



## Captain O.M. MAY OBE, VRD, RANR

[1923 – 2018]



**Captain May was President of the Club from 1977 to 1979**

Osmonde Marshall May (universally known as “Osie”) was born in Wynnum, Queensland on 17 April 1923. His parents, Marshall and Anne May also had a daughter, Adrienne, and lived in Australia and Fiji where Marshall had a building contracting business.

Osie attended Wynnum North Primary School and his secondary schooling was at Suva Grammar, Fiji.

On 16 February 1946 he married Beryl Laura Joan Goss at the Wesley Methodist Church, Kangaroo Point in Brisbane. It was a military wedding - *The bride ... will be attended by Mesdames E. R. Cummings, and A. Sandor, and Miss J. Perrett.. Lieuts. D. G. Mitchell and J. Milne, and Mr. R. Goss will attend the bridegroom. The honeymoon will be spent at Lapstone, Blue Mountains.* The marriage was to be enduring (72 years)– Beryl died before Osie in 2018.

Lieutenant and Mrs May lived at New South Head Road, Rose Bay while Osie completed a Bachelor of Economics (majoring in Statistics) at the University of Sydney in 1949.

*We thank the History Interest Group and other volunteers who have researched and prepared these Notes The series will be progressively expanded and developed. They are intended as casual reading for the benefit of Members, who are encouraged to advise of any inaccuracies in the material.*

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The family grew with the births of three children - Marshall (1946), Christopher (1953) and Rowena (1956). Marshall became a psychiatrist, Christopher, an emergency physician and Rowena became a school deputy principal. All three became Club members.

Returning to Brisbane in 1949, they lived at Coopers Plains while Osie returned to the civilian work force as a Research Officer in the Department of Labour and National Service.

In 1951 they purchased a property at 197 New Cleveland Road (later Tingalpa Road) Tingalpa and christened it "Berosma". Ossie, along with his brother-in-law renovated and extended the house at Tingalpa to a very large and comfortable three-bedroom home with double garage and granny flat for his parents. It was to be their home for 46 years until they move to retirement living at Sheldon. Osie spent his last year in care at "Mandalay", Cleveland.

By 1958, Osie was working in Queensland Treasury Statistics Branch as a supervisor and then in the combined Queensland Statistical Office and Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics. In 1974 the unified Australian Bureau of Statistics was formed, and Osie became the Deputy Commonwealth Statistician for Queensland until his retirement in 1981. He was an envoy of the Australian Government to the South East Asian United Nations Economic Forum in the mid-1970s (Bangkok, Thailand)

For many years Osie and Beryl were heavily involved in fund raising for the General Gordon Memorial Kindergarten which is still in operation.

Osie first joined the Club in 1949. He was Vice-President 1975-1977, and President 1977-79. He was on the Committee as Immediate Past President 1980-81.

For many years, Osie drove a large gold Ford Falcon station wagon with number plates "OMM17" and the United Service Club Crest! It was a frequent visitor to the Club car park. He was immensely proud of the Crest.

Captain May's principal naval promotions and appointments were:

May 1942	Sub-Lieutenant RANVR
5 June 1942	Mobilised
July – December 1942	Service on HMAS <i>Bingera</i> and HMAS <i>Mildura</i>
5 December 1944	Lieutenant (Provisional) RANVR
14 March 1946	Demobilised
15 March 1946	Lieutenant RANVR
5 April 1948	Re-mobilised <i>HMAS Rushcutter</i>
5 Aug 1948	De-mobilised
October 1949	HMAS <i>Penguin</i>
January 1951 – August 1952	Moreton Boom
31 December 1952	Lieutenant Commander RANR
1958-73	Commanding Officer Brisbane Port Division
July 1960	Commander
1970	NOIC Brisbane and Captain
16 April 1982	Retired List

He was created an Officer of the Order of the British Empire OBE (Military Division) in June 1969 for his naval service.

Captain May was appointed as an Aide de Camp to Her Majesty, The Queen 1971-72.

He was Queensland State Chairman of the Committee for Employer Support for Reserve Forces (CESRF) in the late 1980s

Captain May served in Royal Australian Navy ships in SW Pacific during World War II. He qualified at the "Fairmile School" at HMAS *Rushcutter* in November 1942. Service included on the Fairmile HMAS Air Clan [ML428] as Commanding Officer from commissioning in Sydney on 11 December 1944 to March 1946.



HMAS *Air Clan* [ML428]

From April 1945 the ship operated largely in Eastern Indonesian (Borneo, Sarawak, the Celebes, Banda Archipelago) and New Guinea waters. It conducted numerous search and rescue missions in support of RAAF.

In September 1945 the ship was busy with the transporting of surrendering Japanese General Yamamura in Kuching (Sarawak); transporting General Wooten of 9<sup>th</sup> Division; repatriating internees and PoW's; and transporting enemy PoWs.

May's ship developed serious engine problems and was towed from Morotai to Sydney in December 1945 for repairs.

## Fairmiles

The Fairmile B motor launch was a type of motor launch (often referred to as MLs) built by British boatbuilder Fairmile Marine during the Second World War for the Royal Navy for coastal operations.

In Australia 35 boats entered service from October 1942. They were employed on routine patrols, convoy escorts, running special forces in and out of Japanese-held areas, boom defence patrols in harbours at home and abroad, courier operations, survey work, and raiding Japanese-held coasts.

Displacement:	85 tons
Length:	112 ft (34 m)
Beam:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 18 ft 3 in (5.56 m)</li><li>• except Canadian built at 17 ft 0 in (5.18 m) or 17 ft 10 in (5.44 m)</li></ul>
Draught:	4 ft 10 in (1.47 m)
Propulsion:	Two 650 bhp (480 kW) <u>Hall-Scott</u> Defender petrol engines
Speed:	20 knots (37 km/h; 23 mph)
Range:	1,500 mi (1,300 nmi; 2,400 km) at 12 knots (22 km/h; 14 mph)
Complement:	16 (later increased)
Armament:	(for 1940 Sub Chaser) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 × <u>QF 3-pounder Hotchkiss</u></li><li>• 1 × twin <u>0.303 in</u> machine guns</li><li>• 12 depth charges</li></ul> Later (some vessels): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 × QF 3-pounder Hotchkiss</li><li>• 2 × twin 0.303 in machine guns</li><li>• 1 × <u>Oerlikon 20 mm cannon</u></li><li>• 1 × <u>Bofors 40 mm gun</u></li></ul>

HMAS Air Clan [ML428] was a Fairmile B class vessel built at Green Point Boatyard, Sydney, Australia in March 1943. It was disposed of by the RAN in March 1947.

Captain May died at Cleveland on 31 October 2018 aged 95.

Sources included:

- Various web pages
- *United Service Club, Queensland: The First Century, 1892-1992* by Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton
- Club Meeting Minutes, Annual Reports and sundry documents
- Interview and material from Dr Chris May (son).