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Quarterly Newsletter

The Australian Association for Maritime History

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Publisher of *The Great Circle*

Round the world and home again . . . that's the sailor's way! Willie Wonka, aka Roald Dahl

Frank Broeze passes away

With sadness, The Australian Association for Maritime History notes the death of Professor Frank Broeze, which occurred in Perth on 4 April 2001 after a long struggle with a cancer-like illness. Professor Broeze was a founding member of the AAMH and widely respected amongst maritime historians. Our condolences are conveyed to his wife Ulli and son Carsten. Valedictions by Patsy Brown and Malcolm Tull appear on page 12.

Maritime History Beyond 2000; Visions of Sea and Shore

An International Conference on Maritime History and Heritage, organised by The Australian Association for Maritime History will be convened at the West Australian Maritime Museum, Cliff Street, Fremantle 11-14 December 2001. A Registration Form and periodically updated information is available on the conference web site at http://mh2001.murdoch.edu.au The Email address of the conveners is mh2001@murdoch.edu.au

Dr Malcolm Tull has advised that Professor Geoffrey Bolton will replace the late Professor Broeze as a keynote speaker. The other keynote speaker remaining as Dr Gelina Harlaftis.

Annual General Meeting - 16 November

The next Annual General Meeting of the AAMH will be held at 4pm on Thursday 16 November 2001 at the South Australian Maritime Museum in Lipson Street, Port Adelaide.

Members interested in standing for election to any position on the Executive Committee should contact the President for further information and nomination forms.

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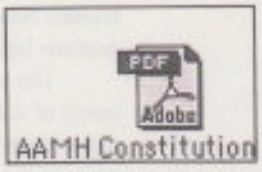
Constitution

The backbone of any organisation such as the AAMH is its constitution. Always accessible to any member, it formally sets out the scholarly aims and objectives of the Association as well as guidelines for office bearers in regard to administrative matters. It is available to members as a PDF file for transmission over the internet as an email attachment. The PDF format is readable on PCs or Macs using Adobe's free software *Acrobat Reader*. If any member would like a PDF copy of the Constitution, send an email request to the newsletter editor, pweaver@starwon.com.au



Australian maritime archaeology reader launched

AAMH President Mark Staniforth and colleague Michael Hyde are the editors of a new book primarily aimed at 2nd and 3rd year undergraduates in the discipline of maritime archaeology. *Maritime Archaeology: a reader* discusses thirteen important topics including theoretical approaches, artefact studies, ethics, historic shipwreck legislation, treatment of historic camp sites, cultural heritage management and diver management. The editors expect the book will also appeal to anyone with a general interested in maritime archaeology and history. In Australia it is available for A$40 posted & packing included from Southern Archaeology, 29 Woodleigh Rd. Blackwood, South Australia 5051. Overseas inquiries should be directed to burbanks.books@senet.com.au or phone/fax +61 8 8278 9350. They have a website at http://www.senet.com.au~mhyde/burbanks_books.htm Contact Mark for further info..

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Conferences

The VI Simposio de História Marítima y Naval Iberoamericana - Lima, Peru. 9 - 23 November 2001. Themes: historiography - archaeology - maritime commerce - maritime exploration - naval activities in peace and war - nautical sciences. Participation from Australia would be welcomed. Assistance can be provided to participants who present their papers in English. Accommodation provided to people presenting papers. Inquiries to Contra-Almirante Melitón CARVAJAL Pereja, Secretario del Instituto de Estudios Historico-Marítimos del Perú, Avenida Salaverry 2487, San Isidro, Lima 27, Peru (fax 51 1 422 7838), insmar@perucultural.org.pe

The Association for the History of the Northern Seas is convening a conference in Liverpool 19-22 August 2001. Contact for further details is Dr Olaf U. Janzen, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada. Fax +1 709 639 8125 olaf@swgc.mun.ca

More than meets the eye behind subs' names

It was a big day out for the navy at Cockburn Sound on Friday 23 February when Collins class submarines HMAS's *Dechaineux* and *Sheean* were commissioned before a reported 700 guests.

HMAS *Sheean* is named for O/D (Teddy) Sheean (top right), an anti-aircraft gun loader on corvette HMAS *Armidale* when it was attacked by Japanese aircraft in the Arafura Sea, about 90 miles SE of Betano on 1 December 1942. Sheean was mentioned in dispatches for remaining at his post and bringing down one aircraft and damaging two others when fellow seamen had left the sinking ship. A recipient of two wounds, he was about to go over the side then decided to returned to his Oerlikon and reengage the enemy. Strapped into the gun seat he is said to have been still firing as the ship rolled over and took him with it. *Armidale* had succumbed to an attack by thirteen aircraft and taken hits from two torpedoes and a bomb. Ten other sailors died on board. Also killed were 37 Javanese soldiers sheltering in the forward mess deck. Others died in succeeding days. According to Leggoe (1983), some 29 survivors, many seriously wounded, endured an agonising 8 days at sea before being picked up by another corvette HMAS *Kalgoorlie*. Gill (1943:44) says 43 crew survived, and that 42 officers and 38 ratings were lost. The allied Javanese soldiers were not mentioned.

Controversial circumstances leading to the sinking of *Armidale* generated bitter division within factionalised naval-officer circles, but a Naval Board of Inquiry, unwilling to nominate a scapegoat, declared that the strategic planning risks taken beforehand were justifiable. An account of Sheean and the loss of *Armidale* was published in chapter six of a 1983 book *Trying to be sailors*, by John Leggoe (St George Books. pp.53-65).

For those interested in the generation of naval legends, a similar story, but of an anonymous sailor firing at Japanese aircraft from his anonymous sinking ship in order to protect his struggling mates in the water appeared in the 1943 *HMAS Mk II* (pp. 178-179). In the same volume edited by H. Gill a brief description of the *Armidale* action without mention of the role of Sheean or the other matters appears on page 44, adjacent to a depiction (See detail) by Dennis Adams of a navy Oerlikon gunner shooting at an aircraft. An Oerlikon gun is the centrepiece in HMAS *Shean's* modern blazon (coat of arms).

The submarine HMAS *Dechaineux* was named for Captain Emile Dechaineux (bottom right) who was killed as a result of a Japanese air attack on HMAS *Australia* on 21 October 1944. While Dechaineux perished, he did not "go down with his ship" as reported by *The West Australian* (24/2/01:3) Indeed HMAS *Australia* survived to participate in many more actions. Emil Dechaineux had entered the Royal Australian Naval College aged 14. He was to carry command on HMS' *Vivacious* and *Egglington*, and HMAS' *Warramunga* and *Australia*. Not French, he was born in Tasmania, and a Tasmanian tiger symbolically features in the blazon of HMAS *Dechaineux*.

For the interest of AAMH readers, following are incidents involving RAN warships including *Australia* against kamikaze (*shinpu*) aircraft. The source is Lind, Lew. (1983). *Historic Naval Events of Australia Day-by-day*. Reed: Wellington.

21 October 1944: A kamikaze aircraft struck the foremast of HMAS *Australia*. The aircraft was a Val Aichi 99 dive bomber. During the dawn action it made two approaches. On the first run under retaliatory gunfire it actually struck the water but recovered. Flying in from the eastern sunrise, its eventual impact with *Australia* resulted in a large explosion and intense fire. 32 crew including the commanding officer EFV Dechaineux were killed. 64 men including the Task Force commander JA Collins were wounded. The following day the ship made for Manus Island for emergency repairs.

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20-27 October 1944: The following Australian warships took part in the Battle of Leyte Gulf. HMAS' *Australia*, *Arunta*, *Gascoyne*, *Shropshire*, *Warramunga*, *Westralia*, *Manoora* and *Kanimbla*. The Australian Squadron experienced several air alerts on every day of the action.

1 November 1944: Leyte Gulf - HMAS *Australia* narrowly evaded torpedoes fired by USS *Abner Read* shortly after a kamikaze aircraft had struck the American ship and set it on fire. The ship quickly rolled over and sank. After the kamikaze attack on USS *Abner Read*, HMAS *Arunta* shared in allied concentration of fire on another kamikaze aircraft which eventually brought it down.

6 November 1944: Lingayen Gulf - HMAS *Gascoyne* shot down a kamikaze aircraft attacking HMAS *Shropshire*.

5 Jan 1945: Lingayen Gulf - HMAS *Australia* (Flagship of the Australian Squadron and HMAS *Arunta* (named for a central Australian Aboriginal tribal group) were hit by kamikaze attacks. With *Arunta* the aircraft (a Zero) made a low altitude approach and plunged into the ocean within metres of the portside hull. The bomb it was carrying exploded blew a hole in the hull and damaged the steering equipment. Two Australian sailors were killed. HMAS *Australia* experienced a vertical dive attack with the impact amidships on the upper portside deck. The explosion killed 25 sailors and wounded 30. A fire was soon extinguished and structural damage slight. Apparently the ship's battle efficiency was not greatly effected.

6 Jan 1945: HMAS *Australia* took its third hit from a kamikaze aircraft. 14 killed and 26 wounded. The ship's commander JA Collins was among the seriously injured, but recovered to later become one of the RAN's most honoured officers. He had a conspicuous naval record, having been amongst the first graduates of the Royal Australian Naval College in 1916. When in command of HMAS *Sydney* in November 1939 he had sunk the Italian cruiser *Bartolomeo Colleoni* in the Mediterranean Sea.

8 January 1945: HMAS *Australia* took two more hits from kamikaze aircraft within 15 minutes of each other. A large hole was blown in the ship's port side when the second aircraft struck the water close to the hull. HMAS *Westralia* (a landing ship) experienced a determined by unsuccessful attack by kamikaze aircraft. Reportedly one aircraft was shot down only a few metres away from the ship.

9 January 1945: HMAS *Australia* subjected to its fifth kamikaze attack. The aircraft struck the cruiser at the top of the third funnel. The ship was obliged to withdraw from the region for repairs.

Paul Weaver

Navies try casting *Perle* before "the swines"

We may never learn if the commissioning of the very French sounding HMAS *Dechaineux* was catalyst for a March visit to Western Australia by a French nuclear submarine FNS *Perle* for exercises against/with Australian subs. However, the visit marked a significant shift in Australian government policy towards France. It was only in 1995 that seemingly every Tom, Dick and Harry in Canberra had stopped drinking French champagne in protest at that country's shameful record of dirty nuclear deeds at Mururoa. Australian criticism combined with world wide pressure at the time forced the French to discontinue nuclear weapons' testing.

The nuclear disarmament movement in Western Australia has been active for at least 25 years, with numerous spectacular protests coinciding with the visits of US nuclear warships during that time. The 2001 visit of *Perle* stimulated a renewed public interest in the potential dangers from aging nuclear powered vessels. A protest to coincide with the arrival was held at the entrance of RAN host-base HMAS Stirling on Monday 5 March. Amongst the principal speakers was Jo Valentine whose name was prominently associated with the protests of the past. She received such accord that she won a seat in the federal senate.

Nowadays organising and even attending such protests takes some courage, because scowling Western Australian police carefully videotape the faces of everyone present, and also the number plates of any cars parked in the vicinity. Undaunted, an information stall was set up by the entrance and before a bevy of media about 100 people proceeded to the police line with some humorous artwork and three metre yellow paper-mache model of *Perle*. To a resounding cheer from the crowd, a convincingly dressed "Marie Antoinette" holding a plate of yellow cakes (the culinary type) pulled the cord on a guillotine and chopped the sub in half. The unamused WA police behind the barricades glared even harder.

As well they might not be amused, because Valentine

Marie Antoinette (Michael Ellis) gives *Perle* the chop

Photo: P. Weaver

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quoted from a recently obtained official contingency plan that in the event of a nuclear accident their masters have decided they will be the first to be called upon to muster an evacuation from wherever in the metropolitan area an accidental radioactive plume spreads. It also revealed the recent reasoning behind allowing nuclear powered ships to anchor closer to the Australian shore in some populated areas such as Hobart. In the event of a catastrophic event the radiation plume will be narrower where it crosses the coast, thus theoretically contaminating a smaller area and initially poisoning less people. The unspoken trade off is that more people in poorer inland suburbs will cop it.

All very convenient but of course the crucial factors are the prevailing wind direction and speed. Often in summertime Fremantle an offshore easterly is notorious for taking bushfire smoke and smog well out to sea before the particles are returned by the afternoon south-westerly and distributed along the entire metropolitan area.

The navy has permanent equipment at Garden Island to monitor visiting nuclear vessels in their berths. According to the plan there is also supposed to be a pair of thermo luminescent dosimeters (TLDs) installed at twenty secret locations in the Perth metropolitan area to monitor nuclear fallout.

No one including the navy should be under the impression that a nuclear accident in the region will be anything other than social and economic catastrophe. Aside from the serious health implications for the civilian and service populations, immediately adjacent to HMAS Stirling is WA's main industrial and shipbuilding area, its only oil refinery, and one of the nations's largest grain storage and export terminals.

Other speakers read leaked pre-prepared flimflam press releases by the Australian government for when the time comes to announce such an event. These anticipatory documents require pencilling in the name of the relevant ship in the blank space next to the letters "USS" suggesting they must have been prepared before French visits were considered possible.

The WA contingency plan was ratified in January 2000 and is administered by "The Nuclear Powered Visiting Warships Coordinating Committee" with representation from the police, navy, army, state-health, Fremantle Port Authority and the Department of Defence. The committee is overseen by a national body, called "Visiting Ships Panel (Nuclear)."

Obviously then, someone somewhere has recognised that visits from foreign nuclear warships do pose a risk to the Australian populace, and indeed the historical record for nuclear submarines is not good. At least 35 major accidents since 1961. Most recently in 2000 the inappropriately named HMS *Tireless* became laid up at Gibraltar with a serious reactor problem which resulted in almost all the British nuclear submarine fleet being pulled out of service. More publicised was the *Kursk* sinking, and in early 2001 USS *Greenville* which with civilians at the controls surfaced under a Japanese fishing vessel. Are submarines unreliable? Consider that since 1945 at least 45 nuclear and non-nuclear boats have been totally lost, usually with their entire expert crews.

More fun than Bastile Day - Australian maritime protest art

Photo: P. Weaver

The French with their six *Le Rubis* (ruby) class nuclear submarines do not have an immaculate record. In March 1994 FNS *Emeraude* lost ten crew to a ruptured steam container, and in July 1993 FNS *Rubis* collided with a tanker.

The *Le Rubis* class with about 90 crew are the smallest nuclear boats in naval atomic fleets. *Perle* and another, *Amethyste*, are improved versions and slightly longer than the original design of 72.1 metres. *Perle* (S606) was commissioned in 1993 is reported to be able to sustain an underwater speed of at least 25 knots. Its torpedo tubes can launch SM 39 Exocet anti-ship missiles which cruise at mach 0.9. The standard torpedo is the wire-guided 35 knot ECAN L5 model 3 which as well as shipping, can theoretically knock out another sub at 550 metres deep.

Reportedly the RAN rendezvoused (sounds very French) with *Perle* twenty four hours before arrival at Fremantle to analyse it for any undesirable emissions.

A question asked by the March 5 protesters was why has the government taken the risk of inviting a foreign nuclear warship belonging to a country apparently not tied to Australia by a defence treaty? Australia's newest Minister for Defence Mr Peter Reith has not said, but claimed in a report (WA 26/2/2001:12) that people were happy about the visit of the *Perle* to their locality. This ignores that some 27 town councils in WA have declared a nuclear free policy and the Fremantle Council has recently announced it will no longer host receptions for crews of visiting nuclear warships.

After six days of *bon vivant* activities at HMAS Stirling, FNS *Perle* and its French destroyer escort FNS *Dupliex* sailed from Cockburn Sound on Monday 12 March to take place in a series of offshore war games with the Australian and

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New Zealand defence forces. Despite assurances from authorities that the risk of an accident was "a million to one" the nuclear sub was humiliatingly shadowed by a tug, a water-police boat and an RAN patrol boat as it undertook a 40 minute trip along the narrow channel. There were no accompanying demonstrators. Unofficial word is that later *Perle* was significantly out-performed by Australian submariners.

Perle departing from Cockburn Sound
Photo from 6 km: P. Weaver

During the exercises, on 20 March an aging RNZAF Skyhawk fighter crashed at sea 166km off Fremantle. The pilot Flt. Lt Barnes was rescued unharmed. A week earlier another New Zealand pilot had bragged in the WA media that during the exercise they were going to take revenge (metaphorically) on the French submarine because of France's past Pacific nuclear testing program and the sinking of *Rainbow Warrior* by French agents in New Zealand. The loss of the aircraft was the final straw for the NZ government, which a few weeks later announced a major downsizing of its defence forces and a step-back from ANZUS.

A second protest against *Perle* attended by federal and state politicians occurred in Fremantle on Sunday 25 March.

Paul Weaver

Flinders University maritime archaeology field-school

From February 3 to 18 2001 Flinders University ran its inaugural maritime archaeological field-school topic (ARCH 3304) at Port Victoria, on Yorke Peninsula, west of Adelaide. Kicking off with a two day AIMA/NAS Part 1 Course on the weekend of 3 and 4 February, and followed by fourteen days in the field, the sixteen students in attendance were exposed to a range of sites, techniques and technologies associated with maritime archaeological practice.

A diverse array of tasks were instituted on a range of sites, including wreck and jetty site inspections, wreck surveys using a range of recording techniques, corrosion potential measurement tasks, magnetometer searches and exposure to limited wreck excavation, underwater still photography, digital video and the cutting edge high precision acoustic survey system (HPASS).

Investigations of allocated sections beneath the historic Port Victoria jetty were a major focus of the work carried out. The jetty, built in 1878 to service the local wheat growers in the area and came to be the focal point of South Australia's fourth largest shipping port. Constructed of jarrah, ironbark and redgum, with a later addition of steel replacement piles and railway tracks for horse drawn carts an L-head was added in 1883 and it saw continued use up until the 1950s.

Student Alana Whitford recording material under the historic Port Victoria jetty
Photo: Aidan Ash

A range of shipwreck sites were visited around adjacent Wardang Island. The island has seen the wrecking of the three-masted iron barque *Aagot* (built 1882) in 1907. The three masted iron ship *Songvaar* (ex *Barcore*) (1884-1912), the schooner rigged screw steamer *Australian* (1879-1912), the three masted iron schooner *MacIntyre* (1877-1927) and the composite built three masted fore-and-aft schooner *Moorara* (1909-1975) were the main focal points for wreck inspection and survey exercises. Also visited were the remains of the auxiliary ketch *Victor*, wrecked close to shore at Balgowan.

Just as diverse were the individuals and organisations represented, with staff members Dr. Mark Staniforth, Matt Schlitz, Nathan Richards, Chris Lewczak, Cass Philippou (Flinders University), Associate Professor Peter Veth (James Cook University), Bill Jeffery, Terry Arnott, Rick James (Heritage South Australia), Vicky Richards, Corioli Souter (Western Australian Maritime Museum) and Viv Moran (Queensland Museum) all providing much appreciated assistance, guidance and unique expertise during the duration of the field-school. Support was also obtained from the Australian National Maritime Museum and the Society for Underwater Historical Research Inc. Special thanks must go to local Balgowan resident Stuart Moody for access to his vast local knowledge and extremely charitable assistance, without which the proceedings of the two weeks would not have run nearly as smoothly.

Besides the obvious educational outcomes, a series of reports were produced, adding significantly to the already extensive archive of material on the sites, with some students completing their AIMA/NAS part 2 certification, and all participants adding to their AIMA/NAS part 2 and 3 modules. The field-school will be run again in February of 2002, and anyone interested is invited to contact Dr. Mark Staniforth on (08) 82015195 or via email at mark.staniforth@flinders.edu.au **Nathan Richards** - Flinders University

Get knotted on the net

If you want to know what sort of knots sailors or anyone uses then Peter Suber's *Knots on the Web* site is for you. http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/knotlink.htm It will be soon realised that knots are a pretty serious business and are still being developed. There is even free computer software available for downloading. If knots are not your thing then

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take a look at *Mother of all Maritime links*. http://www.boat-links.com/index.html If what you want is not there you could be one of those people whom are difficult to please.

WA expeditioners' confirm *Uranie* and *Roebuck* wreck sites

A team of Western Australian adventurers descended on the Falkland Islands early March courtesy of the Royal Air Force to examine the remains of the de Freycinet's corvette *Uranie*. The French vessel struck a rock while making for the site of Bougainville's failed colony and was beached there on 15 February 1820.

Freycinet and wife and colleagues had visited Shark Bay in Western Australia two years earlier then called at New Guinea, Guam, Hawaii and Port Jackson NSW collecting zoological, biological, botanical and osteo-anthropological material along the way. Emulating Dampier's earlier infamous and much quoted comments on north-west Aborigines, the French declared the Shark Bay people as "Perhaps the saddest savages in creation."[1] Much of their scientific collection was lost in the Falklands, but not Vlamingh's inscribed pewter plate which had been recovered from Dirk Hartog Island (WA) in September 1818. The *Uranie* folk stewed in the Falklands for 73 days before being able to acquire passage to France, where the Vlamingh plate did become lost for some 100 years.

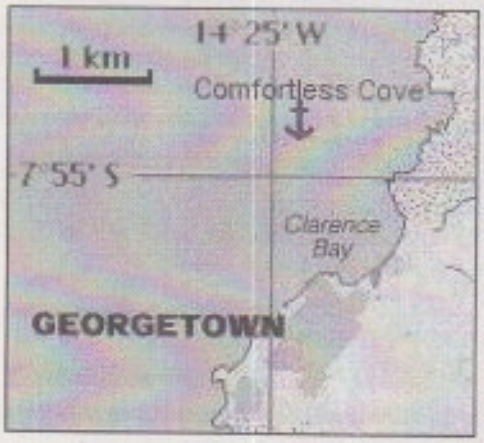
Before departure for the Falklands archaeological expedition leader Dr Mike McCarthy from the WA Maritime Museum told the AAMH editor that the Atlantic expedition was a dream trip he had been researching for several years. Other participants were museum diver Geoff Kimpton, dive-doctor John Williams, abalone diver John Lashmar, Shark Bay shire president Les Moss, diver and prolific book-writer Hugh Edwards and *West Australian* reporter Carmelo Amalfi. According to Amalfi's serialised "Lost Ship Hunt" dispatch from the Falklands (WA 3/3/2001:3) the expedition had no trouble locating wreckage at Uranie Bay on East Falkland Island. The bay is part of Berkeley Sound about 25 km NW of Port Stanley. A lot of timber remains washed up on the beach and a local farmer Neil Watson had been using it as fence posts and borders for his vegetable garden. He has also accumulated a collection of artefacts. It is possible a substantial proportion of the wreck remains, but apparently the seabed changes can be rapid. A local diver Dave Eynon had seen several pieces of wreckage sticking out from the sand during a kelp survey in 1999.

There are many wrecks in the Falklands and some of these were believed to have been plundered by military divers. Robert King the Receiver of Wrecks for the Falkland Islands did not think plundering had been on a large scale, but admitted in the past some people had been found trying to depart with artefacts.

Ascension Island - arrow showing vicinity of Roebuck site

Photo & map: Island Administrator

Following a week of intense activity in chilling conditions the intrepid WA group and their equipment were flown northwards to Ascension Island to look for William Dampier's *Roebuck*, which according to Dampier's *A Voyage to New Holland* (1939) pp.245-250 was holed through rotting timbers then abandoned in three and a half fathoms of water in February 1701. (Dampier and his ship visited Shark Bay in Western Australia during August 1699.) Similarly to de Freycinet, Dampier also lost a significant proportion of a scientific collection when wrecked.



A story appeared in *The West* on 19 March (pp.1,12) announcing the sensational news that remains of a ship thought to be *Roebuck* had been identified 100 metres offshore from "Long Beach" and that a bronze ship's bell had been recovered. The bell carrying an Admiralty

Will Dampier

[1] Phrase quoted from Marchant, L.R. 1982. *France Australe*, Perth: Artlook Books. p.216

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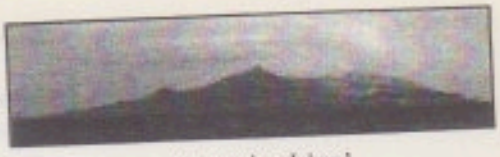
arrow mark had been discovered by John Lashmar during the first hour of diving in 5m of water. Wedged between some rocks and only partially exposed, it was not removed until permission was given the following day by Ascension Island's Receiver of Wrecks. Still concreted on the seabed are chains, grappling hooks, timbers and part of an anchor. A large clam shell thought not native to Ascension Island was also recorded on the bottom. The material has eluded previous searchers an appears to have been exposed by unusual storm activity. Residents say they have not seen similar conditions in forty years.



Ascension Island
Photo: Island Administrator

The Australian Association for Maritime History congratulate the WA Maritime Museum expedition for the significant success in verifying the locations of *Uranie* and *Roebuck*. The publicised efforts of the team hopefully will stimulate greater interest in Australian maritime history. **Paul Weaver**

Sydney foreshore defence properties turned to civilian use

Five Defence-owned properties on Sydney's harbour foreshore have been formally handed over to the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust by Dr Brendan Nelson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence. He presented a scroll to the Federal Environment and Heritage Minister, Robert Hill on 18 March. A $50 million dollar Centenary of Federation grant enabled the transfer of Middle Head, Georges Heights, Chowder Bay, Woolwich Dock and the former Artillery School site on North Head.

Most of the land has been defence connected since before Federation. The first defences were close to the First Fleet settlement at Sydney Cove, most notably at Dawes Point. These were supplemented from 1802 by a battery on Georges Head, which covered the Western Channel, and was the main passage to Sydney Cove. From the 1890s North and South Head became increasingly important with the need for heavy weapons to protect Sydney from long range sea attack. From 1964, George's Heights was the location of the Womens' Royal Australian Army Corps Centre. Chowder Bay was the site of the Water Transport training facility. A water transport unit was also based at Woolwich Dock until recently. It trained soldiers for INTERFET operations in East Timor, where they operated landing craft and controlled Dili port.

Historic Changi takes on new role

The name Changi will forever remain significant in Australian war history because of the thousands of Allied prisoners of war who were imprisoned when Singapore was overtaken by the Japanese. The prison remains, and nearby is the small island nation's relatively new international airport. Beneath the main runway lie hundreds, perhaps thousands of Chinese civilians who were murdered by Japanese troops during the wartime occupation.

In late March this year supercarrier USS *Kitty Hawk* tested a new purpose built deep-water berthing facility at Changi. Known as Changi Naval Station it is a joint strategic project between Singapore and the US. It will not be fully operational until 2003. Complying with regional sensitivities, officially it is not described as a US base, but it is certainly going to become one of the most important setups for rapid resupply of American warships operating in south-east Asia the Persian Gulf and East Africa. The Singapore facility partially fills the vacuum caused when the Philippines curtailed the use of Subic Bay and Clarke Field in 1992. Increasing civil hostility in Japan also threatens the longevity of a US presence there. In April there was an unconfirmed report that Singapore played a role as mediator between the USA and China following the mid-air collision between a US electronic-surveilance aircraft and a Chinese intercept fighter near Hainan where the Chinese Navy have been testing a new hunter-killer submarine. Reportedly, Australian Orions conduct similar air patrols in the region.

USS *Kitty Hawk* arriving at Changi
Photo: USN

The Singapore harbour is about 25km from Indonesia. The enlarged inset in the bottom left corner of the map illustrates the significant size of the seaworks undertaken at Changi on the eastern end of Singapore Island. Singapore is a significant destination for many fresh food products exported from Australia. The naval facility could offer further opportunities.

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On 30 March an advertisement by the Singapore government appeared in a WA newspaper (WA.30/3/2001:42) saying it was exhuming graves in a Christian cemetery at Bidadari on the island next December to make way for a housing development. Human remains would be cremated for storage in a columbarium and any not identified disposed at sea. Further information from the Singapore High Commission in Canberra or a website http://www.hdb.gov.dg/bidari

Greenpeace co-founder dies in car wreck

Coincident with an announcement that the New Zealand government has released files which further embarrass the French government over the 1985 Auckland sinking of *Rainbow Warrior* by French agents, came the news that Greenpeace activist David McTaggart had been killed when his VW suddenly veered into the path of another car at Castiglione del Lago in Italy.

McTaggart is noted as one of the co-founders of Greenpeace in 1971, which evolved from a Canadian anti-nuclear group *Don't Make a Wave*. That group had advertised for volunteers to sail in protest to the French nuclear test zones in the Pacific. McTaggart owned a yacht *Vega* and being familiar with Pacific sailing, renamed it *Greenpeace* then with others sailed to Mururoa in 1972. The French were outraged because the protest drew world-wide attention to their global polluting activities. A gunboat rammed the yacht causing damage sufficient for the protesters to move out of the test region for repairs. A year later McTaggart's group returned and he was savagely bashed by French military officials and lost an eye. The incident was filmed by a Greenpeace member and the footage smuggled out to the world's media. It plainly contradicted French lies that the protesters had been diverted. McTaggart successfully sued France in 1974. A focussed radical, McTaggart's zeal was further fuelled by the French government's 1985 bombing of *Rainbow Warrior* in New Zealand. In 1991 he retired as Chairman of Greenpeace but remained active. In 1995 he was expelled from France for protesting about ongoing nuclear tests in the Pacific. A Canadian ex-patriot living in Italy, McTaggart was 68 when he was killed.

Fenian escapees memorialised

The new WA state government is backing development of a memorial park at Leschenault Peninsular, Australind north of Bunbury dedicated to 19th century Irish political prisoner John O'Reilly who escaped from a Fremantle prison to the USA. He is linked to the later sensational escape of other Fenians on the American whaler *Catalpa*.

Len Fox alive and kicking

An article in the March newsletter mentioning a wartime booklet *Australia's Guilty Men* by Len Fox concluded with a question on the author's whereabouts. I am happy to tell you Len is alive and for a man of 95 years in better health than most half his age. He tells me he is a little unsteady on his feet these days, but he is still producing a steady stream of books and memoirs in booklet form. A most remarkable humanist. Probably his best-known works in recent years are his story of the Eureka flag and his biographical book on the artist and family member E.Phillips Fox. I have sent a copy of your note on "Guilty Men" to Len for his amusement. It was just one of many such items he wrote at the time. He is living at Potts Point in Sydney nowadays. **Hugh Anderson**

Ed's footnote: Mrs Mona Fox has a contribution on page 11.

Merchant Navy highly important to war effort

Over the decades following the conclusion of WW2, I have become aware of a tendency by some Royal Australian Navy writers in particular to acknowledge in anything other the most perfunctory manner the contribution made by our country's considerable number of merchant ships and seaman of that wartime period. Perhaps I should make the point before there are none of us left to do so!

Merchant troop carriers off WA - 1940

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The Royal Navy has never held such inhibitions. Back in *1945*, His Majesty's Stationary Office in Britain published *Merchantmen at War, The Official Story of the Merchant Navy, 1939-1944*. As recently as the Falklands War, Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse, Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet said, "I cannot say too often or too clearly how important has been the Merchant Navy's contribution to our effort..."

Charles Taylor in a recent article, "War Badges" in *The Red Ensign*, Feb/March 2001, p.14, wrote that in May, 1940, Britain's Defence Committee, (Chief of the Naval Staff, Chief of the Air Staff, and Chief of the General Staff) recommended to the War Cabinet that certain categories of persons engaged in war service, and rejected volunteers, should be eligible for a badge. Six types were approved. An Australian Merchant Navy Badge was eventually authorised in view of the advice given by the Dominions Office that the issue of such a badge to Merchant Navy personnel in the United Kingdom had been approved by His Majesty the King. It was to be similar to the design of the United Kingdom Badge", but was to have an appropriate inscription signifying the Australian Merchant Marine. Personnel engaged in Australia for service in overseas, home trade, coastal or deep sea fishing vessels registered at any port in the British Empire were entitled to receive it.

The Australian Merchant Navy badge can be seen engraved on the nation's Merchant Navy War Memorial situated on the northern bank of Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra. **Herb Bolles**

Eds footnote: As well as a badge, Herb received four campaign medals for his wartime service in the Merchant Navy. The letters MN are stamped after his name to distinguish him from RAN recipients. There is an interesting Australian website run by Eric Bissmire dedicated to the Merchant Navy at http://www.onthenet.com.au/~biss/eric.htm

Old book on Dutch history racks up top price in Oz

Bibliophiles thinking they were going to pick up a bargain when an old book covering the *Batavia* shipwreck and bloody mutiny was put up for auction in Melbourne on 26 March got a nasty surprise when an anonymous telephone client put in a last minute bid of A$330,000. Maybe the buyer also got a nasty surprise when he or she discovered that a hefty "buyer's premium" took the final cost to A$384,450. Then again people who are prepared to bid that much probably wouldn't worry. The 1648 book by Joost Hartgers, *Ongeluckige voyagie van't schip Batavia* (Unlucky voyage of the ship *Batavia*) was one of four versions of the incident published in the 15th century. Apparently quite a few copies survive, but rarely come up for sale. One way to recover such an outlay is to print off a facsimile. 5000 retailed at $90 each might break-even but of course there is retail markup, the GST and post and packing to be added. Better forget that idea.

Pleasures and Pains of a Watery Life

A cerulean river and the turquoise sea on the doorstep. What delights might come from it! Some little time ago I took Summer School classes on the history of Fremantle. In preparation for one lesson I went to the local pet shop to buy a plastic dog's bone. What, you may ask, has that got to do with the history of Fremantle? Well, at the time the temperature was up in the 40s and I needed a mutton bone to use as a teaching aid, but one that wouldn't go off in the heat. Mutton was to go into a tucker bag in order to demonstrate what the Fremantle lumpers (dock workers) of yesteryear would take to work for their meals, namely: bread and dripping, and mutton. I told the pet shop owner what I wanted, and why.

"Funny you should say that", he said. He spoke with a wonderful Bow Bells accent, like Smithy in TV's *The Bill*. Apropos of the Fremantle lumpers he told me that his father and grandfather had been dock workers at Lime House. Far from eating mutton the children of their time were sent down to London Road Market each day in order to find spilled vegetable leaves to be boiled up for an evening soup, the best meal of the day, and perhaps the only one.

The area where my informant's family and other London dockers lived was, he said, once a no-go area into which the police dared not venture. It was allegedly a hotbed of Communism. His grandfather had been dragged to the First World War in chains.

How different was the port city of Fremantle! Never did its workers elect a Communist candidate to Parliament and few belonged to the IWW. Why would they yearn for a Socialist paradise? They already had one, even though, according to local legend, the Fremantle populace was made up of two sorts of people: the poor and the very poor. Fremantle was a nirvana.

Fremantle's work, like that of the Lime House dockers, revolved round the water. So did its pleasures. More than a hundred years ago regattas were organised by the gentry folk of Fremantle for the masses, and colourful events they were too. On regatta days flags and bunting fluttered from all the buildings, and ships in the harbour were dressed overall. Races involved whale boats, barges, ships' boats, dinghies, long boats, tug boats, scows and lighters, in fact anything that sailed or was rowed. Smart little yachts also competed.

Yacht clubs were an offshoot of the regattas. "Let's form a yacht club" was the repeated cry of the business and professional people who arranged the regattas. So yacht clubs came, but soon dissolved because they were run by and for an elite owning a very few craft.

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But, like other sporting clubs, in particular football clubs, when the participants rather than the presidents took over, things began to happen. It was after the horrors of the First World War that the ordinary folk of Fremantle decided a yacht club would be a good thing, and they invited in the gentry to sail their yachts while they, men and women, crewed and skippered their own craft, many home made. From then on the clubs advanced, and club houses went from hotel rooms to sheds to the present Fremantle Sailing Club, with its most elegant clubhouse that would rank with any others in the world.

Boats and the water defined Fremantle's past, like its present. Memories of filth in the trenches of the First World War were washed away by them. During the dark times of the Great Depression boats meant line-fishing could put food on the table. Unemployed men spent enforced idleness in building them. They gave pleasure to children who had to leave childhood behind at the age of fourteen in order to work. Boys built them from flotsam and jetsam on the beaches, and stole, and "borrowed" them. Xavier Herbert, the renowned Fremantle author, writes of sailing a craft built by his brother. In this tiny cockleshell he would go southward, "beating along the shore in the easterly you usually got in the mornings and coming spanking home in the afternoon before the sou' westerly sea breeze". After the Second World War Fremantle's Sailing Club cruised into the limelight with Way '79 and the thrill of the international sesquicentennial Parmelia Race. Ultimately Fremantle hosted the America's Cup.

In parallel lives, the dock workers of Lime House or Nantucket, or Bremen, might fight for a living like the Fremantle dockers, but never enjoy the pleasure and the health given by boats to the poor of Fremantle. Did the longshoremen of New York enjoy yachting? But in saying this I stand to be corrected. Was Fremantle indeed unique?

Pat Brown

Row, row, row your boat, gently o'er the Pacific

By any standards the solo unassisted crossing of the Pacific Ocean in a rowing boat is an extraordinary achievement. It was accomplished for the first time on Friday 30 March by 54 year old Briton Jim Shekdar as, in the final moments, his 7 metre boat *Le Shark* turned turtle in the surf at Stradbroke Island near Brisbane forcing him to swim to the final 100 metres to shore. Looking slightly wild-eyed from his 274 day experience he was soon tucking into a decent feed of grilled steak and chips before flopping into a soft bed.

The marathon voyage began in Ilo, Peru in June 2000 and covered about 7,900 nautical miles, averaging about 29 miles a day. Incredibly the adventurer forgot to load a can opener, presumably forcing him to open cans of food with his steel-hard stomach muscles. He noted in TV interviews that sharks had followed him for the first couple of thousand kilometres from Peru, and periodically he was joined by fish, but he did not eat them because he saw them as travelling companions and would talk to them He jokingly attributed the capsize to his boat wishing to get ashore before him. Fortunately he was a strong swimmer, having immigrated to Australia in 1970 and surfed regularly at Byron Bay. He is also a former international water polo player. Ultimately preferring his homeland Jim returned with his wife and two daughters to Britain. In 1997 he rowed across the Atlantic with David Jackson. He and the sturdy *Le Shark* have now returned to Britain. He has said it is not the end of his rowing. He will take it up again when he has recovered from a previously postponed NHS hip operation. Could it be he is contemplating rowing the Indian Ocean next? There has only been two attempts, both east to west by Swede Ander Svedlund. The first in *Waka Moana* departed Fremantle on September 15 1970, but was discontinued after 130 miles. His second attempt from Kalbarri in March 1971 was in *Roslagena*. He rowed 4,400 miles to Madagascar. There have been six attempts by others to row the Pacific since 1974. Briton Peter Bird in *Hele-on-Britannia* rowed from San Francisco to the Great Barrier Reef near the Lockhart River in 1983-83 but did not qualify as unassisted.

Jim Shekdar after the unassisted solo crossing

Photos: Geoff Pettingill

Le Shark about to be rolled at Stradbroke Island

Congratulations to Jim Shekdar for completing his courageous solo E-W Pacific Ocean crossing in 2001.

Darwin bombing - colour movie surfaces - then sinks

Anzac Day 2001 saw the public release of a five million dollar eight part ABC TV series *Australians at War*. A special screening for PM John Howard and selected guests was held in Canberra on 3 April. The somewhat shallow result with its oodles of fake sound effects utilised archival and little-known memorabilia in private collections, including some 8mm colour amateur footage of the February 19, 1942 attack on Darwin by Japanese bombers. The film was taken contrary to regulations by a naval cadet Victor Tuckerman. It was telecast at the start of episode 5 on 23 May.

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Lightship memories

In the early 1930s my father Alexander Brand worked as second engineer on the ship SS *Cape Leeuwin*, regularly servicing lighthouses from Darwin to Brisbane. The ship operated under the command of the Commonwealth Navigation Department. Later in the 1930s my father was appointed Chief engineer of MV *Cape York*, travelling regularly between Melbourne and Perth via Tasmania. The ships were not needed in NSW where lighthouses were either on shore, or functioned automatically.

It was while engaged on the Darwin to Brisbane run that my father wrote a poem *The Carpentaria Lightship* describing an older lightship's role as guardian of the Merkara Shoal, a hazard to ships navigating in that vicinity of the Torres Strait. My dad sent me a copy of the poem in one of his letters when I was about fourteen and living in Sydney. I thought it was a good poem and submitted it for him to the Sydney Bulletin. It was not printed, but in the *Bulletin* column, "Answers to correspondents," appeared the somewhat incomprehensible comment, "Lightship foundered with all hands." One of the lightships now resides in Sydney's Darling Harbour. **Mona Brand**.

Footnote: Mona is married to retired political journalist Len Fox. Her now out-of-print autobiography *Enough Blue Sky* amongst other things described their visit to North Vietnam and meeting with Ho Chi Minh. She is also a playwright. One work, *Here Under Heaven* which was first produced Melbourne in 1948, had a revival in Perth in June 2001. Ed.

The Carpentaria Lightship

Commonwealth Lightship *CLS4* was built at Cockatoo Dock Sydney and was stationed at Merkara Shoal from 1926, and later in Bass Strait. Is now part of Sydney's National Maritime Museum collection in Darling Harbour.

She signed no crew, her stores were few,
Not posted at Lloyds was she,
No ensign spread to freshening breeze
As she stood to the open sea.

Her streaming deck no sailor paced.
No man was at the wheel
As she wallowed through the trackless waste,
Snugged down from truck to keel

Cast adrift like an errant soul
Without a farewell sign,
We towed her back to Merkara Shoal
On the end of a ten-inch line.

We moored her safe in that silent void
With ninety fathoms of chain,
And the seagull wheeling, overjoyed,
Came back to his home again.

She'll surge and strain when furies clash,
Or ride on a lazy swell,
And through the night her light will flash
To the dirge of the dreary bell.

And spirits of shipwrecked sailors,
If sailors have a soul,
Will man her decks from ancient wrecks
Around Merkara Shoal.

Alexander Brand

Alexander Brand 1881 - 1938

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Vale Frank Broeze

Autographing my copy of his book *Island Nation* Frank wrote the kindly words: "With my warmest regards and thanks for long years of inspiration and friendship".

Friendship is reciprocated, so these words could also have been addressed to Frank himself by those of us to whom he was friend, teacher and mentor. My long years of association with Frank began in 1985. We had never met before. I had yet to recognise that voice which resonated through the corridors of the Arts Faculty. But one afternoon, distressed after an academic catastrophe, I stumbled into his office simply because his door was open - as it invariably was, both physically and metaphorically.

"Would you be willing to supervise a doctoral thesis on the boat builders of the Hawkesbury River?" I asked. "No.", he replied, "But I will supervise one on the history of Fremantle as a port city."

Thus we started together on an exploration of Fremantle and that great lake, the Indian Ocean. With Frank's stimulus and practical help it was an quest which eventually afforded me fulfilment far beyond any expectations I had ever held, and for which I will, of course, always be grateful. Others similarly have gained from such guidance and from his belief in their capacity.

Frank showed his generosity of spirit when, even in his last months of pain and illness, he would still find time and make efforts to help those of us who asked.

Frank was often amused, and sometimes bemused, by my penchant for quotations. But his generosity of spirit reminded me of a poem that I learned long ago at school. So in memory of our times together, and of his often quizzical eyebrows raised in response to my excerpts, I will argue in this valediction that, like Abou Ben Adham, he might have said, "Write me down as one who loved his fellowmen." **Patsy Brown**

Franklin (Frank) Jan Aaart Broeze

Born: Rijswijk, The Netherlands, August 18, 1945.
Died: Perth, Western Australia, April 4, 2001

In the late 1970s Frank Broeze sent me a brochure about a newly formed organisation The Australian Association for Maritime History (AAMH). I agreed to join and this was the beginning of professional contact and later personal friendship, which spanned more than two decades.

From his base in the Department of History at the University of Western Australia, Frank spread the word about maritime history to historians, other scholars and the general public both within Australia and overseas. His outstanding and prolific scholarship was an inspiration to us all. But above all else it was his infectious energy and enthusiasm for maritime history, which encouraged many of us to enter the field. He was determined to rid it of its antiquarian image and establish it as a respectable historical specialism. He taught one of the few specialised courses on maritime history available in Australia.

Together with John Bach and Vaughan Evans, Frank formed the Australian Association for Maritime History in May 1978. Its aim "is to promote the study, publication and general appreciation of maritime history." A quarterly Newsletter quickly appeared and in April 1979 the first issue of an academic journal, *The Great Circle*, was published with Frank as the inaugural editor. *The Great Circle* quickly became the academic flagship of the AAMH and a respected outlet for maritime scholarship. Due to Frank's international reputation and outlook it attracted papers from scholars across the globe.

For the first five years the AAMH's Executive was based in New South Wales but in 1983 it passed to Western Australia. Frank served for five years as President of the AAMH and I had the pleasure of working with him as Secretary. He served on the Board of the Western Australian Maritime Museum for many years. His international reputation led to his election as President of the International Commission of Maritime History between 1990-95. In 1998 he was made a fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities.

Frank's achievements, of course, went well beyond maritime history. At the University of Western Australia he taught courses on American, European and Middle Eastern history and served on many university committees and the University Senate. He was a regular contributor to public debates and a writer of perceptive letters to local newspapers.

Frank had battled a rare cancer for many years but the suddenness of his death was a shock to us all. I think this was mainly because outwardly at least he was remarkably cheerful and, although physically frail, right up to the end he was discussing and planning new research. He had just finished a book on containerisation that will be published later this year. It was Frank's idea to hold another international conference on maritime history in Fremantle in December 2001. I was hoping that he would be able meet up with his many friends again but, alas, it was not to be.

I owe him a special debt as he acted as one of my PhD supervisors and guided my stumbling attempts to write maritime history. In the ensuing years we regularly met for lunch where over a good bottle of wine or champagne (I usually let him choose as he never chose badly) we discussed maritime history and solved the world's problems.

I will forever miss his friendship, discussion and advice. Frank leaves his wife Ulli and a son, Carsten.

Malcolm Tull

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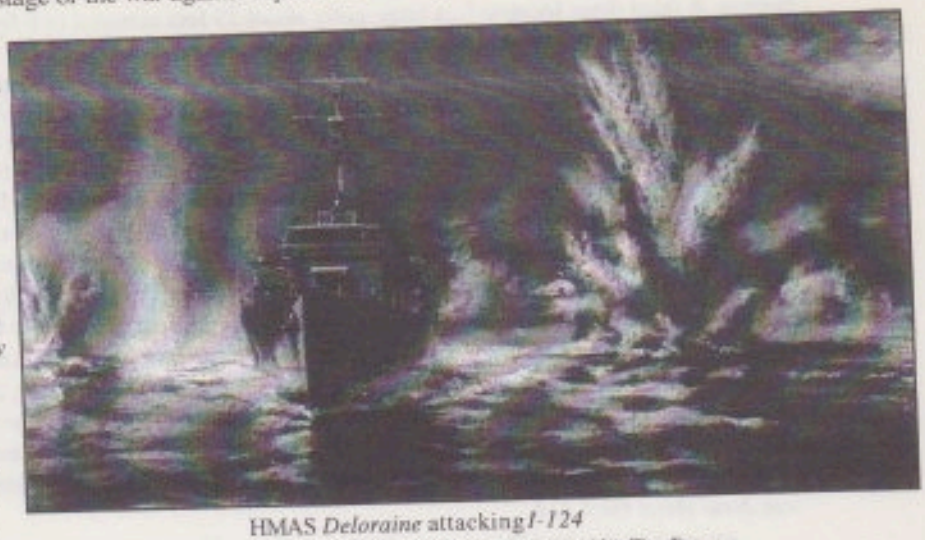
I-124 the RAN's first Japanese submarine victory

In January 1942 four minelaying submarines of Japan's Imperial Navy were in waters north of Australia on a campaign to harass shipping and lay mines outside Allied harbours. Darwin was a harbour of considerable strategic importance and already in this early stage of the war against Japan was holding over 40 Allied ships in the busy deep-water port. The Japanese knew there were many ships, and an attempt by one submarine to waylay an American convoy on its way in was to result in a quick and savage reaction, with the outcome being the first sinking of a Japanese submarine by Australian forces.



HMAS *Deloraine* attacking *I-124*
Pastel by Clay Evans

Early on the morning of the 20th of January 1942 *I-124* attacked an American fleet oiler USS *Trinity* with three torpedoes. They were seen on the surface by one of two escorting destroyers USS *Alden* which turned and began launching depth charges. The counter-attack was unsuccessful and the destroyer lost the contact.

Later that morning HMAS *Deloraine* arrived on the scene. The Bathurst class vessel, commanded by Lieutenant-Commander Desmond Menlove was newly launched, but its first action was nearly its last as Frank Marsh, a stoker now living in NSW recalls:

> ...the trail of the torpedo which missed our stern so closely that the wake thrown up by the propellers actually caused the torpedo to come out of the raised sea surface. I was off watch and on the forward deck at the time of the sighting and have long savoured the corvette's manoeuvrability and Commander Menlove's skill.

According to the *Deloraine*'s official report the torpedo approached, "...at 1335 on a bearing of green 100 and course was altered, full power ordered and torpedo passed ten feet astern." An counter-attack was commenced at 1343 with a pattern of six depth charges and soon attracted three aircraft and two other corvettes, HMAS' *Katoomba* and *Lithgow*. Using ASDIC, *Deloraine* deduced the submarine was creeping south and continued the attack. Disturbed waters where black bubbles of oil were rising brought a pause, but Commander Menlove then ordered the attack to resume, and for the next nine minutes the sea heaved as pattern after pattern of depth charges were dropped.

Finally the bridge lookout reported a submarine was breaking the surface and abruptly the conning tower appeared almost alongside. Frank Marsh reminisced, "I remember seeing the sub's periscope come out of the water a few feet - it turned its hood to face us and then promptly dived". *Deloraine* launched a depth charge and a circling US aircraft dropped a small bomb. Both burst close alongside the submarine. Eventually the boat was confirmed to be motionless on the ocean bed. The fate was sealed for its captain, Lieutenant Commander Koichi Kishigami, his division commander Captain Takao Endo and 80 crew.

Lieutenant Commander Menlove received a Distinguished Service Order and Lieutenant Bruce Harvey the Distinguished Service Cross. Seven other crew received decorations or were mentioned in dispatches.

Their quarry *I-124*, a diesel-electric submarine of 1383 tons (displaced) and 279 feet in length, was one of four older model boats that formed the sixth Japanese submarine squadron. The first of the boats was built by the Kawasaki company, but after financial difficulties the remaining three were finished in the Kure shipyards, with the *I-124* being completed in December 1928. They were slow and somewhat clumsy compared with newer Japanese submarines. According to Mochitsura Hashimoto, a capable commander with a significant war record which included sinking the American cruiser *Indianapolis*, the submarines were very difficult to manage whenever heavy weapons were launched. They carried twelve torpedoes in four 21 inch bow tubes and a 5.5 inch gun on the foredeck. They also carried 42 mines, which could be launched through the torpedo tubes.

Given the ferocity of the Allied effort it seems inevitable the outdated submarine was sunk, but it was hardly the end of the matter because *I-124* became surrounded by rumours and arguments that have persisted until the present.

Initially there was a belief more than one submarine was sunk. Lt. Cdr. Menlove thought they were engaging more than one vessel, and later HMAS *Katoomba* also engaged a contact. *Deloraine* attacked another ASDIC echo the next day, but after consideration the navy decided that there was only one submarine, and awarded credit to the *Deloraine*. Interestingly, an American destroyer USS *Edsall* which launched four depth charges late in the day was given partial credit. Subsequent searches did find only one wreck.

Soon after the sinking the boom defence vessel HMAS *Kookaburra* was deployed to the site and Australian divers went down. They were unsuccessful and engaged the help of divers from the American submarine repair ship USS *Holland*.

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There is some confusion about the initial diving efforts. A 1973 article by Gavin Souter in the *Sun* newspaper claimed that divers from the USS *Blackhawk* also descended and heard the Japanese crew tapping inside the hull. Subsequent research has not confirmed this, but the story has persisted.

The *Holland* divers reported their initial search for the submarine as unsuccessful; the first and second divers not finding the wreck at all in their brief "no decompression" time of 16 minutes which is all they were allowed on the bottom. A third diver located "...a large gully about 15 feet across 4 to 6 feet deep, which is believed to be where the submarine first hit bottom." The *Holland* was moved and:

> ...the fourth diver found - a large submarine. One hatch apparently blown open. Unable to make any identification. Also located 3 other hatches but did not reach conning tower. Fifth diver reported gaskets blown out of two other hatches abaft conning tower; a built in hatch at conning tower with hatch on top.... a small door open on conning tower with valve wheels exposed, believed to be salvage air manifold....Color of submarine black but was covered with slight coating of light colored mud. Ship was on even keel. No bubbles visible. No damage of any kind noted to hull or decking other than condition of hatches.

A sixth diver then verified the report of the fifth. A gasket had been recovered from one hatch and the report speculates on the "fatal weakness" of the design. Rough weather delayed diving for a day. The *Holland's* report suggested that salvage was possible, perhaps using the USS *Pigeon*, a vessel then in the Philippines which was equipped for such tasks. The possibility of retrieving codebooks was on the minds of both American and Australian commanders. The RAN began to make arrangements including the famous Captain John Williams and diver "Johnno" Johnson, salvors of the *Niagara*'s gold off New Zealand. However, the war was to overtake matters. Three weeks later Darwin was struck by the same carrier task force that had devastated Pearl Harbour. Nothing further was done about the *I-124*.

Lt. Cdr. Koichi Kishigami

Strange stories and theories evolved over time. One suggestion sought to link *I-124* German raider HSK *Kormoran* and the ill-fated HMAS *Sydney*. Michael Montgomery in *Who Sank The Sydney?* believed a submarine was refuelling or rearming from the *Kormoran* when *Sydney* was sighted. It then dived and ultimately torpedoed the Australian ship, winning the battle for *Kormoran*. Another unsubstantiated *Sydney* story claims that a seaplane was sighted in the vicinity of the battle, the rationale apparently being that many Japanese submarines carried folding aircraft in a hangar on the foredeck. Suggestions have also been made that a second submarine wreck lies in the vicinity of the purported battle and could be that alleged helper of the *Kormoran*. Other fanciful theories suggest that inside the wrecked *I-124* the captain's safe may contain an answer; perhaps a secret message from the Japanese Emperor congratulating submarine crews on the participation of one of their number in the *Sydney* sinking?

Further controversy surrounds the dives made onto the submarine wreck. More than one source suggests codebooks were recovered from the *I-124*, and this helped win the Pacific war for the Americans. For example, Ed Drea in *MacArthur's Ultra* wrote:

> Shortly after the outbreak of the Pacific War, US Navy divers had salvaged the Japanese Navy's Water Transport "S" codebooks from a submarine that had been sunk off Darwin Australia in January 1942. With these documents in hand, navy cryptanalysts were able to read Japanese naval shipping messages...

Sometimes claims about the *I-124* appear fictitious. A story from Owen Griffiths' *Darwin Drama* - published in 1946 - tells of an occasion during the war when *HMAS Warrambool* gained a load of fresh fish courtesy of *I-124*. The ship was carrying out exercises on the sunken submarine and had dropped a depth charge on it. Griffiths' book recalls:

> From two to two and a half tons of red morwong of 11 lb. each came floating to the surface together with two coral cod, each 500 lb. weight. On gutting some of the fish they were found to contain rice which had obviously come from the Jap submarine lying on the ocean bed. The decks of *Warrambool* were laden with the precious food and there was sufficient for the whole of the Darwin Navy.

During the 1950s Atsuko Kishigami the daughter of the *I-124's* commander began a campaign to have the submarine raised and its entombed bodies returned to Japan. Various high-level communications were made, and the (Japanese) Fujita Salvage Company then in Darwin salvaging the wrecks of other ships still lying in the harbour, made a brief investigation of the proposal before deciding the cost would be prohibitive.

In July 1972 salvage operators CJ (Sid) Hawks, Harry Baxter, George Tyers and John Chadderton began preliminary salvage work on the submarine from the vessels *Arnhem T*, *Larrapan* and *Arundel*. They applied for salvage rights. However, a dispute between Baxter and other three gained considerable media coverage. They were denied all salvage rights by the Federal Government and warned off the site.

In 1976 Baxter was reported to be trying a new recovery attempt. He told the *NT News* that he was anchored on the site and, "...every dive down to the wreck was being recorded on film..." Baxter claimed to the *News* that the hull had been penetrated and: "...some of our divers have seen bodies sitting on the engines, but their heads have rolled away." He said too that he intended to reveal the mysteries of the boat, "...divers had been into the captain's cabin, but had not yet brought up the safe from that cabin." Baxter was later reported in the newspaper as having "...brought into the open two relics from a Japanese submarine..."

Then Baxter and a new Melbourne partner, a Mr Nason engaged the services of a firm known as Sub Sea Services

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to assess the submarine for salvage. At the time Hawks, Chadderton and Tyers were anchored near the wreck disputing ownership. Baxter is later alleged to have attempted to destroy the *I-124* because the government again denied him a chance to salvage the vessel. If an attempt occurred it appears not to have made much of an impact.

In November 1984 Navy divers from HMAS *Curlew* carried out descents to *I-124* to verify its condition. They reported mine-carrying rails but no mines, and also reported that the conning tower had been damaged in a manner consistent with the use of explosives, in accordance with Baxter's claims made in the *Australasian Post* of March 1981.

The divers noted, "The after section of the conning tower is detached... however, the hull appears sound." These reports were further verified in 1989 when the Darwin vessel *Flamingo Bay* captained by David Tomlinson sent down a remote operated vehicle equipped with a TV camera. The ROV sent back pictures of the *I-124*'s conning tower, still upright but with a list to one side.

In later years the wreck became a designated war grave, with the *Historic Shipwrecks Act* being drafted primarily because of the *I-124* and associated scuffles.

The *I-124* has since attracted attention for another reason: A theory that the "trim" tanks were filled with mercury which was at risk of polluting the environment. A major mercury contamination would be devastating to the region. The suggestion stems from the fact that the *I-124* design was based on a German WW1 U-boat *U-125* taken to Japan for use as a model. The vessel was trimmed with several tons of mercury, therefore it seemed possible the *I-124* may have also used the same method. A 1980 Northern Territory Fisheries Department survey of sharks in the region showed no abnormalities, and subsequent research into the *I-124's* past has proved conclusively that mercury was not used, nor carried as cargo.

The submarine seems now destined to lie undisturbed. The site is in a forbidden area, even for boats anchoring nearby. One vessel MV *Leisure*, which was carrying divers during a January 1984 visit was arrested over the site. Any persons these days contemplating a visit should note the penalty provisions of the *Historic Shipwreck Act of 1976*. The *I-124* lies in a "protected zone" and according to the Act no entry is allowed within a radius of 800 metres without a permit. **Tom Lewis**

Sources for this essay are in Lewis T. (1997). *Sensuikan I-124*. An A4 softcover of 131 pages with numerous illustrations. Copies can be obtained from the publishers, Tall Stories of Darwin, GPO Box 2935 Darwin 0801, for $25.00 + $3.00 postage. The painting of HMAS *Deloraine* attacking *I-124* is reproduced in the newsletter with permission of WA realism artist Clay Evans. Clay (40) also has a painting of HMAS *Sydney II* hanging in the wardroom at HMAS Stirling. Unfortunately illness has forced him to withdraw from his painting activities.

Howard government does double backflip over old Artillery Barracks-site offer

The previous AAMH newsletter reported that the Howard Government had decided to gift the old Artillery Barracks site and associated tunnel-riddled land at Fremantle to the people of WA. Well hold everything! In early April, well after the announcement, came unexpected news of a newly cooked-up plan to first sub-divide and sell about two thirds of the land to bolster ailing federal coffers. Up for grabs in the fire sale is the old signal station and old naval store adjacent to the Fremantle traffic bridge. (It is now leased as a bean-shoot factory supplying Chinese restaurants.) The former barracks buildings occupied by the Army Museum are still to be gifted to the people. (they say) Nevertheless, the state government, Freo council and most others connected with the matter are pretty peeved at this latest switcheroo by the feds.

Part of the disputed land - old harbour signal station on Cantonment Hill - old naval store in foreground and the only native vegetation remaining in Freo since colonisation in 1829.

Photo: P. Weaver

Embarrassment in crucial demo of sucker-fish namesake

The ultimate PR fear for the navy is if one of the Collins subs runs into serious trouble an cannot surface. The loss of the Russian submarine *Kursk* last year has served as a grim reminder of the dangers all submariners can encounter, despite all the training and the self confidence they develop. The resultant political pressure is something else.

In an endeavour to facilitate crew-rescue or access to a sunken boat the RAN has acquired a Canadian submersible called *Remora*, named for the fish which attach themselves to sharks and rays to hitch a free ride. The mechanical marvel is designed to attach itself over an escape hatch at significant depths and bring any survivors to safety.

And so it was on 11 April the highly confident PR folk from HMAS Stirling arranged a demo well out to sea for reliable media representatives and high ranking dignitaries from around seventeen foreign navies. Hopefully the former would toe the line and never take the mickey, and the latter would pass to their masters that the expensive device would be a significant and worthy addition to their own fleets.

At a reported 95 metres below, HMAS *Sheean* had been lain on the bottom to resemble as closely as possible the final awkward positioning of the ill-fated *Kursk*. The Aussies would show up those Ruskies with a thing or two about

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Remora and its umbilical cable

underwater rescues. A small group of eager volunteers waited below for the reassuring attachment of *Remora*, and waited - and waited.

Yep, you guessed it. The infamous Murphy had arrived up top and there had been a major hitch, or perhaps it was a half-hitch. In any case a crucial and very-expensive armoured umbilical fibre-optic cable had been kinked and damaged, reducing the *Remora's* capability by a stated approximate 60 percent. Worse, a spare was not on hand.

The Swedish connection

It is not difficult to imagine the colourful sailor talk amongst the ranks of the "silent" service below when it was learned the elaborate exercise had been cancelled. Nevertheless the navy put on a brave face saying that personnel had gained valuable experience and assured the VIP media that its rescue ability was world class. Surprisingly a few weeks later the ABC's *Australian Story* 19/4/2001 provided an unusually frank insight into the failed demonstration, accompanied by some carefully chosen polite remarks from some foreign navy visitors. The transcript is available on the ABC website.

Despite the optimism, *Remora* might have been gazonked. The Swedish company Kockums which designed the Collins subs has begun promoting to the same foreign navy delegates a new-generation rescue submersible which can dive independently to 700 metres and rescue 35 crew at a time from a stricken sub inclined at 45 degrees. (*Remora* has been tested by the Canadians to 547 metres on a practice target, albeit inclined at 60 degrees.)

It is not the first time *Remora* has been the source of embarrassment. It was ordered from the Canadians in a bit of a rush in 1995 to be ready for HMAS *Collins'* first deep dive trial. A significant shortfall was that the shape, weight and launch and recovery details had not been exactly specified in the order. Delivery by air came 23 weeks later, and with it the realisation that a pretty sophisticated mother ship (MOSHIP) would also be required for the awkward device.

Australia II plan tacks and gibes

A syndicate led by Warren Jones, director of the successful 1983 challenge for the America's Cup, almost failed in its efforts to borrow *Australia II* from the WA Maritime Museum and take it to the Isle of Wight for an August regatta to celebrate 150th anniversary of the original race. Almost as soon as it took office earlier this year the new Labor government signalled it had far more important social priorities than to sponsor the venture. Nor would it waive a $50,000 charge to use the yacht. Hopes by the syndicate that tycoon Alan Bond or his divorced wife Eileen might be able to offer sponsorship failed to materialise by the original deadline of 30 March. However, on 4 April came news that a mystery overseas donor was intending to provide funding. On the same date came news in a multi-page feature in *The West Australian* that a computer programmer has revealed duplicate back-up tapes relating to international financial wheelings and dealings of the now defunct Bond Corporation which went into receivership in 1990 with record-Australian losses of $2.2 billion dollars. Still-smarting Australian shareholders recently learned from newspaper reports that since being released from a WA prison over other matters, Mr Bond allegedly now resides in a multi-million dollar penthouse opposite London's Kensington Palace and frequents "fashionable restaurants favoured by Royals." On 9 May at a gala Royal Perth Yacht Club function came an announcement that Shell Development Australia would contribute $200,000. Other sponsors were reported to be Seven Network, P&O Nedlloyd and a mystery anonymous donor in Texas. Fremantle Maritime Museum director Mr Graham Henderson and Ms Eileen Bond were featured guests at the function.

Australia II sails past its new home on 19 May prior to going to the UK

Photo: P. Weaver

Meantime the site for the purpose-built $35 million dollar building initiated by the previous Liberal government to house *Australia II* is a hive of activity. The modernistic gluelam-wood, concrete and glass structure is taking shape quickly, and on the old Swandock slipway alongside, the former RAN submarine HMAS *Ovens* has had a hessian cover lifted to reveal a new paint job.

Toothsome Patagonian toothfish still sucks 'em south

On Good Friday came the news that forty Australian defence personnel had secretly been sent to South Africa to embark with the South African navy on an a high seas intercept of a Togo (west Africa) registered fishing boat *South*

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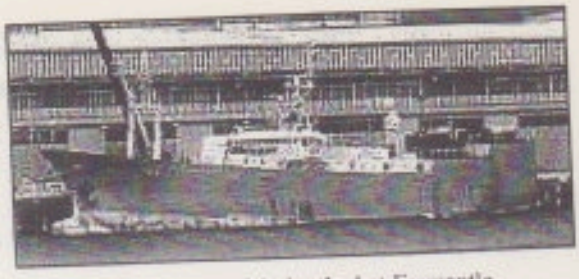
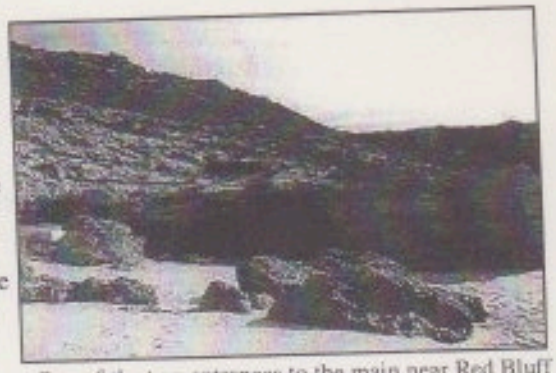
Tonnni fleeing westward from Australia fisheries patrol vessel *Southern Supporter* with a freezer full of Patagonian toothfish allegedly taken in Australian territorial waters near Heard Island. The chase lasted 14 days until with the assistance of the South African navy the vessel had been boarded by RAN sailors and Australian SAS soldiers, who then brought it and its 44 crew to Fremantle. Federal Fisheries Minister Wilson Tuckey reckoned the damage done to toothfish stocks will involve a fifty year recovery. *South Tonnni* is the third arrest of a foreign boat accused of fishing in Australian Heard-Macdonald Islands fishing zone, which is about 4,000 km SW of Albany. It's frozen catch was unloaded at Fremantle and put into cold-storage pending the trial of the skipper in June.



South Tonnni safely berthed at Fremantle
Photo: P. Weaver

New search for *Kormoran* camera unsuccessful

In April, Geraldton identity Max Cramer led a small expedition to search for a Leica 35mm still-camera purportedly hidden by a *Kormoran* survivor in 1941 beneath the sand in a large shoreside cave near Red Bluff on the NW coast. The group used a portable radar to scan the sandy floor, and the roof of the cave, without success. The prospect of finding the camera has excited numerous searchers over the past half century. November this year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the *Sydney-Kormoran* battle. The Carnarvon history group is planning a local display of artifacts and memorabilia.



One of the two entrances to the main near Red Bluff
Photo: P. Weaver

AE2 salvage rejected by government

In mid April the Australian government announced that it would not sponsor the estimated A$30 million dollar salvage of the Australian submarine AE2 sunk during the WW1 Gallipoli campaign. Two informative reports by maritime archaeologist Tim Smith, with maps and photographs involving *AE2* are available for downloading in PDF format from the website of the NSW Heritage Office.

Top French award for independent historian

Congratulations to WA dwelling French ex-patriot Philippe Godard for admission to *The Legion of Honour*. He received France's highest award in recognition of his engineering record in the Pacific, and his contribution to French culture and history, especially his work on early explorations of WA by French mariners. He was instrumental in the recent recovery of an ancient French coin and bottle left at Shark Bay by an early expedition. His research also contributed to the successful WA Maritime Museum expedition to the Falklands and Ascension Island, which was reported on pages 6 & 7. It is not the first such award for his family. His engineering father Jean received it for work with French atmospheric nuclear tests in the Sahara. Son Philippe Godard has his name to 36 books, including one on the *Batavia* incident, and has contributed to the AAMH Newsletter. Most of his working life has been based at New Caledonia..

Researcher Philippe Godard at work.
Photo: P. Weaver

Stop Press: Geraldton's HMAS *Sydney* memorial to be completed for dedication in November. Big donations from local shires and new WA Labor government. Nothing yet from the Howard Govt. Details next AAMH Newsletter.

The *Quarterly Newsletter - The Australian Association for Maritime History* is a lively forum for news, comment and opinion on matters involving maritime history. Views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Australian Association for Maritime History. Contributions are always welcome. Sometimes editing is applied for reasons pertaining to clarity or length. The editor is **Dr. Paul R. Weaver**, 23 Waddell Road, Palmyra, Western Australia 6157. Email pweaver@starwon.com.au In 2001 the publication will go to the printers towards the end of February, May, August and mid-November. Material for inclusion should be sent direct to the editor well prior to these times. If return of material is required please enclose a stamped addressed envelope ⚓ ISSN 1440-5164

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At 8 km distant - Silhouetted against the north tip of Garden Island WA, French nuclear submarine *Perle* departs Cockburn Sound under watchful eyes on an RAN patrol vessel.
See story page 3. Photo: P. Weaver