

## **HMAS Leeuwin: The Story of the RAN's Junior Recruits**

Brian Adams



SEA POWER CENTRE - AUSTRALIA



HMAS LEEUWIN:  
THE STORY  
OF THE RAN'S  
JUNIOR RECRUITS

---

© Copyright Commonwealth of Australia 2009

This work is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, and with standard source credit included, no part may be reproduced without written permission. Inquiries should be addressed to the Director, Sea Power Centre - Australia, Department of Defence, CANBERRA ACT 2600.

National Library of Australian Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Adams, Brian 1952 -

HMAS Leeuwin: The Story of the RAN's Junior Recruits

ISSN 1327-5658

ISBN 978-0-642-29717-4

# HMAS LEEUWIN: THE STORY OF THE RAN'S JUNIOR RECRUITS

---

Brian Adams

## Disclaimer

The views expressed are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Government of Australia, the Department of Defence and the Royal Australian Navy. The Commonwealth of Australia will not be legally responsible in contract, tort or otherwise for any statement made in this publication.

## Sea Power Centre – Australia

The Sea Power Centre – Australia (SPC-A), was established to undertake activities to promote the study, discussion and awareness of maritime issues and strategy within the RAN and the Defence and civil communities at large. The mission of the SPC-A is:

- to promote understanding of sea power and its application to the security of Australia's national interests
- to manage the development of RAN doctrine and facilitate its incorporation into ADF joint doctrine
- to contribute to regional engagement
- within the higher Defence organisation, contribute to the development of maritime strategic concepts and strategic and operational level doctrine, and facilitate informed force structure decisions
- to preserve, develop, and promote Australian naval history.

Comment on this Paper or any enquiry related to the activities of the SPC-A should be directed to:

## Director Sea Power Centre - Australia

Sea Power Centre - Australia  
Department of Defence  
PO Box 7942  
Canberra BC, ACT, 2610

Telephone: +61 2 6127 6512  
Facsimile: +61 2 6127 6519  
Email: [seapower.centre@defence.gov.au](mailto:seapower.centre@defence.gov.au)  
Internet: [www.navy.gov.au/spc](http://www.navy.gov.au/spc)

# Papers in Australian Maritime Affairs

---

The *Papers in Australian Maritime Affairs* series is a vehicle for the distribution of substantial work by members of the Royal Australian Navy as well as members of the Australian and international community undertaking original research into regional maritime issues. The series is designed to foster debate and discussion on maritime issues of relevance to the Royal Australian Navy, the Australian Defence Force, Australia and the region more generally.

Other volumes in the series are:

- No. 1 *From Empire Defence to the Long Haul: Post-war Defence Policy and its Impact on Naval Force Structure Planning 1945–1955* by Hector Donohue
- No. 2 *No Easy Answers: The Development of the Navies of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka 1945–1996* by James Goldrick
- No. 3 *Coastal Shipping: The Vital Link* by Mary Ganter
- No. 4 *Australian Carrier Decisions: The Decisions to Procure HMA Ships Albatross, Sydney and Melbourne* by Anthony Wright
- No. 5 *Issues in Regional Maritime Strategy: Papers by Foreign Visiting Military Fellows with the Royal Australian Navy Maritime Studies Program – 1998* edited by David Wilson
- No. 6 *Australia's Naval Inheritance: Imperial Maritime Strategy and the Australia Station 1880–1909* by Nicholas A Lambert
- No. 7 *Maritime Aviation: Prospects for the 21st Century* edited by David Stevens
- No. 8 *Maritime War in the 21st Century: The Medium and Small Navy Perspective* edited by David Wilson
- No. 9 *HMAS Sydney II: The Cruiser and the Controversy in the Archives of the United Kingdom* edited by Captain Peter Hore, RN
- No. 10 *The Strategic Importance of Seaborne Trade and Shipping: A Common Interest of Asia Pacific* edited by Andrew Forbes
- No. 11 *Protecting Maritime Resources: Boundary Delimitation, Resource Conflicts and Constabulary Responsibilities* edited by Barry Snushall and Rachael Heath
- No. 12 *Australian Maritime Issues 2004: SPC-A Annual* edited by Glenn Kerr
- No. 13 *Future Environmental Policy Trends to 2020* by the Centre for Maritime Policy, University of Wollongong, edited by Glenn Kerr and Barry Snushall

- No. 14 *Peter Mitchell Essays 2003* edited by Glenn Kerr
- No. 15 *A Critical Vulnerability: The Impact of the Submarine Threat on Australia's Maritime Defence 1915–1954* by David Stevens
- No. 16 *Australian Maritime Issues 2005: SPC-A Annual* edited by Gregory P Gilbert and Robert J Davitt
- No. 17 *Australian Naval Personalities* edited by Gregory P Gilbert
- No. 18 *ADF Training in Australia's Maritime Environment* edited by Chris Rahman and Robert J Davitt
- No. 19 *Australian Maritime Issues 2006: SPC-A Annual* edited by Andrew Forbes and Michelle Lovi
- No. 20 *The Russian Pacific Fleet: From the Crimean War to Perestroika* by Alexey D Muraviev
- No. 21 *Australian Maritime Issues 2007: SPC-A Annual* edited by Andrew Forbes
- No. 22 *Freedom of Navigation in the Indo-Pacific Region* by Stuart Kaye
- No. 23 *Asian Energy Security: Regional Cooperation in the Malacca Strait* edited by Andrew Forbes
- No. 24 *The Global Maritime Partnership Initiative: Implications for the Royal Australian Navy* by Chris Rahman
- No. 25 *Missing Pieces: The Intelligence Jigsaw and RAN Operations 1939-71* by Ian Pfennigwerth
- No. 26 *A Historical Appreciation of the Contribution of Naval Air Power* by Andrew T Ross and James M Sandison with an introduction by Jack McCaffrie
- No. 27 *Australian Maritime Issues 2008: SPC-A Annual* edited by Gregory P Gilbert and Nick Stewart
- No. 28 *Presence, Power Projection and Sea Control - The RAN in the Gulf 1990 - 2009* edited by John Mortimer and David Stevens
- No. 29 *HMAS Leeuwin: The Story of the RAN's Junior Recruits* by Brian Adams

# Contents

---

Papers in Australian Maritime Affairs	v
Abbreviations	viii
About the Author	x
Foreword	xi
1. History	1
2. Reintroduction of the Boy Sailor Entry	11
3. HMAS <i>Leeuwin</i>	21
4. The Boys	27
5. Junior Recruit Education and Training	31
6. Life as a Junior Recruit	41
7. <i>Leeuwin</i> Staff	77
8. Discipline	83
9. The End of Boy Sailors	97
10. Junior Recruits Today	105
Appendix	109
Bibliography	115



# Abbreviations

---

ABR	Australian Book of Reference
ADF	Australian Defence Force
ADFA	Australian Defence Force Academy
CO	Commanding Officer
CPO	Chief Petty Officer
DCN	Deputy Chief of Navy
DDG	Guided Missile Destroyer
DNPS	Director of Naval Personnel Services
ET1	Educational Test Number 1
HET	Higher Educational Test
HMAS	Her/His Majesty's Australian Ship
HMS	Her/His Majesty's Ship
JR	Junior Recruit
JRTE	Junior Recruit Training Establishment
MUP	Men Under Punishment
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NBM	Naval Board Minute
NOCWA	Naval Officer Commanding Western Australia
NOICWA	Naval Officer in Charge Western Australia
PO	Petty Officer
PSC	Personnel Services Committee
PTI	Physical Training Instructor
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RANC	Royal Australian Naval College
RAT	Reallocation Test
ROP	Report of Proceedings

SBD	Seaward Defence Boat
SGCE	Services General Certificate of Education
WRANS	Woman's Royal Australian Naval Service
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II
XO	Executive Officer

## About the Author

---

### Rear Admiral Brian Adams AO, RAN (rtd)

Rear Admiral Brian Adams AO, RAN (rtd) joined the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) as a member of HMAS *Leeuwin*'s 22nd junior recruit intake in January 1968. After completing the Topman course in 1969 he trained and commissioned as a seaman officer. Specialising in joint and amphibious warfare, he commanded HMA Ships *Tarakan* and *Tobruk* and trained and served with United Kingdom and United States naval and marine forces. In headquarters positions he worked in naval and joint warfare policy development, capital equipment acquisition programming, resource policy development and officer training.

His senior appointments include command of the Royal Australian Naval College at HMAS *Creswell*, Jervis Bay, Director of Naval Warfare in Maritime Headquarters and Commandant of the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA). In the rank of rear admiral he was the Deputy Chief of Navy (DCN) from 2000 to 2002 and Head of the Defence Personnel Executive from 2002 to 2005.

He is a graduate of the Australian Army Command and Staff College, the Joint Services Staff College and the Australian College of Defence and Strategic Studies. He holds a bachelor's degree in arts and a master's degree in business administration. In 1997 he was made a member of the Order of Australia for services to Australian Defence Force (ADF) warfare capability development. He was promoted to officer of the Order in 2003 for services to the ADF and the RAN as Commandant of ADFA and as DCN. He retired from permanent RAN service in June 2005.

# Foreword

---

Over nearly 25 years, between January 1960 and December 1984, approximately 13,000 15 and 16 year old boys joined the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) as junior recruits – a group the size of our current Navy workforce. The world of the ‘JR’s’, as they were called, was often a very different one from the modern entry processes to the RAN. The majority served in warships before turning 18, some experiencing active service in the Indonesian Confrontation and the Vietnam War.

Before joining the Fleet, most of the boys trained for a year in the Junior Recruit Training Establishment located in HMAS *Leeuwin*, a Navy base located on the banks of the Swan River at Preston Point in Fremantle, Western Australia. Some received their junior recruit training at HMAS *Cerberus*, a base near Westernport south of Melbourne, Victoria.

Most of these former Junior Recruits have retired after serving Australia in peace and war for up to 40 years. However, some still serve throughout the three Services of the Australian Defence Force. I myself joined *Leeuwin* as a JR in 1970, making the long train journey from Queensland to Perth to pursue what has become my life’s career in the RAN.

This book is the story of their – our – experience while under training and of how, late in the 20th century, the Australian Navy still relied on boys to help crew its ships. It is also a record of a unique training scheme that had its origins in the Royal Navy of Nelson’s day, one that is unlikely to be used in the Australian Navy again. Paul Kerr, a junior recruit of the 60th intake, began researching and writing the story; it was completed by Brian Adams of the 22nd intake with the willing assistance of many other former junior recruits. Our gratitude is due to all of them for their tenacity and effort in recording this unusual chapter in the history of the RAN.

Vice Admiral RH Crane, AM, CSM, RAN

Chief of Navy



Canberra, December 2009



*HMAS Leeuwin situated on the banks of the Swan River  
at Preston Point in Fremantle, Western Australia (RAN)*

# 1. History

---

Royal Australian Navy (RAN) practices have in very many ways followed closely those of the British Royal Navy, the navy in which its historical roots lie. This was true of its approaches to recruiting and staffing when, early in the 20th century, the Royal Navy provided a ready template for the development of its fledgling Australian counterpart.

While Royal Navy regulations of the 18th and 19th centuries did specify a minimum age of 13 for the recruitment of boys, or 11 for the son of a naval officer, they were widely ignored and abused until the British Admiralty properly began to enforce them in 1815.<sup>1</sup> Boys of nine, and indeed some as young as six, served in warships during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. The youngest member of Admiral Nelson's crew in HMS *Victory* during the Battle of Trafalgar was a 10-year-old boy, John Doag of Edinburgh.<sup>2</sup> While a popular image of these boys may be that of a midshipman in the Hornblower caste or the 'powder monkey' of Hollywood movies, the reality was different. A formal or official rank or rating of 'boy' did not exist until late in the 19th century and, in the main, boys were employed in ships as servants, or apprentices as they were called, allotted to various officers to undertake menial jobs.

Underprivileged boys were once a useful source of manpower for both the Royal and Merchant navies. Several organisations provided boys as a by-product of their charitable work. For example, the Marine Society founded in 1756 by Jonas Hanway, focused on boys aged from 12 to 17. Most of the boys cared for by the Society between 1703 and 1815 were unwanted illegitimate children, orphans or boys guilty of a minor crime. As an act of charity the Society fed and clothed them and gave them a little education and an exposure to the basics of seamanship. After a period of weeks the boys would be drafted into sea service, mostly to warships but in peacetime often to merchant ships.<sup>3</sup>

Whether they arrived from charitable organisations or not, once in a warship the under-15s could be rated third-class boys and those between 15 and 18 were second-class boys, both quite distinct from the midshipmen of the first class (officer). The numbers of boys permitted in each ship was regulated. In larger ships a maximum of 13 second-class boys could be borne while up to 19 third-class boys could serve in the largest warships. They were generally employed as officer's servants before they were 15.<sup>4</sup>

The nature of boys' employment at sea changed and improved considerably after the Napoleonic War. More concern was shown for the boys' welfare, education and their value to the Royal Navy as future sailors. As stated in an 1853 Admiralty Circular:

All boys ... may be employed as servants ... but all officers in command are to take care that the employment of boys in this capacity does not, on any account interfere with their systematic schooling, instruction in gunnery, exercise aloft, and other branches of a seaman's duty; or in useful trades of which they may possess a knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

In 1854 the British Admiralty began using square-rigged sailing ships as training vessels for boys. Later that century some of these vessels, stripped of most of their rigging, were moored as 'hulks' in a number of English ports including Falmouth, Portland and Portsmouth. There they were used as immobile training schools and accommodation barracks. One hulk, that of HMS *Ganges*, gave its name to what became in 1905 part of the Royal Navy Training Establishment Shotley, a barracks near Ipswich devoted to the training of boy seamen. By the time the *Ganges* training scheme ended in 1976, 150,000 boys had passed through it and the term 'Shotley Boy' had become part of Royal Navy vernacular.<sup>6</sup>

## Australian Colonial Navies

Under the *Colonial Naval Defence Act 1865* the governments of Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia were permitted to operate armed ships in their own territorial waters. The various governments relied on part-time militiamen to man their ships with the crews comprised principally of 'public servants whose wages were voted each year by the colonial parliaments' and 'ex-Royal Navy personnel, having legitimately taken their time on the ... [Australia] Station'.<sup>7</sup> State militias augmented the crews of these vessels for training periods or in times of tension but the men provided were not youngsters, 'they tended to be mature men, employed in occupations associated with the water'.<sup>8</sup>

While boys may not have been employed in the Australian colonial navies, boy seaman certainly served in Australia as crew members of Royal Navy ships deployed to the Australia Station. Service on the Station seems to have been very attractive to some boys not for professional reasons but for the prospect of abruptly severing ties with their employer. In the 1870s Commodore James Goodenough, RN, reported that 'eight lads, under 18 years of age, have been decoyed away from HMS *Pearl*, Sydney'.<sup>9</sup>

While the colonial navies did not include boys in their crews, civilian authorities had great interest in the utility of ships and naval training in helping to deal with troubled youth. In Victoria, 'Industrial' and reformatory schools were established both on land and in hulks under the provisions of the *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864*. Victorian state records show that 'boys on the boys training ship *Nelson* and the reformatory [ship] ... *Sir Harry Smith* were to be trained as sailors'.<sup>10</sup> *Nelson* was used in a reformatory role from August 1864 and received its first draft of boys to 'naval training' in June 1865.<sup>11</sup> An indication of how the reformatory ship scheme was used in Victoria can be seen in a reference made in Victorian state records to a boy named 'Doolan'. Born on 28 April 1856 in Castlemaine, Victoria, he was committed for trial in the circuit court on a charge of grievous bodily harm. For his crime the boy was sentenced to a year in *Sir Harry Smith* by Chief Justice Sir William Stawell.<sup>12</sup> A year of naval training and reform seems to have little beneficial effect on the boy as 'Doolan', whose real name was Jack Dooling, went on to achieve notoriety as the bushranger referred to in the folk song *Wild Colonial Boy*.

New South Wales took a similar approach to using ships and naval training to deal with juvenile delinquents. In 1866 the New South Wales Government used the old sailing ship *Vernon* moored in Sydney Harbour as a school ship for child offenders. In 1890 another old sailing ship, *Sobraon*, replaced *Vernon*. Moored off Cockatoo Island as a 'Nautical School Ship', *Sobraon* served in the role until 1911. By 1905 the Department of Public Instruction administered two industrial schools, *Sobraon* for boys and Parramatta for girls, and two reformatories, the Carpentarian Reformatory for boys and the Shaftesbury Reformatory for girls. The Carpentarian Reformatory at Eastwood in many ways followed the regime on *Sobraon*. Over 5000 boys who had been committed by the Children's Court passed through the Reformatory, dressed in naval uniform, sleeping in hammocks, and conducting their daily activities to the sound of a ship's bell rung from outside the Superintendent's office, a location referred to as the 'quarterdeck'. At the Mettray Agricultural School boys were trained for the navy and slept in hammocks.<sup>13</sup> Naval procedures were clearly highly regarded as a means of reforming wayward boys.

Despite the strong emphasis on naval training and life at sea in the reformation of juveniles there was no direct connection between RAN recruitment and the reformatory ships and floating industrial schools. The aim seems simply to have been, as HJ Thurston puts it, 'to encourage young lads to join the navy or merchant service'.<sup>14</sup> The use of hulk ships and naval training as a means of dealing with troubled youth fell out of favour early last century. However, there exists in Australia today, and indeed in many parts of the world, a strong belief in the beneficial effects for youth of sail training and life in ships. The British Government's 1988 Bicentennial gift to Australia, the brigantine *Young Endeavour*, is today operated full time at public expense by the RAN on behalf of the Federal Government's Young Endeavour Youth Scheme. The scheme provides young Australians with a 'unique, challenging and inspirational experience that increases their self awareness, develops their teamwork and leadership skills and creates a strong sense of community responsibility'.<sup>15</sup>

## The beginnings of the RAN

Following the post-Federation transfer of the colonial naval forces to federal control the question arose as to how these forces should or could be developed into a stronger, unified Commonwealth navy. The matter was to be a source of vigorous debate in Australia and Britain over the next decade. It was resolved to some degree when, at the Imperial Conference in 1909, a British initiative led to raising of 'Fleet Units'. These were forces of armoured and unarmoured cruisers, destroyers, submarines and auxiliaries that, in Australia's case, could provide for the nation's coastal defence and operate away from Australia as part of much larger British imperial forces. Acceptance of the British offer presented the Australian Government and its Director of Naval Forces, Captain William Rooke Creswell, RAN, with a number of very difficult problems to overcome, one of which was how to provide trained crews for the ships



of their fleet unit. In 1911, as part of the task of defining the nature of the relationship between the Royal Navy and the RAN following the passing of the *Australian Naval Defence Act* in November 1910, it was decided that there would be such commonality between the way that both navies' officers and sailors were trained so that they would be interchangeable.<sup>16</sup> This 'confirmation that RAN personnel were to be wholly interchangeable with those of the Royal Navy' was 'one of the most significant aspects of the fleet unit scheme, and certainly the one with the longest lasting impact'.<sup>17</sup>

As David Stevens says in *The Royal Australian Navy*, 'acquiring ships was a relatively simple matter. The far greater difficulty was to organise the personnel'.<sup>18</sup> To crew its fleet the new navy had to expand from the 400 men it had in 1911 to a force of at least 3400, 20 per cent of which needed technical skills. To meet its needs the RAN established boy entry and adult entry sailor training schemes.

To train the adults the RAN relied on existing facilities at Flinders Naval Depot, a former Victorian Navy establishment located near Westernport in the state's south. Commissioned as HMAS *Cerberus* on 1 April 1921, it remains the Navy's principal sailor training establishment. Initial adult enlistment was for five to seven years, and those who wished to join had to be 'smart active youths and young men between the ages of seventeen and 25 years, of very good character'. Recruiting was good:

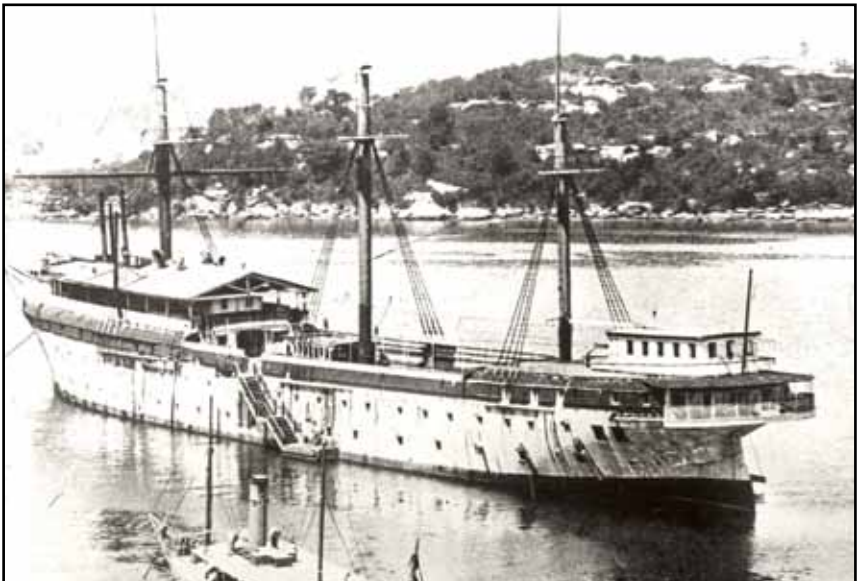
By March 1913, the RAN had 1004 men under training, and to further restrict applications the board raised the age of entry for adult recruits. In June 1913 the RAN's personnel strength reached 2500, supplemented with the loan of 900 seamen from the Royal Navy.<sup>19</sup>

To cater for boy sailor entrants the Commonwealth purchased *Sobraon* from the New South Wales Government for £15,000. The 55-year-old hulk was converted for employment as a boys training ship with a capacity of 300 and, on 25 April 1912, it was commissioned into the RAN as HMAS *Tingira*, an aboriginal word meaning 'ocean' or 'open sea'.<sup>20</sup> The name change was significant as it was intended to assist in differentiating between *Sobraon*'s former reform school role and *Tingira*'s naval training function.<sup>21</sup> To further illustrate its desire to differentiate between reform and naval training the Navy stipulated that 'boys who have been in prisons or reformatories are not received'.<sup>22</sup> Two months later the ship accepted the first entry of 37 boys ranging from 14 to 16 years of age who, with the consent of their parents or guardians, were enlisted to serve until they were 18-years-old, and then for seven years thereafter.

No longer a sea going vessel *Tingira* was moored permanently at Rose Bay in Sydney Harbour. With a white hull, yellow painted lower masts and a canvas awning covering the main deck she was a prominent feature of the harbour. The ship was supported in its training role by shore facilities including a sick bay for the boys in Kent Hall, named after the Duke of Kent, located on the corner of New South Head Road and Vickery Avenue. Drill, gunnery practice and sports activities were conducted by the boys on

grounds at nearby Lyne Park. *Tingira* was both a school and barracks. Boys underwent a year of training in her as either seamen, stokers, signalmen or telegraphists before being sent to sea to complete their training. The Navy intended from the outset that it would be from these boys that it would later choose its warrant officers, specifically gunners, boatswains, signal boatswains and warrant telegraphists.<sup>23</sup> Clearly, the RAN saw *Tingira* as much more than an industrial school, as recruiting material stated:

The boys will undergo a discipline that should inculcate in them valuable habits of promptitude and exactness, factors making for the building up of character. Then, as a result of their Naval training, many boys will doubtless form loftier notions of all that is conveyed in the words 'Duty', 'Honour', and 'Conduct', so obliging themselves for the praiseworthy discharge of their obligations of citizenship, when they arrive at man's estate.<sup>24</sup>



*HMAS Tingira* (RAN)



*William Evan Allan trained as a boy sailor in HMAS Tingira in 1914 and 1915. Born in 1899 he died aged 106, the last Australian naval veteran of World War I (Allan Family)*

Life in *Tingira* was not easy for the boys. The day started at 0530 and boys were kept busy training until 'turn in' time at 2130. Training included seamanship, rope and wire work, splicing, rowing and sailing, signalling, anchor work, mechanics and firearms, as well as general schooling. Corporal punishment was meted out for indiscretions and there was a strong emphasis placed on physical fitness, sports and games. Swimming was compulsory and boys participated in some form of physical activity every day. Leave was limited to 5 hours ashore between 1300 and 1830 each Wednesday afternoon. 'Natives', boys whose homes were in Sydney, were permitted to go home each week from midday Saturday until early Sunday evening. In the words of one *Tingira* boy 'from this routine emerged fit and healthy boys well trained to take their place in the Fleet'.<sup>25</sup>

*Tingira* boys saw service in both world wars, in the Korean War and in the Malayan Emergency. After HMAS *Sydney* (I) sank the German warship SMS *Emden* her commanding officer (CO) Captain JCT Glossop, RN, 'confirmed the splendid conduct of the sixty men and boys from *Tingira*'.<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, the RAN's last World War I (WWI) veteran was a *Tingira* boy. Born on 24 July 1899 in Bega, New South Wales, William Allan enlisted as a 14-year-old on 13 March 1914. He trained in *Tingira* before joining the light cruiser HMAS *Encounter*, his first ship in a career which spanned 33 years, encompassed two world wars and saw him retire as a commissioned officer.<sup>27</sup> The boy believed to be the first to enter the *Tingira* training scheme was Mortimer Froude who, aged 18 and after transferring to the Royal Navy, died in the Battle of Jutland when his ship, the old armoured cruiser HMS *Defence*, blew up.<sup>28</sup>

The *Tingira* boy sailor training scheme was effective in producing quality sailors for the Navy but while it remained a very popular avenue of entry the Naval Board found in 1925 that insufficient funds had been allocated to crew the new ships ordered. Attempts were made to save money by reducing the size of some ship's companies but these measures proved inadequate. The Board therefore decided to achieve a major cost saving by abandoning *Tingira* and the boys training scheme. *Tingira*'s closure in August 1926 had two unfortunate immediate effects; it placed additional pressure on adult recruit training in *Cerberus* and shut down an effective avenue of sailor entry at a time when the RAN still struggled to meet recruiting targets.<sup>29</sup> By the time *Tingira* decommissioned on 27 June 1927, 3168 boys had trained in her.<sup>30</sup>

Accounts vary as to the how *Tingira* was used after its retirement from naval service. Some have it being used at different times as a coal hulk, a storage ship and a hostel for destitute men during the Great Depression. In 1932, it was said to have been used as a viewing platform for spectators at the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. At one stage it was purchased by a Major Friere and Louise Ankin who planned to turn it into a maritime museum.<sup>31</sup> This plan did not happen and, after a period moored in Berry's Bay, it was finally broken up in 1942 by its owner, Karlo Selvinen.<sup>32</sup>

## Endnotes

---

- <sup>1</sup> J Laffin, *Jack Tar: The Story of the British Sailor*, Castle and Company, London, 1969, p. 33.
- <sup>2</sup> P Whitlock and W Pearce, *HMS Victory and Admiral Lord Nelson*, Portsmouth Royal Naval Museum Trading Company, Portsmouth, UK (undated), p. 9.
- <sup>3</sup> Laffin, *Jack Tar*, p. 34.
- <sup>4</sup> S Pope, *Hornblower's Navy: Life at Sea in the Age of Nelson*, Orion Media, London, 1998, pp. 49 and 50.
- <sup>5</sup> Admiralty Circular 121, Regulations for the Entry of Boys and Men into the Navy - Pay - Leave - Gratuities - Pensions and the Pay of Warrant Officers, British Admiralty, United Kingdom, 14 June 1853.
- <sup>6</sup> For an account of 20th century life in Shotley see D Phillipson, *Band of Brothers: Boy Seamen in the Royal Navy 1800-1956*, Sutton Publishing, 2003.
- <sup>7</sup> B Nicholls, 'Sailors to Citizens, Citizens and Sailors, Citizens to Sailors: Naval Men and Australia from 1788 to 1914', in D Stevens & J Reeve (eds), *The Navy and the Nation: The Influence of the Navy on Modern Australia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, Australia, 2005, p. 278.
- <sup>8</sup> Nicholls, 'Sailors to Citizens, Citizens and Sailors', p. 278.
- <sup>9</sup> Nicholls, 'Sailors to Citizens, Citizens and Sailors', p. 273.
- <sup>10</sup> *Prisons and Youth Training Centres*, Record Group VRG 9, Public Record Office of Victoria.
- <sup>11</sup> C Jones, *Australian Colonial Navies*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1986, p. 25.
- <sup>12</sup> Australian Dictionary of Biography Online, 28 Sep 2008, <[www.adb.online.andu.edu.au](http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au)> (October 2008).
- <sup>13</sup> P Quinn, *Unenlightened Efficiency: The Administration of the Juvenile Correction System in New South Wales 1905-1988*, PhD Thesis, University of Sydney, 2004, pp. 44-45.
- <sup>14</sup> HJ Thurston, *The History of HMAS Tingira*, Naval Historical Review, September 1979.
- <sup>15</sup> The Young Endeavour Youth Scheme homepage, <[www.youngendeavour.gov.au](http://www.youngendeavour.gov.au)> (October 2007).
- <sup>16</sup> B Nicholls, 'William Rooke Creswell and an Australian Navy' in T Frame, J Goldrick and P Jones (eds), *Reflections on the Royal Australian Navy*, Kangaroo Press, Sydney NSW, 1991, pp. 46-48.
- <sup>17</sup> Nicholls, 'William Rooke Creswell and an Australian Navy', p. 23.
- <sup>18</sup> D Stevens (ed), *The Royal Australian Navy*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, pp. 22-23.
- <sup>19</sup> Stevens, *The Royal Australian Navy*, p. 23.
- <sup>20</sup> Thurston, *The History of HMAS Tingira*.
- <sup>21</sup> G Swinden, 'HMAS Tingira 1912-1927: A Legacy of Service', *Naval Historical Review*, Vol 12, No 4, December 1991, p. 27.
- <sup>22</sup> Navy Office, *How to Join the Royal Australian Navy*, Navy Office, Melbourne, 1 Sep 1912, p. 13.
- <sup>23</sup> Navy Office, *How to Join the Royal Australian Navy*, p. 13.

- <sup>24</sup> Navy Office, *How to Join the Royal Australian Navy*, p. 6.
- <sup>25</sup> L Boxsell, *Open Sea: The Official Organ of the New South Wales Branch of the HMAS Tingira Old Boys Association*, Vol 3, No 4, Jun 1970, p. 19.
- <sup>26</sup> Stevens, *The Royal Australian Navy*, p. 41.
- <sup>27</sup> M Brooke, 'William Evan Allan: Life of a Boy Sailor', *Navy News*, Vol 28 No 20, Canberra, Australia, 3 Nov 2005.
- <sup>28</sup> Stevens, *The Royal Australian Navy*, p. 38.
- <sup>29</sup> Stevens, *The Royal Australian Navy*, p. 76.
- <sup>30</sup> Thurston, *The History of HMAS Tingira*.
- <sup>31</sup> *Open Sea*, Vol 5, No 2, Dec 1974, p. 9.
- <sup>32</sup> Thurston, *The History of HMAS Tingira*.



**Lionel Derell EGGINS**  
Able Seaman 6115  
Royal Australian Navy

Lionel was born at Southgate August 18th 1902, the son of Frederick and Evelyn Eggins and brother of Muriel, Eric, Evelyn, Iris, Thomas, Myrtle, Lyle, Gregory and Frederick. His education began at Palmers Island School and later continued at Alumny Creek for part of 1915.

He joined the Navy as a cadet on May 9th 1917 on the training ship *Tingira* anchored at Rose Bay. At the age of 17, during the closing months of the war, he served on HMAS *Fantome* patrolling the Pacific Islands around the New Hebrides and Fiji, mainly based at Suva.

After the war he returned to the family farm at Harwood Island for a short time before moving to Maroochydore where he married and joined his brother Eric in a fishing partnership. The brothers also shipped stores between Brisbane and Mooloolaba. In 1927, he returned to the Clarence and resumed farming on Harwood Island. Lionel died November 22nd 1963 in Maclean Hospital survived by his wife, formerly Ellen Warrell and children Clarence, Elsie, Frederick, Gordon, Reginald, Lila and Lionel. His daughter Beryl died in infancy in 1933.

*Lionel Eggins who, after his time at Tingira, served  
in the RAN during the closing months of World War I (RAN)*

## 2. Reintroduction of the Boy Sailor Entry

---

Throughout most of its existence the RAN has had difficulty attracting, recruiting and retaining the numbers of people it needs, particularly those with technical qualifications or the aptitude to undertake technical training once enlisted. On a number of occasions it has relied heavily on sailors recruited or on loan from the Royal Navy, technically and non-technically trained, in order to crew its ships.<sup>1</sup> For example, in 1950 and 1951 efforts were made to recruit up to 1000 Royal Navy sailors, and more from other Commonwealth navies.

A number of specific factors exacerbated the RAN's staffing difficulties, some of which were beyond the capacity of its leadership to control. One factor was a 'boom and bust' approach to work force planning, as large and poorly controlled reductions in sailor numbers occurred after the major wars of the 20th century and during the Great Depression. Other factors were low pay, appalling living and working conditions in ships, and inadequate provision for the welfare of families of married sailors. Not all these problems were unique to the RAN but all contributed to the Navy's inability to attract sufficient numbers of high calibre people to a long-term naval career.<sup>2</sup>

Determined efforts were made after World War II (WWII) to find solutions to the problems of poor recruiting and retention. In 1950, women were permitted to join the permanent Navy, albeit still mostly in support roles for the men serving at sea. Reintroduced in 1951, National Service had some limited success in boosting sailor numbers until abolished in 1957.<sup>3</sup> The RAN decided in 1951 to provide more support to the Australian Sea Cadet Council in the hope of increasing the numbers of former Sea Cadets enlisting in the Navy. Re-engagement bonuses of £250 and £500 were introduced in 1955 as an inducement for sailors to sign on for a further three or six years of service respectively. In 1956 the Royal Navy recruiting initiative was terminated because of the small number of suitable applicants it had attracted.<sup>4</sup> In another measure designed to improve its ability to recruit from overseas, the Navy sought to adopt a common nationality requirement that would permit it to accept non-British migrants as recruits, an approach already adopted by the Army.<sup>5</sup>

By 1957, despite these efforts the RAN's staffing problems had become so acute more drastic action was needed. In that year a number of warships were decommissioned, thereby reducing demand for sailors and, in an effort to stabilise numbers, the RAN's six year term of initial engagement for sailors was extended to either 9 or 12 years.<sup>6</sup> Action was also taken to reduce the number of sailors who were not able to render effective service – referred to rather harshly but nevertheless accurately as 'ineffectives' – and to reduce both the number of commissioned shore establishments and the number of sailors posted to them.



The RAN's staffing problems were exacerbated by the increasing technological complexity of naval equipment and of naval warfare in general, and by major force structure developments being planned partly in response to that complexity. A plan to introduce the Australian-made Ikara anti-submarine warfare missile was one such development. Acquisition from the United States of modern A-4 Skyhawk jet aircraft to operate from the aircraft carrier HMAS *Melbourne*, a plan to acquire new submarines and the decision to purchase guided missile destroyers (DDGs) from the United States were others.<sup>7</sup> Maintaining a range of new equipment and crewing more complex platforms, particularly the modern DDGs, with better educated and trained sailors able to cope with the new technology added an extra layer of difficulty to the Navy's already pressing staffing problems.

While the Navy had ceased taking in boys as general entry sailors through the *Tingira* scheme in 1926 it had never completely stopped recruiting them for other purposes. From 1913, boys aged 13 had been recruited to undergo three years of training at the Royal Australian Naval College (RANC) in order to become naval officers. Also, in 1956 it began accepting boys as young as 15 to undergo three years of apprentice training at HMAS *Nirimba* to become the Navy's technical tradesmen. In an additional, albeit small, step in September 1950, the Naval Board approved in principle the entry of 'Band Boys' aged between 15 and 17 years of age.<sup>8</sup> Also referred to as 'boy musicians', these boys were retitled 'junior musicians' in 1953.<sup>9</sup>

In a much more significant step, in April 1959 the Naval Board decided to consider the re-introduction of the recruitment of boys as general entry sailors while retaining the adult recruit entry at the *Cerberus* Recruit School.<sup>10</sup> In June of the same year the Board approved the proposal to reintroduce boy training and directed that a progress report be prepared after a year's operation.<sup>11</sup> Reversing their earlier decision, Board members also decided to refer to the boys as 'junior recruits' rather than 'boys' or 'junior ratings' as the latter term was already in use as a collective term to describe all sailors of leading seaman rank and below. In deciding to reintroduce RAN boy sailor entry the Naval Board also directed that sailors entered by that means be trained not in *Cerberus* but on the other side of Australia at HMAS *Leeuwin*, a shore base in Fremantle, Western Australia.

The Naval Board's decision to introduce the junior recruit entry and its associated training scheme had been informed by a plan developed quite quickly between April and June 1959.<sup>12</sup> While the plan was submitted to the Board by the Second Naval Member, an admiral responsible for personnel matters, it was prepared by a Working Group comprised of four senior Navy headquarters staff officers: the Director of Naval Education Services, the Director of Naval Personnel Services (DNPS), the Director of Naval Works and the Director of Civilian Personnel. The DNPS was, as was relatively common in the RAN at the time, a Royal Navy officer on exchange service. It is relevant that he would most likely have had an understanding of the operations of

HMS *Ganges*, the British boy sailor training establishment of which *Leeuwin* would become the Australian equivalent. Their remit was substantial: to devise in detail a plan to implement the scheme, identify needs and costs of infrastructure and staff, and ascertain the willingness of Western Australian government authorities to participate in educating the boys to Western Australian Junior Certificate level. The 63-page Working Group report delivered to the Board was a succinct document containing in addition to a short argument leading to recommendations, the draft of a manual titled *Junior Recruit Training Instructions*, along with appendixes covering 'Works, Complement of the Training Establishment, Transport, Boats, method of Selection, Training and Entry Schedule for 1960/1961, Movement of Personnel and Effect on Reserve Training'. Ten months later the draft manual was published as the RAN's *Australian Book of Reference (ABR) 697*. Titled *The Manual of Instructions for the Junior Recruit Training Establishment* it was the bible for junior recruit training for the next 24 years.

The Working Group again visited Western Australia soon after the April 1959 Naval Board decision, this time armed with three specific items of planning guidance. The first was that there should be two entries per year of 150 boys each. Secondly, on entry the boys would be aged between 15 and 17. Finally, the boys would remain in *Leeuwin* for 18 months, undertake basic training for a year before being allocated to one of four branches – Seamen, Communications, Engineering or Electrical – to then complete six months of technical training specific to each of those branches.

Cost factors and the undesirability of duplicating existing navy training schools were the principal reasons why the Working Group did not ultimately favour proceeding with the 18 month plan specified in the Board's guidance to them. Its members had calculated that accommodating 450 boys in *Leeuwin* for each 18 month period would involve 'works' - infrastructure - expenditure of £395,000 spread over three years while 300 boys could be accommodated for 12 months with expenditure of £83,000 spread over two years. Moreover, providing unique-to-branch technical training in *Leeuwin* would require duplication of a number of schools that already existed at *Cerberus* in Victoria and at HMAS *Watson* in Sydney. The financial cost and the increased demand for additional experienced and qualified training staff would have been counter productive and wasteful in a navy suffering acute staffing difficulties and perennial financial problems.

Allocation of junior recruits to the proposed four branches under the 18 month option, rather than allocation to all of the Navy's branches including Supply, Medical and Aviation, was also not favoured by the Working Group. In its judgement:

The product of *Leeuwin* will be of higher educational standard than the present minimum requirements in some Branches ... it is wise to have in every Branch a leavening of really good men who will provide the higher rates and it might become desirable from time to time to divert some of the *Leeuwin* trained ratings into all branches.<sup>13</sup>

Clearly, from the outset, the Working Group's members had high expectations of the standard to be achieved by boys educated and trained at *Leeuwin* and of the contribution they could subsequently make to the RAN overall. By the time of the first graduation parade on 16 June 1961, the aim of the junior recruit training establishment was stated in the *Leeuwin* graduation parade booklet as being to:

Train young men so that –

They regard the Navy as their vocation.

They will develop a high standard of discipline, trustworthiness, initiative, courage and endurance.

Their educational standard will be such that they can assimilate their subsequent professional training.

In due course they will be an important source of supply of Petty Officers, Chief Petty Officers and Special Duties List Officers.

For the RAN's sailor population the *Leeuwin* boy entry scheme was to be a solution to both its recruiting difficulties and the problems associated with growing technological complexity in naval warfare and equipment. This idea was reinforced in the overall aim of the junior recruit entry scheme articulated by the Working Group in their report, with a specific goal being to:

Produce a necessary leavening of better educated ratings from whom the Navy should be able to remedy the lack of SD [Special Duties] ... List officers and ensure the supply of good Chief Petty Officers and Petty Officers as well as the supply of the more highly trained technical ratings.<sup>14</sup>

Their intent was to use the Navy-controlled education curriculum at *Leeuwin* to raise the educational standard of a large proportion of the entire sailor workforce. Each year approximately 300 boys educated to a new, higher, standard would become sailors to replace or supplement the adult recruits joining the Navy through the *Cerberus* Recruit School whose minimum required entry standard was a high school grade eight education.

The decision to reintroduce a boy sailor entry to the RAN was not simply recourse to a tried and true training method. As the Working Group expressed it:

The method by which it proposed to achieve the aim is to attract into the Navy those brighter boys who because they are perhaps cleverer than those we normally recruit are absorbed and retained in civil employment in the period between leaving school (say 15 years) and the age they are acceptable into the Navy under the present system (17 years) - the entry age for adult recruits at the Recruit School at HMAS *Cerebus*.

Although not stated, it seems probable that the group believed the idea of joining the Navy and seeing the world would be highly attractive to bored, adventure-seeking Australian schoolboys, while the prospect of their sons being given a year of free education in a disciplined and safe environment would be equally appealing to their parents. Combined with the aim of raising sailors' educational standards, it was an ambitious strategy that held the potential to kill two birds with one stone; overcoming recruiting deficiencies and addressing the RAN's future technological challenge by obtaining a major improvement in sailor education standards.

Only two recommendations were made by the Working Group in its report to the Naval Board. The first recommendation stated:

That we proceed on the assumption that the number of Junior Recruits will be 300, that they will remain in the establishment for 12 months, and will be given educational and basic training only. Their age of entry will be 15 to 16. The title of the trainees at *Leeuwin* is to be Junior recruits to avoid misunderstanding with the title Junior ratings which is a generic term used to describe all ratings of the rank of leading hand and below.<sup>15</sup>

The second recommendation being 'that the first intake of 150 Junior Recruits commence training at HMAS *Leeuwin* on Monday 11 July 1960'.<sup>16</sup>

The Working Group's task to discuss with Western Australian government authorities the education standards for junior recruits was significant, part of a changing RAN attitude and approach to the education of its officers and sailors. While the RAN required many but not all of its engineer officers to have a tertiary education, it was not the same for its seaman and supply specialisations officers. It was not until late in the 1960s that tertiary education in the arts and sciences in addition to engineering was made available to some young officers. Tertiary education was not available for sailors most of whom were recruited with an education standard equivalent to a grade eight pass in a small amount of subjects. Once in the RAN, advancement, be it to officer or to senior sailor ranks, was determined by a sailor obtaining passes in subjects at the Higher Educational Test (HET) level. The HET was a Royal Navy examination used by the RAN until the early 1970s. Remarkably, but perhaps in line with the 1911 policy requiring personnel interchange between the two navies, the RAN was in 1962, and probably for some time thereafter, sending Australian sailors' completed HET papers by airmail to the United Kingdom for external marking.

In October 1965 the Services General Certificate of Education (SGCE) was agreed to by the Naval Board – and its Army and the Royal Australian Air Force equivalents – as a common academic examination at the Victorian leaving certificate standard.<sup>17</sup> As the then Second Naval Member said:

The need for such an examination, recognised by the Victorian Universities and Schools Examination Board became apparent when the RAN HET and the comparable Army and Air examinations lost their former status and were no longer recognised as acceptable to employers, the public service, universities etc. because of the higher educational qualifications now demanded. The introduction of the SGCE will assist in restoring parity between service educational standards and those of the various educational institutions outside the service. Moreover, with the increased educational standards now achieved in schools, the educational level of recruits is increasing and it is considered that potential officers should be capable of achieving Leaving Certificate standards.<sup>18</sup>

The SGCE replaced the HET in 1968 and had nine subjects: English Expression and Literature, Economics, Modern History, Mathematics I, Mathematics II, Physics, Chemistry, Geography, and Navigation.



*The first Supplementary List Topman Course at Leeuwin, 1969 (RAN)*

Appendix 3 to the Working Group report describes two syllabuses for the junior recruits. Syllabus A was the 'Normal Course' 'designed for entrants with educational qualifications of sub-intermediate standard and below'. The Syllabus B 'Advanced Course' was 'designed for entrants whom possess Intermediate Certificate on entry'. The Advanced Course consisted of English and Physics, Elementary Navigation, Arithmetic and Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry, and Mechanics. While both courses were neither formally accredited nor aligned with any Australian civilian high school standard a good pass in a subject undertaken as part of the courses could be given HET status and qualify a junior recruit for apprentice or officer training. Those in the Advanced Course could achieve passes that were considered to be the equivalent of SGCE passes and therefore acceptable qualifications to justify a boy's transfer to officer training.

A further dimension to education at *Leeuwin* was the emphasis placed from the outset on the utility of the boy sailor entry as a source of officers and apprentices. The fairly narrow Working Group aim was to produce more sailors suitable for advancement to officer rank on the Special Duties List but this was soon broadened in scope. In October 1962, only two years after the junior recruit entry was reintroduced, the Naval Board approved in principle a plan to train a number of junior recruits and apprentices at *Leeuwin* for an additional year with the object of preparing them as Upper Yardmen candidates.<sup>19</sup> Upper Yardman describe a trained and experienced sailor of up to Leading Seaman rank undergoing further education for consideration for officer training.

In 1963, by way of *Commonwealth Navy Orders 122 and 489*, the Naval Board authorised the introduction of the Topman Scheme.<sup>20</sup> The term 'topman' dated back to the days of sail in the Royal Navy where the better performing ratings were allocated to work aloft in the yards at the top of the masts. Under this scheme junior recruits could be selected before graduating from *Leeuwin* for further education in order to prepare them as officer candidates. Unlike their Upper Yardmen colleagues they did not need to experience life at sea as a sailor before being transferred from sailor to officer. In what the Naval Officer in Charge Western Australia (NOICWA) described as a 'bold experiment' the first Topman course began on 9 January 1963.<sup>21</sup> By 1967 at *Leeuwin*, Upper Yardmen and Topmen would undertake a course of study designed to bring them up to a standard equivalent to Western Australian Leaving Certificate in English, Geography, Mathematics A and B, Physics and Chemistry. For those weak in chemistry there was an option to study history.

Also in 1963, the Naval Board approved in principle the introduction 'as soon as practicable' of a Supplementary List of Seaman Officers.<sup>22</sup> As the name implies, the list was intended to supplement the numbers of boys graduating as General List seaman officers from the RANC. Young men could join as Supplementary List officers direct from civilian life to undergo a much shorter period of training than their college counterparts to prepare them for a short service commission during which it was envisaged that



*The badge of HMAS Cerberus, circa 1964 (RAN)*

they would be employed only in the seaman branch. In support of this scheme a special course was introduced into *Leeuwin* in 1969 to prepare ex-junior recruits and other sailors to become Supplementary List officers. That same year a scheme was also introduced to prepare Upper Yardmen of petty officer and chief petty officer rank to become Special Duties List officers. In less than three years a boy sailor entry intended primarily to address an acute sailor recruitment shortage had expanded in scope to provide a pool of well-educated young men for consideration as officer candidates.

Initial recruiting for the junior recruit entry was very successful, so successful that in addition to the intakes entered through *Leeuwin* two intakes of junior recruits were trained at *Cerberus*, in an environment separate from the adult recruit training conducted there. The first intake of 125 boys arrived in *Cerberus* on 17 March 1963 and graduated, or 'passed out' as the RAN called it, on 26 March 1964. The second entry of 200 boys joined *Cerberus* on 5 April 1964 and passed out on 2 April 1965. *Cerberus* then ceased training junior recruits. All other junior recruits received their training in *Leeuwin*.

## Endnotes

---

- <sup>1</sup> For more on navy recruiting in the 20th century see D Stevens (ed), *The Royal Australian Navy*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, Australia, 2001.
- <sup>2</sup> Stevens, *The Royal Australian Navy*, p. 194.
- <sup>3</sup> Stevens, *The Royal Australian Navy*, pp. 170-172.
- <sup>4</sup> Naval Board Minute (NBM) 12/1956 dated 3 Apr 1956.
- <sup>5</sup> NBM 1/1956 dated 9 January 1956.
- <sup>6</sup> NBM 20/1957 dated 29 May, NBM 51/1957 dated 22 Oct 1957 and NBM 45/1957 dated 2 Oct 1957.
- <sup>7</sup> For a detailed discussion on these matters see T Frame, J Goldrick & P Jones, *Reflections on the Royal Australian Navy*, Kangaroo Press. Sydney, NSW, 1991, and P Jones & J Goldrick, *Struggling for a Solution: The RAN and the Acquisition of a Surface to Air Missile Capability*, Sea Power Centre - Australia, Canberra, January 2000.
- <sup>8</sup> NBM 93/50 dated 20 Sep 1950.
- <sup>9</sup> NBM 89/53 dated 15 Dec 1953.
- <sup>10</sup> NBM 22/1959 dated 10 Apr 1959.
- <sup>11</sup> NBM 39/1959 dated 12 Jun 1959.



- <sup>12</sup> The plan was formally titled *The Heads of a Plan for the Reintroduction of Junior Recruits into the Royal Australian Navy*.
- <sup>13</sup> *The Heads of a Plan for the Reintroduction of Junior Recruits into the Royal Australian Navy*, p. 2.
- <sup>14</sup> Following Royal Navy practice, at that time RAN officers were broadly categorised in 'Lists' depending on their avenue of entry and the nature of their employment. For example, those who entered through the Royal Australian Naval College were placed on the General List while those who joined as sailors and were later promoted to undertake a narrow range of duties related to their former employment as sailors were on the Special Duties List. Another list covered short service commission officers.
- <sup>15</sup> *The Heads of a Plan for the Reintroduction of Junior Recruits into the Royal Australian Navy*, p. 2.
- <sup>16</sup> *The Heads of a Plan for the Reintroduction of Junior Recruits into the Royal Australian Navy*, p. 2.
- <sup>17</sup> NBM 70/1965 dated Oct 1965.
- <sup>18</sup> Second Naval Member note for Naval Board members dated 28 Sep 1965.
- <sup>19</sup> NBM Minute 55/1962 dated Oct 1962.
- <sup>20</sup> Commonwealth Navy Orders 122 and 489 1963, Navy Office, Canberra.
- <sup>21</sup> Report of Proceedings for the West Australia Area dated 14 Jan 1964, p. 6.
- <sup>22</sup> NBM 23/1962 dated 31 May 1963.

### 3. HMAS *Leeuwin*

---

Other than to say that the Naval Board ‘discussed’ the matter, the written record is silent as to why the Junior Recruit Training Establishment (JRTE) should be located in *Leeuwin*. However, there are a range of factors that the Board may have taken into account. Simply following Royal Navy practice in separating boys from adult recruits is one. A desire to increase the size of the naval presence in Western Australia is another, highly plausible, factor given that the RAN was very popular in the local community which, as the Working Group noted, had limited employment opportunities. Despite being in varying and in some cases poor condition, *Leeuwin* also had many buildings suitable for use as accommodation, training and administration facilities which made it very attractive to a cost conscious Board. *Leeuwin* also had space available for expansion if needed.

Historically, the permanent RAN presence in Western Australia had been relatively small and *Leeuwin* did not become its focus until August 1940. In 1911 a District Naval Officer was appointed to Fremantle having amongst his multiple tasks the job of supervising Naval Reserve training courses from premises in Croke Lane. The same year, an old Post Office in Cliff Street, Fremantle, was taken over by the RAN and used as the Naval Staff Office and training facility until 1936. In 1913 a building known as King’s Warehouse was leased by the RAN and used as a drill hall for 13 years until the District Naval Officer and his staff moved to a new hall constructed on a block in Fremantle bounded by Mouat Street, Croke Lane and Cliff Street. This facility was known as *Cerberus* (V), a name which signified that it was a tender or sub-element of *Cerberus* located far away in southern Victoria. On 1 August 1940 the Mouat Street site was commissioned, as is the custom for large or permanent navy bases, and named HMAS *Leeuwin*.

Other names had been proposed for the base. Some favoured continuation of the generic naming custom that had led to there being five instances of the name *Cerberus* – the original plus four to whose formal titles were appended the appropriate roman numerals. *Roebuck*, *Geelvinck* and *Houtman*, *Abrolhos* were other names put forward. Respectively, these referred to the ship in which the English explorer William Dampier travelled to Australia, the channel between the coastline and the reef on which the Dutch ship *Batavia* grounded in June 1629 and the chain of islands off the Western Australian coast. *Leeuwin* is the Dutch word for lioness, and is also the name of a Dutch vessel that made landfall in Western Australia in March 1622. The term ‘Leeuwin Land’ was applied by some to the entire south western region of the state but the explorer Captain Matthew Flinders gave the name, more precisely, to a large cape which he described as the southern and most projecting part of Leeuwin’s Land. *Leeuwin* therefore actually refers to the cape which, in the view of the then Secretary for the Navy, brought Western Australia to the mind of all seafarers. The official badge of *Leeuwin* is based on the Dutch royal coat of arms the motto of which translates into English as ‘I Shall Maintain’. The badge shows a crowned and rampant lion clutching a sword and shield.



*The badge of HMAS Leeuwin (RAN)*



*A 1960s view of the gymnasium at Leeuwin (RAN)*

Between 1941 and 1942 another naval depot was constructed at Preston Point several kilometres further up the Swan River from Port Fremantle where torpedo maintenance services were provided for Allied submarines. On 1 July 1942 the navy presence in Western Australian was concentrated at the Preston Point site to which the name *Leeuwin* was then transferred. Until junior recruit training began there in July 1960 it was used principally for Navy Reserve training purposes.

*Leeuwin's* Reserve training function had equipped it reasonably well for a new role as the JRTE. While some of the facilities, particularly the 'sleeping huts', were old and in need of repair, junior recruit training could begin with minimal new construction. In terms of repair the two largest tasks would be to prepare the dining hall at an estimated cost of £20,000 and rehabilitate and furnish nine sleeping huts for £22,000. Recreation amenities for 300 boys were poor, not simply in comparison with modern navy training establishment and civilian school standards, but in an absolute sense. There was only one sports oval, no swimming pool and no facilities such as tennis courts, squash courts or cricket pitches. The canteen was an old, small wooden hut and the dining hall contained little more space than that required to sit the boys in shifts during meals. It would be almost a decade before a modern dining hall and better quality sports and other recreation facilities were provided for the boys and the staff. While there was a large gymnasium available to junior recruits it would be fair to say that the presence there of Physical Training Instructor (PTI) sailors who ruled it with an iron fist, particularly during scheduled physical training periods, meant that for most boys it was a place to be avoided, not a place in which to linger for recreational purposes.



*The boatshed and jetty at Leeuwin in 1973 (RAN)*



*Leeuwin's boatshed and slipway with SBD 1325 in 1960 (RAN)*

Given its WWII role as a torpedo maintenance base *Leeuwin* was well equipped in terms of wharves, slipways, boats and the means to berth and repair them. A seaward defence boat (*SDB 1325*) was already based there, along with two powered workboats, a 25 foot motor cutter and a 17 foot motor dinghy. To these would be added a 32 foot motor cutter, another 25 foot motor cutter and two more workboats. The existing five whalers, which could be sailed or rowed – ‘pulled’ in naval parlance – and four sailing dinghies would be added two whalers and two dinghies.

Command of *Leeuwin* was vested in an officer of commodore rank who was also appointed as NOICWA. The Commodore was also the senior naval officer resident in the state and the representative of the Naval Board to which he was directly responsible. An officer of Commander rank was the Executive Officer (XO) of *Leeuwin*. The XO was second in command and responsible to the Commodore for most of the day-to-day detail of training the boys and leading the ship’s company. In September 1978, an officer of captain rank was appointed as the CO of *Leeuwin*. This left the Commodore free to focus on state-wide naval matters that had broadened in scope and complexity with the establishment of HMAS *Stirling*.



*Leeuwin's parade ground and sports fields under construction.  
In the background are the original accomodations blocks or 'dongas' (RAN)*



*HMAS Leeuwin in the mid-1960s (RAN)*



*HMAS Leeuwin in 1980 (RAN)*

## 4. The Boys

---

The Working Group carefully considered how best to select the boys to be enlisted as junior recruits. Three methods were examined: a selection committee similar to that used to select boys to train as apprentices at *Nirimba*; a system in which each state recruiting office would be allocated a quota to fill; and the establishment of a Personnel Standards Committee (PSC) tasked to select boys on the basis of their written records including education certificates and notes of their interviews with recruiting officers and psychologists.

The PSC method was chosen on the grounds that it would be less expensive and time consuming, compared to the selection committee method, and that it would facilitate selection on merit irrespective of a boy's state of origin. More importantly the Working Group considered that the PSC method would place selection in the hands of a small group of people who were well-informed on overall RAN sailor wastage rates (the term used to describe the rate at which people depart military service) and the standards being applied to adult applicants entering through *Cerberus*. Rejection of the quota system approach was based on an unsatisfactory experience with it in recruitment for the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS) and a perception that it would produce disproportionately more junior recruits from Western Australia.

It is interesting to note the extent to which Working Group members argued in favour of the PSC method, essentially favouring a system more like that used to select officer candidates than that used to select adult entry sailors. Given the emphasis they placed on education and on junior recruits as a potential source of officers, apprentices and the more technologically-aware senior sailors of the future, this was intentional. In summarising its rationale the Working Group asserted the view that a PSC 'should ensure that justice is done to each candidate and that the Navy selects the best of its candidates'.<sup>1</sup>

Working Group concerns over the distribution of recruits by state seem to be confirmed in the numbers recruited for the first intake whose members arrived at *Leeuwin* in July 1960. The intake's 150 boys was made of 46 recruits from Western Australia, 21 from South Australia, 20 from Victoria, 5 from Tasmania, 27 from New South Wales, 30 from Queensland and 1 from Papua New Guinea. The practice of taking recruits from all states and territories for each intake continued throughout the life of the junior recruit entry scheme but it is difficult to identify those recruited from the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory because they were often recorded with New South Wales and South Australian entrants respectively.



In practice the PSC method was simple. Recruiting activity occurred all year round. After medical and psychological examination of all candidates the Recruiting Officer and Naval Psychologist in each state conferred and allocated each boy to one of the following seven categories as defined by the Working Group:

- A Suitable in all respects – of high intelligence and shows scholastic promise.
- B Suitable in all respects – should be capable of handling any of the technical training courses.
- C Considered suitable but could have difficulty in coping with training in some of the more academically demanding rates, e.g. the Electrical branch.
- D Borderline. Has a weakness or weaknesses which make him a risk for selection, e.g. A candidate with good abilities, but a long history of under performance in his school grades.
- E To be deferred for a specified period. Suitable in most respects but has a handicap which precludes selection at the moment. Includes:
  - (i) A language handicap which may yield to further practice in English.
  - (ii) An educational deficiency which could be overcome by private study if the candidate is prepared to make the effort.
  - (iii) A very superficial interest in the service. Considered too naïve and uninformed, at present, to make a sound vocational choice. Highly likely to request withdrawal.
  - (iv) An applicant who is likely to be required at home, e.g. only son, whose elderly father owns a small farm employing no other labour, who has failed to discuss this problem with his parents.
- F Obviously unsuitable. This applicant:
  - (i) has such severe educational handicaps or is of such low endowment as to be considered incapable of rendering satisfactory service in any capacity whether as a junior recruit or an ... [adult] ... entry.
  - (ii) Is considered unlikely to make a satisfactory adjustment to community life in a service environment. Includes those with a history of conflict with superiors, incorrigible truants and those with delinquent tendencies.

Candidates allocated to Categories A, B, C and D were to be advised that they had passed the recruiting tests, that their names would be forwarded to the Naval Board and that they would be advised later whether they had been accepted. Candidates allocated to Category E were invited to return for review by recruiting officers after a stipulated period had elapsed. Those allocated to Category F were to be rejected 'on the spot' by the Recruiting Staff Officer. Candidates whose names were forwarded for consideration but were not offered a place were to be:

Advised that they have failed to meet the high standard required for the final list ... [and] ... be encouraged to apply for a later ... [junior recruit] ... entry or, if too old, for ... [adult entry] ... at seventeen years of age.<sup>2</sup>

The selection taxonomy is interesting for a number of reasons. For an armed service with an acute staffing problem the RAN was being very selective. It had not resorted to taking in any and all applicants as junior recruits. Also, the requirement to place in Category F boys with 'a history of conflict with superiors, incorrigible truants and those with delinquent tendencies', was a clear indication that - like *Tingira* half a century before - *Leeuwin* was not to be a reform school for wayward boys.<sup>3</sup> Boys who had been in prisons or reformatories were still not to be received and while it is impossible to discount the possibility that over the years the recruiting rules may sometimes have been 'bent', stories that later circulated about *Leeuwin* boys being offered the 'Navy or prison' seem to be untrue.

Apart from having a clean behavioural record, the principal determinants of a boy's suitability were his scholastic record and assessed potential. This reinforced the concept that while junior recruits were general entry sailors, neither cadets nor apprentices, the new training scheme was to be focused on improving the overall education level of the RAN's sailor population and on enlarging the pool from which officers and technologically-competent senior sailors could be drawn.

Medical and physical fitness standards for junior recruits were neither extensive nor particularly onerous. While in its recruiting brochure of September 1912 the RAN had stipulated a height standard between 4 foot 10 inches and 5 foot 2 inches and a chest measurement of between 29 and 32 inches, it did not set any definite standard in 1959. Instead, it stated that:

The real test of fitness is the probability of the candidate becoming a well-developed man, capable of carrying out the duties of a Naval rating in all climates and under the vicissitudes of the Services.<sup>4</sup>

*Leeuwin* candidates had to meet a specific hearing standard (the ability to hear a whispered voice 20 feet distant) and sight standards related to their later employment environment. They could be rejected if they suffered from any of 17 conditions ranging from a 'weak constitution' through possession of a 'malformed head' to 'flat feet' but the RAN clearly felt that a generally healthy boy would become a suitable man under

the influence of naval training. The boys did not undergo a physical fitness test before entry but were examined by doctors in the recruiting centres. After arrival at *Leeuwin* they would, if necessary, receive extensive remedial dental and medical treatment and all would participate in a great deal of physical activity. Boys who were found to have an undisclosed or undetected condition or disability after joining *Leeuwin* were immediately subject to medical survey and discharge where necessary.

The RAN followed Royal Navy practice where in the early 20th century the basic period of enlistment as a sailor was 12 years – whence, incidentally, came the popular British sailor’s expression ‘roll on my twelve’. While the enlistment period for those entering the Royal Navy as adult recruits began counting on the date of their enlistment the 12-year period for boys began not on the day they entered but when they turned 18.<sup>5</sup> In Australia, junior recruits were to undertake an initial period of engagement of 12 years, beginning on the day they were signed up in a State Recruiting Office. Depending on their later standards of performance and conduct as well as the Navy’s continuing need for sailors in their employment category they could re-engage for consecutive periods until they reached their compulsory retiring age of 55. While it was remarkable for 15 or 16-year-olds to sign up to serve for 12 years, early life-long career commitments were still commonplace in Australia in the 1960s.

Broadly considered, the junior recruit selection process was well aligned with the overall aim of producing better educated sailors to meet increasing demand from the technical branches and to increase the supply of officer candidates. The focus was on a boy’s educational achievement and potential and seemed to recognise that at the age of 15 or 16 a great deal of physical and mental development was yet to occur, and would occur during their year at *Leeuwin*.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Heads of a Plan for the Reintroduction of Junior Recruits into the Royal Australian Navy*, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *The Heads of a Plan for the Reintroduction of Junior Recruits into the Royal Australian Navy*, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> *The Heads of a Plan for the Reintroduction of Junior Recruits into the Royal Australian Navy*, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *The Heads of a Plan for the Reintroduction of Junior Recruits into the Royal Australian Navy*, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> C McKee, *Sober Men and True: Sailor Lives in the Royal Navy 1900 – 1945*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002, p. 2.

## 5. Junior Recruit Education and Training

---

Available records do not reveal exactly what the RAN planned to do to achieve all elements of its four-part aim of training young men so that they would regard the Navy as their vocation; develop a high standard of discipline, trustworthiness, initiative, courage and endurance; reach an educational standard that would enable them to assimilate their subsequent professional training; and, eventually, be an important source of supply of petty officers, chief petty officers and Special Duties List officers. However, it is clear that achievement of the educational part received the most detailed and formal consideration over the life of the junior recruit training scheme.

Development of a high standard of discipline and the inculcation of the desired values seem likely to have been regarded simply as natural outcomes of a process in which the boys were exposed to the RAN, its lifestyle and its people, and were involved in the range of activities incorporated in the training plan. The latter included a strong emphasis on physical fitness training and sporting activities including, for example, boxing, compulsory for 'senior' junior recruits until mid-1966 when it was made voluntary. Junior recruits were also subject to almost daily parades and weapons drills, character guidance - largely by chaplains of various religious denominations - 'expeditions' or camps, and knowledge of and obedience to the *Naval Discipline Act* (later, the *Defence Force Discipline Act*). In so far as having junior recruits regard the Navy as a vocation it seems likely that the RAN subscribed to a variant of the Jesuit motto of 'give me a child until he is seven and I will give you the man', believing that recruitment as boys followed by a year of naval indoctrination would produce men committed to a long-term naval career.

The junior recruit education and training process had two main components: schoolwork and naval training both theoretical and practical in nature. Schoolwork was to develop the boys' ability to better comprehend technology and cope with the demands of their employment category training post-*Leeuwin*. Naval training was to prepare them for life and work in the RAN, particularly in warships. For junior recruits naval training was to be at least the equivalent of that provided to *Cerberus* adult recruits but, while adult recruits had only 10 to 12 weeks to complete the syllabus, junior recruits had almost a year in which to do so.

Table 1 outlines the syllabus subjects taught over 30 hours per week in 1960:

Naval Subjects	16 Hours	Schoolwork	14 Hours
Seamanship - Theoretical	1	English	2
Seamanship - Practical	4	Arithmetic and Algebra	2
Signals - Practical	1	Geometry and Trigonometry	2
Small Arms Practical	1	Physics	4
Parade Training	4	History	2
Physical Training and Swimming	4	Elementary navigation	2
Miscellaneous lectures	1		

*Table 1: Syllabus at Leeuwin in 1960*

'Miscellaneous lectures' saw junior recruits exposed to a wide range of information, some of which was vital to their later welfare and efficiency while working and living at sea. Matters covered in these lectures included: atomic, biological and chemical defence and damage control ('atomic' later became 'nuclear'); survival at sea; first aid and health; pay and allowances; character guidance and religion; and naval indoctrination including branch and employment category familiarisation.

In practice the boys did not actually undergo a common course. In addition to the Normal and Advanced courses discussed earlier there were differences that arose from the process referred to as 'classing up'. This was the process in which boys were allocated to classes A to F based upon *Leeuwin*'s staff Senior Psychologist's review conducted during the recruiting process. For the boys, the essential short term difference arising from classing up was that those in an A class spent more periods each week on schoolwork while those in an F class spent more time on naval subjects and miscellaneous activity. In the longer term, classing up could actually be influential in determining the employment category to which boys were allocated and whether they could be considered for transfer to apprentice or officer training. Five weeks after joining *Leeuwin* all boys sat Educational Test Number 1 (ET1), a test of competence in English, Arithmetic and General Comprehension. Many boys were reclassified as a result of their ET1 results although the actual numbers doing so declined significantly over the years.

Examination of the different versions of *ABR 697* indicates that until the late 1970s all boys spent more time on schoolwork regardless of the class to which they were allocated. In 1960 all boys undertook 476 hours of schoolwork per year. By 1962 it varied from 385 to 702 hours depending on class allocation while in 1967 it varied from 578 to 1088 hours.



**JUNIOR RECRUIT TRAINING ESTABLISHMENT  
FINAL REPORT**

NAME.....PERRYMAN.....D. J.....PERSONAL NUMBER.....R127781.....  
 ACADEMIC LEVEL Advanced Stream/~~General Stream~~  
 CLASS.....30.....CATEGORY.....CQ.....

SUBJECT	GRADE ACHIEVED	* LEEUWIN EDUCATIONAL TEST
ENGLISH	9	P6
MATHS	6	
SCIENCE/PHYSICS	5	
SERVICE KNOWLEDGE	7	
SOCIAL SCIENCE	6	

NOTES

GRADE ACHIEVED is on a 1-9 scale (9 being the best score).

PASS GRADE is 5.

PASS on retest is 4.

\* Advanced Stream ONLY.

COMMENTS

TRAINING: Has shown an excellent application to his work and has been a conscientious trainee while at HMAS LEEUWIN.

DIVISIONAL:

A polite and well mannered person. He performs his duties with dignity and works to the best of his ability at all times. His dress is immaculate and his leadership unquestionable. He has been a tremendous assistant to the divisional staff.

.....*P. J. Ball*.....Class Administrator

.....*[Signature]*.....Divisional Officer

DATE 30<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1980

.....*[Signature]*.....  
 COMMANDING OFFICER  
 HMAS LEEUWIN

*The final Leeuwin report of Junior Recruit John Perryman,  
a member of the 70th intake (John Perryman)*



Leeuwin's *academic block* (RAN)

While attractive to Australian boys and their parents, evidenced in excellent recruiting numbers, there were significant disadvantages in the year of initial training received by the boys as opposed to the 12 weeks given to general entry sailor recruits. Firstly, no immediate impact was made on the acute staffing crisis which had prompted the reintroduction of the boy sailor entry. While excellent recruiting performance saw all early junior recruit intakes fully subscribed, junior recruits could not contribute to alleviating the shortage of trained sailors until after they had completed a year at *Leeuwin*, undergone common sea training and completed employment training courses of up to a year in length for the more technically oriented courses. Throughout this period they were regarded as 'ineffectives', a burden on the RAN budget and, due to the demand they created for additional trained and experienced staff members at *Leeuwin*, an exacerbation of the RAN's staffing crisis.

Concern, and exasperation amongst navy work force planners and the Fleet Commander's staff who dealt with the impact of staff shortages daily, led to a debate akin to the argument between business and academe over the relative merits of 'enabling' and 'vocationally oriented' bachelor level university education. For many, such as planners and Fleet staff, the aim should have been to give the boys as short a *Leeuwin* course as possible, with a strong principal focus on preparing them for future category training, followed by category training and a sea posting. However, recruiters and *Leeuwin*'s staff believed this rationale of thinking to be short-sighted and misplaced for two main reasons. Firstly, parents' attraction to a year's free education in a controlled training environment and,

secondly, the substantial and beneficial transfer rate of junior recruits to officer and apprentice training. Others, probably a fairly small number, supported education in its own right as a means of dealing with growing naval technological complexity and its general contribution to improving the skills of the sailor work force in the long term.

Secondly, the argument over the timing of junior recruits being allocated to a particular employment category involved much more than a desire to reduce the burden of ineffectives or alleviate what would only be a temporary staffing crisis if a high level of boy recruitment continued. Quite simply, while boys and their parents were committing to a 12 year engagement with apparent ease, the early allocation of the boys to a particular employment category was much more problematic. There were dozens of potential category choices open to most boys and many preferred one over the others, not because they were well informed but because it sounded exciting or because a family member or a friend had been in that category and had influenced their choice. It is also likely that the more popular and effective *Leeuwin* staff members, consciously and subconsciously, influenced boys towards their own category.

Getting the boys to a point where they could make an informed category choice was very difficult. *Leeuwin*'s location meant that boys could not be given comprehensive exposure to the duties and working environment of all categories within the RAN. Throughout the life of the scheme *Leeuwin* staff members endeavoured to ensure that junior recruits visited Australian and foreign warships that called in to Fremantle, but both the ships' visits and the boys' visits to them were short. For the boys these visits were superficial and held the risk of influencing them for or against a particular category on spurious grounds. Indeed, during a review of *Leeuwin* training in 1969 the Senior Instructor Officer asserted that:

JRs [junior recruits] have returned ... [from a period of sea training] ... fiercely determined not to be categorised in any of the seaman categories – a direct result of their employment at sea.<sup>1</sup>

While the RAN had always envisaged that all junior recruits would undertake a period of sea familiarisation training during their time at *Leeuwin* very few actually did so. A minority went to sea in the WWII River class frigate HMAS *Diamantina* based in Western Australia. However, *Diamantina* was engaged largely in hydrographic survey duties meaning she was absent from Fremantle for most of the year visiting remote areas making it impractical to transport junior recruits. All efforts to provide meaningful sea training ceased in the early 1960s. Afterwards, junior recruits' exposure to ships and life at sea was obtained through visits to ships in Port Fremantle and excursions in small power boats.

Thirdly, it proved very difficult to maintain the motivation of junior recruits towards both their studies and a navy career. Despite the attractiveness of the junior recruit entry in recruiting terms the reality of life in *Leeuwin* did not match the expectations of some boys. Having joined the RAN for adventure, excitement and to 'see the world' they spent most



of their days in classrooms, in a regimented lifestyle in which their instructors expected behaviour and attitudes closely aligned with *Leeuwin's* Standing Orders and conformance to naval disciplinary standards very similar to those expected of adult sailors. Moreover, as *Leeuwin* did not have sufficient staff, naval or civilian, to perform all the establishment's domestic duties, all junior recruits were expected to shoulder their share of the daily burden of cleaning, fetching and carrying, food preparation and general labouring. Among the junior recruits the burden of this 'workshop' activity, as it was called, fell on the junior recruits in the Normal Stream who had a smaller time commitment to schoolwork subjects. For many boys *Leeuwin* became a tiresome place, something to endure while anticipating release into the world of sea service and frequent trips 'Up Top' to the carnal attractions of Southeast Asia. For some a year in *Leeuwin* was very demoralising, too long and not worth the wait. Their commitment to a long-term navy career waned and in many cases failed entirely.

For a junior recruit disinterest in study was not risk free. Each boy's progress was monitored, principally by means of periodic examinations, and unsatisfactory achievement would result in them being placed on either Captain's or Naval Board warning depending on the degree of under-performance. Failure to improve would result in discharge from the RAN or, in rare cases usually involving illness or another matter beyond the boy's control, back classing for not more than three months. Good progress on the other hand attracted accelerated promotion to the rank of Able Seaman some time after leaving *Leeuwin* and successful completion of category training. In the early 1960s up to three months advancement could be obtained by good performance in both schoolwork and naval subjects as a junior recruit. Later in the 1960s the total amount of advancement time was reduced to two months.



*A group of junior recruits touring the visiting British aircraft carrier HMS Eagle in 1968. For the boys such opportunities were a rare occurrence (RAN)*

The apparent unwillingness of some junior recruits to buckle down and study was assessed to extend beyond *Leeuwin*. In 1969 it was asserted by *Cerberus* staff members - and rejected by their *Leeuwin* counterparts - that the failure rate of ex-junior recruits undergoing category courses was twice that of ex-adult recruits. *Cerberus* category school staff attributed this rate to an unwillingness of junior recruits to study. Conversely, the willingness of many other junior recruits to study and the quality of their achievements saw the more academically successful boys directed toward officer and apprentice training instead of category schools where they were envisaged to constitute 'a leavening of really good men who will provide the higher rates'. It would be wrong, however, to overstate the impact of this development as selection for officer training hinged on more than academic performance and apprentices who graduated from *Nirimba* did still become highly technically trained senior sailors.

Finally, while it was not an issue that seems to have been considered formally before the boy sailor scheme was reintroduced, it is clear that the immaturity of junior recruits began to become an issue as larger numbers of them joined the Fleet. In the early 1960s it was common for junior recruits and adult recruits alike to go to sea for common sea training immediately on completion of recruit training. Therefore, hundreds of 16-year-old boys went to sea each year, many to experience active service in the Indonesian Confrontation and in the Vietnam War. In 1969, the Flag Officer Commanding the Australian Fleet in a report to the Naval Board assessed the performance of ex-junior recruits as good but added that deficiencies in their standards of appearance, a higher rate of minor disciplinary offences and perceptions of irresponsibility arose more from their immaturity than from training short comings.<sup>2</sup>

Attempts to address these problems and the need to respond to improvements in the RAN's staffing situation meant that the *Leeuwin* syllabus was the subject of frequent review. In June 1969, following a visit the previous year to *Leeuwin* by the Navy's Training Committee, Navy Office instituted a comprehensive review 'so that the length and type of training given to Junior Recruits could be reviewed at Navy Office'.<sup>3</sup> It is unclear whether any of the nine recommendations arising from this review were ever implemented but, in any event, it was only three years before all ships were asked to report their views on the standards of ex-junior recruits entering the Fleet. The reports do not suggest that significant change occurred.

In March 1976, an internal *Leeuwin* review was undertaken of the process whereby junior recruits had until that time undertaken a common course for the first five weeks at *Leeuwin* before sitting the ET1 (which had been replaced by the Reallocation Test (RAT)) and being assigned to a class in which they would stay for the remainder of their course. After the RAT each class would undertake a course involving a different mix of academic study, naval subject study and workshop time. *Leeuwin* instructors felt that the process was an inadequate means of grading the study undertaken in the first five weeks, that there was little continuity between pre- and post-RAT study, was wasteful of study time available, did

not recognise the very wide range of ability that existed in a junior recruit intake and was not well related to individual category preference. Action taken as a result of the review was not revolutionary but the RAT was abandoned and any reallocation between classes was decided on grounds that included the motivation of junior recruits. The latter factor was also to be assisted by a program of lecture sessions in which junior recruits were provided with initial knowledge of all the RAN's branches and their possible category options.

The RAN's long-running staffing problems and continuing expressions of concern made internally and externally of *Leeuwin* regarding the relevance, meaning and effectiveness of its academic instruction led to a 1976 Navy Office review. The review concluded that 'there may be some advantage in designing JR courses at *Leeuwin* with greater bias towards category training'.<sup>4</sup> This occurred partly because *Leeuwin* was under seeming constant pressure to add more naval subject study to the syllabus. The range of subjects proposed for inclusion was broad. In 1966, for example, Navy Office stipulated that sailors' overall knowledge of ships layout was to be improved by the introduction of more training, the inclusion of appropriate subject matter in *ABR 27 - General Knowledge and Naval Lore Test* - and the acquisition of better training aids. In 1970, the CO of HMAS *Sydney* (III) wrote that all sailors lacked knowledge of how to lash a hammock, basic principles of ship husbandry and the watch system used at sea. He asked that both *Leeuwin* and *Cerberus* amend their syllabuses in order to rectify the deficiencies. In 1972, both establishments were asked to include more content on the methods of cleaning ships, methods derived from a study undertaken by the Royal Navy into how to better clean their *Leander* class frigates. Sailing, land warfare and consumer education were among many other subjects proposed for inclusion.

In July 1969 the Flag Officer Commanding the Australian Fleet stated his view that a disadvantage of reducing *Leeuwin*'s course length would be:

Younger common sea trainees ... [younger] ... Able Seaman 2nd class through to Petty Officer ... [and] ... on the grounds of maturity, it is questionable whether any reduction of age in movement through the ranks, would be to the advantage of the RAN.<sup>5</sup>

In November 1976 all these criticisms were repeated by Fleet representatives at a 'Junior Recruit Training Forum' held in *Leeuwin*. In addition, they referred to a perception that junior recruits' category knowledge was lacking and they were not well prepared for the English and mathematics requirements of many categories. They added that the *Leeuwin* practice of having junior recruits address Able Seaman ranks and above as 'sir' was improperly being carried into the Fleet and that 'over protection' of junior recruits produced 'disturbing results in terms of discipline and job performance' when they responded poorly to the freedom and less restrictive environments in the Fleet and other shore bases.<sup>6</sup>

After exhaustive investigation throughout the first half of the year a nine-month long category-oriented course was introduced for junior recruits in October 1977, with a review to be undertaken after a year. Improving the categorisation process and a reduction in ineffectives were the two principal reasons for introducing the new course. The first intake to undergo the new regime, the 61st, would not be spread over existing divisions on entry but would for the first three months form their own division, the New Entry Division, in which their training could be controlled as part of the transition from the old to the new. After undergoing a common course they would sit a series of tests in preparation for provisional categorisation and 'streaming' into one of five courses according to ability and application. The five courses were Alpha (*Leeuwin* Educational Test academic stream) Seaman 1, Seaman 2, Technical and Supply. The content of the later phases of the latter four streams was still being developed some months after the 61st intake had begun their Phase 1 common training. A further attempt was made to reduce training ineffectives in May 1978 when the Chief of Naval Personnel informed the RAN's training establishments that in addition to continuing the category-orientation of junior recruit training, and to reduce the number of trained instructors posted to the establishment, the annual input to *Leeuwin* would be reduced to 240 commencing in the latter half of 1978.

Category oriented training for junior recruits survived for just over a year as in October 1978 *Leeuwin* was directed to end the training by April of the following year. It was replaced with a course encompassing general entry navy training, a naval oriented academic course designed in part to compensate for the education they had missed by joining the RAN so early. It also included naval familiarisation, camping and sail training activities to motivate them towards their future naval employment. In so far as the academic component was concerned, it was to be common to all junior recruits but include streaming into advanced and general (normal) courses to cater for brighter students. New training directives for *Leeuwin* were promulgated by Navy Office in December 1978. The objectives relating to 'vocation', 'standards' and 'education' were reworded but the essence of the 1960 objectives remained. However, the objective of junior recruits being a source of supply of petty officers, chief petty officers and Special Duties List officers was abandoned. In its place was put an objective of ensuring that 'they possess sufficient general Service Knowledge to allow ready assimilation into the wider RAN environment and effectively contribute to Navy aims and objectives'.<sup>7</sup> While the need for education endured, it did so against a background of a significantly increased emphasis on practical training, navy indoctrination, physical training, character development, attitude and motivation. Activities should, according to the directive, be taught with a minimum of classroom lectures and maximum practical involvement but not be pursued to any great depth. All this reflected the view expressed in the directive that 'a person who is strongly motivated towards job and environment will invariably perform well'.<sup>8</sup>

## Endnotes

---

- <sup>1</sup> HMAS *Leeuwin* Senior Instructor Officer Minute 48/5 dated 20 Aug 1969, HMAS *Leeuwin* file 72/12/1, National Archives Series K591/3.
- <sup>2</sup> Flag Officer Commanding Australian Fleet signal message R110100Z Jul 1969, HMAS *Leeuwin* file 72/12/1, National Archives Series K591/3.
- <sup>3</sup> Navy Office letter 311/4/261 dated 18 Jun 1969, HMAS *Leeuwin* file 72/12/1, National Archives Series K591/3.
- <sup>4</sup> Navy Office letter dated 9 Apr 1976, HMAS *Leeuwin* file 72/12/1, National Archives Series K591/3.
- <sup>5</sup> Navy Office letter 311/4/261 dated 18 Jun 1969, HMAS *Leeuwin* file 72/12/1, National Archives Series K591/3.
- <sup>6</sup> Record of the Junior Recruit Training Forum Nov 1976, HMAS *Leeuwin* file 72/12/1, National Archives Series K591/3.
- <sup>7</sup> Navy Office letter N519/2/8 dated 22 Dec 1978, HMAS *Leeuwin* Training Objectives, HMAS *Leeuwin* file 72/12/1, National Archives Series K591/3.
- <sup>8</sup> Navy Office letter N519/2/8 dated 22 Dec 1978, HMAS *Leeuwin* Training Objectives, HMAS *Leeuwin* file 72/12/1, National Archives Series K591/3.

## 6. Life as a Junior Recruit

---

It is impractical to attempt to describe the *Leeuwin* lifestyle experienced by junior recruits over the entire term of the scheme as it changed over the years, in an evolutionary rather than revolutionary manner. A 1960 entrant who visited *Leeuwin* in 1984 would have found most aspects of the more modern junior recruit's on-base lifestyle reasonably familiar. The most notable changes that occurred for junior recruits were improvements in living standards, accommodation, dining, recreation and sporting facilities. Changes in the boys' education and training regimes were others, particularly the 1979 reduction in course length from a year to nine months. Also evident would have been the impact on the entire RAN of the change in community attitudes and standards that occurred in Australia in the 1960s and the 1970s: hair was worn longer, civilian clothing was worn ashore more often and some of the traditions, customs and habits inherited from the Royal Navy had either been discarded or were falling into disuse as they became less relevant to the Australian Navy. This section therefore endeavours to describe major features of the lifestyle.<sup>1</sup>

As well as being a school, *Leeuwin* was a commissioned naval establishment staffed almost entirely by officers and sailors of the Permanent Naval Forces and organised and administered in much the same way as other Navy training establishments. The *Naval Discipline Act* and the subsequent *Defence Force Discipline Act*, applied almost equally to boys and staff members alike. Life at *Leeuwin* was regimented and regulated, where formal and informal rules governed almost every aspect of life. Those who broke the rules were liable to punishments that boys in civilian boarding schools would find very harsh indeed. Boys who expected *Leeuwin* to be an escape from the classroom and teachers were disappointed to find that it was not. One New South Wales Navy Careers Officer was sufficiently disturbed by this problem to inform new junior recruits' parents that 'no matter how it is stressed a percentage ... [of boys] ... still think that the ... [*Leeuwin*] ... schooling will be different to what they have been used to - it won't'.<sup>2</sup> Sounding a note of caution he added:

There are times in civilian life when students will give teachers a hard time. New entrant Junior Recruits will do well to remember that their teachers at HMAS *Leeuwin* are Naval Officers.<sup>3</sup>

On arrival in *Leeuwin* all new boys were ranked as Junior Recruit Second Class. After six months they became Junior Recruits First Class, an advancement that meant little except a small but very welcome increase in pay and pocket money. Unofficially, however, it meant much more to the boys as it helped reinforce an informal but strong culture that the boys maintained amongst themselves. In this culture, relative seniority between boys located at the very bottom of the RAN's formal rank hierarchy was determined by intake date. The boys - but not the staff - referred to the newest intake members as 'new grubs', the next senior as 'grubs', the next as 'shit' with 'top

shit' assuming the position of superiority as the senior intake. It was not simply a matter of vulgar sailor nomenclature. As each intake progressed towards graduation it assumed for itself a level of higher status over the members of newer intakes and the right to claim privileges. The most common and relatively harmless, though extremely irritating, privilege was to 'jack' or move to the head of the meal queue. Bullying of the members of the newer intakes by some members of the older intakes was the 'dark side' of the culture. While apparently fairly benign in the early days of the junior recruit training scheme, bullying seemed to have become commonplace by the late-1960s when there were four intakes of boys per year. Problems that arose from this culture are described in detail later in this section.

*Leeuwin's* training environment had two major functions. The first was simply to provide facilities to cater to the boys' needs for accommodation, food, health care, recreation, education and training. The second was to accustom them to the environment in which they would have to live and work after graduating and being posted to sea. *Leeuwin's* command structure was similar to that of a ship with a CO, an XO as second-in-command and Heads of Department responsible for supply and secretariat, education, training, health care and engineering. Daily Orders, a document promulgated each afternoon under the authority of the XO, set the pattern of daily activities and allocated staff and junior recruits to undertake a range of domestic functions. Junior recruits were required to know and use the traditional jargon used by sailors in ships: the main gate was the 'gangway', toilets were the 'heads', a floor was a 'deck' and walls were 'bulkheads'. Meals were 'SCRAN' and individual dishes had names that would be remarkable if not offensive to the civilian ear. For example, tomato au gratin, a Navy cook's breakfast favourite, was known as 'train smash' while savoury mince on toast was often referred to as 'shit on a raft'. This adapting function was not unique to *Leeuwin*. It occurred in much the same way for cadet midshipmen at HMAS *Creswell*, for apprentices at *Nirimba*, and for adult recruits at *Cerberus*.

In June 1963, the position of Leading Junior Recruit (LJR) was introduced, partly because an under-strength staff was having difficulty undertaking all the necessary management and leadership tasks expected of it. A perceived need to offer some practical leadership experience to the boys was another reason for its introduction. Selected on the basis of their conduct and performance during the first term, boys were appointed as LJRs at the beginning of the second term and discarded the 'rank' at graduation. Their principal duties were to assist staff to supervise cleaning of the accommodation blocks, minimise noise there after hours and lead formed squads of their division and class mates on the parade ground and while moving about the base during working hours. Boys appointed as LJRs wore distinguishing marks on their uniform which varied depending on the year they trained at *Leeuwin*. On their daily working uniform they wore a white armband embroidered with a blue anchor and in later years a coloured lanyard. On a sleeve of their best uniform from the late 1960s

onwards they wore a small red anchor. They also received a small but welcome increase in weekly pocket money.

Despite the badge and extra money, LJR was not a formal navy rank. This conformed to the views of the Working Group that had recommended in 1959 in favour of having LJRs rather than the adoption of a rank – for example ‘Petty Officer Junior Recruit’ – for boys placed in what was essentially a school prefect role. Underpinning the Working Group’s thinking was a desire to establish a system in which as many junior recruits as possible could be exposed to the fairly limited leadership training opportunities available in *Leeuwin*. Boys took turns at being a class leader for example. This approach differed from that used in Australian military officer training colleges where routine leadership opportunities were usually focused on a very small number of boys appointed as ‘cadet captains’.

## Before *Leeuwin*

The recruitment process of assessing scholastic potential, assuring medical fitness and conducting a psychologist’s interview began the boys’ RAN engagement. It seems to have been a very straight forward and smooth process with very few ex-junior recruits having unpleasant or otherwise noteworthy memories of it. The assessment of physical and health fitness against the criteria described earlier, undertaken as part of the recruiting process was not onerous but former junior recruits do recount the usual tales of being invited by the doctor to bend over for a rear end inspection and of their surprise at being grasped by the testicles and invited to cough. Some clearly remember swearing an oath after being selected for entry while others are certain that were not required to do so.

Travel to *Leeuwin* was an adventure for most boys who had little or no experience of either long distance travel or absence from home. For boys recruited from the south west of Western Australia it was fairly straight forward: assembly in Perth with other Western Australian recruits followed by an overnight stay in the YMCA before being bussed to *Leeuwin* the next day to join their colleagues from other states. For boys from the other states it entailed up to six days of second class train travel, without ‘sleepers’, before the Navy in 1967 stopped regarding air travel as an expensive luxury.

## Induction

A theme common to the recollections of many ex-junior recruit’s initial experience of *Leeuwin* was that of bellowing instructors, uncertainty, disorientation and homesickness. The late night arrival of entrants from the eastern states exacerbated many boys’ concerned feelings over what they had gotten themselves into. Soon after arrival each boy was issued with a handbook for use as a guide to conduct, behaviour and performance. Until 1963 boys received a copy of a Royal Navy manual, *BR 1938 – The*



*Naval Ratings Handbook* published in 1954 - probably a rather perplexing experience for some boys who thought that they had joined the Australian rather than British navy. This book was replaced by an Australian publication, the *Junior Recruit's Handbook*. This 8 x 10cm blue book began by referring to the RAN's proud record in war and peace and giving a potted history of *Leeuwin* and its training organisation. It then listed the many things that could keep a boy out of or get him into trouble. Beginning with 'absence from place of duty' it mentioned the protocols of 'addressing superiors', described the dangers of alcoholic drink, prohibited the borrowing and lending of money amongst junior recruits, exhorted them to obey orders with a 'prompt and cheerful Aye Aye, Sir' and demanded that they not gamble, swear or spit. It concluded with the statement that 'whistling is strictly forbidden in all ships and establishments in the Navy ... DON'T WHISTLE'.<sup>4</sup>

What to an outsider would appear a simple process of providing the boys with the required number of uniform items became a two-stage ritual and for many boys an unpleasant one usually conducted by distinctly unsympathetic senior sailors, principally of the Stores Victualling branch. Stage one occurred in the clothing store where boys were issued with a large number of often unfamiliar items of uniform and uniform maintenance items. Many of the items - naval blue jean collars for example - were simply unrecognisable to most boys. Commencing with the issue of a thick canvas sailor's kit bag, each junior recruit had to receive, try for size and stow in the kitbag virtually all the items that would clothe him for the next year or more. Having done so, each boy locked his bag and staggered off under its weight back to make sense of it all.

In the second stage, which seems to have varied in process over the years, each boy was placed at a desk or 'station' in *Leeuwin*'s drill hall. Each station was equipped with an alloy name stamping device prepared with his name and two pads of cloth, one impregnated with black paint and the other with white paint. With navy kit consisting almost entirely of white or black items, the white paint was to be used to mark the black ones and black to mark the white ones. Kit items had to be marked in the precise location identified by the senior sailor conducting the whole activity. Opportunities for error abounded: the wrong colour paint could be used, an item could be marked in a non-approved position or marked in a messy or indistinct manner. The error rate by the boys was proportional to the declining composure and increasing frustration of the shouting and swearing senior sailor conducting the activity. In the late 1960s erring boys were sometimes punished by being marked on the face using their own name stamp dipped in either black or white paint. The end of the activity usually produced a scene in which the boys struggled to flee the scene burdened with a bulging and very heavy kitbag, many with faces defaced by the repeated application of their paint-dipped name tag. One former junior recruit, Bob Scott, recalls the lack of empathy and understanding in the process and the hurt and insult he felt as a result of being called a 'little bucket of snot' by the senior sailor in charge of the activity.<sup>5</sup>



*Boys marking their new kit in Leeuwin's gymnasium, January 1961*  
(Kev Connolly)

New junior recruits shared an experience endured by probably every military recruit the world over – their first military haircut. *Leeuwin* had two barbers under contract who were, due to their names and accents, referred to by most junior recruits and staff as ‘Von Snips’ or simply ‘Snips’ and his son ‘Snips Junior’.<sup>6</sup> Every junior recruit had a standing appointment every two to three weeks for a short back and sides ‘*Leeuwin* style’ haircut and during each working day the small wooden hut that constituted the barbershop was the scene of a production line as the boys’ hair was cut swiftly at low cost. For the new boys, long 1960s and 1970s hair styles were transformed quickly into the haircut they would sport for almost the remainder of their naval career. For many, uniform caps tried on for size so recently during the kitting up process no longer fitted.

Injections and inoculations against a range of diseases were also conducted by a production line approach wherein boys filed past sick bay staff who took turns until each boy had received the number of needles he required. Fainting was common and for those who did not cope well with needles it could be a very unpleasant experience. Sore and scabby arms added to the boys’ woes for a few days thereafter.

A central feature of life for a sailor is his ‘division’, the divisional structure being the Navy’s traditional method of organising a ship’s company into groups for command, leadership, management and welfare purposes. In ships, divisions are organised along employment category or branch lines and in the simplest structure as found in a small

ship there would be a seaman division, a supply division and an engineering division. Large ships could also have a medical division and an aviation division while those in the seaman employment categories could, for example, be allocated to a gunnery division, a torpedo anti-submarine division or a communications division. In *Leeuwin* junior recruits of the same division were accommodated together and led by a divisional staff usually comprising a Divisional Officer normally of lieutenant commander or senior lieutenant rank, assisted by Divisional Senior Sailors usually of chief petty officer and petty officer rank.



*A junior recruit receives his first navy haircut from 'Snips Senior',  
Cornelius van Aurich (RAN and Rene van Aurich)*

In 1960 training began with five divisions, each named after a prominent Western Australian aborigine of the early 19th century: Kaiber, Mokare, Nakina, Winjan and Yagan. As the numbers of junior recruits undergoing training increased and as the Navy continued to have difficulty in providing experienced divisional officers, new divisions were formed, new names were added and old names discarded. According to former junior recruits who served in *Leeuwin* at the time a Wylie division was formed for a short period in 1963 but no trace of it exists in official records. Also in 1963, the existing divisions became sub-elements of the Forecastle Division, the Fore Top Division, the Main Top Division and the Quarterdeck Division, with the Main Top Division having

in it Nakina 1 Division and Yagan 1 Division. This structure remained in place for a year before reverting to the old structure. In 1965 use of the aboriginal names ended and the practice began of naming divisions after former RAN officers. Initially Collins, Morrow, Howden, Rhoades and Morris were used, with Marks, Stevenson, Walton and Ramsay added later. Other reorganisations occurred in 1967 and 1968 both specifically aimed at adjusting the mix of intakes in each division. This varied between having all intakes represented in each division to having the newest intake form its own divisions. The trial of different division-intake mixes seems to have become more important over time, an endeavour to make the sharp divide between intakes less clear and to thereby reduce a growing culture of inter-intake tension and status seeking that had resulted in bullying by members of the senior intakes. In the late 1960s there appears to have been a determined effort made to adjust the mix with one goal being to have members of the senior intakes assume more responsibility for the welfare and informal training of members of more junior intakes.

Ramsay Division was formed in 1972, thereby commemorating Commodore James M Ramsay, the NOICWA and Naval Officer Commanding Western Australia (NOCWA) from January 1968 to January 1972.<sup>7</sup> The practice of using the names of former RAN officers continued until the end of the junior recruit training scheme in 1984 although, as intakes increased or decreased in size, divisions were sometimes further sub-divided into 'port' and 'starboard', or into numbered sub-divisions such as Rhoades 1 and 2. For the 86th, and last, intake there was only one division, Ramsay, comprising 40 boys.

## Classes

Class assignment, as described previously, was determined by an interview with *Leeuwin's* Senior Psychologist and would see the boys placed in six classes graded from A to F. While there were normally about 25 boys to a class the desirability of having boys of the same class allocated to the same division led to some experimentation. In the first year of *Leeuwin's* operation, each of the accommodation blocks housed 31 boys, with the result that some classes were spread between two blocks and between different divisions. The administrative inconvenience of this led to class sizes being increased to 31 by *Leeuwin's* CO, apparently against the wishes of the navy instructor officers responsible for educational outcomes.

## Accommodation

Despite the favourable impression held by the Working Group, *Leeuwin* was not well prepared for its junior recruit training role in terms of accommodation, dining, and general recreational facilities and it would be nearly a decade before significant improvements were made. The decision to accommodate from March 1960 sailors serving as staff members in *Leeuwin*, in preparation for the arrival of junior recruits in July 1960, required in the words of the then CO 'the adoption of emergency measures to cook adequate meals'.<sup>8</sup>

Boys in the early intakes were accommodated in WWII-vintage wooden blocks each having a capacity to sleep 30 to 40 boys. These spartan buildings were referred to by junior recruits and staff members as 'dongas'. Ken Dobbie, of the 6th intake, recalls that they were unheated, single story, timber framed buildings with corrugated cement sheeting roofs and interior walls, exterior cladding of asbestos-cement sheeting painted pale green and windows of a swung out casement design. Each building had an entrance with wooden steps at either end. The timber floors, despite being covered with brown linoleum, were noisy to walk on. Each boy had a standard navy dormitory-style locker made of varnished wood with a small desk incorporated in it. These were lined up back-to-back down the centre of the building with a chair provided at each desk. Grey-painted beds of iron and wire construction, with thin foam rubber mattresses, were lined up perpendicular to the walls down each side of the building. Unshaded incandescent bulbs down the centreline of the building provided light; there were no reading lights over the beds. Showers and toilets were in a separate central facility of asbestos-cement sheeting and concrete floor design. Except for the obligatory RAN signs about discipline and fire safety, decoration was not permitted.



*Junior recruit Ric Turesson standing in the doorway of K 'donga' in the early 1960s  
(Glen MacAndrews)*



*Interior of a 'donga' (RAN)*

Sheets were issued as 'loan clothing' and one sheet was washed in a laundry service once a week. Bedcovers - 'counterpanes' in navy jargon - were washed once a term. For the washing of uniforms a laundry building was also located within the donga complex. This was equipped with Lightburn brand, 'cement mixer' style, washing machines and drying rooms heated by electric fan heaters. Laundry powder was supplied free. Ironing boards were also attached to the walls but irons had to be purchased from the canteen by each boy. Strands of fencing wire were fixed between each donga for use as clothes lines but all clothes had to be removed during working hours. At one stage in 1960 a staff member sailor was appointed to do the washing for junior recruits in bulk. However, the practice was discontinued due to the poor quality of the job being done, the very low status of the job probably being reflected in the task performance. In January 1961, the then CO stated that he considered the junior recruits' laundry facilities to be 'most inadequate'.<sup>9</sup>

Each donga was patrolled at night by the Naval Dockyard Police who did a bed check and provided a general security service although in the view of some boys they often took their role too seriously. The 'turning out' of complete divisions at night was not unusual because of noise or unruly behaviour and duty divisional staff would often be seen running boys around the parade ground at all hours.

Construction of the first of seven multi-story brick accommodation blocks began in 1963. The blocks were intended to represent the stark but much more cluttered and less spacious environment of the shipboard mess deck in which the boys would live post-*Leeuwin*. Designated with the letters A to G each block could house 200 boys with up to eight living in each door-less cubicle situated either side of a central corridor. Heads, showers and a laundry room were located at one end of each floor. Offices for divisional staff members were located immediately inside the ground floor entrance of each block. Within cubicles each boy was allocated a bunk and a four compartment locker in which all his possessions except his bedding, towel, cap and raincoat (known as a Burberry) had to be stowed. Boys were not permitted to leave personal items outside their lockers nor were they permitted to decorate or otherwise personalise their cubicle with photographs, posters or other items. Immediately after 'wakey wakey' each morning each boy had to strip his bed and fold and place all his bedding in the regulation folded manner atop his mattress where they stayed until beds could be readied for use after evening inspection - 'rounds' - by the duty officer. Clothing or personal items left laying about - 'sculling' - were removed to be later collected from a staff member along with a fine, an oral censure or worse.



*B accommodation block in the mid-1960s (RAN)*



*The interior of B block showing the door-less cubicles and junior recruits of the 22nd intake skylarking (John Bailey)*



*Junior recruits inside a B block cubicle. Pictured left to right are P Betts, B Adams, J Bailey, J Allen, G Bain and W McNee (John Bailey)*



While a significant improvement over the old dongas the new blocks were not particularly comfortable places in which to live. There were few showers, with the ratio of boys to a shower varying over the years of the scheme between 12 and 25 to one. Laundry facilities remained barely adequate. Even given the better standards provided in the new blocks conditions were such that early in 1972 the incoming NOCWA expressed his surprise at the 'spartan nature of the accommodation blocks' and his desire to make them seem more homely.<sup>10</sup>

## Uniform

After receiving their issue of navy uniforms shortly after arrival in *Leeuwin* the boys had to send home all their civilian clothes, except underwear. While boys who came from Perth or nearby, and some who were sponsored by local families, did have access to civilian clothing, most boys possessed only the navy uniform clothing that they would wear for almost the remainder of their year. The single thing that distinguished their uniform from that of their adult colleagues was that they wore badges on each shoulder – referred to as a 'flashes' in the Navy – bearing *Tingira* in capital letters. The practice of wearing the flash seems to have varied over the years. In the early days boys wore the *Tingira* flash on both shoulders of their uniforms. Later in the 1960s, after the introduction for all Navy officers and sailors of shoulder flashes bearing the word 'Australia', the *Tingira* flash either replaced the Australia flash on one shoulder or was placed immediately beneath the Australia flash. Wearing the flash served the triple purpose of providing a link back to the boys of the training ship moored in Rose Bay, distinguishing them from their adult junior sailor colleagues and, to the chagrin of junior recruits but no doubt to the approval of their parents, advertising them to the public, to Naval and civilian police and to publicans as minors under the legal drinking age.

All boys had to sew flashes on each shoulder of almost every one of their new jackets, shirts and 'white fronts' – the traditional sailor's tee shirt worn as outer wear in summer or under a seaman's black jersey in winter. Sewing was done using a 'housewife', a 20 centimetre square compartmented navy sewing kit containing black and white cotton and needles. When not in use it was rolled into a small cylinder for ease of stowage in a sailor's locker. For boys accustomed to having their mother mend and alter their clothing the need to sew was a shock that frequently produced gross insults to the tailor's art. In late-1977 the NOCWA proposed to Navy Office in Canberra that the wearing of the *Tingira* flash cease. He did so on the grounds that as adult sailors were now permitted to wear civilian clothes off base, and as that privilege had also been extended to some junior recruits in 1976, wearing of the flash was unnecessary. He added that it would also save the RAN money and improve the appearance of junior recruits whose poor standards of sewing degraded the visual appearance of their uniforms. While no record exists of a formal Navy Office response to the proposal it seems not to have found favour as the flash continued to be worn.



*Commodore Robert L Shimmin, RAN, presenting Cerberus Junior Recruit MR Cain with the prizes for best all round recruit and academic results. On Cain's shoulder can be seen the Tingira 'flash' (The Age)*

Within *Leeuwin* junior recruits wore plain black and ugly leather ankle boots that were expected to be kept at all times in a high shine and spit-polished for parades and other ceremonial events. The two pairs each boy owned wore down rapidly from jogging to and from classes which meant frequent resoling, a task that in the late 1960s was alleged to have been done by prisoners in Fremantle jail. Webbing anklets and belts were worn during working hours also. Until late in the scheme when black items were introduced, webbing was whitened with a daily application of 'blanco'. The brass buckles and removable clips were expected to be highly polished in readiness for morning 'colours' parade on working days. Many former junior recruits complain that this unrelenting daily attention to cleaning webbing either put them off uniform cleaning forever or produced an opposite effect, one of personal sartorial fastidiousness that lasted throughout their naval careers into civilian life.

In July 1976, the privilege of wearing civilian clothes while on short term leave in Western Australia was extended on a trial basis to the senior class of junior recruits during the last three month of their training. The aim of the trial was to ease the transition of junior recruits from *Leeuwin*'s closely controlled and regulated environment to the less restrictive, more adult, milieu that existed in the ships and bases in which they would serve after leaving *Leeuwin*. The trial was regarded as a success and junior recruits in the final months of their training continued to enjoy the privilege until the training scheme's conclusion.

Boys selected for higher education and transfer to the topman scheme wore, as did upper yardman officer candidates, uniform devices to distinguish them from junior recruits and ship's company members. In summer uniform these were blue strips of cloth about an inch wide and four inches long attached 'fore and aft' on both shoulders. In winter uniform, white stripes were worn in the same position, a practice which led junior recruits in the late 1970s to refer to them as 'band aid boys'. Topmen lived a life almost separate from the junior recruit population wherein they undertook academic studies throughout the day and each evening from Monday to Friday, and on Saturday mornings. Except for some participation in sports and limited drill instruction with the heavy cutlass, their lives in *Leeuwin* were devoted to academic studies.

## Routine

Although it varied over the years, a junior recruit's stay in *Leeuwin* had three major parts: an induction period and two terms of study. A mid-calendar year leave period separated the two terms except for those who entered *Leeuwin* in an April intake. All boys received home leave at Christmas. In its report the Working Group foresaw each week having 30 hours of study, plus one hour of 'preparation' each weekday evening and further instruction each Saturday morning if required. This outline was converted by *Leeuwin* staff members into a 'basic daily routine' for the first intake of junior recruits of:

0530	Call the hands
0600	Fall in, clean ship
0655	Breakfast
0755	Fall in for morning parade
0800	Colours (ceremony of raising the Australian national flag and the Australian White Ensign) followed by divisions (inspection and march past) and prayers
0815	First study period
0915	Second study period
1015	Stand easy (a break)
1030	Third study period
1130	Hands to bathe (swimming) in summer or physical training
1200	Dinner
1315	Fourth study period

1415	Fifth study period
1515	Sixth study period
1615	Tea
1630	Recreation
1845	Supper
1945	Commence evening preparation
2030	Secure
2100	Secure, clean for rounds
2115	Turn in (to bed)
2130	Rounds, lights out

This routine varied over the years. For example, call the hands was moved to 0600 and then to 0630, but regardless of the time late risers could find themselves clad in pyjamas and slippers double marching around the parade ground carrying their mattress and bedding. Rounds were advanced to 1900 and lights out was deferred until 2200 in order to give boys more undisturbed time for study and recreation after completion of rounds. However, in a community comprised of large numbers of 15 and 16-year-old boys 'undisturbed time' was seldom available to a boy intent on study.

Life was conducted 'at the rush'. For new boys each weekday morning was a time management nightmare wherein they had to shower, shave (not shaving was a punishable offence), eat breakfast, scrub and tidy their cubicle, and go to the armoury where, in a scene reminiscent of the *Tingira* petty officers wielding their stonnachies, gunnery instructors 'laid on' with .303 rifle bayonet scabbards to make boys hurry up in drawing their rifles. After falling in by division on the parade ground they were inspected, participated in the colours ceremony and marched past. After the parade, held in all but extreme weather conditions, boys double marched off by class for their first period of instruction.

In addition to being responsible for the cleanliness and tidiness of their own living spaces, all boys shared the burden of communal domestic duties. They could work as kitchen hands, cleaners and scullery party in the dining hall; do garbage disposal duty; assist various staff members in a wide variety of base duties including gunner's party, where they maintained the establishments many rifles; and acting as messengers, cleaners and general assistants in the many offices of *Leeuwin's* administration organisation. Certain jobs, particularly those in some of the offices, were preferred over others as they involved little work and the opportunity to relax, to read and to drink as much coffee or tea as desired.



*Junior recruits parading with Lee Enfield .303 rifles pre-1968 (RAN)*



*A 1972 junior recruit parade with L1A1 7.62mm self loading rifles (RAN)*

A special routine applied for boys awarded a formal punishment. Those experiencing a period of punishment were, in navy jargon, said to be 'on chooks' and in daily orders were referred to as 'MUP' - Men Under Punishment. For them, private time was further restricted and the need to rush intensified by the inclusion of extra work and (usually fairly painful) rifle drill on the parade ground. For these boys, the more incorrigible of whom experienced multiple punishments in their year at *Leeuwin*, their very tiring daily routine involved:

0530	Call the MUP
0600	Fall in at the Gangway for roll call and work detail
0645	Secure, rejoin junior recruit normal routine
1230	Fall in at the Gangway for roll call and work or drill
1300	Rejoin junior recruit normal routine
1630	Fall in on the parade ground for drill or work
1800	Rejoin junior recruit normal routine
1900	Fall in at the Gangway for roll call and work detail
2100	Secure, rejoin junior recruit normal routine

## Drill and Ceremonial

Drill, usually with rifles, was a significant feature of the life of junior recruits. In addition to the parades - 'divisions' as the Navy calls them - there were ceremonial divisions conducted during working hours at regular and frequent intervals, church parades, leave inspection parades and quarterly graduation parades. Few boys graduated from *Leeuwin* without having marched through the streets of Perth to mark an event or paraded as a member of a guard to welcome or farewell a visiting regal or vice regal dignitary. The boys also marched on Anzac Day and to commemorate significant military events such as the Battle of the Coral Sea and Trafalgar Day. The opening of the Western Australian Parliament, Western Australian Foundation Day, the annual Seafarer's Service and the Royal Agricultural Show were other events marked by the parade of a guard of, usually, 100 boys. On 21 October 1962, in the presence of the Mayor of Fremantle and others, 50 junior recruits performed the ceremony *Death of Nelson*. Drill at *Leeuwin* was, as a result, of a relatively high standard.

From 1960 to 1968 junior recruits drilled with and were taught to maintain and fire the Lee Enfield .303 rifle that had been the standard individual weapon of the Australian forces for most of the 20th century. Unloaded but with bayonet fixed it weighed about three kilograms and was over five feet long, about the height of many junior recruits. After Navy drill changed from shoulder carriage of rifles to the modern side carriage



*Topmen parading with the cutlass in 1971 (RAN)*

style *Leeuwin's* .303s were modified by the addition of a wooden handle screwed to the magazine. While highly uncomfortable to use for prolonged periods it satisfactorily mimicked the handle of the rifle that would replace the .303 from 1967 the L1A1 7.62mm self loading rifle (SLR). Weighing about the same as the .303 the SLR had a much shorter bayonet, and was therefore easier to manage and much more comfortable to use than its predecessor. Topmen drilled with rifles but were also taught to parade with the navy cutlass. This ancient weapon was heavy and very uncomfortable to hold in the 'at attention' position for long periods.

## Pay

In the November 1907 'Harvester' ruling a fair and reasonable minimum wage for Australian workers was set at seven shillings per day. In contrast, the wage of an Australian able seaman in 1919 was five shillings and six pence per day while those who joined the *Tingira* scheme as a Boy 2nd Class in 1912, earned seven shillings per week of which one shilling was received in hand each Wednesday, the remainder going to a bank account.<sup>11</sup> Boys 1st Class received ten shillings and six pence per week gross and one shilling and sixpence in hand each week. Their 1960 counterpart's pay was age-based with junior recruits younger than 16 receiving nine shillings and two pence per day. On turning 16 their pay increased to fourteen shillings and two pence per day. At the age of 17 they received one pound and six shillings per day. Boys of 17 also received two shillings and six pence uniform allowance per pay but were responsible for the upkeep of their kit unlike younger boys who received free uniform items to replace those damaged through fair wear and tear. Even given the increased purchasing power of Australian currency in 1960 boy's pay rates were not much of an advance of those in 1912. A summary of the boys' pay and pocket money rates over the years is shown in Table 2.

Year	Junior Recruit 2nd Class/Boy 2nd Class	Junior Recruit 1st Class/Boy 1st Class
1912	£0/14s/0 gross, 2s pocket money	£1/1s/0d gross, 3s pocket money
1960	15-year-old - £4/11/8 gross, 15s pocket money 16-year-old - £7/1/8 gross, 15s pocket money	16-year-old - £7/1/8 gross, £1/0/0 pocket money 17-year-old - £14/4/6 gross including uniform allowance, £1/0/0 pocket money
1970	15-year-old - \$18.76 gross, \$10 pocket money 16-year-old - \$26.04 gross, \$10 pocket money	16-year-old - \$26.04 gross, \$12 pocket money 17-year-old - \$28.93 gross including uniform allowance, \$12 pocket money
1980	\$65.00	\$87.00

*Table 2: Fortnightly Pay Comparison*

Until 1973, boys did not receive all their pay in hand. Instead, like their *Tingira* forebears, they only received pocket money in hand with the balance of their pay deposited into a Commonwealth Bank account opened by the RAN on their behalf. Each boy's account passbook was handed to him shortly before his departure from *Leeuwin* after passing out. A further stipulation was that junior recruits were not to have large sums of money in their possession. Early in the 1960s junior recruits second class were not permitted to have more than £2/0/0 in their possession at any one time while a junior recruit first class was permitted to have not more than £3/0/0. Compulsory banking was abolished by Naval Board decision in 1973 prompting the NOCWA to observe in October of that year that many boys were:

Squandering their pay on expensive consumer items and offences involving alcohol are increasing. Nevertheless, I believe that the Naval Board decision will have the effect of cushioning the dramatic rise in pay when adult rates are received after they leave *Leeuwin* and therefore in the long term the decision will be of benefit.<sup>12</sup>

While many former junior recruits recall always being short of cash and having to borrow from family and mates, they did not actually need much money to survive in *Leeuwin* - providing they did not smoke or over-indulge in soft drinks or lollies. Cleaning materials for uniform maintenance and hygiene items were the biggest drain on their income but it was not until 1980 that each boy's pay was 'docked' a small amount to cover 'LWF' - laundry, welfare and haircuts. As was customary in the armed forces



at the time, all boys received free food, accommodation, medical and dental treatment and paid annual leave travel. The boys received their pay every second Thursday in the traditional naval manner. Having fallen in alphabetically on the parade ground each boy, on hearing his name called, marched forward to the Supply Officer to salute, show his identification card, call out his name and service number and receive his pocket money in a small manila envelope. Opportunistic divisional staff members and Regulating or Naval Police Coxswain Branch sailors took advantage of the pay parades to detect boys with overly long hair, scruffy uniform or other minor deficiencies.

## Leave

Like their adult sailor colleagues, junior recruits were entitled to two types of leave – ‘seasonal’ and ‘short’. Seasonal leave was taken mid-term by all boys except those who entered in an April intake while the Christmas break applied to all boys. Junior recruits, however, received six weeks seasonal leave, much more than their adult colleagues. In the days before air travel was common, for boys who lived far from *Leeuwin*, in North Queensland for example, seasonal leave could involve up to 10 days rail travel, sitting upright in a hard seat with no entitlement to a sleeper.

Short leave refers to that taken on a weekly basis. Junior recruits’ entitlement to short leave varied throughout the duration of the scheme. No boy was allowed any leave during his first few weeks at *Leeuwin* – the ‘initial training period’. Later they were granted leave on Saturdays and Sundays providing they were not undergoing punishment or required to remain on board for domestic duties as part of the Duty Watch, a commitment that recurred every four to six weeks. Short leave began to be granted on Friday nights in 1971 in an effort to make the *Leeuwin* lifestyle less restrictive. Leave expired at 2200 for junior recruits second class and at midnight for first class boys, with late return invariably attracting a formal charge and punishment unless a very good excuse could be given. Exceptions to this rule were boys with homes in the Perth and Fremantle region and those boys fortunate enough to obtain ‘sponsors’.

For almost 24 years, *Leeuwin* staff ran a scheme in which boys, particularly those from states other than Western Australia, could spend leave with families residing in Perth, Fremantle and nearby country areas. On Father’s Day 1960 *Leeuwin* staff members and the local RSL and Rotary Clubs organised for 150 junior recruits to participate in a ‘Father for a Day Scheme’. As time went by such ad hoc events developed into a formal sponsorship scheme managed by a warrant officer staff member appointed for the task. Sponsorship allowed boys, with the approval of their parents, to stay overnight with carefully selected families. For the boys it offered some respite from regimented life in the blocks, an opportunity to change out of uniform into civilian clothes and the chance to talk to females. Many families sponsored multiple boys over the years, producing life-long friendships, correspondence and, in some case, marriages between boys and daughters of sponsor families.



## Wanted A Home From Home



Each year over 700 boys aged 15 and 16 years make the long trek from their homes in the Eastern States and the far North-west to join the Royal Australian Navy as junior recruits at H.M.A.S. Leeuwin.

During their 12 months stay in the West they are, of course, given opportunities for overnight weekend leave and it makes a tremendous difference to these youngsters if they can have some of the touches of the home life they left behind.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP A  
BOY WHO'S HELPING HIS COUNTRY  
— AND WELCOME HIM INTO YOUR  
HOME — THEN PLEASE FILL IN THE  
COUPON AND POST IT OFF  
TODAY !**

Please send me full details of the H.M.A.S. LEEUWIN Junior Recruit Sponsorship scheme.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post to the Secretary, Sponsorship Scheme, H.M.A.S. Leeuwin, P.O. Box 58, Fremantle, 6160

*A flyer seeking families to sponsor junior recruits (RAN)*

For boys without sponsors and with little cash in their pockets, there was not a great deal to do while on short leave. Low level tensions between local youth and the uniformed junior recruits on short leave meant that junior recruits usually moved in groups. While much of Fremantle, particularly the area of hotels in the west end of the town, was out of bounds, it did attract boys seeking to purchase alcohol illegally with the assistance of unscrupulous or mistakenly sympathetic hotel staff. Many boys frequented the Flying Angel Club built in Fremantle in 1966 on the site of the Eastern Seafarers Club first established in 1943 to cope with a wartime influx of Asian sailors. While not the sort of place normally associated with youth entertainment the Flying Angel was within easy walking distance of *Leeuwin* and constituted a ready refuge from their daily rigours where the boys could play billiards or the juke box and savour cheap take away food and drinks.

## Health

Many ex-junior recruits have a strong recollection of *Leeuwin* as a time when they were almost always hungry, despite the fact that junior recruits, apprentices and cadet midshipmen received an 'extra victualling allowance' to cater for their bodily growth needs. A long and busy daily life in which boys had to double march during working hours, play afternoon sport, and undergo regular physical fitness training combined with the voracious appetite of any teenage boy made meals major milestones in their day. In the early 1960s, Kai, a thick chocolate-based drink issued to sailors in the night watches at sea, was also issued to boys at 2100 along with a piece of cake but this practice was soon discontinued and the only food sources thereafter were meals or the canteen. Food could not be stored or consumed in the boys' accommodation. In the words of John Lilley a junior recruit of the 23rd Intake in 1968, 'no fat JRs left *Leeuwin*'.<sup>13</sup>

In *Leeuwin* as in the Fleet great importance was placed on personal hygiene, the cleanliness and neatness of uniform, and of accommodation. Both were inspected daily and staff members were quick to issue kit musters to boys who failed to meet the standards required. Naval standards were difficult to accept and achieve for many of the boys whose mothers had formerly done all their washing, ironing, cleaning and tidying. Those who could not match up often received a 'scrubbing', an involuntary wash with 'Pusser's Hard' soap, or sand soap, and hard brooms and scrubbing brushes. For boys on the receiving end of such a scrubbing it was humiliating and painful.

Similarly, throughout the RAN there was a stigma attached to being a too-frequent visitor to the sick bay. Those who did were labelled 'sick bay jockeys' and combined with the fact that a visit to the sick bay was never a pleasant experience this produced a culture in which boys would endure ailments and only seek medical aid when instructed to do so or when the nature or severity of their complaint made it unavoidable. However, the health of junior recruits was of a relatively high order. A reasonably well balanced

diet, an energetic lifestyle with a strong emphasis on sport, ready access to medical and dental treatment and the naval fixation with neatness and cleanliness all helped prevent illness and provide a ready cure when it did occur.

In a reflection of changing attitudes in the Australian community a broader approach was adopted in the 1970s to what constituted healthy living for junior recruits. In 1975, and at least in part due to the personal interest of the then NOCWA, 'social issues', 'human relations education' and drink driving began to be addressed in the syllabus. The development was expanded and formalised in 1976, notably with the inclusion of drug education.

## Recreation

Records show that throughout the life of the junior recruit training scheme *Leeuwin*'s staff members were very conscious of the need to put more into the boys' lifestyle than regimentation and study. *Leeuwin*'s commanders and many individual staff members tried hard to provide activities that distracted and diverted the boys from a lifestyle in which they were confined for almost a year, in large numbers, to a small geographical area, under supervision for much of each day and subject to formal and informal discipline regimes that, if misapplied, would have undesirable outcomes. The difficulty in enriching their lives increased as the size of the junior recruit population grew, as the ratio of staff members to boys diminished and as the training curricula began to focus more narrowly on naval training rather than academics.

From the outset the *Leeuwin* environment had features more characteristic of an officer's training establishment like the Naval College at Jervis Bay than of a sailor training establishment like *Cerberus*. For example, in the early 1960s weekly dances were held on Friday nights from 1930 to 2200. It cost a boy two shillings to attend with the money going to dancing instructors Mr and Mrs Meakins who taught boys the Pride of Erin, waltzing and the quickstep to music from a record player. Dance partners were 15 to 17-year-old girls from the local community whose parents must have had considerable faith in the way the RAN managed these dances. A base bus did a circuit of Fremantle to pick up and drop off girls who, from the photographs available, clearly put a lot of effort into their appearance. *Leeuwin* staff members supervised the dances and girls were not permitted to leave the gymnasium where the dances were held. An added attraction for the boys was that sandwiches, cake, cocoa and 'limers' - navy fruit drink - were provided free of charge to all dance attendees. Towards the end of the 1960s dances were held monthly but these were discontinued in the 1970s. Many boys met their first girlfriends at a *Leeuwin* dance and the girls' families often sponsored the junior recruit who had attracted their daughter. The girls also partnered boys at graduation balls and in many cases friendships arising from these dances endured and, like those relationships began during a sponsorship, often resulted in marriage.



*Smiling 'band-aid-ed' Topmen experiencing one of Leeuwin's less arduous tasks: escort duties for a local charity quest (RAN)*



*An invitation to the graduation dance of the 2nd intake in 1961 (RAN)*



*Junior recruits of the 37th intake having a barbeque at Garden Island, Fremantle, 1971 (Peter Crowe)*

During the period when the number of boys in *Leeuwin* was relatively small and manageable more cultural activities were offered. Quarterly Reports of Proceedings (ROPs) submitted by COs refer to boys being taken on arranged excursions to see plays, such as *Murder in the Cathedral* and *La Traviata*, at the University, free film showing on Sunday evenings and ballet, radio and television productions. Reference to such activities diminished over the years. Judge Rapke, who would undertake an inquiry into certain events at *Leeuwin* in the late 1960s, observed that recreational facilities for the boys were insufficient. As an example he referred to there being only one television available for all the many hundreds of boys.

On long weekends groups of boys were taken away on camps or expeditions (OXPs). In the early 1960s Toojay Valley was the usual destination where, clad in their working clothes and carrying a blanket, water bottle and two Army ration packs, the boys were dropped off on Friday night and instructed to navigate to another point by Sunday afternoon. Later, Rottneest Island a few kilometres offshore from Fremantle was used, but for most boys the usual OXP venue was nearby Garden Island, the site of what is now *Stirling*, one of the RAN's largest bases. There, in spartan accommodation with little staff supervision and very little sporting or other recreational equipment, boys fished if they had lines, snorkelled if they owned the gear, swam and attempted to avoid both the deadly dugite tiger snakes and the attention of members of more senior intakes many of whom used the OXPs to do as they wished. This usually involved running kangaroo courts with attendant minor punishment and humiliation of their juniors and sometimes more abusive activities handed out in retribution for wrongs perceived to have been committed in *Leeuwin*.



*The Windmill Trophy for inter-divisional boxing at Leeuwin (Peter Pascoe)*



*'New grubs' from the 70th intake participating in the annual swimming carnival, 1980 (John Perryman)*

A strong focus on sport for junior recruits endured throughout the existence of the training scheme. *Leeuwin*'s sports facilities were neither extensive nor of a high standard, particularly for boys who joined in the early 1960s. The NOICWA said in a 1960 ROP that:

Extending and levelling of the Playing Field has now been completed and the sowing of new grass will be carried out in January, 1960. I am not satisfied that the levelling of the area will provide the standard of playing field to be expected for the financial outlay which has been made. The ground, while free from bumps, slopes down to the river by an amount which appears greater than is needed for efficient drainage. The matter is the subject of discussion with the Department of Works, whose representative maintains that this is an optical illusion.<sup>14</sup>

Later the same year he reported that:

Aided by Mr Abbot, Curator of the West Australian Cricket Association Ground, Mr Ward, Engineer of the Department of Works and myself laid the turf wickets on the playing field ... The Department of Works representatives are now convinced that the slope of the ground is real ... early rains have aided the growth of grass, although an unwanted crop of oats appeared overnight on the turf table.<sup>15</sup>

While improvement did occur, it did so slowly. In his June 1968 ROP the NOICWA stated that 'it is a matter of concern that extremely narrow limits are imposed on recreational programmes because of the grossly inadequate numbers of playing fields (two for 600 junior recruits)'.<sup>16</sup>

*Leeuwin* relied heavily on the civilian community for access to sporting facilities. For example, despite the heavy emphasis placed by the RAN on swimming and water survival skills after the sinking of HMAS *Voyager* in 1964, *Leeuwin* did not have a swimming pool until November 1970. For water sports and training it relied on access to community pools. This was an irritant for *Leeuwin* staff but the links forged with the civilian community helped junior recruits participate in a wide range of civilian sports competitions. Additionally, *Leeuwin* conducted a very extensive inter-divisional competition, later called the McAllister Cup, founded on the idea that every boy should have the opportunity to represent his division in at least one sport. In 1963 the program was sufficiently staffed to permit boys who did not get to represent their division to undertake 'optional sport'. In such cases a member of the physical training staff or another suitably skilled member of the ship's company gave them a grounding in the rules and skills involved in a range of sports including sailing, rowing, squash, fencing, life saving, gymnastics, weight training and badminton. The magnitude of the sports competition was such that in 1963 *Leeuwin* awarded 'colours' for achievement in nine different sports. While an emphasis on sports continued throughout the scheme's





*Leeuwin recruits Gary Kinnear and Ray Harper taking part in a boxing match in 1968 (Gary Kinnear)*



*Junior Recruit A Okely of the 85th intake receiving a sports award, 1984 (RAN)*

duration it seems that the increasing numbers of boys being recruited, the subsequent lowering of the staff to boy ratio and the lack of navy transport saw a decline in the extent of the boys' sports activities.

Boxing was an activity which attracted a great deal of attention. Compulsory in 1960 for all junior recruits first class and voluntary for their second class colleagues, boxing was made voluntary for all boys in mid-1966. The fact that over 400 boys participated in the tournament in 1966 suggests that either the activity was very popular among the boys or the culture was such that boys felt obliged to join in. The boxing tournaments were a local spectator sport from the very start. At the first tournament held on 21 November 1960, the Second Naval Member, an admiral visiting from Canberra, was the guest of honour. In later years guests of honour included the Western Australian Police Commissioner, the Governor of Western Australia, the Chief of Naval Staff and senior officers of the other two Services. In August 1968, the tournament was even filmed by Channel 9 in Perth and later broadcast in Perth and Melbourne.

Despite the best efforts of staff members, throughout the existence of the junior recruit training scheme, outside of sports, difficulty was experienced in providing a multi-faceted, active program of enriching recreational activities in *Leeuwin*. Access to newspapers, to television and to more cerebral pursuits was limited which often proved insufficient to divert them intellectually from the monotony of schoolwork, the lifestyle and mundane duties.

## Junior Recruits at HMAS *Cerberus*

Between 1963 and 1965 two intakes of junior recruits were trained at *Cerberus* in order to capitalise on the excellent recruiting response. Increasing the number of boys under training in *Leeuwin* was not possible because of the lack of infrastructure there, despite the work being done to upgrade accommodation and training facilities. Training for the first *Cerberus* intake of 125 boys began on 17 March 1963. A second intake of 200 joined on 5 April 1964. The first intake graduated on 26 March 1964 while the second graduated on 1 March 1965, both with the loss of only two boys. The extraordinarily good gradation rates suggest that the boys commitment and the quality of the training received were both high.

Recollections of members of the *Cerberus* intakes suggest that the boys lived a relatively self-contained lifestyle without great involvement in the day-to-day activities of what was, and remains, the RAN's largest training establishment. There is no evidence in the records of the existence of a close relationship between the, nearly collocated, adult and junior recruit training activities. Indeed, some of the *Cerberus* boys recollect their presence was only just tolerated and the separation was intentional. Given their age it is probable that isolation of the boys from the large number of adult sailors of all ranks present there was intentional and deemed to be in the boys' best interests.



*Junior Recruit John 'Jack' Dunn in one of G block's hammocks at HMAS Cerberus, April 1964 (Jack Dunn)*

Boys of the first intake were allocated to five divisions each of 25 boys. Boys of the second intake were allocated to seven divisions of about 28 in each. In *Cerberus*, divisions were named after colonial governors of New South Wales - Phillip, Hunter, King, Bligh, Macquarie, Brisbane and Bourke. The boys of the first intake were accommodated in G Block while the boys of the second intake were allocated to G Block and Getting Block. All took their meals in the Chief Petty Officer's and Petty Officer's Cafeteria. Getting Block was a modern brick building where the boys lived in four berth cabins in conditions similar to those in the more modern accommodation buildings at *Leeuwin*. G Block was a disused WWII-era weatherboard and asbestos sheet accommodation block that was formerly part of the adult recruit training school. In this block the boys slept in hammocks. Unlike *Leeuwin* where academic potential had no role in determining a boy's allocation to accommodation, in *Cerberus* the academically strong recruits were 'given preference in the accommodation [top floor] of Getting to enable them to carry out their evening preparation in their cabins'.<sup>17</sup> Offices for the small junior recruit training staff of roughly 11 officers and sailors, a television room for the boys and a small canteen were also located in G Block.

The daily routine for *Cerberus* boys was similar to that of *Leeuwin* boys. As in *Leeuwin* their naval training was to be at least the equivalent of that provided to *Cerberus* adult recruits but spread over almost a year rather than the shorter period the adult recruits experienced. The academic syllabus was the same at both establishments. However, having access to the well developed training facilities of the RAN's major sailor training establishment may have enhanced the relative quality of the naval training provided to *Cerberus* boys. In terms of discipline and punishment, sports, drill and domestic duties life for junior recruits in *Cerberus* and *Leeuwin* was remarkably similar but according to the recollections of some *Cerberus* boys there were very few sponsor families and very little overnight leave throughout their courses. Understandably, the 321 *Cerberus* junior recruits pride themselves on being just a little bit different, not only from their adult recruit entry colleagues but from their *Leeuwin* colleagues also. This difference is reinforced to a degree by the fact that *Cerberus* boys were allocated official numbers from the block of numbers given to adult recruits (59000 and 63000 series) rather than from the block allocated to *Leeuwin* boys (93000 and up series).



*Commodore Robert L Shimmin reviewing the passing out parade of the first junior recruit intake at HMAS Cerberus on 26 March 1964 (RAN)*

## Perceptions of the Junior Recruit Lifestyle

Interviews with former junior recruits suggest that, unsurprisingly, a universally shared view of the lifestyle experienced does not exist. Extremely critical and extremely favourable recollections exist alongside what appears to be a majority view that it was tolerable, that its unpleasant aspects were bearable and that it had many enjoyable and satisfying features that prepared them well for later naval life and indeed, for life in general. Many boys recall that with home and family a very long way away from *Leeuwin*, even for Western Australians, homesickness was a significant problem. Homesickness was most keenly felt during the induction period with its shock of separation from family, encountering a completely alien, conservative and old-fashioned naval lifestyle, odd language, the pressure of learning quickly how things worked and to cope with time management challenges under the scrutiny of unsympathetic staff members and senior intake members. In this their experience was probably not vastly different from that of their cadet midshipman and apprentice counterparts in *Creswell* and *Nirimba* and, indeed, from that of boys in Australian boarding schools.

For former junior recruits possessing highly critical views of the *Leeuwin* lifestyle their dissatisfaction and dislike seem to have begun after completion of the induction period. After this period the novelty had worn off, they had become a small participant in a lifestyle in which the major features were schoolwork and the need to function within a framework of rules and regulations wherein a small act of youthful absentmindedness or carelessness could produce a harsh disciplinary response. This was the period when unhappy letters to home were posted and when boys who could not adjust began to seek a way out. Exiting *Leeuwin* and the RAN was not easy, particularly before the the Navy's introduction of voluntary discharge after only a short period of training. In the face of parental and staff exhortations to 'give it a go' boys felt trapped. Until the boys were given the right to elect discharge in 1970 the only means of escape were seen to be desertion, the commission of a serious disciplinary offense likely to result in discharge as punishment, wholesale failure in academic and professional subjects and general under-performance.

Former junior recruits who enjoyed their *Leeuwin* experience give a range of reasons for having done so. For those from a farm, a remote rural town, an under-privileged or otherwise troubled family life it provided an excellent opportunity to escape. Many saw the 'big smoke' for the first time on the way to begin training at *Leeuwin* and even the relatively limited facilities there exposed them to ideas and to experiences that would never have been offered in their former life. Others, particularly those joining in the 1960s, recall that while hunger was a problem at *Leeuwin* they enjoyed access to a completely new and enjoyable range of foods after joining. Yet others consider that it gave them an opportunity to develop and grow, to learn how to adapt and cope, to overcome shyness and immaturity and to better understand their fellows by experiencing being in a position of responsibility and authority. In the words of one former junior recruit:

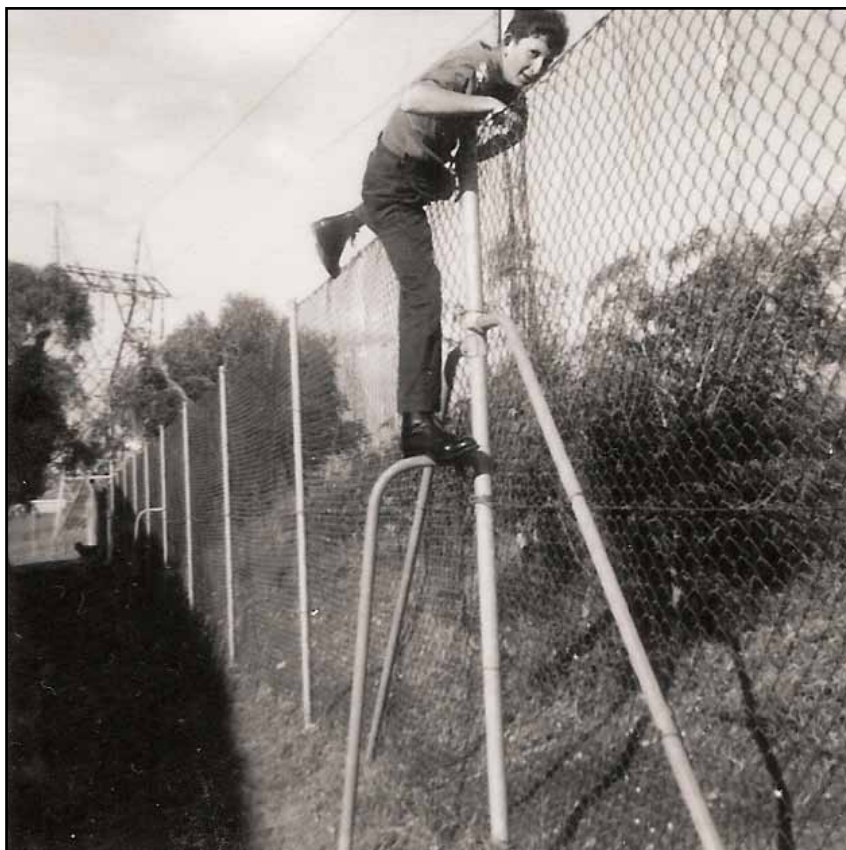
Despite the conditions (and I did not think them too harsh) we all survived OK and were much the better for it. Those who perhaps found the conditions harsh or trying and as such regretful would most probably have found life at sea difficult particularly those who went on to serve in some of the older ships such as *Sydney*. Those who adapted and learned from the *Leeuwin* experience usually did quite well. I do not look back on my time as a JR with any regrets at all (perhaps one of the best years of my life).<sup>18</sup>

Where *Leeuwin* boys differed most from their youthful counterparts in *Creswell* and *Nirimba* was the age at which they left the training environment and went to sea. Cadet midshipmen and apprentices completed three years in their respective training establishments and were at least 18 before beginning their first extended sea posting. Many junior recruits aged sixteen and a half were posted directly from *Leeuwin* to operational ships in which they would experience an extended deployment to Southeast Asia including active service in the Indonesian Confrontation or the Vietnam War before turning 17. The Navy did restrict the leave of its minor sailors but had little effective control over them once they were on shore leave, whether that be in Kings Cross or 'Up Top' in Bangkok, Hong Kong or one of the other regular ports of call for Australian sailors. While swearing, smoking, drinking and sexual activities were neither condoned nor actively encouraged by naval authorities neither were they actively discouraged or policed. These boys grew up very rapidly and if their emancipation from parental control had not occurred in *Leeuwin* it was certainly completed in the very adult, male only, environment of a deployed warship in which they enjoyed behavioural freedoms unimagined by most of their male age group in Australia. The alternative of posting boys only to ships remaining in Australia waters had its own problems summarised by the NOCWA in January 1975 who said:

[Junior recruits] ... leave *Leeuwin* fine, fit young men. Provided they are still given the supervision and understanding they need until they reach the age of 18, they will make good sailors, however, if thrown to the wolves of King Cross through joining ships in refit, there are many not capable of handling this type of situation due to immaturity. The only solution is organised leisure activities by the ships they join.<sup>19</sup>

Clearly the *Leeuwin* experience had a very strong impact on the majority of junior recruits. Some boys who passed through *Leeuwin* believe that they were hurt or disturbed by their experience. However, others regard it as a character building experience and sound preparation for both the RAN and adulthood. It is reasonable to assume that many factors shaped individual boy's experience of it. Those who had experience of boarding school life or who came from family circumstances that

demanded independence and resourcefulness of them may have found the transition to life in *Leeuwin* less of a challenge than others. For those coming from a very nurturing family environment in which responsibility for cleaning, clothing and organising themselves rested with their parents, the first few weeks at *Leeuwin*, and possibly longer, would have been a demanding and often unpleasant time.



*Junior Recruit Peter Crowe of the 37th intake demonstrating the proper technique for a back fence exit from HMAS Leeuwin (Peter Crowe)*

## Endnotes

---

- <sup>1</sup> For readers who seek more detail, individual accounts of life in *Leeuwin* can be found on a growing number of junior recruit intake and reunion internet web sites. *The Gunplot* website <[www.gunplot.net](http://www.gunplot.net)> established and maintained by Russ Graystone, a 1969 junior recruit, is an excellent example.
- <sup>2</sup> Letter to parents from a Navy Careers Officer in New South Wales, undated but likely to have been sent in the late-1970s in possession of the author.
- <sup>3</sup> Letter to parents from a Navy Careers Officer in New South Wales.
- <sup>4</sup> Recruits Handbook, HMAS *Leeuwin*, 1963, p. 57.
- <sup>5</sup> R Scott, *The Leeuwin Way (From Burrigue to Train Smash)*, *The Life of a Naval Junior Recruit (1966 – 1967)*, unpublished manuscript, in possession of the author, Canberra.
- <sup>6</sup> The barbers were Cornelius van Aurich (Snips Senior) and his son Rene (Snips Junior).
- <sup>7</sup> In 1970 the title Naval Officer in Charge West Australia changed to Naval Officer Commanding West Australia.
- <sup>8</sup> HMAS *Leeuwin*, Report of Proceedings (ROP), 1 Jan-31 Mar 1960, p. 3.
- <sup>9</sup> HMAS *Leeuwin*, ROP, 1 Sep-31 Dec 1960, p. 3.
- <sup>10</sup> HMAS *Leeuwin*, ROP, 1 Jan-31 Mar 1972, p. 1.
- <sup>11</sup> D Stevens, *The Royal Australian Navy*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, p. 91.
- <sup>12</sup> HMAS *Leeuwin*, ROP, 1 Jun-31 Aug 1973 dated 4 Oct 1973, p. 1.
- <sup>13</sup> J Lilley, *Call the J.R's – Junior Recruits – Royal Australian Navy*, undated, in possession of the author, p. 7.
- <sup>14</sup> HMAS *Leeuwin*, ROP, 1 Sep-31 Dec 1960, p. 3.
- <sup>15</sup> HMAS *Leeuwin*, ROP, 1 Sep-31 Dec 1960, p. 3.
- <sup>16</sup> HMAS *Leeuwin*, ROP, 1 Sep-31 Dec 1960, p. 3.
- <sup>17</sup> HMAS *Cerberus*, ROP, Apr-Jun 1963, dated 5 Apr 1963.
- <sup>18</sup> K Dobbie, email to the author 24 Feb 2008.
- <sup>19</sup> West Australia Area ROP, 22 Jan 1975, p. 7.





*The junior recruits at Leeuwin were an active part of the community involved in events such as the local Anzac Day march as seen here in April 1980 (John Perryman)*

## 7. *Leeuwin* Staff

---

The junior recruit training scheme operated before the commercialisation and civilianisation reforms swept the Navy meaning RAN officers and sailors undertook most of the work in naval bases at the time. In *Leeuwin*, civilians undertook a limited range of administrative and support work and, as *Leeuwin* did not have sufficient uniformed staff members to perform all the establishment's domestic duties, all junior recruits had to share the daily burden of cleaning, fetching and carrying, food preparation and general labouring.

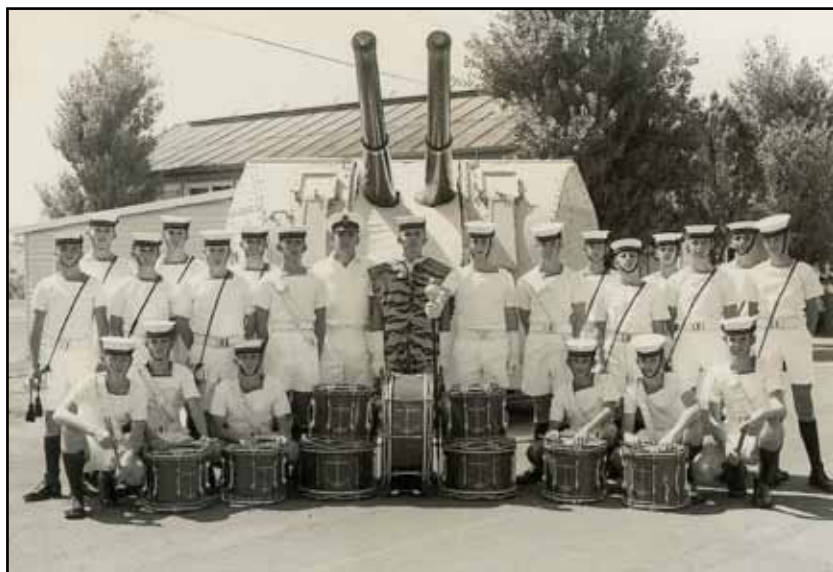
Providing the staff numbers needed to train and care for the boys was one of the bigger demands made on RAN resources by the junior recruit training scheme. Paradoxically, for a number of years after it began the junior recruit training scheme actually exacerbated rather than eased the staffing crisis that it was intended to overcome. With the boys undergoing a year at *Leeuwin* followed by a common sea training period and up to a year of category training it could be three years before *Leeuwin*'s graduates would add to overall sailor numbers. Moreover, the higher performing officers and sailors who as trainers at *Leeuwin* were expected to be exemplars for the junior recruits were the very people that the Fleet Commander and warship COs were loathe to divert from operational to training functions.

The 1959 Working Group's assessment was that to cope with a 300 strong junior recruit population and continue to undertake routine recruiting, Reserve training and minor operational roles, a total of 163 people would be required in *Leeuwin*. This work force included 28 officers, 20 chief petty officers, 16 petty officers and 77 junior sailors as well as a WRANS member for recruiting duties. Another requirement was 22 civilians for tasks such as gardening, clerical duties, tailoring and cleaning. In terms of employment branches *Leeuwin*'s uniformed complement included members of the Seaman, Communications, Engineering, Electrical, Supply and Secretariat, Shipwright, Medical and Air branches.

*Leeuwin*'s ship's company was organised in much the same way as the RAN's other large training bases. Commanded by a commodore rank officer 'dual-hatted' as CO and NOICWA or NOCWA, it included Executive, Supply, Engineer, Medical and Instructor departments. Civilian psychologists and social workers were permanent members of the work force to cope with the collective needs of the boys and staff members. *Leeuwin* had an unusually large academic staff of uniformed instructor officers and senior sailor rank Academic Instructors to operate what was essentially a small junior high school required to deliver the academic components of the normal and advanced training streams. To address the naval elements of these streams *Leeuwin* had a seamanship school, a physical training section, a gunnery school responsible for drill and weapons training, staff to provide instruction in atomic, biological and chemical defence and damage control and a Chief Petty Officer Musician to train and operate the junior recruit

drum and bugle band. In addition to their primary duties many officers and sailors shared responsibility for such things as first aid training, discipline and regulating, and branch familiarisation training intended to assist boys to make informed decisions about their choice of employment category post-*Leeuwin*.

Staff shortages were a recurring topic in *Leeuwin*'s ROPs throughout the life of the scheme. The increase in junior recruits from 155 in July 1960 to 685 in March 1963 prompted the NOICWA to write to Navy Office that 'it is essential to increase the number of instructor officers in proportion to the increase in the number of Junior Recruits'.<sup>1</sup> Difficulty in providing *Leeuwin* with the right numbers of suitable divisional officers was a particular problem. Referring to his forecast shortage of 'Executive Lieutenants' the NOICWA said in April 1965 that he had overcome the 'critical shortage of Divisional Officers ... by selecting suitable Instructor Lieutenants with Divisional experience'.<sup>2</sup> The shortage became so acute in 1966 that in order to cope with the officer shortage the entire junior recruit divisional structure was reorganised by increasing the number of boys in each division to 200. For a lieutenant in his early 20s, perhaps with little or no experience of divisional duties or of caring for teenagers, a posting to *Leeuwin* as a divisional officer was a very significant challenge.



*The Junior Recruit Drum and Bugle Band in the 1960s (RAN)*

The problem for *Leeuwin* was not simply one of staff numbers. There was the very significant question of staff members' aptitude for and inclination towards boy sailor training. For many adult sailors a posting to *Leeuwin* was not a matter of choice; they could be posted at the whim of Canberra staff officers. Additionally, in an albeit well-intentioned effort to increase family contact time, preference would frequently be given to Western Australia 'natives' rather than to those with an inclination for training duties. The NOICWA put it neatly when, referencing opening day on 18 July 1960, he said in his address to the audience at *Leeuwin*'s first passing out parade in 1961:

I seriously question if any of the officers, CPOs, POs or leading hands who were to be their composite guides, mentors and friends in matters naval, had ever been confronted with such a large mass of teenage youth about whom they had to do something fast.<sup>3</sup>

It is highly likely that he was right. RAN sailors had not experienced boy sailor training since the demise of *Tingira* in 1927 and very few if any would have had any formal instruction in training techniques for adults or boys.

The assumption seems to have been that sailors with a good disciplinary record and of high standards of performance at sea would naturally be adept at training and caring for youths. As with most assumptions this was misplaced, particularly in the case of able rank sailors who would have only been in their early 20s. The problem was well summarised by the NOCWA in April 1971 who commented to Navy Office:

The able ranks have individually and collectively by departments represented some dissatisfaction with one aspect of their working conditions. This is the employment of all able ranks, with few exceptions, in four watches as Blocks Supervisors in the Junior Recruits' quarters at night. This is a seemingly simple but yet quite onerous task for Junior sailors, and who are required to spend the day from the dog watches until breakfast time keeping order in the blocks. With 112 boys in a two storey block, 144 in a three storey block and 188 in a four storey block, all letting off steam of some sort and finding their feet by asserting themselves in one way or another, the weak supervisors are soon sorted from the strong and the good influence from the bad. Even backed up by duty leading hands, duty Petty Officers, duty chiefs and duty Officers this is a weakness in our organisation and quickly reveals weaknesses in our adult sailors. A duty adult in each block at night is essential and a disaffected adult sailor can do untold damage to newly joined impressionable Junior Recruits. An unsavoury incident or a few ill-chosen words at 'Option Time' ... [optional discharge decision time] ... could well lead to a massed optional discharge. I cannot emphasize too strongly the need to post the best possible sailors to the staff of the JRTE and to keep the numbers up to complement.<sup>4</sup>

An added irritation for many staff members was that a posting to *Leeuwin* was actually meant to constitute a respite period between sea postings when they would have been absent from their family for long periods and working very long hours in arduous conditions. Instead of the easy 'eight to four' daily routine anticipated, staff were, in addition to the very unfamiliar and uncomfortable pressures of dealing with teenagers, required to supervise junior recruit sports and recreation activities outside normal working hours and have their leave synchronised not with those of their family members but with the rhythm of the boys' training calendar. Bringing the problem to the notice of Navy Office the NOCWA stated that:

*Leeuwin* is probably the only shore establishment where Junior sailors of the Ship's Company are restricted to four watches for leave, and for sailors in their home port this can be a significant source of dissatisfaction.<sup>5</sup>

The heavy training work load, staff shortages, very high levels of responsibility for the most junior ranks and few opportunities for leave would not have made *Leeuwin* a popular posting choice. Critical references regarding the quality of the junior recruits' lifestyle and the need to do more for them would have been both irritating and demoralising for a staff working hard to cover the gaps caused by shortages and to provide a good training experience for the boys.

The nature of relationships between the boys and staff members varied considerably. At the basic level it was formal as, most unusually, all staff members regardless of their rank were called 'sir' by the boys, a practice objected to in the Fleet where it was carried over improperly by former junior recruits for whom it had become a deeply ingrained and highly undesirable habit. The boys' subjection to the *Naval and Defence Force Discipline Acts* combined with a pervasive and unrelenting *Leeuwin* focus on obedience, neatness, cleanliness, conformity and the need to prepare for life at sea in a warship, inhibited the formation of more personal relationships between boys and staff members. In consequence, junior recruit attitudes toward staff members also varied. Boys liked, or at least cooperated well with, staff members who were fair, compassionate and slow to punish. They disliked and feared those whose response to any minor indiscretion was punishment, which could be formal or informal and was often physical. *Leeuwin* was fortunate to have many staff members in the former category who set a fine example and were role models in every respect. Members of each intake have memories of a good sprinkling of individuals whose behaviour and treatment of the boys was exemplary. A fine example of such men is Petty Officer Sick Berth Attendant Ken Hay who served as a divisional staff member at *Leeuwin* in the late 1960s. Lieutenant Commander 'Johnno' Johnson, a transferee from the Royal Navy and *Leeuwin*'s long term Gunnery Officer is another.



*Master at Arms Charles Wright welcoming Anthony Toolan,  
Leeuwin's 1000th junior recruit (RAN)*

Some staff members were unpopular among junior recruits not for their real or perceived individual failings but because of the nature of their duties. It is fair to say that gunnery and physical training instructors seldom attracted boys' affection simply because of the physical nature of the activities they conducted and their capacity, and freedom, to raise its tempo to a level where it became a painful and exhausting form of informal punishment. Regulating staff were another category for whom the boys usually had little time. As Navy 'police' and enforcers of the abundant rules and regulations they fulfilled a gatekeeper role, figuratively and literally. At leave parades it was they who decided whether a boy's uniform was of a sufficient standard to be allowed ashore in. An infuriating delay and loss of leave would often occur as a boy was sent back to his accommodation to remedy the deficiency and wait to report for a further inspection at the time of the staff member's choice. Some regulating staff members are remembered for their eye-wateringly painful habit of smashing down on the bridge of the nose the caps of boys who wore them closer to the eyebrows than the regulation two finger widths. Staff members who resorted to group punishments for minor rule infringements by individuals were also heartily disliked. One boy skylarking after pipe down could result in the entire population of one floor of a block being turned out in pyjamas to double around the parade ground with kit bags or mattresses held above their heads.

As previously mentioned, it was likely that the influence of well-liked staff members skewed the category decisions made by some *Leeuwin* boys. In an environment wherein a family member's naval employment history often shaped a boy's decision and where exposure to the realities of life and work at sea was extremely limited, a popular, persuasive or particularly chauvinistic adult sailor could strongly influence boys to make a categorisation decision that they would later regret.

That *Leeuwin* operated for 24 years with very few calamitous events or abuses of the thousands of boys who passed through it suggests that on balance the quality of staff was good. Seen with 21st century eyes many aspects of *Leeuwin* training, lifestyle and culture seem old-fashioned, overly regimented and harsh, particularly those that existed in the 1960s. However, as explained earlier, *Leeuwin* did respond to changes taking place in Australian society and in the RAN itself. Staff performance and attitudes that existed towards the end of the scheme are likely to have differed markedly from those present at its start. The most fitting accolade for *Leeuwin*'s staff was probably that expressed by the NOCWA handing over command in January 1975 who said:

I must also pay tribute to the officers, senior sailors, and junior sailors who staff the Junior Recruit Training Establishment. These men spend long hours outside normal working hours and over weekends ensuring that Junior Recruits are kept actively and usefully occupied. The Service owes these men much because it is on the results of their efforts that the quality of the bulk of the Navy's manpower depends.<sup>6</sup>

## Endnotes

---

- <sup>1</sup> West Australia Area Report of Proceedings (ROP), 22 Apr 1963, p. 2.
- <sup>2</sup> West Australia Area ROP dated 21 Apr 1965, p. 8.
- <sup>3</sup> West Australia Area ROP dated 24 Jul 1961, p. 2.
- <sup>4</sup> West Australia Area ROP dated 30 Apr 1971, p. 1.
- <sup>5</sup> West Australia Area ROP dated 30 Apr 1971, p. 1.
- <sup>6</sup> West Australia Area ROP dated 22 Jan 1975, p. 7.

## 8. Discipline

---

In *Tingira* punishment for boy sailors was mostly informal, and usually immediate and physical. Accounts refer to *Tingira* boys' working day beginning with the ritual of climbing the ship's rigging with the last boy to hit the deck on completion to feel a petty officer's 'stonicky'.<sup>1</sup> The stonicky, a rope's end lash also known as a 'starter', was once used in many of the world's navies. In the Royal Navy it was used for centuries, particularly by bosun's mates, petty officers appointed to undertake a range of shipboard duties including 'livening' the crew and administering floggings.<sup>2</sup>

Accounts written in the 1960s and 1970s by *Tingira* boys describe a range of physical punishments administered to them for minor transgressions. In a poem titled *The Butt on the Pin*, LM Boxsell describes the punishment for those found smoking in *Tingira*:

Six swipes of the wand, the offence deserves, Strapped o'er three sacks with jangling nerves. The Officer of the day, Sin Bosun and Quack, Assemble below to witness each whack. When the Sadists depart, you wander up top, Recounting each swipe you were destined to cop, Determined to cease 'stinging' butts on a pin', Dice the lung-busters and live free from sin.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, for the crime of having taken part in an unauthorised activity ashore, the same author in a poem titled *The Big Break Out* describes how those involved received their punishment: 'On the Orlop deck astride three sacks, "Skins" revelled in giving six mighty whacks. Some boys' tails looked like a prize dahlia, While others resembled the map of Australia'. Boxsell also describes how, as an 'offshoot of this adventurous prank, Gave vent to discussion - open and frank, As a petition to Parliament later decreed, To abolish forever, the foul swiping reed'. It is not clear whether the boys ever succeeded in raising such a petition but, in any event, it was not until 1919 that the use of the 'cuts' - caning - was abolished as a punishment in *Tingira*.<sup>4</sup>

Caning was not the only form of physical punishment used on boy sailors. One feature of *Tingira* discipline that would resonate with many ex-*Leeuwin* boys was the habit of instructors to use rifle drill as an instrument of punishment and pain. For inattention in class Boxsell recalls being 'sent around the field a-nipping, Prancing with the musket high, o'er the green sward reeling'.<sup>5</sup> At *Leeuwin*, half a century later, junior recruits would experience the similar misery of double marching around the parade ground with a rifle held at the 'high port' position across the chest or at extended arms length above the head, or more painfully doing 'bunny hops' with it in the same position.

The Working Group report that led to the reintroduction of the boy sailor entry stipulated three general requirements of discipline for the boys:



- (a) Care is to be taken that by precept and practice junior recruits are convinced that justice is being administered with utmost care and that punishments are only inflicted when they are thoroughly deserved. The root of all discipline, especially in young minds, lies in the feeling of confidence in those who have authority.
- (b) All offences and complaints are to be investigated in accordance with Royal Australian Navy Regulations and Instructions.
- (c) Punishments are only to be awarded by authorised officers.

As sensible as these requirements were, they were not unique to junior recruits; they applied to every sailor. Therefore, in effect, the general approach taken to discipline at *Leeuwin* was that junior recruits were subject to either the *Naval Discipline Act* or the *Defence Force Discipline Act* in exactly the same way as adult recruits. For offences committed against the acts, junior recruits were liable for most of the punishments that could be awarded to an adult sailor including:

- No 2 Dismissal from Her Majesty's Service subject to Australian Commonwealth Naval Board approval
- No 5 Reduction to second class for conduct
- No 9 A maximum of 14 days extra work and drill during which time leave is stopped
- No 10 A maximum of 30 days stoppage of leave
- No 11 A maximum of 30 days stoppage of pay or pocket money
- No 14 A maximum of two hours extra work and drill during the recreation period for not more than 30 days
- No 15 Admonition, administered when a junior recruit was found guilty of an offence which of itself or in view of mitigating circumstances is not considered to deserve any more serious punishment. The offence and punishment were to be recorded.

All punishments except for stoppage of leave, pay or pocket money were to be suspended on a Sunday but the day was still to count as part of the sentence. A person awarded punishment Number 2 had the warrant for his dismissal read to him in public, in front of the all junior recruits fallen in on the *Leeuwin* parade ground, as was then the practice for sailors throughout the Service. This practice was also referred to as 'drumming out'. Accounts by junior recruits of the 1960s describe how boys punished with dismissal were paraded before the assembled junior recruit population to the beat of a drum and their shoulder flashes removed before they were banished from *Leeuwin*.

The CO of *Leeuwin* could award any of the listed punishments but he delegated some powers to a small number of his subordinate officers. The XO could award punishments numbers 9, 10, 11 and 14 for up to a maximum of a week. Lieutenant commanders and lieutenants posted as Divisional Officers could award one day of extra work and drill to members of their own division. Junior recruits were not permitted to punish one another but LJR's were expected to assist staff in maintaining discipline and supervising the boys. LJR's principal duties were to supervise the cleaning of accommodation areas in preparation for evening rounds, prevent boisterous and noisy behaviour after pipe down and lead formed groups on the parade ground, roles that were for a short period in the early 1960s performed to a degree by Upper Yardmen.

While boys appointed as LJR's did at times enjoy certain privileges such as better accommodation and the right to go to the front of meal queues, their role was never particularly enjoyable or easy. A boy could have his appointment cancelled for a minor misdemeanour and he could be ignored or challenged by members of intakes senior to his own. Much depended on an individual boy's physical presence, demeanour and ability to call the bluff of boys who challenged his authority. Despite the shortcomings LJR's did perform a useful function. They relieved hard-pressed staff members, particularly able ranks on overnight duty in the boys' accommodation blocks, from the more mundane work of organising cleaning parties and reporting to duty officers. Throughout the working day and for duty watch purposes they also ensured that classes or parties of boys turned up at the right place at the right time. Overall, they ensured the establishment's daily routine worked.

By the late 1960s a different attitude towards discipline seems to have developed in *Leeuwin*. In noting the importance of strong staff leadership to discipline among junior recruits, a revised version of *ABR 697* issued in 1967 stated that the Naval Board 'did not wish to place any restrictions of disciplinary sanctions' at *Leeuwin*.<sup>6</sup> It also stated that:

When dealing with these young men it should be borne in mind that, like the state child welfare acts which are designed to deal with children under 18, the disciplinary system should be used to achieve correction and reformation rather than punishment and retribution.<sup>7</sup>

It further noted that in a children's court 'the youth is made to feel that while he cannot transgress without punishment, because of his youth his transgression is treated less harshly than that of an adult'. In apparent contradiction of these liberal views the document also states that 'prima facie sailors under the age of 18 are subject to the same discipline as adult sailors'. Rather than listing the punishments that might be applied to them, it simply stipulated that punishment numbers 3 and 6 (detention and cells respectively) should not normally be awarded.

Boys who committed serious offences, whose overall standard of conduct was unsatisfactory or who were performing badly in academic or naval subjects could be placed on either Captain or Naval Board warning. In either case a boy's parents were to be informed when their son was placed on warning. A boy so warned could be discharged when it was considered that no improvement would result from further instruction. Boys considered 'undesirable' could be discharged with Naval Board approval as either 'unsuitable' or on the grounds that their 'service was no longer required' also known as SNLR. Discharge under the terms of the latter process led to it generally being referred to by sailors as a 'snarler'.

In addition to the punishments that could be applied under the acts, junior recruits could also receive punishments of an administrative nature, either as individuals or as a class, division or other group, in order to correct minor deficiencies in behaviour, performance or attitude. In the gymnasium PTIs could subject a class undergoing a period of physical training to what was known in the Navy as a 'shake-up', a very rigorous, intense and usually painful activity including, for example, hanging from the gym's wall bars until the boys felt that their arms were about to leave their sockets. An individual could receive similar personalised treatment from a PTI for having dirty gym shoes or for wearing un-ironed clothing. On the parade ground, a Gunnery Instructor could double march a class of junior recruits holding their rifles at the 'high port' position for as long as it took for him to believe that they had learned the error of their ways. Out of normal working hours, duty watch staff members could have entire divisions of boys fallen in outside their accommodation for extended periods or doubling around the parade ground wearing only pyjamas and footwear. A variation on this punishment, usually awarded to an individual boy, was to have him empty all his kit from his locker into a kitbag and carry that above his head around the parade ground.

In the accommodation blocks it was common for divisional staff members to award 'kit musters', usually for a minor offence of wearing uniform improperly, or for wearing dirty, unironed or badly maintained clothing. Kit musters involved a boy laying out his entire naval kit on the floor of his cabin, in a very formal manner. Every authorised item of kit had to be present or otherwise accounted for, clean, carefully folded and laid out in a precise, officially prescribed manner. Deficiencies had to be purchased and failure to meet the standard could result in the award of successive kit musters until the staff member was satisfied. For most boys, preparing and presenting his kit was a stressful and deeply irritating process that dug deeply into what spare time a boy had for recreation.

As their training year progressed the great majority of boys quickly conformed to the standards required and avoided, tolerated or laughed off punishments as just part of the game. However, some did not or could not, and thereby put themselves in the miserable position of being the target of instructors' wrath almost every day of their stay in *Leeuwin*. This situation was exacerbated when their individual performance was seen

as a poor reflection on the entire class or division. For boys in this position, criticism came not only from staff but from their class and division mates who sometimes would take on a role of either teacher or punisher. This was the cause of bullying and fights between boys and for the more immature, naive or disorganised boy, often became something that made life a misery, leaving them with few friends and ruining their entire year at *Leeuwin*. In some cases it led to a deterioration in attitude and performance that ended in formal punishment or discharge from the RAN.



*A junior recruit's uniform possessions laid out on his bunk for 'kit muster' (RAN)*

## ‘Bastardisation’

On 26 April 1971 allegations made by Shane Connolly, a junior recruit who had been in the RAN for less than two weeks, appeared in the media of bullying and initiation ceremonies at *Leeuwin*. *The Canberra Times* on 27 April reported that ‘the boy’s mother Mrs Doris Connolly, said last night that her son had been subjected to treatment similar to the “bastardisation” at Duntroon’. *The Daily Mirror* passed its judgement on the same day when it editorialised that:

The systematic beating of a 15-year-old boy in an initiation ceremony is based, at best on a confusion between a so-called toughening process and a muddle-headed Tom Brown’s school days approach. But the worst feature is that the kind of initiation ceremony has clearly been sanctioned by the authorities in charge of the college. It has been going on for so long that it has become traditional and therefore not to be interfered with. Did the Navy learn nothing from the disclosures of bastardisation at Duntroon? Were the Admirals deaf to the Government inquiry into Duntroon practices? Were they blind to the subsequent repostings of senior officers? Charging the boys responsible for this puerile, stupid behaviour will not alter any attitudes at HMAS *Leeuwin*. This will happen only when the senior officers responsible are replaced by men with a more adult approach to the training of recruits. Just as was done at Duntroon.<sup>8</sup>

In a report attributed to a Peter Young of Queenscliff, New South Wales and under the headline ‘Former *Leeuwin* Cadet Tells – Savagery’ the same newspaper published allegations on 29 April that he had suffered a ‘punctured lung ... [and] ... 10 operations after beatings’. It was also alleged that while Young was a junior recruit in 1966 and 1967 more senior junior recruits bullied, assaulted, stole from and humiliated their junior colleagues.

Soon thereafter allegations of improper treatment made by a number of other ex-junior recruits were also published in the press. Lawrence Greystone was reported by *The Melbourne Sun* on 28 April as having been ill treated while training as a junior recruit at *Leeuwin*. He described queue jumping in the meal line, stand over tactics on new boys by longer serving junior recruits including the doing of chores for them, and an atmosphere of fear in which newer junior recruits slept with knives under their pillows to protect themselves from attacks by members of earlier intakes. Separately, Gary Parker, described as being a junior recruit in 1970, was reported in the press as being a victim of bashings, victimisation and humiliation.

In the case of Shane Connolly, an RAN investigation revealed that on 19 April a group of about 20 junior recruits of more senior intakes had gathered around Connolly in the junior recruit’s canteen before five of them took turns fighting with him. Charges of

assault were laid against his five assailants all of whom were 'seen' or paraded before *Leeuwin's* Officer of the Day on 21 April and the XO on 23 April. They were tried by *Leeuwin's* CO on 29 April. Four were punished while the fifth was acquitted.

The then Minister for the Navy, Dr Malcolm Mackay, a navy officer during WWII, took a personal interest in the allegations. During a visit to *Leeuwin* on 21 May he addressed an assembly of all junior recruits and staff members. In a short but wide ranging speech touching on the Russian Fleet's presence in the Indian Ocean, communism, democracy and the need for technologically-skilled sailors in the modern Australian Navy he explained his view that a warship was a 'mighty special place' in which thieves and bullies could not be allowed to prosper.<sup>9</sup> Addressing directly the issues confronting *Leeuwin* he said that 'if there is anyone here who believes that seniority means the right to gang up to terrorize the juniors ... then he had better change his views smartly'.<sup>10</sup> He concluded by saying that 'there is no place for them [bullies] ... in the navy'.<sup>11</sup> Eighteen days later he visited *Leeuwin* again to review the passing out parade of the 32nd Intake.



*The Minister for Navy, Dr Malcolm Mackay, inspecting the guard at the 32nd intake passing out parade in June 1971 during investigations regarding 'bastardisation' at Leeuwin (RAN)*

In statements to the House on 27 April 1971 Dr Mackay referred to the Connolly matter and to another fight between messmates at *Leeuwin* in which LJR JD Russell had been injured. He went on to describe the medical condition and treatment of Connolly and the disciplinary action taken in relation to the incident. He further said that he was 'disturbed by the implications and will move immediately to have the whole matter investigated thoroughly'.<sup>12</sup> On 28 April Dr Mackay announced in Parliament the appointment of Judge Trevor Rapke, QC, of the Victorian County Court to investigate the media reports of initiations or similar practices involving violence and more general allegations of bullying. Judge Rapke had acted in an honorary capacity as the Judge Advocate of the Navy since 1963. His terms of reference for the investigation were to consider and report to the Minister whether:

There is evidence of any form of initiation or similar practices in *Leeuwin* involving organised physical violence, degrading or bullying behaviour, and whether there is any evidence over recent years of any pattern of undue physical violence or bullying amongst junior recruits.<sup>13</sup>

Two days later the Minister announced that he had asked Judge Rapke to examine the Connolly case first, without prejudice to his wider inquiry. Specifically, he asked the Judge to report on the substances of the charges made in relation to Junior Recruit Connolly; the handling of those cases by the Navy; whether the charges had any relation to initiation processes; and whether, given the extent of media reporting of the Connolly matter, there was anything that could be reported to Parliament. Dr Mackay added that the inquiry will be:

Strictly private - as though the Judge were talking with people in chambers. It would defeat the whole concept if the public or the press were present and these persons felt that they were speaking on the record.<sup>14</sup>

Rapke would therefore interview junior recruits without senior RAN officers, or any other Navy people present. Apparently, the Minister and the RAN had authorised Judge Rapke to give assurances to those interviewed that no action would be taken against them for telling their story. Adding to the *Leeuwin* furore was an article that appeared in *The Sunday Australian*, 2 May 1971. The article published allegations by Ordinary Seaman JW White, a former junior recruit, of sadistic treatment of junior recruits on board the troop transport *Sydney*. Judge Rapke was also asked to examine this matter.

Judge Rapke made a preliminary report to the Minister that dealt principally with the Connolly matter. The report dated 6 May 1971 was not made public because, in Dr Mackay's words, it 'contained the names of children and events and times and places which in my view should not be made public'. Judge Rapke's final report dated 3 July 1971 was also not made public. Both reports, entitled *Records of an Inquiry into Events that Allegedly Occurred at HMAS Leeuwin and Onboard HMAS Sydney (The Rapke*

*Inquiry*), are now available in the National Archives of Australia but with a significant amount of text expunged on that basis that under subsection 33 (1) (g) of the *Archives Act 1983*, exemption prevents the unreasonable disclosure of information relating to the personal affairs of a person.<sup>15</sup>

On 28 October 1971 the Minister made a lengthy statement in Parliament in which he said he did 'not consider it would be desirable to make the report public' but that a copy would be made available to the Deputy Opposition Leader, Lance Barnard, and the member for Fremantle, Kim Beazley, 'so that it may be known that nothing of importance is hidden which should be made public'.<sup>16</sup> The Minister described how Judge Rapke had interviewed 467 witnesses in Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney and Brisbane and onboard *Leeuwin* and *Sydney*. These witnesses included serving and retired former junior recruits, RAN officers and other sailors, former members and staff members of both *Leeuwin* and *Nirimba*, and civilian witnesses including experts in criminology and social sciences. He had also accepted written submissions, had examined junior recruit medical records and participated in contact groups with people having an interest of one form or another in junior recruits and *Leeuwin*.

In relation to the specific questions posed in the terms of reference given to Judge Rapke, Dr Mackay simply quoted from the report:

Organised initiation ceremonies, a formal pattern of bastardisation, or any form of patterned violence or misbehaviour have never been a part of the programme, official or otherwise, at *Leeuwin*. The strict answer to the 2 questions which are contained in my terms of reference should therefore be no.<sup>17</sup>

Having technically given *Leeuwin* a clean bill of health, the Minister then went on to summarise the Judge's views as to 'the damaging effects of unorganised and repetitive acts of bullying, violence, degradation and petty crime when they occur'.<sup>18</sup> In relation to the specific case of LJR Russell, the Minister described the judge's view that the case 'was unrelated to any organised violence. It is a case of a squabble over trifles getting out of hand and unexpectedly and unintentionally leading to disastrous results'.

Dr Mackay made a very specific, favourable reference to the NOCWA Commodore Ramsay in saying:

I believe the Commodore to be a dedicated and conscientious officer who has become a respected father figure in his command. That he has had to cope with a small minority of lads who have caused trouble is no fault of his and no more reflection on him than on the rest of the community. Every parent, every schoolmaster, indeed every responsible citizen shares his problems.<sup>19</sup>



These comments reflect two important things. Firstly, that the relationship between Judge Rapke and the Commodore and his staff had been both business-like and minimal and that the Judge had, intentionally, talked mostly with those who considered themselves or their friends to have been treated harshly at *Leeuwin* and not to those in the *Leeuwin* command and training structure. Secondly, in the light of the Judge's report, the Minister seems to have believed that Commodore Ramsay, and perhaps many others in the RAN, had been treated very unfairly by media commentary. It had prejudged and found them guilty on the basis of a relatively very small number of unsubstantiated complaints and the drawing of what turned out to be inappropriate parallels between the by-product of traditional, accepted practice at the Royal Military College Duntroon, the Army's officer training establishment in Canberra, and the unorganised but repetitive acts of unacceptable behaviour by a relatively small number of bullies in *Leeuwin*.

In extending his concern to 'every parent, every schoolmaster, indeed every responsible citizen', Judge Rapke was in effect saying that unlike Duntroon where the abuses arose from training activity conducted by senior cadets and accepted by at least some Duntroon staff members, the problems in *Leeuwin* were not endorsed by either the Navy or *Leeuwin* staff members. It arose from the behaviour of a small number of boys who, unfortunately, behaved as many boys do in the Australian community. In terms of the extent of the physical injury sustained by boys in *Leeuwin* the Minister said that of all the many cases of such injury reported in 1970, in a total population of 650 boys, only 22 could be attributed to fighting or bullying. He went on to say that this supported the initial assessment he gave in earlier statements that in terms of proportion the problem at *Leeuwin* was small.

Throughout the Judge's inquiry, media conduct had annoyed many Navy people, including junior recruits who believed that they and the Navy were being treated unfairly. The behaviour of some reporters certainly seems questionable. One radio reporter gained entry to *Leeuwin* by posing as a friend of Mrs Connolly. He was removed by the RAN only after other media representatives complained about his privileged but unauthorised access. Other media representatives are alleged to have approached junior recruits at a back fence of *Leeuwin* trying to induce them to talk. A statement published in a newspaper in early May 1971 attributed to Mrs Connolly and referring to junior recruits at *Leeuwin* as a pack of low homosexuals was particularly galling for them. In response, some junior recruits and their parents wrote to RAN authorities demanding that action be taken against the media in order to stop what they considered to be inaccurate and slanderous reporting. In Parliament, Dr Mackay made specific unfavourable reference to the behaviour of the media. Quoting Judge Rapke he referred to 'the great spate of national publicity - invariably in condemnatory terms'.<sup>20</sup> In reference to a particular piece of reporting, he added that:

All in all it is illustrative of the bias against the good name of the Navy that marred so much of the journalistic contributions to the matters under investigation by me.<sup>21</sup>

The Judge conducted his inquiry between March and July 1971. While he interviewed a large number of witnesses and received a great deal of input he simply did not have the time to investigate every allegation made to him nor to inquire into every facet of the junior recruit culture. He would have needed more months to do so and, by necessity, his report was therefore more in the nature of a 'snapshot' containing rapidly arrived at conclusions developed remote from *Leeuwin* itself.

The parallels drawn between *Leeuwin* and Duntroon were neither accurate nor helpful and must have been a cause of considerable concern to the RAN. At Duntroon, Mister Justice Cox, a judge of the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory, was appointed to lead an investigation into allegations of ill-treatment of the junior class of staff cadets in the course of their initiation into Army life. The Committee found that the Duntroon tradition of making its senior classes formally responsible, by means of a Corps of Staff Cadets Policy Directive, for certain aspects of the new cadets' assimilation 'has had as a by-product conduct by the senior classes towards the Fourth Class that latterly has become known as "bastardisation"'.<sup>22</sup> The report also stated that 'conduct which has come to be called "bastardisation" must be banned. It is senseless and degrading'.<sup>23</sup>

While bullying and the exercise of informal power were found to be features of unacceptable behaviour at both establishments the conditions under which they occurred at *Leeuwin* were quite different. Where Duntroon had a history dating back to WWI, a reputation and a mystique, for some, as a 'school for generals' complete with traditions actively fostered by its alumni and the Army overall, *Leeuwin* did not. Most importantly, *Leeuwin* lacked the formal structure and tradition of senior cadets exercising authority over junior cadets, a system which Justice Cox described in his report as 'fagging'. In *Leeuwin*, aberrant and violent behaviour, and abuse arose not from the behaviour of overall classes or entire intakes but the behaviour of a relatively minor number of individuals whose bullying, despite the efforts of staff, was not as well controlled as it should have been.

In his address to Parliament the Minister stated that 'never mind the sentimentality about boys will be boys ... it will be contrary to the regulations of HMAS *Leeuwin* that there will be any initiation ceremonies of any kind'.<sup>24</sup> While adding that 'HMAS *Leeuwin* is devoted to producing a highly expert body of men and I believe that it is doing this in a highly expert way'.<sup>25</sup> It seems that this statement virtually ended the matter. The RAN's newspaper, *Navy News*, announced on 14 May 1971 that Junior Recruit Connolly had discharged from the Navy at the request of himself and his mother.<sup>26</sup> No reference is made to either the Rapke Inquiry or any plans for acting on anything arising from it in ROPs submitted by *Leeuwin*'s CO post December 1971. Instead, junior recruit training seems to have continued as before, although it would be fair to assume that within

*Leeuwin*'s command and training organisations there would have been acute sensitivity to the need to prevent any attempts by junior recruits to conduct initiation activities, and to prevent any perception of such things being permitted to occur.

No more allegations were made of initiation ceremonies occurring among junior recruits before the training scheme ended in 1984. In 1979 an isolated case of bullying was responded to promptly by *Leeuwin* staff members with a formal report sent to Navy Headquarters.<sup>27</sup> However, assertions that bullying did occur at *Leeuwin* have continued to be made by former junior recruits. Website accounts written by boys who had trained at *Leeuwin* before the Rapke Inquiry contain very blunt allegations of bullying by members of senior intakes. At least one ex-junior recruit has sought compensation through the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission for what his lawyer referred to as the 'bastardisation' he suffered as a junior recruit 1967 and 1968.<sup>28</sup>

Overall, it would be fair to say that a usually under-strength and hard pressed *Leeuwin* staff did a reasonable job of maintaining discipline among the large numbers of teenage boys residing there at any time. *Leeuwin* had insufficient staff numbers to watch every boy every minute of the day, and it is likely that there was no desire to do so as that would not have created the environment in which the RAN endeavoured to prepare boys for later life at sea or in the much less restrictive environment of shore bases throughout Australia. The methods by which discipline was maintained in *Leeuwin* may seem harsh and horribly old-fashioned when viewed through more modern eyes. Existing in very close company in a very spartan and highly regulated environment, in which sport was the principal outlet, subject to a discipline regime designed to control adults in warships and subject to physical punishment for relatively minor misdemeanours, junior recruits were under constant pressure to comply and obey. It was certainly an environment in which boys either survived and became adults quickly or departed early.

## Endnotes

---

<sup>1</sup> *Open Sea: The Official Organ of the New South Wales Branch of the HMAS Tingira Old Boys Association*, Vol 1, No 10, Dec 1966, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> S Pope, *Hornblower's Navy: Life at Sea in the Age of Nelson*, Orion Media, London, 1998, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> *Open Sea*, Vol 4, No 1, Mar 1972, p. 21.

- <sup>4</sup> *Open Sea*, Vol 4, No 1, p. 17.
- <sup>5</sup> *Open Sea*, Vol 3, No 10, Dec 1971, p. 5.
- <sup>6</sup> *Australian Book of Reference (ABR)* 697.
- <sup>7</sup> *ABR* 697.
- <sup>8</sup> 'Editorial', *The Daily Mirror*, 27 April 1971, Sydney, p. 1.
- <sup>9</sup> M Mackay, *Minister for the Navy's Speech to Junior Recruits at HMAS Leeuwin*, 21 May 1971, copy in possession of the author.
- <sup>10</sup> Mackay, *Minister for the Navy's Speech to Junior Recruits at HMAS Leeuwin*.
- <sup>11</sup> Mackay, *Minister for the Navy's Speech to Junior Recruits at HMAS Leeuwin*.
- <sup>12</sup> *House of Representatives Hansard*, Volume II of R. 71 & 72, 16 Feb-6 May 1971, p. 2112.
- <sup>13</sup> Australian Commonwealth Naval Board routine signal message, date time group R280729Z April 1971.
- <sup>14</sup> *House of Representatives Hansard*, Volume II of R. 73, 74 & 75, 17 Aug-9 Dec 1971, p. 2675.
- <sup>15</sup> National Archives of Australia (NAA), Statement of Reason Under Section 40 of the Archives Act, CRS A12433, dated 1 October 2002.
- <sup>16</sup> *House of Representatives Hansard*, Volume II of R. 73, 74 & 75, 17 Aug-9 Dec 1971, pp. 2674-2681.
- <sup>17</sup> *House of Representatives Hansard*, Volume II of R. 73, 74 & 75, 17 Aug-9 Dec 1971, pp. 2674-2681.
- <sup>18</sup> *House of Representatives Hansard*, Volume II of R. 73, 74 & 75, 17 Aug-9 Dec 1971, pp. 2674-2681.
- <sup>19</sup> *House of Representatives Hansard*, Volume II of R. 73, 74 & 75, 17 Aug-9 Dec 1971, pp. 2674-2681.
- <sup>20</sup> *House of Representatives Hansard*, Volume II of R. 73, 74 & 75, 17 Aug-9 Dec 1971, pp. 2674-2681.
- <sup>21</sup> *House of Representatives Hansard*, Volume II of R. 73, 74 & 75, 17 Aug-9 Dec 1971, pp. 2674-2681.
- <sup>22</sup> A Peacock, *Statement to the Parliament of Australia on the Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Royal Military College Duntroon*, 12 Jun 1970, p. A6.
- <sup>23</sup> Peacock, *Statement to the Parliament of Australia on the Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Royal Military College Duntroon*, p. 9.
- <sup>24</sup> *House of Representatives Hansard*, Volume II of R. 73, 74 & 75, 17 Aug-9 Dec 1971, pp. 2674-2681.
- <sup>25</sup> *House of Representatives Hansard*, Volume II of R. 73, 74 & 75, 17 Aug-9 Dec 1971, p. 2680.
- <sup>26</sup> *Navy News*, Vol 14, No 10, 14 May 1971.
- <sup>27</sup> West Australia Report of Proceedings for the period Apr-Jun 1979, p. 2.
- <sup>28</sup> 'Former Sailor Wins Abuse Compensation', <[www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2004/12/24/1272014.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2004/12/24/1272014.htm)>, (December 2004).



*Commodore Percy inspecting the guard at Leeuwin, 1981 (RAN)*

## 9. The End of Boy Sailors

---

In March 1984 the Chief of Naval Staff Advisory Committee considered a paper titled, *Selection of Either HMAS Leeuwin or HMAS Cerberus as a Recruit Training Establishment either with or without Junior Recruit Training*. This step was in order to address growing concerns about increasing costs and ongoing staffing difficulties, and to resolve the future of both the junior recruit entry scheme and *Leeuwin* as a naval base. Given that abolishing the adult entry was not an option, the paper focused heavily on establishing the relative costs of four other options: adult and junior recruit training at *Leeuwin*, adult and junior recruit training at *Cerberus*, adult recruiting training only in *Leeuwin*, and adult recruiting training only in *Cerberus*. The Committee decided that junior recruit training would cease and sought further advice on the relative costs of conducting adult training only in either *Leeuwin* or *Cerberus*. A 3 August 1984 Navy Headquarters signal advised that the 'junior recruit entry into the Royal Australian Navy will be put in abeyance'.<sup>1</sup> The signal added that 'the need to make more effective use of manpower has resulted in this decision ... [and] ... adult recruit numbers will be increased as necessary'.<sup>2</sup> The message concluded by saying that 'the decision to put the JR entry into abeyance has been made with considerable regret'.<sup>3</sup> The then Minister for Defence, Gordon Scholes, made a public announcement the same month stating that junior recruit training would end in December 1984. He added that the decision reflected 'the Government's insistence that the best use is made of the substantial funds allocated to Navy'.<sup>4</sup>

It was neither a sudden nor unexpected decision. In early 1978, RAN work force planners had decided that it would be more cost effective to increase the numbers of adult recruits entering *Cerberus* and effect a corresponding reduction in the number of junior recruits entering *Leeuwin*. As a result, all intakes from April 1978 onwards consisted of, on average, about 60 junior recruits, the exceptions being two intakes of 120 boys in 1979 necessitated by a need to compensate for under achievement in adult recruiting. Fluctuations in adult recruiting and junior recruit intake strength worried *Leeuwin*'s commanders and posed a significant problem for its training staff because, as a consequence of the 1978 reductions in intake size, the ship's company of *Leeuwin* was reduced rapidly from 274 to 199.

The 'need to make more effective use of manpower' referred to in the Naval Headquarters message was simply another manifestation of the Navy's perennial difficulties in attracting, recruiting and retaining and paying for sufficient numbers of sailors. The particular staffing difficulties prevailing in 1984 originated in action begun immediately after the Vietnam War when the government announced 'manpower economies to achieve better balance in the force structure'.<sup>5</sup> Compounding the problem for junior recruits was the fact that, as one naval historian has put it:

Improving education standards and the requirement to ensure that training was relevant to contemporary society were also having an impact. Specifically, there was less need for the Navy to provide a secondary education.<sup>6</sup>

A reduced need for the RAN to provide an academic education for its sailors struck at the heart of the junior recruit training scheme. If the RAN could recruit sufficient numbers of appropriately educated adults and train them in a 12-week course at *Cerberus*, it was very difficult to justify retention of the year-long and much more expensive scheme operated at *Leeuwin*.

The decision to dispense with junior recruit entry had a mixed reception. It was a welcome decision for those who continued to hold concerns about the numbers of 'ineffectives' in *Leeuwin*, the perceived focus there on schoolwork to the detriment of professional training, immaturity in ship's crews, junior recruit motivation and employment categorisation difficulties. Among recruiters the decision was a matter for professional concern. Against the simplicity of having to only recruit for the adult sailor entry was the fact that the boy sailor scheme was a very popular avenue of entry from 1960 to 1978. Even when RAN interest began to wane as adult recruit numbers grew, the boy sailor entry scheme remained popular with Australian boys and their parents. It was not essentially a problem of failing to meet boy entry recruiting targets; it was more a problem of Navy finding it easier to meet adult entry targets.

Records show that while there was no widespread outcry over the decision to end the junior recruit scheme not everyone in the RAN believed it was for the better. Late in the 1970s, *Leeuwin* staff did try to argue against the proposal to close it down. However, their argument was based on a need to keep the boy entry going principally as a means of coping with under achievement in adult recruiting rather than an argument based on the junior recruit scheme's intrinsic worth. Available records do not show whether an argument was ever constructed to retain the boy entry based on national value to Australian youth or on any specific contribution made to the Navy by it having a very youthful workforce. Indeed, it is not clear whether a high level attempt was ever made to determine whether or not the boy entry scheme had actually been successful in achieving the aims set in 1959 of graduating boys who would 'regard the Navy as their vocation' or in whom they had developed 'a high standard of discipline, trustworthiness, initiative, courage and endurance'. The scheme ended as it began, amid concern over sailor numbers, and once that concern eased no consideration was given to the type of sailor the RAN needed, adult or boy. This is perhaps unfortunate as one observer stated:

The ethos of the RAN came not so much from the citizen sailor, despite the remarkable contributions of Reservists and 'Hostilities Only' personnel during the major conflicts, but from the 13-year-old entry officers, by sailors of HMAS *Tingira* and the 'twelve year engagement' men.<sup>7</sup>

The *Leeuwin* scheme enjoyed a very high level of support in the civilian community, particularly in the Fremantle and Perth region, whose citizens seemed to have felt a degree of ownership of it. Nationwide, hopes were dashed for young boys who yearned to leave school as soon as possible and join the RAN. For their parents it closed an avenue for their sons to enjoy Navy service away from the restrictions of home but in a controlled and disciplined environment in which the opportunity to study was ever-present. For many in the Fremantle area it was the end of another piece of their local naval history.

Despite the perceived and real problems of the boy sailor entry scheme its reintroduction had the intended strategic effect of making the RAN more attractive to a large number of boys who otherwise may never have considered a naval career. Without the scheme the RAN's acute staffing crisis would have continued for much longer as adult recruiting performance failed to meet demand. It is therefore questionable whether the Navy could have successfully introduced new submarines, the *Perth* class guided missile destroyers and maintained the Fleet Air Arm without the sudden influx of large numbers of boys through the junior recruit scheme.

The annual graduation rate over the entire life of the junior recruit training scheme, including those who went to officer candidate and apprentice training, ranged from 68 per cent to 99 per cent while averaging 87 per cent. But there is little to be gained in comparing graduation rates of boys from *Leeuwin* with those of adults from the *Cerberus* recruit school because there were obviously great dissimilarities between the two courses. In an effort to persuade Navy Office to maintain high levels of junior recruit entries two comparisons were made in 1980 of male adult and junior recruit retention rates for the years 1960 to 1973. The first by *Leeuwin* staff members covered intakes in 1960 to 1962 while the second by Navy Office staff members covered the period from 1963 to 1973. The comparative figures suggest that the junior recruit scheme aim of producing sailors who regarded the Navy as their vocation seems to have been achieved to a reasonable degree, if retention rates can be taken as a measure of vocational orientation. As Table 3 shows, in all but one year junior recruit retention was higher than that of adults recruits, although it is clear that the differential narrowed markedly as the years went by.

The aim of the junior recruit entry being a source of senior sailors and officers seems to have been achieved. Given the high retention rates of junior recruits until 1973 it is likely that a great many would have become senior sailors in at least the normal course of their sailor advancement processes, if not earlier because of the age and higher educational achievement. The aim of producing sailors who could make the often difficult transition to officer also seems to have been achieved. In 1972 for example, of the 27 matriculants who entered the RANC nine were graduates of the *Leeuwin* officer candidate course. As outlined in the Appendix, between 1964 and 1984, at least 255 boys, 2 per cent of *Leeuwin* graduates, were transferred to officer candidate training.



Year	Junior Recruits Entered	Male Adults Entered	Percentage of junior recruit entrants still serving on 30 April 1980	Percentage of adult entrants still serving on 30 April 1980
Jul to Dec 1960	155	366	29.6	15
Jan to Jul 1961	145	593	30.3	15.6
Jul to Dec 1961	161	444	19.2	14.8
Jan to Jun 1962	155	560	32.9	17.6
July to Dec 1962	160	335	39.3	17
1963	508	973	36.6	20.5
1964	606	1002	30.2	19.6
1965	616	987	31.9	16.7
1966	618	1040	31.7	20.1
1967	620	1037	31.7	14.5
1968	630	918	37.5	23.2
1969	630	759	42.1	36.8
1970	771	775	40.1	41.7
1971	788	671	44.2	36.4
1972	777	677	50.1	42.1
1973	799	659	46.8	76.5

*Table 3: Retention Rates of Junior Recruit Entrants and Adult Entrants*

In addition to these boys, many ex-junior recruits went on to become officers later in their careers through the Special Duties List, the Warrant Officer Entry Scheme and the New Entry Officer Scheme. By 2001, three former junior recruits had reached the rank of commodore, and of these two were later promoted to the rank of rear admiral. One of them, Russell Crane, a member of the 32nd intake entered on 15 July 1970, was promoted to Vice Admiral and appointed Chief of Navy in July 2008, a unique and remarkable achievement.

Measuring the contribution junior recruits would certainly have made to improving the Navy's capacity to use new technology is very difficult. As the Appendix shows, between 1964 and 1984 at least 299 boys, about 3 per cent of all graduates, left *Leeuwin* either before or upon graduation to undertake apprentice training at *Nirimba*. This 'internal recruiting' no doubt boosted the numbers of highly trained technical senior sailors in the Navy but, as some have argued, at the expense of increasing the technical capacities of the Navy's junior sailor workforce.



*Vice Admiral Russ Crane on his promotion to Chief of Navy with Chief of Defence Force Air Chief Marshall Angus Houston in 2008. Vice Admiral Crane's naval career began in 1970 as a junior recruit of Leeuwin's 32nd intake (Defence)*

As difficult as it was, abolition of the junior recruit entry was an easier decision for the Navy to make than that of deciding whether to consolidate all recruit training at either *Cerberus* or *Leeuwin*. Naval history, local, state and federal politics, the cost effectiveness of concentrating most sailor training in *Cerberus*, and the build up of naval assets at Garden Island in Western Australia were prominent among the very many factors that the Navy's leadership had to balance. While calls were made in Western Australia to retain junior recruits at *Leeuwin* they seem to have been fairly muted, probably because the Navy was already embarked on a process of transferring about half of the Navy's combat capability from the east to the west coast of Australia. Eventually, all the Navy's submarines along with half the *Anzac* and *Adelaide* classes of frigate, ordnance resupply and fuelling facilities and numerous lesser support functions would be based in *Stirling* on Garden Island where junior recruits once visited irregularly for OXPs. In these circumstances it would have been very difficult indeed to argue that Western Australia was receiving less than its fair share of Defence dollars.



*Lowering the White Ensign at Leeuwin on 11 November 1986  
by Recruit WRAN Andrea Garvey (RAN)*

The final passing out parade for *Leeuwin* junior recruits occurred held on 4 December 1984 when 37 boys of the 86th intake of junior recruits graduated. The reviewing officer was Rear Admiral William Crossley, Chief of Naval Personnel, who, having joined the Navy as a sailor in 1954, had the distinction of being the first man to rise through the sailor ranks to become an officer and achieve flag rank.

*Leeuwin* was decommissioned as a naval base on 11 November 1986 but it has continued to play a role in what has become a large Defence presence in Western Australia. With the handing over at a final Navy parade of a symbolic key by Commodore Malcolm R Baird, the then NOCWA, to Colonel A Barsch, the base became *Leeuwin* Barracks under Defence control. However, Navy's presence in the Barracks continued in the form of the Fremantle Port Division of the Royal Australian Navy Reserve and various administrative staff. The wharves and boatshed remained under Navy control in order to accommodate Reserve support craft based there.

## Recruiting of Minors

From the earliest days of WWI and the *Tingira* scheme the Navy deployed boys to war. The last WWI deployment occurred:

On 17th July, 1918, the last wartime draft for overseas service from *Tingira* embarked on the troopship *Borda* for England for distribution to HMAS *Australia*, *Melbourne* and *Sydney*. This draft totalled 50 Boys, of whom 31 were 15 years old, 14 were 16 years old.<sup>8</sup>

Boys entering the Navy in the 1960s experienced similar treatment. Many 15-year-old boys who entered the Navy in the 14th intake and subsequent junior recruit intakes into the early 1970s qualified for war service as 17-year-old boy ordinary seamen and midshipmen in the troop transport *Sydney*. A much smaller number of boys served as 17-year-olds in Vietnam in the guided missile destroyers HMA Ships *Perth*, *Hobart* and *Brisbane* and the destroyer HMAS *Vendetta*.

Australia's freedom to employ boys on operations ceased on 20 October 2002 when the Australian Ambassador to the United Nations signed the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict*. As a signatory to the Protocol Australia agreed to abide by a new standard which set a minimum age of 18 for participation in hostilities and a voluntary minimum age of 16 for recruitment into the Australian Defence Force (ADF). However, the ADF observes a minimum recruitment age of 17 except for 'military schools' that are defined as places where military personnel receive instruction. This exemption permits the recruitment of 16-year-olds to study in military schools but not for participation in hostilities.

The 1984 *Sex Discrimination Act* led to the abolition of the WRANS as a separate entity and the establishment of a liability for Navy women for sea service. Women also soon began to undertake the same adult recruit training course in *Cerberus* as their male

colleagues. An interesting hypothetical question therefore is whether the Navy would have recruited girls via the junior recruit entry avenue had the scheme continued. Given the numbers of females who now enter the RAN it is possible that it may have been very attractive to many Australian girls. Whether it would have been as attractive for their parents is doubtful. As experience post-1984 showed, the Navy experienced considerable difficulty integrating adult women into the seagoing workforce in a manner that was fair, safe and effective. Integrating girls into the same environment would have constituted a far bigger challenge.

## Endnotes

---

- <sup>1</sup> Department of Defence (Navy Office) routine signal message 416 All Ship/414 All Shore dated 3 Aug 1984.
- <sup>2</sup> Department of Defence (Navy Office) routine signal message 416 All Ship/414 All Shore dated 3 Aug 1984.
- <sup>3</sup> Department of Defence (Navy Office) routine signal message 416 All Ship/414 All Shore dated 3 Aug 1984.
- <sup>4</sup> 'Leeuwin: JR Training to Cease', *Navy News*, Vol 27, No 15, 10 Aug 1984, p. 3.
- <sup>5</sup> D Stevens (ed), *The Royal Australian Navy*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, Australia, 2001, p. 223.
- <sup>6</sup> Stevens, *The Royal Australian Navy*, p. 224.
- <sup>7</sup> T Frame, J Goldrick and P Jones, *Reflections on the Royal Australian Navy*, Kangaroo Press, Sydney, New South Wales, 1991, p. 7.
- <sup>8</sup> *Open Sea: Official Organ of the New South Wales Branch of the HMAS Tingira Old Boys Association*, Vol 3, No 8, Jun 1971, p. 11.

## 10. Junior Recruits Today

---

The junior recruit training scheme began and ended within living memory. The oldest former junior recruit will only be 67 on the 50th anniversary of the scheme's commencement in July 2010, while the large majority of boys who joined via the scheme are still alive. Many are still serving in the ADF and many will continue to do so until 2024 when the youngest member of the final intake, the 86th, would have completed 40 years of military service and be 55-years-old. However, given that the compulsory retirement age of the ADF has been increased from 55 to 60 and it employs reservists until the age of 65, it is possible that former junior recruits may still be serving until about 2034.

To match the enduring interest in *Tingira* and its boy sailors the last two decades have seen a burgeoning interest shown in the history of the junior recruits of *Leeuwin* and *Cerberus*. This probably reflects an upsurge in community interest in all things military, arising in part from the high level of operational deployment of Australian armed forces since 1999. It is highly likely that it also represents the interest of former junior recruits born between 1946 and 1964 seeking to have their place recognised in Australian naval history. This is not to say that those born afterwards have less interest in their junior recruit roots, it simply reflects the fact that the majority of junior recruits are 'baby boomers' who, as in many other areas of the Australian community, are active in recording and seeking recognition of their contribution.

Few former junior recruits believe that their training or experience made them intrinsically better sailors than their adult entry colleagues. And they would have no reason to do so because, as discussed previously, all sailor entrants did virtually the same training curriculum albeit in different geographical sites over different time periods. After former junior and adult recruits had completed their category training and had an initial sea posting there was little to differentiate between them, and the RAN did not seek to do so. The single thing that junior recruits would argue makes them different is that they signed on for 12 years at a younger age and served at sea as minors in the very adult environment of warships, many on active service.

Some former junior recruits have very mixed feelings about having signed on as a boy for 12 years in the RAN. While immensely proud of having joined and served their country it is not uncommon to hear expressions of regret about having made a commitment while so young and, in doing so, foregoing other career options that might have suited them better in the long run. Extreme manifestations of this view produce accusations that 'the Navy stole my youth' but in reality there was no compunction to join, the scheme was entirely voluntary and very popular with boys and their parents, to the extent that for most of the scheme's existence the RAN could afford to be quite selective about who could join and who could not. For better or worse, it was the boys and their parents who made the decision; the RAN was simply a very willing beneficiary at a

time in Australian history when early commitment to a life long career was commonplace. Paradoxically, regret over the decision to join so young and forego other opportunities often co-exists with a strong sense of pride in actually having joined and served. Many consider that their exposure to an adult environment, being forced to sever some family bonds very early and to accept responsibility for themselves gave them a head start in life overall and in the RAN. Many attribute achievements, such as early promotion to higher sailor rank, grasping the many opportunities for education and training the Navy offered, transferring to officer training and experiencing at a young age things that many other young Australians would never have the opportunity to do, to their training at *Leeuwin* or *Cerberus*.

Where ex-sailors will identify themselves in relation to a particular employment branch or category within the RAN, a rank or to membership of a particular ship's company, junior recruits identify themselves as members of a particular intake and whether that intake passed through *Leeuwin* or *Cerberus*. The experience of living together as an intake for a year, starting as 'new grubs' and progressing through the informal junior recruit seniority system reinforced intake identity. Doing so in close company, in a challenging training environment helped forge strong, life long bonds of friendship among many junior recruits. The intake orientation endures today. Reunion organisations based on intake are growing in number and activity. Websites are used to document a very active program of reunions around the country. It is not unusual for former junior recruits residing overseas to return for reunions that include social and sporting activities, ship tours as well as viewings of junior recruit memorabilia and parades. A noteworthy feature of these reunions is their inclusiveness, with sailors who exited the RAN during their time at *Leeuwin* attending along with their colleagues who served for up to 40 years. The shared experience of junior recruit training is the enduring bonding factor. In the words of Vice Admiral Crane:

The two guys that I bunked with in 1970, when I first arrived at *Leeuwin*, because we were allocated bunks alphabetically, according to our initials, are my two closest friends today – Russ Crawford and Russ Cronin. So there are relationships that endure forever. It's that sort of environment.<sup>1</sup>

In 2007 a number of former junior recruits banded together and tasked themselves with establishing a memorial to all who joined as boy sailors through *Leeuwin* and *Cerberus* at the ceremonial entrance of *Leeuwin*. When established it will be a counterpart to the memorial unveiled on 1 September 1977 at the corner of New South Head Road and Vickery Avenue, Rose Bay, to commemorate the boys who trained in *Tingira* from 1912 to 1926. Unveiling of the modern memorial will occur on the 50th anniversary of the commencement of the junior recruit training scheme at *Leeuwin*. A program of other commemorative and celebratory events is being planned to occur in conjunction with unveiling of the memorial.

## Endnotes

---

- <sup>1</sup> Russell Crane, 'If I Could Get Back to Sea, I Would – in a Heartbeat', *Sun Herald*, Fairfax Media, Sydney, 9 Nov 2008.





# Appendix

## Royal Australian Navy Junior Recruit Intake 1960-1984

Intake Number	Date of Entry	Date of Graduation	Number of Boys Entered (see note 1)	Total Number Graduated (see note 2)	% Pass Rate (see note 3)	To Officer Training	To Apprentice Training
<i>Leeuwin</i>							
1	13 Jul 1960	16 Jun 1961	155	142	92%	not applicable (n/a) (see note 4)	
2	10 Jan 1961	13 Dec 1961	151	142	94%	n/a	
3	12 Jul 1961	15 Jun 1962	155	143	92%	n/a	
4	7 Jan 1962	12 Dec 1962	154	134	87%	n/a	
5	11 Jul 1962	12 Jun 1963	179	142	79%	n/a	
6	9 Jan 1963	11 Dec 1963	180	162	90%		
7	10 Jul 1963	10 Jun 1964	201	187	93%		
8	8 Jan 1964	9 Dec 1964	205	162	79%	19 topmen (see note 5)	
9	8 Jul 1964	9 Jun 1965	201	181	90%		(see note 6)
10	6 Jan 1965	8 Dec 1965	204	175	86%	15 topmen (see note 7)	
11	7 Apr 1965	30 Mar 1966	102	86	84%		
12	14 Jul 1965	8 Jun 1966	204	182	89%		
13	13 Oct 1965	4 Oct 1966	104	89	86%		
14	5 Jan 1966	7 Dec 1966	203	177	87%	15 (see note 8)	
15	6 Apr 1966	29 Mar 1967	104	92	88%		

Intake Number	Date of Entry	Date of Graduation	Number of Boys Entered (see note 1)	Total Number Graduated (see note 2)	% Pass Rate (see note 3)	To Officer Training	To Apprentice Training
16	13 Jul 1966	7 Jun 1967	207	194	94%		
17	12 Oct 1966	3 Oct 1967	104	89	86%		
18	2 Jan 1967	6 Dec 1967	207	189	91%	21 (see note 9)	
19	5 Apr 1967	27 Mar 1968	105	82	78%		
20	12 Jul 1967	4 Jun 1968	208	179	86%		
21	11 Oct 1967	2 Oct 1968	100	83	83%		
22	3 Jan 1968	11 Dec 1968	209	201	96%		
23	3 Apr 1968	25 Mar 1969	110	86	78%	9	2
24	10 Jul 1968	10 Jun 1969	210	197	94%		
25	9 Oct 1968	23 Sep 1969	100	76	76%	9	7
26	8 Jan 1969	9 Dec 1969	200	181	91%	7	5
27	9 Apr 1969	24 Mar 1970	110	97	88%	4	1
28	16 Jul 1969	9 Jun 1970	210	168	80%	4	9
29	15 Oct 1969	22 Sep 1970	110	87	79%	3	7
30	7 Jan 1970	8 Dec 1970	252	193	77%	11	17
31	15 Apr 1970	23 Mar 1971	183	140	77%	3	7
32	15 Jul 1970	8 Jun 1971	191	140	73%	8	1
33	13 Oct 1970	21 Sep 1971	145	103	71%	3	7
34	6 Jan 1971	7 Dec 1971	250	175	70%	11	15
35	13 Apr 1971	21 Mar 1972	209	142	68%	8	4
36	14 Jul 1971	6 Jun 1972	192	153	80%	2	7
37	16 Oct 1971	19 Sep 1972	129	95	74%	3	8
38	3 Jan 1972	12 Dec 1972	207	167	81%	6	8

Intake Number	Date of Entry	Date of Graduation	Number of Boys Entered (see note 1)	Total Number Graduated (see note 2)	% Pass Rate (see note 3)	To Officer Training	To Apprentice Training
39	10 Apr 1972	27 Mar 1973	189	158	84%	3	6
40	10 Jul 1972	12 Jun 1973	196	157	80%	0	5
41	9 Oct 1972	25 Sep 1973	188	135	72%	4	6
42	10 Jan 1973	11 Dec 1973	254	205	81%	10	9
43	16 Apr 1973	26 Mar 1974	200	176	88%	1	1
44	16 Jul 1973	11 Jun 1974	224	178	79%	3	9
45	15 Oct 1973	24 Sep 1974	100	86	86%	3	0
46	2 Jan 1974	10 Dec 1974	190	164	86%	10	3
47	22 Apr 1974	25 Mar 1975	163	128	79%	3	5
48	15 Jul 1974	10 Jun 1975	142	121	85%	0	0
49	14 Oct 1974	23 Sep 1975	151	117	77%	2	5
50	8 Jan 1975	9 Dec 1975	276	229	83%	7	13
51	1 Apr 1975	23 Mar 1976	172	119	69%	5	7
52	14 Jul 1975	8 Jun 1976	215	188	87%	4	4
53	13 Oct 1975	21 Sep 1976	143	113	79%	4	4
54	7 Jan 1976	7 Dec 1976	252	211	84%	7	1
55	20 Apr 1976	22 Mar 1977	188	131	70%	1	17
56	14 Jul 1976	7 Jun 1977	197	168	85%	0	5
57	11 Oct 1976	20 Sep 1977	164	131	80%	2	3
58	3 Jan 1977	13 Dec 1977	260	207	80%	6	3
59	12 Apr 1977	21 Mar 1978	205	145	71%	3	14
60	11 Jul 1977	6 Jun 1978	173	142	82%	0	5
61	11 Oct 1977	6 Jun 1978	120	99	83%	0	0

Intake Number	Date of Entry	Date of Graduation	Number of Boys Entered (see note 1)	Total Number Graduated (see note 2)	% Pass Rate (see note 3)	To Officer Training	To Apprentice Training
62	11 Jan 1978	19 Sep 1978	120	96	80%	3	6
63	10 Apr 1978	12 Dec 1978	60	53	88%	1	7
64	10 Jul 1978	20 Mar 1979	61	54	89%	1	3
65	10 Oct 1978	12 Jun 1979	90	79	88%	0	3
66	10 Jan 1979	18 Sep 1979	120	107	89%	2	7
67	9 Apr 1979	11 Dec 1979	120	104	87%	0	4
68	15 Jul 1979	18 Mar 1980	60	52	87%	0	3
69	9 Oct 1979	10 Jun 1980	60	57	95%	0	0
70	9 Jan 1980	16 Sep 1980	60	51	85%	1	3
71	8 Apr 1980	9 Dec 1980	60	54	90%	0	0
72	14 Jul 1980	9 Mar 1981	60	57	95%	0	0
73	1 Oct 1980	9 Jun 1981	60	57	95%	1	4
74	7 Jan 1981	15 Sep 1981	60	48	80%	1	3
75	7 Apr 1981	8 Dec 1981	60	52	87%	1	0
76	14 Jul 1981	16 Mar 1982	80	66	83%	0	5
77	1 Oct 1981	9 Jun 1982	80	67	84%	2	6
78	1 Jan 1982	14 Sep 1982	90	80	89%	2	4
79	14 Apr 1982	7 Dec 1982	90	80	89%	1	0
80	12 Jul 1982	15 Mar 1983	90	83	92%	0	2
81	6 Oct 1982	8 Jun 1983	90	76	84%	0	1
82	4 Jan 1983	20 Sep 1983	71	61	86%	0	5
83	6 Apr 1983	6 Dec 1983	70	66	94%	0	0
84	5 Jul 1983	13 Mar 1984	71	60	85%	0	1

Intake Number	Date of Entry	Date of Graduation	Number of Boys Entered (see note 1)	Total Number Graduated (see note 2)	% Pass Rate (see note 3)	To Officer Training	To Apprentice Training
85	10 Jan 1984	18 Sep 1984	40	36	90%	0	2
86	3 Apr 1984	4 Dec 1984	40	37	93%	0	0
<i>Cerberus</i>							
1	17 Mar 1963	26 Mar 1964	125	123	98%		
2	6 Apr 1964	1 Mar 1965	200	198	99%		
Overall Totals	-	-	13000	10875	84%	255	299

### Notes:

1. The 'Numbers of Boys Entered' are derived from HMAS *Leeuwin* Reports of Proceedings (ROPs). However, these documents do not record numbers entered for intakes 3, 6, 22 and 24. These numbers were derived from Navy recruiting intake lists and unofficial class lists.
2. The 'Total Number Graduated' entries are derived from HMAS *Leeuwin* ROPs. However, these documents do not record numbers for intakes 1 to 4, 9 and 10, 12, 14, 16 to 19, 21 and 22 and 24. These numbers were derived from passing out parade handbooks.
3. The '% Pass Rate' does not include the numbers of junior recruits selected for officer candidate and apprentice training. Inclusion of these numbers increases the pass rate to 87%.
4. The Topmen training scheme was introduced in January 1963.
5. This number is that mentioned in the HMAS *Leeuwin* ROP for the period 1 January to 31 March 1964.
6. The first transfer of boys from junior recruit training to apprentice training occurred in 1964.
7. This number is that mentioned in the HMAS *Leeuwin* ROP for the period 1 January to 31 March 1965.
8. This is the number of Topmen shown in the Topmen Division photograph in the 14th Intake passing out parade book, December 1966.
9. This is the number of Topmen shown in the Topmen Division photograph in the 18th Intake passing out parade book, December 1967.



# Bibliography

---

Australia, House of Representatives, 1970, Statement to the Parliament of Australia on the Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Royal Military College Duntroon by the Honourable A S Peacock, Minister for the Army, 12 June 1970, Vol HR.

Barnett, L, 'Education and Training in the Royal Navy as an Element of the Impact of Industrialisation on War and the Military Establishment', <[www.barnettresearch.freeseve.co.uk](http://www.barnettresearch.freeseve.co.uk)> (28 September 2008).

Cunningham, I, *Work Hard Play Hard: The Royal Australian Naval College 1913 - 1988*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra, 1988.

Eldridge, F, *History of the Australian Naval College (From its inception in 1913 to the end of World War II in 1945)*, Georgian House, Melbourne, 1949.

Frame, T, Goldrick, J, & Jones, P, *Reflections on the Royal Australian Navy*, Kangaroo Press, Sydney, 1991.

Gillet, R, *Australia's Colonial Navies*, The Naval History Society of Australia, Sydney, 1982.

Graystone, R, 'Royal Australian Navy: The Gun Plot', <[www.gunplot.net](http://www.gunplot.net)> (28 September 2008).

Grey, J, *The Australian Army*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001.

Grimmer, AS, 'HMS Ganges - The Shore Establishment 1905-1976', <[www.hmsgangesassoc.org](http://www.hmsgangesassoc.org)> (28 September 2008).

Jones, C, *Australian Colonial Navies*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1986.

Jones, P & Goldrick, J, *Struggling for a Solution: The RAN and the Acquisition of a Surface to Air Missile Capability*, Sea Power Centre - Australia, 2000.

Laffin, J, *Jack Tar: The Story of the British Sailor*, Castle and Co, London, 1969.

Lambert, N, *Australia's Naval Inheritance: Imperial Maritime Strategy and the Australia Station 1880-1909*, RAN Maritime Studies Program, Department of Defence, Canberra, Australia, 1998.

Lilley, J, *Call the JR's: Junior Recruits - Royal Australian Navy*, self published.

McKee, C, *Sober Men and True: Sailor Lives in the Royal Navy 1900 - 1945*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002.

Mitchell, C, *Last Pound Shillings and Pence Kids*, in possession of the author, 2008.



Monan, J, 'A Shotley Boy', <[www.submariners.co.uk/Dits/Articles/shotleyboy.php](http://www.submariners.co.uk/Dits/Articles/shotleyboy.php)> (29 September 2008).

*Open Sea: Official Organ of the New South Wales Branch of the HMAS Tingira Old Boys Association*, Vol 1-5.

Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, *Recruitment and Retention of ADF Personnel: Report of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee*, Canberra, October 2001.

Phillipson, D, *Band of Brothers: Boy Seamen in the Royal Navy 1800 - 1956*, Sutton Publishing, Stroud, 2003.

Pope, S, *Hornblower's Navy Life at Sea in the Age of Nelson*, Orion Media, London, 1998.

Presland, G, (ed), *Reunion of Junior Recruits of the 4th Intake HMAS Leeuwin*, Box Hill, Victoria, 2003.

*Prisons and Youth Training Centres*, Record Group VRG 9, Public Record Office of Victoria, Melbourne.

Quinn, P, *Unenlightened Efficiency: The Administration of the Juvenile Correction System in New South Wales 1905-1988*, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 2004.

Royal Australian Navy, *How to Join the Royal Australian Navy*, Navy Office, Melbourne, 1912.

Scott, R, 'The Leeuwin Way, From Burrigue to Train Smash', *The Life of a Naval Junior Recruit (1966 - 1967)*, in the possession of the author.

Stevens, A, *The Royal Australian Air Force*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001.

Stevens, D, (ed), *The Royal Australian Navy*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001.

Stevens, D & Reeve, J, (eds), *The Navy and the Nation: The Influence of the Navy on Modern Australia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2005.

Swinden, J, 'HMAS Tingira 1912 - 1927 A Legacy of Service', *Naval Historical Review*, Vol 12, No 4, December 1991.

Whitlock, P & Pearce, W, *HMS Victory and Admiral Lord Nelson*, Portsmouth Royal Naval Museum Trading Company, Portsmouth, undated but pre-1982.

Wilson, L, *Skilled Hands at Sea: The Story of HMAS NIRIMBA and Naval Training in New South Wales 1855 - 1982*, Naval Historical Society of Australia, Sydney, 2003.