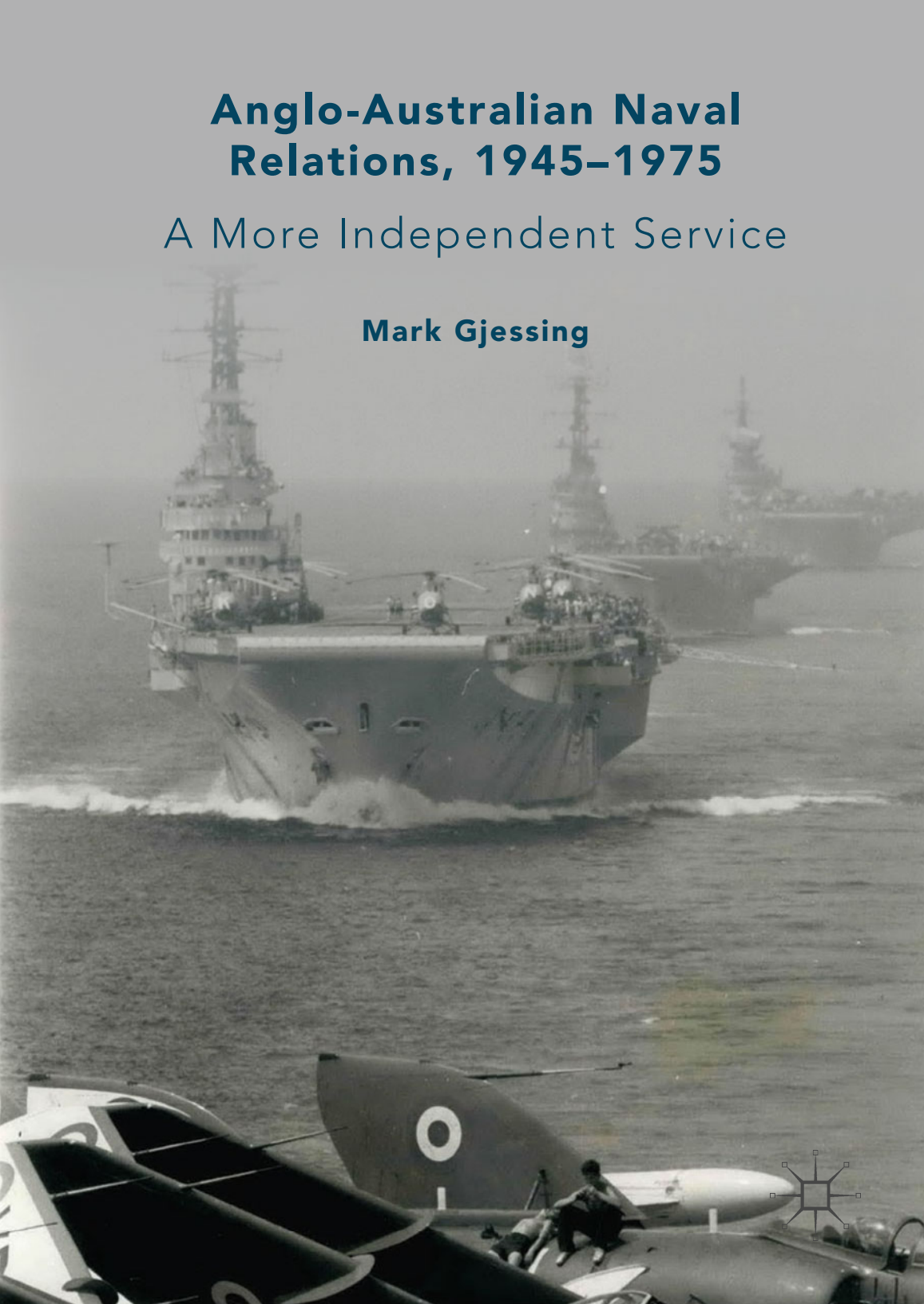
Anglo-Australian Naval Relations, 1945–1975

A More Independent Service

Mark Gjessing



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Preface

This book will examine Anglo-Australian naval relations between 1945–75, a period of great change for both Australia and Great Britain in matters of strategy, economics, diplomacy and international affairs. The transformation of both nations had a marked impact on the relations between the two countries. At the end of the Second World War, Great Britain, though much weakened, was still a world power and the ties of empire and Commonwealth were strong. By 1975, Britain had turned to Europe in economic and strategic concerns. British military forces were much reduced in the Far East, Southeast Asia and Pacific regions. Faced with a declining military, the UK placed much more emphasis on the importance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The degradation in the relative power of Great Britain made an Australian strategic shift towards the USA more likely. In the immediate post-war years Australian strategic concerns were intertwined to a great extent with those of the UK, the empire and the Commonwealth. By the mid-1970s the importance of the USA to Australian security was paramount. The post-war period was also a time of great transformation for both the Royal Navy (RN) and the Royal Australian Navy (RAN).

The RAN was fashioned on the Royal Navy and support given by the latter was absolutely crucial for the day-to-day running of the former. This was especially true in the immediate post-war years. By 1975, the RAN was a much more independent force with less reliance on the Admiralty in matters of strategic direction, operations, personnel and equipment. In many ways, the growth of naval independence mirrored

the national Australian experience, but it did not occur at the same time, or for the same reasons.

This book is structured as follows. Following this preface, Chapter 1 will examine the cultural and historical ties between the Royal Navy and the RAN. Consideration will also be given to the efficacy of communications between the services and the importance of personal relations to the overall interservice relationship. An assessment will be made of the high-level strategic choices made by the UK and Australia in the post-war period in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 will consider the dilemmas faced by Great Britain associated with that nation's declining power, and the impact of the retreat from 'East of Suez' on the strategic relationship between the UK and Australia. Chapter 4 will discuss operational cooperation between the Royal Navy and the RAN. This will include conflicts such as the Korean War, the Malayan Emergency and confrontation with Indonesia, as well as peacetime pursuits such as port visits and the testing of atomic weapons in the 1950s. Cooperation in matters of personnel and training is extremely important in the broader context of inter-naval relations and this subject will be dealt with in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 will assess cooperation between the Royal Navy and the RAN in equipment procurement and design. This chapter will focus predominately on the creation of the Australian Fleet Air Arm and the great assistance given by the Admiralty in this task. In addition, Chapter 6 will examine the increased ability of the RAN to look to non-British sources for equipment procurement. The impact of stronger Australian-American ties on the RAN will be considered in Chapter 7. This chapter will focus on the procurement of the *Charles F. Adams* class guided-missile destroyers by the RAN, the first major RAN vessels to have been designed outside the UK and constructed outside Britain or Australia. The role played by the RAN in the conflict in Vietnam is also covered in this chapter. Chapter 8 will contain the conclusion to this book, a conclusion that will emphasise the growth of Australian naval independence alongside the increased independence of Australia as a nation in the post-war period.

Leeds, UK Mark Gjessing

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A range of UK archives have provided crucial primary source material including the Public Record Office in Kew, the Churchill College Archives Centre in Cambridge, the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, the Imperial War Museum in London and the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, Kings College, London.

My father, Garry Gjessing, has unfailingly provided enthusiasm and encouragement during my academic studies and this book is a testament to his faith in me.

Greatest thanks are due to my wife, Maggie. Any account of the support she has provided to me throughout, not only the fabrication of this project, but during my academic career, could not do justice. Maggie has an unfailing support and abiding belief in this 'old salt' that is both remarkable and greatly appreciated. To state that this book could have been completed without her would be a falsehood.

Contents

Abbreviations

AAW	Anti-Air Warfare
ACNB	Australian Commonwealth Naval Board
ANZAM	Australia, New Zealand and Malaya (Arrangement)
ANZUK	Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom
ANZUS	Australia-New Zealand-United States (Treaty)
ASW	Anti-Submarine Warfare
AWM	Australian War Memorial
BDLS	British Defence Liaison Staff
BRITANZ	British/Australian/New Zealand (Military Discussions)
CENTO	Central Treaty Organisation
CAS	Chief of Air Staff
CCAC	Churchill College Archives Centre, Cambridge
CCH	Command Cruiser (UK)
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
CNS	Chief of Naval Staff
COMFEF	Commander Far East Fleet
CVS	Support Aircraft Carrier (Anti-Submarine Warfare)
DCNS	Deputy-Chief of Naval Staff
DD	Destroyer
DE	Destroyer Escort
DDG	Guided Missile Destroyer
DDL	Light Destroyer
DMZ	De-Militarized Zone (Vietnam)
ECM	Electronic Counter-Measures
FAA	Fleet Air Arm
FESR	Far East Strategic Reserve (British Commonwealth)

FF	Frigate
FFG	Guided Missile Frigate
FPDA	Five Power Defence Arrangement
FOCAF	Flag Officer Commanding the Australian Fleet
GMD	Guided Missile Destroyer (UK)
HMAS	Her Majesty's Australian Ship
HMS	Her Majesty's Ship
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
IWM	Imperial War Museum
KCLMA	Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College, London
MODUK	Ministry of Defence of the United Kingdom
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGS	Naval Gunfire Support
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RN	Royal Navy
RNLO	Royal Navy Liaison Officer
RNZN	Royal New Zealand Navy
RSL	Returned and Services League of Australia
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (NATO)
SACLANT	Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic (NATO)
SAGW	Surface-to-Air Guided Weapons (Ship)
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organisation
SPC-A	Sea Power Centre-Australia
SSK	Patrol Submarine (UK)
SSN	Nuclear Submarine
TNA	The National Archives (UK)
UKSLS	United Kingdom Service Liaison Staff
UNREP	Underway Replenishment (Ship)
USN	United States Navy
VCNS	Vice Chief of the Naval Staff

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CHAPTER 1

Communications, Personal Relations and Cultural and Historical Ties

Historical links and cultural ties between the Admiralty and the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) were extremely strong. Senator George Pearce, the Australian Defence Minister from 1914–21 to 1932–34 described the RAN on its creation as a 'navy within a navy', a logical outcome for a 'nation within a nation'.[1] Due to almost complete reliance on the Admiralty the RAN developed as a mini-version of the Royal Navy (RN). As Millar pointed out 'The Royal Australian Navy developed integrally with and as a direct offspring of the Royal Navy, absorbing its customs, traditions, procedures, skills, equipment and vessels'[2] and 'Until very recently, when national "flashes" were introduced, Australian naval officers, unlike those in the army or the air force, have been visually indistinguishable from British naval officers. Even their accents are more likely to be more "British", and their sense of loyalty to and affinity with the mother country to be stronger'.[3]

Communications between the respective heads of service were extremely important, especially during the early part of the post-war period. Lower-level communications played their part in keeping the links between the navies strong. Lower-deck servicemen of both services frequently interacted with each other and these interactions somewhat illustrated the competitiveness and rivalry common to any two military forces, although this was to some extent, tempered by the shared traditions and cultures of the respective services. The RAN had total dependency on the Admiralty during the early post-war period. This reliance decreased over a period of time, but the drift away from the Admiralty

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was not an easy one due to the cultural and historical ties between the services. Even so, the drift was assured due to the growing independence of the RAN, a self-assuredness that somewhat mirrored the experience of Australia itself.

At the highest levels, the respective heads of the Royal Navy and the Royal Australian Navy dictated the relations between the two services. As Table 1.1, the Professional Heads of the Royal Navy and the RAN makes clear the succession of First Sea Lords and Australian Chiefs of Naval Staff did not coincide with each other. As such the respective heads of service occasionally had to deal with quite different personalities filling the same role as their predecessor. These personal traits were also affected by external influences such as the strategic stance taken by Australia and Great Britain in various stages of the post-war period. High-level national strategy affected lower-level concerns and cannot be ignored when one considers inter-naval relations. In the same sense, national goodwill between countries can in some way be reflected in the interpersonal relations of the nations concerned.

The First Sea Lords and the Australian Chiefs of Naval Staff corresponded with each other on a regular basis. The correspondence took place on many levels from the very personal and private to the more business-like. The correspondence reveals an alteration of the relationship between the two services as well as insights into the individual personalities of the various heads of the Royal Navy and the RAN. Some of the information contained in the messages was of a trivial nature, but this reinforces the fact that overall, the respective heads were comfortable in their dealings with each other. The correspondence also reveals a level of affection and friendship between some of the personnel concerned.

The direct communication between the Admiralty and the Australian Navy Office was sometimes viewed with a level of suspicion and misgiving by outsiders. Australian Ministers of State, the central office of the Department of Defence and Governors-General at times commented adversely on the close liaison between the services.[4] This resulted occasionally in the respective heads of service reinforcing the need for confidentiality. When informing the British First Sea Lord (1946–48) Admiral Sir John Cunningham, of the findings of a recent Australian Council of Defence meeting, the Australian First Naval Member, Admiral Sir Louis Hamilton requested 'that you do not quote me as your informant outside of the Admiralty'.[5] The suspicion with which Hamilton's direct communication with the Admiralty was viewed, was amplified because

Table 1.1 The Professional Heads of the Royal Navy and the Royal Australian Navy

First Sea Lords of the Admiralty		*First Naval Members, Australian Commonwealth Naval Board and Chiefs of Staff*	
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham, RN	October 1943 to May 1946	Admiral Sir Louis H. K. Hamilton, RN	June 1945 to February 1948
Admiral of the Fleet Sir John Cunningham, RN	May 1946 to January 1948	Vice Admiral Sir John A. Collins, RAN	February 1948 to February 1955
Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fraser of North Cape, RN	January 1948 to December 1951	Vice Admiral Sir Roy R. Dowling, RAN	February 1955 to February 1959
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Rhoderick McGrigor, RN	December 1951 to April 1955	Vice Admiral Sir Henry M. Burrell, RAN	February 1959 to February 1962
Admiral of the Fleet Earl Mountbatten, RN	April 1955 to May 1959	Vice Admiral Sir W. Hastings Harrington, RAN	February 1962 to February 1965
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Charles Lambe, RN	May 1959 to May 1960	Vice Admiral Sir Alan W. R. McNicoll, RAN	February 1965 to April 1968
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Caspar John, RN	May 1960 to August 1963	Vice Admiral Sir Victor A. T. Smith, RAN	April 1968 to November 1970
Admiral of the Fleet Sir David Luce, RN	August 1963 to February 1965	Vice Admiral Sir Richard I. Peek, RAN	November 1970 to November 1973
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Varyl Begg, RN	February 1965 to August 1968	Vice Admiral Sir H. David Stevenson, RAN	November 1973 to November 1976
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Michael Le Fanu, RN	August 1968 to June 1970		
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Peter Hill-Norton, RN	June 1970 to March 1971		
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Michael Pollock, RN	March 1971 to March 1974		
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Edward Ashmore, RN	March 1974 to February 1977		

Hamilton, though a Royal Navy officer, acted as the head of the RAN and reported to the head of the Royal Navy. This was acknowledged by Hamilton himself.[6] There is little evidence that Hamilton ever acted in anything but the interests of the RAN. Hamilton served as the Australian First Naval Member from 1945–48 and he was crucial in harnessing Admiralty assistance for the creation of the RAN Fleet Air Arm.

Hamilton's successor Vice Admiral Sir John Collins, the first Australian Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) to graduate from the Royal Australian Naval College continued corresponding with Cunningham's successor as First Sea Lord, Fraser of North Cape. Collins held the post of CNS between 1948–55 while Fraser was First Sea Lord from 1948–51. Collins found this practice useful 'particularly when questions arose that were not altogether suitable for the official channels'.[7] Collins also found it necessary to highlight the need for discretion and asked First Sea Lord Rhoderick McGrigor to 'treat this letter as a personal chat to you. It's the sort of thing I could so much more easily say in conversation than commit to paper'.[8] McGrigor revived the title of Fleet Air Arm and was head of the Royal Navy between 1951–55. Sensitive information was indeed sent by both services to the other. In late 1954, the Admiralty passed on comments made by Marshal of the Royal Air Force (RAF) Sir Jack Slessor during a visit by him to Australia in which he questioned the role of Australian Naval aviation.[9] This was information that Slessor did not discuss with the Australian CNS although he did do so with the Chiefs of Staff of the other two services. The CNS John Collins appreciated the information about Slessor's report and 'the ammunition you provided to counter the attack'.[10] Collins' successor Vice Admiral Roy Dowling was also aware of the sensitive nature of some of the issues discussed in the personal correspondence between the respective heads of service: 'By the way I have no doubt that in future I shall have certain information or comment which must not come to the ears of my political masters. Dangerous'.[11] Dowling was very much an advocate of close ties with the Royal Navy and served as CNS from 1955–59. When informing First Sea Lord Louis Mountbatten about issues with proposed South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) naval exercises, Dowling stipulated 'All this is for your private ear only'.[12] Mountbatten who was First Sea Lord 1955–59 provided a willing ear to Dowling on a number of issues.

It should not be surprising that confidential information was shared between the services as the links between the Admiralty and the RAN

were extremely strong. In addition, the support of the Admiralty was absolutely crucial to the efficient running of the RAN and many of the matters discussed were politically sensitive. On the 1951 Jubilee manoeuvres, involving ships of Australia, Britain, New Zealand, South Africa, India and Pakistan, Collins confided 'Between ourselves the least said about the capabilities of the Pakistan Ships the better. They haven't got an idea of fleet work of even the most elementary type…'[13] Fraser noted 'your remarks on the Pakistanis with interest. We have to tread very delicately on the subject of British officers, both in the Pakistani and Indian Navies'.[14] Hamilton felt enough at ease to offer an opinion on the new Australian Minister of the Navy who 'is turning out even better than I had hoped, he is mad keen and genuinely interested in the Navy'.[15]

The correspondence between the heads of service contained information that was crucial to the day-to-day running of the smaller RAN. Strategic guidance was provided by the Admiralty on all levels of naval matters, including equipment procurement, training and technical concerns, personnel issues and naval culture. This was especially true in the immediate post-war period. Even so, the correspondence between the First Sea Lords and Australian Chiefs of Naval Staff contained topics that may be viewed as trivial. Occasionally matters of great import, as well as more humdrum concerns, were reported to the Admiralty:

> On the whole we are in good heart. Our lower deck pay code, with its automatic cost-of-living adjustments, is very generous. We like to think we did [Operation] Hurricane well, and our boys seem to be well thought of in Korea n waters. We had most of the Fleet into Melbourne for the Cup-a triumphant entry with the Naval Board afloat, guards and bands etc., and at the end of ten days' banzai, had no police reports, which was satisfactory.[16]

That the respective heads of service were able to communicate with each other on such a familiar level is a reflection of the bonds between the officer classes of the RN and the RAN. Most Australian officers underwent training in the UK, especially in the immediate post-war era, and so felt strong ties to the Admiralty, British naval officers and Great Britain itself. Naval culture was remarkably similar in both navies and this would only have amplified these bonds between the officer classes. Collins felt so comfortable with the relationship to 'take this opportunity of saying

a word on behalf of Captain F. B. Lloyd, the RN Liaison Officer here, who has no superior [RN] naval officer to render half-yearly reports on him'.[17] Collins suggested that had he been assessing Lloyd the assessment would have been 'well above average and [I] would have recommended him for immediate promotion. In my opinion he would do well in Flag Rank'. That the Australian Naval Chiefs of Staff felt obliged to seek Admiralty assistance and advice on such a wide range of issues is also an indication of the great level of support provided by the Admiralty. This level of support decreased as the RAN became a more independent service but the co-operation between the two services continued.

The correspondence between the heads of the Royal Navy and the RAN reveal a genuine sense of friendliness between certain personnel. In mid-1951, Collins wrote to Fraser 'I do so much appreciate your personal help and guidance and trust I have not imposed too much on your kindness and time by the forgoing long letter'.[18] Collins welcomed Fraser's successor, Admiral Rhoderick McGrigor to the post and welcomed him 'both personally and on behalf of the Royal Australian Navy'.[19] Collins reiterated that he found the correspondence 'of the greatest value and I think that your predecessors have also considered it a good idea'. There was a gradual relaxation in the manner in which Australian CNS Vice Admiral Roy Dowling addressed the First Sea Lord Louis Mountbatten in his correspondence. His initial letter of the 27 May 1955 was addressed to 'Dear Lord Louis',[20] while Dowling used the slightly less formal form of address 'Dear 1st Sea Lord' in his correspondence of eight months later.[21] By mid-1956 Dowling was using the much more relaxed honorific 'Dickie' when corresponding with Mountbatten.[22] The First Sea Lord between 1959–60 Admiral Charles Lambe fell ill following a visit to Australia and from hospital sent a message to the Australian CNS, Vice Admiral Burrell warning him not to 'overdo it as I have done'.[23] Lambe suffered a serious heart attack which forced him into retirement. Burrell was head of the RAN 1959–62 and was crucial in the decision to purchase US-made DDGs. The approachability of some Australian Chiefs of Naval Staff was also noted in British political circles. Following conversations between Geoffrey Tory, the UK High Commissioner in Canberra and Dowling, the then Australian First Naval Member it was reported that 'It is very satisfactory to note Admiral Dowling's forthcoming attitude. Unfortunately, as we know from experience, the friendliness and confidence displayed by the Australian service Chiefs are not always to be found among some of their political chiefs who control them so strictly'.[24]

The value of the shared correspondence was appreciated by both services. Mountbatten was keen to improve communications between the Admiralty and Chiefs of Naval Staff of Commonwealth countries including Australia. He intended to send a personal letter to the latter 'about every quarter'.[25] Australian CNS Vice Admiral Dowling appreciated the periodical letters from Mountbatten as 'they are of great interest to me and go a long way in keeping us in the Far Flung Antipodes in touch with what is and what is probably going to be. I am most grateful'.[26] Burrell also welcomed the periodic newsletters and found them great value.[27] Collins' last letter to McGrigor made plain the genuine appreciation felt by the Australians:

> As this will probably be the last of the series of letters that have passed between us I would like to thank you most sincerely for all the help you have given me in the past, and the trouble you have taken, amidst a deluge of important problems to write me at length. I very much appreciate what you have done not only for me but for the whole of the RAN.[28]

Visits by senior naval figures to the country of their counterparts occasionally occurred and were appreciated. This was especially the case for the smaller Australian service, as visiting British naval staff had the effect of raising the profile of the RAN.[29] Collins was keen to keep the links between the Admiralty and the RAN strong, and trips by British naval personnel aided this. Collins saw merit for the RAN itself in such visits:

> I had a private note from Admiral Brind [C-in-C Far East Station] in which he offers to come down here [Australia] after relief if there is a requirement. It would be a very good idea as we have had heavy artillery in [Field Marshal] Slim, US Admiral Radford, US General Kenny in the last few months but no senior RN visitors.[30]

There were benefits for a small navy such as the RAN being viewed as part of a larger force such as the RN. Collins said of First Sea Lord McGrigor's failure to come to Australia:

> I repeat how disappointed we all were that you [First Sea Lord] did not come out [to Australia] as this country is becoming less and less naval minded. When the Japanese Fleet was in being to the North of us it was much easier to get across the need for a Navy. I have got the Navy League going on a campaign which may have some results but I do hope

> we can get the First Sea Lord to represent the UK views at some future conference-then we won't spend all the time fighting the land war in the Middle East and Malaya.[31]

The visit of First Sea Lord Louis Mountbatten to Australia in 1956 was very much welcomed by Australian CNS Dowling:

> As you know we have had quite a number of Generals and Bomber Barons in the Antipodes from England since the war-and barely an Admiral. A visit by the 1st Sea Lord himself is a great and extremely valuable occasion and can do much towards ensuring that political and public thought on Defence is kept, or put, in balance…The RAN is not exactly in the doldrums but it needs a helping hand and no-one can do that better than you.[32]

There were political benefits for the RAN having an influential figure such as Mountbatten on its side. During the visit Mountbatten was able to speak to the Governor-General about the:

> …RAN which does not appear to enjoy as good a position in Australia as the RN does in the UK. [The Governor-General] said he would be glad to help in any way he could so please do not hesitate to go and see him with any suggestion for helping the RAN; and you can quote me as suggesting that you should go and see him.[33]

Following the visit Dowling suggested that 'the RAN has had a tremendous and much needed fillip'.[34] Mountbatten appreciated the personal contact between the service chiefs and wrote 'Edwina and I were very sad when we said goodbye to you both at dawn at Canberra yesterday for we both felt we had got to know you both so well during our hectic rush around Australia'.[35] British naval figures were also able to influence Australian politicians visiting Great Britain. The Australian CNS Henry Burrell asked the First Sea Lord Charles Lambe 'if you have a chance to talk to [our PM] during his visit perhaps you might care to fire a few rockets in our favour such as Australia's need for a strong Navy, the need for another Fleet Air Arm (FAA)…[and] the vast potential of submarine forces in future warfare…'[36]

The Admiralty had a sense that the RAN was an adjunct of the Royal Navy and these ties should be maintained through personal ties:

> The Australian Navy is sending the aircraft carrier HMAS *Sydney home* [emphasis added] to the [Coronation Fleet] Review and I very much hope that Collins will come in her as there is a lot to discuss, both from the Navy and the Chiefs of Staffs point of view. However I now understand that Sir Frederick Sheddon is putting difficulties in the way and is opposing any Chiefs of Staff coming over at all; he likes keeping them under his thumb. I do think it would be a very good thing for Collins, at least, to come.[37]

This passage is enlightening on a number of levels. Firstly, the Admiralty considered the Australian aircraft carrier HMAS *Sydney* in some way a 'British' ship. Secondly, there were perceived benefits in Collins visiting the UK as personal contact between the respective heads of service was viewed as valuable.

Collins was keen to visit London, and proposed an Admiralty invitation to witness part of the Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic, NATO (SACLANT)-hosted Operation MARINER as this 'would provide [a] reason acceptable to [the Australian] government…'[38] This matter was viewed as urgent as the Australian Chief of the General Staff 'has received invitation in [the] August C-in C's Conference and probably only one of us can go'. Collins received a personal invitation to attend MARINER. This was an invitation he was happy to accept, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet was asked to look into accommodating Collins. Vice Admiral Hughes-Hallett, the UK National Liaison Representative to SACLANT took issue with the suggestion that SACLANT should not be informed of Collins' presence until the eleventh hour. This decision was apparently made due to 'SACLANTs past attitude to [non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)] observers at NATO exercises'. Any last-minute information about Collins could have been perceived as 'trying to pull a fast one' on US Admiral McCormick, the Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, and it was suggested that Hughes-Hallett should be allowed to:

> Say to him now, quite frankly and openly, that you had invited Collins, and that you had told me to tell him for information that Collins would be embarked in one of H.M. ships taking part. No question of by your leave; a definite statement that it was going to occur.[39]

The First Sea Lord agreed with this suggestion and asked Hughes-Hallett to inform SACLANT of Collins' presence at MARINER. Hughes-Hallet did so and McCormick:

> Made no comment and I think accepted it as quite a natural arrangement. This however cannot be looked on as a test case for the NATO observer problem owing to Collins' position, which entitles him to special consideration.[40]

Collins was unable to attend the exercise, but the episode is illuminating in that the Admiralty felt able to assist Collins' profile by inviting him personally to the exercise, even though the invitation may have caused offence to SACLANT. The fact that it did not do so is an indication that the Americans saw the Royal Navy and the RAN as natural associates.

Personal contact at the highest levels of naval authority cemented connections between the services, as did the ongoing correspondence shared by the respective heads of the Royal Navy and the RAN. There were also processes put in place for the lower-level communications between the services. These predated the end of the Second World War and included the provision for an Australian naval representative at the Australian High Commission in London from 1911. In 1931, a defence liaison officer, assisted by a junior officer from each service, was put in place. In late 1932, the post of defence liaison officer lapsed, but the individual service representatives remained, performing their duties under the official secretary. The form of address utilised was 'Official Secretary (Navy Liaison), and from March 1933 the abbreviation 'NLO' was being used for naval wireless messages.[41] Royal Navy Liaison Officers (RNLO's) were also based in Australia to maintain close links with the RAN, even though there were sometimes issues with the efficacy of the communications.[42]

Following Mountbatten's 1958 visit to the Far East, a trip that included Australia, he remarked that he had been struck by the strength of personal bonds that existed between the Royal Navy and Navies of the Commonwealth. He suggested that a member of the Board should visit the Commonwealth naval countries at least once a year, 'if only to explain to them, on an intimate basis, how Admiralty thought was developing'.[43] In early 1959 following conversations with the RNLO in Australia, Mountbatten was concerned whether adequate measures were being taken to keep Liaison Officers in touch with Admiralty policy. It was suggested that a senior authority in the Admiralty be given responsibility for keeping Liaison Officers up-to-date and that the newly appointed Australian CNS be given an invitation to visit the UK during the coming summer. In addition, it was stressed that a naval member

of the Board should visit Australia during the course of the year.[44] The Board later took note of a Memorandum prepared by the Vice Chief of Naval Staff on arrangements for liaison with Commonwealth Navies.[45]

British naval officers based in Australia were useful in providing advice to Australian naval officers. Collins used the lower levels of Australian-based RN staff as a springboard. Captain F. B. Lloyd RN wrote that 'Collins was talking to me privately and, in fact using me as a listener while he thought out loud. With Admiral Eccles in Sydney, [the] CNS has no contemporary with whom he can really open up'.[46] Conversely, Australian-based RN officers were able to provide their superiors with information on Australian naval thinking, and information that needed to be treated with some discretion.[47] The duties of a naval advisor could sometimes be tedious, as a former liaison officer noted: 'I did not particularly enjoy the appointment with not enough real work to do and too many social cocktail and dinner parties'.[48] Yet the post was thought to be a valuable one. In a letter from the Admiralty informing Rear Admiral C. H. Hutchinson of his transfer to the Reserve List he was praised, with specific mention of his time in Australia:

> From 1952 to 1954, you were the R.N. Liaison Officer in the United Kingdom Services Staff, Australia, and rendered valuable service both in maintaining close relations with the Royal Australian Navy and in interpreting the views of the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff to the Australian Defence Committees and vice versa.[49]

Even in times of decreasing British strategic power and influence in the Far East, robust military links were seen as valuable. The British High Commissioner suggested that maintaining strong links between the services as 'increasingly necessary as the Commander-in-Chief Far Eastern Command and Far East Command [itself] fade away'.[50]

Organised naval conferences also maintained links between the Admiralty and other Commonwealth navies. Exercise FAIRLEAD was a Commonwealth Naval Conference held at the Royal Naval College Greenwich in March 1957. The conference was designed to 'get representatives of each Commonwealth Navy together to get to know each other and each other's problems better'.[51] Representatives from a number of Commonwealth navies attended, including the RAN. Mountbatten viewed the conference as so important that during his visit to Australia '[I] talked to your Prime Minister about FAIRLEAD and

he said he would make it possible for you [Australian CNS] and other Flag Officers or appropriate senior officers to attend…'[52] FAIRLEAD was useful for the Admiralty as a tool 'to make the case for a powerful fleet'.[53] It was also beneficial for the RAN. The Australian CNS Vice Admiral Dowling realised the importance of the RAN being represented at the planning stage of FAIRLEAD, and suggested that 'if FAIRLEAD could have a section dealing with employment of Navies in other than Global War, I am sure this will pay dividends [for the RAN] and help with our carrier policy'.[54] Mountbatten has happy to raise the issue with the conference director, an example of naval political assistance.

Shared correspondence and personal contact strengthened the inter-service bonds, even in a period where the RAN was seen as increasingly independent from the Admiralty. As Burrell noted, 'knowing one's opposite numbers saves misunderstandings and allows one to be blunt on paper without taking offence'.[55] Nevertheless, the services sometimes did not see eye to eye, either on a personal level or a service level. Burrell recalled that during a Defence Committee meeting with Admiral of the Fleet Mountbatten 'we could not agree with quite a few of Mountbatten's proposals, yet at dinner that night at Government House, he assured the Governor-General that there was unanimity on the day's discussions. Such flexible interpretations were not endearing'.[56] A UK brief on the 'Future of the RAN' was issued in late 1959 prior to the Australian CNS's visit to the UK. The opening paragraph warned:

> The Australians are a very independent people. They will welcome Admiralty advice and assistance but will not tolerate ready-made ideas being thrust upon them. In talking to Admiral Burrell we must therefore concentrate primarily on answering the questions we know he is going to ask. Our own ideas must be worked in obliquely and presented as being designed for the benefit of the RAN. We must at all costs avoid giving the impression that we regard the RAN merely as a prop or an adjunct of the RN in the Far East.[57]

Even where interpersonal or top-level relations were not always ideal, communication arrangements such as conferences, high-level communications and correspondence, as well as liaison officers did much to solidify the ties between the services. However, members of the lower-deck, as well as junior officers had associations and dealings with each and these contacts shed much light on the inter-service relationship on a different level than those already examined.

British and Australian sailors and officers had a high level of interaction in the post-war period. The exchange of personnel between the two services was high, especially in the period of 1945–57, and warships of both forces operated with each other in war and peace throughout our period of interest. Ships of both navies visited home-ports of their foreign brethren and were afforded opportunities to interact with the inhabitants. Personal relations varied from time to time but relations between serving members of the Royal Navy and the RAN were often valued and beneficial, reinforcing the close national relations between Australia and Great Britain.

James Craig, a British seaman, who was based at HMS *Golden Hind* in Sydney immediately after the Second World War, stated that his relations with Australians were good: 'they treated us extremely well actually'.[58] On cessation of Second World War hostilities, the ships *Queenborough, Quadrant and Quality* were to be handed over to the RAN. Royal Navy Lieutenant Kenneth M. Macleod was part of the transfer team and stayed in Australia. At the end of November 1945, he managed to avoid imminent repatriation by joining a repair base in Woolloomooloo. He recalled:

> There was also time for some shore-based social life. I acquired an Australian driving license (aided by an Argyll-born police tester)…explored the Blue Mountains [and] improved my surfing skills at Bondi and Manly beaches. I fitted in some leave and spent an exhausting week on a Queensland cattle station.[59]

Another British visitor to Australia recalled that 'the RSL, the Returned Servicemen's League [sic], in Australia, [were] very big, they would take hundreds of sailors and get them completely jugged up, bring them back and throw them on the quay at the bottom of the ladder, they were very friendly people'.[60]

Occasionally visiting personnel would be welcomed with open arms by British immigrants keen for contact with Great Britain. Richard Songer was a Royal Navy artificer, officer and pilot. His ship, HMS *Albion* undertook a world tour in 1957–58. He commented:

> We met lots of British communities ashore, and [local] communities wherever, especially in Australia and New Zealand, they were very welcoming. Because I think in those days they were very connected to Britain, but a

> long way away, they didn't feel completely independent I don't think, and so they liked that link, and they were very generous to us. They took people ashore on bus trips and train trips. An old Spitfire pilot, I remember, picked me up in Hobart and I spent the weekend with him and his family sailing with a little boat, out in the harbour, it was lovely.[61]

The Executive Officer of HMS *Scarborough* also recollected a strong bond between Australia and Great Britain: Anthony Swainson recalled that during a visit to Melbourne, the commander 'had loudspeakers rigged all over the upper-deck, and played Land of Hope and Glory, for the delectation of the natives, it went down very well, and warmed the hearts of those who still thought of the old mother country'.[62]

Although there was some partition between British and Australian servicemen, the strong bonds between the two services made integration from one to the other relatively seamless. Robert Tunstall was a Royal Navy officer who served with the RAN on HMAS *Sydney* during the Korean War 1950–51. According to Tunstall there was much better rapport between the officers and men in the RAN during Korea than during his time with the RN in the Second World War. 'I loved the Australians, but not those [soldiers] alongside us in North Africa, who were gross and foulmouthed'.[63] RAN personnel during the Korean conflict were different, however: 'It was always no worries', and 'RAN deckhands and naval airmen were first class and could get the f-word in between syllables let alone in between words'.

Officers typically had much better relations with each other because of the higher number of instances of inter-naval interaction and a shared officer culture. This was due to RAN officers training in the UK as well as exchange postings from one service to another. In early 1947, RAN officer W. N. Swan was sent to the UK to undergo a Physical Training and Welfare course at Portsmouth followed by two years exchange service with the Royal Navy. Cultural ties were very strong between the services at this time: 'All my thoughts were 12,000 miles away in the mother of all Navies'.[64] Swan called Portsmouth 'the most famous naval base in the British Commonwealth…and I loved every minute of it'.[65] On his way to join his first RN sea-posting, the training carrier HMS *Victorious*, Swan recalled 'Here I was, a stranger from the other side of the world, joining a ship of another country manned by officers and men I had never met. In the small family of the RAN you could be certain to know somebody wherever you went. I was equally certain I knew

nobody in *Victorious*'.[66] Integration was easy for Swan: 'I found life aboard *Victorious* to be much the same as that aboard any other warship of the British Commonwealth…'[67] Even so, cultural differences were recognised: 'to my delight I was elected Captain of the first XI [cricket], a unique honour for an RAN officer in an RN capital ship'.[68] 'After 6 months in *Victorious* I felt I could say I had settled in and been accepted by both the wardroom and the lower deck. There were several exceptions, of course; but there are these wherever you go'.[69] Clearly Swan was very impressed by his time in the UK however inter-service relations were not always so agreeable.

At other times the experiences of British naval personnel to Australia were somewhat mixed.[70] National competitiveness, whether it be tongue-in-cheek, or of a more sinister variety was in evidence. Fred Gosling a seaman on HMS *Belfast* during visit to Australia in early 1960 remarked of the reception 'Good, yeah they were good, [although] some called you Pommies and that…'[71] Naval relations between the RAN and the Royal Navy were mixed on the lower-deck level. One lower-deck member of HMAS *Bataan*, recalled that 'they were forced to accept six newcomers into their mess, four of whom they noted in mock alarm were "kippers"-RAN slang for British sailors, ex RN'.[72] Within a month, relations between the non-kipper and kipper messmates had progressed so that they looked at themselves as an exclusive group. On other occasions, relations between the services were not always so amenable, especially where the lower-deck were concerned. David Butt was a signaller on HMS *Cassandra* on service in the Far East in the early 1960s. During a visit to Hong Kong, Butt recalled:

> We were anchored in the harbour at that time and the weather was so rough, we went ashore one day…they couldn't run the boats [for our return trip] so we were stuck in [the] China Fleet Club, very sad that was with the bar open for two days constantly…that nearly caused some friction because there were a lot of Australians there as well…the Australian navy had a notorious reputation for a sudden change in their character when they'd been drinking. You could sit there for half the evening having a fantastic social chat with them and laugh and joke and everything else and then for no apparent reason one of them would suddenly get up on his high horse as Australians will do and start the old 'English Pom lark' and this sort of thing and start causing trouble. And they did it fairly frequently. It nearly happened in the China Fleet Club on that occasion, but it was so crowded there, because there was so many ashore and it was the

> only place to take refuge because the weather was so poor that it didn't develop into anything… They were a funny sort of crowd, the Australians, and they have that reputation…[73]

Although there were clearly personal differences between members of the RAN and the Royal Navy, the Admiralty did try to foster the notion of 'one Navy'. As early as 1921 First Sea Lord David Beatty said it was necessary to 'ensure that the various Navies of the Empire be similarly trained and that they adhere to a common doctrine and a common system of command and staff'.[74] Beatty was aware of Dominion sensitivity to centralised control from London and argued that 'it is as much the Navy of Australia, of Canada, of South Africa and of India as it is of the British Isles'.[75] That the RAN was so reliant on Admiralty support meant that in many ways the former could be viewed as a smaller version of the latter, especially in the immediate post-war period. This view was tempered somewhat by a growing independence of the RAN, and a lessening of Admiralty ties but culture and tradition is an important part of every military force, and military cultures are generally not altered without great consideration.

In 1954–55, the Admiralty studied the Royal Navy officer structure and eventually recommended the Post and General Lists for the Royal Navy. Mountbatten made the RAN aware of the impending changes but did not force them to adopt the changes automatically. When discussing the proposed changes the Australian CNS thanked Mountbatten for the information and said 'Our problems are very much the same as yours and there is no doubt in my mind that the RAN will adopt at least the major changes. It is essential to maintain our very close relationship in everything that really matters'.[76] CNS Dowling set up a Special Committee under Rear Admiral Burrell to study all facets of the changes to officer structure. The system was examined by the RAN and was adopted by the service, although dispensed with after a fairly short period.[77] One of the benefits of following Admiralty practice was the negation of any confusion in regard to loan and exchange personnel, and to RAN officers under training in the UK. The process of transformation illustrates that the proposed changes were not forced on the RAN by the Admiralty, an alteration of practice from the interwar period. Additionally, the RAN felt some necessity to adopt the changes, due to the close bonds between the officer classes of both services. Lastly, the changes were later found to be less than ideal and were dispensed with, again a circumstance that would have been unlikely many years before.

Uniforms are an obvious visual symbol of a military force. RAN personnel have historically been dressed in the same manner as officers and ratings of the Royal Navy. This is in contrast, for example, to the Australian Army which has long been distinguished by their distinctive 'slouch' hats. The 'Australia' national flash was not added to the RAN uniform until 1967. Until then the differences between the uniforms of the two services were minor, and in many ways only by virtue of the fact that RAN personnel served in non-European climates, and thus, for instance, did not have to wear blue caps. In late 1955, the Admiralty made the RAN and other Commonwealth Navies aware of its consideration of extending square rig to certain branches of the Royal Navy, and also the introduction of white caps 'the whole year round'.[78] The First Sea Lord, it was suggested 'should value your views on this policy'. Dowling remarked that the RAN already wore white caps the whole year round and added, 'I personally believe that we should be thinking of doing away with the Sailors Cap. It is uncomfortable and disliked by nearly all sailors. I have thought of a soft cap on the lines of the US gob!'[79] This suggestion may have been offered in a somewhat flippant manner but is a reflection of the increasing independence of the service.

There were differences between the more laidback approach of the Royal Navy and the stance taken by the United States Navy (USN) in regard to the sartorial standards expected by the respective services. This was especially true when sea-based combat operations were concerned, as in Korea. The RAN followed the example of the Royal Navy and generally was more relaxed in attitudes towards dress regulations, especially when ships were on active service. Even so, there were occasions where the more relaxed attitudes of some Australian officers were frowned upon by their British counterparts. During the Korean War, the men of HMAS *Bataan* saw themselves as fighting sailors and held the view that 'no self-respecting fighting captain would worry about such trivial matters as dress regulations in a war zone'.[80] The Australian sailors felt they could 'thumb their noses at an RN senior officer's admonishments'. This may have been an indication of lower-deck dislike of the officer class, resentment at being told what to do by a foreign officer, a dislike for 'spit and polish', recognition of a more relaxed attitude by the vessel's Australian Commanding officer, or a mixture of all. In any case, RAN officers and to a lesser extent its sailors were virtually indistinguishable from their British cousins throughout our period of interest.

The manner in which officers of each service dealt with ratings of either the same service or its sister-service varied. Commissioned officers

of the services were careful to preserve the distance between themselves and ratings. Commander Warwick Bracegirdle, the commanding officer of HMAS *Bataan* during the Korean War, was described by veterans as a 'very fine man' and an officer who did not talk down to his men. Even so, Bracegirdle was not over-familiar with his crew, a fact that reflected his 'Anglophile inclinations' and somewhat due to the Royal Naval culture from which the Royal Australian Navy had emerged.[81] One Australian sailor recalled that it was often RAN officers who 'adopted an overly officious and abrupt manner towards the men'.[82] Royal Navy exchange officers often appeared able to behave in a less strict manner than their Australian counterparts.[83] Again it is not wise to make generalisations, suffice to say the Australian officer class was at times remarkably similar to its British equivalent, and so could not have been expected to behave in a completely dissimilar manner. It would be unwise to transport the Australian national stereotype of one of 'she'll be right' onto RAN officers, just as it would be incorrect to try to persuade anyone that all British officers conformed to more British stereotypes. An overly-authoritarian officer need not be British, nor a more laidback commander Australian. As so many Australian officers were trained in the UK, Australian and British officer culture was extremely similar.

The Admiralty saw clear advantages in keeping the cultural and organisational ties between itself and navies such as the RAN healthy. When considering the reorganisation of the Navy List, the Admiralty saw the inclusion of Commonwealth officers as a demonstration of the close relationship between the Commonwealth navies. In 1962, on economic grounds, Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) asked the Admiralty to consider excluding all information on Commonwealth Navies. The Admiralty refused although it did permit a reduction in details on officers, ships and establishments to be included.[84]

If individual sailors or officers of the respective services could not easily be distinguished from one another, and the officer classes of both services were very much alike in culture and tradition, the same can be said for the visual aspects of the vessels utilised by the Royal Navy and the RAN. It was not until mid-1965 and the commissioning of the American-built HMAS *Perth* that the RAN had utilised a non-British or Australian built vessel. The addition of American designed ships to the Australian fleet was a clear indication of growing Australian naval independence, but the RAN had tried visually to forge an Australian identity prior to this class of ship entering the fleet.

During the Korean War, RAN ships flew the British White Ensign. In addition RAN vessels used painted symbols of the Union Jack, typically on the top of gun mounts, as recognition features for Allied aircraft. Even so, there was a growing sense of Australian naval independence, and a kangaroo cut-out was suspended on the signal halyards behind the bridge of some Australian ships to differentiate them from other 'British' ships.[85] This kangaroo symbol has since become a permanent feature on RAN ships. In another deviation from Admiralty practice, from 1 January 1969 all RAN ships wore new-style hull numbers that followed USN practice rather than the UK-style 'pennant numbers'.[86] This was perhaps less a sign of growing naval independence, but rather a recognition that Australian naval forces would increasingly be asked to operate with their American partners.

The most obvious visual symbol of growing Australian naval independence was the adoption of the Australian White Ensign. When the RAN was founded in 1911, the question as to which ensign was to be flown from Australian vessels was discussed. The view of the Admiralty was that Dominion warships should fly the White Ensign as this would cultivate and sustain a sentiment of union between the Royal Navy and the naval forces of the Dominions. Australian Ministers considered that Australian ships should fly either the White Ensign defaced with either a seven-pointed blue star or the Australian flag. After some months of debate, it was agreed that RAN ships would fly the unmodified White Ensign at the stern and the Australian flag on the bow jackstaff when in harbour. On 28 October 1965, the Minister for the Navy Frederick Chaney informed the House that the Navy was investigating possible variants on the White Ensign which would convey a distinctly Australian appearance.[87] The Australian CNS canvassed the views of Australian officers on whether the RAN should have its own ensign and:

> Of those whose views I have received, approximately half were definitely in favour of introducing an Australian ensign; of the others several believe that, although they would personally regret it, such a change was inevitable and that it would probably be welcomed by the majority of sailors and many officers.[88]

The Chief of the Naval Staff noted that:

> The RAN has always been closely associated with the RN. For many years the senior officers were RN officers on loan. With one exception it was

> not until 1948 that CNS was an RAN officer and up to 1954 Flag Officer Commanding the Australian Fleet (FOCAF) had usually been an RN loan officer. Since 1957 all Board Members' and Flag Officers', and virtually all Captains' appointments have been filled by RAN officers. Concurrent with this development the RAN has assumed an individual identity, and I believe there is a growing feeling within the RAN that our Navy, our ships and our sailors should be immediately identifiable as Australian.[89]

On 21 January 1966, the Naval Board decided to recommend to the Government that the RAN should have a distinctive Australian White Ensign. Chaney put this recommendation to the Prime Minister noting that:

> The Naval Board considers that the wearing of the RN Ensign, for all its great traditions, is not in keeping with the RAN's individual identity nor with the national wish that Australia should project an independent image to the world. Our ships frequently visit Asian ports, and there is no doubt the wearing of the White Ensign causes confusion. Furthermore in Vietnamese waters our ships fly an ensign identical with that of a country which is not engaged in the conflict.[90]

The Naval Board recommended a design that 'while retaining the essential features of the White Ensign, should be recognisable as Australian in view of its similarity to the National Flag', and a sketch of the proposed design was sent to the Prime Minister. In December 1966 a signal was sent to the Fleet informing it that 'the Government with the concurrence of Her Majesty has approved the adoption of an exclusive Australian White Ensign…'[91] It was stressed that:

> We are all proud and honoured to have served under the White Ensign, but it is now appropriate that an unmistakeable indication of the RAN's position as an independent service of an independent nation of the British Commonwealth should be displayed in Her Majesty's Australian ships and establishments.[92]

Nevertheless, it was stressed that 'In deciding on the design of the new ensign the Naval Board was influenced by its desire to preserve traditional links with the Royal Navy which helped to found, foster and develop our service'.[93] The new ensign retained the two main features of the Royal Navy White Ensign, namely the Union Flag in the canton and

the white background, but removed the red cross of St. George in favour of the stars of the Southern Cross and the Federation Star in blue. On 1 March 1967, all RAN establishments and ships hoisted the Australian White Ensign. It was a clear sign that the RAN was modifying the existing naval culture, shared by itself and the Royal Navy, to reflect a more 'Australian' service. The Australian CNS Vice Admiral Alan McNicoll who held the post between 1965–68 noted that 'It is interesting that from the beginning Australia wished to adopt a distinctive ensign, but was overborne by Imperial and international difficulties'.[94] This fact was an indication that the RAN, perhaps under Admiralty pressure, took longer to find a more unique Australian identity than the nation itself. The high levels of communication and co-operation between the Admiralty and the RAN in the post-war period should not mask the fact that the services were not one, and the RAN grew increasingly independent in the post-war era.

Between 1945–75, the indications of the RAN becoming a more sovereign service are legion. The modifications to uniform, the adoption of the Australian White Ensign, changes to the hull-marking of vessels, and the acquisition of non-British built or designed ships are some of the more obvious examples of this trend. Some of the less obvious examples of this are in the RAN's dealings with the Admiralty itself. One sign of growing RAN self-determination was the decision by Collins to 'kill that misnomer HMA Squadron and substitute the old term HMA Fleet'. Collins did not ask for Admiralty permission to do so, but informed the First Sea Lord saying, 'I am sure you'll agree that such a collection is not a squadron, even if it's small for a fleet'.[95] The First Sea Lord was 'interested to hear of your decision to revert to the original title of HMA Fleet, and I agree that this title is more suitable to describe the Forces you now have'.[96]

There is evidence that the RAN was increasingly being seen as a more self-sufficient force by those in British naval circles. On 15 September 1959, First Sea Lord Charles Lambe sent Australian CNS Henry Burrell a letter apologising for an Admiralty study into the future requirements of the RAN. Burrell assured him that 'it has not embarrassed me in the slightest. I heard a buzz about it but did not give it any weight…'[97] In years gone by, such a study would not have been questioned by either the Admiralty or the RAN. On the impending loss of the Australian Fleet Air Arm in 1959, Lambe apologised to Burrell and said: 'I feel sure you must have been having an extremely difficult time and I only wish

that I could have been of more help to you in fighting your battles than I was…The RAN is so important to us that I am sure you will forgive me for poking my nose in'.[98] This is an admission that the Admiralty was perhaps less useful to the RAN than in previous times, as well as an acknowledgement of the ongoing ties between the services. The comments of the Commander-in-Chief of the Far East Station in regard to the impending loss of the Australian FAA in 1959 illustrated the changing relationship between the RAN and the British naval hierarchy: 'it ill becomes a Pommy to offer advice or even consolation except with the utmost circumspection'.[99]

In many ways, the growing self-sufficiency of the RAN and drift from the Admiralty mirrored the national experiences of Great Britain and Australia. Although Anglo-Australian strategic issues are covered at a later point in this book, some themes will be covered here to provide a national-naval contrast. Australia was a progressively more self-sufficient nation in the post-war period on a number of levels, be they economic, strategic, military, diplomatic or cultural. Even so, the ties that held Australia to the UK were not so easily loosened. Writing in 1955, the British High Commissioner in Australia, Sir Stephen Holmes, pointed to what he termed a 'curious paradox' in the Australian outlook on the world. 'Australians', he noted, 'combine a determined claim to "independence", an insistence on being allowed to think and act for themselves, with a sense of need to be assured of the continuance of an almost paternal relationship between the UK and Australia, which may seem much more appropriate to the days before Dominion status'. As Ward wrote, 'Holmes' comment points to a major dilemma that has confronted historians studying the question of Australia's fraying ties to Britain in the decades after World War II'.[100] This dilemma is also evident in the dealings between the RAN and the Royal Navy in the post-war period. On one hand, the RAN craved an independence from the Admiralty and recognition that the Royal Australian Navy was an 'Australian' service. On the other hand, the RAN was reliant on the Admiralty in ways that the other Australian services were not reliant on their British counterparts. This made the RAN a more Anglophile and conservative force than either the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) or the Australian Army. It is interesting that even by the end of 1974 RAN promotions were still being reported in the *Times* alongside those of the Royal Navy. The Australian Army and RAAF were not accorded the same luxury.[101] It was only when the RAN gained the self-confidence and skills, primarily via

the senior officer corps, to replace the assistance previously given by the Admiralty, that Australian naval independence could be nurtured. This independence was assisted by stronger ties with the United States Navy, again mirroring national experience, but there was no replacement of the Admiralty by the USN. Throughout this process, the Admiralty retained personal and professional contact with those in the RAN, offering advice as appropriate, mindful of the changing circumstances of the relationship.

The British also found themselves confronted with a changing politico-military environment with a strategic shift towards the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and an economic drift towards Europe. Even so national ties were difficult to ignore. As Admiral of the Fleet Lord Peter Hill-Norton stated:

> Our first defence priority is support for the North Atlantic Alliance. The security of these islands must obviously be our first concern, and this is bound inextricably with the security of Western Europe. However, unlike other members of the Alliance, we have traditional and blood ties with other countries and specifically those of the old Commonwealth and the British Dependencies overseas. We cannot, therefore, look to our own interests in isolation from these factors, or from the call they make on our capabilities.[102]

Much use has been made of the speeches and lectures of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Peter Hill-Norton in this book. Hill-Norton was an extremely influential figure in British naval and military circles during the 1960s and 1970s. He held the posts of Assistant Chief of Naval Staff from 1962–64, Second-in-Command, Far East Fleet 1964–67 and Vice Chief of the Naval Staff 1967–68. This was followed by postings as Commander-in-Chief Far East Fleet 1969–70, CNS and First Sea Lord 1970–71, Chief of the Defence Staff 1971–73 and Chairman of the Military Committee of NATO 1974–77.

Efforts were made to assuage any Antipodean feelings of alarm of a drift in Anglo-Australian relations:

> Contrary to what a number of people suppose, I think-not unreasonably-as the results of the negotiations for our entry into the European Economic Community, which is none of my business, we are not becoming little Englanders. There is no intention of withdrawing into our tight little island…[103]

Nevertheless, a level of pragmatism was in evidence that even the national ties of kith and kin, and culture and tradition could not greatly affect: 'Something we must recognise is that all too often the policies and interests of our old Commonwealth friends are quite different to our own aspirations and that realities and self-interest more and more tend to over-shadow sentiment'.[104] This is a sentiment that is very relevant to the impact of culture and tradition on the existing Anglo-Australian naval and national relationships.

High-level communications between the RAN and the Admiralty strengthened the bonds between the services. As Collins wrote, 'Liaison with the First Sea Lord at the Admiralty…was maintained by correspondence and visits. Often much more could be achieved, and more quickly, by personal contacts than through the official channels'.[105] These communications were augmented by lower-level interactions, some not always as efficient as expected. The officer culture of the Anglo-Australian naval paradigm was strong. The officer corps of the RAN has been described as 'conservative and Anglophile',[106] and this was especially true during the immediate post-war period. HMAS *Bataan*'s commanding officer during the ships first deployment to Korea referred to his ship as a 'British ship'.[107] The RAN introduced representational signs that the service was a more 'Australian' one. Collins was the first Australian CNS to have graduated from the Royal Australian Naval College. As Cooper correctly pointed out, 'The sight of Collins… taking over from Hamilton, an RN Admiral, was a very strong symbolic statement'.[108] In addition changes to naval culture were implemented that made the RAN a more 'Australian' branch, such as the addition of 'Australia' flashes to the RAN uniform and the adoption of the Australian White Ensign. There were some that cherished the links between the Admiralty and the RAN. In 1959, former Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Sir Roy Dowling wrote to the First Sea Lord:

> As you are aware, the RAN is very close indeed to the RN. Long may it remain so. There have been pressures in the past for us to be more independent, or more dependent on the USN. All such pressures have been from outside the Service and all have been strongly and successfully resisted from within the Service.[109]

For all of this, the national drift of Australia from the UK could not be ignored, and an alteration in Anglo-Australian naval relations was

certain, no matter the cultural and historical ties between the services. Vice Admiral Sir Henry Burrell wrote 'Throughout my career I, and the RAN, had received the greatest help and consideration from the Royal Navy'.[110] Burrell was given an invitation to lunch with the First Lord, Lord Carrington, and my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty:

> One of the great moments in my life…I had no idea if any Australian naval officer had ever expressed the gratitude of our navy to the Royal Navy, but at that lunch I did just that. This story of my life should reek with the opportunity, experience and friendship given to me by the Royal Navy. If it does not the fault is mine.[111]

The two navies shared a common culture and the bonds between the two were recognised and appreciated. McGrigor's successor as First Sea Lord, Lord Louis Mountbatten, wrote to the new Australian Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Roy Dowling to 'tell you right away how much I hope we shall be able to maintain a close personal contact by correspondence and I hope from time to time by visits. I am sure I do not need to tell you that I will ensure the continued friendly co-operation between our Navies.[112] Dowling responded, 'As you know our two Navies are very closely knit. We are very grateful for all the assistance and guidance we've had in the past'.[113] In addition:

> We hang tight to the guidance of Queen's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions and the rules of the Naval Discipline Act (slightly modified to suit local conditions) and so far there has been no concerted pressure from outside sources to break the grip. Now and then some 'wise-guy' suggests that we follow the RN too blindly and closely or that it's high time we wrote our own instructions (shades of Canada) but we smile and ignore such thoughts.[114]

Even so Australian naval leaders especially Burrell recognised that an increasingly independent RAN had to act with a certain level of pragmatism in its dealings with the Admiralty. This matter-of-factness manifested itself in the purchase of the US-built *Charles F. Adams* class destroyers. Culture and tradition were all well and good, but if the Admiralty could not meet the RAN's requirements, the RAN had to look elsewhere.

In late 1959 the UK High Commissioner in Australia noted, 'I leave here with one dominant impression. It is that the Australians have in recent years made great progress leading to a much greater sense of maturity and self-confidence'.[115] He continued: 'They are independent, sometimes aggressively independent, dislike intensely any suggestion of patronising from English visitors or paternalism from the British Government, and are immensely proud of their own achievements and what they have in this vast country in little more than a hundred years'. These comments could very much be used as a parallel for the altering Anglo-Australia naval relations in the post-war period.

Notes

1. Alastair Cooper, 'The Development of an Independent Navy for Australia: Correspondence between the First Naval Member and the First Sea Lord, 1947–59', in *The Naval Miscellany, Vol. VII*, ed. Susan Rose (London: Ashgate for the Navy Records Society, 2008), 513.
2. T. B. Millar, *Australia's Defence* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1969), 122.
3. Having served in the RAN for nine years until 1993, I can attest that *faux* British accents could still be discerned from certain RAN officers during that time.
4. Robert Hyslop, *Aye Aye, Minister: Australian Naval Administration, 1939–59* (Canberra: AGPS, 1990), 183.
5. London, The National Archives (hereafter TNA), ADM205/68, Letter from Hamilton to Cunningham, 18 March 1947. A later request for privacy was made by Hamilton, ADM205/68, Letter from Hamilton to Cunningham, 17 June 1947.
6. ADM205/69, Letter from Hamilton to Cunningham, 27 November 1947.
7. ADM205/69, Letter from Collins to Fraser, 16 July 1948.
8. ADM205/105, Letter from Collins to McGrigor, 6 August 1954.
9. ADM205/105, Letter from McGrigor to Collins, 29 October 1954.
10. ADM205/105, Letter from Collins to McGrigor, 27 January 1955.
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32. ADM205/110, Letter from Dowling to Mountbatten, 24 January 1956.
33. ADM205/110, Letter from Mountbatten to Dowling, 14 April 1956.
34. ADM205/110, Letter from Dowling to Mountbatten, 2 May 1956.
35. ADM205/110, Letter from Mountbatten to Dowling, 14 April 1956.
36. ADM1/29326, Letter from Burrell to Lambe, 28 May 1959.
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81. Ibid., 230.
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106. Cooper, *HMAS Bataan, 1952*, 245.
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109. ADM1/29326, Extract from letter from Dowling to First Sea Lord, 30 November 1959.
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111. Ibid.
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CHAPTER 2

High-Level Strategy

The relationship between the Royal Navy and the RAN was greatly influenced by the high-level strategic choices undertaken by the UK and Australia. The post-Second World War period saw massive alterations in the strategic outlook of both the UK and Australia. Both nations gravitated to the USA for purposes of national security but strategic ties were still maintained between Britain and Australia throughout the post-war period. Agreements such as the Australia, New Zealand and Malaya agreement (ANZAM) and the creation of the Far East Strategic Reserve (FESR), the Australia-New Zealand-United Kingdom force (ANZUK), the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) and SEATO, strengthened or maintained, in varying levels, the bonds between the two Anglo-Australian navies. In contrast, treaties such as Australia-New Zealand-United States treaty (ANZUS) and the Radford-Collins agreement made plain the strategic shift of Australia from the British sphere of influence to that of the USA. Likewise, the British focus on NATO underlined the importance of that treaty's importance to the UK and presaged the strategic shift of Britain from its global defence commitments to European/North Atlantic defence.

ANZAM emerged from early post-war discussions on the future responsibilities of the Dominions within the remit of Commonwealth defence co-operation. In 1947, it was suggested that improved co-operation between Australia, Great Britain and New Zealand was

M. Gjessing, *Anglo-Australian Naval Relations, 1945–1975*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-92744-2_2

necessary for defence of the British Commonwealth.[1] The area that the resultant reorganisation of defence machinery covered would become known as the ANZAM region. ANZAM was based on the common interests of Australia, New Zealand and the UK in the defence of Australia, New Zealand and the Malayan area, and of the sea and air communications in the region. In late 1948, the British Chiefs of Staff were anxious to encourage Australia to assume responsibility for as large an area as possible, and that Australian acceptance of responsibility for planning was 'a step forward which might in time lead to greater things'.[2] This aim matched the Australian commitment to take on greater responsibilities in the Pacific area.[3] In mid-1949, the Admiralty proposed that the main Australian naval commitment at the start of any future war should be in the ANZAM area. It was later stated that the Admiralty's concept of Australia's share in Commonwealth defence was of reliance upon the RAN to provide the forces required for the defence of sea communications in the ANZAM area. Even so, the actual threat was deemed to be low and as such it was hoped RAN forces would be available to co-operate with the remaining Commonwealth and allied navies in other parts of the world.[4]

In 1950, the Australian Defence Committee recommended to the government that peacetime planning for the ANZAM region would be based on the supposition that Australia would accept the strategic responsibility for the defence of Australia and the overall direction and control of operations within the ANZAM area in the event of war.[5] The RAN had an obvious role to play in the defence of shipping within the ANZAM area. Following the realisation that there was no immediate threat of an invasion of the Australian mainland, the Australian CNS John Collins was intent on emphasising the control of sea communications in the ANZAM region, and not only the defence of Australian waters, as the primary task of the RAN.[6] Indeed the RAN's assumption of responsibility for the defence of sea communications within the ANZAM region was an important departure from previous strategic practices, as the RAN had not had any significant role in strategic planning independent of the Royal Navy. As Cooper so concisely summed up:

> The development of an indigenous naval strategic planning capability reduced the RAN's reliance upon the Royal Navy. Although the RAN did not particularly wish to operate independently of the Royal Navy, its

> increasing ability to do so meant that its ties to the Royal Navy became more ties of convenience than of necessity.[7]

The Admiralty provided assistance to the RAN and helped the latter carry out its new responsibilities. Collins thanked the Admiralty for providing logistics experts for ANZAM planning purposes; 'it seems we are now making some progress in this somewhat tiresome task. If we have seemed un-co-operative in regard to providing planning teams…it is only our lack of officers'.[8] The fact that Australia were to be responsible for defence of sea communications in the ANZAM area was an acknowledgement that the UK would be unable to maintain strong naval forces in the Far East if they were required elsewhere.

All was not plain sailing as far as resources allocated to the Far East Station by the RAN were concerned. In mid-1954 the UK Commander-in-Chief Far East said of the co-operation given by the Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN) that 'we shall be making really big strides if and when we can get the Australians to do the same'.[9] This should be viewed as a more relaxed stance taken by the New Zealand government on the circumstances in which RNZN vessels could be used as opposed to any recalcitrance on the part of the RAN. Indeed, there is evidence that the RAN were more forthcoming than the Australian government. This stance was appreciated as 'After all it is working towards the ANZAM concept'.[10] Certainly the British were keen to have Australian vessels attached to the Far East Station in both peace and war. Collins too, was favourable on 'keeping the closest contact between the Far East Station and the Australian Navy, both from the point of view that they are adjacent Naval Stations, and also because in these days of ANZAM, the Melbourne Pact, and now SEATO, they have so many Naval problems in common'.[11] The addition of a naval air capability to the RAN was a crucial resource for the ANZAM area. The British saw the Australian naval aviation capability as vital in protecting sea communications in the ANZAM area.[12] The Commander-in-Chief of the Far East Station made plain that the strength of British naval forces in the Malayan area at the start of any conflict would depend on whether the conflict was global or local and on how the war broke out. The fact that British naval forces could not be promised in any great numbers in the Far East in a global conflict was implicit in this statement.[13]

ANZAM had a great impact on the relationship between the RAN and the Royal Navy. ANZAM deployed forces in the field for active

service in the 'Malayan Emergency' and in confrontation with Indonesia. During these operations ships of both navies operated side by side. At the same time, strategic planning was carried out by both services under the ANZAM remit. The creation of an Australian capability for maritime strategic planning reduced the RAN's reliance on the Admiralty, but also meant continued co-operation between the RAN and the Royal Navy in the ANZAM region. Nonetheless, the UK was not the only naval power courted by the RAN in the post-war era.

In late 1948 the Australian CNS John Collins, reported to the British First Sea Lord that following a visit to Pearl Harbor, the US 'were thinking on much the same lines as ourselves' and that 'the limits to our proposed area of responsibility on the north and the east were decided in consultation with Commander-in-Chief, Pacific, so as to have some workable arrangement ready in the event of the only possible trouble'.[14] The First Sea Lord hoped that the question of 'areas' would soon be worked out, noting that the exact limits were under discussion at prime ministers' level. He also made plain that 'it is very satisfactory that you have such good contacts' with the American navy.[15] In early 1951, meetings were held between Collins and the United States Commander-in-Chief, Pacific (CinCPAC), Admiral Arthur Radford. The evolution of the search for an accord between the RAN and the USN concluded in the Radford-Collins agreement of early 1951. This agreement divided the Pacific into zones for the naval control of shipping and recognised the existence of the Anglo-New Zealand-Australian area of interest in Malaya (ANZAM). Radford-Collins codified the co-ordination of naval forces of the ANZAM and Commander-in-Chief Pacific Command (US) regions in areas such as search and rescue, anti-submarine warfare (ASW), reconnaissance, the control of shipping and escort and convoy routing.

Collins reported on the meetings to the Admiralty and pleaded 'for the acceptance of the Radford-Collins line as delineating the agreed ANZAM region. If we cannot do so I feel we shall have to have two areas, one the British Commonwealth ANZAM region and the other for use with the United States…'[16] It was later recommended that this be accepted by the British Chiefs of Staff.[17] Radford-Collins was periodically revised and amended but in essence, it remained the same throughout our period of interest.[18] One change to the agreement did directly impact SEATO naval planning, however, in May 1966 an offer to extend to SEATO the naval control of shipping arrangement implicit in the

Radford-Collins agreement was made, an offer that was later accepted by certain members of SEATO.[19] One salient point in regard to the agreement was that Collins represented all of the ANZAM nations, Australia, New Zealand and the UK, during the talks. Even so, there were also representatives of the Royal Navy and the Royal New Zealand Navy present. Radford-Collins arguably raised the profile of the RAN. One observer noted that the Australian Chief of Naval Staff's 'position under Radford-Collins gives him considerable voice and status when dealing with the US Pacific Fleet (PACFLT) authorities. When speaking for the RAN alone, it is possible that in the American mind, CNS could be regarded as just another of the many foreign flag officers who direct minor forces in the Pacific'.[20] The Radford-Collins agreement symbolised one facet of growing Australian naval independence, as well as a shift away from the Admiralty.

Even so, there is evidence that the RAN occasionally saw much more promise in naval relations with Britain than with the USA; Collins wrote to the First Sea Lord 'I am sure we must go ahead on the ANZAM level before we can make any progress with the Americans'[21] and 'You will have gathered from past comments that I have always been "an ANZAM man" and I am glad that things have turned out this way, for ANZAM is realistic whereas Five Power, ANZUS, SEATO etc. are all so indefinite'. This highlights the occasional differences between national strategy and naval strategy. To Australia, on a national level, SEATO had more attraction than ANZAM as the former held the possibility of American assistance. The British viewed its links with Australia and New Zealand 'particularly in ANZAM' as fundamental to achieving its strategic aims in the Far East.[22] Thus ANZAM had clear benefits for both nations and helped to keep relations between the Royal Navy and the RAN strong.

Australia forged closer ties with the USA, on both naval and political levels in the post-war period. The ANZUS treaty which entered into force in April 1952 symbolised a level of political separation between the UK and Australia, as well as the Australian requirement for a 'great and powerful friend'. Following the crisis of Japan's entry into the Second World War, Australians realised for the first time that the Royal Navy was no longer an impenetrable shield guarding Australia and the far east region. In the post-war period, the only nation to which Australia could turn for assistance was the USA. Nonetheless, the fundamental tenet of Australia's foreign policy became maintenance of the closest possible ties with *both* Great Britain and the USA. There was no military planning machinery under ANZUS and although meetings were supposed to

be held every six months, in practice they were very irregular and were primarily political in nature, with military advisors attending as observers.[23] As such, ANZUS had much less impact on naval relations between the USA and Australia than the Radford-Collins agreement. Nor did the ANZUS agreement appear to do much to sour Anglo-Australian naval relations; as far as the British Far East naval forces were concerned, from a military point of view we 'felt that we were getting all we needed from the Five Power Agency' and did not feel unduly excluded from ANZUS.[24] Thus ANZUS appeared to have negligible effect on naval relations between either Australia and the USA or Australia and the UK.

Nor were the British unduly bothered about the impact of ANZUS on its relations with Australia. During British Cabinet discussions it was stated that the 'conclusion of ANZUS would be fully in accord with modern conceptions of the nature of the Commonwealth and that Australia and New Zealand would be undertaking responsibilities for the protection of Commonwealth interests in the Pacific'.[25] The Cabinet later agreed that if the proposed treaty was to be concluded, statements should be made in the parliaments of the UK, Australia and New Zealand making it clear that the treaty would not affect the existing relations between the independent nations of the Commonwealth. Indeed the ANZUS treaty was said by Prime Minister Atlee to 'meet the desire of Australia and New Zealand for guarantees in the Pacific, and would be to our [the UK] advantage as making them more willing to meet their commitments for the defence of the Middle East'.[26] This did not transpire as Australia concentrated its defence resources in south east Asia and the Pacific region, a result of strategic necessity and limited resources.

The South East Asian Collective Defence Treaty, better known as the South East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO), was signed in Manila in 1954: both Australia and the UK were members, as was the USA. Australia had an obvious interest in collective security in Asia. This area provided the most obvious route for potential aggression against Australia. Communist China was viewed as the main threat, and 'the two countries outside the area to which we have to look are the United Kingdom and the United States. Fortunately we are in intimate relationships with each of them'.[27] For Australia SEATO was a useful tool in bringing the USA and Britain together into an Asian alliance. The UK saw obvious differences between ANZAM and the proposed South East Asian collective defence organisation that later became SEATO.

The former 'is a regional arrangement and provides a means of co-ordinating Commonwealth strategy for the defence of the ANZAM area in war'.[28] The latter 'is an organisation designed to block the overt or covert spread of Communism in South-East Asia'. Even so it was concluded that SEATO, being wider in scope, could fulfil the purpose of ANZAM but that ANZAM, as planned, could not be embodied in SEATO. The RAN saw obvious advantages in playing an important role in SEATO. A role in containing regional communism was a boon to a service under the threat of diminishing resources. Australia also saw SEATO as a means of keeping the British east of Suez.[29] In contrast, the British viewed SEATO as 'an impossible instrument to use for hot war planning' due to security reasons, however, it was thought to be 'an extremely useful organisation to enable us all to get together on cold war problems'.[30] In late 1963, the British strategic aims in the far east were viewed as the containment of communism and the maintenance of Commonwealth links, with particular stress on the forward defence of Australia and New Zealand. This could be achieved through active membership of SEATO. The later withdrawal from east of Suez meant this was unachievable, as UK naval commitments to the Far East dwindled due to the redeployment of naval forces to the European theatre and NATO.

The SEATO agreement did not hinder ANZAM as the latter was viewed as cementing the military bonds between the three nations involved: 'it may be said that the existence of the [ANZAM] arrangement greatly facilitates the study of defence problems in this area and will help ensure that the contribution of the three countries to the SEATO alliance are made as effective as possible'.[31] One of the later functions of ANZAM was the preparation of contingency plans for the defence of Commonwealth interests in South East Asia in case SEATO failed to provide such defence.[32] Unlike ANZUS, SEATO or NATO, ANZAM was not a treaty organisation but rather a piece of planning machinery. The 1955 creation of the FESR, the principal role of which was to provide a force-in-being to respond to external threats to the ANZAM region. It gave ANZAM the wherewithal to act as a deterrent to further Communist aggression in South East Asia as well as assist in the maintenance of the security of the Federation of Malaysia. Australia's naval commitment was two destroyers and/or frigates on continuous service in the Far East, with a carrier when available, under British operational control. The vessels remained under Australian government command,

however, a departure from previous command and control arrangements where RAN ships fell under RN command.

The British were convinced that 'in the beginning any organisation [for collective security in Asia] should consist of the countries concerned being linked in a loose periphery and not in a tight organisation controlled by NATO'.[33] This may have been a reflection that the UK was already aware that they could not guarantee military forces in the Far East on the level that they had committed to the Atlantic/European theatres. In late 1954, the First Sea Lord suggested that although some or all of the Far East Fleet may remain in the ANZAM region following a major and direct threat to British territory, it will be decided at the time 'whether any aircraft carrier sent from Home or Mediterranean Stations to reinforce the Far East Fleet should remain to assist you…or whether it should return to NATO'.[34] One month later, the UK Chiefs of Staff discussed SEATO versus NATO.[35] While there was agreement on the importance of South East Asia in the cold war, it was deemed undesirable to rob NATO to support SEATO; 'the forces required must be supplied separately by the Commonwealth as much as the United Kingdom'. In the face of diminishing military resources, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization would take precedence over all other military obligations.

In mid-1949 Britain joined NATO. This did not mean an immediate end to worldwide military obligations. As late as 1955, British strategy still saw Commonwealth co-operation as vital.[36] Ten years later, however, it was stated that the 'threat to Britain's survival can only be met by the strength and unity of the NATO alliance through which the United States, Canada and the countries of Western Europe affirm their independence'.[37] The Defence Estimates of 1968 made plain the British strategic shift from Commonwealth defence; 'The major decisions which the Government has taken may be broadly summarised as follows: Britain's defence effort will in future be concentrated mainly in Europe and the North Atlantic area, [and] we shall accelerate the withdrawal of our forces from Malaysia and Singapore and complete it by the end of 1971'.[38] A reduction in military force available to the British, allied to the steady Soviet military build-up in the post-war period, meant that NATO would have the majority of available naval forces allocated to it by the end of our period of interest. As UK First Sea Lord (1968–70) Sir Michael Le Fanu wrote 'Our first thought must be the security if these islands and the countries of the NATO alliance'.[39] In this, the British

military were in the main unapologetic, while at the same time pragmatic in regard to its strategic realities.

With the vast majority of British naval forces declared to NATO, the provision of forces for South East Asia would be to the detriment of the Atlantic alliance. As Hill-Norton made plain:

> In considering the type and size of the forces we have decided to retain in South East Asia we had to have regard to two overriding military factors. First that, except perhaps in the longer term, manpower and costs will for all practicable purposes rule out the possibility of providing naval and air forces over and above our present overall force levels. The second factor, which stems partly from the first, arises from the fact that the previous Government had planned and announced that after 1971, virtually all our UK and European based forces would be declared to NATO, thus the provision of forces for SE Asia had to be at the direct expense of our planned priority contribution to NATO.[40]

Nonetheless, there was a realisation that Britain had historical ties to other countries such as Australia.[41] As such, much was made of the intentions of Britain not to sacrifice all on the altar of European defence. As Hill-Norton asserted in mid-1971 'I am trying to get across the notion that we are not abandoning our friends, nor are we piking on defence…'[42]

On the other hand, the British military were aware of the resource issues facing them. Following the election of the Conservative Government, and while Lord Carrington, the Secretary of State, was in the Far East in discussions with the regional powers, Hill-Norton stated 'Any adjustments made in our Far East presence can be no more than relatively marginal, unless we are prepared to make major inroads into NATO posture; and I earnestly hope that no-one contemplates that'.[43] Four months later he added, 'A continued presence of some 5 or 6 DD/FF and a submarine East of Suez post 1971 is merely an extension of the periodic deployments that we had in any case planned to make, but inevitably it will be at the expense of the immediate availability of the ships to SACLANT and Supreme Allied Commander, Europe-NATO (SACEUR)…'.[44] Following the apparent change of policy regarding the level of military force to be kept in the Far East it was still necessary to assuage any European fears over Britain's commitment to NATO:

> We shall continue to keep a military presence East of Suez and the British Government is discussing the form and nature of our military contribution there with the Government's of Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore. I hope that this particular change of policy will cause no apprehension here because I can promise you that it is in no way indicative of a lessening of our interest in NATO.[45]

The British military were pragmatic about the strategic realities they faced. On the British inability to reinforce the Far East region due to NATO commitments, Hill-Norton said 'All this may not be easy for all of us to swallow, or perhaps for our good friends overseas to accept, but it is the reality of today'.[46] This is impossible to argue with. The British had no choice but to face up to strategic truth by recognising the importance of the trans-Atlantic alliance. The significance of NATO continues to be paramount to British security. Indeed the perceived maritime danger posed by the USSR increased following the decision to retreat from east of Suez: 'The Soviet Union has become a major maritime power with a large modern well-equipped fleet of cruisers, destroyers and escorts, [with] some 300 operational submarines of which 100 are nuclear powered, and a force of up to 1000 naval aircraft'.[47] A British failure to contribute effectively to NATO's maritime defence may have been perceived as a demonstration of 'a lack of sympathy with the determination of the US to defer the use of nuclear weapons for as long as possible by extending the conventional phase of any war in Europe. It could well precipitate the process of NATO's dissolution'.[48] As such, NATO had to take precedence over Britain's global responsibilities, especially if the strategic links and the 'special relationship' with the USA were to be maintained. Australia, too, rationalised its national strategic needs in the post-war era and moved ever closer to the USA. This had the inevitable result of a shift from the ties of empire and strategic disassociation from Great Britain.

After the British government's decision to retain some forces based in the Malaysian/Singapore area after 1971 it was viewed as 'highly desirable to have a tri-national organisation under which intelligence can be exchanged, combined exercises planned and contingency planning undertaken when directed by the three Governments…Thus there is a clear need for an organisation broadly similar to ANZAM to continue after 1971'.[49] The transition from ANZAM and the FESR produced two structures. The ANZUK force (Australia, New Zealand and the UK) was

the direct successor to ANZAM and the FESR, and both Australia and the UK contributed naval forces to it.[50] The second structure was the FPDA, a military consultation agreement between the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia. The FPDA came into effect on the 1 November 1971, when the Commander-in-Chief Far East was withdrawn and the Commander of the ANZUK force in Malaysia and Singapore assumed command of Australian, British and New Zealand forces assigned to him.[51]

The Admiral of the Fleet Hill-Norton defended the level of British military forces allocated to the new structures during a visit to Australia in 1971:

> Following the election of the present Government in the United Kingdom a year ago, instead of keeping no resident forces in the Far East we are now going to keep forces of all three Services at about the same level of Australia. In a general way…the ANZUK force…of the Five Power defence system breaks down about 40-40-20 with Australia and the UK taking the 40s…[52]

In reality, the FPDA was not a defence pact, with no immediate commitment for either Australia or Great Britain to deploy forces in the defence of Malaysia or Singapore. In any case, the UK did not have the in-theatre forces to back political will, if indeed there was any, with military force. There were differences of opinion between Australia and the UK on strategic matters, one case being the correct method of co-ordinating maritime surveillance in the ANZUK area of interest.[53] The fact that such discussions were taking place in the early 1970s is a testimony to the continued relationship between the two services.

The high-level strategy and international alliances and agreements entered into by the UK and Australia affected not only relations between the two nations but between the RAN and the Royal Navy also. In the immediate post-war period, both nations were committed to a greater or lesser degree, to 'Imperial defence' and working together as nations of the Commonwealth. This co-operation was typified by agreements such as ANZAM, and the creation of the FESR. By the 1970s the UK, in recognition of its reduced global influence, had recalled the vast majority of its military forces to the European and Atlantic theatres in a bid to strengthen NATO. Anglo-Australian military co-operation was evident in latter agreements such as SEATO and the FPDA but these were

diluted by the weakening of British military force in the Far East, as well as a shift of Australian strategic focus towards the USA. This movement was best illustrated politically, by ANZUS, and in a maritime sense, the Radford-Collins agreement.

The alterations in national strategy affected relations between the RAN and the Royal Navy. An Australian national drift towards America made it easier for the RAN to contemplate a similar path towards the USN. Likewise, a British focus on European defence rather than historical responsibilities concerning the Far East and Australasia weakened the bonds between the Admiralty and the RAN. As one observer noted 'At the strategic level, a British withdrawal raised questions about…the future of ANZAM, the commitment of the British to SEATO and the composition of the FESR'.[54] The following quotation from a former British First Sea Lord was relevant to both the national and naval Anglo-Australian ties:

> Something we must recognise is that all too often the policies and interests of our old Commonwealth friends are quite different to our own aspirations and that realities and self-interest more and more tend to overshadow sentiment.[55]

The question of high level or naval strategy, for either Australia or the UK, was not an exchange of either, for the USA. The naval staffs of the UK, the USA and Australia routinely met to discuss naval matters and strategy. During a visit of US Admiral Radford to the Far East in late 1951, the three services were able to take 'a look at all the many holes in the boat if we get into a war…in the near future'.[56] Sir William Oliver, the UK High Commissioner in Canberra stated 'In Australian eyes, her surest guarantee of security in matters of defence lay with ANZUS rather than ANZAM'.[57] This was true on a national level, but on a naval level there were instances where ANZAM was thought to be a very valuable instrument. Australia had gravitated towards the USA on a national level, due in the main to strategic lessons learned in the Second World War. As Britain had not been able to guarantee Australia's security in the last conflict, there was every reason to believe that she could not do so in any future conflict. This did not, however, result in a cessation in Anglo-Australian co-operation at either a national or naval level throughout the post-war period. Even so, the British retreat from east of Suez made agreements such as ANZAM and SEATO in effect obsolete, as least as

far as Anglo-Australian co-operation was concerned. At the end of 1971 the British Chief of the Defence Staff stated that:

> So far as the United Kingdom is concerned this [question of priorities] centres somewhat naturally in the first place on the security of Great Britain and thus on the prevention of a major conflict between the East and West. Our next priority is the support of our other allies and in particular those within the British Commonwealth of Nations.[58]

The sentiment may have been true, but the strategic realities meant that 'the next priority' was 'next' by a fair margin. This was reinforced by the dilemmas faced by the UK in utilising military force in the Far East and east of Suez in the face of economic burden and military reduction.

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CHAPTER 3

East of Suez Dilemmas

The relationship between the Royal Navy and the RAN was directly influenced by the decline of the Royal Navy from the position it once held. Decolonisation, the withdrawal from east of Suez, the loss of Singapore as a main operating base, and the attenuation of British naval power reduced the influence able to be asserted by the Admiralty on the Far East region, and on the Royal Australian Navy. Even so, a level of British military, and especially naval willingness, to continue to be an influence in the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean regions even after the withdrawal from empire, existed. This enthusiasm manifested itself in the readiness to consider alternatives to the main naval base at Singapore, most notably Cockburn Sound on the west coast of Australia. It was also evident in ongoing concerns over the defence of Australasia, and security in the Indian Ocean region, following the disbanding of the Far East Fleet and well into the 1970s. The Royal Navy was a severely stretched military force in the post-war era, faced with limits on manpower, vessels, expenditure and bases of operation. Even so it was an abiding influence, albeit at a much-reduced level, on the RAN and in the Indian/Pacific Ocean regions.

Immediate post-war Admiralty plans were based around the notion of an 'Imperial Fleet'. This force would consist of ships of the British Commonwealth as opposed to a purely British force and be used for the defence of the empire as a whole: 'The success of the World Security Organisation must not be assumed…strong forces of all arms are to be maintained if the British Empire is to retain the status of a first class

M. Gjessing, *Anglo-Australian Naval Relations, 1945–1975*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-92744-2_3

power'.[1] There were doubts by some about the fortitude of the USA in any future conflict: 'From past experience it is unlikely that America will take part in the early stages of a war, and the Empire may be faced once more with "holding the ring" alone'.[2] Leaving the perceived unreliability of America aside, it made much sense for the British to utilise Commonwealth naval unity as much as possible. British resources were not infinite and were much weakened by the war. There was still an innate sense of Commonwealth unity, especially within naval circles and the Imperial Fleet would be to the benefit of the Commonwealth as a whole, not just to Great Britain. The relative decline of the Royal Navy in the post-war period, however, meant that the idea of an 'Imperial Fleet' was soon unrealistic.

Self-evidently, the Royal Navy in 1975 was not the same force as it was at the end of the Second World War. In 1948–49 the Royal Navy possessed 107 major combat units; in 1973–74 the number was 86.[3] In 1949 active Royal Navy personnel numbered 144,500 and fell to 76,200 by 1975. This was despite expenditure remaining remarkably constant over the same period.[4] Observers are at odds over the level of decline suffered by the Royal Navy in the post-war period.[5] Even so, the Royal Navy was not same force in relative terms.[6] On this, the service itself was in no doubt. Following the settlement of the 1955/56 Defence Estimates the Chiefs of Staff concluded that:

> Cuts of the nature suggested and on the time scale proposed would reduce the seagoing fleet of the Navy by over one-third, and would cut our dwindling Reserve Fleet by about a half. The new construction programme would be so small that no ship larger than a Destroyer could be laid down in the foreseeable future and our fighting power would diminish as the large vessels remaining from the last war pass out of service in the next few years. This would in turn reduce us from being a worldwide Navy, which has for many centuries served to link together the countries of the Commonwealth, to what could only be called a continental Navy with a correspondingly limited role…Reductions of the nature proposed could lead to only one conclusion, namely that we no longer have confidence in the ability of naval power to play its part in the defence of this country and the Commonwealth.[7]

The proposed cuts did not immediately bring about the expected diminution of the Royal Navy's global role. Indeed, as Grove pointed out

'The navy had cause to be grateful for the political pressure to get rid of a reserve that was becoming a useless encumbrance'.[8]

The Statement on Defence of 1956 stated 'The cold war is the most immediate threat. The Navy is able to play an important part in upholding our interests and influence in peacetime in distant parts of the world'.[9] The task before the Admiralty was to reduce those forces primarily intended for global war and to re-allocate the resources to mobile Cold War and limited war forces.[10] As such a new construction programme was approved with the aim of providing forces for cold and limited war, with global war relegated to third priority. Nevertheless, Vote A plans for the Royal Navy manpower were to be 116,500 by 1 April 1957, a reduction from 122,500 in 1956 to 128,400 in 1955.[11] More disquiet on the part of the Admiralty was evident at the beginning of 1957:

> The Board of the Admiralty have, for some time, viewed with disquiet the dwindling size of the fleet and have taken vigorous steps…to reduce the shore backing, in order to maintain the sea-going fleet at its best possible strength. A recent reappraisal of the Russian submarine threat has thrown into relief the inadequacy of our existing Fleet, which under the proposals now being examined must be reduced still further, and reduced well below any level which previously the Board of the Admiralty have considered anything like adequate to meet the responsibilities which they conceive to be theirs.[12]

The Minister of Defence proposed to cut RN manpower to 80,000.[13] The Admiralty Board were extremely concerned with the planned reductions stating that:

> For the past decade the Navy had been steadily whittled away and earlier exercises in current defence review had envisaged further cuts involving serious risks. Nevertheless, even the most drastic (the 90,000 manpower ceiling plan Board Memorandum B.1126) had preserved some possibility that, with good fortune and a sizeable new construction programme, the Navy of the future would be capable of playing a sufficient part to ward off a catastrophic decline in the influence of the United Kingdom in naval affairs. A further cut in manpower of the order suggested by the Minister of Defence would, however, certainly go beyond the critical point.[14]

It was stated that under the proposed diminution, the service would be incapable of a limited operation such as MUSKETEER (the invasion of the Suez Canal zone), and the effect on the NATO alliance might be fatal since the UK was the lynchpin of the European naval effort in the alliance. The Minister of Defence Duncan Sandys' White Paper of April 1957 fully embraced the strategy of nuclear deterrent, imposing cuts on the Royal Navy for economic reasons, however, the importance of limited war did prove a justification for the retention of British aircraft carriers, thought to be useful in any future conflict in the Far East. It was this theatre of operations that impacted the RAN the most.

The size of Far East naval resources fluctuated in the post-war period. In mid-1956 naval forces in the Far East consisted of two cruisers, five destroyers and five frigates. It was necessary to augment this force with the addition of a task group based at Singapore. While the ideal composition of this force was far beyond the Admiralty's means, both in money and manpower, it was estimated that the necessary tasks of cold war policing, and holding the line in any limited war, could be carried out by the addition of one light fleet carrier, four destroyers, one landing ship and one cruiser.[15] In early 1957, it was proposed that the Far East Fleet should be reduced to a squadron of one cruiser, four destroyers, and four frigates. The naval base at Singapore was crucial to this force. The Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff doubted that the carrier task force east of Suez could spend any appreciable time in the Far East unless the base facilities at Singapore were maintained.[16] Military forces in the Far East were particularly vulnerable to reduction. In assessing the commitments to be cut if the total manpower of the armed services was to be reduced to 370,000, it was suggested that 'from the military point of view the simplest commitment to shed would be the Far East. However in view of the great importance of Malaya to the sterling area, it is not practicable to remove all our forces from the Far East'.[17] Lord Mountbatten stated that from the naval point of view, the difference between armed forces of 450,000 and those of 370,000 were that in the former the Royal Navy would retain an effective squadron in the Far East.[18] In the latter, it would not.

The Admiralty was convinced about the importance of the Far East as a theatre of likely conflict and stressed that 'Even if there are no "local hot wars" in the Far East this Station is likely to be troubled and unsettled for many years whilst Communist China seeks to emulate Soviet Russia by building a belt of satellites around its border. The purely British interests in Malaya, Borneo and Hong Kong therefore

make it necessary for a naval squadron in the Far East'.[19] In addition, the British had ongoing commitments through her strategic alliances such as ANZAM and SEATO to maintain maritime forces in the region. Nonetheless, they recognised that 'the Commonwealth countries which are most affected are Australia, New Zealand, India and to a lesser extent Pakistan and Ceylon'. As such 'Our policy should therefore be firmly directed at persuading these Commonwealth countries, together with the independent powers in South-East Asia, to provide, with the United States, the main deterrent to further communist aggression in this area, and major forces in any local hot war which may develop, whilst our own naval squadron is kept as small as possible'.

Even before the reductions of later years, the Far East Fleet was stretched with one former Commander stating 'I was next made a Commodore 1st Class…and appointed Chief of Staff Far East Station, based on Singapore. The work was intensely interesting, our parish extending from Japan to Australasia, the Pacific to the Indian Ocean, the Gulf, Suez Canal and East Africa. To cover this enormous area we had an aircraft carrier, two cruisers, a flotilla of destroyers and one of frigates, and a few submarines'.[20] The Admiralty was clear on the benefits of an effective fighting force to Commonwealth relations, 'If we are to continue to contribute to the deterrent and have an effective say in naval policy in peace, both within the Commonwealth and NATO, we should aim at deploying a navy which is as modern and effective as we can make it'.[21] The Admiralty was equally aware of the dangers of a decline in influence on its naval partners such as the RAN. Following the planned defence cuts in 1955, the Admiralty stated that 'The effect of the reductions in the fleet necessary under the Minister's long-term proposals should be brought out, not only in relation to the continued vitality of NATO, but also in relation to the ANZAM area and the Commonwealth generally'.[22] Of the proposed reductions of early 1957, the Admiralty stated that there were 'other implications no less serious consequent upon the reduction of the Fleet and the closing and reduction of overseas bases, which must affect our relations with the Commonwealth and foreign powers, particularly those with whom we are in alliance'.[23] In the 'Role of the Navy' of mid-1957, it was asserted that the defence of the UK rested on a dual deterrent of the nuclear power of the Western Allies, and the political and military cohesion of NATO.[24] Defence of UK interests worldwide depended on NATO above all, but SEATO and the Baghdad Pact as well. One aspect of the Navy's role in

the defence of these interests, as well as the support of NATO, SEATO and the Baghdad Pact, was to provide and reinforce the naval resources required for colonial policing: 'If Her Majesty's Government is prepared to see our Colonies and our dependencies disappear, these [forces] do not matter'.[25] This all seems like a depressing tale of continuous British naval degradation but the need for the defence of the commonwealth remained. An idea that received some British support was that of an integrated Commonwealth Eastern Fleet, a force that was meant to 'do more with less'.

In 1959, the Admiralty Plans Division considered the formation of a 'Commonwealth Eastern Fleet' composed of units of the Royal Navy, the RAN and the Royal New Zealand Navy. Benefits of such a fleet were thought to be 'making the best possible use of our available resources'.[26] The question of an integrated fleet was tied into the recognition that the RAN could not practically continue to operate as a single carrier force. The investigation remarked that 'on its present Vote the RAN is crippling itself for the sake of one Aircraft Carrier, together with all the consequent overheads'. The future of the RAN, and in particular the Australian Fleet Air Arm, was thought by the Admiralty to be 'an immense question'.[27] The Admiralty, however, were in an unenviable position when proffering advice on the Australian FAA:

> We encouraged and helped finance the development of the RAN's FAA after World War II. It is therefore not easy for us to advise that in a matter of ten years naval air has become too expensive a luxury for the RAN and they should abandon it with the concomitant sacrifice of all the ground support and trained personnel that go with it.[28]

Although the detailed working of such a plan required further study it was proposed that a practical answer might be based around the abolition of the Australian Fleet Air Arm, with the RAN concentrating on escorts such as the *Darings, Battle*s and *Type 12* frigates. The additional Australian escorts would enable the Royal Navy to pay off eight British escorts allowing the Royal Navy to man an extra aircraft carrier and carrier air-group and rotate two carriers east of Suez instead of one.[29]

It was somewhat understatedly admitted that 'to achieve any successful solution on these lines we would have to overcome a number of political and national difficulties'.[30] It was also thought that the:

> Commonwealth Eastern Fleet would have to work as one Fleet and not as a Fleet made up of three separate Navies. It would need ONE C. in C., separate to the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board, 2 Flag Officers at sea and probably one Flag Officer ashore in Singapore.[31]

Even though there were formidable difficulties to be met in dealing with the political objections of a 'Commonwealth Naval Force', it was thought that it would be prudent to have 'a military proposition in mind' prior to airing 'this subject in a positive manner to a wider circle'.[32] Prior to RAN Vice Admiral Burrell's 1960 fact-finding visit to the UK it was suggested that:

> It is inferred from correspondence that has already passed that Admiral Burrell, while keen to retain his FAA is already doubtful whether it is going to be practical to do so. He also seems to think that if the FAA has to be abandoned, the right replacement for it is a combination of escorts and submarines. The correct approach therefore seems to be to show every sympathy with his FAA ambitions but to let it become obvious during the course of discussions that really they are impractical…On that basis the encouragement of the RAN towards a Navy comprising mainly escorts and submarines should be an easy step which would fit in admirably with D of P's long term proposals.[33]

It was also suggested that 'the concept of an integrated Commonwealth Fleet ought to be put tentatively and informally to Admiral Burrell… as the ideal long term objective'. Even so, the difficulties surrounding a 'Commonwealth Fleet' were plain. Military forces are the instruments of political policy, and an integrated navy could not exist in a vacuum. The political interests of Australia and the UK were divergent. As the Admiralty itself questioned 'could the RAN be expected to integrate with a RN force most of which remained declared to NATO in global war'. The answer, in hindsight, appears an obvious no it could not. Nonetheless, it was viewed that:

> When the naval problem in the Far East is viewed in the broadest terms the need for some measure of integration with our Commonwealth allies is so apparent that it is not unreasonable to take the line that these problems, formidable though they may be, simply must be solved if the Commonwealth is to remain a global political and military force.[34]

Plans for an integrated naval force were resisted in British political circles. In early September 1959, the Commonwealth Relations Office made plain its displeasure on the proposals to advocate an integrated 'Commonwealth Navy' to the Australian CNS: 'My understanding is that the recommendations of the Australian Chiefs of Staff on defence policy…are for self sufficiency'.[35] The Admiralty confirmed that the draft brief represented purely naval staff thinking and it had not been endorsed by the Board of the Admiralty let alone received outside political approval.[36] The Commonwealth Relations Office accepted that there was no intention of formally advocating the formation of an integrated Eastern Commonwealth Fleet.[37]

In an updated version of the 'Future of the Royal Australian Navy' brief for Burrell's visit it was suggested that:

> It has been known for some time that the Australian Government would be strongly opposed to any such integration because of its effect on ANZUS and because they want to be independent. In these circumstances, no formal proposal can be made to Admiral Burrell for consideration of an integrated Commonwealth Fleet.[38]

This was an admission that Australian strategic interests would not accommodate an integrated fleet, something that was not overtly stated in the draft version of the document. The final version of the document was even more succinct about the possibility of an integrated fleet:

> It is concluded that, even though a fully integrated RN/RAN/RNZN fleet may at best be a distant aim, or at worst unattainable in full measure, nevertheless the pursuit of progressively closer co-operation between these Navies is a realistic-perhaps the only realistic-policy; and that it should provide the background to the discussions with Admiral Burrell.[39]

During the meeting of 13 January 1960 between Burrell and the First Sea Lord, the latter stated that he was not surprised to hear that the RAN were having difficulties in planning balanced forces, as the UK was faced with precisely the same difficulties.[40] The First Sea Lord suggested that from a military standpoint the only feasible answer was 'the kind of integration which NATO aimed at on the organisation of its air forces. Unfortunately the political difficulties in the way of complete integration, even within the Commonwealth, were formidable and in his view

'probably made this concept impractical.'[41] The First Sea Lord did think that there were certain fields where some measure of integration between the RAN, the Royal Navy and possibly the Royal New Zealand Navy was feasible, namely minesweeping. Burrell made no comment on the likelihood of an integrated fleet, or on the practicality of a joint RN-RAN minesweeping force. The First Sea Lord later repeated his suggestion that:

> Mine clearance was one field in which a worthwhile measure of co-operation…might very well be possible. Minesweeping was a non-aggressive-almost humanitarian- operation and therefore the political difficulties which attached to other aspects of co-operation did not exist here…it would be well worthwhile to examine the possibility of a combined RN/RAN/RNZN mine clearance effort for the whole of the area East of Suez.[42]

Burrell repeated that his immediate objective was to test his plan for buying six coastal minesweepers in the UK and building six inshore minesweepers in Australia. Neither the subject of an integrated fleet or a joint minesweeping force was discussed during the subsequent meeting between Burrell and the Admiralty.[43]

The subject of an integrated Commonwealth Fleet is instructive in a number of ways. Firstly, the Admiralty was aware of the diminishing resources of both the Royal Navy and the RAN. There was a measure of pragmatism on the part of the Admiralty in recognising that the RAN could not afford a Fleet Air Arm, but to suggest so would have been problematic due to the great assistance provided by the Admiralty in the creation of the Australian FAA. A shift in RAN naval emphasis from a balanced fleet including naval aviation, to a force mainly composed of escorts and submarines, would have enabled the Royal Navy to reduce its escort force and increase its carrier force, if the concept of a 'Commonwealth Eastern Fleet' was accepted. This would only have been possible if the political will for such a force was present. This was not the case however, either from an Australian strategic point of view, or from an Australian naval position. One proposal that did yield a greater level of inter-service co-operation was the idea of basing British naval forces in Australia.

The suggestion that the Royal Navy may have utilised Australian bases following the loss of the use of Singapore is important when considering the impact of dwindling British naval resources on Anglo-Australian

naval relations. The notion of using Australia as the 'solid background' for fleet operations and resources was not a new one, being proposed by First Sea Lord Sir Andrew Cunningham soon after the Second World War.[44] Indeed, crucial to the mobility of the Imperial Fleet was the existence of a global system of bases from which the fleet could operate. Such bases should be situated in a rear area reasonably free from enemy attack, backed by a developed industry and if possible [possess] a white population. Australia was thought of as a prime candidate such a base.[45] In late 1954, the British Vice Chief of the Naval Staff (VCNS) Admiral Sir William Wellclose Davis suggested that the north-west of Australia be utilised as an alternative to Singapore; 'There was little support in the Admiralty or elsewhere…'[46] His proposed motive was to join the three navies of the UK, Australia and New Zealand into a single force keeping the peace in the Far East, an idea that was probably far too visionary 'but I felt these countries might be ill-advised to rely so wholly on American power to defend them from invasions from the heavily populated areas of Asia'.

In 1956, the Admiralty was asked to provide advice on a number of issues by the Australian First Naval Member, including Admiralty plans for a naval base in South East Asia if Singapore was to become 'insecure or untenable for political reasons'.[47] The Admiralty response was that 'there is too much alarmist talk of the ultimate inevitability of our being forced to seek an alternative base to Singapore. The truth of the matter is that there is no alternative to Singapore of anything like comparable worth and consequently we must not waver in our determination to remain there'.[48] During the First Sea Lord's tour of Australia, in reply to attempts to interest him in Cockburn Sound near Fremantle, on the west coast of Australia as a base for the Royal Navy, he suggested that it should be developed by the RAN.[49] Nevertheless, there were some who suggested that the most obvious solution to the problem of the paradox of Britain wishing to disengage militarily in South East Asia, while still intending to contribute to Australia's defence, would be a shift in emphasis from Singapore to Cockburn Sound.[50]

In early 1961, the Admiralty were invited by the Minister of Defence to put forward plans for the long-term naval programme showing the shape of the Fleet, for the next decade, under three scenarios, one of which was continuing to play a major role east of Suez, with no base except in Australia.[51] The presentation took place on 17 May 1961 and the Minister of Defence directed that a preliminary study be carried

out to examine how best a worthwhile military force could be deployed under such a scenario. Lord Mountbatten stated that according to Athol Townley, the Australian Minister of Defence, the present Australian government would gladly allow the British to set up fresh installations, however, a different (Labour) government would not be so accommodating. As such, great importance was placed on an early official approach to the present government before the next general election to be held in 1961.[52] Mountbatten later urged caution, however:

> We see danger in pressing on too fast, for although our future security of tenure in Singapore may be in doubt, we have no intention of leaving the base until we are forced to do so. If we discuss alternatives to Singapore, we might not only create a false impression as to our real desires, but might also prematurely set in motion the very thing which we wish to avoid. Accordingly, the timing of any submission to the Australian Government will need careful consideration.[53]

The Defence Minister Harold Watkinson agreed: 'We shall have to play this slowly until we are through our other difficulties'.[54] Speculation on the possibility of alternative bases in Australia was again revived when Watkinson visited Australia in March 1962. Cockburn Sound was thought of as the best location for a naval base, and the British Chiefs of Staff drew up a list of requirements including a suitable fleet anchorage and the use of emergency naval repair facilities.[55] It was decided not to press forward with the issue due to a review of defence strategy, the risk of prejudicing the continued use of Singapore and the possibility of discouraging the Australians from spending money in Malaya. The First Sea Lord tentatively raised the issue during a later visit to Canberra but was told the Australians expected the initiative to come from the British. The British were indeed soon assessing how best to provide protection to her strategic interests in the Far East if Singapore was no longer available to them: 'If we should lose our facilities in Malaysia, Australasia would be compelled to rely on close defence, to which we should contribute, using facilities in Australia'.[56]

In mid-1964, the British feared that 'Malaysia must have reservations about the existence of foreign bases on their soil…We would therefore be wise to start to plan now for the ultimate handing over to Malaysian control of the base facilities we now enjoy'.[57] It was concluded that however long the British wanted to stay in Singapore, the Malaysians were

bound, sooner or later, to ask them to go. This should be accepted 'as an inevitable historical development' and once the Malaysians had accepted the principle of self-defence, the UK should take the initiative about an alternative base. The necessity of an alternative base was still viewed as crucial: 'It was most important that the Prime Ministers of Australia and New Zealand should appreciate that even if we eventually had to leave Singapore we had no intention of abandoning Australasian interests'.[58] It was argued that once out of Singapore, the UK could react in SE Asia at Brigade group strength 'more cheaply and more quickly than from Australia'.[59] Even so, 'in the circumstances postulated, the close defence of Australasia would become our immediate preoccupation and this would demand base facilities…' The British appeared extremely keen on alternative facilities. In mid-1964, the British Naval Chief of Staff bemoaned 'the unsuccessful efforts that have been made in the last three years to get down to brass tacks on discussions with the Australians about a base in their country'.[60] The issue of a base in Australia had, since 1962, been left to the Australians to raise and Mountbatten intended to discuss it when he visited Australia in February 1965.[61]

The proposed naval facilities in Australia were generally tied to a continuation of the defence of Australasia after the withdrawal, on political grounds, from Singapore. A part of this overall strategy was the defence obligations the British felt they still owed to the Commonwealth and particularly to the defence of Australia and New Zealand.[62] In mid-1964 the British Naval Chief of Staff asked 'What sort of forces are we likely to have to provide for the defence of Australasia and for the commitments in South Asia we may have to meet in the period after our withdrawal from Malaysian soil?'[63] It was suggested that 'it would hardly be sensible to envisage a [new] UK base in Western Australia as an alternative [to Singapore]…a base in Western Australia should be an Australian base' and incorporate facilities that the UK could share for mutual advantage.[64] The British feared that once forced, and withdrawal from Singapore commenced it would snowball into a rush; at all costs they wanted to avoid 'being ejected like scalded cats' out of Singapore into 'corrugated iron shacks in the bush'.[65] In October/November 1964 a small team of naval experts visited Australia to explore the prospects of the possible use by the Royal Navy of facilities in Australia.

Australian bases for British forces were also discussed during the ANZAM Defence Committee meeting of early March 1965. The subject was not mentioned in the Minutes of the meeting but a record of

the discussions was kept.[66] According to the British Chief of the Defence Staff, the main reason that previous discussions [in 1962] of British bases on Australian soil was never resolved 'was because it had been agreed that if the news ever leaked that consideration was being given to the establishment of an alternative base [to Singapore] in this part of the world [Australia] the alternative would develop into policy'.[67] On the conclusion of these talks, it was agreed that both the Australian and British Chiefs of Staff would consider the issue, so that further possibilities may be examined such as the UK supplying an outline of the size and types of forces they might desire to base in Australia; Australia could then examine the possibility of fulfilling these requirements. Soon after, the Australian military confirmed that it would be of great assistance to them when considering their long-term plans to have some idea of possible UK requirements in Australia. These requirements included the possibility of naval facilities. Such indications, however, could not be given until the Defence Review was completed, and the Government's long-term policy was clearer.

British defence cuts were making any long-term commitment to the region increasingly less likely. In mid-1965 it was reported that at £301,000,000, British military expenditure abroad accounted for three-eighths of the previous year's balance of payments deficit. Nearly all of the money was spent in three main theatres; the maintenance of a British presence east of Suez took 38%, British forces in Europe took 33.3%, and British bases in the Mediterranean, (whose chief purpose at the time was to maintain communications with the forces east of Suez) took 14%. The Government at the time was determined to reduce the amount by £50,000,000 or £100,000,000, a cut of between 16 and 33%. Even so tentative plans for utilisation of a base in Australia continued. In late 1965, the British Chiefs of Staff considered a report on the implications, the means and the costs of a phased redeployment to Australia.[68] The study was not a complete analysis of the problem owing to the inability of opening serious discussions with the Australians. Even so, the assessment was remarkable considering the assumed amount of naval power ultimately to be based in Australia. In terms of major operational units this would be:

1 Strike Carrier
2 Commando Ships/Landing Ships Assault (LSA)
1 Cruiser

2 Guided Missile Destroyers (GMD)
10 Escorts
6 Submarines
12 Mine Counter Measure Ships

This was a sizeable portion of the British Fleet, at a time where the service was under intense pressure to make reductions in running costs wherever possible. Opinions differed about whether further preparations should be put on hold until the ministers had cleared their minds on the politico-military situation in the Far East.

A level of pragmatism on the part of Australia was in evidence in the discussions over the possibility of British forces in Australia. The USA opposed contingency planning against the forced withdrawal of British forces from Singapore on the grounds that if it became known that the UK was seriously considering alternatives the western position there would be gravely weakened. Australia understood this view but agreed to, and carried out such planning because of their doubts about the long-term British presence in Malaysia/Singapore:

> In our view the preparation of contingency plans would help to convince the United Kingdom that we understand their problems and are willing to assist them and would be part of the price of persuading the United Kingdom to hold on in Malaysia/Singapore as long as possible.[69]

Planning for an extension of bases was necessary in any case. If British forces were forced to leave Singapore and adhered to their stated intentions of leaving forces in the region, facilities in Australia would be required. If the British withdrew all forces from South East Asia and the Australasian region, then additional facilities would be needed in Australia to support any expansion of Australian forces.

> Any extension of base facilities in Australia should be carried out as part of Australia's planned defence development of its forces and done in such a way that it cannot be related publicly to alternative deployment from bases in Singapore/Malaysia. It is emphasised that the development of additional facilities in Australia which could be used by United Kingdom forces is not considered to provide a satisfactory alternative to the maintenance by the United Kingdom…of a physical presence in Singapore/Malaysia for as long as possible.[70]

This was at a time when Australia was very much aware of the necessity 'to look ultimately to the United States for backing and support in situations which might develop'.[71] Nevertheless, the Australian Air Chief Marshal Sir Frederick Scherger maintained that 'the Indian Ocean area should continue to be under British influence and not become another American lake'.[72]

In 1966, the First Sea Lord was extremely concerned about the Navy's ability to play its part east of Suez. The 1966 Defence Review's biggest cuts had fallen on the Navy and apart from the carrier force, the loss of 16 frigates and nearly half the minesweeper force would come as a profound shock to the Fleet. 'In the Indo-Pacific area where our forces would be operating on the periphery of land masses and would have to be supported over vast areas of sea there was a clear case for maintaining our maritime forces…'[73] The First Sea Lord pointed out to the Secretary of State that the planned phase-out of carriers in the mid-1970s not only meant that Her Majesty's Government openly accepted the political and military restrictions resulting from their loss but was also dependant on giving up a number of commitments. There was, however, no certainty that it would, in fact, be possible to disengage. He pointed out that 'During his recent tour the Secretary of State had been reported as stating that we intended to remain a world power with substantial forces in the Far East and to stay in Singapore as long as possible'.[74]

The Secretary of State responded that due to the impossibility of basing sizeable land forces in Australia, British policy would be to stay in Singapore and Malaysia as long as we could. If this proved impossible because of political pressures in those countries, the only alternative would be to send the bulk of our forces home and our responsibilities would have to shrink accordingly. There were clear levels of disquiet within British naval circles at the time:

> It would be wrong to pretend that the outcome of the Defence Review was not a severe blow to the Navy presaging as it did the end of its aircraft carriers…There is no requirement within our present defence policy to support the Army from carriers in the European theatre, except conceivably on the flanks; the need for carriers has therefore rested in recent years almost entirely on the maintenance of a strong British military presence 'East of Suez'; and thus ultimately the case for a new generation of carriers has depended on the length of time we would wish to continue to play a world wide role. The Government has now decided to leave Aden [in]

> 1966/68 and to reduce our commitments in the Far East when confrontation ends and when it can be done with honour.[75]

Even so, discussions still took place on basing UK forces in Australia.

In early 1966, an initial meeting was held between the British Chief of the Defence Staff, Sir Richard Hull, and the Australian Chiefs of Staff on the problems associated with deploying UK forces in Australia.[76] In announcing the talks, the Australian Prime Minister said the study 'was exploratory and without commitment by Britain or Australia'.[77] The Australian CNS said that facilities were expected to be available at Cockburn Sound in the early 1970s, even though Ministerial approval had yet to be given for any such project. The possibility of British facilities to replace those in Malaysia and Singapore was stated in the Defence Estimates of 1966. Following the initial meeting, Hull feared excessive pressure could prove counter-productive and make the Australians reluctant to take part due to the impression of having British plans forced upon them. Others stressed that further discussions should take place as soon as possible 'to maintain momentum and to impress upon the Australians that we mean business'.[78] Extensive planning on the possibility for a 'Tri-Service' UK base on Australian soil followed the Minister of Defence's visit of early 1966 to Australia.[79] At this time it was noted that Australian planning for a naval base in Western Australia had already reached a stage where a Naval Staff Requirement had been produced, however it was found to be possible to incorporate the Royal Navy requirements into a revised document. For planning purposes it was assumed that the timescale for the deployment for British forces would be 1975, and that the maximum Royal Navy force would be:

1 Commando Ship
1 Landing Ship Assault
1 or 2 Cruisers
4 GMD Type 82 Destroyers
8 other Destroyers/Frigates
4 Nuclear Submarines (SSN)
2 Conventional Submarines
2 Escort Maintenance Ships
1 Submarine Depot Ship
1 Minesweeper Support Ship
11 Royal Fleet Auxiliaries

It was stressed that not more than 50% of this force would be in any one Australian base at any one time. Even so, this was a sizeable naval force, especially when compared with the overall size of the RAN. In addition, it was only envisaged that the base would accommodate a modest RAN force: 4 escorts, either Guided Missile Destroyers (DDGs), *Type 12* Destroyer Escorts or modernised *Daring*s and 3 *Oberon* class submarines.[80] A maritime airfield and facilities for a British amphibious Brigade were also envisaged. Thus, on these plans, the forces of the Royal Navy would have dwarfed those of the indigenous service.

Initially, the Australian political will for British forces based in Australia was lacking: 'Australia's defence policy has for a number of years been based on a forward defence strategy to hold South East Asia thus providing depth for the defence of the Australian mainland and its island territories'.[81] Although the viability of this policy depended primarily on American support in South East Asia, 'the continued presence of British forces and particularly the availability of bases in Singapore/Malaysia for the use by forces of the ANZAM countries are most important elements of the policy'.[82] The Australian cabinet endorsed the view of the Defence Committee in late 1965 that the centre of possible general war had moved from Europe to Asia due to the emergence of China, a nation that will probably present the main political and military problems for the world in the next few decades. As such Australia believed that the maintenance by Britain of an adequate presence in Asia, if necessary at the cost of reducing her commitments in Europe, would constitute the most effective use of their forces in allied global strategy.

It was assessed that 'Any tendency by the United Kingdom to accept the view that 1970 is a date beyond which the United Kingdom forces are not likely to be in Singapore/Malaysia would be contrary to Australian interests and should be countered'.[83] 'In our view the development of a new system of bases in Australia would be no adequate substitute for the present British Defence structure in the region'[84] as these would not be in accordance with the forward defence policy of Australia. Even so 'the implications of proposals for basing major British units in Australia…and the nature of the facilities they would need require close examination'.[85] The Chairman of the Australian Chiefs of Staff Committee doubted the purpose of any British land forces stationed in Australia and had 'no doubt we would not accept Ghurka troops in Australia'.[86] As for the RAF 'there appears nothing to be gained by having units stationed here', however 'a British naval force based in Australia

and operating in the Indian Ocean would be a most valuable contribution to the security of our sea communications in that area…'[87] An Australian Navy Department single-service paper made plain that a UK sovereign rights type of base in Australia would be 'nationally unpalatable'.[88] Australian misgivings included suggestions that Australia bear all capital costs and doubts on how long any British forces stationed in Australia would remain.

In mid-1966, a joint Royal Australian Navy/Royal Navy working party examined the physical possibilities and limitations involved in providing the required amenities and agreed that the facilities of the proposed base must be integrated for use by both the Royal Navy and RAN on a common user basis, and concluded that 'providing the necessary finance is available, there should be no difficulty in providing the necessary facilities for the Royal Navy force by 1975'.[89] A proposed amended Reference for the civil engineers tasked with the feasibility study of the base was drafted, incorporating RN requirements. The logical sequence of events was seen as construction of the base to accommodate RAN requirements, with an option to expand the base if and when the British could no longer be accommodated at Singapore. In 1967 discussions were still taking place between the UK and Australia as Britain planned 'to withdraw altogether from our bases in Singapore and Malaysia in the middle 1970s'.[90] It was felt by the British Chiefs of Staff Committee that it was important to have a clear definition of the role to be played by any forces based in Australia. There appeared to be political benefits for the proposed forces as they were 'not required exclusively to support the UK national interest, but as clear evidence that we were not intending to abandon our interest in the theatre after we left the mainland of Asia'.[91] Even so, the British were wary that once a firm approach had been made to Australia 'we would have difficulty if, at a later date, we wished to withdraw the offer'. Even though the Australians would look more to the USA than to the UK for assistance in defence in an emergency, the Australians 'would…regard our presence in that theatre, however small it might be, as a means of ensuring that the US government continued to maintain a presence in the Far East'.[92]

In 1969, the Australian Government approved a 'modest' naval facility in Cockburn Sound. There was disagreement on the British side about whether any financial assistance could or should be given towards the construction of the naval base. The Defence Secretary, Lord Carrington, made clear during a visit to Australia in July 1970 that there could be no

question of UK financial involvement. Ministry of Defence advice was given as 'to approach with care any suggestion to the Australians that we might want them to design their own facilities along lines particularly geared to suit our own requirements, if the implication was that we might be expected to make any financial contribution to the new base'.[93] There was, however, a suggestion that a material contribution, such as surplus facilities, perhaps 'a small floating dock, going spare as a result of our partial run down in Singapore' could be offered as a means of ensuring minimal charges for the use of the facilities.[94] The reluctance of the British to make any great contribution to the base was reiterated by the British Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in January 1971, although he did suggest that if the British were to make some use of the base after 1975, a small contribution might be considered. The Ministry of Defence was 'not very sanguine about being able to offer anything about which the Australians would be enthusiastic'.[95] The British High Commissioner, in contrast, hoped that 'it will be possible for us to consider some contribution in kind at least to this work'.[96] This attitude was in stark contrast with the co-operation surrounding the naval joint working party of 1966. During the earlier discussions, the question of costs was left to one side.[97] By this time the Australians did see benefits in inviting the British to utilise the naval base.

In mid-1970, the Australian Minister for Defence, Malcolm Fraser, stated that the British would be welcome to use the facilities without contributing to the capital cost of the base. At this time questions from Australian media continued to be directed at finding out the degree of Admiralty interest in the project, 'the feeling being that without interest outside Australia, the necessary Federal backing would not be forthcoming'.[98] It was later suggested that Royal Naval advice would be welcomed, especially in regard to certain areas in which Royal Naval requirements might differ from those of the RAN. The UK Chief of the Defence Staff suggested that the presence of a well-designed base would ease future Royal Naval operations in the area, therefore British advice should be willingly given, although this would not imply any commitment to particular use of the base in future or any future financial support. He also welcomed the 'opportunity this would afford for further co-operation between our two Navies'.[99] The British Defence Secretary welcomed the intention to establish the base and stated that the Royal Navy looked forward to making occasional use of it. The British later noted that the new naval facilities being developed on the west coast of

Australia may prove useful in deterring an increase of Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean.[100]

British strategic decisions were extremely unpopular in Australian political circles. On receiving the news of the acceleration of the British withdrawal from the Far East, the Australian Prime Minister was 'dismayed that such large decisions should be…made for comparatively small savings'.[101] The Minister of External Affairs observed that the 'new policy would reduce Britain to a status a little less than Italy and a little more than Sweden', while the Trade Minister bitterly observed that in the past Australian troops had arrived 'in Belgium, Gallipoli and Greece without question…'[102] Even so, there appeared to be political advantages for the Australian government in being able to tie British approval, and the Royal Navy's use of the base, when announcing the decision to proceed with the project. The timing of the announcement was 'clearly geared to the internal politics of the forthcoming senate election'.[103] Indeed John Gorton, the Australian Prime Minister had promised in the previous national election that the planned development of a naval base at Cockburn Sound would commence. This did not detract from the main aim of the base especially as far as Australia was concerned; the Australian government attached great importance to the base due to the UK's proposed withdrawal and because of the RAN's reliance upon ports in eastern Australia.[104] There were clear advantages for Australia to have the British involved in the base at Cockburn Sound:

> The point so far as Australia is concerned is that we need major docking facilities on the west coast regardless of what happens in Singapore. If we can engage British interest in helping us construct them, so much the better…The ties of kin and Commonwealth, so easily scoffed at these days, still suggest a vital concern by Australia and Britain in each others security…[105]

An editorial of the *Sydney Morning Herald* succinctly summed up Australia's interest in the British withdrawal from east of Suez, and the potential impact of the new naval facilities:

> The type of British regional commitment in which Australia has a particular interest, is not ground or air, but naval. This is the area in which Australia is weakest and in which she is least able to meet satisfactorily the broader demands of regional security. In the context of the mounting

> Russian interest in the Indian Ocean it was the prospect of the withdrawal of British naval power which was the most dismaying feature of the Wilson government's East-of-Suez policy. It is up to Australia now to press for the maximum British naval presence…Canberra could encourage such a response by a sharp acceleration of construction programmes at Cockburn Sound, an acceleration which Britain is known to consider both necessary and possible. The present approach to the projected new base is ridiculously dilatory.[106]

An Australian Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs Report concluded:

> That the naval facilities at Cockburn Sound in Western Australia should be established and become operational as soon as possible for the protection of Australia's west…that the facilities at Cockburn Sound should be made available to friendly powers under mutually agreed arrangements…that the practicability of the permanent stationing of units of the Australian navy at Cockburn Sound should be considered as of the utmost importance… [and] that Australia should seek to achieve reciprocal naval and air access to Indian Ocean island staging areas now in control of Britain.[107]

On 28 July 1978, HMAS *Stirling* was commissioned as a forward support base. On 19 April 1976, the USS *Oklahoma City* became the first foreign warship to visit the Western Australian Naval Support Facility.[108] The fact that this was an American vessel was perhaps a stark illustration of the impact of dwindling British naval influence in the Asia/Pacific Ocean/Indian Ocean regions.

The discussions over a possible Royal Navy base in Australia are instructive when considering the strategic challenges faced by the UK in the post-war era. The British wished to retain the use of Singapore for as long as possible. If this was no longer feasible due to political pressure, then alternative naval facilities would have to be found. This would have been even more likely if hostilities with Indonesia ceased: 'it is not the present Indonesian policy of confrontation that would render the render the tenure of our main and forward bases uncertain but the situation that could arise in the period following an acceptable solution to confrontation'.[109] Australia, however, questioned whether an end to confrontation would bring a 'halcyon age' as regards to Indonesia.[110] An important aspect of the need for alternative arrangements was the perception that Britain had ongoing commitments to the region: 'However strong the arguments may be…that our duty to the weaker

members of the Commonwealth must diminish as members achieve full independence and become strong, and that in the post-colonial phase we may well invest less in the East than we do now, the need to stand by Australasia and our friends in South Asia will remain…'[111] The proposed naval force to be based in Australia was sizeable; however, the rundown of the Far East Fleet due to economic constraints meant no redeployment was possible. The British, nonetheless, saw potential benefits to the base due to their ongoing interests in the Indian Ocean region.

The British took a keen interest in the increase of Soviet influence in the Far East. The Commander-in-Chief of the Far East Fleet Peter Hill-Norton commented on the Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean becoming a permanent one in 1969: 'My command's watch on small Soviet fleet movements past Singapore is now a routine activity…I leave Singapore with the distinct impression of having watched a potential storm cloud grow on the horizon'.[112] In 1971, the Defence Estimates included a section on the Indian Ocean in which the British government made clear its view that:

> The growing Russian naval presence in this area of strategic importance should be regarded as a matter of concern for all neighbouring countries, as well as those countries, like Britain, who depend for their livelihood upon the trade routes which pass through the Indian Ocean…the decision to continue to deploy British naval forces and long range maritime reconnaissance aircraft in the area is an important contribution to Britain's ability to maintain vigilance in the area…[113]

The reduction of British forces in the Far East meant that the RAN would have to play an enhanced role in the region; however, the reduction of British naval power east of Suez meant there were substantially less opportunities for co-operation between the Royal Navy and the RAN. The reduced availability of British units east of Suez had a number of ramifications for the RAN: 'It is realised that the withdrawal of British forces from SE Asia will demand a major increase in the maritime forces required to protect our vital shipping trade'.[114] In addition, it was thought that the threat to Australia from Indonesia would increase, as would the threat to Indian Ocean trade routes. These increased threats would require an increase in overall naval strength and the unavailability of Singapore would mean the RAN would have to become a two-coast

navy with some forces stationed on the west coast. Alternative communications facilities would need to be constructed to compensate for the loss of Singapore, and there would need to be an increase in afloat support to allow two separate forces to operate simultaneously.

The proposed British withdrawal had great implications for the deployment of the Australian Fleet. Remarking on the Australian strategy of contributing to a deterrent to aggression in SE Asia, and to form a part of forces available for the defence of Malaysia and Singapore, the Flag Officer Commanding the Australian Fleet (FOCAF) suggested that 'after British withdrawal from the Far East in 1970, the deployment of two escorts for this purpose is unrealistic'.[115] It was suggested that a viable deterrent could only be provided by a show of force, preferably continuously, but if this was impractical, then by visits of significant numbers of ships. FOCAF considered the physical presence of two ships alone to be of only marginal deterrent value, recommended that consideration should be given to the withdrawal of RAN units from the Strategic Reserve after 1970 and that the deterrent value of their presence be replaced by annual visits of an Australian Squadron. The composition of the Squadron would depend whether the commitment to Vietnam remained in force, but in any case, the Squadron would provide far greater deterrent than two ships and would be a valuable contribution to the improvement of the Australian image in the Far East.

In response, the Director of Plans suggested that:

> From a military point of view-for the purpose of providing a deterrent and maintaining a military presence in South East Asia-the points made by FOCAF…are considered completely valid. Moreover the proposed deployments and employment of an RAN Squadron represent proper use of sea power by exploiting its inherent mobility and flexibility. However, FOCAF's proposals do not take account of the political considerations (which are unknown to FOCAF) which inhibited our reaction to the British withdrawal of Naval forces. The RAN proposals, as expressed in the current considerations on British withdrawal, have been governed by Government policy in respect of:
>
> a. the need for a continued Australian military presence in Malaysia/Singapore;
> b. the roles allocated to any forces contributing to that presence;

c. the composition of an Australian force contribution; and
d. the nature of any future agreement under which the Australian presence is maintained.

> Until Government has taken its decisions in respect of these matters it is considered that the detailed nature and scope of current considerations should not be made known officially outside Navy Office. Meanwhile, as convenient, FOCAF could be briefed unofficially on the detailed considerations.[116]

The Director of Plans proposed a reply to FOCAF stating that 'Government had not yet taken a decision in respect of the matters a. to d. but [the] decision will be governed by a number of political factors which indicate a need to maintain Australian forces continuously in the area'. It was suggested that the Director of Plans last comments be deleted as they 'touch on policy matters at present undecided. I recommend a reply to the effect that FOCAF's views have been studied with interest and will be borne in mind during the discussions which are taking place the present time'.[117] These discussions are illustrative as they make plain the fact that national policy and naval policy do not always go hand in hand and are often at odds with one another. Royal Australian Naval internal discussions on the implications of the British withdrawal are a case in point.

The British were well aware of the political and military implications of their military diminution on their relations with Australia. In late 1971, Admiral of the Fleet Peter Hill-Norton stated that 'Our basic political aim of a continuing military presence in South East Asia is to encourage the other countries to pay a larger part in deterring aggression and subversion, consistent with their national interests and their own resources'.[118] Hill-Norton had previously claimed that 'he hoped to see Australia playing a larger part consistent with her national interest in the area'.[119] Australia did take a more independent stance in the region. This was partly due to a perceived degradation of operational efficacy of ANZUK forces in the early 1970s. In 1972, the Commander of the ANZUK Force stated that 'the frequency of changes in the United Kingdom assignment of [naval] units is such that continuity of training is difficult'.[120] The RAN Director General of Operations and Plans remarked that:

> The statement in the report on effectiveness is not surprising, nor is the comment of UK national use of the facility. Operational efficiency must suffer under lack of adequate training facilities and exercises, however bearing in mind the emphasis on the political as opposed to operational role of the force, it would be unwise to spend money in providing extra facilities for an indeterminate period. Clearly the UK national cell is making the most of the facilities available at the least possible cost. On the other hand, so far, no RAN ship has reported adversely on the maintenance being provided.[121]

Even considering the diminution of available British naval resources, the Royal Navy still recognised the importance of RAN-aligned areas of interest.

After the disbandment of the Far East Fleet the Admiralty continued to take an interest in maritime issues pertinent to the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean regions. A British Chiefs of Staff Committee Memoranda of 1973 cast doubt on the theory of complete British withdrawal from the east of Suez area.[122] The aim of the study was to examine how existing British military activity in the Indian Ocean might be better co-ordinated with that of other nations in order to more effectively counterbalance the increased Soviet presence and influence in the area. The Russians were not to be allowed to think that the Nixon Doctrine and the Western preoccupation with Europe meant that the West would stand by and permit Russia to extend their influence elsewhere. Possible areas of co-ordination included maritime surveillance, ship scheduling and sharing of airfields, bases and logistical facilities. The British regretted the declining level of co-operation between the RAN and the Royal Navy: 'UK Service links with Australia…are normally very good, although it is disappointing that the recent RAN deployment into the Indian Ocean was planned without any discussion of the possibilities of co-operation with the RN'.[123] Even so, the RAN and the Royal Navy held inter-service negotiations at high levels to the end of 1975 and beyond.

In late 1973, the Royal Navy maintained destroyers and frigates east of the Cape on a rotational basis, to meet UK contributions to the Five Power Defence Arrangements and the ANZUK force, to participate in SEATO and Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) exercises, and when on passage between tasks to provide a presence in the Indian Ocean and South East Asia. It was also planned to provide additional

ships to augment this force. The first such deployment sailed in 1973 and included a nuclear submarine, a command cruiser and frigates, accompanied by Royal Fleet Auxiliaries. Joint exercises were carried out with a number of navies including the RAN. Two Fleet Tankers and one Solid Support Ship were allocated to support the force with one tanker allocated to ANZUK forces on an 80% availability basis. Even so, the withdrawal of facilities and the introduction of Group Deployment by the Royal Navy resulted in a loss of operational effectiveness; as the Commander of the ANZUK force noted in late 1974, 'The Group Deployment method of operating adopted by the Royal Navy has resulted in a very uneven workload, with barely manageable peaks during the periods when a group was in the area'.[124]

The decisions taken to withdraw from the Far East were taken due to economic pressures, as well as strategic necessity. As a former Commander-in-Chief of the Far East stated, 'The decisions of January this year-to accelerate our withdrawal from East of Suez, to leave no fixed bases other than Hong Kong behind us, and to concentrate on a European strategy, were political decisions taken against a backdrop of economic necessity'.[125] The cuts proposed by the Healey reviews of 1965–68 were only slightly reduced by the Conservative government between 1970 and 1974. A change of government in 1974 led to another defence review, the Mason review of 1974–75. The USSR and the Warsaw Pact nations were identified as the main threats to British national security. As such the review concluded that 'NATO should remain the first and overriding charge on the resources available for defence; that our commitments outside the Alliance should be reduced as far as possible to avoid overstretching our forces'.[126] The following were viewed as essential to the security of Great Britain; the UK's contribution to NATO front-line forces in Germany, anti-submarine forces in the eastern Atlantic, the UK's nuclear deterrent and home defence. The Mason defence review aimed to reduce the drain of Britain's defence from 5–6% of GNP to 4.5% over ten years. As Dorman wrote 'This allowed the government to remove the last vestiges of Britain's world-wide role by withdrawing its forces completely from the Five Power Agreement and CENTO, and dispensing with those forces earmarked for these worldwide roles'.[127] The Mason review meant the decisive abandonment of enduring deployment of British forces east of Suez. Even so, relations between the Royal Navy and the RAN continued. Examples include the late 1976 Navy to Navy talks between senior representatives

of the RN, USN, RAN and RNZN.[128] In addition, mid-1980 talks took place between Admiral Sir James Eberle, the Commander-in-Chief of the UK Fleet, and high-ranking RAN officers over subjects as diverse as Australian defence policy post-Afghanistan, UK and NATO defence policies, and strategic questions of mutual interest including new Soviet naval construction.[129]

Great Britain's post-war economy could not support the military forces necessary to police and maintain her colonies or possessions. As such the political necessity for a retreat from east of Suez would appear to be obvious.[130] The scale of the withdrawal, however, was not agreed upon, then or since by historians.[131] A reduction in naval power meant that Britain was constrained by the forces available for use in the Far East and the Pacific. The high-level strategic choices made by the UK placed a premium on the importance of NATO and European/Atlantic defence. Under post-war economic pressure Britain's NATO commitments were incompatible with her prior worldwide commitments: 'In general the provision of forces for South East Asia can be made only at the expense of our planned contribution to the [NATO] Alliance' and 'we shall need to settle the composition of our military presence in South East Asia in a way which will minimise the risk of the adverse repercussions which are certain to follow from any suspicion that our commitment to NATO and European defence was being reduced'.[132] This made the eventual withdrawal from east of Suez all but inevitable. Even so, the Admiralty co-operated with the RAN in plans for a naval base in Western Australia to replace the potential loss of Singapore as an operational base, and remained wary of the increase in Soviet maritime power in the Indian Ocean during the late 1960s, early 1970s and beyond.

Although it may be assumed that the UK and Australia always shared common threats throughout the post-war period this assumption is not so clear-cut. In 1949, the RAN viewed their only potential enemy as the USSR. The Korean War of 1950–53 made plain the non-Soviet communist threat to Western interests. Following this conflict, the Admiralty were concerned about the possibility that China would seek to match the USSR by building a ring of satellites around its border. This possibility made the employment of a British naval squadron in the Far East essential. By 1954, Australia too viewed China as the main threat to Australian interests. The strong relations between Australia and both the UK and the USA were viewed as crucial in ensuring Australian security. Even so, the policy of the UK at the time was to persuade Commonwealth

countries such as Australia, together with the independent powers in South East Asia and the USA, to provide the main deterrent to further communist aggression in the region. SEATO and the British Commonwealth FESR were additional tools to act as a warning to further communist aggression in South East Asia.

Confrontation with Indonesia in 1962–66 was presaged by Australian disquiet about the growth of Indonesian sea power, a threat that was seen as crucial to the requirement for an independent Australian submarine capability. Indonesia was only seen as a limited threat, however and by late 1965, Australia took the view that the focus of general war had moved from Europe to Asia due to the emergence of China. This was in contrast to the British strategic outlook that stressed the importance of NATO to the security of Britain. This divergence of strategic interests did not result in a complete reliance of Australia on the USA, although Great Britain and Australia clearly disagreed about the strategic importance of Vietnam. By 1969, the British were aware of the increase of Soviet influence in the Far East. Even so, a reduction in military force available to the British meant that NATO would have the majority of available naval forces allocated to it in the post-war period.

The 'East of Suez' policy resulted in a diminution of British naval power in the Far East, however the UK was conscious of the increasing Russian naval presence in the strategically important Indian Ocean. These concerns somewhat mirrored Australian concerns about the same issue. The construction of naval facilities on the west coast of Australia was intended to act as a deterrence to Soviet influence in the Indian Ocean. The Mason review of 1974–75 resulted in the decisive abandonment of permanent deployment of British forces east of Suez. Even so, relations between the Royal Navy and the RAN continued, typified by joint-exercises, and inter-service discussions on matters of strategic significance. The Admiralty was mindful of the consequences of the withdrawal from the Far East on its relations with its Commonwealth partners such as the RAN. The disbanding of the Far East Fleet meant a decline in opportunities for Australian and British forces to work alongside one another. Even so the Admiralty retained an interest in the east of Suez region throughout the 1945–75 period and beyond, albeit at a much-reduced level.

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CHAPTER 4

Operations

Operational co-operation between the Royal Navy and the RAN was in great evidence in the post-war period. This collaboration was manifest in conflicts such as the Korean War, the Malayan Emergency and confrontation with Indonesia. Assistance was given to Britain by the RAN during British testing of atomic devices in operations off the west coast of Australia in the 1950s. In addition, naval forces of both nations trained and exercised together throughout our period of interest. These exercises often took place under the aegis of strategic alliances such as SEATO and ANZUK and frequently involved fleet visits to Australia and Great Britain by ships of the other navy. Instances of these naval exercises and port visits continued to take place after the withdrawal of British forces from east of Suez. Australia was fostering closer operational links with the USA during this period, most notably during the Vietnam conflict, and the Royal Navy found itself operating more often with its NATO allies. Even so, operational co-operation between the Admiralty and the RAN took place in varying degrees between 1945–75 and beyond.

The conflict in Korea (1950–53) provided a great opportunity for the RAN and the Royal Navy to co-operate in operational matters. Forces of both navies worked with each other throughout the conflict under the banner of the United Nations, in a manner that was more or less Commonwealth in nature. Even so, the United Nations aspect of the conflict meant that the navies of both forces operated with

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non-Commonwealth naval forces, and were predominantly commanded by those of the USA. For example, all Commonwealth vessels operating off the west coast of Korea in the initial stages of the war joined Task Group 95.1, a formation of the US Navy's 7th Fleet. Grouping of Commonwealth ships together made sense as this maximised the Commonwealth naval effort as vessels of Commonwealth navies had common operating procedures and, to a lesser extent, equipment. There were issues in regards to operating procedures, especially where the Commonwealth navies differed to the USN, but overall the navies of the United Nations worked well together. Light fleet carriers of both the Royal Navy and the RAN played an important role in the war, and their commonality meant that they could be swapped for each other with no great degradation of operational effectiveness. The British and Australian naval contribution to the conflict was substantial, especially when one considers the relative size of the Royal Navy and the RAN and the operational involvement of both forces was appreciated by each other and their American ally.

The shared doctrine, operating procedures, training and equipment between British Commonwealth vessels meant that grouping them together was desirable, and ships of the Commonwealth could usually operate seamlessly with each other.[1] Australian and British ships regularly shared operational information with one another. The officers of HMAS *Bataan*, for example, were briefed on 'current operational policies and situations' before their first patrol on the west coast of Korea in 1952 by the officers of HMS *Belfast*. *Bataan*'s commanding officer also received a final briefing from HMS *Mounts Bay*'s commanding officer, Captain John Frewen.[2] Shared operating procedures were an advantage when one considers vessels of Commonwealth naval forces functioning together, but the lack of the former did not always mean that the latter could not adequately work with non-Commonwealth forces, most notably the United StatesNavy. The British Naval Staff history of the war recorded that 'it was encouraging how smoothly units of the various United Nations navies worked with each other from the start'.[3] One observer noted during the war that:

> It is a most heartening picture to see the troops and Navies of many different countries working and fighting together under one unified command,

> and this despite the diversity of languages, customs, and ways of life. As far as naval operations are concerned, very valuable experience has been gained by ships of the British Commonwealth working in the same task groups and elements as ships of the US Navy under both British and American tactical command.[4]

The commanding officer of HMAS *Bataan* reported that by the end of *Bataan*'s first tour in Korea, 'the navies…were working together with common procedures and doctrines in mutual confidence as parts of an efficient team'.[5] Even so there were problems with differences between methods of operation between the USN and Commonwealth navies such as the Royal Navy and the RAN.

The Admiralty considered that the system of command during the Korean War was perhaps the most important aspect of the campaign.[6] Partly because a US high command already existed in Japan, and to some extent because it was clear that America would take the heaviest load in the war, the remainder of the United Nations, including Britain and Australia, came under the existing command system as they arrived in theatre. Under US naval practices each ship came under three separate command organisations; Operational, Logistical and Type (Administration). The Admiralty viewed this command structure as workable in a self-contained and mobile fleet:

> But with the scattered nature of the operations and multiplicity of separate commands of the Korean War, it introduced various complications, and senior US commanders who had suffered inconvenience by it did not hide their envy of the close relations that existed between the Operational, Maintenance and Technical branches of the staff of the British flag-officer.[7]

Operationally, the chief difference between the American and British systems lay in the rigidity of the former. Orders were extremely detailed and direct communication on a junior level with another service or task group was frowned upon. 'All intercommunication was supposed to go back up the chain of command, through the top, and back down again… practically no discretion was left to the man on the spot'.[8] This was in contrast with the practices of the British Commonwealth commanders whereby 'the normal British anticipation was exercised and action was initiated at once'.[9]

These doctrinal differences caused problems in operational matters, one example being HMAS *Bataan* in August 1952. After diverting United States Marine Corps aircraft to assist in silencing a group of North Korean artillery, *Bataan*'s commanding officer Warwick Bracegirdle was criticised for not going through the correct channels. Bracegirdle argued that improvised control at the local level was quicker than relaying requests to higher authority and that there was no time to refer matters back further than the west coast patrol force commander aboard the cruiser HMS *Newcastle*.[10] Fortunately British Admiral Sir Alan Scott-Moncrieff, the commander of the west coast blockade force, welcomed the use of initiative by Commonwealth commanders.[11] An additional difference between Commonwealth ships and those of the USN was that United States Navy ships were equipped with more communications circuits and operators than their Commonwealth counterparts.[12] This led to overwork of both equipment and complements in Commonwealth ships, and in the course of the war crews were augmented. The Americans also produced and required a much greater volume of paperwork than the Commonwealth commanding officers were used to. Fortunately, Scott-Moncrieff did much to protect his commanders from unfamiliar or uncongenial American methods.[13] One area of operations in which the Royal Navy and the RAN had complete familiarity with each other was in naval aviation, and the aircraft carriers of both services greatly contributed to the conflict.

The contribution that the Dominions could make to Commonwealth defence was optimised during the Korean War. The fact that the RAN possessed a naval aviation capability materially assisted the Admiralty in meeting its operational commitments. The First Sea Lord requested that HMAS *Sydney* be sent to Korea to relieve the operational pressure on the Royal Navy; 'it would be invaluable to the cause and might be useful experience for her'.[14] The Australian CNS John Collins passed on his thanks for the kind words about the RAN ships in Korea and acquiesced to the Admiralty's request for *Sydney*'s presence in Korea. The relief of HMS *Glory* by HMAS *Sydney* was a historic landmark for it was the first time a Dominion carrier had gone into action. As Vice Admiral William Andrewes, the commander of British and Commonwealth naval forces noted:

> Her squadrons…were determined to show that they could beat any records existing, and they were not slow to start. One of the most

> satisfactory aspects…was the very high standard of bombardment spotting by HMAS *Sydney*, which was commented on particularly by the US battleship USS *New Jersey*.[15]

The most conspicuous role played by British Commonwealth naval forces was by the light fleet carriers and 'Their performances were admitted on all sides to be outstanding…'.[16]

Although the USA provided the largest contribution to the war, the Commonwealth effort was by no means insignificant. A total of 76 ships of the Commonwealth and Royal Fleet Auxiliary Services served in the conflict including 32 warships of the Royal Navy, comprising 5 carriers, 6 cruisers, 7 destroyers and 14 frigates, and nine vessels of the RAN consisting of 1 carrier, 4 destroyers and 4 frigates. 17,000 officers and men of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and the RFA Service served afloat in Korean waters, with 165 decorations for distinguished service against the enemy being awarded. The RAN provided 311 officers and 4196 ratings to the war with 57 officers and men being awarded decorations for war service. As evidence of the shared Commonwealth naval assistance to the war, the British Naval Staff History of the conflict listed Commonwealth naval forces alongside those of the Royal Navy.[17] From the British point of view, the Korean conflict had proved a war of blockade, a seaman's war of traditional pattern. The importance of the daily routine patrols of the Commonwealth naval forces was stressed and:

> The degree of success achieved can be judged from Communist reactions. At no time have they been able, or recently even attempted, to supply their forces by sea, and this single factor, in a country with such sparse land communications, has tipped the balance between defeat and victory for the great outnumbered land forces.[18]

The Korean conflict was a drain on the both the Admiralty and the RAN. Collins remarked that 'I am hoping that the Korea business may have subsided by next year and that we have some ships from the Far East Station down to join in the [jubilee celebrations] fun and exercises'.[19] The Admiralty appreciated the assistance given by the RAN; 'The strength of these [British naval] forces has been maintained throughout the operations. Moreover, the strength of the United Nations naval forces has been increased by ships of the Royal Australian Navy, the Royal Canadian Navy, and the Royal New Zealand Navy.

The contributions of these Commonwealth navies are substantial in relation to the size of their peace-time fleets'.[20]

Ships of the Royal Navy and the RAN operated efficiently with each other during the Korean War. 'I have just been talking to one of [Vice Admiral] Andrewes' staff back home and they all speak with such high praise of your Australian ships. Co-operation between us is complete and efficiency at the highest level'.[21] The First Sea Lord regularly passed on his appreciation of the operational capabilities of the RAN in the Korean theatre. Operating with both British and American vessels in Korea, Australian sailors were able to make comparisons between the two forces. HMAS *Bataan* worked with the American escort carrier USS *Bairoko* and the British light fleet carrier HMS *Ocean*. The Australians were greatly impressed with the British ship: 'If *Bairoko* was slick, *Ocean* was slicker'.[22] *Ocean* also paid tribute to the capabilities of *Bataan*; 'When you were inshore your handling of *Ocean*'s aircraft was invariably first class and every target you gave them was a winner'.[23] The First Sea Lord and the Commander-in-Chief of the Far East Station exchanged views on the gradual drift of the Royal Canadian Navy away from the Admiralty, remarking that 'unlike the other Commonwealth countries, the Canadian ships were always difficult in Korea…'[24] That is to say that RAN ships posed no such difficulties. If the RAN and the Royal Navy worked together in an extremely efficient manner during the Korean conflict, the two services also co-operated to realize the goal of a British nuclear capability.

Royal Australian Navy assistance was crucial and much appreciated during British nuclear testing at the Monte Bello Islands off the west coast of Australia in the 1950s. Operation HURRICANE successfully tested a plutonium implosion device in October 1952, and operation MOSAIC in 1956 resulted in the successful explosion of a fusion-boosted device. The RAN provided a large proportion of the naval support force for both operations. This support included preliminary surveys, the laying of navigational buoys and moorings in the target area, safety patrols and logistical assistance.

The detailed planning for HURRICANE commenced in May 1951, and the operation was divided into three phases.[25] Phase I lasted from 26 April to the 8 August 1952, during which the preliminary civil engineering works were carried out. Phase II followed with the arrival of the main force bringing scientific personnel, stores and equipment, and the installation of equipment necessary for the test, and the detonation

of the weapon on 3 October. Phase III comprised re-entry, recovery of records, salvage of material and final withdrawal, and ended on 31 October 1952.

A preliminary survey of the Monte Bello Islands was carried out in November 1950 by representatives of the Ministry of Supply and the Admiralty Hydrographic Department: 'The Australian Naval, Air, Army and Security authorities afforded every assistance to the expedition, including the services of HMAS *Karangi*'.[26] In March 1951 a formal approach was made to the Australian government for the use of the islands to carry out the test. A second more detailed survey was agreed to by Australia and HMAS *Warrego* was nominated for the task, a chore 'that was completed in a remarkably short space of time' according to the Naval Commander of the operation.[27] In May 1951 the Australian Prime Minister agreed to the use of the islands for the atomic test. Planning to carry out the test continued, although the final decision for the test was not taken by the British government until December 1951.

Prior to this, in May 1951, the British Official Committee on Atomic Energy appointed an Executive Committee known as the 'Hurricane Executive' to conduct the operation on their behalf. The Admiralty Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff was appointed Chairman reflecting the major naval aspect of the operation. Subjects that required Australian assistance or advice were referred to the United Kingdom Service Liaison Staff (UKSLS) in Melbourne who in turn referred them to the 'Hurricane Panel'. The latter was the Australian equivalent to the Hurricane Executive. The Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Australia) was the chairman of the panel, again a reflection of the strong naval facets of the planned operation. This was also a manifestation of the strong naval relations between the RAN and the Admiralty at the time. On 15 May 1952, it was reported that a test of a British atomic weapon would be carried out at the Monte Bello Islands off the north-west coast of Australia. The Australian government would co-operate closely, as would the Australian fighting services including the RAN.

A meeting was held in August 1952 in Fremantle between Rear Admiral Arthur Torlesse, Flag Officer of the Special Squadron and the staff of the Flag Officer Commanding Australian Fleet. Many operational and communication problems associated with Australian co-operation in the planned testing were settled at this time.[28] Soon after, British and Australian naval vessels sailed for the Monte Bello Islands. Australian vessels initially utilised in preparation for the tests included

HMAS *Hawkesbury*, HMAS *Koala*, HMAS *Limicola*, HMAS *Warreen*, HMAS *Karangi* and Motor Refrigerator Lighter (MRL) 252 and Motor Water Lighter (MWL) 251. *Hawkesbury* carried out patrols of the prohibited area, while *Koala* was said to be 'a valuable asset to the force' and assisted in maintaining moorings.[29] Rear Admiral Torlesse was 'most impressed with the efficiency of the organisation at Onslow [a small town of some four hundred inhabitants, 90 miles away] and the good work done in support of the forces at Monte Bello'.[30]

HMAS *Mildura* later arrived at the islands with Captain Morris, Naval Officer in Command West Australian Area embarked. This gave the opportunity for future requirements and Australian assistance to be discussed. Torlesse later took over operational control of HMAS *Culgoa* which was stationed as a weather reporting ship. *Culgoa*'s reports were said to be of great assistance.[31] Units of HM Australian Fleet comprising Task Force 75, under the command of Rear Admiral Eaton, arrived in the area on the 27 September. The flagship HMAS *Sydney* was escorted by HMAS *Tobruk* and the frigates HMAS *Shoalhaven*, HMAS *Murchison* and HMAS *Macquarie*.[32] Units of the task force co-operated by providing air and surface patrols during the latter stages of Phase II and over the actual period of the trial. These patrols were said to be valuable and provided assurance that the 'Danger Area' was clear before firing, both from the point of view of security and of safety.[33] RAN vessels greatly assisted with the logistical requirements of the operation. HMAS *Warreen*, HMAS *Limicola*, MWL 251 and MRL 252 operated with the force acting as 'the Fleet Train'. In addition, HMAS *Karangi* and HMAS *Koala* transferred the moorings from HMS *Zeebrugge*, a slow process, however 'any time lost…was made up by the speed and accuracy with which the *Karangi* and *Koala* laid the moorings'.[34] By the beginning of October, all preparations for the trial had been completed and it was necessary to wait for suitable weather before the test could commence. The weapon was successfully exploded on the 3 October 1952.

There were perceived advantages for Australian security following the test. British vessels later returned to the site of the initial explosion to recover records. It was thought that the information obtained would assist in the protection of British and Australian harbours. Professor Titterton, head of the nuclear physics department of the Australian National University was quoted as saying, 'We know far more now of what would happen if an atomic bomb was smuggled in the hold of a cargo ship and detonated in Sydney harbour, or Port Phillip Bay,

Melbourne'.[35] The experience was thought to be equally relevant to the task of protecting London, Liverpool and Glasgow and ports and estuaries on the British coast. *Koala*, along with some of her crew, was slightly contaminated following the operation 'due to carelessness in allowing certain contaminated moorings to be raised on the horns and hauled aft inboard before being hosed down and monitored'.[36]

In 1955 it was reported that a further series of British atomic bomb tests would be held at Monte Bello in April 1956. HMS *Narvik* would lead a joint RN-RAN operation.[37] The Australian Minister of Supply said the RAN had carried out a great amount of preparatory work before the proposed testing at Monte Bello.[38] The RAN again provided a high level of assistance to the MOSAIC atomic tests including logistic support such as fuel and berths and the checking of buoys and other navigational aids in the islands.[39] The device was successfully detonated on the 19 June 1956.

The assistance given by the RAN to the two operations was greatly appreciated by the British. Following the 1952 explosion, Torlesse flew to Onslow to thank the Australian services for 'their invaluable assistance and co-operation throughout the operation'.[40] An official statement from the Ministry of Supply described the test as 'an outstanding example of a combined operation in which the Governments of the United Kingdom and Australia worked in close co-operation'.[41] According to the *Manchester Guardian* HMA Ships, *Warrego* and *Karangi* performed 'indispensable services in the early preparations for the [HURRICANE] test'.[42] The co-operation of the RAN in the atomic testing was not only appreciated by the Admiralty but also by British scientists and Royal Engineers officers associated with the atomic tests.[43]

An interesting footnote to the co-operation between the RAN and the Admiralty with atomic testing was the fact that the RAN sought Admiralty advice as to the possibility of the procurement of nuclear weapons. In August 1954 there was a suggestion by the *Melbourne Sun* that the USA should equip the RAAF with atomic weapons as part of any long-range SEATO defence plan.[44] It was suggested that a highly mobile formation with atomic weapons, airborne and air-supplied, would be the surest method of wiping out an enemy bridgehead on Australia soil. One could only hope that the 'enemy' did not have the foresight to land in a populated location. No mention was made in the article on the possibility of the RAN providing such a capability, but the Admiralty was subsequently asked to provide advice on the availability of a tactical atomic

weapon for use by aircraft from RAN light fleet carriers. The necessity for such a capability was due to the alarmingly high total of the naval vote taken by the FAA, of which, said Dowling, the Australian CNS 'we cannot claim any real offensive power…and our Australian opponents know it'.[45] The answer was seen to be the 'tactical atomic weapon carried by the Sea Venom or indeed any fighters capable of operation from a light fleet carrier'. The Admiralty response was a somewhat guarded:

> Aircraft to carry the atomic weapon would require *Centaur* Class or later Light Fleet Carrier. It is too early to answer precisely what number of weapons referred to will be available, since allocation to United Kingdom services is uncertain. By 1965, when apparently the RAN is thinking of a new carrier, the chances must be better, and will of course go on improving as availabilities increase.[46]

Cooper suggested that the 'the idea of the RAN acquiring tactical nuclear weapons did not go very far. Whether it was an idea of Dowling's alone, one discussed within Navy Office, or dropped because of lack of Australian political or Allied support, is unknown'.[47] Dowling, however, did discuss the issue of nuclear weapons with Sir Frederick Shedden, the Secretary of the Department of Defence:

> I have by no means made up my mind on the way ahead for the RAN but hope to do so sometime this year. One of the important factors is whether or not aircraft from a Light Fleet Carrier will be capable of carrying the tactical atomic weapon. Without this the Navy has no real punch and can play only the defensive role.[48]

The RAN did not acquire nuclear weapons and it is difficult to see the possession of such weapons as being anything but a resource drain on the service.

The issue on nuclear weapons for Australian forces was also discussed in high-level military circles:

> We assume that short of the outbreak of a global war or of a major limited war involving a direct threat to Australia's security, Australia will neither acquire a nuclear capability nor become a nuclear base. However, developments…might require modification of this assumption, which should be reviewed at least annually.[49]

Later it was stated that:

> The existing policy is that there is no immediate requirement for an Australian nuclear capability, but the possibility is not excluded that we may need this in the longer term…the introduction by British forces of nuclear weapons would constitute one of the possible alternatives to our manufacturing our own nuclear weapons whereby Australia could independently or otherwise become a nuclear power.[50]

Australian efforts to acquire an atomic weapon capability, whether half-hearted or not, are not within the remit of this book and have been addressed elsewhere.[51] A salient point, however, is that this research has generally focussed on the nuclear options available to the RAAF rather than the RAN.[52] The fact that the RAN sought advice from the Admiralty rather than the USA is a reflection of the strong ties between the two services, ties that were only strengthened by continuing operational co-operation such as the Malayan Emergency.

The FESR has already been discussed in regards to its high-level strategic role. The secondary role of the FESR was the maintenance of the security of the Federation of Malaysia. The Malayan Emergency of June 1948–July 1960 gave ships of the Reserve opportunity for operational collaboration. Australia placed great importance on the defence of Malaya;

> Apart from the role which Australia may take as a member of the British Commonwealth in co-operation in mutual defence, it is fundamental to our security that the situation in Malaya…should be cleared up as soon as possible.[53]

Reduced operational commitments in Korea following the armistice of 1953 meant that both Britain and Australia could redeploy naval forces to the Malayan theatre of operations. Thirteen Australian ships served with the Strategic Reserve between 1955–60 during the period of the Emergency.[54] This did not mean that all of these resources were used in the Emergency itself, and the part played by the RAN in the Emergency in particular was minor. There was no great effort expended in blockade tasks as would be in evidence in the later conflict in Vietnam. Both British and Australian ships provided naval gunfire support (NGS) to ground forces on a number of occasions, although the efficacy of such

actions was sometimes in doubt. The operations of British and Australian warships in the next regional conflict, confrontation with Indonesia between 1962 and 1966, would be much more important to the outcome of the conflict.

Confrontation with Indonesia in the mid-1960s again provided opportunity for British and Australian naval assets to work alongside each other in an operational role. When the Indonesian government started its policy of confrontation against Malaysia, active operations were confined to the Borneo States. Although naval patrols were maintained in the Kuching and Tawau areas, they were mainly of a deterrent nature and there was little evidence that any seaborne incursions had been planned.[55] In August 1964 Indonesia expanded the area of active confrontation to West Malaysia. As there is no direct land bridge between Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula all incursions had to be made by sea or air. Only one attempt at an airborne operation was ever mounted, and this was a political and military failure. However, a large number of various types of seaborne incursions took place and the Royal Navy and its allies, including the RAN, became the most active tools used to deter and destroy such incursions. The Indonesians believed that by applying military, economic and political pressure to Malaysia it would fall, without the necessity for a full-scale war. The campaign of incursions into west Malaysia was part of that pressure. During the early months of 1965 many sabotage efforts were made, particularly against Singapore. It was necessary to station a large number of patrol ships in the Singapore Strait; this had an immediate effect and the number of incidents dropped off sharply.

Military forces utilised in confrontation were Commonwealth in nature. The security forces involved were those of Britain, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand. Although the British were the predominant partners in this alliance it was of overriding political importance that the anti-confrontation operations would not be able to be depicted as a British imperialist-colonialist war against Indonesia.[56] Naval operations against Indonesia were of a Commonwealth character also. Although the majority of assets were British, the RAN, as well as the RNZN and the Royal Malaysian Navy did provide vessels. As well as destroyers and frigates from the Far East Fleet, for the RAN this specifically meant ships of the 16th Minesweeping Squadron, HMA Ships *Hawk*, *Gull*, *Teal*, *Snipe*, *Curlew* and *Ibis*.[57]

The nature of naval operations during confrontation varied. The naval theatre was in effect split into two: west Malaysian waters and Borneo waters. In the west Malaysian region, the Indonesians mounted two types of operations, infiltration and sabotage. British and Australian vessels were placed in patrol groups in areas opposite known Indonesian base areas. In a three-week period in March 1965, approximately 100 attempts to cross the Singapore Strait were made. These challenges were made by sampans with two boatmen and about 12 troops. It was during these operations that some of the fiercest sea-fighting of the whole campaign took place.[58] The importance of the patrols should not be minimised; one instance of a small fleeting radar contact not being adequately investigated resulted in a sampan containing 15 Indonesian infiltrators successfully landing on the coast of South East Johore. It took two battalions of ground troops, and six weeks before they were eliminated. The nature of these operations was one of the Australian and British vessels working side by side. As one observer noted following the successful capture of an Indonesian *prahu* by the British minesweeper HMS *Maryton*:

> It is one of many beats, links in the chain of nightstick patrols, through the long, dark alley of water from Singapore to North Malaya, one ship taking over where the other wheels and turns back upon her wake. To *Maryton*'s east is an Australian frigate and another Royal Navy minesweeper…[59]

In the waters around Borneo naval forces were used to deter incursions by Indonesian warships, to prevent movement around the coast by parties of armed Indonesians, and to provide naval gunfire support to ground troops ashore. Larger Australian vessels had the added responsibility of occasionally escorting the British vessels *Bulwark* and *Albion*, both of which transported troops to and from Borneo.

British and Australian vessels operated under a number of limitations placed upon them either by political directive or force of circumstance.[60] These limitations included a defensive policy, whereby resistance to all incursions was permitted but no form of counter-attack on Indonesian bases was allowed. In the event of being challenged by Indonesian vessels, allied warships on patrol were not to provoke action and if attacked, were to use the minimum force necessary to persuade the attacking vessel to desist.[61] A considerable problem was one of naval patrols operating effectively in areas that were liable to be saturated with fishing fleets. This constraint was exacerbated by the fact that very few of the ships

employed were designed for anti-incursion patrolling tasks, in the main being Coastal Minesweepers or other wooden-hulled vessels. Command and control was also affected due to the overall naval force consisting of several nations, although orders issued to Royal Navy vessels equally applied to RAN, RNZN and Royal Malaysian Navy ships.[62]

Confrontation with Indonesia placed a heavy burden on the Royal Navy. By mid-1966 confrontation had absorbed 16,000 men and over 70 vessels.[63] The RAN's commitment of twelve ships was much more modest, but confrontation was unfolding at a time of escalation in the war in Vietnam and as one observer noted;

> Australian warships remained committed to the FESR and undertook tasks outside the Malaysian area throughout confrontation. A significant and concurrent commitment was to Vietnam, and FESR destroyers and frigates, as well as the carrier HMAS *Melbourne*, performed escort duty for the troop transport HMAS *Sydney* on all of her voyages to and from Vung Tau.[64]

Although the strategic shift of Australia from Great Britain to the USA was very much in progress during this period, ships of the RAN and the Royal Navy continued to operate very effectively with each other. This was in the main due to shared naval doctrine, culture and equipment, but also due to ongoing co-operation in matters of maritime visits to each nation.

Great value was placed on 'showing the flag' visits to overseas ports by both the RAN and the Royal Navy. This was especially true in regards to the UK and the Royal Navy's role as global ambassador;

> A physical piece of Great Britain carrying a cross section of her male population arrives in a port without any infringement of sovereignty. The community from King or Government downwards returns calls or receives British hospitality, tradesmen profit and in a completely non-political atmosphere an astonishing fund of goodwill is built up. No other Service can do this.[65]

It was said that the Royal Navy's major function in peace was 'To safeguard British citizens, commerce and to uphold our prestige throughout the world. This is a role requiring constant patrol of the worlds oceans and frequent visits to Dominion, Colonial and foreign ports by vessels of

a size commensurate with the importance at which we rate ourselves as a nation and Commonwealth'.[66] In late 1965 a task force from the British Far East Fleet visited Australian ports on completion of joint exercises with the RAN and the USN. Following the 1968 international exercise CORAL SANDS, fifteen ships of the Australian, British, New Zealand and US navies entered Sydney Harbour where HMS *Hermes* fired a fifteen-gun salute in honour of the Australian Naval Board. British ships visited Australia in great numbers during the 1950s. As RAN Lieutenant Commander Swan noted;

> More ships of the Royal Navy were visiting Australia at this time [late 1950s] than at any other period since World War II, with *Alert*, the carrier *Centaur* and the frigate *Llandaff* in Sydney, destroyers *Lagos* at Gladstone, *Solebay* at Mackay and *Finisterre* at Bowen, and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries *Olna*, *Reliant*, *Tide Surge* and *Wave Prince* at Sydney, and *Retainer* at Melbourne. Unhappily, later British governments reduced Britain's strength east of Suez, and such visits became a rarity.[67]

Even so, Royal Navy vessels continued to visit Australia in reasonable numbers prior to the retreat from east of Suez. Between the end of October and mid-November 1966 the largest programme of visits by Royal Navy vessels to Australia ports since the end of the Second World War took place. The ports visited were Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Newcastle, Fremantle, Albany, Geraldton, Bunbury, Cairns and Darwin. Visiting Royal Navy vessels included HM Ships *Victorious*, *Kent*, *Hampshire*, *Leander*, *Arethusa*, *Cleopatra*, *Ajax*, *Forth*, *Oberon*, *Amphion* and *Anchorite*, and the RFAs *Olynthus*, *Tidepool*, *Tidespring*, *Resurgent*, *Reliant* and *Fort Dunvegan*.[68] Such visits to Australia by British vessels were subsequently less regular, and this is understandable when one considers the degradation in British naval forces east of Suez, but these visits did continue in the early 1970s.[69]

Visits to Australia in the 1972–1974 period were made by HMS *Hydra*, HMS *Devonshire*, HMS *Odin*, HMS *Dido*, HMS *Jupiter*, HM Yacht *Britannia*, and the RFAs *Tidespring* and *Blue Rover*.[70] These visits were appreciated by the British. *Hydra* visited Brisbane in mid-1972 and had two defective main engines replaced. Following the visit, the Commanding Officer gave his thanks to the Commander of the Australian Fleet: '*Hydra* leaves the Australian Station with great regret

and happiest memories of whole hearted support given by all RAN personnel'.[71]

Training in an operational environment was and is an important part of inter-service co-operation. Being part of a larger naval organisation such as ANZAM, the FESR or SEATO was extremely valuable for the ships of the RAN, as this allowed for increased opportunities to train with larger, better-resourced navies such as the Royal Navy. Vessels of both services continued to train with each other throughout the Korean War, the Malayan Emergency and confrontation with Indonesia and beyond. Australian and British naval units operated together within the confines of numerous SEATO maritime exercises such as PX-41 SEA ROVER, in 1970.[72] Co-operative naval exercises were carried out prior to the ceremonial entry of the combined fleet to Singapore on the 5 June 1970. CRACKSHOT was the work-up phase prior to the entry to Singapore and during this exercise HMAS *Melbourne* utilised her Skyhawk and Tracker aircraft and Wessex helicopters in various weapons drills including anti-submarine exercises.[73]

Co-operation in operational training did not end with the British withdrawal from east of Suez. Indeed the British strongly held the view at the military level that 'to meet the requirement of having the capability for operations in South East Asia should the UK government so decide, provision should be made for periodic exercises of forces of all three services in the area post-1971'.[74] During the meeting of 6–7 April 1970, SEATO military advisors were informed that after the UK withdrawal from the Far East in 1971, the UK would continue to take part in SEATO exercises, albeit on a reduced scale.[75] It was also recommended that fleet Royal Navy visits to the Far East and South East Asia be timed to coincide with dates set for SEATO exercises. In response to the question of whether British forces would travel to Australia for joint exercises, the Chief of Defence Staff answered 'I would think it very likely', and continued 'I think [such] ships would tend to be those ships that we have East of Suez anyway-ships we very much hope will keep on doing what they have done for many years, taking part in exercises with the RAN and quite often with the RNZN and sometimes with the USN too'.[76]

In 1971, UK Chiefs of Staff stipulated that, as part of the maintenance of links between British military forces and those of Australia and New Zealand, the Navy Department was to include the requirement for ships of the frigate force east of the Cape, and major units planned to

be deployed east of the Cape, to visit both countries periodically whenever possible.[77] It was also ordered that the British Defence Liaison Staff (BDLS) should consider the question of reciprocal visits to the UK. In view of the already substantial amount of RAN personnel training with the Royal Navy, it may be safe to assume that this request was targeted at the Army and the RAF. Although the quantity of British forces in the Far East was greatly reduced in number after 1971, the British were relieved that military co-operation, including exercises and training would continue due to the formation of the ANZUK force.[78] It was planned that one patrol submarine would be attached to the RAN from late 1972, and that another nuclear submarine and a cruiser (CCH) would deploy east of the Cape for six months every other year, with the first deployment in mid-1973. It was envisaged that visits to New Zealand would be less frequent than visits to Australia, and exercises with the RAN would be combined with visits whenever possible. At a time where British military resources were increasingly stretched, it was viewed as beneficial that the Royal Navy have opportunities to exercise and train in an operational environment, with navies such as the RAN, as much as possible. As Admiral of the Fleet (1971–74) Sir Michael Pollock wrote:

> ANZUK provides an integrated command structure based in Singapore to command the Australian, New Zealand and British contributions to the Five Power arrangements and is at present commanded by an Australian Admiral. Besides demonstrating our continued interest in the area, our contribution to this Force allows us to exercise and train regularly with our Commonwealth partners and to maintain our close links with them. There is regular co-operation with other forces in the area, for example the US 7th Fleet, and we also play our part on SEATO.[79]

Such joint exercises were viewed as being valuable in giving the Royal Navy the capability to deploy groups to areas they would otherwise be unable to reach, the Pacific Ocean being one example.[80] Other benefits to the Admiralty of joint operations were evidence of limitations to British communications equipment in the Australian theatre.[81] Examples of joint exercises continued to the end of our period of interest and beyond. British naval vessels continued to take part in joint exercises in the Australia-New Zealand-Indian Ocean areas, examples being exercises GROUNDWORK in early 1973,[82] KANGAROO in 1974[83] and ROLL

CALL in 1978.[84] British task forces were made available for joint exercises in 1974–75 with the RAN in Australian waters on the east coast (KANGAROO 1, JUC 92) and thus should be viewed as additional to the activities designed to deter a Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean.

Joint exercises continued between the RAN and the Royal Navy after 1975. In the British, Australian and New Zealand military discussions of mid-1975, it was agreed that the UK would examine the possibility of producing an integrated exercise schedule of all services of the three countries where they had common interests.[85] In 1977 HMAS *Melbourne* and HMAS *Brisbane* took part in Exercise HIGHWOOD 77, a joint RN/RAF exercise conducted in the South West Approaches to the west of Ireland, north and east of Scotland and in the North Sea. The Australian vessels were part of the ORANGE forces which simulated Soviet units, *Melbourne* acting as a *Kiev* class carrier and *Brisbane* as a *Kresta 2* class vessel.[86] An Ikara firing by *Brisbane* was cancelled during the work-up phase of the exercise due to poor visibility, however, a 'most successful' surface-to-air Tartar war-shot firing was later carried out. The exercise was particularly useful as *Melbourne*, by judicious use of natural obstacles, such as oil rigs and islands, proved a Soviet *Kiev* class carrier with surface escorts could operate for a limited time in the North Sea/Norwegian Sea area with a large degree of success and survivability. The exercise was also useful to the RAN 'particularly in the understanding of Soviet use and co-ordination of their long range missiles, air forces and submarines'.[87] Operational training between the Royal Navy and the RAN was often accompanied by fleet visits of each service to their counterparts' nation.

The Royal Australian Navy and the Royal Navy worked very efficiently together in operational interactions throughout the period 1945–75 and beyond. On one hand, this is only to be expected considering the historical, doctrinal and cultural ties between the two services. On the other hand, the sharp strategic divergences between the UK and Australia in the post-war period could have been expected to lead to a greater operational disassociation between the two services than did in fact occur. Even where overt military co-operation between the Royal Navy and the RAN, as evidenced in the Korean War, the Malayan Emergency and the Indonesian confrontation was no longer required due to the alteration in the strategic stance of both countries, the two services continued to work together in matters of operational training. The Royal Navy continued to send its warships to Australia to 'show the flag' and foster relations

between the two countries. Australian warships took part in joint exercises in the UK, a region far removed from Australian strategic concerns. Even so the RAN, in particular, was not tied to one operational associate, and the importance of the USA as a strategic partner was plain. As much as Australian warships were comfortable operating with their British cousins, they were increasingly at ease working with their American allies as well.

As one observer noted:

> It was nothing unusual for [an Australian] ships' company to find itself at defence watches and at a heightened state of alert for air and submarine attack off Vung Tau one day, and a few days later be patrolling for Indonesian infiltration craft in the Malacca Strait.[88]

This should not detract from the fact that Australian and British warships worked seamlessly side by side to the 1970s and beyond.

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CHAPTER 5

Manpower, Personnel and Training

Perhaps the greatest example of post-war co-operation between the RAN and the Royal Navy was the exchange of personnel between the two services. This trade of personnel helped to strengthen the bonds between the RAN and the Royal Navy, especially where the exchange of the officer class of both services was concerned. This was not a trade or exchange of personnel that was necessarily on a one-for-one basis, and in effect the RAN gained much more than the Royal Navy in the transfer of personnel. It was a migration of personnel that took place in a very fluid strategic situation, with both the UK and Australia greatly altering their strategic positions between 1945–75. There were perceived advantages for both the RAN and the RN in continuing with the personnel migrations between the services. Even so, both services felt great anxiety about the lack of manpower in the post-war period, and these concerns very much affected the exchange of personnel at various times.

Personnel exchanges consisted of the inter-service loan of serving officers and men between both services, the exchange of such personnel, and the recruitment of ex-Royal Navy officers and ratings by the RAN. This last course of action somewhat mirrored the movement of British nationals to Australia in the post-war period and the trend had clear implications for the Royal Navy and its ability to utilise discharged personnel in a reserve capability. Nonetheless, and almost without exception, the British acquiesced to RAN entreaties to carry out recruitment drives in the UK as it was viewed that manning the RAN with officers

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and men with a UK background was an excellent way of ensuring its continued closeness and affinity to the Royal Navy.[1] The personnel exchanges were at times substantial, and these exchanges took place in an environment where the Royal Navy was having great manpower issues of its own. Any transfer of either former or serving personnel to the RAN meant the Royal Navy had less 'apples to pluck from the tree'. There were benefits to the Admiralty, however, not the least of which was the propagation of the idea of an 'Empire Navy'. Quite apart from the strategic aspects of having an empire naval air presence in the Pacific, the sale of aircraft carriers to the RAN addressed another manpower issue of the immediate post-war period, namely that the Royal Navy did not have enough men to man the vessels available.[2] These vessels included Light Aircraft Carriers either in reserve or undergoing construction. Transferring carriers to the RAN made sense as this would lessen the manpower shortages felt by the RN, although this was somewhat negated by the fact that the carriers would have a reasonably heavy contingent of Royal Navy personnel, at least until those billets could be filled with trained Australian sailors.[3]

In the late 1940s the Australian Naval Chief, Sir Louis Hamilton, realised that manpower concerns would trouble the RAN with officers being the key to the problem. The crisis was such that it was suggested that the RAN would be 40–50% short of naval commitments by the end of 1947. In his closing letter to the Australian Prime Minister, Hamilton was frank about the manpower issues facing the RAN:

> There is a serious shortage of trained and experienced officers and men, particularly of Lieutenants of over 4 years seniority and ratings in the 22-27 years age group of all branches. The loss of this age group extending over some six years will have its effect on the morale and manning of the Royal Australian Navy for at least a decade.[4]

Hamilton had fought hard for the creation of the Australian naval air arm and remained concerned for the future of the RAN. While accepting that the approval of the carrier purchase was a victory, Hamilton's successor as the new Australian Naval Chief, John Collins, complained about manpower issues and rising costs. Though thankful for the personnel to be loaned by the Royal Navy to assist in the manning of the new carriers, he also observed that 'a way out presents itself by the desire of many ex-Royal Navy ratings, as expressed to Australia House

in London, to join the Royal Australian Navy and emigrate'.[5] Following Collins' communication regarding manpower concerns the British First Sea Lord asked for clarification on the current position regarding the loan of personnel to the RAN; whether the RAN was likely to succeed in recruiting up to 1000 ex-Royal Navy ratings in the UK, and if so, how would this 'affect our Reserve situation? Do we object?'[6] In reply, the Royal Navy Director of Manning stated 'if sufficient publicity is given to the scheme, and conditions of service made attractive, it is thought that a large number will volunteer' and while the loss of 1000 actual or potential reservists would be a serious setback to Admiralty efforts to build up the Reserves, 'this would be more than offset by the potential gain in Empire Naval strength during the period of their full time service in the RAN'.[7] The Second Sea Lord concurred with these views and even suggested that 'We could help them through our recruiting offices if they could give us information on the pay and conditions, and also the emigration aspect'.[8] The First Sea Lord agreed and promised to refer Australia House to the 'National Association for Employment of Regular ex-Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen', the body to whom men were advised to seek employment with on leaving the British services.[9]

The quantity of the proposed loan of active service ratings included in the aircraft carrier proposal was 245 for the Naval Air Station and 257 for the first carrier, HMAS *Sydney*. In addition, 200 of the proposed 1000 ex-ratings were needed to complete the complement of the carrier. The complement of the vessel was 1789 men, including the carrier air group, and so the total proposed proportion of both serving and ex-Royal Naval ratings on the vessel was substantial. Moreover, as the mariners in question were highly trained, and the vessels and aircraft were British in origin, they were not available from elsewhere.

There were instances where British ratings who were not volunteers for service with the RAN were drafted to Australian ships as a normal RN foreign draft. This situation was deemed as 'most undesirable',[10] however, such were the dangers to the nascent air arm that the practice was accepted. As one interested party emphasised 'We must get the necessary Ratings by hook or by crook or the whole Aviation programme will break down'.[11] It was impossible that the first RAN aircraft carrier, and her complement of aircraft, could have been manned without Admiralty support, and the assistance provided, testified to the strong ties between the services at the time.

Prior to Lord Fraser of North Cape taking over as First Sea Lord in 1948, Collins wrote to him with high hopes for the recruitment campaign as manpower shortages were slowing up the 5-year naval plan.[12] Collins later reported to the Admiralty that the recruitment of ex-RN ratings 'had not been bad, although only 400 instead of the desired 1000 men were expected to be available'.[13] It was later relayed to the Admiralty that the limiting factor to the five-year plan was not money but manpower and materials. Another recruitment drive was suggested by the RAN in April 1949.[14] It was stated that any such scheme would receive favourable consideration by the Admiralty, although there were doubts about whether RN backing could be provided for the second Carrier Air Group on the same scale as for the first. Bearing in mind the reasonably heavy contingent of Admiralty support for the first carrier this was neither a surprise nor evidence of degradation in the inter-service relationship. No impression on the ratings already recruited from ex-RN ranks could be given, however, the Australian First Naval Member had heard nothing to their detriment.[15] The fact that another recruitment drive was desirable probably reflected the suitability of the recruited personnel as well as ongoing issues with recruitment in Australia. RAN ratings were given as 9454 at the start of 1949 with nearly 1000 of this total being ex-RN sailors recruited since July 1948.[16] In addition 214 men were on loan from the RN. This was a sizeable proportion of the entire Australian naval strength at the time and reflected continued Admiralty support for the RAN.

All was not plain sailing with the new recruits to the Australian service, however. In late 1949 Collins reported that they had 'struck some trouble' with the ex-RN ratings over accommodation.[17] According to Collins, there were problems with adequate housing for the families of the ratings, so much so that the RAN was in danger of 'becoming real estate agents ourselves, and running a village of pre-fabs.' Collins minimised the amount of 'trouble' the RAN had struck. The issue was not only a serious lack of accommodation, but more a case of the lack of accommodation being an obstacle to the men being in a position to bring their families across from the UK. The availability of suitable accommodation was a prerequisite for the migration of the ex-RN ratings families. With the initial sign-on period being six years, the thought of families being separated for such a lengthy term was a worrying one. As a result a number of ratings deserted the RAN; 22 men out of the 349 married men initially recruited by the service deserted,

and a number attempted to abscond to Britain, some successfully.[18] Parliamentarians were involved in the resolution of the matter and the resultant poor publicity was heavy.[19] In mitigation, some of the periodicals were said to be 'irresponsible and sensational' though 'widely read'.[20] The controversy cannot have made further attempts to boost RAN manpower by the use of UK naval sources any easier. Nevertheless, the terms on offer did appear clear and stated that:

> It is not the intention of the Naval Board to transport families to Australia as is done in respect to loan personnel, but ratings will be able to nominate dependants under the Immigration Scheme when they have secured accommodation after their arrival in Australia.[21]

Even so there were reports of the terms on offer not being correctly passed on to all of the recruits in question, although the reliability of such reports was questioned.[22] In addition, the RAN later made arrangements for accommodation as best they could including the purchase of two hostels and the appointment of billeting officers in Melbourne and Sydney. Loan personnel also had issues with accommodation, and there were instances where the number of family members precluded the satisfactory housing of those families.[23] The Mayfield NSW branch of the Australian Labour Party felt the necessity to complain to the Minister for the Navy in 1949, stating that:

> …when a definite promise such as this had been made, it should be honoured both in the interests of the happiness of the men concerned and the hope that these women and children may be ambassadors of goodwill between the Mother Country and ourselves.[24]

British sailor George Woodley volunteered for service with the RAN and was accepted, later serving at HMAS *Cerberus* and HMAS *Lonsdale* in 1948–50.[25] He enjoyed his service very much, as it was cheap compared with England, the pay was better, and the food was improved with no rationing. Although it took thirteen months for his family to join him, his children got on very well in Australia. Accommodation was a concern, with the family being housed in a ground floor flat; it 'wasn't a very good place at all, but it was somewhere to stay'. Woodley's two-year contract ended in December 1950; 'When I left Australia I came home with other sailors who had been on loan, [and] there were 52 people

who came down to see us off, I was very honoured. My wife made a lot of friends out there'.

The Admiralty did not accept any liability for the predicament in which the ex-RN ratings found themselves, however, the accommodation issue was taken up on a High Commissioner level due to the men being UK nationals.[26] The seemingly out of the ordinary arrangement whereby nationals of one nation, would be permitted to serve in an armed force of another nation, without becoming a citizen of the latter, left the sailors in question in a peculiar state of limbo. Collins was of the opinion that legally the RAN were in the clear, but 'morally we must do something', especially as 'we must have some results to show before we start another drive for ex-RN's, which we hope to do early next year'.[27] This was a somewhat pragmatic approach to say the least.

On the 15 September 1949, following concerns from the Australian Prime Minister about officer shortages in the RAN, permission was asked for another recruitment drive for ex-RN personnel, this time targeting Engineering, Air-Engineering and Electrical branch officers.[28] The shortage was said to be such that it would 'retard the achievement of the Post-War Naval Plan and hinder the efficient performance of the duties of those branches'. It is no great surprise that much importance was given to the fact that applicants should be under no illusion about the continued acute shortage of housing in Australia. It was agreed that a copy of any proposed advertisements would be forwarded to the Commonwealth Relations Office before placement in any British newspapers or journals. A draft advertisement was later sent for approval and the warning was stark; 'remember, the housing situation in Australia is still critical'.[29] The advertisement was approved and later placed in a number of newspapers and journals.[30] In mid-1950 the number of UK-based officers required by the RAN was given as eleven Mechanical, two Aeronautical and ten Electrical Engineers.[31] The proposed advertisement again mentioned the housing shortage in Australia even though the accommodation conditions placed on ex-RN ratings did not apply to those being offered commissions.[32]

Robert Tunstall was one such RN officer who served with the RAN on HMAS *Sydney* during the Korean War between 1950–51.[33] Tunstall's wife followed him to Australia and spent two years in the country. Tunstall added great air-engineering experience to the new naval squadrons in Australia. He served as the Air Engineer Officer, a role that precluded him from combat flight operations, and developed a system

utilising antifreeze to stop undercarriage failure in the very cold conditions of the Korean theatre. The MBE awarded to Tunstall following his service in Korea read:

> Any successes which the Air Group (HMAS *Sydney*) may have enjoyed are in no small way attributable to the outstanding work of this officer. As Air Engineer Officer of the Air Group he has time and time again produced the seemingly impossible. By his drive and tact he has never failed to produce the requisite number of aircraft. He has worked very long hours, indeed uncomplainingly and cheerfully, and has indeed done an outstanding job of work.[34]

Norman Craggs was a Royal Naval officer attached to the RAN in the early 1950s, who served at HMAS *Rushcutter* as an instructor in ASW operations and on various ships including HMAS *Arunta*. He did not generally enjoy the experience due to his family still being in England. The reasons for this separation are unclear; as the duration he spent in Australia was three and a half years, his less than perfect experience is perhaps understandable.[35] Alan Dobson served on attachment with 723 and 805 Squadrons of the RAN between 1953–58. Dobson and his wife travelled to Australia first-class, and due to the great transfer of personnel between the services, Dobson already had friends from the UK serving with the RAN. Even so his wife did not cope very well with the move.[36] Lieutenant David 'Ben' Bathurst, later First Sea Lord between 1993–95, was offered an exchange to the RAN at six weeks notice. He accepted and served as an instructor with the Fleet Air Arm from 1965–67.[37] The first three months were difficult for his wife and young family, with problems in finding accommodation. A home was found but it had its shortcomings; there was 'no loo, just a can up the garden, [my wife Sarah] stated that if the loo wasn't fixed she would be back to the UK on the next boat'. Bathurst subsequently installed an entire septic tank system on the property. 'We had some wonderful times…it was the outdoor life and couldn't have really been more fun'. So much so that, 'At the end of the 2 years we were very reluctant to come home, we debated whether we would stay as the Australian Navy were always quite keen to take on people and I probably could have transferred, but we decided not to… due to too many ties in the UK'. Relocation of families from one side of the world to the other is never without difficulties, and following the initial housing problems the RAN did much to improve matters, although Bathurst's experiences suggest that more could have been done.

Communications from the Australian Naval Board to the Admiralty reported both satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the manpower situation of the RAN. In mid-1950, Collins reported to the Admiralty that the RAN were 'holding their own' at about 10,000 men a year with the Korean 'affair' giving an impetus to applications.[38] He also reported plans for a 'ministerial high powered campaign' to improve recruiting following cabinet disquiet over the impact of National Service on the RAN. Following a recruiting campaign led by the Prime Minister, RAN recruitment increased but doubts were still expressed about whether a long-term target of 15,173 officers and men in the Permanent Naval Forces by June 1952 would be met. Collins later reported that recruiting was on target at almost 3000 men per year.[39] No mention was made of increased utilisation of RN personnel. National Service for 18-year-olds was introduced on the 1 May 1951 but was not well thought of by the Navy Board.[40] The short period of service, only 176 days, with only 154 of these being continuous, allied to the added training requirements only worsened the personnel shortages. In total the RAN trained 6826 National Servicemen and raised few protestations when it was abolished in 1957.[41]

Although UK national manpower requirements were causing ministerial concern in mid-1951, 'the modest demands' of the RAN were not questioned.[42] Later that month, the Admiralty received another request for additional ex-Royal Navy ratings, on this occasion 100 Electrical and 210 Communications ratings.[43] Significantly there was not an entitlement for any return passage to the UK for either the rating or his family after his six-year term.[44] This appeared to be a reflection of a lessening of Australian reliance on British naval personnel resources. Again, the housing issues associated with Australia were made plain, and the prospective ratings were made to sign a disclaimer certifying they had read and understood the conditions of service. The Admiralty once again gave their full approval to the recruitment plans. The continued approval given by the Admiralty to Australian employment of ex-RN ratings was explained by the pervading view that 'it is very much in the UK's interest that the Royal Australian Navy should be developed on UK lines and with the maximum closeness and affinity to the Royal Navy. To man it with officers and men with a UK background is an excellent way of ensuring this'.[45]

By the end of Collins' tenure as First Naval Member manpower issues again caused anxiety, with the RAN being unable to man any additional

vessels, even if they had the money to purchase the ships. Collins wrote 'with full employment, high wages and "music while you work" it's hard to persuade young men to join the Navy'.[46] In Collins' last letter to the Admiralty as First Naval Member he reported 'I think I'll turn over a fairly small balanced Navy to Dowling with manpower about 1000 short of the 14,400 ceiling and a budget of £48 m. which he may find difficulty in spending'.[47] His successor, Vice Admiral Roy Dowling confirmed the manpower figures on taking up his post. Dowling's later assertion that, if his personnel were not married, 'we would have no re-engagement problems'[48] was questionable, as well as impracticable. In any case, the RAN still experienced manpower shortages and there were further plans to recruit ex-RN ratings, as well as the possibility of direct transfer of personnel from the RN to the RAN. The recruitment issues were still a worry in late 1962 with the possibility of the *Q* class frigates being placed in reserve. In effect, the manpower issues experienced by the RAN in the immediate post-war period endured throughout the period addressed by his book. They were lessened by the migration of both serving and ex-personnel of the Royal Navy to the RAN, a migration that took place when the Royal Navy were experiencing manpower difficulties of its own.

The great level of co-operation on the part of the Admiralty towards Australian naval recruitment must be viewed in the context of manpower concerns also plaguing the Royal Navy. The conflict in Korea meant it was possible to make an increase of effective strength by the compulsory retention of officers and men due to leave the service. In mid-1952, however, it was expected that the loss of 17,000 highly trained and experienced men over the next two years would mean a reduction in the war complements in the Far East, with consequences that 'will inevitably be very severe'.[49] Nor was this situation greatly helped by conscription. Indeed, the Admiralty tended to view conscription as a burden. Training conscripts required regular navy personnel who would no longer be available for duty at sea, and the one-year length of conscription, later increased to two years, did not lend itself to increasing the efficiency of the sea-going fleet.[50] The two-year period of service did at least permit the conscripts to serve at sea, and in 1956, nearly 10% of the total RN strength, 11,600 out of 122,100 was made up of National Servicemen.[51] Serious reductions in the strength of the Far East Fleet were later considered 'in the light of the known difficulties in manning the Fleet'.[52] It was suggested that the Australian Fleet Air Arm could fill any gaps

in operational efficiency following any withdrawal of UK naval air power from the Far East Station but the aircraft carried by the Australian carriers were not suited to the role of interdiction, being optimised for anti-submarine and trade protection duties.[53]

There was a view in the Admiralty that the RAN drew too heavily on officers from the RN, with limits being imposed to some extent. This was because RAN officers had more freedom to resign than their RN counterparts, a situation made worse when times were good and more lucrative jobs ashore were available. Even so, the relations with the RAN were said to be very good, and the exchange of officers was 'particularly welcome'.[54] Nevertheless, the exchange of personnel did cause problems for the Admiralty. In late 1955, the First Sea Lord sent a letter to a number of Commonwealth Naval Chiefs, including the First Naval Member of Australia, describing manpower as 'one of the most pressing and important problems with which we must deal today…'.[55]

Manpower concerns continued to trouble the Admiralty; a Board Memorandum of mid-1962 warned of manpower issues which 'unless they are solved, may make it impossible to meet the Naval Staff requirements'.[56] In late 1962, it was reported to the Admiralty Board that figures for both recruiting and wastage had not fulfilled previous expectations. It was later pointed out that lack of personnel was having a palpable affect on the fleet; 'we cannot at the moment get to sea with the Active Fleet [with] even the numbers authorised in 1957-the missing escorts exist in reserve but they cannot be commissioned because of lack of manpower'.[57] The VCNS stated that the situation with the total suggested manpower of 103,000 in 1968 was serious but manageable but the Admiralty Board suggested that the implications of the manpower situation were so serious that they should be brought to the notice of the Minister of Defence. This was with the proviso that 'The picture should not be made to seem so depressing as to invite really harmful cuts in the size or role of the Navy'.[58]

The manpower situation had deteriorated since the previous review. In discussions on how best to improve the situation, it was questioned whether enough was being done to attract back senior ratings who had left the service.[59] Many of these ratings, however, senior or otherwise, had responded to advertisements placed in the UK to attract them to the RAN, and were no longer available to the Admiralty. In 1964, the Secretary of State's attention was drawn to the fact that the Royal Navy's biggest problems concerned manpower and that radical measures would

be necessary to deal with it. The Navy was 1300 men short of its present requirements. There was also a shortage of officers, particularly electrical officers and aircrew, at a time when the RAN was actively recruiting for such personnel in the UK. It was assessed that the requirement would grow to 107,500 by 1968, with forecast strength by that time of no more than 103,000. The re-engagement rate that had fallen from 65% in recent years to 53%, with the blame lying with the austere conditions of service when serving 'East of Suez'.

Early employment of ex-RN naval personnel by the RAN was followed by continued recruitment, but the advertising was much more specific, targeting aeronautical engineering and electrical officers. Free passage to Australia for the successful applicants, as well as their wives and families were offered, and superannuation would be payable on reaching retirement age.[60] Later requests were made for the same officer branches for either permanent or short-term commissions.[61] Even in the early 1970s advertisements were released in the UK asking for Direct Entry Officers of all branches, with vacancies also existing for most branches of ex-RN sailors; again it was stated that selected officers 'may subsequently be offered permanent commissions'.[62] Interestingly one advertisement was headed by a photograph of HMAS *Perth*, a modified US-built *Charles F. Adams* class guided missile destroyer (DDG).[63] Thus, the possibility was raised of ex-RN personnel being coveted on account of their experience on British vessels, serving with a foreign navy, on a warship built in another country. Indeed I recollect that a Petty Officer supervisor on a vessel during my service in the RAN was an ex-RN matelote; this was on the US designed and built vessel, HMAS *Perth*, with the Petty Officer in question utilized in the maintenance of Ikara, the Australian-designed ASW missile system. One would suggest an example of naval multiculturalism *par excellence*. The use of DDG's in advertising campaigns contrasted with advertisements of previous administrations that depicted British-designed Destroyer Escorts (DE's).[64] The acquisition of the DDGs was used to full advantage in recruitment campaigns in Australia with applicants being urged to 'gain invaluable technical training, while travelling the world in missile-age ships of the Royal Australian Navy'.[65]

The Royal Navy also saw the value of advertising as a method to increase recruitment numbers; the total of new recruits had gone up progressively from 5400 in 1961–62 to some 7150 in 1964, mainly as the result of greater expenditure on advertising.[66] Indeed it was the

view of the Second Sea Lord that 'a direct relationship exists between the amount of money spent on recruiting and the numbers who come forward'. Even with greater resources invested in recruitment the Royal Navy struggled with the issue, and, in 1971, it was suggested that on present expectations there was very little prospect of the RN avoiding a manpower gap in two or three years' time unless service pay and conditions were substantially improved.[67] Meanwhile the RAN continued to use the UK as a 'ready-use store' for various types of personnel.

It was not only British servicemen that the RAN found useful. Civilian personnel associated with a variety of naval interests were highly sought. In 1950 Draughtsmen and Senior Draughtsmen with previous experience in the layout of Her Majesty's ships were required, with the applicants having to serve a minimum of three years.[68] Advertisements ran in *The Times* seeking 'legally qualified medical practitioners' for appointment as Surgeon Lieutenants, the first appointment on offer being four years, with the prospect of transfer to the Permanent Naval Force, or alternatively an extension of short service, up to a maximum of eight years.[69] An Aircraft Maintenance and Repair Engineer was required by the RAN in May 1965, with no minimum term being stipulated.[70] British physicists and electrical engineers were required to assist with the development of Ikara, the Australian-designed ASW missile system, however, the contracts were only offered for either three or five years, with no suggestion of permanent re-settlement.[71] Following the announcement of a $A355,000,000 project for the design and production of three light destroyers (DDLs), the Department of the Navy advertised in *The Times* for the position of Director-General of Naval Design.[72] Arguably, the potential loss of civilians with a range of naval expertise also had an impact on Admiralty efficiency.

There were issues over the likelihood of defence personnel on exchange serving in theatres where their mother-service was not involved. During the Suez Crisis, complications arose leading to the removal of Commonwealth personnel from British ships taking part in operation MUSKETEER. The RAF wanted clarification on such personnel after the withdrawal of Commonwealth members of a bomber crew, and were hoping for a clear agreement with Commonwealth countries that 'unless we can use their aircrews as we wish we cannot have them in'.[73] The Second Sea Lord was against any restrictions which would weaken the exchange programme, and preferred the current arrangements whereby the Admiralty would honour a 'gentlemen's agreement'

that personnel on loan would not be involved in operations without their Government's consent, with the slight risk that they may have to be withdrawn for political reasons. Commonwealth Chiefs of Naval Staff fully agreed with this stance.[74] The RAN too, had complications with loan Royal Navy personnel during the Vietnam conflict. In late 1967, the British Secretary for Defence was forced to describe a report that Royal Navy personnel had been involved in secret military operations in Vietnam as 'totally untrue'.[75] It was said that since 1965, some 30 British service personnel, on loan or exchange, had been on short visits to South Vietnam, mainly in ships of the RAN, but that 'The arrangements under which they were exchanged or on loan precluded any active military operations'.[76] If personnel on loan were in the main kept out of conflict, there were no guarantees against peacetime casualties. Four Royal Navy officers and two ratings were serving in HMAS *Voyager* prior to its collision with the aircraft carrier HMAS *Melbourne* in 1964. The personnel were part of an exchange arrangement with the RAN. Two of the officers and two of the ratings were reported as missing. The accident also claimed the life of an ex-RN senior sailor; Chief Petty Officer Jonathan Rogers was posthumously awarded the George Cross, the highest peacetime award, following the sinking of *Voyager*. Rogers, who joined the RAN in 1950, who won the Distinguished Service Medal while serving with the Royal Navy in 1944. Following the collision, he organised the evacuation of some 50 men from the rapidly sinking forward section of the vessel and stayed behind with those who could not escape and 'led them in prayer and hymn'. Rogers' widow received the award from the Queen at Buckingham Palace on the 8 July 1965.

Officer exchanges took place at the highest levels. The most obvious examples of this were the Royal Naval officers serving as Australian Naval Chief prior to John Collins taking the position in February 1948. The Admiralty had no issues with the proposal for Collins to be given a sea-posting with the Royal Navy, following his retirement from the position of head of the RAN. Such an exchange was viewed as beneficial in binding the Commonwealth and its navies together.[77] The exchange was later disallowed on purely political grounds[78] but the fact that the Admiralty had no objections says much about the strength of the bonds between the services at the time. Indeed, such exchanges bolstered the ties between the navies. When concerns were raised about the gradual drifting apart between the Royal Navy and

Commonwealth navies, a tendency said to be most marked in the Royal Canadian Navy, no similar signs were noted with the RAN.[79] Admiralty views were that the problems were not so acute with the RAN due to the exchange of officers.[80] Following the Indonesian confrontation, future Vice Admiral Sir Nicholas Hill-Norton, then a Lieutenant, was 'sent to Australia in exchange for an Australian officer who'd been doing the course [Electronics Warfare] with me and wanted to stay in England for two years; I had a year on a ship, had a year ashore teaching tactics at their anti-submarine school which I quite enjoyed. It was interesting in seeing another country; interesting experiences in how another navy operated'.[81] Hill-Norton stressed that the RAN was *another* navy; if he had been transferred to the RAN at the end of the Second World War it is unlikely this would have been his view. Even though, cultural bonds existed between the services throughout the post-war period.

Within the overall theme of inter-service migration, the conditions and requirements placed on personnel wishing to join the RAN continued to alter. In early 1960 applicants, in this case for the Junior Recruit Training Scheme, had to be 'resident in Australia and be British subjects or Non-British residents complying with certain conditions'.[82] By late 1965, it was stated that applicants must be 'an Australian citizen or a British subject ordinarily resident in Australia',[83] whereas Army enlistment, not RAN or RAAF, was open to non-British nationals intending Australian naturalisation.[84] By late 1975, it was mandatory that personnel needed 'to be, or intend to become an Australian citizen'.[85] Thus the option was open, at least initially, for ex-RN personnel to join a foreign navy without necessarily becoming a citizen of that country, another reflection of the strong national ties between the UK and Australia, ties that altered, and in many ways mirrored, the altering ties between the Royal Navy and the RAN.

The strong cultural bonds between the services meant that personnel, especially officers, were exchanged constantly. This was, as Alastair Cooper correctly pointed out, 'to the RAN's almost exclusive advantage'.[86] Cooper carried out initial analysis of the relevant RAN *Navy Lists* to show how the trends of inter-service migration very much favoured the RAN. I am greatly indebted to this author for his pioneering work. Cooper readily acknowledged that his initial analysis did not include the number of Royal Navy officers as a percentage of the total RAN officer corps. Table 5.1 lists such statistical analysis, while Fig. 5.1 illustrates the

Table 5.1 RAN to RN officer ratios, 1945–74

Year	*Total officer strength of the RAN 1945–74*	*RN officers serving with the RAN 1945–74*	*RN officers serving with the RAN 1945–74 as a % of the total officer strength*
Oct-45	768	18	2.34
Oct-46	707	13	1.84
Oct-47	712	19	2.67
Oct-48	868	129	14.86
Oct-49	990	182	18.38
Oct-50	1085	260	23.96
Oct-51	1109	213	19.21
Oct-52	1202	242	20.13
Oct-53	1286	251	19.52
Oct-54	1299	193	14.86
Oct-55	1348	191	14.17
July-56	1343	135	10.05
Oct-57	1338	109	8.15
Oct-58	1311	86	6.56
Oct-59	1292	81	6.27
Oct-60	1291	77	5.96
Oct-61	1272	66	5.19
Oct-62	1270	63	4.96
Sept-63	1307	58	4.44
Sept-64	1386	59	4.26
Sept-65	1434	51	3.56
Sept-66	1545	46	2.98
Sept-67	1579	30	1.90
Sept-68	1699	31	1.82
Sept-69	1824	44	2.41
Sept-70	1923	47	2.44
Sept-71	2010	41	2.04
Sept-72	2120	40	1.89
Sept-73	2164	39	1.80
Sept-74	2058	27	1.31

Note All totals are of members of the Permanent Naval Forces only and do not take account of Reserve or Citizen Naval Forces
Personnel listed as Emergency or Retired are not included
Statistical data sourced via http://www.navy.gov.au/media-room/publications/navy-list

high reliance of the RAN on RN officers, either on loan or exchange.[87] This percentage is especially high during the period of 1948–53 and the creation of the Australian Fleet Air Arm.

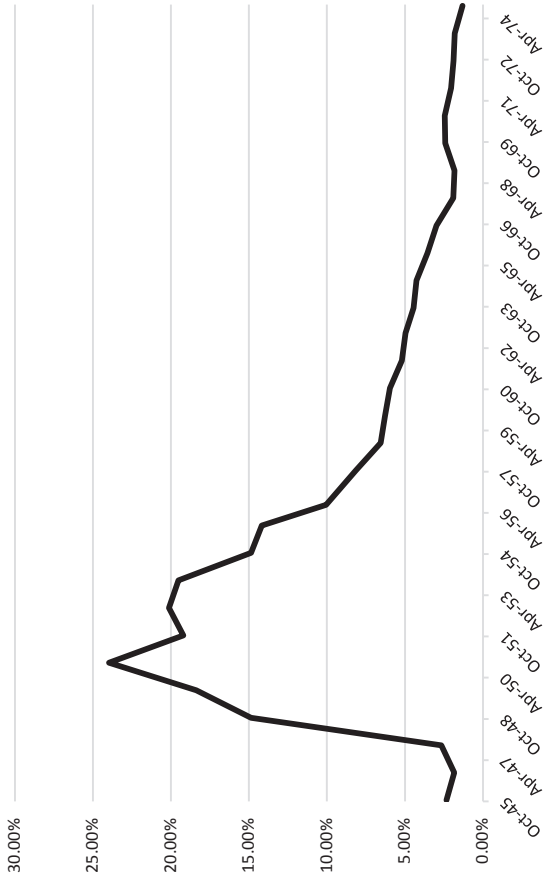

Fig. 5.1 RN officers serving with the RAN 1945–74 as a % of the Total Officer Strength

This migration tapered off sharply towards the early 1970s, which might seem to reflect a diminution in the overall strength of relations between the two services, but an analysis of RAN officer migration (Table 5.2 and Fig. 5.2) shows that RAN officer transfer to the Royal

Table 5.2 RAN officers serving with other navies, 1945–74

Year	*RAN officers serving with the RN 1945–74*	*RAN officers serving with the USN 1945–74*	*RAN officers serving with the RNZN 1945–74*	*RAN officers serving with the Malayan/ Royal Malaysian Navy 1945–74*	*RAN officers serving with the RCN 1945–74*
Oct-45	66	0	0	0	0
Oct-46	23	0	0	0	0
Oct-47	27	0	0	0	0
Oct-48	15	0	0	0	0
Oct-49	15	0	0	0	0
Oct-50	12	0	3	0	0
Oct-51	18	0	3	0	0
Oct-52	33	0	1	0	0
Oct-53	33	0	1	0	0
Oct-54	33	0	0	0	0
Oct-55	31	0	0	0	0
July-56	35	0	0	0	0
Oct-57	47	0	1	0	0
Oct-58	57	0	1	0	0
Oct-59	53	0	0	0	0
Oct-60	55	1	1	1	0
Oct-61	43	1	0	6	0
Oct-62	45	2	0	7	0
Sept-63	51	2	0	8	0
Sept-64	50	2	0	9	0
Sept-65	54	5	0	9	0
Sept-66	45	7	0	10	12
Sept-67	38	45	0	10	17
Sept-68	34	7	0	8	0
Sept-69	37	5	1	5	0
Sept-70	41	6	1	3	0
Sept-71	34	6	0	4	0
Sept-72	37	14	1	6	0
Sept-73	35	17	1	3	0
Sept-74	35	13	1	0	0

Statistical data sourced via http://www.navy.gov.au/media-room/publications/navy-list

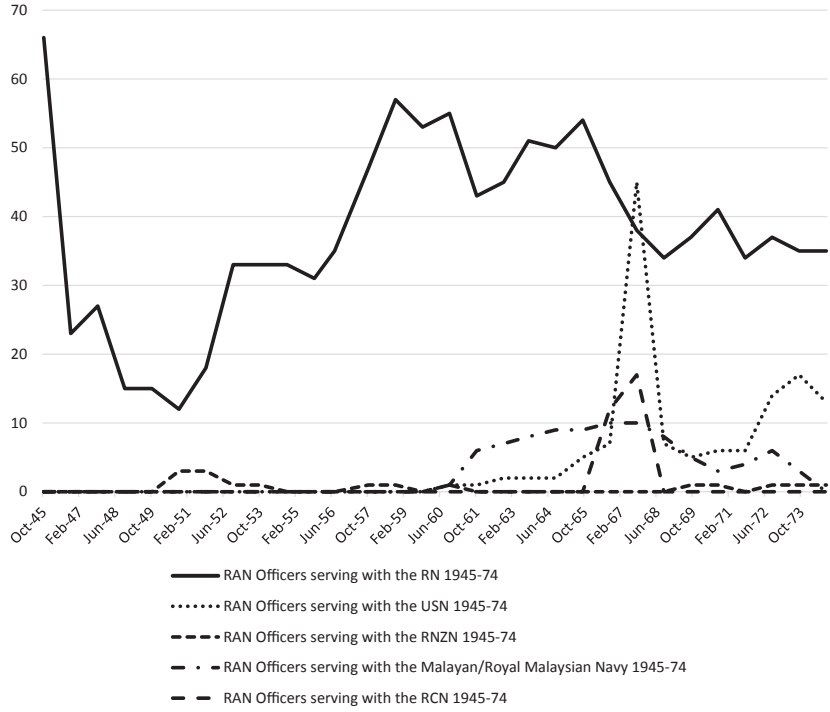

Fig. 5.2 RAN officers serving with other navies, 1945–74

Navy during the same period remained strong. The reduction of Royal Navy officer movement to the RAN thus illustrates a lessening of RAN reliance on British officers.

In the early 1970s, the incidence of RAN officers serving with the Royal Navy is high compared to those serving with other navies such as the United States Navy, the Royal New Zealand Navy, the Malayan/Royal Malaysian Navy and the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN). This shows the ongoing strength of the relationship between the RAN and the RN and that for all of the increased reliance of the RAN on navies other than the Royal Navy, for equipment and vessels, an Australian naval officer was still more likely to serve on a Royal Navy ship if he was transferred to another navy.

In early 1953, prior to Sir William Slim taking up the position of Governor-General of Australia, the First Sea Lord sent him a letter containing Admiralty views of the relationship between the services.

The following makes plain the mobility of officers between the services at the time:

> Rear Admiral Eaton of the Royal Navy, is the Flag Officer Commanding the Australian Fleet, but he will be relieved by an Australian Flag Officer this year. Commodore Price, Royal Navy, is the Fourth Naval Member for Air. Captain Sanderson, Royal Navy, commands the Royal Australian Naval Station at Schofield, and Captain Beattie, V.C. Royal Navy, commands [the] Australian First Frigate Squadron, in exchange for Captain Mackinnon, Royal Australian Navy, who is commanding the British Minelayer, *Apollo*, in our Home Fleet. There is also Captain Hutchinson, Royal Navy, in the U.K.S.L.S. in Melbourne.[88]

Following the First Lord of the Admiralty's visit to the Far East in 1958, a trip that included Australia, he remarked that he had been struck by the strength of personal bonds that existed between the Royal Navy and navies of the Commonwealth. He suggested that 'the growing national consciousness' of those countries would make it difficult to maintain those bonds, and that a 'growing reluctance of the Commonwealth navies to accept RN officers on loan could be offset by a more vigorous development of exchange officers'.[89] He also urged that everything should be done to encourage Commonwealth navies to send their young officers to the UK for training.

The Royal Navy had a manpower crisis in the post-Second World War period. This may seem paradoxical in a time of National Service but due to the limited availability of conscripts for use at sea, and the additional burden placed on the regular forces for the training of the conscripts, conscription was generally viewed by the Admiralty as an encumbrance. Despite the manpower crisis, the Royal Navy had a number of additional priorities including developing an 'Empire Navy', selling warships and ensuring that in times of joint action, such as the Korean conflict, the Royal Navy and other Commonwealth navies could work together with common understanding and procedure so adding to the strategic effectiveness of their naval presence. In light of these other priorities, assisting the RAN with their own manpower issues made sense.

The trends of manpower exchanges in the post-war period were stark. In the immediate post-war period, the percentage of RN officers in the RAN was relatively small at a time when the Royal Navy was a sizeable naval force; the RAN was a small adjunct of its much larger relative.

Between 1948–53, and the introduction of the British-built aircraft carriers, the reliance on Royal Naval personnel was great. The percentage of Royal Navy personnel serving with the RAN steadily declined, but during the period of 1967–73 the percentage of Royal Naval officers serving in the RAN remained remarkably similar, albeit at a relatively small level considering the high levels of officer exchange and loans during the creation of the Australian Fleet Air Arm. Conversely, an Australian officer was much more likely to carry out his duties on a Royal Navy warship than that of another navy if he was not serving with his own service.

There were many advantages for the RAN in the personnel exchanges with the Royal Navy. The RAN had a ready-use resource-pool of trained and competent personnel on which it could call on.[90] Commander Arthur Francis Turner of the Royal Navy, served on loan with the RAN from 1946–50. He was reported to have 'done a remarkably fine job in setting up the technical side of naval aviation in Australia'.[91] David Bathurst, a Royal Navy officer who served with the RAN as an aviation instructor in the late 1960s, described the operational experience as 'tremendous fun, [a] tremendous challenge, one really felt one was earning ones pay… I had never flown so hard in my life…about 60–70 hours a month'.[92] Bathurst was filling an important billet for the RAN; he took part in the Wessex 31B engine proving trials, and his first nine months were spent flying and instructing on that aircraft as he was the only qualified instructor. The exchange of personnel between the services was not without its difficulties, with concerns over accommodation, separation of families and cultural differences. Generally, RN personnel serving with the RAN faced more teething-problems than Australian officers and sailors seconded to, or training in, the UK.

The longevity of the personnel exchanges outlasted the strategic necessity of such exchanges and carried on through a period of great strategic change for both Australia and the UK. British strategic priorities altered from 'empire defence' in the immediate post-war period, to 'empire co-operation' as evidenced in the Korean conflict, to a 'retreat from empire' and the 'East of Suez' policy with a resultant priority given by the UK to the defence of Europe and the strengthening of ties to NATO. Australia too, saw much alteration in her strategic stance, with an increase in the national ties between the USA and Australia and a lessening of such ties between the UK and Australia. The ANZUS treaty and close military co-operation between Australia and the USA during the Vietnam War were high-level indications of this strategic shift.

The purchase by the RAN of US-built warships was but one indication of a lessening in the reliance felt by the RAN on RN support. Even so, personnel loans, exchanges and the recruitment of ex-naval personnel between the services continued, evidence of the strong historical and cultural ties between the RAN and the Royal Navy, as well as a certain amount of pragmatism on the part of the RAN.

Training was an important area of co-operation between the Royal Navy and the RAN. In the immediate post-war period the Admiralty considered that although it was desirable for the Dominions to maintain naval forces as required to suit their own needs, their squadrons and flotillas should form part of the 'Empire Navy' as a whole.[93] As such, the policy of exchange of personnel between the Royal Navy and the Dominion Navies should be greatly extended. It was viewed that a rigid adherence by the Dominion forces to their respective areas would preclude adequate training and thus the development of a common empire naval doctrine.[94] It was assumed that the Royal Navy would be primarily responsible for the training of Dominion navies, including the RAN. A common view at the time was that disproportionate sums were spent in small Dominion navies on local training facilities that were poor duplications of equipment and institutions already available in the UK.[95] Common training of officers, and to a lesser extent, sailors, of the Royal Navy and the RAN would allow personnel of both services to be interchangeable, but training of naval personnel was a drain on manpower and finance, and ships taking part in training duties were not always available for operational tasks. Inter-service training benefited the RAN to an even greater extent than did the exchange of personnel, as the burden of training personnel fell in the main on the Royal Navy. This was especially the case with the officer classes, but the cohesive training doctrine also served to strengthen the bonds between the services.

The Admiralty were extremely compliant towards Commonwealth navies such as the RAN in offering support with training matters. In his haul-down report, the Australian First Naval Member Louis Hamilton, was at great pains to emphasise the aid provided by the Admiralty with, amongst other assistance, training establishments, 'without which the Australian Navy could not exist for long as an efficient force'.[96] Officers in Commonwealth Navies had long been trained in Royal Navy establishments, a privilege not always attended to non-Commonwealth officers.[97] In considering changes to the initial entry of cadets to the Britannia Royal Navy College at Dartmouth, the Admiralty felt that,

although the main consideration should be the impact on cadets of the Royal Navy 'the cohesion of the Navies of the Commonwealth would be very adversely affected if the common early officer training of these Navies was discontinued'.[98] It was strongly recommended that 'the Commonwealth Navies should be given every encouragement to continue to send their Cadets to Dartmouth and then the Training Ship after the Thomas Scheme is introduced'. It was thought that some 50 RAN Midshipmen would join Dartmouth each year with a distribution amongst the branches being similar to that of British entrants.[99] Organisationally the college would remain as one, with Commonwealth and Royal Navy Midshipmen and Cadets spread over the houses. This integration of Commonwealth cadets with those of the Royal Navy was thought of as crucial in promoting links between the Royal Navy and those of the Commonwealth.[100] In 1958, the First Lord of the Admiralty urged that everything should be done to encourage Commonwealth navies to send their young officers to the UK for training.[101] While there were practical difficulties involved, it was thought that they should be approached with a willingness to accept some small loss in the efficiency of the Royal Navy for the sake of long-term dividends which closer personal association with the Commonwealth navies would produce.

The training assistance given by the British had financial implications for both the Admiralty and the RAN. Cooper correctly stated that 'The lack of support infrastructure represented an underlying weakness in the RAN's capabilities…[as] rather than dilute a limited program budget, the RAN usually preferred to acquire a larger number of operational platforms, which would directly contribute to its fighting strength'.[102] The support given by the Admiralty in training matters allowed the RAN to focus their resources on operational concerns. Conversely, resources devoted by the Admiralty to the naval education of members of the RAN were assets that could not be used elsewhere. To alleviate the possibility of young officers at Dartmouth being housed indefinitely in undesirably cramped accommodation, either Commonwealth entrants would have to be excluded, or additional buildings at a cost of some £75,000 would have to be erected. It was decided that to sustain British naval influence, Commonwealth countries should have the fullest opportunity of sending their young officers to the new-style Dartmouth. This would involve large capital costs for the Admiralty, therefore fees would have to rise to £600 a year. This amount only covered half the cost of training.[103] By March 1965, the Royal Navy were training approximately

700 officers and men from 30 different countries. According to the RAN *Navy List* of that time, RAN officers accounted for 90 personnel of this total, a significant amount.[104] An examination of Admiralty discussions on the matter of non-British trainees make plain that 'older members of the Commonwealth' such as Australia were much less of a burden than nations sending personnel for primarily political reasons, or when such personnel failed to reach an acceptable standard of English or were considered a potential security risk. Even so, assisting navies such as the RAN with the maritime education of their personnel was a financial drain on the Admiralty.

As British economic woes increased, it was felt that rationalisation of defence training offered to foreign and Commonwealth countries was necessary. In mid-1969 it was proposed that fees for foreign students on courses with the British Army should be increased 'in the order of 100%, and in many cases a great deal more'.[105] VCNS Vice Admiral Ashmore was not aware of any similar proposals for increased fees on naval courses, but he suggested that any intention to do so could have 'a most serious effect on sales of ships to foreign countries'. It was later agreed that tuition charges should be standardised on the Army/Air Force model, and this resulted in a steep rise in Navy charges, a sign that the fees previously being paid by overseas students at naval training establishments were not completely covering the costs of training. Charges were sometimes waived for countries with whom Reciprocal Training Arrangements had been agreed, and Australia was one such country.[106] The Admiralty wished to minimise the impact of increased charges on nations such as Australia, even though it was viewed that Australia would continue to send students to the UK. This was due to the fact that Australia could afford to pay the increased charges, and due to the high value the RAN attached to the military and technical expertise available at, and the standard of instruction of, British training establishments. The RAN continued to send personnel to the UK for professional advancement, but it increasingly found itself willing and able to take more of the burden for training its own personnel.

The RAN gradually transformed its own training resources, but there was still ongoing aid given by the Admiralty. During a visit to Australia during April–May 1955, Vice Admiral Sir Frank Mason, the Engineer-in-Chief of the Fleet, felt able to speak of unsatisfactory accommodation and facilities available to cadets at HMAS *Cerberus*, while pointing out that the Electrical School was excellent.[107] The speech was said to have

been very well received, and Mason was thanked most cordially for the help and advice he had given during his trip. HMAS *Cerberus* remained the entry point for officers and ratings until the 1950s when a number of other establishments assisted with its responsibilities for recruits and cadets. In 1956, HMAS *Nirimba* became the Royal Australian Naval Apprentice Training Establishment. The Royal Australian Naval College was returned to Jervis Bay in 1958 and commissioned as HMAS *Creswell*, and HMAS *Leeuwin* became the Junior Recruit Training Establishment in 1960.

Cooper was correct to point out that the lack of change in the RAN's training policy, and the continued reliance on the Royal Navy, 'is conspicuous', especially when one considers the degree of change in other operational areas.[108] Non-commissioned members of the RAN were not generally trained in the UK but following initial tuition in Australia, Royal Australian Naval College Graduates completed their specialist courses in Britain as late as 1968. Following the discontinuation of the Royal Navy's specialist warfare courses, the RAN continued to send its warfare officers on the replacement Principal Warfare Officers course until 1985.[109] An analysis has been made of the appropriate RAN *Navy Lists* to illustrate the level of RAN officers under training in the UK between 1945–73. As Fig. 5.3 'RAN Officers on Course and/or

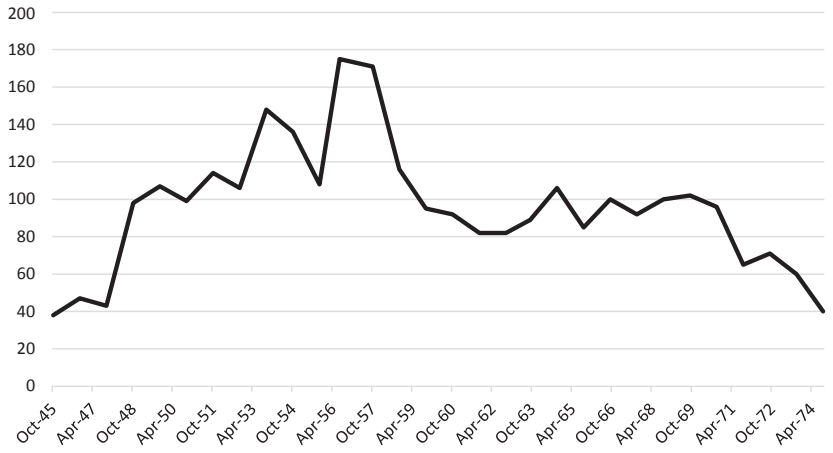

Fig. 5.3 RAN officers on course and/or training with the RN 1945–74

Training with the RN, 1945–1973' shows, there was a high reliance on RN training resources for Australian naval officers throughout the post-war period. Indeed, as Table 5.3 illustrates, the number of RAN officers under training in the UK in September 1973 was over 50% higher than in October 1945.

Table 5.3 RAN officers on course and/or training with the RN, 1945–74

Year	*RAN officers on course and/or training with the RN 1945–74*
Oct-45	38
Oct-46	47
Oct-47	43
Oct-48	98
Oct-49	107
Oct-50	99
Oct-51	114
Oct-52	106
Oct-53	148
Oct-54	136
Oct-55	108
July-56	175
Oct-57	171
Oct-58	116
Oct-59	95
Oct-60	92
Oct-61	82
Oct-62	82
Sept-63	89
Sept-64	106
Sept-65	85
Sept-66	100
Sept-67	92
Sept-68	100
Sept-69	102
Sept-70	96
Sept-71	65
Sept-72	71
Sept-73	60
Sept-74	40

Note All totals are of members of the Permanent Naval Forces only and do not take account of Reserve or Citizen Naval Forces
Statistical data sourced via
http://www.navy.gov.au/media-room/publications/navy-list

The period 1948–70 showed remarkably stable figures for British-based Australian naval officers under training. Even so, Australia increasingly found itself able to be less reliant on the UK for training purposes. Training for non-UK equipment such as the *Charles F. Adams* Class DDGs could not be carried out in the UK and such training was carried out in conjunction with the United States Navy. Submariner training continued to be held in the UK,[110] but by 1970 the RAN offered 750 training courses, 586 of which were offered by the service itself.[111] This was a sign of the RAN's growing independence.

There were benefits for the UK in assisting with the training of overseas students such as members of the RAN. Foreign officers especially, by expressing the ideas and the experience of their country, were thought to 'make a positive contribution to the military thought and breadth of outlook of British Officers'.[112] This was viewed to be even more advantageous when British officers were more likely to be confined to Europe following the withdrawal from the Far East. It was said to be 'clearly in the UK's interest to maintain and improve the capability and efficiency of friendly foreign and Commonwealth forces so they can undertake tasks for which they might otherwise seek assistance from UK forces'. This was even more of a benefit when consideration is given to the British cutbacks in defence. In addition, training foreign and Commonwealth officers helped in selling military hardware and 'by advocating the purchase of UK equipment, they assist service cooperation by commonality and thus interoperability of equipment'. The fact that the RAN felt such heartache in reaching the decision to purchase non-British warships in the 1960s lends credence to this point. Finally, it was assessed that by absorbing UK training methods and tactical doctrine, the difficulties associated with military co-operation in training or operations between other countries forces and those of the UK were lessened. This was certainly the case when one considers the Korean conflict where Commonwealth naval forces were able to operate together almost seamlessly.[113] This was in contrast to Commonwealth naval operations with the United States Navy, at least during the initial stages of the conflict, before operational procedures were agreed.

An example of the consequence of Admiralty aid in matters of personnel exchange and training is seen in the experience of W. N. Swan, a Royal Australian Naval Cadet in the immediate post-war period. In early 1947, Swan was sent to the UK to undergo a Physical Training and Welfare course at Portsmouth followed by two years exchange service

with the Royal Navy. He was delighted with the opportunity to serve with the Royal Navy; 'all my thoughts were 12,000 miles away with the mother of all Navies'[114] Swan recorded that 'Most [RAN officers] would have jumped at the 2 years exchange in the RN…'.[115] He said of his arrival in Portsmouth, 'This was not my first visit to the most famous naval base in the British Commonwealth but it was my first in uniform, and I loved every minute of it'.[116] Swan later took a Combined Operations course at HMS *Drake*, instruction in Minesweeping at HMS *Vernon*, Chemical Warfare tuition at HMS *Excellent*, a Joint Tactical course at HMS *Sea Eagle*, a Defence Officers course at HMS *Victory* and Boom Defence instruction at HMS *Safeguard*. Swan sailed for Australia on 19 January 1950, having been absent from Australia for two years and eight months, much of this time gaining professional qualifications at Royal Naval establishments. Swan was only one of the thousands of Australian naval officers who benefited from professional advancement in the UK. The officer class of the RAN owed the Admiralty much, for the generosity provided in matters of naval education and training.

There were advantages to the UK in supporting the training of RAN personnel. Common training strengthened the bonds between the services and made a drift away from the Royal Navy less likely as RAN members, in particular the officer class, had such close ties with the parent service. It was thought that common training of Commonwealth naval forces would solidify empire relations as a whole. The sale of British ships to foreign nations was viewed as more likely if there were relations between the Royal Navy and the navy of the prospective purchaser. Training of non-Royal Navy sailors and officers was a drain on Admiralty resources, but it was generally thought that the advantages of doing so outweighed the disadvantages. There were clear rewards to the RAN in utilising the resources of its much larger parent service. Training personnel in the UK made economic sense and allowed the RAN to devote scarce resources to operational requirements. The Admiralty did not charge exorbitant fees for such training and when pressured by external sources such as the Treasury to increase fees, the Admiralty generally resisted. The facilities able to be offered by a large navy such as the Royal Navy were better than those able to be provided by the RAN. The RAN gradually increased its training facilities and this was an indication of its growing independence, but officers continued to be educated in the UK throughout our period of interest. The continuation of utilising the Royal Navy for training purposes by the RAN indicates a level of

pragmatism on its part, as well as a measure of the close historical bonds between the services. This reliance is in contrast with the state of flux associated with other aspects of the relationship between the services during the same period. One observer remarked in early 1949, '…how much more effectively the potentially excellent human material, could be enticed into the Navy, and employed and trained, if it could circulate freely among the warships of the Empire and its training centres…'.[117] After the idea of an 'Empire Navy' lost favour, personnel exchanges between the Royal Navy and the RAN continued, as did much co-operation in matters of training.

Notes

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2. James Goldrick, 'Carriers For the Commonwealth,' in *Reflections on the RAN*, ed. T. R. Frame, J. V. P. Goldrick, and P. D. Jones (Kenthurst: Kangaroo Press, 1991), 232.
3. Melbourne, National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA), MP150/1, 348/240/4, Naval Aviation Loan Ratings, 1949.
4. London, TNA, ADM205/69, Letter from Hamilton to the Australian Prime Minister, 19 February 1948.
5. ADM205/69, Letter from Collins to Cunningham, 23 April 1948.
6. ADM205/69, Letter from First Sea Lord to Second Sea Lord, 10 May 1948.
7. ADM205/69, Letter from Director of Manning to Second Sea Lord, 14 May 1948.
8. ADM205/69, Letter from the Second Sea Lord to the First Sea Lord, 24 May 1948.
9. ADM205/69, Letter from First Sea Lord to Collins, 28 May 1948.
10. Melbourne, NAA, MP151/1, 348/201/85, Minute Paper by 2nd Naval Member, Suitability of Non-volunteers (RN) for Loan Service in RAN, 21 February 1949.
11. MP151/1, 348/201/85, Minute Paper by DAOT, Suitability of Non-volunteers (RN) for Loan Service in RAN, 24 February 1949.
12. ADM205/69, Letter from Collins to Fraser, 16 July 1948.
13. ADM205/69, Letter from Collins to Fraser, 7 September 1948.
14. ADM205/72, Aide Memoire of Meeting with First Naval Member, RAN on Tuesday, 26 April 1949.

15. ADM205/72, Minutes of Meeting with First Naval Member RAN on Tuesday, 26 April 1949.
16. ADM205/72, Meeting between the First Sea Lord and the First Naval Member RAN on Tuesday 26 April 1949, Annex II.
17. ADM205/72, Letter from Collins to Fraser, 5 August 1949.
18. London, TNA, ADM1/21605, Letter from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty to Col. J. R. H. Hutchinson M.P., 26 September 1949.
19. 'No-Home Navy Men Desert,' *Daily Express*, 22 August 1949, 5 and MP150/1, 569/201/2169, Letter from Mrs. Lilian Johnson, Co. Durham to Australian Prime Minister, 28 July 1949.
20. ADM1/21605, Letter from the Office of the High-Commissioner for the UK to the Commonwealth Relations Office, 4 July 1949.
21. ADM1/21605, Royal Australian Navy-Recruitment from Ex-R.N. Personnel, N.2/N.5957/48, 18 June 1948.
22. ADM1/21605, Letter from Commonwealth Relations Office to Naval Branch (II) Admiralty, 16 August 1949.
23. MP150/1, 569/201/2227, Message from Secretary Naval Board to 2nd Naval Member, 16 August 1950.
24. MP150/1, 569/201/2158, Letter from the ALP Mayfield Branch to the Minister for the Navy, 16 September 1949.
25. London, Imperial War Museum (hereafter IWM), Woodley, Sound Recording 28460/18/16.
26. ADM1/21605, Register No. 6909/49, 29 August 1949.
27. ADM205/72, Letter from Collins to Fraser, 5 August 1949.
28. DO35/2360, Letter from V. C. Duffy, Deputy High Commissioner, Australia House to Sir Percivale Leisching Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Commonwealth Relations Office, 15 September 1949.
29. DO35/2360, 'Did you serve in the Seaman branch of the Royal Navy?', Attachment to letter from C. L. Hewitt, Australia House to J. M. C. James, Commonwealth Relations Office, 9 May 1950.
30. For example, see 'Did You Serve in the Royal Navy,' *Sunday Express*, 13 August 1950, 13.
31. DO35/2360, Letter from C. L. Hewitt, Australia House to L.B. Walsh-Atkins, Commonwealth Relations Office, 18 July 1950.
32. DO35/2360, Attachment to letter from C. L. Hewitt, Australia House to L. B. Walsh-Atkins, Commonwealth Relations Office, 18 July 1950 and Letter from C. L. Hewitt, Australia House to Miss M. Beryl Chitty, Commonwealth Relations Office, 9 August 1950.
33. London, IWM, Tunstall, Sound Recording, 29959/6/5.

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36. London, IWM, Dobson, Sound Recording, 30906/6/3.
37. London, IWM, Bathurst, Sound Recording, 27084/11/3.
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39. ADM205/76, Letter from Collins to Fraser, 8 March 1951.
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41. Ibid., 172.
42. ADM205/76, Letter from United Kingdom Service Liaison Staff to First Sea Lord, 6 June 1951.
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44. DO35/2360, Appendix A to P618/1/18/116/6499, 'Recruitment in the United Kingdom', 22 June 1951.
45. DO35/2360, 'Australian request to be allowed to recruit officers in the UK for the RAN', 19 September 1949.
46. ADM205/105, Letter from Collins to First Sea Lord, 23 July 1954.
47. ADM205/105, Letter from Collins to First Sea Lord, 27 January 1955.
48. ADM205/169, Letter from Dowling to First Sea Lord, 12 April 1957.
49. ADM205/86, Letter from First Sea Lord to Commander in Chief, Far-East, 16 June 1952.
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55. ADM205/105, Letter from First Sea Lord to Australian First Naval Member, 19 August 1955.
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58. ADM167/162, Admiralty Board Minutes, 13 December 1963, Manpower 1964–68; 5619.

59. ADM167/162, Admiralty Board Minutes, 4 November 1963, Manpower 1964–68; 5610.
60. 'Classified Ad 1,' *Manchester Guardian*, 23 December 1950, 2.
61. 'Display Ad 14,' *Observer*, 7 February 1965, 6 and 'Display Ad 57,' *Guardian*, 9 April 1965, 6.
62. 'Display Ad 65,' *Observer*, 14 March 1971, 16.
63. 'Australia Appointments,' *The Times*, 24 June 1970, 37.
64. 'Career Opportunities for Officers,' *The Times*, 23 January 1968, IX and 'Career Opportunities for Direct Entry Officers,' *The Times*, 2 September 1969, II.
65. 'Join Them,' *Sun-Herald*, 12 November 1967, 95.
66. ADM167/163, Admiralty Board Minutes, 20 February 1964, Memorandum by Second Sea Lord; 5641.
67. ADM167/171, Admiralty Board Minutes, 29 April 1971, Long Term Costing 1971, (A/P(71)2).
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70. 'Classified Ad 82,' *Observer*, 2 May, 1965, 17 and 'Appointments and Situations,' *The Times*, 4 May 1965, 2.
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76. Ibid.
77. ADM205/88, Letter from the First Sea Lord to Sir William Slim, 18 February 1953.
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80. ADM205/101, Letter from First Sea Lord to CIC Far-East Station, No. 1659, 29 July 1954.
81. London, IWM, Nicholas John Hill-Norton, Sound Recording 9034/01/01.
82. 'For Boys Leaving School the Navy Has the Answer on Opportunity,' *Age*, 25 February 1960, 6.
83. 'Imagine Yourself Aboard…Only 12 Weeks After Joining the Navy,' *Age*, 20 June 1965, 12 and 'Join Them,' *Sun-Herald*, 12 November 1967, 95.
84. 'Combined Services Recruiting Centre,' *Age*, 1 November 1967, 25.
85. 'Positions Vacant as Commissioned Officers in the Navy,' *Age*, 25 November 1975, 6.
86. Alastair Cooper, 'At the Crossroads: Anglo-Australian Naval Relations, 1945–1971,' *The Journal of Military History* 58, no. 4 (1994): 712.
87. The RAN *Navy List*, the basis for my statistical analysis, does not differentiate between the two.
88. ADM205/88, Letter from the First Sea Lord to Sir William Slim, 18 February 1953.
89. ADM167/151, Admiralty Board Minutes, 23 October 1958, First Lord's Eastern Tour: Relations with Commonwealth Navies.
90. Cooper, 'At the Crossroads: Anglo-Australian Naval Relations, 1945–1971,' 712.
91. Cambridge, Churchill College Archives Centre (hereafter CCAC), Turner, Personal Papers, TRNR, Conduct Report, 19 September 1949.
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93. ADM167/124, Admiralty Board Minutes, 17 July 1945, Memorandum for the Board, The Post-war Navy and the Policy Governing its Composition, P.D/O.L.133/45.
94. ADM167/124, Admiralty Board Minutes, 12 September 1945, Memorandum for the Board, Composition of the Post-war Navy, P.D.0140/45.
95. See Eleigh, 'The King's Navy of the Commonwealth,' *The Naval Review* XXXVII, no. 1 (February 1949): 90.
96. ADM205/69, Memorandum from Hamilton to Chifley, 19 February 1948.
97. Indeed, there was a long-established rule that 'the only foreigners [non-Commonwealth] who may be admitted to the RN training at Dartmouth are princes of the blood royal in direct line of succession to a throne', see ADM167/159, Admiralty Board Minutes, 15 March 1961, Admission of Foreigners to Dartmouth; B.1385.
98. ADM167/143, Admiralty Board Minutes, 21 September 1953, Dartmouth report on the Thomas Scheme.

99. ADM167/145, Admiralty Board Minutes, 23 July 1954, Board Memorandum Dartmouth-Report of Working Party 'A'.
100. It was common for Cadet passing-out lists to be reported in *The Times* where Australian graduates were listed with their British and Commonwealth colleagues; for example, see 'Naval Cadetships-Passing Out Lists,' *The Times*, 8 May 1950, 2.
101. ADM167/151, Admiralty Board Minutes, 23 October 1958, First Lord's Eastern Tour: Relations with Commonwealth Navies.
102. Alastair Cooper, '1955–1972: The Era of Forward Defence,' in *The Royal Australian Navy*, *Australian Centenary History of Defence Vol. 3*, ed. David Stevens (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001), 197.
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106. London, TNA, DEFE5/192/22, Annexe A to COS22/72, 15 February 1972, Tuition Charges for Overseas Students Attending UK Courses.
107. London, TNA, ADM265/23, Report on the Visit of Vice Admiral Sir Frank Mason KCB Engineer-in-Chief of the Fleet to Australia, New Zealand and Singapore, April-June 1955, Dinner at Parliament House, 9 May 1955.
108. Cooper, 'At the Crossroads: Anglo-Australian Naval Relations, 1945–1971,' 710.
109. Cooper, '1955–1972: The Era of Forward Defence,' 196.
110. An interesting account of issues with submariner training of Australian sailors was recounted by Ian Tyson, a UK instructor carrying out submariner training at HMS *Dolphin*. Such training had an international flavour to it with 'Canadians and Australians and Brits all going through it at the same time.' Tyson recalled that 'when the Australians came over to do their submarine escape training quite a few of them refused to do the escape training tank.' According to Tyson they were sent home and it was reported in the national papers; London, IWM, Tyson, Sound Recording, 25920/8/5.
111. Cooper, '1955–1972: The Era of Forward Defence,' 196.
112. DEFE5/192/22, Annexe A to COS22/72, 15 February 1972, Tuition Charges for Overseas Students Attending UK Courses.
113. Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War, Vol. 2 Combat Operations* (Canberra: AGPS, 1985), 417.

114. London, IWM, Swan, Transcript Memoir, 83/35/1 Voyage in Time Part 2, 432.
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116. Ibid., 437.
117. Eleigh, 'The King's Navy of the Commonwealth,' *The Naval Review* XXXVII, no. 1 (February 1949): 90.

CHAPTER 6

Equipment Design and Procurement

Resource collaboration in matters of military equipment between the Royal Australian Navy and the Royal Navy was an extremely important aspect of the inter-service relationship. Great assistance was given by the Admiralty in the implementation of the Australian Naval Air Arm; indeed, the creation of the latter was unthinkable without the former. In 1957, Australia reached agreement with the USA on standardisation of military equipment, however, this had little effect upon Anglo-Australian naval co-operation in the procurement of major vessels. There were often occasions where vessels were loaned from one service to another, with the majority of cases being from the Royal Navy to the RAN. Exchange of vessels between the two services was very much thought of as beneficial, even though lack of military resource on both sides prohibited any great progress in this regard. The Admiralty-based submarines in Australia to assist the ASW training requirements of the Australian Fleet, and when Australia implemented a submarine capability of its own, primarily due to dwindling British resources, British submarines were chosen. Equipment design co-operation between the RAN and the Royal Navy was evident during the post-war period, perhaps most notably with the Ikara ASW missile system, a weapon system fitted to both RAN and RN vessels, albeit in moderately different variants. The RAN also accepted Admiralty support following the loss of the destroyer HMAS *Voyager* in 1964. The purchase of non-UK built or designed vessels by the RAN, in particular, the *Charles F. Adams* class DDGs from the USA, will be covered in a subsequent chapter, however, the purchase of such

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vessels will be addressed in this chapter when the topic provides a contrast to the UK-Australian naval procurement processes.

The RAN relied on British resources to satisfy their naval requirements in varying degrees between 1945–75. In the immediate post-war period, the reliance was almost total. The political implications of the increasing void between the UK and Australia, and the amplified sense of Australian independence, manifested themselves in a gradual weaning of the RAN from the Admiralty's embrace. Allied to these trends was the growing readiness of the Australian naval establishment to seek equipment from non-Admiralty sources. By the early 1960s, the RAN had sourced major naval vessels, from the USA, a process that would have been virtually unthinkable in the mid-1940s. This did not herald a complete switch to American ships as some envisaged, and the RAN continued to source British designed and/or built vessels and aircraft till the end of our period of concern and beyond. This was a measure of the continuing, albeit reduced strength, of the Anglo-Australian naval relationship. Related to the reduced reliance of the RAN on the Admiralty for its naval hardware requirements, was a growing willingness to gain vessels from a number of sources, itself a demonstration of increased Australian naval independence.

There were clear benefits for both Australia and Great Britain in widening the scope of the naval capability of the RAN to include naval air-power. The addition of a naval air-power capacity to the RAN was seen as an important part of Imperial defence, with strategic benefits to Great Britain as well as Australia. The close ties between the two services at the time meant that realistically any assistance given to the RAN had to come from the Admiralty. The process of transferring the requisite vessels and aircraft was anything but simple, and the negotiations were long and drawn-out, with economic, political and technical issues affecting the overall transfer process.[1] The Australian government was unwilling to pay more than was absolutely necessary for the carriers. The Admiralty made a number of concessions during the negotiations including putting pressure on the British Treasury to make the purchase of the vessels as attractive as possible to the Australians. There was confusion about the technical capabilities of the proposed vessels, however, Australia accepted the ships as being best suited to provide the backbone of the post-war fleet. After protest by the RAAF, the RAN was given the right to control the aircraft on the carriers, an outcome that suited the Admiralty as much as the RAN. The carrier negotiations should be viewed in the

wider context of Anglo-Australian relations in the immediate post-war period.

In the immediate post-war period, Australian defence resources were viewed as an important part of Imperial defence. Following the examples set by the major naval forces during the Second World War on the efficacy of naval air-power, the RAN could only contribute to Imperial defence in the post-war period if the service possessed aircraft carriers. A navy without aircraft carriers would be significantly less able to execute certain missions than a navy that possessed such vessels. The lessons learned from the conflict included the fact that organic air-power that is air-power that was part of the naval force it was tasked to protect and work with, as opposed to land-based air-cover, was much more efficient. This was due to a variety of reasons, perhaps most importantly that the naval force would have a much greater range of effectiveness as it did not have to rely unduly on land-based air-cover. This was particularly significant in the case of Australia, the largest island on the planet. As late as 1971 the necessity of naval aviation was stressed by one observer: 'I think it will always remain a requirement in any navy, not only in my navy, but any navy of any consequence, for organic airpower of some sort…'[2] It was viewed by the RAN that it was technically viable for the service to possess aircraft carriers, and this fact was politically acceptable to the Australian government.

As early as 1944 the Australian Defence Committee resolved that the RAN should have a balanced 'Naval Task Force' including aircraft carriers, the immediate provision being for one carrier, with consideration given to a second vessel.[3] The need for a balanced force was crucial as far as Admiral Sir Guy Royle, the wartime Australian Naval First Member was concerned. A balanced naval force, whether that force be an entire fleet, or a task force despatched from the fleet, was one that was expected to be capable of carrying out several tasks across the spectrum of naval operations, while possessing the requisite types of vessels to provide protection from a variety of potential threats, whether airborne, surface or subsurface in nature. An example of a balanced fleet was that proposed in Admiralty Memorandum 435 'The Composition of the Post War Navy'; 4 battleships, 4 fleet carriers, 10 light carriers, 32 cruisers, 64 destroyers, 60 escorts and 45 submarines. The Anzac contribution was expected to be 1 carrier, 3 cruisers, 8 destroyers and 8 escorts. This appeared to be a balanced force as the aircraft carrier would be expected to provide organic air-cover for the group, the cruisers would provide

protection from surface vessels, as would the destroyers, who would assist in anti-submarine warfare duties with the additional escorts. The carrier's aircraft could also be utilised in harmony with the surface vessels in projecting power onto the land as and when required, as well as providing ASW aircraft to assist in the protection of the task force from submarines.[4] An example of an unbalanced force would be if the aforementioned task force, minus its organic air-cover, entered an environment where enemy aircraft were expected, especially if this location was out of the range of land-based air protection, or if the carrier was sent into an environment without adequate support and escort vessels to protect it from attack from either surface or subsurface vessels. The RAN did not possess aircraft carriers during the war and its vessels had had to rely on air-cover from allied forces. The addition of naval air-power was thought of as a crucial capability if the service was to play its part in Imperial defence as a modern naval force.

The Australian War Cabinet rejected any wartime acquisition, deeming it 'prudent to defer any decision until the post-war position could be more accurately determined.'[5] The Defence Committee's report of 19 June 1945, in considering the 'nature and functions' of the necessary post-war forces, recommended that defence co-operation with the UK and the USA was essential, and that Australia ought to participate fully in the putative World Organisation for Collective Security, by maintaining 'highly mobile offensive Naval, Army and Air Forces…'[6] It was recommended that such forces include a balanced naval task force, incorporating aircraft carriers. The purpose of a balanced fleet was to contribute to Imperial defence. The fleet would of course be used for the defence of Australia, but this was tied into the defence of the empire as a whole, at least as far as the British were concerned:

> The basis of Imperial Defence is the control of sea communications. Without this control, members of the British Commonwealth become disconnected units each one too weak for defence against a first class power. With assured sea communications the whole strength of the Empire can be brought to bear in any part of the world with the greatest economy and effect.[7]

At the end of the Second World War, the Admiralty regarded the RAN as part of a single Imperial fleet. The Dominions were expected to shoulder some of the burden of Imperial defence:

> Every encouragement should be given to the Dominions to bear their share of Imperial defence. The numbers of ships and personnel contributed by them to the Empire Navy will affect the numbers which it is necessary for the United Kingdom to provide. The decision, however, as to what ships can and will be maintained by the Dominions must remain a matter for their own Governments.[8]

Implicit in this statement is the fact that the more vessels and sailors provided by the RAN, the less would have to be provided by the Royal Navy. By the first half of 1947, the term 'Imperial Defence' was no longer being used, however, the idea of the security of Great Britain and the Commonwealth as being intertwined was still strong: 'The British Commonwealth must…to the limit of her economic capacity, be strong and prepared at all times to contribute a share adequate to her world wide responsibilities as a first class power'.[9]

Britain's principles of defence were specified as the ability to defend the resources on which the Commonwealth would draw on to prosecute a major war, until 'with our allies we can develop an all out offensive', and 'the building of bases from which this offensive can be launched.' It was reiterated that 'The integrity of each member of the Commonwealth is the concern of all. Close co-operation on defence matters will greatly increase the strength of the Commonwealth as a whole.' The defence of each individual Commonwealth territory was considered crucial, but so were the sea communications linking them. It is no surprise that such emphasis was placed on the maintenance of sea communications when one takes into account the stranglehold placed on the UK by German U-boats during the Second World War. A naval aviation capability would greatly assist the RAN in meeting the perceived responsibilities the service had to perform in Imperial defence. Any resources that the RAN could provide to the defence of the empire would be resources that Great Britain, and more specifically the Royal Navy, would not have to provide. When the resource in question was one that the RAN did not currently possess, such as a naval aviation capability, the Admiralty would have to assist in the implementation of the capability in the first place.

The Australian government agreed on the necessity for carriers for the RAN. John Dedman, the Australian Minister of Defence, made a statement to parliament on the 4 June 1947 on Australian Post-War Defence Policy. Dedman quoted Admiral Richmond, 'the greatest modern writer on Imperial Strategy', in justifying the increase of the RAN to 2 light

fleet carriers, 2 cruisers, 6 destroyers, 3 frigates and 13 support ships, with fifty vessels in reserve. Dedman noted that 'at no time in its history will Australia have made as great a peace-time contribution to British Commonwealth Defence and to the maintenance of peace and security at large than is contemplated in this programme'.[10] One observer has noted that 'This programme was of fundamental importance in setting the shape of post-war defence forces. The acquisition of naval aviation meant that the RAN would be able to play a principal role in naval cooperation with Australia's allies'.[11] The then Australian CNS Sir Louis Hamilton wrote to the British First Sea Lord in great spirits. Enclosing a copy of the statement made by Dedman, Hamilton was heartened as according to him 'it is the first concrete evidence that the British Empire is not going to disintegrate as a world power…' and 'It means that Australia, for the first time in her history is going to take a real share in Imperial Defence on a planned basis'.[12] Hamilton had long been a proponent of an Australian naval air capability:

> I feel my main job out here is to convince the Australian government of the necessity for a modern RAN including FAA and carriers, which can act as a self contained unit of the future Empire fleet.[13]

It is telling that both Dedman and Hamilton made reference to 'Imperial defence' as being the prime requisite for the increase in Australian naval capability, as opposed to the defence of Australia per se.

Bearing in mind the historical and cultural ties still in place between the RAN and the Royal Navy, any assistance given to the RAN in implementing a naval air capability by another naval force would have to come from the Admiralty. If it was clear that the RAN should possess carriers, and it was equally clear that any assistance should be provided by the Admiralty, it was perhaps less clear about how the creation of an Australian Fleet Air Arm could best be implemented. What followed were varying degrees of co-operation on differing levels of governmental, military and personal affairs in regards to the implementation of the Australian Naval Air Arm.

The First Sea Lord was of the opinion that 'the proposal of the Australian Government to establish a Naval Air Arm was a step of very great strategic significance which the United Kingdom government, in their own interest, should do everything possible to encourage'.[14] A draft brief for the First Lord regarding the RAN carrier capability assists

to emphasise some of the reasoning behind the stance of the Admiralty; 'The fundamental principle on which the proposals in this paper are based, is that the Australian naval aviation plan should not be jeopardised'.[15] The Australian government were to be pacified as much as possible, '…the issue is not [whether] Mr. Chifley's state of mind is justified or not, but that this state of mind is a fact that may jeopardise the naval aviation plan'. Concessions were thought to be necessary, however, any financial concessions should be the minimum necessary, 'subject to the overriding proviso that the Australians must not reject it'. It was viewed that the Admiralty 'must subsidise the start of Australian naval aviation, up to the point at which the Australian Government is thoroughly committed to it; once they are committed, it should be neither in accordance with UK nor with Australian policy for us to continue subsidies'.

The Admiralty saw a special naval interest in addition to the political and strategic significance of the creation of an Australian Air Arm. Inter-service rivalry between the Royal Navy and the RAF was great, especially where the thorny issue of naval air-power was concerned. This also was the case concerning the RAN and the RAAF. During the Australian Defence Committee meeting of February 1946, the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice Marshal Jones, wanted clarification on a naval air arm independent of the RAAF before agreeing to support discussions with the Admiralty. During July and August of 1947 discussions took place in Defence Committee meetings over who was best suited to provide the carriers with the seagoing and land-based portions of the 'air component'. This included aircraft, air ammunition and stores, flying and air maintenance personnel, training, relevant shore facilities and motor transport. This was a considerable amount of resource that both the RAN and RAAF were keen to provide. Captain E. W. Anstice, then on loan from the Royal Navy and serving as Director, Naval Aviation Planning Staff, was part of the evaluation team tasked with reporting on the advantages and disadvantages of either RAN or RAAF control of the air complement. Hamilton wrote that the report was 'masterly' and brought 'out all the overwhelming advantages' of RAN control of these assets.[16] After much discussion the Defence Council accepted that the status and control of the Naval Aviation Branch should be determined in accordance with the principles of the Naval Plan which entailed RAN control of the aircraft on the carriers. Chifley gave governmental approval to the recommendation in July 1947, and the Cabinet endorsed this decision on the 15 August 1947.

The Admiralty were informed by Hamilton of conflict with the Chief of Air Staff (CAS) regarding the issue of how best to utilise air power in the defence of Australia; '[the Chief of Air Staff] launched out into a diatribe on the iniquities of two Air-Forces, the duplication and extravagance of two-training set-ups, and that [the] Royal Australian Air Force would man the [aircraft on the] Carriers under Naval operational control'.[17] These arguments and counterarguments involving the RAN and RAAF were really a reproduction of the conflict of opinion between the Admiralty and the Air Ministry in Britain between 1918 and 1937 over control of the Fleet Air Arm. It did not hurt the RAN's cause to have officers such as Anstice and Hamilton, knowledgeable of past interservice rivalry between the RN and the RAF, and able to use such knowledge to their advantage, fighting its corner. The First Sea Lord noted that he was 'glad to learn that the RAN are to man their own Carriers'. As a close relation of the Royal Navy, the fact that the RAN were in control of their own aircraft gave political benefits to the parent service; 'the allocation of responsibility and the provision of money for this service in Australia to the Navy, and not to the Air Force, represents a very satisfactory decision in a controversy that has occurred in the past in this country and may yet be revived'.[18]

After much support from the Admiralty, the RAN had been given the wherewithal by the Australian government to implement an aircraft carrier capability. In addition, the RAN had been given the political support to take control of the air component of the carrier force against the wishes of the RAAF, again with the support of British Naval officers. In many respects, it suited Britain to enable Australia to contribute as much as possible to Imperial defence, and one important way to do so, was by building a naval aviation capability for the RAN. As Grove pointed out, in August 1946, there was barely 122 aircraft in Britain's recently named 'Naval Aviation'.[19] Any increase in RAN capability meant that the Royal Navy could, as part of an Imperial force, do more with less. An additional benefit to the Royal Navy was the fact that manpower was an issue in the immediate post-war period and the navy did not have enough men to man the vessels available.

One beneficial aspect of Admiralty assistance was due to the economic importance to shipbuilding areas in which the vessels were to be constructed. Even so the expected advantages associated with post-war shipbuilding was not thought to be a one-way street. Hamilton's predecessor, Royal Navy Admiral Sir Guy Royle, pointed out that:

> Australia was now capable of building ships up to the size of *Battle* class destroyers and it may well be that if an agreed Imperial defence policy can be arrived at, we could come to an arrangement whereby they built destroyers for us and in return we built cruisers etc. for them. This policy might go further and Australia might undertake production of certain types of war material for use in British ships.[20]

The creation of a naval aviation capability, controlled by the RAN, added to the Australian defence repertoire was desired by not only those in Australian defence circles with a vested interest such as the RAN, but the Army as well.[21] There were dissenters such as the RAAF but inter-service rivalry, especially when one considers the implementation of naval air-power, was not unheard of. The Admiralty certainly did all in their power to further the cause of Australian naval aviation. A cynic may say that this was to reduce weight from the groaning level of British defence resources, but one must remember the 'special relationship' between the RAN and the RN worked both ways. Following the Second World War, it was evident to many that any modern naval force 'worth its salt', especially one such as the RAN, expected to, and expecting to, contribute to a high level of Imperial defence, needed to possess aircraft carriers. It was also evident that in the immediate post-war period, the RAN required the support of 'great and powerful friends', in this case, the Admiralty.

The carrier HMAS *Sydney*, formerly HMS *Terrible*, was accepted by the RAN in 1949. Her sister ship HMAS *Melbourne*, ex-HMS *Majestic*, was not commissioned until 1955, due to the necessity for an angled flight deck, mirror deck-landing system and steam catapult. The Admiralty provided the carrier HMS *Vengeance* on loan from 1953 to 1955 to satisfy the RAN's requirements for a two-carrier navy. The First Naval Member at the time wrote 'From the Prime Minister down we are all most grateful to the Admiralty and the United Kingdom for her.'[22] The carrier's first Australian commander also viewed the loan as a generous act on the part of the Admiralty. *Sydney* served with distinction in the Korean War, while *Melbourne* remained a key part of the fleet throughout our period of interest, only being decommissioned in 1982. Undoubtedly, *Melbourne* served 'an invaluable and memorable career' and 'her presence added prestige and credibility to Australia's position in SE Asia and Pacific areas during her 27 years service'.[23] Cooper suggested that 'perhaps the most interesting feature of the RAN's entire campaign for the adoption of carriers is that at no time in the whole

process was any consideration given to acquiring the carriers, aircraft, or aviation experience from any source other than the Royal Navy.'[24] This was true, and was a sign of the close inter-service ties between the RN and the RAN in the immediate post-war period.

The question of standardisation of Australian military equipment is pertinent to the level of RAN-Royal Navy co-operation in matters of naval hardware and vessels. In late 1947, the UK took part in discussions with the USA and Canada on standardisation of equipment, and it was viewed that this may have had an impact on 'the future training and equipment of [Australian] forces, in that they have been closely modelled on, and to a greater or lesser extent integrated with ours in the past'.[25] The Australian Prime Minister was assured by the British Prime Minister that 'There is nothing in our plans that would change or harm this'. In 1951, the Admiralty considered measures to be taken to encourage the standardisation of doctrine, tactics and equipment between the Royal Navy and other Commonwealth Navies. It was proposed to make available to the RAN, as well as the Royal New Zealand Navy and the South African Navy, information on the most modern equipment then in use with the Royal Navy to enable either the purchase of equipment from UK production or the production of similar or interchangeable equipment from Commonwealth resources. The Australian Commonwealth Naval Board accepted the proposals and recommended adding a specialist executive officer to the Naval Liaison Staff to assist in duties associated with standardisation issues. At this time there was already a very high level of RAN standardisation with the Admiralty; as the Director of Naval and Air Stores pointed out 'it has always been the policy of the RAN to adopt Admiralty patterns and specifications for all types of stores and equipment so that units of the RAN could operate with sister ships of the RN and avail themselves of the storing facilities of RN bases or supply ships'.[26]

On 4 April 1957, the Australian Prime Minister announced that Australian weapons would be standardised as much as possible with American patterns. This was because Great Britain would find it difficult to maintain a supply line to South East Asia in a global conflict, a war in which it was assumed that Australian forces would be fighting alongside those of the USA.[27] Tellingly, while the RAAF would rearm with fighter and transport aircraft of a performance equivalent to those already in service with the US Air Force, and the Australian Army was to be equipped

with small arms and artillery on American lines, no major changes were proposed for the Navy.

A US Technical Mission visited Australia at the end of 1957 and recommended to the US Department of Defense that 'the United States and Australia pursue a policy of progressive standardization of military equipment'. One of Australia's reservations was that while standardisation of equipment should be the ultimate goal, compatibility of equipment should be emphasised as an immediate and acceptable substitute. A particular concern of the RAN was the continuing need to be able to work closely with the Royal Navy, however, the Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff stated the proposed agreement ought not to be read to preclude that.[28] Indeed, the report from the Technical Mission indicated that the USA 'was looking to the Australian Navy for anti-submarine capabilities and for operational compatibility with US forces with their present basic armament rather than for complete standardization.'[29] The RAN agreed with this approach. A draft agreement was subsequently prepared by the US Department of Defense stating that the 'Proposals…of Australian military equipment on United States models should be considered favourably', however, standardization matters would proceed on a service-to-service level.[30] Following revisions of the draft, the Defence Committee, including the Chief of the Naval Staff, supported the Agreement. It was suggested that there were many advantages in having an understanding with the US, and the revised version 'does not require us to do anything unless we so agree'.[31] Athol Townley, the Australian Minister of Defence signed the Agreement on the 21 September 1960. Although some feared that the UK would feel that the new agreement would exclude them from equipment orders in due course, it was stressed that Australia did not consider that to be the case; compatibility was the important objective, and not a formal goal of standardisation. Thus, the RAN was free to purchase Admiralty hardware as and when they saw fit.

There were clear political benefits for Australia in formalising equipment standardisation with the USA; as one observer stated 'This could be viewed as a real commitment by the US to Australian defence and in this sense a culmination of searching diplomatic policy since the war.'[32] In formalising such agreements, however, there was no political pressure to force the RAN towards only purchasing from the USA. The Minister of Defence stated that policy of standardisation with the US did not mean that 'where we have to buy from overseas we automatically buy

from the United States'.[33] He used the RAN's example of purchasing the bulk of its equipment from Great Britain as a case in point. Australia in general, but the RAN in particular, continued to co-operate with Great Britain in matters of equipment procurement after the agreements were reached with the USA. Indeed, it was hoped that a successful standardisation agreement between Australia and the US may lead to freer negotiations between the UK and Australia.

Standardisation did not greatly affect the level of arms purchased by the RAN from Admiralty sources. Even in the late 1960s, it was deemed preferable that in provisioning overseas the fundamental premise should be to assure supply, account being taken to the basic policy of compatibility of US equipment, together with performance and cost factors; 'In this context compatibility does not carry the implication that the US must be thought of as the primary source of supply.'[34] It was considered by the Defence Committee that too much emphasis was placed on reliance with the US, and that 'the United Kingdom, although gradually re-orientating militarily and economically towards Europe, will still remain a major customer of Australia'.[35] The standardisation process illustrated the strong ties between the RAN and the Royal Navy. While willing to accept the concept of standardisation, the RAN also stressed that the service did not wish its dealings with the Royal Navy to be unduly affected.

As well as the extensive exchange of personnel between the Royal Navy and the RAN, exchange of ships were thought of as advantageous by both services. Agreement in principle was expressed for the exchange of military units by political figures in both the UK and Australia in late 1949. The Admiralty were very supportive of the idea and proposed that the exchange should be between fully operational units of the RAN and the Mediterranean Fleet, on the basis of one cruiser or carrier, or of two destroyers or frigates, to be put into effect sometime in 1951. In response, the Australian Naval Board cited manning difficulties as the reason why such an exchange of units could not take place, 'although the desirability of doing so is fully appreciated and will be kept constantly in mind.'[36] The RAN later suggested that 'this interchange should now be seriously considered. Nothing but good could come of the exchange…' and it was proposed to the Admiralty that two *Battle* class destroyers be allocated for exchange from January 1956 to August of the same year.[37] The Admiralty response was that the refit requirements of the Royal Navy precluded an exchange of vessels in the months suggested and a

deferment of six months was suggested. The RAN could not agree as the absence of any RAN units from the Strategic Reserve, would not be 'politically acceptable'.[38]

In early 1956, it was proposed that one *Battle* class destroyer be exchanged with a unit of the Royal Navy for six months commencing in February 1957. Subsequently, it was suggested that either or both *Battle* class destroyers could be made available from February 1957, either or both HMAS *Voyager* and HMAS *Quiberon* could be made available in the latter half of the same year and, dependant on meeting her Strategic Reserve commitments, the carrier HMAS *Melbourne* might also be made available in 1957. This was a substantial portion of a strained Australian Fleet. Before these proposals could be forwarded to the Admiralty for consideration, the Flag Officer Commanding HMA Fleet insisted on modifications to the proposals due to the Fleet's considerable extraneous commitments. As such the proposed units available for exchange were revised to two *Q* class frigates. Subsequently, the First Naval Member instructed that no further action concerning possible exchange with the Royal Navy should be taken, although the matter should be raised again towards the end of the year.[39] The exchange of units was considered on later occasions, however, the issue was problematic for the RAN due to the shortage of ships, men and money, an outcome that was viewed by the Admiralty as disappointing.[40]

There were perceived benefits to the RAN associated with the exchange of ships with the Royal Navy in the morale, recruitment and re-engagement of its sailors. Even so this benefit was reduced somewhat due to Australian ships in service with the Strategic Reserve and taking part in multinational exercises in the South East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) area. Another perceived drawback was the political implications connected with an Australian warship serving with the Mediterranean Fleet 'if the present tension over the Suez Canal is prolonged'.[41] The exchange or loan of ships was viewed by the Admiralty as an important aspect of co-operation between the navies of the Commonwealth.[42] Yet, both the RAN and the Royal Navy was prevented from implementing the exchange process due to constraints on the resources of both services.

The Admiralty provided much assistance with the ASW requirements of the RAN. The lack of submarine availability to enable ASW training was felt deeply by the RAN in the immediate post-war period, especially when 'our only potential enemy [the USSR] is in possession of

a powerful submarine fleet, a substantial part of which is based on the Far-East'.[43] Following an Australian request for assistance in anti-submarine training for the fleet, it was agreed in mid-1949 that two British submarines would be based in Sydney to meet the training needs of the RAN and the Royal New Zealand Navy. The advantages of 'this very generous Admiralty offer' were 'numerous and obvious', namely that the urgent need for ASW training would be met at comparatively low cost to Australia.[44] Following combined exercises with the Fourth Submarine Division the Australian First Naval Member wrote that 'the RN submarines are worth a guinea a box'[45] and appreciation of the British submarines was relayed continually to the Admiralty.

The Admiralty underwent strains in supporting its overseas-based vessels. In 1959, the Admiralty felt that the Royal Navy was not able to substitute nuclear for conventional submarines due to the necessity to provide 36 operational vessels in training the Royal Navy and to meet its obligations, 'specific or moral', to assist in the training of Commonwealth Navies.[46] It was felt that more would have to be done to induce the wealthier Commonwealth countries with well-developed navies to provide more self-help in anti-submarine training. It was assessed that the Royal Canadian Navy, in particular, should embark on a submarine service of its own 'a good deal sooner than it apparently intended to do.' No mention of the RAN was made during the same discussions. It was the view of the Commander-in-Chief Far-East Station in late 1955 that any suggestion of the RAN opening up a submarine squadron was put 'out of court' by the state of the Australian economy.[47] As such it was considered 'politically impossible' for the RAN to take up submarines. Even so, a level of pressure was placed on Australia to implement its own submarine service. On 27 March 1962, the Australian Minister for the Navy, Senator John Gorton, admonished Rear Admiral Mackenzie, flag officer commanding the RN submarine fleet, for comments attributed to him, urging the RAN to implement its own conventional submarine force lest the RAN become outmoded. Refuting the implication that pressure was being placed on Australia by Great Britain, Gorton was reported as saying 'If and when the time comes that we can afford a submarine service of our own and decide that it is of higher priority than something else, we shall make up our own mind as to when we shall buy and from whom we shall buy.'[48]

The implementation of an Australian submarine service was problematic however. In late 1959, the Australian Cabinet considered 'Australia

could face a situation where it could be called upon to defend for a limited time independently of allies. As such the military should be developed to be self-supporting to some degree, however a decision concerning the introduction of a submarine service was to be deferred'.[49] The Chief of the Naval Staff believed that a reasonable case had been presented for the introduction of a submarine service, particularly if, as appeared likely the Fleet Air Arm was to be discontinued. Submarines were thought of as necessary due to the growth of Chinese, Soviet and Indonesian sea power. In addition, it was assessed that 'within the foreseeable future the Royal Navy would be unable to provide modern submarines for this [training] duty…unless modern submarines are provided, the training of Australian anti-submarine forces will become unrealistic'.[50]

The Minister for Defence, Athol Townley, appeared to have a negative view of the value of submarines to Australia, having been on record as stating 'Australia will have to be pretty careful before it goes into the submarine arm again and will have to take every precaution and examine the position very thoroughly, because three times this country has become involved in submarines and three times it has been pleased to get out of this arm of the Navy'.[51] Even so, the inability of the Admiralty to provide the vessels ad infinitum meant the Australian government were forced to make alternative arrangements. The three-year defence plan of late 1962 did not mention the creation of an Australian submarine capability, although the government was seriously considering such an act, while not yet having decided on the British Oberon class, or recommissioned submarines of an older US class. The former was chosen, and the RAN placed a £6 ½ million order for two Oberon Class submarines in late 1963. The first vessel was expected to be completed by December 1966, and the second by October 1967. A further two submarines were ordered in mid-1964. The last of the initial four Oberon class submarines, HMAS *Onslow*, was commissioned in late December 1969 in Greenock. Two additional submarines were ordered and commissioned as vessels of the RAN; HMAS *Orion* on 15 June 1977 and HMAS *Otama* on 27 April 1978. The RAN viewed the vessels as particularly valuable:

> Against countries such as Indonesia which are obliged to make use of sea communications in support of distant or external operations, the submarine is a potential threat with considerable deterrent threat. This is likely

> to have still greater emphasis when the country concerned is also heavily dependent on sea communications to sustain its own economy.[52]

The basing of British submarines in Australia suited both the RAN and the Admiralty:

> The Royal Navy…makes an important contribution to Commonwealth naval development in the submarine field. The Fourth Submarine Division operates under the control of the Royal Australian Navy…In addition Royal Navy submarines make long passages to take part in joint anti-submarine exercises with Commonwealth Navies. This service is vitally important to the fighting efficiency of Commonwealth Navies and constitutes a direct link with them.[53]

The British Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir Denis Greenhill, viewed the proposal to have a Royal Navy submarine presence east of Suez, in collaboration with the RAN, as a useful addition to bilateral defence links. The main threat to sea communications was viewed by the First Sea Lord as from Russian submarines and raiders. As the primary role of the RAN was viewed as the defence of the sea lanes in the Australian-New Zealand-Malaysia arrangement (ANZAM) area, any assistance the Admiralty could provide to the RAN in anti-submarine operations was considered very worthwhile. The Admiralty were relieved of a substantial part of the operating costs of the Division, as well as the freedom to withdraw the boats without notice in a genuine emergency. Australian Naval Chiefs repeatedly passed on their appreciation to the Admiralty for the vessels as the submarines were essential for ASW training.[54] In early 1956, the Australian First Naval Member Vice Admiral Dowling, made plain his view on the importance of submarines: 'I believe the submerged vessel is by far the most important vessel of the future'.[55] The threat of Russian submarines, with the future potential to carry ballistic missiles, was made plain to Australian authorities. Britain was unable to provide the capability forever, as the advent of nuclear-powered vessels meant fewer conventional powered submarines in the Fleet. The Fourth Submarine Division was disbanded on the 18 August 1967 when the RAN was in a position to provide a submarine capability of its own, with British built vessels. Admiralty assistance did not end there as a number of RN officers and senior sailors transferred to the Australian submarines, and UK-based training for Australian submariners

continued, in the case of simulated escape training, until 1988. The assistance given by the Admiralty in the implementation of the RAN Fourth Submarine Squadron was substantial.

The largely Australian designed Ikara ASW missile system was an example where the Admiralty had the benefit of Australian naval expertise. In 1962, it was reported that a British working party had examined and taken a favourable view of the prospects of Ikara. The system was perceived as necessary as the Wasp helicopter had always been regarded as an interim system pending the advent of a satisfactory anti-submarine weapon. In view of the Royal Navy's urgent need for more satisfactory means of dealing with attacks by nuclear submarines, the Minister of Defence was informed in July 1963 of proposals already endorsed by the Defence Research Policy Committee to undertake a Project Study of a Royal Navy version of the Ikara system.[56] This resulted in the decision of the Royal Navy to purchase a modified version of Ikara. The Australian Cabinet approved the decision for Australia to undertake the research and development programme to modify Ikara to meet British requirements in August 1964. British-designed sections of the system included the launching and handling system, system state and command panel, weapon setting panel and associated switch and fuse panels. The Admiralty required that Ikara be placed into service as soon as possible, so much so that the additional cost of £600,000 to upgrade the first five *Leander* class vessels on long refit would have to be found from existing production resources.

Design co-operation between Australia and Great Britain continued into the 1970s. In February 1971, a British delegation visited Australia with the object of reviewing the general field of underwater warfare research and development between the two countries and of focussing attention upon those areas where collaborative support would be of mutual benefit. A Royal Navy Ikara policy mission visit to Australia took place in mid-1971 to investigate the possible use of the US MK46 torpedo in the British variant of the system. It was reported that it was 'a pleasure to record the total co-operation shown by members of Department of Supply and Department of the Navy in responding to the detailed technical enquiries of the UK mission'.[57] Many of the engineering defects in the RAN variant of Ikara were corrected following the engineering processes associated with the British derivative of the same system.[58] This was an added benefit for the RAN, over and above the more obvious financial gains associated with overseas sales of the system.

Additional advantages to Australia in allowing Ikara to be modified for RN purposes included future access, if required, to a variant capable of carrying alternative payloads and of operating in European conditions, and integrated with Royal Navy technical equipment.

Following the collision between the Australian ships HMAS *Melbourne* and HMAS *Voyager*, and the resultant loss of *Voyager* it was suggested by the BDLS in Canberra that the prompt offer of the loan of a replacement escort vessel would be appreciated. During subsequent discussions in the Admiralty, it was decided that the best vessel to be offered as a replacement was either HMS *Duchess* or HMS *Defender*. As the latter was just completing a long refit, *Duchess* was viewed as the best alternative to 'avoid the danger of criticism of over-generosity'.[59] The Admiralty were extremely proactive in the discussions at this time, as there were no indications from the RAN itself that such a loan would be welcome.[60] If the chancellor approved the loan, the First Sea Lord would be expected to make the initial approach to the RAN on an unofficial basis. The BDLS put the offer to the RAN for the loan vessel, intimating that while there would be no cost for the ship, the RAN would be responsible for running costs, stores and any necessary refits. The Australian Chief of the Naval Staff informed the Admiralty that he was most appreciative of the offer and asked for details of the two alternative ships and their pros and cons.

The Admiralty furnished the details of *Duchess* and *Defender* with a fair warning that the former would require a refit in June. The RAN were advised that questions would be asked in the British parliament about what offers had been given to the Australian government about a replacement for *Voyager*. It was thought that these questions may have embarrassed the RAN as a firm offer had not been furnished by the British. The RAN thanked the Admiralty for the warning and assured them no embarrassment would be suffered. Later that morning the BDLS reported to the Admiralty that the Australian CNS had informed him that he hoped for *Duchess* for four years, followed by 2 new *Type 12* vessels. Failing approval for the latter, then *Duchess* would be required until the end of her useful life.

The Australian cabinet met to consider possible ways to replace the lost warship; these included a firm offer from the USAand a provisional offer from the British.[61] On learning that the USA had made a firm offer for a replacement ship, the British High Commissioner was most anxious that the initiative was not lost and suggested that Britain should

make an offer immediately. The Admiralty soon reported to the BDLS that the British Government was willing to offer the loan of a *Daring* class ship to replace *Voyager*.[62] The British were rightly concerned about being trumped by the Americans; the Australian cabinet expressed particular interest in the US offer and directed that an immediate evaluation be made by the RAN.[63] The Commonwealth Relations Office soon confirmed that, following discussions between the Admiralty and the RAN, the loan of *Duchess* was available to Australia 'for as long as they need her without charge'.[64] The Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies was thankful for the offer and promised to let the British 'have our answer as soon as possible'.[65] A few days later, the Australian Cabinet accepted the RAN's recommendation that the British offer be accepted.[66]

While appreciative of the British and American offers of assistance, naval studies showed that the *Daring* class vessel was in all respects more compatible to the RAN than the US offer of a *Fletcher*-class destroyer, due to logistic, manpower and financial aspects. Significantly, it was viewed that the requirement to man another USN ship, concurrently with HMAS *Perth*, the first of the three US-built DDGs, would introduce serious manning and drafting problems to the RAN.[67] The RAN later wanted two improved British-designed *Leander* class frigates as long-term replacements for *Voyager*. These vessels would be in addition to the existing British-designed *Type 12* frigates, *Parramatta, Stuart* and *Yarra* and the *Derwent*, then still under construction. HMA Ships, modified *River*-class frigates *Swan* and *Torrens* were later constructed as ostensible permanent replacements for *Voyager*. *Duchess* was commissioned as a RAN vessel on the 8 May 1964 and was purchased outright by the Australian Government in 1972 for the cost of £150,000 sterling. The vessel was not paid off from service until late 1977.

Many aspects of the loan of a British vessel to replace the loss of HMAS *Voyager* are important in the overall scheme of Anglo-Australian relations. The British government was obviously keen to use the loan of the vessel to keep national ties between themselves and Australia strong, and there were valid fears that the US would beat them to the punch in assisting the RAN. The fact that the Admiralty were extremely proactive in the respect of aiding the RAN after the *Melbourne-Voyager* collision greatly assisted the political aim of providing assistance to the Australians. This high level of proactivity lessened the strain felt by the RAN in meeting its FESR and South-East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) commitments. Although there was some political bias towards

the American offer on the part of the Australian cabinet, the British offer had clear advantages from a naval point of view. The fact that the initial British approach was made through the naval network meant that the Australian CNS was free from political pressure as to whether or not the British offer was accepted. The loan process took place at a time where the RAN had already broken with tradition by purchasing American-built ships; even so, there were clear benefits for the RAN in accepting *Duchess* as the replacement for *Voyager*. This showed a level of pragmatism on the part of the RAN. If US-built vessels such as the *Charles F. Adams* class destroyers were found to best suit the needs of the service, so be it. This did not mean, however, a complete switch from British designed or British built equipment at the time.

The Australian Light Destroyer (DDL) Project followed the RAN experience during the confrontation with Indonesia and the apparent need for a lighter type of surface ship suitable for confrontation-style operations. A design contract worth £100,000 was let with Yarrow/Vospers for a joint RN/RAN frigate, with the vessel being conceived as a cheap frigate of smaller displacement and complement than designs built to normal RN standards, but close to a projected requirement for the RAN. The Admiralty realised that the concept of the ship could be inflated under pressure from the Australians, with the end result differing from RN requirements. The proposed Australian timescales slipped due to financial issues, and there were publicity issues surrounding the project due to a strong lobby in Australia for the vessels to be built in Australian yards: 'Any publicity for the concept of a joint project had therefore to be handled carefully at this stage'.[68] Even so, the Admiralty were assured that all steps had been taken on a 'Navy to Navy basis' to show the Australians that their association with the project was welcomed.[69] The project was renamed the *Type 21* frigate, and although the design was partially funded by the RAN, with the intention to purchase a number of vessels, no ships of this class were built or procured by the RAN. An amount of design-creep, as well as a change of government in Australia in late 1972, meant the DDL did not come to fruition, however, British involvement in the project, especially in its early phases, was great.

At one stage the British *Type 42* destroyer was thought of as the overseas vessel that most closely met the DDL requirements but 'following that design in toto would introduce serious logistic and personnel problems'.[70] There was also a necessity for the vessels to be distinctively

'Australian', not biased unduly by anyone else's design and with as much equipment as possible produced in Australia.[71] Co-operation with the British was thought of as preferable to dealing with America; 'So far as any design of US origin is concerned, the nature of American standards and practices is such that almost complete rework of the design would be necessary', and 'Australian and UK standards and practices are similar and in the case of a UK design, rework of drawings, for this reason, would not be necessary.'[72]

The fact that the RAN were willing to co-operate with the Royal Navy in the design of the proposed ships, following the earlier procurement of US-built surface combatants is a salient point, and again illustrates a level of pragmatism on the part of the Australian service. Off-the-shelf vessels did not meet Australian requirements so a new design would be necessary. The Admiralty were the preferred partner for this process, at least in the initial stages, but for several reasons, the project did not come to fruition. The necessity for a replacement destroyer remained and, between September 1973 and March 1974, studies were carried out on various ship types from a number of countries including the UK, USA and the Netherlands. In April 1974, the government announced that it proposed to purchase two *Oliver Hazard Perry* class guided missile frigates (FFGs) from the USA. The first of these vessels, HMAS *Adelaide* was commissioned on 15 November 1980. The FFG-7 had earlier been assessed as a 'second rate escort that falls short of the DDL requirements on virtually every respect'[73] but the practicalities of fitting the American SM-1 missile system in the British *Type 42* vessel was a bridge too far for the beleaguered project.

There were political implications associated with the continued reliance by the RAN on the Admiralty. It was viewed that in a global war, the RAN would probably operate under direct US command, and it was not expected that the USN fleet train would carry spares and ammunition suitable only for Australian ships.[74] The experience of British-designed vessels serving in the Vietnam conflict with the RAN showed this fear to be largely unfounded, however, the apprehension did exist. The strategic shift of Australia from the UK towards the USA was somewhat mirrored by the gradual movement of the RAN away from the Admiralty, especially as far as the procurement of hardware was concerned. Even so, there was no complete transfer from one powerful friend, the Admiralty, to another, the USN. Following difficulties with the Australian construction of *Daring* class ships, a request was

made to the Admiralty to transfer two vessels to the RAN. This could not be met due to shortages in the British Fleet, but there were fears that the RAN would source vessels from the USA if assistance was not forthcoming from the Admiralty.[75] The Australian First Naval Member John Collins had previously hinted that he might turn to the USN for assistance.[76] The First Sea Lord was very concerned about this possibility and wrote:

> …we would much prefer that the RAN stuck to British built or British type ships. The reasons are many-standardisation of equipment, and subsequent logistic problems, training problems, and last but not least, tradition and sentiment. What is also important is that the US ships are a great deal more expensive than ours. Once a move towards the US has been started, I feel it might be difficult to resist further diversions.[77]

The initial idea may have been bluff as Collins later stated he had abandoned the idea and would concentrate on getting the Australian vessels completed.[78] The actual procurement of American vessels by the RAN will be covered in more detail in a later chapter, but the fear of such a process taking place was very real. During a visit to Australia in 1955, the Commander-in-Chief Far-East Station was given a brief to persuade the Australians from switching to American equipment.[79] Certainly Vice Admiral Dowling, Australian First Naval Member, felt much angst over the possible purchase of American vessels. He recognised the advantages of the RAN continuing with the process whereby they 'deliberately and consistently worked on the principle of complete interchangeability with the RN in all respects' but due to doubts about whether the 'UK can provide us with what we want in the future' the RAN found themselves 'at the Crossroads'.[80] This was not so clear-cut. In announcing the purchase of American vessels, the Minister of Defence Athol Townley, also announced a decision to purchase British helicopters for HMAS *Melbourne* as well as the British Seacat surface-to-air missile system for other fleet units. Even after the purchase of American ships, the RAN continued to source vessels and aircraft from British sources. The gradual trend away from the Admiralty as a single source is evident in Table 6.1. If this information was expanded to include ships of the late 1970s and early 1980s more American vessels such as the *Oliver Hazard Perry* frigates would be in evidence. If the timeline was expanded even further into the 1990s, and new millennium, *Collins* class submarines

Table 6.1 Major Vessels of the Royal Australian Navy, 1947–75

Class	*Ship*	*Built*	*Commissioned*
Majestic Class Aircraft-Carrier/Fast Troop Transport	*Sydney*	UK	16-12-1948
Colossus Class Aircraft Carrier	*Vengeance*	UK	13-11-1952
Modified Majestic Class Aircraft-Carrier	*Melbourne*	UK	28-10-1955
County Class Cruiser	*Australia*	UK	24-04-1928
County Class Cruiser	*Shropshire*	UK	20-04-1943
Modified Leander Class Cruiser	*Hobart*	UK	28-09-1938
Infantry Landing Ship	*Manoora*	UK	12-12-1939
Infantry Landing Ship	*Kanimbla*	UK	01-06-1943
Tribal Class Destroyer	*Arunta*	AUST	30-03-1942
Tribal Class Destroyer	*Warramunga*	AUST	23-11-1942
Tribal Class Destroyer	*Bataan*	AUST	25-05-1945
Q Class Destroyer/Frigate	*Quiberon*	UK	06-07-1942
Q Class Destroyer/Frigate	*Quickmatch*	UK	14-09-1942
Q Class Destroyer/Frigate	*Quadrant*	UK	18-10-1945
Q Class Destroyer/Frigate	*Queenborough*	UK	29-10-1945
Battle Class Destroyer	*Tobruk*	AUST	08-05-1950
Battle Class Destroyer	*Anzac*	AUST	14-03-1951
Daring Class Destroyer	*Voyager*	AUST	12-02-1957
Daring Class Destroyer	*Vendetta*	AUST	26-11-1958
Daring Class Destroyer	*Vampire*	AUST	23-06-1959
Daring Class Destroyer	*Duchess*	UK	08-05-1964
River Class/Type 12 Frigate	*Yarra*	AUST	27-07-1951
River Class/Type 12 Frigate	*Parramatta*	AUST	04-07-1961
River Class/Type 12 Frigate	*Stuart*	AUST	28-06-1963
River Class/Type 12 Frigate	*Derwent*	AUST	30-04-1964
River Class/Type 12 Frigate	*Swan*	AUST	20-01-1970
River Class/Type 12 Frigate	*Torrens*	AUST	19-01-1971
Grimsby Class Sloop	*Swan*	AUST	21-01-1937
Grimsby Class Sloop	*Warrego*	AUST	22-08-1940
River Class Frigate	*Gascoyne*	AUST	18-11-1943
River Class Frigate	*Barcoo*	AUST	17-01-1944
River Class Frigate	*Hawkesbury*	AUST	05-06-1944
River Class Frigate	*Lachlan*	AUST	14-02-1945
River Class Frigate	*Diamantina*	AUST	27-04-1945
River Class Frigate	*Barwon*	AUST	10-12-1945
River Class Frigate	*Macquarie*	AUST	07-12-1945
Bay Class Frigate	*Murchison*	AUST	17-12-1945
Bay Class Frigate	*Condamine*	AUST	22-02-1946
Bay Class Frigate	*Shoalhaven*	AUST	02-03-1946
Bay Class Frigate	*Culgoa*	AUST	01-04-1947
Ton Class Minesweeper	*Curlew*	UK	21-08-1962
Ton Class Minesweeper	*Gull*	UK	19-06-1962

(continued)

Table 6.1 (continued)

Class	*Ship*	*Built*	*Commissioned*
Ton Class Minesweeper	*Hawk*	UK	18-07-1962
Ton Class Minesweeper	*Ibis*	UK	07-11-1962
Ton Class Minesweeper	*Snipe*	UK	11-09-1962
Ton Class Minesweeper	*Teal*	UK	30-08-1962
Tide Class Fleet Oiler	*Supply*	UK	15-08-1962
Moresby Class Survey Vessel	*Moresby*	AUST	06-03-1964
Charles F. Adams Class Destroyer	*Perth*	USA	17-07-1965
Charles F. Adams Class Destroyer	*Hobart*	USA	18-12-1965
Charles F. Adams Class Destroyer	*Brisbane*	USA	16-12-1967
Oberon Class Submarine	*Oxley*	UK	18-04-1967
Oberon Class Submarine	*Otway*	UK	23-04-1968
Oberon Class Submarine	*Ovens*	UK	18-04-1969
Oberon Class Submarine	*Onslow*	UK	22-12-1969
Destroyer Tender	*Stalwart*	AUST	19-02-1968
Flinders Class Survey Vessel	*Flinders*	AUST	27-04-1973

based on a Swedish design, *Anzac* class frigates derived from the German *Meko 200* class, minehunters that were a derivative of an Italian class, and the *Hobart* class air-warfare destroyers, based on a Spanish vessel were be added to the mix. In addition, the RAN planned to purchase the British aircraft carrier HMS *Invincible* in 1982 only for the British government to withdraw its offer to sell the vessel following the Falklands conflict. A growing ability of the RAN to source non-Admiralty items did not mean a self-imposed embargo in doing so if British equipment was seen as fit for purpose.

There were occasional issues with the inadequacy of the supply of British equipment, and in these circumstances, the RAN did occasionally depart from UK standards. Although it was sometimes stated by the RAN that information from the Admiralty was not as readily available as they would have liked, there were formal agreements in place to ensure Admiralty developments were relayed to the RAN. These included the distribution of Admiralty Staff Targets and Staff Requirements. In addition, the Admiralty held monthly meetings with Commonwealth representatives at which they were informed of current developments. Indeed, following general Australian concerns with the lack of forthcoming British military information, and a resultant

review of the role of liaison officers, it was assessed that in the case of the Royal Navy, that there were so many links between the RAN and the Royal Navy at many levels that no procedural changes were necessary.[81] Indeed of the three services, the RNLO had the least amount of 'selling' to do due to 'the very close liaison and sense of kinship between the RN and the RAN'.[82] In early 1956, the RAN were still very much reliant on the Admiralty for advice on matters such as the value of the Fleet Air Arm, guided weapons for destroyers and frigates, the defence of Australia against mines, and the possible availability of tactical nuclear weapons for use by aircraft from light fleet carriers.[83] This level of reliance soon altered and the RAN showed increased willingness towards a more self-determining stance. Indeed, if anything, the trend in post-war RAN procurement was one of increased independence, allied to a level of pragmatism that was not in evidence at the conclusion of the Second World War.

As well as concerns about a growing sense of isolation from Admiralty thought, there were fears that the RAN were always in the position of 'taking what Father says is good for us'.[84] Some within the RAN were unhappy due to the perception of the Admiralty placing the RAN 'on a lower level than the Canadians, on the same footing as the South Africans and almost on the same footing of the Indians and Pakistan'.[85] This was not the case and it was more likely that the 'old Dominions' of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and to a lesser extent South Africa, were treated on a rank higher than newer nations of the Commonwealth.[86] Even so the perception did exist, and possibly did much to foster the necessity for more than one source of naval assistance. The suggestion that the RAN would purchase frigates and minesweepers from Canada in the early 1950s was only one manifestation of this trend. The Australian First Naval Member in a national broadcast in early 1955 said 'We depend on the Mother Country for research and development of our ships, and everything in them, for "know-how" in building ships and manufacture of ammunition…'[87] This situation did not continue. Following the decision to purchase American destroyers, the Minister for the Navy, Senator John Gorton stated that the choice could lead to the standardisation of the RAN on American equipment.[88] This did not occur, in the main because the RAN did not wish to swap one single-source for another.

Notes

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CHAPTER 7

Australia, Allies and the RAN

Australia's strategic priorities underwent a great change of direction in the post-war period. National strategy has an obvious impact on military and naval strategy, and thus the alteration in Australian strategic concerns must be considered in the context of Anglo-Australian naval relations. In the immediate post-war period, Australian and British links remained strong. Co-operation in naval planning between the RAN and the Admiralty was great, with almost complete reliance by the former on the latter. By the mid-1970s Australian military links with the British were much reduced. This was due to the British withdrawal from east of Suez as well as increased co-operation between Australian military forces and those of the USA. For the RAN, this was illustrated by the purchase of American naval hardware and by the conflict in Vietnam where Australian naval units carried out major combat operations unaccompanied by British units for the first time. Yet, the USN did not replace the Admiralty, nor did it perform the same role as the latter did during the Second World War, and in the immediate post-war years. By the mid-1970s, the Royal Australian Navy was a much more independent service, and this somewhat reflected the experience of the nation itself.

The post-war period saw a decrease in Anglo-Australian relations on national, military and naval levels. In the immediate post-war years, Anglo-Australian co-operation was strong and the ties of empire and Commonwealth were healthy. In mid-1946, the Australian Prime Minister J.B. Chifley stated that Australia must be prepared to shoulder greater responsibilities for the defence of the Pacific. Following the

M. Gjessing, *Anglo-Australian Naval Relations, 1945–1975*,
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Empire Defence talks, Chifley said he could not help feeling disturbed at the burden of armaments resting on Britain after a war that had resulted in complete victory for the United Nations, and added that any proposals should lead to a notable advance in empire co-operation for British Commonwealth security. Even so, following an Australian Council of Defence meeting in 1947, the Australian Chief of the Naval Board bemoaned the lack of Australian strategic direction:

> This Government in pinning its faith to new weapons and largely looks on its contribution to Defence as being the Guided Weapons Range and the 'Higher Defence Machinery' organisation, and regard this as implementing their promises at the Prime Ministers' Conference in 1946. The logical argument then follows is that a small population can not do everything, so if they are involved in War in the future such old fashioned forces as the Navy will be catered for by the Royal Navy and the United States Navy, assuming the unlikely event that a modern Navy will be required at all![1]

This attitude was replaced by a level of optimism following the statement made by the Australian Minister for Defence to Parliament on the 4 June 1947 on Australian Post-War Defence Policy.[2] In late April 1948, it was reported that the Australian Minister for Defence had announced that Australia was to be developed as a main forward base in the Pacific and that this policy related not only to the armed forces, but to the strategic development and distribution of the armed forces of the British Commonwealth. In early 1949, the Australian Defence Minister stated that Australia's defence plans were based on security arrangements, which might be made in co-operation with the UK and other British Commonwealth nations; 'a Pacific regional pact is the best thing to aim for'.[3]

In December 1949, Australia elected the Liberal-Country Party coalition under Robert Menzies and in early 1950, the new Prime Minister made a speech stressing 'in no mean terms' the importance of sea power to the British Commonwealth.[4] The change of government reflected Australian concerns over the onset of the cold war and the perceived threat of communism. In 1954, the Australian Minister of Defence Sir Philip McBride asserted that Australia's defence policy was to co-operate in repelling Communist aggression and maintaining the gap between Australia and 'the present high-water mark of the southward flow of communism'.[5] Menzies asserted that if Vietnam were abandoned at the outset of 1965 'in the long run, and not so very long at that' Australia would be menaced 'almost at our doors'.

This fear of communism meant a strengthening of Australian–American ties, perhaps best typified by the 1952 ANZUS treaty and the commitment to Vietnam, but this did not mean an end to Anglo-Australian co-operation. As Ward noted:

> By the early 1950s the Australian Government had come to view an American defence guarantee as vital to Australian security in the light of the obvious decline in British power in the region in the post-war years. But this by no means implied that Britain had become obsolete in Australian defence considerations…[6]

There were signs, however, of altering Australian attitudes to Great Britain. In early 1962 Sir William Oliver, the UK High Commissioner in Canberra, stated that 'there had been a general change in the attitude of Australia towards the UK. He attributed this to a number of causes including:

> The view that the UK was prepared to give only lip service to the SEATO alliance and had only a mild interest in the defence of South East Asia, and there had, in consequence, been a tendency for Australia to fall more and more under United States influence as regards defence thinking. They had also, to some extent, become disenchanted with the Commonwealth in general, and felt certain United Kingdom policies, particularly on immigration and the Common Market, were contrary to Australia's best interests and would increase her isolation from the mother country.[7]

Even so, the Australian Defence Committee was clear on the necessity to keep British influence in the Far East as robust as possible:

> Should the [British] Defence Review lead to decisions contrary to Australia's interests it would well nigh be impossible to have them reversed. It is considered therefore that it would be to Australia's advantage to attempt to influence United Kingdom consideration of the problems before the Defence Review is completed.[8]

This stance also had perceived benefits for Australian–American relations:

> The awareness by the United States of Australia's efforts to influence the United Kingdom to maintain her commitments on the mainland of South East Asia could strengthen the United States' resolution to continue with her present policies in the area.[9]

This view was taken was only six months after Australian troops had been deployed to Vietnam and was a sign that Australia was eager to maintain strategic relations with both the UK and the USA. The strategic links between Australia and Great Britain were, however, greatly affected by the loss of British prestige and the reduction of military forces east of Suez.

The diminution of British military forces in the Far East was a consequence of strategic necessity and a reduction of British economic power. The strategic decisions taken by Great Britain had a great impact on Australian strategic thinking and on the relationship between the RAN and the Royal Navy. On the British inability to reinforce the Far East region due to NATO commitments, Admiral of the Fleet Lord Peter Hill-Norton said, 'All this may not be easy for all of us to swallow, or perhaps for our good friends overseas to accept, but it is the reality of today'.[10] Australia had long-held doubts about the willingness and ability of Britain to maintain a significant military force in Southeast Asia. These doubts not only helped solidify the strategic bonds between Australia and America but also aided in the alteration of Australia from an outpost of the empire to a more independent nation in the Asia-Pacific region. Britain was aware of the impact of withdrawal on Australian defence sensibilities, but British domestic considerations were viewed as paramount. As Hill-Norton noted:

> In considering the type and size of the forces we have decided to retain in South East Asia we had to have regard to two overriding military factors. First that, except perhaps in the longer term, manpower and costs will for all practicable purposes rule out the possibility of providing naval and air forces over and above our present overall force levels. The second factor, which stems partly from the first, arises from the fact that the previous Government had planned and announced that after 1971, virtually all our UK and European based forces would be declared to NATO, thus the provision of forces for SE Asia had to be at the direct expense of our planned priority contribution to NATO.[11]

This followed Hill-Norton's earlier statement that:

> Any adjustments made in our Far East presence can be no more than relatively marginal, unless we are prepared to make major inroads into NATO posture; and I earnestly hope that no-one contemplates that.[12]

British strategic priorities were clearly at odds with those of Australia. Benvenuti suggested that 'In due course…irreconcilable strategic aims were severely to undermine the Anglo-Australian relationship'.[13] This statement may be unduly harsh, but Canberra certainly reacted with shock and dismay on hearing the news of the proposed British withdrawal. In a sign of growing Australian self-reliance, Australian policymakers recognised the inevitability of Britain's withdrawal from the region and regarded the Conservative Party's threat to reverse the decision as potentially unfavourable to Australia's position in the region. Ward noted that:

> It is hardly disputed that, from the fall of Singapore in February 1942 through to the Australian commitment of ground troops to Vietnam in 1965, Australia's traditional ties to the Mother Country came under enormous strain, revision, and ultimately, reorientation towards a more self-reliant future.[14]

This is true and the need of Australia to have 'a great and powerful friend' led to greater ties with the USA. Even so Australia did not place complete reliance on the USA. In a 1967 study on the 'Long-Term Order of Battle of the RAN' it was postulated that Australia must be prepared to meet a level of military forces required for Borneo confrontation type operations leading to possible limited war with Indonesia arising from difficulties over New Guinea, on its own for an indefinite period. It was assumed that 'because of the manner in which we have honoured our obligations with the United States in South East Asia' the period of independent action would not be prolonged unduly.[15] Even so there was no expectation that the USA would automatically support Australia. A growing sense of Australian independence meant that the nation did not exchange one colonial yoke for another:

> With Australia's development to a relatively strong country in the [Indian Ocean] region both economically and militarily, and bearing in mind the reduced future role of Britain and the uncertainty of United States intentions in the area…a new period of greater Australian political involvement is developing…the attitude of the non-aligned nations, many of which were once members of the British Empire, is gaining importance in relation to Australian actions in the region as Australia takes more responsibility and initiative in an area of growing importance to Australia.[16]

The RAN developed much stronger bonds with the USN in the post-war period. The US Commander-in-Chief, Pacific and PACFLT, Admiral Louis E. Denfeld visited Australia in 1947 and met with the Australian Chief of the Naval Board, Sir Louis Hamilton. An offer was made to send American naval officers to Australia every six months to discuss plans for Pacific defence with the Australian Defence Committee. Both the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board (ACNB) and the Minister of Defence deemed this to be worthwhile.[17] The First Sea Lord also thought this was a good idea and suggested that the Commander-in-Chief of the British Pacific Fleet was made aware of the staff discussions 'so that he can send a representative if he feels like it'.[18] According to Hamilton, Denfeld 'made it quite clear that neither he nor his Government wanted anything to do with agreements on a high level. On the other hand he was very much in favour of staff discussions on a Service level'.[19] Communications between the two services continued in the post-war period and increased due to amplified co-operation in matters of operations, intelligence and equipment procurement.

Senior Australian naval officers regularly visited the USA. Vice Admiral Collins visited Pearl Harbor in 1948 and discussed areas of responsibility 'in the event of the only possible trouble', with Commander-in-Chief, Pacific (CinCPAC).[20] The details of these meetings were relayed to the Admiralty who made plain that 'it is very satisfactory that you have such good contacts' with the American navy.[21] Meetings were held between Collins, and the US Admiral Arthur Radford, conferences that led to the Radford-Collins agreement of early 1951.[22] In 1956, Vice Admiral Dowling reported to the Admiralty that he would be visiting a number of US naval establishments and vessels as the guest of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admiral Arleigh Burke.[23] Dowling's successor, Vice Admiral Burrell visited the USA in 1960 on a fact-finding mission concerning the question of surface-to-air guided weapons (SAGW) ships for the RAN. During the visit, Arleigh Burke ordered that the Australian First Naval Member be given salutes of 17 guns rather than the 15 to which he was entitled. On landing in Washington DC Burrell was greeted by Arleigh Burke with full military honours; 'It was a great compliment to the Royal Australian Navy as were similar events in the next nineteen days'.[24] There may have been an ulterior motive in the pomp and circumstance in that the USN were keen to break the monopoly held by the Admiralty in supplying major

warships to the RAN. Alternatively, RAN and USN units had served in combat together during the Second World War and the Korean War and there was undoubtedly a measure of genuine respect between the two navies.

Australian naval vessels regularly exercised with units of the USA, and ships of both nations increasingly visited the home ports of each other. This was more so the case in the latter part of our period of interest when the strategic connections between Australia and America solidified. Burrell recalled that 'I was at pains to point out the benefit to us of joint exercises whether in Australia, Hawaii or South East Asia. Our liaison with the USN has always been happy at all levels. There really was no need to make an effort to keep our friendship alive'.[25] In preparation for the purchase of the *Charles F. Adams* class DDGs, supplies of ammunition and missiles, provision of base spares and US dollar schemes for payment had to be agreed. Burrell noted 'Fortunately our USN liaison wheels were well oiled'[26] and he appreciated American co-operation in the pre-purchase process.

All was not plain sailing and tensions between the two services did occasionally arise. A 1968 friendly fire incident when HMAS *Hobart*, deployed with the US Seventh Fleet off Vietnam, was struck by missiles fired from an American F-4 Phantom aircraft, resulted in a US Navy inquiry. The inquiry readily acknowledged that the USN was responsible for many operational shortcomings and the incident 'was quickly assigned to history and no significant or lasting damage was done to Australian–American naval relations'.[27] The 1969 collision between the Australian aircraft carrier HMAS *Melbourne* and the American destroyer USS *Frank E. Evans* proved more problematic to inter-naval relationships. One observer called the resultant inquiry 'One of the most disappointing incidents in naval and national relations between Australia and the US…'[28] In addition, there were doubts about American intentions to support the RAN in any future conflict. In mid-1963, Australian Rear Admiral Alan McNicoll wrote:

> I know it is assumed in some quarters that our powerful friends would supply air cover in the South China Sea. They might, but I feel it would be prudent to assume that in a hot war situation their carriers would be in their own offensive postures. So far as I know the USN has never been able to spare a strike carrier for a SEATO Exercise.[29]

Even considering the sporadic setbacks in Australian–American naval relations, the partnership has in many ways been remarkable. This is even more so when one considers that at the end of the Second World War, the RAN was almost totally reliant on the Admiralty for support in areas as broad as strategic and tactical guidance, equipment procurement and the training of personnel. By 1975, the RAN had strategic relationships with several regional powers including the USA, sourced equipment, including major surface vessels from the USA, and it deployed ships in combat operations alongside American forces, unaccompanied by units of the Royal Navy for the first time.

The RAN had toyed with the purchase of major units from non-British sources for some time before the eventual purchase of the *Charles F. Adams* class DDGs in the 1960s. The purchase of these vessels was a turning point in Anglo-Australian naval relations, but was preceded by a period where a shift away from the Admiralty was real. Allied to the strong cultural and historic ties between the RAN and the Royal Navy, the fact that the RAN had always utilised British equipment meant that any alternative would not come without difficulties for the service. These difficulties, such as logistics, training, cost and inter-operability were recognised by the RAN and the Admiralty, and were used to a greater or lesser extent to maintain the status quo. The status quo could only be maintained, however, if the RAN was willing to continue procuring equipment from the British, and if the Admiralty were able to meet RAN requirements.

In 1951, Vice Admiral Collins informed the Admiralty that considering construction delays in vessels being built in Australia, and following the agreement on American mutual aid, he was 'toying with the idea of trying to get some 2100 tonners. It would be a big departure and would cause tremendous logistic problems, but it may prove the only solution. I should be glad to have your views on the latter proposal if by any chance the *Daring*s cannot be made available'.[30] The First Sea Lord did not immediately respond to the proposal as 'you will appreciate that this question will need a lot of thought and consideration'.[31] The fear held by the Admiralty that the RAN would source non-British ships was real. To lessen the chance of any such purchase the Admiralty suggested that 'if the threat to sea communications in the ANZAM region becomes serious on the outbreak [of any future war], we should be able to allocate two of the *'CO' Class* destroyers which will be in the Far East to the ANZAM Task Force'.[32] Collins was most grateful for the offer and wrote

'as a result I have given up the idea of US ships…'[33] Cooper correctly pointed out 'It is difficult to imagine an RN officer raising the prospect of the Australian Navy buying second-hand USN destroyers, as Collins did in 1951'.[34] Thus, the fact that the professional head of the RAN was Australian, itself a sign of growing Australian naval independence, meant that any further shift of the RAN from the Admiralty was possible and, bearing in the mind the alterations of Australian national strategy in the post-war period, very likely.

The likelihood of procuring American equipment did not disappear and in 1956, Collins' successor, Vice Admiral Dowling reported to the Admiralty that the RAN found itself:

> at the Crossroads solely because we very much doubt that the UK can provide us with what we want in the future. We have no wish to become American but there is a very strong belief in this country that the sensible action for Australians is to acquire war equipment from [the] USA now. One telling reason is of course that, certainly in global war our salvation in the Pacific will depend chiefly on the aid of that country. For that we are not less loyal members of the Empire![35]

In addition to perceived shortcomings in the ability of the British to meet RAN requirements, in global war 'the RAN would probably operate under direct US Command, except in Australian waters. That also means using a USN Fleet train which could not be expected to carry spares, ammunition etc. suitable only for Australian ships'.[36] There was clearly a partial meeting of national and naval strategic interests, whereby the USA was viewed as the most likely ally in any future global conflict. Even so, the RAN did feel not compelled to exchange Admiralty support for that of the USN. Following the April 1957 announcement on standardisation no major changes were proposed for the Navy.

The RAN did eventually secure vessels, aircraft and other equipment from non-Admiralty sources, primarily, but not solely the USA Dowling's successor Vice Admiral Burrell considered an American *Essex* class carrier as a replacement for *Melbourne* even though 'according to the CNO these are getting very worn out'.[37] The offer was not taken up due to doubts over the future of the Australian Naval Air Arm, but the suggestion was significant; as Cooper pointed out, 'the RAN was developing ties with a navy other than the Royal Navy-a considerable change from 1945'.[38] Examples of successful procurement are legion

but include the 1964 announcement of the replacement of *Melbourne's* Gannet and Sea Venom aircraft with 14 US Tracker anti-submarine aircraft. US Skyhawk aircraft were later added to the ships complement. The greatest indication of movement towards the USA as a supplier to the RAN, however, was the purchase of the modified *Charles F. Adams* class destroyers in the 1960s. The purchase of the DDGs from the USA was a turning point for the RAN. The ships were the first major RAN vessels to have been designed outside the UK and constructed outside Britain or Australia. The historical and cultural ties between the RAN and the Royal Navy were difficult to ignore and had an impact on the decision-making processes involved in the purchase. Even so, the RAN recognised that the American vessels were superior and the best solution for the service.

The proposed disbandment of the RAN Fleet Air Arm announced in 1959, and planned for 1963, made the acquisition of SAGW escorts by the RAN an urgent priority. In early 1960, the First Naval Member Vice Admiral Burrell and the Third Naval Member Rear Admiral Urquhart visited the UK, Canada and the USA to study possible designs for the SAGW ships. The three contenders for the contract were the British *County* class destroyer, the USN's *Charles F. Adams* class destroyer and the *Brooke* class frigate. The *Countys* were designed around the Sea Slug missile and the lead ship was still six months from launch. The *Charles F. Adams* class offered by the USN was equipped with the Tartar surface-to-air missile, as was the *Brooke* class although the lead ship of the latter class would not be commissioned until the end of December 1962.[39]

As Burrell recounted the simple answer was 'to acquire ships of the *County* class…'[40] The 'initial fly in the ointment', however, was the Sea Slug missile and Burrell was embarrassed to have to say to the Admiralty that 'our authorities were not impressed with the weapon then undergoing trials at our testing station at Woomera'. Burrell was aware of the superiority of the Tartar system over the Sea Slug and invited the Admiralty to incorporate design changes to install Tartar to the *County* design. 'Admittedly this was asking a lot'. Burrell was politely informed that drawing-office resources were not available to make the proposed changes. He recounted that 'I was disappointed. I was not anxious to look elsewhere for guided missile ships. The entire life of the RAN had been built around RN classes of ship, their armaments and stores items… everything except Royal Marines and rum'.

Burrell suggested that his proposed alterations of the British *County* class to the Admiralty was perhaps a trifle impertinent and not really a goer and 'I really could not have expected any other answer'.[41] The fact that he did ask for modifications was a reflection of the growing independent stance taken by the RAN, and also reluctance to leave the Admiralty-nest. During a later visit to Vickers at Barrow-on-Furness, Burrell was informed 'on the side…that they could handle the drawing office side of the *County* class proposal. I was not prepared to consider white-anting the Admiralty by those means'.[42] An unwillingness to offend Admiralty sensibilities was an indication of the courteous relations between the services at the time.

The choice of the *Charles F. Adams* class was primarily due to the superiority of the Tartar missile system, although the cheaper cost, advantageous credit terms, and expected delivery dates certainly made the transition to an American-designed and built vessel easier for the RAN and Australia to accept.[43] It was announced that the RAN would purchase two DDGs initially, with HMA Ships *Perth* and *Hobart* entering service in 1965. A third vessel HMAS *Brisbane* was commissioned in 1967. Following HMAS *Hobart*'s final fitting out period in the Boston Navy Yard, it was 'assessed as most important to subject the ship and her company to the full USN schedule for shake-down…in order to gain a very close understanding of USN drill, operations and procedures…this would allow an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages, if any, of USN doctrine'.[44] The purchase of the DDGs was timely as less than sixteen months from the commissioning of *Hobart* the ship had started her first operation deployment to Vietnam working with the US Seventh Fleet.

The purchase of the DDGs was understandably viewed in conflicting ways by the RAN and the Royal Navy. There was much unease on the part of the RAN in buying non-British vessels. One Commanding Officer of HMAS *Hobart* recalled that 'there was much agonising in the late 1950s and the early 1960s in deciding whether or not the RAN should purchase [British vessels] or the American *Charles F. Adams* class'.[45] Indeed, there is much to suggest that the RAN were compelled to purchase US vessels only because the Admiralty could not meet RAN requirements. In his memoirs Burrell described 'being forced to turn to the USN'.[46] Following the public announcement of the Cabinet decision to purchase the US ships, the Minister of the Navy, Senator John Gorton stated, 'The main reason we bought from the United States was

that Britain has no guided missile destroyers of this kind developed to this stage'. This statement allied with Burrell's views on not wishing to buy non-British ships unless there was no choice but to do so, suggests that there was no great overriding political or military reason for the RAN to switch from Admiralty supply, unless RAN demands could not be met by the British. Hyslop suggested that the new Australian policy of standardisation of weapons and tactics with the USA 'made it possible for the Minister for the Navy, J. G. Gorton, to secure the approval of the Government in 1961 to purchase guided missile destroyers in the United States'.[47] This may have been so, but it was the inability of the Admiralty to meet RAN requirements that made the purchase a far-sighted one. Interestingly, Cooper wrote that 'The driving force behind the DDG purchase was…Gorton who opted for the US ships despite the preference of Burrell'.[48] This statement appears at odds with Gorton's official statements, however, there may have been political pressure placed on the RAN behind closed doors. In either case, the growing independence of the RAN made such a switch more likely, especially considering the perceived weaknesses of the British vessel and the lack of Admiralty interest in modifying the class to meet RAN requirements.

The impact of the purchase of the DDGs on the RAN was considerable, but especially relevant to the subject of Anglo-Australian naval relations was the increased operational efficiency of the RAN by exposure to USN tactics, procedures and training facilities. As Jones stressed, however, 'the RAN did not adopt USN practices wholesale but rather modified those appropriate to suit the RAN's British derived organisation'.[49] As such the purchase of the DDGs was not a complete cessation of dependence on the Admiralty and a subsequent reliance on the USN. Instead, the purchase of the *Charles F. Adams* class ships should be viewed as the beginning of increased RAN independence in equipment procurement.

Quite apart from the cultural impact of utilising non-British ships, the purchase of the DDGs bought tangible problems for the RAN. The logistical effect was great as the USN system was entirely different from the existing Anglo-Australian system; 'The cloud…was the prospect of introducing USN ships into the RAN. It was not the ships and equipment that worried me but the practicability of dealing with logistics of entirely different types, sizes, nomenclature etc'.[50] Burrell wrote 'The US stores ledgers would list thousands of items with foreign names and strange pattern numbers. Even the simple screws had differing threads.

[Even so] the logistic side would have to be made to work'.[51] Burrell was later told that the settling down of two logistics systems was considerable, but eventually proved to be a workable proposition. Following the addition of the DDGs to the Fleet there developed within the RAN the concept of 'two navies'. The DDGs were known as the 'tupperware' ships, with their crews comfortable with USN procedures and the associated jargon required in manning a US-built ship. On the other side was the rest of the Fleet, or 'steel ships'.[52] This idea of 'two navies' was exacerbated by the service of the American-built vessels in combat operations in Vietnamese waters, service denied to the vast majority of the RAN escort force. This cultural split within the RAN was evident during my service with the RAN, with the added complication of the addition of the American-designed *Oliver Hazard Perry*-class FFGs to the Fleet, a class of ship that was sometimes scorned by *both* those serving on DDGs and those serving on the remaining British-designed ships in service.

The Tartar missile system was initially not as robust as the RAN was led to believe. As Jones documented, there were issues with the early performance of the Tartar missile system and the RAN's selection of Tartar was 'by present standards based on the incomplete or sketchy information'.[53] Burrell's memoirs make plain that he was not aware of any issues with the performance of Tartar. When discussing the limitations of Sea Slug, he recalled 'I was aware that there existed a well-tried and proven US guided missile, Tartar, which was about to be fitted to a new DDG class destroyer'.[54] During discussions in 1960 with USN Rear Admiral Johnson, Commander Destroyer Flotilla Six, Burrell remarked that 'My earlier reports of the missile were now confirmed'.[55] Jones stressed that the RAN were aware of the sheer scale of the USN's missile programme and this should have been sufficient grounds for selecting Tartar over Sea Slug.[56]

As could be expected the purchase of the DDGs received substantial press coverage in the UK.[57] There was a measure of Admiralty disquiet surrounding the purchase. RAN Vice Admiral Sir Victor Smith, Chief of the Naval Staff 1968–70, noted that it 'caused a bit of an upset at the Admiralty. In the past we'd always had British-designed ships so this was a breakaway. There were probably some noses put out of joint at the Admiralty by our decision'.[58] This disquiet was perhaps less muted than previous concerns over the RAN sourcing non-British ships as the Admiralty had been involved in the SAGW ship process from its inception. It may also have been a reflection of the Admiralty's acceptance of

the growing independence of the RAN. Burrell suggested that turning away from Britain for our guided missile destroyers produced a little reaction in the UK, although 'in later years I was told that the Admiralty regretted the loss of income from the ship-building industry'.[59] If so there was a level of pragmatism on both sides. Burrell heard stories years later 'that [the] Admiralty thought I was bluffing, that I would accept the risks of a doubtful Sea Slug and that I would not be prepared to shift to USN equipment and standards. There was just no time (or inclination) for me to bluff'.[60] Interestingly this information was not included in the publication of Burrell's memoirs *Mermaids Do Exist*, perhaps a measure of Burrell's loyalty to the Admiralty and a reluctance to offend. The First Sea Lord, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Edward Ashmore (1974–77), remarked that HMAS *Perth* was 'an interesting ship' and noted that 'the days when [RAN] people were sent to *Mercury* and our other establishments to be taught their business is now virtually over. Both Royal Navies are accordingly somewhat the losers'.[61] There was also overt British resentment about the purchase of the American vessels. Following HMAS *Hobart*'s participation with Royal Navy units in exercise SWORDHILT off the New South Wales coast in 1966, the Flag Officer Second-in-Command Far East Fleet remarked that he 'could not understand why the RAN had bought that American rubbish'.[62] The *Charles F. Adams* class ships provided sterling service to the RAN, however, and were anything but 'American rubbish'. The DDGs were excellent vessels and gave the RAN great service to the end of our period of interest and beyond. As Jones pointed out, the acquisition of the three *Charles F. Adams* class destroyers from the USA has been seen by many as one of the most successful purchases in post-war RAN history.[63] Burrell recounted that 'Over the years, I have heard from many that should know, that of their class, finer ships have not been built. When I ask questions about individual characteristics, the replies are superlatives'.[64] The DDGs served with American naval forces in Vietnam, yet another sign of an increasing RAN drift away from the Admiralty, and Australian strategic drift towards the USA.

The use of RAN vessels in the Vietnam War marked another turning point for the service. It was the first time Australian vessels had fought in a major conflict without being in company with units of the Royal Navy. HMAS *Sydney* commenced ferrying Australian troops to Vietnam in May 1965, but the RAN did not enter the war in a combat role until February 1967, when a six-man clearance diving team arrived in theatre

to carry out harbour defence and explosive ordnance disposal operations. On the 3 March 1967, it was announced that the HMAS *Hobart* would join the US Seventh Fleet in operations in Vietnamese waters. Four RAN ships took part in combat operations in Vietnam, the American-built DDGs *Hobart*, *Perth* and *Brisbane* and the British-designed and Australian-built destroyer HMAS *Vendetta*. Logistic support during the conflict was provided by HMA Ships *Sydney*, *Jeparit* and *Boonaroo*. The Fleet Air Arm contributed a helicopter flight, and other RAN personnel, such as clearance divers, logistics and medical staff served in Vietnam. The focus of RAN operations in Vietnam for this book, however, will be on the deployments of the Australian vessels in service with the US Seventh Fleet as this will provide a contrast to previous RAN/RN operational interaction as well as gauge the efficiency of the recently purchased *Charles F. Adams* class destroyers. There were issues with British-designed vessels being utilised in Vietnam in combat roles, primarily due to logistical support and compatibility with US forces.

Four RAN surface vessels carried out combat operations with the US Seventh Fleet over eight deployments. The fact that the DDGs had recently been purchased from the USA meant that the union of these types of RAN ships into the Seventh Fleet was relatively seamless. The use of the *Daring* class HMAS *Vendetta* posed problems initially due to logistical incompatibility with the standard US supply system but the ship performed creditably during its one deployment. RAN destroyers on service in Vietnam generally carried out the tasks of NGS, carrier escort duties and Operation Sea Dragon. The aim of the latter was the interdiction of the coastal lines of communication to the Viet Cong in the south, via the destruction of waterborne logistic craft, barges and junks which negotiated the coastal and inland waterways. These operations took place off North Vietnam north of the De-Militarized Zone (DMZ), and fire from North Vietnamese shore batteries was a constant threat.

HMAS *Hobart* was the first RAN destroyer to serve with the US Seventh Fleet in Vietnam. The fact that the ship was designed and built in the USA made the operational effectiveness of the ship much greater than if a British-designed vessel was chosen for deployment. Integration with the Seventh Fleet was complete and Australian vessels were reliant on the US logistic chain, apart from the provision of items unique to the RAN which remained an Australian responsibility. The Commander of HMAS *Perth* during that ships' third and last deployment remarked of

the logistics arrangements 'In our deployment I can only say the USN logistic effort was indeed superb', although a drawback was that the USN system did not cater for lamb or mutton.[65]

There were operational differences between the manner in which the RAN were used to functioning and those methods used by the United States Navy. This primarily involved the amount of expended ammunition, as the USN was much more profligate in this regard. Griffiths recounted that 'it quickly became apparent that tough judgement was necessary to reduce the shore demand [during Harassment and Interdiction firings] to a practical and economical level of ammunition expenditure'.[66] Captain Ian Burnside of HMAS *Perth* recalled the need to monitor very carefully the requests for Harassment and Interdiction Firings; 'when you have been invited to virtually expend your whole outfit of ammunition on one night of H&I activity, a firm line has to be drawn'.[67] An earlier Commander of the same vessel also questioned the effectiveness of such tactics and suggested that Harassment and Interdiction firings 'were generally a waste of ammunition'.[68] He questioned the necessity to fire on so many targets in the middle of the night. An American Army spotter agreed and said, 'It's good to talk to someone who understands the value of a buck, Sir!'[69] The engagement of specific targets was thought to be much more effective; on one occasion during her third deployment HMAS *Perth* was called to engage 'troops in the open'. The ship expended 126 rounds over 50 min; captured enemy documents later revealed that a Viet Cong battalion had suffered such heavy casualties that it was no longer effective.[70] As Grey noted, the USN placed great emphasis on 'a quantitative measurement of success in terms of effort expended' while the RAN, reflecting its British orientation 'favoured other more qualitative measures'.[71]

The deployment of Australian vessels to Vietnam provided a stern test of the ships and crews, and this was especially useful for the recently purchased DDGs. The Vietnam conflict also gave the RAN an opportunity to demonstrate that older ships such as those of the *Daring* class could be utilised effectively in an operational manner. It also provided an opportunity of deploying a British-designed ship within the USN organisation, a process that was somewhat forced on the RAN by limited resources.

The continuous employment of one of the DDGs in Vietnam posed problems for the RAN. These included training new crews, giving leave to personnel and working up in Australia before deployment to ensure

operational readiness.[72] As the Chief of the Naval Staff observed, the commitments to Southeast Asia posed a continuing problem for the RAN in the short term as 'the number of escorts cannot be increased' while the commitment facing the RAN 'was of indefinite duration'.[73] The only way to lessen the dilemma was 'by getting a greater usage rate from existing escorts'. The Australian vessel HMAS *Vendetta*, a British-designed *Daring* class destroyer served in Vietnamese waters from September 1969 to March 1970, and this did reduce the operational stress placed on the Fleet. The employment of *Vendetta* was not straightforward however, and posed two immediate problems, suitability and support. As the *Daring*s were viewed as good gunfire support and bombardment ships, suitability was determined primarily by a solution to the support problem.[74] The support issue was a consequence of the ship not being standardised on the US Navy's equipment and logistic systems, and it did not fit easily into the Seventh Fleet's organisation as the American-built DDGs had done. Interestingly, during a visit to South East Asia in January 1967, the RAN Director of Plans did enquire about the possibility of Royal Navy sources in Singapore providing support to RAN ships engaged in Vietnam. The unofficial answer from Chief Staff Officer (Plans and Operations) was said to be 'somewhat vague'.[75]

On completion of *Hobart*'s first operational period in Vietnam a general assessment by *Hobart* as to the suitability of a *Daring* Class vessel for operational duties with the US Seventh Fleet was made. *Hobart*'s Commanding Officer was asked to cover operational suitability, compatibility of operational equipment, and if possible, any particular support problems.[76] The reply was lengthy and raised serious concerns about the deployment of *Daring*s in the Vietnamese theatre.[77] These included the operational capabilities of such vessels in anti-air warfare:

> Limitations in the detection and acquisition processes due to poor air warning, short range fire-control track radar and computer parameters, combined give the *Daring* a significantly less chance of successful defence than an equivalent USN destroyer (DD).[78]

In addition, the *Daring*s did not meet the minimum communications requirements of a ship employed in Vietnam. Conversely, the *Daring* was thought to have the capability to combat the primary surface threat of PT boat attack, and was 'well suited' to the naval gunfire support role. In addition, it was suggested that:

> The *Daring* is capable of providing ASW defence in Vietnam operations. Although the ship will be at a range disadvantage with detection equipment, it holds advantages in shallow water performance, and in mine detection capability, also the Mortar MK10 provides a better shallow water capability than the MK44 torpedo.[79]

The operational effectiveness of the vessels was thought to be limited as the Action Information Organisation in *Daring*s:

> As presently fitted and manned allows the employment of these ships in Southern GUNLINE Operations [however] the restricted capability for Anti-Air Warfare (AAW), and air control precludes the employment of these ships in SEA DRAGON Operations, and makes the capability for screening a fleet aircraft carrier in an AAW environment very marginal. Assignment to a support aircraft carrier (CVS) screen in a lesser degree of AAW threat would be possible.[80]

There were also limitations in the Electronic Warfare capabilities of the *Daring*s as 'The Electronic Counter-Measures (ECM) equipment fitted in the *Daring*…is inadequate for operations north of the DMZ and in the Tonkin Gulf'. The supply of ammunition and stores for the British-designed vessels was also extremely problematic as:

> Possibly one of the largest factors affecting the deployment [of] RAN *Daring* Class DDs in Vietnam is the supply of 4.5" ammunition…[and this] appears to provide a major logistic problem which will require consideration whether to attempt to integrate with the Seventh Fleet logistic organisation through the Naval Magazine at Subic Bay, or to provide a separate underway replenishment ship especially for use with the deployed *Daring*.[81]

It was also pointed out that 'it is doubtful whether many suitable stores items could be secured from US sources. Threads on screws, nuts and bolts and electric lamp fittings are not compatible'. As such naval and special stores such as machinery spares had to be transported by air from Australia.

Underway replenishment (UNREP) was also seen as a problem:

> The *Daring* Class DD is incompatible with USN UNREP ships to carry out replenishment in accordance with normal Western Pacific (Command)

> procedures [however] compatibility will be attained if recommended modifications are carried out.[82]

In conclusion, it was suggested that:

> In the absence of other relevant factors not available in this appreciation, it appears that the most economical and expedient answer is to modify a *Daring* sufficiently to allow assignment to duties on the Southern GUNLINE, south of the DMZ, with the possible additional use on the screen of the CVS when present. The ship may require a special scheduling cycle to meet any particular logistic support circumstances.[83]

The Flag Officer Commanding the Australian Fleet, Rear Admiral Richard Peek, concurred with *Hobart*'s appreciation and conclusions and recommended that the most likely vessel to deploy to Vietnam would be HMAS *Vendetta*.[84] This was subject to the modifications to communications equipment and UNREP arrangements as suggested previously, as well as provision for 4.5-inch ammunition and naval and special stores. It was also accepted that the vessel would only be employed south of the DMZ. The expected limitations in operational tasks to be carried out by the ship were an issue however. The Australian Chief of the Naval Board stated that:

> While a single ship is contributed to Vietnam it is preferred that it should be one capable of all the duties normally assigned to destroyer types, and in particular it should be capable of SEA DRAGON operations. Moreover while it is considered feasible to overcome the difficulties associated with the deployment of a *Daring* it is doubtful whether they could be resolved in time for deployment by March 1968.[85]

The limitations of the *Daring* Class ships were expanded on in a later Minute:

> A *Daring*…would…be suitable for only three of the five duties to which destroyers are normally assigned in Vietnam operations. While Australia's contribution is a single ship, it is considered essential that the unit provided should be capable of completing all five duties, and in particular should be capable of SEA DRAGON operations. Any limitations would place an inordinate demand on USN ships, and would inhibit the normal rotation of individual units to the various duties.[86]

As such it was recommended that *Hobart* should relieve *Perth* in Subic Bay in March 1968. Even so there were concerns about *Hobart*'s operational state:

> The ship has been engaged on fairly arduous service, will be so employed again with a relatively inexperienced crew, and will be in the later stages of an extended period of service. A rise in the defect rate and corresponding reduction in reliability can therefore be expected.[87]

Peek, who later served as Australian CNS from 1970–73, pointed out that the revised fleet programme 'requires *Perth* to spend more than the previously accepted six months on station. I would prefer [to] limit service to six months and propose a gap be accepted from 18 March 1968 until *Hobart* arrives on station'.[88] The Chief of the Naval Staff was opposed to FOCAF's 'gap' for a number of reasons, the principal one being the inability to maintain continuity in commitment.[89] Peek saw great disadvantages in the situation whereby the only ships deemed able to serve in Vietnam were the American-built DDGs; 'it is well nigh impossible to keep one of the two DDGs continually in the Seventh Fleet and maintain the stated policy of six months on station'.[90] The material state of the vessels was of concern, and 'the situation will persist at least until HMAS *Brisbane* is available for Vietnam operations'. The operational strains of the Australian Fleet were such that it was recognised that:

> Ships should be given two clear six monthly periods in Australia after service in the Seventh Fleet. However, pending the availability of *Brisbane* for this service it is unlikely that this can be achieved unless the feasibility study, currently under development, of deploying a *Daring* to Vietnam shows that a *Daring* could make an effective contribution to Seventh Fleet operations.[91]

The Naval Board concluded that 'the possibility of a *Daring* class destroyer undertaking a period of duty in Vietnamese waters' should be examined. It was observed that 'the USN authorities regarded logistic support for the *Daring*s as merely a problem to be overcome'.[92] By late 1968, a decision had been made to provisionally deploy *Vendetta* to Vietnam in September 1969. Arrangements were made to pre-position 4.5-inch ammunition and replacement barrels at the US naval base at

Subic Bay, and to alter the manning of the ship so that its complement would be able to meet the needs of the operational environment.[93] The ship was also modified to be compatible with UNREP systems utilised by the USN. HMAS *Vendetta* carried out a successful deployment to Vietnam from September 1969–March 1970 and was credited with 52 enemy dead by body count and another 20 probable from a total of 192 missions.[94]

The restriction of only DDGs being allowed to serve operationally in Vietnam not only had an impact on the abilities of the RAN to carry out its operational commitments. There was also an effect on the morale of the service as the RAN was increasingly being seen as 'two navies'. In late 1967, FOCAF noted:

> Because DDG's are the only ships currently allocated for service in Vietnam we cast doubts about the ability of other units to operate with the USN and because of type postings restrict markedly the number of sailors that can serve in a ship on active service …there is already a feeling in the fleet, that only the DDG's are considered as first eleven ships. This feeling, which is to be deprecated, will undoubtedly spread under the present policy.[95]

This point was reiterated fifteen months later by the Secretary of the Department of the Navy;

> If HMAS *Brisbane* returned [from Vietnam] without relief on station…the morale of the Navy would also become involved because a belief that the Naval Board lacks confidence in any ships but the DDGs would be inevitable [and] this tendency already exists in the RAN…[96]

HMAS *Vendetta* did prove to be an effective gunship in Vietnam but the fact that the ship was designed in Britain and made in Australia meant that the pre-deployment arrangements were anything but straightforward. The necessity of using a British-designed ship in Vietnam was due to the small size of the RAN, and the operational requirements placed on the service.

The RAN found itself increasingly unable to carry out its operational commitments. The added strains of the Vietnam conflict on such a small navy did nothing to alleviate the operational constraints of the RAN. Before the commissioning of HMAS *Brisbane* in 1967, the RAN

had only two ships which could be deployed for combat operations off Vietnam. The recently purchased American-built DDGs, HMA Ships *Perth* and *Hobart* were suited for the task but the rest of the DE's possessed by the RAN were not, being British-designed and thus not standardised on the US logistic system. The strains on the RAN were such that Rear Admiral Peek, felt able to report:

> From observations and from reports it has become apparent that service in the Strategic Reserve no longer offers the excellent training that it did a few years ago. This is caused by the reduction in RN forces and by their pre-occupation in other areas in the Indian Ocean so that exercises with a number of ships are rarely possible…in the opinion of Commodore, Malaysian Navy, the withdrawal of our contribution would not be of concern to the Malaysian Government provided it was available to return in an emergency.[97]

Peek went so far as to suggest that:

> Consideration be given to withdrawing our escorts from the Strategic Reserve [and] maintaining two ships in the Seventh Fleet. Use of ships other than those built in the USA would produce logistic and operating problems…but these problems have to be faced at some time.[98]

The Secretary of the Department of the Navy replied that:

> Any abatement of the RAN contribution [to the Strategic Reserve] could only be by Government decision. It is known that the Government is currently considering the requirement to continue to position forces in South East Asia, but has intimated that it would wish to retain forces at about current levels. Accordingly, it would not be opportune to recommend that the RAN's present commitment should be reduced.[99]

In regard to the suggestion that the commitment to Vietnam be increased it was stated that:

> Similarly, the RAN's commitment to Vietnam is based on Government policy and could only be increased with Government approval…it is unlikely that a proposal to increase the Vietnam commitment at the expense of forces in the Strategic Reserve would be acceptable.[100]

The Deputy-Chief of Naval Staff (DCNS) suggested that 'perhaps our feeling re the reduced training for ships in the S.R. (Strategic Reserve) could be raised with Commander Far East Fleet (COMFEF) in February',[101] however, there is no record of this conversation taking place. The problems in maintaining three ships on overseas deployments were agreed on, but were considered inevitable because of international commitments.[102] The Secretary, Department of the Navy's comments in regard to RAN commitments Strategic Reserve and Vietnam were later reinforced in a Minute approved by the DCNS and the CNS.[103]

The proposals by Peek are illustrative on several levels. The first is that a reduction in the Strategic Reserve could have been seen as a snub to Australia's ANZAM partners, not the least Great Britain. Second, and perhaps more obviously, it was viewed that operational duty in Vietnam was much more beneficial to the effectiveness of a ship than non-combat operations elsewhere. Lastly, the fact that such discussions were taking place is a reflection of growing Australian naval confidence. British Admiral of the Fleet Lord Peter Hill-Norton remarked that:

> Something we must recognise is that all too often the policies and interests of our old Commonwealth friends are quite different to our own aspirations and that realities and self-interest more and more tend to overshadow sentiment.[104]

The level of pragmatism within Australian naval circles shows that this was indeed the case.

The period from 1945–75 was a time of great strategic change for Australia and the Royal Australian Navy. The diminution of British influence in the South East Asia and Pacific regions in the post-war period meant that Australia had to find a new strategic partner. In the immediate post-war period the national ties between Australia and Great Britain were strong, reinforced by the ideas of empire and Commonwealth, however, strategic reality gave Australia little choice than to turn to the USA. The ANZUS treaty was but one manifestation of the altering strategic environment; Australian support of America in Vietnam another. In many ways, Australia did exchange one 'great and powerful friend', the UK, for another, the USA. Australian ties of kith and kin towards Great Britain were eroding due to a growing sense of Australian self-determination. The erosion of these national and historical ties was aided by the end of empire, decolonisation and the British withdrawal from east of Suez.

The national strategic replacement of the UK by the USA was somewhat mirrored by the RAN substitution of the United States Navy for the Admiralty. Even so, the former did not replace the latter in terms of the almost complete support given to the RAN by the Admiralty in the past. Although the RAN did purchase equipment and major units from the USA, itself a departure from the immediate post-war years, where the dependence on the Admiralty for equipment was complete, it did not replace one monopoly for another. Although standardisation on American systems was an Australian strategic goal, the RAN resisted a complete move to the USN. This caused operational issues, as the USN naval supply system could not automatically cater for British-designed ships. This was a concern considering the small size of the RAN, and the Australian strategic shift away from the UK and to America. A *Daring* class destroyer was utilised in Vietnam, but there was great anxiety and much work to do prior to its deployment.

The RAN was a progressively independent service during the post-war period. On the purchase of the American-built DDGs Vice Admiral Burrell recalled that 'My conscience required me to give Admiralty an opportunity to continue our ship construction liaison' however, it was clear that 'my alternative would be to turn to the United States'.[105] This reveals a preference for Admiralty supply, but a willingness to look elsewhere if Australian needs could not be met. As Burrell expanded, 'I am responsible for a success story not quite by accident but because the Royal Navy was unable, perhaps, for understandable reasons…to alter the design of their guided missile destroyers to meet, what I considered RAN requirements'.[106] The drift from the Admiralty was not an easy one as considerations of naval history, culture and tradition were ever present. Nor did the alteration of naval policy herald a complete cessation of co-operation between the RAN and the Royal Navy. In many ways, the alteration in naval relations was a microcosm of the changes in high-level Australian strategic thought, and indeed cultural changes within the nation itself. Even so, the modifications in national strategy and naval policy did not take place at the same times, or for the same reasons.

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CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

The Royal Australian Navy owed much to the Admiralty and the Royal Navy. The RAN was created as an adjunct to the Royal Navy and the ties between the two services were great. This was especially true from the creation of the RAN in 1911, through the First World War, throughout the inter-war years, and during the Second World War. In the post-Second World War era the relations between the two services altered to an extent that in many ways mirrored the relations between Great Britain and Australia.

Recognition of the historical links and cultural ties between the Royal Navy and the RAN is crucial when an assessment of the altering relations between the services is made. In many ways, the strong bonds between the two services made a drift of the RAN from the embrace of the Admiralty painful. The officer class, and to a lesser extent the lower-deck of the RAN, owed much to the Admiralty. Traditions and naval culture were passed from the British service to the RAN. Operational experience in both world wars strengthened these bonds and made the notion of a singular-service, in many ways a natural one. There were advantages for the Royal Navy and the RAN in keeping the inter-naval bonds between the services strong. The Admiralty took the view that the close cultural ties strengthened other aspects of inter-service relations. This was especially true when Commonwealth navies acted in harmony in post-war conflicts such as Korea, the Malayan Emergency and confrontation with Indonesia. The RAN, however, was increasingly being seen as an independent force, acting in operations without British support such as

M. Gjessing, *Anglo-Australian Naval Relations, 1945–1975*,
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Vietnam, and taking a more self-determining posture in matters of personnel and equipment.

This growing independence was illustrated on a number of cultural levels. The elevation of John Collins to the CNS illustrated an increasing level of Australian naval development. Collins' predecessor, Royal Navy Admiral Sir Louis Hamilton, recognised that the RAN had come to maturity, an 'Australia for Australians argument'. The time for an Australian CNS had come, even though there would be a requirement for continuing Admiralty support in matters such as equipment procurement, personnel and training. Even so, cultural changes were introduced by the RAN to foster an increasing sense of Australian naval identity. These included the introduction of 'Australia' flashes to RAN uniforms, differing forms of ship identification such as hull numbering and the introduction of the Australian White Ensign.

The respective heads of service had an extremely good level of communication with each other, although this varied due to considerations of personality and character. Communications at the highest levels continued throughout 1945–75 and beyond. Mid-level co-operation typified by naval liaison officers was variable, but overall inter-naval relations at this level were much more efficient than inter-army or air force relations. Relations on a personal level varied greatly and this was only to be expected considering the great level of personnel interaction due to personnel exchanges and loans, training and inter-service operational co-operation in both war and peace. Experiences of personnel interaction will always differ, and it would be misleading to suggest that the dealings between British and Australia members of the lower-deck were always of a less than comradely manner. It would also be fallacy to presume that members of the officer classes felt completely at home in their brethren's service and nations. Cultural and historical ties meant that the drift of one navy from the other was a protracted process. The inherent 'Britishness' of the Australian officer class meant that decisions such as the purchase of American equipment was made with some trepidation. There was, however, a strong sense of pragmatism associated with the gradual move away from the Admiralty. It was a process that in many ways followed the strategic drift of Australia and the UK from one another.

The high-level strategic choices of both nations altered in the post-war period. In essence, Australia placed much more emphasis on the importance of the USA as a strategic partner at the expense of the

Anglo-Australian strategic relationship. Likewise, the UK gravitated towards Europe and NATO. In the immediate post-war years, much was made of Commonwealth strategic collaboration. The ANZAM agreement grew from post-war ideas on Commonwealth defence co-operation and ANZAM held particular significance for the RAN as the resultant development of independent Australian naval strategic planning was a differentiation from past practice where the Admiralty had been responsible for this task. ANZAM and the creation of the Far East Strategic Reserve, ANZUK, FPDA and SEATO, strengthened or maintained, in varying levels, the bonds between the two navies.

Nonetheless, there was a level of strategic confusion as to the future role of Britain. Was the UK to be an appendage of the USA, attached to it by a special relationship? Or would it be more beneficial to form a cohesive and powerful Commonwealth which would speak with one voice? At various points throughout the post-war period the British stated they had a moral obligation to give help, if needed, to Australia and New Zealand, but the ability of the UK to honour any such obligation practically, was frequently in doubt. Efforts were made to placate Australia, however, the strategic realities facing the UK were clear. On the 31 December 1971 the Commander of the British Far East Fleet hauled down his flag and the permanent presence of British ships east of Suez, apart from those assigned to ANZUK, was at an end.

Australia also redefined its strategic options in the post-war period. In the immediate post-war years, Australia still placed great emphasis on co-operation in British Commonwealth defence. Even so there was recognition of the importance of the USA; the ANZUS treaty of 1952 best signified the alteration of Australian strategic interests towards the USA, although the Radford-Collins agreement that preceded it had more impact on the RAN. Although Australian strategic ties with Great Britain decreased in the post-war period, and Australian–American ties strengthened, it should not be assumed that Australia simply swapped one great and powerful friend for another. Instead there should be recognition of an increase of Australian strategic independence.

In many ways this increased independence was a result of the diminution of British military power and influence in the Indian Ocean/Pacific regions and the Far East. Concerns were held by the British about the stability of the region throughout the 1954–75 period. In 1970 the C-in-C Far East stated, ‘The reasons for our preoccupation with Europe and NATO are plain and compelling. The war which would destroy

Britain swiftly and completely is the war in Europe. But the most likely threats to peace are to be found not in Europe but in the Middle and Far East'[1] and 'these relatively small Asian events are, in my judgement, far more likely to occur to the disadvantage of Britain and her allies than the much greater European events against which the western powers have prepared their major defences.' There may have been a level of self-interest in the pronouncements of the C-in-C Far East but there was continued British interest in the region, not the least concerns over the perceived increase of Soviet influence in the Indian Ocean. The process of decolonisation and the retreat from east of Suez did not mean a cessation in Anglo-Australian naval co-operation, nor did it mean a termination in Anglo-Australian strategic relations.

An examination of Anglo-Australian naval relations does much to shed light on east of Suez and decolonisation concerns. Royal Navy units continued to operate in the region throughout the 1945–75 period, albeit on a much reduced level. In addition, planning for British use of naval facilities in Australia, if Singapore was no longer tenable, was advanced and the proposed level of British naval deployment was at times great.

Inter-service operations in war and peace were possibly the most tangible evidence of naval co-operation between the Royal Navy and the RAN. Vessels of both services operated with each other in the Korean conflict, the Malayan Emergency and confrontation with Indonesia. Shared doctrine, operating procedures, training, and equipment meant that forces of the Royal Navy and the RAN could, in the main, operate seamlessly together. This was especially true during the Korean War where there were occasional difficulties posed by the doctrinal differences of the United States Navy. The Malayan Emergency gave further opportunities for operational co-operation between the RAN and the Royal Navy, although the part played by the former was minor. Confrontation with Indonesia was a more operationally draining affair for both navies. The Royal Navy's contribution was significant, and while the involvement of the RAN was more modest, it was at a time where conflict in Vietnam was escalating, and RAN operational responsibilities were expanding.

Peacetime exercises and training were an important aspect of inter-service co-operation. Units of the Royal Navy and the RAN trained and operated with each other throughout the 1945–75 period and beyond. Joint exercises were valuable for the RAN as they gave opportunities

for the service to work with larger and better-resourced navies such as the Royal Navy. Following the withdrawal of British units from east of Suez, Royal Navy vessels continued, albeit in reduced numbers, to operate with units of the RAN in area such as the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Port visits were crucial in carrying out one of the more important peacetime tasks of maritime forces, that of 'showing the flag'. Such visits to Australia by Royal Navy units continued to take place after the withdrawal of British forces from east of Suez. In a period where Australian strategic focus was increasingly shifting from the UK, Australian vessels continued to visit the UK and took part in maritime exercises and training. Such events continued after 1975, most notably in Exercise HIGHWOOD 77. A further example of co-operation between the services was during British atomic weapons testing off the coast of Western Australia in the 1950s. Operations HURRICANE and MOSAIC resulted in the successful detonation of atomic devices, and the RAN provided a large proportion of the naval support required for both operations. In a period where British naval assets were much reduced in the Asia-Pacific region there continued to be occasions where units of the Royal Navy and the RAN operated together.

There was much co-operation between the two services in matters of personnel. The post-war period saw inter-service loans of servicemen, exchange of human resources, and recruitment of ex-Royal Navy officers and sailors by the RAN. This movement of personnel was not on a one-to-one basis and the RAN benefited very much by the migration of British mariners to the service. The loan of British personnel was extremely important to the fledgling RAN Fleet Air Arm. Recruitment of ex-RN personnel by the RAN was in many cases to the detriment of the Royal Navy as this decreased the pool of resources available to the British. Even so the Admiralty welcomed Australian recruitment drives in the UK as this was seen as fostering the ties between the two services and propagating the notion of an 'Empire Navy'. Officer exchanges also strengthened the bonds between the services, as did the extensive training carried out by RAN officers in the UK. Training of Australian officers was also beneficial to the Admiralty, as the result was a more operationally effective relationship between the services. The migration of personnel from one service to the other took place in a situation where the strategic positions taken by the UK and Australia were fluid. During the post-war period, there was a decrease in personnel exchanges, inter-service loan and UK-based training of RAN personnel but this did

not result in an increase of personnel migration with other navies such as the USN. As such, a decrease of Australian reliance on the Admiralty in affairs of personnel was a further indication of increased Australian naval independence.

Co-operation in matters of equipment was another important area of Anglo-Australian naval relations in the post-war era. The addition of a naval aviation capability to the RAN was a manifestation of the willingness of the service to contribute to post-war Imperial defence in an efficient manner. The fact that Admiralty assistance was absolutely vital to this end was a reflection of the reliance of the RAN on British assistance in the immediate post-war years. The economic terms offered by the Admiralty were generous, even though there was some confusion about the expected capabilities of the vessels and aircraft. There was also a level of pragmatism on the part of the Admiralty, where the view was held that the creation of Australian naval aviation must in some measure be subsidised. It was stressed that following Australian commitment to the endeavour, any subsidies would not be in accordance with either Australian or British policy. The implementation of the Australian Fleet Air Arm was rewarded by the service of Australian carriers throughout the period of interest, including active service in the Korean conflict.

The issue of Australian standardisation is important when assessing Anglo-Australian naval co-operation. In April 1957 the Australian Prime Minister announced that Australian weapons would be standardised as much as possible with American patterns. This was due to the alteration in strategic circumstances whereby it was viewed that Australian forces would fight alongside those of the USA rather than the UK in any future global conflict. The RAN, however, had long been standardised on British equipment and ammunition, and in drafting the proposed agreement with the USA the RAN took great pains to ensure there would be no impact in its ability to act with the Royal Navy in the future. Standardisation did not greatly affect the equipment procurement policies of the RAN, and did not herald an automatic switch from British ships to those of the USA. The standardisation policy may have made it *possible*, but it did not make it *automatic*, and the defining motive behind the purchase of the DDGs was the perceived advantages of the American Tartar missile system over the British equivalent.

The circumstances following the collision between the HMA Ships *Melbourne* and *Voyager* support the evidence of increased choice in

Australian procurement options. The loss of HMAS *Voyager* in February 1964 resulted in offers from both the British and the Americans for a replacement vessel. There was a level of political pressure on the RAN to accept the American solution, however, the British *Daring* class ship was deemed as a more acceptable solution by the service. This decision was made in an environment where the decision to purchase American-built ships had already been made but the RAN saw difficulties in introducing too many US platforms at once due to issues with training and logistical support.

Following the standardisation agreements, the RAN continued to purchase British equipment where such equipment was deemed the best fit. One example was in the creation of a submarine capability for the RAN. The necessity for an Australian subsurface capability was in the main due to British inability to continue the deployment of the Australian-based Fourth Submarine Division. This force had provided valuable ASW training for Australian and New Zealand units since 1949 but a diminution of British military power resulted in a level of pressure being placed on Australia to provide its own submarine force. American vessels were considered, but in late 1963 British *Oberon* class submarines were deemed as the best platform for the creation of the Australian submarine service. Again, the Admiralty provided support for the submarine service, via the transfer of officers and sailors, as well as UK-based training for Australian submariners.

The implementation of the largely Australian designed Ikara ASW weapon system on British vessels was an example where the Admiralty benefited from Australian naval expertise. The system was modified to suit British ships and installed on a number of vessels. Anglo-Australian co-operation in equipment design on Ikara and other systems, such as the proposed RAN DDL project, continued into the 1970s. Even though the power of the RN had declined by the mid-1960s the capacity and inclination of the Admiralty to assist the RAN in matters of equipment and personnel remained.

Australia continued to utilise the resources of British naval personnel and facilities, albeit at a reduced rate, throughout the 1945–75 period. In addition, the RAN continued to benefit from the greater equipment resources associated with the larger Royal Navy. Co-operation in matters of hardware procurement and design continued throughout the post-war period. Even so, the RAN increasingly found itself able to pick and choose in matters of procurement and by the 1960s the Admiralty was

not deemed as the automatic choice. Nor was the USA viewed as the only solution to equipment. Even after US ships had been purchased by the RAN, a decision that was made with much misgiving by some within the service, the RAN continued to exploit the assets of the Admiralty where these resources were thought of as the best solution.

Australia faced many strategic choices in the post-war period. At the end of the Second World War Australia recognised that the UK could not be relied upon to provide protection for Australian strategic interests. Even so, the switch from one 'great and powerful friend', Great Britain, to another, the USA, was not a complete swap, and did not happen overnight. Nor was the strategic drift from the UK a sudden process. Even after the ratification of the ANZUS treaty in 1952 Anglo-Australian strategic and defence links remained. The degradation of British strategic and military power in the Asia/Pacific region had much to do with a reduction in Anglo-Australian co-operation and there were fears about the effect of this diminution on the Commonwealth. As Paul Hasluck, the Australian Minister for External Affairs stated 'I regard the Commonwealth as a wheel with Britain as the hub. Weaken the hub or remove the hub and the wheel will soon become nothing more than a hoop which may be pleasant to play with but will be incapable of bearing any load'.[2] In the immediate post-war period notions of Imperial defence were strong, however, divergent strategic interests rendered notions of Imperial defence as unrealistic. As a result, the strategic stance taken by Australia was a much more independent one.

The drift of the RAN from the Admiralty towards the USA somewhat mirrored the national strategic experience. Visits of high-ranking US naval officers to Australia took place in 1947 and reciprocal visits by the ACNB resulted in the 1951 Radford-Collins agreement. Communications between the RAN and the USN continued throughout the post-war era, and increased due to amplified inter-service co-operation in areas of intelligence, operations and equipment procurement. Tensions did arise between the RAN and the USN, most notably the 1968 friendly fire incident involving HMAS *Hobart* off the coast of Vietnam, and the 1969 collision between the RAN carrier HMAS *Melbourne* and the USS *Frank E. Evans.* But these tensions were not the norm and Australian–American naval relations flourished, even though the USN did not replace the Admiralty in levels of support given to the RAN. Perhaps the most obvious manifestation of the Australian naval shift towards the USA was the Australian purchase of the

US-built *Charles F. Adams* class destroyers. The purchase of these vessels was a stark departure from previous procurement policies of the RAN, where previously all major ships had been designed and/or built in the UK. There was much heartache in the service about the drift from the Admiralty, but the DDGs were viewed as the best solution for the RAN. Even though cultural ties made the decision more painful than would otherwise have been the case, a level of pragmatism won out. The British were unable to fulfil Australian naval requirements so a solution had to be found elsewhere. The American ships were deemed as fit for purpose, and the previous governmental decisions on standardisation with the USA, made for an easier decision.

The British recognised the value of the sale of naval hardware to countries such as Australia and there were misgivings in British naval circles about the alteration in Australian naval procurement practice, but there was also a level of matter-of-factness associated with the purchase of the DDGs. The Admiralty were given the opportunity to modify their existing *County* class to suit Australian requirements, but declined. This is evidence of a certain level of pragmatism on the part of the Admiralty as there were doubts that the RAN would actually source American built ships. Although there were British misgivings about the quality of the DDGs, the ships provided sterling service in Vietnam and beyond.

The Vietnam War marked a turning point in that it was the first time that RAN units had served under the aegis of the US Seventh Fleet and fought unaccompanied by British vessels. The recently purchased DDGs served with distinction on operations including shore bombardment and carrier escort duties, and slotted into the existing US logistical chain almost seamlessly. Doctrinal differences between the USN and the RAN were apparent in the conflict and this was especially the case where ammunition expenditure was concerned. The RAN was a much smaller navy than the USN and placed more emphasis on 'value for money'. Although the Australians were manning US-built ships, many of their naval values were still inherently British, a facet of the British orientation of the service. The British designed *Daring* class destroyer HMAS *Vendetta* performed honourably during its one deployment to Vietnam but there were logistical and operational difficulties associated with the employment of the vessel. For example, modifications to the ships communications and UNREP equipment were necessary, as there was a lack of integration with US systems. In addition, the ships ammunition was incompatible with the US supply chain. The difficulties associated with

the ships deployment have sometimes been understated but there was considerable work to be done before the British designed ship could be considered for use in Vietnam.

The use by the RAN of both American and British designed ships presented a number of problems for the service. The logistical difficulties were obvious, as neither the British or American systems were compatible with each other, but this was accepted prior to the purchase of the DDGs. A less obvious result following the introduction of the DDGs was that some in the RAN viewed the service as one of 'two navies'. One was composed of American built destroyers where valuable active service via the Vietnam conflict was available. The second of the 'two navies' was composed of 'steel ships', or escorts of British design; ships that were generally given tasks that were perceived as less valuable such as service with the Strategic Reserve. Operational constraints placed on the RAN, and the perceived operational benefits of service in Vietnam were such that it was suggested by some that an increase of units with the US Seventh Fleet be made at the expense of forces serving with the Strategic Reserve. This would have had obvious political ramifications for Australia, Great Britain and the USA and the proposal was quickly squashed, but the fact that discussions took place emphasises both the operational difficulties of a small navy such as the RAN and the occasional schism between naval and national policy. A gap between national and naval policy was also apparent in British discussions on the creation of a 'Commonwealth Eastern Fleet'. Such a construct was viewed by some in the Royal Navy as potentially useful in making the most of the resources available to the Royal Navy, the RAN and the RNZN. There were great political difficulties associated with the proposal, and British political figures were adamant that no firm discussions regarding an integrated naval force should take place with the Australians. Dialogue did take place, during Vice Admiral Burrell's 1960 fact-finding visit to the UK, on the practicality of a joint RN-RAN minesweeping force. The suggestion was met with little enthusiasm on the part of the Australians, an indication of growing Australian naval independence.

Throughout the post-war period several international and naval trends were apparent. One is the growing independence of Australia as a nation. This is especially relevant when one considers the strategic shift of Australia from the UK to a more self-sufficient stance. An increase in defence co-operation with the USA also took place in the same period, but the USA did not carry out the same role that Great Britain had

previously. A second trend is that of increased self-reliance for the RAN. This inclination was arguably, a more subtle one, and differing levels of naval pragmatism, from both the RAN and the Admiralty were apparent. This was especially so in matters of personnel, training and procurement of equipment. There was also a level of pragmatism from the RAN towards its new dominant partner, the United States Navy. Just as an increased Australian naval self-reliance meant that the RAN had choices other than the Admiralty in regard to equipment procurement, for example, the same increased independence meant that the Admiralty could continue to be utilised when the RAN saw fit.

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