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HMAS SYDNEY,
at Sydney.

6th May, 1968.

THE FLAG OFFICER COMMANDING,
H.M. AUSTRALIAN FLEET.

HMAS SYDNEY - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - APRIL, 1968

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of Her Majesty's Australian Ship SYDNEY, under my command, for the month of April, 1968. All times are local time as indicated.

2. At the beginning of the month the ship was steaming north through the St. Georges Channel between New Britain and New Ireland having diverted to Rabaul to land an injured soldier of the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. At 0600(-10) on Monday 1st the patient was landed at Rabaul by helicopter and the ship continued on passage for Manus.
3. Force 7 winds from the west were experienced as the ship approached Manus. The conditions dictated that it would be prudent not to Mediterranean Moor to a lee shore so at 0741(-10) on Tuesday 2nd SYDNEY anchored 5 cables to the east of Lombum Point. Refuelling was accomplished from the Oil Fuel Lighter. 100 tons of ADD was also embarked from the lighter to make up the total burnable fuel required for the next passage. Two LCM's were used to assist movement of the OFL.
4. Her Majesty's Ships CAMBRIAN (Commander W.R. Canning) and ZEST (Commander P.L. Poland) were berthed at the TARANGAU jetty during SYDNEY's visit.
5. LCM 761 which has been left at TARANGAU during the previous South Vietnam voyage was returned to the ship.
6. At 1439(-10) the ship sailed from Manus.
7. The passage to the Philippine Area was uneventful. The strong westerly winds persisted for two days. This was caused by the northerly movement of the Intertropical convergence zone toward a stationary Low pressure system and the resultant increase in the isobar gradient. SYDNEY transitted Basilan Strait at 1100(-9) on Saturday 6th and at 0600(-8) on the following morning the ship cleared through Balabac Strait.
8. HMAS PARRAMATTA rendezvoused with SYDNEY at 0745(-8) on Sunday 7th. Chaplains were transferred to PARRAMATTA by helicopter soon after the rendezvous was effected. Later in the forenoon PARRAMATTA was refuelled and at the same time the chaplains were returned to the ship.
9. Jackstay transfers, Surface and AA firings and helicopter screening were conducted on passage to Vung Tau. List of all exercises carried out during the month are shown in Appendix "B".

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10. An aircraft emergency was declared by Helicopter 814 at 1410(-8) on Monday 8th. A defect had occurred in the engine fuel system and the resultant engine overspeeding caused the aircraft to climb. Marginal Control was eventually regained and after a period the helicopter was safely landed on. Two crew members were recovered by PARRAMATTA after they had ditched into the sea for safety reasons.
11. Defence stations were closed up in the Task Group at 1600(-8) on Monday 8th and the remainder of the passage to Vung Tau was uneventful.
12. At 0700(-8) on Tuesday 9th, SYDNEY anchored in Baie de Gamb Rai. PARRAMATTA had been detached at 0530(-8) to sweep ahead and proceed direct to her assigned berth. After anchoring it was learnt that the Chinook helicopters and the "Skycrane" helicopter would not be available to assist in the disembarkation of personnel and stores nor the backloading of the relieved battalion. The alternate plan employing lighterage from the Alaska Barge Company and the ship's LCM's was therefore implemented. The landing of 1 RAR and the embarkation of 7 RAR and the battalion Unit Stores progressed satisfactorily. Because of the non availability of the "Skycrane", backloading of some non goer vehicles was cancelled. During the forenoon my Executive Officer and the Fleet Aviation Officer visited the RAN HFV at "Blackhorse". Concurrently some of the RAN aircrew from the HFV visited the ship. At 1400(-8) SYDNEY weighed anchor and proceeded for Sattahip, Thailand.
13. It is with pleasure that I report that the Midshipmen GLEX who crewed the LCM's proved themselves to be very competent coxswains. Their manner in handling the craft was commendable and the initiative they displayed in beaching their craft despite several bow door failures was of a high order. The bow door failures were overcome by good seamanship.
14. As the ship sailed from the anchorage reports were received from the harbour patrol craft that swimmer activity was suspected in the area.
15. The passage to Sattahip was without incident and opportunity was taken to progress Officer of the Watch training during the period. PARRAMATTA was also replenished with FFO during the passage.
16. SYDNEY arrived off the channel entrance to Sattahip at 0630(-7) on Friday 12th. PARRAMATTA was detached to proceed to an anchorage close west of the entrance channel. It was not until 0800(-7) that activity within the harbour indicated that tugs and personnel were ready to receive the ship alongside. The ship berthed port side to No.1 berth at 0908(-7). Immediately after securing the embarkation of "SNOWGUM" freight and vehicles began. A defect in the floating crane prevented the crane from backloading the 15 ton "wrecker" vehicle. This vehicle was partially dismantled by ship's staff and then embarked by the NCK and 15 ton cranes.
17. At 0930(-7) I called on Rear Admiral JINAWAT WONGPENSRI, Royal Thai Navy, at the Sattahip Naval Base. He returned my call later in the forenoon.
18. Immediately all cargo had been embarked the ship cast off and at 1615(-7) course was set for the Singapore area. PARRAMATTA rejoined SYDNEY as she cleared the harbour channel.
19. Early in the morning watch on Sunday 14th, the medical officer reported that a serious case of peritonitis has developed and that the soldier concerned would require immediate surgical treatment. The patient was operated on at 0700(-7) and at 0930(-7) he was transferred to PARRAMATTA for transfer to BHH Singapore. SYDNEY then proceeded to effect the same

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20. At 0730(-7) on Monday 15th TIDESURGE was met to the east of Pulau Aur and SYDNEY approached the tanker to replenish F.P.O. During the replenishment two Russian Hydrographic survey vessels ALEXSEY CHIRIKOV and FEDORLITKE were overtaken. The former kept station one mile on SYDNEY's port quarter for approximately one hour and then moved ahead to the port bow for a short period before turning away to rejoin her sister ship further to the east. U.S.S. TICONDEROGA and three escorts were also met during the replenishment. The American group had just completed an Easter period R & R visit to Singapore.
21. HMAS PARRAMATTA rejoined as the Replenishment completed at 1115(-7) and after disengaging TIDESURGE returned to Singapore while SYDNEY and her escort proceeded for the Darwin Area.
22. PARRAMATTA was detached to return to duties with the Strategic Reserve at 0830(-7) on Tuesday 16th.
23. The return passage to Sydney was without incident. Mail was received and landed off Darwin on Saturday 20th and at 1400(-10) on Thursday 23rd six Customs officials, 2 Quarantine officers and 2 Army personnel joined the ship from Townsville by helicopter.
24. Before the ship's entrance into Sydney harbour at 0700(-10) on Friday 26th 817 Squadron was flown off to remain at HMAS ALBATROSS during the ship's period in port. The ship finally berthed at the Fitting Out Wharf at Garden Island at 0801(-10).
25. A contingent of 200 of the Ship's Company joined 7 R.A.R., the Ship's Company of HMAS PERTH and a R.A.A.F. detachment for a march through the streets of Sydney at 1220 that same day. The ship's band complemented by HMAS PENGUIN's band led the naval contingent.
26. The ship remained in Sydney for the remainder of the month. On Sunday 28th SYDNEY was opened to the public for inspection.
27. Training has progressed satisfactorily during the month. 80 Ordinary Seamen borne in the ship have now completed their Common Sea Training.
28. All main and auxiliary machinery including Weapons Electric equipment has operated satisfactorily for the month. Present progress indicates that all outstanding URDEFS will be completed during the present period in harbour.
29. The health of the Ship's Company has been satisfactory and morale remains good. Credit is due to the victualling and galley personnel for the high standard of meals that was maintained throughout the last voyage to South Vietnam.

I have the honour to be
Sir,
Your obedient servant

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(Signature)
(D.A.H. Clarke)

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APPENDIX "A" - STEAMING FIGURES

- (A) Distance steamed during the month - 9,245.5 miles.
- (B) Hours underway during the month - 585 hrs 56 mins.
- (C) Total distance steamed since recommissioning - 175,560.5 miles.
- (D) Total hours underway since recommissioning - 11,790 hrs 6 mins.
- (E) Occasions of exceeding economical speed -

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME HOURS</u>	<u>AV SPEED</u>	<u>FUEL USED/HR</u>	<u>DIST/TON FUEL</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
2	6	18 kts	6.19	3.331	Rover 4
3	24	18 kts	7.5	2.38	"
4	25	17.6	7.32	2.39	"
5	19	18	7.58	2.31	"
7	14	17	6.62	2.41	"
8	15	17	6.41	2.44	"
9	4	18	7.47	1.87	"
16	16	17	6.86	2.49	"
17	24	17	6.16	2.69	"
18	14	17	6.45	2.40	"
20	14	18.5	5.87	2.77	"
21	24	17.2	7.91	2.30	"
22	23	19.1	7.79	2.40	"
23	22	19.1	7.58	2.32	"
24	18	19.0	7.65	2.30	"