

# The Seven Seas Tattler Issue 1.7 - December 2017



Good Day members of the Seven Seas Club

Our December edition of the Tattler will hopefully provide items of interest.

Tattler wishes all a Merry Christmas and a happy holiday period.

Comments are always welcome and can be directed to [jonathanagolding@gmail.com](mailto:jonathanagolding@gmail.com)

## Chairman's Report

Protea is currently in Durban conducting surveys on the damage to the harbour after the recent storm.

Amatola is currently in Le Reunion conducting search and rescue exercises with the French Navy.

There is quite a lot of commercial work (mainly trawlers) being conducted by the Dockyard.

No foreign visits expected in the near future.

The Committee and members would like to congratulate R Adm (JG) D.M. Mkhonto on his promotion to R Adm as Chief Director Maritime Strategy with effect 1 Apr 18.

I would like to take the opportunity to wish club members a Merry Christmas and great festive season. Also, my best wishes to those having birthdays in December. (Ed - see elsewhere)

## Club Manager's Report

### Happy Hour and 100 Club Draw

The next Happy Hour and 100 Club draw will take place in the Club on Tuesday the 12th December 2017 from 17h00 to 18h00. Boerewors Rolls will be on sale at R25 each. Normal attendance prizes for two lucky Members in attendance.

### Home to the Warrant Officers

The Club will host the Warrant Officers in the Club on Monday the 4th of December 2017 at 12h00 for 12h30. Members are encouraged to invite either serving or retired Warrant Officers to join us at this annual event. A list of Members and guests attending is in the Bar. The cost is R65 per person. A buffet lunch will be served.

### Seven Seas Club Visitors Book

Although the current Western Cape Liquor Act and the Club's Liquor Licence no longer requires private Clubs to enforce the use of a Visitors Book, the Seven Seas Club Constitution requires that all Members must sign their guests into the Club by completing the Visitors Book. Members are requested to comply with this requirement with immediate effect.

### Seven Seas Club Movie Night

The Club intends to introduce a Movie Night once a month. R Adm (JG) Andre Rudman (Ret) has agreed to run this function and it is intended that the Movie Night will commence with the screening of the 2003 film "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World", starring Russell Crowe and set in 1805 (Run time 133 minutes) at 19h00 on Wednesday 29th of November 2017. Members and their Guests are invited to attend the Movie Nights (no charge).

### Last Dogwatch Luncheon

The retired SA Naval members club (known as the Last Dogwatch) will be enjoying lunch in the Club on Thursday the 30th of November 2017 from 12h00 to 16h00 (approx. 40 Members). Members are welcome to come and meet the "Olds and Bolds" and interact socially.

### SA Legion of Military Veterans

The Regional Chairman of the SA Legion, Capt (SAN) Peter Napier (Ret) placed a collection tin in the Club for Poppy Day to collect funds for the Legion. A letter of thanks and appreciation was received from Peter where he indicated that R 689.95 was collected from Seven Seas Club Members. Well done to those who contributed.

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### **Tattler and the Club welcome a New Member – Alastair Pool.**

Alastair is married to Christina and they reside in Murdoch Valley, Simon's Town. He is a retired gentleman who worked for a Dutch Dredging company and was actively involved in the construction of both the Ben Schoeman Dock and the Port Elizabeth Container Berth. We hope your stay is long and happy.

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## Member's Birthdays – December



*Tattler wishes the following the happiest of birthdays!*

<b>6 December</b>	Esn R Botha
<b>7 December</b>	Esn A D Basson
<b>13 December</b>	Capt V R Neilson
<b>20 December</b>	Mr J V Carne
<b>21 December</b>	Capt F J van der Merwe
<b>25 December</b>	Lt C Chiste
<b>25 December</b>	Mr J A H Golding
<b>31 December</b>	Cdr F Jordaan

## Spotlight on KEVIN BRUCE WISE

This month Tattler speaks to our esteemed Club Chairman, Captain Kevin Wise. Generally a man of few words, until there is controversy in the air.....!

He was born in Plymouth UK on 14 Nov 1959. His father, who was in the SAN, was studying Marine Engineering at the Royal Naval College, Manadon at the time. The family returned to the RSA in 1961 when his father completed his degree.

His brother, Kristian Scott Wise, was born 2 years later at 2 Mil Wynberg. He is serving in the SAN in Pretoria with the rank of Captain.

He started his schooling at Laerskool Paul Greyling in Fish Hoek. He started 6 months earlier than his peers so that he could get to grips with the Afrikaans language. Kevin's parents thought that it best that he and his brother be bilingual. This did, however, annoy them because his brother and he used to speak to each other in Afrikaans and their parents could not understand a word they were saying.

On completion of his Primary school days he was “imprisoned” for 2 years in boarding school at Paarl Boys High School. (Ed – his words!) After his brother’s application was unsuccessful, (anything to do with you Kevin?) his parents gave him the choice of finishing his schooling at Fish Hoek High School. He did not hesitate and completed matric there.

He joined the SA Navy straight after school in 1978 and started his officer training at SA Naval College. The current Deputy Chief of the Navy, current Club Manager (Glen Marlow) and the Club’s tenant Eddie Noble, among others, were in his year group. On completion thereof he spent 5 years in Type 12 under training and as Departmental Officer. In 1983, then a Lieutenant, the SAN decided he should join the Strike Craft Flotilla in Durban. He was not keen on that idea and thus joined the Submarine Flotilla and spent the next 10 years with them in all the submarine post except that of

OC. ( Tattler – been there, done that, got the leather jacket! )

On completion of his submarine career, then a Commander, he spent 5 years at SA Naval Staff College training junior officers on staff course. “Thereafter I was incarcerated to the Navy Office in Pretoria in 1996 as SSO Communications and SSO Submarine Warfare. The minute I arrived in Pretoria I started working on my return to Simon’s Town and more specifically, return to sea as it was still my desire to have command of my own ship. My prayers were answered and I arrived back 3 years later as the Executive Officer of SAS DRAKENSBERG.”

In 2001 he was promoted to Captain as FOFs Personal Staff Officer. (His years as Training Officer at Staff College probably influenced this appointment.) Fortunately he only spent a year in that post (staff work not being his favourite) and he was extremely fortunate to be reappointed to sea as Officer Commanding SAS DRAKENSBERG, “my best appointment at that time.”

On completion of his sea-going career, in 2004, he was appointed as Deputy Project officer Project SITRON (acquisition of the VALOUR Class Frigates) as the Trials Coordinator for the integration of the Combat Suite. On completion of the project he was appointed to the NAVAL Base Simon’s Town in 2008 as the XO, Facilities Officer and Naval Harbour Master (including the role of pilot), the later post he has had since 2012 and “in my mind the best shore appointment one could wish for.”

*Tattler intrudes at this point to examine the role of a Pilot.*

Maritime pilot - From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A maritime pilot, also known as a marine pilot, harbour pilot or bar pilot and sometimes simply called a pilot, is a sailor who manoeuvres ships through dangerous or congested waters, such as harbours or river mouths. He or she is normally an ex ship captain and a highly experienced ship handler who possesses detailed knowledge of the particular waterway, e.g. actual depth, direction and strength of the wind, current and tide at any time of the day. The pilot is a navigational expert for the port of call.

Manoeuvring a ship through the shallow water to berth / unberth in a port requires teamwork which involves, apart from the port pilot, the ship's captain (jointly responsible), ship's crew, port tugs, and shore linesmen. Since the pilot is on board the ship, he controls the tugs and linesmen through a radio and the ship directly. The ship's captain ensures his crew carry out the pilot's orders.

High skill is required to be a pilot as the channels through which the ships move towards the port is normally too narrow and shallow for the size of the ships, stopping distance of the ships being a few nautical miles and the fact that ships do not steer at slow speed. Even if a ship captain is a regular visitor to a certain port, he cannot match the expertise and experience of the Pilot.

*And, back to this month's “victim”*

He married Tracy-Lee (nee Curtis) in 1990. Incidentally her father, WO1 Blackie Curtis, was the Coxswain aboard SAS PRESIDENT PRETORIUS when he was a Midshipman onboard.

He met her at the Club and proposed to her at the Club. “We have been blessed with 2 lovely daughters, Kerry-Lee (25), a Chemical Engineer and Shannon (23), a Club Manager. Tracy has been a continuous support to me during my naval career.”

He actively participated in rugby and athletics at school and Naval College. He played First XV at school and Naval College in the positions of scrumhalf, wing and fullback. In athletics he excelled in

100, 200 and 400 meters. "One wouldn't think that now looking at my profile. " (Ed- nah Kevin, never!) Nowadays he watches these sports on television as well as motor racing. His hobbies are watching sport, as mentioned before, DIY and camping. "The latter hobby I started quite late in life and wished that we had pursued it earlier."

He finds inconsiderate people, particularly road users, very irritating. "I am very quick to blow my horn and utter a few expletives to the person concerned. On one occasion my eldest daughter, who could not yet string together a complete sentence, uttered an expletive on my behalf on hearing the hooter blow, much to Tracy and my horror." Other annoyances are people who can't plan and leave things to the last minute. To them his standard response is "Your bad planning does not necessitate crisis management on my side"

He finds working with people and educating them most gratifying. Hence his current post as the Pilot of Simon's Town harbour offers him the opportunity to teach them the art of ship handling in confined spaces.

He joined the Seven Seas Club as a midshipman in 1979. "I was press ganged by my senior officers to join, which I have not regretted. I have through the years enjoyed socializing with peers and discussing the issues of the day. I think I have spent more time as a committee member of the club as opposed to being a normal member."

He will be retiring in two years' time, but what follows is "still a work in progress."

Tattler believes that it is people such as Kevin and Tracy-Lee that make the club what is and thanks them for their loyalty, dedication and presence.

### **December in Military History**

**December 1, 1925** - The Locarno Treaties were signed by France, Belgium and Germany, as a preventative measure to avoid another war, in the aftermath of World War I. Terms of the Locarno Pact were guaranteed by Britain and Italy.

**December 2, 1805** - Napoleon defeated Russia and Austria in the Battle of Austerlitz

**December 6, 1917** - Two ships collided at Halifax, Nova Scotia, resulting in an explosion that killed more than 1,500 persons and injured 8,000. The Norwegian ship Imo collided with the French munitions ship Mont Blanc which was loaded with supplies for the war in Europe, including 5,000 tons of TNT. A tidal wave caused by the explosion destroyed much of the city.

**December 7, 1941** - The U.S. Naval base at Pearl Harbour, Hawaii, was attacked by nearly 200 Japanese aircraft in a raid that lasted just over one hour and left nearly 3,000 Americans dead.

**December 8, 1941** - A day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, the United States and Britain declared war on Japan.

**December 9, 1941** - During World War II, China issued a formal declaration of war against Japan, Germany and Italy.

**December 10, 1898** - The Treaty of Paris was signed between American and Spanish representatives following Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War. Under the treaty, the U.S. gained the Philippine Islands, the islands of Guam and Puerto Rico, and an agreement by Spain to withdraw from Cuba. The treaty passed by a single vote in the U.S. Senate on February 6, 1899, and was signed by President William McKinley four days later.

**December 10, 1941** - During World War II, British Battleships Repulse and Prince of Wales were sunk by Japanese warplanes in the South China Sea, killing nearly 800 crewmen.

**December 11, 1845** - The first Anglo-Sikh War in India began as the Sikhs attacked British colonial forces. The Sikhs were defeated after four battles. Part of the Punjab region of north western India was then annexed by the British.

**December 11, 1941** - A major turning point in World War II occurred as Japan's Axis partners, Italy and Germany, both declared war on the United States. The U.S. Congress immediately declared war on them. President Roosevelt then made the defeat of Hitler the top priority, devoting nearly 90 percent of U.S. military resources to the war in Europe.

**December 13, 1862** - During the American Civil War, the Battle of Fredericksburg occurred in Virginia as the Union Army of the Potomac under General Burnside suffered a costly defeat, losing 12,653 men after 14 frontal assaults on well entrenched Rebels on Marye's Heights. "We might as well have tried to take hell," a Union soldier remarked. Confederate losses were 5,309. "It is well that war is so terrible - we should grow too fond of it," stated Confederate General Robert E. Lee during the fighting.

**December 13, 1937** - The beginning of one of the worst atrocities of World War II era as the Chinese city of Nanking (Nanjing) was captured by the Japanese. Over the next six weeks, the Rape of Nanking occurred in which Japanese soldiers randomly attacked, raped and indiscriminately killed an estimated 200,000 Chinese persons.

**December 13, 1991** - North and South Korea signed a treaty of reconciliation and nonaggression which also formally ended the Korean War, although actual fighting had ceased in 1953.

**December 14, 1995** - A Bosnian peace treaty was signed in Paris by leaders from the former Yugoslavia. The treaty ended Europe's worst conflict since World War II.

**December 15, 1961** - Nazi SS-Colonel Adolf Eichmann was sentenced to death in Jerusalem for his role in the Holocaust. Eichmann had organized the deportation of Jews from all over occupied Europe to Nazi death camps

**December 16, 1653** - Following the defeat of King Charles I in the English Civil War, Oliver Cromwell, leader of the Parliamentary forces, was declared Lord Protector of England.

**December 16, 1838** - The Battle of Blood River was fought on the banks of the Blood River in what is today KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. In the aftermath of the Weenen massacre, a group of about 470 Voortrekkers, led by Andries Pretorius, defended a laager (circle of ox wagons) against Zulu impis, ruled by King Dingane and led by Dambuza (Nzobo) and Ndlela kaSompisi, numbering between 10 and 20 thousand. The Zulus repeatedly and unsuccessfully attacked the laager, until Pretorius ordered a group of horse riders to leave the encampment and engage the Zulus. Partly due to the fact that the Voortrekkers used rifles and at least one light cannon against the

Zulus' spears, as well as the good location and motivation of the Voortrekkers, only three Voortrekkers were wounded and none perished; that contrasted against the more than 3,000 Zulu warriors who died.

**December 16 1880** - The First Boer War, also known as the First Anglo-Boer War or the Transvaal War, was fought from 16 December 1880 until 23 March 1881 and was the first clash between the British and the South African Republic (Z.A.R.) Boers. It was precipitated by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, who annexed the South African Republic (Transvaal Republic) for the British in 1877.

**December 16, 1944** - During World War II in Europe, the Battle of the Bulge began as the Germans launched a big counter-offensive in the Ardennes Forest along a 75-mile front, taking American troops by surprise. Aided by foggy, snowy weather, the Germans penetrated 65 miles into Allied lines by the end of December. The German advance was eventually halted by Montgomery on the Meuse and Patton at Bastogne. As the weather cleared, Allied aircraft attacked German ground forces and supply lines and the counter-offensive failed. There were an estimated 77,000 Allied and 130,000 German casualties.

**December 18, 1916** - During World War I, the Battle of Verdun concluded after ten months of fighting in which 543,000 French and 434,000 German soldiers were killed.

**December 23, 1948** - Hideki Tojo was hanged for war crimes. He had been Japanese prime minister from 1941-44. Following Japan's defeat in World War II, he was arrested as a war criminal, tried by a military tribunal and sentenced to death. He was hanged along with six other Japanese wartime military leaders at Sugamo Prison in Tokyo, with the sentence carried out by the U.S. 8th Army.

**December 24, 1914** - The first-ever German air raid against Britain took place when a German monoplane dropped a single bomb on Dover, England, during World War I.

**December 24, 1942** - The first surface-to-surface guided missile, later known as the V-1 Flying Bomb, was launched by German rocket engineer Wernher von Braun. Called "Buzz Bombs" for the loud buzzing sound of their motor, they were used by Nazi Germany against Britain beginning in September 1944.

**December 27, 1996** - A genocide trial began concerning the killing of an estimated 800,000 Tutsis in Rwanda. In 1994, a bloody civil war had broken out between the two main ethnic groups, the Hutu and the Tutsi. After the Hutu army seized power it had waged a campaign of "ethnic cleansing" against the Tutsi population

**December 29 1895** - The Jameson Raid (29 December 1895 – 2 January 1896) was a raid on Paul Kruger's Transvaal Republic carried out by Leander Starr Jameson and his Rhodesian and Bechuanaland policemen over the New Year weekend of 1895–96.

From the Archives - a piece that may interest you

## **Hugo Biermann**

- \*Born 6 August 1916 Johannesburg
- \*Died 27 March 2012(2012-03-27) (aged 95)
- \*Cape Town, South Africa
- \*Allegiance South Africa
- \*Service/branch South African Navy
- \*Years of service1945–1976
- \*Rank Admiral (only South African to have held this rank)

### Commands held

- \*Chief of the South African Defence Force
- \*Chief of the South African Navy
- \*SAS Bloemfontein
- \*HMSAS Gamtoos

### Awards

- \*Star of South Africa (SSA)
- \*Southern Cross Decoration (SD)
- \*Order of the British Empire (OBE)
- \*Order of Prince Henry (GCIH) (Portugal)

Admiral Hugo Hendrik Biermann SSA SD OBE GCIH (6 August 1916 – 27 March 2012) was a former Chief of the South African Navy who later served as Chief of the South African Defence Force, the only Naval officer to have served in this post.

Biermann was one of four children. His brothers Phillip and Stefanus (Chips) served on whale catchers that had been converted to minesweepers during World War II. His brother Stefanus reached the rank of Rear Admiral in the SA Navy

He began his naval career in 1938 as a sub-lieutenant in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. In January 1940 he was called up for full-time service and transferred to the Seaward Defence Force. Promoted lieutenant in mid-1941 he commanded HMSAS Imhoff, HMSAS Roodepoort and HMSAS Aristeia before being promoted to Lieutenant Commander in command of the salvage vessel HMSAS Gamtoos.

The crew of the HMSAS Gamtoos cleared several Mediterranean ports of sunken and scuttled ships, and at Marseilles, Biermann blew a hole in the harbour wall so that he could enter the Vieux Port and begin work. The Gamtoos went on to salvage the Sidi Aissa, towing it away to clear the valuable graving dock at La Ciotat by 14 December 1944. This earned Lt Cdr Biermann the Order of the British Empire, an honour he shared with the entire ship's company



The citation for his OBE reads:

“On the recommendation of the British Admiralty, the then Lieutenant-Commander H. H. Biermann, an officer in the South African Naval Forces [SANF], was appointed an Officer of the Military Division of the Order of the British Empire [OBE] “for distinguished service during the invasion of Southern France.”

After the war and with the establishment of the South African Navy (Permanent Force) in May 1946, he was appointed Lieutenant-Commander and Captain of the Algerine class minesweeper, SAS Bloemfontein, commissioning her in Devonport on 8 September 1947 and as Senior Officer of the minesweeping squadron.

In 1950, he was transferred to Defence Headquarters and served on the staff of the then Director-General of the SA Naval Forces. Two years later he attended the British Naval Staff Course at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, and was appointed as naval attaché at South African House, London with the rank of Commander.

Commander Biermann was appointed naval and marine chief of staff on 1 December 1952 and promoted to the rank of Commodore, jumping two ranks. During his tenure the Simonstown Agreement was signed on 30 June 1955. He held that rank until 1 April 1957, with the handing over of the Simon's Town Naval Base, he was promoted to Rear-Admiral.

On 1 December 1965, Rear-Admiral Biermann was promoted to Vice-Admiral and Chief of the Navy, the first time this title was used in South Africa.

In 1972, he took over the position of Commandant General, South African Defence Force and promoted to Admiral, the first time this rank was used in the South African Navy. The title was changed to Chief of the South African Defence Force a year later.

In 1977 he authored "The South African Response." The Southern Oceans and the Security of the Free World: New Studies in Global Strategy (1977).

The navy's submarine base was named after him.

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Fascinating history!

Starting in 1940, an increasing number of British & Commonwealth Airmen found themselves the involuntary guests of the Third Reich, and the British Crown was seeking ways and means to facilitate their escape...

Now obviously, one of the most helpful aids to that end is a useful and accurate map, one showing not only where stuff was, but also showing the locations of 'safe houses' where a POW on-the-lam could go for food and shelter.

Paper maps had some real drawbacks -- they make a lot of noise when you open and fold them, they wear out rapidly, and if they get wet, they turn into mush.

Someone in MI-5 got the idea of printing escape maps on silk. It's durable, can be scrunched-up into tiny wads and unfolded as many times as needed, and makes no noise whatsoever.

At that time, there was only one manufacturer in Great Britain that had perfected the technology of printing on silk, and that was John Waddington Ltd. When approached by the government, the firm was only too happy to do its bit for the war effort.

By pure coincidence, Waddington was also the U.K. Licensee for the popular American board game Monopoly. As it happened, 'games and pastimes' was a category of item qualified for insertion into 'CARE packages', dispatched by the International Red Cross to prisoners of war.

Under the strictest of secrecy, in a securely guarded and inaccessible old workshop on the grounds of Waddington's, a group of sworn-to-secrecy employees began mass-producing escape maps, keyed to each region of Germany, Italy, and France or where ever Allied POW camps were located. When processed, these maps could be folded into such tiny dots that they would actually fit inside a Monopoly playing piece.

As long as they were at it, the clever workmen at Waddington's also managed to add:

1. A playing token, containing a small magnetic compass
2. A two-part metal file that could easily be screwed together
3. Useful amounts of genuine high-denomination German, Italian, and French currency, hidden within the piles of Monopoly money!

British and American air crews were advised, before taking off on their first mission, how to identify a 'rigged' Monopoly set – by means of a tiny red dot, one cleverly rigged to look like an ordinary printing glitch, located in the corner of the Free Parking square.

Of the estimated 35,000 Allied POWS who successfully escaped, an estimated one-third was aided in their flight by the rigged Monopoly sets. Everyone who did so was sworn to secrecy indefinitely, since the British Government might want to use this highly successful ruse in still another, future war.

The story wasn't declassified until 2007, when the surviving craftsmen from Waddington's, as well as the firm itself, were finally honoured in a public ceremony.

*It's always nice when you can play that 'Get Out of Jail' Free' card!*

***Just in case the article in the last Tattler caused you to think about the navy in OZ...***

The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) fleet is made up of 50 commissioned warships as of September 2017.

The main strength is the eleven frigates of the surface combatant force: eight Anzac class and three Adelaide class. Six Collins-class boats make up the submarine service, although due to the maintenance cycle not all submarines are active at any time. Amphibious warfare assets include two Canberra-class landing helicopter dock ships and the landing ship HMAS Choules. Thirteen Armidale-class patrol boats perform coastal and economic exclusion zone patrols, and four Huon-class vessels are used for minehunting and clearance (another two are commissioned but in reserve since October 2011). Replenishment at sea is provided by two ships, Sirius and Success, while the two Leeuwin-class and four Paluma-class vessels perform survey and charting duties.

In addition to the commissioned warships, the RAN operates the sail training ship Young Endeavour and two Cape-class patrol boats acquired from the Australian Border Force. Other auxiliaries and small craft are not operated by the RAN, but by DMS Maritime, who are contracted to provide support services.

The lion's share of the RAN fleet is divided between Fleet Base East (HMAS Kuttubul, in Sydney) and Fleet Base West (HMAS Stirling, near Perth). Mine warfare assets are located at HMAS Waterhen (also in Sydney), while HMAS Cairns in Cairns and HMAS Coonawarra in Darwin host the navy's patrol and survey vessels.

The Australian Air Warfare Destroyer (AWD) project commenced in 2000 to replace the Adelaide-class frigates and restore the capability last exhibited by the Perth-class destroyers. The ship was assembled from 31 pre-fabricated modules ('blocks'): 12 for the hull, 9 for the forward superstructure, and 10 for the aft superstructure. The Hobarts are built around the Aegis combat system. The first ship HMAS Hobart was ordered on 4 October 2007 and commissioned on 23 September 2017.

The most modern and capable vessels in the Australian fleet are the eight frigates of the Anzac class. These were commissioned from 1996 to 2006 as part of a joint program with New Zealand, whose navy operates an additional two examples. Derived from Blohm + Voss' MEKO modular ship family and designated the MEKO 200 ANZ by that company, the ships were built in Australia by Tenix in Williamstown, Victoria. They are designated as helicopter frigates (FFH) by the RAN, and are designed to be capable of both mid-level patrol and blue water operations. In 2010, these vessels began to receive upgrades to their anti-ship missile defence (ASMD) capabilities

The Australian variant of the American Oliver Hazard Perry-class guided missile frigate, six Adelaide-class frigates were built for the RAN. Four were built by Todd Pacific Shipyards in Seattle, Washington, while the final two were built by AMECON in Williamstown, Victoria. They first entered service in 1980, and with the retirement of the Perth-class destroyers, have become the RAN's primary air defence asset. Four of the frigates received upgrades to their weapons and systems during the 2000s, of which three remain in service. The other three ships have been paid off: the first two in the late 2000s to free up funds for the modernisation, and the third in 2015.

Australia operates a single class of diesel-electric submarines, the six Collins-class boats which began entering service in 1993. The Collins was designed by the Swedish submarine builder Kockums as the Type 471 specifically to meet Australian requirements, many of which were derived from Australia's

need for great range without utilizing a nuclear propulsion system. The ships themselves were built in Australia by the Australian Submarine Corporation in Adelaide, South Australia. The submarines are classified by the RAN as guided missile submarines (SSG), but are often referred to as hunter-killer submarines (SSK) in the international press. While these vessels represented a major increase in capability for the RAN, they have found themselves mired in numerous technical and operational problems. Meanwhile, the RAN has struggled to sufficiently crew their submarine fleet, with at times no more than two qualified crews available. Plans have existed to replace the Collins with an even more ambitious twelve submarine program, although the design of this vessel has yet to be selected and there are many questions in Australia whether the program can be successful in light of the problems encountered in their current fleet.

The Canberra class are landing helicopter dock ships based on the design of Spanish ship Juan Carlos I. The hull of each ship was built by the designer, Navantia, then was transported to Australia by heavy lift ship for internal fitout and installation of the superstructure by BAE Systems Australia. Designed to transport and land an amphibious force of up to 1,600 soldiers by landing craft and helicopter, the Canberras are the largest ships ever operated by the RAN. Lead ship HMAS Canberra was commissioned into the RAN in late 2014. The second ship of the class, Adelaide, was commissioned at the end of 2015

The Bay-class landing ship dock HMAS Choules was acquired by the RAN in 2011. The ship was originally built by Swan Hunter for the British Royal Fleet Auxiliary, and entered British service in 2006 as RFA Largs Bay. She was made redundant in the 2011 Strategic Defence and Security Review and sold to Australia. Choules represents a major increase in sealift capability for the RAN, particularly after mechanical issues in 2010 and 2011 forced the early retirement of the navy's two Kanimbla-class vessels, and put HMAS Tobruk in dock for an extensive refit.

For patrol of Australia's vast coastline, territorial waters, and offshore territories, the RAN operates thirteen Armidale-class patrol boats. These replaced the Fremantle class from 2005 as the navy's primary asset for border protection, fisheries patrols, and interception of unauthorised arrivals by sea. Based on the Bay-class customs vessels, the Armidales are significantly enlarged to allow for better range and seakeeping ability. Originally, twelve boats were to be built by Austal Ships, but the establishment of a dedicated patrol force for the North West Shelf Venture saw another two ordered. The Australian Patrol Boat Group has divided the class into four divisions, with three ships' companies assigned for every two vessels to achieve higher operational availability. HMAS Bundaberg was decommissioned in December 2014 after being extensively damaged by an onboard fire. On-going problems with the patrol boats, including wear from high operational use and structural issues, prompted the RAN to acquire two Cape-class patrol boats from the Australian Border Force.

[illegible]

**Thank you to R Adm (JG) A. Soderlund (Ret) for contributing the following articles on the missing Argentinian submarine as well as the Amatola as it steams towards La Reunion**

*ARA San Juan: Argentina's navy says sonar noise did not come from submarine missing in South Atlantic*

Nov 21 - Search teams scouring the South Atlantic for a missing Argentinian submarine say sonar "noise" detected in the ocean's depths did not come from the vessel, which has only one day's worth of oxygen left. Hopes of finding the ARA San Juan, which went missing last Wednesday with forty four crew on board, are waning. Two possible leads have now been discounted. The Navy said satellite calls detected over the weekend did not in fact come from the vessel. And this morning officials also confirmed sonar "noise" detected by probes deep in the South Atlantic was not linked to the San Juan. There had been speculation the "constant" noises could have been caused by sailors banging on the boat's hull to attract attention. Overnight the navy confirmed the submarine had reported an electrical problem and was headed back to base just before it disappeared 432 kilometres off the coast. "The submarine surfaced and reported a malfunction, which is why its ground command ordered it to return to its naval base at Mar del Plata," Commander Galeazzi said. Navy spokesman Enrique Balbi said the craft was carrying enough oxygen to spend seven days underwater. After that, he said, it would have to surface or get near the surface to replenish air supply. Intermittent satellite communications had been detected on Saturday and the navy had said they were likely to have come from the submarine. But that has since been ruled out. More than a dozen ships and aircraft from Argentina, the United States, Britain, Chile and Brazil have now joined the hunt for the San Juan, but storms have complicated efforts to find the vessel. Commander Galeazzi said it was normal for submarines to suffer system malfunctions. "A warship has a lot of backup systems, to allow it to move from one to another when there is a breakdown," he said. Source: ABC News Things are not looking good as they have also not detected signals from the emergency locator buoy which most boats carry and would be released in event of an emergency.



### Amatola steaming to La Reunion for Ex Oxide



Exercise Oxide, the ongoing naval exercise which sees French and South African elements co-operate in the interests of both human and maritime security, can be said to be partially underway as the Valour Class frigate SAS Amatola (F145) steams toward La Reunion.

The Indian Ocean island, a French territory, hosts this year's iteration of the exercise, last held with Richards Bay on South Africa's east coast as exercise HQ in 2015. Expanding on the need for an exercise such as Oxide, the SA Navy website points out there is a clear link between maritime and human security. "Sea lines of communication are a vital part of the world economy and a reported 90% of the world's trade is carried out by sea, according to the World Trade Statistical Review. This makes the importance of a sound security plan easy to see. This becomes even more crucial when one considers increased globalisation in addition to imports and exports of goods essential to human survival, unsolicited objects such as narcotics are also transported along these sea routes. Armed forces all over the world assist to combat the flow of narcotics into any country. "France and South Africa share common interests in the southern part of the Indian Ocean and agree on maintaining close defence co-operation. To enhance co-operation and operational inter-operability between South Africa and France and preserve a maritime presence in the Indian Ocean, these nations hold joint exercises such as Oxide." "The Exercise is scenario based on the theme of "Fight against narcotics". The aim of the exercise is to enhance combat readiness of both military forces in the fight against narcotics in the Indian Ocean."

Objectives set for Exercise Oxide 2017 are: to maintain, promote and build on previous operational and tactical co-operation between FAZSOI (French Armées de la Zone Sud de l'Océan Indien) and the SANDF; to promote training of military personnel and provide joint force preparation training for military personnel, and to develop and test joint and combined inter-operability. Amatola has an embarked Super Lynx maritime helicopter for the duration of the exercise. It will be supported by an SA Air Force Oryx medium transport helicopter as well as a C-47TP maritime patrol aircraft and a 28 Squadron C-130BZ. Other SANDF assets involved are an airborne platoon of 36 combat ready parachutists and a SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) medical team embedded on the frigate. The exercise is due to start on November 29 and ends on December 9.

A woman driving along at speed passed over a bridge only to find a cop with a radar gun on the other side lying in wait. The cop pulled her over, walked up to the car, with that classic patronizing smirk & asked, 'What's your hurry?'  
She replied, 'I'm late for work.'  
'Oh yeah,' said the cop, 'what do you do?'  
'I'm a Rectum Stretcher,' she responded....  
The cop stammered, 'A what?.....'  
'A Rectum Stretcher!'  
'And just what does a rectum stretcher do?'  
'Well,' she said, 'I start by inserting one finger in the rectum, then work my way up to two fingers, then three, then four, then with my whole hand in I work from side to side until I can get both hands in, and then I slowly but surely stretch it, until it's about 6 feet'  
'And just what the hell do you do with a 6 foot arsehole?' he asked  
'You give him a radar gun & park him behind a bridge...'

Hello?", "Hi honey. This is Daddy. Is Mommy near the phone?"  
"No Daddy. She's upstairs in the bedroom with Uncle Paul."  
After a brief pause, Daddy says, "But honey, you haven't got an Uncle Paul."  
"Oh yes I do, and he's upstairs in the room with Mommy, right now."  
Brief Pause.  
"Uh, okay then, this is what I want you to do. Put the phone down on the table, run upstairs and knock on the bedroom door and shout to Mommy that Daddy's car just pulled into the driveway."  
"Okay Daddy, just a minute."  
A few minutes later the little girl comes back to the phone. "I did it Daddy." "And what happened honey?" he asked.  
"Well, Mommy got all scared, jumped out of bed with no clothes on and ran around screaming. Then she tripped over the rug, hit her head on the dresser and now she isn't moving at all!"  
"Oh my God!!! What about your Uncle Paul?"  
"He jumped out of the bed with no clothes on, too. He was all scared and he jumped out of the back window and into the swimming pool. But I guess he didn't know that you took out the water last week to clean it. He hit the bottom of the pool and I think he's dead."

**\*\*\*Long Pause\*\*\***

Then Daddy says,  
"Swimming pool? .... Is this 486-5731?"

***That's it for this month, look after yourselves!***