

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

6th March, 1954.

The Commander-in-Chief,
FAR EAST STATION.

(Copies: The Flag Officer Second-in-Command,
FAR EAST STATION,
The Flag Officer Commanding,
H.M. AUSTRALIAN FLEET.)

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MARCH, 1954.

Sir,

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

2. Times throughout are Zone minus 8.

KURE TO KOBE 1ST TO 3RD.

3. Having followed our normal practise and exchanged several officers with the plane guard destroyer (U.S.S. BAUSELL) the ships sailed in company at 1400 on the 1st, and on the 2nd operated aircraft to the South of Shikoku Island. On completion of flying the officers were returned to their respective ships by jacksay and BAUSELL was detached to join SAIPAN on the West Coast of Korea.

4. Particularly good value was obtained by both ships in this exchange, BAUSELL gave my officers every opportunity to study their methods and to use her equipment, and in return were delighted when several defects in their radar equipment were repaired by one of my electrical officers. Several U.S. Officers were able to fly as passengers in the Fireflies during the day.

AT KOBE 3RD TO 10TH.

5. A pilot was embarked off the harbour entrance and the ship secured alongside to No.4 berth at 0930 on the 3rd. The pilot appeared more than relieved when I informed him that I would handle the ship.

6. In the evening a cocktail party was given in the hangar for the British community of Kobe/Osaka and afterwards I entertained some of the European residents at dinner in my quarters.

7. On the 5th I gave a luncheon party for Japanese dignitaries.

8. Although classed as an informal visit the European community, aided by the Deputy to the British Naval Attache, TOKYO, had taken great pains to see that the Ship's Company enjoyed their stay, and in this they were more than successful.

9. A small committee, most ably led by Mr. Williams, a Lloyd's surveyor, was formed to organise entertainment for the ship, and in addition to considerable private hospitality this included bus tours to KYOTO, visits to the world famous TAKARAZUKA opera, a dance at the Shioya Country Club for the Officers and at the Missions to Seamen for the ratings and a tour of the Kirin Brewery. A party of Officers was also invited to play golf by the representatives of the Dunlop Rubber Company, who then entertained them at a Japanese meal in the evening.

/10. On Saturday 6th March.....

143

10. On Saturday 6th March, a party of 30 Officers and Chief Petty Officers were invited to witness the launching of the SACHIKAWA MARU at the Kawasaki Dockyard. A special enclosure was set aside for the "foreign guests" and an extremely good view of the launch was obtained. The actual launch was carried out with military precision and as the ship went down the ways a huge cardboard ball, suspended from a "bowsprit", broke over the stem emitting nearly a hundred-weight of confetti and streamers and five very startled doves. The party was entertained in the Administration Building after the launch and it was felt by some that the women, who by tradition are excluded from Japanese launching ceremonies, were indeed lucky as a diet of Japanese hors d'oeuvres, peanuts and beer was hardly a happy choice for an 8.30 a.m. snack.

11. A display of JUDO was given by local experts in 'B' Hangar and aroused much interest in the ship's company.

12. Among several United States Navy ships in harbour was the U.S.S. MOUNT MCKINLEY flying the flag of C.T.G. 90.1, and the U.S.S. CAVALIER, who, although carrying her own Roman Catholic Padre, attended Mass on board H.M.A. Ship under my command at their own request,

13. Through the medium of Colonel R.J. Cox, United States Army, who is Commanding Officer, of Kobe Port, I was able to visit KYOTO by a U.S. Marine Corps helicopter on the 9th., a pleasure I would otherwise have had to forego due to the pressure of events in KOBE.

14. The ship was open to visitors on the afternoon of the 7th. and I understand that the comparatively small number (1500) who inspected the ship was due entirely to the fact that the information was published in the English newspapers only. I have been gratified to receive numerous favourable comments on the behaviour of the ship's company ashore and on the general value of this visit to British prestige.

15. The deaths of Chief Petty Officer A.S. HAWKEN, O.N. 31283 and L.E.M.(Air) K.W. NELSON, O.N. 29310 during this period were most unfortunate, but space was made available in the European section of the Kasugano cemetery, and the bodies were interred at an impressive ceremony on the afternoon of the 8th. Among those who attended the funeral were the Deputy Governor of the Hyogo Prefecture, H.M. Consul General Kobe/Osaka, Her Majesty's Consul Kobe, the Deputy Mayor of Kobe and several prominent citizens.

KOBE TO WEST COAST OPAREA VIA SAGAMI WAN 10TH TO 15TH

16. The ship slipped and proceeded to sea at 1400 on the 10th.

17. I assumed the title and duties of C.T.U. 95.1.1. at 0001 on the 11th but flying on that day was cancelled owing to adverse weather caused by an approaching depression and associated warm front.

18. The U.S.S. SPROSTON joined as plane guard at dawn on the 12th.

19. A full day's training of Firefly crews in conjunction with the U.S. Submarine WAHOO had been planned for the 12th in Sagami Wan, South of Tokyo Bay, but unfortunately a defective arresting gear unit forced me to cancel the exercise after only two serials had been flown.

20. Weather conditions south of Japan were not good, but flying was possible on the 14th and 15th. While carrying out a strike on South Korean airfields on the 15th. a Sea Fury aircraft flown by Lieutenant (A/E)(P) J. Brettingham-Moore developed engine trouble, the pilot carrying out a skilful ditching in the sea 5 miles south of Chinhae Airfield. The shore based Search and Rescue Organisation

/went into action.....

44

142

went into action and the pilot was recovered uninjured within 15 minutes and flown back on board later in the day. Arrangements are being made to salvage this aircraft to ascertain the cause of the failure.

21. I assumed the duties of Officer in tactical command West Coast at 0001 on the 16th and the unit entered the Oparea at 0200. Proceedings for this period are reported separately, under cover of my letter O20.2E.5. of 30th March, 1954, copy of which is attached.

22. On completion of flying on the 19th, U.S.S. WALKER was detached for Sasebo and I proceeded via the Shimonoseki Strait to Kure, arriving at 0900 on the 20th.

AT KURE 20TH TO 25TH.

23. Essential maintenance was carried out during this period alongside, and the ship replenished with F.F.O. and fresh provisions.

KURE TO OPAREA 25TH TO 27TH.

24. Sailing at 0930 the ship made a most eventful night passage of Shimonoseki Strait in which collision with no less than three L.S.T.'s was only narrowly averted by going astern on each occasion. This has been made the subject of a separate report and is a story which if told in the Clubs, would do no less than to acquire me a reputation of the type enjoyed by Baron Von Münchhausen

25. The U.S. Destroyer HIGBEE (DDR 806) joined as plane guard destroyer at 0700 on the 26th and after a sleeve target firing in Area George a programme of local flying was carried out.

26. I assumed the duties of Officer in Tactical Command West Coast at 2300 on the 26th and entered the Oparea at 0200 on the 27th.

27. Proceedings for this period are reported separately under cover of my letter O20.2E.5 of 1st April, 1954, copy of which is attached.

MACHINERY.

28. Main and Auxiliary Machinery have performed satisfactorily

HEALTH.

29. The health of the Ship's Company has been good. The extra rations made available during the very cold weather were much appreciated by the ship's company and were very good as a supplementary food as well as a morale booster.

RECREATION AND WELFARE.

30. Welfare is satisfactory.

31. The usual games of Rugby, Soccer, Hockey, Australian Rules Football, Basketball and Baseball were played in harbour whenever opponents and grounds were available.

32. For the first time during the cruise, games were arranged against Japanese teams at Kobe and Hiroshima, and these proved most successful. The Rugby games in particular provided a most entertaining spectacle, as the opposition played a very fast, open game, and unexpected opposition was encountered. The ship's Rugby team avenged their only defeat in this area by comfortably defeating the slightly weakened New Zealand Army team in a return match at Kure.

33. At sea the usual periods of voluntary physical training were well attended while compulsory P.T. during working hours and embracing all departments was continued.

/MAINTENANCE.....

45

141

MAINTENANCE.

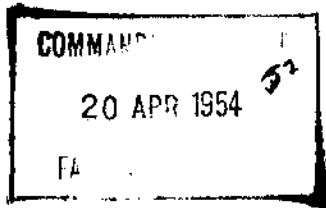
34. With the assistance of Chinese and Japanese Labour, the formidable task of completely chipping the Flight Deck was completed on Tuesday 23rd. The first small patch was started prior to the Ship's departure for Hervey Bay to work up in September, 1953, and the task ahead at that time appeared almost impossible.

35. In regard to the Chinese and Japanese Labour, it is of interest to remark that the Japanese at Kure worked much harder and more thoroughly than the Chinese at Hong Kong.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



(Sgd.) G. C. OLDHAM
(G.C. Oldham)
CAPTAIN.

Encl.