

SECRET

H.M.A.S. DUCHESS
at Hong Kong.

5th October, 1965

The Flag Officer Commanding,
H.M. Australian Fleet,
Fleet Headquarters,
GARDEN ISLAND, N.S.W.

Copies to: The Commander, Far East Fleet.

The Flag Officer Second in Command, Far East Fleet.

The Captain, H.M.A.S. VENDETTA.

H.M.A.S. DUCHESS - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS -
SEPTEMBER, 1965

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of H.M.A.S. DUCHESS for the month of September, 1965.

2. At the beginning of the month H.M.A.S. DUCHESS was in Malacca Strait off Cape Rachado as O.T.C. of a patrol group which included H.M.A.S. IBIS (Lieutenant Commander P.D. CAMPBELL, R.A.N.) and K.D. LEDANG.

3. At 1400GH on Wednesday, 1st September a rendezvous was made with H.M.A.S. TEAL (Lieutenant K. MURRAY, D.S.C., R.A.N.) and two Midshipmen were embarked.

4. On the night of 1st/2nd September the ship continued patrolling with the same group as the previous night and at 0740GH, 2nd September, anchored to the south east of Cape Rachado. At 1230GH H.M.A.S. DUCHESS weighed and proceeded for day patrol.

5. On the night of 2nd/3rd September patrol was continued with H.M.A.S. IBIS and K.D. MELAKA. At 0900GH, Friday, 3rd September H.M.A.S. DUCHESS rendezvoused with R.F.A. WAVE SOVEREIGN and replenished with F.P.O. On completion day patrol was resumed until the ship anchored in the vicinity of Pulau Undan at 1200GH.

6. At 1627GH, Friday 3rd September H.M.A.S. DUCHESS weighed and patrolled once again off Cape Rachado in company with H.M.S. HUBBERSTON and K.D. MELAKA for the night of 3rd/4th September.

7. At 0900GH, Saturday, 4th September H.M.A.S. DUCHESS left the Cape Rachado patrol area and proceeded to a new area to the north west of One Fathom Bank to patrol independently. This patrol continued until 2100GH on Monday, 6th September, interrupted only by a replenishment from R.F.A. TIDEREACH to the south east of One Fathom Bank at 0915GH on Sunday, 5th September.

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8. On completion of this patrol H.M.A.S. DUCHESS proceeded through Malacca Strait to Singapore Naval Base and berthed port side to No.2 Stores Basin alongside H.M.A.S. VENDETTA (Commander D.W. LEACH, R.A.N.) at 1515GH on Tuesday, 7th September.
9. At 1215GH, Thursday, 9th September I called on the Flag Officer, Second-in-Command, Far East Fleet, Vice-Admiral P.J. HILL-NORTON, C.B., flying his flag in H.M.S. ARK ROYAL (Captain A.T.F.G. GRIFFIN, R.N.).
10. Apart from the storing and self maintenance carried out during the short stay in Singapore this period was distinguished by a hard fought and exciting game of rugby against H.M.S. ARK ROYAL who won 14-13.
11. At 0805GH on Friday, 10th September H.M.A.S. DUCHESS in company with H.M.A.S. VENDETTA cast off and proceeded to Manus Island. On clearing Johore Shoal Buoy an A.A. tracking exercise was carried out but the A.A. firings scheduled for 1100GH had to be cancelled due to a combination of bad weather and foul range from shipping.
12. Passage was made across the South China Sea north of Subi Island and along the west coast of Borneo. A quarterly full power trial, which has been reported separately, was carried out during the forenoon of Sunday, 12th September and that afternoon the north coast of Borneo was rounded and passage made through the Malawali Channel.
13. At 0845GH on Monday, 13th September a rendezvous was made with R.F.A. GOLD RANGER to the south of Sibutu Passage and H.M.A. Ships DUCHESS and VENDETTA replenished. On completion R.F.A. GOLD RANGER returned to Tawau and passage was continued to Manus Island.
14. On Wednesday, 15th September a sailor was provisionally diagnosed as suffering from appendicitis and while he was still ambulatory the opportunity was taken to transfer him, with the Medical Officer and Leading Sick Berth Attendant, by boat to H.M.A.S. VENDETTA. It was considered that if an operation was necessary it would be safer in H.M.A.S. VENDETTA where facilities are better. Assisted by the Medical Officer of H.M.A.S. VENDETTA, the Medical Officer operated successfully at 1530H. The sailor was subsequently discharged to H.M.A.S. TARANGAU (Acting Commander C.J. SCHEITZER, R.A.N.) for convalescence.
15. At 1130I on Thursday, 16th September trouble was experienced with a faulty plumber block bearing on the starboard shaft. This necessitated steaming on the port shaft from 2050I on 16th September until 1350I on Friday 17th September when repairs were completed successfully. This has been reported separately in my letter 137/206/2 dated 19th September.
16. H.M.A.S. DUCHESS entered Scaadler Harbour at 1720K on Saturday, 18th September and berthed starboard side to Lombum Wharf at 1800K. H.M.A.S. VENDETTA berthed on H.M.A.S. DUCHESS at 1820K.

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17. At 1200K on Sunday, 19th September H.M.A.S. SYDNEY (OTG327.2) (Captain G.J.B. CRABB, D.S.C., R.A.N.) and H.M.A.S. ANZAC (Commander I.H. NICHOLSON, R.A.N.) entered Lombrum Bay. At 1900K, in company with the Captain of H.M.A.S. VENDETTA, I called on Captain G.J.B. CRABB, D.S.C., R.A.N.
18. During the short period at Manus Island the maximum amount of recreational leave was given to offset the amount of sea time in the past and anticipated in the future.
19. At 0615K on Monday, 20th September H.M.A.S. DUCHESS, in company with H.M.A.S. VENDETTA, cast off and proceeded to sea to form a departure screen. At 0800K, as H.M.A.S. SYDNEY left Scaadler Harbour, H.M.A. Ships DUCHESS and VENDETTA took up sector screening stations for the passage to Subic Bay.
20. At 1340I on Wednesday, 22nd September an underway replenishment was carried out from H.M.A.S. SYDNEY.
21. At 0330H on Friday, 24th September a landfall was made on Batag Island Light in the Phillipine Islands and during the day passage was made through San Bernadino Strait and Verde Island Passage.
22. At 0645H on Saturday, 25th September H.M.A. Ships DUCHESS and VENDETTA were detached from H.M.A.S. SYDNEY and entered Subic Bay. At 0800H H.M.A.S. DUCHESS berthed port side to No.11 Riviera Wharf and H.M.A.S. VENDETTA berthed on H.M.A.S. DUCHESS at 0810H.
23. During the day the Australian Services Attache, Wing Commander F.J. McMAHON, D.F.C., A.F.C., R.A.A.F. called and details of the pending visit to Tacloban in Leyte on 19th and 20th October, 1965 were discussed.
24. It was intended to fuel at Subic Bay however delays in fuelling H.M.A. Ships SYDNEY and VENDETTA in succession by one lighter did not leave enough time for fuel to be embarked by H.M.A.S. DUCHESS before the scheduled time for departure.
25. At 1715H H.M.A.S. VENDETTA cast off and H.M.A.S. DUCHESS followed. Both ships proceeded out of Subic Bay at 1730H in order to be in a position to screen H.M.A.S. SYDNEY on weighing and departing at 1800H. Passage was then made to Cap St. Jacques, South Vietnam.
26. At 0700H on Sunday, 26th September H.M.A.S. DUCHESS carried out an underway replenishment from H.M.A.S. SYDNEY.
27. At 0600H on Tuesday, 28th September H.M.A.S. DUCHESS was detached and proceeded to the anchorage in the Baie de Sanh-Rai, carrying out a Sonar Sweep en route, and anchored in position 305 Point Gahn-Rai Light 1.6 miles at 0715H. H.M.A.S. SYDNEY then entered harbour and anchored nearby to start unloading troops and equipment.
28. During the period in the anchorage continuous boat patrols were run and the ship remained in Operation Awkwa 1 State 2 at 1 hours notice for steam.

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29. H.M.A.S. SYDNEY completed unloading ahead of schedule and at 0615 on Thursday, 30th September, H.M.A. Ships DUCHESS and VENDETTA weighed and proceeded from Cap St. Jacques to carry out a departure screen for H.M.A.S. SYDNEY. When H.M.A.S. SYDNEY finally cleared the mouth of the Saigon River at 0715H H.M.A.S. DUCHESS in company with H.M.A.S. VENDETTA formed a sector screen.

30. At 1545H the same day an underway replenishment was carried out from H.M.A.S. SYDNEY.

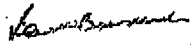
31. At 1700H on completion of fuelling H.M.A. Ships DUCHESS and VENDETTA were detached and at the end of the month were on passage to Hong Kong.

32. The condition of the ship and conditions on board remain satisfactory. The health of the Ship's Company generally remains good and morale high and all look forward to the opportunities for leave in Hong Kong.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your obedient Servant


(I.M. Burnside)
Commander, R.A.N.
CAPTAIN.

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