



From The Crow's Nest



NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA
Western Australia

Volume 8 Issue 4
September 2025

Issue No. 4 (September/2025)

FEATURES

- 3 From The President
- 4 HMAS Perth—Birthday
- 5 Chinese Taskforce 107
- 12 All Things Nautical
- 13 HMS Bulwark
- 18 Ghost Shark
- 21 KRI Brawijaya—Indonesia
- 24 Fleet Round Up
- 26 NLA Membership

REFLECTIONS :

The Royal Navy LHD HMS Bulwark is off to a new home in Brazil after serving 20 years dedicated service with the United Kingdom



**HMAS PERTH
CELEBRATING 19th BIRTHDAY**

WEBSITES :

Navy League Of Australia :
www.navyleague.org.au

NLA (W.A.)
www.navyleaguewa.org.au

HMAS PERTH (I) Memorial :
www.hmasperth1memorial.com.au

Publisher	Editor	Design & Production
-----------	--------	---------------------

NLAWA	Steve Chaplin	Steve Chaplin
-------	---------------	---------------

Navy League (W.A. Division)

Mail : PO Box 735, Fremantle. W.A. 6959

E-Mail : newsletter@navyleaguewa.org.au

Correspondence including News, stories, illustrations, comments, and letters are welcome, and should be forwarded to the Editor at the E-mail address above. Digital images are preferred in JPEG format at a resolution of 300dpi. Please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope for the return of all submitted hard copy print and/or pictorial material.

All rights reserved. The reproduction or copying in part or whole is prohibited without the specific permissions in writing of the Navy League. The opinions or assertions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the author and contributors and not necessarily those of the NLA, NLWA, the WA Division Executive Committee or its members.



From The President's Desk

Well, August came and went without much fanfare. We conducted our Annual General Meeting (AGM), and I will not say anything more about that, other than to inform all members that the outgoing Executive Committee were able to retain their positions. That being said, we look forward to the forthcoming twelve (12) months and keeping things, business as usual !

As for our General Committee, we have some old faces back again for another year and a few fresh faces to make up the team. Collectively, I feel we will develop a remarkable team.

Friday August 29th witnessed a number of officers and ships company from HMAS Perth visit us and convene a get together to celebrate the ship's 19th birthday. The weather was perfect; there was a great turnout and the catering side of the ship put on a feast which was enjoyed by one and all.

Saturday August 30th saw us again at the memorial, this time for a quick meeting followed by staying back to allow the Commanding Officer (CO) HMAS Perth, CMDR Dylan White, to accompany his parents through the facility to view the memorial, plus, have a good chat.

Saturday also presented a fantastic opportunity to speak with Damien, the General Manager from the Swan Yacht Club, and Damien remains as committed as ever in supporting the Navy League W.A. Together with us, the Swan Yacht Club and the Fremantle Rowing Club we really have formed a respectable neighbourhood bond.

As we move into September 2025, and the prospect of improved weather, we will begin planning another charity golf day for anyone interested. Again, all proceeds will go to the Merredin Military Museum.

Likewise, we are well into the planning for a trip to Trayning with our group who usually attend, and much like everything else, you are more than welcome to attend - all the more, the merrier.

Until next month

Brad



*Happy
Birthday
H.M.A.S.
Perth*



*19 Years Of
Dedicated
Service To
Our Nation*



*Commissioned
26 August 2006*



Chinese Task Force Circumnavigation Of Australia

In early February, 2025, Australia and New Zealand tracked a group of People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) warships near Australia, referred to, by the Australian Department of Defence, as Task Force 107.

Using a variety of sources from Australia and New Zealand, it pieced together a timeline of their circumnavigation of Australia. The public were first made aware of the Chinese task force on Thursday 13th February when the Australian Department of Defence (ADF) publicised its presence near Australia and released imagery of the *Type 054A frigate Hengyang* transiting the Torres Strait between Australia and Papua New Guinea on Tuesday 11th February.

The other two ships in the taskforce, the *Type 055 destroyer Zunyi* and the *Type 903 oilier Weishanhu*, transited to the north of Papua New Guinea on or around the same date. The ships transit, then moved these ships into the Coral Sea, where *Weishanhu* rendezvoused with *Hengyang* on either Thursday 13th or Friday 14th February whilst the *Zunyi* remained further to the North.



Part Of Task Force 107 In Australia's Northern Waters

Pic : ADF

"The frigate, the smaller of the two warships, detached itself from the group and traversed across the North of Australia and then went through the Torres Strait on Tuesday 11th February . The ship rendezvoused with the tanker in Australia's exclusive economic zone, and the destroyer is further to the north," Australian Minister for Defence, Richard Marles told local media on Friday 14th February.

On Saturday 15th February, the Australia Defence Force (ADF) released imagery showing Anzac class frigate HMAS Arunta shadowing both *Weishanhu* and *Hengyang* somewhere in the Tasman Sea, between Australia and New Zealand. Metadata extracted from that imagery indicates that it was taken on the afternoon of Saturday 15th February.

The Initial Australian & New Zealand Contingent



HMAS Arunta — FFH 151
Anzac Class Frigate
Displacement - 3,600 tonnes
Speed - 27 Knots
Range - 6,000 nm (approx.)
Crew - 170 Officers & Sailors (approx.)
Aircraft - 1 x Sikorsky MH-60R Seahawk



HMNZS Te Kaha — F 77
Anzac Class Frigate
Displacement - 3,600 tonnes
Speed - 27 Knots
Range - 6,000 nm (approx.)
Crew - 170 Officers & Sailors (approx.)
Aircraft - 1 x Sikorsky MH-60R Seahawk



HMNZS Aotearoa — A 11
Polar Class Sustainment Vessel
Displacement - 26,000 tonnes
Speed - 20 Knots
Range - Not Listed
Core Crew - 64. Capacity for 100
Aircraft — SH-2G(I) Seasprite Helicopter





PLA N Destroyer “Zunyi”
Pic : DimSum Daily—H.K.

A Timeline of Events:

- 11 February : Hengyang transits Torres Strait.
- 12 February : Zunyi and Weishanhu conduct a replenishment at sea.
- 13-14 February : Hengyang and Weishanhu rendezvous in the Coral Sea while Zunyi remains further North.
- 15 February : HMAS Arunta observes Hengyang and Weishanhu in the Coral Sea.
- 21 February : Task Force 107 completes live fire exercise which is observed by HMNZS Te Kaha.
- 22 February : All three ships completed another live-fire exercise which is again observed by HMNZS Te Kaha.
- 26 February : Task Force 107 enters the Great Australian Bight.
- 5 March : Task Force 107 passes Perth heading North.

HMAS Arunta appeared to have ceased shadowing the Task Force somewhere between 15th February and 21st February as, by the morning of the 21st February when the Chinese Task Force conducted its first live-firing exercise, HMNZS Te Kaha was evidenced as the only vessel shadowing the group.

“There were two reporting paths—there has been public commentary on this—one clearly from a civil aircraft that heard the radio call that the Chinese vessels were making to provide an indication of what they were intending to conduct. A New Zealand frigate operating in the vicinity of that task group as part of the shadowing activities also heard that radio call. The communication pathway for that messaging went through both a civil air services and an air traffic control approach as well as through military reporting chains from the New Zealand frigate and into our Australian military system,” the Chief of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), Admiral David Johnson, explained in relation to the 21st February incident.

On the 22nd February, the Chinese Task Force, which by then included all three vessels, conducted another live-fire exercise which was observed by the crew of HMNZS Te Kaha.

“During today’s live firing event, personnel on the New Zealand Navy frigate HMNZS Te Kaha reported observing the Destroyer “Zunyi” firing its main gun,” the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) said in a statement on the 22nd February.

By 24th February, the NZDF reported the group’s position as being 280 nautical miles East of

Tasmania, outside of Australia’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Over the course of the following days, the Task Force moved Southwest around Tasmania, with the Australian Department of Defence reporting that the Task Force re-entered Australia’s EEZ on the morning of 25th February before entering the Great Australian Bight on 26th February.

The Australian frigate HMAS Stuart appears to have commenced monitoring the task group somewhere around 24th February, with the RNZN tanker HMNZS Aotearoa conducting an underway replenishment with the frigate in that time frame. A second replenishment at sea took place on 26th February according to Defence Force resources.

By 27th February, the Australian Minister for Defence, Richard Marles, stated, the RAN Frigate HMAS Stuart intended shadowing the group, on a Westerly, course through the Great Australian Bight.



PLA N Replenishment Tanker “Weishanhu”
Pic : Flickr.Com



PLA N Frigate Hengyang
Pic : Gagadget.Com

The Task Force continued West through the Great Australian Bight before rounding Cape Leeuwin (Western Australia's Southernmost point) sometime before the 5th March. On 5th March, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Richard Marles, stated that the Chinese Task Group was being tracked by three (3) Australian warships (*HMAS Stuart, HMAS Warramunga and HMAS Toowoomba*) and were approximately 300 nautical miles Northwest of Fremantle, Perth, where all vessels continued to move up the Australian west coast.

As of Friday, March 7th, the ADF reported that the Chinese Task Force was approximately 420 nautical miles south of Christmas Island. The vessels appeared to be shaping a course through the Sunda Strait into the Java Sea, to continue their transit into the South China Sea.

Naval News-analysis

The cruise of the Chinese Task Force 107 attracted considerable media and government attention in Australia and New Zealand. Official statements by both countries echoed the general assessment that the task force had operated in line with international law, including where notifications regarding the live fire drills were concerned.



Mystery drone sighting in vicinity of Chinese frigate

The cruise along the course had for the most part been an uneventful affair. The first major exception was local sighting of an "as of yet" unidentified aircraft or drone, when the *Type 054A Frigate Hengyang* transited the Torres Strait between Papua New Guinea and Australia around February 11th. The second instance were the live fire drills later in the Tasman Sea on February 21st.

The aircraft or drone sighted on February 11th in PNG national airspace remains perhaps the most mysterious aspect. Observers were quick to point to *Hengyang* having launched a drone as the culprit, but this explanation remains entirely speculative.

Live - fire drills and questions over submarine presence

The live - fire drills, according to imagery published by Chinese state media, involved the use of the ship's main armament naval guns. **The footage did not show any missile launches.** Both *Zunyi and Hengyang* utilised their 30 mm air defence guns. At least *Zunyi* also fired her 130 mm (5 in) main gun. The limited footage released showed all guns firing at very low elevation, presumably simulating surface and low altitude aerial targets. This kind of gunnery practice would not present a hazard to high-flying commercial air traffic. Interestingly PLAN conducted these live fire drills in international waters outside the Australian EEZ.

The Three Amigo's



HMAS WARRAMUNGA—FFH 152
Anzac Class Frigate
Displacement - 3,600 tonnes
Speed - 27 Knots
Range - 6,000 nm (approx.)
Crew - 170 Officers & Sailors (approx.)
Aircraft - 1 x Sikorsky MH-60R Seahawk



HMAS Stuart — FFH 153
Anzac Class Frigate
Displacement - 3,600 tonnes
Speed - 27 Knots
Range - 6,000 nm (approx.)
Crew - 170 Officers & Sailors (approx.)
Aircraft - 1 x Sikorsky MH-60R Seahawk



HMAS Toowoomba — FFH 156
Anzac Class Frigate
Displacement - 3,600 tonnes
Speed - 27 Knots
Range - 6,000 nm (approx.)
Crew - 170 Officers & Sailors (approx.)
Aircraft - 1 x Sikorsky MH-60R Seahawk



China is one of several countries objecting to drills conducted in national EEZs without consent of the local state. Accepted practice under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) does not require state permission for live fire drills within national EEZs. Other navies including the US Navy routinely engage in exercises accordingly.

Submarine or not

The final question of the Chinese deployment concerns speculation regarding the presence of a PLAN submarine. Only nuclear-powered submarines would be capable of participating in such a cruise, considering the distances and absence of port calls. The Royal Australian Airforce (RAAF) surveillance P-8A Poseidon aircraft appeared to have also dropped sonobuoys during the early stages of the Chinese Task Forces' approaching Australia. Neither Australian nor New Zealand officials have confirmed or definitely ruled out the presence of a Chinese submarine.

Admiral David Johnston, Chief of the Defence Force, in a Senates Estimates-session on February 26th, responded to a related question: *"I don't know whether there is a submarine with them. It is possible. Task groups occasionally do deploy with submarines, but not always, so I can't be definitive on whether that's the case."* As a matter of precedence Chinese SSNs still rarely venture outside the immediate surroundings of the Chinese mainland, with a focus to the east. Activities most often appear to focus on the South and East China Seas.

However, PLAN has repeatedly deployed a Type 09III SSN to the Indian Ocean. Such operations date back to 2013, then causing somewhat of a stir particularly in Indian defence circles. Considering current modernisation and expansion of the Chinese submarine fleet, further ventures abroad would be one logical operational consequence.

In summary, the Chinese Task Force deployment around Australia, while operationally low profile and of limited significance, likely signals the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) intentions to more routinely deploy naval combatants abroad with an intention of primarily political messaging. The overall conduct and emphasis of legal entitlements under international law may serve to counteract Australian and Western efforts communicating similar naval operations near the Chinese mainland, notably in the South China Sea and around Taiwan.



Editor's Note :

Throughout the Media's reporting of the Chinese Task Force's presence and activities in their circumnavigation of Australia, it was incorrectly stated on numerous occasions, that the Chinese vessels were conducting "missile" firings !

At no time throughout the surveillance from Australian and New Zealand warships observing the Chinese activities, were there "factual" reports, or sightings of missile firings from "any of the warships" Involved.

The only "weapon" firing conducted and factually reported from HMNZS Te Kaha, was from the Chinese Destroyer "Zunyi" using its' main Naval Gun, which is a 130mm (5 in) weapon.

Further, it was also stated from one of the airline pilots (either Virgin or Qantas) reporting on the intended live fire exercise, the firing exercise height restriction was thirty five (35) miles. This writer (being a retired Chief Petty Officer Weapons Mechanic) knows that for a 130mm (5 in) naval gun to reach a ceiling of 35 miles is extremely unlikely, given that this action could only occur if a specialised munition was used which would seem to be highly unlikely for the Chinese Navy to be using those particular types of shells !

Naval Sayings

What's the meaning of the phrase 'Loose cannon'?

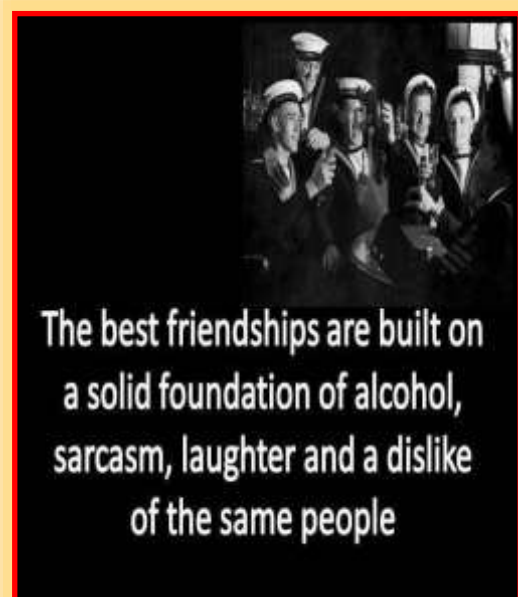
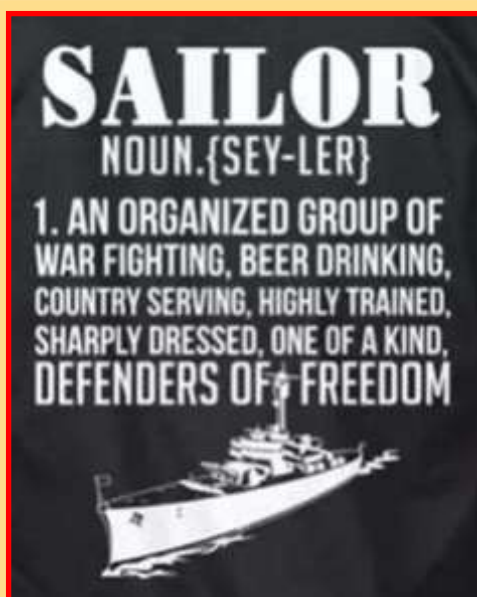


“An unpredictable person or thing, liable to cause damage if not kept in check by others”.

From the 17th century to the 19th century, wooden warships carried cannon as their primary offensive weapons. In order to avoid damage from their enormous recoil when fired they were mounted on rollers and secured with rope. A loose cannon was just what it sounds like, that is, a cannon that had become free of its restraints and was rolling dangerously about the deck.

Victor Hugo who set the scene in the novel *Ninety Three*, 1874. A translation of the French original describes cannon being tossed about following a violent incident onboard ship:

“The carronade, hurled forward by the pitching, dashed into this knot of men, and crushed four at the first blow; then, flung back and shot out anew by the rolling, it cut in two a fifth poor fellow. . . The enormous cannon was left alone. She was given up to herself. She was her own mistress, and mistress of the vessel. She could do what she willed with both.”



Off To A New Home



HMS Bulwark L15 (LPD)

Pic : MoD/RN

On September 10, 2025, the Brazilian Navy signed during the Defence & Security Equipment International United Kingdom (DSEI UK) 2025, the contract for the acquisition of HMS Bulwark from the United Kingdom, the Albion-class landing platform dock (LPD).

The agreement was formalised on board *HMS Mersey* in the presence of the Navy's Director-General of Materiel, Admiral Edgar Luiz Siqueira Barbosa, and the Royal Navy's Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Martin Connell, with the participation of the Commander of the Brazilian Navy, Admiral Marcos Sampaio Olsen, and other civilian and military authorities.

With extensive cargo and personnel transport capacity, the ship will be used to support the population in natural disaster situations through the deployment of field hospitals, food, medicines and other essential supplies directly to affected areas, making a decisive contribution to saving lives in humanitarian emergencies.

In addition, it will be employed in the protection of the "Blue Amazon", the strategic area of Brazilian jurisdictional waters, rich in natural and mineral resources.

According to the Navy Commander:

"The acquisition of HMS Bulwark represents a milestone in the effort to reconstitute the core of Naval Power, greatly contributing to the exercise of sovereignty in waters under national jurisdiction.

The Brazilian Navy thus reaffirms its commitment to expanding its capacity to maintain presence in areas of interest and to ensuring the appropriate efficiency to operate in different scenarios, whether in defence operations or in support of the Brazilian population in emergencies, particularly in response to natural disasters and humanitarian assistance missions.”



HMS Bulwark—L15 (LHD)

Pic : MoD/RN

Training and incorporation into the Fleet

The acquisition of HMS Bulwark was driven by the need to expand the Navy’s capacity, providing modern and robust means for power projection, humanitarian support and the defence of sovereignty, ensuring full operational capability of a multipurpose vessel within a short timeframe.

The ship is currently in Plymouth, England, undergoing a complete revitalisation process, which includes the modernisation of command and control systems, upgrades to communications equipment, and a full overhaul of its propulsion and power generation systems. Completion of this revitalisation is scheduled for 2026. These works will extend the vessel’s service life by at least two decades, ensuring operational safety and compliance with the current demands of the Brazilian Navy.

According to Admiral Edgar, Director-General of Materiel of the Navy:

“The relationship between the Brazilian Navy and the Royal Navy is historic. The multipurpose aircraft carrier NAM Atlântico, the flagship of the Brazilian Fleet, was also acquired from the United Kingdom and arrived in Brazil in 2018. The acquisitions of NAM Atlântico and HMS Bulwark reflect this strategic partnership, which involves not only the transfer of naval assets, but also the exchange of knowledge, crew training and cooperation in areas of mutual interest. This closer relationship strengthens diplomatic ties between the two countries.”

In September 2025, in the order of 48 Brazilian military personnel will travel to the United Kingdom for training and familiarisation with the vessel. In November 2025, a further forty-four (44) personnel will be trained. In addition to technical training, the crew will take part in joint simulations and exercises, focusing on ensuring the vessel's full operational capability.

HMS Bulwark is expected to be commissioned and transferred to Brazil next year (2026) when it will join the Brazilian Naval Fleet.

About HMS Bulwark

HMS Bulwark is 176 metres long, displaces 19,560 tonnes and has capacity for up to 710 military personnel. The vessel maintains an average speed of 18 knots, equivalent to approximately 33 kilometres per hour.

The choice of name follows the Brazilian tradition of referencing national geographic features, in this case, the municipality of *Oiapoque in Amapá*, at the northern border with French Guiana. The name *Oiapoque* has previously been used by three different Brazilian Navy vessels, ranging from a nineteenth-century steam-powered wooden ship to a Thornycroft-built river craft retired in 1964. The new *Navio-Doca Multipropósito* (NDM) *Oiapoque* will be the second-largest ship in the fleet, behind the *NAM Atlântico*, itself acquired from the United Kingdom in 2018. The Brazilian Navy highlights that the vessel will be employed in a wide range of operations, from amphibious deployments to humanitarian missions and disaster relief, while also reinforcing sovereignty in the *Amazônia Azul*, a maritime area of 5.7 million square kilometres under national jurisdiction that contains mineral and energy resources and is subject to foreign research activity.

The vessel is equipped with a well deck for eight landing craft, allowing for the transport of vehicles, including tanks, ambulances, and engineering equipment for infrastructure reconstruction. It has a flight deck capable of supporting two large helicopters, such as the Airbus H225M Caracal (UH-15 Super

Cougar) of the Brazilian Navy, which provides aero-medical evacuation, reconnaissance, and logistics lift. The ship also has medical facilities, including a surgical centre, infirmary, and beds for stabilization, and can embark field hospitals, enabling it to evacuate up to seven hundred (700) people in emergencies. Brazilian sources note that the future *Oiapoque* will also be delivered with the BAE Systems Artisan 3D radar, already used on the *NAM Atlântico*.

The vessel is undergoing a complete revitalisation in Plymouth, including upgrading of command and control systems, upgrades to communications, and a full overhaul of propulsion and power generation systems. The work is scheduled to conclude in 2026, extending the ship's service life by at least 20 years and aligning it with current operational requirements. Brazilian personnel training is structured in phases, with forty-eight (48) sailors sent to the United Kingdom in September 2025 and another 44 in November 2025 for familiarisation and technical instruction, including simulations and joint exercises with Royal Navy crews. The remainder of the crew will follow in 2026, completing the cycle of preparation before the ship is transferred and commissioned into the Brazilian fleet. These steps are integrated into the Navy's Plan of Force Configuration, which sets acquisition schedules and emphasises the need to secure multi-purpose naval capacity in the short term while national shipbuilding programs continue.

The operational history of *HMS Bulwark* in British service illustrates the type of tasks Brazil intends to assign it. In 2006, the ship evacuated about 1,300 civilians from Lebanon during the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. In 2010, it transported military personnel and civilians stranded in Iceland after the eruption of the *Eyjafjallajökull volcano* disrupted air travel. In 2011, it participated in anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia, and in 2015, it provided medical and logistical support during the rescue of more than 2,900 migrants off the coast of Libya. These missions demonstrate its suitability for combined humanitarian and military tasks, and Brazilian authorities reference them when explaining the vessel's role in national emergencies and international commitments.





United Kingdom

Name	HMS Bulwark
Ordered	18 July 1996
Builder	BAE Systems Marine, Barrow-in-Furness
Laid Down	27 January 2000
Commissioned	28 April 2005 <i>(20 years old as at 2025)</i>
Identification	Callsign : GDIV Pennant : L15 Deck Code : BK
Status	Sold To Brazil, September 2025 Price : As at September 2025—Not Released
General Characteristics	
Class & Type	Albion Class Amphibious Transport
Displacement	19,560 Tons
Length	176 m (577 ft 5 in)
Beam	28.9 m (94 ft 10 in)
Draught	7.1 m (23 ft 4 in)
Propulsion	2 x Wartsila Vasa 16V 32E Diesel Generators 2 x Wartsila Vasa 4R 32E Diesel Generators GE Power Conversion Full Electric Propulsion System 2 x Motors & Drives Bow Thruster
Speed	18 knots (21 mph ; 33 km/h)
Range	7,000 nm (13,000 km)
Boats & Landing Craft	4 x LCU Mk.10 4 x LCVP Mk.5
Capacity	67 Vehicles
Troops	405 Royal Marines (710 Overload)
Crew	325 Officers & Ships Company
Sensors	2 x Type 1007/8 I-band radars 1 x Type 996 E/F band radar 1 x Type 997 E/F band radar (from 2026)
Armament	2 x 20mm Phalanx CIWS 2 x 20mm GAM-BO1 cannon 4 x General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMG) 4 x HMG (.50 Cal)
Aviation Facilities	2 x Landing Spots for helicopters up to the size of a Chinook Helicopter



The ship's configuration, with multiple landing craft, large troop capacity, and a two-spot flight deck, is consistent with these operational precedents.

The transaction has also been debated in the United Kingdom. Reports in the British press indicated that the sale of HMS Albion and HMS Bulwark could be valued at around £20 million, despite £132.7 million having been spent on maintenance and refits since 2010. Critics, including Conservative MP Mark Francois, described the decision to decommission and sell the ships as militarily and financially questionable, particularly given that both had originally been slated to remain in service until the early 2030s. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) under Secretary John Healey of the Labour government announced their withdrawal in late 2024, citing manpower shortages and cost pressures. In Brazil, however, the acquisition is framed as an opportunity to address capability gaps created by obsolescence and budget constraints, and to reinforce expeditionary, humanitarian, and maritime security capacities through the integration of a proven multipurpose platform.

For the Brazilian Navy, the acquisition of *HMS Bulwark* as *NDM Oiapoque* is presented as part of the effort to recompose the nucleus of naval power and guarantee presence in areas of strategic interest. *Admiral Marcos Sampaio Olsen*, Commander of the Navy, stated that the ship will contribute to the exercise of sovereignty over national waters and strengthen operational efficiency in both defence and humanitarian contexts. The Navy stresses that the ship will be employed not only in amphibious power projection but also in the protection of the *Amazônia Azul*, civil defence support during natural disasters, and humanitarian aid to isolated communities. Officials link the acquisition to broader goals of national integration and interagency cooperation, and emphasize the interoperability benefits gained through training with the Royal Navy. Taken together, the revitalisation, renaming, training, and eventual commissioning of the *NDM Oiapoque* outline a plan to integrate the vessel fully into Brazil's strategic posture in 2026.



HMS Bulwark—L15 (LHD)
Pic : ukdefencejournal.org.uk

Is This Another Collins Class Financial Debacle



Ghost Shark – Prototype
Pic : Nikki Short/NCA NewsWire

For those of us who can recall the unmitigated financial disaster with the purchase, construction and operations of the Collins Class submarines starting in the 1970's up until commencement of construction in 1990, will this new innovation again prove a monetary humiliation for Australia !

It has now been reported that Defence Minister Marles has committed the Australian taxpayer to a \$1.7bn liability for dozens of autonomous Ghost Shark submarines as the USA cites interest in the technology.

The Australian government has just unveiled a multi-billion-dollar defence package to deliver crewless submarines, in a move designed to strengthen both Australia's naval power and its alliance with the USA.

Current reporting indicates Australia is preparing to launch dozens of these new autonomous submarines, with the first batch of Ghost Shark drones set to enter the water in January 2026.

The \$1.7 billion program, announced by Acting Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles in Sydney last week (September 2025), will see the Royal Australian Navy armed with what he described as "the highest tech capability in the world".

"This is the culmination of three prototypes of Ghost Shark having already been built, and it demonstrates an exquisite capability which has been designed, developed, prototyped and now being manufactured here in Australia," Mr Marles said.

Mr. Marles declined to reveal how many units would be built, saying the "stealth nature" of the program meant only "dozens" would be produced in the first wave.

"This is a profoundly important capability for the Royal Australian Navy," he said.

"We do not want to put out there the precise number, but dozens of these units will be built in the first tranche of this program for the Royal Australian Navy."

The submarines, developed over three years by weaponsmaker **Anduril Australia** in partnership with the Australian Defence Force (ADF), are designed to operate far from Australia's shores and can be piloted from both land and sea. They will be capable of reconnaissance as well as strike missions.

The investment is expected to secure 120 existing

jobs and create a further 150 at a Sydney facility, cementing the country's role in high-tech defence manufacturing.

The announcement followed Chinese President Xi Jinping's military parade in Beijing last week, where more than 10,000 troops marched alongside tanks, warplanes and nuclear missiles.

Following the display of China's very recent military parade, Richard Marles eased fears saying that there is little chance that Australia will fall behind China's advances in undersea warfare.



Asked whether Australia and its allies risked falling behind China's advances in undersea warfare, Mr Marles argued the Ghost Shark showed otherwise.

"The nature of warfare changed significantly over the last few years," he said, adding the technology was evidence "Australia is leading the world in terms of autonomous underwater military capabilities".

He insisted the nation was operating in *"the most threatening strategic landscape since World War II"* and said the program was focused on deterrence.

"All we are doing in terms of spending more on defence, in terms of building a much more capable defence force, is to deter conflict and to provide for the peace and stability of the region in which we live," Mr Marles said.

Assistant Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Matt Thistlethwaite declared the submarines underscored the government's increased defence spending.

"We've been saying for some time that we are increasing our defence expenditure. We are boosting it by \$50 billion over the course of the next decade. It involves AUKUS, a new surface combatant fleet, and important technology such as this," he said.

"I have seen firsthand the Andral prototype for the Ghost Shark. That is very impressive technology developed by an Australian Company which impressed the Americans so much, that they've invested in the company".

"And that's a pretty good signal that they believe that this Australian technology is something that they'd like to acquire into the future. And it boosts the capacity of the Australian Defence Force."

Pressed on whether the US Navy itself could adopt the technology, Mr Thistlethwaite pointed to existing examples.

"This comes on the back of other technology that has been developed in Australia, like the Ghost Bat, which is a flight drone that Australia's developed that the US is interested in acquiring," he declared.

Hitting back at the criticism often put to the government regarding their lack of development and spending when it comes to defence, Mr Thistlethwaite pointed to the fact the government

has always delivered and followed the advice of the Defence Strategic Review (DSR).

"This notion of the amount of expenditure per GDP, I think we need to get away from that and look at what is the capability that we need to defend Australia," he said.

"The Defence Strategic Review lays out what capability is needed. And we see what the DSR recommends, and (we) deliver that. And that is the important thing".

"I think that we are a government that delivers on the priorities identified by the Defence Strategy Review (DSR) to boost the capability of the Australian Defence Force. And we have done it so well that we've impressed the United States military and they're investing in this technology as well."



AI Generated Image Of Ghost Shark
Pic : devdiscourse.com

Historic Arrival of KRI Brawijaya Joins Indonesian Navy as Nation's Most Powerful Combat Ship



KRI Brawijaya – Offshore Patrol Vessel
Pic : TNI AL

Indonesia has dramatically escalated its naval power projection with the arrival of *KRI Brawijaya* (320), which arrived in September 2025, the nation's first *Pattugliatore Polivalente d'Altura* (PPA) multi-mission combat ship, marking a historic milestone in Southeast Asia's maritime balance of power.

The 143-meter, displacement 6,250 tons *Thaon di Revel*-class warship, once destined for the Italian Navy, has now become the largest and most sophisticated surface combatant in the history of the *Indonesian Navy (TNI AL)*.

After a six-week voyage from La Spezia, Italy, the *KRI Brawijaya* entered Indonesian waters through the Sunda Strait, greeted with fanfare and a naval escort, underscoring its role as a new symbol of deterrence in an increasingly contested Indo-Pacific.

The ship's journey was not merely a delivery transit but a carefully choreographed display of naval diplomacy and combat readiness.

En route, *KRI Brawijaya* executed port calls in Türkiye, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Sri Lanka, sending a clear message that Jakarta intends to deepen maritime partnerships with key powers along the Indian Ocean and Red Sea corridors.

Joint naval drills added an operational edge to the voyage, with the vessel engaging in combined exercises with the Egyptian Navy's FREMM frigate *ENS Tahya Misr* (FFG 1001), the Italian Andrea Doria-class destroyer *ITS Caio Duilio* (D 554), and the UAE's Gowind-class corvette *UAEN Bani Yas* (P110).

The ship also linked up with the Indonesian Navy's Diponegoro-class corvette *KRI Sultan Iskandar Muda* (367), practicing electronic warfare, replenishment-at-sea, and air defence drills that highlighted interoperability with allied forces.

Indonesia

Name	KRI Brawijaya
Ordered	28 March 2024
Builder	Fincantieri, Muggiano
Laid Down	03 September 2020
Commissioned	02 July 2025
Identification	Pennant Number : 320
Status	In Active Service
General Characteristics	
Class & Type	Thaon di Revel Class Offshore Patrol Vessel
Displacement	6,270 tons
Length	143 m (469 ft 2 in)
Beam	16.5 m (54 ft 2 in)
Draught	10.5 m (34 ft 5 in)
Propulsion	CODAG CC Scheme 1 x TAG GE Electric/Avio LM 2500+G4 (32,000kW) 43,000hp 2 x MTU Diesel Engines—20V 8,000 M91L, (10,000kW) 13,000hp 4 x MAN Diesel Generators 12V175D-MEM (1,640kW) 2,200hp 2 x Electric Reversible Engines (1,350kW) 1,810hp (each) 2 x Diesel Emergency Generators 1 x Bow Thruster—550kW (740hp) 2 x Shafts, Driving Controllable Pitch Propellers (CPP)
Speed	27 Knots (50 km/h)
Range	5,000 nm (9,300 km)
Boats & Landing Craft	Not Listed
Capacity	173 Beds
Troops	Accom. For Approximately 89 Marines
Crew	90 Officers & Ships Coy. Plus Accommodation For 24 Aviation Personnel
Sensors	Leonardo—Finmeccanica Naval Processing and Control Systems Command Management Systems
Armament	1 x Otto Melara 127 mm 64 Vulcano With Automated Ammo. Handling System 1 x Oto Melara 76 mm 62 Strales Anti-Aircraft Gun 2 x Oto Melara Oerlikon KBA BO6 Remote Mounting 2 x 6 Cell DCNS Sylver A70 Vertical Launch System (VLS)
Aviation Facilities	1 x Agusta Westland (AW101) Helicopter, OR 2 x Eurocopter AS565 Panther Helicopters Double Hangar



A detachment of TNI AL special forces was embarked throughout the mission, underscoring the ship's dual role as both diplomatic envoy and combat-ready war machine

Background on the Acquisition

The PPA acquisition is anchored in a €1.18 billion (USD\$1.25 billion) contract signed in March 2024 between Indonesia's Ministry of Defence and Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri.

The financing package, structured through a USD\$1.25 billion loan from European financial institutions, underscores Jakarta's willingness to commit significant national resources to elevate its naval modernization program.

The deal redirected two hulls originally earmarked for the Italian Navy, reflecting both Rome's export ambitions and Indonesia's pressing demand for high-capability surface combatants in an era of intensifying maritime competition.

This procurement signals Indonesia's determination to move beyond a "brown-water navy" posture toward becoming a credible "blue-water" force capable of safeguarding critical sea lines of communication (SLOCs) that underpin its economy.

For Jakarta, the timing is strategic.

China's increasingly aggressive posture in the South China Sea and growing encroachments around the Natuna Islands have created urgent pressure on Indonesia to field warships with advanced air defence, anti-submarine, and long-range strike capabilities.

Beyond China, Jakarta must also secure its maritime borders in the Ambalat Block, a long-standing flashpoint with Malaysia that has seen naval confrontations in the past, making the deployment of PPA-class ships a deterrence measure against both state and non-state actors.

The lead vessel, *KRI Brawijaya* (320), formerly *Marcantonio Colonna* (P433), is the spearhead of this contract and represents a qualitative leap for TNI AL in terms of firepower, range, and combat system sophistication.

Her sister ship, *KRI Prabu Siliwangi* (321), scheduled for delivery in January 2026, will provide Jakarta with another highly capable surface combatant, creating a two-pronged naval presence that can be flexibly deployed across eastern and

western theatres.

Once commissioned, *KRI Brawijaya* will be integrated into TNI AL's Second Fleet headquartered in Surabaya, with operational responsibilities extending over eastern waters, including the Maluku Sea and approaches to Papua—critical zones due to their proximity to Australia and key energy transit routes.

Meanwhile, *KRI Prabu Siliwangi* will be deployed under the First Fleet Command, reinforcing Indonesia's naval power in the western archipelago, particularly in the South China Sea and Malacca Strait, where maritime competition with China, Malaysia, and Singapore intersects with global trade flows.

Together, these two warships (2) will constitute the most advanced principal surface combatants in Indonesia's inventory, raising its naval standing significantly within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).



KRI Brawijaya – OPV (320)
Pic : suarasurabaya.net

What's New Pussycat



ADV Cape Spencer (225)
Pic : Austal

September 11, 2025

Australia has accepted the ninth evolved Cape-class patrol boat, **ADV Cape Spencer**, built at Henderson shipyard in Western Australia.

“Under project SEA1445 Phase 1, the Evolved Cape Class Patrol Boats have been delivered approximately every six months, contributing to Australia’s ability to effectively protect our borders and offshore interests,” Deputy Secretary Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment, David Hanley, said.

The final Cape being built for the Royal Australian Navy, ADV Cape Hawke, is currently under construction at Henderson shipyard.

September 09, 2025

Nine Indonesian nationals have pleaded guilty to illegally fishing in Australian waters in two separate cases at Darwin Local Court on August 19. One of the men, identified as a repeat offender, was sentenced to a three-month term of imprisonment.

The cases arose from two incidents on the 1st August, 2025 when Australian authorities intercepted two separate Indonesian fishing vessels.



September 09, 2025

Indonesian Navy eyes decommissioned Italian aircraft carrier **Giuseppe Garibaldi** to “strengthen fleet”.

Talks remain in early stages, but the plan reflects Indonesia’s ambition to modernise its fleet.

Local media reported that the discussions with Italy to acquire the decommissioned aircraft carrier is still in the early stages, and appear to be part of Jakarta’s drive to modernise its fleet and extend its operational reach across its vast archipelago.

The **Giuseppe Garibaldi** is a short take-off and vertical landing (STOVL) carrier designed for both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. The carrier was commissioned in 1985.



ASW Carrier—Giuseppe Garibaldi (551)
Pic : AFP/Marcello Paternostro

What's New Pussycat

September 04, 2025

Anzac-class frigate **HMAS Ballarat** has sailed from HMAS Stirling in Western Australia for a Regional Presence Deployment, reaffirming the Australian Defence Force's maintenance of a near-continuous presence in the region.

During its three-month deployment, **HMAS Ballarat** will conduct military visits to ports and participate in exercises and cooperative activities with partner nations, demonstrating Australia's commitment to a secure, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.

Australia conducts Regional Presence Deployments in accordance with international law, allowing Australia to exercise the right to freedom of navigation and overflight in international waters and airspace.

The deployment by **HMAS Ballarat** will run concurrently with **HMAS Brisbane**, which left Australia on a Regional Presence Deployment in late July.



HMAS Ballarat—FFH 155
Pic : Mel Orr/U.S. Navy



Landing Craft "Voea"(A402)
Pic : CoA/Defence

September 02, 2025

Australia has delivered a new landing craft vessel to Tonga, with an official handover ceremony taking place at the Masefield Naval Base, Tonga.

The delivery follows the completion of comprehensive training undertaken by Tonga Royal Navy personnel at the Australian Maritime College in Tasmania.

The vessel was provided under the Pacific Maritime Security Program (PMSP). It is expected to enhance Tonga's humanitarian assistance and disaster relief capabilities, as well as its ability to deter, detect, and disrupt illegal maritime activities in the region.

"The delivery of the new landing craft builds on decades of partnership, and upholds our shared commitment to sovereignty, security and prosperity in the Pacific," Defence's First Assistant Secretary Pacific Division, Susan Bodell, said.

An invitation to join the

NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA



The Navy League of Australia was established in Australia in 1900, and in 1950 became an autonomous national organisation with a Federal Council and Divisions covering all States and Territories. Its aim today, as it was in 1900, is to create an interest in the sea and to keep before the Australian people the fact that we are a maritime nation and that a strong Navy and sound maritime industry are indispensable elements to our national wellbeing and vital to the freedom of Australia.

The Navy League of Australia invites you to join us in this important national task.

Here is also an invitation to join the Australian Naval cadets and sail with us!



To join, you must be a resident of Australia, between 13 and 18 years old and not be a member of another cadet group. You will learn sailing, power boating, seamanship and navigation. It is great way to have fun and make new friends while developing your confidence, pride and self-discipline.

Our training staff are always on hand to keep you safe and secure.

For more information go to www.navycadets.gov.au

Joining the League

To become a Member of the League, you must not need to have had any previous maritime experience. You merely need an interest in maritime affairs. Simply complete the application form below, and post it, together with your first annual subscription of \$50 which includes the four quarterly editions of the Navy, to the Hon. secretary of the division of the Navy league in the state in which you reside, the address of which are as follows:

New South Wales Division:

GPO box 1719, Sidney, NSW 2001.

Victoria Division:

PO Box 314: Bentleigh, Vic. 3204.

Queensland Division:

PO Box 620 Morningside QLD 4170.

South Australian Division:

PO box 3008, Unley, SA 5061.

West Australia Division:

PO box 735, Fremantle, WA 6959.

If you live in Tasmania, please post the form to the Hon. Secretary of the Victoria Division. If you live in the ACT or the NT, please post the form to the Hon. Secretary of the NSW or South Australian Division respectively.

Subscriptions are due on 1 July of each year, and your membership will be current to 30 June immediately following the date on which you join the league, except that if your first subscription is received during the period one April to 30 June in any year, your initial membership will be extended to 30 June in the following year.

For more information, visit our web-site....

www.navyleague.org.au

THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To: The Hon, Secretary

The Navy league of Australia

Division

I wish to join the Navy League of Australia, the objectives of which I support, and I enclose a remittance for \$50.00 (including \$4.54 GST) being my first annual subscription to 30 June next.

Name: [Mr] [Mrs] [Ms] [Rank]

Street _____

Suburb _____

State _____ Post Code _____

Phone _____ Mob. _____

Email _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Subscriptions are due on the 1 July each year and your membership will be current to the 30 June immediately following the date on which you join the League, except that if your first subscription is received during the period 1 April to 30 June in any year, your initial membership will be extended to 30 June in the following year.

DONATION. (Please complete this section if you wish to donate.)

I wish to donate the following amount to the Navy League of Australia. My details have been included in the above portion of this form.

On receiving your application banking details (EFT) will be forwarded to you by your state division with an introductory letter.

DONATION \$ _____