When Mal Wise first went to sea 27 years ago he was lucky to have a video player for off-duty entertainment.

Now he commands one of the nation’s most formidable front-line warfare ships outfitted with world-first technology designed here in Australia.

HMAS Perth, demunitioned in Twofold Bay at the navy or multipurpose wharf on Tuesday before heading to Melbourne for Royal Australian Navy (RAN) centenary celebrations.

It was an unusual event. HMAS Perth is based on the west coast of Australia at Garden Island West, HMAS Stirling, south of Fremantle and is an irregular visitor to these waters.

Perth is the newest of eight ANZAC class frigates hitting the water in 2006 and recently undergoing significant upgrades through the ANZAC Ship Integrated Material Support Program.

The result is a ship that is the envy of the world.

Her CEA Technology’s Active Phased Array Radar gives constant 360 degree range and brilliant target illumination, her advanced weapon systems are managed by SAAB’s newest combat management system and her BAE Systems-designed operations room gives the command team unprecedented awareness of its environment and control over weapons.

Commander Andy Nelson said Perth has just completed the 17-day operation Talisman Sabre in the Pacific, also undergoing vigorous testing of the new gear in Hawaii.

He said Operation Talisman Sabre was a huge combined exercise with the United States involving 14,000 defence personnel and covering waters from Rockhampton to the west coast of the United States.

“The best part of the job is being with a ship like this, it’s brand new, innovative and it’s kicking all the goals right now,” he said.

“We’ve effectively proved the new radar; from here on in we get to start exercising it and see how far we can take it.”

Captain (CAPT) Mal Wise agreed.

“We’re very pleased with the results. Obviously the radar technology is brand new and a world leader and it’s Australian!” he beamed.

CAPT Wise was looking forward to celebrating the RANs centenary in Melbourne this week.

“This ship really represents the next generation in world radar technology,” he said.

“The balance of 100 years of history and looking into the future is a nice convergence of events.”