

## NAVY NEWS WEEK 3-3

17 January 2022

### No midlife refits coming anytime soon for SAN frigates and submarines

Written by Guy Martin -

17th Jan 2022



National Treasury has stated that there is little scope for additional funding for the mid-life refit of the South African Navy's frigates and submarines, in spite of pleas from Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans and warnings that the non-availability of naval platforms due to a lack of maintenance is affecting the ability of the Navy to fulfil its constitutional mandate. In its Budgetary Review and Recommendation Report (BRRR) from the end of November 2021, the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans (PCDMV) said it was aware of the

fiscal constraints facing National Treasury and noted its previous response to the BRRR that no funds were available for a ring-fenced allocation to fund the midlife upgrades of SA Navy vessels, but the PCDMV again recommended funds be reprioritised to upgrade the frigate and submarine fleets in the coming years. *"The non-availability of naval platforms due to maintenance requirements results in the SA Navy not achieving its targets for coastal patrols and sea hours, thus affecting its constitutional mandate to ensure the territorial integrity of South Africa. Additional funding over the medium-term for the midlife upgraders are therefore essential,"* the BRRR stated. The mid-life upgrades on both the SA Navy's frigates and submarines are currently on hold due to a lack of funds. *"The fact that these midlife upgrades have been put off for multiple years not only impact the SA Navy's operational capacity, but may well result in more expensive upgrades being required in the long-term."* According to a response to the PCDMV by Armscor, there will be no mid-life upgrade of the frigates until at least 2033 while there will be no mid-life upgrades for the submarines until 2035. The BRRR recommended the minister of finance should consider an additional ring-fenced allocation to fund the midlife upgrades of SA Navy vessels in need of such upgrades, but the minister noted there is little scope for additional funding and instead advised departments to identify areas of reprioritisation, including by improving their internal efficiency. In August 2021, the Department of Defence told the PCDMV that for the 2021/22 financial year, the SA Navy's vessel refit as well as maintenance and repair full cost requirement of R1.470 billion was only 53.4% funded, with R786 million allocated. Due to historic and current funding shortages, only one of the four frigates, **SAS Amatola**, was partially refitted in 2014/15 and only one of the three submarines, **SAS Manthatisi**, was refitted in 2013/14. Funding for the refit of the remaining three frigates (**SAS Isandlwana**, **SAS Spioenkop** and **SAS Mendi**) and for the Submarine **SAS Queen Modjadji I** was not available since they became due for refits, the DoD said. **Queen Modjadji I** is overdue for a refit. **SAS Manthatisi** is currently operational and was scheduled to undergo further scheduled maintenance and repairs in the second half of 2021. Additional funding to complete the refit of the **SAS Charlotte Maxeke** by the end of 2023 has been made available by the SA Navy. **SAS Spioenkop** is operational while the **SAS Mendi** recently started sea trials after eight years of maintenance. According to the Department of Defence, the average cost estimate for a frigate refit amounts to R687 million and that of a submarine refit amounts to R660 million. Pending the conduct of the outstanding refits, the SA Navy's current focus is to prioritise essential maintenance and repair of the frigates **SAS Spioenkop** and **SAS Mendi**, the combat support ship **SAS Drakensberg** and the Submarine **SAS Manthatisi** to ensure their expedited operational availability.

Source: <https://www.defenceweb.co.za>

## **France's CMN constructing landing craft for African client**

Written by defenceWeb -  
17th Jan 2022



French shipyard CMN (Constructions Mecaniques de Normandie) has started the manufacture of two landing craft tank (LCT) vessels for an undisclosed African country. As reported by Actu.fr, the vessels are being built on behalf of Prinvest and will be delivered in 2023 and 2025, according to Serge Quaranta, CEO of CMN. This is a follow-on to a 2016 contract by Prinvest for around 20 vessels destined for an African country, the publication reports. The 70 metre long vessels will be able to carry 200 tons of payload,

including 260 soldiers in addition to the crew of 18. Watertight bulkheads ensure survivability in the event of damage. A 5.25 metre boat can be launched by a crane. Each LCT will be powered by two diesel engines driving two fixed-pitch propellers and giving a speed of 16 knots. The LCTs are the largest vessels to be built by CMN since the corvette **Baynunah** (71 metres long), delivered to the United Arab Emirates in 2011. CMN has sold vessels to other African countries, including Angola and Mozambique. In 2016, Prinvest announced it would establish a shipyard in Angola and supply several naval vessels under a 495 million euro deal. Prinvest has facilities and shipyards in a number of countries including France (CMN), Germany (German Naval Yards Kiel) and the Middle East. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the 2016 Angolan deal included three HSI 32 patrol craft, which were delivered in 2019, and a long range offshore patrol vessel and a short range patrol vessel from France. The patrol vessels are believed to be Vigilante-1400 and Vigilante-400 models built by CMN. Photos recently emerged confirming the HSI 32s in Angolan service. The HSI 32 is also in service with Mozambique, which in September 2013 signed a controversial 200 million euro deal with CMN to build the three Ocean Eagle 43s, three HIS 32 interceptors and 24 fishing vessels over a two year period. The HSI 32s were delivered to Mozambique from 2016.

Source: <https://www.defenceweb.co.za>

## **Royal Navy's first female admiral takes command**

**Senior Royal Navy officer Judith Helen "Jude" Terry has taken command as the first female admiral in the Royal Navy's history.**

After nearly 25 years' service around the globe and at home in the UK, the 48-year-old Royal Navy officer from Jersey takes the helm as Director of People and Training and Naval Secretary. That makes the rear admiral responsible not only for more than 40,000 regular and reservist sailors and Royal Marines, but also the Royal Fleet Auxiliary – who operate the Navy's crucial support ships – plus civil servants and contractors.



Photo: Royal Navy

She took the reins of her department from her predecessor Rear Admiral Phil Hally (above right) following a ceremony aboard **HMS Victory** in Portsmouth, continuing and building upon many of the changes he has introduced under the Royal Navy's

sweeping Transformation program. "The world has changed in terms of what people want from life and careers, whatever their gender, and the Navy needs to work to modernise our organisation to support this change – a diverse and inclusive workforce is a better place for all but is also proven to deliver better outcomes," Admiral Terry said. "I look forward to

leading my team in supporting them, using modern approaches, helping us all to be the best we can be, and building on the work already done by my predecessor." First Sea Lord Admiral Ben Key added Admiral Terry is "a great example of all the amazing women serving today – and a role model for all who serve and those who follow." Beyond immediate issues impacting today's Navy, Admiral Terry's department is also charged with helping to shape the Royal Navy and its people up to 2040, when there will still be two 65,000-tonne aircraft carriers in service, alongside new Dreadnought-class submarines, three new classes of frigates and a new generation of destroyers.

**Source: Naval Today**

## **How likely is a direct military confrontation with China?**

### **Does China pose a genuine military threat to Australia or have "hawkish" observers exaggerated tensions?**

Australia-China relations are perhaps at a record low, with real, substantive dialogue between Canberra and Beijing seemingly suspended. Prime Minister Scott Morrison's unrelenting criticism of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) policy actions both domestically and abroad caught the ire of President Xi Jinping, who published a list of 14 grievances with Australia, which include:

- calls for an inquiry into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- criticism of CCP behaviour in the South China Sea;
- vocal condemnation of human rights abuses in Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan;
- accusations against China regarding state-sponsored cyber-attacks; and
- the introduction of new foreign relations laws enabling the federal government to veto state or local government agreements with foreign governments.

In addition to suspending formal diplomatic relations with Canberra, Beijing has imposed trade bans and economic sanctions on Australian imports in an attempt to coerce Australia into subservience. But the Morrison government has stood firm, buoyed by public support for a strong stance against CCP aggression. According to Sam Roggeveen, director, international security program at the Lowy Institute, Australia's resilience is evidence of the limits of Chinese power. "Rather than backing down under pressure, Australia has further stiffened its policies since these trade measures were put in place," he writes. "China's reputation has also been damaged, and our economy has passed through the storm. In fact, we survived a much greater economic test in the form of COVID-19, and so far, our economy has shown itself to be remarkably resilient. "The lesson Beijing should take is that it is difficult to coerce Australia economically because we are well protected from even deep shocks." But some fear tensions between Canberra and Beijing may extend beyond verbal jousting and trade weaponisation. Roggeveen dispels such concerns, claiming China is incapable of forging a sustained military campaign against Australia. "Just as there are limits on the economic pain China can inflict on Australia, so it is with military force," he continues. Roggeveen acknowledges China has made "enormous strides" in the defence space, noting the People's Liberation Army's "stunning" technological progress. However, he suspects these advancements fall short of overcoming geographical obstacles. "Since the end of World War II, the world has seen nothing like the speed and quality of modernisation that we see in China's naval, air, space and cyber forces," Roggeveen continues. "Yet, China has not overcome the limits of physics and engineering. The longer the distance over which a nation wants to project military power, the more difficult and expensive it becomes. "Australia's China hawks are apt to forget that over 4,000 kilometres separates Darwin from China's southern fleet headquarters in Zhanjiang." He concedes China's new artificial islands in the South China Sea and its long-range ballistic and cruise missiles can hit targets in northern Australia "with enormous accuracy" but adds such missiles can only carry a single high-explosive warhead or many smaller sub-munitions. "It's a hugely costly way to deliver not very much force," Roggeveen contends. "For sustained military operations, China would need either military bases much closer to Australia, which is a distant prospect, or it would need to sail a fleet towards our shores." Australia should assume China's navy would eventually develop more capable long-range power projection forces, he writes, but geography would continue to hinder a prospective threat. "To sustain military operations over such vast seas requires enormous resources," Roggeveen notes. "China could sail its two

aircraft carriers toward Australia, plus many escorting destroyers and submarines, but it couldn't keep such ships replenished and ready to fight indefinitely, and it couldn't replace them if they needed repair." Roggeveen observes that China would neglect other security threats in the event of a full-scale attack against Australia. "[It's] hard to think of circumstances in which China would devote all its key naval resources to a fight with Australia," he adds. "Everywhere China looks around Asia, its ambitions are constrained by other great powers: India, Russia, Japan, and the United States. "Its relations with those powers will never be stable and friendly enough for it to ignore them as security threats in order to focus its military power on far-away Australia." He concludes: "Granted, Australia's security problems will get harder as China grows. But it remains a manageable problem, especially if Australia continues to get bigger also. "A growing population is good for Australia in many ways, but it is also a key determinant of Australia's ability to manage the risks of a more powerful China."

**Source: Defence Connect**

## **Taiwan adds minelaying ships to defenses against China**

By The Associated Press

Friday, Jan 14

KAOHSIUNG, Taiwan —

Taiwan on Friday commissioned new naval minelayers to add to its [defenses against rival China](#). President Tsai Ing-wen presided over a commissioning ceremony for the Navy's First and Second Mining Operations squadrons, which will operate ships able to automatically sow large numbers of small but powerful mines at high speed without the need for divers. Such technologies are part of a strategy to deter any possible invasion from China, with its



huge military and vast superiority in numbers of aircraft, ships and other weaponry.

Taiwanese sailors form up in front of newly commissioned Navy minelayers in Kaohsiung city, southern Taiwan, on Jan. 14, 2022. (Taiwan Presidential Office via AP)

China claims Taiwan as its own territory, and has stepped up its threat to bring it under its control, [by force if necessary](#), with frequent military exercises and by dispatching fighter jets and other planes to fly near the island.

The initial order of four ships manufactured

by Lungteh Shipbuilding is part of a drive by Tsai to revitalize the domestic arms industry and reduce Taiwan's dependence on [its chief ally, the United States](#), for defensive weapons.

Lungteh also produces missile corvettes, patrol boats and other craft for the Taiwanese armed forces and police, along with ones for civilian use. The automatic mine-laying system was developed by Taiwan's Chung Shan Institute of Science and Technology. The ships give the Navy "even stronger power in protecting our waters," Tsai said at the ceremony. Their commissioning "demonstrated the fruits of the indigenous defense industry and showed the world our determination to defend our country," she said. Lt. Hsu Shu-wei of the Second Mining Operations Squadron said the purpose of the new technology was simply to "[build up our asymmetric warfare power](#)." "Our target is to deter the enemy from getting on our island," Hsu said.

**Source: <https://www.defensenews.com>**

## **Why the West must end its preoccupation with Putin's Russia**

17 January 2022

By: Charbel Kadib

The West's response to Russia's encroachment of Ukrainian sovereignty has distracted from the real threat, China, according to one former US presidential hopeful. Mounting tensions across Russia's border with Ukraine are stoking fears of an imminent military confrontation. Approximately 100,000 Russian troops are deployed along the Ukrainian border, with some observers, including retired US Army Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Vindman, expecting the military's mobilisation to be a precursor to yet another invasion of sovereign Ukrainian



territory. "The most likely scenario in my mind is a major military offensive in Ukraine," Vindman told US media. "I hope I'm wrong, but that's what I see." In an interview with NPR last week, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the Biden administration remains committed to



dialogue, but is prepared for escalation. "There are two paths, and [Russia] can decide which path to follow," he said. "There is a path of diplomacy and dialogue, and we're committed to that. We believe that it's the best way forward. It's the most responsible way forward to deal with differences and the situation in eastern Ukraine. "On the other hand, if they choose confrontation, if they choose aggression, we're fully prepared for it.

We've spent weeks, indeed months now, working in very close co-ordination with allies and partners at the G-7, the EU, NATO to prepare for Russian aggression and to make very clear that there'll be massive consequences if that's the path they pursue." But according to former US presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan — who also served as White House communications director in the Reagan administration — Washington's preoccupation with Moscow is a distraction. "There is not now and never has been a vital US interest in Ukraine to justify risking a war with Russia," he writes. Buchanan points to Washington's historic handling of acts of Russian aggression towards Ukraine, noting the absence of real US intervention. "Even as Ukraine was suffering in the Stalin-induced Holodomor, the terror-famine of 1932-33, President Franklin Roosevelt granted diplomatic recognition to the Bolshevik regime," he continued. "During four decades of Cold War, the US never regarded Moscow's control of Ukraine as any threat to the USA." The former Republican nominee for president commends President Joe Biden's open dismissal of military action as an option in response to any Russian incursion or invasion of Ukraine. He goes on to urge the administration to flatly reject Kyiv's push for NATO membership. "Ukraine is not going to be invited to join NATO and be given Article 5 US war guarantees that are the primary benefit of membership," Buchanan adds. Moscow is urging the US to provide formal assurances ruling out future NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia and the prohibition of offensive arms sales to neighbouring nations that could threaten Russian security. Buchanan notes Russian President Vladimir Putin warning of an invasion and occupation of Ukraine if the demands are not met. With a military confrontation with Russia ruled out as a possibility in the event of an invasion, Buchanan expects the United States to retaliate with severe sanctions, which could include cancellation of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia to Germany. "Putin has lately issued a counter-threat," he continues. "If such severe sanctions are imposed on Russia, this will result in a 'complete rupture of relations' and be a blunder 'which our descendants will later appreciate as a huge one'." "Not long ago, a total severing of relations was the prelude to war." Buchanan claims despite Moscow's provocation on the Ukrainian border, the US and its allies should try to view the crisis "through Putin's eyes". "The heart of Greater Russia as one ethnic, cultural and historic nation consists not only of Russia but also of Belarus and Ukraine. Yet, consider the political condition of that core nation today," he writes. "Ukraine has broken from Moscow and seeks its future in the West, the EU and NATO. Belarus, a nation of 10 million, just went through an election where only fraud guaranteed victory for its 67-year-old autocrat, Alexander Lukashenko, who has ruled Belarus for a quarter-century. "Though an ally of Putin, Lukashenko is not the future." Putin himself, Buchanan adds, has been in power for two decades and is "bedevilled by rising democratic resistance in Russia". Meanwhile, the US has moved NATO across Germany into Eastern Europe and the Baltic states over the past 25 years, and is fostering an alliance between Georgia and Ukraine to contain Russia. "Putin has to see himself as the ruler of a diminishing Russia, not a rising power," Buchanan states. "Time is not on Russia's side or Putin's side. "His principal ally, China, has 10 times the population of Russia and an economy 10 times Putin's. Moreover, China harbours ancestral claims to Russian territory in the Far East, which, in 1969, caused a border clash between the two countries." According to Buchanan, Putin has sought to end the "long retreat of Russian power", which "the eastward march of a NATO alliance created",

even if it risks war with Ukraine. "Putin may see this as a now-or-never moment to halt the decades-long attrition of Russian territorial and national power," he observes. Buchanan urges Washington to channel similar approaches taken by previous administrations in the 20th century and reorient its focus. "In the Cold War, President Dwight Eisenhower did not intervene militarily to save the Hungarian rebels who rose against Moscow in 1956. Nor did President John F. Kennedy act to stop the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961. Nor did President Lyndon B. Johnson intervene to prevent Moscow's crushing of the 'Prague Spring' in 1968. Nor did President Ronald Reagan act when Solidarity was crushed in Poland in 1981," he notes. "Historically, those presidents who refused to use force in Central or Eastern Europe, to avoid a war with Russia where US vital interests were not imperilled, were proven right. "Time was on America's side in the Cold War. And, with Russia, time is still on America's side." The former White House communications director ends by flagging the much larger threat posed by the Chinese Communist Party, suggesting Russia could yet play a role in thwarting Beijing's consolidation of power. "Our great challenge in the 21st century is not Russia," he writes. "Indeed, in the long term, we want Russia on our side in the long struggle between the US and the West, and Communist China. "What the US should do in this Ukrainian crisis is to avoid a war with Russia, avoid an escalation, and leave our adversary with an honourable avenue of retreat. Again, with Russia, time is on our side."

Source: <https://www.defenceconnect.com.au>

## **'What drove the United States to AUKUS?'**

13 Jan 2022

[Charles Edel](#)



September was a dizzying month in Australian foreign policy, especially in the Australian–American relationship. In quick succession were the 70th anniversary of ANZUS, the announcement of the new AUKUS defence partnership, the annual AUSMIN consultations and the Quad's first in-person leaders' meeting. The pace was relentless and the consequences breathtaking, with AUKUS the most notable development. Much Australian commentary has focused on what drove Canberra to join this partnership—the

potential risks and benefits, the political dimensions and the challenges. Less discussed are the multiple factors that drove Washington to this decision. None relate to over-the-top claims that it was motivated by a desperate and provocative grasp at preserving its primacy. Understanding the multiple rationales at work is key to determining how important AUKUS is to America, the strength and durability of its commitment, and the likely evolution of this rapidly changing partnership. AUKUS represents a sea change in US strategic thinking towards empowering its allies, redistributing its forces around the Indo-Pacific, and better integrating its allies into its supply chains and industrial planning to deal with an increasingly aggressive China. This requires sharing sensitive technologies, deepening intelligence cooperation, pooling resources and changing domestic legislation around export controls. It could fundamentally change America's engagement with the region, its approach to technological acquisition, and its relationship with Australia and other allies. Given the strategic, bureaucratic and legislative hurdles, this will be no mean feat. So, what explains this shift in Washington's attitude? Several factors, as it turns out. President Joe Biden has repeatedly asserted that alliances are America's greatest asset and pledged that his administration will repair and reinvest in them. This isn't simply a desire to apply rhetorical balm after four years of disruptions, although that's undoubtedly at work too. For Biden, as with nearly all his predecessors, this is a matter of security. 'When we strengthen our alliances,' Biden told America's diplomats shortly after becoming president, 'we amplify our power as well as our ability to disrupt threats before they can reach our shores.' This

straightforward logic has guided American policymakers for decades: there's safety, and power, in numbers and threats are best confronted as far from the American homeland as possible. For Washington, AUKUS is a tangible demonstration of its commitment to allies under duress. More significantly, it is a recognition that in a deteriorating security environment with a shifting balance of power, America is prepared to significantly augment close allies' capabilities and enable them to do more. Similarly, America needs to address persistent questions about its commitment to, and staying power in, the Indo-Pacific. Foreign observers have obsessed over how inwardly focused America is, where its actual, as opposed to stated, priorities lie, and its ability to defend itself and others from emerging threats. America's allies and partners have asked these questions out of a sense of concern; its adversaries out of a sense of opportunity. In recent months, such concerns were heightened in the aftermath of America's chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan and growing alarm over Taiwan's vulnerability. AUKUS will not put an end to those debates, but willingly sharing the crown jewels of America's technological and military prowess is a big step forward. Just as significant, AUKUS will help shift America's strategic focus and lay the foundation for a significantly expanded regional presence. Related to this is the message intended simultaneously for external audiences and domestic ones that the needs of the Indo-Pacific will take priority over other interests and drive bureaucratic choice and resource allocation. The special regard that Australia is held in, by both American policymakers and the American public, combined with Washington's desire to do more to help Australia respond to China's bullying, also helps account for Washington's willingness to pursue this deal. Australia and America have had a close relationship for decades but, over the past several years, a special interest in, and respect for, Australia's own policies has grown in the US. Australia is seen a canary in the coalmine, often the first to experience and be forced to respond to various forms of Chinese coercion and political interference. In Washington, politicians and policymakers now cite Australia as an example of both what Chinese coercion looks like and how to respond. This, and not paeans to the countries' shared history on battlegrounds, is what is driving Washington's desire to work more closely with Australia. That sentiment is true at both the elite and popular levels. Polling reveals that Americans are willing to take significant risks to defend Australia. Biden's statement that the '*US has no closer or more reliable ally than Australia*' should be seen as a reflection of these views, and a desire to help turbocharge Australia's efforts. Of course, America's desire to shore up its alliances and display its Indo-Pacific focus goes far beyond its relationship with Australia. But given the amount of trust required to share nuclear secrets and collaborate on cutting-edge technology, AUKUS could only have been undertaken with the closest of allies. As US Secretary of State Antony Blinken declared in May, '*The US will not leave Australia alone on the field.*' AUKUS should be seen as a significant attempt to make good on that statement. In strategic terms, AUKUS is largely driven by Washington's recognition that it needs more capable players in the field (or, rather, in and under the sea) to help correct a shifting balance of power. China's decades-long economic expansion has allowed its rulers to rapidly modernise its military. Beijing now possesses the world's second largest defence budget, fields the largest conventional missile force, and controls the biggest navy and coastguard. While China has poured resources into defence and rapidly grown its forces, the US and its allies and partners have not kept pace. The US still has a military advantage over China, but the gap has been rapidly closing in Asia, and in certain domains it may already have been erased. Without an urgent drive to address such trends, the regional balance of power may soon tip in China's favour. Responding to such imbalances requires greater numbers and more advanced capabilities. AUKUS holds out the possibility of fielding more forces and upgrading their capabilities. As China has not yet developed robust anti-submarine capabilities, nuclear-powered submarines can offset Beijing's advantages—if more Australian, British and American submarines can be put in the water on an accelerated timeline. A final American motivation is the hope that AUKUS will galvanise greater investments, efforts and collaborations by other nations concerned by the rapid growth of China's military and its increasingly assertive use. While the sensitivity of the technology being shared and the complexity of the logistical requirements mean AUKUS will remain limited, the idea of nations working together to balance China's rise is by no means exclusionary. This

can already be seen with Japan's and India's contributions to the Quad. Southeast Asia's initial response to AUKUS has been more varied, but Taiwan, Vietnam, Singapore and the Philippines have all shown a willingness to enhance their defence capacities and augment their security partnerships, even if defence spending across the region remains low. Europe too has shown interest in increasing its military presence, which makes it even more important to encourage greater regional involvement by France, despite its loss of Australia's submarine contract. Some of these efforts are more aspirational than others, but the more coordinated efforts take place, the more convincing becomes the argument that Beijing is no longer operating in a permissive security environment. The desire to empower America's closest allies; the need to demonstrate the US commitment to, and prioritisation of, the Indo-Pacific region; the respect for and trust of Australia; the drive to balance Beijing with more robust defence capabilities for its allies; and the hope that bold actions will galvanise more nations to act all played a part in Washington's decision to support AUKUS. Canberra may have initiated this deal with London, but Washington rightly saw the opportunity to advance its own strategic goals. Australia's 2020 defence strategic update concluded that the regional security environment was deteriorating more rapidly than earlier assessments indicated, requiring new thinking and new action. Recognition of an altered landscape and the need to mobilise greater collective efforts can produce radical shifts in what is necessary, and what is possible. During America's Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln declared, *'The dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present.'* Thus he laid the political, moral and strategic groundwork for the Emancipation Proclamation to formally abolish slavery in America. *'As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew.'* Attempting to motivate his fellow Americans, Lincoln concluded that his nation could succeed only by concert, not with, *'Can any of us imagine better?'* but with, *'Can we all do better?'* That simple statement preceded one of the boldest acts of statecraft in American history. Many questions about AUKUS remain unanswered, and critical ones may not yet have been asked. But Washington and Canberra seem to have made the same bet, that only collective effort, and not individual actions, will produce lasting security and stability.

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Source: <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au>

## Indian ship-building on the wane



Indian Navy's first Scorpene submarine being launched in Mumbai, April 2015.

The Indian Navy is unlikely to meet its goal of having a 175-ship fleet in the next five years due to a lack of funds and the government's preference to award contracts to state-owned shipyards over private businesses, Defense News reports. The goal, set in December 2019, was

already lowered from 200 ships after the government allocated less funding than the Navy expected. Both serving and retired Navy officials have expressed concern that the domestic shipbuilding industry cannot thrive in an environment where the government favours state-owned shipyards for building critical naval platforms, including aircraft carriers, destroyers, frigates and anti-submarine warfare corvettes — projects that are already fraught with delays or additional costs. The Navy operates a 130-ship fleet, and 39 vessels are currently on order or under construction. The service spends about \$1.5 billion annually on shipbuilding programs, but officials say that is not enough and should be increased threefold to meet the shortfall in capability. *"The Ministry of Defence in the past has always given preference to state-owned shipyards by nominating them for all big-ticket shipbuilding programs, and private shipbuilders continue to suffer due to a lack of orders,"* one Navy official told Defense News. A source at the MoD said the government allocated about \$15.28 billion over 10 years for the construction of 50 ships (39 are on order or under construction, and 11 were already



delivered). Some sources spoke to Defense News on the condition of anonymity, as they were not authorized to speak to the media. Only three naval contracts worth a total of \$71.42 million were awarded to private players, the defense official added, with the remaining 47 projects awarded to state-owned shipyards. Of the 50 ships, 40 are meant for the Navy and 10 for the Indian Coast Guard. *"Warship building as an industry in the country has been on the downswing for over a decade now,"* former Indian Navy chief Adm. Sunil Lanba told Defense News. The shipbuilding division of private company Larsen & Toubro successfully completed a floating dock program for the Navy and built offshore patrol vessels and interceptor boats for the Coast Guard. But financial problems led to the cancellation of other maritime projects, including one to construct training ships by Bharati Shipyard and another to build offshore patrol vessels by Reliance Naval (previously known as Pipavav Shipyard). Reliance Naval stopped production operations in December 2018. Last month, asset management firm Hazel Mercantile Limited was declared the highest bidder at \$385.71 million for the financially strapped shipyard. Government-backed National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited made the announcement Dec. 13, although the bid from Indian business tycoon Nikhil Merchant was not approved by press time. He owns a liquefied natural gas terminal at Jafrabad Port near the R-Naval facilities, and it's unclear what he would do with the newly acquired facility. United Shipbuilding Corporation of Russia had shown interest in buying out R-Naval's assets but withdrew from the process in mid-2021, citing the unviable shipbuilding business in India. Private players ABG Shipyard and Bharati Shipyard were also forced to eventually shut down operations after declaring bankruptcy. However, L&T and Shoft Shipyard — the latter of which primarily serves as a subcontractor to state-owned shipyards — have survived. Private shipbuilders have managed to deliver 101 vessels to the Indian Coast Guard over the past 20 years. During that time period, only 62 small auxiliary vessels were delivered by state-owned shipyards. In contrast, state-owned shipyards delivered 59 large ships to the Navy in the past two decades; private shipyards have not been awarded any big-ticket large ship programs since 2001. *"The continued nominations and extremely aggressive bidding for competitive programs by state-owned shipyards is a cause for concern,"* Jayant Damodar Patil, an L&T board member and chief of its defense business, told Defense News. Patil said government funding is available for establishing or modernizing facilities for state-owned yards, whereas private yards must use their own capital. Furthermore, he said, private yards must include in their bids the cost of investing in new shipbuilding efforts, but state-owned shipyards do not need to do so. *"The state-owned shipyards continue to enjoy government preference and continue to secure competitively bid naval projects on undervalued costs to eliminate private players from competition. This has resulted in dismal execution of existing warship orders,"* said Mukesh Bhargava, an industry analyst and a retired Navy commodore. The MoD source said for the next five years, the government is dedicating \$13.85 billion for new shipbuilding projects. Out of that total, \$7.85 billion is reserved for state-owned shipyards, the defense official said, while the remaining \$6 billion will likely be pursued through open competition under the public-private partnership model. That model allows for state-owned shipyards to offload production work to private shipyards. But even state-owned shipyards are struggling technologically. The naval industrial bases of China, Japan and South Korea have seen the induction of advanced tech, such as 3D printing, machine-learning systems and cyber capabilities. However, Indian counterparts are not on equal footing, according to Bhargava. *"Despite Indian industry also being on the forefront of most of these technologies, state-owned shipyards have not been able to adopt these disruptive and game-changing processes of digitalization,"* he said. Another MoD official said the government plans to implement new shipbuilding practices and technologies for state-owned shipyards based on requirements for ongoing and future projects to *"increase efficiency [and] productivity, and reduce build periods and avoid cost overruns."*

**Source: Australian Naval Institute**

## **RAdm Christopher Alexander On Accelerating Surface Navy Tactical Excellence**

[January 11, 2022](#)

By Dmitry Filipoff



NORFOLK (Oct. 15, 2021) The guided-missile destroyer **USS Ramage (DDG 61)** sits pierside next to the Navy's newest guided-missile destroyer, the future **USS Daniel Inouye (DDG 118)**, at Naval Station Norfolk. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jeremy Lemmon Jr.)

CIMSEC had the opportunity to discuss the evolution of the Surface Navy's tactical development with Rear Admiral Christopher Alexander, commander of Naval Surface

and Mine Warfighting Development Center (SMWDC). In this discussion, RAdm Alexander covers new initiatives on measuring tactical experience, the increasing demand for Surface Warfare Advanced Tactical Training (SWATT) exercises, and how SMWDC is transforming to accelerate tactical skill across the surface fleet.

**How would you describe the value of SMWDC's restructuring, such as the creation of the Surface Advanced Warfighting School (SAWS), the Fleet Training Directorates, the Technical Reachback Divisions, and other related changes?**

Restructuring SMWDC from a mission-area focused organization (AAW, ASW, etc.) to an organization structured along functional lines creates efficiencies for SMWDC's most valuable asset, the Warfare Tactics Instructor (WTI). The reorganization will improve how WTIs are trained, how they train the fleet, and their involvement in the development of future capabilities with the highest tactical benefit to our customer, the fleet. The reorganization to the specific functional lines of WTI Production, Training Directorates, and Fleet Technical Reach-back Divisions facilitates consolidation of all the WTI courses of instruction (COI) in one location with the establishment of SAWS in San Diego. SAWS will standardize training across all WTI COI, cultivate innovation and collaboration across the WTI disciplines, and drive an all-domain approach to training and Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP) development. Fleet training directorates will manage SWATT resourcing requirements, planning and executing SWATT exercises on the East and West Coasts, and Forward Deployed Naval Forces (FDNF). With the increasing number of advanced training events each year across the globe, Fleet Training Directorates — Pacific and Atlantic — are designed to leverage and build expertise on the geographic training differences of ranges and training resources of each SWATT location while allocating more WTI time and effort for the planning and execution of the training for the ships. Finally, SMWDC intends to bring WTI warfighters closer to the combat system, weapon system, and platform developers. We are doing this by repurposing our IAMD Division in Dahlgren to a technical support division. Currently, Dahlgren is focused on training IAMD WTIs. The transition to a technical support division allows Dahlgren to focus on developing technical solutions to tactical problems and will enable us to integrate WTIs in the weapons system development process from conception. Our goal is to field systems with approved TTP and concepts the fleet can immediately use for tactical advantage against our pacing threats.

**How are the SWATT exercises becoming more intense and challenging? How are the training audiences responding to these experiences and making the most of them?**

When SWATT initially kicked off six years ago, we envisioned conducting approximately four a year for Carrier Strike Groups. However, SWATT proved to be very successful, and subsequently the demand for SWATT has increased to most surface ships participating prior to a deployment. As a result, around 8-10 SWATT events are now conducted annually, with nine completed in FY21. The blue-to-blue integration provides the opportunity for ships and staff (Air and Missile Defense Commander and Sea Combat Commander) to work together and practice TTP execution, post-Basic Phase, and before Group Sail and Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX). As SWATT develops, we want to find the right mix of basic, intermediate, and advanced events, part of the Crawl, Walk, Run concept of progression. This mix ensures SWATT provides training for the high-end fight while addressing foundational proficiencies for the common operator and watch team, such as radiotelephone communications, link operations, risk identification, and systems setup. SWATT is becoming more challenging as we increase Information Warfare integration, unmanned vehicle

integration, leverage more complex Live, Virtual, and Constructive (LVC) training events, Live Fire With A Purpose (LFWAP) events with emphasis on offensive surface warfare. We also integrate warfighting concepts such as Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO), U.S. Marine Corps Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment (LOCE), and Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO). These challenging training events build watch-team cohesion, introduce warfighting concepts, and increase the performance of the participating units. Then shortly after SWATT execution, our new Final Performance Reviews (FPR) provides feedback that is actionable prior to COMPTUEX. The FPR also allows SMWDC to improve SWATT by incorporating fresh lessons learned and feedback from the training audiences into future training events.

**What is SMWDC doing to better measure and track the tactical skills and experience of individuals, such as through the Surface Warfare Combat Training Continuum (SWCTC)? How could this data be used?**

SMWDC continues to improve a holistic and focused approach to generating the advanced tactical skills necessary to fight our ships and win the high-end fight. Foundational to that effort is better understanding the measures and drivers of proficiency of key tactical watchstanders. SWCTC will codify the training and experience standards Surface Warfare Officers (SWOs) will be required to meet through their careers, recognizing the individual's contribution to combat capability. By capturing training data at the individual level, the surface force will better understand performance trends and leverage data to help systematically produce the best tactical watchstanders. A pilot program is underway to collect tactical experience data for SWOs standing tactical combat watches to understand how much tactical experience an officer gains throughout different phases of the Optimized Fleet Response Plan. SMWDC is also developing grade sheets to assess a watchstander's knowledge and aptitude. The grade sheets, divided into three parts, comprise:

- ☐ A skills assessment (general skills based on the watch station and specific skills based on the scenario requirements).
- ☐ A survey portion that is the assessor's opinion of the watchstanders' performance.
- ☐ An overall assessment that gives the assessors' confidence level in the watchstanders' overall ability.

A framework is under development to allow SMWDC to collect tactical assessment data from the schoolhouses to measure an individual's performance in various areas and how those translate into indicators of tactical prowess on a warship. As data is collected it will provide SMWDC the tactical competency data needed to align warfighting training across the numerous training organizations, and identify gaps and seams in warfighting training to inform risk calculations and resource decisions.

**SMWDC integrates various Surface Navy functions that before were often stovepiped, functions such as tactical development, doctrinal experimentation, schoolhouse instruction, and advanced training events with operating forces, to name several. How does SMWDC manage a connected learning environment that helps these integrated areas evolve together?**

Creating a more cohesive learning environment is central to the SMWDC reorganization. Since SMWDC's formation, we have taken pride in leveraging the synergy between TTP developers, instructors, and trainers. Along with consolidating all WTI training under one roof, SAWS now hosts our TTP department. By co-locating the TTP shop with the schoolhouse Subject Matter Experts (SME), we can utilize the SMEs who are teaching the future WTIs to also write and update TTP. Similar to our TTP-SAWS relationship, our N8/9 (Experimentation and Advanced Concepts) Branch is co-located with our Fleet Training Directorate in San Diego which allows for easy integration of fleet experimentation into advanced tactical training (SWATT, LFWAP, etc.). A practical example of this advantage is when ships and SMWDC discover an urgent change is required in a weapons system's TTP during SWATT. The embarked WTI comes ashore and coordinates with the SAWS SME to begin working on the TTP change. When the change is complete, it is pushed to the Fleet Training Directorate (FTD) to include in a future underway event to validate the update. Once the TTP is validated, the updated publication is released to the fleet, and schoolhouse instructors begin teaching the updated curriculum, which then propagates out to the fleet. Before SMWDC, this process

could take years to accomplish; in 2021, SMWDC reduced this time to weeks. We are constantly striving to improve the TTP update time, which is an added benefit to SMWDC consolidation. SMWDC regularly solicits comprehensive feedback. As a result, we have created and implemented processes to capture lessons learned and integrate them into future TTP and training updates. Some examples include our FPR, WTI Re-Blue — our yearly gathering of WTIs to keep them fresh on TTP and fleet developments — and our SMWDC ENGAGEMENT QUEUE, a classified tactical newsletter where fleet authors can share lessons learned.

**How does SMWDC emphasize the culture of being a learning organization, of pushing beyond limits, and constructively harnessing failure in the drive toward tactical excellence?**

Everything we do at SMWDC centers on tactical improvement and learning. One of our main goals is to inculcate a culture of tactical learning across the Surface Force to create an effect where SMWDC's influence lasts well after we work directly with a ship's crew. The emphasis we place on the Plan, Brief, Execute, Debrief (PBED) process is an excellent example of harnessing the value in lessons learned. During each event in a SWATT underway period, WTIs lead the crew through a deliberate process where they learn tactics and emphasize the importance of critical self-assessment. Some of the best learning experiences these crews have had are during debriefs where the execution at times was less than optimal. Through advanced playback technology, WTIs can show the "ground truth" of an event and use voice circuit recordings, chat logs, and input from the watch team to review where execution could improve. The crew then plans for a more advanced scenario and attempts to apply those lessons from the previous event's debrief. Each crew goes through dozens of PBED cycles during SWATT with the goal of the crew assuming a lead role in that process from the WTIs. This way, the crew can continue to grow and improve without SMWDC's direct involvement. Internally, SMWDC emphasizes critical assessment of the SWATT process, the WTI COI, and TTP development. All of these interconnected elements have the overarching goal of increasing the tactical proficiency of the surface fleet. As new systems or platforms come online, new potential adversary technology or tactics change, or national security concerns evolve, SMWDC constantly assesses if we are providing the right tactical training to the right people at the right time. In this era of great power competition, we need to remain a step ahead and anticipate the next fight, not just react to it. Two great examples of this are LFWAP and TTP validation, which occur in conjunction with an underway SWATT. LFWAP not only increases the confidence of our crews in their capabilities and the system they are operating, but each event provides valuable information about our weapon systems for improvement during follow-on assessments. Likewise, when we draft a new TTP, we build it into SWATT scenarios to test and validate the TTP, which keeps crews involved in the innovative force development process and provides efficacy of the new TTP.

Pacific Ocean (April 27, 2018) A Standard Missile (SM) 2 launches from **USS Spruance (DDG 111)** during a Live Fire With a Purpose (LFWAP) event during an underway Cruiser-Destroyer (CRUDES) Surface Warfare Advanced Tactical Training (SWATT) exercise. (U.S. Navy video by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Jeffrey Southerland/released) See video at <https://thumbs.gfycat.com/ZealousTotalIslandcanary-mobile.mp4>

**How can WTI culture and education become more mainstream across the Surface Navy?**

**Could there come a time where all SWOs receive this kind of instruction?**

Our goal remains to increase the tactical proficiency and lethality of the Navy, and the best way to do it is by spreading the education and culture of WTIs through our current and future initiatives. WTI culture and education becomes more mainstream each year across the Surface Navy as we see more WTIs in Department Head, Executive Officer, and Commanding Officer positions. In order to improve the tactical proficiency of the fleet we need to produce more WTIs and fill the follow-on production tours. Those two ingredients, WTI COI and a production tour, are needed to produce a cadre of officers whose "Day-Job" is to think critically about how we should tactically employ our weapons systems. By filling production tour billets we also increase the number of times a ship and crew interact with WTIs as they move through the phases of training. These interactions are where the cultural shift we seek comes to fruition. The WTIs help the crews see the right way of doing things and the tactical advantages in maintaining that standard when the WTIs are not embarked. The combination of WTIs in at-sea leadership billets and increased fleet interactions with WTIs through training events is leading a cultural change for the better. The training investment in



each WTI is extensive and not likely to be replicated across all SWOs. However, the WTI investment and the improved use of metrics previously discussed will very likely drive improvements in the broader SWO training pipelines for various tours, resulting in sustained combat proficiency as the fleet reaches new and higher standards. WTI production, SWCTC, and SMWDC are all part of that long-term drive toward a higher standard in the tactical performance of the Surface Force.

*Rear Admiral Christopher Alexander, a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and the Naval Postgraduate School, assumed the role of Commander, Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center in May 2021. Alexander commanded USS Sampson (DDG 102), USS Princeton (CG 59), and the Surface Warfare Schools Command.*

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