

17/52/

1/10/04

H.M.A.S. STUART,

at sea.

2nd February, 1968.

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

(Copies to: The Commander, FAR EAST FLEET,
The Flag Officer, SECOND-IN-COMMAND,
FAR EAST FLEET,
The Captain (F), FIRST BRIGADE SQUADRON.)

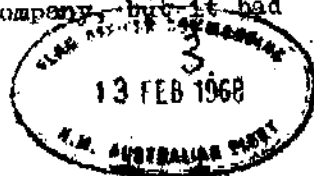
Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of H.M.A. Ship under my command during the month of January, 1968. Times are Zone (-7½) until 051800, then Zone (-7) until 112330, then Zone (-7½) until 272330, then Zone (-9) until 291830, then Zone (-7) until 312330, then Zone (-8).

2. For the first three days of the new year STUART lay alongside No.3 berth, Singapore Naval Base, completing a self-maintenance period. At 1030, Monday 1st January, I called on the Chief of Staff to the Commander Far East Fleet, Rear Admiral I.D. McLaughlin, D.S.C., who has only recently taken up his appointment.

3. At 0800, Thursday 4th January, the ship cast off and proceeded to Bangkok. The passage was uneventful and the pilot embarked at 0840 Saturday 6th January. The passage up the river was full of interest both navigationally and scenically. Although there was an early morning haze it soon lifted and there were blue skies and sunshine such as Singapore had not seen for weeks. This weather persisted during our stay and as the heat rapidly dissipated at dusk it became apparent that our visit was timed for the best part of the year so far as climate was concerned. The ship continued 6 miles past Kleng Toey, where the majority of deep-water wharfage exists, and secured to a buoy at Satu Pradit. There had been a little apprehension at the thought of coping with libertymen with one boat, but a ferry had been arranged and there was always a multitude of water-taxis available, so that an open gangway could be operated almost as freely as when lying alongside.

4. The Australian Services Attache, Colonel D.H. Crompton, boarded the ship soon after securing to the buoy at 1130, and gave details for the visit. Four different tours had been arranged and the most popular were the two that started early in the mornings, one to the floating markets and one to Pataya, with the Bangkok Sub Aqua Club. Three clubs had extended honorary membership to the Ship's Company, but it had not been possible to arrange sport.



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5. Sub Lieutenant VATTI SRIBHADUNA, Royal Thai Navy, was the Liaison Officer and he proved to be invaluable. He dealt with all the ships requirements expeditiously and efficiently and devoted his spare time to entertaining the officers in his home and showing them both the day and night life of Bangkok.

6. I called on the Commander-in-Chief Royal Thai Fleet, Admiral Nai NOPUKUN, at 1000 Monday 8th January and on the Australian Ambassador, A.H. Loomes Esq., O.B.E., at 1100. Return calls were not made as the visit was only operational.

7. The buoy was slipped at 0600 Wednesday 10th January and the passage down stream was made in the same pleasant weather. The Pilot disembarked at 1045 and STUART proceeded to the Singapore practice area, all onboard having enjoyed the visit to Thailand.

8. On Friday 12th January, A.S.W. exercises with H.M.S. AMPHION commenced at 0600 and continued until 1300. Three assessed mortar attacks were made. During the afternoon two A.A. firing runs were carried out with Meteors towing Rushton targets. To the delight of the Gunnery team the first in "blind" produced 100% T.T.B. and the target was shot down and exactly the same occurred in "visual" on the next run. The ship anchored off Loyang at 1845 for the night and a solar beam pattern check was carried out. At 0715 the next morning STUART proceeded to the Naval Base and secured alongside H.M.E.Z.S. WAIKATO at 0810 in No. 3 berth.

9. The ship proceeded from the Stores Basin at 0840, Monday 15th January, to the explosives anchorage to embark Seacat missiles and A.A. practice shell. The anchor was weighed at 1010 and STUART followed H.M.A.S. YARRA to sea for Seacat firings and A.S.W. exercises. Two missiles were fired by YARRA but there was no opportunity for STUART to fire. A.S.W. exercises commenced at 1600 and continued until 2200 when STUART night steamed in company with YARRA and R.F.A. GOLD RANGER. Both escorts fuelled from GOLD RANGER between 0700 and 0800 the next day and then YARRA proceeded to Singapore Roads whilst STUART waited for a Rushton target. When the first aircraft arrived 903 radar developed a fault, and, as this radar is required for record purposes no firing could take place. When the second aircraft arrived at 1200 it was found that only one of the four flares on the target would work but at least this allowed one missile to be fired satisfactorily. There was just time for one blind A.A. firing before the target departed and this yielded 30% T.T.B.

10. STUART then proceeded to Singapore Roads to join YARRA for passage to Port Swettenham. When four miles east of St. John's Island a swamped Indonesian craft with four men clinging to it was sighted. The men were rescued by sea boat and transferred to a Pilot Boat about 30 minutes later. The ship joined YARRA at 1815 and the passage to Port Swettenham continued uneventfully.

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11. Port Swettenham was approached via South Klang channel and STUART berthed on YARRA at No. 7 Berth at 0915, Wednesday 17th January. During the forenoon I accompanied Captain (P), First Frigate Squadron, Captain A.J. Robertson, D.S.C., R.A.N., on calls on the following dignitaries:

- The General Manager Port Swettenham Port Authority,
INCHE MOHD ZAIN BIN AHMAD.
- The Harbourmaster, Captain OTHMAN BIN DARUS.
- The District Officer, Klang, INCHE SULAIMAN BIN HAJI MOHD.
- The Officer-in-Charge Police Department, Klang,
Superintendent ZAMAN KHAN.

12. During the afternoon we proceeded by car to Kuala Lumpur and called on the Chief of Naval Staff, Royal Malaysian Navy, Commodore K. THANABALASINGHAM, A.M.N., R.M.N., and the Permanent Secretary for Defence, TAN SRI ABDUL KADIR. That evening both ships held an official reception which proved to be a successful and pleasant occasion at which about 100 guests enjoyed themselves.

13. The next four days of the visit were well programmed with sporting fixtures and entertainment for officers and sailors. One such occasion was when the Ministry of Defence played the ships hockey and rugby and then entertained them to supper afterwards. There were similar arrangements at the Selangor Club and the Klang Club on the following two evenings. The Acting High Commissioner for Australia, Mr. W. Morrison, and the Australian Services Attache, Colonel C.P.W. Dixon each entertained the ship's officers to a cocktail party at their homes. In fact, the hospitality was most generous and our visit was voted a great success by all onboard.

14. At 0030 Monday 22nd January, Captain D.H.D. Smyth, R.A.N., Mr L. Carter, A.S.I.O., and Lieutenant I.A. Noble, R.A.N., joined to enquire into the loss of pages from a confidential publication. (My message D.T.G. 241410Z Oct refers) The Board convened onboard on three days and departed at 1600 Wednesday 24th January.

15. STUART cast off and proceeded from Port Swettenham at 1200 Monday 22nd January, and berthed at Singapore Naval Base at 0830 the next day after an uneventful passage.

16. At 0600, Thursday 25th January, the ship proceeded out of the Basin and, after collecting a Seacat missile from a lighter, proceeded to the practice areas. It had been intended to fire the three remaining Seacat practice missiles but the only available aircraft became unserviceable. A Casex A17 then took place with GOLD RANGER representing the main body and STUART the screen whilst H.M.S/M RORQUAL carried out her post work-up torpedo firings. When all torpedoes had been found on the surface STUART set course to the east to rendezvous with H.M.A.S. SYDNEY.

17. During this passage fuel consumption trials were carried out with very satisfactory results. Clear skies enabled the Midshipmen to take plenty of sights and so catch up on their schedules which were lagging because of continually overcast skies during the last ocean passages.

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18. STUART took station on SYDNEY at 0940, Sunday 28th January, and at 1100 replenished. The next day R.A.S. approaches were exercised and close range firings carried out against targets provided by two inch rocket flares. STUART exercised 4.5 rapid opening fire at these targets using T.M. fuze. Helicopter control was given to STUART all day and this gave my controllers much needed practice.

19. On Tuesday 30th January soldiers were transferred to STUART for the day and a Fall Out Transit exercise was carried out during the afternoon. The pre-wetting provided an unusual spectacle for the soldiers in SYDNEY as STUART steamed close by. The Task Group approached Sattahip shortly after dawn the next day and STUART anchored off the channel entrance at 0730. SYDNEY proceeded into the new harbour and went alongside to unload soldiers, vehicles and military equipment which are destined to take part in a SEATO exercise in February.

20. Both ships departed at 1600 the same day but were not more than eight miles from the harbour when a main steam joint blew in STUART and it was necessary to anchor for two and a half hours to make repairs. The Task Group proceeded for Vung Tau at 1930.

21. The condition of the ship in good and cleanliness, both internally and externally remains at a high standard. The main and auxiliary machinery has functioned satisfactorily throughout the month and machinery spaces continue to be well kept. All weapons and electronic systems have had a high degree of serviceability with the exception of V.D.S. which has been out of service since 5th January whilst awaiting a spare part.

22. The health of the Ship's Company has been good and their conduct satisfactory.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your obedient servant.

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