

## PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS OCTOBER 2016

October is a momentous month for us in that we vacate our centre of operations of many years, the Melbourne Naval Centre, and as from February next year enjoy the facilities of the Waverly RSL in which to hold our Monthly meetings. Navy week falls in October as well and many of us will be attending the Seafarers Service at Saint Paul's Cathedral, and the open day at HMAS Cerberus functions just for starters.

Every time Jenny and I visited the UK we always made a point of spending time in Portsmouth. I never tire of treading 'where those footsteps have trod', the footsteps being those of our greatest Naval Hero, Nelson. I've been back to the UK this year and also 2015, and each time I viewed 'Victory' I felt a tinge of sadness. I'm sorry to report that in her current state she is no-where near the wonderful pristine warship we viewed in 2005, *October 21st 2005 being the 200th anniversary of the Battle Of Trafalgar*. Ownership of the ship has passed from the Royal Navy to the HMS Victory Preservation trust, a trust which was established as part of the National Museum of the Royal Navy, and very necessary major works are being undertaken, to preserve this national treasure for future generations. In the meantime, Nelson tragics like myself, bemoan the fact the Victory looks like she has just been through a battle! Check out the photos! Sad!



In discussions with one of the attendants, I was advised that the new concept for HMS Victory was not to be just a memorial to one man; that the new emphasis is to also commemorate the 'other' Admirals who raised their flag in Victory over her long career as a flagship. By this comment I presume he included, Keppel, Kempenfelt, Howe, and Jervis, (St Vincent), and culminating with Nelson hoisting his flag on 18th May 1803. I did not comment, but was most disturbed at being advised of this planned development, and I have no doubt, share my misgivings with thousands of other Navy history buffs, who regard Victory as a shrine to Nelson.

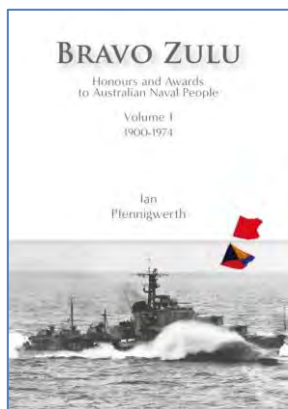
I do not dispute the fact that Victory needs extensive work undertaken over a number of years to preserve her for future generations, but I do urge caution about changing the emphasis from Nelson in any way!



I am so glad that Jenny and I were able to spend several hours on board at her peak of 'perfection' so to speak, in 2005.

*We were delighted to have CMDR Tom de Voil speak to us at our September meeting, and found what he had to recount of his extensive service in HMAS Melbourne II, and of his subsequent time with the Royal Navy and his 10 years with Tenix. Frank will provide further detail on Tom's talk in this 'Dog', and I'm also delighted to advise that with the purchase of the latest Sony hand recorder we have his address and also the extensive question and answer session, recorded for posterity.*

Our much esteemed Treasurer, George Bird has been under the weather of late, but I am proud to report that the 'books' are all ship shape and ready to be audited. They will be presented in the form of a financial statement to the Annual meeting this month. The financial statement will be published, along with the President's Report, in the November THD.



**BRAVO ZULU** is a BIG book of 717 pages and volume 2 could well be as big!!! They represent a tremendous achievement, by my friend and yours, Ian Pfennigwerth. I note that the pages of the Old Testament number 890, and that took centuries! *Bravo Zulu (Well done) to Ian and his willing band of helpers.*

I am enjoying reading my first volume in bursts, opened at random. It is extremely well written and no way could be classified as just a dry reference book. It is a very good read, full of human interest. I always enjoy reading books by Ian, because he doesn't stint on detail, it's all there and is interesting as well!

***Bravo Zulu, Honours and Awards to Australian Naval People  
Volume 1, 1900-1974. Author: Ian Pfennigwerth, Publisher: Echo Books***

At our next meeting on October 24th, which is the AGM, we have the added attraction of enjoying one of our LCDR Roger Buxton's very well researched and interesting talks a well. Roger served in the Royal Canadian Navy and loves to delve into the naval history of his country. His subject is 'The Search for HMS Erebus and HMS Terror', ships who vanished in the High Arctic!

How would you like to meet the renowned author Pattie Wright and her husband Dennis, plus catch up with your mates, have a few drinks and a lovely meal? Join us at the Waverley RSL on Monday November 28th! Check out our 'Events' Page at <http://navyvic.net/associations/nhs/navalhistoricalsociety.html> for full detail.

#### **REX'S ODYSSEY PART 9 - July 2016 '36 hours; Jutland 1916 - The Battle that Won the War.'**

*The Battle of Jutland was fought in the North Sea off Jutland from May 31st to June 1st 1916. It was the largest and most important Naval battle of the first world war. The Germans hoped to weaken the RN by launching an ambush on the Grand Fleet.*



*Admiral Sheer sought to lure Beatty's Battle cruiser force out and destroy it before Jellicoe's fleet arrived, but the British were warned by their code breakers and they put both forces to sea early. Jutland was a confused and bloody action involving 250 ships and around 100,000 men. Initial encounters between Beatty's force and the German High Seas fleet damaged several ships. The Germans damaged Beatty's flagship HMS Lion, and sank HMS Queen Mary and HMS Indefatigable when German shells had lucky hits causing both to blow up. Beattie withdrew until Jellicoe arrived with the main fleet. Out-gunned, the Germans ran for home. The RN had lost 14 ships, and over 6,000 men, but was ready for action again the next*

*day. The Germans, who had lost 11 ships and over 2500 men, ran and avoided complete destruction, but never again seriously challenged the British control of the North Sea. The Battle of Jutland confirmed British Naval dominance and secured its control of shipping lanes, allowing Britain to implement the blockade that contribute to Germany's eventual defeat in 1918.*

Source: IWM Website <http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/what-was-the-battle-of-jutland>

*The Exhibition contains the single largest collection of items from the battle ever assembled, it boasts, 320 artifacts, including pieces from the private collections of the Admirals themselves.*

*Large information displays feature archival photos, great battle graphics and dramatizations of the key events in the battle. Described as the Jutland gun, is a piece from the German Destroyer 'B98' and their two British guns which took part in the battle being from HMS Opal and Narborough. Personal accounts of sailors from both sides of the conflict are featured also.*

Whilst I was at HM Royal Dockyard I was delighted to hear and see the Band of the Royal Marines as they marched to the berth of HMS Dragon, the Type 45 Destroyer which proudly bears the Welsh Dragon on her bows. Dragon was returning to active duty after a 12 month refit and whilst not invited to the ceremony, I like 'Christopher Robin', stood outside the gates looking in. 'Alice' wasn't there but British Pomp and Circumstance was certainly to the fore!!



Come and join us for our last hurrah at the Melbourne Naval Centre South Yarra. We may even have some bubbly to sip with your sandwiches. Roger has an interesting talk to give us and we have the AGM to look forward to as well!!

YOURS AYE!!

REX WILLIAMS