



The Shipwright trade is the oldest technical discipline in the Navy going back several centuries to the days when the Ship's Carpenter was a Warrant Officer and ranked with the Gunner and the Boatswain.

Training of Australian naval shipwrights commenced in 1860 - soon after the arrival of the first ship of any colonial State Navy. HMVS VICTORIA arrived in Port Phillip in 1857 to form the nucleus of the Victorian Naval Forces. Trade training in the trade of Carpenter (Shipwright) was carried out at the Williamstown Naval Depot Victoria until Federation when the State Navies were welded into the Commonwealth Naval Forces.

Training of Naval Shipwrights until 1921 was carried out at the Williamstown Naval Depot where trained or partially trained Shipwrights were recruited and given naval indoctrination training before drafting to a ship of the Fleet for consolidation training. Artisans of the Joiner, Plumber, Blacksmith and Painter trades were also recruited in this manner.

In 1921, when Flinders Naval Depot commissioned as HMAS CERBERUS, a Shipwright and Artisan training section was set up in the Barrackmaster's workshop in HMAS CERBERUS.

The first intake of Naval Shipwright Apprentices occurred in HMAS NIRIMBA in July 1956 and the first entered Shipwright category apprentices were:

Naval Shipwright Apprentices R M Davis, J Carlin, T V Shaw,
A F Haigh, M L Kean, C J Robbins and B L Swan.

Haigh was discharged and the remaining six Shipwright Apprentices graduated. Apprentice Shipwright Swan later gained a commission, underwent cross training in Propulsion Engineering and has been promoted to Commander. He was the first NIRIMBA Shipwright Apprentice to reach Commander rank.

Between 1956 and 1962, when the structure and training of all technical trades was reviewed, 113 naval shipwright apprentices entered HMAS NIRIMBA and of these 81 graduated.

The changes to naval shipwright training as a result of the 1962 (RATSTRUC) Report were not as dramatic as other category training streams and the basic change was that the period of NIRIMBA training was reduced from four years to three and a half years.

In 1972, as a result of the NIRIMBA Report (1969), and the SAILSTRUC Report (1970), the whole character of the shipwright training segment of HMAS NIRIMBA was changed radically. The apprentice training time at NIRIMBA was reduced to two years and the category of Naval Shipwright was changed to Marine Technical Hull.



Lofting Shop - 1957
Mr George Bray, Instructor

Training of the Marine Technical Hull Sailors was then merged with the Marine Engineering Training Section of HMAS NIRIMBA and the main training objectives of these apprentice sailors were directed to the skills of welding, heavy plate, plumbing and glass reinforced plastics. They began then to undergo the various allied trades and fitting and machining training taught in HMAS NIRIMBA in the Craft School.

Between 1962 and 1972 before the SAILSTRUC changes, 213 Naval Shipwright Apprentices entered HMAS NIRIMBA, and of these, 192 graduated. Forty three Malaysian Navy Shipwright Apprentices were trained in HMAS NIRIMBA between 1969 and 1972 and three Naval Shipwrights were trained in HMAS NIRIMBA for the Papua New Guinea Defence Force.

Shipwright training began in HMAS NIRIMBA in the present boiler shop and associated buildings in 1956 and the Officer in Charge was Warrant Shipwright K Tydeman. Mr George Bray was the Civilian Instructor in the Shipwright Training Section at that time and still is.

Officers in Charge of the Shipwright Training Section in HMAS NIRIMBA in the years 1956 to 1972 were:

Warrant Shipwright K Tydeman RAN
Lieutenant Bert Hunter RAN
Lieutenant Fred Bush RAN
Lieutenant Vince Fazio RAN
Lieutenant Commander Pat Timmins RAN
Lieutenant Commander Jack Fowler RAN
Lieutenant Hugh MacDuff RAN
Lieutenant Don Kidd RAN

Mr Len Middleton, Senior Instructor

Civilian instructors who have served in the Shipwright Training Section of HMAS NIRIMBA have been:

Mr George Bray	Mr Ian Tait
Mr Len Middleton	Mr Ron Wynne (ex-Lieutenant)
Mr Barry Chaffer	Mr Barry Kimber
Mr Keith Lambert	Mr B Ward

Since 1976, a further stream of Marine Engineering Hull trade training in HMAS NIRIMBA existed under the phase training scheme.

The Marine Engineering Hull training staff at present in HMAS NIRIMBA comprises:

Sub-Lieutenant David George Bewert RAN (Apprentice January 1967 entry)
Warrant Officer MTH John Davison (Apprentice January 1964 entry)



LCDR Jack McNamara and
Commander W J Crossley, Training Commander
Shipwright Shop - 1971

Shipwright Lieutenant Vince Fazio, now retired, recalls that he joined HMAS NIRIMBA from the naval shipwright course at HMAS CERBERUS. His posting was KUTTABUL (for NIRIMBA) on commissioning. There was a bit of confusion as Vince went to KUTTABUL and was told to push off and find his own way to some obscure place called Quakers Hill.

NIRIMBA was at that time under "care and maintenance" as a partially paid-off Naval Air Station, there being only 70 or so officers and sailors, on board. During the period November 1955 until the 'first intake of apprentices' arrived in July 1956, Vince was THE Shipwright of HMAS NIRIMBA and was busy setting up the Shipwright Training School in what is now the Boiler Shop. The Commanding Officer at the time was Lieutenant Commander D J Robertson who later returned as Commander (Executive Officer) of HMAS NIRIMBA.

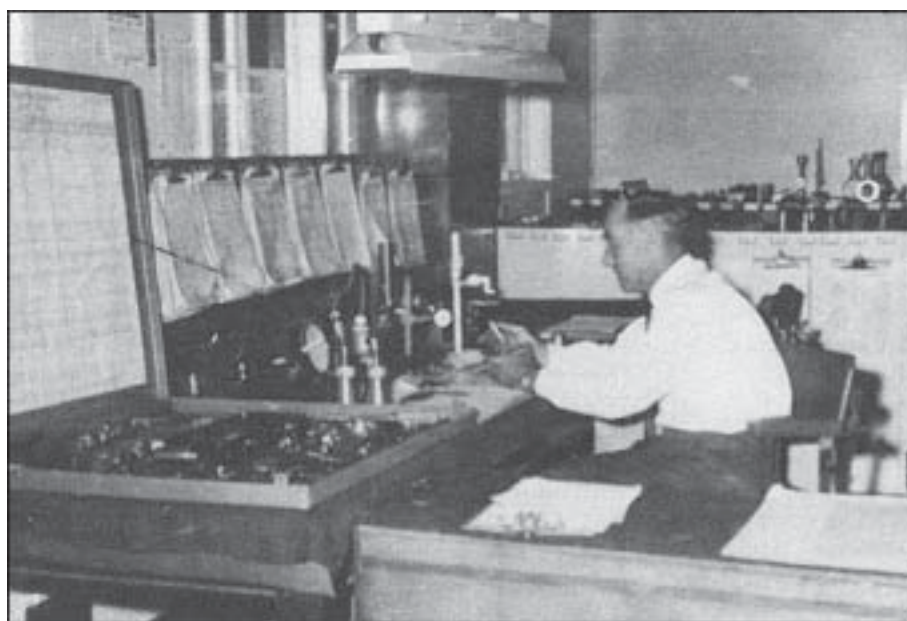
Vince is able to recall that the officer staff of HMAS NIRIMBA prior to the place commissioning as the RAN Apprentice Training Establishment in 1956 comprised:

- Captain F L George RAN - In Command
- Lieutenant Commander Bert Stapleford - Executive Officer & Training Officer
- Lieutenant J Axford
- Lieutenant Commander E F S Nutt
- Instructor Lieutenant Commander E Y Hokin
- Warrant Shipwright K Tydeman
- Warrant Engineer S C Fuller
- Instructor Lieutenant G Young
- Senior Commissioned Gunner J Williams RN
- Lieutenant Commander (Aviation) Harold Kent
- Lieutenant Ted Sangwell
- Lieutenant(S) Bill Fox
- Warrant Officer Stores Vince Frilay.

The Divisional Staff comprised:

- Chief Petty Officer Stoker Mechanic J Burrell, Naval Shipwright Vince Fazio,
- Electrical Artificer D McDonald, Petty Officer QMG Slattery.

Vince remembers that the original machinery for the Shipwright Training School was obtained from the Green Point Shipyard when it closed down. When the Shipwright Shop was being set up, instructions came down from the Executive Officer to leave the centre area clear for the full length of the building to 'enable a yacht to be built there'. The result of that plan was the eventual building of the steel yacht NIRIMBA, which saga forms a separate segment of this history. (See chapter 26.)



Mr Graham 'Jan' Leach
Long serving OIC Marking
Section



Commander B L Swan
Joined NIRMBA as an apprentice (Naval Shipwright)
July 1956 - First Intake