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## **Loaning Ships and Leveraging Influence? American and British Responses to the HMAS *Voyager* Tragedy**

**Steven Paget, University of Portsmouth**

### **Abstract**

The loss of HMAS *Voyager* following a collision with HMAS *Melbourne* on 10 February 1964 was a national tragedy for Australia. Britain and the United States were quick to express their sympathy and both offered to loan a ship to the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) to offset their loss. The offers were genuine and were intended to aid an important partner. The RAN had been tied closely to the RN since its creation, but the 1950s and 1960s witnessed an important transition and the RAN's decision to purchase the American designed and built Charles F. Adams class destroyer as its new class of escorts in 1961 exemplified an increasing alignment with the United States Navy (USN). The *Voyager* tragedy reignited the debate over standardization and afforded both the Royal Navy (RN) and USN with an opportunity to attempt to strengthen ties with the RAN. The eventual Australian decision to accept the British offer, ultimately, had little effect on the development of the RAN. Rather than harking back to a time when the RAN was an appendage of the RN, the decision to select the British ship was a mark of its increasing independence.

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The immediate replacement of *Voyager*, pending the permanent replacement, could be managed only by obtaining a suitable vessel from either the United Kingdom or the United States. Both our friends had indicated most generously their anxiety to help...<sup>1</sup>

Prime Minister Robert Menzies, 1964

Robert Menzies, Australian Prime Minister, was acutely aware that the sinking of HMAS *Voyager*, following an accidental collision with HMAS *Melbourne* on February 10, 1964, would require assistance from either the United Kingdom (UK) or the United States (US). The sinking was a national tragedy. The 82 deaths represented the worst peacetime personnel losses in Australian military history and there were long term consequences for many others involved. Such was the gravity of the tragedy that two Royal Commissions were held to investigate the circumstances surrounding the loss of the ship.<sup>2</sup> While the collision resulted in human tragedy, the aftermath was characterized by diplomatic wrangling between Australia, the UK and the US as the issue of a ship loan was discussed amidst a wider push for military standardization.

Both the Americans and the British were quick to offer a loan to help address the gap in the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) fleet following the loss of *Voyager*. Given the close ties with Australia, there can be no doubting the sincerity of both offers, but they were inevitably made with an under-current of self-interest. Maintaining and, ideally, strengthening ties with the RAN and enacting standardization were important considerations for both the Royal Navy (RN) and the United States Navy (USN). The Australian decision to purchase Charles F. Adams Class guided missile destroyers (DDGs) indicated a change in direction for the RAN.<sup>3</sup> That decision was viewed as merely an initial step by the Americans, while the British hoped that it was not a precedent for future acquisitions. The loans were, therefore, an opportunity to reinforce relations with the RAN. There were both strategic and economic motivations as improved efficiency and interoperability would strengthen the capacity of a trusted ally, while

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Australian vessel acquisitions represented an opportunity to bolster national ship-building industries.

Despite the tragedy that had befallen Australia, they were by no means passive in discussions over a potential loan and actively tried to achieve the best deal possible. Testament to the Australian's independence and initiative was the eventual decision to select Britain's offer to loan HMS *Duchess*. The ship was deemed to best suit Australia's needs and the decision was a pragmatic one that reflected a legacy of previous standardization efforts rather than the future direction of travel. Alastair Cooper summarized succinctly: 'The RAN gradually severed ties with the Royal Navy, not only because it was increasingly self-reliant, but also because the Royal Navy was less and less useful for the RAN's purposes, and the relationship atrophied. In contrast the USN became more useful, and that relationship flourished.'<sup>4</sup>

The loss of *Voyager* was a fateful moment in Australian naval history that is worthy of consideration in its own right. The American and British responses and the negotiations that surrounded the potential ship loans were, undoubtedly, significant events in both diplomatic and naval history. In addressing each of the national perspectives of Australia, the UK and the US, this article examines the complexities of the trilateral naval relationship. The discussions marked a pivotal point in the lineage of relationships between the RAN and the RN and USN respectively. This article will briefly outline the circumstances surrounding the loss of *Voyager* and address the consequences that resulted from the tragedy. The British and American offers will be considered in turn, including the context and motivations behind each. The offers were influenced by both internal and external factors that shaped both the timing and content. The Australian decision will then be analyzed to determine which factors drove the ultimate selection of *Duchess* and the diplomatic deliberations that surrounded the choice. Finally, the article will examine what effect the decision to select *Duchess* had on the RAN, its operational capacity and its relationship with the other two navies. There were a number of short-term

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benefits for the RAN, but it did not halt the weakening of ties with the RN. The two navies would always be close, but the nature of the relationship had been changed irreversibly. Rather than harking back to a time when the RAN was an appendage of the RN, the decision to select the British ship was a mark of its increasing independence.

## **The HMAS *Voyager* Tragedy**

*Voyager*, a Daring Class destroyer, was struck by *Melbourne*, a Majestic Class light aircraft carrier, at around 2056 on February 10, 1964 approximately 20 miles south-east of Jervis Bay while the ships were positioning themselves for night flying exercises. *Voyager* was struck amidships and cut in two. The front half sank soon after the collision and the rear section followed later on.<sup>5</sup> Prime Minister Menzies described the sinking as ‘a shocking disaster, unparalleled in the peace-time history of Australia.’<sup>6</sup> In addition to the 82 deaths, the survivors suffered other injuries and sickness, including as a result of having swallowed quantities of sea water and oil. There would also be long-term psychiatric consequences for some of the survivors.<sup>7</sup> Menzies promised a ‘prompt, thorough and public investigation into the tragedy’ in view of the significance of the events.<sup>8</sup> Two Royal Commissions were subsequently conducted. The first was established to determine the cause and circumstances of the accident, while the second was prompted by allegations Captain D.H. Stevens, *Voyager*’s Commanding Officer, was unfit for command.<sup>9</sup> The two Royal Commissions proved insufficient to end the controversy around the sinking and debate is still ongoing around a number of issues.<sup>10</sup>

## **Previous American and British Standardization Efforts**

The RAN has readily integrated with both the RN and the USN throughout its history. The process has not, as James Goldrick and Alison Vincent have pointed out, been without its challenges and frustrations:

Although the RAN derives from the Royal Navy, and in tradition, organization, and culture is closely related to it, the RAN has long been uncomfortable with

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the apparent inconsistencies between much of the naval ethos and the developing Australian identity. This discomfort has been magnified by the fact that most of the active operations of the RAN were conducted on the basis of integration into the Royal Navy's or the United States Navy's operations, without a specific national identity above the level of individual ships or small squadrons.<sup>11</sup>

Both the RN and the USN influenced the development of the RAN but at separate times and to different degrees. The RN had always been the most influential traditionally, as it shaped the RAN in its embryonic stage but the Australian service's relationship with the USN became increasingly important both during and after the Second World War.

The RAN was viewed as 'a navy within a navy' at the time of its foundation in 1911 and the relationship remained close throughout the First World War and beyond.<sup>12</sup> All ships in the RAN during the interwar period, for example, were British pattern and they employed RN tactics.<sup>13</sup> Eric Grove has stated that even in the wake of the Second World War, 'the Admiralty in London still regarded the RAN as part of a single Imperial fleet. Although this traditional vision was soon faded, it did so only a little and the notion of the Commonwealth as a close defensive alliance remained to be given specific coherence in joint defence planning.'<sup>14</sup> The looming specter of standardization with the USN at the expense of the RN remained a concern for the British. When Vice-Admiral John Collins, the RAN's Chief of the Naval Staff, informed the First Sea Lord, Admiral Bruce Fraser, that the Australians were considering acquiring some '2100 tonners' from the US, the British officer replied:

You will understand, I am sure, when I say that we would much prefer that the RAN stuck to British built or British type ships. The reasons are many-standardization of equipment and subsequent logistic problems, training problems, and last but not least, tradition and

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sentiment. What is more important is that the US ships are a great deal more expensive than ours. Once a move towards the US had been started I feel it might be difficult to resist further diversions.<sup>15</sup>

The idea, which had been prompted by construction delays in Australia, was negated by the Admiralty's assertion: '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.'<sup>16</sup>

While the RAN appeared to be moving closer to the USN, the RN continued its push to seek closer alignment with the Australians. The drive was pursued with renewed vigor given cutbacks to the RN, which prompted the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Charles Lambe, to assess in 1960 that the service was 'scaled down to the lowest level at which a reasonably balanced Navy could be maintained and even lacked some equipments which could only be supplied through co-operation with Allied Navies.'<sup>17</sup>

In discussions at the Military Branch, it was proposed that despite the Australian Minister for Defence emphasizing the 'need for Australian armed forces to be able to act independently and, insofar as the ability to co-operate with Allies was concerned, seemed to lean towards co-operation with the US rather than with the UK,' the rhetoric diverged from the reality. It was concluded that the 'decisions actually taken by the Defence Minister – especially the decision to abolish the Australian FAA [Fleet Air Arm] – seem to point the other way, at least so far as the RAN is concerned.'<sup>18</sup> The Director of Plans even optimistically proposed an 'integrated Commonwealth (RN/RAN/RNZN [Royal New Zealand Navy]) Navy East of Suez' in which 'each Navy should make a specialised contribution towards a balanced naval force' to enhance efficiency and reduce overheads. While that hope was tempered by the understanding that it 'may be at best a distant aim, or at worst unattainable in full measure,' it

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was asserted that the ‘pursuit of progressively closer co-operation between these Navies is a realistic – perhaps the only realistic – policy.’<sup>19</sup>

Optimism diminished because of developments that suggested that the Australians were prioritizing standardization with the US. Vice-Admiral Sir Allan Scott-Moncrieff, Commander-in-Chief, Far East Station (RN), recorded that Sir Eric Harrison, the Australian Minister for Defence Production, explained that ‘it appeared to them [the Australians] they should use the equipment of the people who would be fighting with them in war which, of course, would be the Americans’ and that ‘in war the Americans will be their main protector and they will do everything they can to please the Americans and pin them down if possible.’<sup>20</sup>

The 1950s and 1960s witnessed a number of developments intended to enhance interoperability between the military forces of Australia and the US. The ANZUS Treaty (1951), the Radford-Collins Agreement (1951), South East Asia Treaty Organization (1955) and the Military Standardization Agreement (1960), amongst others, facilitated cooperation between the armed forces of the two nations. The perceived necessity was encapsulated by Sir Percy C. Spender, Australian Ambassador to the US, during a visit by an Australian mission to the Pentagon in 1957 when he stated: ‘The inevitable conclusion is that our destinies are intertwined – if war does break out, our forces will be engaged together. To wait until such a time would be foolhardy and tragic.’<sup>21</sup> The US welcomed the Australian enthusiasm. National Security Council Report 6109 (January 16, 1961) outlined that ‘the United States should continue to urge Australia progressively to standardize its military equipment using United States standards and continue to facilitate, as appropriate, the purchase by Australia of United States equipment for its own forces.’<sup>22</sup> Both the precedent and platform for increased interoperability between Australia and the US had been set.

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The focal point of that ongoing process was the Australian decision to purchase the Charles F. Adams Class destroyer.<sup>23</sup> The decision to purchase the American vessels over the British County Class destroyers, which was announced on June 29, 1961, was a significant milestone. Interoperability was certainly one consideration, but it was far from the only one. Inspection tours to Britain and the US convinced the Australians that the weapons systems of the American ship were superior to those of the RN.<sup>24</sup> It was considered that the British Sea Slug was inferior to the DDG's Tartar surface-to-air missile system and that American radar technology was superior.<sup>25</sup> The US also offered to process the purchase through the Military Assistance Program (MAP) and waived the interest charges for the \$90 million cost of two ships, with only \$1.5 million being required up front and the remainder being spread over the next eight years.<sup>26</sup> It was recognized that the Australians 'would almost certainly have found it impossible to undertake the transaction without the credit financing provided through MAP funds' and proposed that: 'The objectives of the 1960 Military Standardization Agreement between the U.S. and Australia should be furthered by continued efforts to promote the procurement by Australia of modern weapons and weapons systems in the U.S., with credit terms made available in the case of those items too costly for cash purchase.'<sup>27</sup>

Further credit of just over \$45 million was provided subsequently for the purchase of a third Charles F. Adams Class destroyer, as well as additional equipment and spares.<sup>28</sup> The provision of credit to the Australians for the purchase of a third vessel was considered as a means for the US to 'promote foreign policy and national security objectives.' In the background discussions surrounding the financial terms of the sale of a third destroyer, the perceived mutual benefits were outlined explicitly:

coordination will be greatly facilitated at the operational level by the addition to the Royal Australian Navy of a third modern vessel with characteristics matching those of a similar class of the United States



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Navy; in addition, the shore installations which the Royal Australian Navy will provide for support of this vessel and the two destroyers already under construction will also be suitable for the support of United States Navy vessels of similar type should the need arise for their operation from Australian bases. Coordination at the policy level will be enhanced by the encouragement that this transaction will inspire for Australia to continue looking to the United States for cooperation and guidance in matters affecting Australian security.<sup>29</sup>

Australia and the United States had, therefore, made significant progress in enhancing standardization by the time of the *Voyager* tragedy, but British efforts to push interoperability with the RAN continued unabated.

John Gorton, Minister for the Navy, announced in 1963 that approval had been granted for the purchase of four Oberon Class submarines from Britain. A push from some quarters in Australia for the vessels to be built domestically was unsuccessful on the grounds of cost.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, the submarines were built and outfitted in Britain before being delivered to Australia in 1970.<sup>31</sup> In addition, Australian submariners were trained overseas, predominantly in Britain, demonstrating both the ongoing significance of relations with the RN and Australian pragmatism.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the purchase of American and British type ships, the Second World War had emphasized the value of a domestic shipbuilding industry. An Inter-departmental Committee established in 1944 to examine post-war shipbuilding recommended: 'The merchant marine and the ship building industry be established on a sound basis after the war, so that they may provide adequately for the defence of Australia, and in particular the shipbuilding industry should not be permitted to decline and disintegrate as it did after the last war.'<sup>33</sup> The Joint War

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Production Committee later concluded at a meeting on May 9, 1950: ‘In the present state of world affairs, Britain could not possibly meet Australia’s needs of shipbuilding, shipping or ship repairs during another World War. Owing to her strategic position and the rapid development of intense bombing technique, Britain and America are certain to look to Australia for still greater assistance in this respect than was deemed during the 1939-45 war.’<sup>34</sup> Indeed, by 1950, it was recognized that ‘even though it is not possible to compete in peace time with overseas shipbuilding interests in economic production,’ ‘Australia’s increasing defence needs’ required ‘a vigorous and continuing shipbuilding industry,’ including for ‘the construction of naval vessels such as frigates.’<sup>35</sup>

The RAN’s Daring Class destroyers, for example, were British-designed, but built in Australia and modified to suit Australian conditions.<sup>36</sup> Plans – later revised – to convert *Melbourne* to a helicopter carrier equipped with Wessex helicopters for anti-submarine warfare necessitated an increased focus on air defense and resulted in Australian construction being ruled out when the new class of escorts (eventually the DDGs) was being considered due to time constraints.<sup>37</sup>

Ships – irrespective of where they were designed or built – needed to be optimized to meet Australia’s specific requirements. The need for pragmatism was encapsulated in Gorton’s assertion that it was incumbent on him to ‘get for...the Royal Australian Navy the greatest amount of the most modern equipment in the shortest time and at the lowest cost, so that they will be able to do their work with the greatest of safety to themselves and with the greatest benefits to the country that they serve.’<sup>38</sup> Ultimately, when it came to equipping the fleet, the eventual answer needed to be Australian even if significant elements of the equation were designed or built overseas. It was against that backdrop that the loan decision took place.

## **‘Prompt and Practical Action’: The British Offer**

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Following the decision to accept the offer, Menzies expressed his thanks in a letter to the British High Commissioner in Australia, Sir William Oliver, for Britain's 'prompt and practical action.'<sup>39</sup> The British response to the tragedy was swift as the Admiralty began speedily brainstorming options to 'help [the] R.A.N. to replace *Voyager* if their operational reserve does not meet their wants.'<sup>40</sup> Two Daring Class destroyers were considered for the loan. HMS *Defender*, which was in the process of being refitted, was considered as a possible option because it was due to be held in operational reserve in the UK. It was acknowledged that the loan had to be free to avoid diminishing the value of the gesture, but there were concerns that the cost of the refit might cause the gift to be 'regarded in some quarters as over-generous.' The alternative, HMS *Duchess*, was due to be refitted and recommissioned in Singapore in June 1964. The British could avoid the cost of the refit, while the Australians would have the opportunity to incorporate any modifications deemed necessary for service with the RAN. It was determined that *Defender* could be used to replace *Duchess* in the Far East Fleet. It was concluded: 'From the U.K. point of view there is a marginal preference for the loan of the *Duchess* and it would certainly avoid the danger of criticism of over-generosity.'<sup>41</sup>

A signal to the British Defence Liaison Staff in Canberra on February 13 stated: 'If put to U.K. Government now whilst tragedy is still strong in ministers minds loan of a Daring might well be agreed and we would be more than ready to help. We should not however want to embarrass R.A.N. by suggesting this if it is not what they want nor should we wish to make firm offer until it had been put to our ministers.'<sup>42</sup> It was indicated that a choice of two ships would be made available, with the pros and cons of each provided, on the basis that while there would be no charge for the vessel, her upkeep and running costs must be borne by the RAN and there should be no extra cost to the RN.<sup>43</sup>

The preliminary approach was well received. The Australian Naval Board responded to the Admiralty with a signal by the Chief of Naval Staff declaring: 'I am deeply appreciative

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of the offer and would be most grateful if I might have the details of the two alternative ships and their pros and cons. Knowledge of the offer is being kept within Navy Office until consideration can be given to pros and cons.’<sup>44</sup> Mark Gjessing has asserted that for the British, there were ‘valid fears the US would beat them to the punch in assisting the RAN’ and it was against that background that communications were hurriedly exchanged between Britain and Australia.<sup>45</sup> When the Admiralty communicated the options to the Australian Naval Board, the Australians deemed *Duchess* as the favored option as it was AC powered like the RAN Daring Class vessels, partially air-conditioned and newer than *Defender*.<sup>46</sup>

Although the initial indications from Australia were positive, news of the American offer created a significant degree of concern in Britain. Aside from the potential of the British loan being rejected, perceptions over both the ‘officialness’ and visibility of the offer were a source of worry. Once it was confirmed that the US had ‘made a firm offer at political level,’ it was noted that the ‘High Commissioner is most anxious that we should not lose the initiative at this stage and therefore hopes we will make definite offer immediately,’ as well as emphasizing – perhaps through a parliamentary question – that an offer ‘has already been made at Naval level.’<sup>47</sup> It was seen as important to demonstrate publicly that Britain had made a ‘spontaneous offer to help’ and that ‘as soon as news of *Voyager*’s loss was received [the] Admiralty took initiative through naval channels to enquire if they could provide [a] suitable ship as replacement.’<sup>48</sup>

While discussions were initially conducted at a navy-to-navy level, the Admiralty’s desire to assist with a ship loan had clear political support and it was recorded that the Minister of Defence and the Commonwealth Secretary ‘took the same view’ as the RN.<sup>49</sup> The Commonwealth Relations Office, in a move to formalize matters, subsequently wrote to the High Commissioner to convey the ‘British Government offer to make H.M.S. *Duchess* available to the Royal Australian Navy on loan for as long as they need her without charge.’<sup>50</sup>

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Sir William Oliver subsequently wrote to Menzies on February 20, confirming the government's offer to loan *Duchess* without charge. Competition from the USN remained at the forefront of British minds, but, in thanking the First Sea Lord for 'the very special efforts which allowed the offer to be made,' Earl George Jellicoe, Minister of Defence for the Royal Navy, asserted: 'If the Australians do decide to take the *Duchess*, I am sure that our aim must be to confound the cynics and to ensure that this "loan" does not finish up like an albatross around our necks.'<sup>51</sup>

### **'A good demonstration of our solidarity as well as our sympathy': The American Offer**

The loan of a US destroyer was seemingly made by a range of different people to several Australian representatives at various times, which led to a level of confusion in American circles. Initially, the Special Assistant to Averill Harriman informed Alan Renouf of the Australian Embassy that 'the United States would be happy to loan Australia one of the many American destroyers that were in mothballs. The only cost to Australia would be that of demothballing.'<sup>52</sup> The US Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, discussed the loan of a ship with the Australian Ambassador to the US, Sir Howard Beale, and indicated that he would give 'very sympathetic consideration' to an Australian Government request to loan a vessel.<sup>53</sup> The US Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, was more forthcoming in a subsequent discussion, suggesting that the loan ship could be provided from those currently in service (as opposed to mothballs), with a replacement being drawn from reserve. Rather than requiring an Australian government request, Rusk declared: 'Why don't we offer you one straight way instead of you asking for one. It would sound better and be a good demonstration of our solidarity as well as our sympathy.'<sup>54</sup>

In Australia, the Cabinet requested an 'immediate evaluation' of the possibility of loaning a US vessel and discussions were progressed further.<sup>55</sup> The Australians expressed their

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hope that the loan vessel would be a Gearing or Sumner Class destroyer or, alternatively, it was noted that a Charles F. Adams Class destroyer 'like those we are acquiring would be attractive.'<sup>56</sup> Australian hopes were dashed by the offer of a Fletcher Class destroyer for a period of five years instead due to restrictions on the loan of ships. While USS *Abbott* and USS *The Sullivans* were discussed as possibilities, it was USS *Twining*, which would have taken less time and money to prepare, that was nominated as the potential loan vessel.<sup>57</sup>

The offer, while made quickly for political reasons, caused some consternation within US government departments. The US naval attaché in Canberra outlined in a telegram that neither he nor Ambassador William Battle had been informed of the offer to loan a destroyer to the RAN, which only 'came to light' when a RAN staff officer asked if the offer of *Twining* had 'been firmed.' Aside from the lack of awareness, the naval attaché and the ambassador were concerned that in view of the 'headline treatment' in the press of the British offer, 'much US good will' was 'being lost by [the] secretive handling USS *Twining* offer.'<sup>58</sup> The surprise in Canberra was replicated in a number of offices in Washington, DC. The Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs informed Ambassador Battle that they were 'as surprised as you were to learn that an offer had actually been made.' David Cuthell, Acting Director, Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs, informed Ambassador Battle that their inquiries suggested that an offer had only been made informally through one of two conversations between Sir Howard and the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Defense. He concluded: 'Because of the pressure on the Secretary to accompany the President it was made so quickly and privately there was no chance to convey it through State or Defense.'<sup>59</sup> With Ambassador Beale being informed of the offer directly, it was admitted that 'the Embassy was not cut in.'<sup>60</sup>

The informal nature of the US offer facilitated the promptness in which it was made, but it also masked the legal complexities involved in ship loans. A record of a discussion between McNamara and Paul Nitze, Secretary of the Navy, documented that 'special

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legislation would be required to authorize such a loan' and it was suggested that President Lyndon Johnson write to Prime Minister Menzies with the intention that if 'the Prime Minister showed interest the White House would urge passage of the necessary legislation.'<sup>61</sup> It was believed that the legislation would 'readily go through if it had Presidential backing.'<sup>62</sup>

Ships loans had, however, proven to be a problematic issue. Following the transfer of six cruisers to Latin American countries without prior Congressional agreement, legislation was introduced to prevent, predominantly, the transfer of ships of the active fleet without approval from Congress. Consequently, from March 10, 1951, the Chief of Naval Operations had to have certified that any sold, transferred or loaned ships were 'not essential to the defense of the United States' and congressional approval obtained.<sup>63</sup> Section 4, Public Law 3, passed by the US 82<sup>nd</sup> Congress, required the sale, loan or grant of a destroyer or larger vessel to be authorized by legislation.<sup>64</sup> By the time of the *Voyager* incident, the US had loaned 46 destroyers or destroyer-escorts and 24 submarines to various nations; normally for a period of five years (although the loans were extended sometimes). Nitze cautioned, nevertheless, that obtaining approval for loans was becoming more difficult:

Legislation for the loan of ships went along rather uneventfully through 1961, but since that time we have had difficulty in obtaining hearings on the proposed loan bills, none of which has been passed. As a result, two submarines for the Netherlands, one submarine for Turkey and three destroyers for China was now technically overdue for recall because the loan authorizations have expired. By the end of the calendar year 1965, forty ship loans to twelve countries (Netherlands, China, Japan, Turkey, Germany, Argentina, Brazil, Greece, Italy, Peru, Spain and Thailand) will have also expired. <sup>65</sup>

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The challenges experienced suggest that the offer may have been premature, but the belief that loaning ships to allies was an important undertaking was seen to justify the effort involved.

The loans were considered mutually beneficial. First and foremost, it was recognized that the loan vessels were no longer needed by the US and, in the words of Nitze, ‘must be inactivated because of the unavailability of men and operating funds.’<sup>66</sup> Although the ships would not be of direct use in service in the USN, it was felt that they could still provide benefits for both the navy and the nation more broadly. Admiral Arleigh Burke retorted to critics of naval loans: ‘A good ship in the hands of one of our allies is ready if war breaks out... That same ship in mothballs in the United States couldn’t be made ready for action for thirty to ninety days.’<sup>67</sup> As an avenue of defense diplomacy – defined as the ‘employment, without duress, in time of peace of the resources of Defence to achieve specific national goals, primarily through relationships with others’ – ship loans also offered an opportunity to generate goodwill.<sup>68</sup> In addition, while the loans would be made at no cost to the US, it was recognized that recommissioning and repair work would ‘be frequently done in the U.S. at the expense of the foreign government’ and, therefore, provide American industry with ‘a significant amount of work with consequent favorable effect on the balance of payments.’ It was perhaps not insignificant that while their hopes were thwarted ultimately, the US was optimistic of agreeing a significant loan to Australia prior to the *Voyager* incident. It was reported that Australia was ‘very seriously considering requesting an Essex Class carrier from our reserve fleet with the intention of spending approximately \$126 million in the U.S. to repair and modernize it,’ with the cost not including ‘the aircraft and the long-range replacement requirements which could be a source of future U.S. sales to Australia.’<sup>69</sup> This potential loan, while not stated directly, may well have provided further impetus to try to facilitate the loan of a vessel as a replacement for *Voyager* to generate further goodwill.

## **The Decision**



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During the process of trying to extract the best deal possible, the Australians attempted to ensure that the British were not made aware of the American offer. Menzies informed the Australian Higher Commissioner in London: 'For your information the Americans have also made an offer which requires study. We will make every effort to reach a quick decision and will keep you informed. It is important at this stage, that there should be no mention to the British of the American offer.'<sup>70</sup> Australian efforts were in vain, however, as the Admiralty found out about the American offer. A report from the US naval attaché in Canberra suggested, furthermore, that the Australians were downplaying their interest in the British offer during discussions with the Americans. The naval attaché informed the Secretary of State that the Australians considered the Daring Class ship offered to 'be in poor condition' and asserted that 'staff officers say RAN really does not want it.'<sup>71</sup> The Australians kept their cards close to their chest throughout the process of trying to obtain a loan replacement for *Voyager*.

The acceptance of the US offer, in view of the prior decision to purchase the American designed and built Charles F. Adams Class destroyer, may have seemed a natural outcome. An Australian cabinet minute noted that there was 'particular interest in the United States possibility.'<sup>72</sup> A number of practical considerations, however, prompted the RAN to favor and, the Australian government, to accept the British offer. Indeed, the Naval Board eventually assessed that *Twining* was 'the least acceptable short term replacement for HMAS *Voyager*.'<sup>73</sup>

From a financial perspective, C.L.S. Hewitt, Deputy Secretary, Department of the Treasury, advised the Treasurer that the 'the loan of *Duchess* appeared more attractive to the layman' than the loan of *Twining* and that 'the cost of £410,000 of introducing *Duchess* into the R.A.N. was not a matter of great consequence in deciding whether the offer should be accepted.'<sup>74</sup> In recommending the acceptance of the British offer, A.J. Forbes, the Minister for the Navy, summarized in a submission for the Cabinet:

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- (a) The *Twining* is 20 years old as compared with the *Duchess*'s 11 years.
- (b) The *Duchess* is regarded as superior from the tactical and operational aspects.
- (c) The *Duchess* is basically similar to the R.A.N. Daring Class ships and could be supported almost entirely from present R.A.N. resources, including Australian production. Special 'single ship' logistic support would be required for the *Twining* whose stores and armament requirements are completely different from existing or proposed R.A.N. equipment.
- (d) The manning of U.S.S. *Twining*, with the attendant commitment of training personnel on new types of equipment, would present serious problems for the R.A.N., particularly as this would be concurrent with the preparations for the commissioning of the first R.A.N. DDG in May 1965. These problems would not arise with the British ship.
- (e) The estimated cost of introducing the *Duchess* into service in the R.A.N. is £410,000, against an amount over £M1.0 for the *Twining*.<sup>75</sup>

That summary was based on an extensive Naval Board evaluation of the American and British options.

It was expected that the earliest that both ships could be available would be January 1965, but the similarities ended there.<sup>76</sup> The Naval Board's evaluation pointed to a significant divergence in estimated total costs. While *Duchess* was expected to cost £410,000, *Twining* was believed to come at a cost of £1,152,000, although that figure did not include any additional adaptations that may be required for service with the RAN.<sup>77</sup>

The difference in cost was difficult to justify, particularly given the standardization that existed between Australian and British Daring Class vessels. While *Twining*'s main weapon,

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radar and sonar were ‘completely different’ from those in service with the RAN, those on *Duchess* were already in use by the Australians. As a result, ammunition and spares were already held for *Duchess* and were also produced in Australia. It was believed that the differences with the American vessel would require pre-commissioning training – if *Twining* was accepted – that, in the case of technical ratings, could last up to six months in USN training establishments. *Duchess*, in contrast, would require no specialist pre-commissioning training, meaning that it could be completed within three-four weeks as per standard RAN practice. Specialist test equipment, which would most likely never be required again, would need to be purchased to accommodate the American ship. Longevity was also a factor as the normal hull life of a ship in the RAN was around twenty years (in the absence of half-life modernization) and *Twining*, which was believed to be going out of service within a few years, had already reached that age, raising questions about maintenance efforts and costs. The report concluded:

The Naval Board considers that from the logistic, manpower and financial aspects, the choice between the two ships offered clearly points to the R.N. Daring Class destroyer H.M.S *Duchess*. The Naval Board therefore strongly recommends acceptance of the British Government’s offer of this ship as the immediate replacement for H.M.A.S. *Voyager*.<sup>78</sup>

In the case of the ship loan, the move toward increased standardization actually militated against the US option as it was considered that the requirement to man an American ship concurrently with HMAS *Perth* (the first of the RAN DDGs) would prompt significant manning problems. While increased standardization with the USN was underway, it was still in its embryonic stage. *Twining*, therefore, would have been an anomaly in the RAN fleet and the expediencies and cost of supporting a single vessel of a particular type were simply impractical.

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British officials in Canberra were informed that ‘the Daring Class Destroyer was more compatible in all respects to the R.A.N. and would present lesser problems in regard to training of personnel availability of spares and stores and dockyard maintenance than any other replacement likely to be available.’<sup>79</sup> The Cabinet approved the Minister’s recommendation on February 24, 1964.<sup>80</sup> The British High Commissioner received written confirmation from Menzies of the Australian Government’s decision to accept the loan of *Duchess* on February 25.<sup>81</sup> Menzies requested that Sir William: ‘convey our acceptance and sincere appreciation to the British Government.’<sup>82</sup> The Admiralty advised that the ship’s company of *Duchess* could be informed of the decision on the same day.<sup>83</sup> HMS *Duchess* was to become HMAS *Duchess* and, subsequently, underwent a refit at Williamstown between May and September 1964.<sup>84</sup>

## **The Results**

*Duchess* went on to be a reliable and efficient component of the RAN fleet. The initial loan was extended to 1972 and the ship was then purchased by the RAN for £150,000. It has been assessed that the decision not to return *Duchess* at the end of the initial loan suited both navies as ‘the RAN needed the ship to enlarge the available number of escorts’ and ‘the Royal Navy did not want *Duchess* or the nonstandard equipment fitted by Australia back in its fleet.’<sup>85</sup> During her service with the RAN, *Duchess* escorted HMAS *Sydney* on six voyages to Vietnam and participated in operations connected to the Indonesian Confrontation.<sup>86</sup> After she had been purchased, *Duchess* was converted into the fleet training ship and added further value to the RAN. The ship was a credit to the RAN and her service vindicated the decision to select *Duchess* as the loan vessel to replace *Voyager*.

Once the loan had been agreed, attention was focused on the longer-term options for replacing *Voyager*; principally two Type 12 frigates (which could be incorporated into the pre-existing building program), another DDG or an US destroyer escort such as the Brooke or Garcia Class.<sup>87</sup> Two Australian-built Type 12s were eventually ordered as the permanent

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replacement for *Voyager*, which represented a quantitative, though not necessarily qualitative, enhancement of the RAN fleet.<sup>88</sup> The future HMA Ships *Swan* and *Torrens* were originally planned as Derwent Class vessels, but were eventually produced as River Class ships, along the same lines as the British Leander Class.<sup>89</sup> Once the additional loan of *Duchess* was taken into consideration, it could be argued that the addition of two River Class vessels in place of *Voyager* increased the capacity as well as the size of the RAN.

The implications of the decision spanned beyond the immediate replacement vessels. The short-term nature of the loan meant that it was easier for the Australians to step back than to stride forward. Given the common heritage between the RN and RAN and the commonalities between Australian and British Daring Class vessels, the decision to accept the loan of *Duchess* was akin to putting on an old pair of slippers – comfortable and reassuring – but it could not go on forever. The Australians had already committed to purchasing the DDGs and were moving toward increased standardization with the USN. Frame has posited:

Despite the decision to accept the *Daring* class destroyer the attitude which ensured that all equipment acquisitions – both capital and minor – were British had been undermined and was soon discarded. While the RAN was being re-quipped with American technology and supplied with American tactical doctrine, the Australian strategic outlook was undergoing a similar rethink.<sup>90</sup>

Any disappointment on the American side was short-lived. It was calculated that in addition to the purchase of three DDGs and 21 F-111 aircraft, the Australians would purchase over \$370 million worth of US equipment and supplies. The American Ambassador to Australia, Edward Clark, was prompted to write, consequently, on September 26, 1966:

Australian ties with us in the military field - - through ANZUS, SEATO, and the ABCA Standardization Agreement - - are about as far-reaching

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as we have with any country...They have also been most cooperative with us in the field of procurement, against rather strong competition and political pressure from the British.<sup>91</sup>

The decision to accept the British offer was based on pragmatism and was anything but a case of buyer's remorse following the decision to purchase the DDGs, particularly as those vessels demonstrated the advantages held by the USN in areas such as weapons systems and radars. Indeed, the loan decision was based on historical precedent rather than future decisions. *Twining* was entirely impractical for the RAN, but *Duchess* could be accommodated with relative ease. The legacy nature of the decision to commission *Duchess* into the RAN was typified by the appointment of Commander Ian Burnside as the ship's first commanding officer, partly as a result of his previous service on the ship during the Suez Crisis.<sup>92</sup> It was no less emblematic that Commander Burnside would go on to command HMAS *Perth*, a Charles F. Adams Class destroyer, during operations alongside the USN in Vietnam.<sup>93</sup> It was also somewhat symbolic that *Duchess* was the last significant British-built surface vessel that the RAN commissioned.<sup>94</sup>

The transition from the RN to the USN as the focal point for standardization with the RAN was evidence of the Australians exerting an increased level of independence. The RAN's relationship with the RN was long-standing and the ties that bound the two navies would persist into the future. The likelihood of operating with the USN on a more regular basis – as would be evidenced by the Vietnam War – necessitated a more flexible approach and an ability to interoperate as seamlessly as possible with the Americans. The RAN's straddling of dual relationships with the RN and USN and the effects of historical and contemporary decisions were demonstrated in Vietnam. The Australians mostly deployed DDGs to operate alongside the Americans, but a Daring Class destroyer, HMAS *Vendetta*, also undertook one tour.<sup>95</sup> The

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negotiations about the merits of potential loans and the eventual selection of *Duchess* were, ultimately, emblematic of a transitional period for the RAN.

## **Conclusion**

Ship loans were an important and widely-debated issue in the US in the wake of the Second World War. Nitze, for example, stated frankly: ‘I think the entire question of ship loans is of such significance in our relations with our allies as to warrant exceptional measures to attain a solution.’<sup>96</sup> The loans represented, for the Americans, an opportunity to enhance the operational capacity of friendly navies around the world, while also relieving financial and manpower burdens. The offer to loan a vessel to replace *Voyager* needs to be understood in the wider context of ship loans, but also in the particular desire to further standardization and interoperability with Australia. The RAN was very much a primary focus for the USN in the case of naval standardization and the offer to loan a ship was both a benevolent act to assist a trusted ally and an opportunity to further American interests by enhancing standardization and further interoperability. Legislative requirements, however, limited the types of ship that could be offered to the RAN and those constraints ultimately led the Australians to determine that the potential USN vessels had significant limitations. The formulation of the loan offer was less complex in Britain and a logical ship that was fit for purpose could be provisioned. Unfortunately for the British, the loan of a *Daring* to replace a ship of the same type was only able to fulfil the RAN’s temporary requirement because it had met its previous stipulations. The future requirements of the Australians were an entirely different matter and the increasingly independent RAN – as typified by negotiations over the ship loans – would no longer be bound by British options.

The 1950s and 1960s were very much a transitional period for the RAN. Closer alignment with the USN was underway, but while ties with the RN were weakening, they were still substantial and reinforced by sentiment. The relationship between the RN and the RAN

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had a long lineage. Ian Pfennigwerth has pointed out that the RAN was initially ‘heavily dependent in almost every respect upon the patronage of the Royal Navy,’ noting that the ‘manning, training, supplying, regulating and even the design of ships for the new navy were all undertaken within the traditions, practices and strategic planning views of the RN.’<sup>97</sup> Things would be markedly different after the Second World War. Ashley Jackson has observed that the RAN ‘transformed from an adjunct of the Royal Navy to an independent fighting force.’<sup>98</sup> The process, however, was one of evolution and not revolution. While the actual determination to purchase US pattern vessels was delayed, consideration of them, as well as the substantial modifications of the British-designed Type 12 frigates, were testament to that independence.<sup>99</sup>

When the Australians eventually made the decision to purchase the DDGs, which was later followed by the acquisition of four US-built and two Australian-built Oliver Hazard Perry Class frigates (FFGs), the Australian change in outlook to a more independent approach was clearly evident.<sup>100</sup> When the DDL project to replace the destroyers that were due for retirement in 1980 was launched, the importance of enhancing the capacity and technology of Australian shipyards was emphasized.<sup>101</sup> The DDL project, which had included potential collaboration with the RN on a common hull, was eventually cancelled in 1973 and assessments of overseas ship types were conducted, resulting in the selection of the FFGs.<sup>102</sup> Although ultimately not selected, the consideration of Dutch and British ships, including the Type 42 destroyer, demonstrated that the ability to meet specific Australian needs, rather than the origin of equipment, would be the determining factor in acquisition decisions.

Cooper has argued that following the Second World War: ‘Britain’s reduced strength, and the divergence of Australian and British interests led to a gradual weakening of ties. For the Royal Australian Navy this was not a straight-forward process, as very strong links with the RN were fundamental to almost every aspect of its culture and practice.’<sup>103</sup> Indeed, if the appendage became detached, sinews remained which ensured that the relationship with the RN



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would always be close. The selection of *Duchess* was a stop-gap that reflected a by-gone era, but the independence of the decision, along with the purchase of the DDGs, signaled the RAN's increasing autonomy in acquisition decisions. Perhaps the most telling indication that the RAN had undergone a change in outlook was not the selection of *Duchess*, but the fact that the decision may have been entirely different had an alternative ship, particularly a Charles F. Adams Class, been offered to them.

The *Voyager* tragedy punctuated the evolutionary period for the RAN and the decision to select *Duchess* – while actually reflecting the RAN's burgeoning independence – may have appeared to be a residual course of action. The reality was somewhat different. Admiral Lord Peter Hill-Norton encapsulated the events surrounding the increased independence of the RAN in a single sentence when he reflected: '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.'<sup>104</sup> While all three nations demonstrated self-interest over the issue of standardization, the Australian position was especially notable as evidence of a new pragmatic approach to naval relations.

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<sup>1</sup> Telegram from Canberra to Secretary of State, February 24, 1964, Box 5, Record Group 5, National Archives at College Park, MD (NARA).

<sup>2</sup> For more on the incident, see: Tom Frame, *The Cruel Legacy: The HMAS Voyager Tragedy* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2008); Peter Cabban and David Salter, *Breaking Ranks: The True Story Behind the HMAS Voyager Scandal* (Sydney: Random House, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed examination of the decision to acquire the Charles F. Adams Class guided missile destroyers and the subsequent ramifications of that decision for the RAN, see: David Shackleton, *The Impact of the Charles F. Adams Class Guided Missile Destroyers on the Royal Australian Navy* (Canberra: Sea Power Centre-Australia, 2019).

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<sup>4</sup> Alastair Cooper, 'At the Crossroads: Anglo-Australian Naval Relations, 1945-1971,' *The Journal of Military History* 58, 4 (1994): 715.

<sup>5</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, 'Report of Royal Commissioner on Loss of H.M.A.S. "Voyager"', August 13, 1964, A4940, C4042, National Archives of Australia (NAA).

<sup>6</sup> 'Judge to Head Prompt Inquiry,' *The Canberra Times*, February 12, 1964, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Ian Freckelton, 'HMAS Melbourne and HMAS Voyager: The Continuing Psychiatric Aftermath: Hill v Commonwealth of Australia [2003] NSWSC 1025 Per Cripps AJ: Stankowski v Commonwealth of Australia [2004] NSWSC 198 Per O'Keefe J,' *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law* 11, 2 (2004): 367-373; Peter Gaughwin, 'The PTSD Supremacy: Criterion F in Three Voyager Cases,' *Australasian Psychiatry* 17, 2 (2009): 97-104.

<sup>8</sup> Hansard extract, 'Loss of HMAS Voyager,' August 26, 1964, 602, 24, M3787, NAA.

<sup>9</sup> Commodore David Ferry, 'HMAS Melbourne/Voyager Collision: Cause Theories and Inquiries,' *Headmark*, 151 (March 2014): 4. The first commission noted that *Melbourne* should have provided *Voyager* with advanced warning, but that the destroyer was, ultimately, responsible for the collision. The second commission found that Captain Stevens was medically unfit to command *Voyager* due to an ulcer and that the responsibility for the collision rested with the destroyer and that no blame could be attributed to the officers of *Melbourne*.

<sup>10</sup> For example, two survivors of the tragedy felt compelled in two separate newspaper articles in 2018 to try to correct what they perceived as inaccuracies. See: Amanda Gearing, 'Voyager Disaster: The coxswain said 'Sorry lads, we're done for' and sang Abide With Me,' *The Guardian*, February 8, 2018; Amanda Gearing, "'The Lucky Ones Died that Night": Lies, Survivor Guilt and the Voyager Disaster,' *The Guardian*, April 6, 2018.

<sup>11</sup> James Goldrick and Alison Vincent, 'Australia,' in John Hattendorf (ed.), *Ubi Sumus? The State of Naval and Maritime History* (Newport, RI.: Naval War College Press, 1994), 23-24.

<sup>12</sup> Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 76.

<sup>13</sup> Cooper, 'At the Crossroads,' 706.

<sup>14</sup> Eric Grove, 'British and Australian Naval Policy in the Korean War Era,' in T.R. Frame, J.V.P. Goldrick and P.D. Jones (eds.) *Reflections on the RAN* (Kenthurst: Kangaroo Press, 1991), 245.

<sup>15</sup> Cooper, 'At the Crossroads,' 707-708.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Gjessing, *Anglo-Australian Naval Relations, 1945-1975: A More Independent Service* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 175.

<sup>17</sup> 'Meeting Between First Sea Lord and Australian C.N.S.,' January 13, 1960, ADM 1/26681, The National Archives of the UK (TNA).

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<sup>18</sup> The proposed abolition of the Fleet Air Arm was postponed. Head of Military Branch II, 'Future of the Royal Australian Navy: Brief for Discussions with Vice Admiral Burrell,' January 8, 1960, ADM 1/26681, TNA.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Jeffrey Grey, *Up Top: The Royal Australian Navy and Southeast Asia Conflicts 1955-1972* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1998), 20.

<sup>21</sup> 'Minutes of Australian Mission Meeting, 6th June 1957,' June 20, 1957, Box 2, Record Group 59, NARA.

<sup>22</sup> Memorandum from FE – Roger Hilsman to David Ball, Administrator, Agency for International Development, '1550 Determination for Financial Assistance to Australia for the Procurement of a Third Charles F. Adams Class Destroyer in the United States,' April 18, 1963, Box 2, Record Group 59, NARA.

<sup>23</sup> For more on that decision, see: Steven Paget, 'On a New Bearing: The reorganized Royal Australian Navy at War in Vietnam,' *The Mariner's Mirror* 101, 3 (2015): 288-291; R.W.N. Wallace, 'The Australian Purchase of Three United States Guided Missile Destroyers: A Study of the Defense Aspect of Australian–American Relations' (Ph.D. dissertation,, Tufts University, 1980).

<sup>24</sup> Henry Burrell, *Mermaids do Exist: The Autobiography of Vice-Admiral Sir Henry Burrell* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1986), 254–255; Peter Jones, 'Buying the DDGs,' ANZUS Naval Relations, 1951–85,' in T.R. Frame, J.V.P. Goldrick and P.D. Jones (eds.) *Reflections on the RAN* (Kenthurst: Kangaroo Press, 1991), 320.

<sup>25</sup> Steven Paget, *The Dynamics of Coalition Naval Warfare: The Special Relationship at Sea* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 137; Shackleton, *The Impact of the Charles F. Adams Class Guided Missile Destroyers on the Royal Australian Navy*, 185.

<sup>26</sup> Letter from W. Averell Harriman, Assistant Secretary of State, to Paul H. Nitze, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Undated, Box 16, Record Group 59, NARA; Letter from John M. Stevens to Paul H. Nitze, Assistant Secretary of Defense, March 9, 1961, Box 16, Record Group 59, NARA; Jones, 'Buying the DDGs,' 319-320.

<sup>27</sup> Memorandum from the Under Secretary of State to FE – Walter P. McConaughty, 'Draft Paper: "Guidelines of U.S. Policy Toward Australia,"' December 1, 1961, Box 16, Record Group 59, NARA.

<sup>28</sup> Memorandum from FE – Roger Hilsman to U – Mr. Ball, 'Sale of Destroyer to Australia,' May 8, 1963, Box 16, Record Group 59, NARA.

<sup>29</sup> Memorandum from FE – Roger Hilsman to David Ball, Administrator, Agency for International Development, '1550 Determination for Financial Assistance to Australia for the Procurement of a Third Charles F. Adams Class Destroyer in the United States,' April 18, 1963, Box 16, Record Group 59, NARA.

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<sup>30</sup> John Schank, Cesse Ip, Kristy Kamarck, Robert Murphy, Mark Arena, Frank Lacroix, Gordon Lee, *Learning from Experience, Volume IV: Lessons from Australia's Collins Submarine Program* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2011), 4.

<sup>31</sup> John Birkler, John Schank, Mark Arena, Edward Keating, Joel Predd, James Black, Irina Danescu, Dan Jenkins, James Kallimani, Gordon Lee, Roger Lough, Robert Murphy, David Nicholls, Giacomo Persi Paoli, Deborah Peetz, Brian Perkinson, Jerry Sollinger, Shane Tierney, Obaid Younossi, *Australia's Naval Shipbuilding Enterprise: Preparing for the 21st Century* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2015), 140. Two further Oberon class submarines were ordered in 1971 and delivered in 1977 and 1978.

<sup>32</sup> Derek Woolner, 'Getting in Early: Lessons of the Collins Submarine Program for Improved Oversight of Defence Procurement,' Research Paper 3 2001-02, 18 September 2001. Copy available at: [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp0102/02RP03](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp0102/02RP03)

<sup>33</sup> Cabinet Agendum 42B, 'Australian Shipbuilding,' 6 March 1950, 42B, A4630, NAA.

<sup>34</sup> Cabinet Agendum 42C, 'Australian Ship Building Industry,' 14 June 1950, 42C, A4639, NAA.

<sup>35</sup> Cabinet Agendum 42C, 'Australian Ship Building Industry,' 14 June 1950, 42C, A4639, NAA; Agendum 42E, 'Australian Shipbuilding Industry,' 10 October 1950, 42E, A4639, NAA; Cabinet Agendum 42B, 'Australian Shipbuilding,' 6 March 1950, 42B, A4630, NAA.

<sup>36</sup> Royal Australian Navy, 'HMAS Vendetta (II),' <<https://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-vendetta-ii>>.

<sup>37</sup> Andrew Forbes, 'Australia's Maritime Past, Present and Future,' in Geoffrey Till and Patrick C. Bratton (eds.) *Sea Power and the Asia-Pacific: The Triumph of Neptune?* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 171.

<sup>38</sup> Shackleton, *The Impact of the Charles F. Adams Class Guided Missile Destroyers on the Royal Australian Navy*, 18

<sup>39</sup> 'Britain Thanked for Destroyer,' *The Canberra Times*, February 27, 1964.

<sup>40</sup> Message from Admiralty to B.D.L.S. Canberra, 'Personal for RNLO from VCNS,' February 13, 1964, ADM 1/129062, TNA.

<sup>41</sup> Letter from W.D. Reeves to A.P. Hockaday, Ministry of Defence, 'Replacement of H.M.A.S. VOYAGER,' February 13, 1964, ADM 1/129062, TNA.

<sup>42</sup> Message from Admiralty to B.D.L.S. Canberra, 'Personal for RNLO from VCNS,' February 13, 1964, ADM 1/129062, TNA.

<sup>43</sup> Under Secretary (Finance), 'Offer of R.N. DARING to the R.A.N. in replacement of H.M.A.S. VOYAGER,' March 5, 1964, ADM 1/129062, TNA.

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<sup>44</sup> Tom Frame, 'Nobility Down Under: How the *Duchess* became an Australian,' Australian Centre for the Study of Armed Conflict and Society, Occasional Paper Series No.2 (Canberra, 2016), 2.

<sup>45</sup> Gjessing, *Anglo-Australian Naval Relations, 1945–1975*, 159.

<sup>46</sup> Frame, 'Nobility Down Under,' 2-3.

<sup>47</sup> Message from BDLS Canberra to Admiralty, 'Personal for V.C.N.S. from R.N.L.O.,' February 18, 1964, ADM 1/129062, TNA.

<sup>48</sup> Message from Canberra to Commonwealth Relations Office, 'Replacement for H.M.A.S. VOYAGER,' February 18, 1964, ADM 1/129062, TNA.

<sup>49</sup> Head of Military Branch II, 'Register No. M.II/269/4/64,' February 17, 1964, ADM 1/129062, TNA.

<sup>50</sup> Message from the Commonwealth Relations Office to Canberra, 'Replacement of H.M.A.S. VOYAGER,' February 19, 1964, ADM 1/129062, TNA.

<sup>51</sup> Earl Jellicoe, Minister of Defence for the Royal Navy to the First Sea Lord, 'H.M.S. DUCHESS,' February 24, 1964, ADM 1/129062, TNA.

<sup>52</sup> Frame, 'Nobility Down Under,' 6.

<sup>53</sup> Letter from David C. Cuthell, Acting Director, Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs to the Honorable William C. Battle, American Embassy, Canberra, Undated, Box 5, Record Group 59, NARA; Frame, 'Nobility Down Under,' 6.

<sup>54</sup> Frame, 'Nobility Down Under,' 6.

<sup>55</sup> Cabinet Minute, 'Decision No.46: The Naval Disaster,' February 18, 1964, 1964/208, A571/164, NAA.

<sup>56</sup> Frame, 'Nobility Down Under,' 6.

<sup>57</sup> Navy Office, 'Replacement of H.M.A.S. Voyager – Naval Board Evaluation of Ships Offered on Loan by Britain and U.S.A.,' February 22, 1964, 1964/208, A571/164, NAA.

<sup>58</sup> Telegram from ALUSNA Canberra to Secretary of State, State Department, 'Possible US Destroyer Loan to Australia,' February 25, 1964, Box 5, Record Group 59, NARA.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from David C. Cuthell, Acting Director, Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs to the Honorable William C. Battle, American Embassy, Canberra, Undated, Box 5, Record Group 59, NARA.

<sup>60</sup> Office Memorandum from Mr. Thrasher to Mr Cuthell, 'Attached ALUSNA Canberra message on US Destroyer Loan to Australia,' February 25, 1964, Box 5, Record Group 59, NARA.

<sup>61</sup> Letter from David C. Cuthell, Acting Director, Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs to the Honorable William C. Battle, American Embassy, Canberra, Undated, Box 5, Record Group 59, NARA.

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<sup>62</sup> Office Memorandum from E.J. Thrasher to Mr Cuthell, 'Possible Loan of Destroyer to Australia,' February 18, 1964, Box 5, Record Group 59, NARA.

<sup>63</sup> Letter from Department of Navy-Paul H. Nitze to Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, 'The Loan of a Destroyer to Australia and the Significance of Such Loans in our Relations with our Allies,' February 29, 1964, Box 5, Record Group 59, NARA.

<sup>64</sup> David Snyder, 'Arming the "Bundesmarine": The United States and the Build-Up of the German Federal Navy, 1950-1960,' *The Journal of Military History* 66, 2 (2002): 490-491.

<sup>65</sup> Letter from Department of Navy-Paul H. Nitze to Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, 'The Loan of a Destroyer to Australia and the Significance of Such Loans in our Relations with our Allies,' February 29, 1964, Box 5, Record Group 59, NARA.

<sup>66</sup> Letter from Paul H. Nitze to Carl Vinson, Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, January 30, 1964, Box 5, Record Group 59, NARA.

<sup>67</sup> Ken Jones and Hubert Kelley, Jr., *Admiral Arleigh (31-Knot) Burke: The Story of a Fighting Sailor* (Annapolis, MD.: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 189.

<sup>68</sup> Daniel Baldino and Andrew Carr, 'Defence Diplomacy and the Australian Defence Force: Smokescreen or Strategy?,' *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 70, 2 (2016): 140.

<sup>69</sup> Letter from Department of Navy-Paul H. Nitze to Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, 'The Loan of a Destroyer to Australia and the Significance of Such Loans in our Relations with our Allies,' February 29, 1964, Box 5, Record Group 59, NARA.

<sup>70</sup> Frame, 'Nobility Down Under,' 7.

<sup>71</sup> Telegram from ALUSNA Canberra to Secretary of State, State Department, 'Possible US Destroyer Loan to Australia,' February 25, 1964, Box 5, Record Group 59, NARA.

<sup>72</sup> Cabinet minute, 'Decision No.46: The Naval Disaster,' February 18, 1964, 1964/208, A571/164, NAA.

<sup>73</sup> Frame, 'Nobility Down Under,' 7.

<sup>74</sup> G.J. Tredinnick, 'Note for File: Immediate Replacement for H.M.A.S. "Voyager,"' February 24, 1964, 1964/208, A571/164, NAA.

<sup>75</sup> A.J. Forbes, Minister for the Navy, 'Immediate Replacement for H.M.A.S. Voyager,' February 24, 1964, 1964/208, A571/164, NAA.

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<sup>76</sup> *Twining* could, in theory, have been available on the west coast of the US by May 1964 given that she was fully operational, but pre-commissioning training for an Australian crew would have necessarily delayed the process.

Frame, 'Nobility Down Under,' 7.

<sup>77</sup> Navy Office, 'Replacement of H.M.A.S. Voyager – Naval Board Evaluation of Ships Offered on Loan by Britain and U.S.A.,' February 22, 1964, 1964/208, A571/164, NAA.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Message from Canberra to Commonwealth Relations Office, 'Replacement of H.M.A.S. VOYAGER,' February 25, 1964, ADM 1/129062, TNA.

<sup>80</sup> Cabinet minute, 'Decision No.58: Submission No.60 – Immediate Replacement for H.M.A.S. Voyager,' February 24, 1964, 1964/208, A571/164, NAA.

<sup>81</sup> Inward Telegram to Commonwealth Relations Office from Canberra, 'Replacement for H.M.A.S. VOYAGER,' February 25, 1964, ADM 1/129062, TNA.

<sup>82</sup> Letter from Sir Robert G. Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia to Lieutenant General Sir William P. Oliver, British High Commissioner, February 25, 1964, 1964/208, A571/164, NAA.

<sup>83</sup> Letter from Admiralty to FOCINCFEF, 'Info. H.M.S. DUCHESS,' February 25, 1964, ADM 1/129062, TNA.

<sup>84</sup> Frame, 'Nobility Down Under,' 9.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Stephen Lewis, *Voyages to Vietnam: Photographs by Australian Naval and Military Veterans of the Vietnam Conflict* (Adelaide: My Vietnam Trust, 2004), 9. For more on the escort role, see: Rodney Knott and Noel Payne, 'The Vung Tau Ferry' (*HMAS Sydney*) and *Escort Ships (Vietnam, 1965-1972)* (Dural: Rosenberg, 1998).

<sup>87</sup> Frame, 'Nobility Down Under,' 5.

<sup>88</sup> K.M. Archer, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, No.51-1965* (Canberra: Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics, 1965), 1194.

<sup>89</sup> Norman Friedman, *British Destroyers & Frigates: The Second World War and After* (Barnsley: Seaforth Publishing, 2006), 215.

<sup>90</sup> Tom Frame, *Pacific Partners: A History of Australian-American Naval Relations* (Rydalme: Hodder & Stoughton, 1992), 105.

<sup>91</sup> Letter from Edward Clark, American Ambassador, Embassy of the United States Canberra to Mr. Robert S. Lindquist, Country Director, Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific Islands Affairs, Department of State, 26 September 1966, Box 9, Record Group 59, NARA.

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<sup>92</sup> Frame, 'Nobility Down Under,' 9.

<sup>93</sup> See: Ian Burnside, 'DDGs in Vietnam: HMAS Perth, 26 September 1970 to 30 March 1971,' in T.R. Frame, J.V.P. Goldrick and P.D. Jones (eds.) *Reflections on the RAN* (Kenthurst: Kangaroo Press, 1991), 343-348. *Perth* flew the Australian White Ensign, which had been introduced to replace the British White Ensign on March 1, 1967 during operations in Vietnam

<sup>94</sup> Frame, 'Nobility Down Under,' 9.

<sup>95</sup> Steven Paget, 'Old but Gold: The Continued Relevance of Naval Gunfire Support for the Royal Australian Navy,' *Security Challenges* 10, 3 (2014): 77.

<sup>96</sup> Letter from Department of Navy-Paul H. Nitze to Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, 'The Loan of a Destroyer to Australia and the Significance of such loans in our Relations with our Allies,' February 29, 1964, Box 5, Record Group 59, NARA.

<sup>97</sup> Ian Pfennigwerth, *The Royal Australian Navy and MacArthur* (Dural: Rosenberg, 2009), 15.

<sup>98</sup> Ashley Jackson, *The British Empire and the Second World War* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), 482.

<sup>99</sup> Cooper, 'At the Crossroads,' 709.

<sup>100</sup> Eric Grove, 'The Royal Australian Navy: Vehicle for Regional Engagement,' *Maritime Studies* (November-December 1997): 1.

<sup>101</sup> L.H. Barnard, 'Destroyer Procurement and Naval Policy,' *The Australian Quarterly*, 44, 2 (1972): 10.

<sup>102</sup> Gjessing, *Anglo-Australian Naval Relations*, 160-161; Shackleton, *The Impact of the Charles F. Adams Class Guided Missile Destroyers on the Royal Australian Navy*, 71.

<sup>103</sup> Cooper, 'At the Crossroads,' 699.

<sup>104</sup> Gjessing, *Anglo-Australian Naval Relations*, 193.