



When HMAS NIRIMBA was set up for the training of apprentices in 1956, the Syllabus provided for a large segment of craft training in two disciplines - Fitting/Machining and Allied Trades. The Allied Trades segment of craft training was again separated to cover specialist training in the fields of Welding, Sheetmetal Work, Plate Work (Metal Fabrication), Plumbing and Coppersmithing, Enginesmith (Blacksmith), Painting and Preservation, Plastics, Joinery, Woodmachining, Lofting and Boatbuilding and Trade Drawing.

All or some of these skills were planned to be taught to apprentices of different categories according to needs of their category syllabus. The detailed training of Naval Shipwright Apprentices was carried out in Shipwright Training Section and was dedicated to the Shipwright Trade over a period of four years. However the Shipwright Apprentices also underwent craft training in the subjects listed above in addition to dedicated shipwright trade training.

The Craft School was set up in the various buildings in which the school is domiciled today with the separate disciplines in the craft training syllabus under the control of civilian technical instructors with a uniformed officer in overall charge - Lieutenant Jack Shepperd MBE, DSM, RAN.

Officers in charge of the school since then have been:

Lieutenant J Shepperd MBE, DSM, RAN  
 Lieutenant Nigel Berlyn RAN  
 Lieutenant Commander Peter Hardy RAN  
 Lieutenant Commander John George RAN  
 Lieutenant Commander John McNamara MBE, RAN  
 Lieutenant Commander Richard Sproge RAN  
 Lieutenant Commander 'Taff' Jones RAN  
 Lieutenant Commander Jack Fowler RAN  
 Lieutenant Terry Knowles RAN  
 Lieutenant Ray Speight RAN  
 Lieutenant Alan Hennessey RAN  
 Lieutenant Commander John Buttle RAN  
 Lieutenant Bill Forder RAN  
 Lieutenant Graham McDonald RAN



Lt Bill Forder  
 Apprentice January 1958 entry

Of the above, Knowles, Buttle, Forder and McDonald are former NIRIMBA apprentices and Lieutenant Terry Knowles was the first former NIRIMBA apprentice to return as Officer in Charge of the Craft School

Civilian Instructors who commenced craft training of the first entries in HMAS NIRIMBA were:

Mr Wally Swann (Fitting & Machining)	Mr Hark Moscops
Mr George Bray (Shipwright)	Mr Harry Kerr
Mr Jack Baker (Welding)	Mr Laurie King
Mr Max Butler (Welding)	Mr Aubry Davis
Mr Bruce Brewer (Plateshop)	Mr Merv Spring
Mr Keith Leer (Plumbing)	Mr Alwyn Barlow
Mr Vince Collins (Trade Drawing)	Mr L McKinnon
Mr Jack Franklin (Blacksmith)	

Civilian instructors who followed these pioneers in the Craft Training Section have been many. Some well remembered civilian craft training instructors are:

Mr Evan Baker, Mr Eddie Scott, Mr Gordon Forbes, Mr Charles Loines, Mr Laurie Eldridge, Mr Jack Leary-Smith, Mr Jack Baker, Mr Charles Layzell, Mr A Hunter, Mr Roy Forsyth, Mr Eric Scanlan, Mr C Greeves, Mr Keith Leer, Mr E 'Luke' McCain, Mr Allan Phipps, Mr Keith Robertson, Mr Ian Tait, Mr Wally Weaver, Mr Ron Wynne, Mr E Davis, Mr A Richardson, Mr Phil Atkins, Mr B Barlow, Mr Stan Bingham, Mr R Blackie, Mr Ernie Cracknell, Mr K Cutts, Mr David Daines, Mr S Glass, Mr Keith Guthrie, Mr Fred Hadley, Mr Eric Hallam, Mr J Holland, Mr R Johnson, Mr M Johnson, Mr P Lawrence, Mr A McKinnon, Mr D Malcolm, Mr Wilf Matthews, Mr A McGarrity, Mr Ron Payne, Mr R Rodger, Mr R Sell, Mr Colin Smith, Mr R Spencer, Mr Arthur Watts, Mr Bruce Willis, Mr John Morrison, Mr Barrie Ward

Drawing Section:

Mr B Barnes, Mr W Dick, Mr B Kimber, Mr K Paynter.

A Marking Section was set up from the start so that practical trade tests could be assessed by experts and this section commenced under the leadership of Chief Engine Room Artificer Bill Cooper. The Marking Room was located in Building 200. After Chief Cooper left the Navy he returned to the Marking Section to instruct the new OIC Marking Section, Jan Leach. Other specialist officers who have been employed in the Marking Section have been Mr Albert Marshall, Mr Bob Galvin, Mr George Worsfold and Mr Pat Speedy. The personal stories of Mr Jan Leach and Mr Albert Marshall are detailed in a later section of this history. Mr Cooper, then a Chief ERA, was awarded the BEM for outstanding service in HMAS SYDNEY, the RAN's first Aircraft Carrier.



Mr Charles Loines

The current senior staff of the Craft School comprises:

- Lieutenant Bill Forder, RAN (Former Apprentice - January 1958 entry)
- Mr Charles Loines (Allied Trades)
- Mr Ron Payne (Fitting and Machining)
- Mr Derek Searle (Senior Drafting Officer)

Civilian staff in 1983 were or the Allied Trades Section:

- Mr Charles Loines - Senior Technical Instructor II
- Welding ..... Mr Len Smith, Mr Alan Phipps, Mr Elwyn McCain, Mr Roy Rowe, Mr Ian Wykes, Mr Trevor Harris, Mr Ian Cuttle, Mr Steve Renwick, Mr Gary Smith, Mr Brett Hunter.
- Plate Shop ..... Mr Gordon Forbes, Mr Laurie Eldridge, Mr Ken Trueman, Mr J Siddons, Mr John McHugh.
- Pipe Shop ..... Mr Keith Robertson, Mr George Summers, Mr Harry Miller, Mr Col Ryan, Mr John Barlow, Mr Bernie Devlin, Mr Eric Sunnocks.
- Shipwright ..... Mr George Bray (who began instructing in the Shipwright Shop Shop on the day HMAS NIRIMBA commissioned), Mr Len Middleton, Mr Barry Chaffer and Mr Harry Harman.

Civilian staff in 1983 for the Fitting and Machining Section were:

- Mr Ron Payne - Senior Technical Instructor II
- Mr A Robertson, Mr G S Glass, Mr W Timewell, Mr H Walkay, Mr J McCabe, Mr R Rodge, Mr R Johnson, Mr R Hawkins, Mr R Gorbould, Mr D Daines, Mr P Atkins, Mr R Forsyth, Mr G Pearce, Mr M Johnson, Mr M Harrison, Mr J Norris,



Mr D Brown, Mr C Smith, Mr A Magarrity, Mr P Lawrence, Mr J Walzak, Mr F Hadley, Mr K Harris, Mr S Toohey, Mr S Webb, Mr R Spencer, Mr B Barlow, and Mr E Scanlan (who retired after 25 years service in HMAS NIRIMBA in June 1983).

The Metal Fabrication course conducted in the Allied Trades section of the Craft School, which began in 1981 ran a full cycle for Apprentices and Phase II Marine Technical Hull sailors by the end of 1983. The conduct of Shipbuilding and related metal courses in parallel has caused some problems in the Welding and Plate Shops.



Mr Ron Forsyth  
Senior Instructor - Craft School

A considerable amount of work was carried out by the Instructional staff of the Welding and Plate shops to ensure that pilot modules of the Metal Fabrication course were given proper appraisal.

## Work Skill Australia

Work Skill Australia was established in 1982 as a tripartite body under the auspices of the Evatt Foundation. The aim of Work Skill Australia is to raise the standard and status of vocational training and work skills by:



*enabling young tradespeople to publicly demonstrate practical skills through participation in a national system of skill competition, and involving employers, trade unionists, trainers and educators in organising the competitions, and encouraging improvements in training standards.*

A total of 17 competitions with over 1,000 competitors and hundreds of judges and organisers taking part were conducted by Work Skill Australia by mid 1983.

In April 1983 the Regional competition for Apprentices from the Army, Navy and Air Force and from Defence Support Establishments was conducted in HMAS NIRIMBA. Ninety six apprentices from the Forces and Defence Support Establishments took part in the regional competition in HMAS NIRIMBA.

The trade categories involved in the competition were Fitting and Machining, Electrical Wiring, Electric Welding, Metal Fabrication and Carpentry.

Seaman Marine Technical Hull D M Ranson of the January 1980 entry of Apprentices to HMAS NIRIMBA gained first place in the Electric Welding section at the regional competition in HMAS NIRIMBA. The national finals of the WSA competition were held in Melbourne in May 1983 and the World Skill Olympics were held in Austria in August 1983.



Mr Gordon Forbes  
Metal Fabrication Instructor

Many fine people have served in the Craft School in the twenty eight years of its life in both naval and civilian capacity. These and many others who started with minimal resources have had a powerful influence for the good of the Navy in preparing young technical sailors for service in the Fleet. There is a storehouse of anecdotes about the staff, students and activities of the Craft School in HMAS NIRIMBA, but I do not have space here to spin those 'dits'.

