



## FIXING WING AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS

In addition to all our normal helicopter flying, we have sometimes pretended to be a fixed wing carrier. By May 1966 we had seen more than 70 landings by Army Air Corps Austers and Beavers and Royal Air Force Single Pioneers- "Just like the good old days" said Lieut Cdr (F).

With no arrestor wires or barriers we are limited to the numbers that can be landed at any one time. Austers can be struck down into the Hangar, but Beavers and Pioneers must remain on deck and achieving a clear deck is a problem.

209 Squadron Royal Air Force with their Pioneers were our most frequent visitors when we ferried their aircraft to and from Borneo. On 28th August 1965, the Commanding Officer of 209 made his squadron's 100th Deck landing. To commemorate this occasion suitable presentations and expressions of good will were made on the Flight Deck.

*Beaver landing on with a Pioneer in Fly 1.*



*Expressions of Goodwill!*



*"Take over bid?"*

## HOVERCRAFT

Next day 209's 100th Take Off was made by a suitably marked aircraft.

Hovercraft have an obvious potential in amphibious operations and we have been fortunate in carrying out limited trials with one of these craft, an SRN 5, off Borneo.

There seemed to be no problems in embarking troops and small quantities of stores while at anchor and all of us who talked our way into a ride were most impressed.

More extensive trials were eventually cancelled but we did at least see this new form of transport and did perhaps help develop future amphibious techniques.



*SRN 5 at Speed.*



*R.M's embarking alongside.*

~~METROLOGY~~

**MET. DEPARTMENT!!**

~~MEETEOROLOGY~~

In this age of emergent nations and struggling nationalistic minorities it is not unusual to hear of small, well trained, highly organised groups of dedicated men spreading havoc and destruction in the community and striking at the very heart of constituted authority.

This is the story of one such group - the ship's Meteorological Department.

If it has done nothing else, this commission has exposed the weather men for what they are; not, as many think, a shower of short-sighted crystal grazers but a society of highly skilled and professional "rotters up".

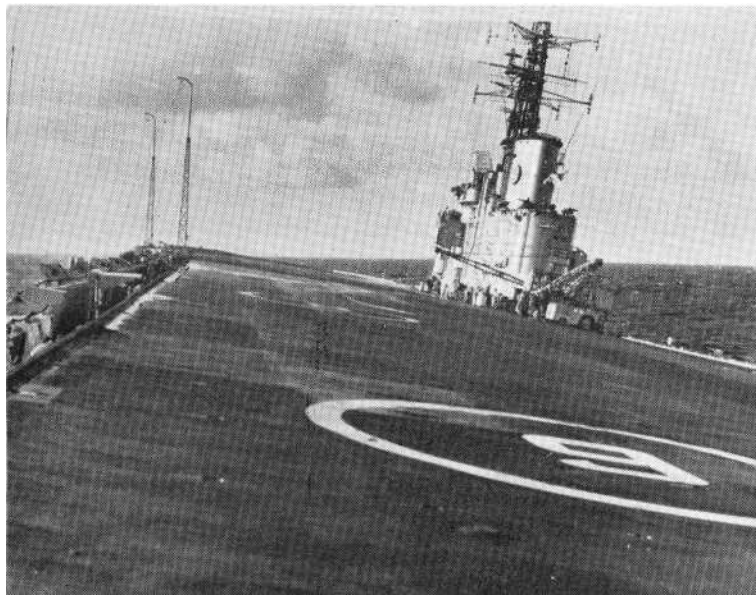
We all know the allegedly funny story about forecasters always being wrong but what is not common knowledge is that they do it on purpose just to mislead and confuse the customers. Questionable forecasts are only a small part of the Met. Department's stock in trade however, as we on board ALBION have found out to our cost during the past eighteen months.

Looking back it seems probable that it all started during the work-up although at that time no one suspected that the particularly boisterous weather that we were blessed with at that time was anything other than a prelude to just another English winter. However as we lurched up and down the Portland exercise areas for five days in a vain bid to find a place where the wind was less than gale force we might have been forgiven for suspecting that we were the victims of some diabolical conspiracy.

And on that glorious Sunday morning when the anemometer at Portland Bill registered 100 knots and then broke off and the wind over the flight deck was 30 knots - down wind, it should have occurred to someone to take a closer look at that seemingly innocent team in the Met. Office.

However no one did; the weather was added to the list of "things wrong with the work-up" and blanket blame was attached to the Staff.

Based on a disarmingly optimistic appreciation of Mediterranean weather a decision was made to complete the work-up at Gibraltar and as we slithered and slid across the deck as the ship rolled to 27 degrees one day off Finisterre no one doubted that the decision was a right one. But of course Gibraltar was just the same.



*Sea slight - swell negligible.*

We spent our time there threatened by the door men at the Casino on the one hand and some undisciplined Atlantic weather on the other, and almost upsetting the balance of power in southwest Europe by finding ourselves with a strong detachment of garrison troops on board which we were unable to return to their front-line positions in Main Street owing to the cross winds at North Front.

There seemed to be a lull after Gibraltar for quite unexpectedly we hit a fine spell and we returned to Portsmouth in brilliant sunshine and eventually sailed for the Far East in much the same conditions.

However, unbeknown to us, the subversive elements in 1K were actively planning their next coup and as we lay weather bound off Port Said waiting for the wind to

abate and missing our canal date by twenty-four hours, we realised that we were not out of the wood yet.

It is difficult to imagine that it is possible to "rot up" the weather at Aden where it is considered as predictable as the inhabitants are anti-social; however, it was left to the Met. Department to show how easy the impossible can be achieved. After being rained on going into Aden I suppose we half expected to find the wind at Ras el Ara to be blowing in exactly the opposite direction to which all records and needles to say forecasts said it would and so almost stopping exercise Jebel jumper before it started.

Crossing the Indian Ocean we spent three nostalgic days dreaming of home watching the driving rain lash the ship from end to end and listening to the siren mournfully announcing that we couldn't see where we were going.

It was probably at this time that we began to suspect that our team of weather experts were something more than incompetent, however with an early visit to Hong Kong in the offing everyone was prepared to forgive and forget, everyone that is, but THEM.

Our brief visit to Hong Kong in the capacity of Flag Ship was curtailed in indecent haste during COMFEF's official cocktail party when it was reported that BABE, a distinctly out of season typhoon, was heading in our direction.

As we reeled our way out of harbour that night, two days before time, we marvelled at the lack of tact of those who chose to rot up the Fleet Commander, and when on the following day it was discovered that typhoon BABE was nothing more than an exhausted tropical depression that was likely to miss Hong Kong by at least 150 miles it was clearly the time for action.

And what more suitable head to roll than that of the Meteorological Officer himself. On the 29th June he was deported to a small penal settlement in the depths of the Borneo jungle where it was hoped that either the leeches or the *tuak* would get him.

Meanwhile back at the ship his two able henchmen Paddy "trout and salmon" WOODSIDE and Marc "blue" GILLETT' fished and ten-pin bowled their way through the Self Maintenance period awaiting their leader's return.

Following the publication of an inflammatory document called "A weather report from Nanga Gaat" which was thought to be contrary to the spirit of the "hearts and minds" campaign, the Met. Officer was returned to the ship.

It appeared that the jungle had had a chastening effect on MET.O for there followed a quiet period during which nothing of any particular significance happened in the weather world. True, Bessie, on her first ever outing, was savaged on the beach in Jason's Bay by a sadistic squall that blew up in the middle of the Captain's lunch party, but then that could happen to any girl.

Even the trip to the Middle East and back in the Autumn was comparatively uneventful despite the fact that an eminent actor and playwright cut short his visit to the Seychelles at the time the ship was in the vicinity, complaining that it had not stopped raining since he had arrived there.

It was at that stage of the commission that a subtle change took place, the true significance of which probably escaped the notice of most of us.

All the best organisations have their "Mr. Bigs", ruthless, influential, enigmatic men, often prominent and respected citizens, who, turn to a life of crime because it's there.

The Senior Instructor Officer, using the teaching profession as a front and operating from a well furnished bed-sitter in 4U cabin flat, has often been suspected of being the brains behind the weather conspiracy although it has always been difficult to prove this. When there was a change of SIO in Mombasa it was not at first clear what effect this would have on the weather. After a week-end in Assab it looked as though the new regime was likely to be as menacing as the old. For two days the ship lay on a dead lee shore under the shadow of a collision and grounding report, while strong onshore winds, undoubtedly the work of dissident tribesmen in the Radfan, lashed the sea into a fury and drenched all the libertymen out for their 2/2d worth ashore.

However in the weeks that followed it occurred to many that they had been a little hasty in their judgement of the new regime because there was a notable lack of subversive activity by the Met. Department and it was even reported that some accurate and reliable forecasts had been produced during this period.

Over Christmas hopes ran very high for a complete end to weather confrontation particularly as the rain stopped - as predicted - minutes before the beginning of the carol service on the flight deck.

Nevertheless the scars of bitter experience are not always quick to heal and so it was not surprising to hear the last Captain remark as he left the ship in Hong Kong "I'm not happy about going home before the end of the commission but at least the weather's better there".

Captain Place might have been forgiven for thinking that his predecessor exaggerated but when he was compelled to make his first approach to Singapore Naval Base in torrential rain and zero visibility, he had very good cause to revise his opinion.

At the end of February the ship went into dry dock and the Met. Department's season came to an end. For men whose livelihoods depend on their ability to outwit and outpace their opponents, training and exercise are essential at all times and particularly so when the "season" is over.

With their activities suspended on board the weather men cast around for pastures new in order to keep their hands in. "Blue" Gillett took up sailing and must be held partly responsible for some terrifying thunderstorms during the latter part of the regatta season. "Paddy" Woodside concentrated on golf and fishing and it is considered no coincidence that around that time a Naval Officer was struck by lightning while playing the fifth hole at the Island Club.

Met. O's activities centered round the language wing in Nee Soon barracks where he succeeded in dealing a blow to the Malaysian National Language campaign from which it is unlikely to recover.

And all the time the Boss himself, ably supported by his wife, maintained a firm grip on the situation from the middle of Terror Swimming Pool.

With the docking over and the end of the commission very much in view it was to be expected that caution and discretion might be the first victims in the run-down; and so it was that plans were made for the ship to visit Kobe at the beginning of the typhoon season.

With our defences down and vigilance relaxed we sailed for Japan on the 11th of May, on the same day that typhoon, IRMA was discovered within striking distance of the east coast of Mindanao. For a day or so our fate hung delicately in the balance but it became evident in time that IRMA was in no hurry and that we were and we sprinted into Kobe while she was still thrashing around in the Philippines.

During our visit however, thanks to IRMA and no doubt the Met. Department, Kobe enjoyed two days of some of the heaviest rain on record for May. However apart from the rain the outcome of Operation IRMA suggested that at last the weather man had met their match and some observers were even confidently predicting that the reign of terror was over, but they did not take into account typhoon JUDY. On the way back from Japan we discovered that by some strange coincidence JUDY was aiming to pass north of Luzon at much the same time as we were and there was very little consolation to be gained from the fact that she was going the other way.

With a bold and defiant gesture the programme was changed - not for the first time in the commission - and we went around the Philippines the other way and so succeeded in outwitting the Met. men yet again.

I'm sure they are getting desperate now; two failures in quick succession must be a very bitter pill to swallow and with the end of the commission only a matter of weeks away we really must expect something big.

But then as we are going to Hong Kong in July in the middle of the typhoon season so we are likely to get it. However that's only a forecast and we all know how reliable they are.

## AIR ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

When the A.E.D. Advance Party joined the ship at Portsmouth in April/May 1964 their predecessors were able to assure them that the chaos had, in fact, once been a working Commando Ship. By the time the Main Party joined in October, all were beginning to wonder if it ever would be again.

The six months between, and most of the following six months, were spent in trying to ensure that we could "provide engineering, workshop, inspection and advisory support for any squadron - and in particular 848 Squadron". Since the squadron was almost the only source of practical information on the Wessex 5, frequent visits to and from Culdrose were necessary and a good liaison was soon established.

By late 1964, some semblance of order had been restored to the ship, the junior Rates had painted the acres of departmental bulkheads for the first time, and sufficient equipment started trickling back from the Dockyard and Stores Depots to give hope for the future. As the sailing date approached, the trickle became a flood, and we sailed with a bonus of six F.I.R. Wessex, a part interest in two Sioux, and a miscellany of ground equipment and air conditioned portable workshops which, it was claimed, would put jungle warfare in the Butlin's Holiday Camp category. (This claim was subsequently confirmed by the regular disappearance of the ship's A.E.O.'s into the jungle).

Once clear of the Channel, the department soon got together to have a successful commission both in the technical and not-so-technical fields. The comment of the A/A.E.O. when the first Single Pioneer landed on and the Duty Crew set to work, are unprintable, as are his opinions of the first "Boy Scouts" attempts to get up a Forward Air Base, but all survived and he has been known to smile since. Similarly it took time to become accustomed to the fact that the Air Ordnance Workshop was the S.R.E.

headquarters and the Aircraft Workshop, the Concert Party rehearsal room - but gun cleanings and weldings were also done occasionally.



*Workshop support.*

The Junior Rates, who did most of their training with scrubbers and paint brushes, kept the messes well up in the credit winning lists, held the Blood Cup longer than any other, and produced their quota of winners in the athletic, boxing, swimming and sailing events.

Seagoing in the F.A.A. tends to be regarded as a necessary interruption to R.A. time, but all members of the 1964-1966 A.E.D. will remember the present commission as a pleasant interruption and they themselves can claim no small credit for making it so.

## THE CHIPPIES

It has been said that Shipwrights should be "Jacks of all trades and masters of most"; it has certainly been true of this commission, whether it has been shoring the stem off Sibú or building Bashes at Bario: resiting the saluting guns overnight or a mock up of a helicopter outrigger; planned maintenance or panic boat repairs; ventilation or sanitation; all of this plus 1001 other odd jobs have been part of our day's work.

When we left Portsmouth there was a large pile of job cards in the "in" tray, and despite the combined efforts of Singapore and Hong Kong Dockyards, the Fleet Maintenance Unit and ourselves, you have contrived to ensure that this pile never diminishes. In dealing with so many cards it has been inevitable that some have had to wait a considerable time before receiving attention; for your patience in this matter, and for ensuring that we have had full employment for the past 18 months we thank you.

Looking back on this commission it is difficult to single out highlights, there has been a lot of hard work but most of it has been enjoyable and interesting. Like other technical departments we do not see much of the glamour and limelight which occasionally exists on the "roof garden", however we like to feel that we have done our bit towards keeping ALBION going, and have even succeeded in improving her to a small degree.

We have had our amusing incidents. Who will ever forget the look on the Chief Shipwright's face when told to make a sledge for the Royal Marines to transport water ashore - we were off Borneo and the temperature was in the eighties. Or the look on his "face" when a rather large tracker dog removed a lump from his shorts whilst he was checking the timber rack on the foc'sle.

On the sporting side, Chippies have represented the ship at Rugby, Soccer, Hockey, Cricket and Sailing. We are too small a department to run our own inter-part teams but have been well represented in the various Chief and Petty Officers' Mess teams.

Now the commission is drawing to a close we all look forward to our return home to our wives and families, and to the inevitable pile of "domestic job cards" which will have arisen in our absence, It has been a long commission, for many of us our last, and we shall take away with us many pleasant memories of our time in ALBION.



*Do not use this machine without a guard.*

## CHURCH NOTES



The first victim of the SRE programme "Personal Choice" was inevitably the Chaplain. If I had known what I was in for I might not so readily have accepted the invitation to undergo the Question-master's shrewd interrogation. My only comfort was that for me it was all over and that for the rest of the commission I could sit back and enjoy listening to the other victims. One question remains in my memory-- "What would you do if you were made Chaplain of the Fleet tomorrow?" That brought me up with a round turn, but my reply went like this; "What every Chaplain of the Fleet (indeed, what every Chaplain)

does." This means demonstrating that the Church is not a closed shop for an eccentric few, but that it is the spearhead of an attack, mounted by saints and sinners alike, "against sin, the world and the devil", the members of which can draw on God's strength to help them and, in doing so, draw nearer to God himself.

How far this has been achieved in ALBION is not for me to say. The worship of the Church has been maintained by a small but increasing number of faithful and I believe that the effect of their example on the lives of those around them has been great. "A man is justified before God by what he does as well as by what he believes" (from Saint James' letter in the New Testament) and there has been abundant evidence of such "justifications" in ALBION in the past eighteen months. At the same time we have had opportunities of seeing the Church in action in ways which we might never have dreamed of; most spectacular of all is the work of the Church in Hong Kong where schools, orphanages, hospitals and clinics, feeding centres and a leper colony all sponsored by the Church, were visited, and where Churches cannot be built quickly enough to accommodate the many people who are drawn to the worship of God by what they see Christians *doing*. At the other end of the scale have been visits to Christian communities in the most remote parts of the *ulu*, where the Church building has been at *attap basher* and the Parish Priest only one generation away from his ancestral headhunters.

We are fortunate in having such a fine Church in ALBION. Here day by day, the one Service instituted and commanded by Our Lord, the Holy Communion, has been celebrated. The number of Communicants has gradually grown and three members of the ship's company have received the gift of Confirmation at the hands of the Bishop of Singapore, while others are preparing for it on return to the U.K.

For any success in my ministry in ALBION I thank God - and you for your encouragement; for any failure I ask His - and your - forgiveness.

Most of you have a copy of the Authorised Version of the Bible at home, even if it is a little dusty. I leave you all, even the "four wheelers" with the words of Saint Paul which you will find in his letter to the Philippians, in the third verse of chapter one; look them up - I really mean them.

### DENTAL DEPARTMENT

About the centre of the ship on the starboard side down a long dark passage appropriately opposite the Chapel is to be found a small bright but warm compartment - the Dental Surgery. On the door might well as the following introduction to the services offered within:



"Surgeon Lieut (D) M. J. Swann - ably assisted by POMA Ted Cooper - who has practised in the principal cities and ports of Ireland, England, South Arabia, Kenya, Japan, etc., etc., offers his assistance to the Officers and Men of HMS ALBION. He professes an infallible secret for cleaning teeth which renders them white as alabaster although before as black as jet, likewise fastens the teeth and makes the gums hard by means of a salutary liquid, which also preserves teeth from rotting and removes that dreaded fear of all sea-going men - scurvy. The toothache can be cured without drawing the teeth. He put in artificial teeth which appear like natural ones".

Powdered human tooth is considered a potent aphrodisiac by most Oriental peoples and brings a high price in some Far Eastern markets. This might explain why one of the five dental surgery assistants employed during the commission has decided not to sign on, instead retiring to England on the proceeds of the above trade.

Apart from POMA Cooper who is new employed in the dental surgery, the following have helped the dental officer provide a complete dental service to the ship's company and the many embarked Army and R.A.F. personnel treated onboard:- POMA Hyatt, LMA Jobson, LMA Wyatt and MA Allen (on loan from HMS SIMBANG).

*Tell me if this hurts.*



## EDUCATION BRANCH

The commission started with Inst. Cdr. Finch holding the fort on his own. The dockyard mateys were in possession of the schoolroom turning it into a mess for the L.E.P.s and we were evicted. We were offered the choice of the funnel uptakes - or nearly so - 2S/T Port Commando Mess Deck. The latter we accepted and with grateful thanks to our friends in Pompey managed to fix it up with boards, notice and black, so that it started to look like a schoolroom.

The remaining staff, Inst. Lt. Cdrs. Burrows and Lewis, joined in October just in time to go on Duty Free after the refit. We settled in, found our way around and prepared for the work up. Followed by our usual instructions.

We have had all the usual difficulties with classes: Ratings not being able to be spared etc., but we also had some special ones of our own. Like the time we lost the schoolroom for its original purpose as a Commando Mess Deck in Windy Weather. The Squadron also posed quite a problem with detachments ashore in Borneo and just when you look forward to an intensive time in Singapore over half your class disembarks to Simbang.

Still we have managed to present a few candidates for the various examinations, although most of the candidates have been after qualifications for going outside. Our problem here is trying to convince people that the sooner they start courses the easier it is for them and the more benefits they can obtain.

We never thought that the time would come when we would be grateful for the odd shape of the schoolroom but there was the time when the Met. Officer had a class at the forward end, S.I.O. was teaching midships and I.O.2 had a third class at the after end - all teaching different subjects! Babel!

A change in management occurred in November 1965, celebrated with a run in Mombasa. I don't think we learnt anything that time!! Much to his horror the boss inherited the Argus, but it has it uses. Remember the trips in Japan? All paid for by Pusser because they were part of the current affairs course run by Argus himself on the passage there.

We managed to press the Padre into service doing his old job of teaching Geography - hope he managed to learn some too this trip.

To all those leaving the service we wish "Sekmat Tinggal" and remember the resettlement officer in Cabin 4U 52.

## MARINE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

For the Marine Engineering Department the commission started straight into the turmoil of a refit and as the summer wore on, (and what a summer that was - making us wish the air conditioning was still working) so the machinery spaces became less and less recognisable. A lot of hard work was done during the refit so that it was possible to carry out a basin trial on terminal date, almost unprecedented in a big ship. The vast majority of the watchkeepers during those first few weeks at sea were new to the ship and the retard party did a great deal to help us find our feet.

Quote

Commander passing Heads reducing valve being repaired  
"Is that what made the lights go out Chief?"

The trials and work up passed uneventfully until two weeks before we were due to sail for the Far East when oil was found in two of the boilers. So we found ourselves inundated with several tons of chemicals and a lot of talk of caustic soda and citric acid but the work was completed in time. So to the east, the air conditioning plant was started up and we began to appreciate fully the worth of long hours of maintenance and inspections, carried out back in Portsmouth.

Quote

"Why are you smiling so much these days Chief?"  
"I am going insane"

After our arrival in Singapore we looked up old friends and made many new friends in the dockyard and soon discovered what a good service they can provide. We also discovered what other services could be provided in the big city and across the Causeway.

Quote

"You know, it's a straight pipe with a great big bend in it".

During the next few months we settled down into a regular pattern of steaming and maintenance periods but not without the odd spot of excitement like ten feet of water in the forward gear room for example. It was not all work and one afternoon we took over Terror Sports ground and held an Engine Room sports meeting organised with his usual efficiency by Charles Samuel BEARD! We had one unique event, namely throwing the Sectional Wheel Spanner, won by POM(E) CLARKE with a throw of 45' 10.5" which is about as far as most of us can throw an ordinary wheel spanner. The prizes were given out by the Fleet Marine Engineer Officer, Commander DOUGLAS-MORRIS mainly to ERA OLD and LM(E) SULLIVAN, who seemed to win most of the events between them.

In July we were all very sorry to see Commander EDLESTON leave the ship in considerable pain from a slipped disc and the Senior Engineer took over as M.E.O. until the end of September when Commander DEANE Joined.

Quote

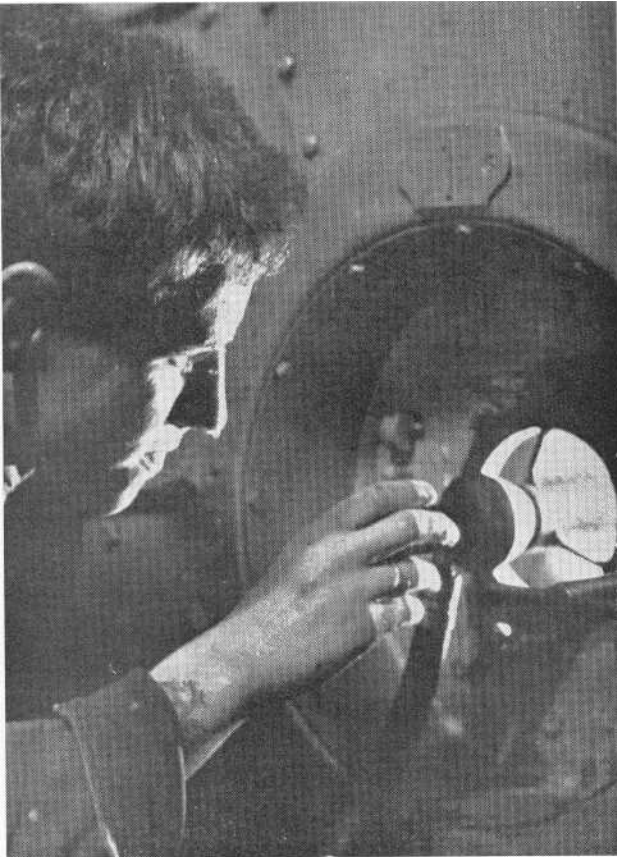
Gunnery Officer in Engineer's Office  
 "Engineers are very good blokes"

When the time came to sail back across the Indian Ocean we were ready for it although it meant much hard work to achieve our earlier sailing date, cleaning boilers, fuelling, storing and carrying out machinery trials all in one day. At the end of that trip the day before entering Mombasa we carried out our biggest and fastest replenishment of the commission, embarking 1581 tons of fuel at a rate of 950 tons per hour.

Quote

Time 0800 OOW to MEOOW - "We will shortly be passing Ceylon"  
 MEOOW to OOW - "What time?"  
 OOW - "Wait one, I will check the chart" -  
 Later "2000"

In Mombasa we engaged the services of a local ship repair firm to undertake a few refitting jobs for us and a considerable amount of painting for the ship. Most of the department took the opportunity for leave and of course visited Tsavo Game Park. The next few weeks were spent preparing for the inspection but the weekend cruises from Aden provided two unusual visits to Assab and Djibouti.



*Sweating it out*

On Boxing Day the Engineer Officers were taken on at Football ( ? ) by the M (E)s, the Engineers are well known for their skill at shove-halfpenny, pitch and toss, and top of the Mandarin go! But they are not very good at playing football with a ping-pong ball which was one of the four types of balls used! The M(E)s showing great skill and dash won by one football, 2 rugger balls and a ping-pong ball type goals to a tennis ball type goal. At the end the teams showed their appreciation of the fine work done by the Ref (C.S.B. himself) by dumping him in the largest puddle that could be found. An early hour on New Year's Day found a band of watchkeepers sweating out the celebrations of the night before as we lit the boilers and raised steam bound for Hong Kong.

Quote

"We didn't put this little fire out with extinguishers, we suffocated it with bodies".

This was also a maintenance period and we took the opportunity of the Hong Kong winter to catch up on some work on the air conditioning, but the weather cheated us again, in a different way, and became so warm that we had to restart the plant earlier than planned.

In February our next land-mark in the commission and a time of great activity down below

was the docking period. A few days before arriving in Singapore we heard that we were to dock five days earlier than planned and the hundred and one things such as tank cleaning, defuelling, de-storing and not forgetting moving ashore, all had to be completed in a week, but we made it and ten hours after entering dock, the bottom was exposed for the first time in seventeen months.

Living ashore was a pleasant break and among many activities, sailing has grown in popularity in the branch, messing about with boats is now a favourite way of spending a few hours in the fresh air. Led by S/Lt PRODGER and well backed up by Lt. CARSLAKE we have done well in this sport. I often wonder why it has become so popular, maybe because the only "clouds" to worry out are those in the Sky!!

We have had our fair share of representatives in the ships' teams with the notable exception of football, even here we seem to have now made the right wing position ours. In two sports the department has dominated the teams, in cricket we have had ten first team players, fielding at least seven in any first team match (see cricket notes). Rugger is our other strong sport, entering more teams in every inter-part competition than anyone else. We have put up 11 members of the first XV and POM(E) CLARKE played for the Naval Base XV. Also we have two members of the first XV Hockey Team.

We did well in the inter-part boxing, coming second to the Seamen with a team few of whom had ever put the gloves on before. Two members, M (E) CURTIS and Mech MOGRIDGE won their weights.

We have done well in the various flight deck sports, the Avfuel deck hockey team are always well in the fore and have won the inter-part hockey stick.

Quote

MEOOD on telephone to MEOOD ARK ROYAL  
"Can I shut down my evaporators yet?"

At the end of a short shake down after the docking we had another change in management when Lt. Cdr. WOLFE took over as Senior Engineer. Lt. Cdr. DRAKE flew back to Singapore in a helicopter laden down with suitcases, squash rackets and parcels. Fortunately Albion Air do not charge excess baggage.

Quote

C.S.B. reminiscing on the good old days  
"Yes, we used to have pre-wetting, Paint ship - coal ship - Wash down"

We are now starting to prepare for the Portsmouth refit although we have still a few miles to go before arriving home, but if the machinery continues to work as it has done so far, we should make Portsmouth before Christmas.

Quote

Sultans Examination  
Questions for Marine  
Engineering Fleet  
Boards.

Question 3.2 (i)

"How are magazines  
flooded in your  
ship?" (!!)



*The M(E)s take the cake*

## MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

So far as the Medical Department has been concerned, the feature of this commission has been the many and varied tasks outside the ship that we have had. Briefly we have worked with 848 in Nanga Gaat and more recently, Bario; we have sortied with the Royal Marine Detachment in the landing craft up the Borneo rivers; we have been lent to small ships to restore their medical complement, simultaneously reducing our own to half; we have built a school in Sabah as part of the Royal New Zealand Navy's Hearts and Minds campaign; we have found ourselves treating Chinese civilian divers with "bends" and we were even called in consultation by the Army to assist in treating a Ghurka rifleman. But above all we have, we hope, looked after you.

The statistics from the Department unlike those of all the other Departments cannot regrettably be made public. This does not mean that we too can't place things end to end and circum-navigate the globe. However, we must forever remain silent.

But of the staff we can perhaps say a few words. We started the commission with one Sick Berth Chief, one P.O., one Killick and the rest - four of them - S.B.A.s. But then suddenly, it all changed. First we acquired an extra P.O. and then we all changed our titles and we advanced into the technicalities of Medical Technicians classes 1-5, and Medical Assistants. Suddenly the Sick Berth staff became the Medical Department and we all got rated up.

To start with we even had an M02 who was older and senior to the PMO. However that situation resolved itself when the new M02 joined, for the new "young doc" really was younger than Bill Jack - just - and junior - very, and the crowning glory of that appointment is that he is a gyneacologist. They say you can do anything with sailors!

### THE STAFF

P.M.O. Surgeon Commander W. R. JACK, MBE, RN

M.0.2 Surgeon Lieutenant Commander D. C. BECKINGHAM, RN

CPOMA T. C. G. O'HAGAN

POMA A. GRAHAM

Med Tech 3 E. T. MARTIN

LMA B. P. MAIDMENT

LMA J. KAY

MA R. SULIVAN



*Danger men at work. This was taken live.  
The patient stayed that way too!*



*Sully gives First Aid.*



*Alan Graham at Bario.*



*To the Sick Bay - Down the bomb lift.*



*Pincher Martin at Nanga Gaat.*

## ROYAL MARINES DETACHMENT

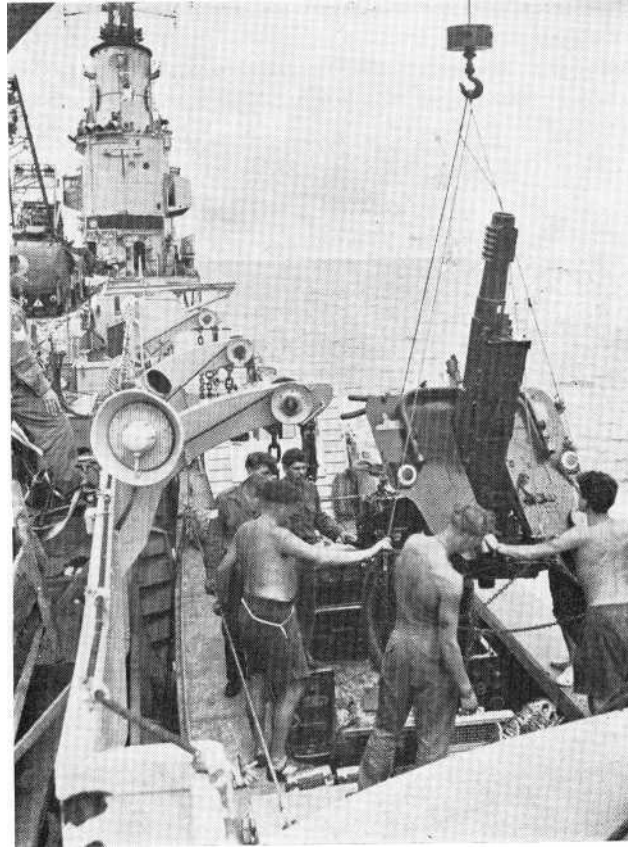
The members of our Royal Marines detachment will have many varied memories of this commission in ALBION. It has been a year and a half of the most diverse activity, operating off the Borneo coast landing and recovering troops and supporting our helicopter squadron ashore at Sibuan and Labuan. The 9th Assault Squadron will reflect on its two trips up the Rajang river to Sibuan and the one to Lundu to collect 42 Commando's stores, and will wonder how much it could have made by charging 3d. a head for everyone taken, for their runs ashore or to the bathing beaches. The Sergeant Major will remember until his dying day the moments when the demand for his Marines for this and that made him wonder if "they" thought we were a complete Commando unit instead of just 32 all ranks. The Landing Craft SNCO will remember paint and the ASO's staff will wake up for months to come after the recurring dream of that piece of kit (whatever it was) right at the back of the deep beam stowages that "they" again want in two minutes.

The Band Sergeant will regret that he never did get the OCRM to play in the volunteer band, and the OCRM thanks his lucky stars that on the one occasion that he nearly did, rain stopped play before blast off.

Operationally, the Wessex 5 helicopter has very largely stolen from the landing craft their former glory in their assault role. The moment of troops and vehicles can now be carried out far more quickly and conveniently by air than sea.



There have been occasions when heavy loads have been carried by sea.



Will it fit in?

but the use of the LCVPs has mainly been domestic.



We have maintained a high standard of serviceability thanks to the crews and our engineer assistants, and they have worked at all the crucial moments. Probably the most interesting times for the crews were those whilst operating South of Singapore with the Naval anti-infiltration patrols. "Bessie", despite all attempts by the flight deck operators to park her on 10 spot, has been with us most of the time, but her only notable battle honour is "Windy Weather" when she was sneakily disabled by a turtle. AOO and his team have contrived to remain calm (and secure) whilst all around seemed out of control, and our operations have gone very well.

For many of us "trained killers", if you'll pardon a Naval expression, this life at sea in a Commando Ship started off rather mysteriously. We found ourselves in a world of Bosun's Mates (where's the Bosun then?) and pipes, of "Roulements" and "Logreqs" and Stickorbats", and all the doors were half way up the walls and one definitely needed cricket pads and a pith helmet whilst proceeding in what we thought was the right way to gangway. Now, we hope, we frown upon such stupidity with the rest of you--we have learned the hard way.

We have, of course, had some famous runs ashore- Japan, Hong Kong (3), Mombasa (2), Aden (dangerous), the Seychelles (!) and the now very familiar Singapore. We had a week's military training with 40 Commando and had 10 day's leave at Penang during the docking period. We have met some extremely interesting people in the units we have carried, and had the unusual experience of working with all five RM Commando units during our first 6 months' operating.