

AWM78

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

AWM78 Class 383 - ML Base, Darwin

File number: AWM78/383/1

Title: AWM78 383/1 - July-August 1944



RCDIG1073439

[383/1]

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CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

Subject:

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M. L. Base Darwin.

Classification Authority—Defence Records
This record has been reviewed and has been
declassified by the Department of Defence
(navy) with effect from 17 Dec 90
Authority Dig (N) Admin 18-13.
Reviewer: LCLR R. L. Smith (RANEM)

Signature: R. Smith Date: 14 MAR 91

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
ACCESS STATUS
OPEN

M. L. Base Darwin

28/8

2026/4/1184 201B

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.
MINUTE PAPER.

3644.

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SUBJECT: M.L. Base - Darwin - Report of Proceedings

D of P. Note Darwin's submission is in accordance with the proposals approved by So. C.C. at each base, who will replace C.O. Fairmiles. This situation will shortly be clarified. A.A. 18/8.

and (S.M.H.) 18/8

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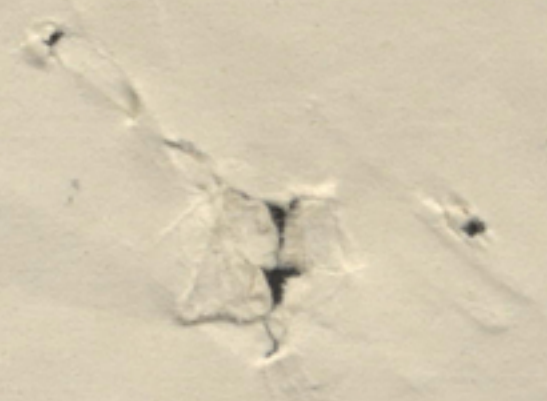
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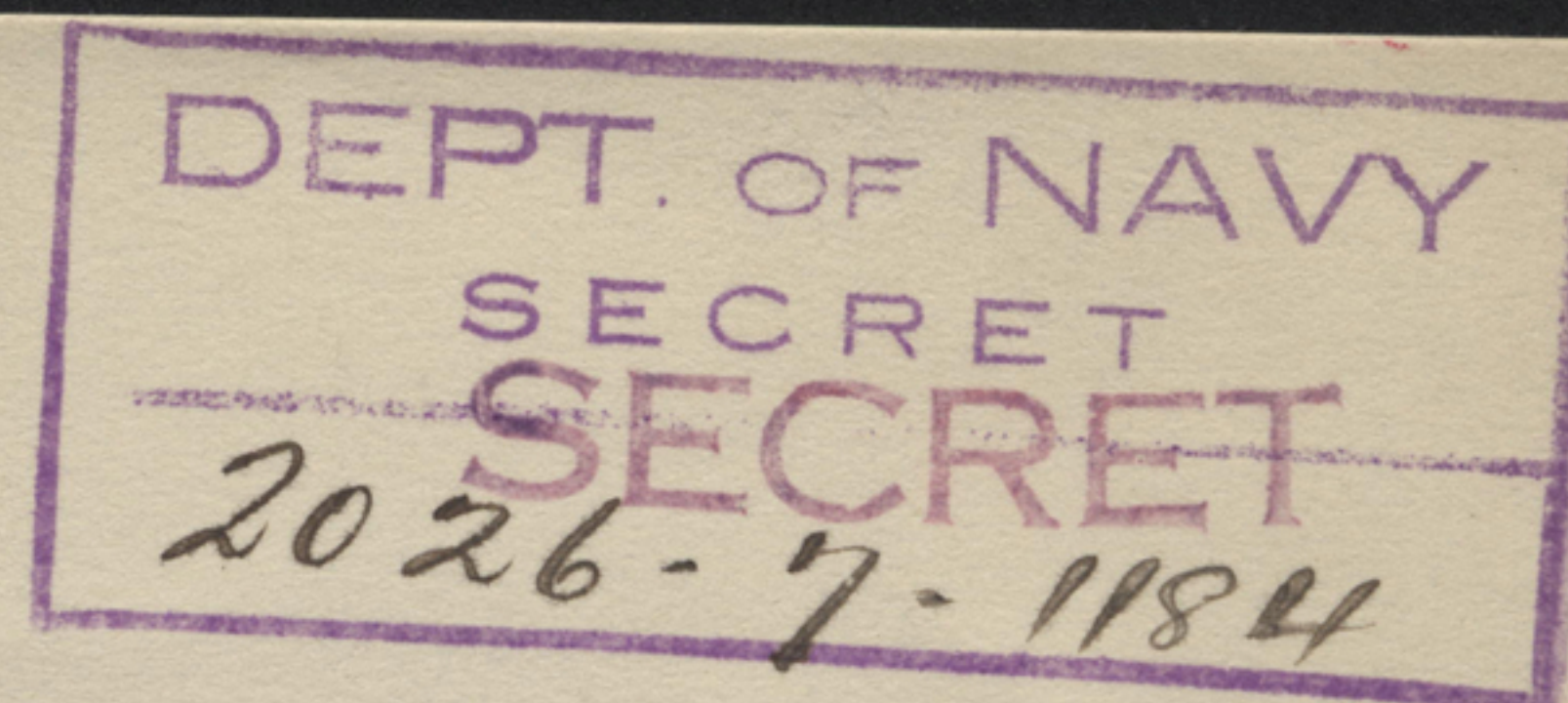
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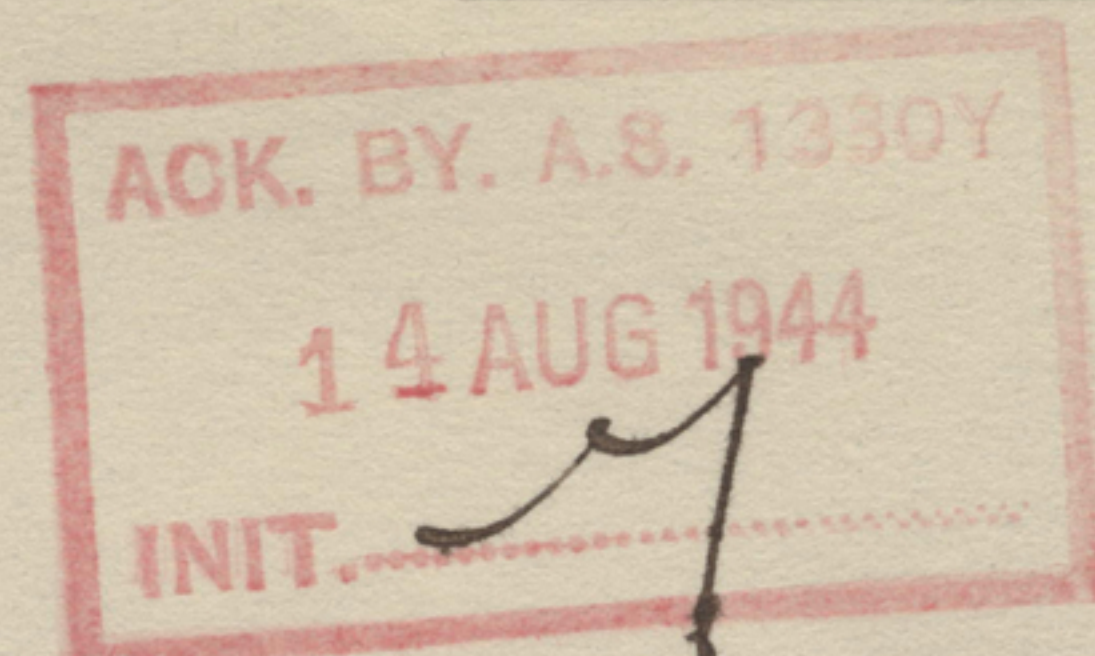
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9/6

Royal Australian Navy.



IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

No. N.T.0600/50.

Naval Headquarters,
Darwin,
10 August 1944.

The Secretary,
NAVAL BOARD.
(Copy to: The Commanding Officer,
M.L.BASE, SYDNEY.)

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - M.L.BASE, DARWIN.

16/8
HN.

With reference to the attached Report M.L.6/8/53 dated 4 August 1944, paragraph 1, it is submitted for the information of the Naval Board that prior to the appointment of Lieutenant Griffin as Commanding Officer, M.L.Base, his predecessor acted in terms of his appointment, merely as Staff Officer (Fairmiles) and a copy of his duties is attached. As The M.L.s based on Darwin were then (and still remain) tenders to "MELVILLE", it was not intended to set up a more extensive organisation that that required for Staff Officer (Fairmiles) to carry out the duties described.

Stalman

COMMANDER, R.N.
For Naval Officer-in-Charge, Darwin.

FROM: The Commanding Officer, M.L.Base, Darwin.
DATE: 4 August 1944. Ref.No.M.L.6/8/53.
TO: The Secretary, Naval Board
(Through the Naval Officer-in-Charge, Darwin)
SUBJECT: (Copy to Commanding Officer, M.L.Base Sydney)

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REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS-M.L.Base, DARWIN.
JULY 1944.

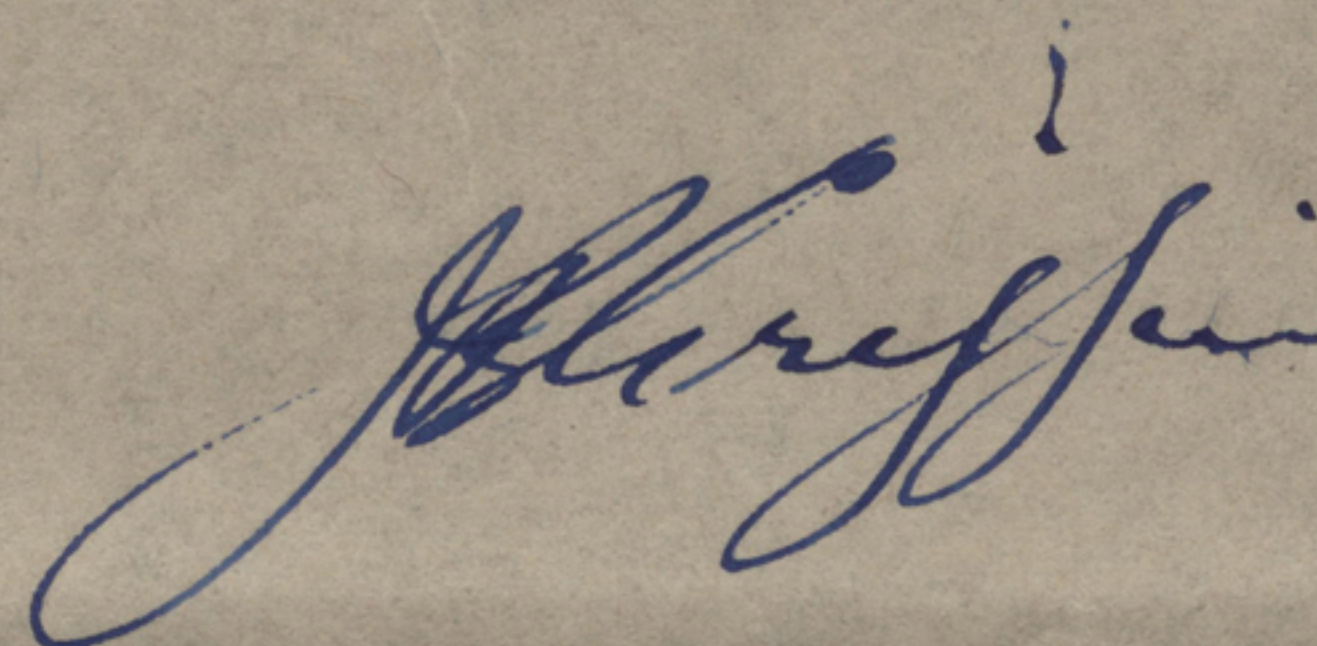
Submitted in accordance with A.C.B.0238 the following report of proceedings of Darwin M.L.Base.

1. The Commanding Officer of the Base arrived in Darwin to take up his appointment ,p.m.23 July 1944 and found that one small office, entirely without such necessary facilities as a typewriter or telephone or staff, comprised the entire Base for the five Fairmiles based on Darwin at present.
2. Several submissions were made to Naval Officer-in-Charge for these particular items and also for a motor utility truck and a motor boat both of which are urgently required and are made necessary by the remoteness of the Base and M.L.s from Naval Headquarters, unavailability of transport in the area and distance from stores and workshops. These submissions are still under review.
3. With the sole exception of H.M.A."M.L.807" which has arrived only very recently it has been found that the M.L.s have a large number of approved "Alteration and Addition" items including practically all modifications to ventilation and in the case of M.L.815 armament, outstanding and very little likelihood of having them completed in the existing circumstances. Accordingly it has been requested that at least one Shipwright and two Joiners should be allocated to the M.L.Base, with the intention of employing them on these boats while they remain operational.
4. In the case of H.M.A."M.L.815" which was one of the earliest boats of this class constructed in Australia, outstanding Alterations and Additions involve considerable structural alteration and a submission has been made to the Naval Officer-in-Charge, Darwin that she should be sent to a Southern Dockyard for refit and modernisation. If this is approved it is intended to change around personnel to provide an opportunity for leave as a large proportion of the Officers and Ratings serving in these ships have been more than twelve months, and several more than eighteen months without leave.
5. A register of approved alterations and additions is in the process of being compiled for each boat in accordance with para.(d) page 4 of A.C.B.0238.
6. Rosters for leave are also in the process of being compiled but any move in this direction will be delayed pending the bringing up to strength of M.L.spare crews.
7. The Base Engineer Officer has been furnished with complete establishments of tools and spares which should be carried for the maintenance of M.L.s.
8. The Base Naval Store Officer has also been furnished with up to date establishment lists of permanent and consumable stores, in addition to tools & spares required to be carried in boats and Base and a direction given to M.L.s instructing them to muster stores and demand to complete where considered necessary, thus affording the Naval Store Officer an opportunity to complete to his establishments.
9. A temporary lay apart store has been made available by the

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Naval Store Officer to the M.L.Base for the storage of M.L. spare gear, which is at present carried in the boats, but unfortunately it is situated several miles from the Base. However no other storage facilities are available at present.

10. Further activities on the part of the M.L.Base, Darwin are obviated at this stage pending a direction on the extent of its scope and the arrival of staff and equipment.



Lieutenant R.A.N.V.R.



N.T.0600/50

Naval Headquarters,
DARWIN, N.T.,
7th Augst, 1944.

DUTIES OF STAFF OFFICER (FAIRMILES)

1. Spare Commanding Officer Fairmiles.
2. Liaison Officer with Fairmiles and H.D.M.Ls. All correspondence to pass through his office for his information.
3. To take turn of duty outside working hours as Duty Staff Officer. (Operations).
4. To be responsible for and to inform X.D.O. of M.Ls available for duty as Boom Patrol, A.S.R. dispositions and detailing of other duties when required.
5. To keep records of engine hours, slipping programme, alterations and additions outstanding, and to work in close liaison with Base Engineer Officer and Engineer Officer Fairmiles, in this respect.
6. To arrange refuelling and berthing of M.Ls through Base Engineer Officer and Naval Berthing Officer respectively.
7. To be present on all occasions of Captain's Requestmen when personnel of Fairmiles come before the Commanding Officer H.M.A.S. "MELVILLE".
8. To be present on all occasions of slipping of M.Ls. Darwin Port Order referring to slipping is in process of production.

Above proposals are subject to amendment according to nature of any concrete orders from C.O. Fairmile School, "Rushcutter".

"Melville" is requested to arrange for Barrackmaster to provide office furniture if available, in collaboration with the Warrant Shipwright.

2026/7/1184

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
MINUTE PAPER

SUBJECT: H.M.A.S. M.L. Base Down - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS.

August 1944

S.N.B.

2.N.M. *HAS 17/11*

3.N.M.

D.O.D.

D. of P.

RDR (N)

D.N.I.

Ops (N)

D.E. (N)

D.O.T.M.

D.N.M.S.

H.P. Pub

N.A.2

N.5. (2)

D.N.I. (N.H.R.O.)



M.L. 815 should have been told to mount Base at least 6 months ago by N.O.I.C.'s

m 6/11

see para 10

(1) D.O.P.

22/11/44

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DNMS. BRANCH
C. DEC 1944
NAVY OFFICE

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2026/7/1184 336A

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.
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SUBJECT: M.L. Base Darwin - Report of Proceedings - August 1944

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~~S.O. 21/9~~

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~~D.C.S. 7/11~~

~~D.P.S. 9/11~~

~~D.T.S.R. 11/11~~

~~D.O.D. 13/11~~
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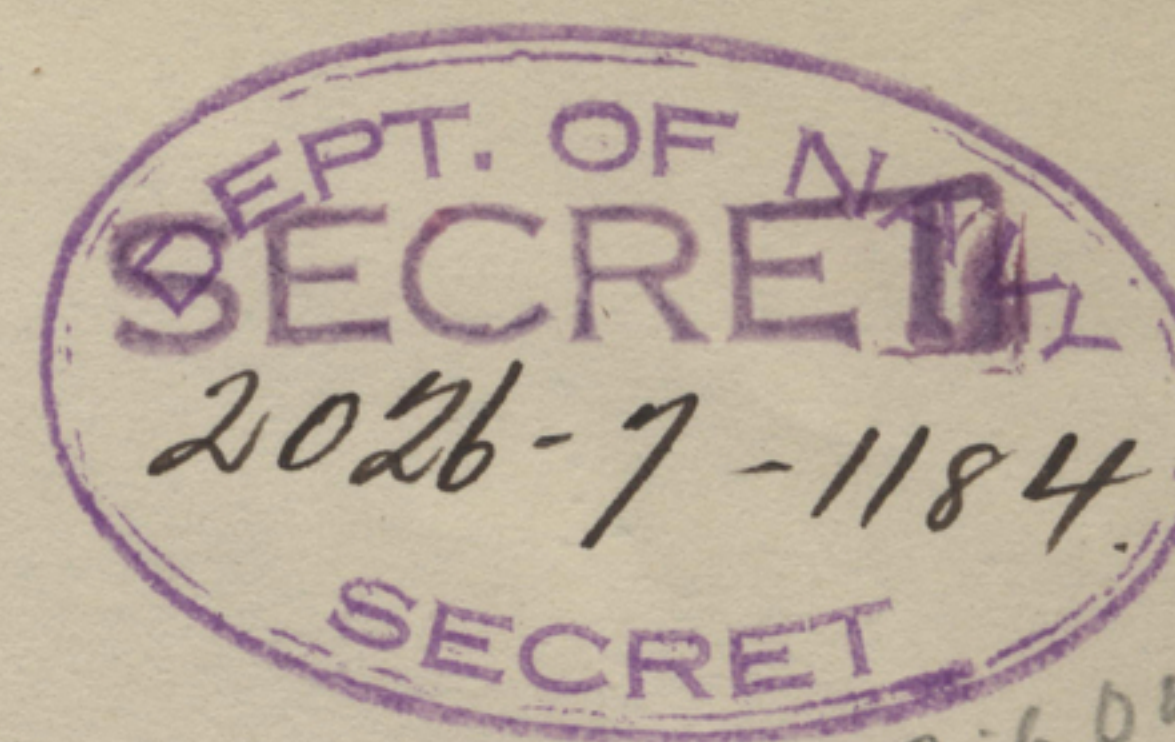
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Royal Australian Navy.



IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

No. N.T. 0600/50

ACK. BY. A.S. 1230Y
16 SEP 1944
INIT. *WBS*

Naval Headquarters,
Darwin,
8th September 1944.

*File 00/P
16/9/44*

The Secretary,
NAVAL BOARD.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - M.L. BASE DARWIN.

The attached report of proceedings for August 1944, N.T. 0600/50 dated 2nd September 1944, is submitted for the information of the Naval Board.

2. In accordance with Naval Board message T.O.O. 190232 August, the function of Commanding Officer, M.L. Base Darwin, has lapsed and superseded by Staff Officer Coastal Craft, and no further reports of proceedings by the former authority will be forwarded.

BB Beldue
A/CAPTAIN R.A.N.

*HN
18/9/44*

1919 J.

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FROM The Commanding Officer, M.L.Base Darwin.
DATE: 1 September 1944. Ref.No. M.L.6/9/165.
TO: The Secretary, Naval Board (Through The Naval Officer-in-
Charge, Darwin) (Copy to the Commanding Officer, M.L.Base Sydney)
SUBJECT: REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - M.L.BASE DARWIN, AUGUST 1944.

Submitted in accordance with A.C.B.0238 the following report of proceedings of Darwin M.L.Base.

1. Although it has apparently been decided to establish M.L. Bases in Australia along similar lines to the Royal Naval Coastal Forces organisation no decision has as yet been received in respect of a base in Darwin and therefore none of the essential requirements or facilities have been provided for a base here. This renders it extremely difficult to carry on.
2. Facilities for the M.L.s also are practically non-existent and there are no berths alongside permanently allotted to them. It is understood that for two or three months of the year local weather conditions render it undesirable to berth small craft alongside in exposed positions, but it is felt that some arrangement should be made whereby M.L.s can obtain shore lighting and/or battery charging facilities to reduce discomfort on board and prolong the life of auxiliary engines.
3. The M.L.s in Darwin were used fairly extensively during August, three being employed on local convoys and one used on two occasions for special operations, but prior to that had fairly long periods of inactivity and on the whole, compared with M.L.s on other stations, have done very little running. This is substantiated by the fact that the first boat on this station (M.L.815) has not yet completed 1500 engine hours although she has been here for nearly seventeen months.
4. Two Shipwrights have been loaned temporarily to the M.L. Base and these have been employed on M.L.809 making good minor defects while the boat remained operational. This is the most satisfactory method yet arrived at but unfortunately a good deal of time is wasted owing to the fact that shipwrights have to be transported to and from the M.L.s by duty boats when lying in the stream.
5. It has been requested that M.L.429 be taken in hand at the beginning of September for slipping, top overhaul, and fitting of a Bofors gun forward. This has been arranged. ✓
6. The Bofors guns for M.L.s have been in Darwin for some time but the mountings and stiffening for it have only just arrived.
7. M.L.815 is without a 2 pounder gun forward at all, although the mounting is there. This shortage of a mark XIV 2 pounder gun has been outstanding for some time and it is therefore intended to transfer the gun from M.L.429 to M.L.815 before the latter vessel is sailed for Fremantle.
8. Improved bridge armament is still an outstanding item for M.L.s 814 and 815, but the twin Gas Operated Vickers Guns for this purpose are in the port. No mountings for them have as yet been located but it is understood that they may be with the Bofors mountings. The guns for M.L.815 have been placed on board and if the mountings become available in time they will be fitted. A midships Oerlikon gun has not been fitted to M.L.815.
9. As a Bofors gun, mounting and stiffening etc is now available in Darwin for M.L.815 but may be too bulky for stowage in her as cargo some direction might be required as to its disposal.
10. The original direction of C.S.W.P.S.F. was to transfer

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M.L.814 to Fremantle Command and Fairmile personnel were changed around to ensure that she was manned as far as possible with West Australian ratings. Then, presumably as a result of a recommendation that M.L.815 was in need of a large refit and modernisation, the decision was changed and M.L.815 allocated to Fremantle. Apart from the reshuffle of personnel which had already taken place, the Commanding Officer of M.L.815 is awaiting the arrival of his relief before proceeding overseas for service with the Royal Navy and it was not considered desirable for him to leave this port. Accordingly the whole ships company of M.L.814 was exchanged with that of M.L.815.

11. M.L.814 recently underwent a refit of three months duration here but, due to lack of trained personnel and materials was not completed with regard to alterations and additions, and the work carried out was not by any means regarded as being satisfactory. The long period spent on the slip has caused her to leak fairly freely.

12. M.L.815, so far as modernisation goes, is in almost the same state as when she commissioned in Brisbane. Practically nothing, other than the bare essentials to keep her running has been done to her.

13. M.L.429 was commissioned some time later, and apart from having several improvements incorporated in her while building, had several alterations and additions carried out in Brisbane.

14. The same is true for M.L.809. This vessel was slipped at the beginning of August and the copper sheathing raised several inches.

15. M.L.807 was taken in hand for outstanding alterations and additions before sailing from Sydney and is practically up to date. This is the only M.L. here with a Bofors gun fitted.

16. Both of these latter mentioned M.L.s are in splendid condition.

17. Complete schedules indicating the present state and authority for all alterations and additions raised and approved for M.L.815, together with all others approved by the Naval Board but for which the authority to raise them has not been received in Darwin, have been prepared and given to the Base Engineer Officer for transmission to N.O.I.C. Fremantle.

This applies to all Fairmiles which have been away from Sydney or Brisbane for any length of time. Future dispositions in accordance with present policy should alleviate the position.



N.T.0600/50
Naval Headquarters,
DARWIN N.T.
2 September 1944.

[Signature]
Lieutenant R.A.N.V.R.
Commanding Officer
M.L.Base, Darwin.

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