NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

September 2022
Volume 6, Issue 9

DOWN THE VOICEPIPE *do you hear there!*

COMING UP

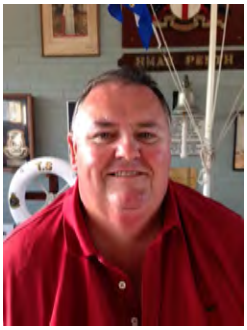
NLWA Executive meeting 09th January 2023 at 1700

HMAS PERTH (I) Executive meeting Saturday 19th. November at 1000

Facility open each Wednesday morning 0900-1200

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

EX HMAS OTAMA back in Western Australia awaiting demolition



September came and went in a flash, I guess that's what happens the closer you get to the end of the year. Nonetheless the WA Division continued to go about our business and it gives me great pleasure to announce the near completion of the boat shed, all we are waiting on now is a little bit of bitumen and the electrics being hooked up and it is ready for use. Also in the news this month, we have replaced most of the patio out the river side of the facility after it was found to be needing a bit of a facelift. It was decided to extend it a little at the same time and it now covers the entire length of the building and equally as important, every window which will go a long way towards keeping some of the heat out of the end office space, not to mention protecting our window murals. In keeping with the rest of the facility it is looking great and has been completed to an exceptional standard, all we have to do now is find a reason to use it and with that, maybe we better start thinking of holding a get-together in the not too distant future to make the most of it, particularly with the long, warm and sunny days we will enjoy over the coming months. This ticks another two jobs off of a rapidly diminishing list of upgrades and maintenance on the schedule we put together not so long ago, it has come at considerable cost but on the positive side, we won't have to do this again for many years.

Returning briefly to our AGM, it gives me great pleasure to welcome our two newest members onto the Executive Committee, they are Bob Cullum, former USN and Mike Honer, former RAN and Past Commodore of the East Fremantle Yacht Club. I'm sure both of these men will be great assets to an already streamlined and well-functioning Executive Committee. We are all looking forward to working with them and are keen to hear their ideas.

Sadly, we have lost another long term supporter and friend to many in Margaret Hayman, wife of former President Mason, who we said goodbye to earlier this year. The Executive Committee will be in attendance at the funeral service and will pass on our commiserations to the family from all of us.

Until next month

Brad

NLWA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 2022/2023

President Brad Barrett

Vice President Bob Cullum Jr

Hon. Secretary CMDR Jim O'Neill ANC RTD

Treasurer Bill (Windy) Gale

Public Relations David Nicolson

Custodian Trevor Vincent

Events and Functions Mike Honer

COMMITTEE

Peter Jarvis

Tom Goodlich

Darryl Dunlop

Ian Holthouse

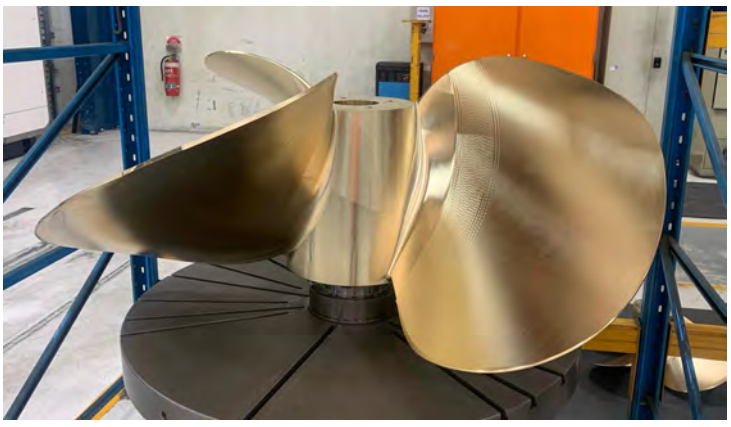
HMAS PERTH (I) MEMORIAL UPDATE
Incorporating NLWA and the
HMAS PERTH (I) Memorial Foundation Incorporated

CMDR William Harold Martin RAN
Executive Officer HMAS PERTH (I)
lost on the 1st. March 1942

CMDR William Harold Martin with
son David Martin RAN RADM
future Governor of NSW

HMAS PERTH (I) MEMORIAL UPDATE
Incorporating NLWA and the HMAS PERTH (I) Memorial Foundation Incorporated

Stage one of the project draws to a close with the final element the propeller to be completed later this week. All energy has now gone into the engineering of the final stage which will include the strutual steel work and ceramic glass. The final graphic has now been applied to the sliding door and completes the story of HMAS PERTH (I) in pictures. Recently I attended the Lions International convention held in our South West at Harvey where I was their guest speaker to an audience of just under two hundred. The talk and presentation was the story of HMAS PERTH (I) and was really well received and has given us an opportunity to spread the remarkable story of this brave ship and crew under conflict in World War II. Thanks go to David Nicolson for acting as my computer partner through out the event.



HMAS PERTH (I) MEMORIAL UPDATE
Incorporating NLWA and the
HMAS PERTH (I) Memorial Foundation
Incorporated

HMAS PERTH (I) MEMORIAL FOUNDATION INC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 2022 to 2023

President Mike Bailey
Vice President Colin Bancroft
Treasurer Sally Hudson
Hon Secretary LCDR Zenda Gardiner ANC RTD
Project Manager CMDR Jim O'Neill ANC RTD
Public Relations David Nicolson

COMMITTEE
Trevor Vincent
Peter Jarvis
Brad Barrett
CMDR Bob Mummery RAN Rtd
Mike Honer

EX HMAS OTAMA on its way to Henderson Western Australia for dismantling

EX HMAS SIRIUS a little bit lighter as dismantling continues

© ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2012 1 A/C SERIAL NO.A2-4 SECTION 2B INDIVIDUAL HISTORY SUPERMARINE SEAGULL V A2-4/VH-ALB MUSEUM ACCESSION NO.73/A/426 27 Aug 34

One of 24 Supermarine type 236 Seagull V aircraft ordered for the Royal Australian Navy to specification 6/34. Built at Vickers Supermarine, Woolston. Order No.0.1.416. Serials A2-1 to A2-24. Fitted with 775hp Bristol Pegasus engine. 08 Nov 35 Engine installed – Pegasus IIM2 P.15531. 03 Dec 35 Test flown from Southampton Water (30 minutes) prior to dismantling and crating for shipment to Australia. 12 Dec 35 Engine removed for shipping. 11 Jan 36 Inspected at Southampton prior to shipment to Australia. 21 Feb 36 Brought on RAAF charge at No.1 Aircraft Depot, Laverton, Victoria. Would have carried standard aluminium doped overall colour scheme with black serial number A2-4 on rear fuselage and rudder top. Original RAAF airframe logbook (Form 338) donated to RAFM by its later civilian owner, Squadron Leader Peter Gibbes in 2001 and held by RAFM Archives section. 09 Mar 36 Allotted to No.101 (Fleet Co-Operation) Flight, Point Cook where training on type occurred; engine re-installed 16th March 1936; three test flights on 17th March 1936 totalling 1 hr 40 minutes; arrived at Richmond NSW 3 April 1936. 14 Apr 36 Lower tailskid sternpost failed. 20 Apr 36 Allotted to the newly re-numbered No.5 (Fleet Co-Operation) Squadron (Formerly 101 Flight) at Richmond, the unit providing aircraft and personnel for ships of the Royal Australian Navy, with a secondary role to carry out air survey tasks for the Government. RAAF Form A50 (Unit History Sheet) has A2-4 at Sydney for exercises with HMAS Canberra on this date. 08 Feb 37 Embarked on cruiser HMAS Australia. 09 Feb 37 A2-4 made its first catapult launch, from the Australia. © ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2012 2 10-17 Feb 37 Participated in exercises in the Jervis Bay area in NSW with ships of the Royal Australian Navy. 22 Apr 37 Flown from Richmond via Darwin (arriving 26 April) by pilot named Jim Alexander on four-day 'detached duty' trip to the Northern Territory, `his stops causing quite a stir in the outback towns, where a Flying Boat had never before been seen' (Nicholl, G W R - `The Supermarine Walrus' Foulis 1966). This mission was a co-operative one with anthropologist Dr Donald Thompson, mapping aboriginal tribal boundaries in the Arnhem Land area in the Northern Territory. Crewed by pilot - Alexander; fitter - Sgt Kerr, and wireless operator LAC Barnes. c. May 1937 Worked for a few days with the survey vessel HMAS Moresby - crew as above. Surveying Northern Australian coastline. Afterwards moved base to Millingimby Mission Station, flying mainly from a rough grass strip on which the grass in places was as high as the lower mainplanes. Continued with mapping work. Then left Millingimby and returned to working with the Moresby for a week, then returning to Sydney in early June 1937 having flown 120 hours in 45 days. (Nicholl, 1966). 5 Jun 37 Returned to Richmond for maintenance, returning to Darwin 10 June, and to Richmond on 16 June, being allocated to assist with an East Coast Fisheries survey, covering Hobart in the south to Townsville in the north, thence to Pont Cook. 05 Jul 37 Alexander again teamed with A2-4 on mission to Tasmania on fisheries work-a survey flight of the Pelagic Fisheries, teaming up with the Fisheries Protection launch, which carried fuel for the Seagull, which identified shoals of fish then led the launch to them. The crew tried to simplify identification by bombing the fish to stun them and bring them to the surface, but this `proved largely ineffective because they soon found they were using the wrong time-delay fuses' (Nicholl, 1966). After 40- hour inspection, survey continued until 14th August 1937. 10 Jul 37 Underside of hull pierced by jack at Point Cook. 15 Jul 37 Hull pierced by Buoy at Mallacoota on the coast of Victoria. 19 Jul 37 FTS for 40 hour check. 08 Aug 37 Alexander flew A2-4 back to Richmond. 22 Aug 37 Embarked on modified Leander Class cruiser HMAS Sydney for tour of West Australia waters. 08 Oct 37 Disembarked from HMAS Sydney, going to Richmond, and returning to that vessel on 26 October. 16 Feb 38 Forced landing at sea, necessitating replacement of port wing tip float © ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2012 3 28 Feb 38 Struck side of Sydney whilst being hoisted. 22 Mar 38 Evening - camera port collapsed during night flying, allowing water to enter the fuselage, with the result that the aircraft was submerged and inverted in Jervis Bay, NSW, for some 18 hours before recovery on this date, which itself caused further damage. 29 Mar 38 To No.2 Air Depot, Richmond, for repair. 05 Apr 38 Unloaded for inspection at Richmond. 30 Jun 38 Airplane to workshops at No.2 Air Depot; engine removed two days earlier. 21 Nov 38 Still undergoing repair in the workshops; engine refitted 28 February 1939. 01 Jan 39 No.5 Squadron renumbered as No.9 Squadron. 03 Mar 39 Test flying after repairs - aircraft swung on landing. 10 Mar 39 Still at No.2 Aircraft Depot - stored. 08 Aug 39 Allotted, serviceable, to No.9 Fleet Co-operation Squadron, Richmond, NSW, - then re-numbered (again) No.5 Squadron. 12 Sep 39 To No.10 (Fleet Co-Operation) Squadron, Rathmines, on Lake Macquarie near Newcastle, New South Wales. 27 Nov 39 Noted as serviceable on aircraft record card. 23 Jan 40 Allotted from No.10 Squadron to Station Flight, at No.1 FTS, Point Cook, Victoria since 10 Squadron became UK based for the rest of the war. 13 Feb 40 Landed at Richmond airfield with wheels retracted. 22 Feb 40 Allotted to No.2 Air Depot for repair. 06 Mar 40 Still in store. 21 May 40 To No.9 Squadron, Rathmines once more. 24 Jun 40 Noted on record card as unserviceable for more than two days. 25 Jun 40 At Rathmines with No.9 Squadron, exercising with No.24 Squadron, so obviously serviceable again (Unit History Sheet). 06 Jul 40 Camouflage scheme applied to aircraft. © ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2012 4 11 Jul 40 Embarked on light cruiser HMAS Perth. Pilot Fg Off E V Beamont. Damaged by gunfire blast and repaired by Qantas in October after disembarkation. 02 Aug 40 Fg Off Beaumont flew the Captain of HMAS Perth to Rathmines on A2-4. 06 Aug 40 Fg Off Beaumont returned A2-4 and the Captain to the Perth. 09 Aug 40 Fg Off P J McMahon left Rathmines in A2-4. Crew of 4 embarked on HMAS Manoora. 27 Aug 40 Fg Off Beaumont flew A2-4 from Rathmines to exercise with HMAS Perth. Above 5 entries taken from RAAF Unit History Sheets. 26 Sep 40 Replaced on the Perth by Seagull A2-17 having suffered extensive gunblast damage to wings and tail. Off-loaded at Sydney. 26 Sep 40 To Quantas, Rose Bay, for repair. 07 Nov 40 Allotted once again to No.9 Squadron, and modified for target towing duties.

12 Nov 40 Ready for flight test after repair, and test flown 18th November. 22 Nov 40 Fitted with target-towing equipment. 25 Nov 40 Serviceable with No.9 Squadron at Rose Bay, following delivery a week earlier. 23 Dec 40 Noted serviceable in three days. 07 Jan 41 Drogue towing operating from Mascot in Fleet Co-Operation role. Returned to No.9 Squadron, Rathmines. 09 Jan 41 Anti-aircraft Co-operation Newcastle for No.9 Squadron. 21 Jan 41 Forced landing caused by Fork-end flying wire breaking during flight. 30 Jan 41 Task as of 9 Jan 41 completed. 10 Feb 41 Bounced on take-off. Port wing struck water and damaged. 17 Feb 41 Allotted to Qantas for repair. 03 Mar 41 Serviceable in 14 days with No.9 Squadron. 04 Mar 41 Allotment to Qantas cancelled. 10 Mar 41 Serviced at No.9 Squadron, Rathmines. © ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2012 5 24 Mar 41 On combined exercises with Cruisers HMAS Hobart, Sydney, and Australia (Unit History Sheets). 08 Apr 41 Allotted to HMAS Australia in error - cancelled the next day since A2-4 was a target-towing, rather than operational, aircraft. 18 Apr 41 Target-towing for HMAS Hobart and Adelaide. 05 May 41 At Richmond target towing with No.22 Squadron for No.9 Squadron. 27 Oct 41 Allotted to No.2 Air Depot for overhaul. 15 Nov 41 At No.9 Squadron, Rathmines. 26 Nov 41 Flown by Wg Cdr J Alexander from Rathmines to Richmond hence to Rose Bay, Sydney for inspection and service by Qantas at their Flying Boat base. (This is a different pilot to the one who flew the 1937 missions). 29 Nov 41 Received No.2 Air Depot ex-No.9 Squadron; engine removed previous day. Jan 42 Photograph via F Smith shows A2-4 being hoisted on board HMAS Perth at Garden Island, Sydney. Whilst on board Sydney at this time the aircraft was painted Matt Light Grey overall with the code `J' in black either side of the cockpit, this being the Perth's' code letter. Red/white. blue roundels were carried on the fuselage and above and below the wings, with a large red/white/blue fin flash and black serial numbers on the fuselage only. HMAS Perth was subsequently lost in the Battle of Sunda Straits on 28 February 1942, so A2-4 would have been unloaded before she sailed for Singapore and the Java Sea area. 18 Jun 42 Issued to Qantas ex-2AD. 03 Jul 42 Work proceeding. 20 Jul 42 Serviceability indefinite. 24 Jul 42 Components undergoing inspection; engine refitted 31st August 1942. 09 Oct 42 Estimated ready in 3 weeks at Qantas. 30 Oct 42 Estimated ready in 10 days at Qantas. 07 Nov 42 Allotted to No.9 Squadron ex-Qantas. 09 Nov 42 Received at No.9 Squadron, Rathmines. 22 Nov 42 Noted unserviceable with No.9 Squadron. © ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2012 6 09 Jan 43 Allotted SHQ Rathmines ex-No.9 Squadron for drogue (target) towing duties. 26 Jan 43 Returned to No.9 Squadron. 01 Feb 43 Drogue winch removed. 07 Feb 43 Actually received by No.9 Squadron. The previous day, 6 Feb, Flt Lt Ekins flew A2-4 from Rathmines to Bowen, Queensland which was No.9 Squadron's new base. 15 Apr 43 Flt Lt Clark flew A2-4 Bowen - Cairns - Bowen. At Bowen, the aircraft was used for anti-submarine patrols and cooperation duties with the US Army; to this end on 26th June 1943 the twin gas operated Vickers guns were removed from the aft mounting and replaced in the forward mounting, presumably to suppress return fire from any submarines encountered; single guns fitted front and rear 16th October 1943. 29 Jun 43 2.35-hour flight from Bowen - C M Bampton was the radio operator (File letter 15 June 82). Aircraft captains on A2-4 whilst with No.9 Squadron at Bowen included: Flt Lt Millar, Flt Sgts Aistrope, Allsopp, Smith and Watson, and Fg Off Angrove, Dowlsey, Hick, Howard and Lucas. 07 Aug 43 Ground-looped whilst operating in Cairns area, causing extensive damage. 03 Dec 43 Received No.2 F/B Repair Depot for overhaul ex-No.9 Squadron. 04 Jan 44 Flown by Wg Cdr V A Hodgkinson Rathmines -Rose Bay, Sydney for overhaul by Quantas. (File letter 10 Dec 78). Overhaul commenced 28th January 1944. 12 Feb 44 Unit History Sheet notes that on this date last of No.9 Squadron Walrus/Seagull aircraft allotted to No.3 OTU, but after a protracted overhaul, A2-4 remained at Rathmines, mainly for communications duties, and had a new engine fitted on 23 February 1945, the overhaul finally being completed 10th July 1945, with a 35 minute test flight – its first flight since 28 January 1944 – the following day. 22 May 45 Allotted to No.3 OTU for storage at Rathmines, but delivery flight delayed due to unservicability. 26 Jul 45 Received at 3 OUT Rathmines (45 minute flight). 06 Oct 45 Flown by Sq. Ldr R H Gray for Air-Sea Rescue demonstrations. © ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2012 7 17 Dec 45 Although allotted to No.2 Flying Boat Repair Depot, noted `Not to be delivered until hours complete' on the record card. Possibly using up flying hours until next overhaul due. Had flown some 1300 hours by this date. 18 Dec 45 Flown by Vic A Hodgkinson Rathmines - Rose Bay. 13 Jan 46 Flown by Hodgkinson Rose Bay - Rathmines (1 hour flight). 03 Feb 46 Flown by Flt Lt Rohde Rathmines - Qantas, Rose Bay -Rathmines. 22 Mar 46 RAAF Seagull aircraft declared surplus and stored, although A2-4 flew on for a time. 27/29/31 Flown by V A Hodgkinson on Rathmines area local flights Mar 46 including photographic exercise of entrance to Lake Macquarie (Rathmines). Apr 46 A2-4 made only 4 flights of 4 hours total. 25 Apr 46 Unserviceable due to hailstorm damage to tail plane and other parts. 29 Apr 46 Obviously repaired by this date. Flown by V A Hodgkinson Rathmines - Rose Bay - Rathmines - perhaps as post-repair test flight. 8/9/10/11 Flights by Hodgkinson round Rathmines area. May 46 16 May 46 Allotted to storage. 21 May 46 Despite above instruction, flown by Captain (Wing Commander) Vic Hodgkinson on two Rathmines - Williamstown return flights - a 40 minute trip each way. 15 Aug 46 Issued to maintenance Squadron Rathmines ex-Air Sea Rescue Squadron. (Airframe logbook records 2 September 1946) 03 Oct 46 Sold through Commonwealth Disposals Commission to McIlree Motors Sydney for £600. Airframe hours - 1,660. One of two Seagulls and two Walrus aircraft purchased by Captain Eric E M McIlree at this time. 10 Oct 46 Issued to McIlree Motors, and stored. (Airfame logbook records 20th October 1946). Last entry on RAAF Movement Card. 12 Mar 51 Allotted registration VH-ALB and listed to Self Drive Motors Pty. Ltd. Not used, and remained in store. Received in good, but dismantled condition. © ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2012 8 16 Jun 54 McIlree withdraw the Seagull, VH-BGP, ex-A2-3 and Walrus VH-BLO ex-P5664 and the former X9515 that he had operated in the New Guinea/New Britain/Solomon Islands area. VH-ALB he retained in store, at Sydney. 1959 Purchased by Ansett Captain Peter J Gibbes of Melbourne – former RAAF Squadron Leader, MVO, DFC, AFC. Co-owners former RCAF pilot Harry O'Hara of Canadair and amateur pilot Anthony Whiter. (`Aircraft' August 1960).

Sold with remains of McIlree's other three Seagull/Walrus aircraft, which were burnt to provide hangar space. Prepared for new CoA by Lawrence Engineering & Sales Pty, Ltd. Camden, NSW. (Airsport April 1960). 17 Mar 60 Test flight. Fitted with Pegasus VI engine, No.33432. (Engine Log Book, DoRIS Ref.B465). 14 Apr 60 Received its first CoA, No.3617. Initially registered for private use, but this was later amended to include charter work by Amphair - (Amphibious Air Charter Work) Pty Ltd, of No.3 Tubaru Steet, Toorak, Victoria. Alterations included adding a window each side just aft of the undercarriage radius rod, the installation of seven passenger seats with blue and silver interior decor, a new instrument panel and more modern radio equipment. (See Radio Log DoRIS Ref.B469). The external colour scheme was: silver wings, nacelle, struts and float bottoms and arctic blue fuselage, float tips and tail assembly. The aircraft initially carried a Walrus symbol on both sides of the bows with black hat, dark blue body and white wing, circle and scarf, and at one stage the titling 'Amphibious Air Charters' on the nose. The registration letters on the fin were white, and black letters on the top starboard wing and lower portwing underside. Photos: FlyPast May 93 p.61; Flight 14 Oct 1960 p.621; Air Enthusiast Jul/Aug 98 p.73; The Last of a Legendary Aeroplane (Fazio) p.41. The aircraft was used on fishing and other expeditions and pleasure flights in the area of its Melbourne base, often being seen on and around the waters of Port Phillip Bay, Victoria. Gibbes, as operations manager of Anseft/ANA held a full commercial pilot's licence, so he could fly the aircraft as these operations. `It never failed to startle the odd fisherman... in the seclusion of his boat far out at sea, to be suddenly accosted by an amphibian whose crew asked `for a loan of some bait to do a bit of fishing, please'. (Nicholl, 1966). Oct 60 Photographed at its base, Moorabbin, Victoria (IPMS Australia newsletter 20). Art this time the aircraft carried a tailwheel that originated as a Vampire nose wheel. 1962 By this time the not totally appropriate Walrus symbol was replaced by the title `Amphibious Air Charters' in black, edged in yellow, on both sides of the bow. © ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2012 9 Mid 1962 Due to increased maintenance costs and the lack of readily available spares, the Seagull was advertised for sale for £6,000. Sep 62 Purchased by Robert W Shute for £5,000, the new owner took a conversion course under the tutelage of Gibbes and received the necessary endorsement to his licence. Shute formed the Barrier Reef Flying Boat Service operating from Mackay, Queensland. 30 Sep 62 Engine removed for overhaul - had flown some 92 hours since March 1960. 02 Nov 62 Test flight after overhaul - fitted with Pegasus VI 33393. (Engine Log Book DoRIS Ref.B466). The aircraft was used to carry passengers - mainly tourists - and cargoes out to the islands of the Great Barrier Reef and up and down the coast, with only one engine failure, caused by the failure of an oil pipe line which had been accidentally omitted from a pressure test during overhaul. The aircraft landed on the sea and was towed to port. 17 Mar 63 Last regular flight. had made 27 flights Nov 62 - Mar 63. Stored out of service at Mackay. 29 Oct 63 Certification approved for ferry flight to Bankstown, Sydney on this date where the aircraft was advertised for sale. had flown 33 hours 45 minutes since 2 Nov 62. c.May 1964 Purchased by a group of local Sydney businessmen - S R Johnson, 'Hockey' Treloar and J L Nicholls. 03 Jun 64 Ferried the 35 miles to Camden NSW for maintenance. 06 Aug 64 Engine inspected for CoA renewal. (Engine log book DoRIS Ref. B467). 8-12 Aug 64 Aircraft inspected at Notley Aviation Pty Ltd, Camden. 17 Sep 64 Registered to the three owners c/o Yeramba Estates, Wynyard House, 291 George St. Sydney. 26-29 Sep 64 Conversion flights with R Shute at Camden. (Aircraft log book DoRIS Ref.B468). 02 Oct 64 Conversion training by one of the new owners proceeding, aircraft caught in a ground loop when the port float hit the ground and bent in, the aileron arm was broken and the fabric torn. Early 1965 Moved north again, to Mackay. Apr-Aug 65 Not flown. © ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2012 10 Aug 65 Flown back to Camden. Made occasional flights. Photo at this time - Flying Review International Dec 65 p.254. 30 Jan 66 Forced landing made at Terrigal, just north of Sydney with engine trouble. Returned to Camden. Apr 66 1½ hours flown. Not flown after this date. 22 Sep 66 Certified as un-airworthy by Dept of Civil Aviation and following this was officially `permanently withdrawn from service'. 21 Jun 67 First RAFM contact reference the aircraft, to Mr McIlltree, its first civilian owner, who forwarded the letter. 28 Aug 67 Hangared at Camden 40 miles from Sydney by this date. Cared for by Mr Noel Notley on behalf of the owners. Still claimed to be airworthy. Engine had only 90 hours since new. Aug 68 Stored in open at Camden by this time. Engine still run up every six weeks or so by Mr Notley. Oct 68 Damaged in a windstorm. Both floats torn off and wings damaged. By Jul 69 Moved by road to Bankstown NSW for restoration. There was some interest in the forthcoming BP sponsored London-Sydney air race, and it was decided that the entry of the Seagull would enhance public interest, and it was duly allocated the race number 48. Overhaul cost approximately Australian $18,000. To increase the range to that necessary for some sectors of the race, an 86 US gallon auxiliary fuel tank from a Mustang was installed. The aircraft was entered by a four-man syndicate headed by Allan Parkes. 09 Jul 69 Test flight after complete overhaul for CoA renewal at Aerosmith Bankstown. Painted in camouflage scheme and white registration letters on fin. 24 Nov 69 Engine inspected for CoA renewal (Engine L/B DoRIS Ref.B467). 26 Nov 69 Flying recommenced. Time to make the race starting line in London had run out but it was still hoped to join up with the race competitors at Singapore and return with them to Sydney. 30 Nov 69 Photo in flight on this date - Aeroplane Monthly Mar 80 p.137. 08 Dec 69 Left Bankstown, Sydney for Singapore. 17 Dec 69 Reached island of Timor, flown by Allan Parkes and John Williams. Held up at Dilli through lack of 80 Octane fuel. Repairs made and fuel obtained. © ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2012 11 30 Dec 69 Began trip back to Bankstown. 08 Jan 70 Arrived back at Bankstown having logged nearly 60 hours flying on the round trip. 21 Jan 70 100 hourly inspection on engine and airframe. Late Jan 70 Flew north to Taree, NSW, a pleasure flight to watch the annual aquatic festival. Return intended for 26 Jan 70 but aborted due to thunderstorms and high winds forcing another night at Taree. 27 Jan 70 See account in Air Pictorial, Apr 70 p.128 - took off at 0615 bound for Sydney, but suffered engine failure at low altitude (500ft) shortly after take-off. Initial cause was failure to select both fuel tanks for take-off, the pilot using an almost empty tank, causing the engine to fail. The aircraft came down rapidly, no more than 12-15 seconds after the engine cut out.

The pilot recovered the aircraft well and aimed for a nearby paddock. However, the starboard wheel hit a tree stump hidden in the long grass, tearing off the undercarriage leg and tearing a long gash in the lower starboard fuselage. The aircraft touched down, the wing dropped, the starboard float was torn off, and the aircraft veered through a fence, damaging the lower starboard wing, coming to rest about 50 feet further on, the crew and passenger, Neville M Parnell were unhurt. This accident closed the Seagull's flying career with a total of 1,893 flying hours. The wrecked aircraft was dismantled and trucked back to Bankstown. Photo as landed - Aeroplane Monthly Mar 80 p138. 28 May 70 Engine inhibited for long-term storage. Jul 71 Derelict and vandalised at Bankstown by this date RAFM still negotiating with Mr Treloar to acquire the aircraft in complex and protracted negotiations. 9 Mar 72 Registration cancelled. May 72 Acquired, finally, by the RAFM. Exchanged with Mr Treloar for Spitfire XVI TE384 plus Australian $5,000. Aug 72 Moved to RAAF base Richmond for storage, via No.2 Stores Depot Sydney. Jan 73 Airlifted to Darwin by RAAF. Feb-Apr 73 Airlifted back to UK in two loads on RAF No.53 Squadron Belfast aircraft, including XR365 which loaded the Seagull at Darwin on 26 March 1973. On the way back, via Fiji, Samoa, Hawaii, California and Gander the Belfast had to be fumigated at Hawaii because Black Widow spiders from the Seagull were found in the aircraft. See file note from Dave Carter, June 2005. © ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2012 12 Photo on arrival at Brize Norton from Gander, 2 April 1973 - A History of No.53 Squadron RAF Brize Norton (022676). See also ‘Around the World in 18 Days’ by Tony Gale, member of Mobile Air Movements Team, on Seagull history file. 05 Apr 73 Final `instalment' arrived at RAFM store at RAF Henlow. The loads had arrived at Brize Norton and were moved to Henlow by 71 MU. Arrived at Henlow with a quantity of spare parts. Aircraft in poor condition, especially the wing structure. Restoration work commenced immediately. 1975 Hull under restoration at RAF Wyton by a volunteer team, the wings being restored by RAFM staff at Cardington including john Chapman; one wing spar was so badly twisted, it had to be cut through and a piece inserted, reinforced by a fishplate either side; each wing took about nine months to rebuild. Photos: Control Column Jul 76 p.112; Air Enthusiast Jul/Aug 98 p.73. 08 Sep 76 Wyton completed hull restoration by this date, moved by road to Cardington by end of Sep by team from RAF Abingdon. Photo: Control Column Jul 77 p.111; Aircraft Illustrated Oct 78 p.514; RAF News April 13 - 26 1977 p.8. Nov 79 Moved to Hendon for Display in newly opened Battle of Britain Hall by this date, where is has remained on public view ever since in Australian camouflage and markings as A2-4 once more. Photo - Air Enthusiast Jul/Aug 98 p.73. TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON

Austal to undertake patrol boat autonomy trial for RAN

Austal Australia has taken possession of a de-commissioned *Armidale*-class Patrol Boat (ACPB), the former HMAS *Maitland*, from the Commonwealth of Australia, to commence planning, modification, and test and evaluation of autonomous and remotely operated systems.

The Patrol Boat Autonomy Trial (PBAT) is a collaboration between Austal, Trusted Autonomous Systems Defence Cooperative Research Centre and the Royal Australian Navy Warfare Innovation Navy (WIN) Branch.

The trial will aim to establish robotic, automated and autonomous elements on a patrol boat, providing a proof-of-concept demonstrator, for optionally crewed or autonomous operations for the RAN into the future. The trial will also explore the legal, regulatory pathways and requirements of operating an autonomous vessel at sea.

PBAT couples Austal's experience as the designer and manufacturer of the *Armidale*-class Patrol Boat (ACPB), with subcontractor L3Harris' experience in autonomous vessel technology. With co-funding from the Commonwealth of Australia, guidance and support is provided from the Trusted Autonomous Systems Defence Cooperative Research Centre.

Following the arrival of the vessel in Henderson, Western Australia, the re-named *'Sentinel'* has entered the trial's 'modification phase'; which includes the fitting of a variety of monitoring and control systems and technologies that enables autonomous and remote operations. From July 2023 the vessel is expected to be registered under Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) jurisdiction as a domestic commercial vessel to enable sea trials to commence October 2023.

According to Austal Australia, the PBAT project aims to:

- Significantly progress the concept of remote operations and the autonomous certification approach;
- Increase the understanding of fuel management, communication, and navigation systems to be made autonomous;
- Investigate and understand the sustained operation of shipboard mechanical systems without crew intervention, including systems of redundancy and reliability to support operations at sea for extended periods;
- Provide input to long-term risk reduction for future naval projects, considering remote or autonomous vessels. This will be extended to other sensors and autonomous vehicles once the initial trial is complete; and
- Transfer lessons learned on the application of remote or autonomous systems to the Royal Australian Navy's current fleet to potentially optimise crew workload. Remote and autonomous operation has the potential to reduce crew workload and increase operational safety by reducing human error.

"Austal understands the future of Australia's maritime capability will partly depend on how quickly our naval enterprise can better understand and integrate autonomous and remotely operated vessels," Austal Limited Chief Executive Officer Paddy Greg said.

"Austal are pleased to be at the heart of Australia's autonomous naval journey, working with our Industry partners, Navy and the Commonwealth, to complete the modification and trials, and share this data to improve the wider knowledge base."

"Our expert staff are excited to be working to learn more about the challenges and opportunities in this autonomous and robotic space.

"Austal always strive to improve our designs and build ships that outsmart Australia's adversaries, delivering capability into the hands of the Australian Defence Force to improve their ability to fight and win at sea," Gregg said.

New system issue delays HMS Prince of Wales' departure again

The £3bn aircraft carrier was due to leave for Rosyth, Scotland, for repairs to her right propeller shaft.

David Wells

HMS Prince of Wales leaving Portsmouth earlier this year.

The departure of HMS Prince of Wales for repairs in Rosyth is on hold again, despite the warship having been listed to sail earlier today. The carrier was due to depart at 10:50 but what's been described as 'an emergent issue on one of the ship's systems' delayed the ship's trip to Scotland. A Royal Navy spokesperson said: "HMS Prince of Wales is preparing to sail to Rosyth to undergo repairs to her right propeller shaft. "The full extent of the repairs will be known once the ship has entered dry dock. We are committed to getting HMS Prince of Wales back on operations, protecting the nation and our allies, as soon as possible."

HMS Prince of Wales is now listed to sail again at 22:55 today but it is not clear at this stage if there will be further delays. The £3 billion aircraft carrier is due for repairs to her right propeller shaft after a mechanical fault was discovered just 48 hours after she left Portsmouth for America in August. She had been due to take part in military exercises in the Atlantic with US partners and F-35s as well as hosting the Atlantic Future Forum conference in New York. Another departure - Monday 3 October - was also missed, reportedly because engineers failed to remove the damaged propeller in time.

Inspections by divers and engineers found that the 33-ton starboard propeller – the same weight as 30 Ford Fiesta cars – had malfunctioned and the coupling holding it in place had broken. The 65,000-tonne ship had been brought back to Portsmouth for further examination by engineers from Babcock before the decision was taken for it to travel to Rosyth, where it was built, to undergo the repairs in dry dock.

Divers surveyed the damage to the aircraft carrier's starboard propellor and shaft, following *her breakdown*. The propeller shaft is made up of a number of 'steel poles' joined together, with the engine on one end and the propeller on the other. Each of the poles is joined together with a 'shaft coupling', which is where the fault has been identified on the Prince of Wales. The Navy has not commented on how long the repairs are expected to take or how long HMS Prince of Wales will be absent from its role as NATO flagship, but it is understood to be months rather than weeks. Its sister ship HMS Queen Elizabeth changed its autumn plans to travel to the US to take over some of the planned engagements, including hosting the Atlantic Future Forum in New York – a defence conference aimed at strengthening bonds between the UK and US.

Rear Admiral Steve Moorhouse, director of Force Generation, who is responsible for making sure Royal Navy ships are ready to deploy, has previously said: "Royal Navy divers have inspected the starboard shaft of the ship and the adjacent areas and they have confirmed there is significant damage to the shaft on the propeller and some superficial damage to the rudder but no damage to the rest of the ship.

"Our initial assessment has shown that coupling that joins the final two sections of the shaft has failed.
"Now, this is an extremely unusual fault and we continue to pursue all repair options," he added.

RAN buys 12 extra ‘Romeo’ helicopters

20/09/2022 Posted by Brian Hartigan 1819 Views 0 Comments

The US Navy has awarded Lockheed Martin a firm fixed-price contract to produce an additional 12 Sikorsky MH -60R Seahawk® helicopters for the Royal Australian Navy.

FILE PHOTO: *An embarked MH-60 Romeo helicopter prepares to land onboard HMAS Adelaide. Photo by Able Seaman Jarrod Mulvihill.*

Procured via the US government’s Foreign Military Sales agreement, the new aircraft will add a third ‘Romeo’ squadron to the RAN’s Fleet Air Arm.
Vice president Sikorsky Maritime & Mission Systems Hamid Salim said the ‘Romeo’ Seahawk helicopter instilled confidence in navies world wide for its high operational availability in the harsh maritime environment, and for the fully integrated mission systems and sensors that quickly generate a complete picture of the surface and subsurface domains. “We thank the RAN for showing confidence in the broad mission flexibility of this proven multi-role helicopter,” Mr Salim said.

“Ongoing and planned upgrades to the MH-60R through partnership with the US Navy, RAN, other international partners and industry will ensure the aircraft’s reliability and mission effectiveness against emerging threats for decades to come.” Under Project SEA 9100 Phase 1 (Improved Embarked Logistics Support Helicopter Capability), the 12 new MH-60R aircraft will create a common fleet of maritime helicopters supporting all of the RAN’s air-capable platforms.

Head of Navy Capability for the Royal Australian Navy Rear Admiral Peter Quinn said the MH-60R ‘Romeo’ multi -mission helicopter built upon a decade of partnership with the United States Navy and Lockheed Martin, and provide the Royal Australian Navy with an unparalleled maritime aviation platform.

“The versatility of the MH-60R to conduct a wide range of missions combined with the world-class support provided by our partners, was a significant factor in the decision by the RAN to make an additional investment in MH-60R under the SEA 9100 Phase 1 program,” Rear Admiral Quinn said.

Lockheed Martin plans to deliver all 12 MH-60R helicopters between mid-2025 and mid-2026. Sikorsky Aircraft Australia Limited in Nowra, New South Wales, currently provides depot-level maintenance, supply support and logistics support for Australia’s MH-60R helicopter fleet. The RAN was the first international navy to select the MH-60R helicopter, acquiring 24 aircraft from 2013 to 2016. The Fleet Air Arm’s 725 and 816 squadrons based at Nowra have accumulated more than 30,000 flight hours embarked on frigates, destroyers and supply ships.

Perth missile firing right on target

23/09/2022 Posted by Mike Hughes 511 Views 0 Comments Evolved Sea Sparrow, Exercise Pacific Vanguard, HMAS Perth, Regional Presence Deployment, US Navy

Anzac-class frigate HMAS *Perth* displayed its capabilities and ability to integrate with partners while participating in Exercise Pacific Vanguard 2022.

CAPTION: *HMAS Perth fires an Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile while operating in the Philippine Sea during Exercise Pacific Vanguard 2022. Story by Lieutenant Eleanor Williams. Photo by US Navy Lieutenant Junior Grade Emilio Mackie.*

Perth put 'smoke in the air', launching an Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile to successfully engage a high-speed, unmanned aerial vehicle the frigate had tracked with its phased array radar and combat system.

The launch was part of a dual-firing exercise conducted in conjunction with the US Navy Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, USS *Barry* (DDG-52), which launched an SM-2 anti-air missile.

Conducted in the Philippine Sea, the biennial air and missile defence exercise focused on enhancing interoperability and advancing training and integration between maritime forces.

The dual firing enhanced interoperability by combining both ships' air and missile defences against realistic threats, proving the integration of systems, weapons and tactics between allies.

Commanding Officer *Perth* Commander Tony Nagle said the highly-anticipated exercise was not only an impressive sight, but also invaluable for testing systems and training personnel to further enhance the Royal Australian Navy's ability to operate effectively with regional maritime forces.

"Operating in company with other Australian ships enhances our own capabilities, but working closely with the US Navy advances our tactical training and strengthens our regional partnership," Commander Nagle said.

"We successfully achieved our training aims during the exercise and thoroughly enjoyed our time working alongside HMAS *Sydney* and our South Korean, Japanese, Canadian, and American friends.

"I, along with the rest of *Perth's* ships company, look forward to returning for future exercises and engagements."

Perth and *Barry* were supported during the exercise by the US Navy Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo and ammunition ship, USNS *Alan Shepard* (T-AKE 3).

Perth participated in Exercise Pacific Vanguard as part of a regional presence deployment through the Indo-Pacific Region, which included a series of joint exercises and other engagements with regional partners.

Perth conducted a port visit in Guam following the exercise before returning to sea to continue its deployment, proceeding to Darwin to participate in Exercise Kakadu 2022 alongside regional partners during September.

The deployment comes shortly after *Perth's* return to operational service following a two-year Anzac Midlife Capability Assurance Program upgrade.

HMAS Glenelg decommissioned

The Royal Australian Navy has decommissioned Armidale-class patrol boat HMAS Glenelg at HMAS Coonawarra, Darwin, following 14 years of service.

CAPTION: *Commanding Officer HMAS Glenelg Lieutenant Commander Alexander Finnis stands at attention as Leading Seaman Kiani Hughes and Able Seaman Eliza McGuigan strike the Australian White Ensign for the final time during the ships' decommissioning ceremony at HMAS Coonawarra, Darwin. Photo by Leading Seaman Shane Cameron.*

Commander Australian Fleet Rear Admiral Jonathan Earley attended the ceremony and recognised the service of the Ship's Company.
"HMAS Glenelg and the men and women who have served in the vessel have made a significant contribution to our national interest," Rear Admiral Earley said.

"The professional and dedicated crews have protected our nation's borders and offshore maritime interests."

Since commissioning in 2008, HMAS Glenelg has worked alongside Border Force, Australian Fisheries and the Australian Federal Police as part of border protection operations.

USS Gerald R Ford v HMS Queen Elizabeth: A comparison

How does the US's newest carrier stack up against the Royal Navy's fleet flagship?

The US Navy's newest aircraft carrier has *set sail for her first deployment*, on which she will work with allied armed forces in the Atlantic Ocean. Named after America's 38th President Gerald R Ford, she is part of the first new US aircraft carrier class designed in more than 40 years, the US Department of Defense said.
There are plans for a further nine in the coming decade, replacing the Nimitz Class on a one-for-one basis. So how does USS Gerald R Ford compare to the Royal Navy carrier, and flagship, *HMS Queen Elizabeth*?

Weapons and aircraft

HMS Queen Elizabeth carries Phalanx close-in weapons – a radar-controlled Gatling gun which fires 20mm shells, 3,000 rounds a minute. They are designed to engage enemy aircraft or missiles if they get past the outer ring of defence such as Sea Viper or Sea Dart.

Crowsnest radar which can detect long-range air and underwater threats are fitted to the Royal Navy's fleet of Merlin Mk2 helicopters, while HMS Queen Elizabeth's deck also accommodates the F-35 Lightning II – the world's most advanced stealth fighter-bomber. USS Gerald R Ford, meanwhile, uses Evolved Sea Sparrow missiles – Rolling Airframe Missiles and Close-In Weapons System. The US carrier also hosts Carrier Air Wing Eight – which includes F-18 E/F Super Hornets, E-2D Advanced Hawkeyes and EA-18G Growlers along with MH-60 Sierra and MH-60 Sea Hawk helicopters.

Aircraft sit on USS Gerald R Ford's flight deck as the ship steams through the Atlantic Ocean prior to maiden deployment (Picture: US Department of Defense).

Speed

HMS Queen Elizabeth can reach upwards of 25 knots, USS Gerald R Ford can hit more than 30 knots.

Propulsion

The US Navy says USS Gerald R Ford has two nuclear reactors.
HMS Queen Elizabeth is not nuclear powered, but the Royal Navy says the powerplant behind her two propellors generates enough power to run 1,000 family cars.

How both nations use aircraft carriers

The Royal Navy has seen 16 different classes of aircraft carriers take to the sea since 1918, with between one and 10 ships commissioned for each class HMS Queen Elizabeth is both a new and a new class of aircraft carrier and was joined by her sister ship *HMS Prince of Wales* in 2019.

The US Navy remains the world's leader in aircraft carriers, with 11 nuclear-powered vessels. It also has nine amphibious assault ships that can carry helicopters and vertical-takeoff fighter jetsOther world carriers France has its own carriers, and Japan has four "helicopter destroyers", which are technically not aircraft carriers, but carry aircraft. Two are being converted to support the short take-off and vertical-landing fighters. Earlier this year,

China *launched a new-generation aircraft carrier* – the first such ship to be both designed and built in the country. China's new carrier was named after Fujian province on the country's south-eastern coast, following a tradition after naming its first two carriers after the provinces of Liaoning and Shandong.

FEATURE | ELECTRIC HYDROFOIL FERRY CONCEPT UNDER DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

By **Baird Maritime** -

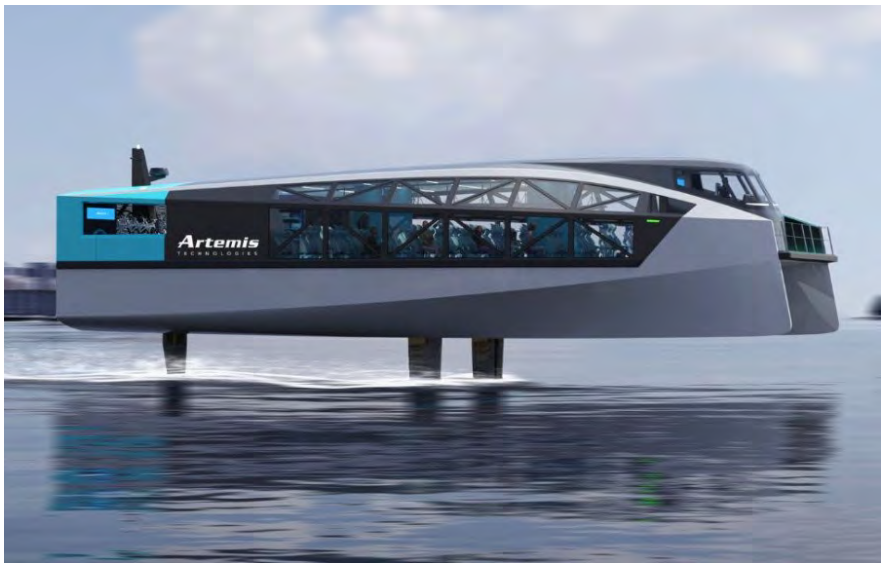


Photo: Artemis Technologies

Northern Ireland-based engineering company Artemis Technologies has unveiled images of a proposed design of a high-speed ferry fitted with hydrofoils and all-electric propulsion. This ferry is among several vessels being developed by Artemis to provide commercially viable reduced-emission transport solutions for operators, cities and governments across the world.

A design offering various configurations to suit operator requirements

Each ferry in the series will have a length of 24 metres, a beam of 11 metres, a draught of 1.8 metres with the foil retracted, a maximum displacement of 70 tonnes, and capacity for 150 passengers and three crewmembers plus 18 bicycles. With front and side loading capability and flexible general arrangement options, the vessel can serve a wide range of customer requirements.*Photo: Artemis Technologies*

The ferries will also be fully accessible and spacious with a range of facilities on board including bike racks, cabin bag and overhead storage, baby changing facilities, and charging points for mobile devices.

A top speed of 38 knots can be achieved while and a range of 115 nautical miles is possible at a cruising speed of 25 knots. Powered by the patented foil-type electric propulsion system, the vessels are designed to fly above the water, providing a comfortable ride for the passengers, mitigating the effects of seasickness, and producing minimal wake at high speeds.

Propulsion arrangement ensuring efficiency and savings

Artemis said the efficiency of the foils and the electric drive system delivers significant OPEX savings including lower maintenance costs and up to 85 per cent fuel savings. The propulsion also generates significantly reduced emissions, ensuring reduced air, water, and noise pollution. Artemis claims that, when operating at a 35 knots average cruise speed for 200 nautical miles per day, 350 days per year, fuel savings will amount to £2.6 million (US$2.91 million) whilst also preventing the release of up to 8,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

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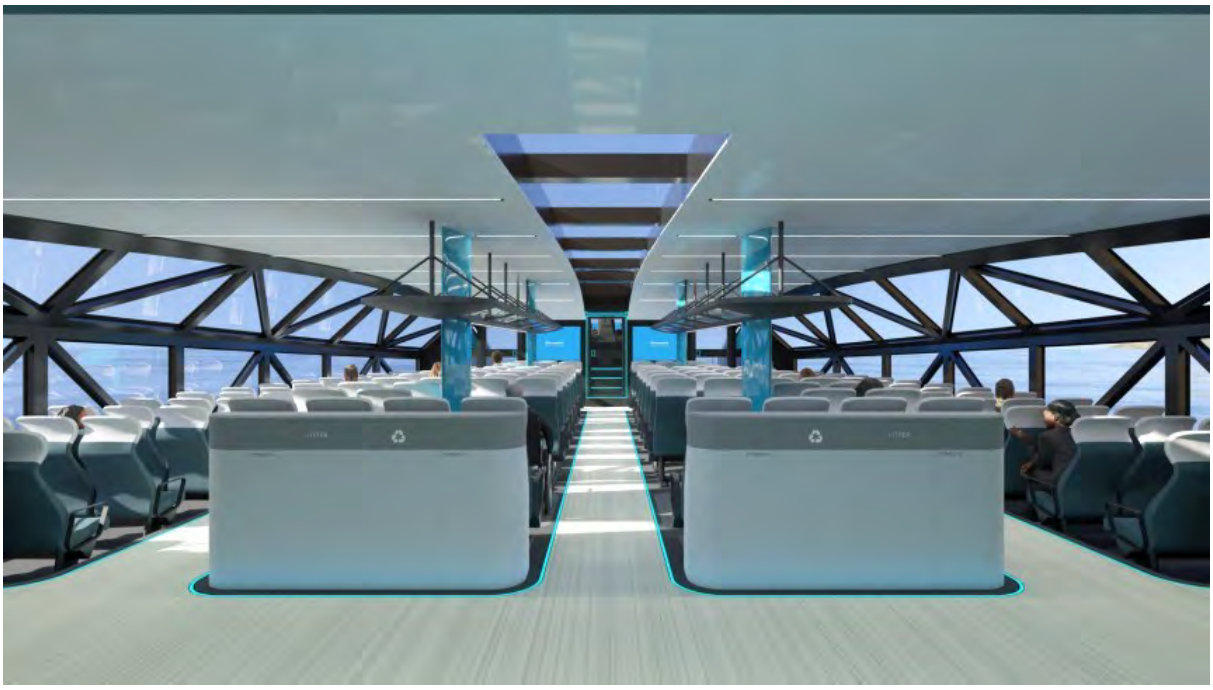

Photo: Artemis Technologies

Dr Iain Percy, founder of Artemis Technologies, remarked that the new ferries will help encourage multimodal transport in urban areas, hence enabling cities around the world to utilise and benefit from the potential of their waterways.
The vessels will also feature a unique high-speed collision avoidance system developed with ECIT, part of Queen's University Belfast. The system will ensure the safety of operations in port and close to shore by safely diverting the ferry on an altered path away from sea life, wildlife, debris, and other in-water objects that might otherwise be obscured from the view from the wheelhouse.
Zero, the first vessel in the series, is scheduled to enter service in 2024. It will be operated by Condor Ferries, which, like Artemis Technologies, is part of the 14-member Belfast Maritime Consortium formed to introduce reduced emission ferries into service in Northern Ireland. The pilot operation using the new hydrofoil ferry will run from Bangor Marina to Belfast's Titanic Quarter with an estimated travel time of around 30 minutes.

HISTORY OF THE USE OF A GUN CARRIAGE FOR FUNERALS

DIDCOT RAILWAY CENTRE We are pleased to read in the newspapers that the gun carriage carrying the coffin of Queen Elizabeth II at the state funeral procession on Monday 19 September was hauled by Royal Navy sailors. Most news reports correctly state that the tradition dates back to Queen Victoria's funeral on 2 February 1901. However, they fail to mention the Great Western Railway's role in supplying the ropes for the sailors to rig to the gun carriage on the occasion. This drawing of the bluejackets hauling the Queen's coffin that day was published in the Penny Illustrated Paper on 9 February 1901, with the ropes clearly visible. On 2 February 1901 the weather was extremely cold and the hawsers for the gun carriage to be used for the procession from Windsor railway station to the Castle had frozen.

The horses intended to pull the gun carriage were also affected by the intense cold and had become restive and possibly dangerous during the wait for the delayed funeral train to arrive. It was at this point that the GWR played its essential part in what has become a tradition for subsequent state funerals. The Duke of Portland, who was Master of the Horse at Queen Victoria's funeral, recalled what happened in a letter published in The Times on 28 January 1936 at the time of King George V's funeral: "Owing to the lateness of the train which conveyed Her Majesty's coffin from Paddington to Windsor the horses attached to the gun-carriage had become cold. When the word of command 'Walk …March' was given, the leaders twice reared up, and then fell back on the other horses, which caused all six to fall down.

"My recollection is that Admiral Sir Michael Culme-Seymour was in command of the large Naval Guard of Honour drawn up on the spot. As soon as Sir Michael saw what had occurred he called out to me in his usual resonant voice, 'All right, my boys will soon straighten out this mess.' He at once ordered them to go into the station and the station master procured ropes (from the communication cords of carriages). Sir Michael then ordered them to fall in and draw the gun-carriage from the station to the entrance to the Castle grounds at the end of the Long Walk and up the slope. It was a most touching and effective procession and, in my opinion, much more impressive than would have been the official procedure." Thus with inspired improvisation and the help of the GWR, began the tradition which the Royal Navy has claimed ever since of hauling the coffin at funerals of the monarch. The ropes on the carriages were the external communication cords to alert the guard in an emergency. Our brake 3rd carriage No 416, built in 1891, still carries this system, so remember to take a look at it next time you visit Didcot Railway Centre.

Australian industry must focus on sustainment of defence capability

By: **Christopher Skinner**

Opinion: RAN veteran and defence analyst Christopher Skinner explains how Australia can shore-up its sustainment capability before proceeding with major defence acquisitions.

The United States Naval Commander of Virginia Class nuclear attack submarines (SSN), an option under consideration for Australia's AUKUS program, recently was reported as unhappy with the number of operational Virginia SSNs that were in maintenance and therefore unavailable for operations.

The cause, he explained, was lack of necessary materials and replacement spare parts, as was agreed by the Submarine Program Executive Manager within the US Naval Sea Systems Command. One of the modern approaches to replacement subassemblies and subsystems is what are termed "rotable pool" items that are purchased in excess of the numbers needed for the submarine construction so that when a unit is removed during maintenance, it can be refurbished, requalified and be ready on the shelf for immediate installation in the next submarine that requires it.

The idea is to reduce downtime for the submarine while the repair work is proceeding without holding up the maintenance availability. So, what has that got to do with Australian industry capability, you may ask. The point is that Australian industry needs to shift its focus from trying to persuade prime contractors from overseas to shift to local industry when they are less well known and may incur start-up costs that don't apply to the existing offshore supplier and likely higher costs of labour and materials in many cases, plus the uncertainty over quality and capacity. Instead, Australian small and medium enterprise (SME) companies should examine closely the sustainment planning for each major program and identify where there is risk of program shortcomings due to lack of materials and subassemblies when needed for regular scheduled and unscheduled maintenance.

This analysis ideally should be led by Defence Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group (CASG) but with the important difference to involve Australian industry analysts and advocates from the start so the critical sustainment industrial functions and components can be assessed without that being filtered through the bidding prime contractors' current supplier preferences. I am a great fan of the Australian Industry & Defence Network (AIDN), the peak body for SME advocacy, but their hands are tied to follow my proposed approach because they are limited to the following three strategic directions, all of which are laudable but rely on the goodwill of CASG and of the prime contractors:

- **Advocacy**: by providing a "voice" for SME issues and concerns.
- **Representation:** AIDN provides leadership and builds and maintains key partnerships at local, national and international level, through influencing national policy and strategy and maintaining key relationships with political and government decision-makers.
- **Member services:** AIDN services its chapters and their members through providing relevant information and awareness on the defence and security environments, opportunities for collaboration and engagement and governance oversight.

The additional element of the proposed Australian industry policy is for the CASG customer to work on behalf of the SMEs to negotiate SME participation in the logistic support analysis for the new capability program right from day one. By all means, work with or through AIDN, but the main point is that the appropriate SMEs are at the negotiating table as supporters of CASG from the first day of contract negotiations and the intention for this to occur is plainly stated in the requests for proposals and tenders.

This approach will undoubtedly be opposed by prime contractors but that should not dissuade CASG as the customer from taking a whole of life approach to the capability and making an objective assessment of the risk of a similar predicament to that reported for the Virginia Class SSNs. There will need to be a rigorous assessment of how best to include this approach in the requests for proposal and other acquisition contracting documentation, but that should not be too difficult. The bottom line is the leverage that will exist at the initial stage of contractor selection that they must have agreed to release the necessary intellectual property rights and technical information to an approved Australian SME subject to CASG acceptance of liability should this fall over or become uneconomic.

The end result then would be involved SMEs' manufacturing and refurbishing rotable pool and other major components and assemblies for the new Australian capability such that there was a local, Australian-run supply chain that might even graduate to offshore export for other operators of the same or similar capabilities.

Cristopher Skinner served 30 years in the Royal Australian Navy as a Weapons and Electrical Engineering Officer in six surface warships, in the South-East Asian Treaty Organisation, the Vietnam War and surveillance of the North-West Indian Ocean. In two of these ships he was the action Weapons Control Officer for ASMD and AAW watchkeeper for area air defence dealing with engagement decisions in real time. Shore service included secondment to the Defence Research Centre, Salisbury and to the US Naval Sea Systems Command to manage the lead-ship trials for a joint frigate project, Superintendent of Missile and torpedo Maintenance, and the initial project director for the ANZAC frigate program of 10 ships for Australia and New Zealand. He is a member of several naval and geopolitical institutes, but the opinions expressed here are his own.

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THE NAVY

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