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DEFENCE NEWS

A century of submarine service in the
Royal Australian Navy

The 100th anniversary of submarines operating in the
defence of Australia was commemorated at the Australian
National Maritime Museum on 7 February 2014. Commodore Peter Scott, CSC, RAN, Director General Submarine
Capability, delivered the occasional address – extracts follow.

“The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) was an early adopter
of submarine technology. The arrival of AE1 and AE2 at the
outbreak of the First World War marked the beginnings of a
proud submarine heritage. These first generation sub-
marines … made a significant contribution to the RAN's
World War I service record. Sadly, both submarines were
lost during the war, with AE1 disappearing off Rabaul,
taking with her 35 lives. Her resting place remains one of
Navy's greatest mysteries… Australia did not operate any
indigenous submarines during World War II….. It wasn't until
the 1960s that the modern era of submarines in the RAN
commenced with the acquisition of Oberon-class submarines. The diesel-electric 'O-boats' served from 1967
to 2000 and provided invaluable service.

When it came time to replace the O-boats, no off-the-
shelf design met Australia’s requirements for range,
endurance and overall capability, so a new design solution
was required. The resultant Collins-class guided missile
submarines continue to provide Australia with critical
offensive and defensive capability.”

The RAN will host a number of commemorative
events during 2014. Publicly-accessible events will be
listed on the events section of the Navy website