

New lease of life for 65-year-old navy cutter



Fully restored cutter from former carrier HMAS Sydney bring re-launched by members of the Armfield Slip Committee at Goolwa SA. Pic by Karyn Reynolds, Sellicks Beach

By CMDR Steve Dunning

The cutter is from the former aircraft carrier HMAS Sydney which was HMS Terrible before it was acquired by the RAN in 1947. Sydney saw active service during the Korean War (1951-52) and during the Vietnam War (1963-72) was used as troopship ferrying men and supplies to Vietnam.

The 32 ft cutter with a beam of 9 ft and draught of 2 ft 2 in was used as a general purpose boat, including ship-to-shore transfers and man overboard evolutions. With a crew of four and capable of carrying 25, the cutter was

built in England in 1941 for the RN during the early years of WW II.

The most distinctive feature of the cutter is the Kitchen rudder. A small wheel attached to the tiller is used to control two curved metal plates that surround the propeller enabling the boat to go ahead, go astern or remain stationary without any change of engine speed or reversing of the propeller.

Following the launch and 'recomissioning' of the 65-year-old cutter by CMDR Andrew Jackman he remained for the salute in a sail past of the cutter and four other similarly restored boats on the Murray River, Goolwa.

The Navy presence was a fitting acknowledgement of the 2,000 hours of volunteer time which had gone into the restoration of the cutter.

After being decommissioned from Sydney the cutter was used by Naval Sea Cadets at Port Adelaide before being sold by the Navy in 1983 to the Milang Historical Society.

Subsequently taken over and painstakingly restored by the Armfield Slip Committee - a group of volunteers who are dedicated to the restoration of wooden boats - the cutter stands as testimony of the strong community interest in Australia's naval heritage.



Left CMDR David West and CO NHQ-SA CMDR Andrew Jackman at Goolwa.

In SA, they're medalling on the Murray

South Australian based Reserve Nursing Officer CMDR David West got more than he bargained for when he turned to at the recent launch of a restored cutter from the former aircraft carrier HMAS Sydney at Goolwa on the River Murray.

A local resident of the coastal area, which has a strong association with the RAN through 817 SQN's ceremonial homeport at Goolwa - it's not uncommon for him to represent the Navy Reserve at local functions.

But on this occasion he didn't really expect to be part of the day's activities.

With the formal part of the launch over, CMDR West unexpectedly found himself parading before the launching officer, CO NHQ-SA, CMDR Andrew Jackman who officially presented him with his certificate of promotion, the first clasp to his Defence Long Service Medal and the new Australian Defence Medal (ADM).

Director Naval Reserve Support-SA CMDR Steve Dunning said it was 'fantastic' to see local commanders making the effort to officially acknowledge Reservists in this manner.

"With the demise of the old Port Divisions many Reservists lost the opportunity to receive their awards either as part of a parade or in other formal ceremonies," he said. "In fact many would receive medals in the post, quite some time after they were actually due."

"It means a lot for individual Reservists to receive their awards and until recently this has been somewhat *ad hoc* and has for some been viewed with a degree of cynicism.

"I must commend CMDR Jackman for his efforts in this regard. He has gone out of his way to ensure that Reservists are acknowledged for their achievements in an appropriate and meaningful manner. I know CMDR West was completely surprised by the presentation and it meant a lot to him and his family."

With the inception of the new ADM and the ongoing task of clearing the backlog of Long Service Medals and clasps, CMDR Jackman can expect little respite from the medal presentations. In fact at the time of writing he was planning for a combined PN and NR medal presentation ceremony at NHQ-SA where some 12 medals will be presented.

The (rounds of the) Kitchen rudder

In 1916 Admiral Kitchen, RN, was granted a patent for a variable speed reversing rudder. It totally does away with reverse gears and variable pitch propellers and can be used to advantage on small steamboats (it is extensively used by model steamboaters).

It was widely accepted in Great Britain and was used until WWII by the RN. A 38' compromise stern cruiser was tested by the US Navy in 1921 and was stopped in her own length travelling at 12 mph. Why it was not accepted by the US Navy is not known, but as it was usually transom mounted, substantial strengthening of the transom was required.

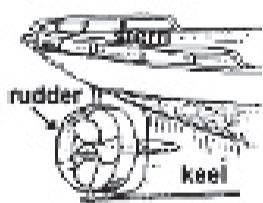
The device is simple and offers the ultimate flexibility in control. It consists of two semi-circular rudders which partially shroud the propeller and which can be closed, from partial clamshell folding to complete restriction.

Each half is mounted through common-centre solid and tubular rudder stock. From each stock extends an arm which controls the angularity of that blade. A worm screw with a rotational

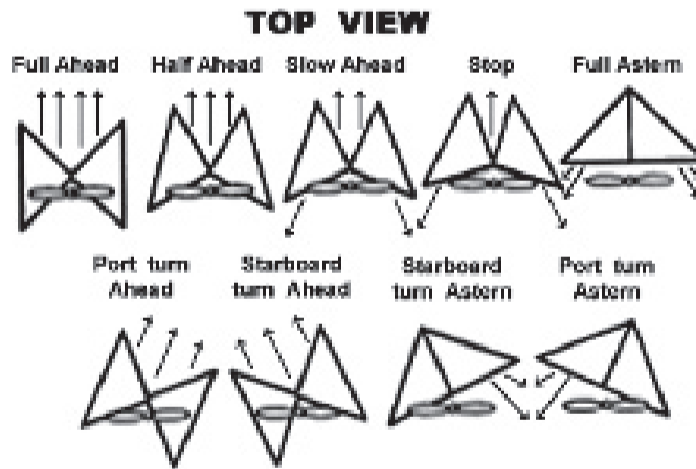
wheel and handle, resembling the tailstock wheel on a lathe, is mounted on the end of this screw, which also serves as the tiller.

By rotating the tailstock

wheel, the clamshells are opened or closed (regulating speed and ahead/astern direction). By swinging the whole screw/tiller assembly from port to starboard, the boat can be steered. Engine



The diagram illustrates the Admiral Kitchen RN, variable speed reversing rudder.



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