

Presidents report to Members.

It is certainly a great relief to finally be in a position to be able to have a newsletter either posted out or available on line, and let you know principally what has been happening with your Association since our last communication to the members.

Primarily as we emerge from the era we have all been through, we have still been operating in a somewhat curtailed fashion, where we find that even now we may still have to cancel a meeting or function at the very last minute, a very interesting state of affairs, which we certainly could do without. My thanks at this stage, should certainly go to our Secretary and the rest of our dedicated Committee, who were re-elected at our AGM on Sunday, 24th July. You will find we are all listed on our home page, together with our contacts should you need to get in touch for any reason whatsoever.

Very briefly, we have where able, attended functions and meetings and looking back on my diary, I find that we have made presentation to Shipp Divisions passing out parades at HMAS Cerberus on three separate occasions so far this year, with another one due on the 27th of this month. We have also attended commemorative ceremonies for HMAS Vampire and of course HMAS Sydney at the Shrine, to commemorate the 80th anniversaries of their loss, and of course the announcement on the 19th of last year of the identity of the sailor who survived the Sydney/Kormoran action and was buried on Christmas Island three months after the sinking, as Able Seaman Thomas Welsby Clark. My thanks must go to all who attended that service, especially our Patron who gave the main address, a very moving ceremony. I would also thank one of our past Presidents, Marty Grogan, who attended the dedication ceremony in Western Australia on our behalf.



We will of course be attending the Shrine again this year on the 19th of November, for Sydney's 81st Commemorative Ceremony, it would be great to catch up afterwards if possible, so please attend if you can. We were lucky to also have our annual Vietnam Memorial Service and Luncheon on Sunday, the 5th of June, which was also well attended by our South Vietnamese colleagues, a great function which was very well catered for, and the raffles were ably conducted by our Secretary, well done Speed, a great day had by all.



I think in this day and age everyone would appreciate that we are now getting into a position where almost everyone has an email address, and is able to go on line and read a newsletter where possible. I attach a report I directed to the Committee for a zoom meeting we had recently, which deals with these concepts –

"I have in the last couple of months been receiving a newsletter from the Naval Vic Network, as I guess some of you have also been reading. I will enclose the latest copy out just in case you haven't had a chance to look at it yet. The contacts are listed below - Your September edition of BROADSIDE is now available to read at:

<https://navyvic.net/broadside/september2022broadside.html> or,

you can download the .pdf file: <https://navyvic.net/broadside/september2022broadside.pdf>

I have enclosed this info for an obvious reason. I think we would all agree that our communication to our members has been virtually non-existent. Please accept that I say that without casting any kind of blame on anyone concerned. I remember turning out the first copies of the "Grey Funnel Line" when I lived in Endeavour Hills, and I know the time and energy it took to turn out the 14 or 16 pages per copy in those days, let alone turn out the much larger editions as they are now.

I draw your attention to the speech I gave at the AGM and my feelings on the members giving us permission for our Association name change. In my view the name change can only be successful if we reach out to younger members of the "Sydney" family, if not why did we change it at all, it can die with our generation!

"As I attend ceremonies connected with our Association or the RSL, I am amazed at the number of sailors or ex sailors who have served on the later Sydney's and are therefore eligible to join our association. There were two present at the Shrine for the 80th anniversary, and they seem keen to assist where possible. I am, like the editor of the grey funnel line, very keen to reach out primarily through all available avenues that the internet affords, to at least give those that may be eligible to join an option to do so where possible. We as primarily Vietnam Veterans cannot carry the ball much longer, as age is already overtaking many of us, and we owe our association membership the chance to be refreshed with younger members, who will ensure that we as an association will attend the 90th and 100th anniversaries of the loss of Sydney 11."

I am fully aware that there will always be members who want a hard copy of our newsletter and I feel that the best way to do this would be to retain at least two copies of the Grey Funnel Line per year, one primarily before the AGM so David can get his message across on non financial members, and another later in the year. This way Dutchy can have a breather, with only a couple of editions to look after.

If you have a look at the Broadside's concept listed above, it only consists of approximately five pages of info, and Lozza tells me that would be a soda to have on our home page and direct our members to read or download bi monthly. The members who don't have the expertise we can pick up by a normal mail out where necessary."

On closing this report to the members, I feel that our communication to our membership does badly need an update, and I hope that the majority of you see the option enclosed as a viable alternative. If, as stated above, you are unable to gain access to a newsletter online, I am sure we can still post out where possible.

Kind regards,

Chris Thompson
President
HMAS Sydney Association (Vic)