

AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT

LIEUTENANT GRAHAM DE CHAIR

Journals, 1927-31

Reel M717

**Commander G.H.D. de Chair
Felden lane
Boxmoor, Hertfordshire**

**National Library of Australia
State Library of New South Wales**

Filmed: 1969

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Henry Graham Dudley de Chair (1905-1995) was born at Winchester, the son of Admiral Sir Dudley de Chair (1877-1958). Sir Dudley de Chair was Governor of New South Wales in 1923-30, a post that had earlier been held by his uncle Sir Harry Rawson. Graham de Chair was trained at the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth and in 1923 was appointed a midshipman on HMS *Iron Duke*. He served on HMS *Laburnam* in the New Zealand Squadron in 1927-29. He was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in 1928. He was ADC to his father in 1929 and accompanied his parents on their journey back to England in 1930.

De Chair remained in the Royal Navy until his retirement in 1955. He became a lieutenant commander in 1936 and a commander in 1943. During the War he commanded the destroyer HMS *Vimy* in the Atlantic Ocean (1941-42) and the destroyer HMS *Venus* in the Indian Ocean (1944-45). He was awarded the DSC in 1942 and 1945.

De Chair was the author of a memoir, *Let go aft: the indiscretions of a salt horse commander* (Tunbridge Wells, 1993). The journal that he kept in 1935-39 is held in the Liddell Hart Military Archives at King's College, London.

Some papers of Sir Dudley de Chair were also microfilmed by the Australian Joint Copying Project (reel M716).

LIEUTENANT GRAHAM DE CHAIR

Reel M717

1. Journal kept by de Chair while serving on HMS *Laburnam* (1927-29), as ADC to the Governor of New South Wales (1929) and while serving on HMS *Nelson* (1930-31)

The journal commences on 24 October 1927 when de Chair joined HMS *Laburnam* (Commander F.N. Attwood) at Auckland. The entries mostly record life on the warship, including ship movements, navigational matters, tours of New Zealand and the Pacific islands, naval manoeuvres, rifle practices, formal events such as the King's Birthday celebrations, repairs, disciplinary matters, official visitors to the ship and weather conditions. There are also references to recreational matters, such as sport, fishing, social events and drives in the country. The ship visited Russell, Dunedin, Lyttelton, Picton, Wellington, Napier and other ports in New Zealand. In June-October 1928 it did a tour of the western Pacific visiting Pago Pago, Papeete, Bora Bora, Raratonga, Suva, Nadi and other places. This section of the journal ends on 9 April 1929 when de Chair left New Zealand.

There are many inserts in the journal including sketches by de Chair, photographs, maps, official circulars, timetables, orders, and a typescript account of a tour of tourist resorts in the North Island.

The second section of the journal begins in April 1929 when de Chair arrived in Sydney to take up his duties as ADC to his father, Sir Dudley de Chair, the Governor of New South Wales. The entries tend to be brief and record the daily activities at Government House, including visitors, lunches and dinners, balls, sporting events, concerts, theatrical performances and church services. There are more detailed descriptions of visits to the Riverina (May 1929) and Mount Kosciusko (August 1929), and a tour of the unfinished Sydney Harbour Bridge with the engineer J.J.C. Bradfield. Photographs, maps and programs are inserted in this section and also a few letters from de Chair to his mother written from New Zealand.

The journal resumes on 3 November 1930 when de Chair joined the crew of HMS *Nelson*, following his return to England in September 1930. It records the daily routine at Portsmouth, a tour of the West Indies and Gibraltar (January-March 1931) and naval exercises at Invergordon, Scapa Flow and Rosyth in Scotland. The journal ends in November 1931.

2. Journal kept by de Chair in 1930 while travelling in South East Asia, China and Japan

De Chair accompanied his parents and his sister Elaine on their leisurely journey from Australia to England at the end of Sir Dudley de Chair's term as Governor of New South Wales. The journal, which covers the period 8 April to 11 July 1930, describes in considerable detail the first part of the journey. It begins with a short account of de Chair's experience as ADC to the Governor in 1929. It describes the farewells to the Governor in Sydney, the journey by train to Brisbane, the voyage on the *Nieuw Holland* (Capt. F. Bauer), sightseeing in Macassar, Bali and Jogjakarta, visits to the temples at Borobudur and Prambanan, a reception given by the Sultan of Jogjakarta, meetings with governors and the governor-general of the East Indies, travels in Java, visits to Batavia and Singapore,

a tour of the Singapore Naval Base which was then under construction, travels in Indochina, including visits to Saigon, Angkor Wat and Phnom Penh, and their arrival in Hong Kong. The party then travelled on various ships to Shanghai, Tsingtao (Qingdao), Weiheiwei (Weihai) and Peking (Beijing), with visits to the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace, before proceeding to Kobe, Tokyo and other cities in Japan. The journal ends at Yokohama, with some reflections on the White Australia Policy.

The journal contains a large number of small photographs, which are virtually illegible, and a few sketches, maps, newspaper cuttings, programs and other printed items.