

# THE **NAVY**

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THE JOURNAL OF THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA



**THE CONFLICT IN THE RED SEA AND  
ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR FUTURE  
AUSTRALIAN STRATEGY AND ITS  
SHIPBUILDING PROGRAMME**

**NEW EYES  
FOR THE  
FLEET**

**WATER POLICE OR  
MARITIME WARRIORS**

**THE RAN IN THE  
'PALESTINE TROUBLES'  
1936-1939**

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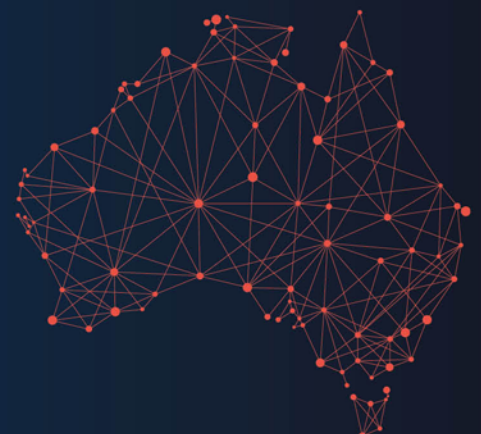
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# THE NAVY

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No1

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### Front cover:

His Majesty's Australian Barge Admiral Hudson passing HMAS HOBART (DDG 39), Sydney Harbour Fleet Review. Admiral of the Fleet, His Majesty, King Charles of Australia Reviewing. (Image Mr John Jeremy AM)

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## Ready? Aye Ready

This first issue of 2025 begins with four highly topical papers on Professor Julian Lindley-French's *Global West* [1] – as we peer into an uncertain, unstable and increasingly contested future. The first paper by longstanding contributor Kelvin Curnow, 1st Prize essay competition professional entry 2024, considers *The Conflict in the Red Sea and its consequences for future Australian Strategy and its Shipbuilding Programme*. Kelvin concludes, *inter alia*:

The determination by the Commonwealth Government to not contribute a warship to [The Red Sea] must be called into question. Putting this in the context of AUKUS, Australia needed to be careful about denying a request to send a ship to support an overstretched USN at the same time as asking the US Navy to transfer three *Virginia-class* submarines out of its order of battle.[23] The decision to not send a ship is puzzling in that the *Hobart-class* would operate seamlessly with Arleigh Burkes using as they do the use same missiles, AN/SPY-1 radar and AEGIS CMS.

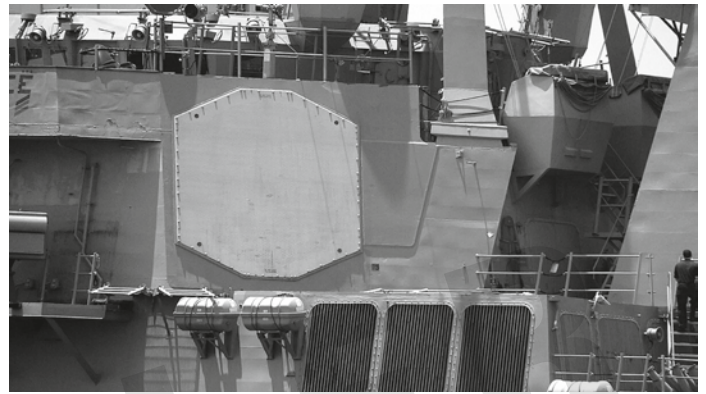
...the RAN will be at the forefront of any future conflict, if for no other reason that we are an island nation dependent on sea trade for our survival. Lessons to be learnt from the Red Sea conflict include:

1. selecting the right ships to meet requirements,
2. equipping them with adequate weapons for both attack and defence, and
3. buying F-3B STOVL fighters to fly from the *Canberra-class*.

Multi-layer defence provided by both long- and short-range missiles together with guns has proven to be an absolute necessity in this conflict. This cannot be provided by small warships constrained in size and weapons loads imposed by the necessity to build them rapidly to a cost, a requirement now being placed on the RAN via the *Tier 2* frigate programme.

Picking up, in part on the questions raised by Curnow and those raised by *THE NAVY* and NLA regarding the role of the Australian Border Force and Australian Defence Vessels (ADV) – largely dual crewed by ABF and RAN personnel, where many ABF are also RAN reservists – new author, Alex Miglietti (1st Prize essay competition non-professional entry 2024) considers *Water Police or Maritime Warriors: The use of the Royal Australian Navy in non-Defence applications*. Quoting Captain Christopher Skinner RAN (Ret), Alex asks if “the mission of Navy – is it to protect the mainland from a possible invasion, or is it to ensure freedom of navigation and protection of trade, information and energy flow and movement of people across the oceans that surround us?” [2] Alex argues that:

Although the *Surface Fleet Review* (SFR) concluded, as many had observed for some time, that the *Arafura-class* OPVs were insufficiently armed to have a warfighting role, their subsequent



Octagonal Radar Antenna AN-SPY-1 on USS PAUL HAMILTON (DDG-60) (Image USN).

reduction has resulted in their being replaced by additional *Cape-class* patrol boats. The *Cape-class* is a delightful ship. Sleek, economical, efficient and incorporating lessons learned from the *Armidale-class*, it is in many ways the perfect civilian patrol boat. It has no main gun, no air defence radar and no helicopter landing spots. If the *Arafura-class* is under-gunned, the *Cape-class* is totally un-gunned...the military's commitment to constabulary missions as a discrete but integral role for the RAN, given that it appears otherwise concerned about a lack of firepower and lethality.

In his analysis, Miglietti suggests that “the [FSR] should go further, that [not only] the RAN supplies the vessels but that they are crewed and operated by civilian or ABF personnel and are available for requisitioning to the RAN in a time or urgent conflict or peculiar need.” This ties back to other debates in the NLA and *THE NAVY* promoting a *Royal Australian Fleet Auxiliary* (RAFA), see [3-7].

Alex further suggests that “creating a new agency is unlikely to end well. It is doubtful that adding bureaucracy to the mix, creating a further sub-allocation of a finite budget with all of the non-essential support staff costs it brings will somehow enable a) an organisation to better execute the vital constabulary role, and b) in doing so relieve the pressure on the RAN to such an extent that it can perform its primary mission better”. Aligning strongly with the NLA Statement of Policy (p.5), Miglietti argues that:

What should be the subject of urgent and focused consideration is whether better resource allocation, an enhancement of the ABF as a broad-based constabulary agency with designated powers and better marine equipment, would allow the Navy to shine in the way only grey hulls in blue water can.

Complementing the first two paper, Murray Dear a long-time contributor and essay winner, in *New Eyes for the Fleet* argues for organic airborne early warning (AEW). Taking an innovative approach he notes:

There can be little doubt that in any future Indo-Pacific conflict the RAN will face a myriad of threats when conducting contested operations. Logically, the sooner such threats can be identified responses can be made for appropriate counter-measures to be taken. For a *Crowsnest* equipped *SuperPac 750XL-II* (aircraft) to become an operational AEW platform, there are a lot of moving parts that need to mesh beforehand. The two main issues that need to be resolved first are:

- Can an operational *Crowsnest* system to be fitted to a *SuperPac 750XL-II*.
- Can a *Crowsnest* equipped *SuperPac 750XL-II* operate safely off an LHD.

Rather than incurring a significant expense to incorporate this feature, it would appear more efficient to just park them on the flight deck abaft the island.



RN Seaking Whisky AEW version (ASaC7) – *Dustbin* – rushed into service in 5 weeks in 1982 to provide early warning radar to the Fleet (Image RN)



It is Murray's "considered view that the RAN would now benefit from the early acquisition of an AEWG platform. In this regard, the *SuperPac 750XL-II* fitted with *Crowsnest*, he suggests, presents as a far superior AEWG platform for the RAN than what any rotary aircraft might offer".

The final paper is an historically relevant paper by long standing contributor and Essay winner, Commander Greg Swinden RAN. See also Greg's photo of ROKS CHEONAN (PCC-772), back page. In his paper, *The RAN in the 'Palestine Troubles,' 1936-1939*, Swinden notes that "members of the Australia Defence Force (ADF) have operated in [the] region (which includes Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, and Jordan) since 30 June 1956 as part of the *UN Truce Supervision Organisation* (UNTSO) and members of the Australian Federal Police have been part of the *United Nations Peace Keeping Force* in nearby Cyprus since 1964. Additionally, ADF personnel deployed to Egypt and the Sinai as part of United Nations Emergency Force in the late 1970's and the *Multi Force Observers* (MFO) in the early 1980s. The MFO is an ongoing deployment for the ADF" – currently under the command of Major General Mick Garraway AM CSC. As a matter of record, many of the RAN's wartime commanders saw action first during the Palestine Troubles. Greg concludes presciently that "the state of Israel was proclaimed on 14 May 1948 and British forces withdrew from the Levant, however fighting between both warring parties has continued to this day and regrettably there appears to be no end in sight".

### New Section

This issue introduces a new section – *The Directed Telescope*. In his *magnus opus*, Colonel Gary B. Griffin US Army noted "the commander's unending quest for certainty in battle has, however, never been fully satisfied. As a result, commanders at every level have been historically presented with a continuous and elusive challenge to develop the most rapid, reliable, and efficient means of obtaining tactical information, communicating critical orders, and controlling subordinate units." [8] He further defines "the *directed telescope*, or, more specifically, the use of specially selected, highly qualified, and trusted officers as special agents or observers for the commander," to be:

...a fundamental method of responding to this persistent challenge. These staff officers have been popularly referred to as the "eyes" of the commander. Throughout military history, the use of officers in this capacity has been critical in obtaining battlefield command information for the commander. The utility of these special agents, whether they are aides, liaison personnel, or special staff officers, has been proven in war after war for thousands of years. The *directed telescope* has survived despite successive waves of information – gathering communications technology.

From the loyal aides-de-camp of the Napoleonic era to the British [Australian, Canadian, South African, Indian] command liaison officers of World War II, command and staff liaison systems, an often-overlooked technique of command, have played an extremely important role in successful command and control at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of warfare.

The critical role of the *Directed Telescope* "to authenticate from the plethora of information and data available today," is what the NLA and *THE NAVY* have done for over a century. Providing appropriate dissent, from a loyal, unwavering, trusted source. Noting Trump 2.0 (47), in this issue NLA Defence Analysts examine the current Defence Budget; crewing and staffing of senior positions, and further cuts impacting the UK Royal Navy – with implications for AUKUS and the RAN.

By developing the *Directed Telescope*, this allows *Flash Traffic* to return to the President's original intent: "that readers should be so up to date that they can argue the case for Navy and Sea Power with anyone." I am delighted to report that longstanding NLA Member (WA DIV) and Project Manager of the *HMAS PERTH (I) Memorial*,



HMAS PERTH (I) Officer of the Watch Lieutenant Power RAN (possibly Philip Renton Power) using his Admiralty Issue Telescope to search for enemy planes March 1941 (Image AWM).

see President's Page and back cover, Commander Jim O'Neill ANC (Ret) has taken over as *Flash Traffic* editor. The *Red Duster* section – with inputs from long standing NSW Div member and contributor Dr Neil Baird's, *Baird Maritime*, (see for example [4]) and the *Maritime Union of Australia* – will be maintained. As inaugurated in 2017 by the late, longstanding NSW Div member and contributor, Captain (Master) Ted Wilson MN.

The above changes maintain the President's bipartisan intent, noting:

Since its inception in November 1900, The Navy League of Australia has sought to hold the Government of the day (whatever Party) accountable for this nation's maritime security through the lens of our Policy Statement. ■



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- [6] Schweikert, M., *An Army Solution to a Navy Problem*. The NAVY - Journal of the Navy League of Australia, 2024. 86, Oct-Dec(4): pp. 7-11.
- [7] Schweikert, M., *President's Pages - "In Peril": the RAN and the Surface Fleet Review*. The NAVY - Journal of the Navy League of Australia, 2024. 86, Oct-Dec(4): p. 5.
- [8] Griffin, G.B., *The Directed Telescope: A Traditional Element of Effectrtu' Command*. Combat Studies Institute Reports, ed. J.R. Spiller. 1985 (1991), Washington, DC: Department of Army.

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 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, undersea and air communication with our Allies and trading partners.
- Supports a continuing strong alliance with Five Eyes, AUKUS, QUAD, FPDA, and ANZUS partners.
- Supports close relationships with all nations in our general area particularly PNG, Indonesia, the Philippines and the South Pacific Island States.
- Advocates the acquisition of the most capable modern armaments, surveillance systems, sensors, and decision support to ensure decisive advantage over forces in our general area.
- Advocates a strong deterrent element in the ADF.
- 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.
- Supports 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.
- Supports Government intention to increase maritime preparedness and increase defence expenditure to 3% of GDP.
- 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 UAS, UUV capability.
- The Navy League believes maritime Defence requires a joint integrated endeavour across Navy, Army and Air Force.
- 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 proposed replacement surface combatants 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 destroyer replacement program to both strengthen the RAN and mitigate the local industry capability gap.
- Recommends the urgent replacement and increase in numbers of the current mine-countermeasure force.
- Strongly supports the early acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines.
- Recommends very early action to provide a strategic submarine base on the Eastern seaboard and further development of Western Australia facilities.
- Notes the potential combat effectiveness and flexibility of the STOVL version of the Joint Strike Fighter (F-35B Lightning II) and supports further examination of its application within the ADF through the LHDs.
- 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 with consideration as to remobilising the Port Divisions in support of securing the maritime and homeland base.
- Promotes and supports the 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 Army and 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





NLA Federal Committee Members join with Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead AO PhD RAN at the 2024 AGM (Image Lynda Gilbert VIC NLA Sec).

## THE LEAGUE 'READY FOR SEA IN ALL RESPECTS'

During November, the Navy League had its annual meeting and Federal Council AGM in Canberra. It was a well-attended meeting which included a most illuminating briefing from the Director General of the Australia Submarine Agency, Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead AO PhD (Australia's equivalent to Hyman G. Rickover).

Many readers of *THE NAVY* will know that the League has been an advocate of nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs), among other capabilities, since the 1980s, given their suitability to Australia's maritime geography. For this stance we 'copped a lot of stick' from the public, media, politicians and some naval officers over the years. So VADM Mead's briefing was a great vindication of our hard work and perseverance.

It was a shame that given how long it took for this to occur that some of our greatest champions of the SSN cause have since passed away and did not get to see the fruits of their labour. Navy League stalwarts such as a RADM Andrew Roberston, RADM David Holthouse, Geoffrey Evans, John Grover, and many others, would have been delighted to say the least to hear how the RAN is preparing to accept, operate and support SSNs in its order of battle.

For the next 12 months, the AGM elected myself as President and Mr Roger Blythman (VIC) and CAPT Simon Reay Atkinson RAN Res (NSW) as Vice Presidents. Mr Brad Barret (WA) was appointed as secretary with Mr John Harker (VIC) as treasurer. The Federal Council Executive has its work cut out for it with the meeting producing over two pages of action items to get the league up to 'flank speed.'

Financially, the League is in a good position sustained largely by its property income. It continues to support Cadets, where it can, provide members with special benefits and produce *THE NAVY* magazine, at great expense.

At the meeting the League's Statement of Policy, which is contained in each edition of *THE NAVY*, was amended and brought up to date.

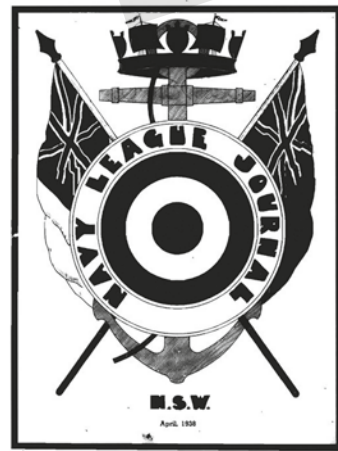
This will be a standing agenda item at each annual meeting from now on. I commend it to readers as a testament to the League's aims, priorities and its pursuits which will no doubt resonate with readers of this magazine. If you are not a member then I would invite you to join the League and show your support for our aims and objectives for it is only through community support that we can continue into the future.

At our annual meeting, the State Divisions Presidents presented their reports. It was humbling to see how our Divisions are working so hard in the community to further the aims of the League.

## THE NAVY

*THE NAVY* remains the preeminent NLA publication of record – predating and succeeding many other publications, since 1920. In continuous publication since 1938. It relies upon the volunteers who staff the NLA and those many authors who volunteer their time and make significant contributions, across the Australian Maritime Enterprise (AME). From sailors, aviators, diggers to Admirals, blue-collar workers / tradies to Captains of Industry, students to professors, industry and industrialists, Allies and partner nations, staffers to leaders.

We would argue, there is nothing like *THE NAVY* on the "market" today. Going free to all HM Ships and Bases (including ANC Training Ships) COs and Messes (Officers, Seniors, and Juniors), state/national libraries, and key Defence Attachés. It is also on sale throughout Australia – with the least returns for a magazine of its type.



*THE NAVY* Front Cover Issue 1 April 1938 with 'Officer in Charge' in writing, top right hand corner (Image NLA).

Many Defence and similarly sponsored (in-house) publications have gone to soft copy only (pdf etc.) NLA analysis confirms three things: demand for authentic, frangible, human-made products that can be "read" is seen to be increasing (it is now 'hip' to be seen reading a journal, magazine, or book); hard copy publications are reducing; meaning demand for magazines in newsagents / airports etc. is increasing. Moreover, many RAN ships and submarines operate silently and remotely, where electronic-access is not a guarantee. *THE NAVY* therefore represents a welcome admixture to mess life, and a colourful addition to the coffee table. Where, we understand, it does not remain long – being fiercely debated each issue. Exactly because of its relevance to the AME.

We need your help to get the NLA message out (see *Statement of Policy*) and encourage membership. If you are reading this for the first time, membership guarantees you your own issue of *THE NAVY*, and joining the NLA 'club.' So, consider becoming a member. If already a member, think what you may do to recruit two extra members – something I have set each member of the Federal Council to achieve over the next year. Additionally, if you know of organisations that would like to advertise in a nation-wide platform of repute, at competitive rates, please let us know. There is much we can do.

## MARITIME ESSAY AWARDS

Following stiff competition, the winners of the 2024 NLA Essay Competition were announced to be:

### Professional Winners

1. Kelvin Curnow
2. Captain George Galdorosi USN (Ret)
3. Captain Christopher Skinner RAN (Ret)



Coral Sea 75th Anniversary Veterans on board USS INTREPID (CV11) – join with PM Malcolm Turnbull. NLA leadership working with Admiral Andrew Robertson AO DSC RAN were instrumental in enabling the meeting between President Trump and Turnbull after an "awkward" start with echoes in 2024.

### Non-Professional Winners

1. Alex Miglietti
2. John Hunter
3. Walter Burroughs

The first two papers by the winners in each category, Kelvin Curnow, and Alex Miglietti, appear in this issue. Congratulations are offered to all our winners, and those who entered this year.

## THE FUTURE

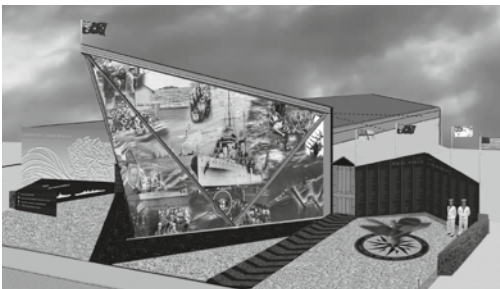
Since its inception in November 1900, The Navy League of Australia has sought to hold the Government of the day (whatever Party) accountable for this nation's maritime security through the lens of our Policy Statement.

The most pressing need is what many commentators and Defence officials are now calling the *Speed to Capability* concept, for conflict seems much closer today than it has for some time. The Government believes it can achieve speed through jingoistic academic fascinator catch phrases like *Minimum Viable Capability* (MVC) – the idea being that just enough, just in time (JEJIT) will win the day (some might liken it to the 21st century version of the 'fitted for but not with' concept). How many Australian parents, wives, husbands etc. would want their loved ones going into combat knowing they are operating the "minimum viable capability" to keep them alive? Not many at all I would suspect. Perhaps *Minimum Viable Bureaucracy / Government* (MVB/G) would be more appropriate?

We need to demand the greatest level of capability for our Australian service people. With an uncompromising determination to ensure capability overmatch of our enemies should be the government's policy, and not only for the safety of our sailors, diggers, and aviators in uniform, but also for the nation's survival. ■

19 November 2024

president@navyleague.org.au



## COMMISSIONING INAUGURATION OF HMAS PERTH(I) MEMORIAL

MARCH 2025



After several years of enormous effort by the executive of the HMAS PERTH (I) Memorial Foundation Inc, we are finally seeing the last stages of construction of the memorial.

The Foundation was established to ensure the lasting memory of the cruiser HMAS PERTH and its crew which, together with USS HOUSTON, was sunk by vastly superior Japanese naval forces on 1st March 1942 in the Sunda Strait, Indonesia. This followed earlier distinguished service in the Mediterranean. Many of those crew members who survived the sinking were subjected to appalling treatment on the Burma railway. Some survived a second sinking when their Japanese transport vessels were torpedoed by US submarines, unaware that they carried POWs.

At the time of her loss, HMAS Perth carried a complement of 681 officers, ratings, RAAF personnel and civilian canteen staff. All are recorded for posterity on the Wall of Remembrance and the glass-walled extension to Navy League headquarters is a striking addition to the riverfront scenery in East Fremantle.

The whole memorial has been achieved through the support of Government grants and other support at local, state and federal level. In addition, local industry has answered to call on many occasions to undertake various elements of development. All, including private donors will be recorded at the memorial site. Without them, we would not be in this position.

The reaction of the local residents and the general public has been both surprising and gratifying. All are impressed with the impact the memorial delivers and a significant number identify with crew members on the final voyage of HMAS PERTH (I). We have, and continue to welcome, visitors from interstate and overseas.

We now look forward to the inauguration on the 83rd anniversary of the loss on 1st March with the knowledge that the story of the ship is now preserved.

**Michael Bailey**  
President  
HMAS PERTH (I) Memorial Foundation Inc.

For details, contact Mr David Nicolson • Email: [info@hmasperth1memorial.com.au](mailto:info@hmasperth1memorial.com.au) • <https://www.hmasperth1memorial.com.au>

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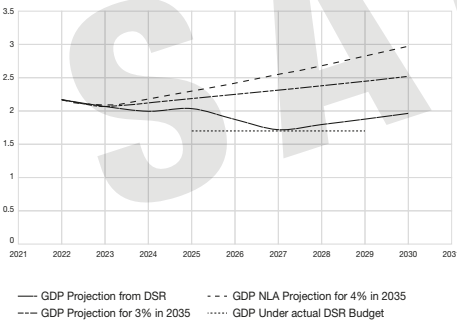
**DSR FSR IIP DE-ACCELERATOR**

In recent Senate Estimates and maintaining the *slight of hand* regarding Defence spending, the Government admitted that GDP spending on Defence would fall to less than 2% in 2024, before recovering to about 2.03% GDP in 2025.

The *Surface Fleet Review* (SFR) and *Defence Strategic Review* articulated a *Speed to Capability* (and *Minimum Viable Capability* (MVC)) – whatever that may mean) – both underpinned by a requirement to increase Defence spending by 3% per annum. Well below inflation, even in 2024. The sleight occurred in the *Integrated Investment Program* (IIP) – which removed increases in Defence spending and relied on achieving growth through cuts. A Performance Management approach imposed by the *consultancies* and seemingly approved by the *Prime Minister and Cabinet Office* (PM&C) and the *National Security Council* (NSC). Two consultancy advised quangos, where power actually rests. The NSC and PM&C, with Treasury, knowingly set Key Performance Deliverables – attempting to “fatten the calf by measuring and carving it.” – that they must have known would cut the Defence budget. A policy that has never worked in the past and for which there is no evidence suggesting it will succeed in the future.

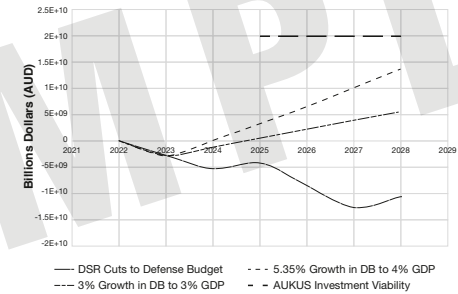
As reality caught up, the \$7B program to create an Australian military-grade satellite communications system (JP 9102) – necessary to interoperate, support key allies and for secure *Tier 1* operations in the Indo-Pacific region – was cancelled in November. With the Prime Minister insisting the government is “[re-]prioritising” the Defence budget. In so doing, releasing an additional (one-off) \$700M to Defence in 2025.

Previously, the Government had allocated AUKUS Defence spending of \$500M spread across the 2027/28 timeframe. Coincident with the increase in Defence spending of between 5-6% per annum committed to in the Forward Estimates. In other words, displacing to the next Government increases in Defence spending.



Defence Budget % GDP 2022-2030

Taking the original cuts, freezing, and *Defence Cost Inflation* (DCI, at between 6-8% per annum [1-8]), the impact on Defence (of cuts, freezing and DCI), is that, between 2022 and 2024, Defence spending reduced by 10%. A contraction of about 3% per annum. The ‘emergency’ cash injection of \$700M will increase the budget to 2.03% in 2025, before falling to about 1.795% in 2028 – when the AUKUS and Forward Estimate increases are ‘expected’ to kick in. Representing a real cut in Defence spending between 2022 and 2028 of over 18% – a contraction of 2.5% per annum for 7 years.



Defence Budget Cuts 2022-2028

The impact is seen more clearly by examining the *de facto* cuts to Defence spending. If the DSR (and FSR) recommended Defence budget increases and savings had been implemented – spending to save and change (an adaptive defence budget) – the AUKUS Defence budget of 3% GDP would have been realised in 2032, rather than the late 2030s. Assuming Defence spending is increased at 5-6% pa allowed for in the Forward Estimates, the Defence budget will not reach the AUKUS steady state budget of 4% GDP until the mid-2040s, if ever.

By most estimates, Defence is being set up for failure – unable to deliver *speed to capability* in the near, or longer term. The Government, despite all warnings, has not prioritised defence spending in the near term – but made intangible promises it (or successive Governments) may be unable to keep.

*Managerial degradation* or *Declinism* (a product of the so called *English School* [9-12]), once established is almost impossible to stop. Additionally creating capability and crewing black holes, not dissimilar to that fashioned by the cuts to the ADF of the 1990s. Underspends of \$1B (1.75% of the Defence Budget) a year – handed back to Treasury in 2023 – are likely to continue. Exacerbating *declinism*, graceless degradation, and unnecessary spending, on things such as car parks.

Cuts to Defence between 2022 and 2028 may not be recoverable in the 2020s. The momentum of decline has been set, with its associated managerialist mindsets. Growth, change, and adaptation requires command and direction. Change is led.

**TRUMP 2.0, 47 (247)**

The impact of a deeply transactional *Trump 247* Presidency on Western defence spending commitments should not come as a shock.

Current Australian Foreign Policy on China and the Middle East – praised, amongst other illiberals, by Xi Jinping for its “strategic autonomy” amid “unprecedented geopolitical complexity and uncertainty” at the meetings of APEC and G20 leaders in Peru and Brazil – appears diametrically opposed to Trump’s long-signalled agenda. Which, amongst other things, seeks to come to an ugly peace in Ukraine, and achieve *stability-short-of-peace* in the Middle East. For which recent Australian Foreign Policy ‘re-balancing’ away from the US (both Trump and Biden), is unlikely to prove helpful.

On Defence spending, Trump could not be clearer. His message to NATO and close Allies is that 2.0% GDP Defence spending just about gets you a seat on the back row. Anything less, buys you every assistance short of help when needed.

The US reduced submarine building, to modernise its shipyards and increase the future build rate through a \$9B program. It has done this, amongst other reasons, to meet the Australian demand for *Virginia-class* submarines, prior to the *AUKUS-class*. This means increasing submarine production from about 1.5 submarines a year, to 2.3 – a 53% increase in production. Whereas, an increase to two a year (+33%) was necessary to meet USN requirements. This will not go unnoticed by the *Trump 247* administration. An administration – staffed by several combat veterans – who understand that Deterrence is not based upon nuclear-submarines alone. Rather, having an effective armed/defence force (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines) to manage the Deterrence escalator (up and down).

**AUKUS OR ADF**

The choice *Declinism* is forcing-by-design on Defence, is to choose between ADF and AUKUS. This would suit many Government back benchers and the Greens, who remain fiercely opposed to nuclear power (and AUKUS), whether in submarines or not.

At 2% GDP, ADF faces being an effective *Tier 2*, regional Defence force without nuclear-powered submarines. It can only be an effective *Tier 1*, regional defence force with nuclear-powered submarines at 3% GDP. Other than being a *jack of all trades*, it cannot do both for 2% GDP – or risk becoming a *third-rate* master of none, with nuclear submarines. A very dangerous place to be. Which is where the ADF is heading under the current budget. Even allowing for forward estimate increases in 2027/28.

It does not take a rocket scientist to realise that the Biden, Australian, and Trump trajectories are jarringly misaligned, in substance if not rhetoric. This will not go unnoticed by *Trump 247*. Many of whose leading office bearers served alongside Australians during the Long Wars (2001-2021).

## COLLAPSE IN ADF MORALE

*Morale is to material as three is to one*  
– attr. Napoleon

It would appear there might be a direct correlation between the increasing “adoption” of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) measures, and an overtly reducing budget, on Defence morale.

The 2024 *ADF Workplace Behaviour Survey*, attests to an accelerating fall in morale and standards between 2021 and 2024.

### See table on page 23

The survey showed that Army confidence in senior leadership reduced by 5.2% a year, from 34% in 2021, to 29% in 2024. RAN confidence in Admiralty reduced from being the highest amongst the ADF in 2021 at 42%, to 32% in 2024. A reduction of almost 9% (8.7%) a year. RAAF probably remained more stable – within the error margin – reducing from 41% confidence in senior leadership in 2021 to 37% in 2024. A reduction of about 3.3% a year.

Why?

It could be suggested that there is a direct correlation between senior leadership maintaining a language of growth (speed to capability etc.) undermined by a Defence budget seen to be reducing at between 2.5% and 3% a year. The “discrepancy” also undermining credibility of senior leadership and the confidence of ADF in them and Government delivering.

## ACROSS DEFENCE

Across ADF and APS, 7 per cent of women said they were victims of sexual misconduct, which the survey defines as “all potentially inappropriate sexualised behaviours experienced by survey respondents”, while 3 per cent said they had been sexually harassed. Eighteen per cent said they had been bullied; 6 per cent said they had been discriminated against; 9 per cent said they had been the victim of an “abuse of power”.

The 2021 Jenkins report into workplace bullying *Set the Standard: Report on the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces*, also indicated that women were more than two-thirds as likely to be bullied by a woman, than by a man.

The 2024 survey found 19 per cent of ADF personnel faced “high” or “very high” risk to their “psychological safety.” The risk was even higher for APS, at 29 per cent.

It should be noted that conflating APS and ADF has in the past potentially disguised higher complaints of workplace risk and sexual misconduct amongst APS, than ADF. Additionally, “more than a third of female recruits reported sexual misconduct while attending the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) in Canberra.”

## ADFA

Army and RAAF ADFA cadets, unlike their RAN counterparts, receive 6-weeks training before going to ADFA to complete their first-degrees. RAN cadets go to ADFA after 56 weeks before the mast, as commissioned officers. In the disgraceful 2011 ADFA Skype scandal – when a Commodore RAN was wrongfully dismissed by the then Minister of Defence, Mr Stephen Smith – no RAN Midshipmen were found to be involved.

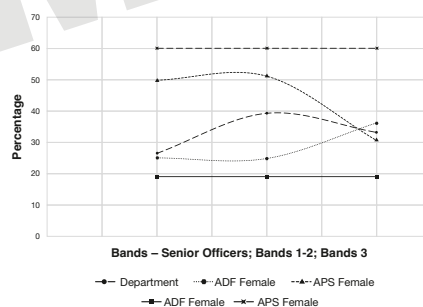
This raises questions about ADFA and its location (Canberra) for training of young officers. There are also questions about how cadets should enter ADFA as now, or as commissioned officers who have served; in addition to the location of ADFA. Additionally, ADFA relevance, given the devaluation of the first degree; increased costs; the value now attached to the Masters, and the better provision of degrees from local universities – attached to Army, Navy, Air Force in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Perth. More significantly, ADFA reporting may show an unhealthy discrepancy between ADF and ADFA, and Canberra-based institutes with the rest of Defence/Commonwealth?

Noting the *Jenkins Report* into workplace bullying, perhaps ADFA is more like the *Canberra Parliamentary Workplace*, than the ADF? Even more reason – perhaps – to rusticate ADFA. Thereby potentially saving Defence up to \$200M a year.

## COMMAND POSITIONS

In the past three years, there has been overt appointing of women into senior (often) nonoperational, ADF positions. Figures are not easy to come by.

Considering APS (in Defence) and ADF positions in terms of senior officer / APS, Bands 1-2 (1–2-star) and Band 3 (3-star), it is possible to draw some conclusions.

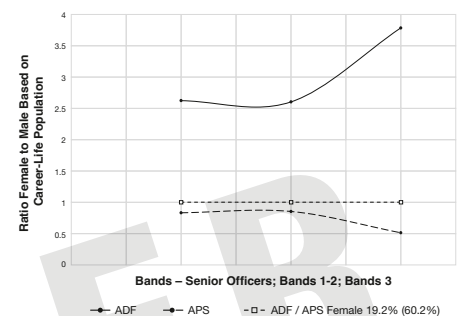


Percentage Male to Female APS & ADF 2024

The APS reports 60.2% of its staff as female – which, in itself, may raise questions. ADF in 2024, reported 19.2% as female. With this in mind – although from a smaller population survey – APS adheres to 50% male: female appointing of Senior APS and Bands 1-2. Given that 60% of APS are female, this may in fact penalise women. Being so close to 50%, also raises questions as to meritocratic or DEI appointing? At Band 3, the proportion of females to males reduced for APS to 30% – also raising questions as to why? Does meritocracy apply at Band 3, more than Bands 1-2? Or is this more reflective of the recruitment base and the political dimension of Band 3 appointments?

The ADF proportion of females to males is about 25% for senior officers and Bands 1-2 and increases to 36% for Bands 3 – from a population base of 19.2% ADF females.

Recalling DEI, this might sound equitable. However, as a proportion of female to males serving, this means women are 1.3 times more likely to their male counterparts to be promoted to Senior/Band 1-2 positions and 1.8 times more likely to be promoted to Band 3 positions. In actuality, due to different retention rates over a career, the true position is “twice as good for women”. Women in 2024 may be more than 2.5 times more likely to be appointed to Senior / Bands 1-2 positions than males, and 3.8 times more likely to be promoted to Band 3 than their male counterparts [13].



## Career Ratio Female to Male APS & ADF 2024

Over a career this makes a considerable difference. It means, for example, females may gain promotion to senior positions between 2-3 years younger than their male counterparts; 4-6 years younger at Bands 1-2, and 5-8 years at Band 3. In career terms, it means that female senior officers are likely to do one to three jobs less than their male counterparts.

This is not a meritocracy. It also leaves females – no matter how competent – vulnerable to accusations of “promotion by DEI.” In such a situation – where competition in peacetime is fierce – women are more vulnerable to other women, than men. Meaning women may be less likely to bring on and encourage other females – and, at the same time, less able to recognise merit and experience. Like any



non-merit-based selection process, it makes the workplace riskier for all – not better. The apparent differentiation of senior appointing to non-operational versus operational (Chief’s) positions, also raises perception problems. Stressing not equal opportunities but DEI “equal outcomes.”

Indicators suggest that those not versed in the the cut-and-thrust of collegiate discussions that occur between peers (operationally or otherwise) at each level, may categorise dissent in DEI terms. Exactly because they have not been annealed by such appointments. Perhaps aligning with opinions expressed in the Jenkins’ (2021) findings for the Canberra Parliamentary workplace? As Janet Albrechsten reported in 2021:

*on average women [in BHP] are appointed to their first managerial roles at 42, while men had to wait until they were, on average, fifty-one. Fair? Only if male employees are so lacking in experience as to warrant this difference. [14]*

**NO MORE YES SIR/MA’AM,  
NO SIR/MA’AM**

*They/them may not be thinking about war – but war is thinking about You!* (paraphrasing Lenin)

Perhaps indicative of *Peak DEI?* – Defence in Canberra is actively seeking the removal of “Sir and Ma’am” from ADF vocabulary. In yet more evidence of doublespeak, ADF personnel will apparently in future be addressed as “officer” or “sailor” or at rank, or they/them. Obviously, Midshipman will get the chop – as already mooted. In this Soviet, Orwellian world, gender will cease to exist – except it won’t. It may be difficult to have respect for senior ADF officers, when they apparently can no longer respect themselves?

**GREENWICH STATION**

According to a senior UK Defence commentator:

...the UK Strategic Defence Review (SDR 2025) is completely back to front – it should be a Defence Strategic Review; not an SDR. The UK needs to explain what is going on and relate this to what the UK should be doing. For which new structures are required to run with adaptation and change, Research and Development on a commercial scale – with potentially no funding from Government.

This capability-driven strategy (which is no strategy at all) is being seen in the panicked reaction to UK Treasury demands on Defence for further cuts. Following the disastrous 2010 cuts imposed by the SDSR – from which the UK “Armed” Forces have never recovered – Defence has announced (prior to the launch of the SDR), additional cuts amounting to about 1% of the budget, in 2024. Reducing



HMS ALBION (L14) Scrapped 14 years early, with no replacement. (Image Royal Navy)

Defence spending to about 2.25% GDP.

The impact on the Royal Navy and Royal Marines will be profound, see also *Flash Traffic*. HMS ALBION and HMS BULWARK the two LPDs are to be scrapped ten years early, in addition to a type 23 Frigate (HMS NORTHUMBERLAND), unable to be crewed, *Chinook CH-47* Helicopters, plus reductions to the mine countermeasure (MCM) force. According to many commentators, the UKAF will no longer be a *Full Spectrum, Tier 1* Force. Additionally, the Royal Marines – now without their LPDs and *Chinooks* – face further “reorganisation” into a British Army less than 76,000 strong and unable to recruit. Put simply, the UK is going in exactly the opposite direction of the DSR (and FSR) – which (eventually, due to the IIP) will reinforce Army Littoral Manoeuvre Force and a blue-water Navy.

The recent fire to the one submarine production shipyard in the UK in Barrow-on-Furness – still being investigated – raises other serious questions. It may delay Astute and thereby the AUKUSS SSN build – so jeopardising AUKUS delivery in the 2030s.

The reduction of the UK Armed Forces to a *Tier 2 Defence Force* – unable to survive a first strike – raises serious questions as to the UK ability to support NATO, an international presence in the INDOPAC, and deter Russia in Ukraine. With quarter a Type 45 Destroyer and 4 quick reaction aircraft (QRA) available to defend the whole of the UK – the country is hugely vulnerable to a revenge attack by Putin. Made more pressing, following the use of *Stormshadow* cruise missiles against Russian targets.

The current UK Government policies – as in Australia – appear antithetical with *Trump 247* and in conflict with some of his key ministerial proponents, such as Elon Musk. It is likely to be a bumpy ride. ■

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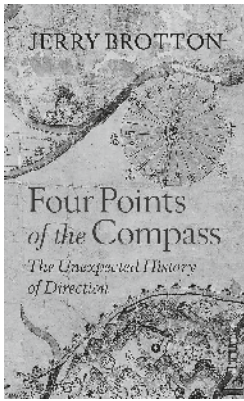
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	2021	2022	2023	2024	Annual Decrease in Leadership Confidence %
<b>Army</b>	34	32.25	30.6	29	5.2
<b>Navy</b>	42	38.3	35.03	32	8.7
<b>Air Force</b>	41	39.6	38.3	37	3.3

*ADF Workplace Behaviour Survey 2024 – Reduction in Confidence in Defence Senior Leadership*



**FOUR POINTS OF THE COMPASS:  
The Unexpected History  
of Direction**

By Jerry Brotton  
Allen Lane (Penguin Random House), Jan 2024  
ISBN-10: 168247770978-0-241-55687-0  
Hardcover: \$50.00

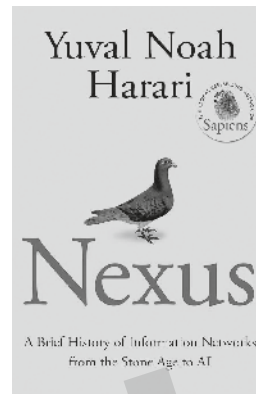
Born in Bradford and growing up in Mrs Thatcher's Britain, Jerry Brotton was educated at state schools in Leeds before studying for a BA (Hons) in English at Sussex University, followed by an MA at Essex University in the *Sociology of Literature*. He lived in East Berlin in the early 1990s, "just after the fall of the wall," before returning to study for a PhD in *early modern mapping* at Queen Mary. He returned to Queen Mary in 2003, and was appointed Professor of Renaissance Studies in 2007.

Brotton notes that this a short book: "the shortest he has ever written". Perhaps thereby complying with the Law of Parsimony? It is in this respect an elegant and most readable book – that will enchant the reader. Particularly those in the far flung, unexpected corners of the compass. Allowing himself one moment of academic prowess and pathos, he opens with Dante's *The Lost – Inferno Canto I*, lines 1-3 (in Italian). As translated, perhaps it rings true for us all, from wherever we begin our mortal journey:

*At one point, midway on our path in life  
When I had journeyed half of our life's way  
Half way along the road we have to go*

On Australia, Jerry recognises that both Thomas Moore (*Utopia* (1516)) and Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1626) began pointing towards an imagined ideal world lying to the south. For most European explores, he recognised that east-west trade was more profitable and less dangerous than travelling north or south, to the Poles. Although the Dutch reached the West Coast of Australia and New Holland and Tasmania in the 1640s, it was not until 1711 that the UK Government created the South Sea Company. Itself leading to the speculative bursting of the "South Sea Bubble" in the 1720s. Economy, direction, and investment remain closely aligned to this day.

Noting Cook's voyages between 1768 and 1779 as also exploring further south than anyone beforehand (71°10' S) and further north in 1778 off Alaska (at 70°44' N) Brotton ends by exploring today. Asking why should we bother – given GPS and Google Maps – continuing with a global map and its four cardinal directions. Directions used to describe politics, and beliefs – as in "Westerners" and the West's decline. In this world of multipolarity, Brotton argues such cardinal descriptions become meaningless. Perhaps. In a field trial many years ago, it became apparent that troops were moving digitally using GPS – rather than analogously using map and compass. They "knew precisely where they were but not where they had arrived or where they were going!" An paradigm for the modern age – perhaps – and all the more reason to read this fascinating cartographer's view of the past 500 years. A great summer read.



**NEXUS**

**A Brief History of Information  
Networks from the Stone Age to AI**

By Yuval Noah Harari  
Fern Press, 10 October 2024  
ISBN: 9781911717089  
Hardcover: \$69.99

Born in February 1976 in Kiryat Ata in Israel, Yuval studied at the renowned Leo Baeck Education Center in Haifa before undertaking his DPhil at the University of Oxford – after completing his BA from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in 1998. He deferred mandatory military service in the Israel Defense Forces to pursue his academic studies and later exempted from completing his military service following his studies due to health issues.

This is not a short book – but nevertheless an interesting, entertaining, and unputdownable read. Yuval asks detailed questions about the nature of information and knowledge correctly challenging the conflation of data and information and warning of what has been called the "DICKi trap" [1] – "not to confuse or conflate, Data with Information with Communications with Knowledge (with intelligence)". Made DICKi to avoid upsetting our American friends!

Almost overnight, Harari became an expert on AI – following his publication of *Homo Deus* (2016) – but recognises that he has no technical or AI, scientific knowledge. What he strongly argues for, is that History and how we have arrived, and may yet be going, is fundamental in what some leading Australian researchers are calling the *Synthetical Age*. An age synthesising quantum, AI, and nanotechnology. These researchers suggest the age began at the end of the *Information Age* and the launch of ChatGPT, 30 Nov 2022. When the world was not yet out of COVID...

Yuval remains optimistic, seeing the need to authenticate the human experience and for history to provide guidance for the future. A future, he recognises, where neither knowledge nor the info-technological may be human. He does not touch on it, but it is increasingly clear that AI hallucinates – for example, creating as evidence fictitious court cases that never occurred. In this world, the authentic and the artefactual – the historically proven, human-made – become a value set of their own. Not a quantum AI fact (QAIfact), after the event. It may be one of the reasons it is now seen as "hip" to be seen reading a book or *THE NAVY*, rather than a tablet or mobile? Exactly because, this remains an authentic human experience. Not yet written (or transferred) by AI...

Both reviewed books (including *Four Points*) give indication as to where we may be going and how we, as humans, may get there. Harari ends:

*The decisions we all make in the coming years will determine whether summoning an alien intelligence will prove a terminal error or the beginning of a hopeful new chapter in the evolution of life.*

An essential summer read.

**NOTES**

[1] Attributed to Dr Jamie MacIntosh, Director of the Institute for Security & Resilience Studies (ISRS), at University College London.



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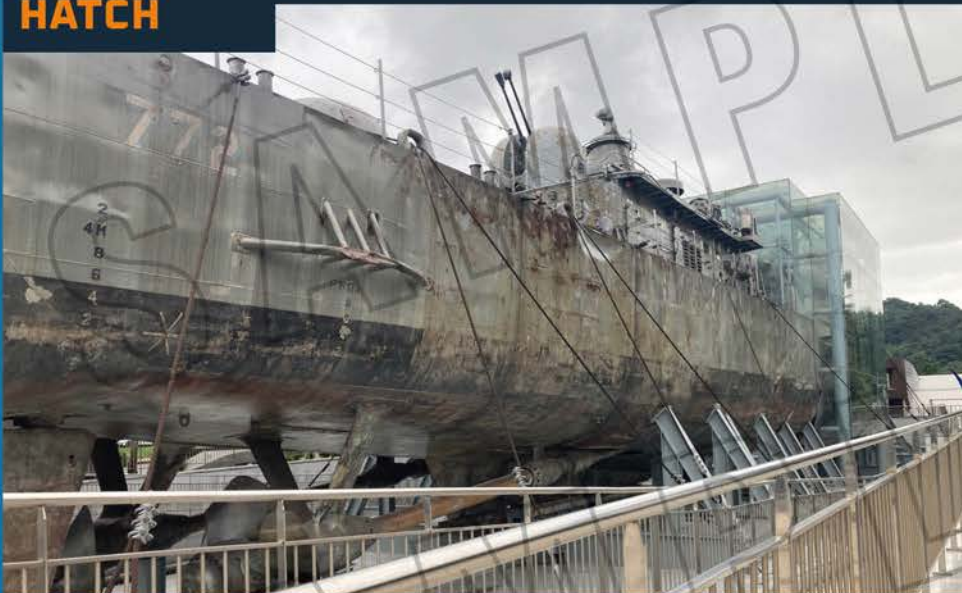


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The Commissioning and Dedication of HMAS PERTH (I) Memorial will take place on 1 March 2025 at Fremantle. We will Remember.

Image CDR Jim O'Neill  
ANC (Ret)

## HATCH



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Memorial to ROKS CHEONAN (PCC-772) and 46 sailors at Naval Base Pyeongtaek, sunk by DPRK Torpedo 2010. We Will Remember.

Image CDR Greg Swinden RAN

## MATCH



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HMAS BRISBANE (D41) fires Tomahawk Missile off the US West Coast December 2024.

Image POIS Craig Walton