

THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MARITIME MUSEUM IN FREMANTLE

Compiled By : Piet Sinke (part 3: the sub)

HMAS Ovens (S 70) was an Oberon class submarine of the **Royal Australian Navy (RAN)**. She was one of six Oberons built for the Royal Australian Navy by the Scottish Scotts Shipbuilding and Engineering Company, and entered service in 1969. During her career, **OVENS** was the first RAN submarine to deploy with the ANZUK

force, and the first RAN submarine to fire an armed Mark 48 torpedo, sinking the target ship Colac. The boat was decommissioned in 1995, and is preserved at the **Western Australian Maritime Museum** as a museum ship.

The diesel-powered ship was not named after a gas range. Rather, it honors Irishman and Australian explorer **John Ovens** (1788-1825).

The **Oberon class** was based heavily on the preceding Porpoise class of submarines, with changes made to improve the vessels' hull integrity, sensor systems, and stealth capabilities. Eight submarines were ordered for the RAN, in two batches of four.

The first batch (including **OVENS**) was approved in 1963, and the second batch was approved during the late 1960s, although two of these were cancelled before construction started in 1969, with the funding redirected to the Fleet Air Arm. This was the fourth time the RAN had attempted to establish a submarine branch.

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Photo comment's

all six torpedo tubes. The orange suit is used in an emergency evacuation. The silver tube at the top of the picture (with the two lines of red tape) is the escape trunk.

The main crew bunks. Each main crew member gets his own bunk. This is also where the crew ate their meals.

The galley. The submarine is 90.0 m long, with a beam of 8.1 m, and a draught of 5.5 m when surfaced. At full load displacement, she displaces 2,030 tons when surfaced, and 2,410 tons when submerged.

The two propeller shafts are each driven by an English Electric motor providing 3,500 brake horsepower and 4,500 shaft horsepower; the electricity for these is generated by two Admiralty Standard Range supercharged V16 diesel generators

The submarine could travel at up to 12 knots (22 km/h; 14 mph) on the surface, and up to 17 knots (31 km/h; 20 mph) when submerged, had a maximum range of 9,000 nautical miles (17,000 km; 10,000 mi) at 12 knots (22 km/h; 14 mph), and a test depth of 200 metres (660 ft) below sea level. When launched, the boat had a company of 8 officers and 56 sailors, but by the time she decommissioned, the number of sailors had increased to 60. In addition, up to 16 trainees could be carried.

The main armament of the Oberons consisted of six 21-inch (533.4 mm) torpedo tubes. The British Mark 8 torpedo was initially carried by the submarine; this was later replaced by the wire-guided Mark 23. Between 1977 and 1985, the Australian Oberons were upgraded to carry United States Navy Mark 48 torpedoes and UGM-84 Sub Harpoon anti-ship missiles.

As of 1996, the standard payload of an Australian Oberon was a mix of 20 Mark 48 Mod 4 torpedoes and Sub Harpoon missiles. Some or all of the torpedo payload could be replaced by Mark 5 Stonefish sea mines, which were deployed through the torpedo tubes. On entering service, two stern-mounted, short-length 21-inch (53 cm) torpedo tubes for Mark 20 anti-submarine torpedoes.

However, the development of steerable wire-guided torpedoes made the less-capable aft-firing torpedoes redundant; **they were closed off**, and later removed during a refit. **OVENS** was laid down by Scotts Shipbuilding and Engineering Company at Greenock, Scotland on 17 June 1966, launched on 4 December 1967, and commissioned into the RAN on 18 April 1969.