



National Bosun's Call



Vol 5 No 6

Once Navy, Always Navy

July 2023

King's Birthday Honours 2023

Member Order of Australia AM

Mr Russell William PETTIS, Melton, VIC

For significant service to veterans and their families.

Naval Association of Australia

- National President, 2011-2017.
- Editor, White Ensign Magazine, since 2016
- Former Secretary
- Life Member, 2014.

Victoria Section, Naval Association of Australia

- President, 2010-2011.
- Vice-President, 2008-2009, and 2017-2020.
- Council Delegate, 2000-2007.

Footscray Sub-section, Naval Association of Australia

- Secretary, since 2007.
- Welfare Officer, since 2007.
- Assistant Secretary, 1998.
- Member, since 1997.

Melton Sub-Branch, Returned and Services League of Australia

- Former President.
- Former Secretary.
- Former Committee Member.
- Foundation Member, 1985.



Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

- Former Board Member.
- Former Chair, Audit Committee.
- Former Member, Senior Secondary Curriculum and Assessment Committee.

Other

- Former Board Member, Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop Medical Research Foundation.
- Board Member, Operations Committee, Melton Country Club, current.

Awards and Recognition include:

- Various Service medals including the Reserve Forces Medal.



Medal Order of Australia OAM

Mr Raymond Thomas SANDFORD, Cleveland QLD

For service to veterans, and their families.

Naval Association of Australia Queensland Section Inc

- Immediate Past President, since 2022.
- President, 2017-

2022.

- Advocacy Officer, current.
- Instigated monthly commemorative services, South Brisbane Royal Australian Navy Memorial.
- Vice-President, Bayside Sub-section, 2015-2017.

Naval Association of Australia

- Queensland Delegate, since 2017.

- Queensland Delegate, Quarterly Forum, Department of Veterans Affairs, since 2017.

- Member, since 1999.

Ex-Service Welfare –Other

- Welfare Officer/Advocate, Redlands Sub-Branch, Returned and Services League of Australia, 2015-2017.

Rugby Union

- Former Player, Redland Golden Oldies and Navy Old Salts.
- Former Assistant Coach, Singapore National Team.

Endeavour Foundation

- Board Member, 1988.
- District President, two years.
- Former Chairman, Bundaberg Branch.

Australian Defence Force

- Member, Royal Australian Navy, 1969-1979.

Awards and Recognition include:

- A range of military medals including Australian Active Service Badge 1945-7



National Newsletter of the
Naval Association of Australia

National President's Notes

The WRANS memorial at HMAS *Harman* was dedicated on 1 July 2003 on the 60th anniversary of the commissioning of HMAS *Harman*. It is appropriate that it is located at *Harman* as the first women to enter the WRANS in 1941 joined the RAN Wireless/Transmitting Station Canberra that was subsequently commissioned on 1 July, 1943 as HMAS *Harman*.

On 11 February 2013 the Association changed its name to 'WRANS – Naval Women's Association (ACT)' to better reflect some members who have served or are still serving in the RAN.

The annual service is usually held in October around the anniversary of the formation of the WRANS – Naval Women's Association (ACT) but for this year only, was moved to July to be part of the celebrations for the 80th Anniversary of the commissioning of HMAS *Harman*.

May I share with you two recent encounters I have had with DVA, both of which had a POSITIVE outcome:

The First: Recently a fellow member of the NAA ACT Section had told me he had reached out to DVA to have a new medical condition added to his records. This was met with the receipt of a full pack of forms dealing with all the conditions presently on his record. The immediate impact 'was to suspect DVA were now reviewing all claims and the only rational explanation coming to mind was that DVA were now going to put all veterans through the process of having to justify their collective claims' when in fact, we learnt that wasn't the case at all. He was subsequently delighted to receive advice from the DVA Case Officer, that on noticing the accepted conditions had not been reviewed for a number of years, he had decided to offer the member the opportunity to review and update any or all of the claims where necessary'. We have taken this as a sign that there may be a new approach emerging within DVA in relation to the processing of claims.

The Second: I suspect I am one of only a very few Vietnam War Veterans who has experienced problems in applying on-line for the 50th Anniversary of the end of the war Commemorative Certificate and Medallion. On advising DVA of my inability to progress the on-line process to a successful outcome, I was afforded an opportunity to meet up with representatives of the team responsible for processing applications and authorizing the mail-out of these



Above: Assembled company at the Memorial Service. Merle Hare in maroon coat in foreground joined the WRANS in 1943. Doing well for her 103 years.

Photos: Judith Rowe



memorabilia items. This was to take place prior to my attendance at the last Committee Meeting prior to the Commemorative Service on 18th August 2023, here in Canberra. I was delighted to meet them and most appreciative of their time and effort in taking me through the on-line process in person and therein, the insight gained as to what takes place within DVA when processing these applications. The on-line program is one that DVA have sourced from an outside agency and whilst it was not clear what may have caused the problem I had encountered, what was so very evident was the eagerness within DVA to facilitate the processing of the applications and to take any phone call from a Veteran or Family Member experiencing problems with the on-line application process. If I may offer some advice in this matter, please do not hesitate to call them. I am delighted to have now received my Certificate and Medallion.

These outcomes and what they represent certainly accord with the cooperative working relationship we have with the Secretary and other members of the Department through the workings of the EX-Service Organisation Round-Table (ESORT).

Yours aye

David Manolas

National President

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National Patron His Excellency General The Honourable
David Hurley AC DSC Retd Governor General of Australia

New tax offset for some veterans affected by the Douglas decision

From: Godfrey, Kaitlyn
<Kaitlyn.Godfrey@dva.gov.au> On Behalf Of
ESORT.SECRETARIAT

Sent: Friday, 23 June 2023 4:14 PM

To: ESORT.SECRETARIAT
<ESORT.SECRETARIAT@dva.gov.au>;
YVF.Secretariat <YVF.Secretariat@dva.gov.au>;
NACCF.Secretariat <AMBNHACCF@dva.gov.au>;
OWP.SECRETARIAT
<OWP.SECRETARIAT@dva.gov.au>

Subject: Military Super - A New Tax Offset
[SEC=OFFICIAL]

New tax offset for some veterans affected by the Douglas decision

Veterans who are entitled to the new Veterans' superannuation (invalidity pension) tax offset (VSTO) will have their affected tax return/s amended by the ATO and be issued an amended notice of assessment.

The ATO advises that veterans do not need to do anything different. Include your military invalidity pension payment amounts in your tax return at question 8 'Australian superannuation lump sum payments', and they will do the rest.

The Veterans' superannuation (invalidity pension) tax offset (VSTO) remove the additional tax some veterans would pay because of the Douglas decision. The Douglas decision covers invalidity pensions paid to veterans under the MSBS (Military Super Benefit Scheme) or DFRDB (Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits) scheme that commenced on or after 20 September 2007.

The ATO is sending letters to veterans who are entitled to a VSTO amount greater than \$0 and have lodged their 2020-21 and/or 2021-22 income year tax returns. They are advising that they are amending their tax returns to apply the new tax offset.

When you lodge tax returns in the future, the ATO will treat your invalidity pension as a super lump sum. If you are entitled to a VSTO amount, the ATO will calculate it for you and apply it to your tax return.

The ATO says it is committed to amending prior year tax returns as quickly as possible. You can get the latest information about the Douglas decision and the VSTO on the ATO's website at

ato.gov.au/militarysuper<https://www.ato.gov.au/individuals/super/in-detail/withdrawing-and-using-your-super/military-invalidity-pensions---douglas-decision/?utm_campaign=milsup&utm_source=articles&utm_medium=email>.

Kind regards

ATO Statement 23 June 2023

PAYG withholding

Your fortnightly invalidity pension payments are subject to the pay as you go (PAYG) withholding system. The amount withheld depends on, among other things, whether your payments are either:

- super income stream benefits
- super lump sum payments.

If your invalidity pension payments are affected by the *Douglas* decision and are therefore super lump sum payments, you don't need to do anything. CSC has determined which rates apply to you and is withholding the updated amounts from your fortnightly payment. Your withholding amounts will take into account the tax-free threshold and Medicare levy exemption if you have claimed them.

The withholding rates are set out in the Tax table for super lump sums but with a modification that may reduce the amount if you have claimed the tax-free threshold from CSC.

If you're not affected by the *Douglas* decision, the Tax table for super income streams continues to apply.

Different PAYG withholding tax tables apply depending on your personal circumstances. Individuals with the same invalidity pension payment per fortnight may have different amounts of PAYG withheld and, therefore, different take home amounts.

Adjust your PAYG withholding

Depending on your personal financial circumstances, you may want to consider:

- whether you claim the tax-free threshold for your invalidity pension payments from CSC
- varying your PAYG withholding
- claiming an exemption from the Medicare levy.

Reversionary beneficiaries

You're affected by the *Douglas* decision if both of these apply:

- you're a reversionary beneficiary of a deceased veteran
- at the time they died, the deceased veteran was receiving an invalidity pension that:
 - ◇ was paid under the DFRDB scheme, or
 - ◇ MSBS started on or after 20 September 2007.

If you're affected by the Douglas decision

If you are a death benefit dependant under tax law, your reversionary pension is non-assessable and non-exempt income.

(Continued on page 4)

New tax offset for some veterans affected by the Douglas decision

(Continued from page 3)

This means:

- you don't need to pay tax on your reversionary pension
- you're entitled to a refund of amounts CSC withheld from these pension payments dating back to the 2007–08 income year.

Your 2021–22 tax return

We'll refund any amounts CSC has withheld from your reversionary pension payments during the 2021–22 income year, after you lodge your tax return. This will be in the original tax assessment, or we will issue an amended assessment.

The payment summary CSC sent you includes the amounts withheld from your reversionary pension. You should prepare your return as usual based on the payment summary. We'll also pre-fill your tax return based on the payment summary.

At the same time, we'll amend any other relevant returns within your period of review. For most taxpayers with simple affairs, the amendment period of review is 2 years from the day we issue you with an assessment.

Amending returns outside your period of review

You will need to lodge an objection to amend any tax returns outside your period of review that included your reversionary pension payments – back to the 2007–08 income year.

Before lodging an objection, you need to understand how it may affect you:

- If you have an existing debt with us or another Australian Government agency, any credits will be offset against that debt before any remaining amounts are refunded to you.
- An objection will result in changes to your assessable income on your notice of assessment, which may have financial impacts on other payments and obligations, including:
 - ◊ family tax benefits
 - ◊ child care subsidy
 - ◊ child support payments to or from an ex-spouse
 - ◊ paid parental leave payments
 - ◊ other government support payments that take into account your taxable income.

Seek professional financial advice if you're unsure how an objection to earlier assessments may impact you.

To lodge an objection, see [How to object to a decision](#) and get a copy of [Objection form – for taxpayers](#).

On the objection form clearly state the following:

I am a reversionary beneficiary of a veteran who was receiving an invalidity pension provided under the MSBS or DFRDB scheme affected by the Full Federal Court decision in Commissioner of Taxation v Douglas [2020] FCAFC 220.

We've worked closely with CSC and in most cases you will not need to provide any additional information. If we do need additional information, we'll contact you.

We're contacting some veterans

We are progressively writing to some veterans who are affected by the *Douglas* decision.

We are writing to veterans who are entitled to a veterans' superannuation (invalidity pension) tax offset (VSTO) amount greater than \$0. These letters outline what we are doing to apply the VSTO to your tax returns, including for prior year assessments and future tax returns.

In February, we commenced inviting some veterans to participate in the [simplified review process](#). Personalised letters advise how to apply for a review of your tax assessments that include invalidity benefits for the 2010–11 to 2019–20 income years.

We're committed to finalising reviews as quickly as possible – see [Process and timeframes](#).

Veterans' superannuation (invalidity pension) tax offset

The veterans' superannuation (invalidity pension) tax offset (VSTO) is a non-refundable tax offset that ensures veterans and their beneficiaries do not pay more tax because of the *Douglas* decision. It applies from the 2007–08 income year.

All veterans affected by the *Douglas* decision are eligible for the VSTO. However only a small number of veterans will be entitled to a VSTO amount because the *Douglas* decision has resulted in them paying more tax.

You don't need to apply for the VSTO. We will work out if you are entitled to a VSTO amount after you lodge your tax return. Your notice of assessment will include any VSTO amount you are entitled to and how it was applied.

We are writing to veterans who are entitled to an amount of the VSTO. See [We're contacting some veterans](#).

VSTO for prior year tax returns

If you want to be assessed for a VSTO entitlement for any tax returns you lodged for the 2010–11 to 2019–20 income years, you need to participate in the [simplified review process](#). As part of this process, we will work out if you're entitled to a VSTO.

If you have already participated in the simplified review process, we will work out if you are entitled to a VSTO for any years we have already reviewed.

London service honours historic links



Rear Admiral Guy Griffiths AO DSO DSC RAN Rtd, right, presents the Royal Navy ensign to Commanding Officer HMS Prince of Wales Captain Richard Hewitt OBE RN.

9 June 2023

In a remarkable service in London, an Australian WW2 veteran presented a Royal Navy ensign to the captain of Britain's most powerful warship, aircraft carrier HMS *Prince of Wales*.

Overseeing the presentation, Australian Submarine Task Force's UK Liaison Officer Commodore Allison Norris said the link between Australia and the *Prince of Wales* was a personal one.

"The relationship goes back to World War 2, when retired Australian Rear Admiral Guy Griffiths was starting his career," she said.

Rear Admiral Griffiths' formidable career began as a Cadet Midshipman in 1937.

"I've seen a few scraps in my time," he said.

On promotion to Midshipman he joined the Royal Navy's battle cruiser HMS *Repulse* in March 1941. Shortly afterwards in May, both *Repulse* and the battleship HMS *Prince of Wales* were involved in the sinking of the German battleship *Bismarck*.

On 25 October 1941 *Prince of Wales* left home waters bound for Singapore, there to rendezvous with *Repulse* and the aircraft carrier HMS *Indomitable*.

In response to the Japanese attacks on Malaya and Pearl Harbor on 8 December both ships sailed from

Singapore to intercept Japanese troop convoys off the coast of Kota Baru as part of Force Z. Two days later, on 10 December 1941, *Repulse* and *Prince of Wales* were sunk by Japanese torpedo bombers in a harrowing encounter that cost many lives.

Rear Admiral Griffiths saw further action in World War 2 in HM Ships *Revenge* and *Vivian*, and HMAS *Shropshire*. He served in HMAS *Anzac* in the Korean war and in command of HMAS *Hobart* during the Vi-



From left to right: Captain Adrian Capner, Captain Richard Hewitt, Rear Admiral (Rtd) Guy Griffiths & Commodore Allison Norris.

etnam war. He commissioned HMAS *Parramatta* in 1964 as its Commanding Officer and commanded the aircraft carrier HMAS *Melbourne* from 1973 to 1975. He retired in 1979 after 43 years of service.

Ray Hyde became fascinated by the fates of *Repulse* and *Prince of Wales* and decided to make a documentary, culminating in planting a Royal Navy ensign on both ships in a dive on their wrecks.

The ensigns were blessed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the dive was approved after much wrangling because of sensitivities about the site. Unfortunately, poor weather allowed an ensign to be planted only on *Repulse*.

And so, on 1 June, Commodore Norris hosted Rear Admiral Griffiths in presenting the blessed ensign to the Commanding Officer HMS *Prince of Wales*, Captain Richard Hewitt.

"The ensign will take pride of place and serve as a constant reminder of the service that Australians made to the Royal Navy in WW2 and provide a lasting memory of our common bonds," Captain Hewitt said.

Edited copy of article by Lieutenant Charlie Marshall

HMS *Prince of Wales*



DVA - Annual increases to travel allowances

5 June 2023

Please be aware that travel allowances for transport, meals and accommodation under DVA's Travel for Treatment Program will increase on 1 July 2023 in line with the consumer price index.

How is the increase applied?

The increase applies to travel by private vehicle as well as accommodation and meal allowances for all eligible veterans, war widows and widowers (entitled persons) travelling for treatment purposes or disability and income support claims.

The increase also applies to the Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests and British Commonwealth Occupation Force (Treatment) Act 2006 and the Treatment Benefits (Special Access) Act 2019.

What is the Transport for Treatment Program?

The intention of the Program is to assist with travelling expenses to the closest practical provider for an entitled person and their medically required attendant, not necessarily to reimburse the entire cost incurred. For further information on closest practical provider requirements and attendant travel, please visit the [DVA Website](#).

The Travel for Treatment Program is available to holders of:

- Veteran Gold Cards and Veteran White Cards (for specific conditions) eligible under the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA) are entitled to assistance towards travelling expenses when travelling to receive treatment for an accepted service-related condition or for treatment of a specific condition covered under Non-liability Health Care (NLHC).
- Veteran Gold Cards under the Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests and British Commonwealth Occupation Force (Treatment) Act 2006 and the Treatment Benefits (Special Access) Act 2019 are entitled to assistance towards travelling expenses when attending approved treatment.

Where can I find more information?

For any queries about travel for treatment allowances, contact DVA on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372). Further information is also available on [DVA's website](#).

New travel allowances are tabulated on Page 5

Navy rescues injured mariner

16 June 2023

HMAS *Sydney* personnel have conducted a medical evacuation of a civilian mariner from an oil tanker, hundreds of nautical miles off the West Australian coast.

The initial request for Navy Maritime Operations assistance came from the Rescue Coordination Centre Australia within the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

With advanced on-board medical capabilities, speed and range, *Sydney* was promptly re-tasked from training exercises at sea and directed by Maritime Operations to render assistance.

Sydney proceeded at speed, travelling about 850nm (1600km) deep into the Southern Indian Ocean to assist the mariner, who had sustained a serious injury while working to rectify a mechanical defect on board the oil tanker MV *Energy River*.

The tanker was unable to transport him to a medical facility within an adequate time.

It took almost two days for *Sydney* to reach this remote area of the globe, at which point, a specialist team was inserted onto the vessel to assess, treat and transfer the patient.

"The medical evacuation team showed great professionalism in safely transporting the injured mariner from the oil tanker back to the ship

Although favourable conditions prevailed, evacuating an immobile patient in a stretcher off a merchant ship in the open ocean came with its challenges, and highlighted the skill and professionalism of *Sydney's* medical and seamanship teams.

Medical officer Lieutenant Jarrad Blackburn led the medical evacuation team, which provided much needed medical assistance to the injured mariner.

"The challenge of conducting medical treatment in the maritime environment, in an unknown vessel, before transferring to our ship, is what I joined the Navy to do," Lieutenant Blackburn said.

Leading Seaman Jarryd Parsons took on the important role of rigid-hulled inflatable boat coxswain, ensuring the safe transportation of the medical evacuation team and the injured mariner.

"It was a rewarding experience to be able to render assistance to a fellow mariner," he said.

"You never know what challenges you might face in the Navy, but it certainly provides opportunity for a story worth telling.

"From the ship's company of *Sydney*, we wish the mariner all the best in his recovery and hope he can return to sea again soon.

By Lieutenant Max Logan RAN

What are the new travel allowances?

New travel allowances from 1 July 2023

Type of allowance	Measure	New allowance from 1 July 2023	Travel with a medically required attendant †
Private vehicle	Per kilometre	41.8 cents	x1
Public, community or air transport	Actual fare	Actual fare	x2
Taxi transport	Actual fare	Actual fare	x1
Commercial accommodation non-capital city – single*	Per night	\$172.70	x2
Commercial accommodation capital city – single*	Per night	\$205.20	x2
Entitled person and medically required attendant – commercial accommodation – shared*	Per night	\$280.90	x1
Subsidised accommodation – single*	Per night	\$107.90	x2
Private accommodation*	Per night	\$53.80	x2
Meal allowance – more than 50 km but less than 200 km from entitled person's home to the treatment location	Per day	\$17.20	x2
Meal allowance – more than 200 km from entitled person's home to the treatment location	Per day	\$34.90	x2

* A meal allowance is not paid on a day where an accommodation allowance is paid, as a meal component is already built into the accommodation allowance.

† This column refers to the number of times an allowance is paid when an entitled person travels with a medically required attendant. For instance, if an entitled person shares a room with an attendant, only the allowance for one room is paid for (x1). If they each have a single room, the allowance for both rooms is paid for (x2).

81st Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea Commemoration Service



Right:

Vicki and Frank Munday, family of the Battle of the Coral Sea, veteran Mr Derek Holyoake (HMAS Hobart I), lay a wreath at the Battle of the Coral Sea commemoration service at the Australian-American memorial at Russell offices in Canberra on the 5th of May 2023. This was the 81st anniversary of the battle which took place from the 4th to 8th May 1942. Derek crossed the bar in February 2023

Photos: Kym Smith



Left:

Captain Kevin "Q" Quarderer, USN, U.S. Naval Attache, U.S. Embassy Canberra speaking at the Battle of the Coral Sea commemoration service.

81st Anniversary of the Defence of Sydney

Friday 2 June 2023 at 10.00am marks the 81st Anniversary of the Defence of Sydney Commemorative Service held by the Australia Remembers - Northern Beaches and North Shore Committee.

The Service honours those who served in the Defence of Sydney during World War II and is held at the Defence of Sydney Monument, North Head, Manly on the anniversary of the attack on Sydney Harbour by the Imperial Japanese Navy in May/June 1942



Above:

Deputy Fleet Commander, Commodore Raymond Leggatt, AM, CSC, RAN, makes an address at the 81st Anniversary of the Defence of Sydney Commemorative Service on the Memorial Lawn in North Fort, Manly.

Photos: LSIS Susan Mossop

Above;

Mr Toduka Shuichi, Consul-General for Japan pays his respects at the 81st Anniversary of the Defence of Sydney Commemorative Service

Right;

Looking across the Heads, the Australian National Flag is flown at half-mast during the 81st Anniversary of the Defence of Sydney Commemorative Service at the Memorial Lawn in North Fort, Manly.



Cairns Catalina memorial

The Catalina Memorial on the Esplanade was erected in 1976 to commemorate the 320 airmen from RAAF Squadrons 11, 20, 42 and 43 who failed to return while flying Catalinas in the South West Pacific campaigns during World War

Cairns was considered Australia's most important Catalina base during World War II, with around 30 "flying boats" called Catalinas and Martin Mariner aircraft based in the city, carrying out 3000 missions during their time here.

During the early critical months of the Pacific War, Catalina Flying Boats of 11 and 20 Squadrons played a significant part in slowing the initial Japanese advance. Operating from northern island bases as emergency bombers and reconnaissance aircraft, although deficient in speed, arms, and armour, they exerted an influence out of all proportion to their limited numbers. As these inexorably dwindled, and their bases were overrun or became untenable, the survivors withdrew to mainland Australia and - briefly licking their wounds - renewed the fight from the waters which this memorial overlooks.

Armed with bombs, depth-charges and mines, they reached out from here, in single flights, to the Solomons, New Britain, New Guinea, and the Netherlands East Indies ; and by stages, and in increasing strength, to the Palaus, the Philippines, Formosa and China.

The expert mine-laying capacity of Catalinas was highlighted by the role of the "Black Cats" — Catalinas painted matt-black, that undertook night-time precision mine-laying. Their crews were able to fly as low as a few metres above the water, laying mines within a ten metre radius of their target. Their missions played a major role in crippling the Japanese Navy.

In January 1942 the two Squadrons attacked Truk, the great Japanese naval base in the Carolines ; by June the enemy flood had reached the Solomons and the Catalinas were bombing Tulagi, the centre of the group. Three years later in May 1945, with the reinforcement of 42 and 43 Squadrons, they were mining the South China Coast and in July, as the test atom bomb exploded in New Mexico they were at full strength, mining the Banka Straits off Sumatra.

Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Robert Chipman was the guest of honour at a commemorative ceremony at the Catalina Memorial in Cairns on 11 June 2023 for the nine crewmembers of 43 Squadron Catalina A24-64 that went missing in 1944 which was reported missing on December 14, 1944, following a mis-



The Catalina Memorial was unveiled by His Excellency the Governor of Queensland, Air Marshall Sir Colin Hannah KCMG, KBE, CB, on 9 October 1976

Photo; Diane Watson

sion to mine Manila Harbour in the Philippines. Subsequent searches of the area failed to find any evidence of the aircraft or determine the fate of the crew.

In 2015, the wreckage of an aircraft was reported in mountainous terrain on the northwest of Mindoro Island to the south of Manila.

In 2019, the Directorate of Historical Unrecovered War Casualties – Air Force, conducted a reconnaissance mission to the site in a joint ADF and Government of the Philippines operation. Additional wreckage was recovered; however, no human remains were identified at the site.

NAA member Merle Hare, twin sister of Sergeant Donald Storrie, an Air Gunner, served in No 20 Squadron RAAF flying Catalinas. Operating from Leyte Gulf in the Philippines, he was lost when laying mines off the coast of Formosa on the night of 7/8 March 1945. It is believed that the aircraft was most probably lost due to bad weather.

Preparing Australian submariners for an AUKUS future

In America's deep south, a group of students has just completed one of the most rigorous academic programs in the US military.

And for the first time, there were Australians among them.

Three members of the Royal Australian Navy have graduated from the Nuclear Power School in South Carolina, more commonly known as 'nuke school'.

The training pipeline was established with the US as part of the AUKUS agreement, under which Australia will obtain its own nuclear-powered submarines.

"It's a historic event for our Navy, an historic event for our submarine force and I think it's an historic event for our nation," said Australia's Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond.

"Two years ago, this wasn't on the radar.

"And we've come a long way in such a short period of time but there's a lot more work to do."

Years out from Australia's acquisition of nuclear-powered subs, the graduation is an early step towards making AUKUS a reality.

But there are still major hurdles ahead when it comes to the broader workforce challenges presented by the plan.

Three Australians — Lieutenant Commander James Heydon, Lieutenant Commander Adam Klyne, and Lieutenant William Hall — started at the Nuclear Power School in November with the aim of eventually qualifying to operate the reactors onboard nuclear-powered submarines.

Lieutenant Commander Heydon described the course he's just graduated from as a "four-year engineering degree crammed into six months".

"Maths, physics, thermodynamics, fluid dynamics, radiological controls, to how do we safely steward

and manage the nuclear plant and the nuclear by-products, are I guess aspects of what we've been learning here," he said.

"My experience [in the Australian Navy] was ship design and ship construction.

"While they were aspects here, it was very foreign. So it was a crash course into the deep end, sink or swim, and we all swam."

The Australians will now have to complete another set of practical learning, which will include spending time on retired nuclear-powered subs known as moored training ships.

After that, they'll receive further training in Connecticut before being assigned to a Virginia-class sub.

"The plan at this stage is to join submarines based in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and they'll complete their training at sea," Vice Admiral Hammond said.

"Ultimately, we need them to pay their skills forward.

"So once they're qualified, sufficiently experienced, then we'll get them back into the ecosystem in a different role."

AUKUS presents major workforce challenges for Australia

The AUKUS plan, announced in San Diego earlier this year, will see Australia acquire a total of eight nuclear-powered submarines at a cost of up to \$368 billion.

US submarines are increasing their visits to Australian ports from this year, and from 2027 HMAS Stirling naval base in Western Australia will host rotations of American and British subs under what's known as 'Submarine Rotational Force-West'.

Australia is expected to buy at least three Virginia-class submarines from the US from the early 2030s, before building its own nuclear-powered boats in Adelaide to be known as SSN-AUKUS.

They will be based on a British design using US technology, with the first scheduled to be delivered in the early 2040s.

(Continued on page 12)

Lieutenant Commander Heydon, Lieutenant Commander Klyne and Lieutenant Hall will now move onto practical training.

(ABC News: Bradley McLennan)



Preparing Australian submariners for an AUKUS future



The US Navy has increased its visits to Australian ports since the AUKUS negotiations began.

(Supplied: US Pacific Fleet)

"It's going to require a massive amount of infrastructure, incredible workforce demand, both in terms of technical skills and numbers.

"It just seems like that's going to be a pretty heavy lift on the part of Australia to do nuclear ship construction."

The federal government says AUKUS will create 20,000 jobs over 30 years across the Australian Defence Force, the public service and industry, including roles such as tradespeople, engineers and project managers.

The number of Australian submariners will also need to be increased, with nuclear-powered submarines carrying larger crews and requiring personnel trained to operate the reactor onboard.

(Continued from page 11)

What is AUKUS and when are we getting nuclear submarines?

In total, Australia will end up with eight of the new nuclear submarines, called SSN-AUKUS.

Those submarines will be based on a British design but have American technology or an American combat system.

While we wait for them to be built, though, Australia's federal government has struck a deal to take three Virginia-class submarines from the US early next decade.

They may be second-hand and it will need the approval of the US Congress to happen.

Five of the eight SSN-AUKUS nuclear-powered subs will be delivered by the middle of the 2050s, with the final three delivered in the 2060s.

The goal is to have one submarine built every two years from the early 2040s through to the late 2050s, to meet demand.

As for the Virginia-class submarines from the US to fill the gap in the meantime, the idea is to have them in the 2030s.

Retired submariner and senior fellow at Washington-based think tank the Hudson Institute, Bryan Clark, describe it as a "crawl, walk, run" approach.

"The biggest challenge is going to be transitioning from having some Australian-owned, US-built submarines ... to having an Australian-built or at least a purpose-built Australian nuclear submarine," he said.

"The submariners that come out of Australia are very smart, very capable, fully able to take on that challenge of becoming nuclear plant operators," said Mr Clark, who is also a former executive officer of one of the moored training ships in Charleston.

"The difficulty might be in getting the numbers that you need to be able to man a nuclear submarine."

Virginia-class submarines carry around 132 people, nearly three times the size of the crew onboard the Collins-class boats Australia has now.

And unlike the Collins, nuclear-powered subs do not need to surface regularly to recharge, meaning they can stay submerged for months at a time.

Australia will continue to operate its Collins-class submarines for the foreseeable future.

Vice Admiral Hammond acknowledged the scale of the task confronting the Navy.

"We were already focused on recruiting, increasing the size of the submarine force and then initially bleeding across in smaller numbers into the nuclear power program and then scaling up as we go," he said.

"So it's a complex challenge, especially given the workforce environment back in Australia.

"Every company, every organisation wants talent. So we'll be focused very, very clearly on recruiting and retaining."

(Continued on page 13)

Preparing Australian submariners for an AUKUS future

(Continued from page 12)

Could Australia set up its own nuke school?

More Australians are expected to follow in the footsteps of the first three graduates in Charleston, while Navy personnel are also training in the UK.

But Vice Admiral Hammond said Australia could eventually host its own training program.

"I think if we're serious about developing a sovereign nuclear submarine capability, then in time, definitely, all parts of the ecosystem built and operated by Australians in Australia, that should be the aim point," he said.

"But we don't need it all at once."

Asked where it could be located, he said the "sensible approach" would be either Adelaide or Perth.

The new subs will be built in South Australia, while Western Australia's HMAS Stirling is undergoing an \$8 billion expansion.

"They will be the two centres of excellence, if you like, for naval nuclear propulsion in Australia," Vice Admiral Hammond said.

"If you cast our minds forward, probably another 10, 15, 20 years, then the majority of the nuclear-trained submariners will be in the home port of the submarine force.

"There'll be a large number in Adelaide, but most of the boats won't be in Adelaide. So through that lens, probably WA.

"But that's a decision for governments and probably a decision for next decade, I'd imagine."

Challenges lie ahead to bring AUKUS to fruition

Aside from skills and workforce issues, there are other major challenges that still need to be overcome to bring AUKUS to fruition.

The sale of Virginia-class submarines to Australia requires the approval of the US Congress, and significant changes are needed to a complex set of export controls restricting how sensitive technology is transferred.

Questions also remain over how the US will deliver the promised Virginia-class submarines, given the pressure its own shipyards are under to meet local demand.

The US Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Michael Gilday, last month said it was "too early" to provide an answer on exactly where the subs would come from.

"I wouldn't expect them to start identifying submarines by name or by hull number just yet; we've got time to work through that," Vice Admiral Hammond said.

"But at the moment, there is a deep tripartite commitment to doing this."

Edited from a press report by North America bureau chief Jade Macmillan and Bradley McLennan in Charleston



The AUKUS deal will see the three nations work together on a new class of submarine to be delivered in the 2050s.

(AAP: Richard Wainwright)

HMA Ships *Benalla* and *Shepparton* decommission in Cairns QLD

23 June 2023

The ships, based at HMAS Cairns, were operated as pairs and collected data to help chart Australia's northern coastline for more than 33 years.

Commanding Officer *Benalla* Lieutenant Commander Michael Casey said the survey ships had sailed the same distance it would take to go to the moon and back four times.

"Old stuff is built to last. I treated *Benalla* with the respect I would with an old car," Lieutenant Commander Casey said.

"Surveying is exploring what we can't see underneath, we would find things never seen before, such as wrecks, shoals and sub-surface obstructions.

"It's sad to see them go; these ships have been home to hundreds of sailors. They operated using highly sophisticated sonars to map the sea around Australia and the South Pacific Ocean."

The ships operated with a maximum of 22 personnel and minimum of 14, who will now go into more deployable survey teams, which operate the autonomous and robotic systems.

Shepparton was the "Lady of the Fleet", being the oldest commissioned ship in service. HMAS *Anzac* will now take on the honour.

Commanding Officer *Shepparton* Lieutenant Commander Benjamin Stevenson said turning up to work each day with a motivated and exceptional team made it worthwhile.



Commander Australian Fleet Rear Admiral Chris Smith AM, CSM, RAN, accepts the Australian White Ensigns of HMA Ships *Benalla* and *Shepparton* from their Commanding Officers during their decommissioning ceremony held at HMAS Cairns in Queensland..

Photos LSIS Shane Cameron

Remotely controlled unmanned vessels with autopilot capabilities will replace the two ships. They make way for robots, autonomous systems and artificial intelligence that will form Navy's new optimised hydrographic survey capability.

It is expected that the next Navy military survey vessel will be built in Henderson, Western Australia, later in the decade.

The transition to the HydroScheme Industry Partnership Program (HIPP) began nearly two years ago, part of a \$150 million investment.

The Defence Strategic Review accelerated the decommissioning.

By Corporal Luke Bellman

Editors note

See Page 16 for details of the HydroScheme Industry Partnership Program (HIPP)



Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Michael Casey RAN, salutes as *Benalla*'s Australian White Ensign is lowered for the last time

Patrol boats welcomed to their homeport Darwin

27 June 2023

Australian Defence Vessel (ADV) *Cape Naturaliste* and ADV *Cape Capricorn* have officially been welcomed to their homeport Darwin with a ceremony conducted at Larrakeyah Defence Force Base.

On June 20 the crews of *Naturaliste* and *Capricorn* were led by their respective Commanding Officers – Lieutenant Commander Jeremy Evain and Lieutenant Commander Alec Fieldsend – in parade reviewed by Captain Simon Cannell, Commander Mine Warfare, Clearance Diving, Hydrographic, Meteorological, Oceanographic and Patrol Force.

Naturaliste's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Jeremy Evain, said each of the crew could reflect on the past 11 months and acknowledge the challenges they had overcome to

provide the first operational evolved Cape-class patrol boat to be based out of Darwin. This supported their motto of 'First to Discover'.

Capricorn's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Alec Fieldsend, said the task of bringing a new vessel into operational service "has required dedication, perseverance and an unwavering commitment to excellence".

Naturaliste and *Capricorn* are the third and fourth Evolved Cape-Class patrol boats to be accepted into service. The ships serve as part of the transition between Armidale-class patrol boats and off-shore patrol vessels.

They will continue to support constabulary missions, maritime patrol and response duties alongside Australian Border Force vessels, other ADF units and other regional partners.



Following acceptance into the fleet in February 2023, *Cape Capricorn* undertook unit and mission readiness workshops in the northern Australia exercise area in early May before commencing its first Resolute patrol on May 22.

Thirty-one days into its first patrol of the Kimberly Marine Park and Ashmore Island in Operation Resolute, *Cape Capricorn* landed its first catch, a Type Three Foreign Fishing Vessel (FFV).

Approaching sunset, an Australian Border Force aircraft located the FFV on the southern reef of Ashmore Island. Unable to get to the vessel due to the breaking surf on the outer reef, *Cape Capricorn* waited patiently at the edge of the visual horizon for the midnight high tide, when the vessel was likely to make its move. *Capricorn* was supported by Border Force Cutter *Cape Wessel* blocked which blocked the FFV's escape through the inner lagoon,

On board *Cape Capricorn*, all awaited the boarding with eagerness, the task representing the culmination of months of hard work.

Among the crew of 22 officers and sailors, eight had only recently completed category training and were embarking on their first sea posting.

When, in the dead of night, the FFV made a run to the north-east into open waters. *Cape Capricorn* closely followed with all lights extinguished. In the pre-dawn hours, the boarding party made their final preparations and launched her RIB. Atop a rolling swell at the crack of morning twilight, the boarding party reached and secured the vessel, quickly confirming the suspicions of an illegal catch.

Executive Officer *Cape Capricorn* Lieutenant Michael Loudon said the young crew did a great job.

"It was an excellent job well done by all. I could not be prouder of the whole ship's company in getting this done," Lieutenant Loudon said.

Edited reports from Defence

Photo: Defence

We want to hear from Coordinated Veterans' Care Program participants

DVA is keen to hear from our Coordinated Veterans' Care (CVC) Program participants about their experiences with the Program.

Every two years a survey is sent to all CVC Program participants asking for feedback. The next CVC Program survey is planned to commence in late July, with letters having been sent recently to CVC participants via Australia Post advising of the survey. Keep an eye on the post for your letter, if you haven't already received it.

The feedback received from the survey allows us to continue to provide high quality programs and services to the veteran community. Your experiences and feedback as a participant are important, as these help us to shape future program improvements and efficiencies.

This year, Roy Morgan Research Ltd (a private market research company, not part of DVA) will be conducting the survey on our behalf.

Roy Morgan will send participants further correspondence in the coming weeks, inviting you to complete the survey either online or on paper.

Any information you share with Roy Morgan will be anonymous and de-identified, (no one will know how you've responded). You can be assured no information is shared with your GP or health pro-

fessionals involved in your care, nor are individual responses shared with DVA. DVA will receive a report put together by Roy Morgan that summarises all responses and feedback in a form that will not identify individuals who responded in any way.

Taking part in the survey is voluntary. DVA does not find out who has, or has not participated. The survey will be conducted with the highest levels of privacy and security, however, we understand not everyone will want to provide feedback. If this is you, you can choose to not respond to Roy Morgan's invitation to complete the survey. You can alternatively choose to opt-out of the survey, before 14th July 2023 and an invitation letter won't be sent to you. To opt-out you can:

email, cvcprogram@dva.gov.au

- or call, 1800 838 372 and say 'opt out of survey' when we ask why you are calling, and leave your details after the prompt.

Did you know, your general practitioner and/or allied health supports may receive payment from DVA for coordinating your treatment and health services through the CVC program? For more information about the program, visit <https://www.dva.gov.au/get-support/health-support/health-services/coord...>

HydroScheme Industry Partnership Program

The HydroScheme Industry Partnership Program is the commercial acquisition program that undertakes focused hydrographic survey activities to contribute to national charting priorities. The vision for HIPP is to undertake an efficient, effective and sustainable hydrographic survey, oceanographic and marine geophysical data collection program through a partnership with Industry to deliver a true nation-building effort.

Strategic Objectives:

- To obtain full, high quality bathymetric coverage of Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone by 2050
- To link the Australian Chart Datum to the National ellipsoid through the development of the AusHydroid by 2030
- To integrate all HIPP activities into the National Plan for Multibeam Data Acquisition
- Provide environmental data that contributes to national efforts in establishing a baseline dataset of Australia's marine estate through data acquisition for safety of navigation
- To support hydrographic, meteorological and oceanographic survey in remote locations
- To support the development of an academic program to deliver an organic tertiary hydrographic qualification
- To support capacity building programs in the region
- To adhere to the Australian Government's Data Availability and Use Policy.

Source: www.hydro.gov.au/NHP/hipp.htm



Have your say: National Care and Support Economy Strategy 2023

8 June 2023

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet wants to hear from the veteran community about the draft National Care and Support Economy Strategy which aims to drive quality improvements across the care and support sectors, including veteran support.

The draft strategy identifies policy goals to deliver quality care and support, create safe and secure jobs that have decent wages and work conditions, as well as ensuring opportunities for career development, and develop solutions to ensure productivity and sustainability across the care and support system.

The care and support sectors are one of the fastest growing parts of the Australian economy.

This strategy is the start of a national conversation about Australians' vision for our care and support system.

Have your say on the draft strategy and help shape the future of Australia's care and support sector economy: <https://www.pmc.gov.au/domestic-policy/national-strategy-care-and-support-economy/have-your-say>

Consultation on the draft strategy is open until 11.59pm Monday
26 June 2023.

Downloaded from DVA website

Summary

The care and support economy—the provision of paid care and support—is one of the fastest growing parts of the Australian economy. There is enormous projected demand for care and support services across aged care, disability support, veterans' care and early childhood education and care (ECEC) sectors.

Australian Government spending in these sectors

is projected to rise from around \$60bn in 2021-22 to more than \$110bn by 2026-27.¹ But there's a challenge. Each of these sectors faces workforce shortages and other challenges that jeopardise access to these essential services.

Funding high-quality care and support provision is an investment in social infrastructure. It provides long-term benefits that go well beyond direct users of these paid services. Care and support services enable people with care and support needs (and their families and carers) to participate in the workforce and society.

The care and support economy has a two-fold impact on women's economic equality – women make up the majority of workers in these sectors, and are more likely to provide unpaid care when formal services are not available.

In recent years, reform of the care and support system has largely been reactive, driven by crisis and Royal Commissions. A more proactive approach will provide a better quality of life for Australians. It will also provide broad social benefits and drive economic prosperity by ensuring the sector provides high quality care, delivered by workers with decent jobs, and by unlocking productivity growth.

This **Strategy** is the start of a conversation about Australians' vision for our care and support system. It complements the substantial work already being undertaken in each of the aged care, disability support, veterans' care and ECEC sectors, by developing whole-of-system solutions.²

Harnessing opportunities in the care and support economy will require a long-term program of work. A **Roadmap** indicates the key pieces of work needed to reach the objectives outlined in these pages. The Roadmap is a live document that will be updated to reflect achievements and emerging priorities.

Sitting underneath this Strategy will be a series of **Action Plans** which will outline practical steps towards achieving the Strategy's objectives. Action Plans will be released iteratively, in collaboration with state and territory governments where appropriate.

When these sectors are referred to as a whole, they are referred to as a system of care and support.

Downloaded from PM&C website

My apologies for the short notice of the above opportunity to consult with the PM&C Office, but the time frame of less than three weeks makes it very difficult to get the opportunity out to our membership for consultation to provide their thoughts on substantial and important issues.

Editor

DVA CONTACTS

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 & Territories are listed below:

PHONE NUMBER:

Telephone:
1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)

International callers:

+61 2 6289 1133

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)



Australian Government

Department of Veterans' Affairs

VETERANS' REVIEW BOARD

Appointment of a Full-time Senior Member and Part-time Senior Members, Services Members and Members

The Veterans' Review Board ("the VRB") invites applications for appointment as a full-time Senior Member and part-time Senior Members, Services Members and Members in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Canberra and Perth.

The VRB is a specialist, high volume tribunal. The VRB is innovative, responsive and seeks to improve access to justice for veterans, serving members and their families by resolving applications at the earliest possible opportunity in a cost effective and efficient way.

The essential requirements for all members are:

- The ability to manage cases using dispute resolution skills and conduct hearings fairly and efficiently;
- The ability to make decisions and deliver clear, concise and cogent oral and written reasons for decisions in a timely manner;
- Conceptual and analytical skills including the capacity to identify relevant issues, to determine facts, interpret and apply legislation and assess competing arguments and evidence;
- The ability to use information technology, including digital platforms, to conduct dispute resolution events and hearings, and to deliver reasons for decision.
- The ability to contribute to multi-member panels and professional education;
- Organisational skills, including the ability to meet deadlines and to work under pressure;
- Communication and interpersonal skills; and
- Integrity, impartiality, tact and courtesy.

Desirable attributes include:

- Knowledge of issues affecting veterans, serving members of the Australian Defence Force, and their families;
- Medical and/or health professional experience.

Persons interested in appointment as a **Services Member** should approach a national organisation representing veterans and propose that they be included on a list submitted to the Minister by that organisation.

An information package and application form are available by contacting the Principal Member's Executive Assistant, Glenn Katsoolis on (02) 9213 8617 or contact@vrb.gov.au

Applications for appointment will close 11:30pm 30 July 2023.

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1800 628 036