

FOR VEC FOLDER

# FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION of NEW SOUTH WALES

POSTAL ADDRESS: PO BOX 28, NOWRA, NSW, 2541

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 3 JULY 1992



## SLIPSTREAM



PUBLISHED BY - FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION of AUSTRALIA (NSW) Incorporated

PO BOX 28, NOWRA, NSW, 2541, AUSTRALIA

REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST PUBLICATION No.NAS2604

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*\*FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH - kindly provided by Neil Keedle, shows that bastion of culinary delights, 'Harry's Cafe de Wheels' as it used to be. Located at the bottom of Potts Point Road, Sydney, and adjacent to the Garden Island Dockyard gate, it has provided sustenance to Royalty, the stars of stage and screen and the exalted and defaulted of the Navy.*

**EDITORIAL**

Congratulations to the Reunion 92 Committee, and the many workers behind the scenes, for the job well done. If you missed the reunion, you missed a wonderful week.

The distribution of SLIPSTREAM is getting wider and wider. We now send copies to all states of Australia, England, U.S.A., Canada and New Zealand. We are now printing about four hundred copies each edition for New South Wales and overseas. If the proposal to send Slipstream to all interstate members goes ahead, this production run will increase to about one thousand copies per issue.

Remember, this is your journal. In order for it to reflect your areas of interest, ideas and opinions. It is necessary for you to contribute articles, letters and ideas. We can't guarantee that your submissions will appear in print, but we can assure you that all input will be archived and form a part of the history of this, your association..

Under the State laws relating to what is known as Legal Deposit, the journal is now forwarded to the Mitchell Library in Canberra, and the State Library of New South Wales.

To quote the State Library correspondence on the matter: *'All issues of this publication will be kept in the Library as part of the documentary record of the State, and may in time become the only set in existence. Your co-operation in making it available is very much appreciated, and any further publications you may produce will also be gratefully received.'*

That's all for now folks. ED

**NSW PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Having been asked to write a few words for Slipstream, I suppose it would be fitting for me to comment on our recent reunion. From the comments received from visitors it can only be concluded that the programme was a great social success.

Nowra was selected as the venue back in April '90 at the National Conference in Perth, with the sanction of all delegates, and the format to be along similar lines to the '88 Reunion. Keeping this in mind, the committee went ahead and drew up a programme of events which was sent to all prospective attendees. Included with the programme, was an invitation to suggest alternative events, but since no such suggestions were forthcoming, the programme went ahead.

Costing was kept as low as possible and planned, hopefully, to give as much pleasure as possible to all the visitors. The committee then decided on a range of souvenirs which would be sold during the Reunion Week. Any items surplus to the immediate requirements, would be sold over a longer time period.

In this regard we have rather more than anticipated, but the committee feel confident that the stock will eventually be sold. The bottom line is that all accounts have been paid and a list of items still available are included in this issue of Slipstream.

Taking the week day by day, I must say that Sunday, the check-in day, was really hectic, registering visitors, handing our 'Rabbits' and answering queries, I would like to thank all the people who helped to make it successful. The same team who put so much work in on the Sunday, also continued on Monday.

The hard work and preparation put in by Mal Wilson and George Parker, resulted in terrific days of Bowls and Golf. My sincere thanks to Mal and George, also Bomaderry Bowling Club and the Nowra Golf Club.

Tuesday's Jervis Bay Cruises were reported as being everything that could be asked for, the Bus Tour much the same, due in no small measure to the tour guide, 'genial' Jock Stanford. My thanks to Jock and

## FOREWORD

By Rear Admiral Andrew Robertson, AO, DSC, RAN (Rtd)

*Chairman of the Capital Campaign of the Naval Aviation Museum.*

'*Esprit de Corps*' is defined as 'the spirit of comradeship, loyalty, and devotion to the body or association to which one belongs'.

Most people, perhaps without knowing it, have experienced the value of *Esprit de Corps* at some stage in their lives, be it a football team, a ship a military unit, or some other organisation where men and women depend on each other.

In all sorts of organisations this feeling of 'togetherness' forms in many ways the cells around which national unity and drive are created and developed.

The Fleet Air Arm, from its earliest days has possessed such a spirit, allied with a consuming zest of 'get up and go'. This was amply demonstrated in May by the huge turnout of the Fleet Air Arm Association for the various activities associated with the reunion and the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea, including the impressive march through Nowra.

Most people would expect such a spirit to develop among aircrew, particularly those who have shared exciting and often dangerous experiences together. But in the Fleet Air Arm it goes well beyond aircrew and is strongly developed in many other units vital to efficient naval air operations such as the aircraft handlers, aircraft maintainers, ordnance personnel and a whole range of other supporting units in the ships and air base.

On joining our first straight-deck aircraft carrier, HMAS Sydney, towards the end of the Korean War, I was fascinated by the team-work of the aircraft handlers racing among the crowded Sea Fury and Firefly aircraft as they strove to ensure a catapult launch every minute or so. Danger there was aplenty as they moved under the wings to place or remove wheel chocks or to attach catapult wires, often within a few feet of the whirling propellers on a deck moving to the sometimes heavy swell of the Yellow Sea. Likewise all the other teams on the flight deck - ordnance, engineers etc worked as highly motivated and efficient groups to enable fully armed and fuelled aircraft to be launched on time.

All this took place amid the roar of aircraft engines, the thumps of the catapult, the screech of the arrester wires, and usually the howl of a strong relative wind.

Equally impressive was the spirit in the hangars where maintainers worked around the clock to repair aircraft damaged in the frequent landing accidents. The replacement of engines, wings and tailplanes was a common sight and aircraft could be virtually rebuilt overnight, ready for test running the next morning. Supporting this activity was the unseen teams in the engine and boiler rooms, the many magazines, the storerooms, the operations and direction rooms, the meteorological office and all the other areas which made up the entire facilities of the small moving airfield/town which was the aircraft carrier.

Rising steadily now at Nowra, is the huge new Naval Aviation Museum which provides a focus of interest for all those who take pride in the stirring achievements of the Fleet Air Arm. In a few years time, given organisation, public support, and the help of many volunteers, the Navy will have one of the great naval aviation museums of the world.

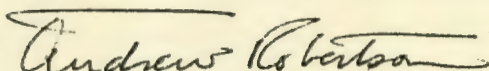
As far as is known, our collection of twenty-three historic aircraft is, after those in the United States, Britain, and possibly France, the next most comprehensive in existence.

Australia, will in due course, have a magnificent reminder of part of its heritage, which will be of great benefit to the nation, the RAN, and the City of Shoalhaven. But more than this, it can become a centre of interest and comradeship for ex and serving members of the Fleet Air Arm, and those who supported them.

Already much has been achieved with great financial support from many firms and individuals, as all who have visited the massive hangar can see. More help is needed, be it in donations or in raising funds; in repairing historic aircraft; as museum guides; or in the many functions needing voluntary effort.

Pulling together we can, and will, not only complete this museum but gain a great deal of satisfaction out of the community effort involved.

After all, that is what '*Esprit de Corps*' is all about.



- RAdm Rtd.



Chairman of the Capital Campaign of the Naval  
Aviation Museum

**REAR ADMIRAL ANDREW ROBERTSON**  
AO, DSC, RAN Rtd

all at *HMAS Creswell* and the Jervis Bay Range Facility. (JBRF)

The race meeting on Wednesday seemed to go off very well. The weather and the food couldn't have been bettered, except by the company. Even though I found it impossible to prise anything out of the bookies, I wouldn't have missed it for quids.

What can I say about Thursday? Both the march and the cocktail party will be long remembered. It was most gratifying to see Theo Bushe-Jones receive his Life Membership. Well done Theo!

Friday's memorial service attracted a capacity crowd and was most moving, due in no small measure to Monsignor 'Tiger' Lyons. The same capacity crowd, plus a few, found their way to the Junior Sailors Club for the barbecue, this had our team of helpers going like the proverbial one-armed-paperhangers. It was never like that at Happy's Canteen, was it?

The Albatross Air Day is something that I can write very little about because, with about half-a-dozen other helpers, I spent most of the day in a marquee flogging plonk and polo shirts to the general public. However, I gather that while there was some complaints about the catering, most agreed that the technical and flying displays were up to Albatross' impeccable standards.

The reunion committee and host division received some criticism for apparently ignoring the *HMS Indefatigable* Association members from the United Kingdom, and leaving them standing around.

I should like to make it clear that we had no notification of their ETA. In fact, to the best of our knowledge, they were supposed to be arriving in Nowra from Sydney on thursday to participate in our march, but they didn't arrive and we had no word whatsoever as to when or if they would arrive.

When we were informed of their presence in the Senior Sailor's Mess, Vice President Jim Lee contacted them and subsequently reported that the majority were quite happy and had had a most pleasant visit.

All in all, I think it was a week of activities that went off very well and reflected great credit on all those who worked so hard to make it the success it was. At this juncture, I must be truthful and say that when the 50th Anniversary comes around in 1998, I expect to be in my dotage and therefore excused from any part of the organising committee.

I'll see you all, hopefully, at the General Meeting in September. If not, maybe at the next Air Day and official opening of Stage 1 and 2 of the Naval Aviation Museum in November this year.

\* *Bob Cronin - New South Wales President.*

## NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

At the end of the 'Reunion' week, a short conference was held with each State Division of the association being represented by three delegates. There were also three observers from Queensland present, but more about them later.

A few of the major items of interest discussed at the conference are as follows:

**Constitution** : Since the Perth Conference in April 1990, our National President, Toz Dadswell, has been working on a new constitution which would meet the requirements of a truly National organisation. This was submitted to the Federal Council for their approval at the Adelaide meeting in October 1991. Subsequent to this approval, a Canberra legal firm advised that the current organisation was far too complex, i.e. Incorporated Associations in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. Following this advice, a sub-committee was elected at the May '92 Conference to examine the organisation that the Association should adopt. The sub-committee consists of Mr.G.Vickeridge (WA), Mr.J.Ikin (VIC) and Mr.C.Bushe-Jones (ACT). They are to prepare a recommendation for the October 1992 Council meeting.

One of the benefits in having a single incorporated organisation is in the insurance area. The policy we currently hold with a \$2m public liability cover, is sufficient for a nationwide membership. Secondly, the need to submit returns to the State Corporate Affairs bodies could then be avoided.

**Council meeting** : The meeting, scheduled for the 30-31st October 1992, was to be held in Melbourne to coincide with the Melbourne Cup. However, the Governor of NSW, RADM Peter Sinclair, will be officially opening Stage 2 of the Naval Aviation Museum on the 1st of November '92. The Museum Board of Directors have agreed that the first meeting to be held in the Museum Board Room can be the Fleet Air Arm Association's Federal Council meeting.

The President of the Senior Sailors Mess, WO Bob McIlwain, has advised the association that the Annual Senior Sailor's Reunion will be brought forward one week to coincide with the opening of Stage 2. This date will be Friday 30th October '92.

**Queensland Division** : Mr. Barry Lister, who attended the conference as an observer, has agreed to be the co-ordinator in forming a Queensland Division. Currently, there are forty members of the NSW Division who are resident in Queensland. Interested parties can contact Barry at 2 Wandarri Street, WURTULL BEACH, QLD 4575, or by 'phone, (074) 932934.

\* *Ian Ferguson - National Secretary*

## NAVAL TRAGEDY OFF W.A.COAST

Able-bodied Seaman Derek Hammond was in the radar room of HMAS Nizam on the dark squally night of February 11, 1945, helping the bridge to navigate the ship around Cape Leeuwin when it happened.

The 1800 tonne fleet destroyer suddenly heeled sharply and shuddered, and the radar set, on which AB Hammond was plotting the coastline, tilted and almost fell on him.

In a matter of seconds that seemed like minutes, the warship righted itself but continued to roll.

Derek Hammond did not know until he came off watch at midnight that ten of his watch mates had been hurled or swept overboard when the destroyer was struck by a freakish wave. The mountain of water had hit the ship soon after it had rounded the cape to head north to Fremantle.

"For some time I didn't know that anyone had been washed overboard," recalls Derek Hammond, a retired principal of Highgate school who now lives at Mt Claremont, "but gradually the news filtered down that there had been some loss of life.

"When I came off watch I was told that four able seamen, four ordinary seamen, a leading seaman and a stoker had been lost from B gundeck, the Port signalling platform, Oerlikon gun platforms and the upper deck.

"While I was still on duty the ship had put about to search for the men, but it was pretty hopeless in the dark and with a big sea running."

Former Able Seaman Hammond's memories of that night of terror are fuzzy today, so many years later, but a graphic account of those moments aboard the Nizam are given in a book published by the Australian Naval Historical Society. Called "N Class", it is written by L.J.Lind and M.A.Payne.

"At approximately 2315 a heavy squall hit the ship," recorded the officer of the watch, Lt.Cdr Cook, quoted in "N Class". "The wind increased greatly in force and almost simultaneously a freak wave struck the ship on the starboard side.

"Spray from the wind-whipped sea made it impossible to see more than twenty metres from the wallowing ship."

Lt.Cdr Cook later wrote: "She broached to, keeling an estimated 60 to 70 degrees (official RAN records say it was 75 to 80 degrees) and burying the whole port side in the water.

"I scrambled up and actually sat on the starboard (vertical) sides of the bridge structure and clung on while she rolled and then slowly righted herself.

"We were doing 21 knots at the time and you can imagine the force and destructive power of the water as it swept down the ship.

"Boats and davits on the port side were swept away, the splinter shield on the multiple pom-pom was bent back, and some witnesses swore the water reached the lower of the two white bands on our funnel.

"My first instinct was to stop the engines, but there was little need to ring down the order as the ship was already stopped.

"It is difficult to describe those few moments...the horror of that dark night, the screaming wind and tearing sea, the wail of lifting safety valves and gyro alarms, cries of men clinging for their lives, a stricken ship, like a beast wallowing with broken legs.

"When we got under way, we slowly cast around looking for those lost overboard, but it was an impossible task."

The Nizam limped into Fremantle on February 12 with her electrical gear in wretched condition.

Derek Hammond recalls that the N-Class destroyers were notorious for their propensity to roll in heavy seas.

"I think they were probably top-heavy," he said.

In South African waters, early in January 1944, the Nizam's sister ship Nepal was struck in mid-afternoon by a series of freakish waves, one of which caught her stern, heeling the ship heavily to port.

The Nepal continued to list to port and broached-to, burying the lee side deep in the Indian Ocean.

According to the "N Class" book, an officer claimed to have been thrown in the armchair in which he was sitting from one end of the wardroom to the other - clear of the deck.

Just before the Nepal went on its crazy roll, cook, R.W.Andrews, appeared on deck to throw a tin of "gash" over the side.

The cook was hurled into the sea, along with a Carley float and lifebuoy.

The ship put about but the captain held little hope of recovering Andrews. A sharp-eyed lookout spotted the raft, however, and a few minutes later the crew cheered when they sighted 'cookie' swimming strongly towards it.

The captain could not see the swimmer, according to the authors, so he was guided by the lookout man who yelled: "See that bloody albatross? He's right over him now."

Nepal, still rolling, was manoeuvred close to the cook, who was hauled aboard in a scrambling net and rushed to the sick bay where he lost consciousness. The ship's doctor reported to the bridge that 'cookie' had a compound fracture of the leg and other injuries, the most serious of which was a mystifying puncture-like wound in the shoulder.

When the cook recovered consciousness he was asked by the doctor to account for the shoulder wound.

"It was the.....albatross. The bird bit me and I bit the bird."

Cook R.W.Andrews became the Royal Australian Navy's only known albatross victim of the World War.

*\* This article appeared in the "West Australian" in 1986. Republished here by kind permission of the Atomic Ex-Servicemen's Association.*

## PRESERVATION OF THE JAPANESE MIDGET SUBMARINE

On May 31, 1942, three Japanese midget submarines stealthily entered Sydney Harbour to attack shipping, particularly the United States cruiser USS Chicago. One was depth charged, one was scuttled by the crew and the third has never been located.

Two were recovered. The stern and centre section from the scuttled submarine and the bow section from the depth-charged submarine were assembled to make a composite submarine for display, as a reminder of the threat to Australia's shores.

For many years this submarine stood outside the Australian War Memorial, where it deteriorated in Canberra's climate and from the attentions of many visitors, until the time came when it could no longer outside.

Once the decision to preserve the submarine had been made, the metals conservation staff carefully documented its condition and photographed its condition inside and out.

They removed small samples of paint and metal for analysis. A conservator spent many hours examining the paint samples to determine the colour and composition of the original paint, as many different colours had been applied over the years. As the submarine was far too large a job for the Conservation Section, the War Memorial decided to send it to the Cockatoo Dockyards in Sydney. The dockyards had done similar work for another museum, and the apprentices were keen to tackle this exciting project.

First the conservators had to develop a "treatment proposal" setting out the conservation treatments that the apprentices would carry out.

Once the proposal was agreed to, the three sections of the submarine were each loaded on a truck and taken to Sydney. Each section was treated separately. The sections were first disassembled into sub-assemblies - a torpedo tube or the rudder for example. These were dismantled, then inspected by AWM conservators, who told dockyard staff how to treat each component.

Treatment was carried out in five steps: paint stripping, corrosion removal, repair, corrosion prevention, and repainting.

The larger components were delicately shot-blasted with fine stainless-steel balls to strip away the many layers of paint that the submarine had acquired. This shot-blasting also removed the corrosion that had built up under the paint.

The paint layers on the smaller components were removed chemically. These components were then treated with phosphoric acid to remove corrosion.

Components were carefully repaired with normal workshop techniques. Every effort was made to keep as much of the original as possible, but it was necessary to make some new parts - new plates for the hull, for instance.

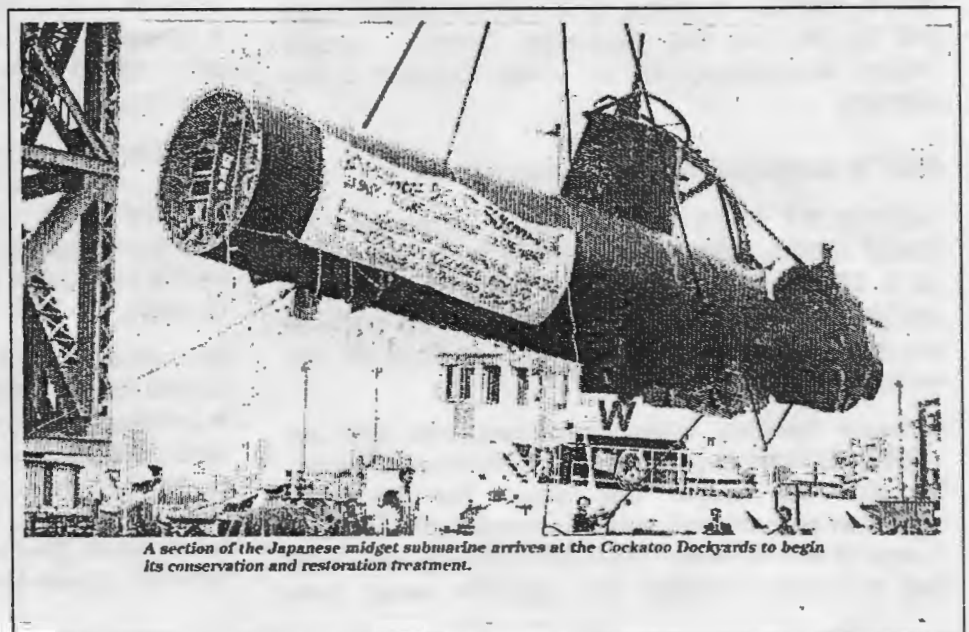
Corrosion inhibitor, a synthetic waxy substance, was applied to minimise further damage.

The components were etch-primed before painting. The etch-primer forms a protective layer, and because it etches the surface of the metal slightly, gives a better bond between paint and metal. A zinc chromate primer was applied on top of the etch-primer, and on top of that a commercial enamel paint.

The paint scheme was carefully matched to the samples of original paint. However, although the paint looks the same as the original, it can be readily distinguished by microscopic examination. The painting was done in stages during the reassembly.

The components were checked and reassembled into the three original sections which were returned to the War Memorial. Two sections are on display, awaiting the day when all three can go on show in the memorial's new exhibition hall, due to open in 1993.

*\* Article by Ann Parkinson and reprinted with thanks from the Dept of Veterans Affairs newspaper, 'Vetaffairs'.*



A section of the Japanese midget submarine arrives at the Cockatoo Dockyards to begin its conservation and restoration treatment.

## DEFICIENCIES NEED RECTIFICATION

In his *Viewpoint* article in the April-June edition of *The Navy*, the Navy League's Federal President, Geoffrey Evans, quoted Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs (Senator Gareth Evans) reference to Air Force's F111s and Navy's submarines as our long range strike capabilities. However, the Minister went on to imply that our offensive capacity is limited because "we have no aircraft carriers and only limited amphibious troop-lift capacity".

The RAN is indeed deficient in both sea-borne aircraft and amphibious lift capacity. Significantly, the major limitation on our amphibious lift capacity is in aircraft and the lack of a ship to deploy them.

At present our sea-borne aircraft are all helicopters:

- \* Sixteen 'state of the art' S70B2 Seahawks are all required to operate from the six FFG7 class frigates.
- \* Seven Seakings, formerly anti-submarine helicopters, have now been assigned to 'utility' duties. One operates from *HMAS SUCCESS*. The others operate from shore. Although they can land on the amphibious heavy lift ship *TOBRUK*, the Seakings cannot deploy with the ship as she cannot refuel them.
- \* Six AS350B Squirrels have no combat capability and very low payload. They are useful for training and low level surveillance.

More helicopters will be required for the ANZAC class frigates and to replace the Seakings when they reach the end of their lives later this decade.

The recent Force Structure Review allocated provisionally \$230 million to provide a helicopter capable training ship to fill the dual need to replace in 1977 Navy's existing seagoing ship *HMAS JERVIS BAY* and to improve the Australian Defence Force's 'limited amphibious lift' to which Senator Evans referred.

### ADF's amphibious lift weakness

Currently the ADF's amphibious lift is provided by *HMAS TOBRUK*, which can embark for ocean transit up to 500 troops and a number of tanks and heavy vehicles. *TOBRUK* can land these over a suitable beach or by two medium landing craft which are carried at davits.

Although Seaking sized helicopters can land on *TOBRUK's* flight deck to embark personnel or cargo, the ship has neither the hangar nor the other helicopter support equipment essential for helicopters to deploy with the ship. The ADF lacks any real troop and equipment vertical lift capability away from

suitable bases on the Australian mainland.

The remainder of the ADF's amphibious lift is provided by six 310 ton heavy landing craft (LCHs), which can operate (inter alia) with the training ship *JERVIS BAY* in a logistics over the side (LOTS) role. *JERVIS BAY* also has a roll-on roll-off vehicle capability.

Thus, in addition to her general naval training role, *JERVIS BAY* contributes significantly to the ADF's amphibious lift capability. A failure to replace *JERVIS BAY* with both naval training and at least some amphibious lift capability would actually reduce the ADF's capability, let alone fail to meet an accepted need for an increase.

The amphibious lift capability would be further reduced by the retirement of the six LCH's, which are already approaching twenty years of age.

The need to improve the ADF's amphibious lift was proven when Australia considered means of evacuating endangered Australians from strife torn Fiji at the time of the 1987 coup. As Fiji is out of range of Australian land based aircraft, and we had no ship capable of operating sufficient numbers of suitable helicopters, there was no way that evacuation could be arranged. When it came to rescuing distressed Australian citizens, the ADF was helpless.

Although similar circumstances could arise in a number of the smaller nation States in our region, the evacuation of distressed civilians is by no means the only foreseeable need for a helicopter capable ship. Disaster relief, support for friendly regional neighbours and deployment of Army units around Australian national territory are a combined basis for the requirement.

A replacement for *JERVIS BAY's* training and amphibious lift capability is essential anyway. By spending a relatively small additional extra sum, the ADF can be provided with an essential additional helicopter orientated amphibious lift.

The precise capabilities of the ship are currently being determined within Headquarters Australian Defence Force. However, it is known that the ship (but not necessarily the helicopters) would be operated by Navy as a service to Army (in the amphibious lift role).

Authoritative sources suggest a ship displacing 20,000 tonnes, able to embark numbers equivalent to a battalion of troops, up to 12 utility helicopters, four medium landing craft and an 80 bed hospital should be feasible on the money allocated provisionally. This may be either a converted merchant ship or new construction. The latter is likely to be more expensive initially but more cost effective on a through life basis.



## Lack of an aircraft carrier

In the context used by Senator Evans - tactically (but not strategically) offensive maritime operations in Australia's zone of strategic interest the term aircraft carrier implies a ship capable of operating fixed wing strike fighters and combat capable helicopters.

With the 1983 decision to scrap *HMAS MELBOURNE* and her fixed wing aircraft, Australia lost the capability to provide fighter cover for her Navy anywhere other than within 500 miles of major RAAF bases. She also lost a most effective means of providing Australian ground forces with airborne ground attack capability in the region and in some Australian territory.

There are no plans to replace this capability. Further, it is not feasible to fit the proposed helicopter capable training ship to fill this function.

The need for combat capable maritime warfare helicopters is being met by the FFG7's Seahawk S70B2s, although as yet there is no approval to arm these with the air to surface missiles that proved so effective against fast attack craft in the Gulf War. The Navy League considers that the Anzac frigates should also be equipped with S70B2 Seahawk helicopters.

Unless a new aircraft carrier is acquired, it is possible that the only way to provide Army units with an airborne ground attack capability would be by acquiring helicopter gunships. Although fixed wing ground attack aircraft are less vulnerable, their need for high grade airfields and low combat radii of action limits their effectiveness in regional and Australian national territorial operations.

Navy is known to be concerned at the lack of a fixed wing defensive fighter capability for the Fleet. To meet this in part, the number of ships with area defence surface to air missile systems will be increased by the commissioning of *HMA Ships MELBOURNE* and *NEWCASTLE*.

Other planned measures include acquiring more close in weapons systems, the fitting of the very versatile Mark 41 vertical missile launching system in the Anzac frigates and arming those frigates with new Sea Sparrow point defence missiles.

Further measures should include equipping the DDG successors with area defence systems, ensuring that they join the Fleet before age forces the retirement of the DDG's themselves, and upgrading the area defence system of the FFG7s.

The cost of some of these measures could be avoided if a new aircraft carrier were to be acquired.

However, Navy is understood to consider that the very substantial cost of a new carrier and her fixed

wing aircraft would divert to an unwise and unacceptable extent the very limited funds required for other projects. These include the Collins class submarines and Anzac frigates.

Therefore, the ADF will have to accept the limitations on areas of operations that the lack of sea-borne fixed wing aircraft imposes on the Fleet.

*\* This article, written by A.W.Grazebrook, is reproduced here by the kind permission of the publishers of "The Navy"; the magazine of the Navy League of Australia. The magazine is published quarterly and is available at selected newsagencies. Readers who wish to obtain "The Navy" on a regular basis can do so by joining the League. A membership application form is included in this issue of "Slipstream".*

## RN FLEET AIR ARM FACT SHEET

7,500 people (12% of the Royal Navy's total strength) are involved in naval aviation. They operate over 300 aircraft deployed at sea as integral parts of ships' weapons systems and at five naval air stations. The Fleet Air Arm provides the ears, eyes and punch of the Fleet.

Flag Officer Naval Aviation (FONA) is Rear Admiral Colin Cooke-Priest who has his headquarters at Yeovilton, Somerset. For operational matters FONA reports to the Commander in Chief Fleet at Northwood, Middlesex and he has direct access to the Ministry of Defence for flight safety matters. FONA's staff is geographically divided - the operations and Plans division is based at Northwood; the remaining majority at Yeovilton.

### FONA's responsibilities include:

*Providing operationally capable Squadrons/Flights to the Fleet.*

*Managing naval aviation resources in peace and war.*

*Being the focal point for naval aviation practices.*

*Maintaining the readiness of the Royal Naval Reserve (Air) Branch.*

*Contributing to the UK search and rescue organisation.*

### The Fleet Air Arm operates 21 naval air squadrons:

**At Sea:** Jet and helicopter squadrons deployed in aircraft carriers, and helicopter Flights deployed in destroyers, frigates and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries.

**Ashore:** 5 Naval Air Stations which, by aircraft type, parent the training squadrons and disembarked front line squadrons.

*\* Our thanks to FONA's Public Relations staff.*

## NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE DELEGATES OF THE THIRD CONFERENCE OF THE FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

It is with much pleasure that I present to you, the delegates to the 3rd Conference of the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia, the President's report. I think it fair to say that the first conference held in Nowra in October 1986 was a planning conference, the second conference held in Perth in April 1990 was a drafting conference and this third will be a confirming conference.

This report covers the period from April 1990 up to May 1992. It is not the three year period envisaged at the previous meeting but I think we have to be practical about the timing. The Reunion has brought members from all States to Nowra and it is sensible to hold a conference while all are mustered in one place. Perhaps in the future we may decide that conferences should only be held at reunion times and we may also decide that the format and attendance should be varied. It is something we might look at.

The FAAA continues to grow in numbers and stature. We are now a contributing member of the RSL Kindred Organisations Committee and we have applied for inclusion in the Veterans Affairs Register of Ex-Servicemens Associations. Our banners are seen on ANZAC Day and people are slowly becoming aware of our existence. Overall I am pleased with the progress we have made over the past two years but there is still much to be done.

Our Patron, Sir Victor Smith, was very disappointed that he could not be with us for the reunion. His note of apology reads as follows:

" I deeply apologise for not attending this reunion, but, to put it bluntly, ill health is the reason. Perhaps the situation is like an old naval aircraft whose activities, not only in the front line but also in the second line, have become limited. Neither squadron, centralised or any other form of maintenance could achieve the desirable result of my being with you today.

I am full of admiration for what the Association has achieved and I wish it further progress. This will entail continuous work by all because, as we all know, very often a static organisation soon moves into reverse. Again, as we all know, the Fleet Air Arm, past and present, does not deserve such treatment."

I am sure that we would wish to place on record our best wishes to Sir Victor and Lady Smith and express our concern about his ill health.

I have spent considerable time, and so have a number of delegates, on revising and redrafting the

FAAA Constitution. At the last Federal Council meeting held in Adelaide in November 1991, we agreed on a document that was submitted to a Canberra legal firm for scrutiny. The advice given by that firm, and it is advice that I respect, was that we should look closely at just what we are trying to achieve. I do not intend to use this report as a means of injecting my thoughts and opinions on the matter, but we do need to examine carefully the way ahead. There is no immediate urgency to resolve the matter as we are already incorporated in West Australia as the 'Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia' and we do carry insurance for that organisation. The main thing is to get it right first time and at the minimum cost to the Association.

In closing I would like to thank all delegates for their support over the past two years. We have made headway in a number of areas. I would also like to record my appreciation to Ian Ferguson, Hon Secretary, Bob Bryce, Hon Treasurer and Les Matterson my very able deputy. And it would be remiss of me if I didn't acknowledge the tremendous effort of the Reunion committee. A great effort and a wonderful result. Thank you.

\* Toz' Dadswell - National President FAAA

### THE INDISPENSABLE MAN

*Sometimes when you're feeling important*

*Sometimes when your ego's in bloom*

*Sometimes when you take it for granted*

*You're the best qualified in the room*

*Sometimes when you think that your leaving  
would leave an unfillable hole*

*Just follow this simple instruction...*

*Take a bucket and fill it with water*

*Put your hand in it up to your wrist*

*Take it out and the hole that's remaining*

*Is the measure of how you'll be missed*

*You can splash all you like when you enter*

*And stir up the water galore*

*But stop and you'll see in a minute*

*That it looks just the same as before*

*The moral of this quaint example*

*Is do the best you can*

*Be proud of yourself, but remember*

*There is no indispensable man.*

\* Anon



## CONTACT COLUMN

**HMS OCEAN ASSOCIATION - UK**

April 1992

Dear JA,

It's an age since I last wrote and I must thank you for your continued interest in our Association. You will be pleased to know that it is raining here today, just the normal Springlike weather for England. But...contrary to popular belief Mancunians (*People from Manchester.Ed*) do not have webbed feet.

Our shipmates had a meeting at the end of February and I took along all the literature from the museum and yourself. They were most interested and asked me to thank you for your kind attention.

Mr.Plant wrote to me with a most informative letter and some photographs and so I feel my appeal in your newsletter has been very worthwhile.

Please find enclosed a copy of an article which was published about the ship some years ago. I hope you will find it interesting. (*To be published at a later date.Ed*)

I notice that your reunion will be coming up in May and hope you have a most enjoyable time. We have just fixed the venue for this year's reunion and will be going to the Royal Sailor's Home Club, at Portsmouth, in October.

My local branch of the FAA Association is going to Portland at the end of this month and as a member I will be going with them. Hopefully we will be seeing quite a lot of the activity that occurs on this base. We will be staying for the weekend in Weymouth, but will take our meals and spend our social time on the base. Should be good I think. Then in October we will be going down to Yeovilton once again. This has become one of our classic weekends and it is usually a brilliant time with a great deal of comradeship. Don't get me wrong. I am just an average housewife, but was always interested in my late husband's Navy interest for all our married life and I have been very privileged that they are still welcoming me to their company now that I am alone.

May I wish you a pleasant Easter and I will write again when I think there is any news that might be of interest to your members.

Yours sincerely, *Joyce Knowlson, Secretary.*

## HMAS ALBATROSS SENIOR SAILORS MESS

*To Fleet Air Arm Association - Publicity Officer*

Dear John,

This years Annual Senior Sailors Reunion will be brought forward one week to coincide with the opening of Stage II of the Australian Naval Aviation Museum which is programmed that weekend.

The date will be Friday 30th October 1992.

It would be much appreciated if this notice is put in your issues of Slipstream.

Thanking you for your support.

*WOM R.McIlwain - Mess President*

Dear Shipmate 'Juke',

I thought I would write a few lines to thank you and all your committee and families for all the effort you all must have put in to make the Reunion the success it was.

Everyone I came into contact with, agreed it was well organised and great to meet so many old shipmates and friends after so many years.

Now, I am sure you are resting up a bit before starting on the next one!!! Never mind, six years is some time away yet!

I was very pleased to purchase a shirt with our logo on, but was a little disappointed to see them on sale at the Air Day to the general public, I thought they were for members only, however, I realise it was a fund raising operation.

Once again, thanks for a great week and a job well done.

Regards to all, *Russ Hamer.*

Dear Members,

I would appreciate a copy of any video film footage taken during Reunion '92.

The main reason for this request being, the faces and names faded into a blur for the people involved in 'keeping the show on the road'.If such footage is available, it would be screened to enable the workers to catch up on the events they weren't able to participate in.

Any costs involved can be negotiated.

Yours sincerely, *L..Matterson, Hon..Sec. FAA Reunion*

## SPIN US A DIT

MEMORIES OF THE  
OLD ALBATROSS  
CINEMA

The old cinema. I always think of it as the 'old' cinema. It must have been new at some time I suppose, but it always had the 'old' appearance about it. Multitudinous coats of paint, various additions and modifications never changed my 'old' mental image of it.

It has seen use as a theatre, a church, a venue for wet weather payment, guard training, basketball, gymnasium and lecture hall. There are no doubt many other uses it was put to over the years, but it was always referred to as 'the cinema'.

My memories of it are mostly with a great degree of affection, because whilst it was in use as a cinema, it provided a means of escape, if only for a couple of hours, from the rigours of the daily routine that were imposed on the young sailor.

These were the days before television, the pay was lousy, the working hours were long, and discipline was spelt with a capital 'D'.

Trips into Nowra didn't provide a great degree of relief because the local citizenry tended to regard sailors in a less than friendly fashion. Yes, the cinema was a lifeline, a non-habitual way of opting out, if even for a short time.

But...this cinema was not a normal movie-house because almost all the good entertainment came from the patrons side of the screen.

The conversations that went on at full voice during the showing of the films would have provided Monty Python scripts for the next fifty years. Unfortunately, these scripts would never have made it past the censor. It didn't matter what gender, rank or other degree of importance the visiting audience consisted of, if something came into 'Jack's' head, it came out of his mouth, always at parade ground decibel level.

If the projectionist slipped a cog, got the sound out of synchronisation or delayed in changing reels, all hell would break loose. This was accompanied by some old, some new, but always ribald witticism. If he had the misfortune to burn a hole through, or broke the film, it was greeted with guffawing waves of delight from the patrons, always quick to score some entertainment from the poor sod's misfortunes.

It would be true to say that there were never any movies where you didn't get your money's worth in one form or another. If the film was good, all well and good. If the film didn't meet the sailor's minimum standards, the audience could always be relied upon to liven things up with off-stage direction. An example of this readily springs to mind....

The movie was slow, it was also a lovey-dovey tear-jerker Western which obviously wasn't designed

to hold the attention of the highly cerebral, expert audience.

The heroine had been playing 'hard-to-get' all the time she had been on the wagon train. When the Indians came in to attack, the wagons formed a defence circle. The hero dashed over to be of some protection to her as the arrows started to fly. Just as he reached her, an arrow struck her a mortal wound in the chest and she fell to the ground at the hero's feet. In her last conscious moment, she turned a teary, wistful face towards our hero, closed her eyes and died a virgin.

This wasteful death of a good sort obviously caused great sorrow to the sympathetic, grief stricken sailor audience.

As her eyelids fluttered closed for the last time, the advice from one of the sailors to the on-screen hero gave a whole new meaning to the expression, 'being laid in the grave'. The vocal necrophiliac then sat with a smile on his face as the remainder roared their approval.

Some of the private conversations that were carried on in the relative anonymity provided by the darkened surroundings, were equally enlightening. This conversation was overheard between a stoker and his current girlfriend...

"Do you love me?" she asked.

"Yeah," he said in a quiet voice, obviously not wanting to pursue the topic in this less than private arena.

"But do you really love me?" she asked, apparently sensing some lack of spontaneity in his previous reply.

"S'ssh," he said in a whisper, "you know I do."

This last statement must have sounded like a bit of an afterthought to the probing female mind.

"Yes... but do you really, really love me?" she persisted.

The poor exasperated stoker did his block, completely forgetting where he was, yelled, "Bloody hell! I r--- yer and buys yer lollies, don't I?"

The audience collapsed in a hysterical heap.

Eventually the cinema became just a bit too 'hot' for the visiting wives and girlfriends to endure. The sparkling ripostes were getting 'bluer' and becoming a source of acute embarrassment to the ones who wanted to use the cinema as a venue for family entertainment.

In an effort to control these 'goings-on', a cinema sentry became a permanent part of the duty watch, his prime function being to maintain decorum during the performances.

This met with a modicum of success, but with the advent of TV rooms around the base, the wit was eventually transferred to those providing the antics on the smaller screen.

Well, I suppose if walls had ears, the 'old' cinema would have thousands of such yarns stored away in its venerable timbers, never to be heard again.

\* *Peregrine*

## MILITARY HISTORY?

Everyone who has ever served on the 'Grey Funnel Line' must have heard the exhortation of the ship's Medical Officer, to 'keep your gun covered' whilst on a run ashore. The item used to comply with this request, was commonly referred to as a French Letter.

This terminology, prompted someone to write to a well known magazine and ask the following question:

*Why are condoms called French Letters?*

Seeing that the answer had an aeronautical flair, the reply to that question is published below.

...The name apparently originated during the First World War, with the Royal Flying Corps. The windsock was first used on French airfields during this time, and its tubular shape was immediately reminiscent of the contraceptive device.

The windsock had an odd name, something like l'oeufil, which the English had trouble in pronouncing, and characteristically referred to it in their Franglais as 'eff-ell'. The sobriquet was subsequently applied to the condom and ultimately shortened to F-L.

Apparently new troops arriving in France asked why they were called F-Ls and the issuing officer unable to offer the full explanation, said that it was short for French letter, and the nickname stuck.

Similarly, German troops, who were also issued with condoms, had their own nickname for them. They called them *Nahkampfsocken* - meaning close combat socks.....

And what do the French call them?

They call them *capotes anglaises* - which translates to English overcoats!

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## SIN BOSUN DITS

### THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"If the Good Lord had wanted us to go metric, He would have had only ten apostles."

### TRUTH WILL OUT

One Sunday morning the Chaplain apologised to his congregation for the sticking plaster on his face.

"I was thinking about my sermon whilst shaving," he explained, "and cut my face."

Afterwards, in the collection plate, he found a note.

"Next time, why not think about your face and cut the sermon."

## SHIP'S STANDING ORDERS FOR BEING HUMAN

You will be issued with one body. You may like it or not, but there is no exchange, no trading it in for a later Mark, it's yours for the full commission.

You can neglect it or look after it, but if you neglect it, you'll pay dearly!

If you look after it, there is no guarantee it will remain in good working order.

You will start training immediately, no time is allowed for 'slinging hammocks', or the like.

The training ship is called 'LIFE', you will be 'Under Training' full time with no leave nor 'Stand Easy'. 'Secure' will not be piped until you have finished.

Each Day you will have the opportunity to learn lessons. You may like the lessons or think them stupid or irrelevant, but you will learn them never-the-less.

There are no mistakes, only lessons. The training is a process of trial and error, experimentation.

The 'failed' experiments are as much a part of the process as the experiment that ultimately works.

A lesson is repeated until learned, it will be repeated in various forms until you have learned it. When you have learned one lesson there will be another; no passing out parades, no graduations, just lessons.

There is no part of life that does not contain its lessons, if you are alive, there is a lesson to be learned.

There is no 'draft chit' to a better billet, when 'There' becomes 'Here' you will simply obtain another 'There' that will look better than 'Here'.

Others are merely mirrors of you. You cannot love or hate something about another person unless it reflects to you something you love or hate about yourself.

What you make of life is up to you. You have all the kit and resources you need. What you do with them is your choicer. The answers to life's questions lie within you.

All you need to do is look, listen and trust.

The first lesson you will learn is that you will forget all of this.

*\* Reproduced with thanks from the Newsletter of the Naval Officers' Association of Vancouver Island, British Columbia.*

**HOW ABOUT SENDING IN YOUR SPECIAL DIT FOR THIS COLUMN?**

## IN THE BEGINNING

### BIRTH OF THE R.A.N. FLEET AIR ARM

In 1945, Lt CDR V.A.T. Smith (later Admiral Sir Victor Smith AC, KBE, CB, DSC) had been tasked with preparing an outline paper for the formation of a RAN FAA. His plan was well received by the Naval Board and, with Admiralty agreement, Lt CDR Smith was attached to the Admiralty to develop a more detailed plan. At the end of 1946 the Naval Board requested assistance from the RN in the form of a small team of experienced officers who commenced work in early 1947 under the title of the Naval Aviation Planning Staff. Their task was to compile the necessary information covering all aspects of a viable RAN FAA and to present their recommendations to Parliament. Should the government approve the acquisition of aircraft carriers, they were to promote discussions between the RAN and the RAAF in order to decide which service should provide the air complement for the carriers. The final combined services Naval Aviation planning staff produced a document entitled "The Naval Plan For Naval Aviation In The Royal Australian Navy" which became the blue print for the RANFAA.

A copy of this historic document dated February 1947 is preserved in the Naval Aviation Museum at HMAS Albatross.

On 3rd July 1947 the Australian Commonwealth Government led by Ben Chifley approved the establishment of a RANFAA to be totally controlled and operated by the RAN. The object of the plan was to "Operate, man and eventually fully train and maintain a RAN Carrier force of two light fleet aircraft carriers (CVL) and three carrier air groups (CAG) with RN co-operation as necessary". Main requirements included recruiting and training of personnel, maintenance and repair of aircraft, supply of stores, disembarkation and shore training of the CAG as well as planning and administration of the whole.

Initial planning provided for the revival of the Nowra airfield and related facilities. Also the acquisition of two CVL's from the RN. The British had laid down the keels for six Majestic class carriers in 1943 which were to be H.M. Ships Magnificent, Terrible, Powerful, Hercules and Leviathan. Construction had ceased in 1946 and none had been completed when the Australian Government took its decision. Ultimately five of the carriers were completed. They were - HMS Magnificent, completed April 1948. Terrible, launched 30 September 1944, completed February 1949 as HMAS Sydney. Majestic, launched 28 February 1945, completed October 1955 as HMAS Melbourne. Powerful, completed 1957 as HMCS Bonaventure. Hercules, completed 1961 as Vikrant, Indian Navy.

Planning provided for one CAG to be formed in the UK for each of the CVL's. The strength of each CAG would be 12 fighter and 12 strike A/C. A third CAG would be formed in Australia and whilst only two CVL's would be commissioned in the RAN, the third CAG would be available for duty in either a training Air Group (TAG) and a Fleet Requirements Unit (FRU) was also included.

It was obvious that the RAN could not wait for her carriers until trained air personnel were available to man them. Full use was made of RN loan and transfer FAA sailors and Officers; they almost manned the first CAG and a significant proportion of the second. Also, training of aircrew and maintenance sailors would take place in the UK for the first ten years. Concurrently, Nowra airfield would be upgraded as well as the satellite Jervis Bay airfield. Requirements were to, maintain the first and second CAG's when disembarked; carry out technical training of ground personnel, other than maintenance sailors; carry out advanced Naval flying training; maintain the third CAG, the TAG and the FRU.

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## NEWS FROM O/S

22APR92 - Six sailors were injured when a Royal Navy jet accidentally bombed the aircraft carrier Ark Royal during a training exercise.

The ship was hit by a small practice bomb from a Navy Sea Harrier during an exercise in the Atlantic.

The Harrier, flown by a pilot on attachment from the RAF, had been carrying out an attack on a floating target being towed 500 yards behind the carrier.

Following the accident, in which one rating suffered serious hand injuries and five others received minor burns, the sailors were airlifted to the Navy hospital in Portsmouth.

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**UPDATE:** In the January 1992 edition of 'Slipstream', we published a story headed 'Prospecting for the Lost Squadron'.

In response to that story, a clipping from the UK newspaper, the 'Daily Express', dated 2nd June 1992, has been forwarded to the Slipstream office. It reads as follows:

### ICE PLANE FOUND

Wreckage of a fighter plane that crash-landed nearly fifty years ago, has been found buried under 257 feet of ice in Greenland.

The American P-38 Lightning was one of six heading for Britain with two B-17 bombers in July 1942.

Explorers, who located the wreck with a steam probe, hope to bring all the aircraft to the surface.

## NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS

### VICTORIA

Before I begin with our news, on behalf of our Division, I congratulate Theo Bushe-Jones on being made a Life Member of the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia. It is a just and deserved reward for his tireless and dedicated efforts to establish the Association Nationally.

I must also give a vote of appreciation to the Reunion Committee on conclusion of a most successful function. It was not without its hiccups but these were mastered and overcome without any fuss. A special tribute must go to 'Juke' for keeping his cool with some of the rude and thoughtless. Any lesser person would have exploded.

Having relinquished the hosting of the Federal Council Meeting for this year in favour of Nowra, we hope to gain nomination for 1993 and moves are at hand to set a date around the Melbourne Cup and include a nostalgia function at HMAS Cerberus as well as the Cup. It could be termed a mini-reunion.

We have gained three new members, John Clifford, Larry Penny and Brian O'Dwyer. Our membership list stands at 101 but there are still a few unfinancial at this time.

Anzac Day was a great success with the biggest turn-out since our inaugural march in 1984. No count was taken but I estimate that there were possibly between 60 and 70. As usual, we were joined afterwards by our Associates for a few sherbets and nibbles.

'Jock' lacy was taken to the hospital from the Air Display having had a haemorrhage in his right eye. After treatment he was referred to a specialist. The news is, that he has lost the sight in that eye permanently, but the operation to remove the cause was successful. It so happens that it was the same ailment that caused his stroke a few years ago. I am led to believe that he was told he would suffer another stroke again. Evelyn said he has accepted it all and is recovering well.

I have had news on 'Danny' O'Keefe. He was hospitalised just prior to leaving for the reunion. Rumour has it that though, that he has changed his address now and is covering.

Our Sunday luncheons at the Watsonia RSL resumed on Sunday 25th May, after being cancelled due to the reunion. They are a monthly occurrence to keep contact, unfortunately, being on RSL premises we cannot conduct a raffle for the purposes of the association.

I saw Hugh 'Slim' Priestley after his trip to the UK. For

those that went to Yeovilton for courses at HMS Heron, he reports that it is now the home of the FAA and has expanded greatly. The FAA museum is there too, he said that to see it all would take many hours and then some. I suggested that perhaps the Podimore and the Lamb and Lark were now part of the living quarters, but he never got to visit them.

Regards to Shipmates in the other Divisions.

\* *Clem Conlan - Victorian State President.*

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### WESTERN AUSTRALIA DIVISION

Hi Shipmates!

I have just been informed that it is time for the next issue of Slipstream from NSW and, as we agreed to be part of this great newsletter that will have coverage Australia-wide, I will try and get some sort of message to you.

Firstly, from us in the West, our thanks to 'Juke' Matterson and all his hard working committee who put up with a lot of criticism, complaints and questions from some of those who attended the reunion. I feel that 'Juke' should be put up for Sainthood for the way that he sorted everything out and never lost his sense of humour, he always had that grin on his face and gave the time to listen to those who found fault with everything. Well done chaps! I think it was a great time, and to those who thought otherwise, please put yourself forward with your ideas, and put in your time and energy and show us how the next one will be so much better.

We all look forward to attending the next one and thank everyone for their hospitality.

We have all returned home now. The last couple being Harry and Maureen Webster, who have just returned from their extended stay in the Eastern States. I believe they had no problems with the 'van. Harry you're better than me, I wouldn't try towing a 'van through Sydney. I don't even like driving there, the train was bad enough.

'Casino' Ron and Aileen Tate enjoyed their trip to Canberra and took in the sights. I have no idea how much he took out of the 'pokies' in the National City, but the 'papers haven't been blaring about a WA raid on their clubs. Better luck next time, Ron.

Bob and Sady Pateriden are away in Queensland holidaying with their son, Graham, they are taking in the sunshine in the North and missing all this lovely rain, buckets of it. But they do have to return.

Bill 'Pappy' Gault has had a time in hospital being re-bored and bushed, haven't heard how everything went, but I believe he has new 'ring gear'. He will be a new man, well, one piece anyway. All the best

'Pappy', will see you at the next meeting.

Another to have a spell in hospital, and now doing well, is Ric Hammond. He's had a couple of blood vessels in his neck 'boiler cleaned', this is all from his heart condition. Glad that everything went well Ric and we wish you all the best.

Jack Duperousel appears to be making good progress after his stroke and is hoping to attend the official opening of the museum. 'Hope that all goes well Jack and you make it.

I have been in contact with Keith Murdoch since I came home. He is still going strong and sends his regards to all those who asked about his health, believe me, he is still very much alive.

To all the cream of the Air Branch, the Armourers, there is to be a world-wide Armourer's Reunion in Hong Kong (not Suzy Wong's Bar in Wanchai) in 1995. All interested parties in WA please contact me on 4519327 as we will have to start making arrangements with accommodation and travel. It's not that far away so make an effort and start saving.

When I was in Melbourne after the reunion, I was lucky enough to be taken by Dick Prentice and Jack Herbert, to see 'Carol' Lombard. It was great seeing him and he sends regards to all. He appeared to be getting on well after suffering a couple of heart attacks. Thanks Dick, the photo's came out really well and I will send them to you soon.

What a surprise to see 'Squizzy' and Shirley Taylor in Nowra for the reunion. We haven't seen anything of 'Squizzy' for a long time, it was pleasing to see him enjoying himself at Nowra. Good one, 'Squizzy'!

We still have a few tea-towels with the 'Battle of the Coral Sea' prints, these are \$14.00 per set of two. There are also a few prints remaining of 'The Sydney in Korea', these are \$16.00 each. Don't be disappointed, get in early while there are some left.

There are still a few out there who have not paid their dues as yet. Please send them to PO Box 8336, Perth Stirling Street, 6849. We can do with the money and would like to see you at a meeting, these are held in the Naval Association Building on the corner of Chapman Street and Railway Parade, East Perth, at 2000 on the second Wednesday of each month. Please consider.

The Federal President, Toz Dadswell and his wife Gwen, will be in the West in August this year, so let's give them a big welcome.

## COMING EVENTS

Breakfast at the Casino, at 0800, 12 July 1992. All interested parties contact me ASAP as we have to make the bookings. The cost is \$19.00 per head.

What you win or lose afterwards is up to you.

Annual Dinner, on 14 November 1992 at the Have-lock Club. This year it will be NO ticket NO dinner. We are giving you plenty of time to make up your mind, and no excuses. Contact some of your mates who have fallen by the wayside and let's get together and have a good time. It's up to you.

Hope you are all in the best of health and coping with the recession.

\* *Theo Bushe-Jones - WA State Secretary*

## HISTORIC FLIGHT UPDATE

### SEA VENOM RESTORATION

Since my last report things have progressed very well for WZ937. Unfortunately we couldn't get the aircraft finished for the reunion as different things kept going wrong, which is, as far as I can work out, common place when restoring aircraft.

The good news is, the aircraft was finally started on the 26 April and was run for a period of eighteen minutes. The bad news was, we had all sorts of problems one of which was no throttle control. The engine stayed at ground idle, no matter what we did. The second major problem was after seventeen minutes it developed a pretty good fuel leak from behind the circulating pump and valve group unit.

Other than that there were a couple of minor problems with the hydraulics and the ground idle was a couple of hundred revs low.

The fuel control unit was changed and the aircraft started once again, this time with throttle control. The RPM was pushed up very tentatively to 7000 and all systems were okay but lo and behold another problem surfaced with the starboard generator, it started to smoke, so once again the engine was shut down for investigation.

Thanks to Flightwatch in New Zealand we were able to build an air start system which worked very well, although slower to wind the engine up than a cartridge, it did get up to the minimum revs of 1100.

We now hope that the aircraft will be completely finished for the Museum activities day on November the 1st. It is also hoped that we will be able to taxi on that day. Unfortunately there probably won't be any spectacular show of the familiar black smoke erupting from the starter exhaust as cartridges at this time are not available. We are still pursuing the buying of cartridges from the UK, but, we still have to raise the money for them.

Work on WZ895 came to a complete standstill some



three weeks before the reunion. The reason here, was so we could concentrate on 937.

On the 16th of May we moved 895 from 'E' hangar across to 'D' hangar where hopefully it is going to stay until completion of restoration. This in itself was a mammoth task as the aircraft seemed to be in about five million pieces.

At time of going to print, work has recommenced on WZ895 as well as 937 with the team being split into two sections.

*\* Tony Penno - Project Manager.*

## **C47A - DAKOTA RESTORATION**

Most people will remember the long nosed version of the C47A Dakota the Navy operated. The intention is to restore this aircraft and use its interior as a cinema to run continuous videos depicting the history of the FAA.

Over the years the weather has taken its toll and severe corrosion is eminent at major structural points. The main wing joints to the fuselage are riddled with exfoliation on both upper and lower surfaces, the rudder support plates are badly corroded as well as the cargo door ribs. Do not despair there is nothing our team can't rectify. The elements played havoc on all of the fabric control surfaces, fortunately we have replacements.

The interior is not too bad, no major damage except for a few rotten floor boards. A lot of vinyl sound proofing is in good repair and with a bit of Safety Equipment ingenuity we should be able to overcome any snags.

I am still tracing the history of the engines. I believe they are both in running condition and perhaps could be used for future trading for items we require.

This project is going to be a long arduous task, I envisage two years hence being our target date.

*\* Don Parkinson - Project Manager.*

## **FIREFLY REPORT**

Since my last report considerable progress has been made on WD826. The Firefly still hasn't flown but it is getting closer, hopefully in time for the official opening of the Museum in November 1992.

The camshaft problem was resolved by having the originals rebuilt by a repair organisation in the USA, with the assistance of Bob Delahunty and Gordon Glynn who arranged the transportation.

The camshaft assemblies have been refitted and timed due to the tireless efforts of Terry Hetherington. The engine still requires the rubber hoses to be replaced, these are being manufactured by a repair

specialist at Bankstown Airport and will be fitted on receipt.

The Firefly was run and taxied for the November 1991 open day at Nowra but discontinued a few months later due to an oil supply problem which has been since rectified.

It is hoped that when the hoses for the engine and the seals for the propeller are fitted that a major service can be carried out and minor defects rectified. Then CAA can be approached for reissue of permit to fly. WD826 can then join the other Historic Flight aircraft on the airshow circuit.

*\* Keith Boundy - Firefly Maintenance Coordinator.*

## **SEA FURY RESTORATION**

Ken Lee, our team member, has returned from his world trip during which he visited a number of aircraft areas, one of which was the Royal Navy Historic Flight area at Yeovil.

At this venue he gained quite a bit of useful information on the Fury, including leads on obtaining an electric starter motor for the Centaurus engine.

Pistons, jug-heads and other parts are looking like new, thanks to the efforts of George Meacham and Jack Constantine.

We welcome to the team two more valuable aircraft engineers, Kevin Hill and Russ Ayres. This gives us a team of six working on the Fury so the rate of progress should increase.

*\* Oscar Harper - Project Manager*

## **WHOSE JOB IS IT?**

This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it but Nobody realised that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

*\* Let's make sure they don't get to be members of our organisation.*

### **\*GENERAL MEETING of the NSW DIVISION\***

A General Meeting of the NSW Division of the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia will be held in the Senior Sailor's Mess, HMAS Albatross, on the 13th of September 1992, commencing at 1100 sharp.  
Terry Hetherington - Secretary

## 'OLD BIRD DESERVED BETTER'

*HMAS Nirimba's* Lt Cdr Ron Robb has strong links to an aged Sea Venom being rebuilt at the Quakers Hill Navy base.

To Nirimba's aeronautical engineering boss, it and another Sea Venom mounted near Bankstown Airport on Henry Lawson Drive, represent a past era of Australian influence and prestige in Northern waters.

The second Sea Venom also has a personal link with Lt Cdr Robb, because he worked and flew in that particular aircraft.

"The Sea Venom was sandwiched between the first and second generation of jet fighter aircraft," he said.

The Royal Australian Navy received its first Sea Venoms with the arrival of the aircraft carrier *HMAS Melbourne*.

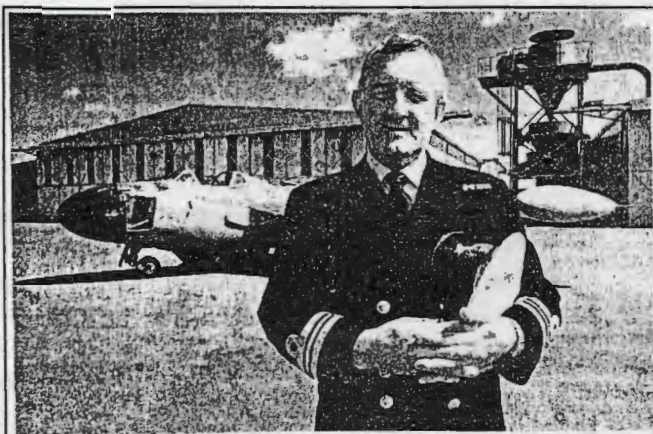
"Although a direct derivative of the Vampire, with its largely wooden construction and twin booms, The Sea Venom was larger, more powerful and fitted with a good airborne radar."

Lt Cdr Robb said the Sea Venom's Ghost engine was a bit of a gas-guzzler "but it was virtually indestructible, it was cheap to buy and to operate and it kept Australia's navy in the forefront of modern military technology."

Lt Cdr Robb despairs of the disbandment of "the best military arm Australia's foreign policy ever had". A highly mobile, powerful and quick reacting maritime task force built around a naval air group.

"I'm sure the people who drive past and fly over the old Sea Venom by the Milperra Bridge would not have an inkling of its importance to Australia's formative years of foreign policy."

"It's sad to see the old bird looking so dilapidated these days - it deserved a better fate from all of us," he said.



## ALBATROSS AFFAIRS

The recent Air Day at *HMAS Albatross* was an outstanding success. Over 15,000 people turned up to spectate throughout the day, judging by the congratulatory letters that have been flooding in ever since, they were all impressed by what they saw. Officially, the "50th Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea Air Day", it also provided a fitting finale for the Fleet Air Arm Association reunion activities of the preceding week.

The amount of preparation time that goes into events such as these is quite staggering. The Naval Aviation Museum meanwhile is plunging ahead and will run a Museum Air Show on November 1st, 1992. With only two full time staff, you have to wonder how they manage it!

Another momentous occasion at the Naval Air Station is occurring (we hope) on the 23rd July 1992. As we are now in receipt of the full consignment of 16 Seahawk helicopters, and most of the contractual details have been ironed out, the 'Seahawk in Transition Unit' - 'SITU' - is poised to become HS 816 Squadron.

On a more everyday note, resurfacing of the second runway

has been completed and we are now having a section of tarmac, adjacent to 'F' hangar, resurfaced with concrete blocks on which the Lear jets can safely sit.

The new OPPS/COMM/ADMIN building is currently ahead of schedule (completion due December '93) and the new Squadron Administration building, located in the old car-park adjacent to 'A' hangar, should be completed in August this year.

Finally, the Army Parachute Training School (PTS), is about to relocate its area of operations from the Western Pad, here at NAS, to Jaspers Brush, which is on the Princes Highway on the way to Berry. This does not necessarily mean that the sight of parachutists landing on buildings and hangar roofs will never be seen again at the NAS. Extremely wet conditions and soggy ground will force them back to the Western Pad.

\* Article kindly submitted by Lt. Liz Waddell, Public Relations Officer, *HMAS Albatross*.

\*\*\* Gutenberg invented the Bible. Another important invention was the circulation of blood. Sir Walter Raleigh is an historical figure because he invented cigarettes and started smoking. And Sir Francis Drake circumcised the world in a 100-ft clipper.

\* The above are some of the answers given in an examination for senior History Students

## WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT

### RDFWA News

Whilst it is almost impossible to keep up to date with all the legislation that governs the administration of Veteran Affairs and Compensation cases, those who involve themselves in assisting veterans, do finish up with a good working knowledge of the system. This is particularly true when that knowledge is combined into an organisation such as the Regular Defence Force Welfare Association.

Recently, the Shoalhaven and District Contact Group of that organisation was able to assist an ex-RAN member who, because he hadn't served in an area of conflict such as Korea, Malaya or Vietnam etc, was under the impression that treatment for a recently diagnosed malignant condition, would have to be covered by Medicare and his private Health Fund. I was under the same impression, unless a connection between his present condition and his RAN service could be established, in which case, a protracted compensation claim would follow.

I am pleased to report, however, that after representation to Veterans' Affairs, that department has advised the veteran that they will cover his medical costs, also, nursing home costs if they ever become necessary.

Further enquiries show this to be part of a broadened policy in respect to cancer. An article in the Naval Association's publication, 'White Ensign', for the 14th May 1992, page 27, Veteran's Affairs News reads as follows:

#### 'FREE CANCER TREATMENT FOR VETERANS'

DVA advise that any Australian Veteran or Mariner suffering from malignant cancer is entitled to free medical treatment for that condition. This has been available for some time but not everyone is aware of it. Some veterans feel that cancer has to be related to their war service but this does not apply to treatment costs. They don't need to have served in a theatre of war, nor do they need to be receiving a pension of any kind.

All local Medical Officers (should) know how to apply to the Department in these cases but anybody can apply on behalf of the veteran. All it takes is a letter to the Department of Veterans' Affairs whose main objective is to help the veteran as quickly as possible.....

So there you have it; they wont, however, pick up the tab for travel costs or grant a pension (disability), unless you have War or Eligible Service, but they will cover Nursing Home costs if they become necessary.

The Shoalhaven and District Group of the RDFWA

will raise the subject of increased publication concerning this benefit as it is important for all to know.

#### If you need help or advice, please write to:

The Secretary, Shoalhaven and District RDFWA Contact Group, PO BOX 28, NOWRA, NSW, 2541.

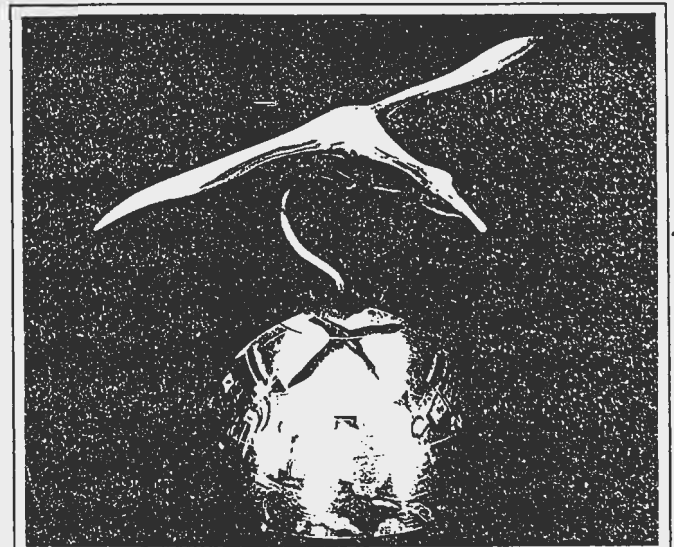
Or you can 'phone: John Arnold - (044) 232014

Neil Gage - (044) 460484 Chips Gray - (044) 416006

\* *Ivan (Chips) Gray Welfare Officer*

### A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

The following photograph shows a model of an Albatross mounted on a half globe. It was presented to the First Sea Lord on the occasion of his visit to *HMAS Albatross* in 1956.



FIRST SEA LORD,  
ADMIRALTY,  
LONDON, S.W.1.

at Canberra.

12th April, 1956.

*Dear Sir,*

I am writing to thank you very much for the fine work you put in on the model of the "Albatross", which was given me on my departure from the Naval Air Station, Nowra.

I should be grateful if you would convey my appreciation to -

C.A.A. S.L. Paul  
N.A.I.M.(A) S. Corboy  
A.A.S. K. Baddock.  
A.Mech. L. Drake  
N.A.I.M.(A) R. Heron

*Yours sincerely*

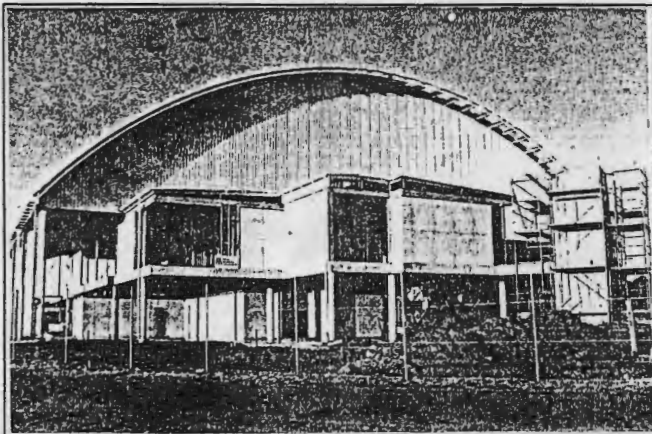
*Illustration of Sir...*

\* *Our thanks to Lex Drake for providing the photographs.*

## NAVAL AVIATION MUSEUM NEWS

From the number of enquiries we have and the number of statements made about the museum, we are glad to see there is growing support for the development and establishment of the museum as a first class facility which displays the rich history of Australian Naval Aviation since the RAN was founded in 1911.

The building program is well advanced with Stage 1, the aircraft display hall completed at a cost of \$1.3 million and Stage 2, the White Ensign Restaurant/Function Centre and the IMB Exhibition Centre due for completion in September 1992. When these two stages are completed the museum will have invested \$2.5 million in facilities to protect and display our naval aviation heritage.



These funds were raised by the museum from corporate and private sponsors, some of which have contributed more than \$250,000 on an individual basis. The NSW Government has provided a cash grant and building design and construction supervision which has been a significant contribution but, as yet, the Federal Government has not provided any direct funding.

To fully establish the new museum, Stage 3 Stage 4 will need to be completed at an estimated total cost of some \$12-15 million. Stage 3 consists of a number of phases and includes, covering the hangar walls, building a new car-park, landscaping and a workshop. Stage 4 is also phased and includes a 100 seat theatre, an administration building, expansion and development of the exhibition, special theme capsules and an elevated walkway inside the museum. These later two stages are expected to take about 10-15 years depending on funding. The museum is not a Navy unit like the RAN Historic Flight which operates the Tracker, Dakota and Firefly aircraft. In 1990 the museum was legally separated

from the RAN and is now an incorporated public company limited by guarantee. It is a non-profit registered charity and has tax deductibility for donations. The museum employs two civilian staff and from time to time casual staff are employed for special projects or specific work. The main core of work is done by volunteers who are prepared to give up a few hours or a day or two each week at the museum.

We are always on the look out for volunteers to assist. So if you would like a change of scenery and you are prepared to help us, especially as the new building will be completed soon, please contact us on (044) 211920 to register your assistance. Without the support of the local Navy and civilian community, the task of developing the museum into a major attraction in the Shoalhaven will be made all that more difficult to achieve.

Our next major event is planned for Sunday, November the 1st, 1992. On this occasion, Stage 1 and Stage 2 will be officially opened. Also, on that day, a flying display of Warbirds and other historic aircraft is being planned.

The Naval Aviation Museum is an exciting project which shows much promise to become the best aviation museum in Australia.

*\* Media release submitted by Commander 'Spike' Campey, Museum Director.*

## GETTING THE FACTS RIGHT

One of the most famous broadcasts of the Second World War was Winston Churchill's great cry of defiance to the Germans after the evacuation of Dunkirk: "We shall fight on the beaches....we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender." Later it was revealed that those words were not spoken by Churchill, but were recorded by an actor.

The actor, Norman Shelley said that Churchill had been asked to record part of the speech, which was originally delivered in the House of Commons. "But Winston was exhausted," Shelley recalled, "and simply didn't have time. He told them to 'get some actor'. I was known for my imitations of Churchill, so I was asked to do it."

When Churchill heard the recording later, according to Shelley, he said, "Very nice. He even got my teeth." (When Churchill spoke, air escaping through his teeth produced a faint hissing sound.)

Churchill did record the speech after the war, but the truth about the wartime broadcast was not known until Shelley revealed it during a BBC interview on his life in the theatre.

THERE WILL BE A SPECIAL ISSUE OF SLIPSTREAM FOR THE 44TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FAA

## SHIPS WITH A SECRET

The 19th century seems to have provided more mystery stories of ships than any other century. Those were mainly the days of sail and increasing traffic on the high seas. When disaster struck there was no wireless to call for help as there is today. Lack of communication was one of the main contributing factors in most of the mysteries to do with ships.

Of these the *Marie Celeste* is the classic example. What happened to her and her crew is a puzzle that so far no one has solved. This American, three-masted barque, built in the shipyards of Parrsborough, Nova Scotia, in 1861, left New York on November 7, 1872. Her destination was Genoa and her owners, J.H. Winchester Co., probably never doubted for a moment that she would reach harbour across the Atlantic.

A few days after the *Marie Celeste* sailed, another barque, the *Del Gratia*, sailed from New York, also bound for Europe, with Gibraltar as her destination. On December 5, a look-out spotted the *Marie Celeste* drifting 130 miles off the Portuguese coast. She appeared to be undamaged, but on boarding her, there was no sign of any living person. The Captain and his family, passengers and crew had disappeared and to this day no one knows why they abandoned the vessel or what happened to them.

The Captain of another mystery ship, the *Abbey S.Hart*, survived the tragedy that killed his crew, but he was never able to offer any explanation. He was out of his mind when discovered by a boarding-party from a German steamer, the *Pickhuben*. The *Abbey S.Hart*, a sailing-vessel, was adrift in the Indian Ocean when encountered by the German ship, in September 1894. Her crew were all in their cabins and there seemed no cause for their death. The *Pickhuben* towed the ill-fated ship to Cape Town. Her last port had been in Java where, at Tanjong Piek, she took on a cargo of sugar.

A mystery that was solved concerned two ships, one a collier, the *Rumney* and the other a French vessel, the *Frigorifique*, both steaming slowly off the French coast in March, 1884, in fog. Despite a careful watch on both vessels, the collier rammed the French ship. Captain Raoul Lambert abandoned the *Frigorifique*. The fog was now so dense that nothing of the French vessel could be seen. The Britisher had not been badly damaged and continued on her way.

Soon after, a ship loomed out of the fog, heading for the *Rumney*, which only just avoided a second collision, but to the crew's amazement, the 'attacker' was the *Frigorifique*, which again steamed into the

fog. Within the hour, she again appeared and this time rammed the *Rumney* so badly that the collier sank. Again the French vessel disappeared. Everybody had managed to take to the boats.

However, a few minutes later the *Frigorifique* once more appeared and slowly steamed by the boats which managed to pull alongside. The two Captains climbed aboard to find the engines still going and the wheel lashed to starboard, which accounted for the circular tours. Strangely, very shortly afterwards, she too sank.

Not so lucky were some of the crew of the *Ellen Austin* in 1881. Heading for Ireland, she came across a schooner with sails set which seemed to be abandoned. A party boarded her to discover that she carried a full cargo, had ample food and water, but that there was not a trace of a living soul to be seen. Not only had the crew gone but the ship's papers and log had gone with them and most mysterious of all, the name had vanished, too, so that no identification of the vessel was possible.

Seamen are superstitious by nature and only the inducement of extra pay produced a few men willing to salvage the unknown ship; but soon a terrific storm raged. When it died down, those on board the *Ellen Austin* were alarmed to see no sign of the salvage crew. The Mate rowed over and reported that they, too, had vanished. Replacements were 'persuaded' to go aboard the unknown ship and, as night fell, were told to stay close to their own vessel; but when morning came, the mystery ship had vanished. She and her crew were never seen again.

A dog was the sole survivor of the *Seabird*. She alarmed a man on Rhode Island when, with all sails set, she rushed straight on the beach. He went on board to find another mystery. Breakfast was ready with boiling coffee on the stove. Everything seemed normal apart from the badly scared dog, but not one soul could be found in the ship or any cause for their leaving so hurriedly.

Total disappearance is not common in this century, although as recently as 1968, 15 ships were listed by Lloyd's as missing without trace. What happened to these vessels may never be known. Their fate underlies the unending power of the sea.

\* Article written by Edyth Harper - source unknown.

\*Mr. Aubrey Furness of 45 Farler Road, Coventry, UK, CV2 2BH - would like to hear from old shipmates of 800, 827 and 880 squadrons onboard HMS Indomitable in 1942.\*\*\*Ron Houston of 39 Elvaston avenue, Neapean, Ontario, Canada, KG2 3Y1, would like to hear from old classmates of Grenville Division of Air Artificer Apprentices at HMS Daedalus, Newcastle under Lyme during 1943/44.

