

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

HMAS PERTH

Item number: 292/2

Title: July 1939 - December 1941



AWM78-292/2

PERTH L. of P.

SECRET

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Reviewer: LCDR R. L. Smith (FANEM)

Signature: *R. Smith* Date: 12 MAR 91

SECRET



IN REPLY
QUOTE

NO.

701

2026/7/20

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

TELEPHONE :
CENTRAL 7185.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS :
"NAVY, MELBOURNE."

NAVY OFFICE, THE NAVY.
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE,

MELBOURNE,
S.C. 1.

013436

27 NOV 1939

CONFIDENTIAL

The Rear-Admiral Commanding,
His Majesty's Australian Squadron,
H.M.A.S. "CANBERRA".

H.M.A.S. "PERTH" - LETTER OF PROCEEDINGS -
25th JULY TO 21st AUGUST, 1939.

I am directed by the Naval Board to
forward, herewith, for information, copy of Letter
of Proceedings of H.M.A.S. "PERTH" for the period 25th
July to 21st August, 1939.

W. J. Harris
Secretary.

Sent to :-

R.A.C.A.S.
C.O., "CANBERRA"
"AUSTRALIA"
"SYDNEY"
"ADELAIDE"
"SWAN"
"YARRA"
"MORESBY".



Previously received direct
27/12

C O P Y

FROM The Commanding Officer, H.M.A.S. "PERTH", C/o G.P.O.,
London.

DATE 31st August, 1939

No..243/101/2.

TO The Secretary, Naval Board, Navy Office, Melbourne.

Copies to :-

The Commander-in-Chief, American and West Indies
Squadron.

The Rear-Admiral Commanding H.M. Australian
Squadron.

SUBJECT..LETTER OF PROCEEDINGS - 25th July to 21st August, 1939.

Submitted for the information of the Naval Board
the following report of proceedings of H.M.A.S. "PERTH" for the
period 25th July to 21st August, 1939.

2. The following programme has been carried out :-

<u>Place.</u>	<u>Arrived.</u>	<u>Left.</u>
Portsmouth.	-	Wednesday, 26th July.
New York.	Friday, 4th August.	Wednesday, 16th Aug.
Kingston, Jamaica.	Monday, 21st August.	-

3. It was originally intended to leave Portsmouth on 25th July, but departure was delayed by order of the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth to enable repairs to the after turbo generator to be completed. This was deemed necessary in view of the fact that electric steering is fitted and that the Diesel generators had not been entirely satisfactory.

4. The Board approved a speed of 15 knots being made good to New York, in order to fulfil the programme there. Arriving on the programme date (Friday, 4th August) enabled official calls and details of later items of the ship's programme to be completed before the week-end in accordance with the wishes of the local authorities.

5. The weather experienced in the Atlantic was very good, apart from some fog in the Western Approaches and in the vicinity of the Newfoundland Bank. I proceeded about 50 miles south of the Bank to avoid reported icebergs, and to keep clear of the worst of the fog.

Gunnery Exercises and Training classes were carried out on passage.

6. The ship secured alongside No.53 Wharf, North River, New York at 0840, on 4th August, a National Salute having been previously fired off the Statue of Liberty.

On the same day occurred the incident referred to in my cypher message 0329 of 6th August and confidential submission 227/32/1 of 21st August, 1939.

7. The programme of official and other entertainment arranged for officers and men proved a strenuous one, particularly in the excessive heat and humidity prevailing.

Details are shown in Appendix No.2.

8. On/

8. On the 11th August a special "Australia Day" was celebrated at the World's Fair. A party of 150 officers and men were paraded at a ceremony held, in the afternoon, outside the Australian Pavilion. I accompanied the Australian Government Trade Commissioner (L.R. Macgregor Esq., C.B.E.) on a round of calls on World's Fair officials, including the various Dominion representatives.

9. The following U.S. warships were in harbour during "PERTH"'s stay.

<u>Ship.</u>	<u>Arrived.</u>	<u>Left.</u>
U.S.S. San Francisco. (Flag of Rear-Admiral A.C. Pickens).	5th August.	10th August.
U.S.S. Lang.	5th August.	12th August.
U.S.S. Tuscaloosa.	9th August.	12th August, for cruise with President of U.S.A.
U.S.S. Wyoming.	10th August.	-
U.S.S. Quincy.	10th August.	-
U.S.S. Vincennes.	10th August.	-
U.S.S. Ellet. (Destroyer).	16th August.	

10. On the 12th August, President Roosevelt embarked in U.S. "TUSCALOOSA" at No. 34 Wharf for a fishing cruise. I had previously informed the local Naval authorities that I was entirely at their service as regards any special ceremonial desired, but as "TUSCALOOSA" was down stream from "PERTH" nothing was required.

11. During the ship's visit to New York, H.B.M. Consul-General (Godfrey Haggard Esq., C.M.G. O.B.E.) and the Australian Government Trade Commissioner (L.R. Macgregor Esq., C.B.E.) spared no effort to ensure that the programme during the ship's stay went smoothly. I am particularly grateful for the help and efficient service given by Mr. Macgregor, who was in charge of social functions and the programme for Australia Day. He and his office staff answered many calls on their time and patience and were always on hand when required. Much assistance was also given by the local naval authorities, with whom officers and men were on the best of terms.

12. There were three seamen absentees on leaving New York, as reported in my message 1838 of 16th August. Two subsequently reported to the Consul-General and are on their way to re-join the ship.

The other (Ord. Smn. T.H. Edwards, O.N. 21861) was a convicted thief whom I had proposed to recommend for S.N.L.R. He is also sub-normal mentally.

13. Passage to Kingston was made in fine weather. I completed with oil fuel 378 tons from a lighter on the 25th August in accordance with instructions from Admiralty.

(Sgd). H.B. FARNCOMB.
CAPTAIN.

C O P Y

(Perth Letter No. 243/101/2. of 31st August, 1939)

APPENDIX I.

The following official calls were paid and returned at New York.

4th August.

1. The Honourable Fiorello H. La Guardia, Mayor of New York City.
2. Rear Admiral C.H. Woodward, U.S.N. Commandant General, Third Naval District.
3. Major General H.A. Drum, U.S. Army, Commanding General, Second Corps Area.
4. Godfrey D.N. Haggard Esq. C.M.G., O.B.E., His Britannic Majesty's Consul General, New York.

5th August.

Rear Admiral A.C. Pickens, U.S.N., of U.S.S. "SAN FRANCISCO".

14th August.

Captain Bastedo, U.S.N., Commanding Officer U.S.S. "QUINCY".

C O P Y

(Perth Letter No. 243/101/2 of 31st August, 1939).

APPENDIX II.

Entertainments at New York.

(a) Officers.

Saturday - 5th August.

Dinner for 2 Officers - Mr. Kemball of British Consulate-General.

Monday - 7th August.

Lunch for Captain - 15 Officers - British Club.
Buffet Dinner for Captain and 3 Officers - home of Mr. G.D.N. Haggard, British Consul General.

Tuesday - 8th August.

Lunch for Captain and 4 Officers - Rear Admiral C.H. Woodward, U.S.N. at Brooklyn Navy Yard.

Tour of Sperry Gyroscope Company Works for 4 Officers and 5 Electrical Artificers - lunch afterwards.

Wednesday - 9th August.

Lunch for Captain and 5 Officers - Rear Admiral A.C. Pickens, U.S.N., on board U.S.S. "SAN FRANCISCO".

Official "At Home" on board - Approximately 600 invitations sent out, approximately 450 attended.

Thursday - 10th August.

Cocktail Party for Captain and 17 Officers - Sir Louis Beale, British Representative at World's Fair, at British Pavillion

Supper Party for abovementioned Officers - at National Advisory Committee Building, New York World's Fair.
Afterwards visit to General Motors Exhibit "Futurama".

Friday - 11th August.

Australian Day at New York World's Fair 1300 - Official Lunch for Captain and 8 Senior Officers - The Honourable Grover A. Whalen, President of New York World's Fair at Perylon Hall, World's Fair.

1445 - Ceremony at Australian Pavilion.

1600 - Reception for Captain and all Officers (not onboard for duty) by American Commissioner General at World Fair, at American Federal Building.

2100/

APPENDIX II.

2100 - 8 Officers attended Radio City Music Hall at invitation of management.

Saturday - 12th August.

Golf and Tennis - Mr. C.S. Allen, British Club.

Sunday - 13th August.

Supper - Captain and 6 Officers at home of Mr. L.R. Macgregor at Scarsdale.

Monday - 14th August.

1300 - Lunch onboard U.S.S. "QUINCY". Captain and 4 Officers.

1500 - Visit to National Broadcasting Company's Studios, R.C.A. Building, Captain and 10 Officers.

1700 - At Home onboard.

Tuesday - 15th August.

Dinner Dance at Waldorf Astoria Hotel at invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Carleton Palmer - Captain and 15 Officers.

Clubs.

Officers were made honorary members of the following clubs :-

British Club.
The Lotos Club.
Governor's Island Club.
The New York Yacht Club.
The Pelham Country Club (4 officers).

- Cinemas etc.

Officers and Men were admitted free in the following theatres:-

Radio City Music Hall.
Roxy Theatre.
Paramount Theatre.

(b) Ship's Company.

The following clubs were open to the Ship's Company :-

Sailors and Soldiers Club of New York.
Y.M.C.A. Club rooms.
English Speaking Union Club rooms.
Sports Grounds and Swimming pool at Army establishment on Governor's Island.

Free tickets for every member of the Ship's Company to the World's Fair. Reduced rates at the majority of Amusement centres at World's Fair.

Dance given by Sailors and Soldiers Club to 75 ratings.

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FROM ... The Commanding Officer, H.M.A.S. "PERTH".

DATE ... 9th September, 1939. No. 253/101/3.

TO The Commander-in-Chief, America and West Indies Squadron.
(Copies to the Secretary, Naval Board, Melbourne, and
Staff Officer (Intelligence) Kingston, Jamaica).

SUBJECT. H.M.A.S. "PERTH" - LETTER OF PROCEEDINGS.
22nd AUGUST - 9th SEPTEMBER, 1939.

Submitted for information, report of proceedings of H.M.A.S. "PERTH" for the period 22nd August to 9th September, 1939.

2. During this period the following programme was carried out:-

<u>PLACE.</u>	<u>ARRIVED.</u>	<u>LEFT.</u>
Kingston, Jamaica.	-	0600, 26th August.
Port of Spain, Trinidad (on patrol in vicinity of Trinidad)	1600, 28 August	1400, 29th August.
Port of Spain. (on patrol in vicinity of Dutch West Indies and Gulf of Venezuela)	2045, 31 August.	1215, 1st September
Kingston, Jamaica.	0700, 9 September	-

3. For convenience of reference I have set out my proceedings in diary form.

4. Wednesday, 23rd August.

0300 - Received Commander-in-Chief's message, time of origin 1205/23rd August, to Admiralty requesting that "PERTH" should remain at Kingston for the present.

I cancelled arrangements for sailing for Panama Canal at 1400 as originally intended, and subsequently received Admiralty message, time of origin 1140/23rd August, directing me to "return to Kingston and await further orders".

Completed with oil fuel from lighter - 378 tons.

Thursday, 24th August.

5. Received information that the Australian Government concurred in the retention of "PERTH" on the America and West Indies Station.

Discussed the situation with the Commanding Officer, H.M.S. "ORION", and agreed on a division of duties for the Caribbean Force.

/..... 6.

("PERTH" letter No. 253/101/3 of 9th September, 1939).

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Friday, 25th August.

6. Learned that German Merchant Ship "KHYPHISSIA" intended to call at Kingston A.M. 26th August. Arranged with "ORION" to spend the 26th at sea exercising, in order to avoid possible acts of sabotage by the ship in question.

Saturday, 26th August.

7. 0200 - Received instructions from Commander-in-Chief to assume duty of Oil Supply Protective Force pending arrival of "DUNDEE" and "PENZANCE", and to sail for War Station (Message time of origin 1915/25th August).

0600 - Left Kingston.

8. On clearing harbour opened out for the purpose of carrying out a Range and Inclination exercise with "ORION".

1045 - Completed exercises. Set suitable course for Aruba to avoid merchant shipping.

Action Stations were exercised each day during passage, and hands were kept, otherwise, at Cruising Stations.

Sunday, 27th August.

9. 0815 - In vicinity of Aruba - closed to 10 miles, then steered for Curacao.

1200 - Received Commander-in-Chief's message, time of origin 1109/27th August. reading (apparently) "Search for submarine (etc) east of Flores Island, Uruguay".

1415 - Received repetition of above. Decided to proceed to Trinidad.

(a) whence these orders could be queried, or

(b) where necessary charts could be obtained from Washington by air.

Monday, 28th August.

10. 1330 - Streamed paravanes on crossing the 100 fathom line.

1600 - Arrived Port of Spain. Visited by Naval Control Service Officer (Harbour Master).

Tanker "OLWEN" in harbour ready to sail for Pernambuco area.

Called on His Excellency The Governor and discussed the local situation.

11. Before arriving at Port of Spain I had signalled my expected time of arrival to the Governor, and passed a message in Inter-Service Stencil Cypher in accordance with C.B.1618Q, Part I paragraph 6, Part III (Trinidad) and Part IV, List 1 (Trinidad) to the "Selected Military Authority".

/ 12.

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("PERTH" letter No.253/101/3 of 9th September,1939).

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12. I subsequently discovered that there is no such person in Port of Spain nor does the Signal Station in the vicinity of Port of Spain (vide amendment to C.B.1618Q on page 33) apparently understand the private signal. The "Preparatory Message" remained undecyphered until I arrived and could explain what it was about; the Signal Station did not answer me when called up by light.

13. The defences and local garrison are actually in the vicinity of San Fernando guarding the oil refineries. There are no defences whatever at Port of Spain (not even a gun to command the Examination Anchorage).

14. I was also informed that there were no guns covering the "Sea approaches" in the Gulf of Paria (A.W.I.0617F, paragraph 52), nor did I see any.

15. I completed with fresh provisions the same evening and took in 476 tons of oil fuel.

Tuesday, 29th August.

16. A.M. - Received Commander-in-Chief's message, time of origin 1955/28th August, telling me that the message relating to the submarines off Uruguay was for information only, and instructing me to remain on oil supply protective duties.

1400 - Left Port of Spain and patrolled in the Tobago - Trinidad Channel.

Wednesday, 30th August.

17. Patrolling in the vicinity of Trinidad and Tobago.

A.M. - Carried out 6" Sub-calibre firing at drifting target, and 0.5" Machine Gun firing at balloons.

Thursday, 31st August.

18. Noon - Anchored in Courland Bay, Tobago, and sent hammocks ashore to bathe.

1615 - After receipt of Mobilization telegram, sailed for Port of Spain to fill up with fuel and provisions.

2045 - Arrived Port of Spain. Received West Indies and South American charts from Washington.

Friday, 1st September.

19. 0300 - Completed with oil fuel - 160 tons, and topped up fresh provisions.

1030 - Received Warning Telegram for Germany and Italy. Passed it to Harbour Master for information of His Excellency The Governor.

1215 - Left Port of Spain for the Aruba area.

Saturday, 2nd September.

20. 0930 - Closed La Guaira Harbour, Venezuela, to a distance of $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles to see if there were any German ships in port, but observed none.

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("PERTH" letter No. 253/101/3 of 8th September, 1939).

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21. I had received no information whatever regarding German or Italian ships in neutral ports in my area and therefore considered that I must find out, as far as possible, for myself.

22. P.M. - Carried out 6" Full Calibre firing at drifting target, 3 rounds per gun; and 4" Low Angle Full Calibre firing, 4 rounds per gun.

23. While I was aware that this proceeding contravened paragraph 82 of 0617F, I considered it essential that my very young Ship's Company should fire a few rounds of full calibre in order to get over gun-shyness and acquire some confidence in their weapons. (Many of the seamen had never been near a firing gun before).

24. The 6" firing was entirely satisfactory, 3 full salvoes being fired. The 4" firing was not so satisfactory owing to sightsetter's errors and mistakes in drill. These, I hope, have now been rectified.

Sunday, 3rd September.

25. 0500 - Appeared off St. Anne's Harbour, Curacao, with a dummy third funnel to try and convey the impression, ultimately, that there were two cruisers in the neighbourhood.

26. After considering the two policies available to me - evasion or publicity, I decided that the latter was preferable. It would be practically impossible for only one ship to cover all ports in the area in order to prevent German merchant shipping escaping, but it might be possible to frighten them into staying in harbour by moving rapidly about the area and allowing the ship to be seen, thus preventing them from knowing when she would turn up next, particularly in the mornings.

With the considerable amount of tanker traffic about, evasion was, in any case, scarcely practicable. Further, if "PERTH" had not been reported, German ships might have assumed that there was no ship there and put to sea. In this event, they may have had a good chance of escaping to an area from which they could have carried out raiding operations.

27. 0530 - Received news of the outbreak of hostilities with Germany.

28. 1030 - Off entrance to Gulf of Venezuela. Signalled a number of small Dutch tankers operating between Maracaibo and Aruba - Curacao. I had managed to obtain an old copy of Lloyd's Register from the Harbour Master, Port of Spain. Without this I should have had no means of checking particulars of ships signalled.

29. 1700 - Signalled a small ship outward bound from the Gulf flying Panamanian Colours. She only replied to the Signal "What port are you bound for" (Curacao), then hauled down her colours, turned into Venezuelan territorial waters and failed to answer further signals.

As her actions appeared suspicious, I stood by her until she left territorial waters near Cape S. Roman about 1800 and then ordered her to stop. This she failed to do until a round of blank was fired.

She was then boarded, and proved to be the American Steamship "TACHIRA" of the Grace line, bound from Maracaibo to Curacao with a small cargo of coffee. Her papers were in order.

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("PERTH" letter No. 253/101/3 of 9th September, 1939).

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When asked why he failed to answer signals, the Master was apologetic and stated that he did not have the complete International Code. Both he and his officers appeared to have but a hazy idea of signalling. It was pointed out that failure to answer a warship's signals would very likely cause him future inconvenience.

30. The Master Supplied the information contained in my message, time of origin 1625/4th September. He had no complaint to make about being stopped and boarded.

Monday, 4th September.

31. Received information from Commander-in-Chief, originating from His Majesty's Minister in Caracas, of the possibility of German mining in the vicinity of Trinidad and the Gulf of Venezuela (Message time of origin 1556/3rd September).

32. 1030 - Closed St. Nicolaas Harbour, Aruba and observed the following four German merchant ships outside with two anchors down :-
"ANTILLA", "CONSUL HORN", "TROJA", "HEIDELBERG".

33. This information was signalled in my message time of origin 1909/5th September. Only the "ANTILLA" was showing German colours.

34. 1100 - Spoken by Dutch Submarine "O 14" between St. Nicolaas Harbour and Oranjestad. Exchanged friendly signals but she would not say if there were other submarines in the neighbourhood.

35. I reported this meeting in my message time of origin 1625/4th September.

36. Continued patrolling in the vicinity of Aruba.

37. 1630 - Spoke British Tanker "CALGAROLITE" bound Montreal from Aruba. Her signalling was so bad that I failed to make satisfactory contact with her and was thus unable to obtain any information from Aruba.

38. I informed the Master by flag signals that his signalling was very bad and that I would report the fact.

Tuesday, 5th September.

39. 0600 - Closed Puerto Cabello Harbour (Venezuela). There were two small steamers there, probably not German. Proceeded towards Bonaire.

1400 - Met H.M.S. "PENZANCE" who reported that she had received instructions to remain in the neighbourhood until ordered to deliver books to Curacao and Aruba.

40. 1530 - Passed Kralendijk, Bonaire. No German merchant ships there. Patrolled during the night north of Aruba - Curacao. Sighted one tanker but did not make contact.

Wednesday, 6th September.

41. 1000 - 1200 In company with H.M.S. "PENZANCE". Supplied her with what intelligence I had, and then instructed her to patrol for the next 48 hours between Aruba and Gulf of Venezuela.

"PERTH" proceeded towards Curacao.

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("PERTH" letter No. 253/101/3 of 9th September, 1939).

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42. 1525 - Signalled S.S. "SANTA PAULA" (Grace Line - U.S.A. - about 10 miles North-west of North Point, Curacao, asking her "Where from" and "Where bound". As she did not reply, after 10 minutes I ordered her to stop. She then made port of destination as Curacao but did not stop. On my closing her, she slowed down to 12 knots but continued on her course. In view of paragraph 34 of 0617F I refrained from bringing her to, but contented myself with ascertaining the information for which I asked, and eliciting the fact (upon the Master's word) that there were no German subjects on board. (Admiralty's message, time of origin 1305/8th September, regarding enemy reservists was not received until 8th September).

43. The ship was ordered to proceed on her voyage at 1615 and her arrival at Curacao at 1740 was not delayed. (Her reported time of arrival there had been intercepted).

Her final destination was New York.

44. While fully seized with the necessity of avoiding friction with the United States of America, I assume that it is not intended that no control whatever should be exercised over American ships, or that they should be allowed to ignore signals from H.M. Ships. Otherwise, they will be able to carry German merchant ships' crews, and reservists, between neutral ports, or even to German ports, with impunity.

45. 1800 - Passed Willemstad (Curacao) at 4 miles distance. Sighted a sloop anchored outside, resembling "JOHAN MAURITS VAN NASSAU". She obviously had steam up and was evidently there to prevent merchant ships leaving without a clearance.

46. Patrolled round Curacao during the night.

47. Received instructions to take command of Oil Supply Protective Force, together with French Submarine "SURCOUF" (Commander-in-Chief's messages times of origin 1350/6th September and 1550/6th September).

Thursday, 7th September.

48. 0500 - Closed British Tanker "SAN UBALDO" who supplied the information contained in my message, time of origin 0814/7th September, regarding a German submarine having stopped the Argentine Tanker "LOS POZOS" off Aves Island.

49. It was most reassuring to learn, subsequently, that the alleged submarine was H.M.S. "PENZANCE".

50. The Master also reported that there was a Dutch Sloop named "BUTONES" inside Curacao Harbour but I cannot identify her from any books I have.

51. During the remainder of the day I made a close inspection of the whole of the coast of Bonaire, and, as a result, can definitely state that there are no harbours or inlets whatever which German submarines could use - as suggested by His Majesty's Minister at Caracas (Commander-in-Chief) America and West Indies Squadron's message time of origin 1556/3rd September). The island is almost entirely surrounded by an unbroken coral wall; even the main "port" (Kralendijk) is a deep open anchorage.

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("PERTH" letter 253/101/3 of 9th September, 1939)

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52. The fact that there is a regular Air Service between the islands of the Dutch West Indies should enable the local authorities to keep some sort of watch on the territorial waters, at least in daylight hours.

53. As regards Aruba and Curacao, while I cannot confirm the fact, it is my impression, from a superficial inspection, that the only available anchorages and harbours are on the west side of these islands, and all have towns or villages in their immediate vicinity.

Friday, 8th September.

54. Nothing of Interest to report.

Saturday, 9th September.

55. 0700 - Arrived Kingston.

Embarked Naval and Victualling stores and completed with 650 tons of oil fuel from "ORANGELEAF".

(SGD.) H.B. FARNCOMB
CAPTAIN.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE.
MINUTE PAPER.



SUBJECT: Hmas. "Perth"

Letter of Proceedings
Dated 5. 11. 38

No 3

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See ~~in~~ B how 15/

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do. (3) - for 20/1

do. (2) ~~16~~ 21/1

do. (A) ~~16~~ 22/1

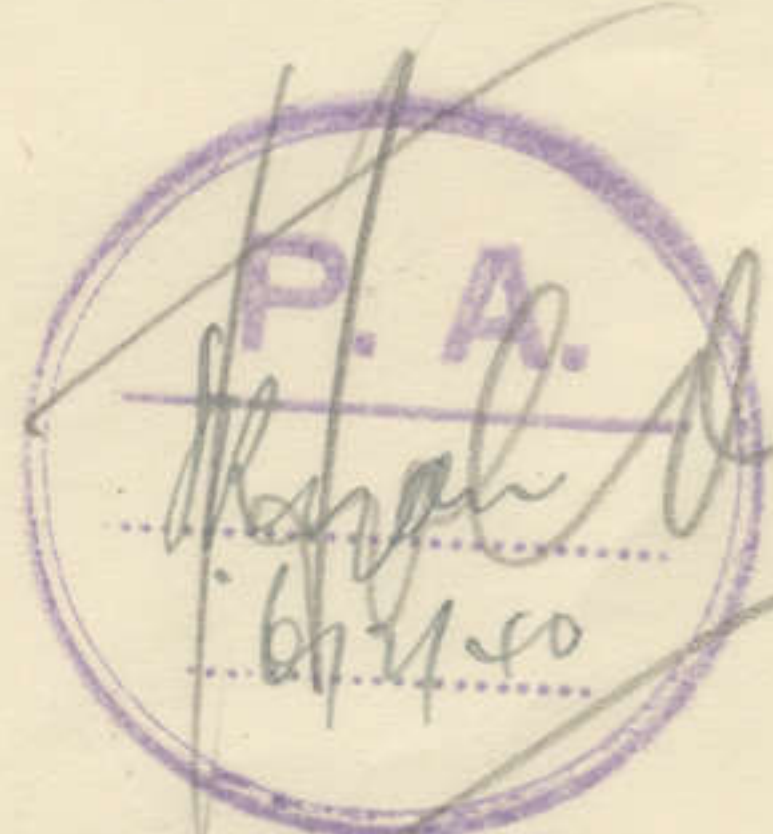
D. E. (N) ~~16~~ 25/1/40

D. A. S. ~~16~~ 27/1

D. V. ~~16~~ 28/1

D. O. T. ~~16~~ 5/2

~~16~~ (N. 4)



for distribution
to ships.

SECRET

RECEIVED
A.M. 10 JAN 1940
P.M.
CONFIDENTIAL RECORDS

DEFENCE SECRET
2026 7 40

FROM..... The Commanding Officer, H.M.A.S. "PERTH".
TO..... The Commander-in-Chief, America & West Indies Station.
(Copies to :- The Secretary, Naval Board, Melbourne.
The Commanding Officer, H.M.S. "ORION".)
S.O. (I), KINGSTON, JAMAICA
DATE..... 5th November, 1939. No. 378/101/6
SUBJECT... LETTER OF PROCEEDINGS NO. 3.

Ack'd By Form
A. S. 1330 a.

Init. ANT
Date 11/40

Submitted for information the report of proceedings of H.M.A.S. "PERTH" from 28th September to 4th November, 1939.

2. The following were the movements of the ship during this period :

Place.	Arrived.	Left.
KINGSTON	0830, 28th September	0900, 30th Sept.
Proceeded to YUCATAN CHANNEL and back.		
KINGSTON	1600, 3rd Oct.	1330, 4th Oct.
Escorting convoy KJ3 to position 40°00' N 47°10' W.		
BERMUDA	0900, 18th Oct.	0630, 22nd Oct.
HALIFAX	0945, 28th Oct.	1230, 31st Oct.

3. After leaving KINGSTON on Saturday, 30th September, 6" sub-calibre and 4" low angle full calibre practices were carried out at a Pattern VI target. "PERTH" then proceeded towards the GULF OF MEXICO in accordance with the Commanding Officer, H.M.S. "ORION"s message 1051/17th September.

4. On Sunday, 1st October, your message T.O.O. 1312/ 1st October, was received directing me to return to KINGSTON in time to escort Convoy KJ3. At this time H.M. Ships "ORION" and "PENZANCE" and H.M.C.S. "SAGUENAY" had been disposed to cut off German merchant ships which were thought to be preparing to leave GURACAO. As time was available I proceeded towards the YUCATAN CHANNEL, made CAPE CATOCHU, thence crossed to CAPE SAN ANTONIO (CUBA) before turning back to JAMAICA, on the chance of intercepting the German S.S. "COLUMBUS", then at VERA CRUZ, or the "EMMY FRIEDERICH", then at TAMPICO, if they too, tried to escape towards the PANAMA CANAL. Neither ship, however, as it subsequently appears, made any movement, and nothing suspicious was seen.

5. My proceedings while escorting Convoy KJ3 prior to being reinforced by H.M.S. "BERWICK" on Sunday, 8th October, have been forwarded to the Commanding Officer, H.M.S. "BERWICK" for onward transmission.

6. On being relieved by H.M.S. "EPPINGHAM" as convoy escort, at 1000, 15th October, "PERTH" proceeded in company with "BERWICK" towards BERMUDA. About 1720 on that day two H.F. D/F bearings of a German ship were obtained and passed by W/T to yourself and D.N.I. Admiralty. This ship would seem to have been the "DEUTSCHLAND". She was probably 200 or 300 miles away at the time.

JB. 12.
AC
1st N.M.
13/1
NH

7. On Monday, 16th October, the weather which had been uniformly good for a fortnight, deteriorated considerably. Reports were received of a hurricane south of BERMUDA moving in a north-easterly or northerly direction. Though course was altered to the westward to endeavour to avoid it, both ships passed fairly close to the centre, the barometer falling to 970 m.b. 0400 17th October, the wind being recorded at over 100 m.p.h.. During very heavy rain squalls at the height of the hurricane, about 0245 17th October, touch was lost with "BERWICK" and thereafter "PERTH" proceeded independently. The weather gradually improved after about 0900 until arrival off BERMUDA NARROWS at 0630, Wednesday 18th October, where "BERWICK" and the French Sloop "VILLE D'YB" were met. During the hurricane a certain amount of damage was done to the ship and boats; one cutter was smashed, the depth charge trap and six depth charges were washed overboard, and other gear was lost. This forms the subject of a separate report (my submission No. 366/81/7 of 26th October, 1939).

8. The ship berthed in South Basin at 0900, 18th October, and arrangements were made with the Dockyard for taking certain essential repair work in hand.

9. On Thursday, 19th October, "PERTH" proceeded to sea in company with H.M.S. "DESPATCH" and carried out an inclination and control exercise and H.A. firings at a sleeve target, subsequently berthing again in South Basin.

10. At 1730 21st October, the ship shifted berth from SOUTH BASIN to GRASSY BAY, and subsequently at 0630, Sunday 22nd October, left harbour. On clearing the Harrows, course 060° was set, speed 25 knots, in accordance with Admiralty message T.O.O.0019/22nd October, and your message T.O.O.0008/22nd October.

11. Owing to the state of the ship's bottom and the weather conditions prevailing, revolutions for 26½ knots were necessary to make good 25. This speed produced a fuel consumption of nearly 25% of full stowage in 24 hours. At 0800 24th October, therefore, I reduced to 21 knots, which gave about half that consumption. I was aware at the time what my "object" was but it was clear that I could not reach Convoys KJ3 or HX5 before shortage of fuel would necessitate returning to harbour, while, from Admiralty messages 1856/21st October and 0019/22nd October, it appears that there was no information of enemy raiders in the NORTH ATLANTIC more recent than 15th October. I assumed, therefore, that my object was reconnaissance.

12. At 1900 24th October, I obtained a 2nd class H.F. D/F bearing 088°, strong signals (R9), of a German ship. This I broke W/T silence to report, as I considered if Admiralty or H.M.S. "BERWICK" obtained a cross bearing useful information might be available. (My message T.O.O.1936/24th October). Although the sense of the bearing was unknown, I decided to alter course to the eastward in the hope of a "fix" being reported during the night. I knew there were British merchant ships close to the eastward of me, and that the AZORES area, which also lay at no great distance in that direction was a likely area of operations for enemy raiders. Actually, from another bearing obtained about four hours later, it seemed possible that the enemy ship was to the westward, but I held on to the east until daylight in the hope of having a "fix" signalled, knowing that if my course was not the correct one, I should shortly be returning westward. Admiralty subsequently stated that this vessel may have been a submarine.

13. At 2000 24th October, your message T.O.O.0557/24th October, directing me to proceed to HALIFAX via CAPE RACE, was received. As the D/F bearing was then being investigated, I decided to wait until morning before turning back.

14. At 0645, 25th October, being then in position Lat. 43°35' N, Long. 34°51' W, course was altered for CAPE RACE. Unpleasant weather was encountered next day with much fog. After clearing during the night of 27th-28th, it came on thickly again on the morning of 28th and persisted until the ship had reached NEVERFAIL SHOAL in the approaches to HALIFAX HARBOUR.
15. I proceed alongside the oil wharf on arrival at 0945, 28th October, and completed with 1051 tons. Berth was shifted to No.4 Wharf, Dockyard, at 1700.
16. On Monday, 30th October, provisions were embarked. The draft of ratings from AUSTRALIA per S.S. "REMUEIRA" arrived onboard at 1830.
17. I was ready to sail for BERMUDA at 0830, 31st October, but the Rear Admiral Commanding 3rd Battle Squadron ordered me to wait until your message T.O.O.2037/30th October, directing me to proceed under the orders of H.M.S. "YORK", had been sent onboard from his office. I sailed in company with H.M.S. "YORK" at 1230 for BERMUDA via NANTUCKET and CAPE HATTERAS focal areas.
18. At 0200, 1st November, CAMPERDOWN, N.S. Signal Station was heard repeating the submarine distress message from the British S.S. "COULMORE". The position given, Lat. 40°20' N, Long. 62°31' W, was some 150 miles S.E. of "YORK" and "PERTH".
19. An inclination and fire control exercise was carried out during the forenoon, and at 1300 "YORK" parted company and returned to HALIFAX. During the day two U.S.N. and one U.S. Coastguard flying boats passed over the ship evidently searching for the "COULMORE".
20. On 2nd November, three British merchant ships bound for HALIFAX were signalled; S.S. "MIDDLETON", "BRADFYNE" and "DEVON CITY". They were informed of the submarine report and were instructed to zigzag.
21. On Friday, 3rd November, I received your message T.O.O.1045/3rd November, instructing me to adjust course and speed to arrive at GRASSY BAY "before dark". I understood this to mean before dark on 3rd November, but as the ship was then 345 miles from BERMUDA this was not possible. On receipt of your message T.O.O.1030/3rd November, to "ORION", relative to the interception of the German S.S. "ANTILLA" which was thought to be about to leave ARUBA, I steered for the FLORIDA STRAITS. I had decided, however, not to get too far from BERMUDA pending further instructions, and had already turned towards it when I was ordered to proceed there forthwith.
22. H.M.A.S. "PERTH" arrived off the NARROWS at 0800, Saturday, 4th November, and proceeded alongside "PATELLA" in South Basin at 0915.

(Sgd) H. B. FARNCOME.

CAPTAIN.

20 26/7/59
SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE.
MINUTE PAPER.

(This side only to be written on.)

D.3158/7.36.—C.8944.

SUBJECT: *Hms "Perth" - Letter Proceedings No 4*
PERTH

Dated 15th December 1939
Period 5th Nov — 14th Dec 1939.

SECRET

Sec *AS Hon 26/*
inv 19/3
2nd am later - on Return from Leave

7 sec. m.c. 22/12
Chief Clerk 27/2

So. (3) 29/2

So. (2) 29/2

So (A) 26/3
on leave

D. N. 1. 29/2

D. N. 5 27/3

D. V. 6/3/40

D. E. (N) 11/3/40

D. DEN 13/3

D. O.



D.

To Hms Ships
2nd am.

H. N. B.
(N. 4.)

DEFENCE
SECRET

2026 7 59

From.... The Commanding Officer, H.M.A.S. "PERTH".
Date.... 15th December, 1939. No. 533/101/7.
To..... The Commanding Officer, H.M.S. "ORION",
(copy to the Secretary, Naval Board, Melbourne).
Subject. LETTER OF PROCEEDINGS NO.4.
5TH NOVEMBER - 14TH DECEMBER, 1939.

SECRET

Submitted for information the following report of the proceedings of H.M.A.S. "PERTH" during the period 4th November to 14th December, 1939.

Rek'd By Form

A. S. 1380 R.

it. *ast*

to *20/1/40*

2. The following were the movements of the ship during this period:-

PLACE.	ARRIVED.	LEFT.	REMARKS.
BERMUDA	0930, 4 Nov.	1130, 6 Nov.	
KINGSTON	1630, 9 Nov.	1630, 17 Nov.	Exercising at sea
KINGSTON	(Patrolling in Southern CARIBBEAN)	on 13th November	
KINGSTON	0830, 20 Nov.	1630, 20 Nov.	
COLON	0740, 22 Nov.	-	
BALBOA	-	1630, 22 Nov.	
COCOS ISLAND	0715, 25 Nov.	1845, 25 Nov.	
Off PUNTA ARENAS (COSTA RICA)	1500, 26 Nov.	1530, 26 Nov.	Did not anchor.
	(Examined coast in vicinity, and to COIBA ISLAND, also SOLANO BAY and PENAS BAY).		
PANAMA BAY	0800, 28 Nov.	-	
COLON	-	2000, 28 Nov.	
KINGSTON	0830, 1 Dec.	0900, 4 Dec.	
YUCATAN CHANNEL	0800, 6 Dec.	2200, 12 Dec.	
KINGSTON	0800, 14 Dec.	-	

3. The following remarks cover matters connected with the conduct of the war.

An interesting report.

23/2

4

Checked for
Indexing

("PERTH" Secret letter No. 533/101/7 of 15th December, 1939).

- 2 -

Friday, 17th November - Monday, 20th November.

4. "PERTH"'s original orders on leaving KINGSTON on 17th November were to proceed to the ARUBA area, but these were cancelled later and instructions were received to fuel H.M. Canadian Destroyers at COCOS ISLAND on 25th November. On 18th November further instructions were received from the Commander-in-Chief, America and West Indies Squadron, to complete with fuel before proceeding into the Pacific.

During this period "PERTH" patrolled in the Southern CARIBBEAN, returning to KINGSTON on Monday 20th November to fuel.

Monday, 20th November - Wednesday, 22nd November.

5. On arrival at COLON at 0740, 22nd November, the United States Naval Officer of the Guard delivered copies of the United States Neutrality Regulations affecting the CANAL ZONE. I signed an undertaking to respect United States Neutrality and not to embark provisions, fuel, etc., without permission. The Admiral Commanding, Inshore Patrol, sent a message to me that fresh provisions could be supplied without any formality. I informed the Officer of the Guard, however, that I required nothing. Twenty-four hours' permission to remain in harbour was given, this time not including the time of transit of the Canal.

"PERTH" was given a quick passage through and was boarded again at BALBOA by an Officer of the Guard who gave me a document indicating the time at which I must leave the CANAL ZONE; I did not, however, delay my departure. Naval Control Service Officers visited the ship at both COLON and BALBOA.

Saturday, 25th November - COCOS ISLAND.

6. H.M.C. Destroyers "OTTAWA" and "RESTIGOUCHE" were fuelled at CHATHAM BAY, COCOS ISLAND, 151 tons and 167 tons respectively: all that was required.

This anchorage is not a good place for fuelling; there is probably always a slight swell even under the most favourable weather conditions, such as obtained on this occasion. There is a marked tidal stream across the mouth of the Bay which, when against the swell, makes conditions alongside uncomfortable for Destroyers. "OTTAWA" sustained some denting of plates and the fuelling of "RESTIGOUCHE" was subsequently postponed three hours till the stream had turned.

Fuelling, which commenced at 0900, was not completed until 1830.

The American fishing yacht "QUEEN MARY" passed close to CHATHAM BAY during the forenoon but did not anchor. It is pointed out that COCOS ISLAND is on the ECUADOR)- CALIFORNIA route and so is not as secluded as might at first sight seem.

("PERTH" Secret letter No. 533/101/7 of 15th December, 1939).

- 3 -

Sunday, 26th November - Tuesday, 18th November.

7. During this period PUNTA ARENAS and the neighboring coastline were examined in accordance with the Commander-in-Chief's instructions. "PERTH" kept outside the three mile limit.

The German Merchant ships "WESER" and "EISENACH" were at anchor off PUNTA ARENAS but there was no sign of "STELLA" and "AEQUATOR", previously reported there.

On 27th November, the Gulf of DULCE and the coast east to COIBA ISLAND were visited but nothing suspicious was seen. In this area there are several sheltered anchorages outside the three mile limit, where fuelling could be carried out. Habitation was scanty though there are one or two minor ports in the vicinity which are probably visited by small ships occasionally.

There is a Panamanian penal settlement on the east coast of COIBA ISLAND.

On 28th November SOLANO BAY (COLOMBIA) and PENAS BAY (PANAMA) were inspected from outside territorial waters. There are alleged to be some German activities, and a W/T Station at the former place but no W/T masts were seen at the small settlement at the head of the bay. In PENAS BAY there are only a few huts.

Wednesday, 29th November.

8. Passed through PANAMA CANAL. "PERTH" was delayed for three hours in CATUN LAKE; about 1½ hours of this appeared deliberate as the ship was stopped right at the end of a northbound convoy for this time to allow one small cargo steamer (only) to go south. I sent a message to H.B.M. Consul at COLON drawing attention to this incivility but asked for no formal protest. I presume the delay was due to some intentional petty officialdom. H.B.M. Minister at PANAMA (C.E.S. Dodd, Esq. C.M.G.) came on board off BALBOA and left the ship at MIRAFLORES Lock. He has only been at the post some three weeks. The Naval Control Service Officer also came on board.

Friday, 1st December - Monday, 4th December.

9. At KINGSTON.

On "EFFINGHAM" being ordered to return to HALIFAX, I arranged to take her place on the YUCATAN CHANNEL patrol, and duly sailed with "HOTSPUR" at 0900, 4th December.

Monday, 4th December - Tuesday, 12th December.

10. Patrolling in the YUCATAN CHANNEL area. "HOTSPUR" had parted company for the WINDWARD PASSAGE about three hours before "ORION"'s message, time of origin, 1422 of 4th December had been received and deciphered. She was not subsequently seen though I turned south east for three hours on the chance of making contact with her next morning.

Two United States flying.../

("PERTH" Secret letter No. 533/101/7 of 15th December, 1939).

- 4 -

Two United States Naval Flying Boats approached the ship, both on Friday, 8th December, and Saturday, 9th December. On the latter occasion one of them (53P1 or 53P7) flew low over the ship, a proceeding which would seem to be highly irregular for a neutral.

11. At 1345 on 9th December the U.S. Destroyer "ROPER" was sighted coming from the northward, "PERTH" then being south of the Channel on a southerly course. After closing "PERTH" to within about 7 miles, "ROPER" altered course to the North West and disappeared. She had possibly been sent to investigate the earlier aircraft report.

12. At about 2230 on Friday, 8th December, the following announcement was heard on a News Bulletin broadcast from New York:-

" Gulf of Mexico: It was reported today by a lighthouse
" keeper and patrol planes that an unidentified cruiser
" was seen off the coast. The cruiser did not fly an
" ensign."

This ship may have been either "HOTSPUR" or "PERTH" although "PERTH" did not approach land in daylight hours and wore an ensign continuously.

13. At 1800 on Saturday, 9th December, five U.S. Destroyers of the "Flush-decker" type were sighted on a northerly course, possibly proceeding towards CAPE SAN ANTONIO from GUANTANAMO BAY. The divisional leader identified herself as U.S.S. "LEA"; I replied "British Warship".

14. During the period in the YUCATAN CHANNEL area, the patrolling ground was changed frequently but it proved impracticable to avoid being sighted by merchant shipping owing to the fact that routes from many directions converge hereabouts.

15. Patrolling ground was left at 2200, 12th December, and "PERTH" arrived at KINGSTON at 0800, 14th December, completed with fuel and prepared to sail forthwith, on information being received of the movements of German ships from Mexican ports.

(Sgd.) H.B.Farncomb
CAPTAIN.

14 copies

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A.M.
P.M. 23 MAR 1940
CONFIDENTIAL RECORDS

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From.... The Commanding Officer, H.M.A.S. "PERTH".
Date.... 2nd January, 1940. No. 610/101/8.
To..... The Commanding Officer, H.M.S. "ORION".
(Copy to the Secretary, Naval Board, Melbourne).
Subject. LETTER OF PROCEEDINGS NO.5.
15TH DECEMBER, 1939 - 1ST JANUARY, 1940.

SECRET

21 MAR. 1940

CONFIDENTIAL

Submitted for information, in continuation of my Letter of Proceedings No.4, the following report of proceedings of H.M.A.S. "PERTH" for the period 15th December, 1939, to 1st January, 1940.

2. 2/9
this period:-

The following were the movements of the ship during

PLACE.	ARRIVED.	LEFT.
KINGSTON	-	1400, 14th December.
YUCATAN CHANNEL	1200, 15th December-P.M.,	19th December.
KINGSTON	0800, 21st December-0945,	28th December.
ARUBA area	1530, 30th December-1830,	30th December.
KINGSTON	0800, 1st January.	-

3. YUCATAN CHANNEL PATROL.

On leaving KINGSTON at 1400, 14th December, I proceeded at 25 knots to the YUCATAN CHANNEL and made contact with H.M.S. "HEREWARD" there at 1200, 15th December. A search was organized on the assumption that the German S.S. "COLUMBUS" which had left VERA CRUZ at 1220, 14th December, might attempt to pass the Channel on the night of the 15th - 16th December.

"PERTH" and "HEREWARD" were spread at twice visibility distance apart with "HEREWARD" 12 miles from the MEXICAN coast. A sweep was then made at 22 knots in a north-westerly direction to "COLUMBUS" farthest-on position at 1630, and thence westerly till 1800.

Both ships then retired to the line CAPE CATOCHE - CAPE SAN ANTONIO at 22 knots and from about 2100 patrolled the Channel for the remainder of the night, "HEREWARD" taking the south-western half, and "PERTH" the area closer to the CUBAN Coast.

By these dispositions I believed that I had ensured that "COLUMBUS" could not reach the line CAPE CATOCHE - CAPE SAN ANTONIO by 2100 without having previously been intercepted. If she wished to pass the WINDWARD PASSAGE on the night of the 16th - 17th December, she would have been obliged to have cleared the line of the YUCATAN CHANNEL by about 0100, 16th December, so

that/

a. c. u. s. 1/27/3
12. 11. 11.

("PERTH" Secret letter No. 610/101/8 of 2nd January, 1940).

- 2 -

that she only had from about 2100 on 15th December until 0100 on 16th December to cross the line in reasonable security.

"ARAUCA" could not have reached the Channel until the night of the 16th - 17th December.

4. On the following days ships were kept at twice visibility distance apart watching the north-eastern portion of the YUCATAN CHANNEL. It was only possible, with two ships, to cover about 60 of the 110 miles.

At night ships patrolled half the Channel each, the chances of intercepting "COLUMBUS" under these circumstances being, of course, very slight.

5. During this period ships were under continual observation from U.S. Flying Boats and Warships. "HEREWARD" in particular was constantly shadowed by the U.S. Destroyers "EVANS" and "TWIGGS", and "PERTH" was occasionally subjected to their attentions. The American warships were most anxious to obtain this ship's name but I declined to give it. I restrained myself, with some difficulty, from making an adequate reply to their impudent persistence for the information, "VINCENNES" being a particular offender.

I reported these facts in my message, time of origin 1002, 20th December.

6. On Sunday, 17th December, "HEREWARD" was completed with 242 tons of fuel at sea.

7. On Tuesday, 19th December, I received your message reporting the interception of S.S. "ARAUCA" in FLORIDA STRAIT and in response to your message, time of origin 1124, 19th December proceeded at 25 knots to join you, "HEREWARD" conforming. At 1621 on 19th December when "ARAUCA" had anchored off PORT EVERGLADES you instructed "HEREWARD" only to join you and I accordingly proceeded towards KINGSTON.

About 1600, information was received that H.M.S. "HYPERION" had intercepted S.S. "COLUMBUS" and that the latter had set herself on fire.

8. I arrived at KINGSTON at 0800, 21st December, and completed with fuel.

9. On Friday, 22nd December, I proceeded out of harbour, and at the request of the King's Harbour Master assisted the salvage tug in endeavouring to tow off S.S. "HOUSTON CITY" which had been aground off PLUM POINT for nearly a week. After towing for some hours, I parted my 5½" wire and then returned to harbour. The ship was refloated next day; her Master and the King's Harbour Master were good enough to say that "PERTH"'s efforts were in some way responsible.

10/

("PRTM" Secret letter No. 610/101/0 of 2nd January, 1939).

- 3 -

10. On Thursday, 28th December, a number of exercises were carried out at sea in company with H.M.C.S. "ASSINIBOINE". "PRTM" then proceeded to ARUBA where contact was made with H.M.C. "DUMBLE" at 1600, 30th December. Upon receipt of your message, time of origin 1306, 30th December, to relieve you temporarily as Senior Officer, JAMAICA Force, I turned for KINGSTON, arriving at 0800, 1st January, 1940.

(Sgd.) H.B.Farncomb
CAPTAIN.



IN REPLY
QUOTE

NO. 2026/7/78.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

TELEPHONE:
CENTRAL 7185.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:
"NAVY, MELBOURNE."

NAVY OFFICE, THE NAVY,
DEPARTMENT OF ~~DEFENCE~~

MELBOURNE,
S.C. 1.

RESTRICTED
SECRET

011474

4 - MAY 1940

The Rear-Admiral Commanding,
His Majesty's Australian Squadron,
H.M.A.S. "CANBERRA."

H.M.A.S. "PERTH" - LETTER OF PROCEEDINGS -
2nd JANUARY TO 29th FEBRUARY, 1940.

I am directed by the Naval Board to forward, herewith,
for information, copy of Letter of Proceedings of H.M.A.S. "PERTH"
for the period 2nd January to 29th February, 1940.

Encl.



W. P. H. H. H.
Secretary.

To:

R.A.C.A.S.
C.O. "CANBERRA."
" " "AUSTRALIA."
" " "SYDNEY."
" " "ADELAIDE."
" " "WESTRALIA."
" " "MANOORA."
" " "MORESBY."
" " "SWAN."
" " "YARRA."
" " "PARRAMATTA."
" " "DOOMBA."
" " "ORARA."

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(COPY)

FROM.... The Commanding Officer, H.M.A.S. "PERTH."
DATE.... 29th February, 1940. No. 790/101/9.
TO..... The Commander-in-Chief, America and West Indies Station,
(Copy to the Secretary, Naval Board, Melbourne).
SUBJECT. H.M.A.S. "PERTH" - LETTER OF PROCEEDINGS NO. 6.
2ND JANUARY TO 29TH FEBRUARY, 1940.

Submitted for information, in continuation of my Letter of Proceedings No. 5, the following report of proceedings of H.M.A.S. "PERTH" for the period 2nd January to 29th February, 1940, during which I was acting as Senior Officer, Jamaica Force.

2. The following were the movements of the ship during this period:-

<u>PLACE.</u>	<u>ARRIVED.</u>	<u>LEFT.</u>
KINGSTON	-	1600, 2 January
CARIBBEAN SEA and WINDWARD PASSAGE	A.M., 3 January	P.M., 9 January
KINGSTON	0745, 10 January	1145, 10 January
WINDWARD PASSAGE	A.M., 11 January	P.M., 15 January
KINGSTON	0800, 16 January	0330, 20 January
ARUBA AREA	0300, 21 January	0930, 27 January
KINGSTON	0930, 29 January	1700, 31 January
ARUBA AREA	0700, 2 February	1600, 6 February
CURACAO AREA	1900, 6 February	0600, 16 February
KINGSTON	1100, 17 February	0930, 22 February
ARUBA AREA	2230, 23 February	P.M., 25 February,
KINGSTON	0800, 27 February	-

PERIOD 2ND JANUARY TO 10TH JANUARY.

3. Nothing of special interest connected with war operations occurred during this period with the exception of a rumour that German ships might leave CURACAO about the 4th January. "PERTH" was, in consequence, ordered to the WINDWARD PASSAGE P.M. 3rd January and remained in that area after the Commander-in-Chief cancelled his special disposition on the following day.

PERIOD 10TH JANUARY TO 16TH JANUARY.

4. At about 0700, 10th January, while entering KINGSTON Harbour to refuel, "PENZANCE"'s report of the departure of the German Ship "CONSUL HORN" from ARUBA the previous night, was received. I was uncertain whether I was expected to order the necessary dispositions, as the Oil Fuel Protective Force was then under my orders, or whether they would be ordered by the Commander-in-Chief. I prepared messages for despatch but waited until 1100 before taking action, at which time the Commander-in-Chief's instructions had been received in "PERTH" and were being decyphered.

5. I met the tanker "BISHOPDALE" outside KINGSTON on her way back from NASSAU and instructed her to proceed to the vicinity of CAPE MAYSI, WINDWARD PASSAGE, and patrol there until further orders.

With the two ships it was thus possible to cover the Passage in daylight in the extreme visibility obtaining. At night I was only able to cover effectively a small front, so I selected for "PERTH" the area in the vicinity of ST. NICHOLAS MOLE (HAITI) as being the most likely route of an escaping ship, on account of the proximity to neutral territory and to the port of ST. NICHOLAS MOLE itself. "BISHOPDALE" remained off CAPE MAYSI.

6. During the period in the WINDWARD PASSAGE both "PERTH" and "BISHOPDALE" were kept under observation of the U.S. Naval Flying Boats. At 2230 on the night of 14th January an American Destroyer approached "PERTH" and turned a searchlight on her. Being by now accustomed to the attentions of the U.S. Navy I took no action.

PERIOD 20TH JANUARY TO 28TH JANUARY.

7. I had originally intended to leave KINGSTON in the forenoon of the 20th January and carry out a full calibre firing before sailing for ARUBA, but in view of the Captain-in-Charge, Jamaica's message, time of origin 2225, of 19th January, 1940, referring to the probable departure of the "HEIDELBERG", I sailed at 0330, proceeded at 24 knots, and arrived off NORTH POINT, ARUBA, at 0300, 21st January, to find all three German ships still at anchor there.

8. At 1230, 21st January, I met the French Cruiser "JEANNE D'ARC" by arrangement and exchanged information with her. She told me that she would make contact with me in the same vicinity daily during the following week but I did not see her again.

9. At 2020, 24th January, on returning to NORTH POINT, ARUBA, it was observed that "HEIDELBERG" was missing. I accordingly informed all ships and authorities in the area and proceeded towards MONA PASSAGE in readiness to carry out a curve of search on the following morning. At 0100 25th January, S.O.(I) Jamaica's message, time of origin 2310, of 24th January, reporting that "HEIDELBERG" had gone to ORANJESTAT for water, was received. The delay in receiving this information from ARUBA was thus probably of the order of 12 hours.

10. It is not practicable to identify a ship at night at ORANJESTAT from outside territorial waters on account of the blending of the numerous shore lights with the lights in the vessel herself. From some bearings it is even difficult to distinguish that there is a ship there. For similar reasons it is quite impossible to identify a ship in ST. NICHOLAS Harbour at night.

11. The improvement of communications from ARUBA is therefore of the highest importance if similar occurrences to this are not to happen in future. The state of affairs there is most unsatisfactory.

12. On Friday, 26th January, the U.S. Cruisers "WICHITA" (flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A. C. Pickens, U.S.N.) and "VINCENNES", accompanied by 12 Destroyers, were sighted to the north of ARUBA. From intercepted signals it was ascertained that they were proceeding to WILLEMSTAT (CURACAO), and ST. NICHOLAS (ARUBA). From a further intercepted signal it was learnt that five Destroyers were visiting CUMANÁ, VENEZUELA, at the same time. These visits were no doubt connected with a report in the U.S. Press that strange warships (i.e. H.M. Ships) had been sighted "manoeuvring near the Dutch West Indies", and with a Press suggestion that the United States should preserve the neutrality of these islands as well as the rest of America. I did not approach "WICHITA" sufficiently close to warrant saluting Admiral Pickens's Flag (she was almost hull down).

13. On the 29th January, the forenoon of my return to KINGSTON, a 6" Full Calibre Firing was carried out at two Pattern VI targets.

('PERTH' Secret letter No.790/101/9 of 29th February, 1940).

- 3 -

PERIOD 31ST JANUARY TO 17TH FEBRUARY.

14. The customary patrol in the vicinity of ARUBA was carried out until P.M. 6th February, when I was relieved by "ASSINIBOINE."

15. At 0300 Zone plus 5, 3rd February, I intercepted a signal from the tanker "JAMES MACGEE" reporting the departure of a German ship from "CALIFORNIA POINT". After some search among publications, and then only because American charts were held onboard, it was discovered that this was a name for the seaward part of North POINT, ARUBA, the actual name for NORTH POINT itself being given as KUDAREBE. It was then realised that "JAMES MACGEE" was a tanker which had passed inshore of "PERTH" at 0230 Zone plus 5 (when the German vessel was alleged to have sailed) as no other ships had passed within two hours of that time. The three German ships at anchor were visible from "PERTH" and should also have been seen by the tanker which passed even closer to them. Either the Master had not been told by the Reporting Officer, ARUBA, how many ships were there, or he did not make a proper inspection. In any case the affair was not a happy start for the new reporting organisation and I feel that the Reporting Officer, ARUBA, must be held largely responsible for not issuing more precise instructions to the Master. Many of these Masters of tankers and freighters are, from my experience of them, not very bright and they need careful coaching if they are to be expected to do anything outside their ordinary job.

16. I cancelled "JAMES MACGEE"'s report twice on 500 kcs. (the second time to cover the "single operator" period) in order that recipients of the first report should thereby receive the cancellation by a similar channel. It was unfortunate that Captain-in-Charge, JAMAICA, did not receive the cancellation from the JAMAICA W/T station as he did the original report.

17. On the 4th February I went across to CURACAO to sight the German shipping there, and particularly "SEATTLE" and "VANCOUVER" in ST. MICHAEL'S BAY. The former had painted herself grey and had been fuelled recently by the small German tanker "FRISIA." This vessel was seen proceeding again up the coast to ST. MICHAEL'S BAY. I met "DUNDEE" and exchanged information.

18. Patrols were carried out on the nights of the 6th, 7th and 8th February in the vicinity of ST. MICHAEL'S BAY, and during daylight north of CURACAO. In consequence of information that the sailing of German ships from CURACAO before 15th February (especially "SEATTLE" and "VANCOUVER") was highly probable you ordered a concentration of all sloops in the ARUBA - CURACAO area. After the 8th February "PERTH" remained continuously clear to the north of CURACAO. A position clear of the trade routes, about 40 miles north-east of CURACAO, NORTH POINT Light was selected during the day and found to be quite isolated. At night I closed to within about 10 miles of the Light.

19. On the 15th February you had arranged a rendezvous for me with "JEANNE D'ARC" north of CURACAO, but, though I waited there all day, she failed to appear. She subsequently arrived to the South of CURACAO and was sighted and reported by "PENZANCE." The latter subsequently reported that "JEANNE D'ARC" had received no orders to rendezvous with me from Admiral, Antilles.

PERIOD 22ND FEBRUARY TO 29TH FEBRUARY.

20. "ASSINIBOINE" was relieved on the ARUBA area patrol on 23rd February. This patrol was taken over by "DESPATCH" and on 27th February "PERTH" returned to KINGSTON with a view to sailing for AUSTRALIA via PANAMA CANAL on the 29th February.

(Sgd) H. B. Farncomb.

CAPTAIN.

27 Feb 1940



DEFENCE
SECRET

2026

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Subject. H.M.A.S. "PERTH" - LETTER OF PROCEEDINGS NO.7

1050, 31 Mch

A.C. N.S. 10.6/4

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SO (3) Geo 24/4.
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SO (A) ^Q 24/4 ^{1 1/2} Geo MS 2/5
~~SO (A)~~ Ray 1/5/40

("PERTH" Secret letter No. 981/101/11 of 1st April, 1940)

- 2 -

5. During the passage across the Pacific Ocean special attention was given to training, and various exercises and evolutions were carried out. In the later stages the landing party for the Sydney Route March were exercised daily.

6. The New Zealand Station was entered at 1100, 11th March, and left at 1700, 28th March, when the ship entered the Australia Station.

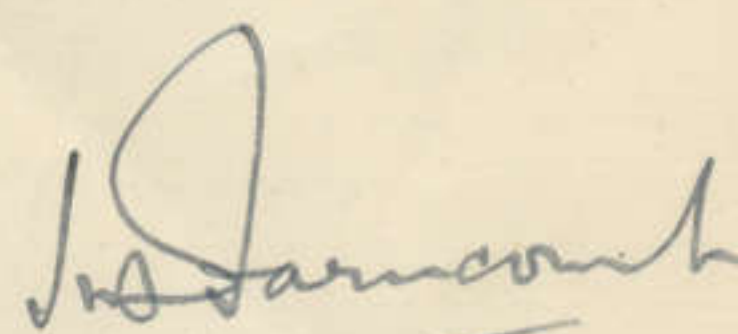
7. The visit to Papeete was most successful. As this was the first visit of an Australian warship since 1928, various functions were held to celebrate the occasion. There was an official luncheon and cocktail party on board. His Excellency the Governor gave a dinner party and small dance, and H.B.M. Consul a luncheon party. The Ship's Band played ashore. Games were played with the local garrison and there was a considerable amount of private entertainment for officers and men.

8. I exchanged a number of official calls. No salutes were fired.

9. 300 tons of diesel oil were taken from the shore pipe line, "PERTH" being alongside. A separate report on the oil fuel facilities is being forwarded.

10. Official calls were dispensed with at Suva but I lunched and dined with the Acting Governor (the Governor, Sir Harry Luke, being absent in New Zealand) and in return had a small luncheon party on board.

11. "PERTH" passed Sydney Heads at 1000, 31st March, and secured alongside Garden Island at 1050.



CAPTAIN.

DATE...

2026/7/183

TO..... The Secretary, Naval Board, Melbourne

SUBJECT.... H.M.A.S. "PERTH" - LETTER OF PROCEEDINGS No.
1st, April - 6th, June 1940.

Submitted for information, the following report of proceedings of H.M.A.S. "PERTH" during the period 1st, April to 6th June 1940.

2.
Diary.
27/6
3.

During the week ending Saturday 11th, May, training class firings were carried out for C.R.1's from Flinders Naval Depot. During the following week, "Ship" sub calibre and full calibre day and night firings were carried out off Sydney, together with H.A. firings at smoke bursts.

4. Libertymen were recalled on two occasions during this period. On the first occasion (when the ship did not proceed to sea), about 70 had not returned to the ship at the end of 4 hours. Steps were taken, in conjunction with The Commodore in Charge, Sydney, to improve the recall arrangements, and these, coupled with a certain amount of disciplinary action, reduced the number of absentees on the next occasion of recall (when the ship sailed for the Queensland Coast), to 13.

5. Opportunity was taken on passage to Port Phillip at the end of May, to visit Westernport and discuss various drafting and other problems with Officers of the Depot.

6. H.A. firings at a sleeve target, and torpedo firing were carried out in Port Phillip, the first opportunity for these exercises which had presented itself for some months.

7. I was relieved in Command of "PERTH" on the 6th June by Captain Sir P.W.Bowyer-Smyth, Royal Navy.

8. During this period the health and conduct of the Ships Company have been very satisfactory.

CAPTAIN.

Royal Australian Navy.

LY PLEASE QUOTE

No.....

From ... The Commanding Officer, H.M.A.S. "PERTH".

Date ... 20 December, 1941. No. 191/2.

To The Rear Admiral Commanding, H.M.A. Squadron.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS.

The following detailed report of proceedings is forwarded for the period, Monday 24th. November, to Friday 5th. December, 1941, whilst detached from your Flag.

MONDAY 24th. NOVEMBER.

Proceeded p.m. (after full power trial) from Port Jackson for Port Phillip.

TUESDAY 25th. NOVEMBER.

On passage to Port Phillip. Throughout the day, various "commissioning drills" and preparations for war were carried out.

WEDNESDAY 26th. NOVEMBER.

Entered Port Phillip a.m. The ship was moored and unmoored off Portarlington, for instructional purposes. During the remainder of the day, the following practices were carried out :-

Day sub-calibre.

Dive bombing by 3 R.A.A.F. Aircraft.

Own A/C bombing at splash target.

Adjustment of search lights.

Exercise in night action, defence watches, etc.

During the day, two scares of fire were experienced - in both cases these proved to be small motors whose insulation had overheated, and no measures were required for extinction, other than switching off power.

Anchored off Mornington on conclusion.

THURSDAY 27th. NOVEMBER.

The following practices were carried out :-

Dive bombing.

Day sub-calibre (own A/C spotting).

One torpedo run for exercise.

Short check calibration of M/F, D/F.

A/C hooking on under way.

Night attacks by ship's motor boats.

The last practice was a very valuable exercise. It permits the use of searchlights for one thing, (a facility so rarely available at the evening exercise of night action at sea). Carefully organised, it provides most realistic "Open fire" procedure, and, if several boats are used, exercises to the full that difficult problem, the effective division of the main and secondary armaments at night. The ship anchored off Dromana for the night, a patch of sand having been chosen, and many of the personnel enjoyed a breakfast of the freshest of fish.

FRIDAY 28th. NOVEMBER.

Before sailing for Sydney, the forenoon was devoted to the following exercises :-

Ran one torpedo.

Exercising A/C at hooking on under way.

Gunnery Drills.

"Perth" No. 191/2.
of 20 December, 1941.

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Page 2. ET

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The ship passed Port Phillip Heads p.m., en route to Sydney. The time on the journey was devoted to Seamanship, Gunnery, and Torpedo drills.

SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER.

Arrived Sydney p.m., after carrying out two runs 6" full calibre firing (reduced charge) at a battle-practice target. Own A/C spotted for run two. I have not yet seen the analysis for these shoots, but both runs produced very satisfactory results, particularly in view of the curtailed working up period.

SUNDAY 30th. NOVEMBER.

Sailed a.m. from Sydney for Auckland.

MONDAY 1st.DEC. - TUESDAY 2nd.DECEMBER.

Various war-like and seamanship drills were carried out. The sea was too bad for air reconnaissance on both days.

WEDNESDAY 3rd.DECEMBER.

My orders having been so amended, I made R.V. at 2100Z/2 with "Mariposa", whom I was to 'trail' to Sydney. At 2320Z/2, a ship was sighted which did not quite agree with my plot, so I stopped her by signal at a distance and carried out full procedure for "raider at a distance" so to speak. She was, however, identified as friendly ("Glenstrae") A/C was catapulted for a pre-sunset defensive search.

THURSDAY 4th.DECEMBER.

Carried out close range weapon firing at smoke burst, also range and inclination exercise on "Mariposa" who kindly made some alterations of course at my request. A/C was catapulted at dawn for an all round offensive search, but could not be used later in the day on account of weather.

FRIDAY 5th. DECEMBER.

Arrived off Port Jackson at 1230, after various gunnery exercises, including a range and inclination exercise on "Mariposa".



(H.M.L. Waller)
CAPTAIN.

A.F. 1211/1100/20.
The Secretary,
Naval Board.



N.A. 1 M.M.

N.B.(N4).

2/2