

Some information on RAN colours and markings post World War 2.

Until recently, I accepted the general view that RAN ships had since the time of the Korean War been painted Storm Grey. However, I have discovered that this is not the case.

First, a slight diversion, the RAN for many years followed the Royal Navy's instructions concerning paint colours. These were issued in Admiralty Fleet Orders (AFOs), Confidential Admiralty Fleet Orders (CAFOs) and Confidential Books (CBs). The RAN supplemented these with their own Commonwealth Naval Orders (CNOs) which in 1965 became known as Australian Naval Orders. The CNOs usually either adopted the RN AFOs completely or a modified version. I have been able to read these recently these, the earliest being dated 1913.

Now back to the RAN's colours etc.

HULL COLOURS

CNO 1946 No.193 took the weatherworks colour back to the pre war grey of AP507C for commissioned ships, AP507C hull and white superstructure for Survey vessels and ships in reserve overall dark grey G10. G10 is actually the same colour as the pre war AP507A, the only difference being that it is a low gloss paint not the high gloss of the AP series.

CNO 1952 No. 325 reiterated the overall colour for commissioned vessels as AP507C with changes to mast colours etc., survey vessels to be overall white with buff funnels and ships in reserve to now be AP507C. So during the Korean War, they were AP507C.

CNO 1955 No. 616 laid down the weatherwork colour for commissioned ships to be BS381C 631 Light Grey. This is the colour from which Storm Grey is *derived*. Light Grey came about in 1930 as colour number 31 and was called Light Battleship Grey. In 1948, this became colour 631 Light Grey. Survey Vessels were to be white with funnels BS381C 358 Light Buff.

Ships boats could be painted any colour except Oxford Blue which was reserved for the Flag Officer Commanding, Her Majesties Australian Fleet or Middle Brunswick Green which was reserved for Flag Officer in Charge, East Australia Area.

A.B.R. 19 Royal Australian Navy Manual of Painting Instructions was issued in May 1956 and laid down the full painting instructions for RAN vessels. ABR is the Australian Book of Reference and is the RAN version of the RN's BR19 with all the colours etc. required to paint RAN vessels listed.

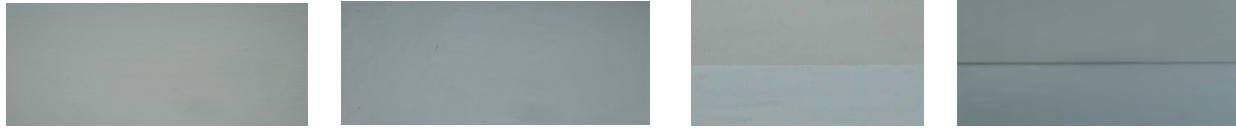
Storm Grey

My access to the ANOs stops at 1975. However, we do know that Storm Grey as a name was introduced in Australia in 1985 with the introduction of AS2700 1985. It did not exist before then. When in 1985, I have no idea as my copy has no actual date of issue, it merely says AS2700 1985. I asked Standards Australia but all they wanted to do was sell me another copy! AS2700 shows 631 Light Grey as the practical equivalent to Storm Grey. This means the colour is similar but not the same. If you look at the colour chips in both standards, they are different colours with Storm Grey darker. This is confirmed by the Munsell description of the two colours. Light Grey is 7.5 6/1 and Storm Grey is 5G 6/1. The higher number (7.5) indicates that it is a lighter grey than Storm Grey at 5. I got some of each mixed up at my local Watty! Trade Centre and both have the same white base and use the same tints but, to make 1 litre, Storm Grey has twice the amount of each tint.

If any old RAN sailor says that the current grey is darker than when he served, he is probably right, if he served before 1985.

So if you are making a model between 1946 and 1955, the colour is AP507C and between 1955 and 1985, you should use BS381C Light Grey as the colour not Storm Grey. The colours might look similar if seen individually but when two models are together, one will be lighter and greener than the other.

N42 Storm Grey in sunlight 631 Light Grey in sunlight Storm Grey top, Light Grey bottom in sunlight and shade



OTHER COLOUR ETC. INFORMATION.

CNO 1955 No. 175 introduced a new non skid deck paint in the colour of BS381C 632 Dark Admiralty Grey which is described as like the current pattern 4158 non slip deck paint Dark Battleship Grey. A piece of history, BS381C came about in 1930 and colour number 32 was called Dark Battleship Grey. In 1948, this became colour 632 Dark Admiralty Grey.

This superseded non slip paints in the colours of Dark Blue Grey and Olive which were to be used up first. Dark Blue Grey is probably the WW2 Deck Colour B15 and may also be BS381C 695 Dark Blue Grey which was introduced in 1948 and deleted from the range in 1964. Unfortunately, I can't get my hands on a copy of BS381C between those dates to see what it actually looked like. Olive is probably BS381C 220 Olive Green which is a deck colour used by RN auxiliaries up until recently.

CNO 1955 No. 191 concerned the use of black boot topping which was restricted in WW2 as an economy measure and was reintroduced to all vessels by this order.

CNO 1955 No. 325 laid down the colours for RAN vehicles.

CNO 1963 No. 554 adopted the SEAT Standard Agreement for hull markings and laid down the sizes as well as instructing a 1" black line around the white markings.

ANO 1972 No. 6 Ikara radomes are to be painted matt light grey not gloss.

ANO 1972 No. 315 AN/SLR-2 radomes are to be painted high gloss black.

ANO 1974 No. 11 Ikara radomes currently painted are to be gloss light grey as a new type of paint has been introduced. 1972/6 is cancelled. Radomes will now be manufactured with grey pigment and will not require painting.

ANO 1975 No. 288 AN/WLR-1 radomes are to be painted high gloss black.

There isn't enough room here to show all the various CNOs, so I'll post them to the forum with a copy of this article.