

U.S.S. Frank Knox In Port



As dawn broke over Cleveland Bay, the U.S.S. Frank Knox, gracefully slipped into Townsville Harbour yesterday on a two-day visit, her first port of call, after leaving Vietnam waters.

The captain and officers of the destroyer will be welcomed by the Mayor, Alderman Harold Phillips, at a mayoral welcome on Friday at 11 a.m. at the Town Hall.

The U.S.S. Frank Knox is the sister ship of another U.S. destroyer which visited Townsville recently — U.S.S. Duncan, whose once took part in the opening of the Coral Sea pool in May.

Captain of the Frank Knox (3,470 tons), Commander James G. Baker, U.S.N., said "We are happy to be here in Townsville. Our visit to Australia last year took us to Newcastle, New South Wales, where it rained solidly for the duration of our visit. I am glad to see that Townsville welcomes us with sunshine." Commander Baker is married with four children. His family resides in San Diego.

The destroyer will be open for public inspection to-day from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

One special feature of the destroyer is the variable depth sonar transducer which is positioned at the stern. Executive Officer, Lt. Cdr. Peter A. Baker (no relation to the captain), said, "When our usual submarine detection equipment cannot be used to trace the position of a submarine, we use the V.D.S. which is lowered through layers of cold

up submarines." U.S.S. Frank Knox is the U.S. Navy's first picket ship to be launched.

3,000 Rounds

Her armament consists of six 5-inch guns which were used to pour 3,000 rounds into Communist held areas of South Vietnam during the ship's tour of active duty.

Lt. Cdr. Baker commented, "We performed the duties of a gunfire support ship off the coast of Da Nang with the attack carrier, U.S.S. Kitty Hawk. Our guns destroyed Viet Cong bunkers, trenches and other structures. Spotter planes guided our gunfire and informed us of the results. We don't know how many Communists we killed."

Frank Knox left her home port, San Diego, California, in January 6, 1969, proceeding to Vietnam waters. She is now on her way home to the States, making courtesy calls to Australian ports.

After leaving Townsville on Friday at 4 p.m. Frank Knox will visit Hayman Island, in the Whitsunday group, and Brisbane before making her way to Hawaii and home.

The ship was built in Boston Naval Shipyard and was commissioned in December, 1944, and received the name of World War II Secretary of the

Knox. During the war, Frank Knox participated in Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet operations against Japan. After the war, she was based in Tsingtao, China from 1948 until shortly before the Communist revolution.

Korean Action

The ship returned to western Pacific waters during the Korean war to service as an original unit of Task Force 77 in action at Inchon, Hung Nam and Wonsan Harbour. In February she took part in the Nationalist Chinese evacuation of the Tachen Islands.

Frank Knox was deployed from San Diego in June, 1965, and while en transit from the South China Sea to Taiwan on July 18, 1965, ran aground on Pratas Reef.

On October, 18, 1966, she put to sea after dry dock repairs in Japan, taking her place in Destroyer Division 172 and resumed her duties as an operational unit of the Pacific Fleet.

In July, 1967, U.S.S. Frank Knox went to the waters of South-East Asia and began a climb that has brought her to a level she previously occupied as one of the most distinguished ships in the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Battle Honours

Battle Efficiency "E" for Destroyer Squadron 17 plus individual efficiency awards in gunnery, engineering and anti-submarine warfare. On November 20, 1968, she was formally awarded the Arleigh Burke Fleet Trophy for being the most improved ship in the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

(Alex Trotter photo)