



TIER TWO
DONATION



TINGIRA
AUSTRALIA

TINGIRA

MEMORIAL

UPGRADE

Tingira Australia Association in conjunction with RSL Rose Bay sub-Branch and Woolahra Council will upgrade the Tingira Memorial, Rose Bay, as part of the ANZAC Centenary during 2015.

Former HMAS Cerberus and HMAS Leeuwin Junior Recruits will gather on Wednesday 11th November 2015 to dedicate their 'Junior Recruit' story as the final part of the famous Tingira naval heritage that lives on from the former days of the naval training ship HMAS TINGIRA and the classic Clipper Ship and Nautical School Ship SOBRAON.

Donations of any amount are sought to assist with this project - direct deposits can be made via the Tingira Australia Association website. www.tingira.org.au Or Cheque sent direct to - Tingira Secretary, ANZAC House, 245 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, NSW.



A Taste of 'Tingira' History ...

The Tingira reserve in Rose Bay, Sydney, was created in two programs - in 1962 and in 1977, as a monument to HMAS Tingira, a naval training ship moored on a swinging anchor in from 1912 to 1927 - often incorrectly pronounced 'Tingara'. The ship started life as a clipper, the Sobraon, built in 1866 in Aberdeen, Scotland and was the largest and fastest composite ship ever built in the world.

After 25 years on the England - Australia run she was pressed into service as a 'Nautical School' for boys and, berthed off Cockatoo Island, serving in this capacity for nearly 20 years.

She was then purchased by the Commonwealth Government in 1911. The stage was set for yet another honourable role in the long life of this ship, for at 8 o'clock on the morning of 25th April 1912, just three years before the famous Anzac Day, the navy white ensign was hoisted to commemorate the commissioning of HMAS Tingira, ex Sobraon, the first naval training ship in the Royal Australian Navy.

Tingira, an aboriginal word meaning 'ocean', or 'open sea', and pronounced Tinguy-rah, was to become the training ship to thousands of young boys who chose the Navy as a career under the Department of the Navy's boy enlistment scheme. Though all those who trained in her went to sea, the Tingira did not - instead she swung at her moorings in beautiful Rose Bay, opposite Lyne Park, for the next 15 years.

The commissioning Captain of HMAS Tingira was Commander Lewin, RN, who, with his first lieutenant, Lieutenant Commander Browne, RN, and Executive Officers Dean and Seaton, were the first of a long line of distinguished men who had been carefully chosen for their special ability of imparting knowledge and instruction to sturdy, self reliant, intelligent boys.

The first intake of boys took place between 1st June and 28th June 1912, and at the date of HMAS Tingira's decommissioning, 3,168 young boys had had the privilege of having their initial training, not on a shore establishment, or a stone ship which didn't rock, but in the safe confines of one of the finest ships ever built and sailed the high seas. Farmer and Settler, a newspaper of high standing, published an article on the boys in 1926:-

'Much misconception exists concerning the good ship Tingira. There are persons still so far behind the times to imagine her to be a hulk whereupon are confined for corrective purposes, the wayward youth of the city. And those misguided folk pass on their placid way, not taking the trouble to learn that on her broad decks are being trained the most highly skilled defenders of Australia's shores. Boys from the best Australian homes, boys from the great public schools, from the outback spaces and from the city's heart, who will pass into the navy, that is to be our bulwark against aggression'.

Many of these boys were to serve their country with distinction in World Wars I and II as well as the Korean campaign.

Indeed, Australia was shocked when it was known that a draft of ex-HMAS Tingira boys had been in HMAS Sydney during her action off Cocos Island, on 8th November 1914, when she sank the German raider Emden. There had been young German boys in the Emden also - and to this day, a strong bond of naval comradeship exists between Australia and

Germany. A representative of the German Consulate was always an honoured guest at the former HMAS Tingira Old Boys Association's Annual Dinner, in Sydney.

This bond of friendship initiated in HMAS Tingira forms the basis of a continuing, caring association of old shipmates. The Association's journal of the NSW Branch proudly displays this statement on its cover - 'In strength and unity, this Association will stand forever'. Today the association still stands proud as the next generation have taken the helm as the 'Tingira Austral Association'.

The winds of change were certainly blowing in the late 1920's and the Navy decided to stop the 'boy' training system and institute the direct entry system. On 27th June 1927 HMAS Tingira was decommissioned. She had nestled in Rose Bay for 15 years and since 1892 had been home to over 6,000 boys.

Neil Goldsmith Roberts, joined the Navy at age 14 years. He was one of the boys on the training ship the 'Tingira' for the pay of 3 pence per week. He told his son in later years, he was so hungry that he used to spend his whole 3 pence (3 cents) on 3 pies, as soon as he got paid. They had to get up at 5.30am in the morning, and the last one up the rigging used to get belted across the backside with a knotted rope. He was also forced to learn boxing, which he disliked owing to his small size. Neil had his photo taken with his two older brothers, Leo and Alfred on the 30th April 1914 in their Naval uniforms.

Neil Roberts was the youngest seaman (age 16 yrs) aboard the HMAS Sydney on 9th November 1914, when the 'Sydney' was escorting the first troop convoy from Australia to the Middle East. The German light cruiser Emden was detected shadowing the convoy. The Sydney was ordered to attack the Emden, and in the ensuing engagement the Emden was battered and finally beached on the Cocos Islands. It was the first naval engagement of the war.

Neil and others sailors were awarded a special medal for their participation in this victory. After the battle, young Neil souveniered a hat band off one of the Emden sailors hats, which he later gave to his brother Leo (my father) who also served on the Sydney in 1913. The Emden hat band is now a prized possession of Leo's daughter Margot, author of this article.

A report from "The Royal Australian Navy" by George Odgers stated - *That while a majority of the 'Sydney's' crew were British servicemen lent to Australia by the Admiralty, quite a large proportion were Australian, including young men under training. Some sixty young men were from the training ship 'Tingira'. To quote an official narrative "the inexperienced crew speedily settled down. The hail of steel which beat upon them was increasing, but they paid little heed as if they had passed their lives under heavy fire instead of experiencing it for the first time". Just after the fight an officer wrote: "Our men behaved splendidly; this was especially noticeable in the case of the young boys, many of them only 16 yrs old and just out of training ship...one little slip of a boy did not turn a hair and worked splendidly (most likely this was Neil Roberts) the other boy, a very sturdy youngster carried projectiles from the hoist to his gun through the action without as much as thinking of cover.*

In 1929, at the age of 63 she was bought by Mr. W.M.Ford, a prominent boat builder and floated outside his boatshed in Berry's Bay. Mr. Ford died in 1935 and in 1936 Major Friere and Mrs. Ankin negotiated to purchase her for the sum of £2,600, and a company was formed to convert

the ship into a floating museum, rumoured to become a casino and bathed in Darling Harbour but because of financial difficulties this development failed.

HMAS Tingira, ex Sobraon, was at last purchased by Mr. Karlo Selvinen who finally broke her up in Berry's Bay in 1942.

The training of boys in the RAN was later continued with the introduction of the Junior Recruit Training scheme at HMAS Leeuwin on the Swan River, Fremantle, Western Australia. In the period of operation (1960-1984) more than 13,000 boys aged between 15 1/2 and 16 1/2 were trained there. The training concept was based on that also conducted at HMS Ganges. The final day of Leeuwin was 11 November 1984.

Junior Recruits who served in the RAN wore an arm badge 'Tingira' that recognised the historical link to the original HMAS Tingira.

Many ex Junior Recruits went on to serve on Active Service in the Malay Confrontation with Indonesia and also the Vietnam War. Many of these boys were still only 16 when they went to war. Something that perhaps would not occur in this era. Today many 1000's have served our navy over past decades on peace keeping duties, others are still serving today, over the 30 years to the day as members of the RAN in 2014.

In July 2010 a JR Memorial was dedicated at the Leeuwin Barracks in conjunction with a reunion of over 3,000 former JR's to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the JR scheme. The then current Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral, Russ Crane AO CSM RAN, dedicated the memorial. He too was an ex Junior Recruit who rose from the lowest rank in the RAN to his position as head of the navy, and became the first Patron of the new Tingira Australia Association formed after that reunion on 1/1/11.

The Navy Recruit School at HMAS Cerberus in 2013 commissioned a new class as "Tingira" where these recruits now become the third generation of Tingira sailors.

In July this year Vaucluse MP Gabrielle Upton announced a funding contribution of \$8,400 for the repair and revitalisation of the community war memorial, Tingira Reserve, in Rose Bay as part of the NSW Community War Memorial Grant Fund. Ms Upton said that ensuring War Memorials, such as Tingira Reserve, are properly maintained is especially important during the commemoration of the Centenary of Anzac. "With the Centenary of Anzac period upon us we all have an obligation to commemorate our diggers who fought gallantly in the First World War to protect the freedoms and privileges we now enjoy," Ms Upton said.

Tingira Treasurer, Peter Stephenson OAM, will now head up the project to fundraise and deliver the third refurbishment of the Tingira Memorial over the next 12 months, working with the Rose Bay RSL sub-Branch, Club Rose Bay and the Woolahra Council to deliver on deadline.

A large gathering is expected to turn out when the 'Tingira Junior Recruits' reform in Sydney on the second week of November 2015 for a week long reunion.

Their major highlight will be to march onto the new Tingira Memorial at 11am on Wednesday 11th November to commemorate all Tingira sailors and remember their finer days in Fremantle by commissioning the HMAS Leeuwin story onto the Tingira Memorial in Rose Bay as part of their rich naval training heritage.