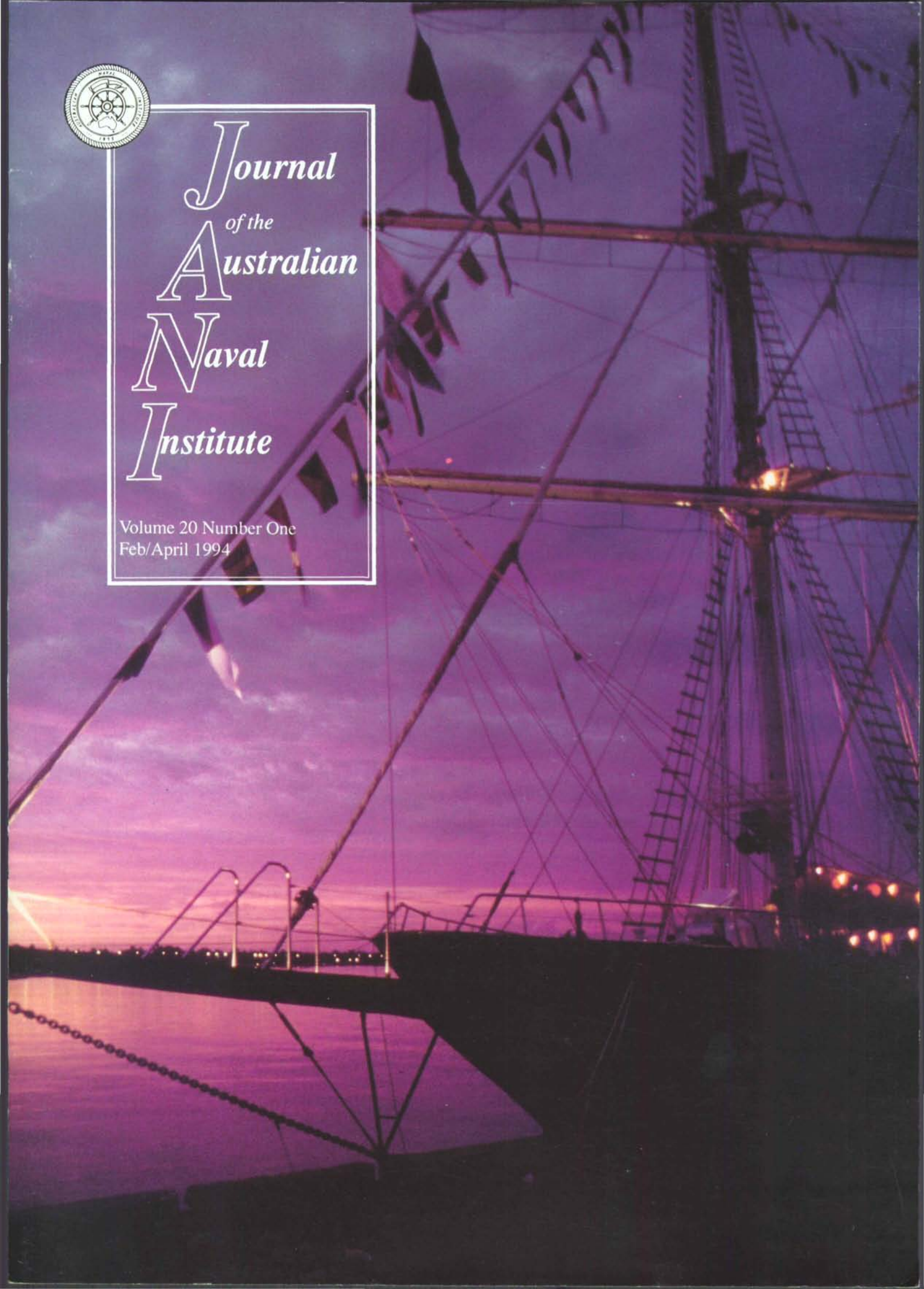

# Journal of the Australian Naval Institute

Volume 20 Number One
Feb/April 1994

# AUSTRALIAN NAVAL INSTITUTE INC

The Australian Naval Institute was formed and incorporated in the Australian Capital Territory in 1975. The main objects of the Institute are:

- To encourage and promote the advancement of knowledge related to the Navy and the maritime profession,
- to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas concerning subjects related to the Navy and the maritime profession, and
- to publish a journal.

The Institute is self-supporting and non-profit-making. All publications of the Institute will stress that the authors express their own views and opinions are not necessarily those of the Department of Defence, the Chief of Naval Staff or the Institute. The aim is to encourage discussion, dissemination of information, comment and opinion and the advancement of professional knowledge concerning naval and maritime matters.

The membership of the Institute is open to:

- *Regular Members*. Regular membership is open to members of the RAN or RANR and persons who having qualified for regular membership, subsequently leave the service.
- *Associate Members*. Associate membership is open to all other persons not qualified to be Regular Members, who profess an interest in the aims of the Institute.
- *Honorary Members*. Honorary membership is open to persons who have made a distinguished contribution to the Navy or the maritime profession, or by past service to the institute.


## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Australian Naval Institute is grateful for the assistance provided by the corporations listed below. They are demonstrating their support for the aim of the Institute by being members of the "Friends of the Australian Naval Institute" coterie.

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# Journal of the Australian Naval Institute

This Journal is published by the Australian Naval Institute, PO Box 80, Campbell, ACT.

The Journal is intended as a forum and the opinions expressed in it are those of the relevant contributor.

Nothing in this Journal should be read as the opinion or policy of the Chief of the Naval Staff, the Royal Australian Navy, the Commonwealth or the Institute itself.

The Institute welcomes contributions from members or non-members on any topic touching on the naval or maritime professions

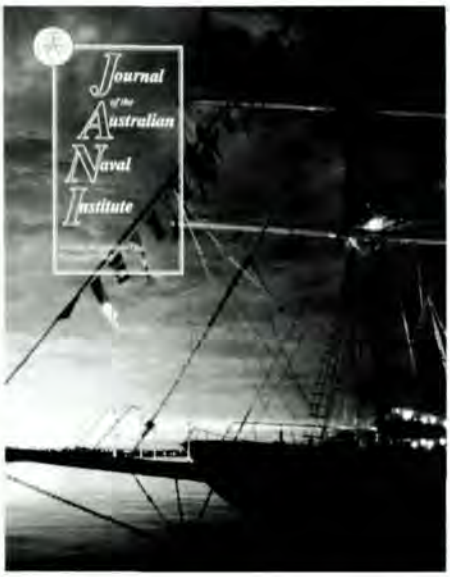
**Volume 20 Number 1 February/April 1994**

## SPECIAL FEATURE:

**Present and recent members of the RAN remember Vietnam in a particular and very special way: A Canberra researcher, Michael Fogarty, has put together a fascinating account of the time before that, back to the post-colonial era, when Australian ships visited Saigon for a different reason...** *Page 23*

## REGULARS






# *In this Issue*



***COVER PHOTOGRAPH:*** ***STS* Young Endeavour** ***at dusk. Picture by ABPH Craig Duff of Navy Public Information Branch***

# AGM REPORT: From the Vice President

We welcome Rear Admiral Chris Oxenbould as our new President and look forward to his regular column which will start in the May journal. Also, we welcome the other new Council members as well as the RNZN and RNZNVR members who were voted in as regular members at this AGM (a copy of the passed motion is set out below).

Another major AGM agenda item involved determining the way ahead for the Institute. Fortunately, as the financial report presented with this journal indicates, we are in a very healthy financial situation with a record profit being made last year. This is mainly due to the contributions of an ever widening group of 'Friends' of the Institute, with the Dawson Group becoming the newest member late last year. Financial sufficiency gives us the means to help fund necessary initiatives and address problems in the coming year. One of these problems is declining membership.

## Membership

Reduced membership of the ANI is a symptom of, not a cause of, the declining status of the Institute as a vehicle for the exchange of maritime ideas and ideals in this country. Whatever the reasons for this decline it must now be reversed and a clear way ahead for the Institute should be formulated.

I think we all agree on the need to boost membership significantly and, in my opinion, our objective should be a membership of 1400 which would ensure that we can financially self support a high quality journal. However, we should examine our motives for increasing membership and growth must occur for the right reasons. If we are convinced that the maritime debate is important for the continued security of our respective countries then we are probably half way there in terms of motivation. However, who should contribute to the debate and how should we, the ANI, be setting out to facilitate the debate?

## The Journal

The flagship for the ANI has long been the Journal which will undergo a 'face lift' this year in terms of presentation and content. It will do its part in spearheading a rise in status through enlightened comment and vigorous debate and build on the foundations set in place by our previous editor. The Journal will also serve as a vehicle for our Friends to broadcast their existence and wares to members, customers and the Maritime community generally. Certainly, a priority in 1994 is to get more junior officers and sailors to contribute to the journal, and I congratulate CPO Solomon on his fine contribution in this issue.

## Broadening our target population

We must also have something more to offer to the Maritime community than the journal, no matter how high a quality product it is. While not neglecting our naval focus, we could encourage participation by those members of the maritime community who we have not yet begun to tap by setting the agenda for the maritime debate. I believe we need to be provocative in the true sense of the word to stimulate the discussion. The list of possible contributors to the debate is endless and we can also invite comment from the Australian fishing industry through selective reprinting of articles from their professional journals.

Our target community could also be broadened to include the Coastwatch organisation and their parent, Customs. It could include port/harbour and marine authorities, marine pilots, Off-shore resource companies and the Australian flag merchant fleet as well as those foreign fleets who ply the Australian coast. Each has a need to influence or respond to the influence of the Industry of the sea.

## Friends

There is potential to encourage and recruit many more Friends of the ANI if we are able to present them with worthwhile reasons to be Friends, and I believe we can. One reason involves offering Friends - who could fall into several categories depending on the amount of their financial contribution - the opportunity to advertise in the Journal in either full or half page advertisements. We should aim for 20 or more Friends (we currently have 15) to support such ventures as seminars and symposiums on a more frequent basis. Among these ventures will be those resulting from our continuing, successful partnership with the RAN Maritime Studies Programme. This often involves bringing guest speakers to Australia from overseas to deliver lectures, orations and play key roles at seminars. Indeed, the visiting speaker program is well underway with more details to be given in the next issue of the journal.

## Your Council

It remains the aim of your Council to constantly seek out new blood and fresh ideas for the administration of the Institute. We will endeavour to have keen

and capable young folk eager to serve as councillors on a board that is able to give them the benefit of more mature, experienced naval personnel, be they permanent or reserve members of the Navy.

Those of us who serve the ANI form the nucleus for the way ahead and 1994 is measuring up to be a successful year for the Institute. There can be no denying that the task will be difficult, time consuming and ,at times, at odds with the demands of our current jobs, but there is no alternative if the ANI is to flourish for all the right reasons.

Terry Morgan

Note - The following amendment was proposed to the ANI Constitution at the 1994 ANI AGM:

2.(1) "Regular members" shall consist of members of the RAN or ANR, RNZN or RNZNVR and persons who, having qualified for membership, subsequently leave the service, all whom are members of the Institute in accordance with Rule 6.

The proposed amendment was: RNZN or RNZNVR

The motion was passed by a two thirds majority of members on 3rd March 1994 at Legacy House, Deakin ACT.

# FROM THE EDITOR

Observant readers will notice some minor changes in this issue. Text is now in 'Times Roman' and a hopefully sexier layout is in place now that we are using state of the art desktop publishing software. Other 'fine tuning' changes will undoubtedly occur as a result of Council getting together a few 'hired guns' in the editorial team who will make JANI better than ever.

With the Australian Prime Minister's visit to Vietnam in April the question of follow up ship visits - as distinct from formal defence cooperation - may arise as it did in the years following normalisation of relations with China. However, notions of what ship visits are and what they achieve are quite woolly and Mike Fogarty has prepared a trip down memory lane with a comprehensive article on Australian ship visits to Saigon between 1956 and 1963. The article will give an interesting insight into the benefits that ship visits can provide.

We also have some interesting contributions from our vigorous and enthusiastic New Zealand Chapter. The first is from Mr Hensley, the Minister for Defence, who addressed a recent NZ Chapter meeting giving a characteristically cogent address on the importance of the sea to New Zealand interests. The second contribution is from Mr Ian MacKay, Chairman of the NZ Maritime Safety Authority. Also, we must thank and farewell Commander Robbins as Convenor of the NZ Chapter for the last few years, and welcome Commander Coffey to the job.

An interesting article from Chief Petty Officer Solomon looks at competency based training in the RAN and suggests that it promotes mediocrity instead of excellence. He highlights the need to look carefully at changes affecting the Service and questions many underlying assumptions affecting our current approach to training. More Senior Sailors should go to print in JANI as there are lots of 'coal-face' problems 'out there' that need to be exposed to a wide audience. Chief Solomon's effort is an excellent example on how to go about this. So get to it seniors. You know I will look after you!

Other very interesting contributions come from Lieutenant Commanders Victor and Littlehales. The former writing on the implications for Australia of Indonesia closing straits to the north, and the latter discussing maritime implications of the policy of comprehensive engagement. Thanks go to the Director of the RAN Staff College, Captain Tim Lewis, for permission to publish their work.

As a break from exciting, topical issues I then make an offering on the dreary subject of cost effectiveness analysis in Defence. This is the second in a series of three 'occasional' articles on aspects of defence management. The first dealt with lessons for effective project management. As your new editor I consider it my prerogative to bore you with my own material!

I look forward to interesting times with the Journal. So, enjoy this read and don't forget to renew membership remembering that the best is still yet to come!

AL Hinge

FAX (06) 268 8440

# WASHINGTON NOTES

from Tom A Friedmann in the United States

October 1993 was not a good month for the foreign policy team of President Bill Clinton. Within a 48-hour period, Somali rebel leader Muhammad Farah Aidid made a public appearance in Mogadishu to announce the release of two prisoners, including an American pilot. Humiliated, the United States bowed to the inevitable and began negotiations with a man it had searched months for at the cost of the lives of 17 Army Rangers. Almost simultaneously, on the other side of the world, Haitian goons scared away a United States Navy LST bearing lightly armed American and Canadian peace- keeping troops. Clearly something had to be done. And the President did it.

On October 15, 1993, Les Aspin announced his "resignation" as Secretary of Defense, a job he three days earlier said was "more interesting and more challenging than (any) I could possibly have imagined" and one in which he did not "think there (was) any problem" that would cause him to resign. The President thought otherwise and promptly eased "the thinking man's defense czar" and the "best-prepared member" of his Cabinet out of office. The dismissal was a surprise, particularly when you consider that the President heads an unusually porous administration in a town noted for leaks.

Judging from press reports after the firing, one might wonder how Aspin lasted as long as he did.

Thomas L. Friedman of The New York Times noted that others on the national security "team" such as Secretary of State Warren Christopher gained breathing room by sacking his deputy while National Security Advisor Anthony Lake was persuaded by the President not to resign over Somalia and Haiti. That left Aspin, the man with the weakest personal links to the President. As is so often the case, there was probably no one event that lead to Aspin's downfall. However, one thing is certain: despite more than a decade's experience in one of the country's most important defense positions, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Aspin was unable to translate his previous expertise to competence at the Pentagon.

Exactly what made Aspin expendable? The list includes his handling of gays in the military; the failure to send armor to Somalia when asked; rambling presentations to Congress and the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the crossing of a picket line to take a vacation just as the administration was trying to repair its relations with labor after the North American Free Trade Agreement; unusual candidness about North Korea's nuclear potential; and his resistance to making further defense cuts as requested by the director of the budget.

And, finally, let's not forget how upset some were when he referred to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin L. Powell as "Colin" during a briefing instead of "General."

Aspin was dealt a tough hand and he lost.

Oklahoma Representative Dave McCurdy (Democrat), a member of the house Armed Services Committee and former chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, observed there was little Aspin could do about the gay issue. The problems in Somalia, Bosnia and Haiti existed in the last administration and President Bush's successor has been no more successful in solving them than his predecessor.

While not claiming to be a great seer, I never thought Aspin was the best choice for Defense Secretary.

After all, in a rare move, Aspin almost lost his chairmanship when the House Armed Services Committee revolted and threw him out of office for several days just to remind him not to get too close to the Reagan Administration. Had I been President Clinton, and had I wanted to name one of the two congressional armed service committee chairmen as defense secretary, I would have selected Senator Sam Nunn. But political differences keep the Senator and the President apart and Senator Nunn is undoubtedly much happier with his Senate chairmanship, which is a position of real power no matter which party holds the White House. While White House chief of staff Mack McClarty led the search for a replacement, he worked with Vice President Al Gore. And the ultimate winner, retired Admiral Bobby Ray (Bob) Inman, was reportedly at the top of the Vice President's list. (Keep an eye on Al Gore. He is turning into one of the — if not the — most influential vice presidents in American history.)

Admiral Inman will be the first professional military person to hold the position of secretary of defense since George C. Marshall. Among other positions he has held are director of Naval Intelligence, vice director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, director of the National Security Agency (the youngest on record) and deputy director of Central Intelligence under William Casey.

That experience led to his resignation from the Agency and the Navy and to a vow not to return to government. It would be easy to say that Inman succumbed to one of the fabled calls from a president. But this doesn't seem to be the case.

In selecting Inman, the President chose a self-styled "operator" for an administration that is pledged to doing things differently. In his acceptance speech, Inman, a registered independent, told the President that he had voted for George Bush despite reservations about how he had handled the economy. "I had to reach a level of comfort that we could work together," said Inman, "that I would be very comfortable in your role as Commander-in-Chief while I was secretary of defense".

While Inman apparently found that level, I wonder what Mr Clinton thought — after all, he is the President. I support a bi-partisan defense policy, but when was the last time we had a Democratic secretary of defense? You certainly didn't see one during the Reagan-Bush years! The fact that the Democratic Party had not held the White House in 12 years was one of the reasons the President's choices for defense secretary were limited both times he has had to make a choice. Couldn't he look for Democrats to hold the office while encouraging bi-partisanship on a broader, public and congressional level? Inman's appointment is also meant to help shore up the President's support with the uniformed services who still can't seem to forget that he avoided Vietnam service. In addition, he also is supposed to bring business expertise to the Pentagon procurement process.I have said it before and I'll say it again: NO democratically-elected chief of state should have to justify past experiences to the military. The electorate judges the qualifications of candidates and not the military and the electorate has spoken. As John F. Kennedy said, "Those...who regard my profession of political life with some disdain should remember that (such a life) made it possible for me to move from being an obscure lieutenant in the United States Navy to Commander in Chief in 14 years with very little technical competence." As for Inman's business experience, it seems to be a mixed bag. As the first officer to reach four-star rank from the intelligence community, he was out of the Pentagon procurement loop (this could be a plus or a minus). Since leaving the service, he served as a director of International Signal and Control. The former head of International Signal, James Guerin, is now serving a 15-year prison sentence for fraud and illegal military exports to South Africa. In a letter Inman sent to the judge as part of Guerin's pre-sentencing process, he referred to Guerin's "patriotism" in providing intelligence information after his trips overseas but could not attest to his overall integrity. Nevertheless, I am an old admirer-from-afar of Admiral Inman. Called "brilliant" and "honest" by those who know him, these are traits that go a long way anywhere and particularly so in Washington. If he is as "decisive" as reported, he will be able to make important strides in bringing American foreign and defense policies the stability and direction they so badly need.

[It is now a matter of record that ADM Inman subsequently declined to face confirmation hearings and the new US Secretary of Defense came from the Pentagon itself. — *Ed.*]

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# MARITIME POWER — Its importance to New Zealand

**A SPEECH GIVEN TO THE NEW ZEALAND CHAPTER AUSTRALIAN NAVAL INSTITUTE**

**By Gerald Hensley, Secretary of Defence, New Zealand.**

When Nelson made his famous signal on the eve of Trafalgar, not everyone received it with the reverence it later acquired. Admiral Collingwood, on *Royal Sovereign*, grumbled: "I wish to God Nelson would stop sending us those damn fool signals. We all know perfectly well what we have to do today."

When inviting me to speak to you, Commander Robbins carefully avoided telling me what to do today, but like Lord Collingwood I hope I know my duty. I want to think aloud a little about the increasing importance of maritime power to New Zealand's defence.

In doing so, I am honoured by your trusting belief that I, who in the course of my working life have spent a total of one week aboard naval vessels, will have something useful, or at least interesting, to say to this group.

The fact is, a former diplomat talking about naval matters is like those equally rare occasions when an admiral rides a horse on parade. It has been done, and done with decorum, but there is a risk that those watching will laugh.

So I will try to stick as closely as possible to my major professional concern — defence planning.

In thinking about this, I often meet helpful people at parties who try to simplify my task by pointing out that New Zealand faces no threat and therefore need waste no money on defence. "If New Zealand needs a navy at all," they say, "it should only be patrol vessels for fisheries protection."

To such armchair strategists, I can only express my interest in their firm reliance on the continued dominance of the US Navy as the underpinning for such views — a point which often strikes them as unwelcome.

For the fact is that New Zealand depends on maritime power not by argument or government policy, but by geography. If you draw a radius of 10,000 kilometres anchored on Wellington — a whole hemisphere — apart from Australia, it will barely brush the coasts of East Asia and the Americas. The rest for all practical purposes is water.

Whoever controls that water, controls our economy and our destiny. It is as bald as that. New Zealanders can indulge the eccentricity of forgetting this fundamental condition of our existence because for all but a few months of our history as a nation it has been controlled by friendly powers.

For a century the Pacific was controlled by the Royal Navy. Under its barely-perceived shelter we grew up as a secure and flourishing state. We are the stepchild of the navy.

For ten months in 1942 that comfortable condition was reversed. After Pearl Harbor the command of the Pacific was seized by a naval power hostile to our interests, and I am old enough to remember how unpleasant our situation was.

When the US Navy took control after the Coral Sea and Midway, the Japanese army found itself doomed to a long retreat. For no army can threaten New Zealand or most other East Asian nations without control of the sea. But we slipped from the protection of the Royal Navy to that of the US with so brief, if nasty, an interruption, we have become so accustomed to the control of the Pacific being in friendly hands, that we may be in danger of assuming it to be a law of nature. Something that we can cheerfully take for granted and turn our attention to matters like fisheries protection. But if the American naval presence in the Pacific were to fade or be challenged by another naval power, we would quickly feel the consequences in New Zealand.

Our geographical situation explains why for all of this century we have instinctively pursued an indirect strategy. We have never faced any sustained threat of invasion. But we have major strategic and economic interests lying well beyond our shores. We cannot defend these by our own efforts. We must of necessity support our interests by collaborating with those countries which share them. This thinking guided our gift of HMS *New Zealand* in 1908, as it has the exercises with Malaysia and Singapore which are going on this week.

The most recent expression of this indirect strategy is set out in the 1991 White Paper. It is termed, perhaps not very originally, 'Self-Reliance in Partnership'.

The White Paper draws a distinction between New Zealand's security needs and its security interests. Because of our geographical remoteness, our security needs are not large. Without a credible threat of attack, we need to be able to deter or repel low-level threats like resource poaching, terrorism, demonstrations of force and the like. My eager dinner party advisers are right; only a small force is needed to deal with these risks.

But for historical and trade reasons, our security interests are very wide — wider perhaps than for any other country of our size. Nearly 30% of our GDP comes from external trade, compared with 17% for Australia and only 9% for Japan. Four of our five largest markets are in the Northern Hemisphere, at very great distances from our shores. We depend very heavily on the stability and security of the regions through which our trade passes.

The problem for all New Zealand planners is how to support these wide-ranging security interests. We clearly cannot do so on our own. The solution we have followed for all of this century has been to join with others who share one or more of our security interests. The various forms of collective security, from working with allies to playing our part as good international citizens in UN peacekeeping, have been seen by successive generations of New Zealanders as inevitable for a small country with large interests.

This still leaves us with a sizeable difficulty: how do you structure your forces to cover such far-flung interests? The traditional procedure of looking at threats and calculating how best to counter them does not work for us. There is no threat to New Zealand, and it is difficult to imagine any in the future which was not a general threat to the security of the Pacific.

Nor is it very profitable to range around the region trying to guess where the next trouble is going to be, and what shape it is likely to take. In my experience this is likely to be about as accurate as betting the defence budget on a series of well-recommended horses. Getting your guesses wrong can be very expensive for a small country.

Instead we have opted for a task-based structure. That is to say, building our forces around the tasks they must carry out, and in particular those which will support and advance our external interests. For the indirect strategy means that our armed forces are as much part of our foreign policy as they are the means of self-defence.

Eight main tasks are listed in the White Paper, ranging from protecting our territorial integrity to ceremonial and other aid to the civil power. But the most important of them, in terms of our external interests, is the requirement to contribute to regional security.

Our interests are global, but our security and increasingly our economic concerns are concentrated in the Asia/Pacific region. Now this region has one feature of key importance to strategists. It is wet. Across it, east to west, goes the largest flow of trade in the world, carried in ships. Half of New Zealand's own trade goes north to Asian ports. All the prospering states of East Asia — even China — are coastal economies, with a growing interest in maritime security .

So maritime issues are prominent in the region's concerns. Professor Desmond Ball calculates that of two dozen conflict points in the region, about a third involve disputes over islands, continental shelf claims and EEZ boundaries. Many of the emerging security worries are also maritime: piracy, oil spills, safety of sea lines of communication, illegal fishing and the exploitation of other offshore resources.

The consequences show up increasingly in the force structures of the region. The ASEAN countries have been engaged in re-balancing their forces away from internal security towards a more conventional structure. The most striking feature, though, is the extent to which sea-air capabilities are being enhanced. This is not so much an arms race as a recognition of future uncertainties and the vulnerability of these countries to maritime threats. But in the only region of the world where arms budgets are rising not falling, significant quantities of maritime surveillance systems, multi-role fighter aircraft with maritime attack capabilities, modern surface combattants, submarines, anti-ship missiles and mine warfare capabilities are being acquired.

Further north, even Korea and Japan are devoting two-thirds of their still-rising defence budgets to their air forces and navies. And as the pre-eminent power in the region, the United States has begun to shift from a Cold War strategy of large static bases to one of mobility. This means a greater reliance on naval power, and therefore on regional exercising, port calls and a growing number of bilateral arrangements — "places, not bases".

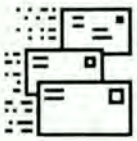
The continuing US presence, and the lack of any immediate threats, give the countries of our region the time to work out and put together a new frame-

work for regional security. New Zealand will want to have a voice in this, and will be expected to make an appropriate contribution.

That contribution does not have to be large. It has to be credible. If we wish to play our part in the region's affairs, one important means will be the maintenance of a small but highly-professional defence force. One that is appropriate to our size but which can do what we claim for it. And then we have to demonstrate our capabilities by maintaining a reasonably visible presence in the region, and by exercises such as the Starfish and Vanguard series now finishing in the South China Sea.

These requirements point to an increasing maritime dimension to our whole force structure. We have to be able to patrol and if necessary control the approaches to New Zealand and the South Pacific countries with which we are linked. We need to hold our small ground forces at a reasonably high state of readiness for deployment over long distances, with ships and aircraft having the necessary endurance and ability to defend themselves. Since we cannot expect that anyone will stop by to pick us up, we need a heavy lift capability to shift our troops — hence the high priority the defence planners give to the acquisition of a military sealift ship.

All three arms of the defence force need to be equipped to operate with confidence in a maritime environment. We might therefore as a nation begin to think harder than the cocktail-party experts about the watery nature of our security. The signals for the future are fluttering clearly in East Asia. Can we be as confident as Admiral Collingwood that we know what we have to do?



# Letter to the Editor

Letter to the editor

**OBITUARY: THE AUSTRALIAN NAVAL INSTITUTE!**

Alas, the Australian Naval Institute is no more. It has ceased to be' and you didn't even know it was sick!

How do you remember it, and how could this happen you ask? After all, the Institute seemed healthy enough in 1993. New RAN members did come in, but this was mainly the result of the efforts of a single person. As a member did you recruit any new members, or even discuss the existence and aims of the Institute with any non member?

The Institute publishes a journal every quarter you retort. The journal was generally interesting, at times a bit turgid, but overall OK. Did you contribute any articles to make the journal better; did you spend a small amount of your time to compose a small piece on some aspect of naval life, on some aspect of navy's future, or on some aspect of the navy's place in a changing world?

Seminars; the Naval Institute was 'into' seminars you say; some pretty good ones you believe. But, did you go? Did you respond to any call for papers? Did you assist in any organisational aspect?

Oh well, you say, the death of the ANI really was inevitable given the number of different avenues that now exist to raise issues in the 'system'. The ANI was a bit of a dinosaur really. It served its purpose and then ran out of relevance. However, as a member did you ever provide any thoughts to the Council for bringing the Institute forward; for repositioning it within the emerging and competing avenues of maritime interest; for making the Institute more relevant to younger officers and Senior and Junior Sailors? Did you ever take more than a passing interest in the development of the institute or did your involvement stop with paying your dues and receiving the Journal.

Some might say that the Council is really to blame: It should have managed the affairs of the institute better; it should have seen the end coming and done something about it. But did you ever serve in the Council? Did you ever attend and participate in an AGM or were you one of the majority that stayed away so that it was sometimes not even possible to achieve a quorum? Did you ever accept any responsibility for the running or the future of your institute....your professional body?

The Australian Naval Institute is no more; it died of apathy and you didn't even know it was sick. RIP

—*Mr Spock* (Former LCDR, RAN)

# COMPETENCY BASED TRAINING ASSESSMENT IN THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY — A LOSS OF EXCELLENCE?

BY

CPOETS S/M. PHILIP SOLOMON

This paper will address the implementation of CBT in the RAN with specific regards to assessment. It will argue that the competent/not competent form of assessment adapted by the RAN, modelled on the TAFE system, is unsuitable for the Navy's needs and overall mission statement. It will show that this system inhibits the drive for excellence, is teacher-centred as opposed to student-centred, and results in minimising trainee motivation. It proposes the argument that the Navy should adopt a graded scale of competence and presents a model to achieve this aim.

## BACKGROUND

The implementation of the Technical Training Plan '92 in July of this year saw the introduction of Competency Based Training (CBT) into the Naval training system. The model used was that outlined by the National Training Board and more specifically, that of the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research, on which TAFE also models its system.

The method of assessment outlined in this strategy is that trainees are assessed *as to what* they can do at the end of the training program, and whether they are competent.

The assessment applied to the trainees can be couched in various terms such as Pass/Fail, Pass/Incomplete, or Competent/Not Competent. Whatever the terminology adopted, the end product is a standard being set as the minimum acceptable level at which a person can be regarded as competent. This method of assessment is commonly referred to as criterion-referenced or, as is now becoming more common, standards-based assessment. (Low & Withers, 1990, p.8)

This form of assessment means that trainees need to reach a certain minimum standard to pass the competency being tested, and the method of assessment is binary, with no varying levels of attainment being recognised. Herein lie the shortcomings of the system.

## WHERE WE HAVE GONE WRONG?

By adopting this model of assessment, the Navy has discarded the policy of "attainment of excellence" from its trainees. This system is not based on the true meaning of criterion-referenced assessment as first proposed by Glaser in 1963 where he argues: "Underlying the concept of achievement measurement is the continuum of knowledge acquisition ranging from no proficiency at all to perfect performance. An individual's achievement level falls at some point on this continuum as indicated by the behaviour he displays during testing...The standard against which a student's performance is compared when measured in a criterion referenced way is the behaviour which defines each point on the achievement continuum." (McCurry,1992,p.229)

This correct description of criterion-referenced assessment has been changed over the years to fit the earlier form of competency assessment, namely task-referencing, which listed precisely defined behavioural objectives which Cole, (1990) describes as: a largely unconnected pool or list of objectives, each linked to test items whereas the Glaser and Nitko (1971) proposal was for tests linked to a scale of increasing competence or achievement corresponding to an instructional path building toward increasingly advanced forms of learning. (in McCurry, 1992, p.230)

If this is the case we should ask ourselves why we are not assessing to this standard and recognizing that trainees do achieve varying levels of competence in any given task. We should be assessing and grading our trainees on their level of competence and not just on the basis of achieving a minimum standard of competence.

McCurry reminds us that: "Criterion-referencing recognises that candidates have varying degrees of competence within an area of occupational activity and sets out to construct and make explicit a 'scale

of increasing competence' in terms of which candidates can be assessed and minimum standards can be specified." (1992, p.230)

## PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

I would argue that the current form of assessment encourages mediocrity, disregards the pursuit-of excellence, and minimises the importance of trainee motivation in the acquisition of competence.

The Navy, as in any professional organisation, aims to achieve excellence in every field, whether it be in terms of operations, productivity, training or standards set by personnel and the training provided to them. The Naval Training Command has even gone as far as to document these aspirations in it's Strategic Plan 19~3/97 where it states that it aims at:

- Sharing responsibility/recognition of achievements and accountability for decisions
- Motivating the Navy's trainers to achieve excellence
- Establish lead schools as centres of excellence in their areas of training
- Recognition and reward of good performance

These aims are admirable and can not be faulted, so why are we not implementing a system that will achieve these aims? The system adopted by the Navy does not recognise achievement but categorises all trainees who achieve a pass in the stated competencies as being at the same level, with no means of identifying superior performers, or for that matter, inferior performers. The Vice-Chancellor of Melbourne University, Professor David Penington argues that CBT is a: "...behavioural nightmare of centrally controlled minimum standards, linked to industrial agreements and renumerations. It is the very antithesis of flexibility, excellence, quality and innovation.(in Juddery,1993,p.6)

If this is the case, why has the Navy followed down this track? Could we not look at what we really want and follow our own **destiny** without referring to a system that does not reflect the **aspirations of** our organisation?

By not encouraging our trainees to strive for excellence we are doing ourselves and the trainees a disservice. We do not know who our exceptional performers are and we also do not know where our weaknesses are either. CSM W.E. Woodall, the US Army's senior training NCO reminds us of a very important fact that seems to have been overlooked in the implementation of the new method of assessing our trainees. He states that: "We need to train as if we were going to war, and we don't do that a lot of times. We really need to train like we were going to fight a war tomorrow... We need to know which ones are weak in what areas when it comes to training... as the army gets smaller, our training has to get better...as we get smarter, we keep quality soldiers in the army, then our training standards have to rise. If you get high quality soldiers, then you have to train at higher levels." (1991,p.5)

By not being able to identify our superior/inferior performers we will not be able to assess our strengths and, more importantly, our weaknesses.

Many proponents of CBT will now be saying that we can't change the way assessment is done because we have to conform to the guidelines laid down by the National Training Board and follow the model currently employed by TAFE to keep our accreditation. I ask the question, why? If a system is not suitable why can we not change it, adapt it, or improve it and then demonstrate it to the appropriate authority, complete with documentation and valid, well researched argument? Can we not lead change instead of being led by it?

Research shows that the current system is not without fault and many people within the system recognise this. The recent progress made at the National Assessment Research Forum in April 1993 agreed that additional discussion was needed in: recognising expertise and excellence and devising an appropriate recognition and record keeping system (Training Torque,1993,p.9)

Even the Chief Executive of the National Training Board, Mr. Alan Godfrey, recognises some shortcomings in the CBT system and admits that: "The board has had to explicitly make some tradeoffs between quality of initial standards and speed of endorsement. Many standards lack the full expression of competency...there were teething problems... it's better to have some standards of reasonable quality and have people implement them to find out what is wrong and refine them." (Cant,1993,p.52)

## MOTIVATION TO ACHIEVE

One of the critical factors missing from the current system is the motivation required by trainees to want to achieve excellence. Comments noted whilst talking to trainees in the Technical Training Centre give rise for concern. Statements such as:

"Why bother to work too hard, as long as I know I can get a pass I'll be happy..." "Where's the incentive to try when you know that you will only achieve a pass like your mate who didn't even study or nothing..." "I am really good at this stuff but they still only give me a pass or fail..." (Solomon, field notes,1993)

These and similar statements should sound a warning bell that all is not right with our training system. Where are the feelings of achievement and satisfaction in ones performance? Where is the motivation of healthy competition and pursuit of excellence? Perce Butterworth in his research in CBT and the culture it generates asks a similar question when he queries: "Why is there no mention of competition...national pride...initiative, excellence, risk-taking, exploration, pride in workmanship, innovation, best quality practices?" (1993,p.18)

Many of our trainees are asking the same question. Why aren't we listening?

Motivation is one of the strongest factors affecting adult learning and that's what our trainees are — adults! Training must incorporate motivational factors to encourage the trainee to want to take part in the learning. They must see a reason to become involved and to be challenged. By not employing some form of recognition for their efforts and attainments we remove a vital psychological component from the learning process. These items seem to be missing in the way assessment in CBT has been implemented.

The whole affective domain of competence such as motivation, values, and pride, is noticeable by it's absence from the assessment criteria. Russell, in his paper, 'Competence: a State of Mind or a Set of Skills' notes that: "Characteristics such as integrity, creativity and initiative and pride in one's work which are important to career success... tend to be ignored as too hard to express by curriculum writers using a competency format...motivation theory also emphasises the relationship between a learner's sense of personal efficacy (self worth and ability) and their goal setting methods and habits." (1993,p.343)

Peak gives us a very simple definition of motivation when he notes that, "Motivation accounted for the difference in performance between two students of equal academic ability." (1983,p.2)

Russell adds that: "This rather broad-brush description acquires a new currency in the competency debate because it highlights the fundamental flaw in CBT's assumption that the learner is a constant, rather than a variable, in the process-product equation. (1993,p.344)

By not providing the means for trainees to become motivated towards excellence we are reducing them to a constant, and when that constant is regarded as a minimum standard, then we can only expect what we ask for a minimum standard. Minnaert & Janssen provide us with a timely warning when they observe that: "Educational researchers who neglect the existence of (complex) motivational relationships lose sight of the science of learning and instruction and of educational practice. (1992,p.191) If we accept the truths of this research then the question must be asked, why are we doing it this way?

## TEACHER VERSUS STUDENT CENTRED LEARNING

By adopting a model that relies totally on the process/product method of training we can choose to ignore the other aspects of learning such as the mediators that come between the process and the end product. Cognitive psychologists have spent many years identifying the ways in which a human being learns. Items such as motivation, meaningfulness, values, and the want/need to learn were found to be crucial to the learning outcome. With the adoption of CBT these items and more were found to be too difficult to write as observable competencies and were therefore left out of the equation. This in effect transported the way in which training is now being conducted back to the behavioural theories of the fifties and sixties.

Why was this allowed to happen? One of the main reasons I would argue was the simplicity of the system. To assess a trainee's competence was reduced to him/her being able to show that they could do it to a minimum acceptable standard. This made the whole method of assessment a simple matter of allowing the trainees to show that they can do it, either a tick in the box or a cross. The aspects of the job that were desirable such as pride in workmanship, ethics and other unobservable, but important traits were given only a token mention such as "in a workmanlike manner", or left out altogether! Knowles observed these same aspects in his report on competency based education where: "Task analysis models tend to be very mechanical. they contain only those competencies that can be observed and for many kinds of performance nonobservable competencies are perhaps the most important...a new trend in the development of competency models is to make sure to include affective competencies — the non-visible performance competencies. (1992,p.27)

To do this will put an added burden on the writers of these competencies and means of assessment. By sticking with the system as it is, we remove the onus from teachers and the organisation to have to re-define the way in which we currently assess our trainees. Simplifying the overall assessment process means that the methods used can be made more teacher-centred at the expense of the quality and aspirations of our trainees.

Many opponents of this form of training and assessment are present in the fields of higher education

but as Professor Pennington recently remarked, "The competency juggernaut still lumbers on!"

The Navy needs to examine more closely the method of training and assessing it's trainees and approach it from the students perspective rather than from the organisation's adopted training methodology. What can we therefore do to improve the training methods and means of assessment?

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

The most vital aspect of assessment that needs to be addressed is the re-introduction of grades of assessment. A trainee must have something to strive for which will provide some form of intrinsic motivation to achieve. Many will say that it is impossible to have grades in CBT but if we remember Glaser's original theory of criterion-referenced assessment we can see that it is not.

How can we design a system of assessment that will separate a superior performer from a good performer right through to a poor performer? I suggest that we already have one. A visit to any instructor study or workplace supervisor's office as a casual observer will show that this assessment of trainees already exists. The conversation could possibly go something like this: "I gave Bloggs a pass as competent in the last exercise but he really is borderline, you have to watch him all the time...Smith passed as well, she can handle the job pretty well by herself... Jones on the other hand didn't have any problems at all, you'd think he has been doing it all his life. He's so good at it that I got him to keep an eye on Brown and show him where he is going wrong... Brown is hopeless,I don't think he'll ever get it right!"

As we can deduce from this imaginary(?) conversation, judgement as to a person's proficiency is being made all of the time regardless of the binary assessment method used in CBT. An observant assessment writer would only have to ask a few pertinent questions such as, "why is he a superior performer, what can't he do, or why do you feel that she can do it unsupervised?" From these questions a suitable scale of standards can be formulated to assess other trainees, which are specific to that particular competency and not a broad sweeping statement that is currently being used to assess competence.

Various forms of grading can be adapted but a system that uses naval Duty Task Inventory descriptions of level and depth of involvement would be desirable. For example: Not Competent, Competent Under Supervision, Competent and, Competent to Supervise

By utilising a scale such as this we can determine to a finer degree a trainee's capabilities and recognise where some may need more work or training. It will provide a means of motivating trainees to strive for excellence and to try and better their own past performances. Symonds & Chase showed in their research that competing against oneself or others assists the motivational factors. The remark that:"Competition with one's own past record, competition with other persons and competition as a member of a group with other groups are valuable types of motivation." (1992,p.288)

Other researchers will argue that by having a reward system such as gradings produce only extrinsic motivation in the trainee, but research by Ames refutes this argument whereas: "Students may perceive grades as controlling, this need not be the case when grades are accompanied by the opportunity for improvement. Similarly, although rewards have the potential to increase extrinsic motivation,...they can be perceived as intrinsic when they provide information about work quality and are tied to progress or other inherent aspects of the task." (1992,p.265)

A system of grades needs to be established to recognise attainment in training but it should not be limited to this form of assessment only. A competency should also be broken down to include grade descriptors such as that used in the Western Australian educational system which has adopted the standards referenced assessment as a replacement for the older, controversial, norm-referenced assessment method. (Low & Withers, 1990,p.32)

This system is very much like the Georgia Teacher Performance Assessment Instrument (TPAI) developed by Capie et.al. in the United States in 1979 which uses a three tiered measurement system with competencies as the most general statement of performance and indicators as more specific aspects of performance that defined the competencies and allowed performance to be assessed.

Assessment decisions were made at a level of precision that was even finer than an indicator. Each indicator was specified in terms of descriptors that provided a focus for assessment,..yes/no decisions on descriptors are aggregated to arrive at indicator scores, and these in turn are aggregated to arrive at competency scores. (Tobin,1989,p.82)

By developing a similar system we can grade our trainees against a pre-determined scale of standards and assign an appropriate score to that trainee's achievements. This grading will be able to be substantiated using the finely detailed assessment tool which, if designed correctly, would prove to be a fully objective assessment and not open to the subjectivity of the assessor.

This form of assessment would need to be developed for each assessable competency which would allow trainees to achieve success in various areas. A trainee may prove to be just competent in say, workshop practical, but could excel in another area such as mathematics or workplace communication. This would have the effect of allowing the trainee to feel some level of success in a relevant competency and possibly point out his/her strengths and weaknesses.

The trainee could then direct future aspirations into areas of strength and could pinpoint the areas where more effort is required. This would also prove a valuable tool for the organisation in identifying the type of trainee required, the effectiveness of its training on various types of trainees, and areas of instruction that may need to be developed more to achieve better success rates. Above all, it would provide trainees with the incentive to extend themselves and strive for excellence in their chosen endeavour. Bandura (1989) reinforced this notion when he commented that: "A trainee's expectations correlate positively with performance outcomes, and are said to be a major determinant of people's choice of activities, how much effort they will expend, and for how long." (in Kirk et.al.1992,p.7)

## CONCLUSION

The development of a grading scale of assessment in the Navy's training system is essential to the production of competent, confident, highly motivated trainees. It will not be an easy task and it will require resources, time, and expertise that, in today's economic climate, will not be easy to find. The alternative is to carry on and be led by other organisations which, by their own account, have not got it quite right as yet. Do we not owe it to our trainees, the taxpayer, and to the Naval organisation as a whole to heed the warning bells being sounded, quietly at first, but growing in volume as the juggernaut rolls on. These bells are not being sounded only by the trainees, but by many instructors who can see the problems forming in front of their eyes.

We are in the early stages of implementation and any changes that need to be made can be made now with minimum disruption to the progress of training and can be regarded as teething problems or fine tuning. If we choose to ignore it and rely on the 'expertise' of others outside of our organisation it may be too late when we have to explain our errors to a disenchanted workforce and an inquiring public. Carol Kay, (1992,p.4) in her paper, *Growing an Innovative Workforce*, presents a timely warning on the reliance on others in determining our training needs when she cautions: "Nothing travels faster through a vacuum than a bandwagon"

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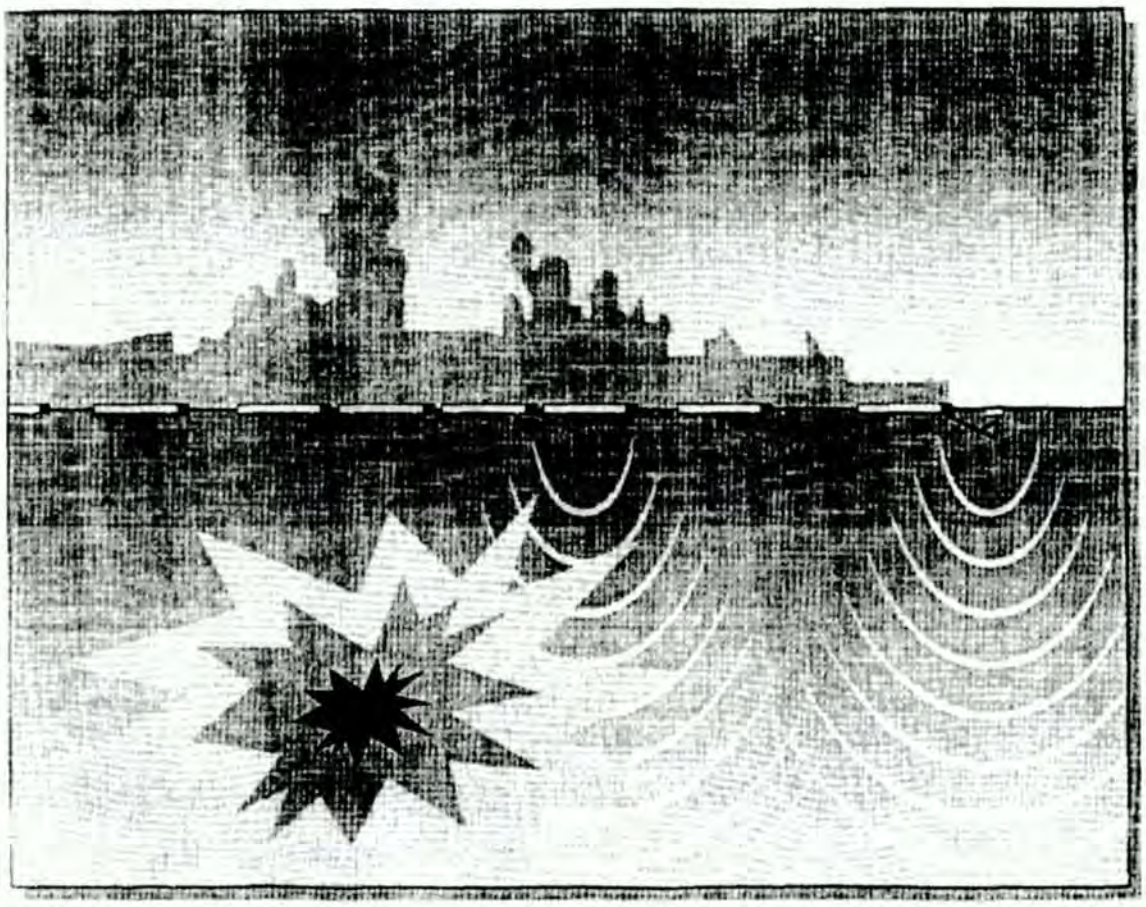

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# THE MARITIME ASPECTS OF AUSTRALIA'S POLICY OF COMPREHENSIVE ENGAGEMENT IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

BY

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER D.C. LITTLEHALES. RAN

*'Our long term goal in South-East Asia should be a comprehensive engagement with countries in the region: ~comprehensive~' in that there should be many elements in the relationship, and "engagement~ because it implies a mutual commitment between equals.'*
*— The Hon. Gareth Evans, QC, MP.* [1]

Australia's relations with the countries of South-East Asia have varied across a wide spectrum from studied ignorance and neglect to an overbearing paternal interest. Despite the fact that Australia has been involved militarily, economically and diplomatically in the region almost continually since Federation, it has only been relatively recently that countries in the region have been considered "worthy" of closer defence and other ties. Accordingly, Senator Evans' Ministerial Statement on Australia's Regional Security marks an important and timely change in our relations with the South-East Asian region.

This essay will examine maritime aspects of Australia's policy of comprehensive engagement in the South-East Asian region. For the purposes of this essay, the South-East Asian region will be taken to consist of: the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), comprising Brunei; Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand; Myanmar (Burma); and Indochina, comprising Cambodia (Kampuchea), Laos and Vietnam. The maritime aspects of Australia's policy will be discussed under five perspectives, namely: historical, geographical, economic, regional security, and national strategy.

## A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

### Australia

From the very beginning of colonisation by Britain over 200 years ago, Australia has depended on maritime links with distant markets for survival. To begin with it was very much a one-way trade of convicts and essential supplies. Gradually this changed to a more typical colonial trading pattern of raw material exported and manufactured goods imported. Naturally, Britain was the dominant player in the market and continued to be so until the 1950s.

Australian attitudes towards defence were dominated by fears of invasion from various nations including France, Russia, and Japan. The colony was dependent upon Britain for defence and accordingly there was a vested interest in supporting the Empire's police actions and wars. Therefore, small army elements were dispatched to participate in British actions in: New Zealand against the Maoris, China against the Boxers, Sudan for the relief of the siege of Khartoum, and in South Africa against the Boers. This idea of sending small colonial forces overseas in support of the British Empire was the forerunner of our strategy of 'Forward Defence'.

Independence and Federation did not significantly change Australian ideas of supporting the British Empire. The establishment of a small regular army, and the Royal Australian Navy, was driven by the fear of an invasion following the possible abandonment by the locally stationed British forces. In the event, Australian forces were to supplement Britain's during World War I and then during the initial stages of World War II.

The entry into World War II by the Japanese changed many perceptions in Australia and South-East Asia. The relative ease with which the Japanese were able to sweep the American, British and other European Forces from the North and South-East Asian regions was something that the ex-European colonies were

not to forget. With the British barely holding the line in India, and Australia under imminent threat of invasion, it was perhaps inevitable that Australia took the unprecedented step of appealing to the USA for assistance. During the remainder of the war, Australian forces were to be committed in various areas alongside the Americans.

The 1950s saw Australia committing troops and other forces in support of 'Forward Defence' and cementing ties with the USA. Action in Korea, the signing of the 1951 ANZUS Security Treaty and the 1954 Manila Treaty were critical elements of the change in guarantors of Australian security. Closer to home the Malayan Emergency and Confrontation with Indonesia brought commitment to Malaya and Singapore which would eventually become the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA).

The British decision to withdraw from 'East of Suez' in 1967 and President Nixon's enunciation of the 'Guam Doctrine' in 1969, provided body blows to Australia's reliance on a major power security umbrella and collective defence strategy. This stance is summed up by the statement: 'The American commitment anywhere is only as deep as the continued conviction of Americans that their interests require it'.[2]

Australia was therefore obliged during the 1970s and 1980s to re-evaluate its defence policy. In addition, a complete overhaul of operational and strategic doctrine was required to establish a viable framework for the future.

### South-East Asia

During the period of Australia's colonisation by Britain, the countries of South-East Asia were mostly controlled by various European or western colonial powers. The Spanish, Dutch, French, British, and also the United States, had carved out various parts of the region as a component of their respective overseas possessions. The rise of Japan during World War II freed these countries of colonial rule, but also left bitter memories of Japanese occupation and forced integration into the Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.

The end of the War found many nationalist organisations fighting for self-rule against their former colonial masters. As a generalisation, it was the future ASEAN states who evolved into nationhood, while Indochina underwent revolution aided by communist dominated China. Burma, or Myanmar as it came to be called later, was to also be heavily influenced by China.

Australia's relations with the newly emergent South East Asian states were to commence with a handicap from the outset. The enactment of 1901 of the Immigration Restriction Act had been perceived by many as a attempt by Australia to remain tied to Europe, as opposed to Asia. This act become known as the 'White Australia Policy' and was to become a constant irritant in relations between Australia and the emerging sovereign states of the region.

Australia's commitment to security in the region, both during and after World War II, has generally been appreciated by regional states. This appreciation has not allayed a perception that Australia attempted to fill the vacuum left by a departing Britain. The various wars in Indochina have also left a lasting impression on South-East Asia of the extent and limitations of superpower military commitment. The current drawdown of forces by both superpowers is viewed with considerable concern over what may fill the vacuum left behind.

For the remainder of this essay the majority of the attention and remarks will concern the ASEAN states. The principal reason for this is that the other states of Myanmar and Indochina are relatively much less significant in terms of economic and military relations with Australia. Considerable diplomatic effort is underway in the Indochina area to resolve outstanding issues in Cambodia and Vietnam, however, this does not alter their relatively minor geopolitical importance to Australia's national strategy.

## A GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

Australia is in the enviable strategic position of being remote from potential aggressors and areas of conflict. Unfortunately this also means we are distant from potential markets. As a trading nation, seaborne trade is critical to our economic well-being. This is a fact recognised by the Soviet Admiral Gorshkov who stated that the economies of all developed capitalist countries depend largely on sea transport.[3]

As a rough guide the value of our exports and imports in 1988-89 was about $A90 billion, with $A47 billion being imports, and $A43 billion in exports. Over 95 per cent of this trade was carried by merchant shipping. The magnitude of this task is indicated by the nearly 200 merchant ships in our ports and 175 in transit daily to and from Australia. About 262 million tonnes of cargo are shifted into and out of the country annually. This amount of cargo amounts to about 15 per cent of the total world seaborne carrying task, despite Australia only accounting for about one per cent of the world economy.[4]

About 50 per cent of all of our international trade transits South-East Asian waters. This means that the principal international straits of Lombok, Malacca, Sunda and Torres are critical focal points for this trade. Though international law provides that the transit passage of international straits shall not be impeded, the potential exists for severe disruption to our trade if this were to be ignored.

The possibility of interference with our maritime trade cannot be ignored, but it must be borne in mind that other nations have an even greater need of free access through these straits. Japan imports almost all of its oil through these straits and uses them again for a significant proportion of her exports. The United States has a significant proportion of her trade transitting the straits as well as requiring them for the free movement of various naval forces to and from the Indian Ocean. The potential, therefore, for purely Australian trade to be disrupted seems remote.

## AN ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

Some economic analysts view the Pacific, and more specifically East Asia, as being the economic powerhouse of the world in the 21st century. The newly industrialised countries of Taiwan and South Korea get the headlines, but most of the ASEAN countries are also experiencing rapid growth. In terms of real growth of GNP these economies are experiencing almost double the growth rate of the Western industrialised countries and well above our own. This growth rate is required to bring these nations up to a comparable per capita income with the rest of the world, but the benefits of this growth to Australia should be evident.[5]

The ASEAN states are important to Australia in direct trade. Collectively they are our fourth largest export market, $A3.9 billion, and our fourth largest source of imports, $A2.8 billion. In percentage terms this means the ASEAN accounts for about 7.4 per cent of our trade, and is therefore of some significance.

## REGIONAL SECURITY

There is a powerful argument that Australia's security is indivisible from that of South-East Asia. This is argued by Michael O'Connor, Executive Director of the Australian Defence Association, who stated: 'What Australian policy-makers must do is recognize the reality that Australia's security is inseparable from regional security, that a rational policy of defence-in-depth demands an Australian commitment to regional security. Australia must embark on a policy of constructive engagement with South-East Asia and the South-West Pacific, an engagement which has economic, political and military aspects designed to develop a co-operative western Pacific security structure'.[6]

Gareth Evans, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, developed this concept further in the Ministerial statement on Regional Security and has also been recently promoting the theme of a collective security arrangement in South-East Asia.

Australia is party to two regional defence arrangements: the Manila Treaty; and the FPDA. The Manila Treaty, signed in 1954, involves Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand and the United States. While the treaty is still extant, its subordinate treaty organisation of SEATO (South-East Asia Treaty Organisation) is defunct. The FPDA involves Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Singapore, and was formed in 1971. While these arrangements were originally formulated to support the defence of Malaysia and Singapore, they have evolved to allow a much wider scope of activity.

To support the Australian commitment to FPDA the current policy is to operate RAAF F/A-18 Hornets at Butterworth, in Malaysia, for a minimum of 16 weeks annually. In addition there is a permanent P-3 Orion detachment, of one to three aircraft, maintained on a rotational basis for surveillance operations. Finally, there is an Army infantry company assigned to assist with base security.[7] In November 1987, the then Minister for Defence, Mr Beazley, announced a continuous Royal Australian Naval presence in South-East Asian waters. Naval support facilities in Malaysia and Singapore were to be used to support the deployments.[8]

Some observers believe that by having Australia tied to regional defence treaties, there is a danger of becoming involved in a dispute between regional friends or an internal dispute: 'When you make a decision to get involved in the way in which we have — air-defence problems, maritime problems — you take your lumps, basically'.[9]

As Ross Babbage indicated in 'A Coast Too Long', Australia has, in recent years, been actively encouraging the ASEAN countries to strengthen their ability to resist external strategic pressures. This has been assisted by encouraging a pattern of consultations on security prospects and policies, combined exercises and co-operative training.[10] The annual maritime Exercise Starfish is an excellent example of the combined exercises conducted in the region. This major exercise complements the more routine passage exercises that are conducted on an opportunity basis. Training and other support activities are carried out under the Defence Co-operation Programme.

## AUSTRALIA'S DEFENCE STRATEGY

To support Australia's national aims and objectives relating to engagement in South-East Asia there must be a suitable defence strategy. While the national aims and objectives are not clearly defined, Defence of Australia 1987 (DOA 87) offers the following guidance: 'The fundamental elements of ...(the Government)... approach are based on:

- maintaining and developing capabilities for the independent defence of Australia and its interests;
- promoting strategic stability and security in our region; and
- as a member of the western strategic community working for a reduction in the level of tension between the superpowers and limiting the spread of influences in our region inimical to Western interests'.[11]

These elements clearly support our commitment to South-East Asia. DOA 87 goes on to define Australia's defence strategy: 'Australia's defence strategy is based on the concept of defence in depth. This strategy and our force structure planning give priority to meeting credible levels of threat in Australia's area of direct military interest'.[12]

The concept of defence in depth is explained further by: 'Defence in depth gives priority to the ability of the ADF to mount operations capable of defeating enemy forces in our area of direct military interest. This means we must have forces capable of tracking and targetting the adversary, mounting maritime and air operations in the sea and air gap to our north...'[13]

The area of direct military interest includes Australia, its territories and proximate ocean areas, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and other nearby countries of the South-West Pacific.[14]

Ross Babbage believes that 'defence in depth' is a semi-disguised version of the strategy of 'denial' proposed by Mr Dibb in his Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities: 'Defence in depth has never been explained with any clarity in public. The White Paper (DOA 87) gives the strong impression that this concept is essentially a political and bureaucratic device designed to maintain the essence of denial, while simultaneously defusing its critics and rationalising a continuation of the broad defensive and offensive force structure mix that Australia has maintained'.[15]

Mr Babbage goes on to be fairly critical of defence in depth essentially on the grounds that, in common with denial, it fails to suitably cater for low-level contingencies. Additionally, he maintains that it does not provide precise guidance on force structure design. While these criticisms may be valid, the concept of defence in depth is the Government endorsed defence strategy.

### Maritime Strateqy

A necessary component of the national defence strategy is a suitable maritime strategy. This is reinforced in DOA 87 by the comment: 'The fundamental importance of the sea and air gap to our security gives high priority to maritime (naval and air) forces capable of preventing an adversary from substantial operations in that area'.[16]

What sort of strategy should be employed to satisfy this requirement? Rear Admiral Hill considers the concepts of Deterrence, Sea Command and Sea Control, Levels of Conflict and Reach to shape maritime strategy for medium powers. While there may be some argument as to whether Australia should be considered as a small or medium power, it will suffice that these concepts must be considered. Of them all, Sea Control is considered to be the most important and decisive factor in the Australian context.

Sea Control is a concept advanced by the American, Admiral Stansfield Turner, and essentially indicates limitations on the original concept of Command of the Sea. Sea Control is defined by Admiral Turner as: 'The new term "Sea Control" is intended to connote more realistic control in limited areas and for limited periods of time ... it is no longer conceivable, except in the most limited sense, to totally deny them to an enemy'.[17]

Sea Control has two complementary aspects: Sea Assertion or Use, and Sea Denial. Sea Assertion concerns the ability to use the sea for your own purposes and covers the following:

a. to ensure industrial supplies,
b. to reinforce wartime economic/military supplies to allies, and
c. to provide safety for naval forces in the Projection of Power Ashore role.[18]

Sea Denial is regarded as the obverse of Sea Assertion, or simply denying the enemy's ability to use the sea for his own purposes. Elements of both concepts fit the Australian requirement, though with a heavy emphasis on Denial.

Accordingly, there is discussion of 'Sea Denial plus' to indicate that there is more than a purely negative or defensive connotation to this strategy. This concept would certainly meet the requirement of DOA 87, as well as being some way to meeting the requirements of Senator Evans statement.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout this essay I have attempted to draw out the various maritime aspects of Australia's relations with South East Asia. Within the historical, geographic, economic and regional security perspectives it can be seen that there is much that we have in common, and much that we rely on, with South East Asia. In military terms there are already many facets or elements to our relations with the South-East Asian countries, and particularly the ASEAN states, on either a bilateral or multilateral basis. It is also obvious that there is much more that could be done in military, economic and diplomatic relations.

An essential maritime aspect of our involvement in South-East Asia is viable maritime strategy. The concept of 'Sea Denial plus' is one that has been discussed, and appears to meet the military requirements of DOA 87 and Senator Evans' Ministerial Statement.

As the concluding paragraph to Australia's Regional Security states: 'Australia in the past has tended to perceive the relevance of South-East Asia and South Pacific to Australia's security in largely military terms. We now have the opportunity to reinforce our national security by utilising the many dimensions of our external policies in an informed, coordinated and vigorous way to participate in the shaping of the regional environment. Effectively implemented and presented, this multidimensional approach to regional security policy is the best way of maintaining our national security into the future'.[19]

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12. ibid, p 31, para 3.44.

13. ibid, p 31, para 3.45

14. ibid, p 2, footnote 1.

15. *A Coast Too Long*, loc cit. p 93.

16. DOA 87, p 31, para 3.46.

17. Quoted in Till, *Maritime Strategy and the Nuclear Age.*p 189

18. Quoted - Till, *Maritime Strategy and the Nuclear Age*, p 10

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# SHIP VISITS TO VIETNAM?

As early as February 1992 the Department of Defence had made informal approaches to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to begin ship visits to Vietnam. The objective was to improve political and trade ties with Hanoi. In the same year, Defence Minister Ray told an Australian Defence Association seminar that the possibility existed for Australia to consider closer defence ties with Vietnam if the opportunity arose, perhaps even in the next ten years. However, the RSL objected suggesting that such moves were premature and that the healing process for many veterans could be harmed. The Opposition decided that Senator Ray had,'...a bizarre and inappropriate set of defence priorities'. Moreover, the Chairman of the Vietnam Memorial Committee at the time said, '....I think the senator should have had some consultation with Vietnam veteran's groups rather than make an announcement without even talking about it to these people'. Shortly afterwards a spokesman for Senator Ray announced that there were no existing plans for defence cooperation with Vietnam and that any move to forge defence links with that country would not occur in the near future. Obviously, a little too much was taken for granted and the prospects for goodwill ship visits to Vietnam would not be politically palatable for some time.

Two years have passed and it is now the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations by a previous Labour Government with Hanoi. In April Prime Minister Keating visits Vietnam as, '...a step in consolidating Australia's links with important regional partners'. According to press releases he will discuss shared bilateral interests and a wide range of regional economic, political and strategic issues.

It is not known whether ship visits will figure in these discussions under 'strategic issues'. However, traditionally the likelihood of ship visits depends on many factors, particularly the importance attached to the international relationship and its prospects for the future. So, just how important is Vietnam to Australia? From the economic point of view two way trade is only $250 million per annum, but actual trade is probably far higher in terms of unrecorded counter trade. Furthermore, two way trade has consistently increased by over 50% per annum in each of the last five years and strong prospects for expansion exist in several areas, especially telecommunications, mineral resources, forestry and marine products, agriculture, infrastructure provision and numerous consultancy niches. Consequently, prospects for long term, high volume benefits are good if we do not 'muff the game' and give up our early placement advantages to other competitors.

Strategic benefits also exist in improving relations with Vietnam. One of Australia's original rationales for rapprochement was to prevent Vietnam being locked into dependency on the Soviet Union. This situation has changed but when taking a very long term view it may be worth Australia's while to help Vietnam be economically strong enough to act as a countervailing influence, together with India and Japan, against what promises to be a Chinese Superpower in the 21st Century. That China will be blatantly malevolent and expansionist is unlikely, but it may be worth taking out some insurance especially if it also means making another friend in the region. Consequently the economic and strategic benefits of rapprochement with Vietnam are considerable.

While accepting the need to build up trade and establish diplomatic relations, many Vietnam Veterans will have mixed feelings about ship visits to Vietnam. Lessons were learnt during that war and this is no place to repeat them and pontificate with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight-enough of that has been done elsewhere - but one lesson is that life goes on and old enemies can be lived with. Few enemies have been as despised as the Japanese were in World War Two, but within 20 years of the end of the war Japan was Australia's major trading partner and a key bastion in the Western Alliance, as was Germany. Furthermore, when considering rapprochement with Vietnam we should also remember that we did go to war for and with half the people in that country, and many of those people and their descendants still live there. Indeed, many still remember Australian servicemen and their 1962-72 'hearts and minds' achievements. This is to no small degree responsible for the favourable attitude of many Vietnamese towards Australia today.

It is important to keep in mind that ship visits do not constitute defence cooperation; they are simply gestures of goodwill and do not represent the 'thin end of the wedge' in terms of defence engagement. This was certainly not the case with China. Certainly, for conspicuous reasons,1995 would not be a good year to start visits, but ship visits should not be dismissed out of hand. Veterans of the Vietnam War - from the field and the 'Gunline' - should be consulted for their views before any decision on ship visits is made. That veterans will not have the final say is taken for granted in this day and age but it's always nice to be asked!

To assist in making this judgement JANI presents an exclusive article by Mike Fogarty on Australian ship visits to Vietnam before the war. This should give some insight into how ship visits are conducted. Enjoy the read.

*—Alan Hinge*

# SHOWING THE FLAG

## Naval Diplomacy to Saigon, 1956-63

by

**Mike Fogarty**

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Between 1956 and 1963, six Australian naval vessels visited the former Republic of Vietnam on four occasions.Three visits were official, regarded as 'diplomatic' visits whereas one ship paid a routine 'operational visit'. Both the then Department of External Affairs and the Departments of Defence and Navy supported these visits in an attempt to promote Australian influence and policies in South Vietnam. It is in this context, stylistic rather than political, that the terms Vietnam and Saigon are used throughout. This work also attempts a political history of Australia's external naval relations with the former Republic of (South) Vietnam.

*Australian naval officers from HMA Ships* QUIBERON *and* QUEENBOROUGH *at an official reception at the Vietnamese Naval Training Centre Nha Trang, January 1963 (From left) LEUT Cec Fuller, Dr Warren Kemp, Ensign Ho Quang Minh, LCDR Frank Woods and a local USN adviser. (F R Woods personal collection)*

While this article is necessarily descriptive, it has also been approached at two other levels. This analysis then provides the background to those visits and also assesses the political impact achieved through them — in the development and progression of the diplomatic relationship between the two countries, Australia and the Republic of Vietnam — a nation which passed into history on 30 April 1975. 'South' Vietnam was later augmented within a new entity — the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

'Gunboat Diplomacy' might be broadly defined as the use of warships in peacetime to further a nation's diplomatic and political aims. As such, it is neither new nor old. All western navies take care to foster this aspect by organising entertainment for local dignitaries, as well as the more significant displays of fighting efficiency. The Royal Navy's apt description of these diversions gives the clue to their real character: 'Exercise Shopwindow'[1].

In the twentieth century, modern communications give these visits a certain immediacy — a situation not enjoyed before their advent. The public relations effect cannot be under-estimated. If ship visits can be rated as important steps in the furtherance of bilateral ties, then decisions not to make visits for political reasons can also send messages of a different kind.

External Affairs saw each visit as part of the overall political relationship. Defence, while acknowledging their emblematic nature, attempted to dove-tail those 'diplomatic' visits into the wider operational fleet program as individual units were deployed overseas. A senior naval administrator of the period had a clearer appreciation of those activities. In a briefing dated 27 October 1961 to his Minister, advising him of the proposed operational visits scheduled for 1962, Sam Landau lent another insight: "The purpose of the proposed visits is mainly good will and flag-showing, while the units are in the area. In addition, of course, such visits to foreign ports have a valuable morale effect in the service."[2]

While HMA ships are armed at different levels, depending on their role and mission, when at sea they are considered 'operational'. They also retain sufficient flexibility to deputise at a representative level as required. Overall, a naval presence acts as a significant deterrent against 'adventurism' and on this plane, the term 'gunboat diplomacy' reverts to its original meaning. In 1962, as the Admiralty saw it, the issues were unequivocal.

"The Far East Station consists roughly of the eastern half of the Indian Ocean north of 10 degrees south and the western half of the Pacific Ocean north of the equator. Throughout the vast area the Royal Navy is able to deploy effective forces wherever and whenever they may be required to help keep the peace or assist in emergencies. This essential flexibility and mobility, which have been the Navy's greatest attributes, enable real support to be given to the other members of the Commonwealth, or SEATO allies and other friends. The Far East Fleet is one of the most potent forces for peace in this part of the world and will long remain so."[3] That was the situation over 30 years ago.

It was incident to these objectives, in an attempt to enter Asia's smaller worlds, that HMAS ANZAC first visited Saigon in October 1956. HMAS TOBRUK made an operational visit to Cam Ranh Bay in September 1959 during the course of major exercises. HMA ships VAMPIRE and QUICKMATCH visited Saigon in January 1962. The last formal visit to South Vietnam took place in January and February 1963 when QUEENBOROUGH and QUIBERON visited Saigon by way of Nha Trang.

For the purpose of this article, all visits are noted as 'peacetime' visits, before Australia's active naval participation and after. Even so, the author notes the particular circumstances of the last visit observing that Australia's initial commitment commenced in mid-1962. For this reason, while noting the significance of that event, any discussion about further claims attached to that visit falls outside the ambit of this article.

Also, no attempt has been made to provide an exhaustive record of any other naval visits outside the immediate period concerned. Certainly, Australian merchant vessels visited those ports in greater numbers although that issue is not under review either. To a lesser extent, the Royal Australian Navy also sought to broaden its professional service contacts with the Republic of Vietnam Navy and its senior officers during those 'flag-showing' visits. In terms of reciprocal visits, the South Vietnamese Navy would have recognised the value of an Australian voyage. However, it appears that practical, operational and logistical capabilities may have militated against that. Moreover, for their armed forces' components Australia was not on the way to anywhere — and at the time, they needed a reason, not an excuse, to go there.

This treatment examines the reasons for those policy decisions to send RAN ships to South Vietnam, on official visits, in the furtherance of discrete political objectives. Reports indicate that all visits achieved their intended purpose. Again, those naval contacts assumed a special importance, successfully projecting Australian force into a country the government wished to influence. In doing so, Australia made a significant gesture, more symbolic than material, in showing solidarity with a SEATO ally.

As well, a goodwill visit was but one of the myriad features of the wider diplomatic array, whose softer contacts included cultural, educational, social, technical, scientific, economic and any measure designed to know and understand people in the growth of friendly ties at an official level. As an instrument of diplomacy, an official defence visit to demonstrate overt political support was a single witness to that policy.

Hitherto, Indo-China was a long-held imperial preserve of France. Because of this, Anglo-Australian naval contacts would have been rare in any case. While critical to the major powers in strategic terms, the Indo-Chinese region increasingly became a vital sphere in Australia's geopolitical reach — as events later proved. If Australian naval vessels penetrated Indo-China's contiguous waters during World War II or after, that contact would have been sporadic and isolated — apart from the major theatres of operations. In July 1945, Lieutenant M.H. Shean RANVR commanded a successful submarine mission off Cap St. Jacques to sever Saigon's sea-bed communications links with Singapore and Hong Kong. Forty years later, Australian companies became involved in a large project to upgrade Vietnam's telecommunications infrastructure. Robert Scoble, a former Australian diplomat who had served in Hanoi, would also contribute to that process.

After World War II, British and French warships conducted joint mine sweeping exercises in the Saigon approaches including the Long Tau shipping channel adjoining the Rung Sat. The Commander in Chief Far East Station, Admiral Boyd RN, made a visit in 1948 to Indo-China in his flagship HMS LONDON along with other Royal Navy ships. The Saigon visit was generally considered to be successful although the Annamite newspapers, once it had been discovered that there were no politics or propaganda behind the visit, paid little attention to it[4].

Nonetheless, that major visit by HM ships to an important ally would have bolstered French hopes in its colonial war and the tangible expression of moral support would have been appreciated. The British and French sailors achieved an 'entente cordiale' of sorts and proved to be veritable ambassadors to their cause. The only diplomatic gaffe occurred in Cambodia. The Saigon Chancery reported that "during one excursion, the Commander-in-Chief visited Phnom Penh where he was received by the King of Cambodia who conferred on him a high decoration and, owing to a lapse on the part of the interpreter, very nearly gave him a dancing-girl as well."[5] In his predicament, Admiral Boyd may have recalled the hospitality granted to Prince Igor's son Vladimir on his capture by the Tartar Chief Khan in 12th Century Russia.

The United Kingdom remained interested in Indo-China's strategic basis, made more acute due to concurrent developments further north in Korea. In 1952, the British Naval Liaison Officer in Saigon reported on his visit to the newly formed naval centre at Nha Trang. Lieutenant Commander Eric Pilditch RN, in his disappointment, noted that the trainees had one ambition to specialise as clerks and writers. He observed that French training always appeared to concentrate on theory and it seems that unless these bureaucratically minded young men are pulled out into the fresh air for far the greater part of their training, the Vietnamese Navy is going to find itself overloaded with pen pushing paper shufflers and short of practical sailors.[6]

After the Korean War, Australian defence planners also began to turn their attention towards Indo-China. While not an immediate priority in Australian interests, compared with the more chronic situation in Malaya, Australian officials acknowledged the problems imposed by a newly independent Republic of Vietnam and the danger of any instability being exploited. It was for this reason that Australia accelerated the momentum in its early contacts with that nascent State.

Australia had previously established diplomatic relations with Saigon on 8 February 1950 and a Legation opened on 23 March 1952. One reason for doing so was to expand Australian representation in the region. The Legation in Saigon completed the chain. That act enshrined the importance planning staff gave to the country and its aspirations. In recognising the importance of defence links, a service attaché joined the small staff. The reporting of military developments was a vital portfolio responsibility and it signalled that only a professional service officer could provide the specialist advice that the Legation required in the discharge of its policy requirements. In an effort to promote Australia's influence in South Vietnam, the RAN came to consider the visits of HMA ships in the future.

On 6 July 1955, Navy Office wrote to External Affairs informing them that 'Vice Admiral Dowling (Chief of Naval Staff) feels that visits to SEATO countries would be desirable and we would like you to think about it.'[7] As a result, the Minister for External Affairs (Mr R. G. Casey, MP) announced on 18 October 1956 that HMAS ANZAC would visit Saigon for the South Vietnamese National Day celebrations on 26 October.[8]

On 24 October 1956, HMAS ANZAC (Commander Eric John Peel, RAN) visited Saigon. The ship arrived at Cap St. Jacques at 0700 to wait for a Vietnamese pilot to ensure safe passage on the Saigon River to the city port 45 miles upstream. While French charts were satisfactory, Admiralty chart 1016 stipulated the need for a pilot. It was necessary to enter the river at high tide to cross the sand bar. A contemporary guide book describes the scene "...the ocean thus far uniformly green is now tinted with blues, violets and greys. Near the low coast line the currents sweep out large bands of muddy water that the Saigon River drains toward the high sea"[9].

John Peel had a distinguished career and he commanded many ships. In 1942, he survived the sinking of HMAS VAMPIRE off Ceylon where he lost the use of one lung when depth charges exploded while he was in the water. In a sentimental gesture, he later commanded the Daring class destroyer VAMPIRE. The ironies of history saw him return to Vung Tau in HMAS SYDNEY in 1967. Before landing at Catinat Quay, as he dressed in his ceremonial white tunic, could he have imagined that possibility at the time?

Naval folklore had John Peel refer to his namesake on suitable occasions — often when entering or leaving port. He played his eponymous signature tune on the ship's broadcast, as the fancy took him. No evidence suggests that he played the border melody 'D'ye ken John Peel?' as he journeyed up that water-logged land. If he did, it could only have deepened the incredulity of any warring factions (Binh Xuyen, Hoa Hao and Cao Dai) who may have heard it. Here anthropologists enter. "Malinowski viewed those who wish to outlaw war among native peoples in something of the manner in which the fox-hunting aristocracy views those who wish to put an end to their sport — he had a Burkean feeling for the wisdom of tradition. Indeed, Malinowski himself expressly drew the parallel between the 'savage customs' of native peoples and the 'silly' English games, such as cricket, golf, football and fox-hunting. These were not 'wasting time' insisted Malinowski; indeed, an ethnological view would show that 'to wipe out sport, or even to un-

dermine its influence, would be a crime.' He intimated that aristocratic custom, style or life, and leisure, no less than native institutions, now had a common theoretical defence"[10].

Commander Peel was a proud man and would hardly have whistled in the dark. Besides, being under orders, he travelled by day on that trip. If he played his song he may have had some fearful portent of things to come. Years later he might have acknowledged those Gothic metaphors about the dangers of river travel in dark lands — as that symbolism migrated to another continent. Then, at the time, that imagery was far from Peel's mind as ANZAC and her crew sailed up that river carrying all the optimism that Australia then held for the country and its people. Those sailors had young hearts and maybe brave hearts but, in the end, as that final legacy was apportioned, there was only so much their thin shoulders could bear.

As bored watchmen turned from their lonely sentinels, to witness ANZAC's passage, her crew anticipated a welcome break from sea duty to an 'off the wall' port rarely visited. ANZAC fired a national salute at 1345 and the ship came alongside Catinat wharf at 1400.[11] If history saw, did it remember Able Seaman James ('Tubby') Edgar as he went about his normal part of ship duties, as the fo'c'sle locker man, knocking the pin out of the anchor chain as the ship secured alongside and as dignitaries and their wives prepared to board?

It was a different Saigon then, with its alluring grace and a distinctive historical and cultural tradition — an amalgam for which the Vietnamese people had the French to thank. The Admirals must have laid out the naval quarter of the town that stands at one end of the quays, dignified and aloof from the noisier streets, an area of solid white buildings, flagstaffs and clipped box hedges, populated by very smart sailors in tropical white rig, with scarlet pompoms on their caps.[12]

To the Australian sailor, as he strolled up Tu Do Street towards the National Assembly, Saigon's cafe society must have appeared in a kaleidoscope of colour, form and movement. Rue Catinat was Saigon's Fifth Avenue and its broad pavements were shaded by tall tamarinds and stately rubber trees. Like extras in a Hollywood spectacle, French officers, sailors, foreign legionnaires, bearded priests, black-robed nuns, Vietnamese natives, military police, Chinese and Indian merchants, occasional Americans make their entrances and exits.[13]

It was from this melange that the Australian Services Attaché, Commander Alan Dollard, RAN made a cameo appearance. Dollard had considerable political skills and also proved to be a good friend to Australian diplomacy during two other representative assignments.[14] He was equally at home on the bridge of a destroyer as on the reception line at a Palace function. However, he was no languid sofa cobra as his command of HMAS MURCHISON in Korea demonstrated.[15]

ANZAC's visit was a complete success and her crew was feted at every opportunity. Sporting competitions with local teams at large venues attracted wide support and interest. As well, guards were regularly paraded and appropriate ceremonial honours were bestowed on local dignitaries — including Vietnamese, Australian, British, French, American and other nationals. The South Vietnamese government sought to confer various national awards on Commander Peel and others but existing protocol prevented their acceptance.[16]

Commander Peel attended a reception as a guest of the Thai Admiral in his flagship RTS MAEKLONG. In the sweltering ante-room, and in the interests of protocol, he was obliged to drink warm and sweet champagne. Moved by this experience, and unsure whether it was politically correct or socially incorrect, he reported that personal incident hoping it would come to the notice of that final arbiter of style — the Second Naval Member. On hosting his own reception onboard ANZAC, Peel thanked his good luck in earlier securing sufficient quantities of champagne from the Australian Fleet Commander when in Bangkok.[17] ANZAC was a man-of-war yet in her austerity she could hardly be described as a floating gin palace. Still, Commander Peel entertained President Ngo Dinh Diem onboard with all due honours.

Meanwhile, the hospitality continued unabated. The Head of Legation, Mr D. W. McNicol, advised his acting Minister (Sir Philip McBride) that the captain and officers of ANZAC gave what is known in these parts as a 'brilliante reception', which was widely and lately attended and apparently well received. A reception was also held by the Service Attaché for the Captain and officers that was attended by the beauty and chivalry of Saigon.[18]

Later, a guard was paraded to provide a ceremonial welcome for the National Secretary of Defence. However, after 45 minutes in the enveloping heat of the Saigon waterfront apron, the guard was 'fallen out' and the visit did not proceed as scheduled.[19] Even then, as a social movement, post-arrivalism had its limitations. Besides, there were other serials on the program to be pursued.

A young third secretary on his first posting, Geoffrey Price, became heavily involved in the planning and detail of that visit. A fluent French speaker with honours levels at Queensland University, he was in the top group of his year. An assessment made on him

during his training highly marked his quality of 'intellectual attack'.[20] Earlier in 1953, he attended an examination, ominously set on a Black Friday in November. The diplomatic cadets were given an 'and/or' question choice, one of which was to "...analyse the political events in Indo-China."[21] Twenty years after his initial posting to the Republic of Vietnam he returned to South Vietnam as Australia's Ambassador and, as art imitates life, that academic question became reality.

For ANZAC's crew, vivid memories would remain. James Edgar recalled that the city was swarming with troops, helicopters regularly crossed the sky and a French monitor ship was on station. Petty Officer Gordon Sheridan remembered the legionnaires and the ship later exercising with the French carrier LA FAYETTE — operating her corsairs. Ordnance Engineer Andrew Dalgleish has the clearest memory of keeping up with white uniforms during that hectic period — ship's laundry facilities being what they were in the fifties. This officer also noted Bishop Daley's initiation at 'liar's dice' in mess games. He rued that it became an expensive exercise when a bishop in his purple shirt meekly offers you four kings and you know perfectly well that the captain is going to lift you.[22]

ANZAC sailed on 27 October from that Paris of the Orient, with four junior sailors remaining on French leave — beguiled by that town's seamless charm. Commander Dollard arranged with local naval authorities the transfer by French warship of the sailors to Singapore. He had no Visiting Forces Act to guide him but he concluded a workable agreement and adjured his defaulters that they were still under military command — albeit foreign. He was later alarmed by reports that their Anglophile hosts had gone beyond their stated brief and continued with the hospitality. He learned that the sailors were excused duties and permitted liberal access to high quality wine issues on the trip to rejoin their shipmates.

The ship's monthly punishment return recorded that the four concerned were 'six year men' — soon to leave the service on the expiration of their engagement, which may have explained their 'last flings'. On return to Australia, all were sentenced to long periods of detention at Holsworthy and two were subsequently dismissed from the service. Though they may have been the first Australians to be punished for Vietnam-related charges, they would not be the last.[23]

HMAS TOBRUK (Captain Hugh David Stevenson, RAN) and HMS CEYLON (Captain Frank Roddam Twiss, RN) paid an operational visit to Cam Ranh Bay from 27-30 September 1959 after fleet exercises in the area. It also proved a respite from prevailing weather conditions. The Australian Ambassador and his staff could not make the journey from Saigon but Mr W. D. Forsythe sent them a note of welcome to the country. The British Military Attaché in Saigon, Colonel Cook, assisted with liaison duties during the visit.[24]

Both commanding officers travelled by car to the naval training establishment at Nha Trang. Captain Stevenson reinforced earlier impressions made by Lieutenant Commander Pilditch in 1952. His initial fears were realised — seven years later. David Stevenson reported his sense of futility — promotion appeared to depend not so much on merit as the correctness of political outlook and being known by the right people. He noted that "... perhaps this is not surprising in a country that holds such sway but it does little to encourage the officers of a service, who already regard themselves as belonging to a Cinderella service."[25]

Rear Admiral Varryl Begg, RN (Flag Officer Second in Command, Far East Station), carried out his harbour inspection of TOBRUK at that picturesque anchorage. Cam Ranh Bay was the headquarters of the French Foreign Legion during the war, and the buildings then served as the HQ of a detachment of South Vietnamese marines. There was little for visiting ships to do, but recreational leave was enjoyed by most of the ship's company.[26]

Due to the admiral's inspection, the ships' officers were preoccupied with preparations and had little time to enjoy the social opportunities afforded by that visit. One description of Cam Ranh Bay notes that this port in central Vietnam is one of the finest harbours on the coast of Annam; it is available for all classes of vessels and offers secured anchorage at all times of the year both in its approaches and within the bay itself.[27]

The Navigator, Lieutenant Jim Dickson, remembers being officer of the day and so did not get ashore. He observed that the harbour was not nearly as attractive as Trincomalee that was visited earlier in the deployment.[28] Another young officer, Kerry Stephen, retained the strongest memory of the area where the ship anchored off the large sand dunes that fringed the shore line. He was also impressed with the tremendous construction activity on shore as the port facilities were then being modernised and augmented.[29] Their visit over, TOBRUK and CEYLON sailed for Subic Bay on 30 September.

By the early sixties, political events in the Republic of Vietnam had assumed a greater velocity and Australian defence planners increasingly became more concerned with the country and its problems. Defence contacts continued apace and the Naval Board saw the value of selected visits to isolated

countries where Australia needed to keep in touch — tapping into regional defence developments and maintaining professional service links at a senior level. As a fellow SEATO ally, the case of far-off South Vietnam had important strategic links to be fostered and maintained.

Vice Admiral Dowling (Chief of Naval Staff) visited Saigon in April 1961 and it can be assumed that the question of ship visits would have been discussed. Ambassador Forsythe advised Canberra on 19 May 1961 that it was time to show the flag (again) in Saigon.[30] It was in pursuit of this policy objective that Rear Admiral Becher approached External Affairs in June 1961 sounding out the possibility of another naval visit in 1962. The relationship between the two countries had developed considerably as the Republic had opened an Embassy in Canberra on 16 August 1961 — appointing its first Ambassador, Tran Van Lam.[31]

External Affairs agreed that a RAN ship should visit Saigon in February 1962 to celebrate Australia Day. The advice to Defence noted that this Department warmly supports the proposed visit.[32] The Foreign Ministry in Saigon was working towards the same end.[33] Australian officials were conscious of the prestige attached to the SouthVietnamese invitation and, for representational purposes, sought to assert independent control over that visit. The Embassy had no wish to be seen in a junior role sharing a joint reception with any Royal Navy vessel. A cable from Saigon urged that... if a visit is to be useful we consider (our) representation should be independent and clearly differentiated from that of the United Kingdom.[34] It was against this backdrop that planning for a 1962 visit began.

HMAS VAMPIRE (Captain A. M. Synnot, RAN) and HMAS QUICKMATCH (Commander P.H. Doyle, RAN) set off from the Singapore exercise area on 23 January 1962 in the teeth of gale force north easterly winds. At 0330 25 January 1962, both ships hoved to in the Baie de Cocottiers to embark pilots and South Vietnamese naval liaison officers, proceeding again for the passage up the Saigon River at 0410. With a full moon and French charts, the night passage of the major portion of the river presented no difficulty.[35]

Perhaps one of Vietnam's mythical dragons silently cruising high above the Annamese Cordillera might have noticed the slow change in that moonlight scene on the water — turning from the luminosity of a Turner painting to the hard-edged precisionism of a work by Robert Indiana. Gradually, night became day — a country emerged in the dawn. To the farmers, as they set forth into the blinding green rice fields, it was just one more day, as the harvest cycle continued.

While the beauty of that scene would have been apparent to anyone with time to appreciate it, the senior officers on board had other duties on hand. Captain Synnot was tasked by Vice Admiral Harrington to prepare a navigational report on the feasibility of HMAS SYDNEY being able to reach Saigon. This function was then delegated to Commander Doyle.[36] The passage was uneventful, though armed patrol boats and a light reconnaissance aircraft had been provided as escorts. In the early morning stillness, the white ensigns stirred in the rising heat as the two ships slowly steamed past the flat and tangled mangrove shores. The syncretic basis of Vietnamese culture includes components of animism, metaphysical forces and an appreciation for the environment. However, there is no evidence that John Peel's foxes were dislodged from their lairs as the RAN returned to Saigon.

A national salute was fired by VAMPIRE, the salute being returned by a naval saluting battery ashore. Having turned in the river above the port, VAMPIRE berthed alongside Tu Do Pier at 0835 and QUICKMATCH berthed outboard.[37] The visit proved valuable and the four days were busily occupied by an extensive social and sporting program arranged locally for officers and ratings. Special Australia Day receptions enabled RAN personnel to meet with Vietnamese men and civilians and, despite some language difficulties, friendly relations were established.[38] For many, the visit developed into a real test of endurance. The crew found sporting facilities to be of a high standard — a band was present and played a few bars of ragtime whenever a point was scored.[39]

The crews enjoyed the visit and a 'Navy News' report revealed interesting social attitudes towards the port and its people — observations that would not survive today's heavily reconstructed agenda and the raft of legislative scrutiny supporting it. These thoughts remain locked in the idiom of the period.[40] Other officers recall the time of the visit and missing their children, not being able to help in their activities. Still, there were times for calls, functions, exhaustive sporting contests and other social activities. The U.S.I.S. filmed the visit and the newsreel was shown throughout South Vietnam — generating much interest locally. A visit by a large group of orphans to the ships proved particularly enjoyable. Remote from their families, some crew members may have seen their own ships as temporary orphanages at sea.

The four-day visit left a lasting impression on Commander Doyle. He wrote that the berthing at Saigon marked the beginning of the most memorable and successful visit he had experienced in his naval career. 'My ship's company was entertained by members of the Australian, British and American com-

munities. This is the only port in the Far East where this has occurred. The bearing and behaviour of the Australian sailors at these functions were the subject of most favourable comment. There is no doubt that the two ships' companies were most worthy ambassadors for their country.' [41]

As with any formal visit, a regular pattern of calls was made and returned. On 25 January the commanding officers of both ships called on the Australian Ambassador, Mr B.C. Hill, and signed the Golden Book at the Independence Palace. Other calls were made on various politicians and service heads including the Commander of the South Vietnamese Navy, Captain Ho Tan Quyen.[42]On 26 January, Captain Synnot met the local and foreign press in VAMPIRE. That afternoon, both ships were open to visitors. In Canberra, the Prime Minister was aware of that visit as he considered the strength of the bi-lateral relationship. As Australia Day was being celebrated in Saigon, the Prime Minister was writing to President Ngo Dinh Diem. Mr Menzies stated that relations between Australia and the Republic of Vietnam have been close and cordial since the early days of its independence. However, due to the parliamentary situation in Australia, he regretted that he was unable to commit himself to a visit during 1962.[43]

The men of VAMPIRE and QUICKMATCH could take some pride in the outcome of the visit for the demonstrable results achieved. Commander Doyle reported that ' ...we were made to feel truly welcome by the South Vietnamese and it was apparent that the reputation of Australia in this country was high, perhaps the greatest single factor in establishing this being the reports of Vietnamese students in Australian universities. I believe this facet of the Colombo Plan is doing more good in establishing goodwill than any other.' [44]

At 0835 on 29 January both ships slipped Tu Do Pier for their return to sea. Brown river turned to bay green and then to ocean blue. After an uneventful passage, the ships arrived off Cap St. Jacques at 1215 where Australian and British Embassy staff were disembarked.[45] Due to the internal security situation in South Vietnam this was, for many of them, the first time they had been outside Saigon. Down river, the ships were provided with an escort of a South Vietnamese LSM with armament manned whilst an observation aircraft flew overhead.[46] The ships then set course for Singapore.

After the 1962 visit, authorities considered an increased naval commitment from Australia. A handwritten comment (author unknown) on a Defence file states that '...the suggestion for two radar-equipped ships should not be approved, and if the request for naval assistance is pressed by the U.S. or South Vietnamese authorities, they should be advised that if desired for the purposes of demonstrating an Australian presence, the possibility of routine visits to Saigon by RAN units from the Strategic Reserve based (in) Singapore will be explored. There has been no pressure for naval assistance, so visits to Saigon could proceed as a normal cold-war task, and the ambassador's views on the best arrangement for local political impact could be accepted. Both External Affairs and Navy propose to follow this advice.' [47]

On review, the outcome of the 1962 visit raised other compelling matters as plans adjusted to local events. The visit program had been arranged by the Ambassador's military staff, namely his Services Attaché, Lieutenant-Colonel L.I. Hopton, and much credit was due to him for its effectiveness.[48] As Australia increased its formal military commitment so too did the pressure to appoint more service staff to the Australian Embassy. In Canberra, a senior External Affairs official endorsed Ambassador Hill's appreciation of the vital contribution made by the Service Attaché to the effective running of the Saigon Embassy. He advised that 'Mr Hill has found Colonel Hopton's advice and comments valuable in relation to the political work of the Embassy.'[49]

Despite Colonel Hopton's useful liaison and collaboration with local representatives, authorities in other quarters were unmoved by the RAN visit. Hill informed his Minister that '...the only marks of disfavour we have noted were shown by the Polish Commissioner on the International Control Commission who told me that he expected a protest. However, to make our legal position water-tight, the Services Attaché formally requested the relevant South Vietnamese authorities in advance to inform the ICC of the visit and its goodwill nature.' [50] In light of this, that visit was a definitely progressive act with its purpose merely to promote Australia's friendly disposition towards that country.'

Following the groundwork laid by the 1962 visit, Canberra officials began planning another annual visit to consolidate the gains achieved. However, political considerations would be factored into the fleet program that would subordinate the operational deployment of vessels to a secondary level. Brian Hill reported to Canberra that ' ... my own feeling regarding Australian visits is based on a desire not to make visits here too frequent and to obtain benefit of greater impact gained by the (next) visit coinciding with Australia Day.' [51]

An attempt was made to task two RAN ships to Saigon in October 1962 but that visit did not eventuate. Representational aspects may have influenced that decision. There was a belief that the Navy should go beyond Saigon and into the important coastal

cities further north. These considerations would see the RAN return (this time by ship) to Nha Trang — the training centre and birth-place of the South Vietnamese Navy. The 1963 visit laid new ground as it was believed to be the first ship visit to that port. The Embassy noted that "... it was a particularly good idea to have the ships visit Nha Trang as well as Saigon." [52] HMAS QUIBERON (Commander V.A. Parker, RAN) and HMAS QUEENBOROUGH (Lieutenant-Commander F.R. Woods, RAN) sailed from Hong Kong on 27 January 1963 and proceeded to Nha Trang. Nha Trang was a seaside resort town and the capital city of Khan-Hoa province in central Vietnam. It is located just off highway one, 448 kilometres north of Saigon.[53] While still a picturesque city, one of QUIBERON's officers (who returned to Vietnam) noted that its essential charm later deteriorated when it was used as an R and R centre.

Both ships approached Nha Trang from the South, QUIBERON embarking the Australian Services Attaché, Lieutenant Colonel P.H.G. Oxley, and the Vietnamese naval liaison officer, ten minutes before anchoring on Tuesday 29 January.[54] The limited time restricted opportunities in Nha Trang although both commanding officers had made official calls on service and civil officials. An official reception for ships' officers was held at the Vietnamese Naval Academy.

Lieutenant Derbidge was the gunnery officer of QUIBERON and he took the ship's landing platoon to inspect a South Vietnamese ranger training centre at Duc My, some 50 kilometres up country. They were armed and travelled in convoy with U.S. and South Vietnamese escorts. He reflected that "...we had our adventures that day but that is another story." [55] As he sailed from Nha Trang on 30 January, Lieutenant Derbidge was struck by the similarity of this town with another port earlier visited. He remarked that the French influence of this beautiful coastal city was unmistakable, very much reminiscent of Noumea.

The two ships arrived at Vung Tau at 0640 on 31 January and, as usual, pilots and naval liaison officers were embarked and escort vessels were provided. [56] Lieutenant Derbidge noted in his log that the passage was achieved with the assistance of overhead planes searching for any signs of threat from the river banks. He also remarked that "we were all pretty nonchalant about this aspect of the visit, not being prescient of the escalating danger being mounted even then." [57]

QUIBERON's motto was "Seek and Subdue" and her battle ensign the "Jolly Roger" no less. There is no evidence that the skull and crossbones banner was flown by the ship on that trip. That act is normally reserved for less formal acts at sea. However, if that flag was struck, mistaken or imagined, observant river dwellers would have had their worst fears confirmed in recalling the Vietnamese proverb: "Brigands steal by night, Mandarins steal by day."

After turning up river from Saigon, QUEENBOROUGH berthed on QUIBERON at Pier Bravo at 1024. A tremendous welcome led by guards from each service and the Navy band greeted the ships as they approached their berths. That day saw both commanding officers making an extensive series of calls on various diplomats, politicians, service heads, the Prefect of Saigon and the President of the Republic. Such a formal diplomatic visit required many international protocols to be observed and appropriate marks of respect were exchanged between the officials of two independent nations who enjoyed full diplomatic relations.

Incredible hospitality was showered on the crew by the South Vietnamese. In 1963, Saigon was firmly under the grip of President Diem and the infamous Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu, his sister-in-law. Even though a curfew was in force, the crews seemed to be able to enjoy the city's nightlife without too many constraints. It was an enjoyable stay of five days with tons of entertainment.[58] Another correspondent wrote that "...the hospitality of our American friends was not to be denied in that city. At one of the bases, there was an open invitation for the ships' companies. This city of tree-lined streets with a French influence was the 'best run of the ship to the Far East'." [59]

The ships' captains accompanied Ambassador Hill to the Independence Palace for a call on President Diem. Sporting events were held and the sporting teams (in the interests of Australian-Vietnamese amity) were told to "throw the games" — allowing the locals to win. However, the results were even as some Vietnamese teams were of an Olympic standard. The ships' rugby teams had to face some big forwards who included some hard-bitten French planters who had come down from the hills, especially for the games. The ships' teams bore their losses with the fortitude normally associated with the highest traditions of the service.

A reception was hosted by the Commander of the South Vietnamese Navy, Captain Ho Tan Quyen, a Diem loyalist who had supported his President against previous coups. In the previous July, the Embassy reported that Quyen had been promoted to the rank of (honorary) Captain in the same week that his wife presented him with a son after six daughters — which made him a much-sought after guest in the cocktail round.[60] An Australian officer remembered that Madame Quyen was a woman of

exceptional beauty in a country where beauty in women is considered unremarkable. That joy was short-lived for Quyen, for on his thirty-sixth birthday he became the first victim of the 1 November 1963 coup that also removed President Diem.[61] The loss of Quyen ushered in nearly three years of turmoil in the senior South Vietnamese Navy leadership.[62]

On 1 February the Ambassador gave a buffet for the ships' officers that was attended by senior officers of the South Vietnamese Navy. Although some foreign missions were disregarding the ban on dancing which was passed into law by the Parliament, (the Ambassador) "...decided not to do so on this occasion — despite some feminine disappointment."[63] The Embassy's first ministerial despatch for the year also reported that "... on 2 February, the ships' officers attended my Australia Day Reception that, by their presence and that of about 10 members of the AATTV, became a more Australian and rather gayer occasion than previously. The only serious hitch occurred when the toasts were proposed to the President of Vietnam and Her Majesty the Queen."[64]

It was evident that the visit improved the quality of the existing bi-lateral relationship and on another plane, Australian-American relations in the Republic. The ships' visits secured favourable and sustained publicity throughout the nation. The United States Information Service in Saigon, which prepared the weekly Vietnamese-language newsreel, gave good coverage and the film was to be shown in every cinema in South Vietnam.[65]

It was time to leave Saigon. Those Australian sailors may well have come as strangers but, in that troubled land, for many Vietnamese, it was no longer their paradise. As the service band farewelled the ships, one doubts whether the bandmaster was aware of the hospitality given to Admiral Boyd in 1948 at the royal tables in Cambodia. If he did remember, in the circumstances, he might have been excused if he responded at a subliminal level, in striking up a spirited version of Borodin's Polovtsian Dances (Act II) in remembrance of the Tartar Chief's daughter, Kontchakovna.

With pilots on board, the ships cast off at 1000 on Monday 4 February and commenced passage down river to the sea. Once again, personnel from the Australian Embassy were embarked and were pleased to accept an invitation to venture beyond the perimeter of Saigon. At Cap St. Jacques (1430) the staff were transferred by motor cutter to the escorting South Vietnamese naval vessel for return to Saigon.[66]

Ralph Derbidge commented that "our transit of the river was marked by an error of judgement by the commanding officer of VNS KY-HOA (HQ-09). This escort vessel buried her anchor in our (QUIBERON's) starboard side whilst coming alongside in the estuary to take off some V.I.P. passengers."[67] The ship anchored to repair the damage. At 1554 the anchor was weighed and the course set for Singapore.[68] So ended a remarkable visit by those ships to South Vietnam — the last 'diplomatic' visit for 30 years. Years later, as Australia's military commitment escalated, the RAN would return in country, rarely in white uniforms but wearing flying suits or jungle greens.

The afternoon watch, as they handed over to the first dog watch, may have had time to reflect on that visit as they left their duties and watched the Vietnamese shores recede into the distance. Saigon's famed light puffy winds refreshed the crew taking in their last views of that hot and mystical land. In their safety and comfort, some crew members might have noted the haunting and wasting beauty of those hills. Years later, those same hills would appear less scenic, become rebarbative, as other young Australians entered them in greater numbers.

The ships took up night stations and the signalling lanterns winked at each other in friendly conspiracies. Overhead, dimmed navigational lights competed for attention with the stars. The bridge watch steadied the course as the bows bit into deeper and unsure seas. Orders were telegraphed to the engine-room and the hands carried out routines to secure their equipment for the night passage. Some on board would return to those waters but with a different mission. For the others, that land faded into the night, the black seas and their memories.

As the respective embassies and ministries saw it, the visits had an overall political impact that should be put into its proper context. Out of those obscure events, some points can be made. Even prosaic functions such as official receptions and diplomatic clearances had their place in the wider order of things and significance can be drawn from those minor acts.[69] The captains were not diplomatic agents but their unspoken brief was to reach into the hinterland of the political relationship — attempting to project "Instant Australia" beyond Saigon's fortified walls.

In his last appointment in Canberra, Brian Hill was involved in planning for the very visit he would preside over in Saigon after his arrival. As Australia's representative, he was well placed to assess the implications of the 1962 and 1963 visits. Brian Hill presented his credentials as Ambassador on 21 December 1961 only weeks before the 1962 visit.[70]

What was the impact of those visits? Were the policy objectives fulfilled? Were our interests materially advanced? In 1992, Brian Hill assessed their significance. On his final call in Canberra his instructions were as brief as they were clear "...support Diem, support the Americans". The naval visits during his watch were a friendly move that cemented our relations in helping the South Vietnamese with their development. On reflection, it was not easy. As the major ally and supporter, the United States was so big and Australia was so small. However, the visits were an active response, even as a small partner, in affirming the relationship. The visits made a large impact, especially with the United States.

In 1963, it was a different time as Australia was little known outside empire circles. It was a world of old colonials and young colonials and we had to work our passage. Australia was then not well known — neither liked nor disliked — yet the country was keen to play a role. Brian Hill intimated that he got on well with Diem. He had his faults, his relatives were heavily involved in government and the President was often badly influenced by his family.

Both visits manifestly enhanced the political relationship between the two countries. The South Vietnamese wanted to know Australia and they sought proof of that friendship. We too wanted to know them so Australia put its cards on the table — dealing a pair of ships in two straight hands. Moreover, the South Vietnamese reacted warmly to the visits and were favourably disposed towards Australia's aspirations for the region.

The two countries, as smaller powers, sought a special relationship within the larger framework of ties. To be realistic, contact was difficult as few Australians could speak their language. It was for this reason that External Affairs sent their best French linguists. Later, the acquisition of Vietnamese language skills would be promoted.

The underlying importance of the visit was not lost on the ships' companies. The crews were consciously aware of the purpose of their visit being well briefed by their officers. While the briefings mercifully stopped short of full political education, the commanding officers made their points.

As far as the RAN's professional association with the Royal Navy was concerned, it was relatively simpler. In the end, it was constructed on two premises — defence and political. In the first instance, the RAN depended on the British Far East Fleet for an outlet into the wider operational environment where vital tactical experience could be gained in exercises with the larger fleet units and auxiliaries. Australian warships had been periodically rotated through the Strategic Reserve since 1955. Annual SEATO exercises also became a playground for many allied navies and the accretion of experience was highly valued for the training it provided for future conflicts. In that sense, it was a professional association based on inter-dependence.

Secondly, at a political level, it was a relationship based on independence as Australia pursued its sovereign interests in Asia, asserting her own national identity and agenda. Canberra recognised the value of its defence links in the region yet sought to manage them in its own image. In its dealings with Asian nations, that sense of independence was not to be surrendered as Australia had a clear perception of its strategic outlook that was a direct outcome of its war-time experiences. The newly emerging Asian states, as they successively gained sovereignty, easily responded to those notions, wishing to be dealt with on an equal footing, free of any former associations.

At the end of the 1963 visit, reports were transmitted between the two capitals. At eventide, the bonzes of the An Quang and Xa Loi pagodas, in their search for beatitude, sung their hypnotic chants amid the cloying incense. Perhaps in doing so they strived to rise above all the turmoil and strife that surrounded them. Somewhere in The Dreaming, a young aboriginal warrior swung his bull-roarer in ever widening circles, and in his fear, he recognised their own. Having failed to reach the same harmonic, it was left to more complex machines to communicate.

In Saigon, the Embassy communicator was busily reporting to Canberra. In that confined and stuffy space, the street noises from Tu Do spiralled up to the seventh floor of the modernist Hotel Caravelle, their sounds being muffled against reinforced grimy windows and heavy bomb-blast curtains. The teleprinters hummed and surged and alarm bells rang as the machines suddenly broke into mother-in-law language, and later, stopping as suddenly as they had begun. Far out on the coast, in the deep shipping channels of the Saigon sea roads, the patrol craft continued their lonely patrols. In a monsoon season, the minesweepers were observed gently rocking in the rain. Later, after a storm that cleared to pink skies, a vessel was sighted sailing through the arc of a rainbow. In thirty years, nations, governments and people have come and gone. The Soirap River still rolls down to the South China Sea. Saigon became Ho Chi Minh City. The port abides.

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Luong Thiên
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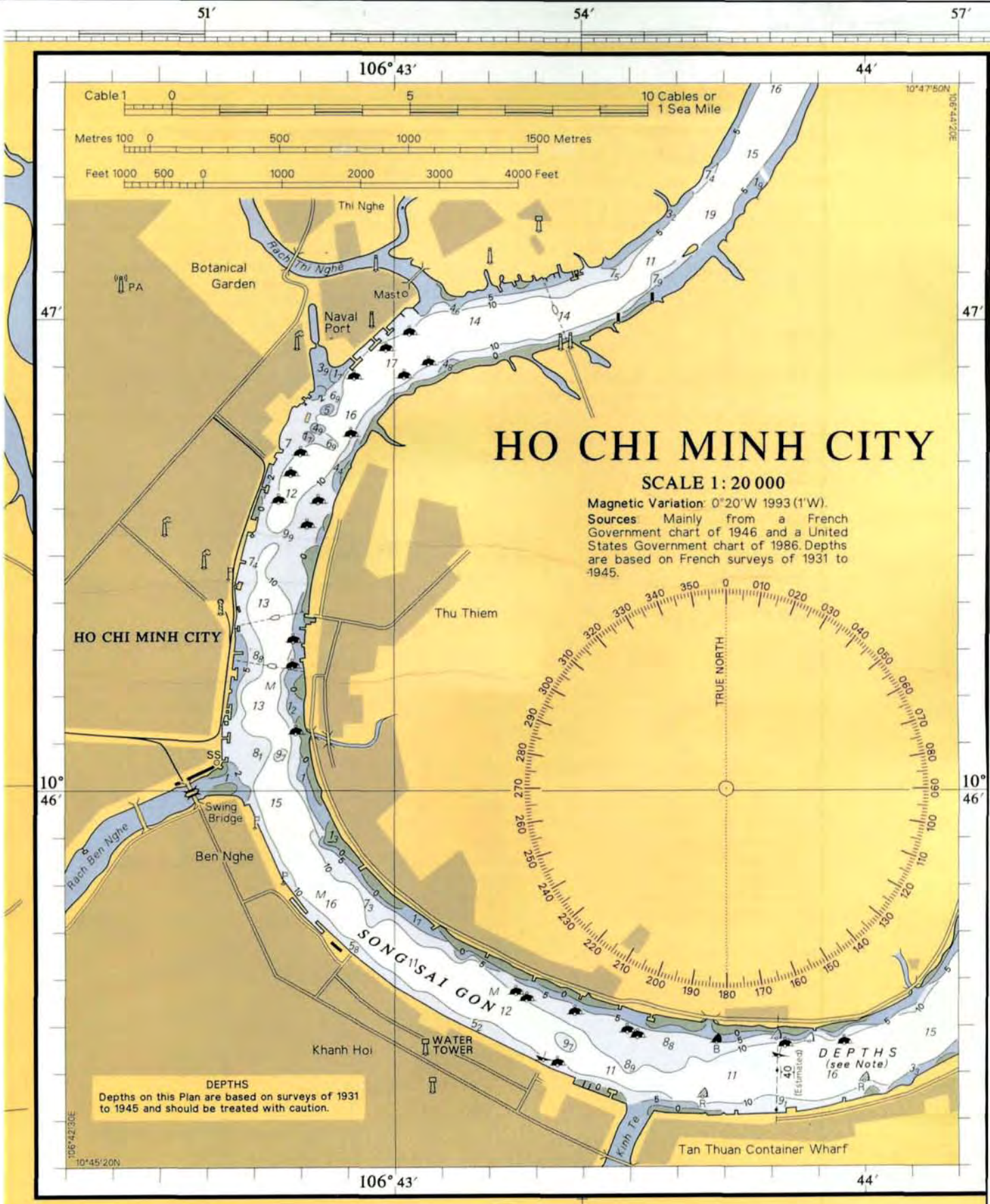

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## Notes

1 Anthony Preston and John Major, "Send a Gunboat—a study of the gunboat and its role in British policy, 1854-1904', Longmans, London, 1967, p. 3 and 185.

2 Navy Office Minute 27 October 1961, Defence file 244/3/40, AA CRS A1945/27.

3 Admiral Sir David Luce, Commander-in-Chief, Far East Station, (Royal) " Navy News", October 1962. (A prescient comment considering the Brunei rebellion two months later).

4 British Chancery, May 1948 Report, DEA file 461/3/3 AA CRS A1838/238.

5 Ibid.

6 British Legation Saigon to the Foreign Office, 15 September 1952, file 1391/1/52, AA CRS A4529/1.

7 Captain Clive Hudson, Director of Plans, personal letter to Mr A J Eastman, External Affairs, DEA file 671/3. The South-East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) had been founded in the previous year (1954) when eight nations, including Australia, signed a pact at Manila. In 1955, Australia first contributed naval assistance to the newly-formed Commonwealth Strategic Reserve in Malaya and Singapore with two RAN ships joining the force on 2 July.

8 Ministerial Statement, "Current Notes", Volume 27, Issue 10, October 1956, p. 650. (President Ngo Dinh Diem had invited the Australian Government to send an Australian naval vessel to celebrate the first anniversary of the proclamation of the Vietnamese Republic).

9 "Guide Touristique", Publicity Edition, Saigon, 1956-57.

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13 G W Long, 'Indo China faces the Dragon', "National Geographic", Volume C 11, Number 3, September, 1952.

14 Dollard served in Saigon from 1956-58, in Tokyo from 1962-64 and as Chief of Staff of the Royal Malaysian Navy during Confrontation between 1965-67.

15 U.S. Embassy, Canberra note to External Affairs of 14 July 1954, seeking approval of the Legion of Merit award to Lt. Cmdr. Dollard. The citation on file at the AWM notes that "...MURCHISON's guns were audible at the Korean cease-fire conference table at Kaesong and Panmunjon, (and) they effectively demonstrated the United Nations' ability to challenge enemy control of the area immediately north of the Han River which improved the Allied bargaining position".

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17 HMAS ANZAC, op. cit.

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19 HMAS ANZAC op. cit.

20 Diplomatic Cadet Scheme, Intake X, Applications 'P', 1953, DEA file 1260/10/2P, AA CRS A1838/T174.

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23 HMAS ANZAC Monthly Punishment Return, October 1956, AA CRS A7111.

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32 DEA letter 696/8/1 dated 1 June 1961 to Defence, Defence file 244/3/40, AA CRS A1945/27. (The writer of this letter had some knowledge of this concept — he had served as an assistant naval attaché with the British Embassy, China, from 1945-46).

33 DEA letter 671/4 of 4 December 1961 to Navy, Defence file 244/3/40, AA CRS A 1945/27.

34 Australian Embassy Saigon cable I.23191 (261) of 29 September 1961 in Defence file 244/3/40 AA CRS A1945/27.

35 HMAS QUICKMATCH, Report of Proceedings, January 1962, file 300/7, AWM 78. Commander Doyle commented that the compulsory use of a pilot is unnecessary for a destroyer if the French charts can be borrowed.

36 Captain Synnot was a gunnery specialist and Commander Doyle had navigational qualifications. While various light carriers had reached Saigon before, caution was necessary. The Australian Embassy reported on a previous visit by HMS BULWARK in May 1961 which saw her anchor off Vung Tau — as her draught was 28 feet it was thought inadvisable for her to attempt to navigate this river up to Saigon. See Australian Embassy Saigon memorandum (516) V.221/5/10 of 19 May 1961, Defence file 244/3/40 CRS AA A1945/27.

37 HMAS VAMPIRE, Report of Proceedings, January 1962, file 351/5, AWM 78.

38 Saigon Sojourn, "Navy News", 9 February 1962.

39 QUICKMATCH Quips, "Navy News", 23 February 1962.

40 A contemporary journalist had the last word on that issue, see David Halberstam, "The Making of a Quagmire", Bodley Head, London, 1965, p.105.

41 HMAS QUICKMATCH, R.O.P., January 1962.

42 HMAS VAMPIRE, R.O.P., January 1962. An Australian diplomat serving in Saigon during the time noted that Captain Synnot quickly established tremendous personal rapport with senior officers of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces.

43 Prime Minister R. G. Menzies to President Ngo Dinh Diem, 26 January 1962, file 3014/10/11/2/1, AA CRS A1838/2.

44 HMAS QUICKMATCH, R .O.P., January 1962.

45 HMAS VAMPIRE, R.O.P., January 1962.

46 HMAS QUICKMATCH, op. cit.

47 Note dated 7 September 1962 to Mr S. Landau, Defence file 244/3/53, second part, AA CRS A1945/27.

48 Australian Embassy Saigon, Despatch 1/62 of 30 January 1962,Saigon/S.E.A. series, 1962, AA CRS A4231/T3.

49 DEA to Defence 20 March 1962, file 673/2/10, AA CRS A1945/28.

50 Ministerial Despatch 1/62 above. This is a significant document as the Ambassador correctly assesses Saigon's attitude towards allied support and he also anticipates the Republic's request for increased Australian aid.

51 Hill to DEA, Savingram 62, I.21251, 27 August 1962 in Defence file 244/3/53, AA CRS A1945/27.

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53 D. Wheatfield, "Historical and Cultural Dictionary of Vietnam",Scarecrow Press, N. J., 1976, p. 208.

54 HMAS QUEENBOROUGH, Report of Proceedings, January 1963, file 298/9, AWM 78.

55 Captain R.T. Derbidge, RAN, correspondence 17 November 1992.

56 HMAS QUEENBOROUGH, R.O.P., as above.

57 Derbidge, op. cit.

58 Derbidge, ibid.

59 "Navy News", 8 March 1963.

60 Australian Services Attaché Saigon, July monthly report 1962, file 3014/12/4 (part one) AA CRS A1838/277.

61 Ellen J. Harmer, "A Death in November", 'America in Vietnam', E.P. Dutton, New York, 1987.

62 F. Uhlig, "Vietnam", 'The Naval Story', Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, 1986.

63 Saigon despatch 1/63, op. cit.

64 Ibid. (The band then played Advance Australia Fair and not God Save the Queen).

65 Ibid.

66 HMAS QUEENBOROUGH, op. cit.

67 Derbidge correspondence.

68 Her correct title was the Ho-Tong Ham Ky-Hoa (PCE 09). For an account of her fate, see Richard Schreadley, "From the Rivers to the Sea", 'The USN in Vietnam', Naval Institute Press, Maryland, 1992.

69 See DEA letter 671/4 of 23 November 1959, in Navy file 244/3/40 AA CRS A1945/27. External Affairs advised Navy that "...an undesirable and misleading impression of Australia's national status and of her relationship to the United Kingdom is inevitably made on the local authorities ... if clearances for Australian ships are sought by United Kingdom diplomatic missions."

70 Australian Services Attaché, monthly report, November/December 1961, Defence file 3014/12/4 (part one) AA CRS A1838/277.


Less water
Rep (1966)
Rach O Tchen
Cu Lao
Phu Loi
Song Nga Bay
Song Dong Dinh
Mangrove
SONG SAI GON
Fishing stakes
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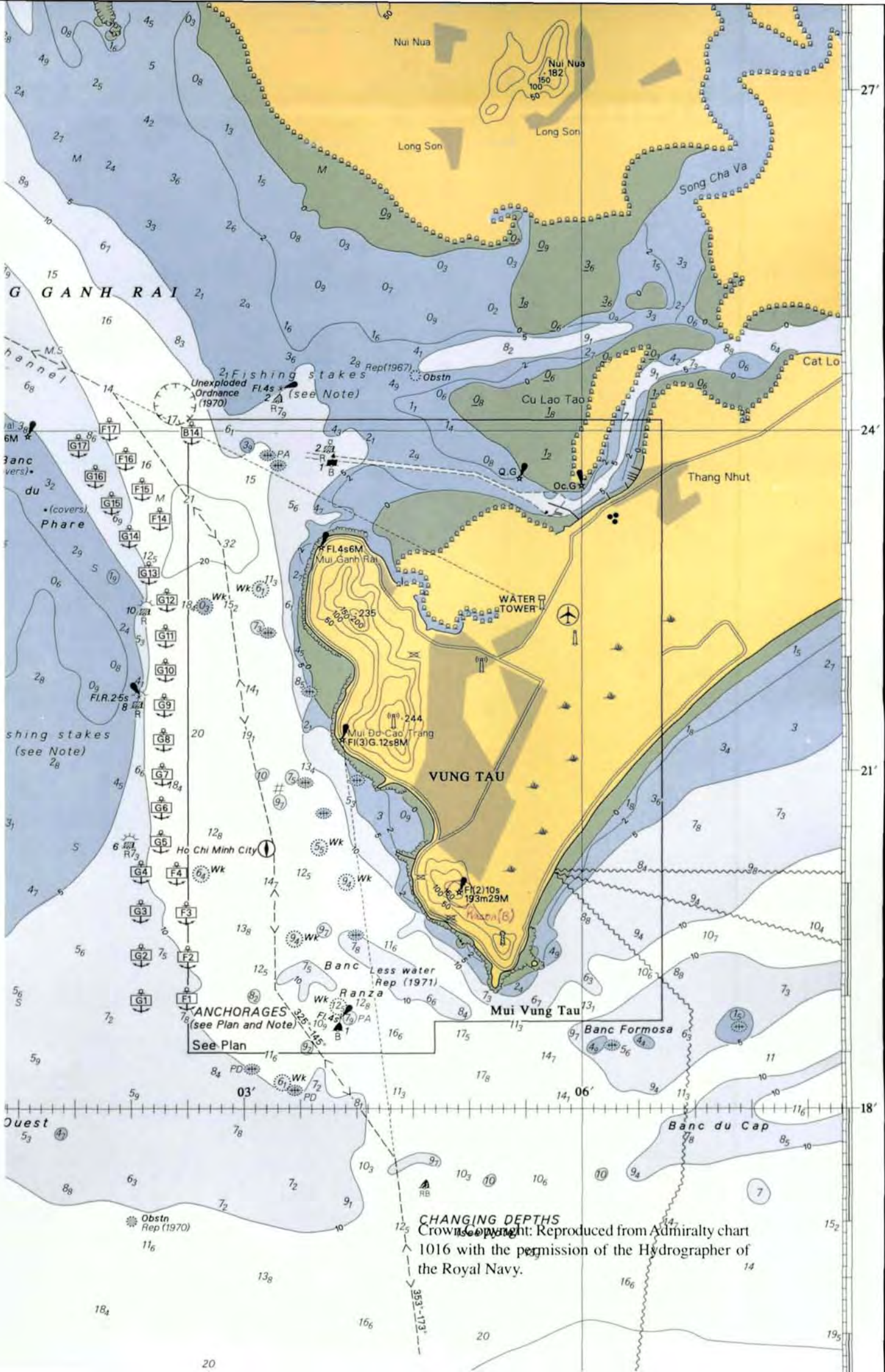


# DENIAL OF PASSAGE RIGHTS IN THE INDONESIAN ARCHIPELAGO — AUSTRALIAN IMPLICATIONS

BY

LCDR B R VICTOR RAN

*'All aspects of maritime power, whether economic or military are influenced by International Law. Indeed were the code of International Law comprehensive, fully agreed and universally respected, maritime power would be governed by law to the extent that the need for its military component would be much diminished. Regrettably neither code nor respect is strong enough to bring this result about.'*

*— Hill J.R. Maritime Strategy for medium powers. Croom Helm, London, 1986, p 36.*

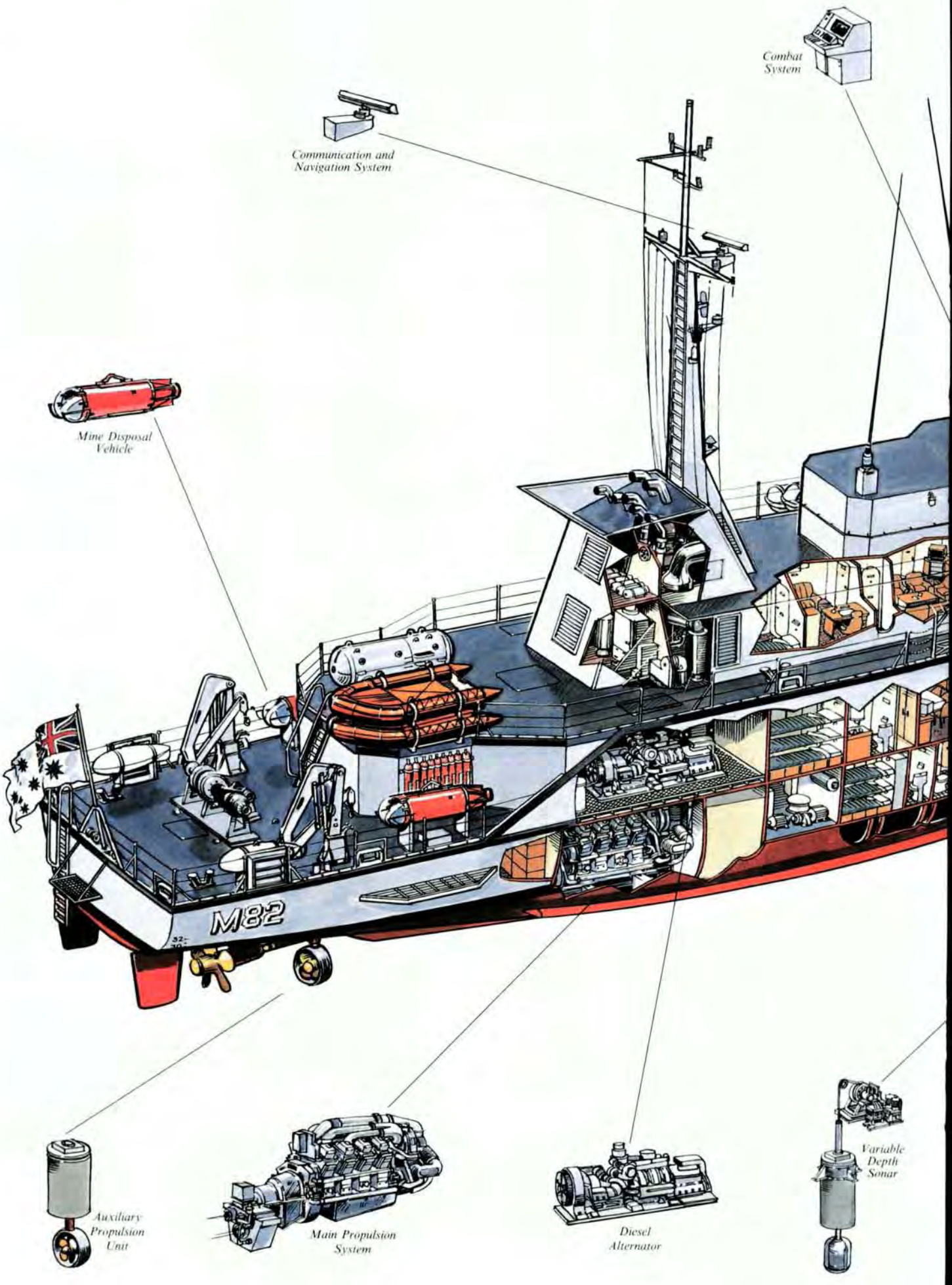
If it ever existed, the era of direct large scale military conflict with the Republic of Indonesia has all but passed. Although military dominated, the government of the archipelagic state has been relatively stable since 1968 when the present administration assumed power. The desire for new territories, and the build up of a military infrastructure to support such a desire does not exist in either nation. Thus the prospective magnitude of any conflict must be reduced to something well short of all-out war.

Whilst avoiding the temptation to develop potential scenarios to fit such a conflict, disputes through diplomatic disagreement, disrespect for national values, conflict with a third country, or mineral exploration rights are possible. The exact nature of the conflict is however outside the remit of this essay. The reactions to and the implications of conflict between Australia and Indonesia, and for that matter any other country which chooses to exercise force in the archipelagic region, are at the least unpredictable, due to the varied nature and circumstances of the conflicts themselves.

The selective closure to Australian naval and trade shipping of the international straits in the Indonesian archipelago is but one option which may be invoked in such a conflict situation. Regardless of the legality of this action, the implications and effects on Australia will be felt even in the short term, whilst sources of peaceful resolution are explored. This essay will examine the implications of denying passage rights through the Indonesian Archipelago to Australian shipping. After discussion of the laws of the sea pertinent to archipelagic transit, the denial issue will be examined from two perspectives. Firstly the influence such a blockade would have on Australia's present Defence strategy with respect to the South East Asian region, and then the influence on Australian sea trade, and ultimately the economy. Alterations to Australia's present strategy to account for such a situation will finally be considered.

## LAW OF THE SEA PERTINENT TO ARCHIPELAGIC TRANSIT

Modern international law of the sea has been under a process of evolution since 1958, when the first United Nations sponsored conference on the subject was convened. Four major conventions were agreed — Territorial Seas and Contiguous Zones, High Seas, Fishing and Living Resources, and Continental Shelf. At the time these conventions covered almost all important aspects of maritime international law. A further conference was convened in 1960 in an attempt to gain agreement on the extent of territorial seas and fishing zones, however no such agreement was reached, and a third conference was necessary. Other factors which were considered at the third United Nations Conference on Law of the


Combat System
Communication and Navigation System
Mine Disposal Vehicle
M82
Auxiliary Propulsion Unit
Main Propulsion System
Diesel Alternator
Variable Depth Sonar

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**THE PROVEN MINEHUNTERS WITH A BUILT-IN SAFETY FACTOR**

Sea (UNCLOS III) were — the tendency of some states to place excessive claims on areas of surrounding high seas, the increasing resource potential of the deep seabed, and an initiative to declare the seabed a 'common heritage of mankind'. UNCLOS III convened in 1973, and in 1982, after 11 meeting sessions, a Convention was agreed. Among the *significant* issues resolved were laws formulated for the benefit of archipelagic states, and of equal importance, laws to protect the states seeking passage through such archipelagos. Australia and the states of South East Asia have signed the treaty, although it is still to be ratified by Australia.

## Innocent Passage.

Both the 1958 and 1982 conferences extend the right of innocent passage through a State's territorial waters to all vessels including warships. To be considered innocent, the passage must not be prejudicial to the peace, good order or security of the coastal state. A comprehensive yet non—exhaustive list of actions which may be considered prejudicial are included in the convention: 'any weapons practice or exercise; information collection; propaganda against the state; aircraft movements; loading/unloading of cargo, currency or persons in contravention of customs, fiscal, immigration or sanitary laws; pollution; fishing, research or survey, and acts against installations' [1]

The right of innocent passage extends to vessels of all countries, and in peacetime there can be no discrimination between flags, especially in selective suspension of passage rights. A coastal state may however temporarily suspend passage rights to all foreign ships if it is considered necessary for the state's security.[2] Two other features of innocent passage are pertinent to warship operations in addition to the restrictions already outlined. Firstly, there is no requirement for a state to notify another of intended warship transit through its territorial waters, and secondly submarines must transit on the surface and show their flag.

## Transit Passage.

In dealing specifically with transit through international straits, UNCLOS III introduced the concept of transit passage, to protect the rights of those states requiring passage through the area. The term is defined as "the freedom of navigation and overflight solely for the purpose of continuous and expeditious transit of the strait between one area of the high seas (or exclusive economic zone) and another."[3] The first significant difference between innocent and transit passage is that transit passage rights are non—suspendable by the parent state. While engaging in transit passage vessels are required to: proceed without delay through the strait, refrain from any threat or use of force against the state, and refrain from any activities other than those incident to their normal modes of continuous and expeditious transit. The United States and the United Kingdom have interpreted the 'normal mode of transit' for submarines as being submerged, which illustrates the second major difference from innocent passage.

## Archipelaqic Sea Lanes Passage.

Further to transit through international straits, UNCLOS III dealt with the issue of transit through the archipelagic states. Laws governing archipelagic sea lane passage were therefore developed. An archipelagic state may designate sea lanes in its waters for the purpose of such transit, the width being generally 25 miles either side of the designated axis line. The rules governing such passage are the same as those for transit passage — including non—suspension of transit rights, and the option of submerged submarine transit. In cases where a state does not designate specific sea lanes, those historically used for passage can be adopted by the state seeking transit rights.

As with law at any level, the rules previously described bind those affected to uphold them. However, a system of law cannot guarantee the individual views and policies of a person or state, and thus the potential for conflict or at least failure to uphold and correctly apply the law can exist. By peaceful means, disputes over Law of the Sea issues are resolved firstly at the diplomatic level, and on failing this through the International Court of Justice. Should the peaceful processes fail, the risk of armed conflict is increased.

Obviously political, military and social developments in the states to the north are of great strategic importance and relevance to Australia. None can be more so than those occurring in Indonesia, as the archipelagic state which covers the majority of our northern approaches, and through which our important air and sea routes of communication lie.[4] As all Indonesian straits used for ocean passage are of importance for both the Australian defence strategy and the economy, Australia seeks to maintain a sound and constructive relationship with Indonesia on rights of passage in the region. Through any of the means previously mentioned, this relationship may breakdown, or alternatively, a third party may intervene with the aim of disrupting Australia's lines of communication. The implications of this intervention should therefore be considered.

## STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

Australia's defence strategy is one of defence in depth, giving priority to meeting credible levels of threat in our area of direct military interest.[5] When examining South East Asia, in times of peace this strategy is achieved in several ways. Of primary importance is the principle of maintaining a high profile in the region through visits and consultations on strategic and defence matters, military and naval visits, defence co—operation, and by showing our ability and competence to use the equipment we have available to us.[6] In implementing the strategy Naval forces make constant use of the Indonesian Archipelagic straits, when projecting Australia's interest into the South East Asian (SE Asian) and Indian Ocean regions. Present defence guidance requires a force of two RAN major Fleet Units in the SE Asian region to fulfil this projection responsibility and to further military and diplomatic ties in the area.

To achieve this requirement and other tasks requiring deployment through the northern lines of approach, all of the principle shipping lanes are used. In the west of the archipelago, Sunda Strait provides the most direct access to SE Asia, for units deploying from Western Australia (WA), while any of Lombok, Alas, or Ombai Wetar Straits provide equidistant access to the Java Sea, when passaging from the eastern states. The RAN currently operates in the Archipelago under the regime of Archipelagic sea lanes transit, which is recognised by Indonesia. Transit intentions are therefore not notified prior to passage being undertaken, limited aircraft operations are conducted within the bounds of the sea lane, and submarines can choose to transit submerged. As Indonesia has only very recently declared Archipelagic sea lanes, the RAN still uses historically established lanes for international passage. The rights of archipelagic transit passage are also used by allied nations in several Indonesian Straits. In particular the United States uses both the Lombok and Wetar Straits for submerged nuclear submarine transit enroute from Guam to the Indian Ocean.[7]

What would be the effect of closure of the Indonesian Archipelagic straits on the Australian defence strategy? As has already been stated, such closure may take several forms and be initiated by various means. Previous discussion has also tended to portray the Archipelago as vital to implement the projection task of the strategy. Putting this in perspective though, projection is but one element of the overall strategy and could be done away with for the duration of the period of tension if required. In fact it may even be necessary to dispense with it completely if a military presence is required to assist in resolution of the conflict. Should Australian military and particularly naval presence still be required in the SE Asian region by the Government of the day, could it be achieved, and if so how great would be the inconvenience?

The alternate routes into SE Asia must first be considered. In the west, the selective closure of the Malacca Strait is virtually impossible, as up to 50000 transits by ocean going vessels occur every year.[8] Additionally intervention by concerned third countries as users of the strait would certainly be forthcoming. For RAN fleet units based in WA, use of this passage would increase the transit distance to Singapore by 1000 miles, which could be accommodated, provided a fuelling stop was made in the north west of Australia prior to departure, and a second was considered in Lumut, Malaysia. Visits to those ports on the west coast of Thailand and the Malay peninsula would be unaffected. For major units deploying from eastern ports, the obvious alternative is to transit east about New Guinea, then into the South China Sea through the Philippine Archipelago. The modest increase in passage distance (600 miles) can easily be accommodated at little extra cost. Once in the South China Sea, access to SE Asian countries is unimpeded. The continued deployment of Fremantle Class Patrol Boats into the area is also achievable with careful planning, through either the east or western routes.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR AUSTRALIAN SEA TRADE AND THE ECONOMY

Separate from the implications an Indonesian Archipelagic blockade would have on present defence strategy are the effects which will be felt by commercial shipping and the national economy. It is of no surprise that of all countries, Japan takes the greatest value of our exports, and is only marginally behind the European community and the United States in providing our greatest source of imports.[9] As the majority of our trade is carried by sea (99.9%), what are the principle routes?

For exports bound for Japan, particularly from the north—west, the principal route is through Lombok Strait, then the Strait of Makassar, before transit into the Pacific Ocean south of the Philippine Archipelago. The ease of navigation and depth of water make this route particularly suitable for iron—ore and gas exports. Traffic through the straits is relatively high however, as the route also provides a deep water passage for Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCC) transitting from the Middle East to destinations in SE Asia and the Pacific. An equally suitable and equidistant alternative passage for exports from the north and west to Japan is Ombai Wetar Strait. From the northern limit of this strait, passage towards the Philippines can be taken through either the Makassar Strait or Molucca passage (east of Sulawesi). For exports proceeding north west from

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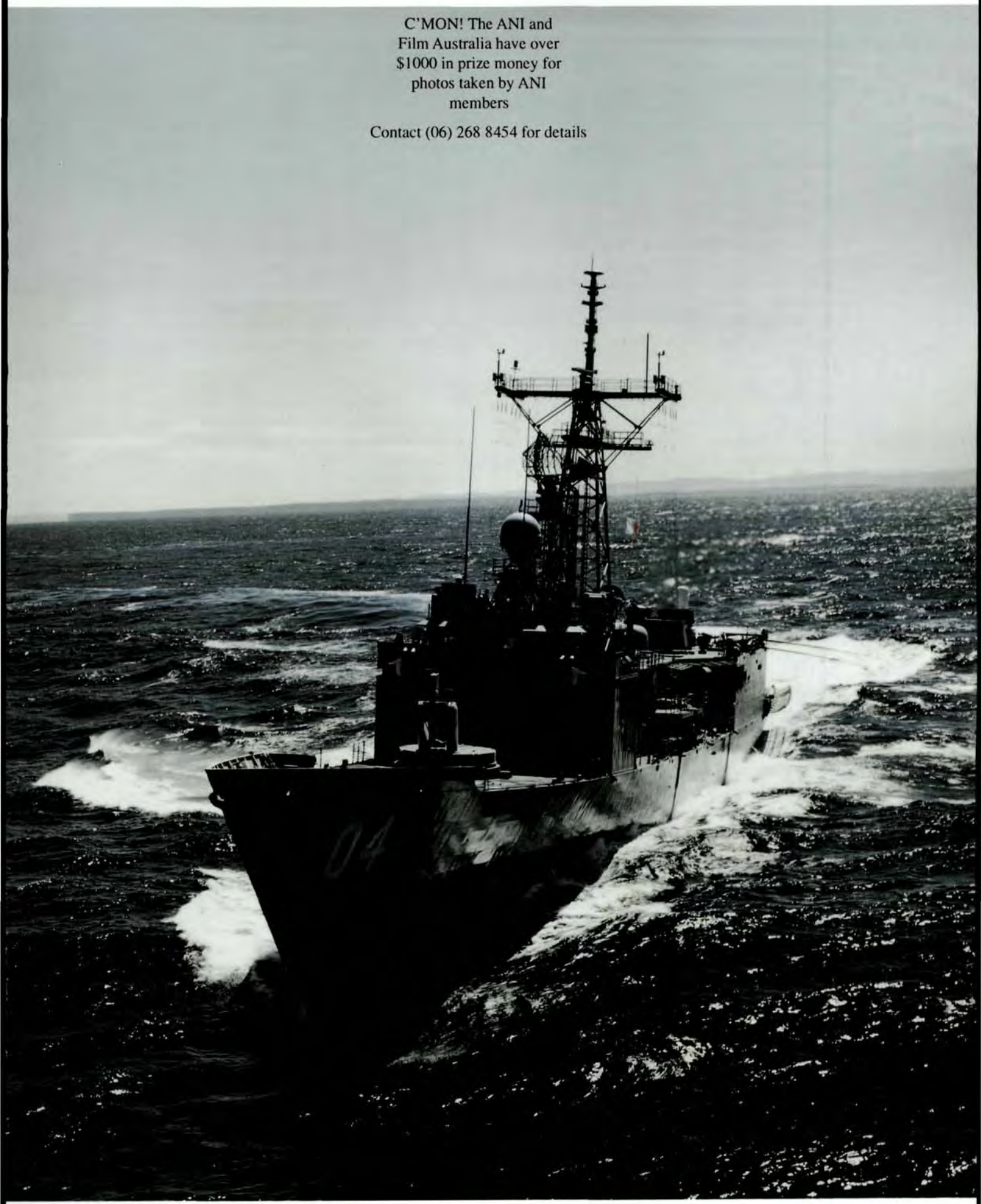

Darwin and the east coast (having first passed through Torres Strait), this Strait also provides the most direct access to the Java Sea, and eventually Singapore and the Malacca Strait. For vessels choosing this route, Karimata Strait, south west of Kalimantan is also significant.[10] Of lesser importance, although still significant for Australia's exports originating in the west is Sunda Strait, separating Sumatra and Java. This Strait is a less direct route to Japan than that available through Lombok, and is also complicated by navigational, draught and tidal constraints. For trade with SE Asia though, Sunda Strait provides direct access from the west. Exports from eastern states bound for Japan and other north west Pacific countries are unaffected by the Indonesian Archipelago, and choose a direct route passing east of New Guinea.

The degree to which imports are affected is equally influenced by both origin and destination. Those principal Straits mentioned in the previous paragraph are also those used for imports, originating in the SE Asian region (6 percent)[11] or subject to routing through the area. Imports from Japan bound exclusively for Australia are routed east of New Guinea, and generally terminated in the eastern States. That cargo bound for the west is freighted overland or moved further by sea south—about, if necessary.

Having considered which Straits through the Indonesian Archipelago are of primary importance for Australian trade shipping, the likely vulnerability of those ships in times of conflict needs examination. Today's technology in maritime warfare makes initial detection of merchant shipping, especially that passing through choke points extremely easy, and thus the chance of intercepting undefended shipping for a direct attack is high. This applies even to small forces with modest capabilities. Modern communications and intelligence also contribute greatly to an aggressor's ability to interdict selected merchant targets. As with military traffic, seaborne trade can also be disrupted by methods other than direct attack. Of primary consideration is the use of mining, whether real or threatened. This cheap and simple means of enforcing a blockade is not selective though and little discrimination between hostile and friendly targets exists. Patrol, then interception and diversion of targets of interest overcomes the problem of selectivity, however this suffers from the high rate of effort required — equipment, manpower and cost.[12]

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

Assuming that through these or any other means, a blockade of Australian merchant traffic through the Indonesian Archipelago is successful, what will be the effect on Australian society and the economy? Before answering this question, the aims and resolve of the potential aggressor must be considered. This is relevant because of the substantial role played by foreign shipping in Australian trade. In the past, as little as four percent of Australian sea trade was carried by Australian flagged vessels.[13] Therefore the question of whether the aggressor wishes to involve a series of third countries in his dispute needs clarification. To consider a worst case scenario for Australia, an assumption must be made that blockade and denial action would be brought against any vessel trading with Australia, not just those of Australian registration. In such a contingency, Australia would wish to maintain exports for domestic reasons — to maintain the economy and standard of living, and perhaps even to finance possible subsequent military operations.[14]

A summary of the effects on the Australian economy and way of life even for a situation of global war denying Australian access to shipping is provided in the 1987 Defence White Paper:— "Australia enjoys a high degree of economic self sufficiency. We are a net exporter of energy and self—sufficient in food. The economy has basic features which have enabled previous short term or sporadic interruptions to trade — through industrial action — to be accommodated, though with inconvenience and economic cost. While our long term prosperity certainly requires a healthy level of commodity exports (exports now account for some 12% of GDP—down from 20% in the early 50's), Australia could survive **significa**nt disruption of overseas trade in the event of global war, though at a cost to our standard of living. Most of the needs of the civil community could be met without external supply if appropriate measures of conservation and rationing were introduced. Those essential items which are imported could be stockpiled or alternative sources arranged even if at higher cost — if there is any change in our current judgement about the remote prospect of global conflict.[15]

## NON—MILITARY SOLUTIONS

In seeking to overcome the economic and social difficulties associated with a successful blockade, the Government has several military and non—military courses open to it. In choosing the non—military course, several options exist, none which come without cost. For imports, the terminal destination can be changed to one more suited to a passage which excludes the Archipelago. The commodities could then be freighted further overland or by coastal shipping. Government subsidy, both for the initial diversion and the subsequent national transport will be necessary. For exports, the options are more difficult. However, the present strategy of diversion of both military and civil traffic away from the area of interest is adequate. Augmentation of the strategy

with appropriate contingency plans is however a worthy consideration, to provide a rapid and coordinated response to the contingency, with the aim of ensuring minimum disruption to the Australian infrastructure. In development of the plan, legal, military and governmental representation will be necessary to formulate a graded response to the scenario, from diplomatic and legal measures, to full military intervention.

Could the ADF cope with the full military intervention option? Given the relative proximity of the southern Indonesian Straits to Australian ports, particularly Darwin, resupply of units operating in the area is achievable. The ability of the ADF to deal with particular threats is not so clear. A reasonable assumption to make about any limited conflict over transit rights is that Australia would not desire an escalation in the situation. Therefore all military action would be in response to that initiated by the aggressor. It would be difficult for Australia to respond fully to any air threat which existed in the area, and impossible to deal with a mine threat, short of re-routing out of the area. Surface action, especially against missile armed patrol boats, is achievable, albeit with likely losses, as would be ASW given a conventional threat conducting focal point operations. The ability of Australian maritime forces to conduct both these operations and convoy escort duty is limited. Thus a military solution to disputes over transit rights must be carefully considered, and be employed only as a last resort. The escalatory nature of this action in International eyes, the unlikely success, and the probable significant losses of ADF assets and personnel make a full military solution undesirable.

## CONCLUSION

The Law of the Sea in its present form provides an avenue for both prevention of disputes over archipelagic transit rights and further, a peaceful form for resolution of disputes should a situation arise. As with any law though, it is only as effective as the signatories choose to make it, and thus the potential for breaches exists. While peaceful means of conflict resolution are explored, at least one party in the conflict will be disadvantaged to some degree. The response from the disadvantaged country may take several forms dependant upon the resolution of both herself and the aggressor, and the nature and extent of the dispute — in this case a full or partial blockade.

In the scenario of either Indonesia or a third country denying passage rights to Australia through the Indonesian Archipelago, Australia will assume the role of the disadvantaged party. As our primary lines of sea communication run through the Archipelago, the potential for major disruption of Australian infrastructure and Government policy exists. The magnitude of such a disruption is dependant upon the aggressor's ability to ensure the blockade is both comprehensive and sustainable. In Australia's region, no country is capable of sustaining a blackade to close all Indonesian straits, unless perhaps mining is employed. The non—selective nature of such action is of equal disadvantage to the aggressor though and will be precluded by the depth of water which exists in some areas. From this non—effective and non—sustainable scenario then, the effects felt within Australia can be assessed.

Strategically, Australia's ability to project influence into, and maintain co—operation with other nations of SE Asia is more difficult without the Indonesian Archipelago. A presence in the region can still be maintained if required by provision of additional funds to finance northern deployments which proceed to the east and west of the Archipelago. It is probable in the scenario though that the requirement for Australian military presence in the region would be waived and defence resources would be recalled to Australia. The effect on Australian trade will be significant for the duration of the dispute. The majority of combined imports and exports pass through the straits, and would require substantial re—routing and government financial backing to be maintained at peacetime levels. As the level of foreign trade and hence foreign capital decreases, so will the lifestyle of Australia's population, albeit to varying degrees. Australia's self sufficiency in most commodities will enable the country to survive unassisted for the medium term, provided that adequate stocks of essential imports had previously been maintained.

In reacting to the threat of disruption of our northern sea lines of communication, Australia's present national and defence strategy is able to cope. The strategy requires augmentation though, in the form of specific contingency plans to deal with the situation. Such a plan should provide for a graded strategic response, from diplomatic negotiation to traffic re—routing to full military intervention. Use of the military option requires careful consideration, as it realistically stands little chance of decisive success. This option, like most other defence tasks, is limited primarily by finance which reflects in too few assets and hence no redundancy capability. For the foreseeable future, re—routing of Australia's trade and military shipping around the area of conflict will remain the only certain way of overcoming the effects of denial of passage rights in the Indonesian Archipelago.

## Notes

1. ABR 5179 — *RAN Manual of International Law*, Volume 1, p 2—12.

2. Ibid, p 2—13.

3. Ibid, p 2—23.

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5. Ibid, p 31.

6. Ibid, p 10.

7. Leifer M. *Malacca Singapore and Indonesia*, Volume 2. Sijthoff and Noordhoff, The Netherlands, 1978, pp 81—83.

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9. Evans G. *Australia's Regional Security* Ministerial Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, 1989. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, 1989, p 26.

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11. Evans G. op cit, p 26.

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15.*The Defence of Australia, 1987*, op cit, p 28.

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# EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT DEFENCE COST EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS, BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK!

by

**Lieutenant Commander AL Hinge**

*This article is the second of three articles on issues in Navy Management*
*The first,* The Navy Project Manager's Primer, *addressed five key problem areas in project management and appeared in the November 1992 issue of JANI. This article tackles the almost universally misunderstood issue of what cost effectiveness is and how the concept should be used.*

National defence decision making is complex. Defence 'output' is often hard to measure and choosing between weapons and policies is not helped in an environment where choices are inter-dependent and many factors vary. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that systematic quantitative analysis has gained wide acceptance in terms of helping to determine the relative cost effectiveness of alternatives. Cost Effectiveness analysis (CEA), like any other management tool, can be used well or badly. It has conspicuous strengths, weaknesses and limitations. If these are recognised and taken into account better defence choices can be made. Consequently, the aim of this article is to identify what cost effectiveness analysis really means in the defence context; that is, what it is, how significant it can be and how it should be used. Particular reference will be made to naval issues.

## What is Cost ?

Cost is often confused with the price paid for acquiring, producing, maintaining or, sometimes, avoiding something. A price can be paid in money, time, goods or 'sweat', but cost really represents foregone opportunities or benefits available from alternatives X,Y or Z which could otherwise have been gained from the money, time or effort paid for option 'W' which was actually taken up. For example, the 'cost' of your new car is really two or three years less mortgage payments, or a three month trip to Europe or whatever else worthwhile the money could have provided at the time. On a broader and less quantifiable scale, the cost of paying for DDG replacements may well be reduced readiness and training or sustainability and stockholding over the period 2001-2010. Again, cost is a measure of benefits foregone. This concept of cost has to be kept in mind; it highlights the need to consider and choose between alternatives at all levels of management. After all, management's most important job is to make good choices.

## What is effectiveness?

An effective choice is one that achieves an acceptable result or return as measured against specified objectives. Requirements are derived from goals, and the degree of effectiveness is judged from the extent of goal achievement. Therefore, at the broadest level, a cost effective option is one giving the user an acceptable return for a reasonable outlay (in his or her eyes). Taking this one step further,the most cost effective option would give the better return for a fixed cost, or , achieve a specified level of benefit or effectiveness for least cost. However, the 'maximise effectiveness for fixed cost' and 'minimise cost for set effectiveness' approaches, while useful in practice, remain sub optimised or simplified approaches to cost effectiveness. Fixing one factor to minimise or maximise the other does not adequately represent the dynamic, usually non linear relationship between the two variables.

Generally, neither cost nor effectiveness alone is sufficient to make the better choice between complex and expensive defence alternatives. Both cost and effectiveness should be understood at the same time and in relation to each other. Importantly, really understanding the relationship and interaction between effectiveness and cost at the margins is central to making good choices between alternatives.

## Putting Cost and Effectiveness together

In business, a key cost benefit accounting idea for choosing between alternatives involves the marginal or incremental approach. This method analyses changes in total costs and benefits (usually profit or revenue) and compares the relative profitability of alternatives. Good managers seek understanding to judge when marginal cost exceeds marginal return, that is, when further spending on a product gives incremental gains so small relative to incremental cost, that further expenditure is no longer justified or cost effective. This situation is known as diminishing return.

Understanding the relationship between cost and effectiveness at the margins involves being able to ask and answer the following kinds of questions: How much more effectiveness do I get for ,say, 5% more cost ? If I reduce effectiveness specifications by 10% how much will be saved on total cost? When does the ratio of marginal cost to marginal benefit or return become less than one? Where is the 'knee' of the Cost/Effectiveness curve which indicates rapidly diminishing return (Fig 1, page 56)? Does a 'knee' even exist in this case ?

Cost Effectiveness Analysis (CEA) aims at understanding the relationship between cost and effectiveness for a range of real alternatives, and is a tool to assist in making choices in defence. Depending on the choice and nature of alternatives, CEA uses methods derived mainly from cost benefit analysis and systems analysis (or any other discipline that is useful) to select the better alternative to improve a 'system'.[1] The approach can help managers generally in deciding what to produce or do, 'how much is enough' and what the better 'product mix' is. Like their counterparts in business, defence managers also need to decide these things. But, defence choices are made in a very different and in some ways more complex and constrained environment.

## Problems with 'Choosing' in Defence

The defence environment lacks the so called 'profit discipline' of the market place This discipline is based on relatively simple criteria of effectiveness (profit in dollars) and constraints which apply. While most public organisations share this problem, defence faces a 'how much is enough' question where real productivity is hard to measure. The output and effectiveness of defence forces can be approximated by looking at staged readiness exercises, but these occur under many constraints that would not necessarily apply in conflict. [2] Output measurement difficulties are exacerbated in a situation of no direct threat where contingency analysis using force on force comparisons are often hard to justify; let alone commit billions of dollars to their conclusions.

Major defence issues of choice fall into two basic categories. The toughest choices are for new capabilities, concepts and policies to handle future needs. The second most difficult choices involve deletions and changes to current policy, concepts and forces. Both kinds of decision take place in an atmosphere of unusual uncertainty, speculation and subjectivity. Who really knows what a living, reacting enemy will do, especially the enemy itself? Sometimes decision makers don't even have the 'advantage' of being able to identify an enemy and how it will operate. Therefore, defence risk management is much more an 'art' than a science, and choices involve alternatives presented by powerful military, political and bureaucratic actors with strongly entrenched vested interests. Adversarial interests exist in what is often seen as a zero sum game: 'I win; You lose' in terms of sharing the budget 'cake'.

Defence choices have to stand up in the very long term. Choices made today in force structure involve some major equipments having lives of thirty years and projects of half that time. Choices must also be wide in scope. The problem of 'Choosing' in defence is also exacerbated by many levels of requirement, coupled with the sheer number and diversity of viable capability alternatives, counter measures and enhancements. Military requirements, often stated in absolute terms, must at the end of the day be placed in a national security context. Commendable objectives at Corps or even Service levels may triple a given capability, but may not contribute enough to national security capabilities at the margins.

## What a Cost Effectiveness approach can do.

Cost effectiveness analysis (CEA) can assist in dealing with uncertainty and managing risk. Assuming a high quality of analysis, a cost effectiveness approach can help resolve difficult issues on a more objective basis when groping through defence's technical and bureaucratic 'minefields'. Good quality analysis of alternatives improves understanding of a problem and encourages adequate considera-

tion of requirements and alternatives for meeting them. This is done by first determining factors driving risks and outcomes; then identifying, clarifying and testing ,as far as possible, the validity of explicit assumptions, underlying assumptions and simplifying assumptions. Above all, good CEA provides a way of setting out choices between real alternatives for decision makers, and linking these choices to budget.

Importantly, a good analysis causes questions to be asked and improves the chance of a rational choice by focussing discussion and avoiding talk in generalities. Disciplined analysis can defend against military and bureaucratic pork barrelling and empire building, by forcing those responsible for a proposal to quantify costs and benefits as far as possible. Otherwise, reliance on value judgements, guesses, 'winging it' and hunches leads to clouded issues, muddled thought and unmet or expensively met objectives.[3]

CEA also provides a screening process for obvious non starters - a kind of entrance exam : it may not be able to pick 'stars' in most cases, but it can often identify 'losers' that do not justify investment at the margins. Choices are narrowed down. Also, if things do not go according to plan, the original analysis may be used to pin-point where, why, and how things went astray. Lessons are learned.

Solid CEA, in the form of capability analysis, is essential when converting a good operational concept (OPCONCEPT) to a formal Defence Force Capability Proposal (DFCP) and, after endorsement, to a Major Capability Submission (MCS). In the Navy capabilities are seldom completely new. Some significant capability exists in most areas and most of the time we are really proposing adjustments at the margins of current naval capabilities - what happens to my overall capability if I buy a little of this piece of kit, or scrap a little of that ? Capability analysis demands establishment of a 'baseline' by assessing the ability of the current and programmed assets to carry out tasks in relation to strategic guidance. From this baseline proposed ways of boosting effectiveness and/or efficiency by adjusting the capability at the margins should be carefully measured. Also, capability shortfalls should show up during good analysis. Note that lots of good, solid 'number crunching' is needed from the DFCP stage onwards and , for those with a morbid interest in this kind of work, DI(N) ADMIN 05-1(The Force Development Process AMDT 3) is an indispensable guide.

Importantly, good CEA can help guard against failure to realise changes in the underlying reasons for operational success or failure. Technical and operational developments over time can change, or, even reverse many conclusions derived from past experience which have over time become 'articles of faith'. Strategies and tactics which worked in one war for certain reasons may fail during the next war because of changes not considered at the time decisive. It is not enough to know from past experience simply that the methods were effective but why they were effective and if they remain as effective. Continuing analysis of probable effects of improvements in alternative capabilities, tactics and technologies in conflict is critical. Lack of testing for the cost effectiveness and applicability of the last war's tactics, methods, equipment and strategies under current conditions could lead to surprise and defeat as an enemy tries to develop hardware and tactics outside your planning focus.

An early RAND study to investigate the acquisition, construction and use of overseas bases for the US air force clearly illustrates the continuing need to use cost effectiveness analysis to help test conventional wisdom. The study was considered a turning point for the role of cost effectiveness in defence choice.[4] Air force took the building of new overseas strategic bomber bases for granted and merely wanted cost efficiency tips from the study. However, the study went much further. It generated three main alternatives to overseas basing and exposed the clear vulnerability of overseas basing to surprise attack. It concluded that the option of US bombers operating 'inter continentally', with ground refuelling at existing overseas bases, was by far the most cost effective choice (by $1 billion) when vulnerability on the ground and many other factors were taken into consideration.

While extensive overseas air force basing was appropriate, indeed decisive, in the Second World War, conditions had changed in the Cold War. Aircraft performance had dramatically improved and enemy capabilities for surprise had increased. The military made a fundamental error by not giving due regard to base vulnerability and were complacent in not thinking about the problem and considering alternatives or combinations thereof. RAND researchers simply pointed out the obvious to a complacent military and endeavoured to quantify it in terms of penetration of enemy airspace, own losses, dollar costs and damage to the enemy. The preferred RAND option clearly won out at the margins of strategic bomber capabilities. In this case, cost effectiveness analysis forced the military to lift their game, be less complacent and rethink the problem.

Let us now look at a case study where Navy's arguments were contradicted by cost effectiveness analysis.

**CASE STUDY: The Carrier Decision**

The decision not to replace HMAS Melbourne in the early 1980's found a complacent Navy not properly justifying its requirement and considering alternatives in a new strategic context.Convoy protection was the cornerstone of navy's argument, but analysis caused searching questions to be raised, and the table below summarises the results of a long series of studies. In the first convoy protection situation (see below) a focal area defence capability yielded an estimated eight ship annual loss at a basic protection cost of $50M. [5] To halve likely losses to four ships, a minimum escort (1 destroyer) cost increase of $20M (40%) was required. However the 'law' of diminishing returns soon came into play. Increasing escort size by three destroyers cost four times that of 'basic cover' ($200M) if losses were to be further halved to two ships. Marginal reduction in loss for marginal cost was much less attractive, especially if the six ships saved and their cargoes (relative to the baseline) were unlikely to have an average value exceeding $25 M each. Besides, high opportunity costs for three added detroyers during a conflict would have to be taken into account.

If a carrier escort was added to the four destroyers, this would seem to offer even worse value at the margins by not even halving losses at double the price tag ($400M). Carrier protection would have effectively needed an average ship and cargo saved value of over $ 51M. This was clearly not cost effective; one or two destroyers as surface escorts per convoy would appear to yield the most cost effectiveness from these figures.Analysis at the margins indicated that the vessel would not make a cost effective contribution to national security on the basis of the traditional reasons for acquisition given.

| PROTECTION TYPE* | COST** | SHIPS LOST | BREAK EVEN *** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Focal Area only (Baseline) | $ 50M | 8 | NA |
| 2P3/ 1 Destroyer | $ 70M | 4 | $ 5M |
| 2P3/ 4 Destroyers | $200M | 2 | $25M |
| 2P3/ 4 Destroyers/ Carrier | $400 | 1.2 | $51M |

* Assumes 12 convoys of 20 ships per annum. Focal area protection taken as bare minimum protection to be provided by government.

** $ Aust 1980.

*** Average ship and cargo value needed to match protection cost above baseline. Depending on the cargo carried, a sunk ship would be worth from $10-$20M (Hull costs $8-15M) Authors' estimate for 1980.

Of course, the value of the above figures in the table depends on the quality of the analysis. This in turn depends on the information available, representativeness and managability of information, validity of assumptions made, methodology used and time being available to sit down and do things properly. The quality of analysis is critical and the limitations of CEA must be kept in mind. Many impressive graphs and tables often represent skewed, unprofessional and sometimes even dishonest analysis based on inadequate or wrong information and very shaky assumptions. Consequently, the right questions need to be asked.

## Limitations: What the Cost Effectiveness Approach can't do.

Limitations on the application of cost effectiveness analysis in defence exist in both principle and in practice. Good quality analysis is onerous and complex. A good analysis must set out in detail which costs and measures of effectiveness are to be included; how they are to be valued and weighted; at what rate(s) they will be discounted, as well as relevant constraints.

For higher level, long term choices a complete analysis should involve a series of 'sensitivity analyses' with alternative assumptions about the values and natures of key variables within the 'system'. Furthermore, and adding to this complexity, the whole process would have to be done for each credible contingency for each alternative - component studies within studies within studies ! Therefore, high levels of sub optimisation and aggregation (kinds of simplifications), are hard to avoid in making many problems amenable to CEA. Also, given that the usefulness of a CEA is critically dependent on the realism of valuation and measurement assumptions for both cost and effectiveness, limitations on quan-

tifying each of these factors must be clearly understood.

### Cost Measurement Limitations

Three main factors cause uncertainty in defence costings. First is a frequent failure to take into account all costs of the 'system', including comprehensive and accurate estimates of research and development, procurement, facilities, stockholding and through life operating costs. Obviously, a lot of effort has to go into recognising downstream cost effects over a twenty year programme. Frequently costings end up as 'guesstimates', sometimes involving 'contingency factor' loadings of up to 40% being placed on them - cost 'garbage' in yields 'cost' garbage out. [6]

The second main costings problem derives from the long term nature of defence financial commitments. Discount rates applied to compare the present value of alternatives assumes unknown aspects of the economy over a long time. Many things can compromise these estimates including markedly different time /investment streams, life of type and varying natures of alternatives. This leads to the third main costings problem: Attempting to measure effectiveness in dollar terms is not always appropriate and a high level of arbitrariness often exists in effectiveness comparisons between dissimilar options.

### Effectiveness Measurement Limitations

Multiple measures of effectiveness arise frequently in defence. If objectives are simple and obvious, effectiveness can be directly related to goal. For example, a better performing army boot can have measures of effectiveness such as comfort and more durability which can be assessed by extensive trial. Both measures can be related back to infantry effectiveness, but even this has problems when trying to decide how much cost and effectiveness 'is enough'. While every effort should be made to make measures of effectiveness as simple as possible, effectiveness usually involves many variables which in turn may 'vary in the way they vary' from contingency to contingency.

Effectiveness evaluation becomes much more complicated when we have to chose between, or decide on mixes, of markedly dissimilar sub-systems and integrate them to contribute to an overall goal. Comparing the relative effectiveness of a patrol boat's contribution to maritime surveillance as opposed to that of a LRMP aircraft becomes difficult when effectiveness in other related areas must also be considered. While in the straight detection role the LRMP aircraft wins hands down, by orders of magnitude, a patrol boat is also able to intercept, search and apprehend targets in the wider context of maritime surveillance and security. A patrol boat also provides command experience to a core of officers earmarked for higher command. How do you cost or measure the effectiveness of these less obvious benefits in dollars or anything else?

Combining performance estimates for dissimilar systems, with each estimate itself differing in reliability under different operating conditions, complicates decisions on relative effectiveness and can lead to interminable arguments. But these qualifications can at least be appreciated in principle and allowances can be made. Political limitations on what CEA can achieve are far more unpredictable.

### The 'Joker in the CEA Pack': Political Constraints

Politics can have an overiding influence on defence choice. Technically brilliant cost effectiveness analyses can pale into insignificance against a backdrop of political tradeoff between competing parties and priorities. Employment, health care, social services, child care, education, transport, beating the recession not to mention regional strategic sensitivites and a myriad of other competing and constraining factors influence defence choices. 'Politics' is even practised with alacrity between departments, the military and within the defence bureaucracy. Cool, rational analysis generally takes second place to protection and enhancement of personal and group power bases, even in matters of nuclear defence and deterrence. A study of US defence decision making even suggested that: '...Strategic concepts and doctrines are themselves not the product of any abstract reflection on national interests. Rather,they are more typically products of the technological and bureaucratic-political environments in which they are developed and advanced. And insofar as they have a role in US nuclear force structure development, it is as instruments to be employed in the inter mural bargaining process than as signposts to indicate development.' [7]

'Politics' at all levels is often driven by social 'intangibles' and public opinion to place constraints on practical cost effectiveness decisions. For example, while nuclear propelled submarines may or may not have proven to be more cost effective than conventional submarines in Australia's geostrategic circumstances, the very thought of acquisition remains a political 'taboo'.

In the US, the 'Kent' studies on allocating resources to minimise damage to the US during nuclear exchanges were of outstanding analytical quality.[8] They concluded that civil defence was by far the most cost effective way of limiting overall damage to the US during a nuclear war and that a dispropor-

tionate increase in population and resource survival, under a wide range of scenarios, would result for a small incremental cost. However, the civil defence recommendations were politically and socially unacceptable; being perceived as a de facto admission of possible defeat and incompatible with the national 'psyche'. Similarly, in the Australian context, any major redirection of resources to a predominantly territorial/coastal defence is likely to be unacceptable to Australians; regardless of its effectiveness at the margins of a 'defence of Australia' capability. [9]

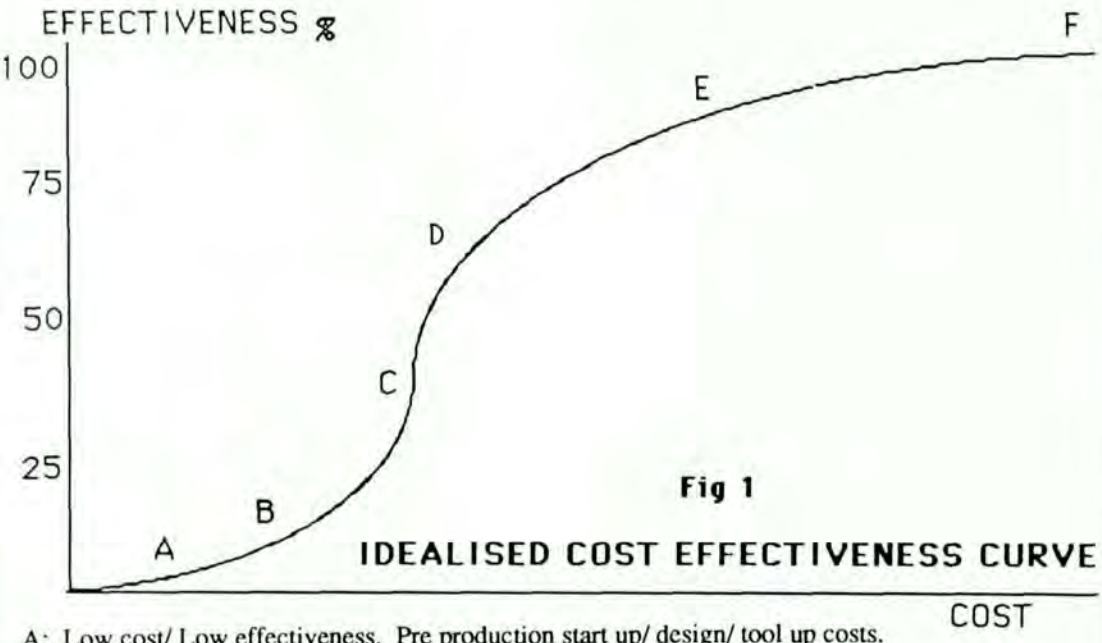


**Fig 1**

**IDEALISED COST EFFECTIVENESS CURVE**

A: Low cost/ Low effectiveness. Pre production start up/ design/ tool up costs.
B: Low cost/ increasing rate of effectiveness per dollar is becoming evident.
C: Between 'B' and 'C' substantial increases in effectiveness are being achieved for less and less dollars. Stage 'C' represents a rarely achieved situation where disproportionate increases in effectiveness can be had for negligible cost input.
D: This represents the 'knee' region of the curve, where the rate of effectiveness increase per dollar starts to decline markedly and the law of diminishing returns starts to bite
E: This stage involves much more money being injected to achieve each percent effectiveness/ performance increase. The question of whether the level of effectiveness achieved from here on is essential or desirable must now be asked in order to justify extra expense.
F: Very large sums are now needed to improve capability by even incremental amounts.

*A complete understanding of alternatives and their relation to each other is only possible once a CE curve is made out for each alternative. This usually requires solid 'number crunching' and should be attempted so that the manager can pinpoint where he is 'on the curve'. Having this knowledge enables one to successfully operate at the margins around the 'knee' and to know 'how much is enough' or , more to the point, how little is enough!*

The significance of cost effectiveness analysis has been compared to judging the quality of a Horse and Rabbit stew ! The 'rabbit' part represents those outcomes that can be measured and evaluated quantitatively with reasonable accuracy and rigour. The 'horse' component represents an amalgam of external effects, social, emotional and psychological impacts and historical and aesthetic considerations that can be judged only roughly and subjectively. However, because the 'horse' would definitely dominate the taste of the stew, evaluation of the 'rabbit's' contribution does not seem worthwhile. For example, the decision to acquire a fourth FFG 7 Guided Missile Frigate in 1980, mainly as a reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, had very little analytic or strategic rationale or measurable impact on the Soviets in Afghanistan or anywhere else. However, it was felt by the Fraser Government to be an effective political gesture of solidarity with the Western alliance regardless of any cost effectiveness rationale, consideration of opportunity cost or concrete idea of real return for the investment. This kind of situation emphasises the dominance of political judgement and 'intangibles' in defence choice.

## Cost Effectiveness Analysis : It's No Substitute for Common Sense.

A major political intangible is the 'political instinct' in which politicians often place an overwhelming degree of trust, because they believe without it they would not have made it to the 'top'. Ex US Presi-

dent Richard Nixon probably best expressed this attitude when, in 1972, under great pressure during the Vietnam War he told his chief advisers, '...As far as I'm concerned the only real mistakes I've made are when I didn't follow my own instincts'. [10]

Knowledge of one's enemy, coupled with plain common sense and experience are critical elements in developing the 'instinct' and ripened judgement to know what is possible, what to do and how far to go. For example, several studies of the effect of a US Navy proposed mining campaign against North Vietnamese ports were conducted between 1965 and 1970 by the CIA, Office of Systems Analysis and even the State Department. They concluded that mining North Vietnamese harbours would not have a significant long term effect on the resupply of the People's Army of Vietnam and Viet Cong Units in South Vietnam. [11]

Nixon's extraordinarily successful decision to mine North Vietnamese harbours was taken at the height of the 1972 Communist Spring Offensive when the fall of South Vietnam seemed imminent. It was taken against the advice of the Defence Secretary and Director of the CIA. At the National Security Council meeting of 8 May ,which immediately preceded Nixon's decision to mine, Henry Kissinger, who had years of experience negotiating with the North Vietnamese, concluded: '....I then answered the analyses that disparaged the effect of mining. The North Vietnamese would have to find alternative routes for 2.1 million tons of sea-borne imports. Sihanoukville was closed. They could use railroads only by night for fear of our interdiction: You can't throw these figures around without better analysis. It is easy to say that they have four months (reserve capacity) and would go all out and end the war, but they would end up with zero capacity...One thing is certain, they will not draw their supplies down to zero'.[12]

Charles Hitch, the founding father of using cost effectiveness analysis as a basis for defence choice, best sums up the relationship between judgement and systems/cost effectiveness analysis in defence : '...I am the last to believe that an 'optimal strategy' can be calculated on slide rules or even high speed computers. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Systems analysis is simply a method to get before the decision maker the relevant data, organised in a way most useful to him. It is no substitute for sound and experienced military judgement, and it is but one of the many kinds of information needed by the decision maker'.[13]

## Conclusion

Cost Effectiveness Analysis can help reduce subjectivity in defence choice by setting out and assessing objective factors systematically. It has become an important risk management tool in coping with inherent uncertainties in defence, and offers a means of understanding the relationship between cost and effectiveness for a range of defence alternatives. Also in defence, costs relationship to effectiveness must be understood across a range of credible contingencies to enable judgements on 'how much is enough' and the right 'mix' to be made.

Cost Effectiveness Analysis has improved the process of reaching defence decisions by trying to link requirements, costs, capabilities and contingency to budget. It can work extremely well at lower order situations of choice where measures of effectiveness and cost are relatively straightforward and largely independent of other systems and sub-systems contributing to the same objectives. At higher levels of decision the number and complexity of factors, coupled with quantification uncertainties in both cost and effectiveness demand more and more sub optimisation and aggregation to arrive at what are often rough approximations. Therefore, CEA has its limitations and the quality and comprehensiveness of an analysis must itself be looked at with a critical eye.

Finally, the case for cost effectiveness analysis in defence is strengthened, not weakened if its limitations are openly debated and stressed. Better understanding of a problem usually results; more informed choices can be made by concentrating attention on basic issues of cost and benefit. However, the limitations of CEA should be understood in that it remains an aid to judgement; not a substitute for it. Good quality cost effectiveness analyses, in one form or another, remain essential aids for making expensive choices in defence, especially when embarking on long term projects vital to national security and using lots of tax-payer dollars. After all, what's the alternative ? [14]

## NOTES

[1] Cost Benefit Analysis uses several techniques for evaluating individual projects and deciding among alternatives by relating the cost of an enterprise to its social and economic benefits. CBA usually applies when all inputs can be measured in dollars, though some disagree with this definition. Systems Analysis analyses methods in scientific and industrial operations, so that improvements to the system can be made.

[2] Simulating a living, reacting enemy who will attempt surprise by taking a line of least expectation is practically impossible. Even the most realistic military exercises have to be orchestrated. Constraints are

made on manoeuvre, tactics, operating area, fuel and ammunition expenditure in order to compress the 'war' into a matter of days or weeks.

[3] These themes are addressed in 'Cost Benefit Analysis: A Survey', *Economic Journal*, December 1965.

[4] *The Selection and Uses of Strategic Air Bases Study* (RAND R-266) was requested by Air force in May 1951. It analysed the future acquisition,construction and use of overseas air bases. The main contributors were H. Rowen and A.Wohlsetter. It is discussed in Robert Leonard, War as a "Simple Economic Problem": The Rise of an Economics of Defence. (An essay in *Economics and National Security: A History of their Interaction*. Annual Supplement to Volume 23 ,History of political Economy, Duke University Press, Durham and London 1991) pp.274-276.

[5] These figures are taken from the Carrier studys Summary of Convoy Losses as a function of Cost of Protection. Focal area sizes vary according to the distance from harbour where shipping concentrates around approaches. This becomes an attractive submarine targetting area. Focal areas would rarely exceed 50-100 nm sector from the harbour entrance during conflict.

[6] For example, during the mid 1980s the Naval Materiel Division assigned a contingency factor of 40% above hard project cost estimates for some high risk projects. Elements of high risk projects include local manufacture of unproven overseas design (example, Collins Class submarine) or local construction and design using new technology (Mine Hunter Catamaran). This amount of cost padding is excessive. In the US a contingency factor in excess of 20-25% is considered indicative of poor planning.

[7] Ball, D and Downes, C (Editors) *Security and Defence: Pacific and Global Perspectives* (Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1990) p.48.

[8] The full study by General Glenn Kent USAF was *Damage Limitation: A Rationale for the Allocation of Resources by the US and USSR* and was published 21 January 1964.

[9] An indicator of this is the failure of the strategy of 'Denial' to be accepted as Australia's defence strategy in the mid 1980s. Many in the military and public saw as too reactive, and it was not looked on favourably by the US. A strategy with more 'reach' was needed to gain the approval of Clausewitz's 'remarkable trinity' - the State(Government), the Military and the People. 'Defence in Depth' was the result.

[10] R. Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (Arrow books, London, 1979) p.602.

[11] It was calculated that numerous waterways from China could not be closed to all traffic; that those left open had ample capacity for filling the gap of imports no longer arriving by sea from the USSR. Similarly, it was determined that bombing railways would not act as a very effective means of permanently disrupting the North Vietnamese war effort given the costs involved. A major factor brought out in these studies was that the North Vietnamese would find it easy to off load cargoes into lighters, barges and smaller vessels.

[12] Kissinger, H, *The White House Years* (Little-Brown,Boston,1979) p.1185.

[13] Hitch, C, *Decision Making For Defence* (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles California, 1967) p.53.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lieutenant Commander Alan Hinge was editor of the ANI Journal in1987-88 and is a frequent contributor to professional military journals in Australia and overseas. He is also winner of 8 Peter Mitchell Essay Competition awards and is a contributing author to the Australian Dictionary of Biography.

He is a science graduate of the Australian National University and joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1979. In 1984-85 after several years involved in weapons electrical engineering training and instruction, he served as Training Officer to the Commander, Australian Mine Warfare and Patrol Boat forces where he developed an interest in the applications of mine warfare in Australian defence and regional conflict. In 1985 he became the first junior officer in the RAN to be awarded a defence fellowship and researched mine warfare. His first book, *Mine Warfare in Australia's First Line of Defence* is largely the result of that work.

In 1987, after completion of the RAN Staff Course, he was posted to Navy Office as a business manager in the Directorate of Shipbulding Policy. Lieutenant Commander Hinge recently completed a Master of Arts in Strategic Studies at the ANU as the inaugural 1993 Rockwell Scholar in Strategic Studies, and has just taken up a visiting military fellowship at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

# THE NEW ZEALAND MARITIME SAFETY AUTHORITY

**A talk given to the Wellington group of the New Zealand chapter**

**by**

**Ian M Mackay**

**Director, MSA of NZ**

It was difficult knowing where to start on this address so I decided to adopt the technique of Dylan Thomas in "Under Milk Wood" where he said "To begin at the beginning".

In May of this year three of us were appointed as the Establishment Board of the proposed Maritime Safety Authority which was to be constituted under one part of the Transport Law Reform Bill, that huge, omnibus piece of legislation which had just gone into the House and which it was hoped would pass through its parliamentary stages by the 1st of July. That was a pious hope, of course, because the Bill is still bouncing around in the Select Committee in what may well be the last of its many-amended versions. When it will be reported back to the House is anybody's bet, as you can well imagine, but it will be in a different form in that it will deal only with the maritime side of transport and will be entitled, not surprisingly, the Maritime Transport Bill (No. 2). From all of the publicity which it has received you will be well aware that the really contentious matter in the Bill is what was originally Clause 240, now 197, the one which abolished cabotage on the New Zealand coast, cabotage being defined in the dictionary as "the reservation to a country's carriers of its internal transport". It has been hinted by the Prime Minister that the clause may disappear in the wake of the new spirit of cooperation which is going to prevail in Parliament so the Bill should go through at the rate of knots. You'll note that I hedged my bets by saying "should", not "will", because I'll believe it when I see it. In the end, the Maritime Safety Authority was established by the Maritime Transport Act 1993 which is a basic and truncated piece of legislation which was passed to enable us to get up and moving and which also sets out our objectives, functions and authorities. Until the big Bill goes through, however, we still have to apply the out-of-date provisions of the Marine Pollution Act 1974 and the safety provisions of the Shipping and Seamen Act 1952 which incorporates much of the venerable UK Merchant Shipping Act of 1894 The passage of the Bill is therefore seen by us as being critically important to the future role of the M S A. It will put in place a modern and specifically New Zealand approach to safety regulation based largely on the model of the Civil Aviation Act but as somebody commented recently, it is ironic that one of the oldest forms of transport should look for guidance to the most recent one of all.

Notwithstanding all of that our legislative charter is clear for the present and for the future. Our principal objective is set out in sec 4 of the Act and requires us to promote a safe maritime environment, and provide effective marine pollution prevention and an effective marine oil pollution response system. And then come the magic words — at a reasonable cost. The legislators appreciated that we lesser mortals would have difficulty with these words so they cleared the problem up for us by saying that a cost is reasonable where the cost to the nation is exceeded by the resulting benefit to the nation. How do we obtain the views of the nation? Do we utilise the services of Messrs Heylen and Gallup or, bearing in mind their recent election forecasts, do we apply the more accurate methodology of spreading out on a table the entrails of a chicken and getting a voodoo man to read them for us? It's all rather vague, really but I am informed and verily believe that Treasury has the answer for us. I hope so, because fortunately, I'm only a simple sailor turned lawyer.

Our principal statutory functions are much clearer, however, and comprise:

i. Developing and monitoring standards which promote safe shipping.
ii Promoting compliance with safety and marine

pollution prevention standards in the maritime transport system.

iii Ensuring the provision of appropriate distress and safety radio communication systems and navigation aids for shipping.

iv Ensuring New Zealand's preparedness for, and ability to respond to marine oil pollution spills.

v Licensing ships, their operation and crews.

vi Ensuring the occupational health and safety of seafarers.

vii Promoting safety in the maritime transport system by providing marine safety information and advice.

viii Investigating and reviewing accidents in the maritime transport system, subject to the role of the Transport Accident Investigation Commission.

ix Maintaining the New Zealand register of ships.

x Advising the Minister of Transport on technical maritime safety policy.

It is important to bear in mind that these functions are exercised in relation to the international conventions to which the Government of New Zealand is a contracting party and responsibility for administering them lies with the Minister of Transport. They have been delegated in a fairly comprehensive manner to the Authority, however, so that we now look after all of the papers which issue forth from the International Maritime Organisation and thus act as the repository - some might suggest that the word "suppository" is more appropriate - for the relevant conventions, codes, recommendations, Assembly resolutions, circulars and working documents. We are likewise required to implement the IMO conventions to which New Zealand is a party by developing standards, entry control, surveillance and corrective actions, as well as providing safety services and information. Again, we act as the national and international contact for technical and safety matters arising out of New Zealand's convention obligations and, finally, we represent New Zealand at the various I M O meetings which take place throughout the year.

In that context it is obvious that we must have a close working relationship with all branches of the shipping and oil industries if we are to succeed in our task of maintaining a safe and clean maritime environment. One of the ways in which this will be tackled will be by means of the input which we shall be seeking into the rule making process. We had a special sheet printed to show how this will work and copies of this are available for you if you don't already have one. In brief, we want to establish a regulatory framework that is relevant, cost effective, workable and - of tremendous importance - is respected, so that compliance will be encouraged and confidence in the system justified.

A recent example of a partnership with the industry is the innovative programme of safety management which was initiated with the Marine Transport Association, the body which brings together restricted limits operators engaged in short haul excursion services, game fishing and the like. In place of periodic inspection and certification of their vessels by surveyors, the safety system will require participants to take responsibility themselves for systematically identifying and eliminating or minimising the risks encountered in their operations and our people are working closely with them to bring them up to I S O 9001 certification.

There's a ton of work to be done so it's appropriate, I think, to give you some indication of our priorities. The initial emphasis will be on the transitional parts of the Maritime Transport Bill which deal with ship safety. Where these provisions remain relevant they will have to be transformed into rules before they drop out of the Act, as it will be at that stage, by virtue of the 3-year sunset section. Our highest priority, however, is to be given to developing standards for New Zealand to accede to L, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships 1973/78 and we have set ourselves the goal of completing these rules within one year of the Act coming into force. Last year the Maritime Transport Division of the M o T finalised the new oil pollution response strategy and its key elements have been incorporated in the Bill. Work has already begun on developing contingency plans and strategies and these are co-ordinated with the OH Pollution Advisory Committee which is chaired by someone from the Authority and brings together a very high-powered and representative group of people from the shipping and oil industries, regional councils, port companies, the Ministry of Maori Affairs, DOC, and the Ministry for the Environment. Training in preventive and clean-up measures for oil spills will be coordinated with the regional councils and other involved parties to ensure that the resources and skills are available if and when a large spill occurs. And which, we would all say, God forbid. The marine oil spill response equipment is being upgraded in line with unto-date methods and anticipated requirements and a substantial 5-year purchasing programme is planned.

Coastal navigation aids are being evaluated to provide the most reliable and cost-effective service around the coast and this programme extends to the quality of servicing of the aids and the replacement and upgrading of facilities with modern, low maintenance, energy efficient equipment. If an installation is no longer an essential part of the overall system it is disestablished.

This brings me to the function which has recently received more public attention than any other — port state control or our responsibility to ensure that clapped out old bangers (ships of shame , as our Australian friends call them) are made to comply with international conventions such as SOLAS and not allowed to wander round our coasts putting our environment at risk. Our new Act will give us greater powers of detention than the Shipping and Seamen Act and by invoking them when required we shall make it clear to the owners of substandard ships that they and their vessels are not welcome in New Zealand. It is of particular importance to the implementation of port state control that next week in Tokyo up to 18 countries, including Australia, Canada, Japan and New Zealand, will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding to establish formally a system of Port State Control in the Asia Pacific region. Signatory countries will co-ordinate their efforts and exchange data electronically with one another. Canada is the most important link in the chain because they have a hook-up to the data base of the Paris Agreement countries in Europe and this widens enormously the information available to our Asia Pacific group. In addition to that, of course, we have a particularly close working relationship with our friends in the Australian M S A and between us recognise standards of ship safety and sea-going personnel in sectors which are not covered by multilateral conventions.

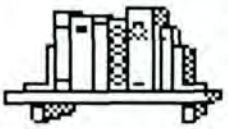
And now — the R N Z N and the relationship between our two organisations. I have the feeling that a degree of suspicion probably existed in the past but if it did I sincerely hope that it is on the way out. We have a contract with the Navy to operate our HF Distress and Safety Radio Service until 1st July next year and I am happy to say that pleasant, relaxed relationships have been established at all levels. We have had the odd technical hiccup but resolution of the problems has been possible on the friendly basis which should exist between partners in an exercise which is of such importance to the safety of shipping. On marine pollution matters, the informal cooperative arrangements which existed between the New Zealand Defence Force and the Authority's predecessor, the Maritime Transport Division, served both sides well but I think the time has come when the relationship should be put on a more appropriate footing. With this in mind a first meeting has been held at working level to explore the possibilities and we are hopeful that a more formal structure will develop. So, let me emphasise - wherever there can be cooperation between us we will be delighted to participate and assist. Before moving on from the subject of pollution, however, and since most of you will remember the Orient Line which ran large passenger ships until taken over by P & O, I'd like to read to you the contribution made by A P Herbert to one particular aspect of pollution. He wrote —

*O seagull, we're grieving*
*To see you relieving*
*Yourself on the merchant marine.*
*You have very good sight*
*And should see, in this light,*
*The "Otranto" is not a latrine.*
*God gave you the oceans*
*For your little motions,*
*And Spain's a convenient po;*
*But if it feels finer*
*To aim at a liner -*
*Well, why not a nice P & O?*

In conclusion, I'd like to say that we are acutely aware of the heavy responsibility that rests upon the Authority to carry out its statutory responsibilities. I can assure you that we shall do our utmost to measure up to the task.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

IAN MUNRO MACKAY is Chairman of the Maritime Safety Authority of New Zealand. In the early 1960's he established P&I Services which deals with liabilities of shipowners and now represents throughout New Zealand all of the world's P&I Associations ('Clubs') which cover those liabilities on a mutual basis and insure 94% of the world's total shipping tonnage. He has held numerous chairman and director appointments and, in 1990, was elected as Titulary Member of the Committee maritime International, the only New Zealander so far to have received this recognition. Ian Mackay is a master mariner; the last vessel he served in being the twin screw, bow well, bucket dredger 'GROPER', a delivery from Glasgow to Brisbane which took 3 months.



# Book Reviews

***Australians in Asia*, various authors, Centre for the study of Australia-Asia relations, Griffith University, Brisbane, 1988-92, 9 issues, price $6-16, postage extra.**

Academic publishing has its own political economy and this series is primarily concerned with promoting the study of Australia's contemporary relations with Asia. To this end, the Centre produces publications on that relationship and the many dimensions therein as expressed throughout the region. As well, the series draws from a wide occupational strata from journalists to academics although there is an emphasis on diplomatic memoirs in the current range. For this reason, one would hope that future manuscripts are attracted from a wider field - perhaps including service attaches, QANTAS station managers, missionaries, business managers, medical staff, relief workers or from any Australian with sufficient insight into that relationship seen from their individual vocational perspective.

While the subject and content is pitched towards business, government, researchers and other educational institutions, there is much here of value for anyone seeking a greater understanding of the region and its people from the personal experiences of those Australians fortunate to have lived in Asia and who were socialised by that living and learning experience in cultures not like our own. Moreover, the books read well offering immediate appeal to the general interest, despite their specialist nature.

This review then briefly surveys some of the titles published in the last five years and notes that more works are currently in progress by two of the authors, that is, on Burma and Indonesia. This review is more concerned with accounts by several retired diplomats - all of them senior ambassadors. While they have a common theme, all four are different in size, scope and style.

Francis Stuart opened the batting order with "Towards coming-of-age" which is perhaps the most interesting not so much for its length or the elegance of his writing but for a fascinating career which had its origins in the pre-war British consular service in then Siam. He thus had a leg-up on many of his contemporaries who came to serve with him in Asia after the war. In many ways, Stuart's career is a microcosm of the service itself as he grew with it from its turbulent days reestablished in post-war Singapore through to Manila and Phnom Penh. His book has been well received in many journals which include "Australian Outlook" (December 1989) and "Pacific Defence Reporter" (February 1990).

Sir Keith Waller was first posted to China (Chungking) in 1941 and later served in Manila and Bangkok. He was appointed Secretary of the then External Affairs Department in 1970 and retired in 1974. He provides some very incisive comments on the nature of Australian diplomacy and is not shy in assessing some of the political figures he knew in a distinguished career. His book, "A Diplomatic Life", was also favourably reviewed in the "Asia Studies Review" of April 1992.

John Rowland was Australia's first chargé d'affaires in Saigon during his posting from 1952-53 (before the appointment of a Minister to the Legation) and he later returned for a second assignment between 1954-55. He witnessed the loss of French power to the Viet Minh and was in Hanoi several days before their entry. Mr Rowland writes extremely well as one would expect of any official tasked with writing numerous despatches for more than half their life. As well, he is more widely known for his poetry, Soviet expertise, and an interest in conservation long before it became socially conscionable and politically sound.

His book, "Two Transitions", also covers his time as High Commissioner to Malaysia from 1969-72. His views have no official imprimatur (indeed the Centre offers its own caveat) which is why the book should be read in its own right. He offers a detailed understanding and appreciation of the many cultures he came to respect. Overall, he retained considerable affection for the country and its people, finding both dignity and enterprise within them - and much to appreciate and learn from. Several UMNO (United Malay National Organisation) political figures receive his attention as he describes his social and working relations with them - on and off the golf course.

If he found fault in foreign societies he also recognised some of the imperfections in his own country. For this balanced assessment his work assumes a certain authority. Anyone involved in the planning or conduct of the major military exercise "Bersatu Padu" in 1970 will note his comments on the wider political features of that event.

As well, John Rowland was alive to the intramural sensitivities shared by senior defence commanders in his parish. He became the good vicar in recognis-

ing that Australia's service leaders in Malaysia and Singapore had their own concept of protocol and responsibility in their formal relationships within regional command structures. That issue reguired careful management by him as much as the existing bilateral relationship. His comments are both thoughtful and well-intentioned as he provides a frank appraisal of how he saw the development of those ties during his term. Moreover he concludes that, having made our bed in Asia, verily, we should lie in it.

Of special interest is Professor Hugh Dunn's book "The shaping of a sinologue of sorts" in which the author describes how he drifted into things Chinese. A brief visit to China in 1945 satisfied a long-held curiosity. That connection led to formal studies in the mandarin language at Oxford and to a long career as a China specialist - culminating in appointments as Ambassador to Taipei and later Beijing.

In all, this series is probably not widely known outside its immediate target readership but the notes are of considerable value. As explained above, the criteria might be expanded to include those many others with stories to tell. One hopes the series continues in its present form yet still finds time and space to widen its approach. That is, to include other Australians still to have a voice to make the series truly representative. In short, this is a remarkable series which would benefit from a wider audience - not just to Asianists but to all who seek more background on Australia's participation in the region.

It is a measure of our society that these former officials have now chosen to record their periods of Asian service using their knowledge and wisdom to note the values we share and the differences which can often lead to misunderstanding. The series has become a cottage industry of sorts as other tyro writers come out of the woodwork. The sentiment that they "indulge in some sort of ego trip" is misplaced as they may have recognised a private duty to account for a public life of particular interest to many Australians. Futhermore, their accounts are written with the characteristic discretion which such attempts demand, yet remaining informative and entertaining. Their first-hand knowledge of various political events provides the personal cachet that some of the more scholarly historical works fail to capture - despite their equal importance.

All Australians with an interest in Asia are better served by these writers who have surrendered to their instincts to provide us with a "thoroughly good read" which we may enjoy and learn from. In their absence, much knowledge and understanding would be denied to us.

*—Michael Fogarty*

## NORTH AND SOUTH

While there has been a welter of military works on Indo China, until now there have been very few personal narratives by diplomats describing their experiences in the region during that era. With the recent publication of three valuable accounts, that imbalance has been corrected. Moreover, these three books are of immediate appeal to Australian readers as, in two cases, the authors reflect on Australian policies and the attitudes of their politicians and officials. In the other case, the author has strong links with Australia and his portrayal of historical events in Vietnam, in both capitals, will be of lasting interest to many Australians who have served on different sides of the Ben Hai river. John Colvin's diplomatic memoirs, *Twice around the world* will be reviewed in a later issue of this Journal.

### *Tiger in the Barbed Wire An American in Vietnam* 1952-91,by Howard Simpson, Brassey's (U.S.), New York, 1992.

The author was an information officer with the U.S .I. A. and he served several tours in Vietnam — mostly Saigon but also in Hanoi during the French colonial war against the Viet Minh. This is a racy account as he vividly describes the intrigues of Saigon society and the coup politics which attended it. Of special interest is his coverage of the visit to Australia by Vice-President Agnew and the public relations handling which carried with it a potential for a major disaster in protocol. In all, a light-hearted treatment of some serious issues but an author with something to add nonetheless. Importantly, he acknowledges the contribution made by Australians in the area during the period.

### *First in, Last out — An unconventional British officer in Indo China*, by Lieutenant Colonel J.P. Cross, Brassey's, London, 1992.

After service in Burma, a young officer of Ghurka found himself in Saigon with allied troops helping to restore order amid the nationalist fervour which accompanied the collapse of Japanese power in Asia at the end of the Pacific War. There followed considerable experience in Asia including service in Malaya and Borneo. Alter twenty eight years of military life in the early seventies he was selected for appointment as Britain's defence attaché in Laos.

He was not unmoved by his immersion in that magical kingdom, Lane Xang - the land of a million elephants. His story describes his exposure to diplomatic life in a *fin de siecle* period — in a political entity which changed slowly and then dramatically as one political regime replaced another. For that

reason, he was fortunate to witness those developments in that extraordinary country's history - events which changed indisputably and remain of lasting significance.

The author claims proficiency in several Asian languages, Lao but one of them, under a tutor with the improbable name of Princess Golden Fairy. As a bachelor linguist, this officer's stoicism and application to his complex grammar drills can only be admired. For an ascetic, amid war time shortages, willing tutors abounded.

As expected, Colonel Cross worked closely with Australian diplomats in Laos. His relationships with them were mixed. While he formed close friendships with some, others did not survive his target range. Curiously, he had positive feelings towards one Australian army officer whereas the other is described in unhelpful terms. The reviewer can only suggest that those uncomplimentary remarks might be better understood in terms of army rivalry.

The author acknowledges his own difficulties in adapting to diplomatic life. "I was to find the Embassy very different from the crisply efficient military life I had till then known. Here was a longer haired, less incisive, more verbose and christian-name oriented set-up. Punctuality was to be a thing of the past and the morning repetition of the previous night's cocktail party trivia as interminably banal as it was inaccurate". John may have missed the point here. It is not a matter of choosing between the attractions of parade ground drill or the athleticism induced in making endless calls on ministries as both can be potential time wasters but have their essential place in the wider management of professional behaviour.

Cross takes particular care to remind the reader how valued his reports were received in London. Despite this, the Colonel felt his ambassador was disloyal, betraying Australian and American confidences, and for that reason he became dispirited with his work. I had the vision of cities all over the world having attachés and diplomats scurrying around, all pretending to be busy, all eating far too much and most drinking too much, and to what avail. It was a gloomy thought and I mentioned it to Cam (Colonel West) . . (who answered).. that we should always try our best in any job we did — which, of course, was very true".

The author accurately describes the beauty of this land-locked country of many mountains. He also provides an eye witness account of the political and social change in the country. Those fascinating personal exchanges with the people evoked considerable sadness at the time of writing. And it shows. On leaving, he had his dog destroyed lest his faithful companion pine mercilessly or be eaten, bringing new life to an old dictum "... greater love hath no man that would lay down a friend for his life".

Despite the author's idiosyncratic approach to diplomacy, as he honestly portrays it, this is a valuable guide to a critical period in Laotian history. From his vantage point, he was privileged to observe those changes. This book will become required reading for anybody approaching Laos with serious intent. Any officer with ambition to serve as a defence attaché would be well advised to read this useful manual.

*—Michael Fogarty*

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