WELCOME TO JAPAN

HMAS Ballarat on final stages of Asian deployment

Bravery rewarded

Ceremonies held around the country to award group bravery citations to personnel involved in SIEV 36 disaster

Michael Brooke

THE courage and heroism of a small group of Navy personnel was officially acknowledged when they received a group of Navy personnel was officially awarded the award for bravery at Government House on May 10.

In Darwin, two Navy and two Air Force personnel, ABCK Quinton Boorman, ABMT Tom Gallant, ABBM Michael Lordan, Air Force personnel, ABCK Quinton Boorman, CPL Brad Bendeich and SGT Sharon Jager, of the Transit Security Element, received the award at a ceremony on May 10.

ABCK Boorman said the citation made him out to be a hero but he was just doing the job for which he was trained.

“Never waste no time rescuing the civilians and our own people from the water where there was a lot of burning debris,” he said.

“Our training and special camaraderie among the crew enabled us to respond in the way that we did to such a tragedy.”

In Brisbane, three members of HMAS Albany were presented with the award at NSW Government House on March 20.

LSCK Maria Mathews, of HMAS Parramatta, ABMT Tom Gallant and ABBM Matt Pierce, both from the SIEV, received the award in recognition of their efforts rescuing injured and burnt people from the water and assisting medical teams after SIEV 36 exploded.

ABMT Gallant said he remembers how the crew “clicked into gear” immediately.

“It was a very horrific scene with a lot of casualties but rather than go into shock, our training kicked in like we were on auto-pilot, and we responded swiftly to the crisis,” he said.

“All the boarding party got straight back into the RHIBs and set about rescuing the survivors.”

ABBM Pierce was on his first sea-posting with Albany when the explosion occurred.

“We wasted no time rescuing the civilians and our own people from the water where there was a lot of burning debris,” he said.

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White on track

MAJ Cameron Jamieson

ADF personnel are proving they are made of “the white stuff” as part of the Australian contingent to embark on Pacific Partnership 2012 aboard the massive white-painted US hospital ship USNS Mercy during its stopover in Guam.

A team of 29 ADF command and medical specialist personnel have joined more than 1000 international military and non-government organisation (NGO) personnel on the ship.

Another 12 engineers are already working on building an emergency care facility and renovating a clinic on the Indonesian island of Talaud as part of the same mission.

Australian contingent commander CMDR Ken Walters said the contingent had been warmly welcomed on board.

“We are a truly integrated force, with our people working side by side with people from the US, 13 partner nations and 23 NGOs,” he said.

“The statistics for this mission are staggering, and they are all aimed at making things better for the lives of the people in the host nations we will visit.”

Now in its seventh year, Pacific Partnership is an annual US Pacific Fleet-sponsored training and readiness mission drawing together partner nations, host nations and NGOs to create an Asia-Pacific collective to respond to natural disasters.

The mission will deliver medical, dental, veterinary and engineering services to locations in Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam and Cambodia during two-week stops in each country.

ON THE WAY: POWTR Kylie Faulks, of HMAS Sirius, stands in front of her home for the next six weeks – USNS Mercy. Photo: MAJ Cameron Jamieson

Setting sail for the Pacific rim

Michael Brooke

HMAS Darwin has set sail for Exercise Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) where she is scheduled to conduct firings of the Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile (ESSM) and torpedoes while embedded with the USN Nimitz Carrier Strike Group.

Darwin was farewelled by more than 300 family and friends from Fleet Base East on May 25 to what is shaping up to be a challenging five-month deployment that includes Exercises RIMPAC, Kakadu and Singapore.

CO Darwin CMDR Brian Schlegel said RIMPAC and the associated activities provided an opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate the capability, professionalism and opportunity for Navy to demonstrate

“We are scheduled to participate in planning conferences, sporting activities, receptions and, of course, the air warfare, tactical communication, anti-submarine warfare that will be conducted with the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group.

“It will be a steep learning curve as we perform our role within the carrier strike group and hone our air warfare competencies.”

Embedding with the USS Nimitz Strike Group will enable Darwin to validate important lessons from Exercise Talisman Sabre when she operated with the George Washington Strike Group.

The embed will enhance coalition interoperability by aligning key systems and procedures while preparing the RAN for the introduction of the Hobart-class Air Warfare Destroyer and the reinvigoration of high-end war fighting.

RIMPAC will give Darwin’s crew an opportunity to cross-deck to Nimitz and US Navy Aegis-equipped destroyers that will provide a glimpse of the capabilities coming with the AWDs.

WEEO LCDR Dan Crocker said the ESSM missile firings would be a first for many of Darwin’s new team of electrical technicians.

“The missile exercise will be a major milestone, because not many of the crew have taken part in collective training and live fire exercises before,” he said.

ABET Tom King joined Darwin in April on his first deployment and is looking forward to seeing new ports while mastering new skills in a major exercise.

AB King said his biggest challenge would be integrating with the ship and the work team.

“Embedding with the US Navy will be a steep but rewarding learning curve for me,” he said.

While transiting to Pearl Harbor, Darwin will visit Apia, Samoa, to participate in the Samoan 50th anniversary of independence celebrations followed by a short visit to Nuku’alofa, Tonga.

ON THE WAY: POWTR Kylie Faulks, of HMAS Sirius, stands in front of her home for the next six weeks – USNS Mercy. Photo: MAJ Cameron Jamieson

ALL ABOARD: HMAS Darwin’s ship’s company members haul in the last line as she sails from Fleet Base East on a four-month deployment. Photo: ABIS Sarah Williams

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SCENIC PASSAGE: HMAS Perth sails through the scenic islands off the Vancouver coast.

Not so strait manoeuvres

CMDR Andrew Nelson

HMAS Perth has achieved a frigate’s equivalent of threading the eye of a needle after piloting one of the most challenging but scenic passages in the world – the Juan De Fuca Strait in Canada.

The Anzac-class FFH reaffirmed Australia’s close ties to Canada with a visit to the Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt in Victoria, Canada.

Activities included a busy program of anti-ship missile defence demonstrations, industry briefings and participation in the Victoria Day march, where HMAS Perth personnel marched in a place of honour ahead of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) at the annual Esquimalt parade.

After departing Esquimalt on May 24, Perth turned her bow east then north before conducting pilotage training through the myriad islands and tricky currents that comprise the historic waterway.

With two Canadian Navy pilots on board to provide local knowledge, the officers of the watch (OOW) and trainee maritime warfare officers derived enormous benefit from undertaking the challenging pilotage planning and execution.

CO HMAS Perth CAPT Mal Wise trained with the RCN as a young officer and reminisced on earning his bridge watchkeeping certificate, then serving as the “specials” OOW on board the Canadian frigate HMCS Qu’Appelle, which frequently navigated the same waters.

“There is nothing more effective than face-to-face contact with mates for developing relationships between navies as well as nations,” CAPT Wise said.

By late afternoon the ship had anchored for the night for the crew to enjoy a beach barbecue and impromptu concert by the ship’s band No Direction (no link to the conduct of the pilotage).

During the visit, HMAS Perth also demonstrated the recently fitted, Australian designed and built CEAFAR radar and CEAMOUNT Missile Control Illuminator.

While on deployment to the US west coast and Canada, HMAS Perth will visit several other ports and then participate in RIMPAC.

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CEREMONIAL SUNSET: Personnel on board HMAS Ballarat lit by the Shanghai skyline.

IN PASSING: USS Blue Ridge and HMAS Ballarat transit alongside each other in the South China Sea. Photo: US Navy

LCDR Simon Franklin

WHISKY tango charlie – Welcome to China was the signalled greeting given to HMAS Ballarat by warships of the People’s Liberation Army-Navy (PLAN-N), as Ballarat made her way into Shanghai on May 17. Her arrival in China marked the 40th anniversary of Australia-China diplomatic relations.

The Anzac-class Guided Missile Frigate has since berthed in Japan on the final stage of its Asian deployment after completing a series of exercises with the maritime forces of China and Korea.

After a short port visit to the city of Kure, HMAS Ballarat was scheduled to participate in the Australian-Japanese bilateral Exercise Nichi Gou Trident 2012 from June 4-6.

The Asian deployment began in China with a busy nine-hour pilotage which included transits of the Yangtze and Huangpu Rivers. Ballarat was escorted by the frigate Anging and berthed adjacent to the famous Bund district in the centre of Shanghai for a five-day port visit.

At the welcome ceremony, resplendent with guard and band, CO Ballarat CMDR Jonathan Earley thanked the senior PLAN-N representative, Deputy Chief of Staff Shanghai Naval Garrison, CAPT Li Jun, for the warm welcome.

“It is indeed an honour for us to be here this year, marking the 40th anniversary of Australia-China diplomatic ties, and what better way to herald this event than to be berthed in such a spectacular location,” CMDR Earley said.

The port visit was a success with a large number of official activities conducted between the PLA-N and Ballarat.

These included reciprocal ship visits, an official reception and banquet hosted by the Commander of the Shanghai Naval Garrison, a cocktail party on board Ballarat jointly hosted by the Australian ambassador to China, and a friendly game of basketball.

The ship’s company thoroughly enjoyed interacting with their PLA-N counterparts, with all ranks doing their bit to help strengthen the relationship between the two navies.

“Our relationship is an important one, and within the maritime domain as navies we can help strengthen that bond through visits such as these both here and in Australia.”

On the way to China, Ballarat also conducted an impromptu passing and photo exercise with US 7th Fleet Flagship USS Blue Ridge on May 8 in the South China Sea.

The exercise provided an excellent occasion for a cross deck between the two ships and eight Australian and 11 American sailors undertook the exchange.

For ABBM Cody Nicol, the chance to cross deck to Blue Ridge was a new and exciting experience as it was the first time he had been on a USN ship.

“From the captain down, the crew was very welcoming. I was blown away on how they lived in 100 man messes and how they had dispensers for soft drink and chocolate milk at lunch,” he said.

Naval News will feature more from the final stages of HMAS Ballarat’s four-month deployment through Asia in the next edition. Further details can be found on the Navy website: http://www.navy.gov.au/Main_Page

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Winner praises training

Michael Brooke

THE winner of this year’s Queen’s Gold Medal said his training was vital in securing one of Navy’s most prestigious awards.

LEUT Charles Marchant, of HMAS Parramatta, has been recognised for his outstanding performance while posted to HMA Ships Darwin and Tobruk.

CN VADM Ray Griggs presented LEUT Marchant with the medal at a ceremony attended by HMAS Parramatta personnel at Fleet Headquarters.

VADM Griggs said the award was presented in recognition of LEUT Marchant’s outstanding performance during the Engineer Officer Application Course (EOAC) and Weapons Electrical Engineer Officer Certificate of Competence (WEC).

“I commend LEUT Marchant for his outstanding achievement and performance on EOAC and WEC and subsequent dedication and commitment to excellence during postings to HMA Ships Darwin and Tobruk,” he said.

“The Queen’s Gold Medal is presented annually to the officer who has exhibited the most exemplary conduct, performance of duty and level of achievement while undergoing initial and application course training.”

Paying tribute to Navy’s signature behaviours, LEUT Marchant said second best should never be an option.

“This award is about being the best that you can be,” he said. “Even if no one is watching.”

LEUT Marchant said the training he received enabled him to answer the challenge of being a junior officer, which required learning from senior sailors while also providing leadership and inspiration.

His training mantra also supports the Fleet operating concept, which is designed to maximise training opportunities and achieve directed levels of preparation in an enduring and cost-effective manner.

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE: CN VADM Ray Griggs presents the Queen’s Gold Medal to LEUT Charles Marchant in front of his family and HMAS Parramatta personnel at Fleet Headquarters, Sydney.

Photo: LSIS Brenton Freind

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A NAVY pilot has been named dux of course, surpassing Air Force pilots in one of the ADF’s most demanding courses.

After 10 months of gruelling training at RAAF Pearce’s 2 Flying Training School, two Navy pilots, ASLT Caleb Muggeridge and SBLT Brody Marris, and 10 Air Force pilots received their wings.

The parade on April 19 was a particularly special day for SBLT Marris who made several trips to the podium to accept course awards.

These included Most Proficient at Instrument Flying, Most Proficient Pilot and to cap it all off, the dux of course award.

SBLT Marris said the 226 pilots course provided a number of challenges but was something he had always wanted to do.

“Flying is something that I’ve always been interested in since I was a kid, it’s something that has always fascinated me,” he said.

“Some aspects of flying are quite challenging and everyone had areas of the course that they struggled with or didn’t do so well in. It’s been a steep learning curve.”

His exceptional performance has given him the opportunity to fly Hawk aircraft at RAAF Pearce’s 79SQN and a future in the fast-jet community.

“I’m pretty rapt to have the opportunity to fly jets. From what I’ve seen so far at the squadron the flying is fun and challenging,” he said.

“It’s a bit of a culture shock for me going to an Air Force squadron when I was expecting to go to a Navy one.

“Here, the atmosphere is a bit more up-tempo, I think that’s just the nature of what they do, but I’m just starting to get used to it and it’s actually pretty good.”

The pilot courses predominately consist of RAAF students, but Navy pilots are also required to complete the course.

“Due to our role at sea we place a heavy reliance on instrument flying and this course has a great emphasis on that,” SBLT Marris said.

**FLYING HIGH:** SBLT Brody Marris receives his trophy for dux of course from AIRCDRE Noel Derwort, CSC Commander Aerospace Operations Support Group, and Pilatus representative Mark Thoreson. Inset, SBLT Marris and ASLT Caleb Muggeridge at the awards ceremony.
Local hero hailed for saving lives

CMDR Greg Swinden

DUBBED the Angel of the Gap, former able seaman Don Ritchie has died at his home in Vaucluse, Sydney aged 85.

His home was near the infamous ‘Gap’ and for more than 50 years he prevented many people from leaping to their deaths from the cliff overlooking the sea.

In April 1970, Don was awarded the NSW Royal Humane Society Bronze Medal for saving the life of a man attempting to jump off the Gap.

In the Australia Day honours list for 2006 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for services to the community through programs to prevent suicide. Also as part of his 2011 Australian of the Year Local Hero Award he had his picture placed on a limited edition stamp commemorating the 2011 Australians of the Year.

On several occasions Don, and his wife Moya, prevented men and women from taking their lives by talking to them and offering them a cup of tea.

It is estimated that some 150 people owe their lives to Don and Moya for this simple act of kindness. Don said, “It shows people who are planning to commit suicide, if you can be nice to them and invite them home, this gives them a chance to change their mind.”

Don was born at Vaucluse, Sydney in June 1926 and educated at Vaucluse Primary School and Scots College.

In his spare time he was a keen sailor and a member of the Vaucluse Amateur Sailing Association. In June 1944 he joined the RAN, as an ordinary seaman, and after his training at HMAS Cerberus he was posted to the cruiser HMAS Hobart in December 1944. The ship was soon sent north to operate with the US 7th Fleet.

Initially Don’s action station was below decks in one of the six-inch shell magazines, but later he became a loader on one of Hobart’s twin four-inch gun mounts.

Don saw service in operations in the Philippines, New Guinea waters and the landing of Australian troops at Tarakan, Labuan and Balikpapan in Borneo.

He was also on board Hobart at the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay in early September 1945.

Don left the Navy in May 1946 with the rank of able seaman. Initially he was a travelling salesman and then a steward before joining the insurance firm Legal & General in the early 1950s. He worked with Legal and General until he retired as a senior executive in 1981.

Don was a keen naval historian and never lost his love for the sea.

In his fox-hole, he was able to fire at the second of two low flying Japanese Zeros with a .303 rifle. One Zero subsequently force-landed at Melville Island with a .303 bullet hole in its oil tank that had caused its powerful engine to seize.

The pilot, SGT Hajime Toyoshima, was the first Japanese POW captured by Allied forces. He subsequently died in a mass escape from Cowra on August 4, 1944.

Mr Sharp was posted to Darwin throughout the sustained Japanese bombings over seven months until August 1942.

With the lack of supplies, he and other personnel relied on local resources for food including shootin wildlife and constructing a substantial fishing net to take advantage of the large tidal flows.

During his career he also flew with RAAF Lockheed Hudson and USAF Mitchell bomber reconnaissance aircraft as a Naval observer over the Timor Sea.

He was discharged from active service at the rank of lieutenant in 1946 and remained in the RANVR in 1976 and was awarded the 1939-1945 Pacific Star medal in 1995, after restrictions on information about the attacks on Darwin were lifted.

“Darwin was not considered to be a war zone,” he said.

Michael Flynn

AT 95 years of age Syd Sharp’s 68th Anzac Day march held special significance because of this year’s 70th anniversary of the Darwin bombing raids.

Declining the office of a taxi or a jeep for the Sydney march, Mr Sharp said he would march until he couldn’t.

“If I can’t march, I will not be participating,” he said.

Mr Sharp has marched every Anzac Day since 1947 and said “God willing” he planned to march again next year.

His involvement with the Anzac Day march started when he served as a flag bearer at the 1937 and 1938 services as an NCO in the Army Militia.

He was commissioned as a sub-lieutenant into the RANVR in February 1943, as Specialist and was posted to HMAS Melville in Darwin as a Harbour Defence Officer in 1941.

When the first wave of Japanese carrier-borne aircraft appeared on the horizon off Darwin on February 19, 1942, he assumed they were from the US.

“I thought they were the Yankees … until the bombs started falling,” he said.

He witnessed the devastation that occurred in the city and in the harbour.

The tonnage dropped that day was more than at Pearl Harbor (from the same Imperial Japanese Navy task force) two months before.

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Michael Flynn

VETERAN MARCHER: WWII veteran Syd Sharp with his wife Linda during this year’s Anzac Day march in Sydney. Photo: PO Darren Pahlke
Charitable walk for proud pup

LEUT Todd Austin

IT WAS paws to the pavement for a 20-month-old Irish wolfhound called Murphy who marched in step with household pets across Nowra for the RSPCA’s Million Paws Walk.

Murphy’s owner POET Olivia Usback was one of several Navy pet owners who took part in the annual fundraising drive on May 20 to raise money for their local RSPCA animal shelter.

Murphy stood out from his four-legged friends this time around, with POET Usback given special permission to dress her pet in Navy’s distinctive disruptive pattern uniform (DPNU).

Murphy and POET Usback had special clearance to use the uniform, which had been made by POET Usback from discarded DPNUs collected by HMAS Albatross’ clothing store.

“I used to volunteer at the RSPCA shelter, so the Million Paws Walk is very special to me,” POET Usback said.

She said while Murphy wasn’t an RSPCA dog, he was once in a similar situation.

“When we came across Murphy, he was on his way to the shelter to an uncertain future,” she said.

“His former owners couldn’t care for him any more.”

To assist Murphy with his efforts, several other Navy members joined in to raise funds for RSPCA.

“All together with the assistance of HMAS Albatross and other members of the ‘Albatross Dog Squad’ we raised more than $400 for the RSPCA this year,” POET Usback said.

There are plans in motion already for next year’s event with the four-legged friends from HMAS Albatross sending out invitations for their HMAS Creswell counterparts to join in the fun and form a ‘Shoalhaven Dog Squad’.

The RSPCA Million Paws Walk is one of the biggest fundraising events for the RSPCA.

It involves thousands of people and dogs registering, fundraising and participating in walks held across Australia.

BIG EFFORT: POET Olivia Usback, of HMAS Albatross, and her Irish wolfhound Murphy show off the doggy-DPNUs after the Million Paws Walk in Nowra, NSW.

Photo: ABIS Hayley Clarke

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MIGHT AND THUNDER

ACCORDING to Greek mythology, the fish-tailed god Triton (the son of Poseidon) carried a twisted conch shell which he blew like a trumpet to calm or raise the seas. However, it was the Navy’s minor war vessels that stirred up a flurry of activity off the coast of Darwin when the Fleet took part in the aptly named Exercise Triton Thunder.

HMA Ships Larrakia, Ararat, Gascoyne, Diamantina, Balikpapan, Shepparton and Benalla were joined by 723SQN, five AS-350 Squirrels, and an LCM8 amphibious landing craft for the exercise, which took place in the Northern Australian Exercise Area (NAXA) and alongside HMAS Coonawarra from May 7-18.

The exercise aimed to further develop littoral warfare and in-company competencies, in a joint service environment with surface, air and land objectives. This ensured confidence in the Fleet’s general warfare capabilities, in-company competencies and amphibious interoperability.

After two weeks of intensive training, the units proved their newly refined skills in a major beach extraction serial at Dundee Beach, near Darwin.

The HMA Ships and aviation assets launched into action.

With the help of Army LCM8 landing craft, operated by 36 Water Transport Troop, they delivered Unimog trucks and personnel to the beach to extract a high value target. The target was then evacuated by sea to safety.

On completion of the beach extraction serial, the Commander of the Minor War Vessels Sea Training Unit, CMDR Alex Hawes, said he was satisfied with the performance of his assets. "The ADF has a long history of amphibious operations and the interoperability demonstrated this week between all contributors holds us in good stead for much larger ventures," CMDR Hawes said.

"While the scale is small, the structure is very sound. The timeline was met and the quality of information provided at key decision points was unprecedented in this exercise context.”

Exercise Triton Thunder is held biannually from Darwin and Cairns.

AT SEA: ABBM Clayton Marshall prepares to fire the 12.7mm Browning machine gun on board HMAS Balikpapan.

DEPARTING: HMAS Larrakia departs Darwin for the sea phase of Triton Thunder, followed by Indonesian naval vessels KRI Tongkak and KRI Kakap.

ON THE WAY: Crew and two Squirrels from 723SQN inside a RAAF C-17 Globemaster ready for transport from HMAS Albatross to Darwin for Exercise Triton Thunder.

BOARDING SKILLS: Members from the Indonesian naval vessel KRI Kakap conduct a mock boarding of the Jenny Wright K.

ON WATCH: ABBM Colin Lees takes up his position on board HMAS Balikpapan while conducting a Force Protection Exercise.

FLYING HIGH: A Squirrel patrols the NAXA.

TEAM WORK: An Army Unimog drives on to HMAS Balikpapan during a beach extraction serial.

EXERCISE SUCCESS: HMAS Benalla sails into Darwin Harbour on completion of Exercise Triton Thunder.

Setting Out: CAPT Heath Robertson, of Sea Training Group, takes control of HMAS Ararat with CO Assault Six LEUT Rob Cucchi.

VARIED ROLES: PO3M Sean Conway, of Minor War Vessels – Sea Training Group, role-plays as a member of an enemy force during a beach extraction serial.

Exercise Triton Thunder, SBLT Sarah West and LEUT Patrick McGuire report.
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DIRTY WORK: CPO Andrew Perry, of HMAS Waterhen on deployment with the International Stabilisation Force, organises a clean-up of the Camp Phoenix grounds in Dili, East Timor.

FAMILY TIES: ABCSO Kate Bowerman catches up with her family as HMAS Warramunga has a three-day stop over at Hobart. The ship has 10 Tasmanian-born personnel embarked who were able to spend some time back in their home state.

FINELY TUNED: Guitarist and singer Christian Power, who is part of the Forces Entertainment Tour, helps ABMUSN Greg Turner set up equipment during preparations for a concert in Dili, East Timor.

LADY WRITER: ABWTR Laura Johnson, of HMAS Newcastle, enters data to keep personnel files up to date. She is also a member of the ship’s medical emergency team and attends to any casualties that might happen on board.

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* Free local call. Calls from mobile and pay phones may incur charges.
She never made it home

The 70th anniversary of the loss of HMAS Nestor brought back vivid memories for one of her last surviving crew, SGT Dave Morely reports.

She proudly represented Australia in the hunt for the German battleship Bismarck, and was the first Australian ship to sink a U-boat in World War II, but HMAS Nestor never graced Australia’s shores.

The N-class destroyer – built in Scotland and commissioned in February 1941, as an Australian warship crewed by Australians – remained the property of the RN.

Former Oerlikon gunner Ken Brown, now 91 and living at Barooga in southern NSW, is one of a handful of Nestor’s surviving crew.

“Nestor was my first destroyer and, to me, she looked beautiful,” he said.

Mr Brown said he wasn’t aware that Nestor was the only Australian ship involved in the hunt for the Bismarck until after the action.

“I was then very proud that we’d taken part, and I still am today,” he said.

On July 24, 1941, Nestor took on board 470 soldiers and crew after the merchant ship in which they were taking passage, Sydney Star, was torpedoed during an Italian E-boat attack on the Malta convoy.

Determined air attacks followed and Mr Brown said they were under constant attack for three days.

“Some of the Army types hid under the torpedo tubes ... last place I’d hide,” he said.

On December 15, 1941, Nestor became the second Australian destroyer to sink an enemy submarine in WWII and the first to claim a German U-boat.

Mr Brown said Nestor was searching for submarines before joining a Gibraltar-bound convoy.

“We sighted a U-boat on the surface off Cape St Vincent, Portugal, at a distance of about seven miles,” he said.

“We opened fire with our main armament, forcing it to submerge.

“After gaining contact we made a successful attack with depth charges.”

Nestor was credited with the destruction of U-127 and her 51 crew.

Nestor left the Mediterranean in January 1942, and formed part of the escort for the aircraft carrier HMS Indomitable, engaged in ferrying aircraft to the Malayan/Java theatre.

She patrolled the Indian Ocean before returning to the Mediterranean theatre in June 1942, where she sailed as part of the Operation Vigorous escort force, protecting a supply convoy to Malta.

On June 15, Nestor was heavily damaged when she was straddled by bombs from an Italian high-level bomber which caused the boiler room to flood.

Surgeon-Lieutenant Shane Watson was later awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for attempting to rescue four stokers from the flooded boiler room.

The stokers were the only fatalities from the attack, however several others, including Mr Brown, were wounded.

“The blast knocked me off the gun platform and I hit my back on the bulkhead behind,” he said.

Attempts by the RN J-class destroyer HMS Javelin to tow the ship failed as lines parted and Nestor took on more water.

Nestor was finally abandoned and scuttled off Crete the next morning with depth charges from HMS Javelin.

Although only in RAN service for 16 months, HMAS Nestor had an action-packed career.

Join Team Chloe 2012

Congratulations to ADCU Member Chloe Esposito for winning the Bronze Medal in Modern Pentathlon World Cup #2 in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil!

We’re targeting relatives of Defence personnel turning 30 something.

NAVY personnel have been reminded about the appropriate wearing of disruptive pattern Navy uniform (DPNU) in public.

Current DPNU policy allows personnel to wear DPNU in public when conducting routine domestic duties while travelling to and from their workplace.

This includes collecting children from school, shopping, buying petrol, and travelling on public transport (excluding commercial air travel).

RADM Tim Barrett said the policy gave personnel flexibility and freedom and helped promote Navy through greater visibility in the community.

While he said the vast majority of personnel were wearing their uniforms correctly, some personnel had been reported wearing DPNU at non-sanctioned social events or functions.

“Currently, the flexibility afforded in the policy has been taken advantage of by some members who are wearing the DPNU to pubs and clubs on social occasions,” he said.

“This has the potential to undermine the positive public image of Navy.

“Personnel must take responsibility for upholding the reputation of our Navy and to wear DPNU ashore in a manner befitting our service.”

Do not wear DPNU at:

- Bars
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- Race tracks and betting institutions
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- Political events
- Any other place or situation that may cause disrepute

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Where DPNU can be worn

We wear with pride: Wearing DPNU at non-sanctioned events is not appropriate.

NEW LOOK: The Australia room at the new Russell Conference Centre is one of six specially equipped rooms.

Russell conference centre open

THE Russell Conference Centre was officially opened on May 18 by Chief Operating Officer Simon Lewis.

The Conference Centre is available for meetings, conferences and workshops. The multi-use facility features six rooms, four of which have video-teleconference facilities, including one secure system.

Use of the centre will help reduce Defence travel and external hiring costs, as well as deliver improved productivity through collaborative workspaces and provide computer access for an increasingly mobile workforce.

Catering can be supported by a catering company and the centre also features two kitchenettes.

Bookings for the Russell Conference Centre can be made on (02) 6266 4499 or bookingscprus.conference@defence.gov.au

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Back to school

LEUT Trent Bancroft
A former student returned to his old high school in style in April.
LEUT Kye Hayman was ecstatic about the opportunity to return to Kawana Waters State College in Caloundra, Qld, with Seahawk crew from 816SQN.

“Having gone to this school, it’s nice to be able to return the favour and motivate some of the current students,” LEUT Hayman said.

During the visit, LEUT Hayman delivered a presentation to the entire school and invited students to chat with the crew and sit in the cockpit of the Seahawk.

“I showed them some photos, and told them about modern-day pirates and what a threat is today,” he said.

186SQN, which is home to the AWD, is also located at Kawana and attempts to visit the city a number of times per year.

When the students got to the AWD shipyard where they saw steel blocks being constructed for the first AWD, HMAS Hobart.

The team assessed the accommodation spaces, communal areas and facilities and provided comments on the suitability and functionality of the spaces, as well as recommendations for improvements.

As part of the review, the team visited the AWD Alliance in Adelaide to undertake project briefings and draw reviews and took part in a tour of the AWD shipyard where they saw the width and height of the sailors’ bunks.

HMAS Sydney’s team have returned the favour and invited Alliance personnel and Taylor Bros management to visit the ship to allow them to gain a better understanding of current shipboard issues.

The feedback from HMAS Sydney’s company, together with recommendations by Taylor Bros, will now be given to the AWD Alliance for consideration.

LEUT Jeff Topping, of 816SQN, at Hayman, POA Nathan Minnet and FLYING VISIT:
A FORMER student returned to his high school in style in April.
LEUT Trent Bancroft
march in Caloundra and Kawana. conducted a flypast for the Anzac Day Topping and PO Nathan Minnet, also the city a number of times per year.

LEUT Hayman said.

As part of the review, the team visited the AWD Alliance in Adelaide to undertake project briefings and draw reviews and took part in a tour of the AWD shipyard where they saw steel blocks being constructed for the first AWD, HMAS Hobart.

The team then travelled to Tasmania to tour the Taylor Bros site.

Deputy Director AWD Capability Development CMDR Michael Doherty said it was a comprehensive review that included just about everything.

“We inspected the overall layout as well as the prefabricated compartments, modular cabins, communal furnishings and equipment,” CMDR Doherty said.

WO Connors said the team was asked to focus on three areas.

“Workplace health and safety, functionality and those things that are nice to have were the criteria for the review,” he said.

“Overall, we found the habitability standard of the AWD a marked improvement over the FFG.

“I was particularly impressed with the AWD shipyard where they saw steel blocks being constructed for the first AWD, HMAS Hobart.”

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LIVING spaces on board the new Hobart-class Air Warfare Destroyers (AWD) have come under close inspection and scrutiny by a review team of four members from HMAS Sydney.

In April, the team took part in a “habitability review”, designed to seek feedback from Navy personnel on the accommodation modules being fabricated for the ships.

It also gave personnel the chance to offer suggestions to refine and enhance the living spaces within the bounds of the current ship and accommodation design based on their knowledge of life at sea.

The outfit accommodation project coordinator for the AWD Alliance, Brad Ginman, said the review was part of the consultation process with Navy by the Alliance.

“An interior design review was conducted in 2010 where Navy was engaged to finalise soft furnishings, colour schemes and accommodation space finishes,” Mr Ginman said.

“Having members of HMAS Sydney’s company travel to Hobart where these spaces are being fabricated was a great initiative and will ensure we deliver a product Navy is happy with.”

“The feedback was very positive and gave the spaces a tick of approval.”

HMAS Sydney personnel who participated in the review were WO Michael Connors, POCSS Grant Ireland, LSCSO Michelle Drewett and LSMT Matthew Blackwell.

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Put your best foot forward

Barefoot training isn’t always the right fit, Lauren Norton reports.

Finding the right running shoe for your foot can be difficult, but what if the best shoe is no shoe?

Taking your daily jog barefoot may not be something you’re willing to try, but what if you could improve your running technique and reduce the risk of chronic injuries without sacrificing performance?

New research has sparked a debate in the health and fitness industry over whether running barefoot is a more natural way of running. This is in contrast to running shoe companies, which have spent millions of dollars researching and developing running shoes that cater to different foot types.

In a world where so many people run with the same shoes, the idea of running shoeless might seem far-fetched. However, some professional runners and athletes have been proving it for years.

How barefoot running works

One of the main benefits of going barefoot is that it reduces the risk of chronic injuries. Barefoot running uses the natural structure of the foot to absorb shock, rather than relying on the shock-absorbing properties of a shoe. This reduces the risk of stress fractures, plantar fasciitis, and other overuse injuries.

Another benefit is that it reduces the amount of energy you need to use to run. When you run barefoot, your body is able to move more efficiently, with less energy wasted. This can improve your performance, especially when running long distances.

Adverse effects

However, barefoot running is not for everyone. Some people may find it uncomfortable or difficult to run for long distances without their shoes. Others may be more prone to injury due to their foot structure.

So what will be right for you?

Running in a heavy shoe doesn’t make a lot of sense when you’re after more efficiency, however, because every foot is different, one type of shoe won’t work for everyone. The same goes for deciding between minimalist shoes or going barefoot.

Barefoot running seems to encourage people to run on the balls or soles of the feet. This forefoot strike pattern has been shown to reduce impact-related injuries when running.

However, most people will have developed a rear-foot strike pattern where their heel hits the ground first because modern running shoes have a slightly lifted heel. This extra cushioning and support reduces the level of feeling and contact with the ground.

This means most runners will not know if their gait needs to be altered or if they could benefit from adjusting their technique.

The benefit of wearing a lightweight or minimalist shoe, compared to going barefoot, is that it protects your feet from harsh surfaces yet still allows you to do the work.

Regardless of whether you decide to go barefoot or minimalist, you need to progress slowly from there to jogging without any breaking.

No set program or timeline can be applied from one person to the next. Slow and steady progression is the foundation of enjoyable and injury-free minimalist shoe running.”

CPL Rawnsley advises prospective minimalist or barefoot runners to do a foot analysis done by a professional and seek guidance from a PTI and podiatrist.

They can monitor the volume of training, give you guidance on the types of surfaces to train on and develop a plan that is tailored to suit your individual needs and outcomes,” he said.

For the cover you can count on

If you choose to try barefoot or minimalist training, seek expert guidance and start with low-intensity sessions.

SLOW AND STEADY: If you choose to try barefoot or minimalist training, seek expert guidance and start with low-intensity sessions.

Photo: LAC Bill Solomou

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Age no barrier for surfer

John Martin

At 57, LCDR Steve Johnson was the oldest competitor at the Interservice Surf Competition last month – but clearly he was not there just to make up the numbers.

He won the inaugural stand-up paddle board event.

Now, we know what you’re thinking. You’re thinking, ‘that’s not proper surfing’.

And you probably won’t get much of an argument from LCDR Johnson who took up the discipline last year.

“I found that, at my age, it gave me much more opportunity to exercise and have fun in the surf and on flat water than the conventional long board and it is something that all the family can do together,” he said.

Don’t let that fool you though.

LCDR Johnson, the deputy director of Project Neptune at HMAS Waterhen, likes the big waves too.

He was there at the first competition in 2004 and he’s surfed at the interservice titles every year since.

His speciality has been the long-board category, an interservice title he has won three times – in 2005, 2006 and again last year.

This year he finished fourth from a field of 24 starters. Poor old fella.

The titles were held at One Mile Beach, Port Stephens from May 14-18 and Navy did not get off to a great start.

“Navy ran the day-to-day competition and RAAF acted as safety management,” he said.

An annual general meeting was held during the event to prepare an application to the ADF sports council to approve surf-riding as a recognised ADF sport.

“Future competitions are hopeful and we would like to include a wide range of surf-riding sports such as body-boarding and open water racing,” MAJ Carr said.

“It is also hoped that challenges can be made to overseas services clubs such as the US and UK.”

2012 SURF CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

➤ Stand-up paddleboard:
  1st – LCDR Steve Johnson
  2nd – MAJ Matt Carr
  3rd – CPL Trevor Marshall

➤ Men’s shortboard:
  1st – FSgt Rick Pfieffer
  2nd – Dr Chris Shanahan
  3rd – PTE Ben Morton

➤ Women’s shortboard:
  1st – ACW Vicky Voyzey
  2nd – CPL Keichelle Oldis
  3rd – LT Denna Fryer

➤ Longboard:
  1st – SQNLDR Mark Evans
  2nd – LS Chad Poland
  3rd – LS Nathan Adamson

➤ Tag team:
  1st – Air Force Team 2
  2nd – Navy Team 1
  3rd (tie) – Army Team 1
  Navy Team 2
  4th – Army Team 2

➤ Service championship:
  1st – Air Force (58 points)
  2nd – Navy (40 points)
  3rd – Army (37 points)

➤ Best and fairest:
  Navy – AB Ben Smeeth
  Air Force – CPL Stuart Johnson
  Army – WO2 Martin Fisher

ROUGH LUCK: LS Brett Tate, of HMAS Penguin, shows off his broken board at One Mile Beach.
Rookies take it to big guns

Michael Brooke

THE Navy men’s rugby team of rookies came of age with a heart-breaking four-point loss to arch rivals Army in the Australian Services Rugby Championships (ASRC) carnival at Sydney’s Victoria Barracks.

Navy played with great skill and determination to lead 13-12 at half-time but fell agonisingly short of a dramatic come-from-behind victory to lose 33-29.

After crashing Air Force 42-3 in its first match, Navy appeared on track to defend the title it won in 2011 ASRU, but lost its way in October, “With nine new players in the squad, the boys really came of age with next year,” he said.

Squad prepare for the CNRC that will assist in the Navy’s Best Players were No 8 PO Hilyard and MIDN Declan Maguire, who was named RAN rookie of the year.

Navy’s other flanker, LS Woodward opened the scoring with a try in the first half.

The six-year Navy rugby veteran bugged over several Army defenders after a scrum win on the quarter-line to give her team the initiative and a confidence boost.

“IT’S not often a Navy team triumph reduces Army’s players to tears.

In a fitting salute to the centenary of Navy rugby, the pain of defeat at the Australian Services Rugby Union (ASRU) carnival made some of the Navy women weep in despair.

The combined Navy and Air Force Women’s rugby team beat Army 13-5 at Sydney’s Victoria Barracks on May 19.

Navy’s victory was secured by flanker LS Renee Woodward, of HMAS Cerberus, who scored a try in the first half and LEUT Sara Mooney, of FFG System Program Office, who kicked the conversion and two penalty goals.

LEUT Mooney was named as the ASRU Women’s Player of the Series for inspiring performances in attack and defence.

“I am as pleased as I am surprised to be named the ASRU women’s player,” she said.

The lanky flanker played with great skill and determination against Army’s veteran forwards, whilst her two penalty goals smothered out their desperate fight back in the second half.

“I have been playing rugby since 2005 and really enjoy how the game challenges me mentally and physically,” she said.

Navy’s other flanker, LS Woodward opened scoring with a try in the first half.

The British Army won 14-0. A full wrap of that game will appear in the next edition of Navy News.

GOING NOWHERE: the second stanza before staging a dramatic come-from-behind victory time but fell agonisingly short of a

As the ball generally favoured them, the sailors missed some crucial tackles to allow Army to race to a 33-24 lead. Navy scored with five minutes remaining and seemed poised to turn a 33-29 scoreline into a fairytale victory, but Army dug in to win.

Navy’s best players were No 8 PO Hilyard and MIDN Declan Maguire, who was named RAN rookie of the year.

WO Doherty said the Navy players would be a force to be reckoned with.

“With 12 months’ experience under their belts and having lost a final by a small margin, it will assist RANRU to regain the ASRC trophy in 2013,” he said.
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