

AWM78

**Reports of Proceedings, HMA Ships and
Establishments**

AWM78 Class 198 - HMAS LAE [LST 3035]

File number: AWM78 198/4

Title: AWM78 198/4 - January-December
1973



RCDIG1073291

[1]

[198/4]

HMAS
LAE

R of P's

1973-

Declassification Authority—Defence Records

This record has been reviewed and has been declassified by the Department of Defence

(Navy) with effect from: 1 Nov 1990

Authority Dig (N) Admin 18-13.

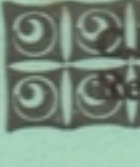
Reviewer: LCDR R. L. Smith (RANEM)

Signature: *R. L. Smith* Date: 1 Nov 90

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
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14



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FILE 18/6/4215

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

HMAS LAE

Report of Proceedings JAN 73

~~AS(NS) 19/6~~

~~D of O 20/6~~

~~DCNS 21/6~~

~~CNS 22/6~~

~~CNF 23/6~~

~~CMTS 24/6~~

~~CNST 29/6~~

~~SECRETARY 3/7~~

~~C of S 3/7~~

~~DFR 3/7~~

~~AS(NS) (NS55) ca 6/1/73~~

NOTES:

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19/6/73



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PAPUA NEW GUINEA DEFENCE FORCE



NAVY—CANBERRA
18 6 4215

Headquarters
Papua New Guinea Defence Force
Murray Barracks Free Bag
BOROKO PNG

Quote in Reply

766/D1/7

8 Jun 73

The Chairman
Chiefs of Staff Committee (1)

→ The Secretary
Department of the Navy (4)

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding
HM Australian Fleet (2)

The Commander
Australian Mine Warfare and Patrol Forces (1)

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
HMAS LAE - JANUARY 1973

1. Forwarded.
2. A recent review of PNGPABRON ROPs has revealed that this Report has not been forwarded. Late submission is regretted, the report relates to the period of formation of the PNG Defence Force and delays were caused by the change in organization and administrative procedures.
3. Distribution is in accordance with procedure existing after the formation of the PNG Defence Force.
4. In regard to paragraphs 12-14 of the Report the 40/60 firing mechanism problem was caused by a combination of:
 - a. defective firing assembly valve;
 - b. a sticking fire control cable; and
 - c. firing assembly adjustment;

both defective units were replaced by Base Staff and the firing mechanism was adjusted and tested.
5. In regard to paragraphs 44 and 45 the attention of the Commanding Officer was drawn to the 100 ft Patrol Boat Marine Engineering Orders, Article 0517, in regard to engaging the main engine ZF gear box clutches. There is a possibility that the damage was caused by the clutch on the starboard gearbox not being fully disengaged.

~~RESTRICTED~~

J. W. Norrie

(J.W. NORRIE)
Brigadier
Commander

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HMAS LAE
at PORT MORESBY

5 FEB 1973

The Commanding Officer
HMAS TARANGAU

HMAS LAE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
JANUARY 1973

Sir,

1. I have the honour to report the proceedings of the HMA Ship under my command for the month of January 1973. All times are zone K(-10).
2. On New Years day I was in the process of taking command of LAE in LOMBRUM.
3. The following forenoon the port propellor, which was removed for repair after the log strike in December, was replaced. LAE sailed that afternoon at 1500 to afford me a ship handling familiarisation. This was done in Seadler Harbour returning alongside at 1555.
4. The same afternoon Tuesday 2nd January shortly after 1600 having officially met the ship's company I assumed command of LAE.
5. At 1300 on Wednesday 3rd January I called on the Commanding Officer HMAS TARANGAU, Commander P.D. McKay RAN, and informed him I had assumed command.
6. For the remainder of the week LAE carried out self maintenance and I took the opportunity to get to know the ship and settle in.
7. The PNG Patrol Boat Squadron commenced a fortnight's shakedown/workup on Monday 8th January which proved to be both busy and rewarding. The program was discussed at a Commanding Officers meeting prior to sailing Monday morning.
8. LAE sailed in company with AITAPE and SAMARAI at 0900. On clearing Seadler Harbour LAE was detached to Rhumboyto Island with instructions to embark one PNG sailor for passage to LOMBRUM. During the two hour passage the Watchbill was proved, Action, Emergency and Leaving ship station exercised and a number of damage control evolutions carried out.
9. The ship's boat was lowered and despatched inshore at Rhumboyto Island shortly after mid-day; LAE proceeding seaward to carry out small arms firings. At approximately 1245 the boat was recovered with passenger and at 1300 the annual full power trial commenced.
10. Full power was attained at 1315 and maintained until 1515. I was pleasantly surprised how well LAE performed at full power in the swell which, although six to eight feet in height, was of sufficient wave length not to cause pounding.
11. On completion of the full power trial LAE rejoined AITAPE and SAMARAI in Seadler Harbour proceeding back to Lombrum in company, securing alongside at 1600.

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12. Tuesday 9th January LAE again sailed in company, this time with AITAPE, SAMARAI and LADAVA at 0830. On clearing Seeadler Harbour an hour of simple OOW manoeuvres were conducted while on route to the gunnery practise area. At 1000 the squadron commenced an AA tracking and firing exercise for the 40/60 armament. A defective firing mechanism prevented LAE from firing although tracking was possible. At 1115, as a result, LAE was detached for independent exercises.

13. As on Monday LAE carried out a variety of drills and exercises including 50 calibre Browning and L1A1/ALR firings. At 1500 LAE proceeded back to Seeadler Harbour independently to carry out a landing party exercise, anchoring off Davies Light. Heavy rain made it impractical to send the party ashore, so the exercise was concluded when the party had been kitted out and briefed. LAE weighed and proceeded alongside at 1700.

14. Maintainers from base staff worked on LAE's 40/60 early the following morning, sailing being delayed only 5 minutes. LAE sailed at 0835 joining AITAPE, SAMARAI and LADAVA for OOW manoeuvres by 0850. An AA tracking and firing serial followed. Although the 40/60 mount functioned well enough to complete the serial, the firing mechanism was still not satisfactory. Further work on the mount since including the replacement of the mechanism in question has rectified the problem.

15. On completion of the AATFX the squadron proceeded to a formation anchorage off Hauwei Island in Seeadler Harbour. Whilst at anchor boarding parties were exercised. The squadron weighed at 1530 and proceeded to Lombrum in company, LAE securing alongside at 1615.

16. Thursday 11th January the squadron again sailed in company; having cleared Seeadler Harbour LAE and SAMARAI were detached to carry out heaving line transfers and a Towing exercise. All proceeded very smoothly. The good standard of seaman practise shown by the PNG sailors was a very pleasing feature of these evolutions.

17. At 1200 following the independent evolutions, LAE and SAMARAI rejoined AITAPE and LADAVA for OOW manoeuvres, the squadron returning to Lombrum on completion. LAE secured alongside at 1430.

18. During the forenoon of Friday 12th January, fuelling storing and ammunitioning took place while the other Patrol Boat Commanding Officer and myself attended a briefing for the remainder of the workup which was to be in the form of SQUADEX 1/73. The briefing was chaired by Commander W.S.G. Bateman RAN, of COMPNGNAV Staff, who was the senior observer for the exercise. The briefing included up to date information on the emergence of the new PNG Defence Force.

19. The team of observers boarded the squadron Friday afternoon what could best be described as a "Mini Training Battle Problem". The squadron sailed in company at 1300, LAE being OCE for the blind pilotage departure. A series of evolutions followed including damage control, proving the Station and Quarter Bill and OOW manoeuvres. The aim was to enable the observers to assess the standard of proficiency prior to the exercise proper. To this end the afternoon achieved its purpose.

20. LAE secured alongside at Lombrum, outboard of AITAPE, at 1620 the squadron remaining alongside over the weekend of 13th - 14th January.

21. On Monday 15th January the squadron sailed for SQUADEX 1/73, each boat embarking one observer. During the exercise the observers transferred between boats as directed by the senior observer.

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22. Internal drills were exercised between 1000 and 1100 followed by OOW manoeuvres from 1330 to 1530. LAE and SAMARAI were detached at 1600 to carry out a shadowing exercise, later in the evening, to be followed by night steam in company. The period of time (2 hours) allowed for the Shadowex, and the speed of advance required did not permit anything constructive to be gained from the exercise.
23. LAE and SAMARAI's night steam in company culminated in a highly successful Patrollex in the vicinity of Dampier Strait from 0300 to 0600 Tuesday 16th. AITAPE and LADAVA defended the Strait while SAMARAI and LAE attempted the breakthrough.
24. On completion of the Patrollex LAE and SAMARAI rejoined AITAPE and LADAVA for passage of the Nesup Channel. Transfer of observers between boats, took place shortly after. Then followed a series of workup exercises, which continued for the rest of the day. They included OOW manoeuvres, station changing and damage control exercises, the day concluding with a night steam in company.
25. A similar series of exercises took place the following forenoon 17th January, Hornbill Channel being transited at 1130. The squadron then headed for China Strait and Samarai Island berthing, at the latter shortly after 1330. Fuelling and transfer of observers took place at Samarai. No water was available which necessitated program changes to allow boats to go to Alotau for water.
26. LAE sailed in company with AITAPE and SAMARAI from Samarai Island at 1720 all three proceeding direct to Pitt Bay where a formation anchorage took place shortly after 2000.
27. The peace and serenity of Pitt Bay was short lived, at 2130 a SQUADEX signal was received ordering the squadron to sail to investigate a reported fishing boat, simulated by LADAVA. I was particularly impressed with the crew's reaction - it was only a matter of minutes before LAE was ready for sea.
28. The search which followed in the Solomon Sea was a worthwhile if not very successful exercise. LAE was detached shortly before 2300 to carry out an independent search to the north. Two surface contacts were investigated during the night, neither of which turned out to be LADAVA. LAE rejoined the other boats, as instructed, off the Kegawam Islands by 0900 Thursday 18th January, none of the boats having intercepted LADAVA.
29. The rejoin having been completed OOW manoeuvres and drills took place, followed by transfer of observers. A Boarding Party exercise, followed the luncheon break. SAMARAI boarded LAE and vice versa. On completion the squadron made passage to Wanatonoli Bay, Sariba Island anchoring 1600. LAE remained at anchor overnight.
30. At 0500, the following morning 19th January, LAE weighed and proceeded in company with AITAPE to Alotau berthing there at 0730. The District Commissioner resident at Alotau, Mr A.K. Jackson met the boats and took the squadron CO and myself on a short tour of Alotau. Watering was completed by 0920; half an hour later LAE in company with AITAPE sailed for Samarai Island where refuelling was to take place.
31. Shortly after clearing Alotau overheating of the starboard main engine necessitated its being shut down while the cause investigated. LAE was detached and instructed to proceed to Samarai in her own time. The problem turned out to be an air lock in the cooling water system. HMAS SAMARAI, proceeding to Alotau, came alongside and technical advice sought from the engineering staff observer. LAE was not delayed long and proceeded without further trouble to Samarai Island berthing outboard of AITAPE at 1210.

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32. Whilst alongside further examination of the low sea suction valve revealed that the seating had come away from the spindle, the circlip had corroded and broken, the valve thus closing. URDEF 4/73 was subsequently raised. Repairs to the valve were carried out on the 24th January while alongside in Port Moresby, no further trouble being experienced during the remainder of the exercise.

33. LAE sailed in company with AITAPE at 1430 and made an uneventful passage to Sewa Bay, Normanby Island, anchoring at 1730. A Landing Party exercise was conducted on arrival; the local inhabitants showing a great deal of interest in our activities, from their canoes. LAE and AITAPE remained at anchor overnight.

34. I carried out Captains Rounds during the forenoon of Saturday 20th January, after which I cleared lower deck and spoke informally to the Ships Company. Certain aspects of the new PNG Defence Force were covered and some of the possible effects it may have on the Navy Element explained to them. The only two aspects raised by the PNG sailors were the possibility of their uniform changing, and their reverting to PIR rations. These two possible changes are not welcomed by the PNG sailors.

35. Shortly after mid-day, the same day, a signal was received from COMPNGNAV initiating the squadron's O.R.E. LAE and AITAPE weighed at 1300 and proceeded to the Kegawam Islands. Whilst on passage a number of exercises took place including a simulated fire in AITAPE, LAE having to provide assistance, by boat. At 1612, as part of the ORE, LAE was detached to search the two western most islands, of the Kegawam group, for possible foreign fishing boat personnel or signs of their presence at any time.

36. The landing party proceeded ashore at 1630, LAE anchoring off Kegawam Light. The search was completed by 1715 and shortly after LAE weighed and proceeded to rejoin AITAPE. At 1745 having rejoined LAE and AITAPE passaged toward Lunn Island, where the patrollex phase of the ORE took place from 202200 to 210600.

37. The first part of the patrollex involved LAE and AITAPE as aggressors while SAMARAI and LADAVA were the patrolling units. On completion at 2359 forces changed sides, LAE being Blue Force OTC for the second part of the patrollex. During both parts if intercepts were achieved boarding took place. LADAVA was detached during part two of the patrollex on a non-ORE mission, this somewhat degraded the latter part of this serial.

38. SQUADEX 1/73 concluded with FINEX at 0615 Sunday 21st January. SAMARAI had rejoined AITAPE and LAE shortly before but LADAVA did not rejoin until 0830. The squadron then set course for Port Moresby. The 22 hour passage passed quite uneventfully for LAE, berthing outboard of SAMARAI at the Marine Base Wharf, Port Moresby, at 0630 Monday 22nd January.

39. At 0845 the same forenoon I departed LAE with the other patrol boat Commanding Officers and called on COMPNGNAV Captain J. Lancaster RAN and then at 0930 on COMPNGFOR Brigadier J.W. Norrie, OBE. The exercise debrief then took place from 1000 to 1200.

40. The remainder of the week was spent primarily preparing the Navy unit for the inauguration parade, which took place on Friday 26th January. On this date we ceased to be the PNG Division of the RAN and became the Navy Element of the Combined Papua and New Guinea Defence Force. The Navy Contingent performed creditably at the parade particularly considering the short preparation and the requirement for them to conform to Army drill. Following the parade a general make and mend was granted.

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41. Meantime attempts were made to make good use of the harbour time for self maintenance, however a shortage of working hands imposed limitations. A compromise with regards leave over the Australia Day weekend was therefore necessary. Tropical routine was implemented on Saturday 27th and on Monday 29th with a favourable reaction.

42. Up to this time LAE had had no major defects during January. The defective valve, as mentioned, was repaired while in Port Moresby the parts having been flown from Lombrum. At the time of sailing on Tuesday 30th all planned maintenance schedules were up to date.

43. LAE sailed for patrol while en route to Lae Town at 1000 Tuesday January 30th. Not ten minutes clear of Basilisk Channel a defect became apparent in the forward turbo-blower of the starboard main engine. The engine was immediately stopped but the blower had seized. I sent an immediate signal to COMPNGFOR and returned to harbour.

44. On the final approach to the berth smoke was detected coming from the starboard gearbox. The starboard engine was, at the time stopped, LAE continued in alongside using only the port main engine, securing at the Marine Base Wharf at 1110.

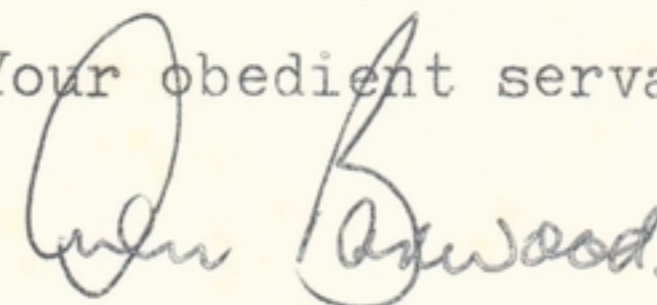
45. As a result of Inspections made of both the turbo-blower and gearbox, URDEF's 5 and 6/73 were raised; both units requiring replacement. The following day January 31st trouble developed in the after air conditioning unit compressor and the auxilliary general service pump, simultaneously. Both are being investigated by COMPNGFOR staff at this time.

46. The conduct, health and morale of the ship's company have been very satisfactory during the period.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



(O.S. BARWOOD)
Lieutenant RAN
Commanding Officer

Enclosures: Appendicies

- A. Steaming Appendix
- B. Monthly return of ship availability-attached
- C. Sports Appendix
- D. Exercise Appendix

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APPENDIX A

STEAMING APPENDIX

a. Distance steamed during the month	2,058.6
b. Distance steamed since commissioning	112,708.5
c. Hours underway during the month	156
d. Hours underway since commissioning	8,367.5
e. Nights away from base during the month	12
f. Occasions exceeding economical speed	(see note)

NOTE: Economical speed was exceeded on numerous occasions as required operationally for workup and SQUADEX 1/73.

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(MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY TO ACCOMPANY MONTHLY REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS)

APPENDIX 'B' TO CANO 7/66

I.C. ENGINE SHIPS
PROGRESSIVE TOTAL EN. HRS

HMAS LAE
DATE 1 FEB 73

AGE SINCE FIRST COMMISSIONING 4 9/12 YEARS
MILES STEAMED SINCE FIRST COMMISSIONING
112,798.5 MILES

NO 1 725
No 2 739

MONTH	AVAILABILITY STATE		OPERATION DUTIES	EXERCISE	WEAPON TRAINING	SPECIAL TASKS	POST REFIT TRIALS	PASSAGE TIME	VISIT	PROGRAM MAINT	PROGRAM REFIT DOCKING	REPAIR	HARBOUR	LONG LEAVE	DEFECTS AFFECTING SHIPS DESIGNED PERFORMANCE (DURATION IN HOURS)										REMARKS
	DAY	1													2	H	E	L	G	TAS	ND	C	EW	DL	
1		x								x		x												Port propellor removed	
2	x						x			x		x												Port propellor replaced	
3	x									x			x											Tested	
4	x									x				x											
5	x									x					x										
6	x									x						x									
7	x									x							x								
8	x					x	x																		
9	x																								
10	x																							40/60 Firing mechanism	
11	x																								
12	x																								
13	x																								
14	x									x															
15	x																								
16	x																								
17	x																								
18	x																								
19	x																								
20	x																							Lower sea suction vve	
21	x																								
22	x																								
23	x																								
24	x																								
25	x																								
26	x																							30-31st	
27	x																							1. Turbo blower URDEF 5/73	
28	x																							2. Stra gearbox URDEF 6/73	
29	x																							3. AC Compressor	
30		x																						4. AC salt water pump	
31		x																							
TOTAL																									

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APPENDIX C

SPORT APPENDIX

7th January Patrol Boats V's HMAS TARANGAU CPO & PO's cricket
LAE 4 participants.

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APPENDIX D

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EXERCISES - JANUARY 73

8 Jan

1030 - 1200 Action stations
Leaving ship stations
Emergency stations
Fire exercises

1220 - 1235 .50 Cal firing

9 Jan

1015 - 1115 AATX

1130 - 1418 Small Arms firing

1420 - 1430 Action stations
Emergency stations
Power failure
Fire exercise

10 Jan

0911 - 1005 OOW Manoeuvre

1010 - 1200 AATX AAFX

1315 - 1500 Boardex

11 Jan

0850 - 1140 Heaving line transfer
Towex

1142 - 1248 OOW Manoeuvre

12 Jan

1300 - 1600 Action stations
Emergency Stations
OOW Manoeuvre
Man overboard
AATX AAFX
Blind pilotage

15 Jan

0900 - 1000 Action stations
Fire exercise
Emergency stations
Flood exercise

1330 - 1535 OOW Manoeuvre

1900 - 2100 Shadowex

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/16 Jan

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APPENDIX D

16 Jan

0400 - 0500 Patrolex
1000 - 1100 Action Stations
Collision exercise
Flood
Fire
1300 - 1615 OOW Manoeuvre
1940 - 2118 OOW Manoeuvre

17 Jan

0700 - 1000 OOW Manoeuvre
2145 - 2359 Simulated fishing vessel intercept exercise

18 Jan

0001 - 0900 Simulated fishing vessel intercept exercise
0902 - 1005 OOW Manoeuvre
1300 - 1403 Boardex

20 Jan

1200 - 0800/21 ORE
1359 - 1418 Fire boarding party exercise
1628 - 1717 Landing party exercise
1930 - 2000 Towex
2000 - 2359 Patrolex

21 Jan

0001 - 0615 Patrolex

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NAVY—CANBERRA

18 6 498

PAPUA NEW GUINEA DEFENCE FORCE

6 JUN P.M.

Telephone 56166

Quote in Reply

766/D1/7

Headquarters
Papua New Guinea Defence Force
Murray Barracks Free Bag
BOROKO PNG

30 May 73

The Chairman
Chiefs of Staff Committee (1)

→ The Secretary
Department of the Navy (4)

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding
HM Australian Fleet (2)

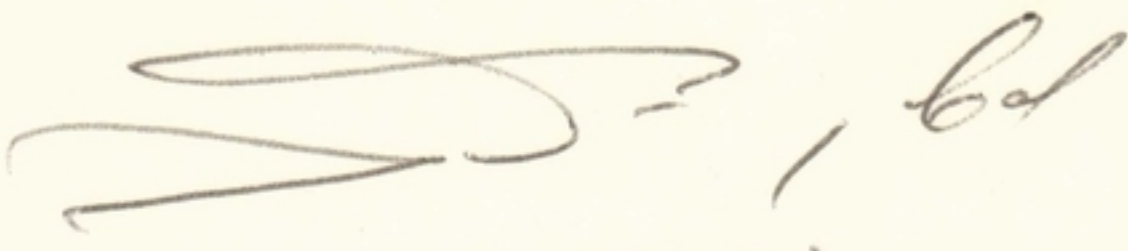
The Commander
Australian Mine Warfare and Patrol Forces (1)

REPORTS OF PROCEEDINGS
HMAS LAE FEBRUARY, MARCH AND APRIL 1973

1. Forwarded.

2. With regard to paragraph 18 of the March Report, the conditions experienced in Namatanai Harbour should have been anticipated in the light of AHP 10 - Small Ship Sailing Directives for Papua New Guinea.

3. With regard to paragraphs 9, 29 and 47 of the March Report, HMAS LAE's battery banks were old and were subject to frequent overchargings and boilings. The individual cell SG and voltage readings never gave cause for real alarm (readings recorded in ship's battery logs) and it is considered that the 1.1 volt cell reported by the civilian contractor was inaccurate. Nevertheless the age and condition of the batteries necessitated replacement and this has been done, paragraph 9 of the April Report refers. No further battery or battery charging defects have been experienced.


(J.W. NORRIE)
Brigadier
Commander

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FILE 18/6/498

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

HMAS LAE Report of Proceedings FEBRUARY, MARCH, APRIL
1973

AS(NS) Ch. 76.

D of O 12/6

~~DCNS~~ 13/6

CNS 14/6

CNP 15/6

CNTS 18/6

CNSW 29/6

SECRETARY 2/7

* C of S 3/7

DPR 3/7

~~AS(NS)~~ (NS55) ca 6/1/73

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12/6/73

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HMAS LAE,
at Lombrum,

1st March, 1973.

The Commanding Officer,
HMAS TARANGAU.

HMAS LAE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - FEBRUARY 1973

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMA Ship under my command for the month of February, 1973. All times are in Zone Kilo (-10).

2. LAE spent the first three weeks of February affecting repairs alongside at Port Moresby. The two major defects required the replacement of the starboard gearbox and a turbo-blower from the starboard main engine.

3. A number of other defects were also repaired during the period including the replacement of an air-conditioning compressor, two starter motors and the drive shaft of the auxiliary general service pump. URDEFS 5/73 (DTG 300446Z JAN 73), 6/73 (DTG 310438Z JAN73) and 7/73 (DTG 070803Z FEB 73) refer to the major defects.

4. On Monday 5th February and again on Friday 16th February, I carried out messdeck and storeroom rounds, and spoke informally to the Ship's Company concerning our time in Port Moresby.

5. Monday the 5th February Chief Artificer Marine Technician Hull Edwards, from COMPNGFOR Staff, conducted a hull survey of selected compartments at my request. A separate report has been forwarded to HMAS TARANGAU.

6. Repairs were completed Wednesday 21st February when basin trials took place; these were completed by 1145. LAE slipped and proceeded into Port Moresby Harbour for sea trials. LAE berthed port side to T.N. Squadron Wharf, having completed sea trials, at 1245. A separate report concerning support facilities at Port Moresby and outlining the difficulties experienced by LAE will be forwarded.

7. LAE finally sailed from Port Moresby at 1615 Thursday 22nd February with one absentee, the Ship's Radio Operator. This placed total reliance on H.F. voice communication for the next two days. The H.F. voice proved to be fairly satisfactory by day but of little value at night, outside 150 miles from Port Moresby. A separate report is being forwarded.

8. LAE's instruction on sailing was to telegram her position from the nearest port should radio contact with Headquarters PNGDF be lost for over twelve hours. At 0915 the following forenoon, 23rd February, in accordance with this instruction, LAE berthed at Samarai Island and a telegram despatched. Whilst at Samarai the opportunity to fuel was taken, LAE sailed from Samarai at 1030.

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9. A series of internal drills were exercised, ~~the~~ passage from China Strait to the Hornbill Channel, the latter being transited at 1230. For the remainder of the day LAE proceeded uneventfully to Posa Posa Harbour anchoring at 1830. Fishery surveillance was maintained en route. LAE remained at anchor overnight. The following morning at first light LAE weighed anchor and proceeded for further surveillance in Collingwood Bay. Meantime a signal was received from COMPNGFOR (DTG230150Z FEB 73) ordering LAE to proceed Oro Bay where the Ship's Radio Operator would rejoin. LAE proceeded to Oro Bay arriving at 1400. The Radio Operator was immediately embarked and LAE resumed her patrol without further delay.

10. Two possible fishing vessels were investigated that afternoon, Saturday 24th February, both being identified as small coastal traders. The second of the two was proceeding to anchor in Douglas Harbour, on the tip of Cape Ward Hunt.

11. The night of Saturday 24th February was spent transiting the Vitiaz Strait, notorious for its currents and rough conditions. The Strait lived up to its reputation and a most uncomfortable night experienced.

12. The weather was even worse Sunday 25th February during the transit of the Bismark Sea. In view of the unpleasant conditions I signalled my proposed passage direct to Lombrum, rather than night steam Sunday night. This LAE did, berthing alongside Lombrum at 0215 Monday 26th February.

13. Whilst on the final approach to the berth the hydraulic oil pressure in the starboard gearbox (newly installed in Port Moresby) fell well below the minimum allowable. Pressure fluctuations in the same system had caused concern ever since the gearbox was fitted. URDEF 8/73 (DTG280418Z FEB 73) was subsequently raised.

14. Investigation revealed a defective Relief Valve which was replaced. Maintenance was also carried out on the Servo Pistons. Repairs were completed by Wednesday 28th February, a sea trial being conducted in Seeadler Harbour between 1000 and 1100.

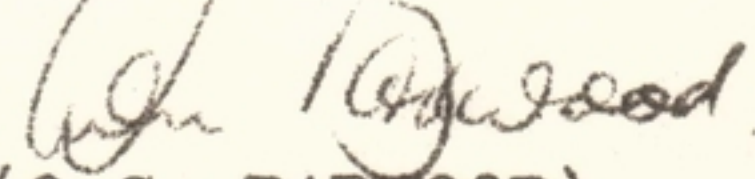
15. LAE sailed for patrol in the North-Western New Guinea Area at 1530 Wednesday 28th February, programmed sailing being delayed by only seven hours. LAE was underway in the Bismark Sea the night of February 28th.

16. The health, conduct and morale of the Ship's Company remain very satisfactory. Throughout the extended period in Port Moresby morale remained high and conduct was commendable. A normal routine and regular sport against Land Element Units contributed greatly to this.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,


(O.S. BARWOOD)
LIEUTENANT RAN
COMMANDING OFFICER

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Enclosures: Appendices
A. Steaming Appendix.
B. Monthly return of ship availability.
C. Exercise Appendix.

APPENDIX A.

Steaming Appendix:

(a)	Distance steamed during the month	958.7	miles
(b)	Distance steamed since commissioning	113667.2	miles
(c)	Hours underway during the month	69	hours
(d)	Hours underway since commissioning	8436.5	hours
(e)	Nights away from base during the month	4	nights
(f)	Occasions exceeding economical speed	Nil	

APPENDIX B.

Monthly Return of Ship Availability: Attached

APPENDIX C.

Exercise Appendix:

24 Feb 73	0930 - 1000	Internal NBCDX: Action Stations Emergency Stations Leaving Ship Stations Exercised Fire and Flood.
	1500 - 1600	9mm Pistol Shoot.

Note: Although 26 nights during the month were spent away from Lombrum only 4 were at sea.

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(MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY TO ACCOMPANY MONTHLY REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS)

APPENDIX 'B' TO CANO 7/66
 AGE SINCE FIRST COMMISSIONING **10 1/2** YRS.
 MILES STEAMED SINCE COMMISSIONING **13667.2** MILES

I.C. ENGINE SHIPS
 PROGRESSIVE TOTAL EN. HRS
 NO. 1. **278**
 NO. 2. **757**

HMAS... **LAE**
 DATE... **1 MAR 73**

MONTH	AVAILABILITY STATE		OPERATION DUTIES	EXERCISE WEAPON TRAINING	SPECIAL TASKS	POST REFIT TRIALS	PASSAGE TIME	VISIT PROGRAM MAINT.	PROGRAM REFIT DOCKING REPAIR	HARBOUR LONG LEAVE	DEFECTS AFFECTING SHIPS DESIGNED PERFORMANCE (DURATION IN HOURS)							REMARKS		
	1	2									H	E	L	G	A	ND	C		EW	DL
1		✓																		
2		✓																		
3		✓																		
4		✓																		
5		✓																		
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27	✓																			
28	✓																			
29	✓																			
30	✓																			
31	✓																			
TOTAL	7	22	1			1	2	22												22.8

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7 FEB 73
 PORT STARTER MOTORS DEFECTIVE
7 MAR 73
 TURDEF 7/73, NEW TURBO BLOWER
 INSTALLED, AUXILIARY GENERAL
 SERVICE PUMP REPAIRED
NEW AIR-CONDITIONING COMPRESSOR
INSTALLED, CONDENSED FITTING
NEW GEAR BOX
AFTER SULLAGE PUMP STARTER
21 FEB 73
 BASIN TRIAL ON BLOWER & GEAR
 BOX, FOLLOWED BY SEATRIALS
7 MAR 73
 TURDEF 9/73
 RELIEF VALVE REPLACED
 & SEATRIAL OPERATIONAL
 FROM 1200 28 FEB 73

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HMAS LAE,
at Rabaul.

31st March 1973

The Commanding Officer,
HMAS TARANGAU.

HMAS LAE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MARCH 1973

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMAS Ship under my command for the month of March 1973. All times are Zone Kilo (-10).

2. The night of 28th February - 1st March LAE was underway in the Bismarck Sea, on passage to the North Western New Guinea area. Landfall was made on the Schouten Islands shortly after 0700 1st March whereupon LAE commenced Fishery Surveillance. This was completed by 1400 when course was set for Wuvulu Island.
3. LAE arrived off Wuvulu at 2330 that night and proceeded close inshore to land a battery charger by boat. As no anchorage was available LAE remained underway returning to recover the boat at 0030. For the remainder of the night LAE patrolled between Wuvulu and the Nindigo Group of Islands.
4. The weather deteriorated rapidly after sunrise 2nd March and by 0930 patrolling was completely impractical. With visibility less than one mile LAE proceeded to anchor blind inside the Nindigo Islands, remaining there for the remainder of the day.
5. Conditions had improved considerably next morning Saturday 3rd March; LAE weighed anchor at 1030 and continued her patrol off the Nindigo and Hermit Island Area. While on passage between the two groups a series of small arms firings and a surface 40/60 firing were conducted.
6. The patrol was concluded by 2000 when course was set for Lombrum. The weather was again unpleasant Saturday night; an awkward, confused sea made conditions most uncomfortable.
7. LAE made a radar landfall off Manus Island at 0130 proceeding alongside Lombrum at 0800 Sunday 4th March. During the four day patrol LAE made only one sighting, a merchantman apparently bound for Wewak.

...../- The week

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2.

8. The week commencing Monday 5th March was spent in Self Maintenance at Lombrum. On Thursday 8th March LAE's Ships Company was required for a Job Analysis Study.
9. A fault became apparent in one of the main battery banks over the weekend of 10th-11th March. Difficulty was experienced in charging the bank; this was thought to be due to the bank nearing to the end of its natural life. The bank in question was not renewed at the last refit and has periodically given trouble since.
10. The problem was not serious enough to prevent LAE sailing at 1000 Monday 12th March bound for New Ireland-New Britain patrol. LAE was programmed to sail in company with AITAPE but a defect delayed AITAPE's departure.
11. An uneventful days passage to Mussau and Emirau Islands followed, a radar landfall being made at 2000. Visibility that evening was exceptionally good; the first sighting of the island being at some fifty miles.
12. The night of 12th and 13th March LAE patrolled the Mussau - Emirau area commencing transit of the Ysabel Strait at 0600 the following morning. For the remainder of the week LAE visited a total of five coastwatchers in the New Ireland Area. A separate report on these visits will be forwarded.
13. The first visit was to Selapui Island where LAE anchored at 1211 Tuesday 13th March, weighing again at 1415 and proceeding to Kavieng. I proceeded ashore at Selapui and visited the coastwatcher Mr E. Lauder, who was away on leave. Earlier in the day I signalled my intentions to proceed to Kavieng with a medical case. By 1515, the time of arrival at Kavieng, LAE had two sailors requiring medical attention. One was detained in hospital as a precaution while the other was permitted to return to the ship.
14. I called on the District Commissioner Mr P. HOLMES and was met by the Assistant District Commissioner Mr P. Whitehead on his behalf.
15. LAE sailed from Kavieng at 1700 and transited overnight to Muliama, on the east coast of New Ireland. Fishery Surveillance was maintained en-route particularly in the area of Tabar Island. A generator failure at 2000 rendered the gyro unreliable, magnetic compass being used for the remainder of the night.
16. The generator failure was the result of the overspeed trip mechanism operating. The actual cause has not been established as yet.

...../- LAE

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3.

17. LAE anchored at Muliama at 0738 Wednesday 14th March. I proceeded ashore and visited the coastwatcher Mr C.B. Bell returning onboard at approximately 0945. The ship weighed anchor and proceeded at 1015.

18. LAE's next port of call was Namatanai being reached by 1330. Soon after securing alongside it became apparent that the surge was too great and would cause damage to both the ship and the wharf. The best alternative was to berth stern to the jetty; this LAE successfully did. During the night the surge continued; three berthing lines parted but no damage was sustained or inflicted. Whilst at Namatanai I visited Bopire Plantation, but the coastwatcher Mr K. Evans was on leave.

19. The following day Thursday 15th March LAE sailed at 0830 and proceeded towards Kamariba. During the departure a fuse blew in the gyro. A pair of polaroid sunglasses and a quick change of the magnetic compass ensured the ships safety.

20. Kamariba was difficult to find. The chart was of inadequate scale and the coast line not definitive. Two stops were made to the south of Kamariba before finding the place. As time was now short my Executive Officer proceeded ashore and visited the coastwatcher Mr S.W. Grosse briefly, while LAE steamed seaward.

21. The boat was recovered by 1400 and LAE proceeded towards Tabar Island and Tereri Plantation. Again little was known of the Tereri Plantation area. LAE arrived off Tereri Plantation at 1530 and an attempt was made to land equipment carried, but the swell was too big. In any case the coastwatcher Mr J.B. Birue was not there. (my 150815Z Mar 73 NOTAL refers). From Tereri Plantation LAE proceeded for overnight Fishery Surveillance; the area covered being the Tabar Group and Lihir Islands. The night was quite uneventful.

22. At 0700 the ship anchored at the eastern end of the Saraware Passage, between Tabar and Tatau Islands, weighing again at 0950 and proceeding through the passage to rendezvous with HMAS AITAPE.

23. Whilst at anchor investigation of the abnormally high idling speed on the starboard main engine revealed a worn bloctube universal joint. Subsequently I signaled HMAS TARANGAU for a replacement part.

24. The rendezvous was achieved at 1100 and exercises between the two ships followed while on passage to Kavieng. At 1700 the same afternoon LAE arrived at Kavieng in company with AITAPE, both ships remaining in Kavieng for the weekend 17th-18th March.

...../- LAE sailed

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4.

25. LAE sailed at 0910 Monday 19th March having embarked Mr T.R. Grimmond of the Department of Health Rabaul. LAE's main task for the remainder of the week was to convey Mr. Grimmond to a number of Aid Posts and hospitals on islands off the coast of New Ireland and New Hanover.

26. The first post visited was on Dyual Island where LAE arrived at 1230; Mr Grimmond was landed at 1245 by boat whereupon LAE proceeded to anchor off Biwa Plantation at 1345. I landed at Biwa and visited the coastwatcher Mr T. Brown. LAE weighed anchor at 1520 and re-embarked Mr Grimmond an hour later. From Dyual LAE proceeded back to Kibnitz Harbour off Stefan Strait, carrying out a blind anchorage at 1937 and remaining there overnight.

27. The following morning 20th March LAE weighed anchor at 0630 and proceeded to Tingwon Island off New Hanover where Mr Grimmond was again landed by boat; as no anchorage was available, a training coastal NAVEX was conducted around the Tingwon Group. At 1330, having recovered Mr Grimmond, LAE set course for Stefan Strait, and then to Mahur Island, the former being transited between 1730 and 1820.

28. The overnight passage to Mahur Island was uneventful arriving off the island at 0630. Mr Grimmond was landed at 0700; no anchorage was available at Mahur, so LAE steamed seaward for breakfast; Mr Grimmond was recovered at 0845 whereupon course was set for Lihir Island.

29. During the time since departing Lombrum close scrutiny of the main battery specific gravities was maintained. Adverse fluctuations of the specific gravities resulted in my signalling for advice on 20th March. (my 200209Z Mar 73 refers).

30. LAE arrived off Lihir Island at 1030 and had the pleasure of being the first Patrol Boat to visit Pali Catholic Mission. The harbour is a delightful anchorage and well sheltered. A jetty exists but mooring stern to was the only practical means of using it. At least two Patrol Boats could shelter in the harbour. A full report of the harbour is being prepared separately.

31. After Mr Grimmond had completed his work at the hospital he and I dined with Father T. Burns (the mission's priest) who was quick to issue a soccer challenge. LAE's Ships Company responded eagerly, winning the game 5 - 1. The jetty facility was put to good use with the ship being opened to visitors shortly after securing. Some 200 school children, parents and workers, almost the entire mission population availed themselves of the novelty. LAE sailed at 1430 bound for Tanga Island.

32. LAE anchored off Tanga Mission Station, Boang Island, at 1800 remaining there overnight. At 0630 next morning, Thursday 22nd March, LAE weighed anchor and proceeded to the Feni Islands anchoring off Malekolow Plantation just south of the Salat Channel. While Mr Grimmond landed at the Babase Island aid post, I visited Mr G.L. Carson at Malekolon Plantation.

...../- As luck

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As luck would have it Mr R.C. Lacy of Warramung Plantation, whom I was to visit later in the day, was at Malekolon. LAE was therefore able to remain at anchor till 1330. Mr Carson, a Lieutenant RANR, requested passage to the Nuguria Islands. This resulted in LAE proceeding to Namatanai that evening, my signal 220326Z Mar 73 refers.

33. On weighing anchor LAE proceeded to Natong, only ten miles steaming, on the south west tip of Feni Island anchoring once again at 1425. Mr Grimmond proceeded ashore by boat and was recovered at 1510. LAE weighed anchor and proceeded to Namatanai, anchoring off the harbour entrance at 2130. I proceeded ashore with Mr Grimmond and was met by a member of the ADC's staff who conveyed me to the ADC's residence. The Assistant District Commissioner Mr T. Bergen had been informed of our pending arrival by radio from Malekolon. Mr Grimmond disembarked at Namatamai after a successful but rather busy four days.

34. LAE weighed anchor at 2345 and proceeded back to Malekolon anchoring at 0630 the following morning Friday 23rd March. LAE remained at anchor till 1100, then having embarked Mr Carson, weighed anchor and proceeded to rendezvous with AITAPE for passage to the Nuguria Islands. This LAE did; at 1145 exercises between the ships took place on passage. At approximately 1245 LAE sighted a fishing boat which was identified as the Taikyo Maru a Japanese boat in transit from Solomon Islands. (my 230337Z Mar 73 refers). LAE and AITAPE arrived Fead Island at 1730 proceeding alongside for the weekend 24th-25th March. The weekend was well spent; Mr Carson arranged outdoor activities, including fishing, and a visit to a bird rookery to occupy the two Ships' Companies.

35. On Saturday evening both Ships' Companies were treated to a barbecue of the fish caught during the day. This break from patrol routine was enjoyed and much appreciated by all concerned.

36. LAE and AITAPE sailed from Fead Island in company at 1000 Monday 26th March with Mr Carson embarked in LAE; for the passage back to Malekolon. A 40/60 surface firing was conducted at 1100. LAE was forced to withdraw when a fault developed in the firing safety mechanism URDEF 9/73 was subsequently raised.

37. At 1500 LAE was detached to Malekolon anchoring at 1605. Mr Carson disembarked, LAE weighing anchor at 1715 and proceeding to rendezvous with AITAPE at 1830. For the remainder of the night LAE steamed in company with AITAPE bound for Rabaul.

38. LAE arrived at Rabaul in company with AITAPE at 0605 Tuesday 27th March, berthing at the Oil Wharf. The ships were programmed to sail again at 1300 having fuelled and provisioned.

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6.

The District Commissioner's Officer, however, asked if AITAPE or LAE could participate in an official opening ceremony at the Duke of York Islands on Friday 30th March. AITAPE's signal 270110Z Mar 73 proposed an amended programme which made LAE available for Friday 30th March.

39. In accordance with this LAE sailed at 2000 Tuesday 27th March only to have a starter motor burn out at 2020, returning alongside at 2050. (my 271055Z Mar 73 refers) and URDEF 10/73 refers. Within 24 hours a replacement starter motor arrived from HMAS TARANGAU and preparations for the Duke of York Islands continued.

40. LAE remained at Rabaul until Friday 30th March. On Thursday 29th March at 1000 I called on the District Commissioner for East New Britain Mr P. Boraga returning onboard at 1100.

41. At 0745 the following day, Friday 30th March, the official party consisting of:-

Dr R. Tuneka MHA	(minister for Health of Papua-N.G.)
Mr B. Sali MHA	(Minister of State of Papua-N.G.)
Mr M. Toliman CBE MHA	
Mr O. Tammur MHA	
Mr W.P. Ryan	Chief Ministers Department
Mr J. Haugie	Defence Branch of Chief Ministers Department
Dr V. Zigas	
Dr A. Taurita	Public Health Department
Mr P. Bouraga	District Commissioner for East New Britain Area

They were accompanied by 7 other official guests.

42. LAE sailed from Rabaul at 0800 berthing alongside at Molott Mission in Balanawang Harbour, (Duke of York Islands) at 0945. The official party disembarked and all members of the Ship's Company, who were not required for duty, were invited to the ceremonies.

43. The ceremonies involved the opening of the new Council Chambers, and a Rural Health Centre. A traditional Toli feast and Sing Sing followed which was both colourful and interesting. The celebrations were quite remarkable and really only just beginning when the time came for the official party to return to Rabaul. LAE sailed from Molott with the party embarked at 1340. Berthing again in Rabaul at 1545, outboard of AITAPE at the main wharf. The official party disembarked on arrival after a very successful day in all respects.

44. During the transits, to and from Rabaul, the visitors were encouraged to inspect the ship. The Ship's Company were not backward in showing them around or in conversing. Their appearance and indeed the appearance of the ship was a great credit to them and the Maritime Element.

...../-An official

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45. An official cocktail party was held between AITAPE and LAE at 1800 that evening.

46. The following forenoon at 0830 LAE shifted berth to the oil wharf to fuel returning alongside the main wharf at 0945. At 1530 the same day Saturday 31st March LAE again shifted berth this time to the small ships wharf where AITAPE secured outboard shortly after 1600.

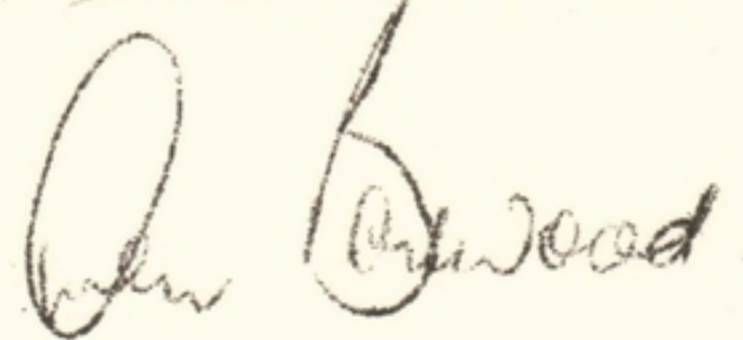
47. The situation with regards LAE's batteries had not improved by Friday 30th March so a battery specialist from Rabaul was consulted. This report was signalled by me the following day after a representative from HMAS TARANGAU had discussed the matter with him. (my 300742Z Mar 73 refers).

48. The health, conduct and morale of the Ship's Company remains very satisfactory.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



(O.S. BARWOOD)
LIEUTENANT RAN
COMMANDING OFFICER

Enclosures: Appendices
A. Steaming Appendix.
B. Monthly Return of Ship Availibility.
C. Exercise Appendix.

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APPENDIX A.

Steaming Appendix:

a.	Distance steamed during the month	2693.8 miles
b.	Distance steamed since commissioning	116361.0 miles
c.	Hours underway during the month	231.0 hours
d.	Hours underway since commissioning	8667.5 hours
e.	Nights away from Base during the month	24 nights
f.	Occasions exceeding economical speed	Nil

APPENDIX B.

Monthly Return of Ship Availability: Attached

APPENDIX C.

Exercise Appendix:

3 MAR 73	1415 - 1630	Small arms firings .632 SLR/ALR SUFEX 40/60 Bofor
10 MAR 73	0900 - 0915	SUFEX 40/60 Gun functioning Trial
12 MAR 73	1330 - 1405	Internal NBCDX - Action Stations, Emergency Stations, Leaving Ship Station. Exercise fire and flood.
16 MAR 73	1030 - 1130	OOW Manoeuvres
	1415 - 1500	FLASHEX (officers)
20 MAR 73	1030 - 1300	Coastal NAVEX (midshipman)
26 MAR 73	1100 - 1130	SUFEX 40/60 Bofor
	1130 - 1200	FLASHEX (officers)

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HMAS LAE,
at Lombrum.

1st May 1973

The Commanding Officer,
HMAS TARANGAU.

HMAS LAE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
APRIL 1973

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMA Ship under my command for the month of April 1973. All times are Zone Kilo (-10).

2. LAE spent the weekend of the 31st March - 1st April with HMAS AITAPE in Rabaul, preparing for exercise SQUADEX TWO, which commenced Monday 2nd April.

3. LAE's batteries which had caused concern throughout March, were examined by the technical observers, who arrived for the exercise. In view of the close proximity of other ships, during the exercise, and the ability to start, at that time, it was considered unnecessary for LAE to be withdrawn from the exercise. During the week that followed no starting difficulties were experienced; a conscious effort being made to reduce the number of starts.

4. At 1000 Monday 2nd April an exercise briefing was held aboard AITAPE, prior to the ships sailing. LAE sailed in company with HMA Ships AITAPE, SAMARAI and LADAVA at 1213. For the next four days the squadron participated in Exercise SQUADEX TWO serials, in accordance with Headquarters Papua-New Guinea Defence Force OPORD 2/73 and HMAS TARANGAU OPORD 1/73.

5. The exercise observers were transferred between ships at the senior observers discretion. LAE's boat was invariably used as the reliability of the boat winches in the other ships was doubtful.

6. During the exercise LAE was OCE for three serials. The first of these was the departure from the Nissan Atoll on Thursday 5th April. Immediately following this LAE conducted a serial of OOW manoeuvres. LAE was also OCE for one of the more major serials namely the Interception and Boardex conducted the night of the 5th - 6th April in the Cape St George Area.

7. The exercise concluded with a blind entry into Rabaul. LAE berthing outboard of AITAPE at the eastern end of the Main Wharf, where both ships took on water. At 0900 both LAE and AITAPE shifted berth to the Shell Wharf to refuel. LAE berthed outboard of SAMARAI at 0910; AITAPE berthing on LAE at 0915.

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8. An exercise debrief for Commanding Officers took place in AITAPE between 1000 and 1200 after which AITAPE and LAE prepared for sea. LAE sailed in company with AITAPE at 1225 bound for Lombrum. The passage to Lombrum was quite uneventful; LAE and AITAPE berthed alongside at Lombrum shortly after 1040 Saturday 7th April.

9. A busy 24 hours followed for LAE, preparing for an intermediate docking. De-ammunitioning commenced on arrival, this was efficiently completed by 1130. The ships batteries which had given good service in getting LAE back to Lombrum, were nevertheless replaced as prearranged.

10. LAE sailed at 1430 on Sunday 8th April for Madang town; the ship's Radio Operator being absent on sailing. For the next nine days LAE was yet again reliant on HF voice communications alone. These proved to be far more reliable than during the previous occurrence in February. The period also provided excellent training opportunities for officers, in communications procedures.

11. Madang harbour was entered at 0700 the following morning Monday 9th April, whereupon LAE proceeded direct to the Slipways Shipyard. Slipping commenced soon after arriving, being effected by 0930.

12. Work undertaken during the Intermediate Docking included the replacement of all six shaft bearings and the starboard rudder post bearing. Progress was slow but satisfactory until Friday 13th when it was discovered that both LAE's propellor shafts are under size at the inner bearing area, notation to this effect had not been made on the ship's drawings. The new stern tube bearings had been machined to specification and therefore had to be renewed again. This plus difficulty in fitting the starboard stern tube bearing extended LAE's time on the slip to mid-day Tuesday 17th April.

13. LAE eventually unslipped at 1325 Tuesday and proceeded alongside the Shell Oil Wharf at 1545 to refuel. This was completed by 1710 whereupon LAE sailed from Madang direct to Lombrum, berthing there at 0810 Wednesday 18th April.

14. The scheduled Base Assisted Maintenance Period commenced immediately on arrival, a significant amount of work being achieved before the Easter weekend which commenced Good Friday 20th April. The assistance and co-operation received from Base Staff throughout the period was most gratifying. All major work had virtually been completed by Saturday 29th. The one exception was the fitting of Windscreen wipers. The drawings forwarded from HMAS WATERHEN were incompatible with the wiper assemblies held. Base action to modify the existing units without drawings has been initiated.

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3.

15. Late on Sunday afternoon 29th April, LAE was ordered to come to four hours notice for sea. (COMPNGFOR 290545 APR73 SAR 7/73 refers). A number of jobs including the machining of two pins had to be completed before LAE was operational. I therefore acknowledged the signal intending to report when fully operational. This was achieved by 0900 the following morning, Monday 30th which coincided with the receipt of COMPNGFOR signal 292242 APR73 ordering LAE to sail to assist in SAR Mission 7/73.

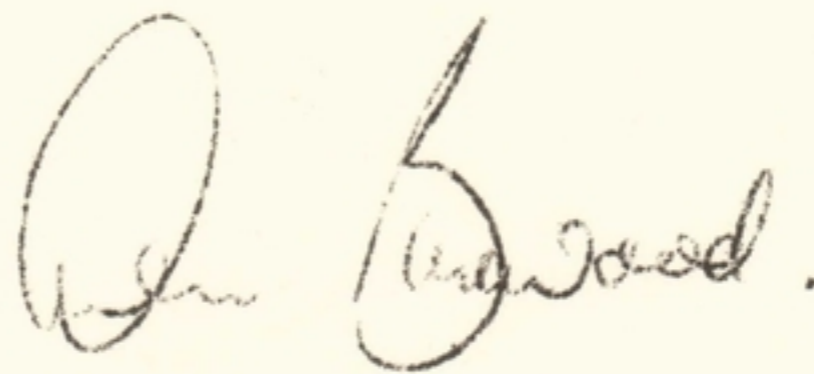
16. LAE sailed in accordance with instructions at 1310 and proceeded at operational speed towards Rabaul. The missing vessel was reported as safe in Rabaul approximately 1800 whereupon the search was called off, LAE being ordered to return to Lombrum. Course was reversed at 1830; LAE proceeding back to Lombrum at economical speed berthing at 0045 1st May.

17. The health, conduct and morale of the Ship's Company during the month remained very satisfactory.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient serant,



(O.S. BARWOOD)
LIEUTENANT RAN
COMMANDING OFFICER

Enclosure: Appendices.
A. Steaming Appendix.
B. Monthly Return of Ship Availability.
C. Exercise Appendix.

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APPENDIX A.

Steaming Appendix:

a.	Distance steamed during month	2074.0 miles
b.	Distance steamed since commissioning	118435.0 miles
c.	Hours underway during the month	127.5 hours
d.	Hours underway since commissioning	8795.0 hours
e.	Nights away from Base during the month	18 nights
f.	Occasions exceeding economical speed	numerous

Note: Economical speed was exceeded as required during SQUADEX TWO and when ordered to sail for SAR Mission.

APPENDIX B.

Monthly Return of Ship Availability: Attached.

APPENDIX C.

Exercise Appendix:

02APR73	1200 - 1315	Formation Departure, Rabaul. Blind passage down Swept Channel
	1330 - 1430	OOW Manoeuvres.
	1500 - 1630	SEAMANEX with SAMARAI - Heaving line transfer, TOWEX, Manoverboard Exercise, Personnel transfer (LADAVA)
	1635 - 1700	OOW Manoeuvres.
	1715 - 1740	SUFY (drum target)
	1900 - 2000	NBCDX - Internal Drills
	2000 - 2359	NEX - PTFX 21
03APR73	0615 - 1315	SAREX
	1500 - 2359	PATROLEX
04APR73	0001 - 1500	PATROLEX
	1750	Formation Anchorage
05APR73	0800 - 0830	Formation Departure Nissan Atoll (LAE OCE)
	0830 - 0930	OOW Manoeuvres (LAE OCE)
	0935 - 1005	NBCDX
	1115 - 1130	Radar Calibration (index error with LADAVA)
	1215	Formation Anchorage
	1300 - 1330	Formation Departure Queen Carola Harbour
	1330 - 1440	OOW Manoeuvres
	1455 - 1520	SUFY - (drum target)
	1600 - 1700	SPX(B) with SAMARAI
	2000 - 2359	INTERCEPTION and BOARDX (LAE OCE)
06APR73	0001 - 0400	INTERCEPTION and BOARDX (LAE OCE)
	0600 - 0635	OOW Manoeuvres
	0700 - 0740	Blind Entry Rabaul
	1000 - 1200	Exercise Debrief

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FILE 18/6/4273

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

HMAS *BAE* Report of Proceedings *MAY 1973*

~~AS(NS) *19/7*~~

D of O *23/7*

DCNS *Alma*

CNS *25/7*

CNP *26/7*

CNTS *30/7* - Para 15 - *Someone is using their brains*

CNSW *30/7*

SECRETARY *31/7/73*

C of S *1/8*

DER D *2-8*

~~AS(NS) (NS55)~~ *Ca 7/8*

- NOTES:
- A. This copy is circulated so that Board Members may see these reports soon after they reach Navy Office.
 - B. The report will be given again to Board Members with Director's comments if there is any matter of special interest in those comments.
 - C. Circulation lists numbers 2 and 3 are referred to Directors and Heads of Branches.
 - D. If any matter requires comprehensive treatment or reference to another Branch a new file should be raised, a suitable note being made above.

18/7/73

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NAVY—CANBERRA
18 6 4273

Telephone 56166

Quote in Reply

766.21.7



Headquarters
Papua New Guinea Defence Force
Murray Barracks Free Bag
BOROKO PNG

13 Jul 73

The Chairman
Chiefs of Staff Committee (1)



The Secretary
Department of the Navy (4)

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding
HM Australian Fleet (2)

The Commander
Australian Mine Warfare & Patrol Forces (1)

Commanding Officer
HMAS TARANGAU

Commanding Officer
HMAS LAE

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
HMAS LAE - MAY 1973

1. Forwarded.
2. With regard to paragraph 2 the SAR mission referred to involved the search for an Administration Work boat - MV LANGU, on passage from RABAU to BUKA Island. The boat subsequently returned to RABAU having got lost en-route.
3. In regard to paragraph 14 instructions have been passed to HMAS TARANGAU requiring more thorough starting system checks when replacing unserviceable starter motors.
4. The communications problem referred to in paragraph 15 has been investigated. HMAS LAE's signal was transmitted corrupt in PNG Ops Code. This Headquarters waited for a verification before transmitting the signal to TARANGAU. This verification was not obtained until after HMAS LAE had arrived at TARANGAU.

(J. W. NORRIE)
Brigadier
Commander

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HMAS LAE,
at Lombrum.

1st June 1973

The Commanding Officer,
HMAS TARANGAU.

HMAS LAE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS MAY 1973

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMA Ship under my command for the month of May 1973. All times are Zone Kilo (-10).

2. The night of 30th April - 1st May LAE was underway returning to Lombrum after Search and Rescue Mission 7/73 was called off; LAE having been sailed to assist. LAE berthed alongside Lombrum at 0200 Tuesday 1st May. For the remainder of Tuesday and Wednesday LAE completed her Base Assisted Maintenance Period and embarked Oceanographic equipment in preparation for Oceanographic Survey UDS 2/73.

3. LAE sailed from Lombrum at 1300 Thursday 3rd May having embarked Dr G. Morgan and Mr I. Hardy of the Weapons Research Establishment, Salisbury, South Australia. The first leg of the survey was passage to Madang carrying out experiments en-route. The weather was unsuitable most of Thursday night so LAE proceeded directly to Madang securing alongside at the Small Ships Wharf at 0830 Friday 4th May. A general make and mend was granted that afternoon.

4. LAE remained in Madang over the weekend 5th and 6th, an official cocktail party being held Friday evening for the citizens of Madang. Particular emphasis on this occasion, was placed on demonstrating to the PNG Officers, how such a function should be conducted. To this end a steward from TARANGAU had been loaned to LAE for the period.

5. During the afternoon of Friday 4th May LAE was brought to standby to sail for a Search and Rescue Mission 8/73. This was cancelled within hours when the missing boat was found not to have left its port of departure.

6. LAE sailed from Madang at 1015 Monday 7th May and continued the survey for the next three days. The area of particular interest was the entrance to the Sepik River. The aim was to study the effect the Sepik River has on the salinity, temperature and velocity of sound profile in the Bismark Sea. This was more than adequately achieved. This new role for LAE was very rewarding, being both interesting and absorbing work.

...../- Survey

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7. Survey requirements made the predicting of ship movements from day to day quite difficult; however, LAE did berth, alongside Wewak as planned, at 1745 Tuesday 8th May remaining there overnight. LAE sailed the following morning at 0855 and commenced a diagonal transit of the Bismark Sea from Wewak to Alim Island. Oceanographic experiments were continued whilst en-route.
8. During the afternoon Wednesday 9th May LAE demonstrated her naval prowess with a comprehensive series of internal drills, a 40/60 surface firing and small arms firings.
9. The atmospheric conditions that day were exceptional. Land was visible at well over 50 miles range and the 975 radar enabled fixing in excess of 40 miles range, with reasonable accuracy. During the whole period of the survey particular note was taken of currents in the Bismark Sea. The only conclusion reached as a result of this study is their completely unpredictable nature. Details will be forwarded separately to TARANGAU.
10. LAE arrived off Alim Island at 0530 Thursday 10th May and hove to for Oceanographic experiments until after sunrise getting underway again at 0700. A momentary power failure about this time rendered the gyro unreliable - magnetic headings being used for the next two hours.
11. Earlier in the week after consultation with Dr Morgan I had signalled my intentions to return to Lombrum Thursday 10th May as Phase A of the survey would be completed. Subsequently LAE secured alongside at Lombrum Thursday 10th May at 1225.
12. The success of Phase A of the survey was such that Dr Morgan requested that LAE retain both the Expendable bathythermograph and velocity profile equipments and take part in Phase B, which was to have been in conjunction with a RAAF P3B Orion. (my 092336Z May 73 and TARANGAU 112010Z May 73 refer).
13. LAE remained at Lombrum over the weekend of 12th - 13th May and sailed as scheduled Monday 14th May at 0830. LAE joined LADAVA which had sailed, shortly before 0830, and took part in a series of heaving line transfers before LADAVA took departure for the Mussau Island area. This period provided an excellent opportunity for the respective Executive Officers to gain ship handling experience.
14. At 1630 the same afternoon LAE's inboard starboard starter motor and one associated solenoid burnt out, flattening the starboard battery bank in the process. This forced the ship to return to Lombrum, securing alongside at 0045 Tuesday 15th May. (my 140825Z May 73 refers).

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15. In reference to the above it particularly concerned me that my priority signal informing HQ PNGDF and HMAS TARANGAU of the defect was not received in TARANGAU, an action addressee, by the time I secured alongside at Lombrum.

16. LAE remained alongside for the remainder of the week ending 19th May, on which day the replacement starter and solenoid were received and installed.

17. On Monday 21st May, LAE commenced a week of daily running, out of Lombrum, for training purposes. As the requirement did not cover all five days I signalled my intention to be available for a families day later in the week. LAE embarked recruits Monday 21st May and sailed at 1015 for general seaman and ship husbandry training; including anchoring, cleaning ship and metallic surface preparation and painting. The ship returned alongside at 1700.

18. The state of HMAS SAMARAI's steering gave rise to examination of the hydraulic pressures. To provide a set of reading for comparison with SAMARAI, LAE's steering was fitted with pressure gauges Monday 21st May. A trial was then conducted using a cross section of speeds and amounts of wheel. The figures have been retained as a permanent record for LAE and were successfully used to ascertain the cause of SAMARAI's problem.

19. LAE remained alongside Tuesday 22nd May but again embarked recruits Wednesday sailing at 0830. Similar activities to Monday were performed but in addition a boarding exercise was demonstrated in slow time inside Seeadler Harbour. LAE boarded the Lombrum Tug TID 503. The ship returned alongside at 1700. On both days the enthusiasm and zeal of the recruits was most encouraging.

20. On Thursday 24th May LAE sailed at 0915 to carry out some follow up Oceanographic work off the north coast of Manus. In addition a 40/60 firing and .50 Calibre machine gun firing were planned. A few minor defects caused these to be aborted. The defects have since been rectified. LAE berthed back at Lombrum at 1430.

21. On Friday 25th May LAE embarked 26 adults and children for a families day, sailing at 0800. Bipi Island was the destination, the ship anchored there at 1230. After a buffet lunch under the fore's'le awning the 'passengers' were ferried ashore, being recovered at 1500. The ship berthed back at Lombrum shortly before 1930. The day was much enjoyed by all, particularly the children.

22. LAE remained alongside for the next four days awaiting instructions for the PNG Land Element exercise "EXERCISE LONGSTEP" for which LAE had been programmed to support the land units.

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23. The Land Units, 7, 8, and 9 platoons 'C' Company 1st Battallion Pacific Islands Regiment, were flown into Momote airfield on Wednesday 30th and early Thursday 31st May. During these two days LAE deployed the 3 platoons to various areas on the coast of Manus Island.

24. A Section of 'C' Company headquarters platoon was the only unit remaining to be transported when the 9th platoon had been landed at 2130 the night of 31st May. LAE then proceeded to anchor in Seeadler Harbour at 2315 remaining at anchor for the rest of the night. A separate report on LAE's role in the exercise will be forwarded.

25. The Health, Conduct and Morale of the Ship's Company has remained very satisfactory during the month.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



(O.S. BARWOOD)
LIEUTENANT RAN
COMMANDING OFFICER

Enclosures: Appendices
A. Steaming Appendix
B. Monthly Return of Ship Availability
C. Exercise Appendix

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APPENDIX A.

Steaming Appendix:

a.	Distance steamed during month	1870	miles
b.	Distance steamed since commissioning	120311	miles
c.	Hours underway during month	148	hours
d.	Hours underway since commissioning	9043	hours
e.	Nights away from base during month	10	nights
f.	Occasions exceeding economical speed	2	days

Note: Economical speed exceeded as required in EXERCISE LONGSTEP.

APPENDIX B.

Monthly Return of Ship Availability: Attached

APPENDIX C.

Exercise Appendix:

08MAY73	1400-1430	NBCDX	Internal Drills
	1330-1410	OOW manoeuvres	
	1445-1730	NBCDX	Steering Breakdown Action stations Emergency stations Leaving ship stations Fire and flooding
		SUFX 40/60	
		Small arms firings	
14MAY73	0915-1000	SEAMANEX	Heaving line transfers with LADAVA
23MAY73	0905-1000	BOARDEX	Recruit training
24MAY73	1300-1445	OOW manoeuvres	
	1315-1330	SUFX 40/60	(aborted)
		.50 calibre Browning	
30MAY73	1130-	embarked part 7 platoon	1st PIR
	1440-	landed soldiers	
	1630-	embarked remainder 7 platoon	
	1745-	landed soldiers	
31MAY73	0730-	embarked part of 8 platoon	
	1000-	landed soldiers	
	1230-	embarked remainder 8 platoon	
	1430-	landed soldiers	
	1730-	embarked 9 platoon (not at full strength)	
	2015-2115	landed 9 platoon	
	2315-	Blind anchorage	Seeadler Harbour

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(MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY TO ACCOMPANY MONTHLY REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS)

APPENDIX 'B' TO CANO 7/
 AGE SINCE FIRST COMMISSIONING.....YRS
 MILES STEAMED SINCE COMMISSIONING

I.C. ENGINE SHIPS
 PROGRESSIVE TOTAL EN. HRS
 NO. 1.....

HMAS... *LAE*

DATE... *15 JUN 73*

120311

MILES

NO. 2.....

MONTH	AVAILABILITY STATE		OPERATION DUTIES	EXERCISE	WEAPON TRAINING	SPECIAL TASKS	POST	REFIT TRIALS	PASSAGE TIME	VISIT PROGRAM	MAINT. PROGRAM	REFIT DOCKING	REPAIR	HARBOUR	LONG LEAVE	DEFECTS AFFECTING SHIPS DESIGNED PERFORMANCE (DURATION IN HOURS)							REMARKS		
	1	2														H	E	L	G	F	ND	C		EW	DL
1	✓																								
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26	✓																								
27	✓																								
28	✓																								
29	✓																								
30	✓				✓																				
31	✓				✓																				
TOTAL	27	4		3	2	13			2	2	2		4	13					4						

OCEANOGRAPHIC SURVEY UDS 2/73

URDEF 11/73 BURNT OUT STARTER MOTOR AND SOLENOID

DAY RUNNING LOMBARD TRAINING FAMILIAR DAYS

ANGDE JOINT EXERCISE

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FILE 18/6/4363

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

HMAS LAE Report of Proceedings JUNE 1973

AS(NS) 23/8

D of O 24/8

DCNS 24/8

CNS 28/8

CNR 31/8

CNS 3/9

CNSW 4/9

SECRETARY 5/9

C of S 6/9

DPR 7/9

AS(NS) (NS55) Ca 10-9-73

para 6 - Ocean race escort. The present policy is that HMA Ships should not be provided.

~~para 6~~. HQ PNG dt conveyance letter is overclassified. 24/8.

BydGop. Propose no further actions on para 6. 24/8

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for 22/8/73

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CONFIDENTIAL

NAVY—CANBERRA

18 6 4363

Headquarters
Papua New Guinea Defence Force
Murray Barracks Free Bag
BOROKO PNG

Telephone 66

Quote in Reply

766-D1-720 AUG P.M.

NAVY REGISTRY



16 August 1973

The Chairman
Chiefs of Staff Committee (1)

→ The Secretary
Department of the Navy (4)

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding
HM Australian Fleet (2)

The Commander
Australian Mine Warfare and Patrol Forces (1)

CO. HMAS TARANGAU

CO. HMAS LAE

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS -HMAS LAE - JUNE 1973

1. Forwarded.
2. June has been a most successful month for HMAS LAE.
3. The detail supplied in paragraph 29 of the report is in response to a request from this Headquarters. The Headquarters is endeavouring to establish a seasonal pattern of floating debris in PNG waters for forecasting purposes.

(W. H. WANSLEY)
Colonel
Deputy Commander

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HMAS LAE,
at Lombrum

1st July 1973

The Commanding Officer,
HMAS TARANGAU.

HMAS LAE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS JUNE 1973

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMA Ship under my command for the month of June 1973. Unless otherwise stated times are Zone Kilo (-10).

2. On the morning of Friday 1st June LAE was at anchor in Seeadler Harbour during the PNGDF Land Element exercise, EXERCISE LONGSTEP. The ship weighed at 0550 and proceeded towards Hyane Harbour to embark the Headquarters Section 'C' Company 1st Battalion Pacific Islands Regiment.

3. At 0640 the main engine sea suction strainers became blocked causing overheating in both main engines which were immediately shut down. This fault was quickly rectified but attempts to restart the port main engine revealed abnormally low voltages in its associated battery bank. LAE therefore proceeded into Hyane Harbour on one engine securing alongside at 0718. I signalled the nature of this battery difficulty to HMAS TARANGAU, embarked the soldiers and proceeded back to Lombrum securing alongside at 0930. The troops were conveyed from Lombrum to their landing near Lorengau by alternative means with little delay.

4. The battery problem was found to have been caused by a minor fault in the port trickle charger; this was rectified without difficulty. No further trouble has been experienced.

5. LAE remained alongside over the weekend of the 2nd-3rd June sailing at 0400 Monday 4th June to continue her support role in EXERCISE LONGSTEP. From that time until 2300 Monday evening LAE ferried No. 7 and No. 8 Platoons, 'C' Company 1PIR, from their patrol areas, on the south coast of Manus Island, to the central headquarters position, near Lorengau. This operation, although somewhat tedious, proceeded very smoothly. A report on LAE's part in EXERCISE LONGSTEP has been forwarded separately to HQPNGDF.

6. The forenoon of Tuesday 5th June was spent in final preparation for the Islands Area patrol, for which LAE departed at 1200; immediate destination Rabaul. LAE berthed at the eastern end of the main wharf, Rabaul at 1630 Wednesday 6th June whereupon preparations for the job as relay ship for the Rabaul-Kavieng yacht race commenced.

...../- I called

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7. I called on the District Commissioner for East New Britain, Mr P. BOURAGA, at 1030 the following forenoon; Thursday afternoon being spent discussing race details, particularly communications and the starting procedure, with yacht club officials. LAE held an official cocktail party Thursday evening which was most successful in providing the very necessary personal contact between the yacht crews, club officials and the ship, prior to the event.

8. LAE sailed from alongside at 1145 Friday 8th June, anchoring off the race start position at 1200. The race start was at 1300, at which time the following personnel were embarked in LAE:

Lieutenant K.A. MANNING RANVR Naval Agent Rabaul
Mr R.E. HALPIN Commodore PNG Yachting Association
Mr J. WRIGHT Cameramen, Department of Information and
Mr P.R. BONNEY Extentsion Services.

9. Right from the start light winds set the pattern of the race. By 1900 the fleet was off Praced Point, on the approaches to Rabaul, but becalmed. LAE proceeded to a position some miles ahead of the yachts and hove to until 2130 when she proceeded through the fleet to identify the yachts. This was completed by 2330 when LAE returned to her position ahead and again hove to at 2356.

10. The awaited breeze came shortly after midnight, LAE getting underway at approximately 0100 Saturday 9th June. By 0800 the fleet had become spread over some 20 miles. This distance had increased considerably by late Saturday afternoon, but by Sunday morning 10 of the 11 yachts still competing were within 16 miles of eachother.

11. The leading yacht entered the Albatross Channel at approximately 0915 Sunday 10th June, LAE following at 0945, a few minutes ahead of the second yacht and proceeding to anchor 4 miles from Kavieng off Globig Island, at 1040. The leading yachts having passed her anchorage position LAE weighed at 1155 and followed them to the finish line for what turned out to be, a most exciting finish and subsequently secured alongside the Kavieng wharf at 1309. All yacht, barring the one which returned to Rabaul Saturday night, finished the race safely. During her "watch dog" role LAE covered some 370 miles.

12. Presentation of trophies and awards was made at a dinner-danee Sunday evening. Race public relations relied much on LAE's progress reports, however, the film and post event coverage were quite extensive. The cameramen from the Department of Information and Extension Services showed much interest in LAE and the Maritime Element in general. The film coverage includes numerous shots of LAE and her Ship's Company. I have requested that the department forward copies of the relevant film and photographs to HQPNGDF for Public Relations purposes.

13. The Rabaul Yacht Club requested that a report on LAE's role, as relay ship, with any suggestions which may improve the race organisation, be compiled; copies of this Report have been forwarded to HQPNGDF and TARANGAU separately.

14. LAE sailed from Kavieng at 1330 Monday 11th June, bound for the Bougainville area. In addition to fishery surveillance LAE continued collecting oceangraphic data by bathythermograph dips and by taking water samples.

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This work was unfortunately cut short, later in the month, when a defect developed in the Bathytherograph recorder. The following afternoon, Tuesday 12th June I carried out Captain's messdeck rounds.

15. At 0830 Wednesday 13th June, after an uneventful day and a half's patrol, LAE entered the north eastern entrance to the Buka Passage, securing alongside Buka Island outboard of MV FRISIA. I proceeded ashore at 0900 to Hutjena and called on the ADC Buka, but was met by Mr J.B. FORERS on his behalf. While at Hutjena arrangements were made with the district office Kieta for LAE's fuelling stop there later in the month.

16. LAE sailed from Buka Island at 1330 and commenced the passage to the Tasman Islands Atoll. Clocks were advanced one hour to zone Lima at 2330 that night. LAE made a radar landfall on the Mortlock Atoll at 0100L Thursday 14th June and on the Tasman Atoll at 1205L. The ship proceeded inside the Atoll anchoring at 1350L, remaining at anchor until 1520L the following day.

17. I proceeded ashore and was greeted by the Island's school teacher who informed me that his radio transmitter was unserviceable. Ship's Staff were unable to establish the cause of the problem so the matter was passed on to the district authorities in Kieta. The Tasman Islands are extremely isolated, the people being very insular and shy. Unlike the people of the neighbouring Mortlock Atoll some 150 miles to the west, the Tasmans have few hand craft skills or agricultural expertise. Their staple diet is the coconut supplemented by fish.

18. Having sailed from the Tasman Atoll pm Friday LAE carried out a night patrol between the Tasman and Mortlock Island Groups entering the Mortlock Islands shortly after 0900L Saturday 16th June anchoring at 0945L. The ship remained at anchor until am Monday 18th June. At 1100L Saturday I carried out Upperdeck and Machinery space rounds after which leave was granted.

19. The Mortlock people are undoubtedly one of the most simple and most friendly people in the Papua New Guinea area. Polanesian by race they are gifted hand craftsmen and have developed root plant crops, the latter being severely limited by the poor island soil. One of the most pleasing aspects of the visit was the good standard of English spoken by the school children.

20. It was reported to LAE by the people of both Atolls that a Taiwanese fishing boat had been sighted the week prior to our visits. No contact was made with this vessel during the patrol. LAE sailed from the Mortlock Islands at 1140L Monday 18th June. That afternoon the ship carried out a series of internal drills and weapon firings while on passage to the Bougainville coast. Clocks were retarded one hour to Zone Kilo at 1830L.

...../- A night

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A night patrol off the east coast of Bougainville followed.

21. At 0830 the following forenoon, Tuesday 19th June LAE entered Kieta harbour securing alongside the Bougainville Copper Pty. Ltd. wharf Anewa Bay. The ship was met by Mr A. MELVILLE of the District Office; I proceeded ashore with him at 0945 and called on the Acting District Commissioner Bougainville, Mr R. HEARN. A visit to the Panguna Mine had been arranged for myself and three others. The Executive Officers, Third Hand and 2nd MTP (all PNG personnel) accompanied me. Following the conducted tour we dined with public relations officers from Bougainville Copper Pty. Ltd. The overall co-operation of the company, both in permitting the use of their wharf and in offering assistance with Ship's Company tours and recreation on future visits to Kieta was much appreciated.

22. LAE sailed from Anewa Bay at 1350 Tuesday 19th June and made passage down inside the reef to Bougainville Strait and commenced the passage to Port Moresby, via the Jombard Entrance. To date LAE had experienced fair weather, however this deteriorated and a most uncomfortable night followed, during the transit of the Solomon Sea.

23. In spite of the weather LAE made good time during the next twenty-four hours, clearing the Jombard Entrance at 2300 Wednesday 20th June. With a following wind, sea and current LAE continued to gain time until by late Thursday the ship was six hours ahead. I signalled my intention to proceed to anchor in Port Moresby Harbour late Thursday night; this LAE did at 2340, weighing anchor at 0640 and securing alongside the TN Squadron Wharf at 0705 Friday 22nd June.

24. I called on the Commander, PNG Defence Force, Brigadier J.W. MORRIE OBE and the Chief of Operations PNG Defence Force, Captain J. LANCASTER RAN Friday forenoon.

25. LAE remained alongside over the weekend 23rd-24th June. On Monday 25th June LAE was visited by a group of PNGDF Officer Cadets. After a tour of the ship at 0930 LAE proceeded into Port Moresby Harbour for a sea familiarisation, returning alongside at 1040. Whilst in Port Moresby SBLT SLEX G. ELIAS PNGDF posted out of the ship being relieved as Executive Officer by SBLT SLEX J.I. MANIANA PNGDF.

26. LAE sailed from Port Moresby at 1240 Tuesday 26th June, bound for Lombrum. The worst sea conditions LAE has experienced this year made the next eighteen hours most unpleasant; in fact it was a very relieved Ship's Company when LAE berthed at Samarai Island at 0830 Wednesday 27th June. Fuelling was completed at 1030 the ship sailing at 1050, the Hornbill Channel being transited at 1245.

27. At 1600 the same afternoon LAE received a memorandum from HQPNGDF instructing the ship to return to Samarai Island for a possible Search and Rescue mission. This was cancelled at 1727 when signal DTG 270702Z JUN73 was received, LAE resumed her passage to Lombrum. The remainder of this passage passed uneventfully, LAE securing alongside Lombrum at 1235 Friday 29th June. I carried out messdeck rounds Friday forenoon prior to entering harbour.

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28. The following evening Saturday 30th June LAE was sailed on a MEDEVAC to the Horno Islands Group. The message was received shortly before 1915, LAE sailing at 2020 with Surg-Lieutenant C. WATTS RAN and Sister J. HERON RANNS embarked. LAE arrived off the Horno Islands at 2330. At 2359 30th June the patient, a pregnant indigenous woman, was being embarked in LAE for passage to the Naval Hospital at HMAS TARANGAU.

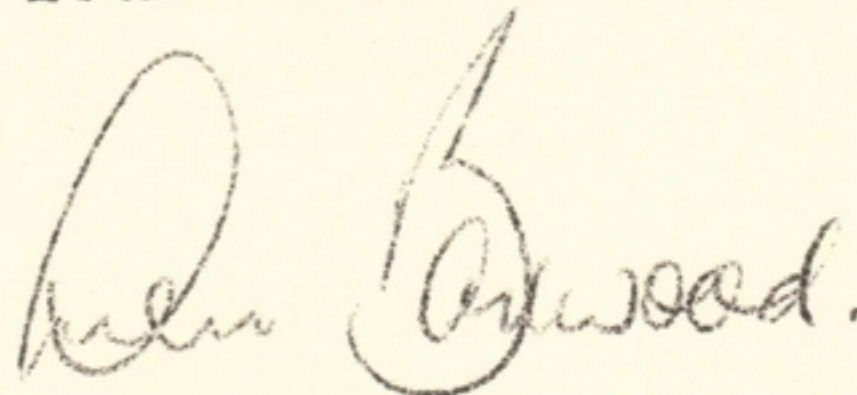
29. During the last three months LAE has traversed most PNG waters with the exception of the Gulf of Papua West of Port Moresby. This has enabled me to note the prevalence of debris in the various patrol areas. The only areas known to have large amounts of debris including logs are the Bismark Sea, mainly the western area extending up to 100 miles seaward from the Sepik River, and the area between Manus Island and the northern end of New Ireland. LAE sighted very little debris off the east coast of New Ireland, or in the Bougainville Area, or along the southern coast of Papua east of Port Moresby. The occasional log has been sighted between Cape Nelson and Vitiaz Strait.

30. The health, conduct and morale of the Ship's Company has been satisfactory during the month.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



(O.S. BARWOOD)
LIEUTENANT RAN
COMMANDING OFFICER

Enclosures: Appendices.

- A. Steaming Appendix.
- B. Monthly Return of Ship Availability.
- C. Exercise Appendix.

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APPENDIX A.

Steaming Appendix:

a.	Distance steamed during month	4176.3	miles
b.	Distance steamed since commissioning	124487.3	miles
c.	Hours underway during the month	329	hours
d.	Hours underway since commissioning	9472	hours
e.	Nights away from Base during the month	27	nights
f.	Occasions exceeding economical speed:		

01JUN73 As required for Exercise Long Step
 04JUN73 As required for Exercise Long Step
 30JUN73 MEDEVAC

APPENDIX B.

Monthly Return of Ship Availability: Attached

APPENDIX C.

Exercise Appendix:

01JUN73	0730	Embarked HQ Section 'C' Company
	0930	Disembarked Lombrum
04JUN73	0720 -0750	Embarked part of 7 Pltn 'C' Company
	1045 -1050	Disembarked Lorengau
	1345 -1400	Embarked remainder 7 Pltn
	1515 -1530	Embarked part 8 Pltn
	1725 -1735	Disembarked Lorengau
	1930 -2000	Embarked remainder of 8 Pltn
	2200 -2210	Disembarked Lorengau
18JUN73	1400 -1445	Internal Drills, Exercised Action Stations, Emergency Stations, Leaving Ship Stations, Fire, Flood, Man overboard drills
	1500 -1550	40/60 and small arms firings.

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FILE 18/6/4397

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

HMAS LAE Report of Proceedings JULY 1973

AS(NS) *14/9*
 D of C *14/9*
 DONS *19/9*
 CNS *20/9*
 CNP *21/9*
 QNTSA *22/9*
 CNSW *25/9*
 SECRETARY *25/9*
 C of S *26/9*
 DPR *28/9*

para 8. It would have been prudent to have had both generators fully serviceable.

para 12. Lae.

para 24. 40/60 malfunctions.

Action taken with J.S. re designation of forwarding letter. *14/9*.

AS(NS) (NS55) *Ca 2/10/73*

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fd 12/9/73

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
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10 SEP P.M.



DEFENCE
MINISTRY

NAVY—CANBERRA

18 6 4397

Telephone 56166

Quote in Reply

Headquarters
Papua New Guinea Defence Force
Murray Barracks Free Bag
BOROKO PNG

766-D1-7

6 Sep 73

The Chairman
Chiefs of Staff Committee (1)

→ The Secretary
Department of the Navy (4)

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding
HM Australian Fleet (2)

The Commander
Australian Mine Warfare and Patrol Forces (1)

CO HMAS TARANGAU

CO HMAS LAE

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
HMAS LAE - JULY 73

1. Forwarded.

2. In regard to paragraph 24 of the report this Headquarters will investigate the feasibility of training armament artificers to assist HMAS TARANGAU with PNG PABRON 40/60 mounting inspection and repairs.

(J. W. NORRIE)
Brigadier
Commander

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
CONFIDENTIAL

RESTRICTED

HMAS LAE,
at Lombrum

1st August 1973

The Commanding Officer,
HMAS TARANGAU.

HMAS LAE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - JULY 1973

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMA Ship under my command for the month of July 1973. All times are Zone Kilo (-10).

2. At the start of the month LAE was underway on a MEDEVAC off the coast of the Horno Islands Group. At 0020 the morning of Sunday 1st July, the patient, a pregnant indigenous woman in labour, had been embarked for passage to the RAN Hospital at Lombrum. LAE's Commanding Officer's cabin had undergone a transformation into an emergency labour ward. LAE proceeded directly to Lombrum while Surgeon-Lieutenant C. WATTS RAN and Sister J. HERON RANNS stood by in case the delivery was to take place onboard.

3. LAE secured alongside at 0240. The woman was safely conveyed to the hospital by ambulance where the baby was born at 0330. Regrettably the baby was dead at birth, however, the mother's condition was satisfactory; she has since returned to her village.

4. LAE remained alongside for the week commencing Monday 2nd July while carrying out programmed self maintenance; few difficulties were experienced.

5. LAE sailed for the Northern Patrol Area at 0940 Monday 9th July. At 2300 it became apparent that there was something wrong with the port generator. Investigation revealed serious dilution of the lubricating oil. Attempts to start the starboard generator failed so I signalled the nature of the problem and proceeded to Wewak securing alongside at 0410 Tuesday 10th July.

6. A malfunction of the air shut off the solenoid was found to be the problem with the starboard generator; however, during fault finding a push rod fractured. URDEF 12/73 was raised, the starboard generator injector lines were transferred to the port generator and an availability sitrep sent to HQPNGDF (DTG's 092227Z JUL 73 and 100058Z JUL 73 refer).

7. LAE remained in Wewak until am Wednesday 11th July. Tuesday forenoon I called on the Commanding Officer, Military Area Wewak, Lieutenant-Colonel C.J. LEWIS. The co-operation of the Land Element personnel and the assistance offered LAE, during this period, was much appreciated.

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8. Having received approval to continue her patrol programme with one generator, LAE sailed from Wewak at 1045 Wednesday. Driving rain, strong winds and awkward seas marked the weather for the next week including the ship's visit to LAE town.

9. LAE anchored in the lee of Finsch Harbour at 1400 Thursday 12th July, weighing again at 0700 the following morning. The ship then proceeded direct to Lae town securing outboard of MV KALILI at the New Coastal Wharf shortly after 1230 Friday 13th July. This arrangement was quite unsatisfactory, however the harbour authorities were most co-operative enabling LAE to make a cold move alongside at 1430.

10. The location of both the Main and New Coastal Wharves is unsuitable for Patrol Boats during the South East season. Excessive rolling and surging, no cartamarans or wharf fenders and large amounts of floating debris caused much inconvenience and concern throughout the visit. A separate letter on this subject has been forwarded to HMAS TARANGAU and HQPNGDF.

11. I called on the Commanding Officer Military Area Lae, Lieutenant-Colonel P. COLE at 1330 Friday and on the District Commissioner for the Morobe District, Mr A. CAREY at 1500. The Officer Commanding Military Cadet School Lae, Major T. WILKINSON was absent from Lae town during the visit.

12. An official cocktail party was held onboard Friday evening. It was both noticeable and disappointing that virtually all the indigenous guests declined their invitations. Apart from this party there was no official contact between LAE and the citizens of Lae town. I was very grateful, however, for the hospitality extended to the ship by the Defence Force personnel at Igam Barracks.

13. LAE remained alongside over the weekend of 14th-15th July sailing both Monday and Tuesday for MCS cadet training. The ship sailed at 1115 Monday with 23 Land Element cadets and two PNGDF officers embarked. The weather and sea conditions not being ideal, LAE proceeded to Salamua anchoring at 1245 weighing again at 1330; returning alongside the New Coastal Wharf at 1445.

14. At 0900 Tuesday 17th July LAE embarked 5 MCS Maritime Element Cadets plus 4 PNGDF officers and proceeded into Huon Gulf for coastal navigation training and patrol boat familiarisation. A .50 calibre machine gun firing and manoverboard drills were also demonstrated; the ship returning alongside at 1415. Lieutenant R.W. EASTGATE RASIGS joined, shortly after berthing for a 12 day patrol boat familiarisation prior to taking up a posting at the PNG Training Depot, Goldie River.

15. LAE sailed from Lae town for the West New Britain Area at 1005 on Wednesday 18th July, passage to the north coast being via Vesup Channel and Dampier Strait.

...../- The

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3.

16. The damage to the paintwork as a result of the period in Lae town was such that it required immediate attention. LAE therefore anchored the following forenoon off Kaliai Village on the North Coast New Britain remaining there overnight. Kaliai is the home of one of LAE's Ship Company, who was able to visit his family for the first time in five years.

17. The ship weighed anchor at 0900 Friday 20th July and continued her patrol of the West New Britain and Vitu Island area. One of the points of interest during the patrol was Mount Langla the active volcano which began erupting recently. The sight was quite spectacular by night.

18. LAE continued her patrol until 0830 Saturday 21st July when she entered Kimbe **securing** alongside, at 0900. The ship was met by the Acting District Commissioner, for West New Britain Mr N.F. FOWLER.

19. LAE remained at Kimbe for the rest of the weekend sailing at 1000 on Monday 23rd July. For the next two days LAE patrolled between Kimbe and Kavieng including New Hanover Area. Tuesday 24th July was set aside for internal drills and weapon firings, these being completed at 1530.

20. A patrol in the New Hanover area took place Tuesday night. The following morning prior to entering Kavieng, LAE carried out pilotage training exercise; with passage of Stefan Strait immediately followed by the Albatross Channel thence passage to Kavieng securing alongside at 1225.

21. I called on the District Commissioner for New Ireland Mr P. HOLMES at 1300. LAE sailed from Kavieng at 0900 Thursday 26th July and patrolled the Ysabel Strait and St Mathias Islands area.

22. A short visit was made to Emirau Island Thursday afternoon securing stern to the jetty at 1500. LAE was able to provide first aid treatment for a number of the islanders as the Aid Post supplies were very low. The medical orderly stated that he was expecting supplies to arrive by Government trawler within a few days. LAE sailed at 1800 and proceeded to patrol the St Mathias Islands area until 2359 when departure for Lombrum was taken.

23. LAE secured alongside Lombrum at 1115 Friday 27th July remaining alongside for the weekend of 28th-29th July. On Monday 30th July LAE commenced her Self Maintenance Period which was in progress at the end of the month.

24. The performance of LAE's 40/60 mounting has been far from satisfactory in recent months. On the last two patrols four attempted firings were aborted through various malfunctions. The problems generally have been of a recurring nature, some parts being replaced three times. During the present SMP Base Staff are carrying out a thorough examination of the whole mounting.

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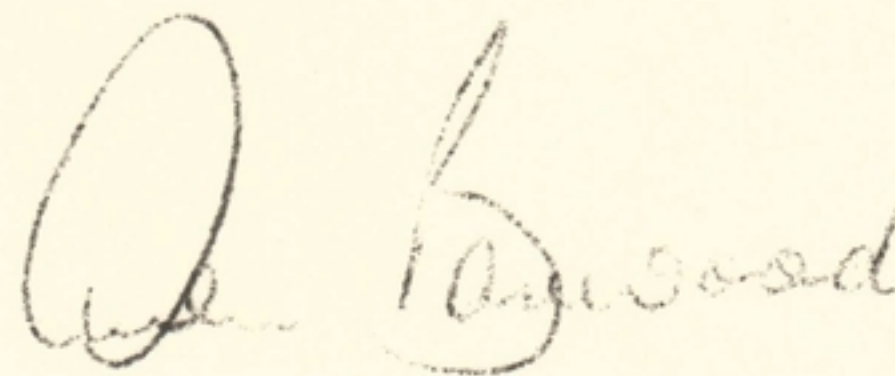
4.

25. The conduct, health and morale of the Ship's Company during the month has been very satisfactory.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



(O.S. BARWOOD)
LIEUTENANT RAN
COMMANDING OFFICER

Enclosures: Appendices.

- A. Steaming Appendix.
- B. Monthly Return of Ship Availability.
- C. Exercise Appendix.

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APPENDIX A.

Steaming Appendix:

a.	Distance steamed during the month	2366	miles
b.	Distance steamed since commissioning	126853.3	miles
c.	Hours underway during month	186	hours
d.	Hours underway since commissioning	9658	hours
e.	Nights away from Base during month	18	nights
f.	Occasions exceeding economical speed		

01 JUL MEDIVAC

27 JUL As required for quarterly full power trials.

APPENDIX B.

Monthly Return of Ship Availability: Attached.

APPENDIX C.

Exercise Appendix:

11 Jul 73	1435 - 1550 NBCDX - Internal Drills.
	1600 - 1630 40/60 & .50 calibre SUFX firing (40/60 aborted)
24 Jul 73	1055 - 1530 NBCDX and Internal Drills.
	1300 - 1440 40/60 and Small arms firings (40/60 aborted)
25 Jul 73	0930 - 1230 Coastal NAVEX and PILOTAGE EXERCISE

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FILE 18/6/4466

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

HMAS hAE Report of Proceedings AUGUST 1973

AS(NS) 18/10.

D. of O 19/10

~~DCNS~~ 19/10

CNS 22/10.

CNP 23/10.

CNTS 25/10

CNSW 24/10.

SECRETARY 25/10

C of S 26/10

DFR 29/10

~~D of O~~
AS(NS) (NS55)

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Ca 16/10

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NAVY—CANBERRA		
18	6	4466

Telephone 56166

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Headquarters
Papua New Guinea Defence Force
Murray Barracks Free Bag
BOROKO PNG

766-D1-7

5 Oct 73

The Chairman
Chiefs of Staff Committee (1)

→ The Secretary
Department of the Navy (4)

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding
HM Australian Fleet (2)

The Commander
Australian Mine Warfare and Patrol Forces (1)

CO HMAS TARANGAU

CO HMAS LAE

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
HMAS LAE - AUGUST 1973

1. Forwarded.

2. In regard to paragraph 24 of the Report, a simplified Disciplinary Code for the PNGDF is now in draft form and it is hoped that its introduction will assist in overcoming the problem.

(J. W. NORRIE)
Brigadier
Commander

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HMAS LAE
at Lombrum

1st September, 1973.

The Commanding Officer,
HMAS TARANGAU.

HMAS LAE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS AUGUST 1973

Sir,

1. I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMA Ship under my command for the month of August 1973. All times are Zone K (-10).
2. LAE was undergoing a self maintenance period at the start of the month and despite numerous interruptions during the week, most of the work planned was completed. One pleasing aspect was that two impending defects were found and repaired during planned maintenance routines.
3. On Wednesday 1st August, the Commander Papua New Guinea Defence Force, Brigadier J.W. NORRIE OBE, accompanied by the Chief of Operations, Captain J. LANCASTER RAN, visited LAE for an informal walkaround. On completion of this, a demonstration of boarding party procedures took place; LAE boarded the Motor Water Lighter.
4. COMPNGFOR's Divisions were held ashore at HMAS TARANGAU on the morning of Thursday 2nd August, LAE's Ship's Company being on parade.
5. LAE sailed for patrol at 1200 Tuesday 7th August, having embarked Sub-Lieutenant K. FRANK PNGDF for passage to Kavieng. Initially the ship proceeded to anchor off Patuam Island in the Horno Group where I questioned the plantation manager in reference to a reported submarine sighting in the area on 30th July last. A separate report has been forwarded to HMAS TARANGAU (HMAS TARANGAU signals, DTG's 310005ZJUL73 and 052349AUG73 refer).
6. After weighing from Patuam Island at 1725, LAE proceeded toward Kavieng making a visual landfall on New Hanover at 0500. A minor fault, which was rectified shortly after arriving in Kavieng, rendered the ship's radar unserviceable for much of the night. LAE secured alongside Kavieng at 1007 Wednesday 8th August. The 8th Field Survey Squadron party of Captain T. ROYLE RASURV and two Sappers, plus their equipment, was embarked from HMAS SAMARAI. Sub-Lieutenant K. FRANK transferred to SAMARAI whilst A/Sub-Lieutenant S. RAEPA PNGDF, who had been on temporary duty in HMAS SAMARAI, re-embarked in LAE. SAMARAI sailed for Lombrum at 1430 that afternoon.

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.../7. LAE

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7. LAE remained in Kavieng overnight sailing at 0600 Thursday morning. For the remainder of the month LAE worked in support of the survey party in the New Ireland-New Hanover area as part of Operation Plastic Bird, Project E7. This involved the re-locating and targeting of selected survey stations in the New Ireland Area. The "Marks" concerned were originally laid during 1956/57 in Project Cutlass, a joint United States/Australian Venture.
8. At 1230 Thursday 9th August, LAE arrived off Semberi Island in the Tabar Group, eventually anchoring for the night in Pigibut Bay at 1640. The ship weighed at 0700 the following morning. Survey operations continued in the area, with the Saraware passage being transitted at 1200 and again at 1330. LAE anchored off the Northern Coast of Tabar Island at 1711, intending to weigh again at 2300.
9. While weighing anchor the Windlass Clutch became defective; LAE therefore remained at anchor until the winch was repaired sufficiently to weigh anchor. This was achieved by 0730 the following morning. (URDEF 13/73 and my signal DTG 102220ZAUG73 refers).
10. The survey continued at Mahur Island Saturday 11th August; LAE night steaming to the Tanga Island Group on completion.
11. LAE operated around the Tanga Group all day Sunday, anchoring off Boang Island at 1920. Survey operations on Boang Island were completed by mid-day Monday 13th August, when the ship weighed and proceeded to the Lihir Island Group, anchoring near Samo I village at 1600.
12. The following morning LAE weighed at 0600 and operated in the Lihir Islands until dusk. At 1800 one sailor who had sustained a gash requiring stitching was landed to the hospital at Palie Mission while LAE proceeded to pick up the remaining survey party. All personnel were recovered by 2030; a night steam back to the Tabar Group ensued.
13. During the survey operations many of the survey ground marks were found to have been washed out. This resulted in the ship returning to some areas to search for selected alternatives. In the Tabar Island case all three alternatives had also been washed out. LAE therefore proceeded to Kavieng securing alongside at 1630 Wednesday 15th August.
14. LAE sailed from Kavieng at 1200 the following day, Thursday, and operated around the New Hanover Area until late p.m. Friday. The ship then steamed overnight to the South Western Coast of New Ireland. Survey operations in this area were completed by 1400 Saturday 18th August, whereupon LAE proceeded to Rabaul securing at 1630 outboard of HMAS SAMARAI.
15. The ship remained in Rabaul until 1100 Monday

.../20th August

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20th August, sailing being delayed one hour by a minor medical case. For the remainder of the day LAE carried out a comprehensive series of internal drills and weapon firings whilst on passage to Dyaul Island.

16. LAE was on task at first light the following morning Tuesday 21st, however, Tuesday and Wednesday did not pass without incident. An impending defect became apparent in one of the ships turbo blowers and on Wednesday a series of defects, including faults with two air-conditioning units, two pumps and the HF transceiver developed. I therefore signalled my intention to complete Wednesday's tasks and return to Lombrum for repairs. (May signals DTGs 202358ZAUG73 and 220040ZAUG73 refers).

17. To facilitate no waste in survey time, Captain ROYLE and his team disembarked at Kavieng prior to LAE's departure for Lombrum. This enabled them to continue the task by road. LAE berthed at Lombrum at 0710 Thursday 23rd August.

18. All repairs were completed by 1500 Saturday 25th August, including the fitting of the new windlass clutch subject of paragraph 9. LAE sailed from Lombrum to resume the survey support at 1520 Saturday 25th August. The passage back to Kavieng was also not without incident. The starboard gearbox overheated as a result of airlocks in both the lubricating oil and cooling water systems. Fortunately the trouble was detected before any damage was sustained.

19. LAE anchored in Kavieng harbour 1030 Sunday and re-embarked the survey team. Having weighed at 1230, survey operations recommenced in the Stefan Strait area; the ship returning to anchor at Kavieng at 1800.

20. At 2150 LAE sailed from Kavieng and night steamed to the Tabar Islands anchoring off Sembeni Island at 0635 Monday 27th August. This third attempt to achieve the aim in the Tabar Islands was frustrated by poor weather and a defective radio in the aircraft carrying out the aerial photography. Because of the distance to the next and last New Ireland survey stations, LAE remained at anchor until 2300, then night steamed to be off South East Coast of New Ireland at first light.

21. In driving rain the task was completed by dusk Tuesday 28th August. The ship then proceeded overnight to Rabaul securing alongside at 0730 Wednesday 29th. Progress with the New Ireland survey had been better than anticipated so LAE was asked to assist, in the remaining time, with similar work on the South Coast of New Britain.

22. To achieve this LAE sailed from Rabaul at 0630 Friday 31st August, proceeding to the Jacquirot Bay Area. Survey operations continued till dark Friday. At 2359 31st August, LAE was underway night steaming off the South Coast of New Britain.

.../23. The amount

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23. The amount of weekend running during the month was unavoidable. To compensate, as much leave as possible was granted when in harbour. The ships company responded admirably to the irregular routine, most days starting at 0600, and working long hours.

24. During the afternoon of Friday 17th August, whilst at anchor I conducted a modified form of the Quarterly reading of the Articles of War. This included a detailed explanation of much of the Naval Discipline Act. The interest shown by the Ship Company was most gratifying, however, their lack of knowledge of the Act and their lack of understanding of the more serious offences, covered by it, was most disturbing.

25. The conduct, health and morale of the Ship's Company remain very satisfactory.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,



(O.S. BARWOOD)
Lieutenant RAN
Commanding Officer

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX C

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APPENDIX A

STEAMING APPENDIX

a.	Distance steamed during month	3,182 miles
b.	Distance steamed since commissioning	130,035 miles
c.	Hours underway during month	275 hours
d.	Hours underway since commissioning	9,933 hours
e.	Nights away from base during month	23 days
f.	Occasions exceeding economical speed	Nil

APPENDIX B

Monthly return of Ship availability - Attached

APPENDIX C

EXERCISE APPENDIX

01 Aug 73	1430 - 1530	Boardex
20 Aug 73	1300 - 1700	NBCDX SUX 40/60 - 50 Cal M/G Internal Drills

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(MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY TO ACCOMPANY MONTHLY REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS)

APPENDIX 'B' TO CANO 7/66

I.C. ENGINE SHIPS

HMAS... LAE

AGE SINCE FIRST COMMISSIONING... 5 1/2 .. YRS

PROGRESSIVE TOTAL EN. HRS

DATE... 3 SEP 73

... 130,035 ... MILES

NO. 2... 1618

MONTH	AVAILABILITY STATE		OPERATIONAL DUTIES	EXERCISE	WEAPON TRAINING	SPECIAL TASKS	POST REFIT TRIALS	PASSAGE TIME	VISIT PROGRAM	MAINT. PROGRAM	REFIT DOCKING	REPAIR	HARBOUR LONG LEAVE	DEFECTS AFFECTING SHIPS DESIGNED PERFORMANCE (DURATION IN HOURS)							REMARKS				
	1	2												H	E	L	G	S	ND	C		EW	DL	CPT	
1	✓								✓																
2	✓								✓																
3	✓								✓																
4	✓								✓																
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26	✓					✓																			
27	✓					✓																			
28	✓					✓																			
29	✓					✓																			
30	✓					✓																			
31	✓					✓																			
TOTAL	31				1	22		2	6			12													

URDEF 13/73

DEFECTS

1. AIR CONDITIONING
2. HF TRANCEIVERS
3. AUXILIARY G.S. PUMP
4. JAPSCO PUMP SEAL

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FILE 18/6/4520

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

HMAS LAE Report of Proceedings SEPTEMBER 1973

AS(NS) 8/11

D of O 8/11

~~DOF~~ 9/11 The deficiencies in life rafts onboard PNG PBF's is a matter for concern.

DCNS

CNS 20/11

CNT 21/11

CNTS 22/11

CNSW Situation in para 2 of covering letter being investigated.

SECRETARY 26/11

D of O 27/11

DPR

D of O 29/11

AS(NS) (M855) 31/11

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NAVY—CANBERRA

18 6 4520

Telephone 56166

Quote in Reply

766-D1-22.....

Headquarters
Papua New Guinea Defence Force
Murray Barracks Free Bag
BOROKO PNG

31 October 1973

The Chairman
Chiefs of Staff Committee (1)

→ The Secretary
Department of the Navy (4)

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding
HM Australian Fleet (2)

The Commander
Australian Mine Warfare and Patrol Forces (1)

CO HMAS TARANGAU

CO HMAS LAE

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - HMAS LAE
SEPTEMBER 1973

1. Forwarded.

2. Delays with the survey and replacement of life rafts have been a cause of concern since early this year. In signal DTG 110536Z APR 73, CSS Sydney was informed that 6 x 8 man liferafts were overdue for replacement in patrol boats. CSS (Signal DTG 170324Z APR 73) informed TARANGAU that replacements were not then available but would be despatched as soon as possible. In the event 4 No. were received by air mid July and of those three were issued to patrol boats with earlier survey and replacement dates for their rafts than HMAS LAE and the fourth was issued to HMAS SAMARAI as a replacement for one lost at sea. A further two rafts were recently received in MV ALDERJO and are held for supply to HMAS LAE on return to LOMBRUM. Supply of the remaining 8 man life rafts is still awaited and 10 are now outstanding for supply.

J. W. Norrie
(J. W. NORRIE)
Brigadier
Commander

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HMAS LAE
Port Moresby

1ST October 1973

Commanding Officer
HMAS TARANGAU

HMAS LAE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
SEPTEMBER 1973

1. I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMAS ship under my command for the month of September 1973. All times are zone kilo (-10).
2. LAE was night steaming off the South Coast of New Britain at the start of the month while in support of the 8th Field Survey Squadron. At first light the morning of Saturday 1st September the Survey party proceeded ashore near Iawa Village, Wide Bay. After two hours, and no success in locating the ground mark, the party was recovered, thus ending LAE's role in the Survey. At 0815 course was set for Rabaul, the ship securing alongside at 1315.
3. At 1430, having disembarked Captain Royle and his team and recovered one sailor, who had been absent on sailing the day before, LAE sailed for Lombrum. The passage passed uneventfully LAE securing alongside Lombrum at 1455 Sunday 2nd September.
4. The following day LAE commenced a two week Base Assisted Maintenance period. The major tasks undertaken were those of cleaning diesel oil fuel tanks and the spray painting of passageways and storerooms. Most of the work set down for the period was completed. A separate report on the period is being forwarded to TARANGAU and HQ PNGDF.
5. Papua New Guinea National Day Celebrations took place in Lorengau Saturday 15th September. LAE's Executive Officer, Sub-Lieutenant J. I. Maniana PNGDF, represented the Defence Force and gave a short address. After the ceremonies were concluded the Minister for Education in the PNG Government Mr E. Olawale payed an informal visit to the ship; he was accompanied by the Deputy District Commissioner for the Manus District Mr L. Hastings.
6. Shortly before sailing, Monday 17th September the ships HF transceiver, having developed a fault similar to that experienced during August, was replaced. Departure was delayed by only 45 minutes, to 1045.
7. The passage to the Southern Patrol area was marred by unpleasant sea conditions. LAE anchored off Kiriwina Island at 0940 Wednesday 19th September. Due to the distance (by boat) to Losuia and the poor weather conditions, leave was restricted to two watches each day. Nonetheless the ships soccer team did land to play a local side Thursday afternoon being beaten 2-0. I called on the ADC Kiriwina Mr J. Dagg Thursday forenoon.
8. LAE weighed anchor at 1020 Friday 21st September and proceeded, via the Swept Channel towards Normanby Island. At the request of the ADC Kiriwina LAE embarked the Reverend Father B. Barnes, Inspector P. Lenahan

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/and Inspector

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- 2 -

and Inspector R. Anderson all of the PNG Constabulary for passage to Alotau. The officers were visiting the various police units in the area and had been stranded at Losuia by an unserviceable Government Trawler. (My signal DTG 210118Z Sep 73 refers).

9. To assist the police officers with their visits LAE called at Bola Bola Mission (Goodenough Island) and at Esa-ala (Normanby Island) p.m. Friday; anchoring off the latter at 2045. LAE remained at anchor until 0140 Saturday and steamed toward Alotau for the remainder of the night. The ship secured alongside Alotau at 0845 Saturday 22nd September having transited the Hornbill Channel at 0630.

10. LAE remained at Alotau for the weekend. Soccer and Volleyball were played, Saturday afternoon, against the Cameron High School. Cameron High winning the volleyball and the Soccer being drawn.

11. At 2330 Saturday M.V. ARUNA unexpectedly arrived off Alotau, LAE had to standoff to allow her to berth before securing outboard. The Executive Officer performed the move. The manouvre was repeated when ARUNA sailed at 0700 the following morning; LAE securing back alongside at 0710.

12. The ship was opened to visitors during the afternoon of Sunday 24th September; the number of visitors being about 250. LAE informally entertained a number of Alotau citizens Sunday evening. The group included the District Commissioner for the Milne Bay District Mr G. Baumau (whom I had called on earlier in the day) other Administration officers and representatives of the Education Department and PNG Corrective Institutions. The number of indigenous guests present was very pleasing.

13. LAE sailed from Alotau at 1015 Monday 24th September with Inspector R. K. Bull PNG Corrective Institutions embarked for passage to Samarai Island. During this short passage a series of internal drills and seaman exercises were performed. The ship secured alongside of Samarai Island at 1320. The ADC Samarai Island was absent during the visit.

14. The ship remained at Samarai Island until 0530 Wednesday 26th September, when having pre-arranged a rendezvous with HMAS MADANG, LAE sailed. This gave LAE her first in company steaming since SOUADEX TWO, which took place early in April this year. On transiting the Hornbill Channel at 0905 LAE detached and continued her southern patrol of the Louisiade Archipelago area.

15. Earlier in the month a leaking oil seal in the Steering System had become apparent, initially it was not serious; a new seal was demanded and LAE continued her programme. On the night of Wednesday 26th the seal deteriorated to a stage where the hydraulics became inoperable. LAE therefore proceeded under mechanical steering direct to Port Moresby. The ship anchored in Port Moresby harbour at 0355 Friday 28th September weighing again at 0645 and securing alongside at 0710. (My signal DTG 262312Z Sep 73 refers).

16. An inspection of the steering revealed that all four bearings associated with the crown wheel spindle and tiller lever were worn and would probably need replacing. At the end of the month LAE was in Port Moresby affecting repairs.

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17. In my June Report of Proceedings I commented on the sighting of floating debris in PNG waters. It has been of particular note that in the last three months LAE has sighted very little floating debris of any kind anywhere in the Bismark Sea, off the East Coast of New Ireland, on the South Coast of New Britain, Milne Bay and Louisiade Archipelago or off the Southern Coast of Papua east of Port Moresby.

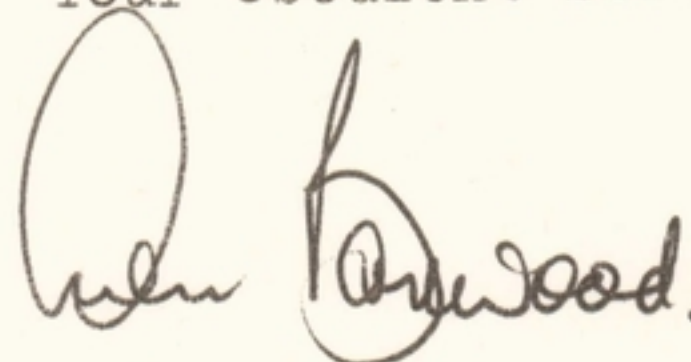
18. Earlier this year LAE demanded replacements for the ships three eight man inflatable life rafts. All three are now well overdue for survey; one by six months, the others by three and two months, and there is no indication when replacements will be available.

19. The health, conduct and morale of the ships company remains very satisfactory.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your Obedient Servent,



(O. S. BARWOOD)
Lieutenant RAN
Commanding Officer

RESTRICTED
RESTRICTED

- 4 -

APPENDIX A

Steaming Appendix:

- a. Distance steamed during month - 1757 miles.
- b. Distance steamed since commissioning - 131,792 miles.
- c. Hours underway during month - 91 hours.
- d. Hours underway since commissioning - 10,024 hours.
- e. Nights away from base during month - 13 days.
- f. Occasions exceeding economical speed - Nil.

APPENDIX B

Monthly return of Ship Availability - Attached.

APPENDIX C

Exercise Appendix:

05 - 12 Sep 73	HARBOUR NAVCOMEX	3 x OFFICERS FLASHEX 3 x VOICE PROCEDURE
24 SEP 73 1105-1152	NBCDX SEAMANEX	INCLUDING INTERNAL DRILLS

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RESTRICTED

FILE 18/6/4579

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

HMAS

LAE

Report of Proceedings October 1973

AS(NS)

D of O

DCNS

CNS

CNP

CNTS

CNSW

SECRETARY

C of S

DPR

AS(NS)

(NS55)

Para 11.12.13 Signal delay.
Some comment by computer would
seem to be appropriate. 11/12

10/12
11/12
17/12
18/12
19/12
20/12
21/12
28/12
4/2/74

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10/12/73

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NAVY—CANBERRA		
18	6	4579

Headquarters
Papua New Guinea Defence Force
Murray Barracks Free Bag
BOROKO PNG

766.D1.22

27 November, 1973

The Chairman
Chiefs of Staff Committee (1)

→ The Secretary
Department of the Navy (4)

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding
HM Australian Fleet (2)

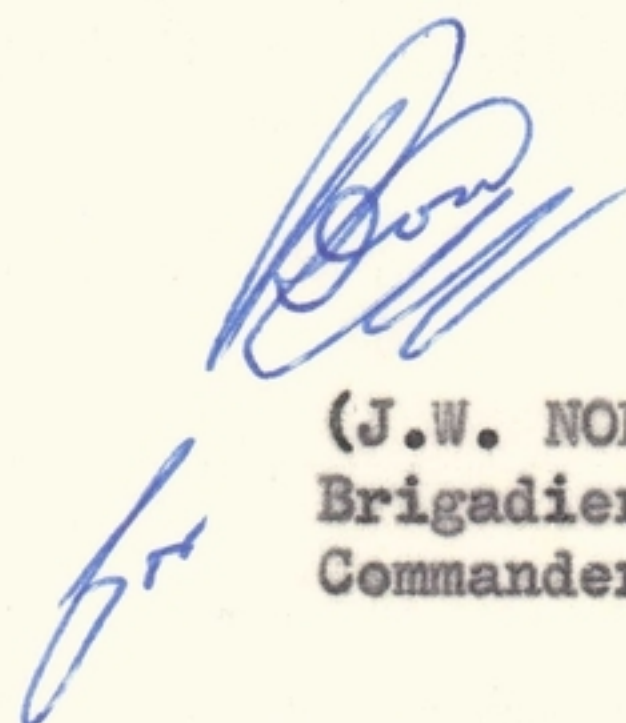
The Commander
Australian Mine Warfare and Patrol Forces (1)

CO HMAS TARANGAU

CO HMAS LAE

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - HMAS LAE
OCTOBER 1973

1. Forwarded.


(J.W. NORRIE)
Brigadier
Commander

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RESTRICTED

HMAS LAE
at Lombrum,

116 NOV 1973

Commanding Officer
HMAS TARANGAU

HMAS LAE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
OCTOBER 1973.

1. I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMA Ship under my command for the month of October 1973. All times are Zone K(-10).
2. LAE began the month under repair alongside in Port Moresby. Frustrated by strikes in Australia and mishandling of the spare parts, on their arrival in Port Moresby, the repairs were not completed until Wednesday 10th October. At 1725 on that day LAE proceeded into Port Moresby harbour and carried out a successful sea trial on the steering and replacement blower. At 2100, the ship sailed for patrol in the Gulf of Papua.
3. Two tasks were assigned LAE during the five day patrol. The first was to investigate, and report on the activities of the prawn trawlers operating in the Gulf of Papua. This was done by day, during the forenoon of Thursday 11th October, and again by night, Friday evening. All seventeen trawlers operating in the area were licensed. (My signal DTG 110205ZOCT73 refers).
4. The second task was to investigate a sunken reef reported recently by a fishing vessel. During Friday forenoon LAE carried out a thorough search based on the datum position given, but did not find the reef. The echo sounder trace and fixes, for the period of the search, were handed to PNGDF Maritime Operations Staff.
5. In addition to these tasks LAE patrolled the Gulf of Papua from Yule Island to Bramble Cay, entering Kerema for the weekend at 1000 Saturday 13th October. The visit was treated enthusiastically by the local people, 600 of whom visited the ship while open to visitors Sunday. Much interest also came from the sport, (Soccer, Rugby and Basketball), played between Kerema and the ship. The honours were even, LAE winning the Rugby, Kerema the Soccer while the Basketball was drawn.
6. LAE sailed from Kerema at 1030 Monday 15th October on the tide. The new buoys marking the channel across the bar are excellent. The least depth experienced - on a 2 metre tide - was 5 feet under the keel.
7. During the passage to Port Moresby LAE successfully conducted a quarterly full power trial. This had been overdue from the September quarter due to the faulty turbo - blower replaced in Port Moresby. LAE secured alongside TN Squadron wharf Port Moresby at 2045 Monday and spent the following day preparing to escort the TN Squadron LCM8's 1050, 1051, and 1053 from Port Moresby to Wewak.

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(HQPNGDF Operational Instruction 4/73 refers). The scheduled departure Wednesday was delayed till 2359 due to poor weather conditions.

9. The weather, although far from ideal at the time of sailing, did not cause concern till late forenoon the following day, Thursday 18th October, when shelter was sought. This was found in Beagle Bay, near Hood Point by 1330. (My signal DTG 180325Z OCT 73 refers).

10. Conditions remained unsuitable for the LCM8's for the next two days. On Friday morning having lost a quantity of main engine lubricating oil due to a main bearing set screw vibrating loose, LAE returned to Port Moresby alone, securing alongside at 1115. I took the opportunity to top up with fuel and water as well before sailing again at 1530. (My signal DTG 182105Z OCT 73 refers).

11. HQPNGDF had signalled permission for LAE to exceed economical speed in order to rejoin the LCM8's as soon as possible, the sea conditions precluded this however. During the return passage a pin dislodged from the linkage between one of the fuel racks, on the Port Main Engine, and the governor. The rack moved to the full fuel position, with the engine still under load. The overspeed trip operated shutting down the engine. Later investigation revealed probable damage to the Portional Vibration Dampers, thus restricting the use of the port Main Engine. I signalled the nature of the problem proposing to continue the escort duty on one engine. (My signal DTG 192055Z OCT 73 and URDEF 15/73 refer).

12. No reply to this signal had been received by 1600 so signalled my intention to sail should weather conditions improve. LAE subsequently sailed from Beagle Bay with the LCM8's in company at 1720 Saturday 20th October. The "convoy" continued without further delay to East Cape, a few minor mechanical defects being repaired en route with the assistance of LAE's ship's staff.

13. Progress was such that the "convoy" arrived of East Cape, and the Hornbill Channel, at 2000 Sunday night. In view of the long delays already experienced I had signalled a request to transit the Hornbill Channel by night, should conditions be suitable. As no reply was received LAE and her convoy anchored off the passage for the remainder of the night. (My signal DTG 210515Z OCT 73 refers).

14. At first light the following morning, Monday 22nd October LAE weighed anchor proceeding to lead the LCM8's through the Hornbill Channel at 0600. Apart from fuel line problems in LCM8 1053 the remainder of the passage to Lae Town was trouble free.

15. LAE proceeded to berth at the New Coastal Wharf Lae Town at 1610 Tuesday 23rd October, the LCM8's berthed at the same wharf shortly after 1700. HMAS AITAPE and the MWL 256 berthed later that evening.

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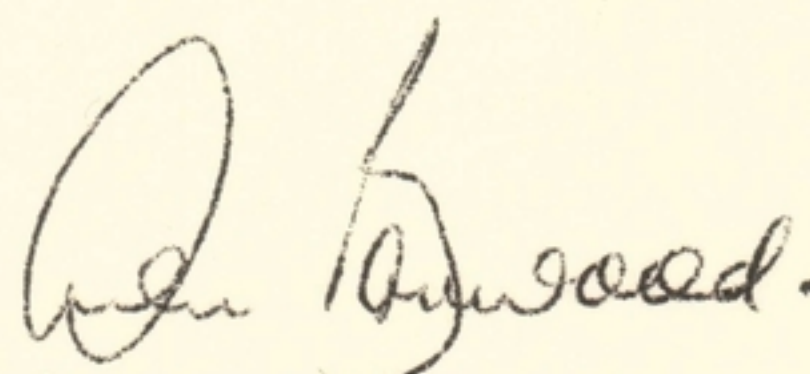
RESTRICTED
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16. LAE, MWL 256 and the LCM8's remained in Lae Town until Thursday forenoon. As LAE's fuelling had been delayed till a.m. Thursday I sailed the other units at 0830 with the stores and personnel for Finschhafen and rejoined them on completion of fuelling.
17. At Finschhafen the MWL and LCM8's disembarked their passengers and stores while LAE proceeded to Finsch harbour and at 1500 secured alongside HMAS MADANG which was at anchor there. Having handed over escort duties to HMAS MADANG LAE sailed at 1630 for Lombrum. An overnight passage of the Vitiaz Strait and Bismark Sea followed with a landfall being made on Alim and Baluan Island at 0900 Friday 26th October.
18. Shortly after making the land fall a signal was received instructing LAE to proceed to Baluan Island to interview the headmaster of the school in connection with a "reported sighting" on 24th October. LAE arrived off the Island at 1130 but was unable to anchor. My Executive Officer therefore proceeded ashore while the ship hove to off the coast. At 1245 LAE got underway again and continued her passage to Lombrum.
19. The information gained, from the interview, was of little value in determining what was sighted. The sighting however does not appear to hold much significance. A separate report has been forwarded to HMAS TARANGAU.
20. LAE secured alongside Lombrum at 1645 Friday 26th October remaining there for the last five days of the month. On Monday 29th the ship commenced a self-maintenance period which will include investigation of the torsional Vibration Damper - subject of URDEF 15/73 - and a further examination of the ships steering system. These were in progress at the end of the month.
21. In previous Reports of Proceedings I have expressed concern at breakdowns in message handling after signals have been passed from sea to HQPNGDF. This concern is highlighted by the situations reached in paragraphs 11, 12 and 13 of this report, where no reply was received to one priority signal and over ten hours elapsed, after transmission, before any action was taken on a second priority signal.
22. The health and morale of ships company has remained very satisfactory while their conduct, with one exception, has also been very satisfactory, during the month.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your obedient servant



Enclosures: A. Steaming Annex. (O.S. BARWOOD)
B. Monthly return of ships availability. LIEUTENANT RAN
C. Exercise Annex. COMMANDING OFFICER

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ANNEX 'A'

Steaming Annex

a.	Distance steamed during month	2,294	Miles
b.	Distance steamed since commissioning	134,086	Miles
c.	Hours underway during month	193	Hours
d.	Hours underway since commissioning	10,217	Hours
e.	Nights away from base during month	16	Nights
f.	Occasions exceeding economical speed:		
	15 OCT 73.....QUARTERLY FULL POWER TRIAL	2	Hours

ANNEX 'B'

Monthly return of ships availability - attached

ANNEX 'C'

Exercise Annex

26 OCT 73 NBCDX Including internal drills.

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RESTRICTED

FILE 18/6/4654.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE
(NAVY OFFICE)

HMAS LAE

Report of Proceedings November 1973

~~AS(NS)~~ 15/1
16/1

SMP + Intermediate Decking

~~D of O~~

~~DCNS~~ 17/1

~~CNS~~ 17/1

~~CNP~~ 18/1

~~CNTS~~ 23/1

~~CNSW~~ 23/1

~~SD(NOP)~~ 25/1

~~C of S~~ 29/1

~~DPR~~ BAC 30/1

~~AS(NS)~~ (NS55) 4/2/74

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See 15/1/74

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Quote in Reply
766.D1.22

Headquarters
Papua New Guinea Defence Force
Murray Barracks Free Bag
BOROKO PNG

3 January, 1974

The Chairman
Chiefs of Staff Committee (1)

→ Department of Defence (Navy Office) (4)

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding
HM Australian Fleet (2)


The Commander
Australian Mine Warfare and Patrol Forces (1)

CO HMAS TARANGAU

CO HMAS LAE

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - HMAS LAE
NOVEMBER 1973

1. Forwarded.


(J. W. NORRIE)
Brigadier
Commander

RESTRICTED

~~RESTRICTED~~

NAVY—CANBERRA		
18	6	4654

RESTRICTED

HMAS LAE

14 DEC 1973

Commanding Officer
HMAS TARANGAU

HMAS LAE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - NOVEMBER 1973

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMA Ship under my command for the month of November, 1973.

2. For the first two weeks of the month were alongside Lombrum completing a self maintenance period and preparing for the annual inspection. During the self maintenance period, Base Engineering staff investigated the Port Main engine, Torsional Vibration Damper trouble, subject of URDEF 15/73. The cause of the symptom which led to the URDEF being raised, could not be ascertained. A sea trial was recommended.

3. During the same period the General Service Pump Motor burnt out and had to be flown to Port Moresby for repair. URDEF 16/73 refers. As a result the sea trial and the ships' sea inspection were postponed.

4. The ships' annual departmental and harbour inspections were conducted Monday 12th November by HMAS TARANGAU staff. LAE's ship's company attended COMPNGFOR's division ashore at HMAS TARANGAU, Friday 9th November, as part of the annual inspection.

5. It became apparent that the General Service pump motor would not be repaired in time for the ships' departure to Madang for the intermediate docking. COMPNGFOR signalled instructions to embark an additional pump to be rigged for improvised bilge suction. (COMPNGFOR signal DTG 13055Z NOV 73).

6. LAE sailed for Madang town at 1650 Wednesday 14th November with a 27 ton capacity cub diesel pump mounted aft. The passage that followed was not without incident, with the cub diesel being unsatisfactory in the poor weather and awkward sea conditions. The ships' Pacific Pump however performed adequately in the bilge suction role.

7. The ship arrived at Madang town at 1015 Thursday 15th November and was immediately shipped at the Madang Slipways for an intermediate docking. For the next 8 days the ship remained on the slip.

8. On Tuesday 20th November, Lieutenant D.P. Richards RAN assumed command of LAE.

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- 2 -

9. At 1200 on Friday 23rd November the patrol boat unslipped and proceeded to the Shell wharf for fuel prior to departing for Lombrum at 1430 that afternoon. The passage north was uneventful and LAE arrived in Lombrum at 0830 Saturday 24th November.

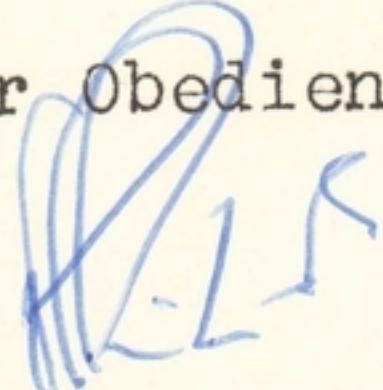
10. For the remainder of the weekend, LAE remained alongside at Lombrum, sailing at 0800 on Tuesday 27th November with HMA Ships, AITAPE, MADANG and LADAVA for sea inspection. After returning to Lombrum at 1830, LAE spent the night alongside, sailing the following morning for a two day exercise. (AITAPE's November 1973 ROP refers). LAE remained alongside Lombrum on Friday 30th November.

11. The health, conduct and morale of the Ship's Company is very satisfactory.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,


(D.P. RICHARDS)
Lieutenant RAN
Commanding Officer.

Enclosures: 1. Steaming Annex.
2. Monthly return of ships availability.

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RESTRICTED

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ANNEX A

STEAMING ANNEX

1.	Distance steamed during November	775.3 MLs
2.	Hours underway during November	64 Hrs
3.	Total distance steamed since commissioning	134,861.3 MLs
4.	Total hours underway since commissioning	10,281 Hrs
5.	Nights away from base during month	12 Nights
6.	Occasions of exceeding fast routeing speed	Nil

ANNEX B

Monthly return of ship availability - attached

ANNEX C

EXERCISE ANNEX

Leaving ship stations
NBCDX
Emergency stations
Admirals sea-inspection
SQUAD EX THREE

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RESTRICTED

FILE 18/6/4717

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE
(NAVY OFFICE)

HMAS LAE

Report of Proceedings DEC '73

~~AS(NS)~~ *6/2*

~~D of O~~ *11/2*

~~DCNS~~

~~CNS~~

~~CNP~~ *13/2*

~~CNTS~~ *14/2*

~~CNSW~~ *19/2*

~~SD(NO)~~ *19/2*

~~C of S~~ *20/2*

~~DPR~~ *25/2*

~~AS(NS) (NS55)~~ *27/2*

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40 5/2/74

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NAVY—CANBERRA		
18	6	4717

Telephone 56166

Quote in Reply

Headquarters
Papua New Guinea Defence Force
Murray Barracks Free Bag
BOROKO PNG

766-D1-22

21 Jan 74

The Chairman
Chiefs of Staff Committee (1)

→ The Secretary
Department of Defence (Navy Office) (4)

For Information:

The Flag Officer Commanding
HM Australian Fleet (2)


The Commander
Australian Mine Warfare and Patrol Forces (i)

The Commanding Officer
HMAS TARANGAU

The Commanding Officer
HMAS LAE

HMAS LAE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
DECEMBER 1973

1. Forwarded.


(W. H. WANSLEY)
Colonel
Acting Commander

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

HMAS LAE
AT LOMBRUM

3rd JANUARY 1974

Commanding Officer,
HMAS TARANGAU

HMAS LAE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - DECEMBER 1973.

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMA Ship for the month of December 1973, under the command of Lieutenant D.P. RICHARDS RAN until 17th December, and under my command from 18th December. All times are Zone Kilo (-10).

2. LAE began the month alongside at Lombrum undergoing self maintenance following the recently completed intermediate docking. There were no major outstanding defects and ship's staff were occupied rectifying faults found during the annual inspection in November.

3. At 1508 on Monday 3rd December, LAE cast off for passage to Rabaul. The ship experienced calm, fine weather during the overnight passage and anchored at 1027 Tuesday 4th December at Garoue Island in the Vitu Islands. During the day the ship's company proceeded with self maintenance and at 1500 the ship was opened to visitors. Fifty school children were given a guided tour of the ship.

4. Shortly after 1700 LAE weighed and proceeded and again steamed overnight to arrive in Rabaul at 0745 on Thursday 5th December.

5. After fuelling, the ship moved to a berth on the new Main Wharf and remained there for two days.

6. On Friday 7th December at 0800, LAE cast off and proceeded out of Rabaul harbour to rendezvous with US Ships CANON, GALLUP and ASHEVILLE. After the rendezvous, she steamed in company with the three ships to enter Rabaul and all four secured at the new Main Wharf at 0915.

7. The Americans were amply entertained by the citizens of Rabaul until they sailed at 0800 Sunday 9th December. LAE also sailed, and in company with the three ships proceeded towards Manus Island. At 1140 the four ships were met by HMAS AITAPE and after a mail transfer, all ships continued on passage. Unfortunately, owing to USN fuel and speed restrictions, few exercises were carried out on passage however three quarters of an hour of OOW manoeuvres were conducted at 1000 prior to entering harbour.

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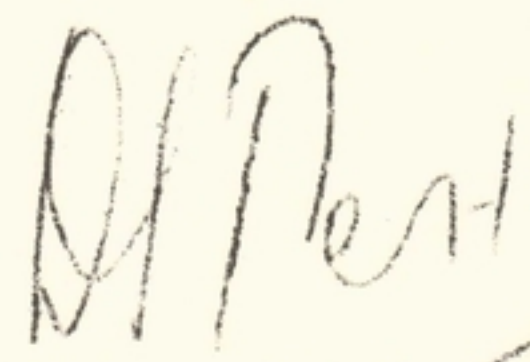
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8. The five ships entered Seeadler Harbour at 1330 and secured alongside at Lombrum at 1415 Monday 10th December. The US Ships spent one night alongside before departing at 0900 on 11th December for their home port of Guam.
9. LAE commenced a self maintenance period on the 10th December and this continued for ten days.
10. The maintenance period was interrupted briefly when, at 0850 on 13th December LAE, in company with AITAPE, proceeded to sea for her gunnery inspection. At 1035, LAE embarked the inspection team from AITAPE. During the subsequent firing the gun experienced a premature burst (my signal P - 130338Z DEC 73 refers) and the firing had to be abandoned. The ship returned to harbour and secured alongside at 1205.
11. Lieutenant D.S. PERT RAN joined at 1800 Monday 17th December and assumed command at 0700 18th December (TARANGAU's R180323Z DEC 73 refers).
12. The self maintenance period finished when, at 1000 Thursday 20th December, LAE left Lombrum and commenced passage to Rabaul.
13. The direct passage was completed in fine weather, hampered only by a long, uncomfortable swell during the early stages. During the forenoon of 21st December a surface 40/60 and .50 calibre firing was successfully carried out. The ship then completed passage to arrive alongside in Rabaul at 1415.
14. The ship fuelled then remained alongside for the Christmas period. Christmas day was celebrated in the traditional manner with the ship very effectively decorated with local flora. A hearty Christmas dinner was enjoyed by the ship's company at midday and in the afternoon many were entertained by local residents. At all times during the festivities the crew was well behaved.
15. The ship departed from Rabaul at 1100 on 27th December and made an uneventful return passage to berth at Lombrum at 1400 on 28th December. LAE then remained alongside at Lombrum for the last days of 1973.
16. During the month the health, morale and conduct of the ships company have been good.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant.



- ANNEX A. Steaming Annex.
B. Monthly return of ships availability.
C. Exercise Annex

(D.S. PERT)
LIEUTENANT RAN
COMMANDING OFFICER.

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ANNEX 'A'

a.	Distance steamed during the month	1,533.9 Miles
b.	Distance steamed since commissioning	136,395.2 Miles
c.	Hours underway during the month	121 Hours
d.	Hours underway since commissioning	10,402 Hours
e.		
e.	Nights away from Base during month	17 Nights
f.	Occasions exceeding economical speed	Nil

ANNEX 'B'

Monthly return of ships availability - attached.

ANNEX 'C'

Exercise Annex

13 DEC 73 Gunnery Inspection 40/60 and .50 calibre
SUFX (40/60 aborted).

10 DEC 73 OOW manoeuvres with HMAS AITAPE, US Ships
CANON, GALLUP and ASHEVILLE.

21 DEC 73 40/60 and .50 calibre SUFX.

RESTRICTED

(MONTHLY RETURN OF SHIP AVAILABILITY TO ACCOMPANY MONTHLY REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS)
 HMAS...LAE.....

APPENDIX 'B' TO CANO 7/66
 AGE SINCE FIRST COMMISSIONING...
 MILES STEAMED SINCE COMMISSIONING

I.C. ENGINE SHIPS
 5 8/12 YRS PROGRESSIVE TOTAL EN. HRS
 NO. 1...1947.....

DATE...1st JAN 74.....

.....136-395.2 MILES

NO. 2...1916.....

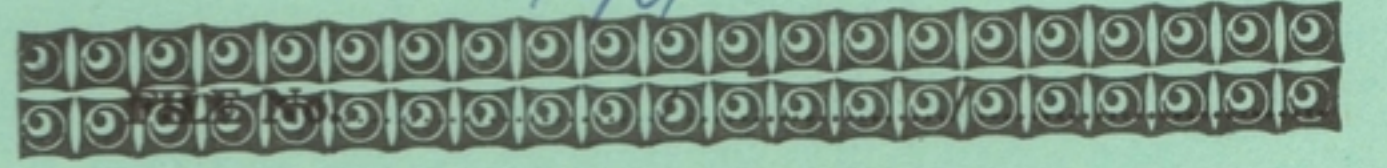
MONTH	AVAILABILITY STATE		OPERATIO DUTIES	EXERCISE	WEAPON	TRAINING	SPECIAL TASKS	POST	REFIT	TRIALS	PASSAGE TIME	VISIT	PROGRAM MAINT.	PROGRAM REFIT	DOCKING	REPAIR	HARBOUR	LONG LEAVE	DEFECTS AFFECTING SHIPS DESIGNED PERFORMANCE (DURATION IN HOURS)							REMARKS
	DAY	1																	2	H	E	L	G	STAF	ND	
1	/																							SMP LOMBRUM		
2	/																									
3	/																									
4	/																									
5	/																									
6	/																								RABAUL (DIRECT)	
7	/																								USN ESCORT	
8	/																									
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10	/																									
11	/																								SMP LOMBRUM	
12	/																									
13	/																								GUNNERY INSPECTION	
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21	/																									
22	/																								RABAUL (DIRECT)	
23	/																									
24	/																									
25	/																								CHRISTMAS	
26	/																									
27	/																									
28	/																									
29	/																									
30	/																								SMP LOMBRUM	
31	/																									
TOTAL																										

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CG 107
(1967)



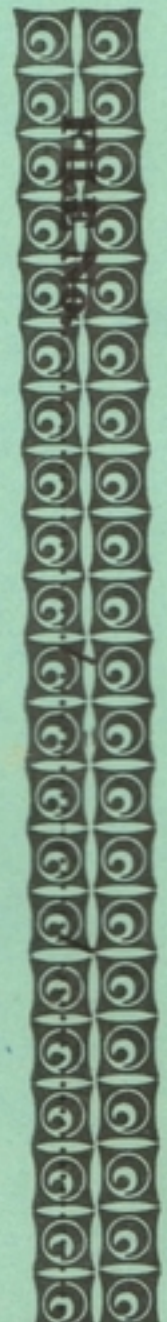
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