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HMAS STUART,
at Garden Island.

5th July, 1967.

The Flag Officer Commanding,
HM AUSTRALIAN FLEET.

(Copy to: The Captain(P), First Frigate Squadron.)

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of HMA Ship under my command during the month of June, 1967. Times are Zone(-8) until 062330, Zone(-9) until 072345, Zone(-9 $\frac{1}{2}$) until 082345 and then Zone(-10).

2. At the beginning of the month HMAS STUART was returning to Australia in company with HMAS SYDNEY, having departed from Vietnam two days previously. As the quick embarkation of troops in SYDNEY had allowed an early departure from Yung Tau the speed of advance was slow towards the rendezvous for replenishment at sea off Singapore.

3. An A.A. medium range firing against a sleeve target was scheduled to be carried out during the forenoon of Friday, 2nd June. It was hoped that the consistent performance of Radar 903 whilst tracking aircraft to maximum range at Yung Tau would be maintained for the firing, but the day prior to the shoot, radar tracking on a balloon and a helicopter met with no success whatsoever. Despite the continual efforts of the maintainers it was not possible to lock on to the sleeve target in bearing and elevation. Four runs were carried out in visual control and these almost compensated for the lack of blind runs as 63% T.I.B.'s were achieved and one run produced 100%. A misfired round during the second run was the only malfunction to mar these firings.

4. A casev with H.M.S/M WABUSH was carried out from 1100 to 1300 as soon as the A.A. firing was completed. This was a successful and useful exercise, particularly as three helicopters were used to augment the screen and assist in close A/S Action. At 1430 both ships rendezvoused with the R.F.A. ALEXANDER and replenishment commenced. HMAS DUCHESS joined from Singapore at 1630 and, after fuelling, she transferred welcome mail to SYDNEY and STUART.

5. STUART and DUCHESS were stationed ahead of SYDNEY and the force proceeded to Darwin via Carigata and Water Straits. The passage was uneventful but as many exercises as possible were conducted consistent with the speed of advance.

6. On Monday 5th June three Army officers of 6 R.A.R. were transferred to STUART to talk to the Ship's Company on their experiences in Vietnam, and this proved to be most popular. The question period became longer than the lecture and the Army officers were most impressed with the questions they received and departed with much more enthusiasm for giving such talks than they had before their arrival.

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7. Both escorts fuelled from HMAS SYDNEY on Monday 5th June and this was the last occasion of replenishment at sea during the current operation. O.O.W. manoeuvres were carried out on three occasions with each ship conducting in turn. At 2100 Wednesday 7th June the escorts were detached to proceed ahead into Darwin, whilst HMAS SYDNEY adjusted speed to be off the entrance to Darwin harbour at first light to collect mail by helicopter before continuing to Brisbane.

8. STUART proceeded alongside S.S. BARALGA which was secured to Outer Stokes Hill Wharf at 0645, Thursday 8th June and DUCHESS anchored in the Quarantine Anchorage. At 0955 on completion of fuelling and storing with fresh provisions, STUART cast off and proceeded to sea whilst DUCHESS went alongside BARALGA to take on fuel.

9. A request had been received from Headquarters, R.A.A.F., Darwin, for STUART to take part in an air defense exercise between 0900 - 1800. STUART's role was to provide early warning for attacks on Darwin which might originate from the north. By departing immediately and allowing DUCHESS to rejoin later on it was possible to take part in this exercise throughout the complete period. For STUART the exercise was restricted to detection, plotting and reporting because of limitations imposed by communications, but it was of good value as there were many contacts dealt with during the day.

10. HMAS DUCHESS rejoined STUART during the Dog Watches having carried out a full power work up on one boiler, and both ships proceeded to Cairns via the Inner Barrier Reef route. The passage was uneventful and both ships entered Cairns on Monday 12th June, fuelled at No. 10 wharf and then shifted to town berths. STUART secured alongside No. 1 berth at 0950 and DUCHESS at No. 2 berth at 1030.

11. Shortly after STUART left Darwin it was found that the temperature of the port stern gland was rising and by Sunday 11th June it reached 140° F. and a knocking noise was audible in the vicinity of the sterntube. This state of affairs was reported in my message D.T.G. 110841Z June and, although the temperatures eventually stabilised at 130° F. speed was restricted to 104 revolutions until arrival in Sydney.

12. The Ship's Companies made the most of their first day ashore in Australia for some time. The Naval Agent had done his best to arrange opposition for sporting teams but as our visit was on a public holiday which followed a sporting carnival weekend he had some difficulty. Still each ship was able to play Rugby League, Basketball and golf.

13. In company with the Captain, HMAS DUCHESS, Commander H.K. Dunoon, R.A.N., I called on the Mayor of Cairns Alderman C.G. Penridge at 0930 Tuesday 13th June. The Mayor was unable to return my call.

14. STUART departed Cairns at 1130 Tuesday 13th June and DUCHESS followed shortly afterwards. Passage south continued inside the Barrier Reef in excellent weather and the three Wideshipman of the U.S. Navy, who had joined STUART for exchange service the day before, saw the Queensland coast and off lying islands to the best advantage.

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15. Another Medium Range Firing had been arranged to take place off Coff's Harbour during the afternoon of Friday 16th June. The radar alignment carried out on a balloon during the forenoon augured well for firing in blind control, but when the aircraft was on task it was again found impossible to lock on in bearing or elevation and a type "B" firing in visual mode was carried out. This was a great disappointment to the ship and it is a matter of concern that the performance of 903 Radar has been so inconsistent. It can only be hoped that the experience being gained by the maintenance team in tracing faults will ensure good and consistent performance after the Long Self Maintenance period.

16. On completion of the practice the passage to Sydney was resumed in fine weather but with practically no time in hand to ensure a timely arrival. From 1900 onwards the weather began to deteriorate so that speed was gradually reduced to 10 knots to avoid damage. Both ships anchored in Watson's Bay at 1900, Saturday, 17th June, and Customs Officers boarded immediately. When clearance was granted STUART proceeded to Garden Island and secured alongside HMAS DIAMANTINA at 1210.

17. Despite the foul weather and the delay in the Ship's arrival a large number of press was in attendance and the subsequent television coverage was quite extensive. This probably accounted for many of the 600 visitors who braved the elements to come onboard STUART the following day when open to the public.

18. Fleet Staff Officers and Dockyard Officers came onboard on arrival and discussed the overheating of the stern gland and it was decided to dock the ship at 1400 Monday 19th June.

19. On docking it was found that the underwater paint system applied in Williamstown last March had failed and only about 20% of the anti-fouling remained. In addition, it became necessary to extend the investigations into overheating by examining both stern tubes and "A" brackets. As this and renewal of the paint system would take some days it was decided to bring forward the Long Self Maintenance and leave period to commence from Monday 26th June. (P.O.C.A.F. Message D.T.G. 220450Z June, refers).

20. The ship was still in dry dock at the end of the month with the work on the stern tubes and A brackets nearly completed. The bottom had been brush blasted and the first two coats of the new underwater paint system applied. An official report on the findings of the investigation into the overheating will not be available until completion of sea trials next week. It appears that the cause can be attributed to the propeller shaft bearing on a small area of the lower stern tube bush in association with contamination of the lubricating oil.

21. At 1100, Friday 30th June, STUART was visited by three officers of the Japanese Self Defence Force, General AKAHO, who is the Chairman of the Joint Staff Council, was accompanied by Rear Admiral SEKI and Lieutenant Colonel CHIDA. This was the first visit any of the officers had paid to Australia and they appeared to be enjoying the experience. Admiral SEKI acted as interpreter for the General during the inspection of STUART and proved to be very capable. The visit was well covered by press and television and it is considered to have been a success from all points of view.

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22. The condition of the ship is generally good. Apart from the defects mentioned earlier in this report the main and auxiliary machinery has performed satisfactorily and the machinery spaces are in good condition. All A.S.W., F.W. and communications systems have had a high rate of serviceability. A new cable has been fitted to the V.D.S. body and a new compound has been used to ensure the watertightness of the connector plug.

23. The health of the Ship's Company has been good throughout the month, morale is high and conduct satisfactory.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(SGD) R. G. LOOSLI

(R. G. LOOSLI.)
COMMANDER, R.A.N.
CAPTAIN