

A Greek boy's commanding position



Sydney's John Stavridis reached a big milestone for himself and Sydney's Greek community last month when he took command of HMAS Arunta, a warship in the front-line of Australia's naval defence.

With the rank of Commander in the Royal Australian Navy, the 41 year old has had his eye on the Captain's chair for some time.

"I always wanted to join the Navy and, with a family history of naval service, it only seemed natural," he said. "Twenty-three years ago my parents were very supportive of my career choice and I have never looked back."

Commander Stavridis was born in Sydney, the son of Iordanis and Kaliopi who immigrated to Australia from the islands of Lemnos and

Samos in the 1960s.

He joined the Navy in 1988 straight out of Sydney's Trinity Grammar School and attended the Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra, completing a university degree, and graduating with honours in 1991.

After navigation training Commander Stavridis specialised as a maritime warfare officer and began to travel the world.

"I have been to a lot of places with the Navy; Asia, the Americas, the Pacific and the Middle East, although I am still waiting for the opportunity to take my ship to Europe – and one day hopefully Greece," he said.

Commander Stavridis considers the Royal Australian Navy an employer of choice.

"I could not think of a better employer in Australia today...the Navy has sponsored me through two masters degrees," he said, adding that it

is the range of job opportunities, adventure, travel, job security and world-class training that makes his career so rewarding.

Commander Stavridis could be the first Australian of Greek heritage to command an Australian warship, although he is not sure.

"What I do know is that all us Greek Australians in the Navy today are serving with pride," he said.

"The Navy is very accepting of my cultural heritage and I personally hold close the Greek customs, language and traditions. My faith is also important to me and the Navy is also very supportive of that."

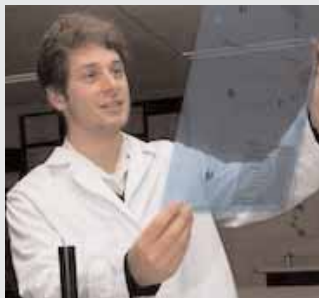
Commander Stavridis has now moved to Perth, Western Australia, where HMAS Arunta is based but his travels are continuing.

He and his crew will be deploying to Darwin and South-East Asia in August to take part in multi-national naval exercises.

(source: neos kosmos)

Two Greek Australian students up for science prize

A year and a half ago, Steven Megaloudis (photo) thought X-Rays were used only at airports or when you broke a bone. Now he and five schoolmates are short-listed for one of Australia's top science prizes for their short film exploring the history, use and importance of the X-Ray. The six students from Melbourne's St Helena Secondary College, including Greek-Australians Steven Megaloudis and Byron Mihailadis, will fly to Sydney later this month for the annual Australian Museum Eureka Prizes. The gala event, celebrating innovation and journalism in science, is partly hosted by celebrity scientist Dr Karl Kruszelnicki. The year 12 students say their aim was to make a three-minute video about a scientific discovery or invention.



"We wanted to stay away from the tacky, unentertaining science video you usually see," Steven says.

"The end result is something we can really be proud of."

The students said they were initially interested in X-Ray technology because it's a rapidly-growing field, particularly in Australia. The team visited the new synchrotron in Clayton, south of Melbourne, which Steven says is basically a super-bright light force, a giant microscope.

"X-Rays have application in other areas, such as biology, looking at the structures of cells," says Steven.

"And I'd never seen an insect breathe before," says Byron. The students worked on this penetrating project during school holidays and public holidays over a year and a half.

"We spent a lot of time researching, there's a lot of information out there," says Byron.

One of the biggest tasks was collating scientific information into a form accessible to those not on the same scientific wavelength.

"People listen when they're interested, so we tried to make the film interesting," says Steven. The students haven't yet showed the film to their fellow students, but say they plan to screen it for the entire school before they head to Sydney.

(source: neos kosmos)

\$20 million construction project approved

A \$20 million upgrade to the Cyprus Community of NSW's site has been given the go ahead after six years and around \$700,000 spent on applying for permits from the Marrickville council.

The Marrickville site, which currently consists of a three level building with clubrooms and offices, will expand to include the construction of 56 units for retirees, a piazza with cafes and restaurants, a gallery, and refurbishments to the existing building.

President of the Cyprus Community of NSW, Michael Christodoulou (photo), said the retiree units are designed for independent living for people aged over 55. He said retirees could purchase a unit, which would later be purchased back by the Cyprus community in the case of the owner moving into care or pass-

ing on. Mr Christodoulou said he was excited that the plans had finally been approved. "We're very excited, it's taken six years, but we're now very pleased with the response we've gotten," he said.

Construction is set to commence in 2011. "We're currently going through the tenders and all the certifications we need to do but building will begin in 2011," Mr Christodoulou said.

The \$20 million upgrade is one of the biggest investments a Greek community organisation in Sydney has ever made according to Mr Christodoulou.

Mr Christodoulou also went on to say that it is important that the Cyprus community is holding onto the site.

(source: neos kosmos)

Hellenic Council NSW promotes Greeks in politics

The Australian Hellenic Council (AHC) of NSW met on Monday for their quarterly meeting, to discuss how to promote issues affecting Greek Australians in the upcoming Federal election.

Secretary of the Australian Hellenic Council NSW, Dr Panayiotis Diamadis, said the meeting looked at the value of Greek-Australians who are members of political parties in promoting Hellenic issues.

"There is a particularly important role for Greek-Australians who are members of all political parties – Labor, Liberal, the Greens and National," he said.

This comes after comments last week from AHC National Co-ordinator Peter Jasonides, where he argued, "privately you can attend any function you want but you can't go representing the AHC at a party fundraiser."

Dr Diamadis declined to com-



Dr Panayiotis Diamadis

ment on the remarks, but said it was important Greek Australians were present at all levels of politics.

"There is a role to be played by Greek politicians, there is a role to be played by members, there is a role to be played by ordinary

members of the Greek Australian community with an interest in a particular issue, be it Cyprus or anything else," Dr Diamadis said.

The meeting also launched the AHC's updated website, www.helleniccouncil.org.au. Dr Diamadis said the website was important to enable Greek-Australians to connect with each-other based around interest, rather than geography.

"We're looking to move away from the first-generation type organisations, towards the second and third-generation ones," he said.

The council also announced a new award to recognise the contribution of a Greek-Australian in Australia. Dr Diamadis said the Alexander Award will be presented at the AHC dinner in November.

(source: neos kosmos)