



Chief of Navy Australia Address

RADM Guy Griffiths Birthday 1 Mar 2023

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Introductory Comments

- **Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen**
- **Acknowledgement of Country (Expect CO Watson to give).** I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Gadigal people of the Eora nation on whose traditional lands we meet today. I would also like to pay my respects to Elders past and present.
- **Acknowledge ships and sailors.** Before I get to the birthday celebrations which have brought us together today, I want to acknowledge that our officers and sailors at sea today, and indeed our entire Navy stands on the shoulders of all who have gone before us. Today I am fortunate to lead a Navy that stands on your shoulders and I am the grateful beneficiary of your service – Thank you. We are fortunate to welcome you as part of the Navy family as honoured guests for our celebrations today.



Chief of Navy Australia Speech

- **Australia has had a Navy for 122 years today, the same day our friend RADM Guy Griffith celebrates his 100th Birthday.** I will try to concentrate on the Navy's birthday, I know Guy is a humble man who does not like a fuss made, especially about him, but I hope he'll indulge a few words about some of his story. I think it's a story worth telling that encapsulates so much of what the RAN should be proud of and a story which should serve to inspire Navy people who navigate the challenging times we find ourselves in.
- **Firstly, the Navy's Birthday.** The father of the Australian Navy, VADM William Creswell believed in an Australian Navy for many of the same reasons we seek to enhance our Navy today. He was concerned that our economy was vulnerable to denial of our sea lines of communication, and that our great and powerful benefactor would struggle to assure these vital sea commerce in the event of challenges in Europe. He lamented the difficulty of finding good people. Creswell's concerns resonate in 2023.
- **Now, turning to Guy, briefly.** Guy joined the Australian Navy less 36 years after Creswell's entreaties on Naval power to the brand new Federal Senate. Having joined the Navy as a 13 year old Midshipman, Guy was still a very young man of just 18 when he joined the formidable battlecruiser HMS Repulse. Within a brief 9 month period, he was involved in the pursuit of the Bismark, seeking to avenge the loss of the Hood, and was rescued from the seas off Singapore after Repulse and Prince of Wales became the first major warships sunk by airpower in combat. Later, on HMAS Shropshire – a replacement for HMAS Canberra, sunk at Savo Island – he witnessed, with our colleague RADM Ross Swan here, the final desperate efforts of the Imperial Japanese Navy at Leyte Gulf, and endured kamikaze attacks in the Lingayen Gulf. He saw conflict again in Korea in HMA Ships Sydney and Anzac as a gunnery officer, and Vietnam as the commissioning CO of HMAS Hobart. Without



wanting to recite Guy's entire bio, in that 26 year period he saw such massive change; from service as MIDN in a WW I era battlecruiser to being the CO of a missile armed air warfare destroyer. Guy served a total of 43 years in our Navy, and we are all the better for it.

- As we celebrate Navy's 122nd, the example provided by RADM Griffiths, by RADM Swan, and indeed by all the senior leaders present give those of us still serving an example of the attitude we need to engrain in today's officers and sailors – determined and humble, we too can survive, endure, and thrive no matter what challenges lie ahead.
- And to Guy, congratulations, thank you for your leadership, we thank you for your service, and your family for supporting you. Happy 100th Birthday.
- We have some correspondence here congratulating you on this significant milestone: The King himself and the Governor General have sent letters of congratulations to you personally.