qualified in submarines in 1994 and was then appointed navigating officer of the *Collins* class submarine HMAS *Collins* in 1996. Hammond then became Flag Lieutenant to the then Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Rodney Taylor AO RAN (1994-1997).

In 1998, Hammond completed the Principal Warfare Officer's course (PWO) and the Submarine Warfare Course. He was then appointed to the commissioning crew of the *Collins* class submarine HMAS *Waller* as operations officer in 1999, returning to the Submarine Warfare Course as an instructor in 2001. He was then appointed as executive officer of the *Collins* class submarine HMAS *Sheean*.

In 2003, after completing the Royal Netherlands Navy's (RNN) Submarine Command Course and the United States Navy's (USN) Prospective Commanding Officer Course, Hammond was appointed to RAN Headquarters as Staff Officer Future Concepts. He attended the Australian Command and Staff College in 2004, graduating with a Master of Management in Defence Studies degree from the University of Canberra. In 2005, Hammond graduated with a Master of Maritime Studies degree from the University of Wollongong. He later served on an operational exchange appointment with the Royal Navy (RN) Submarine Service. Following his return to Australia, Hammond was appointed as Commanding Officer of the *Collins* class submarine HMAS *Farncomb*. While serving in *Farncomb* Hammond undertook two years of demanding

operations in the Indo Pacific region.

Following his period in command of *Farncomb*, Hammond was appointed as Assistant Naval Attache in Washington. DC. On his return to Australia he was appointed as Director Future Submarines – Operational Requirements, before being appointed to Joint Operations Command as Joint Exercise Director (J75). He subsequently became Director Submarine Sub-Program (*Collins* class and Future Submarines). In November 2012, he was appointed as Chief of Staff to the Chief of the Defence Force, General David Hurley, AC, CVO, DSC. Hammond relinquished this appointment in December 2013, and in early 2014, was appointed as Director General Maritime Operations.

In 2017, Hammond was appointed for duty in the United States as Chief of the Defence Force Liaison office to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, then General Joseph Dunford, USMC. In January 2018, Commodore Hammond was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) 'for his exceptional service to the ADF in senior command and staff roles.' The citation for the award particular praised his 'demonstrated exceptional professionalism, leadership and dedication' describing Hammond as 'a highly accomplished submarine commander.' On promotion to Rear Admiral, Hammond returned to Australia in March that year and was appointed as Deputy Chief of Navy. Following two-and-a-half years in the role, he passed this responsibility to Rear Admiral Christopher Smith. On 17 November 2020, Hammond succeeded Rear Admiral Jonathon Mead as Commander of the Australian Fleet.

In June 2022, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Richard Marles, announced that Hammond would be promoted to

Vice Admiral and appointed as the next Chief of Navy (CN). Hammond succeeded Vice Admiral Michael Noonan in the role on 6 July 2022. He was the first graduate from the ADF Academy to be appointed as a service chief. In the 2023 King's Birthday Honours List, Vice Admiral Hammond was appointed as an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for his 'distinguished service' and 'exceptional leadership' in senior command roles. On 22 June 2026, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond was appointed as Chief of the Australian Defence Force, to succeed Admiral Johnston in July. Vice Admiral Hammond was promoted to Admiral upon notification of his appointment as Chief of the ADF.



The personal flag of the Chief of the Defence Force features a horizontal tricolour of dark blue, red, and light blue with the triservice badge and four gold stars. It is derived from the Australian Defence Force Ensign to represent the joint leadership of the Navy, Army, and Air Force.

Design Features

Background: Horizontal stripes of dark blue (representing the Navy), red (representing the Army), and light blue (representing the Air Force).

Center Emblem: The yellow triservice badge combining a naval anchor, crossed army swords, air force wings, a boomerang, and a Commonwealth star crest.

Rank Insignia: Four gold stars placed along the lower portion of the flag to denote the full general (or equivalent service rank) position of the Chief of the Defence Force.

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NB: All links were active as of 23 June 2026.



JOHN JEREMY MEMORIAL ESSAY COMPETITION 2026

The Naval Historical Society of Australia aims to promote knowledge of and interest in Australia's rich naval history. This essay competition is named in honour of John Jeremy, our long-standing Vice President of the NNSA, naval architect, shipbuilder, historian, author, editor, yachtsman, photographer and an inspiration to all who met him.

Original thinkers are sought who, through their work or studies can promote discussion around Australian naval history and its implication for the future of Australia.

The winning essays and honourable mentions will be published in The Naval Historical Review.

The competition is conducted in three divisions as follows.

1. Professional Division: Includes Journalists, Defence Officials, Academics, Naval Personnel and previous contributors to Naval Historical Review.
2. Adult Novice: Non-professional adults over 18 years of age not working as a professional.
3. Senior Students: Students aged 16 to 18 years of age.

Professional and Adult Novice entries should be 2,500 to 3,000 words in length.

Prizes	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
Professional	\$1,500.00	\$500.00	\$200.00
Adult Novice	\$1,500.00	\$500.00	\$200.00
Senior Students	\$1,500.00	\$500.00	\$200.00

Highly Commended Entries

At the organising committee's discretion additional non-monetary awards may be made. These could take the form of book prizes, Sydney Harbour naval history cruises and ship or establishment visits subject to RAN approval.

Deadline Friday 16 October 2026.



Scan to access more
information on our website
www.navyhistory.au



GARDEN ISLAND NAVAL CHAPEL



MEMORIAL PLAQUES

Production of memorial plaques for deceased Navy veterans

The NSW Executive of the Naval Association has assumed responsibility for the production of memorial plaques to honour Navy veterans who have 'crossed the bar.' Any member of a deceased Navy veteran's family, or friends or colleagues, can have a plaque engraved with details of the veteran's service. The cost of each plaque is \$40.00.

Once plaques have been produced, they are mounted in the Chapel of Remembrance, within the Garden Island Naval Chapel; currently there are more than 900 plaques mounted in the Chapel of Remembrance. During the Naval Association's annual Service of Thanksgiving, the chaplain conducting the service dedicates those plaques that have been produced during the previous year. Family members and colleagues of the Navy Veterans whose plaques are be dedicated are invited to attend the service.

A brochure containing information of memorial plaques, and an order form template, is available to provide guidance on this program.

For further information on memorial plaques, or to request an order form, please contact the Naval Association's NSW Secretary by emailing nswsecretary@navalassoc.org.au.





On 7 July 2026, Vice Admiral Matthew Buckley, AM, CSC, RAN formally assumed the role of Chief of Navy, becoming the 34th officer to hold the position and taking command of the Royal Australian Navy at what he himself described as a pivotal moment in its history. He succeeds Admiral Mark Hammond, who has stepped up to become Chief of the Defence Force following the departure of Admiral David Johnston.

A Submariner's Path to the Top

Born in Sydney in February 1972 and raised on the NSW South Coast, Buckley joined the Royal Australian Navy in January 1990 and graduated from the Australian Defence Force Academy in December 1992. His career has been built almost entirely in the submarine service — a background that is notable given the scale of the nuclear-powered submarine transition now underway under AUKUS.

He served in Oberon and Collins Class submarines, spent two years on exchange aboard a Canadian submarine based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and was part of the commissioning crew of HMAS Rankin. After completing the demanding Submarine Command Course ("Perisher") and the tactical phase of the US Navy's own submarine command course, he took command of HMAS Collins before rising to Commander of the Australian Submarine Force.

His senior staff postings have included Director Submarine Capability, Director General Navy Operations, Director General Navy People, and — perhaps most significantly for his new role — Head of Nuclear Submarine Capability from 2023 to 2025, placing him at the centre of Australia's most complex defence undertaking in decades. He was promoted to Rear Admiral and appointed Deputy Chief of Navy in January 2025, before his elevation to Vice Admiral and Chief of Navy this year.

Recognition and Education

Buckley was awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross in 2015 for his contribution to submarine capability, and was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2024 for exceptional service in senior leadership roles. He also holds the Republic of Korea's Order of National Security Merit, Gukseon Medal, awarded in April 2024. Academically, he holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Strategy and Policy from the University of New South Wales, a Master of International Relations from Deakin University, and is a graduate of the Australian Defence and Strategic Studies Course, where he received the Secretary of Defence–Chief of Defence Force prize.

Taking Command

In his first remarks as Chief of Navy, Buckley paid tribute to his predecessors and to the RAN's long history, noting the Navy's 125 years of age, as old as the Federation, with a remarkable record of service in peace and in war, and honouring the sailors and ships lost in its service.

He set out a clear agenda for his tenure, framing the central task as the profound re-capitalisation of the Navy while remaining always prepared with a fleet that is lethal and ready. He pointed to the growth in personnel and platforms underway, including the introduction of more complex capabilities and remote autonomous systems, and said this expansion would demand the most rigorous attention to detail and a nuclear mindset. Buckley said his priority as Chief of Navy would be investment in people — developing highly skilled, resilient naval war fighters grounded in mastery, and supported by strong teams and a system that looks after them and their families.

What It Means

Buckley's appointment places a submariner with direct, recent experience overseeing the Nuclear Submarine Capability program at the head of the Navy just as Australia works through the early, most demanding phase of its transition to nuclear-powered submarines under AUKUS. Combined with his operational background heavily weighted toward the Indo-Pacific, his tenure is likely to be closely watched as a signal of how the RAN intends to balance immediate fleet readiness against the long, technically difficult road to a nuclear submarine force.

Sources: Royal Australian Navy, Australian Department of Defence

Message from the NAA

On behalf of the Naval Association of Australia, we extend our warmest congratulations to Vice Admiral Matthew Buckley, AM, CSC, RAN on his promotion to Vice Admiral and appointment as the 34th Chief of Navy.

Your distinguished career in the submarine service — from your early years in Oberon and Collins Class boats through to command of HMAS Collins, the Australian Submarine Force, and most recently as Head of Nuclear Submarine Capability — has prepared you exceptionally well to lead the Royal Australian Navy through this critical period of growth and transformation. The Association looks forward to supporting you and your sailors as you build on the strong foundation left by Admiral Hammond, and we join the broader Navy family in wishing you fair winds and following seas in this new and demanding chapter of service to our nation.

THE FATHER OF THE NAVY THE ANNUAL CRESSWELL ADDRESS LUNCHEON



Rear Admiral Sir William Creswell in 1918

The Annual Creswell Address Luncheon was held at Box Hill RSL this year in mid July. The lunch is held as close to the birthday of Vice Admiral Creswell - the founder of the RAN - as possible.

The Creswell family attended and a number of Admiral Creswell naval uniform items are usually displayed, courtesy of the family. The lunch was well attended and the address was made by Captain Andrew McKinnon RAN Rtd (President of the Naval Historical Society, Victorian Section). - entitled 'The Father of the Navy.' Guests included the current Commanding Officer of HMAS CERBERUS (Captain Ben Esler RAN) Senior Naval Officer Victoria and additionally former CO's and retired senior naval officers.

The event organising committee was comprised of:

- The Victorian Section NAA
- The Navy League of Australia,
- The Naval Historical Society
- The Naval Officers Association

Part funding was gratefully provided for the event, with appreciation from all who attended, by the Melbourne Naval Committee.

BZ for a great luncheon.

Ron Evans - President VIC Section



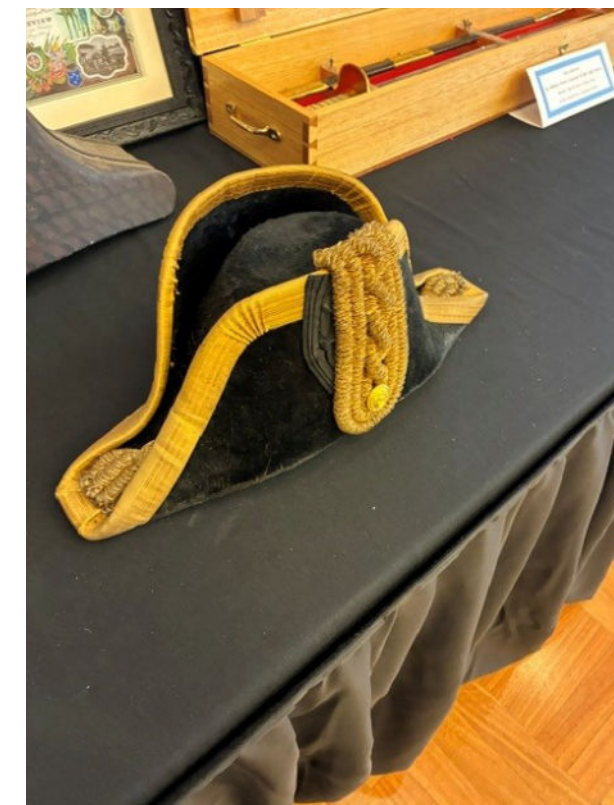
Left: Creswell Descendants - Right: Creswell Descendants & Partners



Creswell Luncheon Attendees



Organising Committee



Uniform Item (Cap)



Uniform Item (Sword)





2026 Service of Thanksgiving Naval Association of Australia (NSW Section)

The NAA NSW Section's annual Service of Thanksgiving will be held in the Garden Island Naval Chapel on Sunday 18 October 2026, commencing at 1000. The service will be followed by morning tea in the RAN Heritage Centre. All members of the Naval Association's NSW Sub-Sections, and their partners, are welcome to attend.

The memorial service will include a formal dedication of plaques by the Navy Chaplain conducting the service. The memorial plaques are those donated during the past year by families and friends of Navy veterans who have 'crossed the bar', and they are mounted within the Navy Chapel.

Service Details:

Event: Annual Service of Thanksgiving & Memorial.

Location: Garden Island Dockyard (the main gate is at the corner of Cowper Wharf Road and Macleay Street Woolloomooloo).

Ceremony: The service typically involves a scripture reading, prayers, hymns and the dedication of memorial plaques. It is supported by the Royal Australian Navy Band and a contingent of Australian Navy Cadets. The Governor of NSW, Commander Australian Fleet and other senior RAN officers have been invited to attend the 2026 service.

For further information, or to nominate to attend this event, please contact the Naval Association's NSW Secretary - call 0439 784 088, or email nswsecretary@navalassoc.org.au

Patricia (nee Anders) McLeod A Former WRAN on A Mission

by Ian Holthouse OAM (WA Section President)

Recently the White Ensign Magazine focused on the service of our Women's Royal Australian Navy (WRAN) people and the massive contribution they have made to our naval service and to the defence of the nation, over a very long time. As a result of that publication, many stories have surfaced about WRANS who made and continue to make a significant contribution to the ex-service community.

The Geraldton Guardian featured an article on ANZAC Eve written by journalist Sienna Seychell (1), where she reported to the Geraldton community via the local newspaper, about the work of Geraldton Sub-section Naval Association of Australia (NAA) President – Pat McLeod. The WA State Section were delighted with the article and subsequently the Section President, Mr. Ian Holthouse OAM, created his own article to submit and feature for publication in the 2026 Winter edition of the NAA White Ensign Magazine, praising the work of Pat.. Ian felt it was very important to recognize and acknowledge the work of volunteers within the NAA in WA.

Pat is a very proud ex-WRAN, who served in the RAN for 22 years. As our readers know, when Pat joined the Navy, the WRANS were a separate arm of the RAN, exclusively for women. Their work was principally ashore, but during her service she did spend some time at sea aboard HMAS STALWART. During that sea time, Pat was able to experience many new activities, particularly the memorable and exciting personnel movement between ships at sea by participating in a jack stay transfer. She fondly described it as being like flung between ships underway in a similar fashion to a flying fox. Before this posting at sea, most of her service was spent ashore at HMAS WATSON, in radar operation roles.

A significant event occurred during Pat's time in the Navy, when the WRANS were absorbed into the RAN and became formally officers and sailors of the RAN through Parliamentary decree. She embraced the change with both hands and felt it made the combined service more equitable for all, but particularly the WRANS.

Pat left the Permanent Navy in 1989 and volunteered for Naval Reserve service for the next 11 years. In

2000 she worked for the Navy as part of the support Team as part of the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. She worked in a Games Venue Control Centre and still regards it as a highlight of her naval career.

Recently, as President of the Geraldton NAA Sub-section, she played a key role in the annual ANZAC commemorations in Geraldton. She will also undertake an important role in November with her role in undertaking the organization and participation in the annual HMAS SYDNEY II commemorative service at the Geraldton HMAS SYDNEY II National Memorial. This service commemorates the loss of the brave sailors who perished in the naval engagement between HMAS SYDNEY II and the German Raider – HSK Kormoran in 1941 in the Indian Ocean off the West Australian Coast. It is a very well supported and attended service which engenders both a sense of respect but also sadness in the tragic loss of so many lives. Pat will never forget their sacrifice.



Reference

(1) The Geraldton Guardian – "ANZAC Reflections" Sienna Seychell, 23 April 2026.



HMAS SYDNEY II Memorial Upgrade

Carnarvon, West Australia

by Ian Holthouse OAM (WA Section President)

The HMAS Sydney 2 Memorial at Carnarvon WA had been reported to NAAWA Section as being in a need of significant repair, and after a long period of negotiation to move forward, the Council staff at the Shire of Carnarvon, have endorsed the WA Section Restoration Project. In 2025, we applied for a Saluting their Service Grant from DVA, and were duly provided with a grant. Thanks to DVA for their support, the grant was awarded with the finance to facilitate the replacing of 8 damaged plaques at the memorial. With significant support from the firm - Sheridan's Badges and Engraving - Perth, the task was undertaken. They offered a significantly discounted price to help the restoration and contribute to the ongoing appearance and reverential reflection of remembrance at the memorial. The memorial is a key element of the HMAS SYDNEY II tragedy and continues to play an important role in remembering all who were lost in that fateful engagement between HMAS SYDNEY II and HKS Kormoran.

The Dedication Ceremony will be held at 1700 on 12 November 2026 at the HMAS Sydney 2 Memorial, Seafront, Olivia Terrace Carnarvon WA 6701. This is the 85th Anniversary of the sinking of both HMAS Sydney 2 and HKS Kormoran. There will also be a commemorative Ceremony at the HKS Kormoran Memoria, Carnarvon.

This will be the start of the week for the HMAS Sydney 2 memorial trail from Carnarvon to Geraldton for the annual HMAS Sydney 2 Ceremony in Geraldton at 5pm 19 November. The Mayor of the Greater City of Geraldton Jerry Clune, will arranging events in Geraldton, as will be the Team of the Shire of Carnarvon, will undertake similar work for around their area. The Space museum in Carnarvon is a must for those

visiting the area. Karl Edwards, from the Gallipoli Trenches display, with weather permitting, hopefully will be arranging their simulated battle, on the 18 November.

The time between the two main events will allow people who wish to attend both to drive down to Geraldton to visit the various sights the area has to offer. These include Kalbarri National Park - with glass walkways over into the canyon, the Pink Lakes and more. Closer to Geraldton is the Town of Northampton, where so many AFL footballers have come from over the years.

City of Geraldton Sub Section Team, led by Gary Coyle, will proceed to Carnarvon to restore the Navy anchor, after the dedication, and will carry out the quarterly maintenance service on the memorial. A great effort and thank you this wonderful work. The memorial was created by the then NAA WA Caernarvon Sub Section, and dedicated in 1991. When the Sub Section closed in 2009, the maintenance was handed over to the local RSL. This work will be supplemented by the Geraldton Sub-section team.



85th ANNIVERSARY OF THE SINKING

OF HMAS SYDNEY 2

CARNARVON WA

5pm 12 NOVEMBER 2026

HON HANNAH BEAZLEY MLA

MINISTER for LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND GASCOYNE



NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (INC)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA SECTION

PO Box 29, WEMBLEY WA 6913

PATRON: Governor General of Australia.



3 July 2026

HON HANNAH BEAZLEY MLA

Minister for Local Government; Gascoyne.

Re: Dedication of the HMAS Sydney 2 memorial Carnarvon (12 November 2026)

Dear Minister Hannah Beazley,

The Memorial is having a major restoration, after falling into disrepair over the years, with major funding from DVA, and some funding from our Association.

This joint project with the Shire of Carnarvon and the Naval Association of Australia WA, will bring the Memorial back to being a significant part of the HMAS Sydney 2 story.

In conjunction with the HMAS Sydney 2 Memorial in Geraldton, we hope to establish a week of honouring this tragic part of our wartime history, by making it a week that can become an ongoing tourist attraction. This can only come about by all parties contributing to its success.

We are honoured by your acceptance to dedicate the memorial, and be a guest speaker. We are putting together the draft of the ceremony program, and as soon as we have all confirmations of the local parties involvement, a preliminary copy will be forwarded to you.

The Shire and the NAAWA look forward to welcoming you to the ceremony.

Also, can you please confirm how many persons who will be accompanying you, for seating arrangements.

Once again thank you for your acceptance, to ensuring the event a success for the Gascoyne region,

Yours sincerely,

Ian Holthouse OAM

State President

Naval Association of Australia WA



Presentation of Certificate of Merit to Graeme Browne by Acting Sub-Section President Gordon Fuller

Xmas in July Lunch at Henery Lawson club Werrington



Sub-Section Meeting



Front Row: Bob Baxter, Kevin (Mitch) Mitchel, Don Lennard, Bob Cooper OAM, Section V/C Eddie Wendt, John Clegg, Roger Kelly, Ken Atckin, Barry Brooks, Barry Kovac, Steve Penman. Back Row: Terry Stafford, Bob Howie

Sub-Section meeting on July 26 at WestTradies Club at Woodstock Ave, Dharruk. A very good meeting and good to have State Executives visiting Sub-Sections to see if they can help. We are looking for more outing with our members.

Bob Cooper OAM JP MSM



Rebirth of a Victorian NAA Sub-Section

Author: Dale Borthwick – President, North West Sub-Section

In 2017 the Footscray Sub-Section (Victoria Section) faced an existential crisis. It opened in 1946 in an upstairs room above the strip shops in Footscray. It was full of WW2 ex-Navy people who had returned to their homes in the Western suburbs of Melbourne. Many took employment at the Naval Dockyard at nearby Williamstown. They still shared common bonds of comradeship, mate-ship and a sense of remembrance.

The formation of a Naval Association of Australia (NAA) Sub-Section in their area seemed like a great idea. The group was subsequently formed and blossomed. In the early 1960's, funds were raised through public donations, street raffles and special efforts to build their own clubrooms in West Footscray. The rooms were built on Council land, with Footscray Council support, and the Council assumed responsibility for the building.

Unfortunately, in 2017, there was a significant decline in the structural integrity of the building, due to subsidence. The council declared the building unsafe, and it was condemned. The Sub-Section was moved to the local Lawn Bowls Club, with Council assistance, but the stay was not successful. Membership declined and by 2024, it was apparent that the Sub-Section needed a new home or it was in danger of closing.

Most of the members lived a significant distance West of Footscray and there was a suggestion that meetings could possibly be held at the Melton Clubrooms of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (VVAA) where most of the members lived. With the assistance of the Melton RSL, the VVAA were approached and very happily

agreed to allow the Footscray group to meet monthly on the second Sunday.

The move was made, most memorabilia from the previous clubrooms which had been stored privately was transferred to the Museum at HMAS CERBERUS with the assistance of WO Marty Grogan. The honour boards were installed at the VVAA club and a new and successful arrangement began with them.

At the first general meeting at the new clubrooms, the members voted to change the name and apply for a new NAA Charter to reflect where the Sub-Section now resided. The new title was – North West Metro Sub-Section – and it covered the North West of Melbourne reaching out into Central Victoria. At the time of transfer the number of members was 15. In a recent membership update, the Sub-Section now has 37 members and is growing.

2026 is the 80th anniversary of the Footscray/North West Metro Sub-Section and the occasion will be celebrated with a formal luncheon on September 20th at the Melton RSL club within the Melton Country Club. The guest speaker at the luncheon will be Commodore Greg Yorke AM CSC RAN Rtd.

To assist in covering the cost of the luncheon, the Sub-Section members undertook a fund-raising BBQ at Bunnings East Melton. It was the first time that the Sub-Section had conducted a Bunnings event, and it was a great success. Many members volunteered to help, and all had a fantastic time interacting with local community. Below are a few photos from the event.

Thanks to a number of businesses who supported our day.



Our new NAA banner



Jeff and Kooky Paull
(our expert chefs)



Some of the BBQ team



NORTH WEST METRO SUB-SECTION

80TH ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON

SUNDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 2026
FROM 1200 TO 1600 HOURS
MELTON COUNTRY CLUB, RESERVE RD, MELTON

COST: \$60 PER TICKET

LUNCH WILL CONSIST OF A 2 COURSE MEAL
(MAIN & DESSERT), TEA & COFFEE
DRINKS AT BAR PRICES
PLEASE ADVISE ANY DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

DRESS: LOUNGE SUIT FOR MEN, COCKTAIL DRESS FOR LADIES
AS THIS IS A DAY FUNCTION, FULL SIZE MEDALS SHOULD BE WORN

BANK DETAILS FOR FULL PAYMENT
NAME: NORTH WEST METRO NAVAL ASSOCIATION SUB-SECTION
BSB: 633-000 ACCOUNT NO: 219105863 REF: YOUR NAME

ENQUIRIES: RUSSELL.PETTIS@NAVALASSOC.ORG.AU



Orange Sub-Section welcomes a national treasure as a new member

Author: Bruce Kafer – Secretary, NSW Section

The Naval Association formally welcomed one of its newest (and also one of its oldest) members on 12 July 2026, when Gwenda Garde (nee Moulton), aged 104, was presented with her membership badge during a meeting of the Orange Sub-Section. NSW Secretary, Bruce Kafer, who was visiting the Sub-Section, had the honour of pinning the badge on Gwenda's coat lapel.

Gwenda is a member of Australia's 'greatest generation'. She was one of the earliest volunteers to join the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service and was recruited in 1941 at the age of 19; her service number was WR36. Gwenda served throughout the remainder of World War II, undertaking highly classified duties as a Telegraphist; and her major postings during the war were to HMAS Harman, near Canberra, and HMAS Magnetic in Townsville.

Gwenda's roles included intercepting and translating Japanese morse code signals, to locate enemy submarines operating around the Australian coastline and in the southwest Pacific Ocean. During her service Gwenda reached the rank of Petty Officer, and she was discharged from the WRANS in 1946. After the war she married John Garde, who had flown RAAF Kittyhawk fighter aircraft in New Guinea, and they had three children.

Gwenda didn't speak about her wartime role to anyone until Covid struck in 2020, when she sat down with her daughter Robin and told her the complete story. Australian National Maritime Museum historian, Dr Roland Leikauf, interviewed Gwenda in 2025 as part of a project to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II. A more extensive record of Gwenda's wartime exploits can be found by accessing the Maritime Museum's website and entering 'Top Secret Transmissions' – which is an article that describes the very important work undertaken by WRAN Telegraphists during the war.

Gwenda is one of Australia's national treasures – we are very fortunate to have her in our ranks as a member of the Naval Association.



Above: Gwenda Garde is presented with her Naval Association membership badge by NSW Section Secretary, Bruce Kafer

Below: Gwenda Moulton aged 19, front left, on pay day at HMAS Harman



Gwenda with Women's Emergency Signalling Corps badge



Petty Officer Gwenda Moulton outside cottages at HMAS Harman



Gwenda with daughter Robin



Photo of Gwenda at the ANMM exhibition

The complete interview with Glenda (Top Secret Transmissions) can be found at <https://www.sea.museum/en/australias-role-in-the-indo-pacific-region/gwendas-war>



Discovery Road

Author: Hendrik (Hank) Koopman



I'd like to submit a chapter from my book **DISCOVERY ROAD**. It pertains to an instance of life in the Navy for me. I think that even in today's modern navy, these stories from the 60s and 70s could resonate with personnel who are just joining up. As a 17-year-old recruit, little thought is given to your divisional officer at the time of enlistment, and half the time, you might think them irrelevant as the person responsible for your well-being.

It is years later, when maturity comes with age, that you might research these divisional officers and come to the understanding that, in fact, they were the heroes you worshipped in the war comics you devoured as an adolescent. When I began writing my memoir, I realised how shallow I had been when I first met two of my divisional officers, who were, in fact, heroes during WWII and the Korean War.

AIRCRAFT HANDLERS COURSE

"Nobby" Hall and Chief Blondell (real names)

Seamanship training was completed on the flagship HMAS Melbourne. Specialist category drafts were now being considered and, as hoped, assured of getting to the head of the scrum queue, the fire section was going to be my next billet.

Lieutenant Henry "Nobby" Hall rose through the ranks as a boy sailor and served in the Pacific during WWII. He witnessed Japan sign the surrender proclamation in Tokyo Bay. He was commissioned in 1953 and seemed to enjoy his new role as Fire Section Officer at HMAS Albatross.

Bow-legged, short and stocky with little sideburn tufts on his cheeks, he was once ordered by Vice Admiral Harrington, who sported the same tufts as Henry, to shave his adornments off. "On me they look distinguished; on you they look ridiculous". The tufts were still on his cheeks when I first encountered him.

At the time, I was so green and immature that I thought he was a bit of a joke. He stood only about 5'4" tall compared to my 6' frame. His tendency to bounce about in his own peculiar fashion, and bellowing out loudly how he and George Blondel, the Fire Chief, would make men out of us!

Years later, well after I had paid off, I found out he was one of the Navy's most decorated sailors in WWII. He might have been small in stature, but he was a true hero and a most compassionate man throughout his eventful life.

I'm going to digress from my story a little here and include a few lines to the memory of Henry "Nobby" Hall.

He was my divisional officer for only 10 months, but he became a firm friend and respected figure many years after my first interaction with him.

He had joined the Navy as an ordinary seaman 2nd class on December 13th, 1938. His posting

to the ill-fated HMAS Sydney II was interrupted when destiny stepped in. An inoculation had given him a fever, and collapsing on the parade ground, he woke up ten days later in hospital to hear HMAS Sydney had been lost with all hands.

Then, at the Battle of Savo Island, on HMAS Canberra, he was sunk in August 1942. He was picked up by the destroyer USS Barnett. Whilst on board, he assisted the Surgeon Commander in the sick bay with amputations and caring for the wounded. This selfless act earned him a Mention in Dispatches.

In 1948, he was promoted to a Petty Officer in the Meteorological branch of the fledgling Fleet Air Arm. Commissioned in 1957 as a Sub Lieutenant, and then as a Lieutenant in 1963. In 1970, he was promoted to Lieutenant Commander. He was made a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for services as the Beecroft Range Officer in 1979.

Retirement came in 1981, but service to his community continued. With his wife Ethel they displayed huge Christmas Nativity scenes on the front verandah of their home. People travelled for miles to visit Currarong and marvelled every year at what he and Ethel created for the kids.

In 2010, he was presented with the Order of Australia for services to veterans and their families. It was mentioned at his funeral, July 5th 2017, that his wit, knowledge, and memory of past events were inexplicably recalled. I can attest to this with another personal story of his amazing ability to remember events from the past.

In 1985, Donna and I were part of a fundraising charity event at Huskisson RSL. Among the audience were some ex-navy personnel, and we reminisced about old mates and what happened to them. "Nobby" Hall and Chief Blondel were mentioned. I remarked that they had made bets Donna and I wouldn't last a year.

"I've got his phone number," an ex-sailor remarked, "ring him". So I did. Ring ring, ring ring, ring ring.....

"Spindrift here," answered the recognisable "Henry" voice of the long forgotten past. (Spindrift was the house name.)

"Is that Lieutenant Commander Hall?" I asked cheerfully.

"Is that the stupid Dutch kid who married that gorgeous bird from W.A.?" came the unbelievable, jaw-dropping response. How did he know? Twenty years had gone by. Incredibly, Henry recognised my voice after all those years.

"It is sir," I acknowledged, dumbfounded.

"Are you still married to her?" he asked questioningly.

"I am sir. We sing together. We're into country music now."

"No way!" he responded in his loud, raspy voice. "Ethel and I just came back from Nashville. We're huge country music fans." Then he sighed, "Well, it looks like I lost the bet, I owe George a tenner. Why not come around to the house sometime? We should catch up?"



Nobby Me Donna Ethel
At our farm "Sailors Rest" Middleton TAS 2004



That's how it happened. Country music was the common denominator; after twenty years, we became firm friends. Numerous dinner parties and evenings were held discussing music and world affairs in a backyard spa, watching the stars.

Writing letters to Donna every day we became closer over time. Some-where along the way I proposed to her. Why Donna accepted is still a mystery? Why Sylvia and Stan agreed is a bigger mystery.

An application to a judge for permission to marry was required, as technically Donna was still underage. Yet approval was granted. Another hurdle was my parents, who reacted appropriately: "Have you gone mad?" The back-and-forth conversation by mail was quite testy at times. Realising that Stan and Sylvia approved of the marriage, what could they do? The date was set, June 19th 1965.

"Koopman!! Get in here now!" It was Lieutenant Hall barking at me from his office, enraged.

"What the f--k are you doing? What do you want to get married for at your age? You're being bloody stupid. There's got to be rocks in your head. You're just a dumb idiot kid!" He took a

breath; then, with a howl of rage, he called out for the chief

"George, get in here! Tell this stupid kid he's going to ruin his life!" I managed to mumble out in self-defence, "but I love her, sir."

"Love her? You don't know a bloody thing about love!"

"Maybe not yet sir but her parents have given their blessing. A judge has signed the legal consent forms and my parents also concur," I answered with a straight face.

He turned to George, "The whole frigging family's gone nuts!" "Is she up the duff?" was his next accusing question. "She's got to be up the duff," he yelled, directing his anger at Chief Blondell. "No sir. She's still a virgin," I was now offended by his remarks. Taking out a picture in my wallet, (photo below) I showed my two antagonists the girl I was hoping to marry.

I found out twenty years later that George had said to Nobby, "That lucky little bastard, what's he got that we haven't?" Apparently, Nobby fired back just as fast, "Call him lucky? It's not going to last more than a year or two," He rummaged around for his pen, grumbling a few more choice words as he signed my leave pass.



IN NAVAL SERVICE THEIR DUTY LAY
AT SEA AND ASHORE, IN PEACE AND WAR
WOUNDS SEEN AND UNSEEN, DEEDS KNOWN AND UNKNOWN
NOW AT REST WE PRAY, THE MEMORIES WITH US STAY.

LEST WE FORGET

Peter Cooke-Russell	ACT
Peter Cullinan	ACT
Joan Gregor	Ballina (NSW)
Vincent Martin	Orange (NSW)
George Hinton	Sydney / Country (NSW)
Raymond Morritt	Sydney / Country (NSW)
Robert Croft	Gerringong (NSW)
Robert "Ali" Khan	Bayside/Voyager (QLD)
Ross Plenty	Beenleigh & District (QLD)
Kenneth Rees	Fraser Coast/Voyager (QLD)
David Bice	Fraser Coast (QLD)
Agustus "Oggie" Fernandes	Sandgate (QLD)
Roy Sycamore	Bribie Island (QLD)
Brian Riley	Launceston South (TAS)
Barrie Curtis	Launceston South (TAS)
Robert Dutton	Frankston (VIC)
Garry Hermesen	Frankston (VIC)
Norman Dean	Canarvon (WA)

SHIPMATE, YOUR WATCH IS OVER

Navy Office located in St Kilda Road, Melbourne served as the center of Australian naval administration from 1911 until 1964.



ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY

Russell Offices complex in Canberra where Navy Headquarters is located.

