

Victoria Barracks, Sydney

Building the Barracks

Spanning the years of Australia's rapid development since the 1840s, Victoria Barracks stand as a memorial to Australia's colonial and more recent military heritage and are intimately linked with the history of Sydney and New South Wales. Moreover, the Barracks continue to provide the Australian Army with a headquarters site in Sydney and a home to a number of its officers and their families. Since the 1970s, it has housed the headquarters of the Army's field forces, now Land Command, and more recently, the headquarters of the Defence Centre - Sydney.

From the days of the British Redcoats, through the raising of Colonial forces and their amalgamation at Federation, through two World Wars, and to the present day, the Barracks have provided a physically elegant and functioning headquarters in New South Wales. Visitors to the Barracks walk in the footsteps of veterans of campaigns dating back to Waterloo.

For Australians, Victoria Barracks is a priceless heritage combining an excellent example of late Georgian architecture with a significant historical background. It embodies the drama and traditions manifest in the country's growth to maturity. The whole Barracks precinct of 12 hectares and its perimeter walls and gardens are listed on the Register of the National Estate.

The state of preservation of the Barracks today affords ample testimony to the great care and high work standards of craftsmen and convicts under the direction of its designer, Lieutenant Colonel George Barney of the Royal Engineers, and his successor, Lieutenant Colonel James Gordon.

Victoria Barracks' history began in 1836 with planning to replace the existing barracks, then sited on 16 and a half acres fronting George Street in Sydney. Suggestions that they were

falling down were strongly supported by other interests claiming that their location was impeding the commercial growth of the town. A board of officers appointed by the Governor, Sir Richard Bourke, selected a site for the new barracks on the southern side of Sydney. It was to occupy a small portion of a 1000 acre reserve set aside by Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1811. By the 1840s, the land was valued at between £750 and £1000 an acre.

The site for the new barracks was rough scrubland with sand dunes and rocky outcrops making it unsuitable for agriculture but it had a fine water supply in Busby's bore. Its location on a high ridge-line provided a commanding view south eastwards to Botany Bay and north to Port Jackson. South Head Road (now Oxford Street) ran past the northern boundary and all other southern and eastern land approaches to Sydney could be kept under surveillance with little effort.

Work on the new barracks began in February 1841, with labour supplied mainly by convicts. Sandstone for the buildings was quarried on the site and at adjoining areas in and around the present Showgrounds. Building cement was obtained from burnt sea-shells gathered at Rushcutters Bay.

Among the convicts employed on stone-work were French Canadians transported in 1840 after being involved in the rebellion of 1837 in Canada. The Sydney Morning Herald records those employed in construction work as being 150 convicts, about 50 stonemasons and builders and five carpenters. Additionally, sub-contracts were let to local tradesmen who used assigned convicts for their labourers.

Some of the outer wall was built by the 11th (North Devonshire) Regiment after they took up residence in 1848. The depth of sand, particularly at the western end of the site, made necessary very deep excavations for foundations - in some places up to 30 feet. Ironically, within a short time, a large part of the western wall was realigned to permit Green's



Victoria Barracks looking towards the officers' quarters. Lieutenant Colonel Barney designed the barracks to accommodate 700 British soldiers and their officers. Originally estimated to take two and a half years to build, construction time dragged on for seven years because of various delays and unforeseen problems. Total cost was about £60 000. (Painting by Jeff Isaacs)

Road to be straightened and widened.

Imported materials for construction included steel columns, girders and railings and the slate used for roofing. Barney also imported cedar in preference to using local timber for interior fittings. Examples of heavy adze-hewn beams may be seen in the guard-room at the Oxford Street entrance and in the clock-tower of the main building.

The main Barracks block with its two wings flanking the magnificent central archway is 740 feet in length. It is reputed to be the longest stone building in the Southern Hemisphere. At the rear of the main block are two kitchens which served the soldiers who took it in turn to cook their daily ration of meat and whatever else they could scrounge. They were paid a shilling a day, half of which was contributed for their ration of meat and one pound of bread daily. Immediately behind the central archway is the two-storey former troops' canteen.

Lieutenant Colonel George Barney

Lieutenant Colonel George Barney was the planner and initial supervisor of the construction of Victoria Barracks. Born in 1792, he graduated from the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, England, to a commission in the Royal Engineers at the age of 16. He served at Gibraltar and the West Indies where he was described as a man of vigour and capacity.

At the request of Governor Bourke, Barney was sent to Sydney in December 1835 to supervise the construction and maintenance of fortifications and convict buildings. He was the first Commander of Royal Engineers in NSW in addition to holding the civil appointment of Colonial Engineer.

Barney's experience in the West Indies, where poor accommodation contributed to disease and high mortality among British forces, undoubtedly influenced his design of Victoria Barracks. By that period, the British Board of Ordnance had accepted higher standards for soldiers' living conditions which also paved the way for improved quarters.

In 1843, Barney was succeeded by Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) James Gordon who continued the supervisory work involved in building the Barracks. Barney remained briefly as Colonel Engineer before returning to England from where he was sent to Ireland. He returned to Australia in 1846 after being appointed Lieutenant Governor of North Australia. This involved him in establishing a short-lived settlement at Gladstone, Port Curtis (Queensland), early in 1847.

One of his tasks on his return to Sydney later the same year was that of adviser on fortifications. He was responsible for building Darlinghurst Gaol and Fort Denison with its fine martello tower on Pinchgut Island in Port Jackson. Circular Quay was another of his engineering triumphs. In 1849 he became Chief Commissioner for Crown Lands and later a member of the Legislative Council of NSW until 1856 when he was appointed Surveyor-General.

British Regiments at Victoria Barracks

The first full-time garrison troops to occupy Victoria Barracks were members of the **11th (North Devonshire) Regiment** commanded by Lieutenant Colonel H. K. Bloomfield. The arrival of an advance party of two companies was recorded by the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

The 11th Regiment (from Van Dieman's Land) ... landed in Sydney from the *Thetis* and on Saturday afternoon, 5 August 1848, marched to the new barracks. Their reception, with colours flying, fifes and drum playing them up George Street, flags waving as they marched four abreast from the landing wharf; amidst the cheers of the populace who lined the route to Paddington Hill, is one of the finest tributes to the British Soldier in the military annals of New South Wales.

Swinging around as they left George Street, the North Devons moved steadily up the long ascent to the new barracks named in honour of Her Majesty whose long reign synchronised with a glorious era in the history of England. That historic entry through the main archway of Victoria Barracks, marked the practical completion in August 1848 of the handsome blocks of brown sandstone, which have weathered many storms and made much history near the shores of Port Jackson.

The troops' boos and catcalls at being banished to the inhospitable wastes south of the friendly inner city went unheeded. The regiment spent nine years in New South Wales and apparently became one of the most popular in the Australian colonies. An earlier visit to Sydney in 1846 by the 11th had been precipitated by the discontent and mutinous attitude of the **99th, Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire) Regiment**, then quartered in the old George Street Barracks. The unheralded and well-disciplined 11th Regiment marching with bayonets fixed straight up George Street after disembarkation from their voyage from Hobart had dispelled further thoughts of insurrection by the 99th.

The 11th gained a considerable reputation as fire-fighters in the district. They also impressed the garrison chaplain, the Reverend George MacArthur, with their discipline and bearing so much that he incorporated their military style into a school he later established at Darling Point. Subsequent moves found the school at Parramatta where it was named the King's School in 1868.

The next occupants of the Barracks were members of the **77th (East Middlesex) Regiment**, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel R. J. Straton, fresh from duty in Dublin. Their stay was short as they were alerted for transfer to Hong Kong early in 1858, but an urgent summons from Calcutta changed their destination. They sailed in April for India to assist in quelling the Sepoy mutiny.

The **12th (East Suffolk) Regiment**, which originally arrived in 1854, was then allotted to garrison duties at the Barracks. It was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel W. J. Kemp and later Lieutenant Colonel J. M. Percival. During this Regiment's occupation, gold fever gripped the community. In barracks, the soldiers' life was relaxed to permit spare-time work such as tailoring, boot-making and manufacturing 'cab-

bage-tree' hats which were popular at the time. These home trades helped to reduce desertions to the gold-fields besides helping soldiers waiting to be discharged to establish themselves commercially.

One of the few recorded civil actions by garrison soldiers was in 1858 when troops of the 12th Regiment were called out to riots at Lambing Flat, near Young. Fighting had broken out between whites and Chinese gold-miners. Lieutenant Colonel Kemp took 300 men, including 60 sailors hastily recruited from HMS *Faun*, gunners and a 12-pounder cannon. Marching briskly at the rate of 25 miles a day, the force took 12 days to cover the 300 miles trek only to find that peace had been restored.

In 1860, the 12th was ordered to New Zealand and took part in the Maori wars until 1866. The **50th (West Kent) Regiment** took over Victoria Barracks garrison duty in 1866 after arriving from New Zealand to spend a second term in New South Wales. History of the 50th is scant apart from the fact its duties took part of the unit to Adelaide where the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel F. G. Hamley, became Governor-in-Chief for a year on the death of the resident Governor, Sir Dominick Daly. The Regiment sailed for England in March 1869.

The last of the Imperial Regiments to carry out garrison duties in New South Wales, the **18th (Royal Irish) Regiment**, initially had a long period of Indian Service. Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel G. A. Elliott, its brief Australian term was preceded by six years in New Zealand. Early in 1870 the unit's headquarters and four companies arrived at Victoria Barracks. Detachments of two companies each were sent to Melbourne, Adelaide and Hobart. Within six months the Regiment was ordered to return to England and the last members left in August 1870. Some of the soldiers, many of whom had not seen their homeland for more than 10 years, elected to be discharged in Australia where they took up commercial enterprises or joined the newly formed Colonial forces.

Colonial Forces at Victoria Barracks

The gold-rush period started in 1851 stimulating much activity in all the Colonies. In 1854, the raising of volunteer forces was authorised. New South Wales raised the 1st Sydney Battalion of Rifle Volunteers of about 300, a battery of artillery and some mounted troops. The only previous attempt to raise volunteer forces was between 1800 and 1810 when small 'Loyal Associations', similar to those raised in Britain during the Napoleonic Wars, were formed for short periods to assist internal security. However, reverberations from the Crimean War, the Maori uprising in New Zealand and rumours of foreign threats greatly stimulated local recruiting and, by 1863, more than 2000 officers and men were enrolled in New South Wales alone.

By 1870, the British Government considered that the security of the Australian Colonies could be adequately left to the Royal Navy. There being no apparent threat, Imperial garrisons were therefore withdrawn. In 1871, a small Permanent Military Force comprising a battery of artillery and two companies of infantry was raised. The infantry was based at Victoria Barracks and the artillery at Dawes Point, now the

southern end of Sydney Harbour Bridge. The infantry was disbanded in 1872, but volunteer units remained. Two more artillery batteries were raised in the 1870s, but eventually, all field artillery moved to Victoria Barracks.

Victoria Barracks Residences

The first building completed in the Barracks was the two storey officers' quarters. Overlooking the Barracks drill square and cricket field from the high ground to its east, this building included the officers' mess on the ground floor of the central section. As originally designed, the northern end held single officers' quarters while the southern end had two family residences. The central area comprised a dining room and ante room, besides billiards, cards and writing rooms. The original marble fireplace surrounds remain as well as cedar joinery, while cast iron verandah columns, which also act as downpipes, and balustrading were imported from Britain. Beneath was an extensive cellar. Today, most of the building is occupied by the Married Quarters Nos. 2-12 (there is no No. 5, it having been combined with No. 4) and the Barracks Chapel which is in the old mess.

This first building, with stables at the rear, was completed in 1842. It is 323 feet in length, 20 feet having been added to the northern end sometime before 1870. The southern end was also extended by having an additional eight feet added to the lower floor. A more obvious feature was the addition, after 1871, of a matching verandah built across the face of the central section to protect the entrances to the officers' mess from the prevailing weather. The building is approached from the guardhouse by an avenue flanked with Norfolk Island Pine trees, Moreton Bay figs, Camphor Laurels and Canary Island Palms.

No. 12 has been used in recent years as a residence for a brigadier, currently the Chief of Staff of Land Headquarters. There is no Residence No. 13, but No. 14, or 'Stonehenge' as it is known, is a separate residence within the Barracks being a small 'sparrow pecked' sandstone cottage first built as the Medical Officer's Quarters within the Quartermaster's Store Group of buildings at the western end of the Barracks.

The forerunner of the Army's Staff College at Fort Queenscliff, Victoria, was formed in July 1938 in the Barracks building vacated by the Royal Military College and began courses of instruction for permanent and militia officers. By July 1940, a total of 360 officers of ranks from captain to major general had passed through the school. During World War II, the Intelligence Corps staff occupied one wing of the building.

Since World War II, the building has served as officers' married quarters although the condition of the building had deteriorated with age. Rising damp was a particular problem, masked by sacrificial walls. As one recent resident, Colonel C. J. Brewer wrote:

Living in a heritage home is a delightful experience but it does present a range of challenges ...The thick, stone walls progressively absorb, contain and then radiate heat in summer and cold and damp in winter. Winter conditions are the most difficult, with mobile heaters unable to compete with the combined influences of cold and damp walls, and high, thin ceilings. It becomes very clear what is

meant by the "pitter patter of tiny feet" as the progress of each pair of feet is transmitted through the floor above, to the tenants below ... In certain weather conditions, there is a strong smell of burning candle wax ... Living within 30 metres of Oxford Street presents an added dimension. The noises are interesting, for the most part, except when trying to sleep ... !

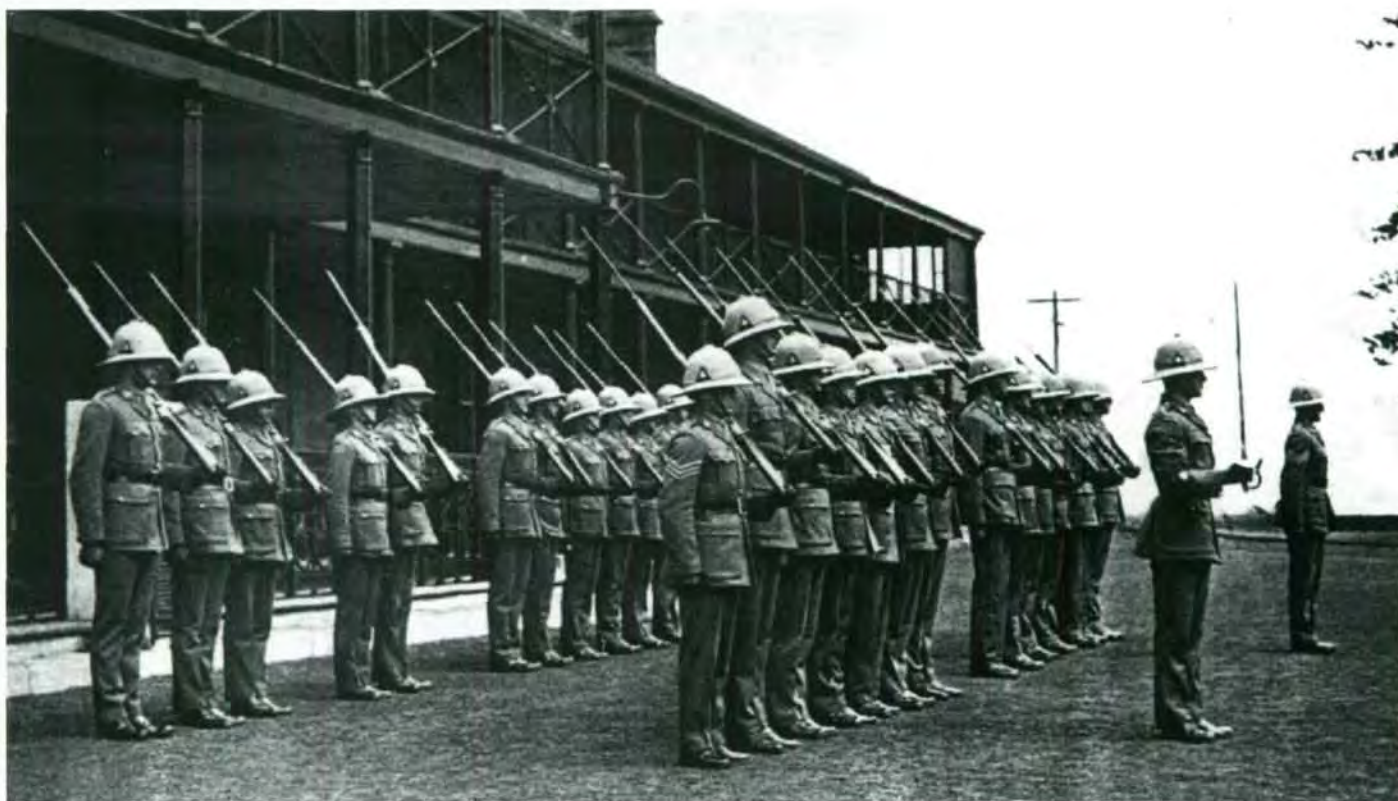
The Defence Housing Authority has commenced major renovations of these residences. A new dampcourse has been inserted and the interior of the homes refurbished to bring them to an acceptable standard while maintaining their heritage features. The Authority's General Manager Operations, Mr Ed David, is planning further major work, including repointing of the original mortar to stop the permeation of water through the walls.



The Officers' Residences or Building 13, at Victoria Barracks, Sydney. Ten married quarters and the Barracks Chapel are contained in this imposing sandstone building which is undergoing major repairs and refurbishment. It fronts on to Sovereign Terrace and faces the Flag Station, one of only five official stations in NSW.



Building 13, showing exfoliated stonework caused by rising damp and exacerbated by a concrete plinth. Water permeation and termite damage also had to be rectified.



During the depression years of 1931 to 1936, the Royal Military College was removed from Duntroon, Canberra, and installed in the officers' quarters or Building 13. This photograph shows the graduation parade of 8 December 1931. The Staff Corps Mess which had been the main occupier of the building, was moved to the former garrison hospital at the western end of the Barracks. It is believed that the Commandant occupied Married Quarter No. 12 as an office and quarters, while the cadets were accommodated in much of the other quarters in this building.

'The Bungalow', Victoria Barracks

The original Barracks Master's quarters and stables were built in 1847. The residence was later extended sympathetically to serve as a residence for Commandants. The original building is an interesting example of an early Victorian bungalow form with picturesque characteristics not normally associated with the work of military engineers. It is regarded as a quite rare surviving 19th century domicile illustrating the lifestyle of military officers in the early Victorian and Edwardian periods. The 1909 and subsequent additions have added a grander note to the interior which now must be rated one of Sydney's most historic homes.

Since World War II, it has been occupied by successive General Officers Commanding and attracted the diminutive name, 'The Bungalow'. Its beautiful garden represents more than a century of care given to it. Two large Moreton Bay fig trees are features and date from the very early days of the Barracks.

There are a host of features warranting preservation including cast iron work, original fire grates and tiles, stone flagging, ceramic and reeded ebony knobs and escutcheons, rimlocks, brass spring closers and tee hinges, tent form ceilings, original torus pattern skirtings, Edwardian wall vents and picture rails, to mention a few. The Defence Housing Authority completed a major refurbishment of The Bungalow in 1993 and 1994.



Work on 'The Bungalow' involved extensive work by skilled tradesman to restore the 19th century fittings.



Renovation work in progress on 'The Bungalow' in 1994.



'The Bungalow' was built in 1847 as a cottage residence with stables for the Barracks Master at Victoria Barracks. Today, it houses the Land Commander Australia, the Army's senior field commander.

The walls of Victoria Barracks enclose the lovely garden of 'The Bungalow'. Its massive Moreton Bay fig trees have been well known landmarks in Paddington's Oxford Street. Earlier this century, it is said, a tree-house in one of them was used for therapeutic purposes for the ailing son of the occupant of the quarters.



Senior Officer at Victoria Barracks, Sydney

Commandants

Major General	J. S. Richardson CB	1865 - 1882
Colonel	C. F. Roberts CMG (Acting)	1882
Lieutenant Colonel	W. B. B. Christie	1882 - 1883
Major General	J. S. Richardson CB	1883 - 1892
Colonel	W. W. Spalding, CMG (Acting)	1892 - 1893
Major General	E. T. H. Hutton CB, ADC	1893 - 1896
Colonel	C. F. Roberts CMG	1896
Major General	G. A. French CMG, RA	1896 - 1901
Colonel	H. Finn CB, DCM	1902 - 1904
Colonel (Temp. Brig. Gen.)	H. Finn CB, DCM	1904
Colonel	G. W. Wadell VD (Temporary)	1904 - 1905
Brigadier General	J. M. Gordon CB	1905 - 1910
Colonel	C. M. Ranclaud VD (Administering)	1908 - 1909
Colonel	E. T. Wallack CB	1910
Brigadier General	J. M. Gordon CB	1910 - 1912
Colonel	E. T. Wallack CB	1912 - 1915
Colonel (Temp. Brig. Gen.)	G. Ramaciotti VD	1915 - 1917
Colonel (Temp. Brig. Gen.)	G. L. Lee DSO	1917 - 1920

District Base Commandants

Colonel	J. H. Bruche CB, CMG	1920 - 1921
Colonel	Wallace Brown	1921 - 1922
Colonel (Hon. Maj. Gen.)	C. H. Brand CB, CMG, DSO	1922 - 1925
Major General	J. H. Bruche CB, CMG	1926 - 1927
Lieutenant Colonel	H. J. C. Taylor DSO (Administering)	1927 - 1927
Lieutenant Colonel	J. L. Hardie DSO, OBE (Administering)	1927
Colonel (Hon. Brig. Gen.)	T. H. Dodds CMG, CVO, DSO	1927 - 1929
Lieutenant Colonel	J. L. Hardie DSO, OBE (Administering)	1929
Colonel (Temporary)	J. L. Hardie DSO, OBE (Administering)	1929
Brigadier	E. B. Heritage CBE, MVO	1929 - 1932
Colonel (Hon. Brig. Gen.)	O. F. Phillips CMG, DSO	1933 - 1934
Lieutenant Colonel	P. M. McFarlane (Administering)	1934 - 1935
Brigadier	J. L. Hardie DSO, OBE	1935 - 1937
Major General	J. L. Hardie DSO, OBE	1937 - 1939

Eastern Command - General Officers Commanding

Lieutenant General	V. A. H. Sturdee CBE, DSO	1939 - 1940
Lieutenant General	C. G. N. Miles CMG, DSO	1940 - 1941
Lieutenant General	H. D. Wynter CB, CMG, DSO	1941 - 1942

Base Headquarters Eastern Command

Major General	A. C. Fewtrell CB, DSO, VD	1942
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NSW L of C Area

Major General	A. C. Fewtrell CB, DSO, VD	1942 - 1943
Major General	E. C. P. Plant CB, DSO, OBE	1943 - 1946

Eastern Command - General Officers Commanding

Lieutenant General	F. H. Berryman CB, CBE, DSO	1946 - 1951
Lieutenant General	W. Bridgeford CB, CBE, MC	1951 - 1951
Lieutenant General	V. C. Secombe CBE	1951 - 1952
Lieutenant General	F. H. Berryman CB, CBE, DSO	1952 - 1953
Lieutenant General	E. W. Woodward CB, CBE, DSO	1953 - 1957
Lieutenant General	R. G. Pollard CB, CBE, DSO	1957 - 1960
Lieutenant General	H. G. Edgar CB, CBE	1960 - 1963
Major General	T. J. Daly CB, CBE, DSO	1963 - 1966
Major General	J. W. Harrison CB, CBE	1966 - 1968
Major General	M. F. Brogan CB, CBE	1968 - 1971
Major General	K. Mackay CB, MBE	1971 - 1973

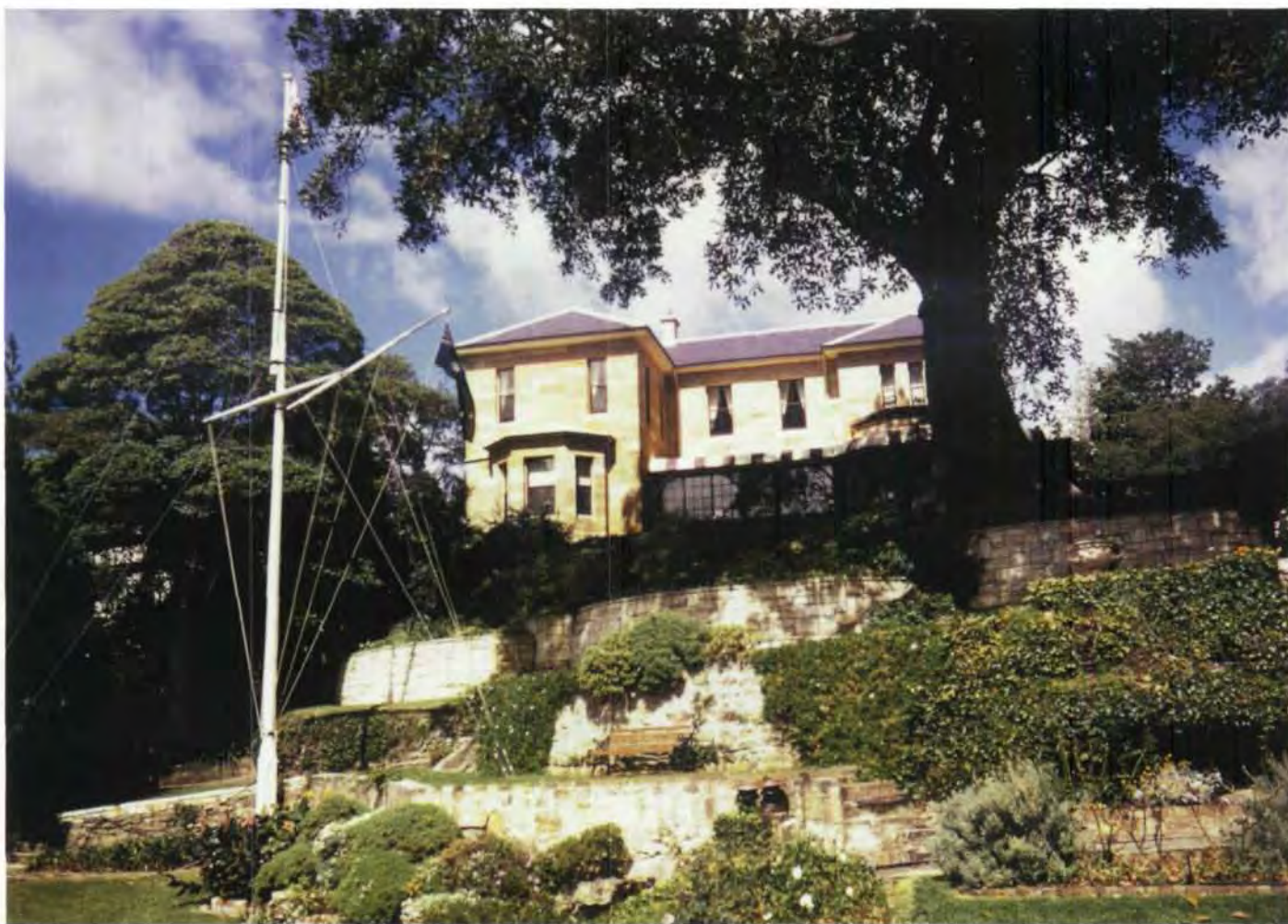
Field Force Command - General Officers Commanding

Major General	K. Mackay CB, CBE	1973 - 1974
Major General	D. B. Dunstan CB, CBE	1974 - 1977
Major General	M. Bradbury AO, CBE	1977 - 1979
Major General	J. I. Williamson AO, OBE	1979 - 1980
Major General	R. A. Grey AO, DSO	1980 - 1983
Major General	J. D. Kelly AO, DSO	1983 - 1984
Major General	L. G. O'Donnell AO	1985 - 1987
Major General	N. R. Smethurst MBE	1987

Land Commanders Australia

Major General	N. R. Smethurst AO, MBE	1987 - 1990
Major General	M. P. Blake AO, MC	1990 - 1994
Major General	P. M. Arnison AO	1994 - 1996
Major General	F. J. Hickling AO, CSC	1996 -

'Tresco', Elizabeth Bay



'Tresco', the Royal Australian Navy's premier residence, was built by the architect, Thomas Rowe (1829-1899) during 1868 and was first occupied by Rowe and his family. However, the story of Tresco is the story, not only of the Rowes and of the Navy, but also the Macleays, the Macarthur-Onslows, the Westgarths and other notable Sydney families. It is a story interwoven with the history of Sydney, of Federation, and of the Naval and Military Forces of the Colony of New South Wales and of the Commonwealth.

The Macleays of Elizabeth Bay

The land on which Tresco was built was originally part of a property of 54 acres officially granted in 1831 to the Honourable Alexander Macleay (1767-1848), Colonial Secretary of New South Wales. The property sloped down to the sandy beach of Elizabeth Bay and extended along the western shores of Rushcutters Bay to a point the Aborigines knew as Jerrowan. The Macleays built the nearby mansion 'Elizabeth Bay House'.

Macleay was noted in England as an entomologist and plantsman, being Honorary Secretary to the Linnean Society from 1798 until 1825 and a Councillor of the Royal Society. He led an active public life and was elected first speaker of the New South Wales Legislative Council in 1843 at the age of 77.

Alexander and his wife, Elizabeth, had seventeen children of whom nine survived and several of the daughters married into landed families.

One daughter married Arthur Pooley Onslow and their son, A. A. W. Onslow (1833-82), Captain RN, married Elizabeth Macarthur (1840-1911), grand-daughter of the founder of Camden Park, who in later life changed the family name to Macarthur-Onslow. A great-grandson of Macleay was Rear Admiral John Saumarez Dumaesq CB, CVO (1873-1922) who became the first Australian-born Commander of the Australian Squadron, 1919-1922. As a Captain, he had commanded HMAS *Sydney* (1917-19) in the Atlantic and during that time he conceived the design and successfully trialled the first deck launching of aircraft from a cruiser.

Macleay's natural history collection was passed to the University of Sydney, where it is still preserved in the Macleay Museum. His estate, now largely subdivided, was left to another great-grandson, James Macarthur-Onslow (1867-1946) of Camden, father of Major General Sir Denzil Macarthur-Onslow CBE, DSO, ED.

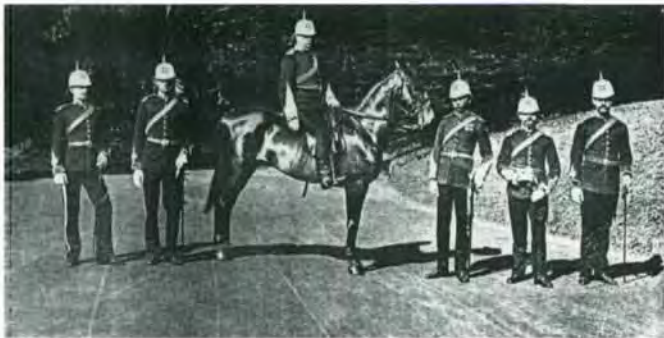
Colonel Thomas Rowe

In 1865, Thomas Rowe bid and secured lot 48 of the Elizabeth Bay Estate subdivision. This was an allotment north of Elizabeth Bay Crescent, part of 93 Elizabeth Bay Road. John Hughes and Thomas Rowe were the first leaseholders to erect buildings to Macleay Point. John Hughes was responsible for the construction of 'Kincoppal' at Rose Bay and Thomas Rowe of Tresco.

Thomas Rowe was born in England at Penzance, Cornwall, the eldest son of Richard Rowe. His mother, whose maiden name was of the ancient Godolphin family which for some centuries governed and owned by lease the Scilly Islands, one of which is called Tresco.

On his arrival in Australia in 1848, young Thomas Rowe tried his fortune on the different goldfields with considerable success. After work in speculative building and contracting, he commenced practice as an architect in Sydney in the year 1856. Success came slowly but Rowe was to design a number of handsome buildings in Sydney, including St. George's Church, the great Synagogue, Newington College, and in Bathurst and Goulburn. Rowe was largely responsible for the reclaiming of Rushcutter's Bay. He was an alderman on the Sydney City Council and, later, the first Mayor of Manly. He founded the Institute of Architects in New South Wales and was president of the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board.

In 1868, Rowe was commissioned to build a house for a client who ran into financial difficulties. Rowe was so taken with the site that he bought the land for himself and is thought to have employed some Italian stonemasons, imported for work at Hunters Hill, to build his house. Thus began 'Tresco'.



This photograph of Colonel Rowe, mounted, shows him with his Engineer officers. During this busy life, Rowe found time to take an active part in the military affairs of the Colony. In 1872, he received a commission in the newly formed Engineer Corps and rose to the rank of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel in 1886. He visited Chatham, Woolwich, Enfield and Aldershot during a European tour and established a headquarters for his Corps at Victoria Barracks. Rowe was also the originator of the Naval and Military Institute. Added to all this, Rowe was a Justice of the Peace and an active Sunday school superintendent for 20 years!



Rowe was the inventor of this ingenious but impractical shovel which also provided armoured protection of a rudimentary kind to the riflemen.

'Tresco' - to 1880

The property's first recorded assessment described the building as a two-storey sandstone house roofed with slate and having 13 rooms and including a coach house, stable and garden. The front of the residence faces the water and, as seen from Darling Point, is early Victorian in character. The verandah was clad in concave corrugated iron, painted in alternate strips of colour, and extended from the entry portico, which was Italianate in style, to the stair landing abutment on the eastern facade. This facade originally had seven full length and one smaller windows.

In 1875, the grounds were cleared of trees and set out with retaining walls and low scale planting which had not reached a significant height. The boat shed and crane were in operation and a boat harbour under construction.



Tresco - Ground floor plan, 1868.

Tresco - Upper floor plan, 1868.



The Westgarths

In 1876, Thomas Rowe reassigned the 99 year lease to William Oswald Gilchrist for £4500 and, in 1880, George Charles Westgarth bought the leasehold property for £5100 and took up residence. He had arrived in Sydney with his father, William Westgarth, in the *Catherine Mitchell* in 1852, William being the first manager of the Australasian Steam Navigation Co (formerly, the Hunter River Steam Navigation Co). The Westgarth family had been shipbuilders in Hull. G.C. Westgarth's second wife was the grand-daughter of Sir G.W.D. (Wigram) Allen (1800-77), Lord Mayor of Sydney 1844-45.

In 1883, designs for the east wing were drawn up and, by December 1884, the additions and alterations were complete. These alterations and additions included, apart from the whole of the east wing; a bay window to the drawing room, widening of the verandah to the north facade, installation of the cast iron balustrade, an additional floor to the kitchen wing, outbuildings beside the coach house, renovation of outbuildings to the utility courtyard and a washhouse. To the eastern boundary, on the reclaimed land frontage to Port Jackson, the boat harbour and 'covered davits' were completed and a summer house and fernery erected to the western boundary in the middle garden. The verandah was partially enclosed during the 1890s.

According to family records, the Westgarths were always changing homes but they certainly lived at Tresco from 1880 until 1891. Several of the eight children of the second marriage were born there, including the fourth son, Dudley, in June 1887. (Dudley Westgarth presented the original bill of sale

signed by his father in 1880 and it is now displayed in the house, at Tresco).

George Westgarth assigned the lease to Frederick Hart King and Edward Ainsworth Gaden in July 1891. He continued to control the main lease and, from 1891, various tenants occupied the house. These included Allen G. Mansfield, The Honourable Henry Kater MLC, JP, Mrs Cecilia and Philip H. Morton MLA and, in 1899, Lieutenant Colonel James Macarthur-Onslow. The tenant in 1902-03 appears to have been the business man George Eccles Kelso King (later Sir Kelso King) (1853-1943) who became a trustee of Royal Naval House and treasurer of the NSW Navy League. James Macarthur-Onslow, through Macleay's will, became the owner of the freehold of a number of the leaseholds originally granted to George Macleay in 1865, and this included lot 52, Tresco. In 1902, G. Westgarth passed the leasehold to the NSW Government.

Naval Presence at 'Tresco'

From 1903, the Crown took possession of Tresco and provided it to the Admiralty as the official residence of the Captain-in-Charge of Naval Establishments in Sydney, then Captain J.G.M. Field RN.

It would appear that the residence was provided at no rental until the hard times of the Great Depression when the then resident, Captain H.J. Feakes RAN, was informed that, from July 1931, the value of rental and furniture charges



would be debited against the occupant of Tresco. The correspondence associated with the early debate over a 'married quarters rental' discloses something of the early history of the naval presence at Tresco.

5th October 1900 - A letter from the Captain-in-Charge (Captain Royle) to the Commander-in-Chief asked that a residence for the Captain-in-Charge be erected at Garden Island and furnished by the Admiralty. Furniture was estimated at £700 - £800. (House allowance was then apparently £250 per annum and salary £1,000 per annum).

13th June 1901 - The Admiralty agreed to the principle of providing the residence, whether at Garden Island or elsewhere. (The Public Works Department, NSW, earmarked £3,500 if on Garden Island, or £6,000 if elsewhere).

1901-02 - Correspondence deals with the possibility of securing 'Bomerah', Potts Point, but the cost was considered too great.

2nd September 1902 - The Captain-in-Charge reported to Governor Rawson his inspection of the properties, 'Clifford', at Wylde St., Potts Point, 'Lydford', at Ithaca Road, Elizabeth Bay, and Tresco. Captain Field favoured Tresco and recommended accordingly, and this property was subsequently acquired.

14th January 1903 - The Crown took possession of Tresco and handed it over to the Navy as official residence of the Captain-in-Charge, Sydney.

10th February 1903 - Captain Field asked the Commander-in-Chief for authority to furnish Tresco at an estimated cost of £1200 and, at the same time, pointed out that £1,000 per annum was insufficient to maintain Tresco and asked for £1,250 per annum, noting the social duties of his position including the entertainment of foreign officers.

18th April 1903 - The Admiralty approved of the proposal to furnish Tresco.

10th July 1903 - The Commander-in-Chief received the original title deeds of Tresco from the Governor.

'Admiralty House'

On the other side of the harbour, the Royal Navy Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Station had been occupying 'Admiralty House' since 1885. The land on which Admiralty House now stands forms part of a grant of 120 acres made in 1800 to a Robert Ryan for 'Service in the Marines and New South Wales Corps'. The house was built in 1845 and had several owners including Robert Campbell (who later established Duntroon in Canberra) and James Milson. The property changed hands several times between 1849 and 1874 when it was sold at auction to The Honourable Thomas Cadell a wealthy merchant and member of the Legislative Council. From about 1861, the house was called 'Wotonga'.

In pursuance of an agreement with the Imperial Government, making Sydney the principal Naval depot for Her Majesty's ships of the Australia Station, the New South

Wales Government offered in 1883 to provide and maintain a residence for the Naval Commander-in-Chief. 'Wotonga' was chosen and the property was purchased for about \$40,000 from Cadell. The transfer was effected in 1885 in the name of Her Majesty Queen Victoria and extensive building additions and improvements were then carried out. By 1910 the value of Admiralty House was estimated at over \$60,000, the land \$27,000 and furniture \$10,000.

From 1859 to 1885, the Australia Station was under the command of a Commodore and the honour board of commanders over this period is now displayed at Tresco. Owing to its increased importance, the Home Government appointed Rear-Admiral Sir George Tryon to succeed Commodore J.E. Erskine. Sir George Tryon hoisted his flag in HMS *Nelson* on 22nd January, 1885, and was the first Admiral to occupy Admiralty House.

Royal Navy Commanders-in-Chief of the Australia Station, who occupied Admiralty House from its establishment in 1885, and most of whose crests now can be seen in the stained-glass windows at the top of the main staircase, were:

Rear-Admiral (later Vice-Admiral)	Sir George Tryon	1885-1887
Rear Admiral	Henry Fairfax	1887-1889
Rear-Admiral (later Vice-Admiral)	Lord Charles Scott	1889-1892
Rear-Admiral (later Admiral)	Sir Nathaniel Bowden-Smith	1892-1894
Rear-Admiral (later Admiral)	Sir Cyprian Bridge	1894-1897
Rear-Admiral (later Admiral)	Sir Hugo Pearson	1897-1900
Rear-Admiral (later Admiral)	Sir Lewis Beaumont	1900-1902
Vice-Admiral (later Admiral of the Fleet)	Sir Arthur Fanshawe	1902-1905
Vice-Admiral (later Admiral)	Sir Wilmot Fawkes	1905-1907
Vice-Admiral (later Admiral)	Sir Richard Poore	1907-1910
Vice-Admiral (later Admiral)	Sir George King-Hall	1910-1913

Following a decision by the Commonwealth Government to establish an Australian Fleet, it was agreed in 1909 that the Imperial Government would transfer and hand over all its properties at Sydney used for naval purposes. The Commonwealth Government assumed responsibility for naval defence on 1 July, 1913, and by the end of that year, the whole of the Australian Fleet had arrived in Sydney. The flag of the last of the Imperial Naval Commanders-in-Chief, Sir George King-Hall, was hauled down in October 1913, and the first Commander of the Australian Squadron under Commonwealth authority, Vice Admiral Patey, took up residence.

Government circles in New South Wales expressed surprise at this announcement, contending that Admiralty House was not the property of the Imperial Government, but had only been provided by the New South Wales Government while Sydney remained the headquarters of the Australian Station. This contention was never seriously disputed; and on 1 May 1930, as a result of a friendly audit, the High Court of Australia ruled that ownership of Admiralty House was vested in His Majesty King George the Fifth, his heirs and successors, in the right of the State of New South Wales.

In 1914, after the departure of Vice-Admiral Sir George Patey, Admiralty House was loaned to the Commonwealth Government as a residence for the Governor-General when in Sydney. Lord Denman was the first Governor-General to occupy the house and all his successors have enjoyed occupancy. When the Royal Navy withdrew from the Australian Station in 1914, the Captain Superintendent Sydney became

the senior naval officer ashore and with Admiralty House transferring to the Commonwealth Government as the Sydney residence for the Governor-General, Tresco became the senior naval residence in the city.

Royal Australian Navy Ownership of Tresco

In 1903, the Admiral sought from the Government Secretary permission to construct a new jetty at Tresco. In 1915, the Naval Works Department completed drawings of the site and ground floor plans. These plans showed the previous coach house and stable converted into a servants' hall and wash-house with a garage and covered area to the southern side. The enclosure of the verandah was completed with a door to the west end. In 1920, Tresco's freehold was conveyed by James Macarthur-Onslow to the Commonwealth of Australia for the sum of £1,500.

The building continued to remain undisturbed until 1964 when plans were developed for converting the servants' wing and garage into WRANS accommodation and the main building was to become self contained with a guest flat. In 1965, the Palgrave Corporation Limited attempted to buy Tresco for redevelopment. In 1968, the large aluminium windows to the front verandah were added and during this period the grounds were modified. The kitchen was renovated in 1977 and the existing jetty was overhauled in 1978.

The house in the 1970s had several modifications made from the 1915 drawings which are shown in the Historical Report and Conservation Management Plan drawn up in 1981. The pantry and store opposite the stairway had been converted to a kitchen. The passageway past the kitchen led to the enclosed verandah with a door off to the immediate right (the now kitchen window) leading to a pantry/freezer room. South of this was a laundry and dry store, with the steward's room between that and the garage.

Upstairs, the divisions had been removed from the two major bedrooms although a door remained between the original 'best bedroom' and the east wing master bedroom. A small hallway inboard of the dressing room led to a separate toilet and bathroom. This latter still had a pressed metal ceiling which by the 1970s had rusted away in part and residents of the time refer to occasional flooding. Plasterboard ceilings had been installed beneath several of the bedroom ceilings to simplify maintenance. At that time there was a passageway between the central bathroom and the south-west bedroom which led out to the quarters.

Renovation of Tresco

Following the study by Fox and Associates, a renovation plan was set in place during the 1980s with preference going to the external structures, eg, chimneys and timberwork. Each encumbent family applied themselves to tasks which grew beyond the available budget. Rear Admiral Griffiths and his



A colourful verandah sets off Tresco and its Italianate style.

wife stripped the woodwork back to the original cedar. The Robertsons had the garden re-established and boathouse and pool refurbished.

In 1991, the Defence Housing Authority with Rear Admiral David Holthouse established a master plan for restoration. The Authority's Sydney Metropolitan Regional Manager, Captain Paul Martin RAN (Retd), has taken a particular interest in this restoration, working closely with Otto Cserhalmi and Associates Pty Ltd, the specialist architects engaged for this task. Work proceeded for some sixteen months and the result was a Tresco capturing the best of the features envisaged by Thomas Rowe in 1868 and George Westgarth and Carl Weber in 1883. The etched glass panes over the main entrance and in the skylight above the stairs were installed as part of the 1991 restoration. The latter is a faithful restoration of what was there originally, found largely untouched when the coverings were removed. The room arrangements and decoration were largely the inspiration of the Admiral's wife, Mrs Isobel (Beechie) Holthouse.



Many examples of the original frescoes which adorned Tresco, such as the one photographed, were found beneath layers of later coatings in the older parts of the house and these were copied where possible including, with great difficulty, the 'crackle' finish on the walls of the main and upper hallways. The Ashlar effect, which had also been used on these walls, was not revived but a small section of the original finish was preserved.

Decor

In the dining room hang several paintings. 'Battle of St Vincent', by Koek Koek was originally presented to the Royal Naval Home Sydney by Lord Carrington, 16th Governor of NSW, in 1890, and subsequently presented to the Navy when 'Johnnies' was wound up. The painting of HMS *Calliope* escaping destruction in the 1889 hurricane off Samba is by George Frederick Gregory (c. 1824-87) who served as a carpenter in the RN until he jumped ship at Hobson's Bay during the gold rush in 1852. Also displayed are four important Naval seascapes, from a set of 25 paintings by Philip Belbin, painted to commemorate the RAN's 75th anniversary.

In the Trafalgar Room, hangs a message from Nelson to Captain Blackwood giving his picket instructions for the night before the battle of Trafalgar. Its history is somewhat mysterious, having come to the house somehow from a country NSW family and lain un-remarked for years before being authenticated.

Also hung in the house is a portrait of Captain Francis Hickson RN Retd, born in Dorsetshire in 1833. Through his

energy the Australian Volunteer Naval Brigade was formed in 1863 and he is reasonably considered the father of the Naval Reserves.

The two sphinxes in the garden were originally located at the foot of the second stairway in Clarens Gardens, the Potts Point house built and owned by the Chief Justice Sir James Martin (1820-1886). The garden had some 250 steps down to the water, built in neo-classic Grecian style. After Garden Island was joined to the mainland an additional electrical sub-station was built into the Clarens Gardens site, in 1942, largely destroying it. The sphinxes were rescued and moved to Tresco. Under the direction of Mr Jack Gibbs, the texture of Clarens Gardens, now within the precinct of HMAS *Kuttubul*, was restored and the Gardens reopened by the NSW Governor, Rear Admiral P. R. Sinclair AC RAN Retd, on 19 June 1994.

The marble lions at the entrance steps to Tresco were originally from another Potts Point house, 'Agincourt'. This also had a garden facing the water, lost in the 1940s reconstruction of Garden Island, in which there were many outdoor sculptures in addition to these two lions. The lions, of course, are related to Nelson's and only roar for the same reason as those in Trafalgar Square!

The interior of Tresco showing one of the many full length windows.





The dining room at Tresco. The main dining table has been twice extended. The centre section was made at Garden Island for Her Majesty the Queen's trip in HMAS Anzac in 1954, along with the set of eight chairs with the Naval Crown carved in the back.

Naval Occupants of 'Tresco'

Under the Admiralty:

Captain J.G.M. Field RN	1903 - 04
Captain W.S. Rees RN	1904 - 07
Captain G.L. Napier RN	1907 - 09
Captain J.P. Rolleston RN	1909 - 13
Captain C.F. Henderson RN	1913 - 15

Under the Royal Australian Navy:

Commodore C.F. Henderson RN	1915 - 17
Captain J.C.T. Glossop CB RN (Commodore 1919)	1917 - 20
Captain Round-Turner RN	1920
Commodore H.Mcl. Edwards RN	1920 - 23
Captain A.G. Craufurd RN	1923 - 25
Captain J.F. Ropbins RAN	1925 - 27
Captain H.P. Cayley RAN	1927 - 29
Captain J.B. Stevenson CMG RAN	1929 - 31
Captain H.J. Feakes RAN	1931 - 33
Captain C.J. Pope CBE RAN	1933 - 36
Captain G.A. Scott DSC RN	1936 - 38
Captain H.C. Phillips RN	1938 - 39
Captain J.W.A. Waller RN	1939 - 40
Captain G.C. Muirhead-Gould DSC RN (Commodore 1940, Acting/Rear Admiral 1942)	1940 - 44
Captain H.L. Howden OBE RAN	1944
A/Rear Admiral G.D. Moore CBE	1944 - 50
A/Rear Admiral H.A. Showers CBE	1950 - 55
A/Rear Admiral H.J. Buchanan CBE DSO	1955 - 57
Rear Admiral W.H. Harrington DSO	1957 - 58
Rear Admiral D.H. Harries CBE	1958 - 60
A/Rear Admiral G.C. Oldham DSC	1960 - 62
Rear Admiral G.G.O. Gatacre CBE DSO DSC	1962 - 64
Rear Admiral A.W.R. McNicoll CBE GM	1964 - 65
Rear Admiral O.H. Becher CBE DSO DSC	1965 - 66
Rear Admiral T.K. Morrison CBE DSC	1966 - 68
Rear Admiral D.C. Wells CBE	1968 - 70
Rear Admiral G.J.B. Grabb CBE DSC	1970 - 72
Rear Admiral W.D.J. Graham CBE	1972 - 73
Rear Admiral W.J. Dovers CBE DSC	1973 - 75
Rear Admiral N.E. McDonald AO	1975 - 77
Rear Admiral J. Davidson AO RAN	1977 - 79
Rear Admiral G.R. Griffiths AO DSO DSC RAN	1979 - 80
Rear Admiral A.J. Robertson AO DSC RAN	1980 - 82
Rear Admiral K. Vonthehoff AO RAN	1982 - 84
Rear Admiral D.J. Martin AO RAN	1984 - 88
Rear Admiral A.R. Horton AO RAN	1988 - 91
Rear Admiral D.G. Holthouse AO RAN	1991 - 93
Rear Admiral A.L. Hunt AO RAN	1993 - 95
Rear Admiral D.J. Campbell AM RAN	1995 -

Garden Island

The island was named by Governor Arthur Phillip in 1788 when a party from HMS *Sirius* established a garden there for the ship's company. The initials of some of the crew carved in sandstone rock have been carefully preserved. The island was cultivated and maintained by parties from other naval vessels until 1801 when Governor King posted a battery of garrison artillery there. In 1811, Governor Macquarie proclaimed it a public domain and excluded Her Majesty's ships from using it. Up to the 1850s, the remains of several pioneers were interred in vaults on the island but were later removed to St. Thomas's cemetery, North Sydney.

In the 1850s, British naval activity in the Pacific increased to meet other imperialist threats. In 1856, Garden Island was again offered by the Colonial Government to the Admiralty for the use of Her Majesty's vessels, but it was not until 1866 that it was formally dedicated as a Royal Navy depot. Before this it had been used as a convalescent and quarantine station, but nevertheless remained more or less in its natural state until the 1880s. Until then it consisted of two small sandstone hummocks covered with trees with a saddle of lower ground between them. The island measured approximately 1,800 ft long by 600 ft at its widest point and the hummocks were 60 feet above sea level. In 1883, the island was selected as the headquarters of the Royal Navy in Australia, and work progressed quickly in establishing the depot.

In 1884, the southern portion of the island was levelled; in 1886, construction of a rigging shed and sail loft commenced; and, in 1887, a boat house, saw mill, engineer's shop and various stores were started. In the 1890s, several other substantial buildings were built and reclamation work was done, so that, by 1913, when it was officially taken over by the RAN, the island was able to service the Australian fleet. A long period of litigation followed when the NSW Government claimed ownership of the island, but soon after the outbreak of war in 1939,

the Commonwealth Government resumed it, purchasing it finally in 1945 for £638 000.

World War II saw the commencement of the massive Captain Cook graving dock which linked the island to the tip of Potts Point, and it became the most important naval base in the southern hemisphere. On the night of the 31 May 1942, a Japanese midget submarine fired a torpedo at the cruiser USS *Chicago* but missed her and instead struck the converted ferry HMAS *Kuttabul*, sinking it with the loss of 19 lives.

The naval base, of which Garden Island is now only a part, has since been named HMAS *Kuttabul* in memory of the men who lost their lives. The graving dock was opened in 1945 and new facilities have been added, so that the dockyard now covers an area of over 20 hectares. The signal station, which has not been used since c. 1967, relayed weather forecasts and warnings to shipping as part of the Commonwealth Meteorological Service.

The Garden Island precinct is an important historic site listed by the National Trust. Two interesting properties lie within HMAS *Kuttabul*, one the former grand house, 'Jenner', which is listed by the National Trust, and 'Chatsworth', still in use as quarters. On the Island itself there are seven noteworthy married quarters.

Naval Residences on Garden Island - The Two Georgian Cottages

This pair of single storeyed semi-detached cottages (Residences B and C), date from 1885, and are reputedly the oldest structures on Garden Island. Built by Thomas Wearne,



Residence G at Garden Island is one of seven on 'the island which is no longer an island'. It was used as a home by the Maritime Commander in 1993-94.

they were used originally as residences for the overseers and have had a continuous association with the naval base for over a century. Their simple, yet carefully detailed workmanship embodies the 19th century approach to naval building architecture.

Constructed of solid brick walls, stucco rendered externally with ashlar lines to imitate stone courses, their original external features are the twelve paned, double hung, box framed windows and the tall stuccoed chimneys with terra cotta pots. Internal walls were rendered. Timber floor, ceiling and roof framing were used to support timber floor boards, a lath and plaster ceiling and a corrugated galvanised iron roof. Originally the residences consisted of six rooms each. Both residences have had verandahs enclosed, a corrugated asbestos cement roof added and substantial internal alterations.

Naval Residences on Garden Island - The Five 'Early Federation' Residences

These residences are mainly intact, large residences which have had a continuous association with the naval base for almost a century. Their fine detailing and prominent position overlooking the Harbour make them a valuable component of the Garden Island precinct. They are included in a pair of buildings constructed between 1894 and 1895 by Eaton Brothers. The buildings are two-storeyed in the Queen Anne style. The walls are in two tone brick, with light coloured background and red bands at window heads and sill, and further highlighted by sandstone string and lintel courses.

The verandahs have fine detailed joinery and timber shinglework. The roofs consist of tiled hips and gable fronts, with moulded chimneys. Gable ends are attractively detailed in timber. Timber double hung windows have nine light top sashes on the ground floor and six on the first floor. Lower sashes throughout have single lights. First floor balconies have sculptured timber columns, timber rails and balusters. These balconies have since been enclosed, the external walls painted and the gable ends modified. The approximate sizes of these two buildings are 21m x 13m (for two residences - F and G) and 18m x 9m (for three residences - A, D and E). Alterations include the concrete roof tiling, enclosure of verandahs, painting of exterior brick walls and removal of fine gable end timbers.

The Garden Island residences were completely restored by the Defence Housing Authority in 1991. At the same time, a number of modern townhouses were acquired nearby in the



These commanding Navy houses on Garden Island were originally built as residences for the assistant storekeeper, warrant officer and storehousemen.

historic precinct of Woolloomooloo. The Authority's assistant manager for South Sydney, Mr Gordon Lowe, himself a former member of the RAN, has closely supervised the restoration work here and at many of the other heritage-listed properties maintained by the Authority in Sydney. All seven Garden Island residences provide comfortable modern homes in a superb site and the 'Early Federation' residences have an unobstructed view of Sydney Harbour.



Some of the extensive restoration work carried out on the century old Garden Island residences.





The Garden Island residences have an unrivalled view of Sydney harbour.

Spectacle Island

Navy's Treasure Trove in Sydney Harbour

One of the Navy's best kept secrets is Spectacle Island, near Drummoyne and 300 metres west of Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour. Spectacle Island is the oldest naval storage depot in Australia and has been used to store armaments and explosives since 1826. It has a fine group of Georgian-style sandstone buildings built in the 1860s to provide facilities for the British Pacific Far East Fleet, then using Sydney as headquarters for its Australia Station. Massively built of solid sandstone, these specialised structures are good examples of built forms favoured by military engineers in the Victorian era.

Structures on the island from that era include the powder magazine, small arms store, office and guard room (built in the 1860s), petty officers' quarters and a filling room (1870s), shell store, gun carriage shed and gun cotton, fireworks and torpedo stores (1880s), cable tanks, laboratory, boat shed, recreation room, bathing place and various stores (1890s). Standing on end at some locations on the island, and in use as fence supports, are the black-painted 12-inch shells from the battle-cruiser HMAS *Australia* of 1911.

Today the storage area is largely taken over as a repository for the original marks and patterns of naval equipment and for the memorabilia of every former ship of the RAN. Those privileged to tour it are treated to a splendid display of Australian naval history.

The Spectacle Island Residence

Dominating the Harbour side of the island is a house, originally constructed in single storey in 1865 as the Commandant's residence. During the 1890s, a second storey was added. The house has an enclosed two-storey verandah on its eastern elevation and a single storey verandah on the north. The building has continued in use as a residence until the present day although it was found to be in a poor state of repair when taken over by the Defence Housing Authority in 1988.

As with the other Victorian-era buildings on the Island, it is listed by the Australian Heritage Commission and the National Trust. The Authority undertook a major restoration of the residence which was completed in 1995. The residence retains much of its history including an original well and paving materials. Careful attention to detail by the architect has ensured that the building is now fully restored yet is still a well appointed home.



Jenny Robbins' sketch of the historic Spectacle Island residence built in 1865. The second storey was added in the 1890s. The house has been recently restored.

Lieutenant Commander Henry Capper - a Colourful Commandant

The Island is redolent with its Colonial history and has a story to tell for every generation which served there and of their Commandants. Perhaps the most colourful Commandant is Lieutenant Commander H. D. Capper OBE RN, who arrived with his family in 1895 at the island where he was to command 13 Royal Marines, an able seaman and four storemen. With a pet obsession for the moral improvement of his staff, he was to convert a storehouse to a church to save the men of his command from the temptations of the bawdy pubs in nearby Balmain. He even transformed them in to a repertory company to raise funds for the construction of swimming baths and other recreational facilities.

Capper was innovative, being the first to put together one piece, ready-to-use, naval ammunition rather than the separate shells, bags of powder, cartridges and fuses. He also entered into an arrangement which saw spoil from the nearby Balmain Colliery dumped at the Island and another hectare added to its area. He started a goat and poultry farm, a vegetable garden, and even a zoo. The zoo was not to last long, however, because its dingoes ate the garrison's 40 hens!



This contemporary drawing of Capper was provided by Lieutenant Commander Graham Thurstens, the current resident on Spectacle Island and director of Navy's heritage collection.



HMAS Watson, Watsons Bay

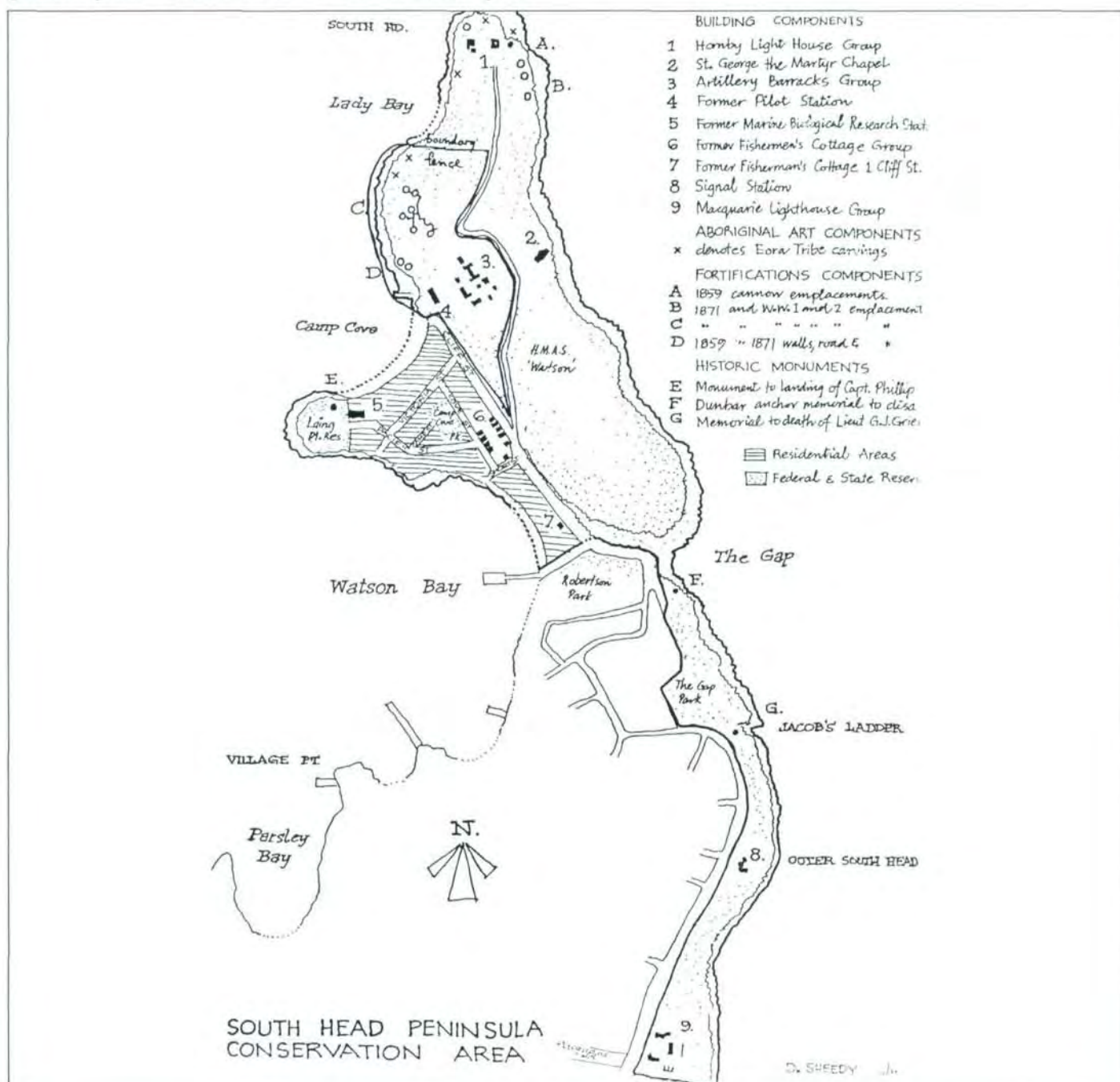
Watsons Bay

In 1788, Governor Phillip, having abandoned the plan for settlement in Botany Bay, sailed into Port Jackson. A small group of seamen and one officer from the transport *Sirius* were landed at the site of Watsons Bay for what some have wryly described as a beach picnic. Later a makeshift flagstaff was erected at Outer South Head which was the sole indicator of the entrance to Sydney Harbour.

A signal station was built in 1791 along the Old South Head Road, which runs past The Gap, together with the Macquarie Lighthouse. It was this lighthouse, designed by convict architect Francis Greenway, that resulted in his being granted a pardon for his fine work. It was also the Macquarie

Lighthouse, first operated in 1818, to which Robert Watson was appointed superintendent.

Watson, former quartermaster turned pilot and signalman, was living in the Bay when, in 1811, Governor Macquarie approved the official name of the area as Watson's Bay. Gradually a village emerged and the settlers gained the name of 'Bay-ites'. Rich city merchants began building high on the slopes and sailors and fishermen clustered in cottages below - becoming known as the 'uphillers' and 'downhillers'.



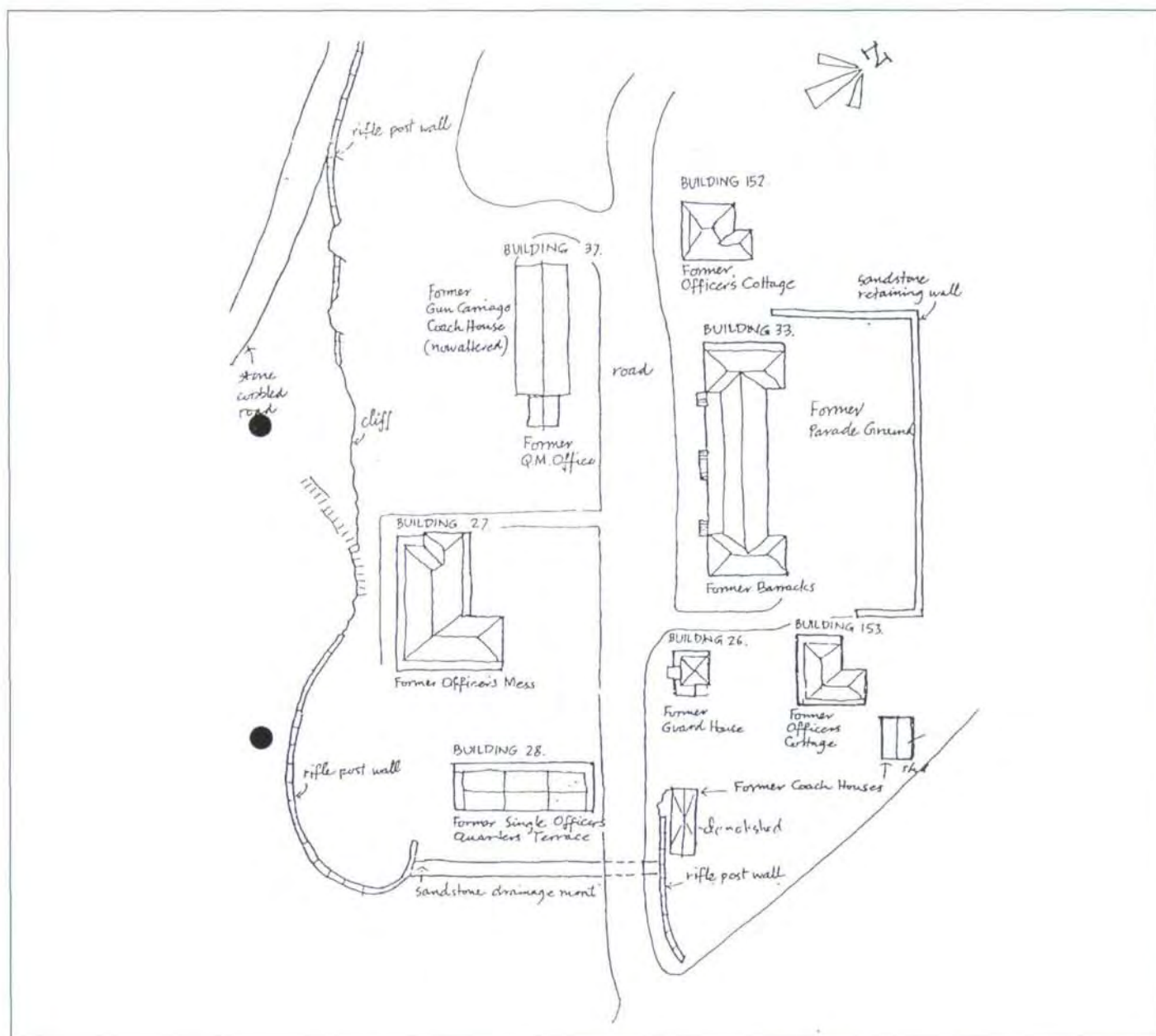
'Artillery Barracks'

In 1839, after a scare of an invasion by the United States, guns were rolled along tracks (now known as Military Road) to Watsons Bay. Further fears of invasion in 1853 by the Russians and again in 1870 by the French, led to the establishment of a permanent military presence at South Head, the 'Artillery Barracks', which was later to include a Torpedo Station, at Watsons Bay.

Gun emplacements were set up and a building program was started in 1870, drawn up by the architect, James Barnet. During his 30 years as Colonial Architect, Barnet was responsible for many of the public buildings in Sydney and New South Wales. Artillery Barracks consisted of a number of military buildings in timber. A number of these have been preserved and are in use, some as married quarters. 'Cliff House', built in 1876, served as a mess and quarters for single officers of the barracks.

In 1940, the Navy took over much of the land and buildings at South Head and established the Radar School and HMAS Watson. The Army continued at South Head until the 1970s when its last units were transferred and its sole remaining presence was Cliff House and the nearby married quarter at 31 Pacific Street, the former Marine Biological Research Station. HMAS Watson now houses modern buildings and training facilities. The Naval Memorial Chapel of St. George the Martyr, also known as the Chapel of the Cliffs, is a well known landmark.

Apart from Cliff House, a number of residences stand in HMAS Watson, the most notable being the former military provost barracks, Building No. 33 in the old Artillery Barracks, which now serves as two married quarters.



'Cliff House', Watsons Bay



'Cliff House', or Building No. 24 of the old 'Artillery Barracks', is described in the Register of the National Estate as 'a beautifully sited late Victorian military mess building of elegant proportions which remains in near original condition and which is visually one of the most important buildings in the barracks group'.

Built of timber on sandstone foundations with chimneys and column pedestals, the house has walls of shiplap boarding with 12 pane hung windows and timber shutters added more recently. The design is symmetrical from the south with single and paired columns to the verandah. The original single hipped roof has been reroofed. There are interesting cruciform corridors with walls of plastered masonry.

While built as quarters for officers of the coast artillery garrison, it appears to have been reserved as married quarters for the commanding officer after the completion the main barrack block after 1880. An outbuilding, possibly a kitchen, was constructed behind in 1881-83. Between 1899 and 1910 other small buildings and extensions were also made to the rear of the building including a covered link to the barracks. These were demolished and a garage built in their place in the 1930s.

Of significance are the finishes but, in particular the original doors, french doors, windows, architraves, including the remaining original iron mongery, skirtings, lath and plaster work, fire registers, mantels and surrounds, and the remaining stone hearths. The verandah posts and beams and lattice work including the lower panel on southern side of verandah are also significant, as is the sandstone work, which includes the chimneys, base wall, and, in the garden, flagging and retaining walls.

The original structure has remained essentially intact. Most of the original internal fittings have survived although the ceilings appear to have been replaced in the 1930s. Skylights in the rear of the building may be later inclusions.

Despite modifications such as the treatment of the verandah floor and insensitive infilling of the rear verandah, the Victorian character of the building has survived intact both internally and externally.

This structures significance derives not only from the historical context of the site and its level of intactness but also, aesthetically, as a fine example of the military design skills of James Barnet, Colonial Architect, displaying clarity and unity typical of his work. It contributes significantly to the overall appearance of the Barracks complex enhancing its village-like scale and disposition of buildings. Finally, although this structure is of some significance as an individual item, its cultural importance is said to be compounded by its role within the Artillery Barracks group, which is assessed as being of national and exceptional cultural significance.

Cliff House or 'Cliff Cottage', as it was previously known when occupied by lesser personages, served as married quarters to senior Army officers of Eastern Command following World War II and has been home to the General Officer Commanding Army's Training Command since the early 1970s. It has been recently renovated by the Defence Housing Authority.



'The Marine Biological Station', Watsons Bay

The former 'Marine Biological Station' at 31 Pacific Street, Watsons Bay, is used as a married quarter and is closely associated with nearby 'Cliff House' and the Torpedo Station established as part of the old 'Artillery Barracks'.

The Register of the National Estate records this house as historically significant as the first marine biological research station in Port Jackson, established by Nicolai Miklouho-Maclay in 1881. The house is a significant element in its setting, its Victorian-Georgian style being well suited to its harbour-side environment and related sympathetically to the other Victorian buildings in and around Camp Cove.

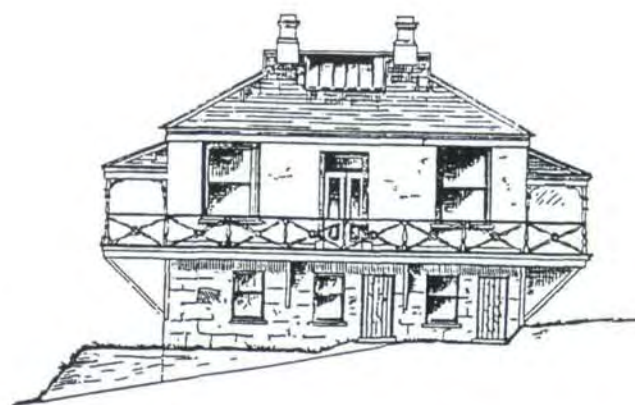
It is described as a single-storey weatherboard Victorian-Georgian style building on a semi-basement with stone walls and foundations. There is an encircling verandah enclosed on two sides. On one of the stone piers is an epoxy replica of the crest of the House of Miklouho-Maclay, which was carved in stone when the house was built in 1881. The original stone is preserved in the Macleay Museum at the University of Sydney (named after Sir William Macleay, the first owner of 'Tresco').

The marine biological station was built as a result of the proposal of Baron Nicolai de Miklouho-Maclay (Nicholas Maclay), the Russian explorer and marine biologist, in 1881. Maclay's right to an aristocratic title is a matter of dispute but he did not deny it. He was certainly an intrepid explorer of the South Pacific and had gained a reputation among the natives of New Guinea where he was called the 'man from the moon'.

The Station was intended as one of a series of such stations world-wide. Built with funds supplied by the Government, matched by public subscriptions, it operated until 1886. Then, much to Maclay's dismay, the Station was resumed for military purposes, being absorbed into the Artillery Barracks complex to allow for the establishment of a Torpedo Station as part of the Harbour defences.

The present occupant, Mrs Jennifer Pakes, says that the house has 'a wonderful rambling quality, typical of Australian beach-side holiday homes. There is something of the "Queenslander" in this house. It has had little cosmetic repair and this may have been to advantage, as many of the original features remain, eg, the pressed metal walls inside the hall and some of the rooms, and the skylight bays, now covered with timber'.

The Russian interest in this house continues. Mrs Pakes recounted that, '1993 was our year for Russian contact. First, we hosted, Dimitri Illankov, one of seven children billeted by the 1st Vacluse Scout Troop. Dmitri was close in age to our boys and despite language difficulties, seemed to enjoy his time in Australia. Secondly, we were contacted by Sydney University on behalf of a Russian film crew. The task for the Russians was to make a documentary on the life of Maclay and they sought approval to take some footage of the house. The crew explained to us that Maclay was famous in Russia, rather like our Captain Cook'.



These views are from early sketch plans of the Marine Biological Station. It consisted of six rooms in three suites of two rooms each comprising a spartan bedroom and workroom (laboratory) where the scientists could live and work. In the stone basement was a bathroom, store and a larger workroom 'for the carrying on of rough dissections and other operations which cannot well be carried on in the rooms above'.

'Ascot House' and 'Archina', Randwick

Two married quarters of historic interest in Randwick are 'Ascot House', 4 Dutruc Street and 'Archina', 49 Avoca Street. These lie at opposite ends of a disused former Army Reserve drill hall and grounds, which also has connections with the Navy and Air Force. The drill hall itself was a former tram depot and one of the sheds is said to have been used by Charles Kingsford Smith. The future use of the property and its two residences is presently under consideration.

'Ascot House' - a Link with Naval Communications History

'Ascot House' was built c. 1888. The original owner was P. W. Nicholls, a building contractor, who purchased the land in December 1884. In 1898, Nicholls rented the house to William Thow, a mechanical engineer with the railways who resided there until the house was acquired by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in 1907. In 1917, the house was purchased by the Commonwealth for use by the Royal Australian Navy as a wireless and electrical workshop. From 1924, the RAAF used the house as an Experimental Station until 1932 when it was reconverted to a residence and used as accommodation for Army officers and their families.

Ascot House is a two-storey Italianate house, enhanced by a large front garden. It is stuccoed and has grey rusticated plaster quoins facing the street. It has a slate hipped roof and moulded stucco chimneys. Under the eaves are moulded corbels.

The left side of the facade projects slightly beyond the verandah and balcony on the right hand side, under a slate hipped roof. The projecting portion has triple windows on both floors with pilasters beside and between each portion of the window. The first floor pilasters have corinthian columns, those on the ground floor are plain. The verandah and balcony have cast iron columns under a convex corrugated iron roof.



'Archina' - Links with the Development of Wireless

'Archina' is a large, two-storey brick Federation house. It has fine timber detailing, particularly on the balcony and front fence. It was erected c. 1907 and the first owners and residents were Captain A. J. and Mrs E. H. Clark. In November 1908, they sold to Clarice E. P. Barwick, who sold to Patrick Ryan in 1910. The Reverend A. J. Shaw bought the property in 1912, with 'Ascot House', for the Sacred Heart Missionaries. Father Shaw established the Maritime Wireless Company in 1908 in order to raise funds for Sacred Heart Missionaries. Radio equipment was made for Mawson's Polar Expedition in a large shed at the rear (now demolished). A tall radio aerial was erected behind the house in 1908.

The house has been preserved in excellent condition with intact detail. Features are the asymmetrical form including gable and hipped roof forms, with two-storeyed bay window form; tapering verandah posts and chimneys; balustrade detailing of stylised floral motif; slate roof with terra cotta ridge tiles and finial; stuccoed upper-storey spandrel including art-nouveau lettering; steeply-raked metal window hoods; red brick structure with darker brick decorative courses and upper storey quoins; and stone window sills.



'Archina', historic Randwick house was acquired by the Commonwealth in August 1916. It has been variously occupied by personnel of the Royal Australian Navy, the Repatriation Trades School (electrical and radio), personnel of the RAAF Experimental Station, and by the Army as a married quarter.

'Kitchener House', Moorebank

'Kitchener House' - Fit for a Field Marshal

Located at 208 Moorebank Avenue, this property was made available to the Army around 1910 for the visit of Field Marshal Lord Kitchener from England, when he was invited by Prime Minister Deakin to advise the Commonwealth on the best means of developing its land defence.

The cottage, originally known as 'Arpafeelie', was the homestead for a once thriving vineyard in Moorebank, owned by Mr. A. W. Smith. Whether it was acquired, leased, requisitioned or voluntarily made available for Kitchener's use is not clear but, from 1912, it was clearly owned by the Commonwealth. In any event, it was duly furnished throughout, in oak, and was used as Kitchener's headquarters on 6 and 7 January 1910. Kitchener stayed at Government House during his visit to Sydney but there is a strong presumption that he slept overnight in the Moorebank cottage on the night of 6 January.

The cottage remained in use as married quarters and, from the late 1950s, was occupied in turn by the brigadiers who commanded the Army formations in the Liverpool area until a new house was provided in the late 1980s. It has certainly been known as 'Kitchener House' throughout this latter period. The cottage has been handsomely preserved and con-

tinues to provide a comfortable family home for the Army. Its preservation has included complete repainting in original colours and the application of a particularly hardwearing finish to the verandah flooring. Internally, details such as string pull light switches, dado and high ceilings have been retained.

Kitchener House is listed by a Liverpool City Council Planning Ordinance as significant because 'it provides evidence of both the long association of this site, and surrounding area, with Army functions as well as the nature of the relationship between Australia and Britain in the early years of this century. The building also has local aesthetic significance as a good and relatively intact example of Federation Bungalow and is probably the 'grandest' and best preserved representative of this style within the City. This significance is enhanced by the building's retention of much of its original fabric and detailing and its attractive setting'.

'Wattle Grove'

The Defence Housing Authority's Wattle Grove development at Holsworthy, near Moorebank has been praised for its innovative use of designs and the quality of its new housing stock. Here the Authority, in Joint Venture with Delfin Property Group, has fashioned a new suburb over the last seven years on what was once the Holsworthy rifle range. Its success may



Field Marshal Lord Kitchener may have slept only one night in this house, if at all, during his historic visit to Australia in 1910, but the house still bears his name and its style has influenced the design of nearby Wattle Grove.

be gauged by the fact that it has been the fastest selling estate in New South Wales for some years. Here the Authority won first prize in the annual Housing Industry Association award for Best Townhouse/Villa Development in NSW.

The Authority's Regional Manager for the Moorebank area, Mr Wayne Prior, explained that these villa homes were detached dwellings built on smaller residential lots with their own title. Such housing provided optimum use of urban land and also broadened the range of choice for Defence families. The Federation style of Kitchener House is very much in evidence in Wattle Grove.

'Remount Park'

Adjacent to Wattle Grove is an area, named Remount Park, the birthplace of the Australian Light Horse and also linked with 'Kitchener House'. The area adjoins the entrance to the Holsworthy Army base and the Holsworthy railway station and is the site, where in 1910, Lord Kitchener reviewed the Commonwealth troops of NSW and invested Major Fanning with command of the 1st Light Horse Brigade. The Australian Light Horse was to be formed from these various mounted regiments in the former Colonies.

The Defence Housing Authority has established a new housing development on the site which includes modern mews style housing for soldiers stationed at the Holsworthy barracks. To ensure that the site's heritage is remembered, the Authority commissioned the design of and incorporation into the area of a memorial to the Light Horse and their important place in Australian history.

The memorial incorporates a gaslit central avenue which



Wattle Grove is a modern and successful housing development providing homes for soldiers and civilians. A feature of this estate has been the return to Federation style, heavily influenced by Kitchener House.

may ultimately be developed to incorporate paved timelines showing the Light Horse's history. A large central bronze sculpture of horse and light horseman, commissioned by the Liverpool City Council, is set in a grassy sward that serves as a parade ground. Landscaping reflects the locations of the Light Horse's various campaigns. For example, Date Palms in the park are reminiscent of Palestine, where the Light Horse made the famous mounted cavalry charge at Beersheba, the last known successful cavalry charge in history. Possible future developments may include a black granite Wall of Remembrance carrying etched diary extracts of the men of the Light Horse, timber stables and a display of a working forge, uniforms and memorabilia.



'Briarcliffe', Glenbrook

'Briarcliffe', adjacent to the Royal Australian Air Force's Air Headquarters in the Blue Mountains is the official residence of the Air Commander Australia. It was purchased by the RAAF in 1953 for the first Air Officer Commanding Eastern Area Command, Air Vice Marshal J. P. McCauley CB, CBE and has been occupied ever since by successive Air Officers Commanding, later Air Commanders. It was purchased from the Milligan family and was originally part of the larger property known as 'Logie'. The Air Headquarters Officers' Mess now occupies what was once the Lapstone Hill Hotel, built around Logie in 1928 and sold to the RAAF in 1949.

Beside Logie stood a Port Jackson fig tree, affectionately known by patrons of the inn and members of the officers' mess as the 'Yumm Yum Tree'. Experts estimated the tree was a seedling around the 1780s - and so probably saw Captain Cook sail in. Unfortunately the tree was blown over during severe winds on 6 November 1994 and its loss is still mourned in the RAAF.

Logie had been built in the 1870s for the Hon John Lucas MLA. Below Logie still stands the old railway station, Lucasville, named after him and which formed part of the Lapstone Zig Zag. Later Logie became the home of Captain Charles Smith who was succeeded by his son Colin. Colin Smith was a bacteriologist of some repute and a rather colourful eccentric who drove Stanley Steamers and shot flies off the walls with a pistol. In 1921, H.G. Kirkpatrick and G.H. Morris purchased Logie and adjacent land from Colin Smith.

In the 1930s, when Briarcliffe was owned by A. H. Poolman, he personally terraced seven acres of garden, evidence of which can still be seen below the lower fence along with traces of the former Cox's road. Cox surveyed and built the first road from Emu Plains to Bathurst in 1814, the year following discovery of a route through the Blue Mountains by Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson.

The large central room of Briarcliffe - the 'Great Room' - was originally papered in broad blue and gold vertical stripes. This room, often referred to as 'The Chocolate Box' after the 'Old Gold' chocolates sold through this period, features large glass doors and a pair of matching windows at one end and an offset fireplace at the other.

It was the 'Great Room' which changed most during the major renovations undertaken by the Defence Housing Authority during 1993 after 40 years of RAAF occupation. In order to create a dining-room where a small bedroom had been, walls were moved so that the fire-place was centrally located in the now smaller 'Great Room'. The near-flat original malthoid roof was removed and replaced with a pitched roof and dormer windows, allowing two upstairs bedrooms to be created. The sun-room was completely rebuilt after new foundations were poured, higher ceilings were installed throughout the house and a stairway created. The renovations and alterations were designed by G.J. Taylor, Architect, constructed by S.J. Ward, Builder, and supervised by the Authority's regional manager, Mr John Heath.



Briarcliffe has been the Glenbrook home for senior Air force commanders since 1953.



Logie was altered and rebuilt in 1928 as the Lapstone Inn by the Sydney architect H.G. Kirkpatrick. The name Lapstone was derived from the stones which covered the area.

In 1822, a traveller, Mrs Elizabeth Hawkins, wrote, 'We began our ascent up the first Lapstone Hill, so called from all the stones being like cobblers' stones. The horses got on very well, but the bullocks could not, so we were obliged to unload, have a cart from Emu and send back some of the luggage. Even the horses were obliged, when they reached the top, to return and assist them. We only performed the distance of one mile and a half that day.'