



NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

October 2020
Volume 4, Issue 10

DOWN THE VOICEPIPE *do you hear there!*

COMING UP

Executive meeting Monday 04th..
January 2021 at 1700

HMAS Perth Memorial Foundation Inc
Executive meeting November 14th, 2020 at
1000.

HMAS PERTH (I) Memorial service St Johns
Church Fremantle 28th. February 2021 at
1200pm

ALL ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THIS
NEWSLETTER ARE PRINTED IN GOOD FAITH
AND DON'T NECESSARY REFLECT THE VIEWS
OF THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA



Navy League of Australia Western Australia Division News update

Another month has come and gone but that hasn't stopped us in our quest to bring our facility up to a much higher standard. Speaking of which, I must thank everyone who has come down to assist with painting, moving items, re-hanging paintings and generally given a much welcomed hand to get us through to the next step in the process, Trevor especially as he seemed to always be on hand with paint brush, sander, cleaning cloth, you name it, he had it. Our meeting room has had new lighting installed, a fresh coat of paint and we have paid for our new flooring, all that's left now to collect it and have it installed.

Membership continues to grow and as always, we encourage anyone to join us. A big misconception is that people need to have been in the Navy or ADF to join Navy League, which is not the case; we encourage any person with an interest in maritime affairs to join and with that, if you know anyone who might enjoy being a part of our organisation please send them our way.

We have been speaking of providing more opportunities to our members of late and with this we have just had our first getaway, a trial run if you will to see just what we have to do to not only provide these opportunities but to do them right. A group of 15 of us recently travelled a little over 600km east of the metropolitan area to Kalgoorlie, the centre of gold mining in WA. Our main purpose for undertaking this venture was to provide a donation to the Royal Flying Doctor Service, a worthy organisation the WA Division has been supporting for over a decade now. We've got a few photos included in this edition and our thanks go to the RFDS, Merredin Military Museum, Hannan's North Tourist Mine, WA Museum of the Goldfields, Southern Cross Caravan Park, Discovery Boulder Caravan Park, Merredin Tourist Village and all who made our trip a huge success. Stand by for news on our next outing or getaway. Naturally, these activities are open to any all of our members who wish to accompany us.

Initial plans are afoot to hold some charity sporting and fun activities. No one needs to be hold any real skills as these events are all about having some fun, camaraderie and a break from the mundane every month or so. Activities will include golf, lawn bowls, ten pin bowling and a sundowner or two to get us started with additional activities to be looked at in more detail as we go along. The idea of the charity sport and fun days, outside of the above, is for each player or spectator to make a gold coin donation which will be tallied and the amount handed over to a chosen worthy beneficiary. If you don't want to play, please come along, cheer on those playing, have a laugh at our sporting prowess or lack thereof, have a catch up with friends over a coffee or just get out of the house and into the fresh air for a couple of hours.

You would have no doubt seen our new advertising page in the September newsletter which is another new initiative whereby we advertise our own or family businesses along with those of people who are keen to support our members by offering discounts on mentioning the newsletter. Currently we have about half a dozen businesses included. Please don't hesitate to get a copy of your business card to Jim O'Neill for inclusion in future editions, after all it's better to support each other where we can, the added bonus of a few dollars saving here and there is not to be sneezed at either.

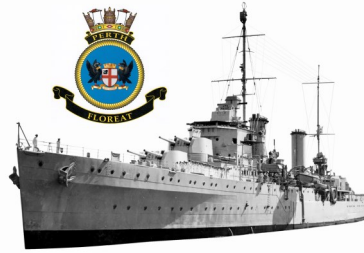
As always, if you have a significant occurrence coming up, a milestone, a birthday, a good joke or have anything you feel may be of interest to the readers please get it into Jim so we can get it out to everyone.

Regards

Brad







HMAS PERTH (I) MEMORIAL FOUNDATION INCORPORATED

The executive crew are settling in for the path ahead. David Nicolson has been working on some exiting things which will be release soon. For those that have ordered polos shirts the order has been placed and I am awaiting confirmation when they will be ready.

The HMAS Perth USS Houston memorial service will be held in St John's church in Fremantle on Sunday 28th. February 2021 commencing at 12:00 pm.

The Foundation is still awaiting the outcome of grant applications applied for and hopefully will here whether we were successful sometime this month. Also waiting to hear from Federal Government on our application DGR so that dononers can receive taxation relief on their donations.

Once we have \$29000 together the next step on the project is to complete the plans and specifications to go to council for approval. Hopefully we can achieve this quite soon depending on donations towards the project.

In February next year we have had talks with the City of Perth with the idea of have a week long exhibition promoting Perth in the Perth Town Hall, we also at the same time hope to have Roland Perry the author of Red Lead in attendance subject to the Co-vid restrictions.

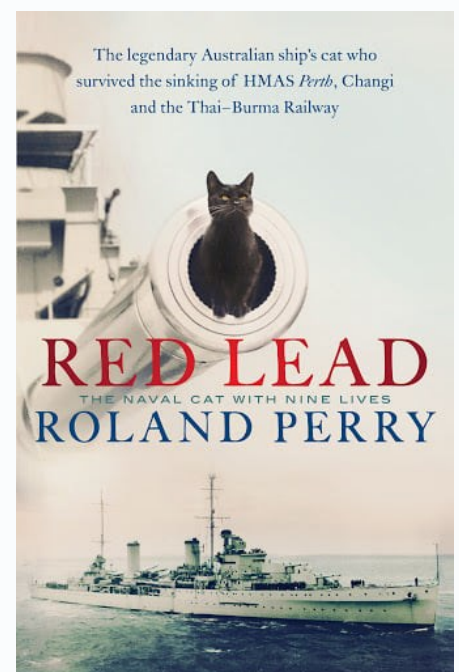
CMDR Jim O'Neill ANC RTD
Project Manager

RED LEAD –By Roland Perry Published by Allen & Unwin October 2020

The legendary Australian ship's cat who survived the singing of HMAS Perth (I) and the Thai-Burma railway.

Just after midnight on 1st March 1942 Australia's most renowned cruiser HMAS Perth (I) was sunk by Japanese naval forces in the Sunda Strait off the coast of Java. Of the 681 men aboard, 328 survived the sinking and made it to shore—and one cat. Named Red Lead, and she was the ship's cat, beloved by the crew and by the Perth's legendary Captaiin Hector Waller. In Perry's inimitable style, this incredible trus story is based on extensive research and the facts brought to life through dramatisations of events and personalities, and their interactions. Perry first researched the background of Red Lead in Java in 1979. He continued with further research in 2018 which included the AWM files on HMAS Perth and on-the-ground research throughout South East Asia.

Roland Perry is one of Australia's best known authors. He has written 35 books., many of them best sellers. Including The Queen, Her Lover and the Most Notorious Spy in history, Horrie the war dog, Bill the Bastard, Don Bradman, The Changi Brownlow, The Australian Light Horse and Monash: The outsider who won the war. Now AVAILABLE IN BOOKSHOPS and Dept stores.



Naval US Navy's cost estimate for new frigate will not hold water, predicts government analyst

By: [David B. Larter](#)



The Navy's rendering of the newly awarded FFG(X). (Source: US Navy)

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Navy's cost estimate for its new Constellation-class [frigate](#) will end up being about 40 percent short of the final cost per ship, the [Congressional Budget Office](#) predicted Tuesday. Eric Labs, the widely respected CBO analyst who produces assessments of Navy programs for lawmakers, [calculated the cost](#) of the ship would be about \$1.2 billion per hull. The Navy's estimate is \$870 million per ship. The whole 10-ship contract, if executed, will cost about \$12.3 billion, CBO estimated. The Navy estimates \$8.7 billion.

The CBO analysis is based on a combination of factors including: the average cost of building similar ships per thousand tons; the cost of similar systems on similar ships; historical data of savings achieved across the life of a shipbuilding program; and it accounts for the fact that the growth of shipbuilding costs historically outpaces inflation in the overall economy. Indeed, if the Navy's estimate were to hold, it would be the least expensive surface combatant in the past 50 years, the report concluded. If the CBO estimate holds true, it will be the latest in a series of programs that have well exceeded their cost estimates. The Navy has been roundly criticized for what the Congressional Research Service estimates is a 27 percent cost growth for the new [carrier Gerald R. Ford](#), though at \$13.3 billion the cost of the Ford exceeds the entire 10-ship FFG(X) buy, no matter whose estimate holds. CBO allowed that the Navy has some good reasons to believe that it can keep costs down, despite historically almost always underestimating the cost of its shipbuilding projects. The ship is based on a parent design of a ship that has been in production for years now, it is developing little in the way of new technology for it, and shipbuilder [Fincantieri Mariette Marine](#) is an experienced small surface combatant builder. But "costs of all surface combatants since 1970, as measured per thousand tons, were higher," CBO reports. Additionally, even when systems put on the ship are mature, as they were in the case of the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, "costs have turned out to be higher than initially estimated." Top of FormBottom of Form The Navy is also trying to [pack a lot more into the parent FREMM design](#) than it has previously accommodated, which could invite unexpected cost growth. The Navy believes it has been conservative with the estimate, based partially on an independent Defense Department estimate that put the price even lower than the Navy's \$870 million per hull. But based on historical data, CBO is unconvinced.

"In its annual analysis of the Navy's shipbuilding plan, CBO found that over the past 30 years, lead ships cost 26 percent more than the Navy's original estimate, using a weighted average," the report reads. "Nearly all of those lead ships cost at least 10 percent more than the original estimate."

MITSUBISHI LAUNCHES LEAD SHIP OF NEW SUBMARINE CLASS FOR JAPAN

By **Baird Maritime** - October 15, 2020



Photo: Japan Maritime Self-Defence

Force

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) has launched the first ship in a new class of diesel-electric attack submarines slated for the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF). The future JS *Taigei* and its sisters are being constructed as modified variants of the Sōryū-class submarines currently in service with the JMSDF. Each will have a length of 84 metres, a hull diameter of 9.1 metres, a displacement of 3,000 tonnes, lithium-ion batteries, and an armament consisting of torpedoes and Harpoon anti-ship missiles. The future *Taigei* is expected to be commissioned into service by March 2022.



'Under the weather'

This everyday idiom can be traced back to the 1830s. It's believed that phrase is a shortened form of the nautical phrase 'under the weather bow', which is a reference to the windward side of the ship's bow - the side of the ship which takes the brunt of high seas.

Originally, it referred to being seasick. During storms or high seas, when passengers and crew were feeling unwell, they would go below deck away from the bad weather to recover where the motion of the boat was less.

Nowadays, it generally means to feel ill or unwell.



OPINION | A THIRD AIRCRAFT CARRIER FOR INDIA: BUDGET VERSUS NECESSITY

By [M Matheswaran](#) - October 14, 2020



The Indian Navy aircraft carrier

INS Vikramaditya in 2014 (Photo: Indian Navy)

The Indian military is undergoing what may be its most significant reorganisation since India's independence, with considerable implications for its future strategic posture. One important issue that has been brought to the fore is the role of the Indian Navy as a regional power projection force built around three aircraft carriers. The government's decision on this issue will have significant implications for the region. The Indian Navy currently operates one carrier, the 45,000-tonne INS *Vikramaditya*, with a second, the 37,500-tonne INS *Vikrant*, having just entered sea trials. Both are "ski-jump" carriers. But the Indian Navy regards a third "flat-topped" aircraft carrier, the planned 65,000-tonne INS *Vishal*, with superior power projection capabilities, as an absolute necessity.

The navy's plans for a three-carrier based force structure, first proposed in early 2000s, has been accepted in principle. It would allow the navy to operate two carrier task groups at all times, with a total fighter aircraft strength of more than 150 aircraft. However, India's new Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat, who took office in January, has stated that budgetary constraints will force the navy to defer plans for the third carrier. Some in the government see the third aircraft carrier as a frightfully expensive white elephant. They argue that India can ill-afford such expenditure on one single platform when there are many other requirements crying for immediate attention.

This view is reinforced by India's bitter experience in acquiring the *Vikramaditya* from Russia, when the original price rose from US\$974 million to US\$2.35 billion. Together with 45 MiG-29K aircraft and additional modifications, the overall price now sits somewhere between US\$6 billion and US\$7 billion.

"India's rising stature, its geopolitical interests and its role as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean region necessitate a strong navy with significant reach and power projection capabilities."

This experience was compounded by the delays and escalating costs of the first Indian-built aircraft carrier, the *Vikrant*, which is already more than five years behind schedule. With cost overruns and 36 aircraft, the total price is likely to be US\$10–11 billion. The third proposed carrier, *Vishal*, still in conceptual stages, is expected to cost US\$6–8 billion and take 10–14 years to build. Including an aerial component of F-18E or Rafale aircraft at current prices, the total cost is likely to be in the order of US\$16–17 billion. General Rawat has hinted at his priorities in view of likely budgetary constraints over the next few years. His focus is on strengthening the land defences against China and Pakistan, and hence his priority is for the army, followed by the air force. The army has urgent requirements in long-pending infantry weapons, artillery and strike corps modernisation requirements. The Indian Air Force's squadron strength is down to 32, well below its minimum operational strength of 42 squadrons. In his view, the navy should focus on submarines and smaller surface ships, principally in a defensive role. In his capacity as the military advisor to the government and as the secretary of the newly created Department of Military Affairs, in addition to his primary role as the permanent chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Rawat's views could well carry the day. India's rising stature, its geopolitical interests and its role as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean region necessitate a strong navy with significant reach and power projection capabilities. Carrier-based airpower is a critical component in responding to contingencies rapidly at extended ranges and would complement land-based air power. With China accelerating its aircraft carrier developments, it will be able to field a carrier task group in the Indian Ocean sooner rather than later. The third carrier, therefore, assumes great importance for India's maritime strategy.

"...the chances of a decision favourable to the navy may be receding."

The navy has been operating ski-jump carriers for nearly four decades. They provide significant cost savings but come with major operational constraints. Currently, *Vikramaditya* operates a maximum of 24 MiG-29K fighters, along with six helicopters for anti-submarine warfare and other duties. At least 70 per cent of *Vikramaditya*'s resources goes into its own air defence, leaving very little for long-range strike. *Vikrant*'s position will be similar. More importantly, ski-jump carriers are handicapped by their inability to launch heavier platforms, such as airborne early warning aircraft. The proposed INS *Vishal* would be a flat-top carrier with catapult assisted take off (CATOBAR) capability, which could include an electromagnetic launch system, also known as EMALS. It would have a sizeable air component of 70–80 aircraft, including helicopters and early warning aircraft, giving it a significant strike capability and reach. Concerns of the government around costs should be seen in perspective. The costs of the project would be spread over 10–14 years, which would make it more manageable. There are also important implications for maintaining necessary skill sets.

Time is of the essence if the third carrier is to move forward. New disruptive concepts and technologies are likely to emerge to challenge the economic and operational viability of aircraft carriers. New technological developments have enabled the possibility of more agile and faster ships, submarines, a spectrum of unmanned vehicle technologies – be they aerial, surface, underwater or autonomous – dominate maritime operational strategies with new dimensions of cost effectiveness for better reach, flexibility and application of force. Artificial intelligence-influenced operational concepts such as swarming could make the use of drones the most important element in naval warfare in the future. The third aircraft carrier is regarded as a vital necessity for the Indian Navy, given the current tensions with China. But with the Indian government delaying its decision, the chances of a decision favourable to the navy may be receding.

This story originally appeared on [The Interpreter](#), published by the Lowy Institute for International Policy.

Naval

The Pentagon is eyeing a 500-ship Navy, documents reveal

By: [David B. Larter](#) and [Aaron Mehta](#) September 24



The Theodore Roosevelt and Nimitz carrier strike groups transit the Philippine Sea in June. The Pentagon is weighing a dramatic change to the composition of the U.S. fleet that could include in excess of 500 ships. (MCSN Dylan Lavin/U.S. Navy)

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon’s upcoming recommendation for a future Navy is expected to call for a significant increase in the [number of ships](#), with officials discussing a fleet as large as 530 hulls, according to documents obtained by Defense News. Supporting documents to the forthcoming Future Navy Force Study reviewed by Defense News show the [Navy moving towards a lighter force](#) with [many more ships](#) but fewer aircraft carriers and large surface combatants. Instead, the fleet would include more small surface combatants, unmanned ships and submarines and an expanded logistics force. Two groups commissioned by Secretary of Defense Mark Esper to design what a future Navy should look like suggested fleets of anywhere from 480 to 534 ships, when manned and unmanned platforms are accounted for — at least a 35 percent increase in fleet size from the [current target of 355 manned ships](#) by 2030.

The numbers all come from an April draft of inputs to the Future Navy Force Study conducted by the Office of the Secretary of Defense. While the number will likely have changed somewhat in final recommendations recently sent to Esper, the plans being discussed in April are notable as they reflect what will likely be major shift in the Navy’s future — and the expectation is that a larger-than-planned Navy based on the concepts laid out in the documents will remain intact in the final analysis. Esper himself hinted at that in comments last week. In a speech [delivered at the think tank Rand](#), the secretary called for a Navy of “over 350 ships,” specifically by increasing the Navy’s shipbuilding funding account. “In short, it will be a balanced force of over 350 ships — both manned and unmanned — and will be built in a relevant time frame and budget-informed manner,” he said.

Indeed, the fleet compositions presented in the inputs broadly reflect the concept of a lighter fleet more reliant on unmanned or lightly crewed vessels that Esper described to Defense News [in a February interview](#) Top of FormBottom of Form

“One of the ways you get [to a larger fleet] quickly is moving toward lightly manned [ships], which over time can be unmanned,” Esper said then. “We can go with lightly manned ships, get them out there. You can build them so they’re optionally manned and then, depending on the scenario or the technology, at some point in time they can go

unmanned.” The Future Naval Force Study, overseen by Deputy Secretary of Defense David Norquist, kicked off in January after Esper [decided he wanted](#) an outside take on the Navy’s self-review of its future force structure. The OSD-led review tasked three groups to provide their version of an ideal fleet construction for the year 2045, one each by the Pentagon’s Cost Assessment & Program Evaluation office, the Joint Staff, the Navy and a group from the Hudson Institute.

Those fleets were war-gamed and the results were compiled into the Future Naval Force Study, which was briefed to Esper earlier this month. Ultimately, the Navy is using the feedback from the study to create their shipbuilding plan and fiscal 2022 budget request, the service said in a statement. “The Future Naval Force Study is a collaborative OSD, Joint Staff and Department of the Navy effort to assess future naval force structure options and inform future naval force structure decisions and the 30-year shipbuilding plan,” said Navy spokesman Lt. Tim Pietrack. “Although COVID-19 has delayed some portions of the study, the effort remains on track to be complete in late 2020 and provide analytic insights in time to inform Program Budget Review 22.” The April documents viewed by Defense News included notional fleets designed by CAPE and the Hudson Institute. Defense News did not have access to the Navy’s inputs into the FNFS. Neither fleet reviewed by Defense News, nor the fleet developed by the Navy, will be the final composition reflected in the FNFS. The numbers, however, provide a glimpse of the radically different future fleet likely to be reflected in the final analysis expected later this year.

Defense News reported on [elements of the draft in April](#).



The U.S. Navy has been developing its tactics and procedures for employing unmanned surface vessels with the Sea Hunter drone developed by DARPA. (U.S. Navy)

Fewer carriers, more logistics

The fleets designed by the CAPE and Hudson teams agreed on the need to increase the number and diversity of ships while boosting vertical launch system capacity — while also holding the operations and sustainment cost of the fleet as steady as possible and avoid adding to the number of sailors required to operate it.

As of the April drafts, both the CAPE and Hudson Institute teams were supportive of shrinking the number of supercarriers to nine from the current 11, which would effectively give the country eight active carriers, with one carrier always in midlife overhaul and refueling. The Hudson study also called for investing in four [light carriers](#). The CAPE fleet called for between 80 and 90 large surface combatants, about the same level as today's 89 cruisers and destroyers. Hudson looked to reduce the number slightly and instead fund more lightly manned corvettes, something Hudson has [called for in the past](#).

The reports called for between 65 and 87 [large unmanned surface vessels](#) or optionally unmanned corvettes, which the Navy hopes will boost vertical launch system capacity to offset the loss over time of the Arleigh Burke-class destroyers and the four guided missile submarines.

Both fleets called for increased small surface combatants, with the CAPE study putting the upper limit at 70 ships. Hudson recommended a maximum of 56. The Navy's [2016 Force Structure Assessment](#) called for 52 small surface combatants. Both fleets also favored a slight increase in attack submarines over the current 66-ship requirement but reflected a big boost in large unmanned submarines, anywhere between 40 and 60 total. The idea would be to get the [Extra Large Unmanned Underwater Vehicle](#) to do monotonous surveillance missions or highly dangerous missions, freeing up the more complex manned platforms for other tasking.

On the amphibious side, both fleets reduced the overall number of traditional dock landing ships, such as the LPD-17, from the current 23 to between 15 and 19. As for the big-deck amphibious ships, CAPE favored holding at the current level of 10, while Hudson favored cutting to five, with the savings reinvested towards four light carriers. The studies called for between 20 and 26 of the Marines' [light amphibious warships](#), which they need for ferrying Marines and gear around islands in the Pacific. Both fleets significantly expanded the logistics force, with big increases coming from smaller ships similar to offshore or oil platform support-type vessels. The fleets called for anywhere from 19 to 30 "future small logistics" ships. The CAPE and Hudson fleets increased the number of fleet oilers anywhere from 21 to 31, up from today's 17.

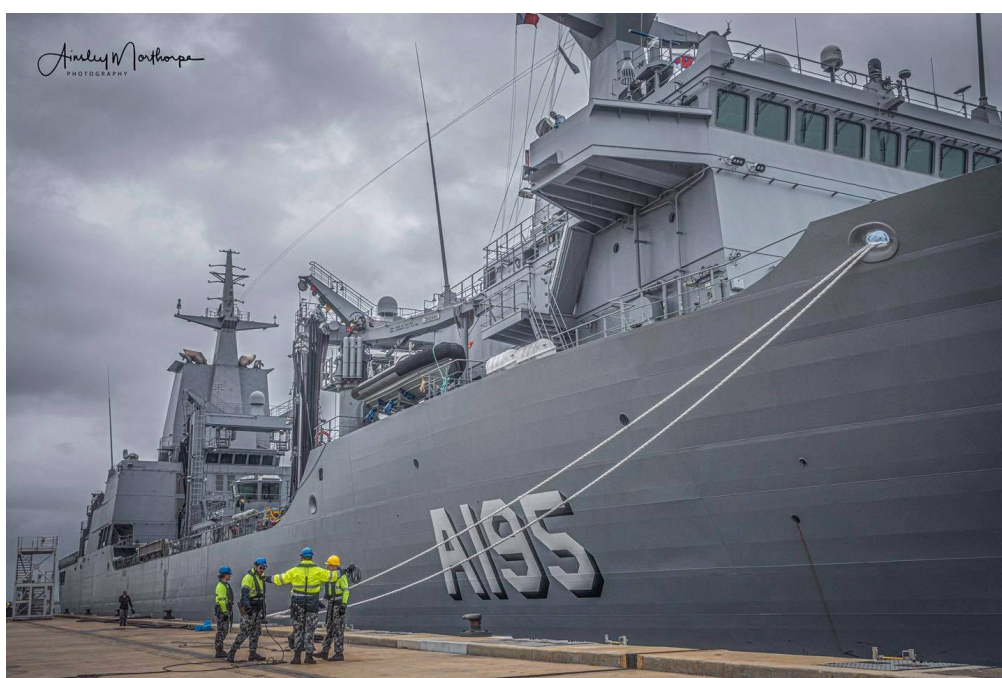
The Marines and Navy have talked about the need to [rethink logistics for a more distributed fight](#) in the Pacific. The Hudson fleet called for a significant boost to the command and support ship infrastructure from today's 33 ships to 52 ships. CAPE called for the fleet to remain about the same. Those ships include dry cargo ships, the expeditionary fast transports, expeditionary transfer docks and expeditionary sea bases.

All told, the fleets posited between 316 and 358 "traditional" ships, but when new classes and unmanned ships were lumped in, the fleet designs contained upwards of 500 ships or more. In his remarks last week, Esper said the Navy would need to increase shipbuilding budgets to accommodate the transformation of the fleet, but it was unclear where the money would be coming from. The Pentagon sought \$207 billion for the Navy in its fiscal 2021 budget request. Even a 2 percent shift under that top line would represent \$4.14 billion in extra funding for shipbuilding — real money, even by Pentagon standards. In his remarks, Esper said the forthcoming study "will serve as our guidepost as we decide on, program and build out future fleet and conduct follow-on assessment in select areas." "We will build this fleet in such a way that balances tomorrow's challenges with today's readiness needs, and does not create a hollow Navy in the process," Esper said. "To achieve this outcome, we must increase funding for shipbuilding and the readiness that sustains a larger force. Doing this, and finding the money within the Navy budget and elsewhere to make it real, is something both the Navy leadership and I are committed to doing."

Maintenance Work in progress HMAS Perth (I) Memorial Facility









Hunt class mine countermeasure vessel (MCV) HS KALLISTO (M63) was cut in half close to the port of Piraees when the container ship MAERSK LAUNCESTON struck the Hellenic Navy Warship at the stern

ARES SHIPYARD, METEKSAN DEFENCE TO DEVELOP TURKEY'S FIRST ARMED USV

By [Baird Maritime](#) - October 30, 2020



Photo: Ares Shipyard

Turkish companies Ares Shipyard and Meteksan Defence have launched a programme to develop a new armed unmanned surface vehicle (USV) for use by the country's navy.

The USVs in the ULAQ series will each have advanced composite construction, a range of 400 kilometres, a speed of 35 knots, day and night vision cameras, and encrypted communications infrastructure. Armament will consist of locally-produced surface-to-surface missiles.

Missions will include intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), surface warfare, asymmetric warfare, escort missions, and strategic infrastructure protection.

Larboard and starboard

Larboard and starboard were the sailing terms used to describe left and right, respectively. In the early days, ships were controlled by a steering oar. Because most sailors were right handed, the steering oar was placed over the right side of the stern, so the right side became known as 'starboard' by combining two Old English words: *stéor* (meaning 'steer') and *bord* (meaning 'the side of a boat').

Originally taken from the Old English 'ladebord', larboard referred to the side of the ship on which cargo was loaded. However, shouted over the noise of the wind and the waves, larboard and starboard sounded too similar - confusing the two could lead to a shipwreck!

The word larboard was replaced by the word 'port' by the Royal Navy in 1844, and has been universally adopted.



FINCANTIERI, COCHIN SHIPYARD INK MOU ON INDIAN NAVY FLEET UPGRADE PROGRAMME

By [Baird Maritime](#) - October 30, 2020



INS Deepak, a fleet tanker built by Fincantieri for the Indian Navy (Photo: Indian Navy)

Fincantieri has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with India's Cochin Shipyard regarding the renewal and expansion of the Indian Navy's fleet of vessels.

The MOU covers cooperation between the two companies in the areas of: design, procurement, and local construction of new vessels for the Indian defence market; local construction and marketing of mechanical products such as propulsion propellers, shaft lines, stabilisation and steering systems, and thrusters; naval automation; ship repair; and training of Indian personnel and consultancies to be carried out by Fincantieri in the field of design or construction or shipyard upgrade processes.

The MOU will be followed by a series of detailed agreements, outlining – from time to time – the respective roles and the scope of supply.

Different areas of the Fincantieri group may benefit from these understandings: the Naval Vessels Division, the Systems and Components Division, as well as Seastema, Vard Marine, and Fincantieri India.

TWO DEAD AFTER MAINTENANCE VESSEL STRIKES OIL PLATFORM OFF SARAWAK

By [Baird Maritime](#) - October 29, 2020



Dayang

Topaz (Photo: Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency)

Two people are confirmed dead after an offshore maintenance vessel struck an oil platform in Malaysia's Baram field on Tuesday, October 27.

The incident began when the anchor cables of the maintenance vessel *Dayang Topaz* snapped due to bad weather while it was some 14 nautical miles off northeastern Sarawak at around 06:20 local time on Tuesday. This then caused the vessel to drift until it struck the nearby Petronas-operated Baram B platform.

Immediately following the collision, some of *Dayang Topaz's* 187-strong crew jumped into the water after their vessel became overwhelmed by large waves.

Three vessels of the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA), 13 other Good Samaritan vessels, and four surveillance aircraft despatched by Petronas then arrived at the scene to render assistance to the distressed crew, which consisted of 185 Malaysian and two Indonesian nationals.

One of the crew who had jumped into the water was later found dead by the responding search and rescue (SAR) teams.

On Wednesday, October 28, an MMEA official confirmed that a second crewmember had been added to the death toll. However, it remains unclear whether this individual had also jumped into the water or had remained on board *Dayang Topaz* along with 61 others following the collision.

No serious injuries have been reported among the remainder of the crew, who have all since been evacuated to Miri in Sarawak.

Petronas said in a statement that an investigation into the incident is ongoing and that all relevant authorities have been notified.

HMAS Arunta docks in Japan ahead of Operation ARGOS



30 OCTOBER 2020

By: **Charbel Kadib**

Defence Minister Linda Reynolds has announced the arrival of HMAS Arunta in Japan ahead of the ship's fourth deployment in support of Operation ARGOS.

HMAS Arunta has arrived in Sasebo, Japan, for a short logistics visit as it prepares to participate in Operation ARGOS — Australia's contribution to the enforcement of United Nations Security Council sanctions against North Korea. Minister for Defence Linda Reynolds said Australia's ongoing sanctions and enforcement operations, in close co-operation with partners, were part of a broader effort to achieve permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula.

"We remain committed to implementing sanctions against North Korea until it takes clear steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation," Minister Reynolds said. "HMAS Arunta and her crew will make an important contribution to enforcing United Nations Security Council sanctions against North Korea, demonstrating Australian Defence Force's ongoing commitment to the region."

PROMOTED CONTENT

Commander Troy Duggan, Commanding Officer of HMAS Arunta, also noted the importance of the operation, which commences on Saturday (31 October).

"The ship and crew continue to do tremendous work in the region, with the ADF playing an important role alongside our partners to enforce the UN sanctions," CMDR Duggan said.

. “The capabilities of the Anzac Class frigates enable the accurate and detailed maritime surveillance required during our deployment to Operation ARGOS.

“I am proud of the work my crew is undertaking, especially deploying to East Asia on the back of a three-month regional presence deployment — they have worked tirelessly for our nation with the support of their families and friends over an extended period.”

This latest deployment is set to mark HMAS Arunta’s fourth contribution in support of Operation ARGOS since it began in 2018.

The ADF has also deployed maritime patrol aircraft to Japan on seven occasions for the operation.

HMAS Arunta is currently on a two-month regional deployment throughout east Asia as part of Australia’s broader commitment to maintain stability in the Indo-Pacific.

BAE Systems to deliver naval guns for Royal Navy’s Type 31 frigates **1, 2020, by Naida Hakirevic**

October

Defence, security and aerospace company BAE Systems has won a contract to produce and deliver Bofors 40 Mk4 and Bofors 57 Mk3 naval guns for the UK Ministry of Defence’s Type 31 general purpose frigate program. The agreement, through a contract with Babcock International, will supply the Royal Navy with a set of advanced, multi-purpose gun systems for its fleet of five ships, with the first unit expected to go into service in

2027.

Babcock announced as Royal Navy Type 31 frigate competition winner Specifically, the latest contract with BAE Systems includes five Bofors 57 Mk3 medium caliber guns and 10 Bofors 40 Mk4 small caliber guns. Both close-in weapon systems are designed to protect the ships against modern and future complex threats. The guns also offer the Royal Navy optimized ammunition types, including the cost-efficient programmable **Bofors 3P all-target munition**. “We will be providing the ... gun system technology ... which can adapt to different levels of conflict, including peacekeeping missions, local coastguard operations, and military operations,” Lena Gillström, managing director for BAE Systems Bofors, said.



Photo: BAE Systems

BAE Systems’ scope of work for the Type 31 program also includes services, tools, spares, documentation and support. Both naval gun systems will be manufactured at BAE Systems’ facility in Karlskoga, Sweden, with deliveries expected to take place in 2023 and 2024. The **Bofors 57 Mk3 naval gun** is installed on various ship types around the world and is in use with the allied navies and coast guards of eight nations, including Canada, Finland, Germany, and Sweden, as well as the United States, where it is known as the Mk110 naval gun.

Beijing only has itself to blame for the return of the Quad



29 OCTOBER 2020

By: **Stephen Kuper**

Much has been made of the reinvigorated Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, including an immense amount of flak from Beijing, however, for Princeton University's Yan Bennett and Charles Darwin University's John Garrick, the rising power has only itself to blame for the strategic anxiety sweeping through the Indo-Pacific.

At the end of the Cold War, Australia, like much of the victorious US-led alliance, believed that the 'end of history' was upon us, that the era of great power competition had forever been relegated to the pages of antiquity – the strategic anxiety now transforming the regional balance of power reveals that to be wishful thinking.

Australia embraced the potential and opportunity presented by this new future and the lessons learned during the Cold War, particularly the impact of interventionism, and sought to capitalise upon its relationships with 'great and powerful' friends like the US willing and able to guarantee its security.

However, the rise of the Indo-Pacific, in particular the emergence and, in some cases, re-emergence of many potential great powers, each with their own conflicting ambitions, economic, political and strategic designs and often ancient enmities, are serving to dramatically undermine the balance of power and stability.

The nation's approach to strategic policy continues to be heavily based upon the formalisation of the Defence of Australia (DoA) policy as identified in the 1986 Dibb report and then enshrined in the subsequent 1987 and 1994 Defence White Papers in particular, with tweaks made in every Defence White Paper to date.

PROMOTED CONTENT

This largely isolationist policy and the ensuing strategies developed in response, focused entirely on securing the sea-air gap as a strategic "buffer zone" for Australia, enabling the reorientation of Australia's strategic and broader defence industry posture, which now serves to leave the nation at a critical crossroads as the region continues to rise.

While successive Australian government's have sought to evolve and, in some ways, modify the Defence of Australia doctrine, the very premise of the doctrine continues to inform the foundation of Australia's strategic policy to this day.

Meanwhile, as Australia continues to contemplate how best to respond to the rapidly deteriorating regional balance of power and the very real challenges to the economic, political and strategic order the nation's prosperity is built upon, the war of words, economic coercion and territorial expansionism continues to mount.

Equally critical in this equation is Australia's culture of dependence upon larger powers, first the British Empire and since the Second World War, the US, which allowed us to fumble and make mistakes, because 'big brother' always had our back.

Now, that is diminishing as the reality of the Indo-Pacific is beginning to sink in for Australia's policymakers and, increasingly, the Australian public.

However, Australia isn't alone in facing these challenges. The rise of Beijing and its increasingly belligerent approach toward the region, particularly Taiwan, nations bordering the South China Sea and those bold enough to question the authenticity of Beijing's claims about the COVID-19 pandemic, has created a degree of strategic anxiety.

In response, the nations of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, made up of Australia, India, Japan and the US, have stepped up their co-operation and reinvigorated the multinational relationships to better prepare for a potential confrontation with Beijing.

This increasing level of co-operation and capability aggregation has drawn attention and backlash from Beijing, which increasingly sees itself as a target for "Western" bullying, a narrative that President Xi Jinping is seeking to leverage at a national level. However, for Princeton University's Yan Bennett and Charles Darwin University's John Garrick, Beijing only has itself to [blame](#).

You can't put your military on high alert and then blame everyone else

The global and regional aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic has seen an increasing war of words and even outright attempts at economic coercion has seen a range of responses, but Beijing's has been true to form for President Xi, one that boils down to: "The West doesn't want China to assume its rightful position as the world's premier power and wants a repeat of the Century of Humiliation."

In response, President Xi has made increasingly inflammatory comments, seeking to prepare the Chinese military for the potential for direct confrontation with any number of nations, but mainly the US, Japan, India, Australia and broader regional and global alliance frameworks.

Indeed, while speaking to Chinese troops recently, President Xi called on all Chinese troops to "put all (their) minds and energy on preparing for war".

However, for Bennett and Garrick, it is this language, combined with the strategic, economic and political coercion, that is driving "like-minded nations" to collaborate among themselves in an effort to enhance collective security, with both stating:

"Chinese President Xi Jinping recently told the People's Liberation Army Marine Corps to 'put mind and energy on preparing for war' as the US announced plans to sell three advanced weapon systems to Taiwan, an island China considers to be its 'lost province' following the Nationalists' defeat in the Chinese civil war.

"In his speech, given in Guangdong Province only a few hundred kilometres from Taiwan, President Xi emphasised that the Chinese marines are an 'elite amphibious combat force' responsible for ensuring 'territorial integrity'. The message was clear: the PLA Marine Corps would be vital in an invasion of Taiwan."

Adding to this, Bennett and Garrick state, "Wary of a new world order revolving around China's authoritarian regime, the US, Japan, Australia and India have reactivated the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue after more than a decade of somnolence.

"The Quad is an informal grouping that involves summits and information exchanges and this year will include combined military drills known as the Malabar exercises. By inviting Australia to participate in the Malabar drills, New Delhi has upgraded its security relationship with Canberra, even though building such alliances antagonises Beijing."

Critically, Bennett and Garrick explain the foundations of the Quad, stating, "Against this ominous backdrop, the Quad presents itself as having a positive agenda — a diplomatic network that assists democracies, as Australian Foreign Minister [Marise] Payne puts it, 'to align ourselves in support of shared interests ... governed by rules, not power'.

"The Quad formed in 2006 as a discussion forum on the rise of China and India and maritime issues in the Indo-Pacific. It met once in 2007, but the informal alliance became dormant due to Australia's and India's reluctance to undermine what had been healthy bilateral relations with China. Beijing's moves since 2012, however, have altered the calculus in how much and how far to challenge China."

Off the back of these statements and provocative actions directed at Taiwan, India and Japan as well as smaller regional nations, Bennett and Garrick are very clear in who is to blame for the re-emergence of the Quad: "As China rapidly rewrites international rules to better reflect its desires, it's hardly surprising that others are responding by protecting their own interests. Already, geostrategic and military alliances beyond the Quad are being worked out.

"Looking ahead, a space alliance between Quad members may also become feasible. The 'Quad-Plus' — the four Quad nations and Vietnam, South Korea and New Zealand — has already met to discuss co-ordinated responses to the pandemic."

Friends who share common challenges

The Quad is in some ways a case of strange bedfellows, but equally, perfect bedfellows, as each grapple with a common series of challenges, albeit in radically different environmental contexts.

India faces down China across the Himalayas, while Japan squares off against an increasingly capable and confident Chinese Navy in the western Pacific, while the other two corners of the Quad, Australia and the US are relatively removed from immediate and direct threat, yet are intrinsically linked, economically, politically and strategically to the enduring balance of power and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Explaining these points, Bennett and Garrick detail the seemingly odd nature of the Quad, yet the ways in which this collaborative relationship provides avenues for future collective security, stating, "The US, Japan, Australia and India now share the common challenge of deteriorating relations with China. India faces border clashes in the Himalayas; Australia experiences economic and political coercive pressure; Tokyo is in dispute with Beijing over Chinese vessels patrolling near the Japanese-controlled Senkaku Islands, which China claims.

"Australia, Japan and the US have also spoken out against China's crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, mass detention of ethnic Uyghurs in Xinjiang, and contested claims in the South China Sea. These nations' relations with China are at rock bottom. But they can sink further; China has already denounced the Quad as an 'elite clique' attempting to contain its rise.

"That China finds the Quad as such a challenge reveals a fragility to its ascendancy as it seeks to alter the world order to reflect its interests. For its part, the US has embraced the Quad as a way to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific and to promote and retain a liberal world order, policy goals articulated in its 2017 national security statement. In addition to these goals, Japan, Australia and India seek a balancing of approaches to China's coercive policies in the region."

Your thoughts

The nation is defined by its relationship with the region, with access to the growing economies and to strategic sea lines of communication supporting over 90 per cent of global trade, a result of the cost-effective and reliable nature of sea transport.

Indo-Pacific Asia is at the epicentre of the global maritime trade, with about US\$5 trillion worth of trade flowing through the South China Sea and the strategic waterways and chokepoints of south-east Asia annually.

For Australia, a nation defined by this relationship with traditionally larger, yet economically weaker regional neighbours, the growing economic prosperity of the region and corresponding arms build-up, combined with ancient and more recent enmities, competing geopolitical, economic and strategic interests, places the nation at the centre of the 21st century's 'great game'.

Enhancing Australia's capacity to act as an independent power, incorporating great power-style strategic economic, diplomatic and military capability, serves as a powerful symbol of Australia's sovereignty and evolving responsibilities in supporting and enhancing the security and prosperity of Indo-Pacific Asia.

Australia is consistently told that as a nation we are torn between our economic relationship with China and the long-standing strategic partnership with the US, placing the country at the epicentre of a great power rivalry – but what if it didn't have to be that way?

UK, Australia agree to collaborate on new frigates

October 21, 2020, by Naida Hakirevic

Australia and the UK have further strengthened their defence relationship by signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to cooperate on building and delivering the next generation of frigates. The MoU re-enforces both countries' commitment to working together on delivering **Type 26** and Hunter-class frigate programmes and maximising mutual opportunities. As informed, a key aspect of the MOU is a pledge on information exchange to ensure shipbuilding best practice is shared and that both frigate programmes deliver advanced maritime capabilities to the Royal Navy and the Royal Australian Navy. The agreement also sets out a framework to enable both nations to utilise the T26 and Hunter programmes to create jobs and contribute to the growth of the UK and Australian economies, seeking to support small and medium-sized enterprises.

"The UK and Australia have always been natural allies. This agreement demonstrates this Government's ongoing commitment to the Type 26 shipbuilding programme whilst supporting our Australian allies to design and build the Hunter class frigate," UK's Defence Secretary Ben Wallace commented. "As we look to the future of our respective navies, our shared continued cooperation will benefit our close alliance and support the industrial supply chain to grow each nation's shipbuilding sectors."

"There are currently seven Australian companies contracted for work on the UK's Type 26 programmes and this agreement supports the close co-operation between UK and Australian industry," Australian Minister for Defence, the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC said. "We are already seeing the benefits of cooperation on the two programmes, with Australian workers involved in the Type 26 build ready to come home and help build the Hunter-class frigates in South Australia." "The Australian Government is committed to delivering a continuous naval shipbuilding programme and the Hunter and Type 26 programmes provide a great opportunity to capitalise on our shared industrial capability with the UK," Reynolds added. Prototyping for the Hunter Class Frigate Programme will begin by the end of 2020

Australian Naval Institute



UK Cold War monster destroyer retired



Cold War military history is full of “might-have-beens,” with canceled projects ranging from nuclear-reactor-juggling [tracked mecha-robots](#), to electron guns that would generate invisible [radar-absorbing fields around spyplanes](#), to name just two. When it comes to the U.K. Royal Navy, this includes its lone Type 82 destroyer, HMS *Bristol*, which it retired this month, [The Drive reports](#).

In the United Kingdom, the fate of the planned [CVA-01](#) class of aircraft carrier remains another tantalizing “what if?” While the catapult assisted take-off, but arrested recovery ([CATOBAR](#)) flattop was canceled as a cost-saving measure in 1966, work did still progress on its planned escorts. The mighty Type 82 class guided-missile destroyers would have provided a defensive umbrella around the carrier.

So big that it was sometimes described as a cruiser, only one example of the Type 82 was ever built, after which the Royal Navy concentrated its efforts on more modest-sized destroyers — at least until the arrival of today’s [Type 45 class](#). The one-off Type 82 destroyer [HMS Bristol](#) was, at 507 feet long, marginally longer than the current Type 45, which measures 500 feet.

For much of its career, the pioneering HMS *Bristol* was considered a “white elephant,” but it remained in Royal Navy service until today, October 28, 2020. It had spent its last days as a training vessel confined to the dockside at Her Majesty’s Naval Base, Portsmouth, on the south coast of England.

HMS *Bristol*, the solitary Type 82 destroyer, was originally expected to be the lead example of a class of eight ships. These were to have provided both anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and anti-aircraft warfare (AAW) support for the CVA-01 class of carriers, four of which were also envisaged for the Royal Navy.

When the axe fell on the CVA-01 as a result of the 1966 Defence White Paper, the Type 82 building program was trimmed back to a single hull, which it was decided would serve primarily as a trials platform for new weapons and equipment.

Construction work on HMS *Bristol* began at Swan Hunter in Tyne and Wear, northeast England, in November 1967 and the destroyer was launched in June 1969. Entering Royal Navy service in March 1973, the new destroyer was characterized by its unusual three-funnel arrangement that served a combined steam and gas turbine propulsion system. This was the last Royal Navy warship design to be powered by steam, bringing to an end a period of British maritime history that had begun in the early 1820s, with the first experiments using [steam-powered warships](#).

The destroyer's primary armament included a twin GWS Mk 30 zero-length launcher for a total of 40 [Sea Dart](#) surface-to-air missiles (SAMs). HMS *Bristol* was the first warship to carry this ramjet-powered area-defense weapon that had a maximum range of 40 miles and could engage targets flying at altitudes up to 60,000 feet. Weighing 1,210 pounds, the Sea Dart missile utilized semi-active radar homing guidance.

Twenty [Ikara](#) missiles were provided for the ASW system, based around the GWS Mk 40 launcher. Ikara was an Australian-designed rocket-powered missile that could deliver a homing torpedo, or a nuclear depth charge, out to around 10 miles from the ship. Once in the drop zone, the Ikara's payload was released under a parachute, then either detonating, in the case of the depth charge, or, if a torpedo, beginning its search pattern to hunt for a submarine.

The Ikara was supplemented by a [Limbo](#) anti-submarine mortar, the basic design of which dates back to World War II. This weapon, optimized for shallow water engagements, consisted of a three-barrel launcher that fired three mortar bombs fused to create a three-dimensional explosive burst around the target. The bombs could be fitted with a pre-programmed pressure fuse or a delayed-action time fuse. The effective range was a little over half a mile.

As well as being the first Royal Navy warship to be armed with the Sea Dart and Ikara, HMS *Bristol* introduced other innovations in its 4.5-inch-caliber [Mk 8 main gun](#) — a weapon that remains in service [today](#) — and its computerized Action Data Automated Weapons System Mk 2 (ADAWS-2), which coordinated the various weapons and sensors.

Although the warship had a flight deck at the stern, a helicopter was not usually embarked as the vessel lacked a hangar or aviation facilities, a reflection of its original role as a carrier escort, where it was expected to work in cooperation with rotorcraft embarked in the carrier. Another deficit was long-range anti-ship weaponry, again expected to be handled by other elements of the carrier group, including embarked aircraft.

After entering service, HMS *Bristol* spent much of the 1970s undertaking trials of its various weapons and control systems, which then found themselves arming a new generation of (smaller) destroyers, as well as guided-missile frigates.

After a fire in the boiler that burnt for four hours off the coast of Wales in February 1974, HMS *Bristol* lost the use of its steam propulsion system for two years, until repairs could be made. In the interim, it was still able to operate using its two Rolls-Royce Olympus gas turbines. By 1979, new electronic countermeasures, Corvus chaff launchers, and a pair of 20mm Oerlikon cannon had been added and the veteran Limbo ASW weapon was deleted. The former Limbo housing was thereafter used for a while as a makeshift swimming pool.

Despite being mainly engaged on trials work, the HMS *Bristol* was more than capable of combat duty and its command and control facilities made it an ideal flagship. It also carried more extensive communications and data links than other Royal Navy warships, allowing it to serve as a “node” for other Royal Navy vessels to communicate with other NATO ships — frequently from the U.S. Navy or French Navy — that may have had incompatible communications suites.

The destroyer’s value as a flagship was proven during the [Falklands War of 1982](#) when the Royal Navy Task Force sailed to the South Atlantic to retake the Falkland Islands after the Argentine invasion. The big destroyer’s extra capacity allowed additional staff to be embarked for the flagship role and it sailed to the South Atlantic as the lead ship in a group of reinforcements, before joining the carrier battle group.

HMS *Bristol* also fired its Sea Dart missiles in anger in the South Atlantic — among the 18 Sea Darts launched from this warship and the smaller Type 42 destroyers during the campaign — but did not register any Argentine aircraft destroyed.

When the previous flagship in the campaign, the [aircraft carrier HMS *Hermes*](#), departed for the United Kingdom after the British victory, HMS *Bristol* took on this role.

Ins vikrant



A warhorse sails into the sunset



The Viraat being towed to Alang

By Sarosh Bana*

A dirge sounded on 19 September through both the Indian and Royal navies as Viraat, the world's oldest aircraft carrier when it was decommissioned in 2017 and which had served both the navies with aplomb, started on its final journey, of three days, from the naval dockyard in Mumbai to a shipbreaking yard 150 nautical miles up the coast.

A Centaur class aircraft carrier, the 28,700-tonne INS *Viraat* (former HMS *Hermes*) had been built by Vickers-Armstrong and originally commissioned in the Royal Navy in 1959. It had the distinction of serving as the UK's taskforce flagship during the conflict with Argentina over the Falkland Islands in 1982. It had a royal connection as well, with Prince Charles, the heir apparent to the British throne, having done his midshipman training in 1974 with the 845 Naval Air Squadron of helicopters embarked aboard the carrier.

Following its purchase by India in 1987 after being mothballed for three years, INS *Viraat* (meaning 'giant' in Sanskrit) played a stellar role with the Indian Navy as well, spearheading the Indian Peace Keeping Force's Operation Pawan in 1987 and Operation Jupiter in 1989, both in Sri Lanka, and in Operation Vijay in 1999, for enlarging India's presence in the Arabian Sea during the Kargil War in the Himalayas between India and Pakistan. It besides had the distinction of having four of its Commanding Officers go on to become India's Chiefs of Naval Staff, namely, Admirals Madhvendra Singh, Arun Prakash, Nirmal Verma and D.K. Joshi.

INS *Viraat*'s operational life of 58 years – 28 years with the Royal Navy and 30 years with the Indian Navy – gained it the Guinness record for having been the longest serving aircraft carrier in the world. Indeed, it may well be the longest serving warship in the world, if one discounts USS *Constitution* that was commissioned in 1797 and is retained entirely for historical reasons on the US Navy ship roster.

Under the Indian flag alone, INS *Viraat* had clocked 22,622 flying hours by its various aircraft, and had spent 2,252 days at sea, sailing an overall 5,88,287 nautical miles, or 10,94,215 km. By this reckoning, it had been at sea for over six years and had sailed round the globe 27 times.

These hallowed honours seemed to vaporise when the hulking carrier, after being paid off from service, remained berthed at the naval dockyard's South Breakwater for three years as the government wrung its hands off proposals to preserve this record-bearing ship as a museum-cum-heritage site to keep the nation's maritime memories alive and as a tribute to its naval history. One government proposal, of 2018, for converting the flatdeck into India's first moored maritime museum and marine adventure centre to be located on the palm-fringed shores of Sindhudurg, 330 km south of Mumbai, deterred bidders because of the prohibitive costs. The private sector too pondered over options for a while, but eventually nothing materialised.

An auction held last December failed to find any buyers for the vessel, by then rendered into a 'dumb barge', having been stripped bare of its machinery and operational equipment. A repeat auction in July secured a winning bid from the Gujarat-based Shree Ram Group that purchased it for Rs38.54 crore (A\$7 million).

Group chairman Mukesh Patel says the vessel now weighs about half its original weight and the steel that it will yield will be sold to steel rolling mills across the country. After various procedures, dismantling the ship will commence at the Alang ship-breaking yard – the world's largest – after about a month and will take nine to 12 months thereafter, he mentions. Patel's is a family business that is engaged in ship-recycling, construction, and cryogenic manufacturing.

INS *Viraat*'s commissioning Commanding Officer, retired Vice Admiral Vinod Pasricha (who was Captain then), remembers heading for Plymouth, on the south coast of Devon, in England, in May 1986 alongwith the commissioning crew of 29 officers and 180 sailors as the then mothballed ship was being readied at the Devonport Dockyard for its recommissioning with the Indian Navy nine months later. They were soon visited on board by the Indian High Commissioner to the UK, who seemed convinced that the ship would not be ready to sail for at least the next three years.

"The *Viraat* crew not only proved him wrong, but also the Royal Naval team, who let us know that we would be lucky if we kept her operational for seven more years," remarks Pasricha. He also remembers that while everyone desired some relaxation after working long hours at the dockyard, the Indian Navy does not allow a bar on ship, unlike the Royal Navy. Bars ashore were priced beyond the men's limited sanctioned allowances. "So as to not break any rule, and yet resolve the issue, the dockyard was kind enough to give us a large room on the jetty that we converted into a bar on weekends," he says. A local travel agent besides provided them reasonably priced weekend trips by bus to Paris, Rome and other tourist spots.

He, as all his naval brethren, had hoped for a resurrection of the Viraat as a maritime museum, but ultimately it met the same fate as the 19,500-tonne INS *Vikrant* (former HMS *Hercules*), also acquired from Britain, in 1961, and which had served the Indian Navy as its flagship for 26 years, from 1961 until its retirement in 1987. *Vikrant* too, which had been the first aircraft carrier in an Asian navy, had been disposed off to a scrap dealer in Mumbai, its steel sold to the Bajaj conglomerate that christened its 150 cc model motorcyle manufactured from the steel as Bajaj V15, V for Vikrant.

There is a wide perception in the navy as also outside that such disregard for the emblems of our past stems from skewed priorities and an abysmal lack of any sense of history. While the preservation of icons like the Viraat are deemed prohibitive, and even as our economy lies in ruins, there has been no holding back on the almost A\$4 billion Central Vista Redevelopment Project that includes the construction of a new Parliament House, or the A\$20 billion Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project, or even the purchase of two new B777-300ER planes from Boeing for dedicated travel by the Prime Minister, President and Vice President and which will cost the national exchequer A\$1.6 billion. The Prime Minister's own personal security costs the nation A\$109 million annually, or A\$30,000 a day. Besides, with the voice of the people enfeebled and no referendums ever sought, it is difficult to fathom whether the nation sees any need for such projects.

"Lament, my friends, as an important piece of our (and also Britain's) naval history sails towards a scrapyards," remarked a retired naval chief. "Any country would have made every effort and would have been proud to retain such a glorious ship as a museum ship, but we have consigned this warhorse to the scrap heap, a 76-year maritime history peddled for Rs38.54 crore!"

***Sarosh Bana is Executive Editor, Business India, and Regional Editor, Asia-Pacific Region, Naval Forces.**



INS Viraat undergoes trials on Saturday after a four-month-long refit at the Cochin Shipyard. Photo: Thulasi Kakkat



Ballarat and McCain test freedom in South China Sea

30/10/2020 [Brian Hartigan](#)

HMAS Ballarat and USS John S. McCain came together in the South China Sea this month to exercise the capabilities of both ships and crews – and freedom of navigation in the region.

CAPTION: *HMAS Ballarat sails with USS John S. McCain in the Strait of Malacca. Photo by Leading Seaman Shane Cameron.*

The Australian Anzac-class frigate and the US Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer practised drills and other tactics on October 27 before both ships sailed through the Strait of Malacca.

Once through the strait and in the Andaman Sea, the joint training will continue with cross-deck helicopter operations and a gunnery exercise. Commanding officer Ballarat Commander Antony Pisani welcomed the opportunity to exercise with the McCain.

“The cooperative deployment allows the crew of the Ballarat to hone our warfare and mariner skills and develop our ability to operate and communicate with the US Navy,” he said. “The shared mutual trust both navies have ensures such activities are mutually beneficial, enhancing the readiness and preparedness of both ships.”

He said the exercise was important as it reinforced both nations’ commitment to exercise freedom of navigation across the Indo-Pacific region under international law. McCain’s commanding officer Commander Ryan T. Easterday echoed Commander Pisani’s comments.

“We find tremendous value in sailing alongside our close ally, Australia, as well as our other allies and partners in support of a free, open, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region,” he said.

“The training conducted helps the ships’ crews improve their mariner skills and warfighting proficiency, in addition to the benefits of both crews working together as a team.” McCain is part of the 7th Fleet – the US Navy’s largest fleet – that interacts with 35 nations in the Indo-Pacific region.

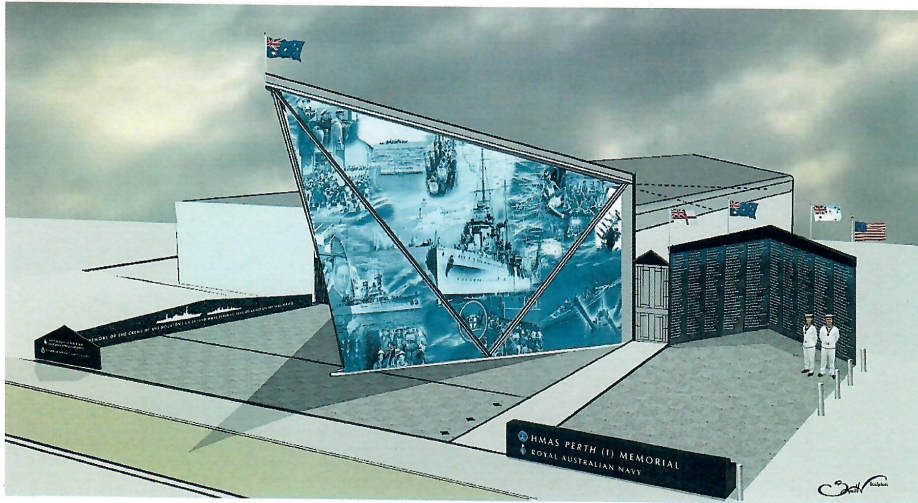
McCain’s operations officer Lieutenant Anthony Haywood said the 7th Fleet was constantly working with its partner nations to cement those alliances.

Before joining Ballarat, McCain conducted trilateral operations [alongside HMAS Arunta](#) and JS Kirisame of the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force.

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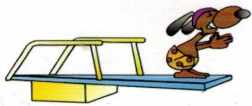
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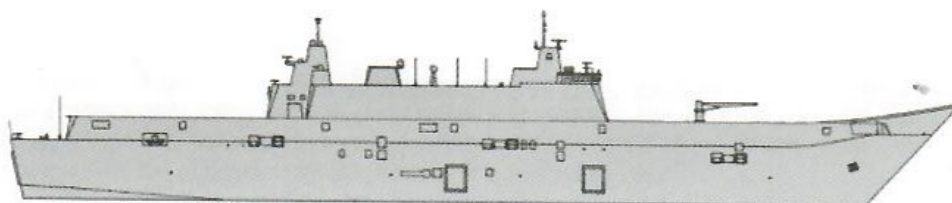


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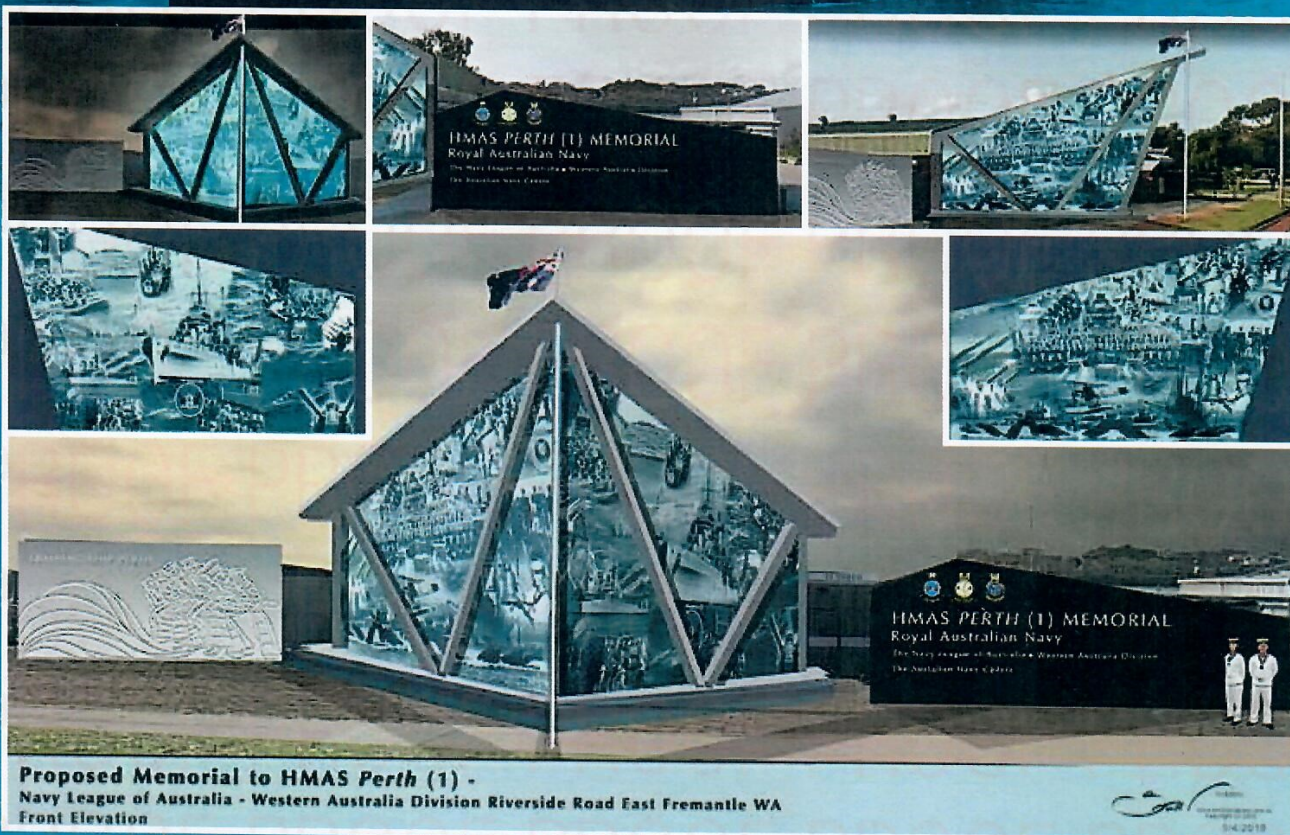
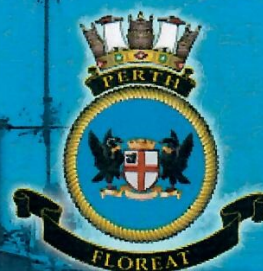
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Subscriptions are due on 1 July in each year and your membership will be current to 30 June immediately following the date on which you join the League, except that if your first subscription is received during the period 1 April to 30 June in any year, your initial membership will be extended to 30 June in the following year.

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Proposed Memorial to HMAS Perth (1) -
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Front Elevation

I WISH TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE HMAS PERTH (1) MEMORIAL FOUNDATION INC.

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The Treasurer

HMAS Perth (1) Memorial Foundation Incorporated

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Membership \$35.00

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JOIN THE AUSTRALIAN NAVY CADETS

What cadets do

Get Out There! If you're into adventure, you'll get as much as you can handle as an Australian Navy Cadet. You'll get to go sailing, hiking, canoeing and camping. Plus you'll learn everything about seamanship. From navigational training to Naval signals and communication.

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To join you must:

- Be a person ordinarily resident in Australia.
- Be at least 12 years and 6 months old and under the age of 19 years.
- Produce a statement from your family or any medical practitioner as to your ability to participate in Cadet activities.

So if you're ready to get fully trained in adventure, get into the Australian Navy Cadets and get out there!

In 88 Units across Australia, sponsored by the Royal Australian Navy, over 2,500 staff and cadets learn about sailing and seamanship, develop leadership skills and learn how to communicate effectively. The ANC is a voluntary youth organisation which trains young adults to become better citizens for the community. This training involves nautical and maritime activities within a military environment.

They develop confidence, pride and self-discipline whilst having an ocean of fun and making loads of new friends along the way.

Check out our website at www.cadetnet.gov.au/anc, find a Navy Cadet Unit near you and set sail on the voyage of a lifetime.

For information on how to join the ANC, email

ANCrecruiting@cadetnet.gov.au

**THE
NAVY**

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The Hon. Secretary, NSW Division
NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA, GPO Box 1719, Sydney NSW 2001



PRODUCED BY THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA WESTERN AUSTRALIA DIVISION

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