

APPENDIX No. 22.

EXTRACTS FROM DIARIES OF MEN SERVING IN THE AUSTRALIAN DESTROYERS.

I. IN MALAYSIA.

The following are extracts from the diary of a stoker in the *Huron* during the service of the Australian destroyers in Malaysia:—

19 June, 1916.—*Huron* left Sydney 9.5 a.m. . . .

12 July.—Left Thursday Island . . . sighted the *King Cyrus*, American barque . . . examined her and proceeded.

23 July.—Dropped anchor off the Customs House pier, Sandakan, North Borneo (China Station).

25 July.—Proceeded alongside oilship and . . . to sea on patrol.

(25 July to 11 August.—*Huron* patrolling off the Celebes. During this time she examined a Dutch steamer, oiled from the *Esturia*, carried out gunnery practice, and met the *Warrego*.)

12 August.—Arrived at Sandakan. H.M.S. *Ienus*, H.M.A.S. *Fantome*, a Japanese cruiser, several colliers, and other merchant boats there. At 7 p.m. H.M.S. *Cadmus* arrived . . . All the ships are run by Chinamen. When you come out you have a tribe of Chinese nippers following you, and if you give them anything more follow you. . . . At night all you hear is a terrible yabbering.

25 August.—Left port. (20th) Stopped the s.s. *Neil McLeod* (American) and boarded . . . In the afternoon we stopped and drifted in mid-ocean, and the racing-boats' crews went away for exercise.

30 August.—On patrol off Basilan Island. Stopped the E. & A. mail steamer *St. Albans* from Hong Kong to Sydney, boarded her and got some fresh mutton, which was very acceptable as we were on bully beef.

2 September.—On patrol in the Tawi Tawi Islands. Ship sighted at 5.30 a.m. At 6 a.m. signalled for her to stop engines. As she didn't stop fifteen minutes after the signal, we fired a blank shot from the port 12-pounder, and she stopped at once . . . s.s. *Tjilatjap* from Batavia to Hong Kong.

3 September.—On patrol in the Sibutu passage. . . . (7th) Met the Danish motor-ship *Columbia* which we searched and took one prisoner off, and proceeded on patrol. (8th) Arrived in Sandakan.

10 September.—Left for Manila—a distance of over 500 miles and only 24 hours to do it in—to stop a ship and search her before she got into neutral country. The first hour at sea we steamed 15 knots, second 20, third 22, fourth 23, fifth 25 knots.

11 September.—Arrived outside Manila; 2.50 a.m. stopped and searched the s.s. *Chin Maa* . . . ; 3.30 a.m. s.s. *Cebir* . . . ; 7.5 a.m. s.s. *Tong Yek* . . . An American destroyer followed us all afternoon.

13 September.—Arrived at Sandakan.

16 September.—Destroyer flotilla left for sea. (17th) 9.20 a.m. commenced manœuvres. 6.5 p.m. arrived at Jesselton in British North Borneo, much the same as Sandakan only cleaner.

(17-22 September was spent in harbour—route-march, football, oiling ship, etc.)

23 September.—Manœuvres.

27 September.—At sea on the Palawan patrol.

14 October.—At sea on patrol. More gunnery practice. Of an evening the sunset looks very pretty. Everything is so still and calm that you seem afraid to speak to break the silence. It is the evening that we look forward to, as the days are so hot and long.

15 October.—On . . . what is called the Equator patrol . . . extra hot and sultry—as far as you can see is calm still water, not a ripple . . . in the next hour it is running big seas. (18th) Chased a Japanese, and later a British, and a Dutch ship

25 October.—Still terrible hot days, and bully beef and biscuits to eat. (26th) Heavy rainstorm. All hands on deck having a rain bath.

27 October.—Arrived in Sandakan.

(28 October to 13 November, in Harbour. Football, cricket, oiling, "church parade—the choir composed of Chinese boys with no boots on but they can sing all right.")

(13 November to 1 December.—On patrol. Stopped nine Dutch steamers, one Dane, one Russian, and spoke to several passing Japanese.)

2 December.—Making for harbour as fast as we could, as we were very short of oil.

19 December.—On patrol. Sighted a ship and gave chase but she steamed into neutral waters and got away from us; but in the night—9.30 p.m.—she came out and tried to get away, but we got between her and the land, and as she wouldn't answer us we fired a 12-pounder blank . . . she was a Dutch steamer.

(On 23 December a Dutch steamer refused to stop until two 4 inch projectiles had been fired.)

25 December.—Christmas Day On patrol—dirty weather—had bully beef and biscuits and some duff we knocked up ourselves.

6 January, 1917.—Arrived in Singapore.

14 January —Left harbour and relieved H M A S. *Torrens* on the Brothers patrol. During that night challenged seven ships of different nationality.

21 January.—Left Singapore.

(From 21 January to 15 February the *Huon* patrolled, calling at Miri, Labuan, Jesselton, Kudat; thence to the Philippines, Sandakan, and Singapore; on 18 February she was out again on the Brothers patrol, and captured a suspicious Norwegian ship, and left her at Port Sweetenham. 24 February to 2 June, alternately patrolling off Singapore and resting; on 11 June docked.)

2 July —Proceeded to sea in company with H.M.A.S.'s *Torrens* and *Swan* for destination unknown.

7 July.—Sighted Cocos Islands in the Indian Ocean. 8 a.m. dropped anchor opposite wireless station. The *Warrego*, *Parramatta*, and *Yarra* are here.

II. IN MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEA.

The following is mainly extracted from the diary of an ex-*Tingira* boy in the *I'arramatta*, but includes (where marked "*Huon*") passages from the diary quoted above.—

9 June, 1917 (*Parramatta*)—Left Sydney at 3 p.m. . . . Three destroyers 55 (*Parramatta*), 79 (*Yarra*), and 70 (*Warrego*) . . . steaming north.

7 July (*Parramatta* at Cocos Islands) — . . . A notable event in the H M A T B D Flotilla. For the first time in its existence the six destroyers came together. . . .

15 July (*Parramatta*).—Diego Garcia. . . . (16th) A search of the islands is being made to find survivors of two ships which a raider has sunk.

20 July (*Parramatta*).—Port Victoria, Seychelles. . . . (21st) Played soccer with natives and won.

28 July-3 August (*Parramatta*).—Aden . . . fighting line 15 miles inland . . . fifteen men from each ship to go to firing line on a pleasure trip . . . altogether 102 men went out. . . . Not a bit of firing was heard out there. They were not allowed close to enemy, although two people got on No-Man's Land in the haze.

6 August (*Parramatta* in Red Sea) —Commander Warren spoke to us of what he required our knowing. "When a submarine is sighted I am going for her."

9 August (*Huon*).—4 p.m. Proceeded through the Canal. . . . Troops from all parts of Australia were there. We flew an Australian flag at the yard arm, and we got a chuck up from the Australian troops.

12 August (*Parramatta*).—*Parramatta*, *Yarra*, *Huon*, *Torrens* left with convoy of five merchantmen across the Mediterranean. (13th) In the war zone now and in real earnest. . . . The vigilance kept is almost extreme for fear of an enemy submarine taking a liking to a fat turkey of our convoy. (15th) Both *Yarra* and *Torrens* sighted a submarine. . . . We did not see her for she dipped too quickly, but we circled everywhere at 24 knots. We were all

cheerful. . . . Extra vigilance kept now. (16th)¹ Shortly after going on afternoon watch a calm patch of water was observed. The day being with scarcely a ripple on all the sea, this patch excited suspicion, especially because another patch of a like manner was made near by. . . . The captain called "Full speed" . . . and the ship's head was put to it. The patches remaining the same a conclusion was made by the captain that it was nothing, so the ship was turned round to join the convoy. In the act of turning, the officer of the watch says he saw a feather (of foam from the periscope) and . . . reported it. . . . The patch was lengthening at about four knots and swerving to the left. . . . *Parramatta* was at general quarters and galloping at a little over 27 knots. A moment after we were over the spot, and a little farther on the captain in his good judgment cried "Let go depth charge." . . . A great dome of boiling water was made by the explosion, and, easing the engines, we steamed over the top. . . . There was oil—though in no extra large quantity—and splashes of black stuff. . . . The *Yarra* fired at an object rising to the surface. . . . The *Huon* and *Torrens* were steaming hard and keeping with the convoy. I was reminded of cowboys riding hard after cattle and protecting them from the Red Indians. . . . *Torrens* and a Frenchman in rear of the ships fired at two submarines . . . and successfully beat off the attack. (17th) The convoy safe in the harbour of St. Paul's, Malta. As soon as the convoy's safety was assured we steamed 18 (knots) to the Grand Harbour.

(From 18 August to 21 September *Parramatta* was at Malta.)

2 September.—An invitation from French man-o'-war *Voltaire* caused a number of boys to go to their cinematograph show. (20th) We were hastily called to reinforce a convoy, and, having steam on main engines, were away with the *Huon* and *Torrens* steaming at about 20. Reached the convoy, which consisted of three ships with one sloop for escort. They had lost two merchantmen that day, but we escorted them safely to St. Paul's Bay.

22 September (*Parramatta*).—After passing numerous minefields arrived safely at Corfu. French fleet at anchor. (23rd) In the evening a party for the *Voltaire* for cinema went aboard the wrong ship, but stopped there.

27 September (*Parramatta*).—Steamed for Malta.

2 October (*Parramatta*).—Taranto. Anchored till they swung the bridge and boats to let us in to the inner harbour. . . . (3rd) H.M.S. *Queen* is our parent ship. Between our 1st division and H.M.S. *Queen* are nearly 20 drifters for the Adriatic. The Adriatic drifters now come under Commander Warren, and our destroyers are to be the drifters' protectors. The commodore told us this. . . .

5 October (*Parramatta*).—Left at 10 p.m. yesterday. An object was sighted . . . it seemed like a trawler at first but at last all flotilla decided that it was a submarine, and, to our dismay, while we were going at it full belt it disappeared below the surface about 6,000 yards away. . . . Anchored at Corfu.

11 October (*Parramatta*).—All the flotilla weighed and went to sea. She was washing down the foc's'le and it was utterly a miserable night . . . bitterly cold. (12th) Headed into Brindisi.

24 October (*Huon*).— . . . (2nd Division) left Brindisi and proceeded to sea on patrol. The *Torrens* and *Swan* accompanied us. (15th) Patrolling from the coast of Italy to the coast of Albania across the Adriatic Sea on the lookout for submarines and Austrian fleet. (16th) Passed several dead bodies floating about with lifebelts on. One was a woman and the others soldiers. . . . (18th) Passed several more bodies, and sunk two enemy mines by gunfire . . . 4.30 p.m. relieved by 1st Division of Australian destroyers.

19 October (*Parramatta*—with 1st Division).—In the forenoon (Friday) . . . we had a spasm which sent us steaming at 26 knots from 10.30 till 1.45 after an enemy ship which we didn't see. While on chase we passed a torpedo stopped but pointing at us and only 20 yards off. Perhaps it was an ill shot at us. . . . (24th) Received a rumour . . . that the Austrians were half-an-hour away when we turned back on Friday's gallop.

31 October (*Parramatta* at Brindisi).—The three of us (1st Division) are together moored heads to buoys and sterns to the shore with a gangway over the stern. . . . H.M.S. *Heymouth* (flag), *Gloucester*, and *Dartmouth* are the cruisers in Brindisi. The Italians of course have plenty of destroyers and a couple of light cruisers. French had destroyers and subs.

1 November (*Parramatta*).—I believe that this ship deposited from Tuesday's pay no less than £450 in the Commonwealth savings bank. (2nd) The vegetable

¹This day's entry in the diary was expanded at a later date. The expanded account is here quoted.

ration is being made shorter by the Italian food control. An area of land has been put at the disposal of all British ships at Brindisi. We Australians have about an acre. (3rd) Alarm of a hostile aerial attack. 1st Division . . . relieved patrol.

2 November (*Huon*, on patrol).—A torpedo was fired at us by a submarine, but it went under us—this is the second that has gone under us.

8 November (*Parramatta*).—A pleasant surprise . . . Arranged between the Commodore of *Weymouth* and Commander Warren that we (boys) . . . be given two forenoons each time in (harbour) on H.M.S. *Weymouth* for gunnery and torpedo instructions. (9th) Our garden is marked out and a party of four men went over and made a start by planting pumpkin.

15 November (*Parramatta*).—1st Division put to sea. . . . The ship made a nasty fuss of the small lopp. . . . Relieved four French destroyers. (16th—The *Orione* incident occurred on this patrol, but is more fully related in *chapter x*) (17th) Found our ship of yesterday (*Orione*) at anchor on a minefield . . . abandoned.

25 November (*Huon*).—Chased a submarine but she dipped before we could fire. . . . (20th) Sighted a submarine on the horizon. We fired two shots . . . at 7,000 but she dipped before we could get close. . . . (29th) In harbour. Played French ships Rugby but they beat us 17-0. (2 December) Played French submarines Rugby and beat 7-4.

8 December (*Parramatta*).—Polling on the Referendum ("for conscription on a modified principle"). (14th) As activity has been reported among the Austrians we were ready at a moment's notice.

25 December (*Huon*).—Left harbour for sea. As we passed the British cruisers they gave us three cheers on account of going to sea on Christmas Day. (Boxing Day) Put into Valona on account of rough weather. (1 January, 1918) Left Taranto on secret service, carrying M. Venizelos and his staff. (2 January) Arrived at Piræus. (4th) Proceeded through the Corinth Canal.

27 December (*Parramatta*).—H.M.T.B.D. *Alarm* . . . is to work with us. (11 February) When we work in pairs, *Parramatta* and *Alarm* go together, and *Swan* and *Huon*. . . . (20 February) The *Torrens* has done a good deal of work since leaving dock. . . . She is fitted with a hydrophone for detecting submarines.

21 March, 1918 (*Huon*).—Left harbour with H.M.A.S. *Parramatta*. . . . (22nd) Arrived outside Patras and picked up a convoy. (Then till 4 April escorting transports backwards and forwards from Taranto to Itea.) . . . The hills all around (Itea) were covered in snow. The troops go overland from Itea to Salonica. (1 April) Troopship was attacked by submarines, but they were driven off. . . .

13 April (*Parramatta*).—Commander W. H. F. Warren drowned in Brindisi harbour.

14 April (*Huon*).—About sixteen British destroyers in harbour. . . .

3 May (*Parramatta*).—Received our hydrophones. . . . (14th) At 7 o'clock we left Wallaby Trot and . . . by 8.30 a drifter had the balloon Edith alongside. . . . We went to sea with balloon at 10, but by noon it was seen that the Edith needed more gas. We brought her down and gassed her and sent up observers, but they soon came down owing to a leak in the balloon. . . . (15th) Only three stokers are fit for duty and six seamen are down with the fever. So we could not proceed to sea. (16th) Air raid signal was given. . . . I got on deck for a short while and saw the enemy machine.

19 May (*Parramatta*).—This morning we got our balloon (Madge) on the winch, and by 9 a.m. were well clear of the outer boom. (20th) At daybreak we placed observers in balloon and sent them up. . . . About 2.30 we sighted an enemy submarine on the surface. . . . Went for her at full speed and fired three rounds 4-inch at extreme range but no good. . . . At 8 we tried to pull down balloon but winch jammed and balloon ripped herself and fell into sea. So ended Madge.

2 June (*Parramatta*).—The (new) balloon is doing well. There are about eight other destroyers with us on patrol, but we are alone all day. (17th) All through the night the hydrophone was in use every half-hour. . . . About 9 a.m. we passed close to an American submarine chaser. . . . I like these craft. . . .

13 July (*Huon*).—5.40 p.m., drifters reported a submarine that they had followed since 7 a.m. We kept stopping to drop our listeners. We followed her for

over two hours and just as darkness came on we got her in a square and every ship dropped depth charges. . . . On account of darkness we couldn't see any oil come to the top. (18th) Sighted a submarine from balloon but she got away. (19th) Every quarter-hour stopped to listen for submarines and could hear them all night. 12.30 a.m., could even hear the submarine through the ship's side quite plainly when we died down. 1.30 a.m., torpedo fired at us, but just passed our bows. We were stopped and . . . could not see anything.

29 July (*Parramatta*).—These patrols are becoming so monotonous that they seem nothing more than a mere routine.

9 August (*Parramatta*).—*Huon* and *Yarra* had a collision last night. . . . (10th) Passed the two lame ducks. *Huon* has her bows turned round, and *Yarra* has a collision mat over what must be a gaping hole about the ward room. (*Huon* went into dock at Genoa for repairs till 10 November. Five of her crew died there of "Spanish" influenza. Some visited many northern Italian towns on leave, and even succeeded in reaching the Western Front.)

23 August (*Parramatta*).—They were expecting some stunt last night, for all boats in harbour were in readiness for sea, but nothing happened. . . . (25th) We slipped from berth early and . . . carried out the usual attacking tactics on the incoming flotilla. (26th) To-day I was enabled to make a balloon ascent. An officer of the R.A.F. was my companion. . . . The ship entered a thick fog, while we were above it.

5 September.—Life in Brindisi is indeed getting monotonous. (17th) Passing off time—it's misery in this hole. (28th) Left Brindisi presumably for Leghorn that ship may dock. (20th) At noon we passed close to Stromboli. . . . About 4.30 we turned right round for a wireless signal has recalled us to Taranto. (*Parramatta* had been called back to escort a merchant ship through Corinth Canal to Athens. There the convoy was handed over, and *Parramatta* docked, etc., from 5 to 20, the crew visiting the Acropolis and other sights.)

20th October.—Carried out trials . . . in Salamis Bay, where the great naval fight of ancient days occurred. (21st) Steamed for Mudros.

23 October.—Found the *Yarra* patrolling off Imbros Island on the Dardanelles patrol, and we kept her company. (26th) Passed a mine so closely that it alighted along our side . . . joined the *Yarra*. We are patrolling between Imbros and Samothrake.

27 October.—*Parramatta* between Imbros and Suvla Bay. . . . I had 7 to 8 (p.m.) lookout and it was dark, but we went very nearly into Suvla Bay and well within range of the Turkish batteries. We kept away . . . in daylight hours. I've been thinking during my lookout of our men who fought and fell here (28th) To-day . . . Gaba Tepe was closer and details could nearly be seen. (31st) A general signal . . . "An armistice has been arranged with Turkey."

2 November.—*Torrens* is said to have gone to a port in Asia Minor at 28 knots. This is record steaming among our boats. (3rd) While negotiations are going on we live in expectation of big things. (7th) We are despatch destroyer to the fleet (running between Salonica and Mudros).

10 November.—S.s. *Katoomba* (Australian coastal liner) is in port to transport 2,000 soldiers for Dardanelles. (11th) Armistice with Germany signed 11 a.m.; and a general signal made to splice main brace. Australian t.b.d.'s here had enough supplied from *Forrester* to run one tot.

12 November.—All the British mobile fleet in Mudros is under way. . . . A mine was sighted and we were detailed to sink it. . . . All ships formed single line ahead. Passed into Dardanelles at 1 p.m. . . . passed Narrows at 1.45 p.m., masts of French (who followed) being just visible.

13 November.—At length Constantinople hove in sight, and by 8 a.m. the grand entree to the capital commenced. . . . The large French fleet steamed to the anchorage in line parallel to the British. . . . In its turn the Italian fleet anchored in a line parallel and then the Greek. . . . At 1 the British fleet had weighed and at length anchored at Ismid. (14th) To-day all the Allied fleet is at . . . the extreme end of the Gulf of Ismid.

25 November.—At 8.30 we were getting through the beautiful Bosphorus . . . *Superb*, *Temeraire*, *Justice*, *Democratie*, and *Roma* are the battle-fleet (Two divisions of destroyers, including *Swan* and *Parramatta*, went with them, steaming a mile on either beam of the battleships)

26 November.—Early this morning, while in a heavy sea, we saw the southern end of the Crimea Peninsula. . . . At 10 o'clock the *Superb* was turning into

Sevastopol. (27th) A good number of Germans are still here. We (*Parramatta*) left at 1.30 with mails and despatches for Constantinople. (*Parramatta* ran between Sevastopol and Constantinople until 16 December.)

5 December.—Sevastopol. Landed at main city steps, and our party tramped through to the scenes of old Crimea fights on a route march. . . . (6th) Constantinople. A Japanese cruiser and some destroyers came in. (9th) Sevastopol. *Huon* and *Warrego* both secured alongside us. . . . Bolsheviks are menacing Sevastopol. (10th) H.M.A.S. *Brisbane* got in here this morning . . . and we're keeping company on our trip to Constantinople.

25 December (at Ismid).—Christmas Day and a merry Christmas. Captain in charge of destroyers went aboard all Australian boats and gave a farewell speech.

26 December.—We Australians have left Ismid for good and seen our last sunrise in Turkey, I suppose. . . .

3 January, 1919 (*Huon*).—Arrived in Gibraltar. 2 p.m., left. (5th) Very rough, lost all our boats and after torpedo-tube and torpedo. (6th) *Torrens'* forward bulkhead gave out so she heaved to and got into harbour the best way she could, *Warrego* standing by her. (7th) *Swan* and *Yarra* out of sight. (8th) Sea moderated a little, so we made for harbour. Got separated from *Parramatta*. We arrived in Ferrol (Spain) in a helpless condition about 3 p.m. *Parramatta* wasn't in, so we went out again to find her. We got her S.O.S. signals. (9th) 12.5 a.m., picked up *Parramatta* and proceeded to harbour (Ferrol), arriving about 3.30 a.m. (13th) Left Ferrol and proceeded to sea, passing through the Bay of Biscay. (14th) Arrived in Devonport. Hands went on 21 days' leave.