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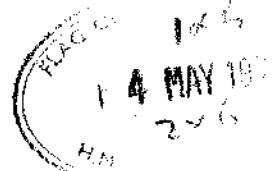
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HMAS OXLEY
C/- G.P.O.,
SYDNEY.

01 May 1977

The Flag Officer Commanding
HM Australian Fleet

For Information:

The Commander
First Australian Submarine Squadron.



HMAS OXLEY - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS -
APRIL 1977

Sir,

1. I have the honour to report of proceedings of Her Majesty's Australian Ship OXLEY, under my command, for the month of April 1977. All times KILO (-10)
2. This month marked the completion of the fourth year of the second commission for HMAS OXLEY. The event was recorded by the successful completion of a vacuum test and safety certificate inspection carried out on 1st April by the Commander, First Australian Submarine Squadron. This inspection, following close on the heels of the Annual Inspection, also carried out by The Commander, First Australian Submarine Squadron on your behalf on the previous day, has given OXLEY a satisfactory material bill of health and extended the safe to dive date from 2nd April 1977 to 2 October 1977, the scheduled Refit date. It is a matter of considerable pride that this extension has been possible, reflecting the high standards of maintenance and preservation that have been achieved over a long period.
3. Against this background of material achievement, April has seen the issuing of a number of postings for OXLEY's personnel without relief, associated with the manning up of HMAS OTAMA in the United Kingdom. It has already been necessary to employ one POUCSM as an LSUC SM and one LSUC SM as an ABUC SM to maintain a one in three watch bill. From the 1st May, this position will have deteriorated further. The submarine squadron manpower problems have been well represented to you Sir, However, being the submarine longest in commission, OXLEY is the unit most likely to feel any short falls having already taken all available personnel from HMAS PLATYPUS. It is for this reason that I consider it necessary to report to you, Sir, that a reduction in the operational capability of the ship appears imminent due to manpower shortages.
4. OXLEY sailed for her routine squadron week and weapon training period on the 4th April. The highlight of this period was an attack carried out on HMAS MELBOURNE off Sydney as she returned from overseas, with three practice MK8 torpedoes being fired. Sea Riding personnel from the Squadron were embarked after this attack in WATSONS BAY to observe and comment on safety drills and evolutions and further weapon firings against TRV 802. OXLEY cut short her scheduled squadron week by some twelve hours to rectify a number of URDEF's that had arisen from the PLATYPUS at 0900 on Wednesday 6th April.

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5. At 2300 that night, OXLEY dived alongside PLATYPUS to carry out a scheduled noise ranging in accordance with RANTAU letter S21.8.18 dated 6th April 1977, surfacing at 0520 Thursday 7th. The remainder of Thursday was spent alongside embarking fuel using the newly manufactured "dough nut" named the "JAMES S McCOY". This acquisition enables ballast water from submarine fuel tanks to be discharged into the harbour without any risk of pollution and represents a considerable saving to the Navy as this water previously had to be disposed of by road tanker. Other activities included the embarkation of a Mk23 practice torpedo for use in a trial against a Type 182 noise maker as fitted in some surface ships, and the fitting of some RAWFL trials equipment associated with sonar type 2007 trials. With the submarine alongside, I took my command team to HMAS WATSON for a valuable day in the Submarine Command Team Trainer.
6. The Easter long week-end was spent alongside.
7. The week 12 - 16 April was spent providing ASW services for HMA ships SWAN and STUART, aircraft from NAS NOWRA and P3B Aircraft from No. 11 Squadron RAAF. Submarine sonar type 2007 trials were also carried out. After an apparently successful Mk23 torpedo firing against HMAS SWAN (Type 182 noise maker) on Thursday, one sailor was landed by helicopter from NAS NOWRA in response to a welfare request. Shortly after the transfer, a seal in the attack sonar type 187 failed and OXLEY was forced to surface, withdraw from the EAXP and proceed to PLATYPUS for repairs berthing at 14 2200. These were completed by 1530 on Friday 15th and OXLEY sailed to resume her Fleet services. On completion, OXLEY returned to PLATYPUS berthing at 160805.
8. During this unscheduled period in harbour your Change of Command ceremony for Fleet Commander took place on HMAS SUPPLY and I was most fortunate in being able to attend.
9. OXLEY sailed at 0900 Monday for Fleet Support with HMA Ships SWAN and STUART and aircraft from NAS NOWRA. On Tuesday 19th during a scheduled IKARA firing by HMAS SWAN, OXLEY was hit, port side on the after casing. This incident was reported in my DDY/DAV 190110ZAPR77. Subsequently permission was given by the Department of Defence, (Navy Office) Canberra, for OXLEY to continue with her scheduled exercises. This involved a second IKARA firing, this time by HMAS STUART which took place without incident. On completion, OXLEY continued on board training before commencing a submerged short transit to the BASS STRAIT and subsequent surfaced passage to PORTLAND VICTORIA where she berthed at No. 1 K.S. Anderson Wharf at 1000 Saturday 23rd April to participate in the 1977 ANZAC Day ceremonies.
10. An Official call was exchanged with Senior Councillor J. C. COONEY, representing the Major who was absent on duty. My officers and I hosted a Cocktail Party for local dignitaries on the evening of arrival.
11. A pleasant and hospitable week-end was enjoyed by the ship's company, with some two thousand local and district people managing to look through the submarine. The ship was well represented at the Dawn Service and Anzac Day March. I led a forty two man squad in the van of the parade and gave the official address at the cenotaph. The ceremony was made **RESTRICTED** a particularly colourful and moving floral display.

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12. At 260630 OXLEY shifted berth to No. 6 RULK Wharf to make way for a commercial booking and sailed at 261000 in accordance with her SUBNOTE. Immediately prior to sailing, a signal was received from MARINE OPS CANBERRA reporting an unknown vessel in distress in the vicinity of the BASS STRAIT oil rigs. This was later assessed by MARINE OPS as a hoax.

13. During the passage to the JERVIS BAY exercise areas, a quarterly battery routine was carried out prior to diving at 281940 for exercises with HMAS STUART. At 290500 OXLEY surfaced and proceeded to Sydney, berthing at HMAS PLATYPUS at 290900 and remaining alongside for the remainder of the month.

14. The material condition of the submarine is now satisfactory after a disturbingly high number of URDEF's during the first week of the running period URDEF's outstanding at 30 April were:-

1/77 Wiping and Deperming
124/77 Flooding Alarm
138/77 EM Log

Health of the ship's company is good and it is pleasing to report that morale is high despite the situation reported in paragraph 3 above.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant.

Alan J. Gange

pk (R. R. H. FAYLE)
Lieutenant Commander RAN
Commanding Officer.

AOD.

Enclosures: Annex A: Steamine Annex
Annex B: Exercise Annex

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ANNEX A to HMAS OXLEY
Report of Proceedings
dated 01 May 1977

STEAMING FIGURES

APRIL

Surfaced Distance 1402.01
Hours 146.59
Dived Distance 813.02
Hours 168.19

SINCE REFIT

Surfaced Distance 51098.44
Hours 5555.19
Dived Distance 31490.82
Hours 5839.26

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ANNEX B to HMAS OXLEY
Report of Proceeding
dated 01 May 1977.

EXERCISE ANNEX

APRIL

- 04 - 06 - Squadron week, Safety drills and Torpedo Firing Exercises.
- 12 - 16 - Sonar Type 2007 Trials
Casex Serials on basic tracking with HMA Ships SWAN and STUART and Aircraft from NAS NOWRA.
Torpedo Firing Mk23 against Sonar Type 182 noisemaker.
- 19 - 20 - Casex Serials with HMA Ships SWAN and STUART
Ikara Firing.
- 28 - 29 - Prowlex serials with HMAS STUART.

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