

GOORANGAI

OCCASIONAL PAPERS OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVAL RESERVE PROFESSIONAL STUDIES PROGRAM

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1

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Welcome to the first edition of *Goorangai*, the Newsletter of the Royal Australian Naval Reserve Professional Studies Program (RANRPSP). It is the intention of the PSP to publish *Goorangai* on an occasional basis in order to bring to the attention of Reserve members and the broader naval and corporate community issues that are of relevance and interest to all. Further, it is the intention of this first edition to highlight the role of the PSP and to promote its use as a communications tool covering Reserve matters for both the Navy and the business community. This edition will also explain why *GOORANGAI* has been chosen as the title of the publication.

The Professional Studies Program

The RANRPSP is an autonomous research program intended to foster independent debate about Australian corporate issues with relevance to Reserve service, Defence and the private sector. Additionally, the aim of the RANRPSP is to promote professional excellence by encouraging Naval Reserve members to apply academic rigour to Defence and corporate challenges and actively pursue issues pertaining to Reserve, Navy and Defence efficiency and effectiveness.

To this end, the RANRPSP will provide a forum for Naval Reservists to share their skills and knowledge with the corporate sector, Navy and the wider Australian Defence Organisation. In order to fulfil these aims the RANRPSP seeks to highlight and develop skills in areas of mutual interest, such as maritime defence, financial and corporate management, operations and logistics, health, human resources, information systems and public relations.

The professional expertise gained by Naval Reservists through their Navy service and civilian occupations will be show-cased at conferences and symposia as well as via the publication of occasional papers and scholarly articles in peer reviewed journals. Additionally, the RANRPSP will sponsor regular seminars that will be open to the public and employers as well as Defence personnel. All Naval Reservists are, therefore, encouraged to contribute to the RANRPSP through the submission of manuscripts dealing with their own areas of expertise and by taking the opportunity to deliver presentations on topical issues.

The flagship events in the RANRPSP calendar will be the biennial Naval Reserve Symposium and every alternate year, the Naval Reserve and Corporate Leadership Forum. Further, the RANRPSP seeks to develop an Overseas Study Grant Scheme to send Naval Reservists who have achieved excellence in their field to other nations to encourage international links and exchange knowledge with members of foreign Naval Reserves.

The Navy Patron of the RANRPSP is the Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Chris Ritchie, AO. The Corporate Patron is the Chairman of the Australian Stock Exchange, Mr Maurice Newman, AC. The combination of Defence and corporate patronage serves to provide a unique opportunity for the development of close links between the highest levels of Navy and the private sector.

Further details concerning the Professional Studies Program can be obtained from Defence Instruction (Navy) – Administration 6-4, which can be found on the Naval Reserve website: <http://www.navy.gov.au/reserves>.

HMAS *Goorangai*

The name *Goorangai* holds a significant place in the history of the Royal Australian Naval Reserve. It is the name of the converted trawler, *HMAS Goorangai*, which was lost with all hands when she was run down by *MV Duntroon* at Port Phillip Heads on 20 November 1940.

HMAS Goorangai was the first Royal Australian Navy vessel lost in World War II, and the first RAN surface vessel to be lost in wartime. The entire ship's complement consisting of three officers and twenty-one sailors were killed in the tragedy.

At the start of World War Two the Royal Australian Navy had insufficient numbers of ships capable of minesweeping operations, so 30 small privately owned vessels were requisitioned by the Australian Government to be fitted out for the minesweeping role. Cam & Sons, a fishing company in Sydney, provided the greatest number of ships for this project. Eight of the company's trawlers were taken up with *Goorangai* (223 tonnes) among them.

On the whole, these minesweepers were crewed by officers and sailors of the Royal Australian Navy Reserve. *Goorangai* carried three officers and 21 sailors, all of whom were Reservists. David McGregor, who had been skipper of *Goorangai* in her trawling days was an exception. He was persuaded to sign on by the RAN as Commanding Officer of *HMAS Goorangai* with the rank of Commissioned Warrant Officer.

In late October 1940, the German Auxiliary Minelayer, *Passat*, layed mines off Wilson's Promontory and Cape Otway. Shortly afterwards in early November, the steam ship *Cambridge* was sunk off the Promontory, and the *City of Wayville*, off Cape Otway. The *City of Wayville* was the first US ship to be sunk in the war.

In response to these sinkings, *Goorangai* and two other minesweepers, *Orana*, and *Durraween*, were sent into Bass Strait to locate and sweep the mines before there were any more shipping losses. On the night of the 20 November 1940, *Goorangai* was crossing Port Phillip Bay from Queenscliff to Portsea, where it was intended she anchor over night, before resuming minesweeping operations the following morning. At that time a southerly gale was blowing and *Goorangai* was steaming without lights. At the same time, the troop ship *MV Duntroon*, on route to Sydney, was steaming down Port Phillip Bay, to clear the Rip at Port Phillip Heads. At 2037 she struck *Goorangai* amidships, cutting her in half. The minesweeper sank in under a minute, taking her entire crew of 24 with her.

Within 15 minutes, the lifeboat *Queenscliffe* was on the scene, and *Duntroon* had lowered her boats to search for survivors, but only the tops of *Goorangai's* masts were visible as she settled in 15 metres of water in the South Channel. Of her crew of 24, only six bodies were recovered, five of whom could be identified. The unidentified crewman was later buried at sea.

Because the wreck of *Goorangai* was sitting close to the shipping channels near the entrance to Port Phillip Bay she was a danger to ships seeking to enter or leave the Bay. In January 1941 the wreck was blasted into small pieces to clear the channel. In 1981, a memorial cairn, listing the names of her crew, was erected on the Queenscliff foreshore, overlooking the site where *Goorangai* was lost. The site of the tragedy was declared an Historic Ship Wreck on 16 November 1995.

The following is a list of *HMAS Goorangai's* crewmembers who were lost.

G. Boyle
A. Carter
H. Gilroy
F. Hack
A. Ladlow
D. McGregor (CO)
K. Matheson
R. Redman
B. Buchanan
C. Cox
C. Green
H. Johnson
A. MacDonell
E. McLaughlan
J. Moxey
J. Saunders
J. Dungey
W. Johnston
M. Madden
F. Wadds
N. Farquharson
A. Kemp
L. Mainsbridge
R. Wadrop

(compiled from information provided by LEUT P. Jackson, RANR & Mr David Stevens, Reserve News, Vol 6 (10) Nov 1999)

The Royal Australian Naval Reserve's motto is 'For Country Not Self'. Those lost in *Goorangai*, all Reservists, lived and died by this motto. It is in their memory that the name *Goorangai* has been used as the title of this volume.

Reserve members and other interested parties are encouraged to submit manuscripts to *Goorangai* for editorial consideration. Drafts of between 1200 and 1500 words will be considered on any Reserve related topic, be it historical in nature, capability focused, or operationally related. All draft publications are vetted by an editorial committee and referred to Navy Reputation Management before going to print. Authorship of individual papers is not acknowledged until the annual summary publication is produced at the end of each year in which all papers and their authors are indexed and acknowledged. The PSP is authorised to make appropriate public comment within the limits of Defence Instruction (General) Administration 8-1 (*Public comment and dissemination of information by Defence members*). Correspondence may be submitted to ranr.studies@defence.gov.au.

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