

## President's Musings – September 2018

After six weeks in Europe, having missed most of our winter, it is nice to come home to a Melbourne spring. Initially I was based in Milan and ventured into the Swiss and Italian Alps, as well as the Dolomites, and visited the Cinque Terre and Portovenere coast. Whilst on this trip I saw Naval Units in the distance and also later drove past the La Spezia Naval Base but was unable to visit its splendid Museum. A highlight of my time in Italy was an eight nights tour of the



Italian Lakes. In England I visited the Naval Dockyard at Portsmouth over three days, and took the boat trip around the fleet three times thus being able to obtain some great pictures of HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH. She is very impressive indeed! The Buzz around the Dockyard was that she was leaving to go to the United States on the Tuesday and so early that morning I ventured to the Round Tower in Old Sally Port and waited for her to sail by on her

way to sea. Alas it was not to be. She left the following Saturday! Fortunately we have obtained some pictures of the event to share with you.

Naturally I visited HMS VICTORY (11th visit since 1981), and report that repairs are still underway, and that her top masts are still struck. I recognise that the repairs are necessary in order for future generations to enjoy visiting her, but I am so glad that Jenny and I were able to see her in her absolute splendour in 2005, the 200th anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar. Over the next few months we will share with you some of my photos which may be of interest to you.

In the current edition of our Naval Historical Review on page 5 is an article entitled 'David McFall and the Maritime Model Museum: Shutting up Shop.' I recommend it to you. David was a friend of mine and I was saddened to learn of his death on May 4th this year. Some years ago David donated the complete set of Naval Video Time Capsules to the Victoria chapter. These were entitled 'Episodes of the Royal Navy' and featured archival film from the Imperial War Museum in London. It was a magnificent gift and the following year I visited David at his Maritime Model Museum in Mona Vale to thank him for his gift. Our NHS colleague Richard Francis joined us there, and after a most interesting tour of the Museum, we enjoyed a very pleasant lunch followed by a visit to David's yacht. What a great day we had together, with much fun and laughter. I will always remember it! We kept in touch over the years and I will miss him. **VALE Captain David McFall, custodian and maker of magnificent models and nautical artifacts, Master Mariner,**

**Officer in both the British Army and Navy, maker of much mirth and he was a good and generous friend!**

My thanks go to Frank Cronin and John Redman, my Vice Presidents, who 'looked after the shop' whilst I was away. I was glad you enjoyed viewing 'The History of the Royal Australian Navy Volume 1.' in July. Indeed we *may* view part of Volume 2 at our October Meeting. We have obtained a copy of Volume 2 from the NHS library in the Boat Shed on Garden Island. This covers the years 1919-1945. *At present we are unable to verify availability of the excellent and most interesting Speaker we hope to have for you for our October meeting. His subject is most topical, he was personally involved, and it has a very direct bearing on our Naval History, plus he is one of ours, having been a member of the NHS for years.*

Also we have our AGM at the October get together. Normally this is fairly brief and consists of President's Report, Treasurer's Report and the election of Office Bearers. Nomination forms are in the 'Three Headed Dog'. Our Treasurer, Marty Grogan and I are currently setting up our accounts at the Bendigo Bank for electronic banking. We are pleased to advise that you can now pay us through direct debit. I was sorry to miss the presentation by Captain Sheldon Williams re his time as Naval Attaché in India at the August meeting. A number of members have told me it was so very interesting and I look forward to listening to the 'podcast' on our pages of the Navy Victoria Network web site, thanks to our recording guru Laurie Pegler. *Thank you Sheldon.*

**Andrew (Andy) Mackinnon joined the RAN in 1963 and trained as an Officer in the UK and Australia. He retired as a Captain in 2001, having had an interesting a varied career which involved Patrol boats, being a Defence Advisor in NZ, working with the UN, etc. etc. However his involvement with Navy didn't finish there!!! Join us on September 24th and hear Captain Andrew B Mackinnon, CSC, RAN(Retd.) tell us the full story of his Naval Career in and out of uniform.**

Yours Aye!

*Rex Williams.*