

SECRET

910/007

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

5 June 1966.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MAY 1966

(All times local)

Sir,

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

2. On Sunday 1 May, DERWENT was alongside South Wall, Victoria Basin, Hong Kong, progressing a fourteen day self maintenance period. During this time preparations were being made for the ship's annual inspection by Captain (F), First Frigate Squadron and for Exercise SEA IMP. By the end of the self maintenance period the ship had reached a high standard of cleanliness and with one or two minor exceptions all machinery and equipment was functioning correctly.

3. It was expected that on Sunday 1 May, local May Day, incidents would occur ashore and consequently all leave was cancelled by direction of the Commodore in Charge. Fortunately this was the only restriction imposed on leave during the ship's stay in Hong Kong.

4. On Saturday 14 May the Director General of Ships, Royal Navy, Sir Alfred J. SIMMS, K.C.B., O.B.E. walked quickly around DERWENT.

5. At 0900 on Sunday 15 May DERWENT cast off and proceeded to sea in company with HMA Ships YARRA and VAMPIRE. A rendezvous was made with HMAS MELBOURNE south of the Ninepin Group. For the remainder of the day the ship acted as a consort and took part in some of the evolutions carried out during your sea inspection of YARRA.

...../6.

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

(Copy to: The Flag Officer Commanding,
HMA Fleet. (Rear Link)
The Commander, Far East Fleet.
The Flag Officer, Second in Command,
Far East Fleet.
The Captain (F), First Frigate Squadron,
HMAS YARRA.
The Captain (D), Tenth Destroyer Squadron,
HMAS VAMPIRE.)



SECRET

047

6. A STYXEX was conducted at 0830 on Monday 16 May using Wessex helicopters to simulate FPB's and Venom aircraft to simulate their missiles. Once more passive intercept potential by UA8/9 was lost when type 667 was operating. This has been reported separately. It was regrettable that a major aerial defect in UA9 considerably downgraded bearing accuracy. The results of this exercise are not yet known but the exercise emphasized the need for extremely close co-operation between the defending units and the quick dissemination of information in such a rapidly developing situation.
7. Before departure from Hong Kong typhoon Irma had been detected well to the east of Manila. It was hoped that Irma would recurve to the north east before the group entered Subic Bay but the typhoon held its course to the west north west for some time after passing south of Manila and it was necessary for ships to remain at sea to the south and east of the typhoon centre. The visit to Subic Bay was cancelled and DERWENT's inspection programme was re-arranged. Accordingly at 0830 on Tuesday 11 May, Captain G.J. WILLIS, A.D.C., R.A.N., Captain (F), First Frigate Squadron arrived on board to carry out his sea inspection. The inspection consisted of a number of exercises including a massed air attack, a FARSEX with VAMPIRE as consort, and a surface throw off firing against MELBOURNE. DERWENT towed MELBOURNE as part of a series of evolutions. Captain F1 returned to YARRA by jackstay on completion of his inspection at 1700.
8. Inspection by Captain F1 below decks took place the following day but divisions and inspection of the upper deck had to be postponed, because of the weather, until Thursday 19 May when the ship was at anchor in Manila Bay.
9. DERWENT anchored in Manila Bay at 1230 on Thursday 19 May. During the next four days concentrated harbour exercises were conducted in preparation for SEA IMP. A number of briefings, including the briefing for the two day sea training phase which I attended on board HMS DEVONSHIRE on Sunday 22 May, were also held during this period. No leave was given in Manila for the first two days of our visit because the weather was too bad for boat traffic. When the weather improved DERWENT's single motor whaler proved quite incapable of transporting her libertymen to MELBOURNE for onward transportation, let alone take them directly to the shore. The visit emphasized what was already known, namely that DERWENT requires considerable assistance if satisfactory arrangements are to be made for leave when the ship is at anchor or a buoy.
10. DERWENT weighed anchor at 0550 on Monday 23 May and proceeded in company with other units forming ASW Group 'A' during SEA IMP. During the following two days concentrated sea training phase DERWENT exercised with USS YORKTOWN, USS BRONSTEIN, HMS HAMPSHIRE, HMS DIDO, HMNZS OTAGO and HMAS VAMPIRE. This was an important and most useful phase of SEA IMP, although conditions became unpleasant during the night of 23 May as the effects of typhoon Judy were felt. DERWENT took part in two Casex A17's, one Casex A4/5, one SUTP and two ADEX, and in company with other units of the SEATO Fleet returned to Manila Bay anchoring at 1830 on 24 May. A briefing for the first phase of SEA IMP was held on board MELBOURNE on Wednesday 25 May.
11. At 0456 on Thursday 26 May DERWENT weighed and proceeded for the first phase of exercise SEA IMP. In deteriorating

.../weather

SECRET

- 3 -

66

weather a departure screen was formed outside Manila Bay and later when the heavy ships had cleared the Bay, DERWENT formed part of the screen on the USS YORKTOWN, flagship of Rear Admiral F.B. GILKESON, U.S.N., Commander Anti Submarine Warfare Group 3, and for SEA IMP, CTG 319.1 or ASW Group Alfa. The wind force increased to force 8 during the afternoon as the force made ground to the south west. Conditions were much improved the following day and the exercise got under way. DERWENT remained with ASW Group A until the mid ocean break on Monday 30 May and by this time had been credited with two confirmed submarine "kills". There were also at least two occasions when DERWENT could have opened fire with IKARA, through use of the EXDAT facility, at submarine contacts held by other ships while they were closing to attack with short range A/S weapons.

12. The VDS cable fairing was torn during Captain F1's sea inspection and for the first time a vulcanizing outfit was available to effect repairs on board. Subsequently the VDS was streamed for a further 78 hours during SEA IMP, under operational conditions of manoeuvring, and no damage has occurred. VDS overall availability during 212 hours of operating compared with other sonars, was

Sonar Type 170	97.5%
Sonar Type 177	99.4%
Sonar Type AN/SQS504	97.0%

The VDS also obtained some initial contacts.

13. The health conduct and morale of the ship's company has been satisfactory.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

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

SECRET

949