

HMAS PLATYPUS 50th ANNIVERSARY
and
SUBMARINERS' MEMORAL DEDICATION
18th AUGUST 2017
COLLECTED SPEECHES

Welcome to Country: Susan MOYLAN-COOMBS

Welcome by Chief Executive, Sydney Harbour Federation Trust: Ms Mary DARWELL

Welcome by President, Submarine Institute of Australia: Commodore Mark SANDER RAN (retired)

Chairman, Sydney Harbour Federation Trust: Mr Kevin McCANN AM

Minister for Defence: Senator the Honourable Marise PAYNE

Deputy Chief of the Royal Australian Navy: Rear Admiral Michael NOONAN AM RAN

Introduction to Keynote Speaker, Commodore Mark SANDER RAN (retired)

Keynote Speaker: Vice Admiral Ian MacDOUGALL AC AFSM RAN (retired)

Vote of Thanks: Rear Admiral Peter BRIGGS AO CSC RAN (retired)

Chief Executive Officer, Australian National Maritime Museum: Mr Kevin SUMPTION PSM

Submariners' Memorial Introduction: Commander Geoff ANDERSON RAN (retired), President, Submarines Association Australia (NSW)

Dedication of the Submariners' Memorial by Father Keith DALBY, Rector, St John's Church Gordon

Warrant Officer of the Navy: WOCISSM Gary WIGHT [Recited the Ode of Remembrance](#)

Master of Ceremonies: Lieutenant Command Desmond WOODS Royal Australian Navy Reserve

Welcome to Country - Susan Moylan-Coombs

'War a mi' Nygiah Susan Nygiah Gurindji, Woolwonga

Goo me dah bee anga Goo me dah wy angra

Murra mer ma wrong te anaga anaga Murra mer ma wrong by alia

Gai-mariagal goori pemul

Hello I am Susan, I am Gurindji Woolwonga I ask to speak to the male spirits and I ask to speak to the female spirits to be able to walk and talk on the land of the Gai-maragal

Specifically, this is the home of the Cammeraygal people who are one of the 8 clans of the Gai-maragal – it was previous thought to be the lands of the Guringah or Guringai, but it has been revealed that they come from up on the Central Coast and moved into these homelands later.

Our tradition is an oral one, and over the decades Professor Dennis Foley continued to assert that this was this Grandmothers country, that this is matriarchal country. It's women's country.

We are here this morning to celebrate 50 years of HMAS Platypus and as a gift from my culture I want to share with you a short story that I have permission to tell about the lesson of the platypus.

A long time ago back in the time of creation, there lived a family of wood ducks. They lived on the river down south in Yuin country. The wood duck family was a typical duck family and lived happily on the river. They had a daughter who was so beautiful, was truly loved by her parents, and she gave them such pride and joy. Young Wood duck whilst she was beautiful, she always honoured her parent's wishes and always took care of the little one.

Just down the river lived water rat. He was a handsome chap, as rats go, he was a hard worker, kind and full of life.

One day he was having a good feed on yabbies' when he heard the sound a duck quacking and he hid behind the bushes on the side of the riverbank. Rat saw wood duck. He thought she was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen.

Over the next few days rat would watch wood duck from a far, never being seen always hiding behind the bushes on the river bank. He was smitten, and he was falling in love.

One day wood duck as she was swimming happily on the river she heard a rustling of the bushes and asked "who's there" and rat came forward and said "its me rat". Now rat didn't want to alarm wood duck and he told her that he had been watching her for a while and that he through she was the most beautiful creature that he had ever seen. He declared his love for her.

Rat felt so strongly for wood duck that he went to Old Man Wood Duck and asked for her hand in marriage.

"Rat, I believe that you are a good creature, very strong, hard worker and caring, but you're a rat? How can you and my daughter be together? You are too different. It wouldn't work?"

Rat knew that they had their differences and through that they could still make it work because he loved her so.

One day, Old Man Wood duck had managed to get himself tangled in tree roots on the rivers edge and was calling out for help and assistance to get free.

Rat heard him and came to his aide. “If I help you, will you give your blessing for me to marry your daughter”

Old Man wood duck said, “No, how would it work, it wouldn't work, she is a duck and you are a rat and you lead very different lives”

So rat sadly walked away and left Old Man Wood Duck stuck in tree root.

But he couldn't leave him there too long because he truly did love Wood duck and he couldn't allow harm to come to her Old Man. So he returned and freed him on the condition that he allow his daughter to come and live with him in the burrow for 3 months to see if it could work. So old man agreed and to honour her father's wishes Wood duck agreed as well.

Rat lined his burrow every day with most exquisite flowers and brought her the most succulent yabbies to eat, but life in the burrow wasn't for ducks. She started to wither because she wasn't meant to live in the dark damp place, she was meant to swim on the water and feel the sunlight on her face.

She got sick, so sick that Rat couldn't bare it any longer and said that it was ok for her to turn to her family.

Wood duck was so sad because she had come to love Rat but it just wasn't possible for them to be together they were too different.

Old Man Wood duck upon his daughters return, seeing how sick she was and how unhappy she was, was very concerned for her, but he was happy to have her home.

“I love him father, but we don't know how to be together”.

Old man wood duck pondered what to do for a while and decided to travel to the sacred mountain and called upon Biامي for counsel.

Biامي came down from the rivers of the dreaming and ask Old Man wood duck what he needed. He explained the situation and said that his daughter wood duck and rat loved each other and that it was an impossible union.

Biامي called on all the old wise ones to council and explained the situation and informed them that whilst this union was against the LORE and the laws of nature, they should consider the situation as both of these two creatures love for each other was pure, selfless and without any malice.

So Biامي declared that their union was to be allowed and as a symbol of this declaration their babies would be a reminder of their unconditional love for each other.

And from that time forth, the babies of the wood duck and rat would come from eggs, laid like Wood duck, feed their young on milk and live in a burrow like Rat. They would have fur like Rat and would have a beak and webbed feet like Wood duck.

And the Platypus came to be, and unconditional love was born

So, the lesson of Platypus is it's not about how different we are or where we come from, it's about how true our love is. It's a story about unconditional love and unconditional acceptance of difference.

Welcome from the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Mary Darwell, Chief Executive

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today, the Cammeraygal people, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would like to welcome you all to HMAS Platypus, a site now managed by the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust.

I am pleased to formally welcome and acknowledge:

Senator, The Hon Marise Payne, Minister for Defence

Minister Trent Zimmerman, Member for North Sydney

Minister Felicity Wilson, Member for North Shore

Commander Peter Cole, Director — RAN Heritage Collection, Spectacle Island

Vice Admiral Ian MacDougall, the first Executive Officer HMAS OXLEY, Commanding Officer HMAS PLATYPUS and former Chief of Naval Staff

Vice Admiral Peter Jones, President, Australian Naval Institute

Rear Admiral Peter Briggs, Chairman Find AE1 Ltd

Commodore Tim Brown, Director General Submarines

Captain Bill Owen, First Commanding Officer HMAS PLATYPUS

Captain James Lybrand, representing Commander Australian Submarine Force

Captain David Michael, President, Naval Historical Society of Australia

Mr Kevin McCann, Chairman, Sydney Harbour Federation Trust

Mr Peter Dexter, Chairman, Australian National Maritime Museum

Mr Kevin Sumption, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director Australian National Maritime Museum

Father Keith Dalby, Rector, St John's Church, Gordon

Susan Moylan Coombs, Director, The Cammeraygal Group

Representatives of the many sub-branches of the Returned Servicemen's League who contributed to the cost of the Memorial

Thank you all for joining us today.

This site has such an important and diverse history as Cammeraygal Country, a gas works, and a naval torpedo factory and submarine base. While the Harbour Trust is pleased to be able to bring this site back to life and into a new phase, it is important we continue to preserve and interpret the important history of this site. That means not only finding ways to share the stories of the site and the people that worked here with new visitors, but also to remember important events.

Today marks 50 years since HMAS Platypus first began to operate. It is a time to acknowledge the remarkable achievements of the submariners who spent more than 30

years working at this important submarine base, and gained a reputation as some of the world's finest submariners.

It is also important we remember those who lost their lives during their service. Today we take the time to acknowledge these men and their achievements, and celebrate their lives as we unveil the Submariners' Memorial that will be permanently located on the site.

The Harbour Trust's management of the site will see it opened to the public for the first time in 150 years. It will mean the site will be brought back to life and the public can enjoy the site and its history.

New public open spaces will be created such as this park which will be further completed, as well as a new arrival square, replacing the 3-storey office building currently being demolished. A new court yard within the Fleet workshop and a new gateway Plaza at the High Street entrance along with access improvements across the site, will also provide new ways for the public to use the site.

The re-use of the workshops will see these buildings retained and adapted to suit a range of recreational, community and commercial activities. This will allow these spaces to be enlivened with new uses while still retaining their heritage values.

Through the Platypus Renewal Project, the Harbour Trust is hoping to create a new phase of this site's history that incorporates character of its submariner's history and allows one and all to enjoy the site.

One again, on behalf of the Harbour Trust, Welcome to Platypus.

Welcome by President, Submarine Institute of Australia Commodore Mark Sander RAN (retired)

Minister for Defence, Senator the Honourable Marise Payne

Mr Trent Zimmerman MP, Federal Member for North Sydney

Member for the North Shore, Ms Felicity Wilson

Rear Admiral Michael Noonan, Deputy Chief of Navy, representing the Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Tim Barrett

Director General Submarines, Commodore Tim Brown

Former Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ian MacDougall

Rear Admiral Peter Briggs

The first Commanding Officer of HMAS PLATYPUS: Captain Bill Owen

Chairman Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, Mr Kevin McCann

Members of the Submarine Association of Australia and members of the Submarine Institute of Australia

Fellow submariners

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for taking the time to be here today to share what is a special occasion for all submariners. We are here to not only remember the good times but also to remember those who lost their lives in submarines in the service of their country.

I was fortunate enough to spend the best part of two decades serving in submarines operating out of Platypus. Platypus was our home, a place synonymous with submariners. The three-story building that used to be behind us here was both our place of work and of recreation, sometimes perhaps too much of the latter.

The selection of this site as the home of submarines, in this picturesque little bay, was not without its challenges. Berthing a 100m long submarine with a stiff breeze swirling down the Bay could be a real challenge for an XO under supervision or even an unsuspecting junior CO. Many a submarine went close to berthing at the Customs wharf across the bay!!

We would come and go at all hours of the day and night which added to the mystery of submarines. Truth be told, the reason was more likely the need to achieve a rendezvous off Jervis Bay with a friendly skimmer, our irreverent term for surface ships. And when that exercise concluded usually at about lunchtime on a Friday, we would hit the roof (surface) and return to harbour, hours after our faster surface compatriots. That was the life of a submariner: and we wouldn't have it any other way.

Two special thank-yous for today: Mary Darwell and Kevin McCann from the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust for allowing us to use this site today and to Chris Skinner and Geoff Anderson who spent many hours organising the event.

Introduction to the Minister for Defence, Mr Kevin McCann AM, Chairman, Sydney Harbor Federation Trust

Good morning ladies and gentlemen,

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today, the Cammeraygal people, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would also like welcome and acknowledge the distinguished guests of the official party.

Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge those who lost their lives during their service.

On behalf of the Board of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, welcome to the HMAS Platypus site. The Harbour Trust has been entrusted to rejuvenate this site and reopen it to the public for the first time in 150 years. Through this renewal project, the Harbour Trust will renew the site in a way that preserves and conveys all aspects of this site's heritage, as we have done across other sites managed by the Harbour Trust.

I have been involved in the Harbour Trust for many years, and as an organisation we provide sites for the public in a remarkable way. This site will add to our portfolio enormously and release this wonderful site to the public.

In 2005, HMAS Platypus was handed over to the Harbour Trust for the purpose of reopening the site to the public. With funding support from the Department of Defence, the Harbour Trust was able to complete an extensive \$46 million rehabilitation project, which was completed in 2016.

The Harbour Trust is now delivering on the vision of the Platypus Management Plan which will see Platypus transformed over the coming years as a lively urban public place.

The \$23.8 million Platypus Renewal Project wouldn't be possible without funding of \$20 million from the Federal Government – and I thank Federal Member for North Sydney Trent Zimmerman who is here today for his ongoing support of this project and this funding.

This next phase welcomes a new era for Platypus, with works now underway to open the site. This project will see the site rejuvenated as a waterfront urban park with the Harbour Trust works including the creation of new open space, access improvements across the site and base refurbishments to buildings to facilitate their future re-use.

The Harbour Trust works will also provide an over the water link with nearby North Sydney Wharf and Kesterton Park. Where possible, we will endeavour to open parts of the site to the public as these works are progressively completed.

It is an honour today to be able to welcome Senator Marise Payne, the Minister for Defence, to HMAS Platypus.

Senator Payne has served as Minister for Defence since 2015. She has almost two decades of parliamentary experience. During her parliamentary career she has served as Shadow Minister for Indigenous Development and Employment, Shadow Minister for the Council of Australian Governments and Shadow Minister for Housing. She has been a member of a number of Joint and Senate committees, including 12 years on the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, including a period as Chair of its Human Rights subcommittee.

Please join me in welcoming Senator Payne.

Senator the Honourable Marise PAYNE, Minister for Defence

Thank you very much, and good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

Let me also acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to their elders, past and present, and thank Susan very much for her welcome here today, her welcome to country, her acknowledgement of country, and her delightful story about the Platypus. Thank you very much.

There are very many special guests here today, as you have heard, and I suspect I won't be able to repeat all of them. But let me start with my friend, Deputy Chief of Navy, Rear Admiral Michael Noonan; representing the Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Tim Barrett; my very good friend and colleague, the Member for North Sydney, Trent Zimmerman; and the Member for North Shore, Felicity Wilson. To the former Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ian MacDougall; Rear Admiral Peter Briggs; the President of the Submarine Institute of Australia, Commodore Mark Sander; President of the Submarines Association of Australia, Commodore Bob Trotter. To Captain Bill Owen, who I've seen down here this morning; to Mary Darwell and to Kevin McCann, to Chris Skinner who I can't see, but I know he's here somewhere. Chris Skimmer, who is a great mate, lovely to see you, Chris. To the very many former serving members of the ADF and current serving members, welcome and thank you for your service.

It's wonderful to see so many of you here today. To Kevin McCann – I'm in a place of old friends, it's fair to say. We're friends of long-standing. Neither of us is going to call each other old, but Kevin, thank you for your very, very lovely remarks. We appreciate enormously the respect and the support that the trust gives to important Defence sites around the harbour – those you have now and those I'm sure you'd like to get your hands on – and we very much appreciate the work that the trust does. Did I just send a shiver down your spine, Deputy Chief of Navy? It's possible I did

Can I acknowledge also the Navy band who, here this morning under difficult circumstances, are doing a fabulous job. Thank you very much for welcoming us and making this such an impressive occasion.

I'm immensely proud of the military bands, and the Navy band just edges up there further in my estimation every time I hear them. So thank you for what you do.

Ladies and gentlemen, it's an enormous pleasure to have received the invitation to be here today to celebrate the 50th anniversary of HMAS Platypus and the dedication of the Submariners Memorial. It is also important that we are here today on 18 August on what is now Vietnam Veteran's Day. To those of you who are veterans from Vietnam, thank you for your service also. We acknowledge and remember the extraordinary contribution that you and your fallen comrades made.

It was indeed 50 years ago today that HMAS Platypus was commissioned as Australia's new submarine support facility, and HMAS Oxley – Australia's first submarine for 36 years – arrived in Sydney. Now, the very authoritative Navy News – which continues to be very authoritative, of course – on 18 August 1967 described Oxley thus: luxurious, lauding its air conditioning, its bathrooms, its fully-equipped galley, and even piped music. I'm not sure whether the piped music was used as an instrument of torture or an instrument of pleasure. That remains to be seen – or heard, I suspect – in the memories, but I'm pretty sure that

most of you who are here today who may have served on an Oberon-class submarine would probably not have often used the word luxurious.

But there are other words that do come to mind when I think about those who have served on the Oberons, their predecessors, now in our Collins submarines, and they are in fact engraved on the wall below us here: strength and stealth. Stealth is particularly apt because it is a by-product – unfortunate or otherwise – of what we need our submarines to do. In fact, very few Australians will ever really know exactly how our submarines and submariners have contributed and continue to contribute to the safety and to the security of our nation. I know that that can be difficult for those whose contribution to that capability is invaluable, but it's not able always to be acknowledged in the same way as other ADF capabilities and therefore contributions are, but it is one of the reasons why I am very proud therefore to be here today, to remember, to acknowledge, and to celebrate the contribution made by submariners, by submarines, by all the supporters of that process, to the history, to the defence of our nation.

Another interesting by-product of that stealth or silence – in the silent service – is that I am still today asked whether we really need submarines. And I did want to take a minute for what would appear to be an appropriate occasion to make an observation about why this Government continues to recognise the requirement for an Australian submarine capability. Self-evidently, as an island nation, one of the largest maritime domains in the world, facing three oceans – the Indian, the Pacific and the Southern – with a coastline of more than 32,000 nautical miles and a population of only 25 million people, it is your Government's obligation to take every step that we think is prudent and appropriate to ensure that we can defend ourselves and our people.

The proportion of the world's trade that passes through Australian ports is enormously significant. We ourselves rely on the sea for 99 per cent of our exports and for a substantial proportion of our domestic freight. Our prosperity, our \$1.6 trillion economy, is dependent on secure and open sea lanes, and the work of the submarine fleet is key in ensuring that shipping is able to freely navigate the oceans and to conduct maritime trade, especially through the massive economic trading artery that runs from the Middle East, across the Indian Ocean, through the South China Sea, past Japan and on to North America. They also play a key role in defending and furthering our efforts to enhance stability in our region by providing Australia with a strategic capability to reinforce the rules-based order in our region, and it is a rules-based order which reduces the risk of regional disputes, reduces the potential for armed confrontations.

Ultimately, there is no other platform that can do what submarines do. As our White Paper said as recently as 2016, submarines are a powerful instrument for deterring conflict, and a potent weapon should conflict occur. For those reasons and many more, submarines aren't an optional part of Australia's strategic capability. They are essential. And in that order, Australia needs the best possible submarines and submariners to support our maritime security, to ensure that our nation continues the way of life that we are privileged to enjoy – to be safe, to be free and to be prosperous.

We've committed to this very solidly through the Future Submarine Program – a program that will deliver an affordable, regionally superior conventional submarine capability which is sustainable into the foreseeable future. We also committed to doubling the size of our submarine fleet to 12 in recognition of that more challenging maritime environment that our nation will face in the decades ahead.

And importantly, these submarines will be truly a sovereign capability. We won't only construct them in Australia, but we will operate them, sustain them, and maintain them in Australia. We're not going to rely elsewhere for any of that. We're going to harness and develop the skills and talents of Australians here in Australia. We're going to develop the national naval enterprise so that we have a sovereign submarine capability that will ensure we are able to build and sustain our fleet without unnecessary reliance on anyone else.

As it occurred, when HMAS Platypus was commissioned on the arrival of the Oberon submarines in 1967, our future submarines will also be supported by upgrades to supporting infrastructure, whether it's wharves or port facilities, as well as simulators and training and submarine rescue systems. The lessons that were learned here on this very ground, over years of basing the Oberons here, with the Collins-class at HMAS Stirling as well, those lessons will be very important to making sure that the future enablers and facilities are best placed to support our future submarines.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, part of that is building a cohort of submariners that will see us into the future. So gentlemen, form a line over there if you feel like coming back and giving us a hand.

Before I close, I really do want to take a serious opportunity to express my thanks to all of the submariners who have served in Oberon and Collins-class submarines. Your contribution to Australia's defence, your real contribution to our national security, is greatly appreciated.

Fifty continuous years of the Royal Australian Navy operating submarines – among the most advanced conventional submarines in the world – continues a tradition that dates back to before the First World War and it will continue, as I've just outlined, for many decades to come.

I know that the memorial that we're here today to dedicate on the 50th anniversary of HMAS Platypus will remind everyone who comes here of the unique and dangerous nature of the work that Australian submariners undertook and continue to undertake for our region. This is a very important memorial, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for the honour of participating with you here this morning.

Deputy Chief of Navy, Rear Admiral Michael NOONAN AM RAN, on behalf of the Vice Admiral Tim Barrett AO CSC RAN, Chief of Navy

Minister for Defence, Senator the Honourable Marise Payne

Member for North Sydney, Mr Trent Zimmerman MP

Member for the North Shore, Ms Felicity Wilson MP

Former Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ian MacDougall

Rear Admiral Peter Briggs

President, Submarine Institute of Australia, Commodore Mark Sander

President, Submarines Association Australia, New South Wales, Commander Geoff Anderson

Chairman Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, Mr Kevin McCann

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honoured to be here today to represent the Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Tim Barrett, who is regrettably unable to attend today.

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Cammeraygal people, both past and present and to acknowledge the contribution made by indigenous men and women who have contributed to the Defence of Australia in times of peace and war.

Australia is a vast island continent, in a maritime region of a globalised world that is highly dependent on the sea for the movement of the goods that create its wealth and sustain it.

In the future we will only become more reliant on the oceans, not only as the highways of the globalised world economy, but also for both food and natural resources.

Being able to effectively operate in the maritime environment is as critical to Australia's defence forces, as the sea is to our national prosperity.

The two are intrinsically linked.

It was with knowledge and an understanding of the potential for submarines to act as a powerful deterrent in the defence of Australia that in 1963, the Menzies Government approved the purchase of British built Oberon class submarines for the Royal Australian Navy to be based in Sydney.

The commissioning of HMAS Platypus on the 18th August 1967 coincided with the arrival of the first Oberon, HMAS Oxley, in Sydney after her delivery voyage from the United Kingdom.

And until 1999, when Platypus bid farewell to the last Oberon and was decommissioned, she played an essential role in delivering the Navy's submarine capability.

The 18th of August 1967 also marked the start of a number of other significant events for the Royal Australian Navy's submarine service.

It marked the start of the Royal Australian Navy's provision of an uninterrupted period of 50 years of a credible submarine capability to Government.

It also marked the first time the submarine capability could be considered to be truly part of the Australian Navy because all the elements that supported the Navy's submarine capability — including submarine policy and resources, maintenance and repair, and naval design coordinated by a dedicated submarine manager — belonged to Australia (albeit with support from the Royal Navy).

While the system was not perfect, it was appropriate, given where our Navy had started from.

Navy learnt many valuable lessons about the importance of submarines in a balanced force.

And with the acquisition of the Collins Class, Navy took a major evolutionary step forward, but it took us more than a decade to wholly realise the magnitude and complexity of the burden which falls to a parent Navy.

We have now evolved well beyond those fledgling days.

We now speak of a national naval enterprise — a sovereign enterprise that embraces the submarine service as the key to the Navy's ability to deliver lethality and deter those who seek to use armed force against us or our allies.

The Oberons had a special relationship with Platypus just as the Navy and Sydney have a special relationship — these relationships are truly unique and we celebrate this today on the 50th anniversary of Platypus' commissioning.

We also come together today to remember those who served and died in the service of our country while in the Submarine Service, especially Able Seaman Christopher Passlow, Able Seaman Hugh Marcrow and Seaman Damien Humphreys.

Each of these sailors demonstrated their readiness to serve their mates, their boat, and their nation.

It is their spirit of sacrifice and dedication that we honour and give thanks for, as individuals, as a community and as a nation.

The memorial that is dedicated here today will remind all Australians of their sacrifice.

Lest we forget.

Thank you.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER INTRODUCTION

by Commodore Mark SANDER RAN (retired), President, SIA

There would be few submariners who have not heard of our next speaker. Vice Admiral Ian MacDougall joined the Navy in 19xx as a Supply Officer serving in ships Anzac, Swan, Vampire and Melbourne. He then transferred to submarines and became a Seaman Officer, and his remarkable career accelerated. He was the Executive Officer of our first Oberon class submarine, HMAS OXLEY, when she first arrived in Australia before he returned to the UK to command HMSM Otter. On his return to Australia he commanded HMAS ONSLOW, now magnificently presented for public visitation at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Darling harbour.

His list of “firsts” are legendary and include:

- the first submariner to command a surface ship(s) including the guided Missile Destroyer, HMAS Hobart and then later the Navies largest vessel, the Fleet Replenishment ship, HMAS Supply.
- The first Australian to be appointed Captain Submarines, Head of the Submarine Force.
- The first Submariner to be the Fleet Commander
- And finally Adm MacDougall went on and became the first and only submariner to be appointed the Chief of Navy.

Vice Admiral MacDougall went on to become the Commissioner of the New South Wales Fire Brigade and in 2000 he was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal

Admiral MacDougall, we are very grateful that you could come all the way from Tasmania and for postponing your travel overseas to be with us today.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Vice Admiral MacDougall.

Keynote Speaker: Vice Admiral Ian MacDougall AC AFSM RAN (retired)
Former Chief of Naval Staff, Commanding Officer, HMAS ONSLOW
and Executive Officer HMAS OXLEY on arrival in Sydney 1967-08-18

(Admiral MacDougall acknowledged the invited guests and other speakers and recognised their institutions and the support they provided).

At the end of World War 2 and the beginning of the Cold War our Government and that of New Zealand recognised the need for continuing anti-submarine warfare [ASW] training for our navies and air forces. The Soviets had a large and increasing arsenal of submarines, many of which came to have intercontinental missile capabilities. A deal was struck with Britain to base a couple of submarines at Balmoral in Sydney. The cost, to be shared by the two Governments, was 15,000 pounds per annum, in today's dollars about 600,000. The Royal Navy submarines were to act as the loyal opposition, often described as clockwork mice.

In the early 1960's Britain announced its intention to withdraw from east of Suez and end the rent-a-sub on the cheap agreement. Our Government acted swiftly. It decided to buy four, ultimately six, Oberon class submarines to be built in Scotland. There were many strands to be brought together including the training of crews in the RN and construction of a base, HMAS PLATYPUS, here in Neutral Bay. Other supporting infrastructure followed. A simulator which evolved into a sophisticated warfare centre and an escape training facility. These acquisitions negated the need for expensive travel to the United Kingdom to requalify in its facilities and gave us independence in determining our future. It also avoided acts of wilful disobedience such as ubiquitous clothing regulations requiring people proceeding to Britain to be issued with an overcoat. Not once but for each trip!

Submarine service has always been on a voluntary basis. About 300, in batches of about 30 officers and sailors, were despatched to the UK, many of whom served in RN boats, often of classes from WW2, for up to four years. Living conditions were spartan. One RN Oberon mischievously invited the UK Ministry for Agriculture and Fish to assess an accommodation space with triple-tiered bunks for 18 and small caravan style tables in an area roughly the size of a small single-car garage. It was declared unfit for pigs! Storage space for clothing, books and personal effects was severely limited in size to a small cardboard removals container. Dress in a dived submarine was of necessity generally limited to shorts and a T-shirt called pirate rig. Fresh water for personal hygiene was very limited. Frankly life in an Oberon was pretty squalid requiring a high level of stoicism. After a long patrol, say 70 days, or a six-month deployment to distant regions sleeping bags were disposed of by incineration. Some who returned to their homes clutching an evil-smelling laundry bag were reputed to have been hosed down on the front lawn before they were allowed to enter their homes. These unsung heroines spent long periods as mothers / fathers / lawn mowers / car mechanics and so on.

When success ensues, there are many claimants and some unsung heroes. The late Commander Henry Cook managed our Oberon project with meticulous care thus guaranteeing its success.

Those Australian submariners who served in Royal Navy submarines experienced high-tempo operations as RN submarines were allocated to the NATO order of battle to defeat

the Soviet threat. They came to recognise that our submarine force could be more than just clockwork mice, indeed would be a vital offensive addition to Australia's maritime defence.

A few years later a Submarine Weapons Upgrade Program [SWUP] was developed to replace the original analogue combat system with a state of the art capability with modern torpedoes and missiles. An unsung hero for this was the late Commodore Peter Mitchell. His dedication ensured success.

Another unsung group was the engineering staffs of the boats and the base. Stripping down 16 cylinder supercharged diesels, particularly at sea in the ridiculously confined and oppressively hot confines of a dived submarine was heroic.

The arbiters of good morale were the two chefs, who, in a tiny galley, produced 6,000 meals a month. Fresh provisions gave way to tinned food after the first three days of a patrol. It will be no surprise that ring-pull cans to replace can openers were invented for USN submarines if disabled on an ocean floor, and now of course proliferate in the world's food industries and our navy.

In those days it was a male only demographic but today submarine crews are made up of males and females. Not for altruistic affirmative action reasons but on merit and a pragmatic recognition that our recruiting base needs to reflect that our population is pretty much half and half of the genders. I think the RAN was the first to introduce submarine service for females.

In passing the matrimonial balance of trade between the UK and Australia was pretty evenly matched. RN submariners took Aussie brides back to the UK and our submariners brought brides home from Britain and elsewhere. I am not sure if this falls into the category of unsung heroes.

This day fifty years ago was a gala day with HMAS PLATYPUS commissioning and our first Oberon HMAS OXLEY arriving after a 68-day passage from the UK. The Commanding Officer of OXLEY, Lieutenant Commander David Lorrimer drove the boat into Neutral Bay with great élan. So much so that the welcomers on the wharf were looking decidedly anxious but he knew what he was doing.

Relations with our Neutral Bay neighbours were generally good. In 1985 shortly before the festive season a mail drop to their boxes wished them well and apologised for any inconvenience caused by the noise generated 24/7 with departures and arrivals as well as equipment maintenance. There were replies which universally said we enjoy your presence. I suppose it could be likened to the living theatre of an ant colony.

There is a measure of sadness today that many who were here 50 years ago have passed away; in submarine parlance, still on patrol. They are not forgotten and are owed a debt of gratitude for building the foundations upon which the submarine force of today grew and will continue to do so. For all the early brouhaha the Collins class has been a successful boat as I am sure the next class of submarines soon to be built will be also.

It is not widely known that submarine personnel component of our navy is only about 2.5%. It is a tradition in the force that when one of its own graduates from training ashore and at sea, the commanding officer of the boat presents them with their submarine brevet of twin dolphins and says: 'Wear them with pride.' Incidentally real dolphins sleep with one hemisphere of their brains only. The other hemisphere remains alert for threats. One of the species sleeps in short bursts of four to 60 seconds. These two skills are acquired on Perisher, the submarine command qualifying course.

I hope my references to the mystique of the Oberons has not put too much stress on handkerchiefs and tissues.

Finally, I would like to shine a light on and congratulate today's unsung hero being Captain Chris Skinner RAN (retired). Over 50 years ago Commander Cook applied considerable skill in bringing our Oberons to fruition. So too has Chris with today's commemoration. It is an important contribution to our history.

Thank you.

RADM Peter Briggs AO CSC RAN (retired), Chairman Find AE1 Ltd

I have two duties to perform today – both give me great pleasure.

The first is to thank Admiral MacDougall for his Platypus address – he is, as always, a man of a few well-chosen words and I shall endeavour to follow his example.

About 32 years ago I was sitting in my office as the Commander of the Submarine Squadron and PLATYPUS – close to where I am standing today when a letter arrived marked for my attention with the Admiral MacDougall's manuscript direction across the top.

It read: "Briggs, fix this". Signed IDG MacDougall

The letter was a request from the Holbrook Shire Council for an Oberon class submarine – once the Navy had finished with it of course.

After they had inspected a submarine in dock at Cockatoo Island we persuaded them that it would not fit down the Hume Highway on a low loader and they settled for the fin and casing of OTWAY that now forms the centre piece of a park and submarine museum.

A very happy relationship grew up between the Squadron and Shire - the annual June long weekend visit by Squadron personnel and Navy Band to Holbrook became a fixture on the calendar until the Squadron moved to WA. Several marriages and recruits resulted.

Not a bad result from 3 words – I suspect that today it might take a few more pages than that!

Thank you for your wise words today Sir.

Secondly, I have been asked to update you on progress in the search to find the men of HMAS AE1, 35 of our first submariners lost without a trace on 14 September 1914 whilst participating in the RAN's first action in World War I, to take over the German colony in PNG and eliminate their Naval radio sited at Kokopo.

AE1 and HMAS PARRAMATTA were tasked with patrolling off Cape Gazelle to guard the southern approaches to the Fleet anchorages in Rabaul and Kokopo.

AE1 was last seen by PARRAMATTA off the Duke of York Islands, some distance from their patrol line at 1430. We believe had AE1 diverted from her orders, in order to locate a German steamer sighted the evening before.

From the last seen position she had 40 minutes or so in hand before having to head back at best speed on the surface in order to be alongside by dark as personally directed by the Admiral when she sailed that morning.

The project team that managed the Silent Anzac project to protect, preserve and tell the story of her sister ship, HMAS AE2 in the Dardanelles has turned its attention to finding AE1 and solving this 103 year-old mystery.

We began by researching all the available original log books, signal logs and reports from the ship's and Vice Admiral Patey, the Commander of the Australian Fleet at the time. Using this we set out a search area and began the effort to raise the necessary funds.

In September 2014 HMAS YARRA, in the area for the commemorations marking the centenary of her loss, searched a shallow water portion of our high probability area.

It was a challenging environment, YARRA found an interesting contact but was unable to identify it.

In January 2015 we funded and organised an ROV examination of the contact; unfortunately the contact was a 54m long line of limestone boulders.

In November 2015 we funded, planned and undertook a 5-day Multi Beam Echo Sounder survey with a high probability of detecting AE1 if she lay in the inshore edge of the area down to the 200m depth contour.

We also collected precise bottom topography of much of the search area – subsequently used by the RAN Hydrographer to issue a new edition of the nautical chart incorporating this data.

No wreck was found – tending to disprove the theory that AE1 had sunk because of a grounding.

The negative result caused us to re-examine the research data and we presented our findings to a workshop of Defence scientists, the Navy's historical specialist, maritime archaeologists, historians and submariners at the Australian National Maritime Museum in December 2016.

The workshop reached a unanimous conclusion on the most likely scenario – a diving accident close to the last known position or on the route back to Rabaul.

It also agreed on the best search technology and methodology to locate AE1.

The Defence Science and Technology Group undertook a probabilistic analysis to rank the most likely sites and we have used this to plan a 30d expedition to thoroughly search the area with towed side scan and sub bottom profiler sonars and a magnetometer.

Based on the results of our analysis and the experience with other similar submarine wrecks worldwide, we believe we will find AE1 sitting upright and intact on the bottom. It is a challenging area, depths range from 200 to 1,000m and the complex bottom topography will require a meticulous search – hence the duration of this effort. We will bring in some experienced overseas wreck searchers to assist in this process.

Why are we so sure?

Immediately following the loss, the RAN ships searched the correct area and foreshore of Duke of York islands – they found nothing, no persistent oil slick, debris or bodies.

The logical deduction from this negative clue is that the submarine did not crush – this water depth is far beyond AE1's crush depth, therefore the submarine must have flooded, equalizing the pressure – hence the weight given to the diving accident scenario.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority has confirmed using drift analysis modelling that any debris would have washed ashore of the Duke of York – providing further corroboration that there was no such debris.

I need to publicly thank a number of organisations represented here today - we have been strongly supported by the Submarine Institute of Australia – thank you Mark Sander.

The Australian National Maritime Museum, thank you Chairman Peter Dexter and the Director of the Museum, Kevin Sumption.

Navy have provided moral and practical support – thank you Navy.

And I am very pleased to announce that the Silentworld Foundation have joined us as a major sponsor and together we have commenced to raise the necessary funds to undertake the search in November/December 2018 and find the men of AE1, where they died seeking out the foe in 1914.

It is a pleasure to welcome one of the Australian AE1 descendants who are with us today:

Ron & Roslynne Lowe – Chief ERA Thomas Lowe was Ron's grandfather.

Thomas Lowe joined the fledgling RAN submarine arm from the Royal Navy in November 2013. He received a Governor General's commendation after the submarine's arrival in Sydney for his sterling efforts on the delivery trip. At the time of AE1's loss, his widow, Mary Priscilla Lowe was living in North Sydney – not far from us today.

It is time Australia found its missing first submariners, honoured their service and brought closure to the descendent families.

The naval ode to be read later in the service by Warrant Officer Gary Wight, Warrant Officer of the Navy was never more appropriate, and I ask you to think of the men of AE1 as we recite it.

Thank you.

Kevin Sumption PSM, Chief Executive Officer,
Australian National Maritime Museum [ANMM]

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen – it's my very great pleasure to be here with you today as we mark this important anniversary and reflect on the achievements of Australia's submarine service.

At the Australian National Maritime Museum, we are committed to sharing the stories and achievements of Australia's submariners with the community.

Through tours of arguably our most popular attraction HMAS Onslow and our Action Stations experience – based on the experiences of past and current service men and women – we aim to give our thousands of visitors an insight into life in the silent service.

As just mentioned by Rear Admiral Briggs, the museum is also proud to be a partner in FIND AE1 Ltd and lend our curatorial and maritime archaeology experts to this important project.

And today I'm very pleased to announce the Australian National Maritime Museum has acquired five military decorations awarded to Chief Engine Room Artificer Leonard Allen for his service as a submariner in the Royal Australian Navy during World War I.

We have acquired Allen's:

- Distinguished Service Medal
- 1914-1915 Star
- British War Medal
- Victory Medal
- Naval Long Service & Good Conduct Medal

Now Leonard Allen is a very fascinating character – he was born in Reading in the UK in 1877 and at age 21 joined the Royal Navy. In March 1913, after 15 years of service, he was promoted to Chief Engine Room Artificer.

In February 1914, Australia's first two submarines, AE1 and AE2, were commissioned at Portsmouth. Allen was transferred from the Royal Navy to the Royal Australian Navy and was part of AE1's commissioning crew, sailing the new submarine to Australia alongside its sister AE2.

Interestingly this was the longest submarine voyage ever taken at that time.

After war was declared, Allen sailed with AE1 to New Guinea but for some reason was transferred to AE2. This proved to be extremely lucky, as shortly after AE1 disappeared with all hands off the Duke of York Islands.

In fact, Allen's replacement was a submariner named Joseph Wilson, who sadly was lost with AE1 when it disappeared but whose medals we also have in the museum's collection.

Leonard Allen went on to sail with AE2 to the Mediterranean but was injured in a boating accident and while convalescing missed AE2's historic mission into the Dardanelles and Sea of Marmara in April 1915.

With both Australian submarines now lost, Allen was loaned back to the Royal Navy where he joined the crew of British submarine E11.

E11 was one of the most successful submarines in action during the 1915 naval operations in the Dardanelles Campaign, sinking over 80 vessels in three tours of the Sea of Marmara.

It was during the second patrol that Allen performed an on-the-fly repair to E11's 12-inch deck gun which earned him the Distinguished Service Medal.

In 1916 Allen was promoted to Warrant Engineer and in 1919 was appointed to Australian submarine J3, which he sailed with from Portsmouth to Australia.

Allen settled in Bondi with his family, and continued to serve until his retirement from the Royal Australian Navy in 1922, returning to the UK shortly thereafter.

I'm sure you'll agree his service career is a fascinating one, connecting the stories of AE1 and AE2 to E11 and the J-class submarines that followed.

Ladies and gentlemen, the museum looks forward to sharing Allen's story alongside the stories of HMAs Platypus and the experiences of other submariners, past and present, with our visitors.

And through our Collection, our commemorative AE1 and AE2 sculptures, Action Stations and HMAS Onslow, we will continue to provide a way to remember and acknowledge their service and sacrifice for years to come.

Thank you.

Commander Geoff Anderson RAN (retired),
President, Submarines Association Australia (NSW)

Senator the Hon Marise Payne, Minister for Defence

Distinguished Guests, fellow submariners, ladies and gentlemen,

Coming from Melbourne and joining submarines whilst in the UK, I was unaware of HMAS Platypus and the idyllic location of Neutral Bay. I first saw the base on 7 July 1970 when Onslow arrived on its maiden voyage. I was on the after casing with two sailors as the piping party for dignitaries, including Vice Admiral Smith, the then Chief of Navy, who had joined us in Brisbane for the passage to Sydney.

As we approached the wharf, we saw this young slim girl waving. Then we realised she was calling Geoff, Geoff. Who is she I thought, when one of the sailors said "looks like you will be OK tonight Sir". Yes I said, but I wonder who she is. Most of you will not know that I am an identical Twin, so she knew me but I did not know her. To this day I don't remember being told that John was married whilst I was overseas and that is how I met my Sister In Law.

There are many stories and memories from Platypus which I am sure will be told today.

The Memorial.

It has always been the intention of the Submarines Association Australia to create a monument to preserve and commemorate the service of the six Australian Oberon Class Submarines, Platypus, all that served and to recognise the sacrifice of those who lost their lives.

After the tragic accidents on Onslow and the Otama where three young sailors lost their lives, it was always intended to create a memorial to them at Platypus. To this end, CPO Grant, or "General to most" acquired the anchor from OXLEY when she decommissioned, to be the centre piece. It was stored on Spectacle Island for many years and recently refurbished and painted by Thales in the Garden Island Dockyard.

Unfortunately, CPO Grant cannot be here today as I am told he is on Safari in Africa.

For over 7 years, the NSW Submarines Association Australia has been represented on the Community Advisory Committee formed by the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust. Virtually from day 1, the location was allocated and shown in all plans.

On behalf of all submariners, I would like to thank the SHFT for their continued support, openness and guidance to achieve what we have today. It has been a pleasure to work with you, past and present members included. We are also indebted to POETP Ken Williams who has been our representative on the Community Advisory Committee.

Last year we called for a design for the memorial, and Gosford Signarama through Mr Paul Cleary, proposed an initial design which was accepted and then shown to the SHFT who in turn passed it to Aspect Studios who were engaged by them to propose the complete story and interpretation of the site including the Torpedo Factory (or RNATME). Aspect Studios thought outside the square, so to speak, and came up with a number of designs which we all reviewed and commented on before the final design was accepted. Some may ask, so

where is the Submarine Silhouette, large Oberang and Dolphins. Rest assured they will be here for all to see, but not part of the actual memorial.

Our next major hurdle was funding. Through our members and affiliated states we raised 40%.

Thank you fellow submariners, too many to mention, and we will respect your privacy. Then with recognition of the significance of the memorial from the NSW RSL State Branch, an additional 40% was received from over 25 RSL Sub Branches. Thank you to all and the local branches, Forestville, North Sydney, Chatswood, Pittwater etc. Special thanks must go to Bombaderry, Auburn and South Hurstville for your significant contributions. The remaining 20% was received via a Saluting Their Service Grant from the Minister of Veterans Affairs. Thanks to Ken Norris for achieving this.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the SIA under Mark Sander for today's ceremony. Special mention must go to Frank Owen for his dedication and behind the scenes activities and I am sure his family motto must be the same as Platypus "Nothing Too Difficult". Also Chris Skinner for his overall organisation, attention to detail and sheer hard work to make this event occur.

The dedication will now be conducted by Father Keith Dalby who is an ex submariner having served in the Navy from 1979 to 1991 on three submarines and was serving on ONSLOW at the time of the accident. Father Dalby is an ex Petty Officer ETS, ordained in 1995 and is the current Rector of St Johns Church, Gordon, having moved there in 2004. A strong supporter of all submariners, it is therefore most appropriate that we ask him to perform the dedication of the memorial.

Father Keith.

Father Keith Dalby, Rector, St Johns Church, Gordon, and submariner

Today we come and celebrate and commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the commissioning of Plats, and dedicate memorials to the submarines that were based here, and to the lives that were lost.

The two sets of memorials are two sides of the one coin. One the one side is the base, and submarines. These form a part of the big picture for the defence department, the navy and of course the government whose political directions we respond to. But bases and submarines are not able to operate without real actual people to either man them and or to take them to sea. Often, as is the case with this second memorial that service is costly.

Once those berthing lines are slipped and hatches shut the submarine environment is one of the most hostile environments a person can operate in. Although at war, AE1 was not lost in action. We don't know why she was lost, but the entire crew was lost, and her whereabouts unknown to this day. AE2 in action only lost a few, although that is too many as well.

Chris Passlow, who I served with on Onslow as a part 3, Hugh Markcrow, who I served with on Ovens, along with his brother Bill, who was my baby SAW, and Damien Humphries who I never knew are our modern-day casualties of our modern submarine story.

It is terribly important that we have these memorials to these men, who died in service of their country. As a parent who has buried their own son, I understand how important it is to have a sacred space to come to and reflect, and this memorial today serves that purpose. It does not matter if the families of these young men never return to this place, simply having this memorial at the place where they set sail for the last time before they commenced their eternal patrol is enough. Chris, of course is buried at Newcastle, Hugh and Damien's bodies sadly and tragically never recovered. But now the three are spiritually brought together at this site, here in this place, in the presence of Damien's family, and their other family, the submarine community. Here along with their families, we the submarine community now have a sacred space to reflect.

Geoff made mention of the stories that would abound today, he is right. I want to share one story about Hugh. Hopefully why I tell it will become evident. One day at sea on Ovens we were running shut down, both diesels going. Bill and Hugh came into the control room and requested to the bridge. They were given permission with the lift driver. A few minutes later a garbled message came over action. Captain sir officer of the watch, the Markcrow brothers are throwing their father over board. To the immense surprise of the OOW and the look out the brothers had taken their fathers ashes to the bridge and commenced to cast them to the sea from the bridge. Except that the wind blowing took the ashes to the snort induction mast, and well, lets say, the OOW and the lookout weren't the only ones surprised, as was the AMS watchkeeper, those at 77 bulkhead, and the engine room staff. The brothers were restrained from completing their task, brought below to speak with the captain, and once we had stood down from a full man overboard procedure, he then ordered the submarine stopped and a proper service with a six-point fix on a new chart to show where the burial took place and the chart presented by them to their mother at a later date. So why have I told this story. Well its funny and can only happen on a submarine, but more importantly while Hughey' mother and brother cannot be with him, his father can, for in that same sea are father and son. God moves in mysterious ways his wonders to behold.

To the Passlow and Markcrow families who are not present, and to Damien's family who are present I want to say this to you all. You have lost your son in the service of our great

country. I don't know what the official contact notifying you of your precious loss was, but I want to share with you words that were written to a mother who lost her sons in another battle, in another land in another time. It says in part;

I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours, very sincerely and respectfully,

A. Lincoln

It is my prayer that from this day on you know that while your sorrow is yours, and only yours you do not bear it alone, for your sons were our brothers, and continue to be so to this day, and we mourn and we remember, and we reflect with you.

In conclusion I want to make one last point. Chris, Hugh and Bear are at rest, the families are not though, and that includes us, the submariners who served with them. For our service has cost us as well, and it is a cost that we continue to live with to this day.

Each and every one of us have responded differently to our service, for we are all different, but there is not one of us who is not affected either in our mental or physical health by our service whether we understand that or not. We need to recognise it, and to seek assistance. Remember, more Australian ex-servicemen died in the 10 years after WW1 than the whole of the war, and we continue to lose ex-servicemen who served in Afghan and Iraq.

Ours has always been the silent service, but we can be silent no more, we need to speak up, and make our voices heard. But remember, Defence, DVA, Psyches, Doctors can only do so much, for they can never understand fully what we went through. How do you explain what we did to anyone who wasn't there?

We need to stick together, to continue to be the submarine community we were when we served, here in this place, and there are many out there willing to listen, to share and to help, so for goodness sake reach out to the associations, the advocates, and even I'll listen to you, we are there for you and we are willing to listen and share, as no one else can.

Dolphin Code 33 and DBF

Warrant Officer of the Navy, WOCISSM Gary Wight
Recitation of the Naval Ode of Remembrance

They have no grave but the cruel sea

No flowers lay at their head

A rusting hulk is their tombstone

A'fast on the ocean bed

We will remember them

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