

Name the mystery ship

Last month's mystery ship certainly sorted out a few people.

It produced some interesting responses and created some confusion.

Of the responses received, most correctly identified the ship as a boom defence vessel (BDV).

Two said the vessel was HMAS *Kimbla* ('The Snail') raising an aircraft in Botany Bay.

Welfare Officer with the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia Ray Burt said he believed it was *Kimbla* raising a 'TWA Electra' aircraft from Botany Bay.

Sorry Ray, no way.

While I've been around long enough, I don't recall any disaster involving a Lockheed L-188 Electra (that's the prop-jet airliner that looks similar to an AP3C Orion) in Australia.

I don't know about the earlier model WWII vintage piston-engined Lockheed Electra.

Bernard 'Dutchy' Verwayen also guessed *Kimbla* 'raising a wing or part thereof from the Vickers Viscount that crashed into Botany Bay on November 30, 1961'.

'Dutchy' got the aircraft and date correct: Viscount VH-TVC broke up in mid-air in a thunderstorm over Botany Bay on that date killing all on board.

And, while Navy or even *Kimbla* might have been involved in the recovery of wreckage (although I can find no evidence of it), September's mystery ship is not *Kimbla*.

Other regulars - Harold Goodall and Reg Bonney and CPONPC Mark Goulding - all plumped for HMAS *Koala*.

Harold had his guess '...out of three boom defence ships ... exercising with a submarine somewhere in Australia'.

Sorry Harold, the only thing correct is that it's a BDV, a fact spotted also by John Flowers of Noosa and reformed birdie, John 'Skinhead' Kelson.

Ex-Defence civilian, ex-RANVR cadet and RANR(NS) Reg said: "I consider that the scene depicted ... has her assisting in the recovery of a submarine. I am unable to identify the class of the submarine but estimate the location would have been in the Fremantle harbour area, where both

US and HM submarines were based during WWII."

Well Reg, that's getting on towards the answer we're after - you've identified the type of ship, location and object being raised correctly but no, it's not *Koala*.

The first entrant Old Salt LCDR David Manolas came a lot closer: "The Sep 'mystery ship' is HMAS *Karangi* on salvage operations in Fremantle Harbour cc Jan 1958. I believe she is assisting in the recovery of what looks like a USN submarine. Fremantle was a very busy USN submarine base during WWII. If this was a US sub, I would think it may have been left behind ... up for disposal".

Well David and 'Skinhead' successfully identified the ship and the location but the date and nationality of the SM were wrong.

Two got it right: Gordon Branch and CMDR Dave Goble.

Gordon - 'a Freo boy born'n'bred' - says: "The ship is the harbour boom defence vessel HMAS *Koorangi* (the ship with the horns). She is assisting in the salvage of the sunken submarine. The tug/diving tender is the *Agnes* from the Fremantle Harbour Trust and the broken submarine is the Royal Netherlands Navy vessel *K-XI*. The year is 1946 and the location is Fremantle Harbour."

Dave Goble correctly identifies the ship as "HMAS *Karangi*, one of three Bar Class BDVs commissioned into the RAN in the early 1940s. The pic shows *Karangi* attempting to salvage the Dutch submarine K11 in Fremantle Harbour around 1945.

"The photo in question comes from the Saxton Fogarty collection."

Pity about the year, and the supplier of the pic, historical friend and public affairs officer extraordinaire Vic Jeffery, protests "...the photo actually comes from the West Australian Maritime Museum. Virtually every photo I've seen from the 'Saxton Fogarty Collection' I can credit



The mystery ship for October

to another source - i.e. RAN, WA Newspapers, WA Maritime Museum ... the list goes on."

Here is what Vic has to say about the image he submitted: "Taken in 1946, it depicts the boom defence vessel HMAS *Karangi* raising the Dutch submarine K.XI with assistance from the Fremantle Harbour Trust's SS *Agnes*. The former Royal Netherlands Navy *K.XI* had been decommissioned on April 10, 1945 and was stripped at North Wharf with someone accidentally leaving a depth gauge valve open! "The old submarine eventually filled with water overnight and sank.

"It took six weeks to raise the submarine and it was towed out west of Rottnest Island and scuttled in September, 1946."

Another aspect which had me puzzled was the discrepancy in spelling - *Karangi* as Vic had it or *Koorangi* as one or two of our entrants had it.

Vic adds: "The 'Saxton Fogarty Collection' is riddled with the incorrect spelling of ship names.

"I saw some shots from Mr Walter Murray of Netherlands warships, which the old gentleman lent me the negs to take some prints off a few years back, and here they are credited to Fogarty & Locke. Confirms my previous statement.

"For the record, HMAS *Karangi*

was based in Fremantle between 1944-57, and until *Diamantina's* 20-year reign, was the longest serving ship in the West.

"It is hard to believe that anyone with a genuine interest could not know the correct spelling."

So there.

On to October's mystery ship.

I was tempted to give you another puzzler from the Vic Jeffery emporium of obscure naval vessels but I've just received an elderly B&W shot from an ex-PO diver similar to the 'mystery ship' provided by the Sea Power Centre - Australia for our June edition.

No one in the centre knows what the ship depicted is and no one could positively identify it.

Anyhow, here's another shot of a vessel which could be the same (yet unidentified) vessel.

The ex-diver (whose name is a bit hard to read) says: "The ship was at the entrance to HK harbour and the photo was taken in Jan or Feb 1940. I was aboard HMS *Kanimbla* (1) at the time."

Written on the back of the shot is: "Boom defence vessel at entrance to HK harbour."

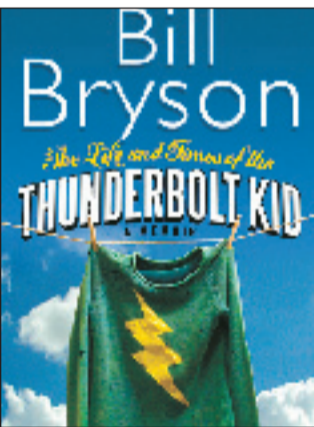
Your best efforts at identification to navyreservenews@defencenews.gov.au please.

— LCDR Antony Underwood



Last month's mystery ship

Books, Books, Books, Books, Books, Books, Books, Books, Books, Books, Books, Books, Books, Books, Books



Lightning strikes to the funny bone

of what you and I might recall - if sometimes blushing - of our own. Bryson has used the very clever vehicle of reminiscing through childlike eyes and this, I think, is the book's great appeal.

Like little boys and youths the world over, young Bryson and friends have that propensity for mischief and misadventure, misplaced enterprise, misdirected innovation and ingenuity. This and the childlike ability to exaggerate everything about a gazillion times over.

Like most young people, Bryson also indulges in the fantastic, taking on superhero powers when he discovers an old green family jumper adorned with a golden lightning strike. When donned, the author becomes the Thunderbolt Kid, protected by the Sacred Jersey of Zap and blessed with vengeful, vaporising Thunderservation.

His relatives, friends and acquaintances - Buddy Doberman, Jed Mattes, Steve Katz, Milton Milton and family, the Kowalskis and the Butters would easily translate into your own hometown tales.

The book takes a few chapters to background the Des Moines scene but then it is up and flying high as Bryson explores the weird and wonderful world of the 1950s, its fads and fashions, the trends, threats and technology.

Not to mention stealing beer, trying to get high on the aroma

of mimeograph machine paper and encounters with the opposite sex - particularly Mary O'Leary and Kathy Wilcox, - whether real, desired on in the realms of fantasy.

DDT and cigarettes were good for you and the use and testing of nuclear weapons posed no great threat.

Three of my favourites vignettes were - and I won't spoil it for you with too much detail - the exciting prospect of the US Postal Service's rocket mail concept; what happened at the local cinema when one-pound bags of bird seed were given out at the matinee premiere of Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* or the fiery ramblings of Julia Chase, of Maryland, through the White House.

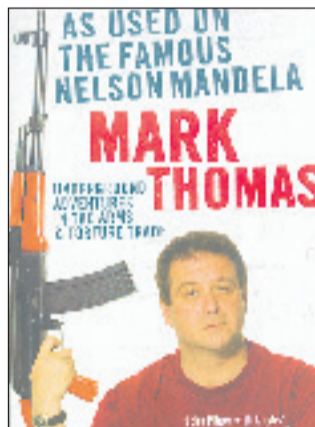
These happened in 1956 and 1959, straddling what a popular poll revealed as the happiest year in the United States, 1957. Bryson sagely observes that never have people looked so ridiculous and so happy at the same time.

The book has its sombre side too, examining American racism, galloping consumerism and that wonderful age of innocence that Bryson probably quite rightly predicts is gone forever.

It will leave you mirthful and misty-eyed. I give it a big thumbs-up.

The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid, Bill Bryson, Doubleday (Aust. dist. Random House), 309pp, RRP \$49.95.

— Barry Rollings



UK arms trade adventures

In many countries and the UK in particular, he suggests, weapons control measures are more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

And he lays blame for much of the injustice of repression or premature death of 'the little people' at the feet of gun-runners and governments that allow them to operate.

In a panel at the front of his book, Thomas says the UK is the second biggest arms dealer in the world; that there are 640 million small arms at large in the world; eight million new small arms are added annually; the number of arms producers has doubled in the past 40 years, there are an estimated 300,000 child soldiers involved in conflicts; and that one person is killed every minute with small arms.

Early in his book, he penetrates the defences of an arms expo by posing as a problem-solving public relations firm, McKintosh Morley, specialising in media training and offering 'free media training' samples.

Thomas also demonstrates how easy it is to set up in the UK as an arms dealer.

As with many who object to arms proliferation, Thomas has in his sights the main British arms conglomerate, senior politicians and the bureaucracy which facilitates export of weapons, in particular the UK's Export Credits Guarantee Department through which he

says British taxpayers subsidise the 60,000 to 65,000 employed in arms production to the tune of more than £13,000 per job each year.

Apart from guns, Thomas takes aim at instruments of torture and the sale of hardware, ranging from military vehicles through to armoured vehicles to highly illegal anti-personnel mines still manufactured in some countries.

Thomas has obviously come a long way from early anarchy when he chained himself to buses filled with arms dealers to his present situation where he's now invited to talk about export controls.

But, unless you're an arms control enthusiast, *As Used on the Famous Nelson Mandela*, palls a bit - like 10 jokes in a row, all with the same theme.

While, I suppose, we ought to be cognisant of the misery and injustice caused in the world by rampant arms trafficking, the book is probably more apposite in the UK which has a larger export trade than we do.

Would I buy the book? Only if I was a disarmament enthusiast and I haven't seen many here since the AIDEX demonstrations about 15 years ago.

As Used on the Famous Nelson Mandela - Underground Adventures in the Arms & Torture Trade, Mark Thomas, Ebury (dist. Random House Aust.), 339pp, RRP \$35.

— Antony Underwood