

THE

NAVY

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA



THE NEED TO BUILD THE SECOND TIER OF THE NAVY ORDER OF BATTLE
THE LONG MARCH TOWARDS ENDGAME: CHINA AND THE INDO-PACIFIC
AUSTRALIA – DEFEAT OR JUNCTURE? PART 2
A SAILOR'S LIFE: WORLD WAR II - KOREAN WAR - POST WAR

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Front cover: RAAF E-7A Wedgetail from 2 SQN FA-18A Hornets from 77 SQN and an EA-18G Growler from 6 Squadron fly over a RAN Task Group, comprising HMA Ships CANBERRA, SIRIUS, HOBART, STUART, ARUNTA (Image Defence).

07 THE NEED TO BUILD THE SECOND TIER OF THE NAVY ORDER OF BATTLE – MINE COUNTER MEASURES

By Mark W Linden

12 THE LONG MARCH TOWARDS ENDGAME: CHINA AND THE INDO-PACIFIC

By Jonathan Wilson

20 AUSTRALIA – DEFEAT OR JUNCTURE? PART 2

By Dr Neil Baird

27 A SAILOR'S LIFE: WORLD WAR II – KOREAN WAR - POST WAR

By Gerry Shepherd with his daughter Jane Headon

REGULAR FEATURES

- 02 From the Crow's Nest
- 04 League Policy Statement
- 05 The President's Page
- 06 Letters
- 16 Flash Traffic
- 19 Red Duster
- 32 Book Review

All letters and contributions to:

The Office of The Editor

THE NAVY

Navy League of Australia

GPO Box 1719

Sydney, NSW 2001

E-mail to: editorthenavy@hotmail.com

All Subscriptions, Membership and Advertising enquiries to:

The Hon Secretary

Navy League of Australia, NSW Division

GPO Box 1719, Sydney NSW 2001

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WOLFPOLITIK

The first issue of *The NAVY* for 2021 begins with a paper by Mark Linden (Essay competition, First Prize Professional Entry) dealing with the need to develop the second tier of the Navy Order of Battle – namely mine counter measures. A question Linden correctly raises is “why, having led on ASW and MCM for many years, did we let this – for Australian Purposes, first tier of national Defence – capability lapse?” The second paper by Jonathan Wilson (Essay competition, First Prize Non-Professional Entry); pressingly considers “China’s long march to end game in the Indo-Pacific”. Wilson correctly raises a bleak picture of an end game of exclusion, if deterrence does not first enable containment. Neither of which sits comfortably with Australia’s own and regional sovereignty. The third paper, is the second in Dr Neil Baird’s series regarding “a strategic juncture (for Australia) or strategic defeat”. There is growing evidence to suggest that Australia and the U.S. have lost the strategic conflict, and are playing catchup in the operational and tactical weeds.

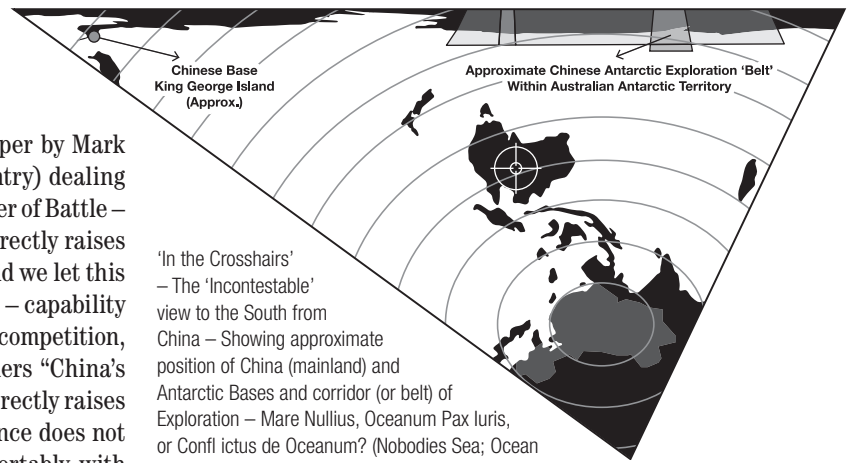
The final paper (Essay competition, Third Prize Non-Professional Entry) from one of our senior NLA Members who saw service in HMAS BATAAN in WWII, and subsequently in Korea, is quite unique and a delight to publish. Written in partnership, Gerry Shepherd and his daughter Jane Headon tell a Navy story to warm the cockles of all seafarer’s hearts. It is also an important bookend to this issue – since it tells of another time when Australia had to stand the test and was not found wanting. At 94, Gerry is one of our oldest members and got to know Admiral Andrew Robertson on retiring from Navy, and leading the *HMAS Bataan Association*. Gerry is probably the last surviving crew member to have served in HMAS BATAAN in both WW2 and Korea. We salute you Jerry, for your service and contribution since joining the NLA Sea Cadets as an 14-year-old. Eighty-years service and still serving Navy and country. A wonderful record.

The NAVY (at [1]) identified China’s emerging Foreign Policy to be ‘Let a Hundred Rules of World Order Contend (让世界秩序的百条规则抗衡, Ràng shìjiè zhìxù de bǎi tiáo guīzé kànghéng)’. [2] In this *real-politick* approach, the global order is both rejected and contestable. In some respects, it may be considered as an adaptation of *Weltpolitik*, which was a rejection of the Imperial World Order by Germany in 1897 [1]. A Chinese interpretation of *Weltpolitik* – perhaps considered today as *Wolfpolitik* (狼政, Láng zhèngzhì) – might be:

We wish to deny no one access to our new silk road (our one belt and one road), but we demand in return control over our own sovereign spaces, claims and interests.

Wolfpolitik describes China’s principle Political Economic Warfare (PEW) strategies to be [1]:

1. The New Silk Road comprising an Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road, also known as ‘the Belt & Road, or One Belt and One Road (一带一路), or OBOR Strategy’.
2. The String of Pearls (珍珠串) strategy, incorporating China’s First (essentially the Nine-Dashed Line) and Second Island Chains (the Second Dashed Lines) [3] and;
3. The Dragon’s Spear (龙的) strategy, incorporating the Chinese Motte, Keep, Bailey, Mote (reclaimed islands), and Moat (the SCS and ECS) [4].



'In the Crosshairs'
– The 'Incontestable'
view to the South from
China – Showing approximate
position of China (mainland) and
Antarctic Bases and corridor (or belt) of
Exploration – Mare Nullius, Oceanum Pax Iuris,
or Confl ictus de Oceanum? (Nobodies Sea; Ocean
under Treaty, or Ocean in Conflict?) [1]

Significantly, these emerging strategies were identified either first or contemporaneously by papers in *The NAVY*, from 2016 (and before) dealing with and giving indications and warning as to what was potentially on our near horizon. It begs the question as “to what the privatised and contractorised professional political class and their pet consultants achieve or add to Australia’s sovereignty, democracy, diplomacy (DFAT), research (DSTG), acquisition and sustainment (CASG), and intelligence?” Indisputably, COVID has created an opportunity for Chinese expansionism and adventurism that did not exist before 2020. Unlike the Global West, China had the strategic thinking and policies in place to exploit the crisis. To such an extent that, having incubated and denied the virus in the first place – which emerged in Wuhan as early as September 2019 – the Global West and the U.S. have been cast as culprits, if not originators.

The current impasse between Australia and China is likely to last months, if not years. Australia is not just at the point of the ‘Dragon’s Spear’ but the spear is directed also at the U.S., to divide ANZUS and Five Eyes. It may well get much worse. Writing in *The Australian*, Paul Dibb [5] recalls a conversation he had with Rich Armitage, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State (2001-2005) in George W. Bush’s administration, who said:

If American Marines are dying across the Taiwan Strait, we sure as hell expect you Aussies to bleed alongside us.



Wolfpolitik - Chinese Warships Mark the 30th Anniversary of Tianamen during their “surprise” Sydney visit.



ROC Taiwan Navy Commissions the TUO CHIANG (616) Corvette Near and new fast combat support ship PANSIH (AOE 532).

Dibb argues circularly:

...in the event of an unprovoked Chinese attack, if the U.S. does not come to the defence of Taiwan then that will mark the end of the U.S. alliance system in the Asia-Pacific region. Japan and South Korea would be likely to reconsider the option of acquiring their own nuclear weapons.

If the U.S. does defend Taiwan and Australia refuses to make a military contribution, that may well threaten the *raison d'être* for ANZUS.

It would appear that the CCP has come to the same obvious conclusion, and is driving its strategies accordingly. Australia may have inadvertently cast itself in the light of Taiwan; allowing the CCP to create a common, contiguous front. Economic attacks on Australia will act to weaken U.S. resolve; so impacting U.S. ability to defend Taiwan; and preventing regional alliances forming. Paraphrasing Dibb and Judging by the few countries who have stepped forward to support Australia in the current Trade War:

No other Ally of the U.S, except perhaps Japan, will commit to the military defence of both Australia and Taiwan. Going through the list of countries that will look the other way: they include:

- All Southeast Asian [ASEAN] countries, South Korea and, probably, India – a Quadrilateral partner;
- Five Eyes Countries such as New Zealand and Canada – although condemning the recent Chinese-Australian ‘atrocious tweet’;
- Every NATO country – including Britain, France and Germany (who have also condemned recent Chinese trade attacks and the atrocious tweet on Australia).

Even if Britain, France and Germany were to engage, the UK may have “the will but not the capability” (in the form of its broken-backed Navy and Armed Forces); France “the capability and not the will”; and Germany – despite announcing a ship to run the Taiwan Straits (June 2019) – is largely entrapped by the EU; its reliance on Russian Gas; and its enfeebled Defence Force, to fight another “American” war. Historically, there are worrying parallels with 1942, except the U.S. was not then as politically, economically, and militarily weakened.

Dr Neil Baird’s papers (Oct-Dec 2020 and this issue) paint a worrying picture of Australian Government, APS and Defence – brutally exposed and exacerbated by the cack-handed release of the Brereton Report. The Defence Minister and PM were largely absent for the first few days – all completely ignorant, it would appear, of the impact and opportunity it gave our enemies. Despite clear warnings in *The NAVY* (Oct-Dec 2020) issue. Painful as it may be, removing the Prime Minister & Cabinet Office, and the multitude of management consultants and accountants that dominate all ministries and enabling a return to democratically accountable Cabinet Government, (where Ministers contest ideas directly) is pressing. Including the re-institution of a ministerial Navy secretary (also for Army and RAAF). In the meantime, strategically Australia must look also to its south. ■

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STATEMENT OF POLICY

For the maintenance of the Maritime wellbeing of the nation.

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

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

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

The Navy League:

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

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

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

The League:

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

THE NAVY LEAGUE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On 23 October 2020 the Navy League conducted its Annual General Meeting and a meeting of the Federal Council of the League. Due to COVID-19 restrictions this was the first time that the League had conducted its annual meetings remotely. We were able to conduct the meetings online, completed a truncated agenda and managed to get through the essentials to keep the Navy League meeting its reporting obligations, review key aspects of the year and make preparations for the year ahead. In spite of the new format the programme was very well attended and the online format did not inhibit participation too much. That said, I suspect all were with me in hoping that we can get together in person next year, to get through a fuller agenda in a more usual setting.

THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA ANNUAL MARITIME AFFAIRS ESSAY COMPETITION

The Navy League annual conference also deliberated the entries in the Annual Maritime Affairs essay competition. The winners were announced to the meeting and the winning papers will be published in *The NAVY* in this and over the next few editions.

Congratulations go out to all entrants in the competition, who put in a great deal of effort in research and writing their papers. There are two prize categories, the professional category, which covers journalists, Defence officials, academics, Navy personal and previous contributors to *The NAVY* and the Non-Professional category. There is a great depth of talent in those who have papers and special congratulations go out to our prizewinners.

First Prize in the Professional category was awarded to Mark Linden for his essay on Navy Mine Countermeasures. Well done Mark, for your ongoing commitment to Navy League and this essay which is a great credit to you. You can enjoy reading Mark's paper in this edition.

Second Prize in the Professional category was awarded to Greg Swinden for his essay Operation Quickstep which is another very deserving entry and will prove a great read to you all. Third Prize in the Professional category went to Dr Honae Cuffe for her essay The Origins of the Singapore Strategy which is further evidence of the quality of entries received.

In the Non-Professional category First Prize this year was again awarded to Jonathan Wilson, this year for his essay The Long March to Endgame. Well done Jonathan and keep up the good work. You can also read Jonathan's paper in this edition. Second Prize in the Non-Professional category was also again awarded to our friend from across the ditch Murray Dear, for his essay The Dardanelles Debacle. A combined paper was the winner of third place in the

Non-Professional category, A Sailor's Life by Gerry Shepherd and Jean Headon. This paper also appears in this edition.

These competition winning papers provide great reading and a new view of events, some of which are likely not known to many. I hope reading these essays will encourage many of you to begin research for and writing of your entry for the 2021 essay competition. The deadline, 21 August 21, will be upon us before you know it – so get started now and be in the running for a great prize and the potential for your essay to be published in a future edition of *The NAVY* magazine.

We look forward to your feedback on the essays as they are published.

THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA PERPETUAL TROPHY – COMMUNITY AWARD

The Navy League of Australia Perpetual Trophy – Community Award is an annual award made to the ship or establishment that has, in the opinion of the Federal Council of the Navy League made the best contribution to its community. The award was established in 1981, and for the last two years was in Western Australia having been won in consecutive years by HMAS STIRLING.

In 2020 many ships and establishments were nominated for the award and the hard work of each of them is worthy of commendation. The Federal Council's task of deciding on which ship or establishment should win was assisted by the Fleet Commander, who reduced those nominated to a shortlist. From that list, each of whom were also well-deserving of recognition, the Federal Council unanimously chose HMAS CHOULES as the Community Award winner for an enormous amount of community service over the entire year.

ENJOY THIS ISSUE

In addition to the first prize winners this issue winners from the annual essay competition there is also plenty of other wonderful reading to stimulate your mind as well as our Statement of Policy which I encourage you all to revisit.

I trust you will enjoy reading these articles and, as always, encourage your feedback.

Happy reading. ■



HMAS CHOULES (L100) and MY Sycamore conduct RAS(P) during OP Bushfire Assist (ABIS Jarrod Mulvihill).



RFA Argus (A135) - Image Royal Navy.



HMS PRINCE OF WALES (R09) Passing the Still and West on entering Portsmouth Harbour.

UK PM TO ANNOUNCE LARGEST MILITARY INVESTMENT IN 30 YEARS (SENSITIVE)

Dear Editor,

Thought you might be interested in the below – highlights from a speech British PM Boris Johnson will be making to the UK Parliament [in December]. Hope helpful, please do get in touch if you have any questions.

Hazel

Hazel Gidley, Head of Australia Network Communications, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, British High Commission Canberra

Resumé of announcement

The biggest programme of investment in British defence since the end of the Cold War [was] announced by the UK Prime Minister.

[UK] Defence forces are operating in a rapidly changing world. This spending increase recognises the need for them to undertake a generational modernisation programme in order to defend the UK, our allies and the world's most vulnerable people.

Since the Cold War the threat from our adversaries has been evolving. Our traditional defence and deterrence capabilities remain vital, and our Armed Forces work every day to prevent terror reaching the UK's shores.

Rather than being confined to some distant battlefield, those that seek to do harm to our people can reach them through the mobile phones in their pockets or the computers in their homes. To protect our citizens, UK Defence therefore needs to operate at all times with leading, cutting-edge technology.

Defence has also been on the front line responding to every major international humanitarian disaster of the last decade. In the last year alone HMS ENTERPRISE has come to the aid of Lebanon following the explosion in the Port of Beirut, RFA Argus and Army personnel have delivered disaster relief to Central American countries ravaged by Hurricane Eta, and the RAF has transported vital medical supplies to communities struggling against coronavirus in West Africa and the UK's Overseas Territories.

UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, said:

"I have taken this decision in the teeth of the pandemic because the defence of the realm must come first.

"The international situation is more perilous and more intensely competitive than at any time since the Cold War and Britain must be true to our history and stand alongside our allies. To achieve this, we need to upgrade our capabilities across the board.

"This is our chance to end the era of retreat, transform our Armed Forces, bolster our global influence, unite and level up our country, pioneer new technology and defend our people and way of life."

PMUK: We will restore Britain's position as the foremost naval power in Europe

- £16.5bn boost to defence will finance significant expansion of the Royal Navy
- New warship contracts – including first ever commitment to 'Type 32' frigates - to create thousands of British jobs

- Defence settlement will fill the black hole in the military equipment budget, ending a cycle of underfunded, over-budget projects.

The £16.5bn defence spending increase over four years, to be formalised in the Spending Review, will allow the UK to confirm our order of 8 Type 26 and 5 Type 31 frigates, commit to the next generation of warship the Type 32, build two multi-role research vessels and construct fleet solid support ships to supply our Carrier Strike Group. These projects will create thousands of jobs across the UK in the coming years.

Next year the QUEEN ELIZABETH carrier, one of our two aircraft carriers – the largest warships ever built for the Royal Navy - will embark on its first operational deployment.

Scotland has always played a critical role in the UK's defence. That is thanks to its important geographical position which makes it an ideal home for half of the UK's typhoon force and the Royal Navy's entire submarine service, and to its people, who have always answered the call of duty to serve their country. Around 10,000 regular personnel and 4,000 reservists call Scotland home and this number is growing.

By Editor

Dear Hazel,

As précised: the view of *The NAVY* is, regrettably, this may all be too little, too late. No matter how welcome.

Britain ripped the heart out of the UKAF 10 years ago under SDSR and PM David Cameron. Having broken the covenant, the UK apparently cannot recruit, even if it had the ships, tanks, aircraft, regiments to fill - which it does not. Naval designs are ...not big enough and too few - they do not fit with the crews needed to populate them. Even if the UK has the will, it may no longer have the capability.

You may like to ask the High Commissioner to respond, or the Defence Attaché? *The NAVY* would be delighted to publish such a paper:

Britain was its Navy, and the Royal Navy was Britain. Ergo, without its Navy and Royal Marines, what is the purpose of the UK?

The carriers that probably cannot be protected by the RN in its emasculated form, are more a risk than an opportunity. They are both too small and not big enough – and, having largely destroyed the FAA, the UK apparently cannot find enough pilots even if it could buy enough aircraft. For good historical reasons, it is probably best that the UK considers carefully the increasingly less cold party here in the Indo-Pacific. The HMS QE deployment to the region may have unforeseen risks.

Kind regards

Aeneas.





THE NEED TO BUILD THE SECOND TIER OF THE NAVY ORDER OF BATTLE – MINE COUNTER MEASURES

By Mark W Linden

In a speech delivered at Johns Hopkins University in 2018, Gen James Mattis (Retd) stated “Great-power competition is recognised widely as having been the root cause of the First World War, a powerful contributor to the Second World War, and a core element of the Cold War.” [1] Mattis refers to the serious possibility of a war with a major power on the horizon. His statement resonates as we increasingly recognise the parallels of today’s geo-political environment with the pre-World War II period and the recent overt and coercive international behaviour of China and Russia. The Defence Strategic Update 2020 contends, “...our region is in the midst of the most consequential strategic realignment since the Second World War, and trends including military modernisation, technological disruption and the risk of state-on-state conflict are further complicating our nation’s strategic circumstances”. In Naval terms, what was a contingent strategic plan for 10-15 years hence, is potentially being dusted off and contemporised for today’s order of battle.

INTRODUCTION

The recently announced Force Structure Plan (FSP) states the Government will build the Royal Australian Navy’s (RAN) fleet and strengthen its lethality with the suite of advanced platforms and guided weapons. [2] The plan also highlights the ability to deploy Naval task groups to ‘shape, deter and respond’. Sea control over our Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) to the North, i.e. the ability to use the sea in reasonable safety [3] would rely on the strategic deployment of task groups such as carrier battle groups with our Allies. Notwithstanding our ‘big fleet’ capability, should an existential threat impact Australia’s SLOC, or the need arise to support a large amphibious manoeuvre and to sustain it from the sea, or an adversary strike closer to home, our Navy will require little ships: a second tier. An essential component of this second tier is an effective minecountermeasures (MCM) capability to guard against the imposition of sea denial along our SLOC, near sea approaches and our ports.

When analysing the threats to Australia’s SLOC throughout the archipelagic waters to our North and closer to home, it is clear the sea mine poses a credible threat. In terms of sea denial, [4] the threat of maritime mining in our waters is a cheap and accessible option, easily deployed and hard to defeat. In the mine warfare fight of the future, part of the second tier, the eight dual role MCM-hydrographic vessels heralded in the FSP will not be enough. In fact, as we dispose of the current capability, the new capability becomes a zero sum gain. We therefore need more MCM vessels. This paper offers a case to enhance the new MCM-hydrographic capability with Minesweeper Auxiliaries (MSA).

LOOKING AFT – A VIEW FROM THE SWEEPDECK

The most revealing testimony to Australia’s vulnerability to offensive minelaying was the assessment of the captain of the WWII German raider/ minelayer Pinguin. Captain Ernst-Felix Kruder stated:

“Australia’s vulnerability to mine attack was so clear that it would be a worthwhile and decisive act to make the long reach to South and South East Australia for the sole purpose of laying mines off Sydney, Adelaide and the Southern part of Tasmania.” [5]

German raiders laid minefields off New South Wales, Hobart, along the Victorian coast near Apollo Bay, Investigator Strait near Adelaide and in Bass Strait. The German strategy was effectively delivered and initiated a disproportionate response. Between 1940 and 1941, German mining resulted in the sinking of four merchant ships and severely damaged one. [6] Germany’s offensive mining effort initially required 10 ships to be taken up from trade and converted for minesweeping. A further 26 civilian ships were requisitioned by the end of 1940 and these were followed by 36 purpose built Bathurst Class minesweepers. By the end of the war the response to enemy mining by Germany and Japan required 70 ships operating from six ports. [7]



MSA Carole S, MSA Wallaroo and MSA Koraaga (in more Naval appearance) at anchor in Broken Bay during workups.

MINING

Our Navy’s mining capability; the ability to target shipping or deny an adversary access to our ports and SLOC has declined. Since relying on stocks of Mk36 Destructor kits (a Vietnam era mine-fuse kit for a Mk82 bomb) in the 1990s, the only real innovation has been the use of the Stonefish Exercise Mine (SEM). The SEM was introduced into service in 1997 and achieved operational acceptance in 1998. The use of the SEM for exercising our MCM forces and for tactical development in mining has established a good level of sovereign knowledge and expertise. The SEM is still in-service today, but it is arguably moving toward the end of its life. Today’s modern mines can be laid in deep water and use a combination of magnetic, acoustic, seismic, pressure, optical and other sensors. These types of mines do not just target classes of ships; they can also target specific ships. Notwithstanding internal efforts to reinvigorate the mining capability over the years, little if, any development has taken place. It is therefore heartening that the FSP recognises the requirement for a new mining capability and this should be hastened.

MINE COUNTER MEASURES (MCM)

Similarly, our MCM capability has slowly deteriorated over the last decade. As my former commanding officer in Rushcutter wrote in ASPI’s The Strategist in April of 2020:

“...it was recently announced that the four remaining Huon-class vessels will not have life of type extensions but will be retired within five years. A very modest program to introduce a minesweeping and mine-hunting capability is running years late and will provide an almost experimental-level capability of small individual technologies.” [8]

This is a very poignant reminder of the demise of our second tier.

Table 1: MSA General Description - IMFOR Auxiliary

MSA	LOA	Taken Up From Trade	Crew	Origin
Brolga	28m	Purchased	12	ex-MV Lumen - QLD Maritime Safety Authority Light Tender
Salvatore V	23m	Leased	9	Trawler/ long liner - Ulladulla, NSW
Koraaga	22m	Purchased	9	ex-Grozdana A - Ceduna, SA
Waverider	16m	Leased	8	Prawn Trawler - Yamba, NSW
Carole-S	20m	Leased	8	Trawler – Sydney, NSW
Bermagui	21m	Purchased	8	ex-Nadgee II - Hobart, TAS
Wallaroo	3m	Purchased	8	ex-Grenville V Long Tow Tug -Singapore
Bandicoot	30m	Purchased	8	ex-Grenville VII Long Tow Tug -Singapore

CRAFT OF OPPORTUNITY (COOP)

The Craft of Opportunity (COOP) project commenced in the late eighties as the Interim Minesweeping Force (IMFOR). This was part of the Navy’s Order of Battle until a credible minehunting capability arrived in the *Huon-class* minehunters. The project could take wooden hulled trawlers up from trade and fit winches, a degaussing system and mechanical and magnetic-acoustic sweeps within 48 hours. These vessels were also fitted with a rudimentary combat system (a minesweeping control/ tracking system) and communications, and they could deploy a side scan sonar in a secondary MCM route survey role. The vessels of the IMFOR, as reflected in the RAN Bridge Cards of the time, included the Minesweeper Auxiliaries (MSA) in Table 1.

All of the IMFOR sweepers deployed Double-Oropesa mechanical sweeps and magnetic-acoustic influence sweeps. The Australian Acoustic Generator, a world class Australian technical innovation in terms of being able to emulate acoustic signatures, was later developed to enhance their acoustic influence capability. This addition made the COOP’s magnetic-acoustic minesweeping capability one of the best available. The sweep’s effectiveness was exemplified by the despairing look on a USN Chief Mineman’s face, when *Salvatore V* and *Koraaga* successfully swept all of the USN laid mines during operational evaluation!

The sweep’s wider acceptance was demonstrated by the Royal Navy (RN) when they operated the RAN’s own sweeps (rebadged the Shallow Water Influence Minesweeping System or SWIMS) During the Gulf War in 2003. The RN used these Australian sweeps to clear the Shat Al Arab waterway and the port of Um-Qasr. SWIMS deployed ahead of the more sophisticated minehunters in a precursor magnetic-acoustic minesweeping role against the threat of the modern Iraqi Manta mines. The Royal Navy selected SWIMS because it was effective against modern mines, available, could deploy from any suitable vessel, it could operate in shallow water and did not require a power source. The Royal Navy deployed the sweeps remotely from aluminium vessels similar to those in service



MSAs Salvatore V (far) and MSA Koraaga (near) Conducting mechanical team sweeping 1989.



MSA Salvatore V sweep deck closed up and cleared away.

with their Royal Engineers and fitted them with a rudimentary remote control-auto pilot system: simple and effective.

SAILORS, SALT AND 'WOOD'

As with the Australian designed magnetic-acoustic sweeps, the second tier ships need to be simple and effective. Degaussing MSAs was achieved with permanent magnets and the magnetic-acoustic sweeps 'clipped' onto the vessel requiring no power. In terms of crewing, the MSAs were spartan. Hot bunking or sleeping where you found somewhere comfortable was standard and it was not out of the ordinary for the Officer of the Watch to check his set and rate from the last fix then take a quick peek at the evening roast cooking in the adjacent oven. The flexibility of these vessels is also exemplified by the ability to rotate the crew underway. The vessels could remain underway 'out sweeps' and rotate in a fresh crew by sea boat to maximise the vessel's capacity to provide minesweeping effort within the allocated time for the task.

The MSAs were also suitable for a broad number of operations due to their fuel capacity, long range, the heavy lift capacity of the main winches (approximately 20 tonne bollard pull), hydraulic cranes, their large spacious holds (previously fish rooms) and their simple mechanical and electrical systems. The ship's propulsion and electrical systems usually consisted of a prime mover, two diesel alternators and a simple navigation suite and autopilot. Most of the vessel's mechanical and electrical systems could be jury rigged, if not repaired underway. Together with the trawlers, *Brolga* acted as a MCM support ship. She was ideally suited to this role as a former light tender. She could raft up and host two off task MSAs at anchor and she could be fitted with mine rails to act as a minelayer and recovery vessel. Mine laying evolutions were regularly practised and *Brolga* recovered minefields very efficiently utilising her substantial deck crane and large centre hold.

As trawlers and ex-civilian craft, the MSAs kept their civilian livery for most of their Navy working life. Although sailing under a white ensign, the MSAs were inconspicuous at sea and their unremarkable appearance worked to their advantage on many occasions. When conducting exercises, major fleet units were often caught off guard by a trawler on the horizon, first challenging them, and then requesting "...permission to proceed in accordance with previous instructions." On one occasion, a Northern local newspaper reported the capture of a long liner and arrest of the crew after

we had come alongside, when in fact; the local water police had shown their hospitality by providing a paddy wagon for a lift into town. Civilian livery provided good cover. [9] To illustrate this, I can only offer a quote from a Brisbane prawn trawler transmitting over 27 MHz whilst we conducted route survey operations to seaward of Caloundra: "*Who are these blokes? I haven't seen this one up here before, the bastards better not be shooting away [deploying the trawl] over my spot!*" These anecdotes accentuate the usefulness of civilian designed craft to quietly go about Naval business in time of conflict: it should not be underestimated.

SECONDARY ROLES

Aside from minesweeping, the MSAs lent themselves to a variety of secondary roles. These types of roles are reflected in the employment of the second tier ships in the book *The Rag Tag Fleet* by Ian W. Shaw, in which little ships supported United States and Australian Forces throughout the Pacific in WWII. Examples of these types of roles are presented below:

- a. **Search and rescue.** *Brolga* deployed from HMAS Waterhen to provide search and salvage support for the RAAF 707 crash off East Sale in October 1991 and, IMFOR equipment was employed to search for an F-111 in Northern Australia. IMFOR vessels were also tasked, through AMSA, to search for missing mariners on more than one occasion.
- b. **Route survey of ports and approaches.** *Brolga* and *Koraaga* deployed from January to December 1992 (almost a year deployed) to conduct route surveys of the ports Brisbane, Townsville, Cairns, Thursday Island, Weipa, Darwin and Snake Bay in the Tiwi Islands.
- c. **Support to RAN Clearance Diving Teams and US Marine Very Shallow Water (VSW) Diving Forces.** MSAs supported diving operations on a regular basis. The capability to support clandestine diver insertion due to their unaltered trawler appearance and their ability to support a forward deployed diving team was utilised on multiple occasions.
- d. **Heavy Lift.** MSAs recovered mines and bottom objects such as clearing mine like objects from shipping routes, laying and recovery of buoyage and datum laying for Sub-miss and Sub-search operations.

e. **Joint Operations Support.** During Operation BELISI II, 1999 - 2001 the MSAs *Wallaroo*, *Bandicoot* and *Brolga* rotated through the Bougainville Peace Monitoring Group (PMG) as the resident support vessel on station in the Port of Loloho. The MSAs were utilised in a variety of support roles:

- i. Security Vessel including stand by evacuation and transporting small teams.
- ii. Insertion/ extraction of Peace Monitoring Team patrols in remote coastal villages.
- iii. Maritime patrol and reconnaissance throughout Bougainville and patrols through Bougainville Strait and Buka Island.
- iv. Escorting Army LCM8 landing craft.
- v. Logistical Support - reprovision PMG out stations.

When we look at their primary role in MCM and the wide variety of other roles these 'little ships' undertook, they acquitted themselves very well. Sadly, the practice of taking vessels from trade to use in MCM operations has not been practised for over 10 years and the number of available wooden hulled trawlers suitable for minesweeping has significantly diminished. Noting this, it would be very difficult to provide a pre-cursor minesweeping capability in the numbers required for our priority ports, our choke points or even sections of our sea lines of communication if mined during a conflict. Australian flagged coastal vessels today number approximately 14, down from 100 thirty years ago. [10] With the overwhelming reduction of suitable Australian flagged coastal vessels plying our waters and the reduction of available wooden hull trawlers, one could reasonably argue there is no longer a fleet of small ships to requisition for MCM and other roles. In terms of sovereign knowledge in the art of minesweeping, our knowledge now lies with a declining number of uniformed grey beards.

LOOKING OVER THE F'OCSE

In simple terms, MCM operations consist of pre-cursor operations, mine clearance and mine disposal. Although pre-cursor minesweeping can clear buoyant mines, it is primarily a line of effort to minimise the statistical threat of a mine by running down the ship count clock inside magnetic-acoustic mines. This minimises the initial threat to minesweepers or minehunters in the clearance phase. Minehunting is a well-practiced method of localising, classifying and removing the mine threat. The development of unmanned minehunting technologies and the general political imperative to keep the sailor out of the minefield delivers challenges of its own. [11]

Minehunting. Localising the threat with a specialist minehunter, equipped with a high definition-short range sonar and controlled by skilled mine warfare personnel is an effective capability. The minehunter is designed to maintain a low magnetic and acoustic signature and it can proceed at a speed of advance through a minefield at around four knots. On detecting a sonar contact, the minehunter can manoeuvre around the contact to gain a higher definition sonar picture and positively classify it as non-mine or mine prior to deploying a disposal vehicle or recovering the contact for exploitation. With a good team, this evolution can be completed in less than half an hour. The utility of minehunting was shown in 2011 when the Royal Navy HMS BROCKLESBY and HMS BANGOR, fitted with a Sea Fox mine disposal system, deployed on operations



MSA Brolga rigged for minelaying.

in Libya. Whilst conducting operations off the port of Misrata, the minehunters located and destroyed a mine and a torpedo. [12]

Australia's *Huon-class* mine hunter, based on a modernised Gaeta design, is a platform preferred by a number of Navies including Malaysia and the United States. HMAS HUON commissioned in 1999 as the first of six Australian MHCs. Regrettably, two of these little ships were laid up in reserve in 2011 and have now been sold. This was a questionable decision, as is the decision not to commit to a life of type extension for the remaining four minehunters. The MHC has proven to be a very capable minehunter and they have acquitted themselves well in exercises as recently as 2019 in Japan and Korea. With the report that they are to be decommissioned within the next five years, the demise of the current minehunting capability can only be seen as inviting risk because the replacement 'shared role' platforms will dilute both sovereign MCM knowledge and a unique MCM capability.

Unmanned Vehicles. Unmanned vehicles such as Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (UUV) and Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUV) are coming to the fore as we the search for new technologies to keep our sailors out of the minefield. As opposed to conventional minehunting, these vehicles are employed in different roles; mine search and mine disposal. In the mine disposal role, UUVs are already an efficient means of disposing of mines when combined with a camera and the sonar on a dedicated minehunter. However, I offer here mine searching is not minehunting, and unmanned vehicles may not necessarily deliver the force multiplication necessary to match conventional minehunting. Unmanned vehicles may take the sailor out of the minefield, but they take far longer on



MSA Brolga pilotage ex-Cairns.

average, to search and clear a suspected minefield to an acceptable percentage of clearance and a palatable level of confidence in the required time.

This is because the search area requires multiple 'runs' or searches along predetermined tracks. Side scan sonars fitted to these vehicles are prone to leaving 'holidays' or gaps along these tracks, so more 'runs' are required. This takes time. The post mission analysis of the resultant data also requires time to process. In a tactical sense, should a clearance be required within a specific time imperative, the MCM planners may only have the time to define the boundary of the minefield. This means leaving mines in the water until there are sufficient resources available to clear them. MCM forces then have to ensure against 'strays', the hunting phase takes longer to initiate and a second phase clearance effort is required to declare 'safe waters.' [13] These technologies also prompt the question of how many mines will be programmed to detonate upon encountering an unmanned vehicle with a clearly discernible narrow band acoustic signature emanating from their propulsion system.

When compared with a conventional minehunter, the time taken to identify and clear a minefield with confidence will only be shortened if these unmanned vehicles are deployed in a persistent manner to surveil SLOC and choke points. We will need far more of them to achieve this if we are gain warning time, but clearing the threat will still take time. Time in MCM operations is a precious commodity. It follows that the ability to identify, localise, classify and dispose of sea mines using unmanned vehicles, efficiently and effectively, is a long way off.

LOOKING TO THE HORIZON

As a maritime nation, modern mines pose a direct threat to our national wellbeing by attacking our strategic centre of gravity – the economy. A minelaying operation directed against Australia, similar to that deployed against us in WWII, will require a disproportionate response as soon as the first mine located. If we take a view through the lens of a conflict in the South China Sea, the new Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) will likely support tier one combat operations and our patrol boats are likely to be employed in support of other operations around the archipelago. If a mine threat materialises in this scenario, eight dual role MCM-hydrographic ships with unmanned technology and no supporting pre-cursor MCM capability does not bode well.

Add to this the possibility of mining our SLOC in waters throughout archipelago to our North or closer to home, and an ominous situation develops. It will not take long for Australia's major Northern ports, their anchorages and their surrounding navigational approaches to become unnavigable or be closed. We will also have to prioritise the ports and SLOC to keep open in order to maintain maritime trade, deliver military capability forward, but importantly to move essential war materiel to Australia to sustain the fight. We should remember the eight MCM-hydrographic shared role vessels noted in the FSP are not dedicated MCM vessels. We will need more MCM little ships: the second tier.

In light of this, we might re-examine the requirement for MSAs and consider an Australian 'little ship' building initiative (along with the current Naval shipbuilding initiative) to provide sufficient numbers for a second tier. The second tier would not only strengthen our MCM capability, but also provide for the variety of other duties that have been required of the Navy, and will be required again, in a contingent conflict. ■

About the Author: Commander Mark Linden, CSM RAN joined the Navy in 1979, as an Underwater Weapons rating, is mine warfare qualified and an MWO/ MTO officer. His sea postings include *HMA Ships Melbourne, Vampire, Curlew, Rushcutter* and command in *MSAs Salvatore-V, Koraaga, Carole-S* and *Wallaroo*. Operational deployments include OPs BELISI II (2000), CATALYST (2006-7) and MANITOU (2014-15). He is a RANSAC graduate and holds an Executive Masters of Business from the Queensland University of Technology.



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- [10] <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-04-26/shipping-out-unions-industry-concerned-by-run-down-in-fleet/11046456> accessed 19 July 2020.
- [11] The notion of taking the sailor out of the minefield has always puzzled me. This is because in my 40 odd years of Naval service, primarily in MCM, the first time you have located a new minefield is when a mine has sunk or damaged a ship full of people. Therefore, people populate the minefield and even more people in other vessels are required to support damage control efforts or recover survivors. This requires a 'break-in' to ensure a clear a path to the stricken ship or survivors. A similar break-in or breakout is also required for entering or exiting newly confirmed mined areas through a narrow corridor known as the 'swept channel'.
- [12] <https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/About-the-Royal-Navy/-/media/Files/Navvy-PDFs/About-the-Royal-Navy/TheRNContributiontoLibya.pdf> accessed 22 July 2020.
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THE LONG MARCH TOWARDS ENDGAME: CHINA AND THE INDO-PACIFIC

By Jonathan Wilson

As the 2020s unfurl, the People's Republic of China (PRC) is a littoral power with ambitions for global reach. It wields a burgeoning navy that some analysts say will eclipse the US Navy (USN) by the middle of the century. At the time of writing, not a week goes by without headlines citing "tensions" in the South China Sea (SCS). Though the PRC appears to be the regional hegemon with now-militarised artificial reefs, its position in the SCS and in the wider region is far from guaranteed. This essay will argue that the situation in these contested waters and the Indo-Pacific region is fluid and uncertain. The future of this vast space will depend on the actions of the two superpowers, while regional middle powers may have the final say. Multiple players operate on multiple fronts, in a complex and multi-layered game occurring primarily in the maritime domain. The future of Australia's near-abroad is in limbo.

INTRODUCTION

Incidents between the US and Chinese forces in the SCS, such as a near collision between two warships in 2018 [1], are becoming more common. Of course, incidents arising from Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) are not new. They were a staple of Cold War rivalry and occasionally led to some dangerous encounters. [2] While the Cold War never went hot, numerous, high casualty hot wars by proxy engulfed various parts of the globe. The defining feature of the Cold War was the bipolar structure of the conflict – two nuclear-armed superpowers called the shots.

Animosity between China and the US is no longer an open secret, thinly veiled by strong trade linkages. The larger Indo-Pacific region is a point of strategic competition between China and the US with many middle power stakeholders and an unpredictable North Korea in play. The paradigm for the regional contest is multipolarity.

A previous essay in *The NAVY* [3] dealt with the instabilities in East Asia. This essay will focus on the wider Indo-Pacific region that is the heart of Australia's interests and the forefront of national foreign policies that span an arc from Delhi to Washington. The Cold War is long dead. The era of multipolarity is well and truly here.

THE INDO-PACIFIC AND CHINA'S GEOGRAPHY PROBLEM

For thousands of years, China, in its myriad forms, struggled with geography. After a turbulent history and a "century of humiliation," the PRC controls vast swathes of land, that includes Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, the Tibetan plateau, along with its reclaimed former possessions, Hong Kong and Macau. [4] Not only is it a strong land power, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) exercises control over its coastal waters.

The Indo-Pacific region is vital to PRC strategy. This area includes the western Indian Ocean and the Eastern Pacific, as well as Northern Asia and Southeast Asia, with Australia as the Southern bulwark. [5] The epicentre of superpower rivalry is the SCS, where the PRC has established seven island outposts, through dredging and construction of military bases and port infrastructure. [6] The



The Arleigh Burke destroyer, USS DECATUR (DDG 73) left, and PLAN LANZHOU (DDG 170) (right) in a 2018 FONOPs incident.

militarisation of the islands in these sea lines of communication (SLOCs) are perceived as vital to China's "Island Chain Strategy".

The "Island Chain Strategy" is borne out a sense that China is geographically constrained by three island chains. [7] The first island chain comprises the Kuril Islands, Taiwan, the Japanese archipelago, the northern part of the Philippines, and the Malay Peninsula. To highlight these constraints, PLAN warships passing through the East China Sea towards the Pacific will transit through Ryukyu islands and the American naval base at Okinawa, which is home to a large stockpile of anti-ship missiles. [8] A former Japanese naval chief of staff stated that PLAN submarines would not be able to approach the deep waters of the Pacific through the Ryukyu islands, northern and southern Taiwan, or through the Luzon Strait without detection by the US and Japanese navies. [9] This has implications for China's nuclear deterrence.

US officials assert that China plans to expand its influence beyond the second island chain, which includes Japan, Micronesian islands and Indonesia. [10] PRC planners are concerned about the vulnerability of SLOCs, particularly the Strait of Malacca and the Indian Ocean, through which most of China's petroleum imports transit. The PRC views these routes as being vulnerable to a US and allied blockade. [11] China, therefore, seeks to contest USN control of the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean, according to US and Chinese military officials. [12] For now, the PRC is tightening its grip on its peripheries.



China and the island chain (Image adapted from Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) mapz.com – Map Data: OpenStreetMap ODbL (2019)).

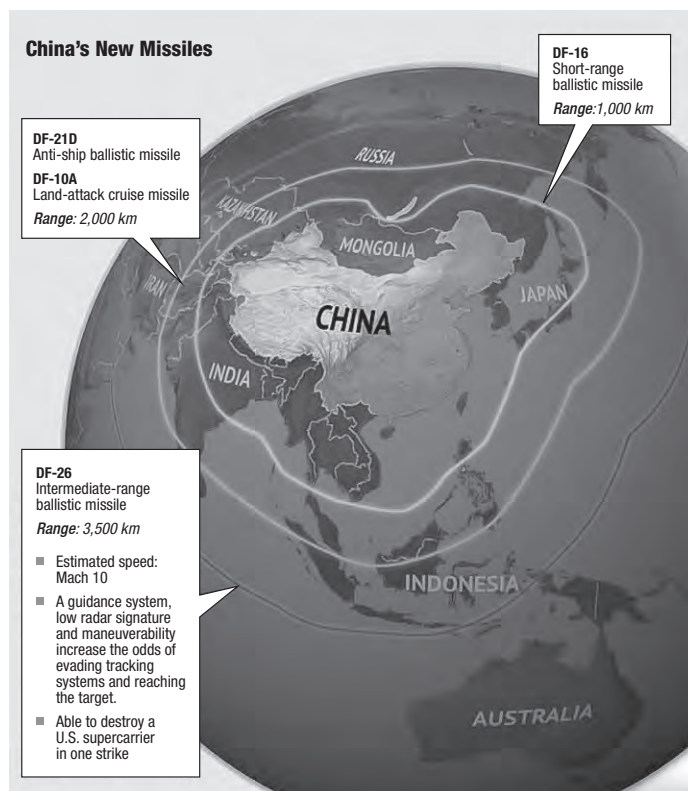
THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

The SCS is a maritime commons through which goods to the value of \$3.4 trillion transit annually. [13] It is a vast 3.6 million square kilometre space, half of which is claimed by the PRC in its 2000 kilometre-long nine-dash line. [14] The nine-dash line is disputed by the governments of the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Taiwan, each with competing and overlapping claims to parts of the SCS. [15] The United Nations Convention of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982 states that all nations have a right to resources within a 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) extending from their shore. [16] Where there are conflicting claims, the states involved are encouraged to negotiate. Consensus has not yet been reached between these governments, which affects the cooperation that is needed to counter China.

In June 2020, the US Secretary of State made an official statement rejecting Beijing's maritime claims to the SCS and expressed solidarity with Southeast Asian allies, saying: "The world will not allow Beijing to treat the South China Sea as its maritime empire". [17] Whether the regional powers will jump on the bandwagon and risk drawing the ire of Beijing remains to be seen. The ASEAN political bloc is unable to counter China effectively. ASEAN needs consensus of its ten member states to act, and Laos and Cambodia, who act as voices for the PRC, have the power of veto. [18] Dr. Rory Medcalf asserts that the alignments and strategies of the middle powers will also determine the outcome of the region. [19] The disarray among governments in Southeast Asia may play well to China's advantage in securing the region as its backyard.

CHINA: A LITTORAL POWER WITH GLOBAL ASPIRATIONS

With its maritime militia, coast guard and fledgling navy, the PRC controls the East China Sea, the Yellow Sea and the SCS. [20] Since 2009, PLAN ships have conducted anti-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa. [21] However, the PLAN is far from being an expeditionary force.



Map showing the range of China's new missiles image adapted from Stratforwww.stratfor.com (2015)).

China's navy is numerically greater than the USN. At the end of FY2020, the PLAN had 360 battle force ships to the USN's 297. [22] Of course, ship numbers – and ship tonnage for that matter – are a somewhat antiquated method of comparing naval capability, as noted by veteran researcher Ronald O'Rourke. O'Rourke asserts that naval capability is a function of numerous factors such as the types of ships, aircraft numbers, quality of maintenance and logistics, crew training and initiative, doctrine, and quality and complexity of exercises. [23] China does not have an extensive history of naval experience to draw upon. China's political and military leaders acknowledge that America has more powerful ships and supremacy at sea. [24] In China's peripheries, however, the PLAN has the advantage of being close to supply lines and mainland military assets.

Of China's many formidable land-based units, the latest anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs) may be a game changer in the SCS. The mobile DF-21D has a range of more than 1500 kilometres. [25] The DF-26, has a range of more than 4000 kilometres, with both conventional and nuclear applications. Analysts note that China's ASBMs can be used in concert with maritime targeting and surveillance systems, that would give China the ability to target aircraft carriers and other US and allied surface vessels. These units could also be based on the outposts in the SCS, which may have the same deterring effect that mainland-based units now have on US carrier battlegroups.

The PLAN operates the largest submarine force in Asia, with 66 in service as of 2020. The US Office of Naval Intelligence estimates that China will have a force of 76 boats in 2030, during a period of shrinking US submarine numbers. [26] One analyst noted that "even the least sophisticated submarines are apex predators in the naval environment". [27] While the PLAN's submarines may not yet be cutting edge, or even as capable as their Russian counterparts [28], they are a force to be reckoned with.



HMAS BALLARAT (FFH 155), right, and Indian Naval Ship SHAKTI (A57) conduct a replenishment at sea on the final day of phase one of Exercise Malabar 2020 (Image LSIS Shane Cameron).

China's navy is numerically and technologically impressive, but the degree to which it will alter the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific is yet unclear. China reportedly lacks certain naval technologies and still uses foreign suppliers for some engines, weaponry and electronics. [29] The PRC's carrier building program is ambitious, and more are slated for production. However, observers regard the flagship, LIAONING, as more of a "trainer carrier" that would be vulnerable in a US-China conflict. [30] Arguably, China's navy, at least in the 2020s, can be viewed as a prototypical navy.

It will be decades before the PLAN can sufficiently challenge the US beyond the first island chain. Indeed, a retired PLA Officer stated: "China's navy prowess is limited to its shores and is too early to be a force reckoned with on the open sea". [31] The PRC plays a long game and, as one observer noted, for every new Chinese navy vessel launched off its coasts, there is less room for the US Navy in these waters. [32]

THE USN AND THE INDO-PACIFIC

The USN remains a strong presence in the Western Pacific. Whether America can guarantee a "free and open" Indo-Pacific in the long-term is looking less likely. Some observers argue that FONOPs in the SCS, coupled with diplomatic protests, do little to change the PRCs resolve. [33] The island outposts are a force multiplier that can house aircraft and anti-ship missiles. At any time, the disputed islands could be turned into a diplomatic incident between the PRC and America, or other claimant states. [34]

The USN operates with increased caution around the coasts of China. In 1996, during Taiwan's first democratic elections, the PRC fired missiles towards the coastal waters of the island nation in protest. Washington dispatched two aircraft battlegroups to the island and Beijing desisted. Now, China's land-based fighter jets and anti-ship missiles are a credible deterrent to American and allied

naval activities off China's coasts. Carriers no longer deploy to the Yellow Sea or the Taiwan Strait, after multiple warnings from the PRC. [35] The debate as to whether carriers are still prime fighting assets or sitting ducks continues.

The USN is aiming for a force of 355 ships by 2030, though it is moving towards a more distributed architecture. [36] The fighting force will move away from high value, larger surface combatants, to smaller surface vessels and unmanned platforms. One observer asserts that nothing short of a war between the US Seventh Fleet and the PLAN can dislodge the PRC from their fortified islands. [37] The options for thwarting PRC control within the first island chain are limited.

A POLICY OF CONTAINMENT

The US is pursuing a policy of containing China's expansion in the Indo-Pacific. America has moved more fleet units to the region and is engaging allies and other regional navies. [38] The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue is a US-led initiative involving India, Japan and Australia. The four powers conduct naval wargames, such as a 2020 exercise in the Philippine Sea, with Japan and Australia, and an exercise with India west of the Malacca Strait. [39]

Given America's declining submarine force and Japan's impressive fleet, O'Rourke views Japan as one partner that could greatly enhance regional security through a closer security relationship. [40] As a resource thin nation, it requires open SLOCs for energy and food security. A staggering 90 per cent of Japanese oil needs passes through the SCS. [41] Allies, like Japan, are equally concerned by China's intention to control East Asia and the SCS, so there is scope for greater cooperation through more streamlined conventional deterrence.

US-led alliances are crucial to maintaining an open Indo-Pacific. Paul Dibb of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute argues that



Indian naval ships and USS NIMITZ (CVN 68) conduct a passage exercise (PASSEX).



if the “in the event of an unprovoked Chinese attack, if the US doesn’t come to the defence of the Taiwan that will mark the end of the alliance system in the Asia-Pacific region”. [42] He asserts that the ANZUS treaty would be in jeopardy if Australia refused to contribute militarily to a US defence of Taiwan. Therefore, closer military cooperation is vital to curbing PRC expansionism beyond the first island chain.

CONCLUSION

A future in which the SCS is controlled by island fortresses and a constabulary PLAN is not in Australia’s or regional powers’ best interests. It is prudent to maintain cordial relations and trade ties with China. Appeasement, however, is fallacious. Military control of the SCS will increase uncertainty in these SLOCs. Australia must continue to play a role in intelligent diplomacy, naval exercises and regional cooperation.

Clausewitz’ famous dictum – “war is a continuation of policy by other means” [43] – falls short when describing the endgame of high stakes competition in the Indo-Pacific between America and China. War between these two nuclear-armed powers would be the failure of policy and diplomacy. The means could be catastrophic. ■

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Joint Chiefs Chairman General Mark Milley US Army.

U.S. CEDES CONTROL OF WESTERN PACIFIC TO CHINA

Joint Chiefs Chairman General Mark Milley US Army stated (4 December 2020) that its “military must embrace robotics and artificial intelligence to maintain superiority over China”. [1] This followed a paper by Vice Admiral Joe Sestak USN (Ret.) PhD – a longstanding friend of Australia and Japan – that “the U.S. has lost assured command of the Western Pacific” seas to its great power rival. [2]

Joe Sestak, a national security adviser to Bill Clinton, wrote that by continuing to pursue “unattainable force levels”, the US Navy had lost command of the seas to China in the Western Pacific. He went on to say:

“China’s pace of war is the speed of light through cyberspace, leaving US forces blind and deaf, while America’s is 30 knots, taking weeks to arrive at a fight,”

“...the public commons of cyberspace” had already made it this century’s strategic challenge for the US, but domination of 5G technology presents an even greater threat.”

“The 5G network’s vastly enhanced processing speeds would enable hypersonic attacks and the activation of missile defence networks in response. It would increase the capability of AI to empower swarms of robotic attackers, or killer drones capable of facial recognition. In addition, Beijing’s aim to master quantum computing decryption capability by 2030 would leave the US completely exposed”.

In such a scenario, “the US wouldn’t even know if Beijing had decrypted all of their protected weapons systems, and read their most highly classified communications going back years. In effect, America is being held hostage without even knowing it – until without warning one day its

entire, now-defenceless digital systems are rendered completely useless, and its military capability rendered irrelevant”.

General Milley, who is expected to keep his job under Joe Biden, in response stated that:

“[the world was] in the middle of a fundamental change in the character of war” in which those who best mastered cyberwarfare – precision-guided munitions, drones, and advanced satellite communications — would win the battle.

“If you put in artificial intelligence and you do man-machine teaming, add that to robotics, put in precision munitions and the ability to sense and see, throw in a few hypersonic weapons, you’ve got a fundamental shift.” in the global battlefield.

Sestak observed that “...China [is] now capable of controlling the South China Sea in all scenarios short of war with the U.S.”

“Because of China’s development of capabilities in a new domain that touches every walk of life – from critical infrastructure to the economy – the effectiveness of a U.S. fleet based primarily upon force structure seems diminished, if not altogether gone.”

General Milley recognised that “smaller forces, widely distributed, and very difficult to detect” were key to a future US military, as were land-based units stationed in Australia, The Philippines and Vietnam operating long-range precision missiles to prevent China from taking control of the Western Pacific in a conflict”.

USN FIRST FLEET RESTORED

On 3 Dec 20, President Donald Trump announced the finalisation of the build-up of the US Navy’s presence in the Pacific and Indian Ocean seaways to Australia’s north, to ward off any further expansion of China’s interests.

U.S. Naval Secretary, Rear Admiral Kenneth Braithwaite USN (Ret), also expected to keep his position in a Biden administration – recognising the threat of Chinese interference and that it made sense to ramp up patrols ... in concert with India, Australia and Japan – announced the reformation of the Navy’s 1st Fleet for the first since 1973.

“In order to improve our posture in the Indo-Pacific, we will reconstitute the 1st Fleet, assigning it primary responsibility for the Indo and South Asian region as an expeditionary fleet”.

“This will reassure our partners and allies of our presence and commitment to this region while ensuring any potential adversary knows we are committed to

global presence, to ensure rule of law and freedom of the seas.”

The U.S. 1st Fleet will dedicate more American ships and sailors to waters off South-East Asia and west to the Indian Ocean, including the Strait of Malacca through which much of the region’s oil and cargo supplies transit by sea.

Key points:

- More USN ships, sailors and Marines will be sent to waters off South-East Asia and west to the Indian Ocean
- The US Navy last stationed the 1st Fleet in the Pacific region in 1973
- The threat of Chinese interference made sense to ramp up patrols in concert with the Quad nations of Japan, Australia, and India.

TRUMP LEGACY

Despite almost continuous attacks on outgoing US President Donald Trump’s policies, he has made good on his promise to the U.S. people (and the Global West), to:

- Not get involved in any new wars;
- Resist Chinese expansionist-adventurism (Wolfpolitik);
- Take on Chinese Political Economic Warfare (PEW) strategies, through Trade Tariffs; counter industrial espionage; and returning industry to the U.S.
- Withdrawing U.S. Forces from the lost, long wars of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria.
- Taking head-on Iran, its nuclear ambitions, and its proxy armies of the IRGC and Hezbollah;
- Taking forward and opening up diplomatic relations – for the first time since the Yom Kippur War – between Israel and neighbouring (Muslim) Middle Eastern and North African states;
- Seeking to modernise and expand the U.S. Armed Forces (including Space and Cyber) – while encouraging recidivist NATO nations, e.g. the UK, to spend more on Defence and modernising their own forces.
- Supporting the Indo-Pacific Command in developing relations and expanding its footprint across the Indo-Pacific. Including with Quad nations, Australia, Japan and India.
- Despite a poor start by PM Malcolm Turnbull, being a good friend to Australia, Japan, India and Taiwan, as they find themselves “at point of the Dragon’s Spear”. [3]
- The signing of a five-year agreement on health, infotechnology (Cyber) and

security between the U.S. and Taiwan (Nov, 20)

The one area Trump may yet be found wanting is North Korea. Yet, as China openly reinstates illicit trade with North Korea (embargoed by the UN), what little advances Trump made, may have:

1. bought some valuable time – and;
2. represent more than anything achieved diplomatically with North Korea since the 1990s.

In response to the U.S.-Taiwan Agreement, Lu Kang, a CCP foreign ministry spokesman, said:

“We have already lodged stern representations with the US government.”

Mr Li Kexin, Minister, Embassy of the People's Republic of China to the U.S., went further, threatening:

“that if the US sent ships into the port of Kaohsiung (Taiwan's second biggest city), China would attack the island: the day that a U.S. Navy vessel arrives in Kaohsiung is the day that our People's Liberation Army unifies Taiwan with military force.”

Li Kexin must feel incredibly emboldened to make such a threat on U.S. soil, and not face any diplomatic consequences.

500 FLEET NAVY

In the *2018 National Defense Authorization Act* (12 Dec 17), President Donald Trump mandated the ‘as soon as practicable’ – realisation of a 355 Ship U.S. Navy. This included aspirations for a 100 submarine USN Fleet – effectively reducing the ratio of submarines to surface ships from 1:4.8, to 1:4.6; and submarines to FF/DDs, from 1:2.7 to 1:2.5.

Building on this, General Milley said

“the US would also have to expand its fleet from 300 to 500 by 2045, with at least a quarter of all vessels unmanned, robotic ships”.

Dr Sestak responded, stating

“building more ships was not the answer given it was the ships’ networks and data – rather than the hulls themselves – that were now the primary target.”

Sestak also recognised that China's ballistic missiles, and the quieting of its submarine fleet, means the U.S. war plan in the Western Pacific is now limited to fighting largely outside the first island chain (where Taiwan lies) with long distance strikes until forces could amass. In other words, the strategic advantage has swung dramatically in China's favour in 2020.

The Versatile Modular System (VMS) [4, 5] appears increasingly to offer the only viable



Reformation of US Navy First Fleet (Nov 2020).

and affordable way for Western Navies, such as the USN, RN, and RAN, to rapidly expand their Fleets. 2045 is too late for the USN and the RAN (with its prolonged *Attack-class* program). These ships are required today, now, if the Global West – specifically, Taiwan, India, Japan, Australia, and the U.S. – are to respond and deter Chinese aggressive expansionism and *Wolfpolitik* (see editorial).

ANSON, writing in both *The NAVY* [6] and the British *Naval Review* – makes a similar point. Arguing that, “in order to rapidly rescale Western Fleets and mobilise Industry, a capitalised VMS program is essential”. Restoring not just scale – but placing sophistication in the system and networks, and affordability into the hulls. [4] As also argued for by Sestak [2]. The key issue all five papers argue for, is scale (numbers and size) and affordability in being “able to afford to take the losses (Politically, Militarily, Economically and Industrially”:

If a nation cannot afford to [Politically, Militarily, Economically and Industrially] lose these capabilities, they will not be able to use them. And vice versa.

The capitalised VMS model is the only viable response Western Navies have today. Attributed to Churchill but probably first quoted by Abba Eban, an Israeli Diplomat, is that:

“Men and nations behave wisely when they have exhausted all other resources.”

Otherwise quoted as:

“You can depend upon the Americans to do the right thing. But only after they have exhausted every other possibility.”

It is to be hoped that the Global Western Liberal Democracies, specifically the countries mentioned in *Flash Traffic*, have finally arrived at a similar place? Moreover, financial resources are returning to the “safe havens” of the U.S., the UK, and Australia –

giving these countries an opportunity to reinvest locally in the *Fourth Industrial Revolution*, now well underway – given impetus under the cover of COVID-19.

A juncture can be seen as being like a weather front moving through. As Sailors, this provides choices to sail round; catch the winds, or steer for the centre. Standing still or stasism is not an option – leading ultimately to nihilism, zombiism and strategic failure. [5]

If the empirical rule of thumb is “for every one submarine, there should be five surface ships”, and “for every one submarine, 2.5 Frigates and Destroyers (or equivalent escorts)”, then it may also be suggested that the cost per Basic Mass Empty (BME) of current Frigate and Destroyer designs should be commensurate [with merchant ships]. In other words, a 6,900 Tonnes Frigate such as the Type-26 / *Hunter-class* costing about \$750M, as opposed to \$1,860B a ship (depending on exchange rates). If the submarine crew per BEM rate is considered to reflect fitting crews to ships, then the complement of such a ship might be 85. However, this does not assume radical alternative design and costing models as suggested by VMS™ designs, which go much further:

reflecting a disaggregation of capability – while retaining capability within the Network. [5]

A single *Hunter-class* with a crew of 110, would be the equivalent of 2.5 VMS Frigates, costing the same as a single Hunter, each with a crew of 44. This marks a fundamental design change – a critical juncture with previous designs.

The last Revolution in Naval Affairs (RNA) was led by the revolutionary designs incorporated into the FFG-7 class, and the Israeli Navy's Sa'ar / *Reshef-class* of missile boats. [4,7] It occurred at the chaotic transition between



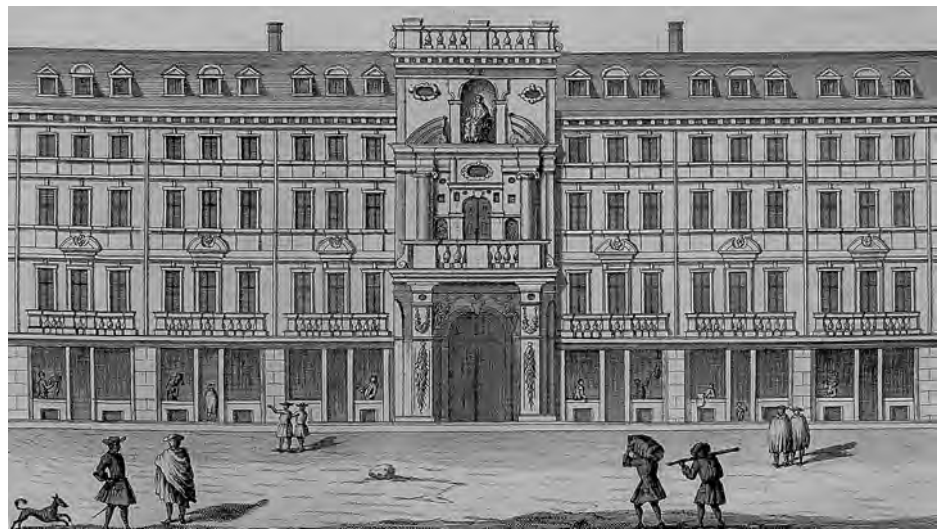
the Industrial Age (1920-1965), and the Information Age (1970-2015). [4] Disparaged at the time, the FFG-7 recapitalized scale in numbers and size; enabling President Ronald Reagan to build his 600 ship Fleet. FFG-7s should have been replaced by new designs in the 1990s but were not – resulting (at 8% DCI) in the halving of fleet numbers. For example, 6 RAN FFGs to 3 DDGs. When investment in Research, Adaptation and Design has been maintained, DCI has been reduced. For example, in submarines resulting in a DCI below Historic Inflation. [8, 9 & 10] Concomitantly, submarines have become comparatively more affordable than warships.

Table 1: Potential USN and RAN Fleets – Restoring Design Balance and Capacity by VMS™ design.

USN	280	355?	Future VMS™ Balance?	RAN	2019	Future	Future Balance?	Future VMS™ Balance?
Aircraft Carriers (ATCs)	13	16	32	LHDs / ATCs	2	2	2	3
Amphibious Assault Ship (ATCs)	26	32	64	LSD (Heavy Lift)	1	1	1	4
Attack Submarine	60	77	77	Submarine SSs	6	12	12	12
SSBN	19	24	24	AORs	2	2	4	5
Cruiser	25	32	55	DD	3	3	4	7
Destroyer	79	100	170	FF	8	9	12	13
Dock Landing Ship (Heavy Lift)	14	18	60	OPVs	0	11	14	16
Mobile Base Ship	1	2	6	MCM	6	6	6	12
Littoral combat ship	13	16	30	Hydrographic	6	6	6	12
MCM	13	16	35	Patrol Boats	15	0	0	16
Patrol Boats	15	19	50	Total	49	52	61	100
Submarine Tenders	2	3	3					
Total	280	355	606					

Ullman [11] considers that it is necessary to deal with the strategic “Black holes” caused by hollowing out. He is right but the order may be wrong. First it is necessary to give our people the tools by creating and abstracting the designs and thinking necessary to build and sustain a Fleet Refresh Rate at no more than 14-15 years, as determined by the ‘natural order of things’ and an empirical peacetime DCI of 8%. Numbers need to be set-aside from the cosy political-finance-defence-industry complex. A balanced U.S. Fleet of 500-600 ships of different designs may do the same and more, differently. And the same might apply to the RAN – with such balanced VMS designs supporting a possible future Fleet of a hundred or more ‘affordable’ designs.

The answer will not be 280, 355, 500 (52, 61 or 100) but different – hence the step change. Achieving this will restore thinking, invention, and productivity to industries and



Formation of the Bank of England integrated with The City of London and Admiralty (1694).

readiness to fleets, exactly by preventing political, economic and military hollowing out (and Black holes forming). It will require a whole new tempo and strategic way of critical thinking, designing, capitalizing and scaling – that will also potentially be of value and applicable to Merchant Fleets. [5] This will prove our foremost Deterrence. The Allied navies can do this. They have the designs, passion, ingenuity and people – including in industry, commerce, and in the financial sectors – to create the step change and invent anew from this Critical Juncture. The alternative – staying on the same course – is simply not worth thinking about!

GREENWICH STATION

Prime Minister Boris Johnson (19 Nov 20) announced plans for the largest Defence spending increase since the Cold War, to:

“end the United Kingdom’s “era of [strategic] retreat.”

In a speech to Parliament, Johnson announced an additional \$31.5 billion in Defence spending (10%) over the next four years, adding to the current annual budget of \$80 billion.

The Defence Review committed to:

- eight Type 26 frigates;
- five Type 31 frigates;
- new supply ships for the Royal Navy’s two Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers;
- a “next generation of warships,” including “multi-role [MCM / Hydrographic] research vessels” and a Type 32 class of frigate.
- new integration of cyber [offensive and defensive] operations;
- new capabilities to deploy networked drone swarms.

It is all too little, too late. The RN can no longer recruit from its traditional maritime regions, so badly was the covenant broken by the 2010 Strategic Review under PM David Cameron. It also cannot build big ships, such as the replacement Fast Fleet Replenishment ships, in British shipyards. The only way the UK can now lead is by grasping the VMS nettle, and taking a leaf from market capitalised shipbuilding. As it did in 1694; so kickstarting the Industrial Revolution. ■

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MERCHANT NAVY DAY, 3 SEP 20

The significant and invaluable contribution merchant seafarers make to Australia's economy and society, both during wartime and at peace, is recognised on Merchant Navy Day, marking the anniversary of the sinking of the first Allied merchant vessel during World War II, on 3 September 1939.

With more than 98 per cent of the nation's imports and exports carried by sea, the COVID-19 crisis has highlighted once again how vital seafarers remain to Australia's security and economic success.

During World War II, one-in-eight Australian merchant seafarers sacrificed their lives – a casualty rate higher than those suffered by any of the armed forces – in an effort to maintain supplies of goods and materials vital for the war effort.

MUA national secretary Paddy Crumlin commented:

"During the first and second world wars, more than 800 Australian merchant mariners sacrificed their lives for the Allied cause,"

"The role of merchant seafarers remains just as important during peace-time, as they transport the goods and resources needed to keep the Australian economy ticking.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of this invaluable work, as global supply chains were stretched by an unprecedented crisis.

"Unfortunately, very few large trading vessels still fly the Australian red ensign, undermining our economic sovereignty as supply chains become increasingly reliant on foreign owned, crewed and flagged ships.

"A smart island nation needs a strong merchant navy – a lesson that is as relevant

in the midst of a global pandemic as it was during both world wars."

"As the number of Australian-crewed vessels declines, not only are quality jobs lost, but the country is left vulnerable to global conflicts or economic shocks that disrupt maritime trade."

"During past conflicts, Australian-owned vessels crewed by Australian seafarers were available to ensure our supply lines remained in place, but decades of neglect has seen the industry hollowed out."

"Australia is now almost entirely dependent on foreign flag-of-convenience vessels, often registered in tax havens and crewed by exploited visa workers on as little as \$2 per hour, to move cargo around the coast."

"One of the key lessons of World War II was the importance of having skilled, experienced seafarers to maintain supply lines during times of crisis. It is essential that as a nation we don't forget it."

Lest We Forget

BRING BACK THE AUSTRALIAN MERCHANT FLEET

In a much unreported speech, Bill Shorten blamed "decades of economic rationalism" for Australia's dwindling fleet of merchant ships, claiming the nation has become a "soft touch" on protecting the seafaring industry. [1]

Bill Shorten went on to say:

"it was unacceptable that an island nation like Australia should have so few ships when a country like Norway maintained a fleet of 1800 merchant vessels". He stated that "he was sick and tired of literally decades of economic rationalism saying that you can't have a seafaring industry" He retorted:

"Well, the rest of the world hasn't given up on their seafarers, only we have. Switzerland, they're landlocked – they've got more mountains than they've got ports – if they can have 405 ships, why is it beyond the intellect and the imagination of Australia's business community and Australia's political leaders..."

Bill Shorten wanted the fleet for:

- reasons of national security;
- to provide a domestic source of skilled Australian seafarers;
- more environmentally sustainable and economically efficient transportation in terms of fuel costs than roads.

The requirement for an Australian merchant navy has a long history, with a debate running right back to Federation. [2]

There have been many government inquiries addressing the issue that invariably come back to one simple fact: Australian-flagged ships with Australian crews cost more.

The Australian International Shipping Register (AISR) was created in 2013 to provide a competitive registration alternative for Australian shipowners who mainly engage in international trade. Large integrated transport companies have a lot of political influence. Australian industry, including the National Farmers Federation, has argued against increased costs and loss of competition in the freight industry, with competition from overseas shipping keeping costs down. [2]

Military bases and airfields in northern Australia are heavily dependent on fuel-imports by sea. Tankers are also essential to support naval operations. "There's real value in having a capacity to deliver your own fuel". [2]

There is a strong case on national security grounds for moving tankers onto the AISR with government subsidies. This would be a tiny fraction of the amount that road and rail receive from public funding. A study might be made of not only the importance of new tankers but the feasibility of moving more domestic freight back to sea. [2] ■



HMAS JEPARIT acquired by the Department of Shipping and Transport to carry supplies for the Australian forces engaged in Vietnam War.



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AUSTRALIA – DEFEAT OR JUNCTURE? PART 2

By Dr Neil Baird

This series of COVID-19 discussions was undertaken between Dr Neil Baird, industrialists, senior Defence personnel, legal experts, public servants, diplomats and academics between September and November 2020. The papers provide a commentary on the strategic failure of Australia politically, diplomatically, economically, and industrially over the past 20 years.

Since the first article appeared in the Oct 2020 Issue of *The NAVY*, there have been some developments – yet the much hoped for COVID-19 changes to Industrial Relations and Australia's Industrial, Research, Defence, Business, University, Migration and Media Base – including to the Federation and State models – have been slow in coming forward. Indeed, some would argue that Australia runs the risk of regressing to an unsustainable 1970s model – neither nationalised nor capitalised. At the same time, Australia is also at existential risk of being isolated in the Indian-Pacific Oceans. Cut loose by an entrenching U.S. – under whatever leadership that emerges from the Presidential elections and the Trumpian excursion. Divided from South East Asia by Chinese Communist Party policies, designed to punish Australia by example. Not since 1903, has Australia had such an opportunity to renew and revitalise its sovereign identity and Federation. Yet the hope may again be squandered in a post-COVID recovery, as it was lost in the battlefields of France in 1917.



Admiral Chris Alexander Barrie AC RAN - Last Navy Chief of Defence Force, 1998-2002 (Image RAN).

INTRODUCTION

Neil: Thank you for agreeing to take part in this second discussion. I have set out my thinking and would ask you to address these matters, specifically as they relate to Defence, our Industrial Base and to Navy.

What strikes me today, with the release of the Brereton Report into alleged SAS (and Commando) war crimes and unlawful killings in Afghanistan between 2006/7 and 2014/15, is how “we are all ADF now”.

Precisely, it is all about Army when it suits Army and the SAS is their crown jewels, that they have fought so hard to protect and build up. But suddenly, when the chips are down the problems are all the ADFs – Navy, and RAAF as much as Army. This is a nonsense.

It also, perhaps, spells the danger of creating the ADF in the first place and doing away with the Single Service identities, and their own political secretaries.

It is an Army problem. More than half of all Chiefs of Defence Force (CDF) in the past two decades have come from Army. None from Navy...

And Governors General and state governors too...

Yes. CDF wrote to all ADF personnel about the matter – as if sharing the blame meant not having to apportion and ascribe the blame. “We are all guilty now...”

The point I was making, though, was that many of the Army senior command, and CDFs, and Chiefs of Army have all come from a Special Forces background. Yet, when called out, it is no longer Army's problem but ADFs. That is deceitful and harmful to the other Services and indeed to the many non-Special Force Regiments and Corps in Army.

BRERETON REPORT

Neil: I recall what the Army did after Vietnam. It was a war where Australians – many conscripts – fought with integrity, competence and honour. Yet when they came home, they were treated abysmally by fellow Australians. And Army, rather than learning and retaining these (mostly men), got rid of them and secured future commands about armour and infantry and “people like us”. It was quite disgraceful. Could this happen again?

There is every likelihood it will happen again.

I concur. Look at the Brereton report, it essentially exonerates the officer caste, many of whom are now senior officers, and exclusively blames troopers, corporals and sergeants.

Breaker Morant all over again...



East Indiaman REPULSE (1820) in the East India Dock.

Are we honestly to believe that the SAS operated in a command, moral and values vacuum for over 10 years – where no officers asked questions, or raised concerns, or took part in the decision making and planning processes of these operations?

On command, leadership & management – leading such a potent force would be the ultimate leadership challenge. One acknowledges that soldiers using “thrown-downs” went to extraordinary lengths to cover up their actions, and had no doubt gotten away with it for many years. However, it is patently unacceptable for officers and SNCO’s to say “we didn’t know”. It poses only one question: “WHY didn’t you know?”

Yes, as also upheld under International Law and the U.S. Supreme Court (decision 7-2) in terms of the Yamashita Standard, which states:

The highest-ranking officer is accountable for, and should be prosecuted and convicted of the crimes of every officer and soldier under his command, even if he/she is unaware of that the crime, or was aware and actually gave orders to stop it. Ignorance of the actions of his/her subordinates and failed attempts to stop them are not a defence.[1]

These very same senior officers, legal advisers and polities should have known this and advised accordingly before they began the witch-hunt, apportioning blame and stripping honours.

My indication is that it was apparently much worse in the Commandos, than even the SAS – yet this has not yet come out. The Commandos were essentially contracted out to a [foreign] agency.

It still comes back to at least two generations of Army Officers (from 2000 onwards) many of whom have gone on to enjoy senior positions in Army and the ADF. And yet we are led to believe that none of them knew or did anything – even to ask what was going on? In my book that is a dereliction of command and duty of the highest order.

Neil: I think, generally, we should also apportion more blame to the Howard Government, both for its infatuation for using the SAS and the ridiculous decisions to completely unnecessarily involve Australia in Iraq and Afghanistan in the first place. That was criminal idiocy. Our Kiwi cousins were smart and brave enough to keep out. They weren't thrown out of ANZUS as a result. Context is critical but how does this relate to Navy and ADF?

In this instance, Neil, I believe it is fundamental to the question. Look, in 2004, the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal blew up in Iraq. You may recall that this was a high security prison taken over from Saddam Hussein and being run by the Coalition (of the Willing) by U.S National Guardsman and Reserve Military Police under a Reserve Brigadier General, Janis Karpinski. It was a disaster at the time, and remains so.

I recall this – it is a long time ago though...

In the end the Brigadier General and a handful of National Guardsmen (a number of them women) were dismissed. It never went any higher than that. Yet context was key, and evidence since uncovered indicates that the orders and way in which the prison was run came from the top of the administration. Political, Diplomatic and Military. The context – subsequently found to be in clear breach of the Geneva Convention – was established through Executive Order. Yet only a handful of National Guardsman were ever brought to account – many of whom had probably never been outside Continental U.S. before they ended up in Iraq running a Prison.

I thought when it occurred, that the only answer was to pull the prison down, admit [our] mistakes and apologise. None of this was done and, like Guantanamo, it became a recruiting sergeant across the Muslim world...

And those who asked questions of the pol-mil command chain at the time – of course – were moved on. Nothing to see here, etc, etc. Sound familiar?

Neil: How does this relate significantly to the questions we are seeking to address?

PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANIES

It relates to ADF, because of the way in which – as identified in the Oct 2020 issue of *The NAVY* editorial, Paper I, and the article by Alston on VCs – Defence, ADF, and Navy have essentially been privatised. Or, at best, treated like Private Armies – or Private Security Companies (PSC).

Neil: I can see how this might change the context – perhaps you might elaborate?

In 2006/7 there was a concerted effort in both the UK and U.S. to address the matter of Private Security Companies (PSC). A Green Paper was drafted, with the intention of this being taken forward for legislation as a White Paper. Critically, many PSC operatives were and still are drawn from the U.S.; UK; Australia; Canada and South Africa, it:



0524 21 August 2017 USS JOHN S. MCCAIN (DDG 56) involved in a collision with the Liberian-flagged tanker Alnic MC off Singapore (image USNI).

1. Sought to bring PSCs under some form of Command and Control, in Theatre;
2. Looked to Licence individual companies to an agreed set of standards that also created a revenue stream to Defence. Since Defence would undertake the licensing.
3. Licensed individual operatives for their skills sets – requiring each operative to re-certify every two years, again through Defence.

What it was attempting to do was place PSCs under accountable command, and a licensing system that paid for itself. Without robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Of course, it went to the very heart of the U.S. Administration, billion-dollar contracted military complex (CMC), and to the whole Shock and Awe methodology for fighting wars on the cheap. It was never going to be enacted, for the exact same reasons that led to Abu Ghraib and prevented a proper investigation.

Neil: The whole thing sounds a bit like the East India Company on steroids. We know how that ended, in what India calls today, its First War for Independence.

Shock and Awe tactics assumed that there would be no need for a Phase 4 stabilisation after the conflict.

It was worse than that. As I recall, General Eric K. Shinseki (Chief

of U.S. Army) and Admiral Lord Boyce (Chief of UK Defence Staff) at the time, both reference detailed Phase 4 planning. All of which was thrown out for Shock and Awe, underpinned by contracted support and PSCs.

Exactly, by 2006 the second largest force in Iraq was PSCs and, by 2011, it was the largest force.

For locals, one westerner in ray-bans and carrying a gat looks pretty much like any other westerner, whether in a regular Army or not.

Neil: I think what you are saying – and there is growing evidence to support this – “is that privatisation and contractorisation essentially drove selection of the Force on the Ground”. At the same time, Government Departments, such as DFAT – no longer constrained by requirements to employ their own Defence Forces – sought to use PSCs they could control. Who they could use as they liked, avoid accountability, and provide deniability. All totally immoral

Exactly so. Not forgetting that the Coalition in Iraq had to fight two bloody urban warfare campaigns in Falluja because of rogue PSC elements, or mistakes made by them.

At the same time that privatisation and contractorisation – commencing in the 1980s – drove selection and choice, it also, through outsourcing, removed capacity from Defence Forces. They were pared to the bone by the processes of Performance



UK no longer able to build RFA Fleet Solid Support Ships in British Shipyards (image MOD).

Management (Lean, 6 Sigma, Agile etc.) driven by the accountancy and management consultancy companies. They dominate Defence Forces to this day. They are the real power – unaccountable and hidden from the pol-mil command chain.

The impact on Navy was profound – the USN and RN in particular. The wars meant that peace time forces (tanks, crews, ships, aircraft etc.) with a design life of 25 years, were being consumed at three times that rate. In other words, after 8 years fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan they had run out. There was no additional funding, so funds for new ships, service hospitals, pensions, pay, submariners, aircraft, recruits etc. were transferred to keep armies fighting. As it turns out, simply to prevent them losing. Ships like the British Type 23 were run on, and on, and on...

By 2010, the UKAF had run out. It was the same in the U.S. Armed Forces, by 2011/12. Think of the ageing ships and plethora of collisions brought about due to inadequate training and increasing operational demand on both the USN and RN. Many of these ships (and crews) should have been replaced years ago – as seen by the collapsing ship build rate in the U.S. In the UK, shipbuilding hardly exists anymore. So much so, that they cannot build their next generation Fleet Auxiliaries in the UK, even as now directed.

As an aside, there were times in the UKAF where the majority of forces fighting in Afghanistan were Royal Navy (mostly Engineers and Logisticians), Fleet Air Arm (Apache (flown by Royal Marines), Harrier, and Seaking) and Royal Marines.

On the ground, fatalities became politically unacceptable. Success for a deploying battle group was measured not in campaign success, but lack of fatalities. How can you win hearts and minds like that – when all you are doing is feeding and fighting to look after and protect yourself?

One deployed European Troop Contributing Nation actually employed PSCs to protect their own troops on the ground – rather than take any attributable losses themselves. How can you “win” like that?

In Australia – as in the U.S. and UK – the political emphasis was on Special Forces. They were separated from Army mainstream

and politicised to do tasks for which they were never designed; nor intended. They were sexy. All the polities wanted to be associated with them.

As noted in the Brereton Report, SAS Squadrons were repeatedly rotated through with little respite. It is important to note all RA Infantry soldiers are trained in counter insurgency ops. This training commences at No. 1 Recruit Training Unit for all recruits, and is refined further in Initial Infantry Training. So, it is a fair comment that the work being performed by SASR in Afghanistan is not unique to the SF elements. It can be performed very effectively by regular mounted and dismounted infantry.

Why then was SASR allowed to treat OP SLIPPER as “their train set?” They could have been relieved by any number of Australian Regular Army and even Reservist RA Infantry units as “fresh relief”. On the contrary, I fear that the SAS Squadrons had been so frequently cycled through this theatre that they became desensitised to killing.

They were watch on stop on. The context had changed, perhaps irrevocably. It was driven more and more by immoral decisions and advice, made and taken as much by senior officers, as by management consultants, the Prime Minister and Cabinet Office, the “Top Four” accountancy companies, central bankers, and Polities. They were all to blame – yet only a few corporals and sergeants will be hung. Nothing to see here, Guv, move along!

Collectively, they sold out the Global West and the covenant between our people, Commonwealth, and our soldiers, sailors and aircrews.

Neil: Voltaire (1759), commenting on Britain and Admiral Byng RN, said: “mais dans ce pays-ci il est bon de tuer de tems en tems un Amiral pour encourager les autres”. He did not advocate killing a few sergeants from time to time to punish a few. Yet that is probably what Army is going to end up doing.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

I appreciate we are off target by a country mile – yet when we talk about Industrial Relations, it is as important to examine the employer as it is the employee. And who represents both sides of the table.



Supply Ships offloading munitions and supplies at Milne Bay, Papua, September 1942 (Image AWM).

Neil: Agreed. Look, Hal Colebatch in his 2013 book “Australia’s Secret War: How Unions Sabotaged Our Troops in World War II” (Quadrant Books, Sydney) drew immediate ire from political pundits and academics alike: “It was lacking in evidence and detail, poorly written, and clunky”. Yet some of the assertions, for those who fought at the time, like my Father who fought at Milne Bay and beyond as a “chocco” infantryman, rang true. He saw his boss, Major General Cyril Clowes, fired by the pathetic Blamey at the direction of MacArthur after winning the Battle of Milne Bay handsomely at minimal cost in Allied lives and treasure. Not terribly unlike today. A first-class general sidelined because he wouldn’t toe the party line. In contemporary parlance, he was not woke enough. I fear this remains the case, or maybe worse?

Worse.

The Australian Trade Union movement – unlike in the UK and the U.S. and most of Europe – was never reformed. There are indications that, like the British Trade Union Movement, it was deeply infiltrated and sympathetic towards Moscow and the Soviet Union by the 1970s. This has never gone away.

And unlike the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Germany – and ironically the role played by the House of Lords and honest obits in the UK – this has never come out in Australia.

The wharfies – like their counterparts in the London Docks, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Belfast – destroyed their own industry through greed and corruption. To this day many unionists come from the UK. Some having risen, with their Glaswegian accents, to the top of the Labor party. This may be no bad thing – but union power and disruption to Industrial Relations also remains to this day.

At the start of COVID, the Government made an honest attempt to resolve these huge additional costs borne by Australian Industry, when compared to their South East Asian and European competitors. It appears to have come to nothing.

This, along with the behaviour of the banks, accountancy and management consultants, and senior polities – many of whom have never had a proper job in their lives – is destroying our economy and future for a long-term sustainable, knowledge-industry based recovery.

Just as the union movement leadership has relied largely on immigrants, so too has much of our labour market. Think of it, our immigrants – including those fleeing the Middle East – are often better educated than their Australian counterparts, and more willing to do whatever job they can to make a go. And to give back.

I agree. Recent analysis is showing that Australians from rural communities and universities are doing better than their city-educated contemporaries – many from better universities and backgrounds. The reason appears to be that regional workers are more prepared to do the small jobs – working with less prestigious companies – than their city cousins. The result is, of course, that these youngsters get on and make the big breaks later on, exactly because they have the “Plus”.

My own observation ties in with this. Many young, often female graduates in the big cities, are putting their lives on hold. Rather than take a job with a lesser company – in other words not one of the “Top Four” – they are pursuing more and more Masters. For what end or purpose – other than greater debt, from a Higher Education sector that (unlike 40 years ago) is no longer in the first division? I know what candidate I would rather take on, and that is the regional graduate who has tried, perhaps joined the Navy – and kept at it during this time. Creating the plus that we so desperately need amongst our graduate population.

Neil: We need to spend more time, I believe, on the failings of the Higher Education Sector and Industrial Relations. Including putting forward practical recommendations that will revitalise both sectors. It is not that we do not need Unions – but when the Unions become too big to fail, like the banks, they have failed. Particularly when their membership also continues to fall year on year. Perhaps Paper III?

I also want to explore the culture in Defence, today. One of the critical matters raised in Paper I was that every consultant employed by Defence costs at least \$100,000 more than a public servant or ADF equivalent. How have we come to this? At the same time, despite One-Defence, we have consultants and public servants firing consultants and reservists on a days’ notice. This cannot be right. What does this do – it certainly cannot encourage loyalty.

ON CASG

Neil: In 2016 we smashed a failing organisation with a specific and different (some might say) broken culture – the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO) – together with a marginally more effective organisation working to a different time constant, known then as the Capability Development Group (CDG) into a single entity: The Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group (CASG). Has this worked?

When considering the commercial acumen of CASG, ask yourself this question: if you were to buy shares in a company with a rather large list of failed high value CAPEX projects, would you want your super going into it? (or would you buy shares in it?)

Ergo, it speaks to CASG’s inability to manage projects effectively.

I guess my major concern is that there is a risk that industry will walk away from Australian Defence as a “high risk” client.

Neil: Much of the commercial shipbuilding industry already has.



HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH entering Portsmouth Harbour (passing the Round Tower) to be stationed in Far East – WWII Malaysia all over again? (image USNI).

Ack. As we also nearly saw in 2014 when the Boeing company in Chicago made serious preparations to shut down the BDA entity, and focus exclusively on commercial aircraft sales (which relatively speaking is a very, very small market for them.)

Despite numerous attempts to professionalise their workforce, CASG continues to suffer the effects of being a large public sector agency which fails to understand the basic nature of private sector business and commerce.

This is clearly evident in the existence of the so-called “list of Projects of Concern”. Companies routinely have the threat of being placed on this dreaded list waved at them as a means of complying with overtly onerous contractual conditions. For the avoidance of any doubt, this list affords all blame for underperforming projects squarely on prime contractors whilst exculpating CASG of any contribution.

Tellingly, the mere existence of this “list” is unique to CASG.

Consider the obverse scenario of a mining company such as Rio Tinto, Newcrest or BHP having such a list, wherein all underperforming projects are blamed exclusively on contractors. The General Managers and other executives on the client side responsible for these projects would be dismissed without further redress.

Neil: I seem to recall that BP did exactly this when they created their Business Units, all of which came tumbling down when the Deepwater Horizon rig blew up in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. They were “beyond petroleum”, indeed. More recently, their chief economist has said BP is getting out of oil – complete madness.

Just look at their share performance for where the market wants them to be.

Sadly [X] appears to be heading in the same crazed direction as BP. That is the real reason, not the caves, why the top three execs have been fired. Several of their big projects, notably in [Y], are a complete shambles.

Yes. Think of the ridiculous policy of the UK to phase out all new ICE car sales by 2030. It will simply make the rich richer and the poor poorer, and less mobile. The polities have no empirical clue as to where the power is coming from, how it is to be paid for, or highly toxic batteries disposed of and what it will do to remaining British industry. Let alone the lack of base load capacity – filled, presumably, by non-sustainable wood chips, gas and nuclear.

I agree and although we are a bit off track, Private sector companies (unlike government departments, privatized industry, accountants and governments) understand that it is impossible to apportion ALL blame for ALL failed projects exclusively on contractors. Rather, it is commonly understood that clients are at least equally culpable for capex and sustainment projects which fail to meet objectives.

Neil: It sounds depressingly like the Victorian State Government, or indeed how many of our Government and public service organisations are being run.

Agreed, except a “blacklist” of underperforming companies simply does not occur outside of CASG. Moreover, CASG’s “blacklist” fails to appreciate two key factors:

1. The standard ASDEFCON (Australian Defence Contract) suite of contractual terms remains absurdly onerous on contractors, to the point where contractors are doomed to fail in almost all circumstances. To couch it in simplistic terms, the Commonwealth can default on its obligations and walk away blameless – yet Contractors must have the veritable Sword of Damocles hanging over their head for the duration of the program. This is despite numerous attempts to reform these contractual terms; and
2. Many of these “projects of concern” ultimately end with a Deed of Settlement. This deed apportions blame somewhat more equitably and therefore, realistically but at considerable cost and waste of time.

CASG has conducted numerous attempts at professionalizing its workforce. All have failed, and been consigned to the waste bin of bureaucratic reform projects. The solution is neither simple nor expeditious:

1. Hire the right people, starting with an emphasis on candidates with experience from working in industry. Specifically, people who viscerally understand how industry works, and how fair and reasonable profits are made;
2. Understand that the ASDEFCON terms are totally unacceptable, but are only tolerated by industry on account of CASG being a “monopoly client”. In almost any other industry, the client would be greatly challenged to get contractors to sign-up to such terms; and;
3. From that understanding, the ASDEFCON terms must be discarded once and for all, and replaced by terms more along the lines of FIDIC [2] or Australian Standard (AS) terms. It’s worked in the US and UK, and the Australian market is primed for such a reform. However, such a reform will never succeed unless and until there is root & branch attitudinal change in CASG.

CONCLUSIONS

Neil: Thank you. We are covering considerable ground – I can only hope that some of this is being read and understood by the so-called professional-political class?

We do need to get back to Industrial Relations and the Australian Trade Union Movement. There is much more that needs uncovering.

We also need to understand the complete failure of basic Government Project Management. I have on record – as also detailed in *The NAVY* regarding the *Attack-class* submarine program – that all the recent NSW infrastructure projects were predicted to blow out by the amounts they have (100% or more), years before the first sod was turned. How can it be that the rest of the community can make accurate predictions of failure – and the Government sector simply cannot? At this size of blow outs, the whole sector is at risk of becoming a rort – corruption cannot be ruled out. All of this is money lost – that can no longer be spent on ships, hospitals, universities, research etc.

Although off topic, I was amused by Boris Johnson’s big announcement re. a UK defence expenditure boost. What will \$31.5 billion get them? Why on earth are they thinking of stationing a carrier in the Far East? It will be a prime target for both the Chinese and the Russians – WW II Malaysia all over again!

We are in a period of mobilisation. Things are looking as bleak today, as perhaps they did for Australia in 1942 and at the height of the Cold War in the late 1970s. I want to explore the Directive system that used to apply – when there were clear lines of authority and command. Not divided by accountancy and management consultancies, contractors, and private armies, from a core moral understanding of the Discipline of War and its leaders. For example, could today someone like Essington Lewis rise to the top and take forward / revolutionise the Defence industrial sector? Or would – as appears more likely – he be killed off at the soonest opportunity. Exactly because his success would expose the miserable failing of Government agencies like CASG, the APS and senior ADF Officers?

I agree. If I may illustrate, the SAS problem seemingly stemmed from a confluence of the following:

- An almost narcissistic belief in their “elite” status and the cult of the warfighter;
- A virtually unlimited pool of resources, on demand; [from pet acquisition consultants working directly for PM&C];
- A total lack of any accountability [to Defence and Army];
- A misplaced belief at Whole of Government level that they were the default force element for counterinsurgency ops; and
- The unremitting cycling of SASR through this particular theatre, which resulted in soldiers becoming de-sensitized to killing.

Neil: Thank you. This segues to my final thought: “what is the point of expensive staff courses and Master’s level ADF graduates, if they are never listened too?” Their advice discarded by the senior officers, polities, and APS they serve – in favour of an ever-expanding elitist group of poorly brought up, over-educated, expensive consultants. Many “on loan” from the PM&C? This is all part of the context we spoke of earlier – and part of the conditions leading to the moral failure of the SAS. Indeed, the Commandos may, like the SAS Second Squadron, not survive. ■

About the Author: Dr Neil Baird has spent 43 years as a global maritime publisher, commentator and event organiser as co-founder, with his wife Rose, of Baird Publications, now www.bairdmaritime.com. He has been a commercial fisherman, briefly a naval reservist, a journalist, and, always, a keen yachtsman. He has been involved with the NLA for more than 30 years, including serving several years on its Federal Advisory Council with the late John Strang AO. Currently, he comments on matters maritime, tends to his investments, and is writing a maritime history of Australia.



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A SAILOR'S LIFE: WORLD WAR II –KOREAN WAR–POST WAR

By Gerry Shepherd with his daughter Jane Headon

In 1945, the final year of World War II, Gerry Shepherd was fortunate to commission the 'show pony' of the Royal Australian Navy. The Tribal Class Destroyer HMAS BATAAN was given the nickname 'show pony' by sailors as the ship was always getting the royal treatment. The BATAAN was christened by Jean MacArthur, wife of General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in the South West Pacific. The ship's name celebrates the gallant stand by American and Filipino soldiers on the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines in 1942.

INTRODUCTION

The Australian Navy's heavy cruiser, HMAS CANBERRA was critically damaged by numerous Japanese Navy shells during a battle off Guadalcanal in 1942. The survivors were evacuated and the next day the CANBERRA was sunk by an American torpedo. In 1943, to honour the CANBERRA, the Americans named their newest heavy Cruiser USS CANBERRA. Around the same time a new Tribal Class Destroyer for the Australian Navy was to be named Kurnai, after an Australian aboriginal tribe, following the tradition of the RAN's other Tribal Class Destroyers, HMAS ARUNTA and HMAS WARRAMUNGA. However, when the US Navy named their new ship USS CANBERRA, the Australian Government reciprocated by changing the name of the KURNAI to be the HMAS BATAAN. Jean MacArthur always had a soft spot for our BATAAN, evidenced by her visiting the ship twice whilst we were alongside in Tokyo.

The commissioning Commanding Officer (ship's captain) of the BATAAN was Commander Henry Burrell, who later became a Vice Admiral and went on to serve at the helm of the Navy (Chief of Naval Staff) from 1959-1962. Like King George VI, Henry Burrell had a stutter, but he never let this get in the way of his naval career.

After commissioning, the BATAAN sailed for the Philippines (Subic Bay and Manila Bay) in July 1945. When ashore in Manila the crew had to carry Army water bottles as the Japanese had only recently been defeated in the Philippines and there was fear that they had infected the town water supply with typhoid. This was later found to be untrue.

BATAAN patrolled around the Philippine islands looking for enemy warships to no avail. Whilst we were in Manila, envoys from the Japanese government arrived to discuss and understand the Terms of Surrender prior to signing. The BATAAN then sailed for Tokyo, arriving there on the 31st August 1945, 3 days before the surrender. Our feelings at the time, when we each knew we were experiencing the Japanese surrender up close, and the end of the greatest war of all time, are very hard to describe. On a personal level, I felt much pride to be a small part of such a history-making ceremony. Being part of the American 7th Fleet made it even more special. There were hundreds of warships from so many nations - battleships, cruisers, destroyers, corvettes and so many smaller craft. It seemed that Tokyo Bay could not possibly hold any more! The sky was swarming with hundreds of war planes of all shapes and sizes. The day was momentous, and we were blessed with stunning weather for the occasion. The surrender ceremony took place on USS MISSOURI



HMAS BATAAN (D191) on launching 15 Jan 1944 (image Navy).

(BB 63), giving the Navy the ultimate glory over the Army and Air force! The entire ceremony was so surreal, and I will always remember it as a life highlight.

After the Japanese signed the surrender, sailors on liberty leave were able to go ashore. As Tokyo Bay was quite shallow in parts, the battleships and cruisers had to anchor a long way out in the bay. The smaller Destroyers were on a daily roster, going alongside the larger ships to take their liberty men ashore, and bring them back again. So, for a while the BATAAN became a ferry.



USS BATAAN (CVL 29) and HMAS BATAAN 1951 (Image USN).

ASHORE IN TOKYO

To be the first to go ashore in Tokyo was yet another amazing experience. The American B-52 Bombers had annihilated Tokyo city entirely. First by bombing heavily and then dropping incendiary bombs that burned the city to the ground.

The more we saw of Tokyo and the rest of Japan it became obvious to us that there was probably no need to drop the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Japanese had no oil remaining and the population was clearly close to starvation. The nation was in a terrible state.

One amazing aspect about the surrender was that Japan lost the war without being invaded. The atomic bombs putting an abrupt end to the War. We saw pictures in the local newspaper, the Nippon Times that have never been published outside Japan. There is one photo, in particular, that I can never erase from my mind. It showed a dead mother lying down naked, with her baby at her breast. Skin from the mother and the baby had fused together, and both had large black holes through their bodies. War is indeed a truly a terrible business!

Whilst the majority of the Naval Squadron that represented Australia at the surrender departed for home a couple of days later, the HMAS BATAAN was ordered to remain in Japan for another three months, much to the dismay of the crew, wanting to go home to their loved ones. Soon after the surrender was signed, we sailed around the country evacuating POWs, including many Australians. We transported the POWs back to Tokyo where they were transferred to the roomier aircraft carriers for the journey home. Some of the healthier ones were flown home. Reaching the town of Sendai, north of Tokyo, we picked up Australian and American PoW survivors from the sinking of HMAS PERTH, which was sunk along with the USS *Houston*.

See also the rules issued to the PoW by the Commander of the Prisoner Escort Navy of the Great Japanese Empire at the end of this document – via a copy of the rules document that Gerry has.

To maintain crew morale during our time in Japan, the Captain involved the whole crew in a vote. Option 1 was to sail to Hong Kong for a week. Option 2 was to stay alongside in Tokyo and go away in groups into the country. It was Option 2 that won the day. Whilst some groups opted to travel south down to the slopes of Mount Fuji, my group opted to catch a train to Nikko, which is 150km north of Tokyo. Nikko must surely be one of the loveliest places on the planet. As the Japanese had no food, we took everything we had with us, which was canned bully beef and canned potatoes in hessian sugar bags. So, our meals remained the same as on board our ship.

Then it was time to head home. We had arrived in Tokyo on the 31st August, and we arrived back into Sydney Harbour to a large welcoming crowd in November 1945.

BACK HOME

On arrival back home, the BATAAN became a tourist boat. The Government advertised that anyone buying a £10 war bond could have a one-day trip on a destroyer. We took the public out on day cruises from Brisbane, Newcastle, Sydney, Melbourne, Portland, Devonport, Hobart, Victor Harbour and Port Adelaide. The BATAAN's show pony status lived on!

HMAS LISMORE

Our Government sold five of our *Bathurst-class* Corvettes to the Royal Netherlands Navy, and six sailors from the *Bataan*, including myself, were drafted on to the HMAS LISMORE to sail to what was then called Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. Once there, Dutch sailors came onboard to take over the LISMORE for the Netherlands Navy. The LISMORE crew, and the crews from the other four Corvettes, went by boat to Trincomalee to commission five LST 3008s (LST standing for Landing Ship, Tank) from the (British) Royal Navy, into the RAN.

Sailing from Sri Lanka, we landed our LST 3008 on the beach at Balikpapan, Borneo, where we loaded up with troops, tanks and transports. We were picking them up and bringing them home from their successful campaign against the Japanese in Borneo. On returning to Sydney on the LST 3008, Gerry was demobilised.

THE KOREAN WAR

Gerry was out of the Navy for five years then re-enlisted in 1950 for the Korean War. He was immediately involved in the commissioning of the new Battle Class Destroyer HMAS ANZAC, staying with her for the initial trials, before transferring back to the HMAS BATAAN.

The BATAAN had returned from her first deployment to Korea and had been decommissioned for a major refit. Consequently, Gerry was in the commissioning crew for the second time and he is the only sailor to have done so.

The BATAAN arrived in Korea in the middle of the northern winter. The average temperature was -17° Celsius. The sea was covered in heavy ice there were frequent snowstorms. The BATAAN had no air conditioning or heating. In the tropics, the mess decks are extremely hot and humid. The Korean winter was the absolute opposite. Going



USS Bataan (LHD-5) a Wasp-class amphibious assault ship currently operating in the Middle East.



HMAS BATAAN Ships Company circa 1947 (Image Navy).

below deck, it seemed just as cold as being out on the open deck. The boiler room on a ship is extremely hot indeed, yet even here, there was frost on the bulkheads, just like the other bulkheads throughout the ship. Hot soup was always available from the galley.

CLOTHING

We were issued with long underpants called long johns (otherwise known as 'Passion Spoilers'). They were held up with a rope through the top seam. We were also given long double weft wooden stockings, woollen gloves and mittens, a woollen jumper, a tarpaulin and a fleece-lined overcoat. For our heads, a leather motor bike helmet and a balaclava. The sailors were issued no boots, however the officers were issued with long fleece-lined flying boots.

BATAAN RECEIVED A DIRECT HIT

BATAAN had only been in Korea for a few days when a North Korean shore battery opened fire on us. With their excellent gunnery, they put a 3-inch shell through our Captain's cabin. Luckily, the Captain was on the bridge at the time! A Carley Float (life raft) was on fire and some other timberwork was ablaze. Whilst at first sight it looked disastrous, our Damage Control Party soon had things in hand. I was a loader on our 4-inch quick firing gun, and we were the first to respond to the enemy shore battery, putting it out of action in quick time.

On every gun on BATAAN, the gun crew were out on the open deck with absolutely no protection. With our guns firing and the incoming gunfire from the enemy on many of our patrols it was very daunting. The flash and noise of our guns, the explosions from North Korean shells lobbing close to our ship and the stench of burnt cordite and smoke had you frequently on edge.

Conditions on board were pretty tough. Quite often as well as having bombards during the day, we would have to fire our guns in the middle of the night. Sleep seemed almost impossible. With the ship shuddering from our guns firing, the asbestos coating from the pipes and deck heads – which was used for insulation (well before we understood the hazard of asbestos) broke loose. So much asbestos dust filled the air you could hardly see, and it coated everything including your clothes. With the ship crashing through the pack ice on a thin plated hull, the noise was horrific. The men could not shave as their faces were too tight from the icy conditions. No electric razors in those days.



HMAS BATAAN Shore bombardment on the Korean peninsula (Image NAVY).

BACK TO SYDNEY HARBOUR FOR THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

In 1995, through the HMAS *Bataan* Veterans Association, Gerry chartered a Sydney Harbour Ferry, the *Proclaim*, and held a day on Sydney Harbour for past and present sailors of our Navy. All Ship's Associations were contacted. The *Proclaim* tied up at Commissioners Wharf in Circular Quay.

This day coincided with the 50th Anniversary of the commissioning of HMAS BATAAN. Three hundred sailors, past and present, came onboard. Gerry was fortunate to secure a grant of \$1500 towards the day from the Australia Remembers Scheme. This Scheme also donated a further \$400 to Gerry to write the History of HMAS BATAAN booklet. A six-course banquet was enjoyed by all on board. The day was a huge success.

INVITE TO UNITED STATES

In 1997, Gerry was contacted by Captain Craig Wilson, the commanding officer of one of the largest warships in the United States Navy. He rang to invite a contingent of HMAS BATAAN veterans to Pascagoula, Mississippi, compliments of the United States Navy, for the commissioning of his new warship (LHD-5 troop assault ship – one of the largest ships in the US navy). The ship was to be named the USS BATAAN – a namesake of HMAS BATAAN.

Captain Wilson had been researching the history of their 1st Light Aircraft Carrier that served in WWII and the Korean War – the USS BATAAN. He noticed the Australian HMAS BATAAN often escorted the USS BATAAN, as aircraft carriers were always escorted by a destroyer. He suspected that there could well be an HMAS *Bataan* Veterans Association in Australia, and approached the Australian Naval Attaché in Washington D.C. who contacted the Navy Office in Canberra, who then supplied him with my phone number as President of the HMAS *Bataan* Veterans Association. We arranged for eleven HMAS BATAAN veterans to go to Mississippi, including the late Rear Admiral Andrew Robertson AO, DSC, and his wife Patricia. Andrew Robertson was the past Vice President of the Navy League. Throughout all these years we exchanged letters and phone calls. As an ex-Able Seaman, I am proud to have had a Rear Admiral as a very good friend.

By Editor: *Rest in Peace Andrew as you set sail for the far horizon.*



Photograph of Navy League Sea Cadets, Port Melbourne Company, was taken in 1943 Gerry fourth row from the front, first from left.

A highlight of the trip to Mississippi for the USS BATAAN commissioning was when the Australian contingent were guests of honour at the Captain's Cocktail Party in the Civic Hall on the eve of the commissioning. Only the very 'top brass' from the United States navy were present. I was honoured to present their ship with a highly polished plaque that I had made personally from Tasmanian blackwood. The plaque depicted the ship's crests from both the USS BATAAN and the HMAS BATAAN. On behalf of the ex-crew of HMAS BATAAN I wished their ship fair winds and a following sea. I also presented them with a large album with brass ornaments containing photographs of the Great American White Fleet in Sydney and Melbourne in 1908.

After arriving home from the trip, I exchanged letters with Captain Wilson. He wrote that the plaque is now installed on the bulkhead as you enter the ship's wardroom and it is the only foreign plaque installed in a United States warship. The photo album is kept in a glass case in the wardroom, but visitors are able to look through the pages and enjoy seeking the historic photographs.

See also the thank you letter from Captain Wilson, Oct 1997 at the end of this document.

HMAS BATAAN MODEL

Gerry was also fortunate to obtain the Admiralty Plans for the HMAS BATAAN from which he was able to meticulously construct a large-scale model of the ship. He has donated the model to our Navy's Sea Power Centre in Canberra.

CURRENT

To Gerry's knowledge, he is the only surviving sailor from the HMAS BATAAN from its participation in the Japanese surrender. At 94 (as of 2020) Gerry is currently serving as the welfare officer in the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard, and possibly the oldest living member of the Coast Guard.

Additional Information

Gerry has in hand a copy of the original document given to each Australian PoW being embarked on a Japanese transport ship, known as 'Hell Ships'.

STERN ORDERS FOR PRISONERS AT SEA

Below is a facsimile of orders issued to allied prisoners transported on Japanese prison ships as promulgated by the Commander of the Prisoner Escort, Navy of the Great Japanese Empire. As can be seen, the threat of the death penalty covered such breaches of discipline as "talking without permission", "raising loud voices" and "using more than two blankets". The offer of preferential treatment in Clause 6 must have provoked smiles from the prisoners not merely on account of its pidgin English.

Commander of the Prisoner Escort Navy of the Great Japanese Empire.

REGULATIONS FOR PRISONERS

1. Prisoners disobeying the following orders will be punished with immediate death:
 - a. Those disobeying orders and instructions
 - b. Those showing a motion of antagonism and raising a sign of opposition
 - c. Those disordering the regulations by individualism, egoism, thinking only about yourself, rushing for your own goods
 - d. Those talking without permission and raising loud voices
 - e. Those walking and moving without order
 - f. Those carrying unnecessary baggage in embarking
 - g. Those resisting mutually

- h. Those touching the boat's materials, wires, electric lights, tools, switches, etc.
 - i. Those climbing ladder without order
 - j. Those showing action of running away from the room or boat
 - k. Those trying to take more meal than given to them
 - l. Those using more than two blankets
2. Since the boat is not well equipped and inside being narrow, food being scarce and poor, you'll feel uncomfortable during the short time on the boat. Those losing patience and disordering the regulation will be heavily punished for the reason of not being able to escort.
 3. Be sure to finish your "Nature's call", evacuate the bowels and urine, before embarking.
 4. Meal will be given twice a day. One plate only to one prisoner. The prisoners called by the guard will give out the meal quick as possible and honestly. The remaining prisoners will stay in their places quietly and wait for your plate. Those moving from their places reaching for your plate without order will be heavily punished. Same orders will be applied in handling plates after meal.
 5. Toilet will be fixed at the four corners of the room. The buckets and cans will be placed. When filled up, a guard will appoint a prisoner. The prisoner called will take the buckets to the centre of the room. The buckets will be pulled up by the derrick and be thrown away. Toilet papers will be given. Everyone must cooperate to make the room sanitary. Those being careless will be punished.
 6. Navy of the Great Japanese Empire will not try to punish you all with death. Those obeying all the rules and regulations, and believing the action and purpose of the Japanese Navy, cooperating with Japan in constructing the "New order of the Great Asia" which lead to the world's peace will be well treated.



Letter dated 1 Oct 1997
COMMANDING OFFICER
USS BATAAN (LHD 5)

1 October 1997

To the members of the HMAS *Bataan* Association,

On behalf of my officers and crew, it is my sincere pleasure to thank each member of the *Bataan* Association for helping make the commissioning of the newest *Bataan* the most inspiring naval ceremony I have ever seen. I only wish that everyone in the association could have been there to share the day with the crew. For those who were there, you provided a personal connection to the heritage of the BATAAN campaign and the spirit of the great ships which were named in its honor. In my mind, that spirit is the greatest gift our ship could receive.

The wonderful plaque donated by the Association will remind BATAAN crews well into the twenty-first century of your legacy. It symbolizes the close ties our countries have shared throughout history, and certainly will continue to share in the future. Moreover, the plaque reminds them each day what it means to serve aboard a ship named BATAAN.

Again, I send you my most sincere thanks for all the HMAS *Bataan* Association has done for the newest USS BATAAN.

About the Author: [Gerry Shepherd] joined the Navy League Sea Cadets during 1942 at the age of fourteen, joining the Port Melbourne Company, which was based in a building known as the Town Pier, alongside Station Pier, Port Melbourne.

Whilst in Sydney the NL Sea Cadets were based on Snake Island, near Cockatoo Island Sydney Harbour. Victoria had a second Corps - as they were known - on the foreshore of Half Moon Bay, near Black Rock by Port Phillip Bay opposite the Iron Monitor, HMVS CERBERUS. The CERBERUS is the last Iron Monitor left in the world and now is partially sunk as a breakwater.

Each NL Sea Cadet unit had a Navy 27ft whaler which Sea Cadets would row. They would also be taught rope handling, tying knots, splicing, and semaphore with the signal flags. They would also be drilled and marched with wooden rifles. The Officers were mainly retired naval officers, with some merchant marine officers included. The Cadets had to buy their own uniforms, including a cap with "NL Sea Cadet" on the tally. If a Cadet could not afford the uniform, the Navy League would find a way to provide it.

Being a Navy League Sea Cadets instilled a strong sense of discipline which is still a part of being in our Naval Reserve Cadets today.

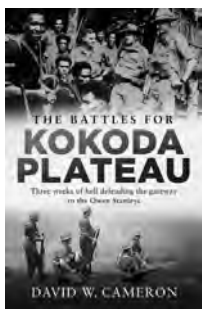
I joined the R.A.N. on my 17th birthday, but I was not called up for thirteen months until July 4, 1944 during WWII. I served in the following ships:

WWII

Tribal Class. Destroyer HMAS BATAAN (1944)
 Bathurst Class Corvette HMAS LISMORE (1946)
 Tank Landing Ship HMAS LST 3008 (1946)

Korean War

Battle Class Destroyer HMAS ANZAC (1952)
 HMAS BATAAN (1952)



THE BATTLES FOR KOKODA PLATEAU

Three weeks of hell defending the gateway to the Owen Stanleys

David W Cameron

Allen & Unwin (March, 2020)

ISBN: 9781760529550

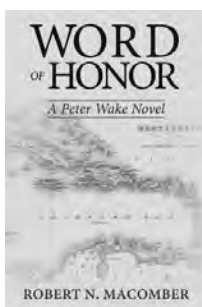
Softcover: \$27.50

This is an essential read as to how an Australian Militia force, the 39th Battalion supported by the Royal Papuan Constabulary, kept the Japanese New Guinea reconnaissance and manoeuvre force at bay. Outnumbered three to one, they fought alongside each other for three blood-soaked weeks, stranded in drenching swamps and lowland jungles to keep the Kokoda Airstrip out of enemy hands.

The story of the battle for the Kokoda Plateau is enmeshed with that of two groups of Australian Missions, fleeing the north coast and trying to make for Australian lines. In the aftermath it became clear that, despite clear warnings by Australian diplomats and military officers to move south, that they had remained at their posts as directed by Sir Philip Nigel Warrington Strong KBE CMG CStJ (11 July 1899 – 6 July 1983), Bishop of New Guinea, 1936 to 1962. Until it was too late. Bishop Strong remained at his post in PNG throughout the war and gained a strong reputation. However, his subsequent letters to the New Guinea Martyrs may, as suggested by the Author, appear as “self-serving”.

Major General Tubby Allen, the real mastermind of the Battle for Kokoda disgracefully dismissed by Generals Douglas MacArthur and Thomas Blamey, also appears. In this case, when he was charged with investigating the massacres. Many of those responsible escaped punishment, having been killed fighting in other theatres during the war. Others committed suicide before being executed. Punishment was also meted out on Papuans found guilty of aiding and abetting Japanese forces – in some cases, involved in the massacres. Some 17 Papuans were hung.

This is an eloquent and sad story covered in detail by the author. Sympathetically, he relates with conviction and forgiveness the times of a people now almost lost to history. An essential read as we contemplate, today, greater involvement with and support for our island neighbours. Where have we been these last 20 years?



WORD OF HONOR

A Peter Wake Novel

Robert N. Macomber

USNI (1 Oct, 2020)

ISBN-10: 1682475387

ISBN-13: 9781682475386

Hardcover: \$45.00

Robert Macomber writes well and inspiringly so – giving voice to the US Navy and US Marine Corps and its officers and enlisted men (ratings) now lost to memory. This novel is something of an examination – a non-judicial investigation into Peter Wake during the U.S. Spanish wars, encompassing largely operations in Cuba, but also touching on U.S. involvement in the Philippines. One hundred and twenty years later, it might be argued that the very same theatres are again active, or at the very least part of a hot peace that may, rapidly, transcend into Cold War Mk 2. The differences and comparisons are quite profound.

This novel is essentially a court scene – dressed up as a review. The book ends with the launch of Wake as Roosevelt's proto-master of intelligence; leading the fight-back against German expansionism in the Pacific and Latin America, and laying the groundwork for the emergence of a powerful blue water U.S. Navy and a seat at the top table, in 1919. It hints at the struggle in America between expansionism, exceptionalism, and isolationism and retreat. Wake is exonerated ultimately by the Review by telling truth to power – and holding on to his integrity, when shamed and belittled. Sadly, it is something we have seen happening all too often in the modern world of tweet and social media – where virtue is to be a victim.

Does the book work? Yes and No. No, in that it is essentially a court case – without a case or court. On the other hand, as a way of closing Wake's time as a seagoing Captain and opening him up to new ventures in a century not yet old, the book works. It will be interesting to read the next book – and see how Wake establishes the intelligence cells that, in one form or another, remain with us to this day.



THE HERNDON CLIMB

A History of the United States Naval Academy's Greatest Tradition

By Rear Adm. James McNeal, SC, USN (Ret.) and Scott Tomasheski;

Foreword by Gary Kinder

USNI (Fall, 2020)

ISBN-10: 1682474380

ISBN-13: 9781682474389

Softcover: \$30.00

There are some books that one gets to review that are an unexpected pleasure, that take you back to that long summer of memory, discovery, shared understanding and adversity. This book is one of them. A story about an obelisk to an obscure (by non-US Navy standards) USN Commander, William Lewis Herndon. Herndon went down with his ship, the SS Central America carrying five hundred souls after four days battling a hurricane, on its return from the 1857 Gold Rush. Ultimately, The Herndon Climb is about the ethical ways in which Navies exist – their codes of conduct and rules of engagement.

What is the point of the Herndon Climb? As George Leigh Mallory said in 1924, when asked why he wanted to climb Mount Everest? – “because it's there”. Arguably “the most famous three words in mountaineering”. Starting in the mid-1940s, the Herndon (as it is referred to by the Plebes in their first year at USNA) have sought to climb the monument. Initially simply to remove the dixie (cap) of the first-year plebe and replace it with an officer's combination cover – so marking the end of the first year and their move to second year and midshipman status. Latterly scaling the monument when also covered in lard.

Why do they do it – because it's there. Because it goes beyond honour and duty and attaches to a past that is as real in that moment of a Herndon victory, as it was to preceding generations. Mad, ridiculous, absolutely against all 21st Century identity politics and health and safety regulation No-No-No types, it reaffirms the US Navy and Marines and stands safeguard to their future glories. A great read over Christmas 2020/21 – to build upon as our navies “to glory steer”. Paraphrasing Edmund Burke:

Dictators will be tyrants from ethics, when sailors are rebels from morality.



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

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

The Navy reserves the right to reprint all essays in the magazine, together with the right to edit them as considered appropriate for publication.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

Saturday 21 August 2021

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



HATCH: Improved *Kilo* class 636.3 RFS VOLKOV ((SSG)B-603) commissioned into Russian Pacific Fleet (image USC).



MATCH: PLAN HOHHOT (DDG 161) a revised Type 052D Destroyer enters service with Southern Theater Command.



DESPATCH: FN Submarine RUBIS (SSN 601) that evacuated French DGSE Agents after the 1985 Rainbow Warrior attack in New Zealand.