

AMC/LSI Association of Vic

Armed Merchant Cruiser / Landing Ship Infantry

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President Chris Harvey
2 Clyde St Oakleigh Vic 3166
M: 0412 390 686

Patrons: Bruce Candy, Hiram Ristrom & Norm Tame.

ANZAC DAY Melbourne, 25 April 2019 , 8.30am start, new time & location.

The Navy will be stepping off at a new time and new location, 8.40am just over Princes Bridge east side St Kilda Road opposite the National Gallery of Victoria, so be there well beforehand as there may be a last minute reshuffle of the banners. Please remember to wear your Medals; Veterans on your left and descendants on your right. We have obtained permission for our descendants to march with the Navy behind our banner's and this may be the last year that we do so, keep in mind the new underground works.

Prams or Backpacks etc are not acceptable it's SECURITY issue.

For our precious remaining veterans if you are unable to march the distance, there are three transport options available to you on ANZAC Day 2019 Melbourne.

- 1/ Ask a descendant or carer to arrange a wheelchair so you can "march " in front of your banner.
- 2/ To be picked up from your home by an RACV vehicle, and transported into the city then join the procession and driven to the Shrine where you will be seated in a marquee for the duration of the march. You then have the option of being transported to your reunion lunch or back home— **not both**.
- 3/ To be chauffeured in a vehicle from the National Gallery of Victoria St Kilda Road Eastside for the march and to our memorial Tree.

After the march to the Shrine we will make our way to our memorial tree for HMAS Manoora, Kanimbla, Westralia and Assault (see our mad map on page 8) where we will gather to remember those we have lost in the past year. After the service at our tree we will head across to Jardin Tan restaurant in the Royal botanic Gardens our reunion lunch at 11am, we need to know who is coming to lunch, please contact

Chris on 0412 390 686 or Max on 0413 753 473



Mission Statement

To honour and remember those who served with the AMC/LSI including but not limited to
HMAS WESTRALIA, KANIMBLA, MANOORA & ASSAULT

WHO LIKES ICE-CREAM

by Alan Hooley

Shortly after being commissioned as a LSI, HMAS Westralia had become a unit of the United States Seventh Fleet. When training exercises were being held, the Crew had to remain at Action Stations whilst the exercises were in progress, resulting in much loss of sleep. The advantage was that as the ship was now no longer under Australian rations and replaced with American tucker— e.g, grapefruit segments for breakfast, roast turkey and cranberry sauce, ice cream with sweets and of course, spam.

The ship's cook did a remarkable job. At times when Army personnel were on board, generally for seven to ten days, the cooks had to prepare around 5,400 meals each day (1,800 meals three times a day). The meals were dished out on meal trays, divided into six compartment. We ate in the ships cafeteria, which could accommodate around 350 personnel at any time. To ensure a fast traffic flow of personnel in these circumstances, the long stools were removed and the tables were lifted on poles, so that we were required to eat our food standing. Not very satisfactory, but practical, as this method deterred us from lingering after we had consumed our meal.

One amusing (Life Threatening) incident occurred in August 1943, while the ship was sailing though the Coral Sea, known to be a hunting ground for the Japanese submarines. The ship was carrying' 1,200 American Marines bound for New Guinea. Unfortunately, the ship's galley ran out of ice cream and, as it didn't have ice cream making facilities, the cook had to rely entirely on American supply bases for replenishment. This situation caused consternation amongst the Marines and something had to be done to rectify this sorry state of affairs!!!

The ship was being escorted by a US destroyer, which had the facilities to make the confectionery. Much to our surprise of our crew, both ships stopped in mid ocean, whilst one of our landing craft was lowered over the side and proceeded over to the destroyer to collect canisters of ice cream to bring back to feed the Marines and us. Quite a risky affair, considering the likelihood of a submarine lurking in the vicinity.

At this point, I must mention the condition under which the Army personnel with their personal equipment, were expected to survive whilst being accommodated in HMAS WESTRALIA. Their crowded living and sleeping quarters were located in the bowels of the ship - E and F Decks - which were both below the water line. This meant, of course, that there were no scuttle (portholes) which could be opened to allow fresh air to circulate, the only ventilation being air forced though a series of metal shafts. Three hessian bunks were provided for sleeping. With such a large number of personnel, the atmosphere on those deck was quite heavy.

In the tropics, which was most of the time, it was inevitable that relief from the stifling conditions should be sought on the upper decks. Many of the crew slung their hammocks on the open deck or just "crashed" on the deck itself, and I was one of them. This situation was fine, as long there were no Army personnel around but, immediately they came on board, the deck at night became extremely crowded.



Alan Hooley



Arthur R. Evens &
President J. F. Kennedy

The Coastwatchers'

In 1919 Captain C. J. Clare RAN saw the importance of establishing a voluntarily Coastwatchers' Service to report enemy movement during wartime along the Australian coast, New Guinea. Papua and the Solomon Islands. The Naval Intelligence RAN was asked to organize a reliable civilian service of postmasters, police, government servants, missionaries, civil pilots, patrol officers and planters in the territories and remote ports. By 1939, Naval Intelligence had established its Coastwatchers' service of about eight hundred all on a voluntary basis. It trained personnel in tele radios, Morse code, decoding communication and to guard against a surprise attack from our enemy.

When the Japan attacked in December 1941, our Coastwatchers' by January had reported Japanese air reconnaissance over Madang, Lae, Salamaua, and Rabaul. Our first air raid on Rabaul was the 4 January 1942 reported by Coastwatcher C. I. Page on Tabar. All our military were in other places; Army were in the Middle East, our Navy was in the Mediterranean, our Air Force in Britain, we had three or four Catalinas and four Hudsons for communication and transport and five Wirraways, which were a training aircraft pressed into combat roll in the South-West Pacific and Australia. The 53rd Battalion of CMF (1,000 men) poorly trained in Port Moresby and in Rabaul 2/22nd Battalion of 700 AIF and Lark Force of which made up a force of 1,500 in Rabaul and in New Ireland a Commando unit, 130-strong 2/1st Independent Company. And the RAN had no ships in the Pacific area at all. There are two Gateways for a enemy to invade Australia; one is through the Flores and Arafura Sea to the North and West coast of Australia; The second is through the Bismarck Sea, past the Island of New Britain and into the Coral Sea and to the east coast of Australia. Our Coastwatchers' were our only eyes and ears to these gateways.

There are too many Coastwatchers' for a one page story. One was L. G. Vial evacuated from Rabaul just before the Japanese landing and on arrival in Australia he immediately joined the Coastwatchers'. He was flown to Salamaua New Guinea a few days before the Japanese invasion in February 1942. He was known as the Golden Voice, awarded the American DSC. He was killed March 1943. AB Donald J. Bath trained at HMAS Assault, Moreton Bay and HMAS Westralia. In 1943 he volunteered for Coastwatchers' and was flown to Milne Bay, New Guinea, late 1943, and served at Finschhafen. In April 1944 was transported by US Torpedo boat to the North Coast of New Britain until September 1944; he Passed the Bar 6 February 2017 in Hobart, Tasmania.



AB Donald J, Bath

One of the best known Coastwatcher was Sub Lieutenant Arthur A. Evans DSC RANVR. He was trained at Magnetic Island, QLD Intelligence in 1942 and assigned to Guadalcanal January 1943. he had worked in the Solomon Islands before the war and was recruited by the Coastwatchers' Organization. He secretly manned an observation post atop Mt Veve, a volcano on Kolombangara Island. On 2nd August 1943, he spotted the explosion of John F. Kennedy's boat PT-109 and later received a coded message that PT-109 was missing, and despatched Solomon Island scouts Biuku Gasa and Eroni Kumana in a dugout canoes to find the crew. He met president John F. Kennedy in the White House 1st May 1961. Evans died on the 31 January 1989.



Dixie

Coder - Ronald (Dixie) George Lee, born Ulverstone Tasmania; he join the RAN 1941 and served on HMAS Manoora, Guadalcanal, Soloman Islands. Treasury Island, Bougainville, Goodenough Island, Finschhafen, Milne Bay and Lae. Dixie Lee live at Werribee Melbourne with his wife Mem they have 17 Grand-children and 7 Great- grandchildren.

Sources: Book, Of Nautilus and Eagles by P. Firkins, Navy records, Trove Newspapers, Naval Historical Review.

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Incident at Genoa 1948 by Eyewitness AB Derek Self 34539

HMAS Kanimbla Fremantle Perth W.A 11th October 1948; Italian Communists were almost certainly responsible for the disturbance, riot and death of Royal Navy PO Gordon Leslie Fleming 25192 in Genoa on the night of the 16 September 1948, when sailors from HMAS Kanimbla became involved in a riot which resulted in one of them being killed and 20 others wounded by gun fire. This was stated in several quarters aboard the ship when she reached Fremantle to-day. [Sydney Morning Herald, Canberra Times; October 1948.](#)

There was anger from the crew at the **false news** and allegation from local and overseas newspaper's that had appeared in the Australian press was freely expressed aboard ship and it was claimed that they gave a completely false picture of what had happened, denying matters of fact. In June 1948 HMAS Kanimbla had sailed for England with extra crew for Australian first Aircraft carrier, HMAS Sydney III. In addition to transporting men and stores for the new vessel, there was a cargo of 1,500 tons of rice urgently required to feed war-torn Britain. On her return trip to Australia, onboard were 300 British recruits mostly ex-RN for the RAN. The ship also called in at Genoa Italy, to pick up 432 European persons who were migrating to Western Australia.

On the night 16th September 1948 the infamous **"Incident at Genoa occurred"** it has been **Falsely alleged by the press** that three sailors had become involved in a dispute with Italian civilians who had falsely accused them of being drunk and molesting an old beggar woman. That a fight had developed with fists, sticks and bottles, and that hostages had been taken and held onboard HMAS Kanimbla. An inquiry was held in February 1949 by the Australian Naval Board and a report sent to the Minister of the Navy, Mr Bill Riordan CBE. All officers and crew of HMAS Kanimbla were exonerated by the Naval Board which inquired into the incident, stating that the incident arose through circumstances over which the officers and crew of HMAS Kanimbla had no control, and that the report of the **HBM consul General were a tissue of falsehoods and exaggerations.**

And also stated categorically that there had been no molestation whatsoever of any Beggar woman, that no sailors left the ship to take part in the affair and that no hostages had been taken aboard. In the evening, shore leave was given to some of the ship company, none were armed in any way as the ship had been disarmed at the end of WW2, and was operating as a transport ship by the RAN.

When the trouble started a number of sailors were some distance from the ship and on their way back from leave; they were harried continually, stones and bottles being thrown at them and also pieces of angle iron, which were believed to be missiles, commonly used by **Communists** throughout Italy. It appeared that the local Communists, who are very strong in this area, and had spread false reports that HMAS Kanimbla sailors had taken a policeman and a carabinieri and were holding them as hostages onboard ship. The riot spread to an Italian wine tavern, shots were fired resulting in the fatal shooting and death of an ex-Royal Navy rating PO Gordon Fleming of London, enlisted in the RAN, and four Australian ratings were injured or shot in the Tavern, AB Alan Dickson shot in the leg. Altogether several hundred rounds were fired from machine guns by **local Italian Communists, and no one was ever arrested or charged with Fleming's murder.**

The commanding officer of HMAS Kanimbla, Captain Alan P. Cousin RANR, DSO on returning to the ship at 11pm walked into a hail of machine-gun bullets which whistled past him. Almost at once he was held up by several men armed with tommy guns, and spat on and taunted with cries of "dirt Australian" and "dirt British" Captain Cousin was in uniform. With guns pressed into his body he was then bundled into a van, being kicked in the back in the process, and taken to a police station.

There were two other officers and about 100 ratings were also taken, and they were only released to re-join the ship when the British Consul reluctantly got involved and was completely at odds with the facts. It was stated by the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board that the men of HMAS Kanimbla were of high standard of character and efficiency.

Sources: National Library of Australia Trove, Canberra Times ACT, Daily Mercury QLD, Sun Sydney, Kalgoorlie Miner WA, Sydney Morning Herald, Brisbane Telegraph QLD, Northern Star NSW, Naval Board of Inquiry February 1949 and [Eyewitness AB Derek Self 34539.](#)



AB Derek Self 34539

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HMAS CHOULES L100



It's not often these days that a Naval Ship arrives at Station Pier, Melbourne, offering a ships tour, especially, for Naval Association members exclusively. So on hearing of this offer we decided to get a group together of around ten people and take up the opportunity.

We arrived bright and early to be confronted with an impressive sight indeed! This is a big ship by anyone's imagination, well to be precise her total length is 177m with a Draft

of 5.79m, but like most modern warships these days are very high. So high in fact it takes a significant climb up a 20m gangway to actually get on board this mighty vessel. A decent ascent you may imagine for this 66 year old writer but you can imagine our concern and that of certain high ranking Naval personal as to how our 94 year old Patron Hiram Ristrom was to scale these heights. However, we need not have worried as he beat us all to the quarter deck to sign in. Then, escorted to a rather large room to be briefed on what this ship is all about.

HMAS CHOULES is an amphibious ship with internal docking facilities, the stern opens up allowing the lower loading deck to be flooded to a depth of 3m, heavy equipment and personnel is then loaded on large barges (landing craft) and safely transferred ashore. HMAS Choules does not need a jetty or a wharf. At this stage I decided to go check on our patron Hiram just to make sure he was safe. Only to find he was comfortably ensconced in the ratings mess surrounded by young sailors being well entertained and no doubt regaling them on the good old days of HMAS KANIMBLA.

The primary function of Choules is humanitarian, she was able to greatly assist in cyclone ravaged North Queensland following Cyclone Derby supplying food, water generators etc, and no doubt she will prove invaluable in future disasters with her 150 officers and sailors and a capacity of 356 Troops 700 at a squeeze.

Our tour was now coming to an end and we were gently placed back onto Station Pier. Following all that activity we had built up a ravenous appetite so time for a seafood lunch, this undertaken, we headed home, safe in the knowledge we made good friends aboard HMAS Choules. The ships Motto is **FACE DIFFICULTY WITH ZEAL**; Appropriate wording as we all felt proud and safe in the knowledge we have a very good Navy.

Our association wish to thank the crew of HMAS Choules and Commander Terry Making AM, RAN Rtd, NAA President & NCCV.

by Max Tozer

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We wish you a "Very Happy Birthday" from the Committee and member's of AMC/LSI Association of Vic.

November; Ray Winter, Bryan Peters, Neil Morris, Tasman Luttrell, Roy Cummings, Roy Seiboth, Cedric Bowerman.

December; Reg Dorwood, John Boyd, Keith Tonkin, George Hinton, Bob Elliott, Max Kenner.

January; Nev Phillips, Uki Macartney, Bill Tattersall, Leon Beech, Jock Inglis, wife AB David Elva McBay 100 years.

February; Robert Murdock, Martin Marks, Derek Self.

VALE

Gordon (Goffers) Graham, 01/11/2018.

Kevin Leslie Clark Brown, 27/09/2018, OAM.

Bernard Michael McMullan, NBC, 2018.

Arthur Lunan , 18/12/2018.

Sapper Hurtle Inwood, SX25629, 01/01/2019.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION

- ◆ Memorial Donation to Raymond John Henry O'KEEFFE, from Valerie O'Keeffe.
- ◆ AB Brian H SULLIVAN.
- ◆ Robert (Bob) MURDOCK NBC.
- ◆ In memory of Gordon Douglas MUNRO, from daughter Jenny Van Kalken.
- ◆ Dudley ADCOCK HMAS Australia Association.
- ◆ In memory of Alan Hooley secretary of HMAS Westralia Association, from his son Doug.
- ◆ Tasman LUTTRELL.
- ◆ From Frank, Shirley & Michael Birmingham.
- ◆ William (Bill) Harris.

Keith Krause from NSW.

If you wish to donate to AMC/LSI Association of Vic you can send a cheque to :

2 Clyde Street Oakleigh Vic 3166 or

Transfer funds to Westpac Bank.

Account No 42 2541 BSB No 033 070

In description box state your name please.



We wish a very special 100th birthday to ELVA McBAY, Singer, Actress & a beautiful soul.

ASHES

A Navy way to say goodbye to the one you love, for some the link between a sailor and his/her Navy experience is to have their ashes committed to the sea.

Undeniably a distinct tribute to their shipmates and the impact their navy service had on them. Thankfully the Navy provides an opportunity of this dedicatory act to continue, albeit as and when they are able. As always, you have to make your wishes known to family **beforehand.**

Families may request to commit the ashes to the sea of their family ex-Navy member by contacting Defence Community Organisation, Locked Bag 18, Darlinghurst N.S.W. 2010 or send an email to LCDR Mark Burton at mark.burton4@defence.gov.au

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Tasman Luttrell

Robin daughter of Ian Gardner. Norm & Julie Tame /Mac Hay. comes from QLD every year.



Phyl Austin

Shirley
Birmingham

Mac Hay
Treasurer
Secretary
AMC/LSI

8 December 2018 Shrine of Remembrance Melbourne, Wreath laying commemoration.



Commander Terry Makings AM

Commodore Greg Yorke CSC

Bruce Candy

Norm Tame

Hiram Ristrom

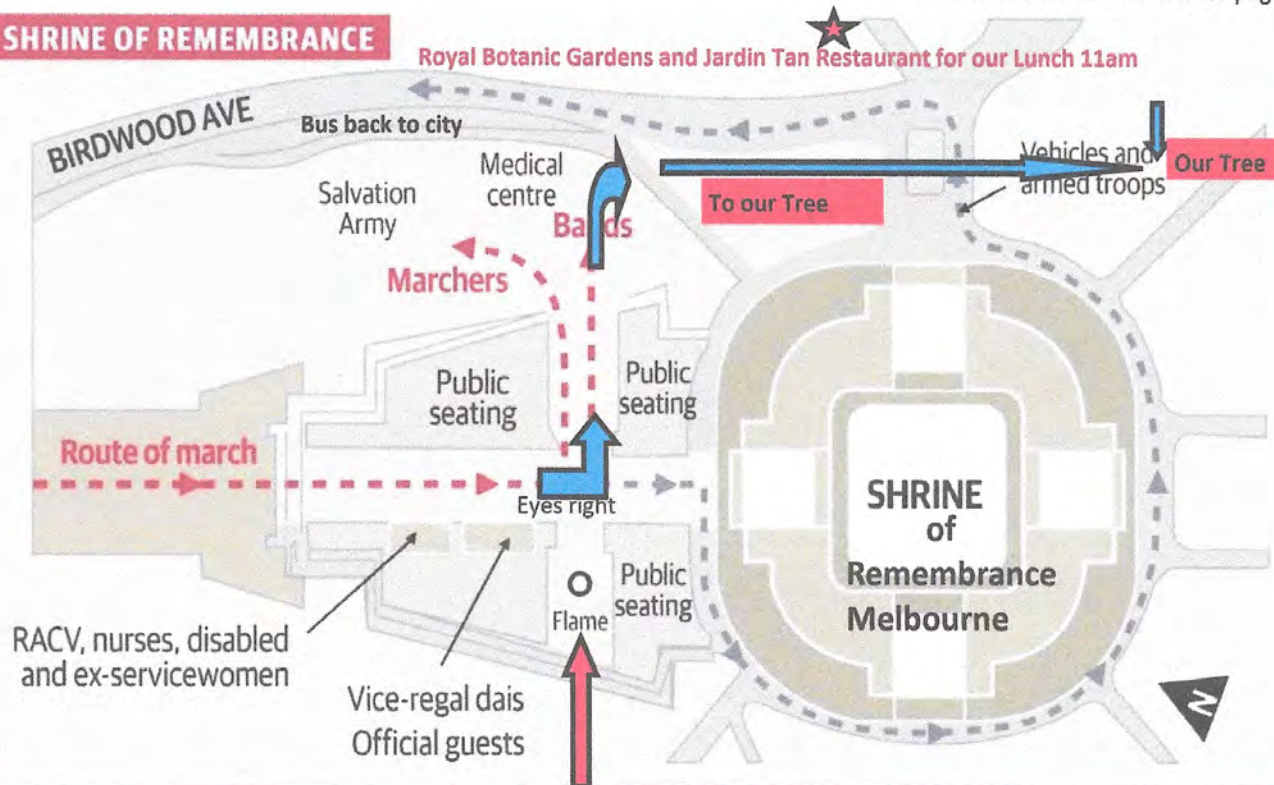
Ian Gardner

Frank Birmingham

Bill Tattersall

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SHRINE OF REMEMBRANCE



When approaching Eternal flame; hats off right hand over heart and eyes right until your unit has passes the Eternal flame.

To be retained by member
carry in top left hand pocket

ANZAC day Medical
identification card.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Date of birth: _____

Brief medical history: _____

Next of kin, name & relationship: _____

Address: _____

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