



HMAS BALLARAT

DEFEND THE FLAG



8th 'Special Up-Top' Edition - April 2011



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A Note from the Editors

Well, we're finally nearly home! I know I speak for the rest of the crew when I say it will be good to see all our loved ones again.

It's been a busy time for the crew since we left all the way back at the start of March this year. Our next port of call is Darwin so we can restore ship as well as clear customs and quarantine. Then its home-sweet-home before we finally conduct sea-swap with HMAS *Parramatta*.

Being in a task group with *Parramatta* for the last three months has had other benefits than just increasing our ability to work as a task-group. Sibling as well as paternal relationships and established friendships between the members of the two crews have made for a unique up-top experience.

With so many ports behind us and only one more until we reach home let me give fair warning: We're coming home!

From the Captain's Chair.....

We often forget the enormity of the journey we have travelled and reflection forces us to acknowledge the good work that has been done. One of the reasons many are drawn to the Navy is for its variety of service and opportunity to travel. By the time we come home we will have effectively circumnavigated Australia, and journeyed through some of the busiest maritime areas that supply the lifeblood of the world's trade. More importantly is the personal contacts we make with our counterparts in other Navies are vast and will serve us and the Navy into the future. We recently had a change of Chief of Navy with our new Chief Vice Admiral Ray Griggs, AM, CSC, RAN. In his outgoing speech, Vice Admiral Crane stated: "Of course our ability to deliver on our mission is fundamentally enabled by the support we all receive from our families and loved ones. Theirs is often a very difficult task as they endure long periods of separation during deployments or have to deal with very high workloads on the part of those supporting our seagoing fleet. I am acutely aware of the very real effect that this can have on our families and loved ones and want to specifically acknowledge and thank our families for their ongoing support to our navy and it's mission and for their understanding and compassion when things get tough on occasions. They are a very real and extremely important part of our navy and we are indebted to them for their outstanding support." I echo those comments.

For you in this our homecoming edition we have a special piece on our Sailor of the Quarter, Able Seaman Kylie Hunter who was recently awarded this prestigious honour by the Deputy Chief of Navy, Rear Admiral Trevor Jones, AM, CSC, RAN whilst in Singapore. Her great work reflects on that of all the crew whilst we have been going about great work in far waters and I congratulate her on her everything she has done to be a leading light in *Ballarat*. Just a reminder that we get home next week, Friday 17 June at around 10:30 am at Woolloomooloo (ask where Fleet Base berth 4 is). DCO will be there with everyman's support (tea, coffee, biscuits) and we will berth after HMAS *Parramatta*. Access is via the Harry Café de wheels gate and please, let us know if you are coming via your loved one. We are really looking forward to seeing you there to bring us home from a major part of the year. Thanks again and see you next Friday!



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Singapore Port Visit

By POMT Crump
A.k.a. "the Crump Show"

Singapore 'the *fine city*' didn't quite live up to its reputation for me; particularly as I don't actually recall anybody being fined for anything. There were two port visits to Singapore, Sembawang (twice) and Changi. Both were hot and sticky with lots of walking once off the Ship.

Sembawang was the first port and was home to the NEX, the Terra Club and Sub Way. All three were often seen happily populated by Ships Company. I think the Sub Way lunch line must have broke some sort of Guinness record.

Changi Naval Base was the second Singapore port we visited. Changi had quite a lot of char going on when we visited with the ships of 17 Navies represented. Of particular note was that sleek grey messenger of death that the Russians had. She was getting on a bit, but she was a beauty.



French, Russian, US and Indian ships at IMDEX

There was plenty to see and do in Singapore. Home to over 5 million people and being the second most densely populated city in the world; it was pretty amazing to see how green and clean everything was.

Some popular attractions (in no particular order) were Marina Bay, Orchard Towers, Clarke Quay, Chinatown, Sentosa Island, Little India, Universal Studios, the Zoo, loads of shopping plazas and of course their famous chilli crab.



Chilli Mud Crab, Steamed and Fried Bread washed down with Tiger Beer

There is an unconfirmed report of two poor sailors being taken for a ride at the Boat quay. Unaware that Crab can actually be priced by the 100g, they were happy to dine on a 3.5 kilo King Crab, until they got the bill that is. It wasn't cheap..... delicious, but definitely not cheap.

The Ships AFL and Rugby teams managed scratch up some wins. A few people got a bit of enjoyment out of watching the one of the PO's sneeze for the first time through his mangled nose after a hard tackle.

So when the Singapore visit finally came to an end, so did the hole in the wallets. The city was enjoyed by the majority with everybody taking in the majority of its attractions.



Night City View from the Swissotel's Sky Bar



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THE AIR UP THERE

By LSSTD Russell

Most people in Australia don't even know that basketball is one of the most popular sports in the world. Australia has been in the top 10 rankings for men and woman for the past 15 years.

Our best male and female players were number one draft picks in the respective leagues:

- Andrew Bogut (NBA's Milwaukee Bucks in 2005), and
- Lauren Jackson (WNBA's Seattle Storm in 2000).

Well most of us hoop junkies dream of bigger things we sometimes get to represent our country in other ways through basketball. Just like we did for the Pulau Tioman Sports Day.

I have been lucky in my career that I have played games against teams and in places I never thought I would, including:

- the Hong Kong Police,
- the US Navy,
- Thailand,
- New Zealand Navy,
- the Australian Army and RAAF, and
- against other RAN ships and establishments.

A chance to play at the Bersama Sheild Pulau Tioman Sports Day (a beach resort in Malaysia) was another exciting opportunity; this time in the capacity of the coach/referee/team representative. That is until I had an itch to scratch, and played the last half of our last game.

When looking at the court, with cracks all through, a couple of holes where the volleyball net would be, a backboard showing fair signs of wear and tear, and finally rims which had seen better days (they were rusted, bent and almost broken). I could be forgiven for feeling that the court wouldn't last the day. To top it all off, one of the balls we had was flat and there we were with no pump available.

The teams were separated into countries; RAN, RNZN, RN, Malay Navy and Singporian Navy. The RAN side had to share their games between HMAS Ballarat and Parramatta. So each country played 4 games in total.

A game was about 16 minutes long with 2 x 8 minute halves. There was a lot of waiting around, but a lot of fun was had by all.

Thank you to the following Ballarat Ballers:

- SBLT Baumgarten
- POMT Belleville
- LSCIS Murugavel
- ABET Stanley
- ABET Bryant-Smith
- ABMT Gault
- ABMED Connaughton
- SMNMT Buchanan
- SMNBM McLean

And those fans who came out and supported us:

- LEUT Quinn
- LSWTR Zeiher
- ABCK Chaston

(Sorry if I have forgotten anyone else who was there).



The Ballarat Ballers

New Zealand dominated every game due to their size, strength, speed and athleticism. Australia showed a lot of fight, determination and laughs. England was having fun with only a little understanding of the game, and Malaysia was short but fast. Singapore showed they had spirit.

Hopefully in the coming months we will have more chances to play either at home or overseas because **I love this game!**



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Sattahip Port Visit

By POET John Belford

On 26 May, HMAS *Ballarat* and *Parramatta* arrived in Sattahip, Thailand to conduct a port visit for the start of AUSTHAI 2011. A combined squad of fifty *Ballarat* and *Parramatta* personnel were officially greeted at the opening ceremony by RADM Duesdee Sangkhapreecha and Director General Maritime Operations Commodore Philip Spedding, DSC, AM, RAN.



AUSTHAI 2011 Opening Ceremony

Following the opening ceremony, and in the bond of friendship that AUSTHAI came to be known, members of *Ballarat's* Ships Company attended a Navy League function along with members of HMAS *Parramatta's* ships company at The Marriot Hotel in Pattaya. A generous quantity of beverages and food were laid on, and a good evening was had by all who attended.

An official function was held on *Ballarat's* flight deck on Friday 27 May 11 which was attended by various officials from the Royal Thai Navy (RTN), members of the Ambassadorial teams from Bangkok. The evening was a success and ended with a Ceremonial Sunset. A huge hit.

Ballarat and *Parramatta* were challenged to a round robin soccer match in Sattahip by Thai Navy personnel on the afternoon of Friday the 27th of May. We then played two 15 minute halves against *Parramatta* and went down 0-2. The two Thai teams played each other with the winning team playing *Parramatta* in the final round.

Members of the ships company enjoyed the weekend absorbing the best of Thai culture and cuisine that Pattaya had to offer. A regular bus routine ensured that all members were able to get into Pattaya and return onboard with minimal fuss. Whilst in Pattaya various venues were keenly attended, such as, Under Water World, Muay Thai kickboxing, the Tiger zoo, Go Karting, traditional displays of Thai Culture and Elephant rides. Of course no visit to Pattaya would be complete without a visit to Walking Street and there were plenty of bargains to be had from the various stalls at the evening street markets. The visit was a cultural sensation and one that will be remembered fondly as our last port "Up top"



Walking Street in Pattaya



HMAS *Ballarat* Ship's Ball

June 25 2011

Hilton Hotel Sydney

Tickets: \$65





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Introducing the HMAS Ballarat Sailor of the Quarter:

She's toured an Iraqi oil platform, and owns her own rifle, better watch your back, it's Kylie Hunter.

By LSMT Scott Giffin

Preparing for her second Gulf Deployment while just completing her first South East Asia Deployment.

Let's see what fun Kylie has been up to?

So why the Navy? What influenced you to join?

Nothing major really influenced me to join. I finished school with no idea of what I wanted to do. A friend mentioned in passing about jobs in the defence force. I didn't give it much thought until after 2 years of casual work, which was getting me nowhere in life, so I decided to join.

Where has your career taken you so far?

Well to start, my first stop was good old Cerberus (near Melbourne) where for the first time I experienced a winter, and I nearly got hypothermia in April, yes April. Then to (HMAS) *Stuart* where I did my first overseas trip ever. the bonus was. it was to

the Gulf. After *Stuart* I went ashore and died of boredom at DEFCOMMSTA (Defence Communications Station) Sydney. I was then deemed worthy enough to go on my advanced course, so even though I was dreading it, I went back to *Cerberus*. This time I definitely packed some warmer clothes. So that brings me to now on *Ballarat* where I have just completed my first South East Asian deployment.

What has been your highlight of our SEAD?

I had so much fun I don't know if I can pick one; eating grasshoppers while watching Mui Thai boxing has to be one of them. Having a personal driver to drive us around Penang, that was also great. I really enjoyed Singapore; however my bank account sure paid for it (literally).

What is something know one on board knows about you?

I have a twin sister; and no we don't look alike. Oh, and I own a rifle, so don't mess with me!!

Spin us your best Warrie!

I don't really have an awesome warrie to share. However, I have cross decked onto some yank patrol boat, and also onto Khawr al Amaya Oil Terminal (KAAOT) when I was in the gulf. It was one of the oil platforms we patrolled—it was still covered in bullet holes from the first gulf war. That was pretty char! I did get worried when I was walking about on it, as it looked like it was going to give way at any moment. The plus side was they had awesome food. (KAAOT is one of the two oil terminals generating over 85% of income for Iraq – Ed)

Where will we be seeing you in the future?

Well, I will be doing the sea swap onto *Parramatta* and once again doing a Gulf trip. Then alas, I must be promoted and go ashore for a bit.

Any last words?

No, not really.



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Top Tips to Stay on Top ... National Welfare Coordination Centre (NWCC)

Providing 24/7 Support and Information for Defence Families.

Freecall: 1800 801 026

NWCC is a welfare and family support service and is part of the wider Defence family support network.

It provides:

- A free call 24/7 information and referral service for families of deployed Defence personnel;
- Timely and accurate information; and
- Reassurance, support and referral to other family support agencies.

NWCC is staffed by trained and experienced service personnel with a wide range of contacts within the Australian Defence Force.

Our operators can assist you with:

- All hours referral to support agencies;
- Passing urgent information to deployed personnel;
- Mailing addresses and postal regulations for overseas deployments; and
- A friendly voice at any time.

When you contact the NWCC, the operator will:

- Answer your questions OR
- Direct your query to the appropriate agency to assist you AND
- Follow-through to ensure your query is answered.

With the upcoming Gulf Deployment for those members of the Ship's Company transitioning over to HMAS Parramatta post Sea-Swap, it seems prudent to let you all know about the Defence Mail Allowances and Procedures.

Read the next column to find out more...



Information about Defence Mail

The Defence Mail service is a specialised service for sending mail to defence personnel within Australia and overseas.

While normal rates apply to articles being sent within Australia and overseas, articles addressed to HMA ships (irrespective of location) or an overseas Australian Forces Post Office (AFPO) attract a concessional rate.

Postage rates

- Free postage applies for all mail up to 2kg (cubed) to all AFPOs, with the exception of AFPO2 (Malaysia)
- Postage is assessed on the post office shown in the address.

For delivery to:

- An HMA Ship overseas or East Based Ships in Australia, address to:

PmKeys Number,
Rank and Name of recipient
Name of HMA Ship
AUSTRALIA DEFENCE FORCES
NSW 2890

DI(G) LOG 4-7-001 - 'Provision of Australian Defence Force postal support to deployed personnel' states that personal mail, within the approved 2 kg cubic freepost weight limit, posted between Australia and deployed forces via the Sydney Gateway Facility, is delivered to the recipient free of charge to the sender.

Consequently, personal mail over the approved 2 kg cubic freepost weight limit will incur full postal charges (both domestic and international) which must be paid by the sender.

Basically, you can send small 2kg or smaller parcels free to your loved ones whilst they are deployed in an Area of Operations. God bless the Posties!



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Jack Speak

The Rum Ration

Before the 17th century, the ration of drink in the Navy was one gallon of beer or wine per day. Owing to stowage difficulties, Admiral Blake introduced brandy instead of beer in about 1650; rum replaced brandy in 1687 following the conquest of Jamaica. The ration then was half a pint of rum twice daily - half that quantity for Boys. Before brandy or rum were drunk by the sailors, beer was the accepted ration drink provided.

But the beer must have been terrible stuff - according to William Thompson in 1761; It "stands as abominably as the foul stagnant water which is pumped out of many cellars in London at the midnight hour and the sailors were under the necessity of shutting their eyes and stopping their breath by holding their noses before they could conquer their aversion so as to prevail upon themselves in their extreme necessities to drink it". In 1634 Nathaniel Knott wrote that "The brewers have gotten the art to sophisticate beer with broom instead of hops, and ashes instead of malt, and (to make it more lively) to pickle it with salt water so that, whilst it is new, it shall seemingly be worthy of praise, but in one month wax worse than stinking water".

In 1740 Admiral Vernon (commonly known as "Old Grog" because of the cloak he habitually wore which was made of a coarse kind of taffeta called Grogam) introduced the watering-down of the sailors' rum.

The watered rum accordingly soon achieved the name of 'Grog'. In 1740 the issue was 1 pint of rum mixed with 1 quart of water, issued in the forenoon and again in the evening; the evening issue was stopped in 1824 and the ration of rum reduced to one gill (eighth of a pint) per man per day in 1850.

Grog is the mixture of one gill of rum with one quarter of a pint of water (i.e., 1 part rum, 2 parts water) issued as a daily ration to all ratings below Petty Officer of and over the age of 20 years who desire it. CPO's and POs draw their rum neat.

Two-water grog replaced three-water grog early in 1937. (i.e. 1 part rum to 1 part water) Men entitled to the rum or grog issue who do not draw it receive *Grog Money* in lieu. Officers are not entitled to the daily ration of rum or grog. Grog money was increased to 3 pence per day in 1919; prior to then it had been 1 Shilling and 7 pence per month.

Black Tot Day, July 31 1970, was the final day where the British Navy issued sailors with their daily rum ration. For the Kiwis it was on March 1 1990.

Choose Your Rate, Choose Your Fate!

By LSSTD Lindsay Russell

Welcome back to "Choose Your Rate, Choose Your Fate!" Another month, another three members of the crew.

Name (Nickname) Peter Raftery (Raffo).



Rank and Rate Able Seaman Boatswains Mate (ABBM).

Years Service 5 years.

Posted Onboard August 2010.

Posting History HMAS Cerberus, Federation Guard, HMAS Sydney, Defence Plaza (Sydney), HMA Ships Darwin and Ballarat.

What Your Job Entails Small arms, Chipping and Painting.

Auxiliary Duties Line Handling, Replenishments at Sea (RAS's), Helmsman, Boat Coxswain, Bowman and Quarter Master's Assistant (QMA).

Hobbies / Interests Golf.

Likes Touch Footy and Fishing.

Dislikes Politicians.

If you Could Invite Anyone to Dinner... (pick three)
Tracey (my wife), Beryl (my mum) and Adam Sandler.

You Can Quote Me on That N/A.



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Name (Nickname) Sarah Benton (Babs)



Rank and Rate Lieutenant Dental Officer (LEUT DENTO).

Years Service 4 and a half.

Posted Onboard April 2010.

Posting History

HMAS Creswell (New Entry Officers Course), HMAS Stirling, West Coast Fleet Dental and HMAS Ballarat.

What Your Job Entails Annual dental check ups, making sure all fleet units personnel are individually readiness compliant for dental treatments and check ups.

Auxiliary Duties I have none, I am the Dentist. It is what I do.

Hobbies / Interests Riding horses and dressage (show riding).

Likes Renovating my house, water sports and disco dancing.

Dislikes Cover charges, paying for parking and my eggs not cooked right.

If you Could Invite Anyone to Dinner... (pick three)
G.V. Black (the father of modern dentistry) + 2.

You Can Quote Me on That

"Life is not measured by the number of breaths you take, but the moments that take your breath away".

Name (Nickname) Jai Kal ("Fifty", "Tabooli", "Akmal", "KALoupolis" – to name a few).



Rank and Rate Leading Seaman Marine Technician

Years Service 6 years.

Posted Onboard Feb 2007 – July 2010 (Ship Swap to Stuart) Then Posted Back on Ballarat, Nov 2010 – current.

Posting History FIMA, HMA SHIPS Ballarat, Stuart and Ballarat (again).

What Your Job Entails Spinning Spanners and being a Grease- monkey! Marine Technician, Diesel Engine (DE's & AGE's) and Gas Turbine maintainer, Steering gear, Stabilisers, Shafting. To help maintain and repair the ship's propulsion machinery and small boats as best I can. ME01 Represent!

Auxiliary Duties CLEANO'S! – and making the Tiff's Brews. FWD Repair Scene I/C.

Hobbies / Interests Serious Car Enthusiast, modifying cars for the drag races (Eastern Creek and Willobank), Modifying my own car and Motorbike, Exploring the scenic routes, Live bands, Soccer, Moto GP, V8 Supercars, Archery.

Likes NANDOS, Turbos, Spending time with my friends & Family, Brisbane, Kebabs, The open road, The Sunshine Coast, Sunday Arvo BBQ's.

Dislikes Narrow mindedness, People that Cut Queues, Bird crap on my windshield.

If you Could Invite Anyone to Dinner... (pick three)
Guido Hatzis, Heather Graham & Megan Fox.

You Can Quote Me on That

"Shhhhticky-tape fixes everything!"