



HMAS COLLINS Australian Deployment 2010



CMDR Glen Miles fishing off the casing

After a week filled with final maintenance, storing ship and preparations for departing, the boat and crew departed on 2nd August 2010 from Fleet Base West with a small crowd to see us off.



Family and Squadron staff sees off the boat

During the transit to our first stop, Exmouth, the crew was kept busy with on watch training and preparations for Exercise Kakadu and our Unit Readiness Evaluation or URE. For those of you who aren't up to speed with all the Navy jargon the Unit Readiness Evaluation is the big operational test the submarine is given that goes for

a whole day and assesses our ability, as a crew, to do the jobs that the government asks us to do.

We arrived to beautiful weather in Exmouth Gulf on Friday 6th August 2010. No one needed to pay for a whale watching tour because we had plenty of action around the boat, as seen in the attached photo. There were more than a couple of the crew who were talking about looking down and seeing eye-to-eye with an inquisitive whale who came by to say hello to another brother of the deep.



Whales playing in Exmouth Gulf as seen from the Submarine

The casing was open for the crew and everyone took advantage to grab some much needed vitamin D. Some got a little more vitamin D than the rest with LS Daryl Clarke suffering sunburn that has lasted a week after the port visit.



PO Tracy Small and LCDR Dave Reid

A tour of the Naval Communications Station Harold E Holt was organised for the crew and everyone who attended finding it very informative and interesting. The Executive Officer highly recommended the tour saying "It was just like a scene from Dr Who." This is one of the communications stations that sends us our news and family grams when we are at sea.

Another activity the crew participated in was a Dive on the Navy Wharf, which is listed as one of the top five dive sites in the world. Stories and photos of large Grey Nurse sharks and an abundance of fish were passed around the boat.



Underwater view of Navy Wharf Exmouth

Fishing off the casing was another well enjoyed activity by all. With a wide range of fish being caught from two inch long pre pubescent Herring to decent sized Coral Trout. PO Ken Moir showed off his superior angling skills, out doing everyone on the first day.



PO Ken Moir and one of his many fish caught

Ashore everyone enjoyed the small country town atmosphere, most settling for having a nice meal and a couple of cool beverages at the local. Accommodation at the Pot Shot Resort was nice with good facilities including a pool in the beer garden, which joined the main bar.

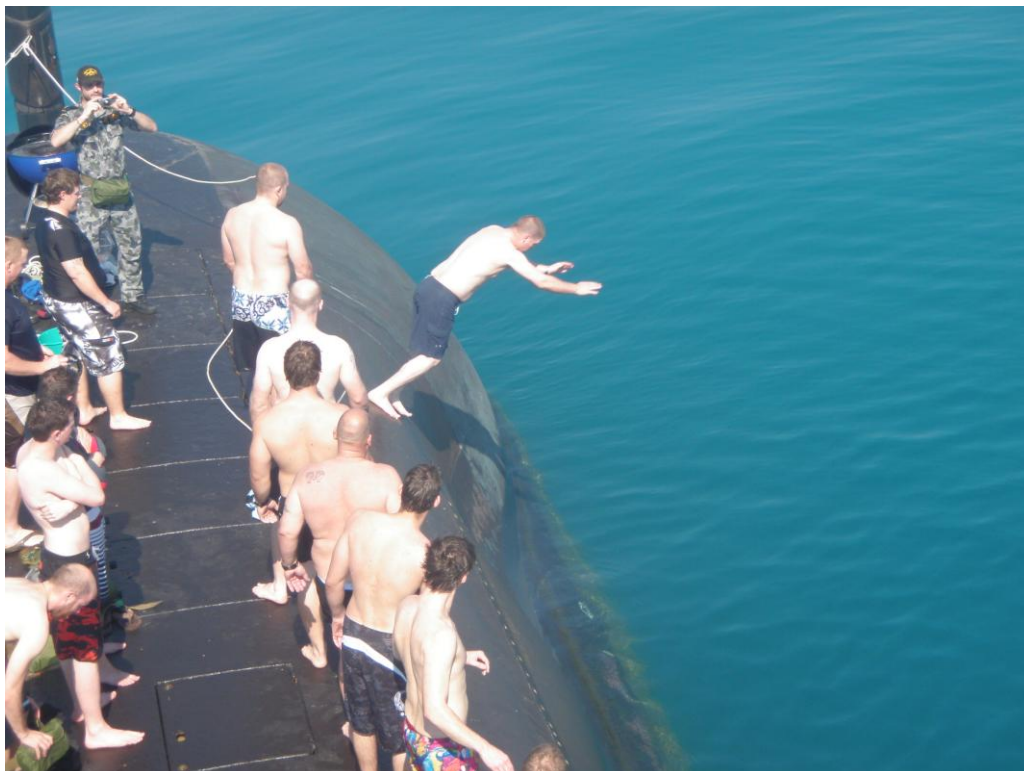
The crew arrived back on board and we were underway for the transit to Darwin on time. All were refreshed and appreciated the short break in Exmouth.



HMAS Collins preparing to depart Exmouth

On our way from Exmouth to Darwin we continued all of the training that we needed to ensure that we set ourselves to pass our Unit Readiness Evaluation. During the transit North we took the opportunity to cross deck, or send some of our crew to an Australian Frigate that we organised to meet up with on the way. So we traded some crew and gave six surface sailors a chance to experience living beneath the waves for a few short hours. As expected five out of the six are volunteering to join the submarine fold. The sailors that we crossed decked to the Frigate came back telling stories of email, ice cream machines and strange looks, but were happy to be back home onboard.

With the weather being so fine we just had to take the opportunity to take a break and have a SWIMEX or what most people would call just having a swim off the submarine.



Synchronised Swimming???

Unfortunately the HMAS COLLINS synchronised swimming team is not likely to be selected to participate in the next Commonwealth Games.



HMAS COLLINS Diving squad

As you can see some of the crew were just leaping at the chance to go for a great swim in the crystal clear water that is so characteristic of North Australia. Maybe our diving squad has a better chance than our synchronised swimming team, well maybe not that much better a chance.

Before we knew it we were tying up the submarine alongside in Darwin, the gateway to Northern Australia. It was a very busy port visit for us as we had lots of things to do to prepare the submarine for EXERCISE KAKADU and the Unit Readiness Evaluation. But even though there was lots to be done the crew got out and about and had a good time. Some of the must do's were all you can eat seafood, going to visit the crocodiles and visiting the Mindal Beach Markets.



A Classic Red Darwin Sunset (as seen from the all you can eat seafood restaurant)



Most of the crew made a trip to Litchfield National Park



Florence Falls



Magnetic Ant Hills



Swimming with the Crocodiles



One of the larger local residents



The skull of a very large bitie

Halfway through the visit we had to take the submarine out into the harbour to go to a different berth to allow another ship to come alongside which lead to a somewhat sunny, hot and interesting harbour cruise.



Our sunny harbour cruise

When the port visit was over we all arrived early in the morning to put to sea and start EXERCISE KAKADU 2010. KAKADU is the largest multinational maritime exercise that the Royal Australian Navy will participate in this year and involved ships from Australia, Singapore, Thailand and Japan, and aircraft from Australia, New Zealand and Japan, all in all it was quite a big exercise. For COLLINS the biggest part of the exercise was our Unit Readiness Evaluation which took just over a day and tested us on all of our training to that point. The crew put in a sterling effort and the boat passed with flying colours. After the very busy evaluation we surfaced for a couple of days and let everybody get a good sleep, to recharge the batteries and received a paper delivery from our friendly RAAF.



The two Smith's (Brad & Ben) awaiting our paper delivery



This is what Submariners use as a paper boy

Then it was back underwater and back into the last part of the exercise. Once the exercise was over we surfaced and headed to the East, making ground for the next port of call, Cairns.

Now the path we took to Cairns was the Inner Great Barrier Reef Route which starts in Torres Strait and winds its way through a series of wrecks, reefs and island. This tight passage put our navigation team through its paces for the four days it took to make our way through. The area that we transited through is renowned for its beauty, but unfortunately the weather was uncharacteristically poor during our transit and we didn't get to enjoy the beauty of the Great Barrier Reef – that will just have to wait until our days off in Cairns.

During our deployment so far we have qualified six new submariners:

ABCKSM Kylie Cox
ABETSM Coby "Guyro" Dolan
ABAWASM Todd Williams
LEUT Dominic Worthington
ABMTSM Alex Melville
ABCKSM Matt Farrelly

The Captain and crew of HMAS Collins would like to congratulate them and welcome them to the submarine family.

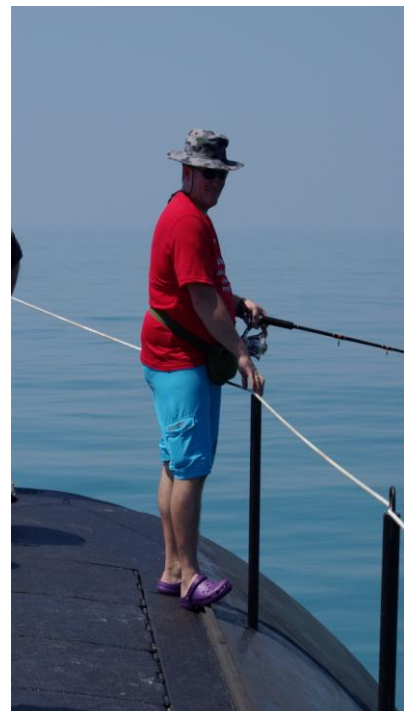
We have also celebrated a few birthdays so far:

LSAWASM Ben Smith
ABAWASM Dave McWatters
ABCKSM Ashley Oliver
ABAWASM Brian Tisdall
ABMT Yaan Kelly-Flanders

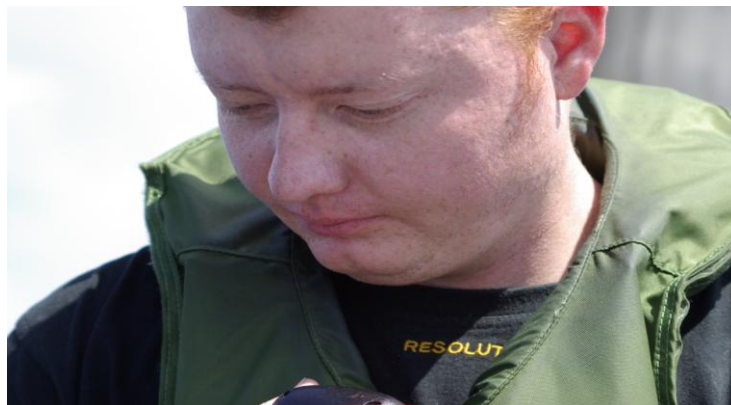
Photo's from around the boat:



Chief's Sunday Breakfast



Chief Tiff in his Sunday Best



ABAWASM Dave McWatters concentrating hard



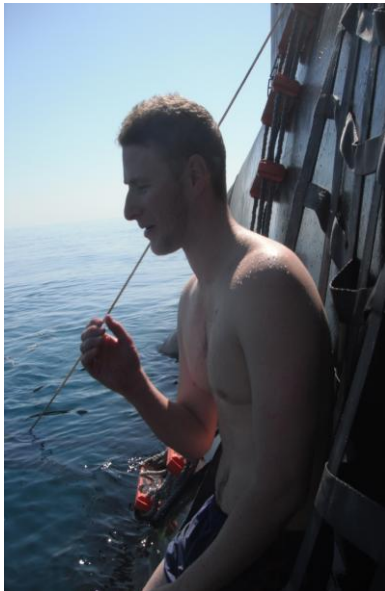
LSETSM Matthew Holmes collecting the newspapers



ABETSM Tyler Tindall



POETSM Gareth Watson



ABMTSM Dave Neville



ABMTSM Stuart Matheson