



## SUBMARINES ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA

### W. A. BRANCH (Inc)



#### WA Branch Report for 2009/10

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After the completion of a very successful Subcon in Fremantle, branch business and committee person's lives returned to normal.

Accolades were received from many interstate members and I am extremely grateful for the terrific result which the organizing committee lead by Sid Czabotar managed to achieve. A full report of proceedings and many photos were submitted to the Webmaster for publication.

Shortly after Subcon, the branch lost its patron, LCDR Max Shean, DSO\* RANVR after a long illness. Max's funeral was a full Naval funeral attended by branch members and serving officers and sailors of the Submarine force and HMAS Stirling. Not long after Max's passing our RN comrades lost their Vice President, Doctor Colin Douglas Smith who like Max was an Australian serving in RN Submarines during the Second World War. The likes of these gentlemen we will not see again.

Later in the year we attended three ceremonies commemorating the lives of submariners with whom many of us have served or knew. Regretably one was not an Association member, but never the less still a Buddy in Boats.

Subsequent to Max's death, Commodore Bob Trotter OAM, RAN Rtd was invited to become the branch patron – a request which he graciously accepted.

The branch joined our RN comrades at their memorial service at the Periscope in Fremantle in October and they joined us to commemorate Remembrance Day alongside OVENS at the Maritime Museum in Fremantle. The Cadet Unit TS Cockburn, which is linked with HMAS WALLER, continues to provide us with support at our Remembrance Day service.

In November last year I and other members were invited to attend an awards ceremony at the Submarine School, where CN recognized the courageous actions of the officers and men of HMAS FARNCOMB in a dangerous man overboard incident in the South China Sea.

Our relationship with the Submarine Force is strong and Commodore Davies and Captain Sampson have been very supportive of the branch and association in general.

At the commencement of Subcon 2009 a plaque commemorating the exploits of the AE2 was unveiled alongside OVENS. It is hoped that one day a plaque commemorating AE1 will be erected on the same site. Just recently I have been advised that if plans go ahead as predicted a further plaque to AE2 will be erected and commemorated in the ANZAC Peace Park in Albany on ANZAC Day 2011. Albany was the last Australian port which the crew of AE2 saw before sailing with the first convoy to the Middle East. I am hopeful that we will send a band of stalwarts to Albany for this event.

ANZAC Day saw the branch parade again in Fremantle as do our RN contemporaries. The RAN element was very strong again this year, flooding Freo in white. The decision to march in Fremantle appears to be a popular one.

**President:**

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Prior to ANZAC Day we attended the commemoration service for the newly placed fin from ORION. This was a project undertaken by the Rockingham Branch of the Naval Association, providing a fitting tribute to the O Boats in the Naval Memorial Park. An application is being made to DVA for funds so that we can place a plaque on or adjacent to the fin to commemorate the lives of the three sailors who tragically lost their lives in two accidents at sea whilst serving in RAN Oberon class submarines.

General meetings have been held quarterly and in October last year a team explored the old fortifications of Bunker Hill in Fremantle followed by lunch at the Orient Hotel. In February this year a pleasant BBQ lunch was held in King's Park.

As a part of our annual program, I and other members travelled to Albany to commemorate the losses of the USN Submarine service during WW2. With our RN contemporaries and serving RAN and USN submariners we hold an informal dinner on the Saturday night, hosting as our guests, the remaining widows of the old USSUBVETs. The ceremony has become part of the City of Albany's annual program and I sincerely hope that this branch will continue to support the event. The senior USN submarine officer in WA, CMDR Paul Varnadore has given a commitment that their support will be ongoing also.

From our data base, the branch appears to be about 126 members strong. During the year we have seen 6 new or returned members join us. I am strongly of the view that membership of the body as a whole be our catch cry. With a fluid and moving membership, branch membership should be a secondary consideration. This being the case we could better achieve this if our National Treasurer and National Secretary accessed and contributed to the same data base. Once again, demonstrating a need for a secure area in the website. We take every opportunity to promote the Association to our serving submariners, but unfortunately very few are taking up membership. Perhaps there could be a Collins Class chapter added to our Association. We have had commitment from our exchange USN buddies, who have supported our branch activities when operational circumstances permit.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the great work which has been done by our National Secretary who has been at the Sickbay too many times in the past year and to my own Committee for the great support they have given me. Having come to this office in 2004, with a short absence midway I wish to advise that I will not be standing for re-election this year.

Yours aye

Fred Lawrence  
President  
SAA WA Branch (Inc)

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