

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

5th May, 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 APRIL, 1954.

Sir,

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

2. Times throughout are Zone minus 9.

AT SASEBO 1ST TO 3RD.

3. The ship arrived at Sasebo at 0900 on the 1st and secured to a buoy.

4. This visit had been planned in order to take leave of the Commander Task Group 95.1, Rear Admiral T.C. RAGAN, U.S.N., and I was somewhat put out to find that all the Flag Officers were in Tokyo to meet the new American Naval Commander in the Far East, Vice Admiral W.McC. CALLAGHAN, U.S.N.. However on the 2nd., I entertained in my quarters Senior American Naval Officers present in the port, together with the Commanding Officers of H.M.C.S. HAIDA, H.M.A.S. ARUNTA and the Royal Navy Officers on the staff of C.T.G. 95.1.

SASEBO TO KURE - 3RD.

5. With the destroyer U.S.S. BADGER in company I sailed for Kure on the morning of the 3rd, and making an unopposed passage of the Shimonoseki Strait berthed alongside in Kure at 0800 on the 4th.

AT KURE 4TH TO 6TH.

6. This visit to Kure was unexpected and due to the need to Court Martial one of my Chief Petty Officers. The President of the Court, Captain B.C. DURANT, D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N. of the 4th Frigate Squadron had flown from Hong Kong, and the Captain of H.M.S. COCKADE, Commander H.A. CORBETT, D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N. who was present in the harbour, together with two of my Officers, formed the court, which was held on the 5th.

KURE TO BUCKNER BAY 6TH TO 8TH.

7. I sailed at 0900 on the 6th with BADGER in company, fuelling her underway on the 7th and carrying out flying exercises on the 7th and 8th.

8. The flying programme on the 8th consisted of two large strikes on the airfields at Okinawa which were defended by jet fighters of the U.S. Air Force. The pilots had an exhilarating day and achieved some success. I received a complimentary signal from the shore authorities on the planning and execution of these attacks.

9. BADGER was detached for Sasebo on completion of flying on the 8th and I anchored in Buckner Bay at 1715.

AT BUCKNER BAY 8TH TO 10TH.

10. On arrival, the ship chopped to the operational control of the Commander Task Group 96.7, Rear Admiral H.D. FELT, U.S.N., to take part in the Hunter Killer Exercise enroute to Yokosuka.

11. The Admiral arrived in his Flagship, U.S.S. RENDOVA at 0800 on the 9th, and signalled that he wished calls to be considered paid and returned. The other units taking part in this exercise, 8 destroyers and 2 submarines were already present in the harbour.

12. The exercise was discussed at a conference on shore in the afternoon and I met the Admiral at this time.

13. Major General D.A.D. OGDEN, Commanding General Ryukus Command, and the Officers of the Army and Navy based on shore in Okinawa entertained Officers from the task group at cocktails on the evening of the 9th. One of my motorboats, transporting officers ashore for this party, was unfortunately stranded on TAIRA SONE Reef in low visibility. All personnel were recovered but with regret I have to report that the boat later sank and salvage has not yet been practicable. This has been reported separately under cover of my letter 07/1/2 of 22nd April, 1954.

BUCKNER BAY TO KURE 10TH TO 15TH.

14. SYDNEY sailed in company with Task Group 96.7 at 0845 on the 10th and by order of C.T.G. 95.1 I assumed the title and duties of C.T.U. 95.1.1. at 0900. Subsequently it became clear that this was occasioned by the need to despatch SAIPAN to Indo-China with Corsair aircraft. The H.U.K. Exercise which followed is reported separately.

15. This exercise was generally of good value to the ship and also to the Task Group as a whole, it being the first occasion that two Carriers have participated in the H.U.K.

16. Prior to parting company at dusk on the 13th, I visited the Flagship by Helicopter. The Admiral was most complimentary on the part played by SYDNEY and subsequently in a congratulatory signal remarked that her presence "had been a tonic to us all".

17. After completing a full day's flying on the 14th, in which all operational aircraft from the R.N.A.R.s at Iwakuni were embarked, the ship anchored off MITSUYAMA for the night, proceeding to berth alongside at Kure at 1115 on the 15th.

AT KURE 15TH TO 21ST.

18. The Easter period was spent alongside in Kure - storing and essential maintenance being carried out.

19. Although Duty Carrier until the 25th, the ship was at 72 hours notice to reach the Operational Area and approval had been given to proceed with plans for the lift of the R.N.A.R.s from Iwakuni, and for the projected visit to Yokohama.

20. The British Troop Ship DUNER was due to sail from Kure on the 27th, and provided a convenient and earlier means of transporting the Royal Naval aircrew back to the United Kingdom.

21. In view of the large deck park caused by the additional aircraft from Iwakuni, and the fact that only two further days of air operations were planned, I decided to discontinue flying, land the R.N. Aircrew at Kure to await passage in DUNER and otherwise proceed with the programme.

/22. The U.S. Destroyer LAWS.....

22. The U.S. Destroyer LAWS, who had arrived on the 18th was recalled to Sasebo and sailed on the 20th.

KURE TO YOKOHAMA 21ST TO 23RD.

23. More from a point of view of interest, rather than as a time saving factor, the ship sailed at 0730 on the 21st, dressed with Masthead flags in honour of the birthday of Her Majesty The Queen, and proceeded Eastward through the Inland Sea. I believe this is the first occasion for some time at least, that a ship of this size has made the passage. It proved most interesting and without hazard, though I consider the transit of the narrows of KURUSHIMA KAIKYO should be made under reasonably slack water conditions as was the case on this occasion.

24. Entering Tokyo Bay at 0700 on the 23rd, the ship passed over the D.G. range at Yokosuka and secured alongside at No.3 berth YOKOHAMA at 0900.

AT YOKOHAMA 23RD TO 27TH.

25. Details of the official calls paid and returned are included in Appendix 'A'.

26. This short visit to Yokohama was much enjoyed by the Ship's Company, not only because of the proximity of Tokyo. The British Commonwealth Leave Centre at Ebisu Camp, just outside Tokyo, provided transport and entertainment, together with accommodation, at small cost, for over 100 ratings each night. There was an evening of Scottish Dancing, and sporting fixtures against local teams, who proved too good in all matches.

27. For the Officers, a small number was invited to the St. George's Ball on the 23rd, there was a reception at the Australian Embassy for 30, and a bus tour of Tokyo, including a short but effective visit to the Asahi Brewery, organised by the Japanese Maritime Safety Force. ~~board.~~

28. A cocktail party was given on board for about 400 official guests on the evening of the 24th, while on the 23rd and 24th, groups of Officers and men from the Japanese Maritime Safety Force were taken on conducted tours of the ship.

29. On the 25th, three hundred officers and men from the ship attended the Anzac Day commemoration service at the British Commonwealth War Cemetery near Yokohama. A small number of Australian and New Zealand army personnel and civilians also attended. I read the lesson and an address was given by His Excellency the Australian Ambassador.

30. At the conclusion of the service, wreaths were laid on the Australian and New Zealand Cenotaphs by the Australian Ambassador, the New Zealand Charge d'Affairs and by myself on behalf of the Royal Australian Navy.

31. The War Graves Cemetery at Yokohama was a most pleasing surprise to us all and we saw it under the best conditions of a beautiful Spring morning. It is very unlike one's normal conception of a cemetery - a somewhat grim looking site with tombs and headstones generally varying in size, shape and inscription to give an appearance of crowded disorder. On the contrary, the spacious grounds of this cemetery with trees and sloping banks of flowering shrubs and expansive lawns together with the uniform headstones and dignified memorials presents a peaceful atmosphere not unlike the beauty of the better parts of the Melbourne Botanical Gardens on a quiet weekday forenoon.

32. After a visit.....

137

32. After a visit which the Ship's Company appreciated and enjoyed, I sailed for Kure via Bungo Suido at 0900 on the 27th.

33. U.S.S. SAIPAN assumed the title and duties of C.T.U. 95.1.1. at noon on the 25th.

AT KURE 29TH.

34. I berthed alongside at 0715 on the 29th, and having been informed that the Japanese ships intended to dress ship overall in honour of the birthday of the Japanese Emperor, I instructed ships present (H.M.S. CRANE and H.M.A. Ships ARUNTA and COMMONWEALTH) to conform.

35. Stores of all kinds for passage south were embarked during the day, together with personnel from H.M.A.S. ARUNTA.

36. At 1030 on the 30th. the ship slipped for the last time from Kure after a very happy association with this Dockyard Port. The popularity of Kure among the Ship's Company is quite outstanding and, I feel, worthy of record.

AT IWAKUNI 30TH.

37. The ship anchored off Iwakuni at 1230 on the 30th, and with assistance from the floating crane, tugs and barges from Kure, the embarkation of the Royal Naval Air Repair section commenced.

38. In my letter 20.2A.8. of 10th March, 1954, I regret that I omitted to record the transfer of the Administrative Control of H.M.A. Ship under my command from the Flag Officer Second in Command, to the Commander-in-Chief, Far East Station on 26th February.

MACHINERY.

39. Main and Auxiliary machinery have performed satisfactorily.

HEALTH AND WELFARE.

40. The health of the Ship's Company has been good and Welfare satisfactory. There were 38 cases of Venereal Disease during the month.

MAINTENANCE.

41. With the cessation of operational flying, every effort is now being made to bring the ship up to a high standard of preservation.

RECREATION.

42. During the month only limited opportunities were found to play games, owing to grounds being converted from winter to summer requirements. However, several interpart games of cricket were played at Kure, in addition to soccer and hockey against Army teams.

43. At Yokohama, Rugby, Hockey and Soccer games were arranged against Japanese University teams, which proved too strong for the Ships representatives, but fixtures were obviously very much enjoyed by both sides and our teams were badly in need of a run.

44. At sea, improved weather conditions enabled Volley Ball and Deck Tennis to be played whenever dock space was available.

45. Recreational films were shown as usual and continued to be popular.

GENERAL.

46. Apart from the few remaining days at Iwakuni, our contact with Korea and Japan is over. I, who had previously seen Japan only in the winter, was struck with the amazing change in the countryside from the bleak and unfriendly appearance in the winter to the richness of colour and beauty in the spring.
47. In the past, I had seen only the labouring and peasant types of natives and some dockyard officials, and the masses in the streets of Tokyo. Except for the latter, they were completely subservient in their attitude in those non-fraternisation days, and polite(?) to a degree that caused them to bow low while inhaling through their teeth with an infuriating noise. All this has changed. The Japanese now appear to me to be naturally polite with a desire to be friendly towards us - a fact which many of my Ship's Company have not been slow to exploit!. I have moreover, met some cultured Japanese and some business men on this occasion, and while the latter are no doubt astute and hard, the people generally have displayed a measure of charm which has surprised me.
48. The ship as a whole, has made the best of its opportunities in Japanese Ports. While Kure has been their "home from home", due in no small measure to the Australian element there, many have availed themselves of the opportunities to see some of the culture, art, industry and commercial activities of the country provided by a visit to Kobe and to Yokohama.
49. Wherever we have been, we have been shown nothing but kindness and a desire by the residents to seek out and meet our wishes. In a previous report I mentioned the British Community of Kobe in this regard which was led and organised by Her Majesty's Consul. Of the Naval authorities, the Naval Officer in Charge, Kure (and H.M.A.S. COMMONWEALTH) and the British Naval Attache, Tokyo, were no less able and enthusiastic in their efforts to see to rather more than our needs. Similarly, the United States Army authorities (Port Commandants) at Kobe and Yokohama went out of their way to provide us with what facilities in the way of transport etc. and amenities, that they could muster.
50. While the Japanese authorities at Kobe and Yokohama had little opportunity during these informal visits to do a great deal, they were "full of regrets" but at least they gave whole hearted co-operation and consideration, and this is particularly so of the Japanese Police who showed no inclination at any time of wishing to exercise the jurisdiction to which they were entitled.
51. I am glad, and indeed proud to be able to report that the Ship's Company in general, have played their part in a most creditable manner. There has been an individual exception on occasions, but the misdemeanour has been of a nature which at least has caused no publicity. I have received favourable comments on their dress, conduct and manners from civilian and Service Europeans and Asiatics in most places visited. While this has been a source of particular pride to me, I am not so naive as to believe that it legitimately refers to more than a large majority.
52. I am sure (that like myself, but more so) the average man on board will return to Australia with a very different view of the Japanese race as a whole, to that held eight months ago. In the case of the Ship's Company, their outlook has been influenced primarily by the art (whether natural or acquired) of the Japanese women to show a seemingly sincere friendliness towards them, and the ability of many to provide night clubs and beer halls, with services

/of an order.....

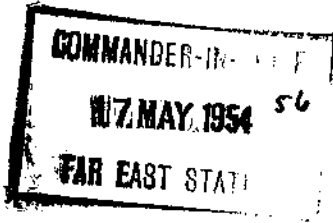
135

of an order to which they are unaccustomed at the price, for their entertainment.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



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

Encl.