

## THE SHIP'S RECORD

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### THE FIRST COMMISSION

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H.M.S. "Hood" has always been a "West Country ship," or in other words she has always been manned from the Devonport port division. She was first placed in full commission on 15th May, 1920, and shortly afterwards hoisted the flag of Acting Vice-Admiral Sir Roger Keyes, Vice-Admiral Commanding the Battle Cruiser Squadron.

The routine of ships of the Atlantic Fleet at that time, as at present, was to do three cruises a year, from January to March, the Spring cruise to the coast of Spain and the Mediterranean; from May to July, the Summer exercise period; and from September to November, the Autumn exercise period.

H.M.S. "Hood" first proceeded to the Baltic, where she was honoured at Stockholm, Copenhagen, and Christiania by visits of Their Majesties the Kings of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway respectively.

On leaving Scandinavia "Hood" sailed for Scapa Flow, and in that anchorage, for ever famous as the base of the Grand Fleet during the war, she first joined company with the two battle squadrons and other ships of the Atlantic Fleet under the orders of Admiral Sir Charles Madden.

The fleet regatta took place in the month of July, and "Hood" started her pulling record well by winning the Battle Cruiser Squadron regatta at Lamlash and the Rodman Cup at Portland. The latter trophy was presented by Admiral Rodman, U.S.N., who commanded the American battle squadron which served with the Grand Fleet during the war; it is a cutter race open to all ships of the fleet in home waters and is pulled for annually.

After giving Christmas leave the ship took part in the Spring cruise of 1921 to Spanish ports and Gibraltar. On her return to England Rear-Admiral Sir Walter Cowan relieved Sir Roger Keyes.

The summer cruise of the fleet was upset by the coal strike of 1921; "Hood" was in dry dock at Rosyth at the time and stayed in the Forth until the end of the strike. After Summer leave the Autumn practice period was passed at Invergordon, Rosyth and Portland. Christmas leave followed and then another Spring cruise to southern waters, during which "Hood" visited the French naval port of Toulon.

The early part of the Summer cruise of 1922 was again interfered with, this time by the economy axe falling on the fleet. The scheme for the reduction of personnel, under which large numbers of officers and men were discharged from the Navy, necessitated ships being as far as possible at their home

ports. Early in July the fleet assembled in Torbay for inspection by the King, and H.M.S. "Hood" had the honour of being visited by His Majesty.

Very soon afterwards news was received that H.M. Ships "Hood" and "Repulse" were to represent the Royal Navy at Rio de Janeiro in August and September, 1922, on the occasion of the centenary of the declaration of Brazilian independence. The voyage to Rio brought a new experience not only to "Hood" but to most of her ship's company, for the equator had to be crossed. King Neptune dealt most effectively with those who had not before entered the waters of the southern hemisphere.

Warships of many nations were gathered in the beautiful harbour of Rio, and the days following the arrival of the British battle cruisers were devoted to entertainments and sports. The British ships were called upon to uphold the prestige of the White Ensign in international naval sports and regatta; in this they were very successful and the cup presented by the Brazilian Ministry of Marine was carried off by "Hood" and "Repulse." The President of the Republic visited H.M.S. "Hood" during her stay.

After a visit to Sao Paulo, where the British Colony were most hospitable, the two ships sailed from South America for Gibraltar, calling on the way at several of the British West Indian Islands (the scene of many of the exploits of Admiral Lord Hood) and the Canaries. The ships were delayed at Gibraltar owing to the period of tension in the Near East which preceded the Treaty of Lausanne, but reached home in time for Christmas leave. The Spring cruise of 1923 to Spanish and Mediterranean ports was the last cruise of the first commission.

H.M.S. "Hood" paid off on 14th May, 1923, and re-commissioned on the following day, Rear-Admiral Sir Frederick Field relieving Rear-Admiral Cowan on the same date. After fleet practices at Invergordon, "Hood" paid her second visit to Scandinavian waters and had the honour of again being visited by Their Majesties the King and Queen of Norway. On this occasion the flag of the King as an honorary Admiral in the British Royal Navy was flown in "Hood." After paying a visit to Skagen the ship proceeded to Torbay, where a record was set up of five thousand visitors to the ship in one afternoon. It was soon to be broken.

## THE WORLD CRUISE-ENGLAND TO SINGAPORE



In the early autumn of 1923 the Admiralty announced that H.M. Ships "Hood," "Repulse," and the First Light Cruiser Squadron, consisting of the "Delhi," (flagship of Rear-Admiral the Hon. Hubert Brand), "Danae," "Dragon," "Dauntless," and "Dunedin," were to make a world cruise to show the flag, especially in as many parts of the Empire as could be included. "Hood" was selected to be the flagship of this Special Service Squadron, and Sir Frederick Field was made an Acting Vice-Admiral for the period of the cruise.

October and November were busy months of preparation. The ship was docked at Rosyth and given a thorough refit there and at Devonport in readiness for the work she had to do, a matter of necessity, as once away from the British Isles there is no dry dock nearer than Pearl Harbour, Honolulu, which will take the "Hood."

At five o'clock on the chill, misty morning of 27th November, a handful of dockyard officials and workmen saw the ship safely away from her berth alongside Devonport Dockyard. All the world seemed dead as she passed out to Plymouth Sound, but out at sea "Hood" joined company with other ships of the squadron and much-appreciated messages of good luck were received from the King, the Admiralty and the Prime Ministers of Australia and New Zealand, who were in London for the Imperial Conference.

After eleven days at sea the squadron reached its first port of call, Sierra Leone, where the reception of the ships gave them an idea of what was to come.

Two days out from Sierra Leone the Line was crossed and the well-known ceremonies were observed in all ships. Cape Town was reached in thick fog, but the welcome which the ships received there more than made up for the unkindliness of the weather. After Christmas, the first which most of the officers and men had spent in a summer season, the Light Cruiser Squadron sailed for Durban. Later, while on the way to Zanzibar, the battle cruisers by special request made calls of a few hours' duration at East London and Mossel Bay in order to let as many people as possible see the ships. The fog unfortunately caused many to be disappointed at Port Elizabeth. Zanzibar was reached by the squadron after a short stay off Durban, and here and for several weeks afterwards the heat on board the ships was intense. The Sultan of Zanzibar, an impressive figure, paid a visit to "Hood," and when the squadron sailed on 17th January, 1924, he led the ships out to sea in his yacht.

Ten days across the Indian Ocean brought the Special Service Squadron to Trincomali, in Ceylon, an old naval base which is being re-conditioned as a store depot to meet the growing needs of the Royal Navy in the East.

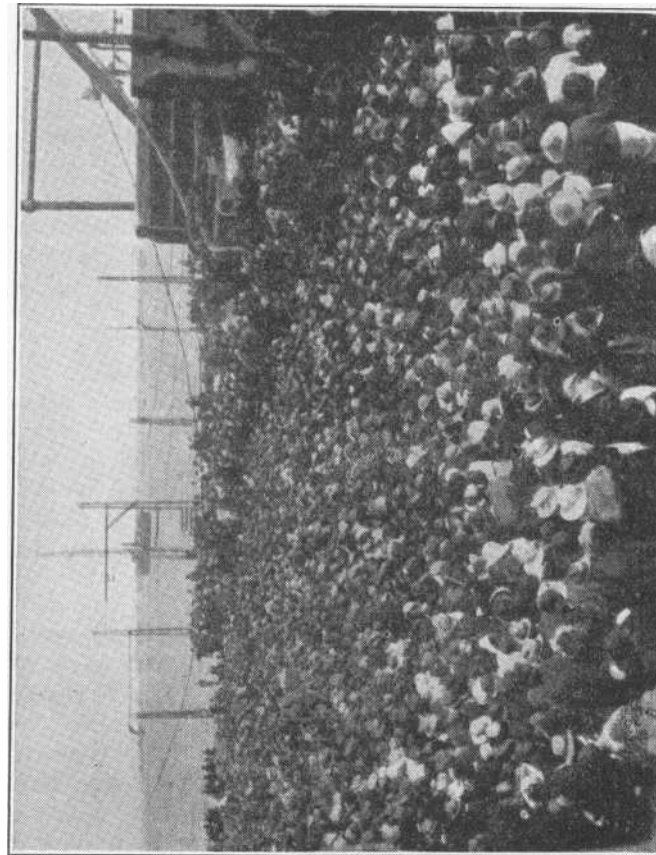
Port Swettenham, in the Malay States, was the next stop, and from there Kuala Lumpur, the capital of the States, was visited by parties from the ships. It was a short distance from Port Swettenham to Singapore, then the subject of world-wide interest on account of the controversy over the proposal to build a naval base there. At Singapore, as at every place visited, wonderful hospitality was shown to officers and men.

## THE WORLD CRUISE-AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND



On the ninety-third day after leaving Plymouth H.M.S. "Hood" anchored off Fremantle, the port of Perth which is the capital of Western Australia. The equator had been crossed three times and 15,000 miles had been traversed. The experiences of the ships at Fremantle showed them what welcome Australia was to give them; before "Hood" left New Zealand, two months later, over half a million visitors had been on board her.

From Fremantle the squadron sailed to Albany and thence across the Great Australian Bight to Adelaide, the capital of South Australia. In the big seas of the Australian Bight the "Hood," for



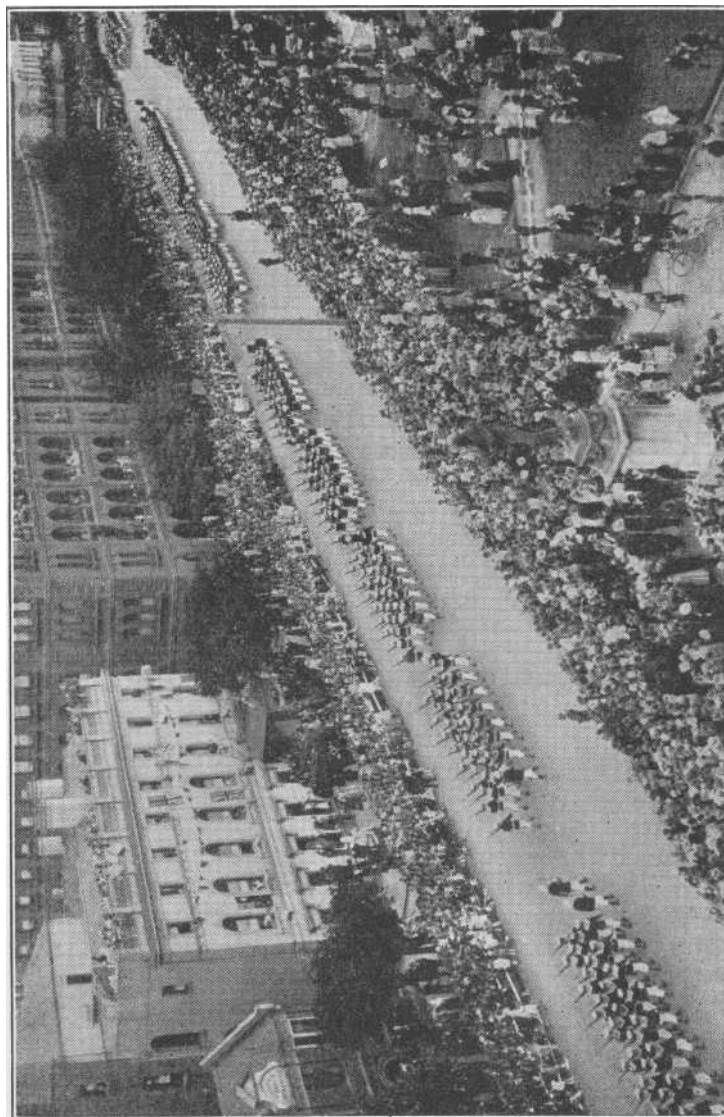
Portion of a huge crowd waiting to come on board at Melbourne

the first time in her career, met weather which made her behave like a small ship and showed that she could roll. The shallow water at Adelaide would not permit of the big ships lying off the port and Glenelg was made the anchorage. After five days, during which officers and ships' companies were treated with the greatest hospitality, the squadron proceeded on its way to Melbourne. Arrived there, "Hood" was placed alongside, and the crowds that visited the ship during the next eight days completely passed all previous records; in one afternoon 35,000 persons came on board the "Hood." There was a route march through the city and a vast number of entertainments for officers and men. Melbourne is not likely to be forgotten by those who were privileged to take part in the world cruise.

From Melbourne the ships went to Hobart, the capital of Tasmania, and, sailing once more after a few pleasant days there, they proceeded to Jervis Bay in New South Wales. Three days later - it was by now the 9th April - the squadron reached Sydney and met with the most wonderful welcome of the cruise. The ten days that followed emphasised the enthusiasm of the welcome.

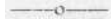
From Sydney the ships sailed for Wellington, the capital of New Zealand, and after a stay of fourteen days the Governor General of New Zealand, Admiral of the Fleet Lord Jellicoe, embarked in "Hood" for passage to Auckland. The time at that place was spent by many in trips to the Hot Springs of Rotorua and the Maori reserves.

Towards the middle of May the squadron sailed for the Fiji Islands. At Suva, the capital, and at Samoa, the next port of call, many interesting native dances and customs were seen.



Route March through Melbourne

## THE WORLD CRUISE-CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES



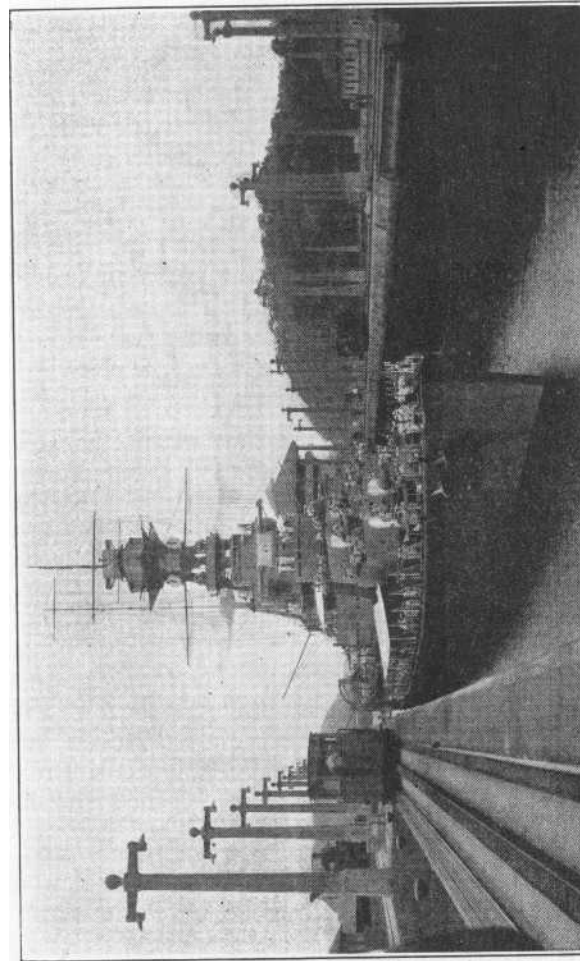
Up to this point every port visited by the squadron during the seven months which had passed since the ships left England had been on British Empire territory. Honolulu which was next visited was the first exception; as a compliment to the American nation the British ships went "dry" on arrival. The wonderful climate and beauty of the island and the welcome which they received from the Americans made a deep impression on everyone. When the squadron sailed for Victoria, British Columbia, it was honoured by an escort of United States naval seaplanes.



After nine days at sea Victoria was reached, and both there and at Vancouver, which was visited by the battle cruisers, officers and men were given a very warm welcome. Parties were organised to enable officers and men to visit the magnificent scenery of the Rocky Mountains.

On leaving Vancouver the First Light Cruiser Squadron parted company in order to visit ports on the west and east coasts of South America.

"Hood," "Repulse" and H.M.A.S. "Adelaide," which had joined the Special Service Squadron in Australia, proceeded to San Francisco. On approaching they were met by an escort of seaplanes, and at the entrance to the famous Golden Gates the compliment was paid to the British admiral of dropping a large "golden" key from an aeroplane. The hospitality shown to the ships by the people of the United States was no less warm than in British



H.M.S. "Hood" in the Panama Canal

Dominions, and the visit showed the good fellowship which exists between officers and men of the two navies.

The battle cruisers and "Adelaide" sailed for Panama on 11th July and passed through the canal to the Atlantic. "Hood" is the largest warship to go through the canal, and the ease with which the operation was conducted very much impressed everyone on board.

British territory was again reached at Kingston, Jamaica, where the ships stayed for a few days before proceeding to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and from there up the St. Lawrence River to Quebec. There the ships lay for a fortnight and enjoyed once more the great hospitality of the Canadians.

Newfoundland, Britain's oldest colony, was the last to be visited by the ships of the Special Service Squadron. The harbour of St. John's was too small for vessels of the size of "Hood" and "Repulse," and the ships, therefore, anchored in Topsail Bay. After a stay of fifteen days, the longest at any place during the cruise, the three ships sailed for England. On 29th September, 1924, the First Light Cruiser Squadron, on its return from South American ports, again joined Vice-Admiral Field's flag for a few hours, and by the same evening "Hood" was anchored in Cawsand Bay outside Plymouth Breakwater. During ten months of absence she had steamed nearly forty thousand miles.

## - WITH THE - ATLANTIC FLEET



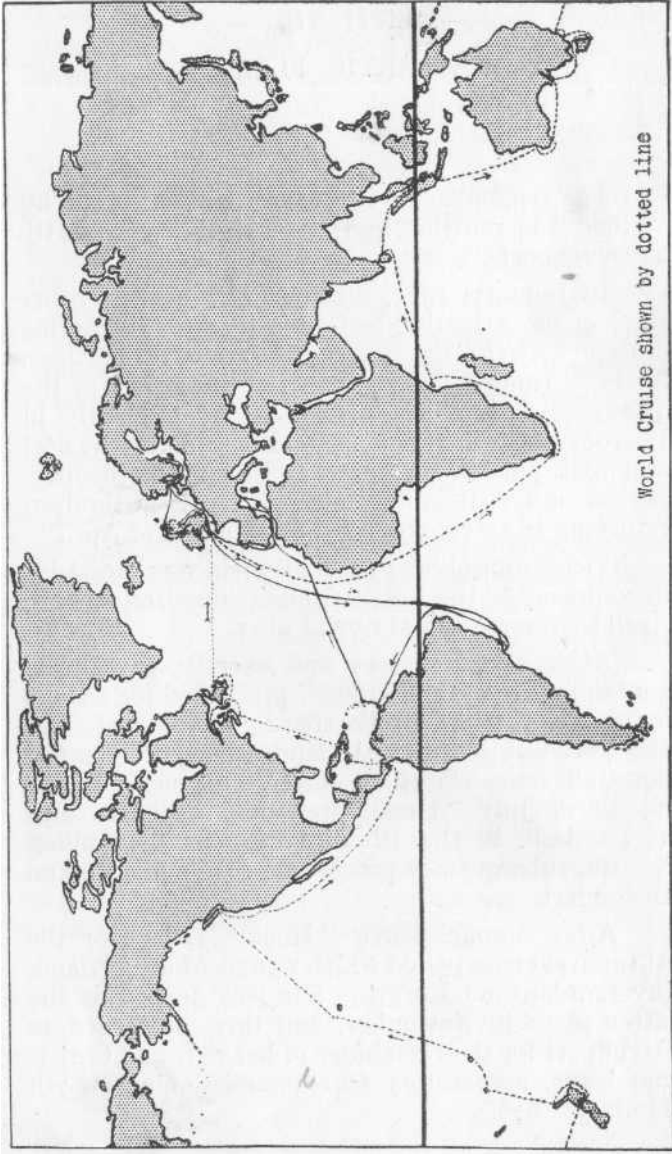
The remainder of the year 1924 was spent by "Hood" in refitting, partly at Rosyth and partly at Devonport.

In January, 1925, she concentrated with other ships of the Atlantic Fleet and sailed for the Spring cruise. After exercises on the way to northern Spain, "Hood" was detached to take part in the Vasco da Gama celebrations at Lisbon early in February. On their conclusion she rejoined the fleet and took part in further exercises in the Mediterranean and visits to Spanish ports and Gibraltar, returning to Devonport at the beginning of April.

Vice-Admiral Sir Frederick Field was succeeded in command of the Battle Cruiser Squadron on 30th April by Rear-Admiral Cyril Fuller.

After fleet practices and exercises at Invergordon and Rosyth, "Hood" proceeded for a short independent cruise to Portree in the Isle of Skye and Portrush, Northern Ireland, where the greatest hospitality was shown to officers and men. In the middle of July "Hood" rejoined the battleships at Lamlash, in the Isle of Arran, for the pulling regatta, subsequently proceeding to Weymouth and Devonport.

After summer leave "Hood" sailed for the Autumn exercise period which was spent at Portland, Invergordon and Rosyth. She was docked at the latter place in November, and then proceeded to Devonport for the remainder of her refit and Christmas leave, preparatory to recommissioning on 7th January, 1926.



The Track Chart of H.M.S. "Hood."