



NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

February 2022  
Volume 6, Issue 2

# DOWN THE VOICEPIPE

*do you hear there!*

COMING UP

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

HMAS PERTH (I) Battle of the Sunda Strait

1st. March 1942

80th. Anniversary of sinking with the loss of 353 lives

## Navy League of Australia Western Australia Division News update



I advised in the last newsletter that February was slighted to be hotter than January and the weather gods weren't wrong. February started back up in the high thirties and into the forties. WA has just recorded the hottest summer since records started being kept, well over 100 years. I'm yet to find someone who relishes this weather but as we move through the month, we move that little bit closer to March, which can still be warm but can also be a little more forgiving.

Also advised last newsletter was our busy bee, complete with painting, sanding, pruning, weeding and general facility tidy up. In keeping with the above, the day chosen was the hottest of the month. These antics remind me of a saying about mad dogs and Englishmen and although we had no mad dogs, we did have some members of English descent come to assist. All in all, a great effort was put in by a great few people and we managed to achieve far more than I had expected or most of us had hoped for. We sincerely thank all of those members who came down to assist.

February 20 saw the hosting of the 62<sup>nd</sup> HMAS PERTH Memorial Regatta at Nedlands Yacht Club, albeit in a different fashion to previous years. Anyway, the day went off without a hitch and judging by the looks on people's faces and the amount of banter between mates, I know each person had the opportunity to pay their respects, rekindle friendships, eat, drink and be merry.

February 27, as per normal SOP's was the day of the HMAS PERTH and USS HOUSTON Memorial Service at St John's Anglican Parish in Fremantle. This day was also well attended and afforded those present time to reflect on those sad events some eighty years prior.

With our continued growth in the WA Division we now have members and close ties with many former US veterans and service personnel who we are proud to call friends and colleagues. It's great to see both Australia and the United States represented, which is ultimately what founded and underpins this commemorative event.

Over to building maintenance and it gives me great pleasure to inform you that almost all of the recently put in place panels that line the exterior walls of the building are painted in a striking two-tone grey pattern. Whilst painting we have had several members of the public passing by who have stopped to comment on the paint scheme which has led to a greater understanding of just who we are and what we do. Some photos of the finished job will be in this newsletter and as good as they look, they really don't do justice to seeing it in person.

I've pencilled in our next NLWA getaway for mid March but as the state starts to ramp up for the next round of Covid restrictions I'm not one hundred percent positive that some changes will need to be made. My belief is to approach the getaway in the same manner as the whole country has had to over the last couple of years with restrictions, lockdowns and the like, we hope for the best whilst planning for the worst at the same time.

In closing this month's spiel, I hope all of our friends and colleagues in other States and Territories are remaining well.

Until next month,

Regards

Brad  
2



## HMAS PERTH (I) MEMORIAL PROJECT

This month has been an extremely busy month all the cladding of the existing facility has been installed and two tone painting of the cladding has been completed. A number of NLWA, Foundation, HMAS Perth Association, ANC Staff and the American organisation Volunteers of Foreign Wars was in attendance.



We await the arrival of the granite from overseas to commence the wall of remembrance in the next couple of weeks. A service will be held at the end of the month to commemorate the gallant efforts of HMAS PERTH (I) and its crew, which will be held in St Johns Church Fremantle.. The Hec Waller Memorial regatta will be held at the Nedlands yacht club the week before. Following on our second exhibition of HMAS PERTH (I) relics and memorabilia will be held in the undercroft of the Perth Town Hall and opened by the Lord Mayor of Perth Basil Zempilas.



# Annual Church Service at St John the Evangelist church Fremantle Western Australia Eightieth Anniversary of the sinking of HMAS PERTH (I) and USS HOUSTON 1st. March 1942



CAPT Gary Lawton RAN  
Commanding Officer  
HMAS STIRLING



The Very Reverend Dr John Shepherd AM



CMDR Tony Nagle RAN  
Commanding Officer  
HMAS PERTH (III)



CMDR Tony Nagle RAN



Trevor Vincent  
Navy League of Australia  
Western Australia Division



Mr David Gainer  
US Consul General



The Most Reverend Kay Goldsworthy AO  
Archbishop of Perth



Photographs by  
LEUT David Nicolson RAN  
RTD  
Public Relations Officer  
HMAS PERTH (I) Memorial  
Foundation INC.

62nd. HMAS PERTH (I) Annual Memorial Regatta Nedlands Yacht Club Nedlands Perth



## BLAST KILLS THREE, INJURES 11 ON INDIAN NAVY DESTROYER

By **Baird Maritime** - January 20, 2022



*The Indian Navy Rajput-class destroyer INS Ranvir during Exercise Malabar 2009 in the Pacific Ocean (Photo: US Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Cynthia Griggs)*

Three Indian Navy sailors were killed while another 11 suffered less severe injuries following an explosion on board their vessel on Tuesday, January 18. The incident on the Rajput-class destroyer INS *Ranvir* occurred shortly after 16:30 local time on Tuesday while it was anchored off Mumbai. Navy officials said Master Chief Petty Officer 1st Class Krishan Kumar and Master Chief Petty Officers 2nd Class Surinder Kumar and A.K. Singh all succumbed to injuries they sustained as a result of the blast. A preliminary investigation revealed that the explosion may have been triggered by a gas leak in one of the onboard AC compartments. The three personnel who perished were reportedly in an adjacent compartment at the time. Officials clarified that *Ranvir* itself suffered only minor structural damage and that the explosion had nothing to do with the ship's weapons or ammunition. The navy has ordered a board of inquiry to identify the events that led to the mishap.

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## KEEL LAID FOR FUTURE US NAVY AMPHIBIOUS SHIP HARRISBURG

By **Baird Maritime** - February 1, 2022



*Rendering of a San Antonio-class landing platform dock*

Huntington Ingalls Industries' (HII) Ingalls Shipbuilding laid the keel for the US Navy's 14th San Antonio-class landing platform dock (LPD) on Friday, January 28. The future USS *Harrisburg* will be the second US Navy ship to be named after the capital city of Pennsylvania. The 684- by 105-foot (208- by 32-metre) amphibious ship will support embarking, transporting, and landing US Marines and their equipment by conventional or air-cushioned landing craft. The ship's capabilities will be further enhanced by its flight deck and hangar, enabling it to operate a variety of helicopters as well as the MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft. The LPD will also be able to support a variety of amphibious assault, special operations, expeditionary warfare, and disaster relief missions, operating independently or as part of amphibious readiness groups, expeditionary strike groups, or joint task forces.

## More details on new Chinese sub



### The new Chinese submarine

Since a video was leaked of [a new Chinese submarine](#) on February 8, analysts have been trying to make sense of it. While the Chinese Navy's (PLAN) overall submarine expansion has been towards larger submarines, notably nuclear-powered ones, this new boat does not fit the expected trend. It may be sophisticated, but it is also small. It does not neatly fit into the array of types currently fielded by other major navies. China is, it appears, doing its own thing, [Naval News reports](#).

The submarine was visible in a short video clip uploaded on Chinese social media. The video was later deleted from some of the initial accounts, after it attracted attention, but not before we had gathered the key information. Naval News has been able to provisionally geolocate the video to a particular spot along the Yangtze River in China.

The location is downstream from the shipyards in Wuhan which are known for building submarines. And the submarine was travelling towards Shanghai where some Wuhan-built submarines are moved to for fitting out.

There are two shipyards in Wuhan, one near the center and a newer one outside [known as Wuchang](#), which build submarines. Notably, they only build conventional submarines so there is no suggestion that this new submarine is nuclear powered. The main class that they currently build is the Type-039A Yuan family. The shipyard downtown appears to be used for first-in-class and special work, so this may have been built there.

Both yards are part of CSIC (China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation). This may be significant as CSIC has previously [shown small submarine designs](#). Several were displayed at the 2017 Defense & Security exhibition in Bangkok, Thailand.



Of these, the new boat appears to be similar to both the MS-200 midget submarine and S600 coastal submarine. Our estimate is that it is closer to the latter, although likely shorter. The 600t 'S600' was advertised as being 50 m (164 ft) long and 4.6m (15 ft) in diameter. Part of that length would be down to an Air Independent Power (AIP) system. If the new boat is shorter, it might be due to the elimination of the ambitious AIP system. The design is also similar to a special submarine [first seen in 2018](#). That submarine lacks a sail and, absent of any official name, is known as the 'sailless' submarine. The overall size is similar and the rudder bears a strong family likeness. Significantly that submarine was also built by CSIC, although not in Wuhan.

### Increasingly Potent Small Submarines

Traditionally small submarines have been less capable, which is largely why major navies do not field them. Although cheaper to build, they compromise on performance, range and speed. Basically they have less power.

But this balance may actually be changing. New lithium-based battery technologies may offer small submarines much longer endurances. And/or higher cruising speeds. This may significantly increase their combat utility, particularly inshore where their small size is an advantage. There is circumstantial evidence that China has been researching these batteries for submarines. And possibly even fielded it, although that is unconfirmed.

Increases in battery power may also allow more powerful sonars and combat systems to be carried.

### What is this Submarine? The Theories

One theory is that the submarine was built for export because the design is similar to the CSIC concepts shown abroad. Myanmar, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka might be candidates. But there have not been reports of this.

White stripes running along the top of the sail may indicate that it is for the Chinese Navy (PLAN) however. These are normally seen on submarines before they are commissioned.

If the PLAN is going to operate this new type, it represents a much larger deviation from other leading navies' strategies. But as small submarines become more capable, they may have a valuable role for the PLAN. The South China Sea and island chains seem particularly well suited.

Smaller submarines will still be behind larger ones, which will also benefit from the new batteries. And smaller ones will have fewer weapons and less provisions. But the balance of usefulness of small submarines might be changing.



TS CRESWELL

## TURKEY TO LIMIT RUSSIAN WARSHIP SAILINGS IN DARDANELLES, BOSPHORUS THROUGH TREATY IMPLEMENTATION

By **Baird Maritime** - February 28, 2022



*The Russian Navy Project 636.3 submarine Magadan (Photo: United Shipbuilding Corporation)*

Turkey's foreign ministry has confirmed that the country's government will implement an international treaty with the aim of potentially limiting the movement of Russian warships in the Black Sea straits of Dardanelles and Bosphorus.

The move to enact articles of the Montreux Convention, which was originally signed by Turkey and the Soviet Union as well as eight other countries in 1936 to regulate maritime traffic in the Black Sea, comes after officials in Ankara called Russia's attack on Ukraine late last week as "unacceptable."

Speaking to local media, Turkish foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu commented that the Russian attack on Ukraine is "officially a war" and added that the convention will be implemented.

The articles of the treaty permit Turkey to close off the Dardanelles and Bosphorus straits to prohibit the movements of foreign naval vessels during wartime or if there is an imminent threat to the country. However, a clause in the same treaty will allow the transits of warships returning to their respective registered homeports.

Six Russian Navy surface ships and a submarine reportedly sailed through the straits earlier this month.

Mr Cavusoglu emphasised that there should not be "any abuse of [the] exemption" that allows warships to return to port.

## Old cruisers are unsafe, US Navy says



The U.S. Navy has tried to convince Congress to let it decommission the cruiser fleet by making cost-based arguments. It's tried readiness-based arguments, too, noting the drain on the ship repair industry.

Congress largely hasn't been swayed, continuing to limit how many cruisers can be retired before the end of their 35-year service lives. Now, the Navy is trying a new angle: the safety of the men and women onboard.

Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro said March 9 the service does not want to continue to operate some of its worst-off cruisers because it's no longer safe.

"The wear and tear is significant, and the safety of our people in the United States Navy always has to come first in times of peace, without question. And so it would be irresponsible to continue to upgrade some of those platforms today at great risk to personnel safety," he said at the McAleese Defense Programs Conference. Del Toro said those who question the Navy's desire to retire these old and worn-out ships haven't experienced for themselves "the challenge of having to repair ships of that age."

"If we tried to repair those ships at a cost that far exceeds the investment to go buy something else that's new, why would you do that?" he said, likening the situation to someone who won't give up their beloved 20-year-old car, even though it needs \$1,000 in repairs every time it's taken in for an oil change and it lacks all the latest safety features and technologies of new cars.

"At some point, you gotta let it go," he said.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday spoke immediately afterwards at the conference. Asked by Defense News to detail those safety concerns, he said one cruiser in the fleet had to stop during its deployment for voyage repairs because water was coming in below the water line into a berthing area.

Another destroyer had to pause its deployment for repairs when water started coming in below the water line into a main engine room. A third — [cruiser Vella Gulf last year](#) — had to return to its home port twice at the start of a carrier strike group deployment because of cracks in the ship's fuel tanks.

Gilday also said the Ticonderoga class of cruisers is doing little to contribute to modern warfighting needs, despite lawmakers' argument that they haul around 122 vertical launching system cells each and ought to remain in the fight to deter potential adversaries like China.

"You have to see the threat to knock it down. So SPY-1A, SP-1B [radars are] just not sufficient given the threat we're facing," Gilday said. He also reiterated that the cruisers wreak havoc on maintenance funding and the ship repair industry's capacity. Seven cruisers are in some phase of an [extended service-life extension and modernization effort](#), which is not only requiring significant manpower at private repair yards but is also running years late and costing tens of millions of dollars a year more than the Navy budgeted.

"They're eating us alive in terms of our ability to get maintenance back on track, which is where we need to be," Gilday said of the cruisers. "We are paying tens of millions of dollars beyond what we expected to because of growth work and new work on ships that are beyond their service life."

Gilday said his desire to decommission these ships and reinvest the money elsewhere in — dubbed divest to invest — has been mischaracterized.

He argued he's not taking a perfectly good ship and trading it in for the potential for a future ship. Rather, with the cruisers not contributing much to operations, not being reliable or safe and eating into readiness funding for other ships, Gilday argued it's an easy decision to ditch these ships today. Then, as a separate next decision, he said money that would otherwise pay for cruiser operations and maintenance could be reinvested into future readiness, lethality and capacity.

He said he's worked to achieve a balanced fleet that is only as large as the Navy can afford to man and maintain. Lawmakers' desire to keep the cruisers for the sake of bolstering the ship count are undermining that effort. Harkening back to the days of sequestration, he said, "If capacity becomes king again in a static budget environment, we're going to go back to where we were in 2013, and we're going to pay for that capacity with manpower at sea, with weapons in magazines and with respect to readiness and maintenance. I just won't go back."

About [Megan Eckstein](#)

Megan Eckstein is the naval warfare reporter at Defense News. She has covered military news since 2009, with a focus on U.S. Navy and Marine Corps operations, acquisition programs, and budgets. She has reported from four geographic fleets and is happiest when she's filing stories from a ship. Megan is a University of Maryland alumna.



### 'Cut me some slack'

'Cut me some slack' is an expression that has been used for many years, and was an instruction given when a ship was docking.

Tying a ship to a pier was always a difficult task and required two teams of men equipped with mooring ropes.

To 'cut me some slack' meant to loosen the rope. As one rope was pulled to haul the ship closer, the other line was released or given slack, which would continue until the ship was properly aligned and docked.

Nowadays, it means to make allowances for a person's behaviour, or to be less strict with someone.



## THE ONGOING UKRAINE CRISIS – NAVAL ASPECTS

By **Trevor Hollingsbee** - February 18, 2022



*The Russian Navy's Project 11711 landing ship Ivan Gren (Photo: United Shipbuilding Corporation)*

The major build-up of Russian land forces around Ukraine has received a great deal of media attention, but the accompanying accumulation of warships of the Russian Federation Navy (RFN) has been largely ignored.

Analysts believe that there are now at least 40 RFN vessels positioned in and around the Black Sea and the eastern Mediterranean. Intelligence reports show that this fleet includes Rapucha-class and Ivan Gren-class amphibious warfare vessels laden with naval infantry and vehicles. There are also three battle groups of frigates and destroyers, headed by the missile cruisers *Moskva*, *Varyag* and *Marshal Ustinov*, together with Udaloy-class destroyers and Admiral Gorshkov-class frigates, and at least four Kilo-class diesel electric powered attack submarines.

The ships have been drawn from a number of RFN fleets, with some ships reportedly being resupplied on rotation at Russia's naval base at Tartus, Syria. Russia, meanwhile, has issued Notices to Mariners, warning international shipping to keep clear of large swathes of sea off Ukraine and Crimea.

Russian ultimate intentions remain unclear, but analysts believe that, with these naval movements, Moscow is visibly maintaining an option of initiating an amphibious landing in the southern part of Ukraine, as part of a possible invasion strategy. Also, the anti-shipping cruise missile-armed cruisers, frigates and destroyers constitute a strong threat-in-being to NATO's aircraft carriers in the region.



*HMS Prince of Wales (Photo: Royal Navy)*

In response, NATO naval forces are gathering in the eastern Mediterranean. Available assets currently include three aircraft carriers, namely the French Navy's *Charles de Gaulle*, the American *Harry S. Truman* and the Italian *Cavour*, while the British flat-top *Prince of Wales*, currently flagship of the NATO Rapid Response Force, has been placed on standby. Escorting the carriers is a growing fleet of frigates, destroyers and offshore patrol vessels, so far including ships from the US, UK, Spain, Italy, Norway and Turkey. Recently observed movements of US and UK nuclear-powered attack submarines indicate that some of these craft have also been deployed.

## STANDING UP TO CHINA: TENSIONS MOUNT IN ASIAN WATERS

By **Trevor Hollingsbee** - February 24, 2022



*A PLAN Yuzhao-class amphibious transport dock vessel enters the Torres Strait on February 18, 2022. (Photo: Australian Government)*

For many years, paramilitary patrol ships of the China Coast Guard (CCG) and its predecessor, China Maritime Surveillance, usually lightly-armed, but often with the reinforced hulls which are essential for ramming tactics, have been in the vanguard of Beijing's headlong maritime expansionism.

The CCG is commissioning more combat-capable vessels and the 2020 introduction of a new law gave legal backing to CCG enforcement action against foreign vessels "incurring" into Chinese-claimed waters.

The already-large CCG inventory is now being augmented by ex-People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) Type 056A corvettes. These 1,500-tonne vessels have very limited ant-submarine capabilities and are therefore surplus to naval requirements.

The corvettes are having their missile launchers and torpedo tubes removed but are retaining their 76-millimetre guns and 30-millimetre cannon. Large LED display screens, to convey visual warnings to what Beijing considers to be intruding vessels, are being installed on port and starboard sides of their superstructures.

### Recent Chinese naval movements off Taiwan and Japan

The PLAN, for its part, recently assumed a more prominent role in pursuit of China's maritime ambitions. PLAN warships, including its two aircraft carriers, have transited the Taiwan Strait in force in concert with mass incursions into Taiwan's Air Defence Information Zone by warplanes of the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF).

The growing numbers of warships of various nations operating in and near the South China Sea are routinely shadowed by PLAN vessels. For instance, surface escorts of the British *Queen Elizabeth* Carrier Strike Group (CSG), which during 2021 exercised in Asian waters, detected multiple submerged Shang-class submarines in its vicinity.



*The People's Liberation Army Navy aircraft carrier Liaoning underway some 160 kilometres off Miyakojima in Okinawa prefecture on April 26, 2021 (Photo: Japanese Ministry of Defence)*

CCG patrol ships, now virtually a permanent fixture around the Japanese-claimed Senkaku (Diaoyu) islands, are sometimes augmented by PLAN surface warships and submarines. A PLAN task group, headed by the aircraft carrier *Liaoning*, has voyaged between the Japanese islands of Miyako and Okinawa.

The PLAN is now routinely conducting proactive operations well beyond the South China Sea and these days maintains a lurking presence off eastern Taiwan by deploying warships East and South of the Japanese-claimed Nansei (Ryuku) islands in the western Pacific.

The extension of China's naval reach was underscored by an incident on February 17, 2022. Two PLAN warships, the Type 052D destroyer *Hefei* and the Type 071 landing platform dock *Jinggangshan*, were detected operating in the Arafura Sea some 90 kilometres off the Australian coast within Australia's EEZ. The destroyer shone a laser light at a patrolling Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) P-8A Poseidon aircraft in what is an aggressive and potentially dangerous act. The diplomatic fallout from this incident continues.

### Responses by US, partners

The US Navy maintains a steady drumbeat of Freedom of Navigation transits through the SCS. Meanwhile, Beijing's relentless push for dominance of Asia's seaways has proved to be a catalyst for the ongoing radical upgrades of Asian maritime forces, notably those of Taiwan, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam. Additional vessels, both new and secondhand, are being commissioned, and ships' fixed armaments are being enhanced. Regional exercises with American and other foreign warships are increasingly frequent. Washington has increased its naval presence, maintaining two carrier strike groups in the region, while warships from the UK, France, Germany, India, Japan, and the Netherlands have deployed to the region in the past year. Washington and Tokyo have planned a response to any possible aggressive moves by China around the Nansei islands, including the rapid deployment of US Marine Corps anti-shipping missile systems to the islands. Particularly significant, though, is the formation of what has become known as "The Quad", which is a flexible naval alliance between Australia, the US, Japan, and India. A high-level quadrilateral conference, held in Melbourne early this year, raised the profile of this arrangement. Quad exercises are gaining momentum, and in April 2021, warships from a French task group took part in a joint exercise with Quad assets in the Indian Ocean. There is little doubt that the years ahead will see tensions continue to rise in Asian waters, particularly as Beijing will probably seek to take advantage of the current concentration of western military minds upon the situation in Ukraine.

### The Navy's latest Astute class SSN HMS Anson in trials



HMS Anson



HMS *Anson*, the fifth Astute-class attack submarine recently undertook trim and basin dive trials in dock at Barrow. The 7,000 tonne *Anson* was first laid down in 2011. The sixth and seventh boats in the Astute-class, *Agamemnon* and *Agincourt*, and *Dreadnought*, the first of the next-generation SSBN submarines are all under construction at Barrow.

## THE Royal Navy's biggest warship ever built has joined forces with an American task group at sea ahead of a huge Nato exercise in the Arctic.

By Tom Cotterill

Saturday, 12th March 2022, 4:38 pm [HMS Prince of Wales](#) left Portsmouth earlier this week to join Exercise Cold Response in [Norway](#). The drill will involve some 35,000 military personnel from 28 nations – including the United States.



HMS Prince of Wales, top, pictured with the USS Mount Whitney

And on the way to the Arctic, the 65,000-tonne aircraft carrier joined up with the USS Mount Whitney task group currently in European waters. Currently the flagship of the US 6th Fleet, USS Mount Whitney serves as a command ship for top military officers. The role is similar to HMS Prince of Wales, which is acting as the flagship for Nato's maritime high readiness force – an international task group formed to deal with major global events



American sailors join their British counterparts on HMS Prince of Wales's huge flight deck. The ship took to Twitter to share photos of the historic link up and said: 'On our way to #ColdResponse22 we took the opportunity to meet up with the @USSMountWhitney task group. 'Proud to host them on board for a quick visit before we went our separate ways.' The aircraft carrier was joined by Portsmouth-based destroyer HMS Defender, which is also due to take part in Exercise Cold Response. HMS Prince of Wales will be the first of the navy's two new Queen Elizabeth-class carriers to operate in the Arctic.

Leading Airman (Aircraft Handler) Josh Thomason was excited by the warship's Arctic adventure. Speaking before HMS Prince of Wales left Portsmouth, the young sailor said: 'I'm looking forward to operating in the extreme cold weather.

'We are prepared as a team to operate with different aircraft in these harsh conditions and are looking forward to the challenges this will bring.'

Captain Steve Higham, commanding officer of HMS Prince of Wales, said it was a 'great source of pride' to be working with Nato and added: 'As we sail to meet up with other Nato units taking part in Cold Response in Norway, the team in HMS Prince of Wales is ready to deliver as a command ship for Nato in the most challenging of environments.'

## Climate warriors solve carriers' energy demands



HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales, come together in their home port of Portsmouth. (RN photo)

When the Royal Navy's new [aircraft carriers](#) arrived in Portsmouth, the base faced a critical issue – how to find enough electricity. HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales doubled the base's energy use. In fact, the load was so great there was a danger it would impact power supplies to the city itself, [Forces Net reports](#). To meet the need, they built a new 13 megawatt combined heat and power plant, capable of producing enough electricity to fully power the base, and with the added bonus of supplying heat as well.

As well as reducing emissions, the plant has saved £4,000,000 a year – cash that is being re-invested in other green technology there.

The financial gains from the plant have also provided opportunities to run feasibility studies to look at what happens next.

"We've just completed a feasibility study... taking seawater and breaking it into oxygen, which becomes a sellable product, and hydrogen, which we can then use to mix with our mains gas... and these [generators] become not only very efficient but productive in terms of our carbon journey," said the engineer in charge of the project, Iain Greenlees, Portsmouth's Infrastructure Superintendent.

The power plant is one of a raft of initiatives here aimed at cutting the base's carbon footprint and bringing it close to net-zero by 2040.

Portsmouth emits 31,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, about 3% of the entire defence estate emissions. That figure has already been drastically reduced – cut by two-thirds since 2003. At the same time, the base's energy use has been cut in half.

But they want to go further. They are also trialling wind power here and constructing a new logistics building for the carriers that will be completely net-zero. The base also has 46 electric vehicles, and new solar canopies are being fitted over some of the car parks here to power charging points.

"We've had a really good history over the last 10 years of cost-led reduction in our energy consumption in the base," explained Commodore Jeremy 'JJ' Bailey, the base commander.

"When I arrived a couple of years ago, I began to change that so we thought about carbon as part of that dynamic. "That's allowed us to think forwards about the sorts of things we might adopt and the technologies we could bring into play," he added.

Across the water from the dockyard is Whale Island, a former naval gunnery school and now home to the Royal Navy's headquarters. Here they are also going green, encouraging wildlife and fauna to grow, and building a colony of bees. They even produce their own honey.

"Sustainability has always been at the heart of what we do," said Rear Admiral Paul Beattie, Director of Naval Staff. "The difference now is that it's at the fundamental core

#### PROPULSION-RELATED DEFECTS FOUND IN THREE SOUTH KOREAN SUBMARINES By **Baird Maritime** - February 22, 2022



*The South Korean Navy submarine ROKS Sohn Won-yil at berth near the US Navy aircraft carrier USS Nimitz at Busan Naval Base, February 28, 2008 (Photo: US Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Lou Rosales)*

South Korean Navy officials have confirmed the discovery of a number of defects that will place three of the service's diesel-electric submarines out of action for at least six months each. The affected submarines all belong to the Sohn Won-yil class, which are variants of the Type 214 built by Germany's HDW primarily for the export market. Officials said each submarine will undergo a complex overhaul lasting no fewer than four months. Another two months will be allotted for the transport and repair of the submarines' inverter modules whose cables contained the identified defects. The inverter modules, which are key components of the submarines' propulsion systems, need to be transported to manufacturer Siemens in Germany, as existing legal restrictions mean repairs on the modules may not be performed in South Korea. The navy said work is already underway on one of the affected submarines while the second and third boats will begin undergoing their respective overhauls in August 2022 and February 2023, respectively.

## FORMER METALLURGIST GETS 30-MONTH PRISON SENTENCE FOR FALSIFYING RESULTS OF STEEL TESTING ON PARTS FOR US NAVY SUBMARINES

By **Baird Maritime** - February 17, 2022



*The US Navy*

*Virginia-class attack submarine USS Minnesota under construction in 2012 (Photo: US Navy)*

The former Director of Metallurgy at US-based defence contractor Bradken has been sentenced in US District Court in Tacoma to 30 months in prison, and made to pay a US\$50,000 fine, for falsifying test results that measure the strength and toughness of steel that her company sold for installation in the US Navy's submarines.

Elaine Thomas, 67, of Auburn, Washington, pleaded guilty on November 8, 2021, to major fraud against the United States. At Thomas' sentencing hearing on Monday, February 14, US District Judge Benjamin H. Settle said it was, "a crime of pride and ego, that in some way she knew better than those who set the standards."

"For 32 years, Elaine Thomas betrayed the trust of the United States Navy, knowingly placing its sailors and military operations at risk," said US Attorney Nick Brown. "She falsely stated that steel Bradken produced met critical specifications – standards developed to keep military personnel safe – and allowed inferior steel to go to navy subs in half the orders she reviewed." According to records filed in the case, Bradken is the US Navy's leading supplier of high-yield steel castings for naval submarines. Bradken's Tacoma foundry produces castings that prime contractors use to fabricate submarine hulls. The navy requires that the steel meets certain standards for strength and toughness to ensure that it does not fail under certain circumstances, such as a collision.

For 30 years, the Tacoma foundry (which was previously known as Atlas, and acquired by Bradken in 2008), produced castings, many of which had failed lab tests and did not meet the navy's standards. Thomas, as Director of Metallurgy, falsified test results to hide the fact that the steel had failed the tests, the US Department of Justice said in a related statement. Thomas falsified results for over 240 productions of steel, which represents about half the castings Bradken produced for the navy. Court filings indicate there is no evidence that Bradken's management was aware of the fraud until May 2017. At that time, a lab employee discovered that test cards had been altered and that other discrepancies existed in Bradken's records.

In April 2020, Bradken entered into a deferred prosecution agreement, accepting responsibility for the offense and agreeing to take remedial measures. Bradken also entered into a civil settlement, paying US\$10,896,924 to resolve allegations that the foundry produced and sold substandard steel components for installation on US Navy submarines. The navy has taken extensive steps to ensure the safe operation of 30 affected submarines. Those measures will result in increased costs and maintenance as some of the substandard parts are monitored.

The navy says that to date, it has spent nearly US\$14 million including 50,000 hours of engineering work to assess the parts and risk to the submarines.

## ITALIAN NAVY'S NEWEST 133M PATROL VESSEL FLOATED OUT

By **Baird Maritime** - February 14, 2022



Photo: Fincantieri

Fincantieri has floated out a new patrol vessel slated for the Italian Navy.

The future *Giovanni delle Bande Nere* is the fourth in a series of multi-purpose offshore patrol vessels (Pattugliatore Polivalente d'Altura; PPA). Delivery of the vessel is scheduled for 2024.

Once completed, the vessel will have a length of 133 metres, space for 145 crewmembers, and a combined diesel and gas turbine (CODAG) propulsion system that will also include electric motors. The CODAG propulsion will deliver speeds in excess of 31 knots.

The vessel will also have deck space at the stern for one 11-metre rigid inflatable boat (RIB).

The PPA's other duties will include search and rescue (SAR) and civil protection.

## Frigates and changing defence planning



**By Peter Jennings\***

For the moment, Defence Minister Peter Dutton has decided to stick with the troubled Hunter-class frigate program. With his usual candour, he [told \*The Australian\*](#) last week: 'We looked very carefully at this project and we've decided that we will proceed with it. The relationship with the United Kingdom is incredibly important. BAE is a very important partner with us.'

Workable strategy is always about the art of the possible. The Hunter class will still be around after the election. The challenge for the Department of Defence will be to see how it can fix a connected set of problems reportedly making the ship's design overweight, top-heavy, underpowered, slower than planned and too lightly armed relative to Chinese vessels.

Compare this with the mal-igned and cancelled Attack-class submarine project. Documents recently released under freedom of information legislation show that in August last year Defence submarine program head Greg Sammut judged the project was 'affordable and acceptable, and compliant with contractual terms and conditions'.

The conclusion was that 'substantial progress' had been made with the manufacturer, Naval Group, 'and there are no extreme program strategic risks'.

Defence Department secretary Greg Moriarty responded, 'I will ensure that the good progress to date is part of the advice we take to government, and you will have that message repeated in the 2+2 with France and in other engagements.'

Just over a fortnight later, the Attack submarine was cancelled when the AUKUS security pact was announced, offering Australia a pathway to submarine nuclear propulsion in partnership with the US and Britain. Australia's relationship with France and Naval Group's partnership were clearly not important enough to save the Attack-class subs. Has the Hunter-class frigate survived because BAE Systems is also the builder of Britain's Astute-class nuclear-powered submarines?

The reality is that AUKUS puts to the torch every aspect of current defence planning. Nuclear propulsion is only part of the picture. A major step-up in cooperation is promised in four technology areas that could reshape the global balance of power: quantum computing, artificial intelligence, hypersonic vehicles and undersea technology.

If AUKUS delivers, Australia will become a leading provider of security in the Indo-Pacific. If AUKUS fails, we will have damaged our most important alliance relationship with the US, which has underpinned our security since the Battle of the Coral Sea in 1942. Success is far from assured. The US Navy and Department of Energy, which control nuclear propulsion, will rightly make the most stringent demands of Australia to ensure we are developing the capability to safely operate the technology.

US President Joe Biden has the authority to compel his officials 'to seek an optimal pathway to deliver this capability' for Australia, but he has no capacity to force an outcome. Delivering success through AUKUS will come down to our ability to persuade a sceptical part of the US national security system unused to dealing with Australia that we are, in fact, worth the risk to their control of the technology.

A failure will be a significant failure also for Biden, further diminishing his struggling administration, reinforcing a national mindset about the unreliability of allies and the need to place 'America first'. Whichever party wins government in the coming federal election, setting the foundations for AUKUS success will be the most significant development in Australia's security since the signing of the ANZUS Treaty in 1951.

In effect, this means we need a complete rethink of defence policy. Spending about 2% of GDP on defence delivers a small force with modest military capabilities. It emphatically does not produce navy infrastructure geared around nuclear propulsion or plans for domestic missile manufacturing, hypersonic weapons and the rest.

During the next half-decade or so we will need to double defence spending to deliver on what is apparently bipartisan support for AUKUS. This will produce a defence force dramatically different from the one we have now and the 'future force' designed in the most recent defence white paper in 2016. The government should approach this challenge initially by resisting the temptation to produce another defence white paper. The last one was written mostly in 2015. A strategic update in 2020 made the right judgement call about the rapid deterioration of regional security.



The gap in thinking is about Defence's equipment plans. Blueprints for large but under-gunned surface ships, heavy armoured vehicles and exquisite but expensive manned combat aircraft all start to look dangerously outmoded. The risk in asking Defence to produce a new white paper is that the organisation will diligently make the case for keeping current plans on track. I have been associated with a few white papers: seldom are opportunities taken to propose genuinely new and different military capabilities. Typically, white papers validate the status quo, replacing like with like.

In fact, the last time the Australian Defence Force's force structure was given a thorough independent assessment was in Paul Dibb's 1986 *Review of Australia's defence capabilities*, 36 years ago. The six white papers that followed offered cautious expressions of incrementalism. Arguably the biggest jump in military capability was Kevin Rudd's plan in 2009 to expand the submarine fleet from six to 12 boats. Now we are unlikely to have more than six subs well into the 2040s.

An independent assessment of the ADF's structure would hold open the possibility of grafting AUKUS's technology agenda onto Defence thinking, and hopefully lift priority for uncrewed autonomous vehicles, ships and aircraft that will come to dominate modern military forces. A second critical task should be to bury the Dickensian idea of 'sovereign capabilities' being built in slow-motion in South Australia. There is a reason the air force is the most technologically advanced service—no one thinks we should build combat aircraft in Australia.

AUKUS holds out a much more promising industry pathway, which is to focus on high-tech component production, systems integration and maintenance as we do for the F-35. The more we can shape a shared defence technology future with the AUKUS countries and Japan, the stronger Australia will be. Finally, Defence has a need, and the need is for speed. Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin are not waiting to see if we can resolve the Hunter-class frigate's weight problems. The ADF needs to be strengthened quickly, but Defence has shown it can't deliver that outcome. Something must be done to light a fire of urgency under our strategic thinking.

**\*Peter Jennings** is the executive director of ASPI and a former deputy secretary for strategy in the Defence Department.

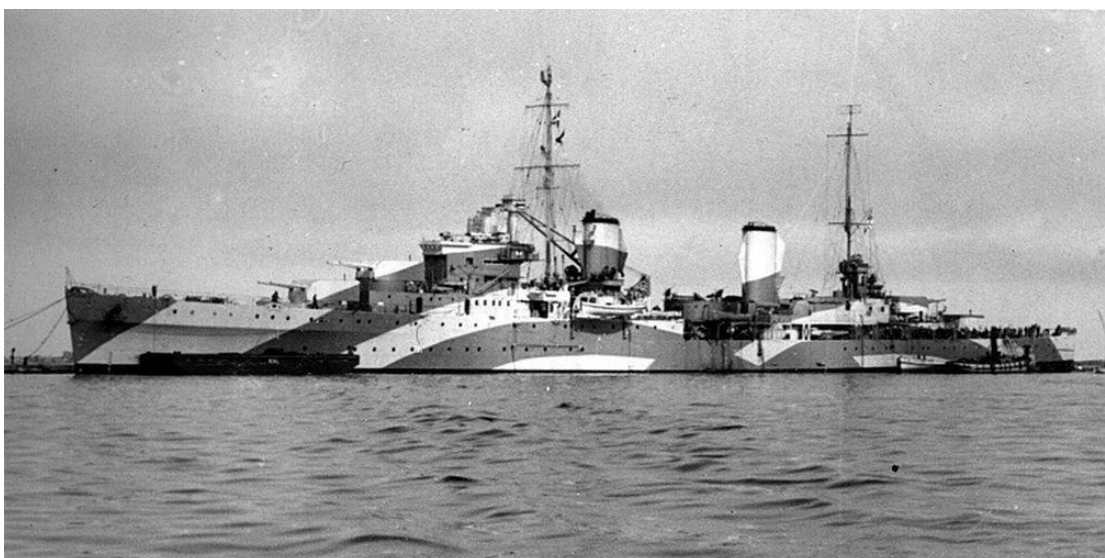
*First published by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au>*



NS ARAFURA



TSPERTH Provided the guard of honour at the Annual service for HMAS PERTH (I) at St Johns church Fremantle





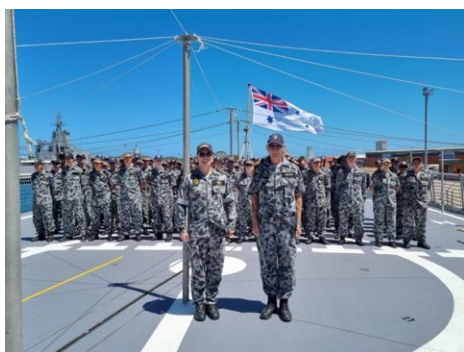


NS Kalgoorlie has a new temporary location at the Potter's House Church while the Army Depot is having a multi million dollar refurbishment.



A blast from the past

Cadets attended HMAS Stirling and were hosted by the Adventure Training Team, lead by CPO Darren Dyball. They planned on conducting paddleboarding in the Cockburn sound from Camp Markham but the plan was scrapped on the day when windy conditions became too high. The Cadets were instead hosted in the Gymnasium where the team took them through a number of indoor games and took them up the Rock Climbing Wall. It was overall a great day and the Staff and Cadets were very grateful to the team for hosting them.





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