

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

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

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

Sir,

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

2. At the beginning of June 1960, H.M.A. Ship under my command was on passage from Hong Kong to Yokohama, off the south coast of Honshu.
3. A flying programme was scheduled to commence at 0900I, 1st June, but difficulty was experienced in obtaining clearance for the flights from ADIS Tokyo, and this was not finally given until shortly before noon. Gannets and Venoms were flown between 1215I and 1640I.
4. During the night of 1st/2nd June, the MELBOURNE passed through the approaches to Tokyo Bay, and at 0730I stopped off No. 3 buoy, Yokohama, to embark the quarantine authorities and pilot. On entering the outer harbour at 0750I a 21 gun National Salute was fired, followed by a 15 gun Salute to the flag of Vice Admiral Fukuchi, the Commandant, Yokosuka Regional District. Both salutes were returned by the Japanese Frigate KASHI, which, wearing the flag of Vice Admiral Fukuchi, was secured to No. 4 buoy.
5. Tugs were secured forward and aft and the port anchor let go to assist turning in the inner harbour, and berthing starboard side to Yamashita Wharf. A third tug was employed to assist the turn by pushing as required. Berthing was completed at 0850I. All tugs were propelled by the Vort Schneider method, and their performance was most impressive, as indeed was the whole berthing manoeuvre, with the pilot and tugmasters exhibiting a high degree of skill and complete mutual understanding.
6. Also impressive was the size and composition of the "Welcome Party" including members of the Australian Embassy staff, B.N.A. Tokyo, representatives of the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force, and a large number of press, radio and television representatives. Another member of the official welcoming party was "Miss Yokohama", who on behalf of the Mayor of Yokohama, presented you, Sir, and me, with large bouquets of flowers, while being assiduously photographed by the pressmen and others.
7. The official calls paid and returned in Yokohama are listed in Appendix "B".
8. On the evening of 2nd June, I attended with 120 of my officers a reception at the Australian Embassy in Tokyo, given by the Australian Ambassador and Mrs. Mc.Intyre, after which my Executive officer and I had the pleasure of dining, Japanese style, with Admiral and Mrs. Ihara, and other senior officers of the Maritime Self Defence Force, and their wives, at the Happoen Cafe.

2/. 9. I lunched.....

9. I lunched in your company at Yokosuka as a guest of Rear Admiral Withington, Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Japan, on Friday 3rd June.
10. In the evening I attended a dinner, given by you, Sir, for senior officers of the Maritime Self Defence force.
11. On the afternoon of Saturday 4th June a party was held onboard for 100 Japanese children from four orphanages. The children all appeared to enjoy themselves, and appreciative comments appeared in most Japanese language newspapers printed in Yokohama, as representatives from seven newspapers and two television stations attended.
12. An official reception was held onboard on the evening of Saturday 4th June, and was followed by the ceremony of "Beat Retreat" by the Guard and Band of H.M.A. Ship under my command. Approximately 250 guests attended and most of them commented most favourably on the performance of the Guard and Band.
13. H.M.A.S. MELBOURNE was open to visitors on Sunday 5th June, and over 8,000 came onboard, while many more were unable to be accommodated. The local police most efficiently controlled the crowd in a long queue, and ensured that all that could be allowed through the ship did in fact, come onboard.
14. The principal sporting activities in Yokohama were the visits by the ship's rugby union team to Chuo University, and Kanagawa University on 3rd and 5th June respectively. Two excellent games resulted in a defeat for the ship on the first occasion, and a win in the second match. A ship's cricket team was defeated by a local European side on Sunday 5th June.
15. Casting off at 0830I Monday 6th June, the ship was hauled off and turned by two tugs, the action of weighing the port anchor also assisting in the manoeuvre. After stopping to drop the pilot, course was set at 15 knots to clear Tokyo Bay.
16. For a day or so before leaving Yokohama the weather reports had been studied with increasing interest, as the two tropical storms "Mary" and "Nadine", had been reported deepening in the Philippines area. "Karen" and "Lucille", had already created some havoc in May of this year, thus proving that statistics must be used with circumspection. According to records an average of only 0.8 storms have occurred in May, and 0.9 in June.
17. As is usual the early reports of the position, strength, extent and movement of both "Mary" and "Nadine" were vague, and different reporting centres were divergent in their views.
18. It was, however, apparent that "Nadine" presented the more immediate problem, being situated approximately on the direct line from Yokohama to Singapore, which the MELBOURNE had planned to follow, and some 500 miles south of Okinawa. "Mary" was developing south of Hong Kong.
19. It is extraordinary how cramped the vast expanse of the north Pacific Ocean suddenly becomes when confronted with the task of avoiding a developing typhoon. These difficulties are more than doubled when the chances are that the avoiding action from one typhoon may place the ship in danger from the second.
- 3/. 20. Fortunately, the.....

20. Fortunately, the information available on "Nadine" became more definite during the forenoon of 6th June, and it was decided that on clearing the approaches to Tokyo Bay, the ship would proceed along the south coast of Japan at 20 knots in an attempt to leave "Nadine", now classified as a typhoon with maximum winds of 60-70 knots at the centre, well to the southward.
21. By 0900I 7th June, the reports on "Mary" indicated that it also was reaching typhoon proportions, and would present a major threat if it moved north eastwards, and passage was made to the west of the Ryuku islands as previously planned. Course was therefore altered to the south west to remain east of the Ryukus, and speed maintained at 20 knots during the day with the intention of passing between "Nadine" and "Mary", as quickly as possible. Preparations for rough weather were made throughout the ship.
22. During the day the classical portents of an approaching typhoon were apparent with first the swell, followed by the correct cloud formations and then the wind. Fortunately, "Nadine" was behaving in a classical manner and began to move off in a north easterly direction at increasing speed, enabling the MELBOURNE to pass some 170 miles to the west of its centre at approximately 0300I 8th June, with nothing more ominous than a confused swell and sea requiring a reduction in speed to 18 knots, with wind up to 28 knots, light rain and reduced visibility.
23. By dawn on 8th June "Mary" remained the only problem; she was still deepening and was situated somewhere south of Hong Kong. Sea conditions improved during the day and speed was again increased to 20 knots to clear the front should "Mary" decide to move eastwards. In this event it was planned to proceed east of Luzon and through San Bernadino or Suragas Straits.
24. During the day reports on "Mary's" position and movement became firmer and by 2000I 8th June, it was evident that she was passing northwards over Hong Kong, and would present slight hazard to the MELBOURNE. Course was altered to pass north of Luzon through Balintan Strait, and speed reduced to 15 knots. The marked interest of all onboard which had been very evident for the previous two days suddenly lapsed. "Mary" caused considerable damage and loss of life in the Macao-Hong Kong area but, fortunately, was no further trouble to the MELBOURNE.
25. During the middle watches of 7th and 10th June, the ship passed U.S.S. RANGER and U.S.S. YORKTOWN respectively, and signals were exchanged. The size of the former at 2½ miles range was impressive to say the least.
26. Because of the need for a speedy advance to clear the typhoon areas, no flying had taken place during the first 3 days out of Yokohama, and as wind conditions on 9th June did not meet the requirement for maintaining the speed of advance, the flying programme scheduled for that day was cancelled.
27. Conditions on 10th and 11th June were however, ideal, requiring little or no alteration to the required course and speed, and flying programmes for Gannets and Venoms took place from 0900I to 1600I on both days.
28. Sunday 12th June saw a quiet day onboard while the ship made ground towards Singapore.
29. We were blessed with favourable wind for flying again on Monday 13th June, and Venoms and Gannets were flown in the forenoon and Venoms only in the afternoon until 14250H when the wind died away and caused the last launch to be cancelled. Gannet engine serviceability has been an ever present problem, and only two were available for this day's operations. In contrast 805 Squadron fielded six Venoms for each launch as planned on the flying programme.

30. A landfall was made on the Anamba Island shortly after 1800GH and at 2000GH 13th June a herald to his Imperious Majesty, King Neptune, came onboard to present his Master's greetings, and expressed a Royal wish to hold court onboard on the morrow. To this I assented with pleasure.

31. At 0700GH 14th June, two Gannet aircraft were launched to proceed to R.A.F. Seletar with two helicopter aircrew required to attend as witnesses at an R.A.F. Board of Inquiry, arising from a "near miss" between one of our helicopters and a Canberra aircraft on 13th May.

32. The ship entered Singapore Strait at 0815GH and came to anchor off Johore Shoal buoy at 1000GH to embark helicopter rotor blades and exchange mail from a lighter. During the approach to anchor H.M.S. CAVALIER made a high speed run round the ship to entertain a party of Malayan school children she had embarked. Also in the vicinity were H.M. Submarine TACTICIAN and H.M. Tug ENIGMA.

33. Weighing at 1045GH H.M.A. Ship under my command proceeded eastwards out of Singapore Strait before turning south to head for Gaspar Strait.

34. At 1330GH His Majesty, King Neptune, arrived onboard with his submarine court in attendance and proceeded to carry out the familiar ceremonies. In addition to those taking part in the ceremony, either voluntarily or involuntarily, a large number of my ship's company watched the performance with amusement.

35. The two Gannet aircraft were recovered at 1625GH and the ship then proceeded towards Gaspar Strait.

36. The MELBOURNE passed through Gaspar Strait between 1400GH and 1630GH, 15th June during a series of torrential rainstorms.

37. At 0345GH 16th June rendezvous was made with the Indonesian Naval sloop, PATTIMURA and HASANUDIN who were to escort us to Tanjong Priok. They took station ahead and astern and the senior officer in PATTIMURA passed polite but definite instructions to the MELBOURNE about the courses and speeds required. Their standard of English on the voice circuit, and their general R/T efficiency were commendably high.

38. The ship stopped off Edam island at 0600GH and waited until a helicopter landed on deck at 0630GH, bringing the Pilot, the Australian Military Attache, the R.A.N. Liaison officer and the Picket officer (officer of the Guard).

39. The escort broke off at approximately 0645GH, and as the MELBOURNE passed between the breakwaters at the harbour entrance at 0705GH a 21 gun National Salute was fired, and returned by the shore battery manned by the Indonesian Navy (A.L.R.I.).

40. The ship secured alongside starboard side to No.1 Basin North West Berth at 0720GH, being welcomed by an Indonesian Naval Guard and Band, and numerous officials representing the Indonesian Government and Armed Services, and the Australian Embassy.

41. Official calls occupied the forenoon and are listed in Appendix "B".

42. A noteworthy feature of the ship's visit to Djakarta was the hospitality shown to my Ship's Company and officers, not only by the Australian and British community, but also by the A.L.R.I. This took the form of sightseeing tours, sporting fixtures and receptions, and started as soon as the ship secured. Because of the political situation in Djakarta, the high prices and the lack of facilities for public entertainment, leave was only given to organised parties. This in fact, gave the whole of the Ship's Company at least one opportunity for going ashore.
43. One hundred officers and cadets and 300 ratings of the A.L.R.I. visited the ship during the forenoon of Thursday 16th and showed great interest in every thing they saw. The majority spoke excellent English. Further parties of A.U.R.I. (Air Force), Marine and Army officers and other ranks totalling approximately 500 came onboard on Friday 17th for a less technical tour of the ship. Some of the Air Force officers were conversant with the latest developments in the flying world, and showed great interest in all they saw.
44. The ship was open for public inspection on the afternoon of Thursday 16th June, and 4,184 visitors came onboard. Each of these visitors had been provided with a pass, by either the Australian Embassy or the A.L.R.I. which enabled them to enter the dock area in which the ship was berthed. The general public and other interested sightseers could not approach the ship or its immediate vicinity as the area was carefully guarded and patrolled by armed Marines.
45. A highly organised and successful party was given on the evening of Thursday 16th by the Australian and British community. 40 officers and 256 ratings were met at the Cricket Club by a large number of hosts who entertained small parties to dinner at their homes, and met again at the Cricket Club for dancing. Very high praise was forthcoming from all who attended.
46. On the same evening the A.L.R.I. gave a reception for 100 officers, which I had the pleasure of attending. During the evening native music and dancing were presented, and again this was a most successful party and enjoyed by all.
47. The sporting fixtures undertaken at Djakarta included Cricket, Swimming, Hockey, Soccer, Badminton and Tennis. Only in the hockey versus the A.L.R.I. was the ship's team successful, but in all games a reasonably creditable performance was put up, and all the players thoroughly enjoyed the exercise.
48. Guests for a formal luncheon onboard on Friday 17th June, which I attended, included the Australian Ambassador, Mr. Patrick Shaw, C.B.E.; the Commander in Chief A.L.R.I. Rear Admiral Metadinata and the Deputy Chief of (Army) Staff, General Gatot Subroto, and the Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, Colonel Sudarso.
49. An official reception was held on the Flight Deck at 1830GH Friday 17th June, for 450 guests, and was followed by the "Beat Retreat" ceremony by the Guard and Band of H.M.A.S. MELBOURNE. This was commented on very favourably by our Indonesian guests, who are a musical race, and also by the British and Australians.
50. I had the pleasure of being present, Sir, at an informal dinner party given by you after the reception, for the British Ambassador Sir Leslie Fry and Lady Fry, the Chairman of the "Box" Club, Mr. King, who was largely responsible for the organisation of the hospitality mentioned in paragraph 45, and other local dignitaries.

51. After farewell messages had been delivered onboard and the A.L.R.I. Guard and Band was fallen in abreast the ship, H.M.A.S. MELBOURNE cast off at 1100GH Saturday, 18th June, and was turned by tugs before proceeding. Again the sloops, PATTIMURA and HASANUDIN formed an escort for some 10 miles to seaward and then broke off at 1200GH, manning ship and saluting before returning to harbour.
52. Course was set to pass through Sunda Strait and Krakatau was abeam to starboard at 1845GH. At this time little Krakatau was belching huge clouds of steam and smoke.
53. At 2000GH 18th June, two minutes silence was observed onboard in memory of those of the ship's company of H.M.A.S. PERPH who perished in these waters in 1942.
54. After rounding Panajtan at 2115GH 18th June, a southerly course was set with the intention of passing close to Christmas Island to embark their mail if desired. After an exchange of signals, it transpired that their mail had been taken off a day previously. However, for interest the ship passed close to Flying Fish Cove at 1400GH 19th, before proceeding on the direct route for Fremantle.
55. Gannet and Venon flying took place between 0900H and 1600H Tuesday 21st June, but programmes for 20th and 22nd June were cancelled because of the heavy swell.
56. At 1200H Thursday 23rd June two Gannets were launched to proceed to R.A.A.F. Station, Pearce, to embark mail and press representatives, and returned at 1650H. Three Venoms were launched at 1300H landing on at 1400H. A second launch scheduled for 1500H was cancelled because of insufficient wind.
57. Rottnest island light was raised at 0320H Friday 24th June, and after a short delay caused by the berthing of the liner SOUTHERN CROSS, the MELBOURNE entered Fremantle harbour at 0750H. The ship was turned by tugs in the harbour, and berthed starboard side to No. 8 berth at 0830H.
58. Alongside in Fremantle was H.M.A.S. DIAMANTINA undergoing self maintenance.
59. During the forenoon of 24th June, calls were paid on you, Sir, and I accompanied you on returning these and making others which are listed in Appendix "B". His Worship the Mayor of Fremantle gave a reception at noon on this day which I attended with 35 of my officers.
60. After they had been cleared by the customs officials, the West Australians of the ship's company were despatched on mid-winter leave.
61. An official reception was given onboard on the evening of Friday 24th, and was followed by "Beat Retreat". Some 400 guests attended.
62. H.M.A. Ship under my command was open to visitors during the afternoons of Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th June, and a total of over 9,000 came onboard.
63. Sporting events over the weekend started on Friday when the ship's basketball side won against Applecross, a local 1st Grade team. Sunday 26th saw defeats for the MELBOURNE in Rugby Union, the 1st XV by West Australia, and 2nd XV by Perth University. The former, however, was a close fought game, won only by superior fitness of the home side which was manifest in the second half. An Australian Rules football match against C.B.C. Old Boys also on Sunday ended in a victory for the home side.

64. Two officers of the Customs and Excise Department from Melbourne were embarked at Fremantle on Sunday 26th to effect clearance of the ship's company on passage, Fremantle/Melbourne.

65. After you, Sir, had landed to carry out your inspection of H.M.A.S. LEEUWIN, H.M.A. Ship under my command cast off at 0930H Monday 27th June, and proceeded to sea in a strong westerly wind which caused considerable motion.

66. Rounding Cape Leeuwin shortly after 0001H Tuesday 28th June, an easterly course was set. Weather conditions were still bad causing the ship to move heavily.

67. By 0900I Thursday 30th June the weather had improved considerably and the swell had subsided. Flying operations commenced at this time and no alteration to course was required in the east north easterly wind to launch Gannets and Venoms. Flying continued until 1700I 30th June.

68. Condition of the Ship

The condition of the ship is satisfactory.

68. Health and Morale of the Ship's Company

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


(J.S. Mesley)
CAPTAIN

Encls.