

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Ray Griggs**

**Speech at the Centenary of the Royal Australian Naval College,**

**Osborne House, Geelong**

**2 March 2013**

Minister Snowdon, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is truly an honour to be here in this place, in Geelong, on this day. This is truly a significant event for the Navy. As Vice Admiral Jones mentioned earlier, it was the final piece in the architecture of the Navy being put in place. Our submariners would probably disagree – they would say the final piece was in 1914 with the arrival of AE1 and 2, but I think from an architecture point of view, it was the final piece of putting the Navy together.

The first of March is a very significant day for Navy. 112 years ago the Commonwealth Naval Forces were born. 100 years ago this College was opened. 71 years ago, in a number of short but brutal hours, HMAS *Perth* and USS *Houston* were lost in the Battle of the Sunda Strait. Hec Waller, as mentioned earlier was Captain of *Perth*. Over 1000 Australian and American sailors died in those couple of hours.

Yesterday on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, we rededicated the Navy's official memorial in Canberra and unveiled an expanded set of campaign and battle honours – uniquely Australian campaign and battle honours, stretching right back to 1860 and the New Zealand Campaign, when HMVS *Victoria* took part in that campaign.

Also yesterday, the Government announced the award of a Unit Citation for Gallantry for HMAS *Yarra* and her actions on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February and 4<sup>th</sup> of March 1942. Particularly on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 1942, when the ship was sunk by far superior Japanese forces, trying to protect the convoy it was escorting to Fremantle.

Also yesterday, I announced the completion of a project we've been working on to name all of the divisions at the Recruit School at *Cerberus* after sailors. For many many years they've been named after officers and I always found this a little bit incongruous. So last year we renamed two divisions; after Leading Seaman Buck Taylor from HMAS *Yarra* and Leading Aircrewman Noel Shipp from the Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam. Yesterday we added Leading Cook Dickie Emms, who like Teddy Sheean, died defending his ship, defending his country, in Darwin on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February 1942 in HMAS *Kara Kara*. And we also added Chief Petty Officer Jonathan Rogers, George Cross, Distinguished Service Medal, who died in our worst peacetime tragedy, the loss of HMAS *Voyager*. So now, as our sailors come through the Recruit School, they have four sailors, exceptional sailors, to inspire them early on in their careers.

The four divisions we previously had – including one named after Captain Frank Getting from the 1913 entry, who started his naval career here in Geelong – will move to HMAS *Creswell*, where they should be. Getting, Moran, Rankin and Waller will be honoured as the names of the *Creswell* divisions. And as *Creswell* now has five divisions, we are adding Vice Admiral Sir William Clarkson, the Navy's greatest engineer, who stood by Admiral Creswell in the early years of the development of the Navy. Often in Creswell's shadow, Clarkson played an absolutely pivotal role in these early years and produced a first class infrastructure for our Navy.

The College, as you heard from Captain Chandler, still performs a vital function in preparing our officers to lead the men and women of the Royal Australian Navy. We all know what we do is not ordinary, it is different, it is demanding. Some of the

things we ask of people require first class leadership, so that we can achieve our mission to fight and win at sea. And that's what the College is about generating; first class leaders, who lead first class sailors in the operations and tasks we undertake.

The two years here set the tone for this College. And I think if you look at the 1913, 1914 entries; their record really speaks for itself and it speaks for the quality of the training they got at this very impressive place. I thank you very much for being here today and I'll now unveil the plaque.