

ARUNTA PATROLS

THE GULF



Seaman Luke Fiddes maintains watch



RHIBs are launched for personnel transfers and navigational exercises

The ANZAC-class frigate HMAS Arunta is currently deployed to the Northern Persian Gulf as part of Operation Catalyst.

She is tasked to assist in the protection of Iraq's offshore assets such as oil platforms, which allows Iraq to generate much-needed funds to support reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.

HMAS Arunta also assists with the detection, interception and deterrence of vessels suspected of undertaking illegal activity within Iraqi waters.

HMAS Arunta, in the capable hands of Commander Timothy Brown, is the second of the Royal Australian Navy's eight ANZAC class frigates, and the second ship to carry the name.

The original Arunta was commissioned in 1942 during World War II and served with distinction in New Guinea and the Pacific between 1942-1944, the Battle of Leyte Gulf in 1944 and Lingayen Gulf in 1945.

'Arunta' is derived from the Arrente Aboriginal people in central Australia, around Alice Springs.

The Arrente Council presented HMAS Arunta with a flag displaying a Perrente lizard, an animal from the dreamtime of the Arrente people. The lizard features on the nose of HMAS Arunta's Sea Hawk helicopter.

Members of the Arrente nation joined family and friends of the crew to farewell the ship from Garden Island, WA, in November.

It is the ship's second tour of the Persian Gulf and its company of 183 men and women are deployed for six months.

Commander Brown is the ship's captain and has taken command of the frigate after a career spent aboard submarines.

Operation Catalyst is the Australian Defence Force's contribution to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Iraq. Working with the Iraqi Government, the ADF continues to contribute to Multi-National Force efforts to develop a secure and stable environment in Iraq, assist national recovery programs and facilitate the transition to Iraqi self-government.

Seaman Ian Hamilton stands guard



Able Seaman Carly Southam updates HMAS Arunta's incident board during a damage control exercise



Sub Lieutenant Andy Devene and Able Seaman Danielle Briggs receive updates on damage control during an exercise



Launched:	28 June 1996
Commissioned:	12 December 1998
Displacement:	3600 tonnes
Length:	118 metres
Beam:	14.8 metres
Armament:	5 inch Mk45 Mod 2 gun Mk41 vertical-launch system with Evolved Sea Sparrow anti-air missiles 2 x Mk32 Mod 5 triple mounted torpedo tubes 4 x 50 oal machineguns Nulka active missile decoys
Main Machinery:	1 x General Electric LM2500 gas turbine 2 x MTU 12V 1163 diesels driving two controllable-pitch propellers
Speed:	More than 28 knots



Lieutenant Karen Guselli is treated by a medic during a damage control exercise



AUSSIES RULE THE GULF

Completing a five-month assignment in the Middle East, 30 Australians assigned to the command group of Task Force 158 in the North Arabian Gulf have returned home.

This was the third time Australian Defence force personnel led TF158 – the multinational mission to protect Iraq's territorial waters and oil-loading facilities in the Gulf, mainly Khawr al Amaya Oil Terminal (KAAOT) and al Bakr Oil Terminal (ABOT).

The oil that flows through these two offshore platforms generates some 90 per cent of Iraq's gross domestic product and, as such, they are crucial to Iraq's ability to fund reconstruction and provide for its own future.

During the Australian's five months of command, more than US\$17 billion worth of oil was loaded onto 110 tankers at the two platforms.

TF158 consists of a Coalition flotilla and marine security forces.

Home for the Australians during their in-command mission was initially a barge moored to the side of the Khawr al Amaya Oil Terminal, followed by a spell in new accommodation and workspace modules on the terminal itself.

Commander TF158 Commodore Allan du Toit says the Task Force was very much a Coalition operation. "We had ships from the US, the UK, Australia and increasingly from Iraq," he says.

"This was the third time Australians have led the task force, and it was a great honour and a privilege as an Australian to lead the team."

The Australian command group's deployment to TF158 was conducted as part of Operation Catalyst, the Australia Defence Force's contribution to international efforts to develop a secure and stable environment in Iraq and assist with national recovery programs after the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime.

Following this most recent mission, the Australians handed over command of TF158 to the US Navy, appropriately, on Australia Day.



ADELAIDE RETIRES

HMAS *Adelaide* was decommissioned at Garden Island in Western Australia in January after 27 years of service in the Royal Australian Navy. She was Australia's oldest serving frigate.

During the decommissioning ceremony, the ship's Australian White Ensign was lowered for the last time and handed to her commanding officer, Commander Robert Slaven.

"Today is an historic occasion, one which the crew of *Adelaide* is proud to be a part of," Commander Slaven said.

Adelaide is the second of the Adelaide-class frigates to be decommissioned, the first being HMAS *Canberra* in November 2005. Their four sister ships, *Sydney*, *Darwin*, *Melbourne* and *Newcastle* remain in service.

Adelaide was constructed by Todd Pacific Shipyard in the United States and commissioned into the RAN on 15 November 1980. She was the second ship in the RAN to bear the name – her predecessor was a light cruiser that served from 1922-1946.

Adelaide has proudly represented

Australia in a number of theatres of conflict during her years of service. She was one of the first Australian warships to be deployed to the Persian Gulf in 1990. *Adelaide* was again deployed to the Gulf on two more occasions in 2002 and 2004. She also participated in both major East Timor operations in 1999 and 2006.

In peacetime, one of *Adelaide's* more notable achievements was her involvement in the high profile search and rescue of solo yachtsmen Thierry Dubois and Tony Bullimore from the Southern Ocean in 1997.

The name *Adelaide* will not be missing from the Australian fleet for long, with one of the forthcoming Canberra-class Landing Helicopter Docks to bear the name.

Adelaide will be gifted to NSW and sunk off the Central Coast at Terrigal as an artificial reef and dive attraction.



HMAS Adelaide visits the City of Adelaide for the last time before decommissioning. Pic Leading Seaman Helen Frank

Top: HMAS Adelaide is escorted into the City of Adelaide for the last time. Pic Leading Seaman Helen Frank

Middle: Army's 48 Field Battery fire Howitzer field guns in reply to a 21-gun royal salute fired by HMAS Adelaide. Pic Leading Seaman Helen Frank

Above: HMAS Adelaide crewmembers fold the ship's White Ensign for the last time. Pic Able Seaman Lincoln Commane

A tangled mess containing up to 12 different fishing nets, floating aids and dead sea creatures – and weighing between 12 and 15 tonnes – has been successfully retrieved from the Arafura Sea near Maningrida in the Northern Territory in a joint operation involving the Djelk Sea Rangers, Customs and HMAS Tarakan.

A death trap for marine life caught in its tangled reach and posing potential quarantine risks, the net's presence in Australian waters was closely monitored by the local sea rangers, but proved too large for them to handle.

Assigned the retrieval task by Border Protection Command, HMAS Tarakan sailed from Cairns to rendezvous with the sea rangers, 10 nautical miles off Maningrida, for an escort to the net's precise location.

Djelk Sea Rangers Brenton Cooper and James Woods led Tarakan to the 'ghost-net' where considerable effort was eventually required to drag the hulk from the water.

'Ghost nets' are fishing nets that have been lost, deliberately discarded or otherwise abandoned at sea, left to float with the currents. Unfortunately, they continue to 'fish' indiscriminately, catching and killing fish and mammals, including endangered species, as they cruise the seas.

Six weeks before the Maningrida net was hauled in, Hydrographic Survey Vessel, HMAS Melville, stumbled upon it's own ghost net in the Arafura Sea – only this time, the discovery proved a little more fortuitous for some of the marine life ensnared in its web.

Upon investigation, Melville's crew discovered that five turtles were caught up in the net and, more importantly, they were still alive.

'All hands on deck' was called to effect the rescue of these protected marine creatures as recovery of the net became a whole-ship evolution.

First objective was to release the five trapped turtles, which fell to Petty Officer Marcus Efferett and his boat crew.

With the turtles successfully released, the task of hauling the net onto Melville to prevent the capture of further marine creatures began – an easy task in theory, but the execution proved to be another story.

Using the foc'sle's capstans, lines were rigged in a pulley system to heave the net in. While the system worked initially, the sheer weight of the net began to take its toll, forcing it to break under its own mass and fall back into the sea.

The task became more challenging when, in addition to the pulley system used to heave in the net, strops were attached to the stores crane to lift the bulk of the soaking, heavy net out of the water.

ARAFURRA GHOST



After four hours of careful juggling, however, the crew finally succeeded in bringing the last portion of netting onto the deck.

While it is near impossible to estimate the number of 'ghost nets' there are in the sea, the problem is a world-wide phenomenon that is a grave concern to environmentalists and governments alike.

