

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

17/52/215

1/10/04

H.M.A.S. STUART,

at sea.

1st June, 1967.

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

(Copy to: The Captain (F), FIRST FRIGATE SQUADRON.)

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of H.M.A. Ship under my command during the month of May, 1967. Times are Zone (-10) until 251830, then Zone (-9) until 271830, then Zone (-8).

2. H.M.A.S. STUART cast off from Garden Island at 0900, Monday 1st May, and proceeded to sea in company with H.M.A.S. QUEENBOROUGH for A.S.W. exercises with H.M.S/M TRUMP. These exercises continued until 2000, Tuesday 2nd May, with STUART detaching for an A.A. Tracking Exercise and a Naval Gunfire Support Exercise. The ship was anchored in Jervis Bay at 2030.

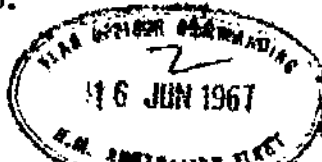
3. On Wednesday, 3rd May, landing parties and divers were exercised during the forenoon and in the afternoon the first games of a comprehensive inter-part competition were played.

4. STUART departed Jervis Bay at 0800 the next day and made passage to rendezvous with the tug BRONZEWING and the Williams Target. N.B.C.D. exercises were carried out en route. As Radar 903 was unserviceable it was decided to carry out the surface shoot in Clock Rate. This was completed satisfactorily with the right gun only as the left still continued to double ram. Then course was set for Sydney and the ship was secured alongside Cruiser Wharf at 1600. A small reception was held onboard that evening for the Officers of U.S.S. EPPERSON.

5. The arrival in Sydney marked the beginning of the first self-maintenance period since the Mid Cycle Docking and there was much to be done. A new E.H.T. Cabinet for the L.W.O.2 radar was fitted, the V.D.S. body was returned after an extensive overhaul, the M.R.S. 3 received considerable attention and there was a great deal of work carried out on the Main and Auxiliary machinery.

6. After casting off from Garden Island at 0830 Tuesday 16th May, the ship ammunitioned at No.2 buoy and then sailed in high hopes that all equipment would function correctly. However within two hours of lowering the V.D.S. body the cable connector plug allowed the ingress of water and a new cable is required before the Sonar can be used again. This particular plug has been the major cause of V.D.S. unserviceability in STUART and details of the failures were reported in my letter No.7/2/024 dated 22nd May, 1967.

7. The M.E/D.P. equipment was calibrated satisfactorily but the A.A. tracking exercise which followed indicated that further adjustments were necessary to the Radar 903. From 1900 until 0200 a Casex was carried out with H.M.A.S. PERTH and H.M.S/M TABARD.



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8. During the forenoon of Wednesday 17th May, an A.A. Tracking Exercise was carried out and followed by a Medium Range firing. Unfortunately, cloud prevented a satisfactory radar alignment and the firing had to be carried out in visual. The result of an estimated 38% T.T.B.s and 17% early bursts was heartening, but this was offset by the continuing double ramming of the left gun.
9. A surface shoot was programmed for the afternoon, but just as the tow was streamed to its maximum the Williams Target overturned. By the time STUART's divers had righted it there was insufficient light to carry on. There was no apparent reason for the target capsizing as the weather was good and the seas calm, but it was frustrating to the Gunnery team. A six hour Casex with H.M.A.S. PERTH and H.M.S/M TABARD followed, and when it had finished, course was set to rendezvous with H.M.A.S. SYDNEY off Brisbane.
10. Balloon tracking during the next two days and further adjustments to the left gun indicated that the M.R.S.3 was fully operational but it will not be possible to confirm this until an A.A.M.R.F. is carried out in the Singapore exercise area on 2nd June. Daily ramming and the firing of 18 rounds from the left gun indicate that the double ramming is cured and will not recur.
11. At 1815, Friday 19th May, STUART took station ahead of H.M.A.S. SYDNEY carrying members of the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment. The four day passage to Manus Island was made at 19 knots and was uneventful. Helicopters of 725 Squadron onboard SYDNEY supplemented the screen during daylight hours and Officers undergoing a "d" course were transferred to STUART to control them. Replenishment of fuel and transfers of stores and personnel were carried out concurrently on two occasions. Bathythermograph readings were taken each hour and lines of sounding were charted where it was considered they would be of use to the Hydrographer.
12. Both ships anchored in Seeadler Harbour during the forenoon of Tuesday 23rd May, and SYDNEY embarked fuel. The ships departed at 1800 and set course for Vietnam via Basilan and Balibac Straits.
13. N.B.C.D. Exercises with particular emphasis on Damage Control were carried out frequently. STUART again fuelled and transferred stores and personnel concurrently from SYDNEY on two occasions. NAVCOMEX's and plotting exercises were a regular occurrence and STUART provided star shell targets on which SYDNEY carried out a Rapid Open Fire exercise.
14. SYDNEY provided a newspaper "SYDNEWS" each day and so impressed my Ship's Company that a rival paper is now being produced in STUART and it compares very favourably. An Army versus Navy Boxing Tournament was held in SYDNEY on 26th May and STUART provided six novices of whom two won their bouts.
15. The ship came to condition 3 when 18 hours out of Vung Tau and closed up at action stations for entering harbour from 0600 Tuesday 30th May. STUART came to single anchor at 0700. Awkward State 2 was assumed immediately and was maintained until departure at 1430. The operation of embarking and disembarking troops and stores in SYDNEY was completed in record time and was much quicker than had been thought possible.

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16. Course was set for the Singapore area when clear of the channel and the ship reverted to condition 4 at 0730 Wednesday 31st May. The time spent at condition 3 and Awkward State 2 was of great benefit to the Ship's Company and a high standard has been achieved in Damage Control exercises with the spur of the possibility of damage being real.

17. The long period at sea in good weather has enabled the upper deck and all internal compartments to be brought up to a good standard. Apart from a few minor defects the main and auxiliary machinery has functioned well. All weapons and electrical equipment with the exception of those mentioned earlier have had a high rate of serviceability. There has been a malfunction and a series of defects on the Ikara Magazine spray arrangements which gives cause for concern and this has been reported in my letter No.7/3/071 dated 29th May, 1967.

18. The health of the Ship's Company has been good throughout the month, morale is high and conduct satisfactory. The Ship's Company has been spoken to on security.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant.



(R.G. Loosli)
Commander R.A.N.
CAPTAIN