

TYALGUM DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



**S.S. TYALGUM – Ship’s Bell**

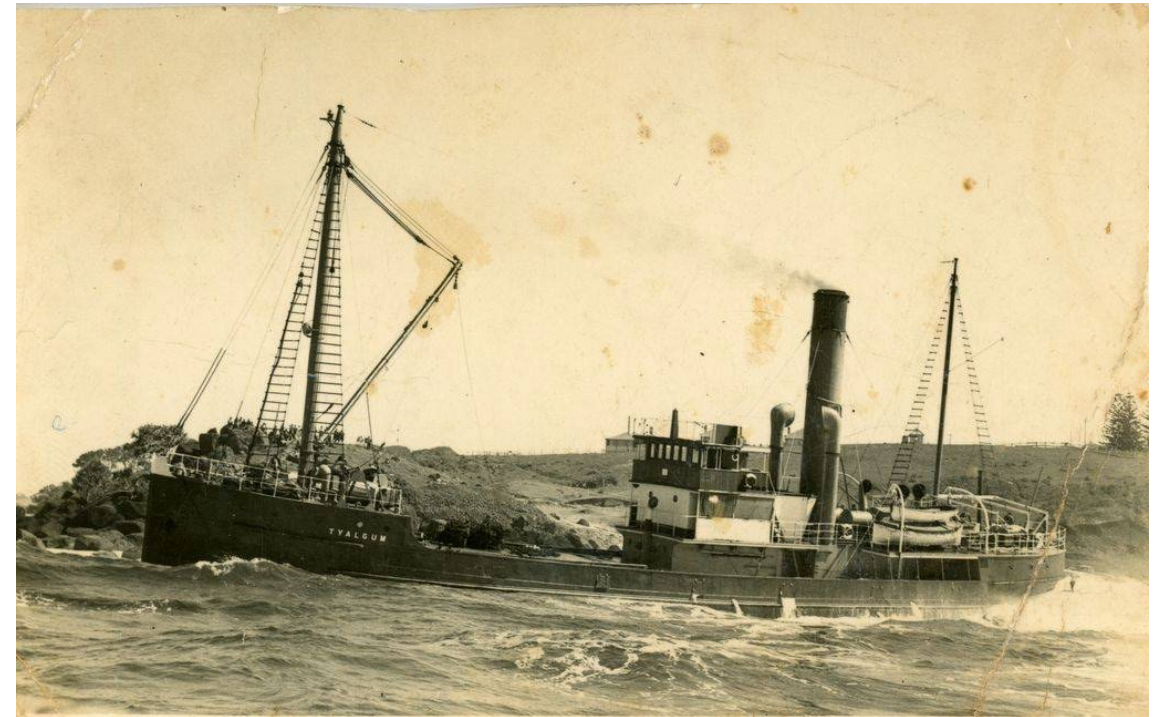
**Proposed Merchant Navy Memorial**

**Tyalgum Cenotaph**

# The SS Tyalgum

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- Built 1925 in Scotland (Clyde River)
- Career – North Coast Steamship Navigation Co Ltd (NCSNCo)
- Wrecked 25 August 1939 - Duranbah
- Sold for salvage 3 September 1939
- WWII declared 8 September 1939



# The Ship's Bell

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## Provenance

- Salvaged in 1939
- Offered for sale by grandson of Bosun Swift (Sydney)
- Tyalgum Recreation Reserve purchased the Bell – 8 April 2024
- Donated to TDCA for the Community



# Merchant Navy in wartime

The term “Merchant Navy” refers to the commercial shipping and crews of the Allies.

The title “Merchant Navy” was granted after WWI by royal decree of King George V to recognise the contribution made by merchant sailors

During the Second World War, merchant vessels were commissioned into naval service as hospital ships, supply ships and armed merchant cruisers.

The Battle of the Atlantic lasted almost the entire duration of World War II. The battle was fought across one of the war's most dangerous shipping lanes. Some **3,500** Allied merchant ships and **175** warships were sunk, and over **72,000** Allied naval & merchant mariners were lost.



# Merchant Navy in WWII

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All those who served in the Merchant Navy were **civilians** and **volunteers**. Like those who served in the Royal Navy and the Royal Australian Navy, they faced the dangers of enemy attack and the perils of the sea. Some merchant ships were armed, but they were not designed to withstand enemy attack.

If a merchant ship was sunk at sea, the merchant seaman's chances of survival were poor.

Approximately 185,000 seamen, including 40,000 men of Indian, Chinese and other nationalities, served in the Merchant Navy during WWII.

36,749 seamen were lost to enemy action, 5,720 were taken prisoner and 4,707 were wounded, totaling **47,176 casualties**

Merchant Mariners suffered a minimum **casualty rate** of over **25 per cent**. Mr Gabe Thomas, the former Registrar General of Shipping and Seaman (Great Britain) stated that "27 per cent of merchant seamen died through enemy action"

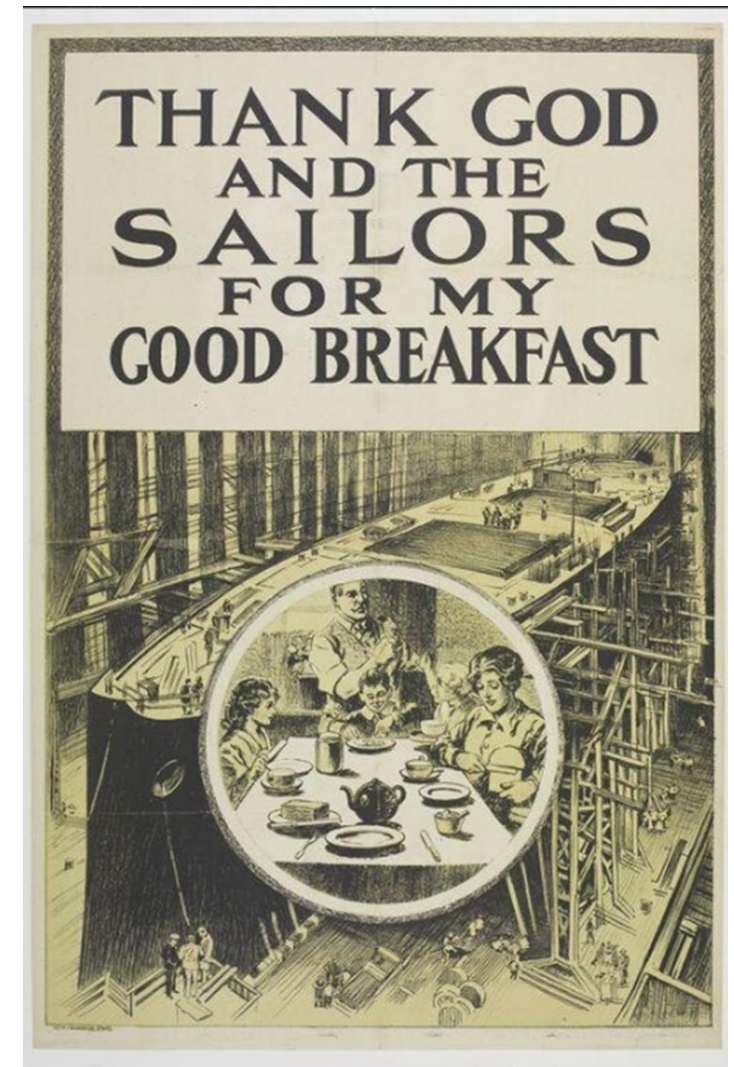


# Merchant Navy in Australia

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During the Second World War Merchant Navy ships carrying valuable cargoes were at just as much risk as Royal Australian Navy (RAN) warships. Merchant ships were attacked not only in distant waters but also within sight of the Australian coastline while traversing much frequented trade routes.

Following a number of gunnery and torpedo attacks on merchant ships along the New South Wales coast, the Naval Board instituted a system of coastal convoys as a temporary protective measure. Ships that sailed independently, rather than in convoys, ran a greater risk of being torpedoed. Hospital ships were crewed by merchant seamen.



# Merchant Navy in Australia

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Contrary to popular belief, merchant seamen were not well-paid, did not have comfortable working hours, and their living conditions were often poor.

The McGirr Inquiry into the Needs of Australian Mariners, (Department of Repatriation, 1989), found that five percent of Australian merchant seamen had died during WWII ... **the same as the casualty rate in the RAN.**

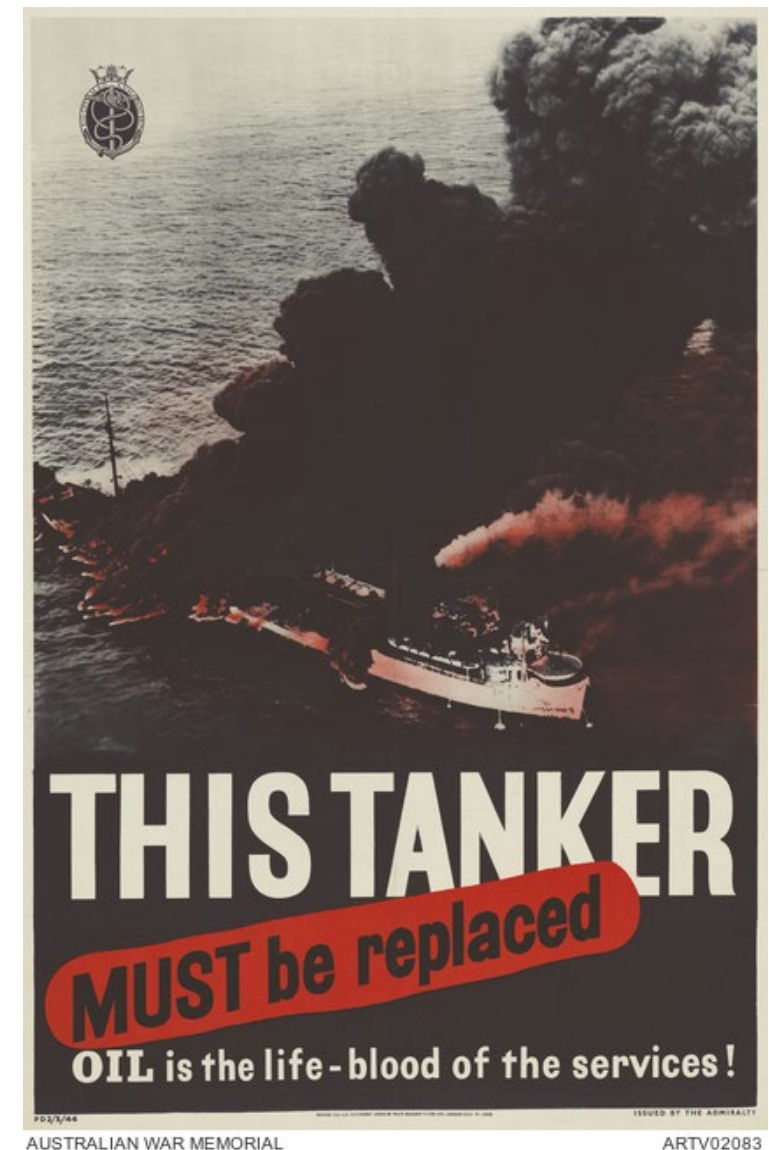


# Merchant Navy losses in Australian waters

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The official war history gave the number of dead seafarers resulting from submarine attack on the east coast as **467**. It gave the number for the **30 ships** destroyed by submarines on the on the entire Australia Station as 654, of whom 200 were Australian (Gill, 1968:557)

The Australian War Memorial had compiled a list of **520 names of Australian merchant mariners who had died**, and names were still being added (McGirr, 1989:30-31).







# HMAS UKI (NCSNCo)

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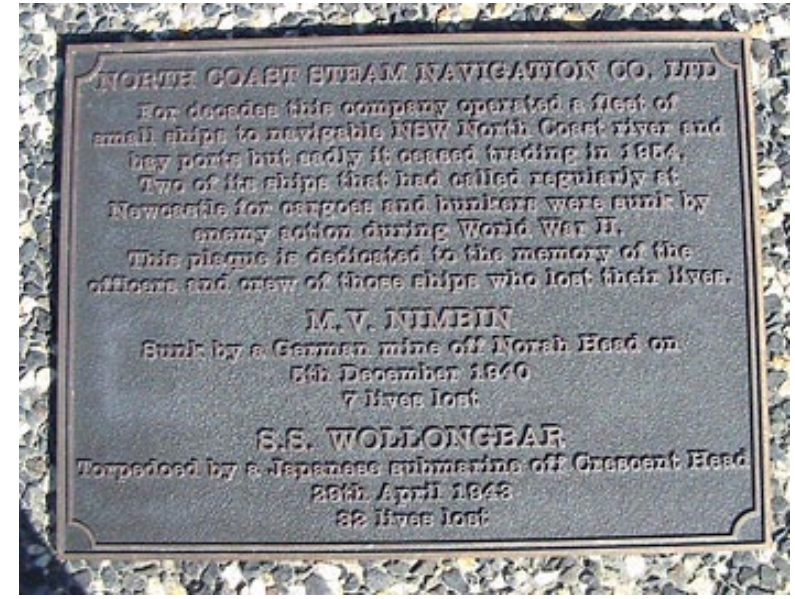
- Sister ship to SS Tyalgum
- The steel twin screw steamship Uki was built by Lithgows Ltd of Glasgow, Scotland, for service in the northern New South Wales coastal river trade and named after the northern New South Wales town of Uki in the Tweed Valley.
- She was requisitioned by the RAN in Sydney from her owners, the North Coast Steamship Navigation Company, for naval service on 3 November 1939.





# Loss of SS Nimbin (NCSNCo)

- In late October 1940, the German raider *Pinguin* entered Australian waters laying minefields
- Nimbin 1052 tons, was sunk about 8 miles off Norah Head, New South Wales after hitting Mine at 3:20pm 5 December 1940
- The following Australian Merchant Navy mariners were lost, and their bodies were never found:
  - William James Bryantson, Master, 57 years old
  - Charles George Chapman, Chief Officer, 56 years old
  - Ernest Walter Hallett, Wiper, 60 years old
  - Archibald McAllister, Third Engineer Officer, 47 years old
  - Ernest Wilfred Carlson, Donkeyman, 56 years old
  - Nils Hulton, Greaser, 60 years old
  - William Gorry, Able Seaman



# Merchant Ships Sunk in NSW Waters

The 19 ships destroyed off the New South Wales Coast during WWII were, chronologically:

Nimbin, 1052 tons, 5.12.1940

Millimul, 287 tons, 26.3.1941

Iron Chieftain, 4700 tons, 3.6.1942

Iron Crown, 3353 tons, 4.6.1942

Guatemala, 5527, 14.6.1942

George S. Livanos, 5482 tons,  
20.7.1942

Coast Farmer, 3290 tons, 20.7.1942

William Dawes, 7177 tons, 22.7.42

Dureenbee, 223 tons, 3.8.1942

Kalingo, 2047 tons, 17.1.1943

Iron Knight, 4700 tons, 8.2.1943

Starr King, 7176 tons, 9.2.1943

Recina, 4732 tons, 11.4.1943

Limerick, 8724 tons, 26.4.1943

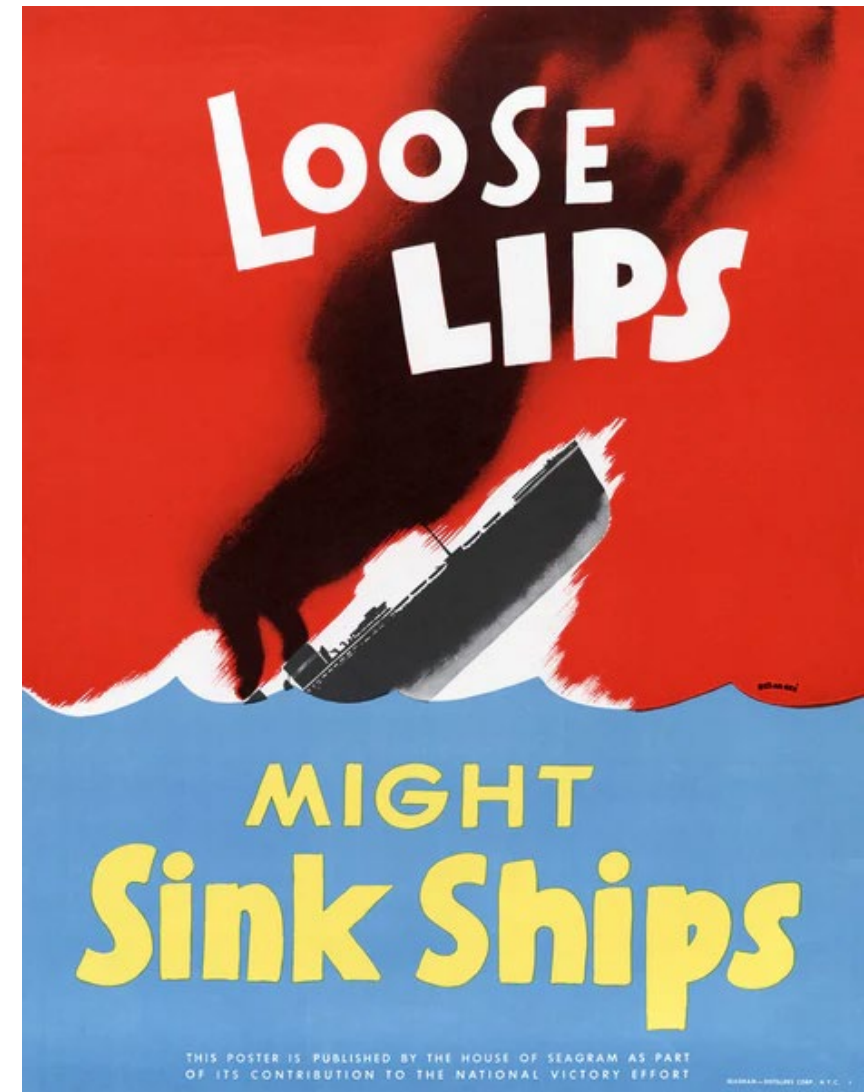
Lydia M. Childs, 7176 tons, 27.4.1943

Wollongbar, 2240 tons, 28.4.1943

Fingal, 2137 tons, 5.5.1943

Portmar, 5551 tons, 16.6.1943

Robert J. Walker, 7180 tons, 24.12.1944



# Merchant Navy Day

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- Proclaimed in 2008 by the Governor General.
- 3 September annually, chosen to commemorate the British liner SS Athenia, which was torpedoed and sunk without warning by the German submarine U-30. This happened only 10 hours after Britain's declaration of war in 1939.
- Held alongside Australian National Flag Day.
- RED ENSIGN (for Merchant Navy) may be flown
  - The Australian Red Ensign is the official flag flown at sea by Australian registered merchant ships
  - may be flown along with the Australian National Flag
  - the Australian National Flag should be flown in the position of honour.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

ARTV05319



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# Merchant Navy Memorials

National Merchant Navy Memorial in Canberra

MN Plaques usual on cenotaphs



# Bell memorials in Australia

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## Heritage Bell Tower

Heidelberg, Melbourne

Commemorates the relationship between military veterans and the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital that commenced in 1941 when it was known as the 115th Heidelberg Military Hospital. The bell was donated by Noel Sanderson in 2008 in memory of all those who have served.



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# Bell memorials in Australia

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## H.M.A.S. Sydney - SMS Emden Friendship Mast Cocos-Keeling Islands

The monument commemorates the sailors of Australia and Germany who were killed in action during the engagement of H.M.A.S. Sydney and SMS Emden in November 1914.

The bells on the mast are replicas of the bells of the Sydney and Emden.



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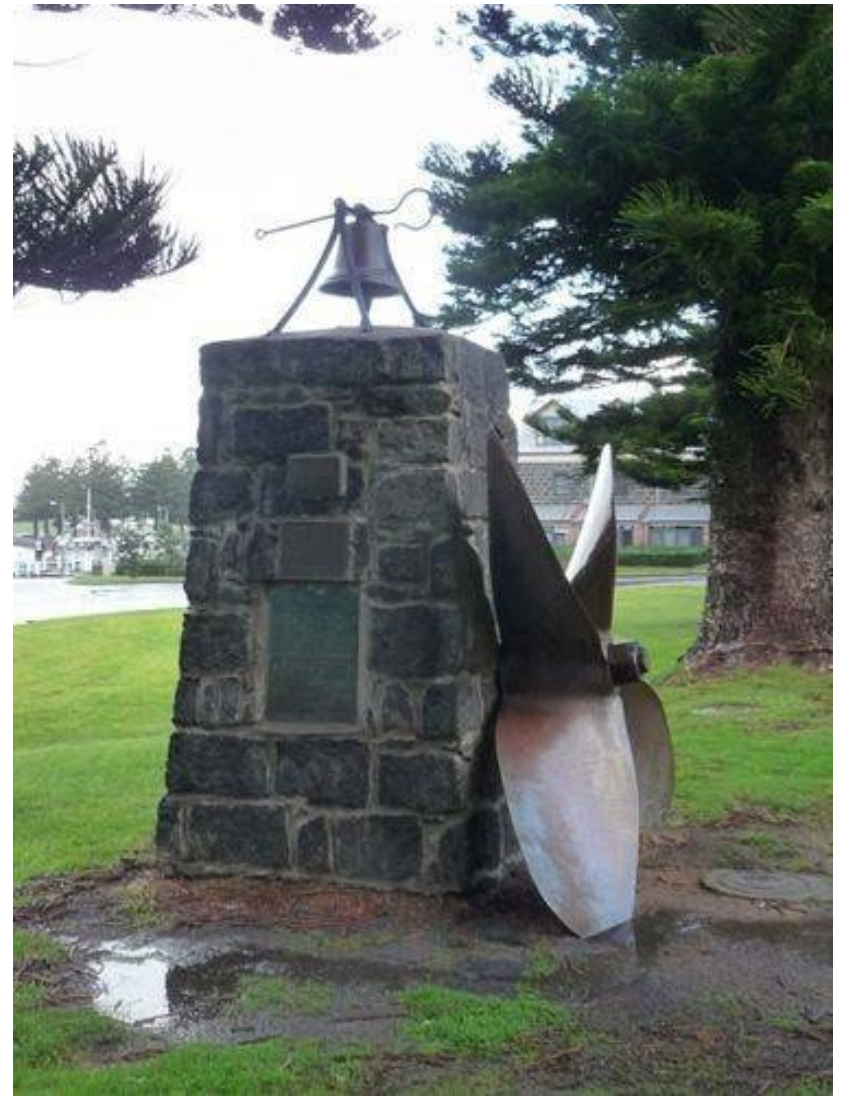
# Bell memorials in Australia

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## **S.S. Casino**

Port Fairy, Victoria

The monument commemorates those who lost their lives in the sinking of the S.S. Casino off Apollo Bay in 1932. A plaque was added to the memorial in 1982 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the registration of the vessel and the 50th anniversary of the sinking.





# Bell memorials in Australia

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## Robinvale Memorial Arch (Villers Bretonneux Walk)

Robinvale, Victoria

The gateway marks the World War One theatre of war and a friendship between Villers - Bretonneux and Robinvale as sister towns. The bell at the top of the arch is from the Victoria College at Villers - Bretonneux and was presented to the people of Robinvale at the 'twinning' ceremony in Villers-Bretonneux on the 5th May 1984.



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# Bell memorials in Australia

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## War Memorial Bell Tower

Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Woolloongabba, Queensland

A freestanding bell tower commemorate those who died in service or were killed in action during World War Two.

The parish war memorial bell and belfry was dedicated by Archbishop Halse on the 19th June 1949.



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# Tyalgum Cenotaph

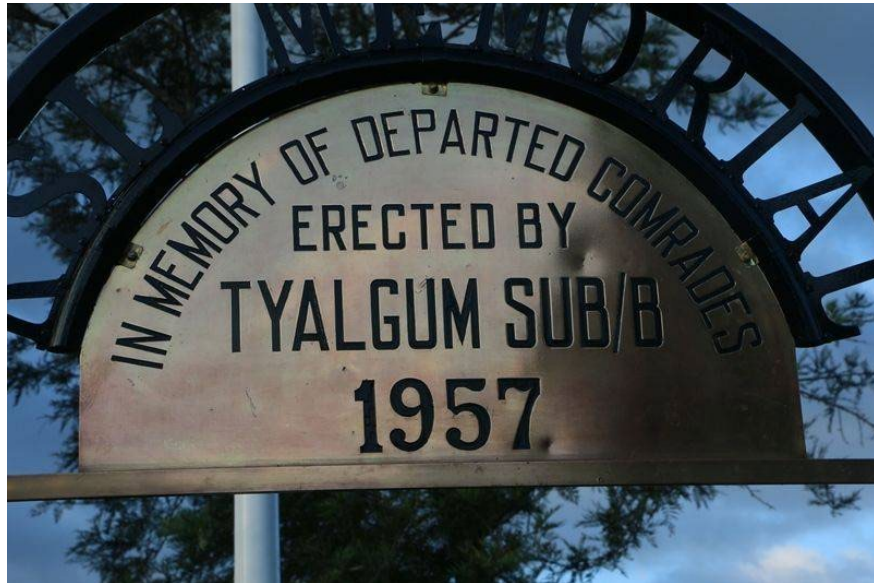
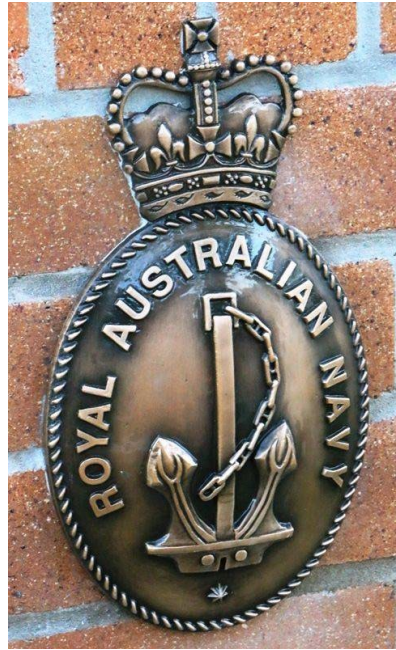
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- Current Configuration
  - Brick walls
  - Centre archway – 1957 RSL
  - Flag pole
  - Lone Pines either side



# Tyalgum Cenotaph

Current plaques and badges



# Tyalgum Cenotaph

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## Options

1. Flagpole
2. Archway
3. Bell Tower



# Flagpole Option

Existing Flagpole modified/replaced to accommodate bell

- Sydney-Emden precedent
- Nautical flagpole with yard arms
- Bell mounted at central junction of yards and mast
- Allows hoisting of ANF and Red Ensign for ceremonial occasions



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# Archway Option

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- Steel construction (Heidelberg precedent)
  - Resonance with existing 1957 RSL arch
- Brick Construction (Robinvale precedent)
  - Resonance with existing brick walls
- Robust
- Low maintenance
- Security



# Bell Tower Option

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Tower – wood & Corrugated Iron

- Resonant with Tyalgum Village architecture
- Security – climbable
- Maintenance







# Proposed Bell Installation

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## External Consultation to date

- Tweed Shire Council – Ms Amelia Pitt – Planner – Parks & Active Communities
- Tweed Regional Museum – Ms Erika Taylor
- Murwillumbah RSL Sub-Branch – Mr Chris Chrisostomos
- Nautical Association of Australia – Mr Rex Cox
- Company of Master Mariners Australia – Capt Arthur Diack
- Nautical Institute – Capt. William Burton

# Proposed Bell Installation

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- Proposed Community Consultation
  - TDCA FB & website
  - TDCA newsletter
  - Tyalgum Recreation Reserve
  - Tyalgum Community Hall Association
  - TSC consultation assistance?





# Proposed Bell Installation

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- Way forward
  - TDCA Decision Process – minuted in August 24 General Meeting to proceed to community consultation
  - Progress with Flagpole and Archway options for consultation (not Bell Tower)
  - TSC Approval – Development Application
  - Funding sources
    - Community War Memorials Fund - Round 1 2024/25 | NSW Government
    - Dept Veterans Affairs - Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program



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