



CASTLEMAINE CAPERS

An Occasional Newsletter

Issue # 5 – Oct 2023

Welcome to this the latest edition of our occasional newsletter.

It has been a very productive time for the *Castlemaine* since the last newsletter. The work of cleaning and painting the engine room is continuing, the starboard side of the ship has been painted and the dummies are here.

Geoff has become quite adept in clambering around in the engine room bilge removing the rust and repainting sections that may not have been touched for 70 years or so.

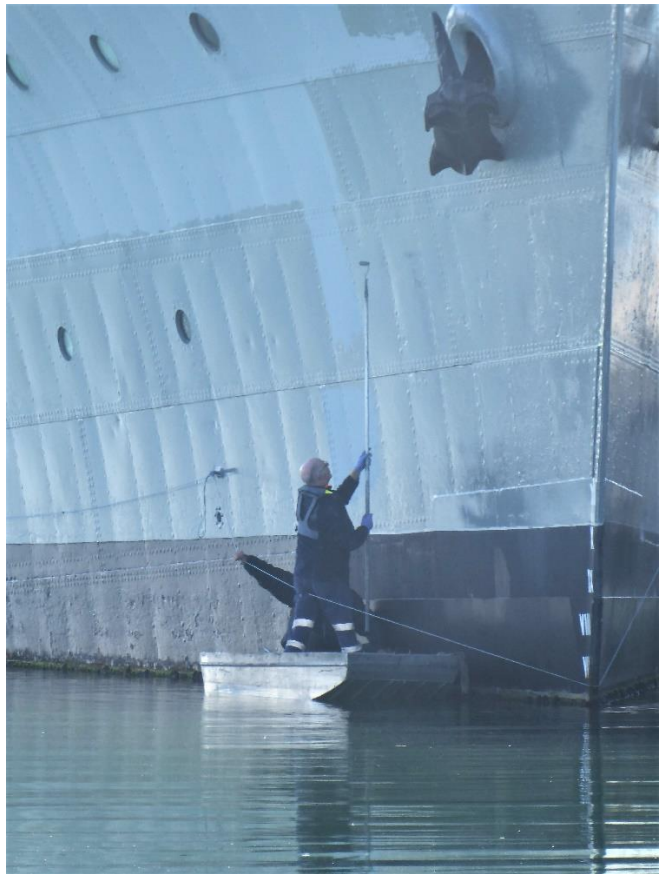


Just a small section before and after

Pumps and valves did not escape Geoff's paintbrush either as can be seen from the photos below.



Painting the starboard ship side of the ship has been completed with a combination of leaning over the side and working from the punt.



Martin and Dennis on the left and Martin stretching on the right with Andrew.



On the left we have Martin and Andrew messing about in the punt and on the right is Dennis doing a bit of Quality Assurance.

The dummies arrived from the UK in pieces with assembly instructions and Allen key, a bit Ikea-ish. We needed to decide where we wanted to place them for best effect and availability of uniforms. It was decided that one should be a Chief Petty Officer seated at the table in the Chief's mess. And the other a 'Wavy Navy' Lieutenant sitting at the table in the Wardroom. Any future dummies we think will feature in the CO's cabin dressed in the uniform worn by Lt Moss *Castlemaine's* last CO. And another dressed as a rating in the wireless room. Future dummies of course rely on gaining grant money and maybe a benefactor or two.

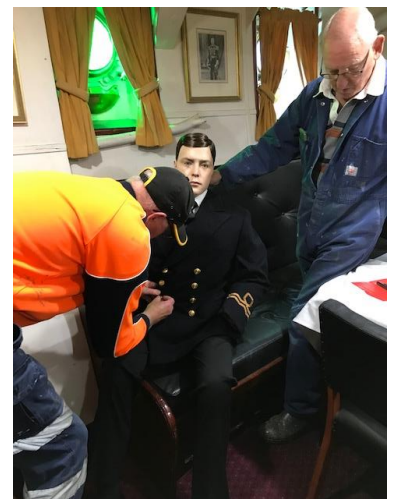
The bits



Martin with head



Martin & Dennis the valets



And now the finished products



I think they look pretty good, now all we have to do is keep the visitors hands off them!

Over the last month or so Kerry Hodges, the author of the *Castlemaine's* book and a long-time volunteer going back to the 1970's, has been trawling the internet for photos of crew members and death dates for the Honour Roll. Well, thanks to his efforts over forty new photos have been added to our archives. They are available, along with all our other records of the crew, on the ship in digital and hard copy form. The photos have also been posted on our website at www.hmascastlemaine.org.au

I asked Kerry if he had any memories he could share from those early days in the 1970's and 80's.

Some of the things I remember about the early days at South Wharf.

Power to the ship was supplied through a builder's box outside the stb door to the mess deck. The mess deck was full of rubbish and a lot of rust. All light fittings were gone just the light bases left with some cables cut. Light was supplied by a string of festoon lights connected back to the builder's box when the door was open.

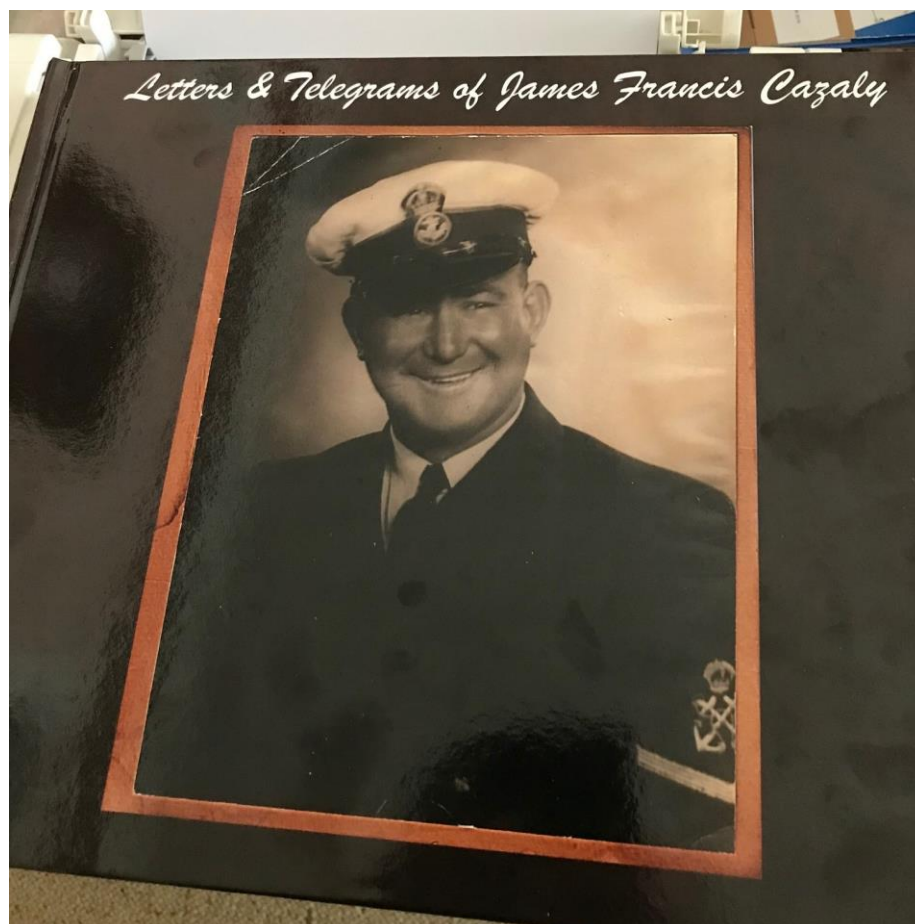
It was decided to get a sand blaster company in to clean up all the rust areas. On the first day they came down to set up and start work the Painters & Dockers Union turned up and said they could not work on the ship unless a Painter & Docker was employed to be on board while the work was done, we had to pay for that and he just sat around and did nothing. It just shows how powerful they were at that time. I remember when I was an apprentice at

Hobson's Bay Dock & Engineering Co. we were flooding the dock before lunch to float out a tug. After lunch the yard manager sacked two of the Painters & Dockers for coming back from lunch drunk and asked for two replacements. The rest walked off the job with the dock half flooded until the original two were reinstated.

With the lighting it took me a lot of time (abt 12mths) to trace all the cut electrical cables and re-join the cut sections throughout the ship. Then we had to find the light fittings from various sources, some had to be rebuilt completely. Finally I was able to connect the shore power back to the switchboard and partially restore the lighting throughout the ship. However only the lights could be used on shore power (AC). Then another couple of years to reconnect other cut cables to pieces of equipment, none of the fans could be run as they were DC only until we got the Southern Cross generator set running. This was needed for functions on board as shore supply was limited.

It was not easy going in the early days and it is thanks to the many volunteers that have worked on the ship over the years that we are in the position we are today.

On Saturday 7th Oct the ship was visited by Jenny & Glenn Thornton. Glenn is the grandson of James Francis Cazaly who served on the *Castlemaine* between Nov 1944 and Nov 1945, he was a PO Stoker. They presented to the ship a book, put together by Glenn, of the wartime letters, telegrams and diary of his grandpa. This book will be kept on board and be available to anybody read.



We have also been able to obtain a digital copy of the diary of Bruce Dyker a Telegraphist on *Castlemaine* for two and a half years from commissioning. The diary also includes a transcription to enable easier reading that was undertaken by Bruce's niece Verity Byth. I would like to thank Verity and the Dyker family for allowing us to have a copy of this most interesting document. As this is a new acquisition we are still deciding the best way to make it available. Although I do hope that at least some parts will be available on our website.

Finally I would like to give a shout out to three of our volunteers who are doing it particularly hard at the moment: Doug Lapham, John Szanto and Charlie Chambers.



All the 'Castlemaine Capers' newsletters are also available on our website:
www.hmascastlemaine.org.au

If you have any comments or contributions, please send them to me Bob Pearson at newsletter@hmascastlemaine.org.au

Cheers & TTFN

Bob