

File No. 20.2A.8.



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

10th March, 1954.

The Commander-in-Chief,
FAR EAST STATION.

The Flag Officer Second in Command,
FAR EAST STATION.

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

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - FEBRUARY, 1954.

Sir,

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

2. Times throughout are Zone minus 9.

HONG KONG TO IWAKUNI 1ST TO 6th.

3. Flying on passage was restricted by gale force northerly winds but only on the 3rd was it cancelled, and then primarily to allow the ship's company to listen to the broadcast of the arrival of Her Majesty the Queen at Sydney.

4. I assumed the title and duties of C.T.U. 95.1.1. at 0001 on the 3rd.

5. The Destroyer JAMES C. OWENS joined as Plane-guard on the 4th and, when the days flying was completed, received Lieutenant (P) L.R. CORICH, R.N. by Jackstay, subsequently making a rendezvous and transferring this Officer to H.M.S. NEWCASTLE for passage to Hong Kong.

On the 5th Aircraft exercised with H.M.S. NEWCASTLE on passage Sasebo to Hong Kong. Strikes were made and a C.A.P. under the control of NEWCASTLE was provided. The combination of Gale Force winds and swell made conditions difficult, but after a slight delay a lee was found to the East of Kyushu where swell conditions were less pronounced and 49 sorties were flown. The pilots handled the strong gusty wind conditions admirably. Ten aircraft were flown to Iwakuni for Compass & ranging.

7. On completion I proceeded via Bungo - Suigo to anchor off Iwakuni at 1015 on the 6th, the JAMES C. OWENS proceeding direct to Kure.

AT IWAKUNI 6th.

8. Unserviceable aircraft and stores were disembarked during the day and the ship also topped up with AVGAS and F.F.O. from the R.P.A. WAVE CHIEF.

AT KURE 7TH TO 12TH.

9. At 0900 on the 7th I weighed and proceeded to Kure, Berthing Port side to No.5 berth at 1100.

10. On the 9th

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10. On the 9th I proceeded to Sasebo by air to report to C.T.G. 95.1., Rear Admiral C.M. Olsen, U.S.N. The journey was made in three stages, Helicopter to Iwakuni, Firefly to Itazuki and P.B.M. (Mariner) to Sasebo. By a fortuitous circumstance I travelled in the same P.B.M. as Admiral Olsen's successor, Rear Admiral T.K. Ragan and was able to discuss the future programme including the lift of the R.N.A.R.S. from Iwakuni with both Officers before returning to Kure the following day.
11. The U.S.S. JAMES C. OWENS sailed for Sasebo on the 8th.
12. Rear Admiral T.K. Ragan relieved Rear Admiral C.M. Olsen as Commander Task Force 95 and Commander Task Group 95.1 on the 11th.
13. I sailed from Kure at 1100 on the 12th launching three aircraft to Iwakuni for Compass swinging during the forenoon and making a night passage of Shimonoseki Strait.
14. The Destroyers WILLIARD KEITH and JAMES C. OWENS joined on the morning of the 13th and a sleeve target firing was carried out in area George.
15. Impending bad weather restricted flying on the 13th the forecast being such as to make me loth to launch the planned 30 aircraft in a strike against Japanese airfields. 12 aircraft were embarked from Iwakuni and one small strike flown, before the remainder of the programme was cancelled.
16. Group Captain D.R. Chapman, R.A.A.F., the Officer Commanding No. 91 (Composite) Wing, R.A.A.F. at Iwakuni, who had taken passage from Kure to witness the flying was flown off by Firefly to return to Iwakuni during the afternoon.
17. At 2359 on the 13th I entered the West Coast Oparea and proceedings for this period are reported separately in my letter 020.21.5 of 26th February, 1954.

WEST COAST OPAREA TO KURE 24TH AND 25TH.

18. On 24th February, a surprise "scramble" of all aircraft on deck was piped at 0540. There were 12 Sea Furies and 6 Fireflies on deck and of the 9 Furies and 5 Fireflies were armed for strafing. Sunrise was at 0700 but there was a bright moon. The catapult, Flight Deck and first aircraft were ready in 29 minutes and the Helicopter had been ranged and was ready just before this. All the remaining armed aircraft were ready seven minutes later and the four unarmed overnight were armed within 44 minutes. The Helicopter was airborne 47 minutes, and the first aircraft 55 minutes after the pipe. These take-off times could have been bettered by 10 to 15 minutes if cock-pits had been manned earlier but it was insisted that aircrews should have a light breakfast before flying and this caused a slight delay.
19. U.S.S. ROGERS was detached at 0900 to join SAIPAN who was then in Sasebo and who assumed the title and duties of C.T.U. 95.1.1. at 0001 on the 25th.
20. A sleeve target firing was carried out on the afternoon of the 24th, the accuracy being greatly improved, and with U.S.S. BAUSELL in company a night passage of the Shimonoseki Strait was made to secure alongside in Kure at 1000 on the 25th.

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AT KURE 25TH TO 28TH.

21. The ship remained at Kure throughout the rest of the month.

22. On the 28th an inquiry was held on board to investigate the Flight Deck accident of the 14th in which Naval Airman K.J. Hazel was injured. Commander R.D. Richie, M.V.O., R.N., the Captain of H.M.S. MODESTE, was president.

ADVANCED HIGHER RATES COURSES.

23. It became apparent during recent examinations for advancement to higher rate, that semi-technical and technical Leading rates and Petty Officers possessed very poor Power of Command and, in addition, had little idea of the general as opposed to technical responsibilities of men holding higher rates. In consequence they failed to appreciate that the position should enjoy some prestige and dignity.

24. The nature of their work under present operating conditions makes it difficult to find opportunities within their departments for these essential qualities to be developed and exercised. However, in order to improve matters, a short advance higher rates course of twenty instructional hours based on the Petty Officers' School syllabus has been instituted and the first one is already proving to be well worth while.

LINKS BY DIVISIONAL OFFICERS.

25. A very large number have been given.

PRESENTATION BY THE 1ST BATTALION THE DORSET REGIMENT.

26. In my letter 20.24.8. dated 2nd February, 1954 it was not mentioned that while the ship was in Hong Kong in January, the 1st Battalion the Dorset Regiment commanded by Lieutenant Colonel O.G. White, D.S.O., went to great pains to entertain the ship's company. On one occasion a full day was spent with the Battalion and after games of soccer and rugby, in which the honours were even, the ceremony of "Beating the Retreat" was staged with excellent precision. In the evening the teams and spectators were entertained in the various messes and in conclusion a presentation was made to the ship in the form of the regimental badge mounted on a wooden background. In addition, the Wardroom received a framed picture of a soldier of the battle of Plassey and three volumes of the regimental history.

27. In return, members of the battalion have been to sea to witness flying and have been entertained on numerous occasions and a return presentation was made of a framed photograph of the ship and the ship's crest.

MACHINERY.

28. Main and Auxiliary Machinery have performed satisfactorily.

HEALTH.

29. The health of the Ship's Company has been good but with the return of the ship to Japan the incidence of Venereal Disease is increasing. There have been 50 cases during the month, making a total of 247 since the ship's arrival on the Far East Station.

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RECREATION.

30. A total of 38 games was played during the periods at Kure and Iwakuni, half of these being inter-part games, the remainder against Army, R.A.A.F., R.N. and U.S. Navy teams.

31. The rugby teams have been very successful, while the Australian Rules team has defeated the two leading teams in the Kure Area Competition.

32. At Sea recreation was restricted to Badminton and Physical Training, the attendances being such that all available space was fully occupied.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,



(G.C. Oldham)
CAPTAIN.

Encl.