

PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS JULY 2016

We did enjoy the 'Naval Video Time Capsules -Episodes of the Royal Navy last month and indeed are looking forward to also enjoying 'D-Day reflections of Operation Neptune on July 25th. Full details elsewhere in this 'Dog'.

We are very fortunate to have some excellent speakers in the months ahead. On August 21st, Nicky Cree has some rare films shot by his father CMDR Charles Cree DSC RN to share with us. His father's films cover the years 1941-1944 whilst CMDR Cree was serving in HMS KENT, an 8" cruiser. HMS KENT was the lead ship in her class and our HMAS AUSTRALIA and HMAS CANBERRA were Kent class as well. Nick's father had an interesting career during and after the war, including service in HMS KING GEORGE V, when she came to Melbourne with the British Pacific fleet. *Thereby hangs a tale as well!*

The title of CMDR Tom de Voil's talk to us in September is 'HMAS MELBOURNE II, HMS ARK ROYAL and more'. Tom de Voil joined our RAN in 1962 as a direct entry Engineer officer. His involvement with HMAS MELBOURNE began with his first posting to sea. Over his career he was posted to her again, once as a watchkeeping EO and also as Marine Engineer Officer.

During exchange with the RN, he worked on the staff of PNO (Tyne), the MOD overseeing organisation during the construction of ARK ROYAL, and in retirement he spent 10 years at Amecon/Tenix during the construction of two FFG's and 10 ANZAC Class frigates.

Tom has worked on both sides of the naval fence, and his thoughts and comments are sure to make an interesting evening for all!

Monday the 24th of October is the date of our last function at the Melbourne Naval Centre in South Yarra. Our 'End of Year Function' will be at our new 'home', the Waverley RSL in Glen Waverley, on November 28th. Our speaker at the November function is the well known author 'Pattie Wright' so mark that date in your diary now!

'AGM plus 'The Search for HMS EREBUS and HMS Terror' is our fare for our last meeting at the MNC!

Our speaker is our LCDR Roger Buxton RCN, and Roger will recount how in 1845 Her Majesty Ships EREBUS and TERROR, under the command of Sir John Franklin, set out to discover the last section of the North West Passage, and *Vanished!*

Recently the search was continued and in 2014 the wreck of HMS EREBUS was discovered. Roger will summarise the search for the North West Passage, the information on the fate of the Franklin Expedition obtained from the Inuit (Eskimos), and the recent search and final discovery of HMS EREBUS.

Rex's Odyssey – Part 8 – HMNB Portsmouth and Portsmouth Historic Dockyard: (August 2015)

The latest attraction in the Historic Dockyard is Monitor M33, veteran of Gallipoli. M33 was ordered in March 1915 as part of a series of craft to make use of a number of 6" guns that had become available.



HMS M33 is an M29-class monitor

M33 was commissioned in June 1915. Legend has it that the design concept for five Monitor vessels was written on the back of an envelope by Winston Churchill and naval architect, Sir Eustace Tennyson d'Eyncourt. It was built – in just seven weeks – with a flat bottom so it could get close in to shore and with hers two 6" guns, one 6 pounder and two Maxim guns, with which she could pepper coastal defences and troops. Over the years I've seen her in her dry dock at the dockyard and whilst realising she had been at Gallipoli I knew little about her and was delighted to go on board and spend an hour or so in her last August.

M33 soon left Belfast after her commissioning and upon arriving at the Dardanelles, fired her first shots in anger on August 2nd 1915, at the village of Yeni Shehr. Subsequently, M33 was stationed off ANZAC. She was generally on the right flank of ANZAC, her role being to engage any Turkish artillery that began firing on our troops. M33's shooting generally caused the Turkish batteries to cease firing as their crews were forced to take cover. When the Dardanelles campaign ended, M33 was redeployed to support the campaign against Bulgaria. At Stavros on February 8th 1916 she came under heavy attack from enemy aircraft, but despite bombs falling all around, no hits were received. In April, the crew joined in the firing against a Zeppelin that was attempting to bomb Salonika, which was brought down and destroyed by the ships' gunfire. When the war ended, M33 was decommissioned, however in May 1919 she found herself bound for Murmansk and subsequently the Russian Civil War. You can read a fuller account of M33's story in Ian Buxton's 'His Majesty's Monitor M33, 1915-2001, Hampshire County Council 2001, which is available at <https://navalairhistory.com/2015/02/27monitor-m33-veteran-of-gallipoli>. I also sourced information from Steven Morris's Guardian article of February 20th 2015: HMS M33: last surviving Gallipoli ship restored to former glory.



HMS M33's 12" gun.

Your visit to M33 begins with a dockside introductory talk prior to your entering the ship. Whilst on board there is an excellent film on the Gallipoli campaign. **Enjoy the pictures.**

YOURS AYE!!

REX WILLIAMS