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

The following information is provided to assist the bereaved who may wish to, as part of a funeral service, include a Naval Association of Australia remembrance ritual to commemorate their loved-one’s life and Service to his/her country as a member of the Royal Australian Navy. The options contained within this advisory are many and are your choice to consider.

Additionally, included are avenues to discover your loved-one’s service record. Follow this URL to access the online facilities: [**Find and view a navy service record online**](https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/defence-and-war-service-records/royal-australian-navy-service-records) **(move the mouse over the highlighted text to open the site). Within this site are forms and a Record Search capability should you have questions.** All navy service cards (series [A6769](https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Guest.aspx?Location=SNRSeriesDetail&Key=A6769) and [A6770](https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Guest.aspx?Location=SNRSeriesDetail&Key=A6770)) have been digitised and are available to view online. Visit [RecordSearch](https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au). Use the 'NameSearch' function to search for the member. Select 'Navy personnel records' from the dropdown menu. Use the [help](https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/HelpRecordSearch.aspx) tab in Record Search if you have any questions.

Other options to assist include the Odes. Choose from a list of preferred Odes, provided on the <https://navalassoc.org.au/sections/vic-v00>

**Explanatory Note** – The Naval Ode focuses on the happenings and engagement with the enemy at sea, the dangers of the sea itself, and an incident resulting in the loss of life at sea. As evocative as the Ode may be, the verse does not address the passing of a naval veteran who has served and returned ashore on completion of their service. The Ode to the Naval Veteran may be used to complement the other Odes on those occasions when commemorating those who have lost their life at sea and those who are “returned” Naval veterans and to pay our respects to all who have served in the Navy, be it in war or in peace.

There are options, for the sequence of serials within your Naval Association of Australia remembrance ritual provided. These options are available on the Victoria Section Web portal: <https://navalassoc.org.au/sections/vic-v00>

Remembrance Ritual for use at the Funeral of a Deceased Member Non-Gender specific

Female (Cruel Sea) Naval Funeral Service

Female Naval Veteran Naval Funeral Service

Male (Cruel Sea) Naval Funeral Service

Male Naval Veteran Naval Funeral Service

[Crossing the Bar](https://d.docs.live.net/ea41cd1a4f48fa64/Documents/Crossing%20the%20Bar_Poem.docx) the poem in writing. [the Poem](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/play/77076) Audio

**Flags and Ensigns.** The NAA is often asked if the Australian White Ensign can be used as a coffin Pall. To assist, points of contact are provided below this text. The Australian National Flag, the Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag can be obtained free of charge by contacting the electorate office of your [local Senator or Member of the House of Representatives](https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Guidelines_for_Contacting_Senators_and_Members)

Requests for approval to purchase and use the Australian White Ensign (AWE) can be submitted directly to the Royal Australian Navy via email to [navy.mlo@defence.gov.au](mailto:navy.mlo@defence.gov.au). Approvals will only be given to those with a Navy nexus, for example, RSLs, memorials, museums. Requests for approval to use the Australian White Ensign (AWE) as a pall at a funeral can be submitted directly to [navy.bereavement@defence.gov.au](mailto:navy.bereavement@defence.gov.au) or indirectly via the funeral company. If known, please include as much information about the member such as their full name, service number/PMKeyS number, and dates of service.

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

**Royal Australian Navy Bereavement Pin**

Families of deceased Royal Australian Navy veterans may wish to apply for a Royal Australian Navy (RAN) Bereavement Pin. The RAN Bereavement Pin was commissioned by the Chief of Navy to recognise the valued contribution of all RAN personnel who served and provide their families with a special keepsake in remembrance of this service. RAN Bereavement Pins are available to immediate Next of Kin. ~~family members of deceased RAN veterans, including widows/widowers, parents, siblings, children, and grandchildren.~~ Extensions to this eligibility can be considered for compassionate and compelling circumstances. The NAA representatives at a burial ritual will usually provide bereavement pins to family members at the conclusion of the ritual.

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

What is burial at sea? Burial at sea is the disposal of [human remains](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cadaver) in the ocean, normally from a ship, boat, or aircraft. It is regularly performed by navies and is done by private citizens in many countries. Burial-at-sea services are conducted at many different locations and with many different customs, either by ship or by aircraft. Usually, either the [captain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_(nautical)) of the ship or aircraft or a religious representative (of the deceased's religion or the state religion) performs the ceremony. The ceremony may include burial in a casket, burial sewn in sailcloth, burial in an urn, or scattering of the cremated remains from a ship. Burial at sea by aircraft is only done with cremated remains.

**Notes.** Below is a list of religions and Country that allows burial at sea.

**By country**

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

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

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

**By religion**

**Christianity**

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

**Catholicism**

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

**Protestantism**

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

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

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

the form of words used is:

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

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

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

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| **Hinduism** |  |

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

**Islam**

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

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

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

**Judaism**

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