

U.S. CRUISER ARRIVES Vincennes Will Be Here A Week SHIP TO BE OPEN TO PUBLIC

The United States cruiser Vincennes, flagship of Rear-Admiral Paul Hendren, Commander of the South Pacific Area and Force, arrived at Wellington at 3.30 yesterday afternoon from Auckland. She will remain here for a week. During her stay her officers and men, totalling just under 1200, will be freely entertained at functions and tours arranged in their honour by the people of Wellington.

As soon as the ship berthed yesterday Admiral Hendren called on the American Charge d'Affaires ad interim, Mr. Prescott Childs, and with him later visited the Prime Minister, Mr. Fraser, and the Minister of Defence, Mr. Jones. Today further calls will be exchanged, and tomorrow Mr. Fraser will give a luncheon for the Admiral.

The Admiral has announced that the ship will be open for inspection by the public from 2 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. each day, except on Friday and Monday, when the hours will be from 1.30 p.m. to 3 p.m. She is berthed at Aotea Quay No. 2.

The Vincennes is one of the most modern warships Wellington has seen for some time. She was commissioned in January of last year, but has seen a great deal of active service in the Pacific. Of 10,000 tons, she is classed as a light cruiser. She is commanded by Captain William G. Lalor, U.S.N., with Commander L. W. Bailey, U.S.N., as his chief executive officer. There are more than 70 officers and about 1100 men.

The main armaments of the Vincennes are 12 6-inch guns, in four triple turrets, and there are also 12 5-inch guns and a large number of 40 and 20 millimetre pieces.

The Vincennes belongs to the biggest cruiser class in the world, more than 50 having been built in the United States in the last few years. She is more like a battleship than a cruiser in the degree of superstructure, especially in the tiered tower and the fighting top.

Third of Line.

Third of her name, the Vincennes had two notable predecessors. The original Vincennes was a sailing ship which in the early part of last century was the first American naval vessel to sail round the world. The second Vincennes was a heavy cruiser, which was commissioned in 1937 and was sunk in the first Battle of Savo Island in August, 1942, during the assault on Guadalcanal.

The Vincennes now in Wellington was commissioned in January, 1944, and made her first contact with the enemy in June of the same year. Since then she has been present at every major engagement in the Pacific. She took part in the Marianas operations, the first Battle of the Philippines, the later action in the Leyte Gulf, when the Vincennes sank a Japanese heavy cruiser, air strikes and sweeps against Luzon and Formosa, and in the South China Sea, the invasion of Iwo Jima, strikes against Tokio, and the seizure of Okinawa.

The Vincennes started to return home on June 17 for overhaul. She was at the Mare Island Navy yard when Japan surrendered, and her present assignment as Rear-Admiral Hendren's flagship was given her there.

Admiral Hendren's service in this war includes participation in the North Africa, Sicily, and Salerno operations. He has been decorated with the American Legion of Merit, a Gold Star in lieu of a second Legion of Merit, the Oak Leaf Cluster (awarded by the United States Army), and the British Distinguished Service Order.

Captain Lalor spent the early part of his naval career in destroyers. He was at Cavite, in the Philippines, when the Japanese attacked, and reached Australia after being taken off by submarine to Java. Until November, 1942, he was stationed at Perth as Chief of Staff to the Commander of the Allied Naval Forces, Western Australia, and he then went to Washington and served on the planning board of the joint chiefs of staff. He joined the Vincennes last January, in time for the Iwo Jima operation.

RETURN VISIT

U.S.S. VINCENNES

The United States light cruiser Vincennes, flagship of Rear-Admiral Paul Hendren, Commander of the South Pacific Area and Force, arrived at Wellington on a return visit yesterday afternoon. She will remain here about a week and then sail for Auckland. Rear-Admiral Hendren did not accompany the ship to Wellington, but he is expected to arrive here today by air.

The cruiser will be open for inspection between 2 and 4.30 o'clock each afternoon.

Captain W. G. Lalor, commanding officer of the ship, was entertained at luncheon today by the American Charge d'Affaires ad interim, Mr. Prescott Childs.

At a ceremony held on board the ship on January 21, the officers and enlisted men witnessed the presentation of the Legion of Merit to Captain W. G. Lalor, U.S.N., the commanding officer, by Rear-Admiral Hendren, for "meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service as commanding officer of the Vincennes in operations against the enemy during the period February 1 to June 17, 1945."

U.S.S. Vincennes is classed as a light cruiser, of 10,000 tons, standard displacement. Her executive officer is Commander L. W. Bailey, U.S.N., and she carries more than 70 officers and about 1100 men. Her main armament consists of 12 6-inch guns in four triple turrets, 12 5-inch guns, and a large number of 40 and 20-millimetre pieces. In the degree of superstructure she looks more like a battleship than a cruiser, especially in the tiered tower of her bridge and fighting top.

ADMIRAL'S FLAG BAND Public Performances In City

On the cruiser Vincennes is the flag band of Rear-Admiral Paul Hendren. The people of Wellington will have ample opportunity to hear this unusual band in performance, for the admiral has given his permission for public appearances throughout this week while the ship is in port.

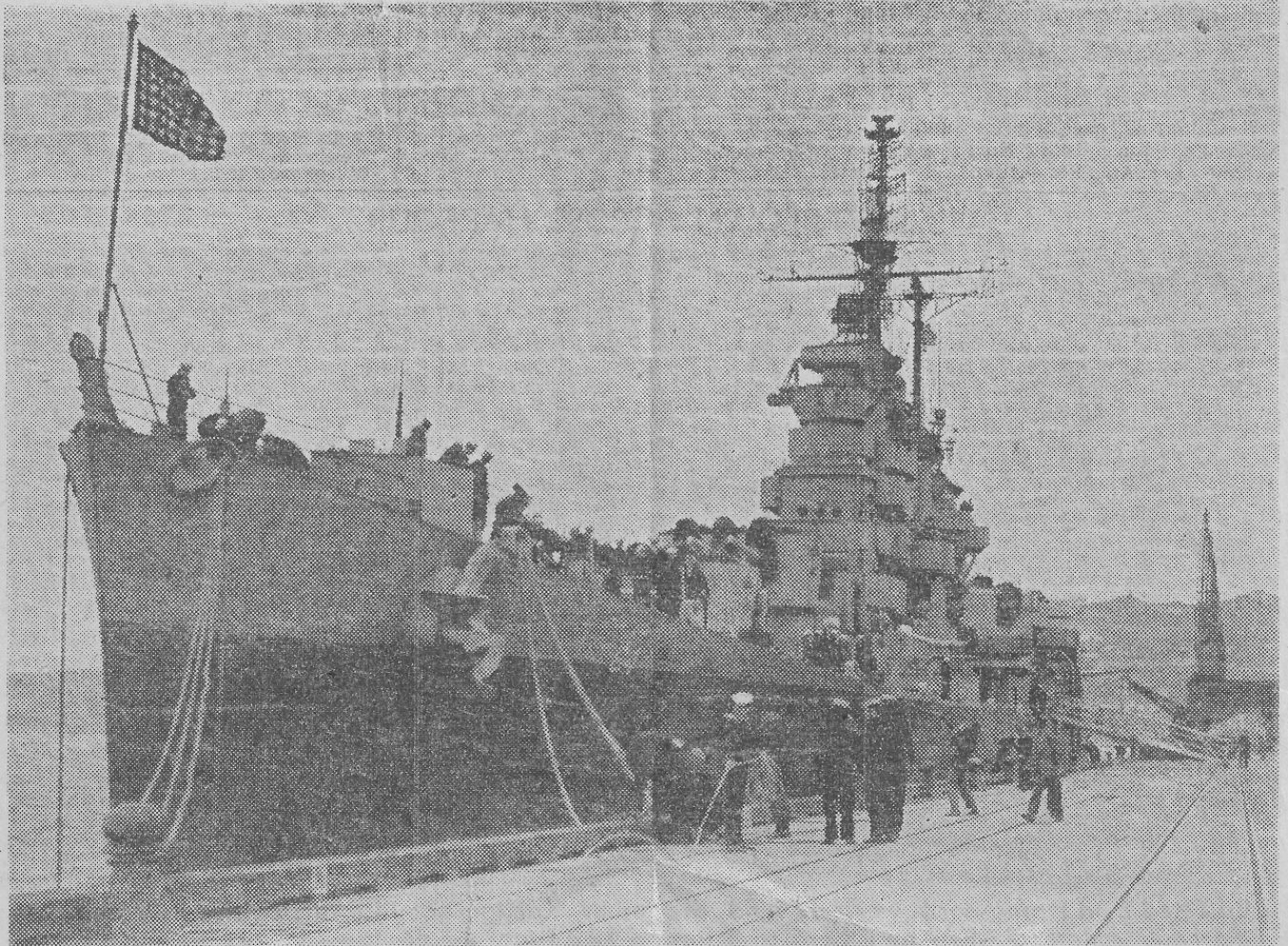
The band consists of two units, each of 23 pieces, and is capable of performing concert or dance music in a manner which has already attracted keen attention in Auckland. Both units belong to the United States Navy School of Music, and have for the last 18 months been stationed in the Pacific.

Numerous engagements have been arranged. The band will appear at dances to be given by patriotic clubs in honour of the ship's crew. Among the public appearances will be one at the City Mission Fair in the Town Hall tomorrow afternoon, a second at the Opera House from 5.15 p.m. to 6.15 p.m. on Friday in aid of the Ngaio Free Kindergarten, and another at Oriental Bay (or in the Town Hall if wet) at 3 p.m. next Sunday. A further concert will probably be given at the Opera House on Sunday evening.

In announcing these engagements undertaken for the band, an official of the United States Legation said that admission to all concerts would be free, though in some cases, when there were benefit performances, collections would be taken up.

Wellington patriotic clubs and officials have been busy preparing entertainment for the visitors. Dances will be held, bus trips organized, and private parties arranged. The Dixon Street hostel will have beds available for those who wish to stay ashore, and many people have offered hospitality in private homes.

U.S. CRUISER VISITS WELLINGTON



The American cruiser Vincennes photographed as she berthed at Wellington yesterday after her arrival from Auckland.