

E NEWS

R O Y A L A U S T R A L I A N
N A V Y W R I T E R S
A S S O C I A T I O N

Stories from around the traps

John Kenneth King - R94237. I joined pussers in January



1964 as part of the 8th intake of Junior Recruits at HMAS Leeuwin, where I spent 2 years, the second as a Topman. I bombed out as an officer due to having a duodenal ulcer and was sent then

to Cerberus in 1966 to do the Writers' course (bypassing the traditional route of a year at sea as an OD).

Held back for one week cos I failed typing, but eventually posted to Kuttabul as part of Ship's Coy, serving time in the Accounts Office and then the pay office when Jack Markham was the Chief Writer. I was assigned to the Mine Sweepers' pay just as we were converting to computerized pays. I believe they're still trying to sort out the cock ups I made, when I drafted to HMAS Sydney, in August 1967, just in time for a major refit, so my first 4 months at sea were spent either alongside Garden Island or the dry-dock at Cockatoo Island.

Did two trips to Vietnam in Dec '67 and Feb '68. On the second trip my ulcer started bleeding and I also had an accident wrecking my knee (these two resulted in my being granted TPI in 1995). Finished the second voyage in sick bay and was then transferred to the hospital at Penguin. Did a few weeks in

the medical ward there before being put into Ships' Coy in the pay office before being medically discharged in July '68.

A magnificent Naval career torpedoed by a belly ache. Now living back in my home state of Queensland after a much chequered career out in civvy street.

Chris Jones reports: "Thought I'd take this opportunity to update my details.



My wife and I have sold our Perth property. After 8 years of being an Avocado grower in Pemberton (south of Perth) we move out on the 11th June, hitch up the caravan and head off into the sunset.

We will take the opportunity to see more of our great country but our ultimate aim is to end up down in Launceston where one of our 3 sons resides. With a bit of luck we'll be able to catch up with Frank & Lana Brown and others.

Keith Winkler advises that **Brian Barton** mentioned in the June e-news, passed away 15/9/2001.

David Michael Saffell 'Joined as a JR in 1967 (20th Intake) and discharged 1979. Served at Leeuwin, Diamantina, Cerberus (for course), FOCAF HQ, Sydney, Albatross, Tarangau, Carrier Air Group, Melbourne (as CAG LSWTR).'



Theresa Hawkins (nee O'Connell)

Theresa joined the Royal Australian Navy in September 1981. Following category training, Theresa's postings included Navy Office Pay Office and HMAS Platypus. In early 1985, Theresa formed part of the initial posting of women to sea on-board HMAS Jervis Bay. This attracted the attention of the media with Theresa featuring in various publications including the Woman's Day, New Idea, and The Sunday Telegraph souvenir supplement for the RAN's 75th anniversary.



Eight Months To Go - Nowra Reunion 2015

Time to start booking for the reunion to be held next year. Information about the Nowra reunion in March 2015 can be downloaded from our page:

<http://www.ranwriters.com/2015reunion.html>

From Stew Merriliees:

A piece of trivia. On Monday 16 June 2014 my Grandson joins pussers (as a CSO), my daughter is currently a ML-P and as I don't reach compulsory retirement age till 16 Jul 2014 there will be 3 generations of one family serving at the same time. As my father was RN Fleet Air Arm (AB2, Bankstown and Scofields [Nirimba]) this makes four generations in a row.



While serving on HMAS Jervis Bay Theresa was the first WRAN to be married while posted at sea (Theresa married the then LSMTF Laurie (Hawkeye) Hawkins). Other postings included Australian Clearance Diving Team 4, where Theresa was the first female to be posted to a diving team. In October 1993, POWTR Theresa Hawkins transferred from the Permanent Navy to the Reserve List and continued Reserve Service until 1996.

Theresa was diagnosed with cancer in 2002. During periods of remission she worked at the Australian Maritime College in Launceston, then, as Office Manager and Personal Assistant to various Launceston Mayors.

Theresa was a member of the Naval Association and was for a number of years club secretary. In the presence of her loving family, Theresa passed away on 7 May 2014, aged 51.

Peter Charlton's family sent a card as follows " The passing of our father Peter Charlton was rough but your kind expression of sympathy will always be remembered regards Vanessa, Felicity, Marshall and families".

Phil 'Robbo' Robertson - WO

Robbo has updated his bio and the following updates his service from 2007. His full bio can be read on the web site.

After Baghdad about 2007, I was posted to HMAS Success for a couple of years and again enjoyed being at sea although most of the time we acted as a glorified 18,000 tonne Patrol Boat off Christmas Island chasing SIEV's.



After Success I was lucky enough to again be posted to Command Legal for three years where I acted as Clerk of Court for Defence Force Magistrate Hearings and Court Martials. This was one of my most interesting postings and was fortunate to see quite a few trials. And it was always far better being on the right side of the Judge rather than the where the accused sat.

In early 2011 I was privileged to have been selected for promotion to Warrant Officer and was finally nabbed for a posting to HMAS Kuttabul as the Personnel Officer. Looking after 1500 full time members was definitely a challenge but one that I enjoyed.

Now, in 2014, after almost 30 years service, I am the Category Manager for the now Maritime Logistics Personnel Operations (nee Writers). It is a challenging but rewarding roll given the way forward for us is completely different than that when I joined almost three decades ago, but as our category has and always will do, we will adapt and overcome what ever they throw at us.

Marc Henderson - WO

Marc has updated his bio and the following updates his service from 2009. His full bio can be read on the web site.

He joined *Sydney IV* in January 2009 and participated in the Northern Trident 2009 world deployment, a highlight of his career.



Promoted to Warrant Officer in June 2010 he returned to Canberra where he was employed as the Writer Category Manager. During this posting he deployed to Operation *Slipper* (August 2012 – March 2013) as the Chief Clerk at Headquarters Joint Task Force 633 in the United Arab Emirates.

In February 2014 he took up his current position within the Organisational Response Unit. In 2011 he completed his Masters in Management Studies (Human Resource Management).

Warrant Officer Henderson lives in Canberra with his wife Sharon and daughter Olivia.

Lest We Forget

Andrea "Annie" TILEY (ex SWWTR)
Passed away on 28MAY14 of Cervical cancer Aged 49 years.



We were advised that **Alan Russell WHITELAW** passed away in 11//2012. Ex Wtr and Paymaster Sub Lieutenant . He was 96 years.

Mick Yarred writes his bio:



Having left school in WA at the end of Year 10 in November 1979 and having absolutely no idea of what I wanted to do with my life, I recalled someone mentioning the Navy and Junior Recruits. So I took myself into the Defence Recruiting Centre in the old CAGA building in Perth and made some enquiries....well a few months later after a couple of medicals and a psych test to make sure I had some sense of sanity and wasn't completely loopy, I was successful in getting entry into HMAS Leeuwin as a 15 1/2 year old JR in the 73rd Intake (Ramsay), 7th October 1980.

For the 9 months that we actually spent at Leeuwin I am sure that 80% of us hated it, doubling everywhere, getting balled out for someone else's stuff ups, the endless kit musters, PT shake ups, shits and top shits nights, blanket bashings (couldn't have them these days – apparently that is now referred to as bastardisation!!!) the torture just never seemed to end. However when we left, I think the vast majority of us looked back and thought.....hang on we really bloody enjoyed that and made some great mates! Not to the extent that we would want to do it all again, but it was a great way of getting a group of young blokes to 'man up' pretty quickly!

So after Leeuwin if was off to 'sunny' Cerberus for completion of the Basic Writer Course No: 8/81 with Instructor POWRWTR Hillary Rushton. The course didn't seem to difficult and I even managed to survive the dreaded NBCD course including the requirement to run around inside a sealed hut until you were breathing fairly heavily and then having the instructor let loose a Tear Gas canister, just so that you could have the pleasure of coughing your guts up and trying to claw your own eyes out!! Not sure if they still do that these days either.....most likely banned under WHS rules!

During the last week of our Scribes course we were all advised of our initial postings, some to Harman (Navy Office), some to establishments in Sydney, one to birdie world at Albatross and me to a place called Creswell.....unfortunately none of us had ever heard of Creswell so I really had no idea where I was actually going, other than it involved an overnight train trip from Melbourne to Sydney and then a further 3 to 4 hours on a rickety old train kindly referred to as the Red Rattler from Sydney down to Nowra (Bomaderry).

On arrival at Nowra there was a duty driver from Albatross there to collect another new scribe posted there, but alas no one heading for Creswell. So I recall having to get in contact with the OOD at Creswell and ask very politely if someone could come and retrieve me....Please Sir!! After about an hours wait a WRAN truckie arrived and off we went. The trip seemed to take an eternity as we drove further away from civilisation (Jervis Bay Road was really no more than a sealed track in the early 80's) and I was starting to feel a little concerned for my own safety!! We then came to a section of road looking down on Creswell itself.....what a sight, a huge bay of calm blue water (Jervis Bay) surrounded by pristine white sandy beaches.....I said a silent thank you to DSP for this posting!!!

My 18 months or so at Creswell was fantastic, but it was over all far too quickly and my first sea posting was promulgated....off to the mighty warship Vampire (Life's Fun on Double One!). Ray Hamilton was the CPOWTR, the infamous Pat McGeown the POWTR and Rick Berry was the LSWTR. I also recall Terry Stickler and Graham Campbell were there for a short period when I first joined her, and then there was myself, Ice Coolegum and Zorro Zubcic as ABWTR's, with Gavin Locke replacing Ice after he left (Disciplinary reasons if memory serves me right – had probably gone AWOL again to attend another VFL match) . We only did one up-top trip during my time on-board with the bulk of our sea time spent conducting Midshipman Navigation Training in and amongst the Whitsunday Islands.....that was hard to take!!

From Vampire, I posted to Albatross (PSO Nowra) for a 2 year stint starting in Nov of 84, with POWTR Geoff Nesbitt doing Removals. It was there that I learnt that Birdies don't get posted around much.....back then it was Albatross or a SQN to CAG on Melbourne and then back to TROSS again. I recall having one crusty WOATWO coming in enquiring about his final discharge removal after 20 odd years of service.....'Just go through it slowly Son' he said 'this is my first removal!!!' Say what???? He apparently moved into his current MQ back in 1969 and have never moved since.... Blew me away!!

From there it was off to Canberra in DEC 86 for a short (and cold) stint at Navy Office working in DGNPS. Really didn't like Canberra first time around and was itching to get back to the West, so my POWTR (Pat Dummett) had a contact or two in DSP and arranged a swap posting (but luckily for me at Defence expense) between myself and a SWRWTR at Stirling who wanted to come east with her Stoker boyfriend. So after only 9 months in the nation's capital, it was off to Stirling.

I worked under the supervision of CPOWTR Trevor Sweeney in the Personnel / Registry office who pushed and pushed me to get my Parts 1 and 2 for promotion completed.....finally caved in and did them and about 6 months later was promoted to LSWTR. I then volunteered for and was successful in getting the LSWTR's position at CPSO(WA) working alongside POWTR Julie Mudry. I really enjoyed my time there, a good mix of people and also some very interesting work.



In **November 1992** I was posted back to Stirling (Accounts Office) for a stint, prior to joining Derwent in **July 1993**. I was briefly loaned back to Cerberus to complete the Petty Officers Management **and Staff Skills** Course and Advanced Writer Course No 161993 with CPOWTR Angus as our Instructor. On returning to Derwent **we** completed her decommissioning cruise, to various destinations including the Andaman Islands.

December 1994 after taking a 2 month LSL break I was posted back to Albatross (817SQN) as the Squadron Regulatorprobably from my perspective the worst posting of my career, however the birdies thought it was brilliant to have someone who could do their paperwork, calculate their allowances for when they went on course

or leave etc etc. Prior to my posting into the SQN the Reggies position had been filled on an ad hoc basis by a long list of MAB sailors waiting for discharge etc so I guess having someone in the role 'long term' was a bonus for them.

I didn't mind the admin / personnel side etc, it was the fact that the Reggie was also the SQN OH&S Rep and Unit Safety Officer and umpteen other subsidiary roles.....except for the bleeding obvious (like those big spinning blades on top and slightly smaller ones at the back) I had no idea what the dangers were of working in hangar full of Sea King helicopters.....incorrectly placed oil drip trays, wrong tool for the job, not correctly completing Maintenance Logs etc....I had absolutely no interest in any of that!!

So it was with great relief that I finally received another posting in November 1996 back to Navy Office as Staff Officer DNSC. That posting didn't last too long as in 1997 they amalgamated the 3 Service Conditions sections (1 for each Service) into one DSC directorate. So I sat around in Building K at Russell Offices for a couple of months doing not a great deal of anything!!! In July 1997 I got snaffled to run the Services Allocation Module (SAM) Help desk. This was the application used by Defence around the country for the allocation of Married Quarters to entitled ADF members. I enjoyed this and in March 1998 I was for want of a better term 'seconded' to the Defence Housing Australia (DHA) office in Barton to work alongside the 2 staff there who were running the DHA Help desk. I was heavily involved in the design and testing of the new software application that was being developed to replace SAM (it was non Y2K complaint!!). Then in July of 1999 a posting came out in the LSP for me to go back to Russell Offices to the DSCM File Registry.....Ugh!!

However the then CIO at DHA (ex CPOWTR Bruce Lockyer) asked if I'd be interested in leaving the Navy and joining DHA as a full time Help desk Analyst.....so in Oct 99 I discharged at own request, and it is there that I have been ever since. DHA is now undergoing some fairly significant changes in the way they do their business and to that end my position has been made redundant effective 1 October. Fortunately the timing (for me at least) could not have been better, I get to have a couple of months at home relaxing and waiting for my wife to take 2015 off work – when we are going to do a lap around Oz as trainee Grey Nomads!!

**A recent dinner at Young, NSW had the following Scribes attend:
Lewis Horsfield - John 'Paddy' O'Brien and
Christine Hayden [Nee Bailey]**

