



Andrew MacKinnon

Andrew was accepted into the Royal Australian Naval College located on the shoreline of pristine Jervis Bay, south of Sydney after completing his education at SHS. After three and a half years of further academic and naval training, including an amazing eleven week training cruise around the South Pacific in HMAS Anzac, he graduated as a Midshipman in 1966. Over the next year he spent further training time at sea in three ships (Parramatta, Hawk, and Vampire), all operating in the Far East before returning home.

Andrew then completed further academic and professional training at the Royal Naval College, HMS Britannia, at Dartmouth in England, followed by a further year attending familiarisation courses at various naval specialist schools.

Returning to Australia in 1969, he was posted back to sea in HMAS Vendetta, deployed to Vietnam for six months before being sent to northern Australia for five months in patrol boats, briefly as the Navigating Officer in HMAS Buccaneer and then Executive Officer in HMAS Advance. He joined the destroyer HMAS Torrens as part of her commissioning crew in 1971, and later served as her Navigating Officer.

In the latter half of 1972 Andrew deployed to the USA in HMAS Hobart for a five months gun modernisation in San Francisco, before returning to the RAN College in 1973-74 as a member of staff. He qualified as a Principal Warfare Officer in the UK in 1975, before undertaking two years exchange service with the Royal Navy as Operations Officer in HMS Aurora. After two years on the tactical training staff at HMAS Watson in Sydney, he headed back to Portsmouth, England for a five month specialist course in Anti-Submarine Warfare. Following this he returned to the sea as the ASW Officer of HMAS Brisbane, mostly operating in the South Pacific and Far East, then came ashore for staff duties in the Directorate of Underwater Weapons in Navy Office, Canberra.

From here Andrew commanded HMAS Wollongong, a Sydney-based patrol boat in 1983-84, and on promotion to Commander, served for eighteen months as the Chief of Staff to the Naval Officer Commanding Victoria.

From 1986-88 Andrew was the inaugural Director of the Pacific Patrol Boat Project, responsible for construction of the first six of what later became 22 patrol boats provided by Australia to various South Pacific nations. After attending the Joint Services Staff College in Canberra in 1989, he took command of Navy's patrol boat base HMAS Cairns, plus regional duties as the Naval Officer in Charge Cairns and a national role as Commander Australian Patrol Boat Forces.

Andrew was promoted to Captain in late 1990, and from mid 1991 to 1994 served in the Department of Defence in Canberra as the Director South Pacific Branch in the International Policy Division. During this time he was lucky enough to visit virtually every country in the region at least once, and learned much about the political, security and social fabric of the region.

From 1995-96 he commanded Navy's patrol boat and communications base in Darwin, HMAS Coonawarra, for which he was awarded a Conspicuous Service Cross. Following he was selected to serve in a diplomatic posting as the Australian Defence Adviser in Wellington, New Zealand from 1997-99. This was a fascinating time in New Zealand's political and defence history, also encompassing the Bougainville and East Timor interventions.

On return to Australia Andrew spent eighteen months as the Director UN, Peacekeeping and Arms Control in the Defence International Policy Division in Defence. He retired from the RAN in September 2001, and immediately took up a civilian position working on a range of strategic planning issues in Navy Headquarters. He remains 'in harness' as a Navy civilian, and is still enjoying it.

For the past year Andrew has been acting as the Director General Navy Strategic Policy and Futures.

Andrew acknowledges that the Navy has given him a fantastic and rewarding career and the opportunity to see much of the world and would recommend a position in the Navy to any young person looking for some adventure, personal challenges, comradeship, the ability to usefully serve your country while acquiring a wide range of skills – and be paid well!

He was also able to complete a Bachelor of Arts degree (majoring in international relations and development studies) and a Graduate Diploma in Strategic Studies.