

The ship immediately set off with all dispatch to HONG KONG, and what was to have been a ceremonial entry at 0900 degenerated into a dirty dart into Victoria Basin at 0100, where the ship was met by ambulances with lights flashing, a police escort, and all the trappings of a full medical emergency.

Fortunately all recovered fully in due course, but it was a sobering experience.

On arrival in HONG KONG, BOSSINGTON, with the rest of the Sixth, launched into a months workup and area familiarisation, and then at the end of November was taken in hand for refit at TAIKOO Dockyard.

This was the first Minehunter refit at TAIKOO, and BOSSINGTON was the guinea pig for the rest of the Squadron. In the event it was a good refit in most respects, though not as many rabbits were done as we would have liked.



Lieutenant Commander R. E. Woolgar, R.N.

Mechanically refreshed, or so it seemed, we set off in March 1970 to MANILA for the MCM phase of a big SEATO exercise called PX41. MANILA was a good run and the exercise went well, with MAXTON giving us stout assistance. We then set off for a visit to BRUNEI, but one day out of MANILA we blew a piston ring in the starboard main engine and had to return to HONG KONG for an engine change.

Summer 1970 was a busy period for the ship in HONG KONG waters. They threw Squadexes, Minexis, Community projects and even Banyans and families days at us, and we still found time to act as a marker off PEDRO BLANCO for the HONG KONG Yacht Club races. Typhoons constantly threatened but never materialised and it became routine to go to the typhoon buoy on Saturday morning and lounge around in glorious weather all the weekend before the all clear was sounded on Monday morning.

In August Lt: LOCKYER relieved Lt: CONEY as 1st Lt: and the latter returned to the United Kingdom to instruct young sailors at Raleigh.

Towards the end of September we joined up with HUBBERSTON and went to KOKURA in JAPAN as an added attraction for British Week at the ITZUTSIA Department Store. Although we were berthed between a Chemical factory and a Gasworks, which did not ease the First Lieutenant's ceremonial problems, it proved to be a very enjoyable and full visit. The two Japanese Minehunters IOU and TAKAMI were in harbour and a most worthwhile exchange of minehunting techniques and ideas took place between the four ships.

On return to HONG KONG we took part in a major MCM exercise called Far Fling, and were recalled from this with MAXTON to show the flag in the Western end of the colony. We were put in our place when a leading HONG KONG newspaper spoke of the presence of two large police boats!

Lt: Cdr: JONES was relieved in command during the AMP in November by Lt: Cdr: WOOLGAR. Lt: Cdr: JONES had been in command for over two years and left us to do the Staff Course at the Royal Naval College, GREENWICH.

November and December were taken up with a work up and various squadron exercises, and Christmas was spent in HONG KONG.

In the New Year we took part in Exercise Dragon, a fortnights general exercises with all five ships. Few who made the stag dinner at the TAI PAK restaurant will forget it in a hurry, and we also found a lot of hidden Cowboy talent during Operation Rodeo, a cattle round up on WONG WAN! This was certainly a community project with a difference! After a tremendous amount of hard work by all on board, our harbour inspection was a considerable success. Our sea inspection was reasonably successful, though some well tried drills were marred by over-eagerness on our part.

DED immediately after inspection was a bit of an anti-climax, but the VM's had a most enjoyable time at the Mariners Club, though the RA's dripped about the interminable boat trip to WHAMPOA.

We have now just completed two most enjoyable and busy foreign visits to BRUNEI and JAPAN. The Royal Brunei Malay Regiment looked after us extremely well in BANDAR SERI BERGAWAN and MUARA and it was a most successful visit. Unfortunately we picked up some contaminated fuel on the return trip and this made a double engine change essential on return to HONG KONG, which made a lot of work for the Engine Room department.

Ten days later we were off to Japan, visiting TAKAMATSU, KURE, SHIMINOSEKI and SASEBO, and doing a lot of work with our old friends IOU and TAKAMI. On the trip up we hit a heavy sea off KYUSHU which damaged our underwater sheathing, so we will have to slip for repairs during our AMP in July to put the damage right. A number of ratings managed to get away on a camping exped in JAPAN, which went well although the participants doubted their wisdom in volunteering when torrential rain one night swept them out of their tent.

All in all everyone enjoyed JAPAN which provided a full programme of work and entertainment, and despite the dreadful weather -- it rained almost constantly during our three week stay - it was a memorable visit.

At the time of writing we are in the final stages of planning our long haul back to U.K. We set off in September and hope to confound all the prophets of gloom by turning up in Pompey in good time to give Christmas leave before paying off in January.

Although we shall all be happy to be home, we shall leave behind many happy memories of a most enjoyable commission as part of the Sixth in HONG KONG.

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SEAMEN DEPARTMENT



Tas U.W.	L/Sea	REED	(Buffer)	Gunners	A.B.	Duncan	(Scouse)
	A.B.	Bayfield	(Peter)		A.B.	Lightfoot	(Dick)
	A.B.	Roberts	(Robbie)				
	A.B.	Lorains	(Lorrie)	R.P.'s	L/Sea	Smith	(Smudge)
	A.B.	Johnson	(Johnno)		A.B.	Balneaves	(Hen)
	A.B.	Walker	(Whisky)				
	A.B.	Conway	(Jock)		A.B.	Heaton	(Mick)

Because of the Practice Programme, the Seamen Dept. has become quite efficient in sweeping and seamanship evolutions. Of course we've had our days (who doesn't) when things haven't gone exactly as planned, like the time the No.1 tried his hand at kite flying and succeeded in getting it airborne. This in itself was quite a feat as the kite was the minesweeping one and we were exercising at the time.

Or the incident during inspection when nothing went right (does it ever for inspections) when Bossington found a new method of laying S.S.B.'s standard. The Buffer called the operation "Self-laying" but opportunities for this method are rare now as we've laid S.S.B.'s so many times we think we can do it with our eyes closed, although that has yet to be proved.

We mustered some expd kings during the last trip to Japan, four in fact. The Buffer, Pete, Scouse, Dick and a whole mountain of provisions. They went up country for a weekend. They were well received by the people even though after the first day they all smelt a little.

As with all expeds it rained most of the time but the whole weekend was thoroughly enjoyable.

Well, as you can imagine everyone is looking forward to the trip home but there is a little sadness too as we'll be leaving all those friends we made who will remain in Hong Kong!

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A TRUE STORY FROM THE SHORTEST BOOK EVER WRITTEN

(The book of Radio Department defects!)

Scene	...	...	...	...	...	The Bridge.
Time	...	...	...	...	...	0200.
Location	...	...	...	...	...	Somewhere in the South China Sea.
Weather	...	...	...	...	...	Rough.

After being called to the bridge REMN Ken Peck, (Super-Tech!), was informed by the Command the "Blip-blip-echo-listen-look-me-see-you radar box is % @£&!/? Duff".

As a result of his initial investigation Super-Tech decided the display was u/s and with his trusty can opener soon had the modern miracle of the electronic age open.

With apparent nonchalance he inserted the tip of his hit-and-miss-and-guess-and-work screwdriver, (I'm told it's coincidence it looks like a magic wand), into the display. At this point the ship rolled heavily and the whole bridge was lit by an eerie almost supernatural light followed by a sharp report from the display.

Having now temporarily blinded himself Super-Tech did not see the edge of the display when he stepped back in awe from the uncanny light and as a result received a blow on the back of the head. This caused him to lower his head in pain and in doing so he banged his face on the power unit causing tears to spring to his eyes. As a result of the verbal discharge which followed the bridge crew were stunned into silence.

Possibly as a result of the attention it had just received the display burst into life and clearly showed both RTV and HKTVB to the satisfaction of the Command.

His job done Super-Tech mounted his trusty blow-up motorbike and went on his way muttering, (can you tell talk from mutter?), "Super-Tech, faster than a speeding bullet" to himself.

Moral of the story: Electricity is the same principle as water, all Super-Tech did was to clear a blockage.

RADIO DEPARTMENT

REMN	Peck	(Super-Tech)
REM	Austin	(Junior-Tech)



ENGINE ROOM DEPARTMENT

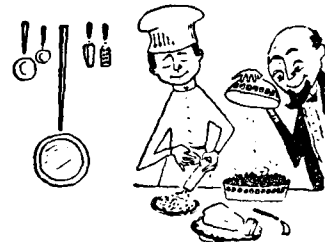
Mech 1	Forrest	(Jack)
POMEM	Hurst	(Les)
POMEM	Aspley	(Dave)
LMEM	Turnbull	(George)
MEM	Parnell	(Regle)
MEM	Abbott	(Bud)
MEM	Morris	(Paul)
MEM	Leonard	(Len)

During an interesting year which has seen almost 100% staff changes, the department has worked well, conscientiously and efficiently. We have had only one long range run marred and that was by salt water in the fuel tanks. Because of this it has now been proved that deltic engines will definitely not run on water!

Another interesting fact is that the No.1 is not amused when we attempt to keep his decks well lubricated with dieso and luboil!

Staff wise we have probably assembled the largest collection of professional agitators in the squadron whose hobby and greatest pleasure is the noble art of cage rattling!

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A SHORT HISTORY



R.F.A. Gold Ranger

R.F.A. Gold Ranger is a small fleet attendant tanker, one of the three survivors of the six-ship Ranger class, and the sole survivor of the "G" (Gold, Gray, Green Ranger). The Ranger class were designed prior to the Second World War as replacements for the 2000 ton class, and were the first Admiralty designed tankers since the 1917 LEAF class. Originally launched with, for camouflage purposes, the foremast on the starboard bow, a dummy plate funnel forward, the wheelhouse offset to port, and the small funnel (since lengthened) on the port quarter, this alignment may well have saved them from being sunk. It also caused a great deal of confusion at night for other ships in the convoy. The petrol tank forward is surrounded by water ballast tanks, the deck above it being armoured, whilst a cofferdam runs right around the engine room for the full depth of the ship. The large fo'c'sle was designed to accommodate a 9 ton RAF refuelling barge for flying boats, but was never carried in any of the ships.

Gold Ranger was launched by Mrs. J. C. Kell at Dundee on the 12th of March 1941, at the yards of the Caledon Shipbuilding Co. Ltd. Except for two periods, she has spent her life in the Far East, including the Korean War, and attached to the Inshore Squadron during the Borneo Campaign.

Whilst based in Bermuda in 1949 as West Indies Station oilier, she made several trips to the Falkland Islands refilling the Naval Storage tank there. On one occasion she proceeded with the "John Biscoe" to Deception Island in the South Shetland Islands with a cargo of

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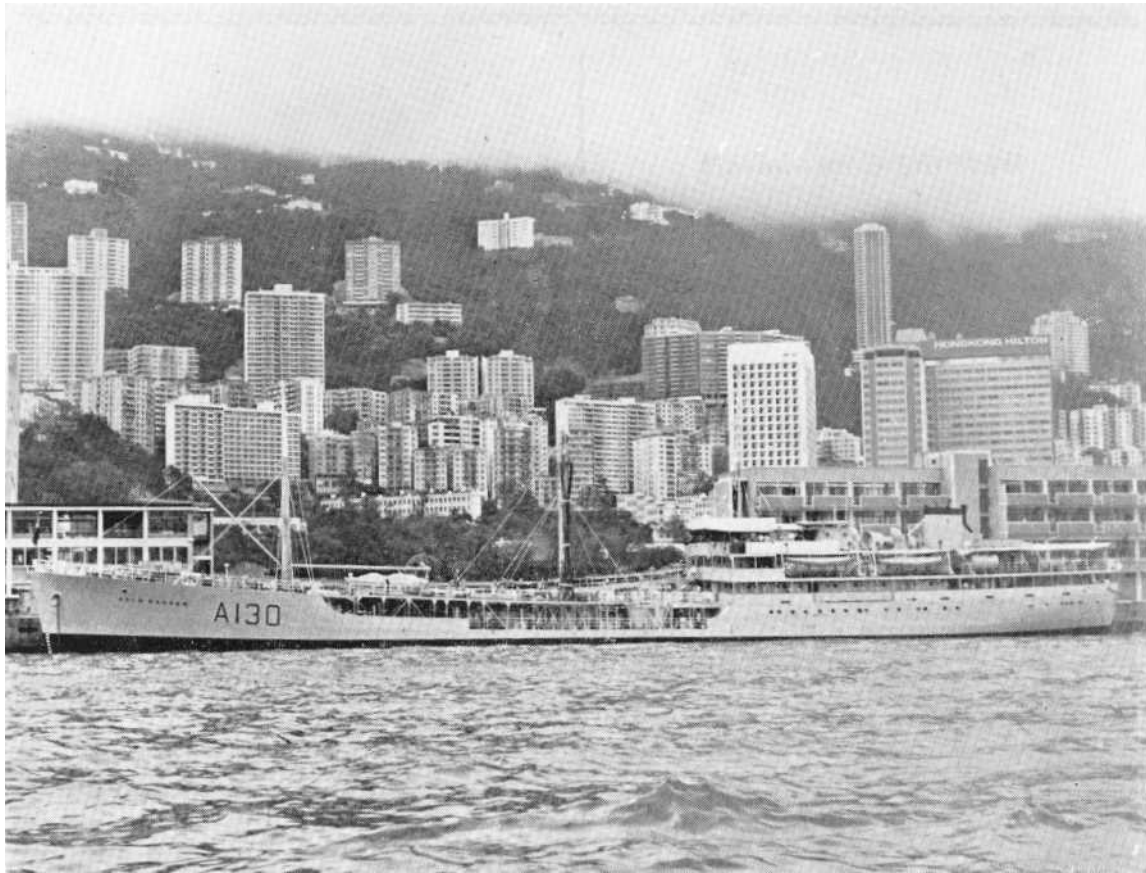
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R.F.A. Gold Ranger alongside in Hong Kong

petrol and diesel oil for the Air Base being set up there for the relief of scientists on Stonington Island. Bad weather was experienced and both ships had difficulty extracting themselves from the ice. About ten days were spent in the ice area. On a later occasion she went on a Hudson Bay expedition with the Canadian Government ships, and had more ice experiences.

Gold Ranger is fitted with a four-cylinder Doxford single screw diesel engine, consuming 14 tons per day, and giving a service speed of twelve and a half knots. She comes under the operation of the Director General of Supply and Transport (Director of Fuel, Movements, and Transport), a Civil Service Officer delegated by the Chief of Fleet Support to the day-to-day operation of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, and organizing the supply of stores. Gold Ranger is manned by 10 Officers and 1 Petty Officer, and Hong Kong Chinese Petty-Officers and Ratings, who sign standard Board of Trade Articles of Agreement. She has an overall length of 356 feet, a breadth of 48 feet, and a loaded draught of 21 feet. Cargo deadweight capacities are 2300 tons of dieso, 590 tons of heavy fuel oil, and 200 tons of water. The dieso and FFO capacities were originally reversed, but due to modern fleet requirements, FFO is no longer needed in large quantities. Replenishment at sea is carried out by the abeam method using a derrick with three or six inch hoses as required. Dieso may also be supplied by the astern method. Gold Ranger's size and draught make her ideal for inshore support of Minesweepers and Fast Patrol Boats, and she is well sought after as a tender by both the Malaysian and British Navies, who regard her with a proprietary interest. The insignia of the Dragon Squadron (6 MCMS) is worn on her funnel.

L.A.H.

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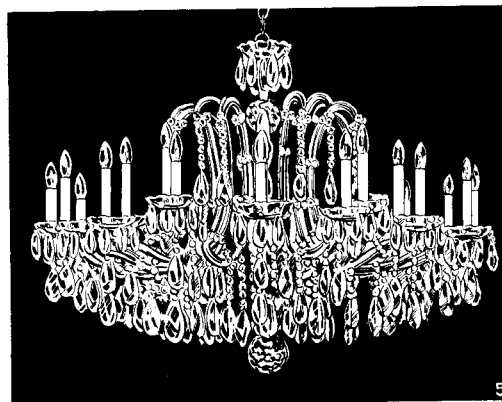
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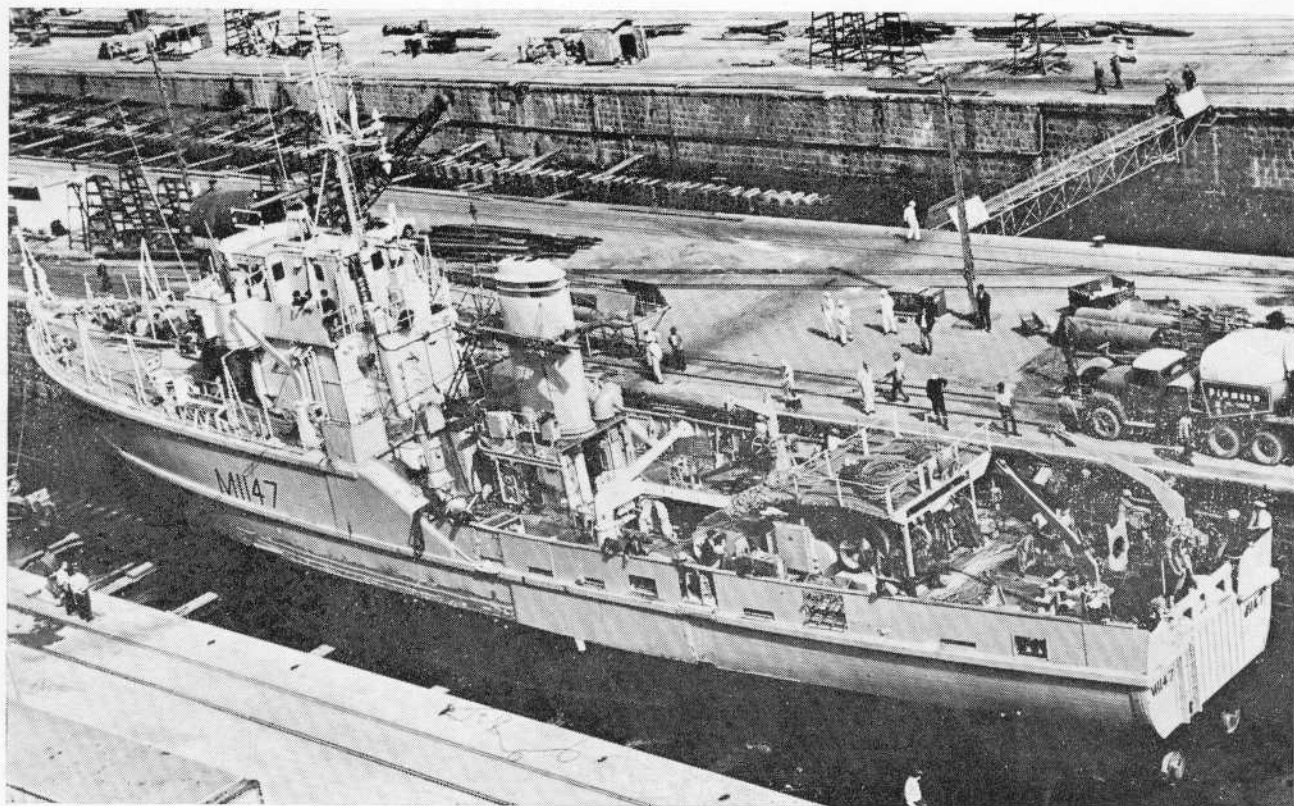
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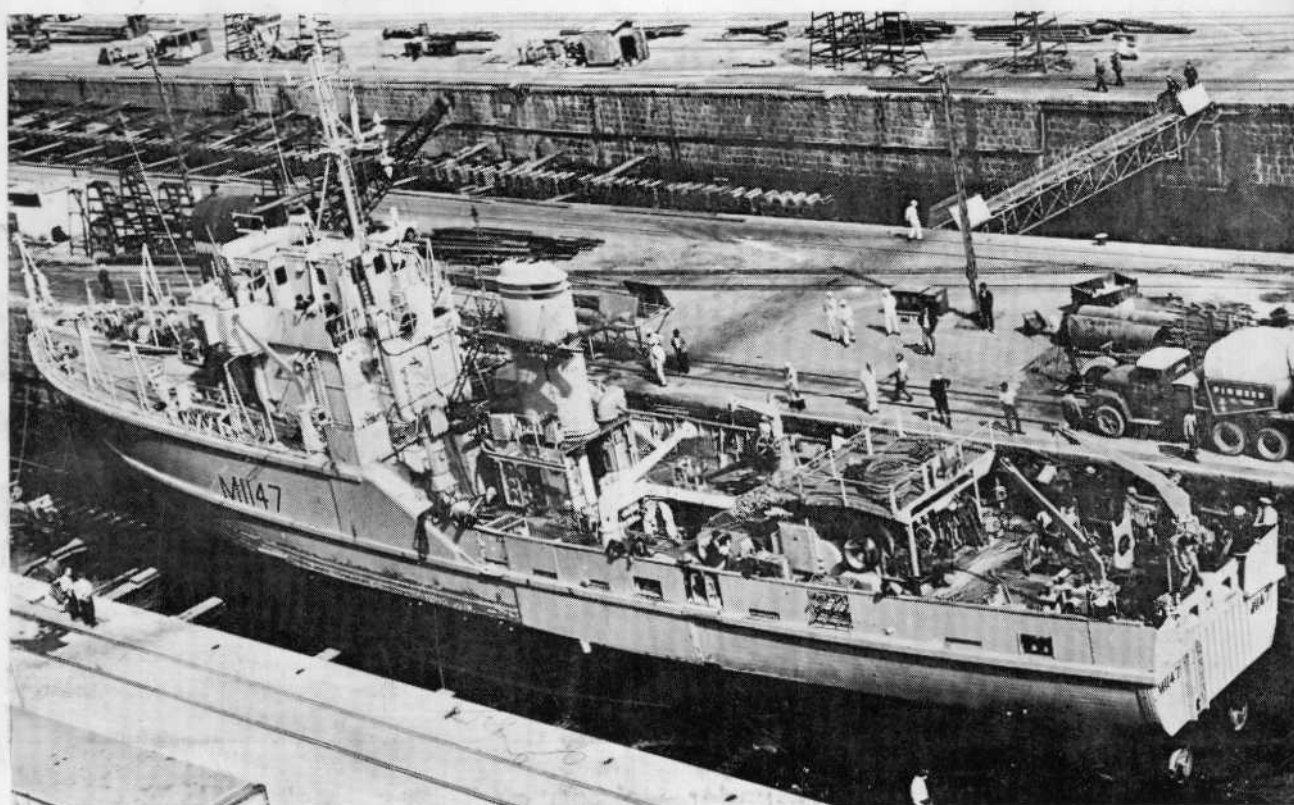
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