



## NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Queensland Section INC  
Monthly Commemorate Ceremony  
Naval "Jack's" Memorial  
South Brisbane Memorial Park, South Brisbane QLD 4101

HMAS Voyager (II)



The purpose of the monthly ceremonies is to commemorate the service of Officers and Sailors of the Royal Australian Navy. Each month the State Executive will select one or two Officers and or Sailors and high light their service.

Month: August Date of Ceremony: 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021 MC: Rudi Bianchi

Presenter[s]:

Assistant:

Person[s] to be Commemorated: Chief Petty Officer Jonathan Rogers, Midshipman Kerry Francis Marien, Electrical Mechanic (Electronics) First Class William Joseph Condon and their fellow shipmates who paid the supreme sacrifice in the service of their country.

Ship in which served: HMAS Voyager (II) Date of Event: 10 February 1964

| Time  | Action                   | By whom       |  |
|-------|--------------------------|---------------|--|
| 10.25 | Muster at Jack           | All           |  |
| 10:30 | Set up inc comms         | NAAQLD        |  |
| 09:55 | Handout Ceremony Flyer   | Assistant     |  |
| 11:00 | Covid-19                 | President Ray | COVID safety message   |
| 11:05 | Welcome inc housekeeping | MC            | <i>The Naval Association acknowledges the Turrbal were Jagera people the traditional owners of the land and hunting grounds, on which this ceremony is located.</i>  |
|       | Address                  | MC            | <p>Good Morning, we, members of the Naval Community are gathered here to commemorate the service of the Crew of HMAS Voyager (II). In particular, Chief Petty Officer Jonathan Rogers, Midshipman Kerry Francis Marien Electrical Mechanic (Electronics) First Class William Joseph Condon and their fellow shipmates who paid the supreme sacrifice in the service of their country.</p> <p>On behalf of the Association would like to recognise<br/>Mr Alan Hellier<br/>Mr Robert Kahn and<br/>Mr Vic McDade Survivors of the Voyager.</p> <p>HMAS Moreton Commanding Officer, Commander Phillipa Hay<br/>CSC RAN<br/>The Reverend Canon Gary Harch, St Marys Anglican</p> |

## [HMAS Voyager sinking](#)

Bearing of 120 degrees from Point Perpendicular lighthouse at distance of twenty nautical miles lies the wreck of HMAS Voyager.

On the night of 10th February 1964, HMAS Voyager inexplicably turned to port and attempted to cross ahead of the flagship, HMAS Melbourne. At 08:56 Melbourne struck Voyager amidships cutting her in two. This resulted in the loss of 82 of 314 Voyagers crew. The collision remains the Royal Australia Navy worst peacetime disaster.

Melbourne and Voyager were engaged in work-up training after recently completed refits.

Voyager and Melbourne anchored in Jervis Bay on, Sunday 9 February, allowing the sportsmen in their ship's companies to enjoy the facilities provided by HMAS Creswell and a number of sailors under training joined after completing their initial training.

Both ships sailed from Jervis Bay early on Monday 10 February, with the day being spent in the local exercise areas conducting trials and exercises.

On the night of Monday 10 February 1964, HMAS Melbourne was engaged in flying exercises. Voyager joined Melbourne in the role of plane guard, which involving the rescue, if necessary, of aircrew personnel from the sea. Melbourne was in the process of finding a course to conduct flying operations. After a number of course alterations a flying course of 020 degrees was selected. Voyager was ordered from a position on the Starboard bow to the Plane Guard position on the Port Quarter. Voyager was observed to first turn outwards away from the Melbourne then turn to Port back across Carrier's bow.

At 20:56, Melbourne struck Voyager at the aft end of her bridge, heeling her over to an angle of about 50 degrees. A flash appeared to come from Voyager's 'A' Boiler, and she emitted high pressure steam and black smoke. Debris, including the revolution table from Voyager's bridge, and a pair of binoculars, were thrown onto Melbourne's flight deck.

The impact pushed Voyager bodily through the water for a few seconds, and then she broke in two. Her forward section passed down Melbourne's port side, and the stern section down the starboard side. The forward section sank soon afterwards and the after section about three hours later. Immediately after the collision Voyagers' crew were in the fight of their lives. The disaster resulted in the loss of 14 officers, including the commanding officer, 67 sailors and one civilian dockyard employee, 82 lives in total. There were 232 survivors.

It all happened in a terrible instant, no one had any time to prepare for the assault on their senses. Many men suffering burns, terrible impact injuries and covered in oil, were recovered by the crew of Melbourne and other ships immediately deployed from Jervis Bay.

Voyager survivors, who had been through a horrific experience, lost the ship that they lived aboard and any possessions, were granted a week of leave to return home before being posted to a sister ship.

There was minimal post-collision mental care or recognition of trauma. In later years, many compensation cases were raised and, since 1964, the RAN has improved greatly in this field.

The Melbourne-Voyager collision is one of the RAN's most devastating disasters. For so many men to be killed in a training exercise severely damaged the RAN's standing with the Australian Government and public. It also highlighted numerous weaknesses and OOW standards, Command Team training and operational procedures were improved as a result.

The collision also spurred the inertial RAN through significant cultural change with an increased focus on safety and the correct following of procedures. These reforms eventually led to the RAN becoming a more open and accountable organisation. Whilst the collision itself is one of the service's most damaging events, it and the resulting alterations laid the foundations for many practices of the modern RAN.

|               |                     |  |
|---------------|---------------------|--|
| Wreath Laying | Assistant           |  |
|               | MC                  | I would like to invite Chaplain Stephen Briggs RAN to lead us in prayer  |
| Naval Prayer  | Chaplain Briggs RAN | <p>The Naval Prayer</p> <p>Eternal God, creator of the heavens and ruler of the raging seas, take under your powerful protection and bless all members of the Royal Australian Navy. Preserve them from the dangers of the sea and strengthen them so that they may faithfully serve our country. With the help of others who love freedom may they be able to ensure security for all those who lawfully travel the seven seas, and by their effort maintain for all people the possibility of serving you in peace and justice all through their lives. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.</p> |
| ODE           | MC                  | <p>They have no grave but the cruel sea<br/> No flowers lay at their head<br/> A rusting hulk is their tombstone<br/> A'fast on the ocean bed</p> <p>They shall grow not old as we who are left grow old<br/> Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn<br/> At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,</p> <p>WE WILL REMEMBER THEM</p> <p>Lest we forget</p>  |

|                 |             |  |
|-----------------|-------------|--|
| Last Post       | Bugler      |  |
| Minute Silence  |             |  |
| Reveille        | Bugler      |  |
|                 | MC          | I would like to invite Canon Gary Harch from St Marys Kangaroo Point to provide the Benediction  |
| Benediction     | Canon Harch |  |
| Recognition     | MC          | I would like to thank the men of Voyager and Commanding Officer and Ships company of HMAS Moreton for their support of today ceremony.                                       |
| Closing remarks | MC          | On behalf of the President of Naval Association of Australia Queensland Section I would like to thank you all for allowing us to remember the service of our fallen Shipmate |
|                 |             |  |