= Henry Burrell (admiral) =

Vice Admiral Sir Henry Mackay Burrell , KBE , CB (13 August 1904 ? 9 February 1988) was a senior commander in the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) . He served as Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) from 1959 to 1962 . Born in the Blue Mountains , Burrell entered the Royal Australian Naval College in 1918 as a thirteen @-@ year @-@ old cadet . His first posting at sea was aboard the cruiser HMAS Sydney . During the 1920s and 1930s , Burrell served for several years on exchange with the Royal Navy , specialising as a navigator . Following the outbreak of World War II , he filled a key liaison post with the US Navy , and later saw action as commander of the destroyer HMAS Norman , earning a mention in despatches .

Promoted captain in 1946 , Burrell played a major role in the formation of the RAN 's Fleet Air Arm , before commanding the flagship HMAS Australia in 1948 ? 49 . He captained the light aircraft carrier HMAS Vengeance in 1953 ? 54 , and was twice Flag Officer of the Australian Fleet , in 1955 ? 56 and 1958 . Burrell was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1955 and a Companion of the Order of the Bath in 1959 . As CNS , he began a major program of acquisitions for the Navy , including new helicopters , minesweepers , submarines and guided @-@ missile destroyers . He also acted to reverse a plan by the government of the day to dismantle the Fleet Air Arm . Knighted in 1960 , Burrell retired to his farm near Canberra in 1962 and published his memoirs , Mermaids Do Exist , in 1986 . He died two years later , aged eighty @-@ three .

= = Early career = =

Henry Mackay Burrell was born at Wentworth Falls , in the Blue Mountains district of New South Wales . He was the third child and only son of schoolteacher Thomas Burrell and his wife Eliza . Henry 's father , who had emigrated from England , joined the Australian Imperial Force at the age of fifty @-@ five during World War I , seeing active service in Egypt . His grandfather and great @-@ grandfather had served in the Royal Navy . Henry attended Parramatta High School before entering the Royal Australian Naval College , Jervis Bay , on 1 January 1918 , at the age of thirteen . A keen sportsman , he competed in rugby union , tennis and hockey , winning colours for hockey . Burrell graduated from the college in 1921 and became a midshipman the next year . He went to sea first aboard the light cruiser HMAS Sydney and then the destroyer HMAS Stalwart . Posted to the United Kingdom for further training in 1924 , he served on the light cruiser HMS Caledon and the battleship HMS Malaya . In April 1925 , he was promoted to sub @-@ lieutenant , rising to lieutenant by July 1926 .

After attending a Royal Navy course in 1930 , Burrell became a specialist navigator , and saw service aboard the minesweeper HMS Pangbourne , destroyers HMAS Tattoo and Stuart , and cruiser HMAS Brisbane . He married Margaret MacKay at Scots ' Church , Melbourne , on 27 December 1933 . Burrell was promoted to lieutenant commander in July 1934 , and graduated from an advanced navigation course the following year .

Burrell served on exchange with the Royal Navy as navigator aboard the cruisers HMS Coventry and HMS Devonshire , the latter during her tour of duty in the Spanish Civil War . Described as being " egalitarian " and " approachable " , his familiarity with ratings earned him the criticism of Devonshire 's captain ; Burrell however believed that a close relationship between officers and men was necessary for the smooth running of a ship . After completing the Royal Navy 's staff course in 1938 , he returned to Australia and was appointed staff officer (operations) at the Navy Office , Melbourne , in March 1939 . It was Burrell 's first shore @-@ based position , and he spent the next four months bringing naval sections of the War Book (preparations for war) up to date .

= = World War II = =

Burrell was still based at the Navy Office when World War II broke out in September 1939 . A reorganisation of the headquarters in May 1940 saw him promoted to commander and given the new role of Director of Operations , overseeing troop convoys and their air cover , local defence ,

and staffing issues . Burrell 's " full knowledge of Australian naval plans and resources " led to Prime Minister Robert Menzies personally nominating him to participate in staff talks with representatives of the Royal Navy and US Navy in October . Soon after , he was posted as the first Australian naval attaché to Washington , D.C. , in an effort to improve communications with the US in light of the threat from Japan . Burrell was credited with helping to foster closer cooperation between the two navies in the Pacific region . He also warned the Australian government that Britain and the US would adopt a " Germany @-@ first " strategy in the event of war with Japan , and that the US was prepared to weaken its Pacific fleet to help secure the Atlantic .

Posted to Britain , Burrell was appointed commanding officer of the newly commissioned N @-@ class destroyer HMAS Norman on 15 September 1941 . The ship 's first operation was transporting a Trade Union Congress delegation led by Sir Walter Citrine to Archangel , Russia . After returning to Britain , she steamed to the Indian Ocean to join Admiral Sir James Somerville 's Eastern Fleet at Addu Atoll , Maldives , on 26 February 1942 . Following the Eastern Fleet 's withdrawal to Kilindini , Kenya , Norman took part in the capture of Diego Suarez on Madagascar on 7 May . Later that month , she was reassigned to the Mediterranean and in June was involved in Operation Vigorous , an unsuccessful attempt to resupply the besieged island of Malta . Transferred back to the Indian Ocean , Burrell led Norman in the second campaign of the Battle of Madagascar in September , and was mentioned in despatches on 19 February 1943 for his " bravery and resource " during the operation . By this time Norman was escorting convoys in the Pacific , before deploying to the South Atlantic for anti @-@ submarine duties in April ? May .

On 23 June 1943 , Burrell relinquished command of Norman and returned to the Navy Office , Melbourne , as Director of Plans . Having been divorced from his first wife Margaret in November 1941 , he married mineralogist Ada Weller (also known as Ada Coggan) on 21 April 1944 ; the couple had a son and two daughters . Burrell took charge of the RAN 's latest Tribal @-@ class destroyer , HMAS Bataan , at her commissioning in Sydney on 25 May 1945 . Arriving on the scene too late to see action , the ship was deployed to Japan via the Philippines in July , docking in Tokyo on 31 August . There she participated in the formal surrender ceremonies that took place on 2 September aboard USS Missouri . Bataan remained in Japan as Australian Squadron representative until November , assisting with the repatriation of inmates from Japanese prisoner @-@ of @-@ war camps . On a mission to one such camp at Sendai , Burrell located crewmen from the light cruiser HMAS Perth , which had been sunk in the early hours of 1 March 1942 during the Battle of Sunda Strait ; 320 of her complement of 680 survived the sinking , 105 dying in captivity .

= = Post @-@ war career = =

Burrell 's first appointment following the cessation of hostilities was as commander of the 10th Destroyer Flotilla . He was promoted captain in June 1946 , and became Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff (DCNS) that October . As DCNS , Burrell played a major role in establishing the Navy 's Fleet Air Arm and preparing for the introduction of carrier @-@ based aircraft . He was appointed an aide @-@ de @-@ camp to Governor @-@ General William McKell in July 1947 . From October 1948 to the end of 1949 , Burrell served as commanding officer of the heavy cruiser HMAS Australia , flagship of the RAN . Posted to Britain in 1950 , he attended the Imperial Defence College , London , and spent two years as Assistant Australian Defence Representative . He took command of the light aircraft carrier HMAS Vengeance on 2 December 1952 , less than three weeks after she was commissioned into the RAN after transfer from the Royal Navy . The ship began working up for deployment to the Korean War in June 1953 , but in the end her place was taken by the carrier HMAS Sydney . Vengeance was involved in a collision with HMAS Bataan near the Cocos Islands on 5 April 1954 , while acting as part of the escort for the Royal Yacht of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip during their inaugural tour of Australia , but continued on duty .

Completing his tour as captain of Vengeance , Burrell briefly resumed the role of Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff in August 1954 . The following month he was made an aide @-@ de @-@ camp to the Queen . Burrell was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in the 1955 New Year Honours . In February he became Flag Officer of the Australian Fleet , with the acting rank of

rear admiral ; this was made substantive in July . On 12 May 1956 , he hoisted his standard aboard the recently arrived aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne , marking her replacement of sister ship HMAS Sydney as flagship of the RAN . Burrell was posted soon afterwards to the Navy Office , Canberra , to redevelop the service 's officer structure , leading to a new General List of officers ' seniority . He served as Second Naval Member (Personnel) from September 1956 until January 1958 , when he again became Flag Officer of the Australian Fleet . Appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath in the 1959 New Years Honours , Burrell was raised to vice admiral on 24 February and became First Naval Member , the Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) . He succeeded Vice Admiral Sir Roy Dowling .

 As CNS , Vice Admiral Burrell had to contend with a threat by Defence Minister Athol Townley to disband the Navy 's fixed @-@ wing Fleet Air Arm capability by 1963 , but gained approval for a major vessel re @-@ equipment drive that was to include new submarines , destroyers , minesweepers , and auxiliaries . This led among other things to the procurement of British Oberon @-@ class submarines , selected by Burrell when his original preference for an Australian @-@ built craft proved too expensive , as well as Ton @-@ class minesweepers and the Navy 's first purpose @-@ designed hydrographic survey ship , HMAS Moresby . The re @-@ equipment program also resulted in augmentation of the RAN 's rotary @-@ wing assets with Westland Wessex anti @-@ submarine warfare helicopters . Most significant was the purchase of three Charles F. Adams @-@ class guided @-@ missile destroyers , a decision of " ingenuity and forethought " on the part of Burrell and Navy Minister John Gorton , according to historian Tom Frame . The CNS and his minister enjoyed a close working relationship ; Burrell declared that Gorton " deserves our thanks for his efforts " , and Gorton called Burrell " one of the most honest , sincere and most dedicated sailors " .

 The purchase of the destroyers signalled a shift in reliance for equipment from Britain to the United States that was contrary to prevailing Australian defence policy at the time , particularly in what historian Jeffrey Grey described as " the most British of the Australian services , the RAN " , and provoked pressure from the Royal Navy and UK shipbuilders , which had lobbied for purchase of their County @-@ class destroyer . Burrell later declared that the superiority of the US weapons system was a key factor in his preference for the Adams design over the County class . On a mission overseas to discuss trends and acquisitions in January 1960 , he was rebuffed by Britain 's Chief of the Defence Staff , Admiral of the Fleet Lord Louis Mountbatten , who mistakenly thought him responsible for the imminent dissolution of the RAN 's Fleet Air Arm , but warmly welcomed by the US Chief of Naval Operations , Admiral Arleigh Burke . As it happened , Burrell would gain credit for maintaining the integrity of the FAA , and its fixed @-@ wing component remained viable until the early 1980s . He was appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire in the Queen 's Birthday Honours , gazetted on 3 June 1960 . In June 1961 , he met with his opposite numbers in the Army and Air Force at a Chiefs of Staff Committee conference to discuss the necessity of Australia acquiring nuclear weapons ; the chiefs agreed that the probability such a capability would be required was remote but that it should remain an option under certain circumstances , a position the defence forces maintained during the ensuing decade .

= = Retirement = =

 Burrell made his farewell to the Australian Fleet aboard HMAS Melbourne at Jervis Bay on 8 February 1962 . He left the Navy on 23 February , and was succeeded as CNS by Vice Admiral Hastings Harrington . Burrell retired to Illogan Park , his property near Braidwood in the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales . His son Stuart followed him into the Royal Australian Naval College in 1963 . In retirement Burrell enjoyed horse racing both as a gambler and as the owner of several successful mounts . During the 1960s , he was also a member of the ACT Regional Selection Committee of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trusts .

 Burrell suffered a serious heart attack in 1980 , having been diagnosed with cardiac problems shortly after his retirement from the Navy . His wife Ada died in August the following year . In 1986 , Burrell published his memoirs as Mermaids Do Exist : The Autobiography of Vice @-@ Admiral Sir

Henry Burrell , reflecting on what he described as a " lucky " career , and offering his thoughts on maritime strategy . He died on 9 February 1988 in Woden Valley Hospital . Survived by his three children , Sir Henry Burrell was buried in Gungahlin , Australian Capital Territory , following a private funeral . The Burrell Cup doubles tennis trophy , established by the admiral in 1955 , completed its fifty @-@ eighth year of competition in March 2013 .