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H.M.A.S. DERWENT,  
at Tawau.

April  
5 ~~March~~ 1966.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MARCH 1966

(All times local)

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of Her Majesty's Australian Ship DERWENT for the month of March 1966.

2. At the beginning of the month, DERWENT was at sea in company with HMAS VAMPIRE on passage from Manus to Singapore. At 0800 on Wednesday 2 March VAMPIRE and DERWENT replenished with fuel from RFA GOLD RANGER off Tawau, and were then joined by HMS SALISBURY who had been relieved as guardship, Tawau, that day.
3. Each ship carried out an AA tracking exercise in the Singapore exercise area on the morning of Saturday 5 March. This was followed by an AAMRF. DERWENT was unable to shoot because there was insufficient time remaining after SALISBURY shot down the sleeve. At 1500 DERWENT arrived off Beaulieu Shoal Buoy and subsequently secured starboard side to number 7 berth Naval Stores Basin, Singapore Naval Base. The nine days Self Maintenance period which followed enabled officers and sailors to attend briefings on such matters as intelligence, patrol duties, and security, and in general to acquaint themselves with the operational requirements of the Far East Station. Perhaps of greater importance, the Superintendent, Gyro Compasses stripped and repaired the defective gyro compass which has since operated satisfactorily. A report on the defects found in the gyro compass has been forwarded in DERWENT letter 150/20/5 dated 29 March 1966.
4. At 1130 on Tuesday 8 March, the Commander, Far East Fleet, Vice Admiral Sir Frank B. Twiss, K.C.B. D.S.C., addressed the ship's company explaining briefly the current situation in the Far East and the part DERWENT would play during her 5 month tour of duty.
5. On the evening of Friday 11 March an official cocktail party was held on the forecastles of HMA Ships VAMPIRE and DERWENT.

THE FLAG OFFICER COMMANDING,  
H.M. AUSTRALIAN FLEET.

(Copy to: The Commander, Far East Fleet.  
The Flag Officer, Second-in-Command, Far East Fleet.  
The Captain (F), First Frigate Squadron.  
The Captain (D), Tenth Destroyer Squadron.  
The Commander, Naval Forces, Borneo.)

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6. The Flag Officer, Second-in-Command, Far East Fleet, Rear Admiral C.P. Mills, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.C.\* visited the ship at 1100 on Saturday 12 March 1966 and met the officers.

7. During the ship's stay in Singapore great interest was shown in Ikara. Demonstrations were given on three occasions, the number of visitors being limited to sixteen in each case. Allocations to the dockyard and ships in company were made by the Commander, Far East Fleet. In this manner forty eight officers visited the ship and it was unfortunate that all those who wished to come (there were seventy six) could not be accepted. It is hoped that they will come on another occasion.

8. At 0550 on Tuesday 15 March DERWENT cast off and proceeded to sea. At 0900 the ship commenced check DG ranging which was completed by 1100 and then proceeded to the Singapore exercise areas. During the remainder of the day an AATX and AAMRF were carried out followed by a Casex A14/5 with HM Submarine ANDREW. This casex provided the first opportunity for the ship's team to exercise Ikara. Sonar conditions were suitable for the tactical employment of "Long Tom" and the results obtained by the Sonar Control Room crew were most encouraging. Good "cuts" were made and accurate tracks were displayed on the attack console.

9. At 2100 on Tuesday 15 March DERWENT returned to the Singapore Straits area to carry out her first night patrol which was without incident except for the large number of merchant ships encountered.

10. Independent exercises the following day included a surface firing against a towed target and a Naval Gunfire Support Firing off the island of Pulau Aur. At 2030 DERWENT joined HMS AJAX for A/S exercises with HM Submarine ANDREW.

11. At 0830 on Thursday 17 March the ship secured to Bravo Buoy, Singapore Naval Base, for a compass swing, moving alongside on completion at 1200.

12. At 0720 on Friday 18 March DERWENT cast off and proceeded for Tawau for duties as guardship. The passage via the Mallawallee Channel was made without incident and at 1200 on Monday 21 March the ship anchored off Tawau Jetty having replenished from the RFA GOLD RANGER before entering harbour. The normal weekly meeting conducted by the Tawau guardship took place onboard HMNZS TARANAKI during the afternoon. This meeting is attended by representatives of all military authorities in the local area and on this occasion served as the turnover for DERWENT.

13. At 0730 on Tuesday 22 March, DERWENT weighed and proceeded in company with HMS DEVONSHIRE, wearing the Flag of the Flag Officer Second-in-Command, Far East Fleet, and HMNZS TARANAKI, to carry out a operational bombardment against targets on the northern side of the Sabah/Indonesian border on the island of Sebatik. This was a most interesting shoot and of excellent operational value. DEVONSHIRE then parted company, followed later by TARANAKI.

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14. DERWENT assumed the duties of guardship Tawau at 1000 on Tuesday 22 March. Visits to Headquarters, East Brigade, RAF Tawau and Special Police scheduled for the afternoon were hurriedly postponed when it was learnt that the Panamanian registered ship CARINA had grounded on a reef to the west of Sibutu Passage in Philippines waters and required assistance. DERWENT weighed anchor at 1430 and proceeded with all despatch, arriving in the area at 1900. Subsequent events have been reported separately. DERWENT left CARINA the following morning to land her crew at Tawau, arriving at 1430 Wednesday 23 March.

15. Patrol vessels operated by DERWENT (on behalf of COMNAVFOR) during the remainder of the month, at Tawau, were as follows:-

- HMNZS SANTON (Lt. Cdr. L. Tempero, RNZN)
- HMAS HAWK (Lt. J.D. Foster, RAN)
- KD SRI NEGRI
- SEMBILAN (Lt. R. Cave, RN)
- KD SRI MELAKA (Lt. C. May, RN)
- RFA EDDYROCK (Captain G. Baker)

Except for one night when HAWK was unserviceable following the discharge of firearms on board by one of her sailors, the operational availability of all ships for patrol duties has been good and has enabled each ship to have one night off duty in five. This also provides an opportunity for self maintenance although in this respect there have been increasing demands upon the guardship for assistance. The operational control of these ships, and the co-ordination of their programmes with the Special Police, Army and Air Force authorities ashore is providing unusual and valuable experience for DERWENT.

16. It is now the current practice for the guardship to be allocated a Civil Aid Project in the near vicinity of Tawau to be completed during her tour of duty. DERWENT's project is the building of a small loading platform for sampans in 6 feet of water about one hundred and fifty feet from the shore on the island of Salakan in Darvel Bay. The natives are to construct the walkaway to the shore. It is hoped that this will be completed during the second week in April. There has been no lack of volunteer "jetty builders" on board and the project has created a healthy interest amongst the sailors. The construction party of about twelve will live ashore, probably under canvas, and be self sufficient in all respects.

17. Because fire power in the Tawau area is limited it is accepted that the guardship could be called upon at short notice to provide Naval Gunfire support to our troops ashore. To this end DERWENT during the period in Tawau from 22 - 31 March has carried out three operational shoots (two at anchor in the Wallace Bay Area) and formed a good liaison with the Naval Gunfire Support Observer ashore. It is intended to carry out at least one bombardment per week using both ground and air spot during the ship's tour of duty.

18. The bearding party system of one officer, one petty officer and eight junior sailors has worked very well. Drill is now smooth and the boarding party has achieved a high standard of efficiency with fifteen boardings during the month.

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19. Communications at Tawau have a bad reputation but little difficulty has been experienced to date, beyond delays in ship/shore traffic. The volume of traffic required an extra effort from the radio operators particularly in off line cryptography, but use has been made of Radio Operator Specialists to ease the load in the Bridge Wireless Office while at the same time giving the 'S' operators some radio experience.

20. Apart from bombardments, there are no practice facilities for external exercises in the area. A continuous UA9 watch is maintained as part of the air defence functions of the guardship and it is hoped to organise limited jamming exercises shortly but geographic limitations make realistic training difficult. EDDYROCK is unable to supply fuel at sea and ships replenish from her alongside at anchor.

21. A number of EW exercise have been carried out in the Singapore exercise area. UA9 results achieved against submarines have been most satisfactory. On one occasion however, the jammer became unserviceable on both bands immediately it was switched on, although S band eventually became operational. This serial highlighted the unpalatable fact that the availability and reliability of Type 667 is still suspect. This may be attributed to lack of maintainers and insufficient maintenance experience.

22. The operational availability of the Ikara Weapon System has been disappointingly low due to numerous defects, some of which can be attributed to design weaknesses, and others to incorrect setting to work of the equipment. The rectification of these Guidance Equipment defects has been slow, due to lack of spare gear and information, and also inexperience of the maintenance sailors concerned. It was disquietening to find that when ten Ikara missile bodies were tested on 2 March, four were apparently defective. Considerable investigation has been undertaken on board in an attempt to discover whether the missiles are actually defective, or that they are only incompatible with the test equipment. This problem has been reported separately, but has not yet been resolved. During Ikara missile testing, it was observed that the Ikara Handling and Magazine equipment became unserviceable in temperature above approximately 90° Fahrenheit. It was eventually found that the missile detection photo-electric units were heat sensitive. This design defect caused a minor accident to occur in the Missile Assemble Room. When carrying out loading drills, the trolley moved in the wrong direction causing the nose cone of the test missile to strike the umbilical connector of an operational missile. All missile components were tested and found operational. Until these units are modified, operation of this equipment in the Automatic mode is not permitted (ACNB message DTG 220613Z March '66 refers).

23. Mr. Heath, a Department of Supply Field Engineer, arrived in Singapore on 10 March to investigate the apparent failure of Ikara guidance fins, when tested. After completing the investigation, Mr. Heath considered that test failures were due to incompatibility of fin and fin test equipment and would probably not effect equipment operationally.

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24. On 9 March the 4.5 inch turret training re-setter box was replaced with a spare item. Replacement of the resetter box only slightly improved the training motion performance, which is still outside tolerance. However the MRS 3 system should still be capable of obtaining reasonable results, with present turret performance. The defective left gun intensifier has also been replaced, and both guns are now operational.

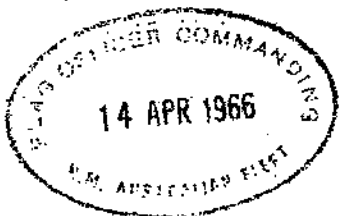
25. On 7 March the Sonar Type AN/SQS 504 transducer, frequency V5, was replaced with a new transducer, frequency 25.

26. The health, conduct and morale of the ship's company is satisfactory.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant.



*J.D. Stevens*  
(J.D. STEVENS)  
COMMANDER R.A.N.  
CAPTAIN

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