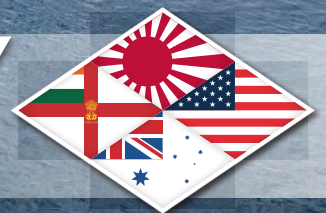


THE

NAVY

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA

THE ROYAL NAVY'S CARRIER STRIKE GROUP 21



LAND BASED ANTI-SHIP MISSILE USE

COMMANDER AGETA'S INCURSION

TWO MYTHS OF THE SINKING OF HMAS ARMIDALE

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Front cover: Royal Australian Navy ship HMAS ADELAIDE is followed by HMAS CANBERRA and HMAS SUPPLY into Nuku-alofa harbour Operation Tonga Assist 2022 (POIS Christopher Szumlanski). Showing also the naval ensigns for AUKUS and the QUAD as designed by the NLA.

05 THE ROYAL NAVY'S CARRIER STRIKE GROUP 21 A SIGN OF REVIVAL OR A SYMBOL OF A NAVY'S DECLINE - RATIONALE BEHIND CARRIER STRIKE GROUP 21

By Kelvin Curnow

REGULAR FEATURES

- 02 From the Crow's Nest
- 04 League Policy Statement
- 09 Flash Traffic
- 14 Red Duster
- 15 Book Review

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SEAS ETERNAL CALL

In recognition of the series of papers commissioned by *The NAVY* on the IJN and JMSDF, [1-4], the poem *Pacific as One* relating to common service in arms in recognition of our long histories as Allies, including during WW1, was commissioned.

*Seas eternal call
Australia as Japan
May to Blossom's Fall*

海の永遠の呼びかけ
日本もオーストラリアも同じ
花が降るまで [5]

We live in dangerous, uncertain and unstable times at the end of a long period of relative hot peace between global powers, 1945-2022. The papers in this issue reflect in large part change and the need to reaffirm trust, friendships, and alliances in uncertain times. Blood is thicker than water.

Mark Schweikert (NLA Federal Vice President and Strategic Defence Analyst) – having been in much demand during the highly successful Pacific 2022 Maritime conference and exhibition in Darling Harbour (this May) – returns with a powerful paper examining *Land Based Anti-Ship Missile use*, specifically following the sinking of the MOSKVA. Mark observed after PAC 22 that, like a fine beverage, “*The NAVY* and the Navy League of Australia refreshes the parts other publications and researchers cannot reach”. In this vein, the second paper by Kelvin Curnow examines *The RN's Carrier Strike Group 21 – a sign of revival or a symbol of a Navy's decline?* Notwithstanding AUKUS, Kelvin's paper raises fundamental questions of the UK's Indo-Pac outreach, commitment, and meaningful ability to sustain an ongoing presence.

The third paper by Dr Tom Lewis considers the *Two Myths of the Sinking of HMAS Armidale – the last stand of Teddy Sheean VC*. This important and timely paper sets the record straight regarding some of the claims made against Japanese seafarers at the time, and also that HMS ARMIDALE's Commanding officer, Lieutenant Commander Richards, was “shunned by the Navy”. The claims against Japanese submariners, in particular, are found wanting, revealing brave and noble actions on their part in the face of their enemy. Readers will recall that, in a timely and prescient piece, William Alston (2020) in *It is Time: RAN VC (The NAVY, Vol 82, Issue No. 4, pp. 22-27)* set out the case for awarding Teddy Sheean his [Australian] VC. He also opposed the dissembling action of the Morrison Government to provide patent for stripping VCs from recipients, against royal decree.

The fourth paper by long standing New Zealand contributor Murray Dear is entitled *Commander Ageta's incursion* and relates to the actions during May 1942 of five Japanese submarines of the 8th Squadron off Australia and New Zealand waters. This piece also sets the record straight and provides a detailed analysis of courageous actions by Imperial Japanese Navy submariners in the Pacific during WW2. Actions, such as the attack against Sydney Harbour leading to the loss of HMAS KUTTABUL, that are recognised in the Navy's excellent Heritage Museum in Garden Island (accessible by ferry from Circular Quay) – where one of the midget submarine's rests. Well worth a visit, along with the best Canteen in Navy!



JNS IZUMO (DDH 183) F-35B Capable Carrier to Deploy to Australia in 2022.

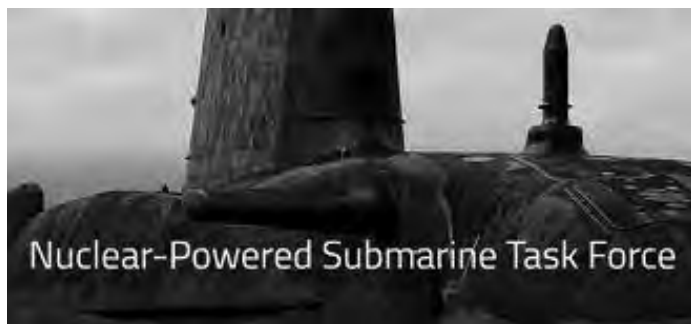
JMSDF crews visiting Sydney harbour pay their respects to their fellow sailors whenever they visit. A memorial and shrine entrusted eternally to the RAN to preserve.

The new Government is off to a firm start with the appointment of Richard Marles as both Minister of Defence and Deputy Prime Minister. Further reaffirming his intent by choosing to reside in the Russell Offices alongside the Chief of the Defence Force and the Secretary. The track record of Labor on Defence this century has not been good – noting the ransacking of the budget, by both Prime Ministers Rudd and Gillard. The record of Defence and the Liberal Government on Defence has proven equally patchy – considering the submarine, guided weapon, and other procurement debacles outlined by both Dr Neil Baird and Hugh Bagehot in recent issues of *The NAVY* (vol 83, no.1, (Jan-Mar 2021), pp 20-26, and vol 84, no. 2, (Apr-Jun 22) pp 8-12).

Peter Dutton was the first big hitter appointed as Minister of Defence since Kim Beazley in 1990. Noting his overturning of the decision to remove SAS unit citations and other gallantry awards by the current Chief of Defence Force (CDF) and Chief of Army on the release of the much-flawed Brereton Report, his relationship with the Chiefs of Defence and the Secretaries were reputedly marginal at best. CDF and Chief of Army should have resigned in 2020 as a matter of principle and honour, as any other CEOs would have done for much less. So, lancing the boil and allowing Defence to move on. Apparently, Mr Dutton prepared his own list of future Chiefs and Secretaries (due to change by the end of the year), so bad had relations become. Something he may now wish to share – out of *noblesse oblige* – with Richard Marles?

The impact on Defence has been significant. Beyond COVID phase 1, and unable to say NO, Defence found itself being used to solve state-federal, media-political issues – often deploying far in excess of numbers or effects required. Resulting, during OP Flood Assist 2022, in over 7000 Navy, Air, and Army personnel cheerfully being deployed in less than two weeks to the flood plains of NSW and South East Queensland. The largest mobilisation of ADF since Vietnam. Where, despite some reporting, they were graciously and warmly greeted by the local populations, as during COVID.

None of this procures, builds, or acquires the submarines, aircraft, ships, and armour urgently required by Australia, today – not in 2040. Yet many Defence commentators continue to read AUKUS and the submarine program incorrectly. There is significant danger that



Nuclear Powered Submarine Task Force showing image of *Astute*-class submarine.

the Nuclear Powered Submarine Task Force (NPSTF) will simply replicate the lack of leadership and incompetence exhibited by the Future Submarine Program.

The NAVY sympathises with Dr Baird's view [6] that an interim class submarine may be required before the introduction of the nuclear fleet, augmented by at least 24 *Orca*-class Boeing autonomous underwater vehicles (AUV). [6] Some commentators and ex-politicians (who should know better), are advocating the building of *Collins-2* by the same European shipbuilder. Through simple weighted analysis, see Table 1, Dr Neil Baird determined:

The only conventional (non-nuclear powered) SSG submarine that competes across all five sub-categories is the Korean *Jangbogo (III)*-class, built under licence to the German company TKMS – itself derived from the highly successful Type 212 class. The second choice, competing in two of the five sub-categories, is the Japanese-built *Taigei*-class. Only at an extreme, would one go to a European builder, such as for the Navantia SA80 and under no circumstances whatsoever would one touch the “Other European” option. Which, of course, is what Canberra ended up doing for both the *Collins* and (for different reasons) the *Attack*-class submarines.

Table 1: Submarine Replacement Weighted Options

Class	Allied Partner / Relationship	Regional Ally / Proximity	Trade & Defence Liaison	Logistics Chain	Extension Characteristic Modifications	Total Weighting
<i>KSS-III (Jangbogo III) Extension</i>	2	1	2	2	1	8
Navantia SA80 Extension	3	3	3	4	2	15
Type 212 CD Extension	3	3	3	3	2	14
<i>Taigei</i> -class Extension	1	1	1	1	4	8
Other European	3	3	5	5	5	21

Regarding the *Hunter*-class, The NAVY has long advocated that this was the best design. However, like all Frigate and Destroyer options currently available, these represent an optimised design, fit for the 1990s – not the 21st century. The MOSKVA attack (see paper 1), affirms that different designs will be required to survive the modern battlefield. As advocated by ANSON, Blake, and Reay Atkinson et al (7-9). Blake [8] goes further, recommending a 100-ship Versatile Modular Ship design RAN, capitalised to augment and fit with an expanded USN, balanced against the number of submarines.

Table 2: Potential USN and RAN Fleets – Restoring Design Balance and Capacity by VMS design

USN	280	355	Future VMS Balance?	RAN	2019	Future	Future Balance?	Future VMS?
Aircraft Carriers	13	16	39	LHDs	2	2	2	3
Amphibious Assault Ship	26	32	76	LSD	1	1	1	4
Attack Submarine	60	77	77	Submarine SSG	6	12	12	12
SSBN	19	24	24	AORs	2	2	4	5
Cruiser	25	32	55	DD	3	3	4	7
Destroyer	79	100	170	FF	8	9	12	13
Dock Landing Ship	14	18	43	OPVs	0	11	14	16
Mobile Base Ship	1	2	4	MCM	6	6	6	14
Littoral combat ship	13	16	27	Hydrographic	6	6	6	8
MCM	13	16	39	Patrol Boats	15	0	0	20
Patrol Boats	15	19	45	Total	49	52	61	100
Submarine Tenders	2	3	7					
Total	280	355	606					

Underpinning this essential maritime mobilisation (including for Army Littoral Manoeuvre vessels and RAAF (F-35Bs)) are their crews. Navy will need to grow to at least 30,000 by the end of the decade to support such a program. The piece-meal approach to date of adding a few 1000 here and there, simply will not sustain. Similarly, as offered by *The NAVY* (in addition to the flags for QUAD and AUKUS):

- political secretaries of Navy, Army, and Air Force need to be reinstated.
- To support our Allies, proper secretariats also need to be configured from APS and Defence for the National Security Council, QUAD, AUKUS, and NPTF – ideally all co-located in Melbourne.

All of this will require the political, military, industrial, research, educational, and economic leadership necessary to build confidence in uncertain times. This is the challenge of today, if we are to build an Indo-Pacific Charter fit for the 21st century – *Pacific as one*. ■

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- [5] By Associate Professors Captain Simon Reay Atkinson RAN PhD and Commander Hiroyuki Kanazawa PhD JMSDF. The full poem reads: Seas eternal call, A mariner's lonely watch, Pacific as one; Tides essential turn, Australia as Japan, common arms again; Times every season, Waiting fates capricious turn, May to Blossoms Fall.
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STATEMENT OF POLICY

For the maintenance of the Maritime wellbeing of the nation.

The Navy League is intent upon keeping before the Australian people the fact that we are a maritime nation and that a strong Navy and capable maritime industry are elements of our national wellbeing and vital to the freedom of Australia. The League seeks to promote Defence self-reliance by actively supporting defence manufacturing, research, cyberspace, shipping, transport and other relevant industries.

Through geographical necessity Australia's prosperity, strength, and safety depend to a great extent upon the security of the surrounding seas and island areas, and on unrestricted seaborne trade.

The strategic background to Australia's security is changing and in many respects has become much less certain following increasing tensions, particularly in East Asia involving major powers, and in Europe and the Middle East. The League believes that Australia should rapidly increase the capability to defend itself, paying particular attention to maritime defence.

The Navy League:

- Believes Australia can be defended against attack by other than a major maritime power and that the prime requirement of our defence is an evident ability to control the sea and air space around us and to contribute to defending essential lines of sea and air communication with our allies.
- Supports a continuing strong alliance with the US.
- Supports close relationships with all nations in our general area particularly New Zealand, PNG and the South Pacific island States.
- Advocates the acquisition of the most capable modern armaments, surveillance systems and sensors to ensure technological advantage over forces in our general area.
- Advocates a strong deterrent element in the ADF enabling powerful retaliation at significant distances from our shores.
- Believes the ADF must be capable of protecting commercial shipping both within Australian waters and beyond, in conjunction with allies.
- Endorses the development of the capability for the patrol and surveillance of all of Australia's ocean areas, its island territories and the Southern Ocean.
- Advocates Government initiatives for rebuilding an Australian commercial fleet capable of supporting the ADF and the carriage of essential cargoes to and from Australia in times of conflict.
- Notes the Government intention to increase maritime preparedness and gradually increase defence expenditure to 2% of GDP, while recommending that this target should be increased to 3%.
- Urges the strength and capabilities of the Army (including particularly the Army Reserve) and Air Force be enhanced, and the weaponry, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, cyberspace and electronic capabilities of the ADF be increased, including an expansion in its UAV capability.
- Considers that the level of both the offensive and defensive capabilities of the RAN should be strengthened, in particular with a further increase in the number of new proposed replacement frigates and offshore patrol vessels, noting the need to ensure essential fuel and other supplies, and the many other essential maritime tasks.
- Recommends bringing forward the start date of the replacement frigate program to both strengthen the RAN and mitigate the local industry capability gap.
- Recommends the timely replacement and increase in numbers of the current mine-countermeasure force.
- Strongly supports the early acquisition of large, long range and endurance, fast submarines and notes the deterrent value, reliability and huge operational advantages of nuclear powered submarines and their value in training anti-submarine forces.
- The League is concerned at the very long time before the projected 12 new conventional submarines can enter operational service, noting very serious tensions in the NW Pacific involving major maritime powers.
- Recommends very early action to provide a submarine base on the Eastern seaboard.
- Notes the potential combat effectiveness and flexibility of the STOVL version of the Joint Strike Fighter (F35 *Lightning II*) and supports further examination of its application within the ADF.
- Supports the development of Australia's defence industry, including strong research and design organisations capable of the construction and maintenance of all warships, submarines and support vessels in the Navy's order of battle, and welcomes the Government decision to provide a stable and continuous shipbuilding program.
- Advocates the retention in maintained reserve of operationally capable ships that are required to be paid off for resource or other economic reasons.
- Supports a strong and identifiable Naval Reserve and Australian Navy Cadets organisation.
- Advocates urgent Government research and action to remedy the reported serious naval recruiting and retention problem.

As to the RAN, the League, while noting vital national peacetime tasks conducted by Navy, including border protection, flag showing/diplomacy, disaster relief, maritime rescue, hydrography and aid to the civil power:

- Supports the maintenance of a Navy capable of effective action in hostilities and advocates a build-up of the fleet and its afloat support elements to ensure that, in conjunction with the RAAF, this can be sustained against any force which could be deployed in our area of strategic interest.

The League:

- Calls for a bipartisan political approach to national defence with a commitment to a steady long-term build-up in Australia's defence capability including the required industrial infrastructure.
- Believes that, given leadership by successive governments, Australia can defend itself in the longer term, within acceptable financial, economic and manpower parameters.



THE ROYAL NAVY'S CARRIER STRIKE GROUP 21

A SIGN OF REVIVAL OR A SYMBOL OF A NAVY'S DECLINE - RATIONALE BEHIND CARRIER STRIKE GROUP 21

By Kelvin Curnow

The 2020 British government document titled *Global Britain in a competitive age – The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy* [1] considers Britain's role in the world post-Brexit. As a 'showing the flag' exercise and a demonstration of the UK's desire to establish stronger relations, particularly defence partnerships with the wider global community post-Brexit, Carrier Strike Group 21 (CSG21) can be considered to have met its objectives. It is only to be hoped that the announced plans for renewal of the RN do proceed, for without them the Royal Navy will remain a minor player in the face of Russian and Chinese developments of their own capabilities.



HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH (R08) alongside aircraft carriers from Japan and the US during CSG21 (Japan Maritime Self-Defense).

we will develop a better understanding of China and its people, improving our ability to respond to the systemic challenge that China poses to our security, prosperity and values – and those of our allies and partners.

To this end, some forty years after the disbandment of the Far East Fleet the Royal Navy (RN) is returning 'East of Suez'. The tangible presence will be in the form of two Singapore based Batch II *River-class* Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs), to be replaced in the second half of this decade by *Type 31* frigates, coupled with regular deployments of more substantial units such as the *Queen Elizabeth-class* aircraft carriers.

WORK-UP AND INITIAL DEPLOYMENT AND OPERATIONS

On 1 March 2021 the aircraft carrier HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH sailed from HMNB Portsmouth to begin a period of working-up before deploying as the lead component of Carrier Strike Group 21 (CSG21). A major component of the work-up was Exercise Strike Warrior which took place off Scotland between 8 May and 19 May 2021. CSG21 comprised: HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH; the Type 45 (T45) destroyers HMS DIAMOND and HMS DEFENDER; the Type 23 (T23) frigates HMS RICHMOND and HMS KENT; the auxiliaries RFA TIDESPRING and RFA FORT VICTORIA; the submarine HMS ARTFUL; the destroyer USS SULLIVANS; and the Dutch frigate HNLMS EVERTSEN. The QUEEN ELIZABETH carried a substantial air component consisting principally of eight Lockheed Martin F-35B Lightning IIs from the RAF's 617 Squadron, and ten F-35Bs from the US Marines Corps (USMC) Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 211, all under British command.

Between 22 May 2021 and 24 May 2021 all CSG21 ships departed their respective ports and sailed to the Eastern Atlantic Ocean off Portugal to take part in the NATO Exercise Atlantic Trident. The strike group then passed through the Strait of Gibraltar on 31 May 2021 and met up with the French carrier FS CHARLES de GAULLE to conduct joint carrier operations before exercising with other NATO navies. This was the beginning of a twenty-eight week 26,000nm (48,152km) deployment under the mantle of 'Operation Fortis'.

Sailing into the Eastern Mediterranean F-35s from the strike group bombed Daesh targets in Iraq beginning on 18 June. For the Royal Navy this marked a significant milestone, not since the 1990s had jets flying from the service's carrier decks had taken part in an

INTRODUCTION

The 2020 British government document titled *Global Britain in a competitive age – The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy* [2] considers Britain's role in the world post-Brexit. The paper states that the Indo-Pacific region is critical to the UK's economy, security and global ambition to support open societies. The document specifically addresses the increasing power and international assertiveness of China which it considers to be one of the most significant geopolitical factors in the world today, to which end it makes several important observations, Britain will:

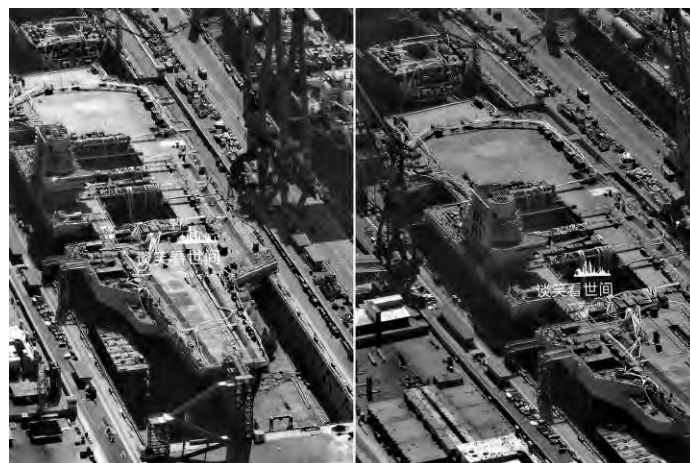
- Require a long-term strategic approach which will continue to adapt to a changing international environment defined by: geopolitical and geo-economic shifts, such as China's increasing international assertiveness and the growing importance of the Indo-Pacific.
- Pursue deeper engagement in the Indo-Pacific in support of shared prosperity and regional stability, with stronger diplomatic and trading ties recognising the importance of powers in the region such as China, India and Japan, and extends to others including South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines.
- Do more to adapt to China's growing impact on many aspects of our lives as it becomes more powerful in the world. We will invest in enhanced China-facing capabilities, through which

active bombing campaign, in that instance BAE Sea Harriers flying against targets in the Republika Srpska (Republic of Serbia). For operations against Daesh the F-35Bs from VMFA-211 were armed with GBU-12 Paveway guided bombs, Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM), AIM-120 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAMs), and AIM-9X Sidewinder short range missiles. The UK's aircraft were armed with Paveway IV guided bombs, AMRAAMs and Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missiles (ASRAAMs). There was no attempt to mask the presence of the US or UK aircraft over the battlefield, both nations F-35s carried their short-range missiles externally and were fitted with Luneburg Lenses which are radar reflectors. By not flying in stealth mode there was no prospect of Russian units stationed in Syria of testing their ability to detect and gain a firing position on the F-35s flying in full stealth mode.

INTO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

Passing through the Suez Canal on 6 July CSG21 sailed into the Red Sea and then the Indian Ocean exercising with the US and Indian navies respectively. Leaving the Indian Ocean CSG21 passed into the South China Sea (SCS) on 26 July. This marked the beginning of the most significant phase of the deployment featuring a Freedom of Navigation Operation (FONOP), challenging China's claim that it had sovereignty over the entire maritime region within its self-proclaimed nine-dash line, which in basic terms is the whole SCS. Beyond conducting the FONOP QUEEN ELIZABETH's presence in the SCS was a signal to China that the UK was willing to project power in support of like-minded nations which adhere to international conventions. Every country with a coastline on the SCS - China, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia and Vietnam - have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This grants them an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) up to 200 nautical miles (400 kilometres) from their coastlines. However, China also claims historic rights within the nine-dash line which include areas that go well beyond its own EEZ. These claims have provoked clashes with its neighbours, notably Vietnam and the Philippines, over fisheries and oil and gas exploration. It was not lost on China that CSG21's presence in the SCS signalled that the UK was returning in strength to a region which it had departed after abandoning the East of Suez defence policy.

Not surprisingly the deployment was met with reaction from the Chinese media. However, CSG21 presented a dilemma for Communist Party's outlets such as the *Global Times* and *People's Daily* which at one and the same time argued that the British focus on the Indo-Pacific and the deployment of the ships was both a mortal threat to



PLAN Type 003 Aircraft Carrier approaches readiness to launch (Jun 2022).

regional security, and simultaneously a pointless piece of gesture politics which was militarily insignificant. The rhetoric went unmatched by any significant response from the Chinese military. There were, for example, no overflights by aircraft from the People's Liberation Army Air Force or the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) Air Force. Satellite imagery showed that at the same time QUEEN ELIZABETH was in the SCS the PLAN's carrier SHANDONG was also present, albeit the two flat tops were on opposite sides of the disputed waters with the former somewhere between the coast of Vietnam and the island of Borneo and the latter just south of the island of Hainan, leaving the carriers some 580nm (1,074km) apart. Although no official accounts of interactions with Chinese warships have been released the respected online media site Navy Lookout, quoting the *Daily Express*, reported that the strike group had been shadowed by three Type 093 Shang class submarines. Two SSNs were detected by the ASW frigates HMS RICHMOND and HMS KENT, the third by an *Astute-class* submarine sailing ahead of the group. [3] The article noted that both frigates were well equipped for the ASW role with towed-array sonar, while the *Astute-class* is among the most sophisticated submarines extant and far quieter than their Chinese counterparts.

Leaving the SCS some of the intended port visits, including those to Japan and South Korea were largely abandoned because of the COVID pandemic, although HMS ARTFUL did visit the port of Busan in South Korea and other individual units made it into Japanese ports. Marking a significant milestone in her deployment, QUEEN ELIZABETH and her escorts pulled into the US Naval Base on Guam on 6 August having thus far met all strike group's stated goals. (It is beyond the scope of this paper to report CSG21's mission into the Pacific Ocean because of the closing date of the 2021 Essay Competition.)

CSG 21 – STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The Strengths

For a middle-ranking power like the UK, with a far from robust economy, to have assembled such a sizeable task group led by an aircraft carrier second only in size to the USN's supercarriers, and despatched it on a mission visiting some forty countries is a significant achievement. Further, CSG21 was a well-balanced force containing a good mix of destroyers, frigates and support vessels which in itself marks a change for the RN which will no longer rely on patrols by single vessels but will in future put to sea in larger task groups. The past practice was for the RN to use frigate or destroyer size vessels for patrols in areas where offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) would be both far more suitable, and more than adequate. The RN now has eight OPVs including five of the very capable 2,000-ton



RAF F-35B Operating from HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH (R08) alongside HMS DRAGON (D35).



RN Far East Squadron River Class OPV HMS TAMAR (P233) visits Darwin for Crew Handover (June 22). Impressively armed when compared to original designs for the *Arafura-class*.



HMS DIAMOND (D34) suffered a serious defect during CSG21 docked in Taranto Italy for repairs.

Batch II *River-class*. Possessing helicopter capable OPVs of this size frees up the RN's escort forces to engage in protection of major assets such as aircraft carriers and thus permit the formation of future task groups. Additionally, CSG21 proved again the value of regularly exercising with allies, the Dutch and US ships assigned to the group operated seamlessly under British command, all three nations having a long history of naval cooperation.

The deployment of CSG21 was marked by a number of firsts. Not since 2010 when the UK retired its fleet of Harrier jets had the RN deployed fighters operationally at sea. The jets themselves were of a considerable difference to the second-generation Harrier fighters, these were fifth-generation F-35Bs the most advanced sophisticated fighter produced thus far. With some thirty-three aircraft and helicopters from all three nations distributed across the surface units, CSG21 represented the largest number of aircraft simultaneously at sea in a British-led strike group since the Falklands War. Often repeated in both the technical and popular press is the claim that during the CSG21 deployment QUEEN ELIZABETH carried far more fighter jets than any RN carrier since the days of ARK ROYAL and EAGLE. Of course, such is not the case. HMS HERMES carried sixteen Sea Harriers, ten Harriers and ten Westland Sea King helicopters at the height of the Falklands War. Post the Falklands it was not uncommon for *Invincible-class* carriers to carry a mix sixteen Sea Harrier and Harrier aircraft. What is true, however, is that QUEEN ELIZABETH has put to sea with an air wing containing the largest number of fifth-generation fighters thus far.

Other air assets included three Leonardo Merlin HM2 helicopters under the Crowsnest programme to carry Searchwater radar and tasked to provide Airborne Early Warning (AEW) for the fleet. The RN designates these helicopters as fulfilling the Airborne Surveillance and Control (ASaC) task, which is a more accurate description of their role. The helicopters have not yet reached Initial Operating Capability (IOC) because of a long, drawn-out period of development which hit a number of development issues. The other RN helicopters available to the strike group are four Leonardo Wildcat HMA2s drawn from 815NAS, and used in the maritime attack role. Images have appeared of a Wildcat operating as part of CSG21 carrying its maximum load-out of two MBDA Sea Venom and ten Thales Martlet missiles. The former is designed to be employed against corvette size warships; the latter is designed to counter swarm attacks by small boats such as those employed to attack shipping in the Persian Gulf by the Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The Wildcat's weapon suit is indeed impressive and more than adequate to carry out the tasks assigned to it, however by the time CSG21 sailed neither missile had achieved IOC.

The Weaknesses

On the surface CSG21 could be deemed a success, a show of strength by Britain probably last demonstrated in the Falklands War. Nonetheless, digging deeper reveals serious shortcomings, particularly with the RN's equipment. Primarily, and the most obvious of these, surrounds the number of F-35s on board QUEEN ELIZABETH, there are more American than British aircraft. Without the F-35s from the USMC a meagre RAF eight jets would have been available to the strike group. This reflects the slow buy rate of the aircraft by the UK. Of the intended buy of one hundred and thirty-eight F-35s only forty-eight have been ordered so far and the total number could be as low as sixty to eighty aircraft. This, given that the aircraft would also be required to be RAF's primary land-based fighter aircraft, means that the possibility of operating both *Queen Elizabeth-class* carriers with a full air wing simultaneously would be precluded. With funds for the UK F-35 programme now likely to be transferred to the development and procurement of the UK's own BAE Tempest sixth-generation fighter, the prospect of an adequate number of F-35s is diminishing. The sight of large fleet carriers with empty flight decks is a growing possibility.

Not only F-35 numbers are an issue, the buy rate could be further slowed by the high cost of integration of MBDA Selected Precision Effects At Range (SPEAR) 3 precision ground attack missiles and MBDA Meteor long range air-to-air missiles, both unique to the UK. Together these are weapons which will make the British F-35s more capable than those flown by the forces of other nations, but they will not be available until 2024 at the earliest and until then will leave the RN with serious capability deficiencies. [4] The SPEAR 3 missile will be particularly valuable because it will be capable of attacking land and naval targets at a range of 100km+. Of note there will also be an electronic warfare (EW) variant of the same weapon providing the aircraft with a significant electronic attack capability. The Meteor missile with a range of 100km+ and a speed of Mach 4 will provide a step change in capability in that it can complement the RN's primary long-range surface-to-air missile, the MBDA Aster 30.

The unqualified need for surface attack weapons is highlighted by the reality that between them the four RN escorts assigned to CSG21 carry only four obsolete Boeing Harpoon Block 1C missiles. These are on board the T23 frigate HMS KENT. The plan is to replace these with a limited buy of missiles under the title of the Interim Surface to Surface Guided Weapon (I-SSGW) programme, with the first of these to be delivered by the end of 2023. Also required to perform the land attack role the most likely candidates are the: Lockheed Martin Long Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM) AGM-158C; Kongsberg Naval Strike Missile (NSM); and, Saab RBS15 Mk



RN Merlin Crowsnest from 820 Naval Air Squadron commissioned for CSG21 (from Falkland War designs) operating from HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH.

4 'Gungnir' (Odin's Spear). Initially to be fitted to the five Type 23 (towed array) frigates capable of concurrent anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and anti-surface warfare ASuW operations, the missiles will be transferred to the Type 26s as they enter service. Ominously as at August 2021 the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) has still to formally invite bids from industry. The T26 frigates will eventually be equipped with the Future Cruise/Anti-Ship Weapon (FCASW) from 2028. This is an Anglo-French weapon to be designed and built by MBDA, the programme completed the Concept Phase in July 2021. As with the SPEAR 3 and Meteor missiles there will a considerable gap between development, orders being placed, integration of the weapons system and entry into service. Until the latter half of this decade the RN will have comparatively little with which to fight should a shooting war break out.

Other serious deficiencies exist within the RN's escort fleet. The T45 has had a troubled existence with ongoing WR-21 gas turbine powerplant problems. This was highlighted when HMS DIAMOND suffered a breakdown on 7 July and was forced to stay behind at Augusta in Sicily leaving other ships of CSG21 to sail through the Suez Canal. The destroyers are currently being put through a programme of rectification with the first T45, HMS DIAMOND, entering the Power Improvement Package (PIP) programme in 2020. On a brighter note the T45s are to be equipped with twenty-four MBDA Sea Ceptor SAMs which are in addition to the current load out of forty-eight Aster missiles. This represents a considerable improvement in armament. Both programmes will be completed by yet to be determined dates and will undoubtedly, as exhibited with the PIP, face serious delays.

One further glaring deficiency must be mentioned, this being the radar equipment employed by the RN. The T23s are equipped with BAE Systems ARTISAN conventional radar which has an antenna rotating at 30rpm. This is at least two generations behind modern Active Electronically Scanned Array radars. Ominously this radar is also to be fitted to the T26 frigates. Additionally, the Merlin Crowsnest helicopters employ a radar originally equipped the Westland Sea King AEW2 which was born out of a Falklands War requirement for such an aircraft. A system developed in 1982, no matter how much it has been updated, will hardly be adequate to meet future challenges.

CONCLUSION

As a 'showing the flag' exercise and a demonstration of the UK's desire to establish stronger relations, particularly defence partnerships with the wider global community post-Brexit, CSG21 can be considered to have met its objectives. Nevertheless, in doing so it highlighted the reality that the RN has suffered from serious under investment for at least three decades with any money that was available being set aside for the aircraft carriers and the *Successor* SSBN programmes. It is only to be hoped that the announced plans for renewal of the RN do proceed, for without them the navy will remain a minor player in the face of Russian and Chinese developments of their own capabilities. ■



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NLA CRITICAL SUBMARINE DEBATE

Enjoined by the Senior Vice President and Federal Vice Presidents and based upon Peta Credlin's article in *The Australian*, (Jun 16) *Nuclear submarines challenge will define Albanese*, a debate was initiated regarding the non-trivial and contradicting issue of the twin needs to obtain nuclear powered submarines well before 2040 and extend the operational life of the *Collins-class* to cover the gap.

Credlin's article articulated the dangers of a son of Collins/interim solution. It follows many of the fears of what an interim sub might mean for the future nuclear-powered submarine – delaying, postponing, or even cancelling the program.

The NLA position on the submarine gap, potentially suggests an alternative more joint/integrated gap filler rather than an entirely new complex and expensive submarine class?

The gap could be filled by a cold war style SOSUS warning net around Australia and the SW Pacific; crewed/uncrewed surface craft Cooperatively Optimised (COOP) with variable depth sonars; more P-8 *Poseidon* patrols (working with RNZAF); a new Jindalee Operational Radar Network (JORN) facility to cover the SW Pacific area; and a capitalised Versatile Modular System aircraft carrier (configured as to the *Izumo-class*) with F-35Bs.

The maritime, thematic, and temporal gap is much wider deeper and challenging than the GIUK, which is simple by comparison.

The worst option of all may be LOTE. Followed by *Collins-2*. High risk, least gain. Either option would be a new submarine. Dr Neil Baird has argued the same.

There are significant challenges pointed out in previous articles in *The NAVY* facing US shipbuilding in terms of old shipyards, archaic industrial relations, poor designs and an ageing workforce. There may be some wriggle room but to generate two additional *Virginia-class* in the ramp up to 100 USN SSNs is going to be challenging, any time before the 2040s. UK yards are by comparison more modern and modularised and the design may be close to right. But there is no capacity and workforce plus MOD reductionism, lack of ambition and inability to think limits any capacity to, in effect, build one SSN for RN and one for RAN, concurrently. Even if Australia had the shipyards and workforce. Additionally, despite what the PM Boris Johnson and First Sea Lord might say, there is no political vision, or ability, or military industry complex resolve or capability in UK to do so. Back to the US...



Collins-class submarines an exceptional conventional submarine.

The only realistic option if we are to replace *Collins* on an interim basis is to go Japanese or South Korean. As set out by Dr Neil Baird. But, as argued by Peta Credlin, this is likely also to allow the Labor administration off the hook – and push nuclear powered submarines into the long grass. If not cancellation at the end of this Parliament – AUKUS notwithstanding.

In all of this debate, it is necessary to note that this is a political-strategic leadership decision to go SSN. Left to its own resources, Navy has enough on its plate to stay with the same numbers and force structure – without the ambition, capability, capacity, leads, engineers or appetite-in-being to grow the fleet for SSN.

SSN POLICY POSITION

The following NLA policy position was recommended:

BLUF: *The League has been an active supporter of a nuclear powered submarine capability since 1985 and thus welcomes the decision to acquire the capability for Australia's security. We are concerned however, at the potential impact on our undersea warfare capability a protracted acquisition may impose.*

The problem remains that the dates and outcomes don't align. It took 16 years to build six *Collins* from announcement to last sub in the water. If it is decided at the end of 2022 to get an interim sub it will take a year to decide which one and then another two years to customise it to RAN needs (bearing in the mind the lessons learnt from the *Prescott-McIntosh* inquiry). Add that to 16 years for another six brand new subs

(Japanese or South Korean). That means that the last boat would enter service in 2042. Two years later then current planning for our first SSN.

However, if the yard is geared up for SSK production how long is it going to take to re-tool for SSN production? At least another four years?

So Australia wouldn't start building till 2046 (assuming no delays with the above) with first in the water in say 2054? But the first new SSK will still have another 15-20 years left in the hull. How is that value for money, will be the media and political question?

Additionally, Japanese and South Koreans may not be able to deliver any earlier from their yards as the threat from China is on their doorstep. Concomitantly, it needs to be an Australian build, remembering we haven't built a submarine in 21 years and all the 'builders' and project management people have moved on. So we start from scratch again; negating the need for SSN.

The irony is that "back" in the 2000s we examined four options to replace *Collins*. 'More *Collins*' and 'off the shelf' options were discontinued in favour of a completely new sub or a *Collins* derivative, as our needs are unique. In the end Defence went with a hybrid off the shelf in the form of the Short Fin Barracuda. If we were to go South Korean or Japanese we would probably have to modify it (potentially less so for the South Korean option) as we did to the French boat. So the question will be asked:

Why not just go back to the French boat?

At least we were a few years ahead of the curve of the other Asian boats.



SETTING ASIDE THE CAPABILITY ISSUES THERE IS THE POLITICS

Take this simplistic scenario:

Anthony goes to the milk bar to buy a double choc thick shake from Joe the American milk bar owner. A thick shake costs \$10. The time is 20:22hrs. Joe says "man, my machine is working flat out. I can't make it for that guy down there until 20:40hrs". Anthony says "OK, I'd like it earlier but I guess I'll have to wait."

Along come two of Anthony's school friends. They say "hey, while you wait why not get a chocy milk from the fridge as well". Anthony says "but its \$7 and I only have enough for my thick shake as the flu season was really bad this century".

Then Adam goes into the milk bar. He hates Joe and thick shakes and says to Anthony "if you don't wait and just take the chocy milk I'll let you come to my place and copy my homework. You can then donate the remaining \$3 and be super super popular". Anthony, says "OK, this chocy milk is good enough". And they leave the milk bar at 20:39hrs.

Obviously the above is a take on Australian politics today. When Prime Minister Anthony Albanese wants to get legislation through the Senate that isn't supported by the Liberals, he will have to turn to the Greens Adam Bandt. The Greens have already said that any legislative negotiations on any topic will first involve the cancellation of the SSN project. Consequently, if an interim solution is in the field then it becomes the solution for short term political expediency and bye bye SSNs.

Experience working with the Greens by some NLA members suggests that the above scenario will play out. In the parable, if no 'chocy milk' is available, then the PM will have to wait for his thick shake from Joe. It is in the interests of Australia and our Allies to make sure of that.

PROPOSED NLA POLICY POSITION

The following policy position was proposed:

The League has been an active supporter of a nuclear powered submarine capability since 1985 and thus welcomes the decision to acquire the capability for Australia's security. We are concerned however, at the potential impact on our undersea warfare capability a protracted acquisition may impose.

- The above high-level policy avoids 'solutionising' from the glossy brochure (as that's never worked); noting:

- Australia cannot risk defeat being snatched from the jaws of victory on the SSN capability.
- While the argument is attractive for the interim (New submarines and / or LOTE), NLA has worked too hard for this to accidentally shoot ourselves in the foot at the last minute.

GAP FILLER?

As previously noted, the maritime, thematic, and temporal gap to be filled is much wider deeper and challenging than the GIUK.

UUVs and large numbers is a pre-requisite. Australia could build them here. At least five for every *Collins-class* submarine. Essentially wrapping each *Collins* in a UUV cloak. And providing opportunity for optional crewing downstream. In other words, turning the *Collins* itself into a UUV as part of an upgrade (not LOTE) program. Critically, the *Collins* becomes the UUV controller, eyes on, in situ. The Master switch...

The worst option of all is LOTE. Followed by *Collins-2*. It would be a new submarine. Dr Neil Baird maintains the same.

The challenge facing Australia today is to adequately extend the useful operational life of its current first-class *Collins-class* submarines, without undertaking a highly risky and potentially unsafe LOTE rebuild and endangering the SSN procurement.

Incredibly, at least one fully crewed *Collins-class* submarine deploys each year from the West Coast, to operate off the East Coast, via the Great Southern Ocean and Bight! And returns each year. Travelling largely on the surface, its speed of advance is not much faster than the speed of HMS VICTORY in 1805. This is a patent nonsense.

Of the *six-Collins*, four are operational at any one time; one in long-term and another in shorter-term maintenance.

The argument for Versatile Modular Systems has been to use commercial ships in support and warship roles, modularised to fit.

Significantly reducing hull usage, would act to extend life and therefore greatly reduce the need for LOTE and / or its costs. Emphasis might be placed on an upgrade rather than rebuild.

The proposal is that the RAN acquire three Heavy Lift ships, each capable of carrying two *Collins-class* submarines and associated UUVs. Two of these ships would be dedicated as fast transit mother ships, and the third as an experimental capability.

Additionally, the Heavy Lift Ships would be:

- Crewed as Merchant Ships (Auxiliary or RAN);
- Modularised for:
 - Submarine support systems – allowing the submarine to act as a trainer while in transit;
 - Hotel facilities, for [two] *Collins* and UUV crews and engineering support capabilities;
 - Self-defence Weapons;
 - Weapons (Torpedo) Magazines;
 - C2 facilities to process and augment/ support the operation of *Collins* and multiple UUVs.

Significantly, such an approach is conservatively estimated to reduce the usage of existing hulls by as much as 33%, thus extending the life of the *Collins-class* to cover off the SSN-gap. Moreover, this approach would take the pressure off building the East Coast Submarine Base, with the Heavy Ship capability providing the hotel services and engineering capabilities to sustain on board all maintenance other than a full refit.



HMCS CHICOUTIMI (SSK 879) aboard the heavy lift ship Tern in Halifax harbour on April 6, 2009.



Boeing Orca-class UUV.

The full costs saved in outfitting and operating the Fleet in this way, from 2023 to 2040 is estimated to be \$5B in terms of the estimated \$6B costs for full LOTE rebuild.

It would be what we were doing if we were at war, so why not now...

COLLINS-UUV HEAVY LIFT WRAPAROUND

The *Collins-UUV* wraparound proposal allowing for optional *Collins*-crewing and heavy mother-ship lift capacity would additionally extend life safely and provide an innovative solution to “the gap”, matched against the criteria set out by the proposed NLA policy position.

Australia would get much more bang for the buck and it would be an innovative solution, aligned to Australian strengths.

UUV have large crewing (and data-centric) footprints of their own - so local (operational) tethering to Heavy Lift mother ships and *Collins* would make sense in all regards.

END GAME

The Albanese Government may want a way off the AUKUS-SSN hook. This carries considerable risk. The proposal set out by the NLA:

1. Allows the longer-term introduction of SSNs matched to long-lead [UK or U.S.] procurement programmes;
2. Enables the growing of nuclear power engineering and back-aft expertise, over a realistic timeframe;
3. De-risks the hugely expensive and potentially unsafe *Collins*-LOTE program;
4. Removes the need for an alternative submarine-class build;
5. Extends the life of the *Collins-class* by as much as 33%

6. Plays significantly to Australia’s engineering strengths of innovation and automation through:

- a. the 21st Century application of *Collins* / Heavy Lift wraparound UUVs;
- b. augmenting the *Collins-class*;
- c. capitalised through the introduction of heavy lift mother ships.

As significantly, it would allow the Albanese-government to maintain the longer-term SSN program without diffusing intent. In fact, it would provide an enhanced regional capability apposite for the moment and capable of significantly enhancing RAN power projection, and therefore Australian deterrence capability, pending arrival of Australia’s first SSN.

AUKUS

A bipartisan group of U.S. House lawmakers unveiled in June legislation that would help the Royal Australian Navy train its future submarine warfare officers with U.S. sailors.

Dubbed the “The Australia-U.S. Submarine Officer Pipeline Act,” the legislation would allow Australia to send at least two of its submarine warfare officers to train with American sailors each year. The Royal Australian Navy officers would first attend the Navy Nuclear Propulsion School, then take the Submarine Officer Basic Course, and finally deploy aboard a U.S. submarine after finishing the basic course, according to text of the bill.

“The new bipartisan bill will establish a joint training pipeline between the U.S. Navy and the Royal Australian Navy, and will enable the start of U.S.-based training of Commanding Officers for Australia’s future fleet of nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS alliance,” the AUKUS working group said in a news release.

The bill would mandate that the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of Energy begin the training exchange in 2023 and continue it in the years to follow.

The legislation is the product of Congress’ AUKUS working group, which lawmakers created in April to help advance the new partnership between the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia.

The bill comes as the U.S., the U.K., and Australia continue an 18-month evaluation period to determine what’s necessary for Australia to develop nuclear-powered submarines.

“The AUKUS alliance is the most important national security partnership that America has entered into in decades. Its centerpiece is creating an Australian nuclear-powered undersea fleet of submarines, which all three allies are actively designing. While that work is ongoing, it makes sense to open the U.S. Navy’s nuclear training programs to Australia’s naval officers to acquire proficiency in the operation of nuclear submarines,” Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.), a member of the AUKUS working group who is also the chair of the House Armed Services seapower and project forces subcommittee, said in a statement.

RUSSO-UKRAINE WAR

While the denouement will necessarily be ashore, the Russo-Ukraine war will be lost at sea, before it is won ashore.

Putin’s land grab is intended ultimately to seize Odessa and the Black Sea coast, below the 47th parallel. Thus, removing Ukraine’s ability to exist as an independent state, in anything but name.

Stubborn and exceptional resistance has so far prevented this seizure but it remains uncertain how this war ends, or can end.

While initially coalescing support against Russia and bringing the European democracies together with NATO, the U.S. and the EU, divisions are appearing. With President Macron and Kissinger both advocating for an appeased solution. Largely to the detriment of a sovereign state, in this case Ukraine.

The 1917 Russian Revolution was brought forward by the starvation caused by the blocking of non-icebound Russian ports and ships in the Black Sea through the closure of the Dardanelles by Turkey. One of the key reasons for launching the 1915 Gallipoli campaign was to open up the sea routes to Russia – and so keep her in the war.

The positions are now arguably reversed – with much of the world facing starvation without the ability to bring the grain carriers



USS KEARSAGE (LHD 3) moored in Stockholm, Sweden June 03, 2022 Part of 40 NATO warships undertaking Baltic Operations 22.

into Ukrainian ports, and extract the grain stockpiled from last year's harvest.

The Baltic states, also defined by the maritime, are equally anxious as recognised by both Finland and Sweden seeking to join NATO.

Putin having failed in his gambit and exposed his Chinese Ally for what they are, has potentially only two final recourses to play. Both are likely to involve a maritime incursion on a NATO state or its shipping. Equally, there may be a need at some point to stage a new "Berlin Airlift", with convoys of grain carriers being escorted and channels cleared to Ukrainian ports.

For this reason, and in an unprecedented move, the French, British, and U.S. Nuclear Deterrence Forces all gathered earlier this year in Faslane.

In the meantime, Putin awaits General Winter's return, when energy prices will sky rocket in the northern hemisphere and shortages will be exploited. The EU is unlikely to be able to sustain its position for long, member states will break away at some stage. Some NATO members also. It will be left then to the usual alliance of Canada, Norway, the U.S., the UK, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Australia to hold the line, with Scandinavian, and Baltic Allies.

There is scant support from the rest of the world for the western position on Ukraine. If nothing else, Putin has assisted in further isolating the global west from the non-Liberal and democratic states that make up the majority of countries in the UN. Many now deeply in hoc to China.

TAIWAN

Xi Jinping has made clear his intent to reunify Taiwan with the mainland by 2025, including by force, if not achieved beforehand.

It is increasingly clear from the coordinated support for Russia against Ukraine, that if Putin had succeeded in seizing Ukraine in the first 72 hours – as his advisors had told him was possible – that China would have in all likelihood moved on Taiwan this year. At least as far as the Quemoy and Matsu Islands, lying close to the mainland are concerned.

The delay caused by Ukraine's resistance may unfortunately end up strengthening China's position in 2025, exactly by denuding the West's will and ability to support Taiwan.

ANTARCTICA IN THE FRAME

Russia and China have made it clear that they will contest and if needed, revoke the Antarctic Treaty System, if necessary, before its renewal date of 2048 in order to allow for mining and, potentially, military basing.

Already China has established a belt through Australian Antarctic Territory as part of its Belt & Road Initiative, thereby connecting the Pacific with the Atlantic.

As the ice melts across the Arctic, Russia is similarly seeking to militarise and exploit its position across the North Pole, where it has already launched numerous contested claims. Putting pressure on NATO Allies, including the U.S. Norway, Denmark, and Canada. China continues to seek northern basing facilities, including recently in Greenland.

RETURN OF THE BOATS

Admitting the collapse of its economy, Sri Lanka announced in June it will default on all its international loan commitments, pushing an estimated 500,000 of its 22 million population into extreme poverty.

Although the root cause is a failure of politics and the decision to place a ban on imports of chemical fertilisers to ease the burden on the balance of payments, the result has

implications for all economies reliant on inexpensive Russian energy, and fertilizers.

Not only in developing countries but also in the Western World, do police and security forces recognise the connection between social unrest, crime and the price of fuel and bread. As for the poorer suburbs of Melbourne, is the case in the Middle East and South East Asia.

The economic crisis in Sri Lanka giving rise to an increase in people trafficking emerging from the island is potentially a portent of what is coming to the rest of the world if prices and shortages persist.

While the conflict in the Ukraine continues, these systemic failings will push more and more people into poverty and malnutrition around the world, not just in developing countries.

Russia is the world's largest exporter of superphosphate. Ukraine is the world's number four exporter and number one in the export of urea, which is needed to create nitrogenous fertilisers. China, which accounts for about one-tenth of the world's urea and one-third of another important farm product involved in the production of diammonium phosphate.

General Northern Winter may yet provide the Russian Leader the victory he is demanding in Ukraine. He appears more than happy to seed discontent across the western world and use the misery of millions to achieve his aims. As have Russian (and Chinese) Dictators before him. Except this time on a global scale.

DEVONPORT STATION

Dr Oliver Hartwich, Executive Director of The New Zealand Initiative, a Wellington-based think tank, wrote recently (11 May, *The Australian*) on the Foreign Policy lessons New Zealand should learn from Germany. He concluded that the parallels in both countries' international positioning are astonishing.

As a German and New Zealand citizen, he noted that Putin's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February exposed Germany's major foreign policy mistakes as being three separate but related issues.

- First, the Germans realised how dependent they were on Russia, especially in the energy sector.
- Second, it finally dawned on Germany that its military capacity was depleted.
- And third, Berlin found its relations with its major security allies and neighbours strained.

Hartwich recognised that not just for the past few years but for the past three decades,

Germany indulged in the dream of its special relationship with Moscow. Germany then chose to ignore Russia's geopolitical ambitions by pretending that Russian oil, gas and coal exports were just ordinary business transactions. Consequently, Germany allowed its armed forces to deteriorate to the point where it had no ships that sailed, no planes that flew, and no soldiers properly equipped for their missions.

All these policy decisions were traduced by Putin's invasion of Russia. "Germany emerged as a nation that had naively confused its strategic and economic interests, and... isolated itself from its Western allies".

Like Germany, New Zealand put its economic interests with China ahead of any security concerns. And dependencies shaped by its agricultural exports, rather than its energy imports. But it is a similar strategic dependence regardless.

New Zealand has also neglected its defence spending. At 1.5 per cent of GDP, New Zealand spends about as much on its military as Germany. That is too little to defend New Zealand, and also insufficient to pull its weight in the region.

New Zealand was content to free-ride on the Defence provided by its allies, most notably Australia and the US. And just as Germany, New Zealand irritated these allies, for example over its reluctance to engage more deeply through the Five Eyes partnership. And its gratuitous criticism of AUKUS.

Like Germany's pursuit of carbon and nuclear zero by using cheap available Russian gas, New Zealand, banned offshore oil and gas exploration under the umbrella of pursuing a 'net zero' emissions goal.

As a result of ambitious carbon targets, energy security has deteriorated in both countries. The Germans are now desperate to correct past mistakes and establish alternative sources of energy.

In cleaning up the messes of their past policy choices, the Germans now recognise two things

- First, dealing with autocracies comes with major risks.
- Second, liberal democracies must assume responsibility, both militarily and politically, within the Western security framework.

Dr Hartwich concludes that New Zealand still has to learn these lessons. And it would better do so quickly.

Meanwhile, following a self-invited visit to the U.S., rewarded by a visit to the White House, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern downplayed the reshuffle of her Cabinet as "minor". Yet the key minister,



Five British aircraft carriers of the British Pacific Fleet at anchor 1945.

more notable by her absence in the region and her pro-China, anti-ANZUS stance on Foreign Affairs, Nanaia Mahuta, stayed put as Minister for local government and foreign affairs. Reflecting more the increasingly factional, Maori divisions within the New Zealand Labour Party and its Government.

Mahuta, while being critical of Australia, including on the Solomon Islands, has been notably absent from the region at a time when China is aggressively expanding its security belt across Pacific island nations. Former Labour cabinet minister Michael Bassett said:

Mahuta was Foreign Minister "in name only", adding: "Mahuta holds a Rasputin-like grip over Jacinda, who seems permanently in thrall to anything promoting Maori that Nanaia comes up with."

It would be interesting to have been a fly on the wall at Prime Minister Aherm's pre-briefings in the West Wing. It may have made for uncomfortable viewing.

GREENWHICH STATION

First Sea Lord, or Chief of the British Royal Navy (RBN?), Sir Ben Key announced at PAC 22 and more recently a significant ramping-up of British Defence and diplomatic presence in the Indo-Pacific to combat rising change threats and re-establish the UK as a major player in the region. This follows on what is considered to have been a successful Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 21 deployment, see Paper 2.

Noting HMS TAMAR's arrival in Darwin, the Royal Navy First Sea Lord said "Britain's increased influence in the region under Prime Johnson's Indo-Pacific tilt was a return to waters we once knew well".

Sir Ben went on to note the deployment of

Britain's newest and greenest warship (HMS TAMAR) highlighted the UK's "deep interest and renewed presence in the Indo-Pacific".

"The Indo-Pacific tilt, announced in the 2021 integrated review of foreign policy, security, defence and development, is driven by the UK's strong economic ties to the region,"

Writing in *The Australian*, he said.

"We benefit from an extremely strong network of diplomatic missions from Kolkata to Canberra, membership of the Five Power Defence Arrang recently the granting of dialogue partner status from ASEAN, the first time this was granted in 25 years."

The Batch 2 offshore patrol vessels, HMS TAMAR and HMS SPEY propulsion systems reduce nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide emissions by up to 97 per cent.

On AUKUS, Admiral Key offered that:

"It is also profound, only the second time our American cousins have agreed to share nuclear technology in the seven decades that they have operating submarines."

Two OPVs do not a fleet make, no matter how green, competent and attractive. The UK is ideas and cash-strapped. Lack of ambition and capacity to think is constraining the RNs ability to mobilise and grow. It remains to be seen if the political will exists to support its growth over the longer term. And if the RN leadership, has the competency, will, intent and guts to take the RN back to the high seas. The recent past is not a good indication. The RN will perhaps achieve such an aim if it were to show the resolve and pluck that led to the last great Empire Fleet, the British Pacific Fleet. A Fleet that fought its way back into the Indo-Pacific against the strong opposition of the USN, and the designs of the IJN. ■



QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS 2022: RAVI INDER SINGH NIJJER, AM

Ravi Inder Singh Nijjer, was awarded an AM following a 62-year career in shipping that continues to steam ahead to this day.

Joining as a Merchant Navy officer in India in 1960, he has been awarded the AM as an international expert on maritime safety.

"It's been quite an improbable life for a boy who grew up in landlocked Jullundur," Mr Nijjer laughed. "In fact, that's the name of my soon-to-be published book: *An Improbable Life*."

Following education at The Bishop Cotton School (Simla) Nijjer was serving in Hong Kong in 1968 when he met his Australian wife. They moved to Australia in 1970 and he continued to serve on the seas until 1980. He then moved to education and head at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Transport's Department of Marine Transport. In his role there, he rewrote the Masterclass I syllabus. Commenting on today:

"There's not much of an industry left in Australia, though," Nijjer lamented. "When I arrived in 1970 there was a thriving merchant shipping industry with over 100 Australia-registered ships. The number has dwindled to around 12 ships. That's despite being an island continent where 99% of imports and exports are transported by sea, with hundreds of large commercial ships operating in Australian waters. The decline has many people seriously concerned. The new prime minister is promising to create a strategic fleet of up to a dozen ships that can be relied on to deliver essential cargoes and fuel supplies."

MERCHANT NAVY DAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2022

Merchant Navy Day occurs each year on 3 September on the anniversary of the first merchant marine sinking of World War II. The British liner SS *Athenia* was torpedoed and sunk without warning by the German submarine U-30. This happened only 10 hours after Britain's declaration of war in 1939.

During the World Wars and the Vietnam War, merchant ships and their civilian crew have been responsible for transporting service personnel, supplies and equipment. Some vessels were converted to military hospital ships for wartime service.

The Battle of the Atlantic was fought across the war's most dangerous shipping lanes. Over 3000 Allied merchant ships were sunk. Some 30,000 Allied sailors and merchant mariners were lost at sea.

Over 800 Australian merchant mariners died serving the Allied cause during the World Wars, almost 10% of Australia's Merchant Marine. More than Australians killed in the Vietnam and Korean wars.

The Merchant Navy Memorial, on the edge of Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra, commemorates the contribution made by the Australian Merchant Navy during the World Wars. The Shrine in Melbourne also remembers our Merchant Sailors, as do memorials in Newcastle and other major ports.

MARITIME UNION OF AUSTRALIA 150TH ANNIVERSARY

The MUA traces its lineage back to the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia, whose roots lay in the formation on the Australian waterfront in September 1872 of two unions in Sydney, the Labouring Men's Union of Circular Quay and the West Sydney Labouring Men's Association which merged ten years later to form the Sydney Wharf Labourers' Union. The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) covers waterside workers, seafarers, port workers, professional divers, and office workers associated with Australian ports. The MUA was formed in 1993 with merger of the Seamen's Union of Australia and the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia.

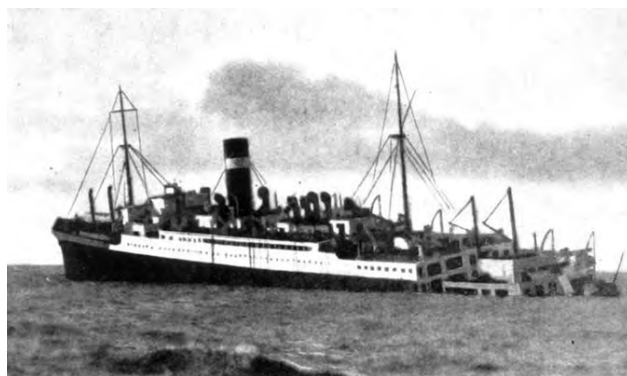
On 29 February 2016, at the MUA national conference, delegates voted unanimously in favour of a merger with the CFMEU. The Fair Work Commission approved the merger in March 2018.

MUA WELCOMES LABOR VICTORY

Opening his account with the new Labor Government, Paddy Crumlin (National Secretary) stated:

"Our members have been prosecuted, persecuted, lied about, undermined, sacked, vilified and conspired against by the Liberals and Nationals in line with a pattern of behaviour established by their predecessors in the 1980s and 1990s".

In a letter to members, Mr Crumlin noted the enthusiastic and early commitment by Labor to establish a *National Strategic Fleet of Australian-crewed and Australian-flagged vessels*. This is a crucial step towards securing Australian supply chains and revitalising an industry which has been



SS Athenia sunk at the outbreak of WW2, 3 September 1939

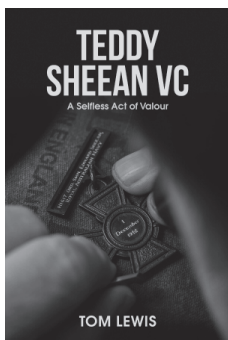
allowed to decline under successive Liberal leaders as big-businesses have shifted more and more of their seaborne trade on to Flag of Convenience ships crewed by vulnerable and exploited international seafarers being paid as little as \$2 per hour.

Paddy Crumlin added:

"Labor's victory and the election of that great supporter of decent and sustainable shipping policies and maritime workers -- Anthony Albanese -- provides a new and definitely our greatest opportunity to protect our rights and jobs and by extension all workers' rights, jobs, health and retirements."

Bill Shorten, whose policy this is, has been appointed as the Minister for NDIS in the Albanese-Government. It might have been appropriate to make Mr Shorten also Minister for the Merchant Navy – providing wider recognition of the role. Noting the fact that, unlike almost all his colleagues, Bill Shorten has actually served. As an Army Reservist. In a bolder move, as advocated by *The NAVY*, if the Government elects to reinstate single Service political secretariats, as required for any coherent mobilisation – Mr Shorten should become the Secretary of Navy, including the Merchant Marine. A bold move validated in these uncertain times.

The drive for the unions to return Australian Industrial Relations to the 1970s is not the answer. It will simply drive capital further off shore. At the same time, it is clear that the accountancy driven consultancy companies and their media-techs have paid scant regard to sovereign capabilities, knowledge and rights. They have done considerable damage to all Western democracies – immorally setting global ethics and profit before values. A new compact is urgently required – as seen in the recent debacle over energy supplies. ■

**TEDDY SHEEAN VC****A Selfless Act of Valour**

Tom Lewis

Big Sky Publishing, Newport, 2021

ISBN 10: 1922387908

ISBN 13: 978-1922387905

Paperback: \$24.25

Reviewed by Jim Truscott, redux version kindly approved for reproduction by ALI and Dr Lewis.

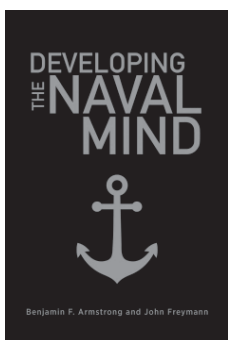
Tom Lewis is to be commended for forensically reviewing all primary and secondary sources and producing an easy-to-read book about the short 18-year life of Teddy Sheean, as well as the even shorter 173-day life of HMAS ARMIDALE.

The author sets the scene by describing what it was like to serve in the Navy, Teddy Sheean's family, his Navy life in Tasmania, and the changes in technology that were impacting naval warfare and the rise of Japan at the time.

The book describes the tragic finale with the air and sea search not starting until two days after the sinking. While those men who were in the motorboat were picked up on the sixth day, those men who were rowing the salvaged whaler were not picked up for eight harrowing days. Those men left desperately hanging on to the constructed raft were initially sighted but never seen again. The author quite categorically assesses that there is no evidence of a Japanese submarine being involved in the loss of the raft.

The second half of the book address the history of the Victoria Cross with the standard for awarding the medal differing from service to service. It has been a long and somewhat inconsistent history, varied and haphazard, with ultimate approval in the hands of the Monarch. The author deduces that the absence of a recommendation for Teddy Sheean was not due to deliberate incompetence, rather just the stresses of war on the chain of naval command.

This book about Teddy's war, a story of a sea disaster and tragedy, should be in the library of every school in Australia and readily available in Timor Leste, Indonesia and Holland. This event was the greatest loss of RAN life after the sinking of HMAS SYDNEY and HMAS PARRAMATTA in the Second World War. Now that the wreck lays in waters belonging to Timor Leste, the names of those lost at sea in the final battle and ordeal while awaiting rescue should be placed on the honour board in the Australian Embassy's Sparrow Force House in Dili alongside the soldiers who gave their lives in this campaign.

**DEVELOPING THE NAVAL MIND****By Benjamin F. Armstrong and John Freymann**

USNI: November 15, 2021

ISBN-10: 1682476030

ISBN-13: 9781682476031

Softcopy: \$36.00

Commander Benjamin "BJ" Armstrong, USN, is a former search and rescue helicopter pilot and associate professor of war studies and naval history at the U.S. Naval Academy. John Freymann is a permanent military professor at the U.S. Naval Academy. After spending the first half of his career as a Surface Warfare Officer, he earned his PhD in the history of Christianity from the University of Chicago.

By not accepting born leaders or a ruling class, the US Armed Forces have a tradition of engagement at the cultural edges of knowledge. So important to exercising unity of command, in war. The underlying theme of this book, though, is the lack of thinking currently being exercised by senior officers in the USN (and USMC). Often driven out by performance management KPIs that insist on 20-minute, power point briefs, to be completed throughout the day – with no allowance for the exchange of (true) knowledge (both human and infotechnological) and proper reflection.

While recommending that officers read broadly in pursuit of individual knowledge is an important part of creating a truly educated and professional Fleet and Fleet Marine Force, the authors maintain that it is also important for leaders in the sea services to offer mentorship and create opportunities (a safe to speak and fail ecology) for discourse that encourages group learning. *Developing the Naval Mind* not only serves as a traditional how-to manual and syllabus for leaders to create and lead discussions – but paints a very real scenario of future demise and failure, should Navy's fail to listen, speak and learn.

The final chapter, ch. 19, *How we lost the Great Pacific War*, by Dale C. Rielage is sobering. You may wish to start the book from here, and read back? It begins with a Memo from COMUSPAC Fleet to CNO, dated 6 Jun 2025, entitled *Lesson Learned from Recent Naval Actions in the Western Pacific*. COMUSPAC Fleet concludes, *inter alia*:

- The tragedy of our defeat is that it hinged on such small factors: our margin of victory in high-end naval combat had grown "razor thin."
- Shifting resources was simple compared to creating an intellectual shift within the force. We did not rebalance the force until well after we advertised that we had. We worked hard on getting the narrative right, but our allies and potential adversaries could do the math on the correlation of forces; and they concluded that the numbers had stopped adding up in our favour.
- Our ten-year rule was an informal, unspoken assumption throughout the force, and thus harder to challenge. We lost along the way the truth that the imperfect reality trumps the perfect potentiality.
- Fleet staffs, warfighting development centres, and the Naval War College spent hard effort in creating concepts that required varsity level execution. Unfortunately, at the same time we were creating these concepts, we were also hemorrhaging experience out of the Pacific.
- Once combat was joined, it was apparent that we had not found the right balance between efficiency and effectiveness. The years of continuing resolutions, Budget Control Act restrictions, and maintenance deficits left the sustainment phase a shell of a concept.
- We lost the ability to train naval aviators in quantity for the next decade. We repeated the mistake of the Imperial Japanese Navy air arm, which spent most of its highly trained naval aviators in combat in the first half of World War II without considering the need to train replacements.
- The best insights on this fight had been found within the professional research, assessment and planning community which was disbanded some years ago after being nursed along for a decade.
- We needed to align our command and control across warfare domains. After all, the war started in cyber. From the first inklings of conflict, our networks were contested terrain; and we started that fight behind the power curve. The losses sustained by Task Force 70.2 stemmed in part from attacks that leveraged these vulnerabilities. We should have been willing to harden the network in peacetime.
- The crew of the destroyer USS FISHBURNE earned a Navy Unit Commendation going back for the survivors of the USS HOLLOWAY. It was a heroic, if unsuccessful, gesture that ultimately cost us a second DDG. The reality is that keeping FISHBURNE's missile magazines afloat and, in the fight, would have saved more American lives than any successful rescue.

These tragic lessons need learning and reflecting upon today, which is the intent behind this excellent book.



HATCH: SAS KING SEKHUKHUNE I (P1571) Multi Purpose OPV Commissioned by South African Navy.



MATCH: PLAN FUJIAN (003) J-35 Aircraft Carrier Launch June 2022



DESPATCH: HMAS MAITLAND (ACPB 88) Decommissions, Darwin, April 2022. Commanding Officer and Honour Guard presenting the Colours.