

# THE NAVY

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA



**AUSTRALIA – PYRRHIC  
DEFEAT OR CRITICAL  
JUNCTURE? PART I**

**SERVATIONE VIGILANTE – THE  
NAVY AND THE NLA, BEYOND 2038**

**ANDREW ROBERTSON:  
WE WILL REMEMBER**

**IT IS  
TIME:  
RAN VC**



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**Front cover:** Navy FA18E Super Hornets and Grumman Trackers Combined Task Group 635-5 and USS RONALD REAGAN CSR Regional Presence Deployment 2020  
(Image LSIS Ernesto Sanchez).

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## RE-CONSTITUTING INSTITUTIONAL POWER

The final issue of *The NAVY* for 2020 ends with a powerful set of papers beginning with the NLA obituary for Rear Admiral Andrew John Robertson AO DSC RAN, followed by a paper compilation of three of his more recent contributions. Paper 2 by Dr Neil Baird – through meetings with maritime leaders – picks up the questions raised by Admiral Robertson to provide searing analysis of where Government, Defence and Navy procurement decisions, leadership, and management rests today. Paper 3, by William Alston, builds the case for the award of Navy's first Victoria Cross. Written before the report by Dr Brendan Nelson submitted to the Prime Minister in August recommending Teddy Sheean be awarded the VC, the paper examines the case based on precedence's established for posthumous awards and forfeiture. The final paper is by the team established by the NSW NLA Division to examine the future of *The NAVY* and compares the nature of the current media and publishing space. It is not a healthy picture.

Senator Reynolds told the Defence sponsored Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 7 Aug:

*We have got the right capability plan, but we don't have an organisation that is yet adaptable enough to actually deliver.*

Minister Reynolds was addressing the Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group. But Defence also includes the single Services, the Defence Science and Technology Group (previously Organisation); their inter-relationships with each other, with the APS, and Government. Each of the entities represents a system. System formation and systems-of-systems formation is to do with power formation, where those responsible for forming systems have the power (authority and responsibility) [1] to enact new rules of engagement and to change them. In general,

*If the conditions are fulfilled within the context of the institution, Institutional Power can be defined as "the power of an agent to create a [new] institutional fact represented by deciding to take, acting upon, or performing an action or procedure". [2]*

For example, Chief of Navy has the power to appoint flag officers. After going through a selection procedure, if he signs a particular document, then the person to be selected is promoted to the role. The relationship between signing the document and the consequences of being promoted to that role has a value specifically in context of Navy; its connecting systems, including Defence; the single Services; and, other navies / Armed / Defence Forces. The consequence of CN's decision becomes a [new] institutional fact. [2]

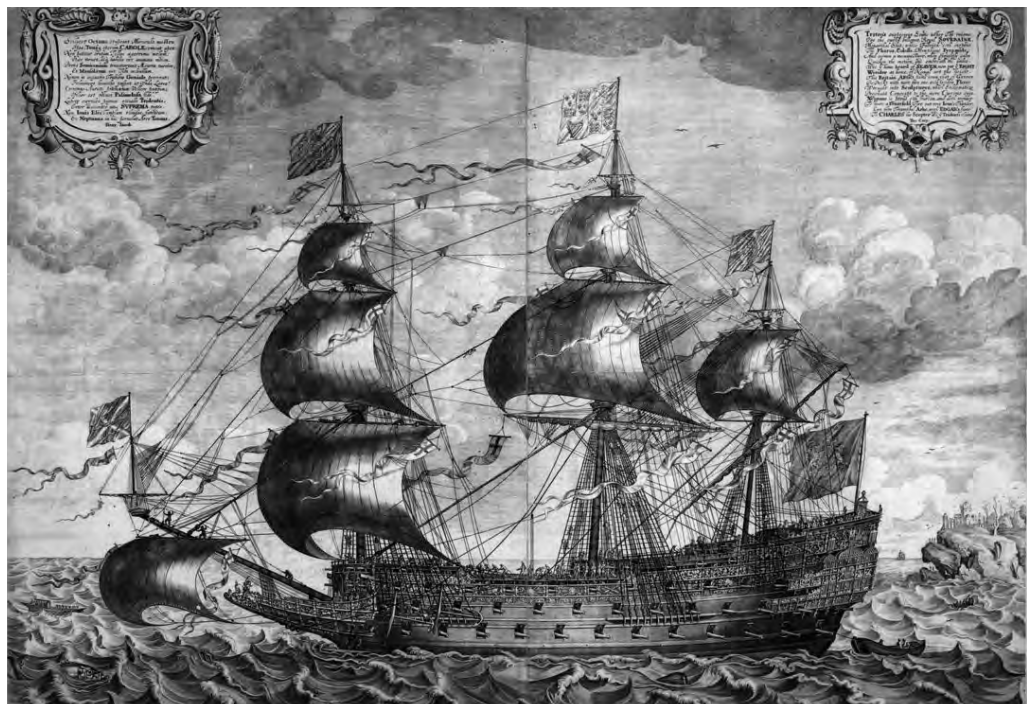
The British Civil Wars historian, John Kenyon, rejects historical inevitability as a reason for explaining the descent into violence. Instead he argues:

*It is impossible not to turn to a tactical or political explanation, and final causes of the Civil War in the state of the Monarchy: first its general weakness, which unbalanced the working constitution; and, secondly, the perverse ineptitude of some of his advisors, which triggered off a series of crises. [3]*

John Morrill, concurring with John Kenyon, considers that the institution of monarchy represented by King Charles I "had become the dynamic agency of progressive change in the early seventeenth century". Intellectuals and royalists were largely on the side of the King and the Church of England "opposed, not so much by an ever-strengthening body of Puritan fanatics, as by self-interested congeries of anticlerical landowners". [4] Considered in terms of the three Estates – the Clergy and Church; King, the institution of Monarchy and its magisterial class; and "the rest": wage labourers, merchants, landowners and Commoners (or the Commons) – the Establishment had lined up behind two of the estates. The more progressive the first two estates became – the more they disenfranchised the third estate. Yet, no estate, even after the outbreak of violence, questioned the [unwritten] constitution or the existence of its institutional powers, to which all sides consented. It was the ineptitude and greed exercised, for example, to pay for lost wars through Ship Money Tax, that ultimately "unbalanced the constitution and triggered further crises".

The 21st Century Establishment comprises the 18/19th Century Fourth Estate – a free independent press – and the Fifth Estate, emerging through the media-tech giants, Cyber and its associated systems-of-systems, and networks-of-networks. [5]

An issue connecting all four papers concerns Institutional Power: the institutional power of Navy (Army and Air Force) to design, plan and reconfigure themselves within Defence, as part of a Defence Force – and, increasingly, a Joint Force. In 1973, the Minister for Navy and Department for Navy was subsumed into the Minister of Defence under a single Minister – as for Army and Air Force. A transfer of institutional power occurred that placed Navy alongside Army, Air Force, and Defence as competing



HMS SOVEREIGN OF THE SEA (1637-1650), Later Commonwealth Ship SOVEREIGN (1651-1684) and finally HMS ROYAL SOVEREIGN (1685-1697) paid for by Ship Money (Image source: [www.britishmuseum.org](http://www.britishmuseum.org)).





Admiral John Aquilino commander of the US Pacific Fleet, with Chief of Navy Michael Noonan (Image RAN).



The guided-missile destroyer USS MCCAMPBELL transits the Taiwan Strait May 2020 (Photo US Navy).

entities. The institutional power of Navy was diluted and that of Government, Defence and the APS strengthened. For example, the institutional power to grant the use of “Naval” identified in papers 2 and 4. Professionalisation, while allowing for identification, also promoted division through privatisation. In Defence, privatisation followed two paths: contractorisation (through outsourcing); and securitisation through body-shopping – such as Base Security. As suggested in paper 3, this led to the formation of “private” Navies, Armies and Air Forces. Institutional Power of Army was focussed on the professionalism of an elite – increasingly directed by risk-averse, cost-cutting, political-military aims. Dividing SAS from Army and Chief of Army led to elitism. SAS had become a power and law unto themselves – no longer Commonwealth’s or even Army’s Boys and Girls. In Aug 2020, CDF “belatedly appointed former naval officer and Anglican Bishop Tom Frame to conduct yet another review into the culture of the special forces; ...examining the conduct of the senior ADF leadership and the strategic conduct of the war”. [6]

The stability of autonomous systems, institutions, and organisations is fundamentally based on the constancy and consistency of expert rationality, merit, and the individual consent covenanted to it. Power becomes “at risk in institutions when rival expert groups become independent of one another, compete substantively, and confront one another”. [1] If the institution of Navy – “as the discoverer, designer, protector, and creator of new knowledge splits up through competing antagonistic opposing truths and realities – then that is the extent to which...systems independent of individuals shatter”. [1]

In the 1990s conditions changed, with the transition of empiricism to “reflexive scientisation” (circular relationships between cause and effect in the social sciences); metritic\* (as opposed to meritocratic) gender and identity intersectionalism; individualism; the disaggregation of leadership and management, e.g. to Human Resources; Climate Change puritanism; privatisation and outsourcing of sub-systems to consultants (see paper 2); the diminution of the Fourth Estate and the rise of a monopolistic, progressive Fifth Estate. [1] This caused a shattering of Institutional Power in Navy and across Defence and Government. A possible example being flag officer promotions (and resignations).

Warren and Warren [7] attest that “healthy organisations are those

that can solve problems”. In other words, individuals have the Power and confidence to exercise and take decisions on behalf of the Institution. The reverse also applies – noting the grey, haggard, haunted faces of previously collegial senior officers, even weeks after entering Canberra. At Pacific 2019, Chief of Navy – alluding to nuclear propulsion – innocuously commented:

*A change in the propulsion system for the Attack-class submarines; it's something that will no doubt be discussed over the next 30 years, bearing in mind that by the time we deliver No. 12 it will be 2055.* [8]

The repercussions were immediate. Despite being the professional Head of Navy, CN did not have the Institutional Power to say such things. Consequently, his progress to CDF – the first for Navy in 20 years – has, apparently, been stymied.

Senator Reynolds claims “we have got the right capability plan”. Is this really the case? Even if it were, as Eisenhower is reputed to have said: “the value is in the planning; not the plan”. Planning is a function of Institutional Power. Does Senator Reynolds have the power and understanding to value and reconstitute Institutional Power in Navy (Army, and Air Force). If not, the consequences for Australia’s sovereignty and sovereign knowledge will be dire. ■

\* Selection by quota-based metrics.

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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.
- 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.

**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.

## VALE REAR ADMIRAL ANDREW JOHN ROBERTSON, AO DSC RAN

In July our longstanding member, dedicated contributor, determined promoter, former Federal Vice President, and great friend Andrew Robertson passed away at the age of 95.

Andrew was exceptional from the very beginning. As a Cadet Captain at the Naval College, he excelled in sport, received prizes and awards across subjects academic and practical, including the Otto Albert Memorial Prize for seamanship and received the King's Medal for displaying the most exemplary conduct, performance of duty and good influence amongst his peers.

His seagoing career was forged in the heat of the Second World War. The outstanding zeal, energy and devotion to duty which resulted in his receipt of the award of a Distinguished Service Cross for his service as gunnery officer in HMAS ANZAC under fire off the Korean Peninsula in 1952 never dulled. His service in command, as a senior officer and diplomatic roles led to his being made an Officer in the Order of Australia in 1980 and influenced us all. His was an outstanding career.

The obituary in this edition details more of his career, but for those of us, like me, who came to know him through the Navy League, in the days well after his RAN service, these characteristics remained throughout. He was a great sounding board, an unrelenting advocate (especially when it came to nuclear power and Australia's interests) and a steadfast friend.

It was also lovely to have Andrew around. Whether it be as a colleague in the meeting room, as a companion nearby at a meal or function, or just on the end of the phone or an email, his own greatness never outshone others. He had the ability to bring out the best in us all without elevating his own importance, to encourage when we needed it, to question and prompt as required and to lighten the mood (generally with a 'brief' anecdote to illustrate the point) when it desperately needed lifting.

He was a fine role-model for more than one generation of Naval Officers, those interested in maritime affairs, and the preservation of history and will be sadly missed by me and by the Navy League among many others.

My condolences, and that of the Navy League of Australia, go out to Andrew's family and friends, especially his wife Pat, and children Angus, Jane, Julia and Bruce.



Vale Rear Admiral Andrew John Robertson AO DSC RAN (Ret).

## WELL DONE — TEDDY SHEEAN VC

The Victoria Cross is the pre-eminent award for acts of bravery in wartime and is Australia's highest military honour.

In August the Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia announced that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II had posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross to Ordinary Seaman Teddy Sheean as a result of his bravery under fire in HMAS ARMIDALE (I) in 1942.



Ordinary Seaman Teddy Sheean VC (Image AWM).

The paper in this edition, eloquently arguing the case for the posthumous award of the VC to Sheean, predates that announcement but is compelling reading nonetheless. This award, and the paper, behoves us all to reflect on those acts of bravery in wartime to persons who, in the presence of the enemy display (in the words of the award) the most conspicuous gallantry, a daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice, or extreme devotion to duty.

The recognition of Sheean's actions finally adequately acknowledge his bravery, bring great credit to his family and community and showcase the values and culture of Royal Australian Navy in which he served so proudly.

## VP DAY 75TH ANNIVERSARY — THE END OF SECOND WORLD WAR

While Victory in Europe was declared in May 1945, fighting in the Pacific region continued until August of the same year. On 15 August 75 years ago, after the devastating nuclear bombings in the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, then Prime Minister Chifley declared Victory in the Pacific Day (a day elsewhere in the Allied world known as VJ Day) in a wireless broadcast. Thus, he marked the end of the Second World War.

Across Australia there was great excitement, people took to the streets, hugged, cheered, police officers were kissed and there was dancing in the streets. With all of the gaiety and rejoicing, there was also sadness, freshly laid flowers, reverence and homage offered to those who paid the high price to enable Australians to rejoice then and since.

On Victory in the Pacific Day we recognise those who served our nation, honour those veterans who remain and remember those who are no longer with us. We owe those men and women a great debt of gratitude and we will never forget.

We pay tribute here, as suggested by Mr Chifley in 1945, to those whose lives were given, and look forward, that we may enjoy this and many other glorious moments, in the peaceful company of those who cross the seas from many nations to visit and live here, to share our boundless, abundant plains, and uphold our traditions and customs.

*We are stronger today as a result of the community we have forged together. Lest we forget.*



## THE AGM OF THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA

The AGM of the Navy League of Australia is on again in October. Details of the meeting are contained in this edition.

It will come as no surprise to members that we will have to adopt a different approach to usual. Hopefully this will mean even more of you are able to participate this year than ever before.

I encourage all members to participate in the AGM, it is an opportunity to further explore the important issues which are canvassed in this *The NAVY: The Magazine of the Navy League of Australia*, to address emerging naval matters and mix with like-minded members. I hope you are all able to join us.

Around the time of the AGM our Federal Council will also review the Navy League's Statement of Policy, which I continue to encourage you all to revisit from time to time. It is the statement of our direction and guidance. Let us know if there are areas that need to be updated or issues that need to be added.

The League's contribution to the national debate and the shape of our Navy is dependent upon us all and I encourage you to stay involved to shape the future of the Navy League and the nation.

### IN THIS ISSUE

In this edition you will find some articles prepared over the years by our late great contributor Admiral Robertson. In addition, Dr Neil Baird's consideration of contemporary issues around the present maritime industry, particularly relevant to three current major programs, is sure to prompt debate.

Another important issue that the League has been addressing in recent years and will continue to revisit is our own future, the best application of our resources and how to maximise our contribution to the national debate. We are a maritime nation reliant on the sea



Commander Max Clark DSC, RAN inspecting the guard at HMAS COMMONWEALTH Kure, Hiroshima, Japan, late 1948 (Image Navy).

for 98% of our exports. Our coastline covers over 32,000 nautical miles. Our maritime trade, security and prosperity are dependent on free navigation for shipping. Our regional neighbours expect of us cooperation, assistance in countering terrorism, and a contribution to the maintenance of international law and a rules-based order. It behoves us all to keep before the Australian people our view that a strong navy and a capable maritime industry are vital to our freedom and prosperity. It has been the role of the Navy League and this publication *The NAVY* to do so since inception and I hope the paper on the future of the Navy League and *The NAVY* is a reminder of this important work and a call to action for us all.

I commend this edition to you and, as always, encourage your feedback. ■

Happy reading.



NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA



will be held online by video conferencing on **Friday 23 October, 2020 at 8.00pm AEDT.**

To receive video conferencing details please register your attendance (and your email address) by email to [editorthenavy@hotmail.com](mailto:editorthenavy@hotmail.com) by COB Tuesday 20 October and the details will be emailed to you prior to the meeting.

### BUSINESS

- 1 To confirm the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in Canberra on Friday 25 October 2019
- 2 To receive the report of the Federal Council
- 3 To receive the financial statements of the year ended 30 June 2020
- 4 To elect Office Bearers for the 2020-2021 years as follows:
  - Federal President
  - Federal Senior Vice-President
  - Additional Federal Vice-Presidents (2)

Nominations for these positions are to be lodged with the Honorary Secretary prior to the commencement of the meeting.

### 5 GENERAL BUSINESS:

- To deal with any matter notified in writing to the Honorary Secretary by 16 October 2020

## ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

By order of the Federal Council

**Adrian Borwick**  
Honorary Federal Secretary

PO Box 2495  
Chermside Centre QLD 4032



# VALE ANDREW JOHN ROBERTSON

## REAR ADMIRAL AO DSC RAN

### 1925-2020

Navy League of Australia  
Federal Executive 1987-2011

Navy League of Australia, NSW Division  
Executive, 1982-2020

It was with immeasurable sadness that this July the Navy League of Australia and *The NAVY* learned of the death of Rear Admiral Andrew John Robertson AO DSC RAN. Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Michael Noonan AO RAN signalled the Fleet, *inter alia*:

*It is with great sadness that I inform you of the passing of Rear Admiral Andrew John Robertson, AO, DSC RAN (RETD). RADM Robertson made a most significant contribution to Navy, in war and in peace, during his distinguished 43-year career, and in the four decades since his retirement.*

*One of our most admired leaders, his courage under pressure and calm demeanour in the face of adversity has set the benchmark for our navy leaders now, and for generations to come.*

*Andrew Robertson is a role model for what navy officers can achieve in the most demanding of circumstances.*

*[He] always sought to fight through obstacles, and rose to all challenges both in war and peace.*

Andrew is one of those rare men who contributed as much to Navy and Australia during his 43-year's active service in the RAN (from 1939 to 1982) as he did in the thirty-eight year's he was blessed with after his retirement. In truth, Andrew never retired. His mind was as active, passionate and enquiring as it was when he was a thirteen-year-old cadet midshipman joining Navy and the RANC. Unsurprisingly, on graduation he was awarded the prestigious King's gold medal.

## A BATTLE FOUGHT

There was perhaps a sense of regret that drove Andrew throughout his two careers. Of "not being there" – essentially of atonement. Andrew joined HMAS AUSTRALIA (II) six-weeks after The Battle of the Coral Sea. We are fortunate that he was not there because we may well have lost him if he had been. His rare courage would have put him at the forefront. His atonement was in gaining recognition for the Battle of the Coral Sea and for shipmates who fought there and did not come home. The Prime Minister Scott Morrison, speaking on board USS RONALD REAGAN (CVN 76), 19 Jul 2019, recognised:

*The Battle of the Coral Sea as being The Battle for Australia.*

Andrew was instrumental in achieving this long sought after recognition for Navy. A battle that provided the essential denouement, without which Kokoda would not have occurred.

In 2015, looking forward to the 2017, seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea, Andrew wrote of the need to commemorate the event as it had been during the 50th. [1] In the event, the anniversary was disappointingly downplayed in Australia and fully recognised in the U.S. Andrew again played his part. His paper was provided to the Naval Attaché in Washington for use at anniversary events, and the Embassy put in contact with Andrew – who was there for the 75th anniversary on board USS INTREPID (CV-11) in New York. This was a hugely important occasion for Australia. His presence enabled a platform for then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to meet with President Donald Trump and rebuild relations after a shaky start. Indubitably, the current standing of Australia and the RAN – seen at the July 2020 AUSMIN – is based in no small part upon the rapprochement enabled

by Andrew. His final rejoinder to country and Navy was to [2]:

*Stick with the Yanks, and pay our way – but this cannot now be done on a mere 2% of GDP!*

## AT WAR AND PEACE

In 1944, midshipman Robertson went to England for his sub-lieutenant's course, where, true to form, he received first-class certificates in seamanship, navigation, gunnery, torpedoes, signals, air operations and anti-submarine warfare. [3] During this time Andrew tells an interesting story, where we might have again lost him.

Andrew was messed at the St Dunstan's Home for the Blind (as it was then called), near Brighton, England. It was early evening, and he was having a bath on the upper floor. St Dunstan's was designed to help the partially sighted, with large windows providing 360 degrees of light into the building. The Air Raid siren sounded just as he got into the bath. Andrew jumped out, grabbed



his dressing gown and headed out. As he exited the bathroom, he saw a V1 doodle-bug cruise missile “coming straight for [him]”. He realised that he did not have time to get out of the building, so decided to return to his steel bath, where he reasoned “[he] would be the safest and most comfortable”. From the luxury of his bath, looking out above his “toes and taps”, he was able to follow the inbound V1. It narrowly missed the building, flying at level to Andrew past the right-hand windows. Andrew calmly completed his ablutions and got on with the rest of “his” WW2.

On November 16, 1952, Andrew was awarded the DSC. His citation reads:

*His calmness and disregard of personal danger when most effectively controlling the armament in a relatively prolonged action against an enemy coastal battery of four guns which hotly and accurately engaged HMAS ANZAC on 16 November 1952 was most notable.*

Vice Admiral Peter David Jones, AO, DSC RAN (Rtd) commenting on this action [3] notes:

ANZAC was at anchor protecting the garrison on Cho Do island when fired on by four 76mm guns hidden in caves more than 10 kilometres away.

“In this perilous situation, ANZAC quickly slipped her cable, leaving a buoy marking the anchor. Due to the nearby shoals, ANZAC was prevented from making a quick seaward escape,”

“Fortunately, in a spirited fight, ANZAC’s guns found the caves’ entrances and the smoke and dust partly obscured the destroyer from the artillery. A running duel ensued for 23 minutes with ANZAC firing 174 rounds with 50 from the enemy falling near the ship.”

As ANZAC’s gunnery officer, Robertson was an indispensable part of the ship’s many engagements with enemy forces, and for his service, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

Before retirement, while commanding HMAS ALBATROSS, then Captain Robertson initiated the establishment of the Australian Naval Aviation Museum, now the Fleet Air Arm Museum. A remarkable museum, today of world renown. During this time, he helped facilitate, from ALBATROSS, the evacuation of more than 350 local residents who had been trapped in their homes after floods inundated the Shoalhaven. Lessons learned, which were subsequently used in the mass transit of supplies into, and people out of, Darwin after cyclone Tracy in December 1974.

## BEYOND THE CALL

After serving as head of the Australian Defence Staff to the Australian High Commission in London, and being appointed Officer in the Order of Australia in the Queen’s Birthday honours list (1980) for “service to the Royal Australian Navy and the Defence Force”, Rear Admiral Robertson became Flag Officer Naval Support Command, Sydney. An appointment recognised by him being made a Freeman of the City of Sydney for “enhancing the bond between the Navy and the City”.

Coral Sea 75th Anniversary Veterans on board USS INTREPID with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.





In retirement, Andrew was the driving force behind the conception and creation of the Australian National Maritime Museum. He was named the inaugural honorary fellow in 2016.

In 2016, Admiral Robertson was the key instigator behind the wonderful Windjammer Sailors statue in Darling Harbour. Maritime museum director and chief executive Kevin Sumption said:

The council and staff of the museum are saddened by the loss of our great friend RADM Robertson. He was one of our earliest champions and we bear daily witness to his legacy in the work we do here. The Windjammers Sailors statue, in the museum's forecourt, was donated by RADM Robertson and is much loved by our visitors.

At the time of his death, Andrew was also the patron of the HMAS SYDNEY Association and *Training Ship Sydney* for naval cadets.

## SERVICE TO THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA AND "THE NAVY"

Rear Admiral Robertson served twenty-four years as a Federal Executive of the Navy League of Australia, 1987-2011, and thirty-eight years on the NLA, NSW Division Executive, 1982-2020. His contribution was significant – encouraging youngsters and championing critical thinking in Navy, even if unpopular in higher echelons. Specifically, Andrew supported restoring a RAN carrier capability realised in the two LHDs (HMAS CANBERRA (L02) and ADELAIDE (L01)), F-35B *Lightning II*, and nuclear propulsion for the *Attack-class* submarines.

The Windjammer Sailors Statue AMM.

Men like Andrew Robertson are truly unique, if not "indispensable". Paraphrased, the character Roy Batty in the 1982 genre-film *Blade Runner*, might have opined:

*I've seen things you people wouldn't believe. Carriers on fire in the darkness of the Coral Sea. I watched our boys return from the horrors of Japan and walked over ground zero at Hiroshima. All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain.*

Andrew's advice to colleagues and fellow members of the NLA and its different Divisions was always honest and forthright. In the words of Colonel Jessop (*A Few Good Men* (1992)):

Admiral Andrew Robertson could handle the truth. He could live in a world of steel walls and, in guarding those walls, save lives.

His encouragement was always sage and measured. While welcoming the return of Japan to the global stage, he also warned of their underlying philosophy. Noting that Japan had never truly atoned for their crimes during WW2. While building and looking toward the quadrilateral dialogue between Japan, Australia, the U.S., and India, Andrew also understood and shared China's concerns about Japan. In this, he was seeking both to defend Australia, and find ways of helping China identify a path "beyond Xi and his Princelings". Away from the harm they have done, even before COVID. Much to the anger and fear of numerous honourable Chinese people and diaspora communities in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Australia. Including the brave Doctors of Wuhan who died trying to get the truth out. ■

*We will Remember.*

**Rear-Admiral Andrew Robertson is survived by his wife Patricia (Pat) and children Angus, Jane, Julia and Bruce.**

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# ANDREW ROBERTSON: WE WILL REMEMBER

By Rear Admiral Andrew Robertson AO DSC RAN

**This compilation of recent papers by Rear Admiral Andrew Robertson AO DSC RAN, going back over the last five years, provides an insight into a remarkable Australian; his passion for the Royal Australian Navy; and his belief in the future of Australia. His life was one of vitality, vigour and values fought for in the crucible of world war. One of the last of the Great Generation (1915-1929), he believed also in the quality of our younger generations; investing his thinking and experience preparing them for the future. A future he saw as increasingly contested and as challenging as the one in which he grew up. While also a future he believed Australia had the capacity to envision, grasp and build.**

*The British Marquess of Halifax in 1694 responded to the question “What shall we do to be saved in this world?”:*

*“There is no answer but this, look to your moat”.*

## INTRODUCTION

Australia is so far from the international danger areas of East Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe so why should we worry? Here the sun shines, the economy is reasonable, the beaches delightful and sport reigns supreme. But technology, including huge changes in communications both in air transport and all forms of electronic communications, has shrunk our world.

*What was the main strategic requirement which had to be achieved before Allied armies could be launched and supported to bring about the final victory?*

Fundamentally, in both World Wars, the major requirement was to control needed ocean areas and trade routes to bring the resources of the British Empire – from Britain, Canada, the Indian Empire, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the many British Colonies, and finally the might of the United States to where these resources were needed.

This essential requirement involved the destruction or neutralisation of enemy maritime forces, whether surface warships, submarines, merchant raiders or aircraft, and the clearing of minefields. Indeed, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill once famously observed that:

*the only Battle in WW II which really scared him was the Battle of the Atlantic, for if lost the war would have been lost.*

The formation of the League of Nations after WW1 and the United Nations after WW2 brought hope that major wars were things of the past and that all problems between nations could be resolved peacefully. These hopes have not been fulfilled and major wars, even possibly including nuclear weapons, can no longer be ruled out, despite the utmost efforts of many nations to avoid such catastrophes.

The situation now in East Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe is one of high tension involving major world powers. This is no time for complacency, for in the event of a major war, Australia could easily be dragged in.



The Battle Area Action 1, 4 May 1942; Actions 2 and 3, 7 May and Action 4, 8 May (Main Battle).

## THE BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA

In 2018 (unlike in 2017 for the *Battle of the Coral Sea* – which, according to the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, speaking on board USS RONALD REAGAN (CVN 76), 19 Jul 2019, was *The Battle for Australia*), there was considerable prominence given to what was also termed The Battle for Australia. This seemed largely to concentrate on the New Guinea Campaign, air attacks on Darwin and other towns, and the submarine attack on Sydney.

But was this accurate or objective analysis of the reality and the major factors involved in the defence of this nation against the background of the overall world situation? Some would argue that there is a different perspective to be considered.

It is often forgotten that in both world wars success depended fundamentally on allied control of the main ocean lines of communication, for otherwise it would not have been possible for Britain to survive or the might of the British Empire and the United States and other allies to have been marshalled and deployed for the great land campaigns.

Our enemy strategy was to try to sever these sea lines of communication by a massive naval and air offensive using submarines, surface raiders (both disguised heavily-armed merchant ships and warships), mines, and, in WW2, aircraft. Losses at sea in both world wars were huge, but the combination of naval





HMAS AUSTRALIA and Task Group (TG) 17-3.

and air action, the holding of vital bases, and the great effort put into ship-building, and aircraft and innovative equipment production, enabled the allies to win at sea and the armies and air forces to be deployed for the war-winning land campaigns.

In our area attacks on shipping caused much concern and major effort was put into anti-submarine and raider operations by the RAN and, in WW2, the RAAF. The tragic loss of HMAS SYDNEY in 1941 with all 645 men (more than our losses of all servicemen in the Korean War (340 killed) and in Vietnam (540 killed), or on the terrible Kokoda Track (more than 600 killed)) often overshadows the great importance to the maritime war of the SYDNEY's destruction of the German raider *Kormoran*. For the *Kormoran* had already sunk 11 merchant ships and carried 400 mines for laying numerous minefields around our coasts.

The attack on Darwin by naval aircraft from 4 Japanese aircraft carriers – the same carriers, under the same Admiral, which had attacked Pearl Harbour – was mainly directed at shipping and maritime facilities such as fuel tanks and airfields. Similarly, the Japanese attack on Sydney Harbour was an attack on ships, as was the subsequent submarine campaign off the NSW coast. Around our coasts and approaches no less than 30 merchant ships were sunk with the loss of 645 allied seamen.

## STRATEGIC AMNESIA

In December 1941 Japan entered the war and her naval forces swept all before them, destroying the American Battleships at Pearl Harbour, the British Battleship HMS PRINCE OF WALES with the Battle Cruiser HMS REPULSE off Malaya and the Dutch/US/British/Australian naval forces in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia). The allies then lost any capability to control the ocean areas and the shipping routes in East and South East Asia, the Eastern Pacific and the Bay of Bengal. The fall of the Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, Hong Kong, the Dutch East Indies, northern New Guinea and Western Pacific Islands was inevitable as they could not be supported.

By April 1942 powerful Japanese naval forces under Admiral Inouye in his flagship at Rabaul were poised to strike south to cut off Australia from US support and prevent the use of our country as a base for a repost against Japan. The US decided that this move must be defeated and two aircraft carriers (USS LEXINGTON and YORKTOWN) with strong forces of cruisers, destroyers, submarines and support ships were sent to the South-West Pacific.

Australia provided the Heavy Cruiser HMAS AUSTRALIA, and the Light Cruiser HMAS HOBART under Rear Admiral Sir John Crace RN (an Australian from the Canberra area serving in the Royal Navy) and elements of the RAAF.

The RAN Coastwatcher organisation (covering not only the mainland but New Guinea and the islands of the Solomons) and the US/Australian code breaking unit in Melbourne proved to be of great importance in the coming major battles in the South West Pacific. Admiral William Halsey the US overall commander famously stated:

*The Coastwatchers saved Guadalcanal and Guadalcanal saved the Pacific.*

## BACK TO THE CORAL SEA

*Without a doubt, May 7, 1942, vicinity of Coral Sea, was the most confused battle area in world history [4]*

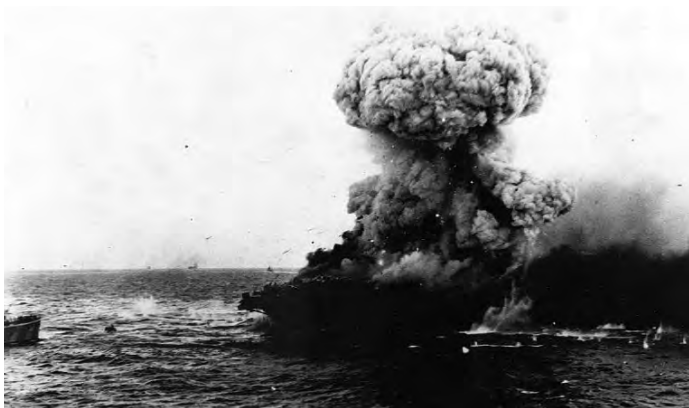
The Battle of the Coral Sea, the first in a new form of naval warfare between aircraft-carriers in which neither side sighted their opponents, took place from 4 to 8 May. The passage of weather fronts and much false reporting by reconnaissance aircraft on both sides caused confusion as each side tried to find the other at long range. Indeed, on one occasion a confused Japanese pilot tried to land on a US aircraft-carrier!

Whilst prognostications on the 'What-ifs' of war are always speculative and fraught with argument it is interesting to consider the possible situation had the Battle of the Coral Sea resulted in major defeat including the loss of both American aircraft-carriers. The Americans would then have had only two aircraft-carriers in the subsequent Battle of Midway against five or even six Japanese carriers. The East Coast of Australia would have been open to attack, not just by submarines, but by aircraft-carriers and battleships. Landings on our shores may even have occurred.

I was not present at the Battle but joined the flagship HMAS AUSTRALIA four months later just as the Japanese assault on Milne Bay was being defeated. One day while on patrol in the Coral Sea I was sent with an important message to Rear Admiral Sir Victor Crutchley VC DSC RN the Task Force commander who was in his secret Operations Room. I glanced at the chart showing estimated Japanese and Allied dispositions. I was horrified to see the huge Japanese Force including aircraft-carriers, battleships, heavy cruisers and submarines operating from Rabaul. I emerged from



Virginia Attack-class submarine - US Beyond the Fiscal Year 2017 Shipbuilding Plan for increasing the number of submarines.



A mushroom cloud rises after an explosion on board USS LEXINGTON (CV-2).

the room a very pale-faced Cadet Midshipman – thankful for the US Navy – for I was a poor swimmer.

In 2015, Admiral Robertson [1] argued:

*there are important lessons for our nation flowing from the naval campaigns. It would certainly seem that Australia should again, as it did for several decades after WWII, including when President Bush visited for the 50th anniversary, commemorate the Battle of the Coral Sea and the subsequent naval campaign – the real key to our defence in WWII.*

*The 75th Anniversary is not far off [two years] – a suitable occasion for a further Presidential visit and nation-wide commemorations.*

Editorial Note: In the event, the 75th Anniversary of The Battle of the Coral Sea was commemorated more by the U.S., on board USS INTREPID (CV-11) in New York, than it was in Australia. Admiral Andrew Robertson attended these events, which also provided an opportunity for then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, to meet President Donald Trump. The NAVY and the NLA provided enabling support by joining up the Australian Embassy in Washington with Admiral Andrew Robertson and approving copies of his 2015 paper on the Coral Sea to be run off for use at the event.

## ANCIENT HISTORY?

As occurred in the lead up to WW1 and WW2, the military dominance of the major democratic powers of the West is under challenge, particularly on the oceans. Huge resources world-wide are being devoted to maritime power, especially in submarines, aircraft (including aircraft carriers), amphibious forces, and all elements of sea control. This is particularly concerning to many western-orientated nations due to their dependence on sea and air communications and on ocean trade.

The seizure of much of the South China Sea by China in abrogation of the International Law of the Sea, together with tension between China and Japan over certain islands, and the bellicose attitude of nuclear-armed North Korea towards the USA, South Korea and Japan should be particularly concerning to Australia. But have the dangers been reflected in our decisions on our own defence?

Clearly much has been done in recent years to improve our defence capability both internally against terrorism and subversion and for some elements of external defence not to mention providing vital support to help with natural disasters both here and overseas, seemingly all too common these days. However, the maritime teeth

elements of the ADF in particular have to a degree been neglected by successive Governments.

Have we forgotten the devastation to our shipping in WW2 by the attacks of German merchant raider ships, minefields, Japanese (and one German) submarines and Japanese Aircraft-carriers (Darwin and the Coral Sea)?

True the Howard Government to its credit ordered two large landing ships (LHDs) and three guided-missile destroyers (AWDs) all now entering service or building.

## BEYOND THE 10 YEAR RULE

The Rudd Government also initially addressed part of the maritime problem in 2009 by announcing a plan to build 12 conventionally-powered submarines, 8 frigates, and 20 offshore Patrol Vessels. This plan, with an increase of one frigate, has again been announced by the present Government, along with a most sensible decision to revert to the long-suspended policy of continuous naval construction.

But 8 years have passed since 2009 and no orders for combatant ships have yet been placed! One wonders why designs were not developed and ship types selected in those 8 years, and at the huge waste of endless studies, without orders.

The first of the conventionally-powered new submarines is unlikely to be operational in less than maybe 14 years (in 2019) after the order has been placed. Clearly this decision is almost irrelevant to our defence for at least the next 14 years or so! Do we really think that our country couldn't face a major threat in that time scale?

Most Australians, if the problem was placed before them, would surely agree that we must not send our men and women submariners under the sea in anything less than the most efficient, effective, proven, reliable and survivable submarines we can get. That means obtaining nuclear powered boats from the U.S., Britain, or France, as soon as possible.

They would, of course, give us arguably the most effective deterrent to an attack in any serious war involving us that we could have.

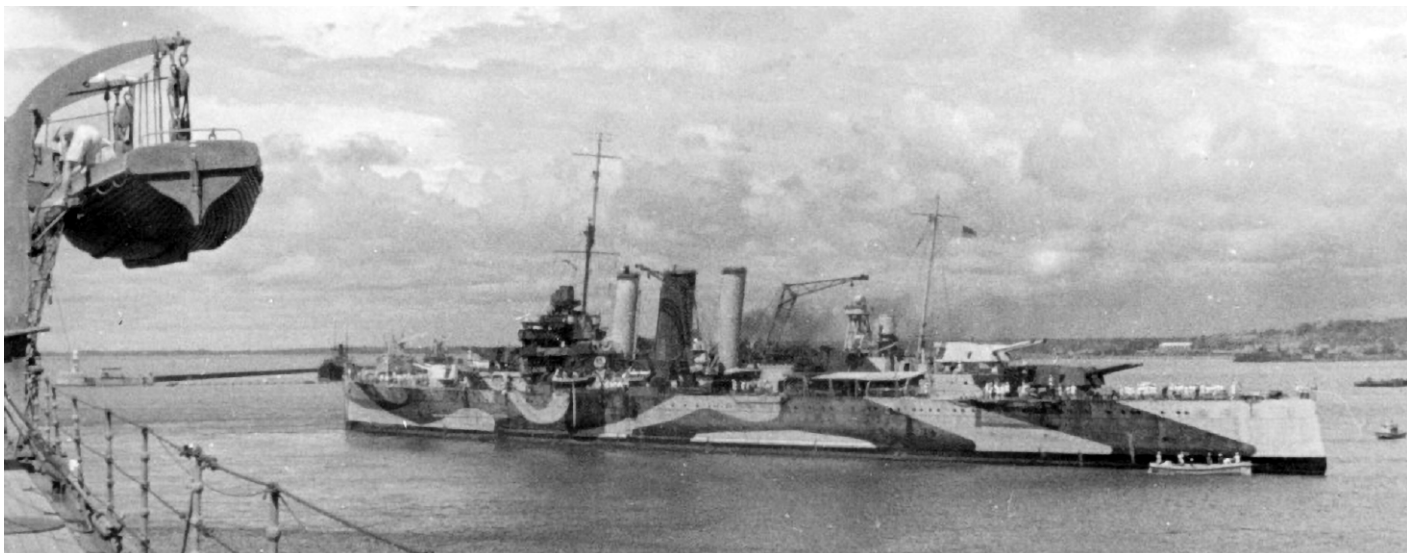
The current Defence programme calls for 9 frigates to replace our present 8 ANZAC class in many years' time. But we now have 5 largely unarmed huge ships (3 Landing Ships and 2 support tankers/store vessels) which could often be operating independently. In any serious war involving Australia, our tiny force of frigates/destroyers would be hard-pressed to provide a reasonable level of defence (together with the RAAF) for all these ships as well as dealing with the myriad of other tasks; including defending other vital convoys, our 70 odd port areas, offshore oil and gas installations, vital merchant shipping, etc.

## MORAL TO THE PHYSICAL, IS AS THREE IS TO ONE

Psychology and maintaining the moral high ground in war is of the greatest importance. For instance, the ghastly defeats of Gallipoli and Dunkirk were turned into national symbols for unity and the will to win, whereas other very successful actions received little public recognition or historical emphasis, and are thus largely unknown.

The magnificent performance of our soldiers on the Kokoda Track under appalling conditions is seared into the nation's memory. It was of great psychological importance and uplifted spirits, but its strategic importance in the defence of Australia, compared with





HMAS AUSTRALIA (II) Wearing her Disruptive Camouflage Scheme circa 1943.

other important events, is questionable. Had the Japanese taken Port Moresby it would have been a considerable setback for the Allies, especially the loss of the most important air bases, and a blow to morale. However, it would not have been possible to hump the fuel, bombs, ammunition, and supplies needed through the mountains and mud of the Kokoda Track.

It is arguable that the first defeat of the Japanese at the eastern tip of New Guinea at Milne Bay and the superb performance of our army and air force in holding that bay was of much greater strategic value. For had the Japanese won that battle they would have been able to control one of the major entrances into the Coral Sea. As it was, Milne Bay was developed into a major base for the subsequent seizures of islands and the campaign up the New Guinea coast and eventually to the Philippines.

All this was only possible through allied control of the Coral Sea, for without the safe passage of shipping none of these campaigns would have been possible and the east coast of Australia would have been open to attack by the Japanese Fleet.

## THE KEYS TO THE BAYS & PENINSULAR

*And what were the keys to controlling the Coral Sea?*

In his official report to the Secretary of the U.S. Navy on the war in the Pacific, Fleet Admiral Ernest King, the Command in Chief U.S. Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations, stated:

From the outset of war, it had been evident that the protection of our lines of communication to Australia and New Zealand represented a "must". With the advance of the Japanese in that direction, it was therefore necessary to plan and execute operations that would stop them.

Early in April 1942, the Japanese had overrun the island of Tulagi in the Solomon Islands and been attacked by American carrier aircraft. This was followed by the Battle of the Coral Sea, the historic first occasion of a battle between aircraft-carriers (mobile airfields) in history, when the opposing fleets never sighted one another. The powerful American carriers operated against the main Japanese carrier force while a combined task force of American and Australian cruisers and destroyers under the command of Rear Admiral Grace of the Royal Navy (also an Australian) was despatched south of New Guinea, to block a Japanese invasion fleet heading for Port Moresby.

The American's lost the world's largest carrier – USS LEXINGTON – a destroyer, and a tanker. The carrier USS YORKTOWN was damaged. The Japanese lost the small carrier SHOHO while the carrier SHIKAKU was badly damaged. The Australian/American task for including the cruisers HMAS AUSTRALIA and HOBART was attacked by Japanese aircraft (and then by U.S. Aircraft operating from Queensland!), but no ships were hit and the route to Port Moresby remained barred.

While suffering heavier losses, it was a strategic victory for the allies, for the Japanese were forced to withdraw and never again attempted to enter the Coral Sea in force. This not only enabled the defence of New Guinea but removed the possibility of a Japanese assault on our east coast.

The victory of the USN, with some help from our Navy and Air Force, in the Coral Sea and the Solomon's ensured the safety of Australia and its development as a major base. Together with the Battle of Midway and the most successful U.S. and Royal Navy submarine campaigns, it so weakened the Japanese fleet that allies could move steadily to the offensive and eventually drive to the very shores of Japan.

It is to be hoped that this perspective will receive some attention as the nation remembers *The Battle of Australia* [in 2018].

## FORCE MAJEURE ET CAS FORTUIT?

*The most fundamental welfare is the security of our people.*

The Naval force must be increased, and soon. At least two assembly ship-yards will be needed for timely construction. And should we not be equipping at least one of our Landing Ships with the short take off/vertical landing version the RAAF's new *Lightning II* fighter (the F35B), for which these ships were designed? Out of effective 24-hour cover of RAAF bases this would provide an extra measure of defence for the fleet and embarked ADF as well as some modest air support for troops in remote areas.

There are of course deficiencies in other areas in our small ADF and its support organisations which must be addressed. Not least would seem to be the need to increase greatly the size of our reserve army, which would have many tasks in a threat situation.

Expensive? Of course, but there will be spin-offs for industry,



Ships on Fire following the attack on Darwin 19 Feb 1942.

employment, national development, workforce skills, taxation etc. And Australia will have a much more effective international voice and be a more valuable friend and ally.

A wealthy, advanced, but exposed island nation which expends some 35% of its annual budget on health and social security, but only approaching 2% of its GDP on Defence would seem to be running an unacceptable risk in this rapidly changing unstable world.

The time has come for our nation to lift its defence to a new level, particularly in all areas of maritime defence. This will need strong leadership, explanation to our people, bi-partisan support, resources and drive at all levels involved.

One would expect that no Government (or indeed opposition) would wish to be remembered in history as the Government or opposition that, having seen the warning signs, did little to prepare for a dangerous future. And we have a huge wide

## FUTURE DESIGNS?

*Stick with the Yanks, and pay our way – but this cannot now be done on a mere 2% of GDP!*

As to the future, geography to a large extent controls the possibilities for military strategy, and doesn't change. Both world wars would seem to hold major lessons in this regard. Since 1788, as an island – albeit a large one – we have depended on the control of the ocean's by Britain's Royal Navy, under whose shield we were able to explore, develop, and unite as one nation. Since 1942, we have depended largely on the might of the United States and particularly its most powerful navy.

But the world is changing. Within a few decades the U.S. may no longer be the only super-power. Wars will still take place and there is now a major increase of military power in Asia, particularly maritime. While clearly in recent years emphasis has been on our contributions overseas in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other hot

spots, many would caution that we should now further build up our maritime capability, in all its elements, as part of our national insurance.

In the meantime, perhaps still of relevance and interest to a modern island nation, over 95% of whose people live within missile range of the sea, is the famous Greek historian Thucydides' report of the speech of the officials of the island of Corcyra (Corfu) to the Athenians in 433 BC:

*And then it is quite a different matter for you if you reject alliance with a naval power than if you do the same with a land power. Your aim should no doubt be, if it were possible, to prevent anyone else having a navy at all: the next best thing is to have on your side the strongest navy that there is.*

Today many would argue that for islands, though technology has altered weapons, tactics and capabilities, little needs changing in this philosophy – except to add “and Air Force”. ■



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# AUSTRALIA – PYRRHIC DEFEAT OR CRITICAL JUNCTURE? PART I

By Dr Neil Baird

This article arose from recent meetings between the author Dr Neil Baird and a number of distinguished colleagues, with over 100 years' experience in the maritime industry, media, Government, Defence, and the naval and merchant marines. The author also brings over 40 years' experience of the maritime industry, specifically from industrial, design and investigative perspectives. This paper is constructed from a series of interviews, over a number of months. Individual names and those of specific organisations are not included.

## INTRODUCTION

**Neil:** Thank you for agreeing to take part in this discussion. Perhaps you could outline the challenges you believe Australia is facing at the moment?

The lack of capacity not capability is critical. It was brought home by the recent death of Admiral Andrew Robertson AO DSC RAN (Rtd) and Mr John Strang AO (in 2016). Both were national treasures, brought up in the empirical world of hard knocks. They understood Industry and Admiralty as it was. But that is also part of the problem. They would not be able to recognise Defence today, or the way in which it is behaving.

**Neil:** Can you explain what you mean?

When Andrew and John were in their prime (1965-1989), there was a core knowledge of what Navy was and how Institutional Power was exercised, in war and in peace. That has gone.

For example, as covered in *The NAVY*, what exactly is the Naval Shipbuilding Institute and Naval Shipbuilding College?

Who gave authority for / approved the use of "Naval" in their titles?

This is a strategic question of the utmost importance, concerning the exercising of Institutional Power. In Andrew and John's Day, Navy would have determined the use of "Naval", as in the fight to have the Australian Naval Institute recognised.

My guess is that it was the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PMC) Office, not Navy, Defence, or even the Minister of Defence.

Does Navy own Navy anymore?

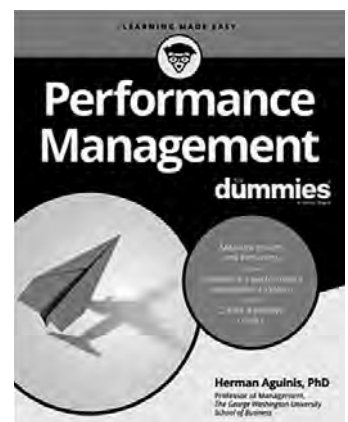
I concur, returning to capacity, most maritime and Defence workforces today have an average age in their mid-50s. Many will be retiring in the next ten years and there is simply no trained strength coming on behind. These (largely male) workforces undertook their apprenticeships and engineering internships in the late-1970s and mid-1980s. They are mostly Gens X and Y. In the 1990s, through the perverse application of Performance Management; the expansion of Higher Education; and the removal of apprenticeship and cadetship schemes, we also removed our empirical base?

## ON EDUCATION

**Neil:** Are you saying that what was undertaken in the 1980s and 1990s was a bad thing – we should not have expanded Higher Education?



Offices of Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (Canberra).



Performance Management for Dummies eBook by Dr Herman Aguinis.

To an extent Yes – particularly when you consider the collapse in standing of Australian Universities, and their exposure to the Chinese "Dollar". They are simply no longer sustainable or affordable by tax payers and students alike. They do not provide a service for Australians and compete poorly against even top tier Chinese universities.

I agree. The problem is that the degrees, even from those who claim graduates are "job ready", are not providing what is needed. First degrees are far too long, and too refined – not sufficiently attached to industry. The old Polytechnic scheme in the UK used to work well, not dissimilar to German Technical universities. But that was done away with in the 1990s, when they moved from being first rate Polys to fourth tier universities. Much the same thing happened here with the "Dawkins Plan" in the early nineties.

From an Industry perspective, most first degrees with a gap year mean that graduates are joining the workforce in their mid-20s. This is far too late. They are formed adults by this stage – and the problem is in the forming. They simply do not know how to behave or fit in the workforce. We, Industry and Defence, need them in their teens so we can form and recruit them to the existential nature of being an engineer, medical doctor and serving as a front-line worker, sailor, soldier, or aircrew.

**Neil:** I understand that our Ambassador to the UN in Geneva was asked, in 2017, "how do graduates join DFAT?"



Chef d'État-Major de la Marine Amiral Christophe Prazuck.

**He responded “a Masters plus”. When pushed, he said “everyone now has a first degree, so the starting point is a Masters – quite frankly, we are more interested in the plus”.**

Precisely. We have to remember that in the 1990s, when there were far fewer graduates, DFAT had 200 graduate internships starting every year. Now it is a mere handful. They simply cannot grow their people anymore. The same crisis of average age in the mid-50s is confronting DFAT. A vibrant organisation needs an average age in the mid-40s (Navies in their late twenties), otherwise they are dying on their feet.

It is the same in Industry. The “plus” is what counts. But how do our folk get the plus now there are so few proper apprenticeships and internships? The Navy has much to offer since it can provide the “plus”. But it needs an average age at HMAS CRESWELL in the late-teens. ADFA was useful but no longer so. The first degree should be no more than two years (as it is for some UK Private Universities). The emphasis should be on completing much of it on line (as per the University of New England degree), and then having a mid-20s bonus when Navy/Defence/Industry will sponsor a full time, face-to-face Masters. That would be attractive. Moreover, by that time non-engineers will have a better idea what they want to read.

For engineers, make it two-years plus a year in the field. Then a Full Time Masters when they have completed their applications courses and first tour as an Assistant Engineering Officer. By the time they go back as a Deputy for their Charge qualification, they will have a body of maritime experience and qualifications behind them.

My experience is many young engineers enjoy academe but do not want to get their feet wet and leave on completion of degree. It will sort the wheat from the chaff. They need the Masters and Charge

qualification to gain professional recognition and chartered status in any case.

We also need to allow many more engineer technicians entry as engineering officers, with a degree path open to them.

## PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

**Neil: What was the problem with Performance Management – surely, we needed to improve productivity after the disaster of the 1970s?**

The point about Performance Management was that it was primarily directed at reducing inflation by improving productivity. That was at a time when Inflation had become the number one enemy – that monetary policy was designed to defeat. As we know, today, Inflation in the economy is no bad thing – a band between 2.5 and 4.5% is actually a healthy indicator that the market economy is working. Since the GFC, most central banks have been chasing that figure – and generally falling well below.

**Neil: Agreed, but that does not make Performance Management (PeMa) a bad thing.**

The problem with PeMa is that it concentrates on optimising the current product and ignores, or indeed removes, any other possible or indeed plausible designs. So, you end up largely invoking Augustine and Pugh's Laws, whereby with Defence Cost Inflation – a Fleet (any Fleet) – halves in size every twenty-five years. [1]

It's actually worse than that. We have a really good example discussed in *The NAVY* regarding the FFG-7 [2]. The current range of Frigates and Destroyers are all products of that original design – now 50 years old. Think about it. The USN had 60 FFG-7s. Today they will be lucky to have 15 FFG (X), even adjusted for historical inflation.

I concur and the ships are not working. They are no longer fitted to the crews, as the HELGE INGSTAD sinking revealed. [3] That showed that, not only are the ships no longer fit for purpose, but neither are the crews. They were too few to save the ship – and the ship too big for the crew to save it.

You may recall that at the 2019 Sea Power Conference – I wonder when we will see another? – the French Chief of Navy (Chef d'État-Major de la Marine) Admiral Christophe Prazuck MN, said something like:

[He] could no longer crew his ships on a rectangular basis – “they cannot all be engineers and technicians, available just in time”. Because “ils ne sont pas disponibles, jamais à temps (they are not available, never on time)”.

We need to return “to a triangular shape where we grow our Navy and sailors again from bottom to top (de bas en haut) ...I am fighting to recruit and restore crew numbers [in our ships], so we can grow the French Navy”.

## ACCOUNTANCY CONSULTANCY COMPANIES

**Neil: Are you suggesting Lean crewing was wrong?**

Yes. You have to look at Lean (and Agile), they all derive from and are part of Performance Management.

What occurred was that savings were achieved by reducing crew sizes – not changing ship designs. Ask any public servant or sailor “what a Review is”? They will tell you “more for less” – where, in





Attack-class Submarines (Image Navy).

Defence and the Public Service, the “less” is always at the expense of the people or crew. So, assets were sweated – which, in reality, meant stripping assets and knowledge from organisations. Since knowledge is vested in the crews and crewing of our ships [and industry and the Public Service] – which was what Admiral Prazuck was getting at with his “triangular growth model”.

Then they...

**Neil: Who do you mean by “they”?**

The [Accountancy Consultancy Companies [ACC] – names withheld]. They hold the power and determine the designs. They set these fixed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) through their metrication industry that tells you precisely where you were, but not where you are going. It is a tyranny. [4] As the old saying goes “you cannot fatten the cow by measuring the cow”. But that is all we are doing.

Precisely – furthermore no one is allowed to question the KPIs. To do so is professional suicide – and the consultants that run Defence will simply get their pet Public Servants to fire you on a day’s notice.

Or buy you out if you are APS or ADF by offering a lucrative position – which is the same thing.

## PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET OFFICE

**Neil: You mentioned the Prime Minister and Cabinet Office. Surely that is a good?**

You need to remember that PMC under John Howard had about a dozen folk – 4 of them DSTO scientists. They could actually fit on a large sofa. Today there are 1300 or more...

**Neil: What is the problem – I would have thought this makes for better Government?**

Yes. The 1300 are mostly not Public Servants – and there are still the same number of scientists as there were during John Howard’s time.

**Neil: Well that must be good value for money (VfM)...**

The problem is that many of the 1300 are essentially Special Political Advisers [SPADs] drawn from particular [named] Management Consultants [MCs] “on a volunteer basis”. So yes, that is good VfM, as you might say – since the tax payer is not paying.

I don’t agree. There is no such thing as a free lunch. These SPADs have essentially duplicated all Departments of State. In effect, Ministers report to – and are scared of PMC – and PMC then reports to the Prime Minister, and tells the PM what to say and how to direct

the Ministers. This is not Cabinet government but government by dictat of a non-elected elite. The model they are selling is just the latest version of PeMa, that has already done so much harm. Of course, by displacing Ministers and Public Servants, they [non-accountably] influence all key decisions.

From that perspective, you have to look at the politicians. Thirty years ago, they came from a cross-section of society (Blue Collar (Tradies), Farmers, Industry, Academics, Lawyers (Barristers) of course, White Collar, Defence Force) and their average tour in Parliament was six years – or 2 Parliaments. Today they are largely consultants, PR/marketing gurus, solicitors (not Barristers), financial advisers and unionists – all with degrees. This managerial elite represents, at most, 20% of Australian Society and makes up two-thirds of all MPs. They are now MPs for 18 years, on average, once elected – or six Parliaments. 18 years is a profession.

I concur. Look Scott Morrison is doing a fine job but consider his nickname “Scotty from Marketing”. He simply has not the experience of running a manufacturing company or even being a local councillor in the thick of it. What does he do? He reaches out to the same [named] MC. And that same [named] MC recruits these pollies as advisers during their furlough years – when not in Government.

As an aside, what happened in the UK in 2019 is interesting. For the first time in almost 40 years they have restored thematic variety – with a huge influx of new Northern MPs, many with Blue Collar working experience. Ironical that the Conservatives are now the home of the artisan and the blue-collar worker. The elites have all joined the Labour Party...

## ON DEFENCE

**Neil: I think we are getting a little off track. What has this got to do with Defence, Industry, Navy and government?**

A Lot.

**Neil: Please explain.**

Well consider the three major programmes underway. The new *Attack-class* submarines; the *Hunter-class* programme and the projected three-fold increase in Guided Weapons over the next decade. Much of it for Army.

### Attack-Class

Look the *Attack-class* is a basket case. That is not the fault of the two Primes [NAVAL GROUP and Lockheed Martin Australia] – but of Defence acquisition incompetency and Political Pork-barrelling. The Primes have brought some of their best people and products to bear. It is a classic example of an incorrectly Optimised Design Space (ODS) – the ultimate outcome of Performance Management.

A nuclear-powered submarine of the type should, by Basic Mass Empty (BME) costing [3,5] at the same tonnage cost about \$4Billion to build. In other words, \$50Billion for twelve, give or take. That submarine, with its tear-drop-hull, would work in today’s contested environment. But we have stripped out the nuclear plant, inserted some form of Diesel, maintained the same hull shape, and demanded all the boats are built in Australia. The result? As projected by *The NAVY* and others as far back as 2016, [3] the cost of build (alone) will be closer to \$89B, or almost seven-and-a-half billion dollars per submarine. That is not VfM.

I agree. Consider the timescale, the first submarine will not be



Hunter-class Frigate (Image BAE Systems).

operational until about 2035, and the last will de-commission in the 2080s. This is all far too late. Australia needs the capacity, today – now – if they are going to be of any value to us at all.

That is before we consider the very real risk of trying to run on the *Collins-class* well beyond their design-lives. Where is the steel that allows for that? The Life of Type Extension is a dangerous illusion that will put sailors and our Deterrence capability at great risk.

The only way we could have got this right is probably by working with NAVAL GROUP and allowing the first two to be built in the 2020s from French yards.

**Neil: why not all of them and all nukes?**

Yes, and that would have obviated the fundamental design flaw that requires us to look at the hull shape and utility designs matched to diesels rather than nuclear that Australia can afford to use through new modular, conceptualised designs, today.

## Hunter-Class

**Neil: That addresses the *Attack-class* for the time being – but what is wrong with the *Hunter-class*?**

I think we all agree that the *Hunter-class*, Type 26, Global Combat Ship is the best design available...

**Neil: The pity is the US did not buy it for their FFG(X).**

Agreed. However, it is still a derivative by-optimised-design of the FFG-7. Hence its cost-per-ship. Its design is best matched to the late 1990s, and early 2000s – but not the 21st Century. We simply need many more of these ships – better matched to the crews that will serve in them. As was stated in a recent *The NAVY* paper [2]:

we have to be able to afford to lose the ships politically, industrially, militarily, and economically – the old DIME – if we are going to use them.

**Neil: Can Australia do better?**

Yes, by opening up to industry; applying the conceptual design space [rather than the ODS]; stripping out incompetent Defence managers; and doing things differently. Australia builds ships – but most of our shipbuilders have walked away from Defence because of the appalling way they have been treated. Their ideas plagiarised by egregious public servants and never attributed. [Examples were cited].

Agreed, we have to ask ourselves “what would we do if we were at

war, and do it”. Waiting 10-15 years for a ship is a nonsense. Imagine it was 1940 and we said your next submarine would be available in 1955. Madness.

Look at the fire on board USS BONHOMME RICHARD. The design of this class is almost 50-year's old. The BONHOMME RICHARD is twenty-five years old. She is at the end of her design-life – or should be. She should have been sold off at 15-20 years and replaced with a new design. We could then have bought her on the cheap, rather than our LHDs [HMA Ships CANBERRA and ADELAIDE].

Yes, and Navy would be operating F-35B *Lightning II* today, fully interoperable with the USN...

Consider the trauma the USN is now going through – a vital LHD down, and unable to replace it for years. Think about the fire on the PLAN Type 075 *Yushen-class* LHD. The Chinese had four ships in build for launching in the next two years, and simply brought forward the second-of-class and launched her. They will hardly miss a beat.

Yup – and what about the Type 055 Destroyer (*Renhai-class* Cruiser)? That is going to be a real game-changer. And we have nothing like the capability and numbers available to match it.

## Guided Weapons

**Neil: You mentioned Guided Weapons?**

This is probably the worst example. You have to recognised that the separation of guided from weapons and GW from Explosives Ordnance and GWEO from combat logistics under separate business units is entirely artificial. They have to be treated under the same capability-life-cycle model, from end-to-end. For example, in the next five years, even small arms ammunition will have some form of guidance, through nanotechnology and a combination of AI.

The Chiefs [of Defence] apparently refused to consider the GW outsourcing model – and asked [a Defence Group] to consider again. This was undertaken formally with industry, and industry was asked to consider alternative models. They also came up with a detailed model for defining Sovereign Capability in the GWEO field. This research showed that outsourcing not only stripped knowledge and asset from Commonwealth and reduced resource mobility (and Sovereign Capability) – but cost more.

**Neil: What, more than Industry?**

Yes. The problem is that the APS has done away with its scientists, engineers and blue-collar workforce – “we are all managers now”. So many of these outsourcing organisations are “body-shoppers”; not engineering companies. And they work with the same [ACCs] who supply the SPADs and contractors to Defence – because of the shortage and problems recruiting APS. It costs up to \$100,000 a year more, per outsourced engineer/technician, than a Public Servant or ET (Navy Engineering Technician).

But of course, this goes against the outsourcing mantra that has done so much damage over the past thirty years, along with PeMa.

Precisely. Industry came forward with innovative ways of bundling and disaggregating risks under a GWEO-Log umbrella; including the value-set for developing such a working relationship within a capitalised Joint Venture structure – allowing for profit to be generated and in-kind for Defence. So, for example, Commonwealth could re-start essential engineering and technician apprenticeship and cadetship schemes that would grow capacity for all.





July 2017 Hypersonic Glider launched from Woomera (US DoD, RAAF and Boeing).

I have long thought of the need to recognise the “Loyal Contractor” and indeed the loyalty and desire of Defence Companies to get back to designing, engineering and building...

#### Neil: So what happened?

Christmas. The fact of the matter is that there is little value added by Defence, and APS knows that. They can only maintain some pretence of control provided they keep GW, EO and Logistics divided – all separated from Industry and Finance. For example, going through Foreign Military Sales in the U.S. can take up to three years. Half of which is taken-up in Canberra. Where is the added value there? Again, a bit like saying in 1940 you can have your Lend-Lease Destroyers in 1943. By which time the Battle for Australia is lost.

The study also showed that a joint venture partnering arrangement between Defence, Finance, and the Primes could do the job more efficiently and effectively – even to the point of restoring a GWEOLog build Sovereign Capability in Australia.

#### Neil: And then what?

Senior APS were being asked to vote for Christmas. Despite going out to Industry through all the approved protocols to answer an agreed set of questions requested for information:

- first, the questions were changed – so that only the outsourcing model was apparently ever asked for;
- when that did not work, [they] removed a key recommendation, so that any mention of a Joint Venture partnering enterprise was deleted;
- when that did not work, [they] sacked the research team and ordered the report be re-written.

#### Neil: would that not be unlawful?

Maybe not unlawful, but certainly untruthful, unethical, immoral and outside normal contracting requirements set by government probity rules and One Defence. [6] The [Defence Group] ended up treating senior Reservists as contractors “letting them go” on a day’s notice when they would not comply with their orders – apparently even seeking to strip them of their IDs and access to Defence bases. However, the orders to change the report and recommendations may have been unlawful...

In which case it is lawful to refuse them. There should be a Senate Enquiry or Royal Commission – did no one ask?

Of course, there should be – but then [these] public servants win again. There were also senior military officers involved, which raises questions as to their competency and integrity to lead complex programs and people. However, none of this gets us to the point of re-capitalising our people and mobilising Industry and Commonwealth for what lies ahead.

It will come out in the wash – there are some good people out there. Notably in Industry, but also in Defence and APS. We have to put our people, the Workforce (our Sailors and Crews), Commonwealth, Government, Industry and Defence first. That is what the project loyally did and the [Defence Group] / APS failed to do.

## CONCLUSIONS

Neil: Thank you for your perspectives.

This confirms much of what I have thought for a long while. We have not touched on Quantum, AI and nanotechnology – fields in which Australia leads. Perhaps another day? We also need to consider IR, commercial and autonomous vessels, research – and what I have termed “optionally crewed ships and submarines”. For example:

Could the *Attack-class* be made into a UUV for specific missions? And how would this change our designs today, for tomorrow?

The tyranny of distance in our use and designs for our people – has also been one of Australia’s great strengths. It takes leadership.

I share the concerns of the interviewees. As Einstein is alleged to have said:

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.

If that is the case then, given COVID-19 and the need to revitalise and capitalise our economy, the design-models discussed in this paper are right, right now! Otherwise we are going to end up fighting a Communist Economy with a COVID-nationalised economy. A sure path to defeat.

We have to break the shackles of an immoral and alien Canberra and re-design our own Sovereignty. Australia can do this – and there are signs that politicians and industry are looking for ways to break out. ■

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## ARSON: USS BONHOMME RICHARD & USS MIAMI

There is growing evidence that the fire that swept through USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6) in July 2020 was started by an unnamed sailor (Sep 2020). Damage on-board the ship appears extensive, including to the flight-deck, island infrastructure, masts, antennae, and operations room – although not impacting the engine room and auxiliary power plants.

The estimated cost of build (in the mid-1990s) was \$1Billion. Replacement costs in 2020 – noting lack of capacity in U.S. Navy Yards – is approximately \$5.7B (for an America-class LHA).

Cost assessments are currently being undertaken – and are thought to be in the region of \$4B noting the need to cut away whole parts of the ship and re-build horizontally, from 4 deck upwards. Prefabrication in modern ship-yards – not unlike building office blocks – means assembling hulls vertically. Hulls are rotated and worked on, from bottom to top, until being laid on the keel for assembly.

One of the major shortfalls of U.S. shipbuilding is that many of its yards are outdated and inefficient, when compared to Chinese, Korean, Japanese and European civil and military shipyards.

The USN is in an unenviable position. It is short of LHAs – to make up the gap of three nuclear-powered aircraft carriers – the wait-time for replacements is too long and, although the costs of replacing the BONHOMME RICHARD may be similar to repairing it – repairs may be made sooner.

In a potentially equivalent incident, USS MIAMI (SSN-755, launched in 1988), while undergoing a 20-month refit, suffered a fire causing \$650M in damages – with repairs estimated at \$1B. A shipyard worker was subsequently arrested, convicted of arson and sentenced to 17-years imprisonment, and a \$575M dollar reparation fine.

Although metallurgists found no major damage to the hull and the Navy determined it was cost-effective to repair the submarine – subsequent mandatory budget cuts (sequestration) led to the boat being de-commissioned in 2015. She will ultimately be replaced by a \$4B submarine.

Note: the difference in costs of new-build between the LHA and SSN is indicative of Defence Cost Inflation. In the case of the *Virginia-class*, the tonnage has increased by 25% over the *Los Angeles-class*, and because of R&D investment in submarines, Basic Mass Empty costs are in line with historical inflation. This is not the case for LHD and LHA program costs, see Blake. [1]

## GREENWICH STATION

Following yet another review – the Integrated Defence and Security Review – the Royal Navy is to have its future ASW Frigate force of 13 ships – currently eight Type-26 and five Type-31 Frigates – cut to “single figures”. Potentially to only four Type-26s (completing with HMS BIRMINGHAM) and five Type-31s. A naval-source was quoted as calling this:

*a national embarrassment for a maritime nation.*

While a Defence industry source – from one of the British Primes – stated:

*You might as well start claiming that you're going to defend Great Britain with a bunch of dugout canoes.*

The state of Britain's once illustrious Royal Navy and its Armed Forces, in general, has long been a concern to its Commonwealth, U.S., and NATO Allies. This is becoming more pressing, now that it appears as if Canada and Australia – with 9 and 15 Global Combat Ships respectively – will in effect be required to hold the Type-26 in class.

Alternative City-of-London-costed, maritime industry designs – including crewing – have been submitted to the British Admiralty, since at least 2008. They have generally been dismissed by Government, Admiralty and Public Servants unable to distinguish between cost and value, efficiency and effectiveness. [2]

The UK has ten standing maritime commitments, including in the Middle East, in the Caribbean, its nuclear Deterrence, NATO and internationally. Applying the Doenitz-cycle, this requires 40 Frigates (FF) and Destroyers (DD) – 26 FF plus 16 DD – in addition to about 13 Auxiliary Oilers / Replenishment ships (AORs). Geography has not changed...Currently, due to crewing shortages – few want to join the RN anymore following the 2010-2012 cuts – and problems with the Type-45s (now being put right), the RN can sustain about 11 (of thirteen) Frigates and 4 (of six) Destroyers. In broad terms, it can cover 37.5% of its international maritime commitments. For example, the recent need for NATO to reactively patrol UK home waters for the RN, during a recent Russian Navy incursion. Lack of escorts also puts in doubt the UK's ability to safely deploy HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH (R08) to the Far East in 2021 with its required escorts. The RN FF/DD force can provide less than a third of the cover required.

Dominic Cummings, the PM's Chief Adviser, may be onto something if he was pushing the MOD to come up with politically, economically, industrially and militarily affordable designs and solutions (that UK can afford to use (and lose)) – which are

available, today. [2] This is not the case – according to an informed source:

*Mr Cummings [doesn't] understands the bare facts...he doesn't understand what these decisions mean and how they are interpreted by our adversaries and enemies [and Allies, alike].*

In a separate indication of how institutionally powerless the UK MOD has become – without going to wider industry or taking into account other costed designs or seeking viable commercial inputs – its procurement agency announced in August a shot-gun \$2.75 bid for three Fleet Solid Support (FSS) ships to be built in UK yards. All necessary to support the Carrier Battle Group.

The name of the Review – Integrated Defence and Security – is telling. Integrated comes at a cost in terms of time and money and is used to achieve hi-fidelity control over resources. It drives out alternatives and removes thinking and adaptation from the force. Mixing Defence and Security is also problematic – since the outcome is pre-ordained as more privatisation, i.e. integrated-control (through contractorization and securitisation). Lord West, a former First Sea Lord (Chief of UK RN), commented:

*The alliances that are so important to our security consist of countries that have relied on our military contribution, which is faltering. ■*



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USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6) On Fire in San Diego, CA, July 2020 (Image Defense News).





## VIEWPOINT: THE SALVORS' LIFEBLOOD

By: Michael Grey, Lloyds List

THEY constitute an emergency service, which people who operate ships probably don't think about too often, but are very glad indeed that they are there when they need them. Professional salvors are finding life quite tough these days as there are fewer casualties that require their specialised skills, but ironically they are needed as much as they ever were, in a world that is pathologically intolerant to shipwreck and will demand that even if it is not possible to save a ship, somebody better clean up the mess and take it all away.

The International Salvage Union (ISU), which represents most of these professional specialist operators, has been "re-positioning" itself to reflect the reality of a sector which is firmly part of risk mitigation. You might think of the salvor these days as less of the fireman and more of the provider of specialist expertise that will contain the conflagration and save lives, property and the environment.

Speaking earlier this month, the new ISU president Richard Janssen suggested the sector needed to get closer to owners and insurers in a proactive fashion, rather than being around only when the emergency occurs. It would be nice to think that this policy will be enthusiastically taken up by ship operators and their underwriters as it obviously makes sense. Having an experienced salvor take a look at a new ship design, for instance, would make very good sense, with their ability to ask "what if..." and "how it can be made more salvageable, should everything go pear-shaped?"

### INNOVATION

If you look back through the history of salvage you can see some quite astonishing innovating that goes on whenever a salvor goes into action. How do you get a fully laden capesize off the rocks, with most of its compartments open to the sea, on an exposed coast in filthy weather? Nobody thought it possible until a salvor came up with the idea of emptying the ship using slurry pumps and lightening it sufficiently to be hauled off, repaired and returned to service.

How do you salvage a laden VLCC aground in one of the world's most remote places —the Strait of Magellan?

How do you retrieve the world's biggest submarine, sunk with its crew, nuclear reactors and goodness-knows what unstable weaponry, from the bottom of the Arctic seas?

There is one of the world's biggest cruise



HMS ENTERPRISE enters Beirut Harbour August 2020 (Image RN).

ships lying on its side off an Italian resort and everyone wants it taken away. How can it be done?

### CONTAINERSHIP FIRES

There is the ongoing problem of containerships that persist in catching fire, with the owners of such monsters just hoping it won't happen to them, especially when the several hundred types of chemicals they have loaded, find themselves mixed into a terrifying cocktail. And there are all the underwriters who have insured these huge ships and their cargoes wondering what to do and how their liabilities might be controlled, as the ships still

New generations of these people need to be attracted into these specialist roles and grown to become the experts and innovators who will solve the next lot of problems that will afflict the shipping industry, operating as it does in its unchanging, hostile environment. The rewards have to be commensurate with the investment in all this plant and people, because if they aren't ISU members, who have learned to diversify, may not stick around. The ISU may be "re-positioned", but the main mission of this essential service, one suggests, probably won't change that much.

### UK RN SURVEYS BEIRUT'S HARBOR

The Royal Navy survey ship HMS ENTERPRISE (H88) called at Beirut to survey the harbour and deliver humanitarian supplies after the devastating explosion earlier this month.

HMS ENTERPRISE loaded stores from

RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus, then carried them to Beirut. The delivered goods include 500 canvas cots, 112 tents and five field kitchens.

ENTERPRISE berthed adjacent to the capsized cruise ship *Orient Queen*, across Basin Three from the blast site on the Port of Beirut's silo pier.

After unloading, ENTERPRISE got under way with the task of surveying the harbour's seabed for any changes or hazards to navigation. The ship carried out a full bathymetric survey, measuring the depth of the water and mapping the underwater features of the harbour approaches.

Working closely with her survey motor boat, which was able to go close in to shore, ENTERPRISE completed the entire task in a day's work. The raw data was processed on board the ship and handed over to the local government in Beirut.

"HMS ENTERPRISE has had a small role to play here supporting our partners in Lebanon in their efforts to rebuild and more importantly, reopen this vital port," said Commander Cecil Ladislaus, commanding officer of ENTERPRISE:

"Given our strong ties with our fellow hydrographers in Lebanon, we are here to deliver support both ashore . . . and afloat through survey work which will complement that which has already been completed by the Lebanese Navy." ■



# IT IS TIME: RAN VC

By William R. Alston



The Victoria Cross was established on 29 January 1856 with the award adopted into the honours system of Canada in 1967, and by Australia and New Zealand in 1975. India and Pakistan introduced their own systems of awards. In India, the VC was replaced by the Param Vir Chakra (PVC) and in Pakistan by the Nishan-e-Haider (NH). Before considering posthumous awards of the Victoria Cross, of which there are many examples, this paper considers those medals that have been forfeited. Noting, also, that for actions before 1975, Victoria Crosses awarded to Australian recipients would have been gazetted through the British [Empire] Honours System. This paper builds a case for the award of the Royal Australian Navy's first VC.



Lieutenant Edward St John Daniel VC.

## FORFEITURES

Eight VCs awarded in the 19th Century to five Englishman and three Irishman, were subsequently forfeited by the Crown. On petition from the sister of James Collis to King George V after his death on 28 June 1918, she received a sympathetic reply from the King's private secretary Lord Stamfordham who, while denying the request, did support the proposal that Gunner Collis' name should be inscribed with those of other VC recipients on the tablets of the Royal Artillery Victoria Cross Memorial. When the matter was again raised to the attention of King George V, he expressed his opinion that:

*no matter the crime committed by anyone on whom the VC has been conferred, the decoration should not be forfeited.*

This view was recorded in another letter from Lord Stamfordham, dated 20 July 1920. While, on the one hand, no VC to date has again been forfeited; neither has one been restored. Application by the family of Lieutenant Edward St John Daniel VC RN to have his Victoria Cross restored (made in the 1950s), was refused, noting:

*...the restoration of forfeited awards may only be made on a petition to the Sovereign from the former recipient himself. In Daniel's case this is not possible. Furthermore, as your proposal relates to events so long ago it is considered inappropriate to reverse the decision made in 1861 by Queen Victoria.*

It is difficult, with hindsight and many years after the events occurred, to reconstruct the grounds upon which the VC decorations were awarded, and then forfeited. Reviewing Table 1, would suggest that all the recipients might have suffered from varying degrees of what was called Shell Shock in WWI, and is now treated as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Regardless, it is clear that King George V, as expressed through Lord Stamfordham, took a dim view about VCs being forfeited. It is this precedence that has been sustained, to date.

It is unclear on what grounds a Victoria Cross might be forfeited today, since the precedent, as established, refers more generally to civil crimes committed years after the award was made, and not on the battlefield. In other words, reasons for forfeiture were based upon civil and not martial criminal codes. In this more contested, media-litigant age – when revisionist activism is dictating the removal of statues on the bases of ideas once held (and gender, race) – it is unlikely to be long before civil claims upon martial rules of engagement are made against current and deceased VC recipients.

A legal claim of forfeiture may necessarily be made citing *Jus Bello* on the battlefield, associated with, leading up to, and immediately following the gazetting action. In which case, mitigation would also need to be examined in detail; relating to the reconstruction of the award; the ability to do so; and, the mental fitness of the recipient at the time. It could and would no doubt be argued that the context in which the award was made was largely shaped by the political, military, and economic conditions then pertaining. For example, many elite forces were being used to do jobs previously undertaken by regular army units – and, because of shortages and over use, were watch-on-stop on. Often fighting two or more campaigns over as many years. It might be wise for the VC Honours System to be informed by amended letter of the edict, in addition to its spirit:

*no matter what crime committed by anyone on whom the VC has been conferred, the decoration once awarded should not be forfeited.*



In examining medals forfeited, Table 1, five of the VC Forfeiteders were English (one born in India), mostly from what would then have been called lower class families – some with long service to the British Army. One recipient was an Officer in the Royal Navy, and three were Irish. This may be problematic and indicative of the social, British, and colonial divisions pertaining at the time. Divisions which may have lasted longer in colonies such as Australia, than they did in the “Mother Country”. It is noteworthy that King George V knighted John Monash on the battlefield, whereas Australia has yet to posthumously award him the rank of Field Marshal. Yet saw fit to award Thomas Blamey (of English, West Country family origin) the rank of Field Marshal on his death bed. A General of contested morality in both civil and military life – prepared to cashier fellow officers during WW2, at the behest of a foreign power. Albeit in incredibly stressful times, working for Australia’s first *Pro-Consul*, Douglas MacArthur.

Of the eight VCs forfeited, although from a small and self-selecting number, by population Irish soldiers were almost three-times more likely to be awarded and then forfeit their VC, than were their English counterparts. At least one of the VCs (James McGuire’s) was lost after stealing a cow allegedly to feed his family, not long after the Irish Famine. The record also confirms what we know about the Irish remittance economy and long service from the 14th Century as mercenaries in European armies. A senior British Army General apparently observed after WW2:

*Given the Irish love of a good fight, thank goodness England is closer to Ireland than Germany, else we would have been up against the Irish as well!*

## BACKGROUNDS

The majority of VC Forfeiteders went on to serve or continued serving in some capacity after their trial – even having lost medal, pension, and the prestige of “being VC”. Edward St. John Daniel, the one officer and member of the Royal Navy amongst the *courageously imperfect pantheon*, appeared to have jumped ship in Melbourne and then enlisted for New Zealand for service during the First Taranaki War, where he died. [1]

The issue for Australia of this breakdown may also reflect colonial divisions referred to previously. The population of New Zealand was always very different, with a higher proportion of Scots-English and Maori descent, than Irish. Not unlike South Australia. In 2017, 30% of Australia’s population was of Irish Descent. In 1919, when the population of Australia was only 5 Million, the percentage of those of Irish Descent was probably higher, at 35-40%. In 1944, the Australian population was 7.3M.

Whereas in WWI, there was general support for the war by Protestant and Presbyterian settlers and families from British stock, the same did not apply amongst Catholic families, many of Irish descent. As was evidenced in the two failed conscription referendums, when the majority would not be swayed. Notwithstanding, many Australian’s of Irish descent joined the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and others the British Armed Forces (and Royal Navy) – where some have suggested that they were more likely to be treated equally, than in the AIF. There is record of Australian Catholics getting themselves to London under their own steam, where they could then enlist as officers, for example in the Irish Guards. Believing that they had better chances joining as officers in the British Army, than the AIF. The Royal Navy (not always its Colonial derivatives), from Nelson’s days onwards was crewed by Scots, Irish and English – officered

by the Anglo-Irish, Scots-Irish and Anglo-Scots. The Author’s family amongst them.

## POSTHUMOUS

The original VC Royal Warrant did not contain a specific clause regarding posthumous awards, although official policy was not to award the VC posthumously. Following a number of posthumous VC recommendations, in 1907 the policy was reversed and six medals were sent to the next of kin of these soldiers. The warrant was not officially amended to explicitly allow posthumous awards until 1920, by which stage one quarter of all VCs awarded during WWI were posthumous – when 46% of all VCs ever awarded were won. Twenty-two percent of all VCs have been awarded posthumously.

A legal question arises as to the nature of posthumous. Generally, posthumous awards have been made within months of the accrediting action taking place. The six VCs awarded in 1907, went back to actions occurring up to two decades beforehand. In Common Law, it could be argued that “precedence has been established allowing for posthumous awards for actions occurring decades earlier”.

Precedence may be reinforced by the exceptional action of Lieutenant Commander Gerard Roope RN off the coast of Norway on 8 Apr 1940.\* Commanding the destroyer HMS GLOWWORM, Roope came across two German destroyers and decided to engage. GLOWWORM scored a direct hit against one, and the two enemy destroyers headed north with Roope in close pursuit. Roope knew he was being led towards larger forces and undertook two further actions: relaying the location of the German Fleet; and steering for “the sound of the guns”, on an almost certain one-way ticket. On encountering the German cruiser ADMIRAL HIPPER, HMS GLOWWORM released a salvo of 5 torpedoes. None hit and ADMIRAL HIPPER’S counter-fire destroyed a number of HMS GLOWWORM’S turrets; causing a sharp reduction in speed. Another salvo of 5 torpedos from HMS GLOWWORM failed to find their mark, and ADMIRAL HIPPER continued to close.

Lieutenant Commander Roope gave the order to charge and ram the enemy cruiser. At two cables, HMS GLOWWORM unleashed a final salvo into the ADMIRAL HIPPER scoring a direct hit. GLOWWORM rammed the HIPPER; ripping off its anchor; tearing away over 40 metres of its armoured belt; and destroying its torpedo tubes:

*...the GLOWWORM, badly stove in forward and riddled with enemy fire, heeled over to starboard, and the Commanding Officer gave the order to abandon her. Shortly afterwards she capsized and sank. The ADMIRAL HIPPER [gallantly] hove to for at least an hour picking up survivors but the loss of life was heavy, only 31 out of the GLOWWORM’S complement of 149 being saved. [2]*

Lieutenant Commander Gerard Broadmead Roope was not amongst the survivors:

*Full information concerning this action has only recently been received [June/July 1945, via the Red Cross from the The ADMIRAL HIPPER’S CO, Kapitän zur See Heye, recommending award of the VC for his opponent’s courage in engaging a vastly superior warship] and the Victoria Cross is bestowed in recognition of the great valour of the Commanding Officer who, after fighting off a superior force of destroyers, sought out and reported a powerful enemy unit, and then fought his ship to the end against overwhelming odds, finally ramming the enemy with supreme coolness and skill. [2]*

The VC was presented to Lieutenant Commander Roope's widow on 12 February 1946. The VC awarded to Lieutenant Commander Roope was the first to be awarded in WW2, and amongst the last to be presented. Almost six years after the action.

The last action gazetted a VC for WW2 was awarded posthumously to Lieutenant Robert Hampton Gray RCNVR (FAA) for actions off Onagawa Bay, Miyagi Prefecture, Japan, 9 Aug 1945. Victory over Japan occurred on 15 Aug 1945 (VJ/P Day in most Commonwealth countries). The United States celebrate VJ Day on 2 Sep, the day the Japanese Instrument of Surrender was formally signed on board USS MISSOURI. In 1946, to avoid VC cases being raised long after citable actions, King George VI declared that no more VCs would be awarded for WW2.

## ORDINARY SEAMAN TEDDY SHEEAN MID

A case exceptionally dear to Navy is that of Edward Sheean. Edward Sheean was of Irish Catholic stock whose family came to Australia in the 1840s. He was born in Lower Barrington, Tasmania, on 28 December 1923, the youngest of fourteen children to Mary Jane (née Broomhall) and James Sheean, a labourer. The Sheean family moved to Latrobe, where he was educated at the local Catholic school. Growing up during the Great Depression, 1929-1939, after school Sheean gained casual employment working on several farms in the vicinity of Latrobe and Merseylea. He joined the Royal Australian Volunteer Naval Reserve on 21 April 1941 – following in the steps of five of his brothers who had already joined up, one also joining the Royal Australian Navy.

It is not the purpose of this paper to set out the remarkable courage shown by 18-year old Teddy Sheean and the action of HMAS

ARMIDALE in the Arafura Sea on 1 December 1941, which has been covered in detail elsewhere. It is noteworthy that OS Teddy Sheean's actions have direct parallels with Lieutenant Commander Gerard Roope VC and, specifically, Boy 1st Class Jack Cornwell VC (age 16½), awarded posthumously for standing by his gun on board HMS CHESTER at the Battle of Jutland. Three months after the action, Captain Robert Lawson RN of CHESTER described the events to the Admiralty. The Admiralty was recorded to have been most reluctant to accept, let alone recommend Cornwell for the award. Eventually, Admiral David Beatty RN decided to recommend Cornwell for a posthumous Victoria Cross and King George V endorsed it.

Originally buried in a common grave, Jack Cornwell was subsequently re-buried with full military honours on 29 July 1916. His epitaph reads:

*It is not wealth or ancestry  
but honourable conduct and a noble disposition  
that maketh men great.*

For those of us who have served, used personal weapons, and exchanged rounds, the denial of Teddy Sheean's VC (often by those remote in time and space from the battlefield, who have never faced similar situations, or served) is galling.

On Wednesday 10 June 2020, following intense political and community pressure for a rethink of his initial rejection of Teddy Sheean's VC, the Prime Minister announced an expert panel – to be headed by former Defence Minister Dr Brendan Nelson. Scott Morrison had previously rejected a Defence awards tribunal recommendation that a posthumous VC be granted to Sheean. New evidence before the tribunal included that Teddy Sheean, had

Table 1: Forfeited VCs

Name of Recipient	Date of VC	Theatre	Date of Birth - Place	Date of Death - Place	Rank & Service	Date of Forfeiture / Crime
Valentine Bambrick	6 May 1858	Indian Mutiny	13 April 1837 India (English parents)	1 April 1864 Pentonville, Suicide	Private, Kings Royal Rifle Corps	12 December 1863 Assault when Drunk
James Collis	28 July 1880	Afghanistan	19 April 1856 England	28 Jun 1918 (served in WWI), England	Private, Royal Horse Artillery	18 November 1895 Bigamy
Frederick Corbett	5 Aug. 1882	Anglo-Egyptian War	17 September 1853 England	25 September 1912 Maldon Workhouse, England	Private, Kings Royal Rifle Corps	30 July 1884 Embezzlement
Edward St. John Daniel	18 Oct. 1854 – 18 Jun. 1855	Crimea	17 January 1837 England	20 May 1868, Hokitika, New Zealand	Midshipman – Lieutenant, Royal Navy, Constable in the New Zealand Police	4 September 1861 Desertion
Thomas Lane	21 Aug. 1860	Second Chinese War	May 1836 Ireland	12 April 1889, Kimberley, South Africa	Private-Sergeant, 47th Regiment of Foot	7 April 1881 Desertion on active service and Theft
James McGuire	14 Sep. 1857	Indian Mutiny	1827 – Ireland	22 December 1862, Ireland	Sergeant, 1st Bengal European Fusiliers (later The Royal Munster Fusiliers)	1860, Stealing a Cow
Michael Murphy	15 Apr. 1858	Indian Mutiny	1837 – Ireland	4 April 1893, England	Sergeant (Farrier) Major, 2nd Battalion Military Train (today, the Royal Logistic Corps)	5 March 1872, Theft
George Albert Ravenhill	15 Dec. 1899	Second Boer War	21 February 1872, England	14 April 1921, England	Private, Royal Scots Fusiliers	1908, Theft – unable to pay the fine





...rejected after a raft of naval community figures and historians". If you Know of a Better Raft (after Bruce Bairnsfather and Tugg Wilson MBE RN).

reached the relative safety of a lifeboat when, seeing his comrades being strafed in the water by Japanese fighters, decided to return to his gun post. Other new evidence included that Sheean was not a gunner, but a loader; that he was only wounded after deciding to return to his gun; and, that he shot down at least one aircraft. Mr Morrison had knocked back the award on advice, including from the Chief of Defence Force, General Angus Campbell, and Chief of Navy. It was reportedly General Campbell's view:

*...that [acting] retrospectivity in such awards could open the floodgates to others and might upset the Queen [adding also that the recommendation] was rejected by a raft of naval community figures and military historians.*

Exactly who are these "raft of [nameless] naval community figures and military historians?" They were not on the raft that Teddy Sheean returned from to make his last noble stand, or one the Author would care to share. According to the knowledge of the Navy League of Australia, and that of *The NAVY*, neither were approached for comment. The maritime community that represents both the NLA and its associated journal are likely to be highly supportive of the award of VC to Teddy Sheean. General Campbell might also have appeared to be playing *lèse-majesté* in presuming on the persons of both The Governor General (his Commander in Chief) and of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth of Australia.

## RAN HELICOPTER FLIGHT VIETNAM

There is another pertinent issue regarding the award of, potentially, up to three VCs for the actions of RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam (RANHFV). Challenging, no doubt, to Army and RAAF, the



Teddy Sheean and fiancée Kath Laphorne. Picture (image Garry Ivory).

RANHFV is amongst the most decorated and cited unit in Australian military history:

*For actions between October 1967 and June 1971 fought ashore, alongside the US Army against the North Vietnam Army and Vietcong, on 18 Aug 2018 (as recorded in The NAVY) the outstanding service of Royal Australian Navy's Helicopter Flight Vietnam was recognised with the presentation of the Unit Citation for Gallantry at a ceremony conducted by the Governor-General of Australia, his Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK, MC (Ret) and Vice Admiral Tim Barrett AO CSC RAN (Ret).*

RANHFV is one of only two units to receive the Unit Citation for Gallantry, introduced in 1991 – the other being for the 1st Australian Task Force (Forward) units deployed during the Battles of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral, 12 May 1968 to 6 Jun 1968.

Neither is it the intention to detail the three RANHFV recommendations for the VC, from at least two separate actions – that have also been recognised by the award of MiDs, MBEs, DSCs (DFCs) and U.S. gallantry decorations. RANHFV VC recommendations have been the subject of more than one review – and, similarly, knocked back. The concern is more to do with their denial. There were, at the time, quotas (50% of recommendations) and down-tuning being applied to the number and type of decorations awarded for service in Vietnam – due also to the unpopularity of the war.

As for Teddy Sheean, there may be suspicion in the commentary that review board members were not predisposed to make awards to the RANHFV. This may not only be a view by Army and RAAF, on Navy – and jealousy for awards being made to the Fleet Air Arm, fighting in a Land-Air Campaign. It may also expose a Master Race mentality still evident amongst the Surface Fleet today – jealous of the service



*Painted specially for this work*

*[By Charles Dixon.]*

BOY (FIRST CLASS) J. T. CORNWELL, OF THE "CHESTER," THOUGH MORTALLY WOUNDED, STANDS AT HIS POST AMID THE DEAD AND WOUNDED GUN'S CREW.

Boy First Class Jack T. Cornwell VC mortally wounded stands by his gun HMS CHESTER (Image Charles Dixon).

and ability of the FAA and Submariners. This has potentially been seen in the denial of FAA and Submariner Flag promotions and the 'promotion' of possibly less qualified and operationally competent Surface Warfare Officers.

## AN EXISTENTIAL HONOUR

Despite HMAS SHEEAN being named after Ordinary Seaman Teddy Sheean MiD, the sense of a VC denied appears to remain large within the Australian Community. As increasingly it does for up to three VCs denied the FAA Navy community, for RANHF service in Vietnam: 'justice delayed, is justice denied'. One thing that really gets an Australian's goat, is a sense of justice denied – it is deeply engrained in our unique larrikin culture.

There are some matters that might humbly assist Dr Nelson in his review, outlined below:

1. Precedence has been established for awarding the VC posthumously, even decades after the action on appeal or separate citation, including recommendations from *amicus hostis*.
2. The Crown takes specific interest and care of the award of the VC; including determining policy regarding the forfeiture of the VC – the VC once awarded should not be forfeited.
3. The (up to four) RAN VCs raised in this paper would have been

awarded under the British [Empire] Honours System, not the Australian Honours System that came into place in 1975.

Noting the 1946 decision by King George VI to close the award of VCs for WW2 citeable actions and the principle of *lex rex, vivit regem*, it may be wise to consider Teddy Sheean's VC under the Australian Honours System.

4. The Governor General, as Her Majesty's vice regal representative in Australia and Commander in Chief – has the authority to speak for The Queen and be assured that she would not be upset by such an application. *Noblesse Oblige* suggests that The Queen might, in fact, be delighted.

Conversely, Her Majesty is likely to be particularly upset if any Government were to recommend the forfeiture of a VC against the express wishes of Her Grandfather.

5. There are issues of Australian colonial religious, ethnic, and ethical divisions/rivalries that might have influenced and precluded the award of the VC to Teddy Sheean in 1941, that may not today apply.
6. There are potential issues of inter and intra Service rivalry at play (RAN v Army v RAAF, and RAN v FAA) and artificially imposed decoration limits that may have biased the award of VCs during the Vietnam War, and posthumously.



7. Precedence has been set by other similar documented actions for the award of the VC to Teddy Sheean – and RANHFV nominees – decades after the action. Specifically:

- a. the VC awarded to Lieutenant Commander Gerard Roope RN, also in recognition of the actions of the Crew of HMAS GLOWWORM on 8 Apr 1940.
- b. The award of the VC, after considerable debate by the Admiralty, to Boy 1st Class Jack Cornwell VC for similar, if potentially less pressing actions, than Teddy Sheean demonstrated while serving in HMAS ARMIDALE, 1 Dec 1941.

It is concerning that “social justice theory lawyers” may in future call for the removal of VCs, along with the desecration of statues – despising the regal decree that “once awarded a VC should not be forfeited”. Equally concerning is that the award of the first RAN VC may be used to obfuscate forfeiture. It should not be. The award of Teddy Sheean’s long overdue VC should stand on its merit and not be used for media spin – that could besmirch his and all VC holder’s remarkable courage.

The lack of a Victoria Cross for the Royal Australian Navy has become a matter of the utmost importance. It suggests, today, that the RAN may be wanting – that its history is “not good enough”. Social justice theory warriors seek to tear down and desecrate our pasts. Whereas recognition for Teddy Sheean (and RANHFV) would honour and recognise our maritime shared history by reaffirming tradition; not tearing down.

The over-professionalisation of the ADF and the associated cult of the warfighter (as opposed to warthinker) may also have led to a presumption of Private Army, Navy and Air Forces controlled by political elites. They are not. These are Australia’s men and women – they belong to People and Commonwealth. That is the sacred covenant. There are not “floodgates for the VC” and, even if there were, the standards remain so exceptionally high that few might ever cross the pantheon’s threshold, and few would want to try. In the instance of Teddy Sheean, it may reasonably be concluded that Commonwealth has spoken – the award of his VC is merited and long overdue.

The VC is an immortal recognition not just of the individual, but for the Service and crews that they fought for. It goes beyond a



Lieutenant Commander Gerard Broadmead Roope VC RN.

Unit Citation or even the naming of a major submarine combatant. It touches our people and naval community today, while speaking of our pasts and tomorrows. It is of existential importance to the men and women who have served, are serving, and will serve. In an Australian twist, it may also be appropriate, on award of the VC to Teddy Sheean, to consider honouring his ships, as in HMAS ARMIDALE VC and HMAS SHEEAN VC. ■

**Post Paper Note:** On Wed 12 Aug 2020, The Governor General, David Hurley, announced Her Majesty The Queen had approved Ordinary Seaman Teddy Sheean MiD for the Victoria Cross. As suggested in this paper, the award was made as an Australian Honour. Some of the considerations raised in this paper were also addressed by Dr Brendan Nelson in his excellent response, *Historic Victoria Cross Report of the Expert Panel*, see <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resourcecentre/pmc/historic-victoria-cross-report-expert-panel>

\* With parallels - not covered in this paper - to the action undertaken by Lieutenant Commander Robert William Rankin RAN serving in HMAS YARRA (U77) , 4 March 1942 and for which recommendations have also been made and knocked back for a VC. HMAS RANKIN (SSG78) was named after him.

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HMS GLOWWORM final run to ram the ADMIRAL HIPPER.

# SERVATIONE VIGILANTE THE NAVY AND THE NLA, BEYOND 2038

By Servatione Vigilante 38

The stated aims of Servatione Vigilante (SV38), set up under the NLA NSW Division in March 2019, is:

To Keep the Navy League of Australia 'on Watch' well into the 21st Century and celebrate the 100th Anniversary of *The NAVY* quarterly journal as a print and digital maritime log of national record in 2038.

*The NAVY* and Navy League of Australia (NLA) seeks to maintain a printed and digital publication into the future (beyond 2022) and identify a sustainable model to do so. There is a genuine belief of the need to provide a Journal of Record outside Defence; loyally critical of the Naval Service. SV38 Objectives are to:

1. Maintain a printed copy of *The NAVY* until at least February 2022 and during this time;
2. Explore the development of a digital copy to go alongside / support the printed version to at least 2022 (completed now to 2018).

## BACKGROUND

The Navy League of Australia (NLA) was founded in 1900. *The NAVY*, the NLA quarterly journal, has been published continuously since 1938. It will celebrate its 100th Anniversary in 2038. As a journal of record, *The NAVY* has a successful penetration of the marketplace – recording the lowest number of returns-per-sales for any magazine of its type and genre in the Australian market-place. The model of the NLA and *The NAVY* is something of a hybrid between the membership-only UK *Naval Review*; the Navy League of the United States (with a membership of 50,000); and the U.S. Naval Institute (USNI), with its *Proceedings* journal and established publishing base.

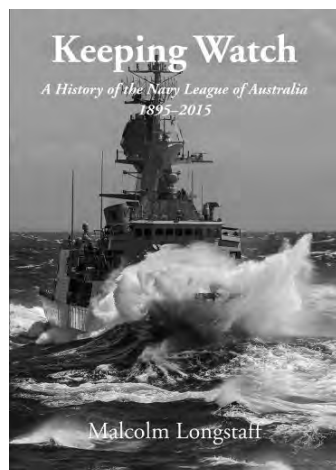
## A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In the July-September 2019 issue of *The NAVY*, a longstanding member and contributor drew attention to the Chief of Navy's Professional Resource List, 2019, commenting *inter alia*:

Whereas ANI gets one mention and the Sea Power Centre is mentioned twice, in a 13-page document (replete with a broad range of referenced reading, including by Chief of Navy and Warrant Officer of Navy) *The NAVY* and the Navy League of Australia, or any of their recent articles, papers, or books are not mentioned once.

The ANI seems to have taken on much of the role that NLA used to 'fight for' and has a good website, annual journal, annual dinner, and support of Navy. That said, NLA has always asked the much 'harder' questions than ANI due to it being influenced from outside and within Navy. ANI has struggled in the past and nearly 'sank' in the late 1990's due to lack of interest but has several recently retired senior Sirs who make sure it stays afloat and its now on an even keel but it took a lot of hard work.

The [colour] ANI magazine *Headmark* died as it was too costly to print and mail out. A website which has weekly updates has taken its place. Is it time for NLA to consider other options to stay afloat? Or use the ANI model – i.e. website (but open to all) rather than a magazine to get the information out there and maybe a once a year 'annual', or some combination of them both?



Keeping Watch A History of the NLA 1895-2015 by Malcolm Longstaff.



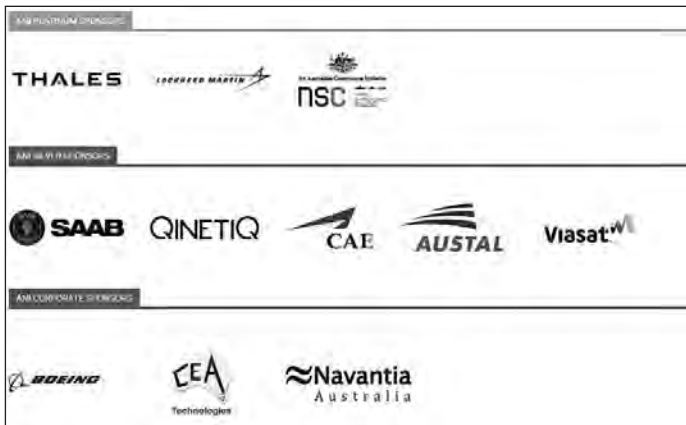
CN Professional Resource List 2019.

## THE CLOCK IS TICKING

*You have your clocks; we have time – old Pashtun Proverb*

As of 2022, the future of the hard copy version of *The NAVY* and with it the Navy League of Australia is uncertain. Other NLA publications, such as the Navy League of Western Australia's emailed electronic Newsletter, do a fine job. But do not in themselves augment or replace *The NAVY*. More recently, the relaunch of the NLA website (see <https://navyleague.org.au/>) provides free electronic access to all copies of *The NAVY* from 1938 to 2018 (80 years) – see: <https://navyleague.org.au/navy-magazine/>. There is a view, that as for other publications of its type, historical and contemporary issues should be membership only, and/or paid for. Another view, is that access for the previous five years should be available for Members and/or paid only. At present, *The NAVY* website is not set up for this type of publishing – and sales of the journal are by subscription or directly through national newsagents.





ANI Platinum, Silver, and Corporate sponsors.



Australian Naval Institute.

## BIASED COMPETITION?

In October 1973, Captains Vernon Parker and J.A 'Rocker' Robertson RAN came to the conclusion that what was needed was a "Naval Society". On the afternoon of Friday 12 July 1974, a meeting was convened by Captain Parker at which was discussed the "need to produce a journal on naval and maritime affairs to promote greater awareness of these issues within the naval profession". The meeting agreed "that a naval society should be formed and Parker was to head a steering committee to produce a draft constitution". A month later a meeting agreed to the three objectives of the Naval Society, which were:

1. To provide an unofficial forum for the exchange of ideas about the development and improvement of the Navy;
2. To bring together all persons and bodies interested in maritime affairs as they effect the Australian Nation; and
3. To collect and disseminate information about naval and maritime affairs.

It was also agreed that the name of this naval society would be the *Australian Naval Institute*. The Minister of Defence, after some discussion, approved the use "Naval" on 7 January 1975. The Registrar refused to accept the ANI objectives, and referred the application to the Attorney-General. The Registrar demanded to see the original letter approving the use of "Naval" and to receive it directly from the Department of Defence. In early April 1975, the Attorney-General queried whether the *Australian Naval Institute* was associated with the Navy League of Australia (NLA) or the Naval Association. The criticism at the time – leading to demands for the formation of the ANI – was that "[both] were issuing statements to the press on Naval policy". The Attorney-General gave his consent in April 1975 and the Registrar approved the publication of an advertisement in the Canberra Times giving notice of the intention to form the *Australian Naval Institute*.

It could be argued that the ANI would not exist other than for competing with the NLA and the Australian Naval Association. This ties in with three additional drivers occurring at the same time:

1. The desire to professionalise all aspects of Defence and, specifically, align the single Services into a singular and more joint Australian Defence Force;
2. An underlying drive for *Performance Management* and accountability driven KPIs, created through the disaggregation of organisations into business units, under centralised control of head offices, to deliver 1.;

3. A P/political desire to control, manage and dominate the narrative, as required by 2.

Professionalisation led to professionalism and elitism, drawn from an increasingly exclusive political professional elite. *Performance Management* created privatised vertical polarisation that prevented the essential informal horizontal networks forming that underpin all successful organisations – and Armies, Navies and Air Forces. P/political control of/by Navy created conditions where dissent, or even useful scuttlebutt, could only be raised through professionalised organs and their respective "business units" – operating more like Private Armies. All overseen by Accountancy Consultancy Companies and their special political advisers (SPADs). The business units fiercely protected their polarised boundaries – all reporting to Chief of Navy (and the Prime Minister & Cabinet Office (PMC) and Minister of Defence), in one capacity or another.

### Headmark and Australian Naval Review

Between 1975 and 2015, the ANI produced the highly successful *Headmark* magazine, a quarterly publication that sat alongside and directly competed with *The NAVY*. In its final iteration (Issue 154, Jun 2015), it was a 64-page, colour publication, including 6.25 pages of colour adverts, mostly from Defence related companies – approximating one colour advert for every 9 pages. *Headmark* has been replaced by the ANI website, its e-newsletter, reports; occasional papers and the peer-reviewed Australian Naval Review, begun in 2016, see Table 1.

### Wings Magazine

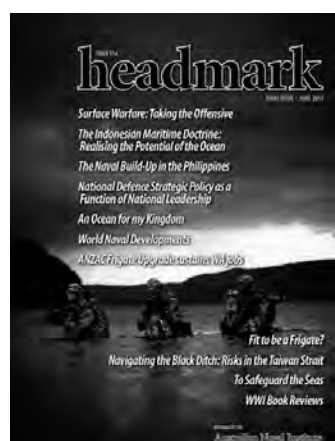
A close comparator to *The NAVY* is the *Wings Magazine*. Flight Publishing printed the magazine for 30 years (1989-2018), before it moved to its new format and publisher, RAAFANSW Publications Pty Ltd (RAAFAPubs) – a charitable, not-for-profit publishing company wholly owned by RAAFA NSW Division. Although its format has not changed, belonging to RAAFAPubs means that the magazine is underwritten by RAAF. Hard copy versions are now circulated alongside *The NAVY* in Canberra, and sent to all RAAF Bases / Squadrons.

## FINANCIAL BIAS

Professionalised centres, think tanks, institutions, and their associated publishing houses attract a significant amount of Federal funding from 'within the Canberra beltway' and largely respond and are responsive to a closed professional political base. These same centres, for example ASPI, also attract what advertising remains available; while also being partially or fully-funded by Defence, and



RAAFA WINGS Winter 2020 Issue.



Final Issue of ANI Headmark June 2015.

## INSTITUTIONAL BIAS

What brought this to a head was the product placement of an article entitled “Developing the workforce to deliver the National Naval Shipbuilding Enterprise”, by Mr Ian Irving, the Chief Executive of the Naval Shipbuilding Institute (NSI), in the *Australian Naval Review*, 2020 – Issue 1. The article accompanied a colour advert of the Naval Shipbuilding College (NSC). [1]

The term “Naval” is used in both the NSC and NSI – presumably with the approval of PMC, the Registrar, the Attorney General, Defence, and Navy? The Naval Shipbuilding College is listed as being an “Australian Government Initiative”. The Naval Shipbuilding Institute (NSI (Aust) Pty. Ltd) is an incorporated joint venture company (JVC) of Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) and Kellogg Brown and Root Pty Ltd (KBR). The NSC (unlike the NSI) is a Government Initiative; presumably publicly funded by Defence and Navy, for the NSI?

The NSC promotional article, with accompanying advert, was probably written for promotional purposes. Bias cannot therefore be ruled out. Requests for articles on the NSC by the Royal Institute of Naval Architects (RINA) and *The NAVY* have not been responded to.

In *The NAVY*, Flash Traffic, [1], the NSI and the NSC were both examined in some detail, from the perspective of both RINA and the NLA (Ed. Board). There is a discrepancy between reporting in *The NAVY* and that in the ANR. Critical questions were raised. This is important, since the use of “Naval” connects directly to Navy and Defence, and public funds are involved.

Once an article is seen to be positioned in such a way, it raises questions as to how other papers have been sourced. The *Australian Naval Review* is somewhat bland – fitted to “the view from Canberra”. Subjects are safe, in the centre; rather than edge. There is no questioning of policy, or engagement of current shipbuilding designs, including for the OPVs; the Hunter and Attack classes. Why? While there are interesting historical pieces, personal perspectives, and CN on autonomous vehicles, there is nothing that rattles cages. This is not necessarily the case on the website, where attributable papers address a range of more contentious issues. But the papers are linked and not badged, written or sourced by / for ANI. While the weekly e-letter also contains useful news, analysis is generally limited and linked to other sources – with ANI acting as a conduit.

**Table 1: Comparison of Other Similar Productions**

	Format	Pages	Years	Adverts / Pages	Board	Editorial Team	Sponsored	Publisher	Est Cost
<b>Wings</b>	Colour	76 (4 a Year)	1948-	1 to 8	5: Mostly ex RAAF Paid	9 ex RAAF, APS?, Consultants Paid	RAAF Association, the RAAF and RAAFA Pubs	RAAFA Pubs (From Flight Publishing)	6 x <i>The NAVY</i>
<b>Headmark</b>	Colour	64 (4 a year)	1975-2015	1 to 6.25	17 Councillors, President & Vice, Patron RAN, Rtd. Res, APS? Paid	8 RAN, Rtd, APS?, Consultants Paid	Australian Naval Institute and RAN	Unknown	4 x <i>The NAVY</i>
<b>Australian Naval Review</b>	4 pp. Colour, 104 Black and White	108 (2 a year)	2016-	1 to 12.5	17 Councillors, President & Vice, Patron RAN, Rtd. Res, APS? Paid	9 RAN, Rtd, APS?, Consultants Paid	Australian Naval Institute and RAN	Instant Colour Press, for ANI	4 x <i>The NAVY</i>





Australian Navy Cadets The Most Important Future Factor Volunteerism versus Professionalism.

### A Convergence?

The key reason that *Headmark* stopped being produced was that it was too expensive. It was subsumed into a bi-annual *Australian Naval Review* and various on-line fora. Has it worked? From the position of being “self-supporting and non-profit making” – with its Membership subscriptions, access, Defence funding and advertising – it probably has. From the perspective of its founders, to “provide an unofficial forum for the exchange of ideas about... Navy; bring together all persons and bodies interested in [Australian] maritime affairs; and collect and disseminate information about naval and maritime affairs” – it has probably failed. It is not an informal publishing house, as its Council and Editorial Board shows. With the loss of *Headmark*, it has not brought all sides together and appears to be an exclusive organ for Canberra cognoscenti. What it tells may be biased and at the expense of other publications competing in the free market place of ideas.

Old Navy had a set of inclusive values that enabled membership and volunteers. In its original design, the NLA was also responsible for the Australian Navy Cadets. This was transferred to Navy in 1973, with the NLA maintaining a watching brief. Professionalism comes at the expense of volunteerism. Old Navy had the ability to tolerate, understand and work with the voluntary sector – as an essential adjunct to its peace-time roles. It did not feel threatened or the necessity to control-thought-codification – since its values were well known and shared.

This is something of a *Prisoner's Dilemma*. It cannot be in Navy's interests not to have a vibrant Navy League with *The NAVY* publication (as in the U.S.) – that also provides deniability. Some half-way house, at a minimum restoring the costs of one issue a year would go a long way.

### A WAY AHEAD

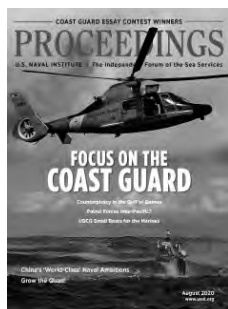
There is space for the NLA and *The NAVY* to work alongside but not for the ANI – providing the ANI with a self-supporting and non-profit making outlet – that tests ideas, loyally. Beyond this, consideration of reviewing advertising across ANI platforms and enabling fair access – short of actually banning (as per ABC) – would go a long way. If the NLA and *The NAVY* did not exist, any number of consultants would be pressing Navy to create the same (at great expense). Seeing the NLA and *The NAVY* as competition may, ultimately, be destructive. It weakens the Naval case, rather than strengthening it.

It is strongly believed that *The NAVY* and the NLA have a vital role to play in the future as an on-line publication; a magazine; or both. It would not take much to find suitable connections to allow this to occur. A step back as a means of moving forward may be to the benefit of Commonwealth, the Navy and NLA / other maritime communities at large. ■



#### REFERENCES

- 1] See Flash Traffic (2020) On the Naval Shipbuilding College, *The NAVY*, Vol 82, Issue 3, pp. 18-19



## PROCEEDINGS

United States Naval Institute  
Monthly Publication

Annual International  
Membership: \$145.00



## THE NAVAL REVIEW

Registered Charity  
Quarterly Publication

Annual International  
Membership: \$75.00

*Proceedings* is a 96-page monthly magazine published by the USNI. Launched in 1874, it is one of the oldest continuously published magazines in the United States. *Proceedings* covers topics concerning global security and includes articles from military professionals and civilian experts, historical essays, book reviews, full-colour photography, and reader commentary. Roughly a third are written by active-duty personnel, a third by retired military, and a third by civilians. *Proceedings* also frequently carries feature articles by Secretaries of Defense, Secretaries of the Navy, Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and top leaders of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard – including on its editorial boards.

*Proceedings*, although by Membership subscription, nonetheless champions and takes forward articles critical of Defense policy, including of USN and USMC, as protected under the US First Amendment:

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*

The *Naval Review* is the quarterly journal of professional record of the Royal Navy, incorporating also the Royal Marines and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. It is an independent journal whose charitable purposes are to serve the interests of the Royal Navy (RM and RFA). The *Naval Review* began publishing in 1913 and encourages the promotion of healthy discourse (also under pseudonyms), including “being critical of and challenging accepted norms and offering novel conclusions”.

In respecting this special relationship, and in acknowledgement of established UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) communications policy, the *Naval Review* is limited to membership by subscription only (including Commonwealth Naval Officers / Senior Ratings). This is a collegiate agreement within a “club-like arrangement” probably unique to the British culture and necessary to protect discourse outwith a First Amendment. There have nonetheless been questions raised in Parliament arising from articles in the *Naval Review* and the Editor (a retired Admiral) is occasionally brought into MOD for a meeting-without-coffee.



## THE WHITE ENSIGN MAGAZINE

Naval Association of Australia  
Bi-Annual Publication

Annual Membership (Full): \$38.00  
(\$7.00 Magazine)



## AUSTRALIAN NAVAL REVIEW

Australian Naval Institute  
Bi-Annual Publication

Annual Membership: \$75.00

The *White Ensign Magazine* is the primary means of communication with Naval Association of Australia members. The magazine has recently been rejuvenated; dedicated to making this information relevant to new and old Veterans and the wider Defence Community. The Magazine concentrates on its four pillars, primarily to recognise a responsibility to uphold the intent of its forebears. Care relates to support of those in need; continuing to support Veterans and their families by whatever means at our disposal; and History.

The publication is now on-line and also promulgated to Navy personnel through ForceNet – the intranet of ADF. Its articles are newsy, historical and about Navy, written by serving RAN personnel. It is forwarded by the Governor General and Chief of Navy and is aimed at keeping its membership informed. Although the ANA was potentially more critical of naval matters in the past, the *White Ensign Magazine* is now perhaps more of an information source for members; supported by Navy.

The *Australian Naval Review* (ANR) is modelled on the UK *Naval Review* and was intended to incorporate the highly successful *Headmark* magazine, produced quarterly between 1975 and 2015.

More detail is provided in paper 4 (this issue). Relying also on on-line and weekly publications of (largely) re-sourced material, the *Australian Naval Review* may be finding its feet, since publishing began in 2016.

Without the U.S. First Amendment and the club-membership culture of the UK, within which *Proceedings* and the *Naval Review* respectively both exist, the ANR sits on the establishment side of both publications. It does not appear to offer the same discussion, critique and source of authors previously provided by *Headmark*.





# THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA ANNUAL MARITIME AFFAIRS ESSAY COMPETITION



## TOPICS

- 21st Century Naval Warfare
- Australian Naval History
- Australian Industrial and Merchant Navy Maritime Strategy

## CATEGORIES

A first, second and third prize will be awarded in each of two categories:

**Professional category**, which covers Journalists, Defence Officials, Academics, Naval Personnel and previous contributors to *The NAVY*; and **Non-Professional category**.

Essays should be 2,500-3,000 words in length and will be judged on accuracy, content and structure.

## PRIZES

	1ST PLACE	2ND PLACE	3RD PLACE
Professional	\$1,000	\$500	\$250
Non-Professional	\$500	\$200	\$150

Essays should be submitted in Microsoft Word format on disk by;

Post to:

Navy League Essay Competition  
Box 1719 GPO, SYDNEY NSW 2001  
OR

Emailed to: [editorthenavy@hotmail.com](mailto:editorthenavy@hotmail.com)

Submissions should include the writer's name, address, telephone and email contacts, and the nominated entry category.

## DEADLINE

**Saturday 21 August 2021**

Prize-winners announced in the January-March 2022 Issue of *The NAVY*.



**HATCH:** UK Fleet Solid Support Ship Procurement re-commenced July 2020 (Image UK Ministry of Defence).



**MATCH:** NUSHIP SUPPLY (A0195) Completing Sea Acceptance Trials, Ferrer, Spain August 2020 (Image Navy).



**MATCH:** USS ST LOUIS (LCS 19) Commissioned August 2020 (Image LMC).