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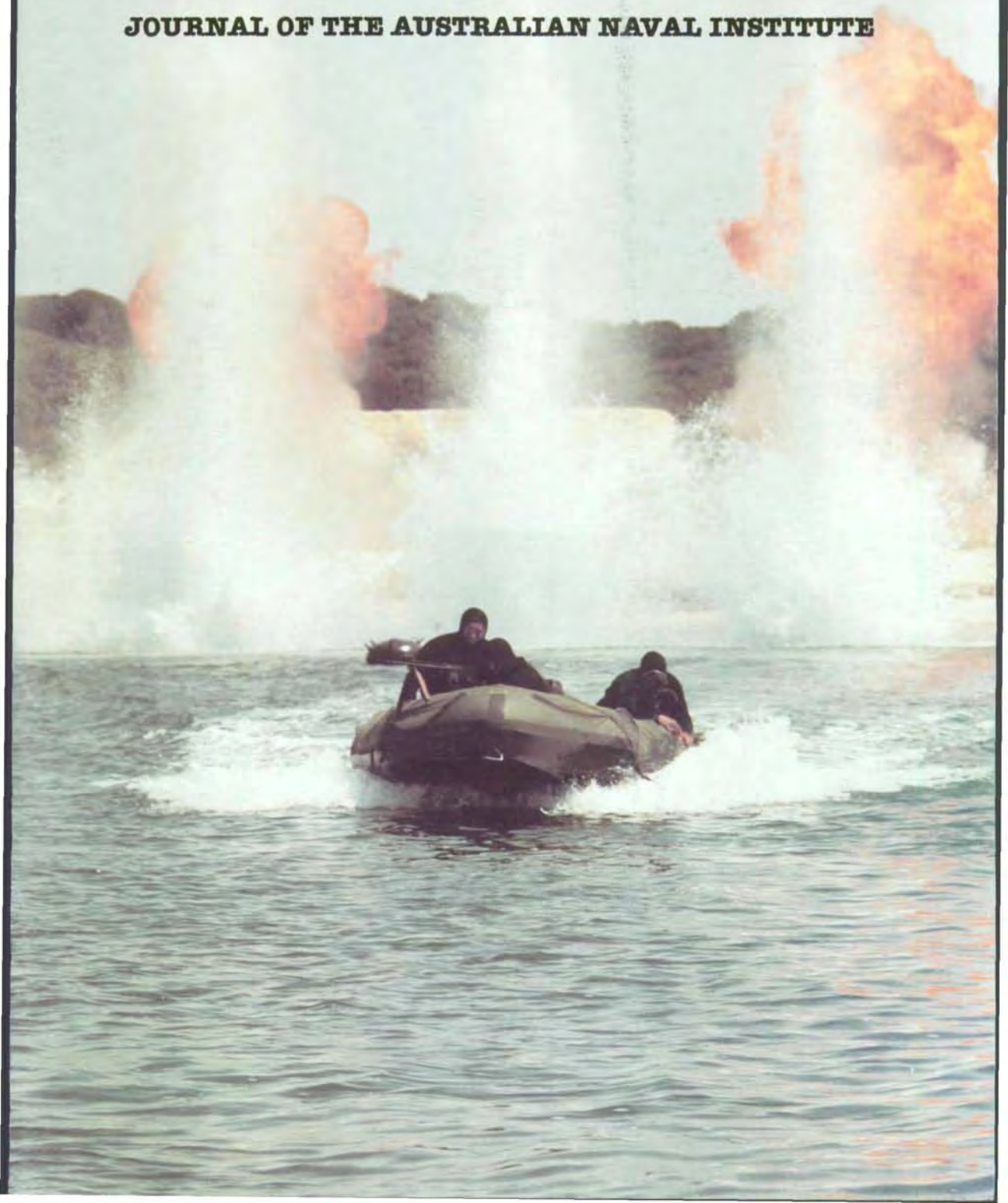
# JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN NAVAL INSTITUTE



# AUSTRALIAN NAVAL INSTITUTE INC

The Australian Naval Institute was formed and incorporated in the Australian Capital Territory in 1975. The main objects of the Institute are:

a To encourage and promote the advancement of knowledge related to the Navy and the maritime profession,
b to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas concerning subjects related to the Navy and the maritime profession, and
c to publish a journal.

The Institute is self-supporting and non-profit-making. All publications of the Institute will stress that the authors express their own views and opinions are not necessarily those of the Department of Defence, the Chief of Naval Staff or the Institute. The aim is to encourage discussion, dissemination of information, comment and opinion and the advancement of professional knowledge concerning naval and maritime matters.

The membership of the Institute is open to:

a. Regular Members. Regular membership is open to members of the RAN or RANR and persons who having qualified for regular membership, subsequently leave the service.
b Associate Members. Associate membership is open to all other persons not qualified to be Regular Members, who profess an interest in the aims of the Institute.
c Honorary Members. Honorary membership is open to persons who have made a distinguished contribution to the Navy or the maritime profession, or by past service to the institute.

## DISCLAIMER

Views expressed in this journal are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of the Department of Defence, the Chief of Naval Staff or the Institute.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Australian Naval Institute is grateful for the assistance provided by the corporations listed below. They are demonstrating their support for the aim of the Institute by being members of the "Friends of the Australian Naval Institute" coterie.

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# Journal of the Australian Naval Institute

Volume 18 Number 3
August 1992


## DEPARTMENTS



***COVER PHOTO:*** *RAN Clearance Divers of Clearance Diving Team 4 exercising at the demolition range on the northern end of Garden Island in Western Australia.*
*Photo: Navy Public Relations (WA)*

*A sailor aboard HMAS Adelaide cleans the 76mm gun prior to entering San Diego during RIMPAC 92.*

# FEATURES

# From the President

We are by nature a maritime nation whose strategic thinking and march toward nationhood, has been enveloped in continental thinking. Yet the sea is in our blood, and our prosperity, the mainstream of our commercial life and our freedom has depended upon a successful understanding and use of both near and distant seas over the past two hundred years.

As the World Order changes and evolves, it has become increasingly important that Australians recognise that we are 'a nation girt by sea', that in order to maintain or improve our national prosperity as a Pacific nation we understand the importance of our sea lines of communication (SLOC), and potential constraints placed upon them by the law of the sea regime and the archipelagic and island state nature of the Pacific/Indian ocean regions.

It is an instructive exercise to overlay the Indian Pacific region with the boundaries of archipelagos, island states and exclusive economic zones and to then identify the unconstrained portion of the oceans between Australia and our trading parties. We must ask ourselves whether our SLOCs start to acquire a degree of sovereignty and what this may mean for the future of our Navy - and, importantly through our journal and occassional seminars, inform and influence other Australians so that there is an increasing realisation of the importance that must be attached to the maintenance of a professional and competent Navy which supports sound maritime strategy.

I implore you all to contribute to the debate through our journal - I would like to encourage the short controversial, as well as the scholarly, article. The ANI has a legitimate role in developing maritime thinking and influencing the more 'continental' among our countrymen. **'CONTRIBUTE'.**

**Sincerely**

**Don Chalmers**

# From the Editor

This issue of the Journal will be my penultimate involvement as the Editor as I join the RANEM members as from 1Nov92. I would like to take this opportunity to thank authors and members of the ANI council for their assistance in the production and distribution of the Journal over the past four years.

The Journal is the main activity of the ANI council and recently the council have considered its format and production process. Subject to Council approval it has been proposed to enlarge the size of the Journal to A4. The additional publishing cost is not significant but it will mean that new binders for the Journal will be required.

You will notice the inclusion of a combined **Replied Paid mailing envelope and Order Form** with this Journal. This insert has been designed to be stitched within a future A4 size Journal but can be distributed with the current size Journal until the changeover in Journal size can be implemented easily and economically. The insert will facilitate the updating of membership addresses, encourage new membership and the ordering of books, published and/or distributed by the ANI, at discounted prices to members of the ANI.

The formation of an ANI Journal Publishing Group to have oversight of future Journal content and production has been proposed to the ANI Council. This group would comprise the current Editor and three other members of the Council and collectively be responsible for production, content and distribution of the Journal with co-ordination of the activities being undertaken by the Editor. Planning for future Journals would be undertaken to ensure each quarterly Journal can be published by the middle of the month of issue. Camera ready preparation of the Journal for printing by the publisher will continue as at present.

At this stage of preparation for the November Issue of the Journal I find there is less than satisfactory number of received articles and the February 93 issue has traditionally even less selectivity of acticles from which to choose. So readers please put thoughts to paper/disk NOW.

This Issue of the Journal contains several interesting articles and Book Reviews. In particular, there is an article by CDRE Robertson (RTD) which provides an alternative view of the Voyager incident.

**Regards**

**Don Agar**

# Guide for Authors

## General

All readers, whether members or not, are invited to submit articles for publication. Articles should deal with interesting recent developments in maritime matters which have a direct or indirect bearing on naval matters.

Contributions from overseas are welcome.

Articles specially written for the ANI, and accompanied by a statement to that effect, may be eligible for prizes from time to time.

The Editor reserves the right to reject or amend articles for publication.

Articles from 2500 to 6000 words are welcomed and the Institute will pay for original articles at $10 for each 1000 words published.

Long articles should be subdivided appropriately and accompanied by an abstract of up to 75 words describing the scope of the article.

The Journal's established style is for impersonal, semi-formal, prose. Where a published work, whether serial or book, is directly quoted, due acknowledgement should be given. Specific numbered references should be used where appropriate and a suitable bibliography appended to the article.

## Illustrations, photographs, graphics etc.

While glossy black-and-white prints are preferred, colour prints with good contrast are often acceptable. Attach caption and other information to the back of the print with a small piece of tape. A width/height ratio of about 5:4 is ideal. The Editor likes to include a mix of vertical (portrait) and horizontal (landscape) photographs. Tables, diagrams and graphs should, if complex, be carefully drawn in black on white paper and treated as photographs. Simple tables can be reproduced in the typesetting process, but it is the author's responsibility to ensure the clarity of the information presented.

## The typescript

As much of the journal as possible is entered from computer disk or via an optical scanner. The preferred disk format is Macintosh but popular MS-DOS packages are welcome . If in doubt, submit ASCII text format. **The preferred typescript format for scanning is laser or daisy-wheel printer output**, single-spaced on A4 paper. High-quality dot-matrix (24-pin) output may be acceptable. Lesser quality (9-pin) which might need to be entered by hand, should be double-spaced. Three hard copies of the article are required whether submitted on disk or otherwise.

## Copyright and clearance to publish

In submitting material to the Journal, authors are granting the ANI a non-exclusive licence to publish. It is the responsibility of authors to obtain from the appropriate source permission to publish material that may be regarded as sensitive in any way. If an author ventures a personal opinion, the context should make it impossible for any reasonable person to infer official sanction for that opinion.

## The cover sheet

The author's name, address, telephone number, present position and brief biographical particulars. If an article has been previously published, a publication history should be included. Any outside assistance accorded the author in research or preparation should be acknowledged.

**ANI's postal address is PO Box 80, Campbell, ACT, 2601.**

**Telephone enquiries to the Editor, ph (06) 280 3761 (Business hours)**

**FAX (06) 239 1167**

# Tribute to a Legend.

## An edited version of an address by the Chief of Naval Staff VADM Ian Macdougall AO RAN at the laying of the keel of the Collins class submarine *Waller*, Adelaide, 19 March 1992.

It is my privilege today to talk about Captain Hector Macdonald Laws Waller.Hec Waller was one of a kind. He was a great leader who was endowed with that elusive quality: charisma. The combination of his special qualities and his outstanding achievements made him a legend in his own lifetime.

Hec Waller was born in Benalla, Victoria, on 4 April 1900. The youngest of eight children, he decided at the ripe old age of nine to join the Navy. He held to that decision and entered the Royal Australian naval College when he was thirteen.

From the very outset Hec Waller's outstanding abilities shone through and he was the natural leader of his class. At the Naval College he became the Chief Cadet Captain and was awarded the king's medal for being the most outstanding cadet of his term.

Young midshipmen experienced service in the first world war in the Royal Navy battleship *Agincourt*.

In the interwar years he specialised in communications and became an expert with few peers. Indeed, he was the only officer to achieve higher marks on communication courses than Lord Louis Mountbatten.

In 1937 Hec Waller got his first command. It was the British destroyer B*razen* which served in the Mediterranean during the Spanish Civil War. It was during those unsettled times that Waller made appoint of telling his sailors as much as he could about whatever operation they were about to undertake. He reasoned that they would work far better as a team with the benefit if the complete picture. He tried to carry this philosophy through his career to the great appreciation of all who served with him.

At the outbreak of World War II Commander Hec Waller took command of the destroyer leader HMAS *Stuart*. He also had in his charge the four other ships of the Australian Destroyer Flotilla: *Vampire, Voyager, Vendetta* and *Waterhen*. These ships, all veterans of the great war, were despatched to Waller's old stamping ground, the Mediterranean.

During the following two years Waller and his flotilla participated in more action than probably any other group of RAN ships.

In June 1940,*Stuart* found herself in an uncharted minefield. Typically, Waller quickly developed a new procedure to chart mines by sonar. He then extradited his ships from the minefield and reported it. These skills were shortly tested in two more minefields. For this Waller was awarded a Distinguished Service Order.

In the next couple of months *Stuart* bombarded enemy shore positions, attacked two submarines, sinking one, and took part in the battle of Calabria.

In these actions Waller gained the confidence not only of his men but also of his superiors. I will give an example of this: In 1940 *Stuart* entered the port of Sollum to find that allied troops were being forced out by an enemy assault. *Stuart* soon came under artillery fire but responded and stemmed the advance.

Waller signalled his Commander in Chief, Admiral Cunningham, that "I am bombarding Sollum." It is reported that when an agitated staff officer told Cunningham that Waller was bombarding this allied port, he replied: "Relax. If Waller's doing it, it's all right."

The highlight of Waller's career was the Battle of Cape Matapan. In a night action the British fleet engaged an Italian cruiser squadron. *Stuart* led the destroyer flotilla in an attack that led to *Stuart* sinking one cruiser, damaging two others and sinking one destroyer. *Stuart*'s performance was outstanding and ranks as the most successful single action by an RAN ship in our history.

Admiral Cunningham called the Battle of Matapan "*Stuart*'s wild night". Deservedly, Hec Waller was awarded a second Distinguished Service Order.

With these exploits Waller and his ships achieved national recognition. The ships were known as the Scrap Iron Flotilla and passed into Australian folklore.

Following his success in the Mediterranean, Hec Waller was appointed commanding officer of the cruiser *Perth*. Two months later Japan entered the war and so began some of our nation's darkest days. The fall of Singapore and the loss of the Philippines placed Australia under direct threat for the first time. The RAN joined remnants of American, British and Dutch naval forces in the region to try and stem the tide.

This force made its stand in defence of the Dutch East Indies. Known as the Battle of the Java Sea today, it was in fact a series of naval engagements against a powerful Japanese fleet. The odds against the allied force, which

was formed through hasty circumstances, were large indeed. Beside being outnumbered by a superior force, the allied squadron lacked adequate air cover and was short of ammunition.

Few chapters in the history of war at sea, in any age, carry so many incidents of individual heroism and such great tragedy.

The main engagement, north of Surabaya, broke the allied force. Waller took the US cruiser *Houston* in his charge and attempted to escape from the enveloping enemy net through the Sunda Strait. But fate had deemed otherwise: Waller encountered a strongly escorted amphibious armada. Undeterred, *Perth* and *Houston* engaged as many ships as possible until they were reduced to firing practice ammunition. In the end both ships were sunk. Hec Waller was last seen on the bridge looking silently ahead as the bows of the *Perth* slid beneath the waves. It was an incredibly tragic and heroic action that Australians and Americans of future generations can read with pride.

That is a brief outline of the gallant career of Hec Waller. But what about Hec Waller the man? I offer you two perspectives. First, Admiral Cunningham provided a light-hearted insight into Waller the man:

Cunningham recounted how his wife was short of sewing machines for the Red Cross effort in Egypt and asked Hec Waller if he could get any. Hec Waller took up the challenge. While on a Tobruk ferry run he landed in the besieged town. But he was soon stopped by the military police: For fear of wholesale looting nobody was allowed into the town. Hec Waller argued with the MPs saying: "I had a hand in helping capture this place. Surely I can go and have a look at the results of our bombardments." "No, sir. I've orders to let no one in," the MP replied. "If I let one in we shall soon have the place full of these bloody Australians pinching every mortal thing."

What persuasive blarney Hec Waller used to get his own way is a mystery, but suffice to say a truck with sewing machines arrived at the Admiral's residence for Mrs Cunningham.

The sailors' view of Hec Waller is equally illuminating. I am sure those men here today from the Scrap Iron Flotilla and HMAS *Perth* Associations which have their story of Hec Waller. I'll quote from one sailor from the *Stuart* who remarked that:

> "Commander Waller was the type of man in whom one could have complete confidence in an emergency; friendly in manner and possessing the happy faculty of making one feel completely at ease in his company."

One of the reasons why Hec Waller stood out was that he was his own man and a true individual. In his dealings with people he could talk just as easily with an ordinary seaman as with an admiral or governor. At sea, Hec Waller would often be seen chatting with sailors on the upper deck and when on the bridge would join conversation on general subjects with the signalman on watch.

Hes Waller had great dignity and respected the dignity of others. He was fair, serious minded and reasonable. He also had a profound sense of his responsibility towards his men, his ship and the navy.

At sea Hec Waller would spend long hours in his bridge chair with his pipe firmly clamped between his teeth. He dressed with an accent on comfort. In winter he wore an ancient blue jersey, grey slacks, sea boots and a blue beret. In summer he wore a blue milanese shirt, torn at the back, and generally dilapidated shorts with a cricketing hat. Thus attired he was occasionally mistaken for a sailor by newcomers to the ship. While he may not have presented the classic image of a naval officer, to his men he was a character greatly loved and respected.

There is no doubt that had Hec Waller survived the war he would have become an admiral and would have helped shape the post-was navy. We mourn his loss but we are thankful for the service he rendered to our country and the sacrifice he made.

I conclude with the words of Admiral Cunningham. He said:

> Hector Macdonald Laws Waller will always remain in my mind as one of the very finest types of Australian naval officer. Full of good cheer, with a great sense of humour, undefeated and always burning to get at the enemy, he kept the old ships of his flotilla — the *Stuart, Vampire, Vendetta, Voyager, Waterhen* hard at it always. Greatly loved and admired by everyone, his loss in HMAS *Perth* in the Java Sea was a heavy deprivation for the young navy of Australia.

Ladies and gentlemen, Hec Waller was a remarkable man. I am pleased that we are honouring him today. I am particularly happy that we are honouring him in the presence of his son, Michael.

# HISTORY OF 1913 ENTRY TO NAVAL COLLEGE

In July 1991, Rear Admiral H.A. Showers, CBE, RAN (Rtd) died in Sydney. with his passing the last link with the historic first entry to the Royal Australian Naval College (RANC) in 1913 was severed.

A CNS endorsed decision was made in late 1991 to write a history of the 1913 Entry and the contribution that they had made to the RAN. Mr A.W Grazebrook (a RANR Commander) was selected to write this history and is currently collecting research material for the task.

Many readers will know Mr Grazebrook as the Naval correspondent to Asia Pacific Defence Reporter.

The 1913 Entry to RANC commenced at Osborne House, Geelong, and later transferred to the Jervis Bay site in 1915. Of the 28 thirteen-year-old boys who entered the College in 1913, twenty three passed out from the College in 1916 (four were withdrawn by their parents and a fifth, Cadet Midshipman O.E. Albert, died from meningitis in 1914).

Following their graduation all 23 newly promoted Midshipmen were sent to join ships of the Grand Fleet (Royal Navy) then operating in the North Sea against the German High Seas Fleet..

Two of the 1913 entry were destined never to return from serving in World War I. They were E.S. Cunningham and F.L. Larkins who both lost their lives whilst serving in submarines.

A few of the 1913 entry left the RAN during the inter-war years but a number continued to serve. With the outbreak of war in 1939, three had achieved the rank of Captain (H.B. Farncomb, J.A. Collins and J. Burnett).

During World War II several of the 1913 entry distinguished themselves on active service. Captain J.A. Collins (later Vice Admiral Sir John Collins, KBE, CB, RAN) commanded HMAS *Sydney* in 1940 when she sank the Italian Cruiser "Bartolomeo Colleoni". Later in 1944 he was appointed to Commodore (1st Class) and was wounded when a kamikaze aircraft hit HMAS *Australia* at the battle of Leyte Gulf.

Captain H.A. Showers commanded several RAN warships including HMA Ships *Adelaide*, *Hobart* and *Shropshire*. He was in command of *Hobart* when she was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine off Espiritu Santo. Despite serious damage Captain Showers brought the *Hobart* to port for repairs.

Three of the 1913 entry were killed during the war. Captain J. Burnett was killed when HMAS *Sydney* was sunk with all hands following her encounter with the German Raider *Kormoran* in November 1941.

Captain F.E. Getting was mortally wounded when HMAS *Canberra* was sunk at the Battle of Savo Island in August 1942, and Lieutenant Commander L.L. Watkins was lost when HMAS *Perth* was sunk in a battle against overwhelming Japanese forces in March 1942.

Three other members of the 1913 entry were heavily involved with setting up and controlling the coast-watching organization in New Guinea and the Solomons. They were Commander R.B.M. Long, Commander E.A. Feldt and Lieutenant Commander H.A. Mackenzie. All three were decorated for their services in maintaining the coast-watching system.

Captain H.B. Farncomb was the first RANC graduate to reach the rank of Captain and during the war he commanded several ships including the aircraft carrier HMS *Attacker*. He later assumed command of the Australian Squadron when Commodore Collins was wounded at Leyte Gulf.

Both Collins and Farncomb were promoted to Rear Admiral in 1947, Collins later becoming a Vice Admiral and Chief of Naval Staff in 1951.

The 1913 entry served the RAN well in both peace and war. Nearly a quarter of those who graduated in 1916 lost their lives during World Wars I and II and one of their number rose to command the RAN.

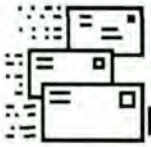
The written history of the 1913 entry should prove to be a fitting tribute to them and the Navy in which they served.

During his research Mr Grazebrook plans to contact a number of relatives and persons who served with the 1913 entry to obtain personal anecdotes and other material available from memory.

Readers who have material which may be of interest to Mr Grazebrook in compiling this history are requested to contact the Historical Collection Officer, HMAS *Creswell b* (Lieutenant G.J. Swinden) who will organise for material to be passed on to Mr Grazebrook.

The Royal Australian Naval College postal address is
HMAS CRESWELL,
JERVIS BAY, 2540.
AUSTRALIA

Eventually all research material will be stored in *Creswell* to provide a central repository for further research. It is also intended that the Historical Collection in *Creswell* become the repository for the papers/documents of former eminent naval officers, particularly those who are graduates of the Royal Australian Naval College.



# Letter to the Editor

The Editor
Journal of the Australian Naval Institute

Dear Sir,

Recent issues of the Journal have devoted significant space to the problems of ANI membership. Declining membership and the rank creep are problems that, unless tackled, will not go away.

Membership is the cornerstone on which the Institute is built and it is simple that if there are few members the Institute will falter and eventually fail.

A few thoughts on the problems of membership: Firstly, the Institute is seen by many, including myself (an ANI member), to be an exclusive 'club' for senior officers. Most junior officers are prepared to air their views in the Wardroom or workplace but few wish to earn themselves the tag of troublemaker by putting their views down in writing.

Many senior officers will disagree with this point of view and this letter even appears to contradict this. There is, however, still a strong view that the more gold on your shoulder, the more valid your argument. Rank has no monopoly on good ideas, but many junior officers and their views are often negated by their lack of seniority.

Secondly, although most junior officers have a tertiary education that is no guarantee that they will be interested in Maritime Strategy or Naval History. This is not to say they are uninterested, just that it must take a back seat to the many other activities that take up a junior officer's lifestyle, such as work, application courses, sport, family, girlfriends/boyfriends or running ashore with the lads.

Thirdly, many junior officers are not even aware of the existence of the Institute. The Institute occasionally advertises its existence at ADFA but not at the RAN College.

The ANI completely neglects the senior and junior sailor and the 1990 membership figures indicating only eight sailors as members is not surprising. Those who do know of the Institute see it as a clique for senior officers but most don't even know of its existence. As stated before, rank has no monopoly on good ideas, intelligence or opinions.

By neglecting the senior and junior sailor, the Institute is denying input from the bulk of the Naval community.

Fourthly, the Journal has to compete with the plethora of naval and military journals available in Australia. These include *The Navy, White Ensign, RUSI Journal, Naval Historical Society Review, Cameraderie, ARFFA Viewpoint, The Defence Force Journal* and the list goes on. Coupled with overseas journals such as *USNI Proceedings* and the *Naval Review*, it is not surprising that few personnel progress no further than *Navy News*. At least *Navy News* has the page 3 girl and HMAS *WORT*.

These are a young turk's- views on some of the problems of ANI membership, but how does the Institute go about solving them. Increased publicity would certainly increase the awareness amongst the naval population that the ANI actually exists. This could be done through advertisements, articles and membership forms being displayed in *Navy News*, which has a large readership amongst serving and ex-serving personnel.

Another way to raise awareness could be the provision of free copies of the *Journal* to ships and establishments. A copy, or copies, to the Wardroom and Senior Sailors Mess would have the effect of getting the Journal to potential readers, contributors and members. I seriously doubt that non-members have ready access to the *Journal* and that is why they are not ANI members. With fewer than 500 members (many of whom are retired officers) a more likely scenario is that the bulk of naval personnel know little or nothing about the Institute, its aims and ideals.

The provision of free journals of course is highly dependent on finances, however, increased readership may generate increased membership and therefore increased revenue.

The ANI may wish to offer prizes, such as a free two-year subscription to the *Journal*, to trainees at ADFA, RANC and HMAS *Cerberus* for say, the best Defence Studies, Naval History or Maritime Strategy essay. This would also help to heighten awareness of the Institute. The USNI currently offers a prize at the RAN College and has done so since the early 1960s; the ANI has been in existence since 1975 yet does not.

Larger membership may well increase the number and quality of articles submitted for publication. The *Journal* at present runs the risk of printing narrowly-viewed articles or becoming the mouthpiece of a few vocal persons.

These ideas are no guarantee of success but unless the ANI increases its membership amongst the Naval community (not just officers) then it runs the serious risk of fading away. The bottom line is not just publish and be damned, but one of publish or perish.

LEUT G J Swinden,
HMAS *Creswell*,
Jervis Bay

# WASHINGTON NOTES

## from Tom A Friedmann in the United States of America

The vote by ANI members at the last Annual General Meeting to join a 'loose association of kindred maritime organisations' is a positive step to secure the future of maritime studies in Australia. From my reading of Tom Frame's noted of the meeting, this 'loose association' approximates the 'confederation' proposal he and Peter Jones made to the 1991 Annual General Meeting. I propose that this confederation serve as a first step to the creation of a single, large and influential organisation for Australia.

This proposal is not an easy one to make. Nonetheless, the time has come to address persistent problems that the ANI has been unable to surmount.

The current discussion on the ANI's future has been framed around the Institute's loss of membership and the 'greying' of the remaining members. Increasing our numbers, particularly among naval officers, has been a problem for years. Too many RAN officers have never considered it important, let alone advantageous, to join the Institute. Certainly cost cannot be the reason because ANI dues have never been onerous. Whatever the reason may be, the RAN's officer corps has never supported the Institute as it should.

The Journal has been available as a forum for debate, yet it has never been used to its fullest potential. Even a topic as critical as the future of the Institute drew few responses from our members.

The time has come for a change. I think the change could be good for the naval profession, the RAN and for Australia.

What would the ANI bring to an amalgamation of maritime organisations? How would its members benefit?

The Institute would bring the power, prestige and influence of the RAN. Despite the shrinkage in ANI membership, 'grade creep' here works in our favour. The ANI's numbers may be down but many of those left are still influential. I would expect that the senior RAN members of the ANI would take a leading role in the formation of any new maritime organisation.

On the financial side of the equation, the Institute will be negotiating from a position of strength. The Institute is not only solvent but has money in the bank. However, financial security can be a fleeting thing, as the 1991 operating loss of $9,200 reminds us.

Support from the Friends of the ANI is important but even this support is subject to outside pressures. Fir example, the recession and defence cutbacks have severely altered corporate giving in the United States. The same thing could happen in Australia, particularly in the out-years as the new submarine and frigate programs are completed.

The Friends probably already support other maritime organisations such as the Navy League. Surely they can be persuaded to continue, and possible expand, their support for a broader based organisation.

An amalgamation would permit the creation of a professionally produced publication. I know how hard it is to write a column for the *Journal* I have been on the editorial side of a quarterly publication and know how hard it is to put such a publication 'to bed'. I've never been able to figure out how editors have balanced their professional and family responsibilities with the demands of the *Journal*.

Michael Head, in his response to the Jones-Frame paper, concentrated his comments on what types of articles should be in the *Journal*. He listed such areas a strategy, finance, changes in the Defence Department, personnel matters and interservice relations as likely topics. Head concluded that these issues are geared more toward the professional naval personnel than the wider audience an amalgamated publication would reach.

I disagree. These are precisely the type of articles that the wider naval-maritime audience needs to read. Creating a publication that can be sold on news-stands is secondary to creating one with a larger readership among people who are natural supporters of the navy. These are the people the Navy will have to turn to during the next 'war of the budget' (and we do remember when the RAN was not the 'favoured' service, don't we?) On the other hand, naval personnel should benefit from exposure to articles on maritime matters from the perspective of the Merchant navy, business and–dare I say it–the RAAF. In addition, a regular dose of good in navy history could do everyone concerned a world of good!

Jones and frame make other persuasive arguments for amalgamation. Funding for an information service centre might be available as could increased funding for maritime seminars. In addition, a wider, built-in audience would be available for these seminars. The proposal to establish a publishing house is particularly important because of the

ridiculously high cost of books in Australia. I still remember, with some embarrassment, gasping at the price of the first book I saw at the Australian War Memorial. We cannot spread maritime knowledge, particularly to younger readers, unless the cost of books is brought under control.

The drawbacks listed by Jones and Frame do not outweigh the advantages of amalgamation. Certainly a charter could be drafted to encompass the interests of most of the organisations they list. And as for legal difficulties, don't overlook going to Parliament for enabling legislation.

Confederation doesn't make sense. The publication of one journal in place of many is at the core of this alternative.

However, if we give up printing our own journal, and our journal is at the heart of what the ANI does, how can we justify continued independence?

Maintaining the status quo means a slow, lingering, death.

Rationalisation means generating a commitment from the Navy that has not been there in the past and cannot be attained without the support of current members.

As we say in the United States, *e pluribus unum.*

# FEMALE OFFICERS IN THE RAN: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

**By Katerina Walbank**

*I wish to thank Lieutenant Commander Alan Hinge andLieutenant Tom Frame for their constructive criticism throughout the development of this paper*
*—KW*

The belief that combat is for the male preserve only continues to be central to the RAN's identity. Although there have been numerous policy changes in the last twenty years concerning the employment of women, the Navy prescribes a division of labour which typically allocates active and public roles to men, and passive and private roles to women. This article examines this phenomenon by looking at men and women's opinions concerning job suitability for female officers.

## INTRODUCTION

Career prospects for women in the military are closely associated with attitudes and beliefs about gender roles. The debate over the last two decades concerning the role that women should play within the Australian Defence Force (ADF) has been accompanied by some changes in employment conditions (Costigan 1981: 1417). However, many of the studies conducted on women in the military during this time give the impression that, even though women are supposed to be participating on equal terms with men, gender remalns a salient issue. De Fleur for example, states that whilst military tasks and the use of females in western militaries have changed significantly in recent years, attitudes and beliefs that are affecting women In different roles are changing more slowly. (De Fleur 1985: 221). In spite of some recent advances, two significant issues remain unchanged. Firstly, women in the military are still proportionally few and secondly women are still excluded from direct combat duties. The Parliamentary decislon in 1990 to allow women to participate in combat-related positions is certainly a step in the right direction for Australia's military women. Whether or not this is an indication that attitudes are changing to the point where women in the ADF can expect to be seen for their individual abilities rather than being defined in terms of their gender, remains to be seen.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This study focuses on the attitudes and beliefs within the Officer Corps concerning the appropriateness of various occupations for female officers in the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). The exploration of attitudes and belief systems are necessary in any institution since policy is more often based on opinion rather than on evidence. Hence attitudes and opinions held about female officers in the RAN are important and those held by senior naval officers are especially significant. There are a number of common findings among the studies carried out on attitudes and beliefs concerning the role of women in the military. Military women tend to be more accepting of men and women in similar roles both in the military and in civilian society (Fuller: 1973, Politetal: 1978, Savell and Collins: 1975 and Segal Mady: 1978). Officers are also found to be more egalitarian than enlisted personnel with female officers expressing the most egalitarian attitudes (Savell et al: 1975). Another crucial attitude issue is the question of women in combat roles. Of all the possible military roles for women this is the one that encounters the most resistance. (Savell et al: 1975). In the past, women, far more than men, have generally felt that combat-related specialities were appropriate for their sex. (Savell et al: 1979). The purpose of this study was to see how relevant this earlier research is to the study of female officers in the RAN, particularly given the removal of the combat-related exclusion policy.

It was anticipated this research vould have one significant outcome: to establish whether attitudes and beliefs about women in the RAN have changed since the earlier, mid 70s, studies. The study of attitudes and beliefs of the role of women within the RAN is important because it has a bearing on their future paths. Combat-linked roles are the primary avenue for advancement in the RAN and womens' limited participation in these roles has, and will continue, to restrict their chances to move ahead.

## HYPOTHESES

This research rests on the following assumptions: Gender is fundamental to the way in which work is orqanised within the RAN. Themes centred on gender differentiation and exclusivity are paramount within the military generally. They are sustained by arguments based on physiological and psychological differences between males and females necessitating their playing different roles.

**There exists within the RAN qender belief systems which explain, and to some extent justify, themes of male exclusivity and qender differentiation.** These belief systems legitimate unequal rights and responsibilities, restrictions and rewards for men and women by explaining how and why they differ.

**These belief systems are resistant to chanqe.** Although the use of female officers in the RAN has changed in recent years, the beliefs and attitudes that affect women in different roles are changing more slowly.

**The RAN is not an organisation isolated from the broader society.** The gender belief system found in the Navy reflects a gender belief system found in western society generally. Most jobs in our economy are regarded as either "men's work" or "women's work". Society as a whole, and more specifically work organisations, are pervaded by beliefs and behaviour concerning the sexes and the role they play. The dominant sex role stereotypes are such that traits like aggression, dominance, competitiveness, objectivity and decision making are seen as masculine and thus appropriate for the male only. Attributes such as empathy, tenderness and consideration are thought of as feminine and thus characteristic of the female only. These stereotypical traits become even more significant when it comes to the role men and women play in the work force. The incidence of sex-segregated occupations is commonly found in the broader society as it is in the Navy. For example, secretaries, kindergarten and pre-school teachers and domestic workers are predominately women. On the other hand, occupations such as engineers, aeroplane pilots and mechanics are predominately occupied by males. Not only are the jobs that men and women do quite different, but so is the value and importance placed on male and female occupations. In Australian society (as with western society generally), comparatively few women hold positions of influence and authority (Weinreich 1978: 18-20). In fields where both sexes are represented, women become fewer the higher up the hierarchy one looks. However, the fact that men and women do very different kinds of work does not automatically mean that one's work is superior to the other.

The real issue is that men do come to be more highly valued and rewarded for their tasks than do women. There appears to be a linkage between gender differentiation and gender, societal definitions, which are formulated and disseminated by elites who are predominantly male (Chaftez 1990:91). Elites within society foster a belief system which values male traits and work more highly than females, therefore maintaining their own privileged status. In the case of the military, the combat exclusionary policy which prohibits women from the most prestigious military tasks ensures that combat (the most highly rewarded activity in terms of honour and promotion ) is reserved for men .

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Questions

The following research questions were designed to give direction to the study: that are the beliefs concerning the appropriateness of various occupations for female officers. Do males and females differ in their beliefs concerning the appropriateness, performance and effectiveness of female naval officers? Will the belief system in the RAN generate objections to the full integration of women including combat positions?

### Research Method

The method of research used was both qualitative and quantitative.

### Population Sample

The following requirements were identified: The sample would constitute fifty percent male and fifty percent female officers. - The sample was taken from two Establishments and Navy Office. Twenty from each of the following: HMAS *Watson*, HMAS *Creswell* and Personnel Division in Canberra. This method of sampling ensured that there would be some degree of randomness in the selection process as well as ensuring the highest ranking officials would also be selected. Given the above constraints, thirty males and thirty female officers were selected. In addition to the sample selected for the survey, eight senior rankIng naval officers were selected from the following: Headquarters Australian Defence Force, Personnel Division, HMAS *Watson*, HMAS *Creswell*, RAN Staff College, Navy Office and Maritime Headquarters. These senior officers were chosen because they represented key positions within the RAN.

## DATA COLLECTION

**Questionnaires** The decision to use a questionnaire for this research was influenced by several factors. The respondents came from three separate areas and a questionnaire provided the simplest and quickest method of reaching such a wide-spread group. It provided assurance of anonymity and this was particularly important since the respondents were asked to state their personal views rather than official views held by the RAN.

## INTERVIEWS

These officlals were chosen because they represented key positions within the RAN. Eight senior officers were interviewed; six of whom were males and two of whom were females. The data base obtained from both the questionnaires and interviews, offers detailed responses related to the attitudes and beliefs of both male and female Naval Officers, therefore representing the spectrum of age within the RAN.

## FINDINGS

The data supports the hypothesis that career prospects for women in the RAN are closely associated with attitudes and beliefs about gender roles. Even though female officers are supposed to be participating on equal terms with men, gender does remain a salient issue. In spite of more equal job oppor.unities for female offices, women are still proportionately few and continue to be excluded from direct combat duties.

The study focused on three main questions. The first

looked at the beliefs concerning the appropriateness of various occupations for female officers. The data supported the concept that the RAN is an organisation based on perceptions of male superiority where gender is at the forefront of job suitability. Certain occupations are still viewed as "male" whilst others are seen to be suitable for females as well. There are various myths which help support this belief system. On the issue of women at sea for example, the reasons given as to why women should not go to sea focused on their lack of physical strength, their inability to handle stressful situations as well as men, and the fact that they would inevitably disrupt the cohesion of the ship. Where women are viewed in this way, the assumption is that males are the opposite. That is, males do not lack physical strength, they can handle stressful situations and they do not disrupt the cohesion of the ship. Hence, whilst there is policy in place now allowing women to go to sea, there remain elements of resistance. This resistance is further evidenced with the issue of women serving on combatant ships during a conflict, as more than half the males surveyed believed that women should not serve on combat ships in a conflict situation. Male officers also regarded the more feminine traditional more appropriate for female officers. The opinions of males are important since they make up the greater proportion of the RAN membership. Furthermore, because the attitudes and beliefs of male members dominate the broader belief system within the Navy, the opinions of men are central to the career prospects of women.

The second question posed by the study looked at whether male and females differ in their beliefs concerning the appropriateness, performance, and effectiveness of female naval officers. The data showed that the difference in opinion between males and females was at times subtle, and at times quite marked. On the whole females were more positive than their male counterparts on issues such as female leadership, female promotions, female occupations, females in command, and females on board combatants. The issue with the greatest opinion difference between the sexes, was the issue of combat. Fifty percent of males felt that women should not serve on board combatants in a war situation. From the female pool, fourteen percent agreed with their male counterparts. The data also indicated quite strongly that male officers were more likely than female officers to hold traditional views about women. That is, they vere more likely to consider females to be naturally nurturent, submissive and passive. Having said this, it is important to note that not all men held stereotypical views of women and some were in fact supportive of females In combat roles. When it comes to job suitability for female officers, females were more egalitarian than their male counterparts. Whilst the male respondents were not antipathetic towards females, they tended to be less inclined than females to having women in non-traditional occupations. Often it seemed that, when it came to job suitability, gender was an issue for a great number of the male respondents. The female respondents, on the other hand, were more likely to feel that job suitability had more to do with one's training and not one's gender. That is, female officers were more inclined than male officers to believe that females should be permitted to work in any job they are capable of performing. On the issue of women at sea, more females than males considered all seagoing positions as being suitable. The majority of males and females could foresee problems with women going to sea yet they gave very different reasons. For example, some males felt that women would disrupt the cohesion of the ship, causing numerous problems. This was not even a consideration for female officers who saw entrenched male attitudes as one of the main problems that would face women going to sea. Respondents in both the male and the female groups could foresee problems with the recent inclusion of women in combat-related positions. Whilst there were a few similarities in the reasons given, there was an even greater disparity. Males considered that females were less able than men to handle stress, they were more likely to reduce combat capability and, males would find it difficult to take orders from females. Females on the other hand, felt that entrenched male attitudes and the male protective "instinct" toward women, was more at issue here. The issue of women in combat highlighted a significant difference of opinion between men and women. More than half (53.6% ), of the males considered that females should not serve on ships going into combat. The reasons given were that: women would hinder combat capability; women, by their nature, are not suited to combat; males would be too protective of females, thereby neglecting the task at hand; and finally, it is morally wrong to send women in to combat. The women who felt that women should not serve on board combat ships (27.6% ), viewed that males' attitudes towards females were too great a hindrance to overcome. The final question which gave focus to the research looked at whether the belief system in the RAN would generate objections to the full integration of women, including combat positions. The data does support the concept that gender is fundamental to the way in which work is organised in the RAN. Arguments on physiological and psychological differences between males and females justify male exclusivity and gender differentiation. The data also highlighted the differences in the male and female pools in terms of their personal particulars. Males were usually older, higher in rank, and had served for longer than their female counterparts. Whilst males were significantly represented in the middle to senior ranks, females had limited representation in the middle ranks and no representation in the senior ranks. Up until 1990, the ADF restricted the areas in which females could specialise and seek tralning. Although combat-related positions have opened up to females they are still excluded from direct combat roles. Combat exclusion is a way of reducing career competition between male and female service members.

## CONCLUSIONS

The belief that combat is reserved for men only continues to be central to the Navy's identity. In spite of recent changes in policy concerning the employment of women,

the Navy still prescribes a division of labour that typically allocates active and public roles to men, and passive and private roles to women.

If the belief system in the RAN does not change to the point where women can perform in combat and command combat vessels, their prospects of being promoted to levels which are normally aspired to by their male counterparts are virtually nil. Unless the necessary changes occur, this factor will continue to limit the full integration of female officers. It is improbable that the RAN will change in isolation from the wider society. The Navy reflects the same gender belief systems found in western society generally. When one looks at the western world, comparatively few women hold positions of influence and authority. In most professions and institutions where both sexes are represented, women become proportionally fewer the higher up the hierarchy one looks. When it comes to job suitability, gender can be as much an issue in other organisations as it is in the RAN. Attributing the male with a higher employment value than the female is a phenomenon displayed in most western cultures. Those characteristics, traits and activities associated with male members of society are deemed to have more importance and greater value than those associated with females. Hence the RAN does not appear to reflect a gender belief system which it has created and maintained on its own, rather it reflects the gender belief system found in the broader social setting. Consequently, without significant social change occurring in the wider society in terms of gender equity in the work place, the higher management within the Navy is unlikely to exert the necessary pressure to being about changes within the RAN.

## THE AUTHOR

Katerina Walbank completed a Bachelor of Arts (Social Science) at the Canberra College of Advanced Education in 1987. She spent two years working as a family counsellor. In 1991 she commenced a Master of Arts in Sociology at the University of Wollongong. This paper is an outline of research findings concerning female officers in the RAN. Her special academic interests are gender in the work place and political violence.

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# Personnel Representation in the Australian Defence Force or Trade Unionism?

by

**Jim Parsons, Development Officer, Armed Forces Federation of Australia**

In 1974 and 1975, during the Whitlam years, the Chiefs of Staff Committee was reluctantly persuaded to consider an opinion survey within the ADF on the formation of an association to represent service personnel. Eventually it was decided that any move to form an association should come from within the services themselves. Ten years later this spontaneously happened.

In 1984 the Australian Defence Force (ADF) was in the fourth year of a pay freeze. A change had been made to the taxation policy on lump sum payments on retirement without giving consideration to the compulsory early retirement ages of military service. Housing, repatriation and other benefits seemed under constant attack. There was a generally perceived degradation of conditions of service and a conviction that there was a growing disregard for the uniqueness of service life. It was widely believed that the historic and generally accepted convention of the Government's traditional protection of service members' interests had been set aside.

It was in this environment of neglect of pay and conditions that the Armed Forces Federation of Australia (ArFFA) was formed. Its founders believed that it was time to take independent action to highlight personnel, pay, welfare and conditions of service issues. The Federation was distinct from other organisations representing members of the armed forces (such as RSL and RFDWA) in that its efforts were focussed on serving personnel, not retired. Its constitution was framed for serving military personnel who understood and fully accepted the traditional values of the ADF. Foremost in their minds was the need to maintain operational effectiveness.

The Federation is a professional association representing the interests of serving men and women. Its constitution was conceived to achieve the Federation's aims through consultation and negotiation. It prohibits any action that may result in its members confronting their superiors and provides for suspension of activities in time of war or any national emergency. Strikes, boycotts, work to rule and other 'traditional' and legitimate trade union activities are strictly forbidden.

The concept of organisations representing service personnel is not new — it has existed in some overseas countries for many years and is common in Europe. Indeed, there are over 60 such organisations within the armed forces of such countries as Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and those of Scandinavia. Some represent particular groups such as senior NCOs or other ranks while others are restricted to a particular branch of the services or even to a single regiment. However, regardless of their size or organisational basis there are a number of common themes. Firstly there is normally no right and where it exists it has never been and is unlikely ever to be used. Secondly none is linked to a particular political party. Thirdly most are confined to questions of personnel and administration and conditions of service and rarely are they involved in strategic or operational matters.

The situation in the Netherlands is interesting.. Here the armed forces are represented by a number of organisations whose rights (to represent the services) are enshrined in law. Any change to legislation that concerns conditions of service issues must have their agreement before it can proceed.

The industrial situation in the armed forces is unique in Australia. Cases to support pay or allowance increases are initiated and prepared by the Pay and conditions Branch within Headquarters, Australian Defence Force (HQADF) for presentation to the Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal (DFRT). The DFRT is an independent body where the Defence Force Advocate presents the ADF case. The Commonwealth case is argued by the Department of Industrial Relations. These are the only two authorities legally entitled to appear in front of the tribunal. Any other organisation has only 'intervener' status.

The HQADF Pay and Conditions Branch is ultimately accountable to the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) who has the responsibility for all aspects of the Defence Force, including capital equipment and operational effectiveness as well as the pay and conditions of its personnel. Therefore the CDF is placed in the invidious position of having to balance pay and conditions against overall ADF effectiveness. That means pay cases are prepared under an umbrella of finite resources rather than industrial equity.

This conflict of interest was demonstrated when HQADF developed a case for an increase in service allowance. Legislation requires that all ADF pay and allowances must be reviewed at least every two years, but the last full enquiry into service allowance was in 1986/87. Although programmed to be heart by the DFRT on 14 May 1992, the CDF requested, on 7 May, that the case be withdrawn. It is difficult to accept that the CDF was able to withdraw a case such as this, particularly when HQADF had developed a case for a substantial increase. It is even more difficult when it is known that the individual services and the HQADF chief of personnel opposed the decision to

withdraw the case. The DFRT had the prerogative to insist that the case went ahead but chose not to exercise it, despite the legislation requiring ADF salaries and allowances to be reviewed at no more than two yearly intervals.

The case was withdrawn solely for financial reasons, despite the smokescreen later released by HQADF.

This example demonstrates the need fro an independent organisation, with rights laid down in legislation, to contribute to representing the case for service personnel who are unable to speak out for themselves. While a trade union organisation would run counter to the traditions of the ADF it is not seen as the solution to this ongoing problem. There is the need for an independent group, outside of the ADF, to represent the rights of service personnel. Without this, industrial equity cannot be achieved.

In a recent meeting with ArFFA representatives CDF observed that it was good there was an independent group which could concentrate solely on personnel matters without having to balance against other, conflicting, issues. In reality ArFFA's representation at the DFRT is not governed by legislation. In the interests of industrial equity this should be changed. With the defence budget declining in real terms, a defence policy that places heavy emphasis on capital equipment, privatisation of traditionally uniformed tasks and the intention to reduce the number of uniformed personnel by 15 per cent over the next decade, the demands being placed on service personnel are increasing. The ADF is a unique occupation requiring many sacrifices including family stability and certain civil rights. Job security is increasingly under threat. The net result is that the conflict of priorities between current defence policies and pay and conditions issues can only increase.

It is unreasonable for the CDF to be expected to balance these contradictory requirements while maintaining adequate regard for the rights of the uniformed person.

# AUSTRALIAN MARITIME POWER - COMPLETE OR INCOMPLETE?

**by LCDR G.A. Dunk BSc MSc MCGI RAN**

*"He who controls the sea controls everything"*
*- Thermistocles,circa 400 BC*

*"This much is certain, he that commands the sea is at great liberty and may take as much or as little of the war as he will, whereas those that be strongest by land are many times nevertheless in great straits."*
*Francis Bacon, circa 1620*

What is Maritime Power? Certainly it is more than just Naval Power, and from various readings would appear to encompass, depending on the author, everything from national character and courage, to political will and geographical circumstances[1]. Perhaps the most succinct definition is Admiral Staveley's:

"It is a nation's ability to use the sea".[2]

A more detailed description was given by Admiral Gorshkov who stated

"...as the main components, possibilities for the State to study the ocean and harness its wealth, the status of the merchant and fishing fleets and their ability to meet the needs of the State and also the presence of a Navy matching the interests of the State" [3]

The only military component of the Gorshkov description is the Navy, and while this may be a realistic description for those Navies that have direct control over air assets, for the Australian situation the maritime air power of the Air Force has to be included.

The Gorshkov points will now be examined one by one to determine the status of Australian maritime power.

Australia's efforts to explore the oceans and utilise its wealth have been, to say the least, patchy. Our oceanographic activities have been neither extensive nor sustained, and have been further diminished with the de-commissioning of HMAS *Cook* in August 1990. In addition, a significant proportion of the Australian coastline remains to be adequately charted for surface navigation, let alone topologically and geologically surveyed for potential mineral exploitation. The single notable success in this category has been the exploration and exploitation of off-shore oil and natural gas. It is important to note in this regard that 85% of our known gas reserves[4] and 80% of oil production[5], are off-shore. The only other significant utilisation of mineral resources from the sea is in salt production, which in 1985/86 was worth $99 million.[6]

The Australian merchant fleet is patently unable to meet the needs of the State. In 1986/87 only 0.6% of world tonnage was represented by the Australian fleet although trade to and from Australia, measured in tonne-miles, accounted for 13.6% of world sea-borne trade[7]. Shipping accounted for 99% of the Australian international transport task and yet only 4% of this trade was carried on Australian-flagged ships[8] The situation with regard to Australian merchant shipping is however slowly improving. In 1984 there were approximately 100 major Australian-flagged vessels. Since then some 40-50 ships have been either built, ordered or are under construction, many of these being replacements for obsolete vessels. The introduction of newer ships has enabled crew levels to be reduced, and fuel efficiency to increase, both major factors in the overall competitiveness of Australian shipping. These vessels are however all sourced overseas as Australia no longer produces large merchant ships.

Apart from the direct economic impact of a strong Australian merchant fleet, a larger fleet would be required should it be necessary to take up ships from trade in any contingency; noting that normal commercial trading would undoubtedly continue, and without a larger merchant fleet Australia would rely further on foreign carriers for our trade. A larger fleet would most probably diversify the ship types and thus allow any ships taken up from trade to be closely matched to particular tasks.

Australia does not have an effective fishing fleet. Of the 6000 or so species of fish, crustaceans and molluscs that occur in Australian waters less than 100 are commercially exploited. The Australian fishing industry concentrates on estuarine, coastal, pelagic (surface) and demersal (bottom living) species, with the major catches being prawns, rock lobster, abalone, tuna, other fin species, scallops and oysters[9].

Under the Law of the Sea Convention Australia has an international obligation to allow access to other nations to resources occurring within the 200 nautical mile Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ) that are surplus to domestic fisheries requirements. The fact that significant numbers of vessels from Japan, Korea, Thailand and Taiwan are currently licensed to conduct operations with the AFZ shows that the local fishing industry cannot utilise the available resource.

The final aspect on the Gorshkov list is that of a Navy matching the needs of the State. Maritime power relates mainly to the Government's defence and foreign policies. With regard to defence policy it has been stated that "Australia must have the military capability to prevent an enemy from attacking us successfully in our sea and air approaches, gaining a foothold on our territory or extracting political concessions from us through the use of military force" [10]; whilst a key foreign policy priority has been stated by Senator Evans as "protecting Australia's security through the maintenance of a positive security and strategic environment in our region" [11]. The use of maritime power can therefore be seen to have relevance firstly, to ensure that an unfavourable situation does not develop the latent utilisation of maritime power and failing that, in the successful prosecution of any conflict that may arise, the active use of maritime power.

It should not be forgotten that Australia comprises both an island continent and a number of off-lying islands, and as such has no international land boundaries. Any threat to Australia's sovereignty must be posed through the surrounding sea/air gap, and must therefore necessitate a maritime response. The sea/air gap is open ocean in all directions except the north, and strategic guidance focuses on the northern archipelago as being the area from which, or through which, a conventional attack could most easily be posed.

Australia's relationships with regional countries, both in South East Asia and the South West Pacific, can be characterised as a series of bi-lateral relationships, with a notable exception being our involvement with Malaysia and Singapore, along with New Zealand and great Britain, in the Five Power De fence Arrangement (FPDA). These bi-lateral exchanges, rather than a single all-encompassing regional relationship, have been necessary due to the differing perspectives, needs and aspirations of the countries involved.

Maritime forces have two significant roles to play in support of the Government's policy of maintaining the current favourable strategic environment, namely influence and deterrence. Influence in this regard is described by Senator Evans in terms of politico-military capability, and he states "It provides the foundation for our capacity to contribute to a positive security environment "[12].

The act of influence by maritime forces is manifested in a number of guises, including ship visits, disaster relief and de fence co-operation.

The forms of defence co-operation differ for the SW Pacific and for South East Asia, and take regard for the individual needs of the various countries. In the SW Pacific the primary vehicle for cooperation is the Pacific Patrol Boat programme, designed to give the recipient countries some measure of autonomous surveillance and control over their vast fishing zones, and in the provision of maritime surveillance flights. In Asia the main form of cooperation is in military training and the participation in exercises, usually bi lateral although multilateral exercises do occur with respect to the FPDA. All these, and other lesser, actions demonstrate to our neighbours that the maintenance of a stable regional environment, and the maintenance of good bi-lateral, and where applicable commitment to multilateral, relations are of importance to Australia.

On the deterrence side the same ship visits, exercises and other defence co-operation serve to demonstrate Australia's military competence and capabilities.

In the event that influence and deterrence are not successful the ADF will be required to exercise active maritime power in the defence of Australian territory and/or assets. Strategic guidance focuses on the north of the continent as being the area most likely to be targeted during low level or escalated low level conflicts. Senator Evans details four key elements in our defence planning; early warning, surveillance, interdiction and ground mobility[13] of which surveillance and interdiction are directly related to the maritime elements of the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

Whilst possessing, by regional standards considerable maritime capabilities for both surveillance and interdiction, the weaknesses for Australia are the lack of an adequate, some might argue any, mine warfare capability and the lack of specialised defence infrastructure in the north, with resulting difficulties in logistic support. Whilst various measures have recently been announced by the Government to redress some of these concerns over the next decade[14], particularly with regard to mine warfare, maritime air activities and ground mobility, inadequacies associated with naval repair capability and the requirement to utilise the northern road transport infrastructure for extended logistic support operations in particular, will remain.

The Navy, and the maritime air aspects of the Air Force, can be considered as matching the interests of the State, and the final Gorshkov point is therefore met.

Another complementary look at the completeness of Australia's maritime power can be obtained by considering the six elements of seapower as described by Mahan, and transposing maritime power for seapower. Firstly, geographical position. Australia is situated at the end of a long archipelagic chain and adjoins the Pacific, Indian and Southern Oceans. No major trade routes pass close to the Australian coast and therefore, whilst our position may be advantageous as far as national security is concerned, we are not in a position to readily influence the maritime activities of other countries. A quick comparison with the geographical position of India will indicate that this is so.

Second, physical configuration. Mahan believed that large ports and harbours were a source of wealth to a country, as it allowed easy access to the sea for trade. He also believed that the same ports and harbours to be a weakness in times of war if they could not be properly defended. Australia,

being a large country with an extensive coastline has many ports, many associated with a single export item; eg. iron ore, coal, sugar, etc. Our ability to patrol and defend all ports, even just those in the north is questionable, resulting in priority being given to those with the greatest strategic worth.

Third, extent of territory. Mahan saw that countries with major gulfs or bays, or large river systems, are at a disadvantage due to the ease that these can be penetrated by an enemy. Our extent of territory, particularly the long, rugged and exposed northern coastline is therefore seen as a disadvantage to Australia's development as a maritime power.

Fourth, number of population. Mahan said that a country should have both substantial population and a significant proportion of people engaged in maritime activities. Australia's population is small and largely concentrated in the south-east corner. Of these only a small percentage of is actively engaged in maritime-related industries.

Fifth, national character. Mahan considered national character as related to maritime power in two main areas; firstly the tendency to trade and secondly the tendency to colonise. As seen previously, although Australian trade, as measured in tonne-miles, accounts for over 13% of world seaborne trade, the vast majority is carried in foreign-owned ships.

Lastly, character of government. Mahan wrote that the character of government had influence upon maritime power in two ways. Firstly, in peace the government could, or not, favour the growth of maritime -related industries, and secondly in war the government could maintain a Navy commensurate with the national shipping and other maritime interests. Whilst the Mahan description may be a little simplistic in that the maintenance of suitable maritime forces in peace may deter the outbreak of war, it could be argued that the Australian Government has encouraged, to some extent, the development of commercial maritime pursuits through policies designed to re-vitalise merchant shipping and reform the waterfront. As discussed previously under the Gorshkov definition of maritime power Australia's maritime forces are believed, in a large part, to be capable of defending our maritime assets and proximate shipping during credible contingencies.

In conclusion therefore Australia is an incomplete maritime power, both from the Gorshkov and Mahan descriptions. As far as Gorshkov is concerned Australia is incomplete in the harnessing of the ocean's wealth, with the notable exception of oil and natural gas exploration and exploitation, and in the status of our merchant and fishing fleets. From the Mahan definition we have significant deficiencies due to the nature and size of the Australian coastline, the size and location of the population, and the lack of mature maritime involvement and industries.

For a country with no land borders with any other nation, which has been settled by waves of migration coming over the oceans, which possesses diverse and extensive maritime assets, and whose trade, both internal and external, largely travels over the sea, this is hardly a notable national achievement.

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## About the Author

LCDR Dunk joined the Navy in 1974 and graduated from the University of New South Wales with a Bachelor of Science degree in pure mathematics in 1977. He undertook Principal Warfare Officer training at HMS DRYAD in 1983 and subsequently served as the ASW Officer of HMAS SYDNEY and as the Tactical Officer (ASW) at the RAN Tactical School. In 1987 he returned to the UK and completed a Master of Science degree in Maritime Defence Technology at the RN Engineering College, also being awarded the City and Guilds of London Institute Insignia Award in Technology. LCDR Dunk is currently serving as

the Deputy Director of the Towed Array Development Project and studying part time for a Master of Defence Studies degree at the Australian Defence Force Academy. He is married with two children.

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# THE NAVY PROJECT MANAGER'S PRIMER

**by Lieutenant Commander Alan Hinge, RAN**

*This article gives a handy checklist of questions to assist project managers minimise cost/schedule overrun factors which tended to plague defence project management teams in the 1970's and 80's.*

Well, it's FY 92-93 and again we are coming up to that fun time of the decade when defence project managers come under intense public scrutiny and feel the heat of cross examination before a better than average parliamentary committee. It seems like only yesterday,in 1985-86, that the blowtorch of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts was mercilessly applied to our collective defence 'belly'. We got a pretty well deserved and very well documented bollocking in June1986 for our generally ham fisted and amateurish approach to big ticket item project management, as detailed in JPCPA Report *Review of Defence Project Management*. Since then defence's belly has been fattened with about $55 Billion of the taxpayer's money and in the 1995 review we will be expected to have cleaned up our act. Remember, the 1995 hearings are only a posting away!

There is little doubt in my mind that defence has tidied up its project management act since the bad old days of the late 70's and early 80's, but have we come far enough and can we prove it? It may be worthwhile to rethink some of the lessons brought out in 1986 JPCPA report and several other reports of the era and apply these lessons as measures of effectiveness to current and envisaged defence projects. The aim of this primer is to provide the big ticket Navy project manager with a handy check-list of questions that may assist planning, and prevent problems by minimising the likelihood of previous project mistakes being repeated; to the detriment of cost, schedule, specification and perhaps one's own career.

In the 1980's cost and schedule overruns often stemmed from problems in the following broad project areas:

- Risk Assessment,
- Contractor Management Structure and Resources,
- Design,
- Cost Estimation,
- Equipment Acquisition,
- Contract Administration,
- Production, and
- Trials and Evaluation.

Detailed below are check-lists comprising questions that relate to contingency factors associated with each of the above project areas. Mitigating the effect of the undesirable contingency factor,or project characteristic ,listed helps keep the project within budget, on schedule and up to specification. However, if the contingency or characteristic is not able to be eliminated or reduced, some sort of costing provision should be factored into the project budget.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

From the outset, a better than gut level estimate of project risk must be made so that the project manager can develop realistic estimates for project costing, staffing and scheduling. An early 'alarm bell' on the project may save much time, money, energy and heartache if a good risk assessment is made and properly presented early on. It is generally difficult to quantify risk level with any degree of precision, so a basic scheme of three risk levels - low, medium and high - may be used to get an initial approximation. As a rule of thumb, low risk projects should get an additional cost and scheduling contingency factor of 15-20% added to the hard project cost estimate, while medium and high risk projects should get C/S contingency loadings of 20-30% and 30-40% respectively added to the hard estimate. Any higher level of contingency allowance indicates that planning homework may not have been properly done or that the project may be too difficult and should not be attempted in country. Of course,political imperatives have sometimes been known to override practical risk avoidance processes. A number of factors help in establishing which of the three risk levels a project should fall into, and they should be taken into consideration in any initial assessment of risk. Factors associated with **low risk** projects are:

- Manufacture and assembly of a proven design using technology within Australia's current industrial capacity.
- The unit, or one very similar, has been manufactured here previously.
- The unit is basically an 'off the shelf' overseas purchase involving minor in country modification.
- An overseas prime supplier exists (local assembly).
- The supplier is reliable and experienced with a good industrial relations record.
- The contract is minimum risk ie fixed price.
- Low level of technical complexity.
- Short duration (under five years)

Factors associated with a **medium risk** project are:

- Manufacture and assembly of a proven design using technology involving some development of Australian infrastructure.
- Unit has not been manufactured in Australia previously.
- Overseas purchase of prime equipment with some local manufacture and development.
- Local modification of existing equipment.
- Moderate risk contract of the firm price or cost incentive variety.

- Project duration of 5-10 years.
- Substantial level of technical complexity.

Factors involved in a **high risk** project include:

- local manufacture of unproven overseas design with large overseas component.
- local development of a new concept.
- local construction and design using new technology.
- local construction and design using existing technology
- high level of new technology and design effort leading to a high level of technical complexity.
- High risk contract such as a cost plus contract.
- Suppliers cost estimating skills and financial management are not efficient or particularly effective.
- Project duration in excess of 10 years.
- High degree of interfacing difficulty due to many equipments from many countries to be built into the one unit.

## CONTRACTOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES.

Sometimes you have very little choice of contractors and it is a matter of choosing the lesser of evils. Sometimes 'political' imperatives will leave you with no choice of contractor Nevertheless, there are ways of keeping contractors and tenderers honest by demonstrating that you have a sound idea of their company's profile and problems. Above all, great care must be taken to ensure that the contractor has correctly interpreted your project requirements.

Asking yourself the following questions can assist in evaluating tenderers and getting an inside story on the outfits which can make or break your project:

- Have I really established an accurate picture of the company's commercial profile?
- Does the company have a mediocre record of success or worse?
- Check the books. See products and workmanship. Determine if they have consistently met budget,schedule and spec.
- What do sub contractors and competitors say about the company's operations?
- Do areas of underdeveloped staff management skills exist?
- Does the company lack of experience in managing a project of this type?
- Is their project management organisation.appropriate?
- Is there a shortage of project management resources?
- Does the company lack project performance and monitoring systems eg. (CS).?
- Is there a historically high staff turnover. and lack of management continuity?
- Does the company have a track record of poor interaction with clients in terms of liaison arrangements with the department?
- Does a low level of project manager authority and autonomy.exist?
- Does the company have a deteriorating financial position? Is plant and material ageing to an unacceptable level?
- Was honesty lacking in pre-tender estimates?
- How effective are management reporting systems? How good is the formal review machinery? Does comprehensive Milestone reporting.exist? Is there a record of late issue of important management reporting documents?
- Does a low level of ability to co-ordinate design effort.exist?
- Is there an inability to formulate a comprehensive task plan?
- Does a limited understanding of, and experience in, catering for defence requirements exist?
- Are company approval processes overly cumbersome and time consuming?
- Does the company have a poor industrial relations record?
- Is the quality assurance framework adequate?
- Is there a probability that underestimation of project complexity has led to an inaccurate assessment of difficulty and duration of task.?
- Does a low Management Information System (MIS) infrastructure.exist?
- Is there sufficient access to management assistance ie good consultants?
- Have recruiting difficulties and delays.been evident?
- Have any reductions in staff ceilings seriously affected performance?
- Are there competing project demands.? Is the company spreading itself too thin?
- Does a low level of proven ability to monitor sub-contractor performance exist?
- Are you dealing with a consortium, as opposed to a single company? If so,will this lead to interface difficulties.?

## DESIGN

Do not make the 'best' the enemy of the 'good enough' by 'gold plating' or overspecifying requirements (Do all components have to be mil-spec?) This has been done extensively by the military in the not so accountable past and the bureaucracy and the taxpayer are justifiably wary of the 'Toys for the boys' syndrome. Differentiate between what your user actually needs as opposed to what he 'wants'. Where possible, apply the 80/20 rule and carefully establish that the unit's design meets the aim and maintain this aim.throughout the project ie the first rule of project management is the first principle of war.

- Is the level of design expertise adequate?
- Is project definition sufficient ? ie. do you have adequate specifications and documentation?
- Are you dealing with a first of class design?
- Do you have to use new technology ie unproven materials?
- How slow are design approval procedures? Can they be sped up?
- Do Inadequate and poorly monitored document and unit conversion processes relating to foreign designed

vessels.exist?
- Is sufficient use being made of simulation models?
- Are design standards.absolutely clear?
- Is the level of weight control in design process realistic?
- Do sufficient R and D resources exist to progress development?
- Is production capacity sufficient to minimise design constraints?
- Is there adequate liaison with the rest of the project team?
- Is the 'technological tail' wagging the 'operational dog'?

## EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION

- Is the equipment you need in production.?
- How good(or bad) is the ILS/Production package?
- How long will the equipment be on the production line?
- Have you negotiated places on equipment production lines?
- Are there sufficient training courses and documentation?
- Is equipment specification adequate?
- Have you provided adequate MIS and stock records?
- Will procurement action be impeded? Take steps to reduce process order times.
- Does the new equipment have commonality with equipment in service?
- Have the latest Australian Industrial Involvement conditions and constraints been satisfied?
- Have you accurately forecast needs for associated capital facilities and included their costings in estimates?
- How cumbersome are Change of Order procedures? How heavy are the penalties?
- Have you ordered appropriate quantities and types of test equipment?
- Have you provided for sufficient in-county spares?
- Did you order long lead time Weapons Sensors/ Common fits at an early enough stage?
- Is it probable that a foreign government change of policy could lead to embargo of some materials?
- Have you got an adequate reporting system for outstanding procurement actions?

## CONTRACT

- Does an unnecessarily high level of contract complexity exist?
- Do you currently have a poor capacity to supervise the contract and monitor it?
- Does the contractor have a clear idea of departmental requirements?
- Have you ensured against a failure to strictly adhere to Australian Standards (AS 3902)
- Have tender specifications been adequately written and oversighted? Has ambiguity been avoided?
- Have you incorporated sufficient incentive provisions?
- Did you incorporate appropriate penalty clauses and specific excusable delay clauses?
- Did you make adequate allowance for volume of design changes?
- Have you sufficiently emphasised the submission of satisfactory progress reports? Has the reporting methodology and frequency been specified?
- Have you incorporated and specified comprehensive and tailored QA management program?
- Have both parties set an agreed time for notice of pending contract change proposals?
- Were steps taken to minimise the likelihood of late contract finalisation?
- Have you avoided placing any FMS contracts before finalisation of AII (Australian Industry Involvement) agreements?
- Is there a mutually agreed provision for contract disputes built into the contract- eg. who will arbitrate if production package is not in accord with original specifications?

## COST ESTIMATION

- Do staff have a poor quality of cost estimating skills?
- Is there a lack of systematic cost/schedule reporting systems?
- Does an adequate ability exist to have early warning of cost and schedule overruns? Can timely corrective action.be taken?
- Has contract negotiation.been comprehensive enough? Have loopholes been minimised?
- How will slow approval arrangements.affect costs?
- Has a detailed and impartial check been made for omissions in estimates?
- Could there have been an intentional underestimation of costs to obtain contract?
- Has the economic downturn affected FMS costings (drop in dollar value)?
- Have previous industrial disputes led to major pay increases.and conditions expenses and is this pattern likely to continue?
- Is sub-contractor supervision and relations poor?
- Is an adequate equipment costing database.at your disposal?
- What is the full life impact on project cost of royalties?
- Have you factored travel and associated expenses.into project cost?
- Is an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) necessary? If so, how much will it cost and how much time is budgeted for it? How much will this time cost?
- Don't forget to take out insurance if possible?
- Have you taken into account extensive through-life costs of all major and ancillary systems?
- Did you underestimate training costs?
- How old is production plant and material? Will additional fund injections be called for during the production process?

## PRODUCTION

- Is change to key project personnel.minimised?
- Are production facilities and resources.adequate?
- Does the workforce have sufficient experience in specific production processes and material handling?
- How stable is the workforce? Also, is it historically prone to strike action and causing schedule slippages? Check accident rate.figures.and application of the total quality management process. If TQM is not applied

insist on the formation and training of Process Action Teams.

- How high is the incidence of equipment modification?
- Can approval processes be shortened through minimising departmental decision making time?
- Are adequate staffing arrangements in place to ensure contract specs met?
- Is the outfit cleared to AS 3902 standard in all respects? Are there any deviations in compliance with AS 3902?
- Do unnecessary recruitment delays.exist? If so, how can they be minimised?
- Have all inadequate or ambiguous specifications.be eliminated?
- How faulty are equipment and materials? Do ageing plant and materials.pose major problems?
- What problems exist with the use of new materials?
- Are all new procedures adequately promulgated to workforce?
- Have steps been taken to ensure that configurational modifications and specification changes at relatively short notice are minimised? Has the follow on impact of all configurational changes been traced on a total performance basis? Who is overviewing the net effect of all individual configuration changes?
- Does the department have poor on-site QA team representation?
- Has purchase order processing time.been minimised?
- Is the manufacture of associated facilities (eg. Land Based Magnetic Test Range (LBMTR) for MHI project).adequately coordinated?
- Have steps been taken to minimise late submission of contract changes?
- Have any Contractor-Subcontractor interface problems.been fixed?
- Are subcontractor work sharing arrangements inefficient?
- Are satisfactory and compatible networking techniques.being used?
- Have you taken into account possible discontinuity of resources eg. rearrangement of government priorities and its effect on budgets due to change of government or economic downturn?
- Is the weight monitoring system.adequate?
- Is there the likelihood of future staffing constraints?
- Is a mix of specifications being used?
- Does a low commonality of production processes.exist?

## TRIALS AND EVALUATION

- Have you made special time and conditions allowances for first of class or prototype testing? Have you anticipated user problems due to unfamiliarity with type?
- Is the unit built to specification? Are technical performance specifications unambiguous and measurable?
- Are satisfactory mechanisms in place for remedial action to be taken? Has all warranty/guarantee information been received, checked and agreed? Is an appropriate outstanding action and defect reporting system in place?
- Have you ordered sufficient stock in advance of requirements?
- Are all maintenance and operation publications available (in English)?
- Is an adequate test and repair centre available?

## CONCLUSION

A host of questions dealing with contingency factors traditionally affecting project success have been listed. All factors have the potential to produce project specific contingencies that can adversely affect cost, schedule and whether or not the end product meets specification. In the ideal case, the manager should proactively attempt to eliminate the contingency factor from his project at an early stage or at least move to mitigate its adverse influence. If this is not possible application should be made for an out of Canberra posting from the project in late 1993/early 1994 (depending on the degree of your verifiable, sustained culpability) so the proactive manager can separate himself, in both time and distance, from embarrassing questions in 1995/96.

Perhaps the proactive project manager of the future may even consider getting hapless contractors to sit an examination in which most of the questions in this primer must be answered to the project manager's satisfaction, in say 250,000 words or less in a one week time frame. This would not only prove that the contractor is the 'right stuff' in terms of delivering on time and up to spec, but it would also be a hell of a test of his motivation and commitment!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lieutenant Commander Alan Hinge is a physics graduate of the Australian National University. After two years instructing in TAFE, he joined the RAN as an Instructor Officer in 1979 and spent several years engaged in electronics training including hands on application service on board HMAS *Perth* In 1985, after a posting to HMAS *Waterhen* as Training Officer, he became the first junior officer in the ADF to be awarded a Defence Fellowship which involved research into the use of sea mine deployments during limited conflicts. This was followed by the RAN Staff College where he graduated as a prizeman and a posting to Navy Office in the Directorate of Naval Shipbuilding Policy. Lieutenant Commander Hinge is a former editor of this Journal 1987-88) and is a frequent contributor. He is the winner of eight Peter Mitchell Essay Competition awards and has produced twenty eight articles for professional journals in Australia and Europe. His first book, 'Minewarfare in Australia's First Line of Defence' has recently been published by the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian ational Unversity.

*HS 816 Squadron Seahawk Helicopters in formation.*

# Salt in her Veins:

**If anyone could be said to have salt in their veins without ever going to sea, it is Margaret Booth, long-serving secretary and life member of the Naval Historical Society.**

## by Larry Noye

Margaret Booth was introduced to the Navy as a girl. Her Glasgow-born father, the late Jock Campbell, was a sick-berth attandant. During his 30 years in the RAN (from 1919) he was likely to take the little girl along when he was engaged on weekend work at one of the Sydney naval depots to which he was attached.

She would do little jobs at his suggestion. "We lived the Navy 24 hours a day," she recalls. "That included when we lived at Crib Point, near Flinders Naval Base in Victoria."

Then there were the anxious wartime days. Her father was among those at sea during perilous times. He was among crew members taken off the stricken HMAS *Australia* in action against the Japanese off Savo Island in the Solomons on 9 August 1942.

That date was to be important as Margaret grew into middle age. For 15 years she has produced the *Canberra Communicator*, a regular newsletter of the Naval Historical Society in Canberra. Its columns absolutely breathe nautical life.

It will report that a new captain has taken over a ship and offer a 'welcome aboard', or tell of how the chapter provided books for lonely sailors on HMA Ships *Success*, *Jervis Bay* and *Canberra*, or how prizes were awarded for outstanding success in courses aboard *Jervis Bay*...

A recent issue reports that: "The chapter is trying to support in a small way the newly-enlarged Naval Aviation Museum at Nowra. We hope to provide a few seats for weary visitors."

Ships' COs are quoted from time to time in warm replies to her missives. Some turn up at minthly chapter meetings and tell of their experiences.

A special edition of the *Communicator* was issued to guests at a recent anniversary dinner. It was on 9 August — the anniversary of the loss of HMAS *Canberra* (and of the unveiling of the ship's memorial near the shores of Lake Burley Griffin.)

That memorial — a big anchor set in concrete and bearing an appropriate message — is also a monument to the efforts of people like Margaret Booth: It was installed by members of the Naval Historical Society and its completion vindicated the efforts of everyboy who had been involved since the chapter's inception in 1974., not the least president and treasurer Frank Adamik and Arthur King.

It was perhaps apt that when, ten years ago, Admiral Sir Anthony Synnot unveiled the memorial, the chill wind blew from the mountains that ring Canberra, prompting the *Communicator* to liken it to "standing on the bridge of a ship."

The unveiling was also seen as a sincere tribute to the 84 young sailors who died when the cruiser went down all those years ago.

At a dinner marking the 10th anniersary of the memorial Margaret Booth was made a Life Member of the Naval Historical Society, but rumour has it that when offered the prime page three position in *Navy News* if she cared to change into a bathing suit, Margaret none too reluctantly declined...

**THE AUSTRALIAN NAVAL INSTITUTE BOOK OF THE OUARTER**

*The ANI Council has decided to offer Institute members an opportunity of obtaining important works on naval affairs at discount prices under a special agreement with the Co-op Bookshop at the Australian Defence Force Academy.*
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# AUSTRALIAN NAVAL INSTITUTE BOOK OF THE QUARTER — Spring 1992

## *Aye, Aye Minister: Australian Naval Administration 1939-59*

### Introduced by Tom Frame

**ANI Book of the Quarter Special Price: $13.95**

(Postage and handling: $5.00 — Recommended retail price$29.95)

The popular conception of navies is usually limited to ships and sailors, and to their activities in wartime. As Jeffrey Grey comments: 'Far too much military history in this country treats the armed forces as self-contained entities and regards combat as the only element of war worth writing about.'[1] It is an image that regrettably neglects the complex administration, largely staffed by civilians, which supports both the men and the equipment in operations at sea.

In the years when the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) was a distinct administration entity (1915-21 and 1939-73), the Secretary of the Department of the Navy was a powerful figure and the civilian equivalent of the uniformed Chief of Naval Staff. Yet the contribution of the Navy's civilians and the roles and functions of the Navy Office has been severely neglected by historians.

The release of *Aye Aye Minister* follows Robert Hyslop's pioneering work on naval administration in the period 1900-39, published in 1973. Hyslop is ideally suited for his task. He joined the Department of the Navy in 1936 as a clerk employed at Garden Island and remained a naval administrator for over thirty years, becoming Assistant Secretary of the Navy Department. During his career, Hyslop completed the Joint Services Staff College course at Latimer in England and was made a Companion of the Imperial Service Order for his contribution to public administration.

*Aye, Aye Minister* examines the formulation of naval defence policy and the management of the RAN in wartime and peacetime. It assesses government control of naval affairs, the professional command of the RAN and the impact of each on the other. In his review, John Eddy states: 'we are introduced to the structures and habits of the Navy, and into the great plans and daily workings of the bureaucracy as well as the strategies and dilemmas of the 'statesmen' who were in principle their constitutional masters. The events described sweep from the momentous to the trivial, as did the lives of his *dramatis personae*, and Robert Hyslop's canvas abounds with characters both lively and dull. There is a mastery about the work, a wit and a perception which distinguishes it from workaday administrative history.[2]

The author of this historical study writes in the best traditions of administrative understatement and with a commendable commodity of words. So much so, indeed, that we need to be on guard not to fall into the trap of failing to recognise the magnitude of the issues he addresses and then missing their ensuing lessons for us today.

Two examples serve to illustrate my point. First, the conversion of the RAN from being adjunct to and dependent on the Royal Navy to becoming a wholly independent national force in the late 1950s. This was more than simply a 'coming of age'. It was the maturing of the RAN's relationship with the parent British navy, all the more

traumatic because of some strident ultra-nationalistic political attitudes and utterances. Hyslop describes the changes but touches only lightly on the possible deleterious effects. It is only in passing that he reminds us how much of this change denied the received wisdom of yesteryear when a close connection with the Royal Navy was seen as a *sine qua non*.

The second example is somewhat less explicit, partly because it is strictly outside the period addressed in the book. This is the disappearance in 1973 of the Navy Department and the absorption of its civil staff into the new enlarged Department of Defence. Much has been written on this subject and Hyslop was apparently unable to resist offering in his own contribution. 'I fear that Australia will regret the decision to replace the separate departments with a single much expanded and more-cumbersome department of defence that has been designed to deal with central defence policy-making but not at all with the complexities of the administration of the armed services'. Hyslop's suggestion of a separate ministry of services administration is, according to Jeffrey Grey, 'unlikely to find favour with either government or civilian bureaucracy, but it is worth thinking about nonetheless'.[3]

We need to remember here that Hyslop was a senior officer of the Navy Department that was deliberately disbanded and it would perhaps be fair to allow for a degree of bias unfavourable to the burgeoning Defence Department. But no emphasis on his personal attitude should diminish the loss to naval endeavour that these changes represent.

The Chief of Naval Staff may now be free of the sometimes irritating voice of the naval civil servant who remembered history and advised caution. But he also lacks the wise counsel of the man in the 'black coat' who had seen so much more of the government game and who was acutely tuned to the politics of recurring situations.

The publisher, AGPS, deserves credit for the excellent production of *Aye. Aye. Minister*. Veteran military historian Warren Perry remarks that 'the book is physically attractive and its attention to detail makes it a good book for the general reader as well as for the specialist. It includes a comprehensive biography, lists of Ministers, Permanent Heads and Chiefs of the Naval Staff, and a chronology The author has provided readers with a comprehensive and useful analytical index which does not limit itself to single main entries followed by 'strings' of numbers only'.[4]

*Ave, Aye Minister* is an engaging study rich in fine detail and analysis and, as Michael O'Connor suggests, 'should stimulate a wider interest in Australia's naval history and administrative culture'.[5] With the benefit of unrestricted access to primary source material, Hyslop has produced an authoritative work which will be of continuing interest to students of naval history and public administrative. It is highly recommended and a most appropriate volume for the first ANI 'Book of the Quarter'.

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***Aye Aye Minister: Australian Naval Administration 1939-59*, Robert Hyslop (Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1990) 229 pp text, 3 tables, chronology and glossary, softcover.**

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# DANCING WITH TIGERS—A MATTER OF CONFIDENCE

## AN ESSAY ON AUSTRALIA AND SOUTH EAST ASIA:

by LIEUTENANT J.P.M. SHEVLIN, RAN

**THIS IS AN ANI SILVER MEDALLION WINNING ESSAY**

*'In quietness and confidence shall be your strength'.*
*—Isaiah, 30:15*

## INTRODUCTION

In an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* titled 'Dancing with Tigers', Professor Stephen Fitzgerald, Director of the Asia-Australia Institute, stated 'Australia's future is bound up with the Asian region whether we like it or not. To be a part — to belong — is a matter of our survival'.[1] This view echoes other statements acknowledging the economic might of the so-called 'Asian Tigers' and the rapidly developing pride of South East Asian 'tiger cubs'.[2] Australia's future wellbeing depends on the region and the security of South East Asia and its continued prosperity are fundamental to our interests.

The 1989 Ministerial Statement on 'Australia's Regional Security'[3] recognised this situation and described, amongst other initiatives, a desire to achieve a 'comprehensive engagement' with the nations of South East Asia. The statement defined the relationship as:

> ..."comprehensive" in that there should be many elements in the relationship, and "engagement" because it implies a mutual commitment between equals... The essential elements of the concept of comprehensive engagement might be stated as ... participating in the gradual development of a regional security community based on a sense of shared security interest'.[4]

This intention persists today, and, in large part, determines the shape and content of Australia's relationship with her near northern neighbours.

The imperatives of comprehensive engagement are clear. The economies of South East Asia are rapidly expanding: growth averages 6-8%, Thailand is achieving an annual increase of 9%;

Singapore now has a higher average income than Australia.[5] South East Asia is a major trading partner and in excess of 40% of Australia's trade is with, or passes through, the region. As Prime Minister Hawke observed in May 1991, 'no element of our international policy over the coming years will be more important than maintaining the momentum of Australia's economic enmeshment in the (South East Asian) region'.[6]

However, despite these imperatives, it is also clear that Australia is ill at ease and uncomfortable with the situation. This point was cleverly made in a cartoon accompanying the 'Dancing with Tigers' article. It showed a confident, nimble footed tiger, waltzing effortlessly; an uncertain Prime Minister Keating – wearing European ball dress – hung uncomfortably in its paws; other tigers lounged lazily in the background, waiting their turn. The image was powerful. The scene captured well Australia's predicament; perched awkwardly on the edge of Asia, acutely aware of the little we share in common with our northern neighbours, but, nevertheless, determined to be a part.

Australia must succeed in this endeavour. We need to secure long-term access to regional markets and, in the shortterm, demonstrate to South East Asia the value of our participation. Our differences may make this difficult but, as Richard Woolcott noted, 'we need to be able to operate (in South East Asia) efficiently and confidently if we are to guarantee our national security and advance our economic interests'.[7] We need to become 'the "odd man in" rather than the "odd man out"'.[8]

The purpose of this essay is to explore how this assimilation might be achieved. To this end, the essay will briefly examine Australia's links with South East Asia and identify the mechanisms by which Australia can comprehensively engage with the region. It will also nominate possible roles for Australia in the gradual development of a regional security community. The essay will contend that Australia has a useful part to play but must act quickly to secure her future. Moreover, there are misgivings about Australia's participation in the region. The essay will assert that a sensitive outlook, founded on trust and growing mutual confidence, offers the best hope of achieving future well-being and national security. A number of confidence building measures will be identified.

## DEFINITIONS

Before progressing further it is important that a number of terms be clarified in the context of Senator Evans' statement. Foremost amongst these is South East Asia. The region comprises 10 countries: the six ASEAN[9] nations; Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand; the three Indochinese countries of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam; and, finally, Myanmar.

The second term is 'comprehensive'. The Ministerial Statement defines a multidimensional approach to South East Asia and offers seven instruments by which the relationship can be developed. These are identified as: military capability, politico-military capability, diplomacy, economic links, development assistance, 'non-military' assistance, and exchanges of people and ideas.[10] These elements represent the comprehensive nature of Australia's engagement in the region, but, for the purposes of this essay, it is intended to focus on the application of the first three instruments; military capability, politico-military capability and economic links.

The final term to be defined is 'security community'. Amitav Acharya has defined it as 'a group of states whose members share dependable expectations of peaceful change in their mutual relations and rule out the use of force as a means of problem solving'.[11] In short, a group of countries capable of peacefully resolving shared problems by applying the resources and capabilities available to individual members. The focus is internal; a security community does not seek to project its influence outside its defined borders. This is the meaning used throughout the essay.

## AUSTRALIA'S LINKS WITH SOUTH EAST ASIA

Australia wishes to be part of South East Asia but, at the same time, is acutely aware of its 'otherness'; a point well made in the Ministerial Statement. We have a 'unique character' and 'Australia's history, cultural affiliations, values and traditions, ethnic makeup and alliance memberships make us distinctly different from the countries of our immediate region'.[12] Despite these difficulties, Australia has worked hard to become an accepted player in South East Asia.

Understandably, mistakes have been made in the effort because, as Evans has noted, 'South East Asia has tested Australian foreign policy. We have tended to accept it as the touchstone of our success or failure (and) it has thus borne the brunt of our own uncertainty'.[13] More recently, however, Andrew MacIntyre has discerned 'a more hard-nosed attitude' in Australia's diplomatic efforts in the region 'based on the realisation that ... membership of South East Asia is, to a large extent, simply a state of mind'.[14] A more assertive foreign policy tone and a more confident outlook now characterise Australia's dealings with South East Asia, and, over the years, a number of important and enduring links have been forged with the region.

### The Colombo Plan

The Colombo Plan provided the forum for Australia's first formal involvement with the newly independent nations of South East Asia. The plan was conceived by Australia as a scheme for regional, bilateral, economic cooperation. The scheme was adopted in 1950 and provided economic, technical and developmental assistance to South East Asia. The Commonwealth countries were its principal backers although the United States was also a major benefactor. In its first 15 years (1950-65), Australian expenditure exceeded £58 million; £41 million was devoted to economic development, £17 million was spent on technical assistance.[15] The Colombo Plan has now lapsed but it was important for Australia 'furnishing the ideological, philosophical and humanitarian basis of subsequent aid policies for South East Asia'.[16]

### The ANZUS Treaty

Whilst not a link with South East Asia, the ANZUS Treaty is included here because of its influence on regional security. The treaty is an essential element of Australia's defence posture and, cognisant of Acharya's definition, it also represents an important capability that could be utilised in the peaceful resolution of regional problems. The ANZUS Treaty commits the three members to 'consult together whenever ... the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the parties' is threatened and provides an undertaking to 'act to meet the common danger'.[17] In the 1950s the danger was unequivocally the looming menace of communism.

### The Association of South East Asian Nations

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established in 1967. Its declared primary goals are 'economic growth, social progress and cultural development'.[18] Success in these areas has only been minimal but, as noted in the Ministerial Statement, 'ASEAN has contributed to stabilising the region in a productive way. It has provided a forum to dilute (but not eliminate) intra-regional territorial and security suspicions in the ambience of ASEAN solidarity'.[19]

Australia became an ASEAN dialogue-partner in 1974. This status has allowed Australia to work closely with the ASEAN members, both individually and collectively, and, particularly in the forum of the annual ASEAN-PMC meetings, a better understanding has developed and opportunities for cooperation have emerged. Liaison at Government department level is encouraged and the recent addition of business organisations as participants in this forum, has added a further dimension to Australia's links with ASEAN and, ultimately, the whole South East Asian region.

### The Five Power Defence Arranqements

In 1971, following the announcement of the United Kinqdom's withdrawal from 'East of Suez', Australia and New Zealand joined the UK in an arrangement committed to the security of Malaysia and Singapore. The Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) describes this association.

The main operational element of FPDA is the Integrated Air Defence System (IADS) and Australia provides rolling deployments of FA18 aircraft to Butterworth in support of IADS activities. Additionally, an Infantry Company is based in Malaysia whilst periodic detachments of maritime patrol aircraft and occasional ship visits and associated exercises, complete Australia's commitment.

However, the real strategic significance of FPDA is that it is the only regional security arrangement that includes external powers. As one of these nations, Australia's involvement in FPDA represents an important foothold in the security network of South East Asia. Acknowledging the dramatic changes that have swept the globe in recent years, it is quite possible that, before too long, this foothold could prove useful. This potential will be explored later on.

## Regional Economic Links

Australia's relationship with South East Asia today is based on a strong trading foundation. ASEAN constitutes our fourth largest export market and is the fourth largest source of Australia's imports. The region is acknowledged as home to the fastest growing economies in the world and 'Australia has come to recognise that (the) neighbourhood is paramount to its trading future'.[20] The trading relationship has expanded and access to one another's markets is becoming easier. Indeed, over the last five years to 1990, two-way trade has shown an annual growth rate of 17%.[21] According to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'this is a trend likely to continue due to ASEAN's increased market competitiveness and declining levels of protection in Australia'.[22]

Over the years the relationship has matured. The donor-recipient attitudes of yesterday have been overtaken 'by discussions of mutually beneficial cooperation and technology transfer'.[23] That the relationship is now very much a commitment between equals, cannot be overstated. Efforts are being directed towards enhancing and sustaining positive economic trends in the region, in an open, multilateral trading environment. Australia has sought to encourage this cooperative mood, perceiving its role as a catalyst for the idea. There is good reason for this. Quite clearly, despite its size and potentially buoyant economy, Australia has the most to gain.

The strength and vibrancy of the South East Asian economies stand in stark contrast with our own economy. The Sydney Morning Herald has reported 'some younger South East Asians speak of nations like Australia with concern, even condescension ... (and) worry that Australia is falling behind'. Moreover, one Indonesian businessman observed, 'we need each other; we don't want you to be a stagnant place that feels excluded'.[24]

Recognising this prospect and aware of regional perceptions of our economic circumstances, Australia-ASEAN forum discussions are now more forward-looking. Efforts are now directed to a 'more detailed exploration of the specialist fields of science and technology, education, telecommunications and the environment',[25] areas where Australia has considerable experience and expertise. Attention in these areas offers scope for developing further linkages in the chain of Australia-South East Asian relations.

This move towards service and 'value-added' industries is also reflected in activities initiated under the umbrella of the ASEAN-Australia Economic Cooperation Program. Projects are assessed solely on their commercial potential and 'concentrate on science and technology and food and agriculture, with a shift towards science and technology over time'.[26]

## External Economic Links

Whilst Australia's focus is drawn more and more towards South East Asia our links beyond the region cannot be ignored. Japan continues to dominate our export market, a characteristic we share with the region. Our imports, however, originate primarily in the United States or the European Community.[27] Australia is dependent upon securing and maintaining extensive trading links; indeed, 'we must be able to deal with, invest or trade, anywhere'.[28] This is not always easy to do.

The fabric of international trade describes a complex pattern of interlocking, sometimes overlapping, interests. Markets are interdependent and economic survival demands cooperation. Not surprisingly therefore, a recent Time Magazine Asia conference held that 'securing access to markets and technology was ... the most vital (regional) concern'.[29] The conference also underlined the fundamental need for domestic economic order to ensure ongoing success in international markets. In this regard, doubt was frequently expressed about the state of the US economy. Because of its size and global influence, concern about the US will inevitably lead to a consideration of security issues and it is to this subject we now turn.

## Shared Security Interests

Talk of a US withdrawal from South East Asia, be it piecemeal or wholesale, true or false, cannot be ignored by either Australia or South East Asia. From the region's perspective, Japan remains an uncertain quantity and balancing her economic might is a problem. According to Noordin Sopiee, Director General of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Kuala Lumpur, there is only one solution. He notes, "...the threshold of an economic Pax Nipponica, it is absolutely essential for us to ensure the comprehensive engagement of the US in this region'.[30] The memories of World War II remain vivid for many in South East Asia and Japan is clearly mistrusted and feared. Australia's concerns are driven less by emotion but doubts about the future are no less real.

Clearly, Australia and South East Asia share many common interests and the links between both are substantial. However, dominating the landscape is a single, common

feature; economic security founded on free and open trade. Any plan therefore to develop a regional security system must be based on a solid commitment to preserve this essential, shared interest.

## THE MECHANICS OF COMPREHNSIVE ENGAGEMENT

The gradual development of a regional security community will be slow and complex. However, it is possible and, to assist in the process, Prime Minister Hawke last year nominated four corner stones for the project. These were: 'support for the United Nations; support for the continued engagement of the United States; support for the development of regional cooperation and dialogue on security issues; and, last, continuing to develop Australia's defence force as our final guarantor of Australia's security, and as a contribution to the security of the region as a whole'.[31]

The first two cornerstones require no explanation. The important role of the United Nations is well understood and the influence and power of the US is egually apparent to all. The remaining two stones, however, warrant closer study.

### Regional Cooperation and Dialoque

The development of a systematic process for dialogue on security matters between South East Asian nations, is perhaps the most important cornerstone. Senator Evans has provided a good description of just what this entails and it is worth repeating:

> 'What is involved here is dialogue to reduce the possibility of misapprehension that is so large an element of friction between nations; dialogue so that we can come to share perceptions as the strategic landscape changes around us; dialogue so that we can assure others, and be reassured ourselves in turn, about the role of military forces; dialogue that can be used to reach out to former adversaries as well as to strengthen existing links with friends; and dialogue that can be used to build up a cooperative capacity to tackle jointly regional issues such as the security of sea lanes'.[32]

There is an element of idealism in this definition but the simple message is nonetheless clear. If there is a willingness to discuss issues and cooperate together, any problem can be overcome, it only takes time and patience and a willingness to compromise. The benefits are irrefutable.

Australia's 'otherness' is no obstacle to this process.Indeed, dialogue is one of the easiest things to initiate although constructive, enduring dialogue, does take practise. In recent months, the Australian Defence Force has ably demonstrated its corporate skills in this area and the results have been encouraging. Two examples illustrate this claim.

The first example involves the Chief of General Staff and the conference he convened in April on the theme 'Land Forces into the 21st Century: Australian and Regional Challenges'. The intention was to promote an understanding of the role of land forces in maintaining national and regional security and, with this in mind, the audience included many senior officers from both Australia and overseas. The objective was achieved well. As Denis Warner observed, it was a 'stimulating initiative (and) a healthy reflection of the Service appreciation of accelerating regional changes'.[33]

The second example relates to the conference 'Maritime Change: Issues for Asia' jointly sponsored by the RAN and Australian Defence Industries, in November 1991, and attracting an audience drawn from across the region. It too was a big success but, of particular note, is that its success was well reported in South East Asia. Benjamin Machmud wrote of 'the tremendous spirit of goodwill and cooperation developed'[34] and suggested regular meetings of this kind should be held. The conference provided a forum for robust debate and an open exchange of views. It confirmed once more the value of dialogue and demonstrated the defence force's skills in this area.

### Developing the Australian Defence Force

The fourth cornerstone, developing the Australian Defence Force, requires careful management unless the wrong message be conveyed to our regional neighbours. Nevertheless, whilst the need for caution and sensitivity is accepted, there are indications that now is a good time to consider a more expansive Australian role in the pursuit of a regional security community. Uncertainty about the continuing US presence in the region and the recent ASEAN agreement 'to engage in a collective dialogue on security issues and to explore new avenues for security cooperation', [35] lend credence to this suggestion.

Australia enjoys a good reputation in South East Asia as a trusted and reliable friend. Nathan has commented that 'Australia's greatest asset in dealing with South East Asia is its non-threatening profile'. We have no record of imperialism or aggression but rather a reputation as 'a source of national development and progress'. Our past efforts in the region are generally considered 'to be quite successful and instrumental in promoting regional cooperation'.[36]

At the same time, Australia's links with the US through ANZUS (and the access to new technology and the opportunities for joint operations and exercises they provide) afford Australia a level of credibility, and confirm a measure of capability, unmatched within the immediate region. In the event of a US withdrawal, Henry Albinski suggests 'Australia is a trusted, resident and non-intimidatory middle power' [37] and is therefore well placed to contribute actively to the security of the region. Our position as an ASEAN dialogue-partner or our commitments to the FPDA could provide the means to do so.

Australia's self reliant defence posture has produced a well-balanced and capable force. Quite clearly, it has the means, albeit limited, to guarantee Australia's security and to contribute to the security of the region. Australia must remain conscious of her regional strength and cannot forget the importance of building and maintaining confidences in the region. In this respect, Desmond Ball has identified 12 'building blocks' for regional security, what he describes as 'Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs)';[38] they are worth a look.

## Confidence and Security Buildinq Measures

Ball's CSBMs are 12 simple building blocks designed to foster trust and confidence between Australia and her South East Asian neighbours. They are practical and cumulative, each building on and reinforcing, the confidences established by the preceding block. The concept is elementary but also highly effective and CSBMs represent a viable framework on which could be developed a regional security community based on shared security interests.

The 12 CSBMs are: transparency in relationships; the creation of intelligence exchanges; strengthening and expanding existing bilateral cooperative arrangements; building on the ASEAN-PMC process, that is, extending government-to-government contacts; the declaration of the Timor Sea Zone of Cooperation; institution of a regional maritime surveillance and safety regime; establishment of a regional avoidance of incidents at sea regime; introduction of a regional airspace surveillance and control regime; the creation of South West Pacific sovereignty surveillance regime; a technology monitoring regime; an environmental security regime; and, finally, the expansion of non-government contacts.[39]

Individually, each CSBM is fairly self explanatory and the measure can be implemented without too much difficulty. They address issues upon which there is a measure of consensus and, far from being ends in themselves, their value lies in the foundation they provide for the following blocks. Some have already been adopted and, to that extent, the gradual development of a regional security community can be considered to have begun.

## CONCLUSION

Australia and South East Asia are distinctive regions that have little in common except for geographic proximity and a growing number of links in a developing relationship. Economic growth is the objective of all and, whilst Australia has the largest regional economy its annual rate of growth pales in comparison to those of its neighbours. Regional economic enmeshment is a shared objective. That said, the potential vulnerability of the region is also recognised and its limited capacity to provide for its own security is manifestly clear

In these circumstances, Australia's defence capabilities, her proven interest and commitment to regional in the Five Power Defence Arrangements, and her alliance United States, make her an important player on the stage. With a reduction in the US presence in South ia anticipated, Australia's involvement in regional matters may expand.

While Australia could accept a broader role it is clear move to do so should be prefaced by extensive regional. Discussion and consultation have been identified as important ingredients to regional security. There is a constant reassurances and the liberal use of confidence ity building measures.

For the moment, Australia is conscious of her 'otherness' and the differences often seem more obvious than the similarities. As a result, we still tend to be uncomfortable in our relations with South East Asia but, that said, it would also appear that full participation is simply a matter of developing confidence. When all parties can refine that, a regional security community will be well on the way to fruition.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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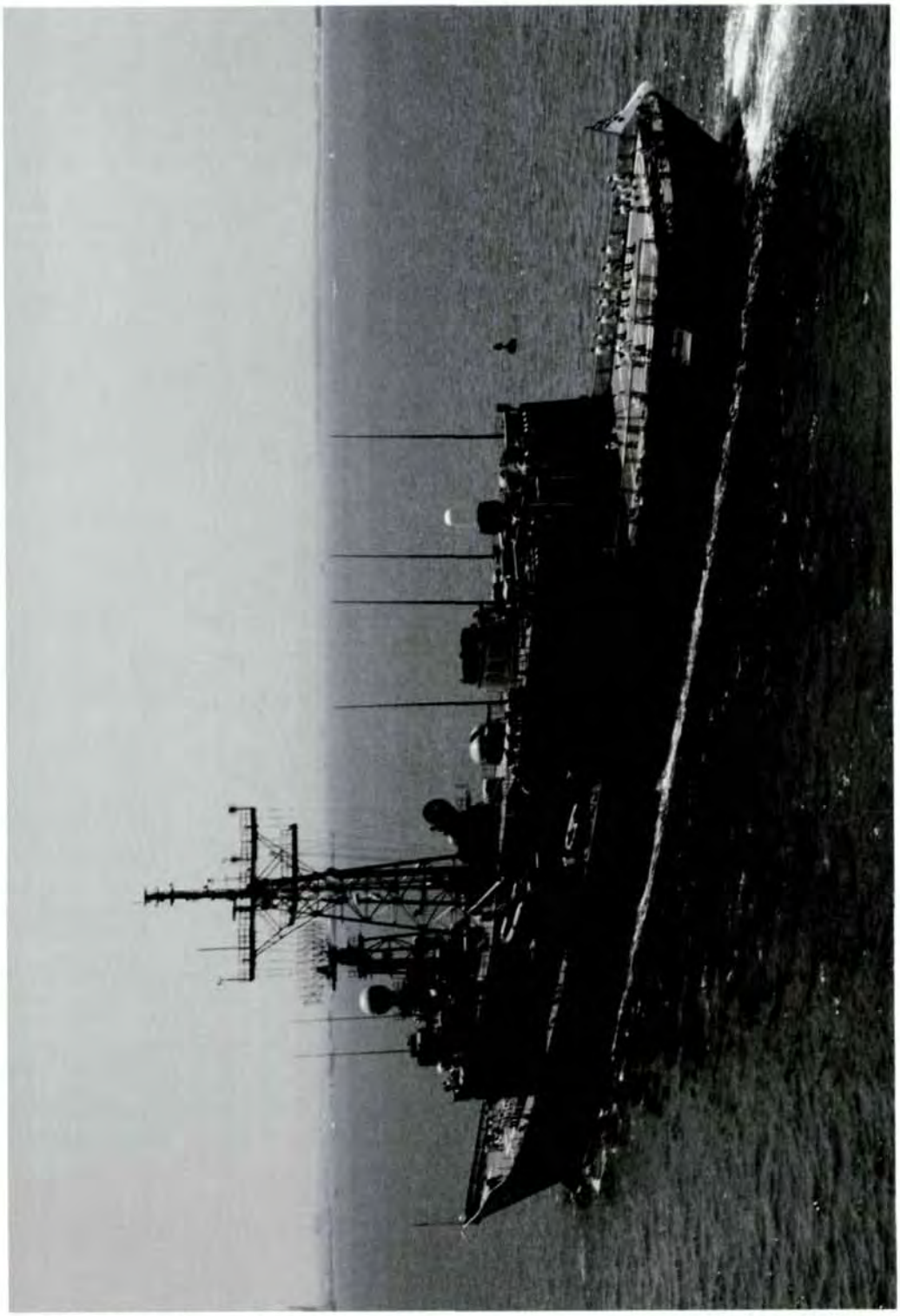


*The Guided Missile Frigate HMAS Canberra approaches San Diego Harbour during Exercise RIMPAC 92.*

# SWEEPING

## by George Henry Robinson

*This never before published piece gives a first hand account of minesweeping in the Aegean Sea and Dardanelles during WWI. It was written shortly after the war and thanks is given to the writer's grandson, currently serving Lieutenant Graham Robinson, RAN for making it available to JANI. We are also grateful Lieutenant Commander Alan Hinge,RAN was also instrumental in bringing this work to the public forum.*

It is a cold November morning in 1918; wraiths of mist writhe like restless spirits upon the foreshores of Cape Helles and Seddul Bar as we cast off from SS *River Clyde* in readiness to steam to the island of Imbross where we are to join our sweeping partner HM. Trawler *Bush*.

Swinging round into the strong current of the Dardenelles the sun promising warmth and brightness later in the day rises behind the bluff headland of Hum Kale causing the cliffs to stand out in bold relief and creating an illusion that one could almost leap from the deck of the Trawler to the shores of Asia Minor.

Towards Imbross the scene is one of indescribable beauty as the island irnerges from a chrysalis-like shroud of morning mist and exposes in parts a rugged outline of turret upon turret of black crags.

Steaming between the buoys which mark a channel that has been swept clear of mines in order that shipping may journey in comparitive safety to and from Stamboul and the Black Sea ports, the sea is as smooth as a mirror. To the eastward sky and sea appear to merge in a rosy glow of early morning light while to the westward Samothrace a huge volcanic mass towers hundreds of feet from a sea that is almost black.

Arriving at the little cove on the north side of Imbross all is peaceful and quiet suggesting nothing of the scene it presented during the hectic days of 1915 when it was an important base for the Gallipoli campaign with thousands of troops camped ashore and craft of all descriptions anchored in the little bay. The village of Castro perched some hundreds of feet up on the north west corner of the island looks disdainfully down the many episodes connected with the Great War that it has witnessed during these last few years being but an insignificant phase of a vast historical panorama that has passed within its orbit since before the time that St Paul and his fellow voyagers sailed through these same waters carrying the Christian message to the Pagan west.

HMT. *Bush* having been anchored in the cover overnight is waiting for us and we steam close alongside her heaving a hand line aboard to pick up her sweep wire. For the information of the uninitiated I would mention that in sweeping for mines a specially prepared wire is used. It is roughly barbed for the purpose of cutting the mooring cables of the mines which are anchored to the bed of the sea at a depth of from 8' to 12'. One trawler has the wire on the drum of its steam winch and the end of the wire which has strongly spliced loop is passed through the block of the Aft Gallows picked up by the other trawler which in turn threads it through the block of its Aft Gallows and from there the loop is fastened into a slip shackle. The Gallows are loops of steel in the shape of an inverted "U" about 8' high and fitted with a steel roller block at the top. These are fixtures fore and aft and normally are used for the hawsers of a trawl net. The slip shackle is used to allow the sweep wire to be immediately released in case of emergency such as a mine mooring cable becoming entangled around a sweep wire and the danger of the air chamber in the mine allowing it to slide up the sweep with disastrous consequences to the trawler.

We couple up with the *Bush* and both ships steam apart to the regulation distance of about 200 yards. A course is set by the lieutenant commanding the *Bush* semaphored to the *Triton* and after lowering the "kite"— a length of heavy cable chain threaded on the sweep wire and lowered on the end of a wire rope to weight down the sweep to the sea bed, all is in order for the day's work. Making a steady 5 or 6 knots we approach Cape Helles keeping strictly between the buoys marking the swept channel the motor patrol boat following the sweepers for the purpose of sinking any swept mines having a cushy time for as yet after about two hours sweeping we have found nothing in the channel.

Entering the straights and opposite the southern extremity of the Peninsular — where evidence of the sanguinary 1915 campaign meets the eye in the shape of a small Italian steamer, a French torpedo boat and the famous SS. *River Clyde*, all beached and riddled to such an extent by shell fire that they resemble nothing so much as so many huge sieves—we meet with the powerful flow of the Dardenelles and progress becomes very slow. Plugging along now scarcely making 3 knots, two or three mines that have been carried into the channel by the strong current are swept up and are in the process of being sunk by rifle fire, when just after midday a British Destroyer passing up the straights at full speed flags us and signals "Armistice concluded 11 am today.

The effect of this short message is remarkable. Whereas hitherto every man philosophically accepted the war and all its implications as a new way of living and never even

thought that it might some day come to an end, now in light of this news of its termination every man jack thinks that his contract is completed and that he should be immediately repatriated.

Little Raggy McCall a hard case Grimsby fisherman brings out his accordion and between the rendering of assorted sentimental numbers, forecasts the amount of beer he will consume upon his return to G.Y (Grimsby Yard). Tom Weatherburn, who in civil life is a wholesale fish buyer, talks of his plans on resuming his usual calling and postulates our discharge in about a month. In short all have visions of an almost immediate repatriation until the skipper a dour Hull fisherman who usually says very little remarks "Ow the 'ell do yer all think yer are gettin' 'ome afore Christmas? 'Oo the 'ell do yer think is to clean up all these bloody minefields - the fairies?"

These few remarks bring everybody back to earth as we all know that there are miles of minefields to be swept before the war is over as far as the mine sweepers are concerned and the prospect of an early discharge fades.

We are now approaching the Chanak forts with torpedoed battleship HMS *Majestic* lying keel up in shallow water on our starboard bow and the famous British submarine E13 which dived under five rows of Turkish mines and sank the battleship *Messudujeh* lying on a sandbank close inshore on the Asiatic side with only her conning tower showing and are now passing over a stretch where Davy Jones's locker is full to overflowing. Submerged obstructions impede our progress and we have a busy time as the sweep wire is repeatedly fouled and snapped on sunken vessels. Sweeping right into the narrows our partner signals to turn and sweep back down the channel. When turning during sweeping operations the procedure is for one vessel to mark time as it were simple to pivot round very slowly and the other vessel steams around and towards its partner thus forming a long loop in the sweep and eliminating as far as possible the danger of fouling the sweep wire.

As we swing around the two vessels come within a few yards of each other and I am hailed by the look out on the focs'le head of the *Bush* an old friend of mine Geordie Colthard who waves his hand and shouts "we won't be long now Robbie." Guessing that he refers to the armistice and the prospect of soon being back in England I shout back that we have another six months to go at which he feigns collapse.

Bob and I were old chums joining the Navy on the same day at Newcastle-on-Tyne, were messmates and trained in the same squad on the square at Pompey Barracks. After completing our training at Portsmouth we lost track of one another for some time he serving in the Harwich Patrol and I going to Scotland to joint the fleet.

We eventually ran up against one another in Salonica and over a bottle of beer in that insalubrious town where the thirsty have the option of either drinking bottled beer or seriously risking an attack of dysentery we compared notes and learned that we were both in pretty close association as the *Bush* and *Triton*, on which ships we served respectively, were shortly afterwards paired as sweeping partners and we had shared many vissitudes together.

On the return journey we make swift progress as we are carried along by the powerful flow of the stream which had nearly broken the hearts of the firemen on the passage up. When about midway between Chanak and Cape Helles we are amazed at a signal from the *Bush* instructing us to alter course and steam at right angles to the swept channel. This will take us right into the "pockets" which an aerial survey has disclosed are literally teaming with mines and to do so virtually means committing suicide as the draught of a trawler is from 14 to 16 feet and mines in an enclosed area like this are never more than 7 or 8 feet below the surface. The order is all the more perplexing in view of our common knowledge that Capt Higginson R.N. — that grand old sailor who had command of all the sweepers in the Aegean — had given instructions that the trawlers had not to be sent into virgin minef ields owing to their deep draught but that the specially built shallow draught fleet sweepers had to make the first sweep and the Trawlers follow on and systematically clear up the fields.

However our job is "not to reason why" but to carry out the instructions of the senior officer and the *Triton* swings around the *Bush* both trawlers leaving the swept channel astern. Immediately upon entering the "pockets" things begin to move.

Johnny Turk has in no uncertain manner insured against a repetition of the attack upon the Peninsula. There are repeated blobs as the mines break the surface upon their moorings being cut by the sweep. The patrol boat is chasing them as they are carried swiftly downstream in the surge of the current and not being able to sink them quickly enough by rifle fire is now peppering them with her three pounder quick firer at point blank range and taking a terrible risk for if one of the detonators happens to be hit it would be just too bad.

We have ploughed into the "pockets" for about 300 yards and having been relieved watch I stand against the engine room casing making a cigarette before going below for tea when there is a terrific detonation and the *Triton* shudders as if in the throes of an attack of malaria. The *Bush* is enveloped in a pall of black smoke and all I see of her before she completely disappears is the mizzen mast and the leg-o-mutton sail waving backwards and forwards as if endeavouring to wriggle clear of the calamity that has overtaken them.

Momentarily we are all shocked into immobility but as the skipper roars out "man the whaler, slip the sweep" every man aboard is at his station. The stricken trawler is as yet coupled to the *Triton* with her sweep wire and as she sinks

she pulls us over at an alarming angle. Running aft to the slip shackle where a hammer is always kept in readiness for emergencies such as this I slip the sweep and as we settle back on an even keel I have the sensation of having rapped the fingers of a drowning man clinging to an overloaded lifeboat.

The sea is black as ink from the exploded charge of TNT and what little remains afloat of the *Bush* is rapidly being carried downstream pursued by the patrol boat and the whaleboat of the *Triton*.

Going full speed astern we are soon back in the swept channel where we cruise around waiting the return of the whaler and news of any possible survivors although we know that the chance of there being any of the latter is indeed remote as from being struck the Bush must have sank within 20 seconds.

It is almost dark as the whaler returns and we learn that there are two survivors both of whom are in a very bad way. I enquire as to their identity anxious to know the fate of my old mate Colthard and soon learn that he has gone to the sailors Valhalla.

As we steam towards Cape Helles I muse over those prophetic words of his shouted as we turned at Chanak "we won't be long now Robbie" and wonder was the prophecy altogether made unconciously. I think also of the inexplicable action of the Commander of the *Bush* in leaving the swept channel for no apparent reason. What impelled him to take such a course? It all seems so strange that I give up searching for reason in what appears to be the working of an inscrutable Night has fallen the Peninsula lies in a soft shadow; the scars of war — as yet still very evident in light of day in spite of the passage of years are hidden in that shadow and as we tie up to the old *River Clyde* only the soft lap of the wavelets on the beach tempers a silence as complete as the very grave.

The silence is broken by a raised voice querulous coming from the focs'sle "Well boys its been a 'elluva old war, and it sure has been a 'elluva old Armistice day."

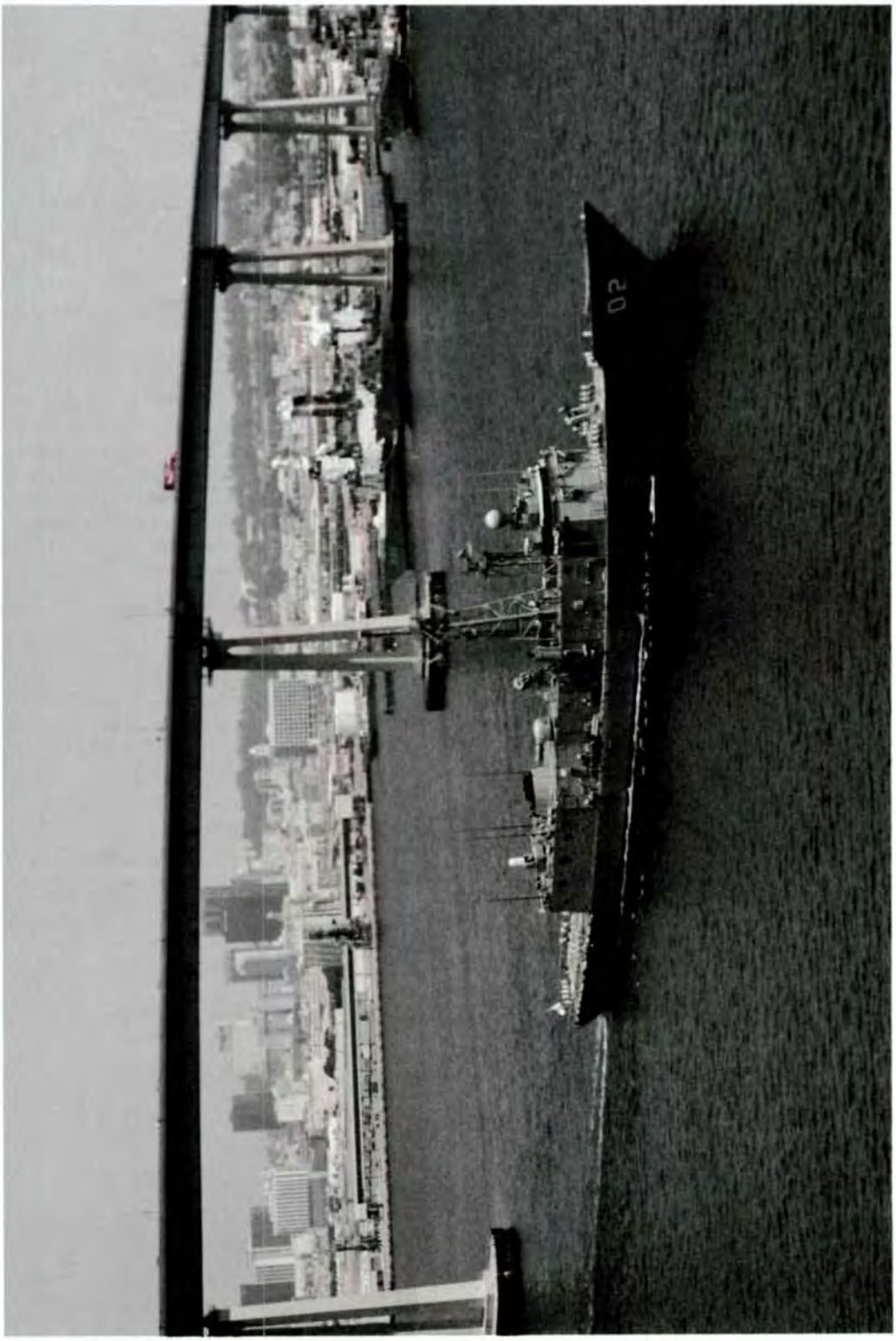
## About the Author

George Henry Robinson was born 14 December1898 at Sunderland in England and died in1988 at Weston NSW. At an early age Mr Robinson commenced work in coal mines at Ashington, UK. He joined the Royal Navy in 1916 and saw some service in the North Sea but mainly in the Aegean Sea on mine sweeping duties.

He discharged from the RN in 1919 and migrated to Australia in 1926, working at Richmond Main Colliery. He was cavelled out in 1930 and remained unemployed for eight years. During this time he was involved in organising and establishing the Weston branch of the Unemployed Workers Movement. Mr Robinson undertook activities in support of the UWM programs which led to the abolition of the apalling dole docket system, and its replacement by cash paid rationed relief work. Mr Robinson often said that the hardest job he ever held was Secretary of the Unemployed which he held unpaid during the depression years of the1930s.

He served with the Australian Army from1940 to 1945, leaving as an Area Staff Sergeant. After the war he joined the National Co-operative Insurance Society Ltd and retired in 1970 from the position of Chief Inspector.

Mr Robinson wrote "Sweeping" shortly after arriving in Australia. His grandson, currently serving Lieutenant G. Robinson, RAN recalls his grandfather retelling the events related in 'Sweeping' as clearly as if the events had only occured the day before.




*HMAS Canberra sails under the famous Coronado Bridge during Exercise RIMPAC 92.*

# BOOK REVIEWS

**Michael A. Palmer, *On Course to Desert Storm: The United States Navy and the Persian Gulf*, Contributions to Naval History No. 5, Naval Historical Centre, Washington DC, 1992, softcover, 137 pp. text, 64 pp. notes, bibliography and index, 44 b&w photographs, 2 maps, 10 tables, RRP not supplied.**

The 1990-91 Gulf War has been, and no doubt will continue to be, the subject of detailed analysis by naval specialists for some time. In a world in which naval forces are rarely able to validate their tactics and test the true battle efficiency of their weapons, every aspect of the conflict ought to be examined. This is a positive outcome from an unnecessary war, and one particularly favourable for naval history.

The contribution made by the US Navy to American diplomacy in the Persian Gulf was not widely known until the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 despite the long and colourful history of American naval power in that ever changing part of the world. Michael Palmer has recorded and interpreted that history in *On Course to Desert Storm: The United States Navy and the Persian Gulf*, the fifth monograph in the US Naval Historical Centre's series 'Contributions to Naval History'. Palmer, formerly a staff member at the Naval Historical Centre in Washington DC, is currently an assistant professor of history in the Maritime History Programme at East Carolina University and specialises in US Naval policy and strategy in the post-war period. He contributed the first volume in the 'Contributions to Naval History' series with a monograph entitled, *The Origins of the Maritime Strategy*. Although the de facto demise of the Maritime Strategy following the Gulf War has made some of the conclusions in this work less than relevant to current debate about American naval affairs, it is a very useful study of US naval policy in that highly transitional period in international relations between 194550.

Palmer started work on this monograph in mid-1988 when the Persian Gulf Tanker War was at its height. Consequently, this is not, nor was it ever intended to be, a naval study of Operation Desert Storm although it does outline the specific circumstances which led to the crisis and America's military response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

*On Course to Desert Storm* examines the growing American interest in the Gulf region and the role the US Navy has played in demonstrating American resolve to protect those interests throughout the last two centuries.

The earliest American interest in the Gulf was related to trade with the Arab states. The first American warship to pass through the Straits of Hormuz was the iron-clad steamship USS *Ticonderoga* in 1879. In the period before World War I, American industrialists obtained leases and concessions with the Gulf oil states and the US soon found it had an interest in the international shipment of oil. While American naval power did not play a major role in determining inter-Gulf and intra-Gulf affairs, several US Navy officers, serving and retired, sought to secure and extend, by private and official means, American access to Gulf oil supplies with favoured nation status.

In the five years after World War II, the Soviet Union seriously challenged American hegemony in the Gulf with indirect action in Turkey and direct action in Iran. At the same time, the global US military establishment developed a dependency on Middle East oil supplies. However, the US was largely unconcerned by the character of incumbent governments in the Gulf states given that they did not in any way threaten American access to oil.

The operational plan which established Task Force 126, US Naval Force, Persian Gulf, was released on 20 January 1948. The initial force consisted solely of tankers and an administrative staff. When enlarged, it was renamed on 16 August 1949, Middle East Force. The headquarters was at Bahrain with major support facilities located at Asmara in Ethiopia, and at Dhahran in Saudi Arabia. Naval task groups were deployed to the Persian Gulf in the ensuing years. By April 1951, a small flotilla of combat and auxiliary ships had been deployed as permanent elements of the Middle East Force.

For the next thirty years, the Middle East Force remained small and played a minor role in US policy towards the Gulf States and Middle East oil. American policy, following the withdrawal of the British east of Suez in 1967, was to relying on regional states for the maintenance of peace and stability. However, this policy was in disarray when the Shah of Iran was overthrown in 1979 and replaced by a hostile Islamic revolutionary state, and war broke out between Iran and Iraq in 1980. A new strategy and a strengthened American force was needed.

The challenge was taken up by the newly installed Reagan Administration. This led to the creation of a new unified command; United States Central Command; the continued development of a Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force; a more active role for the US Navy in the Indian Ocean; the reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers to provide additional international protection; an increase in US military aid for friendly Gulf states; and, the adoption of a more belligerent attitude towards Iran.

By 1987, indiscriminate Iranian attacks on oil tankers had attracted a large international naval force (which did not include RAN units) which sought to preserve the right of innocent passage through international waters. The mistaken missile attack launched by an Iraqi F-4 fighter on the frigate (FFG-31) USS *Stark*, leaving 37 men dead, caused an overall reassessment of US policy and placed strains on American support for Iraq and President Saddam Hussein.

The hawkish Reagan Administration started looking for a way out of the protracted conflict which was placing a heavy and continuing burden on American naval resources. By 1988, there were signs that the war would soon be over despite the mistaken shooting down of an Iranian civilian airliner by the cruiser (CG-49) USS *Vincennes* in July. The recently renewed controversy surrounding the alleged location of *Vincennes* within Iranian territorial waters would suggest the fall-out from this incident, which greatly embarrassed the US Navy, is far from over.

Palmer concludes that in the course of two centuries the United States has accumulated interests in the region in a series of layers: commercial since the 1780s, strategic since the Second World War, and pentostrategic since the late 1940s. The pursuit of each set of interests led the United States more deeply into the affairs of both the gulf and the Middle East. [p. 135]

It also broadened the involvement of the US Navy.

The appendixes contain much useful information. Dr Hans Pawlisch, Command Historian for the US Central Command, has contributed an essay on Operation Praying Mantis. This was a mission in retaliation for the damage sustained by the frigate (FFG-58) USS *Samuel B. Roberts* after striking an Iranian mine. The operation had a two-fold objective of, first, destroying the Sassan and Sirri gas-oil separation platforms owned by Iran which were used to support the mining of international waters and, second, the sinking of an Iranian naval vessel. It was a highly provocative and disproportionately aggressive action, and one which Pawlisch makes no effort to justify, which prompted a concerted surface action in northern Gulf waters resulting in the sinking of the Iranian frigate *Sahand*, the destruction of another frigate, *Sabalan*, and the 'neutralising' of five patrol boats.

Two other appendixes include a diagrammatic representation of the Middle East Force chain of command for the period 1949-1988, and a list of the Commanders, Middle East Force in the same period. The latter includes the name Rear Admiral William J. Crowe, later Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and more recently a critic of the Bush Administration's handling of Gulf security problems, who commanded the force between June 1976 and July 1977.

This monograph has many strengths. The prose is clear, concise and very readable. While the earlier chapters cover longer periods of history and are mainly descriptive, in the latter chapters Palmer makes a useful and positive analytical contribution to the recent debate and controversy surrounding the Iran-Iraq tanker war. His conclusions are, not unexpectedly, more those of a novelist than a politician. The primary research on which *On Course to Desert Storm* has been based shows Palmer's intimate knowledge of US naval archives. The endnotes and the comprehensive bibliography will certainly assist others working in this field. What this reviewer found particularly impressive were the forty-four photographs, including portraits, profiles of ships and depictions of action, spread throughout the text. Most are drawn from official naval sources and many have not previously been published.

There are few weaknesses. Like many American naval historians, Palmer tends to treat his subject in narrow isolation. There is very little mention of the role played by the navies of other nations, including the Royal Navy, in the Persian Gulf. While the approach is scholarly and the author is academically honest throughout, there is the odd chauvinistic remark directed at some of the Arab states accompanied by some expressions of American patriotism which create a slightly polemical tone to the work. Notwithstanding the sponsorship of this volume by the US Naval Historical Centre and the inclusion of a disclaimer from the Director of Navy History, Palmer's periodic lapses into justifications for US Naval policy and action are unnecessary in a work of this kind. But these are peripheral issues which do not detract from its purpose.

This monograph which comes highly recommended to ANI readers, and others in the 'Contributions to Naval History' series, can be obtained by writing to:

US Government Printing Office Superintendent of Documents Mail Stop: SSOP Washington, DC 2402-9328 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

*Reviewed by Tom Frame*

## One Hundred Days: The Memoirs of the Falklands Battle Group Commander — by Admiral Sandy Woodward with Patrick Robinson, Published by Harper Collins, London, 1992. 360pp illustrated — available through USNI.

Admiral Woodward, with the assistance of Patrick Robinson (who co-wrote John Bertrand's *Born to Win*) has written a remarkable book. It is remarkable because of the insight it gives into the mind of a commander at sea. Unfortunately the majority of autobiographies written by admirals to date have tended to be descriptive, understated and with very little analysis of events or decisions. Even classics such as Admiral Cunningham's *A Sailor's Odyssey* maintain a veil over certain matters, To an extent this is a generation thing. Woodward, however, gives us a candid account of what he thought and how he came to his decisions. His extensive use of diary notes gives us a 'warts and all' view of operations and includes comments that some would have deleted for posterity. It is to Woodward's great credit that they remain and the reader benefits greatly from them. A good illustration of this candour is an extract from his opening chapter covering the Exocet attack on HMS *Sheffield*. He wrote:

> "Having survived the first emerging sign of panic in my own Ops Room, I proceeded to divorce myself from the details of the rescue and salvage work. Like any military man, I am not allowed to throw an attack of the 'wobblies' on these sort of occasion. Never to panic at all i possible. And I was working hard to convey to my staff an atmosphere which I hoped was one of calm and confidence. Its amazing what you can get away with sometimes."

Following that chapter Woodward outlines his career and how he came to find himself on the bridge of HMS *Hermes*. It is clear that Woodward was an intelligent officer, very much an individual and not of the typical "naval officer mould". He was also an extremely gifted submariner and this has been verified in discussions I have had with people who knew him. Vice Admiral MacDougall was a student of Woodward on the Perisher course. CNS relates when, on one run as a student, he remained at periscope depth with a frigate bearing down on him. Woodward, standing behind on the other periscope, sternly asked him why he did that. He received Lieutenant Commander MacDougall's hasty reply from the periscope of: "Curiosity". Woodward's clipped reply was 'killed the cat.".

It is equally clear from *One Hundred Days* that Woodward did not suffer fools gladly. This made him unpopular among those officers, both senior and junior, who were left in no doubt as to what Woodward thought of their poor performance. For the reader, though, this makes the book even more illuminating. For example, Woodward does not hold back on what he thought of Defence Secretary John Nott and his Defence Review.

Although at the outset of the Falklands crisis Woodward was away from the decisions being made in Whitehall, *One Hundred Days* gives an illuminating account of those activities. They key naval players in Whitehall talked to Woodward about that period and this section is most interesting. This book shows the key roles played by the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Terence Lewin and the Commander in Chief Fleet, Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse. The RN were blessed with having able men at the top in a moment of crisis. Lewin in particular is described in Margaret Thatcher's excellent foreword to the book as "a tower of strength". Thatcher herself comes across as an able and decisive leader who gave her commanders the backing they needed. This was particularly the case in the crucial area of making difficult political or military decisions in a timely manner.

*One Hundred Days* should be read by many people. In the first place it should be read by those involved in political decision making and foreign affairs so that they can see the human consequence of failure in international relations. It should also be read by those involved in force structure issues to emphasise upon them the importance of providing well-balances and well-equipped forces. The book gives planners a glimpse at how complex joint operations can be and the vital importance of secure long haul communications. For those who go down to the sea in ships *One Hundred Days* is particularly thought provoking. This is not only for those who aspire to command at sea. The book gives a graphic account of the exploits and difficulties Woodward's ships encountered in their fight against modern jet aircraft. Finally the book gives quite different assessment of Sea Dart and Seawolf from the "proven in battle" advertisements that appeared in defence magazines shortly after the conflict. So perhaps defence contractors should also pore over *One Hundred Days* for a sobering and reflective read.

*One Hundred Days* is the sort of book that should be acquired by a Wardroom and passed round from officer to officer.

*Reviewed by P D Jones*

## ***Mine Warfare in Australia's First Line of Defence*** **by Lieutenant Commander Alan Hinge, RAN: 1992, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University; 253pp; $23; Reviewed by CMDR K B Taylor, RAN.**

Mine Warfare has come to occupy an increasingly important place in modern conflict and Alan Hinge's book goes a long way in providing an informed insight into the use of sea mines and their countermeasures.

The central aim of the book is to provide a practical framework for the use of the sea mine as a tool of graduated response in specific Australian Defence contingencies. A comprehensive model (the Australian Mine Use Model—AMUM) is developed in Chapter Nine which systematises the use of mines in an escalating threat spectrum which encompasses 18 specific defence contingencies. Each contingency is dealt with in detail with many political/military factors included in each equation.

Alan Hinge's book is logically structured and easy to read, even when delving into the technical aspects of the mine. The volume itself is attractive and contains several interesting diagrams and tables. Two diagrams are, however, difficult to read, apparently as a result of being reduced from large originals. Another problem is with reference to the Soviet Union in Chapter Three. The changes that occurred in the 'old' Soviet Union (during the printing of this book) have meant the level of threat portrayed in the chapter has, in my view, reduced accordingly. Despite this, the formidable mine capability of the old SOVPACFLT remains and the discussion in Chapter Three on the mines themselves remains valid. I also note that the MCM Force Structures discussed in Chapter Four of the book have been superseded by the ADF's Force Structure Review.

A very useful aspect of the book is that it draws together a number of legal issues and provides one with a good insight into key aspects of international law associated with mine warfare. Another useful aspect of the book is that is highlights the practical uses of the mine, particularly in its ability to eliminate the highly escalatory 'eyeball to eyeball confrontation'. The 'psychological warhead' of the mine is discussed in detail.

Alan Hinge levels some severe criticisms at what he perceives to be failures in Australian MCM developments, particularly the Australian-designed and -built Minehunter Inshore (MHI). While he does a reasonable job justifying his criticisms (supported by the recent Force Structure Review) he fails to acknowledge that some very worthwhile lessons were gained as a result of MCM projects. For example, the technologies associated with the construction of Glass Reinforced Plastic vessels (in the case of the MHI and the construction of the Minesweeping Buoyant Dyads (BVDs) are two aspects of the MCM projects that will prove beneficial in the long term. Furthermore, the risks associated with the MCM projects were considered worthwhile, given Australia's thrust toward self reliance.

*Mine Warfare in Australia's First Line of Defence* is a fine book and is, in many ways, a unique and important contribution the the Australian defence debate. The book opens up the 'black art' of Mine Warfare to all interested ADF officers and the public.

### THE REVIEWER

Commander Kevin Taylor is a seaman officer who has had extensive experience in mine warfare before and after attaining his Mine Warfare and Clearance Diving qualifications in 1980. The highlights of his mine warfare experience include serving as XO/CO of HMA Ships *Curlew* and *Snipe*. His mine warfare staff experience includes an exchange posting to the USN's Mine Warfare Command (1984-86) and a posting to Navy Office as the Deputy Director Mine Warfare and Clearance Diving (1987-88). Commander Taylor is currently a member of the Directing Staff at the RAN Staff College.

# AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE, COMMUNICATIONS AND THE BATTLE OF SAVO ISLAND

**By Commodore Bruce Loxton RAN, (Retd)**

Early in the morning of August 9th 1942, a Japanese force of five heavy cruisers, two light cruisers and a destroyer, under the command of Vice Admiral Gunichi Mikawa, surprised an Allied cruiser force off Savo Island and sand four of them; the Japanese did not lose a ship.

Royal Australian Air Force Reconnaissance aircraft operating from Milne Bay had sighted the Japanese off Bougainville the previous forenoon but the Japanese approach down the chain of the Solomons went unopposed. After the initial sightings, the Japanese force was not seen again until lookouts in HMAS *Canberra* and USS *Patterson* spotted them at a range of three miles.

Admiral E.J King, Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of the US Fleet, later described August 9th as his blackest day of the war. In December 1942, having received no full written report of the circumstances which lead to the loss of the four ships, he instructed Admiral AJ Hepburn USN (Rtd), a former Commander-in- Chief (C-in-C) of the US Fleet and, in 1942, Chairman of the General Board of the Navy, to conduct and informal inquiry into the circumstances attending the loss of the ships and to report his findings to Admiral CW Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) Pacific Fleet.

By mid-May 1943, in what Nimitz described as a skilfully conducted, exhaustive study, Hepburn concluded that "surprise was the fundamental cause of the defeat and the foremost reason for surprise was (the) inadequate condition of readiness of all ships to meet sudden night attack".

In forwarding Hepburn's report to King, Nimitz commented that among the primary causes of the defeat were uncoordinated searches, the failure of either carrier or land based aircraft to conduct effective searches, the Bougainville on August 8th and communications weaknesses.

In September 1943, some thirteen months after the battle, King informed the Secretary of the Navy, the Admiralty and the Australian Naval Board that he accepted that surprise had been the immediate cause of Allied losses. He believed that the disaster could have been prevented if the flag officers and ships had been on the alert.

There the matter rested for eight years until, in 1951, the US Naval War College completed an analysis of the Battle of Savo Island and Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot Morrison, US Naval Reserve, published the first edition of 'The Struggle for Guadalcanal' as Volume V in his 'History of United States Naval Operations in World War II'. Since then historian and biographers have generally accepted that the defeat would not have occurred had we been 'bright eyed and bushy tailed' at 0143 on August 9th. The poor showing of those responsible for aerial reconnaissance, which should have prevented the surprise, is rarely mentioned.

When it is mentioned, the consensus is that bad weather prevented shore based, long range US Army Air Corps reconnaissance aircraft from sighting the Japanese on August 8th, that shorebased RAAF aircraft failed to maintain contact with the Japanese when they sighted them off Bougainville and that no RAAF aircraft made an immediate enemy report by radio.

Except for the Naval War College Analysis, the part that could have been played by carrier based reconnaissance aircraft has been ignored and coverage of the communication shortcomings had been confused and sketchy.

## Aerial Reconnaissance

The Allied cruiser force, part of Operation Watchtower-the first Allied advance in the South Pacific-was screening amphibious ships that had begun landing the US First Marine Division on Guadalcanal and Tulagi on the morning of August 7th.

Vice Admiral RL Ghormley commanded the South Pacific Area and was the overall commander for Watchtower but remained at Noumea, New Caledonia, for the landings and designated Vice Admiral FJ Fletcher, on board the aircraft carrier USS *Saratoga*, to command the Expeditionary Force. General MacArthur commanded the South West Pacific Area and the boundary between the two commands lay along the 158th Meridian of East Longitude for the operation. The position of the boundary in relation to the position of major Japanese forces that threatened the operation played a major role in the Battle of Savo Island.

As result of the boundary location, responsibility for the aerial reconnaissance of the Bismarck Archipelago, the Solomons Sea, the Solomon Islands and the waters north of the Solomons also was split along the 158th Meridian. Macarthur's Allied Air Forces North Eastern Command with Headquarters in Townsville, Australia, searched generally west of the boundary; Ghormley's South Pacific Air Command, which was commanded by Rear Admiral JS McCain, based on the seaplane tender USS *Curtiss* in the New Hebrides, searched primarily east of the boundary.

The 158th Meridian lies only 95 miles west of Guadalcanal in the southern Solomons; because the Solomons chain

trends north west toward the Bismarck Archipelago, Rabaul — the probable source of the major threat to the Expeditionary Force—lay outside Ghormley's South Pacific Area, as did the greater part of the approaches to Guadalcanal from Rabaul (see Figure 1).]

To cover the northern Solomons and the waters to the northwest of them, Macarthur's North Eastern Command, on August 5th, developed five Lockheed Hudson's of 32 Squadron RAAF to Fall River, a fighter strip on Milne Bay at the eastern tip of New Guinea, where they remained under the operational command of Townsville. The North Eastern Command's communication plan called for all signals to Ghormley's South Pacific forces to be routed via Allied Air Forces Headquarters in Brisbane. Only if urgency demanded could the RAAF air bases at Townsville and Port Moresby communicate direct with South Pacific Air Command air bases and task forces. No provision was made for communication between the Hudsons and the ships off Guadalcanal.

Allied Air Force Headquarters' instruction to Townsville included an order that special precautions were necessary to preserve secrecy. A personal signal from Lieutenant General Brett emphasised that only those operations and communications officers who required the information for the proper execution of their duties be informed. As a result neither Fall River nor the aircrew deployed there were told of the reason for their deployment.

How were aircrew and operations and communications personnel to determine the urgency of a report when they were unaware of its relevance to operations then in progress? In the event, sightings made by RAAF aircraft in the context of the previous experience of those concerned, were of a routine nature; in the reality of the Guadalcanal operations, however, they were obviously of immediate importance.

Arrangements for coordination of the carriers' considerable reconnaissance capability with that of McCain's land-based aircraft and seaplane command were limited to a verbal agreement between the task force commanders that carrier aircraft would be made available if the long range aircrafts' coverage was inadequate. This arrangement was meaningless because the carriers were informed of the coverage achieved by McCain's aircraft only after they had all landed after nightfall.

On August 8th, in any case, Vice Admiral Fletcher, the Expeditionary Force Commander, effectively limited the contribution that carrier aircraft could have made to aerial reconnaissance by moving his carriers from their planned operating area southwest of Guadalcanal to an area about 60 miles southeast of the island. Thus, in reducing the threat to his three carriers from one possible Japanese carrier—which he thought might be operating west of Guadalcanal — the increased the vulnerability of the force he was supporting.

Even then, the Naval War College's Analysis found that a carrier aircraft search flown during the afternoon came within 30 miles of the Japanese force as it was steaming through Bougainville Strait. The Allies paid a heavy price for Fletcher's 'shadow boxing'.

To ensure that a Japanese force could not approach undetected from the direction of Truk or the Marshall Islands, McCain deployed the seaplane tender USS *Macfarland* to Ndeni in the Santa Cruz Islands, and the seaplane tender USS *Mackinac* to Maramsike Estuary on the southeast coast of Malaita. These ships and USS *Curtiss* operated up to 20 PBY Catalinas on searches to the north and east of Guadalcanal.

McCain also controlled B-17 aircraft of the Army Air Corps' 11th Bombardment Group, based on Espiritu Santo and at Noumea, New Caledonia, which were responsible for watching the northwestern approaches as far as New Georgia and western Choiseul. The B-17's carried radar but their searches were effective only during the day because of equipment limitations. They were prevented from searching beyond New Georgia because of the South Pacific Area boundary line, which lay about six hours steaming time from Savo Island. As a result of the radar and search area limitations, they proved ineffective against a force that decided to use darkness to mask its approach. These handicaps were exacerbated by the timing of their searches; the aircraft had been instructed to be abreast Tulagi by sunrise on their outward legs so that they reached the limits of their search by 0915, leaving any possible Japanese force the remainder of the day to steam south east undetected.

As a means of preventing a surface force making a high speed penetration through the Solomons by night, the searches planned by Rear Admiral McCain were virtually worthless. The curtailment of B-17 searches by bad weather, despite all that had been made of it, was totally irrelevant to what followed.

## Communications

Rear Admiral RK Turner, who commanded the Amphibious Force for Operation Watchtower, recognised the danger, aware that he was asking McCain to 'poach' in Macarthur's South West Pacific Area, he nevertheless requested him to increase the area searched by the Catalinas in include the northern Solomons and the approaches to them from Rabaul. McCain had aircraft available, but there is no contemporaneous record that any such additional search was flown. Indeed there is no record of that McCain got the request. It is unlikely, therefore, that the additional search was flown.

But since Turner has no reason to doubt that this search had been flown, the absence of any enemy report during the afternoon and evening of August 8th probably strengthened his belief that the force sighted off Bougainville had not continued to close Guadalcanal.

In assessing the part played by the Allied Air Forces' North Eastern Command, it is important to understand that the staff perceived the assault on Tulagi and Guadalcanal as a side show. On D-day, August 7th, for example the Senior Air Staff Officer at Allied Command Headquarters, Townsville, was visiting out lying airfields. The Command had been for some considerable time fully extended fighting the war in New Guinea with inadequate resources. It was facing the probability of an assault on Milne Bay and an intensification of the threat to Port Moresby from across the Owen Stanley Mountains.

The airfield of Fall River at the western end of Milne Bay, had become operational only days before—on July 26th. A metalled 5,000 foot strip surrounded by a sea of mud and coconut trees, it was in an area that received an average rainfall of more than 130 inches a year. It had no navigational aids, bass staff or any maintenance back up for the Hudsons. The lack of amenities forced some of the Hudson aircrew to sleep in their aircraft.

Intelligence matters at Fall River were handled by the specialist air intelligence officers of the two resident Kittyhawk fighter squadrons to whom maritime reporting must have been something new. Reports of enemy shipping, including warship sightings, were radioed to Townsville in a format known as Form White which had been introduced as recently as August 4th.

Flight Lieutenant Lloyd Milne, an officer of very considerable experience, commanded the Hudsons at Fall River. But Sergeant William Stutt and his crew were more typical of the crews; they had just completed their operational training, which included less than an hour's instruction in ship recognition. They flew their first mission together on August 4th.

In retrospect a great deal was asked of inexperienced aircrew flying daily seven to eight hour sorties in a difficult environment with inadequate administrative and logistic support. As events proved however, little of the blame for what followed can be attributed to them.

The crews of the three Hudsons that took off from Fall River at about 0715 on August 8th had been told that they might sight Allied ships east of Bougainville, but they knew nothing of the Tulagi-Guadalcanal operation which had then been in progress for 24 hours.

Hudson 218, flown by Stutt, at 1025 sighted what turned out to be Mikawa's cruiser force 37 miles northeast of Kieta. Expecting the ships to be friendly, Stutt continued to close until he recognised them as Japanese. On sighting a single-winged float plane in the vicinity of one of the larger ships, and fearing interception, he retired to the north west towards cloud over Bougainville.

All crew members had a good look at the ships, but there were no ship identification aids on board. After some discussion they decided to report seeing three cruisers, three destroyers and two seaplane tenders or gunboats. The identification is surprising as four of the ships were virtually identical (the four Aoba class cruisers) and a fifth (*Chokai*), though larger, was similar in outline. The navigator thought that there were a number of cruisers and destroyers and there were two that looked rather different. Because they had seen a seaplane, they felt that they might even be some sort of 'back up vessels' which carried seaplanes. The intention was to indicate that they had sighted two ships which they could not identify; a more experienced crew would have indicated doubt by describing the two as 'unknown'.

The crew deemed it an emergency, and broke radio silence to transmit an enemy sighting report. *Chokai*, Mikawa's flagship, intercepted the message, but there was no acknowledgment of receipt by Fall River. The radio station at the airfield had been closed down from about 1032 to about 1100 because of an air raid alert. Unaware of the reason why his transmission had not been acknowledged, Stutt decided to return to Fall river without delay. Pausing only to make an unsuccessful bombing attack on two submarines west of Guadalcanal, he landed at 1242 and was immediately taken by jeep to the operation hut and debriefed. (all this is contrary to the unwarranted criticism heaped on Stutt by Samuel Moreton, Vice Admiral G.C. Dwyer and Brigadier General S.B. Griffith II, USMC).

Fall river's first Form White of the day reporting the ship and submarine sightings was prepared and transmitted to Townsville via Port Moresby. The debriefing officer, probably because he had no ship recognition aids either, and because of inexperience in maritime matters, accepted the ambiguity of "two seaplane tenders or gunboats" which was of course nonsense if only because of the difference in size between the two types.

At 1101, Hudson 185 flown by Flying Officer M. Willman, sighted the Japanese and, once again believing them to be friendly, closed until *Chokai* opened fire and hit the aircraft in three places. William decided to continue his patrol and did not return to Fall River until 1501. He attempted to send an enemy sighting report but was told to maintain radio silence, apparently by Fall River.

After landing, he was immediately debriefed and reported the sighting of six cruisers and two destroyers. The debriefing officer refused to believe that he could have seen such a force and despite what William later was to describe as "a flaming row", reported in the subsequent Form White that Hudson 185 had seen two heavy cruisers, two light cruisers and one small unknown type. William subsequently recorded in his log book the sighting of the eight ships and also the damage to his aircraft.

To add insult in injury, William was reprimanded for breaking radio silence, Fall River was apparently not only unaware of the Guadalcanal operations but also of Allied Air Force instructions to break radio silence to report enemy sightings.

Had William's information reached the task force off Guadalcanal during the evening, their commanders could hardly have failed to realise that Mikawa's purpose was to raid the amphibious area and would have acted accordingly. There would have been no debacle at Savo.

Milne flew the third aircraft, Hudson 157, but did not sight Mikawa's cruiser force, although he was fired on by other Japanese ships in the area. Fall River's third Form White for the day describes how he sighted and was fired on on three separate occasions by single Japanese warships. He made an unsuccessful bombing attack on one of them, the destroyer OITE, south of the Shortland Islands, against heavy anti-aircraft fire. He also reconnoitred Green Islands, the Shortlands, Faisi and Choiseul Bay.

Though Stutt had landed at 1242 and had almost immediately been debriefed, word of his sighting did not reach naval officers ears in Brisbane until 1817. It was quickly passed to South Pacific ships and authorities through Canberra Naval Radio Station

At 1835, almost exactly eight hours after the initial sighting. The sun had set at 1815, so that it was far too late to relocate and verify the composition of the Japanese force. Intelligence from William's debriefing was even longer in transit as it did not reach South Pacific command until about 2130, six and a half hours after the aircraft had landed.

During his investigation, Admiral Hepburn reported finding several passages indicating that the sighting of the Japanese force that morning off Kieta was unknown on board more than one ship during the afternoon. In spite of directly questioning survivors he was unable to obtain any positive information on the matter. Nevertheless, there has been speculation that early warning of the Japanese approach was received, most recently in an article which was published in 1989 in Australia and which was based on a paper prepared a year earlier by Captain Emile Bonnot USNR (Rtd).

A re-examination of the evidence contained in the Hepburn Report and its Annexes (including the Communication Plans of the Task Force Commanders involved and of the Australian coast watching organisation) and a review of Bonnot's work has shown that there was virtually no likelihood that any ship in the Allied Force received word of the sighting off Kieta before it was broadcast by the Canberra and Pearl Harbour naval radio stations after sunset on August 8th. In particular Bonnot's work appeared to be selective in its choice of evidence from Hepburn and others and selective and inaccurate in reporting proceedings at the Board of Injury into the loss of CANBERRA which was held in Sydney in August 1942.

The Naval War College Analysis put the inordinate communication delays down to a laissez-faire attitude on the part of RAAF personnel who had become complacent as a result of their inability to take offensive action because they lacked resources. This is probably a fair comment as there is evidence in the Signal Log of Allied Command Headquarters in Brisbane, complaining of excessive message handling delays, itself took nine hours of August 8th to reach Townsville! There can be no doubt that the reaction of RAAF personnel would have been very different had they known of the operations then under way at Gudalcanal.

Deprived of the opportunity to update their intelligence during the afternoon, the task force commanders had to make their estimates of the situation on unverified information that was eight hours old. South West Pacific naval headquarters and Turner, among others, deducted that the Japanese were bound for an island anchorage from which to launch torpedo attacks. As is now well known, they got it wrong. The principal cause of their miscalculation was the inclusion of seaplane tenders in Stutt's report and a healthy respect for Japanese torpedo bombing.

But the failure to provide for the possibility that Mikawa was leading a raiding party is another story. It should not continue to obscure the effects of the failure of reconnaissance and communications to provide adequate warning of Japanese intentions. What happened is in reality a sad story of inexperience, incompetence, and even, perhaps, stupidity—not only, as one has been led to believe, on the part of senior officers and ships off Guadalcanal but also—and probably predominantly—at command and at staff level elsewhere.

# The *Voyager* Incident — an alternative view

**by CDRE J A Robertson, RAN (Ret)**

*EDITOR'S NOTE*
*This article was submitted as a book review, but we had already published a review of* Where Fate Calls, *Tom Frame's doctoral thesis, in the February issue. Out of courtesy, because many of CDRE Robertson's comments refer not so much to the book as such but to Leut Frame's conclusions, we showed Leut Frame the piece before finally deciding how to treat it.*
*After due consideration, and with the precedence of Tom Frame's own critique of* A coast Too Far *published last year, the piece was treated as an article expressing a personal opinion. Tom Frame has, of course, full right of reply and/or clarification and the Journal is an appropriate forum for some more discussion on what remains a sensitive and controversial subject.*

Tom Frame's doctoral thesis is extensively researched. He has gathered evidence from almost every possible source. That evidence is presented in the detail appropriate to a critical analysis meant for academic recognition. The known facts and hypotheses are discussed and assessed to arrive at a definite conclusion. Some may find so much detail overwhelming but Frame's writing style is very readable. However, at 447 pages long it is not to be devoured at a single sitting, this book demands more attention than that.

In my view it was a mistake of judgement to raise the ghost of *Voyager* even after 28 years. It opened up opportunities for the inevitable superficial public rehashing of issues already done to death in the media.

It would seem therefore, that those concerned did not appreciate the difficulty of presenting the Navy in a good light in the media. When ships conduct operations in peace or war and remain undamaged it is assumed that the circumstances could not have been very dangerous. Such comments were made during the Gulf War, for example. Personally, I thought keeping track of scores of unidentified aircraft, any one of which could have proved hostile, and steaming around with only limited information on Iraqi mines was a fairly alarming scenario. But, since no one was hurt and ships were undamaged, it was concluded in the media anyway, that apart from the Clearance Divers delousing ordnance it was all pretty much of a breeze.

On the other hand, if a ship is sunk or damaged, or lives are lost, there is a quick rush to judgement on the assumption that the cause must have been incompetence or negligence.

Generally the Army and Air Force do not have such an unfavourable media image. I can offer no suggestions for combating the assumptions underlying the media's view of the Navy, but it needs thought and work to restore some balance. Of course deaths, accidents and injuries need to be publicly investigated, but that is a different matter altogether.

For me the saddest aspect of the media's superficiality was exemplified on the cover of the Sydney Morning Herald's supplement of 1 February, which said, "Revealed at last, how 82 perished." In my view the book does not do that at all.

## PERSONAL INTEREST

Before explaining why I do not accept Frame's conclusion it needs to be acknowledged that I have a considerable personal interest in the collision. I knew all the principal characters involved. I had known John Robertson (no relation) since 1946. Our relationship was such that he called me "Junior" and I called him "Father". I knew Duncan Stevens even better. We had served together as watchkeepers in HMAS *Shropshire* in 1946, and again in HMAS *Melbourne* when he was the carrier's Executive Officer. My collateral duties as Flag Lieutenant at that time brought us into frequent contact, both in our work and socially. I saw him for the last time in London in December 1962, just before he returned to Australia to take command of *Voyager*.

More than that, I was Cabban's predecessor as the Executive Officer of *Voyager* in 1961-62, and I will have more to say about the Cabban Statement on that account. I subsequently commanded HMAS *Duchess* (*Voyager's* replacement) and carried out planeguard duties on many occasions.

I served in HMAS *Melbourne* three times–on commissioning her in 1955 and again as Fleet Communications Officer and Flag Lieutenant in 1958-59. As FCO I made all the tactical signals for fleet manoeuvres, including flying operations. As *Melbourne's* Executive Officer in 1966-67 I was allowed to conduct night flying operations with Sea Venoms, Gannets and Wessex during 10 days of a SEATO exercise, so that the captain could get some sleep. I doubt whether many of the carrier's other XOs had that opportunity.

In the light of these factors I cannot pretend to be objective. And especially so because of the Cabban Statement.

## THE CABBAN FACTOR

Mr Ash's demolition of Cabban as a witness was so comprehensive that it seems extraordinary to me that anyone could still take him seriously. As reported in the book Cabban reveals himself to be self-dramatising and disloyal. He cast himself as a latter-day Maryk from "The Caine Mutiny". But his performance as a witness reminds me of Queeg. There is the same initial inability to answer some questions, and then, after an interval, he can apparently recall an incident in considerable detail.

Yet on page 200 Frame says "(Cabban) was an honest and truthful man." And again "... he was not a moralist. His judgements on others ... were those of a man with a firm sense of duty and a well-defined appreciation of responsibility". Given Cabban's misrepresentation of me it is hardly surprising that I find Frame's judgement questionable.

I cannot comment on the accuracy or otherwise of most of the Cabban Statement, but if the early paragraphs which refer to me are any example, the whole document is worthless. In his introduction, Cabban says that some four months after I had left the ship "Stevens described the wardroom as the most depressed group of officers he had ever seen."

Cabban goes on to say that hew knew why. It was because, he says, the day he took over from me I had carried on drinking with the officers until three in the afternoon. He then says that he subsequently ordered that there was to be no drinking at sea, and insisted on strict adherence to bar hours in harbour. And, therefore, it is implied, the wardroom was unhappy with his stricter routine.

The impression Cabban creates with this passage is that I had led the wardroom in an afternoon boozing session, probably while the ship was at sea. The truth is quite different.

*Voyager* was alongside Garden Island in a maintenance period. Having turned over to Cabban that morning I was technically on leave. After lunch everyone else returned to their duties. I remained in the wardroom alone sipping a brandy with my coffee. From time to time the others came back, individually, to say their personal goodbyes and chat about the commission we had just completed. We had had a very good working relationship and the ship had performed superlatively well under David Wells' outstanding leadership. I had been lucky enough to be promoted. The others did not drink. It was not that sort of occasion.

Far from being a booze-up it was a very low key business. In any case Cabban was now Mess President and second in command, if he did not like what was going on, why did he not do something about it? He was only next door. Alan Willis, the new captain, was only a few feet away too. He knew what was going on too but apparently did not find it reprehensible.

The unavoidable and unpalatable conclusion I draw from this is that Cabban, in attempting to shift Stevens' criticism from himself to me, peddles half truths. And, as Robert Ardrey has said, "A half truth told as a whole truth is worse than a total lie."

This is not to suggest that Duncan Stevens' behaviour in harbour may not have fallen well short of an acceptable standard at times. And the factual record of the number of days at sea on which he was not fit for duty should be enough to dismay his strongest supporters. But it is generally acknowledged that this had nothing to do with the events of February 10, 1964.

Cabban is thus merely an unpleasant distraction from the real issue. So, what really caused the collision? Is Frame right?

## WHAT CAUSED THE COLLISION?

Frame lists five possible causes of the collision and dismisses each of them in turn until he gets to what he concludes is the most probable cause - incorrect reception and reporting of the final "Foxtrot Corpen" signal.

Frame rejects as one of the five possible causes that "the state of training or readiness of either or both ships was poor" (page 310). But he does acknowledge that *Voyager* was not a worked up ship. Nor was *Melbourne*. Robertson had only been in command five weeks and was under pressure to embark the squadrons on Wednesday 10th, two days after the collision. It is probable that refit delays had compressed the time available. Certainly, Saturday 8th, had had to be spent getting aircraft to the deck by day.

Monday 10th was effectively only the second day of *Voyager's* workup. The ship had had a complete change of officers, so Stevens had a new Navigator and all new watchkeepers, and he was concerned about their untried competence. He had said so to a fellow captain in Williamstown dockyard less than two weeks earlier. Evidence that Harry Cook, the navigator, had told Paul Berger that Stevens had been riding him is consistent with an attempt by Stevens to force better performances out of his new officers.

While Stevens may have been understandably more comfortable with Ian MacGregor as his new XO, MacGregor would have only been on the bridge that night to report evening rounds. He was no part of the bridge team despite his question to the Ops Room.

In that connection it is an indication of *Voyager's* low state of efficiency that the Ops Room was not more actively involved keeping a close watch on *Melbourne*. And, if the radar was suspect, why was the sonar not closed up to provide ranges? Worked up ships use every resource at their disposal, in my experience, and do so as a matter of course.

Finally there is the question of Stevens himself. Frame says he was tired but makes no more of it.

I suggest he would have been very tired, and probably irritable. He would have been on his feet since about 0630 and on the bridge for the best part of fourteen hours at the time the collision occurred. He had a quick temper. Red-faced and angry his tongue could be very rough and unnerve subordinates who did not know him better. Cook, the navigator, was apprehensive about him as noted earlier. And, from all indications it does not seem that Price, the Officer of the Watch, would have been prepared to argue with his captain at this early stage of a new commission.

It was a calm windless night and they had been engaging in some fairly drastic course alterations looking for wind since the night flying serial had begun about an hour and a half earlier. Apart from taking up the initial planeguard station all subsequent manoeuvres had been turns together; kindergarten stuff until 2054.

I suggest that *Melbourne* was in a fairly low state of readiness itself in those early days of its workup. The carrier's task that night was night touch and goes, not arrests and catapult launches. While even relatively small cross winds would not be acceptable even for touch and goes, observing the alterations from 190 to 060 to 020 it is reasonable to deduce that there was no wind at all. No doubt the Flying Control Position would have been impressing on the new bridge team the importance of every scrap of wind down the deck, especially for launching Venoms. And the Gannets, with only 16 feet clearance from wind tip to the island would not be happy with even a small cross wind component. But it is reasonable to believe that there was no wind of any consequence that night, and, therefore, any flying course would have been as good as another. I have discussed this with Tos Dadswell and he agrees.

What I am suggesting is that Robertson's relative inexperience in the carrier led him into chasing non-existent wind when there was no need for it. In turn *Voyager* was finally asked to act like the worked up ship that she was not. And that is when it all fell apart. But no one was prepared to suggest that a more deliberate approach would have been more prudent at this very early stage of both ships' workup programs.

This is not all that unusual. The Navy has a "can do" tradition. No captain wants to admit that his ship cannot do anything asked of it. This "can do" outlook is generally admirable, and, as a result, the Australian taxpayer has had infinitely more out of the Navy budget dollar than should be reasonably expected. But it has its down side too, and, I suggest, it was a significant factor in the collision.

Frame sketches in some of these aspects, but, in the end, accepts that both ships were ready for what they were trying to do. Therefore, he says, the collision must have other causes.

Frame suggests that *Melbourne's* starboard sidelight would have been clearly visible from *Voyager*. On the contrary, I believe that with her lights dimmed right down for night flying, *Melbourne's* sidelights were not at all that easy to see. Was that the reason why Price was using binoculars at less than 1500 yards away?

So we get to the sequence of signals recorded by Frame at Appendix 2. If these are correctly recorded there are some points which trouble me.

Frame suggests that Robertson, as a communicator, would have been an expert in the ANMI and ANSB. I doubt it. Robertson had first qualified in the RN's Fleet Signal Book and Conduct of the Fleet. In the Pacific he would have had to relearn and use the USN's General Signal Book and tactical doctrine pamphlets. Sometime after the war the RN revised their FSB to use international flags. The NATO books came into force in about 1952. Robertson's first command was *Swan*, not given to much fleetwork. His only other time at sea with the new books was in *Vendetta*. Why would he not rely on competent staff the same as any other Captain would?

I also have a problem with the view that there would have been difficulties in hearing tactical primary on *Voyager's* bridge. It was a calm windless night, not much ambient noise. I kept watch many times on that bridge and do not recall difficulties in hearing pritac. Much more importantly, there are thirteen signals listed in Appendix 2 before the final 2054 entry, none of which seems to have been misheard or misinterpreted. But we are now asked to believe that:

a the Captain, Navigator, Yeoman of Signals and the OOW all could not hear the last signal properly; and
b did not ask for a repetition; or
c variously, a "Foxtrot Corpen" was reported as a "Corpen Foxtrot" and that "Zero Two Zero" was misinterpreted, misheard, or incorrectly reported as "Two Two Zero" or even "Two Seven Zero", or that a "Corpen" was mistaken for a "Turn" - and that TO Evans in particular and everyone else on the bridge got it wrong as well.

I find these hypotheses less than convincing when there is probably a quite straightforward explanation.

The 2054 signal is reported as "Foxtrot Corpen 020 Tack 22" and executed with a time.

On recept of this signal a generally accepted version of events is that Price ordered starboard wheel. Stevens told Price to come back to port and use less wheel. Stevens, the Navigator, and the Yeoman then went to the chart table for a discussion. In the meantime, with port wheel still on, the ship was fast approaching a point where collision was becoming inevitable. When Stevens came back from the chart table, regained his night vision and realised the danger the ship was in it was all too late.

I think this sequence of events can be explained quite simply as follows:

a On receipt of the final Foxtrot Corpen signal, Price believed he should take up planeguard station on *Melbourne's* port quarter and ordered starboard wheel. (*Voyager* would have had *Melbourne's* 'Mayfly' signal and would have known that the next touch and goes were due at 2100.)

b Stevens, perhaps advised by the Navigator or Yeoman, or both, was in doubt that Foxtrot Corpen required a change of station, and ordered Price to come back to port.

c To resolve doubt, Stevens, the Navigator and Yeoman went to the chart table to check the manoeuvring instructions and any other qualifications which *Melbourne* gave escorts as to how planeguards were to act.

d Price either believed Stevens had taken the con by his instruction, or he was so unnerved by Stevens' manner, and, in any case uncertain of what *Melbourne* was doing, that he did nothing and left port wheel on.

e By the time Stevens had concluded his discussion, regained his night vision and saw what was happening it was all too late, the collision was inevitable.

The fact is a Foxtrot Corpen is only an information signal, and, in my view, therefore should not have required any executive action. Furthermore it was executed with a time. While this is a legitimate way to execute any signal it is unusual, to say the least, to order an implied stationing signal, if indeed it was one.

If, for some reason of which I am unaware after so many years out of the business, Foxtrot Corpen was actually meant to order *Voyager* to her planeguard station on the new flying course, the timing is curious. It would mean that *Voyager* had only six minutes to get from *Melbourne's* starboard bow to her port quarter. Dadswell was due to put his wheels on the deck at 2100. If so, *Voyager* would probably have been discharging hot funnel gases into Dadswell's flight path as he was in the final stages of his approach. Not an attractive proposition for an aviator.

All told, if it was intended that *Voyager* should go to a new station, it was not a very good way to go about it, and it would hardly be surprising if it gave rise to doubts in *Voyager*.

Frame's understanding of the signals involved is open to question since, earlier in Appendix 2, he says that "Turn Foxtrot Sierra Speed 25" is an order for ships to turn together to port to the flying course and proceed at 25 knots. Certainly the track charts shows the ships did turn to port. But why? It was a 180 turn. To get that result surely it should have been "Turn Foxtrot Port"? And Sierra Speed is actually Stationing Speed, the maximum speed required for manoeuvring purposes, not as Frame reports it, an instruction to proceed at 25 knots.

These points suggest that Frame is not as well informed about the signalling aspects as he ought to be, and this is important if we are to be convinced of his conclusion that it was the mechanisms of the reception and reporting the final signal which was the cause of the collision.

I believe it is much more likely that factors of fatigue, inexperience, people still to become comfortable working with each other, a generally low state of efficiency in both ships, and confusion as to what the final Foxtrot Corpen, an information signal, really required of *Voyager*, which led to the tragedy. Of course my opinion is no more likely to be correct than Frame's. The fact is we will never know. And those who could tell us are all dead.

So, what are we to make of this handsomely produced book?

While it is still a pity it was ever done, it is a monumental effort which merits the doctorate the author has received, and we can all be glad for him on that account. However for the reasons I have given I think the old Scottish verdict of "Not Proven" would be about right. But read it anyway. Just keep your critical faculties alert.

## THE AUTHOR

Commodore John Alan Robertson had a distinguished career in the RAN, joining in 1940 at the age of 13 and serving for more than 40 years.

A specialist communications officer, CDRE Robertson served in virtually every class of ship in the Fleet, including three tours in HMAS *Melbourne* and one as Executive Officer of HMAS *Voyager*

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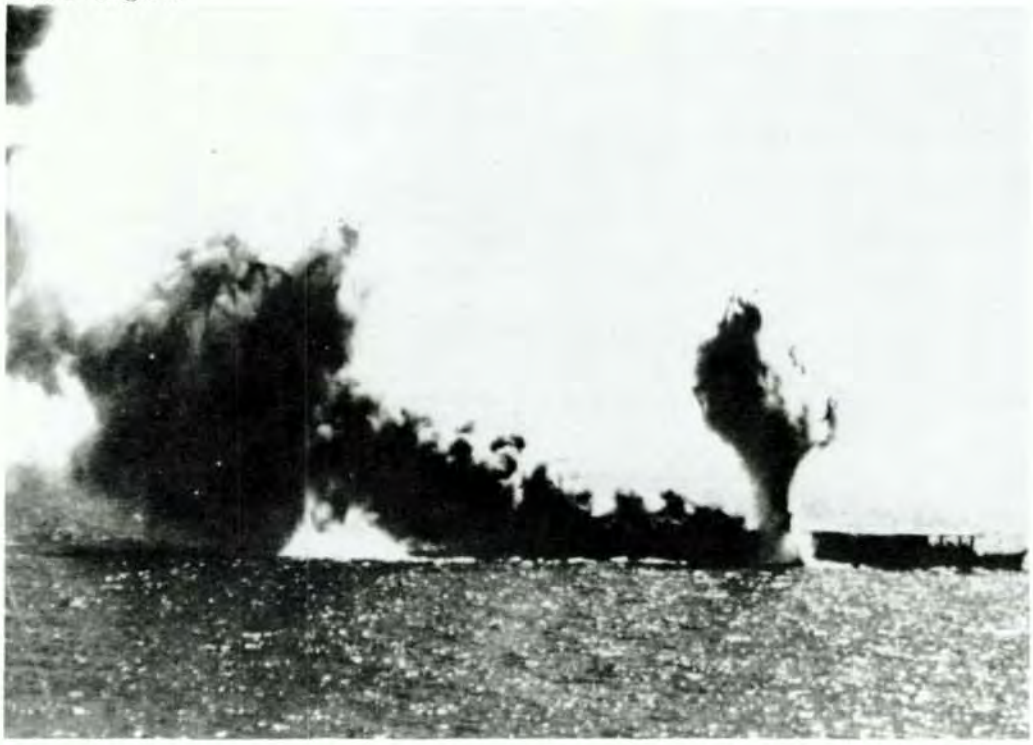

*Japanese Carrier Shoho, lost in the Battle of the Coral Sea.*

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| | – 25 picas deep by 33 picas wide |
| **Material form required** | – B&W: Clean artwork or negatives |
| | – Colour: Four colour separation negatives |
| **Screen size:** | – 133 preferred but 125 – 150 acceptable |

# ADVERTISING CHARGES – 1992

| | Standard | Discount | Bulk |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Colour** | $A | $A | $A |
| Centre double page | 800 | 700 | 630 |
| Back page | 500 | 450 | 405 |
| Internal page – single | 400 | 350 | 315 |
| Internal page – double | 700 | 600 | 540 |
| Half page | 300 | 275 | 250 |
| **Black and White** | | | |
| Centre double page | 330 | 330 | 270 |
| Back page | 180 | 160 | 150 |
| Internal page – single | 165 | 150 | 135 |
| Internal page – double | 300 | 275 | 250 |
| Half page | 135 | 120 | 110 |

**Notes:**

1 The Discount Rate applies if a booking is for four or more successive journals with the same advertisement. The Bulk Rate is for the same if the total bill is paid with the initial order.
2. The deadlines for material are: No1 – 21 Jan; No2 – 21 Apr; No3 – 21 Jul; No4 – 21 Oct
3. Payment should be made on receipt of invoice.
4. The above prices do not include any agency commissions.
5. A copy of each Journal will be sent to the advertisers.
6. Two- Three- and Four-colour line advertisements can be inserted. Prices will be supplied on request.
7. Further information can be supplied on request to the Advertising Manager, who can be contacted by 'phone on (06) 265 3194 between 8:30am and 4pm Monday to Friday.

# AIR MAIL RATES

Members and libraries overseas who would like to receive their journals by air mail should add the following sums to their subscription orders:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| For those in: | New Zealand, PNG | A$ .9.00 |
| | Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore | A$11.00 |
| | Hong Kong, India, Japan | A$13.00 |
| | USA, Canada | A$16.00 |
| | UK, Europe, South America | A$18.00 |
| | Other countries | On request |

NOTE: Surface/ordinary rates are included in the subscription.

*The Guided Missile Frigate HMAS Canberra approaches San Diego Harbour during Exercise RIMPAC 92.*

# THE AUSTRALIAN NAVAL INSTITUTE INC