

# FHSM NEWSLETTER

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2021



HMS OTWAY PRIOR TO LEAVING THE UNITED KINGDOM



HISTORICAL ARTICLES

ARTEFACTS  
AND INFORMATION

FROM THE GALLERY BOATS, PEOPLE AND PLACES

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

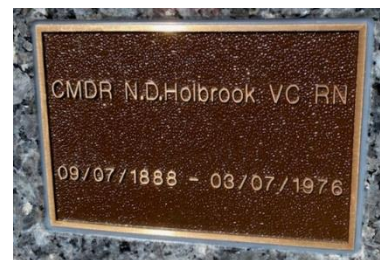
The two months since the last Committee meeting has seen a substantial increase in activities from our committee. The development and launch of a significant educational package for the Greater Hume Council schools and students has begun with various FHSM Members serving as Mentors to the students and teachers. This project, mainly organized by Thor Lund, has great potential for having school students learn more about Australian submarine history through quizzes and competitions.

A second Webinar convened by FHSM in association with SIA was successfully run in July by Thor Lund. It had over 70 local and international attendees which was double the number for the first Webinar. An edited version of the Webinar has been made into a video and uploaded to YouTube and the FHSM/HSM Website. There is also a possibility of a book coming from the various presentations.

We are pleased to welcome Morrie Jeppesen who has been appointed by the Greater Hume Shire Council as the new curator of the Museum and we strongly support his appointment. We are grateful to Morrie for all he has done already, he is an excellent link between the Museum and FHSM with being on our Committee as well. Helen Wyatt, our Assistant Secretary, and member of our development team, has set to work in helping him update the Holbrook Museum collection on the Mosaic system and with other cataloguing issues.

Helen Wyatt our hardworking Archivist has also been heavily involved with the SIA's Virtual Museum Project and testing of Collection Information Management Systems with Thor Lund over the period.

**CMDR Holbrook Plaque** has been placed in the Honour Roll Wall at Submariners' Walk Heritage Trail Teneriffe, Brisbane.



**New Members** - I am pleased to welcome 3 new members this period:

**Warwick Lloyd, Alan Lindsay, and Terry Roach**

In conclusion well done to all for what you are doing. We are steadily making a major contribution to the Holbrook Submarine Museum and more widely and it is thanks to you all that this is being achieved.

**FHSM President - Michael White**

SPECIAL  
PROJECTS  
UPDATE  
Educational  
Package launched

Regular Items  
Morrie's Page.

Webinar update

Historical:  
*Remembering our  
past*

Nostalgic  
*Sea Life:*

The Mk5 potato  
peeler

EDITORIAL  
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**NOTICE OF 2021 AGM** – Please note the FHSM AGM will be held on the 14<sup>th</sup> of OCT at 1900 Qld Time by Zoom Meeting. Members wishing to attend must register online as follows: <https://forms.office.com/r/31XBT4vxh5>, or by email to The Secretary [tlund@bigpond.net.au](mailto:tlund@bigpond.net.au)

## FHSM EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGE LAUNCHED

A package of educational Challenges started its development in 2020 but was put off due to Covid and lack of resources and time. It was revived earlier this year 2021 with a view to its possible involvement in the 2021 SUBCON due to be held in Holbrook in October 2021.

Initial developments revolved around online games of which 2 were developed and are available. However, whilst these games had some merit, they did not fit within the general schools' curricula in the Greater Hume Region. Thus, advice was sought from local educators to help us tailor the approach.

The results of an intense period of development led to a scheme which can be deployed through the area schools, and which has both educational merit and attributes designed to encourage involvement. The following table outlines the 3 key areas of our approach and the mentors assigned to assist students and schools with their entries.

At time of writing some 14 schools in the region have been approached and the response has been favourable

Area	Mentors
<p><b>1. Submarine History.</b> <i>Educations links to: History, Geography, English, research</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dr Michael White</b> OAM, QC, Adjunct Professor of Law at Qld University, a leading authority on Australian submarines and author of 3 books on the subject.</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Helen Wyatt</b>, Archivist and FHSM specialist in history, coeditor of the FHSM newsletter and researcher</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Submarine Science and Technology.</b> <i>Educations links to: Science and technology Biology, engineering Mathematics and physics STEM</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dr Roger Neill</b>, former chief scientist on the AE2 expeditions and senior scientist with DSTO</li> <li>• <b>Commodore Geoff Rose</b> AM RAN Rtd, engineer with wide submarining experience. He was also Project Director for the building of the Collins Class submarines</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Submariners and Submarine Art.</b> <i>Educations links to: Art, Sociology Writing, composition, and creative writing</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sandy Freeleagus</b> - Former submariner, artificer and highly regarded submarine artist and cartoonist.</li> <li>• <b>Thor Lund</b>, former submariner, pilot, author, film and TV script writer.</li> </ul>

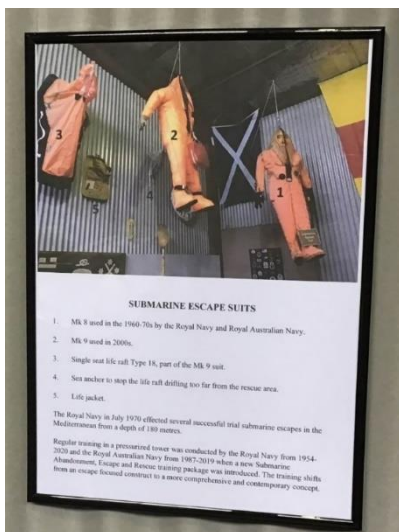
**Bendigo Bank Sponsorship** -With sponsorship from Bendigo banks Community Program the Submariners Challenge 2021 was launched in early August. It is hoped that if successful the package could be made available in coming years as an annual event and with possibly a broader reach. If you want more details on the challenge, please visit the website and download the information pack or email [tlund@bigpond.net.au](mailto:tlund@bigpond.net.au)

## CURATORS CORNER - PROJECT UPDATES

Work at the HSM has been steady with the upstairs storage/workshop area now rearranged with numerous items sorted. I have also made progress in the display areas as outlined.

**Progress** - A start has been made with descriptive signs being placed near exhibits. The six O Boat Plinths in the Oberang room will be dedicated to each boat with the plinths placed under the relevant boats photo and A4 frame with the boats crest and tally band. Submarine Qualification Badges have been redone for display. The Collins Boats have been redone with cloth crests and tally bands we are awaiting cloth crests from Stirling (if available)

A longer-term project I'm working on is a Timeline to show the various classes of submarines used by Australia. I will seek Roger Cooper's advice and expertise on this.



*Descriptive signs*



*Boats Crest and Tallyband*



*O Boat Plinths*



*Submarine Qualification Badges*



*Collins Boats Display*

**Project Plans** - We plan to install 2 x TV Monitors. One Monitor to display the Yellow Submarine story (video) when the signage etc. is moved to the wall near the torpedo tube. A second monitor is to be placed in the Oberang Room with photos of the boats and crews displayed as a photo gallery.

# UPCOMING WEBINAR

## HMAS PLATYPUS – THE EARLY OBERON YEARS



Joint Webinar  
6<sup>th</sup> Oct 2000 (AEST) 2021

NAVAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND THE FRIENDS OF HOLBROOK SUBMARINE MUSEUM



*The early years of the newly formed Submarine Squadron were not easy, and many initiatives and work arounds were necessary to keep the squadron working. In this webinar we will explore the difficulties, the harmony, and the funny side of some of the issues that faced the fledgling squadron from those who were there.*

- **David Michael- Your Host - *The buildings and structures services history.***  
David is a former Skimmer (surface ships) and Logistician who served in most branches of the RAN from 1973 to 2009. This included five years in the Submarine Arm where he served 18 months at HMAS PLATYPUS as base and Squadron Supply Officer before relocating with the Squadron to Western Australia where he spent a further 3 years at HMAS STIRLING. He was the Squadron Supply Officer and the director of the Submarine Training and Systems Centre (STSC). In the STSC he was responsible for Collins class submarine training and the phasing out of Oberon training and the SETF. Today he is President of the Naval Historical Society.
- **Peter Horobin MBE - *The submarine operational difficulties***  
Peter is a former submariner and commanding HMAS Otway in the 1970s. In the early 1980s he was the Navy project manager for the establishment of the Submarine Escape Training Facility at HMAS Stirling. From 2011 to 2015 he was leader of James Fisher Defence (predecessors to JFD Australia) delivering the Submarine Rescue Service for the RAN and from 2013, the Pressurised Escape Training service. From 2012 to 2015 he was the Director responsible for James Fisher Defence global submarine escape rescue and abandonment operations. This included responsibility for the James Fisher Defence rescue services for Australia and Singapore and the rescue team in the NATO Submarine Rescue System based in Faslane.
- **Sandy Freeleagus - *maintaining the submarines, lack of equipment and spares***  
Sandy Freeleagus was a Warrant Officer Artificer and long serving submariner. His experience with maintenance and delivery of services to the growing submarine squadron at HMAS Platypus in the early life of the squadrons well known. Sandy is also a well-known military cartoonist and illustrator. Sandy left the navy on the 1st August 1981 after 20 years of service. He then did a further 20 years as a member of the Emergency Reserve during which he served a period in HMAS Platypus.

### Registrations - Online

<https://d.docs.live.net/b2cc2ef06c33ce2c/FHSM%20PROJECTS/WEBINARS/Guidelines/Webinar%20Application%20Form.html>

or

email: [tlund@bigpond.net.au](mailto:tlund@bigpond.net.au)

**This is our third webinar for the year and our final one for 2021. Keep an eye out for next year's webinar schedule**



**OPPORTUNITY** – We need a volunteer Webinar Coordinator. If you would like details of the job, contact the FHSM Secretary: [tlund@bigpond.net.au](mailto:tlund@bigpond.net.au)



# 'REMEMBERING OUR PAST'

## August September HIGHLIGHTS

*Looking back at the events that shaped our submarine heritage.*

### 4<sup>TH</sup> SUBMARINE SQUADRON

18th August 1967 was a memorable day in Australian Submarine History when the Minister of Defence, Mr Alan Fairhall unveiled a plaque to commemorate the commissioning of the submarine base, HMAS PLATYPUS in Neutral Bay, NSW. The commissioning marked the establishment of the new 4th Submarine Squadron.

Present at the ceremony was Flag Officer, Submarines Rear Admiral I L M McGeoch RN who presented a bronze casting of a platypus which was subscribed to by the officers of the Royal Navy Submarine Service



Shortly after the ceremony, HMAS Oxley, under the command of Lieutenant Commander David Lorrimer arrived on her maiden voyage from the UK via Bermuda, Jamaica, Panama, and Pearl Harbor

### SUBMARINER LOSSES

1987 (3-Aug) ABUCSM Hugh Markcrow and SMNUC Damien Humphreys were lost when the submarine HMAS OTAMA dived off the New South Wales coast. The memorial honouring the memory of sailors who lost their lives in HMA Submarines is in Rockingham, WA. The memorial includes the name of ABUWSM Christopher Passmore who lost his life following an accident on HMAS ONSLOW on 1 March 1981.



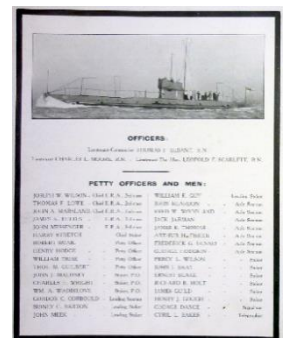
1939 (10-Sept) HMS OXLEY (ex HMAS OXLEY) was sunk by HM submarine TRITON. First submarine loss of World War II. Of a complement of 54, there were only two survivors.

1914 (14 Sept) Loss of AE1 with no survivors.



### ANOTHER LINK TO AE2

As a follow up to the last newsletter, we received information on the NAA Queensland's *Alex Nichol Memorial Shield*. Nichols was the only Queensland on AE2 and later became Life Member and patron of the Queensland Naval Association of Australia. The image shows the presentation of the Shield by ex-submariner, Ian Appleby (Darling Downs Sub-branch) to Norm Gale (Stanthorpe and District Sub-branch)



# SEA LIFE – THE MK 5 POTATO PEELER

**Disclaimer** – *From time to time we get sent stories that we cannot validate, and thus to date we have not printed these stories. However, many of these are amusing and have some basis of fact upon which we have decided to print the occasional one. They will be anonymous, and we take no responsibility for their accuracy or fact.*

For those of you who underwent submarine training in the UK in the 60's and 70's you will no doubt fondly remember the love of chips with every meal possible. In fact, the veg store on most RN boats had little other than potatoes. So, this story relates to the competitive nature of submariners and the often boredom breaking activities that submariners undertook during long patrols.

To set the scene, the Oxley and Otway had been home for some time and the Ovens was newly arrived. The tradition of Forendy peeling the spuds during a dived routines had continued from the RN tradition and was not an unpleasant chore to undertake whilst watching the For'd mess movie from behind the screen sitting on the step. It came to pass on one of the boats that Forendy's started a potato peel competition to see who could produce the longest peel. Okay, sounds typical of Forendy behaviour, but it got serious to the extent that money was changing hands.



It was not long before cheating came into the game with secretly stowed large potatoes brought from ashore. That hole in the rules was plugged after someone forgot to produce their hidden potato and the smell overtook the for'd mess and a lively, growing spud emerged from a locker. Measurement was then brought into question, and it was decided that the MK8 torpedo was a good gauge. The TI was not impressed to find potato skins draped along his shiny fish so that had to go. Eventually the Coxn approved tape measures were introduced and strict rules on the measurement enshrined in Forendy SOP's.

This did not deter the avid potato peel competitors and favorites emerged along with after mess competitors entering the arena. Of course, the rumour spread to the other 2 boats and submariners being competitive, it was on for young and old. It was often heard discussed in muted tones in the inboard wardroom and even had a tally board in the junior sailor's mess at one stage. So, with stringent rules around gathering and measuring and who could bet etc. the only thing left for personal skill improvement was the tools. This was left to the discretion of the peelers (no reference to the English police, **Peelers was the name for the English police. After Sir Robert Peel.**)

The Mk 1 peeling device was the good old pussars dirk (it had to be good for something) however, many had long since lost theirs, so the Mk 2 was a borrowed knife from the galley. This was declared illegal as the chefs often bet on the outcome. The Mk3 and 4 were a variety of shore bought peelers that you might find in any kitchen. Experiments with different sizes and shapes did not seem to make much difference. We believe the engineers workshop even got involved.

One bright and creative peeler had noticed a device on the Joe the Gadget Man TV Show and thought he might splurge on one on his way home at Nock and Kirby's (early days Bunnings's type hardware store). Practicing whilst on leave with his new device he could get a tremendous length of skin with the thing. Heaven knows how many potatoes he ate to get the result. So, the Mk5 potato peeler was born and scooped the pool in the next round of competition.

Unfortunately, jealousy and other events conspired to the demise of the Mk 5 when it was lost at sea. We do not have any pictures of the Mk5, but we believe it was a round device into which the potato was put and a handle turned rotating the spud against a blade which followed the contours of the said spud.

If anybody has a picture relating to this device or the competition, we would love to have them.