

The 2019 Annual Cruise & Luncheon

*Today we'd like to sit and sip
Forget about the world a bit
Ignore the things we have to do
And just enjoy a drink or two.*

And with those words from Mrs Finola McMahon who graciously stood in for Sister Mary Leahy OAM and delivered Grace, the tone was set for another very successful Sydney Harbour Cruise & Luncheon for Members and their Guests.

Sister Mary who has delighted all on board with her Grace on past Cruises had to attend a meeting overseas in her capacity as Stella Maris Chaplain, Oceania Region. However, Mrs McMahon did say that Sister Mary will be on board next year to check once again on those who consume their bread-rolls before Grace and give the necessary absolution, but they are getting a dispensation this year.

Blessed with fair weather, a smooth sea and abundant good companionship 157 Members & guests boarded the Captain Cook vessel, *Sydney 2000* for an enjoyable day out.

President, Capt. Murray Doyle welcomed Members and guests, honoured Guest Speaker, Graeme W Finney OAM and noted with sadness Members who had Crossed the Bar since the last Cruise.



Left to Right. Capt Ted van Bronswijk, Director of Merchant Navy War Memorial Fund; Capt Murray Doyle AAM, President; Graeme W Finney OAM Guest Speaker; Capt Alan Tait OAM Immediate Past President, Vice-President (Ex Officio); Dr Paul Scully-Power AM, Patron.

Keynote address

Guest Speaker, Graeme W Finney OAM, FAIM, CAHRI, Deputy Commissioner

Fire & Rescue NSW, is a former serving Brigadier in the Australian Army and has enjoyed a 28-year leadership career. He has predominantly served in operational and training assignments including as Director General Operations for the Australian Army and as Director Future Operations for the NATO led International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan). He has also served in a range of training appointments with the Australian and US military, including as Commandant of recruit training at Kapooka (Wagga Wagga) and as an instructor with the US Army Command and General Staff College (Fort Leavenworth).

His service in Afghanistan, information about the country and facts and issues associated with the land formed the basis of his interesting presentation, with many issues posed to consider and remark upon, engaging the audience which showed its enthusiastic appreciation.

Musical entertainment

All on board were entertained by a musical duo who maintained a very enjoyable tempo throughout the Cruise. And all Members again contributed to the musical gusto in putting excellent voice to the singing of Sea Shanties.



Revellers on board have also noted with some excitement that the Cruise achieved a significant milestone this year being the first time anyone has danced at an Ancient Mariners outing in its 116 years of existence.

War Memorial Fund Raising Appeal

Donations by Members made on the day will go to The Merchant Navy War Memorial National Fund Raising Appeal.

The Appeal was addressed by Capt Ted van Bronswijk, Sydney Tug Master and Director of the Fund and was well supported by Members raising \$1260. The Fund will assist new and remedial works at the Memorial in Canberra in honour of those of the Australian Merchant Navy who gave their lives in World Wars 1 & 2.

Offshore & Specialist Ships

In the toast to visitors, Reg McNee responded and outlined his organisation for the benefit of Members – Offshore & Specialist Ships Australia which was formed in 2017 to work towards preserving the history of specialist ships in Australia.

Many thanks to all those who contributed with their time and effort to make the 2019 Cruise a great success.

The Annual Cruise & Luncheon is firmly established on the League's calendar of events allowing members to gather, rekindle old friendships and make new ones.

The next Annual Cruise & Luncheon will be May 2, 2020.