

File No. 20.2A.8.

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

2nd February, 1954.

The Flag Officer Second-in-Command,
ELR EAST STATION.

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

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - JANUARY, 1954.

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of January, 1954.

2. Times throughout are Zone minus 8.

AT HONG KONG 1st to 11th.

3. The ship remained in harbour until the 11th with the Ship's Company fully employed on maintenance work, in storing, ammunitioning and painting, while throughout this period flying training continued with the aircraft previously landed at Kai Tak.

4. An Inquiry into the death of Sub Lieutenant M.J. BEARDSALL, R.N. was opened on board on the 1st, Captain F.4, Captain G.W. HAWKINS, R.N. presiding.

5. While carrying out wet winching drill on the 5th, the helicopter experienced a mechanical failure and crashed into Kowloon Bay in $5\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms of water. Fortunately there was no injury to the aircrew.

6. Assistance to salvage the helicopter was requested and the Boom Working Vessel Barbain was soon on the scene. The Helicopter was recovered in daylight the following morning which enabled the cause of the crash to be established beyond doubt, but corrosion had already set in to a certain extent and was such that that aircraft was beyond mechanical repair.

EXERCISE PERIOD 11th to 15th.

7. The ship sailed for exercises at 0900 on the 11th with COCKADE in company as planeguard destroyer and throughout this period a destroyer of the 8th Destroyer Squadron or DEFENDER was always in attendance.

8. Exercises had been planned with the main emphasis on joint A/S warfare and with H.M. Submarine THOROUGH as target. The aircrew progressed from the laying of dummy sonobuoy patterns to the final homing of ships with the submarine being limited only to keeping above silent speed. These exercises were of great value.

9. The Sea Furies were employed in strikes on the Colony, close air support and bombardment spotting, and C.A.P. against attacks by shore based Hornets and Vampires.

10. Exercise "Farmyard III" was carried out on the 14th. SYDNEY and a destroyer striking force, represented by CONSORT was covering an imaginary convoy against surface attack by COSSACK and COMUS.

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11. Search Fireflies were flown off before dawn and soon made contact. 16 Furies and 6 Fireflies were launched to carry out a strike co-ordinated with an attack by CONSORT. These tactics were deliberately employed to give the Commanding Officer, H.M.S. CONSORT and the Commanding Officer, 850 Squadron experience in their respective roles. The latter took no part in the attack but acted as strike co-ordinator under the general direction of the Commanding Officer, H.M.S. CONSORT. They played their parts with commendable efficiency and the results were most pleasing.

12. During the forenoon of the 15th, Acting Sub Lieutenant (P) J.H. McCLINTON, R.N. was struck by a revolving propellor and sustained compound fractures to the skull. An exercise involving aircraft, destroyers and a submerged submarine was in progress and I immediately turned over the duties of Officer controlling the Exercise to H.M.S. CONSORT and returned to harbour with all despatch. Instructing the aircraft in the air to land at Kai Tak on completion.

13. Sub Lieutenant McCLINTON was transferred to the Royal Naval Hospital, Hong Kong on my arrival about one and a half hours later but it is with great regret that I have to record his death, later in the day.

AT HONG KONG 15th to 21st.

14. The Commander-in-Chief, Vice Admiral Sir Charles E. Lambe, K.C.B., C.V.O. arrived by air on the 15th and honoured me by attending a small cocktail party in my quarters on the evening of the 16th. The Commander-in-Chief's Flag was hoisted in H.M.S. ALERT on this day.

15. A replacement Helicopter arrived in H.M.S. BIRMINGHAM on the 17th.

16. The funeral, with full Naval honours, of Sub Lieutenant McCLINTON took place on the afternoon of the 18th at the Happy Valley cemetery and was attended by a large number of the Ship's Company.

EXERCISE PERIOD 21st to 25th.

17. The ship slipped and proceeded to sea at 0900 on the 21st for the second Hong Kong exercise period during which it was planned to give priority to air to air firings and live 500lb bombing for the Fury pilots with A/S training and R.P. firings for the Fireflies. Weather, unfortunately, was poor throughout with low cloud and visibility causing cancellation of air to air firings, live bombing and one Sonobuoy tracking run with H.M. Submarine THOROUGH.

18. The ship returned to harbour at 0140 on the 23rd with a case of acute appendicitis. On proceeding to sea again at 0206 I was in collision with a Junk in Lei-u-mun pass. There were no casualties and only minor damage was caused to the Junk. A separate report has been rendered on this subject.

19. A major damage control exercise was carried out at sea on the afternoon of the 23rd; this has no connection with the incident referred to in the preceding paragraph. The ship anchored in Junk Bay on completion until the evening of the following day.

20. I proceeded at 2200 on Sunday the 24th with H.M.S. CONSORT in company for Exercise Billycan II, Defence of Hong Kong. The weather on the following day was quite unsuitable for any form of flying and the exercise had to be cancelled.

21. SYDNEY secured to No. 2 buoy at 1300.

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AT HONG KONG 25th to 31st.

23. On the occasion of Australia Day on the 26th, Ships in harbour were dressed overall.

AT SEA 31st

24. I proceeded out of harbour at 0930 on Sunday 31st and was screened by the 8th Destroyer Squadron. Throughout the day Hunter Killer tactics together with Screen penetration by H.M. Submarine THOROUGH were exercised. A full programme had been planned and manoeuvring was almost continuous. It was a valuable day.

25. On completion of the exercises, I parted company with the 8th Destroyer Squadron and proceeded West of Formosa for Iwakuni.

MACHINERY.

26. Main and Auxiliary Machinery have performed satisfactorily.

HEALTH.

27. The health of the ship's Company has been good. The incidence of Venereal Disease has not decreased there being 52 fresh cases, making a total of 197 since the ship's arrival on the station.

RECREATION.

28. Full use has been made of all ground allocations for the ship, and in addition challenges from the Army, R.A.F. and civilian teams were accepted.

29. The Ship's Rugby team has been particularly successful, and a great deal of enthusiasm has been shown in inter-part games. Ship's players have been in great demand for local matches, 13 of them representing teams in a local international competition which resulted in a draw between Australia and England in the final.

30. Cricket, Tennis, Soccer and Hockey have been well supported and local clubs have expressed keen anticipation of future games against the ship.

31. A large number of ratings passed the provisional swimming test which was conducted at a nearby beach, as a swimming pool was not available.

32. At sea, physical training instruction in the dog watches was well attended, and whenever space permitted Badminton courts were fully booked.

GENERAL.

33. This month, spent at Hong Kong and exercising in the vicinity, has undoubtedly been of great value to the ship as a whole. While the Ship's Company generally prefer Kure which they regard as their home on the Far East Station, I believe they appreciated the games played, and the work done in the more pleasing climate of Hong Kong. After a further period in Korean/Japanese waters in the winter they will probably appreciate it more.

34. A maintenance period at the beginning of the month was essential and major replenishment was facilitated by the visit. The finer weather enabled maintenance work in exposed parts and the painting of the ship to be carried out more efficiently.

35. From the air-crews' point of view, the visit with its greater social attractions and recreational facilities was an unqualified success, but over and above all this was the necessity in my mind, to provide a change from the limited type of work available to the air-crew in Northern waters.

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35. The aircrews have unquestionably reached a high standard in rail and road reconnaissance, photographic reconnaissance and close air support work. To continue this type of work in unpleasantly cold flying conditions with no real incentive as at present, and bearing in mind that it must be continued during the whole of February and much of March, was, I considered, foolish when a complete change was available.

36. Although the facilities at Kai Tak for flying training, when the ship is in harbour for maintenance and recreation are not good, they are virtually non-existent in Japan.

37. Very pleasing results have been obtained with C.C.A. practices and the A/S work for the Fireflies has been of great value and a most welcome change for the Observers whose morale has increased accordingly.

38. On 17th January, the Flag Officer Second-in-Command, Far East Station sailed in H.M.S. NEWCASTLE for Korea/Japan. H.M. Ships at Hong Kong had been instructed to be prepared to sail at short notice should the situation in Korea deteriorate as appeared a possibility as the result of disagreement over the question of Prisoners of War. Ships again reverted to normal notice on 24th January.

39. Mails from Australia were less regular than when the ship was in Japan/Korea.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,



(Sgd.) G. C. OLDHAM

(G.C. Oldham)
CAPTAIN