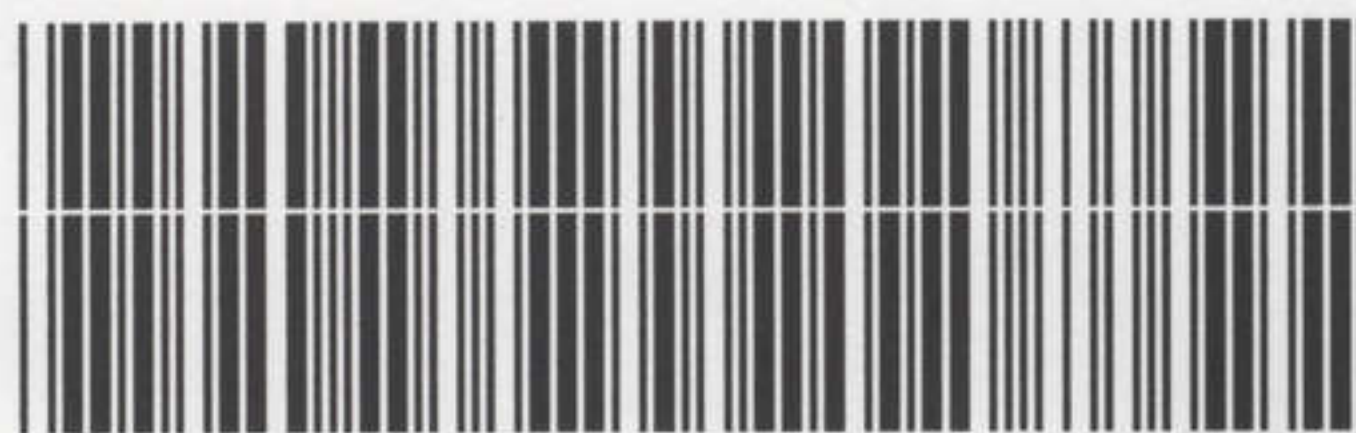


**AWM78**  
**Reports of Proceedings,  
HMA Ships and Establishments**

**HMAS COOTAMUNDRA**

**Item number: 93/7**

**Title: January 1958 - May 1959. Duplicate**



AWM78-93/7

COOTAMUNDRA.

NAVAL ARCHIVES BRANCH

## MINUTE PAPER

Reference:

Subject:

THIS FILE CONTAINS HMAS COOTAMUNDRA'S REPORTS OF PROCEEDINGS  
FOR THE FOLLOWING PERIODS:-

JANUARY 1958

FEBRUARY 1958

MARCH 1958

APRIL 1958

MAY 1958

JUNE 1958

JULY 1958

1 AUGUST 1958 - 19 AUGUST 1958

19 AUGUST 1958 - 31 AUGUST 1958

SEPTEMBER 1958

OCTOBER 1958

NOVEMBER 1958

DECEMBER 1958

1 JANUARY 1959 - 5 JANUARY 1959

5 JANUARY 1959 - 31 JANUARY 1959

FEBRUARY 1959

MARCH 1959.

MAY 1959.

COPY.

1285-3-3

FLAG OFFICER-IN-CHARGE,  
EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA.

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA. REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS  
MAY, 1959.

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(The Captain, H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA's letter 22/18 dated  
1st. June, 1959).

II.

30th June, 1959.

N.1/16/3  
The Secretary,  
DEPARTMENT OF NAVY.

Forwarded for the consideration of the Naval  
Board.

(Sgd.).....  
REAR ADMIRAL.

Naval Headquarters,  
Potts Point, Sydney.

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA,  
At Sydney.

1st June, 1959.

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,  
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MAY, 1959.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the Report of Proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of May, 1959.

2. During the whole of this period, the ship was alongside port side to at Cruiser Wharf, Garden Island and only very basic maintenance was carried out to keep H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA going as a living and accommodation ship.

3. The Ship's Company has been employed preparing H.M.A.S. GASCOYNE for commissioning and much preparatory work has been completed in the Machinery Spaces and on the superstructure of that ship. This was restricted to work that the Dockyard was unable (because of higher priorities) - to carry out.

4. The embarkation of Naval Stores has been progressed in H.M.A.S. GASCOYNE.

X | 5. Health and Morale. Both these aspects remain good and much hard work has been put into H.M.A.S. GASCOYNE. All leave due has been taken. However, the living conditions in H.M.A.S. GASCOYNE - in particular the locker situation and the messing arrangements - have given rise to much discussion amongst all ratings and anxieties and concern of the Ship's Company over these matters has been difficult to satisfy.

6. The cleanliness of H.M.A.S. GASCOYNE, both above and below decks, is another aspect which has caused much concern, but I understand that the Dockyard will have the ship well cleaned before commissioning.

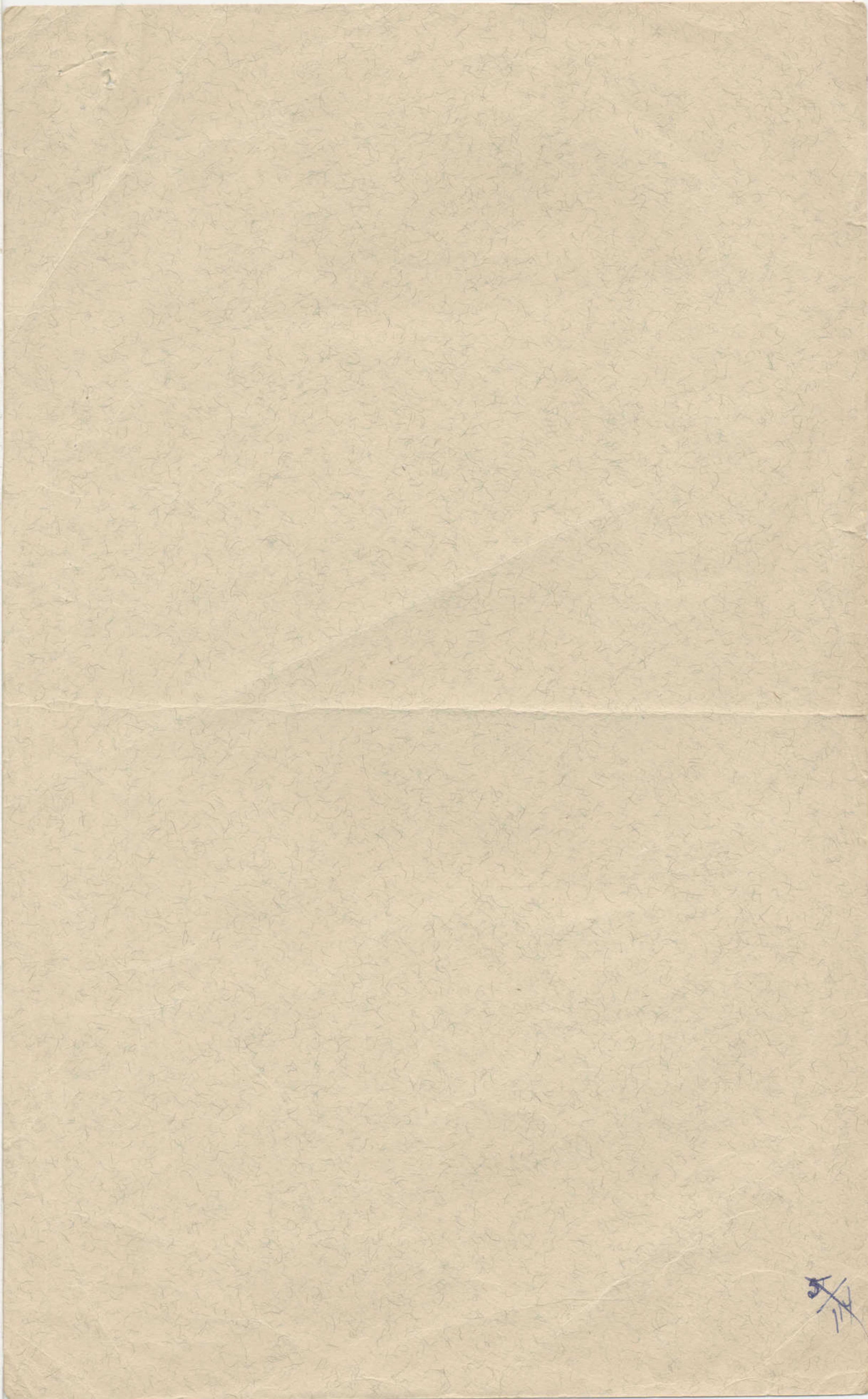
I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

(Sgd.).....  
Lieutenant Commander (X) R.A.N.

C A P T A I N.



4336/12/1158.

22/18

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA,

at Sydney :

1st April, 1959.

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,  
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MARCH 1959.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the Report of Proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of March, 1959.

2. The beginning of the month found the ship in the Lord Howe Island Area operating with H.M.A.S. Kimbla.
3. At 0340K on Tuesday 3rd March, I came to port anchoring 11 fathoms with 5½ shackles veered in position 31° 32'S, 158° 40'E off Lord Howe Island. Also at anchor nearby were H.M.A.S. Kimbla and the motor schooner Argonaut (Registered in Hobart) making its quarterly visit with stores for the island.
4. Having surveyed the northern entrance to the lagoon by boat, I allowed leave to both watches from 0800 - 1130 and 1230 - 1530 respectively. Normal working hours were carried out by the watch left onboard. In addition a cinema party of 20 was landed from 2000 - 2359. This short spell ashore for all hands was very much appreciated as the scenery and beaches of Lord Howe Island on a fine day are idyllic. Prior to landing these parties, I had entertained Mr. N Fenton, the local N.S.W. Government Representative onboard, and obtained his approval for the proposed leave. He stated his pleasure at seeing some of H.M.A. Ships in these waters.
5. At 0800K, Wednesday 4th March, I weighed and proceeded in continuation of the exercises and on completion set course for Sydney, securing to the Kuttabul Dolphins at 1335K on Friday 6th March. During this passage, I took the opportunity to exercise my depth charge, A/S and Bofors crews. In addition a Closing Down and Pre-wetting Trial and an A.B.C.D. exercise were held.
6. During the period 6th March to Monday 16th March the ship remained alongside and opportunity was taken to progress work on the upper deck and ship's side, which was completed after many interruptions for heavy rain late on Sunday 15th.
7. On Tuesday 10th March, I attended a meeting with General Manager Garden Island Dockyard and Deputy General Manager Garden Island Dockyard together with my First Lieutenant and Engineer Officer, concerning the paying off of Cootamundra and bringing forward of Gascoyne. On Tuesday 12th March, I visited the latter ship and was most impressed by the high state of cleanliness and preservation, particularly below decks in the living spaces and storerooms. I spoke to my assembled ship's company and broke the news of the future of these ships. On Friday 13th I attended a conference concerning the proposed dates for effecting the change over of ships chaired by your Chief Staff Officer.
8. On Monday 16th March, I sailed Sydney to rendezvous with Swan in position 27° 55'S 157° 00E at 0800K on Thursday 19th. As I had time in hand, I anchored in Trial Bay between 0630K and 2100K on Tuesday

17th. March to progress work on the upper deck and to show a film in  
- fort. On completion, I proceeded up the coast and made my departure  
from Cape Byron Light for the rendezvous at 0930K on Wednesday 18th. At  
0545K on Thursday 19th. March, H.M.A.S. Swan was sighted fine on the  
starboard bow in position 27° 56' S, 156° 47' E.

9. There commenced a frustrating day under adverse weather  
conditions. Throughout the day it was overcast, with heavy rain squalls  
intermittently reducing visibility to less than one mile. Several attempts  
were made at replenishment exercises, the first one of which was hurriedly  
broken off as reported in my letter No. 18/30 dated 20th. March 1959 with  
the attached Form S232. Immediately after this first exercise, which had  
been abandoned after receipt of four Cadets, I closed "Swan" again, but as  
I did not like the replenishment course the transfer was abandoned.

10. During the forenoon, the four Cadets embarked had the  
minesweeping gear explained to them, and an "O" Sweep was streamed and  
*recovered* ~~was~~ in somewhat uncomfortable conditions, as practical instruction.

11. Once again an attempt was made at about 1400 K to effect a  
successful transfer of personnel. This time, the replenishment course  
was into wind and sea; and though the ship was pitching about, a much  
steadier course could be steered. As the transfer was about to commence,  
"Swan" suffered a total power failure and, hurriedly, the jackstay was  
slipped and I hauled off. Further attempts to transfer personnel whilst  
underway were thereupon abandoned for the day.

12. In the dog watches, O.O.W. manoeuvres and evolutions were  
exercised and on completion at 1800K, course was set for Moreton Bay.

13. On Friday 20th. March, in Moreton Bay, which was entered by the  
North West Channel, the four Cadets were transferred back to "Swan" by  
jackstay and further manoeuvres were exercised. The ships entered  
Brisbane River at 1145K and I secured at No. 1 Newstead Wharf to embark  
fuel, starboard side to.

14. I shifted berth to No. 2 berth, Howard Smith Wharf securing  
port side to, securing at 0750K, on Saturday 21st. March.

15. An official cocktail party was held onboard Cootamundra from  
1830 to 2000 on Saturday to <sup>which</sup> 40 guests, invited by N.O.I.C., attended.  
In addition the ship was open to visitors on Sunday 22nd and between 500  
and 1000 civilians came onboard between 1400 and 1700. The wardroom also  
entertained ten R.A.N.R. Officers on Sunday between 1145 and 1300.

16. On Monday 23rd March, I slipped at 0830K and followed Swan out  
of harbour, recovering a lifebuoy which had been accidentally slipped in mid  
channel from Swan. Doubt was felt onboard as to whether or not this was  
all part of the evolutions, drills and exercises I had been threatened  
with on our way south in company with Swan.

17. On clearing Moreton Bay by the North Eastern Channel I closed  
Swan, and under good conditions, effected a rapid and successful transfer  
of 22 Cadets for practical instruction in minesweeping. Having streamed  
and recovered an "O" Sweep, to starboard, successfully by 1605K, all  
Cadets were again transferred by jackstay back to Swan.

18. The remainder of the passage south was taken up with  
concentrated O.O.W. manoeuvres, zig zags throughout the night watches,  
all of which was of inestimable benefit to myself and my young and  
inexperienced watchkeepers. These exercises culminated in a forenoon spent  
in exercising screening diagrams and positioning. It will be appreciated  
how tiring this was for myself when it is remembered that I had no Battenburg  
Station Pointer, none of my O.O.W's had ever seen these manoeuvres before,  
and my T.O. had not done any of this work for about eighteen months. This  
concentrated exercise at one quarter of the distances laid down in the  
relevant tables in A.T.P. 1, the reorientation of screens, exchanging  
screening stations, etc., proved to be a most successful exercise and one  
which refreshed my memory of A/S work very smartly.

19. The two ships entered Sydney in company with Cootamundra



flying a rather uncessful paying off pendant. The balloons used to support it were, one after the other, burst by the hot smuts released by the Engine Room. I secured to No.4 Buoy at 1330 and immediately started deammunitioning. On completion, I shifted berth at 1615K on Wednesday 25th March, to the centre of Cruiser Wharf, port side to. Kimbla secured port side to outboard of me at 1930K.

20. On completion of the major part of destoring, begun on Thursday 26th March, the majority of my Ship's Company proceeded on long leave. A very successful paying off party was held that evening which about 40 guests attended.

21. Work is now progressing in completing the destoring of Cootamundra and the cleaning out of all fuel tanks. Normal daily maintenance is being progressed on the upper deck and the living spaces, as far as the small number of hands left on board will allow.

22. Health. The health of the Ship's Company remains good, though one officer has been landed with a collapsed intervertibular disc. Whilst in Brisbane sixteen of the Ship's Company donated blood to the Red Cross.

23. Morale. Every opportunity has again been taken to play sport and the Ship's rugby team was much encouraged by a convincing win of 21-0 against H.M.S. Cook.

24. The morale of the Ship's Company is very good and offences this month have been of a very minor nature. All men due six weeks leave have proceeded on leave. The retard party will go on leave and be back prior to <sup>Gascoyne</sup> the ship's commissioning. All hands are looking forward to transferring to the more comfortable and spacious quarters available in Gascoyne.


25. Despite the cancellation of your inspection and the imminent decommissioning of Cootamundra it is considered that the cleanliness of the ship particularly in the living spaces, has been much improved of late. I have insisted that normal work should continue until the departure of the leave parties. This directive has been followed and reflects creditably on the perserverance of my Officers and Ship's Company.

26.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your Obediant Servant



Lieutenant Commander (X) R.A.N.  
CAPTAIN.

APPENDIX 'A' TO H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA'S REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS  
MARCH - 1959.

- A) Distance steamed during month : 2347.4  
B) Hours underway during month : 248.0  
C) Distance run per ton of fuel : 11.737  
D) Distance steamed since commissioning : 105804.0  
E) Hours underway since commissioning : 13237.0  
F) Date of commissioning : 12 December, 1951.  
G) Number of hours steamed in excess of economical speed : 22.

- 1) (i) Number of hours steamed in excess of economical speed : 11  
(ii) Average speed : 12 knots  
(iii) Fuel expended for all purposes per hour : 11.8 tons  
(iv) Distance run per ton of fuel: 11.2  
(v) To make amended rendezvous with H.M.A.S. SWAN
- 2) (i) 11 hours  
(ii) 11.7 knots  
(iii) 11.5 tons  
(iv) 10.8 miles  
(v) Manoeuvres and Exercises with H.M.A.S. SWAN

APPENDIX 'B' TO H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA'S REPORT OF  
PROCEEDINGS FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH 1959.

WHALE SIGHTING REPORT

- NIL REPORT -

APPENDIX 'G' TO H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA'S REPORT OF  
PROCEEDINGS FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH 1959.

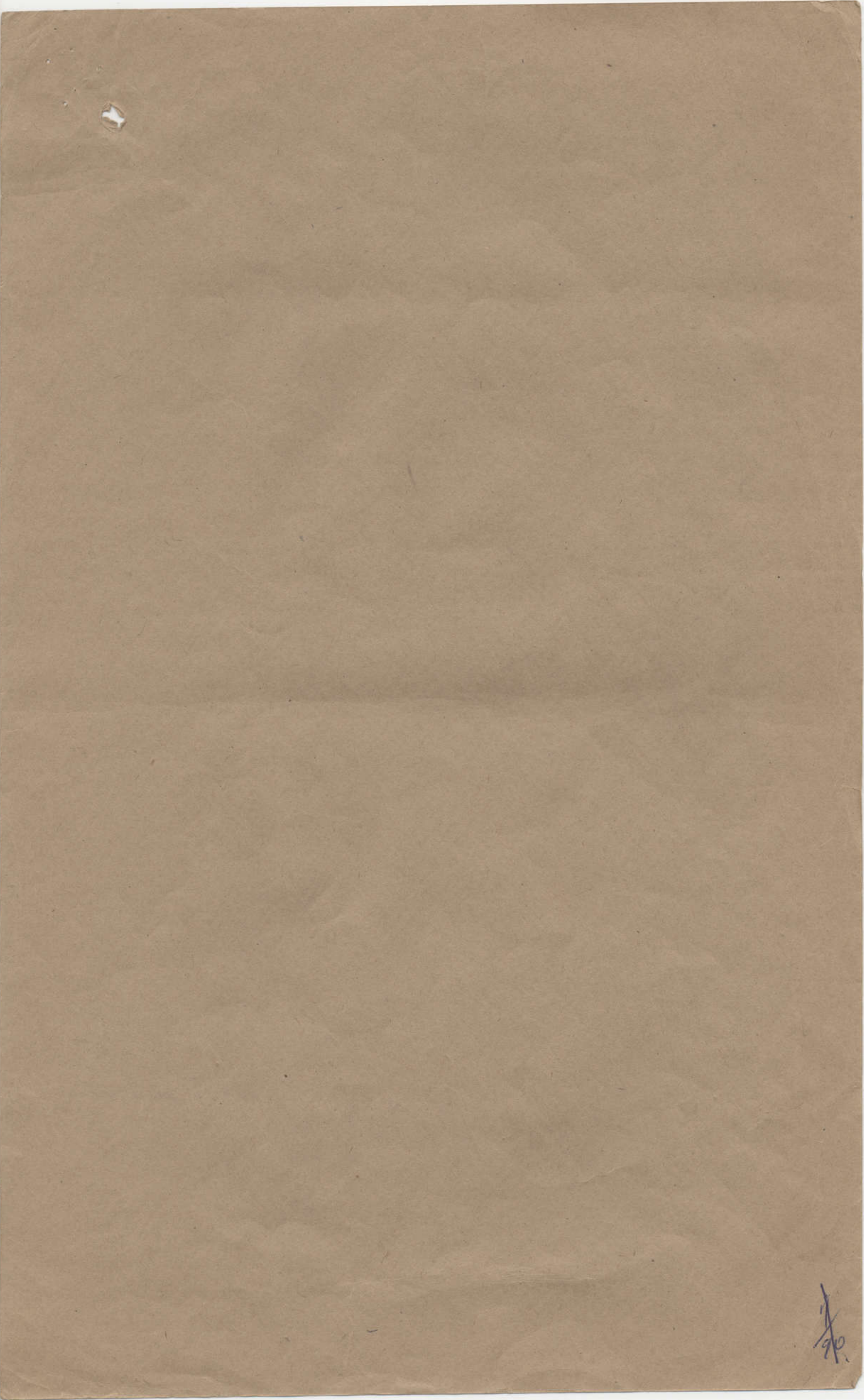
OFFICIAL CALLS PAID AND RETURNED.

SYDNEY - TUESDAY 10 MARCH

THE CAPTAIN, H.M.S. COOK. (Commander Hatfield)

LORD HOWE ISLAND - TUESDAY 3 MARCH

THE ISLAND SUPERINTENDENT (Mr. Norman Fenton)



90

C O P Y  
- - - -

4336/12/155

Office of the  
Flag Officer-in-Charge,  
East Australian Area,  
Wylde Street,  
POTTS POINT.

N.1/16/13

16th April, 1959.

The Secretary,  
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS -  
FEBRUARY, 1959.

Ref: N.16/11/3 dated 13th April, 1959.

Be pleased to lay before the Naval Board the  
attached correspondence, omitted in error from the reference.

(Sgd.) .....  
for REAR ADMIRAL.

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA,  
at Sea,  
1st March, 1959.

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,  
EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - FEBRUARY, 1959.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the Report of Proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of February, 1959.

2. The ship was secured starboard side to, ahead of H.M.A.S. FREMANTLE at No.2 berth, Inner Harbour, Port Adelaide at the beginning of the month. Normal leave was given during the weekend, South Australian 'natives' being allowed weekend leave from time of arrival to time of departure.

3. At 0845 IK Monday 2nd February, I slipped and proceeded alongside, port side to, at the C.O.R. wharf, Port Adelaide to embark fuel. On completion, I slipped and followed H.M.A.S. FREMANTLE out of harbour at 1110 IK. On clearing Outer Harbour, the two ships thereupon commenced exercises which have already been fully reported in "FREMANTLE"'s letter No.35/60 dated 6th February, 1959 and in my letter No. 19/7 dated 10th February, 1959. I carried out storeroom rounds on Thursday 5th February.

4. In view of the altered requirements concerning the towing of an Army Phillipine Lighter to Melbourne and the necessity for me to give my Engineer Officer time, in harbour, to carry out essential maintenance on both fuel feed pumps, I decided to enter harbour on Friday 6th February on completion of all exercises late on Thursday night. I secured starboard side to at the C.O.R. wharf at 0700 IK and fuelled ship. On completion, I shifted berth to No.13 berth, Inner Harbour, Port Adelaide, securing starboard side to. The ship was dressed overall in honour of the Accession of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II to the Throne. "FREMANTLE" secured astern of me at 1305 IK. A muster of the official stamp account was completed on this day.

5. H.R.H. Princess Alice, embarked in M.V. "QUEENSLAND STAR", was in Port Adelaide overnight 6th/7th February. Her Royal Highness was not sighted nor was any ceremonial carried out. I was invited by "FREMANTLE" to attend a small reception he was giving for H.E., the Governor of South Australia, Sir Robert George, between 1700 IK and 1800 IK on Saturday 7th February. I had already accepted an invitation to sail in the yacht "TAHUNA" (owner - Mr. Henry Wilckens of the Royal South Australian Yacht Club and whose Admiralty warrant I inspected) all day Saturday. I was thus unable to attend this reception. "TAHUNA" is a 45 foot W.L. Ketch and one of the most well appointed and luxurious 'blue water' yachts I have ever seen. The luxury does not cramp the style with which Mr. Wilckens sails his ship, as he won the Adelaide - Port Lincoln race the following weekend - being first and fastest - under very difficult conditions.

7. On Monday 9th, the Mayor (Mr. P.J. Whicker Esq. J.P.), Aldermen and the Councillors of Port Adelaide gave a reception for the Captain and Officers of "FREMANTLE" and "COOTAMUNDRA" at 1100 IK in the Mayoral Chambers. "FREMANTLE" slipped and proceeded out of harbour at 1700 IK.
8. On Tuesday 10th, having made arrangements with N.O.I.C. S.A. to have the Army Lighter standing off by tug at Outer Harbour, I slipped at 1630 IK and proceeded out of harbour. Having successfully secured the tow, I commenced to tow this lighter to Melbourne. This operation has formed the subject of a separate report to you under cover of my letter No.18/26 dated 20th February.
9. As a result of a directive from me, the last of the written reports on the musters by the custodians of all the P.L. Lists in the ship were received by me on Tuesday 10th. Subsequent paper action on Forms A.S.126 and A.S.148 is still in the course of preparation.
10. On Wednesday 11th, my Executive and Engineer Officers consulted with me in the collation and preparation of the ship's Main Defect List for the forthcoming refit period in April/May. This list is a formidable and comprehensive one and was, after consultation with the various Command and Dockyard authorities, left with G.M.G.I.D. in final form prior to departure from Sydney on 27th February. In addition, a complete muster of all warrants, Baggage vouchers etc. was completed on Wednesday 11th. Clocks were advanced 30 minutes to zone K (+10) at 2345 IK.
11. At 0700 K on Thursday 12th, identities were exchanged with H.M.A.S. VENDETTA, bound for her working up area off Port Lincoln in position 38° 30' S , 141° 50' E. This newly commissioned unit of the R.A.N. presented a fine sight in the early morning sun on a calm day at five miles.
12. On Friday 13th, I carried out messdeck rounds. Having arrived at Williamstown at 1250 K, and on completion of fuelling, I moved to Station Pier, Port Melbourne at 1545 and granted overnight leave to all Melbourne and district 'natives'.
13. I slipped and proceeded at 1030 K on Saturday 14th and, having cleared the Rip at 1400 K, set course for Sydney. The weather was perfect, sea slight throughout the passage, and a fast run to Sydney was made passible.
14. On Monday 16th, I carried out Upper Deck rounds. It is heartbreaking for all on board, and in particular for the seamen, to see rust breaking out everywhere within as short a space of time as two weeks after proper and thorough treatment. At about 1100 K, identities were exchanged with H.M.N.Z.S. ROYALIST, H.M.A.S. WARRAMUNGA and H.M.A.S. QUICKMATCH. The ship entered Sydney and secured starboard side to at 1555 K, at Kuttabul Dolphins. Audits for the Ship's Welfare Fund and Wardroom Fund for the period ending 31st January, 1959, were presented to me for signature.
15. During the period Tuesday 17th and Sunday 22nd, the ship was alongside Kuttabul Dolphins and was available for minesweeping training and Battle practice target towing. In the event, a tow for H.M.A.S. VOYAGER and H.M.N.Z.S. ROYALIST was cancelled on Thursday 19th owing to cyclonic conditions in the Sydney area. Owing to wet weather, little or no work was progressed on the Upper Deck, maintenance being continued between decks. In addition, many of the wires associated with minesweeping were renewed by Ship's staff during this period. During this period, I called informally on G.M.G.I.D., The Hydrographer R.A.N., "VOYAGER" and "QUICKMATCH". I also had lunch at the R.A.N. EL. on Wednesday 18th to meet the officers and scientists and to discuss the forthcoming trials with "KIMBLA".



16. On Monday 23rd, I slipped at 0900 K, having embarked the Port Rake Party. I proceeded with a battle practice target to area NOVEMBER TANGO in position Hornsby Light 090° 11 miles to provide a target for a shoot by "QUICKMATCH". An embarrassing moment was experienced when proceeding to sea as I was rounding the Channel Buoy off Bradley's Head. The ship failed to answer to starboard helm and even with the use of my engines, she continued to complete a complete circle to port, with the B.P.T. astern at short stay. I got the ship and target back under control and proceeded without further incident to sea. Battle practice target towed at short stay astern and at slow speeds, very much reduces the ship's manoeuvrability. "QUICKMATCH" commenced firing at 1330 K and completed her shoot at 1400 K. I set course for Sydney and because of a heavy swell outside the heads, recovered the target under the lee of North Head and secured it on my port side. The ship secured alongside Kuttabal Dolphins at 1740 K with the target alongside. All on board considered this to have been a long day for a 30 minute shoot and I, for one, breathed a sigh of relief on ringing off main engines.

17. During the period Tuesday 24th to Friday 27th, the ship was docked in F.D. 3002 to have a conversion made to her Asdic Type 128 set prior to proceeding for exercises with "KIMBLA". Opportunity was taken during this period to attack the upper deck. In addition, I availed myself of this unexpected period in harbour to arrange a demolition exercise on Tuesday 24th and an annual musketry course on Thursday 26th. During the week, I signed your visitor's book and that of the F.O.C.A.F.

18. On Tuesday 24th, I attended discussions in the Hydrographic office at 1400 K concerning the forthcoming survey in Arnhem Land. Present were the Hydrographer R.A.N., his assistant, Colonel Fitzpatrick of the Australian Army Survey Regiment and two Army Officers.

19. On return on board at 1630 K Tuesday 24th, a dummy board for our candidates for the Higher Rates Training Boards was held by myself and my officers. The standard was very low, but not unexpected, (vide my letter 7/15 dated 12th February, 1959) and I felt that there were only five candidates to be able to attempt the proper examination. In the event, only two passed Part 1 of the examination. I consider the lack of knowledge of my candidates to be due to the lack of a properly organised training class in the ship. Since the date of the board to be convened was promulgated, every attempt was made to bring the candidates up to a reasonable standard. This was not successfully accomplished owing to the lack of time. This state of affairs will not recur again as I have instructed my Executive officer to maintain Higher Rates Training Classes as a running concern. I expect my candidates, therefore, to be more proficient and to have reached a higher standard in the future. It is regretted that the time of the examiners on Board A was wasted in the examination of candidates from this ship whose standard was, admittedly, low.

20. The ship was undocked at 1530 K on Friday 27th and secured port side to, ahead of "MELBOURNE" at Fitting Out wharf. Alignment and other tests on the A/S set were then carried out by Dockyard officers and workmen whilst alongside. On completion, I slipped at 1820 K, having embarked two scientists from R.A.N.E.L., and proceeded to sea to carry out trials with "KIMBLA". These trials will be fully reported by separate letter. R.A.N.E.L. (Commander (L) H.G. Baker) at my invitation, spoke to the assembled Ship's Company on the forthcoming trials, quite briefly, at 1600 K.

21. Morale. The morale and cheerfulness of the Ship's Company remains good and I continue to be pleased with the way the men have responded to the work and routine required of them. Offences are, in the main, of a minor nature and consist of "nibbling" at leave. In accordance with my stated policy, I am cracking down hard on all leave breakers and I feel the point is being hoisted in.

22. Health. Two cases of Pediculi Pubis were discovered, whilst at sea, after the visit to Adelaide. By isolating these cases, a general epidemic, which could have been expected in a ship with such crowded living conditions, was averted. In addition, four cases of venereal disease were reported; it is understood that all four were contracted in Adelaide. Otherwise, the general health of the Ship's Company as a whole remains good.

23. During the month, the cricket team landed twice in Adelaide and was defeated by "FREMANTLE" by four wickets whilst beating the Officers' team of the Blue Funnel Line S.S. IXION by 15 runs. In addition, since being in Sydney, members of the Ship's Company have taken exercise in the dog watches on Garden Island. Our two representatives in the Inter-service Boxing, Sub Lieutenant Foster and M.(E)2 Diggins were landed for the period of the boxing training and fight.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,



**J. M. NICHOLAS**

Lieutenant Commander (X) R.A.N.  
C A P T A I N.

APPENDIX 'A' TO H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA'S REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS FEBRUARY, 1959.

a) Miles steamed during month .....	1,761.6
b) Hours underway during month .....	212.0
c) Distance run per ton of fuel for month ..	7.5
d) Distance steamed since commissioning ....	103,458.1
e) Hours underway since commissioning .....	12,989.0
f) Date of commissioning .....	12 December, 1951
g) Number of hours economical speed was exceeded .....	Nil.

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WHALE SIGHTING REPORT.

Nil sightings.

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OFFICIAL CALLS PAID AND RETURNED.

Nil.

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4336/12/1130

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA,  
at Adelaide,  
2nd February, 1959.

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,  
EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - JANUARY, 1959.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the Report of Proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the period from Monday 5th January to Saturday 31st January, 1959.

2. I assumed command at 1700K on 5th January and for the remainder of the week, the ship was berthed at Kuttabul Dolphins. Use was made during this period to store and clean ship.

3. At 1030K on Wednesday 7th, I called on you ; thereafter, I called on the Command Departmental Officers, the General Manager, Garden Island Dockyard and the Captain of the Port.

4. In view of the recent case of T.B. reported from the ship, a mass X-Ray for all personnel on board was held on Wednesday and Thursday.

5. During the forenoon of Thursday and Friday, the bofors' gun crew and the depth charge crews were drilled and exercised respectively to prepare them for the shake down period.

6. On Friday 9th, I spoke successively to the officers, Chief and Petty Officers and the remainder of the Ship's Company to inform them of my policies on board and to acquaint all on board as to my objectives as regards the ship.

7. A small "At Home" was held from 1200 to 1300 on Friday 9th, for those Dockyard Officers, both civil and naval, who had assisted the ships' officers during the current self refit period. In particular, I must mention the good work of Supplu Sub Lieutenant (S) Morey R.A.N. and Mr. Pucell of the Command Supply Officers' Staff, who have spent long hours carrying out a 100% muster of Naval Stores on board.

8. Having landed A/S/Lieut. I.D. Roberts R.A.N. to join H.M.A.S. KUTTABUL and being in all respects ready for sea, I slipped at 1030K Monday 12th and, having hoisted both boats, proceeded out of harbour to commence a shake down and clean up cruise before arriving at Hobart in compliance with your message D.T.G.190525Z November (H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA's programme).

9. After lunch, I commenced exercises, carrying out steering breakdowns, seaboard exercises and ship handling exercises for my own benefit. It is of interest here to report that whilst changing over to after steering, it is impossible to steer the ship on a steady course by keeping one shaft steady and altering the revolutions on the other, except in very light conditions. I realised very quickly under the conditions existent, how prone this type of vessel is to the wind effect. During the dog watches, I exercised my O.O.W. in 'Man Overboard' and at 1815, being about 5 miles to the east of Wollongong, set course  $110^{\circ}$  at 8 knots in order to exercise my Navigating Officer in celestial navigation.

10. Tuesday 13th. The new minesweeping wire fitted on the starboard winch was streamed to stretch it in 2000 fathoms of water and was recovered at about 1700K. During the day, the crew was employed on cleaning ship and preparing for painting. I walked round the Engineerroom Department and was more than interested to see something at first hand of steam reciprocating engines, which I had never experienced before.

11. During the afternoon, I exercised my Bofors' Gun Crew. Despite all persuasions, the gun failed to fire in automatic and this defect will be made good on return to Sydney. Despite the disappointment of the gun not firing correctly, all gunnery rates on board were pleased to have seen the gun fire single rounds. The gun has not been fired for some considerable time.

12. I exercised all U.C. Rates on board by lowering the A/S dome and conducting an A/S search for shoals of fish with a view of firing a depth charge. No fish were found.

13. Wednesday 14th; As intended, I made my landfall in the region of Twofold Bay; I entered and anchored to facilitate the rigging and swinging out of all acoustic sweeps. I had reported my intentions in my message D.T.G. 132200Z January to you so that reports from local shore authorities would not concern you. At about 1030K, I got under way and when well clear of the fishing port of Eden, swung out and activated all acoustic sweeps and streamed the Oropesa sweep to starboard. Minesweeping exercises continued all day and having recovered all sweeps, I entered Twofold Bay and anchored at 1900K.

14. I ordered mail to be landed and a cinema show to be given. On completion of this, I proceeded out of harbour at mid-night to continue progress southward.

15. Thursday 15th. Cleaning ship again continued whilst during the day I exercised handling ship, danbuoy laying and in the dog watches, fired at a shoal of fish with one depth charge set to 500 feet at 12 knots. This depth charge fired correctly, but the Main and Auxiliary feed pumps broke down simultaneously and the ship came to a stop. This charge was fired in over 1000 fathoms in position  $39^{\circ} 35' S$ ,  $149^{\circ} 05' E$ . By the time the ship was underway again, all trace of the explosion and the fish had disappeared.

16. H.M.A.S. SWAN exchanged signals with me as "SWAN" wished to exercise transfer by jackstay and O.O.W. Manoeuvres either on Friday 16th, Monday 18th or Tuesday 19th. I would have welcomed the opportunity for these exercises in company with another H.M.A. Ship but regretably, had to turn the proposals down in view of my position (50 miles N.E. of Flinders Island) and the fact that I was keeping next week free for painting ship for Hobart. His programme would not allow him to wait until I could get to Tasman Island which I estimated to be at 1700K Friday, at the earliest.

17. At about 2200K, the ship entered swirling mist which reduced visibility to a few hundred yards. Accordingly, I took the normal seamanlike precautions and set course  $180^{\circ}$ .

18. On clearing this fog at about 2345K, I set course to the S.W. and made my landfall at about 0200K between Swan Island and Eddystone Lighthouse and altered course to the South.

19. Friday 16th. At 1030K, I conducted messdeck rounds, having ~~of course~~ walked round the ship 'tween decks previously. These rounds revealed some progress, but I am in no way satisfied with the cleanliness of the ship at present and everywhere there is tremendous room for improvement.

20. At 1230K, I made passage through Geograph Strait into Oyster Bay and anchored at 1400K in position  $42^{\circ} 15.4' S$   $148^{\circ} 16.6' E$ . The ship then prepared to tow forward/providing gear and to point ship to starboard with a spring on the Port cable. On successful completion of these exercises, gear was returned.

21. At 1900K, I weighed and proceeded out of Oyster Bay, leaving the Schouten Islands on my port hand. Once clear, I exercised Oropesa sweeping at night with sweep out to starboard. Owing to defective junction boxes, I have despatched one of these to the Chief Staff Officer for ~~since~~ information sake and to show why the night minesweeping lights were inoperative. This defect has now been remedied. On completion of manoeuvres, the sweep was recovered and course was set to enter Safety Bay at Port Arthur at 0600K.

22. Saturday 17th. I anchored in Safety Bay at 0620K in 8 fathoms with 4 shackles of my port cable out in position  $43^{\circ} 10.7' S$   $147^{\circ} 52.2' E$ . During the forenoon, paint was mixed, the ship's side washed down and the stages rigged to paint ship's side.

23. On completion, I allowed recreational leave and there followed the incident which led to the Board of Inquiry convened in H.M.A.S. SWAN on Tuesday 20th January. As this matter will have been fully reported to you, I do not propose to add any further remarks here.

24. At 1900K, I weighed and proceeded to Opossum Bay and anchored with 4 $\frac{1}{2}$  shackles in position  $43^{\circ} 9.0' S$   $147^{\circ} 51.9' E$ . I sent an officer ashore to inform the local police of the events of that afternoon.



25. Sunday 18th. Once again the ship was prepared for painting. On completion, I piped down. Colours were halfmasted between 1030K and 1200K. A short Memorial Service was held on the forecastle between 1045K and 1100K at which virtually, the whole Ship's Company was present including Roman Catholics.
26. I landed at 1100K to call on the police and we proceeded by car to Safety Bay where I showed the officers concerned the site of the attack. All that afternoon, a sweep assisted by "COOTAMUNDRA" ratings, was conducted by Sergeant Langford of the Hobart Water Police and Constable Cripps of Carnarvon.
27. Monday 19th. At 0908K, I received an Operational Immediate Signal from "SWAN" instructing me to join him forthwith. As part of normal machinery maintenance was in hand and I was at four hours notice, I ordered my Engineer Officer to raise steam with despatch and actually sailed at 1130K with Sergeant Langford and Constable Cripps and joined "SWAN" to S.E. of Tasman Island at about 1215K.
28. "SWAN" passed me all the relevant signals concerning the sighting of a body the night before and instructed me, with the aid of the police, to evaluate and report to him the usefulness of further and continued searching. This I did, and, accordingly, "SWAN" called off the search and instructed me to return to harbour. I re-anchored in position  $43^{\circ} 9.1' S$   $147^{\circ} 51.6' E$ . off the township of Carnarvon and work was recommenced at painting ship. On return to harbour, I went ashore and rang N.O.I.C. TASMANIA to inform him of the position.
29. At about 2130K, it started to gust up to about 30 knots from the North. I therefore ordered steam to be raised and anchor watches to be set. By mid-night, the wind had increased to force 8 and at 0035K/20th, I shifted berth and re-anchored in position  $43^{\circ} 9.3' S$   $147^{\circ} 52.3' E$ .
30. Tuesday 20th. At 0900K, the wind suddenly died away and I ordered anchor watches to cease and the ship to revert to four hours notice for steam.
31. At about 0930K, on receipt of news concerning a Board of Inquiry, I raised steam once again and proceeded with despatch, in the absence of any other instructions, to join "SWAN" in Hobart. At 1300K, I met "SWAN" half way up Storm Bay and he, having sorted the situation out and having received my acknowledgement concerning the venue of the Inquiry, ordered me to follow him back to Port Arthur.
32. On anchoring, I immediately repaired on board "SWAN" and explained personally my apparent tardiness in obeying signalled instructions, which in fact, had never been received on board until too late.

33. The evidence compiled at the Board of Inquiry convened by myself on Sunday 18th was made available to "SWAN", and in addition, all relevant witnesses were instructed to proceed to "SWAN" for interrogation by the Board of Inquiry. I myself, remained on board "SWAN" until the proceedings were completed (about 2130K) and then proceeded ashore. My Ship's Company had been invited to a local dance to be held in their honour and I wished to be able to make my presence known to the locals and to thank them for the entertainment. I returned on board at about 2330K.

34. The next two days saw great activity on the part of all hands on board, both in machinery maintenance and in painting ship preparatory to being the flagship of the Sandy Bay Regatta. By 1900K on Thursday, though there was still much wet paint on stanchions, reel covers etc., the exterior of the ship was excellent and reflected great credit to all hands. Thursday afternoon, I went ashore and paid my respects to the local Postmistress, the Town Clerk, the Publican and the Policeman for their endeavours and friendliness towards all on board.

35. Friday 23rd. I sailed for Hobart at 0001K at 7 knots and secured alongside South Elizabeth Street Pier at 0800K for my first alongside with inturning screws with no mishap - which was just as well, as R.M.S. STRATHMORE had berthed just opposite me and all eyes were on "COOTAMUNDRA" and her White Ensign. This time "STRATHMORE" dipped to me, but at 0500K just before entering the Derwent, I had hauled over and told her to pass me. She did so at close quarters; it being quite light, and she, failing to extend the normal courtesies of the Merchant Marine to a ship of Her Majesty's Fleet by the dipping of her colours, was later reported to N.O.I.C. TASMANIA by me for this lack of manners.

36. The Officer of the Guard boarded me on securing with the usual welcome and information. At 0900K, I departed for my round of official calls arranged by N.O.I.C. TASMANIA. At 1125K, I received the return calls and, after a small entertainment, my callers departed at about 1300K.

37. The duties and routine involved in being the flagship of the Sandy Bay Regatta are dealt with by separate report.

38. I was unable to refuel until Sunday 25th January which meant that I had to raise steam everyday whilst at Hobart. Normal leave, however, was granted from the time of arriving alongside and in addition, I allowed each man on board one complete day ashore regardless of the ship's movements over this long week-end. In addition, a make and mend had been granted on Friday 23rd.

39. I departed Hobart for Adelaide at 1030K on Tuesday 27th January and proceeded down the beautiful D'Entrecasteux Channel. I exercised - as far as this is practicable in this ship - blind pilotage and passage of the Channel was completed successfully by radar and estimated position by my Navigating Officer (Lieut. R.A.G. Herron R.A.N.) As soon as I turned west to clear Tasmania, the ship was beset by a persistent S.W. blow with the ensuing nasty swell which reduced many of the Ship's Company to impotence through 'mal de mer'.

40. At 1030K on Thursday, 29th, I was informed by S.B.A. McLaren P.E.W. O/N R.49752 that he had a suspected case of grumbling appendicitis on board. I instructed him to watch developments carefully and to report to me immediately he had cause to feel unhappy about the situation. This he did at 1410K and I accordingly proceeded above economical speed to Adelaide, informing authorities to that effect. I considered landing the rating at Port Macdonnell, Bridgeport or Robe but decided the extra delay following a passage to Adelaide, where full and complete treatment was available, was justified. I just missed a favourable tide at Backstairs Channel and therefore arrived at Outer Harbour at 0740IK/30th where an ambulance was awaiting. A successful appendicectomy was performed and M.(E)2 Hattenfels P.A. O/N R.53418 is now recovering satisfactorily in R.G.H. Springbank.

41. At 0815IK, I proceeded up the Channel to Inner Harbour and berthed ahead of H.M.A.S. FREMANTLE, starboard side to, at No.2 berth, Inner Harbour. During the forenoon, I called on "FREMANTLE" and N.O.I.C.S.A. "FREMANTLE" and myself were entertained to luncheon at Government House. Make and mend leave was granted to allow my Ship's Company to witness the opening day of the fourth cricket test.

42. On Saturday 31st, an informal "at home" was held on the forecastle between 1815 and 2015IK. Some sixty guests were entertained.

43. Morale. I cannot too strongly recommend the support, backing and loyalty I have personally received from all hands on board during the month of January. The fact that H.M.A. Ship under my command has been so very quickly welded into a team willing, and expecting, to work hard to attempt to bring the ship up to a satisfactory standard for your inspection reflects great credit upon my young officers and all senior rates. In particular, I should like to mention that the strength I gathered from the behaviour of my Company during the immediate period after the tragedy of Saturday 17th was of inestimable assistance in helping me to carry the burden in my lonely situation at Port Arthur.

44. The fact that the ship steamed from 1430K/29th to 0730IK/30th (vide para 40) at 190 revolutions is worthy of note and a creditable performance.

45. During the month, I have taken every opportunity of landing a cricket team to play local opposition or for cricket practice.

46. The general health of the Ship's Company remains satisfactory.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

**A. W. NICHOLAS**

Lieut. Commander (X) R.A.N.  
CAPTAIN.



APPENDIX 'A' TO H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA'S REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS  
FOR JANUARY, 1959.

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- a) Miles steamed during month ..... 1732.9  
b) Hours underway during month ..... 190.0 hrs.  
c) Distance run per ton of fuel for month .. 9.73  
d) Distance steamed since commissioning .... 101,696.6  
e) Hours underway since commissioning ..... 12,777.0  
f) Date of commissioning ..... 12th Dec., 1951.  
g) Number of hours economical speed was exceeded :

1. (i) No. of hours economical speed exceeded 30 mins.

(ii) Average speed 12 knots

(iii) Fuel expended for all purposes per hour 1.2. ton

(iv) Distance run per ton of fuel 8.5 miles

(v) To search for body. (N.O.I.C. TAS. 190001Z Jan.  
refers).

2. (i) 1 hour.

(ii) 12.1 knots.

(iii) 1.12 ton

(iv) 6.1 miles

(v) To join H.M.A.S. "SWAN" for inquiry. (P.O.I.C.E.A.'s  
190206Z JAN (restricted) refers).

3. (i) 16 hours 40 minutes

(ii) 13.125 knots

(iii) 1.11 tons

(iv) 12.3 miles

(v) Toland M.(E) 2 Hattenfels. (COOTAMUNDRA's 290440Z JAN  
refers).

Copies of these signals are attached as Appendix 'D'.

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APPENDIX 'C' TO H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA'S REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS  
FOR JANUARY, 1959.

OFFICIAL CALLS PAID AND RETURNED.

SYDNEY. Wednesday 7th January.

F.O.I.C.E.A.	C.Sy.O.	Captain of the Port
G.S.O.	C.E.O.	B.O.O.
C.L.O.	G.M.G.I.D.	

HOBART. Friday 23rd January.

N.O.I.C. TAS. (Cdr. A. Salisbury R.A.N.)

His Excellency, the Administrator, Sir Stanley Burbury K.B.E.

The Deputy Premier, Hon. J.J.Dwyer V.C. M.H.A.

The Right Hon. the Lord Mayor Sir Archibald Park.

The Commander, Tasmania Command, Brigadier A.D. Molloy  
represented by Major administering command Major Hopton.

Resident Air Force Officer, Squadron Leader G.L. Waller R.A.A.F.

Master Warder Marine Board, Colonel Turner.

All official calls were returned.

ADELAIDE. Friday 30th January.

N.O.I.C. S.A.

The Captain, H.M.A.S. FREMANTLE

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APPENDIX 'D' TO H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA'S REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS  
FOR JANUARY, 1959.

FROM NOIC TAS  
TO SWAN INFO COOTAMUNDRA

OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE  
190001Z

COOTAMUNDRA IS IN PT ARTHUR AND HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED BY TELEPHONE TO RENDEZVOUS WITH YOU 090 TASMAN LIGHT 1 MILE AND SET WATCH ON Y46 CW FORTHWITH

// 190001Z JAN 1959

FROM FOIC EA  
TO SWAN COOTAMUNDRA NOIC TAS

ROUTINE  
190206Z  
RESTRICTED.

SWAN 181413Z (COOTAMUNDRA TO JOIN SWAN) (-)  
QR AND AI 1642 AND 2304 (-) A BOARD OF ENQUIRY CONSISTING OF CDR H C LOXTON (SWAN) PRESIDENT LT Y G STACEY AND SURG LT A S WILSON IS TO ASSEMBLE AS DIRECTED BY PRESIDENT ON TUES 20 JAN TO INVESTIGATE THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF EM1 DERRY R50299 (-)

-2-, COOTAMUNDRA IS TO PASS HER MESSAGES DTG 170655Z AND 180256Z TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD (-)

-3- NOIC TAS IS REQUESTED TO MAKE A SHORTHAND WRITER AVAILABLE

// 190206Z JAN 1959

FROM COOTAMUNDRA  
TO NOIC SA

PRIORITY  
290440Z

RAHOS SUSPECTED APPENDICITIS -

-2- PROCEEDING ADELAIDE ETA 0630IK 30TH

=3- REQUEST AMBULANCE AND BOAT TO COLLECT RATING FROM SEMAPHORE ANCHORAGE

// 290440 JAN 1959.



~~1/1~~  
5/5

From: FLAG OFFICER-IN-CHARGE,  
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA.

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - 1ST  
TO 5TH JANUARY, 1959.

(The Captain, H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA's letter 22/18 dated 9th  
January, 1959.)

27th January, 1959.

II

N.1/16/13  
The Secretary,  
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

Forwarded for the consideration of the Naval Board.

REAR ADMIRAL.

Naval Headquarters,  
Potts Point, Sydney.



22/18

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA,

at Sydney,

9th January, 1959.

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,  
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - 1ST TO 5TH JAN. 1959.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the Report of Proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the period 1st January to 5th January, 1959.

2. During this period, the ship has remained alongside Kuttabul Dolphins. The retard party has been employed returning and drawing stores and readying the ship for the return of the main leave party on the morning of Monday, 5th January.

3. Lieutenant Commander (X) J.M. Nicholas R.A.N. assumed command at 1700K Monday, 5th January, 1959.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,



Lieut. Commander (P) R.A.N.  
CAPTAIN.

4336.12.1108.

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - DECEMBER  
1958.

(The Captain, H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA's letter 22/18 dated 9th  
January, 1959).

II

27th January, 1959.

N.1/16/13  
The Secretary,  
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

Forwarded for the consideration of the Naval Board.

REAR ADMIRAL.

Naval Headquarters,  
Potts Point, Sydney.

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA,

at Sydney,

9th January, 1959.

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,  
EAST AUSTRALIA AREA.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - DECEMBER 1958.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the Report of Proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of December, 1958.

2. Throughout the month, the ship remained at Garden Island continuing the self refit period.
3. At 1035, Monday 8th December, berth was shifted to the floating dock with the assistance of dockyard tugs "WATTLE" and "TB7", securing in the dock at 1115.
4. The following nine days were taken up with cleaning of the ships' bottom and maintenance of underwater fittings. Some difficulty was encountered when replacing the Asdic Dome but, on the fitting of a new canoe, no further trouble ensued.
5. The ship was cleared of all personnel at 0900 on Saturday, 13th December, and fumigation commenced. The ship was opened at 1500 and, owing to a strong breeze, was almost clear by 2000. However, to allow isolated pockets of gasample time to disperse, duty watch remained on the dock and the ship was re-occupied at 0630 on Sunday 14th December.
6. At 0830 on Thursday 18th December, flooding up commenced and at 1000, aided by "WATTLE" and "TB7", berth was shifted to Kuttabul Dolphins, securing alongside, starboard side to , at 1105.
7. At 1100, tugs secured O.F.L. 1202 on our port side.
8. The remainder of the month was spent making good small defects and returning stores.
9. The Ship's Company reverted to a two-watch system on Christmas Eve - evenly splitting the holiday period and thereby enabling all Sydney natives to spend Christmas with their families.

10. During the month, morale aboard has been high and the behaviour of the Ship's Company satisfactory. Work has progressed well in all departments.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,



*Lehmann*

Lieut. Commander (P) R.A.N.  
CAPTAIN.

APPENDIX E 1 TO H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA'S REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS  
DECEMBER 1958.

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- a) Distance steamed during the month ..... Nil
- b) Hours underway during the month ..... Nil
- c) Average distance steamed per ton  
of fuel for the month ..... N.A.
- d) Distance steamed since commissioning ..... 99,963.7
- e) Hours underway since commissioning ..... 11,581.0
- f) Date of commissioning ..... 12.12.51.

APPENDIX 11 TO H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA'S REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS  
DECEMBER 1958.

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WHALE SIGHTING REPORT.

Nil.

C O P Y.

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - NOVEMBER, 1958.

(The Captain, H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA's letter 22/18 dated 4th  
December, 1958.)

II

E.A. 682/2/122  
The Secretary,  
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

Forwarded for the consideration of the Naval Board.

(syd) D.H. Harris  
REAR ADMIRAL.

Naval Headquarters,  
Potts Point, Sydney.

Royal Australian Navy.

EA 682/2/122

REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

No. 22/18

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA,

at Sydney,

4th December, 1958.

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,  
EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - NOVEMBER, 1958.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the Report of Proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of November, 1958.

2. At 0001, the ship was in position 23° 25' S., 152° 21' E., with O.F.L. 1206 in tow, making good 6½ knots and proceeding for Cape Moreton, off which I intended to embark oil fuel from the tow.

3. On 2nd November, a strong westerly of about 18-20 knots was blowing and, as there would be little shelter for the fuelling operation off Cape Moreton, I altered course at 0503 for Caloundra Light where it seemed likely some shelter would be afforded by the mainland.

4. Arriving in fairly calm water off Moffat Head, the tow was slipped at 0957 and I proceeded alongside the O.F.L. shortly afterwards. Once secured to the O.F.L., I anchored and fuelling commenced. It was considered inadvisable to anchor the O.F.L. due to the slipping clutch of her forecastle winch. Fuelling was completed by 1115; the O.F.L. was satisfactorily ballasted with sea water and I was able to proceed for Sydney at 1200. The tow was held at about 80 fathoms until clear of the shallower water of Moreton Bay when approximately 150 fathoms was veered for the ocean tow to Sydney.

5. The passage to Sydney Heads was uneventful though speed was reduced to allow arrival off Hornby Light at 0759. By this time, the tow had been heaved in to short stay of about 50 fathoms for the negotiation of the Western Channel of Port Jackson. On entering, speed was reduced to 4 knots and off Shark Island, the tow was slipped to BRONZEWING. I secured at Kuttabul Dolphins at 0905 on 5th November.

6. The ship was met by quite a large group of relatives and friends and these were entertained on board for morning tea after securing.

7. On Thursday, 6th November, oil fuel was embarked and destoring of O.F.L. 1206, secured alongside, was commenced. In addition, all hands were employed preparing ship for your walk-round and many extra hours work outside the normal were devoted by willing volunteers.

AD O



8. At 1000 on 17th November, I had the honour of your inspection of my Ship's Company at divisions and afterwards, I was pleased to receive you on board to walk round my ship.

9. The remainder of the month was spent alongside at Kuttabul Dolphins and the work of the dockyard in the refit was commencing.

10. At 1100 on 28th November, the Ship's cricket team and spectators proceeded by road for Cootamundra, N.S.W. where we were received by the Mayor, alderman and representatives of the R.S.S.A.I.L.A. The cricket match was won by the Cootamundra colts by twelve runs. The Ship's party remained in the town of Cootamundra for the greater part of the week-end, returning on Sunday evening, 30th November. It was a most enjoyable occasion and the hosts were pleased with our visit and expressed the wish that the cricket match should be an annual event.

11. During November, morale has been good and the behaviour of the Ship's Company has been most satisfactory. Work has continued in all departments in further endeavour to bring the ship to an even more satisfactory state.


12. Distances steamed and whale sighting reports are included in Appendices A and B respectively.



I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

  
 for Lieutenant (X) R.A.N.  
CAPTAIN A.O.L.

APPENDIX A TO H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA'S REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS  
NOVEMBER, 1958.

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a) Distance steamed during month .....	702.0
b) Hours underway during month .....	103
c) Average distance steamed per ton of fuel for month .....	7.7
d) Distance steamed since commissioning .....	99,963.7
e) Hours under way since commissioning .....	11,581.0
f) Date of commissioning .....	12.12.1951.

APPENDIX B TO H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA'S REPORT OF  
PROCEEDINGS FOR NOVEMBER, 1958.

WHALE SIGHTING REPORT

NUMBER	TYPE	POSITION SIGHTED	DIRECTION OF TRAVEL	REMARKS.
4	Finback	Moreton Bay	No marked direction	Accompanied by two calves.

C O P Y.

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - OCTOBER, 1958.

(The Captain, H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA's letter 22/18 dated 1st  
November, 1958)

II

25th November, 1958.

E.A. 682/2/122

The Secretary,  
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

Forwarded for the consideration of the Naval Board.

(Sgd.) D.H. HARRIES  
REAR ADMIRAL

Naval Headquarters,  
Potts Point, SYDNEY.

22/18

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA,  
at Sea,  
1st November, 1958.

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,  
EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - OCTOBER 1958.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the following report of proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of October, 1958.

2. During the first day of this month, at 1400, I <sup>shifted</sup> ~~slipped~~ berth from Fort Hill wharf, Darwin, to alongside the O.F.L. at the Boom Wharf in preparation for our departure with our tow for Thursday Island. The remainder of the day was spent in final readying and examination of towing gear and in completion of loading stores and testing of all machinery in the oil lighter.

3. At 1049 on the 2nd October, I slipped from the Boom Wharf with our charge alongside. The tide was on the ebb and it was deemed advisable to keep the O.F.L. alongside until clear of Port Darwin. Towing alongside proved satisfactory and by use of alternate ahead and astern power, courses could be steered accurately. On clearing the channel and off Channel Rock Buoy, the O.F.L. was dropped astern and in the relatively shallow water, towed at short stay with about 90 or 100 fathoms of wire veered. Course was set for Cape Fourcroy and speed of advance estimated at almost six knots. On reaching deeper water of approximately 20 fathoms, the tow wire was veered to 150 fathoms. Cape Fourcroy was rounded at 2300.

4. Initially, during the passage, the nip in the Carpenter's stopper and over the roller fairlead was freshened every four hours. This time interval was gradually extended to eight hours then to twelve hours and finally to 24 hours as the wire remained undamaged.

5. Speed was reduced for freshening the nip by 15 revs. every four minutes to prevent any tendency of the lighter to "run on". Increases of speed were similarly made to ease working strains on all gear.

6. On 3rd October, Cape Van Dieman was rounded at 1120 and an easterly course was set for the Carpentaria Light Vessel.

7. The remainder of the passage was uneventful and the weather throughout was fair. Average speed made good was 6.5 for the 842 miles.

8. Carpentaria Light Vessel was sighted at 1410 on Tuesday 7th October and course was altered at 1525 for Booby Island Light which was raised at 2208.

9. The tow was slipped at 0530 on 8th October, about 3 miles clear of Goods Island. The O.F.L. steaming party recovered the towing pendant and I proceeded alongside the tow before entering Normanby Sound to take the lighter to its anchorage.
10. Whilst under way to the anchorage, fuelling was completed and at 0940, the O.F.L. was anchored in 6 fathoms in position  $170^{\circ}$  Goods Island Light 1.1miles.
11. I slipped at 1030 from the O.F.L. to proceed to Thursday Island town jetty where I berthed at 1115.
12. The 9th October was spent alongside and at 0530 on 10th October, I slipped and proceeded to anchor in the harbour to allow the M.V. "WAIBEN" to go alongside the jetty.
13. This ship was carrying our frozen and fresh provisions and sailing for the pearling grounds had been delayed to await her arrival and (so) some expensive cold storage charges on our provisions in Thursday Island. Embarkation of these fresh and frozen provisions was completed in the afternoon and I weighed at 1610 to proceed to sea.
14. A brief call was made at the O.F.L. to deliver mail and fresh supplies and at 1750 I proceeded for area Q'L'D.5.
15. Before reaching the pearling area, I had decided from the charts available to proceed no further north than  $10^{\circ}$  S. This decision was made as soundings were as much as 18 miles apart and only a few miles to the eastward reefs were marked.
16. On passage, as soundings became more separated, I anchored in position  $10^{\circ} 25' S. 141^{\circ} 19' E.$  for the night 10/11th Oct.
17. I weighed at 0630 and my courses were set to follow the ten fathom line to latitude  $10^{\circ}$  S. Asdic was operated continuously as also the echo sounder.
18. The Japanese were sighted at 1145 on 11th October and I anchored in the vicinity of the mother ship and Japanese F.I.V. in position  $10^{\circ} 02' S 141^{\circ} 08' E.$
19. During the next four days until 16th October, anchorage was shifted to maintain a convenient position in the proximity of the luggers from which we could continue our surveillance.
20. The Japanese take in this area was poor and conditions were not good due to fast tidal streams and their subsequent muddy water.
21. At 0001 on 16th October, I weighed and set course for Thursday Island once more for the Japanese had declared their diving completed as conditions were, by then, most unsuitable. Thus they finished the season approximately ten days early on their original schedule.

22. On passage to Thursday Island, asdic and echo sounder were operated on the doubtful waters. A brief check that all was well with the O.F.L. was made before entering Thursday Island harbour.
23. The Japanese, meantime, were preceeding to position  $11^{\circ} 13' S. 141^{\circ} 58' E.$  to discharge shell to the mother ship and replenish before returning to Japan.
24. At 1000 on 18th October, I sailed from Thursday Island, delivered mail to our O.F.L. party and rejoined the Japanese at 1728 on the same day in their loading position.
25. Advantage was taken of the calm sea and fair weather to paint ship's side which was completed on the following day.
26. The Japanese, no less than ourselves, were pleased to see the end of the season. It made quite a colourful picture when all luggers flew their decorative Thanksgiving flags. I exchanged calls on the friendliest of understandings with the Japanese government inspector and the pearling fleet master.
27. The Japanese were due to depart for their homeland at 0600 on 21st October but in order to land Mr. A. Adams, our fisheries inspection officer, I proceeded at 0200 on this day for Thursday Island. Mr. Adams had been summoned to a pearling conference in Canberra and his plane departed from Horn Island at 1115.
28. During the passage to Thursday Island, the ship was steamed at 180 revolutions, slightly more than economical speed, to check new main bearings which had been changed during the previous two days. The bearings proved satisfactory and I secured alongside the town jetty, Thursday Island, at 0910 on 21st October.
29. On Thursday, 23rd October, my First Lieutenant, Lt. P.M. Cumming, was relieved by Lt. H.D. Cook, and he proceeded on leave before taking up his new appointment in Navy Office.
30. At 1430 on 23rd October, I slipped and proceeded alongside the O.F.L. in Normanby Sound and spent the night there before commencing our long passage south.
31. At 0535, the O.F.L. weighed after I had pointed ship and without any complications, the tow was dropped astern and held at short stay for negotiating the reef passage.
32. By this time, the O.F.L. was lighter by about 200 tons of F.F.O. and only about 80 tons of ballast had replaced it. "stern-deep" trim had been maintained for directional stability but speed made good had increased to seven knots.
33. Passage through the reef was uneventful though, as usual, requiring constant vigilance. Conditions throughout were well-nigh perfect - sea was calm, winds about ten knots from the S.E. and a full moon was most useful during dark hours. In addition, the radar had never before produced better results. Consequently, time was gained on passage to Cairns as allowance had been made in our original programme for the possibility of anchoring at night.

34. At 0845 on the 27th October, the O.F.L. was slipped and anchored two miles clear of the Fairway Beacons off Cairns and I proceeded to enter the harbour where I secured to the Naval wharf at 1010. This call in Cairns was made necessary by the limited freight capacity of the airline serving Thursday Island. It was not possible to air freight all our needs of fresh provisions as the majority of the island supplies are sent by air, and any capacity devoted to our needs may have deprived the dwellers on Thursday Island. And so during our period of operating from Thursday Island, our demands were kept to a minimum.

35. At 0850, I slipped from Cairns No. 10 wharf and after turning in the river, proceeded to the O.F.L. anchorage to resume our tow. This was accomplished without difficulty after fuelling and I set course from the Fairway Beacons at 1215.

36. The passage south continued without incident until 1320 on the 31st October in the vicinity of North Reef when frantic sounding of the engineroom reply gongs were followed by the report "Both feed pumps are off the board and am stopping both engines". With the dying revolutions of the engines, it was possible, by veering rapidly on the towing wire and with helm hard over, to avoid being rammed by the O.F.L. in its "run-on". In addition, the O.F.L. was ordered to veer immediately two shackles of cable to assist in slowing her down.

On 33 fathoms, the O.F.L. was shortly afterwards anchored and I fetched up after boilers were closed down, still secured by the towing wire to the stem of the O.F.L.

At 1520, after the O.F.L. reported that he could not weigh due to a slipping clutch on his forward winch, I manoeuvred the sterns close together with restored power and shortening in of the tow wire to allow me to slip the tow.

Sea state was too choppy to proceed alongside to resume the tow without risk of damage so I anchored up wind from the O.F.L., veered cable and connected up the tow again. By heaving in on the ships cable, sufficient strain was relieved from the O.F.L. cable to enable him to weigh and I proceeded on course at 1655. I was grateful that the O.F.L. anchor held sufficiently well in deep water, in about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  knots of tidal stream and force 4 wind.

37. At mid-night on the 31st October, I was in position  $23^{\circ} 25' S.$   $152^{\circ} 21' E.$  in a low swell and force 3 wind with both ships riding comfortably.

38. The task of chipping and painting has proceeded most satisfactorily during the month and great advances in improvements in our general appearance have been made.

All hands are in high spirits and working willingly and with good effect. The health and morale continue to be most satisfactory.

39. The visits to Thursday Island were a welcome change from those to Darwin and the general feeling was that our calls there were most welcome. Behaviour ashore called for no criticism.

40. The Sub-Collector of customs in Thursday Island, Mr. H. McMahon rendered all possible assistance during our stay there and his efforts on our behalf are worthy of note.

41. A cricket match was arranged against the local team in Thursday Island and several games of basketball were played with honours shared evenly.



42. There was little evidence of the "explosive situation" reported in many newspapers regarding the unemployed Ryukyuan divers. The divers are housed in specially built barracks and though receiving no pay, are still supplied by their former employers with food. Their predicament has evoked considerable sympathy from townspeople not engaged in pearling. At intervals, when shipping is available, they are being returned to their homes and in the meantime have given absolutely no trouble.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

Lieut. Commander (P) R.A.N.  
C A P T A I N.

APPENDIX 1 TO H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA'S REPORT  
OF PROCEEDINGS FOR OCTOBER, 1958.

✓ OK

Miles steamed during month ..... 2315.3

Hours underway during month ..... 343 45/60

Distance run per ton of  
fuel for month. .... 7.7

C O P Y.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - SEPTEMBER, 1958.

(The Captain, H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA's letter  
22/18 dated 1st October, 1958)

RECEIVED

13 AUG AM

NAVY REGISTRY

PLEASE RETURN  
TO  
NAVAL ARCHIVES BRANCH

II

E.A. 682/2/122.  
THE SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

Forwarded for the consideration of  
the Naval Board.

(Sgd). *D.H. Harries*...

REAR ADMIRAL.

Naval Headquarters,  
Potts Point, Sydney.

*Head of W*  
PLEASE RETURN  
TO  
NAVAL ARCHIVES BRANCH

*DAO*

*11/8/59.*

22/18

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA,  
at Darwin,  
1st October, 1958.

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,  
EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - SEPTEMBER, 1958.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the following Report of Proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of September, 1958.

2. At 0635 on 1st September, having remained at anchor off the entrance to Liverpool River during the previous night, I weighed and, with the motor dinghy sounding ahead, proceeded. I had been asked by N.O.I.C.N.W.A. to embark eleven native boys from Manangrida Mission on the Liverpool River on this day and at 0805, having negotiated the restricted waters of the mouth of the river, I anchored  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile South-West of Entrance Island and about 4 miles from the mission.

The chart of the Liverpool River (1057), although 92 years old, was found to be still accurate for our purpose.

3. After the party of natives arrived on board, I weighed and, clearing the river entrance again with the motor dinghy sounding ahead, set course for the pearling fleet for a final check before returning to Darwin for replenishment.

4. The native boys brought their own knapsacks and so were accommodated on the sweep deck with a Leading Seaman in charge. They appeared fine specimens, intelligent, well-turned out and well behaved, possible indication that they were under the mission influence for a number of years.

My ships' company soon made friends with them, presenting cigarettes and sweets and assisting them in every way. On arrival in Darwin, they were to be employed in various duties, such as gardening by the Department of Army.

5. At 1430, after clearing the shallow water North-East of the Liverpool River, the first of the Japanese luggers was sighted and shortly afterwards, all were accounted for. Although the divers were still working with success at this late stage of the Heap, the current was beginning to run too fast and underwater visibility was deteriorating. In fact, operations ceased at sunset on this evening and the pearling fleet proceeded to their normal anchorage in Baucaut Bay for their rest period while "COOTAMUNDRA" returned to Darwin



6. Gaining considerable assistance from current and tidal streams through Dundas and Clarence Straits, I entered Port Darwin at 1620 on 2nd September, securing alongside Fort Hill Wharf at 1700.

7. At 1915 on 2nd September, Acting Sub Lieutenant F.D. Foster, R.A.N., joined for training.

8. "COOTAMUNDRA" remained at this berth for the next four days, storing and fuelling during that time. H.M.A.S. FREMANTLE (Lt. Cdr. B.D. Gordon, R.A.N.) secured alongside at 0910 on 3rd September after her return from Dili in Portuguese Timor.

9. Little opportunity arose for organised sport during this stay. Ship maintenance and preparation of arrangements for towing O.F.L. 1206 precluded other activity, although picnic parties to Berri Springs and Rum Jungle on 4th September were arranged.

10. In order to rejoin the pearling fleet P.M. on Sunday, 7th September, I slipped and proceeded from Darwin at 1200 on Saturday, 6th September. Passage to the Baucaut Bay area was uneventful and at 1645 on the 7th, all luggers were sighted within a 3 mile radius of position  $11^{\circ}37' S$ ,  $134^{\circ}17' E$ . Conditions for diving were ideal but the luggers were not reporting very large takes.

11. After contacting and passing close to the luggers, I proceeded inshore to Baucaut Bay to recover my camping party which had been left there during the time the ship was in Darwin. The party, consisting of 1 Officer and 5 ratings, returned on board at 1030 on Monday, 8th September.

12. Weighing at 1040, I returned to the fishing area where a flat calm prevailed. Such conditions did not suit the pearling fleet for it meant that the luggers gained no assistance from wind and were required to use their engines almost continually. In addition, mud stirred up by the divers was not carried away and effective underwater visibility was reduced to approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  metre. This calm persisted for the following  $2\frac{1}{2}$  days and the take was not large.

13. Mr. Adams, the Fisheries Inspection Officer, assisted by my Engineer Officer and another officer, visited the luggers in turn, inspecting and measuring shell. This team with two or three ratings normally remain on one lugger for several hours, taking comprehensive details of amount, size, weight and characteristics of the shell. On this particular area, much of the catch was young shell and the Captain of one lugger volunteered the suggestion that the area be closed for three years. This advice has been passed on to the Department of Primary Industries by Mr. Adams in his report.

14. From Monday, 8th September until Sunday 14th September, "COOTAMUNDRA" remained on station, adjusting anchorage as necessary when the luggers moved to new grounds. When operations for this Neap began on Saturday, 6th September, the luggers were concentrated in an area 31 miles N.N.W. of Baucaut Bay and throughout the Neap, the main body moved Eastward at an average of 2.3 miles per day. Occasionally one or two luggers would stray but the Japanese Fishery Inspector, Mr. Hirao, showed the greatest willingness to co-operate and gave accurate details of the positions of all luggers each day.

During this week, as much minesweeping as possible was exercised. On passage from Baucaut Bay on Monday the 8th, the starboard Oropesa sweep was streamed twice. On Tuesday 9th, all acoustic sweeps were streamed and a number of defects discovered. On Thursday 11th, after remedial action, the A.H. MK.3 and A.D. MK4. were again streamed; this time operating efficiently.

16. At 1100 Sunday 14th September, I left the pearling fleet and once more proceeded inshore to Baucaut Bay to land a surveillance party for the period of my replenishment stay in Darwin. I was joined in Baucaut Bay at 1930 by EHIME MARU, the Japanese Fishery Inspection Vessel, which was due to be relieved of her duties the following day then return to Japan. The officials on board EHIME MARU welcomed myself and my officers to a small farewell on board their vessel that evening.
17. I weighed at 1100 the following day and made rendezvous with the new F.I.V. HAKOZAKO MARU at 1200. With my First Lieutenant and Mr. Adams, I visited this ship where changeover formalities took place and instructions given. On completion, I sailed for Darwin and shortly afterwards, EHIME MARU sailed for Japan.
18. Passage as far as Clarence Strait was uneventful but here a six knot current was experienced enabling the ship to make good 16 knots for approximately one hour. At 1705, on Tuesday 16th September, I entered Port Darwin and shortly afterward secured at Fort Hill Wharf for replenishment.
19. At 0810 on 18th September, I shifted berth to alongside O.F.L.1206 at Boom Wharf to unship my starboard Oropesa towing wire from the winch for stowage in the O.F.L. and reel on the 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " E.S.F.S.W.R. for towing of the O.F.L. This was completed by 1730.
20. On the 19th September, Lieutenant J.S. Dickson, R.A.N. was discharged to "MELVILLE" for onward passage to "WATSON" for little "d" course.
21. At 1000 on Sunday 21st, divisions and prayers were held on the wharf. On completion, I slipped and proceeded once more for Baucaut Bay and surveillance duties.
22. After rounding Cape Don, a short, steep swell was encountered and speed was reduced to prevent any possible pounding. Conditions were not pleasant, wind speed was in the vicinity of 30 knots. No damage was suffered.
23. Because of the forced reduction in speed, it was not possible to enter Baucaut Bay before sunset as was intended so in view of the prevailing conditions, I anchored at 2330 some 8 miles clear to await daylight.

24. At dawn, I weighed and continued the approach to Baucaut Bay in much calmer conditions and reached our usual anchoring position at 0815. The shore party was embarked immediately and I proceeded to examine a patch of discoloured water which I had sighted on two previous occasions in position 11°54' S . 134°24' E . The patch appeared almost white, giving the appearance of very shallow water. However, the soundings made by the motor dinghy indicated no depth less than 8½ fathoms (four and a half hours after A.M. low water, Darwin) and bottom was fine sand. A Hydrographic report has been rendered.

25. At 1640, I anchored in the vicinity of the pearling fleet in position 11°34' S. 134° 32' E.

26. The fleet remained in this area until 1600 on 25th September by which time we estimated that they had taken their quota of 350 tons for N.T.D. 19.20.21.

27. The Japanese shifted then to N.T.D.18 and commenced working this new area at dawn the following day. During the next three days, the catch was near record. For each successive day, 12 tons, 20 tons and 22 tons were taken. But conditions deteriorated and the fleet retired to Baucaut Bay for their rest period during the night of 1/2 October.

28. I sailed for Darwin on 28th September. It was necessary to cut short this surveillance patrol to return to Darwin and store fuel and once more check all preparations for towing O.F.L.1206 to Thursday Island. I secured alongside Fort Hill Wharf at 1500 on Monday, 29th September after an uneventful passage.

29. I remained in this berth until the end of the month, continuing the maintenance work on the ship and storing both vessels.

30. The health of the ships' company continues to be very good and morale has improved as the end of our period of service in northern waters appears in sight. I feel confident that the ship will have no recurrence of any serious breaches of discipline. The number of offences was reduced to two during the month.

31. As the result of a request to A.C.N.B. to increase our daily victualling allowance by 2d per day to a similar rate allowed for H.M.A.S. MELVILLE, a considerable improvement in the standard of the general mess has been possible. The increased allowance was made retrospective to 16th May (N.O.L. 3818/2/93 (20705) of 17th September, 1958) thus allowing "COOTAMUNDRA" to eliminate a small debit and to start the victualling accounts for October with a credit of over £80

32. Considerable progress was made in the huge task of chipping and scraping externally. It is apparent that in past years, little care or attention has been given to this most important work. In some places on the sweep deck and on mountings of roller fairleads aft, 'flakes' of rust sometimes over ¼" thick have been taken off. As many as eleven colours of paint have been removed from some bulkheads.

33. Sporting activities have been fewer during this month due to pressure of the work of preparation of the O.F.L. as already recorded and furthermore due to the ships necessarily short periods in harbour.

34. The engineroom department continues to be most satisfactorily run. There have been no serious machinery troubles during this month and several minor breakdowns have been very quickly repaired.

35. All members of the ships company are looking forward to the change of scenery offered in our move to Thursday Island.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

*H. H. H.*

Lieut. Commander (P) R.A.N.  
CAPTAIN.

Copy to :- N.O.I.C.N.W.A.



APPENDIX 1 TO H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA'S  
REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR SEPTEMBER 1958.

Miles steamed during month ..... 1675.5

Hours under-way for month ..... 181 37/60

Distance run per ton of  
fuel for month. .... 12.4

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C O P Y.

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - 19/31 AUGUST, 1958.

(The Captain, H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA's letter 22/18 dated 1st September, 1958.)

PLEASE RETURN  
TO  
NAVAL ARCHIVES BRANCH

II

E.A.682/2/122  
THE SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

Forwarded for the consideration of the Naval Board.

D.H. HARRIES.  
REAR ADMIRAL.

Naval Headquarters,  
Potts Point, Sydney.

PLEASE RETURN  
TO  
NAVAL ARCHIVES BRANCH

22/18

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA,  
at Sea,  
1st September, 1958.

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,  
EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - 19/31 AUGUST, 1958.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the following Report of Proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the period 19th to 31st August, 1958.

2. I joined H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA at 0910 on Tuesday, 19th August and assumed command from Lieutenant Commander P.C.S. Martin R.A.N. at 1630 on that day, at which time the ship was secured alongside Fort Hill wharf, Darwin.

3. H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA remained alongside until Saturday, 23rd August. During this period, I called on the Naval Officer-in-Charge, North West Australian Area, Captain J.H. Dowson, A.D.C., R.A.N. and was privileged to receive him on board at 1150 Friday, 22nd August.

4. At 1130 on the 21st August, H.M.A. Ship under my command assumed the duties of Pearl Fishery Surveillance from H.M.A.S. FREMANTLE. At this time, the Japanese Pearling Fleet, in the interval between 4th and 5th Neaps of the season, was at anchor in Boucaut Bay.

5. At 1150, Saturday 23rd August, Mr. A.E. Adams, Fisheries Inspector, representing the Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries Division, joined and at 1218, I slipped and proceeded, clearing Darwin harbour at 1237.

6. By 1725, on 23rd August, the ship had cleared Clarence Strait, having encountered strong adverse currents on passage, over two knots in some parts, in others quite irregular. The waters in the eastern end of Clarence Strait show evidence of many rips, rather more extensive but otherwise reminiscent of the entrance to Port Phillip. However, no particular difficulties of navigation were experienced. Cape Don was rounded at 0035, Sunday 24th August.

7. The first of the Japanese Luggers was sighted at 1415 on Sunday, 24th August and by 1500, all 15 luggers were in sight as well as the Japanese Fishery Inspection Vessel, EHIME MARU. The Japanese mother ship was absent in Japan and is not due to return for several weeks.

At 1510, in company with Mr. Adams and Lieutenant H.D. Cook, I paid a visit to the EHIME MARU. We were greeted in the most friendly manner by the Japanese Inspector, Mr. K. Hirao and by Mr. G. Meike, the pearling company overseer, as well as the Captain of the EHIME MARU.

8. With the use of a Japanese/English Dictionary, continuous re-phrasing, and sign language, the intended fishing programme was learned.

I returned to "COOTAMUNDRA" at 1630 and anchored in close proximity to the Japanese F.I.V. in position  $11^{\circ} 36' S.$   
 $134^{\circ} 18' E.$

9. Area 19 is proving fruitful to the Japanese this season and during the next two days, the luggers remained within 6 miles of this position. I shifted ship as necessary to allow Mr. Adams to visit two or three luggers each day to measure shells, check for minimum size and estimate the take on board each lugger. For this season, three hundred and fifty tons has been agreed upon between the Australian and Japanese Governments as the limit of the take for Area 19.

10. The motor dinghy is continuously at the disposal of Mr. Adams to transfer him around the lugger fleet. Normally he is accompanied by my Engineer Officer, who assists him in his taking of measurements and by one or two ratings to help in recording and to allow them to see a pearling lugger at work. This duty has proved rather popular and it is hoped that all hands will have an opportunity to visit a working lugger before the season is complete.

11. The luggers work from dawn to dusk and each diver will probably dive four times during the day, each "dip" for approximately one hour - the present depth averages 20 fathoms.

Slight cases of 'bends' are fairly frequent and for such divers there appears little sympathy. There seems practically no time allowed for 'staging'. The mother ship normally carries a doctor who is at present accommodated in the Japanese F.I.V. whilst the mother ship is in Japan.

12. On Wednesday, 27th August, with the fleet dispersing a little, I weighed at 0700 and proceeded to sight all luggers. The sea state was too rough for boatwork and wind was Force 4.5 so I proceeded inshore to Boucaut Bay to check on the camping site where later we are required to leave a party.

13. This party, which will consist of one officer, one senior rating and four other ratings, is landed when the ship returns to Darwin for replenishment, at the request of various departments, Customs, Immigration and Native Affairs, to ensure no communication between natives and Japanese during the divers rest period occurs.

14. The investigating party landed - found a permanent supply of slightly brackish water but <sup>were</sup> unfortunate in their efforts to add barramundi and wild fowl to the ship's larder.

15. I left a party ashore when I weighed and proceeded from Boucaut Bay at 0730 Thursday, 28th August, to rejoin the pearling fleet. I remained in the vicinity of the luggers throughout the day whilst inspections continued. At 1730, I anchored in position  $11^{\circ} 32' S.$   $134^{\circ} 19' E.$  At this time, 11 luggers were in sight and the remaining four were working 6 or 7 miles to the North-West.

16. With the neaps drawing to a close, the luggers seemed content to remain in the vicinity of this position during the next two days.

17. At 1300 on Sunday 31st August, I weighed and proceeded to Boucaut Bay from where, after exchanging shore parties, I proceeded to an anchorage off the entrance to the Liverpool River. I had been asked by N.O.I.C.N.W.A. to embark 11 natives from the mission station for passage to Darwin on behalf of the Department of Army. I anchored in position  $11^{\circ}53.3' S.$   $134^{\circ}16' E.$

18. The health of the ship's company is very good and all seem to be showing a keen interest in the new task of fishery surveillance. There are no obvious signs of any great discontent and I feel that the departure of A.B. Clorley (Warrant No. 14/58.) has had its good effects.

19. I found on assuming command that the state of the ship was barely average externally but maintenance on upper deck work had apparently lost ground during the arduous period of the survey.

During our employment on Fishery Surveillance duties, far better opportunities are apparent for a whole-hearted endeavour to eliminate rust. However, interior paint work and standards of general upkeep in mess decks and store rooms is good with only a few exceptions.

20. Discipline on board is satisfactory and is effected in an easy manner though I consider that in the past ~~that~~ considerable leniency has been shown to offenders.

21. The Engineer room department is efficient and well run.

22. Recreation has been limited to the sending ashore at Boucaut Bay of the shooting and camping parties already mentioned, two cinema programmes, an "Uckers" competition and a quiz competition in which everyone has shown interest.

23. It may be difficult towards the end of the pearling season to find suitable diversions. I intend to continue to land shore parties as possible and endeavour to maintain supply of cinema programmes.

24. The standard of victualling varies but generally is quite good. A letter has been written to A.C.N.B. requesting that our daily victualling allowance be increased by two pence per day to that of H.M.A.S. MELVILLE as in A.C.N.B. signal 074 "F" of 31st March, 1958.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

*Hebance.*  
Lieut. Commander (P) R.A.N.  
CAPTAIN.



APPENDIX I .

Miles steamed during the month .....	2695.4
Hours under way during the month .....	268 10/60.
Distance per ton of fuel for the month .....	11.9.

APPENDIX II

COMPOSITION OF JAPANESE PEARLING FLEET.

BOAT NO.	DESCRIPTION	OFFICIAL NO.	TONNAGE	H.P. ENGINE.
EHIME MARU	F.I.V.	-	290 approx.	variable. N.K. Petrol prop.
No.2 MIYO MARU	KETCH	WK2 - 843	62.5	160
" 3 MISAKE MARU	"	WK2 - 842	45.5	80
" 5 HORAI MARU	"	WK2 - 844	46.5	80
" 6 NICHIRAN MARU	"	WK2 - 846	46.34	80
" 10 KOJIN MARU	"	WK2 - 847	44.3	80
" 11 ZUIHO MARU	"	WK2 - 848	44.8	80
" 15 DAIFUKU MARU	SCHOONER	WK2- 849	50.	80
" 16 TAMA MARU	KETCH	TK2 - 329	46.8	80
" 17 OKOYO MARU	"	TK2 - 328	50.	100
" 18 HAKUCHO MARU	"	TK2 - 325	45.	90
" 21 SEICHO MARU	SCHOONER	KN2 - 458	45.	80
" 22 SUMIYOSHI MARU	KETCH	TK2 - 408	45.	80
" 24 KIMI MARU	"	KT2 - 412	50.	100
" 26 TOVOTA MARU	"	KA2 - 495	47.	80
" 27 MANSUI MARU	"	N.K.	48.	80

APPENDIX III .

WHALE SIGHTING REPORT FOR AUGUST 1958.

N11.



APPENDIX IV

The following is the intended programme for  
H.M.A. Ship under my command until the return to Sydney.

ARRIVE.	PLACE.	DEPART.
Tue. 2 Sept.	Darwin	Sat. 6 Sept.
	FISHERY SURVEILLANCE DUTIES.	
Thur. 18 Sept.	Darwin	Sunday 21 Sept.
	FISHERY SURVEILLANCE DUTIES.	
Mon. 29 Sept.	Darwin	Wed. 1 Oct. (O.F.L. in tow.)
Tue. 7 Oct.	Thursday Is.	Tue. 7 Oct.
	FISHERY SURVEILLANCE DUTIES.	
Wed. 15 Oct.	Thursday Is.	Sat. 18 Oct.
	FISHERY SURVEILLANCE DUTIES.	
Wed. 29 Oct.	Thursday Is.	Fri. 31 Oct. (O.F.L. L. in tow))
Fri. 14 Nov.	SYDNEY.	

2. This programme is submitted only as a guide. All dates are subject to alteration, being dependant upon the movements of the Japanese Pearling Fleet.

22/18

PLEASE RETURN  
TO  
NAVAL ARCHIVES BRANCH

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA,

at Sea,

19th August, 1958.

The Flag Officer-in-Charge,  
EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - 1ST TO 19TH AUGUST, 1958.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the Report of Proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the period 1st August to 19th August, 1958.

2. At 0001 IK Friday, 1st August, the ship was in position 10 deg. 08 min. S, 128 deg. 43 min E, looking for water shallow enough to anchor in comfortably. This was found and the ship anchored in 40 fathoms at 0025 IK. Weighing at 0625 Ik, surveying commenced at 0700 IK.

3. Normal surveying continued through Friday and "WARREGO" joined company during the forenoon of Saturday 2nd August. The three ships surveyed together during the day and at 1825 IK, "COOTAMUNDRA" took her last 'fix', then proceeded to close first "WARREGO" and then "SWAN" to collect mail and personnel for Darwin. On being detached from "SWAN", the ship carried out several ceremonies to celebrate completion of the survey and farewell signals were exchanged, course being set for Darwin at 1905 IK Saturday, 2nd August.

4. Thus ended what was an interesting and most instructive period for the officers, particularly as regards station keeping, but also what was becoming a very monotonous routine for the ships company. Full credit must go to the technical hands in the ship who kept A/S, Echo Sounder and Radar sets going throughout the period. The Echo Sounder, except for the last 'fix' on one day, was 100% operational throughout.

5. Arriving at Darwin 0705 IK, Sunday 3rd August, the ship secured to the Boom Wharf. During the day, accompanied by my Navigating Officer, Lieut. J.S. Dickson R.A.N. and S/Lieut. G.E. Cockram R.A.N., I was taken by the R.A.A.F. in a 'Lincoln' bomber to observe and examine the approaches and surroundings to Cartier Island and Ashmore Reef. The value of this flight was inestimable and paid welcome dividends when approaching this area in the ship shortly after. Also of value was the excellent chicken salad lunch and seemingly inexhaustible supply of fruit juices (cold), coffee and fruit available on passage. Unfortunately, my Victualling Officer was not present to take note.

6. Returning on board at 1700 IK and having embarked Mr. Macqueen and Mr. Franklin, geologists from the Department of Mines, I slipped and proceeded at 1800 IK 3rd August to rendezvous with "WARREGO" and thence to Cartier Island. At 0105 4th August, mail was transferred to "WARREGO" and course was set to pass approximately five miles south of Cartier Island.

7. Cartier Island was closed at 0850 IK Tuesday, 5th August and after skirting the Eastern and Northern sides of the surrounding reef, which, being low water, was fully exposed. All hope of landing that morning was abandoned and course was set for Ashmore Reef area. Cartier Reef was closed to a distance of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  cables whilst looking for an opening with a nearest point of approach of 2 cables. Least depth of water was 85 fathoms.

8. Ashmore Reef was sighted at mid-day and finally approached from the West. My way was felt with caution along the Northern edge of the reef and, after lowering the motor-cutter to go ahead with a hand line, I finally anchored at 1430 IK, just inside the Western entrance to the Eastern lagoon in the reef. Depth of water was five fathoms and there was ample room for the ship to manoeuvre though I would add an O.M.S. is possibly the largest ship that could anchor in this particular entrance. Further progress into the lagoon was blocked by a barrier of easily discernable 'niggerheads' and shallow reefs. After anchoring, the two geologists, accompanied by my First Lieutenant, proceeded to the East Island to carry out an intent survey and also investigate a lugger anchored near the island.

9. At 1300 IK Thursday, 7th August, I shifted berth to a larger lagoon at the Western end of the reef to be in a position more accessible to the middle and west Islands. This lagoon appeared much larger than the other one but once again a barrier of 'niggerheads' and reefs prevented very deep penetration. The first position was a good one however, being in the lee of a reef which cut off a quite heavy ocean swell. Depth of water was 14 fathoms and the area would allow ample swinging room for a maximum of four fleet destroyers and still provide protection from the outside swell.

10. The geologist's party worked at a good pace and completed their operations at 1330 IK Friday 8th August, being assisted by members of the ships company as requisite. During the period, my First Lieutenant also inspected and investigated sea luggers which were operating in the reef area. These all proved to be 'trepan' or 'beche de mer' fishermen from Koepang, Timor. ~~Some~~ <sup>None</sup> could speak English or Dutch but it was quickly evident they knew who we were and in fact, their apparent liking for Australia was unbounded. Their luggers of about 40 feet were primitively though soundly constructed. No compasses were carried of any nature and in fact, their only navigational aid appeared to be the sun, stars and the direction of the waves. Amid all this primitiveness, my First Lieutenant was surprised to see modern fountain pens and notes written in good copper-plate writing. Each lugger had a crew of approximately nine men of mixed ages and no women were observed at any stage. Some of the Indonesians were observed to be suffering badly from coral sores etc. so on the second day in the area I landed my S.B.A. to render what first aid he could. This, to say the least, was most appreciated as the fishermen had no whatsoever - this lack of first aid being evident by the small number ~~observed~~ of graves observed on each of the islands.

11. During the period, astronomical observations of the ships position were taken and positions of the islands fixed while an excellent plot of the reef etc. in the immediate vicinity was obtainable by eye and on radar. All data is being correlated and forwarded to the Hydrographer, R.A.N.
12. Weighing at 1400 IK, I proceeded to and anchored off the Western end of Cartier Island Reef in 22 fathoms at 1805 IK - distance from the edge of the reef was  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cables. The tide was practically full flood (neaps) and the reef covered by water but an attempt by the First Lieutenant in the motor-cutter to cross the outer edge was thwarted by breaking seas. As it was evident it would be some days before the tide would rise sufficiently to allow a party to land, the effort was abandoned and I weighed and proceeded to Darwin in which Port I arrived at 1030 IK Sunday, 10th August, securing alongside "FREMANTLE" at the Boom Wharf.
13. Fuelling completed, the ship shifted to inner Stokes Hill wharf at 1400 IK Sunday, 10th August and in this berth I remained until slipping and proceeding to Dili at 1140 IK Tuesday 12th August. "SWAN" entered harbour at 0730 IK Monday 11th August, and "WARREGO" at 0930 IK Tuesday, 12th August, T.E. 260.0.0.1 being disbanded at this time.
14. After a pleasant voyage, I anchored in Dili harbour at 0900 H Thursday 14th August. On arrival, the ship was boarded by the Harbour Master, Lt. Cdr. P.C. Sampaio P.N., the Chief of Military Staff, Captain M.H. Chorao de Carvalho and the Secretary to the Governor, Lieut. D.R.S.M. de Carvalho Braga, whom accorded a formal welcome and hoped our stay would be a pleasant one. At 1015 H, I landed to call on the Australian Consul, Mr. F.J.A. Whittaker, then accompanied by him, calls were made on His Excellency, the Acting Governor, Lieut. Colonel Manuel A.G. de Aguiar, the Chief of Police and the Administrator of Dili. The Australian Consul returned on board with me while all calls were returned 'en masse' at 1600 H.
15. Friday, 15th August being a close religious holiday saw little activity in the port. A ships soccer team was defeated 8-1 by the locals sporting club, this match being watched by some 4,000 spectators. At night, the Governor entertained the officers to drinks before dinner.
16. Saturday 16th August was most active. Sightseeing trip, in three groups, were arranged for officers, Chief's and P.O.'s and junior ratings respectively. All had a most enjoyable day, the ships company stating the major object of their hosts was to fill them with "Vino", food and then more "Vino". In this they were most successful though fortunately nobody disgraced themselves. The officer's party was a flight to Baucau, some 25 minutes flying time east of Dili. Here we were shown several nearby villages and settlements before proceeding to Baucau proper for a swim followed by a most excellent luncheon as the guests of the Administrator for Baucau.
17. In the evening Saturday 16th August, an official cocktail party was held on board.
18. At 1200H Sunday 17th August, I weighed and proceeded from Dili and anchored Quarantane Anchorage Darwin at 0805IK Tuesday 19th August. After inspection by Customs and Medical Officers, berth was shifted to Fort Hill Wharf for fuel and stores from "Kimbla"

19. Lieutenant Commander (P) R.E. Bourke R.A.N.  
assumed command at 1630 IK Tuesday, 19th August, 1958.

20. Since the completion of survey duties, there has been a noticeable improvement in the morale and spirits of the ships company and the trip to Dili was undoubtedly a just reward after some three months extensive steaming. Ships husbandry has been progressed and I consider the arrival of fresh supplies of paint etc. will soon see a vast improvement in the ship's appearance. Mechanically, the ship is sound though the quieter steaming conditions while on the pearling grounds will enable a backlog of maintenance to be taken in hand.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



Lieut. Commander (X) R.A.N.  
CAPTAIN.

Copies to :- The Secretary, Department of the Navy. (2)  
N.O.I.C.N.W.A.  
The Hydrographer, R.A.N.  
The Captain, H.M.A.S. SWAN

The Captain, H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA, at Sea,

1st August, 1958.

22/18.

The Flag Officer-in-Charge, EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - JULY 1958.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the Report of Proceedings of H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of July, 1958.

2. At 0001 IK, Tuesday July 1st, the ship was in position 11 deg. 48 min. South, 129 deg. 55 min. East, on a course 306 deg., speed 11 knots, proceeding from Darwin to Survey Area 4. Rendezvousing with "SWAN" at 0700 IK, jackstay transfer of stores, mail and personnel was carried out and the ship commenced opening to station for survey at 0723 IK, anchoring on completion of survey at 1911 IK.

3. A delay to the programme occurred on Wednesday 2nd July, when the Starboard Thrust Block of my main engine failed at 1115 IK. This necessitated steaming on one engine whilst the defect was made good and anchoring at 1521 IK while final adjustments were effected. On weighing at 1555 IK, survey was continued until 2000 IK when I closed "SWAN" for transfer of records prior to being detached at 2110 IK to transfer mail etc. to "WARREGO" at the North-West end of the area.

4. Rendezvousing with "WARREGO" at 0050 IK, Thursday 3rd July, mail etc. was transferred by boat and I proceeded to rendezvous with "SWAN". The nights steaming was most opportune as it afforded a good opportunity to run in the new bearing. Being in station at 0700 IK, surveying commenced and normal routine then continued through to P.M. Saturday, 5th July.

5. At 1908 IK, Saturday, 5th July, surveying for the period was completed and I closed "SWAN", taking station astern. Course was set for Cape Fourcroy and both ships proceeded in company at 8 knots.

6. Cape Fourcroy area was reached and the ship anchored in 9 fathoms with Port anchor at 0815 IK. The remainder of the day was passed in pleasant conditions. Large recreational parties were landed fully equipped with with steak, beer issue, etc. and this most welcome break from survey and Darwin routine was most appreciated by all.

7. At 0310 IK Monday, 7th July, I weighed and proceeded in company with "SWAN", setting course for Darwin at which port I arrived and secured, outboard of "SWAN" at the Boom wharf, Starboard side to, at 1015 IK.

8. The ship then remained alongside in Darwin until A.M. 11th July. During this period, ship maintenance was continued and the ship's side received some long overdue attention. C.T.E. 260.O.O.1 walked round the ship A.M. Tuesday, 8th July, and that evening, a very successful Squadron Cocktail Party was given to the divers ditizens of Darwin on the quarterdeck of "SWAN", which setting was admirably suited for the occasion.

9. At 1310 IK, Friday 11th July, I slipped and proceeded in company with "SWAN" for the Flat Top Bank area where some pearling luggers were reported to be operating illegally. Under perfect conditions, luggers were sighted at approximately 2145 IK and I was detailed to close a lugger at 2155 IK. On approaching lugger, three echos were noticed to be in close vicinity to that of the lugger on radar. A cautious run in was made and after coming practically alongside and warning, hoping they could understand, the lugger's crew in good 'Australian' that a boat from "SWAN" would be over shortly, I proceeded to investigate the three echos, each about two cables from the lugger and spread more or less evenly around. Nothing at this stage had been seen visually. Under the good radar conditions, I was able to close each object to under  $\frac{1}{4}$  cable before losing echo. Each turned out to be a pair of small metal buoys, approximately two foot long by one foot in diameter and had evidently been laid out by the lugger as a guide for divers. During this investigation, it was also noted that as slow as 6 knots, using 25 deg. of wheel, the wake showed up quite clearly on the radar screen.

10. At 2323 IK, "SWAN", having completed her duties as 'Policeman delivering summons', both ships proceeded, "COOTAMUNDRA" opening out in station, for the following days survey.

11. Surveying commenced at 0730 IK Saturday, 12th July, and normal survey routine then continued until "SWAN" was closed for mail etc. at 1930 IK Friday, 18th July.

12. Having received mail and personnel from "SWAN" and "WARREGO", I was detached by C.T.E. at 1940 IK, 18th July, for Darwin at which port I arrived at 0940 IK Saturday, 19th July, securing port side to Boom wharf at that time.

13. At 0015 IK Sunday, 20th July, I slipped and proceeded to rendezvous with "SWAN", who was anchored some three mile to the North of Cape Fourcroy. This I did, anchoring five cables north of "SWAN" at 0912 IK. The ship remained at anchor and after an early lunch, a large proportion of the ships company was landed to participate in the 'Far Cry' sports meeting between "SWAN" and "COOTAMUNDRA". A very good afternoon sports programme followed, the ships alternating the lead on points. After the last event, both ships were even on point scores and it was decided the last event, the surf race, would count. Here, "SWAN" took three of the first four places and thus became 'Cock O' The Beach' - noted in first place was an officer on loan from the "WARREGO". It is regretted also, "SWAN" earlier stole a march on "COOTAMUNDRA" when, while the ships company<sup>475</sup> celebrating a straight two pull win over "SWAN" in the tug-o-war, a "SWAN" raiding party very smartly made off in a motor cutter with "COOTAMUNDRA's" ships pennant which was only retrieved after a heavy 'fine' much later in the day.

14. Both ships weighed and proceeded to Area 5 at 2300 IK, "COOTAMUNDRA" opening out during the night to be in station for survey which commenced at 0700 IK Monday, 21st July.

On completion of the days soundings, "COOTAMUNDRA" was detailed to transfer mail etc. to "WARREGO" and I accordingly made a rendezvous at 2330 IK and proceeded to return to station at 2345 IK.

15. After a delay in reaching station or return from "WARREGO", sounding commenced at 0741 IK and the survey continued as normal until sounding ceased at 1859 IK Friday, 25th July. At this time, both ships set course for Darwin, "COOTAMUNDRA" closing slowly during the night so as to be in station prior to entering harbour.

16. "SWAN" having berthed at the Boom wharf, Darwin, I secured Port side to "SWAN" at 0730 IK Saturday, 26th July; in this berth I remained until P.M. Monday 28th July.

17. At 1217 IK, Monday 28th July, I slipped from "SWAN" and at 1242 IK, proceeded in company with "SWAN" for Survey Area 5A, in which area we arrived at 0815 IK Tuesday, 29th July, surveying commencing at that time. Survey then followed normal routine and at 2359 IK Thursday, 31st July, I was in position 10 deg. 08 min. South, 128 deg. 43 min. East, searching for a comparatively shallow place in which to anchor.

18. Throughout the month, the health of the ships company has been good and morale likewise. Every opportunity has been taken to play sport while in Darwin and additionally, swimming and hunting parties have been landed as convenient. Inter-Service sport has been progressing in Darwin and the ship's company has provided members for golf, cricket, tennis, water-pole and rifle shooting teams.

19. The state of the ship continues to be good. Engine room defects, except for Thrust Block, have been of a minor nature and these have all been overcome. Constant maintenance has been required in radar, asdic and echo-sounder and except for a major breakdown of the echo-sounder at the second last 'fix' on the 31st July, gear has been fully operational throughout the month. Ship maintenance has been, due to operational and weather conditions, slow, but work done, although apparently disorganized at times, has been thorough. I feel confident that on completion of survey and resumption of more tranquil steaming conditions, the results of effort to date put into removing years of accumulated rust, both above and between decks, will quickly show.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

F. C. S. MARTIN  
CAPTAIN

Lieut. Commander (X) R2A.N.  
CAPTAIN.

(Copies to :)- The Secretary, Department of the Navy. (2)  
C.T.E. 260.O.O.I. H.O.I.C.N.W.A.  
S.O.N.S. Garden Island.



APPENDIX "A"

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - JULY 1958.

Miles steamed during month.	4183.7
Hours underway during month.	394
Distance run per ton of fuel for month.	12.

The Captain, H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA, at Sea.

1st July 1958

22/18

The Flag Officer -in- Charge, EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - JUNE 1958

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the report of proceedings of H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of June 1958.

2. At 0001 IK Sunday 1st June the ship was anchored in position 12°36'South, 124°24'East, in Survey Area 6, and remained at anchor throughout the day. Divisions and prayers were held during the forenoon, after which hands 'Piped Down'. During the afternoon various interpart competitions were conducted, i.e. darts, tug o'war, quiz, etc.

3. At 0540 IK Monday 2nd June I weighed and proceeded to take station for survey soundings, which commenced at 0735 IK. Surveying then continued until p.m. Thursday 5th June, anchoring as requisite on completion of each day's run.

4. Having received mail etc. from "SWAN", I was detached by C.T.E. 260.O.O.I. at 1930 IK Thursday 5th June and set course, with "FREMANTLE" in company, for Darwin. With time in hand minesweeping exercises were commenced at 0815 IK Friday 6th June.

5. The opportunity was taken to exercise my minesweeping party in the streaming and recovery of 'Influence' sweeps. The major part of the forenoon was thus occupied with "FREMANTLE" exercising independently astern. Both ships streamed 'O' sweeps just prior to lunch break, on completion of which exercises were carried out altering course, changing station etc. All sweeps were recovered at 1500 IK and course was once again set for Darwin, passing over FLAT TOP BANK en route. On reaching FLAT TOP BANK at 1800 IK I stopped both ships for two hours in the hope of catching sufficient fish to relieve the strain for one meal on the victualling allowance. This effort proved abortive, the sum total for both ships being five large toads and two small inedible sharks.

6. At 0730 IK I arrived at Darwin and secured Port side to FORT HILL wharf at that time, with "FREMANTLE" securing outboard of me some 10 minutes later. Both ships remained in harbour until the following evening, fuel and stores being embarked during the stay.

7. Slipping at 1910 IK Sunday 8th June, I proceeded, with "FREMANTLE" in company, to rendezvous with C.T.E. 260.O.O.I. in Survey Area 6. Passage was made without delay and I rendezvoused with C.T.E. and carried out jackstay transfer of personnel, stores and mail at 0700 IK Tuesday 10th June. On completion of transfer I opened to station to commence survey.

8. Surveying continued through to p.m. June 15th. During the first part of this period my radar was inoperative, spare parts ordered not having arrived prior to departure Darwin. However, I am pleased to say, by sheer tenacity, will-power, ingenuity and hard work my newly rated Chief R.E. managed to have the set going and in so doing fully justified, particularly in the eyes of those who assisted him, his recent advancement.

9. At 1525 IK 15th June soundings were completed and after closing "SWAN" for transfer of records, the Task Element set course for Darwin. During the forenoon Monday 16th June weather conditions prevented exercises but by 1300 IK had moderated sufficiently for C.T.E. in "SWAN" to detach "FREMANTLE" and myself for minesweeping exercises.

10. Opportunity was taken on this occasion to exercise 'A' sweep. In the first instance I operated as 'Slip' ship, "FREMANTLE" as 'Winch'. Grass was passed to "FREMANTLE" but regrettably it parted as "FREMANTLE" opened out. Positions were then reversed and 'A' sweep was successfully passed between the two ships. Alterations of course etc. were then exercised, sweeps being recovered on completion. Major lesson learnt was that the 'Winch' ship should not attempt opening out too early or too quickly. In addition it was all too apparent that both ships lacked practice at 'A' sweeping and it is to be regretted that both could not meet more frequently for minesweeping exercises.

11. On completion of minesweeping exercises both ships rendezvoused with "SWAN", and after a short burst of O.O.W. manoeuvres the Element entered Darwin harbour, "COOTAMUNDRA" securing Port side to BOOM wharf at 1635 IK, "FREMANTLE" outboard shortly after.

12. The ships remained alongside until Saturday June 21st and during this period as much opportunity as possible was taken to give the Ships Company recreation, organised and otherwise. Considerable trouble had been taken to organise sport, motor trips etc., but in spite of this it is regretted that a few of the younger and more irresponsible members of the Ships Company, along with those from other ships, acted in their own conception of the traditional manner for sailors ashore, bringing the Service into some disrepute and thus causing many citizens ashore to judge all on the actions of a very small few.

13. The evening of Friday 20th June saw the occasion of the first Mayoral Ball in Darwin and one in which the Service acquitted itself honourably. Debutantes were presented and were escorted onto the floor by various Officers of the Task Element. The Army and Air Force, apart from being in the official party, took no part in the proceedings, and it was most gratifying to see our Officers carry themselves so well and distinctly, particularly when compared with the partners the young ladies joined for the Debutante Waltz. By and large the opening stages of the Ball were conducted in the best of tradition and it was a pity therefore, after supper, to observe some of the newly presented young ladies and their partners 'rockin' and rollin'' in bare feet in a section of the Dance hall. Comment encountered in Darwin later was such as to fully justify Naval participation and it has no doubt done the Navy a lot of good as regards public relations in Darwin.

*did this mean the on-lookers remained*

14. At 1140 IK Saturday 21st June I slipped and proceeded in company with "SWAN" to Area 2, "FREMANTLE" having been detached to Pearlina Patrol. On receipt of a signal at 1355 IK I returned to Darwin to land one rating required in Sydney on compassionate grounds. He being transferred to "MELVILLE's" Motor Boat at 1550 IK, I then proceeded to rendezvous with "SWAN" in Area 2.

15. A temporary breakdown of Main Feed Pump during the forenoon of Sunday 22nd June caused a delay in outward passage, and after sighting "SWAN" and "WARREGO" at 1329 IK, I anchored at 1444 in position 10°06 South, 127°24 East.

16. Surveying recommenced Monday 23rd June and continued on through until p.m. Saturday 28th June when soundings finished at 1217 IK and I closed "SWAN" for transfer of records, mail and personnel at 1310. On completion of transfer I was detached by C.T.E. to proceed to Darwin rendezvousing with "WARREGO" for mail and personnel en route.

17. At 1536 IK 28th June I rendezvoused with "WARREGO" and after transfer of mail and personnel set course for Darwin where I secured Port side to BOOM wharf at 1030 IK Sunday 29th June. Victualling stores for all three ships were embarked after securing, leave being granted on completion.

18. Slipping at 1730 IK Monday 30th June I proceeded to rendezvous with C.T.E.260.O.O.I. in Survey Area 4. At 2359 IK I was in position  $11^{\circ}48'$  South,  $129^{\circ}55'$  East on a course 306, Speed 11 knots.

19


19. Throughout the month the health of the Ships Company has been good. Regrettably my L.S.A.(V) was landed early in the month with concussion (incurred ashore), while my Leading Cook proved allergic to penicillin which had been given for boils. Morale of the Ships Company is good.

20. Mechanically the ship is sound. Continuous use has brought to light defects in Radar and A/S equipment, particularly the latter which shows signs of obvious old age and is kept going literally by sheer will-power plus a lot of maintenance. The engine-room department is running well, only normal running defects now being encountered. Externally maintenance is progressing, though the present shortage of Seamen is making it difficult to cope with rust made more active under present weather conditions. This shortage will be more acute if Seamen continue to be drafted without relief.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your obedient servant

  
Lieutenant Commander (X) R.A.N.  
CAPTAIN

Copies to :-

The Secretary, Department of the Navy. (2)  
The Naval Officer -in- Charge, NORTH WEST AUSTRALIAN AREA  
Senior Officer, Hydrographic Service  
C.T.E.260.O.O.I.

The Captain, H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA, at Sea,

31st May, 1958.

22/18

The Flag Officer-in-Charge, EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MAY 1958.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the report of proceedings of H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of May, 1958.

2. At 0001 K 1st May, the ship was berthed alongside "ARUNTA" at the cruiser wharf undergoing refit. The ship slipped and proceeded at 0815 K for Engine, A/S and Echo Sounding trials. When clear of the heads, a ceremony for scattering the ashes of the late Lt. Cdr. Mead, R.A.N. and the late C.P.O.M.(E). Little, R.A.N. was conducted by the Port Chaplain, Chaplain Helyer.

Trials being successful, the ship returned to harbour and secured to No. 4 buoy for swinging compasses and thence alongside "ARUNTA" at 1510 K.

3. The ship remained in this berth until Tuesday 6th May. During this time, storing etc. was completed and preparations were made for the reception of the M.(E)2's training class which joined on Saturday, 3rd May. The 'dockyard mateys' sensing the refit was soon to end, showed signs of some animation, the last of them eventually finishing work late A.M. Tuesday, 6th May.

4. At 0910 K Tuesday 6th May, you were received on board to look around prior to ships departure. The ship slipped and proceeded at 0955K and after cheering the wives, families and 'sweethearts' who had come to farewell the ship, I formed up astern of and proceeded out of harbour in company with "SWAN" at 1015 K. The weather on clearing the Heads can only be described as perfect for which, no doubt, many on board were truly thankful.

5. Weather for the next three days continued at its best with only an occasional passing shower, mostly out of working hours, to disturb conditions. The opportunity was taken to thoroughly clean the ship on all remains and revages of a refit period. O.O.W. manouvres were carried out during the first dog watch each evening, all officers attending, as it is realized how few opportunities there are these days to exercise same.

6. Opportunity was taken during the forenoon of Friday 9th May to stream and calibrate the 'O' sweep kite and otter. Whitsunday passage was made during the middle watch on 10th May, "QUIBERON" being passed, southward bound, on clearing same.

7. At 0630 K 11th May, one E.R.A. was transferred to "SWAN" by whaler for medical treatment. "SWAN" then proceeded into Cairns for fuel and after anchoring for a period, I proceeded into harbour, securing port side to fuelling berth at 1112 K, "SWAN" having proceeded to land demolition stores at Cooktown.

8. No mail was received in Cairns and after a short delay over fresh provisions for "SWAN", I slipped and proceeded from Cairns at 1400 K Sunday 11th May, rendezvousing with "SWAN" off Cooktown at 2200 K.

9. The Supply Officer, one rating and fresh provisions for "SWAN" were transferred by jacksay during the forenoon 12th May, both ships then continuing passage through the Barrier Reef. Except for several minor engine defects, this passage was uneventful, Booby Island Light being passed abeam to port at 1140 K Tuesday 13th May. Weather at this time, except for passing showers on the 10th & 11th May, had continued to be very good and in fact remained that way for the rest of the month.
10. Passage across the Gulf was continued and during this period, all equipment required for survey was run and several defects found in echo-sounder and radar. With the aid of technical and material assistance from "SWAN", these were remedied.
11. At 1630 K, having received one E.R.A. ex medical treatment and mail from "SWAN", I was detached to proceed through Dundas and Clarence Straits to Darwin. Tidal effect was favourable and after making good 15 knots through Clarence Strait, I anchored at 0350 IK in the Quarantine anchorage, Darwin. At 0720 IK, I weighed and secured starboard side alongside "FREMANTLE" at 0740 IK. This being the first time these two ships have been together during my period in command, it was interesting to observe the comparative freedom of upper deck space in "FREMANTLE" compared with a ship fitted for comprehensive sweeping.
12. During the forenoon, I called on the N.O.I.C.N.W.A. Captain F.N. Cook D.S.C., A.D.C., R.A.N., this call being returned at 1130 IK. Fuel, stores and mail embarked, I slipped and proceeded for the survey area with "FREMANTLE" in company at 1657 IK. Enroute to the survey area, engine trials were carried out to ascertain maximum safe speeds on one and two boilers exhausting to L.P. piston. Subsequently, there has been a considerable saving of fuel and water, enabling the ship to remain in the area longer than anticipated.
13. "SWAN" & "WARREGO" were sighted at 0420 IK 18th May, and I anchored in company at 0658 IK. After a conference in "WARREGO", I weighed and surveying commenced at 1140 IK. Surveying completed, I anchored by the stern at 1720 IK veering 150 fathoms of  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " towing wire attached to 40wt. anchor. This method of anchoring has been used consistently since and except for one occasion when all ships dragged, has proved quite successful, the very favourable weather conditions being of great help.
14. Surveying continued daily until 1800 IK Thursday, 22nd May when course was set for Darwin. Except for a breakdown of A/S equipment (since located and remedied.) electronic equipment in "COOTAMUNDRA" has functioned quite well, most errors being human rather than mechanical. Further soundings were made on passage to Darwin, these finishing at 0830 IK Friday 23rd May. Throughout the remaining daylight hours, screening and GOM manouevres were exercised, full advantage being taken by C.T.E. of the rare occasion of having four ships together at the one time. Much value was obtained and it was noticeable how "rusty" one can be after having been alone for so long.
15. At 0800 IK Saturday, 24th May, ship dressed on the occasion of Empire Day, dressing overall on securing alongside "FREMANTLE" at the Boom Wharf, Darwin at 0915 IK. Opportunity was then taken to stream and run A.H. & A.O. sweeps alongside. The ship remained in this berth until proceeding to sea on Wednesday 28th May.
16. During the forenoon Monday 26th May, I paid official calls necessary in Darwin in the company of the Captain, H.M.A.S. SWAN. It is regretted that also during the forenoon, a matter of indiscipline occurred among the seamen on board, this being the subject of a separate report submitted through N.O.I.C.N.W.A.
17. All calls were returned and received on board "SWAN" at midday Tuesday 27th May.
18. At 1800 IK Wednesday, 28th May, having transferred three seamen to "SWAN", I slipped and proceeded in company with "SWAN" & "FREMANTLE" for the survey area.

19. Being detached by "SWAN" at 2355 IK 29th May, I anchored at 0025 IK 30th May by starboard anchor in 41 fathoms, in position 12 deg. 23.5 S 125deg. 30.5 E for tidal observations. These were commenced at 0215 IK, the ship having anchored at slack water and this was not appreciated at the time.

20. Tidal observations completed, I weighed and proceeded at 0320 IK rendezvousing with "SWAN" in position and commenced sounding at 0953 IK. Soundings completed, I anchored at 2045 IK to the south of "SWAN" on a 20 fathoms patch in position. The ship was in this position at 2359 IK Saturday 31st May.

21. The health of the ships company throughout the month has been good in spite of the stay in Darwin when all members landed with 'two pays' in their pockets. Due to a large change of permanent ships company with the resultant influx of hands with no small ships experience plus a degree of overcrowding, morale was not very high on leaving Sydney. A large contributor to this state was also the fact the dockyard personnel did not leave the ship until just prior to sailing and no opportunity occurred therefore re having the ship properly cleaned prior to departure. However, on settling down at sea and having explained anticipated measures for improving conditions on board and in spite of the incident on the 26th May, which took all by surprise, the morale of the ships company is now quite good and showing continued improvement everyday. It is considered that after some interships sport in Darwin, the ships company will soon reach the high standard of morale and keenness that was normal before leave and refit.

22. Ships husbandry is being progressed most satisfactorily. This at present involves, in steps, taking all the ship back to bare metal and it is amazing the amount of paint and rust that has been encountered in the process. I would venture to say that in some places, this is the first time this has been done since the ship originally commissioned in 1943.

23. Mechanically, the ship is running efficiently. It is regretted that a considerable number of defects have occurred since departure from Sydney. As these all involve, in the main, works undertaken by the dockyard during refit, a separate report is being made. To date, defects have all been dealt with by ships staff and those concerned are to be commended as on occasion, many long hours have had to be spent repairing that which should usually run efficiently and this has kept the hands away from their work and duties. This, of course, has been no aid to improving morale.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



Lieut. Commander (X) R.A.N.  
CAPTAIN.

APPENDIX "A" - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MAY.

Miles steamed during month.....	4049.9 Miles
Hours underway during month .....	406 24/60 Hours
Distance run per ton of fuel for month. ....	12.5 Miles.



# Commonwealth of Australia.

Department of the Navy.

## Royal Australian Navy.

From The Captain, H.M.A.S COOTAMUNDRA at Sydney  
 Date 5 May, 1958. Reference No.  
 To Flag Officer-in-Charge, EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA.  
 Subject REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - APRIL 1958.

Sir,


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

2. The beginning of the month found the ship in Captain Cook Dock. Undocking was carried out on the 9th April, when moved by tugs and secured alongside North End Oil Wharf. The ship remained in that berth until 24th April when moved by tugs alongside "ARUNTA" at the Cruiser Wharf. The close of the month saw the ship still in this berth.

3. For the entire month the ship has been in Dockyard hands undergoing refit. Long leave has been granted to those members of the ships company who were entitled (to same).

4. Due to the large amount of work undertaken by the Dockyard, well intended plans of completing the ships company long leave early went somewhat askew as the preponderance and ever increasing numbers of dockyard workers prevented ships husbandry being progressed as hoped for. However, a large amount of preparation has been completed and given fine weather, a few days at sea should see the ship as clean, externally, as one could hope for.

5. The health and morale of the ships company has been good and the ship is as sound as one could expect whilst in Dockyard hands. All major defects have been dealt with and it is anticipated that all but a few minor defects will be completed before departure for Northern Waters.

  
 Lieut. Commander (X) R.A.N.  
CAPTAIN.



REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS-MARCH, 1958-  
H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA.

(The Captain, H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA's letter 64A-5 dated 1st  
April, 1958)

11

E.A. 682/2/122

THE SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

Forwarded for the information of the Naval Board.

*(Sgd) D. H. HARRIS*

REAR ADMIRAL

Naval Headquarters,  
Potts Point, Sydney.

28th April, 1958

# Royal Australian Navy.

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

No. 64A-5

H.M.A.S. GOOTAMUNDRA  
At Sydney,  
1st April, 1958.

The Flag Officer in Charge,  
EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA.

## REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MARCH 1958.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the Report of Proceedings for the month of March 1958.

2. At 0001 on Saturday 1st March the ship was in position 39°59'S, 151°05'E for Hydrographic Investigations, which were completed without incident, at 0800 on 3rd March.
3. At 1315 on 3rd March I entered Harbour and secured alongside Kuttabul Dolphins.
4. A class of four Merchant Navy Officers, a minesweeping class from H.M.A.S. WATSON and the Base Chaplain, Chaplain Hillier joined the ship at 0800 on Tuesday 4th March. I slipped and proceeded at 0850 and on clearing the Heads, the chaplain scattered the ashes of the late Surgeon Commander D.M. Austen R.A.N.R. On completion of the ceremony, the class streamed the starboard Orepesa sweep and the Merchant Navy Officers carried on with instruction in Radar Fixing under their course officer Lieutenant Commander P. Burnett R.A.N. *HEATER*
5. At 1550 on my return alongside H.M.A.S. WARREGO AT THE Fitting Out Wharf, Acting Sub-Lieutenant G. Cockram joined from leave on return from the United Kingdom.
6. At 0745, 5th March Minesweeping And Radar Training classes were embarked and I slipped and proceeded at 0830. At 0930, a violent thunder storm was encountered, and as the weather allowed neither Radar Training nor minesweeping, I returned to harbour and anchored in Vaucluse Bay.
7. Whilst at anchor, the A.D. Mark 4 sweep was screamed and was recovered after the ship proceeded at 1350. The A.O. Mark 4 was then streamed and recovered, and having completed the day's programme, I returned alongside H.M.A.S. KOOKABURRA at Kuttabul Dolphins. ✓
8. I slipped and proceeded at 0830 on 6th March, with minesweeping classes from H.M.A.S. SYDNEY and WATSON. A single orepesa and the acoustic sweeps were streamed and on completion I returned alongside Kuttabul Dolphins.
9. I slipped and proceeded at 0830 on 7th March to complete minesweeping programme and returned alongside Kuttabul Dolphins at 1225K.
10. The ship commenced leave and refit period on the 10th March and remained alongside Kuttabul Dolphins until the 19th when shifted by tugs to the Fitting Out Wharf.
11. On 25th March, the ship was docked in Outer Captain Cook Dock and was in dock for the remainder of the month.
12. To date, apart from normal problems encountered during a refit, progress has been satisfactory. The ship's appearance has naturally deteriorated, but full opportunity has been taken of the use of Dockyard facilities to progress ship's husbandry, and subject to satisfactory

T  
15 APR 1958

weather, practically all rust on weather surfaces should be disposed of, inhibited and covered by the end of refit.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant



Lieutenant Commander (X) R.A.N.

CAPTAIN.

C O P Y

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - FEBRUARY, 1958.

(The Captain, H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA's letter 193/64A/4 dated  
1st March, 1958.)

II

E.A. 682/2/122  
THE SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

Forwarded for the information of the Naval Board.

3. The reference at the end of paragraph 13 is to a report of the successful towing of a minesweeper by a helicopter.

(Sgd.) D.H. HARRIES

REAR ADMIRAL.

Naval Headquarters,  
Potts Point, Sydney.

19th March, 1958.

# Royal Australian Navy.

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

No. 193-64A-4

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA,  
at Sea,  
1st March, 1958.

**Flag Officer-in-Charge,  
EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA.**

## REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - FEBRUARY, 1958.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the Report of Proceedings for H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of February, 1958.

2. At 0001K 1st February ship was in position 32° 33' South 152° 53' East course 230° speed 10 knots returning to Sydney after carrying out Hydrographic investigations. Sydney Heads were entered at 0755K and I secured alongside "Sprightly" at Kuttabul Dolphins at 0825K in which berth the ship remained until Tuesday 11th February.
3. During the period alongside minor engine room defects were made good and full advantage was taken of the opportunity to progress with ships husbandry around the upper deck and superstructure. Wet weather prevented all being done as originally hoped for but at least, with the aid of a large number of power tools, a considerable amount of rust was removed from the iron decks and the ships side was given a much needed coat of paint.
4. At 1315K 11th February, I slipped from Kuttabul Dolphins and secured to No.4 buoy to await B.P.T. which was to be taken to Jervis Bay. The B.P.T. was placed alongside at 1410K. At 1830K word was received that the tow to Jervis Bay had been cancelled.
5. On Wednesday 12th February the B.P.T. was removed at 0830K and at 1600K I slipped and proceeded for S.A.R. duties in the Tasman Sea. During the day a class of eight ordinary Seaman plus instructor had been embarked from "Sydney" for training in Helmsmans duties. A rough sea was encountered immediately on clearing the Heads and within two hours approximately 90% of the ships company were sick.
6. By A.M. Thursday 13th February, the weather had moderated slightly and as a distraction for those members of the ships company fit enough to take interest small arms practice and instruction was carried out on the sweep deck. The rendezvous position for S.A.R. duties was reached at 0900K Friday 14th February and the ship remained in the vicinity until the Royal Aircraft had passed overhead. W/T contact, unfortunately, was not made with the aircraft although it could be heard quite clearly. The aircraft was unobserved but on its passing I set course for Jervis Bay where I was to collect an A/S target to be towed to Sydney. The weather by this time had moderated and conditions at sea were quite pleasant.
7. At 1758K Saturday 15th February, Beecroft Head was sighted and at 2203K, having negotiated the Melbourne and fleet units without mishap, I anchored off Captains Point, Jervis Bay. The target was placed alongside at 2220K and after checking towing arrangements etc., I weighed and proceeded at 2238K. Shortly after clearing Point Perpendicular it became apparent that in spite of the fine weather and sea conditions the tow was not behaving at all well. At 0125K February, 16th, I stopped to trim, if possible, the tow down by the stern. This was managed by flooding the after compartment and at 0230K I was able to proceed with revolutions on for 9 knots.

8. At daylight on observing the target to be towing most satisfactorily speed was increased and at 1130K I secured port side alongside "Warrego" at the Fitting Out Wharf. The after tank of the target was pumped out and an inspection revealed it was none the worse for wear.
9. Monday 17th February was spent alongside embarking stores etc., and at 0830K Tuesday 18th February having embarked a class of Merchant Service Officers from Watson, I slipped and proceeded for radar navigational training. As would appear usual with "daily running" calm conditions with passing showers prevailed outside and these together with an abundance of shipping gave the class under instruction ample opportunity to develop their talents. I returned to harbour and secured alongside "Warrego" at 1540K.
10. Wednesday 19th February was spent alongside and at 1405K on Thursday 20th February, having embarked a second training class of 15 Ordinary Seaman and 1 instructor from the "Sydney" plus 4½ tons of free freight ammunition for Marjbyrnong, I slipped and proceeded. M.R.L. 253 was taken in tow off the east side of Garden Island at 1445 and I thence proceeded down harbour. Weather conditions were ideal at this time though some rough weather from the south had been forecast. On clearing the heads I set course to the southward intending to run south along the 100 fathom line and thus get the best of the southerly set and be clear of most shipping.
11. At 1855K a strong southerly rain squall passed over leaving in its wake a steady south wind about force 5 to 6 which gradually built up a moderate head sea. The ship and tow continued to ride quite well and it was not necessary to reduce speed at this stage.
12. At 0005K Friday 21st February I stopped to change the point of tow aft and have more direct lead over the port roller, and proceeded once more at 0115K. By this time a rough sea was running with the wind force 7 from 210°, my course being 200° speed was slowly built up to normal revolutions for ten and there being no undue strain on the tow wire and as both tow and self were riding comfortably I decided to maintain this speed. A constant watch was kept on the wire which was riding well on the port roller fairlead. At approx 0310K it was reported the tow wire had jumped the roller fairlead and had become jammed between it and the upright for the M.L.4 sweep fairlead. However, in spite of stopping the ship, before any effective action could be taken the wire parted at the fairlead at approx 0314K.
13. I immediately closed the M.R.L. and having ascertained she was riding comfortably I remained in radar contact sighting the M.R.L. at regular intervals until dawn. By dawn the wind had freshened to about force 8 and the subsequent rough seas made it impossible to effect recovery of the tow. The M.R.L. at this stage was approximately 10 miles east of Point Perpendicular riding almost beam on to the wind and sea but appeared comfortable and not taking much water. I decided to remain in the vicinity of the M.R.L. keeping in visual contact steaming on northerly and southerly courses at seven knots. During the day the M.R.L. rode quite comfortably and in fact taking less water than I was when heading into the sea. By about 1600K the M.R.L. had crossed the 100 fathom line and soon began to drift to the S.S.E. at about 2 knots. Although taking a lot of water over the bows when heading into the sea there was not a great deal of discomfort in "Cootamundra" and to entertain the ships company there was a showing of the "Cruel Sea" in the messdecks during the day. Consideration was given to method of tow shown in VOL XCIII No.2407 page 571 of "The Aeroplane" dated 18/10/57.
14. By nightfall 21st February the wind had eased a little but a heavy sea was still running. During the first watch a particularly heavy swell over the bows carried away the port sliding door and vertical roller of the fo'castle breakwater and at the same time lifted the hydraulic motor to the Bofors off its brackets. In a subsequent search at daybreak the roller was found in the port waist but there was

no trace of the sliding door.

15. At 0145K 22nd February an unknown merchant ship which refused to identify itself or acknowledge any signals approached the vicinity of the M.R.L. and for some minutes there was speculation as to whether or not it would hit our tow. Luck was with the merchantman and he missed by about two cables.

16. At 0726K Saturday 22nd February the weather had moderated sufficiently to attempt to recover the tow. I stopped and lowered the whaler hoisting same at 0747K having transferred my Bosun and four hands to the M.R.L. which was taken in tow at 0827K. Unfortunately while passing the tow minor damage was sustained to the brackets holding sweep gear aft when my stern on two occasions touched the M.R.L. This is regretted but to pass the tow it was necessary to be as close to the M.R.L. as possible and with the wave in the water the ships screws could not be turned without risk of fouling. On passing the tow course was set for Jervis Bay. At this time there was still an eight to ten foot swell from 210° and the wind force 3 - 210°. The tow was recovered in a position 20 miles S.S.E. Point Perpendicular.

17. Slow progress was made to Jervis Bay but not without interest as it was revealed the M.R.L. party had transferred without food or water. Ordinary Seaman Training Class was then given a demonstration of provisioning at sea. A tin of provisions was attached to an anchor buoy and this was floated aft attached to a grass line being expertly retrieved by the M.R.L. party with a makeshift grapnel.

18. I entered Jervis Bay at 1630K and subsequently anchored off Captains Point at 1800K. By 2130 K the parted tow having been recovered, towing wire and gear checked I weighed and proceeded. During the middle of the 23rd February the weather once again deteriorated and this time brought with it a short choppy sea which caused me to reduce speed. Slow progress was made during the day and I set course for Twofold Bay there to wait better weather conditions. At 0323K Monday 24th February I anchored in Twofold Bay off Eden township. The weather by this time had dropped to almost calm conditions.

19. During the forenoon Monday 24th February the tow was checked once again and altered as requisite in preparation for the remainder of the voyage to Melbourne. I landed in Eden to consult the local lighthouse keeper re weather conditions etc.,. Contact was also made with the keeper at Gabo Island and as both these gentlemen forecast fair weather for the next few days I rang the Chief Staff Officer to appraise him of what had happened and my intentions re sailing.

20. At 1310K Monday 24th February I weighed and proceeded and transferred to the operational control of N.O.I.C. S.E.A. on rounding Gabo Island at 1830K. For the remainder of the voyage fair weather was enjoyed it keeping accurately to the weather in the special forecasts from A.C.N.B. - these were most appreciated. I eventually anchored off Gellibrand Light, Port Melbourne at 1123K Wednesday 26th February with just under 30% fuel remaining.

21. At 1250K having recovered all gear from M.R.L. 253 for return to Sydney the M.R.L. was transferred to tugs and I proceeded to secure alongside Nelson Pier for fuel. However the U.S. Navy had arrived and as all the fuelling party available was tending its needs I shifted berth to Outer West Wing Station Pier securing starboard side to at 1447K. There being no prospect of fuel until the next morning hands piped down and overnight leave was granted.

22. At 0817K Thursday 27th February I shifted berth to O.F.L. at Gellibrand to fuel ship. After some delay fuelling was commenced at 1011K and I eventually slipped and proceeded for Hydrographic Investigations at 1245K.



23. At 2359K Friday 28th February the ship was in position 39° 59' South 151° 05' East course 104½° speed 10 knots heading for the initial firing position for the next series of investigations.

24. In spite of the bad weather during the month ships husbandry above decks has progressed satisfactorily. Minor defects have occurred in the engine room, these have been made good and the ship is mechanically sound.

25. The conduct and health of the ships company has been good. All members of the ships company are working as a team and this was apparent when the whalers crew to recover the tow consisted of 1 L.M.E, 1 E.M, 1 L/SEA, 2 A/B's and one Sub/Lieut. The Ordinary seaman training classes from the "Sydney", once having found their small ship sea legs have proved themselves a considerable asset and all of them appreciate putting to practice/use all they had learnt in the training-ship "Sydney".

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,



Lieutenant Commander (X) R.A.N.  
CAPTAIN.



APPENDIX "B" REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - FEBRUARY, 1958.

WHALE SIGHTING REPORT.

N I L   R E T U R N .

APPENDIX "A" - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MONTH OF FEBRUARY, 1958.

Miles steamed during the month.	2231.4
Miles steamed since commissioning.	79,027.9
Hours underway during the month.	272 45/60
Hours underway since commissioning.	8736 45/60
Distance run per ton of fuel for month/	10.9 Miles.

COPY

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS, JANUARY, 1958.

The Captain, H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA's letter 178/64A/3 dated 1st  
February, 1958

11

E.A. 682/2/122  
THE SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

Forwarded for the information of the Naval Board.

REAR ADMIRAL

Naval Headquarters,  
Potts Point, Sydney.

17th February.

# Royal Australian Navy.

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

No. 177-64A-3

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA,  
at Sydney,  
1st February, 1958.

Flag Officer-in-Charge,  
EAST AUSTRALIAN AREA.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the report of proceedings of H.M.A. Ship under my command for the month of January, 1958.

2. At 0001K on the 1st January the ship was secured along side Kuttabul Dolphins in which berth we remained until the 7th January. During this period work was progressed in cleaning ship and stores and trials equipment embarked.

3. At 1300K on the 7th January I slipped and proceeded for Gabo Island area. Starboard "O" sweep was streamed for exercise during the afternoon and it was pleasing to observe that the ships minesweeping team were able to stream and recover sweep in a time compatible with a fully worked up and operational minesweeper.

4. Having received word during the night that the father of P.O.M.E. Purdy had <sup>died</sup> deceased I proceeded to Twofold Bay and anchored off Eden at 1020K on the 8th January. P.O.M.E. Purdy was landed by whaler manned by Engine Room Dept. and I weighed and proceeded at 1120K and rendezvoused with "Kookaburra" off Gabo Island at 1350K. Exercises commenced at 1717K and continued until 1500K 9th January when bad weather called a temporary halt. I returned to Twofold Bay anchoring off Eden at 2042K.

5. Weather having moderated I weighed and proceeded at 0600K 10th January arriving on station at 0830K. Exercises were recommenced at 1045K and in spite of unpleasant weather conditions remaining serials were completed by 1715K 11th January. I set course for Melbourne at the same time transferred to the operational control of N.O.I.C. S.E.A. Bad weather necessitated a reduction of speed at 2136K but by 0130K 12th January I was again able to proceed at 10 knots arriving at Port Melbourne and securing at Outer West Wing Station Pier at 2310K. In this berth I remained until the 15th January.

6. At 0900K 15th January I slipped and proceeded to Williamstown for fuel. A rather strong southerly wind did not assist the alongside to the oil lighter which had a berthing party of one civilian hand plus three fuelling party (civilian) onboard. It was interesting to note that when asked to assist and take a line the fuelling party replied "not us mate, that's not our Union's job!" The stern being close in hands were put aboard the lighter and I secured without mishap. At 1300K I slipped and proceeded. M.L.4 sweep was streamed and pulsed for one hour while proceeding down Port Phillip Bay and passing through the Rip at 1808K I set course to rendezvous with "Kookaburra" in the Cape Nelson area

7. At 1020K 16th January I closed "Kookaburra" for a heaving-line transfer of W/T crystals and minor stores. "Kookaburra" being in position at 1330K exercises were commenced at this time and these continued until 1510K 21st January. In spite of rather inclement weather during this period the full Cape Nelson and Cape

Continued.....

Banks exercise program was completed and the visit to Adelaide was cancelled. Several minor incidents occurred during this time one worthy of note being the fouling of my starboard screw with a  $1\frac{1}{4}$  lb. charge. This was cleared by A/B Reynolds (on loan from "Watson") the stern at the time rising and falling some twelve feet in the heavy seas that were running.

8. At 1510K 21st January I set course for Melbourne and duly secured alongside oil lighter at Williamstown for fuel at 1440K 22nd January. Fuelling completed I slipped at 1700K securing alongside Outer West Wing Station Pier at 1730K. In this berth the ship remained until Sunday 26th January.

9. On Sunday 26th January a party of seventeen Sea-Cadets was embarked during the forenoon. The intention had been to land them at Portsea but unfortunately due to an unforeseen delay in the engine-room I was unable to slip until 1330K - this necessitated disembarking sea cadets at Frankston. At 1545K I anchored off Frankston pier and found myself involuntary flagship of the Frankston Anniversary Day regatta. It was almost with regret that I weighed and proceeded at 1620K all sea-cadets having been safely put ashore. The Rip was cleared at 1900K and I set course for the Gabo Island area.

10. Overtaking "Kookaburra" at 1250K I closed to give my Sub-Lieutenants an opportunity (very rare) to exercise station-keeping. Shortly after the defect in the starboard engine, reported in my signal 300709Z Jan., developed and I slowed to allow temporary repairs to be carried out and closed "Kookaburra" at 1536K.

11. At 0600K 28th January I transferred back to your operational control. "Kookaburra" being in station then next exercise was commenced at 1200K and continued until 1300K 31st January when due to bad weather and poor communications the serial was cancelled. I then set course for Sydney.

12. At 2359K 31st January I was in position  $32^{\circ} 33'$  South  $152^{\circ} 53'$  East course 230° speed 10 knots.

13. Due to bad weather experienced at sea the ships husbandry above decks has received a considerable set back and I regret the ship does not appear as clean as perhaps she should. However considerable heavy rust has been removed and the few days respite gained by omitting the visit to Adelaide should see the set back quickly made good. Minor defects have occurred in the engine room but these have been made good and the ship is, in general, mechanically sound.

14. The conduct and health of the ships company has been good. Morale, in spite of the continued rough weather, has remained very high. This has in part been due to card competitions etc., organized by divisional officers plus the sobering thought that no matter how rough the weather we in "Cootamundra" have experienced the effect on those in "Kookaburra" has no doubt been a lot worse.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your obedient Servant.



*[Handwritten Signature]*  
 Lieutenant Commander (X) R.A.N.  
CAPTAIN.

APPENDIX "A" - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MONTH OF JANUARY, 1958.

Miles steamed during month.	3382.5
Miles steamed since commissioning.	76796.5
Hours underway during month.	420 26/60
Hours underway since commissioning.	8736 45/60
Distance run per ton of fuel for month.	11.4 Miles.

H.M.A.S. COOTAMUNDRA,  
at Sydney,  
1st February, 1958.

APPENDIX "B" - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MONTH OF JANUARY, 1958.

WHALE SIGHTING REPORT.

N I L.



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