

4. On 13th July, 1945, Commodore G. H. Faulkner, D.S.C., assumed duties as First Naval Member of the New Zealand Naval Board and Chief of Naval Staff, in succession to Commodore Sir Atwell Lake, Bart., C.B., O.B.E.

5. On 1st April, 1945, the Royal New Zealand Navy consisted of H.M.N.Z. ships "Achilles," "Gambia," "Arabis," "Arbutus," and H.M.N.Z. mine-sweepers and auxiliary craft. In addition, shore and training establishments were in operation, consisting of H.M.N.Z.S. "Philomel" and H.M.N.Z.S. "Tamaki" at Auckland; H.M.N.Z.S. "Cook" at Wellington; H.M.N.Z.S. "Tasman" at Lyttelton; Naval W/T Station, Waiouru; and Navy Office, Dunedin.

6. Units of the Royal New Zealand Navy, comprising the 25th A/S M/S Flotilla and twelve Fairmile launches, continued to operate under the command of Commander, South Pacific Area, until July, 1945, when they were released and returned to Auckland under the control of the New Zealand Naval Board for refit and disposal, with the exception of H.M.N.Z.S. "Arbutus," which from June, 1945, until October, 1945, served under the control of the Commander-in-Chief, British Pacific Fleet.

SECTION II.—PROCEEDINGS OF CRUISERS OF THE ROYAL NEW ZEALAND NAVY

H.M.N.Z.S. "GAMBIA"

In April, 1945, "Gambia" was replenishing in Leyte Gulf, where, on 28th, Captain R. A. B. Edwards, C.B.E., R.N., relieved Captain N. J. W. William-Powlett, D.S.C., R.N., in command.

2. On 1st May "Gambia" sailed with Task Force 57 to continue operations against Sakishima Gunto. On 4th, "Gambia," in company with H.M.S. "Swiftsure," carried out a simultaneous bombardment on Nobara Airfield with air co-operation for spotting. A very successful bombardment was reported. Air strikes were continued against Sakishima Gunto until 25th May, when, after fuelling, Task Force 57 set course for Manus.

3. From 1st to 4th June "Gambia" was on passage from Manus to Sydney, where she remained until 28th storing and replenishing, apart from two days at sea carrying out gunnery exercises.

4. On 28th June the Rear-Admiral commanding Fourth Cruiser Squadron, Rear-Admiral E. J. P. Brind, C.B.E., and a skeleton staff embarked and "Gambia" proceeded in company with the British Pacific Fleet for Manus. Rear-Admiral Brind and staff were transferred to H.M.S. "Newfoundland" on 30th June.

5. After fuelling at Manus, "Gambia," forming part of Task Force 37.1, sailed on 6th July for the current operations against Japan. Air strikes were carried out against Northern Honshu and Southern Honshu.

6. Rear-Admiral R. M. Servaes, C.B.E., commanding Second Cruiser Squadron, and two of his staff officers joined "Gambia" temporarily to gain experience of fleet operations in the combat area. "Gambia" later rejoined Task Force 37, and the whole force carried out more air strikes against Southern Honshu on 28th and 30th July. During the month of July, "Gambia" spent thirty days at sea and steamed 10,561 miles.

7. On 9th August "Gambia" was detached with Task Unit 37.1.8, under the control of the Rear-Admiral commanding Fourth Cruiser Squadron, to carry out a bombardment of Kamaishi. Reports suggested that the bombardment was most successful. During the retirement the force was attacked by a Japanese aircraft which was engaged by "Gambia." This, as far as is known, was the last aircraft to be engaged by British Fleet gunfire during the war. It was ultimately reported as being brought down.

8. Further air strikes were carried out over Northern Honshu until, on 15th August, Commander Task Force made a signal, "Cease Hostilities against Japan."