U.S., Australia Naval Forces Conduct Bilateral Training in the South China Sea



SOUTH CHINA SEA (Sept. 16, 2025) – Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Dewey (DDG 105), left, sails alongside Anzac-class frigate HMAS Ballarat (FFH 155), right, during a bilateral training with the Royal Australian Navy in the South China Sea, Sept. 16, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Oscar Diaz)

By Lt. Victor Murkowski, Destroyer Squadron 15

SOUTH CHINA SEA – The U.S. Navy and Royal Australian Navy (RAN) conducted bilateral training in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific through the South China Sea, Sept. 15-16.

Participating ships included the Arleigh Burke-class guided-

missile destroyer USS Dewey (DDG 105) and the RAN Anzac-class frigate HMAS Ballarat (FFH 155).

Over the two days, the ships engaged in a formation sailing exercise, maritime communications training, and simulated fires exercises alongside information sharing and a combined transit through the South China Sea.

“It was a fantastic opportunity to work alongside Ballarat and our Australian allies,” said Cmdr. Ivan Dobrev, commanding officer of Dewey. “Deepening our interoperability with our allies and partners here in the Indo-Pacific is the key to enhancing our collective deterrence against any adversary threatening peace and stability in the region.”

The U.S. Navy regularly trains alongside our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region as a demonstration of our shared commitment to international law and a free and open Indo-Pacific. Bilateral training such as this provides valuable opportunities to exercise and develop tactical interoperability across allied navies in the Indo-Pacific.

“This activity was a component of a planned routine deployment for Ballarat to the region,” said Cmdr. Dean Uren, commanding officer of Ballarat. “This activity is an important demonstration of the resolve that Australia has to supporting an open, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific, where international law is respected.” The Australian Defence Force routinely operates in the region and has done so for decades.

The Dewey is forward deployed and assigned to DESRON 15, the Navy’s largest DESRON and the U.S. 7th Fleet’s principal surface force.

U.S. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet and routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific

region.