

SIGNALS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

JUNE 1990

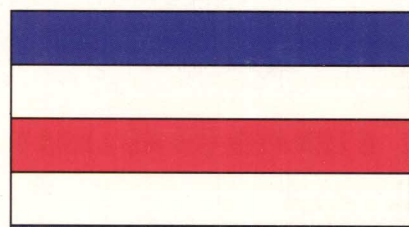
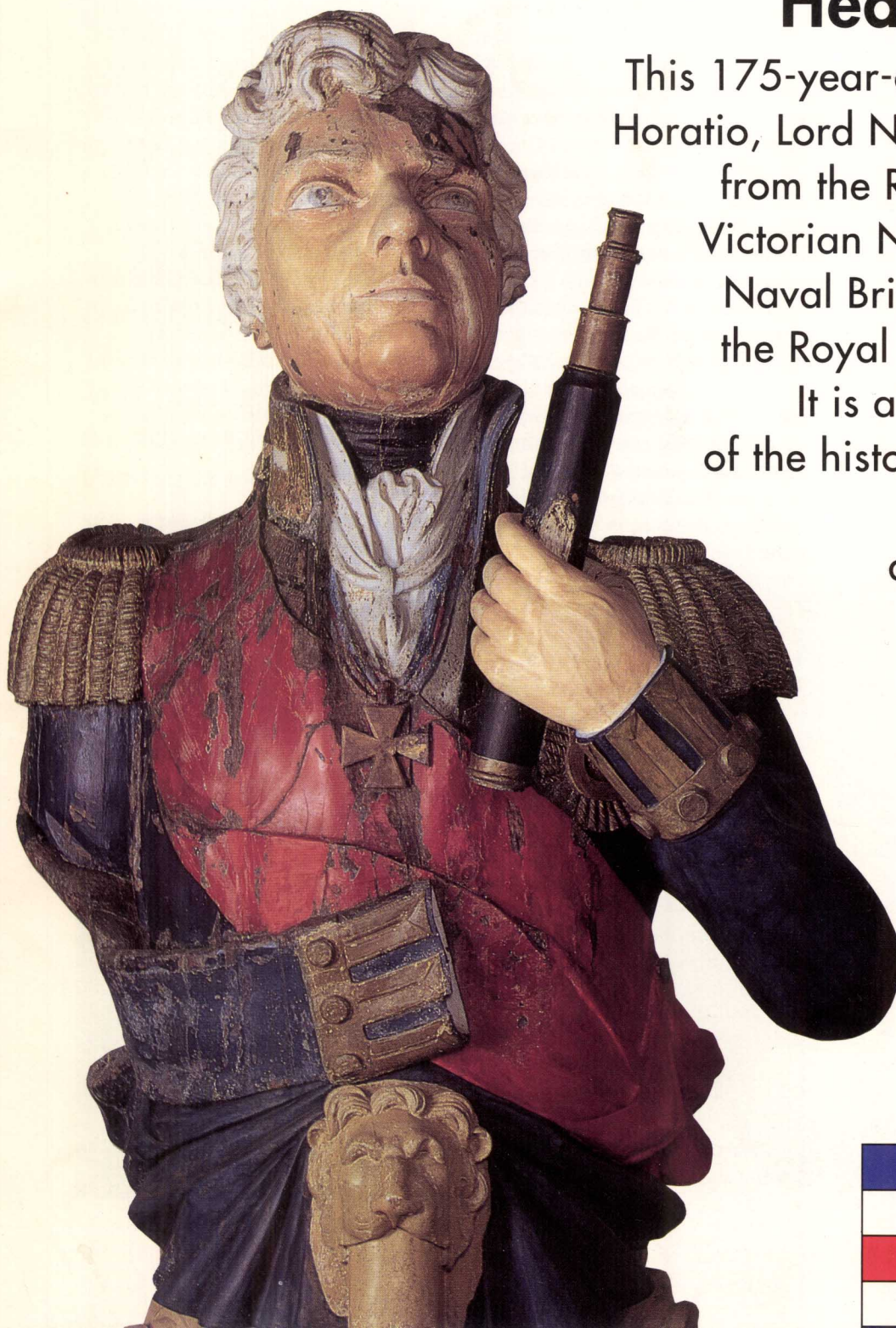
NUMBER 12

Hearts of oak

This 175-year-old figurehead of Horatio, Lord Nelson has passed from the Royal Navy to the Victorian Navy, to the NSW Naval Brigade and then to the Royal Australian Navy.

It is a powerful symbol of the history and traditions shared by these different services.

The massive 2.7-metre high figurehead, carved for England's largest timber battleship, HMS *Nelson*, is now in this Museum's collection. It is a spectacular part of an exhibition about navies and their people in Australian history.



SIGNALS

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In developing the National Maritime Collection and the opening exhibitions, the Australian National Maritime Museum has worked closely with many other cultural institutions, public and private, and with the Australian community. The Museum welcomes contact from interested individuals and groups. For further information about the Australian National Maritime Museum, contact the Public Affairs section.

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From the Director

Everyone associated with the Museum was delighted to hear the recent news of the appointment of our Interim Council member Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair as Governor of NSW. Peter has been an enthusiastic member of Council, working closely with our Navy curator and also serving on our USA Gallery Consultative Committee. Although we had long planned that this issue of *Signals* would highlight our Navy exhibition, it seems fitting that these pages are devoted to the organisation through which he has served the Museum. While we are sorry to lose him from Council, we are naturally delighted to have such a good friend in the office of Governor. Chairman Peter Doyle joins me and everyone in the Museum wishing Peter and Shirley Sinclair happy and fruitful years in Government House.

When the Museum exhibitions open, it will be the first time that the treasures of more than 200 years of naval involvement on the Australian continent will be on view to the public at large at a major venue. Some of the remarkable objects from the Navy exhibition featured in these pages remind me of the unusual circumstances in which the Museum's collections have been assembled. It is a requirement under our legislation that we develop a National Maritime Collection, but five years ago none of it existed. Navy is unique among the Museum's collecting areas in that we co-operated with the Royal Australian Navy in bringing together some of their historical artefacts from various Australian locations. In addition we are independently acquiring a significant Navy collection from a wide variety of other sources.

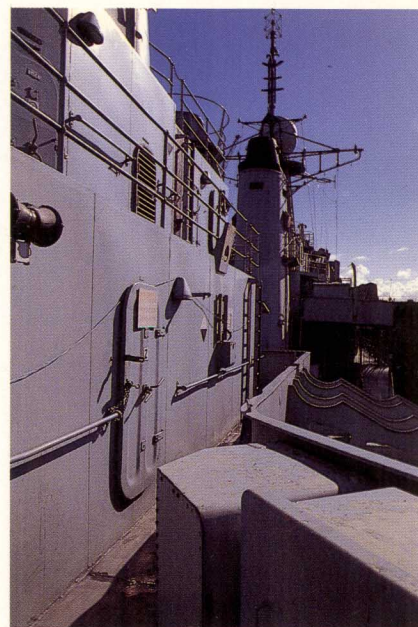
Aside from the Navy exhibition, collecting for all other areas gave curators the daunting task of assembling a national collection in a very short space of time, starting from scratch. Most new museums or museum

redevelopments draw on extremely well-established collections.

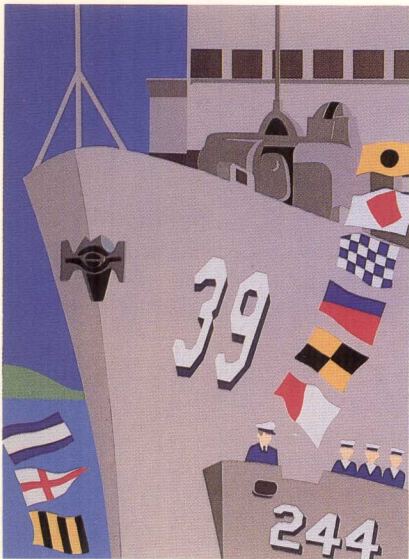
Because of the short time frame in which this Museum has come into existence, its collection is likely to remain small for the foreseeable future. While this is unusual for a museum of national stature, it does have some advantages. From the outset it has been Museum policy to acquire only those items which were judged to be relevant to its mission and to the interests of visitors and researchers of the approaching new century.

This will not be a museum displaying only one or two percent of its collection with the remainder locked away in storage, rarely to see the light of day. Perhaps half of the entire collection will be on display when the Museum opens its doors. But don't think this implies a second-rate collection. As in all museums our curators are forever on the lookout for notable additions. They have been able in a short space of time to acquire wonderfully diverse artefacts relevant to the six opening themes, material which truly meets the standard of excellence required of the National Maritime Collection.
Kevin Fewster

Ex-HMAS Vampire, currently undergoing painting, will be the Museum's largest display object. The last Daring Class destroyer in Australia, it is on loan from the Navy.



Tradition and transition



Navy - protecting Australia is one of six major exhibitions that will open at the Australian National Maritime Museum at Darling Harbour in 1991. The others are **Discovery - the finding of Australia** (Newsletter 8); **Passengers - the long sea voyage** (Newsletter 9); **Commerce - the working sea** (Newsletter 10); **Leisure - sun, surf, sails** (Newsletter 11); and **Australia - USA - linked by the sea** (Newsletter 7).

Beaded and embroidered keepsakes like this pincushion, apparently made by an HMAS Sydney sailor for his sweetheart, were a popular 19th century seaman's handicraft. The tradition was probably passed on by Royal Navy sailors who transferred to the new RAN. ANMM collection.

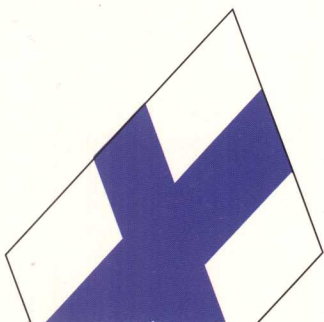
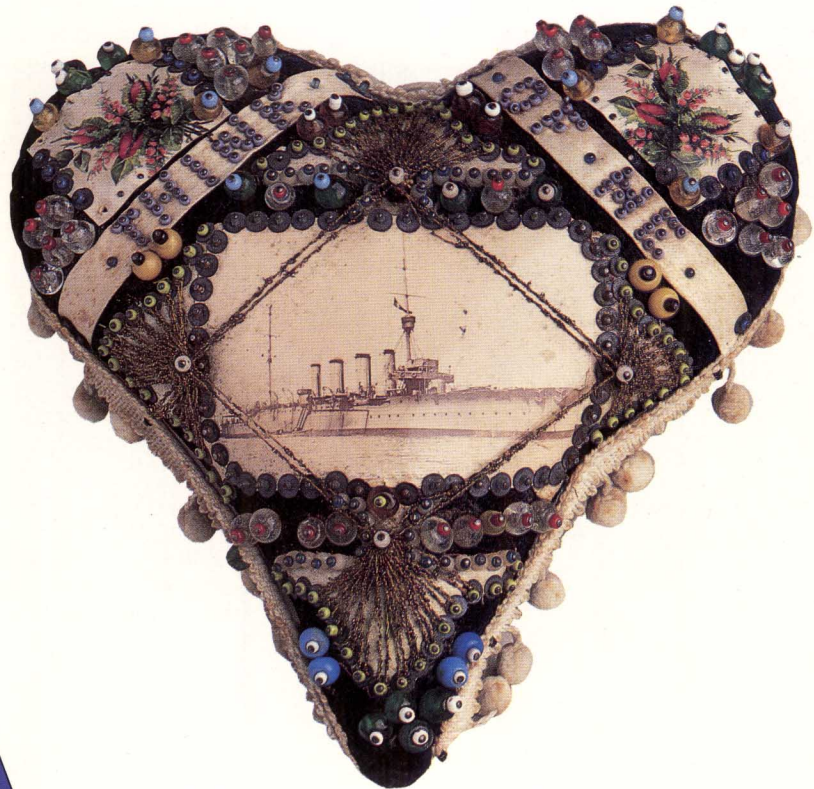
Geographical remoteness has always been important in Australian history. However, oceans and distance no longer guarantee the security of Australia's 36 735 kilometres of coastline. Since the coming of Europeans, the naval activities of foreign powers have caused concern whether they were rival 18th century French explorers, 19th century Russian foes of England from a conflict on the other side of the world, or newly industrialised neighbours from 20th century Asia.

From the time that Lieutenant James Cook, RN, charted east coast Australia until early this century, the Royal Navy played a leading role in Australian affairs. This was not limited to defence. It explored and charted the Australian coastline and provided the first administrators of the colonies. By 1859 the Royal Navy had established the Australia Station. From its Sydney base the Imperial Australian Squadron patrolled the region, protecting British interests.

Most of the Australian colonies, however, developed part-time navies of their own, paralleling their political moves towards independence. The creation of the Royal Australian Navy followed Federation, and for many people the celebrated arrival of its first ships symbolised a nation coming of age.

The Museum's Navy exhibition traces this transition. It examines the elements of tradition that were passed down, and the changes of technology that accompanied it. At the centre of the story are the people who served and their experiences of naval life. Curator of the exhibition, Pat Chisholm, and Assistant Curator Verena Mauldon, have illustrated this with a wide variety of personal objects, from the letters and handicrafts of ordinary seamen to the death mask of a revered naval leader.

In developing this exhibition the Australian National Maritime Museum has had the co-operation and support of the Royal Australian Navy which has always been represented on the Museum's Interim Council. In addition to the Museum's largest exhibits, the warships *Advance* and *Vampire*, the RAN has transferred an important selection of material from the Naval Historical Collection at Spectacle Island on Sydney Harbour.



One man's four navies

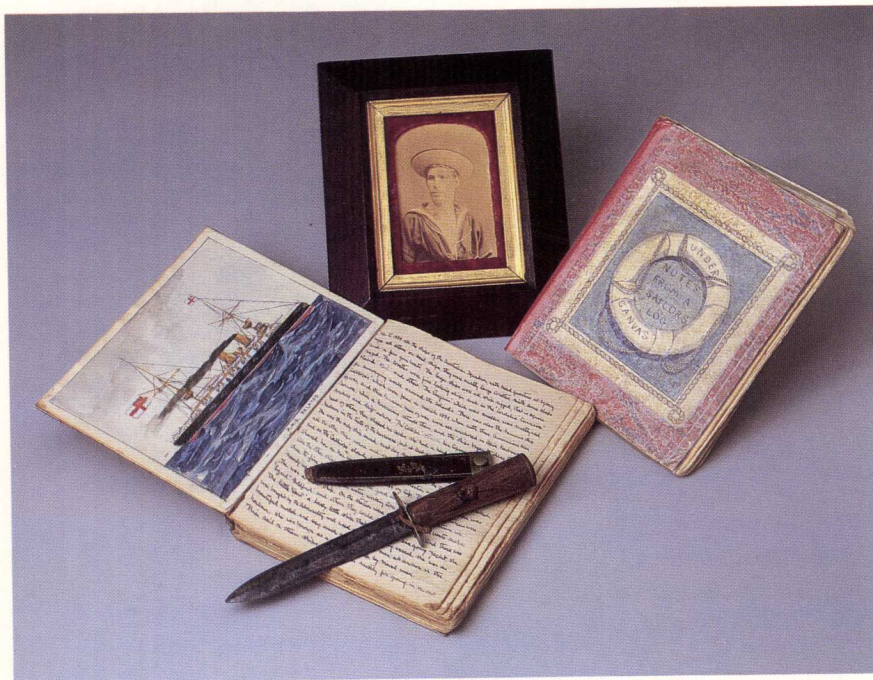
A selection of personal mementos, to be displayed in the Navy exhibition, recalls the life of a sailor whose career spanned four different navies in the service of Australia.

James Bryance Conder was one of the thousands of ordinary British sailors who helped to shape Australia's naval history. His career, interspersed with periods ashore, illustrates all the stages in the transition from British control of Australia's naval defence to full local responsibility, with the formation of the Royal Australian Navy. It also shows what a strong imprint the Royal Navy left on the RAN.

Conder joined the Royal Navy in Australia in 1891, having arrived as a merchant seaman. He served in the flagship on the Australia Station, HMS *Orlando*, when it escorted the ships of the new Australasian Auxiliary Squadron (paid for by the Colonies, but manned by the Royal Navy) around the coasts to be shown to the colonists. He later served in one of those ships, HMS *Katoomba*, after Federation when it formed part of the transitional Commonwealth naval defence forces. Conder had also served in the Victorian Navy, in HMVS *Cerberus*.

As bosun's yeoman on HMS *Katoomba*, his job was to help train new recruits. From 1917 until 1937, Conder served as a study corporal at the RAN Naval College, training midshipmen according to the practices of the Royal Navy and helping to ensure that its traditions were carried into Australia's Navy.

Conder described his seagoing years in the memoirs he wrote later in life. For each of his children he produced a two-volume handwritten journal, lovingly illustrated with his own paintings and drawings, with photographs, concert tickets and other mementos. His journals tell of the conflict between his love of the sea and his desire to be with his wife and family. The set of memoirs produced for his daughter Alice, with some other articles recalling his naval life, have been donated by family members to the Museum.



Personal mementos of a naval career that spanned four navies, donated by the sailor's family. ANMM collection.



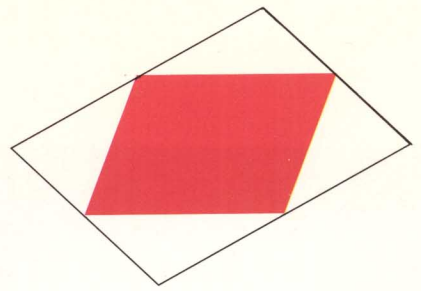
One continual cheer...

The formation of the Royal Australian Navy was enthusiastically greeted by the people of Australia. It was seen as a sign of Australia's new nationhood, marking 'the first step in carrying out Australia's high ambition of relieving the motherland of the burden of our sea defence... and at the same time adding to the fleet strength of the Empire' (*The Sydney Mail*, 17 August 1913).

Sydney marked the occasion well. The day of the Navy's first procession through Sydney Heads was declared a public holiday and a week of well-planned celebrations ensued. The ships were illuminated, and the night was lit by search lights and fireworks. Frank Trevor Jones, an able seaman aboard HMAS *Sydney*, recorded in his journal the arrival of the fleet from a shipboard point of view.

'Thousands of people lined the cliffs for miles. All pleasure boats and ferry boats were crowded with visitors. From the time the ships got through the Heads until they secured to their respective buoys it was one continual cheer.'

Jones served on *Sydney* for the next four years. His journal has been donated to the Museum along with other memorabilia including the medallion illustrated above. It commemorates the sinking of the World War I German raider *Emden* by HMAS *Sydney* at Cocos Islands in 1917. The medal was struck and presented to *Sydney* crew by the people of Western Australia.



One of a series of George Cruikshank caricatures of life in the Royal Navy in the years after Trafalgar, when Royal Navy administration and protection still played a leading role in the settlement of the Australian colonies. From *Greenwich Hospital, a series of Naval Sketches descriptive of the Life of a Man-of-War's Man*, by an Old Sailor, 1826. ANMM collection.

Death of a commodore

The prestige of the Royal Navy in colonial society is well illustrated by the Australian public's response to the tragic death of Commodore James Graham Goodenough, killed in 1875 while patrolling the south western Pacific.

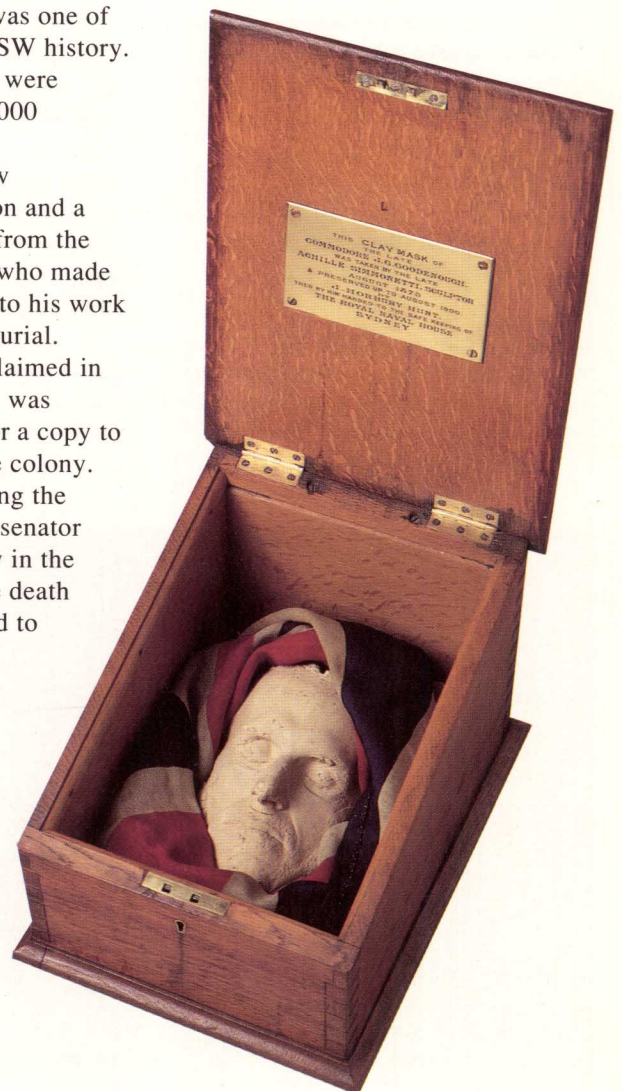
In the nineteenth century the Royal Navy divided the world into zones of strategic interest identified as stations, each protected by its own squadron of warships. Australia was originally part of the East India Station, but pressure from the colonies for greater protection resulted in the formation of the Australia Station, with Sydney its base. Its warships, the Imperial Australia Squadron, enjoyed great prestige and no doubt bolstered the colonies' sense of importance along with their security.

James Graham Goodenough, appointed commander in 1871, had been a naval attaché and was a veteran of action in the Crimean war and on the China Station. After a successful cruise through the New Hebrides, promoting 'friendly relations with the natives', Goodenough and five of his men were wounded by poisoned arrows in the nearby Santa Cruz group. He died of tetanus eight days later, on board his flagship *HMS Pearl*, and

was buried in St Thomas' Church in North Sydney between two other victims of the attack. It was one of the biggest funerals in NSW history. Banks and public offices were closed in respect and 10 000 people attended.

Goodenough's widow commissioned a medallion and a bust of her late husband from the artist Achille Simonetti, who made the death mask as an aid to his work while the body awaited burial. Simonetti's bust was acclaimed in Sydney, and a committee was formed to raise money for a copy to be made, to remain in the colony. This marble bust, depicting the Commodore as a Roman senator swathed in a toga, is now in the Art Gallery of NSW. The death mask has been transferred to the Australian National Maritime Museum from the Naval Historical Collection.

The clay death mask of Commodore James Graham Goodenough, commander of the Australia Station, killed by a Pacific islander's poisoned arrow in 1875.
ANMM collection.



Krait - the ship of heroes

One of Australia's best-known fighting vessels, *Krait*, has been entrusted to this Museum by the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. *Krait* was a Japanese fishing boat captured by the RAN before the fall of Singapore. For Operation Jaywick in 1943 it was sailed from Australia back to occupied Singapore, with its crew of Z Special Unit commandos disguised as native fishermen. The men used limpet mines to sink two enemy ships and damage another five. In the 1960s *Krait* was found in Borneo by veterans of Z Special Unit and a fund was established to return the historic vessel to Australia where it became a dedicated, floating war memorial.

Two sets of documents which have recently come into the National Maritime Collection add to the limited knowledge of *Krait's* pre-war history. They are the ship's papers and the captain's papers which were seized by the Gunnery Officer of HMAS *Goulburn* when the Japanese-owned vessel, then named *Kofuku Maru*, was captured off Singapore in 1941.

The papers include the vessel's



fishing boat licence, its port clearance for 29 November 1941, two days before war with Japan was declared, and the captain's identity card, all issued by British authorities in Singapore. From them we learn that the little motor vessel was owned by a Japanese resident of Singapore, Tora Yeifuku, mortgaged to a Chinese bank and licensed as a Drift Net Fish Carrier. Its master's name was Saburo Izumi. The two sets of papers, which include photographs of the owner and master, are housed in cylindrical brass cases which were used to keep them dry on board.

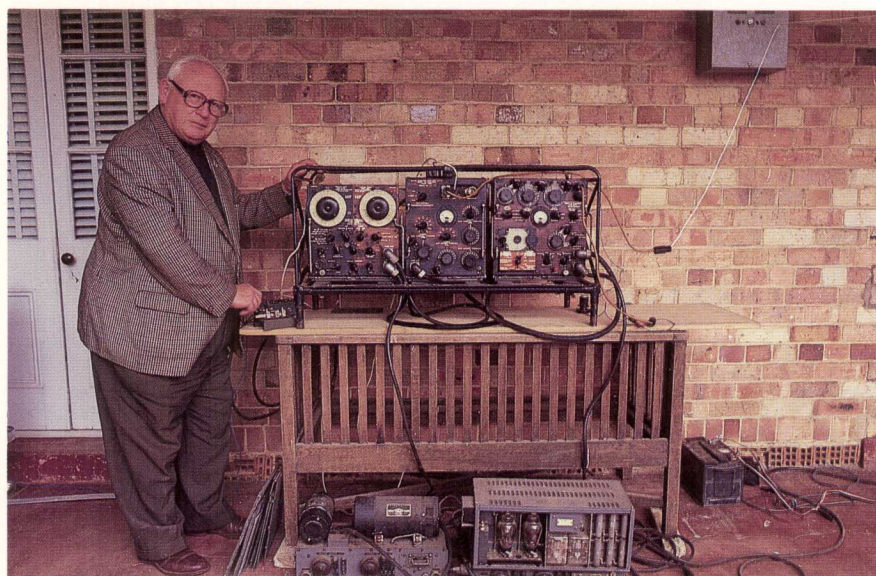
The captain's papers and their brass case have been donated by the former Gunnery Officer on HMAS *Goulburn*, Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen, VRD, RANVR, in

conjunction with the Z Special Unit Association.

A set of radio equipment identical to that carried by *Krait* on the daring Singapore raid has also been acquired. The bulky AT5 transmitter, AT8 receiver and antenna coupling unit, complete with handbooks and workshop manuals, was donated to the Museum by Dr Keith King of Lawson, NSW. Dr King, a returned serviceman and member of the Z Special Unit Association of NSW, is an amateur radio operator who collected the equipment in new condition at a disposal sale after the war.

The now extremely rare radio, still in operating condition, was designed as a portable set for use in wartime aircraft, and was thus ideal for adding to *Krait's* gear. In September 1943, while approaching Singapore through the occupied Java Sea, the crew of *Krait* tuned in their AT8 receiver and were cheered to hear the news of the Italian surrender in the Mediterranean. It was later used to monitor Japanese news reports when *Krait* was waiting in hiding while its operatives carried out their canoe raid on Singapore shipping.

Dr Keith King with a radio set identical to the one carried by *Krait* during Operation Jaywick. A modern marine radio of similar power and range could be held in one hand. J Mellefont photographs.



The ex-HMAS *Advance* was one of 20 Attack Class patrol boats built in Australia for the RAN.

Launched in 1967, *Advance* saw service on all Australian coasts as well as acting the part of HMAS *Ambush* for the ABC-TV series *Patrol Boat*. *Advance* was presented to the Museum by the RAN when it was decommissioned in 1988.

Because this complex exhibit was acquired fully equipped and in operating order, it will never require research and restoration to determine how it should appear in future years when its few remaining sister-ships have vanished.



A N M M • N E W S

Sponsors back rare globe acquisition

James Hardie Industries Ltd and TNT Ltd have contributed to the Museum's acquisition of a rare Dutch celestial globe, notable as the first full publication of the southern constellations including the Southern Cross. This fine and extremely rare globe was made by Willem Janszoon Blaeu of Amsterdam in 1602, and is the earliest complete example of his work to survive. Blaeu's globe derives from the observations of Frederick de Houtman during two southern voyages including a 1598-1600 voyage to Sumatra.

The first western illustration of the Southern Cross was made in 1515 in a letter from Portuguese Cochín, India, by Florentine traveller Andrea Corsali, who was also the first to describe it as a cross. Blaeu's globe is one of the first to give 'modern' positions of the constellations based on the work of his contemporary the great astronomer Tycho Brahe. A rival of Blaeu also produced a globe in 1600, but it omits some southern constellations including the Cross. On the Blaeu globe in the Museum's collection the five stars are depicted within an image of the Christian cross, tucked beneath the belly of Centaurus and near a splendid illustration of a caravel. In honour of its

generous contribution, James Hardie Industries Ltd has been made a Founding Patron.

The Museum's Patrons Program also welcomes the National Australia Bank which has joined the growing list of Founding Patrons of the Museum.

The new Federal Minister for the Arts, Mr David Simmons, viewed the Blaeu globe during his first visit to the Museum in May this year. He is seen here (right) with ANMM Deputy Director Mr Gavin Fry.



Thistle's missing link

A Museum publicity program in the Warnambool - Port Fairy (Vic) region has uncovered information and other material relating to a Victorian cousta fishing boat that will join the Museum's floating exhibits at Darling Harbour. *Thistle*, built in 1903 by a Williamstown or

Footscray fishing boat and yacht builder called Jones, was part of the approximately 60-boat fleet from Queenscliff and nearby ports that trolled Bass Strait for barracouta and shark for the Melbourne fish'n'chips trade. It is currently undergoing restoration in the Sorrento boat yard of Tim Phillips, a leading restorer and builder of the open, centreboard boats which have gathered a cult following among Victorian sailors. With their efficient high-peaked gaff sloop rigs (earlier types were also lug-rigged) and lines which evolved to suit local conditions, they are keenly raced by the Cousta Boat Club of Victoria.

Local radio and newspapers publicised an appeal for *Thistle* information and memorabilia, coinciding with an exhibition about this Museum at Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village. Relatives of former owners who responded to the appeal include the widow of a previously unknown owner of the boat in the period 1935-46. Museum staff have since travelled to Victoria to interview these people in order to establish an accurate sequence of ownership, and to document the boat's work history. *Thistle* has worked variously in the cousta, shark and cray fisheries, as well as being a tow dredge and a houseboat. The research also

throws light on when and why various modifications were made to the boat. For example, petrol invoices assist in the investigation of claims that it was one of the earliest cousta boats to fit an engine.

A number of period photographs and a tool from the original boat also came to light as a result of the appeal. One photograph provided by Director of the Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village, Peter Ronald, shows *Thistle* in collision with the Maritime Village's ketch *Reginald M* at the entrance to Port Fairy's Moyne River in 1975.

Overseas visit

ANMM Director Dr Kevin Fewster attended the Annual Conference of the Council of American Maritime Museums in Philadelphia in April. The Australian National Maritime Museum has been made an associate member of CAMM in recognition of ANMM's permanent USA Gallery, the result of a major US Bicentennial gift to Australia. Dr Fewster also attended the Scrimshaw Collectors' Conference at Kendall Whaling Museum, Massachusetts, and the Conference of the American Association of Museums at Chicago.



LUBs and FUBs

Notable recent acquisitions encompass a variety of media and subject areas. Among them:

- Two small naval craft transferred from the RAN for display on board the ex-RAN Daring Class destroyer *Vampire* at the Museum wharves. They are a Fleet Utility Boat (FUB) designed to transport 15 crew or one tonne of stores, and a Lightweight Utility Boat (LUB), a diving, survey or general purpose boat.
- A magnificently illustrated edition of George Dixon's *A Voyage Round the World, 1789*, one of the most important late 18th century accounts of travel in the Pacific.
- A two-foot model sailing skiff, *Cutty Sark*, made on the north coast of NSW in 1919. Model skiff racing was popular up to the 1950s. The deep-ballasted little skiffs spread sails proportionally as huge as 18-footers.
- A copy of the musical score of the *Schomberg Galop*, composed for the launching of the wooden sailing clipper *Schomberg* of the Black Ball Line, commanded by 'Bully' Forbes, which ran aground on the western coast of Victoria on its maiden voyage. The cover of the sheet music is a colour lithograph of the vessel (below).

From the Council

Interim Council member Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair, AO, RANEM, has been appointed Governor-designate of NSW, and is expected to take up his position in July or August. He will succeed his long-time friend, the present Governor Rear Admiral Sir David Martin, whose early retirement due to ill health was announced recently. Rear Admiral Sinclair, who was Deputy Chief of Naval Staff before his retirement, was recently selected by the State Government of NSW to co-ordinate the rebuilding of flood-devastated Nyngan in the west of the state. He became a familiar sight to viewers of evening television news, with the characterful bush-hat that rapidly became a symbol of the special co-ordinator's job. Council and staff of the Museum offer their congratulations on a demanding job well done, and on his appointment as Governor. Rear Admiral Sinclair will retire from the Museum Interim Council to take up the Governorship.

Tasmanian member the Hon Ken Wriedt, MHA, has reluctantly tendered his resignation from the Interim Council of the Museum because of ministerial and parliamentary

commitments. Mr Wriedt, who served for 14 years in the merchant navy and was a foundation member of the Tasmanian Maritime Museum, is Tasmanian Minister for Roads and Transport. He is a former Federal Minister and Senator. Museum Chairman Mr Peter Doyle, AM, expressed regret at the resignation and thanked him for his many efforts towards the Museum's development over the past few years.

Volume 5 of the *Oxford History of Australia*, by Interim Council member and Professor of History at the University of Queensland, Geoffrey Bolton, AO, has just been published. Professor Bolton's volume covers Australian history from the fall of Singapore in 1942 to the Bicentennial celebrations in 1988.

Painted ships, painted oceans

Later this year the Museum will mount an exhibition of art works and objects from its collection, at the S H Ervin Gallery, Sydney. The exhibition, *Painted ships, painted oceans*, will be the Museum's first special exhibition, and will run from 14 September to 14 October 1990. With the opening of the Museum still a year away, the exhibition will provide a preview of part of the National Maritime Collection. The material on display represents many facets of maritime history and culture and spans several centuries. The works include oil and watercolour paintings, etchings, engravings, lithographs, photographs and rare publications. Also represented will be extremely fine examples of the cartographer's and shipmodeller's arts, as well as the handicrafts of ordinary sailors.

The S H Ervin Gallery is part of the National Trust Centre at Observatory Hill, Sydney. The Gallery is open to the public six days a week, 11-5 Tuesday to Friday and 2-5 Saturday and Sunday.

Further education about ANMM

A five week course, *Behind the Scenes: The Development of a New National Museum*, is being organised through the Workers

Education Association to introduce people to the Museum and to gain an understanding of how it has been established. Introductory lectures will detail the history of the Museum. On-site lectures will include an inspection of the new Museum building at Darling Harbour and a look at some of the unusual objects in the Pyrmont collection storage facility, with discussion about how objects are catalogued, registered and conserved. The final meeting will be held at the Fleet Base at Berrys Bay. The course will be held weekly on Wednesday mornings at 10.30 a.m. commencing on 18 July. Bookings may be made through the WEA, 72 Bathurst Street, Sydney, (02) 264 2781.

A special one day course has also been organised for Wednesday 19 September, 1990. Entitled *Meet the Fleet and the Australian National Maritime Museum*, it includes a trip on the Museum's Attack class patrol boat, the ex-HMAS *Advance*, from the Museum's Darling Harbour wharf to its fleet base at Berrys Bay. Topics covered will be the history and function of *Advance*, and the on-board life of its sailors, as well as the history of the Berrys Bay site which originally formed part of Alexander Berry's estate, and subsequently became the depot for the quarantine service launches once responsible for boarding and fumigating ships and cargoes. A BBQ lunch will be followed by a talk about the Museum and an inspection of the fleet. The return trip will include a maritime history cruise around Sydney Harbour. An inspection of the Museum's Darling Harbour site will complete the day. Bookings through WEA are essential as numbers allowed on *Advance* are limited to 30.

