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HMAS SYDNEY,  
at Sea.

1/16/3(2).

3rd December, 1969.

Flag Officer Commanding,  
H.M. Australian Fleet.HMAS SYDNEY - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - NOVEMBER, 1969.

Sir,

1. I have the honour to submit the report of proceedings of Her Majesty's Australian Ship SYDNEY, under my command, for the month of November 1969.

2. On Saturday and Sunday 1st/2nd November the ship was alongside at Cockatoo Island at the end of the refit.

3. At 0910 the ship was cast off and moved cold from Cockatoo Island to No2 buoy. On completion of ammunitioning the SYDNEY slipped and proceeded to sea at 1340. The ship remained at sea for 48 hours to prove machinery after the refit, carry out gun functioning trials, full power trial and seamanship evolutions. No major defects were found and the ship berthed starboard side to at the Fitting Out Wharf at 1400 on Wednesday 5th November.

Rear Admiral W.D.H. GRAHAM, C.B.E., the Fourth Naval Member visited the ship on Monday 10th November, and walked around the ship.

5. By Friday afternoon the ship had stored and loaded in preparation for the departure on Saturday 15th November, and the ship cast off and proceeded at 1006, after a short delay while a merchantman was to clear the Heads...

6. An uneventful passage north preceded the ship's berthing at No3 B.H.P. wharf, Hamilton Reach, Brisbane, at 1416 on Sunday 16th November.

7. At 1230 on Monday 17th November, with the 8th RAR embarked for passage to Vung Tau, the ship cast off and proceeded north via the Barrier Reef inner route.

8. In order to conserve fuel the DUCHESS was routed north in advance of the SYDNEY, and by 1500 on Tuesday 18th November this ship had caught up, and the two ships proceeded in company. Torres Strait was cleared by 0900 on Thursday 20th November and the DUCHESS refuelled at 1000. At 1205, on completion of refuelling the DUCHESS was detached to proceed to the approaches to Darwin, and the two ships again joined company at 1045 on Saturday 22nd November, to the west of Melville Island.

9. The passage continued, and Sunds Strait was transitted on 25th November, and the ships passed through Gaspar Strait late that night.

10. At 1200 on Wednesday 26th November the SYDNEY and DUCHESS refuelled from RFA TIDEPOOL, and the evolution was completed at 1522. A jackstay transfer was then carried out with the DUCHESS and the passage continued towards VUNG TAU.

11. After crossing a sheer line stretching across the centre of the South China Sea the weather turned very nasty and rain and a NNE wind of Force 5-7 had whipped up an 8-10 foot swell with 3-5 feet of sea. In this weather, on Thursday 27th November, the cargo party did well to pre-stow all cargo for disembarkation with the exception of twenty pallets containing cardboard containers of Xmas presents and cakes. In view of the damage which would have been done to this cargo by the driving rain I decided to anchor at VUNG TAU at

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0600 on Friday 28th November. The advancement of the ETA by one hour was approved by the local harbour authorities, and after arrival the cardboard boxes were stowed on deck in preparation for off loading.

12. The unloading commenced at 0700, as usual, and went very smoothly. All troops were embarked/disembarked and cargo loaded/off loaded by 1148 and at 1200 on Friday 28th November the SYDNEY weighed and proceeded out of VUNG TAU to join the DUCHESS, who had weighed and proceeded at 1150. The two ships proceeded south through the very uncomfortable weather described in para. 11. A few glancing hits on the bottom of the LCM's by waves again emphasised the vulnerability of these LCM's, in their stowages in the SYDNEY, particularly from a rough sea on the quarter.

13. On Saturday 29th November the DUCHESS detached to proceed to SINGAPORE, and the DERWENT joined from SINGAPORE.

14. On Sunday 30th November, the ships passed through first Gaspar and then Sunda Strait on passage to FREMANTLE.

15. During the period of work up members of the Fleet Trials unit were embarked to carry out Gun Functioning trials. Many minor defects were found on all four mountings during these trials and these defects were not rectified until the evening before sailing for Vietnam.

16. On Tuesday 11th November the Gunnery Officer and one Midshipman visited HMAS 'LE TROSS' to carry out a recognition course.

The ships company have twice been exercised at Action Station and Defence Stations and in addition guns crews, lookouts and communication numbers have been exercised. One surface shoot has been carried out against smoke floats laid by HMAS DUCHESS.

18. The Boarding Party, LCM and Boats crews and sentries have been instructed in the use of small arms. Small arms competition have been held against the Army contingent and parts of ship.

19. The Higher Rates training class has been given frequent instruction in squad drill by the Petty Officer in charge of Gunner's Party.

20. An aircraft recognition course has been started with volunteer Dog Watch instruction. This has met with limited success.

21. Satisfactory progress has been made in the cleaning of the various air magazines and other compartments no longer in use.

During the month numerous sporting activities have been held. The ship's company have responded willingly to the various competitions and it is considered that both morale and fitness have increased as a result. Volleyball still appears to be the predominant sport with up to 40 teams competing in various competitions. Games have also been played against the Army personnel.

23. P.T. has been held every morning (except Sunday) for all Ordinary Seamen and Midshipmen off watch. A number of volunteers from other parts of ship have also attended.

24. The Band has given several concerts to the ship's company and troops embarked for Vietnam. These have been particularly well received especially when the mood changes from classical to modern. The Band have integrated themselves well into the ship's routine.

25. Training of Ordinary Seamen and Junior Recruits has progressed satisfactorily during the month. It is considered that the trip north has been most beneficial, particularly to the young sailors of the Seamen category who will all be qualified helmsmen before arrival in Sydney town. A noticeable rise in morale amongst these young men was evident once the ship proceeded to sea.

26. Training for Section One Part One of the Higher Ranks Promotion Board was carried out during the month for the 54 candidates

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on board.

27. In the interests of creating a worked up diving team for Vung Tau a night diving exercise was carried out on 10th November and daylight exercises carried out on the 11th, 12th and 14th November. A demonstration operation awkward was carried out for all ship's dive operation awkward sentries and boats and LCM crews on AM 12th. A semi-realistic daylight attack was carried out on PM 12th by CDT 2 to exercise ship's divers and operation awkward sentries.

28. The ship's diving team carried out U/W defence operation in Vung Tau on 28th November.

29. Most electrical machinery has performed well, there having been no major failures. The self-contained air-conditioning unit in 4N Dental Surgery has proved ineffective. This is probably because of an inadequate flow of cooling air around the machine.

30. Despite the mounting just having completed a dockyard biennial planned maintenance routine, the breech block of G3 40/60 mounting was so badly worn as to render the gun unoperative. A breech block was borrowed from HMAS DUCHESS and returned before she detached.

Trials of K3 Turbo-generator were not carried out before sailing for this trip as no load tank could be made available by Garden Island Dockyard. A 'heat' run only was carried out by ship's staff. A post-refit full power trial was carried out on 5th Nov. with satisfactory results and all machinery has settled down well after a lengthy refit. Minor problems were experienced with refrigeration, air-conditioning and water-coolers but these have now been overcome.

32. Air-conditioning units have now been fitted in 4K CPO's mess and the Wardroom Anteroom; both these units have considerably improved conditions in the tropics in these spaces. All modernised bathrooms and heads are now in use. A considerable number of minor defects have had to be remedied by ship's staff in every modernised compartment.

33. Due to industrial disputes whilst the ship was alongside at Cockatoo Island and the completion date for work on refrigerated spaces, storing of the ship in readiness for the trooping passage had to be undertaken at extremely short notice and was only completed on 11th November, the day prior to sailing. Due to the speed with which the Victualling Stores in particular had to be embarked, little or no opportunity existed to inspect the stores on delivery. A close inspection, however, did take place as soon as possible after the ship's departure from Sydney and it was revealed that certain stocks of fresh provisions either had been supplied in poor condition or had been supplied in a manner contrary to the expressed wishes of the ship - e.g. lettuce and cabbage in an unwrapped state. My letter 46/10/15 of 27th November, 1969, is relevant and emphasises the point that, during trooping passages under sweltering conditions, it is absolutely vital to the physical well-being of all onboard and in particular the Army personnel, for the standard of all food stocks supplied to the ship to be of the highest possible standard.

34. On departure from Sydney the General Mess balance stood at \$5446.84 credit. As at 30th November, this balance had been reduced to \$3383.09 credit, and it appears that the ship will arrive Sydney on completion of the current trooping commitment with a credit balance of approximately \$1000.00. It is clear that, once again, the General Mess has had to accrue and sail with a very substantial credit balance to offset the considerable over-expenditure of the victualling allowance during a trooping run. My submission for a Supplementary Victualling Allowance as contained in HMAS SYDNEY's letter 77/95/1 of 12th November 1969 sets out the history of the consistent over-expenditure during the ship's trooping passages over the 1968/69 period.

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35. Both the Main Galley and the Wardroom Galley have functioned well during the present trooping commitment. The new grilling plate which was installed in the Main Galley during the recent refit has proved to be worth its weight in gold, and the structural and ventilation alterations made to the Wardroom Galley have made life more bearable in that particular compartment. There still remains room for a great deal of improvement in the functional layout of the Chief and Petty Officers' Galley and it is to be hoped that something can be done in that direction during 1970.

36. The replacement of fan trunking and the fitting of larger fans during the last refit has improved the living conditions. When all the programmed fan trunking has been replaced the living conditions will have improved greatly.

37. The health, conduct and morale of the officers and ship's company is satisfactory.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

*D.A.H. Clarke*  
(D.A.H. CLARKE)  
CAPTAIN

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APPENDIX A.

STEAMING FIGURES.

- a) Distance steamed during the month. 6,801.5 miles
- b) Hours underway during the month. 414.0 hours
- c) Total distance steamed since recommissioning. 238,693.5 miles
- d) Total hours underway since recommissioning. 15,067.6 hours
- e) Hours exceeded economical speed.

Economical speed was exceeded for 289 hours during the month. Three hours on 4th November while doing a full power trial and the remainder was caused by the high passage speed required for this trip.

APPENDIX B.

SPORTS PLAYED ASHORE.

		No's
volleyball	SYDNEY defeated KUTTABUL	3-2
Cricket	NIRIMBA defeated BIG SHIPS	125-28

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