

Patrons: Alan Hooley & Bruce Candy

AMC/LSI ASSOCIATION of VIC

Armed Merchant Cruiser/Landing Ship Infantry

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HMAS WESTRALIA FLY THE FLAG SERVICE

Mon 15th December 2014

1200 noon Shrine of Remembrance

This is our annual pilgrimage to the Shrine of Remembrance to honour and remember those who served on HMAS WESTRALIA for their dedication, sacrifice, amazing courage and discipline.

The Shrine Trustees will fly the flag of the White Ensign to honour HMAS WESTRALIA for its part in the landing operation conducted at Arawe, New Britain, 71 years ago on 15th December 1943 as a unit of the USA Seventh Fleet.

HMAS WESTRALIA's engagement in this operation marked the beginning of the 'Road to Tokyo'. Months of planning and training had taken place prior to the successful landing at Arawe. According to Executive Officer, W.N. Swan, it would require the ship's company to put in a "superhuman effort" to achieve their mission. And, that they did – showing discipline, focus, restraint and silent cohesive teamwork that functioned like a well oiled machine.

All Veterans, descendants and current serving members are welcome. We have a limited supply of car park passes for the Shrine – so please ring Chris Harvey on 0412 390 686 to secure your allocation.

We are requested to assemble in the Shrine Forecourt at 11.45am and if the weather is against us, then in the Visitor's Centre inside the Shrine. The Service will commence at 12.00 noon in the Sanctuary.

Later we move across to the nearby Observatory Cafe, Botanical Gardens, for a cuppa and get-together. We are bringing along Alan Hooley's scrap book which shows the ship's Routine Order for that particular day 71 years ago. If you have photos or memorabilia you'd like to share, please bring them too. We'll have a Visitor's Book which we would like everyone to sign after the ceremony.

Looking forward to seeing you.

What does AMC/LSI represent?

AMC/LSI is the acronym for Armed Merchant Cruiser/Landing Ship Infantry – of which HMAS WESTRALIA, MANOORA and KANMBLA are classified by the navy.

Our association is a not-for profit group of volunteers who operate with the passion and desire to honour and preserve the memory of those gone before us. It is hoped that our intentions will benefit veterans, descendants, serving members and indeed the larger community.

We don't ask for membership fees, so with enormous thanks we acknowledge the following generous donations received since our last newsletter:

- ❖ Jeff Lovegrove
- ❖ Robert Parsons

We are heartened and encouraged by the positive feedback we've received from veterans, descendants and numerous navy associations.

Our mail list is growing and managing the database is a big job as is merchandising, research and archival projects. If you would like to be part of this in any way, please don't hesitate to contact us.

We can be contacted via our email:

Email: amclsi@gmail.com

Navy Calendar of Events

Mon 15 Dec HMAS WESTRALIA Fly the Flag

Wreath Laying Ceremony

12 noon at the Shrine – Sanctuary

**2 March 2015 Australian Navy Foundation Day
'Creswell Oration'**

For More Information go to Navy Victoria

Network website: www.navy.vic.net

OBITUARY

The AMC/LSI Association of Victoria would like to pass on our sincerest regards to the families of those we have lost in the past three months.

Ken Baldwin, Vice President of HMAS MANOORA Association and active member of Naval Historical Society passed away 26th August 2014.

If we have omitted your loved-one, please contact us so we can publish their name in our next newsletter.

If you would like to make a donation, you can either:

- mail a cheque to:

**AMC/LSI Association Vic,
1/129 Surrey Road
Blackburn Vic 3130**

Or

- Deposit directly into our Westpac Bank Account:

Account Number: 42-2541

BSB Number: 033-070

Congratulations & best wishes to everyone who has celebrated a birthday since our last edition:

Tom Fowler

Wally Cumberland

Geoff Wilkinson

Cecil Browning

Tim Young

Fred Pullen

Ted Flower

Norm Tame

Les Barton

Bill Beston

Max Sluggett

George Gray

Brian Booth

Norman Farrell

Noel Grant

Graham Knight

Stanley Hale

Keith Jones

Ken Kemp

And, to those we may have missed – please let us know – and we wish you a “Very Happy Birthday”.



SHARING YOUR STORY

An article featuring the life of a Coxswain and the landing at ARAWE

I have taken most of the article about my father from his book, "The Sluggett/Sloggett War History (Mostly 1939 – 1945) by Max Sluggett JP (Ret.), copyright 1997.

Max (Dave) Sluggett was a coxswain on HMAS Westralia. The daily routine on board saw an 8am start with cleaning, polishing, painting or seamanship training class – learning gunnery, rules of the road, signals, etc.; there was a host of things to learn. Our ship's crew was split into three watches or groups so that at 8am one group went on watch the other two groups to normal ship's routine. The watches were known as the Forecastle, Midships and Quarterdeck. At about 11:30am the next watch for duty went to lunch so as to be ready to take over their "watch" at 12pm. At this time the other two watches would go to lunch. At 4pm again the changing of the watch known as the first "dog" watch, then 6pm known as the second "dog" watch. The "dog" watches are the means of changing the crew around so that they are not doing the same watch, day in, day out.

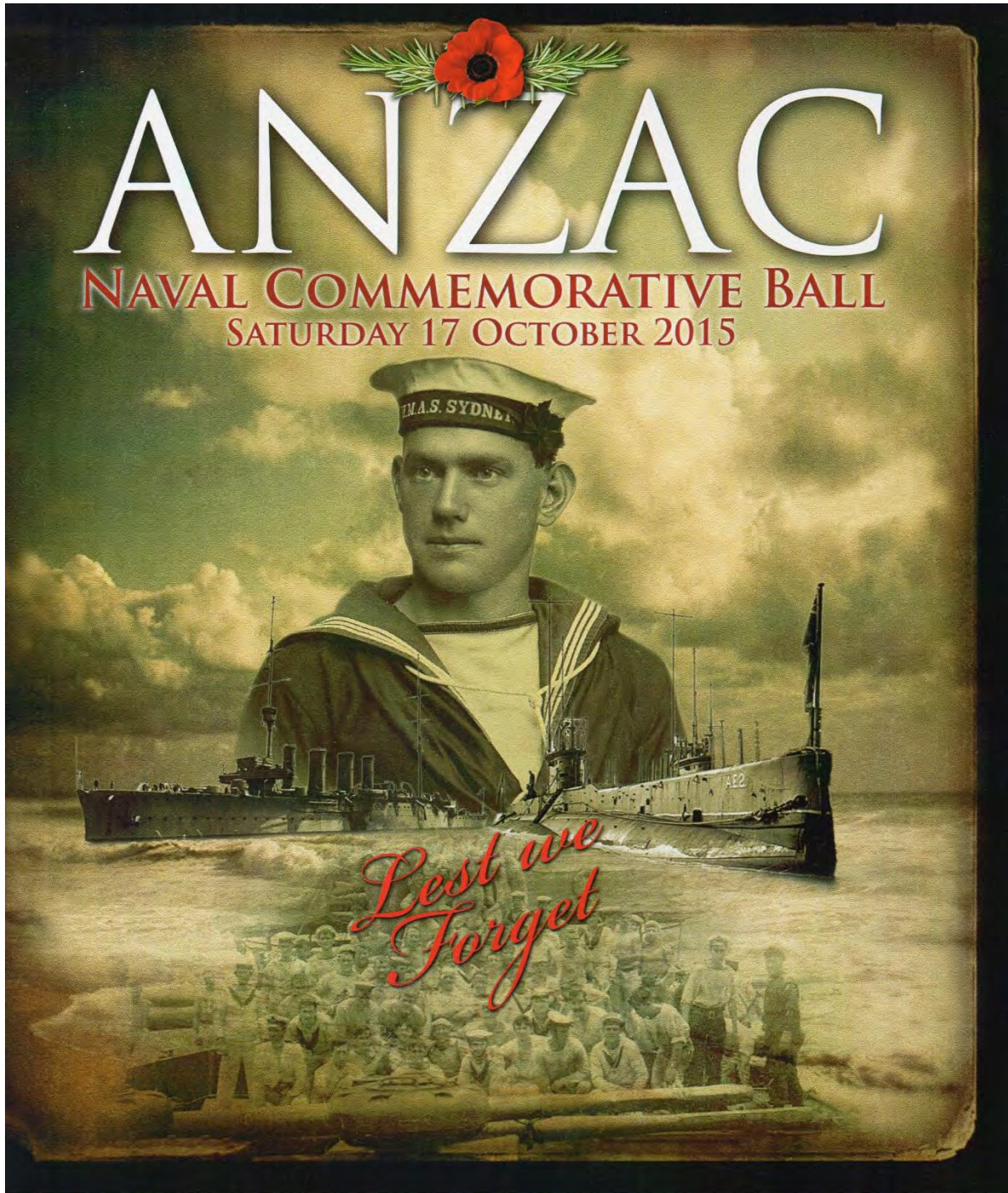
When it was drawing towards sundown it was "clear lower decks" and stand to until dark. There were conditions just before daylight when everyone had to 'stand to' at their battle stations. For it was at sunset and sunrise that the enemy were most likely to spring a surprise attack. At 8pm the first night watch took station and, for those off duty, it was 'lights out' at 9pm. 1130pm saw the calling of the midnight watch; they took over at midnight. The next watch was called at 330am to take over at 4am. Shortly after it would be 'clear lower decks' to close up for sunrise. When that closed down it was breakfast and normal ship routine. We were lucky have three watches as quite a number of ships only had two watches therefore they worked four hours on and 4 hours off. Although the boat crews were trained for a special job we still had to work ship's routine.

HMAS Westralia was involved in seven major landings during the war. They were Arawe, Hollandia, Panaon Island, Lingayen Gulf, Tarakan, Brunei Bay and Balikpapan. While we were trained, the Army and Air Force fought bravely against huge odds to hold the Japanese from invading our country.

The ship's first experience at combined operations was the landing at Arawe, next came Hollandia. One of the many incidents there was the Japanese had a gun on rails cut into the mountain about a third from the top with which they were making themselves a nuisance by firing at our fleet. A destroyer, patrolling at our rear, spotted where it was situated and she came racing through the fleet and, when the cannon made its next appearance, it was its last!

Dad reflects on his life at the war saying that as sad and destructive as war is he made some wonderful mates. He met chaps that he would otherwise never had met and known. "It was a friendship welded in adversity, a real education in Mateship".

Compiled by Richard Sluggett JP (son)



The Naval Commemorative Committee Victoria, invite all serving ADF personnel, Australian and Allied Veterans along with family and friends, to attend the ANZAC NAVAL COMMEMORATIVE BALL 2015. Dance to the Music of the RAN Dance Band.

Venue: Victory Room, Etihad Stadium Melbourne
Date: Saturday 17 October 2015
Time: 1830 for 1900
Dress: Formal
Cost PP: \$130.00 (covers your food and drink)

all bookings, payments and further information, please contact Mr David (Speed) Dwyer - Email: davidgdwyer@hotmail.com Mob: 0423 675 146 or PO Carmel Tom - Email: carmeltom@netspace.net.au Mob: 0418 710 510. All bookings and payments must be made no later than Friday 4 September 2015. To avoid disappointment please book and pay early.

We are seeking expressions of interest.
Does anyone want to book a table or join a table?

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

Denise the Pig Who Went to War



Photo supplied by Bob Worthington: 'Pig & chooks traded from the Philippines 1944. Kelly & McCartney on left.'
Do any of our readers know the names of the three chaps on the left hand side of picture?

Denise the Pig was born on Panoan Island in the Philippines during WWII. She was a gift from the Filipinos who surrounded HMAS WESTRALIA in their canoes on the day the ship landed their Island. Denise joined the ship's company in the most undignified manner - enduring a number of sea dunkings whilst being transferred from canoe to ship. She presented a very poor figure of indeterminate sex as she landed, flaked out on the deck - exhausted. So pigs can swim - well this one could - just !

Although her unorthodox enlistment into the RAN was questionable, she adapted quickly to the task at hand. Her main duty was that of garbage disposal. True to form, she was a discriminating grunter, accepting the very best in food brought to her by numerous attendants from the cafeteria and served in specially constructed feed boxes with her very own name tastefully painted on them. In doing so she developed complete disregard for her figure. Her duty was never undervalued or under estimated - otherwise scraps might be thrown overboard which would leave a trail of evidence for the enemy.

Denise grew in brains and beauty. She stood thigh high to the skipper, could stand to attention during inspections and grunt before meals in the expectation of plenty. Her coolness under fire became a byword for the ship's company. Where she actually went on such occasions was a mystery, but when the four-inch opened up she was last reported moving through the QX mess-deck.

She was well cared for by the crew. Dr Jim Guest remembers her being walked around the deck on a lead. Each morning she was given a salt-water hosing - which one attributes to her peerless complexion. She ruled the ship's company from the after well-deck, where she was washed, oiled, fed and schooled in the art of being the only sea-going pig in the RAN.

She enjoyed the ships' company and was not averse to a little tippie - on one occasion displaying unfamiliar behaviour, staggering around in circles on the strength of half a bottle of beer. Her charm and personality won the hearts of all. Denise's most endearing quality was her ability to uplift the spirits of her shipmates by her absurd behaviour.

Thank you Denise !

Story researched by Chris Harvey from '*Landing Ship Infantry*,' '*Spearheads of Invasion*' and newspaper clippings.

ANZAC CENTENARY FIRST CONVOY COMMEMORATIVE EVENT



HMT HORORATA

One hundred years ago, thousands of Victorians embarked from Port Melbourne bound for the battlefields of WW1. By the end of October 1914, 17 troopships had left Victorian shores carrying almost 8,000 troops as well as nurses, technicians, horses, supplies and weaponry. This was Victoria's First Convoy; they were to meet at Albany before sailing to Egypt.



To commemorate the historic departure, a number of symbolic events were organised for the public at Port Melbourne, Princes Pier, on 19 October 2014. Many of the period style costumes were worn by descendants of those who fought in WW1.



Ted Baillieu & Hugh Delahunty with three generations of descendants of George Robert Carson who embarked on the HMAO Orveito.



The day started early at St Paul's Church for the Annual Seafarers Church Service. There were many people brought together with direct and indirect links to the defence of our ocean trade routes and the maritime industry. Some travelled from overseas and interstate. Guest of Honour was Rear Admiral Mark Purcell RAN. Also in attendance; Captain Steve Bowater OAM RAN, Commanding Officer HMAS Cerberus and Senior Naval Officer Victoria.

Immediately after, was the Navy's Commemorative Wreath Laying Service held in the Sanctuary of the Shrine of Remembrance. A wreath was laid by Ms Elizabeth Sevoir, Great Granddaughter of Vice Admiral Sir William Rooke Creswell RAN, commonly known as the 'Father of the RAN'. Other wreaths were placed by RADM Purcell on behalf of the RAN, Pet Johnson Vice President of NCCV on behalf of all ship/unit and Branch Associations, and LCDR Harry Kime OAM RAN Rtd State President Naval Assoc of Australia on behalf of NAA.



The busy day was topped off with an evening Cocktail Party onboard HMAS ARUNTA at Station Pier, Port Melbourne.

The Navy Band, complete with two female vocals performed for the Sunset Ceremony.

Photo: The Hon Ted Baillieu MLA, Chair of the Victorian ANZAC Centenary Committee, together with Hiram Ristrom – President of MAS KANIMBLA Association and Norm Tame WWII Veteran who served on HMAS AUSTRALIA, SYDNEY, KANIMBLA and ASSAULT.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: This newsletter has been a collaboration of help and inspiration from Chris Harvey, Bob Worthington, Mary-Beth Hosking and Max & Richard Sluggett. We would like to sincerely thank those who have contributed to this edition.