

MARITIME NEWS – 21 NOVEMBER 2016

The Navy took away sailors' job titles, and now no one knows what to call each other

Things have gotten, well, awkward, in the two months since the Navy abruptly eliminated sailor's titles and the shorthand that they used to refer to each other like "GM1," "OS2" or "boats." During a recent underway on the amphibious assault ship Iwo Jima, it was apparent that sailors weren't having an easy time of it. If you ask sailors what they do, invariably they tell you their now non-existent rating. Others say they're getting in hot water for still using those abbreviated titles, even though they're the fastest way to refer to sailors (and doesn't involve remembering dozens of last names).

What's clear is that sailors still don't know what exactly to make of the move, which was rolled out in late September with little detail about the larger career implications.



Credit : Jeff Bacon/Broadside.net

Some sailors said the decision genuinely upset the more senior sailors in the division. One airman who did not want to be identified to share candid views said his second and first classes were particularly distraught. "It's a waste," the airman said. "They feel like it takes away from their accomplishments and their identities that they've built over their careers." Another junior sailor said he had little patience for all the bellyaching over the dumped ratings. "It does seem pointless but people just don't like change," said the sailor, who also asked to remain anonymous. "In some ways though I like the idea of having greater career flexibility."

Online the conversation around dumping ratings hasn't died down. On a Navy forum on the link sharing website Reddit, sailors describe the daily annoyances that the ratings execution has brought. "Does anyone get annoyed being corrected on addressing Petty Officers, etc. by their old rates?" one Redditor asks, a question that has generated 35 responses to date. "For instance, I was talking with an officer and without thinking, referred to a Petty Officer 1st class as HM1," Redditor drm4490 continues. "She says, 'you mean Petty Officer first class so-and-so?' I mean, even though she's technically right, it rubs me the wrong way when they actually correct you. I also just find it way easier to say three syllables."

One Redditor said he disagreed with the change but would just be happy when it's one thing or the other. "I've been corrected for using both a generic PO1 X as well as (insert rate here) X. The try-hards are offended by the old and the salty ones are offended by the new," the commenter said. "I'll be happy when everyone gets on board or it's changed back. As nice as it would be to have my rate back, I just want it one way or the other."

Another sailor said his command has been using the "seaman" and "petty officer" honorifics in formal paperwork but have otherwise ignored the new rules. "Have yet to see anyone in my command get butt hurt over us calling each other by rate," the commenter said. "Most of us have put a half-assed attempt at saying Seaman or Petty Officer and mostly use it jokingly. Only our CO, XO, and CMC have put up a real attempt at not using rates. Normally just use SN or PO when writing emails and doing paperwork for formalities."

One sailor noted that the change is still causing confusion in simple interactions such as telephone calls. "Talking to a chief on the phone yesterday: 'I'll get airman... seaman so and so... whatever the f--- this new rate bulls--- is, to come open the door for you,'" the commenter recalled. "Chief clearly isn't enjoying this new game." **Source : SUBSIM /Navy Times**

A simpler answer would have been to simply modify 'man' to the generic term 'homen'. Not only simple – just add water with half the hydrogen but more logical. Yeoman would become Yeo ho man – much more jovial than their heavy handed attempt at PC-ness. Pretty sure a letter to Mr Trump will see results in 2017.

Royal Navy 'woefully low' on warships

Britain's defences are at risk amid uncertainty over plans to replace the "woefully low" number of Royal Navy warships, MPs have warned. The Royal Navy has 19 frigates and destroyers, but a Defence Select Committee report says that number could fall unless there is a clear timetable set out for replacing older vessels. It says the UK could "lack the maritime strength" to meet potential threats. But the Ministry of Defence says it is investing billions in the Navy's fleet.

The committee's report examines the MoD's plans to modernise the Royal Navy's escort fleet - including the introduction of two new classes of frigate and the enforced refit of engines on certain destroyers. MPs said they had "serious concerns" about the funding and timetable of the new fleet, and the country's ability to handle threats from areas like Russia.

They also attacked the MoD for the "extraordinary mistakes" in the design of Type 45 destroyers after it emerged they had faulty engines unable to operate continuously in warm waters. "The UK's enduring presence in the Gulf should have made it a key requirement for the engines. The fact that it was not was an inexcusable failing and one which must not be repeated," the MPs' report said. And it added: "Failure to guarantee this would put the personnel and ships of the Royal Navy in danger, with potentially dangerous consequences."

Modernising the Royal Navy

- Ageing Type 23 frigates to be replaced by eight Type 26 frigates (pictured above) plus five General Purpose frigates
- First Type 23 ship due to retire from service in 2023
- Defence Select Committee says it is not convinced MoD can deliver to this schedule
- MPs also want detailed costs and timetable for refit of faulty engines on Type 45 destroyers

Defence committee chairman Julian Lewis said MPs were "putting the MoD on notice" to deliver the modernisation programme on time. He said: "For decades, the numbers of Royal Navy escort vessels have been severely in decline. "The fleet is now way below the critical mass required for the many tasks which could confront it, if the international scene continues to deteriorate."

Royal Navy warships - numbers since 1985				
Year	Aircraft carriers	Assault ships	Frigates	Destroyers
1985	4	2	41	15
1995	3	2	23	12
2005	3	3	19	9
2016	0	3	13	6

UK's "woefully low" escort fleet could shrink even further, report says

A UK Defence Committee Report has said that the Ministry of Defence will have to devise a sound plan for replacing its 13 ageing frigates while maintaining the already low number of operational vessels in the fleet. The report calls for the National Shipbuilding Strategy, due to be published this week, to provide the necessary detail on how and when the Royal Navy's new frigates will be delivered. Without that information, the Strategy can be little more than a collection of aspirations, the report says. The Defence Committee further called for the upcoming Strategy to set out a detailed

timeline for the delivery of the Type 26 global combat ships and the Type 31 general purpose frigates. It suggests a comprehensive assessment of the potential to build a new complex warship every two years should be made.

The Royal Navy's existing Type 23 frigates will be replaced by eight Type 26 and 'at least' five general purpose frigates. The first Type 23, **HMS Argyll**, is due out of service in 2023, followed by the other twelve at annual intervals until **HMS St Albans** is withdrawn in 2035. The Type 26 programme has already experienced delays and if further occur, the current total of 13 frigates—already an historic low—will fall even further, the report noted. The Defence Committee has also asked about how the construction timetable for the general purpose frigate will align with that of the Type 26.

It added that it was vital to know which European examples, whether it be the French Aquitaine-class, or the Danish Absalon-class frigates, the MoD has considered as being suitable templates for the GPFF. The fact that the MoD is being forced to refit the engines of all six Type 45 destroyers following a series of engine failures which resulted from major shortcomings in specification, design and testing for which blame can be attributed both to the MoD and its contractors, the report said adding that the taxpayer will have to foot the bill for the work.

Dr Julian Lewis, Defence Committee chairman, said: "The National Shipbuilding Strategy offers the potential not just to manage this work efficiently and effectively, but also to reverse the trend of ever-decreasing numbers. To do this, however, it has to contain the degree of detail and scheduling for which we have asked." "The Ministry of Defence must deliver this programme of modernisation on time. If it fails to do so, the Government will break its categorical pledge to maintain at least 19 frigates and destroyers—already a pathetically low total. The United Kingdom will then lack the maritime strength to deal with the threats we face right now, let alone in the future. We are putting the MoD on notice that it must not let this happen." **Source : Naval Today**

Although two similar report, it is worth reading both as one is more 'factual' and precise

Lockheed Loses & Raytheon Can Gain, as Navy Disarms the USS Zumwalt

Guns without bullets don't shoot very well. Companies without contracts don't do much better.

On 15 October 2016, the U.S. Navy commissioned its largest gun-toting surface warship since battleships prowled the seas: the **USS Zumwalt** (DDG 1000).



The **USS Zumwalt** sports two powerful "advanced gun systems" (the two pillboxes up front) -- but has fewer than 90 bullets between them. Image : U.S. Navy.

Technically a destroyer, **Zumwalt** is actually bigger than the Navy's current fleet of **Ticonderoga**-class cruisers -- weighing in at 14,800 tons to the Tico's 9,800. It also carries more powerful guns than the Navy's big cruisers: two 155-mm Advanced Guns System (AGS) cannon, each capable of firing a 225-lb. Long Range Land-Attack Projectile (LRLAP) and striking a target 80 miles distant with pinpoint accuracy. There is, however, one small problem with these guns... They have no bullets.

Bullets for battleships

Well, they have almost no bullets. Although in 2015, Congress approved \$113 million in funding for 150 rounds of LRLAP ammunition for the **Zumwalt** and her two sister ships (not yet commissioned), as of today only 90 rounds have actually been purchased -- and some of those have already been used in testing. Worse news for **Zumwalt**: Earlier this month the Navy confirmed that it has decided to halt purchases of LRLAP ammunition entirely.

The reason: While by all accounts, LRLAP has worked admirably in testing, the fact is that it was designed to be produced in bulk to arm a fleet of more than two dozen **Zumwalt**-class destroyers. As plans evolved, though, the Navy ultimately cut its anticipated purchases of Zumwalts to just three ships. The corresponding reduction in volume of ammunition needed means that LRLAP producer **Lockheed Martin** (NYSE:LMT) is unable to produce the ammunition at scale, unable to cut prices accordingly, and must charge the Navy somewhere between \$800,000 and \$1 million per each round of ammunition.

Million-dollar bullets

\$1 million. That's nearly as much as the Navy pays to buy Harpoon missiles from **Boeing** -- and Boeing's Harpoons carry 500-pound warheads, 20 times the size of the 24 pounds contained in the LRLAP. This being the case, the Navy is probably making the right decision to cancel further purchases of the LRLAP. It does, however, leave open the question of what to load into those big, beautiful AGS cannon instead.

Desperately seeking ammunition

What's the alternative? And which company might ride to the Navy's rescue (from what's looking like a real PR nightmare) to suggest this alternative? Currently, two options seem most likely. Given that accuracy was the defining characteristic that made LRLAP so attractive to the Navy, **Raytheon's** (NYSE:RTN) uber-accurate Excalibur howitzer round might make for a good substitute.

True, at \$70,000 a pop, Excalibur is not what you'd call a "cheap" bullet. But it's a darned sight cheaper than \$1 million, and Raytheon has proven in real-world testing that Excalibur can strike targets 30 miles distant -- and hit within two meters of what it was aiming at. Even better, as a 155-mm round, Excalibur should slide right into the AGS' borehole -- albeit its smaller size will probably necessitate changes to other aspects of the weapons system (such as for loading).

A second alternative, and one that's been talked about for years, is the Hyper Velocity Projectile (HVP) that **BAE Systems** (NASDAQOTH:BAESY) has been developing for use in the Navy's experimental electromagnetic railgun program. BAE says that HVP is the right size for use in **Zumwalt's** AGS cannon. What's more, its potential use as the projectile of choice for future railguns, and its suitability for firing from the 5-inch guns mounted on Navy **Arleigh Burke**-class destroyers (of which we have dozens), means that manufacturing HVPs in volume and at low cost should never be a problem.

Who will win?

Which alternative the Navy ultimately will elect on remains to be seen. Ultimately, though, if the Navy has decided not to buy Lockheed Martin's LRLAP for its AGS, it simply must choose a different bullet -- or render the AGS useless, and its **Zumwalt**-class destroyers disarmed. One way or another, Lockheed Martin's loss must turn into Raytheon's or BAE Systems' gain. **Source : The Motley Fool**

Russian Aircraft Carrier To Get An Upgrade



The **Admiral Kuznetsov** moored in Murmansk **Photo : Jan Pieter Honkoop, 2nd Officer/DPO, DFPV Seahorse. (c)**

The carrier, **Admiral Kuznetsov**, which is designed to engage large surface targets, became fully operational in 1995. Russian aircraft carrier **Admiral Kuznetsov's** air wing will be strengthened and receive new capabilities, Alexey Rakhmanov, president of the United Shipbuilding Corporation (USC), said in an interview Wednesday with Rossiya 24. The interview came after USC Vice President Igor Ponomarev said that the **Admiral Kuznetsov** will be upgraded in 2018 after returning from service. "The Zvezdochka shipyard will embark on repairs aimed at the modernization of the

Admiral Kuznetsov aircraft carrier," Ponomarev said. Rakhmanov said during his recent interview that the modernization of the air wing will "unfortunately" not lead to any fundamental or conceptual changes in the vessel.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu had earlier said that the carrier had begun taking part in anti-terrorist operations as part of Russia's naval task force in Syria. Russia has been conducting airstrikes in Syria. However, the West thinks that Moscow's participation is more inclined toward helping long-time ally Syrian President Bashar Assad rather than fighting extremists like the Islamic State group, also known as ISIS. While commenting on **Admiral Kuznetsov** releasing black smoke on its way to Syria, Rakhmanov explained that the carrier's boilers run on oil, which in turn "has a tendency to burn with the emission of a very large amount of soot."

This week, Shoigu confirmed that they had begun strikes they claim will wipe out ISIS from Syria. "Today, we started a major operation to launch massive strikes on Daesh and al-Nusra Front targets in the Idlib and Homs provinces [in Syria]," Shoigu said earlier this week at a meeting with the ministry's leadership and defense enterprises. He added: "For the first time in the history of participation of the Russian Navy in operations, the **Admiral Kuznetsov** aircraft carrying cruiser began taking part. According to Rakhmanov, the Russian Defense Ministry will issue an open tender for the upgrade to the **Admiral Kuznetsov**, Sputnik News reported.

The vessel, which was constructed at the Mykolaiv South Shipyard (in present-day Ukraine) in the mid-1980s, became fully operational in 1995. The delay in operations was reportedly caused due to severe budget cutbacks to the Russian military following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The ship, designed to engage large surface targets, is capable of carrying between 41-52 fixed and rotary wing aircraft, including Su-25UTG and Su-33 fighter aircraft, as well as Ka-27 and Ka-29 anti-submarine and assault transport helicopters. **Source: IB times**

India commissions final Kolkata-class destroyer **INS Chennai**



Photo: Indian Navy

INS Chennai, the last of three Kolkata-class guided missile destroyers, joined the Indian Navy in a ceremony held at the Mumbai naval dockyard on Monday. Following her formal induction, **INS Chennai** will be placed under the Indian Western Naval Command. In due course, the ship will be homeported at Mumbai and assigned to the Western Fleet. The Project 15A Kolkata class destroyers are successors of the Project 15 Delhi-class destroyers which entered service in the late 1990s. Conceived and designed by Indian Navy's Directorate of Naval Design, the ships have been named after major port cities of India, Kolkata, Kochi and Chennai.

Measuring 163m in length and 17.4m in width, the ships displace 7 500 tonnes. According to the Indian Navy, they are propelled by four gas turbines, in a combined gas and gas (COGAG) configuration, capable of achieving speeds in excess of 30 knots. **INS Chennai** is fitted with the super-sonic BrahMos surface to surface missiles and LR SAM surface to air missiles. The ship's anti submarine warfare capabilities are provided by indigenously developed rocket launchers and torpedo launchers. **Source : Naval Today**

Taiwan Plans South China Sea Drills

Taiwan's coastguard has said it plans to hold rescue drills in waters around Taipei's sole territorial holding in the disputed South China Sea at the end of this month, and that the drills could involve its navy. The exercises to be held around Itu Aba, known by Taiwan as Taiping, would include drills in rescuing shipwrecked personnel, the coastguard said. More details would be released later, it said in a statement on its website late on Sunday. "Currently the navy

regularly patrols near Taiping Island. We don't rule out the navy playing a supporting role in future humanitarian rescue drills being held near Taiping," the Coast Guard Administration said in the statement.



China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei also have overlapping claims in the South China Sea, through which \$5 trillion in ship-borne trade passes every year. Taiwan has largely kept out of disputes between China and its neighbours, but the planned drills would be the first since President Tsai Ing-wen took power in May. In July, a judgment by an international court classified Itu Aba as a rock and not an island, thereby making it ineligible to own a greater economic zone of resources off its coast.

Taiwan's coastguard has had direct oversight of Itu Aba since 2000, when it took over from the Taiwanese military. More than 100 coastguard personnel are stationed on Itu Aba. China distrusts Tsai and her ruling independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party, but Beijing has previously maintained that Beijing and Taipei had a common duty to protect Chinese sovereignty in the waterway. The United States, Taiwan's only major political ally, criticized former president Ma Ying-jeou for visiting Itu Aba earlier this year because it did not want tensions to escalate in the South China Sea. **Source : The Maritime Executive**

The Oldest USN Submarine turns 75



The Navy's oldest submarine celebrated another birthday today. A ceremony was held for the 75th anniversary of the **USS Drum**. The World War II era submarine has been a fixture at USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park since it was donated in 1969. Active military members and submarine veterans came to learn more about the sub and tour it. Submarine veterans say they share a stronger bond with a sub than a sailor does to his ship.

"A lot of them served on submarines like this," said Tom Bowser, Volunteer at **USS Drum**. "During the war, after the war, these were still in service up to (1974). So it's coming home to them. As we say, we grew up on these submarines because we went on board at 18 or nineteen years old. They took us into manhood." In honor of the submarine's birthday, admission to Battleship Park was free all day. The USS Alabama will celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary next year. Source : News5

What this short article does not say is that Tom Bouser started her preservation after she was found derelict in the park in 2006. He was joined by Ms Lesley Waters from the Park who had been trying to keep the boat viable for some time. Tom is a veteran of nuclear boats. For years they worked alone –

even replacing major components. Only later when the progress was so obvious did others volunteer to assist. It is a remarkable achievement by two remarkable volunteers who also raised the money to achieve it!

HMAS Sydney: Australia's Greatest Naval Tragedy



The Royal Australian Navy's **HMAS Sydney** sank 75 years ago on November 19 and was the subject of intrigue for decades to follow. **HMAS Sydney** was one of three modified Leander-class light cruisers operated by the Royal Australian Navy. On 19 November 1941, **Sydney** was involved in a mutually destructive engagement with the German auxiliary cruiser **Kormoran**, and was lost with all 645 onboard. 318 of the **Kormoran**'s complement of 390 survived.

Sydney was off the coast of Western Australia, near Carnarvon, and heading south towards Fremantle when she spotted a merchant ship. She made to intercept and signalled the vessel. The merchant ship hoisted her callsign, but as she was ahead and just port of **Sydney**, the flags were obscured by the funnel. **Sydney** requested that the merchant ship make her signal letters clear, which the signals officer did by lengthening the halyard and swinging the flags clear. The callsign was that of the Dutch ship **Straat Malakka**, but she was not on **Sydney**'s list of ships meant to be in the area.

A short while later, a distress signal was transmitted by **Straat Malakka**, indicating that she was being pursued by a merchant raider. Following this, **Sydney** pulled alongside the merchant ship from astern approximately 1,300 meters (4,300 feet) away. **Sydney**'s main guns and port torpedo launcher were trained on the ship, and sent a signal ordering her to show the secret callsign.

Straat Malakka did not reply, because she was the German auxiliary cruiser **Kormoran** in disguise. Instead, she began 'decamouflaging' and opened fire. **Sydney** also fired, although accounts are divided as to which ship fired first. **Sydney**'s first salvo either missed or passed through **Kormoran**'s upper superstructure with minimal damage, but four of the raider's six 15-centimeter (5.9 inch) guns were able to destroy the **Sydney**'s bridge and gun director tower, damage the forward turrets and set the aircraft on fire.

Sydney's defeat is commonly attributed to the proximity of the two ships during the engagement and **Kormoran**'s advantages of surprise and rapid, accurate fire. However, the cruiser's loss with all hands compared to the survival of most of the Germans has resulted in controversy. The disbelief that a modified merchant ship could defeat a cruiser combined with the lack of Australian survivors led some to believe that the Germans fired on **Sydney** before raising their battle ensign or after using a flag of surrender or signals of distress to lure the cruiser in.

There were also rumours that a Japanese submarine was partially or completely responsible for sinking **Sydney**, that the involvement of the Japanese was covered up to lure the United States into the war and that Australian survivors were killed in the water to eliminate witnesses. Other claims included a belief that **Sydney** was not at action stations and thus not prepared for **Kormoran**'s attack, distress calls from the cruiser were heard by Australian shore facilities but ignored and that survivors were captured then executed by the Japanese.

These claims have been proven false by historians and researchers. However, some have speculated on why **Sydney** was so close to an unknown vessel, with various levels of blame assigned to Captain Burnett for the demise of his ship. **Sydney**'s destruction was a major blow to Australian morale and military capability; her ship's company made up 35 percent of the Royal Australian Navy's wartime casualties. The wrecks of both ships were lost until 2008 when

renewed efforts to find the **Sydney** came to fruition, confirming her fate and bringing closure to the mystery. **Source : The Maritime Executive**

Comment on RN lack of Harpoon replacement in 2018

Rear-Adm Chris Parry, said: "It's a significant capability gap and the Government is being irresponsible. It just shows that our warships are for the shop window and not for fighting."

Lord West of Spithead, a former First Sea Lord, said: "This is just another example of where the lack of money is squeezing and making the nation less safe. "We will have this gap of several years without missiles. Well, that's fine if you don't have to fight anybody in the meantime."

The Royal Air Force has long axed its own anti-ship missiles.

Nick Childs, a naval expert at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said Britain was cutting its anti-ship missiles just as America had decided they were becoming more critical to maritime fighting. "It must be a great concern that this capability is going to be removed without immediate or direct replacement because we are moving into an era of concern about a more contested maritime environment," he said.

A spokesman for the Navy said: "All Royal Navy ships carry a range of offensive and defensive weapons systems. Backed by a rising defence budget and a £178 billion equipment plan, upgrade options to all our weapons are kept under constant review." **Source : RANOPS/The Telegraph**

'Spokesman Speak' - How to say nothing in two sentences!

READER COMMENT

1. Ref : The People's Liberation Army Navy's first aircraft carrier is ready to meet threats on the battlefield, Chinese media reports. "As a military force, we are always combat ready and our combat capacity also needs to be tested by war," PLAN Senior Captain Dongyou Li told the Global Times, a Chinese daily newspaper. "... we are preparing for actual combat at any time." *I'm sure they can conduct flying operations with a fair level of success, but whether they can conduct carrier operations is another question.*

A rather interesting point.

2. *RN woes – as an old salt CPO ex RN told us at the Naval Gym – don't worry when you are told that the Navy is going to the dogs, start worrying when they stop saying it!*

AGS