

' Visit to HMAS DECHANEUX '

By Andrew Broadway

On the 30th October a small group of club members, including the Commodore, had an enjoyable lunch at the club with three of the senior officers from HMAS Dechaineux. The Collins class submarine was visiting Melbourne during the cup carnival week. As a reciprocal gesture the captain invited club members for a guided tour over the ship on 2 November.

As you approach her she looks low, black, windowless and somewhat malevolent. A sort of estuarine crocodile without teeth except for its guided missile torpedoes. And if you are identified as the enemy that is exactly what you will get.

The man who confirms whether you are the enemy wears no name badge, his eyes remain covered by very dark glasses & he offers no identification.

He does tell us that his job is sonar & he can identify a vessels size, speed, type, nationality and how many screws are in operation as a starter. Then, by contrast, there is the navigator. He tells us all about the navigational system he is working on. Flat on his chart table is, yes, a paper chart of Port Jackson, the ship's next port of call. The super e-system that can take the ship to a pebble on the bottom of Bass Strait is secondary to the good old paper chart.

The sixty crew, including nine women, are billeted in various parts of the ship. The trainees, both male and female, are all together in a bunk cabin. The bunks are removable due to the fact that this area doubles as the torpedo room. If you want a cuddle there are plenty of friendly torpedoes hanging from the ceiling. The number of torpedoes on board is secret although the seven that were obvious in this area, seem to be the largest concentration on the ship.



Collins class are diesel electric. The electricity is provided by three V18 Hedamora diesels, one of which could probably provide enough power to drive every boat in our Marina at the same time. The noise level in the engine rooms must be unbelievable when they are all running. These engines provide power to the three Jeumont Schneider generators that charge the super battery that provides all power to the vessel including a single 7 blade prop of 4.22 m diameter. Astonishing maneuverability is attained through a "V" shaped double rudder system that makes these subs amongst the best in the world.

Space is tight and facilities & limited. The serviceman's mess is adequate with two long tables that have fold down flaps & bench seats that are used for dining but remains the only form of seating. The seats have thin cushions that suggest the crew's bums should not stay there for too long. None of the crew complain about the food which is prepared by up to 3 chefs.

Everything has its place & everyone has a job. The operations on board run in 4, 6 hour shifts per day. Each crew will do two shifts. The only form of privacy is a sign on each sleeping cabin door that quotes "knock and wait"!

During our tour we found one of the "stokers" (diesel operators), fighting with one of the 4 Jabsco electric macerator toilets. "I am the poo engineer today" he said in an amusing tone. Now we all pricked up ears & got ready to give him some experienced advice. After all, who of us boaties haven't had trouble with our macerator from time to time. As it appeared that somebody had cut off the water supply to the flush unit we all decided that he was better equipped to fix it & we moved on.

Dechaineux is 78 m long and 8 m wide. She weighs in at about 3250 metric tonnes. Delivered in 2001, she was the 1st of the six Collins class to undergo the massive refit that was required after the unfortunate series of misadventures & poor performances. Whatever was done, they now perform extremely well, going from the noisiest to the quietest subs in service.

Crew admitted to an underwater speed of 20 kn. A little bird told me that 20 knots is very conservative. Cruise speed underwater, which is where they stay unless in port, is usually around four knots, which is also the sub's search speed. This gives the ship a huge range & amazing economy. The batteries can be recharged at snorkel depth which allows the engines to run with full aspiration.

The actual hull is protected in many parts by the casing, which is a cowl that forms the top deck, part of the sides and

' The *Unlikely Voyage* of Balboa and Gypsy '

By Malcolm Gill

Equipped with cheerful optimism and suitcases full of spare parts and warm clothing, Frank Wilkes, Paul Ringe and yours truly boarded the morning flight to Newcastle on a wintry Tuesday in October to retrieve two boats from Lemon Tree Passage marina and return to Melbourne. Balboa a 36' Fairways and a 32' Island Gypsy. Our fourth crew member, John Zammit was to join us on Thursday afternoon.

Throughout the flight, Frank recounted a number of stories about characters and places to head for to seek shelter but as he said with the weather forecast showing great weather all the way down the NSW coast and beyond, the trip would be a no-brainer. Hearing all of this and doing a quick spot of mental arithmetic, I calculated that there was more than 100 years of boating experience between the crew members. Frank estimated that he has undertaken about 200 boat deliveries and Paul, a retired Port Phillip pilot and ship's master so with that knowledge around me I sat in smug silence knowing that the trip south was in good hands.

At the Marina office Frank collected the boat keys and also some round fenders he had pre-ordered for me from the marina office. Imagine my surprise when after placing all the luggage on board he started the engine of Gypsy and said he was ready to leave. But what about John Z., Frank said we are meeting him in Sydney on Thursday. Hells Bells....two days to get to Sydney....

We moved about 200 metres from the marina and Frank got off and boarded Balboa which was sitting on a swing mooring. A quick check and Balboa's engine growled into life. After a two hour run on the inside passage we reached Nelson Bay and moored at the Game Fishing wharf for the evening. Dinner at the local and some shopping for provisions at the local Safeway.

Up early and departed Nelson Bay for Newcastle. Smooth comfortable ride but Balboa's GPS called it quits and Gypsy's fresh water pump retired. Fortunately Frank had a 10 litre container of drinking water to get us through to Newcastle. Four hours later we are berthed at the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club marina. Attempts to get the GPS and the water pump to operate were unsuccessful. Frank made a call to Melbourne and a replacement GPS was in John Z's luggage. Our voyage from Nelson Bay was remarkable. The sea was kindly and the number of coal ships waiting for loading into Newcastle harbour. We passed about five of these behemoths anchored waiting to take our carbon debits offshore. I was relieved to see that one was actually called "Green Power" – so I now have nothing to worry about.

Left Newcastle before daylight and headed south to Sydney. Abeam of Sydney Heads, Frank headed into Cremorne to collect John Z and the GPS and Gypsy continued onto Port Hacking. Two hours later Frank appeared behind us with John Z aboard. Seas were quite lumpy and Gypsy was only doing 9 knots so we were happy to reach the marina at 4pm.



Gypsy off Sydney Heads

John Z comes aboard and Paul joins Frank on Balboa. No sooner had I mentioned that the fresh water pump was out of action, John was in the bilge saying that the problem was a loose connection and seconds later he had it gushing harder than a bombed aquarium. John happily demonstrated his legendary self-belief and confidence later to the other crew members about his knowledge of all manner of marine equipment. Certainly entertaining.

Up at sparrows and we reach Wollongong by lunch after an easy morning with a following sea which pushed us along at almost 10 knots. First refuel and Gypsy slurps up nearly 300 litres. Quick calculation and she is getting through almost 10litres/hour at 1500 revs.

Frank tells us he wants an early start in the morning and true to his word we hear Balboa start at 5am. We clear Wollongong at first light and head south. About 2 hours into the trip the sloppy swell becomes ugly. Seas off out port quarter are getting larger but Gypsy is still making about 8 knots albeit with some rockin'n'rollin. Balboa frequently disappears from view. John tells me to keep a sharp lookout for whales because there were plenty during his last trip a month earlier. Maybe they have all migrated or they can hear us coming and have headed to the sea floor.



Enroute to Ulladulla

Frank calls up on the radio and we are heading for Wreck Bay for lunch and a fuel filter check. This is such an amazing cove. It was a flat as the proverbial. So very different to what we had just left outside. A quick meal and a bleed of the primary filter and we are off again to Ulladulla. Early afternoon saw us alongside at Ulladulla a huge fishing jetty with rubber fenders like piles. Ulladulla is a quaint little fishing village with a breakwater harbour.

About thirty minutes after berthing a yacht arrives and attempts to raft three wide. Frank using all his diplomacy and tact explains that this is not possible. Despite several attempts to force his vessel against Gypsy, the yacht rafts up to a fishing charter boat ahead of Balboa. Watching the yacht raft up to the charter boat, I concluded that yachties have several additional rules that are not applicable to other boats. One or two I found are

- 1) The Morse control only has two speeds.... Full ahead and Full reverse.
- 2) Only two fenders are to be deployed at any one time. One of these will be over the bow.
- 3) No lines are to be taken from the locker until you are alongside the mooring. There will then be a mass debate amongst the crew about who does what but only one member is allowed off the boat to secure the lines. The other crew members have to watch and shout loudly.

A visit to Marine Rescue allowed is to chat and catch up with local gossip before we left in the morning. We did the tourist spots – Coles, the mall and had a Tooheys or two at the Marlin Hotel on the corner.

'The Unlikely Voyage of Balboa and Gypsy' continued

At the local we meet up with Todd and Deano, two of the town's local identities who have been attending the awards afternoon for the under18 football team. Both are highly entertaining while explaining the social attitudes of the townsfolk and the community. Fully conversant with the rights and wrongs of Ulladulla we move to the local RSL club for some more drinks and dinner.



Balboa and Gypsy at Ulladulla

The following day the weather report is not good. So we remain at Ulladulla whereupon I seek out a chandlery and purchase a replacement fresh water pump. Did I mention that it had failed again and we had been without fresh water for two previous days. Dinner on board that evening and the weather is still nasty outside. Another day at Ulladulla.

Finally the weather clears and the weather report is favourable for the next two days. We leave Ulladulla early morning and head for Bermagui. John has guaranteed that we will see whales on this leg of the trip. After 3 hours, the radio crackles with Frank saying that there were whales off to port. I must have blinked because there weren't any to be seen. Another hour passes and yes, 'thar she blows'. Almost dead ahead. John grabs his camera and rushes forward.

What a sight to see these immense beings surge out of the water and then



crash back with a wave of their flippers and a view of their huge tail.

We reach Bermagui late in the afternoon and refuel. This time almost 700 litres goes into Gypsy. Balboa takes on almost a small tanker full. Fuel filters are emptied of water and the new fresh water pump is working. We wasted no time in taking advantage of the fishing cooperatives' facilities, which included hot showers and a laundromat.

Next Instalment: Bermagui to Williamstown

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By Andrew Broadway

incorporates the conning tower. Now that tower is not a good place to be when the vessel is submerging as it is immersed in water on both sides having no dry area, as is the case with all of the casing. Collins class are a Swedish design originating from Saab.

In this short article, it is not possible to cover the amazing integrated electronic systems that actually make the thing run and do its job. The crew are very happy to answer questions, within reason, and are all totally friendly, amenable and completely switched on to their jobs and proud of their machine.

Our long-time member Doug Bews (Cmdr R.A.N., retired) was the chief engineer and CEO of the Australian submarine 'Corporation' for the Collins class submarines during the construction period in Adelaide.

Those members who had been fortunate enough to enjoy the lunch with the three very friendly officers greatly enjoyed their company. Those who were fortunate enough to attend the tour of the ship were extremely impressed with the 'Dechaineux' and her crew.

Thanks also to our member Cmdr Graham Furlonger, Staff officer R.A.N., H.M.A.S. Cerberus for organising the events and, of course, to the captain, officers and crew of the HMAS Dechaineux for such a wonderful opportunity.

CENTENARY CUP Nav Rally RESULTS

From Chris Ackerman

**1st place: Eventide
Bob Battye / Alan Crighton
13 points**

**2nd place: Rob Roy
Mark Rindfleish / Kathy Rindfleish
18 points**

**3rd place: Bold Venture
Cameron Simpson
32 points**

12 boats took part.



REFUELLING IN THE MARINA

By Andrew Broadway

Members and visitors visiting the marina are reminded of By-Law No. 71 (Page 19 of the By-Laws 2010), **"Refuelling Vessels from Cans is Prohibited"**.

Two members have been observed refuelling their boats in the marina this past month. One member created a diesel spill that required the duty officer to take immediate action before it could be identified by adjoining marinas.

This By-Law is part of our insurance requirement and the Committee can take the appropriate action to deal with members breaking this By-Law.

' 2011 NEW MEMBERS - Welcome to RVMYC!'



JOHN HENRY



RONALD BARROW



PHILIP WARD



DANIEL EGAN



JUDITH RINGE



FRANK MORETTI



LEON THORPE



SHIRLEY PHILLIPS

BBQ AREA & CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL

CLUB CLOTHING

By Andrew Broadway

Under our current liquor licence, signed in guests of members may not approach the bar and purchase drinks unless they intend to consume those drinks **in the bar**.

If you, as a member, require alcoholic drinks for your guests to consume elsewhere on the premises, the guests must be signed in and **only you or another member** can purchase drinks for them to **take away** from the bar area.

The days of dwindling clothing stock are over.

The new summer range is here. There are many old favourites and some useful and stylish new designs for members, both ladies and gents.

Also, we have decorative items such as epaulettes in white and black for boat owners and epaulette shirts to fit them on to.

Tie bars and cuff links are now available. The popular Australian made crew neck pullovers are also still available.

Keep your eye on the cabinet in the foyer for the new stock.

' Vale - RON ELLIOT '



Ron Elliott
7th October 2011, aged 91 years
RVMYC 1965 to 2011
Secretary 1977 to 1998
Life Member

***'Home is the sailor
Home from the sea.'***



' FIRST AID COURSES '

From Chris Ackerman

We are seeking expressions of interest in first aid courses being held at RVMYC. In order to start the process of organising this type of training course, we need to establish how many members would be interested in attending.

We are yet to set the date(s); however we expect to run the course(s) on a Wednesday night and it may take two sessions to complete the training. If you would like to register your interest please email the Club at rvmc@optusnet.com.au or call the office.