



NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

July 2021
Volume 5, Issue 7

DOWN THE VOICEPIPE *do you hear there!*

COMING UP

Executive meeting Monday 06th September
2021 at 1700

AGM NLWA Saturday 21st. August 2021 at
1000

HMAS PERTH (I) Memorial Foundation INC
Executive meeting Saturday 11th. September
2021 1000

AGM HMAS Perth (I) Memorial Foundation
Inc. Saturday 25th. September 2021 at 1000

HMAS Perth (III) 150 Freedom of entry into
the City of Perth commencing at 1030 on the
28th. August 2021

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



Still at the forefront of most people's lives is Covid 19. We've now been living with this for a year and a half and unfortunately, despite some major leaps forward, we still don't seem to be able to get on top of this. Every time we start to see some changes for the better a new variant pops up and places us behind the eight ball again. I reiterate our best wishes to those in other, more heavily affected states and hope to see some improvement sooner rather than later.

A little bit of personal background, July 2021 marks forty years since I walked into Navy Cadets as a thirteen-year-old boy, joining TS PERTH in what was then, the Naval Reserve Cadets. In that time, I have experienced the high's and lows of the cadet program but the one constant has always been the level of support provided by the WA Division of our organisation. This support continues today and not just to myself. It is this ongoing support and camaraderie which I believe sets us apart from some of the other groups and organisations currently in existence.

On the building front, the new windows have been installed, as have the new shutters. Both truly complement each other and well and truly bring our outside façade up to modern standards. Our builder, Emidio, is fashioning some bulkheads to complete the job and as usual, has everything looking a million bucks. The old Boat Shed and Cage area have been dismantled and mostly taken away, leaving a blank canvas as we progress towards the proposed memorial to HMAS PERTH I and a potential new Boat Shed.

Saturday the 24th saw a few of us head to the Northam RSL for Christmas in July. Leaving Perth on a dreary, wet day we had a very pleasant hour and a bit journey up to Northam and some dry weather, even the sun was out which made a refreshing change. On taking our seats we were pleasantly surprised by a dance show which lasted about half an hour and allowed those volunteering their time in the kitchen to put the finishing touches on a sumptuous three course meal. As is always the case, we received a fine welcome with special thanks passed onto us for making the trek. From start to finish we had a lot of laughs with the RSL members and invited guests and yours truly even had a win with a minor door prize, bubbles in a bottle, not to drink though but to dip a stick in, pull it out and blow bubbles from the soapy mixture inside. Oh well, it's the thought that counts and again this little undertaking created a few laughs for our table. Leaving Northam in sunlight saw us head back into a repeat of the weather we left behind a few hours earlier. Our thanks go to Mick, Donna and all of the members and volunteers who made our day so enjoyable.

Again, I direct you to our 2021 AGM, happening on Saturday 21 August from 10am. I know this is the second time in as many newsletters I have mentioned the AGM though you'll be pleased to know this reminder won't appear in the August newsletter, effectively giving you a good ten or so months reprieve.

Until next month,

Regards

Brad

NLWA Monthly Roundup.



Photo of HMAS Perth (II) has arrived and has now been fixed to the wall of the memorial. Many thanks go to CMDR Bob Mummery RAN RTD for his efforts in securing this memento from the Williamstown Dockyard offices and to CN for arranging safe delivery



Refurbishing of The HMAS Perth (I) Memorial and Facility continues with the NLWA having installed new windows and shutters. Other works are continuing on a scheduled works plan.



HMAS Perth (I) Memorial Foundation Inc Round-up and events

HMAS Perth (I) Foundation update

The project is progressing as expected plans and specifications are before the council and are proceeding satisfactory. The ANC condemned boatshed has now been demolished and removed taking with it asbestos cladding. In due course a new purpose built boatshed will be erected and set back further to take in the new memorial wall. NLWA is proceeding with the original memorial updating refurbishing and replacing old windows and fittings. The new shutters are now in place on the windows and has improved the appearance of the building. Further work will include resurfacing the main deck \$10000, Cladding or rendering the exterior of the facility approx. \$9000. Approx. \$45000 has been spent on this project by NLWA to allow the foundation to concentrate and fund the new extension through donations and grants. Currently grant applications are before Lotteries WA, Anzac Day Grant 2022 and heritage grant finally a grant of just under \$4000 has been received from the East Fremantle community grants scheme. All monies raised by the foundation are going directly into the project.

The NLWA and Foundation has lent the Forts museum complex The Heroes of the Sunda Strait banners as part of the mari-



Photos courtesy LEUT David Nicolson RAN RTD

Through the efforts of CMDR Bob Mummery RAN RTD and one of his mates in Queensland we have been donated a mounted wall photograph of HMAS Perth (II) which originally hung in the Williamstown Dockyard Office The NLWA and the HMAS Perth (I) Memorial Foundation is also very much appreciative of the assistance of the RAN and Chief of Navy who kindly arranged the safe delivery to Western Australia.

It is very encouraging the number of people coming together to ensure this National Memorial of Significance becomes a part of our Australian Naval wartime history. Many people are putting their memorabilia and photographs on our Facebook page to share with the Australian Community.. This past month we have picked up another five members.

A Australia wide search is being conducted to try and locate one of HMAS Perth (II) propellers to be incorporated in the memorial. If successful the propellor would be melted down and recast in to the same type of propellor carried by Perth (I). Fingers crossed that we can achieve this. If unsuccessful if anyone can obtain or locate a propellor that would suit this purpose it would be most welcomed . The propellor would be recast into a 5" diameter to fit the top of the compass rose to be located in front of the memorial wall.



It would be wonderful if any of our readers could follow up on this story and report back for a future addition

Memorial Bench on Panjang Island

By Dana Charles



(Left): The memorial/observation bench at Munir Beach on Panjang Island; (Right): The dedication plaque in English which is installed on the back side of the bench. (Photos provided by David McGrath)

Memorial Bench on Panjang Island

By Dana Charles

Through the efforts of Australian David McGrath, grandson of Stoker Edward Arthur Thomas, (S/N 21793) who died on the HMAS *Perth* (D-29) during the battle of Sunda Strait, a large memorial/observation bench has been constructed at Munir Beach on Panjang Island—the closest land mass to the final resting places in Banten Bay of USS *Houston* (CA-30) and HMAS *Perth* (D-29).

The bench is situated approximately 160metres away from the *Houston* and about 4500 metres away from the

Perth, according to McGrath, who got permission to build the bench from the site's landowner about 30 months ago. Local islanders began construction shortly thereafter. McGrath wrote in an email, "All I wished to do was get the people to watch over our ships and report any illegal salvage operations near the ships. And I simply asked the landowner if I may build a memorial seat for other descendants to sit and reflect in the shade, while looking out towards 'the ships of heroes.' Everyone involved told me to do whatever I would like to do."

The bench sustained some damage last year, but it and the entire site was upgraded in June 2021, including the addition of a pergola and ceramic plaques engraved in Indonesian and English which share with the local people the reason behind the seat being there.

McGrath wrote, "I first went there for my late grandfather's 100th birthday and placed wreaths above both ships. I started 'Coast Watch' to give them donations of food and in return I asked them to please watch over our 'ships of heroes.' I now have 22 orphaned kids on the island [whom] I support every 6 months, along with the school library, and food to the poorest families. It has been a humbling experience. I love the people on this island. And they have helped me every step I have taken, along with local government and state government. The support I have been shown is unbelievable." "I invite anyone who wishes to visit Panjang island to please do so," McGrath wrote. "The government of Banten Province has told me to tell all: YOU ARE MOST WELCOME TO VISIT, and I can assure you they are a very friendly lot."

US Navy has christened future USNS John Lewis T-AO 205 replenishment oiler ship
Naval News July 2021 Navy Forces Maritime Defense Industry
POSTED ON SATURDAY, 17 JULY 2021 17:16



Future USNS John Lewis T-AO 205 replenishment oiler ship for U.S. Navy. (Picture source NASSCO)

The future USNS John Lewis is the first ship in its class and will be operated by the Navy's Military Sealift Command. The ship is named in honor of the late politician and civil rights leader. John Lewis-class oilers will be named for other prominent civil rights leaders and activists.

The John Lewis-class ships are based on commercial design standards and will recapitalize the current T-AO 187-class fleet replenishment oilers to provide underway replenishment of fuel to U.S. Navy ships at sea. These ships are part of the Navy's Combat Logistics Force.

In June 2016, the Navy awarded a \$3.2 billion contract to General Dynamics NASSCO in San Diego for the design and construction of the first six ships of the Future Fleet Replenishment Ship, the John Lewis-class (T-AO 205), with construction commencing in September 2018. The Navy plans to procure 20 ships of the new class.

The new fleet oilers for the U.S. Navy are designed to transfer fuel to the Navy's carrier strike groups operating at sea. The oilers feature the capacity to carry 162,000 barrels of oil, a significant dry cargo capacity, aviation capability, and a speed of 20 knots (37 km/h). NASSCO designed the new vessels with double hulls to protect against oil spills and strengthened cargo and ballast tanks. The vessels measure 746-feet (227 m) in length with a full load displacement of 49,850 tons.

Navy Charges Sailor with Arson, Hazarding a Vessel in 2020 Bonhomme Richard Fire

By: [Gidget Fuentes](#)

July 29, 2021 5:24 PM • Updated: July 29, 2021 10:01 PM



Federal firefighters assess damage in the hangar bay aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD-6) on

July 15, 2020. US Navy Photo

This post has been updated with additional details of the sailor accused of starting the fire aboard the former Bonhomme Richard (LHA-6).

The Navy has filed charges against a sailor for allegedly deliberately starting a fire last year that quickly spread and consumed much of the interior of amphibious assault ship USS *Bonhomme Richard* (LHD-6), the service announced Thursday.

"The sailor was a member of *Bonhomme Richard*'s crew at the time and is accused of starting the fire," Cmdr. Sean Robertson, a U.S. 3rd Fleet spokesperson in San Diego, said in a statement.

The charges against the seaman apprentice are aggravated arson under Article 126 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice and hazarding a vessel under Article 110, USNI News has learned. The charges "were brought forth against a Navy sailor in response to evidence found during the criminal investigation into the fire started on USS *Bonhomme Richard* (LHD 6) on July 12, 2020."

The fire began in the morning of July 12, 2020, as the ship was berthed at Naval Base San Diego. It burned for nearly five days and later lead to the Navy's decision to decommission and scrap the ship, which began commissioned service in 1998 and carried tens of thousands of Marines and sailors across the globe and to combat zones over the years.

Only about 160 sailors of the ship's 1,000 crew were aboard Bonhomme Richard when the fire broke out. The ship had been undergoing maintenance on Pier 2 at Naval Base San Diego, following a \$249 million maintenance availability at the nearby General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard that included updates to support the Marine Corps' advanced F-35B Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter.

"Evidence collected during the investigation is sufficient to direct a preliminary hearing in accordance with due process under the military justice system," Robertson said.

"Vice Adm. Steve Koehler, who commands 3rd Fleet, is considering court-martial charges and has directed a preliminary hearing at which an impartial hearing officer will make determinations and recommendations required by the UCMJ prior to any further trial proceedings – including whether or not there is probable cause to believe an offense has been committed and to offer a recommendation as to the disposition of the case," he said.

The charges are against the same sailor who was questioned in August by NCIS Naval Criminal Investigation Service and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives agents, a Navy official told USNI News. The sailor had been held in custody at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., before being released in November, reported [The San Diego Union-Tribune](#) [earlier this month](#).

Under military justice procedures, the preliminary hearing officer would make a recommendation to 3rd Fleet on whether the charges should be dropped or warrant prosecution at a court-martial.

The criminal investigation into the cause of the fire is separate from several other inquiries on how the Navy and other agencies effectively battled the blaze. A command investigation into the details of the fire fighting effort is due out in September. *The following is the complete statement from U.S. 3rd Fleet.*

On July 29, charges under the Uniform Code of Military Justice were brought forth against a Navy Sailor in response to evidence found during the criminal investigation into the fire started on USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6) on July 12, 2020. Evidence collected during the investigation is sufficient to direct a preliminary hearing in accordance with due process under the military justice system. The Sailor was a member of Bonhomme Richard's crew at the time and is accused of starting the fire.

Vice Adm. Steve Koehler, commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet is considering court-martial charges and has directed a preliminary hearing at which an impartial hearing officer will make determinations and recommendations required by the UCMJ prior to any further trial proceedings – including whether or not there is probable cause to believe an offense has been committed and to offer a recommendation as to the disposition of the case.



Dear Member

The 69th.Annual General Meeting of the Western Australia Division will be held on Saturday 21st. August 2021 in the HMAS Perth (I) Memorial Facility Riverside Road East Fremantle. Commencing at 1000.

Business

To present the Annual Report of NLWA for the period 2020/2021

To receive the President's report

To receive the Secretary's Report

To receive the Treasurer's report

To receive the balance sheet and accounts for the financial year ending 30th. June 2020/2021

Receive nominations and to elect the Executive Committee for the financial year 2021/2022

Guest speaker for the morning to be notified

Morning tea will be provided at the end of the AGM

For catering purposes, please complete the form below and return to the Hon Secretary

NO LATER THAN 14TH. AUGUST 2021. (By email if possible)

Name:

Number of guests

WILL / WILL NOT BE ATTENDING Yours Aye

Jim

Jim O'Neill CMDR ANC RTD

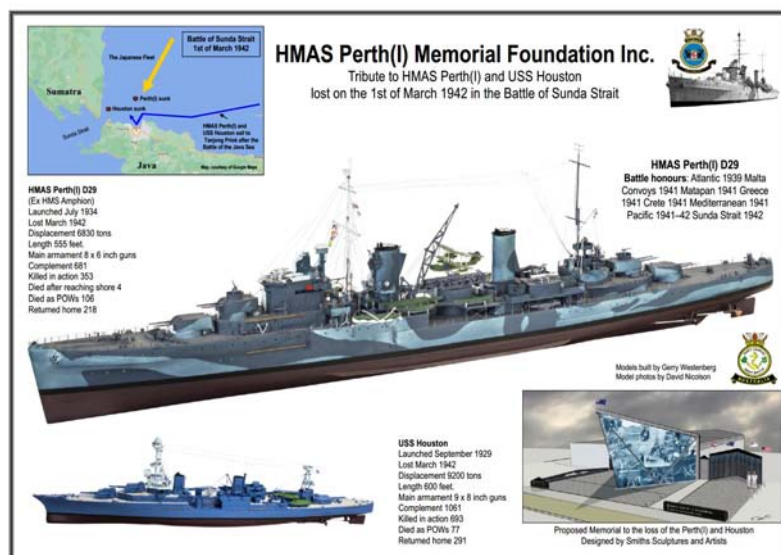
Hon Secretary

The Navy league of Australia was established in Australia in 1900 its aims today as it was in 1900, is to create an interest in the sea and to keep before the Australian people the fact that we are a maritime nation and that a strong navy and a sound maritime industry are indispensable elements to our national well-being and vital to the freedom of Australia The Navy League of Australia invites you to join us in this important national task

www.navyleague.org.au Facebook: Navy League of Australia WA Division



HMAS Perth (I) and her cat 'Red Lead' As the last liberty boat was leaving before HMAS Perth departed from Sydney on 30 November 1941, two young Able Seamen, Bob Collins and Ray Firminger, were making their farewells. Ray's wife and his young daughter Pat, who was cuddling a tiny grey and white tabby kitten, were saying goodbye. Bob was chatting to the little girl when she reached out to him and told him he should take the kitten. Bob was taken aback but as the liberty boat was about to leave, he accepted the gift and hurriedly stuffed the kitten into his jacket. King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions forbade pets aboard HM Ships, but in the interest of morale a blind eye was often turned to this restriction. To the larrikin Collins this was a challenge and as he knew pets were forbidden, this could incur the wrath of his disciplinarian Executive Officer, Acting Commander Reid. Where to keep the cat until it found its sea legs was a problem solved by use of the paint locker. In those days when ships were primarily made of steel, there was a need for continuous maintenance of surfaces against the effects of corrosion. Teams were constantly chipping, scraping and wire brushing metal surfaces and then painting them with a primary coat of red lead. Ships had many gallons of this ubiquitous paint which is now known to be injurious to health. What could be more likely to happen in a crowded paint locker than the cat knocking over a pot of red lead, leaving incriminating paw marks. Hence the name Red Lead was acquired. Bob Collins still had the tricky task of gaining acceptance for his feline friend and a cunning plan was devised. Hec Waller was thought to be favourable to pets as in Stuart they had a monkey 'Chico' as mascot. During this period Perth was on the 'ferry service' escorting ships between Sydney and Fremantle, sometimes this could be exciting when doing high speed runs with Queen Mary and Aquitania, but usually it was with ships of lesser importance and with reduced speed. After leaving Fremantle in good weather, when he knew the Captain was on the Bridge and thought to be in a favourable mood, Collins introduced Red Lead to the command by letting her wander around until seen by the Captain. Thankfully, he seemed quite amused to see the kitten and rolled up some signal paper for it to play with. After this Red Lead was allowed to roam free and Collins was assigned her guardian. When HMAS Perth was sunk Bob Collins took the plunge into the sea hanging on to his beloved Red Lead. Bob was to survive but Red Lead was last seen clawing on to a piece of wooden wreckage. Red Lead lives on There was of course another ship of this name. HMAS Perth (II) was the lead ship of three American-built guided missile destroyers which provided admirable support to the RAN for more than three decades, especially during the Vietnam War. Within this ship there was however no mention of our feline friend. HMAS Perth (III) is the last of eight Anzac Class frigates and it is in her that the tradition of Red Lead survives. On her bridge there is a picture of Red Lead and on the companion way leading to the bridge are to be found her tell-tale paw marks. To complete the picture the wardroom door has a cat flap, although no cat has been known to pass through it and new pets are not encouraged. 9 There is one surprising anomaly as Red Lead shown in the picture is a (lucky) black cat while in 'Cruiser' and 'Shipmates' she is mentioned as a grey and white tabby. 'Shipmates' notes a further reference to the memoirs of another Perth veteran, Signalman Bill Bee. Bill wrote 'All Men Back – All One Big Mistake' which mentions Red Lead but does not allude to her colour. Unfortunately, Bob Collins is no longer with us, but two other survivors (SBLT Gavin Campbell and Able Seaman Frank McGovern) stated in 2014 that she was ginger. An Australian National War Memorial tribute also speaks of Perth's black cat. Whatever her colour, and black she was not, she was a remarkable feline who helps us remember the proud deeds of those who have gone before.





HMAS Sydney, third and final Hobart-class destroyer of the RAN.

Royal Australian Navy 'HMAS Sydney' Frigate Completed Combat System Trials

HMAS Sydney today returned to Garden Island, Sydney, following a four-and-a-half month deployment to the United States and Canada in which she qualified for operational duty. [Martin Manaranche](#) 30 Jul 2021 *Royal Australian Navy press release*

While away, the crew of Navy's third and final Hobart-class destroyer conducted combat system sea qualification trials, including weapons firings off the US west coast and integrated sonar suite trials, sailing from NanOOSE Bay, Canada.

Sydney passed the tests and now joins her sister ships *Hobart* and *Brisbane* as being ready for operational deployment.

Commanding Officer *Sydney* Commander Andrew Hough said Navy's Hobart-class destroyers provided significant combat capability to the joint force, be it in defending naval task groups, providing fire support to troops ashore, or coordinating air defence activities with the Air Force.

"Our deployment was the culmination of more than a decade of work by Navy in partnership with the Australian shipbuilding industry. "Despite the constraints of the pandemic, the crew achieved their mission while maintaining COVID-safe practices, with the support of their families back home.

"They demonstrated resilience and professionalism and showed that while the pandemic continues to shape our navy-to-navy interactions, we can still operate domestically, regionally and globally.

"It was an honour to lead such a dedicated crew and to return to our home port, knowing we have been part of the final check off for such a critical capability."

Commanding Officer *Sydney* Commander Andrew Hough

Built in Adelaide by the Air Warfare Destroyer Alliance, *Hobart*, *Brisbane* and *Sydney* are equipped with the Aegis combat system, which includes an advanced phased array radar and SM-2 missiles.



HMAS Sydney launching an ESSM for the first time. RAN picture

The Aegis provides the destroyers with advanced air defence systems capable of engaging aircraft and missiles. Coupled with its surface and anti-submarine warfare capabilities, the destroyers have layered offensive and defensive systems to counter conventional and asymmetric threats in all spheres of naval warfare.

Sydney's 174-strong crew is fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Before arriving at Garden Island, all personnel completed a 14-day quarantine period at sea and all required pre-arrival COVID-19 tests. *Sydney's* crew will now enjoy some much-needed respite while the ship undergoes a post-deployment maintenance period.

About Hobart-class Destroyers



Royal Australian Air Force F-35A Lightning II aircraft conduct a flypast of HMAS Sydney during an air warfare serial off the coast of New South Wales.

The three Hobart-class destroyers *Hobart*, *Brisbane* and *Sydney* are based on the Navantia designed F100 frigate and is coupled it with the Aegis Combat System. They were constructed in Australia by the Air Warfare Destroyer Alliance.

The Hobart-class provides air defence for accompanying ships in addition to land forces and infrastructure in coastal areas, and for self-protection against missiles and aircraft. The Aegis Combat

The Hobart-class ships carry a MH-60R helicopter for surveillance and response to support key warfare areas. The surface warfare function will include long range anti-ship missiles and a naval gun capable of firing extended range munitions in support of land forces.

They also conduct undersea warfare and be equipped with modern sonar systems, decoys, surface-launched torpedoes and an array of effective close-in defensive weapons.

These capabilities ensure that the Hobart-class guided missile destroyers have the layered defensive and offensive capability required to counter conventional and asymmetric threats.

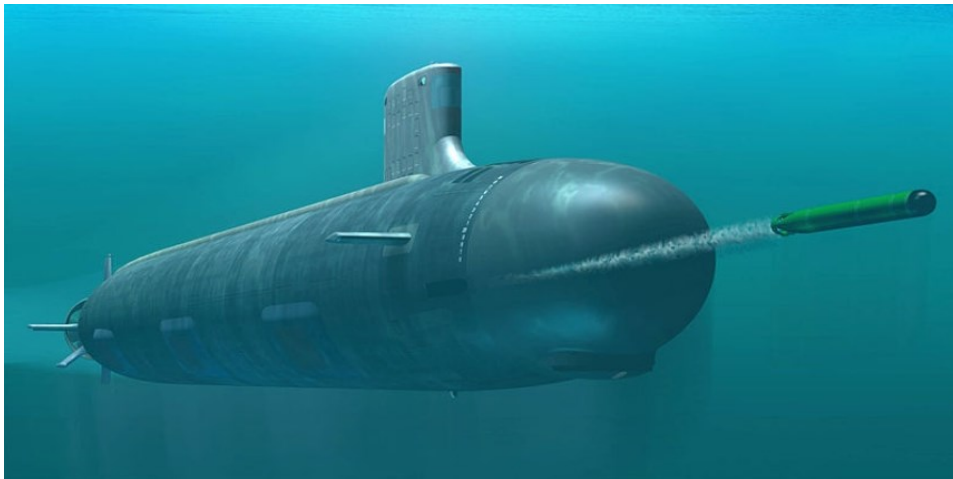
Hobart-class characteristics

Displacement: 7,000 tonnes full load
Length: 147.2 metres (483 ft)
Beam: 18.6 metres (61 ft)
Draught: 5.17 metres (17.0 ft)
Speed: 28+ knots
Range: 5,000 nautical miles at 18 knots



US NAVY CHRISTENS ATTACK SUBMARINE HYMAN G. RICKOVER

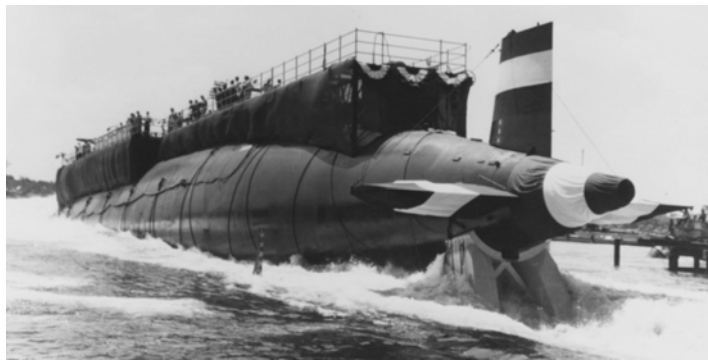
By [Baird Maritime](#) - August 2, 2021



Rendering of a Virginia-class submarine (Photo: US Department of Defense)

The US Navy christened the future attack submarine *USS Hyman G. Rickover* in a ceremony at General Dynamics Electric Boat's (GDEB) Connecticut facilities on Saturday, July 31. The Virginia-class nuclear-powered submarine is the second US Navy vessel to honour the late Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, whose efforts helped lead to the widespread adoption of nuclear propulsion on the navy's surface ships and submarines beginning in the late 1950s.

As with its Virginia-class sisters, the future *Hyman G. Rickover* will be capable of operating in littoral and deep waters while conducting anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface ship warfare, strike warfare, special operations forces support, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), irregular warfare, and mine warfare missions. The submarine's inherent stealth, endurance, mobility, and firepower directly enable them to support missions involving sea control, power projection, forward presence, maritime security, and deterrence.



In this July 9, 1960, file photo, the U.S. Navy nuclear powered attack submarine USS Thresher is launched bow-first at the Portsmouth Navy Yard in Kittery, Maine. (AP Photo)

The Navy believes the Thresher's sinking was likely caused by a burst pipe and electrical problems that led to a nuclear reactor shutdown.

"The Navy continues to stand by and remain transparent with the families and the public on the conclusions of the 1963 Court of Inquiry and the likely scenarios that caused the loss of Thresher," said Lt. Katherine Diener, a Navy spokesperson. Another 4,000 pages of Thresher-related documents are due to be released, she said.

Bryant, himself the skipper of a Thresher-class submarine, agreed that a series of events led to the sinking: The sub descended far too quickly without stopping to assess for leaks from previous shock testing months earlier; there were training concerns because the location of valves had changed while in dock; and ice buildup prevented the crew from effectively blowing the ballast tanks to resurface.

The main cooling pumps eventually stopped, followed by the nuclear reactor, robbing the submarine of the ability to stop its fatal descent, he said.

No one will know for sure exactly how the disaster played out. But it's clear that precious minutes went by as the crew became aware of their dire situation. At one point, a message from the submarine to a rescue ship referred to "900 north" suggesting the sub was 900 feet beyond its test depth, according to the documents.

The test depth was redacted but previously declassified documents indicated it was 1,300 feet, said Norman Friedman, a naval analyst and author of more than 30 books on naval topics.

The documents reveal many of the submarine's safety systems were based on operations in shallower depths from previous-generation submarines, and were inadequate in the unlikely scenario of a loss of nuclear propulsion while deep underwater, Bryant said.

That World War II mindset during the nuclear age proved fatal for the Thresher crew, he said.

At the time, the Navy's resources and personnel were strained as it pushed to get ballistic missile-equipped submarines deployed quickly to counter the Soviet missile threat, Friedman said.

That contributed to veteran crew members being reassigned and new officers and sailors coming aboard who were less familiar with the Thresher's complicated system of pipes and valves before the fatal dive, he said.

"It's almost a wartime situation and you might consider them casualties of the Cold War," he said of the Thresher's crew.

The sub's destruction caused the Navy to accelerate safety improvements and to create a program called SUBSAFE, an extensive series of design modifications, training and other improvements.

One submarine has sunk since then, the nuclear-powered submarine Scorpion in 1968, and it was not SUBSAFE-certified, the Navy said.

Tim Noonis, whose father, a radio operator, perished on the Thresher, said the loss remains painful for families like his, but he finds comfort that the Navy corrected mistakes for the sake of future sailors.

"No one wants to lose a family member, but if other families have benefited, well, there's some solace in that," Noonis said.

Noonis was born at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, where the Thresher was built. The sub was based in Groton, Connecticut.

Its final dive took place beyond the continental shelf, about 220 miles off Massachusetts' Cape Cod.

Thresher currently rests at a depth of 8,500 feet. The wreckage is spread over a mile on the ocean floor.

NEW GUARDIAN-CLASS PATROL BOAT HANDED OVER TO VANUATU POLICE

By [Baird Maritime](#) - August 2, 2021



RVS Takuare (Photo: Austal Australia)

Austal Australia delivered a new Guardian-class patrol boat to the Australia Department of Defence (DOD) on Thursday, July 30. RVS *Takuare* was then formally handed over to the government of Vanuatu. The Maritime Wing of the Vanuatu Police will use the vessel for border patrols, regional policing, and search and rescue. The 39.5-metre, steel-hulled *Takuare* is the 12th Guardian-class boat to be built and the first in the class to be acquired by Vanuatu. It will replace RVS *Tukoro*, a Pacific Forum-class patrol boat delivered by Tenix in 1987. The newbuild also has a stern launch and recovery system for one rigid hull inflatable boat (RHIB).

USS BULLHEAD (SS-332) Balao class submarine

The USS Bullhead (SS-332) was the last of 52 American submarines and the last US vessel lost in WWII. She departed Fremantle on 31st. July 1945 and was sunk in the Java Sea off the coast of Bali, Indonesia on 6 August 1945, the same day that the first atomic bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima.

Fremantle was the second largest submarine base of the war after the US naval base Pearl Harbour, Hawaii and approximately 170 American, British and Dutch submarines were based here over the course of the war and a total of eleven that operated from Fremantle were lost.

The submarine fleet was the single biggest factor in deciding the outcome of the Pacific war and accounted for more than half of all Japanese shipping losses. A memorial this week was unveiled in the Port of Fremantle to commemorate the loss of the Bullhead and its crew and was unveiled by Consul General of the United States David Gainer and Mr Tim Baldock author of *Fortress Fremantle*



China's warning to UK's strike group



HMS Queen Elizabeth

China has warned the UK [Carrier Strike Group](#) (CSG) upon its arrival in the contentious [South China Sea](#), saying it is ready to deal with 'improper acts'. The [HMS Queen Elizabeth](#)-led fleet has begun a 'freedom of navigation' patrol in the waters that are officially recognised as international, despite [China](#)'s claims of sovereignty.

An expert told Forces News the aircraft carrier can, at the very least, expect to be monitored by the Chinese as Beijing will not wish to appear 'bullied' by foreign forces. China's warnings have so far been all words rather than action, but the waters remain hotly contested. So too are the small islands and reefs they contain, claimed by several neighbouring countries, and China is becoming increasingly assertive. Beijing has laid claim to the majority of the area – it has even set its own boundaries.

But the rest of the world does not recognise them. Beijing is angry following US Freedom of Navigation operations – America uses surveillance flights to keep a routine watch over the region. Asia-Pacific expert at RUSI, Veerle Nouwens told Forces News: "The Chinese have had some close encounters with, for example, American vessels. "There have been some accusations of unprofessional shadowing at too close ranges. That, of course, can lead to unintended accidents at sea. "That sort of behaviour makes it difficult or makes it worrisome that you could see something eventuate at sea." China is spending considerable sums of money developing its military resources.

In relation to global defence expenditure, it is behind only the US in the rankings. The CSG is on its way from Singapore to Japan – where it has been invited to participate in military exercises. Is an actual conflict over passage through the South China Sea likely? Ms Nouwens added: "There is a lot of reporting in Chinese press that China should not allow itself to be bullied, that it has to present a strong show of force, so there is that nationalistic element of 'we must not let others push us around'.

"Having said that though, again in terms of what China actually wants to happen, it does not want to be involved in a conflict, it does not want to be seen as actually leading any sort of contingency at sea."

These are tense times for the fleet, whilst China watches its movements with a close eye.

Japan's naval flag a point of contention



In this Oct. 14, 2012, file photo, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) escort ship "Kurama," left, navigates behind destroyer "Yudachi," with a rising sun flag, during a fleet review in water off Sagami Bay, south of Tokyo.

South Korea — Korea, China and other Asian countries say the flag is a reminder of Japan's war-time atrocities, and is comparable to the Nazi swastika, military.com reports.

That's why the flag has created anger at the Olympics, with some of the host nation's neighbors calling for it to be banned during the Tokyo Games. There's little prospect that ties between Seoul and Tokyo will improve any time soon. But the flag dispute may ease. Some experts say the COVID-19 restrictions that have banned spectators at most Olympic venues stadiums may prevent the disagreement from growing. Here's a look at the "rising sun" flag and the long-running unease it has caused in Northeast Asia.

There are two rising sun flags associated with Japan, whose very name in Japanese means "the sun's origin." One is the country's national flag, called "nisshoki," or "hinomaru," which has a red disc on a white background. Few have a problem with this. The other one also has a red disc, but it is surrounded by 16 rays that extend outward. Called "kyokujitsuki," this one has led to vehement protests from some of Japan's neighbors.

Both flags have been used for centuries. But disputes about the "rising sun" flag date back to the early part of the 20th century. That's when Japan's imperial navy used it as its official flag as the nation colonized the Korean Peninsula and invaded or occupied China and other Asian countries until its World War II defeat in 1945. It's still Japan's navy flag, used by the Maritime Self-Defense Force and, in a slightly modified version, by the Ground-Self Defense Force since 1954. These days, ultrarightists in Japan often use the flag during rallies or on social media.

Conflicting Views

Japan's government emphasizes that both rising sun flags use the sun as a motif and were used across the country even before the wartime period. Even today, the rising sun with rays flag motif is used in everyday life in Japan, such as to celebrate a big catch by fishermen, childbirth and other festivities, the government says. "An argument that it is a political statement or a symbol of militarism is completely irrelevant. I believe there is a big misunderstanding," now-Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said in 2013, when he served as chief cabinet secretary.

Japan's neighbors view it differently.

In 2019, South Korea formally requested that the International Olympic Committee ban the flag at the Tokyo Olympics. Seoul said that the flag recalls the "scars and pain" of Asian people who experienced Japan's wartime military aggression, similar to how the swastika "reminds Europeans of the nightmare of World War II."

North Korea's state media, not known for understatement, have accused Japan of trying to turn "the flag of war criminals" into a symbol of peace at the Olympics, saying that is "an intolerable insult to our people and other Asian people." China is also highly sensitive to perceived slights from the Japanese government, individuals and companies. However, official outrage over history has diminished somewhat, while China's political, economic and cultural rivalry with the United States and European democracies has increased in recent years. When it comes to the flag, it's clearly less sensitive in China than in South Korea.

Use at the Games

On Saturday, when South Korea removed banners at the Olympic athletes' village in Tokyo that the IOC ruled to be provocative, Seoul said it received an IOC promise that the displaying of the "rising sun" flag would also be banned at stadiums and other Olympic venues. But South Korean media later reported that some activists carried the "rising sun" flag near the athletes' village. Media reports also said Japan's organizing committee ruled the flag isn't banned inside Olympic stadiums.

"It would be inappropriate to ban the flag from naval exchanges because a version is used by the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Forces," Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul, said. "However, you would not expect the Tokyo Olympics hosts or Japanese athletes to use the rising sun emblem because it is not the national flag." Ties between Seoul and Tokyo, both U.S. allies, have suffered for years in part because of disputes over history and trade. South Korean President Moon Jae-in's office announced Monday that Moon had decided not to visit Japan for the Olympics because the two countries failed to find enough common ground to support a leaders' summit.

Will This Get Worse

Some experts say the flag dispute isn't as serious as other points of contention, like Japan's war-time mobilization of Koreans into sexual slavery or forced labor, and won't likely worsen ties.

The flag dispute can still flare, however, if anger among anti-Japan civic groups in the South draw a backlash among the Japanese public, says Lee Myon-woo, deputy head of the private Sejong Institute near Seoul. Lee says South Korea should refrain from a "too excessive, political interpretation" of the flag because there is no sign that Japan is reviving past militarism. But Bong Young-shik, a research fellow at Yonsei University Institute for North Korean Studies, says the flag wouldn't have become a major issue if Japan had accepted its neighbors' demands for making a more "sincere apology" over its wartime abuse.

The dispute may not have much kindling to fuel it, though, for one key reason: The lack of spectators at nearly all Olympics venues means no one is waving that flag — which means the dispute may die down for the time being.



Local SME wins SEA 5000 pilot order



MARITIME AND UNDERSEA WARFARE

26 JULY 2021

By: **Charbel Kadib**

A Western Australia-based firm has been tapped to develop a prototype for potential integration in the Royal Australian Navy's future frigates.

Following an initial [feasibility study](#) in 2020, BAE Systems Maritime Australia (BAESMA) has awarded a \$180,000 contract to marine technology company VEEM, which has been tasked with developing a prototype propeller blade for the Royal Australian Navy's forthcoming Hunter Class frigates.

VEEM, based south-east of Perth at Canning Vale, will work alongside Kongsberg Maritime, which will continue to support the manufacture of the technology if the prototype demonstration is successful.

BAESMA is expected to issue a 'request for proposal' (RFP) for the propeller and brake blade over the coming months, with the final award announcement scheduled for 2022, before the steel cut on the first vessel at Osborne Naval Shipyard later that year.

This latest announcement comes just a month after VEEM secured \$862,060 in funding from the Commonwealth government via round two of the Manufacturing Modernisation Fund.

"VEEM looks forward to working with BAE Systems Maritime Australia and Kongsberg Maritime on this pilot propeller blade and is very confident of being able to meet the exacting specification, having previously delivered blades to defence clients around the world," VEEM managing director Mark Miocevic said.

"This will contribute significantly to maximising local sovereign industrial capability for the Hunter Class Frigate Program.

"As a long-term supplier of components for submarines, surface ships and warships to the Royal Australian Navy and having supplied more than \$200 million worth of defence products since 1987, VEEM is committed to the supply of Australian-made propellers and brake blades."

Minister for Defence Industry Melissa Price welcomed the announcement, which she said would support the Commonwealth government's broader strategic objectives for the shipbuilding sector.

“This is an important project for the Hunter class frigates and a great opportunity for Australia’s defence industry as we continue to develop our local capability to support naval shipbuilding in Australia,” Minister Price said.

“We look forward to seeing more Australian industry participation in the Naval Shipbuilding Program, improving Australia’s defence manufacturing capability.”

In June 2018, the Commonwealth government announced [BAE Systems](#) Australia as the successful tender for the \$35 billion SEA 5000 Future Frigate program.

The nine Hunter Class frigates will be based on the BAE Systems Type 26 Global Combat Ship currently under construction for the Royal Navy and will replace the eight Anzac Class frigates when they enter service beginning in the late 2020s.

The Hunter Class is billed as an anti-submarine warfare (ASW) centric vessel delivering an advanced ASW capability to the Royal Australian Navy at a time when 50 per cent of the world’s submarines will be operating in the Indo-Pacific region.

SEA 5000 is expected to support over 500 Australian businesses who have been pre-qualified to be part of the Hunter Class supply chain, with the Australian steel industry in particular benefiting from the 48,000 tonnes of steel required to build the ships.



25th June 2021

Two of the seven Sandown-class vessels in the Navy are undergoing maintenance, while of the two assault ships HMS Bulwark and HMS Albion, one is operationally available.

All River-class and River-class II [offshore patrol vessels](#) are ready for operations, while there are several [Royal Fleet Auxiliary \(RFA\)](#) ships undergoing a period of upkeep.

With the news last week that [HMS Diamond had to detach from the Carrier Strike Group 21 mission](#) after suffering "technical issues", it was confirmed this month there was [only one of the Royal Navy's six Type 45 destroyers](#) operationally available.

However, HMS Duncan's crew has this week [returned to the Type 45 destroyer](#) after an 18-month refit at Portsmouth naval base.

Revealed: How Many Navy Vessels Are Unavailable

The Government has admitted that numerous Royal Navy ships are unavailable, due to maintenance being carried out.

Sam Whitworth

29th July 2021 at 11:27am



A defence minister has confirmed the number of [Royal Navy](#) ships currently out of action and undergoing maintenance.

Minister for Defence Procurement Jeremy Quin was answering a written parliamentary question from Conservative MP Mark Francois on the number of [vessels](#) operationally available, where he provided a breakdown of the current status of different classes of ship.

[SEA VESSELS](#)

[What's Next For The Navy's Vessels?](#)

20th May 2021

Last month, HMS Monmouth left service bringing the total of Type 23 frigates to 12, of which four are at present undergoing maintenance, leaving eight operationally available. The figures released by Mr Quin also showed that of the six Hunt-class mine counter-measure vessels at the navy's disposal, two were also unavailable.

Class	Upkeep/Maintenance	Operationally Available	Total
Type 23	4	8	12
River Class Patrol Ships	0	3	3
River II Class Patrol Ships	0	5	5
RFA Tide Class	1	3	4
RFA Wave Class	1	1	2
RFA Landing Ship Docks	1	2	3
Sandown Class	2	5	7
Hunt Class Mine Counter Measure Vessels	2	4	6
HMS ALBION/HMS BULWARK	1	1	2

Table breakdown provided by Jeremy Quin (Picture: Parliament).

HMS Queen Elizabeth Enters Disputed Waters Of South China Sea On CSG21

The British aircraft carrier and its strike group have entered the disputed waters for the next phase of their journey.

Sam Whitworth

28th July 2021 at 12:58pm



HMS Queen Elizabeth has entered the [South China Sea](#) with her [Carrier Strike Group](#) after completing its passage [through the Singapore Strait](#).

The UK-led Strike Group is on a 28-week deployment, covering 26,000 nautical miles including passages through the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, from the Gulf of Aden to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean to the Philippine Sea.

The [South China Sea](#) is one of the most important legs of that journey, as its strategic location makes it a passing point for what is estimated to be a third of the world's maritime shipping, including the maritime crude oil trade.

The region has its share of disputes, often seeing territorial disagreements over the boundaries of the sea and the region's islands.

China, Taiwan, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam all have an interest in the sea and its related archipelagos.

[South China Sea: What Is It And Why Should We Care?](#)

China claims historic rights to most of the South China Sea and sets its own boundaries with its controversial "nine mark line".

However, this has been challenged by a number of countries, including the Philippines, the United States and Indonesia.

This week US Defense Secretary, Lloyd Austin, added [his support for the Royal Navy-led work](#) in the region during a visit to Singapore.

Emphasising the area's importance, he stressed his belief in the power of deterrence and supporting the rule of international maritime law.

Mr Austin told reporters: "Beijing's claim to the vast majority of the South China Sea has no basis in international law.



[Growing Risk Of Accidental Conflict Between West And China, Experts Warn](#)

23rd February 2021

"That assertion treads on the sovereignty of the states in the region."

He also had a special mention for the Royal Navy's flagship: "The HMS Queen Elizabeth is sailing through this region as a flagship of a multi-nation carrier strike group that includes a US destroyer and a US Marine Corps F-35 squadron."

The Carrier Strike Group has run into problems on the deployment recently, with a number of [positive coronavirus cases](#).

This [included HMS Diamond](#), which had to [detach from CSG21](#) after also suffering "technical issues".left the Royal Navy with only one of six [Type 45 destroyers](#) operationally available.



India orders six diesel-electric submarines

By Julian Kerr | Sydney | 29 July 2021

India has issued a Request for Proposals (RfP) for the construction of six diesel-electric attack submarines (SSKs) in which two shortlisted domestic shipyards must each enter into a strategic partnership with one of five overseas original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) before bidding for a contract valued at about A\$7.82 billion.

The classified RFP for Project 75 (I) issued on 20 July requires state-owned company Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL) and private-sector firm Larsen & Toubro to partner with either Naval Group (France), ThyssenKrupp Systems (Germany), Rubin Design Bureau (Russia), Darwoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering (South Korea), or Navantia (Spain).

The P-75 (I) program was initially approved by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in 2007 and then again in 2022 and is the first such project proceeding under the Strategic Partnership (SP) category of India's Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020. Describing the five OEMs as the world leaders in the field of conventional submarine design, construction and all other related technologies, the MoD said the OEMs would transfer technologies to enable the establishment of dedicated manufacturing lines for the new submarines "and make India the global hub for submarine design and production".

The project also envisages associated shore and engineering support, together with training and spares packages. The SSKs will be fitted with contemporary equipment and sensors, fuel cell-based air-independent propulsion (AIP) systems and feature advanced torpedoes, modern missiles and state-of-the-art countermeasure systems, the MoD said.

According to one unconfirmed report, indigenisation will include arming the SSKs with the Indian-developed Brahmos medium-range supersonic cruise missile. Indian media said final selection and contract signature would take at least two years, with delivery of the first-of-type around 2030. Project P-75 (I) will follow on from completion of the ongoing Project 75 in which MDL has been licence-building six 1,775-tonne (when submerged) Kalvari (Scorpene)-class SSKs in collaboration with Naval Group.

All six Kalvari-class boats are expected to be in service by early 2023.

AUSTRALIAN NAVY CADETS ROUND UP



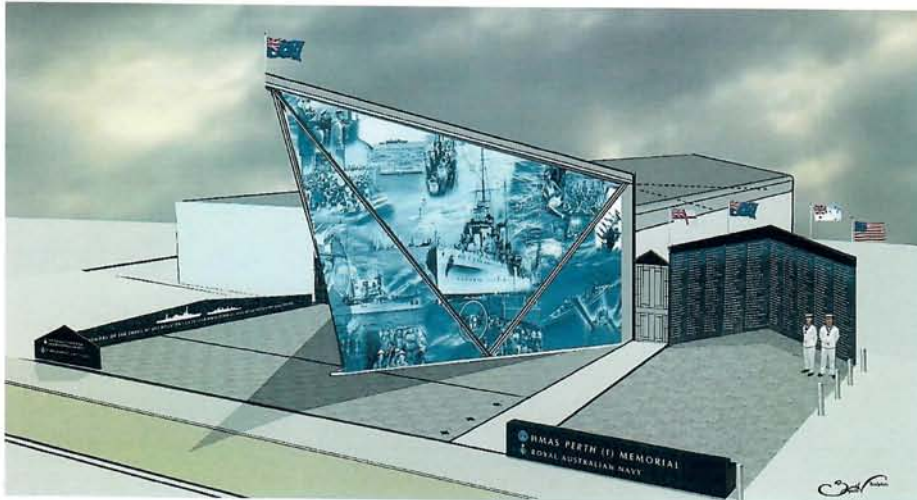
The Navy League of Australia Western Australia Division congratulates SBLT Jared Haselhurst ANC on his appointment as Commanding Officer of TS Perth a well deserved appointment and promotion. Under the next generation of Australian Navy Cadets staff members and the new direction the Director General of Australian Navy Cadets and Reserves and his staff are taking will see a much input to the success of the ANC into the future. It is encouraging to see the many opportunities that will now be available to the cadets under the proposed scheme. It is also acknowledged the tremendous enthusiasm and hard work the Westralian Flotcom LCDR Robert Hughes ANC has continued to exert into the troubled West Australian division. Hopefully his efforts will be recognised in the increased numbers of cadets and programs available to the future ANC network. Bravo Zulu



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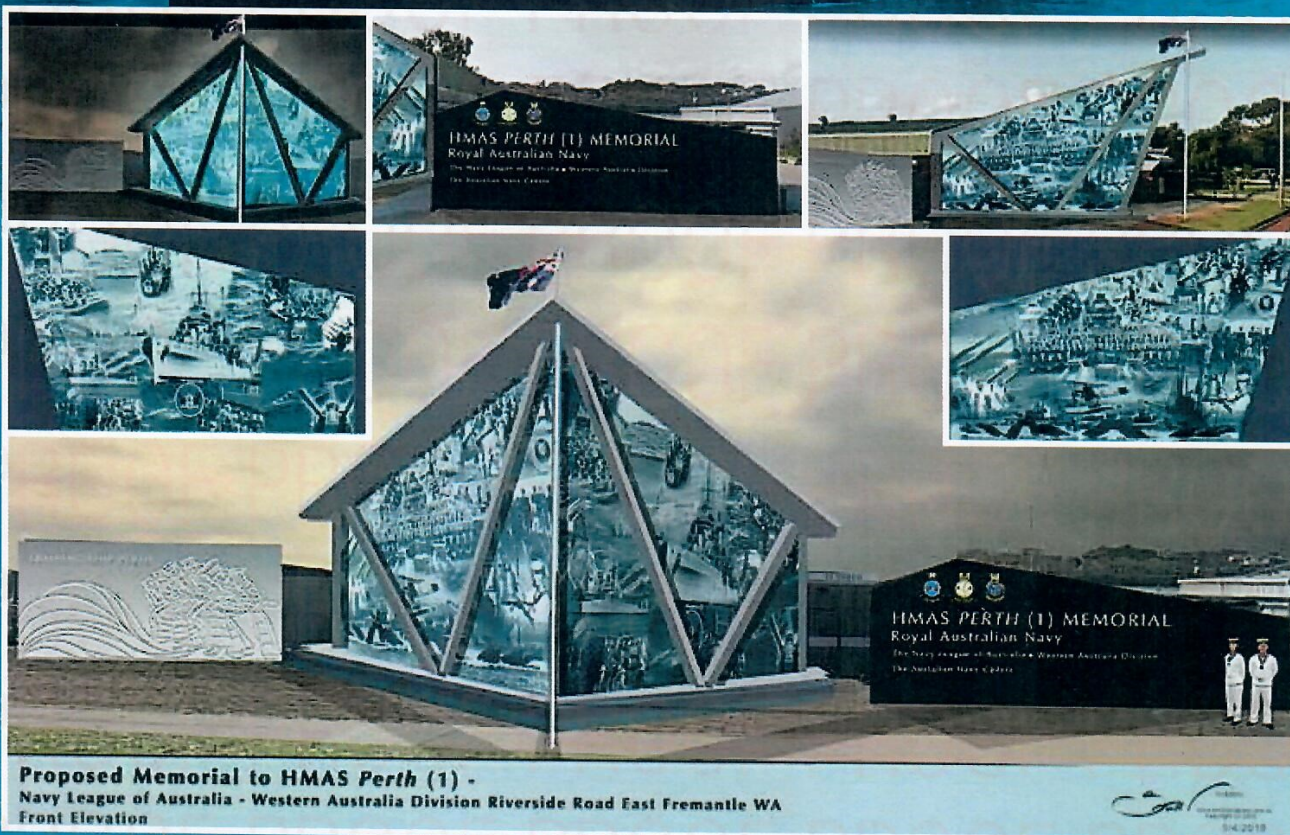
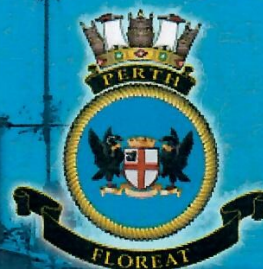
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