

## President's Musings – December 2017

Our End of Year Function has to be considered a great success. LCDR Mohapp was a very engaging and entertaining Speaker, plus numbers attending were most gratifying! Its success was certainly a joint effort, so pat yourselves on the back. As is normal, Waverley RSL ensured the success of our celebration with good food, excellent service and superb facilities.



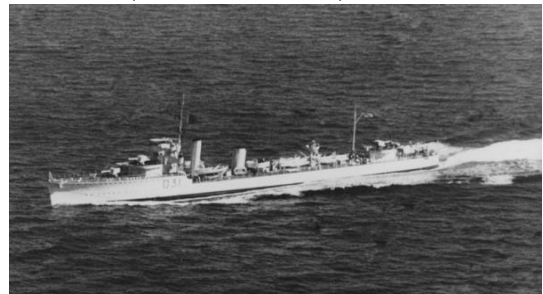
**WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A  
HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR TO YOU AND YOURS!**



*Our next Meeting is on Monday February 26th at Waverley RSL and we have a very interesting and informative Speaker for you. CMDR Matthew Hoffman RAN is currently our XO at HMAS CERBERUS but for most of his career he has been a Submariner, having served in 10 Submarines over his 28 years in the Navy. Matthew will speak to us about his Career to date, both Ashore and in Submarines. It is an exciting time to be part of our Navy, and CMDR Hoffman will 'tell us all about it!' Join us, you are very welcome. Make a special occasion of it, enjoy a meal in the Warramunga Restaurant from 1730 onwards.*

Being a member of the HMAS CERBERUS Museum Team of Volunteers has many advantages, including enjoying the fellowship of WOWTR Marty Grogan and his crew of 'Merry Men' and of our Maid Marion, aka LCDR Jan Gallagher RANR, who keeps us under control. ***Seriously, Marty and his team do an excellent job in maintaining and improving the museum.***

When I get a spare moment I like to go into the Museum Archives, (a treasure trove) and learn more about our Navy and its people. Recently I found the diaries of J H Schofield, Leading Stoker of 5 Mess, in HMAS VOYAGER I. The diaries are printed in French, but Mr Schofield had a very good hand, and his writing was in English, clear and concise. The years covered are 1940 and 1941. They were momentous years to be



*HMAS Voyager I*

serving in Voyager in the Mediterranean Theatre of war. For an excellent account of HMAS VOYAGER's War I refer you an excellent piece on the NAVY website. It is at <http://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-voyager-i>. I would like to share excerpts of Leading Stoker Schofield's diaries through the medium of my Musings over the next few months, and then you too, will begin to feel you know him, and share in his war!

We begin our summary of his diary entries on April 9th 1940 in Sydney awaiting his draft. He



*HMS Ramillies supporting the Allied landings*

played billiards all day and took 'Grace' to the Tivoli that night. Next day he was drafted to the Battleship HMS RAMILLIES at 1100 and they sailed at 1230 in company with HMAS ADELAIDE for Melbourne. Schofield's entry on the 11th described RAMILLIES as a very dirty ship. (This prompted me to research RAMILLIES's war to date and she had indeed been worked very hard and desperately needed a refit. During March in Sydney she

had a short refit at Garden Island, and needed another one at Alexandria in the floating dock on May 23rd, only to have the refit suspended on June 11 when Italy entered the war.)

They arrived in Melbourne at 1530 on the 12th and by the 14th all the soldiers had embarked in the four troop ships which were being convoyed, Strathaird, Neuralia, Ettrick and Dunera. He enjoyed his time in Melbourne. The Convoy US 2 left for Fremantle on the 15th with RAMILLIES departing on at 0330 on the 16th. HMAS SYDNEY II had also joined the convoy. HMAS ADELAIDE was detached on the 15th. April 21st found the convoy at Fremantle where troop ship NEVASA joined having embarked West Australian troops. He notes in his diary that all the hotels were closed because of the Soldiers, but not to be outdone our Sailors still managed to get a few drinks. HMAS Swan and Yarra joined the convoy. A British submarine joined on May 1, together with the French Cruiser SUFFREN and HMS KENT. They crossed the line on April 29th and usual ceremonies were held. In his monthly summary for April, L/STO Schofield remarked that the Engine room reached 136 degrees on the 1st of May, the heat being deadly. (The Stokers were embarked as passengers but were still required to be watch keeping in the Boiler room.)

Arriving in Colombo on May 2nd was a highlight. He enjoyed his first ride in a Rickshaw. On May 4 they sailed for Aden at 0500 in company with cruisers HMS KENT and SUFFREN with Destroyers HMS DECOY and DEFENDER joining on the 11th. There was also air cover from the 10th. They arrived at Aden on the 12th at 0530 to find HMAS HOBART in harbour and having oiled ship, left at 1500 entering the Red Sea in company with HMAS HOBART, HMS LIVERPOOL, two Destroyers and a Sloop, with air cover. On the 14th Hobart was replaced by SUFFREN. Contact was made with a submarine on the 15th, but alas they got away.

Landfall at Port Suez on the 17th, and they were through the Suez Canal by 1900, with arrival at Port Said at 1230 next day. Trouble was anticipated from Italians ashore and a detachment of Royal Marines were ready to land at any time during the night, having Motor boats at the ready, armed with guns.

Not unhappy to leave HMS RAMILLIES L/STO Schofield caught the train to Alexandria via Ishmalia. He described the trip as being very hot and murderous though interesting. Arrived at Alexandria at 1900 and went on board HMAS VOYAGER I. He commented next day: "On Board a decent clean ship at last. From first impression they look like a good mob. Engineer gave us a little talk about keeping the mob contented, and to deal with any trouble ourselves. Attended Divisions.



*HMAS Voyager off Crete*

Duty Tonight and kept my first watch. VOYAGER in company with STUART, VAMPIRE, WATERHEN, two French Battleships and Destroyers left the next day enroute to Bizerta in French Tunisia. Calm seas, but for how long!!!!

More next month.

Yours Aye!

*Rex Williams*