

President's Musings – November 2018

We were treated to an excellent presentation of the AEI story at our last meeting by our member Captain Ken Greig. Unfortunately I was unable to view the film, and hear Ken's talk, but the forty odd folk who were there thoroughly enjoyed it. Thank you sincerely, Ken.

*I do hope that you can join us for 'Our Great Year-End Get-Together' on the 26th. CMDR Max Speedy has a great story to share with us about the RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam and in essence our gathering is a celebration of awarding of the **Unit Citation for Gallantry**. We have requested that Max bring some copies of his book '**A BLOODY JOB WELL DONE**' which he co-authored with Bob Day. At \$30 each they represent good value.*

The preservation of HMS VICTORY for future generations to admire and visit is in my mind of supreme importance. We have included a photo of the steel pillars which extend through the hull of the ship to support the weight of her masts on the concrete under the keel. Additional stays were fixed from the 'Tops' to anchorage points on the dockside, a necessary step to protect her from westerly gales. This means that VICTORY could now keep her top masts, yards and rigging intact. This has been a major challenge.



The next question was how she should be presented?

In 1922 the Society for Nautical Research convinced the Admiralty Board that VICTORY should be restored and returned to how she looked at TRAFALGAR in 1805. The recent work on the ship reinforces this key decision to present her - as at TRAFALGAR! Since 1981 I have visited the ship many times and have observed that opinions as to authenticity have changed. In 2005 we were assured that the colour scheme etc was as at Trafalgar, but today the colour scheme is similar to that in 2005 but I find that the brown is definitely



lighter! As well, I remember viewing Nelson's cot, and am bemused now to find that a different cot is in place. Basically the cot consisted of a wooden coffin shaped container (dual purpose), suspended in an ornate hammock with beautiful curtains surrounding it for privacy. We will include photo of the latest 'Cot.' Cot number one appears now

to be attributed to Captain Hardy.

Whilst in Pompey last August I again viewed the Monitor, HMS M33 the only survivor of the Naval forces off Gallipoli in 1915. She was launched in May 1915 and arrived off Gallipoli in time to support the August campaign. Now restored and situated in a dry dock close by VICTORY she is well worth a visit. Of 568 tons with a shallow draft which allowed her to get close in-shore and fire at targets on land, she carried two powerful and oversize 6" guns but was however a basic metal box lacking in comforts. The 72 officers and men who sailed for the Gallipoli Campaign were crammed inside and away from home for over three years.



We commend CMDR John Goss for the successful completion of his initiative to refurbish the grave of the 'Father of the Navy' Vice Admiral William Creswell. The new plaque erected was most appropriate and indeed Navy honoured her founder proud! Bravo Zulu John.

HMAS WARRAMUNGA was in port during Navy Week and hosted a very pleasant reception on October 19th. The Waverley RSL hosted the ship's XO and Warrant Officer to lunch that day, and other members of the crew on the Saturday. A very pleasant time was had by all. The WARRAMUNGA/Waverley RSL connection, I am pleased to report, is 'alive and well'!

A number of us enjoyed exploring HMAS CHOULES whilst she was in port. An addition to our fleet with much very useful capability.

Please put Friday March 1st 2019 in your diaries. In the Naval community there is great interest in our Future Submarine program and on March 1st our Admiral in charge of the program has agreed to speak to us. Rear Admiral Gregory Sammut AM CSC RAN, Head Future Submarine Program Sea 1000, is our Creswell Oration keynote speaker next year. You won't want to miss it, and the function represents far better value in 2019. You still get to enjoy the splendid meal and glass of wine as provided to us by the William Angliss Institute Restaurant, but we have negotiated a better price for you of just \$40 per head.

Further detail in December 'Three Headed Dog'

Yours Aye!

Rex Williams.