

New South Wales Police

STATEMENT in the matter of:
Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race Investigation

Place:
Tasmania Police Search & Rescue
Hobart

Date: 25 October 1999

Name: Leigh John STANLEY

Address: Police Marine Search & Rescue Service
Hobart.

Tel. No.: 03 6230 2903

Occupation: Police Officer

STATES:-

1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence which I would be prepared, if necessary, to give in court as a witness. The statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable for prosecution if I wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.
2. I am 40 years of age.
3. My full name is Leigh John STANLEY, I am a Constable in the Tasmania Police stationed at Marine & Rescue Services, Hobart.
4. On Sunday 19 September 1999 Constable's G. PEARCE, P. ALLAN, R. STACEY, J. PRATT, D. BIDGOOD and myself attended the Australian Maritime College at Newnham, Tasmania. Our duties were to assist Detective Senior Constable S. GRAY and Senior Constable D. UPSTON as safety divers and trial life rafts, harnesses and safety lines used by yachting crews.
5. The first exercises, which were conducted, consisted of 15 people trained with life raft operation having to complete a number of exercises. Each person had to swim 50m. then get into a 10-man life raft. After getting into the life raft there was another person in the raft with them, the role of this person was played by Constable STACEY with Constable PEARCE to be an exhausted survivor. Another person in the pool played the role of an unconscious person in the water. It was the job of each of these 15 people to work out how to get the unconscious person back to the raft and into it. In the raft was a throw-line, which could be used to assist with the recovery. Not all of the people used the throw-line, some tried to swim the person back without it, some chose to send the exhausted survivor to swim out to the unconscious person. Getting the unconscious victim into the raft was attempted by some different methods, showing to the people how hard it was. Most stayed in the water making it harder to push the victim into the raft.

Witness: *R.P. Beckman*

Signature: *Leigh John Stanley*

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6. These 15 trained people were then required to individually get into another six-man life raft, which was inverted with them in it. They were then required to get out of it without getting caught. After getting out they had to right the life raft and after righting the six-man raft they had to swim to the ten-man raft and right it. Due to the size of the ten-man raft this caused some difficulty for some people.
7. The second exercise that was conducted on Sunday 19 September 1999 was 15 untrained people in life rafts doing the same exercises as the trained people did. The same recovery methods were tried as by the trained people, but some tried to paddle the life raft to the victim in the water. Some also found getting into the ten-man raft difficult as they did not use the aids on the raft correctly. It was also noted that when inverted in the six-man raft some had difficulty getting out of the raft. Some twisted and got caught in the door, they were caught to the extent that if alone the circumstances could have led to drowning. During the righting exercises of both life rafts it was noted that a large number of these people could not correctly right the rafts. Being unaware of the correct technique, including having the inflation bottle on the near side to them, which could have caused injury to them when righted, if done with it on the far side.
8. On Monday 20 September 1999 the first exercise conducted was oxygen and carbon monoxide level testing in an inverted six-man raft with five people in it. Constable's ALLAN, STACEY, PRATT, Mr. T. BOYLE and myself entered the inverted raft with an air meter in it. Constable G. PEARCE and Constable D. BIDGOOD were safety divers for this exercise. It took less than four minutes for the alarm to go off indicating that the CO level was at a dangerous level and all members had to exit the raft. This was repeated three more times, each time the alarm would activate approx. 4 minutes each time.
9. During all other exercises carried out in the pool on the 19, 20 and 21 September 1999, I had the responsibility of being in the water as a safety diver.
10. On the afternoon of Tuesday 21 September 1999 sea trials were conducted using both the square and round six-man life rafts. The rafts were taken into Bass Strait off the entrance to the Tamar River near Low Head. The Police Vessel Van Diemen was used to transport the rafts and equipment.
11. During all tests carried out in Bass Strait I was the operator of the safety vessel.

Witness: *A. P. [Signature]*

Signature: *[Signature]*