

**Recruit School**

**Final Waller Division Graduation**

**Address by Chief of Navy**

**Vice Admiral Ray Griggs, AO CSC, RAN**

Mr David Waller, grandson of Captain HML Waller, Families and Friends of Waller Division Recruits, distinguished guests, Recruit School Instructors and staff, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my great privilege to be here with you today to review General Entry 311, Waller Division graduation ceremony.

On behalf of the graduates, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you, the family and friends of the Navy's newest members. Many of you have travelled great distances to be here today.

I cannot overstate to you, how much Navy values the support you provide to your sons, daughters, partners, relatives and friends in their naval careers to date. It is not an easy role, particularly when your loved ones are required to deploy, often at short notice, to meet the tasking we are given. You have already demonstrated your support today and I thank you very much for this. I welcome you very warmly, to our Navy family.

Sailors of General Entry 311, Waller Division, today of course does not mark the end of the journey for you, but in many ways its beginning.

Certainly, your transformation from civilian to sailor is largely done, but we need to hone your individual skills in the categories that you have

chosen to pursue. This will take you another step closer towards going to sea, to defend this great land and serve the interests of its people.

If that sounds important – its because it is. The sea's importance to Australia is so fundamental that it often sits in the sub conscious. But it is fundamental to our way of life. So don't ever think what you do in this uniform is not important or lacks relevance.

As you proceed further in your naval service, know that I expect high standards from you and every one you will work with. These standards are higher than what are expected of people in the general community because of the task we need to perform but they are easily met if you practice both our values and signature behaviours.

I expect you will always give your best, no matter what the task. Our navy, although modest in size, has earned an enviable reputation among the world's navies for its professionalism. The reason it has this reputation is because of people like you – doing the job well and doing the job properly.

The officer after whom your division is named, as you well know, is Captain Hec Waller, who was without doubt one of Australia's greatest naval fighting heroes. He knew his mission, he executed that mission time and again in the Mediterranean with the Scrap Iron Flotilla and then again in command of HMAS *Perth* in the Java Sea in February 1942. You all know the story of the Sunda Strait, that savage battle which raged over a few short hours and saw the loss of two fine ships and, more importantly, over 1050 Australian and US men; sadly Hec Waller was among that number who died that night. He personifies what is needed to lead and to fight and win at sea.

You are the last Waller Division that will graduate from the Recruit School – Waller Division will move to the Naval College next year, but the values and standards he exemplifies will live on. You should be proud of your individual connection to his name. I am very glad his grandson David could be here today to help us mark this end of an era at the Recruit School. Over the next few months we will transition to Division names here at the Recruit School that will be named after equally inspirational individuals, but this time they will be sailors.

I think this is a most fitting change and I look forward to the first divisions to graduate which will be named after Leading Seaman Buck Taylor from HMAS *Yarra*, Leading Seaman Dick Emms from HMAS *Kara Kara*, Leading Aircrewman Noel Shipp from the RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam and CPO Jonathan ‘Buck’ Rogers, winner of the George Cross and Distinguished Service Medal, who perished when HMAS *Voyager* sank in 1964. I think it is important to give the stories of some of our sailors much greater prominence to our sailors of today and in moving the current division names to *Creswell*, the home of our officer training, I think we have struck a good balance.

You will be engaged in serious business in your careers but don’t forget to have fun. You are about to embark on the journey of a lifetime. You will do things that you never dreamed you could, and you will learn things about yourself you might never otherwise have known – the reality is that in 11 short weeks you probably already have. You remain ambassadors for our Navy and our country, in or out of uniform, at work or at home or out and about, and you should never forget that.

The Royal Australian Navy has a proud history, forged by the dedication and sacrifices of our sailors. The Fleet and its supporting units you are soon to join are active in Australian waters protecting our borders and also around the world. Today, HMAS *Toowoomba* is in the Middle East – she is the 54<sup>th</sup> individual ship deployment since 1990. Shortly she will be relieved by HMAS *Newcastle*, which departed Australia earlier this month – the 55<sup>th</sup> individual ship deployment. These ships and their crews carry the responsibility of defending Australian interests in both peace and conflict, a responsibility you will now share as members of the fighting service that is the Royal Australian Navy.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Royal Australian Navy has provided over 112 years of loyal service to this country. Waller Division, today you become part of that history. You are no longer Recruits – you are now Sailors of the Royal Australian Navy.

On behalf of your families and friends, instructors and leaders, we are very proud of you and your achievements thus far and we wish you well for the exciting future that lies ahead.

Bravo Zulu on a job well done.