

# 'DOWN UNDER' Newsletter

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## February 2019



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## Monthly General Meeting February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019

The President, **Alan Jameson**, opened the Meeting with a Toast to Absent Friends, and to the Crew of **HMS/M Vandal**. February is the 76<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the loss of HMS/M Vandal after only being 4 days into the Submarine's 1<sup>st</sup> Commission.

**Apologies:** Ken Read, Bob Pitman, Jim Dandie, Richard Drain, Frank Wilson, John Harrison, Ian MacKenzie, Barry Morgan, Karl Campbell, Paul Meakin, Mick Hannah, Eoin Douglas-Smith.

**Attendees:** Alan Thomas, Pat Thomas, Bob Wood, John Manning, Peter Greenfield, Roy Stedman, Geoff Arnold, Barry Grace, Mick Hanlon, Peter Treen, John Reeve, John Keating, Ned Newcombe.

**Ladies:** Margaret Melville, Pat Hanlon, Yvonne Newcombe, Charlotte Keating.

**Guests:** Ian Vickers (National Secretary) & his Wife Glenys, Dave Barlow (National Vice President) Sid Czabator (Australian S.A.) Lee Stedman (Roy's Son)

**Rum Raffle Winner:** Geoff Arnold.

**Rum Raffle Proceeds:** 120.00 **Attendance Proceeds:** \$120.00 **Splicers Donation:** \$65.00

**Woodwork Raffle Winners:** Mick Hanlon, Roy Stedman, Peter Treen.

**Woodwork Proceeds:** \$95.00 (to the Senior Pensioners Action Group)

**Splicers Donated By:** Ian Vickers (Birthday)

**Lunch:** \$100.0

**Total Proceeds To Treasurer:** \$240 + \$65.00 (Splicers Donation) = **\$305**. Minus **\$100.00** for Lunch. **Therefore, Grand Total = \$205.00.**

**BZ'S to All who Contributed.**

### President's Report

It was with Pleasure I welcomed **Ian Vickers** and **Dave Barlow** as Guests to our Meeting. Ian as you know is the National Secretary of our Association and Dave is National Vice President, although Dave is such a regular visitor, we feel he is one of us.

As you may know, I have been making use of the **Scooter** belonging to our Branch. Unfortunately, it Malfunctioned, and the Dealership informed me that there were no Spare Parts available. I therefore Purchased one, a modern and powerful model, which when I leave this Mortal Life, it will be given to our Branch.

Recently I had the Pleasure of meeting a Lady who is a Senior Crew Member on the sailing Ship **Endeavour**, a replica of **Cap't Cook's Endeavour**. The Ship has been crewed by Physically Disabled People, and listening to their Stories was Heart Rending, as they show a Tremendous Spirit. The Lady, **Fran Taylor**, recited a Poem from the Book she has written, and on hearing it, the poem resonated with me.

It was a Poem about the **Albatrosses** that Sailors of Old believed were the **Souls of Sailors** who had Died. I immediately thought of Friends who have Crossed The Bar. I have written it relating to our People. I Recognise the Author of the Original Poem. **Sarah Vial** and I would like to Share it with You:

**“I am the Albatross that awaits You at the End of the Earth. I am the Forgotten Soul of our Fellow Submariners, who have Crossed the Bar Having Served our Country Beneath the Waves. They Fly on my Wings For Eternity. “**

On Your Behalf, I have accepted with my Daughter, an invitation from **Admiral Jonathan Mead**, to attend the **2019 Australian Fleet Reception** on board **HMAS Canberra** on **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2019**.

*Regards,*

**Alan Jameson, President Australia Branch S.A.**

### **Treasurer's Report**

<i>General Account:</i>	<b>\$1732.00</b>	<i>Investment Deposit Account:</i>	<b>\$22,000.00</b>
<i>Welfare Account:</i>	<b>\$1171.83</b>	<i>Total Assets 13 Feb 2019:</i>	<b>\$23,903.86</b>
Acceptance Proposed by:	<b>Allan Thomas</b>	Seconded by:	<b>Peter Treen</b>

### **Secretary's Report**

**Allan Thomas** received an update on the **Periscope Memorial** from **Paul Leveris** - Project Manager Parks, Fremantle City Council. Date for commencement of work on site are end of February, with substantial completion of the Project by middle of March. Also, on December 16th, 2018, Allan attended the **RAN Submariner of the Year Awards** in Rockingham. The SAA & RNSA donate \$100.00 each to the Submariner of the Year. This year's recipient was Leading Seaman **Mark Leach**.

Many Thanks to **Ian Vickers**, **Dave Barlow**, and **Sid Czabator** for attending our meeting, and **Lee Stedman** for bringing His Father **Roy Stedman**. Once again to our Meeting. **BZ's to Ian, Dave, Sid & Lee**

**Ian Vickers** was presented with an **Australia Branch Plaque** by the President **Alan Jameson**. Ian brought out some **Slops** to give **John Manning**, such as Dolphins, Polaris Pins, and some stickers. **Dave Barlow** brought a bottle of '**Submariners Highland Whiskey** which after much discussion, Proposed and Seconded by **Allan Thomas & Buster Keating**, will be **Auctioned** at the **Annual Mid-Year Luncheon**. **BZ Ian & Dave**.

After much discussion it was decided that our Branch put forward at next year's Annual NMC Meeting that All Members at 90 Years of Age & over, receive a Lifetime Member Lapel Badge from the Submariners Association.

I have organised with the **Fremantle Council** that we have the Memorial Site, and that Power is put on for the **Periscope Memorial** on **Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2019**.

*Regards,*

**Bob Wood, Secretary Australia Branch.**

### **Social Secretary's Report**

Due to some members being unavailable to attend the end of summer BBQ in Kings park on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> February it was agreed to move the event to Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. The calendar below has been updated accordingly.

Preparations for the USN memorial weekend in Albany need to be started, so can anyone who will be attending on the weekend of 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> May let me know the numbers attending and the dates a room(s) will be required. The Le Grand Motel continues to be the venue of choice and I would like to give Joe the numbers immediately after the March MGM. You can either give me the numbers at the MGM or email them to me whenever you have firm numbers.

## Proposed Social Diary For 2019

### Thursday March 7<sup>th</sup>

Social Golf – Maylands Golf Club 08:00 - All levels welcome.

All are welcome, and it is stressed this is 'social golf' ... we're not out to present trophies to a hero, we're out to have some fun and time together. If you have a 'seniors card' bring it with you and it'll save a few dollars. \$16 for nine holes, \$21 for eighteen plus a buggy if you want one at \$20 a head for eighteen holes (not sure about 9 ....). Please confirm with Barry so I can book/confirm the tee. So far, we only have Mick Hanlon and me confirmed ... don't be shy, it'll be fun. Confirmed names to Barry as soon as possible please. This is not a Pro golf day, it is open to members, wives, families etc ...come along and have some fun. If preferred by the majority, we can move the tee time to 09:00 and just play 9 holes, your call.

### Sunday March 3rd

Summer Picnic 1200 @ Kings Park Pines BBQ Area.

Gifts for raffles welcome. Bottle of Pusser's for the winner of the Bocce Contest (Petanque/boules). Our normal Quiz (set by last year's winner Bob Wood) will also be held with a prize for the Winner.

### Wednesday March 13th

SA Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

### Wednesday April 10th

SA Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

### Thursday April 25th

ANZAC Day March 10:30 @ Fremantle, Esplanade park.

*Lunch afterwards at Sailing Club. Rum Raffle will be held with probable proceeds split between SAA & our Association.*

### Wednesday May 8th

SA Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

### Friday May 24th to Sunday May 26th

USN Memorial Weekend @ Albany.

Please give names to Social Secretary at the March Meeting (or contact Barry by email) of those intending to attend for Booking purposes.

### Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June to Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June

SUBCON in Hobart

### Wednesday June 12th

SA Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

### Sunday June 23rd

Mid-Year Lunch 1200 @ Mt Henry Tavern. Combined with the presentation of the Charles Costeau Trophy. Gifts for raffles welcome.

### Wednesday July 10th

SA Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

### Wednesday August 14th

SA Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

### Wednesday September 11th

SA Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

### Sunday September 15<sup>th</sup>

AE1 Memorial service at HMAS Stirling with lunch in chiefs mess afterwards (pay on the day).

### **Wednesday October 9th**

SA Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

### **Sunday October 20<sup>th</sup> (27<sup>th</sup>)**

Royal Navy Periscope Memorial Service 1030 @ Fremantle Memorial Park. Lunch afterwards at The Fremantle Navy Club.

### **Wednesday November 13th**

SA AGM and Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

### **Sunday November 10th**

SAA Remembrance Day Service 1030 @ WA Maritime Museum. A free tour of HMSm Ovens for those interested followed by lunch at the Fremantle Navy Club (12:00) courtesy of the SAA

### **Sunday November 17th**

End of Year Picnic 1200 @ Kings Park Pines BBQ Area. Gifts for raffles welcome.

### **Wednesday December 4<sup>th</sup>**

SA Monthly Meeting 1130 for 1200 @ The Flying Angel Club.

### **Saturday December 14<sup>th</sup>**

Christmas Luncheon 1130 for 1200 @ Mt Henry Tavern. Gifts for raffles welcome.

Please contact Barry for any errors or changes. The calendar will be updated as required at each meeting.

[barry\\_grace@hotmail.com](mailto:barry_grace@hotmail.com)

I requested some interesting articles from our more distant members / associates and their families for publishing in our monthly newsletter. It gives me great pleasure in presenting Part One of 'Max Shean – A Personal Insight' from Max's daughter Ruth Shean, my thanks to her for putting her memories to paper and letting us read them, we'll look forward to Part Two next month.

### **Max Shean – A Personal Insight**

*Composed by Dr. Ruth Shean FAICD, FGIA, FCIS, FIPAAWA*

Barry Grace has asked readers of *Down Under* if they had any suggestions or offerings to "spice it up a little". While the only thing in my life that counts as spice sits in my pantry, I thought that readers might be interested in this daughter's insight into my father, Max Shean. June 2019 will mark ten years since Dad's death, but he remains larger than life for many of us.

Dad grew up in South Perth. The Sheans lived in Mill Point Road above the Chinese market gardens. Dad spent his childhood exploring the river in home-made craft – a precursor to his lifelong love of the ocean. He made canoes and sailing dinghies and spent much time on the family's various craft, chief among which was the converted ferry, Medana.

While spending much of his spare time sailing, Dad also became proficient at many associated tasks. He made a set of navigation instruments including a sextant from jarrah, brass and pieces of mirror.

He left school as Australia was recovering from the great depression. After working for a year as a laboratory assistant in the Faculty of Agriculture at UWA while he studied French – a requirement for university entry – he enrolled at UWA as an engineering student.

Dad was concerned about the escalation of conflict in Europe. University staff advised students to continue with their studies through to graduation when they would have more to offer. In June 1940, however, a newspaper advertisement appeared inviting "applications from gentlemen with yachting experience to be commissioned as Temporary Acting Sub Lieutenants in the Royal Australian Naval Volunteer Reserve" and to be trained in anti-submarine duties. Dad applied and was accepted in August 1940.



**HMS *Vandal* (P64)** was a Royal Navy U-class submarine built by Vickers-Armstrong at Barrow-in-Furness, yard number 838. The submarine had the shortest career of any Royal Navy submarine, being lost with all 37 onboard just four days after commissioning.

The submarine, under the command of Lieutenant James S. Bridger, was lost whilst carrying out a three-day-long working up exercise following commissioning. The submarine was last seen leaving her anchorage on 24 February 1943 at Lochranza, in the North of the Isle of Arran before her rediscovery in December 1994.<sup>[2]</sup> She had only just joined the Third Submarine Flotilla in Holy Loch, a major submarine base during the Second World War used extensively for trials and exercises.

There were initially conflicting reports over the possible position of the lost submarine, one submarine reported seeing a smoke candle two and a half miles (5 km) north of Inchmarnock, and another reported hearing hull tapping in a similar area. However, a spotter plane reported a large oil slick about 2 miles (4 km) north of Arran (15 kilometres from Inchmarnock). An inquiry at the time of her loss ignored the report from the spotter plane and concluded that the submarine had sunk during the deep dive she was scheduled to perform on that day, somewhere north of Inchmarnock.

At the time Prime Minister Winston Churchill demanded a full report on the loss of the *Vandal* and asked if the submarine had been recovered. The reply from Flag Officer Submarines repeated the mistaken assumption that the *Vandal* lay in deep waters off Inchmarnock, where salvage would be impossible.

In 1994 the Scottish Branch of the Submariners Association finally persuaded the Navy to search the area north of Arran where several trawlers had reported their nets being snagged by an underwater object. A Royal Navy expedition aboard HMS *Hurworth* finally located the wreck in June 1994, 300 feet (100 m) below the surface 1.5 miles (3 km) northwest of Loch Ranza, roughly where the spotter plane had first reported the presence of an oil slick. The wreck lies in pitch darkness on a muddy slope 100 metres down with a 35-degree list to port. Her 12-pounder forward gun remains covered with a trawler's net, and the brass letters VANDAL are clearly visible.

There was only one survivor of *Vandal's* crew, Larry Gaines. At the time Gaines was too ill with earache to sail with the ship, and was replaced by a younger, less experienced crew member. For 60 years Gaines had blamed himself for the loss, as he believed his replacement had not secured the aft engine room hatch, one of Gaines' final checks before diving. Subsequent dives on the wreck revealed that the aft engine room hatch was closed, and this could not have been the cause of the sinking. Prior to this investigation, it was generally considered that human error in leaving a hatch open as the submarine dived had caused the loss. It was later proved that the submarine was on the surface and not diving when the accident occurred.

The ship was originally named HMS *Unbridled*. Before taking command of what was to be his first and last boat, skipper James Bridger assembled his crew on the jetty at Barrow, to inform them that she would henceforth be officially known as *Vandal*. This went against a long-held maritime tradition that to change the name of a ship risks bringing bad luck upon it and the crew.

A team of divers investigated *Vandal* in August 2003, looking for an explanation for her mysterious sinking. They found a large section (about 4 ft) of the stern was missing and the aft engine room escape hatch was closed, but the forward escape hatch was open. In addition, the mooring lines were neatly stowed around both amidships and stern bollards, and the forward hydroplanes were in their stowed position. It is therefore likely that *Vandal* was on the surface when the incident occurred. The area that *Vandal* lies in is known as area "Quebec", and was used by submarines performing log calibrations over a "measured mile." So, it is possible that log calibration work was being carried out, and although there are other explanations, this might suggest why she only travelled two miles (4 km) in one-and-a-half hours. Maintenance of the log on a submarine can be very hazardous as raising it for inspection can potentially breach the pressure hull and cause a serious flood.

In the case of HMS *Untamed* (which sank three months after *Vandal*) incorrect procedure whilst carrying out log maintenance was the main contributing factor to the boat and her entire crew being lost. Had the hull been breached, whilst the forward escape hatch was open, the inrush of water could have overwhelmed the submarine. The starboard propeller blades were found to be worn down at their tips, indicating that either the propellers were turning (perhaps full astern) as *Vandal* hit the seabed, or whilst she was on the seabed in an attempt to drive her off the bottom.<sup>[8]</sup>

This would imply there were survivors in the forward compartments of the submarine, and a report by the Lochranza pier master of seeing smoke candles on the surface gives further weight to this theory. Those not killed in the initial flooding in the aft compartments might have therefore attempted to use the forward escape hatch to leave the submarine and tried to make it to the surface, an endeavour that ultimately ended in failure. The submarine was not reported overdue until the following morning, and search vessels were finally deployed to the area twenty-three hours later. It was during this time that a spotter plane observed a small concentrated patch of oil over what is now known

to be *Vandal's* position. Three hours later this patch had drifted away and dispersed. All other hatches and external openings to the sea were discovered to be closed, and there were no external signs of hull damage, or collision.

A memorial to those lost aboard HMS *Vandal* was erected beside the Caledonian MacBrayne ferry terminal at Lochranza Pier, Isle of Arran, by HM Submarines Old Comrades Association in 1997.

The wreck was one of those designated under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986, which prohibits interference with the site by divers.

*Acknowledgments to the Imperial War Museum and Wikipedia for the story and photographs above.*

**Regards, Barry Grace, Social Secretary Australia Branch.**

## Welfare

I have spoken to **Ken Read** and **Dennis Williams** since our Meeting Last Wednesday. Both are OK & much the same as Before.

Worryingly I have been unable to contact **Jim Major** who had a back condition and was waiting for an operation. **Barry Grace** is going to have a drive to his address and try to talk to him or a neighbour.

**Regards,**  
**John "Buster" Keating, Welfare Officer Australia Branch.**

## Crossed The Bar

### RN SM Association - CTB's for Feb 19 'Down Under' (from UK)

Date/Name:	Rank (if known):	SM Service:	SM's Served On;	Branch/Age:
Jan 19 - Richard 'Dick' S Bell	StoMech	09/1946 - 01/48	TABARD, SCOTSMAN & SYCTHIAN	W of Scotland; Age 91
Jan 19 - Peter C Runham	WO2MEA	1971 - 2007	REVENGE (71/76), RENOWN (77/78), REPULSE (78/83), RESOLUTION (84/88), VALIANT (00/02), SPLENDID (03/06)& SPARTAN (06/07)	Gosport; Age 70
Jan 19 - Clifford/Rab Butler	PO (S)	1968 - 69	CACHALOT	South Kent; Age 68
Jan 19 - James R Pardoe OBE	Cdr	09/1943 - 12/69	URSULA, VULPINE, TURPIN, AUROCHS, XE9 (CO), SEA DEVIL (CO), THERMOPYLAE (CO) & ARTEMIS (CO)	DOLPHIN; Age 94
18 Jan - Frank C Pretty	CPOWEA	1975 - 90	COURAGEOUS, CHURCHILL & REPULSE (P)	Ex-Barrow; Age 61
Jan 19 - Keith Milner	CPOME	1953 - 79	SENECHEL (53/54), SEASCOUT (54/56) AENEAS (56, 61/65), SEADEVIL (56/57), SENTINEL (57), TOTEM (57/58), TRENCHANT (58), TUDOR (58/61), OLYMPUS (58/62) & OPOSSUM (75/77)	DOLPHIN; Age 84
23 Jan - Len 'Jan' Reeks	AB	1946 - 48	SATYR, SENESCHAL, SPRINGER, SANGUINE, SLEUTH & SELENE	Exeter; Age 93
3 Feb - Peter Roland Appleby	LCdr	1972 - 83	DREADNOUGHT, SWIFTSURE, COURAGEOUS & SPLENDID	RN SMO Assoc; Age NN

4 Feb - Alan Pillifent	COEM	1964 - 77	THERMOPYLAE (64/65), RESOLUTION (66/69), DREADNOUGHT (71) & CONQUEROR (72/75)	Barrow; Age 73
4 Feb - John WB Taylor	CPO Ops SM	1950 - 80's	SEASCOUT, TIRELESS, ALCIDE, ARTFUL, CHURCHILL, VALIANT, SUPERB & DREADNOUGHT	Barrow; Age 80
Feb 19 - Raymond 'Ray' Clapton	CCWEA	05/1967 - 08/89	RESOLUTION, REVENGE & RENOWN	W of Scotland; Age 79
Feb 19 - G Gordon Foster BEM	AB ST	12/1943 - 06/46	TRUSTY (43) & TACITURN (44/45)	Nottingham; Age 95
Feb 19 - Paul Cubitt	FCPO Elec	1953 - 80	SEADEVIL, SOLENT, EXCALIBUR, TIPTOE, TURPIN, ALCIDE & CACHALOT	Gosport; Age 84
Feb 19 - David 'Sid' Syborn	CMEAP	1966 - 79	DREADNOUGHT, REPULSE & RESOLUTION	Morceombe Bay; Age 79
Feb 19 - Richard Hilton	RO1 (G)	NN	CONQUEROR	DOLPHIN; Age 70
<b>RN Navy News - Feb 19 Edition:</b>				
21 Dec 18 - Frank 'Barney' Barnett	LMEM (M)	NN	Served 1958 - 82 in HERMES, RUSSELL, THERMOPYLAE, MAIDSTONE, ALBION, ASHANTI, BLAKE, ZULU, BRILLIANT (during Falklands conflict); then spent 10yrs in the RFA, in OLWEN, FORT GRANGE & SIR GALAHAD	NN; Age 76

**NOTE: There were 5 other SM CTB's in this Edition, but we had covered all 5 in a previous Newsletter**

**Meeting shut at approx: 12:55**

**END OF FEBRUARY MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING**

**The next Monthly General Meeting will be at *The Flying Angel*, Fremantle on**

**March 13th, 2019 commencing at 1200**

