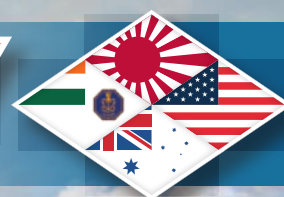


THE NAVY

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA

**CONTEST FOR THE
SOUTHERN OCEAN**



**DSR AND
SURFACE
FLEET
REVIEW**

**DEATH BY A THOUSAND
REVIEWS – A LETHAL RAN?**

**BACK TO THE FUTURE
THE NEED TO RE-CREATE
THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN
FLEET AUXILIARY**

**A HISTORY OF
AUSTRALIAN NAVAL
SHIPBUILDING, 1911-1948**



IN MEMORY OF
ELIZABETH SYKES

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Deterrence is to trust, as trust is to competence.

This is a sombre issue of *The NAVY*, potentially marking a point of no return regarding the current Government's Defence posture with Allies and competitors, alike. There has been significant correspondence regarding the NLA / *The NAVY* assessment of the *Smith-Houston Defence Strategic Review* (DSR) – with many Defence analysts and Industry leaders becoming increasingly alarmed. [1] The four papers in this issue, pick up in part or full the critique of the DSR – raising concerns about the long-term impact upon the Economy, Defence, and Regional Relations. Including with critical Allies in the QUAD (Japan, India, and U.S.), AUKUS (U.S. and UK), Five Eyes (CA, NZ, U.S. and UK), FPDA, and key partners in ASEAN (including Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines), the TPP (Japan, Vietnam, Mexico, Singapore and Canada), NATO *Indo-Pac* partners (France, Canada, U.S., and UK), and the Pacific Family / Pacific Island Forum.

The first paper by long-term NZ contributor Murray Dear (Essay competition, Non-Professional entry, Third Prize) examines the ongoing Contest for the Southern Ocean. The NLA and *The NAVY* have consistently raised concerns about Chinese encroachment into Antarctica and Australian, NZ, and British Territories. Seemingly, placing egregious and unlawful demands on Antarctica, as per the South China Sea. Murray concludes:

Should such policing [of Chinese Fishing Operations] result in an aggressive Chinese response (which seems likely)...or the annexation of their Inexpressible Island base in Ross Sea [NZ Antarctic Territory], then New Zealand, with United States and Australian support, may need to consider mounting a "South Thule" type operation, which would surely bring armed conflict to the "White Continent."

The second paper is by long-standing Federal Vice President and Senior Defence Analyst, Mr Mark Schweikert. Mark tackles Admirals Hilarides and Mayer *Surface Fleet Review* (SFR); concluding, inter alia:

...the Minister has already hinted at major shakeup of the surface fleet...From the Ministers statements on the DSR one could easily suspect that Government has already made its mind up and potentially using the review, through its unpublished terms of reference, to justify a pre-conceived acquisition strategy for Corvettes. Paying for it by 'robbing Peter to pay Paul' with funds from the *Hunter* project.

The third paper by another long-standing contributor and maritime expert, Greg Swinden (Essay competition, Professional entry, Third Prize), in *Back to the Future* examines the need for a Royal Australian Fleet Auxiliary. Something the NLA and *The NAVY* have been calling on for decades. Greg notes:

There will be many nay-sayers who will come up with every possible reason why the RAFA concept will not work – but if the British and US governments can make it work, then why can't Australia?

In the final paper of this issue, Dr Neil Baird in the first of two articles, examines Australian Naval Shipbuilding between 1911 and 1948 (covering both World Wars). In his second paper, Neil looks at the period from 1949 to 2023. His detailed analysis by ships and class over both periods, represents a significant contribution. Dr Baird concludes ominously:

Given that very chequered history, it is obvious that the RAN has had very serious problems with its peacetime warship acquisition processes. The Commonwealth government is very well aware of Navy's continuing flow of catastrophic decisions. Successive governments, especially since World War 2, have promised to improve its acquisition processes but they never have. So, what is to be done about it?

Let them Hate, for so Long as they Fear (Caligula, 12-41 AD)

This editorial considers "Deterrence, Trust, and Competence," regarding Australia's emerging Defence posture and International Relations. The quote attributed to Gaius Caligula suggests that the obverse of trust may be hate and fearful compliance. Increasingly unpopular, U.S. / Western domestic and foreign policy may be significantly dividing the seventy or so Democratic nations, from the 130 "other" UN nations. Giving the *No Limits Axis* (NOLA) – led by China, Russia and Iran, incorporating the BRICS (Brazil, India, and South Africa) and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) – a free hand. Paraphrasing a discussion between Fred M'membe, and Kyeretwie Opoku [2] on the "West in Africa":

When the Chinese come, we get a hospital. When the Westerners come, we get a lecture.

M'membe – noting the "largest Drone Base in the world in Niger sits alongside a uranium mine supplying 1/3 of France's Electricity supply" – concluded: "Western (U.S. and EU) interests are concerned more about protecting strategic minerals from China, than investing in Africa". The point M'membe and Opoku underlined is threefold:

1. African nations are increasingly likely to trust China, meaning;
2. they can afford to hate the U.S., UK, and EU due to long-term "no string's infrastructure investment" by China and, so;
3. no longer fear.

In simple terms, the U.S. (and EU) is not feared nor, more worryingly, trusted. Without fear or trust, there is no, or limited Deterrence. Without demonstrable competence – in Defence, Security, and International Relations – what is there to be fearful about and what can be deterred? Following Lord Ismay's advice on the establishment of NATO in 1949, the Global West has singularly:

failed to keep the Chinese (and Russians) off side; the Global West in, and African and other nations (including in SE Asia, the Pacific Rim, and Latin America), on side.

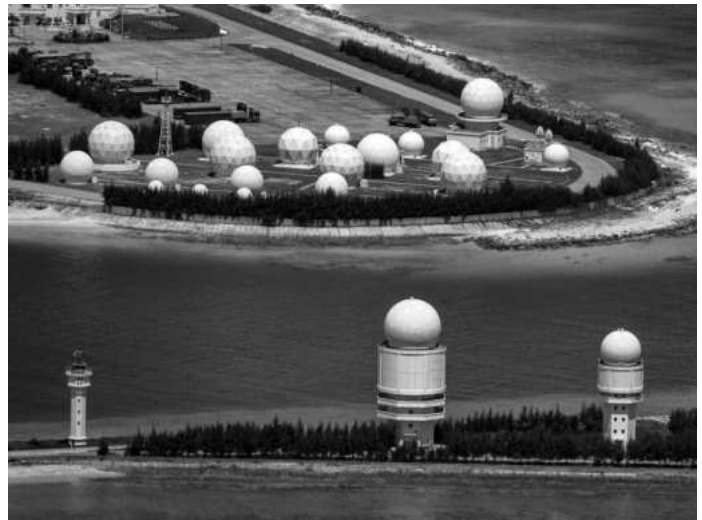


China's research icebreaker PLAN XUELONG (Snow Dragon), Operating in Antarctica.

Trust is to competence

Undermining what trusts there are, is the competence being demonstrated by many Western Governments. What is there to trust, when many of their institutions are under attack – as much from within, as without? When democratically elected Governments – including in Australia (WA and Victoria – as permitted by the Federal Government) – can impose as drastic Covid lockdowns, border closures, and restrictions, as imposed by communist China? When the state, media, and judiciary can imprison a respected religious leader, or apparently exploit political-media motivated charges to persecute (rather than prosecute) an alleged assault case? Allegations that possibly influenced a Federal election result? Where, despite the *Lawyer X* scandal that exposed Victorian judicial, executive (political), and enforcement organs, few if any heads have fallen? When Australia Day, the Australian Flag, Head of State, and Governor General, are all undermined by political-media elites. With the AWM and even ANZAC Day, now in their sights? At the same time, investing in what may be a bitterly divisive referendum. Its design and purpose, tragically appearing more likely to divide, than unite.

What confidence is there when an acclaimed *Defence Strategic Review* – supposedly acting to strengthen Defence in the critical 2025-2027 timeframe – in actuality, rips its heart out? [1] As outlined in this issue's DSR and *Surface Fleet Review* analysis, see *Flash Traffic*, pp 16-21. When the Australian Naval Institute (ANI) publishes a soft article; at the same time accepting advertising from the defunct *Naval Shipbuilding Institute* and the façade that was its *Naval Shipbuilding College*. Even after concerns were loyally raised by RINA, the NLA and *The NAVY*. At no time offering apology or explanation. Nor addressing what an in-house Defence publishing arm is doing accepting advertising, and promoting self-serving articles in the first place? Leaving critical, loyally dissenting, trustworthy articles to appear in *The NAVY*. While advertising continues to go the ANI – to charm the Canberra Industrial Complex elites? When a Chief of Defence Force and then Chief of Army, should so clearly have resigned on the release of the *Brereton Report*. In accordance with International Law and the Geneva Conventions. Disgracefully, having to be referred to the ICC by Senator Jacqui Lambie. But stayed on, with the blessing of the self-same political-media elites. Instead of honourably lancing the boil and allowing Defence to move on. By staying, doing untold damage to reputation. So, preventing a new generation of thinking, fighting, winning, officers to come forward. Better trusted to advise and prevent the unfolding disaster that is the *DSR* (and the *SFR* may become), from being inflicted on Commonwealth, Country, and Defence. Also denying Navy its first CDF, in over two decades.



When Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPS), have failed to deter China (Image Fiery Cross Reef).

Internationally, the incompetent disaster that became Biden's Afghanistan bugout, followed by his incredulous January 2022 comments signalling to Russia that a "minor incursion" into Ukraine might be "dependent," further damaged trusts. When Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPS), have failed to deter China in the South China Sea and on Taiwan.

It is much worse than in the 1970s, when the U.S. had within it the capacity and rigour to lead a strategic rebuild. Able to economically defeat the USSR by 1991. It is uncertain today, that the U.S. can morally recover – and rearm domestically and internationally. As testified by its moribund shipbuilding industry, and the increasing return to Gold to offset a potential collapse of the US Dollar. A collapse being metricated by the *No Limits Axis*, with its allies in the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa. Including, due to exceptionally competent strategic Chinese statecraft, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

It should be no surprise that recruitment is falling in many Western countries. What is there to belong to, or fight for – when *identitism* is willfully portraying patriotism, as nationalism, while training budgets are cut? When the Australian Flag and the Australian White Ensign (Navy's Colours), are no longer allowed to belong to all our people, and Navy?

And yet, and yet. The spirit that is, was, and always will be Australia – our Commonwealth, as vested in its higher values, will come forward. As being seen, in a remarkable Generation – the *Millennials* (b. 1990-2004) – that, through adversity, may be emerging. To rebuild and reconstitute the flame of democracy. With Navy, eternally its safeguard and vanguard. ■



Chinese nuclear-powered aircraft carrier design Concept 04 (image DefenceTalk, Asia Times).

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- [1] NLA-Defence-Analysts, *Flash Traffic: Analysis of 2023 Australian Defence Strategic Review (DSR)*. *The NAVY* - Journal of the Navy League of Australia, 2023. Vol 85, Iss 2, May-Jun: p. 16-22.
- [2] *When the West visits Africa, they talk about China*. - YouTube, accessed Jun 2023.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

For the maintenance of the Maritime wellbeing of the nation.

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

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

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

The Navy League:

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

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

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

Our winter edition of *The NAVY* magazine is in your hands and we trust you will enjoy reading and commenting on it as we steam through these colder months into warmer climes.

This edition comes rather hot on the heels of the last one, which we delayed to include commentary on the *Defence Strategic Review*. There is more about that in this edition and on the Surface Fleet Review. There is also much talk in broader Defence circles on the subject. If you have got a view, we would love to include it in a future edition, so please let us know.

As always, there are some great papers in store for you, including from our Navy League of Australia Maritime Affairs Essay Competition prize winners Murray Dear and Greg Swinden, from NSW-based maritime author and publisher Dr Neil Baird of international acclaim, and from the Federal Vice-President of The Navy League of Australia, Mark Schweikert a leading thinker on strategic Defence issues.

I am confident you will enjoy reading each of them. Let us know your thoughts on any or all of the articles – we love to receive your feedback.



The Brereton Report - "junior soldiers have been thrown under the bus, while those responsible for the culture of the ADF are getting away Scot free."

BRERETON REPORT AND THE ADF LEADERSHIP RESPONSE

Many readers have commented on issues arising from the 2020 *Inspector-General of the ADF Afghanistan Inquiry report* (most widely known as the *Brereton Report*).

Much publicity has been generated in media reporting around a number of these incidents and *The NAVY* and *The Navy League of Australia* denounce all unlawful actions undertaken by members of our military, whether in a deployed theatre of combat or otherwise.

You will know that the *Brereton Report* refers to the existence of credible information of 23 incidents of unlawful killing of one or more non-combatants, by, or at the direction of, Australian Special Forces. These incidents may constitute war crimes, including that of murder. We deplore that and call on all those so accused to be dealt with expeditiously by the appropriate criminal proceedings, with all its checks and balances. What we do not promote, is that individual members of the ADF, current or past, be pre-conceived as guilty by a contemporary, user-driven, media environment.

Many of our members have also noted receiving unsolicited opinions from the broader community on this issue. All of the reports we have received also deplore the alleged unlawful killings which the credible information contained in the report may establish and which may lead to the war crime of murder.

What is a common thread, though, is that in almost all of the anecdotal reports we have received, there is a feeling that there has been an absence of leadership accountability for these actions. That is, that the senior leaders of the time – including politicians, advocates, and in the Public Service – have been willing to apportion blame at the lowest level, or with the broadest brush-stroke, while having not accepted responsibility for the culture, overuse, and application of Special Forces, that allowed such situations to develop, or did not deter their development.

Put another way by one correspondent, and perhaps more articulately in its simplicity,

the most junior soldiers have been *thrown under the bus*, while those responsible for the culture of the ADF are getting away *scot free*.

The NAVY is of the view that those involved, at all levels, should take the appropriate action to demonstrate acceptance of their part, not only in alleged crimes if that is the case, but also in a culture that led to such an *alleged* deplorable set of circumstances developing. While such acceptance may include the oversight and implementation of wide-ranging reforms, it may also be as simple as demonstrating personal contrition in a more apparent way.

As always, there remains opportunity to respond offered by *The NAVY*, should Defence, Government, or politicians wish to set out an alternative position.

OUR STATEMENT OF POLICY

On the previous page you will see our *Statement of Policy* for the maintenance of the maritime wellbeing of the nation. This statement forms our guiding principles and is reviewed from time-to-time to suit the changing needs of our maritime nation. A review of the *Statement of Policy* is upcoming and we invite you to let us have your thoughts on any areas that you think should be updated, changed, require adaptation to a changing international and regional environment, or have become obsolete.

As well, I encourage you to revisit the *Statement of Policy* to remind yourself of the motivators that *The Navy League of Australia* holds vital to our national wellbeing and the freedom of Australia, as well as those issues we continue to champion, that which we seek to promote, and the strategic thinking behind that position.

Please let us know what you think.



AB Teddy Sheean VC - a deed of rare and noble courage reflecting true character and values (image AWM).

NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA MARITIME AFFAIRS ESSAY COMPETITION

The Navy League of Australia Annual Maritime Affairs essay competition remains open for submission of papers any time up until 19 August 2023.

Whether you are a seasoned contributor or a first-timer, I encourage you to put pen to paper, to put your thoughts into words for this year's essay competition. There are prizes in cash up to \$1,000 as well as the opportunity to have your article published in a future edition of *The Navy*. Get writing!

Contributions can be submitted on a range of topics including 21st Century Naval Warfare, Australian Naval History, and Australian Industrial and Merchant Navy Maritime Strategy.

Further details are inside the back cover, so get your pens (or keyboards) into action. Winning contributors will be announced in the first 2024 edition of *The NAVY* magazine.

Good luck!

THANKS FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT

By engaging with *The NAVY*, you are doing your part in our intent, to keep 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.

Thanks again to you all for your ongoing commitment.

We encourage you to share your copy of *The NAVY* with a friend, or even better sign them up for a membership as a gift or encourage them to join. They will thank you and they, and our great nation, will be the better for it.

Thanks also, of course, to our wonderful volunteers, including our volunteer editor and editorial team, as well as all others who contribute to making this unique publication such an ongoing success. ■

Well done and happy reading.

From: CN Australia (Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AM RAN)
DTG: 290246Z MAY 2023



VALE ABLE SEAMAN FRANCIS JOSEPH MCGOVERN OAM

1. It is with great sadness that I inform you of the passing of Francis (Frank) Joseph McGovern, the last surviving crew member of HMAS PERTH I sunk in the Battle of Sunda Strait on 1 March 1942
2. Frank was born in Paddington in 1919 and grew up in Sydney. He joined the Naval Reserve on 30 Aug 1939, along with a group of his mates as the clouds of war darkened ahead of the Second World War. He posted to HMAS WESTRALIA for a short time after initial training, then in Nov 1941 posted to PERTH I; joining his older brother Vincent who was a Stoker on board
3. PERTH I and USS HOUSTON were sunk in a heroic last stand in the Sunda Strait, a night action against a vastly superior Japanese Force. They were outgunned and low on ammunition, operating in support of the short lived

Australian-Britain-Dutch-American Command desperately attempting to interdict advancing Japanese invasion forces. 328 PERTH I sailors were lost that night, including Frank's brother Vincent.

4. Frank was taken prisoner of war (POW) by the Japanese Forces and endured horrific conditions working on the Thai-Burma railway. He was later torpedoed by a US Submarine and sunk a second time while being transported to Japan. Recaptured, Frank would labour as a POW in Japan, on one occasion he walked out of hospital and back to work with a fractured spine to avoid bleeding to death as an involuntary blood donor at the hands of his captors.
5. He and his fellow POWs endured Allied incendiary Air Raids, with Frank at one time being wounded, and they were close enough to see the Flash from the Atomic detonation at Hiroshima. Frank's incredible tale of survival is testament to his resilience and that of his fellow POW.
6. Perhaps Frank's greatest legacy was his work after returning home, providing companionship and support to his fellow PERTH I survivors, in forming the HMAS PERTH and Naval POWs Association, and later through the HMAS PERTH National Association, Frank created a community for fellow survivors to turn to, while setting a steadfast example for later generations of HMAS PERTH Sailors and Navy as a whole. In the 2019 Australian Day Honours he would be awarded The Order of Australia Medal for his service to Veterans and their Families.
7. In an aged where the memories of Global Conflict and Naval warfare grow dim, our Navy must hold the experience and memories of veterans like Frank dearly. The resilience, endurance and fortitude displayed by Frank and his Generation of Sailors in War, and as POW, serve to inspire today's Sailors who may one day face their own grave challenges. With Frank's passing on 24 May 23, we have lost a valued exemplar.
8. Frank's Funeral Service [was held] at 1330 on Thursday 01 Jun 23 at Our Lady of The Sacred Heart Church, Randwick.
9. CN Sends.

HMAS PERTH (I) MEMORIAL

Commander Jim O'Neill ANC (Rtd) Hon Sec NLWA Division wrote to the President alerting the NLA to Frank's passing, shortly before he died. Jim and his colleagues in WA have been the moving force behind the HMAS PERTH I Memorial. Jim writes:

In 1967 a memorial to HMAS PERTH I was established on the banks of the Swan River in East Fremantle. The memorial was dedicated as a living memorial to the ship and crew and TS PERTH Australian Navy Cadets were given the honour of being the Guardians of the memorial.

In the last two years NLWA have spent over \$200,000 refurbishing the existing memorial. Funding for the final stage has been entirely funded through The HMAS PERTH (I) Foundation INC.

In 2017 the NLWA decided to complete the memorial and to date have raised through grants and sponsorship \$750,000 for the project. Many obstacles have been overcome. It is hopeful that the final stage will be completed late October 2023. Allowing planning for the opening can take place on the 1st of March 2024, the 82nd anniversary of the sinking.

Before 2017, many Australians did not know the story of HMAS PERTH I. Since then, we have widely published HMAS PERTH I and its crew through the media, and in liaison with State and Federal politicians.

Navy have recognised that the memorial will become a reference centre for HMAS PERTH I, II, and III and have transferred relics and memorabilia from PERTH 1 and 2 into the collection at the memorial.

I would encourage anyone who wishes to donate or lend memorabilia and relics from PERTH I to the memorial for a

wider safe environment of display. A further \$50,000 is needed to complete the memorial to a high standard that will become a memorial of national significance. With the completion of the memorial wall and propellor (which was designed from the original type of propeller on PERTH I from archived drawings held at the War Memorial) many direct descendants have visited the memorial from all over Australia.

Donations can be made to the Treasurer HMAS PERTH (I) Memorial Foundation INC, PO Box 735 Fremantle, WA 6959, email info@hmasperth1memorial.com.au, or to BankWest, HMAS PERTH(I) Memorial Foundation INC, BSB 302 162, A/C 1499868.

THANK YOU: LIEUTENANT COMMANDER DESMOND WOODS OAM RAN

The NAVY and the Navy League of Australia are indebted to Lieutenant Commander Desmond Woods, the Navy Bereavement Liaison Officer, Directorate of Navy Sensitive Issues Management. Desmond contributed significantly to arranging Frank's funeral and writing his Obit, that appeared in the National Press. As used by CN in his signal to the Fleet. Lieutenant Commander Woods joined the Royal New Zealand Navy in 1974, subsequently serving in the Royal Navy, the British Army, and the RAN as an Education Officer, teaching naval and military history to junior officers. He retired from Navy on 12 June, after almost half a century before the mast – in the Service of Crown, Commonwealth and Country. Fair winds in your retirement. Thank you, on behalf of generations of sailors you enriched and served as leader. You set the bar high.

VALE ELIZABETH SYKES

The NSW Division and the whole of the Navy League in Australia are enormously saddened to record that Liz Sykes has crossed the bar in late June.

Liz has been the Honorary Secretary of the NSW Division for almost 20 years, a member for many years longer than that as well as maintaining the mailing list for the whole of *The Navy's* data base.

On top of all that, Liz has also been the personal assistant of Otto Albert in his working life as well as being the NSW's Division President for more than 30 years.

A few of the many tributes we have received are:

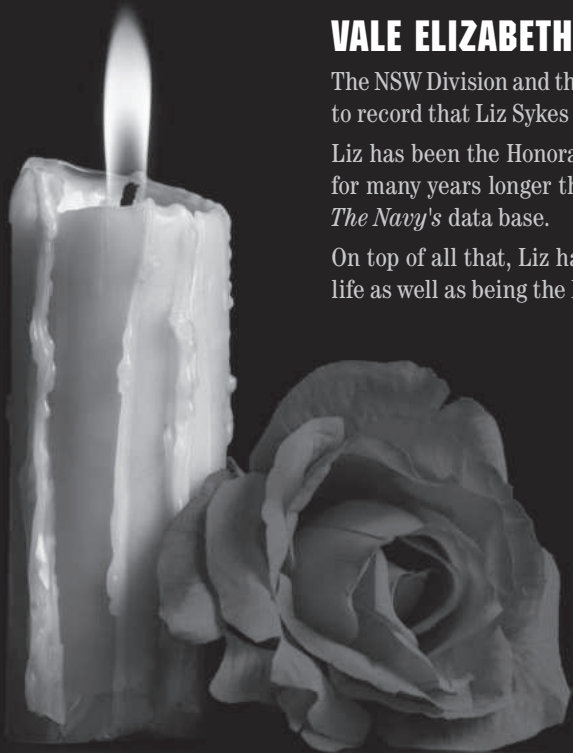
"Friend, colleague and stalwart of the League... she will be sadly missed"

"Extremely bad news; she will be a great loss"

"She has contributed greatly to both the NLA and *The Navy* magazine over many years; always consistently, progressive and supportive."

Liz was a good friend for all of us and will be very sadly missed.

Otto Albert
NSW President





CONTEST FOR THE SOUTHERN OCEAN

By Murray Dear

At the announcement of the Defence Strategic Review [1] in a press conference on 3 August 2022, the Prime Minister Anthony Albanese noted that the review would prepare Australia to effectively respond to the changing regional and global strategic environment. The intent of the Review is to “ensure Defence's capability and force structure is fit for purpose, affordable and delivers the greatest return on investment”. [2] A copy of the the Review was provided to the Prime Minister by Sir Angus Houston on 14 February, 2023. The DSR was publicly released on 24 April.



The Great Southern Ocean and Antarctica 60 Degree South.

INTRODUCTION

The Southern Ocean is generally accepted as that body of water which lies below 60° South and which fully encompasses the continent of Antarctica. Over the next quarter of a century there are three significant factors that will impact on Antarctica and the surrounding Southern Ocean:

- Climate change
- Expiration of The Antarctic Treaty
- China's growing presence in Antarctica

Before examining these factors, it is useful to consider the outcome of a naval operation which occurred at the conclusion of the 1982 Falklands War.

THE SOUTH THULE INCIDENT

South Thule Island is a British Overseas Territory which lies at the furthest end of the South Sandwich Islands, some 450 miles to the south-east of South Georgia and just 30 miles north of latitude 60° South. In 1976, the Argentine Navy and Air Force illegally established a weather reporting station on South Thule manned by up to 40 servicemen. Diplomatic efforts to remove them had been to no avail and following the Argentine surrender at Port Stanley the decision was made to retake South Thule, by force if required.

Assembled away from prying eyes at South Georgia, a naval task group under Captain Nick Barker RN comprising the ice patrol ship ENDURANCE (flagship), frigate YARMOUTH, tanker OLMEDA and tug SALVAGEMAN was formed. Two rifle troops of M Company, 42 Commando were embarked aboard OLMEDA as the assault force. Two Reconnaissance Sections and a mortar crew went aboard ENDURANCE and six naval helicopters were spread amongst the task group.

On 19 June 1982, two Wasp helicopters from ENDURANCE landed ten Royal Marines of the Reconnaissance Sections behind the weather station. On the morning of 20 June, the Marines ashore were ordered to advance down towards the weather station while YARMOUTH was to conduct a gunfire demonstration. The sight of the advancing Marines was sufficient for the Argentineans to surrender six minutes before the YARMOUTH was due to open fire. Only ten men had been occupying the base, the others having been removed earlier during the Falklands War. The prisoners were flown off to ENDURANCE and the station secured before Captain Barker returned to South Georgia on 24 June.

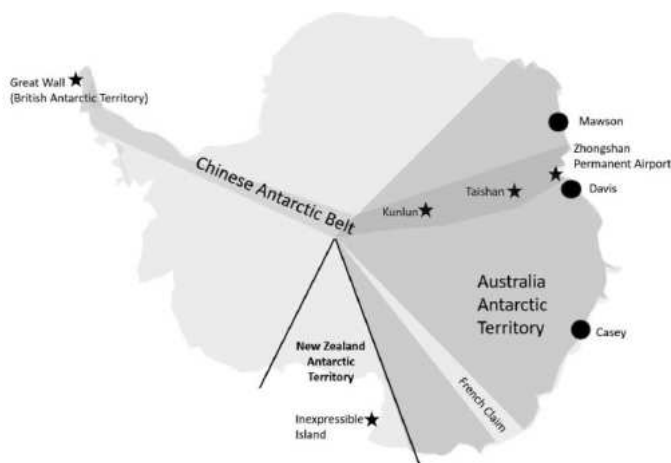
CLIMATE CHANGE

The impact of climate change on Antarctica will be a gradual process, ultimately resulting in rising sea levels. In recent years, southern summers have been hotter and longer. As the Southern Ocean gradually warms from the absorption of more sunlight, warm currents are created that are eating away the undersides of the continent's ice shelves where they meet the sea. These warm currents are deep as salty sea water is denser than the fresh water coming off the ice shelves. The Thwaites glacier, the so-called “Doomsday glacier”, in Western Antarctica is the most vulnerable ice shelf on the planet where the major inflow of warm water is through a channel just four kilometres across.

Climate change is already having an effect on access to America's McMurdo Station and New Zealand's Scott Base in the Ross Sea. In early January 2022 the US Coast Guard heavy icebreaker POLAR STAR cut an ice channel through to McMurdo's new ice pier constructed during the 2021 winter. By 11 February when the Polar Class 6 replenishment ship HMNZS AOTEAROA berthed at the ice pier, all the sea ice had broken up and drifted out to sea. It seems likely that sea ice in the Ross Sea will in future dissipate significantly earlier than has usually been expected during each southern summer.

THE ANTARCTIC TREATY

The Antarctic Treaty was signed at Washington on 1 December 1959 by the twelve nations whose scientists had been active in and around Antarctica during the International Geophysical Year of 1957-58. It entered into force in 1961 and has since been acceded to by another 42 nations. The key important provisions of the Treaty are:



Chinese "Antarctic Belt" and Ice Stations Running through Australian, New Zealand, and British Antarctic Territories.

Article I – Antarctica shall be used for peaceful purposes only.

Article II – Freedom of scientific investigation in Antarctica and cooperation toward that end shall continue.

Article III – Scientific observations and results from Antarctica shall be exchanged and made freely available.

Article IV – All territorial positions are explicitly protected, which preserves the status quo. Seven nations have territorial claims with those of Australia, New Zealand, France, and Norway clearly defined. The territorial claims of Argentina, Chile and the United Kingdom overlap around the Antarctic Peninsula. America and Russia maintain a "basis of claim" while other countries do not recognize any claims. No acts or activities taking place while the present Treaty is in force shall constitute a basis for asserting, supporting, or denying a territorial claim to sovereignty in Antarctica or create any rights of sovereignty in Antarctica. No new claim, or enlargement of an existing claim to territorial sovereignty shall be exerted while the present Treaty is in force.

Article VII – To promote the objectives and ensure the observance of the provisions of the Treaty, "All areas of Antarctica, including all stations, installations and equipment within those areas shall be open at all times to inspection."

Ideally, the existing Antarctic Treaty system should be renewed for a further term. If not then it is very likely that there will be many new territorial claims, particularly in Marie Byrd Land in West Antarctica where there are currently no claims recorded. How likely is there to be international agreement on a new Antarctic Treaty? In mid-2022 there was a meeting of the Treaty partners in Berlin to step up the protection of emperor penguins that are increasingly threatened by the effects climate change is having on their habitat. At the conclusion of the meeting, the German government advised that a formal decision was "blocked by one party". You guessed it – that party was China. If China will not agree to the relatively innocuous protection of emperor penguin habitats in Antarctica, then there is no chance of an orderly renewal of the Antarctic Treaty.

CHINA'S GROWING PRESENCE IN ANTARCTICA

China began its first Antarctic expedition in 1983, then gradually expanded its presence in the continent and adjacent waters. To date, China has established four Antarctic stations; Great Wall, Zhongshan, Taishan Summer Camp and Kunlun/Dome A. A fifth station is being built on Inexpressible Island (part of New Zealand's

territorial claim) in Terra Nova Bay of the Ross Sea and this is expected to be completed by 2022. This station is designed to be a year-round research base which could accommodate 80 people in the summer and 30 in the winter. This foothold may well have the capability of supporting Chinese fishing activity in the Ross Sea which is the main fishery for Antarctic Toothfish (*Dissostichus mawsoni*).

China is also paying attention to Antarctic krill, the last untouched marine living resource on the planet. China sees the potential of krill fisheries which are currently under the current management of the Commission for the Conservation of Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). With China interested in increasing its krill fishing, this could stymie the process to establish more marine protected areas (MPA) in Antarctica.

The Ross Sea region contains the world's largest MPA and this is about 1.5 times the largest national park on land and covers 1.55 million square kilometres, of which 1.12 million square kilometres is fully protected. The MPA was the result of the unanimous support for a joint United States/New Zealand proposal within the 25 member CCAMLR. It was agreed, albeit with reluctance by China, in October 2016 and the agreement entered into force on 1 December 2017. The MPA consists of:

- A "no take" general protection zone,
- A Special Research Zone which allows limited research fishing for krill and toothfish,
- A Krill Research Zone which allows for controlled research fishing for krill.

The New Zealand Defence Force operates naval and air force patrols during the summer on behalf of the CCAMLR to protect the krill and toothfish resources within this MPA.

Using the China's maritime insurgency in the South China Sea as a template, it would not be unrealistic to expect that China's very large fishing fleet would be very aggressive in pursuing fishing operations in the Southern Ocean and the Ross Sea in particular. Using its now familiar "grey-zone strategy", such fishing activities would no doubt be supported by China Coastguard and/or Peoples Armed Forces Maritime Militia vessels.

China currently has two operational icebreakers, *Xue Long* and *Xue Long 2* (*Snow Dragon 1 & 2*), with a third 26,000 tonne Polar Class 2 heavy icebreaker currently under construction. These icebreakers will be able to resupply China's Inexpressible Island station and open the Ross Sea to fishing in the early summer. While China's icebreakers are officially designated as research support vessels, it is quite likely that they can be quickly armed with light weapons should the need arise.

As a long-term strategy, China may well be considering annexing Inexpressible Island and establishing a 200nm EEZ around it when the Antarctic Treaty expires. This would have significant implications for the United States and New Zealand access to McMurdo Station and Scott Base and also German and Italian access to their Gondwana and Mario Zucchelli stations respectively.



HMS ENDURANCE (A171) Retook Thule as Part of Operation Keyhole Jun 1982.



HMNZS AOTEAROA (A11) Arriving at Pearl Harbor for RIMPAC 2022.

COUNTERMEASURES

The Ross Sea and Ross Ice Shelf are fully contained within the Ross Dependency, New Zealand's Antarctic territorial claim. As such New Zealand accepts responsibility for constabulary naval operations in the Ross Sea and adjacent Southern Ocean. During the summer months, one of the RNZN's two OTAGO class Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) is usually rostered on fishery protection duties in the Ross Sea. While only lightly armed with 1 x 25mm Rafael Typhoon and 2 x GPMGs, these OPVs can operate a Kaman SH-2G(1) Super Seasprite helicopter. Originally ordered for the RAN, there are eight Super Seasprites in service with two spare airframes in storage. The Super Seasprite can provide the OPVs with a modest ASuW and ASW capability with either Kongsberg AGM-119 Penguin anti-ship missiles, Mk 46 Mod 5 lightweight homing torpedoes or depth charges. In addition to supply runs to McMurdo and Scott Base, the AOTEAROA can also fully support OPV operations in the Ross Sea. The AOTEAROA can operate a Super Seasprite or NH90 helicopter and is fitted for, but not with, a bow mounted Phalanx CIWS. The RNZN has identified a need for a Southern Ocean Patrol Vessel with a Canadian built HARRY DEWOLF class Arctic and Offshore Patrol Vessel (AOPV) probably at the top of the wish list. This purchase was quietly "deferred" early in 2022 with the Ministry of Defence citing "personnel pressure" among reasons.

The government's National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) operates the ice strengthened research vessel RV *Tangaroa* which has in the past hosted junior RNZN officers during operations in the Southern Ocean and Ross Sea. The *Tangaroa* is equipped with Dynamic Positioning (DP2) and can remain stationary or track a precise path in the challenging Southern Ocean environment. In reality, the *Tangaroa* is too valuable to be risked in aggressive fishery protection operations. One option for a rough and ready Southern Ocean Patrol Vessel, might be to copy the Icelandic Coast Guard (ICG) which during the Third Cod War (1975-76), was unable to acquire a new coastguard vessel in Europe due to UK diplomatic pressure. The ICG responded by requisitioning and converting the ice-strengthened trawler *Baldur*. The ICGV BALDUR then developed the trick of swinging her stern into the sides of RN frigates causing more damage to the Royal Navy than any other Icelandic coastguard vessel. New Zealand does lack a dedicated icebreaker to gain access to the Ross Sea in the early summer.

Currently the RNZN is dependent on the USCG POLAR STAR, which is being kept operational by cannibalizing spare parts from her laid up sister POLAR SEA. One other option might be for the NZDF to seek assistance from the new Australian Antarctic Supply Research Vessel *Nuyina*, purely in a support role.

The RNZN's Devonport Naval Base (DNB) in Auckland's Waitemata Harbour is a long way from the Ross Sea. It would accordingly seem prudent to establish during the summer months a Forward Operating Base in the Sub-Antarctic islands south of New Zealand. The most southerly of these is the Australian territory of Macquarie Island but this lacks a sheltered harbour. Lying 700 kilometres south of the South Island, the most southerly of the New Zealand World Heritage listed Sub-Antarctic Islands is Campbell Island. On the east of the island lies Perseverance Harbour, a drowned volcanic caldera. While normally sheltered, strong easterly winds can make the harbour uncomfortable.

A further 270 kilometres to the northwest and 465 kilometres south of Bluff Harbour lie the Auckland Islands. There are two large sheltered harbours arising from drowned ancient volcanoes, Port Ross in the northeast and Carnley Harbour, which separates Auckland Island and Adams Island, in the south. Carnley Harbour is large and runs 20 kilometres from the main eastern entrance to the narrow Victoria Passage in the west. It contains two sub-harbours,



USCGC Polar Star (WAGB-10) Recommissioned in 2012 – Commissioned in 1976. Base Port Seattle. in 1976.



Harry DeWolf-class offshore patrol vessel HMCS HARRY DEWOLF (AOPS 430) considered underarmed compared to Chinese and Russian equivalents.

the Northern Arm and the Western Arm. On the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the German steamer *Erlangen* anchored in the Northern Arm to collect firewood for her boilers. She was so well hidden she was not sighted by the cruiser *LEANDER* which had been sent to look for her. In April 1941 New Zealand established three Coastwatch Stations, codenamed the Cape Expedition, overlooking Port Ross, Carnley Harbour and Perseverance Harbour. It was thought that the German pocket battleship *ADMIRAL SCHEER*, which was then operating in the Indian Ocean, might use one of these sheltered harbours for replenishment and a self-refit before making a run for Japan. Carnley Harbour certainly has the potential to become New Zealand's "Scapa Flow".

Commencing from December 2022, four Boeing P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) will replace RNZAF 5 Squadron's five Lockheed P-3K2 *Orions* (a sixth Orion has already been retired to the RNZAF Museum). While the *Orions* operate from RNZAF Whenuapai in West Auckland, the *Poseidons* will operate from RNZAF Ohakea on the west coast of the North Island near Palmerston North. The RNZAF does have options to extend the range of these MPA by using Invercargill Airport, which has the third longest civilian runway in the country, in the south of the South Island. To the east of the South Island, the Chatham Islands Airport runway is also currently being lengthened and strengthened to operate aircraft up to Boeing 737 (P-8) standard. Once the RNZAF *Poseidons* enter service it is likely they will practice using the ice runway at McMurdo as the *Orions* have previously done. For many years RNZAF *Orions* have practised low level attacks using 500 pound Mark 82 bombs on the remote Kaipara Air Weapons Range. It is highly likely that the *Poseidons* will continue to undertake this weapons training which will provide a deterrent capability to vessels illegally fishing in the Ross Sea.

And what of New Zealand's allies and friends. For the US Navy, apart from SSN operations, the Arctic and Southern Oceans fall mainly within the operational purview of the US Coast Guard. In this regard the now elderly POLAR STAR and POLAR SEA are to be replaced by six new Polar Security Cutters to be built by Halter Marine Inc. While Australia has the largest Antarctic Territorial Claim, it seems

astonishing that the RAN does not operate a single ice-strengthened surface warship. It would accordingly appear prudent to complete at least some of yet to be built ARAFURA class OPVs to an ice-strengthened standard. The RAAF's fourteen P-8A Poseidon MPA would certainly be capable of providing useful aerial surveillance of the Southern Ocean south of Australia and this intelligence could then be shared by data-link with their RNZAF counterparts.

CONCLUSIONS

Once the Chinese station on Inexpressible Island is operational, then it is likely that there will be increased Chinese fishing activity in the Ross Sea. Based on the record of other Chinese fishing operations, some of these new fishing activities are likely to be illegal but will be given a veneer of legality by claiming they are purely for "research". It is also likely that the Chinese Ross Sea fishing fleet will be protected by Coastguard and/or Maritime Militia vessels.

Policing Chinese fishing activities in the Ross Sea will ultimately be the responsibility of the NZDF which will need to maintain mastery of the Southern Ocean. Should such policing operations result in an aggressive Chinese response (which seems likely), then the RNZN may need to consider acquiring a "ICGV BALDUR" type ice-strengthened trawler as an interim Southern Ocean Patrol Vessel. Indirect support from the US Coast Guard and RAAF P-8A *Poseidons* will be essential to monitor Chinese fishing activities. Should China ever decide to annex their Inexpressible Island base in the Ross Sea, then New Zealand, with United States and Australian support, may need to consider mounting a "South Thule" type operation, which would surely bring armed conflict to the "White Continent". ■

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DEATH BY A THOUSAND REVIEWS – A LETHAL RAN?

Mark Schweikert

It would seem from the recent Defence Strategic Review and statements by the defence minister that The *Hunter-class* frigate project, SEA 5000, may be about to meet the same fate as Army's LAND 400 Infantry Fighting Vehicle Project, with a Rob Peter to Pay Paul strategy to meet the Government's own minimal budget fleet design. Our Federal Vice President unpacks some of those issues.



The Spanish Navy's F-105 class ship ESPS CRISTÓBAL COLÓN, arriving at Sydney's Garden Island in 2017 as part of her visit to Australia to help the RAN train NUSHIP HOBART's crew. (Defence)

AN OPEN LETTER (APR 2022)

In early 2022 an Australian Strategic Policy Institute (APSI) paper suggested Navy should immediately build another three *Hobart-class* Air Warfare Destroyers (AWDs), to meet a shortfall in fleet numbers and lethality brought about China's massive naval build-up and the delay in delivering the new *Hunter class* frigates.

Since then, the new Federal Government has commissioned and released its Defence Strategic Review (DSR). Unfortunately, the DSR had no answers on the issue of Navy's fleet numbers or composition. Instead, it announced yet another review to be conducted by retired US Vice Admiral Willy Hilarides, Australia's former Finance Secretary, Rosemary Huxtable, and former Australian Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral Stuart Mayer, disappointingly without a public submission phase.

While this new review is not expected to be completed until September this year, the DSR's release had many commentators and four-star Twitter Admirals again calling for the building of more *Hobart-class* destroyers in Adelaide.

While the intent and reasoning for more Hobart style capability is sound, the means are potentially impractical, if not unachievable.

THE PAST

The original contract for *Hobart-class* warships was announced in 2007. The A\$8 billion three-ship deal (2007 dollars) actually included an option for a fourth AWD at a later date. This option was due to expire in Oct 2008 but was extended to early 2009, so as to take in account a new Defence White Paper commissioned by the then new Labor Government.

Despite the contract for the fourth AWD having been negotiated, drawn up and a way forward planned, then Defence Minister Joel Fitzgibbon decided not to proceed.

So, in the end only three ships were built and delivered (three years late and \$1.2bn over budget) with much of the workforce and specialist parts manufacturing and warship building skills being absorbed back into the general workforce, given the lack of follow on orders by then then Labor government. Much of that Hobart specific set-up infrastructure is also no longer present.

Mr Craig Lockhart, managing director, BAE Systems Maritime Australia (a partner in the AWD build) said in a recent interview with The Australian on 25 May that:

Unfortunately, during the last "valley of death" hundreds of experienced shipbuilders lost their jobs at the end of the Air Warfare Destroyer (AWD) program.

At BAE Systems Australia, we continue to keep in touch with many ex-AWD shipbuilders so that we might re-employ them on the Hunter program. However, many have moved on to new careers in the years that passed and we have lost the highly sought-after experience along with them.

So, the calls to build three more identical AWDs are easier said than done. In fact, building a 2007 designed warship would be much like reopening the Holden car factory in Adelaide to start producing 2007 VE series Commodores again. Nice car for its day, but not exactly appropriate for today.

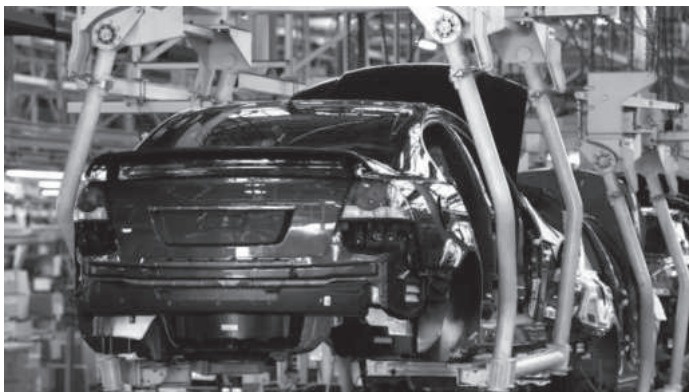
It should be remembered too that in March 2014 an ANAO report heavily criticised the Defence Material Organisation and the AWD Alliance for underestimating the risks in redesigning the F-100s into the *Hobart-class* for Australian operations, and building them in shipyards with no current warship construction experience/orders or existing infrastructure.

Given the break of nearly six years since SYDNEY was launched, one would suspect that not much would change if three more AWDs were ordered from ASC in Adelaide today. However, there is possibly another way to meet ASPI's, and Twitter's, intent and desire for more AWD capability.

THE FUTURE

The *Hobart-class* destroyers were based on the *Spanish F-100 class* ship, but improved for Australian conditions and operations. Spain built four F-100 and one F-105 class ship, the latter being a modified F-100 based on Australian design modifications and requirements, and thus very common to our Hobarts.

Spain was to build at least two *F-105 class* ships, but the Spanish Government stopped at one, ESPS CRISTÓBAL COLÓN, which on commonality grounds is somewhat of an orphan in the Spanish Armada.



The last VE series Commodore on the Holden production line in Adelaide, 2007. Would anyone seriously contemplate reopening the Holden factory to just produce VE Commodores again?



NUSHIP HOBART's crew on the flight deck of ESPS CRISTÓBAL COLÓN at ASC Shipbuilding's facility in Adelaide, with then Defence Minister Christopher Pyne addressing them. (Defence)

So common to the Hobarts is ESPS CRISTÓBAL COLÓN that the ship was deployed to Australia in 2017 to help train HMAS HOBART's commissioning crew on how to operate their new ship.

If the Australian government could negotiate a deal with the Spanish Government on acquiring ESPS CRISTÓBAL COLÓN, which could involve purchasing other Navantia products like their new Avante 2200 Corvette design for instance, then this could represent the quickest and most efficient way to enhance the current RAN AWD capability without affecting the vital upcoming *Hunter-class* frigate production line and build at ASC's Adelaide facility.

NOTHING VENTURED NOTHING GAINED – PROPOSED STEPS FOR THE SURFACE FLEET REVIEW

1. Australian Government to request of the Spanish Government to sell ESPS CRISTÓBAL COLÓN to Australia as a means of promoting Indo-Pacific deterrence against China. With Spain about to embark on a new *F110 class* frigate build, extra funds may be warmly welcome while at the same time removing a costly orphan class of ship from their logistics pool.
2. If Spain approves, Navy should establish a multi-disciplinary survey team (ASC, BAE systems (who have the support contract for Hobarts) CASG, RAN, industry) to interview HMAS HOBART's commissioning crew on their experience of ESPS CRISTÓBAL COLÓN compared to HMAS HOBART to identify any similarities or potential show stopper differences.
3. The survey team should then travel to Spain to conduct an audit of ESPS CRISTÓBAL COLÓN's current condition, configuration and categorise additional similarities and differences to ascertain modification costs needed to baseline her with the RAN's Hobarts.
4. Government should reallocate additional funds to SEA 4000 Phase 6 (AWD improvement project) to:
 - a. purchase ESPS CRISTÓBAL COLÓN
 - b. allow Navy to design greater lethality enhancements to all the AWD's beyond current plans (see below)
 - c. include ESPS CRISTÓBAL COLÓN in the Phase 6 project in order to standardise her with post upgraded Hobarts to ensure commonality and preserve current Fundamental Inputs to Capability (FIC) support arrangements and costs.
5. Announce the name HMAS MELBOURNE or DARWIN for new post Phase 6 ship.

Purchasing ESPS CRISTÓBAL COLÓN represents the only off the shelf solution to enhancing the RAN's at sea lethality quickly and cost effectively, and at the same time integrating into current support/FIC arrangements. This would also support the

Hunter-class building program and its quintessential importance in the continuous ship building strategy, which will help avoid future cost overruns and delays in any new ships builds post Hunter, as well as ward off 'shipbuilding valley of death' scenarios.

Any residual differences between the original Hobarts and their new sister would still be less than building three new AWDs to the original design, given technology and build standards improvements since 2007.

PROPOSED LETHALITY UPGRADES AND PHASE 6

The Government's DSR rightly raised issues with the RAN's current surface fleet's lethality, or lack thereof. Lethality is something that can be worked on now through innovative capability improvements. Mass less so. But a 4th AWD, if possible, would help in the latter case.

On this front Navy has form for innovative warship lethality improvement. Take for instance the accelerated upgrade Navy did to the DDG HMAS BRISBANE on its deployment to the first Gulf War in 1990. Radar absorbent material, two Phalanx weapon mounts and numerous other improvements were applied in quick time given the realisation she could not survive in a proper missile aged shooting war.

Some good old Aussie lateral thinking came to the fore and improved the vessel to make it the most potent DDG in the world. This same level of lateral thinking could easily transform our AWDs into the high-end warfighting ships many in the lay community (and Government) think they already are.

At the risk of solutionising, there are examples that could be used to inform additional lethality enhancements of the AWDs. For example, the USN seems to be moving away from Phalanx and onto RAM and SeaRAM. RAM (Rolling Airframe Missile) is a fire and forget Infra-Red and Radio Frequency homing missile specifically designed for the anti-Anti Ship Missile (ASM) role. It comes in either a Mk-49 21-cell launcher or on a Phalanx Block 1B mount in an 11-cell 'cassette' in place of the 20mm gatling gun.

Adding two 21-cell Mk-49 launchers to the AWDs at the aft corners of the helicopter hanger (see image of German Type 122 for example) in place of the single Phalanx, and removal of the bridge wing 25mm guns and replacing with a Phalanx in each spot would provide the lethality enhancement the AWDs critics have been calling for.

THE DSR – MOVING THE DECK CHAIRS

At the media conference releasing the unclassified version of the DSR and its recommendations, Defence Minister Marles hinted at a major shakeup of the surface fleet and noted that 'with the switch to nuclear powered submarines, the currently envisioned fleet would



A German Type 122 class frigate illustrating its fitment of two Mk-49 21-cell RAM launchers on the aft corners of the helicopter hangar. A similar arrangement could be applied to our Hobart class AWD's increase their self-protection capability and capacity.

need changes given it was designed to operate alongside diesel-powered submarines'.

This assertion is rather baffling as our submarines have always been independent operators free from any direct surface fleet repressibilities or support. The statement seems more like a media stunt (something known in the game as a logical fallacy) to set the conditions for a future decision, such as reallocating funds around the portfolio, which the DSR did with Army.

To back this up, and 'out of the blue', the Minister also said Navy needs to embrace a two-tiered system of surface combatants. Why? The DSR rightly articulated a need to raise the current fleet's lethality. However, it proposed to do this through reorganising the fleet order of battle to a Tier 1 and Tier 2 surface combatant force.

Tiering categories of surface combatants is not strictly defined, thus a Tier 1 ship might be expected to be capable of power projection – vessels similar to the *Hobart-class* destroyers and the *Hunter-class* frigates. Whereas a Tier 2 ship would typically refer to a vessel of Corvette size that is capable of presence operations or operating as a supporting part of a larger task group.

From these statements many are speculating that the Government has already decided to cut the Hunter project to pay for Spanish built Corvettes. However, given the looming submarine threat in our region, the Hunters' importance to maritime and thus trade security and our way of life cannot be overstated.

THE HUNTER CLASS, A SUBMARINERS WORST NIGHTMARE

The RAN's nine new *Hunter-class* frigates, also known as the BAE System's Type 26 Global Combat Ship, will be one of the most, if not the most, advanced Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) class of ships in the world.

Modified for the RAN's operational environment and interoperability with the USN, the Hunters are currently being built by ASC Shipbuilding at the Osborne Naval Shipyard in Adelaide, where the AWD's were built.

The Hunter ships will begin entering service in the early 2030s replacing the eight *Anzac-class* frigates, which have been in service since 1996. In the interim the Anzacs will undergo a life of type extension program to enhance their lethality, utility and longevity.

Building of the nine Hunters represents a pivotal first step in the Continuous Shipbuilding Program to avoid any future 'shipbuilding valleys of death', assuming it can survive the three yearly political cycle.

Its acquisition is also vital for Australia's security given that in the next 10 years, half of the world's submarines will be located in our area of operations. One need only remember how close Britain came to surrender when strangled by German U-boats during WW II.



If Spain would agree to sell ESPS CRISTÓBAL COLÓN to Australian then this sight of four Hobart's class AWD's off the Australian coast could become reality. (Defence - Modified)

The hull and machinery of the *Type 26/Hunter-class* are specifically designed to avoid interference with its passive sonar systems, by making the ships as silent as a submarine. This not only enhances the on-board passive or listening sensors but also makes it significantly difficult for submarines to detect a slow-moving Hunter searching for its underwater prey.

Diesel, gas and electric drive with a minimal use of noisy gearboxes is one way that noise is kept to a minimum. Electric propulsion mode, produced by up to four MTU diesel engine generators on double-resilient mountings and housed within acoustic enclosures, provide power to two large electric motors for patrol and search, with a Rolls Royce MT30 gas turbine clutched in at a moment's notice for higher speed requirements. Even then, it is understood that the gear box is the quietest ever produced.

The hull has also been optimised to reduce flow noise across it, with the ship also using two fixed pitch propellers employing submarine technology to again reduce noise.

These quietening measures enable the ship to hunt and close rapidly on submarine contacts while still remaining more undetectable than any other warship in the world.

The Hunter's main ASW sensor system is the Thalys S2087 variable depth towed array. This sensor is currently without doubt the best



Seen here is Block 16, a prototype first 'block' for the Hunter build. It weighs in at more than 140 tonnes and involved the expertise of 35 different trades. 22 blocks go into making each Hunter class frigate. (BAE)

ASW hunting system available today. It is a Low Frequency Active Sonar (LFAS) and consists of both active and passive sonar arrays (listening or pinging). With active pinging the Hunters will be able to locate submarines at considerable distances, even beyond the range at which they can launch an attack. It is said that this has been proven many times on numerous NATO exercises with the active transmissions so powerful they act like radar in keeping the sub away to avoid detection.

The sonar can also be moved up and down the water column to avoid or take advantage of sound ducts created by salinity, turbidity and water temperature changes.



A computer generated rendering of a Hunter class frigate complete with CEA AESA Radar. The Hunters will be without doubt one of the most capable frigates in the world and possibly the best ASW warship ever seen. (Defence)

This sonar is also backed up with another new state of the art hull mounted sonar in the form of the Ultra S2150 hull-mounted active/passive sonar.

A high proportion of enclosed superstructure and high free board designed into the class aids in seakeeping and stealth. The shape of the superstructure of the Hunters reduces the amount of reflected radar energy returns to a transmitter, thus reducing its detectability and enhancing other countermeasures such as Chaff and Nulka if fired on by ASMs.

For anti-air/missile tasks, the Hunters will be equipped with the world leading Australian-developed CEA Active Electronically Scanned Phased-Array Radar, mated with the US Navy's latest Aegis combat management system, Baseline 9. These will be integrated using an Australian designed system developed by Saab Australia. This combination means the Hunters will be one of the most capable frigates in the world at numerous tasks simultaneously.

A unique aspect of the Hunters is the multi-mission bay amid ships. This space can accommodate up to 12x20ft containers however, a mix of containers, Unmanned Undersea Vehicles (UUVs), small boats and/or additional SH-60R Seahawk helicopters are more likely. The bay is connected to the hangar through a fire proof door and the sides have roll up shutter type doors to protect the bay from the elements. The bay also represents an area that could be used for capability upgrades such as more Vertical Launch System (VLS) modules.

At the same time, and without impacting its fleet ASW capability, a number of features have been incorporated into the Hunters to broaden their utility across a broad spectrum of maritime operations and taskings.

For the amphibious support role a Mk-45 Mod 4 127mm/5" gun is located at the bow. The class also have a 32-cell Mk-41 VLS able to accommodate various anti-air, ASW and strike missiles.

One of the criticisms levelled at the Hunters is the relatively small number of VLS cells. However, as the role and *raison d'être* for the acquisition of the ships is fleet ASW, with anti-air a secondary, the 32-cell capacity is adequate for that task. Particularly considering the ability to quad pack the Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile (ESSM), meaning the maximum missile capability for each ship isn't 32 but 128.

The class have an extended flight deck able to accommodate a Chinook helicopter even with the ramp down and a large hangar for a SH-60R Seahawk ASW helicopter.

So far, the Royal Navy has ordered eight and the Royal Canadian Navy 15 of the *Type 26 class*. With the RAN's nine, that's 32 ships in a common user community able to share insights, experiences, issues and collectively solve problems. More nations are also looking at the Type 26, which will only enhance its longevity and ease of use in service.



The RN's first Type 26 GLASGOW has already been launched and currently fitting out. Many lessons have been learned from GLASGOW's build which have already been applied to the RAN's *Hunters*. (BAE)

RECENT CRITICISM

In May this year the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) published an audit of Project SEA 5000, *Hunter-class frigates*. While touted in the media and the arm chair admirals on social media as 'damning' and 'scathing' and claiming the project was in serious trouble, the audit actually concentrated on the management of the project office rather than the building of the ships or the ships themselves.

The report claimed that the in-service date is now delayed and project costs increased. However, this is regrettably not out of the ordinary for large military acquisitions (such as AWD before it), particularly those impacted by COVID. Many Australians are already employed on *Hunter* production with many small Australian companies under contract and supplying parts and materials for the project, and relying on it for their survival.

Hopefully the Government will not take the audit out of context to affect the *Hunter* project. "Hopefully".

CONCLUSION

The very real threat of war in our region has not gone away with a change of government. With the Government's perceived reluctance to fund Defence to the additional levels that is required to deter conflict, we are not only entering uncharted and dangerous waters but headed for a reef. Ukraine's example of not preparing enough to deter war with Russia should be upper most in the Governments Defence decision making.

So, the Hunter's must not only remain in the mix, given the looming submarine threat to this island nation, but should also be considered for additional batches of ships beyond the nine rather than Corvettes built overseas. A fourth AWD from Spain would also help.

As mentioned, the Minister has already hinted at major shakeup of the surface fleet. Which is actually at odds with the intent of calling for another review to inform the Government on a way forward. For example, what if the review says 'stay the course'. Would Government still accept it and/or publish it?

From the Ministers statements on the DSR one could easily suspect that Government has already made its mind up and potentially using the review, through its unpublished terms of reference, to justify a pre-conceived acquisition strategy for Corvettes. Paying for it by 'robbing Peter to pay Paul' with funds from the Hunter project. ■



DSR UNRAVELS

The *Smith-Houston Defence Security Review (DSR)*, as forecast in *The NAVY DSR Analysis (Flash Traffic, Issue 2, May-Jun 2023)*, is unravelling fast. Creating the very conditions of fear, paralysis, and retrenchment foreseen by *NLA Defence Analysts*. [1] Precisely because there is minimal (*Schumpeterian*) creation, and “maximal optimisation, predicated on cutting some programs (substantively hollowing out Army), to rapidly capitalise others (Submarines, Air, Space, Cyber, Guided Weapons, UA/S/U/Vs) through predictive change”. [1] All orchestrated by the accountant consultancies, who run Defence.

The *Smith-Houston DSR* failed to:

1. Create an identifiable leadership strategy for the 2035 timeframe, against which planners might plan;
2. Understand Defence as a complex enterprise and that adaptation requires managing both growth and decline;
3. Consequently, disguising growth as optimisation, while cutting Army to pay Navy and mandating yet another review for Navy. Creating the very fissures intended for divide and rule.

The international consultants advising the DSR, appear to be the very same that advised the UK Government during its disastrous

2010 UK *Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR)*. Before the SDSR, there was no so-called *Black Hole*. After the SDSR, there was. The UK Armed Forces have been chasing their tails ever since – while getting progressively smaller, less capable, and adaptive. Before the DSR, there was no Defence *Black Hole*. Now there is a fabricated \$42 Billion Dollar Black hole; “including over \$15B to be clawed back over the next decade” (2023-2032). At the same time, increases in Defence spending are frozen for the next four years, and will only increase afterwards, in the forward estimate “by 5-6% to a target under 2.4% of GDP”. [1]

The situation is worse than feared. Hence the palpable fear stalking Russell, as every program grinds to a halt to find non-existent savings, “apparently hanging around like low hanging fruit.” As example, contractors are no longer being hired – for several reasons, including the PwC scandal. These jobs are supposedly to be filled by APS. But there is no appetite for APS recruiting, or trained APS available – while gapping acts as an unofficial cut, or “saving.” So, people do not get hired, things do not get done, Defence training is slashed, and everything grinds to a halt. Essential travel to build contingent trusts is cancelled, because “everything can now be done virtually, from

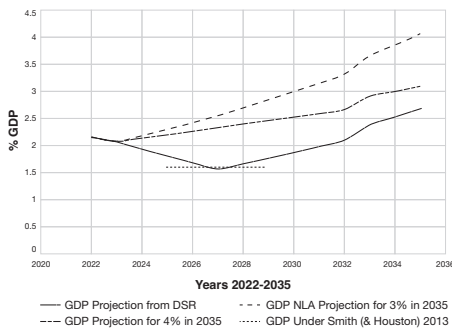
home.” Representing another saving, given *hot-desking* is now the norm. Government offices are deliberately being reconfigured at 67% capacity – as advised by the very same accountancy consultants who created the open-plan mess in the first place. In other words, 1/3 of the staff at any time will not have a desk. If everyone came into work, there would be nowhere to go. One step from downsizing (sacking and, or famine). Brutal *von-Neumann* turnpike change-management, at its worst.

DEFENCE ECONOMICS 101

To *simply* explain to Government, Smith, Houston (and Dean) – the fabricated *Black Hole* requires real cost savings (cuts) in the order of 4% of the Defence budget, per annum for the next decade. To 2032. At the same time – during a period of high inflation – increases in the Defence Budget have been frozen until after the forward estimates. When a future Government is expected to increase defence spending between 5-6% per annum. The combined impact (cuts, freezing, and inflation) mean that, in real terms, the percentage of GDP spent on Defence is likely to reduce to about 1.6% (from around 2.1 to 2.2% in 2022). This should be familiar territory for both Smith and Houston, as they were both on watch (or just coming off), the last time Defence spending reached these levels, in 2013. The lowest level of Defence spending on GDP by any Australian Government, since WW2.



More Casuistry - 5 or 8 AUKUS SSN Submarines?



Real Impact of Cuts, Freezing, and Inflation on Defence GDP, 2022-2035

In real terms, around \$40Billion will have been removed from the Defence Budget in the first four years, at about \$9-10B a year – peaking in 2028. Exactly as intended. In GDP terms, the Defence Budget will not recover to its 2022/3 level until 2032/3. Even then, to a target “under or about 2.4% GDP – which is essentially a training and exercise [i.e., not a war thinking, fighting, and winning] capability budget.” [1]

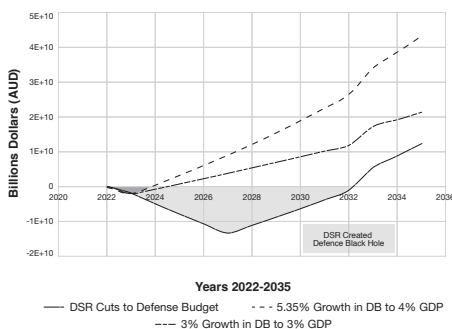


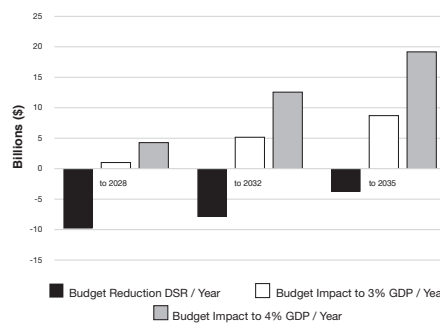
Fig 2 The DSR Fabricated Defence Black Hole

If the Government had understood Defence, Defence economics, or “defence budgeting for change,” it would have continued to increase Defence Spending at 3% per annum. This would have allowed for a brief dip between 2022 and 2024, before recovering to about 2.7% in 2032 and 3% in 2035 – as recommending by the NLA (see *Statement of Policy*, p. 5). Recommendations by NLA Defence Analysts, [1] to increase Defence spending to 4% of GDP by 2035, requires increasing the Defence budget by 5.35% per annum. Even allowing for cuts, after a smaller dip, this would have led to about 3.3% of GDP by 2032, and 4% of GDP in 2035.

RIPPING THE HEART OUT

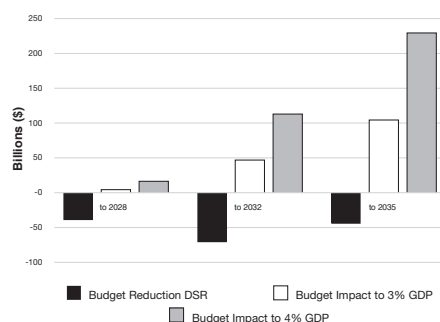
The impact in real dollar terms is to rip the heart out of the ADF, catastrophically at a time of urgent change and growth in the size and scale of the Defence Force. All requiring real investment in change. The effect on the Defence Budget of cuts (to 2032), freezing (to 2028) and inflation, is shown by the size of the fabricated *Smith-Houston Black Hole*. The DSR Defence Budget will not have

recovered from the compound impacts of all three effects (cuts, freezing, and inflation), by 2035.



DSR Budget Reductions per Year, to 2028, 2032, and 2035

In real terms, the *Smith-Houston Defence Budget* removes from the Budget \$45-55B by 2035, and over \$70B by 2032 (allowing for growth at 5 or 6% from 2028). While the cuts in the forward estimates over the next decade may have filled the fabricated \$42B *Smith-Houston Black Hole* by 2029, the real impact is much, much worse, and prolonged. Cuts of this nature are very hard to arrest once the reductionist mentality takes hold. Overshoots are inevitable, if not unstoppable. In actuality, the Defence Budget, as currently projected, will not have dug itself out of the *self-fabricating Black Hole* by 2035. In real terms, between 2023 and 2027, the *Smith-Houston Defence Budget* reduces Defence spending by almost \$10B a year; between 2028 and 2032, by \$8B a year. Even by 2035, reducing Defence spending by \$3-5B a year over the next 12 years. In other words, Defence will not have recovered from the self-immolation caused by the DSR in 2023, by 2035. It will certainly not be in any shape to respond to the years of peak threat (2025-2027), that it was intended to address – and / or to deliver on AUKUS. Be it for three *Virginia-class* SSNs in the early 2030s, and 8 *AUKUS-class* submarines to be built in Australia. Or variations of that theme.



Overall DSR Budget Reductions, to 2028, 2032, and 2035

KNOWN OR SHOULD HAVE KNOWN

It was reportedly General Campbell's view as CDF, in 2018/19:

...that [acting] retrospectively in such awards [e.g., for Teddy Sheean VC] could open the floodgates to others and might upset the Queen [adding gratuitously] that the recommendation was rejected by a raft of naval community figures and military historians.

Readers will recall that William Alston in his piece “It is Time: RAN VC” [2] also warned of retrospective action to remove VCs, or to tie or conflate the award to Teddy Sheean's long-deserved award of the VC, with the removal of a VC, and changes of letters patent. Changes of letters patent that would go against Royal decree and the express wishes of King George V. [2] Notwithstanding, the Morrison Government did both – leading, amongst other things, to the pre-judging of civil cases, before criminal charges had been brought. Also confusing the valour of the man and the deed at that instance, with the moral character of the individual.

General Angus Campbell, following the release of the *Brereton Report*, went on to demand the removal of honours and citations of those units similarly implicated, before trial. This had to be countermanded by the then Minister of Defence, Mr Peter Dutton. On the change of Government and result of a recent civil (not criminal) court case, General Angus Campbell is again visiting the removal of awards and citations, from members of the Defence Force. A directive possibly being entertained by the current Minister of Defence, and Deputy Prime Minister. Thereby continuing to confuse the deed at that instance, with moral character (his and others). It was King George V's view that even a condemned man, should go to his execution still wearing his VC.

It should not have taken Corporal Senator Jacqui Lambie's referral to the International Criminal Court, for General Angus Campbell to know that the *Geneva Conventions, Article 87 of the 1977 Additional Protocol I* provide:

1. The High Contracting Parties and the Parties to the conflict shall require military commanders, with respect to members of the armed forces under their command and other persons under their control, to prevent and, where necessary, to suppress and report to competent authorities breaches of the Conventions and of this Protocol.

Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), Geneva, 8 June 1977, Article 87. Article 87 was adopted by consensus. CDDH, Official Records, Vol. VI, CDDH/SR.45, 30 May 1977, p. 307.



While, *Working Group A of Committee I, adopted draft Article 76(2) of the Additional Protocol I with the following wording:*

The fact that a breach of the Conventions or of the present Protocol was committed by a subordinate does not absolve his superiors from penal or disciplinary responsibility as the case may be, if they knew or had the possibility of knowing in the circumstances at the time that he was committing or was going to commit such a breach and if they did not take all feasible measures within their power to prevent or repress the breach.

CDDH, Official Records, Vol. X, CDDH/I/321/Rev.1, 21 April–11 June 1976, p. 153. (After the meetings some delegations informed the Chairman of Committee I that they wished to have the words “or had possibility of knowing” replaced by the words “or had information on the basis of which he should have concluded”.)

Although the wording has been *recklessly* changed and obfuscated in the Commonwealth Criminal Code (1995, s 268.115 at 2, a. through c) for military commanders – when compared to similar Allied coding – the same intent applies. Senior Officers are not absolved from disciplinary action if “they knew or had the possibility of knowing in the circumstances at the time that he was committing or was going to commit such a breach and if they did not take all feasible measures within their power to prevent or repress the breach.” This applies to General Angus Campbell, and other senior Army Officers “who [irrespective of *recklessness*] knew or should have known” – yet were positively removed from consideration under the *Brereton Report*. A report established by General Angus Campbell, other senior Army officers, under an Army General (Brereton), supported by senior Australian Public Servants.

General Campbell's June 2023 leaked claim that he tried to return his DSC, on the release of the *Brereton Report*, and that this was rejected by the then Prime Minister Scott Morrison, shows lack of grace. The PM is not the Commander in Chief. Only the Governor General, acting as Commander in Chief, could have accepted the return of a DSC. As a soldier, the Governor General would have also known that, not confusing deed with moral character, the return of the medal would not be permissible, without accepting General Campbell's resignation. Which, almost certainly, the Governor General would have honourably accepted.

General Campbell knew or should have been expected to know this. The only honourable option that CDF and then Chief of Army could and should have taken was to resign. The fact that they did not and continue to stay, has further damaged Army and ADF standing. Transferring yet more power to the

media and political elites, and the Canberra Industrial Complex. Of which CDF, through his actions – appears clearly a part.

CHANGE LEADERSHIP

Change requires leadership – it is not managed. Without leadership, the fearful conditions created by the *Smith-Houston DSR* will freeze change. People will become understandably fearful of doing anything other than sitting tight and protecting the furniture – in so much as they can. Because the budget is being cut in real terms by up to 10% per annum, for the next 14 years – the debilitating and destabilising effects will go much further. From a political, industrial, environmental, and policy perspective, elements of the Labor Party are already resisting AUKUS; including nuclear powered propulsion. As vested in Howard's absurd Pandora legislation: *The Commonwealth, Environment, Protection, and Biodiversity Conservation Act*, 1999 (in s.1404).

General Campbell should have honourably resigned with the then Chief of Army, on the announcement and findings of the *Brereton Report*. That would have significantly lanced the boil. His next opportunity came when Peter Dutton as Defence Minister rescinded his order removing awards and citations from over 3000 ADF personnel, incriminated or otherwise in the *Brereton Report*. General Angus Campbell was then extended as CDF to see through the *Defence Security Review* and the implementation of the *Brereton Report*, also playing out in the courts. His position was by then more by political “grace and favour” – exactly where a CDF should never be. The findings of the recent civil case and the continuing questions being raised of and about the *Brereton Report* and his leadership, should have caused General Campbell to consider his extension as CDF.

The handling of the *Smith-Houston DSR* and the knowledge “CDF knew or should have known” about the scale and impact of the DSR on the ADF (as outlined) and the Army, in particular, was General Campbell's last opportunity to resign with honour. Tragically, Campbell may now become known more for what he failed to honourably do, than any of his now besmirched successes.

Noting that change is led and leadership is, first and foremost, about trust – CDF and several other senior Army officers are probably not the people to carry the ADF into the 21st Century. To represent the ADF to the political elites, the Canberra Industrial Complex (CIC), and lead with trust and honour. In the words of Lieutenant General Oliver Cromwell, speaking to the Rump Parliament, on 20 April 1653:

It is not fit that you should sit here any longer. You have sat here too long for any good you have been doing lately ... In the name of God go.

LAUGHING ALL THE WAY TO THE PEOPLE'S BANK OF CHINA

Potentially, one of the key reasons that the CCP has been largely quiescent on the DSR is that, unlike it would appear the Canberra Industrial Complex, they have retained a level of analytical, strategic, political-economic competency – and done their homework. Why protest or add to the flames, when the DSR and the CIC is doing their job for them? As Sun Tzu might have concluded, why deter, the already seemingly deterred:

Deterrence posture and effects are very difficult to assess. The very real danger here is if the enemy does not believe it or wants to take the risk, then our new strategy is already defeated. If the Government does not make the appropriate investment in all defence capabilities, then an enemy will certainly not believe the strategy. [1]

The Argentines saw the 1980 UK Defence Review's implementation as an opportunity to embark on military operations. Such is the power of defence reviews. [1]

The DSR fabricates a \$42bn ‘black hole’ in the defence budget which is forcing the Government to cancel, reshape or defer current capability projects in order to fill. By these actions, does not [the DSR] admit that the Government is unwilling to fund the so-called black hole? [1]

The Central (or People's) Bank of China Defence Analysts, may well have concluded all the above and more. Based upon NLA Defence Analyst's findings, the biggest threat to ADF comes not from outside but from within Canberra. What more could you ask, than a major regional Defence Force committing its own *seppuku* – by unknowingly, or worst case knowingly, substantively reducing Defence spending in real terms (to below 2.1-2.2% of GDP) and removing up to \$70B of Defence spending, over the critical timeframe, 2023-2032? While, concomitantly destroying the morale necessary to foster the types of leadership required to think, fight, and win?

Attributed to Solzhenitsyn in 1975, is an anecdote of Lenin's saying: “when it comes time to hang [Lenin's Useful Idiots], they will sell us the rope.” Now Australian knighthoods are off the table, perhaps the authors of the DSR along with various serving and retired State Premiers, are deserving of the CCP's prestigious *Friendship Medal*:



Ships of the US, Canada, France and Japan participating in Large Scale Global Exercise (LSGE) 23.

bestowed on foreigners who have made outstanding contributions to China's socialist modernization, the promotion of exchange and cooperation between China and foreign countries, and the protection of world peace?

THE SURFACE FLEET REVIEW

From the Government's recent *Defence Strategic Review* (DSR), yet another review has been commissioned to examine the 'lethality' and composition of the RAN surface fleet. The justification given was that with the introduction of the new Nuclear-Powered Submarines (SSNs), the surface fleet's focus needed to change.

The review is being conducted by retired US Navy Vice Admiral Willy Hilarides (former Submariner and Commander of Naval Sea Systems Command - NAVSEA), former Department of Finance Secretary, Rosemary Huxtable, and retired Australian Fleet Commander and former Head of the ADF's Force Design Division, Vice Admiral Stuart Mayer AO, CSC & Bar.

As mentioned in Paper 2 in this edition, the re-focusing explanation is odd as our submarines have been, and will for the most

part remain, separate from the surface fleet's activities.

The best illustration of this is from the 1982 Falkland's conflict, where the Task Force Commander, Rear Admiral Sandy Woodward, did not have command over the SSN's in theatre. They remained highly mobile free agent hunter killers commanded from Fleet HQ Northwood, in the UK. In any future Indo-Pacific conflict with our SSNs being forward deployed and rapidly tasked at the strategic level, why would anyone think this would be different and thus influence the make-up of the RAN's surface fleet?

Suppression

The Minister's assertion for the need to change, coupled with the suppression of the review's terms of reference and a no public submission phase, could indicate a decision on the surface fleet's make up may have already been made in the back rooms of parliament house. In fact, it is rumoured that the review team have already sent a preliminary 'quick look' finding to the Minister and had it rejected.

Media are already reporting that a Spanish corvette build by Navantia will be purchased and the *Hilarides-Mayer Surface Fleet*

Review will essentially set the justification for the purchase, at the expense of something else no doubt.

The one point from the DSR that can be agreed upon is lack of lethality and resilience of the current in-service surface fleet.

This is not ending well

In Vol 83 No.4 of *The NAVY* the late Senator Jim Molan and our Federal Vice President Mark Schweikert, published an article "Wargaming Tomorrow – It's possible this won't end well". In it they highlighted the lack of lethality in the ADF (including Navy) as a peacetime training force:

... a very good, small but fragile one-shot military lacking lethality (cannot fight nasty enough), sustainability (it cannot fight for long enough) and mass (it is not big enough). Case in point, Anzac class frigates with only an 8-cell VLS (Vertical Launch System) and Destroyers (frigates in Spanish Navy service) with only 48 cells and one Phalanx close in weapon system for 'leakers'. One mild swarm attack and it's all over. And why would anyone think the enemy would do no less?



So the first step should be a resilience upgrade to the current fleet.

Mk-49 RAM and/or Phalanx missile defence systems are much needed in every ship of the RAN to add another layer of self-defence, so the fleet has a greater chance of completing its mission. Navy recently announced the acquisition of a Rheinmetall soft kill decoy system, which will be a great addition to those ships earmarked for it. An 'arm the ship as if your life depends on it' mindset now needs to be applied.

Looking back at the Falklands conflict and the many lessons therein, the RAN is in a similar situation now to the RN of 1981. It was for all intents and purposes a training navy lacking lethality and resilience which was subject to restrictive if not falling budgets. It also felt it had time to 'arm up' if the Cold War went hot. The Falkland's conflict meant the fleet had to go as is. With deadly consequences.

The combat improvements to the RN surface fleet post the conflict is where the RAN should be today, given the predicted likelihood of conflict in our region in the next five years.

3+8 or 3+5 – Yet more casuistry?

Alas, this government has already cut defence spending by clawing back \$15B over the next decade. Its defence funding strategy appears to be 'rob Peter to pay Paul,' in a vain attempt to look 'decisive'.

One could be forgiven for thinking the government's attention isn't avoiding war with China but with other issues like *The Voice*, renewable energy, Brittany Higgins, what people get paid and so on.

With regard to the new submarines, it was revealed at a recent Senate estimates hearing by Chief of Navy and the Head of the SSN task force, that the number of AUKUS SSNs to be built in Adelaide will only be five. Many in the community were expecting eight. The reason given was the three second hand Virginia class SSNs being acquired will be counted as the 'the eight' SSNs identified as the necessary fleet size. It was further revealed that that number could fall even further if the option of two more US Virginias is taken up. So much for the continuous shipbuilding strategy.

VIRGINIA'S, OR NOT?

Long warned of by John Jeremy, Robert Blake, and Dr Neil Baird, writing in *The NAVY*, the U.S. may not have either the capacity, or the modern shipyards to deliver three and up to five Virginia-class SSNs by the early-mid 2030s. In other words, in just seven years' time.

The issue is twofold; reflecting both the *Trump-era* demand signal to create a 100-strong US Navy Submarine Force, and



Image of Hunter-class Frigate (Image RAN).

the long rundown in US shipbuilding yards. Which means that, today, U.S. shipyards are sclerotic and unproductive, when compared to other shipyards. Including in the Far East and in Europe.

This is also becoming more of an issue amongst U.S. legislators, who are increasingly concerned about the transfer of technology to Australia, and the impact of the "loss" of a significant proportion of the class, at such a critical moment.

U.S. legislators will also be watching closely the impact of both the *Smith-Houston DSR* and the *Hilarides-Mayer Surface Fleet Review*. Both of which will, arguably, denude Australia's deterrence capability – necessary to survive a first strike. For which an effective surface fleet and Army are both fundamental. In other words, the loss of these submarines will directly affect the deterrence capability of the USA, and the mutual deterrence umbrella supposedly extended and contributed to by Australia, and other Allies. The rundown of the British Royal Navy, has been of similar concern. The more so, that Britain's nuclear deterrence relies similarly on a second-strike capability. For which scaled conventional forces and its surface fleet are a pre-requisite.

Ironically, modern British shipyards may have more capacity to design and build the AUKUS submarine in the requisite time-frame. But would still require the transfer of front-end technologies from the U.S. – requiring legislative approvals.

The decision to build the AUKUS submarine in Australia represents a significant risk, if they cannot be built in time, or the *Virginia-class* made available. For which *Collins-class* LOTE, is simply not a credible, or safe option. It would be better, by far, to hold to the advice of General Sir John Monash after WW1 (see Paper 4), and to build the *AUKUS-class* in Britain. Saving up to 50% cost and time saving over local construction. The same may, reasonably, apply to the *Hunter-class*? The RAN requires its ships and submarines today, and tomorrow – not in the next decade.

WESTERN PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

Ships from the navies of Japan, France, and Canada (but, unusually, not including the RAN unlike in 2022), joined two U.S. Navy carrier strike groups to operate as a unified force in the Philippine Sea, June 9.

The aircraft carriers USS NIMITZ (CVN 68) and USS RONALD REAGAN (CVN 76) met the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force's large-deck helicopter destroyer JS IZUMO (DDH 183) – now capable of operating the F-35B – and surface units from Canada and France.

The integrated at-sea exercise brought together more than 12,000 Sailors from across the four maritime nations and supports U.S. *Indo-Pacific Command's Large Scale Global Exercise* (LSGE) 23. LSGE demonstrates the U.S. military's interoperability with allies and partners in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Rear Adm. Jennifer Couture, commander, CSG 11, aboard USS Nimitz, stated:

The credibility of an integrated carrier strike force is the U.S. Navy's greatest deterrent to those who threaten the international rules-based order.

Together with our allies and partners, we're demonstrating our capability to seamlessly integrate across all domains, our readiness to respond to any contingency, and our commitment to uphold freedom of navigation and overflight in the Indo-Pacific region.

JMSDF Rear Admiral Takahiro Nishiyama, commander, Escort Flotilla 1, confirmed:

The First Surface Unit of the Indo-Pacific Deployment 2023, JS IZUMO and JS SAMIDARE, departed their mother ports by June 1 to begin their three-and-a-half-month deployment operations. As the first multinational exercise, I was very excited and reassured to have the opportunity to strengthen cooperation with our important like-minded countries, the Royal Canadian Navy and the French Navy, in addition to the U.S. Navy, with which we have strong bonds of cooperation. I also believe that this exercise embodied

the willingness and ability of Japan and our allies and comrades to continue our engagement in the Indo-Pacific region toward the realization of a free and open Indo-Pacific.

The combined force conducted flight operations and air defence exercise scenarios as well as simulated strikes against maritime targets. Other ships in the partnership included USS ANTIETAM (CG 54), FS LORRAINE (D 657) and the frigate HMCS MONTREAL (FFH 336), from the Royal Canadian Navy.

The training and events provided commanders the chance to practice capabilities across the maritime domain as participating forces focused on anti-air, anti-surface, and anti-submarine warfare tactics and procedures. Moreover, cooperative maritime engagements with such enduring partnerships help strengthen existing relationships and increase collective war-fighting readiness, maritime superiority, and power projection.

Rear Adm. Michael “Buzz” Donnelly, commander, CSG 5/Commander, Task Force 70, commented:

The combined operations of CSG 5 and CSG 11 – exercising with our Canadian, French and Japanese allies – demonstrates our interoperability, combined capability and common commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

As a Pacific nation, our presence allows us to coordinate across all domains and maintain a responsive maritime force that is able to support stability and security in the region by being ready across the full spectrum of naval capabilities.

The lack of RAN representation is puzzling – given the continuing emphasis on up-scaling ADF Command and Control interoperability with US and Japanese carrier strike groups, and with France and Canada. Including two (U.S. and Japan) of the four members of the QUAD.

This appears to reflect a drawing back from previous RAN Freedom of Operation (FONOP) patrols, fundamental to “supporting a free and open Indo-Pacific.” Acting also as a deterrence to any potential invasion of Taiwan.

Lack of attendance, also emphasises the lack of indigenous Air Cover in the RAN – and Australia’s inability to fight at scale. Emphasised by the failure of the *Smith-Houston DSR* to address the F-35B *Lightning II* requirement, supported by suitably adapted LHDs and a new RAN aircraft carrier.

There is increasing suspicion that the Government may be walking away from international commitments, including towards QUAD, AUKUS, and Ukraine. In

order to support a Chinese “placation policy,” [1] that – given the apparent deficiencies of the *Smith-Houston DSR* – may be beginning to look more like a policy of *appeasement*?

VIETNAM JOINS INDO-MAL MULTINATIONAL EXERCISE

Ship 20 of Vietnam Naval Region 3 Brigade 172, arrived in Makassar, Sulawesi, Indonesia, in early June to participate in the 4th *Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo* (MNEK), according to the *Quân Đội Nhân Dân* (the Vietnam People’s Army newspaper).

The military exercise held by the Indonesian Navy completes in early June. The working delegation (Sailors) of the Việt Nam People’s Navy (VPN) aboard the vessel are expected to partake in a ceremonial parade, a multilateral drill at sea, and cultural exchanges.

Earlier, Ship 20 – a *Pohang-class* corvette built by the Republic of Korea Navy in October 2018 – visited Langkawi (Malaysia) to attend the 16th International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA) 2023.

The trip, made at the invitation of Malaysian and Indonesian navies, aims to consolidate and strengthen the friendship and cooperation between the Việt Nam People’s Army and the VPN, with other countries.

It was also intended to consolidate directives of the Vietnamese Central Military Commission and the Ministry of National Defense “on international integration and defence diplomacy, and improve naval troops’ ability to work together in response to common maritime security challenges”.

GREENWICH STATION

Under current projections, the Royal British Navy will have just 10 frigates – down from 13 – as aging Type 23 vessels decommission. The 10 frigates, plus the six Type 45 destroyers that should still be in service at the time, will struggle to meet the United Kingdom’s naval needs, and commitments to allies including NATO, and AUKUS in the Indo-Pacific.

Aircraft carriers and amphibious ships will require escorting, in addition to protecting fisheries and shipping lanes, escorting vessels of rival fleets in U.K. waters, with at least one legacy territory – the Falkland Islands – to protect. In addition to longstanding commitments to Britain’s waning possessions and influence in the West Indies.

Let alone repeating the Falkland Islands of 1982, the British Fleet today and certainly by 2026, would not be able to mount the type of Amphibious support to the UN (in Sierra-Leone) in 2000 – nor, without the now broken British Army, the invasion of

Iraq in 2003.

A force of 16 warships is at least 32 vessels short. With or without Autonomous Uncrewed Vessels. Which will require sophisticated command vessels to control, in any case. Notwithstanding AI.

Currently, less than 25% of vessels are available for operations at any one time. Given increasing unreliability of the Type 23s; the failures of the Type 45 vessels only now being addressed, and ongoing maintenance rates – exacerbated by a sclerotic Fleet replacement rate, currently in excess of 40 years.

A single carrier battle group – built around one of the two *Queen Elizabeth-class*, requires an attack submarine, destroyer and three frigates. Leaving one frigate to protect the United Kingdom. Iain Ballantyne, naval historian, editor of *Warships International Fleet Review*, and long-term friend of *The NAVY* notes the warship-shortage is not new: “it is a serious challenge that has been building for more than 20 years.”

Cuts since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 have shrunk the British military to less than half its Cold War order of battle. The disastrous SDSR of 2010 created a fabricated *Black Hole* in the region of £45B (sound familiar) that eliminated, among other forces, two aircraft carriers, three SSNs, two amphibious ships, three Supply vessels, and four frigates. In addition to doubling the Fleet Replacement Rate, from about 25 years to fifty, or more. ■



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CHINESE BULKCARRIER SCAVANGES HMS REPULSE

In late May, Malaysia detained a Chinese-registered vessel suspected of looting from two British World War Two shipwrecks. The Chinese bulk carrier was seized on Sunday for anchoring illegally at the site in the South China Sea.

During investigations, ammunition believed to be from the HMS PRINCE OF WALES and HMS REPULSE, sunk by the Imperial Japanese Navy in 1941, were discovered on board.

The UK MoD has condemned such illegal scavenging as a "desecration" of maritime war graves.

Ships sunk before 1945, are increasingly targeted by scavengers for their rare low-background-radiation steel, known as "pre-war steel". The low radiation in the steel makes it a rare and valuable resource for use in medical and scientific equipment.

The warships lie 50nm off the east coast of Malaysia, and have been targeted for decades. The ships were sunk by Japanese aerial torpedoes on 10 December 1941, three days after the attack on Pearl Harbour. 842 sailors were killed and it is considered one of the worst disasters in British naval history. The subsequent surrender of Singapore in 1942, also representing the end of *Pax Britannica* and the British Empire.

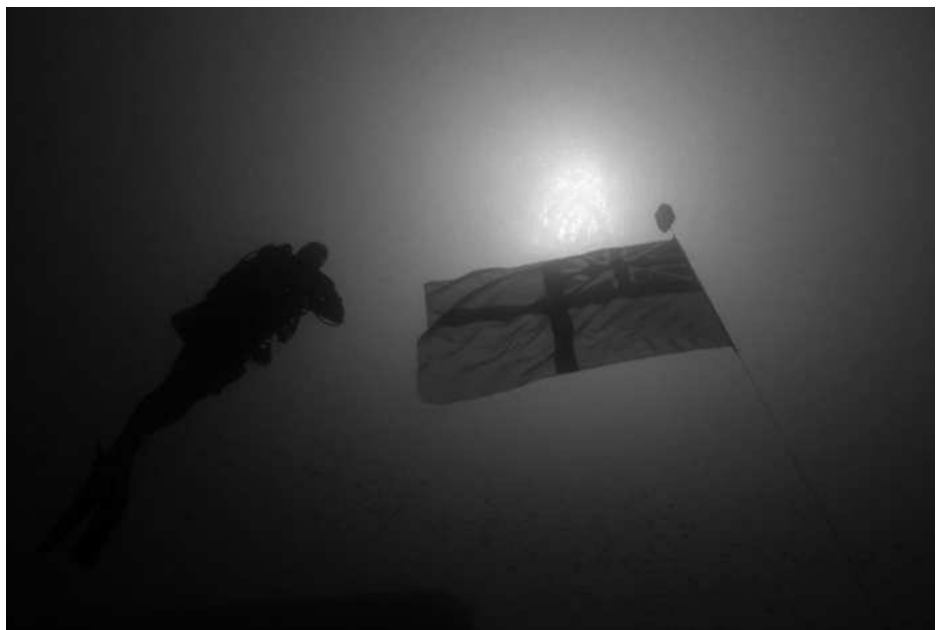
Fishermen and divers reported the presence of the Chinese vessel to Malaysian authorities in April. Local maritime police detained the Chinese ship at the end of May. According to the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA), the ship, registered in Fuzhou, had 32 crew on board. The MMEA linked a cache of unexploded artillery, said to be from the two sunken vessels, that police seized from a private scrap yard in the southern state of Johor, earlier in May.

In 2017, during a tour of Malaysia, a local diver showed King Charles as the then *Prince of Wales*, images that documented damage to the HMS PRINCE OF WALES, now considered much worse.

The UK Defence Secretary claimed at the time that Britain would work with Malaysian and Indonesian governments to investigate claims that up to six British warships had been plundered in South China Sea waters. *Pax Britannica* no longer applies, as *Pax Sinica* increasingly challenges the global rules-based order and *Pax Americana*.

BLYTHE STAR FOUND

After almost fifty years, the the *Blythe Star*, has been located on the seafloor of the South Pacific Ocean, off the South West Cape of Tasmania.



We will Remember - the Royal Navy White Ensign flying over HMS REPULSE, 2014 (Lieutenant Adam Bolton RNR, HMS VIVID).

The 44-metre MV *Blythe Star* was a coastal freighter disappeared off Tasmania, while travelling from Hobart to King Island, on 13 October 1973. It suddenly capsized and sank off the southwest coast of Tasmania. All 10 crew members were able to escape the sinking vessel into an inflatable life raft. Tragically, three crew members died before the survivors were able to find help and be rescued 12 days later on 24 October 1973.

Report into the loss of the *Blythe Star*'s tragedy indicated failures in the Tasmanian Transport Commission's; an indifference to safety, and the mishandling of earlier critical incidents.

The location of the MV *Blythe Star* was confirmed by the CSIRO's Marine National Facility, using its research vessel, the *RV Investigator*, on 12 April 2023 during a 38 day research voyage to study a submarine (underwater) landslide off the west coast of Tasmania. According to the CSIRO, the wreck of the MV *Blythe Star* is located approximately 10.5 km west of South West Cape, Tasmania and lies in 150 metres of water. The investigation showed the vessel is intact and sitting upright on the seafloor, with its bow pointing northwest. The visual inspection using the underwater cameras was able to identify key features to confirm the wreck was the MV *Blythe Star*. This included identifying part of the vessel name – 'STAR' – on the ship's bow.

The discovery marks the final chapter of an Australian shipping tragedy that has had a lasting impact on the management and regulation of Australian shipping in the latter half of the 20th century.

Extract from Michelle Myers, MUA.

HEROIC IDUN RELEASED FROM DETENTION

Following nine-months detention by Nigerian authorities, the owners of the tanker, *Idun Maritime*, a subsidiary of Norway's *Ray Car Carriers*, pleaded guilty to a single maritime offence, that of entering sovereign Nigerian waters unlawfully, and agreed to pay a fine of NGN5 million (US\$11,000). Additionally, the plea agreement allowed for the recovery of costs by the Nigerian Navy associated with the detention of the vessel. These "costs" are believed to run into the millions of dollars, the Nigerian Navy claims.

The *Heroic Idun* arrest highlights how seafarers are being used as pawns in multi-million-dollar claims by littoral states; badly treated by shoddy legal systems that wrongfully criminalise them on trumped up charges. The case had been delayed and adjourned several times for no good reason. Nigerian Navy spokesman Commodore Adedotun Ayo-Vaughan refused to concede that the process was probably flawed.

Extract from "Hieronymus Bosch," *Baird Maritime*. ■





BACK TO THE FUTURE

THE NEED TO RE-CREATE THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN FLEET AUXILIARY

By Greg Swinden

The British Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) and the United States Military Sealift Command (MSC) are well known to most navies. Civilian mariners (many ex-RN or USN) operating grey hulled non-commissioned state-owned ships providing logistics support far and wide to their respective navies and allies. What is probably less well known is that the RAN once operated its own auxiliary logistics fleet – the Royal Australian Fleet Auxiliary Reserve (RAFA).



NLA / The NAVY Designed Blue Ensign for the RAFA (and Australian Defence Vessels).

POST WWI

The need for a Fleet Auxiliary post World War I was seen as essential to the RAN and the RAFA collier *Biloela* and oil fuel tanker *Kurumba* were brought into service in 1919-20; both ships had been ordered by the RAN, from British shipyards, during World War I but were not made available to the navy until after the war had concluded. Manned by civilian mariners the ships operated throughout Australian and New Guinea/Solomon Islands waters providing coal or fuel oil fuel to RAN ships. The RAN's light cruisers used mainly coal while the destroyers used fuel oil. In 1927 *Biloela* supported the cruiser HMAS ADELAIDE when she was deployed, at short notice, to the Solomon Islands (then a British protectorate) to assist the local administration deal with a perceived 'native uprising'. *Biloela* provided coal to the cruiser to enable her return to Australia and also substantial food and other stores to support the naval landing force ashore on the island of Malaita. *Biloela* was paid off in late 1927 but *Kurumba* remained active as an oiler until 1946.

Assisting these activities was the coal hulk *Hankow* based at Thursday Island and later Darwin. *Hankow* was an old steel hulled sailing ship with her masts and upper deck removed and manned by a small team of RAN Reserve personnel. She was regularly topped up with coal by a contracted vessel operated by Burns-Philp Pty Ltd. The value of the coal hulk was that RAN warships deploying north from Sydney could easily top up with coal at either Thursday Island/Darwin on their way north or south thus precluding the need to have a collier operate with the ships. The coal the hulk could be moved by tug to other locations as required. The use of civilian mariners was not without its problems as on at least one occasion the crew of *Biloela* went on 'strike' in the port of Darwin and naval personnel were required to unload the cargo. The use of larger ships (i.e., cruisers) to supply fuel to smaller ships (i.e., destroyers) did occur by the astern fuelling method (floating a steel wire rope across with the fuel hose connected and then, in very calm weather, literally towing the receiving vessel while transferring fuel).



HMAS AUSTRALIA (I) C6 in 1914.

WORLD WAR ONE

The RAFA came into being during World War I as a result of the deployment of the bulk of the RAN's ships to seize the colony of German New Guinea in September 1914. Ships were taken up from trade to become collier/stores ships (*Koolonga & Mallina*), tankers (*Esturia & Murex*), stores ship (*Aorangi*) submarine tender (*Upolu*) and a hospital ship (*Grantala*). Once the campaign was over the bulk of these vessels were returned to their owners to resume civil tasks but some were retained for naval use. This included the stores ships *Aorangi* that proceeded, via Cape Horn, in early 1915 to provide stores and ammunition to the cruisers HMA Ships MELBOURNE and SYDNEY then operating in the West Indies and then on to England to offload stores for the battlecruiser HMAS AUSTRALIA that had arrived there in February 1915. While *Aorangi* had a small RAN detachment on-board for administration and communications duties the bulk of her crew were merchant mariners. *Aorangi* was returned to her owners in mid-1915.

The tanker *Esturia* was also later used to support the Australian *River* class destroyers operating in South-East Asian waters during 1915-17. The destroyers were undertaking contraband patrols; preventing the movement of German weapons and munitions via the neutral Netherlands East Indies and the US controlled Philippines to India where there was potential for uprisings to occur. *Esturia* was operated by merchant mariners but with a small RAN detachment onboard to provide a logistics interface with the destroyer's command team. The tasks undertaken included arranging the resupply of fuel, stores, provisions, and the all-important payment of the destroyer's ships company. *Esturia* accompanied the destroyers when they sailed across the Indian Ocean, bound for the Mediterranean theatre in late 1917, but ceased her logistics support role when the destroyers transited the Suez Canal and could draw on RFA and shore-based support.

To supplement the RAN's operations in northern waters naval fuel oil tanks were built in Darwin but this was a glacially slow process that commenced in the mid 1920's and was still in progress when war broke out in 1939.

WORLD WAR TWO

World War II saw a significant increase in support vessels for the RAN. Crewing was a real 'mixed bag' with some vessels following the RAFA civilian crewing model with some RAN personnel on-board for communications duties or to operate weapons (i.e., Oerlikon guns or 4-inch guns) under the Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships (DEMS) system. Other vessels were taken up from trade but manned totally by RAN personnel while others saw merchant navy officers commissioned in the RAN Reserve (Seagoing) and kept in command of their vessels. In the case of the stores carrier HMAS MATAFELE her Melanesian crew were kept on and issued with naval uniforms. Below is a list of the main merchant ships operated by the RAN/ RAFA/ Commonwealth Salvage Board during World War II.

Merkur – Victualing Stores Issue Ship (mixed Merchant Navy and RAN ships company).

RFA Bishopdale – Tanker on loan from the British with mixed Merchant Navy and RAN ships company (of note most of the deck and engine room sailors were Indian).

Yunnan – Ammunition Ship (mixed Merchant Navy and RAN ships company)

Aase Maersk – 1941-42 Tanker (mixed Merchant Navy and RAN ships company)

Baralaba – stores carrier (mixed Merchant Navy and RAN ships company)

Charon – Victualing Stores Issue Ship (mixed Merchant Navy and RAN ships company)

Mamutu – Stores issue ship (mixed Merchant Navy and RAN ships company)

Mulcra – Armament stores (mixed Merchant Navy and RAN ships company)

Salvage tugs Caledonian Salvor, Cambrian Salvor, operated by the Commonwealth Salvage Board.

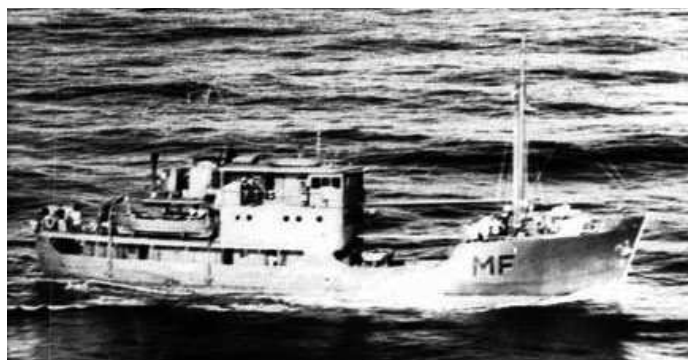
Tugs Reserve, Sprightly, Tancred – originally operated by the Commonwealth Salvage Board but later transferred to the RAN

HMAS PING WO – operated by the RAN as a Floating Workshop Ship

HMAS WHANG PU – operated by the RAN as a Mobile Repair Ship

HMAS POYANG – operated by the RAN as an Armament Stores Issue Ship

HMAS MATAFELE – Stores & Mail Carrier (RAN ships company but also had nine Melanesian sailors on-board who augmented the RAN personnel)



HMAS MATAFELE (MF) lost without trace 20 June 1944.

Also of note is that the United States Army operated the US Army Small Ships Section between 1942 to 1947 from Australian ports. As the name suggests these were all manner of small vessels ('taken up from trade') used to conduct logistics resupply tasks moving all manner of cargo from Australia to New Guinea and other South West Pacific locations. Many were crewed by men (although a few women did serve briefly) who were deemed 'unfit' for service in the Australian forces. This 'unfitness' comprised those deemed as too old or too young to serve in the Australian forces, or medically/mentally unfit, or had significant criminal records or had been 'kicked out' the Australian Forces for various reasons, or were not Australian citizens (i.e., New Zealanders, Canadians, Chinese, Danish, French, Filipino, Dutch and several other nationalities served in this organisation). The US Army Small Ships organisation wanted personnel to sail logistics vessels north to the war zone and really did not care about the age, fitness, or background of the crew; as long as they did their job.

POST WWII AND VIETNAM

Following the end of WWII, the RAN quickly began to reduce its number of support vessels 'taken up from trade' and in 1946 the dedicated RAFA oiler (*Kurumba*) was laid up and later sold. The provision of fuel at sea to RAN vessels became less often until the aircraft carriers SYDNEY and MELBOURNE came into service and had the ability to conduct abeam refueling of their escorts. In 1955 the tanker *Tide Austral* was laid down in Belfast to become a new RAFA tanker for the RAN but once completed there was a shortage of mariners to operate her and she was loaned to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. In 1962 she was commissioned as HMAS SUPPLY with an all-RAN crew. Also operating in the post-World War II period were a number of motor lighters being Motor Stores Lighters (MSL), Motor Water Lighter (MWL) and Motor Refrigeration Lighters (MRL) that provided logistics support to the RAN's isolated bases in Darwin and Papua New Guinea (especially HMAS TARANGAU at Manus Island). These vessels were RAN manned and operated well into the early 1970's.

The Vietnam War saw the use of merchant vessels to undertake logistics resupply to Australian forces involved in the conflict. Civil sealift was used but issues arose with various unions refusing to load ships and some merchant mariners also refusing to sail in these ships. This saw the supply vessels *Boonaroo* and *Jeparit* commissioned into the RAN and naval personnel placed on-board to operate the ships – but in both cases the ships officers (many of who held RAN Reserve commissions) and some crew (also reservists) were retained and mobilised for service.

Following the end of the Vietnam War the RAN followed a more sedate logistics model with the tanker SUPPLY (paid off 1985) and destroyer tender *Stalwart* (paid off 1990), the tanker WESTRALIA (in service 1989 – 2006), the tanker SUCCESS (in service 1986 – 2019), and the tanker SIRIUS (in service 2006 – 2021). The operation



Tanker RAFA ESTURIA 1917 possibly commencing stern refueling of an RAN River-class Destroyer. Probably flying the 1901 (adopted 1903) Australian Red Ensign.



In 1966 HMAS BOONAROO was chartered to carry supplies for the Australian forces engaged in the Vietnam War.

in East Timor during 1999-2000 saw the hire of a civilian high speed catamaran HMAS JERVIS BAY (in service 1999-2000) to augment the venerable landing ship heavy HMAS TOBRUK. All these vessels had RAN personnel as their ships company.

So why the history lesson?

Well since the early 2000's, the RAN has followed a more fluid model of crewing ships with civilian mariners (contractors or defence/ other government department civilians) as the crew operating vessels such as the training ship *Seahorse Horizon*, Submarine Rescue ships *Besant* and *Stoker*, the helicopter support ship *Sycamore* and border force vessels such as *Ocean Shield*. Recently the Pacific Step-Up vessel MV *Reliant* was procured to undertake 'good works' in the South West Pacific and again will be crewed by my civilian mariners. ADF personnel often serve on-board these vessels when the command or skills sets, they have are required. The Navy and CASG ('who know boats') have been heavily involved in the procurement of these vessels and the contracting of 'crews' to operate them. But Australia's nation-wide skills shortage includes qualified mariners and 'tradies' as well as fit and qualified personnel who can serve in the RAN. The Navy has always struggled to recruit enough personnel and the current skills shortage in the country will make this harder in the future.

OPPORTUNITY NOW

The opportunity exists now to take another step forward in operating 'logistics vessels' in the future and that is to re-form the Royal Australian Fleet Auxiliary (RAFA). These RAFA personnel can be used to operate not only the current fleet of non-grey hull support ships but also operate the current RAN tankers and future tankers, future stores ships, future submarine and destroyer tenders, future ammunition ships (both guided and non-guided weapons), hospital ships, etc. Most of these vessels need people with mariner or technical skills but not necessarily warfighting skills and thus the crew size can be reduced to a number that is commensurate with operating the ship – and not fighting the ship! A small number of uniformed specialists (i.e., communications personnel) may be required when and as required.

If the senior cook is 65 years old, has spent a few years in gaol, is 20 kilograms overweight, has 15 ear rings and missing two fingers and ten teeth does it really matter if they can run the galley effectively and produce high quality meals! By opening up the RAFA to personnel with the actual skills required (i.e., Chef, Administration, Electrician, Marine Technician, Deck Officer, etc) then much lower medical/dental and other entry standards can be applied. Additionally in order to widen the recruiting net the opportunity

to serve in the RAFA should be extended to non-Australian citizens. This should include those in Australia on various visa's pending citizenship and also to other nationalities who are seeking Australian citizenship (i.e., New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and other South West Pacific nations, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, etc) using a 'service brings citizenship' concept.

Another task for the RAFA could be to operate static fuel tankers (Similar to the old coal hulks of the 1920's). Why? Shore based fuel facilities have two weaknesses – one - they take a long time to build under the current Defence way of doing business and two - they are static so an enemy knows exactly where they are and thus can more easily target them. An old but still serviceable/safe tanker can be used as a floating fuel depot that allows warships to come alongside and refuel. They are cheaper to acquire than building a new fuel depot, can be moved to where are needed most (either towed or under own power) and require only a small number of personnel to operate the ship (and not fight the ship).

Additionally in the event of an enemy attack being detected the tanker can be towed/steamed away from a threat area – static fuel farms do not move and can be destroyed and take more time to rebuild. A floating fuel 'farm' can move and thus has more chance of surviving an enemy attack. If it is destroyed then another one can be bought on the open market.

AYE SAYERS

There will be many nay-sayers who will come up with every possible reason why the RAFA concept will not work - but if the British and US governments can make it work, then why can't Australia? ■



HMAS WESTRALIA (II) AO 195, 1989-2006.

FROM TEDIOUSLY SLOW AND RIDICULOUSLY EXPENSIVE TO CATASTROPHIC

A HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN NAVAL SHIPBUILDING, 1911-1948

By Dr Neil Baird

Since its establishment in 1911, the Royal Australian Navy has acquired several hundred warships, patrol boats, support vessels and submarines. Very generally, most of those that were purchased on a 'fully imported' basis have been acquired close to 'on time', 'on budget' and relatively 'free of faults', except when the RAN has decided to substantially modify them before they entered service. Paper 1 examines the period 1911-1948. Paper 2 examines the period 1949-2023.

The two articles (1911-1948 and 1949-2023), the first appearing in this issue of *The NAVY*, were taken in their entirety from Neil Baird's forthcoming book *Australia and the Sea: An Encyclopaedic Maritime History*. It is expected to be published in 2025. [1]

INTRODUCTION

Apart from during World War II, when there were many notable ship and boat building successes, thanks, largely, to competent civilian oversight of construction projects, most local naval shipbuilding and modification projects have varied from the tediously slow and ridiculously expensive to the catastrophic.

The reasons for such problems are well known, as can be seen below, but they seem to be almost impossible to avoid. Essentially, Australian naval officers are brave enough and appear to be competent ship handlers and shooters. A competent, aggressive captain can make even an inadequate ship effective but the opposite most definitely does not apply.

Apart from recommending a ship purchase, I have concluded that "naval officers should not be allowed anywhere near the acquisition, construction or outfitting process." They and their bureaucratic masters, the 'Canberra Factor' (through the *Canberra Industrial Complex*) which adds the completely unnecessary 'Canberra margin' to the price of every ship, are the main cause of the RAN's unacceptable cost increases and delays. [2] Australian governments' vessel acquisition processes, not solely of naval vessels, are dangerously and expensively inadequate. They must be dramatically and rapidly reformed.

This analysis is divided into two parts. The first considers the largely more successful first 38 years of the RAN's existence, including two world wars. The second, the more dismal failings after a brief period of "success" into the 1970s, covering the period 1949 onwards.

Those ships that performed notably in action or whose construction successes or, more commonly, failures, deserve praise or caused controversy are described below.

1911-1948

This paper is further divided into two distinct periods, 1911-1928 and 1929-1948.

1911-1928 AND WORLD WAR I

HMAS ADELAIDE I

The first ADELAIDE, a second class protected, six-inch, modified *Town-class* cruiser, commenced construction from a British supplied kit at Cockatoo Island in 1917 during WW I. She was completed in 1922, earning the nickname HMAS LONG DELAYED. Like her sister-ship HMAS BRISBANE I, and the four torpedo boat destroyers built at the same time, she was delivered very late and at about double the British price for identical ships. A subsequent enquiry blamed bureaucracy, dithering, financial constraints, and design changes. Nothing ever seems to change with naval shipbuilding. A lengthy hiatus in local naval ship acquisitions then ensued [3].

The ship was despatched from Sydney to Malaita in the then British Solomon Islands Protectorate in 1926 to suppress a native 'anti-head tax' uprising. Its mission was accomplished. The next year it visited Noumea in New Caledonia to assess its defences in case the colony might one day have to be taken from the French. It was a prescient move, given what transpired in 1941. In 1928 HMAS ADELAIDE returned to Malaita to suppress yet another native uprising, an RAN activity that continues to the present day. The cruiser returned to Noumea in 1940 to remove the collaborationist Vichy French government and support the establishment of General De Gaulle's Free French forces in New Caledonia.



HMAS ADELAIDE I.

HMAS AE 1

One of Australia's first two, British built by Vickers Armstrong's, *E-Class* submarines. She was mysteriously lost with all hands near Rabaul during the Australian capture of the capital of German New Guinea in September/October 1914, only seven months after her commissioning. Her wreck has recently been located and declared a war grave.

HMAS AE 2

After sinking several Turkish vessels, including a 'cruiser', in the Bosphorus and Sea of Marmara during the Gallipoli campaign in 1915, the AE 2, a sister ship to AE 1, was sunk and scuttled with her crew captured intact.

HMAS AUSTRALIA I

The British built heavy cruiser HMAS AUSTRALIA I escorted the surrendered German High Seas Fleet into Rosyth, Scotland in 1918.

HMAS AUSTRALIA II

Another heavy cruiser, was ordered in 1925 along with sister-ship HMAS CANBERRA I.

General Monash

On the advice of WWI hero and noted engineer, General Sir John Monash, AUSTRALIA II and CANBERRA I were built in Britain at an estimated 50% cost and time saving over local construction.

Monash was correct and it is sad that few subsequent Australian governments have heeded his advice re the perils of local construction of large, complex warships.

HMAS BRISBANE I

The first Brisbane, a *Town-class* second class protected cruiser, was ordered from HMA Naval Dockyard Cockatoo Island in 1912. Built from a British supplied kit, it was delivered during WWI. In 1918 it carried a Royal Marine force to Sevastopol in the Crimea to support White Russians against the Bolsheviks. In 1921 she 'showed the flag' in New Guinea and Solomon Islands waters. In 1925 she became the first RAN ship to visit Japan.

HMAS CANBERRA I

The Scottish built, *County-class* heavy cruiser She was a 10,000-ton, 8-inch cruiser laid down in 1925 at John Brown's shipyard on the Clyde and commissioned in 1928 as a sister ship to HMAS AUSTRALIA.

HMAS FANTOME

Was a British built, 1,000-ton, sloop which suppressed a native uprising at Malekula in the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) in 1918. She served from 1901 to 1924.

HMAS GAYUNDAH

Was a British built, 360 ton, 37 metre, 10.5 knot, flat iron, 8 inch 'gunboat' that, in 1911 arrested Dutch/Indonesian luggers fishing illegally for trepang (beche-de-mer) off the Kimberley coast of NW Western Australia. Purchased by the Queensland colonial government in 1884 from her builder Armstrong Whitworth Ltd, she was to serve Queensland until 1911 when she transferred to the newly formed RAN. Initially, she patrolled tropical northern Australia. In 1913 she was assigned to east coast waters until 1924.

HMAS MELBOURNE I

A 5,400-ton *Town-class* light cruiser of 139 metres LOA, eight 6-inch guns and a top speed of 25.7 knots, *Melbourne* was constructed by Cammell Laird in Britain over two years and delivered in 1913. Her

first actions were in 1914 in German New Guinea. Following those relatively easy successes, she escorted a troop convoy to Egypt before joining the Royal Navy's Grand Fleet operating from Scapa Flow. After the War, HMAS MELBOURNE I in 1920 cruised New Guinea waters to remind German settlers of who controlled the region. This led to a rapid influx of Australian miners, plantation owners and ship owners who contributed so much to the development of what is now Papua New Guinea. Several of the later settlers contributed significantly and very bravely as Coast Watchers in World War II. (See above).

HMAS MORESBY

Was the RAN's first serious hydrographic survey vessel. In 1925 she conducted a detailed survey of the Great Barrier Reef to determine its exact position.

HMAS SWAN I

A sloop, assisted White Russian forces in the Sea of Azov in 1919.

HMAS SYDNEY I

A succession of Australian warships have been named HMAS SYDNEY. HMAS SYDNEY I, a British built light cruiser is noted for sinking the German cruiser/commerce raider *Emden* at Cocos Island in 1915 while escorting a Middle East bound troop convoy. Later, in 1919, SYDNEY put landing parties ashore at Penang and Singapore to assist local authorities in suppressing riots.

HMAS TORRENS I

A torpedo boat destroyer completed at Cockatoo Island in 1916.

HMAS UNA

A converted yacht, in company with the French gunboat *Kersaint*, in 1916 undertook a punitive expedition against rebellious natives in Malekula in the New Hebrides, now Vanuatu and formerly a German colony.

HMAS WARREGO I

The torpedo boat destroyer HMAS WARREGO was completed from a kit of parts at Cockatoo Island in 1912. Promises as to local content were, as usual, largely not met. The Commonwealth then placed orders for three more torpedo boat destroyers and a second-class protected cruiser HMAS BRISBANE I to be built at Cockatoo Island which had become *HMA Naval Dockyard Cockatoo Island*.

All four ships were successfully completed during World War I and a fifth, the cruiser HMAS ADELAIDE I, was commenced.

Local content remained very low. In the event, each of the ships cost about double the British price and was invariably delivered very late.



HMAS WARREGO I (D70).

1929-1948 AND WORLD WAR 2

HMAS ADELAIDE I WAS decommissioned, re-commissioned and much modified several times, AND eventually scrapped in 1949.

HMA ADMIRAL'S BARGE

A delightful yarn reminiscing about a design and build project undertaken by renowned Brisbane boatbuilders, Norman R Wright and Sons, to construct an Admiral's Barge for the RAN, epitomises a large part of Australia's warship building problem. While it involved a very small and simple boat by RAN standards, Bill Wright's article whimsically defined the difficulties created by Canberra 'experts'. In this instance it was a Defence Department naval architect 'Mr Walker', who, while he had admittedly never designed a ship or boat, managed to continually interfere with the project and cause significant delays and cost increases [5].

As has been mentioned elsewhere, it is the multitude of 'Mr Walkers' who have compelled Australia's ship and boat builders to add a 'Canberra margin' of 80 to 100% to the normal commercial price for anything they build for government.

HMAS ALBATROSS

An ugly 6,000-ton seaplane tender, effectively Australia's first aircraft carrier, was completed at Cockatoo Island to an Admiralty design in 1928. It was soon 'swapped' with Britain for other vessels. It was the last warship completed in Australia for six years [6].

HMAS ARMIDALE I

Was a nearly new *Bathurst-class* corvette that was bombed and sunk by Japanese aircraft south-east of Timor while *en route* to Darwin following a re-supply and refugee repatriation mission to Australian commandos operating there in early 1942. Some 100 Australian sailors and Timorese refugees were killed. A young ordinary seaman, Teddy Sheean, was, eighty years later, finally awarded a Victoria Cross for his heroism in fighting the ship until it sank. The delay in his award was largely due to RAN bureaucratic obstruction.

HMAS ARUNTA I

Was the first of three British designed 2,293 tons *Tribal-class* destroyers constructed at Cockatoo Island, two of which were launched on time and under budget in 1942. The very fast (36+ knots) and well-armed vessels made significant contributions to the Allied effort in the Pacific War. ARUNTA sank a Japanese submarine off the Papuan coast between Port Moresby and Milne Bay in August 1942. Later she was heavily and successfully involved in the battles of Surigao Strait (Leyte Gulf) and Lingayan Gulf in the Philippines.

After a successful WWII including being present at the pivotal Battle of Australia – the Battle of the Coral Sea – and accompanying as Flag Ship to the late HM Queen Elizabeth during her 1954 tour of Australia – HMAS AUSTRALIA II (I84/D84/C84) decommissioned, 31 August 1954.

HMAS BALLARAT I

Was a 688-ton *Bathurst-class* corvette, built at Cockatoo Island, and launched during early 1942, that served effectively around New Guinea, particularly during the Battle of Milne Bay.

HMAS BATAAN I

Was Australia's third *Tribal-class* destroyer that followed her successful sisters ARUNTA I and WARRAMUNGA I when launched from Cockatoo Island near the end of WW II.

HMAS BATHURST I

Was the first of class of the very simple, effective, and economical *Bathurst-class* minesweeper/corvettes of which 50 were built at several shipyards during World War II. Even their steam main propulsion engines were manufactured locally.

HMAS BEACONSFIELD I

Was a *Bathurst-class* minesweeper/corvette.

HMAS BROOME I

Was a *Bathurst-class* corvette that served effectively around New Guinea, particularly during the Battle of Milne Bay.

HMAS CANBERRA I

Was sunk in 'Iron Bottom Sound' with the loss of 84 lives in the Battle of Savo Island against the IJN in the Solomon Islands in August 1942. Prior to her loss, she served widely in the Indo-Pacific region as a convoy escort and chasing German commerce raiders.

HMAHS CENTAUR

Was an RAN hospital ship that was notoriously sunk by a Japanese submarine, the *I-177*, in May 1943, off Moreton Island with a resulting heavy loss of life, 268 of 332 personnel aboard. CENTAUR was a nineteen-year-old, converted, Scottish built cargo motor passenger liner of 3,222 tons and capable of 12.5 knots that was requisitioned from Alfred Holt & Sons Ltd.

HMAS COLAC I

Was a *Bathurst-class* corvette that served effectively around New Guinea, particularly during the Battle of Milne Bay

HMAS DELORAINE I

Was another successful *Bathurst-class* corvette that, among other feats, rammed and sank a Japanese submarine in Darwin Harbour in 1942.

HMAS FREMANTLE I

A *Bathurst-class* corvette on which the author's father-in-law, Lieutenant R. J. Bain, RANVR, (1911-2002), served as first lieutenant from 1942 to 1946. The ship operated around New Guinea and the Philippines before clearing mines along the South China coast. Notably, she was attacked but not damaged by Japanese 'kamikaze' suicide boats in Hong Kong's Lamma Channel a week after the Japanese surrender in August 1945. All boats, despite their high speed, were destroyed by the good gunnery of the FREMANTLE's crew.



HMAS FREMANTLE I (J246).

HMAS GAYUNDAH

Operated as a sand barge in Brisbane until 1958.

HMAS HOBART I

Was a *Leander-class* six-inch light cruiser of 7,100 tons, 169 metres LOA and 32.5 knots that was commissioned as HMS APOLLO in 1936. Transferred (sold?) to the RAN and renamed in 1938, she served widely in the Pacific and Indian oceans and Red and Mediterranean seas during 1939 to 1941. She was bombed just before escaping from Singapore in January 1942 and, again, in the following month while in Tanjong Priok in Indonesia. In May, she participated in the Battle of the Coral Sea and then Guadalcanal in August. Torpedoed in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) in 1943, she suffered 13 fatalities. She served in Manus, Cebu and Tarakan before arriving in Tokyo Bay for the Japanese surrender in August 1945. She was paid off in 1947 and eventually scrapped, ironically by Mitsui in Japan, in 1962. A hard-working and useful ship that was purchased second-hand.

HMAS HUON I

Was a 74-metre torpedo boat destroyer completed at Cockatoo Island in 1916 from a British kit.

HMAS IPSWICH I and II

Again, and successively, a World War II *Bathurst-class* minesweeper/corvette (and a 1980s built *Fremantle-class* patrol boat).

HMAS KANGAROO

Was a World War II boom defence vessel used for laying and moving anti-submarine nets at the entrances to harbours. She was built successfully, as one of a pair, at Cockatoo Island in 1941.

HMAS KANIMBLA I

An armed merchant cruiser/LSI of World War II. Converted from a 19 knot TSMV, 10,000 gt passenger liner, she was launched in Scotland in 1936 for McIlwraith McEachern from whom she was requisitioned in 1939. She served reliably and well in many theatres, China, Japan, Pacific, New Guinea, Philippines and Borneo before being returned to her owner in 1950. During the war, she captured 22 ships, a floating dock and a train. She was involved in several major amphibious landings. The author vaguely remembers two childhood voyages on her in the 1950s.

HMAS KARANGI

Was a sister ship to HMAS KANGAROO above.

HMAS KUTTABUL

Was a converted Sydney Harbour ferry used as an accommodation barge at Garden Island in Sydney Harbour on 1 June 1942. She was torpedoed and sunk, with 27 fatalities, by a Japanese midget submarine, one of three that attacked the Harbour that night.

HMAS LABUAN.

Was a converted U.S. Navy LST that took part in several Antarctic expeditions, for which she was quite inappropriate, in the latter 1940s.

HMAS LAUNCESTON I and II.

HMAS LAUNCESTON I was a *Bathurst-class* minesweeper/corvette that served effectively during World War II.

HMAS MANOORA

An armed merchant cruiser/LSI of World War II. Converted from a requisitioned Adelaide Steamship passenger liner, she was a 1935 built TSMV capable of 15.7 knots. Her impressive war record was similar to that of HMAS KANIMBLA (Above) and she was returned to her owner in 1947.

HMAS MANOORA II

Suffered from the same provenance as her sister-ship *HMAS Kanimbla II* (Above) and her record was similar. The usual RAN procurement problems prevailed.

HMAHS MANUNDA

Was a hospital ship converted from an Adelaide Steamship coastal passenger liner. She gave sterling service in the Middle East and around New Guinea and beyond in World War II, particularly during the Battle of Milne Bay. She was damaged in the Japanese air raids on Darwin in 1942. A 9,115 GRT TSMV, she was launched in 1928 and was capable of 15 knots. Carrying about 30,000 casualties to safety, she also retrieved several thousand former POWs from Malaya and Borneo.

HMAS MARYBOROUGH I and II

Were the usual combination of a *Bathurst-class* minesweeper/corvette of World War II and a 1980s built *Fremantle-class* patrol boat.

HMAS MATAFELE

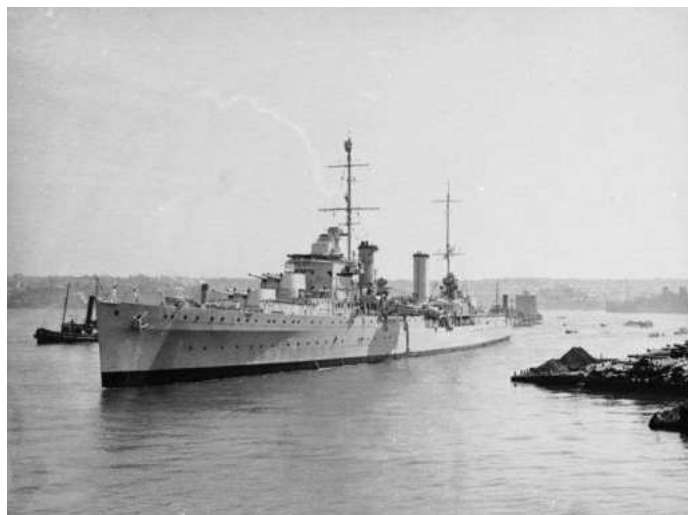
Was a small cargo ship requisitioned from Burns Philp Ltd and commissioned as an RAN supply ship. She was lost without trace along with her crew of 37 between Port Moresby and Milne Bay in 1944.

HMAS PARAMATTA I

Was the third of four British designed *Grimby-class* sloops launched at Cockatoo Island in 1937. All were built close to budget and close to time and served effectively in World War II.

HMAS PERTH I. PERTH I

A British built *Leander-class* light cruiser was overwhelmed and destroyed by a Japanese task force in the Battle of the Java Sea in early 1942 following a successful and useful period in the Mediterranean Sea. The American heavy cruiser USS HOUSTON and several other Allied ships were also sunk in the battle. Some 350 members of PERTH's crew went down with their ship. Of the 324 survivors, many more died in Japanese prison camps.



HMAS PERTH I (D29).

HMAS QUICKMATCH

Was a 1941 launched, British built *Q-Class* destroyer/frigate of 2,400 tons and 31 knots. She served in the RN in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans until 1952. After transferring to the RAN, she, among other actions, bombarded communist positions in Malaya's Johore state with sister-ship HMAS QUIBERON in 1956.

HMAS SHOALHAVEN

The Walkers Ltd built, modified *River/Bay Class* frigate proved useful in 1948 when it was despatched to Malaita in the Solomon Islands to 'show the flag' following further 'unrest' in that turbulent territory.

HMAS SHROPSHIRE

Was a sister ship to the *County-class* 8-inch cruiser HMAS CANBERRA that was sunk in 'Iron Bottom Sound' in the Solomon Islands following the Battle of Savo Island (See above). Scottish built in 1929, she served in the Atlantic and Indian oceans and Mediterranean and Red seas until gifted to the RAN by the British government. She then served very usefully and effectively in the western Pacific.

HMAS STIRLING

On the recommendation of Admiral Henderson RN, construction work began in 1911 at Woodman Point, adjoining present day Henderson, on a naval base. Work was abandoned when World War I broke out in 1914 and did not resume until 1942, during World War II. Eventually, in 1969, construction began on HMAS STIRLING, later known as Fleet Base West at Garden Island. The base was opened in 1978. No comment is required.

HMAS STUART I

Was a British Tyneside built destroyer of late World War I vintage purchased by the RAN. It gave great service as part of the 'scrap iron flotilla' of early World War II fame while operating in the Mediterranean Sea.



HMAS STUART (I) visiting Malta during service in the Mediterranean.

HMAS SWAN II

Was a British *Grimsby-class* sloop launched from Cockatoo Island in 1936. She was completed close to budget and time and went on to serve usefully in World War II.

HMAS SYDNEY II

A British built *Leander-class* light cruiser was, following sterling service in the Mediterranean Sea, sunk with all hands during a very close quarters action with the German auxiliary cruiser/commerce raider *HSK Kormoran* north of Geraldton on 19 November 1941. *Kormoran* was also sunk but most of her 397-man crew survived to become prisoners of war.

HMAS TOBRUK I

Was, along with its sister ship HMAS ANZAC, a much-modified British designed Battle-class destroyer that was ordered from Cockatoo Dockyard in 1944 but not delivered until 1950 due, it was claimed, to post war labour shortages.

HMAS VAMPIRE, HMAS VENDETTA, HMAS VOYAGER and HMAS WATERHEN along with HMAS STUART

Were British *V Class* and *W Class* destroyers of World War I vintage. They comprised the famous 'scrap iron flotilla' that served so effectively in the Mediterranean Sea during 1940 and 1941. They were elderly Tyneside built small but fast destroyers. WATERHEN was lost, with no casualties, to a German aerial attack while returning from a 'Tobruk Ferry' supply run in June 1941. She was the first Australian warship to be lost in World War II. VAMPIRE was sunk off Ceylon in April 1942 by Japanese carrier borne aircraft. Her captain and eight ratings were lost with her. VOYAGER was grounded and lost, with no casualties, on Timor while on a commando re-supply run.

HMAS VIGILANT

A 35 metre Customs patrol boat built at Cockatoo Island in 1938 for service in the Arafura Sea, she was acquired by the RAN in 1942. Based on Darwin she operated throughout the Arafura and Timor seas as far away as Dutch New Guinea and Timor. Described as the most attractive ship built at Cockatoo Island, she was commanded for part of 1942 by the author's father-in-law, Lieutenant R. J. Bain RANVR.

HMAS WARRAMUNGA I

Was a fast *Tribal-class* destroyer, an exact sister-ship to HMAS ARUNTA I, see above. Apart from extensive and useful wartime service, she was, in 1947, despatched to Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands to quell native 'unrest'.

HMAS WARREGO II

Was a British designed, Cockatoo Island built *Grimsby-class* sloop, launched in 1940, that served very effectively in World War II, despite its slowness.

HMAS WESTRALIA I

A Scottish built TSMV, a coastal passenger liner delivered to Huddart Parker Ltd in 1929, she was of 8,100 tons, 136 metres and could do 14 knots. Requisitioned by the RAN in 1939, she was equipped with seven 8-inch guns, a seaplane and other weaponry when commissioned in 1940. Serving thus, as an armed merchant cruiser she operated far and wide in the Indian and Pacific oceans before being converted to an LSI. As such, she completed the War before being returned to her owners in 1951



HMAS WESTRALIA (I) F95.

HMAS WHYALLA I

Delivered in 1941, she was the first *Bathurst-class* corvette built by BHP at Whyalla, South Australia.

HMAS YARRA I

The first of a trio of torpedo boat destroyers ordered from Britain in 1907. The others were PARRAMATTA and WARREGO. The first two were built in Britain and Warrego was constructed at Cockatoo Island from a British built kit. All three served in World War I and were eventually succeeded by several other ships given the same names.

HMAS YARRA II

The next HMAS YARRA II, one of four British designed *Grimsby-class* sloops, was launched from Cockatoo Island in 1935. She was to become famous in World War II both in the Mediterranean and Red seas until tragically sunk in the Battle of the Java Sea in early 1942.

PEACETIME BUILDING COMPROMISES WARTIME THINKING

Given that very chequered history, it is obvious that the RAN has had very serious problems with its peacetime warship acquisition processes. The Commonwealth government is very well aware of Navy's continuing flow of catastrophic decisions [12]. Successive governments, especially since World War II, have promised to improve its acquisition processes but they never have. So, what is to be done about it? ■

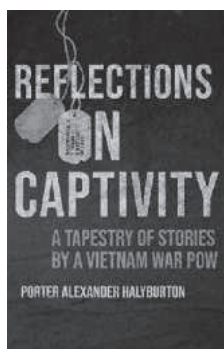
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www.wikipedia.com. A vast amount of useful and well-documented material on most of the ships mentioned can be obtained from Wikipedia.





REFLECTIONS ON CAPTIVITY

A Tapestry of Stories by
a Vietnam War POW

By Porter Alexander Halyburton

USNI (15 November, 2022)

ISBN-10: 682478254

ISBN-13: 9781682478257

Hardback: \$33.00

Porter Halyburton survived captivity as a Prisoner of War in North Vietnam from 1965 until 1973. His many awards include the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, three Bronze Stars, three Purple Hearts, and seven Air Medals. Porter is from Davidson, NC, a graduate of Davidson College (BA), University of Georgia (MA), and the Naval War College. He was awarded Honorary Doctorate degrees from the University of Rhode Island and Greensboro College. Retired as Commander, U.S. Navy in 1984 and as Professor of Strategy Emeritus from the Naval War College in Newport, RI, retired in 2006.

This is a moving book that seers into the mind of the reader. For those of us who have been trained in escape and evasion, interrogation techniques, and operated ashore the reality outweighs, the preparations. No matter how simulated. The fear of capture remains, which is what the captors exploit.

Porter, flying in Air Wing 7 from the aircraft carrier USS INDEPENDENCE (CVA 62), was shot down on October 17, 1965 – and spent over 7 years in prison. Think about it, that is two years longer than an Allied soldier captured at Dunkirk and released in May 1945.

In capture, the prisoners created their own virtues moving from a “First Line of Resistance” to protect mates, family, and country, to a “Second Line of Resistance” that:

reminded you that there was usually something that you could do in order to render their tactics useless in turning public opinion against the war, especially in America. Ultimately, torture and mistreatment did not serve them well.

Within the second line, was “our captors’ poor understanding of American culture, humour, sign language, and the very fabric of our society.” Additionally, there was homogeneity in that the Hanoi Hilton and the other prisons Porter was incarcerated with “were almost exclusively aviators of some kind, most had college educations, all were volunteers, most of us were very patriotic, and we had great reason to support our government, our democratic way of life, and the sources of prosperity and freedom.” The overwhelming virtue that emerged and connected, often in camera and isolated, was Leadership based on trust and common belief:

We were fortunate that we had capable leaders at every level of command – men who led by example, not just by the orders they issued or the advice they gave. For us, that was normal. That’s why our captors tried so hard to isolate us from our leaders and from one another. They brutalized and isolated our senior leadership, denied that we had ranks at all, and treated us as criminals. Without men like Robbie Risner, Jim Stockdale, Jerry Denton, Bob Purcell and others, we could have been lost.

A humbling book that is surprisingly uplifting. The *Stockdale Paradox* became a principle that emerged:

a technique to navigate challenging and ambiguous times by combining the ability to confront the brutal facts of your current reality, even as you maintain unwavering faith that you will prevail in the end, no matter how distant that is.

That focus in the future, and planning for it became a useful tool for navigating Covid – where the pernicious ambiguity of political-media driven post-first-wave lockdowns, devastated communities. The guards had simply changed uniform. An important read and contribution. Thank you, Porter.



NEWPORT MANUAL ON ARCTIC SECURITY

By Walter Berbrick, Gaëlle Rivard Piché,
and Michael Zimmerman

USNI (15 November 2022)

ISBN-10: 1682478297

ISBN-13: 9781682478295

Hardback: \$74.50

Walter Berbrick is as an associate professor in the War Gaming Department, founding director of the Arctic Studies Group, and co-lead scholar of the Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative. Berbrick is an International Affairs Fellow and member with the Council on Foreign Relations, holds a Doctorate from Northeastern University, and served 10 years in the U.S. Navy. Gaëlle Rivard Piché is a defence scientist for Defence Research and Development Canada. She holds a PhD in International Affairs from Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. Lieutenant Colonel Michael Zimmerman earned his BA in History from Ohio State and JD from the University of Cincinnati. Commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps in 2000, he served as the principle legal advisor for the Commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa, where he advised on the international law ramifications of activities throughout Europe, with a primary focus on the Arctic.

The Manual focuses first and foremost on traditional security issues, reflecting on the role maritime forces can play in maintaining peace and security in the Arctic. It goes beyond strictly national security and defence; seeking to address soft security issues when relevant and include “considerations for actors beyond states, including multinational forums, transnational networks, and especially Northern communities and Indigenous peoples”. Despite Treaty obligations, it has relevance to Antarctica – see also Paper 1, this issue. Great power rivalry now meets in both Polar Regions. Perhaps calling for an Antarctic Security addenda to the Treaty – and a book on the same?

The Authors do mention the *Joint Antarctic Naval Patrol* (PANC), and how it may be applied in the Arctic. However, there are fundamental differences between both regions, including the Treaty and existing claims – now in conflict?

Notwithstanding, reading Antarctic for Arctic: “As activity in the Antarctic increases, gaps in the Treaty framework and regional governance will become more apparent and could undermine regional peace and stability. Existing obligations may not to be enough as the strategic importance of the Antarctic continues to grow – potentially magnifying outstanding issues and disputes among states”.

A worthy and important read. Different conditions apply but a similar study of Antarctica is potentially overdue – with parallels to lessons not learned in the South China Sea. *The NAVY* is happy to review if one exists...



THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA ANNUAL MARITIME AFFAIRS ESSAY COMPETITION



TOPICS:

- 21st Century Naval Warfare
- Australian Naval History
- Australian Industrial and Merchant Navy Maritime Strategy
- Australian Strategic Alliances: AUKUS, QUAD, Five-Eyes, FPDA, ANZUS.

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

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

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

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Emailed to: editorthenavy@hotmail.com

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

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

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

Saturday 19 August 2023

Prize-winners announced in the January-March 2024 Issue of *The NAVY*.



MATCH: USS CANBERRA II (LCS 30) to be Commissioned at the Royal Australian Navy Fleet Base East, July 22.



DESPATCH: USS NIMITZ (CVN-68) To Decommission in 2026 (Image US Navy, MC3 Elliott Schaudt).



DESPATCH: USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN-69) To Decommission in 2027 (Image USNI).