



# HIRAM IN THE NAVY

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Dedicated to  
Hiram Ristrom  
and his comrades  
who served in  
*HMAS Assault, Kanimbla, Manoora and Westralia.*

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## Harold (Hiram) George Ristrom PM 4883 Leading Seaman/Coxswain HMAS Kanimbla



Hiram was born 'Harold George Ristrom' at Benalla on 21 June 1924 to Percival George Ristrom and Lily Rosalind Ristrom, nee McFadyen. He was the first of five children, followed by Joan, Dorothy, John and Margaret. His father was a representative for International Harvester Company which often required him to be away from home as he travelled the country fixing and selling farm machinery. His mode of transport was by train, car and occasionally horse and buggy.

The Great Depression set in during Hiram's formative years. The family moved several times seeking work, finally settling in Bentleigh. Hiram's father started a second-hand car business in Prahran, however the business "dried up" when petrol rationing was imposed. This necessitated Percival to seek work in the Mallee district constructing silos and returning home every few weeks to be with his family. Love, faith, loyalty, adaptability, ingenuity and perseverance were the threads that wove the family fabric.

One of Hiram's earliest peacetime memories was, as a young lad, watching artillery men in ceremonial uniform riding horse-drawn gun carriages along St Kilda Road. "Under the beautiful trees the whole thing was absolutely magnificent, very picturesque." Hiram's father would have driven him there in the family car to watch his Uncle George.

Hiram was 15 years old and in his last year of high school when WW2 broke out on 3 September 1939. The Nation and its people were about to recalibrate themselves. At that time, the luxury passenger liner TSMV *Kanimbla* was sailing from Brisbane to Sydney. Upon arrival, the Royal Navy requisitioned her for conversion to an AMC (Armed Merchant Cruiser). Stripped of her beautiful wooden interior, then installed with armament (including 7 x 6" and 2 x 3" guns) she was commissioned HMS *Kanimbla* on 6 October 1939 and sent forth to patrol the Pacific Islands and China Sea.

Families adapted too. Hiram's Uncle George, who had been a volunteer or "weekend" soldier for the artillery, was sent abroad to Syria and the Middle East with the 2nd 11th Field Regiment. Hiram's father found work at a munitions factory closer to home in Footscray. Hiram got a job as a junior clerk for Royal Insurance Co in Collins Street, not far from the heritage-listed Olderfleet Building. It was in that building, one lunchtime, where Hiram volunteered for the Navy, inspired by his great grandfather, Eric Ollov Ristrom, a Swedish merchant seaman who "travelled to far-away places".

The Navy swore Hiram in but said: "We're not ready for you yet – go home, work and we'll let you know when we want you!"

Hiram was 17 years old when Japan bombed Pearl Harbour, drawing the USA into WW2. The next 24 hours saw Japan launch simultaneous attacks on Guam, Malaya, Singapore, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Wakde Island (Indonesia) and shortly after Borneo and Rabaul (Papua New Guinea). Japan had already invaded China and French Indochina (Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos). Two months later Darwin was bombed, the first of 97 air-raids across northern Australia. In May that year a Japanese mini submarine infiltrated Sydney Harbour, taking aim at USS *Chicago*, however misfired its torpedo and sunk HMAS *Kuttabul*. During the attack HMS *Kanimbla* and HMAS *Westralia* were berthed nearby at Neutral Bay.

With Japan's rapid advancement in the South West Pacific a seismic shift was taking place in the Nation's thinking. AIF troops from the 6th, 7th and 9th Divisions who had been fighting in Europe and the Middle East were returned to Australia to gear up for the task ahead. The Australian, American and British governments recognised the need for a joint effort of strategic amphibious operations to recapture enemy-occupied territory and push back the Japanese. The Australian War Cabinet granted approval for the establishment of the RAN amphibious training centre, HMAS *Assault*, where the Joint Overseas Operational Training School would be set up to coordinate and train Australian and US army and navy personnel in amphibious warfare. In June 1942, a suitable site for *Assault* was identified at Nelson Bay, Port Stephens, NSW. It would take some months for the shore facility *Assault* to be built.

Meanwhile, Hiram was still waiting to hear from the Navy when on his 18th birthday he received a letter from the Army. "Everybody got called up and had to go into the Army whether they liked it or not." Hiram informed them that he'd already joined the Navy, however the Army said: "We've got news for you!" After completing eight weeks training at Puckapunyal with the 4th Field Training Regiment Hiram approached his Staff Sergeant to volunteer for the AIF in the hope of travelling abroad like his Uncle George. It was only then that the Sergeant remembered a letter he'd received from the Navy concerning Hiram. The two week old letter had been conveniently filed under his desk blotter – out of sight, out of mind – until now!

Consequently, on 27 August 1942 the Army discharged Hiram and he was transferred to Flinders Naval Depot (HMAS *Cerberus*) where he enlisted into the Royal Australian Naval Reserve as Ordinary Seaman, PM4883. He and others, who had also transferred from the Army, were assigned to Class S18. Little did they know that "S" stood for Special Services. After completing an obligatory three week training course, Hiram was drafted to HMAS *Assault*.

However, the shore facility *Assault* wasn't ready yet so Hiram was transferred to HMAS *Penguin* for a couple of months while waiting for the quiet fishing village at Nelson Bay to undergo its transformation. Nelson Bay was put off limits to the general public necessitating locals to use permits to come and go. It had to be fortified with gun emplacements, fixed torpedo tubes on a purpose-built jetty, command post, signal station, search light station as well as sufficient water and electricity supply. Barracks had to be built to house the large numbers of Australian and US defence personnel. The kitchen, mess hall, sick bay, stores, administration blocks, and numerous buildings to house plant and equipment had to be built too.

Harold George Ristrom was given his nickname "Hiram" by Able Seaman Roger Gittus. Roger and Hiram shared the same time at Flinders Naval Depot, and in HMAS *Penguin*, *Westralia*, *Assault* and just a few days in *Manoora*. Hiram explains;

"We were mucking around on the mess deck and I took the part of Hiram Scudder who was an American in an afternoon kids [radio] play named 'Frank and Archie' [Frank Watanabe and the Honorable Archie]. Hiram Scudder was one of the characters in that. Roger was so impressed he did a caricature of me and stuck it on the noticeboard with 'Hiram J' underneath it, and that was it – I was 'Hiram' from then on."

Roger later became an official War Artist and gifted Hiram some of his artwork.

Apparently the "Hiram J" stuck as evidenced by the chippy's handiwork on Hiram's wooden suitcase. It is in this suitcase that Hiram has faithfully stored his Navy rig which remains in excellent condition decades later.





Hiram finally got transferred to HMAS *Assault* in November 1942, initially boarding and training in HMAS *Westralia*, berthed at Port Stephens, until the shore facility was fully built and operational a month later. During the next ten months *Assault* would facilitate training of 20,000 US soldiers and marines, 2,000 Australian soldiers and 1,000 RAN personnel, including 120 naval commandos. Training was intense, covering unarmed combat, instructions in weaponry and explosives, signals training and amphibious landing operations for hostile shores. Hiram's forte was in navigational skills, barge handling and landing manoeuvres.

Initially the landing craft used were British-designed LCAs, also known as ALCAs (Armoured Landing Craft Assault). They were heavy, cumbersome, difficult to pull back from shore and sat low in the water – not ideal for rough conditions. Later the barges would be replaced with American-designed LCVs (Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel) which were lighter, quicker and more agile. Hiram's prowess at handling the various landing craft was well and truly put to the test when he crewed a 15.2m LCM (Landing Craft Mechanised) from Port Stephens to Sydney where it was to be winched onto HMAS *Kanimbla*. The 100 nautical mile journey meant that they had to cross the Newcastle Bight taking the barge 50 miles offshore to the open waters.

Each LCV carried 36 soldiers in the well deck, plus the coxswain, stoker and two seamen who, if required, would man the gunner's cockpit. Before any landing, a Beach Party would be sent ahead for reconnaissance to identify and deal with any obstacles and set up communication flags. Sniper fire was always a risk. Every landing presented different conditions such as the swell of the surf, tidal and current behaviour, landmines, coral reefs, sandbanks, nature and gradient of the beach as well as enemy position, etc. If the barge wasn't landed close enough to the beach – there was a risk that troops, laden with their armament, would drown when offloading. The skill was to catch a wave at the right time, land at the right place and unload as quickly as possible, then withdraw from the danger area, returning to the ship for the next load. Depending on the wind and water current there was also the chance of the barge broaching sideways while unloading its crew and equipment – making it difficult to reverse out of trouble. The speed of the approach as well as the timing of the ramp being released were also critical elements – if done too fast or too soon the barge could fill with water and sand.



Photo: HMAS *Assault*, Troops storm ashore from a LCV.  
AWM 304843

Model of K12, created by STO Nev Phillips. Displayed at Geelong Naval Museum. Photo by C. Harvey



Between February and June 1943, while training was being carried out at *Assault*, the Royal Australian Navy requisitioned *Kanimbla*, *Manoora* and *Westralia* for conversion from AMCs (Armed Merchant Cruiser) to LSIs (Landing Ship Infantry) in readiness for the task ahead. In October that year Hiram was drafted to HMAS *Kanimbla* as Coxswain of LCV K12. He spent the rest of the year engaged in training with US troops in amphibious warfare

near the Naval Beach Commando School, Toorbul, on Bribie Island and Redcliffe, Queensland in preparation for operations in the South West Pacific Area (SWPA).



From January 1944 until the end of WW2, *Kanimbla* participated in seven Operations in the South West Pacific Area. Interspersed with these were reinforcement runs, escort duties and more joint training exercises at Trinity Beach - Cairns, Goodenough Island - Papua (now New Guinea) and Morotai - Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia).

Hiram experienced his first air-raid in January 1944 when *Kanimbla* had just dropped off US troops and their equipment at Langemak Bay, New Guinea. When "Action Stations" was sounded, Hiram's duty was to man the damage control water pump and hoses on the troop deck near No.4 Hatch, wearing a protective asbestos suit. The ship would be "closed up" during Action Stations and with the heat of the day and battle dress gear it was a claustrophobic environment. "You could be called to Action Stations any number of times during the day or night as well as practise runs every day at dawn and dusk". Photo: 13.4.1945 at HMAS *Penguin* demonstrating the efficiency of an asbestos suit. AWM 088272

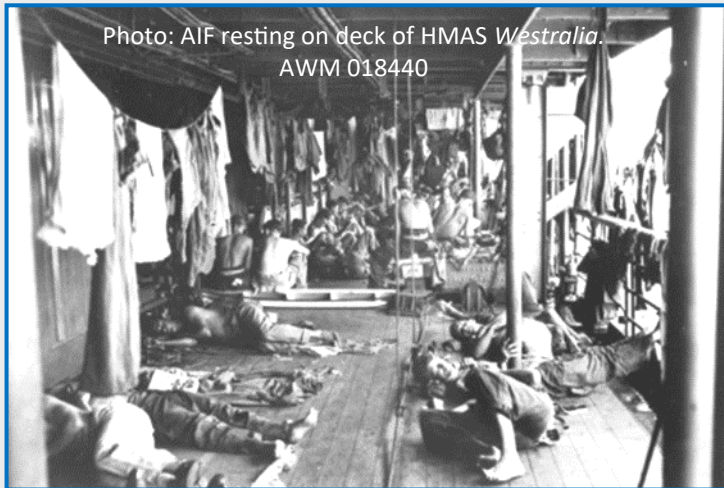
AWM 088272



Thankfully there was no damage and *Kanimbla* proceeded to Port Moresby to pick up 56 officers and 1,090 men from the 2/31 Battalion, 7th Division AIF and return them to Australia. These men were in "terrible shape" having courageously fought the arduous Kokoda Track Campaign, against massive numbers of Japanese and in horrendous conditions. TEL Peter Sherman writes in his book, *Cry Havoc HMS-HMAS Kanimbla Goes to War*:

"The soldiers were in a pretty bad state with their jungle greens all torn, and sores all over their legs, in a shocking state. The first night aboard, to give the soldiers a good meal, the cooks put on sausages, eggs and tomatoes. Some of the sailors were helping the cooks serve the meal by way of handing out the bread and butter. A.B. Ken 'Snowy' Barrett was helping, and as one soldier was passing along the line, Barrett said to him, 'How are you going Dig, had enough?' and he replied, 'It's great, I have been through three times, and I am going through again!!' Lieut. Commander Lou Irvine, the ship's Paymaster came down to the cafeteria, and asked the Chief Cook, Bob Bastian, 'How are you going there?' Bastian replied, 'We are nearly out of food.' Lieut. Commander Irvine said to him, 'Take stock from the Wardroom Galley, and feed them as long as they want to eat'."

Photo: AIF resting on deck of HMAS *Westralia*.  
AWM 018440



*Kanimbla* had a ship's company of 650, however when it took on troops of 1,000 or more, the sleeping and eating arrangements required adaptability and tolerance. Hammocks proved to be very hot in the tropics. Where possible, it was cooler to sleep on the upper deck although that was disrupted with occasional tropical rain. Often Hiram would sleep on the mess deck bench stools.

As for eating, it was standing room only!

Photo: 3.5.1945 AIF troops having lunch aboard HMAS *Kanimbla* AWM 089356



Water was rationed to twice a day for ten minutes at a time. Having a shower was like being in a fast-moving production line. If you didn't finish washing your hair before the water supply got cut off, you'd have to go up on deck and use salt water to wash the soap out - the hair and skin would remain crusty all day.

Early February 1944 *Kanimbla* returned to New Guinea to bring back another contingent of the 7th Division to Australia. This followed more training at Trinity Beach, Cairns with 6th Division and the Naval Beach Groups. By that time the new American designed landing craft had arrived to replace the cumbersome ALCA barges.

>Film: F01305 Training at Trinity Beach Cairns 7th & 9th Division <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C188879>

>Radio Interview: [www.abc.net.au/radio/canberra/programs/breakfast/war-memorial-milne-bay-kokoda-campaign-commemorations-awm/8833716](http://www.abc.net.au/radio/canberra/programs/breakfast/war-memorial-milne-bay-kokoda-campaign-commemorations-awm/8833716)



Things didn't always go as planned but Hiram's ability to adapt, stay focused, keep a level-head and sense of humour invariably prevailed. There was great activity and even excitement in the leadup to their first invasion, Operation Reckless. *Kanimbla*, *Manoora* and *Westralia* were to join a flotilla of 158 vessels which was to diverge into a three-pronged attack on Tanahmerah Bay, Hollandia and Aitape, effectively separating the Japanese army of 60,000 into two locations, disrupting their supplies.

Imagine the disappointment when just prior to the Operation, twelve of *Kanimbla's* LCVPs and their barge crews, which included Hiram, were put ashore at Oro Bay (US Army base at Buna, Papua). They had to rely on their own limited resources. Aussie ingenuity stepped in and they found disused tents, located on the camp's periphery, where they could sleep. There was no NOIC (Naval Officer In Charge) at Oro Bay, however eventually they were acknowledged and taken in by the US Army. Hiram and K12 crew were assigned as "duty boat" to service various ships in the Bay and for approximately two weeks got drafted to American destroyer USS *Neuendorf*. Hiram also boarded USS *Henry T Allen* and delightfully recalls eating pancakes with ice-cream and discovering cold lemonade on tap whilst on board. They stayed a total of 46 days at Oro Bay and in that time suffered prickly heat rash – a condition made worse in the humid tropics. The US Army doctor advised that their condition was exacerbated by the inappropriate flannelette shirts the RAN had issued them. Consequently, they were sent off to the US purser for a supply of 100% cotton "US navy blues". They were given a boisterous ribbing from their mates as they reboarded *Kanimbla* dressed in their new rig.

Hiram was never to be separated from *Kanimbla* again. Though in the very last landing he and those on K12 nearly got separated from us all – and that would have been the end of this story.

It happened during Operation OBOE TWO at Balikpapan on 1 July 1945:

The prelanding bombardment at Balikpapan was massive. One might almost be assured that no enemy could possibly have survived such an onslaught. As K12 was approaching Yellow Beach there was disturbance across the water ahead of them and a mortar shell flew just over the top of K12. The order was given to break form and change direction. Immediately Hiram responded with instinctive efficiency – relentless training had paid off. More strafing was hitting the water where K12 would have been had it not changed direction so quickly. They were under machine gunfire. Fortunately, the destroyers dealt with that effectively. On their journey back to *Kanimbla*, K12 received the warning signal that they were passing through a minefield ... a crew member had to keep watch from over the bow as they manoeuvred through the treacherous area.

Victory in the Pacific was declared on 15 August 1945 – bringing the end of WW2.

*Kanimbla* was in Subic Bay (Luzon, Philippines) when Japan surrendered.



Photo: 15 August 1945, Balikpapan, Borneo  
Members of 7th Division and RAN Commandos at prayer  
during the thanksgiving service held in the salvation army hut on Milford Hwy on VP Day. AWM 113205

Hiram's fondest memory is "bringing long-serving members of the  
7th and 9th Divisions of the AIF  
back home on 4 September 1945 to a tumultuous welcome."



Photo: 4.9.1945 HMAS *Kanimbla*, Brisbane AWM P02303.003

For nine months after the war *Kanimbla* voyaged to various locations in the SWPA  
returning repatriated POWs and troops to Australia.  
She also made trips carrying Japanese POWs.



HMAS *Kanimbla*

Ship's Company

New Farm Wharf, Brisbane

5 September 1945



Photo courtesy of Hiram Ristrom



Hiram was in the Navy "just shy of four years" – although you get the impression he never really left.

His employer was holding his job open for him – but that offer had a limited timeframe as there were many lining up for civilian jobs back home. To keep his job Hiram left the Navy and returned to his employer, Royal Insurance Company. In 1950 he joined the Caledonian Insurance Company. He remained loyal to that firm for the remainder of his working life – even through the company's numerous merges and takeovers.

In the early 1950s, golden threads of loyalty, love and a whole lot more were being interwoven into Hiram's fabric of life when he met and married his beloved Betty. They had two children; Christine and Ian who gave them six grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. Betty's love and unselfish devotion provided Hiram the room to stay connected and engaged with his comrades.

Harold (Hiram) Ristrom 2018

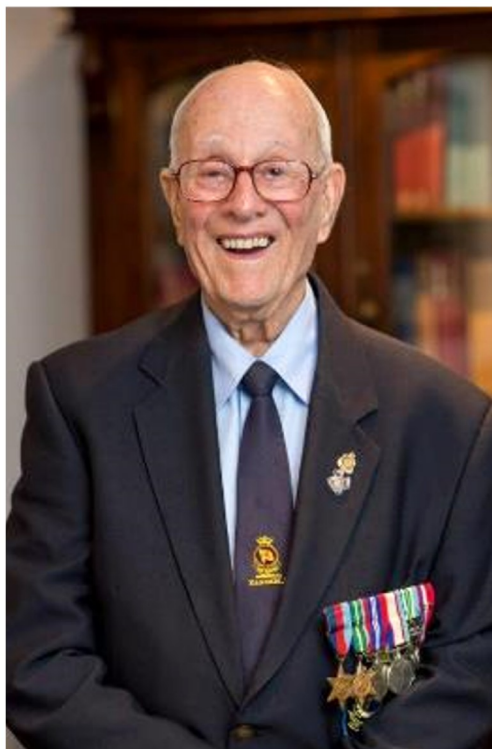


Photo courtesy of Bentleigh RSL

Apart from a ten year break, when work moved Hiram and his family to Warrnambool, Hiram has been actively engaged in all things Navy.

After being discharged from the Navy in July 1946, he joined HMS/HMAS *Kanimbla* Assoc Inc., serving as a member, committee member and finally as their President for 26 years. His ability to connect and bring people together has been an asset that ensured the Association's enthusiasm, professionalism and longevity.

He is an inaugural member of NAA, (Naval Association of Australia) South Eastern Branch and still attends their meetings.

He is involved with the local Bentleigh RSL and continues to volunteer every year.

He is a highly valued member and Co-Patron of AMC/LSI Assoc of Victoria where his active involvement brings a wealth of knowledge and wisdom to the committee, its members and the organisation as a whole.

His contribution to the Navy fraternity extends to the broadest community: On Remembrance Day 2015 at the Shrine of Remembrance, he recited the Ode – his voice resonating with thousands of people present.

In 2017, ANZAC House gave Hiram the great honour of co-leading the ANZAC Day March in Melbourne. In August that year he was invited by the Shrine of Remembrance to join a panel of five WW2 veterans for the public program; "Words From Our Navy Veterans". The event was recorded for perpetuity by the Shrine of Remembrance.

In his 90's Hiram continues to attend committee meetings, naval functions, ceremonies and, sadly, funerals

His participation grows more precious as time goes on

In his quiet unassuming manner there exists something far greater than what our eyes see

It is his comrades, past and present, that he carries in his heart and mind

They served in HMAS *Assault*, *Kanimbla*, *Manoora* and *Westralia*

and formed a unique bond that has stood the test of time

Words cannot describe what they truly went through

Nor can words describe our sense of indebtedness

for their service and sacrifice

Hiram's loyalty, commitment and involvement with the navy fraternity long after the war

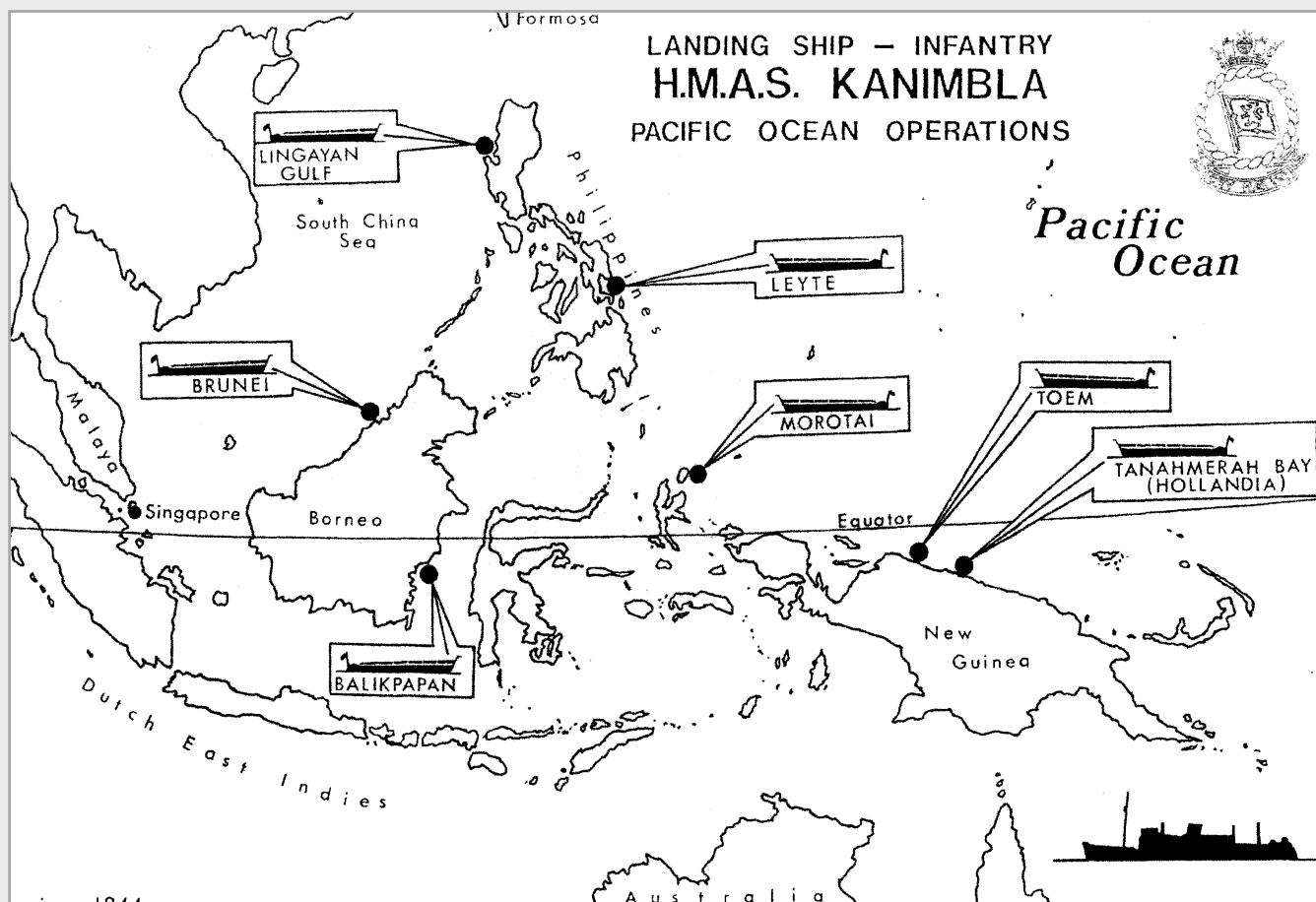
has endeared him to many

One might be forgiven for thinking that, "Hiram is synonymous with Kanimbla."

>Video of Hiram speaking on a panel of five WW2 veterans at Shrine of Remembrance 'Words From Our Navy Veterans 9.8.2017' [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC\\_6DR7M7VrrtRpl238BofTw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_6DR7M7VrrtRpl238BofTw)

# HMAS *Kanimbla* participated in seven operations in the South West Pacific Area (SWPA)

Map by AB Harry Peers



|                             |                           |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Operation Noiseless         | Tanahmerah Bay, Hollandia |
| Reinforcement Run           | Toem                      |
| Operation Interlude         | Morotai Island            |
| Operation Musketeer King II | Leyte                     |
| Operation Musketeer Mike I  | Lingayan Gulf             |
| Operation OBOE SIX          | Brunei                    |
| Operation OBOE TWO          | Balikpapan                |

|                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Operation Noiseless</b></p> <p>22 April 1944</p> <p>Tanahmerah Bay, Hollandia,<br/>Dutch New Guinea<br/>(Indonesian province of<br/>Papua, New Guinea)</p>                     | <p>With a flotilla of 158 ships, Operation Noiseless was conducted as a prelude to Operation Reckless. The object was to secure the port and three airfields that the Japanese had built during their occupation of New Guinea—effectively dislocating into two the Japanese army of 60,000. Its execution involved a “deception tactic” to keep the Japanese expecting a blow at the Madang-Hansa area whilst the true focus was Hollandia. It was a coordinated three-pronged attack on Tanahmerah Bay, Humboldt Bay and Aitape. <i>Kanimbla</i>, and <i>Manoora</i> landed at Red Beach, Tanahmerah Bay while <i>Westralia</i> landed at White Beach, Humboldt Bay.</p> <p><i>Kanimbla</i> disembarked 1,300 US troops and equipment in less time than any other ship. A total of 14,000 troops landed at Tanahmerah Bay while 40,000 were engaged in the whole operation.</p> <p>Much to Hiram’s disappointment, he was sent to Oro Bay, Buna during this Operation.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><b>Reinforcement Run</b></p> <p>5 June 1944</p> <p>Toem, Wakde Island<br/>Dutch New Guinea<br/>(Indonesia)</p>                                                                    | <p>US troops had landed the area a fortnight earlier but were having extreme difficulty holding the beach. The Japanese were only 30 to 50 metres inland and were pushing back the troops to the water’s edge. Hiram recalls, “At night the Japs would infiltrate the US camp and kill sleeping soldiers or blow themselves up in tents. The US troops needed urgent reinforcements. There was heavy surf and exposure to sniper fire ... dead bodies floating in the water as we approached the beachhead—it was a ‘hairy’ day.”</p> <p><i>Kanimbla</i> put 1,500 US troops ashore as did <i>Manoora</i> amidst ferocious attack from the enemy.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>Operation Interlude</b><br/>Aka<br/>Morotai Operation</p> <p>15 September 1944</p> <p>Morotai Island<br/>Dutch East Indies,<br/>Part of the Maluku Islands<br/>(Indonesia)</p> | <p>Operation Interlude was coordinated with Operation Trade Wind (Occupation of Morotai).</p> <p>Island hopping or leapfrogging was a military strategy used by the US and Australian forces in the SWPA. General MacArthur planned to counter Japanese garrisons by bypassing them and interfering with their supply chain instead, thus reducing their capacity to fight. He deliberately bypassed Halmahera Island to occupy nearby Morotai Island where there was little resistance as the Japanese were focused on protecting their strong-hold at Halmahera. This isolated the Japanese on Halmahera. Importantly, Morotai then provided a support base (logistical hub and command centre) for the liberation of the Philippines and the Australian led Borneo campaign.</p> <p><i>Kanimbla</i> was engaged with the White Beach Attack Group of 37 ships. <i>Manoora</i> was with the Red Beach Attack Group of 66 ships.</p> <p>As there was limited pre-invasion intelligence, the landing craft were faced with unexpected poor beach conditions, rocky ridges and coral reefs. As a result, the soldiers and equipment had to be landed in deep surf.</p> <p>Hiram recalls the dreadful heat and glare off the water on the day of the landing and the overcrowding on board ship. <i>Kanimbla</i> disembarked 144 officers and 1,061 troops from 124th Regiment 31st US Division.</p> <p>The Battle for Morotai Island was a naval and air success with no Australian lives lost. However, 45 American soldiers and 325 Japanese soldiers were killed.</p> |



## Operation Musketeer King II

20 October 1944

Leyte Island  
Philippines

Northern Attack Force TF78  
Rear Admiral Barbey's V11  
Amphibious Force

Panaon Attack Group TGF78.3  
Rear Admiral Struble

Southern Attack Force TF79  
Vice Admiral Wilkinson's 111  
Amphibious Force

The Japanese commenced their invasion and occupation of the Philippines on 8 December 1941. Aerial bombardment severely damaged the American Asiatic Fleet in the Philippines. General MacArthur, who was in command of the Philippine and American troops, was ordered to flee to Australia. The suffering of those left behind is well documented. General MacArthur made a promise: "I will return". The landing at Leyte Island on 20 October 1944 marked the return of General MacArthur and the beginning of the liberation of the Philippines. The purpose for taking the smaller centrally located Leyte Island was to disrupt Japanese communications between the two larger islands, Luzon and Mindanao.

*Kanimbla*, *Manoora* and *Westralia* were in a flotilla of 600 Allied ships. As they neared Leyte Island, the Panaon Attack Group (which included *Kanimbla*, *Manoora* and *Westralia*) detached from the main flotilla and headed for Panaon Island, at the most southern tip of Leyte Island. At unopposed Green Beach they disembarked 2,866 troops of the US 21st Regimental Combat Team and their equipment. During the first 24 hours of the Operation the Force put ashore 80,000 troops.

Hiram said, "We were keen to get away from there as we knew the Japs would approach through nearby Surigao Strait. We were not a fighting ship, we only had a 4" gun and anti-aircraft guns."



What followed was the largest naval battle in history. It raged in Leyte Gulf, Surigao Strait from 23-26 October 1944. The Imperial Japanese Navy sent all its major ships from the Asia area to fight in the battle. Only two of their ships escaped unscathed. HMAS *Australia* was the first Allied ship to be attacked by suicide bombers in which 30 officers and sailors were killed and 64 wounded.

By 1 November the Japanese had regained strength in the air and occupied the west side of Leyte Island (Ormoc) with 45,000 of their troops. Reinforcement runs were needed. *Kanimbla* survived more kamikaze attacks on its convoy back to Leyte where another 30,000 US troops and their equipment were unloaded. During the 67 days to recapture Leyte Island 55,340 Japanese were killed and they lost 21 warships, 41 transports and 2,700 aircraft.

Fifty years later in October 1994, Hiram, as President of HMS/HMAS *Kanimbla* Assoc Inc., would return to Leyte together with comrades Tom Leigh, Ken Barrett and Nevin Phillips to join in the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the landing which led to the Liberation of the Philippines.

## Operation Musketeer Mike I

9 January 1945

Luzon Island  
Lingayen Gulf  
Philippines

Luzon Attack Force TF77  
Commanded by Vice Admiral Kinkaid  
955 ships

Covering Force  
437 ships

San Fabian Attack Force  
303 ships

Lingayen Attack Force  
215 ships



Luzon Island is Philippines' largest island where the capital, Manila, was strongly fortified by the Japanese. However, Lingayen Gulf, just north of Manila, was undefended and was the gateway to excellent road and rail infrastructure connecting to the capital. Logistically, by taking back Luzon, the Allied forces would be in a better position to interfere with the enemy's supply lines from the Netherlands East Indies, Malaya, Thailand and Indochina.

Operation Musketeer Mike I (also known as Luzon Campaign or the Lingayen Operation) was the largest amphibious operation against the Japanese in WW2. Under the command of Vice Admiral Kinkaid, the Luzon Attack Force TF77 comprised 955 Allied ships with 120 of them being capital ships. The flotilla stretched 240 nautical miles. 100,000 troops were needed as reinforcements.

Luzon Attack Force was made up of:

### i. **Covering Force**

TG77.2 Bombardment and Fire Support Group commanded by Vice Admiral Oldendorf. HMA ships *Shropshire*, *Australia*, *Arunta* and *Warramunga* were among the group's 6 battle ships, 12 escort carriers, 8 cruisers, 46 destroyers and smaller craft.

TG77.3 Close Covering Group commanded by Rear Admiral Berkey.

### ii **San Fabian Attack Force**

TF78 Commanded by Rear Admiral Barbey. Carried troops of the 6th and 43rd (who trained aboard *Westralia* at Aitape) Divisions of the First Corps, US 6th Army.

### iii **Lingayen Attack Force**

TF79 Including *Kanimbla*, *Manoora* and *Westralia*. Commanded by Vice Admiral Wilkinson. Carried troops of 37th and 40th Divisions of 14th Corps, US 6th Army. *Kanimbla* carried 83 officers and 1,247 men of the US Army.

Their journey to Luzon was dangerous as they navigated waters within range of 70 enemy airfields, 10 motor torpedo boat bases and 2 submarine bases. The Japanese had 200 airfields within the Philippines and over 600 aircraft from which they could launch attacks. And they did!

Hiram recalls, "The day before the landing was the most terrifying of all for the ship's company." Their convoy was attacked by approximately 60 kamikaze bombers. Action Stations were called and guns were blazing. It is reported that a kamikaze came within 4.5 metres of *Kanimbla*—so close, you could see the pilot in the cockpit. *Westralia* received damage, disabling its steering gear. However, repairs were quickly made and she was able to resume her position in the fleet.

Hiram was detailed as "smoke boat" (to make visibility difficult for the Japanese aircraft). He was situated between two American battle ships that were bombarding the shore. Hiram recalls the sound of gunfire and rockets all around echoing off adjacent battle ships as "absolutely deafening, ... they were using 16 inch guns".

The Japanese used a total of 23 divisions in the whole Philippines campaign to 17 American divisions. The enemy army strength was 250,000 while the total Allied troops numbered 80,000.

## Operation OBOE SIX

aka  
Borneo Campaign  
&  
Borneo Operation

10 June 1945  
Z Day

Brunei Bay  
British Borneo

Even though Victory in Europe was declared a month earlier, Japan refused to surrender—vowing to fight to the end.

The Liberation of Borneo was conducted by three progressive Allied attacks between May and July 1945:

Operation OBOE ONE: 1-3 May 1945 landing at Tarakan

Operation OBOE SIX: 10 June 1945 landing at Brunei

Operation OBOE TWO: 1 July 1945 landing at Balikpapan

Both *Manoora* and *Westralia* were engaged in the landing at Tarakan. However, *Kanimbla* missed out because she was held up having maintenance and a refit after spending 18 months of continuous service in combat zones. During the refit they replaced the 3" guns with Bofors to better combat enemy aircraft.

*Kanimbla* was back in time for the landing at Brunei. The objective of OBOE SIX was to destroy hostile garrison, secure Brunei Bay and establish a base and give protection to oil and rubber resources.

The area had been bombarded by RAAF Liberators ahead of the landing. *Kanimbla* had taken on board 80 officers and 1,199 men of the 2nd 17th Regiment, 9th Division of the AIF together with 320 tons of supplies. The first wave of troops was landed at Green Beach then the remainder troops and equipment were unloaded on Yellow Beach. The landing was unopposed. As the tide receded at Yellow Beach there could be seen unexploded bombs—just where craft had landed only half an hour earlier.



Photo: OBOE SIX, Z Day, 1st wave of troops from 2nd 17th Infantry Battalion scramble down nets slung over side of HMAS *Kanimbla* into LCVPs. AWM 108939

>AWM film footage F07221 showing K12 manoeuvring through the ship's wash with troops on board for the Brunei landing [22:03:53:09]. The end of the footage shows troops scrambling down the nets and aboard a LCVP approaching the landing at Brunei.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C190338>

## Operation OBOE TWO

aka  
Borneo Operation

1 July 1945

Balikpapan  
Dutch Borneo

Vice Admiral Barbey  
Overall command of naval forces  
247 ships

Attack Group 78.2  
121 ships  
*Kanimbla, Manoora & Westralia*

Operation OBOE TWO,  
was the last amphibious assault  
by any nation or combined armed  
force in WW2.

On 6 and 9 August 1945 the US  
dropped 2 atomic bombs over  
Hiroshima and Nagasaki, instantly  
killing an estimated 120,000 people.

Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945  
bringing an end to the deadliest  
conflict in mankind's history.

An estimated 70,000,000 people  
(military and civilians) were killed  
and many more wounded  
during WW2.

[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/06/world-war-two-fatalities-visualized\\_n\\_7526390.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/06/world-war-two-fatalities-visualized_n_7526390.html)

Photo: 1 July 1945 Balikpapan, Borneo  
LCVP landing troops of the 7th Australian Division AWM 128283



Balikpapan was a major oil port with refineries located around the town. It had an excellent harbour with good anchorage and provided ideal facilities for a supply base.

In preparation for Operation OBOE TWO, the Attack Group carried out joint exercises (rehearsals) on beaches around Morotai over several days. Sixteen days of minesweeping was conducted prior to the landing. Although heavy pre-landing bombardment had been carried out they still encountered sniper fire.

Operation OBOE TWO was the last amphibious operation carried out during WW2. On the first day there were 10,500 troops, 700 vehicles and 1,950 tons of stores put ashore in rough surf conditions. Of that, *Kanimbla* unloaded 361 tons of vehicles and supplies, 115 officers and 1,152 other ranks of the 2nd 9th Regiment 7th Division AIF. These men were well-experienced having fought in the Middle East and New Guinea.

According to documents found after the landing; it was apparent the Japanese intended releasing oil into the streams and onto the beaches with the intention of igniting them to create a hazardous barrier. Fortunately, this didn't happen due to a broken pipeline.

Photo: 1 July 1945 Balikpapan, Borneo  
Major R.H. Hamilton, Deputy Assistant Director of Medical Services,  
2 Beach Group, supervising the evacuation  
of wounded by LCVP during the  
OBOE TWO Operation. AWM 111034





9554102 1921 TO 1925 INC. Deferral Pay Card No. 44818

### ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVAL RESERVE.

#### RECORD OF MOBILIZED SERVICE.

NAME (in full) RISTROM Harold George OFFICIAL NUMBER P.M. 4883

Date of Birth 21 June 1924 Place of Birth Geelong Vic. Religion Methodist Home Port or Port Division Port. Hob.

Nest of Kin (Relationship and address) FATHER. Leonard George 10 Fernside Road Hawthorn Vic.

Entered in Ledger List No. Cerberus 57/10333

Initials of Certifying Officer [Signature]

The above-named member has been mobilized for service by proclamation. He reported for duty on 27 AUG 1942 19

Rank or Rating Ord. Smn. Seniority 13.8.42.

Specialist Qualifications or Non-substantive Rating

Service to which allocated on Mobilization

Date 7 AUG 1942 [Signature] Signature and Rank of C.O.

The above-named member has been medically examined and is fit for service.

#### DESCRIPTION OF MEMBER.

| Colour of |        |          |        | Complexion. | Marks, Wounds, and Scars. |
|-----------|--------|----------|--------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Height.   | Build. | Hair.    | Eyes.  |             |                           |
| 5         | 7 1/4  | lt. Brn. | Hazel. | Sallow.     |                           |

Date 27 AUG 1942 [Signature] Signature and Rank of Medical Officer.

Signature of Member [Signature] Date 27 AUG 1942

#### EXAMINATIONS AND NOTATIONS SUBSEQUENT TO MOBILIZATION

| Date.       | Particulars.                          | Date.       | Particulars.       |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| 6 April '43 | Assault Awarded 75 (P.M.) A.S. 2/4/43 | 23 JUL 1946 | Deferred P... Paid |

WAR GRATUITY

CLF NO. 23208

AMOUNT £142-10-8

INITIALS [Signature]

#### GOOD CONDUCT BADGES.

| Date.  | Let. Int. or Det.    | Granted, Disputed, or Revoked. | Date. | Let. Int. or Det. | Granted, Disputed, or Revoked. |
|--------|----------------------|--------------------------------|-------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2.8.45 | 1st. Lt. [Signature] |                                |       |                   |                                |

Wounds received in Action, Hurt Certificate granted, Meritorious Service, Special Recommendations, &c.

Date 21.10.41 Particulars Paid £301 9 12 in Lieu of 10 Days Accrued S. And W.S. Leave - A/c No. [Signature]

Name RISTROM Harold George Official Number P.M. 4883

| Name of Ship or Depot. | Rank or Rating. | From.    | To.      | Character. | Efficiency. | Date Assessed. | Remarks.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|------------|-------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cerberus               | Ord. Smn.       | 27.8.42  | 17.9.42  | V8         | Sat.        | 31.12.42       | Data Entered 26 AUG 1942<br><br><b>RATING AWARDED</b> <u>Ord Smn.</u><br><br>Rated 27.8.42 Assault 75222<br>Confirmed 27.9.42 1st. Lt. 16780 N<br>Rated 1st. Lt. Smn. (for) (C) 1.4.44 16780 N<br>DEMOB 3.7.46 16780 N 221<br>Reverted to 1st. Lt. 16780 N 221<br>Reverted to 1st. Lt. 16780 N 221 |
| Assault                | "               | 18.9.42  | 15.11.42 | V9         | Sat.        | 31.12.43       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| "                      | "               | 16.11.42 | 26.8.43  |            |             |                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Kanimbla               | A/A.B.          | 27.8.43  | 30.9.43  | V9         | Sat.        | 31.12.44       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                        |                 | 1.10.43  |          |            |             |                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

SEA SERVICE whilst borne on books of a Depot (To be written up from Victualling Columns of Ledger).

| Ship.     | From.    | To.     |
|-----------|----------|---------|
| Australia | 17.11.42 | 9.12.42 |
| Maurovia  | 12.3.43  | 16.3.43 |

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7



R.A.N.R. 2. (Revised 1939.)  
(Reprinted August, 1941.)

## CERTIFICATE OF THE SERVICE OF

|                                                                             |                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>SURNAME.</b><br><small>(In Block Letters.)</small><br><br><i>RISTROM</i> | <b>CHRISTIAN NAME OR NAMES.</b><br><br><i>Harold George</i> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|

**in the Royal Australian Naval Reserve.**

NOTE.—The Corner of this Certificate is to be cut off where indicated if the man is discharged with a "Bad" character or with disgrace, or if specially directed by the Naval Board. If the corner is cut off, the fact is to be noted, in peace time, in the Roll Book; during mobilization, in the Ledger.

|                                                                        |                       |                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| R.A.N.R.<br>Port Division                                              | <i>PORT MELBOURNE</i> | Official Number <i>PM4883</i>                                                |
| Date of Birth <i>21 June 1924</i>                                      |                       | Nearest known Relative or Friend.<br><small>(To be noted in pencil.)</small> |
| Where { Town <i>Benalla</i><br>Born { State or Country <i>Victoria</i> |                       | Relationship <i>Father</i>                                                   |
| Occupation                                                             |                       | Name <i>Reuval George Ristrom</i>                                            |
| Trade brought up to <i>junior clerk</i>                                |                       | Address <i>14 Cairns Grove</i><br><i>Geelong</i><br><i>Vic</i>               |
| Can swim                                                               |                       |                                                                              |
| Religious Denomination <i>Methodist</i><br><i>will make money 1943</i> |                       |                                                                              |

**All Engagements to be noted in these Columns** (including dates of Mobilization and Demobilization).

| Date of Actually Volunteering. | Commencement of Time. | Period Volunteered for.    | Date of Actually Volunteering. | Commencement of Time.      | Period Volunteered for. |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. <i>13 August 1942</i>       |                       | <i>2 years or duration</i> | 6. <i>17 Sept 42</i>           | <i>Issued Certificate</i>  |                         |
| 2. <i>27 Aug 42 mobilised</i>  |                       |                            | 7. <i>20 Sept 42</i>           | <i>plough year</i>         |                         |
| 3.                             |                       |                            | 8. <i>2 Nov 43</i>             | <i>Issued Battle Pass.</i> |                         |
| 4.                             |                       |                            | 9. <i>10 May 45</i>            | <i>— — —</i>               | <i>Home &amp; Tour</i>  |
| 5.                             |                       |                            | 10.                            |                            |                         |

|                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Address of Rating. | Address of Employer. |
|--------------------|----------------------|

(To be noted in pencil.)

| Description of Person.                        | Stature. |              | Chest.                 | Colour of—         |              |                    | (a) Marks, Wounds and Scars.<br>(b) Specimen Signature. |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------|--------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
|                                               | Ft.      | In.          |                        | Hair.              | Eyes.        | Complexion         |                                                         |
| On Entry as a Cadet                           |          |              |                        |                    |              |                    | (a).<br>(b)                                             |
| On advancement to man's rating, or at entry   | <i>5</i> | <i>7 1/4</i> | <i>31</i><br><i>34</i> | <i>Light Brown</i> | <i>Hazel</i> | <i>Pale yellow</i> | (a)<br>(b)                                              |
| On re-engagement after 12 years, or re-entry. |          |              |                        |                    |              |                    | (a)<br>(b)                                              |

**CAUTION.—This is an Official Document. Any alteration made to it without proper authority will render the offender liable to severe penalties.**



3

Name RISTROM Harold George

| Second Class for Conduct.<br>(Inclusive dates.) |     |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----|
| From.                                           | To. |
| (For use on Mobilization only.)                 |     |
|                                                 |     |
|                                                 |     |
|                                                 |     |

| Good Service and Good Conduct Badges.        |                |                              |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| Date.                                        | 1st, 2nd, 3rd. | Granted, Deprived, Restored. |
| (For use in Peace Time and on Mobilization.) |                |                              |
| 27 Aug '45                                   | 1st            | Granted                      |

| Time Forfeited.                 |                      |                 |         |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------|
| Date.                           | P., D., C., P. W. T. | Number of days. |         |
|                                 |                      | Awarded.        | Served. |
| (For use on Mobilization only.) |                      |                 |         |
|                                 |                      |                 |         |

Character and Efficiency on 31st December yearly, on demobilization, and other occasions prescribed by regulation.

Note as to Method of Assessing Efficiency.

|                                       |                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Superior—above average efficiency     | } in substantive rating, without regard to fitness for advancement. |
| Satisfactory—average efficiency       |                                                                     |
| Moderate—less than average efficiency |                                                                     |
| Inferior—inefficient                  |                                                                     |

Variations in efficiency are often explained by the fact that the man had recently been promoted—see pages 2 and 4—and had not gained sufficient experience in his new position to justify a higher award than that actually assessed.

| Character.                      | Efficiency in Rating, noting substantive rating, in brackets. | Date.      | Captain's Signature. |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|
| (For use on Mobilization only.) |                                                               |            |                      |
| V.G.                            | Lat (Ord. Army)                                               | 31 Dec '42 | J. Cook              |
| V.G.                            | Sat (9 A.B.)                                                  | 31 Dec '43 | W. Shaw              |
| V.G.                            | Sat (New A/Loc. Service)                                      | 31 Dec '44 | P. H. Chumley        |
| V.G.                            | Sat (New A/Loc. Service)                                      | 31 Dec '45 | S. H. Crawford       |
| V.G.                            | Sat (A/B)                                                     | 5 July '46 | A. S. Wink           |

Previous Service in H.M. Forces, including sea experience other than Naval Service.

| Inclusive dates of service. | Unit and Official Number. | Nature of Experience. | Commanding Officer's Signature. |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
|                             |                           |                       |                                 |

Examinations passed and Notations of Qualifications, including Civil, Technical and Scholastic, other than those entered on History Sheets. Include special issues of Clothing.

| Date.                                        | Particulars. | Commanding Officer's Signature. |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| (For use in Peace Time and on Mobilization.) |              |                                 |
| 10 Sep '42                                   | QAL1 - 1 day | Chumley                         |





### RESULT OF EXAMINATIONS.

| Subject                 | For Able Seaman                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | For Leading Seaman |      |       | For Petty Officer |      |       |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------|-------|-------------------|------|-------|
|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Max.               | Pass | Awdd. | Max.              | Pass | Awdd. |
| Rigging                 | No marks to be awarded.<br>Result of examination to be<br>assessed as V.G.I., V.G.,<br>or Good.<br><br>e.g. Qualified for A.B.,<br>" Good."<br>QUALIFIED FOR A.B.<br><br>TIME GAINED      MONTHS<br>Signature of Examining Officer<br>and Rank.<br><i>Cubens</i> | 20                 | 10   |       | 20                | 10   |       |
| Anchor Work             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 20                 | 10   |       | 20                | 10   |       |
| Rule of Road            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 30                 | 27   |       | 40                | 36   |       |
| Boat Work               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 20                 | 12   |       | 20                | 12   |       |
| Organisation            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 15                 | 7½   |       | 15                | 7½   |       |
| Signals                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 10                 | 5    |       | 10                | 5    |       |
| Compass Helm and Lead   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 15                 | 7½   |       | 15                | 7½   |       |
| Watertight Fittings     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 15                 | 7½   |       | 15                | 7½   |       |
| Log Books, Charts, etc. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 15                 | 7½   |       | 15                | 7½   |       |
| Taking Charge           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 50                 | 30   |       | 100               | 60   |       |
| General Duties          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | ...                | ...  |       | 30                | 15   |       |
| Total marks obtained:   | <i>Commander</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 210                | 124  |       | 300               | 178  |       |

ABLE SEAMAN as from \_\_\_\_\_ 19 \_\_\_\_\_

LEADING SEAMAN as from \_\_\_\_\_ 19 \_\_\_\_\_

PETTY OFFICER as from \_\_\_\_\_ 19 \_\_\_\_\_

† Part V. is only to be completed when a Reservist is considered competent to undertake some special duty in the internal organisation of a ship at sea—i.e., Boatswain's Mate, Quartermaster, Captain of Top, M/S or A/S Duties.

Where a rating is found unsuited for any particular Gunnery duty, a notation to that effect is to be made in RED. Should any man be subject to severe seasickness, and therefore unsuitable for employment in ships smaller than cruisers, this fact is to be reported to the Captain Superintendent of Training, and a notation made on Page I.

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### RECORD OF VISION TESTS.

To be filled in by Medical Officer after each Test.

| Date | Gunnery Rating | Ship or Depot | Vision<br>R. L. | Initial Test for: | Passed or Failed | Remarks | Initials of Medical Officer |
|------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|---------|-----------------------------|
|      |                |               |                 |                   |                  |         |                             |
|      |                |               |                 |                   |                  |         |                             |
|      |                |               |                 |                   |                  |         |                             |
|      |                |               |                 |                   |                  |         |                             |
|      |                |               |                 |                   |                  |         |                             |
|      |                |               |                 |                   |                  |         |                             |
|      |                |               |                 |                   |                  |         |                             |

### RECORD OF FIRINGS.

To be filled in for all Test firings carried out in Gunnery Schools and H.M.A. Ships at sea, with any gun 3 inches and above.

| Date | Ship | Gun | Mounting | Rounds | Nature or Practice | O. or F. | Assessment | Initials of Gunnery Officer |
|------|------|-----|----------|--------|--------------------|----------|------------|-----------------------------|
|      |      |     |          |        |                    |          |            |                             |
|      |      |     |          |        |                    |          |            |                             |
|      |      |     |          |        |                    |          |            |                             |
|      |      |     |          |        |                    |          |            |                             |
|      |      |     |          |        |                    |          |            |                             |
|      |      |     |          |        |                    |          |            |                             |
|      |      |     |          |        |                    |          |            |                             |

### SUBMARINE DETECTOR

### AND OTHER SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS, e.g., TORPEDO.

Any special qualifications not provided for :

| Date    | Ship     | Special Qualifications      | Officer's Initials |
|---------|----------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 17/9/42 | Cerberus | DISCIPLINARY COURSE         |                    |
| 6.4.43  | Assault  | Assault Trained 75% 1 month |                    |
|         |          |                             |                    |
|         |          |                             |                    |
|         |          |                             |                    |
|         |          |                             |                    |

### ANTI-GAS.

| Date | Ship | Details of Course | Percentage obtained and Officer's Initials |
|------|------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------|
|      |      |                   |                                            |
|      |      |                   |                                            |
|      |      |                   |                                            |
|      |      |                   |                                            |
|      |      |                   |                                            |



## OFFICIAL No. \_\_\_\_\_

PORT DIVISION

Failures to be shown in RED.

See A.S. 1245, Page 4.

## MACHINE GUN, RIFLE AND PISTOL PRACTICE.

[illegible]

Name RISTROM Harold George

| Name of Ship<br>(Tenders to be inserted in brackets.) | List and No. | Rating.                     | From.              | To.                | Cause of Discharge and other Notations authorized by Article 606, clause 9 K.R. and A.I. |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (For use on Mobilization only.)                       |              |                             |                    |                    |                                                                                          |
| <i>berberus</i>                                       |              | <i>Ord Sea</i>              | <i>27 Aug '42</i>  | <i>17 Feb '43</i>  |                                                                                          |
| <i>Assault</i>                                        |              | <i>1st Lt. Team</i>         | <i>18 Oct '42</i>  | <i>26 Aug '43</i>  |                                                                                          |
| <i>Assault</i>                                        |              | <i>Able Seaman</i>          | <i>27 Aug '43</i>  | <i>1 Oct '43</i>   |                                                                                          |
| <i>Kanmbla</i>                                        |              | <i>---</i>                  | <i>2 Oct '43</i>   | <i>31 Nov '44</i>  |                                                                                          |
| <i>Kanmbla</i>                                        |              | <i>Prov. A/L. S.M. (TY)</i> | <i>1 Apr '44</i>   | <i>13 June '46</i> |                                                                                          |
| <i>Lonsdale</i>                                       |              | <i>Able Seaman</i>          | <i>14 June '46</i> | <i>3 July '46</i>  | <i>Reverted to General Service vide CNO 379/45. Demobilized D.D.N 32/46</i>              |

## Medals, Clasps, &amp;c.

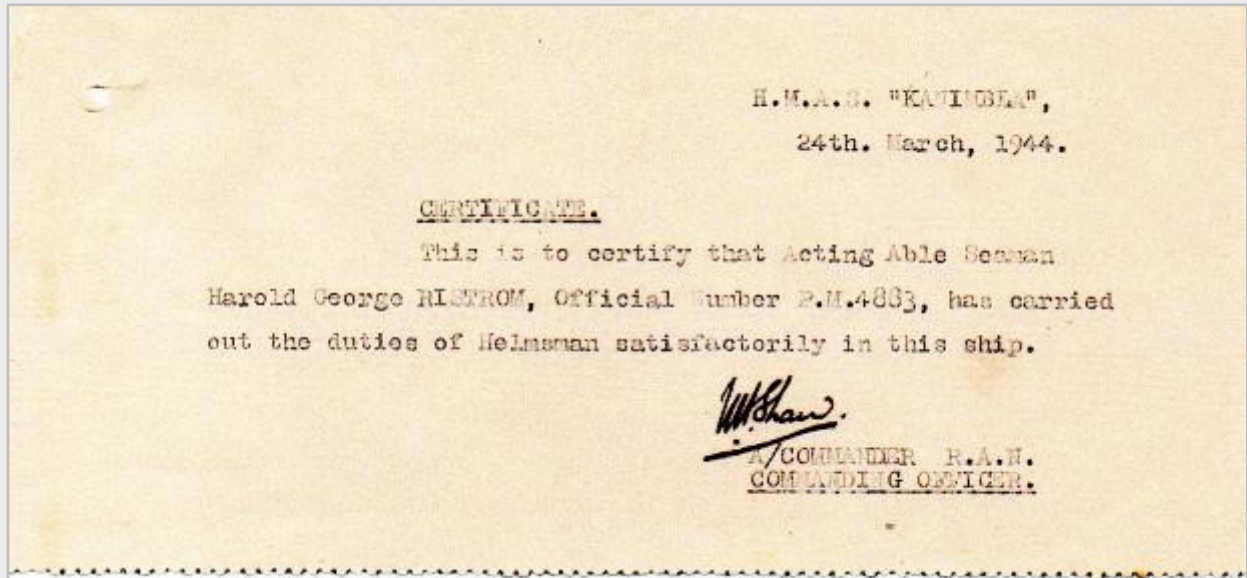
| Date received or forfeited. | Nature of Decoration. | Date received or forfeited. | Nature of Decoration. |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
|                             |                       |                             |                       |

| Date. | Wounds received in Action and Hurt Certificate; also any Meritorious Service, Special Recommendations, Prize, or other Grants:<br>(For use in Peace Time and Mobilization.) | Commanding Officer's Signature. |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|       |                                                                                                                                                                             |                                 |

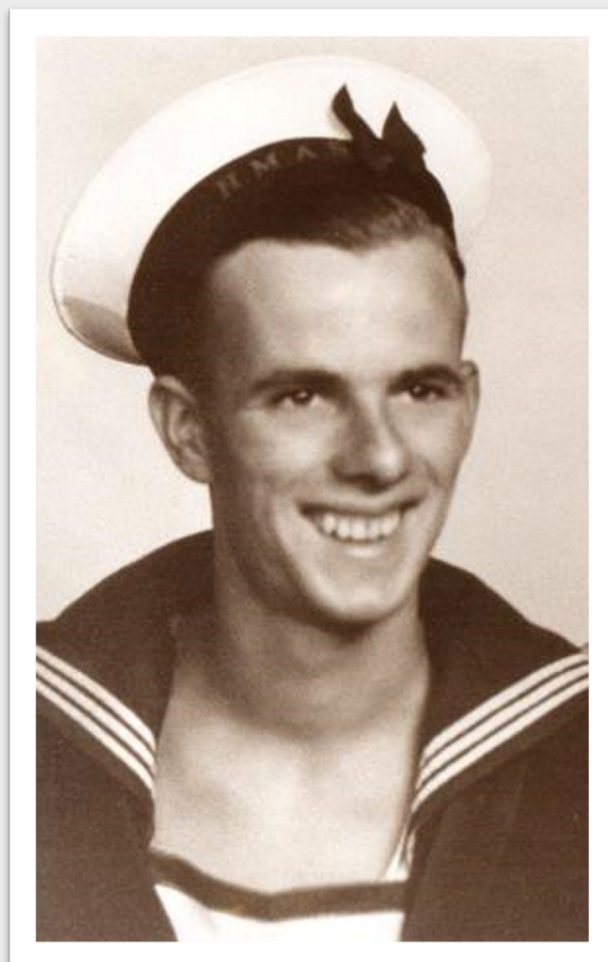




## Helmsman Certificate



Leading Seaman/Coxswain Harold (Hiram) George Ristrom PM4883





October 1994  
50th Anniversary—Leyte Landing,  
Philippine Liberation Campaign

Marcos Country Estate  
Tacloban, Leyte, Philippines

Imelda Marcos (centre) wife of  
ex-President Ferdinand Marcos  
and her entourage together with:

Hiram Ristrom (LHS at rear)

Phil Thompson (front, blue shirt)

Ken Baldwin (behind Phil)

Bev Baldwin (next to Imelda)

Ken Barrett (striped shirt)

Tom Leigh (centre rear)

Josi Sandiford (holding red hat)

Also in attendance but not visible:  
Nev Phillips

Photo courtesy of Hiram Ristrom



19 October 2014  
ANZAC Centenary First Convoy Cocktail Party  
HMAS *Arunta*  
Station Pier, Port Melbourne

L-R:

The Hon Ted Baillieu MLA,  
Chair of the Victorian ANZAC Centenary  
Committee.

Hiram Ristrom, President HMS/HMAS  
KANIMBLA Assoc Inc.

Norm Tame, WW2 Veteran.

CMDR Terry Makings AM RAN Rtd, President NCCV.

Photo by P. Makings



9 August 2017—Shrine of Remembrance, Auditorium  
'Words From Our Navy Veterans'

L:R

Norm Tame, Pamela Nicholls, Ray Leonard, Tracey Curro—Shrine of Remembrance Trustee, Jim Paizis & Hiram Ristrom

Photo courtesy of Shrine of Remembrance

11 November 2015  
Remembrance Day  
Shrine of Remembrance  
Second World War Forecourt

Hiram standing with  
Sandy Hood, Master of Drum Corps  
and  
Caulfield South Primary School  
Drum Corps

Photo by G. Lewis



11 November 2015  
Remembrance Day  
Shrine of Remembrance

After the service, Hiram was interviewed by  
Nick Etchells of Channel 7

His interview, which referred to being in the fleet  
the day General MacArthur returned to the  
Philippines, was included in the special  
Remembrance Day news segment  
that evening

Photo by G. Lewis



7 May 2017  
Shrine of Remembrance  
Second World War Forecourt  
  
75th Anniversary of the Battle of Coral Sea

Hiram reading the Ode

Photo by D. Mosnik





10 December 2016  
Shrine of Remembrance—Sanctuary

Annual Wreath Laying Ceremony  
organised by AMC/LSI Association of Victoria to  
honour and remember those who served in  
HMAS *Assault*, *Kanimbla*, *Manoora* & *Westralia*

Hiram reading the prayer

Photo by R. Lewis



25 April 2017 ANZAC Day  
Jardin Tan Restaurant, Melbourne

Reunion for veterans and descendants  
held by AMC/LSI Assoc of Vic

Love and support that weave the fabric  
of life continue through the generations.

Hiram surrounded by  
his son, daughter and just some of his  
grandchildren and great grandchildren.

L-R:

Sapphira Rainford, Ian Ristrom,  
Christine Rainford, Harold (Hiram)  
Ristrom, Robert Cerny holding Angela  
Cerny, Alexander Rainford,  
Brendon Helps, Rebecca Rainford  
(seated) and Mary-Ann Rainford. Also in  
attendance but not visible: Maddison  
Helps.

Photo by R. Lewis



25 April 2016 ANZAC Day  
Under Memorial Tree for HMAS  
*Kanimbla*, *Westralia*, *Manoora*  
*Morton Bay* & *Arawa*  
Shrine of Remembrance  
Melbourne

L-R:  
Mary-Beth Hosking (background)  
Vice President  
AMC/LSI Assoc Vic.  
LS/COXN Noel Grant, DSM (in  
wheelchair)  
AB Harry Peers  
STO Nev Phillips  
STO Tas Luttrell  
LS/COXN Hiram Ristrom  
Also present but not visible:  
COXN Bill Tattersall

Photo by R. Lewis





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

LS/COXN Hiram Ristrom for his endurance, amazing memory and records of all things *Kanimbla* and Navy  
ABC Radio Canberra: Dr Brendon Nelson's poignant commentary on those who fought the Kokoda Trail  
Shrine of Remembrance for presenting and recording 'Words From Our Navy Veterans' 9.8.2017  
TEL Peter Sherman for his dedication in writing 'Cry Havoc HMS-HMAS Kanimbla Goes to War'  
The Committee of AMC/LSI Assoc of Vic for their patience, encouragement and support  
Ian Pfennigwerth for his unbiased book 'The Royal Australian Navy and MacArthur'  
Neil Wilson, Herald Sun, for article 'Old Salt Lights a Candle For HMAS Kanimbla'  
STO Nevin Phillips for his handiwork in constructing the model of K 12  
Channel 7 for their news coverage of Remembrance Day 11.11.2015  
LCDR William N. Swan for his book 'Spearheads of Invasion'  
SIG John Wesley for his faithfully written War Diary  
SIG Ron Feben for his knowledge and insight  
AB Harry Peers for his detailed artwork  
Jan Lewis for her encouragement  
National Archives of Australia  
Australian War Memorial  
HMAS Cerberus Museum

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## Acronyms

|       |                                            |
|-------|--------------------------------------------|
| AB    | Able Seaman                                |
| AIF   | Australian Imperial Force                  |
| ALCA  | Armoured Landing Craft Assault             |
| AMC   | Armed Merchant Cruiser                     |
| AWM   | Australian War Memorial                    |
| COXN  | Coxswain                                   |
| DSM   | Distinguished Service Medal                |
| HMAS  | Her/His Majesty's Australian Ship          |
| HMS   | Her/His Majesty's Ship (UK)                |
| IJN   | Imperial Japanese Navy                     |
| JOOTS | Joint Overseas Operational Training School |
| LCA   | Landing Craft Assault                      |
| LCM   | Landing Craft Mechanised                   |
| LCVP  | Landing Craft Vehicular Personnel          |
| LS    | Leading Seaman                             |
| LSI   | Landing Ship Infantry                      |
| NAA   | Naval Association of Australia             |
| NCCV  | Naval Commemoration Committee of Victoria  |
| NOIC  | Naval Officer in Charge                    |
| POW   | Prisoner of War                            |
| RAN   | Royal Australian Navy                      |
| RANR  | Royal Australian Navy Reserve              |
| RN    | Royal Navy                                 |
| SIG   | Signalman                                  |
| STO   | Stoker                                     |
| SWPA  | South West Pacific Area                    |
| TEL   | Telegraphist                               |
| TF    | Task Force                                 |
| TSMV  | Twin Screw Motor Vessel                    |
| USS   | United States Ship                         |