

Len Ackroyd's Journal, HMS Wager 1944 – 1946

The following is a replication of a journal kept by AB (R) Len Ackroyd whilst serving in HMS Wager.

I have attempted to remain faithful to Len's original notation, though I have taken some minor liberties with punctuation and layout; these changes being made so as to facilitate easy reading. I have also added, in brackets, some of the better-known names for ports and places as quite a few of those visited by Wager have long since changed.

Flyleaf notes

Comm: April 3rd/44 Clydebank

Greenock

Scapa Flow

Norway – Ops

Shetlands

Faroes

Spitzbergen – “ (ditto for Ops??) June

Leave July 3rd – 17th

Left UK 26.7.44

Diary 1944 Aug 8

*Aug 8 left Gib for Algiers
took Ramilies with us*

Aug 9 at sea

Aug 10 Arrived in Algiers 0900

Aug 13 Left Algiers for Malta

Aug 15 Arrived in Malta 17.30

Aug 17 Left Malta for Alexandria

Aug 19 Arrived in Alex noon. Passed Tunisia, Libya & Pantelleria

Aug 24 Left Alex for Aden

Aug 25 Passing through Suez. All desert and a few camps

Aug 29 Arrived in Aden. Pretty hot now & a few sharks

Aug 31 Left Aden for Colombo

Sep 1 stooging about for U-boat in Indian Ocean

Sep 5 Crossed the equator. Still stooging about with aircraft carrier HMS Battle?

Sep 7 Crossing the line ceremony & called at Addu Atol (island) to oil

Sep 9 Arrived in Colombo

Sep 10 C-in-C Sir Bruce Fraser came aboard

Sep 11 Left Colombo with HMS Victorious for Trincomalee

Sep 12 Arrived in Trincomalee. Victorious lost two planes, we picked up crews

Sep 17-19 Went to rest camp at KINNIYA for 48 hrs, good oh, whilst having boiler clean alongside HMS Woolwich (depot ship).

Sep 19 to Oct 15 working up etc.

Oct 15 left Trinco and bombarded Nicobar islands with Indomitable and Victorious (carriers). Picked up one pilot. Arrived back Trinco 21st Oct

Oct 21 take Victorious to Colombo, turn straight round & ?????? ?????? back arrive 25th

Oct 30 left Trinco for Bombay arrived 2nd Nov

Nov 4 left Bombay for Colombo calling at Addu Atol to oil. Arrived Colombo 9th Nov

Nov 10 Left Colombo, arrived Bombay 12th

Left Bombay 18th Nov arrived Trincomalee 21st Nov

Left Trinco 4th Dec arrived Cochin (West coast of India) 6th Dec

Left Cochin 8th arrived in Trinco 14th after crossing the line for the 7th time

17th Dec left Trinco for bombardment in Malacca Straits, arrived back Trinco 22nd Dec: & went for boiler clean alongside Tyne

1st Jan 1945 left Trinco for strike on SUMATRA arrived back 7th

Left Trinco 16th Jan strike at southern Sumatra 24th – 28th. We were attacked by torpedo bombers, shot down six.

Arrived in Freemantle Australia 4th Feb: left same day and arrived in Sydney 10th Feb

28th Feb left Sydney, arrived Admiralty Islands (north of new guinea) 7th March

7th March – 15th exercises

18th left Manus island

20th March arrived Caroline Island

Left Caroline Islands 23rd for attack on Formosa & islands between Formosa and Japan

Carried out attacks on 26th 27th 30th 31st March; 1st 6th 7th 12th 13th 16th 17th 20th April

Arrived LEYTE 23rd (PHILIPPINES)

3rd May left Leyte for Manus

8th May arrive Manus

8th May: VE day, Splice the Main Brace

9th May left Manus for Sydney. 13th Arrive Sydney

15th left Sydney for Auckland NZ

19th arrive Auckland for refit -----

12th July out on trials

14th July left Auckland for Sydney

17th July arrive Sydney

22nd July left Sydney for Jervis Bay (Aust) for working up

27th July left Jervis Bay and arrive Sydney

31st July left Sydney with Whelp and Duke of York for Manus

5th Aug arrived Manus

6th Aug left Manus for Guam arrive Guam 9th

Left Guam 13th with Admiral B Fraser in Duke of York; Admiral C Nimitz in USS Missouri to meet Admiral Halsey's 3rd Fleet 300 miles south of Tokio

15th Aug at sea, off Bonin Island

16th Aug joined up with BPF & US 3rd Fleet 300 miles south of Tokio

27th Aug entered SUGAMI WAN (bay) with allied fleets

29th Aug left Sugami Wan & entered Tokio Bay

Sept 1st paint ship

2nd Sept VJ Day representatives of allied nations sign armistice aboard USS MISSOURI. Mass aircraft display by allied aircraft.

10th Sept left Tokio with Duke of York and Whelp

12th Sept arrived OKINAWA, left same day

14th Sept entering Hong Kong harbour. Detailed ops/off? to try and find a Dakota in distress, 20 passengers on board her.

15th Sept HMS URSA picked up survivors

16th Sept entered Hong Kong harbour, like passing through a Norwegian fjord. Splice the main brace.

20th Sept takes Admiral Bruce Fraser 20 miles south of CANTON, he goes rest of the journey by RAF launch - too shallow for us.

21st Sept returned to Hong Kong with Fraser on board.

24th Sept typhoon warning, we go into open sea. Typhoon misses us, we return to harbour 25th

29th Sept up to 28 groups leave the ship for UK.

3rd October leave harbour for anti-piracy patrol up and down coast

4th return to harbour pick up aviation spirit to take to Swatow and leave same day

5th Oct arrive south of Swatow and we fuel Sea Otter & anchor

6th Oct leave TONG SANG and return to Hong Kong harbour same day

9th Oct Chinese celebration ashore, fire crackers etc. etc.

18th Oct left Hong Kong for (Hon Dau) Haiphong? (Indo China) to liberate Indian soldiers

20th arrived Hon Dau and commenced transporting Indian ex-prisoners of war from shore to HMS Venerable (Carrier). Working through the middle of the night.

21st Oct left Hon Dau (Haiphong) arrived Hong Kong 22nd Oct

23rd Oct concert on board

27th Oct left Hong Kong on anti-piracy patrol

1st Nov finish APP (anti-piracy patrol), drop anchor in gunk bay

2nd Nov Flotilla holds Racing Whalers Regatta, we win it

4th Nov leave Hong Kong for Sydney

5th Nov China Sea

9th Nov Arrived Port Darwin

10th leave Darwin

15th Nov Whirlwind leaves us to call at Brisbane

17th Nov arrived Sydney with Kempenfelt

19th Nov Whirlwind arrives

29th Nov explosion on board Kempenfelt alongside us, one killed. Ship's dance.

1st Dec leave Sydney with Whirlwind & Duke of York for Fremantle

7th Dec arrived and left Fremantle. Take on comforts for Britain?

11th Dec call for 5 hrs at Christmas Isles

12th Dec passing through Sunda Straits

13th Dec Casper Straits

14th Dec arrived Singapore 0630, left at 1700. Leave Duke of York there

15th Dec passing through Malacca Straits

19th Dec arrived Colombo

21st Dec leave Colombo for Aden

25th Dec Christmas Day at sea, one bottle of beer for each man

26th Dec arrived at Aden

27th Dec leave Aden for Suez

30th Dec arrive at Port Tufix? & drop anchor

31st Dec proceed through Suez and arrive Port Said midnight

2nd Jan 1946 leave Port Said & arrive Gibraltar 8th Jan

10th Jan leave Gib arrive PORTSMOUTH 14th Jan