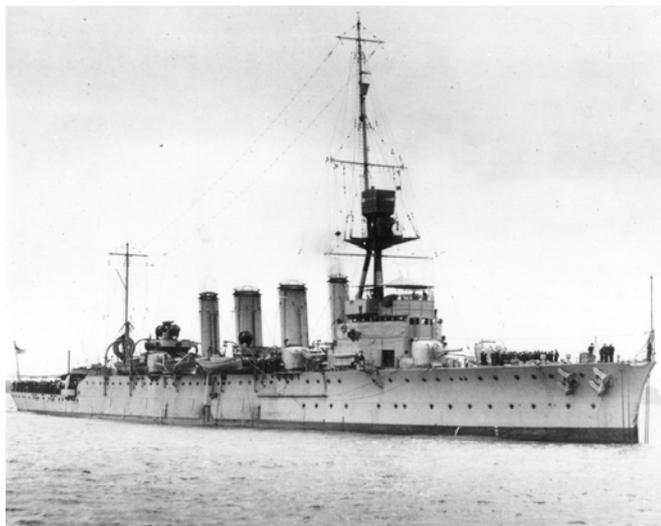# SHIPS NAMED ADELAIDE

With the second of the Royal Australian Navy's (RAN) new amphibious ships (LHD) nearing completion and due to commission as HMAS *Adelaide* (III) in 2016, it seems timely to review the history of the two previous RAN warships to have proudly carried the name of South Australia's capital city.

HMAS Adelaide (I) *in her original configuration with four funnels.*

The first ship to be named HMAS *Adelaide* was an improved version of the 'Chatham' group of the British 'Town' Class light cruisers. She was laid down at Cockatoo Island Dockyard, Sydney and launched by Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, wife of the then Governor-General, on 27 July 1918.

Fitting out and completion were seriously delayed due to the loss, by enemy action, of important forgings for her turbines and other important machinery which could not be manufactured in Australia. The replacement of those parts, coupled with decisions to incorporate extensive modifications as a result of lessons learnt during World War I, resulted in further delays. This led to some derisively referring to *Adelaide* as HMAS '*Long-Delayed*'.

Adelaide eventually commissioned at Sydney on 5 August 1922 under the command of Captain JB Stevenson RAN. After sea trials and work-ups in waters off Jervis Bay she became an active unit of the RAN participating in the usual pattern of exercises conducted on the Australia Station.

On 18 April 1924 *Adelaide* joined the Royal Navy's Special Service Squadron, led by the battle cruiser HMS *Hood*, flagship of Vice Admiral Sir FL Field, RN, which at that time was mid-way through a worldwide cruise. *Adelaide* joined the British squadron in Sydney and accompanied it throughout the remainder of the deployment reaching Portsmouth on 28 September 1924, having called at Wellington, Napier, Auckland, Suva, Honolulu, Victoria (BC), Vancouver, San Francisco,

Panama, Colon, Jamaica, Halifax, Quebec, Topsail Bay and Conception Bay en route.

During that cruise *Adelaide* became the first RAN ship to pass through the Panama Canal and after three months service in British waters she departed Portsmouth on 10 January 1925, returning to Australia via the Mediterranean, Colombo, Singapore and Thursday Island before finally reaching Sydney on 7 April 1925. For many of her crew it was the voyage of a lifetime.

On 10 October 1927 *Adelaide* was hastily despatched from Sydney in support of a punitive mission to the Solomon Islands following the murder and mutilation by natives of a District Officer, a cadet, and fifteen native police at Sinarango (Port Diamond), Malaita.

Under the command of Captain GC Harrison RN, *Adelaide* arrived at Tulagi on 14 October and immediately sent ashore a landing party comprising one officer and sixteen ratings to reinforce local protection. With the Resident Commissioner on board, *Adelaide* then steamed to Sio Harbour and Port Diamond, where she remained for the next month. On the morning of 17 October *Adelaide* landed three platoons at Sinarango establishing three base camps from which locally enrolled troops and police operated to round up the natives responsible for the massacre. With the mission complete, *Adelaide* departed the Solomons area on 18 November returning to Sydney on 23 November.

Landing parties from Adelaide (I) *proceeding ashore in the Solomon Islands.*

Following further participation in exercises and goodwill visits around the Australian coast *Adelaide* was paid off into long-term reserve at Sydney on 27 June 1928.

Ten years later she was taken out of reserve to undergo an extensive refit and modernisation at Cockatoo Island Dockyard. The refit included conversion to burn oil fuel which saw the removal of the two forward boilers, the forward funnel as well as the construction of additional oil fuel tanks.

Adelaide (I) *wearing her wartime disruptive camouflage paint scheme c.1944.*

Several alterations were also made to her armament, including the removal of one 6-inch gun, the 3-inch anti-aircraft gun and the torpedo tubes. Three 4-inch anti-aircraft guns were fitted instead and the gunnery control positions were also modernised.

Adelaide re-commissioned on 13 March 1939 under the command of Captain HL Howden, RAN, and, after trials and work-ups she proceeded from Sydney to participate in trade defence exercises in company with units of the Australian Squadron, the New Zealand Squadron, mercantile marine and aircraft of the Royal Australian Air Force. These exercises completed in April 1939 at which time *Adelaide* returned to Sydney before again paying off into reserve on 17 May 1939. Many of her crew subsequently transferred to SS *Autolycus* on 15 May, for passage to England to commission HMAS *Perth*.

Adelaide's time in reserve was short-lived and on 1 September 1939 she re-commissioned for war service under the command of Captain HA Showers, RAN, operating on the Australian coast in defence of trade.

On 3 September 1940, while proceeding to Brisbane from Sydney *Adelaide* was involved in a collision with SS *Coptic* of the Shaw Savill and Albion Line. Fortunately both ships avoided major damage.

Throughout September and October 1940 *Adelaide* operated in the New Hebrides and New Caledonia where she was instrumental in helping to avert a Vichy French coup. From then until May 1942 *Adelaide* carried out patrols, convoy escort and shipping protection duties on the Australia Station and in waters around New Guinea.

Between May and July 1942 *Adelaide* was again modified to improve her anti-aircraft armament, after which she was based at Fremantle for convoy and escort duties in the Indian Ocean.

On 28 November 1942 *Adelaide,* together with the Netherlands cruiser *Jacob van Heemskerck* and the Australian minesweepers *Cessnock* and *Toowoomba*, was escorting a convoy in the southern Indian Ocean when they intercepted the German supply ship *Ramses* disguised as a Norwegian merchantman. *Adelaide* challenged the vessel before opening fire causing the Germans to scuttle and abandon ship. Her crew was subsequently rescued by *Adelaide.*

Adelaide spent the remainder of the war undertaking convoy escort work and carrying out patrols mounted from Fremantle. This service was briefly punctuated by a further refit at Williamstown Naval Dockyard between June and September 1943 at which time additional modifications were made to her armament.

On 6 January 1945 *Adelaide* arrived in Sydney bringing an end to her wartime and seagoing service. She was paid off on 26 February 1945 but was subsequently re-commissioned on 19 May 1945 as a tender to the Sydney shore establishment HMAS *Penguin*. On 13 May 1946 the venerable cruiser decommissioned for the final time.

The ship's hulk was sold on 24 January 1949 to Australian Iron and Steel Pty Ltd; all useful fittings and equipment having been removed or sold in 1947. In April 1949 *Adelaide*'s hulk was towed by the tug HMAS *Reserve* to Port Kembla, where it was broken up.

HMAS *Adelaide* (II)

The second ship to carry the name Adelaide was the first of six *Oliver Hazard Perry* class guided missile frigates (FFG) ordered for the RAN in the late 1970s.

Laid down on 29 July 1977 at the Todd Pacific Shipyards Corporation in Seattle, Washington, *Adelaide* (II) was launched by Lady Ann Synott, wife of the then Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Sir Anthony Synnot, KBE, AO, RAN, on 21 June 1978. She commissioned on 15 November 1980 having been assigned the pennant number 01.

HMAS Adelaide (II) *was the first of Australia's* Oliver Hazard Perry *class guided missile frigates to enter service in the RAN.*

Over the next 27 years *Adelaide* (II) proudly served the nation maintaining maritime and regional security and was twice awarded the Duke of Gloucester Cup, presented annually to the RAN's most efficient fleet unit.

During her long commission *Adelaide* undertook more than 30 overseas deployments and was at the forefront of many Australian Defence Force operations including participation in: Operation MORRIS DANCE in response to a military coup in Fiji in 1987; Operation DAMASK in 1990 following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait; Operations WARDEN, STABILISE and ASTUTE that assisted East Timor in 1999 and again in 2006; followed by a return to

the Middle East under the auspices of Operations SLIPPER in 2002 and CATALYST in 2004. Fishery and border protection duties were undertaken between 2001 and 2004 under Operations RELEX, RELEX (II) and RESOLUTE.

On 5 October 1992 *Adelaide* became the first FFG to be home-ported in Western Australia as part of Australia's two ocean navy policy.

In other roles, *Adelaide* received worldwide attention in January 1997 as the ship that rescued English and French, around-the-world yachtsmen; Tony Bullimore and Thierry Dubois. Both were plucked from the inhospitable waters of the Southern Ocean after their vessels were dismasted and foundered.

Adelaide also became the first of the Australian FFGs to undergo extensive modifications to allow her to operate the S-70B-2 Seahawk helicopter.

Adelaide (II) decommissioned on 19 January 2008 at Fleet Base West. She was subsequently stripped of all useful fittings and cleaned before being sunk as a dive wreck in 32 meters of water 1.8km off Avoca Beach near Terrigal on the Central Coast of New South Wales.

Adelaide (II) *is welcomed into her namesake city for the last time in 2007.*

Adelaide (III)

Adelaide (III) is a *Canberra* class LHD built in collaboration between Navantia and BAE Systems - Maritime in Spain. The *Canberra* class LHD are bigger than Australia's former aircraft carrier HMAS *Melbourne* (II) displacing 27,500 tonnes. They are more than 230m long and 27.5m high. *Adelaide* (III) has been assigned the pennant number 01, thus continuing the tradition.

After being launched in Spain on 4 July 2012 *Adelaide* was transported via the heavy lift-ship MV *Blue Marlin* from Spain to Australia where she arrived at Williamstown Shipyard, Victoria, on 7 February 2014. There work has been ongoing to add the various superstructure and mast components to the hull and complete her internal fit-out. She is currently undergoing acceptance trials.

Adelaide (III) *enters Port Phillip Bay for the first time on MV* Blue Marlin.

The *Canberra* class LHD are capable of carrying a combined armed battle group of more than 1100 personnel, 100 armoured vehicles and 12 helicopters. Six flight deck spots are available for operating medium sized helicopters such as the MRH-90 Taipan or MH60R Seahawk Romeo and four spots are available if required to operate the larger CH-47 Chinook sized helicopters. Refuelling is available at all spots. The vessel is equipped with one aircraft elevator (aft - 13.6 x 13.3m) and one multipurpose elevator (starboard side forward - 11.2 x 17m) which access the hanger/light vehicle deck. A dedicated ammunition elevator also operates between the magazine and flight deck.

When commissioned *Adelaide* (III) will inherit the following battle honours and campaign awards:
- Pacific 1941-43
- East Indies 1942
- East Timor 1999
- Persian Gulf 2001-02

John Perryman

Adelaide (III) *passes her sister ship HMAS* Canberra (III) *on her arrival in Sydney, 26 June 2015.*