





# **HMS EAGLE**

**1969-1970**



**THE FLAG OFFICER, CARRIERS AND  
AMPHIBIOUS SHIPS**

**REAR ADMIRAL M. F. FELL,  
C.B., D.S.O., D.S.C. and Bar**



**CAPTAIN J. D.  
TREACHER, ROYAL  
NAVY**

**FOREWORD by The Captain**

This book is a record of the past 15 months - not a full Commission but a period which has covered a wide variety of tasks, from our main operational role as a strike carrier, to being Flagship for the Commander-in-Chief when Her Majesty the Queen presented a new Colour to the Western Fleet.

Aircraft carrier operations are the most complex and demanding of any undertaken by the armed forces today. Their success depends as much on all those who provide the essential support below decks as it does on the aircrew and the flight deck parties. Each and every one of you has played his vital part in the team effort required to operate our aircraft efficiently and safely.

I have been proud to command such a splendid ship and her ship's company who have responded so well to every call made upon them. I take this opportunity to thank you all for pulling your full weight and to send you and your families best wishes for the future.

*John Treacher.*

*By Sir John Bush, Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Distinguished Service Cross and two Bars, Admiral in Her Majesty's Fleet, and Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Ships and Vessels employed and to be employed in the Western Fleet.*

## **H.M.S. EAGLE - Commissioning Order**

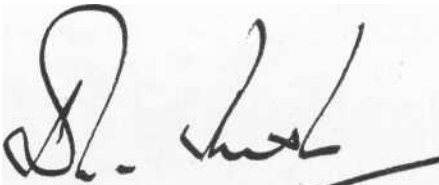
The Admiralty Board on behalf of the Defence Council having directed that Her Majesty's Ship Eagle is to be recommissioned at Devonport on 6th January, 1969 or as soon afterwards as circumstances permit, you are to proceed forthwith to commission her for a General Service Commission.

On commissioning you will be under my full command. During this period you are to bring to my immediate notice, and to the notice of the appropriate local authority, anything which gives cause for dissatisfaction with the ship or any part of her and any other matters of importance, in particular those relating to the Welfare of the Ship's Company.

Given under my hand this 19th day of December, 1968.

To: Captain J. D. Treacher, Royal Navy

Copy to The Ministry of Defence, (Navy)  
The Commander-in-Chief, Plymouth



ADMIRAL

With these words, read by the Captain to the ship's company, their families, friends and a host of distinguished guests, H.M.S. *Eagle* was Commissioned on Wednesday, 5th March 1969.

# HOW IT BEGAN

Of course, for many of us, it had all started quite a while before. From early October 1968, the biggest and best bird class carrier had been in Devonport for docking and the rectification of a multitude of defects. For a couple of months we had enjoyed the hospitality of H.M.S. *Drake* and had kept ourselves fit by tramping to and from the ship four times a day. In early January we moved back on board and said goodbye to most of those remaining from the last Commission who did not have the good fortune to remain longer, and the new ship's company began to arrive.

For many, particularly all those for whom this was their first ship, *Eagle* must have been a sorry sight. Two months in dry dock, with no-one living on board, had left their mark and with a great deal of work still to do there was little enough time to worry about cleaning her up. But cleaned up she was. Quickly messdecks were transformed from dull and cheerless boxes into places fit for habitation - well almost - and began to acquire all those various touches and individual ornamentations which make all the difference. More slowly the maze of dockyard clutter began to be removed; the flight deck became revealed as a relatively flat and open expanse after looking like a mining construction site for most of the winter; acres of grubby, oily hardboard were found to conceal decks which were quite clean and colourful in places; smoke came from the funnel, machinery began to hum, our own electricity became available (at least from time to time) - in short *Eagle* was getting back into business. And so to -

# COMMISSIONING DAY

The Gods clearly knew that it was a great occasion. After weeks of miserable weather, 5th March dawned as bright and clear as any day one could wish for. A trifle cool but the sun shone and wives and sweethearts trooped aboard looking gay and colourful and in festive mood. Distinguished guests were legion. The Lord Mayor of Exeter with his Lady and retainers and no less than 11 admirals including the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Michael Le Fanu, G.C.B., D.S.C., himself a former *Eagle* commanding officer and joined on this occasion by six other former *Eagle* captains.

Few could fail to be moved by the simple ceremony and service held in the hangar. The White Ensign was hoisted as the band played 'God Save the Queen', the ancient acts of Dedication and of Blessing of the Ship were spoken, the Captain addressed us all and the commissioning cake was cut. The seventh Commission of H.M.S. *Eagle* officially began.



*Families streamed aboard*



*Captains of Eagle*



*... and Admirals*



*The Captain addresses the Ship's Company*



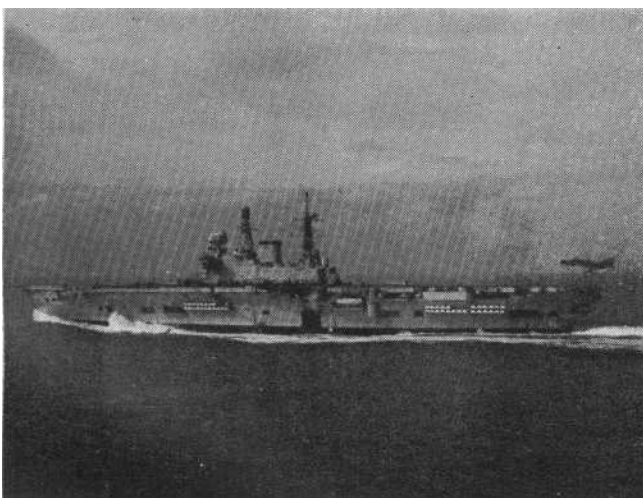
*Preparing to cut the cake*

Two days later we sailed for sea trials, Friday, 7th March setting the precedent for weekend departures which became the custom of the Commission. Another glorious sunny day imparted just the right sense that all was right with the world and indeed almost everything was right. One by one the various systems and pieces of equipment were checked out and the results of the months of work in the dockyard became apparent. The steamies delightedly found that they could achieve more revolutions and make the ship go faster than at any time since before the

modernisation started in 1959 - a great tribute to the efficiency and skill of both dockyard and ship's company work during the D.E.D. The airey-fairies couldn't wait to get started and soon aircraft were coming and going as if we had been in business for months. Some of our own squadron people came to have a look at us and to get in some deck landing practice and a few embarked and provided the aircraft for the flight deck teams to play with. The weather turned a bit sour but all the essential tasks were achieved. During this period the first

Royal Navy Phantoms appeared in the sky over a British carrier and for the first time a British deck reverberated with the roar of reheat Spey engines as the first touch and go landings were carried out.

After a fortnight or so of this we returned to Devonport and had about 10 days to put right all those things which had been found to need attention before we could get down to the serious business of squadron embarkation and our first work up.



*First Phantom approach*



*... and roller*



*Junior Leaders*

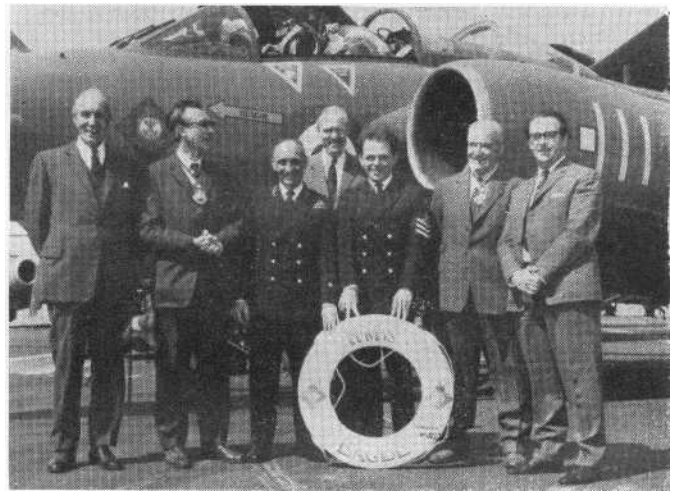


*Sir Alec Rose*

## **VISITORS**



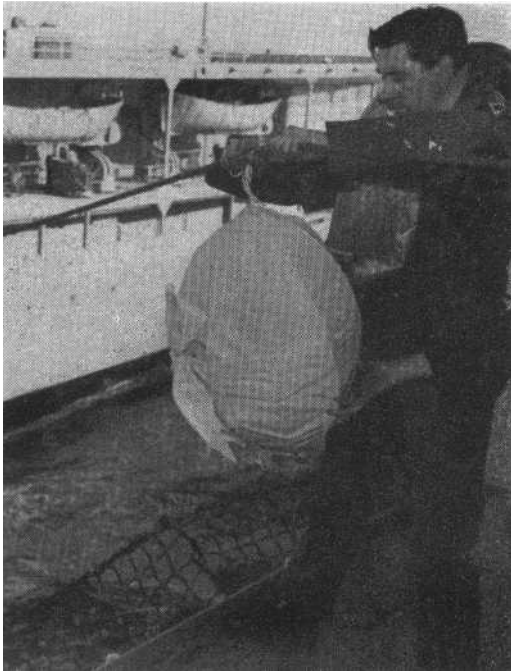
*Lifeboatman*



*Senior leaders, Lord Mayor of Exeter with retainers*

*W.R.A.C.*





*Easter egg for Olmeda*



*Seacats whooshed. Russian trawler in background*

## WORKING UP

Even *Eagle* couldn't sail on Good Friday so we sailed a couple of days earlier and embarked our Vixens, Wessex's and Gannets on Maundy Thursday, when our Home Air Command friends ought to have been on leave, and made leisurely passage up the Irish Sea and around North Scotland en route for the Moray Firth. Splendid weather, and all over the world people were paying good money for Easter travel of various sorts and we had our own free Easter cruise. Cunning 800 Squadron delayed their embarkation until well after the 'holiday' but soon the skies over N. Scotland were thick with aircraft. Mountain and glen echoed the roar of jet engines, innocent fishermen were surrounded with whirlybirds furiously dipping their whatsits and a not so innocent 'trawler' busily followed in our wake trying hard to appear inconspicuous. Bombs dropped, rockets fired, Seacats whooshed, guns banged and flares glowed.

Some of these even struck their targets and great was the Gunnery Department's joy at a pilotless aircraft and a sleeve target downed in the same afternoon. Perhaps that 'trawler' was not quite so bold after she had witnessed a few Seacat firings.

After two intensive weeks, during which the Flag Officer, Carriers and Amphibious Ships came to have a look at us, we anchored off Lossiemouth for three days' well-earned rest and some exercise ashore. But not for the first time the treachery of these northern waters frustrated the intention. The first wave got ashore all right but it was soon clear that boatwork was to be far from easy. Near swamping of an officer's boat caused cancellation of

further traffic - those ashore were ashore, those on board stayed - and so it was for the weekend. On Sunday evening rising winds made a getaway most desirable so everyone was recalled. On Monday morning one of the greatest heli-lifts in history transported nearly a thousand officers and men back to the ship and we put to sea with almost everyone on board. The next 10 days in the Moray Firth produced hail, snow, gales, rain, fog and high seas but very little serious interruption to the programme was experienced and after finally landing some Scottish natives for leave on 27th April we completed the work up and turned south into the North Sea bound for Portsmouth.

*FOCAS came to have a look at us*

*Wessex 3, wet winching*







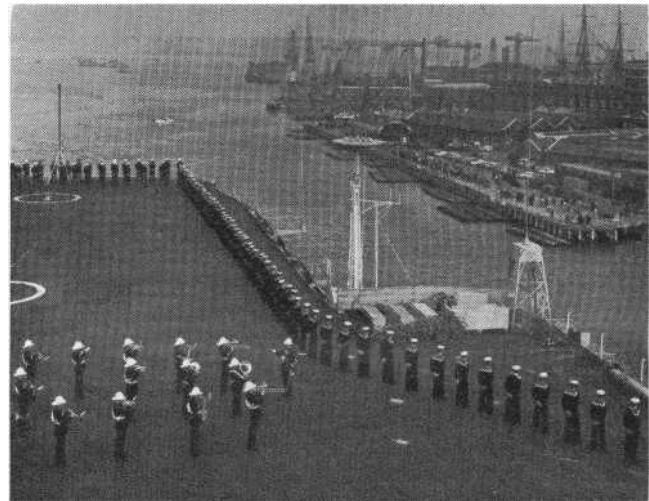
*A bit heavy ...*



*... and not quite straight*

# PORTSMOUTH

It had been several years since *Eagle* had been in Portsmouth and for the large number of Pompey natives this promised to be the only time during the Commission when they could be 'up-homers' every night. Ten days' leave to everyone went all too quickly and by 19th May we were all back on the job in order to be ready to sail for our final work up period.



*Portsmouth - almost there*



*Families came aboard*

We sailed, of course, on Friday, 23rd May, embarked the squadrons in the Channel and this time headed for the south Irish Sea. Our objective was a last burst of effort to bring us to top line efficiency for our ORI by the Flag Officer, Carriers and Amphibious Ships.

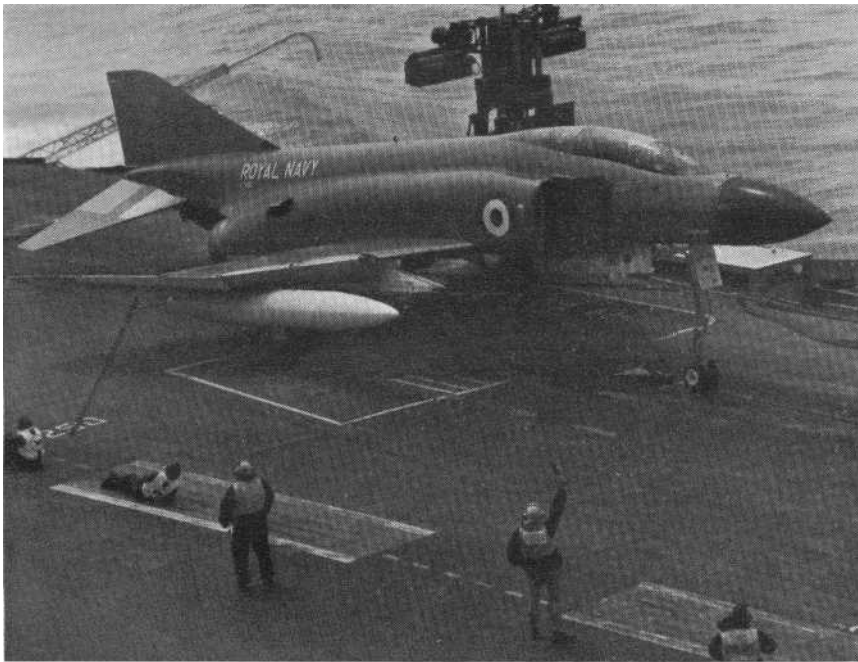
We were at sea with a job to do but someone had forgotten that it was Whit weekend and the Great British Public were on holiday. Some hundreds of these had converged on that blissfully peaceful and scenic spot in western Pembrokeshire known as Nolton Haven in St. Brides Bay - to lie and dream in the sun, to sail, to fish, to bathe and to enjoy the quiet serenity of that favoured backwater. But at 0730 on Sunday morning the air was filled with screaming jets and bombs and rockets - or so we were led to believe - and within a couple of hours we really were National News. The Battle of

St. Brides Bay was on. It was nobly fought on both sides - the weighty sophistication of Britain's greatest warship against a handful of unarmed warriors in rowing boats. No battle honour recording this encounter will hang proudly on *Eagle's* quarterdeck, for the enemy had a powerful ally - the British Press - and the mighty *Eagle* was defeated - retired to lick her wounds and peace again descended on St. Brides Bay.



*Evening calm*

## THIRD WORK UP AND OPERATIONAL READINESS INSPECTION

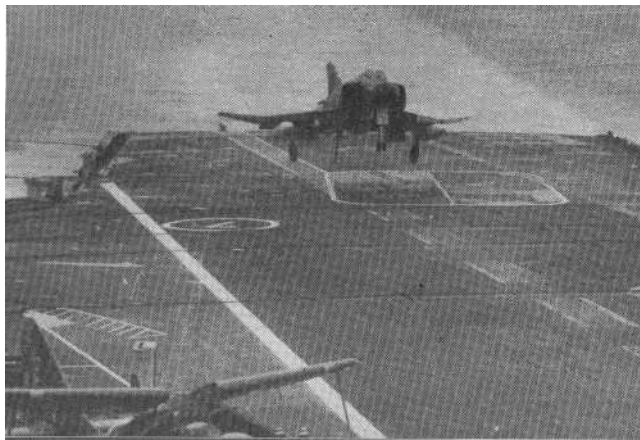


*First Phantom launch*

And so to the ORI. A great effort by everyone and somehow (nearly) everything went right. The staff seemed pleased and FOCAS said we had passed, so once again the *Eagle* was fully fledged.

Not that we were allowed to relax. Back to the Channel we went to embark the Imperial Defence College for a short visit and the Phantom Trials team. The next two weeks were to be spent in providing the deck for the series of landings and launches necessary to find out if it had been worth spending all that money on *Ark Royal* after all. The first arrested landing of a Phantom in an R.N. ship occurred on Monday, 2nd June and the following morning the first launch was successfully accomplished.

*... and recovery*



*1000th deck landing. Lt. Cullen with Mid. Tybjerg cutting the cake*



# ATLANTIC CROSSING

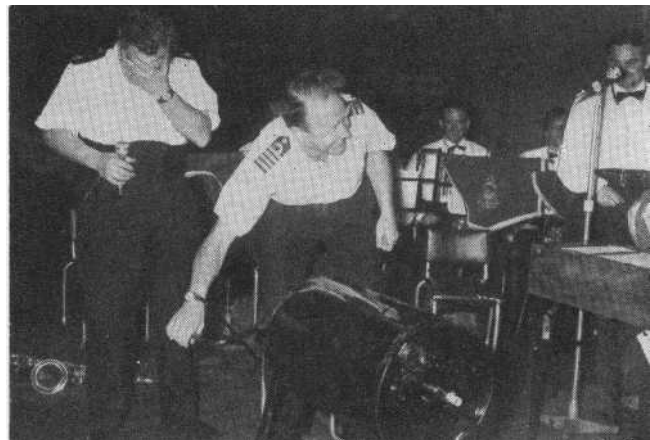
After three months of hard work in home waters the prospect of relaxation in a foreign port was eagerly looked forward to. On Monday, 16th June, after a welcome weekend in Plymouth Sound, the 'Grey Ghost of Lyme Bay' at last pointed her bows purposefully westwards, and as the leader of a somewhat scattered force commenced the westbound Atlantic crossing. For many this would be a first foreign visit; for many more the first sight of the mighty United States of America - and for quite a few the first taste of open ocean and venture into waters unsheltered by nearby land. But after a couple of days of strong winds and ocean swell sea legs were rapidly acquired and the doctor's administrations to the very few were no longer required. The quarterly full power trial helped to push us well on our way and we settled down to a comparatively quiet passage with no flying to disturb us. It began to warm up and very soon 'bronzy-bronzy' was the order of the day as pale white skins concentrated on



*Purposefully westwards*

getting the maximum exposure before meeting the expected fierce glare off the Virginian coast. Perhaps too, the prospect of all those suntanned Venuses to be encountered (some thought) on the great wide beaches, prompted not a few to ensure that they could rival the equally bronzed local Adonises.

A balmy, but breezy Saturday evening on the flight deck under the stars provided the setting for the Commission's first SODZOPRA. As usual, talent emerged from all sorts of unexpected places, a good time was had by all and the fine traditions of this noble form of culture were well maintained. The first 'Ship's Grand Draw' provided prize money of nearly £1000 and the Captain drew the tickets and made sure that it was well distributed. First prize of £300 went to the NAAFI barber - but even so the price of haircuts went up a few weeks later



*The Captain drew the tickets*

# THE UNITED STATES



*Norfolk Va. Committee of welcome*

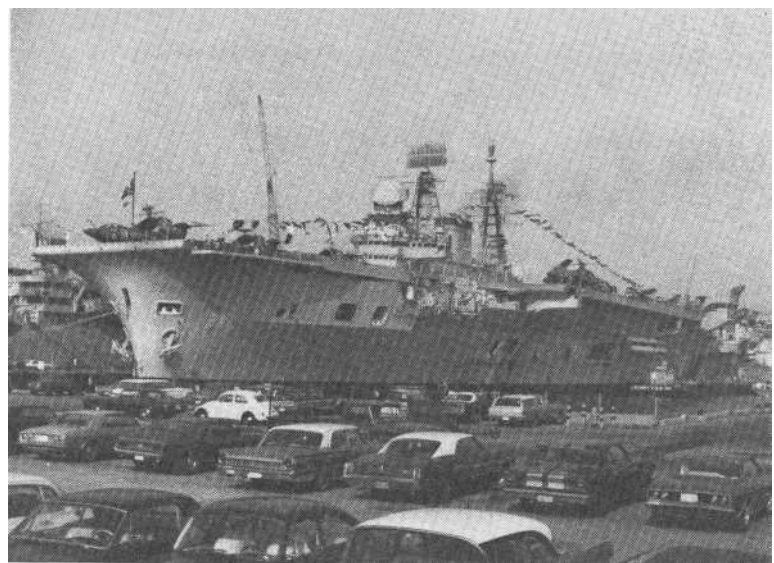


*Protection*

And so to the balmy waters of the western Atlantic off the coasts of Virginia and North Carolina and to four days of intensive flying before entering the great naval base of Norfolk, Virginia.

On Friday, 27th June we passed Cape Henry and in sweltering heat, nosed our way round to Norfolk for a seven-day run ashore. The advance publicity for Norfolk had been by no means good - 'Too big, too far to town, too much U.S. Navy, too expensive, too difficult to buy a drink, etc., etc.', but to most of this the lie was very soon given, the far-famed American hospitality conquering all. It was soon apparent that there was plenty to do to suit all tastes - from just lying in the sun watching the world go by to a trip to Washington D.C. or to the fleshpots of New York City. 'Halo Tours' under the energetic, if not financially profitable

management of Padre John Davies, did a roaring trade and sold a total of some 3000 coach seats for the various sight-seeing tours. Williamsburg can hardly have seen so many Englishmen since the days when it was the capital of the North American colonies. And all the time the kindness of our hosts with their uncounted, individual and personal acts of hospitality, was creating and cementing new friendships and much goodwill. On 4th July, as all over town Britons and Americans celebrated Independence Day, who would have believed that not 200 years before British warships had bombarded Norfolk, leaving, still to be seen, a cannon ball embedded in the wall of the old church.

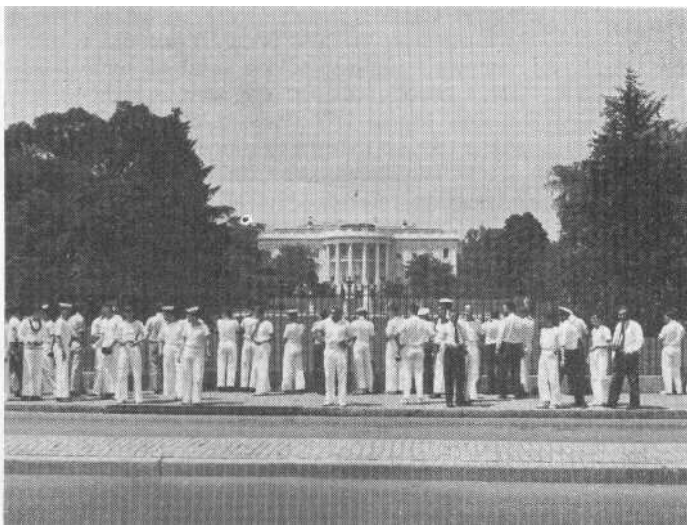


*Canada Day*

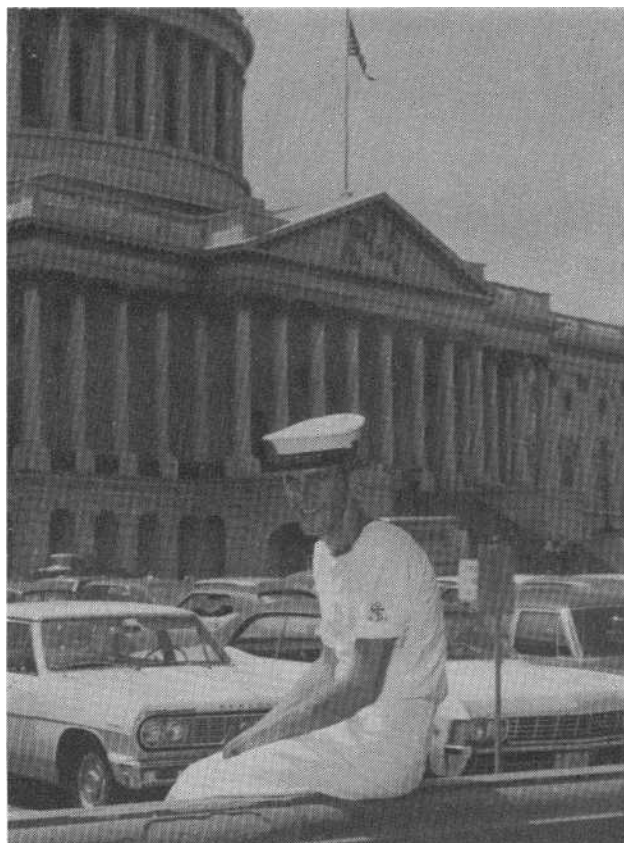


# SIGHTSEEING

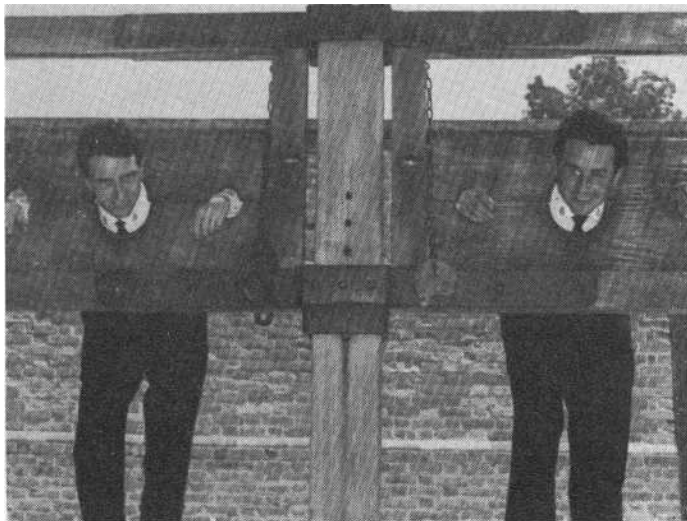
*The well-dressed Englishman goes ashore*



*The White House*



*The Capitol*



*Williamsburg*

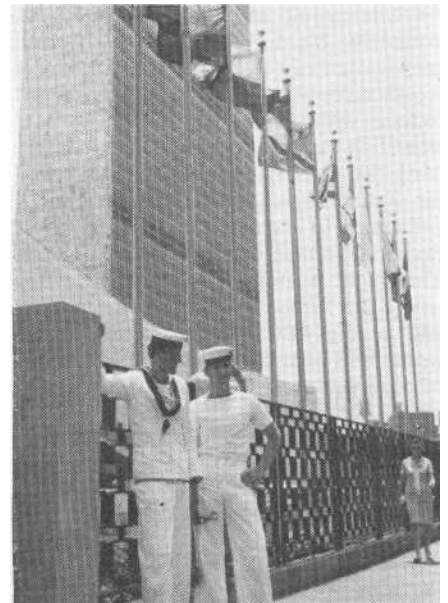
Saturday, 5th July saw us regretfully on our way; tired but happy, and with a few days' respite as we sailed northwards to our second port of call. A day or two's flying enabled the aviators to keep their hand in and by dawn on Wednesday 9th we had rounded Cape Cod and were heading for Boston, Massachusetts.

That this was to be no ordinary visit was soon clear, as, threading our way through the islands into Boston Harbour the welcome began. Fire-floats with hose-pipes spraying, floating bands with bag-pipes playing, aeroplanes towing banners of welcome - the Bostonians were obviously out to make it quite clear that they were pleased to see us. And memorable it was. Where everyone went and what everyone did will never be known. Trips here, there and everywhere, unending 'up-homers' hospitality, fishing, swimming, sailing, eating, drinking, dancing, lazing and travelling; five all too short days until early on the morning of Monday, 14th we once again pointed our bows seawards and wound up the clockwork for a fast passage home.

*Arrival at Boston*



*Empire State Building*



*United Nations*



*Boston Bunnies*



*Boston Tea Party*

The casual observer of our transatlantic passage from Boston might have wondered that so complex and expensive a ship as *Eagle* was apparently nothing more than a mobile parade ground. An enormous guard drilled repeatedly; small parties of solemn-looking individuals endlessly slow marched up and down the flight deck and performed complex gyrations and evolutions. The band played incessantly and the Commander looked very worried and took to sucking throat lozenges to safeguard his voice. All this was in preparation for the ceremony of the Presentation of a Colour to the Western Fleet by Her Majesty the Queen in Torbay, scheduled for 29th July.

On Sunday, 20th July we arrived in Plymouth Sound and, secured to 'Charlie' Buoy, began to prepare in earnest. Paintwork to be refurbished - two fast Atlantic crossings had taken their toll - a mammoth cleaning of flats and passages, complete flight deck repainting and preparation of the hangar in case of wet weather routine. The BBC came aboard in force with all their equipment for 'live' television broadcasts and on Wednesday, 23rd the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir John Bush, K.C.B., D.S.C., himself embarked to oversee the final stages of preparation and conduct the rehearsals. That night we moved to Weymouth Bay where the Western Fleet was assembling and as the BBC festooned the upperworks and hangars with cameras and bits of wire the ceremonial rehearsals on the flight deck continued. Saturday, 26th dawned bright, clear and calm and soon after sunrise the Fleet was up anchoring

# PCWF

and, with *Eagle* leading, putting to sea in line ahead to rehearse the steam-past on passage to Torbay. Sadly it was too bright and too calm. Before long the whole Fleet was enveloped in fog. A startled leader in the 'Round Britain Powerboat Race' suddenly found himself surrounded by warships of every shape and size and the rest of the competitors were soon whizzing through the Fleet. Fortunately it cleared sufficiently and the rehearsals were successfully completed before we all anchored in our appointed berths in Torbay.

By the morning of Monday 28th the final preparations had been made and

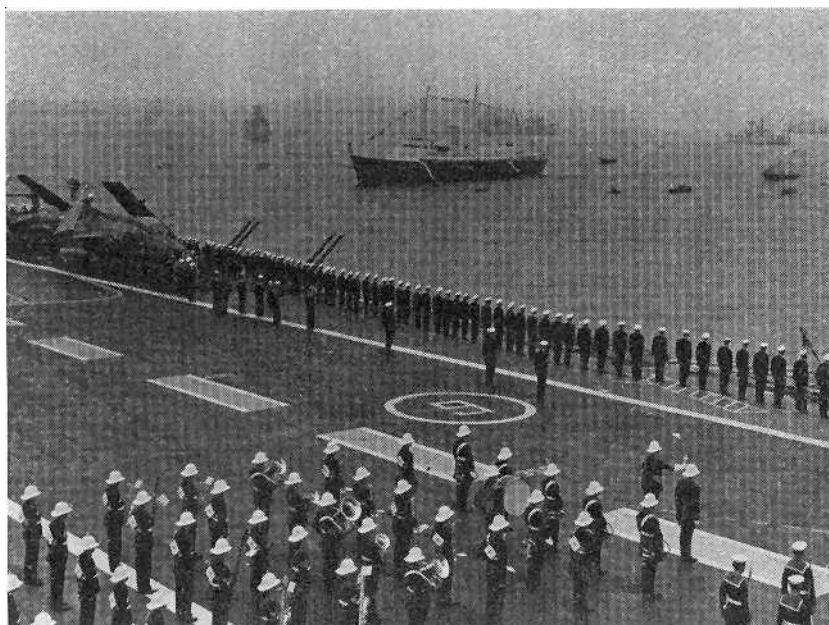
*The C-in-C arrived*



... to take charge

it all depended on the weather - which was most unkind. Her Majesty and the Royal party arrived in Torquay and embarked in the Royal Yacht *Britannia* which steamed through the lines to take up her berth a cable or two from *Eagle*. Soon after, a miserable downpour set in for the rest of the day but in spite of this the programme went on. Lunch for senior officers in the Royal Yacht, visits round the Fleet by members of the Royal Family, tea for chief petty officers with the Queen and her family in H.M.S. *Blake*, an early evening reception for officers aboard *Britannia* and a dinner in the Wardroom of *Eagle* attended by Her Majesty, the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Charles and Princess Anne. Last, and by no means least, a presentation to Her Majesty and the entire Royal Party of the *Eagle* concert party revue 'Where Eagles Dare' to finish a long and exhausting day.

*Britannia arrived*

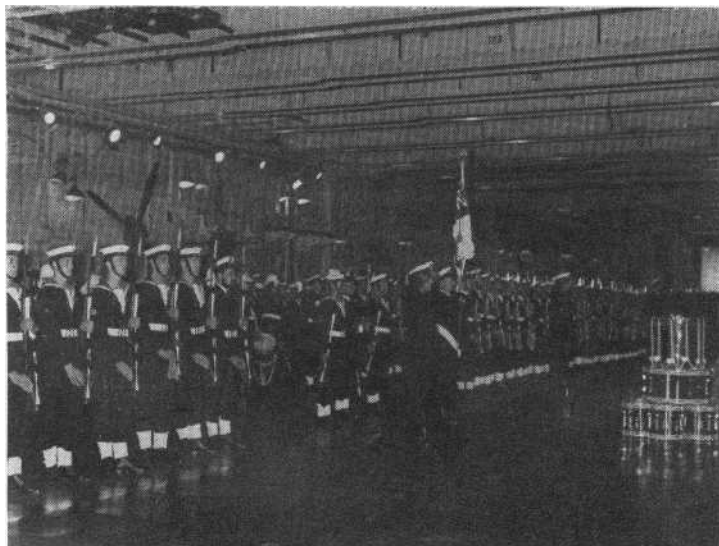




... and the Queen came to dinner



Command performance



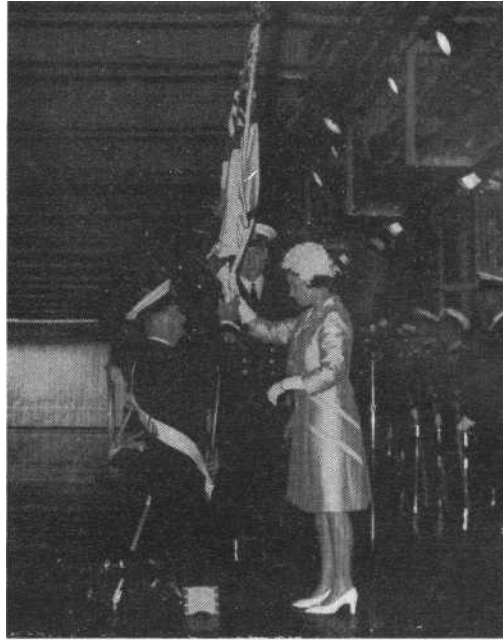
By the time Her Majesty returned to the Royal Yacht it was not only raining but beginning to blow and the prospects for the ceremony were looking bleak. Fortunately the met. men's long-awaited clearance arrived in the middle of the night and the wind swung to the north. The big day dawned fine, sunny and dry-but blowing a gale. Foul weather routine had to be followed and thus the ceremony in the upper hangar was very much an *Eagle* affair - and perhaps the more impressive as a consequence. Afterwards the Royal Party just reached the flight deck in time to witness a magnificent massed fly-past by Fleet Air Arm aircraft in what were very difficult and turbulent conditions. And the ship's photographers failed to get a photograph!

The afternoon brought the final stage of the two very hectic and memorable days as Her Majesty, in the Royal Yacht, led the Fleet to sea with the sun shining brilliantly on the sparkling white-flecked water. *Britannia* turned back along the line, the Commander-in-Chief in *Eagle* stood at the salute and one by one, as *Britannia* passed, the ships of the Fleet cheered their Queen. And to bring the day to a fitting conclusion the order was given 'Splice the Mainbrace'.





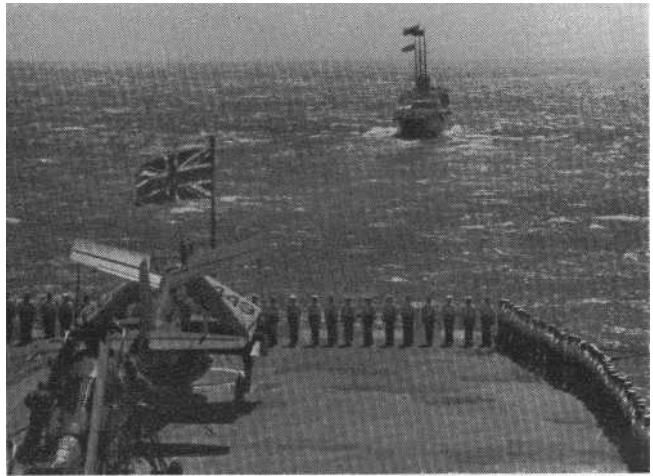
*The old colour*



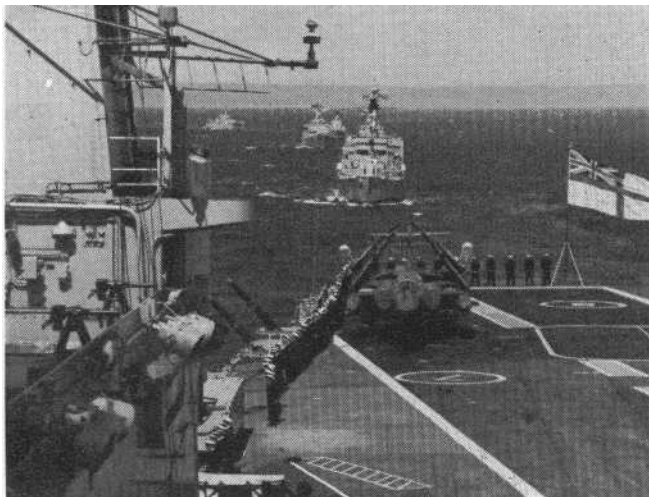
*... and the new*



*After the ceremony*



*Britannia leads the Fleet to sea*



# FAMILIES DAY

The exertions of PCWF behind us, the last day of our 'Summer Cruise' was most enjoyably spent in taking our families to sea to witness at least a sample of what a carrier at work is really like. This may well have been the only occasion on which fixed-wing flying from the deck has been undertaken with several hundred families embarked. The weather was very kind and, from the embarkation early in the forenoon from the tugs which brought the visitors out to 'Charlie' Buoy, until we finally secured alongside late in the evening, the sun shone and warm breezes must have made our guests believe that carrier life is all something of a pleasure cruise.

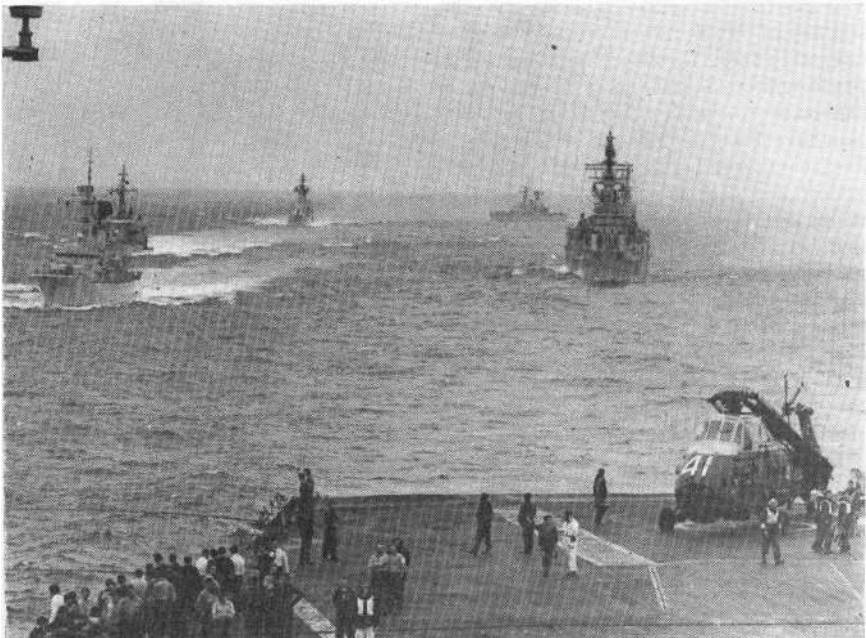
Careful organisation allowed everyone in turn to see aircraft being launched and recovered; noisy and spectacular excitement was offered by bombs and rockets and flares and the visitors were able to see something of the multitude of activities which occupy their husbands/sweethearts/fathers. Film shows provided relaxation for those who tired of more energetic activities and in the evening everyone had a chance to watch a repeat performance of the concert party which had been presented two days before to the Queen.

And late in the evening we all came up harbour together for five weeks alongside and some summer leave.



On Thursday, 4th September we slipped once again from Devonport, down Channel and turned right to renew our acquaintance with that highly familiar stretch of sea which lies to the southwest of Brawdy. The squadrons all rejoined and we got down to serious work in preparation for the autumn exercise programme. Everything soon settled into the old grooves except for the engineers who found mysterious losses of power impeding our progress - which apparently had something to do with large quantities of mackerel which were foolhardy enough to 'come aboard'.

The first engagement was in Exercise 'Peacekeeper' which began with *Eagle* rendezvousing with the ships of the NATO Standing Naval Force Atlantic which were to form our personal screen during the



*Exercise 'Peacekeeper'*

## AUTUMN CRUISE



*The new Commander joins*



*Arrival Gibraltar*



*View from the top*

exercise. FOCAS, who was to be 'boss man' in this show, joined us and the force turned westwards into the Atlantic to the west of Ireland where we were to meet up with the rest of the exercise fleet which had crossed from N. America. After a drop of 'roughers' on the way we made our rendezvous on time to find that those to the west had been delayed by the weather. Nevertheless soon all was sorted out and we came back to familiar waters

in the entrance to the Bristol Channel where most of the play took place. Round and round, up and down, to and fro, launch and recover - then someone discovered a leak and we had to spend a couple of nights at anchor plugging the hole. An unpleasant and dangerous job for ship's divers, working in the dark on the outside of the hull, but they managed to stick on a patch, the leak was stopped and back we went to the fray.

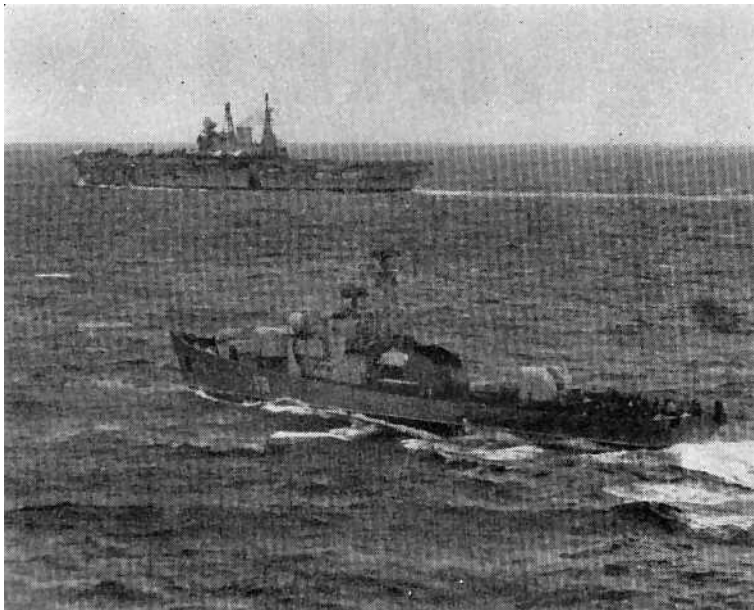
A successful exercise completed, a quick call into Plymouth Sound enabled the fortunate natives to enjoy a night at home before we sailed for Gibraltar on the afternoon of Thursday, 25th September. A fast passage brought us into the lee of the Rock less than 48 hours later and soon we were snug alongside the mole for 14 days' `Self Maintenance'.

Some people maintained themselves better than others but Gibraltar these days is not the most exciting run ashore. Nevertheless, for very many, this visit was another `first' and although the old hands may still look back to the days when `La Lin' provided delights now forbidden to us, Gibraltar is still the gateway to the

Mediterranean and manages to retain a good deal of its old fascination. Wednesday, 1st October was the day on which the United Nations resolution calling on Britain to vacate the Rock expired and there was much speculation as to what new measures the Spaniards would take to intimidate the population. The fleeting presence of a Spanish Fleet in Algeciras Bay raised the hopes of the Press that mischief was afoot but nothing happened. Perhaps it was the presence of *Eagle* that ensured that all was quiet. There was no doubt that the natives were pleased to see us at this time and when we opened the ship to visitors about a third of the population turned up to come aboard.

The Sports Officer took the opportunity to arrange contests in every conceivable sport with every conceivable opponent and the games players had a great time. Others occupied themselves with the production of another edition of EAGLE SODZOPRA but by the end of the second week most of us were ready to get back to sea. So on Saturday, 11th October we began yet another fast passage (when did we ever go anywhere slowly), for the Malta area. The water was a little warmer and the sun shone a little more often but after a couple of days with that island just over the horizon we again pushed eastwards to Crete, the Aegean and . . .

## EXERCISE DEEP FURROW

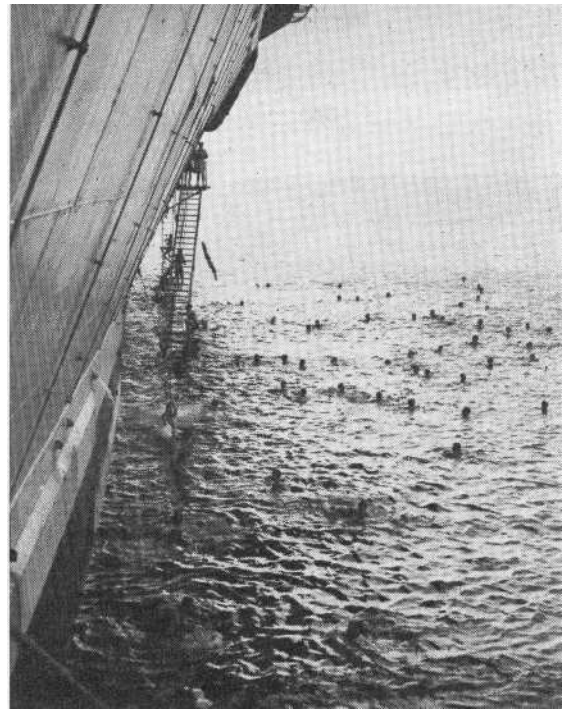


*Russian follower*

On Friday, 17th we entered the Aegean from the south-east and for the next two days steamed northwards through the Greek Islands. Our role was to provide support for the transit and landings of an amphibious support force on the coast of Turkish Thrace. As usual we spent our time gyrating in endless circles as aircraft sorties were launched and recovered. The monks on Mount Athos, who had a grand view of the proceedings most of the week, must have thought it all very crazy but the exercise was a great success. Except perhaps for the American destroyer who got lost and then homed on us one

night thinking we were the *John F. Kennedy!* As usual the Russians joined in and we had the pleasure of the close company of first a *Petya* and then a *Kotlin* which stayed with us for a week or two and seemed pleased to receive a present of a bottle of whisky as a token of our appreciation for her faithful attendance.

Having successfully ploughed our furrow in the Aegean, we immediately moved to the eastern Mediterranean and the Cyprus area for Exercise `Ranular' -an air defence exercise with the RAF based in Cyprus. Not that Cyprus was ever more



*Hands to bathe*

than a dim smudge on the horizon for most of us - but being an RAF exercise the pace was leisurely, the water was warm and for several days we enjoyed the rare luxury of `Hands to Bathe', an evolution which appeared to puzzle our Russian escort more than somewhat.

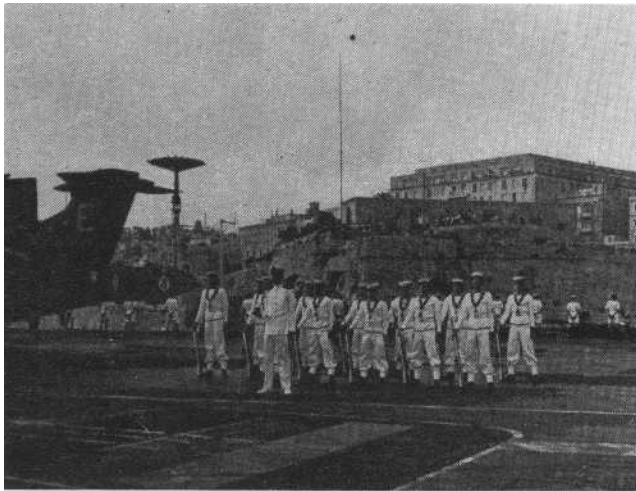
This exercise completed, the engineers again wound up the revs and back we creamed westwards for Malta. On Friday, 31st October, after an absence of many years, *Eagle* again entered Grand Harbour and secured to buoys for two weeks' self-maintenance.



*Approachin Malta*

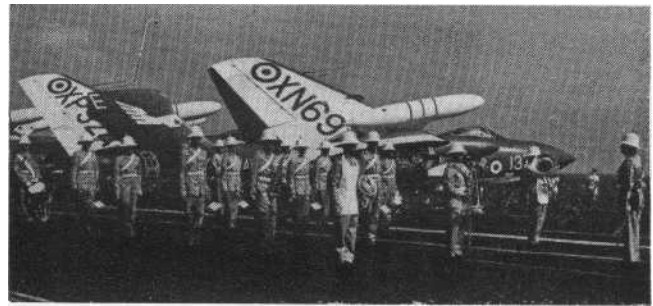
For most of us, this period was a very welcome and pleasant change. Quite a number of wives managed to join us to enjoy the amenities of what has now become very much a holiday island. After a very wet early autumn, Malta was unusually green, and for us the sun shone almost continuously. Some of the more enterprising went on exped. to Gozo, many enjoyed a few days' rest and relaxation at Ghain Tuffieha, there was swimming and sailing, lazing and sightseeing, the more athletic played their usual games by day and many played it pretty hard at night.

During this period the Air Group landed a number of aircraft ashore where they enjoyed the hospitality of the RAF at Luqa airfield. Some valuable flying was achieved and for those who had served at Halfar in the past it was a welcome and warming sight to see naval aircraft once again in the skies over Malta.

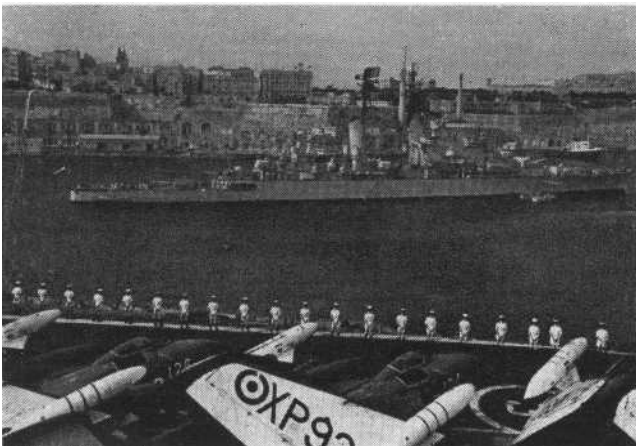


*Guard ...*

# MALTA



*... and Band*



*In Grand Harbour*



*Commander-in-Chief NATO  
Naval Forces Southern Europe*

It was at this time that somehow the planners must have got our programme mixed with some other ship. On Thursday, 13th we sailed into a calm and blue Mediterranean, did a quick RAS off the coast of Sicily with Mount Etna towering in the background, and next morning there we were entering harbour at Naples, Italy (as the Americans would say), for yet more relaxation.

Our hosts had gone to a great deal of trouble to provide us with a berth convenient to the dockyard gate and the town centre and by early afternoon, what was to be a memorable long weekend was well under way. Our tourist agency, of North American fame, was under new management and now trading under the name of 'Rosary Tours'. Thousands of pounds changed hands and thousands of bus and boat miles were covered - Rome, Pompeii, Vesuvius, Herculaneum, Capri, Ischia, Caserta, Solfatura, Sorrento, Amalfi - anywhere else you care to name within a day's run. Of course there were unkind people who said it was all a fiddle - what with Father John charging a shilling over the odds for every tour. But it all came back to the Welfare Fund in due course and never did so many sailors soak up so much sightseeing in so short a time. Most of Naples seemed to come and look at us, and thousands of them came aboard - free, in spite of the enterprising youngsters who sized up the situation on the first day and were selling tickets outside the gates on the second. The children's party was a great success (language never seems to matter on these occasions), the Marine Band performed in the Palazzo Municipio and by the end there was a general feeling of rather lethargic bonhomie - 'It's been a great visit!'. But somehow everyone was a little tired.



*Alongside Naples*

# NAPLES



*Official Reception*



*The Neapolitans came to see us*



*... and some stayed to tea*



*In the Palazzo*

But now it was time to turn back towards home, so with the odour of regret at leaving, mingled with the first scent of Christmas leave in our nostrils, we departed on Tuesday, 18th November for the western Med.



*Sightseeing*

## EXERCISE

## DECAMP



*After the battle*

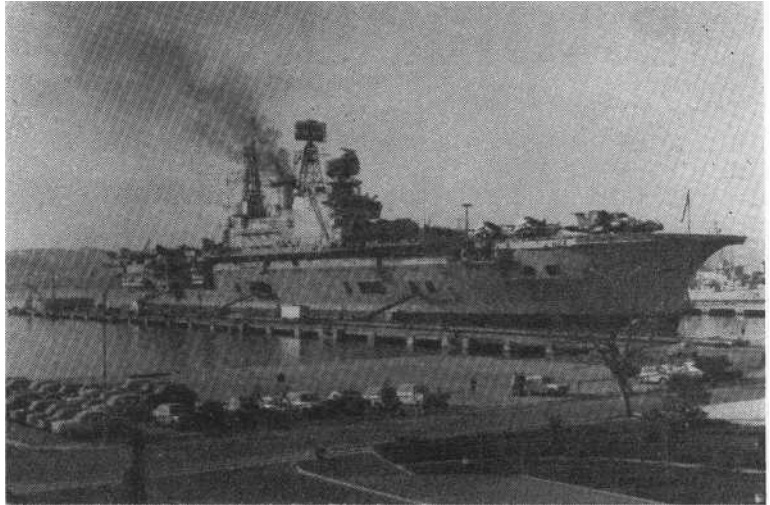
The usual quick passage was followed by a few days' private flying in the Gibraltar area after which, together with our faithful URG, we passed through the Straits for the final exercise of 1969.

*Hermes*, Britain's only mini-carrier, had departed from U.K. and sailed south-west into the Atlantic towards an area some 500 miles north of *Eagle*. The idea was for each to use her aircraft to seek out and strike the other using the maximum resource and low cunning. It was all good fun but no-one ever knew who won. The battle extended to witty repartee in the respective ships' newspapers and finally FOCAS had to diplomatically declare the result a draw, but at least we were sure that *Eagle* didn't lose.

In due course we all joined up together and after a gap of some years we once again had two British carriers operating a synchronised programme in company. FOCAS transferred to *Eagle* (it's more comfortable), and we all went back to Gibraltar for a long weekend and some Christmas shopping. Two days of this and we were off for a fairly leisurely passage home. In spite of some filthy weather in the Bay, the squadrons all managed to depart to their various air stations and by Friday, 5th December we were alongside in Devonport for Christmas leave.

# SPRING CRUISE

And so into 1970 and the final fling of the 'First Leg' of the Commission. With memories of leave and the seasonal festivities rapidly fading we were lucky that Monday, 12th January enabled the scheduled leaving harbour to be accomplished according to programme. Three good days' flying enabled everyone to settle back into the familiar routine and by the evening of the 15th we were again pointing our bows southwards towards Gibraltar. The weather allowed us to get in a solids RAS next morning but rapidly got worse as we went south to give what many voted the roughest passage so far, but by the time we reached Gib., on Sunday morning, it began to look like spring. Four hours' leave to two watches gave some a chance to stretch their legs ashore before we headed for the Gulf of Lions and flying exercises to the south of Toulon. There, 10 days' private flying were accomplished in conditions considerably more comfortable than were being experienced in a wet and windy January in Britain. H.M.S. Minerva joined us for a week to act as planeguard and R.F.A.s *Lyness*, *Resource* and *Olna* were on hand to supply our wants. The rare luxury of a weekend at anchor in the shelter of the Iles de Hyeres, east of Toulon, gave all five ships the chance to get together for flight deck sports and for social and recreational relaxation.



*By day*



*... and night*



*Battle of the Flowers*

## TOULON

On Friday, 30th we entered the French naval port of Toulon for our final foreign visit.

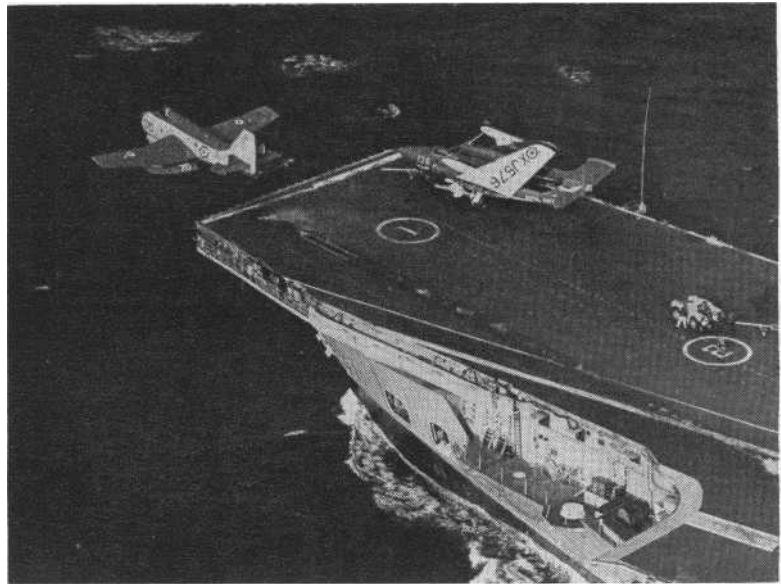
Toulon is not the most exciting place in the world but, for those who took the trouble, there were plenty of things to do which are 'different' and for very many this was the first opportunity to sample French wine and food by the native hearth. Our presence coincided with the annual 'Battle of Flowers' festival in Nice - where sailors are a greater rarity than in Toulon, as many discovered who took advantage of the Padre's tours. A fortunate few, including 15 junior ratings, took to the mountains for ski-ing, and various other enterprising parties went on exped. and explored the hills of Provence.



# BACK to UK

Back to sea for a further uneventful spell of flying and another weekend at anchor (the French don't believe in providing diversion facilities on Saturdays and Sundays). But this was rudely interrupted by rising winds - the local 'mistral', which forced us to put to sea and for most of the next four days we rode out the gale with very little flying possible. By Thursday, 19th it was time to turn towards home again so back we went to Gibraltar with a full power trial on the way and a quick rendezvous with R.F.A. *Regent* to transfer an aircraft or two. Those who had not had leave on our previous call at Gibraltar had a quick run ashore but by Sunday evening it was goodbye to the warmth and sunshine as we headed into the Atlantic and back to chilly U.K.

But already the prospect of our next port of call was beginning to seize the collective imagination. LIVERPOOL. What strange visions of delight were conjured up as proud Merseysiders, with a proprietary air, wrote letters to *EAGLE EXPRESS* full of conflicting advice on where to go, what to do and how to have a ball. Old hands nodded wisely and predicted the finest run of the Commission so, after a couple of days in familiar waters off Brawdy, it was with a certain air of expectation that we moved up river on Friday, 27th February to arrive in mid-afternoon at the splendid berth at Princes Pier, a stone's throw from the City Centre.



## and LIVERPOOL



*Approaching Liverpool*



*. . . impressive entertainment*



*Longest Scarf*

Although quite a few R.N. ships visit Liverpool each year, we were lucky perhaps that *Eagle* was the first carrier for a very long time, and the local citizenry certainly convinced us that they had been saving up for the occasion. From the first evening, a most impressive programme of entertainment ashore kept many hundreds of us busy and hundreds more found that the mere sight of a uniform anywhere around the town was often enough to ensure a great and generous welcome. In return the citizens from miles around flocked to see the ship - so much so that capacity was reached on both days we were open and thousands had to be turned away.



*Cakes for the children*



*Football supporters*



Although our departure on Wednesday, 4th was delayed by the combination of a congested river and snow showers, no-one seemed to mind and we got away that evening for a leisurely move back to Plymouth.

*First taste of winter*



A weekend at 'Charlie' Buoy enabled the '15-mile natives' to have a night or two at home whilst we embarked a large team of boffins for the 'Harrier' trial. This was to be our main remaining task during the next two and a half weeks. During this period we again had a most successful day showing off to eighty-odd members of the Imperial Defence College, closely followed by the First Sea Lord who arrived, fittingly, by Sea King and spent a night with us. At this time too, we were delighted to meet up with Ark Royal, fresh out of her great refit and getting down to the job of taking over from us in a few weeks' time.

*Top brass*



*Old sea dogs*



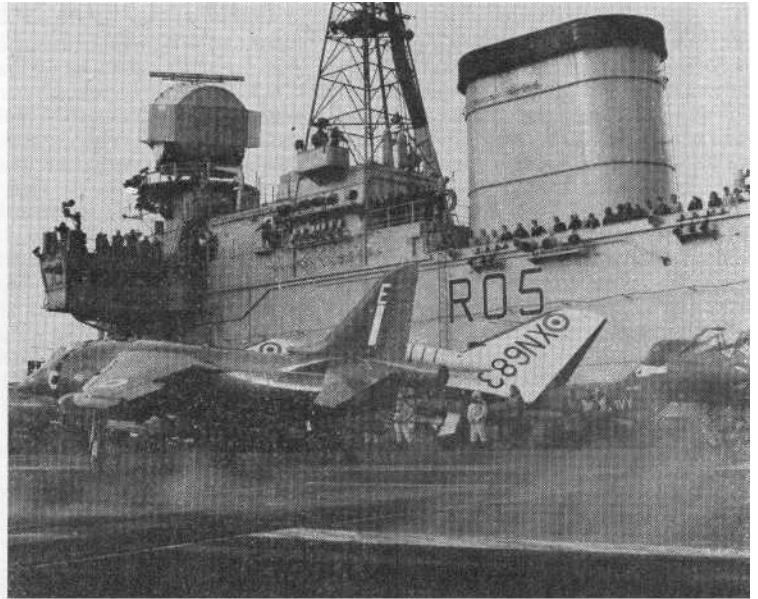
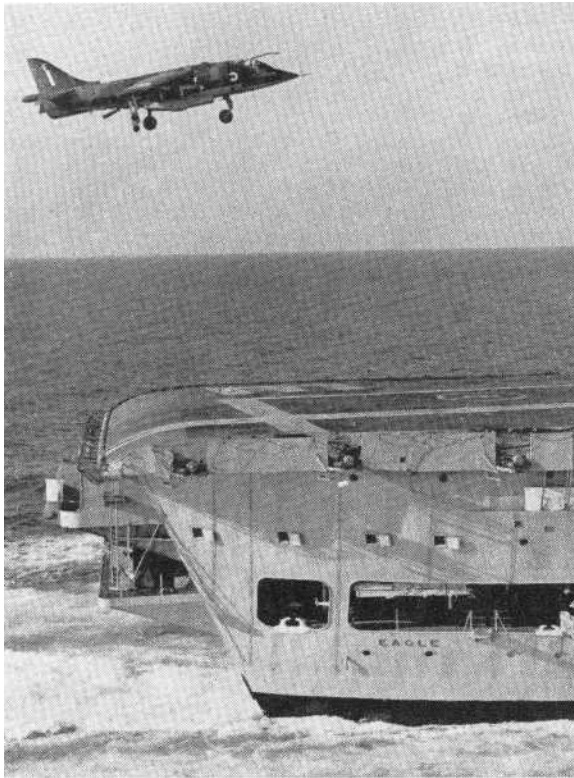
*Flight deck conference, Ark Royal in the background*



*'Bandie' entertains the I.D.C.*



*New Shape*



*Short take-off*

*Slow approach*

The Harrier trials were a great success and to everyone's joy, finished early, so surprise, surprise, we spent a final weekend at anchor at Spithead. It only remained to fly off the squadrons, who,

true to form, were 100% serviceable on disembarkation day and treated us to a very elegant farewell fly-past. And so, in the early morning on 25th March we came back up the Hamoaze to come

alongside in dashing and impeccable style for the last time before our mid-commission D.E.D.

We'll be back.



## 800 SQUADRON

It's been a challenging Commission punctuated by many embarkations and debarkations; in fact, we've undoubtedly been the cause of the revival of British Rail's interest in the 'troop train' concept which we've decided, after trying endless variations, is the least painful method of oscillating 230 men plus gear between two extremities of the U.K. However, there's seldom been serious cause to voice our unofficial exhortation 'Keep smiling', and there have been many pleasantly memorable moments.

It was a relatively inexperienced team of aircrew who embarked on 10th April 1969 for the first work up in the Moray Firth. The emphasis lay with settling down to flying from the deck, and interpretations of this varied from Peter Lewis' six diversions ashore in seven sorties, to the frivolous performance of Lts. Callow and Law who challenged No. 4 wire to an airborne tug-o-war: much to their surprise the wire not only won but graciously prevented them from performing their second scene entitled 'Under the Catwalk' in which they tried hard to give themselves a 'float test'! Such a shameless lust for publicity was barely satisfied by front-page illustrated coverage in most of the national press next morning.

It wasn't till after some late Easter leave and the Phantom trials that we were almost reunited as the ship at last headed west towards the United States. We say 'almost' because despite several attempts one aircraft failed to get aboard due to heavy seas; so it was flown back to Lossie by that 'coals to Newcastle' pair Mc-Sporran Forrest and McNifico Law, who resigned themselves gallantly to a V.C.10 flight to New York, and thence to Norfolk as a sort of travelling zoo to await the ship's arrival. It must've been hell.

Most of us have hazy but happy memories of Norfolk and Boston: those ship-open-to-visitors days with endearing enquiries such as 'Gee, now why d'ya have those targets painted on your aircraft?'. And the generosity of the natives: remember when Chief Read was seen staggering up the brow beneath a stuffed moose's head, with Chief Daley tottering behind with the poor beast's hooves made into a table-lamp? It's rumoured that soon after we left for the autumn cruise Mrs Read kindly presented a moose's

head to the Chiefs' Mess at Lossie ... It was a great treat to be in the States over 4th July, and the 'rebels' were amazingly kind to us - though Chief Lenaghan pushed his luck when, asked to sing an English folk song, he gave 'em the National Anthem ... And we enjoyed taking America for a ride now and again, like an anonymous Kiwi called Neil 'Dem Bones' Rawbone who coolly announced to a dazzled woman's page reporter that we were the Queen's Own Red-Sashed Buccaneer Squadron. At least that was an improvement on Tug's dangerous outburst 'The Queen's Own Light Paraffin Lancers', for which he came perilously close to losing his honorary Squadron membership. You know we love you, Tug.

After coming home from the States we took part in the Royal Review Fly-past over Torbay on 29th July. This was memorable for the interesting variety of emergencies that occurred just after the outwardly immaculate formation disappeared out of sight of Her Majesty: the now-famous call '3, you're on fire' resulted predictably in one aircraft in each formation arcing gracefully heavenwards till the ambiguity had been solved; amazingly, all aircraft eventually returned safely to Lossie.

Next day was the ship's Families Day, and four of our aircraft flew down to entertain with various daring little demonstrations in the glorious sunshine. During this Hugh 'The Grin' Cracroft disgusted himself by bolting for the first time, watched by his father who flew from the deck 40 years ago.

When we returned to the Big 'E' at the beginning of September it marked the start of the autumn cruise, during which we starred in 3½ exercises: 'Peacekeeper', 'Deep Furrow', 'Decamp' and 'Ranular' (you've guessed!). These gave us full scope to demonstrate our 'flexible response' with successful long-range strikes and reconnaissance sorties to targets in every West European country sporting an Atlantic/North Sea coastline except Spain and Portugal; and we overflew parts of every North Mediterranean country bar the Communist ones (or so the Observers reckon). Allying to this a splendid record of serviceability, only a deep modesty prevents us from claiming to be the best Strike Squadron - let's say we just set the

standards for the rest!

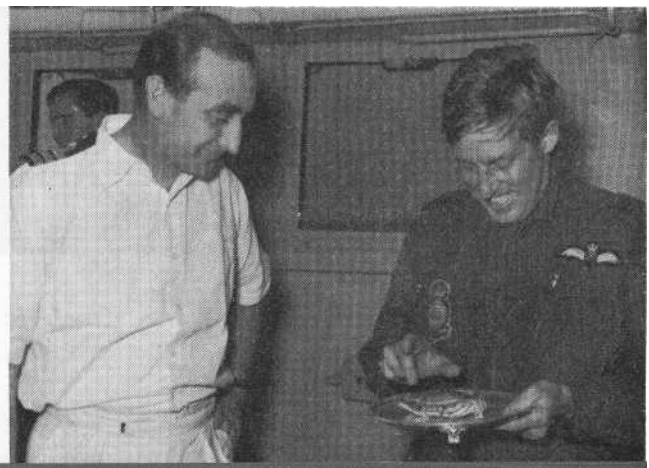
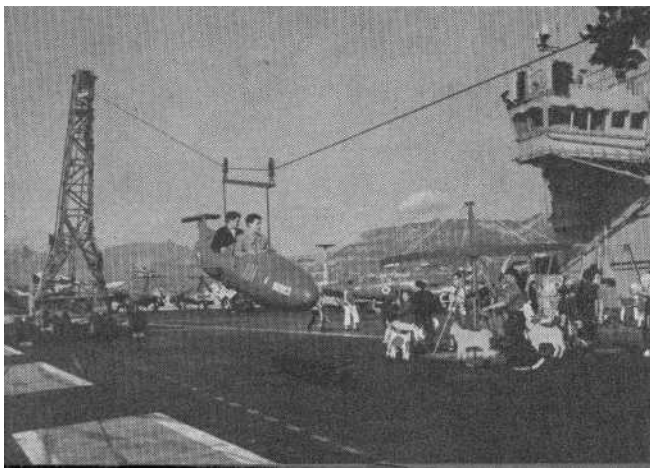
For most of us Gibraltar was an overcrowded disappointment, apart from a highly successful Squadron Run at Europa Point following a remarkable soccer match in which 'Ski' Kukulski, Looenant U.S.N., thrilled the crowd with his startling interpretation of the rules. Both he and Jay Shower, our 'Vietnam Veterans', have earned a place in our hearts with their happy turns of phrase ranging from 'No s...t, Commander' to 'Did I done good, Boss?'; quite apart from Ski's habit of using tobacco coupons as postage stamps ...

Malta, Naples - the saga rolled on. Here and there a bonus happy event warmed our lives, such as 'Carbo Me-Plump' (McLean) passing his aircrew medical; and the presentation of a beautifully mounted airbrake tip to the deserving flight deck team '... in loving memory of so many airbrake tips so deftly removed!'

Before heading home for Christmas we were given the opportunity to toy with *Hermes*. The unfairness of this contest quickly became only too obvious, and the farce was ended when Albert Jay Shower, with 'Loaded Loins' Lucas one micro-second astern, slotted in behind a guileless *Hermes* Vixen and chuckled 'Bombs awaaaaay ...'. To add insult to injury, poor 801 Squadron had to divert two aircraft to the Big 'E', one of them piloted by none less than their CO. Chief Oulton now stepped into the limelight, for when (the then) Lt.-Cdr. Dimmock rang the ACR to enquire whether his aircraft had been turned round, our intrepid Line Chief tersely replied, 'Ve ask ze questions - you are a prisoner of war!' - and replaced the phone. However, all wounds were affectionately healed during the subsequent weekend in Gibraltar. And so, back to a wintry Lossie for Christmas; just before which David Mather and Keith Somerville-Jones were awarded the Sandison Trophy for being the most potent flannel-and-uckers combination in the Fleet Air Arm in 1969!

By the time we'd returned to the grindstone after Hogmanay we'd experienced two major shifts of power: David Mather had transferred the 'weight' to Joe Billingham, and Jonathan Tod had taken over from Tim Notley as Senior Pilot.

*Joy Ride*



*Departure of a 'Crab'*



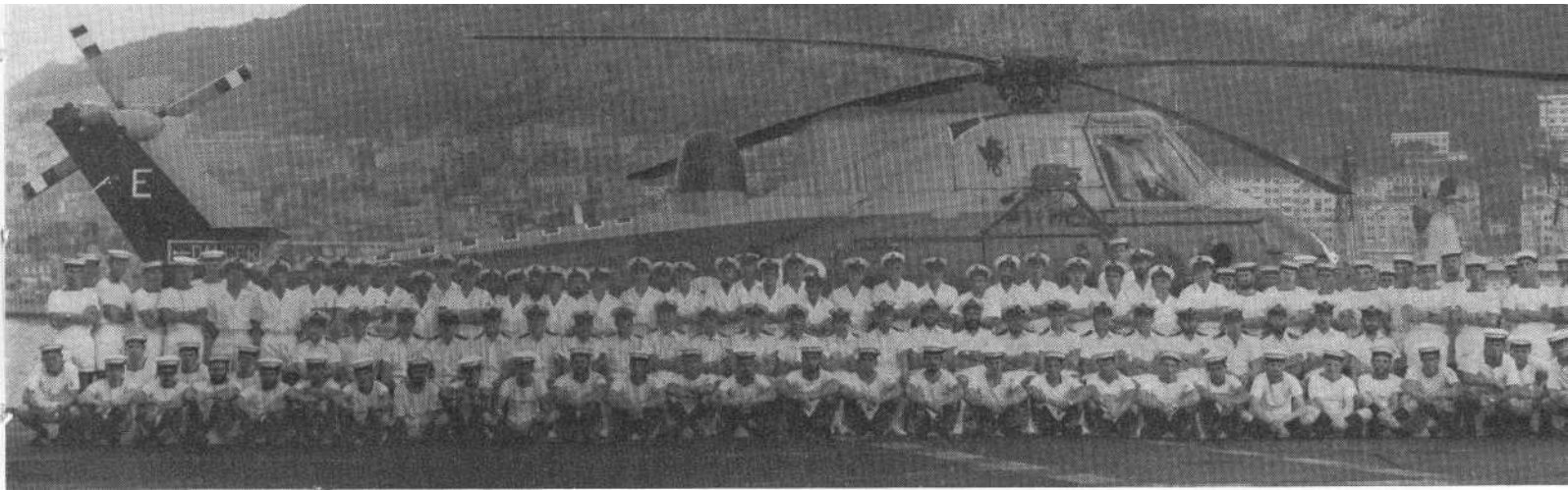
*Sandison Trophy winners*

Toulon is recent history and perhaps can be summed up in an irreverent anglicisation of its very name (no prizes); but at last we were rolling home licking lips in anticipation at the thought of Liverpool just over the horizon. However, fate turned cruel for the new 'fly-by-night' team plus ground party, who were either ordered at gunpoint to fly to Lossie or marched blindfolded to Lime Street Station for onward transportation to the Morayvian salt mines. Yes, even those two bearded potentates Chiefs Baker and

Notley were overheard croaking that it was one of the best runs ever - and that probably takes in the Rape of the Sabine Women!

Now our final debarkation is near, and with it the end of the Commission. We've barely ever had time to settle in properly on board, but our embarked periods have been most valuable and the 'fish-heads' have done us proud: many thanks, and we look forward to being with you again in September.

## 826 SQUADRON



The Squadron story really starts back in October 1968 when we re-equipped with Wessex Mark 3s and we spent a busy three or four months with maintainers and aircrew all getting used to the new steeds. Life was hectic, with trials of the new gear box to be fitted in with all the business of working up in all our various activities: Casexes, Screenexes, winching, instrument flying, load lifting and even night refuelling at the hover. But by the time of the Squadron ORI we had achieved all the essential objectives.

With the inspecting teams came the usual Culdrose clag. Flag Officer Naval Flying Training was unable to land and spent part of the forenoon circling above the airfield before returning to Yeovilton. Out of all the excellent things that were planned for us, we eventually got in one Casex with the submarine *Oracle* and the Senior Pilot proved the all-weather capability by operating in Negative Red recovery conditions and actually found the sub. By 1700, even the Staff had had enough so we all returned to celebrate in the customary fashion.

The Squadron embarked for the first time on April Fool's Day. However, Lossiemouth excelled itself by calling

down snow showers marooning two of our aircraft and *Tartar's Wasp* on the flight deck of *Olmeda*. Not content with that they called upon mighty winds to maroon half the Squadron ashore. In the subsequent airlift we even got our pictures in the paper. April 24th was a red-letter day when the met. man produced low cloud and visibility which upset the fixed wing programme but gave us a nine hour Casex without interruptions.

On returning to the ship at Portsmouth, we decided a small diversion was in order. Bad weather and unserviceability led to a very smart formation shut-down on Slapton Sands. However a bowser was despatched from Dartmouth and we all finally arrived on board by 1530.

The third work up and ship's ORI went as smoothly as can be expected. The Phantoms now took everyone's interest and half the Squadron went ashore to Portland where they learned many things and increased their experience in sun-bathing.

After some very revealing Casexes with *Odin*, we arrived in Norfolk, Virginia. The highlight of the stay was an invitation by HS-3 Squadron to visit and fly with them. This Squadron recovered the crews

of many of the manned space capsules and it was a great honour to be made honorary members.

Throughout the month of July, there was great emphasis on formation flying. We flew with ourselves and then we flew with Gannets and they flew with us. The culmination of all this preparation was the fly-past for Her Majesty the Queen where we formed the right hand formation of the helicopter group and were rewarded by a free tot afterwards.

At the end of August, the first of the hierarchy changes took place in the form of a new Senior Observer followed a fortnight later by a new Senior Pilot. By no means in protest, Lt. Bailey decided to do a short seamanship course but found to his chagrin that 142 did not float long enough for him to qualify for a watch-keeping ticket.

However much the imagination of those on board was taken by the daily strikes deep into Scandinavia during 'Peace-keeper', we managed to fly for 71 of the 144 hours of the exercise losing only three of the 108 planned sorties. Submarines were found and sunk and the exercise proved a valuable experience to all who took part. 'Deep Furrow' brought us face

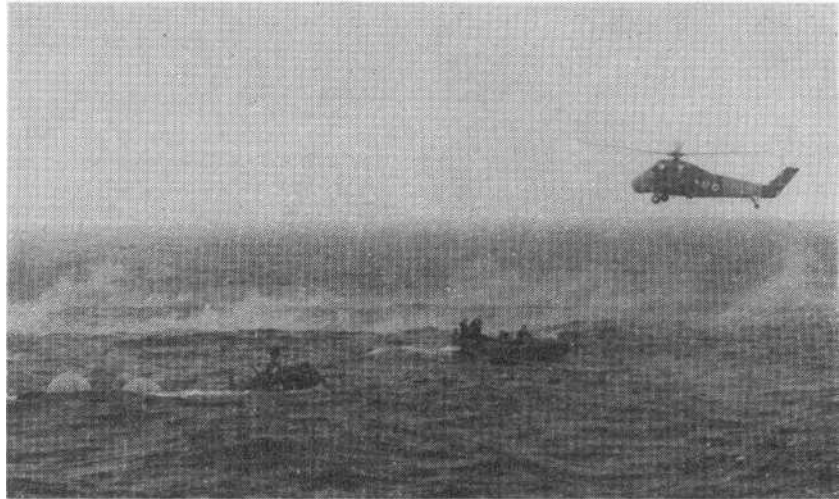
to face with both Greek and Turkish FPBs and night patrols around the islands became very much the 'in' thing. This provided a very pleasant break from submarine chasing by day.

The Malta stay cemented our relations with the Army. The Third Paras did some free fall drops from 7000ft over Ta'qali airstrip and we were also invited to tea during the short escape and evasion exercise in Gozo. Our other activities included picking up Shackleton crews by night from their dinghies and fetching all the bullets and rockets for the 'other element' from *Resource*. On 3rd November our new boss, Lt.-Cdr. N. Unsworth joined and was greeted in the traditional manner. We said goodbye to Lt.-Cdr. L. G. Kemp who went off to drive a desk at the Admiralty.

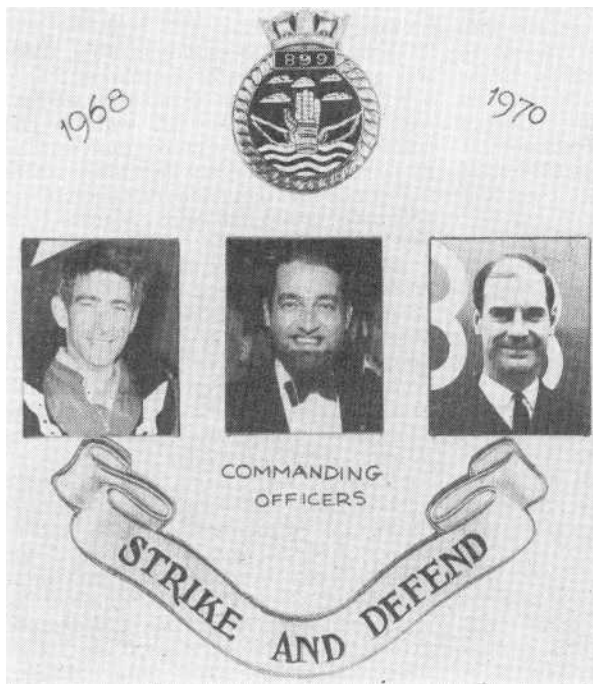
During Exercise 'Decamp', S/Lt. Warren also decided that the sea is better than the air but he too was not able to keep 143 afloat for very long. *Olmeda*, in sympathy perhaps, also had engine trouble and we only just managed to get our detachment party back in time for a last minute shopping run in Gibraltar.

Since it was decided to winter abroad this year, we made a bee-line for the south of France via St. Mawgan and Gibraltar. After many Screenexes outside Toulon we disembarked to St. Mandrier for some continuation flying and some *entente cordiale*.

We are now beginning to lose our aircraft to other Squadrons and will shortly be disbanding. However we will return after the D.E.D. with six Sea Kings - even bigger than Buccaneers we are told.



*Real sea time*



## 899 SQUADRON

The 899 hot pursuit group returned from Christmas leave and straightaway started the first work up to ensure that we remained the Navy's premier Squadron. The new year saw the announcement of 'Boss' Hunt's promotion and also the departure of Harry O'Grady to Gibraltar as Flag Officer, Rock Apes. Smooth talking Ken Black became our new 'D' and Bill Peppe departed to teach 738 Squadron students how to break nose oleos. Amidst all these disturbances the trappers passed virtually unnoticed. A hard work up culminated in a highly successful ORI, 44 sorties being flown on one day. With time to relax, FOCAS came to Yeovilton to return the Australia shield to its rightful owners.

The ghouls packed 'goofers' for the Squadron's return to *Eagle*. Their excitement was particularly intense because of the 'six'-new pilots who were landing on for the first time. John Dixon played to the crowd by breaking a nose oleo to give the spectators the only interest in an impeccable Squadron land-on. Having found our way to the bar, cabins and briefing room, our short stay took on a more serious aspect as we continued our work up in the Moray Firth. The stay in Lossiemouth was marred by bad weather and

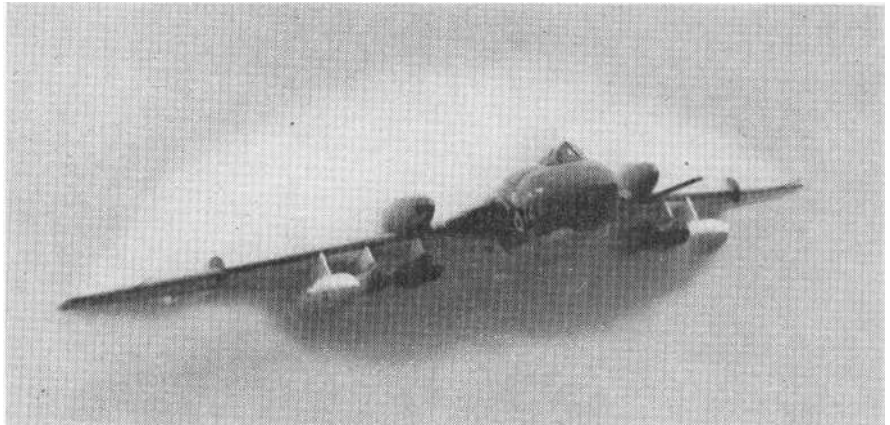
many of the Squadron were forced to stay ashore for the weekend instead of the one night planned. It was hell.

Having passed the ship's ORI and successfully completed our missile firings, we sailed for the States. Arriving off Norfolk, Virginia, we had several days' hard flying before going alongside. The first foreign run ashore of the Commission was highly successful, many of the accessories being supplied by our very hospitable hosts, U.S. Navy Squadron V.F. 41. All too soon we had to leave and spend more time at sea en-route to Boston. This period included a 'shop-window' display for the ship with the 'Boss' just clearing the flight deck on one pass. Much to our surprise Boston was every bit as enjoyable as Norfolk and we really needed the rest when we finally waved good-bye to America.

We disembarked as soon as we were within range of Yeovilton and then the flying consisted of practising for the Queen's Review Fly-past which went by without a hitch. This was followed by a rather sad occasion when we took part in a fly-past over Linton-on-Ouse to mark the passing out of the final Naval fixed-wing course. After summer leave, Lt.-Cdr. Dunbar-Dempsey had only a few days as our new CO before we were back to the hard grind at sea with flying off Brawdy. A Saturday Night at Sea inspired 'Nuttie' Walters to lead a one-man team to eliminate the young midshipmen. He was carried away to spend a week in Brawdy's sickbay.

Our first exercise of the Commission, 'Peacekeeper', took place south west of U.K. Although many sorties were flown, it was a frustrating time as there was very little trade. Among the targets intercepted were the Fishguard-Cork ferry and the Smalls lighthouse (reported to be moving rapidly). Having kept the peace next stop was Gibraltar. We flew occasionally from North Front when the sorties did not clash with the runs ashore or the 'cultural' visits to Tangiers. Dave Boag obviously had a good run there because the PMO removed his appendix and sent him to Malta after we had been at sea two days.

Exercise 'Deep Furrow' was next, the venue this time being the Aegean Sea. We flew a lot,



### *If you want to go fast ...*

but again, there was not much trade to make it interesting. However, third time lucky and so it proved to be with Exercise 'Ranular' in which we helped the RAF to defend Cyprus. Thus satisfied, we went to Malta for a couple of weeks of gentle flying. The Mess at RAF Luqa was soon colonised and converted. Several midshipmen were given rides in the Vixen as was Chief Green. He remained unconvinced that he should change jobs. Chief Silcock also had his moment on the Malta-Gozo ferry. Being a big ship man, his stomach wasn't quite used to the rigours of small ship life.

Leaving Malta, the grand Mediterranean tour progressed to Naples after which we found a small gap in our itinerary before our next visit. This was filled by Exercise 'Decamp' against *Hermes* in which it did not take us long to assert our superiority beyond all doubt. The highlight of our return to Gibraltar was the Squadron Run. Circumstances beyond our control prevented the stripper appearing but Steward Simpson rose to the occasion and stood in as substitute. What a sight that was. After buying 'rabbits' we set off home with our Exercise 'Decamp' booty (namely *Hermes*) in company. We launched two of our Vixens late with the sole aim of leading 893 back to Yeovilton. (It was rumoured that in view of the lack of Tacan beacons en-route, they would not have

launched until Lands End was in sight.) About this time a strange new face appeared in the Squadron. When challenged the face claimed to be our very own REG Chief, Chief Pattenden, who had shaved off his 'set' for the first time in years.

All too soon it was time to re-embark for the fourth and final time. This was too much for 'Tonk' Parker who went off on another of his sporting jaunts, this time to St. Moritz for the Inter-Service Cresta Run competition. From the grapevine we learned that life was pretty rugged over there, the pressure on the nerves heavy, and the tensions high. The tobogganing he found easy and relaxing, gaining the fastest Naval time and second position overall.

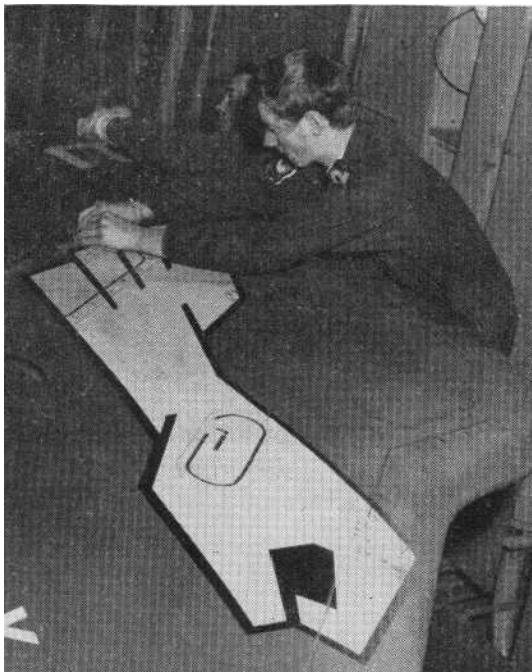
For those who had time to work, it was back to our old stamping ground, the Gulf of Lions, this time using BAN Hyeres as our diversion. We proved that 'Fanny' had no control and that the French Air Traffic team understood our English better than our French. We spent many days rocketing over the nudist colony on the Isle de Levant, but the word must have got around that 899 were in the area because not one naked French bottom did we see to fire at. Disappointed, we gave up and went into Toulon for a couple of weeks' maintenance. We had a splendid banyan that was a great success - Jon Whaley broke both his wrists.

It was hard work but we finally cracked the second CO of the Commission, Lt.-Cdr. Mike Layard replacing Cdr. Dunbar-Dempsey when we left Toulon.

The advertisements don't lie when they tell you that you will see the whole world with the Navy. Our next port of call was Liverpool, closely followed by Plymouth. Judging by most people's faces when they returned on board, both runs were just as good as sitting in the tropics sipping 'Tiger'.

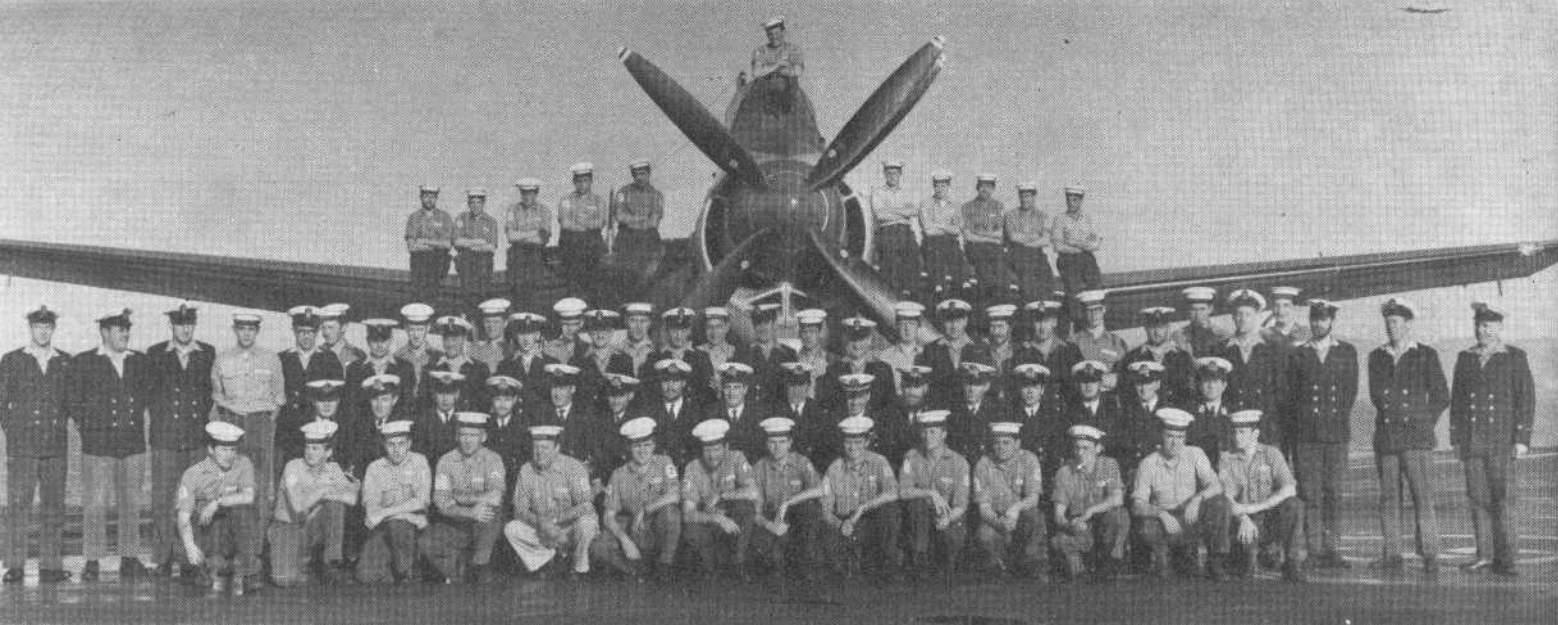
We left Liverpool so that four of our pilots could try night flying from the deck for the first time. They disproved Robin Shercliffe's theory of 'black air - no lift', by completing three or four sorties each.

Now the circle is complete and we are back at Yeovilton for the summer and the silly season, preparing once more for our return to the Mighty 'E'.



*... you have to polish it first*





## 849D FLIGHT

- 1 *Of Eagle's* aircraft most agree  
The ugly is the Gannet Three  
The Flight has four and also flies  
The COD, our postman of the skies.  
Six pilots and observers ten,  
Make up the aviating men  
Sixty-three supporting crew  
Combine for AEW.
- 2 From dawn to dusk and sometimes  
nights  
Gannets launch on lengthy flights  
Air raid reporting, shipping plot  
Is generally our daily lot  
But in addition to these chores  
We often fetch the mail and stores  
And many brave and trusting gents  
Flew with us for experience.
- 3 The Flight embarked on April 3rd  
Of '69 and soon was heard  
The Double Mamba's throaty roar  
By Lossie's green and pleasant shore.  
The work up in the Moray Firth  
Provided one excuse for mirth  
One weekend at Lossie, half the Flight  
Were stormbound, boatless, overnight.
- 4 That Easter we spent back in Wales,  
Regaling Brawdy with tall tales  
Of life at sea, and how the Fates  
Decreed we'd soon be in the States.  
We also frequently did fly  
And practice for the ORI  
Which brought us to the end of May  
And Phantom trials in Lyme Bay.
- 5 Of runs ashore, the all-time greats  
Were on the visit to the States  
Norfolk, Boston, ports of call  
Which were enjoyed by one and all  
And when these visits were complete  
The Queen reviewed the Western Fleet  
'D' Flight Gannets in this last  
Joined in the Royal Mass Fly-past.
- 6 The autumn brought a change of jobs  
New CO, AEO and SOBS  
Then exercises in succession  
Prepared the Fleet against aggression.  
The first was planned the Peace to  
Keep,  
The second ploughing Furrows Deep  
But of corny names the best so far  
Was an exercise called 'Ranular'.
- 7 Twice we visited Gibraltar,  
Naples followed two weeks in Malta  
But things ain't what they used to be  
Down in the Mediterranean Sea.  
Britannia's rapidly losing her grip  
For *Eagle* was almost our only ship  
From the British Fleet, so thin on  
the ground  
While Russians, and others, in  
numbers abound.
- 8 *Hermes* joined us in November  
That was an exercise to remember,  
Or forget, we didn't know  
Whether she was friend or foe  
Till in Gibraltar both the ships  
And 'A' and 'D' Flight came to grips  
The conclusion of this carrier war  
FOCAS declared to be a draw.
- 9 And so to Christmas and farewell  
To one-third of our personnel  
Their reliefs soon soon got the buzz  
And later re-embarked in Guzz.  
The first few days of flying off Wales  
Were noted for the wintry gales  
We didn't think they'd last for long  
As *Eagle* headed for Toulon.
- 10 The spring cruise gave the Flight a  
chance  
To have a look at Southern France  
And some achieved their bold  
ambitions  
By going on camping expeditions.  
After Toulon back at sea  
The weather worsened markedly  
The heavy seas and howling gales  
Were worse than those we had off  
Wales.
- 11 Now back in England's climate cool  
We left the ship in Liverpool  
Our place aboard our favourite carrier  
Is (temporarily) taken by the Harrier  
Yer actual VSTOL can't replace  
The friendly, bumbling, Anyface  
'D' Flight signs off with the wish-  
Best of luck on the *next* Commish.

By A. LONG FELLOW



*Departure of the postman*

# THE HEART OF THE SHIP - THE HANGARS

The day the hangars ceased to function as a Dockyard Restroom so the battle to defend this ever popular piece of real estate began. Many were the bids from other departments for 'space to stow a few boxes' and equally many were the dictionaries from which they obtained the definition of 'a few'. In some cases they were extremely hard to convince that it was necessary to leave any room for aircraft at all.

There were occasions, of course, when outside events took precedence, the first being the Commissioning Ceremony when the upper hangar echoed to the responses of the Gaelic Blessing after the Captain had read the Commissioning Warrant. Since then the upper hangar has resounded to the voices of many visitors, young and old, during receptions, various open days and children's parties, from as far apart as Norfolk, Virginia and Naples. On these occasions, bids from other departments were most welcome and some first class exhibits went on show. Prepara-

tion of the hangar to the standard required for these events however, was not without its pain and problems, for where else in the world would you attempt to convert a workshop from full production to 'Earls Court' display in 12 days, let alone 12 hours?

The undoubted high point in all these extra-mural activities was during the Queen's Review and PCWF in July 1969. What miracles the mention of these magic letters achieved. The lower hangar was converted into a television control centre and seemed to be filled to capacity with BBC vehicles, mysterious boxes and mile upon mile of cable. On the day of the ceremony, to all this was added the many who found their way to this rarely visited spot to watch the proceedings on the colour monitor that had been set up by the BBC team.

The upper hangar became a theatre for the staging of the ship's revue 'Where Eagles Dare' and a rehearsal area for the Colour Presentation Ceremony. There

was also a plan for Foul Weather Routine but we were all convinced that this would not be necessary as the weather was bound to be 'Admiralty Pattern' on the day. However it was not to be, for on the evening prior to the Review the weather 'failed to conform' and at midnight, with the hangar full of a thousand odd chairs, 500 stranded souls (and a dozen soulesses) the decision was taken to prepare for the wet weather routine. PO Wright and the entire hangar party toiled all night to achieve a standard 'fit for a Queen' and some measure of the success of their all night efforts may be judged by a study of the reflections in the deck in the numerous photographs taken during the Presentation of the new Colour.

Currently, early preparations are in hand for the Wardroom Easter Ball complete with discotheque in the after lift well. Just in case there are still any doubters, the hangar WAS used from time to time to stow aircraft, and, of course, the Huntress.

## SEAMAN DEPARTMENT

There have been ships named *Eagle* in the Royal Navy for nearly 400 years and there have always been seaman on board running them. However, the seaman today is far more versatile than his 16th century predecessor. Of course, the Gunner has always been with us, whether the weapon was a bow and arrow or the 4.5in. twin turrets and Seacat missiles of *Eagle* (is there much difference?). The Gunnery Officer and his merry men will be able to tell you the difference and I am quite sure we have all been thankful for the high standard of efficiency of the self-defence weapon system of the ship (the airy-fairies sometimes miss you know), which has been achieved through hard work and in trying conditions.

The other two main sub-specialisations have come in comparatively recently, the RP branch with radar and the TAS branch with the advent of the submarine. How often have we heard the cry 'Why RP's when we have a computer system to take their place?' The RP's can assure you that they have always worked far harder than the computer especially during exercises 'Peacekeeper' and 'Deep Furrow'. The RP's were involved in every aspect of these exercises but principally in defence against Air, Surface and Subsurface attack. Besides destroying most enemy units in both exercises, H.M.S. *Eagle* managed to bag several Boeing 707's and fishing boats.

The TAS branch is quite small but no less important since they are part of our

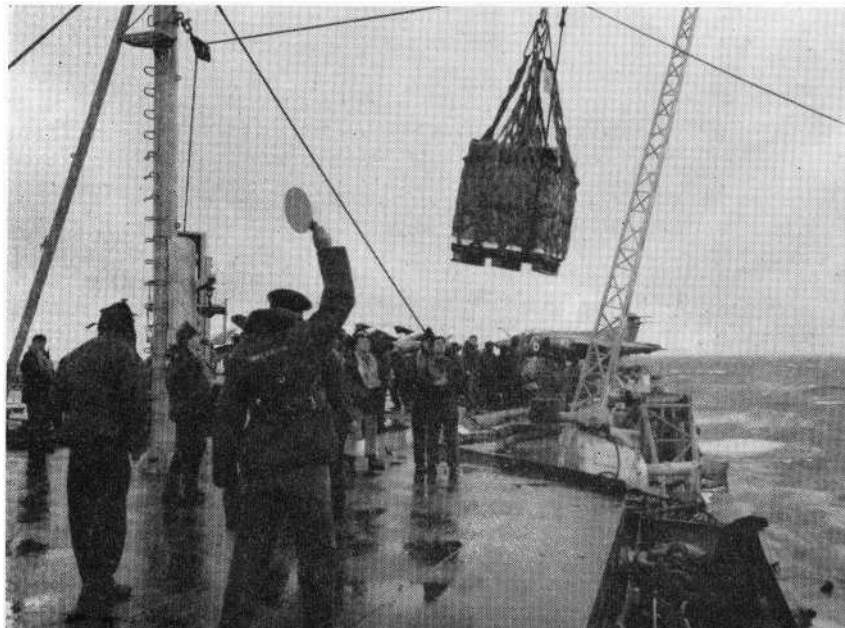
defence against attack by submarines, using the up-to-date 184 sonar. They have proved their worth and obtained vital long-range warning of attacks.

Besides these innovations the Department has been heavily involved in, of all things, seamanship. The RAS has been a regular feature of *Eagle* life and the various teams involved have repeatedly beaten the Bogey Time. The buzz that seaman officers play ping-pong during a RAS is not true, they are signalling their colleagues on the Supply Ships. (What, you saw an officer making a clear hand signal without a bat?).

The Department was also heavily involved in PCWF from the ceremonial - G.I's Paradise - to the more routine jobs of running boats, rigging booms and

ladders etc. Another big occasion on the calendar was coming to head and stern buoys in Malta. A particular mention must go to the Quarterdeckmen in carrying out what, to most of them, was a completely new evolution. But let us not forget the Cable Party who have 'dropped the pick' on many occasions and been closed up at all times of the day or night in addition to their normal watchkeeping. Last, but not least, we have managed, with the help of other departments, to qualify one of our seamen as a splash target coxswain.

However, I'm sure you think that the finest achievement of the Seaman Department was to get the ship alongside in Devonport at the end of March for a well-earned D.E.D.



*Rough weather RAS*

# COMMUNICATIONS

R03 J. A. M. Strangler,  
2MA4 Mess,  
H.M.S. *Eagle*,  
BFPO Ships

Dear Felicity,

Thought I would write and tell you about a very nice thankyou letter I got from our admiral, the other day. You see, he was so pleased with the way I organised the ORI (didn't tell him about the private teleprinter link I had young LRO Stokes fix up with Sandy MacStrangler in Faslane, did I, but what the eye don't see the shiny boot needn't trip over), where was I? yes, he was so chuffed that he asked me and the Captain if we'd like to become permanent Comms test ship for NATO. I haven't been able to tell you before, because it was Secret but Jock Sutherland says it's okay now. The Captain liked this as he could wangle a trip to do another burn up on the Pennsylvania Turnpike and as I fancied it myself I agreed and so old FOCAS fixed us a trip Stateside, to check out the comms there. Poor Alfie Marks had a hell of a time with the Norfolk broadcast, until I told him it was run like tombola then he won a prize too. But on the whole the Yanks weren't too bad and I gave them 8/10.

Then we had to test out the Western Fleet for old Admiral Bush at Torbay. He was so impressed that he fixed for the Queen to come on board and give the ship a new tiddly ensign for the excellent work me and my lads were doin'. Old Yeo Gray did well there as he only lost about 10 of the 10,000 signals we handled and Yeo Zolly Farnes had a heyday selling photostat copies of the Queen's speech.

FOCAS and I then decided we'd better sort out the rest of NATO, so we fixed up this enormous exercise. We had so many nets the Russians thought we were another trawler. I had some trouble with the 'Newport News', so I sent over one of my brighter lads, RS Dave Evans and he did so well that my oppo Admiral Semmes gave him a signed coloured photo which didn't harf make old Ted Scott jealous who'd only got an ordinary one the year before. To reciprocate I sent over that one of you and me taken in the photy booth at Pompey in May. Well we checked out the NATO navies and Norwegian and German armies and a few others. Then we went down to the Med., not to frighten old Franco like SKO (you know, old Lt.-Cdr. Ellis, who takes a great interest in Comms in his spare time) put in the papers, no, but to check out the Sixth Fleet and the Italians, Greeks and Turks. I had to send over a Drongo Australian Lt.-Cdr. to the Sixth Fleet Flagship instead of going myself, but I was busy trying to fix some Turkish FPBs for the gollies to play with. Old RS Bateman and Jacko Jacobs were fair pleading to be allowed to join in. After that we went down to Cyprus to give the RAF a rub up. They were terrible, but I had a brainwave and sent for old RS Fox (the redfaced one who made improper suggestions to you in Guzz) who had stayed at home sick, and he showed the RAF a thing or two, like how to work an Elsan receiver on top of a mountain.

After Christmas we had a go at the French, where my UHF men 'Manking' Melia and Mac McClarity used to call FANNY every morning and Paddy Beckles chatted'em up in Creole. And we've been doin' lots of Jocomexes with the Army and RAF and finally got them talking the same language as us. Maybe they talk like Oily Allred, Snips Parsons, Golly Breen and Burrows but still. Perhaps I should have sent our D-J Tony Revett. Old RS Bray had to give up so many tots that he nearly went 'T' poor ole fella. In the end, the only bods we didn't set up a circuit with were the Luxemburgers and the Welsh Nationalists.

Unfortunately it's all come to an end now, but we did manage to squeeze in one more foreign when Scousers Mansfield and Watkins persuaded me to ask the Captain to 'live a little' and go to Liverpool.

I quite enjoyed my time on board really. Me an' the Captain got on just fine, he used to ask me to look out for him when he went to see his missus about her R.A. money. We had the First Sea Lord visit us the other day and he told me confidentially that he thought the Captain might get his R.A. this time. He also said that he had heard so much about me from ole FOCAS that he was sending me to help out in the Far East. Old Norman Phelps (he's the Stamps Officer who helps Florrie Ford with the Soccer) also reckons he'll be out there too. Most of my team are moving on in fact, old Lt. Briggs, who I used to help out when he was stuck, has already gone off for a rest at Lossie and I sent Mad Mick Mugeridge to qualify for officer - well, he did interfere a bit, you know.

Well Felicity my love, that's yer lot. All the lads send their love too, they can afford it with this new pay thing.

Yours till the sun sets on time as I keep telling CCY Clements,

Lots of love,

Alfa Mike

## Heard in the Ops Room

'ORO this is Gunnery Officer, request clear range on a bearing of 370.'

'This is ORO, Roger, range clear.'

*Pause.*

'This is ORO, say again bearing?'

'Charlie this is One Three Six, radio check.'

'This is Charlie, Roger, you are loud but faint . .

## Heard in the GDR

'GDP this is GDR, is the aircraft on a bearing of 100° an Etandard?' (French fighter).

'This is GDP, negative, it's a big one.'

## AIR DEPARTMENT

This has not been, in any sense, a remarkable Commission but more one of solid achievement. However, it has had several highlights, we've had at least one 'first' (the British deck trials of the Phantom) and although a couple of Wessex now reside on the ocean bed, we didn't have a casualty.

The operation of an Air Group in a Strike Carrier is essentially a team effort, and as the Squadrons cannot operate without the support of the Ship's Air Department, their not inconsiderable flying achievements are a fair reflection of that support. Each member of the team has his part to play, whether it be that of Chockman, Director, or FDO, but almost never singly, always as part of the whole.

The collection of individuals who joined at the beginning of 1969, many in their first ship, were gradually moulded into an efficient organisation. This in itself was a team effort by the more experienced FDO's and Petty Officers, but perhaps especially by the busy, bustling figure of the Captain of the Flight Deck, CA Neate. He quickly became a familiar figure, spurring on the FD crews to greater efforts (and occasionally asking a goofer without ear defenders to 'go away!') all under the eagle eyes (if you'll pardon the expression) of 'Wings', Cdr Anson, and little 'F', Lt.-Cdr. Mike Darlington, perched up in the Royal Box. Their early dissatisfaction with things like bogey times for Barrier Drills soon began to make sense as times and standards improved, and complex aircraft movements became routine.

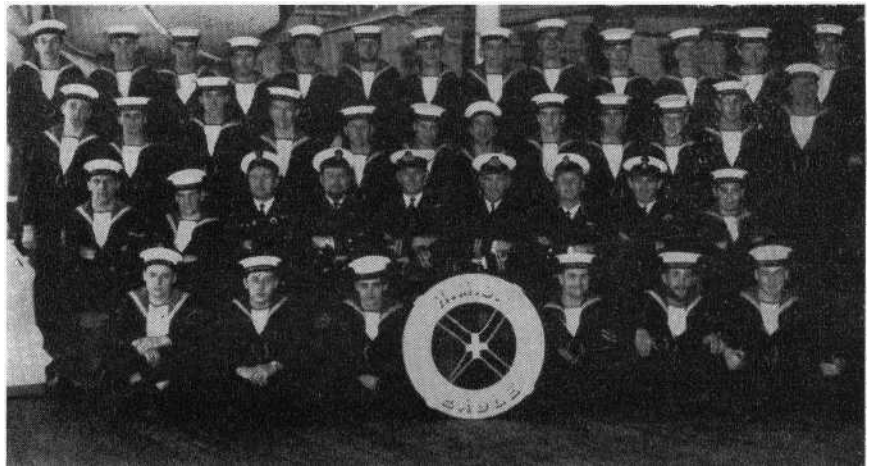
Immediately after being 'passed out' by

FOCAS in the ORI the Department was faced with the new and different problems presented by the Phantom with its strange, flat Jet Blast Deflector that had to be cooled after every launch, and its string of boffins with their differing requirements. Similarly at the end of the Commission, the smaller Harrier (but with just as many boffins), produced another challenge but, as with the Phantom, this was taken in their stride by all those involved.

The SAR Flight, for almost all the Commission under the command of Lt. Roger Mortimer, with their old Wessex Mk. 1's were invariably in evidence performing a multitude of tasks, but fortunately rarely being called on 'in anger'. They flew many photographic sorties resulting in a steady stream of photographs for the Director of Public Relations while the Photographic Officer himself, Lt. 'Tug' Wilson, contributed

enormously to the whole ship with his daily ration of superb artistic humour in *EAGLE EXPRESS*.

The succession of major exercises, 'Peacekeeper', 'Deep Furrow', 'Ranular' and 'Decamp', during the autumn of 1969 ably demonstrated the high level of efficiency of the Air Group resulting in a certain, justifiable, self satisfaction. However, perhaps even more important, in a sense, was the extremely favourable impression gained by 150 or so senior Officers of many services and nationalities of the Imperial Defence College, the 850 families and many individual VIP's all of whom witnessed first class demonstrations of the ability of the Air Group. In addition, the many hours of hard work spent preparing the ship for 'Open to Visitors' was all well worth while when considering the many thousands of people in the U.S.A., Italy, Gibraltar and Liverpool who were so impressed with all they saw.



*The Weapon supply team*



*CA Neate with  
FONAC*

*Photographic team*



# MARINE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

## COME STEAM WITH ME

The start of our story must really go back to July 1968, when many of us arrived in the ship. But unlike joining all other ships, we had to work at the start and this work lasted for almost eight months before things really began to settle down to a ship's routine, barracks was vacated and living on board became the rule of the day.

Soon the time came for the MARENS to take their place as the driving force of the ship. Events built up; 5th March came and for once we all wore badges on our best overalls and, with steaming caps stowed away, looked the perfect matelots in uniform. Hymns were sung, prayers and Warrant were read, and then we were on our own. What would we make of it? Would we be as good as the Eagles before us, or would the Big 'E' come off best? We now know the answer, but it was not easy.

Sailing day - it had to come at last, and for all of us the cobwebs of barracks and 5 and 6 wharves were speedily shaken off and Friday, 7th March was the big 'off'. Trials and tribulations came and went and slowly the pattern of the *Eagle* Marens was being moulded.

Speed was the order of the day on 12th March when we pushed along at 236 revs. Even 'Navy News' gave us a mention, telling us that this was the fastest we had been since Builders' Trials. This helped us along to Lossiemouth and the event of our weekend with the 'Airies'. Some of us never made it but those who did enjoyed the hospitality of the Air Station to the full. There was no truth in the rumour that they liked it up there, they only stayed behind for the helicopter ride at the end. We never did find out who the key ratings were, they all looked the same to us.

'Oh Portsmouth, thou Queen of the Hampshire Coast', they took us there to mend. Some of it was done but that's only a rumour. Our President was like a member of the United Nations and all he



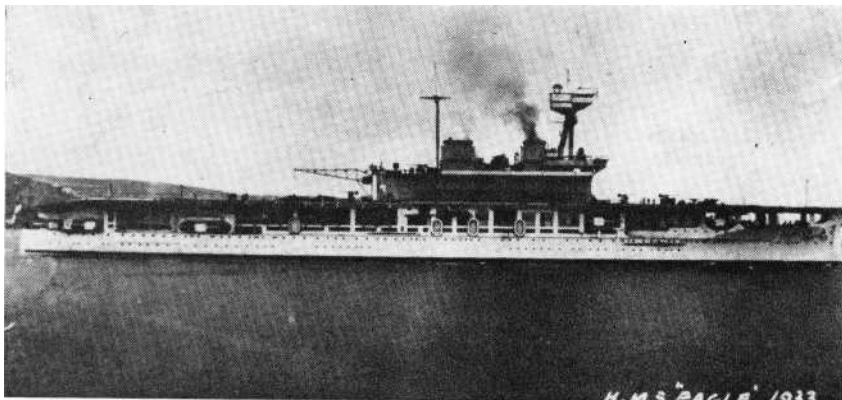
heard was 'Niet, Niet, Niet'. But various sports and activities went on and the night hawks were able to do some night flying in Soho, etc. It ended, as all visits do, with more friends and the Devonport accent weakening. This was soon regained with a brief visit to 'Charlie Buoy' before we were off once more.

May the turning and the burning  
Still continue through the night,  
May the Greenies keep on giving  
Us our everlasting light,  
May the fluids keep on flowing  
Thro' their preselected pipes  
And may M(E)s cease to suffer  
From phlebitis, cramps and gripe,  
May the Chippies keep a-chipping  
At their lumps of four by two  
And 'X' engine keep on making  
The greatest dregs of stew;  
May the Badgers keep 'em flying  
From the waist and for'd cats,  
And still have time to sleep all day  
Like nocturnal bats;  
May *Eagle* keep on steaming  
Until her days are through,  
'Cos I'll be gone on draft by then  
And so no doubt will you.

Re-scrub at Damage Control - what a failure. The results of all our hard work were really shattered by the Staff. The rest of the O.R.I. went well and so did the rescrub.

It had to happen - it did happen - 'A' Boiler Room. At 0730 on the morning of Friday, 13th June, a mass of oil fuel came down the fan trunking and every other trunking and things looked very black indeed. The Wardroom emergency party turned out in force, but to no avail - the PO(ME)s of the watch got the commendation and pictures in the 'Navy News'. Well done! But the Seamen, Electricians and all who came to our aid had to work really hard to get the danger over. To mention a few of our helpers, let us not forget the 'Limers' king in 4 deck passageway who kept us well supplied, the cigarette people, the foam carriers and many many more. Thank you all and well done. Then Devonport came to our aid and soon the 'yardies' made everything look nice once more.

What then? - Well Columbus did it, Chichester did it and *Eagle* was going the same way - to the Americas. Memories, memories, there must be a million of them, but Norfolk Navy Yard was really something to behold. They had everything and gave us their all. Many visits were made and all tastes were satisfied, from the highbrow to the other sort. Private houses were thrown open to us and 4th July was a really splendid affair. It's not every day the next door neighbours say 'Use the pool if you want to'. Messes grew in size, tots were shared and the name swapping was wonderful, from Elmer G to Homer Bittle. So different from Dave and Mike. We loved you, we left you, but our triumphs were not yet over.



37 years ago, and we still make smoke

Boston, what a name to think of. Many opportunities were taken to visit friends and General Booth found a cousin who was really a Scotsman on holiday, so we are told. But he ran a bar and that was good enough for us. Organised sight-seeing, sailing and motoring were the order of the day and one in number Ch(M)E was found drinking in the Wardroom of the American Base at Newport, Rhode Island - they're everywhere.

How those sailors changed after the event; horns are stowed away and tales are swapped. Some fool issued Richard Prest with a car and let him loose on the turnpike. The remark of the day: 'If we are stopped for speeding remember, we're British'.

Ceremonies have to come, so to Torbay for the presentation of the new Colour to the Fleet. It rained, and how! But even so it was a good visit and many friends were made. There was a tea party for the CPOs and when the Royal Family were meeting the crowd, a Ch(M)E (from Eagle), looking at the Prince, was heard to remark, 'Gawd don't 'e need an 'aircut'. This was overheard by H.M. and he appeared at the Wardroom dinner that evening looking very smart after a quick trim.

So to leave and time to get the Big 'E' out of the system. But leaves must end and exercises begin. The first was called 'Peacekeeper', all very nice, but as with every exercise for the Steamies, it was the usual round and the usual defects. Then off away to the Med. 'S.M.P.', what a set of words these are. To us they meant more work to get the old lady ready for another hard slog. But the natives of Gibraltar were friendly to us and the names of the pubs became quite familiar. 'Deep Furrow' was the next one (not a ploughing competition in Dorset but an exercise). All sorts of foreigners were involved in this and as ever, we won, beating the wicked Bulgars who had attacked one of the NATO countries.

Then to the jewel of the Mediterranean - Malta, back to the land of the dghaisa and for some, R.A. They all enjoyed it and the dinners with the ladies were well to be remembered. Mess dinners, runs ashore and the inevitable horoscope readings. But the belle of them all was the battle of 'Hydrophobia'. Stokers with rifles, good ones at that, targets to fire at and for one (nameless) the target was the sand dune protecting the butts. Strange words were spoken such as 'magpie', 'inner' and all that. Thank you to the GIs and the GOs for your patience and for not letting us hear you swear. Romps over the hills and conquests new for all. May we return again, was the general opinion.

What then, had we done it all? - Not on your life. Napoli, 'O Sole Mio' and all that. Trips to the past (Pompeii), trips to the future (the wine shop), and the learning of a new dance - the steamie



stomp (one foot on the pavement and one in the gutter). Somebody found us wandering and with the aid of a compass we were brought home. Some went to see the Pope, but not available, and to the Coliseum (no lions), but in all, a good day for the sightseers. Once more it had to end and off we went to the land of 'Chrimbo Shopping'. Money flowed like water and the scent shops were full of members of the staff covered in the stuff.

A Merry Christmas/Hogmanay to you all - at home of course. This was the season of goodwill and families and it lasted until 12th January before we heard the call of the sea once more. A call at Gibraltar and then to Toulon for a touch of the French way of living. A memory of Toulon, Y unit beat X unit at football and the losing ChM(E) was heard to remark at every goal 'Oh the pain' - and there were 13 of them. Perhaps a mention of the trip to the Mardi Gras at Nice. All had a lovely time and the expression 'confetti' was heard for many a long day afterwards. Then back to the sea and to the next port of call, Liverpool.

Pages could be written of this visit and some of the memories will never be forgotten. The two youngsters who asked to change watches because they were courting two sisters (granted), and of the

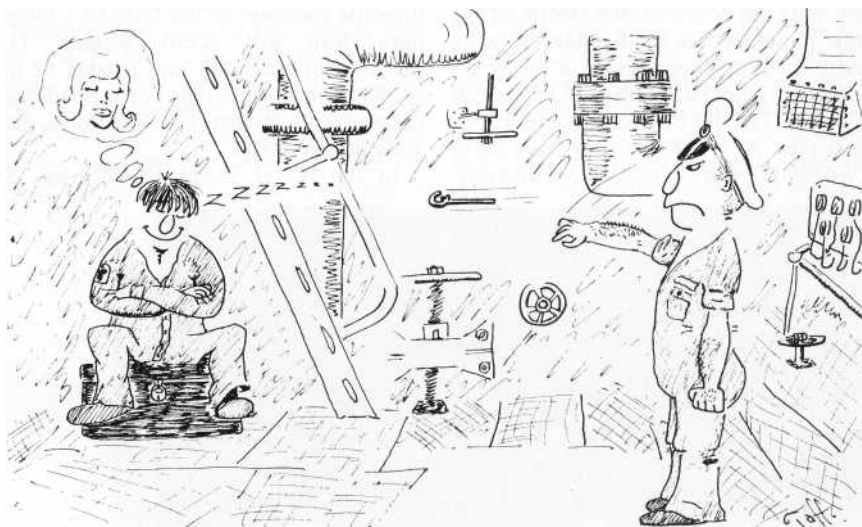
night hawks who were seen to come on board at 0600 looking a little worse for wear, but they never gave up. Congratulations to the two swimmers - the awards were made by the MAA. 'Good-bye Scouse' was all that was heard and some of the ladies are still chasing us up.

Work was still to come and they gave us the Harrier to play with. What a lot of smoke watchers we had and the old tale of only a stoker was not in it. Senior had a go and so did many more of us but it was very strange that they only went up when the Harrier was taking off or landing. Congratulations to 'B' and 'Y' Units for taking part and covering the gentry with mucky water when changing over De-Sups.

Our last word, thank you all for the trip, the P.U.s and all that. We shall ring off for now and hope that, if you do not sail next time, you will remember us who will.

POSTSCRIPT

R.F.A.s Olmeda and Olna and various shore filling stations have supplied us with 88,196.3 tons of F.F.O. at 6d per gallon. For this we still owe them £520,356 8s 3½d and they still owe us 10,407,128 green shield stamps. Eagle is therefore a very economical old girl, but she still costs about £6 per mile to run.



No Supply and Secretariat Department on board an aircraft carrier can expect to have an easy time, and *Eagle* has been no exception to this rule. However, under the guidance of Cdr. Northey and Lt.-Cdr. Fidler, then later of Cdr. Tippet and Lt.-Cdr. Violet, the Supply and Secretariat Department have had a successful, if arduous, commission.

In writing of the Department it is difficult to deal at length on the activities of any one sub-department to the exclusion of others. So, to avoid any injured susceptibilities, let us make clear that throughout the commission the Cooks have cooked the Ship's Company's meals, the Wardroom staff have served and cleaned and generally kept the After End from open rebellion, the Stores have stored, de-stored and re-stored, the Victuallers have victualled and provided the rum, the Caterers have catered, and the Writers have wallowed amidst endless piles of paper work and new pay codes.

No one, as yet, has crawled into the Sick Bay and complained of malnutrition. In fact the opposite would seem to be the rule observing the number of the Ship's Company the PMO has placed on diets. This fact is not surprising when one considers that between them, the Catering, Victualling staffs and Ship's Company Cooks have managed to account for 92,940 dozen eggs, 1,635,200 lb. of potatoes (chips with everything) and 1,016,512 sausages, which for the mathematically minded, taking each sausage as having an average length of four inches, would stretch for 15 miles, 89 yards, 1 foot and four inches. Using these and other ingredients, the divulgence of which is contrary to the Official Secrets Act, the Cooks have prepared and served 2,228,775 meals, which is a lot of nosh by any standards. When speaking of the Cooks one must not overlook the efforts of the flour power people in the Bakery, who, under the expert supervision of the Ship's Tombola Caller have baked 15,620 loaves of bread, 714,000 bread rolls and 33,500 meat pies. As a sideline they have made 2 Wedding, 9 Christening, 14 Anniversary,

85 Commissioning and 150 Christmas cakes besides knocking up 7,050 gallons of ice cream to keep the Air Departments happy. Returning for the moment to the Victuallers, one statistic which must not be overlooked is their noble effort to keep the Ship's Company in a state of happy oblivion by the issue of 584,000 tots.

Down in the deep, dark depths of 7 Victor flat, the Pay Office Staff have sweated over their monstrous piles of filthy lucre. Despite the old saying that when two Writers get together somebody is bound to be seen off, they have nevertheless managed to get through £1,178,138.11s.0d. in payments to the Ship's Company. This has been paid in Sterling, Gibraltar and Maltese pounds, U.S. dollars, Italian lira, French francs and Scousewegian wackers and has always arrived on time at the pay tables despite currency exchange difficulties and the thoughtful promulgation by MOD of two new pay codes at the most inconvenient times. In addition the Pay Office staff have run the Post Office, allotted, remitted and gone quietly spare. Over on the other side of the ship their opposite numbers in the Captain's Office have dealt with 6,450 requests, 112 punishment warrants and masses of incoming and outgoing correspondence, ranging from Paternity to Phantoms, and gone noisily spare.

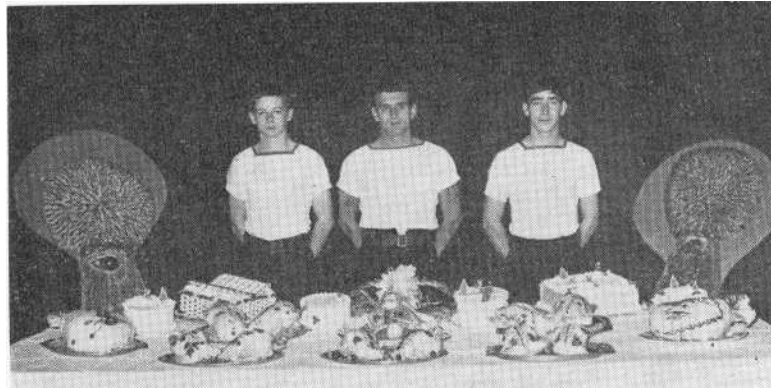
In the Naval Stores Department, 34

store rooms containing 62,000 items have been maintained throughout. 900 Signal demands and 45,000 routine demands for additional items have been made, 7,500 obsolescent items including 2,500 Wessex Mk. 3 spares have been returned and the department is now busy looking for space to stow the additional 4000 spares that will be required with the advent of the Sea King. 22 RAS's with RFA's *Lyness*, *Reliant* and *Resource* have been undertaken and 2500 loads taken aboard by jackstay transfer and in addition 8 Ver-treps have been successfully coped with.

Back aft the Wardroom Stewards and Cooks have stood up well to the many extra numbers catered for during the Phantom and Harrier Trials and during our exercises in the Mediterranean. Without doubt the highlight of the Commission for the Wardroom staff was the Royal Dinner in July when they served Her Majesty the Queen, Prince Philip, Prince Charles, Princess Anne and members of the Royal Staff. Whilst speaking of the Wardroom staff, mention must be made of that well-known football supporter and raffle ticket seller extraordinary who has kept the Captain reasonably well-tempered throughout despite earning him the soubriquet of the 'four-minute mealer'.

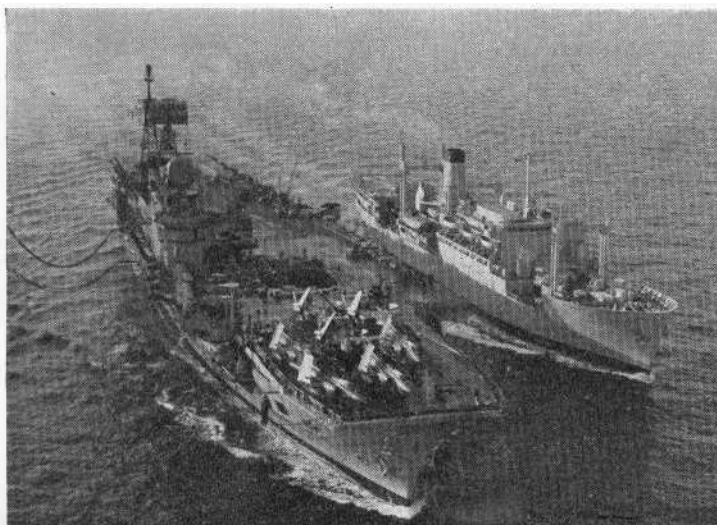
Sportswise the Department has not been outstanding in any one field although regularly supplying members for most of the ship's teams. The only trophy earned, albeit unofficial, has been to the Supply Petty Officers' Mess, who by general consensus of opinion, have fielded the best hooley team throughout the commission.

To sum up the Department as a whole, it is safe to say that everyone has played hard, worked hard, achieved what they set out to do, and despite any protestations to the contrary, will look back on many happy times in *Eagle*.



*S and S display, Liverpool*

## SUPPLY AND SECRETARIAT DEPARTMENT



*The mobile grocer comes alongside*

# WEAPON ELECTRICAL DEPARTMENT

Although the commission officially started on 5th March, in a ship with well over 1000 compartments, all of which contain something which concerns the Weapon Electrical branch, the start date for us was several weeks earlier. Much of the work, such as the provision of lighting and ventilation on the messdecks, had to be completed before the ship's company moved back aboard from *Drake*.

During the D.E.D. period, apart from carrying out maintenance and repairs, the dockyard made some major modifications. These included replacing the notoriously unreliable gas turbine generator by a diesel machine and completely modernising the ship's sonar equipment.

Unfortunately, because of labour shortages in the dockyard, quite a lot of the trials were not completed before the ship sailed. Partly as a result of this, and with an almost completely new Electrical Department, the first few days spent at sea were heralded by power failures of one sort and another. After a few days, things settled down a bit but other problems with the more sophisticated equipment carried, reared their ugly heads.

On 11th April a hole appeared in the slip ring unit of the 984 radar and after much scratching of heads, the dentist was called to give assistance. Surgeon Lt.(D) D. Webb patched the hole using ordinary tooth filling material and enabled the set to continue operating.

The sea trials period was severely disrupted by bad weather and the ship entered her work up with many weapons and electrical trials still outstanding. The weather again turned sour on us, leading to long hours of frustration and trials being carried out on an opportunity basis. However, this period was not without light relief, thanks to the Greenies. On one occasion the whole ship was sent to action stations due to a fault on the main broadcast system and on another, a full scale search was carried out for a non-existent man overboard when the alarms were set off, again due to a snag on the circuit. Perhaps the most significant indication of the problems encountered during the sea trials was that the newly fitted diesel generator was almost due for its 500 hours servicing before the period was over.

During the notorious Lossiemouth weekend, it was significant that the only W.E. officer ashore was the only bachelor in the Department, Lt. J. F. J. Simpson, and the Electrical Office Writer, PO(O) El. Adamson, who had previously stated that 'these things aren't safe' and 'that

you won't get- me in one of those things for all the tea in China', was last seen sprinting from the helicopter looking decidedly puce.

After passing the scrutiny of FOCAS during the O.R.I., the Department settled down to carrying out its main function, that of providing equipment in working order to the various user departments. On 18th April the ship obtained its first submarine contact on the modernised sonar and from then on didn't look back, obtaining the 984th interception using the type 984 radar during Exercise 'Peace-keeper', less than five months after leaving the dockyard.

On an aircraft carrier the weapon side of the W. E. Dept. necessarily suffers due to the ship's flying programme but this does not mean that the weapon systems are completely ignored. About one-fifth of the Department are employed maintaining the ship's A.A. armament and their endeavours were rewarded by the firing of 17 Seacat missiles and several shoots by the 4.5in. guns expended a total of 555 shells. Two of the missiles scored direct hits, one on a pilotless target aircraft and the other on a towed target. The 4.5in. firings proved that the rather elderly gunnery system fitted in *Eagle* can still hold its own alongside its more modern counterparts.

Apart from the normal flying commitments, two periods of trials, namely those of the Phantom and the Harrier aircraft, posed extra problems of power supplies for the specialised equipment the trials teams brought with them. However, with some highly improbable-looking improvisations, we managed to provide all that was asked for and both periods were deemed to be very successful.

Another challenge presented to the Department was to be the control ship for the PCWF. This entailed having a large BBC unit on board and making live T.V. transmissions from the ship. Again this led to power supply problems as the equipment was spread from the lower hangar, on five deck, to the top of the island, nine decks above.

Running concurrently with the Royal

Review was the royal revue 'Where Eagles Dare', making late July one of the busiest times for the Department. We provided the lighting and sound engineers and most of the back-stage personnel and in overall charge behind the scenes was the Deputy Electrical Officer, Lt.-Cdr. Osborne.

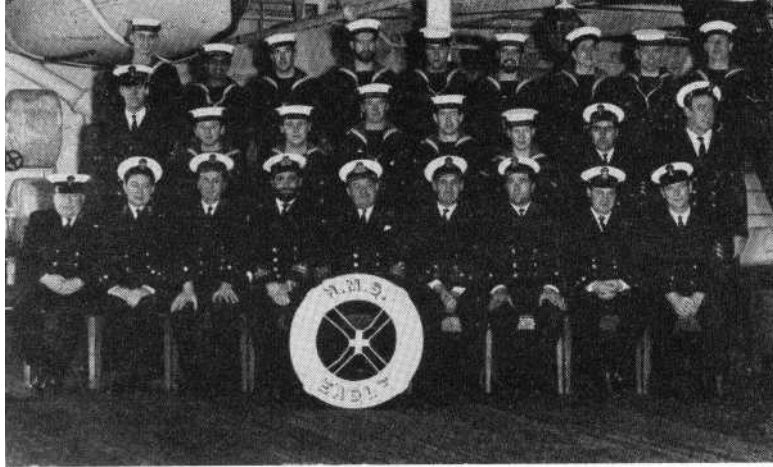
Contrary to popular belief, it was not hard work all the time for the W.E. Department. Sports teams were entered for all of the inter-departmental tournaments held on board. No fewer than three teams were entered for the inter-part soccer competition, two of which did very well and the Department's first eleven proved to be one of the best on board, losing only a few games in the whole commission. We were also well represented in all the ship's teams from shooting to rugby. In the wider circle of Navy sport, the Department could hold its head high, having one Navy fencer, Lt. P. R. C. Johnstone, and Ordnance Artificer Apprentice A. G. Kerr was flown from the ship to represent the Navy in an athletics match against the London Colleges of Technology.

Throughout the commission there seems to have been an endless stream of people joining or leaving the ship. Amongst the leavers were the D.L.O., Lt.-Cdr. Osborne, who, after being promoted, has taken up a new appointment in the M.O.D. and 'Green Leader', Cdr. P. G. Fortescue left in February, again for the Ministry. On a sadder note, C.CEL., 1. A. Williams, well known for his methods of obtaining volunteers to act as pirates at children's parties, was given a compassionate draft to the R.N.R. at Swansea.

In early January 1970, Eng. S/Lt. R. H. Roberts rejoined the ship, having left only 14 months previously to undergo the S.D. Officers Course. This, and the fact that many of the senior rates have volunteered to extend their length of service in the ship, bodes well for the next leg as it should avoid many of the problems we encountered with an almost completely new staff trying to get the ship ready for sea after a long spell in dockyard hands.







Services group



Safety Equipment and Aircraft  
Movement Control group

## AIR ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

'It would take 50 people working day and night for 200 years to make the same mistake that an electronic computer could make in only two seconds.' In the Air Engineering Department we have no computer but we do have 200 men able to work day and night but for a somewhat shorter average span of 18 months. Our mistake would be to attempt to write adequate comment on all these stalwarts and for this reason we present a short narrative with the A.E.D. story told in pictures.\*

Cdr. N. C. Fitzgerald relieved Cdr. P. Grant early in May and whereas our volleyball team suffered an irreplaceable loss (6ft 10in. in his volleyball socks) the ship's and A.E.D. sailing fraternity were to prosper through the efforts of their new President. Completing the Board of Governors was Cdr. J. Parker, Radhaz Exponent, Master of Armament (Breaks) and himself an expert in assessing the seaworthiness of the Captain's barge. Cdr. Parker was relieved in July by Cdr. G. D. Palmer from which date the A.E.D. became infused with a charm and grace befitting of this renowned specialisation. Supporting this echelon of expertise has been Lt.-Cdr. Geoff Meekums, our Deputy A.E.O. This young aspirant to upper management has competently dealt with the more intricate aspects of Guided Weapons, from torpedoes and tranquillity in C.A.T.O. to censoring the Wardroom supply of Play-boy. Additionally, he recently successfully completed his 200th memorandum concerning a day in the life of the duty Air Engineer. We reflect with some satisfaction that Mayflies have overwhelmingly outnumbered May-days within the Department.

Lt. Kevin Donnelly relieved Lt. Alan Grint in May and he and his team have made continuous and varied contributions in providing aircraft services both on and below flight deck level. LAM Thirwell has effectively

ensured a consistent supply of fuel, air and oil. Special mention must be made of the commendable efforts in sustaining the ship's S.A.R. helicopter. In A.M.C.O., Lt. Ray Hicks has been entrenched as A.E.O. SUPPORT, providing a host of valuable services including Mechanical Workshops, aircraft inspections, A.S.U.C.O. and prolific editor of A.E.D. signal traffic. It is interesting here to record the A.E.D. Log for Easter 1969-Pneumatic descalers in mechanical workshops successfully ruined 4000lb of dough nicely risen in 4E Bakery and intended for bread and hot cross buns - apologies to the Chief Baker and reconsider career prospects of AM1 Farnworth and AA1 Seeley. CAF Georgeson (Paloustes) and LAM Elliott (Tyre Bay) have provided an excellent service in these spheres. In all, a total of 1300 jobs were undertaken by workshops, each of these calling for original design and repair. Contrary to opinion this Department does enjoy some leisure time although precautionary measures are in hand to announce the end of commission in A.M.C.O. on 25th March.

The Air Ordnance Section run by Lt. Stan Fleming has serviced all the Squadrons' armament equipment and ejection seats. An undeniably Celtic flavour (Fleming the Bombs, Bulley the Seats, Cowley the Stores) has enhanced the quiet efficiency of this Department. Lt. George Roach departed in July and we bade farewell to our resident Bridge expert. His successor, Lt. Roy Nicholls, later to be known as Avionics Specialist has continued in the best tradition and produced what's best in aircraft radar and electronics. Also, LEM Holtham has proved a very capable Battery Room Specialist. CREA Isaac and team have manipulated the missiles and torpedoes and achieved a high degree of successful firings. It is confidently confirmed that all Eagle's

torpedoes were recovered and the only recorded loss was that of 4½ stonies by PO REL Haverson.

In March '69 our aircraft control officers graduated and were admitted into the A.E.D. complex. No-one envied these young gentlemen (Lt.-Cdr. Peter Hutton and Sub-Lt. Peter Widdicombe) their task of making the most of deck and hangar space. They have done with polished professionalism. The Safety Equipment Section faultlessly fashioned by Lt. Dennis Fowler (also Hangar Control and assisted by Sub-Lt. John Pearce) retain that luxury appointed compartment where essential items such as mae wests, helmets, parachutes and No. 8 repairs receive expert attention. The demands of aircrew emergency services, aircraft movements and polished hangar decks, cocktail parties for the use of, have all been amply fulfilled. CPO Musgrave and PO Wright have done sterling work in these Departments. Typifying the zeal, energy and sense of humour of these two characters and their ilk would be a true story such as this

N.A.M.: 'Could I be excused the 0900 muster Chief?'

Chief: 'You've heard of Custer son, all his men were there at the time.'

N.A.M.: 'But you know what happened to Custer's men, Chief?'

Chief: 'And I know what will happen to you, son, if you're not there on time.'

In sporting circles we are proud to record that A.E.D. (2J4 Mess) have provided the whole of the ship's volleyball team and that the A.E.D. hockey team under the able command of REA1 Lacombe reached the final of the Inter-Departmental tournament only losing 2-1 to the Wardroom in the closing seconds of the match. We have entered into most sporting activities with varying degrees of success and team spirit has remained high throughout. PO REL Mc-

Support group



Ordnance Electrical (Air)





*Avionics workshops and guided weapons*

Alpine has proved a most conscientious A.E.D. sports representative.

Finally, our congratulations corner. To AA2 Waghorn on his marriage to Wren Stella Nunn. Wren Nunn is the only R.N. Air Hostess, flying regularly with 781 Squadron. Ship's Sports-AA2 Butt (Soccer Ist XI and Plymouth Command), AM2 Urech (Ship's Golf and Winner of Malta 'Greensome' Trophy), REA I Larcombe (Hockey-1st XI), A.A.2 Waghorn (Fencing),

PO OEL Bodycote (Exped.), AM1 Farnworth and AM1 Clark (Angling Club), Cdr. Fitzgerald (Sailing and Hockey), NAM Jones (Steam Railways Hobbyist) and not forgetting REA Allen and LAM Taylor our big prize winners in the Ship's Grand Draw. In academics, to C.E.A. Frankcom and CREL MECH. Marsden (H.N.C. and Ambim), CREA Cox (H.N.C. (Electrics)) and REA Backhouse to GRAD I.E.R.E. Petty Officers Dwyer, Smith, Speed,

Georgeson and Edwards were advanced to Chief Petty Officer.

Limitation of space and the shortcomings of this author would preclude a mention of everyone in the Department. It is hoped however, that at some time in the future we might reflect with some pride on our contribution on behalf of the A.E.D. which helped in so many ways to make *Eagle's* 1969/70 Commission a successful one.

\* The reason for this is threefold:

1. To re-affirm once and for all and in print, the talent and potential within A.E.D. (without pictures this Success Story would never have been told and naval archives inexcusably incomplete).

2. Allow respective Divisional Officers to identify their stalwarts who have reputedly been on loan for 12 months or more.

3. Confirm the author's suspicions that the Air Ordnance contribution to Communal Party is grossly over-estimated.

In attempting to chronicle this portrait gallery I have had the assistance of many volunteers including the Deputy A.E.O., whose summaries of ambassadorial activities ashore could alone have filled this book.

## EAGLE SCHOOL SPEECH DAY AND PRIZEGIVING

Mr Chairman, Governors, parents, colleagues and pupils: I welcome you here today and would welcome more of you to the school-room, except that it only holds 18, which is about 1 % of the possible catchment.

As you will know, our educational system has gone completely comprehensive. Not only have the eleven plus results no meaning for us, but we are prepared to accept all comers from all trades for a variety of interesting courses. This is entirely in keeping with modern educational trends.

Unfortunately, life in the senior school has followed some of the more disquieting examples of the outside world. Our students are not quite so revolting as some but we have suffered from several sit-ins, and the school-room has frequently been occupied for several hours at a time, by various factions clamouring for attention and their rights as students. We have done our best to placate them and it is noteworthy that they do usually drift away at the sound of 'secure'. There have been several demonstrations to celebrate NAMET day. These were marked mainly by sit-ins in the starboard pocket of the Junior Rates' dining hall. More high minded cults have periodically assembled and made obeisance to deities with the unpronounceable names of GCE(F) and GCEHET, some quite ordinarily, but others at a highly advanced level.

It is pleasing to note that, when not involved with classroom activities, students have freely availed themselves of the various cultural facilities offered by departments of extra-mural studies elsewhere on the campus. I must offer my usual words of warning to the more zealous. Some students are tending to become too involved with outside activities, to the detriment of their studies. Hours spent in exploring the depths of the MAREN mines, or in scaling the precarious Island Heights are of little assistance towards the attainment of those achievements for which we strive. I

must also deprecate two further activities that have recently come to notice. The first is the keeping of watches, a selfish practice as its name suggests, and one which should be abandoned to enable everyone to benefit from educational and recreational facilities. Secondly, it has been observed that some pupils are keeping pets and even tending them during school hours. Care of vixens cannot be allowed by the Governors much longer and appropriate pressure will be brought to bear on those few who have been known to creep away early to tend their cats and sea-cats.

It is my duty to comment on two of the issues with which the youth of today are becoming increasingly involved. I refer to sex and to drugs. I am happy to report that the trends reported by the press have not become apparent here. During term times, little interest has been shown in activity concerning the opposite sex. We cannot vouch for behaviour during vacations but we have done our best, in consultation with the Governors, to see that these have been as short and as infrequent as possible. There have, regrettably, been a few skirmishes in other fields. We have had dealings with lox-sniffers who are suspected of operating an illicit still on the campus. Indeed it is common knowledge that they make frequent attempts to inflict their product on all of us. There has been some experiment with smoking and 'main line' brands are openly burnt to the exclusion of the once popular 'blue liners'. The close confines of the schoolroom, with its poor ventilation, make it ideal for group 'smoke-ins', an activity particularly evident in groups of stewards on every afternoon for weeks prior to the March NAMET festival. In many cases the desired effect appears to have been achieved.

Enough of reporting activities - I must now turn to the achievements of our prizewinners.

The R.E. Settlement Trophy is awarded this year to the Fleet Air Arm House, who have suddenly surged to the fore with a clear lead for job-hunting.

The NAMET cup goes, for the first year ever, to the Stewards House, for having provided, entirely on their own initiative, a class of enthusiasts, although it is also fair to mention that the Seaman and Stoker Houses have also made a very good effort.

The Correspondence Cup has not been awarded. It is sad to note that of the many who embark on these courses, there are still few who complete them. There may be some close contenders for this prize next year.

The Tape Trophy is shared equally between the French and German Linguaphone Groups, although the two men taking Norwegian should not be discouraged. It is also worth mentioning the stout-hearted individuals who are working at Russian and Dutch.

Before announcing the winner of our most coveted trophy, the Headmaster's Prize, I must say a word of consolation to all those who have not yet got the results that they have been hoping for. I would remind them that the help is there-the effort has only to be made. Therein lies the stumbling block, for it does require a big effort to study amongst all the other distractions.

Finally, the Headmaster's Prize, awarded to the individual who has shown the most initiative during the year goes to S. C. Ouse. Most commendably, he tried to raise some humour and benefit his fellow men by organising language classes in preparation for our stay in Liverpool. Unfortunately his efforts were thwarted by the editors of both Daily Orders and *EAGLE EXPRESS* but we are glad to have discovered subsequently, that in spite of this, the great majority found no difficulty in establishing adequate communication with the natives.

## MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

An article about the Sick Bay is rather like an article about a small hospital, devastatingly boring to all but those of the medical fraternity and very often them as well. There are, of course, notable differences that make life in the Bay just that much more interesting for us. One, of course, is our PMO Surg.-Cdr. Adamson, who everyone on board thinks has a blood lust. Now to be absolutely fair to him, the truth must be told. He has. From the day we sailed, 7th March, until 14th March, he had separated three people from their appendices (at the time of going to press the total score was 14). Another fascinating aspect of our Bay is its conversion to a quagmire during a solids RAS, when an even layer of split peas, flour and beer from fractured cans is distributed across the deck. This is one disease we have never been able to eradicate, it has always been with us, and always will.

CPOMA Clark did trojan work in whipping some degree of unity into the staff, MAs being notoriously individualistic, and throughout the Commission has maintained a calm steadying hand on the helm of the Bay. Thank you Chief.



MTI(P) Feltham, our physiotherapist, got made up early in the Commission and promptly celebrated by growing a horrible beard, and later on MTI(L) Faragher, the microscope king, was promoted. He got yet another haircut on the strength of that L/MA (Jacko) Jackson was the 'tour de force' in the executive field, did a marvellous job, kept a clean kit and was only known to have missed his tot once. We had a radiographer at one time, MT4(X) Rider, but their Lordships decided he was wasted on board and he was swapped for MT2(N) Young, a fully qualified S.R.N., who thankfully came and sorted out our overcrowded and overworked ward.

We were lucky enough to have the assistance of several R.N.R. officers during the early part of the Commission. Surg.-Lt. Tulloch, R.N.R., Surg.-Sub-Lt. Whittaker,

R.N.R., Surg.-Sub-Lt. McKinley, R.N.R., Surg.-Lt.-Cdr. Hepburn, R.N.R. an aviation doctor from Farnborough and, last but not least, Surg.-Cdr. Davidson, R.N.R. who added a touch of class to the proceedings. He was a general practitioner, and had trained as a navigator in the RAF in the war, which accounted for his observer's wings (he said he was given a pair, so he thought he might as well put them on). He immediately endeared himself to the whole of the Sick Berth Staff, by the simple expedient of stopping the tot of everyone who saw him. This had a profound effect on the morning sick list and after he left, it took about a month to recover its normal level.

Well that's our domestic life, what happened . . . ? Doctor Stronge was transferred to H.M. Submarine Opossum during an exercise to treat their Captain for an eye infection and spent the night on a hot bunk. His claim for one day's hard lyers and submarine pay was approved. Immediately he came back, Doctor Robins shot off to R.F.A. *Olmeda* to treat a back injury. He had his own suite of rooms on board and a double bed. He did not even try for hard lyers.

Self Maintenance Period at Easter was in Portsmouth, and we sheltered in the lee of that great centre of naval medicine, R.N.H. Haslar. Most of the staff had oppos there who were hurriedly and exhaustively made use of on both the professional and social levels to the benefit of all concerned.

When we left Portsmouth, we went to America. This was a bit of all right, and we had the help of the U.S. Naval Medical Authorities. Most of us went round the very large and very modern naval hospital in Norfolk, Virginia, and we were duly impressed. The trip to Boston gave us the chance of seeing one of the great hospitals of the world, the Massachusetts General Hospital, the Americans again very kindly showing us everything. After all this *Eagle* returned for the Royal Review when MA Robertson put his boots on and did his thing in the Royal Guard.

L/MA Jackson and Doctor Robins both helped to produce the Revue.

Summer leave was given in Devonport. R.N.H. Stonehouse coped stoically with all our problems, and for the first time *Eagle* went almost 'foreign' when she sailed into the Mediterranean. There, on various occasions the naval hospitals at Gibraltar and Malta came to our aid, which was most welcome.

A Wessex ditched in September and the full emergency facilities of the Sick Bay were swung into action. What actually happened, was that the aircrew gathered in the PMO's cabin and sat around a rapidly emptying bottle of brandy. No other treatment seemed necessary.

One case that was interesting cropped up when we were exercising with the Italian ship *Andrea Doria*. A case of appendicitis was flown over and the operation performed on board. Assisting the PMO was the Italian Medical Officer who spoke no English, thus an interpreter was rushed into operating theatre clothing and stood by the patient on the operating table. He was almost rendered speechless with the fascination at seeing his first operation and the operation slowed considerably as a consequence of his having to be kicked into interpretive activity every time it was required. Both patient and interpreter did well.

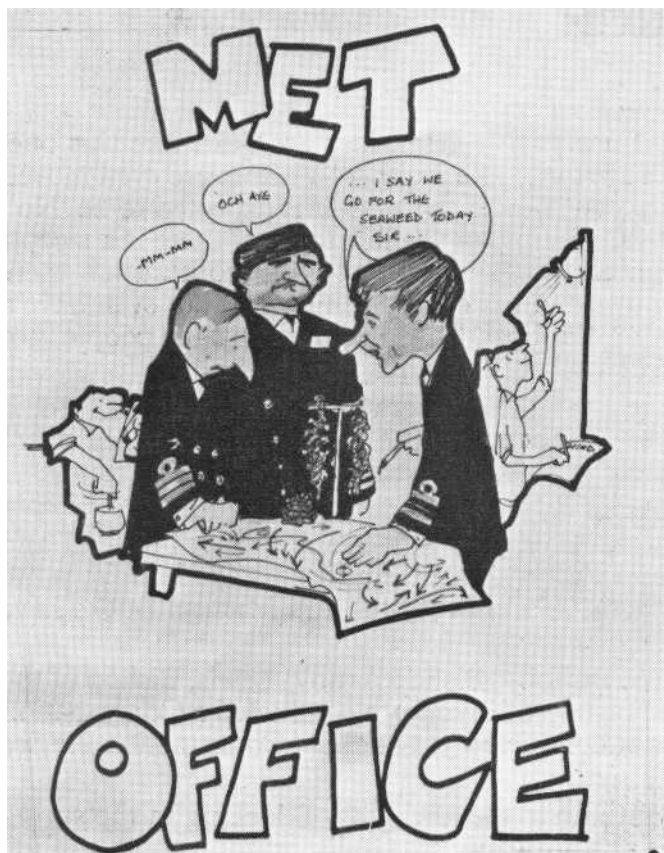
It was back for Christmas and out to the Mediterranean again in January. The one interesting visit this time was Toulon, where visits were made to the naval hospital-Hopital de Sainte-Anne. We found out that the French were very switched on in a medical respect, and several patients had to be admitted; two stabbings, a jaundice and a few others. We had to ask for 176 large chest x-rays to be performed, and the whole lot were done and reported on by the specialist in an afternoon.

Doctor Gibson took over from Doctor Robins at the beginning of the year, proved a very likeable lad, worked well without supervision and on one run ashore managed to keep up with MT1 Feltham pint for pint. They were both sat in a corner the next day and kept away from the patients.

Both the PMO and Doctor Gibson will be staying on for the remainder of the commission but everyone else will be leaving for fields new.

Before we go we'd like to thank everyone else in the ship for producing all those lovely illnesses for us. Over the year there were about 10,000 attendances (that's four each). We had epidemics of 'flu, mumps, German measles, ordinary measles and chickenpox. 98,000 headache pills, 21,000 penicillin tablets were required to keep you going and 7000 tranquillizers were required to keep others from going too far.

Cases of interest? One LOEM(A) sprained his ankle, had it strapped up, walked out of the Bay, fell over a gash bucket, and fractured it. Another patient was admitted with a sore throat, then got glandular fever, mumps, and German measles. Well, as he was in, he thought he might as well get them over with.



## WEATHER

Very many `slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' have of course been hurled at the Met. Office during the past 15 months, but on the whole we can claim to have arranged some fairly fortuitous weather for the ship during this Commission. At the moment of writing, she has only failed to enter harbour, or sail, on one occasion, and that was leaving Liverpool. On that sad day we can honestly claim that the female natives had invoked a powerful juju to keep us there.

Before you reach for your pen/telephone to tell us how you:

- (a) were stranded ashore/on board at Lossiemouth,
- (b) were drenched on the last day in Boston/Naples,
- (c) were nearly swept off the flight deck off Toulon/in the Bay of Biscay,
- (d) nearly died of cold in Gibraltar/the Aegean,

remember please that we are a very small department consisting of only two Forecasters, one Petty Officer, one Leading Hand and four Naval Airmen (never forgetting our senior technical adviser, the S.I.O.). To provide 24 hours of weather each day, to suit all tastes, is a demanding task and despite our efforts the ultimate word is with a Higher Authority whose decision is final and binding.

Like the Windmill (now sadly shut), `we never close'. We have provided information to just about every department in the ship. Sometimes the reason is obscure-who is it that always phones for the sea and air temperatures at noon every day? Sometimes it is painfully obvious - where has all this ! \* ! \* ! low cloud come from?

We could provide you with all sorts of impressive statistics about the thousands of weather observations that have been made, about the thousands of charts we have drawn, and how, of the hundreds of forecasts we have produced, some four or five have actually been right-but then, such is our sad lot that no-one would believe us. So perhaps we had better cut this article short. In any case negotiations have just started with the Higher Authority about the weather over the Easter weekend and we must give that our full attention.

# CHURCH

The Vicar writes ...

My dear friends, perhaps you have noticed that few parish magazines are quite like this one. Yes, verily (as they say in my Branch), few parishes are quite like it either! Visitors are even moved to ask 'You don't have a CHURCH in the ship, do you?'-and the answer is expected to be 'No'. But when I answer 'Yes' they then ask me where it is, looking up vaguely to see if there is a steeple tucked away amongst all those aerials, chimneys and things we have on the 'roof'. I tell them that the church is evenly distributed between the bows and the stern adding, 'And we even have a chapel as well'. By this time the penny has dropped - the CHURCH of course means people, not just a place of worship - however much respected or well used that place may be.

I am happy to say our little chapel of St John the Evangelist is both respected and well used. It is used by all denominations for both private prayer and for corporate worship. It is a place where God is felt to be particularly present; a place where everyone is welcome whether in trouble or in joy.

The church (very small letters this time) as a department has seen many changes of staff and noteworthy events. The Reverend John Davies, and Father John Helm both stayed on from the last Commission while their Reverences David Harries, John Pibworth and Michael Bucks have been with us for shorter periods.

We have been honoured with the presence of three Bishops; Bishop Arnold Lewis, Bishop of the U.S. Armed Forces, visited the ship in Boston. The Bishop of Plymouth conducted a Confirmation service in August 1969 and the Bishop of Liverpool conducted yet another Confirmation service in March 1970.

So from the highlights of a visit to Rome in the autumn to the lowlights of docking in the spring we look back on many blessings and friendships and forward, by God's grace, to many more, wherever we may be.

ALAN HEWISON, Chaplain.



*Christening in Liverpool. A.B. Ellis,  
proudfather*

# SPORT

## SOCCER

### FACTS AND FIGURES

P	W	L	D	GF	GA
30	19	6	5	98	45

Of the six matches lost, five were against professional or semi-professional sides and a further two were drawn.

There has been a total of 30 players in the First XI, the W/E Dept. leading with eight members. The squadrons have contributed five, these being sorely missed during the periods in Devonport. The Second XI was also impressive, playing 14 matches, nine of which were won. Of the five lost, three were against opponents who should have played the First XI, they having other commitments to meet.

With a number of matches during leave periods, the grand total adds up to 52 matches, scoring 207 goals. Mickie Calvert has been the most successful with his shooting boots, scoring 26 goals in 26 matches for the First XI, quickly followed by Jock Inglis who has scored 19. Rumour has it that Mickie Shingleston doesn't know where the goal is, whereas Trevor Bough and Jock Gibson had no trouble putting the ball past our own goalkeeper. Calvert also showed his versatility when he kept goal on one occasion when Alan Butt and Pudd Goodchild were unavailable, but sadly that occasion also records our only defeat against a services side. No complaint to Mickie though-he did his best against a good side when we had an off day.

Trevor Bough has lead the side well from the back line showing that he is not only a good player but a good diplomat



Toulon 1970. Eagle versus French Navy. Eagle won 4-0

off the field too. Jock, 'The Rangers Fan' Stronach has been there for every match and seven others have been regular attenders.

Tony Jackson and Alan Butt, our two hangers from precommission days, are still going strong while Dave Paris, Chalky White and Des Cosker are more recent additions. A number of stalwarts have left, the most notable being Bungy Williams and our baby, Taff Evans. Dave Paris and Steve Mackay are two representatives from the Wardroom and

the whole lot have been welded together as a team by our very able coach Florrie Ford.

Among matches of special note are those against Hudson Benfica near Boston, where the whole team was wined and dined for two days and our manager learned to drive a Volkswagon, Gibraltar F.A. in Victoria Stadium, the Combined Services Gibraltar and Malta, Sliema Wanderers and Hibernians in Gzira, Malta and Sporting Club de Toulon, France.

## FENCING - SCHIRMA - ESCRIME

It was during the welcome visit to Naples that the first match of the commission was held against the W.S. Napoli. Much too our horror, this received advance publicity in the local press and was held in a basketball stadium with some 200 Italians attending (we never did discover why all the servicemen appeared except that the match was organised by a Colonello). We were told beforehand that the opposition had just beaten Rome in a weekend match. The match was held on a ladder basis in all three weapons and we lost 53-43 after a typical Gallic show. This included the taking of many photographs, for one of

which we were invited to give 500 lira and which none of us has seen since.

We continued meeting as often as possible until we reached Toulon where we were able to practice before the match in a salle with jeune filles fencing and practising judo alongside us. The match was held on Thursday evening against a team from the French Naval Arsenal with a fair number of French spectators and one 826 officer who appeared with two French girls only to disappear with them both fairly rapidly. This was a conventional fencing match for which we managed to raise seven separate Eagle fencers. The results were Foil, lost 6-19

fights, Epee, lost 6-10 fights, Sabre, lost 2-7 fights. The match was nicely rounded off by the consumption of a few bottles of champagne with the French team.

A small group of fencers started to meet some two years ago including Cdrs. Fortescue and Weir, and since then meetings have taken place every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at sea-to which all fencers are most welcome. However it was not until A.A.2 Waghorn arrived and shortly afterwards arranged for the then Navy Coach CPTI Pearson to give a short fencing course at Drake, that the numbers started to increase sufficiently to produce a team.

## RUGBY

The first rugby of the Commission was played during the first work up period off Lossiemouth. In the weekend 18th-20th April our teams played their first matches against N.M.S. *Fulmar* in which the First XV had a narrow victory and the Second XV won convincingly.

There was then a long period without matches since the U.K. season had ended and our next chance of a run out did not occur until we got to the States. We arrived in Norfolk, Va. on Friday, 27th June and our introduction to rugby in America was a tournament held in Norfolk the following day. *Eagle* entered two fifteens, each one winning one and losing two of their matches. This was a fair result as there were two additional opponents against us, bone hard grounds and temperatures in the 90°s. These resulted in E.R.A. Dave Broadhead's slipped disc and Lt.-Cdr. John Highton collapsing from heat exhaustion. The following Tuesday, the First XV travelled to Richmond and won a fast exciting game with a good display of open rugby. The team were accommodated privately by the opposition, being treated to hospitality which was an outstanding feature of the visit and was returned, in some measure, in the ship the next evening.

In Boston, Mass., matches were arranged for First and Second Teams on Saturday, 12th July. The First XV were beaten by a surprisingly good Boston team which consisted mainly of British



*Exchange of trophies, Norfolk, Va.*

and Irish emigrants-. It would be fair to add that their team was made to look better by the effects of the local brew and hospitality which our lads had sampled in large amounts. The Second XV, though obviously suffering from the same ailment, won quite easily against a local youth side.

Back in Devonport for leave, the first phase of the Commission's rugby ended with the loss of two of our outstanding

players, Mech. Dinger Bell and Lt.-Cdr. Highton the team captain. This latter loss was a double blow as he had run *Eagle* rugby virtually on his own as well as being the driving force and inspiration behind the First XV. Several trials were held during this period in Devonport, each being hampered by leave periods and the lack of squadron personnel. However a basic squad was gathered together and a new First XV captain selected, this being E.R.A. Dave Broadhead.

We then found ourselves in the Med., Malta being the first chance to show our paces owing to the lack of pitches in Gib. Even here we were restricted by the number of pitches available and only three First XV and two Second XV matches were possible. The First XV kicked off with a match against RAF Luqa in which the first half was quite even, *Eagle* being 6-9 down. The second half showed our lack of fitness and match practice, the RAF running away with the game and winning convincingly. This was followed by a match against the Overseas Club which *Eagle* won, having played really well. The final First XV game was against the Army and again lack of fitness was our downfall. Having played an exciting fast game, with most of the play in the Army half and leading by 11-6 points, we allowed them to score 10 points in the last five minutes to lose 11-16.

In Naples we had only one game, the



*Toulon-E.R.A. Broadhead presenting Eagle crest to French Navy Rugby Captain*

First XV being beaten by the local Army who fielded a very fit and fast side.

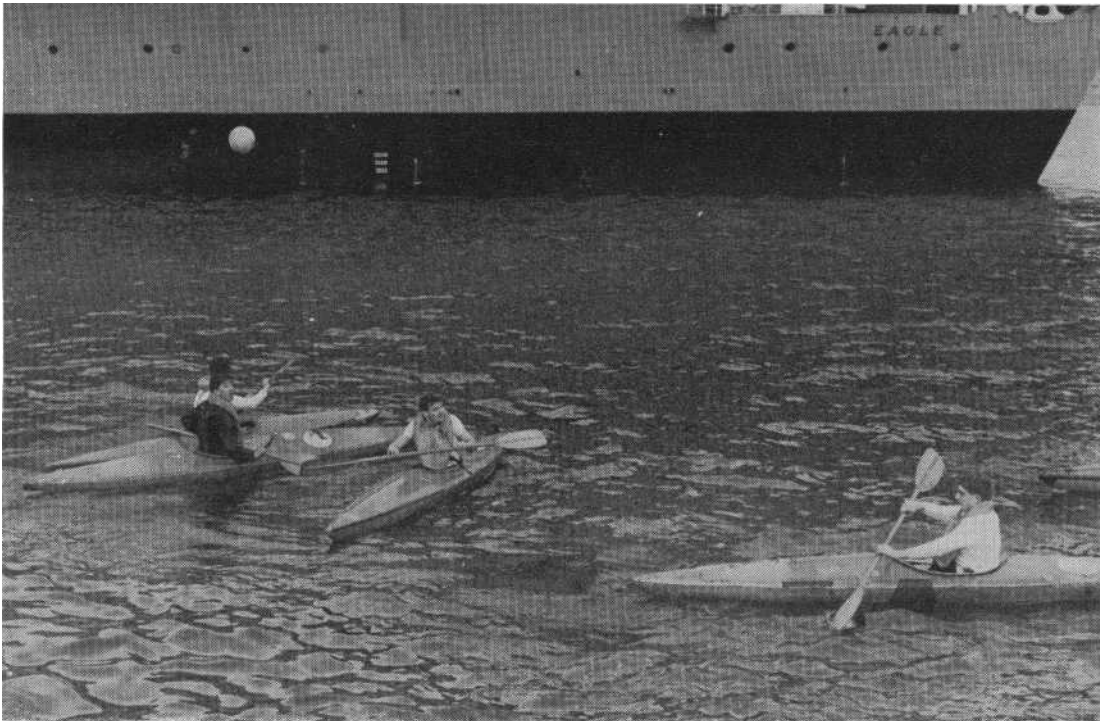
Back once more in Devonport, we had two First XV matches. The first, against *Ark Royal*, proved to be a very hard fought match with no quarter given or taken. *Eagle*, leading 3-0, were once again let down by poor covering in the final minutes when *Ark Royal* were able to equalise with an unconverted try. The other match, against *Bulwark*, was played in a downpour on a mud patch, *Eagle* emerging winners by 8-3.

Our final cruise taught us some useful lessons from a series of games in Toulon.

The First XV opening game against Toulon Rugby Club 'A' side was a warning of what to expect. Large, very fast and fit forwards, who would pass the ball about in a style many three-quarters would envy, played havoc with our cover and we lost 36-5. I, like many other enthusiasts went to watch Toulon's First XV, French Club Champions, in a local derby, and was well able to understand why their 'A' side is of such a high standard. There were two further First XV matches against the local Army and Navy sides. *Eagle* beat the Army 9-8 and lost against the Navy 11-18, the latter giving

us an injury list as long as your arm. The Second XV had two matches, both being fairly close affairs with only five or six points in it. In the final match of the visit against La Seyne Rugby Club, a mixed team was fielded from the uninjured players. *Eagle* was well beaten but the local brew, laid on after the game, made the visit very welcome. La Seyne presented the ship with a very handsome trophy to commemorate the occasion. This, together with the various plaques and pennants gathered during the Commission, will be displayed as soon as a suitable cabinet is obtained.

## CANOEING



*'Canolo' in Toulon*

The canoeists have been out and about in various waters. The first memorable trip took place when the ship was anchored off Brawdy. The canoes were lowered from the port PV space, always a perilous descent, providing much amusement for the spectators, and three young men braved the elements on a quiet Saturday afternoon. They didn't reckon on the combined effects of waves and tide on their re-embarkation. The first man to climb the ladder left a capsized canoe. With some difficulty it was righted and emptied by the other two. The second man did likewise and it proved impossible to empty his boat. Fortunately some midshipmen were out in the seaboard, and with their assistance, the second

canoe was emptied and hoisted. The third man took no chances and sat with his canoe, in the seaboard, to be hoisted in style.

On the next occasion, albeit in the warmer waters of the Med., care was taken by all not to capsize on return. The last man up the ladder was so pleased with the progress of the others, and so careful not to tip himself that he forgot to hold on to the canoe which promptly drifted off towards the French coast. Again we had cause to thank the Seamen Department for bringing the last boat safely home.

Most of the afternoons in Toulon saw members being shown some of the various and undignified ways of entering the

water, and of returning into the canoe whilst still in deep waters. Trips round the harbour were made and many games of three a side 'Canolo' were played into the dusk. It is a most exhilarating activity that provides plenty of practice at the various strokes demanded of the slalom contest.

The most memorable events? Two simultaneous capsizes in a party of five in a force four at Toulon: struggling down, and worse, up, that confounded rope ladder: loitering round the yacht marina of Toulon and sunbathing on the rocks of the Rock, knowing that it was snowing at home,



## GOLF

The *Eagle* Golf Society was formed shortly after the ship sailed in April to promote golf throughout the ship. At a well-attended meeting a committee was elected consisting of Lt.-Cdr. Jessurun, R.A.N. as Captain, Lt. Black as Secretary and PO REL Law as Assistant Secretary. These three also became the handicap committee to enable seagoing handicaps to be awarded for internal ship tournaments. In spite of minor difficulties we did manage to play golf in the majority of countries visited. Some people even had the foresight to take their clubs during the work up and enjoyed a round at Lossie. It was here that the SHARKS first appeared.

Our next golfing opportunity occurred in the States where we were most welcome. Playing against Americans on their own beautiful courses was indeed a pleasure made even more so by the sometimes enormous green fees being waived. Norfolk and Boston proved to be a golfer's paradise. A far cry from our next encounter with the 'wee ball' at the Royal Marsa Golf Club, Malta. Here, SHARK first class, PO Urech won the afternoon Stableford amid many dark looks from the locals. Naples proved very poor for golf, there being only a seven-hole course within 20 miles of the city but Eagles were seen to be going round it a

few times.

The South of France provided us with some of the best golf of the Commission. A delightful course at Valcros was discovered by SATCO and ACRD and this resulted in two full days of golf. Many were the balls lost when the mistral blew and a new species of Australian SHARK was discovered.

Back in U.K. the weather was against us and although a few stalwarts managed the odd round in Liverpool, there is little more to report. Some of us look forward to making the best of the summer whilst in D.E.D. and hope for some keen competition before *Eagle* sails again.

## EAGLE JUDO CLUB

PO Ken Moseley, Black Belt First Dan, joined us in May 1969 with 800 Squadron, just in time for the trip to the U.S.A. A club was formed on board and during the summer, practices were held whilst at sea. In Norfolk, Virginia, and later in Plymouth, we took the opportunity to visit and to help local clubs. During our stay in Plymouth in August, we were fortunate to have PO (Cook) Bob Hamilton join us. Bob was at that time a Second Kyu (Blue Belt) and he proved to be the mainstay of the club, taking over practice whenever Ken Moseley was on watch.

Our first autumn call was made at Gibraltar where we instructed the Gibraltar Judo kwai four nights a week and finished our visit by giving them a promotion examination in which all were successful in being upgraded.

Once back at sea we continued with our practice in the port pocket, cinema and tombola permitting-which was not as often as we would have liked. Malta proved a hectic two weeks with five training sessions a week and three promotion examinations. The clubs which benefited from our visit were the Malta Judo Association at Zabbar, the RAF Judo Club at Luqa and the Service Children's Schools at Tal Handaq.

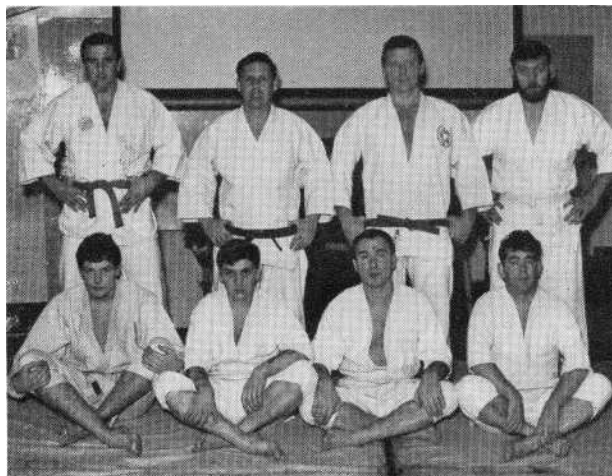
Apart from a good run ashore in Naples we also found the local judo at the Plazio-Della-Sporta which turned out to be just round the corner from the fun-fair. A hard training session was followed by Ken Moseley giving instruction on the new method of playing judo which is practised in the U.K. at the present time. On the way home we had a brief stop in Gibraltar, just time enough to have a quick practice session. Bob Hamilton quickly crushed old competition and had to start instructing and stop fighting else

there would have been no-one left to instruct. Back to Guzz for Christmas leave and while away 800 Squadron had a change of commanding officer to bring us Lt.-Cdr. J. O. F. Billingham, Black Belt First Dan.

PO (Cook) Bob Hamilton, 2nd Kyu (Blue Belt) to 1st Kyu (Brown Belt).

POME O. L. Jones, 3rd Kyu (Green Belt) to 2nd Kyu (Blue Belt).

Cook Lawrence, 4th Kyu (Orange Belt) to 3rd Kyu (Green Belt).



In Toulon we once again had a hectic time both on and off the mat. Here we found competition equal if not better than us. The local club boasted at least 80 members and was situated quite near one of the dockyard gates. We had some very good practice sessions and of course, as in every French port, the inevitable contest, in which we emerged victorious-Ken Moseley undefeated and the others doing very well. We only suffered two defeats which was rather remarkable considering the French put out a very strong team.

Whilst at Toulon we took the opportunity of holding promotion examinations for the *Eagle* Club. The successful candidates were:

POSA Bill Gibson, Novice to 5th Kyu (Yellow Belt).

PO (Cook) Taff Hughes, Novice to 5th Kyu (Yellow Belt).

Cook David Williams, Novice to 5th Kyu (Yellow Belt).

James Duffy, Novice to 5th Kyu (Yellow Belt).

This was a really outstanding performance on the part of the club members in having 100% success in the examination.

At the time of going to print the Club is going from strength to strength and the practice sessions are getting harder as the time goes by. We now look into the future assured of the continuing success of the Club.

## ROAD RACING AND CROSS COUNTRY

The past year has been very successful in this most arduous of sports and got away to a very fine start when LM(E) Cain was selected to represent the Royal Navy in the Inter-Services Cross Country Championships during the first work up period. This representative honour was the result of a great deal of hard training during the D.E.D. period and a very fine performance in the Plymouth Command Championships, finishing first.

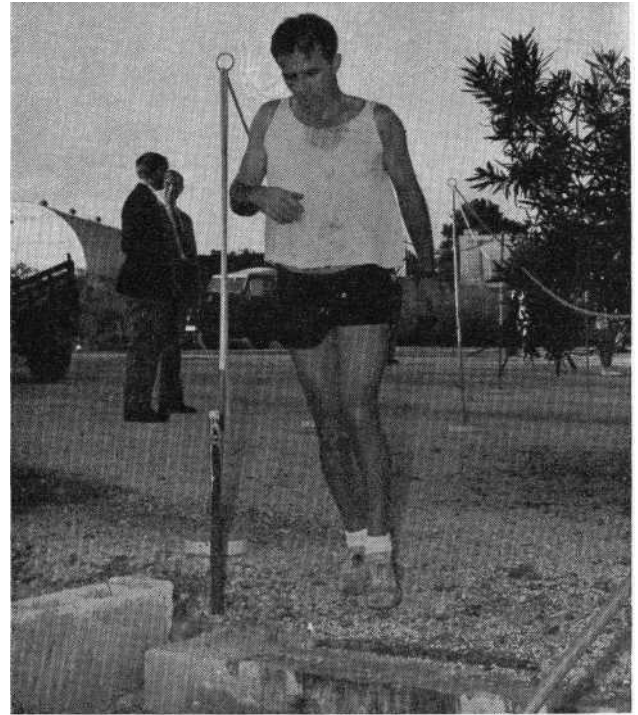
This individual performance was followed up by our team captain L/Stwd. Bob Meadows remaining at Lossiemouth whilst the ship was in America and during this time he ran in the R.N. in Scotland Championships winning both the 10,000 and 5000 metres races and gaining second place in the 1500 metres, followed 24 hours later by the NAC Championships where he won the 10,000 metres in a new R.N. record time and was second in the 5000 metres. Finally in the R.N. Championships he set a new R.N. record in the 5000 metres.

Our first team race of the Commission took place at Gibraltar in October and with a one-two by Bob Meadows and Tom Parker the stage was set for victory over the Black Watch Regiment and Gibraltar AAA.

Guy Fawkes Day in Malta saw us take on teams from Third Para., First Lanes., RAF and H.M.S. Blake and although Meadows ran in first the Para's were too strong for us and we were runners-up. In the first official road race of the season in Malta, 'Eagles' won the day with a course record by Bob Meadows.

The thought of a competitive race against Hermes was all the excuse needed

*L/Stwd Bob Meadows  
wins inter part  
Cross Country  
at Corradino*



for our own Inter-Departmental Championships at Corradino, won very convincingly by the Air Department. Our last team race in Malta was yet another Eagle success when LM(E) John Cain finished first, leading the team to victory over the RAF and the First Lanes.

On 29th November, back on the Rock, the ship's team ran in second to the Black

Watch and defeated teams from Gibraltar AAA and Blake. This was a warm up for the big race of the Commission—a 50-a-side 'Round the Rock', Eagle versus Hermes. Our little sister could not hope to hold us with a 1-2-3 by Bob Meadows, Tom Parker and John Cain followed very closely by the other 47 'Eagles'. Perhaps we caught them with their trousers down—they certainly ran like it.

After a long rest we took the field as a team once again at Gibraltar and were once again pipped at the post by the resident Army side, the Black Watch.

As expected, Toulon was also a successful venture when a team of 50 runners turned out as guests in the French Navy Championships. This race was no exception and the old firm of Meadows and Cain romped in equal first once again. The very next day a four-man team ventured to Marseilles to run in the French Regional Championships and behind internationals like Texerou, Coomes and Kolbeck. We finished: 18th Cain, 22nd Meadows, 52nd O'Brien, and 67th Stephens, a very creditable performance indeed. It is hoped that these runners who have done Eagle so proud will continue to have every success in the future.



*Start of Plymouth Command Cross Country, Autumn 1969*

## HOCKEY

Always short of breath but never lacking enthusiasm or opposition the ship's hockey players have had some interesting and hard matches during the Commission and the results have been fairly even. Individual performances on the field have been matched by those at the bar after, and in some cases before the game, and few players would admit that they have not enjoyed playing the various sides in Malta and Gibraltar. Mediterranean hockey is all played on hard pitches and consequently the game is fast; for example the naval pitch at Gibraltar is surfaced with MPBW tarmac and an hour and a quarter of hockey on this can be very hard on the feet. During one game there we had to share the pitch with the scaffolding and tractors of MPBW who were installing floodlights over the ground.

Most of our opposition has been from the Services but we have also played local club teams. For its size, Gibraltar has a remarkably thriving hockey community and teams such as the Gibraltar Hockey Association really proved too strong for us. During our first visit, we played five matches in 12 days in addition to the

running of the ship's inter-part competition, and Exercise 'Deep Furrow' gave us a welcome chance to let the blisters heal before Malta.

Compared with Gibraltar, Malta hockey is generally of a lower standard—not that we beat all comers. We drew with the Malta Hockey Association side, beat the RAF and the Third Parachute Regiment but lost to the Army, all games being played in a magnificent spree of weather. A most successful afternoon of six-a-side inter-party hockey was also played at Corradino, the Wardroom winning the final against the Navigation Division.

Unfortunately, neither the Italians nor the French play hockey and hence our only other games before Christmas were again at Gibraltar when we met *Blake*, *Hermes* and the Combined Services—fielding First and Second XIs against *Hermes*. We were due to play the Gibraltar Regiment on the last day of our visit but we could not table a strong enough side because of injuries to some players and a strong instinct of self-preservation amongst the others. In all then, we have had a most successful and enjoyable tour

and it has been possible to keep a fairly settled team, under Lt.-Cdr. Tonkin, despite the lack of a proper ship's trial. It is hoped that it will be possible to hold a trial after the D.E.D. when the squadrons have re-embarked, with the aim of producing two regular teams. It always seems extraordinary to the selectors that less than one member in a hundred of the ship's company enjoy playing this game and are keen enough to do so regularly. All who would like a game but for one reason or another have remained in the background, are urged to give their names and positions to the P.T. Staff without delay.

Meanwhile, for those who remain with *Eagle* during the D.E.D., the Secretary hopes to arrange a series of mid-week games on Brickfields against local sides and all who want to keep their eye in during the summer and drink a few jars of ale should put forward their name. Finally the Secretary wishes to thank the umpires. Frequently acting as a team's safe deposit, they have all possessed considerable patience and their work has been, and always will be, much appreciated.

## SAILING

American Independence Day 1969 was well celebrated with Schlitz beer on ice, burgers and crisps in the very pleasant surroundings of the Norfolk Naval Sailing Club after both our 'A' and 'B' teams had beaten the Norfolk Naval Sailing Association both in Bosuns and in Mobjacks.

A week later we took on the U.S. Naval Destroyer College at Newport, Rhode Island, where we again enjoyed excellent hospitality. Both teams showed the Americans that the British were more at home in 19ft keelboats than in 12 metres on those waters. The College most generously lent *Eagle* two Shields 30s in which some of us enjoyed a day's racing from the famous Ida Lewis Yacht Club. Both the Norfolk and Newport encounters were in defence of the Read Cup so that the combined results made a major contribution to ensuring the Cup remains on the eastern side of the Atlantic for 1970.

The end of July, back in Torbay for the Royal Review, we acted as the weather mark for the Western Fleet Regatta but regrettably were unable to participate, as, due to a communications failure, we had arrived without any of our Bosuns.

In late September we had the first of many enjoyable encounters with the

Royal Gibraltar Yacht Club. The course lay between the runway at North Front and the La Linea shore with 'Smokey Joe', the coal burning Spanish Guardship, as an interesting hazard on the windward leg. Racing in a strong Levanter, the *Eagle* 'A' team secured a good win in the Victory

class but unfortunately both opposition teams proved stronger in the Bosuns. In the return match, protests and gear failures led to an inconclusive result so that we sailed for Malta with our honour unredeemed.

However once in the Malta sunshine



our fortunes were completely restored. We started off with a very good win against the RAF Malta team in Albacores, closely followed by a win over the R.N.S.A. side in Bosuns. Our strength in helmsmen was such that we were able to turn out two completely different teams for these two events.

Our enthusiasm and a tricky decision as to which side of a merchantman to pass, anchored in mid-stream, caused us to incur the wrath of the harbourmaster. However we had exchanged boats before the harbourmaster's launch appeared on the scene and the F.O. Malta who had taken over the offending boat stopped a most undeserved 'Blast' before the substitution was discovered.

Our Grande Finale in Malta was a two-team match against the Garrison Sailing Club in Pegasus and Bosuns. After two races in each class and an appreciable reduction in the length of Norman Fitzgerald's fingernails (he was acting as our representative on the race committee) the result stood at a draw. Scenting victory the opposition willingly agreed to sail a decider rather than argue a number of protests. Spurred on by a threat from the Box that we could B' well swim back if we did not do better, and at last having mastered the vagaries of the Pegasus trapeze-by the simple method of not using it-we sailed to a convincing win in both classes, so rounding off a most enjoyable stay in Malta.

Back in Gibraltar we found yet another Levanter blowing but we sailed forth in force 5/6 to exact our revenge on the R.G.Y.C. and settle the argument beyond doubt. Alas, the use of brass shackles (supplied 'in lieu' of S.S. by Pusser) cost us three masts overboard and ensured that once again the issue remained very much in doubt. To add to our misfortunes, in the first race a bathing pontoon was being used as the leeward mark but the race instructions failed to add that the spring-



board was still rigged. This fact was only established when, with a comfortable lead, Mike Tattersall planed close around the mark and found shrouds, mast and sails around his ears.

After Christmas leave we set off once more for the Mediterranean, regrettably with only four Bosuns in commission. The first stop was Toulon where we found ourselves guests of the Club Nautique de la Marine at Toulon and also at the French Naval Air Base at Hyeres. True to form, our first encounter commenced in the aftermath of a gale known this time as the Mistral. This match against the French Navy in Toulon was sailed in Sharks (Requins), the predecessor of the Dragon, ending in a win for *Eagle* despite the presence of two extra boats in the opposition. A second match was sailed the following weekend which was again won convincingly. To mark this event the President of the Club very kindly presented the *Eagle* team with a trophy which has been named the 'H.M.S. *Eagle*

'Requin' Trophy' which we hope to make available for competition between any H.M. Ship visiting Toulon and the Club.

In Gibraltar again at the end of February, we were unable to resolve our prolonged battle with the R.G.Y.C. due to a shortage of boats but we were fortunate in that at last we were able to get a match with the United Services Sailing Club in Albacores. Again the Gibraltar wind did its worst only this time dying out and forcing the abandonment of the match.

Throughout the commission we have been able to field two teams for which even Command helmsmen could not always find a place. Norman Fitzgerald, Keith Somerville-Jones, Mike Tattersall, Richard Prest, Pat Donegan, Dick Ottoway, Ninian Stewart, Bill Pollock and Jack Holderness all sailed in one or more matches, together with a number of stalwart crews and reserve helmsmen including Mick Dibble, Ian Strong, Rip Kirkby, Dave Platten, Ski Kukulski (USN), Malcolm Tennant, Mike Callaghan and Mark Scorer.

Despite our heavy commitments in ship's matches we managed to sail off a 12-team inter-part event in America during the summer and a 36 helm individual knock-out tournament in the autumn. 800 Squadron emerged undisputed victors of the team event beating Maren in the final but due to a series of calamities were not represented in the first three of the individual which was won by Richard Prest (Maren) with Bill Pollock (Seamen) second and, much to their surprise, the Reverend Alan Hewison and Father Helm (Combined Churches) third.

