

It is, luckily, human nature to forget many of the less pleasurable moments of one's lives. Of course there have been moments of frayed tempers and tension, but when we look back at all the events too numerous to mention here, you fish-heads and airy-fairy types are not a bad lot, and it's been a pleasure to work with you. We are sure this will continue, but do remember, ALBION is a COMMANDO Ship.

THE SEAMEN DEPARTMENT

On looking back over the period of the past two years and four months we will always remember the times that caused us great amusement. As far as the seamen were concerned, two things were obvious as one gazed at the shining faces that jostled for their joining cards that day - in RNB(P). One, that we were going to have a very young department, and two, that there did not seem enough for what we were expected to do..

This, as it turned out, was the same heartfelt cry heard throughout the ship. Introduction to life on board a ship must have been an eyeopener to our very many "First timers" as the refit got under way, and the ship filled with dockyard maties which kept popping out of every dark hole and whom one tripped over in remote corners.

Then out of this chaos we found ourselves afloat, commissioned and on our way for work up at Portland in November. Here our new boats crews had to find their feet and they could not have done too badly as we still had some when we left, battered but afloat (just).

At least the weather gave us the chance to step ashore, foreign in Gib. with sunshine, while learning a new Combined Ops job.

Then farewell to Mother England: we were off. The Bay of Biscay in sympathy was kind to us, we renewed our acquaintance with Gib and soon found ourselves going down the Suez Canal where it was the turn of our Quartermasters to show that they could steer in a straight line.

In the Red Sea some of the seamen were given instruction in bomb throwing and others in handling a Sterling, the sounds of their practice often disturbing the sun-worshippers. By the end of the commission nearly every other seamen had mastered one or both of these nasty gadgets.

At Aden the full meaning of being in an operational area was made clear as the motor whaler circled the ship nightly with its deadly load. And the department were also responsible for armed escorts for vehicles and groups of personnel. Armed with a sterling and his 007 licence clutched in his hot sticky hand, many were sent to ride shotgun.

Off to Mombasa and en route "Daisy May", whilst removing a weather screen cut the wrong side of the lashing he was holding, found himself in the Indian Ocean. He was quickly recovered by the whaler which speaks well for all those dinner time and tea time sea boat drills, though it did go down once without the bung.

Having left Mombasa with the usual firewood we soon found ourselves entering the Straits of Sumatra where the RPs, in addition to warning the lookouts of the presence of ships, began the task of reporting to Bukit Gombak all aircraft seen by the revolving bedstead. A constant job in the Air Defence Area. Who amongst them will ever forget Delta Charlie Golf.

Singapore, the changeover, we had the weight! This was soon proved as we went scurrying across that stretch of water we got to know so well to do our first roulement. Where the Guides and Assault Supply Parties made up by our gallant Gunners proved their mettle.

We haunted that coast pretty thoroughly in the eighteen months in support of our aircraft and troops ashore, and with the numerous escorts that we've had. They have always been well watered and fuelled by the watch on deck. We ourselves have done replenishments galore for our share of food and wine. And have been treated to the sight of our Gauchos and their whirling bolasses competing with the line-shooting Redcoats.

A certain rating has even proved that our liferafts work in the most practical way. Well done NILE party. The Special Paint Party is still competing with the Side Party to see who can use the most paint.

Even our short spells in S.N.B. gave us time for little rest as the numbers of seamen who spent all night on boat patrol in the Straits of Johore steadily grew each time we entered harbour.

We pulled our share of Communal duties, a job which even managed to suit a few. It is said that "Spud Harrison" spent more time on his knees during the job change period than on his feet.

We have managed to run classes for and had passed by the Fleet Boards. Five LS for PO. Seven ABs for LS. Starred all our Basics. Pumped the required knowledge into all JS and Ords to make good sailors of them, and have in the mill at the time of printing, another four LS for PO and seventeen ABs for LS.

The seamen made themselves felt in the realms of sport, the backbone of the First and Second XI Football teams being made of Dabtoes. The Tug of War team reigned for most of the commission before being beaten, Kobe must have weakened them, they have never looked so clean, must have been all those baths.

Over the whole period most of the sandscratchers have rotated through various jobs and towards the end of the Foreign could say that they were jacks of all Trades, but the shining faces were replaced by a more worn look.



The Sea Boat in use. Not "For exercise" this time.

The department has had to work hard to fulfil its commitments and it has met the many challenges set before it, and whether it has been rain or shine "Sorry No Oilskins" its members in the main retained that sense of humour so vital when doing so many of the jobs which befall the lot of a seaman.

When you read this, the Grey Ghost will perhaps not be your Host any more. But a memory of places visited and lessons learnt, to be stored and related during a night watch another time another place. Good Luck.

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

The thought of joining a "flat top" from such places as Whitehall Wireless (London), Northwood NATO Comcen and Burnham Radio filled us with horror and it took a while before we were thinking like sea-going matelots again. In the months we spent at Portsmouth most of the staff managed to find their way to the Bridge Wireless Office at one time or another, only to find themselves detailed off to attend various courses and to go on loan drafts.

When the dockyard maties moved off the ship in Portsmouth, they left us with lots of new equipment but omitted to tell us how it worked. The first week or so at Portland was spent in finding out exactly what we could do, at the same time trying to convince the SCO that we knew what we were doing but were just out of practice.

For an eighteen month commission, it has been rather uneventful and the only time the department worked at full pitch for any length of time was during exercise "Windy Weather", when we had the heavy drama of being in two watches. The majority of R.N. sparkers come into contact with the Merchant Navy at one time or another, and we were no exception with two distress calls to our credit so far. We were sent from Portland to offer assistance to a Norwegian ship floundering off the Channel Islands in a gale - the fact that there was no salvage money had nothing to do with us, see your D.O. Whilst on passage from Mombasa to Singapore, a request for medical assistance was received from the Russian ship "Poti", and this gave us the unique experience (for a warship) of working someone from Redland over the air, but "TKS" means "Thank You" in any language on a morse key.

Borneo has been our stamping ground for most of the time, and it didn't take us long to adapt ourselves to the Army and RAF operators who always seem so much slower than Jack, and "switch off" as soon as dusk arrives - something that we would dearly like to see adopted in this mob! Every time that the ship does a Commando Assault, the first aircraft ashore usually carries two R.O.s of the Helicopter Control Team who handle the communication side of things until the Bootnecks are established. The HCT tell us that they do a good job under difficult conditions, but we just smile and recall the time in Aden when a smalley boy was offered in exchange for their landrover - we never did get that back, come to think of it.

We have had some excellent results from radiotelephone calls to the UK, quite a number of you took advantage of the scheme and we hope we gave a service comparable to the civilian liners. It was certainly cheaper for you because we make no extra charge for our services on telegrams and telephone calls - a can of beer a time was thought of but we hadn't the nerve to ask for it.

We are of course all looking forward to getting home in September, and perhaps in later years when our memories have mellowed, we will say "It wasn't a bad commish I suppose".

THE OPERATIONS ROOM

We've been quite a versatile lot in the Ops Room this commission. Just consider:- The Direction Officer has tried hard to apply the principles of Work Study to both Operations Room and Quarterdeck - the results of his studies on the latter had to be suppressed. Lt. Yetman has spent much time with liferafts, Wardroom goffers and his medical friends. The Boats Officer is occasionally seen in the Ops Room and even the Editor of this book has been caned for Watchkeeping whenever he can be dragged away from his Heinz varieties of duties - where else do you suppose he has done all the editing? Various other officers have blundered in now and again, mostly on their way elsewhere, despite all the No Gangway notices. The Chief P.R.I., that fine figure of a man, seems to prefer to spend most of his time in the Seaman's Regulating Office or swimming around underneath the ship accompanied by another RP rating, equally noted for his slim profile. The RP.'s have had to be bribed to leave H.Q.1, the Quarterdeck, the Foc's'le, etc., to give us the benefit of all their expensive training, and the R.P.s generally seem to have been the backbone of the Seaman Department as boats' crews, gangway staff, postman, boat-swains party to mention just a few organisation to whom the demand for watchkeeping in the Ops Room has caused considerable inconvenience.

Of course we've done things in the Ops Room too - apart from our roles as the eyes and nerve centre of the ship! We've controlled the aircraft for hours and hours. We've done lots of Carrier Controlled approaches (I refuse to be pinned down to checkable statistics) and even, once or twice, tried to tell the L.C.V.P.s where to go whenever they managed to get their radios switched on. We're responsible too for much loss of sleep for the greenies (seriously though, they've done a grand job) and blown the fuses of the Communication Department's transmitters as frequently as possible without arousing their suspicions that we do it on purpose. The AOR R.P. crew has helped considerably to add to the confusion of roulements and Assault Exercises and the A.I.O. coffee boat has managed to provide unenviable service at all hours of the day or night. The rumour that the ability to make a drinkable cup of coffee is part of the R.P. starring exam is quite unfounded. If it were, a number of ratings still would not have qualified.

Finally, our achievements in the artistic field should not be forgotten. We do not claim to have invented it, nor are we entirely responsible for its effectiveness, but the noise of the radar on the equipment of the Beat Group, the P.M.O.'s Electronic Organ and a very senior officer's tape recorder, is a startling "New Sound" even if not always appreciated! We have christened it "The Metric Beat".

"BUT YOU HAVEN'T ANY GUNS"

This is the normal first remark but life is not one long holiday for the Gunnery department. (Yes, folks, ALBION had us fooled too). Our task is to store ammunition for the Commando, provide weapons and advice to the Squadron, and defend the Ship. On the side we run the Offensive Support, organise air weapons practices, produce ceremonial, guard the Naval Base, look after the laundry, encourage the Band and help the Commander run the Ship.

Early in the Commission we started trying out (classified) bright ideas and many will recall the unique, wooden underslung load which fell so regularly in to the sea. Suffice it to say it was all worthwhile.

The Commando have never called on us to help them operationally with ammunition but its custody has kept the Gunner's Party busy as, with other ammunition and armament stores, it makes us almost the largest store keeping department. Detachment of 848 flights to Aden and Sabah has given us an outside interest and "Dato" Stone an interesting venture to the interior of Sarawak to discover what Bulwark really had left behind.

A great many hours have been spent watch keeping on Bofors guns because of "Confrontation". This has enabled us to save valuable daylight hours by first and middle watch shoots. The unexpected gunfire has brought many sarong clad officers out into 2U cabin flat but P.O.(GI) McAuley did well in preventing them abandoning ship.

The highlights of the Commission have been an offensive support exercise, (Guardrail), with a helicopter borne R.A. observer controlling, in rapid succession, a Hunter then a Scimitar strike, the latter with 1,000 lb bombs, followed by a destroyer's shoot. Secondly the finale of the Beat Retreat at Labuan - the Ship catching the glow of the setting sun, the "Rajah Brooke" moving along the side of the Padang behind the massed Greenjackets and RM bands playing Rule Britannia. As Confrontation ended the following day, and after the political battering the Navy had in early 1966, the music seemed just comment on the Royal Navy's achievement in Malaysian waters 1963-1966.

SUPPLY DEPARTMENT

"Our business always was to do the business of the day in the day" to quote the Duke of Wellington. And so once again another commission is ending for the Supply Department of HMS ALBION. A commission full of incidents and one in which the Supply Branch has been sorely strained, but, we like to think, never failed to meet the Duke's maxim. (Bv Ed: Copy received 3 weeks after deadline!)

You will find separate articles from the Naval Stores, Victualling, Pay Office, Captain's Office, Cookery and Assault Supply departments. One must not forget however, the LEP's article, which unfortunately had to be rejected by the printers - who could not reproduce their beautiful text. Their Chief Steward has asked us to pass on one tip, to any bachelors trying their luck in Hong Kong or Singapore. The phrase you have all been longing to know goes like this:

Gum-man lay haw yee tong-ore hon ding-yin; ma? which to the uneducated few means: "Would you like to see a film with me tonight?"

The highlights of life onboard for the LEPs was undoubtedly the Party given by the Wardroom for their families during the 1965 visit to Hong Kong and the visit to London.

In the world of NAAFI over 22,000 gallons of draught beer and a quarter of a million cans of beer have disappeared somewhere and all this despite the famous occasion when all the Chinese staff were left behind when ALBION made a hasty withdrawal from Hong Kong!

NAVAL STORES

14th May 1964 saw the arrival of the new commission Stores (S) - conspicuous by their absence were the old staff. Then followed a free for all search of the ship to locate storerooms with the aid of a "green" guide, SA Green, who had been in the ship all of two weeks.

Ensuing weeks saw the arrival of a variety of "pussers" goods, worthy of mention was the advent of 800 Aircraft securing chains in one glorious snarled heap - this little lot took 10½ hours to unravel. Laugh followed laugh - duplicated orders for Teepol, Buckets, Soft Soap, Calgonite and Soda all of which arrived from outlying depots in fleets of lorries late afternoon - Mutter! Mutter! Mutter!

Statistics of stores issued - dull stuff - 1,000 torches - winking lights in the lift well on cinema nights - 20,000 torch batteries; enough to run 1,600 transistor radios and 1,600 record players - take your pick. Finally 2,100 gallons of paint has been used - oh for a ship without rounds!

Loss forms completed - highest and lowest - a Wessex rotor blade value £1,980 (a clanger dropped by 848 off Aden) and a Id tommy bar raised by a certain POSA (with a grudge against airy fairies?)

Opportunities for a Jack Dusty to see how the other half lives are few and far between, but several of the staff were able to accompany the 9th Assault Squadron RM on a logistic support operation up river to Sibiu, an 18 hour trip not without excitement - one LCA being holed by flotsam.

One unsolved problem still being pursued diligently by LSA Hambly is to find a hatch large enough to take the Padre's U/S Organ.

S & S Expeds

Our leisure time was not spent very much differently from what one would expect from a Matelot abroad: Beer, Women, Beer and more Women. We did however manage to corner one of the Minibuses on four occasions, and I think one can safely say a good time was had by all with many thanks to our opposite numbers in the Victualling world, who as well as sharing our fun on the trips also donated generously to the preparation. Thanks also to a tolerant Commander (S), who ensured that we lacked nothing in the way of Food and Equipment (within reason) on each occasion.

We had two day trips, one to Jason's Bay, and the other during our first trip to Hong Kong. The latter one we spent touring the New Territories and during that occasion several of our members managed to get lost in an area very close to the Red China Border, fortunately or otherwise all eventually turned up safely, and nobody was left behind. The typhoon which made us sail before our expected time managed to deplete our numbers by two for while, but that is really another story, and if you wish to know more about this SA Vinall or SA Bald will be pleased to inform you.

The two main trips were, one for four days, and another for ten days. During the former we travelled up the west side of Malaysia spending our first night in somebody's garden somewhere on the outskirts of Malacca. The next part of our journey took up as far as Kuala Lumpur where an extremely good time was had by all during our overnight stay. Readers who have been to Kuala Lumpur will know what we mean by overnight, I believe CPOSA (V) Raggett has more details of this rather blank period.

From Kuala Lumpur we cut across the country to the East Coast, and then made our way back to Singapore staying one night at both Kuala Rompin and Jason's Bay (moonlight swimming and to hell with the sharks!) before finally arriving back at ALBION.

For the ten day trip we decided to travel up the East Coast, and we set off with no razor blades and no real plans, except to make the best of whatever happened along the way.

We stayed a few days at a very much recommended Kuala Rompin. The "South Pacific" type coastline proved to be rather a fine place to laze around but after a few days we decided to move on to find somewhere else to be lazy. Kuantan proved to be our next stop mainly because we had a rather sick senior member on our hands. To be precise we stopped at Kuantan General Hospital, and here we placed our patient in the competent (we thought) hands of the hospital staff. (He was led off muttering many rude words about OD Jack Dusties and sabotage). From the hospital we moved onto the beach where camp was made in very romantic, tropical surroundings. The reader may think "romantic" a strange word to be used by a Matelot when describing a camp, but it certainly proved to be exactly that, as within minutes of our arrival two of our illustrious company had managed to make accepted advances to young Ladies.



Exped?

We spent the rest of our leave at Kuantan boozing, sleeping, drinking, eating, and even finding more time between our swimming and sunbathing to partake of liquid refreshment. I think you will agree a pleasant way to spend the time. Also during these pleasant relaxed days we found time to make a few trips into town to visit the few bars, and also of course to inspect at close quarters our sick oppo. and his attendant nurses, and of course to tell him what a wonderful time we were having. The latter information we found did him no end of good, and after a while it became dangerous to visit him unescorted!

Of course our leave, as for everybody else, had to come to an end, and back we came to the ship very tired and "bronzy", and with mixed feelings. We will

all remember our Minibus trips, with the few troubled moments, and the many lighter ones.

Thank you CPOSA(V) Raggett for taking on all our troubles, thank you the Royal Marine M.T. staff past and present, and thank you also the Nuffield Trust, without you it would never have happened.

If wanting Stores after September 8th
NUTS and bolts

ODE TO A JACK DUSTY (V)

We are the boys known as Jack Dusty Vee,
Clothing and feeding the ship's company,
Led we are by two Pussers bold,
Who coax us and hoax us like lambs in the fold.
We're matey with all by hook and by crook,
Of course there's the exception, the old Chief Cook.
We store with provisions; fresh, frozen and dry,
Cash clothing and mess gear all pass by.
Times there are when we're most chokka
When detailed off to stow the spud locker.
Tea boats and limers we all dish out
With measures so paltry the caterers shout,
Down to the slop room they troop one by one,
Only to be met with "We ain't got none".
The cry goes up for varied "Nine O'Clockers"
But what can we do, they've killed all the cockers?
Down to the storerooms we go gay and hearty,
(What happened to the "S" Rating of the General Mess Party?)
Roulements, RAS's all come our way,
No guilty conscience on the day of the pay.
One victualler we have is now full of glee,
He's been accepted in the realm of A.B.
Gone are his days of tea, sugar and beans,
He'll find himself rigging those upper deck screens.
If boots you require for a flight deck ramble,
Then come and see the P.O. (Young Andy Campbell)
A Draft Chit you have, you're going away
Then take him your bedding down in 6 J.
Our boss as you know is S.O. (V)
Alongside you'll find him on No. 1 tee,
July is the month when we all shall grieve,
The lucky old victualler is being relieved.
The D.S.O. is always wailing
For a Jack Dusty to go with him a'sailing,
This he does on the up and up.
And to prove it he comes back with a regatta cup.
There's Wally, Woody, Buck and Sads,
On the whole, Not bad lads,
Jan, Taff and Stan make the team up no less,
Blimey! I forget, there's old father (S).

PAY OFFICE

Since the beginning of the commission, well over a million pounds have slipped out of the Pay Office safe, and been placed at the tender mercies of the ship's company. We will not attempt to guess where all this money is now - suffice to say that we have left £50,000 in Hong Kong, £35,000 in Aden, and £28,000 in just one week in Japan. But quite a lot has been saved too - £40,000 in the Post Office bank, £120,000 in Remittances and £20,000 in Postal Orders, and most of all, of course, in allotments,



Anyone know the combination?

We are all set for a take-over bid of Cook's Travel Agency as soon as we reach Pompey. Our international desk has worked more than thirty full-scale currency exchanges, dabbling with Gibraltar pounds, Aden dinars (three times), Mombasa shillings (twice), Hong Kong dollars (three times), Seychellas rupees, Ethiopian dollars, French Somaliland francs, Malaysian dollars, and the Japanese with their fabulous yen - and now back to U.K. bobs and tanners! Often payments have been made by remote control - such as when the Squadron were in Aden, and our office in Hong Kong; and when 848 were ashore in Borneo, while their ledgers were with us in Ethiopia,

We recall (with mixed feelings!), collecting money on a helicopter stop, peeling spuds at Assault Stations, sweating on a R.A.S. inhaul, breaking down in a minibus on a wet Japanese Sunday, being stuck in the Minibus again in a bog in Kenya and being gassed in darkness at Action Stations. Nevertheless it's been a great and certainly memorable commission!

THE CAPTAIN'S OFFICE STAFF

Well, there we were, tucked away nicely in 4U. And we thought nobody knew we were there, UNTIL we found ourselves besieged by 700 ratings demanding Medals (Heaven only knows what for). However, this was the climax of two and a half years of sometimes hard work in our little haven, Somewhere along the way we managed to accumulate about 10,000 letters, pushing out some 7,000 in reply, All this involved us in tapping our typewriter keys approximately 12,000,000 times, which, converted into terms of distance, would represent a continuous line of typing some 72,500 feet long! No, we haven't measured it either! On top of all this, the PO Writer actioned nearly 2,500 requests of one kind or another, whilst of course being the main source of information for the ship's company. All this no doubt helped towards some of the names we got called at one time or another, Three Badge Floating Biro's being a favourite among the printable ones,

This however did not prevent the Staff from enjoying life, and we did get our share of recreation. The Secretary and the PO Writer were prominent in the Concert Party, whilst the Leading Writer was often to be seen sporting for the ship in one game or another, Rumour has it too that Office II staff were to be seen drinking down Bugis Street, but, for the sake of the Branch, we have always denied this, blaming it on our brothers in the Pay Office. However we are all agreed that it was all well worth it, if only for Japan and Hong Kong where some of our most happy hours were spent!!!

THE CHEFS

First of all let me introduce you to the branch:-

Sub. Lt. B. WINTIE - Sub. Lt. D. PULFORD.

Chief Cooks

A. Wallace, B.E.M., R. Owens, S. Palmer.

Petty Officers

A. Walker, C. Pearce, S. Clews, L. Cox.

Leading Cooks

N. Taylor, V. DeMaine, H. Lewis, B. Hannat, T. McCully, M. Coomer, B. Baker.

Cooks

M. Gearing, R. Bolsover, R. Pinks, N. Ames, V. Fenelly, J. Talmage, I. Haywood, W. Johnstone, R. Jackson, G. Markham, T. Masters, D. Lester, S. Burton, D. Dobson, H. Fairclough, R. Routledge, P. Calland, D. Anderson, P. Towse, R. Pope, J. Stevenson, A. Bruce, J. Bekusch, and the three Squadron cooks R. Spence, D. Cardwell, and T. Browning.

Well now we've been introduced I'll carry on with a few details about us. Sub Lt. Wintie left the ship during April and Sub Lt. Pulford assumed the duties of Cookery Officer. All but two of the cooks and a P.O. Cook have done at least two years on the ship so far so as you can imagine we know the ship quite well.

We started off in May 1964 when we all joined ALBION together with the exception of four who were advance party and Chief Cook Wallace who joined at the end of the last commission. Of course, we had the usual procedure, all the cooks of the last commission were going on leave and we were trying to get our kit unpacked at the same time. We finally managed to get settled in okay but there was one amongst us who was well and truly settled in; P.O. Pearce, for he had already done the whole of the last commission on board and now he's almost completed his second.

It was when we moved into dry-dock that we first had a taste of real hard work. We went over to the shore-side galley which no doubt quite a few of you remember quite well. There we had to keep the fires going all the time piling on the coal plus doing the meals and by the time the duty watch had finished at night they looked more like the "Black and White Minstrels" than chefs. Some of us were lucky and went into the barracks where we quite enjoyed our stay working in the galley.

Let's skip the next few months and go to the day we left Portsmouth. Most of us were a little morbid about leaving home for eighteen months and in the mess that night it was just like a funeral parlour. Then as we went along things picked up and we managed to keep ourselves reasonably happy. On our way we lost about twenty dishes of chips going through the Bay of Biscay. A couple of chefs were chased down the galley by tanks and pots of various shapes and sizes. After that the rest of the trip to Singapore went quite smoothly for us except Aden where 'Bats' Coomer and the author went ashore for a "pint" and ended the evening off just right when someone decided to fire a bazooka at our taxi! Needless to say we didn't go ashore in Aden again!! We did have one more little mishap just before we reached Singapore at a place called Gan, a couple of our band decided to prolong their stay. Yes, "Buck" Taylor and Jack Bekusch kept us all waiting an hour or so but managed to get back alright, a little adrift, a little tipsy perhaps, but they made it.

I think the hardest part of all for us were the times we had troops onboard, when there were about four or five hundred extra mouths to feed. Meal times in the galley were an utter chaos, there'd be tea urns, dishes of chips and potatoes all over the place, but we always managed to get it out on time and were always thankful when eight o'clock came the next morning, and even more thankful when eleven thirty came when we could retire until eight the next morning. I think the hardest of all was when we had the Malay Infantry and the Gurkhas onboard. They could neither speak or understand English and didn't know how to use tea urns or anything, but as usual we managed to feed them all somehow.

A couple of the ship's cooks were put into Barrio, they were "Scouse" Bruce and Bob Pope, they seemed to have enjoyed themselves quite a lot there. Of course, the three Squadron chefs were in and out of there all the time.

On the whole the commission has been quite hard but it's passed very quickly indeed and even now you can still hear the morning-watch stomp being performed with the chefs having a crafty "burn" when they go to ditch the gash. Sometimes you'd walk past the galley and think it was a mad-house. Then there's the bakery which still turns out bread and rolls for us, and some of the escorts we've had. There's a job where you sweat away all night and part of the morning and your bed is the most welcome sight at seven o'clock in the morning more than anything else in the world. There's the Chief's and P.O.'s galley where they, like the rest of us, plod on day after day. The Chief Cooks in charge of these departments have managed to keep things running smoothly and, as most of you know, the meals or your bread have never been adrift. Most well known, (of course) is Chief Cook Wallace; he's stood there morning, noon and night in that galley making sure everything is O.K. and that there are no snags. Some of you may regard him as an Ogre or something but he isn't at all, in fact there isn't one of us who haven't enjoyed working for him. It was quite funny at times, perhaps we would all be skylarking then someone would shout "Here's Wally" and we'd all be like little choir boys. Anyway, congratulations Chief on being selected for promotion. Things like this have made this quite a good commission for us and given us quite a few laughs. I don't know whether we broke the leave breaking record or not but one or two of this band of tearaways had a good try.

We work hard and play hard too, for the Cooks provide the backbone of S & S sports teams - two of them, Anderson and Cardwell have played for the ship's soccer team and Ldg. Ck. Coomer played for the Navy Command Team in water polo.

Two of us left the ship during commission. P.O. Ck. Webster, who had to be flown home from the Seychelles owing to personal troubles and L/Ck. Shepherd who flew home in March as he'd finished his "time". They were soon replaced by P.O. Ck. Cox and Ck. Fairclough who soon got into ALBION's routine.

Yes, we certainly have had some laughs in and outside the branch. It's been hard graft but good experience for us all, we've not done badly because not one of the cooks has been awarded a Good Conduct Badge, the oldest one of us being twenty one.

There isn't much more one can say except all of us in the Cook(S) branch would like to wish the ship's company all the best in the future and we hope to meet up with you sometime and we can have a good old natter about the eighteen months foreign and ten months at home on the "Old Grey Ghost" and just one more thing: we think we're the best bunch of cookies the Royal Navy has ever had.

ASSAULT SUPPLY

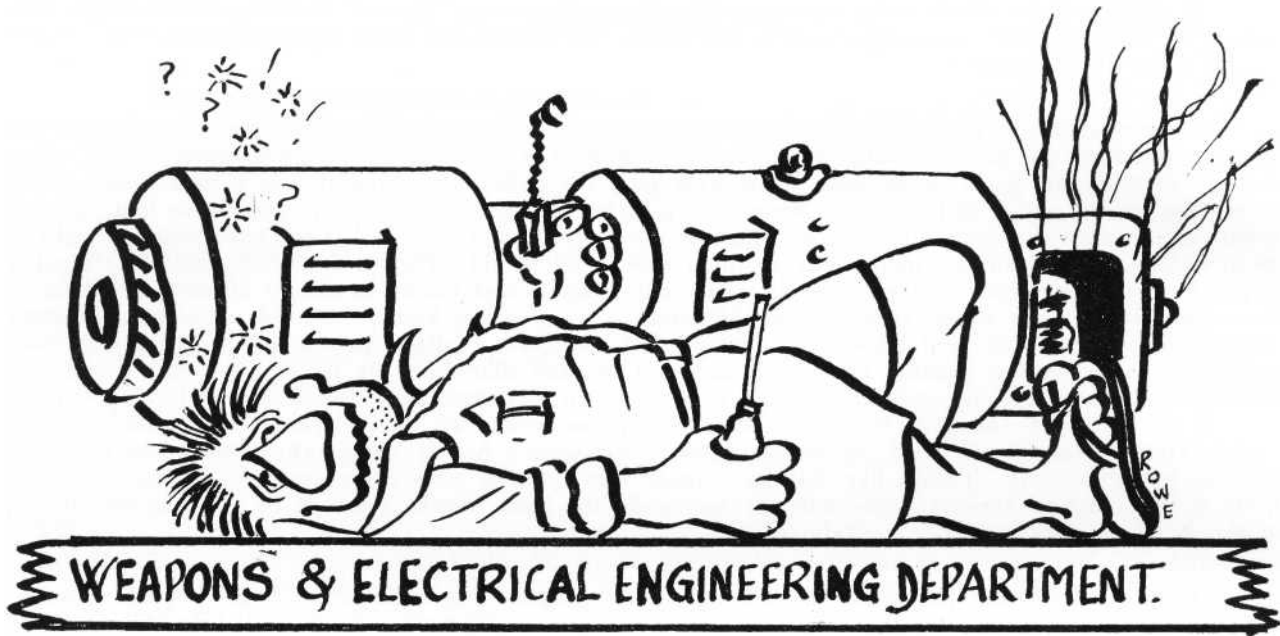
The Assault Supply Department consists of seven Royal Marines. (It has been worked out that the store area occupied warrants 57 Royal Marines and the ship requirements warrants 107 Royal Marines) Vehicle spares - radio spares - tentage - jerricans - compo plus a great deal of work for embarked units, underslung loads, all this makes up the job. Add to this:-- sentries, guards, clean ship, pay escorts, and you will have a small part of the number of jobs the Royal does.

The store areas, without a Commando to fill them, are looked at longingly by departments who need space - let them in - and they get out as a favour - minutes before the unit embarks. Somehow the tasks have been done and on time.

Marine WELLBURN has been a regular member of the ship's hockey team, and when the Royal Marines and the S and S have been combined, then some very good teams have resulted.

The liaison between ASO's Department - Victualling - Stores and all other parts of ship has been very good during the past months. Strained at times but usually good!!

In general the department has always done a good job whatever it has been - loyal to RM and S & S throughout and let's be honest "Jack" and "Royal" are not always good company!!



It was in the summer of 1964 that most of us joined the department. We found the ship in dockyard hands with all the grime and discomfort that entails. Most of us had little or no turnover from our predecessors so were forced to find out everything for ourselves. Much hard work lay ahead and we set to immediately on the task of getting our equipment to work properly and ourselves accustomed to the ship's routine. Discovering which switches and which fuses controlled which piece of equipment or circuit was no easy matter for tallies were missing everywhere. We replaced literally hundreds of them! Before first sailing, Harbour Acceptance Trials had to be completed and this entailed almost endless hours of work for some of our members in getting equipment like generators up to an acceptable standard. And the state of D.C. cables, A.E.L.s and fans was confused to say the least. However by the time we sailed for the Far East things were already looking brighter - except for leaving home! It is a credit to all concerned that, today, it is the odd defect which causes remark and not the odd piece of equipment which is "actually working properly!"

The refit days seem very distant now and much has been accomplished since. Our compartments are hardly recognisable as the ones we found at Portsmouth. A few hard figures give some indication, but only some, of what we have achieved. We have used well over 20,000 yards of cable on re-wire jobs and that does not include the amounts used by the dockyards during our maintenance periods! A colossal 24,000 lamps and 8,000 fluorescent tubes have been replaced! Some 48,500 fuses have somehow gone somewhere! Soon after the D.E.D. period some 440 newly charged A.E.L.s were re-commissioned in the space of a fortnight! And who knew it was no uncommon thing for our Telephone Exchange to handle over 2,500, yes 2,500 calls a day?

However, it has not all been hard work. We feel we have played our part, too, in ship's activities like the Concert Party, and the Ship's Company Dance, besides, being sports enthusiasts. C.R.E.A. Clutterbuck. LEM Rowland. EM Fenton and EM Holden all played in the ship's rugby team. EMs Barkley and Mcateer were first XI soccer team regulars and A/LREM Archer player many times. EMs Green, Hargreaves and Milne played for the second eleven. The department boasted three players - EA Fairhurst, REA Walker and EM Ray - in the ship's highly successful hockey team. W. Mech Daragon became the 1966 Far East Fleet Small Arms Champion and Rifle Champion, besides accounting for many other trophies. In fact, we hear his wife has designs on a new sideboard so that all his cups and shields can be stored in one place! In the ship's boxing championships EMs Fenton and Milne won their weights. PO EL Allan and EM Ballantyne won the 1965 "Uckers" competition. In the ship's water-polo team EM Hodges was a consistent player. In the Swimming Gala, too, we had our successes. Commander Holgate came third in the Senior Officers' Race and who can forget S/LT Forster in the two lengths butterfly event when all we could see of him on the homeward stretch were his finger-tips breaking the surface! But he came in third!

Looking back over the past two years is interesting but how amazing it is that troublesome times are soon forgotten and how, in retrospect, things which caused consternation at the time, are now a source of amusement. Like the time when rumour had it that the WEE Messdeck was hoarding beer. In a flash the Master-at-Arms and his team from the C.I.D. swooped on the messdeck and nabbed the offenders! The Captain's Table that followed must surely have been one of the longest ever held in ALBION! Not many of us can claim to be successful fliers - nor can a certain EM. One night, imagining he had grown wings he took off from an upstairs balcony at HMS TERROR in attempt to prove that Newton knew nothing about apples. Newton won! We are very glad to say that this EM is now well on the way to recovery and not disposed towards a second attempt. There was, too, the case of the P.P.E. candidate who on being asked what was meant by de-gaussing had no hesitation in replying "It's a system used by the Engineers, sir, to clean soot out of the funnel!"

In April 1966 we were all saddened by the sudden death, by heart attack, of one of the most popular members of the ship's company - LEM Tasker. He will long be remembered by us all for his outstanding cheerfulness.

Much else has happened which slips the memory or cannot be included through lack of space. It is certain though that we have all found new friends and all will have our separate reminiscences of a commission which will not soon be forgotten.

GUESS WHICH BRANCH?

Looking at the list of officers borne and their duties gave me a vivid picture of my life at sea. I remember one day in particular. It started badly with a shake at 0220, evidently we were due to pass through the Mala Wall Channel and I was required in the Ops room to keep "D" awake. Fortunately I was relieved from this task at about 0600 only to be presented with 12 photographs of Tigabu Island with instructions to make a mosaic. This completed, the cryptic order "Interpret that" came. This was quite a poser as no brief was given so obviously a 3rd Phase report was not required as the command was awaiting a reply. 2nd Phase reports are only to amplify 1st Phase, so that was my requirement - a "hot" report. Extract from staff paper: "The purpose of a 1st Phase report is to obtain a positive statement as quickly as possible, in answer to the purpose for which the sortie was flown". This made the answer easy - "It's an island, Sir!" After that I rapidly removed myself from the bridge.

After the usual breakfast of fruit juice and a paludrin tablet I found a worried looking Dentist just getting up. His X-Ray machine was giving trouble. No one knew whether it was the emmitter or the film which was u/s. After looking at the stock books and plans of the ship I found my radio active store and with the aid of a source we were able to prove that the machine wasn't working!

At about this time loud noises of protestation were coming from behind Doug Hale's beard, he was after the blood of the paper caterer; Someone had pinched the "Playboy" and "Penthouse" from the Wardroom. At least they had left the hard covers behind. Thinks: "Now I know why he persuaded me to take the job over".

Now we had reached our exercise area and the assault was in full swing. Duty in the Ops room - running around with a chinagraph keeping stateboards up to date. COMAF was so used to them being behind that even having had the hot word from his staff and written in "London" we were caught with "Why isn't the board up to date? - it should read London". Ah well - you can't win them all.

There was just time to grab a quick bite of lunch in the Wardroom when it was announced that the helicopter carrying the press was due. They had to be met and looked after. They tend to make life a little difficult when in the middle of an assault they want a helicopter to be ranged from the hangar so they can photograph it. Then there was the defence correspondent of the Guardian who stayed over night, she slept in the Captain's cabin (aft I might add, whilst the Captain used his sea cabin).

I was now feeling a little uneasy about my own work and tried to call on my colleagues for help. Alas, Stew was busy sampling the wardroom wines - in line of duty of course - teaching the Mids the finer things in life and the Boss was far too busy producing the Argus and sorting out mess problems.

Trying to eat dinner I was just managing to edit this book at the same time when John comes up and lets drop that the Captain needed some more library books to stop his doors slamming.

A quick run through of the rugby programme followed, a team was selected for the next match and, as I had to ref, a bout of 5BX was called for.

Feeling exhausted after a really strenuous day I managed to crawl to my pit only to discover the Met dept. had run out of paper for the Argus. Staggering around, the yellow paper was found and within seconds I was back in my bunk.

In the half conscious state between sleep and awareness I heard "In 15 seconds time it will be 0645" and with a start I woke up fully to discover that it had been a nightmare. We were safely alongside the wall in Singapore - working tropical routine and the first class was due at 0745. Ah well time for another quick sleep!! ZZZZZ

THE UNOFFICIAL CHINESE

At the onset of the commission, the laundry was worked by a small band of "volunteers" from the ship's company. Although they did a grand job, it was with relief (mainly by the laundry volunteers) that on our first arrival in Singapore, the Unofficials embarked.

Led by their No. 1, Mr. Chiang, they were soon hard at work and within two days, the laundry, tailor shop and cobblers were open. For reasonable prices one could have a suit made, a pair of shoes



The Button Crusher?

made to measure, or hand in any size bundle of dhoby and get it back laundered and ironed within 24 hours. In addition there is always a smiling Unofficial ready at any time of the day to serve you with a goffer on the Forecastle.

One may complain if a button is missing off a shirt or there is too much starch in a shirt, but on the whole these cheerful Chinese make a valuable contribution to the welfare of the ship.

The services of the tailor and shoemaker will be lost before the ship leaves the Far East Station but the laundry firm is returning with us to the U.K. and remain for the next commission.

Well done and thanks to the Unofficials.

By Ed. Seriously, we are grateful for the way we have been looking after by our Chinese friends.

HMS ALBION AND THE CONFEDERATION OF THE CINQUE PORTS

"Those readers who imagine that Sibiu, Kuching, Labuan, Kota Belud and Tawau comprise the Cinque Ports have the editor's sympathy, but in fact, the Confederation who adopted the ship in 1953 have their home slightly nearer the white cliffs of Dover. And this may or may not give you the reason for HMS ALBION's association with the Courts of Brotherhood and Guestling. Anyone born in the shadow of a Martello Tower can tell you that Dover, Hythe, Hastings, Sandwich and Romney are the five Ports, but do not forget the Antient (sic) Towns of Rye and Winchelsea, who are of equal standing with the Cinque Ports, and who confuse the issue by bringing the real total up to seven. Which is just one more feature of medieval history that your logical mind will have difficulty in grasping.

More recent historical records show that Captain Adams attended the Yorkshire and Kent cricket match at Dover on the 20th August 1964 as the guest of the Registrar of the Cinque Ports. One outcome of this was that he caught a cold, but a more lasting result was that by the end of the year each Mayor's parlour in the five Ports sported a framed picture of the ship, personally presented by members of the ship's company on behalf of the ship. As the opening batsmen struggled to reach a century before lunch, plans for the first roulement of the commission were also laid, and on the 29th November 1964 the ship anchored off Dover. Nearly a dozen appropriately garbed Mayors and Mayoresses, plus assorted Aldermen were flown on board by helicopter from the rain drenched landing site at Granville Gardens, and entertained to lunch in the Wardroom before returning to their Kentish longhouses.



Unfortunately the ship's programme has prevented further personal contact with the Brotherhood but we have kept in touch. Not long after sending a telegram of congratulations to the Warden, Sir Winston Churchill, on the occasion of his 90th birthday we heard the sad news of the death of this great man. We next sent a cable to Sir Robert Menzies when he was elected Lord Warden and we were pleased to receive a personal note from him at Christmas. No doubt the forthcoming spell of Home Sea Service in dry dock will provide the next commission with further opportunities for fostering the association and maintaining the link between us before Albion moves East again.

ALBION MERRY-GO-ROUND

"Off caps," ordered the Commander as we stood there at the after end of the Flight Deck sweating on many a Sunday morning after Divisions. "Stand at Ease . . . Stand Easy" to be followed by the melodic tones of an electric organ appearing on the rising after lift - reminiscent of the interval music from such cinemas as the old "Trocadero". Not many of us fainted - doubtless influenced by the salutiferous gaze of our organist.

Afterwards down below we went to enjoy the odd game of Uckers or dominoes or to listen to some taped music over the SRE. Dinner with a good cooling dollop of strawberry ice cream. Marvellous! And now for a bit of fresh air. This air conditioning may be the envy of those ashore - but living in a floating box, many of us do long for the occasional blow through of fresh air.

And so off many of us would go in such breathtaking vehicles as "Margaret" or in one of the 8 Piccolo dinghies or yet again trying to emulate the Eskimaux (was it?) in trying to turn over one of our fibre glass canoes. Skiing behind "Margaret" with her 60 h.p. Evinrude outboard gave us a chance to enjoy this select sport - almost exclusively enjoyed by the millionaire playboy class in Europe we are told. Here was something to remember - even if we did crack the odd rib or - sorry Captain - finger, in our determination to master the skills of slaloming and "one-ski" skiing.

On this same Sunday one would probably find 848 Flight's AA 1 enjoying a quiet beer in the cool open green valley at Bario, waiting for "Quebec" to return from a trip to one of our forward helicopter landing areas. Down off Labuan Island some of the off duty watch would be sitting on the beach near the Combined Services Sailing Centre watching two of their number learning the intricacies of Sub Aqua swimming.

Back onboard 16 rather tired and dusty individuals might be seen climbing up the gangway, having just returned from 2 days of motoring and camping along the South East coastal route of Malaya - once again ALBION's two Minibuses had given some of us a chance to explore into the "beyond" at very little cost.

What is this, you may ask, an ad to "Join the Navy and See the World?" "No, certainly not," I'd reply. It is just a brief description of some of the £3,200 worth of Nuffeld Trust equipment that ALBION now boasts. And as we steam towards the delights of Kobe, there awaiting us, we hope is another ski-boat (this time made in fibre glass) for use by 848 Squadron. No, this is certainly no Ad., but gives as a chance to pay a small tribute to the continual generosity of the Nuffield Trust, who have over the past 4 years bent over backwards to meet ALBION's every plea for help. We even found the Minibuses lying alongside at Portsmouth one day - long before we'd even had formal approval for their purchase. "Thank you" Mrs. Margaret Robinson!
