NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

December 2021
Volume 5, Issue 12

DOWN THE VOICEPIPE *do you hear there!*

COMING UP

Executive meeting NLWA Monday

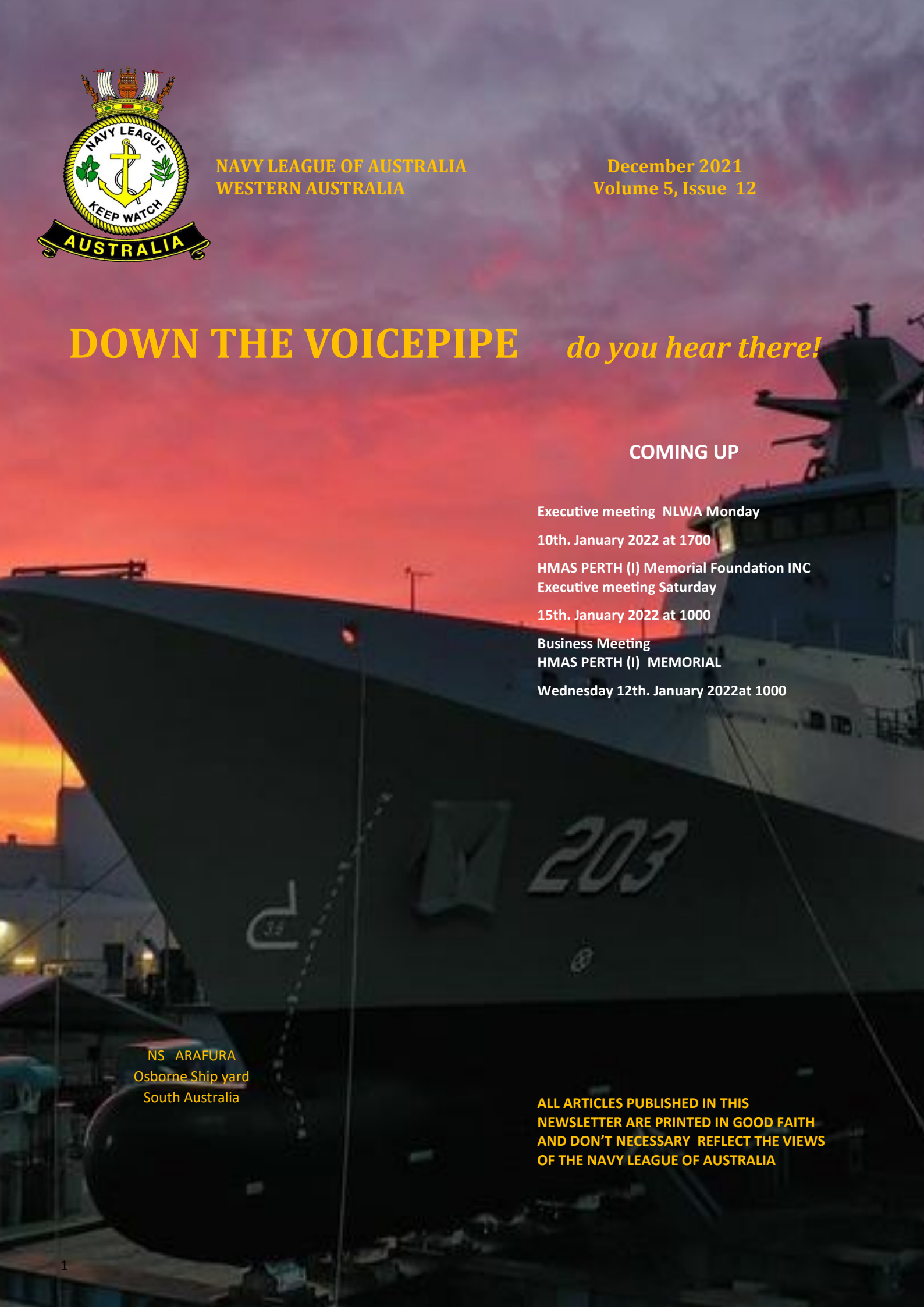
10th. January 2022 at 1700

HMAS PERTH (I) Memorial Foundation INC Executive meeting Saturday

15th. January 2022 at 1000

Business Meeting HMAS PERTH (I) MEMORIAL

Wednesday 12th. January 2022at 1000



NS ARAFURA
Osborne Ship yard
South Australia

Navy League of Australia Western Australia Division News update

Well, here we are in December and the final month of 2021. This year that can be best summed up as having many high's and low's and I'm not too sure if anyone really knows what the future holds yet. All we can hope for is a better year ahead.

December saw the Executive Committee invited to the Annual Awards Presentation for TS PERTH and a great afternoon was had. Though not our domain, it is very pleasing to see TS PERTH back into a form of stability and we trust the cadets and staff of the unit have a prosperous and fun 2022. Naturally, we extend these good wishes to the other units in the State.

Our traveling party amassed another 2,750 or so kilometres this year and visited many country towns, museums and the odd watering hole or four. Camaraderie around the bbq has been beyond expectation, every single person has been welcoming and I have no doubt that we will have even more members joining us on our adventures next year.

Speaking of members, this past year has been one of the best on record for attracting new people into the organisation. This is great for us as a group but has also proven very handy on a personal basis as with more members, we have more trades and backgrounds to choose from when we need a job or two carried out or some unbiased advice be that at our facility or our own homes. It is both pleasing and rewarding to see some of our members utilise our Trades and Services list with some members being looked after very well and more importantly, not being taken for a ride.

Mid-month we held a Pre-Christmas lunch which gave us an opportunity for a final catch up prior to embarking on the festive madness that brings about the close of a year. As per usual, the camaraderie was beyond compare, the food exceptional and a thoroughly enjoyable time was had by all in attendance.

December ends on a sad note with the passing of Life Member and former President, Mason Hayman. Mason has given a huge amount to Navy League and the WA Division in particular and can best be summed up as one of life's gentlemen, a great friend, sounding board and always on hand when help was needed. Mason will be very sadly missed. Our thoughts go out to Margaret and their family.

In closing, I would like to extend my very best wishes to all of our members and colleagues for the festive season and the year ahead, may 2022 be all you could want.

Until next month,

Regards

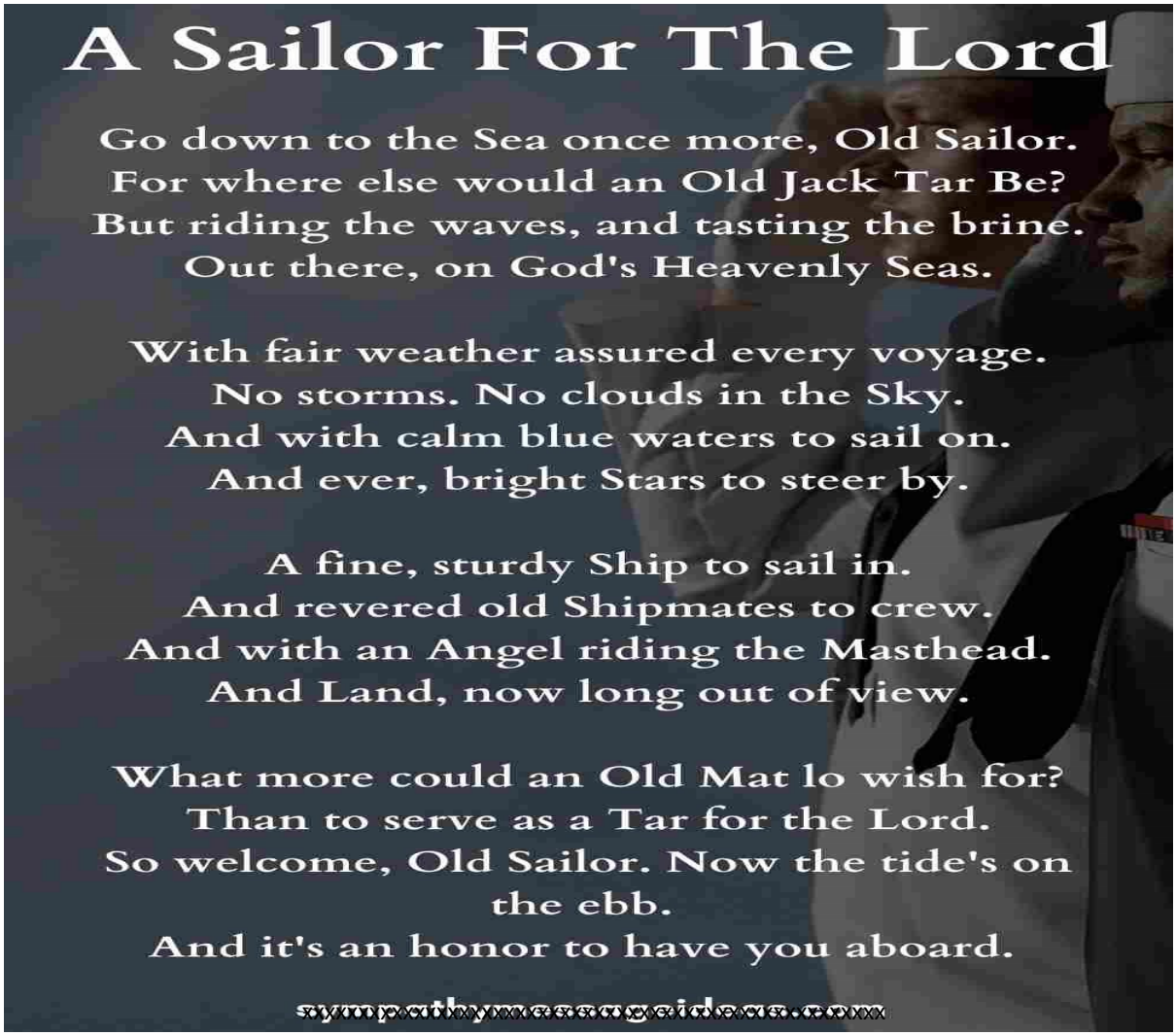
Brad

Captain Pat (Chic) Rodrigue AM RAN RTD.
Longstanding member of Navy League Western Australia Division, Former Commanding Officer Fremantle Port Division Royal Australian Naval Reserve, Former Commanding Officer HMAS ACUTE
Chic's funeral will be held on Friday 14th. January at 1000 in St. Benedict's Church Applecross

Mason Hayman formerly served in the Merchant Marine Longstanding Member of Navy League Western Australia Division since 1987. Former President NLWA And Life Member of Navy League of Australia
At the time of going to print Mason's funeral notification has not as yet been received

Crossed the bar this month and have set sail on their next deployment. NLWA extends our deepest sympathies and condolences to the families of these fine gentlemen., who served their country with distinction.

Lest we forget



The decline of American naval superiority, the National Defense Authorization Act 2022 and the re-emergence of navalism

09 DECEMBER 2021

By: **Reporter**

With an ageing fleet and quantitative disadvantage against potential adversaries, the US has ceded its long held naval superiority. Defence Connect analyses whether the *National Defense Authorization Act 2022* can stem this decline, and whether the United States might see a resurgence in navalism.

State of play

Analysts the world over have warned of China's growing naval superiority. Indeed, pre-eminent analyses including those from the US Office of Naval Intelligence have acknowledged that China possesses not only a larger fleet of newer naval vessels, but also warns of a greater capacity for an immediate expansion in shipbuilding capabilities. This latter point was evidence earlier this year when news reports revealed that China was able to commission three new warships in one day.

US Naval Academy lecturer Claude Berube in *War on the Rocks* this week reiterated this widely held doubt over the US' naval capabilities. In his analysis, Berube noted that China's navy is not only newer and bigger, but also requires less maintenance, providing fewer resource strains on the service.

"Today, only 25 per cent of America's 114 commissioned surface combatants (cruisers, destroyers, and littoral combat ships) are less than a decade old. By comparison more than 80 per cent of China's 141 destroyers, frigates, and corvettes have been commissioned in the past decade. In the same time period, the United States commissioned 30 surface combatants," Berube suggests.

"Earlier this year, the Navy began decommissioning some of the littoral combat ships. China, by contrast, mass-produced 120 surface combatants. US ships are operating, in some cases, with decades-old technology."

As a result of this rapid naval expansion, Berube explains that China has been able to undertake operations beyond their coastline, gaining critical expertise in maritime operations while keeping sufficient vessels in reserve. Meanwhile, the US has seen much of their aging fleet requiring additional maintenance and upkeep requirements due to their long periods at sea and over deployment.

"The pace of China's shipbuilding output has meant that ships have rarely needed to deploy more than once. Its growing fleet has allowed China to do more without degrading its ships. Conversely, the United States has struggled to maintain its ships, which are deploying at a higher rate for longer periods," Berube argues.

"The nearly 600-ship Navy of the late 1980s deployed only 15 per cent of the fleet on average. Today, with fewer than 300 ships, the US Navy deploys more than 35 per cent to service its global missions, contributing to a material death spiral."

The difficulties faced by the US Navy aren't simply limited to the number of ships in operation. Unlike China, the US has faced significant delays in the production of their surface vessels, casting doubt on the US' ability to rapidly increase their naval output in the event of a global war.

"To provide perspective, from Pearl Harbor to the surrender of Japan was 1,375 days. As of Nov. 29, 2021, it has been 1,885 days since Zumwalt was commissioned and 1,601 days since Ford was commissioned and neither has deployed," Berube argues.

Berube argues that the United States' inability to overcome such shortfalls stems from the fact that many political and military decision makers simply remain rusted onto the belief that the US maintains military superiority, succumbing to their own propaganda, including Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin noting that the US still has naval primacy.

The current and future numbers tell a remarkably different story.

The loss of US naval superiority was succinctly argued by *Asia Times* writer David Goldman, who suggested that "with 350 intermediate-range missile launchers and DF-21 and DF-26 ship-killer missiles, China can sink American carriers as surely as Japanese torpedo bombers sank Allied battleships in World War II".

However, with a new *Defense Authorization Act* passed this week for the coming year, are there any lifelines for the US Navy to regain global primacy?

Will the US' *National Defense Authorization Act 2022* close the gap?

This week, US Congress passed the country's *National Defense Authorization Act 2022*. Despite the $768 billion defence package passing with bipartisan support, it remains unclear whether the act will be a sufficient enabler for the US Navy to close the capability gap.

According to Reuters, the act has enabled the US Navy to purchase "13 battle force ships including two Virginia-class submarines made by Huntington Ingalls (HII.N) and General Dynamics (GD.N) and three DDG 51 Arleigh Burke destroyers also made by General Dynamics".

The act further provides $7.1 billion to support US operations in the Indo-Pacific as part of the Pacific Deterrent Initiative (an increase of some $2.1 billion). The investment is expected to support US capabilities in the region, including the defence of Guam, which some analysts have suggested is over reliant on disconnected missile systems for defence.

While the act does provide provisions for the development of further naval capabilities and protection of US naval bases, not all military analysts appear content with the House and Senate Armed Services Committee's budgetary recommendations with a sub-optimal allocation in budgetary funds.

It has been revealed by numerous media outlets that the Committee provided funding for an additional 12 Boeing Super Hornets, despite the Pentagon arguing that none should be purchased as they will be unable to overcome the threats posed by the modern fighter aircraft used by the US' adversaries. Rather, the capital could be redirected into researching and developing sixth-generation fighter aircraft.

Despite the price tag, this really isn't much.

In 2019, an image of a Chinese shipyard was posted online in which a single shipyard was constructing nine destroyers. Former Forbes contributor HI Sutton provided a sobering thought: "To put that into context, the Royal Navy's entire destroyer fleet is just six ships. And this yard is just part of a much bigger construction program."

Meanwhile, over recent weeks Beijing has conducted successful tests of its new amphibious assault ship (Type 075) the Hainan including dismounting vehicles, and also progressed plans to build its first naval base in the Atlantic threatening the US' east coast and European allies. China is expecting to build their base in Equatorial Guinea on the west coast of Africa, where China already operates a port.

Evidently, the upcoming *National Defense Authorization Act* is not an antidote for failing US naval superiority. Perhaps the US Navy needs to try an older, and more tested path, to overcome political and budgetary deadlock to build next generation naval capabilities.

Will the US see a rise in navalism?

Some analysts have provided interesting solutions for the US to mitigate the threat of an underfunded, underperforming and stretched naval service.

Andrew Blackley in the US Naval Institute explained that the UK's Royal Navy in the 1880s faced much of the same issues as the current American fleet, including a lack of political willingness to invest in a newer and larger navy. However, the British naval establishment used 'Navalism' to overcome the deadlock and recapture its place as the world's foremost naval superpower.

“Facing the renewed growth in naval power of its Cold War adversaries, budget constraints, and a Congress often skeptical of its requests for a larger fleet, the service should look to the past for direction on how to acquire the political capital to build the force structure it will need to meet future challenges,” Blackley suggests.

“Arthur J. Marder, a historian specialising in British naval history, described navalism as 'the big navy movement', led by naval officers, politicians, and sympathetic civilians. In Britain, they used popular support to obtain the political clout needed to finance the rapid expansion of the Royal Navy in the 1890s.”

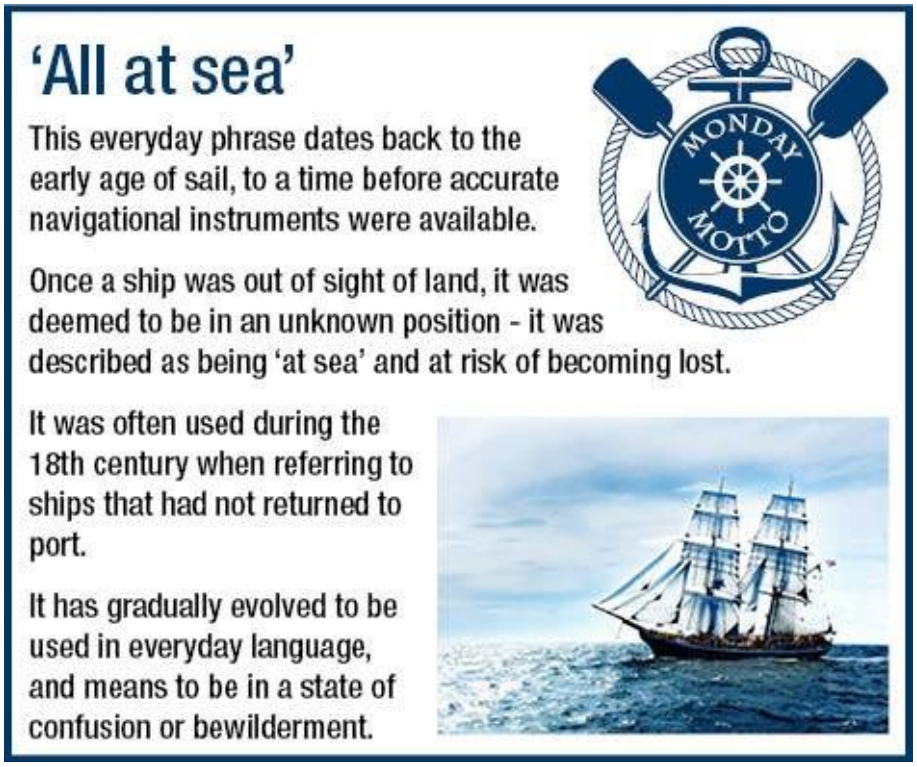
Blackley argues that navalism is comprised of two mechanisms, 'hard' navalism in which the military and their political allies prosecute a renewed strategy for the navy including how a new fleet could support the nation’s grand strategy and the requirements to meet those needs. This 'hard' tactic is underpinned by 'soft' navalism, which is executed by the navy’s supporters in the press and an in the community to build public support for the navy.

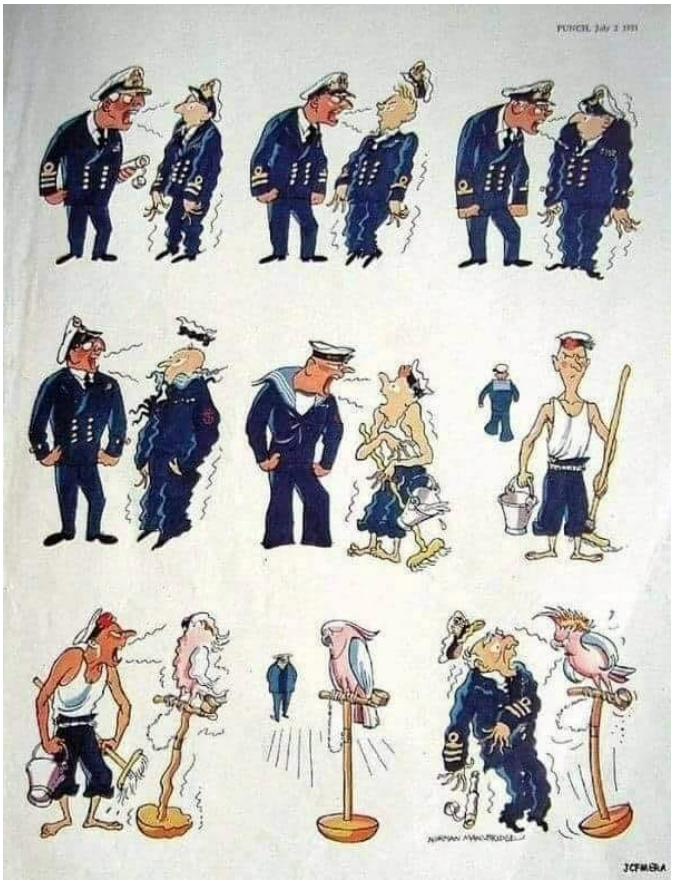
The push was ultimately successful.

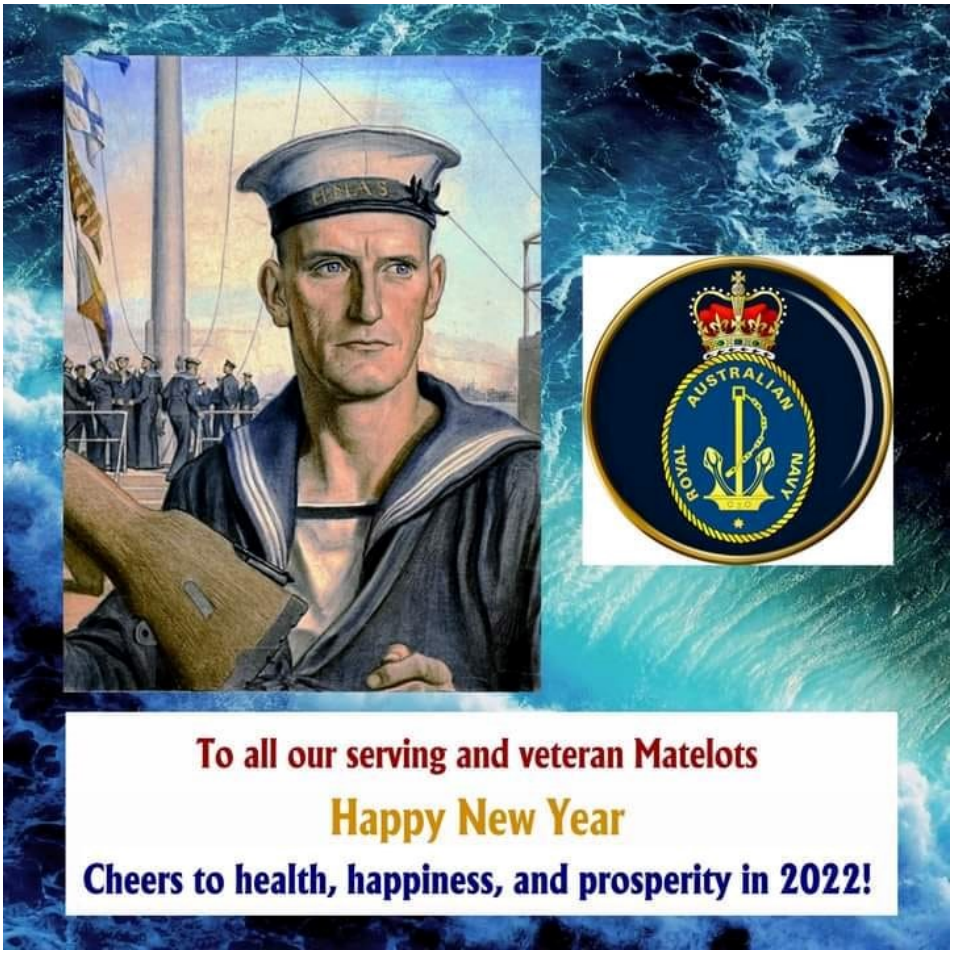
Over recent years, the United States Navy ceded its qualitative and quantitative advantage over its adversaries. Not only is the US Navy simply outgunned, but its naval capabilities are significantly older, being produced at a slower rate and have far higher maintenance costs and requirements.

There doesn’t appear to be reprieve on the horizon for the US Navy either. While the *National Defense Authorization Act 2022* may stem some growing pains with the provision of funds for extra ships, difficulties in the production of naval capabilities suggest that there may be poor alignment between the operational-strategic level perspectives of America’s political decision makers, military decision makers and shipbuilders.

Some analysts have seen the current state of the US Navy as providing room for the rise of navalism, giving navy the opportunity to demonstrate why it needs greater flexibility and bipartisan political support.




PUNCH, July 2 1958
JOHNSON


HMAS
AUSTRALIAN
ROYAL
NAVY
To all our serving and veteran Matelots
Happy New Year
Cheers to health, happiness, and prosperity in 2022!

HMAS PERTH (III)

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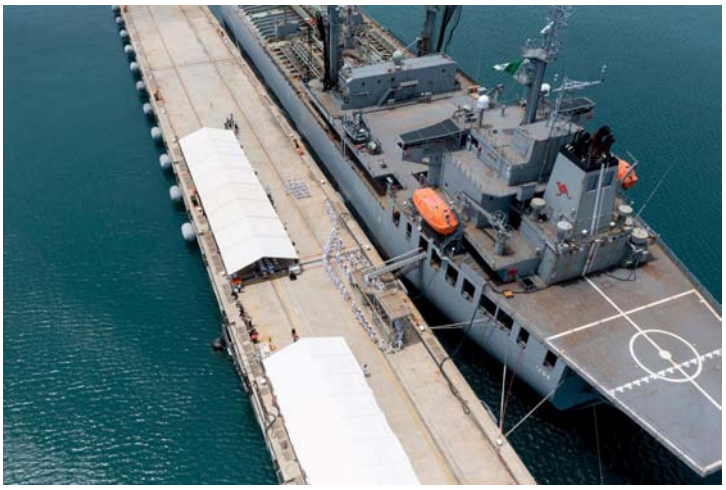
SEASONS GREETINGS FROM THE SHIPS COMPANY HMAS PERTH (III)



Farewell HMAS SIRIUS (I) The support ship was farewelled at a traditional ceremony after 15 years service. At Fleet Base West.
During her service HMAS SIRIUS has sailed more than 469000 nautical miles and conducted 770 Replenishments at Sea.
SIRIUS will be greatly missed but has been replaced by two Supply Class Auxiliary Oilers Replenishment Ships HMAS SUPPLY (II) and HMAS STALWART (III, that are vital capability to the Australian Navy.

The Royal Australian Navy congratulates you on a job well done Bravo Zulu

FRIDAY DECEMBER 17 2021

NEWS 23

All aboard for launch

Olympian Nova Peris was given the honour of launching the OPV Arafura at Osborne Naval Shipyard on Thursday. Picture: Dean Martin

TODD LEWIS

SOUTH Australia launched the first of two new offshore patrol vessels (OPV) at the Osborne Naval Shipyard on Thursday.

The Arafura OPV was showcased for the first time, marking a milestone in the expansion of the nation's naval capabilities.

It is one of two patrol vessels being built at the shipyard, creating hundreds of jobs with a construction program worth $4bn.

Luerssen Australia started building the vessel in 2018.

At Thursday's launch, Premier Steven Marshall said this was just the start of SA's defence growth.

"South Australia has well and truly cemented its position as the defence and space capital of the country and will continue to power forward and play its part in building and sustaining the nation's sovereign capabilities," he said.

Mr Marshall said the state's naval projects, which will also include up to eight nuclear-powered submarines, would create hundreds of direct local jobs.

"Anybody who is looking for a job in naval construction will have a job now and well into the future," he said.

Federal Defence Minister Peter Dutton, who was in Adelaide for the offshore patrol vessel launch, said the project was helping strengthen the country's defence capabilities. "Today, as we enter a period of unprecedented regional instability and uncertainty, we again forge ahead with a new capability and with a new confidence," Mr Dutton said.

The Arafura OPV is scheduled to be delivered to the Royal Australian Navy next year.

THING LESS THAN A BROADWAY REVELATION"

NUSHIP *Arafura*

Type	Arafura Class OPV
Role	Maritime border patrol Maritime constabulary roles including interdiction Fisheries patrol Humanitarian and disaster relief
Builder	Luerssen Australia and ASC Shipbuilding
Laid Down	10 May 2019
Launched	16 December 2021
Dimensions & Displacement	
Displacement	1640 tonnes
Length	80 metres
Beam	13 metres
Draught	4 metres
Performance	
Speed	20 knots (maximum)
Range	7400 kilometres
Propulsion	
Machinery	2 x 4250KW diesel engines
Armament	
Guns	40mm gun 2 x 50 calibre machine guns
Other Armament	2 x 8.5 metre sea boats (side launched) 1 x 10.5 metre sea boat (stern launched)
News Articles	Defence News

Australia's current Armidale Class and Cape Class patrol boats are planned to be replaced with a single class of Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV), under Project SEA 1180 Phase 1, to be built in Australia by German shipbuilder, Lürssen's subsidiary, Luerssen Australia partnering with ASC OPV Shipbuilder for construction of the first two OPVs in South

Daily Mail AUSTRALIA

New Russian stealth warship suffers £225million of damage after catching fire during construction

- **The blaze started on Friday in St Petersburg at the Severnaya Verf shipyard**
- **Footage showed devastating fire damage to the £307 million stealth ship, intended to carry Vladimir Putin's lethal Mach-9 hypersonic missiles**
- **It has caused a major setback to the Kremlin's naval modernisation project**

By WILL STEWART IN RUSSIA FOR MAILONLINE

PUBLISHED: 20:48 AEDT, 21 December 2021 | **UPDATED:** 21:51 AEDT, 21 December 2021

A new Russian stealth warship has suffered £225million worth of damage after it caught fire during construction. The scale of the blaze which started on Friday in St Petersburg has caused a major setback to the Kremlin's naval modernisation.

Footage showed devastating fire damage to the £307 million stealth ship, intended to carry **Vladimir Putin**'s lethal Mach-9 hypersonic missiles.

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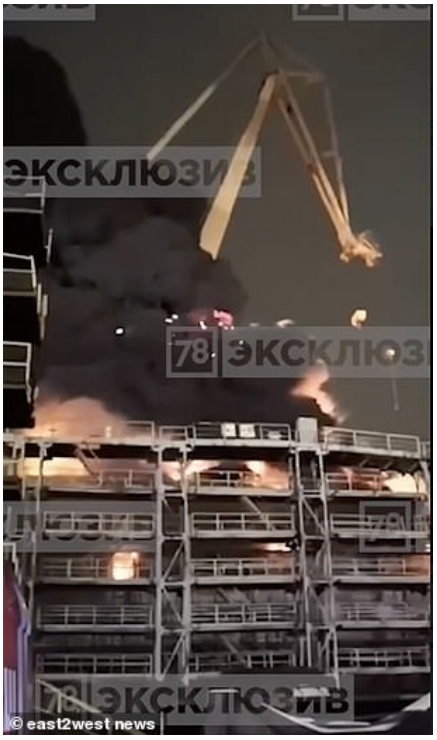
A new Russian stealth warship has suffered £225million worth of damage after it caught fire during construction. Pictu still grab taken from footage of the fire in St Petersburg



The scale of the blaze (pictured) which started on Friday in St Petersburg has caused a major setback to the Kremlin's m modernisation

-

Pictured: Smoke can be seen rising from the construction yard in St Petersburg after the the corvette Provornyy (Agile) fire while it was under construction

Huge flames and thick smoke were seen rising from the corvette Provornyy (Agile) at Severnaya Verf shipyard where it was under construction.

The warship has been almost totally destroyed by the fire - the latest of a spate of mysterious blazes at top secret naval shipbuilding facilities - with the damage running into hundreds of millions of pounds, say reports.

Russia says there were no weapons or crew on board the stealth corvette when fire erupted, however, other reports said three crew were injured, with **Military.com** reporting that two required hospitalisation.
The hull is said to be intact but the entire superstructure and decking must now be dismantled after its destruction in the inferno, say reports.

A criminal probe has been launched into the major blaze on the Provornyy - designed to carry Russia's deadly new Zircon - or Tskirkon - hypersonic missile.

The 6,670 mph weapon is seen as 'unstoppable' by current Western technology, and will initially be deployed on frigates but Putin said it would 'definitely' be used with Project 20385 corvettes like the blitzed Provornyy.

- **Huge flames and thick smoke were seen rising from the corvette Provornyy (Agile) at Severnaya Verf shipyard where it w der construction**

The Gremyashchiy corvette - the first of this new type of corvette - was recently deployed to the Russian Pacific coast where it has been armed with Kalibr missiles.

The Russian government recently gave the go-ahead for full-scale production of Zircon missiles at a top-secret plant at Reutovo, near Moscow. Late last month, Russia also **revealed** a 'successful' test of its the Zircon missile, fired from a warship in the White Sea. The 'unstoppable' weapon hit a target some 250 miles away from the Admiral Gorshkov frigate, the Moscow defence ministry said on November 29.

Putin today awarded the Zircon's creator, Boris Obnosov head of Tactical Missile Corporation, the Hero of Russia honour. Damage from the fire on the warship has been put at around £225 million. 'One of the main questions of the investigation is why it caught fire, given that a warship should be made of non-combustible materials,' said a source.

A rendered image of Provornyy corvette. The part of the corvette highlighted in yellow is believed to have been destroy fire

In February a fire was extinguished on the Ural nuclear icebreaker at another plant, and in 2020 three workers were injured on the Ivan Papanin ship while under construction for the navy. Among other naval fires, a blaze on the aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov in 2019 caused an estimated £972 million in damages. Fontanka media outlet said: 'The stench from the major fire covered all of the Kirovsky district of the city. 'It was rare case when taxpayers could literally sense their burning billions,' it said. 'This is the finale of regular fire emergencies at St Petersburg's shipyards.'

The Story Behind the Photo

Despite the loss of her Number 3 turret in the Java Sea on 4 February, the heavy cruiser Houston and her men fought on. Within a month of this photo, she was sunk at the Battle of Sunda Strait, and most of the men shown were either dead or prisoners of war.

By Captain Gerard D. Roncolato, U.S. Navy (Retired)

December 2021

As a new ensign on board the USS *Merrill* (DD-976) in 1979, I met a man who came on board for a family day cruise out of San Diego. He was old, barrel chested, and obviously enjoying being back at sea. We talked, and he told me he had been a boatswain's mate in the Navy. What ship? I asked. The heavy cruiser *Houston,* he said. I was dumbstruck. At the time, I was reading about the Battle of the Java Sea and particularly about the *Houston*'s damage. I mentioned the loss of the Number 3 8-inch/55 gun turret. He nodded, telling me it was bad. He was one of the men who removed the remains of his shipmates from that turret. He then proceeded to tell me his story.

What did he focus on? The captain. Going into that last battle at Sunda Strait on 1 March 1942, Captain Albert Rooks told the crew they were in for it, and the ship would likely not survive the night. The skipper talked about what an honor it was to serve with such men, and said he hoped the best for each and every one. Then he announced that the ice cream bar would be open to all hands at no cost. This is what this gentleman remembered. He didn't complain about the odds, or the danger, or the lost buddies. He focused on a great skipper and ice cream. He served out the rest of the war in the horrors of a Japanese prisoner of war camp. Sadly, I never learned his name.

In February 1942 the situation in the Far East was grim. Japan's Pacific offensive was unfolding with relentless force. The United States' small and battered Asiatic Fleet was reeling, having been chased out of the Philippines and now joining a polyglot collection of allied forces—the ABDA Command—in an attempt to stem the Japanese tide. History tells us they failed, and most died in the process. Yet they—American, British, Dutch, Australian, all of them—fought to the end.

This is not hyperbole or drama. It is fact. So, the question is, what made these sailors from various countries, as one, set aside their futures and their lives for a mission that, even to them at the time, clearly appeared headed for failure?

The Photograph

The USS Marblehead (CL-12) passes the heavy cruiser Houston (CA-30) in Tjilitjap, Java, on the morning of 6 February 1942. Credit: Naval History and Heritage Command

To explore this question, consider the photograph of the *Houston* (CA-30) as seen from the bridge of the old light cruiser USS *Marblehead* (CL-12). It tells a story, indeed, many stories. At first glance, it is unremarkable—one ship enters port, passing by another already tied up. But within a month, most of the men in the photo would be dead; the rest would be prisoners of war. This adds a gritty context and poignancy, a sense of tragedy, to the image. Maybe it is the normality, the sense of the everyday, juxtaposed with the reality behind it that makes the image so powerful.

The *Houston* and *Marblehead* had been bombed and damaged north of Java on 4 February. Both needed extensive repairs and withdrew to Tjilitjap on the south-central coast of Java, the only sanctuary left beyond Japanese aircraft. In the image, the *Marblehead* is passing the *Houston* early on the morning of 6 February. The *Houston* had pulled in the day before—it took the *Marblehead* that much longer to arrive because her rudder had been disabled in the attack and she had to steer by engines alone.

The *Houston*'s Number 3 8-inch turret is visible in the center of the image, trained to port. The 4 February attack knocked it out and took the lives of 48 men, mostly the crew of the turret and ammunition-handling rooms below. Note the shadows of the burnt-out life rafts on the turret top. Her flag is at half-mast while the burial party is ashore laying the dead crew members to rest. *Houston* sailors crowd the deck to watch the damaged *Marblehead* pull in. Walter Winslow, an officer on board the *Houston* at the time, reported that they stood to cheer the light cruiser's crew, a cheer that was reciprocated by the exhausted *Marblehead* sailors.

Note the *Houston*'s weathered sides. They offer a clear indication of the relentless operational tempo being demanded of these ships since early December 1941. Constantly underway, often in combat, normally in a state of heightened combat readiness, far from maintenance facilities or any logistic support, with no flow of replacement parts, scant access to ammunition—frequently defective at that—and fuel scarce, the *Houston* and the other ships of the Asiatic Fleet and ABDA Command were barely hanging on.

What were those sailors thinking? Were they looking for ways to escape, to retreat to fight another day? Were they resentful of the conditions under which they were operating, of the fact that no reinforcements were coming, of the dawning reality that theirs was a forlorn hope that would meet a terrible end? Not so much. As best we can know from survivors' stories, these guys—along with their comrades on the other ships—were focused on the mission and on taking it to the enemy. They were proud, determined, and aggressive, wanting nothing more than to dish it out to the enemy.

Walter Winslow conveys the condition and spirit of the crew:

> Morale remained high, but the physical condition of the crew was poor. Most had not had a chance for anything one might call rest for more than four days because battle stations had been manned more than half that time, and freedom from surface contacts or air alerts had never exceeded four hours. This had caused meals to be irregular and inadequate. Nevertheless, the exhausted crew shrugged it off, for every man considered himself lucky to be alive, and was determined to give every last ounce of strength to bring the *Houston* through.

These were professionals, and they had to know they faced insurmountable odds. They knew they could not win. All they could do was buy time, impose costs, and make a statement. But they stayed, they fought, and they died.

As a result of the damage inflicted on 4 February, the *Marblehead* would be sent home for repairs. Except for a small commercial floating drydock, Tjilitjap lacked the necessary facilities. The *Houston*'s commanding officer had the same option, but with six still-functional 8-inch guns, Captain Rooks felt the situation warranted staying to fight. More important, perhaps, he likely saw the broader significance of the *Houston* and the other U.S. warships in the fight for Southeast Asia. His and his ship's continued fight would send a message to the beleaguered allies in the region: The United States is with you and will not run.

While it was clear the Dutch East Indies could not be held, the brave Dutch forces deserved U.S. support. Australia, also threatened, could be defended, and it was important for Rooks and the remnants of the Asiatic Fleet to demonstrate U.S. willingness to stand and sacrifice for that goal.

Rook's decision would cost him, many of his sailors, and his ship their lives. The rest of the *Houston*'s battles were fought with that aft 8-inch turret out of commission. She was sunk, along with the light cruiser HMAS *Perth* and the Dutch destroyer HNLMS *Eversten* in the Battle of Sunda Strait on 1 March 1942. Except for four U.S. destroyers, the entire ABDA Command force was lost.

ABDA COMMAND

The ABDA Command (American, British, Dutch, and Australian Command, or ABDACom) was formed on 15 January 1942 when General Sir Archibald Wavell assumed command. It encompassed Burma, Malaya, Singapore, the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines, and part of northern Australia. Beset by the almost total loss of territory and forces (Burma and Australia being the exceptions), ABDACom ceased to exist by late February 1942.[1]

The extent of the disaster is brought into relief by the fate of the warships that at one time or another served under ABDACom.

- Cruisers: 11 assigned; 4 heavily damaged; 1 lightly damaged; 6 sunk by enemy action
- Destroyers: 31 assigned; 21 sunk

Of the 14 allied cruisers and destroyers that fought the Battle of the Java Sea on 27 February 1942, all but 4 U.S. destroyers had been sunk by the Japanese by 1 March. ABDACom naval forces were effectively annihilated by the Japanese within two months of establishing the command.

This is the story this image tells. It depicts a single moment, but it is an oft repeated tale across naval history. In fact, the *Houston*'s saga was paralleled by many others in that period. The Royal Navy ships *Prince of Wales*, *Repulse*, *Exeter*, *Jupiter* and others, the remaining ships of the Royal Netherlands Navy, and the Australian cruiser *Perth* all have their stories to tell. Similarly, the other U.S. ships and squadrons of the ill-fated Asiatic Fleet—the destroyers that won the Battle of Balikpapan in late January 1942, the submarines that fought with defective torpedoes, the patrol planes of Patrol Wing 10—all fought bravely and with remarkable aggressiveness against truly insurmountable odds.

For the U.S. Navy, this aggressiveness was no accident—it had been consistently inculcated into the fleet for decades. And while the sacrifice of the Asiatic Fleet and its allies did little to stem the tide of Japan's offensive, it signaled the commitment of the Americans to the fight and the eventual defeat of Japan.

Lessons for Today

The U.S. Navy in this interlude showed not only the willingness to fight and die for its mission and cause, but also the benefit of decades-long realistic preparation for the fight that had now come. Yes, the Asiatic Fleet lost against a determined and capable enemy, but it fought well even when at significant disadvantage, never flinching, always looking for ways to impose costs on the enemy.

Today's Navy must look hard and with honesty at what is going to be required in a war with China in the western Pacific. The time may come again when America's sailors must stand and be counted, when a mission might require the ultimate sacrifice, perhaps even when it is known that mission cannot succeed.

The men of the *Houston* and her sister ships hold lessons, if the Navy will avail itself of them: How to steel its sailors, stoke their courage, and give them the tools they will need for the test that is coming—not just material tools, but personal and moral tools. How to reorient to, and prepare for, warfighting. How to instill in sailors the toughness and discipline that will be required to prevail.

To get all that from a single photo is, admittedly, a bit over the top, but that is the story it tells. The *Houston* was a proud ship, well run, and with a good captain and professional crew. Yet, she was outgunned by even one of the several Japanese cruisers she faced in those days. She and those with her paid the price for slowing the Japanese advance, even as little as they did, but it was the mission.

A saying attributed to the Royal Navy holds: You have to go out, but you don't have to come back. This captures the essence of the Allied situation in the western Pacific in early 1942, but it also is useful wisdom in these days of reemerging great power—and great naval—competition. Experiencing no sustained, high-intensity at-sea combat for more than 75 years, how can today's Navy get its collective head wrapped around this truth?

1. CDR Walter. G. Winslow, USN (Ret.), *The Ghost That Died at Sunda Strait* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 97.

2. CDR Walter G. Winslow, USN (Ret.), *The Fleet the Gods Forgot: The U.S. Asiatic Fleet in World War II* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1982), 211. Winslow survived the war in Japanese POW camps and went on to write stories about his shipmates, including "Courage Mounteth with Occasion," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 77, no. 8 (August 1951), and "The 'Galloping Ghost,'" U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 75, no. 2 (February 1949). Until the release of POWs at the end of the war, the Navy and the country knew only that the *Houston* had been sunk, but none of the details of her exploits.

3. The drydock was capable of handling only destroyer-sized vessels. Though the *Marblehead* was too large, they were able to get the bow in and dry to patch the underwater damage; the stern was too heavy, so the jammed rudder could not be repaired. U.S. Navy, "USS *Marblehead* (CL-12) Bomb Damage, Java Sea, 4 February 1942," date unknown. See also Office of Naval Intelligence, Combat Narrative, "The Java Sea Campaign," 13 March 1943.
4. This is largely conjecture on my part. Captain Rooks left no account of his thinking along these lines. However, as Asiatic Fleet flagship, Rooks must have had numerous conversations with the intelligent and perceptive Admiral Thomas Hart, the Fleet commander. Rooks was of a kind with previous flag captains such as J. O. Richardson and Chester Nimitz. It is hard to imagine he would not have thought about the broader purposes of his fight.

5. Naval History & Heritage Command, "Final Days of USS *Houston*, The Galloping Ghost of the Java Coast," 29 February 2016. Captain Rooks died shortly after ordering the crew to abandon ship in the 1 March 1942 action in Sunda Strait. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

We know the HMAS Perth & USS Houston were sunk in the Battle of the Sunda Strait , it is interesting to reflect of the damage sustained by Imperial Japanese Navy in the same battle.
It is credited that the Heavy Cruisers IJN Mogami & Mikuma were responsible for sinking the Houston & the Perth. The Long Lance Torpedo (Type 93) used in the attack by the Japanese were the world's most advanced torpedoes with incredible accuracy and credited for both sinkings.
68 Torpedoes were launched by the Japanese resulting in the sinking 5 of their own fleet as well as the Houston & Perth
Mogami launched 12
Mikumi launched 6
Natori launched 4
Shirakumo launched 9
Murakumo launched 9
Funuki launched 9
Shirayuki launched 9
Hatsuyuki launched 9
Shikinami launched 1

IJN MOGAMI

Japanese Damage during the Battle of the Sunda Straits
1 minelayer sunk - MS W-2
4 troopships sunk or grounded[3] - Sakura Maru,Ryujo Maru,Horai Mari,Tatsuno Maru
1 cruiser damaged
3 destroyers damaged
10 killed
37 wounded

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ABC NEWS

Faulty Chinese aluminium adds to Navy boat delays, costing extra $44 million

By defence correspondent Andrew Greene 17/12/2021

© Provided by ABC NEWS An audit report has shown delays on the boats have blown out. (Supplied)

The Royal Australian Navy expects its new Evolved Cape Class patrol boats could now be delayed by up to nine months, while an extra $44 million will need to be spent keeping its old fleet in the water, after poor-quality aluminium was imported from China.

In March the ABC revealed Australian shipbuilder Austal had detected deficiencies in the material, believed to have been sourced from Wuhan. At the time Defence said it expected "the scheduled launch dates of all six boats to be delayed by between four and 16 weeks".

Now an Auditor-General's report has revealed the delays have been significantly upgraded to between six and nine months, partly because Austal is also struggling to recruit skilled labour. "The ANAO's [Australian National Audit Office] comparison of the date ranges provided by Austal against contracted dates indicates that delays of between six and nine months are anticipated for all six boats' acceptance milestones," it said.

According to the ANAO, Austal advised Defence in June of "further schedule delays due to production workforce issues" in the $350 million project. For the first time Defence has also publicly quantified how much the delays to the Evolved Cape Class patrol boats will cost in terms of keeping older Armidale Class boats in the water. The ANAO said that in July this year Defence estimated delays would cost an extra $43.9 million.

"This has resulted in the planned extension of service of the Armidale class and a reduced in-service period for the evolved Cape class, demonstrating the consequential effect of project schedule delays to ADF capability and the Australian Government's naval shipbuilding strategy."

Shadow Assistant Defence Minister Pat Conroy criticised the government's handling of the project. "This, at a time when our nation's security is of critical importance," he said. "This is an incompetent, wasteful government that cannot deliver Defence projects on time and on budget.

"As always, taxpayers are forced to foot the bill for their stuff-ups, and our Defence personnel are left without the capabilities they need, when they need it." West Australian-based shipbuilder Austal was awarded the contract to build six of the 58-metre Cape Class vessels to replace the Navy's ageing Armidale Class fleet in May last year.

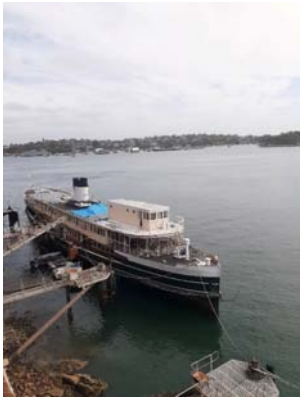
A month after the ABC revealed problems associated with the imported aluminium, Austal ended its joint venture with a Chinese shipbuilder called Aulong Shipbuilding.

The Sydney Morning Herald

Historic former Manly ferry sinks in Sydney Harbour

A historic former Manly ferry has sunk in Sydney Harbour, following a decades-long push for the dilapidated vessel to be restored.
The 99-year old MV Baragoola began taking on water at its mooring beside the Coal Loader at Balls Head Reserve in the lower north shore suburb of Waverton about 10.30pm on Saturday, police said.
A NSW Police spokeswoman said two people on board the boat at the time had called NSW Fire and Rescue to help them pump water from the vessel, before the pair fled to safety on a small boat.
Police arrived to find the boat submerged beneath about 10 metres of water. Officials from Maritime NSW and the Port Authority of NSW were also called to the site.
Baragoola, meaning "flood tide" in local Aboriginal dialect, was built at Mort's Dock in Balmain and launched on February 14, 1922.
For six decades, it ferried passengers between Manly and Circular Quay, making its last official voyage in 1983.
The 500-tonne vessel became the first moveable object to be subject to a permanent conservation order in the late 1980s, prompting the state's then heritage minister, David Hay, to declare: "There can be no better illustration of our working heritage than an old Manly ferry such as the Baragoola."
However, the vessel spent the next two decades in limbo. It passed through the hands of various owners before the NSW government removed it from the state heritage register due to its poor structural condition in 2010.
The then deputy director of the Department of Planning's Heritage Branch, Tim Smith, said despite its significance, the vessel's state of disrepair meant delisting was "the only valid option on heritage grounds".
He said the vessel would be sold to a group dedicated to its restoration, known as the Baragoola Preservation Association.

It said the group had "unfortunately handed the vessel over ... awhile back as COVID-19 and lack of access made it untenable". It was unclear whether the association had sold the vessel to a new owner.
In September, the association said it had been exploring moving the vessel onto a barge or dry land, or dismantling the vessel and placing it into storage to allow it to be gradually restored.
The Baragoola was "the last Sydney built Manly ferry that is restorable", the post said,
and the vessel "can and should be saved"



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How an undersea volcano nearly sidelined this Navy ship

By Geoff Ziezulewicz

Dec 16, 2021

The expeditionary sea base Miguel Keith, shown here in August, was nearly taken out of commission last month after debris from an undersea volcano jammed up critical systems. (Navy)

The brand-new expeditionary sea base ship Miguel Keith was nearly sidelined last month after debris from a massive undersea volcanic eruption gummed up vital ship systems, according to Japan-based U.S. 7th Fleet.

Commissioned in May, Miguel Keith was operating off Japan when the remnants of the volcanic eruption made themselves known.

It began when Fukutoku-Okanoba, an undersea volcano about 800 miles southeast of Japan, erupted on Aug. 13, sending pumice stones and debris into the air and surrounding waters, an event believed to be the biggest of its kind in the area since World War II, according to the Navy.

The volcano's summit sits just 80 feet below the surface, according to NASA, and satellite imagery soon revealed "expansive gray pumice rafts" floating in the surrounding waters.

"Pumice is one of the only types of rock that can float due to a combination of surface tension and the many air-filed holes and cavities found within the rock," according to NASA. "Rafts of rock can drift in the ocean for months or even years."

Satellite imagery shows a floating "pumice raft" drifting west after an undersea volcano erupted off Japan in August. That raft would go on to gum up the works of expeditionary sea base Miguel Keith, which was operating in the area. (NASA)

And while the dangers of pumice to ships like Miguel Keith are well-known, aviation and marine warning systems for such eruptions remain in development, according to NASA. Miguel Keith soon encountered the pernicious pumice as it operated near Okinawa in late October.

Soon, pumice began clogging strainers on the ship's sea chests, which bring in seawater for firefighting, equipment cooling and other needs, according to 7th Fleet. Some of that debris was so small that it passed through the ship's strainers and entered critical propulsion systems, Miguel Keith's commanding officer, Capt. Troy Fendrick, said in a statement. "Over time, pumice ingestion plagued virtually the entire engineering plant," he said. "Clogs caused high temperatures in both port and starboard coolers."

Such coolers are critical in moving water to cool propulsion and electrical generating equipment. To make matters worse, that volcano pumice jammed up stern tube seal pumps and evaporators as well, which are used to make potable water, according to Fendrick.

Navy Times

Expeditionary sea base Miguel Keith commissioned by Navy

The ship is named for Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Miguel Keith, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Vietnam War.

By Diana Stancy Correll

Engines on each shaft had to be shut down for nearly four days at a time so that the crew could disassemble and clean those vital parts. Fendrick equated the work required to "a depot-level job" normally done in port.

"The fact that our crew was able to accomplish this at sea in such a short time, keeping us on station and ready to 'fight tonight,' and avoid costly damages and repairs, speaks to our warrior toughness, and our ability to adapt and sustain ourselves in the face of adversity," Fendrick said. Seventh Fleet officials said no other ships are believed to have been impacted by the pumice debris. Miguel Keith is deployed to 7th Fleet with Amphibious Squadron 11.

About Geoff Ziezulewicz

Geoff is a senior staff reporter for Military Times, focusing on the Navy. He covered Iraq and Afghanistan extensively and was most recently a reporter at the Chicago Tribune. He welcomes any and all kinds of tips at geoffz@militarytimes.com.

Navy Times

Damaged submarine Connecticut arrives in San Diego

By Geoff Ziezulewicz

Dec 14, 2021

The fast-attack submarine Connecticut departs Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton, Wash., May 27, 2021, for a deployment to U.S. 3rd and 7th fleets. The Connecticut, which collided with an undersea mount in the South China Sea Oct. 2, arrived in San Diego Sunday after transiting from Guam. (Navy)

The secretive, damaged and pricey fast-attack submarine Connecticut, which struck an undersea mountain in October, pulled into San Diego Sunday after transiting from Guam.

Navy officials declined Monday to say why the sub is in Southern California, what damage the stealthy boat sustained and when it will head north to Washington's Puget Sound Naval Shipyard for repairs. In response to several questions regarding Connecticut, Submarine Force Pacific spokeswoman Cmdr. Cynthia Fields would only confirm that the boat was in San Diego and that "the submarine remains in a safe and stable condition." Fields also declined to answers questions in connection to media reports that Connecticut had to transit to San Diego at the surface because the collision damage had impeded its ability to safely travel underwater.

News of Connecticut's arrival in California was first posted to Twitter Sunday by the @WarshipCam account, which tracks the coming and going of vessels. Connecticut collided with an undersea mountain in the South China Sea Oct. 2, and 11 sailors sustained minor injuries in the mishap. It made its way to Guam for damage assessment, and the command triad was relieved in November. Later that month, the head of U.S. Submarine Forces ordered a community-wide navigation stand-down.

While officials declined to provide details on the precise substance of the stand-down, they said it would serve as a refresher course on navigation and other best practices in the submarine community. While the community appears to be spreading lessons learned from the mishap, officials have not indicated when the Navy's investigations into the mishap will be made public, although Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday has said they will be in the future. "We'll get to the point where we can release those investigations, absolutely," Gilday told reporters last month.

Scramble to salvage F35

Wreckage of USN F/A-18F Super Hornet salvaged by USNS Catawba in July 2015. The aircraft crashed in the Gulf on 12 May 2015 due to engine failure shortly after launch from USS Theodore Roosevelt. The crew ejected safely. (Photo: US Navy)

On the morning of the 17th November, a UK-owned F-35B crashed into the sea while flying from HMS Queen Elizabeth. The pilot ejected safely but there is now a scramble to retrieve the wreckage of the aircraft.

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