The Ironclad '*Cerberus*'

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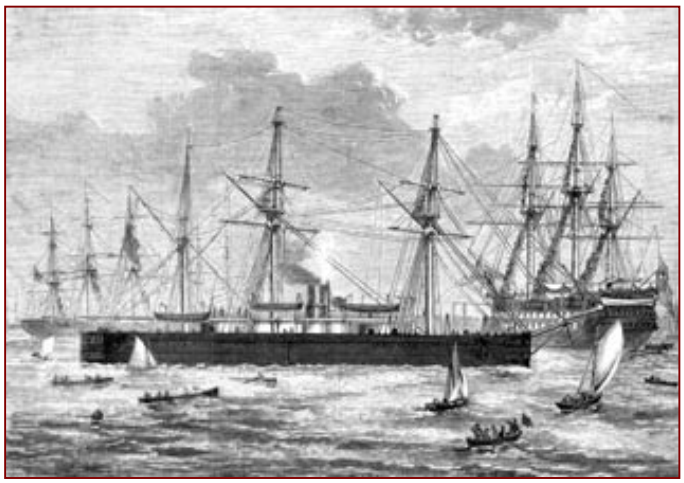
Introduction

The *Cerberus* has the unique distinction of serving in three navies of the one nation. Firstly, she served in the Victorian Colonial Navy from 1871 until 1901. Then, from 1901 until 1913, in the Commonwealth Naval Forces following Federation. Finally, from 1913 until 1924, she served in the Royal Australian Navy. In 1926, a Melbourne salvage company bought her and, after removing the engines and boilers but leaving the 1,800 ton armored barbette, the four 18 ton guns and the two 400 ton turrets – scuttled her as a breakwater, 150 metres off shore at the Black Rock Yacht Club, Victoria.

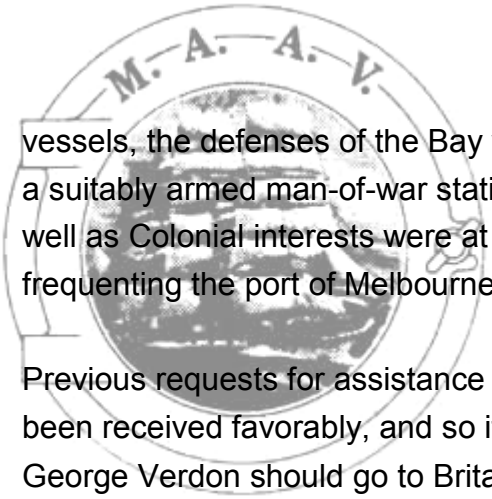


Wood engraving depicting the arrival of the ironclad steam turret ship *Cerberus* in Hobson's Bay, Victoria on the 9th of April 1871.

The *Cerberus*

The ever present threat of Russian Pacific action, and the activities of the American commerce raider *Shenandoah* had convinced the Victorian colonists that some form of maritime protection other than that afforded by the armed sloop *Victoria* was imperative (1).

The colonists realized that unless the Heads were made impassable to hostile



vessels, the defenses of the Bay would be incomplete, without the assistance of a suitably armed man-of-war stationed within the Bay (2). Important Imperial as well as Colonial interests were at stake. In 1866 eighty percent of the shipping frequenting the port of Melbourne was the property of British owners.

Previous requests for assistance from Her Majesty's Government had not always been received favorably, and so it was decided that the Treasurer, the Honorable George Verdon should go to Britain as Victoria's special representative.

Verdon was obviously a highly skilled diplomat, for within a short time after his arrival C.B. Adderley on behalf of the Lord of Carnarvon (2) wrote the following letter to him.

Downing St. 15th November 1866.

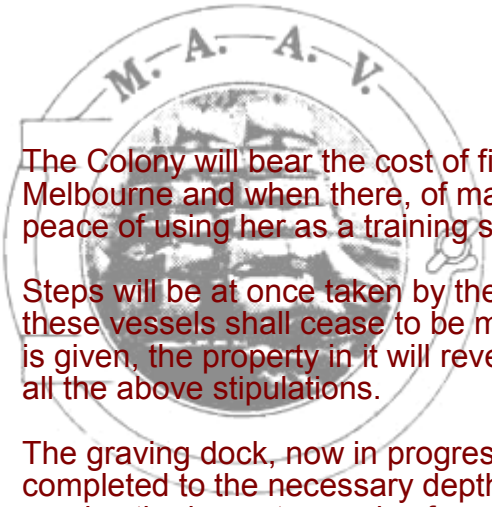
"Lord Carnarvon directs me to inform you, that if you, on behalf of the Colony, are prepared to accede to the following arrangement, which is based on the terms of your application, and to other papers to which I have referred, Her Majesty's Government will be ready to propose to Parliament the pecuniary appropriations necessary to give it effect.

The Controller of the Navy will arrange with you the details of an armor-plated monitor or turret ship, to be constructed in a private yard, but under Admiralty superintendence, and to be capable of carrying 22-ton guns.

The cost of the ship is not to exceed 125,000 pounds of which the colony will furnish 25,000 pounds. The cost of armament is to be borne by the Colony. The maintenance, manning, and command of the ship is to be undertaken by the Colonial Government, receiving such occasional aid as heretofore in the selection of such officers and men from home as may be asked for.

It is clearly understood that this ship is maintained for the protection of the important British as well as Colonial interests that require naval defense in the waters of the Colony. She will, therefore in time of war, be under the command of the Senior Naval Officer on the station, who, in the event of any serious emergency, will not be precluded from withdrawing her for a time from the immediate waters of the Colony, in case the general safety should, in his judgement, make such a temporary withdrawal absolutely necessary. It is of course, understood that such an emergency should be a serious one, and that due regard should be had to the wishes of the Colony.

Further, a wooden line of battle ship, with steam power, will be selected and given to the Colony, with such masts, yards, and necessary stores as have been specially appropriated to her; and such additional stores, work, and c., provided as may be needed, to be paid for by the Colony.



The Colony will bear the cost of fitting out this vessel, of conveying her to Melbourne and when there, of manning and maintaining her, and in time of peace of using her as a training ship for a local naval force.

Steps will be at once taken by the Colony for raising such a force. If either of these vessels shall cease to be maintained and used for the purposes for which it is given, the property in it will revert to Her Majesty's Government, discharged of all the above stipulations.

The graving dock, now in progress of construction at Melbourne, will be completed to the necessary depth, and with the necessary approaches, so as to receive the largest vessels of war now built, and will be at the command of Her Majesty for any of Her Majesty's ships that may require repair; and with this object, Lord Carnarvon understands that the Colony will be ready, on the requisition of the naval officer in command, to move any other ship cut in order to allow Her Majesty's ships to go into the dock. In the event of this dock, which is now a government work, being leased to any private company, provisions to this effect should be introduced into the lease.

Understanding that you are desirous of leaving the country shortly, Lord Carnarvon loses no time in communicating to you these proposals on the part of Her Majesty's Government, and he will be glad to learn from you as soon as possible, whether you are prepared to close with them on behalf of the Colony of Victoria."

Your most obedient servant
C.B. Adderley.

The concept of an armored man-of-war was not a new one, the French had built the *La Gloire*, a wooden frigate 255' x 55' covered in 4.75 inches of wrought iron armor in 1859. The British countered by building the *Warrior* 420' x 58', protected by an 18 inch layer of teak and 4.5 inches of iron, in 1860, however, the full potential of the "iron-clad" was not realized until the 8th of March, 1862, when the Confederate built iron-clad *Virginia/Merrimack* steamed out of the Norfolk Navy Yards into Hampton Roads, sinking the sloop of war *Cumberland* and battering the frigate *Congress* into surrender. The following day the *Virginia/Merrimack* attempted to repeat the previous day's success, only to be met by the Union built ironclad *Monitor*, designed by J. Ericsson. The first battle between two ironclad warships ended in a standoff, but it did demonstrate that the only effective countermeasure to an armored man-of-war was another armored Man-of-war.
In the mid-1860's the design and construction of ironclad warships was still in the experimental phase. The Chief Constructor to Her Majesty's Navy E.J. Reed was asked to design an ironclad monitor suitable for the defense of the Port of

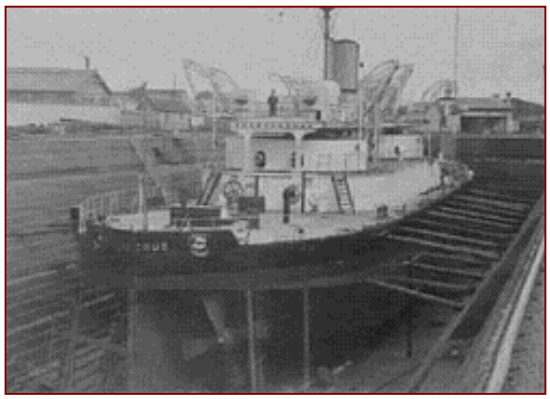
Melbourne. Reed found the requirements as regards ordinance and armor very difficult to meet under the restrictions imposed.

Reed's design for the *Cerberus* was a complete break from established tradition and unlike anything as yet seen afloat. The *Cerberus* was the first of seven "near to sister" armored coastal defense ships constructed in Britain between 1867 and 1877 (3).

Construction of the *Cerberus* was entrusted to the Palmer Ship Building and Iron Co., Jarrow-on-Tyne, the keel being laid down in September, 1867, she was launched in December, 1868 and completed in September, 1870.

OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION

The following is an official description published at the time she was built (4).



The *Cerberus* in Alfred Graving Dock, Williamstown, 1874.

"The design is based upon the breastwork principle, the object of adopting the central armor plated breastwork being to protect all the principal apertures into the ship to a height of ten or twelve feet above the water, and thus to add greatly to the security of these low-decked vessels. The only apertures through the low deck in this ship, outside of the armor breastwork, are three skylights for giving light and air below in a direct way when in harbor. Each of these skylights is surrounded by armor, and provided with an armor-plate cover for use in action. The ship, although of moderate dimensions, is coated with very thick armor, and carries 4 10-inch R.M.L. guns, and 4 1-inch Nordfeldt Machine Guns and has a speed of about nine knots.

Dimensions:

Length between the perpendiculars	225	ft.	0	in.
Length of the keel for tonnage	195	"	7	"
Breadth, extreme and for tonnage	45	"	0	"
Depth inhold	16	"	6	"

Burden in tons, O.M., No. 2107 23/94.

The nominal power of her engines is 250 h.p. and she is propelled by twin screws. She sits on an even keel, with a draught of water of 15 feet 6 inches, and is steered by a balanced rudder, which is well protected by the overhanging stern.

Her freeboard is 3 ft., the side being covered with armor from stem to stern, and to about 4 ft. below the waterline. This armor is in two strakes, the upper one

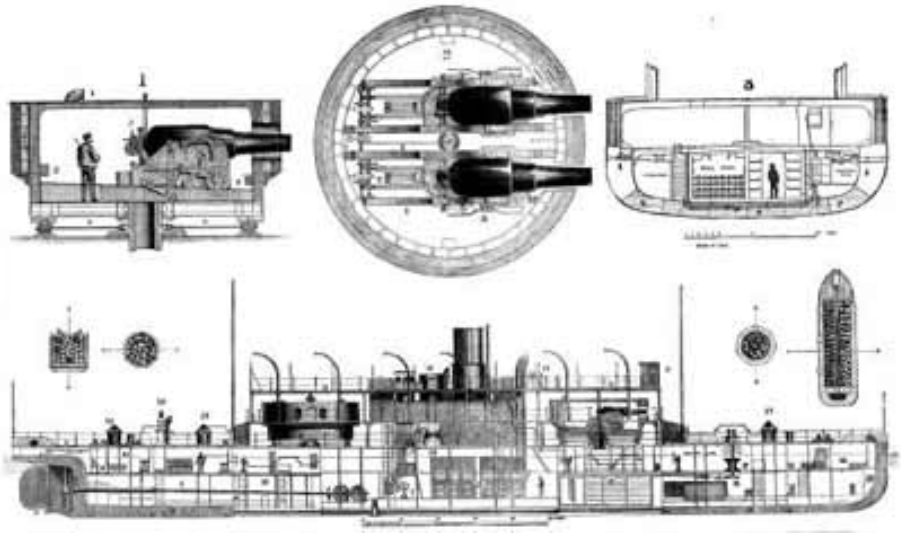
being 8 in. and the lower one 6 in. thick, each tapering towards the extremities of the vessel to 5.5 in. and 4 in. respectively. The teak backing is worked horizontally between outside stringers, and the whole secured to two thicknesses of 0.625 in. plating.

Her frames are 3 ft. apart, excepting in the double bottom, which extends from the armor-shelf on one side to the armor-shelf on the other, through the whole length of the midship body, where the frames are 4 ft. apart.

The keel is composed of two flat plates, strengthened by a continuous vertical keelson. There are also four longitudinal frames, composed of steel plates, running fore and aft the vessel on each side of the keel, the upper longitudinal forming the shelf or recess for armor; the remainder of the hull is built of iron.

The upper deck outside of breastwork is protected with two thicknesses of 0.75 in. plates, and the skylights upon it are formed of 6 in. armor plates, 3 ft. 6 in. high, with strong watertight covers.

The breastwork stands upon the midship part of the upper deck, and is 112 ft. long, 34 ft wide, and 6 ft deep, having circular ends, which are protected by 9-in, armor in wake of turrets; elsewhere 8-in, armor is placed on the sides of the



breastwork; the frames are 3 ft. apart, and well secured to the upper-deck

Transverse and longitudinal sections of the *Cerberus*.

beams; the top of the breastwork is protected with two thicknesses of 0.5 in. plating upon the ordinary transverse beams, excepting where the turrets pass through it, and also where the funnel, air-shaft, etc., enter it. Besides these, the breastwork encloses two small engines for working each turret, a steering-wheel, cooking-ranges, and the hatchways leading directly down to the ammunition, as well as those leading to the fore and after parts of the lower deck where the crew are berthed.

The turrets, two in number, one at each end of the breastwork, and about 5 ft. 6 in. above it, are each constructed to fight two 18-ton guns, and may be turned either by manual or steam power. These turrets are protected in front by 10 in.

and in the rear by 9 in. armor, extending down a short distance within the breastwork; the teak backing is worked horizontally between stringers, which are outside of the two thicknesses of 0.5-in. skin-plating, and the tops of the turrets are protected by 0.5-in. plating upon the beams.

A flying deck, 20 ft. wide, is worked above the turrets, for the whole length of the breastwork, and the communication from the latter to the flying-deck takes place through watertight iron trunks; all openings in this and the other decks are protected from a vertical fire.

The pilot-house is supported from the top of the breastwork, and extends to 4 ft. above the flying-deck; the sides of the pilot-house are protected with 9 in. armor, and its fore and after parts with 8 in. armor, the teak backing being worked as before described, and upon two thicknesses of 0.5 in. plating without internal frames.

The davits and other outriggers for boats, etc. will admit of being lowered, so as to clear the range of the turret guns.

The fresh air for ventilating the vessel will be admitted by means of the airshaft, the ash-shoot, and the openings in the decks over stokehole. A fan at the bottom of air-shaft, and another at the fore-end of the boiler-room, will be worked by steam, and will drive the air forward through main pipes under the lower deck, and aft through similar pipes at the upper part of shaft-passage, and from these pipes branches will be led wherever required.

There are seven water-tight transverse bulk-heads continued to the upper deck, and having water-tight doors in them, either at the lower deck or in the hold."

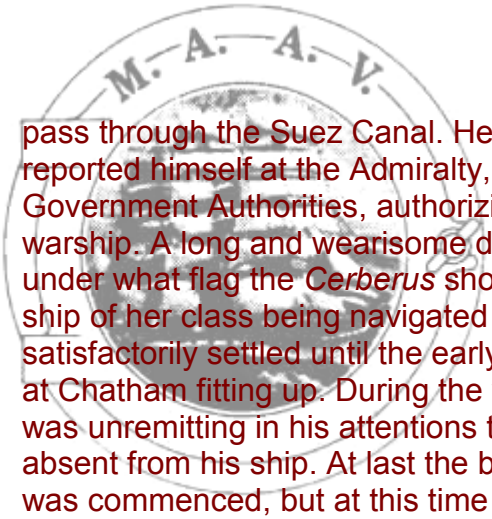
For the voyage out to Melbourne temporary sides were constructed extending from the curve-in of the breastwork to the bow and stern, a full three masted rig was also provided.

A contemporary account published in the Illustrated Australian News of April 22nd, 1871 provides us with an insight into the trials and tribulations encountered in preparing for the voyage to Melbourne and the voyage itself.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE VOYAGE

Lieutenant Panter commander of the *Cerberus*.

"With reference to the passage out of this unique vessel of war, we may remark that twelve months has scarcely elapsed since Lieutenant Panter left these shores for the purpose of bringing out the *Cerberus* to Port Phillip Bay. He left Melbourne by the English Mail on the 24th of April 1870, and has consequently arrived within a fortnight of the twelve months. When on his way to England he successfully made arrangements with the necessary authorities for the *Cerberus* to



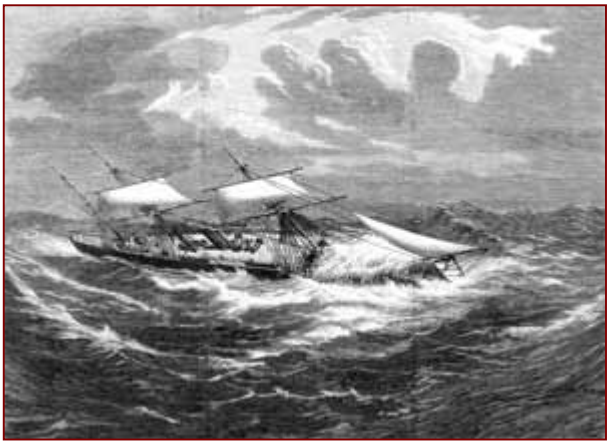
pass through the Suez Canal. He arrived in England in June, and at once reported himself at the Admiralty, presenting his credentials from the Victorian Government Authorities, authorizing him to take charge of and bring out the new warship. A long and wearisome delay thereupon took place in order to decide under what flag the *Cerberus* should be sent out, as there was no precedent for a ship of her class being navigated under the merchant flag. This question was not satisfactorily settled until the early part of October 1870, the ship meanwhile lying at Chatham fitting up. During the whole of these five months Lieutenant Panter was unremitting in his attentions to his duties, not being more than 48 hours absent from his ship. At last the business of taking stores for the outward voyage was commenced, but at this time only 25 men had been shipped, and as the shot weighed 400 lbs. each, the work was necessarily slow. When the *Cerberus* was handed over to Lieutenant Panter by the Admiralty, there was not a single article in the way of stores on board her, and he, therefore, had the whole of this work to do to get the vessel ready for sea. At this stage of the proceedings another piece of red-tapeism cropped up, and Captain Chamberlain, superintendent, objected to the vessel being supplied with provisions from the yard, as they did not come under the title of stores. This question had to be referred to the Admiralty, entailing a further delay of three weeks, but at last the matter was decided in Lieutenant Panter's favor. Everything being on board ready for sea, it was discovered that the two shot rooms which were on the one side of the vessel, had 40 tons of shot, having been taken on board against 20 tons of powder on the other side, thus the vessel had a strong list of six degrees. Another communication was forwarded from the Admiralty instructing him to fill up one of the watertight compartments so as to bring the vessel on an even keel.

STILL DELAYED

Lieutenant Panter, however, objected to this course, and after some little delay, the officials at the Admiralty agreed to remedy the defect, which caused a further delay of four days. All these little inconveniences having been adjusted, the *Cerberus* proceeded down the river to Sheerness to adjust her compasses, which were found to have a deviation of 66 degrees. This matter having been settled, on the 29th October the *Cerberus* made her first start on her voyage, the first port of call being Plymouth. In the Downs, however, she met with a stiff gale of wind, which with a heavy head sea, tried all her sea-going powers, and kept her lower deck thoroughly washed all the time. Indeed, to such an extent was the latter process carried out that the whole of the 25 men comprising the crew were constantly employed in baling the deck out with buckets. During this gale the vessel was perfectly unmanageable, as she would neither steer nor steam more than 1.5 knots per hour, but as the cause of this was set down to her trim, it was fully anticipated that the next port would put matters all right. Spithead was at last reached, and as showing the heavy weather then prevailing, it may be mentioned that on the day following no less than 60 vessels put into anchorage through stress of weather. Proceeding thence to Plymouth, which was to be the final port of departure from the English coast, the crew of able-seamen was increased from 25 to 63 although the announced loss of *H.M.S. Captain** militated strongly against a full complement of men being obtained for such a service. The requisite supply of coal having been taken on board, the port was left on the 7th November.

NOTE: **H.M.S. Captain* (6,950 tons) a turret ship designed by Captain Cowper Phipps Coles, R.N., and strongly disapproved of by *Cerberus's* designer, capsized off Cape Finisher on 6th September, 1870. Only eighteen were saved from her complement of 493, the death toll included her commander Captain H.T. Burgoyne, V.C., R.N., and Captain Coles her creator.

AWAY AT LAST



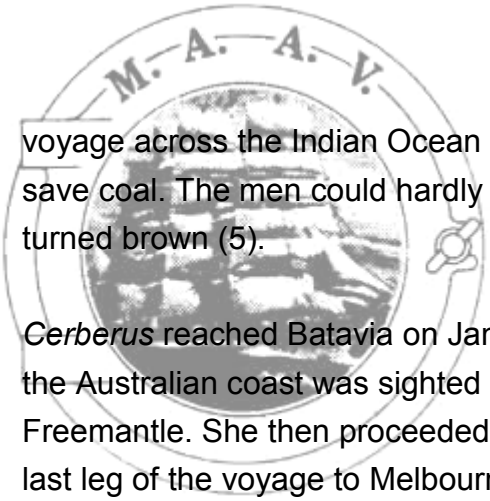
The *Cerberus* in a gale in the Bay of Biscay on her voyage to Melbourne.

Two days afterwards a very heavy breeze sprang up, which lasted until the 12th. During this time the *Cerberus* behaved in a very bad manner, rolling so heavily that on one occasion the bilge pieces were fairly thrown out of the water. The ship rolled quite 45 degrees each way, and it is a current rumor in the ship that a man who was asleep on one of the lockers at the time she rolled so heavily was thrown 30 feet without touching the ground. At this time the only canvas shown was a close-reefed main try-sail with the head hauled in, and a fore staysail or fore try-sail used occasionally. Even with this canvas and the steam it was found almost impossible to keep the vessel head to wind, and Lieutenant Panter puts this down as one of the worst gales he has experienced. Upon arriving at Gibraltar a few days subsequently he was told it was a far heavier gale than the one in which the Captain was lost, and surprise was evinced that he had not had to cut away his masts. This was particularly stated, as he carried 1,900 tons above the water mark, and only 1,800 tons below water line. The Admiral at Gibraltar told him that he should not allow his vessel to roll more than ten degrees before he cut his masts away, but this advice he had not found necessary to carry out."

At Malta on the 28th of November nearly all hands on shore broke ship and one crew member was drowned when a boat overturned. Men on shore continued to break leave the following day and it was necessary to post a guard boat day and night to prevent further deserting. The next day 10 men were sent ashore to gaol (5).

Cerberus reached Port Said on December the 19th and two days later under tow began the passage through the Suez Canal.

In the Red Sea approaching Aden temperatures in the engine room reached 123°F the stoke-hold was 142°F. This problem was further aggravated during the



voyage across the Indian Ocean when the ventilation engines were turned off to save coal. The men could hardly breathe and the paint work in some cabins turned brown (5).

Cerberus reached Batavia on January the 17th and sailed on February the 25th, the Australian coast was sighted on March 15th. Three days later she arrived in Freemantle. She then proceeded to Albany to paint ship in preparation for the last leg of the voyage to Melbourne.

On the ninth of April, *Cerberus* entered Port Phillip Bay, her arrival was described as follows in the Illustrated Australian News (4).

"At an early hour on the 9th, a sharp lookout was kept for the arrival in Hobson's Bay of the latest addition to the Victorian Navy. Nothing, however, was seen of her until about 12 o'clock, when her hull was seen looming in the West Channel, and by half past twelve she had passed the light ship, and shortly after brought up of Williamstown about two cables' lengths astern of the *Nelson*. When she was first sighted down the Bay, Captain Payne, chief harbormaster, and Mr. Call, P.M., put off in the harbor boat and proceeded to meet her, but beyond this no official notice was taken of her arrival, and coming out as she did, under the merchant flag, she was only boarded in the usual manner by the custom's authorities. Some little recognition of her quality was, however, given as she steamed past the *Nelson*, the boys of which manned the rigging and saluted her with three hearty cheers, the ensign being dipped at the same time. Shortly after her anchoring, Captain Koltovskoy, of the *H.I.R.M.S. Haydamack*, sent an officer on board with his compliments to Lieutenant Panter. No sooner had the ironclad anchored in the bay than the news was disseminated throughout the suburbs, and there was a general rush to Sandridge in order to have a look at the novelty. The boatmen at the pier drove a roaring trade, and in a very short time the decks of the vessel were crowded with a throng of gaily dressed pleasure seekers who swarmed over every part, from hurricane deck to stokehold. The crew were very obliging, and eager to show the visitors over every part, but owing to the crush, it was impossible for everything to be seen at one view."

Lieutenant Panter was promoted to Captain and Senior Officer of the Victorian Navy. The removal of the top-hamper and the reconditioning of the *Cerberus* took over five months and it was not until the 25th of August she carried out her first trial in Port Phillip. This turned out to be a rather sorry affair with an inexperienced crew. The following day a number of passengers including members of Parliament were taken on board.

The members of Parliament were allowed to fire the guns and the *Cerberus* then proceeded to Geelong. On entering she ran aground but got off without damage

and anchored in Corio Bay where she remained the centre of attraction for some days (6).

The *Cerberus* as she appeared in 1871.

After completing her trials, the *Cerberus* spent most of the next fifty years quietly rocking at her moorings off Williamstown. She was a regular participant in the Easter Maneuvers and other exercises, it was during one of these that five men were killed at Queenscliff when a torpedo (mine) accidentally exploded (7).

New boilers were installed in 1883 (8)

Visiting naval dignitaries were often invited to inspect her and to comment on the efficiency of the crew. Life on the *Cerberus* followed a set routine, and she was manned permanently by a nucleus crew, their day to day activities being described in detail in a two part article appearing in the Williamstown Chronicle of the 24th of February and the 1st of March, 1864.

"As but few people have any idea of what life is on board a man-of-war, it may not be uninteresting to Victorians to know something of the crew of their own ironclad, and the routine to which they are subjected. In the first place, it should be stated that the crew of the *Cerberus* numbers seventy seven all told. Her commander is Captain Mandeville who has command of the permanent naval

force of the colony. His next in command is Lieutenant Collins, who is at present in England. The gunnery and instructive branch is under the supervision of Mr. John Smith, RN and Mr. J.H. Tubb, who has for many years been gunner in the naval forces. The chief engineer is Mr. Huysman, who has under him two engineers (one being away on leave), and one officer, and fifteen stokers. He has charge of the engines, twenty in all, and also supervision of the engines of the *Nelson*. The apparatus for generating the electric light is under his care, as well as the two steam launches belonging to the Cerberus. Besides being a first class engineer, Mr. Huysman possesses a thorough knowledge of torpedo boats and the Whitehead torpedo, with the working and construction of which he is fully acquainted. Mr. J.A. Thompson is the paymaster. He keeps all the accounts of the naval forces, including the Naval Reserve, conducts the correspondence, receives all stores and hands them over to the different branches of the service, checks the accounts for the same, and is also responsible for the victualling of the force. He is, in fact, accountant, paymaster, corresponding clerk, and storekeeper, all in one. Mr. Frogley is the chief boatswain, and Mr. Nielson chief carpenter, but they are located on the *Nelson*, as their services are more required there.

The ordinary daily routine of the crew is one that most landsmen would regard as rather monotonous, but to the tar there is a charm in being afloat which compensates for all drawbacks. The crew are necessarily all early risers, and have also to ‘turn in’ early at night, and it is no wonder that, with their regular mode of life and the pure air they breathe, they are a fine robust lot of men. The first to be called up in the morning are officers, the boatswains’ mates, and hammock stowers, who are aroused at a quarter past 5 o’clock, the hands being ‘turned up’ a quarter of an hour later. At twenty minutes to 6 they muster and wash decks, and at half-past 6 the hammocks of night duty men (who are allowed the extra hour) are lashed up. At a quarter to 7 a flag, ‘letter B’, is hoisted, which is a signal to recall ‘liberty men’ who are on shore, and who are supposed to leave the Williamstown pier by the time the flag is lowered, which is five minutes afterwards. At five minutes to 7 the cooks of messes prepare the breakfast, which is served at 7 o’clock. At half past 7 o’clock the boatswain crews ‘clean, in the rig of the day’, that is, they tidy themselves and dress in the costume of the day, blue or white rig’ as may be ordered. The watch on deck fall in at quarter to 8, at which time the watch below cleans the lower deck and steerages, and the boat for officers and the post is got ready. The recall for officers is hoisted at ten past 8, and at ten minutes past 9 hands are set to clean. There are divisions and inspection at half past 9, and drill in accordance with routine. Drills are dismissed at half past 11, and the decks are cleared up. Dinner is partaken of at noon, and at quarter past 1 o’clock the men fall in again and are drilled. At the same time a boat is sent away for the post. The drills are dismissed, decks cleaned, and pumps rigged at half past 3, and at 5 a well earned ‘supper’ is sat down to. Quarters at half past 4, when ‘liberty men’ are landed, and a boat is got out for officers and the post. ‘Liberty men’ are those of the crew who are permitted to go ashore. The boats not required are hoisted in at sunset, and the order is ‘stand by hammocks’. The lower deck is cleared up at a quarter to 9, and at 9 o’clock the order is ‘out lights on the lower deck’, and ‘the weary sailor turns to rest’. Petty officers turn in at 10 o’clock, and officers at 11 o’clock. The commanding officer has to visit the different parts of the vessel once each day and night.

Besides the duties mentioned a fixed weekly routine is followed in the following order: On Sundays the decks are cleared at 6 o’clock in the morning. The church

party is landed at 10 o'clock, and dinner is served when they return, which is generally at about 1 o'clock. At 6 p.m. they 'shift clothing'. On Mondays they have general quarters in the forenoon, and class drill in the afternoon, reference to which will be made further on. On Tuesday mornings, small-arms men are landed, if practicable, or the men are exercised at turret drill, and in the afternoon at cutlass or pistol drill. Wednesday mornings are set apart for rifle drill, and the afternoons to fire quarters (which will also be referred to again), also rifle and sword bayonet drill. At half past 4 o'clock on the same afternoons, hammocks are scrubbed. On Thursdays they land small-arms men if practicable, or have class drill in the morning, and in the afternoon 'liberty men' are landed, and extra drill men fall in for drill. They are put to turret drill on Friday mornings. After dinner to cleaning and paint work, and at half past 4 o'clock sling clean hammocks. Saturdays are set apart for cleaning the ship, and liberty men are landed in the afternoons.

The foregoing are the regular routine duties of the crew, which are of course distinct from those of the engineer's staff, who have plenty to do, as will be seen by the following outline of their particular work:

They have daily to turn main and all auxiliary engines, and effect all necessary repairs to the same. On Sunday they clear up, generally. Each Monday they have to examine and work all watertight doors, ventilating, sluice, and magazine flood valves and cocks, and the connections to the same. On Tuesdays they examine the interior of the double bottoms, longitudinals, air valves, fresh water condensers, fire pumps and connections.
Each Wednesday there is an examination of boilers, superheater and connections, turret engines, and gear for revolving the turrets. On Thursdays they examine and refit, as may be necessary the steam launch and cutter, steering rams and connections. On Fridays there is an examination of the electric lights and dynamo machine, telegraph gear in connection with the different parts of the ship, both mechanical and electrical. Saturdays are set apart as general cleaning days.

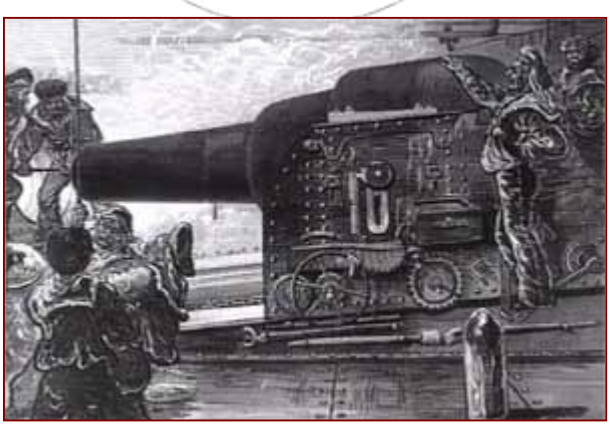
The crew have most time to themselves in the evenings, and they then amuse themselves as they like. In fine weather, after the duties of the afternoon have been performed, they 'tumble up' on deck, and indulge in various kinds of pastime, singing and step-dancing, jumping, and a dozen other modes of amusing themselves, and there are not a few of them who spend a good deal of their spare time at fancy work, in which some sailors display great taste. When the weather is bad they find plenty of amusement for themselves below and many hard fought games of crib, euchre, whist, draughts, and chess have been played upon their mess tables whilst their quarters have rung again with the boisterous laughter which has followed the narration of a tough yarn, or the perpetration of a good joke. Manly as sailors are, there are no men who give themselves over to pleasure with more abandon and boyishness than they do, and the very wantoness of their mirth does one good to witness.

The men are rationed in first class style, and, of course, fare much better in port than they would if at sea. Fresh provisions, meat, vegetables, bread, etc. are brought off from the shore at half past seven o'clock every morning. Before being received over the gangway they are inspected by the quartermaster cook, and steward. If passed, they are checked by the paymaster, and apportioned to the

cook of each mess. The men are each allowed half a gill of rum per day, or an equivalent in money, which is recorded to their credit.

The half of each watch is allowed to go ashore on alternate nights, leaving the ship at half past 4 p.m. and returning at 7 o'clock next morning. The men not absolutely required on board are allowed public holidays.

The conduct of the men is, as a rule most exemplary, and the officers have but little trouble with them, as they are thoroughly amenable to the discipline of the ship, and do their work in a willing and satisfactory manner. Should however, any of them misbehave themselves, the vessel is provided with a dungeon deep in the fore compartment, where they can be confined pending inquiry when in port, or imprisoned when at sea. The prison has, however, been 'to let' up to the present, and may it long continue so.



Inside a turret of the *Cerberus*: "load!". Wood engraving, 1877.

The best day upon which to visit the *Cerberus* is Monday, which is known as general quarters day. It is on this day that the whole crew are put to quarters, and go through turret and other drills, the men from the *Nelson* taking their places with the others. The turret drill is most interesting, but it is much slower than it would be at sea, as the turrets, etc. have to be worked by manual power, whereas, when the vessel is at sea or in action all is done by steam power. All the work is done by the sound of the bugle, the different calls of which are understood by the men. The first thing done is to clear the ship for action, and upon the sound of the order the crew rush up from below and swarm the decks. Each man knows his post, and in a wonderfully short space of time the deck fittings railings, etc. are all removed, hatchways and ventilator gratings are covered in by great heavy iron plates, secured on the inside. The vessel then presents a singularly bare appearance. No means of entering her is to be seen, excepting the turret port holes, and the grim muzzles of the guns there offer but a slight inducement for any boarding party to negotiate that mode of entry. The ship having been cleared for action the turrets are manned, and an officer takes charge of each turret to take sights on the object to be fired at, and also to fire the guns, by means of an ingenious contrivance, which enables them, whilst standing in the 'well' of their respective turret, to fire which gun they please. The muzzle of each gun is elevated or depressed by appliances within the turrets, and the lateral sight is obtained by revolving the turrets themselves. The guns being muzzle loaders have to be run back in order to load, but being mounted on inclined planes, they slide out again to position of firing. When firing, the 'kick' or rebound sends them right back to the loading position, but in drill, tackle has to be used to haul them back. When merely drilling, a dummy charge, representing 50 lbs. of powder, is used, and an ordinary chilled 400 lb. projectile. After the guns have been brought to bear on an imaginary vessel, and are supposed to have been fired, the turrets are immediately swung round again as soon as all is ready for further firing. The whole work is done very smartly, and notwithstanding the celebrity with which the movements are carried out, there is no undue noise or bustling about, the ponderous guns and massive turrets being worked with wondering ease.

The crew are then put through review exercises as a landing party, and right well they look as they stand in company upon the deck, in their easy fitting garments, with belts and cross-belts, and carrying their Martini-Henry rifles. They go through the bayonet drill and firing exercises, after which arms are grounded, and they do half an hour or so at cutlass drill, in which they are very proficient, as has been seen when the men have appeared in public assaults-at-arms. Besides these exercises, there are classes for ammunition instruction, etc. so as to make them proficient in every branch of their work.

Another interesting feature on quarter days is the fire-quarter drill. The first intimation of fire drill the men have is the alarm rung out by the big bell. In an instant the bugle calls the crew to man pumps, and, for a few seconds only, there is a bustle and excitement as the men go to their quarters. The signal given denotes the locality of the supposed fire, and, in a few minutes, four powerful jets are brought to play, two being supplied by pumps forward, and two aft. There are two 9 in. pumps, and two 7 in. These are worked by manual power when in port, but when at sea steam is used, when, of course, a much greater pressure is maintained. Even by manual labor, however, a splendid supply of water can be obtained, each nozzle throwing jets of water to a distance of over 20 ft. In the event of fire, buckets and wet blankets would also be brought into requisition.

Signaling also forms a portion of the drill, and some of the men are very proficient at this. The mode adopted on the *Cerberus* is the semaphore system, in the day time flags half yellow and half red being used, as these two colours are supposed to show out best. At night the signaling is effected by flashlight.

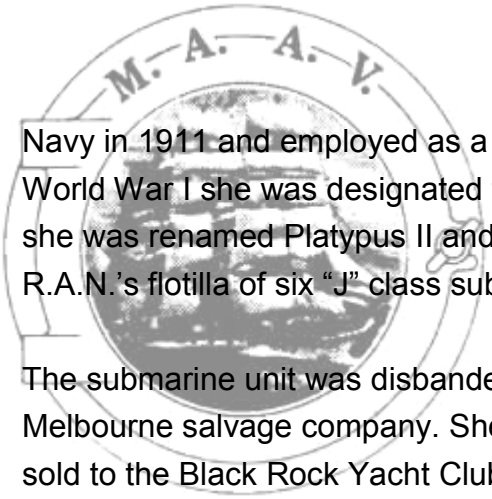
At one time the *Cerberus* possessed an excellent band, and its strains were often listened to with pleasure by those on the other vessels in the Bay as they were wafted over the water. The band used frequently to appear in public, and was greatly appreciated. Although some of the members still practice together, the majority no longer belong to the crew, and therefore the vessel may be said to be without a band.

It is a great pity that the crew are not afforded better opportunities for practice in the Bay, for, no matter how perfect they may be in their drills, still nothing can do so much to make them thoroughly proficient as the actual maneuvering of the vessel and firing practice."

In 1896 a new 18 ton gun was installed and in 1903 plans were prepared far installing modern 7.5 inch B.L. guns, however, this proposal was never adopted (6).

In 1901 control of the State Naval Services was transferred to the commonwealth. The *Cerberus* was taken over by the Royal Australian

The *Cerberus* at the Williamstown Naval Depot, Victoria, 1915.



Navy in 1911 and employed as a tender to the Williamstown Naval Depot. During World War I she was designated the Port Guard Ship. On the 1st of April, 1921 she was renamed Platypus II and became the Submarine Depot ship for the R.A.N.'s flotilla of six "J" class submarines stationed at Geelong.

The submarine unit was disbanded in 1924 and the *Cerberus* sold to a Melbourne salvage company. She was stripped of everything of value and then sold to the Black Rock Yacht Club for use as a breakwater.

On the 9th of July, 1926, the Black Rock Yacht Club requested permission from the Sandringham Council to place the *Cerberus* off Black Rock. After permission had been granted two councilors who also happened to be members of the Black Rock Yacht Club suggested that the whole of the cost of purchase, and removal to Black Rock be borne by the Council. A heated debate followed, and the Council finally resolved that 150 pounds be paid, "as it was in the interest of the Municipality that the hulk be secured". The Town Clerk was then asked to request that the Government pay the costs of removal to Black Rock (9).

On the 2nd of September, 1926, the *Cerberus* was towed to her final resting place at Half Moon Bay and scuttled in shallow water to form a breakwater (10).

The *Cerberus* Preservation Trust was formed in 1970 with the aim of raising and restoring the *Cerberus*. This organization later became the Maritime Trust of Australia. It has been suggested by the Maritime Trust of Australia that the *Cerberus* be raised as part of Australia's Bicentenary celebrations (11), however there appears to be little interest in, or public support for this project and it is likely that the *Cerberus* will remain where she is.

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