



Naval Historical Society
of Australia

Victorian Chapter

President's Musings – March 2018

We began our year with a very interesting illustrated address by CMDR Matthew Hoffman RAN, the XO of HMAS CERBERUS. CMDR Hoffman told us of his Naval career to date and left us in no doubt as to the importance and effectiveness of our submarine force in respect of the overall defence of our nation.

Our speaker on March 26th is WWII veteran Pamela Nichols who enlisted in the WRANS in 1943. *Check out the flyer for further information. You definitely won't want to miss it!*

Please don't turn up for our April meeting on the 23rd, as it is now being held on April 30th!

What we have in store for you on the 30th is well worth waiting another week for!

ANZAC VOICES GALLIPOLI – From those who were there! *Anzac Voices is the story of Gallipoli, told by the Diggers who lived through it: regular troops, senior commanders, stretcher bearers, signal operators, a nurse and a Turkish general, as well as Australia's official war correspondent, Charles Bean. We will hear disc one of a two disc set on ABC Classic's CD 481-1626. It is available for purchase from ABC shops, and well worth buying for your children or grandchildren!*

ANZAC Day itself is a very special day to all of us, and this year is even more special for the members of the NHS of A, as leading the Melbourne march at 0900 are a father and son, who are both currently serving in our Royal Australian Navy. Not since 2009 has a member of our Chapter of the NHS of A led the Melbourne march! That year it was lead by our greatly respected and sorely missed Past President and Historian, the late LCDR Mac Gregory RAN. This year the march is being lead by Captain Darren Greville Grogan CSM RAN and his father WOWTR Martin Greville Grogan OAM RANR. Both Grogan matelots have very interesting careers to date and it is with pleasure that we include their respective profiles.

CAPTAIN D GROGAN CSM RAN:



Born and educated in Melbourne, CAPT Darren Grogan joined the Royal Australian Navy as a Supplementary List Officer in 1988. After graduating from the Royal Australian Naval College, Jervis Bay, he completed his basic Seaman Officer training ashore in HMA Ships Watson and Cerberus and at sea in HMA Ships Jervis Bay, Torrens and Geelong. He joined HMAS Perth in 1989 where he was awarded his Bridge Watchkeeping Certificate.

Shortly thereafter, CAPT Grogan completed the Intermediate Navigation Course and was posted to HMAS Launceston as Navigating Officer. After a short stint instructing navigation at HMAS Watson, he was promoted to Lieutenant and served as the Decommissioning Navigating Officer in HMAS Derwent. In 1996, after navigating HMAS Melbourne, he was selected for an exchange

posting with the United States Navy. He served over two years at the United States Naval Academy instructing navigation, a highlight of which was commanding a USN Yard Patrol Craft.

On return to Australia, CAPT Grogan served as a Submarine Controller, the OIC of the Tri-Service Physical Training School, and as Deputy Master Attendant. In 2000, he travelled to the UK as part of the Australian Federation Guard Contingent to march on Buckingham Palace in celebration of Australia's Federation.

On promotion to Lieutenant Commander in 2002, CAPT Grogan served as the Operations Officer in HMAS Tobruk, before navigating the Anzac Class HMA Ships Parramatta and Stuart. During his time on board, Stuart deployed to the North Arabian Gulf in support of the International Coalition Against Terrorism, where he was awarded a Maritime Commander's Commendation.

In July 2005, CAPT Grogan assumed Command of the Fremantle Class Patrol Boat HMAS Ipswich. After a very busy two year command, Ipswich became the final FCPB to be decommissioned in June 2007.

In June 2007, he was selected to attend the British Army managed Joint Advanced Command and Staff College in Kuwait. On successful completion of the course CAPT Grogan was awarded a Masters Degree in Military Science, before being selected for promotion to Commander in December 2007.

On return to Australia in September 2008, CAPT Grogan was promoted to Commander and assumed duties as the Staff Officer 1, Current Operations (J3), Headquarters Northern Command. This posting coincided with a significant increase in illegal maritime arrivals which saw him coordinate the daily military response for Operation RESOLUTE.

In April 2010 CAPT Grogan was appointed to the position of Chief Staff Officer Patrol Boats with the Patrol Boat Group Headquarters where he oversaw and coordinated Patrol Boat manning, training, sustainment, maintenance and image. He was responsible for delivering an operational Patrol Boat Fleet at a time when the Patrol Boat Group was operating at a tempo never previously experienced. He was recognised for this work with the award of a Conspicuous Service Medal for 'meritorious achievement in the field of Border Protection at Headquarters Northern Command and at the Royal Australian Navy Patrol Boat Group'.

In June 2011 he assumed duties as the Military Assistant to the Chief of Joint Operations Command. As the senior member of CJOPS personal staff, this challenging role saw him intimately involved in the daily command and management of all operations that Australia was involved in. He was recognised for his significant contribution to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of Headquarters Joint Operations Command and, consequently, the conduct of joint operations, with the award of an ADF Gold Commendation.

CAPT Grogan assumed Command of HMAS Sirius in December 2013 and during his Command the ship participated in many major international exercises including TALISMAN SABRE and BERSAMA LIMA and led a Task Group on a South East Asian Deployment that included participation in bilateral exercises with the Malaysian and Thai Navies and visits to the Philippines and Vietnam. On completion of Command he was posted as the Deputy Director of Sailors' Career Management, where he was responsible for the operational management of the Navy's sailor workforce.

In August 2016, he was promoted to Captain and assumed duties as Director Maritime Operations based at HQJOC before assuming Command of Sea Training Group in August 2017.

He holds a Masters of Military Science and a Masters of Arts (Security and Strategy). CAPT Grogan has been selected as the Commissioning Commanding Officer of the in-construction replacement Oil Replenishment Combat Support Ship – HMAS Supply II – which is due to be delivered to Australia in 2019.

WOWTR M GROGAN OAM RANR:



Marty was born at South Melbourne on 1st November, 1946, educated in Middle Park, lived in South Melbourne and joined the Royal Australian Navy from the Defence Recruiting Centre in Queens Road, South Melbourne on 25th November, 1963, as a just turned 17 year old Recruit Seaman.

After 3 months intensive basic training at HMAS CERBERUS, Westernport, 3920, Victoria, he was posted to a recently converted Fast Troop Transport, HMAS SYDNEY (formerly a Majestic Class Aircraft Carrier). This Ship was converted in mid-1963 in anticipation of the need to be ferrying Troops and Equipment to Asia with various conflicts already underway. In a highly top secret Tri Service Mission, they sailed from Sydney at Midnight on 28th May, 1964 ferrying troops and equipment to Jessleton, North Borneo (now known as Kota Kinabalu) in Support of Britain during the Indonesian Confrontation. Details of the mission were not released until 30 years after the Mission. From there the SYDNEY transported essential supplies to Penang (Georgetown) in support of foreign aid to Malaysia. The equipment was unloaded and transported to the RAAF Base at Butterworth. In 1965, HMAS SYDNEY commenced the first of its 25 troop transport runs to Vietnam culminating in the last trip in 1971.

Not long after returning to Australia he was then posted to the Aircraft Carrier, HMAS MELBOURNE, which had just returned to Operational Service after being involved in a collision with the Destroyer HMAS VOYAGER, earlier in the year. On completion of his Common Sea Training he was posted to the Naval Air Station at Nowra, NSW, for consolidation of the sea training.

A further posting then followed to HMAS CERBERUS in late 1965 for training in another Branch of his choice.

On 19th December, 1966 (with less than 2months notice) he was posted to the former British Daring Class Destroyer, HMAS DUCHESS and they sailed two weeks later for a 7 month Deployment to South East Asia (Far East Strategic Reserve) in support of British operations in and around Malay.

After two years he was posted back to HMAS CERBERUS to undertake a Petty Officer's promotion course and promotion to Petty Officer followed in May, 1969.

In January, 1973, he was posted as Captains Secretary to HMAS ANZAC, a Destroyer based in Sydney. Promotion to Chief Petty Officer followed in March, 1973.

In October, 1974, HMAS ANZAC was decommissioned after 25 years service and Marty was then posted to the Staff of the Australian Naval Attache in Washington, D.C. For his service in HMAS ANZAC Marty was awarded a Captains Commendation.

In March, 1977 he was posted as Manager of the RAN Relief Trust Fund in Victoria Barracks, Melbourne and was selected for promotion to Warrant Officer in June, 1977.

In December, 1980, he was posted as Personnel Officer, HMAS MELBOURNE (Aircraft Carrier and Flagship of the RAN). In January, 1982, HMAS MELBOURNE was decommissioned and he was then

posted back to Victoria Barracks, Melbourne in another Senior Management role undertaking a once off project.

When this project was completed he was posted to Canberra and decided to leave the Royal Australian Navy rather than disrupt his family.

He immediately joined the Royal Australian Fleet Reserve (RAFR) for 5 years and rendered Annual Continuous Training (ACT), as required.

On completion of the five years RAFR service, he joined the Royal Australian Navy Reserve (RANR), Melbourne Port Division (MPD), based at HMAS LONSDALE in Port Melbourne. When HMAS LONSDALE decommissioned in November, 1992, his Branch was transferred to Victoria Barracks in Melbourne and then to RAAF Base Williams at Laverton.

The Naval Control of Shipping (NCS) that he was attached to underwent restructuring in 1998 and Marty then reverted back to his former Branch and rendered annual service as required.

In 2005, he took the opportunity to undertake full time service with the RANR and commenced service at HMAS CERBERUS, Westernport in various Administrative roles.

In 2008, he was appointed as Manager of the Museum of HMAS CERBERUS and continues in that role today.

His current employment contract expires in November, 2018, and at this stage he intends to leave the RANR then before he gives the Navy the best years of his life.

Marty is widowed, has three Children and four Grandchildren. Fear prevents him disclosing the ages of his two daughters. His only Son is a Captain in the Royal Australian Navy and has just completed 30 years service.

Marty was awarded an Order of Australian Medal (OAM) in the Civil Division in the 2006 Australia Day Honours awards for service to youth and sport in his district and for service to Navy Veterans.

Frank Cronin has received an email from our friend and colleague Ian Pfennigwerth. Ian commented on the 1940/41 Voyager Diaries of L/Stoker Schofield which we have been featuring each month. Ian commented: "*Re the Voyager diaries, there were H & A awarded for the sinking of the Italian submarine and the discovery of the minefield it had laid. See Bravo Zulu Volume 1 pp 104-05.*" Space constraints prevent us featuring another excerpt from Schofield's diaries this month, however we take the liberty of summarising the entries referred to:

Excerpts from Bravo Zulu Volume 1, by Ian Pfennigwerth, Pages 104-5

'On June 13 *Voyager* made contact with a submarine while on patrol outside the port. The destroyer responded with an attack and, with later assistance from another destroyer, sank the intruder, taking the honour of being the first RAN vessel to sink a submarine. Not satisfied with one, on the same night *Voyager* detected another and expended her remaining depth charges on the target, and assisted *Stuart* in carrying out further attacks. One of *Stuart*'s sonar operators was Able

Seaman Henry Warr of Eastwood SA, who maintained contact with the submarine, enabling the attacks which seriously damaged it. He was recognised with a DSM for his skill and persistence. The second sonar operator, A/ S Arthur Browne from Elsternwick Vic. was awarded a MID, as was a third, A/S William Woolmer from Moss Vale NSW. Following these early successes, *Voyager* was one of five destroyers which successfully attacked a further three submarines at the end of June off Alexandria. Her Commanding Officer, Melburnian CMDR James Morrow, was awarded a DSO for his skill.'

'Admiral Cunningham had witnessed the performance of his Australians at first hand and observed in a letter to the Admiralty that: "The officers and men of these Australian destroyers out here are magnificent material and a quite wasted on these old ships. Tovey (Rear Admiral RN) has suggested that they be transferred lock, stock and barrel to five new ships and used at home. They certainly are the liveliest and undefeated fellows I have ever had to deal with." (End of quote from BZ Vol.1)

I got my copy of BZ Vol 1 from: www.nautilushistory.com.au. Costs are \$65 for a paper- back, \$75 for hard cover, plus \$13 postage and packaging. BZ Vol 2 will be available this year and I certainly will be purchasing a copy!

Yours Aye!

Rex Williams