

**Chief of Navy Address (as presented)**

**Keel laying of NUSHIP *Stalwart***

**Navantia Ferrol Dockyard, Spain**

**1220, Saturday 24 November 2018**

Good afternoon, Navantia Chief Operating Officer, Australian Ambassador, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

And, to the men and women of Navantia, it's my pleasure to be back here again today, on another beautiful day in Galicia [rainy weather]..and my absolute honour to play a very important part in the birth of NUSHIP *Stalwart*. To be part of the keel laying of this ship represents the important phase of consolidation of building what will be Australia's second Auxiliary Oiler for our Navy.

The first *Stalwart* was a S Class destroyer which was built for the Royal Navy in 1919, at the end of World War I, and was gifted to the Australian Navy in 1920. She served in the Australian Station for just over five years, was decommissioned in 1925, and was eventually scrapped in 1937.

The second *Stalwart* was a Destroyer Tender, which was built in Australia at Cockatoo Island in Sydney and she was commissioned in 1966, a pretty important year [VADM Noonan's birth year].

She went on to become Australia's flagship in 1982, and served extensively around Australia, the Southwest Pacific, and in Southeast Asia and took part in a number of very important humanitarian disaster relief operations during her time in commission.

She decommissioned from our Navy in 1990 and became a ferry, before she was scrapped in 2003.

*Stalwart II* was a very important ship for me personally; for she was the first Australian warship, in fact the first warship that I ever stood foot on, as a 14-year-old boy before I joined the Navy. She was a big ship, at 15,000 tonnes, huge engine room, 400 sailors, and I, was in awe of this great piece of Australian engineering, and it probably was the defining activity that saw me join the Navy.

I served briefly in *Stalwart II*, after I joined the Navy, when she was a training ship. She left an indelible mark on my memory, in terms of how important it is for us to have large capabilities in our Navy.

Yesterday we saw the launch of *Stalwart's* sister ship, *Supply*, and we will introduce both of these ships into service in our Navy in 2020.

They will provide an absolute essential combat support to our frigates, to our destroyers, to our combatants wherever they operate in the world. They will provide replenishment of fuel, of stores, of ammunition and ensure that those ships can operate anywhere in the world.

So it's a great honour for me to be here as the Chief of the Australian Navy with you, the men and women of Navantia and of this great dockyard, to take part in what will be the consolidation of HMAS *Stalwart III*. And before we know it, we'll all be back here in June next year for another launch of another great ship.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Thank you.

**END**