

# Press release: Horse researcher jailed for multiple fraud offences

Dr Maria Magdalena Leitner, 56 of Bollington, Cheshire, was sentenced at Chester Crown Court on 28 November 2018 after she was convicted of three counts of fraud, as well as one count each for obtaining credit whilst bankrupt, failing to deliver assets to the Official Receiver and acting as a director whilst bankrupt.

The court heard that in 2005, Dr Leitner set up Equine Research & Information Centre Limited (ERIC) a specialist horse research company.

In 2010, Dr Leitner wanted to buy specialist camera equipment and under the guise of ERIC applied for funds through a leasing company so that she could buy the cameras from a company based in the United States, worth around \$250,000.

But Dr Leitner dishonestly secured £297,000 – more than the equipment was worth – as she told the leasing company she was buying the camera equipment not from the firm in the United States but from another company that she had falsely set-up. Dr Leitner did this to make the leasing company believe that this was a valid transaction for the larger amount.

And once she received the funds, instead of paying the full amount due to the camera supplier, Dr Leitner used the money to clear some of her debts, including mortgage payments.

Dr Leitner did pay back more than £128,000 to the leasing company but when she stopped making payments, the leasing company applied to have her made bankrupt in 2012.

The camera supplier still had not released the equipment from storage in the UK as it had not received full payment. However, despite being restricted from borrowing money as a bankrupt, Dr Leitner illegally came to a credit agreement with the camera supplier so they could deliver the specialist cameras.

Dr Leitner then failed to pay back the full loan to the leasing company and following their petition to wind up ERIC, the research company was closed down in July 2012.

The Insolvency Service was brought in to carry out investigations and throughout the enquiries, Dr Leitner was uncooperative.

For example, when it came to recovering the specialist camera equipment, she handed over a small number of the cameras to the Official Receiver, while claiming that the rest had gone missing. But behind the scenes, Dr Leitner had kept back the majority of the cameras and software for her own purposes.

The Insolvency Service also discovered that Dr Leitner submitted £43,412

worth of false VAT returns, while laundering the proceeds of one of these through an offshore account in Mauritius.

At sentence, HHJ Everitt said that Maria Leitner “set up a web of deceit” and “there was sophistication and a lot of planning ... over a sustained period of time”

Arwel Jones, Director of Legal Services for the Insolvency Service, said:

Dr Leitner may well have genuinely wanted to buy the camera equipment but this was unfortunately the start of her downfall. She told a series of lies to secure funds and once she received the money, Dr Leitner used it to pay off her debts. From there on in she continued to defraud various organisations and even when it got to the point of our investigations, Dr Leitner continued to act deceitfully and dishonestly.

Four-and-a-half years is a significant sentence and we hope this sends a strong message that we will robustly investigate and bring criminal prosecutions if appropriate where people carry out fraudulent activities.

She had been previously disqualified as a director for 11 years by Macclesfield County Court in 2014 in connection with ERIC.

Dr Maria Magdalena Leitner was born in November 1961. She was appointed director on 31 March 2005.

Equine Research & Information Centre Limited (CRO No. 05409900) was incorporated on 31 March 2005 and traded from Dingers Hollow Farm, Wildboarclough, Cheshire, SK11 0BE.

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

The Insolvency Service administers the insolvency regime, investigating all compulsory liquidations and individual insolvencies (bankruptcies) through the Official Receiver to establish why they became insolvent. It may also use powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK. In addition, the agency deals with disqualification of directors in corporate failures, assesses and pays statutory entitlement to redundancy payments when an employer cannot or will not pay employees, provides banking and investment services for bankruptcy and liquidation estate funds and advises ministers and other government departments on insolvency law and practice.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7637 6498

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

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# Speech: IISS Global Partnerships event 2018

Admiral Sir Philip Jones, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, spoke alongside the Head of the Royal Australian Navy, Vice Admiral Mike Noonan at the International Institute of Strategic Studies on 28 Nov 18.

## **Introduction**

Good morning everyone, and Nick [Childs, IISS], thank you very much for the introduction, for the invitation for Mike [Noonan, RAN] and I to be here with you all this morning, and to everyone here at IISS for facilitating this event.

And a special thanks to Mike. He looks as fresh as a daisy this morning, but he's on a bit of a world tour, taking in London having also taken in some substantial visits in Europe to check on future RAN capability, I'm sure you'll hear more about that later, and then after a trip to Scotland tomorrow to have a look at what a Type 26 looks like, and we'll see the significance of that of course, we're then travelling together to Chile on Thursday night to help them commemorate the 200th Anniversary of their navy. So you've covered a lot of ground as Chief of Navy but for very good reason and it's really good to have you with us, Mike, today.

What I wanted to do is to set the scene, before we hear from the Theatre expert, Mike, on the Asia Pacific Region, about how the Royal Navy sees that region and the way we've shifted some of our posture to reflect that in the last year or so.

## **RN Pacific Presence**

Because it won't have escaped the attention of most of you who are tracking what the Royal Navy does and where it goes that this year has seen a very public return to that region.

The deployments of the frigate HMS Sutherland initially, which also went to Australia, the LPD HMS Albion and her embarked Royal Marines, now followed by the frigate HMS Argyll which is in the region as we speak, and then HMS Montrose, who I'll be on board in Chile in a couple of days' time, is then crossing the Pacific to New Zealand and Australia on her way through the region too; so all of that has drawn no small amount of interest and commentary, both in the region and back here in the UK.

And I hope that comes as no surprise because those deployments have had in the region, I am told, a really tangible effect. Whether on be operations: helping to enforce UN Security Council Resolutions against the DPRK, or the

significant programmes of defence engagement they have been conducting right across the region – Indonesia, Vietnam, the Republic of Korea, Brunei, Japan and of course Australia to name but a few.

But why now? Why has that change of focus to the region come now?

## **Importance of the Pacific**

Those of you who are aficionados of IISS events may have been at their other site in June when, the US CNO, Adm John Richardson, and I spoke at a similar event about the challenges we share together in the maritime domain, challenges that have grown considerably into threats, and threats have both intensified and diversified.

And whilst it's perhaps unsurprising that our combined UK/US geographical focus is principally in the Atlantic area, we made the point that the same challenge to freedom and security on the high seas is to be found in many other places in the world, perhaps most notably over the last year or so in the Indo-Pacific region.

And that's a region we here in the UK simply can't afford to ignore.

As I said at my Sea Power conference at RUSI a few weeks before that IISS event I did with CNO, we were feeding off the UK Defence Concepts and Doctrine Centre's analysis of [Global Strategic Trends](#) which clearly identifies the economic shift towards the Indo-Pacific region; that's already on the way and will only intensify in the years to come

When you combine this with the well established importance and growth of global maritime trade, and the UK's ambitions for an enhanced global trade network once we depart from the European Union, it becomes very easy to see why the Indo-Pacific region will be of such strategic importance to this island nation in the years to come – physically separated from that region by several thousand miles though we may be.

But this renewed ambition for trade links in the Indo-Pacific, where some of the largest and fastest growing economies reside, does rely on influence in the region; you have to earn your place there.

And that's where the key attributes of a navy can come into play, the ability, as one of my predecessors, Adm Sir Mark Stanhope, once put it, to do 'engagement without embroilment', and that can come into play in support of cross-government objectives.

But to paraphrase our Secretary of State for Defence: it's not all about soft power, it's also about being able to back it up with credible, hard power if required. And the way we can proactively contribute to regional maritime security is clearly one component of that.

# China

In any assessment of the Indo-Pacific region, the growing role and influence of China will play a major part. China is the most populous country in the world, it's home to the largest supply of natural resources, it boasts the second largest world economy. So it is perhaps only natural that given their place in world they should look to exert their influence as a world power.

And we're seeing this ambition play out very clearly in the maritime domain as the PLA(Navy) evolves from a coastal force to a regional force, and now very clearly a global force; they had 5 different task groups on deployment around the world last year.

It's an ambition backed up by a programme of Naval expansion that massively exceeds any other country in the world, including the United States. If you look at the scale of their shipbuilding programme purely in terms of tonnage, it broadly equates to launching the equivalent of the whole Royal Navy or French Navy, every year, and they'll be able to do that for the next 10 years.

Combine this with their equally rapid development of tactics and doctrine and it is very clear that they now possess a potent Naval force, equipped and ready to support China's national agenda, and this will be the case more and more in the years to come as they become bigger and more and more capable.

Now there are probably differing, even conflicting views as to how this growth in Chinese military capability is to be perceived, but these perceptions are surely influenced in no small part by their recent actions like the militarisation of artificial features in the South China Sea, and I suspect not influenced for the better.

## UK/China relationship

At the national political level, Britain is very clear eyed in its relationship with China, it's a good relationship and one we hope will continue to prosper for all sorts of reasons. And at a Head of Navy level, I'm pleased to say my relationship with Admiral Shen Jinlong, Commander of the PLA(N) is a good one. I visited him in China this year and we had a further meeting at the International Sea Power Symposium in Newport, Rhode Island a couple of months ago.

Now unquestionably there were issues on which we do not see eye to eye, but the open, honest and frank discussion we have over a myriad of issues which affect all of us in the maritime domain are open and genuinely valuable, and I thank him for it.

But at the same time, to again paraphrase my Defence Secretary, we will not shy away from telling them when we feel that they do not respect the commonly accepted rules and norms of international behaviour, the laws and systems from which we all benefit and therefore have a duty to protect.

Specifically, in the Maritime domain, we are committed to ensure that the

global commons remain secure and freely available for all mariners who are going about their lawful purpose, anywhere in the world, and we will continue to work to ensure that the laws and conventions that exist to protect those rights are followed.

## **Return to Pacific**

So it's clear that the Pacific is somewhere the Royal Navy needs to be, in defence of our national interests and to promote our national prosperity, but also to exert our influence in the region as we seek to uphold the rules that have underwritten our collective security since the middle of the last century.

But all of this comes after something of a fallow period in the Royal Navy's record of operations in this region, and I'm very keenly aware of that. Following the decision in the 1960s to withdraw naval forces from the region, and the demise of the Far East Fleet in 1971, our last ship, HMS Mermaid, left the Sembawang Basin in Singapore in September 1975.

Since then we have seen a steady decline in the Royal Navy's presence in the region, exacerbated further by the withdrawal from Hong Kong in 1997, to the extent that when Sutherland arrived back in the region earlier this year, that was the first Royal Naval presence in the region for 5 years.

The stark contrast of this year's near constant presence shows that we've now passed that nadir of presence and engagement, and I think we can now look forward to far closer engagement with our key regional partners there, whether it be in the guise of FPDA activity or bi-lateral and tri-lateral relationships such as our burgeoning relationship we have with Japan, and after Chile I fly on to Japan with Admiral Richardson to have another one of our close tri-lateral meetings with Admiral Murakawa, the head of the Japanese Defence Force.

## **RN/RAN**

But whilst we may have been removed from the Pacific for a while, we have not lost our links with Pacific-based powers, especially the Royal Australian Navy. Throughout, our 2 navies have continued to enjoy a significant programme of personnel exchanges, building those all important personal relationships, shared experiences and mutual understanding.

And at the tactical and operational level, our collective efforts in the Middle East in particular have kept our 2 navies closely aligned.

As 2 of the 4 central members around which the 33 nation Combined Maritime Forces coalition has been built over the last 15 years or so, our ships have worked side by side and we have each taken a large share of Task Force Commander responsibilities. And if you've seen in the press in the last couple of days, we've also started to muscle in on the Royal Australian Navy's drug busts as well.

In the course of these commitments the Royal Navy and Royal Australian Navy

have shared in a plethora of operational tasking – and no small amount of operational success – be it counter piracy and counter narcotics focussed maritime security tasking right the way through to offensive military action.

Going back to 2003, on the gun line off the Al Faw peninsula during 3 Cdo Bde RM's assault, that gunline was HMS Marlborough, HMS Richmond, HMS Chatham and HMAS Anzac.

And that Combined approach was far from unprecedented either; 12 years earlier during the 1991 Gulf War, HMS Gloucester and HMS Cardiff had operated in the high end of the Gulf establishing air defence supremacy alongside their Australian counterparts HMAS Brisbane and HMAS Sydney.

All of that is evidence of how closely our 2 navies have, and can, integrate with each other.

## **Interoperability**

I hope we can take it as an established fact that interoperability lies at the heart of successful international partnerships. And that for effective interoperability, how we operate and why we operate is just as important as where we operate and when we operate. So it's about far more than simply our ability for our comms fits to speak to each other – important though that may be.

In this sense, the Royal Navy and Royal Australian Navy are always going to be natural partners. We have those ties that bind our 2 countries together, our common history including being part of the Commonwealth, and we're always going to share near identical outlooks and values, and I would contend that this is especially true in the relationship between our 2 navies. But now we have a generational opportunity to further enhance this Naval partnership.

The decision by Australia to buy and operate Type 26 frigates means that our 2 navies will soon be operating common Anti-Submarine Warfare platforms, the Australian Hunter class working side by side with our near identical Royal Navy City Class. And if you add to that our common outlook on how we generate these common platforms, how we bring that capability and its characteristics into service, it's but a short leap to see that we can find a way to operate them more closely together.

And therein lies the opportunity to set the gold standard for interoperability – in the Asia-Pacific region, in Combined Maritime Forces and more widely amongst the 'Five Eyes' community.

And if the Type 26 has a coalescing effect for Combined RN/RAN operations, it will surely enhance our Anti-Submarine Warfare strategic partnership too, and Admiral Mike and I have signed an agreement today to push that between our two navies.

There's no small amount of truth in the old adage that '2 heads are better than 1'. So the ability to tap into all of the skills, knowledge and experience that our navies both share, to address the future challenges in

the underwater battlespace that we know we face, I think that makes a really powerful partnership.

## **US and Regional Leadership**

Potent though this combined force may be, I think it would be remiss of me not to reflect on the predominant Naval power in the Pacific, which of course remains the US Navy, a navy with whom both the Royal Navy and Royal Australian Navy also work incredibly closely.

Given the number of maritime facing nations in the Indo-Pacific region, some of which may be small but all of which are rightly proud and keen to play their part, leadership opportunities abound.

And working alongside the USN, there's no doubt that there's something the Royal Australian Navy can provide in leadership through the region, which is significant; providing the lead for other navies to follow and providing a unifying role within the region.

And I think this is something our 2 navies very much have in common.

Just as the Royal Australian Navy provides that leading role within the Pacific, I would like to think the same can be said for the Royal Navy's corresponding leadership role in the Atlantic and the adjoining seas, bringing together, in our case, principally European navies to work together alongside the US, in our case most often under the framework of NATO.

So the leadership role we play in our respective oceans is a real point of connection for us, and I hope this is something that will allow the Royal Navy to quickly begin to deliver effect alongside the RAN in the Pacific.

I hope that this work, the unifying effect that we can bring with the Royal Australian Navy, can achieve within the region the leadership opportunity that I think is there, and by bringing to bear our mutual close relationship with the US Navy and a host of other navies in the region, I think this can have a powerful effect.

## **Conclusion**

A few weeks ago we marked the centenary of the armistice that brought to an end the First World War. The Royal Australian Navy might only have been formed 3 years before the outbreak of that war, but from the very outset our 2 navies were entirely compatible.

The Royal Australian Navy had almost all its major units operating as part of the Royal Navy's Grand Fleet in the North Sea for most of the Great War, and the Royal Naval Division landed directly alongside the Anzacs at Gallipoli. In the Second World War, 5 Australian destroyers distinguished themselves repeatedly as part of Admiral Cunningham's Mediterranean fleet and over 1,000 Australians were serving in the Royal Navy on D Day.

Through the subsequent campaigns in Korea and Malaya, and right up to the



present with those 2 recent conflicts in the Arabian Gulf, our 2 navies have been at each other's side.

It's a partnership steeped in history. But it's also modern, forward looking, and it's hugely valued, certainly on my side, and I look forward to seeing it grow in the future.

So I'm hugely grateful to Mike for being here today and for all your team is doing to lean so heavily in to the optimisation of this relationship. Because as we re-assert our presence in your region I have no doubt our cooperation with you will continue to feature very heavily.

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## **Press release: UKAEA to design national thermal hydraulic facility**

£40 million advanced nuclear reactor technology centre is planned for Menai Science Park in Anglesey

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## **Press release: UKAEA to design national thermal hydraulic facility**

Press Release, Wednesday 28 November 2018

The UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) has been appointed by the UK and Welsh Governments to develop the outline design of a proposed £40 million national thermal hydraulic research and testing facility, to be built in north Wales.

The facility was announced in the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy's 'Nuclear Sector Deal' and aims to boost the UK's nuclear new build programme and development of Small Modular Reactors and Advanced Modular Reactors.

The proposed centre will focus on thermal hydraulics – the movement of heat and fluids in the reactor system during the conversion of nuclear energy into electricity. Detailed understanding of these processes is vital in designing safe and efficient future power stations, such as those planned for Wylfa Newydd in Anglesey and Hinkley Point C in Somerset, and in ensuring their safe operation throughout the several decades they are expected to generate electricity.

The facility could also have wider uses in non-nuclear thermal hydraulic testing.

Outline planning permission has been secured at Menai Science Park, Anglesey. The facility itself is expected to create around 30 permanent jobs, with further benefits to the local economy. The testing hardware will be accompanied by a research centre for up to 50 visiting scientists to carry out data analysis, computer modelling and simulation work. Intended to be the most modern of its kind in the world, it is seen as integral to the development of advanced nuclear technologies.

UKAEA's role will be to work with UK companies to identify how their requirements can be met by the thermal hydraulics facility. This information will then be used to produce a design with a detailed costing and operational model, which will enable the UK and Welsh Governments to develop business cases for the funding and decide during 2019 how best to proceed with construction, commissioning and eventual operation.

Colin Walters, Project Director at UKAEA, said:

UKAEA is already working with Government and industry partners on upgrading the UK's nuclear skills and facilities to compete with the best in the world. This key facility in north Wales will be another part of the UK's nuclear renaissance and we are glad to have been chosen to lead it. We are now consulting with potential users of the centre so we can incorporate their requirements in the outline design.

Companies interested in participating in the design consultation should contact Amanda Brummitt, Project Manager at UKAEA: [amanda.brummitt@ukaea.uk](mailto:amanda.brummitt@ukaea.uk)

Ends

For more information please contact Nick Holloway, UKAEA Media Manager – [nick.holloway@ukaea.uk](mailto:nick.holloway@ukaea.uk) / 01235 466232.

Notes to Editors

UK Atomic Energy Authority

The UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) researches fusion energy and related technologies, with the aim of positioning the UK as a leader in sustainable nuclear energy. It oversees Britain's fusion programme, headed by the MAST Upgrade (Mega Amp Spherical Tokamak) experiment. It also hosts the world's largest fusion research facility, JET (Joint European Torus), which it operates for European scientists under a contract with the European Commission. Based at Culham Science Centre near Oxford, UKAEA is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.

More information: [www.gov.uk/ukaea](http://www.gov.uk/ukaea). Twitter: @fusionenergy

## Nuclear Sector Deal

The Nuclear Sector Deal, published by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy in June 2018, builds on the Government's historical partnership with the UK nuclear sector.

It will ensure that the UK's nuclear sector remains cost competitive with other forms of low-carbon technologies to support the Government's Clean Growth Strategy and Grand Challenge. Through adopting new construction techniques and innovative approaches to manufacturing, the deal will reduce the costs of building new reactors in a way that builds domestic supply chain capability and skills.

More information about the [Nuclear Sector Deal](#)

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## **News story: Adobe invest £63.5 million in booming UK creative sector**

Software giant Adobe has today (29 November) announced a substantial investment into the UK with a commitment to grow its workforce by over 20 per cent.