

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

1960

The Flag Officer Commanding,
H.M. AUSTRALIAN FLEET.

H.M.A.S. MELBOURNE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - APRIL 1960

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of April 1960.

2. At the beginning of the month H.M.A. Ships MELBOURNE and VOYAGER were proceeding northward, inside the Great Barrier Reef on their way to join the Strategic Reserve.
3. At 0730K 1st April, VOYAGER came alongside for replenishment, and was supplied with 211 tons of F.F.O. in 55 minutes.
4. Flying commenced at 0915K in Halifax Bay off Townsville, and two Gannet aircraft landed at Garbutt airfield and collected mail. The schedule of sorties ended at 1215K, by which time H.M.S. BELFAST, wearing the Flag of the Flag Officer 2nd in Command, Far East Station, and H.M.S. CAVALIER were in the vicinity. During the afternoon of 1st April while making ground to the north, a competitive surface plotting exercise was carried out by all ships. One helicopter which had landed mail for H.M. Ships BELFAST and CAVALIER was delayed at Townsville by a mechanical defect, but eventually returned shortly before 1500K.
5. MELBOURNE rounded Fitzroy Island at 2200K, and at 0800K 2nd April, passed Lizard Island of the Turtle Group, on the Starboard hand.
6. No flying took place on 2nd April, because of the restricted waters of the Barrier Reef.
7. Having passed through Adolphus Channel between 0630K and 0730K 3rd April, MELBOURNE left Booby Island to port at 1100K, and VOYAGER, who was then stationed 5 cables on the port beam, took guide to give MELBOURNE officers of the watch station keeping experience.
8. Carpenteria Light Ship was abeam to starboard at 1430K and a course of 270 degrees 14 knots was set.
9. At 0645K 4th April 2 Gannet aircraft were flown off to search for H.M. Ships, BELFAST and CAVALIER as part of a search and strike exercise, but the strike did not materialise because of insufficient wind to launch Venoms.
10. Light south easterly winds prevailed all day and only Gannet sorties were flown. Day flying was completed at 1430K.

11. A rendezvous with H.M. Ships BELFAST, CAVALIER and R.F.A. WAVE MASTER was effected at 1700K and ships were stationed on a circular screen about the latter. At 1730K when the force was 10 miles north of Cape Wessel, all ships stopped, and mail was transferred by boat to MELBOURNE. On completion, WAVE MASTER was detached and BELFAST, VOYAGER and CAVALIER took up rescue destroyer stations for night flying, which consisted of one Gannet sortie, launched at 1930K and recovered at 2100K. Lack of wind again prevented Venoms being launched.
12. With MELBOURNE and BELFAST in column, and the destroyers screening, the force proceeded to the westward during the night, carrying out a short leg zig zag for one hour in each watch.
13. At 0620K Tuesday 5th April MELBOURNE acted independently, and there being sufficient wind, a Venom sortie was launched at 0630K. Flying continued until 1215K.
14. MELBOURNE fuelled from WAVE MASTER between 1345K and 1700K, and 1,647 tons of F.F.O. were embarked.
15. Ships passed through Clarence Strait during the middle watch on 6th April, and arrived in Port Darwin at 0640IK. MELBOURNE came to anchor at this time.
16. At 0930IK Wednesday 6th April the Naval Officer-in-Charge, North Australia Area, A/Captain A.H. Cooper, R.A.N. called on you, Sir.
17. Social activity at Darwin included your luncheon onboard H.M.A.S. MELBOURNE to the Chief Justice Mr. Justice Kriewaldt and Mrs. Kriewaldt, A/Captain and Mrs. Cooper, and Colonel and Mrs. Hind. In the evening Flag and Commanding Officers were entertained at a buffet supper by the Naval Officer-in-Charge, North Australia Area, and Mrs. Cooper, and afterwards attended a corroboree enacted by aborigines from Bathurst and Melville islands.
18. Sailing from Darwin at 0830IK 7th April under your Tactical Command, MELBOURNE, BELFAST, VOYAGER, CAVALIER and WAVE MASTER proceeded to the westward after rounding Cape Charles. Between 1230IK and 1515IK replenishment exercises were carried out and during this time MELBOURNE made two approaches to WAVE MASTER, and connected both fuelling hoses. An attempt on the second run to disconnect the after hose by breaking the emergency coupling was unsuccessful. Officer of the Watch manoeuvres followed, and proved to be good value.
19. Ships continued on a westerly course in column throughout the night.
20. At 0830IK Friday 8th April, VOYAGER came alongside and yourself and staff were transferred by light jackstay for her annual sea inspection.
21. Day flying took place between 1000IK and 1200IK, Gannets only being launched because of insufficient wind for Venom operations.
22. BELFAST came alongside at 1415IK to transfer one press reporter by jackstay, who had come to witness night flying. He was unfortunate, however, as night flying was cancelled because of Gannet unserviceability, and lack of wind for Venoms.
23. VOYAGER took MELBOURNE in tow during the first dog watch, while CAVALIER performed a similar exercise with BELFAST.
24. After you, Sir, and your staff returned from VOYAGER by boat at 1730IK, ships formed column in reverse order of sequence numbers, and north westerly course was set for the night.

25. Although no flying was scheduled for Saturday 9th April a light south easterly breeze during the afternoon permitted three Venom sorties to be flown for touch and go and arrested landing practice between 1230I and 1500I.
26. The force passed through Lombok Strait between 0500H and 0700H Sunday 10th April and cleared Goa' Goa island at 1530H, when course was altered to head for Carimata Strait.
27. A day at sea without flying gave opportunity for sporting activities on the flight deck, and deck hockey and volleyball knockout competitions were held.
28. At 0820GH Monday 11th April MELBOURNE increased speed, and proceeded ahead of the force to make ground for the afternoon flying programme. At 1020GH H.M.A.S. QUEENBOROUGH having left Singapore two days previously, joined the main body and transferred welcome mail to all ships.
29. The flying programme which lasted 2 hours from 1430GH consisted of deck landing practice for 805 Squadron, and Gannet test flights.
30. MELBOURNE rejoined the main body at 1640GH and after an hour of Officer of the Watch manoeuvres, the force proceeded to the northward in company. Serotoc island was abeam to starboard at 0300GH Tuesday 12th April.
31. Having made rendezvous at 0800GH with WAVE MASTER and FORT CHARLOTTE a replenishment was carried out. 1,100 tons of P.F.O. were embarked from WAVE MASTER, and then a quantity of victualling stores from FORT CHARLOTTE by heavy jacksay. This was completed at 1400GH when MELBOURNE acted independently, and carried out a major Damage Control exercise.
32. Officer of the Watch manoeuvres which included the recovery of lifebuoys without using a boat, occupied $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours of the dog watches, after which MELBOURNE proceeded towards the Singapore exercise areas, screened by QUEENBOROUGH and CAVALIER, VOYAGER having been detached at 2000GH to proceed direct to Singapore.
33. At 0545GH on Wednesday 13th April CAVALIER came alongside and returned one lifebuoy by heaving line.
34. Throughout the day MELBOURNE carried out a flying programme curtailed by the lack of wind which precluded all but one Venom launch, although Gannets were able to fly throughout the day.
35. A.A. close range sleeve firings took place at 1415GH against a target towing Beaufighter aircraft from Selatar, R.A.F. Station.
36. Night flying, again using Gannets alone, was completed shortly after 2100GH.
37. With QUEENBOROUGH in column on MELBOURNE the ships steamed at ten knots until 0100GH Thursday 14th April when QUEENBOROUGH was detached to proceed to the Singapore Naval Base.
- 4/. 38. MELBOURNE arrived....

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38. MELBOURNE arrived at the Degaussing Range at 0850GH, and after stopping to embark and disembark the DC officer, we passed over the range to check the DG settings. A total of twelve runs were carried out, and at 1415GH course was set for the Naval Base. At 1700GH a salute of 17 guns was fired to the Commander in Chief, Far East Station, and was answered by the Police Battery at Beaulieu Point. The ship berthed starboard side to No. 8 berth at 1745GH.

17th - 23rd April 1960 - at Singapore.

39. During this period H.M.A. Ship under my command was alongside in Singapore dockyard, embarking stores and preparing for exercise "Sealion" along with other units of the R.A.N., R.N., Pakistan and French Navies.

40. While in Singapore a large number of calls were made and returned. These are listed in Appendix "p".

41. On the evening of 16th April the Australian Commissioner and Mrs. David McNicol gave a reception at their residence, for officers of the Australian Fleet and senior officers of all fleets present. This was a most enjoyable function.

42. The Australian Fleet reception was held onboard H.M.A.S. MELBOURNE on Tuesday 19th April. This was followed by the ceremony of "Beat Retreat", which was well received and favourably commented upon.

43. The Commander in Chief, Far East Station gave a farewell party in H.M.S. ALERT on the evening of Wednesday 20th April, which I had the pleasure of attending.

44. The ship's swimming carnival was held at the swimming pool H.M.S. TERBOR on the afternoon of Thursday 21st April.

23rd - 28th April - Singapore to Manila.

45. Sailing from Singapore Naval Base at 0915GH, 23rd April, H.M.A.S. MELBOURNE wearing your flag led the second division, consisting of H.M.A.S. VENDETTA and F.S. CASSARD, out of harbour, having been preceded by H.M.S. BELFAST wearing the flag of the Flag Officer, 2nd in Command, Far East Station, and the fifth and eighteenth frigate squadrons.

46. The passage to Manila to assemble for exercise "Sealion" was made under the tactical command of the Flag Officer, 2nd in Command, Far East Station, and the programme of exercises carried out en route came under the suitable title of "Seacub".

47. A three hour flying programme was carried out between 1330GH and 1630GH in the approaches to Singapore strait, after which MELBOURNE rejoined the force which moved to the north east during the night.

48. On Sunday 24th April church services were held onboard. During the afternoon of this day an athletics carnival was held on the flight deck, competitors from all other ships in company having been sent by boat. A balanced programme of serious and novelty competitions was finally won by H.M.S. TORQUAY with MELBOURNE second. Rear Admiral V.C. Begg, C.B., D.S.O., D.S.C., Flag Officer, 2nd in Command, Far East Station, spent the afternoon onboard viewing the sport, and presented the prizes.

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49. During the early hours of Monday 25th April rendezvous was made with the Underway Replenishment Group consisting of WAVE MASTER, FORT CHARLOTTE and FORT SANDUSKY. MELBOURNE embarked approximately 390 tons of fuel between 0800H and 0930H from WAVE MASTER, and then detached from the group to commence flying operations screened by H.M.S. TORQUAY, H.M.S. TENBY and H.M.A.S. VENDETTA. Flying ended at 1215H.

50. At 1345 P.N.S. TIPPU SULTAN came alongside to simulate fuelling. Hoses were connected up, but no fuel was passed. This was followed by all ships forming column and carrying out an Anti Aircraft Rapid Open Fire exercise against 2 inch rocket flares.

51. Officer of the Watch manoeuvres occupied half an hour from 1615 after which a D/F check calibration enabled ships to check the accuracy of their equipment.

52. MELBOURNE with VENDETTA in company detached from the force and proceeded to the north north west in preparation for the next morning's exercise, carrying out a schedule of radar and W/T transmissions en route, for the benefit of the Electronic Warfare teams in each ship of the main force.

53. At 0600H 26th April Gannet aircraft were launched to search for BELFAST and her screen, and were followed by strikes of Venoms. Later in the forenoon Venom aircraft were launched to carry out attacks on the forces to exercise A.A. gun coordination, break up shot being fired. The two groups of ships combined again on completion of flying at 1230H, and heaving line transfers of exercise orders were carried out with H.M. Ships TORQUAY, TENBY, SCARBOROUGH and Pakistan Navy Ships TUGHRIL and TIPPU SULTAN.

54. During the afternoon Gannet aircraft and H.M. Submarine TEREDO were engaged in a submarine transit exercise which ended prematurely at 1600 when the catapult developed a fault, precluding the launch of the final detail.

55. Between 2000H and 2300H 26th April a night shadowing exercise was carried out with H.M.A.S. VENDETTA and F.S. CASSARD as shadowers of the main force. Ships were fully darkened with the exception of MELBOURNE which burned dimmed navigation lights to enable the screen to keep station while maintaining radar silence.

56. Wednesday 27th April started with an anti submarine tactical exercise. All ships including R.F.A's were formed as a convoy with MELBOURNE operating aircraft "in the box". Gannet aircraft were launched for convoy close support, and Venoms carried out rocket attacks on a splash target. Contact was made with H.M. Submarine TEREDO and attacks carried out by ships and aircraft.

57. On completion of flying shortly before 1500H the force stopped to clean ship's sides, moving off again at 1600H.

58. At 1630H heavy ships replenishment was carried out and MELBOURNE embarked 411 tons of F.F.O. from WAVE MASTER.

6/. 59. Small ships.....

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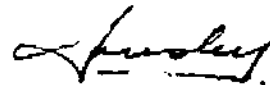
59. Small ships replenishment took place after dark commencing at 2000H. During the latter part of the first watch the 8th Destroyer Squadron consisting of CAVENDISH, CAVALIER and CAPRICE, joined company and took up screening stations on completion of fuelling.
60. Corregidor Island light was raised at 0515H on Thursday 28th April.
61. Screening manoeuvres and exercises were carried out off Manila Bay between 0600H and 0700H, during which time U.S.S. YORKTOWN and her screen of 6 destroyers hove into sight astern.
62. At 0720H MELBOURNE proceeded 2½ miles ahead of BELFAST and led the formation into Manila Bay. MELBOURNE came to anchor at 1030H. All other ships except H.M.S. TORQUAY were assigned alongside berths, and before proceeding to her berth H.M.S. BELFAST fired a 21 gun national salute in honour of the "Republic of the Philippines".
63. Calls paid and returned at Manila are listed in Appendix B.
64. Numerous pre-still and exercise programme conferences were held during the period at Manila.
65. On the evening of Friday 29th April, Officers of the Philippine Navy gave a party at their club for the Officers of the visiting S.E.A.T.O. Fleets, which I had the pleasure of attending in your company.
66. A feature of the visit to Manila was the great interest taken by officers and men of the Royal Australian Navy and the United States Navy in each others ships and equipment. Friendly visits at all levels took place between personnel from H.M.A.S. MELBOURNE and U.S.S. YORKTOWN, and other U.S.N. vessels present.

Condition of the Ship

The condition of the ship is satisfactory.

Health and Morale of the Ship's Company

The health and morale of the ship's company is good.



(J.S. Mesley)
CAPTAIN

Encl.