

Chief of Navy speech at the
Rededication of the Navy Memorial – Anzac Parade
Navy Birthday – 1 March 2013

- Dr Andrew Lee, MP, representing the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel; Senator David Feeney, Parliamentary Secretary for Defence; Dr Chris Bourke MLA representing the ACT Chief Minister; General David Hurley, Chief of the Defence Force; Dr Brendan Nelson, Director of the Australian War Memorial; Mr Ante Dabro, artist and sculptor of this Memorial; Veterans and other distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.
- Can I start by acknowledging the traditional owners of this land and pay my respects to their elders past and present. Can I also thank you for joining us here today for the rededication of the Royal Australian Navy Memorial here on ANZAC Parade, the nation's foremost ceremonial and commemorative precinct.
- The reason we are rededicating this memorial is that in 2009 the Governor General approved an updated and expanded set of campaign and battle honours for the RAN.
- There are I think two important aspects to the 2009 decision.
- First, this is the first time the Navy has had a complete set of distinctly Australian Campaign and Battle Honours. This is the culmination of work by many dedicated people over many years.
- From the establishment of a uniquely Australian system of awarding campaign and battle honours, to the exhaustive and diligent research

to identify those units whose participation was to be recognised and honoured, this has been an important task and I thank those involved.

- Although we have individual and unit awards for gallantry and service, the system of campaign and battle honours is an important part of the way in which we record and recognise a unit's overall service. And it is an important part of the individual identities of each unit that is honoured, identities that live on through successive ship's companies and the renaming of ships down through time. The current crews of ships, squadrons and units are the custodians not only of the current commissions service but that of their forebears.
- So today, the day an Australian Navy came into existence 112 years ago, the day that 71 years ago over 1000 Australian and US Navy sailors and officers lost their lives in a few short brutal hours of combat as HMAS PERTH and USS HOUSTON were lost in the Battle of Sunda Strait, today I am glad that we rededicate this memorial with three new campaign and battle honours – for service in East Timor in 1999-2000, the Persian Gulf in 2001-2003 and Iraq 2003.
- As well as for 12 new historical campaign and battle honours stretching back to New Zealand in 1860-1; China in the Boxer Rebellion; Rabaul, German East Africa, the North Sea, Adriatic and Indian Ocean in World War 1; the East Indies, Darwin and Borneo in World War 2; and honouring the Far East Strategic Reserve, Malaya in the 1950s and Malaysia 1964-66 for Confrontation.
- The second aspect, is that these are campaign and battle honours – I emphasise the campaign honours. Over half the honours are for

campaigns. Warfare, as our history attests, is more about campaigns than it is about individual battles. Battles are, without significant exception, periods of particular intensity within a campaign. It is not that they are not important, more that the battle must always be placed within the context of the campaign of which it was part.

- From the perspective of recognising our servicemen and women, and honouring their effort and sacrifice, I think the understanding of campaigning is also crucial. There is danger throughout a campaign, sometimes from the environment, sometimes from the activities attempted, more usually from the enemy. Many people risked their lives, were injured and died, outside of specific named battles, so honouring the campaigns they served in properly honours their service and sacrifice.
- The campaign at sea is today a joint one, it requires endurance, persistence and resilience. It requires seamanship, seaworthy ships and warfighting skills. And it requires these, all together, all of the time.
- The campaign at sea is multi faceted whether that be to keep open our sea lines of trade and communications, to directly defend Australian sovereignty or to seek out and attack an enemy, to transport and sustain our troops ashore, and then to extract them when required. In the archipelagic environment that we live in, the success of Navy's role in the campaign at sea, will inevitably sow the seeds for the success of the overall campaign itself.
- So our history of active service is up to date, it is a history we can be well proud of. Australia has been and continues to be well served by

its Navy; those far distant storm tossed ships on which we rarely look. I am glad the Navy's pre-eminent memorial now acknowledges the RAN's full service to the people and the sacrifice of its members in order to defend our nation and its prosperity and freedoms.