



# Royal Australian Navy Band Association Magazine

Winter 2017 Reunion Edition

[www.ranbandassoc.net](http://www.ranbandassoc.net)



A magazine for association members and permanent band members of the RAN



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It went so fast I can't believe we are 7 weeks past our reunion in Melbourne already and Winter is upon us. This edition as you will be well aware is stacked with reports on the successful reunion.

From the Meet & Greet to the Concert on the final day there were so many things happening, this edition will give you the full story.

So many times over the weekend I heard members saying, "I haven't seen you for ..... Years" it was an indication of how many new faces were at the reunion and it is why it was such a fulfilling weekend. And congratulations must go to Jim McDonough, John Widdicombe, Bill Farrell and Vic Knowles for receiving Life Membership of the Association.

From this desk, thanks goes to the behind the scenes workers that made the weekend flow with no hiccups that were noticeable to members anyway. Those that gave their weekend looked after everything from Photography, rehearsal and Concert setups, Using their facilities and Instruments for the Veterans Band and generally being there when needed.

Victorian association members made the administration of the events flow seamlessly, manning the registration and merchandise tables, setting up the AGM room , looking after the trips to the wineries, Peninsula tour and Golf Day and again picking up on anything that needed attention during the weekend, great team work.

So where are we off to next, North I hear and we look forward to the report from John and how its tracking so far.

So enjoy the read.



Doug Drysdale, Conducting the Veterans Band Concert.



## Vice-Presidents Report

John Widdicombe

Congratulations and a big thank you, to all our Victorian friends for what was a wonderful Reunion.

Everyone would agree it was a very exciting and joyous weekend. How wonderful that we can meet up and be so much more than just a bunch of old sailors getting together for a few beers, but to be able to partake in a whole weekend of magnificent activities, companionship and friendship.

What a great finale the Concert was, something to be proud of, and be part of. No one will ever forget that unbelievable reaction of the audience. Everyone was moved by such a musical experience.

It has been a great privilege to be President of the RAN

Band Association for the past 3½ years, and I pass on my thanks to all the members who work so hard to keep the Association going. That's why we can do what we did in Frankston and all our reunions.

At the AGM I was very annoyed when Ralph announced there were four members nominated for Life Membership. The committee had discussed three with me, so as President I felt the buggers were making decisions over my head. However, when the fourth was announced I forgave them.

Congratulations Jim, Bill and Vic, I was in good company. Vice.



## Presidents Report

Ralph Daines

Another year, another reunion and another President, welcome to my first report as President and I will endeavour to follow my past Presidents in representing this wonderful Association with dignity. I am honoured to be the President and will continue to serve this Association with the same fervour as I have in the past and will be totally hands on and will remain as Public Officer and Veterans Band/Events Manager.

To explain the change in Presidency; the Constitution requires that the President can only serve two terms (4 years) in office and can only nominate if no other nominations are made. John Widdicombe has been a great President and will be serving as Vice President from now.

The Committee that has been returned at the General Meeting has been functioning very well and the members are committed to pushing the Association along to new levels with new ideas which will keep the Association as one of the most successful in Australia, thank you Errol, John snr, John junior, Bill, Doug and Rob.

As for the Association, we are strong and growing thanks to our Victorian contingent who have formed a very strong relationship with RAN Band Melbourne which has seen a renewed interest in the Association from serving members and former members of the RAN Band. Past DOM Navy, Paul Cottier and present DOM Navy, Steve Stanke, have been very supportive of the Association and assist in many ways. Via the Veterans Band, the Association is well known in Navy, overseas and at home, the Band has performed with distinction over the past seven years and non Navy players have worn the uniform with pride and shown a huge respect for the Association. For the first time, serving members of the RAN Band performed with the Veterans Band in Frankston for the Concert at the Reunion, thank you Navy and what an honour it was to have them join us.

Next year the Association turns **25**, and the Committee has decided to pull the Reunion, in Coolangatta, forward to the end of October 2018 to celebrate this milestone. Keep a look out as John Lennon will have some details out soon to give some ideas as to what will be happening.

I won't say too much about the Reunion in Victoria as a lot will appear later in the magazine, but what a great success, a great turnout in numbers and congratulation to Errol and his team for the wonderful work.

Another step forward in preserving the history of the RAN Band by the Association has been taken by the Committee and Errol Hatch in particular, with an official part of the Museum at HMAS Cerberus turned over to the Association with Errol as the Curator. We all had a look at the display, whilst at the reunion, and Errol has done a great job with our initial display with much, much, more to come. I had the honour of opening the Association section and it was a very proud moment.

Just a short note on the Association's Constitution and Rules; like all Associations and Clubs, our members belong to, we have our own, but it seems very few take ours seriously. The Association members have the rights to challenge what the Committee are doing, nominate for positions on the Committee etcetera, but it seems that I get complaints about a number of things that could have been answered by looking at the Rules, which are available, just ask please.

Till the next edition, keep smiling,

Ralph Daines



# Treasurer Report

Errol Hatch

Balancing the books after this reunion has been quite an exercise with so many events that happened over the weekend. Members all paid their fees for participating in the reunion and dipped into their pockets over the weekend for the raffles that were held covering some of the additional costs. My report will give you a breakdown of each of the events so you can see where your funds were distributed.

## Social events and Tours

The side events, Winery, Peninsula, Golf tours were all well attended and the reports tell us they were successful and enjoyed by all. These were covered by members paying for the events directly and all costs were covered. A big thankyou to those that helped coordinate these events and the weather did not let us down either (Thankfully)

## Rehearsal and AGM

A big thank you to Peter Sharp and the Frankston High School as our costs were minimal for our rehearsal day and AGM. Our only outlays there were the lunch, morning tea condiments and the hire of the van to get the Instruments and Stands to the Arts Centre. For the concert.

## Meet and Greet and Gala Dinner

With the Meet and Greet we made sure you had enough to eat so the additional Pizza's delivered through the evening were covered in our costing. The Bar tab was half covered by the raffle leaving us with a small shortfall overall. The Admirals Own Big Band were well looked after also and enjoyed being part of the evening.

The Gala Dinner was well attended and surplus costs apart from the Bar tab left us with a small surplus to cover the remaining functions over the weekend

## Cerberus Visit

This was a bit of an unknown as to the total cost of the visit to Cerberus and as the numbers grew we had to put on another Bus and increase our numbers for Lunch. I'm sure we would (Those who attended) all agree that it was fantastic that we made it apart of our reunion.

## Museum

Our Association is now the benefactor of the Band section of the museum and I feel this is the ultimate way of telling our story about our Branch in the Navy. The cost to get to the stage we are at was not substantial but did eat into our funds. I hope that what you saw justifies the expense to date and the word gets out that a visit is well worth the trip to Cerberus.

## Concert

If there was any part of the weekend that had an element of how it was going to turn out it was the concert. The Frank-

ston Arts Centre was not a cheap venue, we could have had it in a hall in the back blocks of Frankston but the idea was to perform to a appreciative audience apart from our love ones and partners. Tickets sales to our members were heavily discounted and each member received one each if they attended the Gala Dinner. Sales were slow up to the week before through the FAC Box office and I had sold more over the phone than they had. I did not receive a summary of how sales were going once the reunion started so I was expecting about 200 to 220 people. What a surprise once the doors were opened to find we had to put more chairs out and the numbers had swelled to over 400.

Sales to pensioners and groups were the biggest proportion of sales in the week up to the concert and minus the booking office fee and some additional charges the concert made a modest shortfall.

## Overview.

A reunion like this one does not come around too often, we had significant events attached to it that cost the association but I think the legacy of the significant piece of the museum history and the memories of the weekend far out way the costs we incurred.

I hope you, those that attended agree.



The magnificent Tympt Playing of Chantelle Riordan.



## Secretaries Report

John Lennon

This report will be a case of where do I start.

Firstly, a big well done must go to Errol Hatch and the Victorians for hosting a magnificent reunion. I, like a few others, thought this was going to be a huge challenge trying to fit all the events into the space of 3 days. However, all the sceptics were well and truly proved wrong.

The Frankston reunion was not only a great success but it also saw some new faces (maybe a bit older from what we remember) but great to see them none the less. The new faces that come to mind were Kevin & Elaine Hillier, David O'Meara, Roger Greentree & Dizzy Gillespie just to name a few. Also, it should not go without mention the attendance of partners/wives of members who are sadly no longer with us. This included, off the top of my head, Jan Atkins, Anita Le Dan & Glen (Glenda) Jacklin (Newham). It would have been difficult for them to be at this reunion without their partners, and we appreciate their attendance and hope to see them at future reunions.

From a firsthand account the wine tasting was successful y carried out and I was well informed that the Golf achieved what they set out to do also. Not being a golfer I am still trying to work that out. Big thanks should also go to Kevin Hillier who as the Frankston RSL president secured some very good discounted deals on providing the meet & greet and formal dinner venue along with discounted prices on meals & drinks. Sunday morning saw the official opening of the Band Room at the HMAS Cerberus museum. My small contribution was assisting Errol & the museum staff set up the display. I was absolutely blown away with the preparation and planning that

had gone into this by Errol. I suggest Sharon have him tested for (EEAS) Excess Energy Anxiety Syndrome, as no one our age should have that amount of energy. The opening of the Band Room was enthusiastically supported and hosted by the Museum's curator WO Marty Grogan & his staff.

The afternoon concert at the Frankston arts centre was packed to the rafters and included a number of VIP guests including the current Director of Music Lieutenant Commander Steven Stanke. There were some very encouraging comments made about the standard of musicianship displayed by the veteran's band, who were ably assisted by 2 members of the HMAS Cerberus band on Horns. As these young musicians still had a full crop of hair the trumpet section tried their hardest to part it from behind which resulted in them blowing away what hair we had left.

It should not go without saying that many people in the background worked very hard to make the concert a success including the team from Evolution Music and the Victorian committee and members. The vision and passion behind the success of the Veterans Band can be attributed to Ralph & Cheryl Daines, Errol Hatch and of course our wonderful musical director Doug Drysdale. Now we turn our focus and energy on preparing for the next reunion on the Gold Coast, to be held at the Tweed Heads Services club on the weekend 25th, 26th 27th and 28th of October 2018. For an update on plans see the article in this edition: Reunion 2018 – Tweed Heads.

John Lennon



## Queensland Report

John Lennon

I seem to start each Queensland reps report with the same opening statement which normally goes something like, "Not much to report on since the last edition". While that is the case so far, I would like to use this report as a call to arms to our members who are located in the south east corner of Qld and northern NSW. As this year starts to wind down I will be locking in events and plans for next year's reunion on the last weekend in October 2018 \*See "Reunion 2018" article.

As we get closer to this event there is going to be a number of things that will require assistance in achieving. I have already had offers of assistance which is much appreciated. If we are to have a successful Veterans Band concert it is going to need some wide advertise-

ment. I believe that with our network of members within a close radius of the Tweed Heads area, we should be able to tap into the local Veterans & Retirement community to support our concert. I have spoken to Jim Hawkins for example, who has contacts with local radio stations in the Northern rivers area. I am also hopeful that some good contacts within local RSL's (Ballina RSL comes to mind) will help push our concert.

This is going to be a Queensland organised event and we need to take ownership of the event using the Victorian Reunion as our benchmark. I have a network of contacts in the Brisbane music scene, therefore, I am comfortable that we can supply whatever the Veteran Band needs to present a pro-

fessional high standard concert including PA's, Amplifiers, Music Stands Timpani's etc. As for the actual events, I am going to need volunteers to help with registrations and other activities.

We are looking for potential corporate sponsors who are willing to make donations towards raffle prizes, so if anyone can do a bit a salesmanship on getting sponsors to donate towards raffle prizes, or even Concert sponsorship that would also be welcome. I will be on the Gold Coast for a week from the 10th June at which time I will be looking at locking in venues & events so any positive suggestions would be welcome. As we get closer to the actual reunion I will need to know who is available and willing to assist.

John Lennon



## Victorian Report

Terry Ekin

With the reunion just over a month ago (as I write this) there is a great temptation to write covering all the events of that weekend. However, I'm sure there will be reports from the executive committee in the newsletter which will encapsulate the weekend, as well as the roadies review online which gave an outsider's/bystander's view, and said it all so well.

Melbourne's weather even cooperated apart from a brief reminder on the Sunday morning of the reputation that Victoria has of "if you don't like the weather, just wait a couple of minutes" and "the land of 4 seasons in one day". However, one thing which unmistakably stood out and often commented on, was the organisation that had so obviously been done over the years leading up to and during the reunion to make everything appear to go like clockwork (although there must have been times when the second hand must have stopped briefly or skipped a few beats). A big BZ to Errol for taking the lead to make the weekend the success that it was, and not forgetting Sharon who no doubt had to cope with a quite a bit.

Personally, I only (over) heard one "complaint" from someone at the Sunday lunch at the museum with a (light-hearted) comment that there were no mud crabs. If there were any complaints, I'm not aware of them and as we all know, "you won't please everyone", regardless of what

preparation or consultation is done.

Some I know who attended the reunion for the first time were pleasantly surprised by the welcome they received and any perceived dark clouds or storms that may have kept them away in the past, have given way to clear skies and smooth sailing. And the concert itself also inspired some, I believe, to brush away the dust and cobwebs rekindling an interest to start playing again. Sure there was the odd "bum" note, but considering the band came from all over Australia, never having played together and in effect, only having 4 hours of rehearsal time, there was a good, strong and tight sound when the concert called for it.

In closing my first Mexican report, I want to thank Len Nurse for his time as the Victorian rep of the association. During his time there have been numerous get-together's over the years which maintained the old friendships and fostered new ones developed out of the uniqueness of our service and branch. And of course, you can't forget Maree who was always there to assist when needed. To those wondering when the next Mexican lunch is, how does Christmas (in July) sound? Until next time, stay safe. Roll on Twin Towns, just make sure you have some mud crabs for a clarinet playing Townsville resident :-)

Terry Ekin



## Western Australian Report

Bill Farrell

NEWS FROM THE WESTERN FRONT:

Following the extremely successful National Reunion, it has to be stated that the Western quartet thoroughly enjoyed the festivities. Many others would have liked to attend but for varying reasons, this was not possible nor practical.

Ted Lincoln was very pleased that his apology had been noted at the AGM, as would everybody if time had permitted. For those who are not aware, Fred Brewer has been forced to place his wife Beryl in a residential care facility not far from his home so he can regularly visit. He sounded the same cheery Fred that his friends will remember and it is certain that all Bandyies of his time will wish Beryl well in the future.

Next we come to Andy Rourke about

whom rumours were circulating at the Reunion that he had suffered a heart attack. The writer has spoken to him and he says that he is okay, but he did venture the news that he had suffered two "episodes" whilst at school (work), one concerning his heart and the other a vertigo attack, both of which were sorted out by the School nurse.

However, it was suggested that they were both "messages to retire." Incidentally, Andy retired from the RANR in February, and combined with permanent time, he amassed a total of 47 years service, probably a record for a Bandy. Congratulations Andrew, but don't forget those messages!

Then we come to Bill Middleton, who made it to the Reunion and played in the Band although he was not 100%

healthy. He now feels a little bit better, but he would still like to be 100% fit. Of the others over here, no word has been heard although there is a whisper that overseas travel may be in the offing for some of our fraternity.

Of course, no news is good news, so one can only hope that the lack of information means that we have a perfect Western Front!

Bill Farrell.



# Reunion 2018—Tweed Heads

**John Lennon**

The proposed plan so far is to use the Tweed Heads Services Club as our core venue for the 2018 reunion comprising the following dates, from the 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th of October. Due to the enthusiasm shown by the participants & members overall to the Veterans Band concert we are planning to include this in our 2018 reunion.

The plan is for the Veteran band members (those that are able) to arrive a day earlier than would otherwise normally happen. This will allow us to have a full day of uninterrupted rehearsal. This will free up Friday & Saturday to allow all members to be involved in a full range of planned activities. The Gala concert is planned to take place at the Tweed Heads Civic Centre Auditorium on the Sunday commencing at 2pm. This will allow for a final top and tail rehearsal and sound check prior to the concert.



The set up of the hall and logistics of preparing the venue for the concert will allow those non playing members who feel inclined to get involved. The rehearsal day and concert is planned for the same venue. The Civic Centre is located about 4 blocks from the Tweed Heads Services club which makes it very convenient to local accommodation including the Mantra Twin Towers resort accommodation.

There is a huge range and choice of activities for Friday & Saturday including the Meet & Greet, Formal Dinner & AGM. I have made some initial enquiries and being the tail end of the Whale watching season the Half Day tour including a canal cruise is a real option. The Whale Tour boat has a capacity of 65 persons so it would be nice if we could book the whole boat for that trip with approx cost of \$100 per person not including transport to Surfers Paradise for

boarding the boat. (Proposed Friday).

The other proposal is for a northern rivers day coach tour including morning tea and lunch at either Ocean View Country Club (spectacular views up and down the coast including cape Byron) or the Ballina RSL (which could include a visit to the famous maritime museum next door) (Proposed Saturday). For those who just want to have a great time, have a few beers and spin heaps of yarns a lunch time BBQ at the AARDVARK & ARROW Micro Brewery at Varsity Lakes may be to your liking. The Owner and Proprietor would be very sympathetic to your needs - he just happens to be Guy Scruton, Trombone and ex PO Musician 70 & 80's (Proposed Friday). More suggestions welcome.

The Tweeds Heads area allows for varying types of accommodation from Caravan Parks, Budget, Resort and Premier accommodation options. Twin Town Services club offers excellent accommodation at their Mantra Resort Tower which is interconnected to the Services club, and will allow you to stagger home at any time day and night in complete safety and comfort without ever leaving the air conditioning.



I would be happy for any feedback and suggestions after this newsletter which will allow us to give some thought and consideration in deciding events & activities. We are hoping to start locking in activities and events and present them with approximate costs by the next addition of the magazine. At that time we will be asking for members who would be likely to attend to allow for detailed planning.

Regards

John Lennon



## Letters & Emails to the Editor

**Hi Errol,**

Just a quick note asking you to thank you, John & all members who commented on Wal's passing in the December edition of your magazine it was most appreciated by me & my family.

It was really great to see John & Lindsey even though it was not the most happiest occasion, I am sure Wal would have been pleased with his final farewell.

Thank you all once again.

Kaye Handfield.



**Errol,**

Now that all the hype has died down, just a quick email concerning the recent Frankston Reunion which to our way of thinking was a tremendous success. It was well worth the flight across Australia, and even the bus ride from Tullamarine to the scene of the festivities, although that part of the trip did turn out to be longer than the flight! Everything that you had arranged moved like clockwork and I emphasize the word "you" because I understand how much personally you must have contributed to the overall success of the entire weekend. The visit to CERBERUS was a real highlight for us as we did manage to get to the Anglican Chapel, where we were married 56 years ago next Saturday week.

The Museum is indeed a triumph of planning on your part as it will allow future generations of Naval musicians to see just how their forebears carried out the task of providing music for the Royal Australian Navy. I have searched around and found the stool which I believe is a relic of HMAS VENGEANCE, the aircraft carrier which came to

Australia in 1954 to fill in for the MELBOURNE while the latter ship was being completed.

I spoke to Gordon Crompton, who was in that Band also, and he agrees with me that these are the stools on which we sat for rehearsal. I will measure it and let you know so we can work out a method to get it to the Museum. Once again the Veterans Band came to the fore with a great concert, and in the audience were friends whom we had not seen for 48 years! They loved it. We are seeing Jeremy O'Driscoll tomorrow morning when we will present him with the plaque. In conclusion, congratulations on a great Reunion from both Maxine and I and I know that your Lady will have had some input as well. Once again, thank you for rekindling a lot of happy memories for both Maxine and myself.

**Maxine & Bill Farrell**

**Thanks Errol,**

It was a pleasure to play and I thank you for asking me. Well done on your part in coordinating and presenting such a major event and I trust you've been able to get some rest since!

**Martin West**

Guest Flautist for the "Blue Water Men Concert"



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*I can only say at the outset that the aim of the weekend was to make it as memorable as possible to our association members. I Think we achieved it.*

*The moment I was informed that Melbourne was to be the destination of the 2017 reunion I knew that it had to be a significant event. Our membership is aging and new blood though slowly growing would not be significant enough to make the numbers at a reunion swell.*

*So, under the assumption of many members making one last trip interstate to Melbourne it had to have something to offer, a theme, a major event or both.....*

#### **The Lead Up.**

*The months leading up to the reunion were in some way frustrating, waiting for members to send through their booking forms (even knowing they were coming) made confirming everything from lunches to transport, seating and general logistics to the events we offered were unparalleled compared to previous reunions. The organising committee could not do much more than wait for their roles until numbers were locked away.*

*Once we had them it was all go in the week leading up to the events, and here is the weekend that transpired.*

#### **FRIDAY the 10th, Day 1**

Heading to Frankston from home (Clyde North, 20 minutes from Frankston) I get a call from Yogi Soutar to say "I'm standing outside my hotel and no one has picked me up for Golf". My first stuff up (told Barry Pollock there were no pickups for Golf from the Best Western) and it is only half hour into the reunion weekend. Don't worry Yogi I'm only 15 minutes away I'll pick you up, "I Said" and drop you down to Safety Beach Country Club to join Gordon Crompton, Dale Granger, Gary Searle and others for a magic day.

Once Yogi was taken care of I headed to Cerberus where some of the members had decided to play the course for reminiscing purposes more so than a complete game. Kevin Hillier, Gary Sander, Roger Downton were joined by John Lucas and Partner, Barb for 9 holes.

At the same time as the golf, leaving from the hotels and eventually the Frankston RSL was the wine tour and it was well attended. The coordinator, Ralph Daines was joined by

Jim and Nancye McDonough, Bill and Robin Middleton, Bill and Donna Bekendam, Bill and Maxine Farrell, John and Lewyah Lennon and Trevor Williamson. They were later joined by Dot Crompton for Lunch at the Tucks Winery. From all that took the tour it was an enjoyable day and the weather was perfect for visiting the Mornington Peninsula, now a winery hub. The golf went off well with perfect weather and with players enjoying a lunch after the round and the winery tour returned on time for members to return to their accommodation and prepare for the evenings Meet and Greet.

The evenings event was the Meet and Greet at the Frankston RSL which started at 6.30pm and it was the first opportunity to get a feel of how the members were taking to coming to Melbourne. With food a plenty and an open bar it was as Meet and Greet should be, boisterous and plenty of "Haven't seen you since....." Greetings from the swelling list of attendees. (Stuff up No 2, brought in the Gala Dinner Name Badges instead of the M &G's), but everybody even-

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tually got to know each other. As a finale to the evening the Admirals Own Big Band treated us to a 45 minute set of wonderful music, this was followed by a constant flow of Pizza varieties before we closed the Bar at 9.30pm

Many adjourned to the Bar and lounges or started to board the organise buses back to the city centre hotels.

**Our Guest list for the weekend were,**

Lachlan & Julie Anderson, Bevan Andrews, Doug & Christine Antonoff, Jan Atkins, Anita Le Dan, Bill & Donna Bekendam, Ron Bergman, Peter & Michelle Blackwell, Sarah Bond, Ken Brown, Geoff and Belinda Bunce, Dean & Elaine Butler, Nicholas Chiselet, Mal & Gail Codling, Steven Cottier, Paul Cotier, Rod & Sue Coughran-Lane, Gordon & Dot Crompton, John & Linda Cruise, Ralph & Cheryl Daines, Craig Dickman, Roger Downton, Doug & Lyn Drysdale, Terry & Lorraine Ekin, Brian & Kerry Ellis, John & Rose Ezergailis, Bill & Maxine Farrell, Paul & Carmel Farrugia, Pat & Judy Gallagher, Martyn & Kathy Gillespie, Frank & Marie Godleman, Dale Granger, Roger & Sue Greentree,

Robert & Josephine Gwynne, Errol & Sharon Hatch, Jim Hawkins, Jim Henshaw, Kevin & Elaine Hillier, Alan & Shirley Hogg, Diane Hudason, Glenda Jacklin (Newham), John Jones, John Karr, Ned & Chrisie Kellas, Les & Carol Kent, Vic & Eliza Knowles, Gary & Molly Krause, John & Leywah Lennon, Ken & Sue McCallum, Blue & Gail McNally, Jim & Nancye McDonough, Colin McKenzie, Peter McLeod, Bill & Robyn Middleton, Ray Mills, Col & Pam Collins, Lindsay Mungovan, Len & Marie Nurse, Barry & Pat Pollock, Bill & Carol Post, Kevin & Jan Ridout, Gary & Christine Sander, Gary Searle, Peter Sharp, Geoff & Kathleen Shew, Clive & Noelene Smith, Rob Soutar, Leon & Sandra Stucas, Taffy Thatcher, Kevan & Lila Thomas, Michael Thompson, Jac Jenner, Shane Urquhart, John Widdicombe, Trevor Williamson, Alan & Delores Woodhouse, LCDR Steven Stanke, LT Andrew Stokes and Kathryn Pulbank (Coxon) and sons, Julien and Mathew.

With Day 1 of the reunion now under our belts the next 2 days were going to be exciting to say the least.

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## Day 2 Saturday the 12th

Early Saturday morning our Sound and Stage team for the weekend, Michael Prizeman and Mark Symonds along with Peter Sharp who kindly made available his Music Department at the Frankston High School were busy setting up the rehearsal room. In the next room the committee were doing likewise but getting it ready for the AGM to be held at 9am. With all this happening members were being shuttled to the school by the bus that was taking wives and partners on the tour down the Peninsula for the ferry to Queenscliff and lunch. Once that was underway under the guidance of Sharon Hatch and her second in command, Cheryle Daines it was down to business at the AGM.

With an excellent attendance for such an early start the meeting (after a bit of

car shuffling) got underway. With business from the previous meeting covered it was time for the current executive to vacate the chair so new elections could take place. With the election of Ralph Daines as President and John Widdicombe, Vice President, John Lennon remained as Secretary and Errol Hatch as Treasurer.

Our state reps remained the same with the exception of Len Nurse passing the banner to Terry Ekin for the Victorian chapter. Other business included our next reunion moving to Tweed Heads in 2018 to bring us back into line and to celebrate 25 years of the association. From there the meeting was closed on time and members enjoyed a morning tea before rehearsals.

10.30am, Saturday the 11th of March, If ever there was going to be a time for Doug Drysdale (our Conductor for the concert) to worry it was now, 56 players (some he has never met), a busy program of new charts (Blue Water men, most never played since we recorded them in 1971), guest soloists (who haven't rehearsed their parts with a band before today), 4 hours to put it all together (Hell, is that all). I can honestly say, sitting up the back that 60 seconds into "Blue Water Men" there was an air of confidence in our conductor and the Band responded. When our sound engineers produced a stunning sound for Procession for Flutes, Martin West let fly with a brilliant rendition over top of the Band, a Definite highlight of the morning. This was followed by our very own Jim Henshaw who produced a wonderful version of Sway and then in the "Satchmo selection" a soon to be crowd favourite, "What a wonderful world".

Irrelevant things like no charts for that chair or this were covered as the morning progressed and by lunch what was important was that the program was as is, no exclusions. It was a credit to Doug to get through the morning rehearsal, yes dynamics were questionable, (Initially) there were a few wrong



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notes and certain passages needed a couple of going overs but the emotions of finally having a Veterans band sound so strong and tight for only our first hour and a half run through was gratifying.

With lunch on, missing charts were finally handed out, members met our honorary members who joined us for the concert and the buzz from the room was positive.

Back into our studio for a complete run through after lunch was going to be a test of stamina as it was to be a complete run through of the program. Luckily Doug put his faith in the Band knowing Colonel Bogey on Parade and Symphonic Marches and run through only certain passages. By 3pm Doug was happy to wrap things up and the boys loaded the van for transport to the Arts Centre. Right on time the Peninsula tour returned and the bus transported members back to their hotels for the evenings Gala Dinner.

**Gala Dinner,**

The room looked a treat but for some reason they crammed us to the bottom end of the room and put in a dance floor (Not Requested). The original intention was to have a small swing group from the Cerberus band but due to the Jazz festival at Inverloch. We were offered at the last moment a classical quintet. Initial thoughts were to compliment that with members playing but canned that idea as it would create more logistical problems than what it was worth. So with the classical music flowing to those at the front of the room (Obviously loved by our woodwind players) members arrived and were met by our efficient registration ladies and pointed to their tables.

The evening was attended by our special guests, LCDR Steven Stanke, Director of Music, LT Andrew Stoke Music Director Melbourne, Kathryn Pullybank (Coxon) and her Sons, Julien and Robert. The meal was a little different with Fish and Lamb as main courses and Scallops and Chicken for Entrée. The meal was a hit and the evening flowed with the raffle, speeches and plenty of laughter and comradery. Though we didn't have the climax as we did at the Meet and Greet I'm sure everybody enjoyed the ambience so as to not have to talk over top of loud music. Before we knew it was 10.30pm and the party continued in the Bar and lounges of the RSL. The RSL provided a perfect venue for our functions and all our members used its facilities to advantage. With Buses running to 11.30pm all that had to head back to the Hotels for a even busier Sunday did.

**Day 3 Sunday the 13th**

The last day of the reunion was to be just as busy as the last 2. leaving from the Hotels then the Frankston Arts Centre were 2 large buses that were taking members on a trip to HMAS Cerberus and the Museum for the official opening of the Band Section. But well before that the team of Stage



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and Sound engineers were busy starting to setup the Auditorium for the afternoon concert.

With the Buses loaded a total of 116 were on their way to Cerberus. I'm quite sure the drive down the back way to Cerberus brought back a lot of memories and to come through the now security enforced West Gate was not how it use to be. The first stop was the Cinema Complex and to meet us was PO-Musn Brett Donovan. The Cinema now has a 200 seat theatre and behind it rehearsal rooms, Library and storage for the Band equipment. It was well laid out and made what we probably all remember as Band rooms look luxurious. The foyer housed the administration, recording room and upstairs another cinema complex.

Apparently the cinema will be going through an upgrade process as part of the major works happening at Cerberus. From there we were all back on the bus and after a short tour around the surrounds arrived at the Parade Ground to be met by the volunteers of the Museum and Manager, WO Marty Grogan. The Depot look as green as ever and in Victorian style a light shower went through quickly to give everything a gleam. After a quick cuppa members wandered through the New HMAS Sydney room and the Vietnam room which is situated in the admin building. From there all the members crammed into the hallways and rooms of the Museum as our new President, Ralph Daines officially opened our new permanent Band Branch Display. Members crammed into the room to view it

as others took in the other exhibitions throughout the building. Also open was the old School of Music Building and this proved very emotional as members recollected their years as young Jr's treading the boards.

Venturing out onto the Back concrete area of the school many remembered the Volleyball court and the lake in the gardens where some significant events took place in our lives. With time against us a fantastic lunch was served (By Millies) in the Vietnam room and the reminiscing continued as we tucked into a massive spread. Before we new it, it was 12.15pm and the Buses were loaded and on their way back to the Frankston Arts Centre for the Sound Check and Concert.



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### The Concert

While the members were enjoying Cerberus the stage and lighting team were experiencing issues with wireless devices namely the mixer that had worked so admirably the day before. With the ipad not connecting to the mixer it was decided that Mark would make a quick trip home and pickup another mixer. But too there professionalism, when the buses arrived all was ready for the sound check and members would not have known of the dramas they encountered. The sound check in front of an already filling auditorium gave us an indication of how it was going to sound and with a few tweaks, up here and down there the balance was achieved.



With only an hour to go members relaxed and those that hadn't attended Cerberus changed into the uniform and prepared for the event ahead. Not knowing the total number of tickets sold by the Arts centre the theory was that an audience of 200 to 250 would be the max. With 40 minutes to go people were flowing in at a great rate and chairs were being filled fast. It was apparent that ticket sales had gone through the roof in the last remaining days and we had actually over booked. Band members were adding rows of chairs at the back of the auditorium but they still kept coming.



With a full house, I mean people standing around the walls, the Band members made their way to the stage with a roaring welcome from the Audience. Our MC for the day, the wonderful Peter Northwood, an experienced MC at many a concert could feel the excitement in the audience and with the introduction of our Conductor, Doug Drysdale the concert was underway.

This was no ordinary concert, it wasn't just planned 18 months ago when Melbourne was awarded the 2017 reunion, it was a mission that one day we in some capacity, the Veterans Band would perform tracks from Blue Water men. This was the first opportunity since 2013 that the band had at a reunion, be brought together for a major concert. What made it even more significant was the number of members that put there hand up to play in this concert.



Blue Water Men opened with the beautiful tone of David O'Meara's French Horn and then the rhythm section created the drive but the telling note of the concert was the lead guitar of Kevin Ridout. It created a memory as if it was yesterday we recorded it, the sound of the band was fantastic and with only 4 hours of rehearsal to put this together was a credit to all.

A program was not issued as we didn't know until we ran through the program on the Saturday if all the selected charts were going to work, so the audience were treated to an hour and a half of surprises as we moved through our program .

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**The concert program included:**

Blue Water men  
Colonel Bogey on Parade  
Magic Trumpets, Granger, Stucas, Lennon and Urquhart  
Voices  
Sway, Featuring Jim Henshaw on Vocals  
Procession for Flutes, Featuring Martin West  
Jersey Boys  
Stranger on the shore, Featuring Ralph Daines  
Navy Bugle Boy Blues  
Symphonic Marches  
Howzat  
Blues Brothers revue  
Dam Busters  
You Cant see around corners  
Satchmo  
Waltzing Matilda



**The Band members were,**

Conductor: Doug Drysdale (SA)  
Guest Soloist Flute: Martin West (Vic)  
Guest Vocalist: James Henshaw (QLD)  
Our MC: Peter Northwood (Vic)  
Flute: Craig Dickman (NSW)  
Sarah Bond (Vic)  
1st Clarinet: Ralph Daines (NSW)  
Ken McCallum (QLD)  
Diane Hudson (Vic)  
Terry Ekin (Vic)  
2nd Clarinet: Vic Knowles (NSW)  
Peter Sharp (Vic)  
Peter Martin (QLD)  
Karen Baker (Vic)  
3rd Clarinet: John Widdicombe (NSW)  
Ned Kellas (SA)  
Alan Tacon (Vic)  
Oboe: Jenny Stevenson (Vic)  
Bass Clarinet: Len Nurse (Vic)  
1st Bassoon: Trevor Williamson  
Bevan Andrews (QLD)  
2nd Bassoon: John Cruise (SA)  
Edwina Muir (Vic)  
Alto Sax: Clive Smith (NSW)  
John Karr (Vic)  
Tenor Sax: Jac Jenner (Vic)  
Barry Pollock (Vic)  
Yogi Soutar (Vic)  
1st French Horn: David O'Meara (Vic)  
LSMusn Jeffrey McGann (Cerberus Band)  
2nd French Horn: ABMusn David Rampant (Cerberus Band)  
3rd French Horn: Bill Farrell AM (WA)  
1st Trumpet: Dale Granger (Vic)  
Leon Stucas (QLD)  
John Lennon (QLD)  
2nd Trumpet: Alan Fenney (Vic)  
Shane Urquhart (QLD)  
3rd Trumpet: Frank Godleman (TAS)  
Euphonium: Kevin Hillier OAM (Vic)  
Gordon Crompton (Vic)  
1st Trombone: Geoff Bunce (QLD)

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1st Trombone	Nicholas Chiselet (Vic)
2nd Trombone:	Bill Post (Vic)
3rd Trombone:	Ken Brown (Vic)
Bass Trombone:	Peter Blackwell (Vic)
Tubas:	Rod Coughran-Lane (Vic)
	Peter McLeod (NSW)
	Michael Thompson (Vic)
	Gary Sander (QLD)
String Bass:	Harry Williams (Vic)
Bass Guitar:	Gary Searle (NSW)
1st Guitar:	Kevin Ridout (Vic)
2nd Guitar:	Michael Prizeman (Vic)
Percussion 1:	Errol Hatch (Vic)
Percussion 2:	Natalie Pollard (Vic)
	Max Pollard (Vic)
	Bill Middleton (WA)
Tympani:	Chantelle Riordan (Vic)
Sound Engineers:	Mark Symonds (Vic)
	Michael Prizeman (Vic)

A special thanks needs to go to Roger Downton also for helping our (under the pump) sound engineers get a great sound balance. To our special guest performers, Martin

West and James Henshaw, what performances, the audience applause said it all and added to a wonderful program. Peter Northwood summed it up in his presentation as each piece was introduced, Fabulous.... And with Peters great introductions made the concert flow effortlessly. The last of the accolades must go to our conductor Doug, His initial apprehension went out the window (I'm sure he would agree) once the first 10 minutes of our one and only rehearsal took place. The Band gelled and on the day it played on emotions, thanks Doug.

With the concert over that was the end of the reunion weekend. Many departed immediately for flights home while others helped pack up and load the gear to return to the school. From there it was back to the RSL where many enjoyed the remainder of the day and dined into the night. It was a reunion that had everything which was what the organisers wanted, to jam as much as we did into the 3 days and for members to participate in all the events made the organising worthwhile.

Our next adventure, Tweed Heads in 2018 or maybe there might be a Veterans Band gig local or o/seas, whichever, those that have now played for the first time can see the enjoyment of playing together, so take up the offers that come around.

Errol.



# HMAS Cerberus Museum

With the official opening by our new President, Ralph Daines, The Band Branch section of the museum is now a reality. After a frantic week of setting up (with the tremendous help of John Lennon and Museum volunteers) we can now proudly display our band history in a massive showcase for all visitors to see the significance the Band has made to the RAN. The association is now the benefactor of this section so it is up to us to help enhance it with donations, Memorabilia and financial input to keep it fresh and vibrant.

The display area is designed to be forever changing and portray a certain aspect, period or event in the band's history and our first display is appropri-

ate. Its focus is on our Directors of Music and their legacy in the recordings of the Band. As the reunion weekend was around the "Blue Water Men" recording each Director portrayed has a significant album highlighted beside them, (updating Phil Anderson, Paul Cottier and our current Director, Steven Stanke at the moment with album covers)

At each end of the cabinet are artefacts donated by members and their significance to the band explained. Current exhibits in the cabinet are from Barry Pollock, Ray Mills, Ralph Jones, Trevor Williamson Jenni Chinner, Ron Bergman, Yogi Soutar and Greg Newham (Dec)

It is significant to note that the visitors to the museum are significant, with bus tours constantly booked to visit and with our display playing recordings and with the visual display through the large TV we always have a large number now looking at our display.

Thanks to those that have commented on the display when we had the opening it has been a mission to make the band section a significant piece of the museum.

More to come in the following months or on our new website.



## A Musicians Profile

Hi Errol,

A few years ago I gave the Address at the annual Anzac Service at my school. This is a major event at my College and is always attended by Old Boys who are returned servicemen. I spoke on my grandfather's WW1 service and my father's WW2 service before sharing my own military story. I don't know whether you still look for articles from members but have attached an excerpt in case you would like to use it for the next newsletter.

Kind regards

David O'Meara

"Gladly David"

Excerpt of an address delivered at the Christian Brothers' College (CBC), St Kilda, Anzac Service in the presence of the student body, staff and ex-servicemen.



At seventeen, like my father, I enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy, and fortunately for me this was during a time of peace. At this time I had left CBC and was working in an office. Now offices then weren't like they are today. There were no computers to email friends or 'surf' the net when you had lost interest in the work. And the girls were segregated as most of them worked in a place called the 'Typing Pool'. I found it a boring job, and environment, and craved adventure. Every day on my way to work I would walk pass the Military Recruiting Office in Flinders Lane and one day I went in. I signed up for the RAN Band as I had learned to play the trumpet in the Army Cadet Band at CBC. Overnight I left

behind the world of a boy and was in the world of men. It was all men in those days as women were only allowed to serve in the WRANS, Women's Royal Australian Navy, doing menial jobs. I am pleased to say that today women serve in all branches and the Navy is richer for it.

Upon arriving at HMAS Cerberus Recruit School I noticed that no one used their first names. They all had nicknames. I met 'Boma' Brown, 'Shiner' Wright, 'Knobby' Clarke, 'Bumper' Farrell, 'Pincher' Martin, 'Knocker' White and 'Blue' McNally. And they spoke a different language. I hadn't joined the Navy at all I was now in 'pussers'. 'How long have you been in 'pussers?' they would ask and I had to learn a whole new vocabulary. I wasn't a recruit I was a 'rawbone!' I slept in a 'donga', a drink was a 'goffa', movies were known as the 'dits', your mate was your 'oppo' and your girlfriend was called a 'squarie'. Hearing: 'me and my oppo picked up our squaries bought a couple of goffas and went to the dits', left me very confused. This world I had entered was a place of 'no excuses.' These men meant exactly what they said! If I was told to be on parade at 0600 hours, that's 6am, I couldn't turn up at 0605 or 0615 and I definitely couldn't not turn up and the next day bring a note from my mum. I survived Basic Training and graduated as an Ordinary Seaman – or I should say a very ordinary seaman. I continued my training at the School-of-Music and then joined the RAN Band. I played in ceremonial parades, street marches, concerts and Anzac Day parades. Eventually I was an Able-Bodied Seaman, although that was debatable! I got a crash sea draft, meaning sudden, as I went to work one day and they said

'pack your kit O'Meara you're going to sea.' My sea time was spent on the aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne, the fleet's flagship of the time.

I reported to HMAS Melbourne and had to find my mess which was identified to me as 'Four November Starboard Inner.' Wandering the bowels of the ship I eventually found it and was pointed to my bunk which I was told was the only one available. It was the bunk above my oppo, my mate from HMAS Cerberus, 'Boma' Brown, so I was happy. The bunks were in tiers of three which were folded away when not in use. As I unhooked mine I saw it had a chain missing at the end and hung down on a slope, I knew then why it was available. I learned to sleep on a sloping angle and it didn't bother me... until we went through a monsoon. During rough seas I had to hang on to prevent myself from falling out and I didn't get a good sleep on those nights. Then I became worried thinking if the other chain gave way I would collapse onto the bunks below me. Now I knew, despite what you may have heard about sailors, my landing on top of 'Boma' Brown in the middle of the night was a situation he would not have been very happy about!

We eventually arrived in Pearl Harbour, Hawaii. I would love to share some of my stories from when I went ashore but I'm worried I might get sacked! In my defence all I will say is that I was a young guy who had just spent two weeks confined in a warship surrounded only by men, working and doing drills every day of the week. Trust me a situation like that would have the Archbishop looking for a good time ashore!

## A Musicians Profile

Eventually we went back to sea for two weeks of war exercises with the US Navy and various other Navies called RIMPAC. The band was given lookout duties. We would rehearse all day and then have to take up lookout watches. Watches lasted four hours each throughout the day and night and you would be woken up, called being given a 'shake', by a duty sailor at midnight or 4am, unless you had a Dogwatch which was during the afternoon. Lookout duties were up on the Gun Direction Platform called the GDP. The GDP was the highest point of the ship way up above the Bridge the modern day equivalent of the crows nest. Using the naked eye and binoculars our job was to keep an eye out for F111s, fighter planes which were simulating missiles. If we saw one we had to shout out 'aircraft' and the ship would go to 'battle stations' and when the plane flew over us the big guns would start firing at it. I have to admit I did find it pretty exciting but I knew they were using blanks. On a Dogwatch one day I spotted one and called out 'aircraft.' The Duty Officer picked up the handset and said 'GDP to bridge, aircraft spotted on the port bow'. He then ran over and said 'where is it?' Just then a lone seagull flapped across the horizon and I knew I had made a terrible mistake!

When we returned to Australia I was excited as I had now joined the honoured ranks of 'men who had gone to sea in ships' and could participate in a great Naval tradition. A lot of sailors had tattooed on their arms the names of the ports they had visited and I was really impressed with this. On many limbs I had seen exotic names like 'Singapore', 'Subic Bay', 'Japan' and 'Hawaii'. Now it was my turn. I went to a tattooist in Kings Cross and said I wanted Pearl Harbour written on the back of my arm. Now, boys, I've got a tip for you and pay attention because this is really important. If you ever decide to get a tattoo, and don't rush into it because it will be there for a long, long time, make sure you find a tattooist who can spell! The next day I peeled off the bandage to reveal my badge of honour and can still hear the laughter from my shipmates when

'Icky' Potter announced: 'hey, he's been to Pearl Harbour.'

A year later I received a scholarship to study classical music at the Victorian College of the Arts, a tertiary institution in Melbourne, and the Navy generously granted me a free discharge. I studied the French horn and went from Marches to Mozart and a whole new adventure opened up. I lived the free and easy life of a student and then the Bohemian existence of a musician. I moved on with my life although I did miss the secure feeling of having shipmates looking out for me and their gift- edness in not allowing me to take myself too seriously. But I made new friends and in time the tattoos faded and so did the memories of my years spent in the mess decks.

Like all people I faced adversity in my life and through these experiences was introduced to myself. I came to see that although I had left the military life behind it hadn't left me behind. I still polished my shoes, starched my shirts and had a tendency to 'march' when I walked maintaining a good posture. Whenever I was tired or didn't feel like going to work I still 'hit the deck' meaning I just got up and faced the day because people were counting on me. Whatever job I had I did my best to get on with everyone. Living with people in a confined mess deck working, sleeping, eating and socialising together I learned to accept others as they are and to look for the good in them.

I kept my 'part-of-ship' tidy. Whatever portion of this world was allotted to me – people, places and things I took care of. And sometimes, just like in the Navy, I had to 'turn to', which means clean it up. This required effort – sometimes physical, sometimes emotional and sometimes spiritual. The seeds of my spiritual life were planted by the Presentation Sisters in primary school then watered by the Christian Brothers, but these other parts of me I came to believe were tattooed 'RAN.'

Eventually I came to see that the Royal Australian Navy had placed expectations upon me and that this was their way of having faith in me. They believed I could achieve all they asked me to do, and more, and a lot of the time I did... except for being a good lookout! I came to see it was a great blessing in my life to have had others expect things from me. The Navy hierarchy knows that when boys start accepting responsibility for themselves and their actions they commence the path towards manhood. I have always been grateful for the guidance I received from the many 'Old Salts' when I took my early faltering steps upon that essential journey.

David O'Meara

Director of Music  
Ex-Able Seaman Musician



