



CHIEF OF NAVY

R1-4-C001, Russell Offices, CANBERRA ACT 2600

CN/OUT/2001/533

Mr P. Barsdell

Secretary
Senate Legislation Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Defence and Trade
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Barsdell

I write to correct evidence that I gave at the Senate Legislation Committee additional estimates hearing on 5 June 2001 concerning the Royal Australian Navy's submarine force.

In my opening statement to the Committee (page 146 of *Proof Hansard* Tuesday, 5 June 2001), I stated that "Performance of the submarine arm is improving following the successful limited capability upgrade of HMA Ships *Dechaineux* and *Sheean* late last year and, as recently demonstrated in exercise *Tandem Thrust*, those submarines are now becoming quite capable."

This information created ambiguity because of the implication that the *Dechaineux* and *Sheean* were part of exercise *Tandem Thrust*. They were not involved and it was the submarine *Waller* which played a successful part in the exercise. The intention of the phrase "those submarines are now becoming quite capable" was to indicate that we are becoming professionally more competent in the use of all the COLLINS class submarines, whatever their modification state.

I apologise for any misunderstanding that may have arisen.

Yours sincerely

D.J. SHACKLETON, AO
Vice Admiral, RAN
Chief of Navy

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15 June 2001

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Chairman of the Board

SONARTECH ATLAS PTY LTD

13 June 2001

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Legislation Committee
The Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Attention:
Mr P. Barsdell, Secretary

For Information:
Senator S. MacDonald, Chair

Reference:

- A. Statement by Vice Admiral Shackleton to Senate Estimates Committee dated Tuesday 05 June 2001.

Sir,

I refer to the following excerpt from a prepared statement, read by the Chief of Navy Vice Admiral Shackleton, AO, AM, RAN, and delivered to your Committee last week:

"Performance of the submarine arm is improving following the successful limited capability upgrade of the HMAS ships DECHAINEUX and SHEEAN late last year and as recently demonstrated in exercise TANDEM THRUST, those submarines are now becoming quite capable."

In making this statement I believe that the Chief of Navy may have created an impression with your committee that is not entirely accurate. To my understanding the facts are as follows:

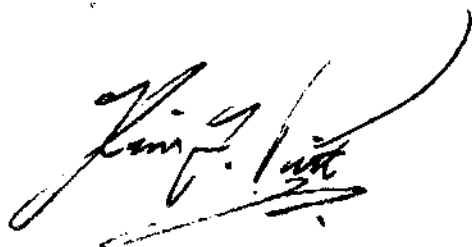
- a. HMAS DECHAINEUX and HMAS SHEEAN did not take part in exercise TANDEM THRUST; nor have they participated in other recent international exercises eg. RIMPAC and LUNGFISH.
- b. HMAS DECHAINEUX had hull modifications completed late last year. The Combat System Augmentation was installed in May this year and has not yet completed sea trials.
- c. HMAS SHEEAN had hull modifications completed late last year. The Combat System Augmentation is currently being installed. This system has not yet commenced sea trials.

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It might be noted by the committee that HMAS WALLER is the submarine that won praise from the USN for its role and performance during RIMPAC last year and the recently completed exercise TANDEM THRUST. This submarine has had no hull modifications performed, has the original Swedish propeller and does not have any USN sourced augmentation equipment fitted.

What HMAS WALLER does have fitted that is acknowledged (within the operational submarine community) as the reason for the submarine's improved performance, is a sonar processor designed and manufactured in Australia by Sonartech Atlas. The sonar was previously fitted to the Oberon Class submarine HMAS ONSLOW and was transferred at short notice prior to WALLER deploying for the RIMPAC and LUNGFISH exercises last year. It was this sonar that significantly increased the operational capability of the submarine.

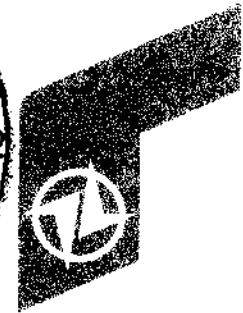
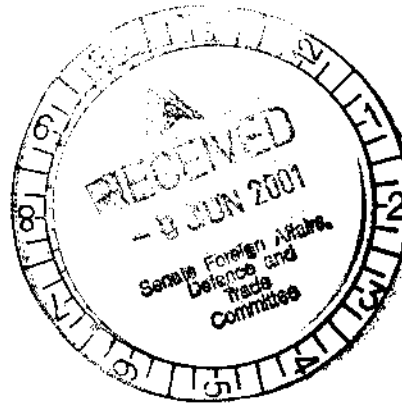
Yours sincerely,



Kim F. Pitt
Commodore, AM, RAN (Rtd)

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06 June 2001

Mr Paul Barsdell
Secretary to the Senate Foreign Affairs,
Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
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Canberra ACT 2600

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Collins Replacement Combat System

Reference:

Proof Committee Hansard; Senate Foreign Affairs; Defence and Trade
Legislation Committee; Consideration of Budget Estimates 4 June 2001

Dear Sir,

1. I note from the reference that there is a concern in the Committee that STN ATLAS has a commercial relationship with RADM P.D. Briggs AO CSC RAN retd.
2. I hereby confirm that STN ATLAS does not have, and has never had, a commercial relationship with RADM Briggs for any purpose whatsoever. As to his relationship with any member of our bidding team for the Collins Replacement Combat System (a relationship with Nautronix was suggested), if such a relationship does exist it is without the knowledge or approval of STN ATLAS. To the best of our knowledge no such relationship exists.

Yours faithfully,


Gordon Hargreave
Chief Executive