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Flag Officer Commanding,
 H.M. AUSTRALIAN FLEET

at Sea.
 1st March 1962

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H.M.A.S. MELBOURNE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - FEBRUARY 1962

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of February 1962.

2. The first two days of the month were spent at sea completing the ship's work-up programme. Day and night flying were carried out on Thursday 1st and day flying only on Friday 2nd as night flying had to be cancelled due to poor visibility and low cloud base. Other exercises including A.A. close range firings using break-up shot, gun direction exercises, replenishment at sea with VOYAGER, I.F.F. Mark 10 Trials with QUEENBOROUGH and airborne torpedo drops from Gannet aircraft. MELBOURNE anchored in Jervis Bay at 1900 on Friday 2nd.
3. Small arms practice targets were moored in Jervis Bay on Saturday 3rd and used throughout the day to exercise the ship's landing party in the use of rifles and automatic weapons. Cadet midshipman from the R.A.N.C. visited the ship on this day.
4. Divisions and Divine Service were held on Sunday 4th.
5. Heeling trials were carried out on Monday 5th. The ship was first listed 15° to port then 15° to starboard. The performance of many items of equipment was observed throughout the trials. With 15° list to starboard, anchor was weighed and MELBOURNE proceeded at 1530. It was interesting to observe that with 15° starboard list the view to port from the compass platform was completely obscured by the edge of the flight deck. MELBOURNE anchored at 1635 in company with VOYAGER and QUEENBOROUGH.
6. Whilst heeling trials were in progress the Ship's Company closed up at action stations and action messing exercised, also Damage Control drills were carried out.
7. On the night of 5th MELBOURNE's shallow water divers assisted those of QUEENBOROUGH in searching for a diver who was thought to be missing during diving operations. The diver concerned was found ashore the following morning in good health.
8. During the forenoon of Tuesday 6th members of the ship's companies of MELBOURNE, VOYAGER, and QUEENBOROUGH were inspected and addressed in the flagship by the retiring Chief of the Naval Staff (Vice Admiral Sir H.M. Burrell K.B.E., C.B.). MELBOURNE's ship's company manned ship at 1330 and a 15 gun salute was fired by the flagship as the First Naval Member departed. The ship was dressed overall on this day to celebrate the accession of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
9. MELBOURNE proceeded at 1400 with VOYAGER and QUEENBOROUGH in company for Hobart. Day and night flying were carried out on the 6th and 7th and day flying on Thursday 8th. Whilst on passage heaving line transfers and replenishment at sea approaches were exercised. Air attacks by both Sea Vulture and Gannets at a splash

10. A full power trial was carried out by MELBOURNE during the afternoon of Thursday 8th. Whilst it was not possible to measure accurately the speed, the revolutions achieved were higher than any previously recorded. That evening fuel replenishments were carried out with VOYAGER and QUEENBOROUGH.
11. MELBOURNE berthed at the Oil Wharf at Hobart at 0700 Friday 9th in order to embark fuel and shifted berth to Princes Wharf, at 1430.
12. I was present when calls on the Flag Officer Commanding H.M.A. Fleet (Rear Admiral A.W.R. McNicoll C.B.E., C.M.) were made by the Lord Mayor of Hobart (Alderman B. Osborne C.B.E.) the Deputy Premier of Tasmania (Hon. R. Fagan M.L.A.) the Chief Justice of Tasmania (Hon. Sir Stanley Burbury K.B.E.) and His Excellency the Governor of Tasmania (The Right Hon. Lord Rowallan K.T., K.B.E., M.C.).
13. A Fleet 'At Home' was given in MELBOURNE at 1830 and was attended by over three hundred guests. Guests were subsequently conducted to the Flight Deck to witness a 'Beat Retreat' ceremony performed by the ship's guard and band. A group of 50 sea-cadets were also present for this display.
14. A full programme of entertainment had been arranged for the visiting ships, including receptions, cocktail parties, a ball, buffet dinners, sporting fixtures bus tours and visits to the Cadbury Chocolate Factory and the Cascade Brewery. Free public transport in the Hobart area was available to Naval personnel in uniform. It was pleasing to see that so much entertainment, both organised and unofficial, was provided for ratings.
15. MELBOURNE was open to public inspection for a period of four hours during the afternoon of Sunday 11th and an estimated 7000 persons walked around the ship.
16. The Fleet pulling regatta was conducted during the forenoon of Saturday 10th and was won by ANZAC with MELBOURNE coming second.
17. Lieutenant Commander W.J. Boyer U.S.N., Captain of the destroyer USS VANCE called on me on 12th February and his call was returned on the following day. It is of interest that "VANCE" was named after Lieutenant (J.G.) Vance who was killed when serving in H.M.A.S. CANBERRA at the Battle of Savo in 1942.
18. The Royal Hobart Regatta was staged on Tuesday 13th and the Fleet was well represented in various items on the programme. I attended Regatta Committee's luncheon at which the Minister for the Navy (Senator the Hon. J.G. Gorton) was present.
19. MELBOURNE slipped and proceeded from Hobart at 0900 Wednesday 14th with VOYAGER and QUEENBOROUGH in company. Gannet and Sea Venom aircraft were launched at 1250 and carried out a fly past over Hobart, also the Sea Venoms gave an aerobatic display. For a large part of the passage to Adelaide a heavy South Westerley swell restricted flying operations. Night flying on 14th and 15th had to be cancelled and eight launches only were made on Thursday 15th. Sea conditions had improved sufficiently by Friday 16th and day flying operations were executed. Other exercises carried out included a F.A.A.G.C. exercise and surface plotting exercises. Two Australian Broadcasting Commission representatives were collected from Adelaide AM on 16th and were given facilities in MELBOURNE to gather television material. The representatives were returned to Adelaide during the afternoon and the Gannet in which they travelled was required to make a free take-off owing to temporary catapult unserviceability.
20. MELBOURNE secured at No 4 berth Outer Harbour Adelaide at 0800 Saturday 17th. At 0930 on 19th, I accompanied the Flag Officer Commanding H.M. Australian Fleet when he called on His Excellency the Governor of South Australia, (Lieutenant General Sir Edric Bastyan K.B.E., K.St.J., C.B.) and had the honour of lunching with His Excellency.

21. A Fleet reception was given in MELBOURNE at 1830 on 17th and was attended by over three hundred guests. The guests were later escorted to the Flight Deck to watch the ceremony of 'Beast Retreat' performed by the ship's guard and band and, as usual, this ceremony was very well received. The ceremony was again performed in East Parklands, Adelaide, at 1500 Sunday 18th before an audience of approximately five hundred.
22. The hospitality that was extended to the ship was indeed generous and included free admission for ratings to horse racing and trotting events, and honorary membership was extended to Officers by the Port Adelaide Racing Club and the South Australian Trotting Club also bus tours, sporting fixtures, dances for ratings, a free film show, and tours to General Motors Holden, West End and Southwark breweries had been arranged.
23. Accompanied by a number of my officers, I attended a Civic Reception given by the Lord Mayor of Adelaide (Alderman the Honorable C.J. Glover) to H.M.A. Ships at the Adelaide Town Hall at 1700 Monday 19th.
24. MELBOURNE was open to Ship's Company visitors on Saturday 17th and to the Public on Sunday 18th; on the latter occasion, an estimated 11,700 visitors walked around the ship.
25. The ship departed Adelaide at 0930 Tuesday 20th. On clearing the channel VOYAGER and QUEENBOROUGH joined company; day flying was carried out and followed by light jackstay transfer exercises with the escorts. Flying was cancelled on Wednesday 21st due to the heavy swell encountered. At 1300 MELBOURNE acted as a target for a throw-off shoot carried out by VOYAGER.
26. An electronic warfare exercise was commenced at 0030 Thursday 22nd prior to rendezvousing at 0530 with the U.S.S. 'COONTZ' a guided missile frigate which was visiting Australian Ports. A light jackstay transfer was carried out by MELBOURNE with COONTZ in which gifts were exchanged, the former's being in the form of a 60lb cake decorated to commemorate the birthday of George Washington. Day flying was carried out between 0900 and 1600 and, at the request of the U.S.S. COONTZ, strikes were flown against her to enable R.A.N. observers on board to see her detection system in operation.
27. Airborne torpedo trials were conducted in the afternoon. Two motor cutters launched for this purpose were both damaged by one torpedo when the depth setting mechanism failed to operate correctly. This matter is being fully reported separately. Night flying operations were carried out between 2030 and 0015.
28. Day flying was conducted between 0900 and 1700. On 23rd R/P attacks at a splash target in the forenoon were followed by a massed air attack and a simulated nuclear attack. Hands were exercised at Action Stations and at Shelter Stations. Guns crews were also exercised and fired break-up shot. During the simulated nuclear attack evasive action was taken by MELBOURNE and ships in company and units rejoined when clear of the "fall-out" area. Opportunity was taken to fuel VOYAGER and QUEENBOROUGH during dog watches. This was followed by night flying at 2030 which ended prematurely at 2240 due to lack of wind.
29. Exercises on Saturday 24th included a surface plotting exercise and day flying. A request from the town of ALBANY was met when Gannet and Sea Venom aircraft carried out a fly-past over the town at 1200.
30. At 0700 Sunday 25th both Chaplains were transferred by jackstay to QUEENBOROUGH and subsequently to VOYAGER before returning to MELBOURNE at 0940. Divisions were held on the flight deck followed by church services.
31. MELBOURNE anchored in Gage Roads at 1530 that afternoon and remained so overnight before proceeding at 0630 Monday 26th and berthing at No 8 Wharf on the north side of the river. Natives of Perth had been landed the afternoon.

32. Very little formal entertainment had been organised for the ship's visit, but it was obvious that many of MELBOURNE's company had friends ashore. MELBOURNE was open to Public inspection in the afternoon of Tuesday 27th. The relatively small number of visitors was considered to be due to it being a working day. A mobile transfusion unit obtained 85 pints of blood from volunteers during Tuesday, the unit was unable to accept a greater quantity.

33. I had the honour of dining with His Excellency the Governor of Western Australia (Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Gairdner K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., K.B.E., C.B.) on Tuesday 27th.

34. MELBOURNE proceeded for Singapore at 0900 Wednesday 28th in company with VOYAGER and QUEENBOROUGH. During the day, fleet anti-aircraft gun co-ordination exercise, a surface plotting exercise, highline transfers with VOYAGER and QUEENBOROUGH and Officer of the Watch manoeuvres were carried out.

35. CONDITION OF THE SHIP

The condition of the ship remains satisfactory. The port shaft had to be trailed between 1200 on 21st and 0630 on 22nd in order to effect repairs to the aft main circulator.

36. HEALTH AND MORALE OF THE SHIP'S COMPANY

The health and morale of the ship's company continues to be of a high order.

V.A.T. Smith
 (V.A.T. SMITH)
 CAPTAIN

The Secretary,
 Department of the Navy.

