



Victorian Chapter

## President's Musings – June 2020

On May 25 1970 Lew Lind convened a meeting on Garden Island in Sydney and some 40 people attended during their lunch break. Within 40 minutes the Naval Historical Society of Australia was launched, an interim committee appointed with Lew as President, funds raised and a provisional constitution approved. Offices were found in the Royal Marine barracks building (building 31). Lew remained as President for 18 years and was associated with the society until his death in 1994, and can truly be considered as our founding father. Our Victoria chapter was formed the following year and our meetings were held in a building in Flinders Lane. More about our early history at a later date. *Our National President, David Michael has written a comprehensive account of the beginnings of our society and the story so far, is on page one of our June Naval Historical Review and I commend it to you.*

Following discussions with Mike Black, the Vice President of our Waverley RSL, we decided that a realistic date to aim for the resumption of our meetings at the RSL is Monday August 24. In recent times the number attending our meetings has been around 30, with around 20 of that number having a meal prior to our gathering in the Warramunga Restaurant. **Restrictions on numbers of patrons make it absolutely necessary that you notify Rodney Phillips if you wish to have a meal prior.**

I'm delighted to advise that WO Ray (Pedro) Rich OAM, BEM RAN Rtd. has agreed to speak to us on August 24. On 10th February 1964 HMAS *Melbourne II* collided with HMAS *Voyager II* off Jervis Bay, resulting in the deaths of 81 sailors and one civilian dockyard worker. Pedro received the British Empire Medal for Gallantry for his actions the night HMAS *Voyager* sank. ***Join us on August 24 to hear Pedro share with us his story!***

On 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020, at Berrigan, NSW, LCDR Ken Brown 'Crossed the Bar'. I first met Ken in November 2016 when he was presented with the 'Arctic Star' by then CN, Vice Admiral Tim Barrett, in the presence of the then G.G. Sir Peter Cosgrove. This was during divisions at HMAS *Cerberus* and it was indeed a grand affair.





Our next meeting was in March 2017, when I joined Marty Grogan and his friend Jeanette when they journeyed up to Berrigan NSW to visit Ken, his wife Mavis and family members for lunch at the RSL.



It was a very pleasant day. The bell from HMS(HMAS) *Nestor* is part of the extensive collection at our *Cerberus* Museum and Marty had borrowed it for the day as a special treat to share with Ken, a former crew member of this gallant ship. Ken served in her from February 1941 and was the only survivor still alive of her sinking, which occurred on 16 June 1942. Ken joined the Navy as an Ordinary seaman on 22 March 1938. He was commissioned on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 1951 having served in every sailor rank up until Master at Arms (Chief Petty Officer

Regulating Branch). Ken was promoted to Master at Arms just 3 weeks after his 26<sup>th</sup> birthday. This made him the youngest ever to achieve this rank in either the Royal or the Royal Australian Navies, an achievement Ken was deservedly proud of.

In his 38 years of service in the RAN he served in: HMAS *Sydney II*, HMAS *Perth I* (Commissioning Crew), HMAS *Nestor*, HMAS *Napier*, HMAS *Lolita*, HMAS *Platypus*, HMAS *Shropshire*, (onboard for the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay on 2 Sept 1945), and was Master at Arms in HMAS *Australia II* from 6 April-26 October 1950. His medals and awards included: 1939-45 Star, Atlantic Star, Burma Star (with Pacific clasp), Arctic Star, and Africa Star.

Ken was a humble, pleasant man and it was my privilege to meet him. He is survived by his wife Mavis and 4 children, Sandra, Rodney, Ken and Keith.



*Ken and his wife Mavis*

Ken and Mavis celebrated their 73<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary on the day before he died.

Marty Grogan journeyed up to Berrigan to perform the Naval segment of Ken's funeral. Ken was the last known surviving HMAS *Sydney II* veteran, and a Life Member of the HMAS Sydney Association (Vic.). He was also the last known commissioning crew member of HMAS *Perth* (I).

**VALE LCDR Kenneth James BROWN 21913/O130 - "May you have fair winds and following seas"**  
(pictures of Ken's Funeral are below.)



On 23 June our John Jeremy will screen a 'ZOOM' presentation from Sydney entitled: '**A CENTURY OF SUBMARINE DEVELOPMENT**' at 1400. Victorian Members can enjoy this presentation. All you need is a computer, tablet or smart phone. There are various options for joining a Zoom meeting, but the simplest is to click on the link included with the invitation e-mail just prior to the meeting starting time. You then download and run Zoom and click on to join the meeting!

*Your invitation will be e-mailed from the Society one week before the meeting*

Chapter Secretary, Rodney Phillips has agreed to co-ordinate our requests for an invitation e-mail.

Contact Rodney by

Phone: 9702 8528 or 0466 983 313

email: [77minstrel@gmail.com](mailto:77minstrel@gmail.com)

Our 21 July Presentation is by Gillian Lewis is also at 1400 and is entitled: '**FINDING HM BARK ENDEAVOUR**'

There are presentations scheduled each month this year, the last one is on 24 November.

### **Creswell Oration 2021**

A number of us had booked and paid for the 2020 Oration which unfortunately needed to be cancelled because of 'the Virus'

**GOOD NEWS!** Following discussions with Graham Harris the Chairman of the Organising Committee, I am pleased to advise that the monies received are being held in credit for next year's Oration.

Yours Aye!

*Rex Williams*









