

THREE FLEET REVIEWS – AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN NAVY

André Wessels¹

Abstract

Especially in the course of the past century and a half, many countries have organised fleet reviews to commemorate some or other important event in the history of the concerned country, or in the history of its navy. In this study, three major fleet reviews and concomitant naval events are described, discussed and analysed, in an effort to, inter alia, place the history of these particular events on record, to ascertain just how important they actually were, and to draw conclusions that could be of importance for future naval planning. The three fleet reviews that form the basis of this study are the South African (SA) Navy's 75th anniversary celebrations (SAN75) in and off Simon's Town and Cape Town in 1997, the 200th anniversary of the battle at Trafalgar that was commemorated in and off Portsmouth in 2005, and the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Royal Australian Navy's first warships in Sydney, which was commemorated in that city's harbour and bay in 2013. Throughout, the emphasis will fall on the SA Navy's role, for example in hosting SAN75 and participating in Trafalgar200; and its non-participation in the 2013 review.

Keywords: Fleet reviews; South African Navy; Trafalgar200; Festival of the Sea (Portsmouth); Royal Australian Navy; International Fleet Review (Sydney); naval diplomacy.

Slutelwoorde: Vlootrevues; Suid-Afrikaanse Vloot; Trafalgar200; Festival of the Sea (Portsmouth); Royal Australian Navy; International Fleet Review (Sydney); vlootdiplomatie.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1997 the South African (SA) Navy commemorated its 75th anniversary. The commemorative events included a maritime expo, an international fleet review, and a parade through the streets of Cape Town. Eight years later, in 2005, a SA Navy warship sailed to the United Kingdom to take part in the massive naval review that commemorated the famous battle at Trafalgar which had taken place 200 years earlier, on 21 October 1805. Eight years after Trafalgar200, ships from several navies gathered in Sydney Bay for the 100th anniversary of the arrival in that very same bay of the Royal Australian Navy's first warships.

Proceeding from the assumption that navies have a very important role to play in the field of diplomacy, the three prominent naval reviews referred to above

1 Senior Professor and Head, Department of History, University of the Free State, and a Visiting Fellow, University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy (UNSW@ADFA), Canberra. E-mail address: wesselsa@ufs.ac.za

will be described and analysed. The emphasis will in the first place fall on the *history* of the three reviews, and consequently some finer details with regard to the participating ships and the commemorative events will also be provided. Questions that will be answered include the following: How many warships from how many countries took part in each of these events? Who took part and who stayed away – and why? What was the international context in which each of the events took place? How successful were the events? What can be learnt from the events? As far as possible, the emphasis will fall on the SA Navy throughout, and also on the lessons that can be learnt from the historic naval events that will be discussed and analysed. Can any conclusions be drawn that could be of importance for future naval planning?

All sources consulted in writing this article are freely available. The author enjoyed the privilege of attending all three of the fleet reviews that will be discussed, and consequently some of the information presented is based on personal observations. All the brochures, etc., referred to, comprise part of the author's private document collection.

Prior to the discussion of the reviews of 1997, 2005 and 2013, a brief background history with regard to international and other fleet reviews through the ages will firstly be provided.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Through the centuries, but especially since the second half of the nineteenth century, many countries have organised fleet reviews to commemorate either some or other important event in the history of the concerned country, or in the history of the country's navy; for example, the Royal Navy (RN) used to hold fleet reviews in honour of a monarch's coronation, or to commemorate significant jubilees of a reigning king or queen. But initially they were held to demonstrate a country's naval strength to potential enemies, or when a fleet was mobilised for war. On 20 June 1346, Britain's King Edward III reviewed some 1 000 ships at Spithead, off Portsmouth, before sailing to war against France. In August 1415 Britain's King Henry V reviewed his ships prior to sailing from Southampton to France, where his soldiers defeated the French at the decisive battle at Agincourt (25 October 1415). More than 500 years later, in May 1944, a review of the pre-D-Day (6 June 1944) invasion fleet was held. Approximately 800 warships and support craft were present, but for obvious reasons this momentous event was never advertised.²

2 "Fleet review history", <<http://www.navy.gov.au/ifr.history>>, consulted 27 September 2013; "Royal reviews of the fleet", <http://www.royalnavalmuseum.org/info_sheets_fleet_reviews.htm>, consulted 27 February 2014; *Navy News* [UK], *Fleet Review Souvenir*, July 2005, pp. 2-3; information supplied by the National Museum of the Royal Navy, Portsmouth.

Fleet reviews have also been held on occasions when a reigning monarch presented the Sovereign's Colours to the RN, or to celebrate victories. An example of the latter kind of fleet review is the one that was held from 17-23 July 1919 at Southend, on the coast east of London, after the Allied victory in what was then known as the Great War of 1914 to 1918.³ Other fleet reviews commemorating military matters include the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) review that was held on 16 May 1969 to commemorate NATO's 20th anniversary. On 28 June 1977, the RN hosted a commemorative review in the Solent, between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, to mark Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee. (Some 129 British and 20 foreign warships, submarines and auxiliaries took part.) On 12 June 2010, a major fleet review was held in Esquimalt Harbour on Canada's west coast, and on 29 June at the Bedford Basin, Halifax, on the east coast, to commemorate the centenary of the Royal Canadian Navy's birth. In the course of the past few decades, other fleet reviews have also been held in the People's Republic of China, India, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and the United States of America (USA).⁴ For the naval review in honour of the USA's bicentennial independence celebrations, held in New York on 4 July 1976, the SA Navy sent the frigate SAS *President Kruger* – the first time that a South African warship had visited that country. Given the prevailing international climate, the political implications of the invitation extended to South Africa, were enormous.⁵

In Australia, several fleet reviews had previously been held. The Royal Australian Navy (RAN)'s first-ever fleet review was held in 1921 in Port Phillip, the large bay on whose northern shores the city of Melbourne is situated. On this occasion, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII, before his abdication) inspected 28 Australian warships. On 4 October 1986, the RAN held a Naval Assembly and Review in Sydney (with Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, as the presiding officer), attended by 27 warships from seven navies. This was in honour of the 75th anniversary of the granting of the Royal title to the RAN. On 1 October 1988, the Bicentennial Naval Salute was held in Sydney to commemorate 200 years of European settlement in Australia. A total of 59 warships from 15 navies took part.⁶ In 1951, the SA Navy's "Loch" class frigate

3 "Fleet Review history", <<http://www.navy.gov.au/ifr/history>>, consulted 27 September 2013. For a list of fleet reviews in British waters, see S Bush, *Solent fleet review 2005: a complete guide to the warships, tall ships and merchantmen at the review* (Liskeard: Maritime Books, 2005), pp. 90-93.

4 "Fleet Review history", <<http://www.navy.gov.au/ifr/history>>, consulted 27 September 2013; "Silver Jubilee Fleet Review Official Souvenir Programme", <<http://www.axfordsabode.org.uk/pdf-docs/slvjrjuble1.pdf>>, consulted 19 April 2014.

5 See, for example, A du Toit, *South African fighting ships past and present* (Rivonia: Ashanti Publishing, 1992), p. 232.

6 See, for example, "IFR 2013", <<http://www.navy.gov.au/afr-2013-participating-warships>>, consulted 1 March 2013.

SAS *Transvaal* visited Australia to take part in that country's 50th anniversary celebrations in Sydney. The ship also visited Fremantle, Jervis Bay, Melbourne and Adelaide.⁷ In 2001, the SA Navy's combat support ship SAS *Outeniqua* was on her way to Australia to take part in a Centennial Naval Salute, to commemorate the centenary of the Australian Federation, when the event was cancelled in the wake of the terror attacks that occurred in the USA on 11 September 2001 (9/11).⁸

In South Africa, fleet reviews were previously held, for example, on 3 February 1988 in Mossel Bay to commemorate the arrival of the Portuguese discoverer, Bartolomeu Dias, in South African waters in 1488,⁹ and also on 5 September 2007, when a Presidential Fleet Review was held in False Bay.¹⁰ But the most important review was held in 1997 to commemorate the SA Navy's 75th anniversary.

3. THE SOUTH AFRICAN NAVY'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY, 1997

The SA Navy was established on 1 April 1922 as the South African Naval Service (SANS). By 1934, the SANS had lost all its ships, owing to financial restrictions. It was resuscitated in 1939 as the Seaward Defence Force (SDF) and became the South African Naval Forces (SANF) in 1942. The SDF and later the SANF made small but nevertheless important contributions towards the Allied war effort during the Second World War (1939-1945), was renamed the SA Navy in 1951, and expanded considerably in the years 1953 to 1972. However, the SA Navy, in particular, was detrimentally affected by the United Nations arms embargo of 1977, lost its blue-water and anti-submarine warfare capabilities, and by 1987 had been reduced to a 24-hull navy – partly because of the extensive requirements of the land and air forces for their role in the war in Namibia and in Angola. When, ten years later, the SA Navy commemorated its 75th anniversary, it was still a 24-hull navy, with three submarines, nine missile-carrying fast attack craft (locally known as strike craft), four mine-hunters, four minesweepers, two combat support ships, one survey ship and one torpedo recovery/diving ship.¹¹

7 Du Toit, p. 161; *Commando* 2(12), May 1951, pp. 4-7 and 2(15), August 1951, pp. 4-7.

8 Line-book: SAS *Outeniqua* (consulted at SA Navy Museum, Simon's Town); "SA Navy. SA Vloot. SAS *Outeniqua*. Ile de la Réunion. Ship's log", <<http://www.simonstown.com/tourism/navy/otqlogs.htm>>, consulted 6 March 2002. The ship was diverted to La Réunion, where exercises with the French navy were conducted.

9 *Navy News* 7, March 1988, p. 17; *Weekend Post*, 23 January 1988, p. 9; *The Citizen*, 3 February 1988, p. 4 and 4 February 1988, p. 11; *Daily Dispatch*, 19 March 1988, p. 2.

10 *The Mercury*, 5 September 2008, p. 3 and 10 September 2008, p. 4; *The Independent on Saturday*, 6 September 2008, p. 3; *Navy News* 28(5), 2008, pp. 1-2, 5-7, 9-18, 20-22, 24-25, 27-34, 42; *South African Soldier* 15(10), October 2008, pp. 10-12.

11 For the history of the SA Navy in general, see JC Goosen (compiler), *South Africa's navy: the first fifty years* (Cape Town: WJ Flesch and Partners, 1973); CH Bennett and A Söderlund,

In the run-up to, but especially after the creation of a new political dispensation for South Africa in 1994, doors (ports) opened for the SA Navy to once again send its grey diplomats (i.e. warships sent on flag-showing/diplomatic missions) overseas on flag-showing cruises.¹² From 1994 onwards, more foreign warships than ever before visited South African ports, for example, 21 ships from eight countries in 1994, 26 from 12 countries in 1995 and 27 from ten countries in 1996.¹³

It was against this background that the SA Navy decided – with the support and concomitant financial assistance of the government – to celebrate its 75th birthday in 1997. It was also an opportunity “to celebrate South Africa’s peaceful transition to a full democracy and return to the international fold, and at the same time to honour South Africa’s greatest citizen, President Nelson Mandela, the first democratically elected leader of South Africa and Commander in Chief of its Armed Forces”.¹⁴ For the SA Navy’s 75th anniversary (henceforth referred to as SAN75) the following major warships assembled – first in Simon’s Town from the end of March 1997, and then in Cape Town (the ships are listed according to their country of origin, and the countries are listed in alphabetical order):

- Argentina: “Meko 140” class light frigates *Rosales* (1986) and *Parker* (1990) – the latter with an Alouette III helicopter on board.
- Brazil: “Niterói” class frigate *Constituição* (1978), with a Lynx helicopter on board; “Inhaúma” class light frigate *Inhaúma* (1989) and replenishment tanker *Almirante Gastão Motta* (1991).
- France: “P400” class patrol boat *La Rieuse* (1987) and repair ship *Garonne* (1965) – both ships stationed in the Indian Ocean.

South Africa’s navy: a navy of the people and for the people (Simon’s Town: SA Navy, 2008). See also A Wessels, “The South African Navy in the years of conflict in southern Africa, 1966-1989”, *Journal for Contemporary History* 31(3), December 2006, pp. 283-303; A Wessels, “The South African Navy and its predecessors 1910-2009” in K Young and R Mitchell (eds), *The Commonwealth navies: 100 years of cooperation* (Canberra: Sea Power Centre – Australia, 2012), pp. 79-110.

12 For more on the SA Navy’s flag-showing cruises since 1922, see A Wessels, “South Africa’s grey diplomats; visits by South African warships to foreign countries 1946-1996”, *Scientiae* [sic] *Militaria* 27, 1997, pp. 69-102; A Wessels, “Onwaarskynlike ambassadeurs: vlagvertoonvaarte deur Suid-Afrikaanse oorlogsskepe, 1922-2002”, *Journal for Contemporary History* 27(3), December 2002, pp. 54-81; C Manganyi, *South African naval diplomacy since 1994* (MA thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2013), *passim*.

13 A Wessels, “Buitelandse vlagvertoonbesoeke aan Suid-Afrikaanse hawens (3): die eerste dekade van die nuwe RSA, 1994-2004”, *Journal for Contemporary History* 32(1), June 2007, pp. 223-229.

14 The quotation is taken from Bennett and Söderlund, p. 53. The list that follows is compiled from the observations made by the author. See also Bennett and Söderlund, p. 55. The dates in brackets after the ships names indicate when the ship was commissioned for the first time. For more particulars on each of the ships, see R Sharpe (ed.), *Jane’s fighting ships 1996-97* (Coulsdon: Jane’s Information Group, 1996).

- India: training ship *Tir* (1986).
- Kenya: “Nyayo” class missile-carrying fast-attack craft *Nyayo* (1987) and *Umoja* (1987). Interestingly enough, this was not the first time that the Kenyan navy had visited South Africa. In 1974 the small patrol boat *Mamba* visited Simon’s Town on its delivery cruise.¹⁵
- Malaysia: training ship *Hang Tuah* (1973). She was built as a display ship for Ghana’s President Kwame Nkrumah, but was taken over and commissioned by the Royal Navy before being transferred to the Royal Malaysian Navy in 1977.
- Pakistan: frigate *Babur* (1974), which was formerly the Royal Navy’s “Amazon” class frigate HMS *Amazon*, and the replenishment ship *Moawin* (1964), with a Sea King helicopter on board. The latter ship was the former Dutch *Poolster*.
- Russia: “Sovremenny” class destroyer *Nastoychivy* (1993), with a Helix helicopter on board, and “Uda” class replenishment tanker *Lena* (c1963). No Soviet Union warships had ever visited South Africa before, albeit that several had sailed around the Cape, for example, a five-ship task force (including an aircraft carrier) in 1979 and a six-ship task force (also including an aircraft carrier) in 1983.¹⁶
- Singapore: “Sir Lancelot” class landing ship logistics *Perseverance* (1964) – previously the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service’s *Sir Lancelot*, withdrawn from service in 1989, becoming a floating casino just outside South African territorial waters off the coast near Cape Town (1991), before being acquired by Singapore in 1992.
- South Africa: the “Daphné” class submarine *Emily Hobhouse* (1971); “Warrior” class strike craft *Jan Smuts* (1977), *Shaka* (1977), *Adam Kok* (1978), *René Sethren* (1980), *Job Masego* (1983) and *Makhanda* (1986) (designed in Israel, with some built in that country, and the others in South Africa); “River” class mine-hunters *Umkomaas* (1981), *Umzimkulu* (1981) and *Umhloti* (1981) (designed in Germany, with two out of a total of four built in that country and the others in South Africa; originally “disguised” as “research ships”); British-built “Ton” class minesweeper *Walvisbaai* (1959); combat support ship *Drakensberg* (1987; locally designed and built); combat support ship *Outeniqua* (1992; Ukrainian-built Arctic supply ship, acquired by the SA Navy in 1993); British-built “Hecla” class hydrographic survey ship

15 List of ships visiting Simon’s Town 1965-1978, compiled by Mr WD (Bill) Jones. Supplied to the author by Rear-Adm. (JG) A Söderlund (retired).

16 *Paratus* 30(6), June 1979, p. 27 and 34(12), December 1983, pp. 10-11.

Protea (1972); and South African designed and built torpedo recovery/diving ship *Fleur* (1969). Fifteen of the SA Navy's 24 "major" warships took part; i.e. 62,5% of the fleet.

- Taiwan (Nationalist China; Republic of China): "Cheng Kung" class frigates (based on the United States Navy's "Oliver Hazard Perry" class frigates, but built in Taiwan) *Cheng Ho* (1994) and *Yueh Fei* (1996), and the Taiwanese designed and built combat support (replenishment) ship *Wu Yi* (1990). At this stage, South Africa still had diplomatic ties with Taiwan (broken in January 1998), and Taiwanese warships had also previously visited South African waters in 1981, 1985, 1989, 1992 and 1996.¹⁷
- United Kingdom: "Broadsword" class (Batch 3) frigate *Chatham* (1990), with a Sea King helicopter on board.
- USA: "Oliver Hazard Perry" class frigate *McInerley* (1979), with a Seahawk helicopter on board.
- Uruguay: "Commandant Rivière" class frigate *Uruguay* (1962) – acquired from France in 1990.

Before SAN75, and off the Cape coast, the ships from Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, together with a number of SA Navy units, took part in the third ATLASUR Exercise. *En route* to, and later again on the way back from Simon's Town and Cape Town, some of the foreign grey diplomats visited Durban (for example, *La Rieuse*, *Hang Tuah*, *Chatham*, *Tir*, the three Taiwanese ships and both the Kenyan ships, mostly in the period from 10-14 April); the *Umoja* developed engine trouble *en route* to Simon's Town and had to go to Port Elizabeth for repairs – and also to put ashore an ill sailor; and all three of the Taiwanese ships visited East London (28-30 March).¹⁸

The 22 foreign warships from 13 countries first assembled in Simon's Town, where a maritime expo was also held. The 14 participating SA Navy ships and one submarine were also in Simon's Town. Most of the ships sailed from the SA Navy's main base on Friday 4 April, and anchored in False Bay, where they were all lit up that evening. During the night of 4-5 April, they then sailed around the Cape Peninsula for the grand fleet review that took place in Table Bay, off Cape Town, on Saturday 5 April 1997. South Africa's State President, Mr Nelson Mandela –

17 *Navy News* 4(3), 1985, pp. 3-7, 11-14, 4(6), 1985, p. 4, 4(8), 1985, pp. 2-6, 10-18 and 8, June 1989, Appendix, p. 1 and 8, July 1989, p. 11.

18 See, for example, *Cape Argus*, 1 April 1997, p. 3 and 4 April 1997, pp. 6, 11; *Die Volksblad*, 2 April 1997, p. 7; *Sunday Tribune*, 6 April 1997, p. 4; *Die Burger*, 7 April 1997, p. 3; *The Mercury*, 7 April 1997, p. 3; *Navy News* 16(3), 1997, pp. 4-7, 10-15 and 16(6), 1997, pp. 18-23; *Salut* 4(6), June 1997, pp. 22-27.

together with the Chief of the SA Navy, Vice-Adm. Robert Simpson-Anderson, and other visiting naval chiefs and dignitaries – was on board the review ship, SAS *Protea*. For the review, seven other ships were also anchored in the bay, while some 70 yachts and other small craft followed the review ship. During the review, there was a fly-past by four SA Air Force and two foreign military aircraft, as well as eight helicopters. Afterwards, all the ships berthed in Cape Town harbour (most of them in the Victoria and Alfred Basin, with others in the Duncan Dock), where they were open to the public (6-8 April). Other activities in Cape Town connected to SAN75 included a luncheon held on 5 April at the Cape Sun Hotel; a thanksgiving and remembrance church service held on 6 April in Bishops Chapel in Rondebosch; a gala concert in the Nico Malan Theatre on the evening of 5 April and a parade on 7 April in central Cape Town, in which sailors from all the ships took part.¹⁹ The SA Navy also published a 108-page commemorative coffee-table book, *A navy for three oceans: celebrating 75 years of the South African Navy* (s.l.: no publisher indicated, [1997]).

From the above information, it is clear that the 22 foreign grey diplomats that visited South African shores for SAN75 consisted of one destroyer, ten frigates, two fast attack craft and one other patrol ship, two training ships, four replenishment ships, a repair ship, and a landing ship logistics. Only three of the ships came from Europe; seven were from the Americas, eight from Asia and the Far East, two from Africa and two from Russia. Four of the ships belonged to NATO countries. The Russian destroyer was the largest and most powerful combat ship present. It was a pity that the USA and France did not send larger ships – which would have elicited more publicity for these two countries. However, the ships sent to South Africa probably more or less represented the level of inter-state relations at that particular time. Twenty-eight of the 37 participating ships dated from the Cold War era, with an average age of 17 years for the 37 ships. (The average age of the SA Navy ships that took part was 19 years.) With the exception of the French and the Kenyan vessels, all the visiting warships had to sail very far to get to South Africa.

Two countries that planned to send ships, but in practice did not do so, were Indonesia and Portugal. Other countries with which South Africa had good relations, but which did not send warships, included Canada (although that country did send a maritime patrol aircraft), Spain, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, the Scandinavian countries, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Enemies and/or former enemies together celebrated SAN75: Argentina and the United Kingdom, which had fought over the Malvinas/Falkland Islands 15 years earlier, and had then continued the feud at a diplomatic level (the *Perseverance* took part in the 1982 conflict as the

19 *The official souvenir catalogue: Maritime Expo 97*; Media Kit SA Navy 1922-1997; SA Navy Info Bulletin 14/97, 31 March 1997; observations by the author. See also all the sources mentioned in footnote 18.

RFA *Sir Lancelot*); India and Pakistan; as well as France, Britain, Russia and the USA. Most of the ships from the latter four countries dated from the Cold War era.

SAN75 can be regarded as the most important event in the history of the post-1994 SA Navy – perhaps even in its whole history. It was an excellent showpiece for the fledgling South African democracy, did much to boost the morale of the SA Navy, renewed old ties, strengthened existing diplomatic ties, and forged new ties. It also elicited a great amount of positive publicity for the SA Navy.

4. TRAFALGAR200, 2005

On 21 October 1805, Napoleon Bonaparte's French navy (with the support of the Spanish navy) was decisively defeated by a British fleet under the command of Admiral Horatio Nelson – who, of course, was mortally wounded during the battle.²⁰ To commemorate the 200th anniversary of this epic sea battle, the Royal Navy (RN) organised one of the biggest naval commemorative events ever held in the United Kingdom: an international fleet review on Tuesday 28 June 2005 at Spithead, the anchorage between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, in a channel known as the Solent; and concomitant naval events, including a four-day Festival of Sea in the Royal Naval Base in Portsmouth. (Although the Spanish Armada of 1588 posed a similar or perhaps even greater threat to Britain's sovereignty than Napoleon's abortive invasion plans, there was no naval event to commemorate, in 1988, the 400th anniversary of the defeat of the Armada.) For the 2005 international fleet review, 90 warships and five submarines from 36 navies were anchored in rows, while Her Majesty the Queen, Elizabeth II, on board the RN's Antarctic patrol ship *Endurance*, and accompanied by, *inter alia*, the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Alan West, sailed past all the ships. *Endurance* was escorted by three RN and one Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) warship. Charles, the Prince of Wales, and his wife Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall, were on board the *Scott*. The total of 111 naval ships (including submarines) present for Trafalgar200, with their 25 000 sailors, came from the following 36 countries (in alphabetical order):²¹

20 See, for example, N Best, *Trafalgar: the untold story of the greatest sea battle in history* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2005); C Lee, *Nelson and Napoleon: the long haul to Trafalgar* (London: Headline, 2005); A Schom, *Trafalgar: countdown to battle 1803-1805* (London: Penguin Books, 1992).

21 Sources/lists differ with regard to the exact number of warships that took part. This comprehensive and complete list was compiled on the basis of the observations made by the author. See also Bush, *passim*; *Ships Monthly* 40(9), September 2005, pp. 14-16; "Trafalgar200", <<http://www.trafalgar200.com>>, consulted 19 August 2005; *The News*, 28 June 2005, pp. 1-9, 13, 27-28, 42-43; *The Daily Telegraph*, 29 June 2005, pp. 1, 4-5. See in general also *Trafalgar200* (official Royal Navy programme). The dates in brackets indicate when the ships were commissioned for the first time. For more information on the ships, see S Saunders (ed.), *Jane's fighting ships 2005-2006* (Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, 2005).

- Algeria: “Djebel Chenoua” class corvette *El Kirch* (2002).
- Australia: “Anzac” class frigate *Anzac* (1996).
- Belgium: “Wielingen” class frigate *Westdiep* (1978), command and support ship *Godetia* (1966) and Tripartite mine-hunter *Narcis* (1990).
- Brazil: sail training ship *Cisne Branco* (2000).
- Canada: “Halifax” class frigate *Montréal* (1994).
- Columbia: sail training ship *Gloria* (1969).
- Denmark: “Absolon” class multi-role support ship *Esbern Snare* (2005).
- Estonia: patrol ship *Admiral Pitka* (1976).
- Finland: minelayer *Pohjanmaa* (1979).
- France: “Cassard” class destroyer *Jean Bart* (1991), aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle* (2001), “Durance” class replenishment ship *Meuse* (1980), “Rubis/Améthyste” class submarine *Perle* (1993) and small sail training ships *La Belle Poule* (1932) and *Mutin* (1927).
- Germany: “Sachsen” class frigate *Sachsen* (2003) and “Frankenthal” class mine-hunter *Dillingen* (1995).
- Greece: “Hydra” class frigate *Hydra* (1992).
- India: “Delhi” class destroyer *Mumbai* (2001) and sail training ship *Tarangini* (1997).
- Indonesia: sail training ship *Kri Dewaruci* (1953).
- Ireland: patrol ship *Eithne* (1984).
- Italy: “Improved Sauro” class submarine *Giuliano Prini* (1989) and sail training ship *Amerigo Vespucci* (1931) – the latter also took part in fleet reviews in, for example, 1953 (Solent) and 1977 (Solent).
- Japan: “Murasame” class destroyer *Murasame* (1996), “Asagiri” class destroyer *Yuugiri* (1989) and training ship *Kashima* (1995).
- Latvia: “Vidar” class support ship *Virsaitis* (1978) – former Norwegian minelayer.
- Lithuania: Type 331 mine-hunter *Kursis* (1959) – former German ship.
- Morocco: “Floréal” class frigate *Mohammed V* (2002).
- Netherlands: amphibious transport dock ship *Rotterdam* (1998), Tripartite mine-hunter *Urk* (1986) and small sail training ship *Urania* (1938).

- Nigeria: Meko Type 360 frigate *Aradu* (1982).
- Oman: “Qahir” class corvette *Al Mua’zzar* (1997) and sail training ship *Shabab Oman* (1979).
- Pakistan: “Amazon” class frigate (ex-RN HMS *Avenger*) *Tippu Sultan* (1978) and replenishment ship *Moawin* (1964) – the latter formerly the Dutch *Poolster* (which, in Pakistani service, had also attended SAN75).
- Poland: “Oliver Hazard Perry” class frigate *General Tadeusz Kościuszko* (1980), acquired from the USA in 2002, and the sail training ship *Iskra* (1982).
- Portugal: Meko Type 200 frigate *Alvares Cabral* (1991) and sail training ship *Sagres* (1938).
- Romania: Type 22 frigate *Regina Maria* (1987) – formerly the RN’s HMS *London*.
- Russia: the “Udaloy” class destroyer *Admiral Levchenko* (1988).
- Serbia: sail training ship *Jadran* (c1932). In 2006 the ship was transferred to Montenegro.
- South Africa: the combat support ship *Drakensberg* (1987).
- South Korea: “KDX-2” class destroyer *Chungmugong Yi Sun-Shin* (2003) and “Chun Jee” class replenishment ship *Chun Jee* (1990).
- Spain: aircraft carrier *Principe de Asturias* (1988) and “Alvaro de Bazan” class frigate *Blas de Lezo* (2004).
- Turkey: “Barbaros” class frigate *Orucreis* (1996).
- United Kingdom: “Trafalgar” class submarines *Trafalgar* (1983) and *Turbulent* (1984); “Swiftsure” class submarine *Sovereign* (1974); “Invincible” class aircraft carriers *Invincible* (1980) and *Illustrious* (1982); Type 22 destroyers *Cardiff* (1979), *Exeter* (1980), *Southampton* (1981), *Nottingham* (1983) and *Gloucester* (1985); Type 22 frigates *Cumberland* (1989) and *Chatham* (1990); Type 23 frigates *Marlborough* (1991), *Lancaster* (1992), *Iron Duke* (1993), *Montrose* (1994), *Westminister* (1994), *Grafton* (1997) and *St Albans* (2002); “River” class patrol ship *Tyne* (2003); “Archer” class patrol ships *Archer* (1985), *Explorer* (1986), *Blazer* (1988), *Example* (1988), *Puncher* (1988), *Ranger* (1988), *Trumpeter* (1988), *Raider* (1998) and *Tracker* (1998); “Hunter” class mine countermeasures (MCM) ships *Ledbury* (1981), *Cattistock* (1982) and *Middleton* (1984); “Sandown” class MCM ships *Walney* (1993), *Pembroke* (1998), *Grimsby* (1999), *Bangor* (2000), *Ramsay* (2001) and *Shoreham* (2002);

Antarctic patrol ship *Endurance* (1991), which was the review ship for the fleet review; “Echo” class survey ship *Enterprise* (2003); small survey ship *Roebuck* (1986); very small survey vessel *Gleaner* (1983); large survey ship *Scott* (1997); landing ships logistics *Sir Bedivere* (1967), *Sir Tristram* (1967) and *Sir Galahad* (1986); “Albion” class assault ships *Albion* (2003) and *Bulwark* (2005); helicopter carrier *Ocean* (1998); aviation training ship *Argus* (1981); “Appleleaf” class large support tanker *Orangeleaf* (1984); “Fort Victoria” class large fleet replenishment ships *Fort George* (1993) and *Fort Victoria* (1994); “Wave” class large fleet tanker *Wave Ruler* (2002); and the sealift ro-ro ship *Hurst Point* (2002). (Of the RN’s 121 major warships, 55 took part; i.e. 45,5%.)

- USA: “Tarawa” class amphibious assault ship *Saipan* (1977) and US Coast Guard sail training ship *Eagle* (1936) – the latter having formerly belonged to Nazi Germany, under the name of *Horst Wessel*.
- Uruguay: sail training ship *Capitan Miranda* (1930).

Many non-naval sailing ships and other vessels were also present (a total of at least 50). The 111 naval vessels consisted of five submarines, four aircraft carriers, 11 destroyers, 22 frigates, two corvettes, 12 patrol vessels, 11 MCM ships, eight amphibian ships, 16 training ships and 20 support and other ships. After the review ship had done her rounds, there were aerobatic and flying displays, and a fly-past by a total of 34 aircraft and 25 helicopters. That evening, there was a spectacular *Son et Lumière* illustration of an early nineteenth-century sea battle (sound and light show), as well as a fireworks display (10 000 fireworks, comprising 12 tons of explosives).²²

Thirty-one of the 56 visiting (i.e. not RN) warships came from European countries; i.e. they did not have to sail very far to reach Portsmouth. Fifteen years after the end of the Cold War, only 57 of the total of 111 ships (including several old training ships) still dated from that era. The average age of a participating ship was just under 20 years. The ships represented all continents and a cross-section of the world’s navies. An interesting omission was the People’s Republic of China.

After the fleet review (which was observed by some 250 000-500 000 spectators, plus a television audience of several million), some of the warships sailed home, while many of the RN and RFA ships sailed to other bases or ports; but the rest berthed in Her Majesty’s Naval Base, Portsmouth, for the Festival of the Sea. In the interim, an International Drumhead Ceremony was held on Southsea

22 *International Express*, 5 July 2005, pp. 4-5; *The Witness*, 29 June 2005, p. 1; *The Mercury*, 29 June 2005, p. 13; *Folksblad*, 28 June 2005, p. 5; *The News* (final), 29 June 2005, pp. 1-6; *Daily Express*, 29 June 2005, pp. 4-5.

Common on Wednesday 29 June.²³ For the Festival of the Sea, 30 June-3 July 2005, 42 ships (no submarines) – plus several harbour and other naval craft, as well as civilian vessels – from 25 countries were berthed in the Naval Base, and 39 warships were open to the public, while there were also many other activities in the Base, including various military demonstrations, exhibitions, and aircraft and helicopter displays.²⁴

The Chief of the SA Navy, Vice-Adm. J Mudimu, was also in the United Kingdom for the fleet review. For the duration of the Festival of the Sea, the SA Navy's combat support ship, SAS *Drakensberg*, was berthed at a pier opposite the Russian destroyer *Admiral Levchenko*. The *Drakensberg* had departed from Simon's Town on 9 June, with a crew of 163 under the command of Capt. Colin Sharwood, and with an Oryx helicopter and a "Namacurra" harbour patrol boat on board. It took her 18 days to reach Portsmouth. At the end of the Festival of the Sea, the *Drakensberg* sailed from Portsmouth back to South Africa via Lagos (Nigeria) and Luanda (Angola). This was the SA Navy's first-ever visit to Nigeria, and the first visit in many years to Angola. From both a military and a political perspective, these visits were strategically significant. The *Drakensberg* arrived back in Simon's Town on 1 August 2005. The ship's deployment to the United Kingdom was a resounding success, confirming her role as the SA Navy's foremost, most prominent and most active and successful grey diplomat in the years since her commissioning in 1987. In the years 1987 to 2005, she undertook no fewer than 19 flag-showing cruises.²⁵

Trafalgar200 was a resounding success for Britain – and in particular for the RN. But by 2005, the RN was continuing its steady decline, with a constantly increasing number of ships being withdrawn from service, and staff members either being laid off or not replaced. While in mid-1997 (when SAN75 took place), the RN still had 15 submarines, three aircraft carriers, 12 destroyers, 23 frigates, 26 patrol ships, nine assault and related ships, 23 MCM ships, four research ships and 16 major support ships (for example, fleet tankers), and 48 000 personnel,²⁶ the statistics by mid-2005 (Trafalgar200) read as follows: 15 submarines, three aircraft carriers, nine destroyers, 19 frigates, 22 patrol ships, eight assault and related ships, 19 MCM ships, five research ships and 21 major support ships, and 40 000

23 *The News*, 29 June 2005, pp. 1-7 and 30 June 2005, pp. 4, 15; *International Drumhead Ceremony* (programme).

24 Observations by the author. See also *The News*, 2 July 2005, pp. 7-11; *International Festival of the Sea: official souvenir programme*.

25 *South African Soldier* 12(9), September 2005, pp. 13-15; *Navy News* 24(4), 2005, p. 2 and 24(5) pp. 24-31. See also A Wessels, "SAS *Drakensberg*'s first 25 years: the life and times of the SA Navy's foremost grey diplomat, 1987-2012", *Scientia Militaria: South African Journal of Military Studies* 41(2), 2013, pp. 116-141.

26 Sharpe (ed.), pp. 754-789.

personnel.²⁷ By the end of 2013, when the fleet review in Australia (see *infra*) took place, the RN's order of battle was as follows: 11 submarines, five destroyers, 13 frigates, 21 patrol ships, four assault and related ships, 15 MCM ships, four research ships and 17 major support ships; and 30 000 personnel.²⁸ The RN is a sorry shadow of what it was in years gone by. It is an open question whether the RN will ever again host an international fleet review – this navy, which once ruled the waves, now simply has too few ships to show to the world. It is consequently also noteworthy that when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II celebrated her Diamond Jubilee as monarch in 2012, there was no fleet review – in contrast to 1977 (on the occasion of her Silver Jubilee).

5. THE INTERNATIONAL FLEET REVIEW, SYDNEY, 2013

Australia as a federated state was established on 1 January 1901. At that stage, most of the former states, for example, New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, had their own small navies, which were only equipped with small and mostly outdated coastal warships. The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) was established on 10 July 1911. It was decided that the RAN would initially acquire a battle-cruiser (HMAS *Australia*), three light cruisers (HMA Ships *Sydney*, *Melbourne* and *Encounter*) and three destroyers (HMA Ships *Parramatta*, *Warrego* and *Yarra*) – all British-built warships.²⁹ On their delivery cruise from the United Kingdom, *en route* to Australia, HMAS *Australia* and HMS *Sydney* visited Cape Town and Simon's Town (26-29 August 1913), and the *Australia* also visited Durban (31 August-6 September).³⁰ By the end of September 1913, all seven of the above-mentioned warships were ready to be presented to the Australian public. A grand entry into Sydney Harbour was planned for Saturday 4 October 1913 – which turned out to be a memorable day, with huge crowds taking up positions around the bay to welcome the RAN's first new warships in their home port.³¹

In the course of the next century, the RAN went from strength to strength, playing a meaningful role in two world wars and several other conflicts.³² To

27 Saunders (ed.), *Jane's fighting ships 2005-2006*, pp. 810-845.

28 S Saunders (ed.), *Jane's fighting ships 2013-2014* (s.l: IHS, 2013), pp. 878-910.

29 D Stevens (ed.), *The Royal Australian Navy* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 11-25.

30 B Rice, *The Royal Navy in South Africa 1900-2000* (Liskeard: Maritime Books, 2001), pp. 3, 29; *The Natal Advertiser*, 1 September 1913, p. 3 and 6 September 1913, p. 3.

31 Stevens (ed.), pp. 25-26.

32 For the history of the RAN in general, see, in particular, the excellent book edited by Stevens referred to in footnotes 29 and 31, but also L Lind, *The navy day by day: historic naval events in Australia and abroad* (Kenthurst: Kangaroo Press, 1996). See also the excellent publications produced by the Sea Power Centre–Australia, Canberra, for example, I Pfennigwerth, *Missing pieces: the intelligence jigsaw and RAN operations from 1939-71* (2008); GP Gilbert, *Australian naval personalities: lives from the Australian Dictionary of Biography* (2006); J Mortimer and

commemorate the centenary of the RAN's grand entry into Sydney Bay in 1913, a decision was made to host an international fleet review as well as a series of related events from 3-11 October 2013. More than 50 navies, including the SA Navy, were invited to send a ship(s) to attend the International Fleet Review (IFR). The following warships (listed according to country of origin, with the concerned countries listed in alphabetical order) were present in Sydney for the IFR:³³

- Australia: “Collins” class submarine *Farncomb* (1998); “Oliver Hazard Perry” class frigates *Sydney* (1983) and *Darwin* (1984); “Anzac” class frigates *Stuart* (2002), *Parramatta* (2003) and *Perth* (2006); “Armidale” class patrol boats *Broome* (2007) and *Bundaberg* (2007); “Huon” class mine-hunters *Huon* (1999), *Hawkesbury* (2000), *Norman* (2000), *Gascoyne* (2001), *Diamantina* (2002) and *Yarra* (2003); heavy lift ship *Tobruk* (1981); landing craft *Labuan* (1973) and *Tarakan* (1973); replenishment tanker *Success* (1986); “Leeuwin” class survey ship *Leeuwin* (2000); “Paluma” class survey ships *Benalla* (1990) and *Shepparton* (1990).
- Brunei: the new German-designed and built “Darussalam” class offshore patrol ship *Darussalam* (2011).
- China, People's Republic of: “Luhu” class destroyer *Qingdao* (1996). There were two additional Chinese warships, which did not enter Sydney Bay, but sailed around along Australia's east coast for the duration of the IFR.
- France: “Floréal” class patrol frigate *Vendémiaire* (1993), which was stationed at Noumea in New Caledonia.
- India: “Shivalik” class frigate *Sahyadri* (2012).
- Indonesia: “Diponegoro” class corvette *Sultan Iskandar Muda* (2008).
- Japan: “Takanami” class destroyer *Makinami* (2004).
- Malaysia: British-designed and built “Lekiu” class frigate *Jebat* (1999).

D Stevens (eds), *Presence, power projection and sea control: the RAN in the Gulf 1990-2009* (2009); A Wright, *Australian carrier decisions: the acquisition of HMA Ships Albatross*, Sydney and Melbourne (1998); NA Lambert, *Australia's naval inheritance: imperial maritime strategy and the Australia Station 1880-1902* (1998).

33 Harbour craft are excluded. The dates in brackets after the ship names indicate when the ship was commissioned for the first time. The list is compiled from the observations made by the author. See also the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 October 2013, p. 5; “International Fleet Review”, <<http://www.navy.gov.au/ifr/>>, consulted 1 March 2013. For more particulars on each of the ships, see Saunders (ed.), *Jane's fighting ships 2013-2014*.

- Micronesia: Australian-designed and built “Pacific” class patrol boat *Micronesia* (1990), similar to those representing Papua New Guinea and Tonga at the IFR (see *infra*).
- New Zealand: “Anzac” class frigate *Te Mana* (1999) – a ship similar to the Australian “Anzac” class ships and indeed built in Australia for the Royal New Zealand Navy.
- Nigeria: frigate *Thunder* (1968) – more about this interesting ship will follow in the discussion below.
- Papua New Guinea: “Pacific” class patrol boats *Rabaul* (1987) and *Dreger* (1987).
- Singapore: “Endurance” class helicopter-carrying transport dock ship *Endeavour* (2001).
- Spain: replenishment tanker *Cantabria* (2010) – this ship was in Australian waters during February-November 2013 to replenish Australian warships on the east coast while the RAN’s replenishment ship *Success* was undergoing maintenance.
- Thailand: offshore patrol ship *Krabi* (2012) – so far the only unit built according to this new ship design.
- Tonga: “Pacific” class patrol boat *Savea* (1991).
- United Kingdom: “Daring” class destroyer *Daring* (2012), the leading ship in a new class of very sophisticated destroyers for the Royal Navy.
- USA: “Ticonderoga” class cruiser *Chosin* (1991).

On the basis of the foregoing, it is clear that 39 ships from 18 navies attended the IFR, including one submarine, one cruiser, three destroyers, ten frigates, one corvette, eight patrol ships, six mine-hunters, plus nine other warships and support vessels. The average age of the warships was approximately 16,5 years; most of them (27) were indeed built in the post-Cold War era. Of the RAN’s 53 major warships, 21 (39,5%) were in Sydney for the IFR.

The SA Navy was invited to send a ship to attend the IFR, but declined the invitation – although the then Deputy Chief of the SA Navy, Rear-Adm. MS Hlongwana, did, in fact, go to Sydney to attend the IFR, in order to represent the Navy. If the Navy had had the money to put more ships out to sea, South Africa would probably have been represented either by one of the “Valour” class frigates, or by the combat support ship *Drakensberg*. However, it is interesting to note that, around the time of the IFR, money was indeed made available to send the frigate SAS *Spioenkop* all the way along the west coast of Africa and as far as

Dakar (Senegal) on a flag-showing cruise that lasted for 45 days. The ship departed from Simon’s Town on 9 October 2013. The original main purpose of the West African cruise was to form the showcase for South Africa and its defence force at the African Seapower Symposium in Senegal; but this event was cancelled after the SA Navy ship was already well on her way. The planned exercises with a number of African navies did go ahead, however; and the ship visited Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Angola and Namibia.³⁴ What this cruise clearly indicates is that South Africa subordinated the value of its relations with Australia to those with West Africa.

As a consequence of the non-participation of the SA Navy, the only African country to be represented by a warship at the IFR was Nigeria. This West African country sent the *Thunder*, which was originally commissioned as the United States Coast Guard “Hamilton” class high endurance cutter *Chase*. After being withdrawn from service in 2011, she was gifted to the Nigerian navy, who commissioned her on 23 January 2012 as the *Thunder*. Although the ship was only armed with a single 76 mm gun and four machine-guns, the Nigerians decided to reclassify her as a frigate (with pennant number F90).³⁵ The *Thunder*’s visit to Australia was the most ambitious and longest deployment ever undertaken by a Nigerian warship. The ship departed from her home port, Calabar, in the second week of August 2013 and sailed to Sydney via Luanda, Simon’s Town, Port Louis (Mauritius), Fremantle in Western Australia and Hobart in Tasmania. *En route* back to Nigeria, the *Thunder* visited Melbourne, Albany in Western Australia, La Port at Pointes des Galets (La Réunion), Durban, Walvis Bay (Namibia) and Pointe Noire (Republic of the Congo) – and then sailed back to Calabar. This was the first time that a Nigerian warship had ever visited South Africa. When it arrived in Durban, the ship was no longer in a good condition, and had to undergo urgent repairs. Consequently, the ship had to stay longer than originally planned; and on its departure on 26 November 2013, it was still not in very good shape.³⁶ Nevertheless, it is to the credit of the Nigerian navy that the *Thunder* successfully completed her visit Down Under. This flag-showing cruise gave a great deal of exposure to Nigeria as a country, as well as to its navy. From a South African point of view, it is a pity that the opportunity to show the South African flag at a major international naval event was not exploited.

In the light of the competition between South Africa and Nigeria with regard to the question as to which country is the leading nation in Africa, it can be said that Nigeria – whose economy has lately (2013-2014) been doing better than that

34 “Deputy Chief of the Navy represents the SA Navy at the historic International Fleet Review”, <http://www.navy.mil.za/archive/1310/1331023_int_fleet_review/article.htm>, consulted 3 March 2014; *The Mercury*, 27 November 2013, p. 7; *Die Burger*, 9 October 2013, p. 4.

35 Saunders (ed.), *Jane’s fighting ships 2013-2014*, p. 569.

36 *The Mercury*, 13 November 2013, p. 6 and 27 November 2013, p. 7; observations by T Jones (e-mail to the author, 26 November 2013).

of its southern rival – had pulled off another “win” by sending the *Thunder* to the IFR. It is also interesting to note that the SA Navy is finding it difficult to put ships out to sea, and since the commissioning of the submarine *Queen Modjadji I* in 2008 has not acquired any new warships (over and above the six Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry ships that were handed over to the Navy in 2012, but which were returned a year later). In the past five years (2009-2013), Nigeria has commissioned one frigate and two large and 17 small patrol boats, and will, in the course of 2014, receive two additional ships from the USA, namely another “Hamilton” class cutter as well as a survey ship.³⁷ Ironically, a number of small personnel ferries and craft that can also be used for patrol work, have been or are being built for Nigeria in South Africa – some of them by a private company inside the Simon’s Town SA Navy Base.³⁸ Nigeria’s *Thunder* was, without any doubt, the most interesting and (from a public point of view) unexpected visitor to the IFR in Sydney.

South Korea, which has a strong navy, did not send a warship to the IFR. There were also no warships from South America. Several European navies did not send ships to the IFR, including the Netherlands, Germany and Italy; and two of the three European navies that were represented, either had a ship stationed in Australian waters (Spain) or sent a ship stationed in the Pacific Ocean (France). Financial considerations and defence budgets that do not always keep pace with inflation, can have an impact on a navy’s ability to conduct flag-showing cruises. So, in practice, as far as European navies are concerned, it was only Britain’s Royal Navy that sent a warship specifically to attend the IFR, albeit that during this flag-showing cruise, the ship also visited other ports and engaged in training. Three Russian warships would have attended, including the “Slava” class cruiser *Varyag*, but the Russians either did not want to pay docking fees in Sydney, or could not afford to pay these fees; and in practice, the ships were diverted to the Arabian Gulf because the Russian ship that had been deployed there had broken down. (These deployments took place as a result of the revolt taking place in Syria, where rebel forces tried – and are currently (2014) still trying – to overthrow the government of President Bashar Hafez al-Assad.) Had the Russian ships attended the IFR in Sydney, this would have comprised the first visit by a Russian warship to Australia since 1903. In contrast, Russian warships have visited South African waters in the post-Cold War era, namely the destroyer *Nastoychivy* (for SAN75 in 1997; see Section 3, *supra*), and since then also the nuclear-powered battle-

37 *Africa Defence Forum* 6(4), [2013], p. 61. As far as the economic competition between Nigeria and South Africa is concerned, see, for example, *Business Day*, 10 April 2014, p. 15 and 11 April 2014, pp. 5, 9; *The Star*, 10 April 2014, p. 18.

38 *Maritime South Africa*, February 2012, pp. 16-17.

cruiser *Pyotr Velikiy* (Peter the Great) in January 2009 (alongside in Cape Town, 12-15 January).³⁹

On Friday 4 October 2013, the arrival of Australia's first warships exactly a hundred years earlier was commemorated by means of a ceremonial entry into Sydney Harbour by the RAN ships *Sydney*, *Darwin*, *Perth*, *Parramatta*, *Diamantina*, *Huon* and *Bundaberg*. It is interesting to note that a small VIP launch, the steam-driven *Lady Hopetoun* [sic], which was present in Sydney when the first Australian warships arrived on 4 October 1913, was also present (and sailing around) in Sydney Bay a hundred years later during the IFR. By that time, several foreign warships were already either berthed at the Garden Island Naval Base or anchored in the vast Sydney Bay. During the course of the day, the remaining foreign grey diplomats arrived.⁴⁰ On the morning of the next day, the Ceremonial Fleet Review as such took place, with Britain's Prince Harry (fourth-in-line to the throne) and several other dignitaries, including the Governor-General of Australia, Quentin Bryce, on board the survey vessel *Leeuwin*, which acted as the review ship. The *Leeuwin* made her way past all the ships anchored in the bay or berthed at Garden Island – all dressed overall and with their crews lining the sides of the ships. The review was accompanied by a ceremonial fly-past, to salute the Navy, by 26 helicopters (including Australian S-70B-2 Seahawks, MRH90 Taipans and AS 350BA Squirrels, as well as naval helicopters from the French, New Zealand, Royal Navy and US Navy ships) and at least 14 warplanes (including Australian Hawk 127s, F/A-18 Hornets, an E-7A Wedgetail and AP-3C Orions). Later that afternoon, demonstrations by several of these and other helicopters and aircraft took place.⁴¹ And from 19h40 until 20h10 that evening, the crowds (numbering at least 1,7 million people, and perhaps as many as 3 million, according to estimation) lining the shores of Sydney Bay or watching from other vantage points, were treated to an impressive fireworks and light-show display (including 7 tons of fireworks).⁴² For the first time, fireworks were set off from RAN warships anchored in the bay.

On Sunday 6 October and Monday 7 October, a total of 17 warships were open to the public at Garden Island, and another four could be viewed at Barangaroo. It was noticed that the Chinese destroyer *Qingdao* did not berth and was consequently

39 *Navy News* 28(1), 2009, pp. 10-11; *The Mercury*, 13 January 2009, p. 5, 15 January 2009, p. 3 and 28 January 2009, p. 4.

40 Observations by the author; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5-6 October 2013, pp. 10-11; *The Daily Telegraph*, 5 October 2013, pp. 1-4.

41 Observations by the author; *The Australian*, 7 October 2013, pp. 5, 13; *The Telegraph* [Australia], 7 October 2013, pp. 7-9; *Ships Monthly*, January 2014, pp. 20-22. See also "Aviation program", <<http://www.navy.gov.au/ifr/events/aviation-program>>, consulted 25 September 2013 and "Participating aircraft", <<http://www.navy.gov.au/ifr/participants/aircraft>>, consulted 25 September 2013.

42 Observations by the author; *International Fleet Review: Sydney, Australia, 3-11 October 2013* (brochure); *Central*, 9 October 2013, p. 5; *The Sun-Herald*, 6 October 2013, pp. 1, 8-9.

also not open to the public. Her crew members were also never allowed to go ashore. She merely sailed to a point near Garden Island, before departing on 6 October.⁴³ Also on that Sunday, an ecumenical and interfaith service was held in the (Roman Catholic) St Mary's Cathedral in central Sydney, attended by several high-ranking officers as well as sailors from visiting warships, including Nigeria.⁴⁴ On Tuesday 8 October, a RAN memorial service was held at the cenotaph in Martin Place in central Sydney. Once again, the Nigerian sailors, with their somewhat out of the ordinary yellowish white uniforms, drew a considerable amount of attention. The next day, approximately 4 000 sailors from the ships berthed in Sydney for the IFR, took part in an impressive parade (Combined Navies Parade) through the streets of central Sydney, with the salute being taken at the town hall. In the meantime, the RAN Sea Power Conference 2013 and the Pacific 2013 International Maritime Exposition were jointly held at the Sydney Conference and Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour (7-10 October). Various navy bands also played at several venues during the course of the IFR. On 10 October, the 16 tall ships that had been in the harbour for the duration of the IFR, sailed, followed the next day by most of the warships. Several of the warships then took part in Exercise Triton Centenary (Part 2) in the East Australian Exercise Area (EAXA) – Part 1 of the exercise had taken place from 23 September to 1 October; i.e. in the run-up to the IFR.⁴⁵

Thus ended a spectacular event in one of the world's most beautiful city and harbour settings – an event that honoured the achievements of the RAN in an appropriate manner, and reflected how proudly the RAN has served its nation in the course of a century. And all Australians (and many others) were reminded of the importance of a navy for any maritime nation.

6. CONCLUDING PERSPECTIVES

This article has put on record the history of three naval reviews, listed the ships that took part, provided a brief review of the events that were connected to each of the naval events, and commented on the participating navies – or the non-participation of certain navies. The SA Navy hosted one of the reviews that were analysed, and attended one of the other two reviews.

The three naval reviews analysed in this study took place in the course of sixteen years (1997-2013), with Trafalgar200 (2005) taking place eight years after SAN75 (which was held in 1997, in South African waters) and eight years before

43 Observations by the author.

44 Observations by the author. See also the programme of this event: *Ecumenical and interfaith service to commemorate the centenary of the first entry of the Royal Australian Navy into Sydney*.

45 Observations by the author; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 October 2013, pp. 2-3; "International Fleet Review", <<http://www.navy.gov.au/ifr>>, consulted 1 March 2014.

the International Fleet Review (IFR) in Sydney (2013). All three reviews took place in the post-Cold War era, and Trafalgar200 and the IFR took place post-9/11. The IFR took place at a time when many countries across the globe were experiencing serious economic problems – which explains why more ships did not participate.

SAN75 commemorated a navy's 75th anniversary; Trafalgar200 commemorated a famous sea battle's bicentennial, while the IFR in Sydney in 2013 commemorated the centenary of an important event in a navy's history. By 1997, the SA Navy had for many years (even decades) been the Cinderella of South Africa's armed forces, but eighteen months after the events in Simon's Town and Cape Town in April 1997, the SA Navy would be thrown a much-needed life-buoy when it was announced that, as part of an arms package, the Navy would receive three new submarines and four new frigates. By 2005, when Trafalgar200 took place, the Royal Navy was already in decline, and its strength would be further undermined in the following years. By 2013, the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) had established itself as a major role-player in the Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean, and adjacent areas, and the IFR show-cased its strength. Soon, the RAN's capabilities will be further enhanced when three new "Hobart" class destroyers and two new "Canberra" class assault ships will be commissioned.⁴⁶

Thirty-seven warships from 14 navies (including 15 from the host, the SA Navy) took part in SAN75 in 1997; 111 warships from 36 navies (including 55 from the host, the Royal Navy) took part in Trafalgar200 in 2005; while 39 warships from 18 navies (including 21 from the host, the RAN) took part in the IFR in Sydney in 2013. It is thus clear that while Trafalgar200 was the largest of the three events, SAN75 and the IFR were more or less of the same magnitude and scope, with the IFR having a slight edge over SAN75 as far as the number of participating navies and the number of participating ships were concerned. In most instances, those ships that were deployed to South Africa in 1997 had to sail much further to reach their destination than in the case of the visitors to the IFR in Sydney. However, the importance of inter-state relations tends to override the distance involved.

There are many reasons why navies participate in fleet reviews. Participation can indicate the state of the relations between the host country and the visiting ships' countries. It also offers participating navies the opportunity to operate in a multi-national environment while assessing the operational readiness and competence of the other navies, especially if the review is linked to manoeuvres (as was the case with the ATLASUR Exercise prior to SAN75, and Exercise Triton Centenary prior to, as well as after, the IFR). Another motivation lies in the opportunity to observe the standards of the host nation's navy. Then, of course, there is also the show of the acceptance of association with a particular group of nations. And last but definitely

46 For particulars with regard to these new RAN ships, see Saunders (ed.), *Jane's fighting ships 2013-2014*, pp. 26, 31.

not least, the sending of a ship(s) serves as a reminder to the host nation that the host naval base is within the operational reach of the participating visiting navies. The days of gunboat diplomacy are far from over – they have merely taken on a new guise.

The three reviews clearly show that navies indeed have a very important role to play in the field of naval diplomacy – but also as far as diplomacy in general and interaction between countries are concerned. Of course, it has to be kept in mind that fleet reviews merely comprise the stages on which politics (international relations) are being acted out, while the participating warships are, so to speak, merely the tools of the trade. Furthermore, countries make a decision to attend a particular fleet review in order to indicate their relations with the host nation; and they decide what platform (warship) to deploy in order to convey certain messages, for example, the level or strength of the relationship with the host country – as well as a show of strength to the other participating navies.

All three events that have been analysed were very successful, enhanced the profile of the host navy/country, and also had positive financial spin-offs for the host cities. The SA Navy is small in comparison to the Royal Navy (despite the latter's ongoing decline), as well as to the RAN. But the SA Navy has a proud record with regard to foreign deployments, including flag-showing cruises. In the light of South Africa's relative geographical isolation (being far away from the Americas, Europe, Asia and Australasia), it is of the utmost importance that the SA Navy's ships should be deployed from time to time on flag-showing cruises. The SA Navy, in collaboration with government departments and other role-players, should also consider hosting an international tall ship event, similar to Sail Amsterdam (which is held every five years), and linking it to a naval review or other event. This could garner much positive publicity for the SA Navy, as well as for the host ports, and for the country as a whole.

The SA Navy's four relatively new and sophisticated "Valour" class frigates, as well as its fairly large combat support ship, are ideally suited for flag-showing cruises over long distances; and hopefully, they will indeed be utilised in future, more than ever before, in South Africa's diplomatic actions. After all, the frigates have thus far visited several countries. Examples of such visits include SAS *Isandlwana's* visit to South American countries (November-December 2006) to take part in the ATLASUR VI exercises, as well as EXPONAVAL in Chile;⁴⁷ SAS *Amatola's* visit to the United Kingdom (June-August 2007) to take part in the strict Basic Operational Sea Training course;⁴⁸ and SAS *Spioenkop's* visit to the Far East (Singapore, People's Republic of China, Vietnam, Malaysia, India and Mauritius;

47 *Navy News* 26(3), 2006, pp. 26-33; *Daily News*, 4 January 2007, p. 6.

48 *Navy News* 27(5), 2007, pp. 20-32; *Volksblad*, 23 July 2007, p. 5.

September-November 2008).⁴⁹ And from 1987 until 2004, the combat support ship SAS *Drakensberg* was South Africa's most prominent grey diplomat, with (in the years 1987-2012) no fewer than at least 27 foreign deployments,⁵⁰ including an extensive flag-showing cruise to Europe, May-August 1994, to show the new flag of the new democracy in Portugal, the United Kingdom, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Spain;⁵¹ visits to the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan and India (February-April 1995);⁵² and visits to Brazil, Puerto Rico, the United States of America, Senegal and Ghana (June-August 1996).⁵³

The diplomatic role of the above-mentioned frigates and combat support ship can be backed up by flag-showing cruises by the SA Navy's hydrographic research ship, SAS *Protea* (which has undertaken many such cruises in the past, for example to Portugal in 1990⁵⁴ and Brazil in 2000⁵⁵); the few remaining "Warrior" class offshore patrol vessels (gun-boats; ex-strike craft), which in the course of many years have also been deployed to, for example, Taiwan (1990)⁵⁶ and South America (1993),⁵⁷ as well as to several African countries;⁵⁸ the remaining "River" class mine-hunters, which in the past have been deployed to African countries, for example to Zaïre (1990),⁵⁹ while even submarines can show the flag overseas – examples in this regard are the visit by SAS *Charlotte Maxeke*, accompanied by SAS *Drakensberg*, to Argentina and Uruguay in November 2010,⁶⁰ and – many years ago – the visit by the "Daphné" class submarine SAS *Maria van Riebeeck* to South America.⁶¹

For the SA Navy's ships and submarines to play a meaningful role in the field of diplomacy, sufficient funds must be made available for their proper maintenance;

49 *Navy News* 28(6), 2008, p. 20 and 28 [sic] (1), 2009, pp. 16-19; *Maritime South Africa*, May-June 2009, p. 53.

50 For the *Drakensberg*'s exceptional record, including as a grey diplomat, see the article by Wessels, referred to in footnote 25, *supra*.

51 *Salut* 1(2), June 1994, pp. 50-51 and 1(6), October 1994, p. 26; *Navy News* 13, June 1994, p. 18 and October 1994, pp. 12-13, 15-16; *Daily News*, 6 June 1994, p. 2.

52 *Navy News* 14, May 1995, pp. 12-14.

53 *Salut* 3(11), November 1996, pp. 58-59; *Navy News* 15, October 1996, pp. 13-18.

54 Line-book, SAS *Protea*; *Navy News* 9, July 1990, pp. 12, 15, 17.

55 Line-book, SAS *Protea*; *Navy News* 19(5), 2000, pp. 15-17.

56 *Paratus* 41(6), June 1990, p. 32 and 41(9), September 1990, p. 26; *The Natal Mercury*, 12 May 1990, p. 4 and 26 June 1990, p. 2. Two strike craft were accompanied by SAS *Drakensberg*.

57 Line-book, SAS *Magnus Malan/Makhanda*; *Paratus* 44(2), February 1993, p. 13 and 44(6), June 1993, p. 20. Three strike craft were accompanied by SAS *Drakensberg* and a submarine, SAS *Maria van Riebeeck*.

58 For example, Namibia was visited by two strike craft in 1997. *Navy News* 16(5), 1997, p. 7 and 16(6), 1997, p. 32.

59 *Paratus* 41(10), October 1990, pp. 8-9; *Navy News* 9, February-March 1991, pp. 12-13.

60 *South African Soldier* 18(1), January 2011, pp. 22-23; *Navy News* 29(5), 2010, pp. 18-21; *The Mercury*, 17 November 2010, p. 4.

61 See the sources and additional information referred to in footnote 57, *supra*.

while enough funds should also be allocated in order to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of properly trained officers and other sailors available to crew the ships. In addition, sufficient funds should be available for fuel and stores with a view to deploying SA Navy units on flag-showing cruises. The fact that the SA Navy was able to stage a very successful 75th anniversary international fleet review and related events in 1997, and was also able to deploy SAS *Drakensberg* to take part in Trafalgar200 in 2005, did much for the image and morale of the Navy. These two events were excellent public relations exercises, and made many South Africans very proud. The IFR in Sydney in 2013 was a missed opportunity for the SA Navy – and for South Africa. Hopefully the SA Navy will in future be able to exploit similar opportunities in the interest of the Navy, and of South Africa and all its citizens. Ideally, 20 years of democracy in South Africa (2014), or otherwise, 21 years of democracy (2015), should be commemorated with a fleet review. All people interested in naval history, and in particular the history of the SA Navy, are looking forward to the SA Navy's 100th anniversary in April 2022 – a centenary which will hopefully bring the world's navies together in South African waters once again, as in 1997.