

## 06/07/99 President's Report

### THE REVIEW HAS STARTED

#### What role will we play?

The first round of hearings took place in Hobart, 22 & 23 June 1999, Admiral Mike Hudson presented a detailed opening submission, after which, more than a dozen ex-navy personnel gave verbal support to their written submissions.

Our Tasmanian Delegate, Leon O'Donnell, was very impressed with the process and conduct of the hearings. Leon said that everyone was made to feel at ease and the environment was not one of over formality. However, the Judge, Major-General Mohr, kept firm control while being very patient with contributors, Leon felt that the hearings "went very well".

Admiral Mike Hudson phoned from Tasmania and reinforced Leon's impressions.

What is important now is that you get your submission in the Review; this will enable you to speak to it, if you wish. I understand that it may be during July, so we must get prepared. Remember, the closing date for submissions is 9 July 1999, GET THEM IN.

I think it is important that those who served during 1955/60 base their submission around personal experiences. The Judge will get enough information about inequity, history and 'seen off storied' from the NAA, JCG and our Association's submissions.

The things that I think important are:

Did your ship's Boarding Party conduct searches of other vessels? Were you involved? (Gunnery rates).

Did you close up at Action or Defence Stations that was not for exercises? (Applicable to all branches).

Did the gunner's party provide HE ammunition to the Gun-bay while at Action or Defence Stations? Or DA fused shells in preparation for NGS? (Gunnery rates).

Did the Landing Party go ashore from your ship? Were you involved?

Were you ever told why the Landing Party went ashore?

Did your ship challenge other ships while patrolling in Malayan waters? (Communicators).

Did your ship conduct signals interception, or other EW activities, while on patrol in Malaya? (Communicators (S) – you may speak of these activities now).

Did you feel apprehensive, i.e. prepared mentally and physically to engage the enemy?

Was it your understanding that you were on Active Service?

What duties did you perform which you consider outside normal peace time activities?

Did you encounter trouble spots ashore? Have to rescue shipmates who were in trouble from attacks by communist sympathizers?

Were you involved in shore patrol duties to protect train stations etc, or safe passage of other servicemen?

Were you involved in political riots?

Were you aware that your ship was on patrolling duties? If so, how were you aware? i.e. at defence stations, boarding party at the ready etc, etc, etc.

If you have a photograph of landing, boarding party activities, i.e. boat searches, landing party ashore etc., Get them blown up and submitted. Please do not be tempted to include, in your submission, reference to things that 'you heard', or that 'Bungy told you at the fleet club. If you want to address another period, please do, but make that a separate issue. Personally, I will be offering submissions on a number of issues, but each individually. The worst thing we can do is exaggerated, resort to hearsay or fabricate a story.

When we know the date for the review, we will promulgate details by and interim Newsletter. You may need to nominate to speak through the Secretariat. I would like to see as many as possible give verbal testimony about personal experiences, feelings, preparations and expectations. i.e. things that happened to you or while you were present. If you do not wish to appear and give evidence, then turn up and support your mates.

This is our chance to have our case heard, We must participate, it is no use, afterwards, thinking: "if I had only...". After hearing what Admiral Hudson and Leon O'Donnell had to report, I am confident that we are going to get a fair go. Lets put all the conspiracy theories, them and us attitudes, etc, etc, etc, to bed, and get behind the Review

Noel Payne  
National President.