



# The Navy League of Australia

## South Australia Division

A.C.N. 008 451 063

**PATRON: His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le AC**

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA DIVISION NEWSLETTER – Issue 3 - July 2021

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## SPECIAL EDITION

### FAREWELL TO OUR PATRON THE GOVERNOR OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA HIS EXCELLENCY HIEU VAN LE AC and MRS LAN Le



His Excellency Hieu Van Le AC steps down from his official role as Governor of South Australia on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021. He and Mrs Le will be sorely missed,

Navy League Australia – South Australia Division followed a time-honoured tradition of inviting the new Governor for South Australia to become our patron 7 years ago. His Excellency and Mrs Le have been great supporters of Navy League in attending our Divisional lunches and many Navy-related ceremonies and events. Indeed, His Excellency said at one of our lunches that he feels part of the Navy as he and Mrs Le travelled by boat to Darwin!

His Excellency first held office of Lieutenant-Governor for 7 years and in 2014 was appointed for 5 years as South Australia's 35<sup>th</sup> Governor. Such was his inspiration and contribution that his role of Governor was extended for another two years, thus making his service in a Vice-Regal position to be 14 years. This will be the longest continuous period of service in South Australia's history, which he has served with distinction.

During this time, His Excellency and Mrs Lan Le have dedicated themselves to meeting as many South Australians as possible. Respectively, they are patron to over 200 organisations and 25 organisations.

They have both worked tirelessly in multi-cultural fields and His Excellency even has his own tartan kilt for Scottish celebrations. Their special link with Navy League of Australia – South Australia is deeply appreciated.

We wish both His Excellency and Mrs Le every happiness and contentment in retirement from their official duties.....but it is extremely likely they will still be as busy ever.

Congratulations and thank you for your patronage of Navy League of Australia – South Australia Division.

# THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA 79<sup>th</sup> COMMEMORATION SERVICE

## SUNDAY 2 MAY 2021 - ADELAIDE BOTANICAL GARDENS MEMORIAL

Address by **CMDR Alastair Cooper ADC RAN,**  
**Commanding Officer Navy HQ-SA**



We meet to commemorate the battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942.

If we were meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1942, and if we knew of the potential for a naval battle in the Coral Sea, we would likely have a very different view of it, than we do now. We would not be so much intrigued by the new-found potential of naval aviation, so much as concerned at what it might mean for Australia. We would not be contentedly reflecting on the first steps of an inevitable march to victory, so much as fearful of yet another terrible defeat.

The front page of the Advertiser on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1942 recorded the desperate plight of the Allies as a key railway was cut in Burma and speculated about the lack of Allied co-ordination as a key reason for Japanese victories.

In the two preceding years, Australians, Americans and friends and allies around the world had seen the evacuation of Dunkirk and the fall of France in May and June 1940; defeats in Greece and Crete in April and May 1941; the siege of Tobruk and the sinking of HMA Ships *Parramatta* and *Waterhen* on the dangerous ferry run which supported it.

The six months which preceded May 1942 were even more awful for Australia and the United States. In November 1941 HMAS *Sydney* was sunk in action by the German raider *Kormoran* and Japan entered the war with attacks throughout South East Asia and the Pacific. In December 1941, there were defeats at Pearl Harbor and in the South China Sea with great loss of life in the sinkings of HM Ships *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* and the US Pacific Fleet.

The New Year brought worse news, most shockingly of all, the fall of Singapore in early February followed by a desperate retreat south and west; defeats in the Java Sea and Sunda Strait where Dutch, British, US and Australian ships were sunk; HMAS *Perth* and USS *Chicago* in Sunda Strait and HMAS *Yarra* to the south of Java defending fleeing convoys.

Darwin was bombed for the first time in February 1942 and in April HMAS *Vampire* was sunk in action defending the small aircraft carrier HMS *Hermes* off then Ceylon, now Sri Lanka.

The Japanese advances were on a truly hemispheric scale, covering distances at a speed that had little precedent, with great success that matched Germany's defeat of France in 1940.

The usual turning points identified for the Second World War, the Battles of Midway, Guadalcanal, Stalingrad and El Alamein only took place from June 1942 through to early 1943, in the case of Stalingrad.

This then was the bleak picture not just for the Australian and US public, but also for the sailors of the Australian and US Navies. They sailed not to some interesting and innovative engagement, but to one filled with uncertainty and fear. But sail they did - and they made the most of what they had. And in doing so, I believe they showed the characteristics to which we all must aspire.

- Co-operation in the face of adversity
- Courage to engage against an enemy seemingly without weakness
- Determination to learn, to overcome and to succeed.

None of these things are pre-determined. None were obvious as they sailed north into the Coral Sea. None were easy. And so, the alliance and friendship we now enjoy is, to me, all the greater because it was borne not in times of easy success, but was forged in the fire of defeat, tempered in the trials of weakness and failure, and honed through arduous campaigns across the Indo-Pacific.

As we look to the future, with its perils and opportunities, conscious of our weakness and our strength, I think the events of 4-8 May 1942 in the Coral Sea guide us to that which is best in ourselves, remind us that we can prevail for the greater good and inspire us to go on to better and brighter thing. **LEST WE FORGET**



His Excellency the Governor, accompanied by Mrs Le, placed a wreath at the 79th anniversary Coral Sea commemorative service, along with LTCOL Mark Weinrich, U.S. Marine Attaché, Australia representing the President and the people of the United States of America, CMDR Alastair Cooper ADC RAN, Commanding Officer, Navy HQ-SA, Air Commodore Ross Bender, Senior Defence Force Representative – South Australia, Brigadier Graham Goodwin, Commander 9 Brigade. President of Australian American Association, Mrs D. Stoba hosted a luncheon following the service.



Very proud Australian Navy Cadets from TS Adelaide and TS Noarlunga ably assisted welcoming guests and during the service.

Special thanks to the Royal Australian Navy Band – SA Attachment once again for their excellent musical support.

## EXERCISE PACIFIC VANGUARD 2021



HMAS Brisbane, JS Makinami, ROKS Wang Geon and USS Rafael Peralta during Exercise Pacific Vanguard.

Photo: Leading Seaman Daniel Goodman. Article By: LEUT Geoff Long.

Warships from Australia, Japan, South Korea and the US successfully completed Exercise Pacific Vanguard on July 9, the first time the annual quadrilateral event had been held in Australian waters.

Previous iterations of the exercise, which involves high-end warfighting training serials such as live firings, surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare and ship-to-ship communications, have been held in the Pacific Ocean around Guam.

The task group comprised destroyers HMAS *Brisbane*, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force JS *Makinami*, South Korea Navy ROKS *Wang Geon*, and USS *Rafael Peralta*. Submarine HMAS *Rankin* also supported the event.

Commanding Officer *Brisbane* Commander Aaron Cox said the successful completion of Exercise Pacific Vanguard in the East Australian Exercise Area off the coast of NSW demonstrated the four nations' commitment to regional cooperation.

"This week has allowed us the opportunity, in Australian waters, to test not only Australia's preparedness to host such exercises but also to very seamlessly integrate partner navies into the way we conduct our combined training," Commander Cox said.

"Exercise Pacific Vanguard also allows us to demonstrate and prove our interoperability should that be required by our national governments."

The exercise was also notable for holding the first joint surface-to-air missile firing by three of the international partners.

Air Defence Officer *Brisbane* Lieutenant Matthew Stobo said sound preparation had been key to the successful live firings. "Live firings of our surface-to-air missiles give us the opportunity to test our system from end to end. Being able to do it with other nations allows us to build our rapport with those navies and understand their methods and procedures for conducting these types of events."

## EXERCISE TALISMAN SABRE 2021

*Makinami*, *Wang Geon* and *Rafael Peralta* will make a brief contactless port visit to Fleet Base East, Sydney, at the end of Pacific Vanguard before participating in Exercise Talisman Sabre (TS21).

*HMAS Brisbane* will participate in Exercise Talisman Sabre alongside HMA Ships *Ballarat*, *Canberra*, *Choules*, *Melville* and *Parramatta*, off the coast of Queensland. As well as *HMAS Rankin*.

The forward-deployed ships of Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 7, along with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, arrive off the coast of Australia in preparation for the biennial bilateral exercise during July and August.



USS America, USS New Orleans, and USS Germantown in the Indo-Pacific region, 13 June 2021.

Source: Defence RAN

The U.S. maritime component of TS21 features the Navy's only forward-deployed amphibious ready group, which includes the amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6), the amphibious transport dock ship USS New Orleans (LPD 18) and the amphibious dock landing ship USS Germantown (LSD 42), along with embarked elements of the Okinawa-based 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

During TS21, the American units will integrate with the Royal Australian Navy, Royal Canadian Navy, Japan Maritime Self Defence Force, and Republic of Korea Navy for maritime operations further enhancing their ability to respond to crises as part of a joint or combined effort.

Partner nations will train together to operate and sustain each other in a contested maritime environment, conducting integrated amphibious and air defence operations, as well as tactical manoeuvres and replenishments-at-sea.

Rear Admiral Chris Engdahl, commander of ESG 7, highlights the clear need for, and benefits of, exercises like TS21. "Emerging events in the Indo-Pacific region underscore the importance of presence to ensure a rules-based international maritime order."

Talisman Sabre 21 allows the U.S. alongside partners and allies, to further enhance our ability to respond to any contingency as part of a joint or combined effort in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region."



**Prior to official opening of Talisman Sabre 21**  
Bindal Elder Uncle Alfred Smallwood welcomed Exercise Talisman Sabre participants to country with a traditional smoking ceremony at Lavarack Barracks, Townsville.

Photo: Lauren Larking  
By: Lieutenant Jonathan Carkhuff  
Source: Defence Australia

It was quite a new experience for many international military personnel who gathered in anticipation for the traditional Welcome to Country as part of Exercise Talisman Sabre.

## **OFFICIAL OPENING OF TALISMAN SABRE 2021**

By Flight Lieutenant Clarice Hurren

Australia's largest bilateral exercise with the United States, Exercise Talisman Sabre (TS21), has officially commenced with the opening ceremony held at RAAF Base Amberley, Queensland, on 14<sup>th</sup> July.

Commander of the ADF's Deployable Joint Force Headquarters, Major General Jake Ellwood, said the high-end warfighting exercise was designed to enhance the interoperability between the ADF and the US armed forces. "Exercise Talisman Sabre reflects the strength of the Australia-US alliance and the close and enduring nature of our military relationship. This year's exercise will involve more than 17,000 personnel from Australia and the United States, deploying across central and northeast Queensland and off the east coast of Australia, as well as 40 aircraft from the Royal Australian Air Force."

In addition to the US, forces from Canada, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom will participate and Australian-based personnel from India, Indonesia, France and Germany will observe the exercise. The majority of these international forces will participate exclusively offshore, including about 5000 who will participate as part of a US Navy Expeditionary Strike Group, in a contactless component to the exercise. The Exercise also provides an important opportunity for the practice of rapid airbase activation and subsequent flying operations from RAAF Base Scherger in Far North Queensland; the Air Force's northern bare base and strategic outpost.

"Talisman Sabre is a major undertaking for all participants and demonstrates our capacity to achieve large-scale operational outcomes, while also dealing with a global pandemic. "The exercise would not be possible without the generous cooperation of the community, including landowners, local governments and traditional owners. We are grateful for their ongoing support." said Major General Ellwood.

Gavin Sundwall, United States Acting Chargé d'Affaires, spoke at the opening ceremony and said bilateral exercises such as Talisman Sabre helped maintain trust and inter-operability among key allies through shared experiences and tough, realistic training.

"Although this occasion looks different than it has in the past due to COVID-19, our servicemen and women are still able to execute this crucial, high-level, bilateral exercise in the presence of our many allies and partners invited to observe. Now, more than ever, we can appreciate the significance of essential workers and essential work such as this exercise, which ensures the future security and prosperity of all our nations

"In the face of adversity, whether it be security concerns, combat operations, or humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts, Exercise Talisman Sabre has proven to us time and time again that we are flexible and ready for anything." TS21 is the ninth iteration of the exercise and incorporates force preparation activities, amphibious landings, ground force manoeuvre, urban operations, and air combat and maritime operations.



### **RAN Officer's US training brought to bear in Talisman Sabre 21**

Ref: Lieutenant Sarah Rohweder  
Defence News 19 July

The knowledge gained from learning a powerful maritime weapons system while on exchange with the US Navy has been a significant benefit to Lieutenant Nick Adriaanse during Exercise Talisman Sabre 21. The Aegis combat system is now installed on all 3 Hobart class ships

Weapons Electrical Engineering Officer Lieutenant Nick Adriaanse on the forecassle of HMAS Brisbane off the east coast of Queensland



### **RAAF Talisman Sabre ramping up in the sky**

Flight Lieutenant Amy Tinto is an air traffic controller from No. 452 Squadron, the unit which co-ordinates all aircraft coming in and out of the Townsville aerodrome.

For Talisman Sabre, Townsville air traffic control will provide the air base traffic services for the foreign military aircraft and the Australian aircraft, which are based out of the Townsville aerodrome.

Air traffic controller Flight Lieutenant Amy Tinto, from No. 452 Squadron, in front of the air traffic control tower at RAAF Base Townsville during Exercise Talisman Sabre 21. Photo: Leading Aircraftwoman Emma Schwenke



### **RAR Exercise Talisman Sabre 2021**

The stage is set for the ADF and its United States partners to undertake high-end joint land combat against a capable enemy force during the field component of Exercise Talisman Sabre 21.

The exercise also provides an opportunity for forces from the United Kingdom and Japan to operate alongside Australian & US forces during amphibious landings, with broader participation by forces from Canada, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea.

Australian Army soldiers, of 2nd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment, approach Langham Beach, Queensland, during Talisman Sabre 2019. Photo: Sergeant 1st Class Whitney C. Houston. Ref: MAJ Cameron Jamieson- Defence News 13 July

## ROYAL NAVY EXERCISES IN THE INDO-PACIFIC 2021

### HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH



Source: Royal Navy

Following a visit to US Indo-Pacific Command in Hawaii, UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace met with the Commander Admiral John C Aquilino and announced that the UK Carrier Strike Group will undertake a series of multinational exercises with global allies in the Philippine Sea this August.

Operating alongside Naval and Air Forces from the United States, Australia, France, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea, the UK Carrier Strike Group will undertake a number of integration exercises designed to build interoperability between like-minded international partners in this globally significant region of the world.

The HMS Queen Elizabeth led Strike Group will operate with a US Carrier Strike Group, which combined, will be the largest concentration of F-35 jets anywhere in the world. Embarked British and American personnel represent the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and US Marine Corps. Accompanied by 2 destroyers, 3 frigates, an Astute-class submarine together with two Royal Fleet Auxiliary support ships, in company with destroyer USS *The Sullivans*.

Complex exercises like these will enable 617 Squadron to develop F-35 Lightning interoperability with partner nations, building a core of valuable Royal Air Force and Royal Navy experience in operating this cutting-edge technology. These air exercises will build upon the capability development that 617 Squadron achieved through the combat missions mounted from the Carrier in the East Mediterranean, during a dedicated period in support of Operation Shader, the UK mission to defeat Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

The Carrier Strike Group will also undertake Anti-Submarine exercises with US Pacific Fleet with allied submarines, helicopters and P8 Maritime Patrol Aircraft. These events represent a crucial milestone in the regeneration of the UK Carrier Strike capability that will contribute to collective defence and security for decades to come. Carrier Strike Group 21 embodies the Prime Minister's vision for the UK as an outward facing, modern and responsible international actor who also takes its global defence and security responsibilities seriously and invests in them accordingly.



## **SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CONNECTIONS:**

### **THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS – ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY**



#### **MEMBER (AM) IN GENERAL DIVISION OF THE ORDER OF MEMBER OF AUSTRALIA Mrs Elizabeth Anne SCARCE AO**

For significant service to the community of South Australia through a range of roles. Anglicare South Australia, Patron and Volunteer since 2014. Ronald McDonald House Charities, South Australian Chapter Patron, since 2008. Partners of Veterans Association of Australia, South Australia Branch Patron, since 2007,. Children's Week Association of South Australia Ambassador since 2014, Committee Member, current, Patron, 2007-2014. Resthaven Malvern Volunteer, since 2004. Unley Legend, Unley Legends Season 2 (joint project film with City of Unley), 2018. Mary Potter Foundation Board Member, 2016-2019., Supporter, since 2011. Other awards and recognition include: Dame of Grace, Most Venerable Order of St John, 2007.

**Mrs Scarce previously served with the Women's Royal Australia Naval Service.**



#### **MEMBER (AM) IN THE MILITARY DIVISION OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA Rear Admiral Mark Davenport HILL CSC**

For exceptional service as the Commander Joint Task Force 633 on Operation Accordion from June 2019 to January 2020. Rear Admiral Hill displayed outstanding leadership and international diplomacy while in command of Australian forces deployed on operations in the Middle East region. As the Commander of Joint Task Force 633, he carefully managed Australia's commitment with regional allies and partners in preparation for a reduction in assigned forces. His diplomacy throughout has significantly enhanced the reputation of the Australian Defence Force on Operations and reinforced Australia's reputation as a reliable partner.



#### **NAVY PROMOTION Captain Andrew Burnett RAN**

Congratulations Andrew Burnett, who has been promoted to CAPTAIN at a recent ceremony in Canberra. His previous posting was Commanding Officer Navy Headquarters – South Australia.

Both Captain Burnett and Rear Admiral Hill commenced their naval careers with the RANR in South Australia.

We wish you fair winds and following seas for your next posting.

## SAILORS IN WWII MINE ACCIDENT REMEMBERED

By Leading Seaman Jonathan Rendell 22 July 2021



Commanding Officer Navy Headquarters – South Australia Commander Alastair Cooper with the granddaughters of Thomas Todd, Debra Filippona, left, and Michelle Bitmead at the memorial service.

Two men believed to have been the first service personnel killed on Australian soil, as a result of enemy action during World War II have been remembered. A memorial service was held on July 16 at Beachport for:

Royal Australian Navy able seamen Thomas W Todd and William E L Danswan,

who were killed on July 14, 1941, near the South Australian town when a sea mine exploded while they were attempting to render it safe.

The mine had broken free from an enemy-laid field and was spotted about 12km off the coast of Beachport,

It was brought ashore for inspection by the two sailors and their officer-in-charge, Lieutenant Commander Arthur Greening, with help from the crews of four fishing boats.

After the decision was made to destroy the mine, it was towed to a stretch of beach away from the town and the Navy three-man Rendering Mines Safe team began the demolition process.

Tragically, although 800m of demolition cable had been laid from the mine, the demolition charge exploded prematurely, with the two able seamen metres from the mine. Both men were killed. Lieutenant Commander Greening narrowly escaped the blast.

Eighty years on, the Robe and Millicent RSL Sub-Branches came together for the first time, supported by Navy Headquarters – South Australia, to commemorate the tragic loss of the two sailors.

The service was held at the Beachport Mine Memorial.

The granddaughters of Thomas Todd, Debra Filippona and Michelle Bitmead, addressed those in attendance. “My father was only 18 months old when the explosion killed his father,” Mrs Filippona said. She spoke of the challenges her grandfather’s death had presented for her family over decades, and of their pride in his sacrifice through service.

Commanding Officer Navy Headquarters – South Australia Commander Alastair Cooper also addressed those gathered. “It was an honour to represent the Royal Australian Navy at the service,” Commander Cooper said.

He reflected on the importance of the men's sacrifice. "They were doing something that took courage in cold blood. They did it because it meant safety for the Beachport community, Their service had meaning, their action mattered and that spirit of service and sacrifice is something we must seek to emulate."



Navy bugler Leading Seaman Musician Sean Hickey stands ready to sound the Last Post and Reveille during the memorial service marking the 80th anniversary of the Beachport mine explosion in South Australia.

**LEST WE FORGET**

*As we go into Covid-19 lockdown again in SA, hopefully not for long, please stay safe.*

*Sending best wishes to those in lockdown inter-state.*

*Our special thoughts for all the ANC units and hope they are back on deck very soon.*

*Kindest regards from the President & Executive Committee of South Australia*

**TO JOIN NAVY LEAGUE – SA DIVISION PLEASE CONTACT US FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

**Would love to welcome you aboard!**