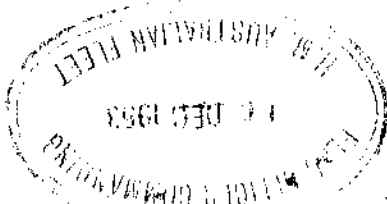


File No. 20.2A.8.



H.M.A.S. SYDNEY,
At Sea.

3rd December, 1953.

The Flag Officer Second in Command,
FAR EAST STATION.

(Copy to: The Flag Officer Commanding,
H.M. AUSTRALIAN FLEET).

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - NOVEMBER, 1953.

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of November, 1953.

2. Times throughout are Zone minus nine unless otherwise stated.
3. The ship had entered the Far East Station on 31st October when I reported for duty to the Commander-in-Chief, Far East Station, subsequently proceeding to Singapore via Sunda Banka, Berhala and Doerian Straits.
4. Thirteen Sea Furies for compass swinging and general flying, and five Firefly Mk VI's were flown off to the Royal Naval Air Station, Sembawang on the 2nd and the following morning I saluted the Flag of the Commander-in-Chief in Singapore Roads.
5. H.M.A.S. BATAAN who was in company as planeguard destró/pr was detached at 0805 (GH) to anchor in the Roads, while SYDNEY proceeded to the Naval Base, firing 13 guns to the Flag of the Flag Officer Malayan Area, before securing at No. 8 Berth at 1045 (minus 7½).
6. I had expected to be checked on the D.G. Range but had been informed before arrival, that it was not in operation.
7. During the two days in Singapore, the aircrews flew from Sembawang who we found most helpful in every way. I waited on the Commander-in-Chief and the Flag Officer Malayan Area and in a return call to the Commanding Officer, H.M.S. SIMBANG, was shown over the Air Station and was able to appreciate the capacity of the Supply and Repair facilities. A full list of the calls paid and returned together with social activities of an official nature is included in Appendix 'A'.
8. At my request the Commander-in-Chief was good enough to address the Ship's Company, generally on the situation in the Far East and particularly on the role the ship might play during her tour of duty on the station.
9. On proceeding from my berth at 0930 (minus 7½) on Thursday 5th I touched H.M. Submarine THOROUGH, but fortunately the damage was negligible. A separate report on this matter has been rendered under cover of my letter 13 : 4 : 7 of 8th November.
10. BATAAN joined me off Johore Shoal Buoy and subsequently the 13 Sea Furies previously landed and 12 Firefly Mk V's were embarked, bringing the total number of aircraft on board to 36. H.M.A.S. BATAAN was then detached to return to Australia and course was set for Hong Kong.

/11. The following morning.....

27

11. The following morning H.M.S. COMUS joined me as plane-guard destroyer and soon had some work to do. The engine of a Firefly cut on take off from the catapult and the aircraft ditched close ahead of the ship. COMUS recovered the aircrew little the worse for their experience.

12. Flying operations were conducted during the passage, both ships arriving at Hong Kong on the 9th November when I saluted the Flag of the Commodore-in-Charge, Hong Kong with 11 guns, subsequently securing to No. 3 buoy at 0845.

13. Hong Kong harbour presented a busy sight with U.S.S. YORKTOWN, H.M.S. OCEAN, several destroyers and frigates and a variety of merchantmen in evidence. The approaches to Hong Kong similarly showed signs of considerable activity as with the dawn we encountered no less than 150 junks in fairly close formation ahead of the ship.

14. The period at Hong Kong was spent primarily in a turnover from H.M.S. OCEAN who sailed with a paying off pennant flying on the 11th November, when she was cheered by the ship's company.

15. Two Dragon Fly Helicopters ex H.M.S. OCEAN were taken over and the newly appointed crews spent the time in becoming familiar with their S.A.R. craft.

16. The ship proceeded at 0800 on the 12th November and with H.M.S. CONSORT in company as plane-guard destroyer, operated aircraft during the day as part of an exercise designed to test the defences of Hong Kong. Unfortunately the catapult, which had given much trouble of a minor but consequential nature, again became unserviceable, and with 38 aircraft embarked the number of sorties using free take off, was necessarily restricted. The situation was not made easier by the requirement for an emergency landing just as the deck had been spotted for the second free take off serial. Nevertheless it appeared that the overall aim of the exercise was achieved, and on completion H.M.S. CONSORT was detached to rejoin Captain (D) 8th Destroyer Squadron and course was set to the North to pass West of Formosa.

17. On the evening of the 12th the condition of an officer suffering from a Mastoid was causing some concern. U.S.S. YORKTOWN was within visual range at this stage and speed was increased to maintain touch with her in order that my Medical team might benefit from assistance by her Medical Officers should it be necessary to carry out an intricate operation on this officer. Fortunately by the following morning, the patient had reacted favourably to treatment, and speed was reduced.

18. The same evening H.M.S. NEWCASTLE wearing the Flag of the Flag Officer Second in Command Far East Station, Rear Admiral E.G.A. Clifford, C.B., was passed whilst on passage to Hong Kong. I had hoped that we would meet her in daylight and thus give me the opportunity to wait on the Admiral by Helicopter.

19. On 13th November, the catapult again became unserviceable but 41 sorties were flown during the day in a strong North Easter, using free take off.

/20. The ship secured.....

20. The ship secured to No. 18 buoy at Sasebo at 0830 on the 16th November. During the passage from Hong Kong, and indeed since leaving Singapore, my officers and I spent many hours reading and digesting the several and voluminous orders issued in connection with the United Nations Forces allocated to the Korean theatre. We were fortunate in that the Fleet Aviation Officer had joined us at Hong Kong and he was able to assist in many of our difficulties. Nevertheless I know I was not alone in finding the situation somewhat confusing at this stage, but after our visit to Sasebo which included a final briefing by your staff, when most of the background had been absorbed, I found the situation clarifying for the first time.

21. Our opposite number U.S.S. POINT CRUZ entertained my Heads of Departments and me at luncheon on the 17th, and her Officers were our guests at a cocktail party on board in the evening. I was able to persuade the Commander Task Group 95 (Rear Admiral C.E. Olsen (U.S.N.)) to attend this party as returning my call previously made on him. With Captain John T. Hayward of U.S.S. POINT CRUZ he remained on board for supper in my Cabin, and I obtained some further and valuable briefing on this account.

22. An investigation into the catapult defects was carried out in conjunction with the Fleet Engineer Officer and the Base Engineer Officer, Sasebo, and arrangements were made for the manufacture of a "Fluid exhaust pipe from Power Cylinder extension cylinder to Launching Valve" which was to be despatched for final machining and fitting at Kure.

23. The ship sailed with U.S.S. HOLLISTER and FRANK KNOX as screen at 0800 on the 18th for Kure via Bungo Suido. Close range weapon practices and flying exercises were carried out en route.

24. SYDNEY became Duty Carrier at 0001 Item on the 20th November and with every chance of the catapult still being defective I decided to land 13 Furies and 5 Fireflies until such time as the catapult was repaired. This left 20 aircraft including 2 Helicopters on board which I considered the maximum number for efficient operations using RATOG and free take off.

25. Aviation spirit was embarked while at anchor on arrival at Kure on 20th November, and on completion the ship secured to No. 5 Berth with the destroyers on the other side of the Pontoon at No. 4.

26. The Naval Officer in Charge, Kure called on me during the day and this was subsequently returned. The Commander-in-Chief, British Commonwealth Forces, Korea was absent from the port and my call on him was deferred until 22nd when I was invited to join him and Mrs. Wells at cocktails before luncheon.

27. It had been hoped that the catapult repairs would have been made good to enable the ship to sail on Monday 23rd but this was not so. A report on this defect has been forwarded separately in my 31.16.12. of 30th November, 1953.

28. With HOLLISTER and FRANK KNOX in company, the ship sailed at 0700 on Tuesday 24th via Shimonoseki Straits, for the Operational Area off the West Coast of Korea. U.S.S. HOLLISTER was detached at 1700 to join C.T.G. 95.2 on the East Coast.

/29. The following day.....

157

29. The following day the aircraft from Iwakuni were landed on with the exception of 2 F4U Corsairs and 1 Firefly, bringing the total number embarked to 35.

30. The Operational Area was entered at 0004 on the 26th November where in addition to the duties of C.T.U. 95.1.1 I assumed those of Officer Tactical Command West Coast Blockade and Patrol Force.

31. The ship remained in the Operational Area for the remainder of the month and proceedings covering this period are reported separately.

MACHINERY.

32. Main and Auxiliary machinery have been satisfactory.

DISCIPLINE, WELFARE AND HEALTH.

33. Discipline, I regard as being good in that the ship's Company as a whole are doing their best cheerfully, in an endeavour to reach a high standard of efficiency. On the other hand, leave in places strange to them has resulted in many leave breaking offences particularly amongst the younger ratings whose sense of responsibility when ashore is frequently lacking. I hope that with some encouragement, this matter is on the way to a satisfactory solution.

34. There is no reason to regard Welfare as anything but satisfactory. Health is good but in spite of talks by the Medical Officer and myself on Venereal and other diseases in the Far East, it is clear from the incidence of the former that a percentage of men either doubted the veracity of the facts they were told or decided that when in Rome they must do as Rome does. There have been 49 cases of Venereal Disease since the ships arrival at Singapore on the 3rd of the month.

RECREATION.

35. At Singapore and Hong Kong, Rugby, Soccer, Hockey and Basketball teams played their first games for the season and met with mixed success. Subsequent games at Sasebo and Kure resulted in victories for all teams except those competing against HOLLISTER and FRANK KNOX at Basketball and Softball in which the Americans were matched in enthusiasm only. At sea full use was made of the flight deck for Volley Ball, Deck Hockey and Deck Tennis games and Athletics training whenever opportunities offered. A Deck Hockey team from H.M.S. COMUS was transferred by Jackstay and gave us an exciting game.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(G.C. Oldham)
CAPTAIN.

Encl.

30