

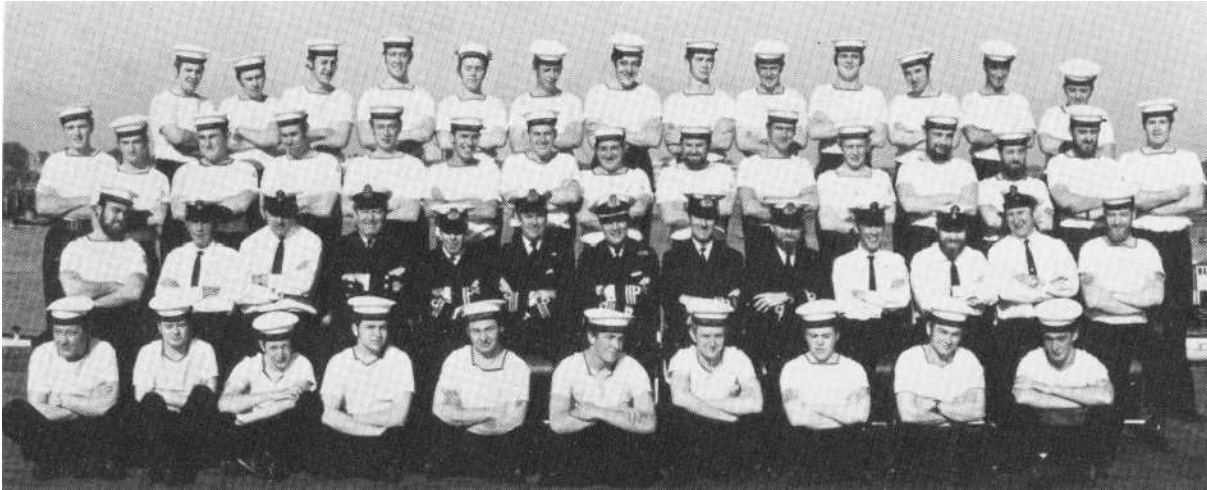


PERFIDIOUS ALBION

Taken from the 'Argus'

She's grey and old, her messdecks cold
leave little room for mirth;
Her life is spent, her flight-deck bent,
She's had her time on earth.
She's aged and rusty, dark and dusty,
But when she's gone for scrap
Don't call her `tub' or `a green rub'
and never `pension trap';
When you're on draft and talking daft
About `Singers' or the `Vill',
The old Grey Ghost of the Java coast
Will serve us matelots still.

AIR DEPARTMENT



Variety has been the keynote of this commission in respect of the Air Department. During the past 18 months we have operated in the North Atlantic in winter, the Mediterranean in Spring and the South China Sea in all its unchanging seasons. We have transited the Indian Ocean twice and flown helicopters off Malaysia, Japan, Australia and Hong Kong. Detachments of aircraft have operated in Kenya, Korea, Masirah, Gan and Cyprus, and have flown over jungle, desert, swamp and snow. Besides our ever changing environment we have also had a variety of aircraft on our deck; to date no fewer than 16 types of aircraft have successfully operated from the ship. Squadrons too, have been with us for various lengths of time, we have been 'Mother' to 845 Sqdn and 848 Sqdn with their Wessex 5s and 'Foster Mother' to 826 Sea King A/S Sqdn.

The beginning of the commission saw 845 as the resident Naval Air Commando Squadron but before the Far East deployment 848 Squadron took their place. On arrival in Singapore 847 Squadron were re-absorbed by 848 and passage was taken by Dieppe and Brunei Commando Flights at various times.

The Orient leg of the commission was very pleasant, a number of the ship's company took advantage of indulgence flights and brought their families to Singapore and Hong Kong and at least one member of the department married a local girl. The operational highlights of this leg were provided by three exercises, the first being Exercise 'NEW LOOK 11' off Brunei. Exercise 'ROUND UP' took us to the East Coast of Malaysia, whilst the culmination of our time in the Far East was the Naval steampast/flypast of 18

ships and 50 aircraft to signify our withdrawal from the Singapore Bases. Exercise 'CURTAIN CALL' off the West Malaysian Coast marked our ultimate departure from Eastern Waters, but we had little time for nostalgic reminiscences, for we were earmarked to cover the withdrawal from the Persian Gulf. In the event the ship did not enter the Gulf but spent a pleasant time off Masirah, which was terminated rather hurriedly when the Indo/Pakistan war broke out. Sea Kings from *HMS Eagle* were embarked and *Albion* steamed towards Bangladesh to stand by to evacuate refugees. Before entering the Bay of Bengal it was learned the British nationals had been rescued so we returned to the island of Gan where 40 Commando were disembarked and subsequently flown home.

Christmas Day was spent at sea in the Mozambique Channel but New Year's Eve found us in Capetown enjoying very cordial hospitality. Spirits were high for, before the end of January, we knew HM Customs would welcome us to Portsmouth.

The Mediterranean deployment in April to participate in two exacting Exercises, 'DOUBLE BASE' off Cyprus and 'DAWN PATROL' in the Aegean, provided a welcome change of scenery. Cross deck operations with USS *Guadalcanal* provided our pilots and deck crews with useful experience in handling American aircraft. In June we visited Scapa Flow and carried out Exercise 'STRENGTH TRIAL' which was in preparation for the Autumn visit to North Norway when we participated in the largest NATO Exercise scheduled for some years. For this exercise we embarked a detachment of 826 Sea Kings and

welcomed back 845 Squadron who had been with *Bulwark*. Exercise 'STRONG EXPRESS' was a fitting culmination to a commission that had already achieved 10,000 deck landings and seen aircraft ranging in size from the Sioux to the Sea Stallion. We can look back with a sense of achievement, for behind this figure, which is impressive in itself, lies the hard work that has made it possible. We must not overlook the important part carried out by the non-aviation personnel, the Ops Room and AOR teams, the Flight Deck Guides, the 'Tween Decks Guides and the ASO's party, all of whom contribute significantly to the smooth operation of the Flight Deck.

As for the Flight Deck itself, it has required a continuous process of husbandry to maintain the status quo despite the elements and the punishment inflicted by 2,000 men using and abusing its potential, for it has been all things to all men. Who for instance would have thought of turning it into a golf course and then using cubed pieces of wood for golf balls? At times it has been a sports field, where the Air Department has acquitted itself well, having won the Hockey Championship three times and also the knockout Olympiad once.

To sum up, the Air Department has been right at the sharp end of things, we have had to work hard but have also played hard. We are proud of our achievements and can rest assured that in looking through *Albion's* last commission book in future years, perhaps we will remember with pleasure the halcyon days we spent on board.

Editor's Note: My thanks to the Photographic Section for their invaluable help in the production of this book.

AIR ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT



A large proportion of the complement of AED have been in the ship since the latter end of 1970. It was then that a snow plough was produced by 3D Workshops and winterisation mods embodied in all the ground equipment by the merry men of HES in conditions colder than the cold weather trials themselves. Despite qualifying for our blue nose certificate on 5 February 1971, we soon found that snow is not always plentiful in the Arctic.

On arriving back in Portsmouth there was a lot of activity taking leave and making final preparations for the Far East leg.

At this time we changed squadrons, from 845 to 848 and an amicable and close working liaison was soon achieved, helped along by 'fireside chats' between Mr Thring and Mr Goodwill.

After a passage which included calls at Durban and Bombay, we berthed at Singapore dockyard in June. We supported 848 Squadron at Simbang and managed to cope with the wide range of jobs that arose. In sport - we made our presence felt in the various activities. Although unsuccessful in claiming any laurels, AED regularly supplied three ship's rugby players, one hockey player and a soccer player for the double header at *Terror*.

Long Weekend at Erasers Hill in the Camerons was enjoyed by many of the department as were our next visits to Japan and Australia before our next long stay in Singapore and this time indulgence flights were arranged to fly wives out or husbands home.

Our next spell at sea was for exercises before a visit to Hong Kong, calling at Olongapo on our way. This produced one or two laughs, including the episode of Bass Chamberlain returning on board with three live ducklings under his hat.

On arrival at Hong Kong Commander Denholm took over the reins as AEO from Commander Paul. It was not long before our new boss showed his expertise on the volley ball pitch in several matches played between the old and bold and the younger elements of the department.

By the time that the ship steamed out of Singapore for the last time in the Far East, all available space in the department was overflowing with countless rabbits. Much to the DAEO's delight, both HES and AOS boasted very healthy looking aquaria, the latter under the expert eye of Willie Wyness. Because 4Q58 Mess was always so sparkling, the lads had to forage farther afield for the cockroaches that their tame praying mantis relished.

At Mombasa Lieutenant Asquith (AAEO) was relieved by Lieutenant Jones, the latter in time for the Gulf Deployment. This proved to be an anticlimax operationally, but once again all sorts of varied activities were devised to relieve boredom, including a village fete in which Willie Monaghan and Taff Gelder really excelled in their fancy dress. Bob Jepson and his crew built a box kite which the Captain flew in competition against *Eagle*. Regrettably, *Eagle* won!

After a visit to Cape Town, we were on our way home and saying goodbye to Lieutenant Commander Wheeler (DAEO) who was relieved by Lieutenant Whitfield,

who soon showed us he could wield a mighty stick on the hockey pitch. We returned to Portsmouth to a wonderful welcome by our families and friends and a good spell of leave.

During the DAMP at Portsmouth, CAA Tizard was relieved by CAM Chinnock, complete with his accordion. The ship and department also benefited from the arrival of REAL Ackerman, the Combined Services and Navy rugby player.

Then followed deployment in the Mediterranean which was interesting from an operational point of view in that the AED were called upon to look after visiting USMC helicopters, including Sea Knights, Sea Stallions and Cobras. There was little opportunity for shore activity, but everybody took advantage of the two stops at Gibraltar to buy still more rabbits.

An exercise in the Orkneys followed, again with little opportunity for shore leave, but it did give a chance to save our money for the visits to Rotterdam, Greenock and Dover where once again Lieutenant Jones in the ship's sailing team proved that the sea shall not have him. Dover was also a new experience for many in the department as due to bad weather, a night had to be spent ashore in the Royal Marine barracks at Deal. Then back to Portsmouth for leave, Navy Days and a very damped down DAMP.

The department is now looking forward to the visit to Canada and to see what the future has in store in the form of Draft Orders and dates of joining new ships or establishments.

THE CHURCH IN ALBION



The sounds of talking, singing, pop groups, films, the scratching of pens and grinding of brains, strains from the organ and notes from the choir, the depth of prayer and the concentration of reading -all can be found on four deck in the middle of the ship in the Chapel of St Christopher.

The sounds and stirrings are those of many onboard who have found the value of a place set apart both for worship and for quiet.

The Ship, Squadron and Commando crests hang high on the light oak panels, a constant reminder of the men and their families who are prayed for every day at the service held in the Chapel.

The service of Holy Communion has been held regularly during the week and on Sundays and during the Commission, two and a half thousand people received Communion and more than four thousand attended worship.

The Chapel holds forty in reasonable comfort and so on occasions services have been held on the Quarterdeck, the Lift Wells, the Hangar and the Flight Deck.

There are, in the Chapel and Vestry, some striking reminders of the message of the Christian Faith created by men who have served in the ship: a strong and starkly modern crucifix was made by a Chief whose name is not recorded, Marine Peter Howarth has done a painting of The Last Supper and a painting of the Crucifixion was done by POMA W. Davies. The Patron Saint of the Chapel, St Christopher, is depicted in a picture by the door of the Chapel, painted by Cook J. Talmage.

Talent from the ship has not only helped decorate the Chapel but in the form of a Choir led by Lt H. Straw and Cdr M. Jones has added a sparkle and quality to the singing during the services which has been well worth while and welcome. It has ranged from a small group of half a dozen or so to a multi-part choir of over twenty coping well in the leading

of the singing with small congregations on a wind and rain lashed Quarterdeck to one of more than eight hundred singing Carols on Christmas Eve in the Indian Ocean.

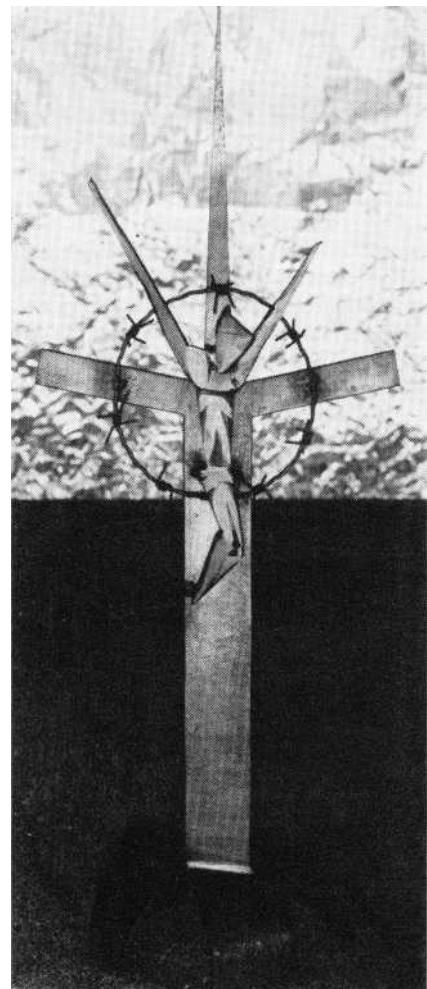
Half the Chapel during the week has been curtained off to form a small, but comfortable, 'Rec Space'. Padre's Hours, Film Shows, Study Groups, information about countries to be visited, lists for 'Bus Tours (one of the Padre's other occupations) are found here - not to mention a Harmonium and Electric Organ for those who are musically minded.

Hanging on the panels are photographs showing the various aspects of the Chaplain's work; all aspects have been covered by the Chaplains who have served in the ship. These range from taking the services, baptisms and deaths as well as Holy Communion, Morning and Evening Prayer, visiting other ships at sea by Helicopter, boat (or on foot!), visiting the sick, pushing out points of view, talks, epilogues and music on the SRE in such programmes as 'Mic Vic's Musical Medley', or 'Pop goes the Padre'; visiting the Messdecks, being available for all at any time and much more besides. All these aspects provide the Chaplain with an interesting, varied and busy time.

The ship's Bell in the Chapel is a reminder of another part of the Chaplain's work - Baptising - not only babies but adults as well. Names are inscribed on the side of all those who have been baptised onboard. Vance Calladine, Melanie Coates, Heather and Andrew Dougan, Annette Goram, Scott Knee-Robinson, Fiona Rutland, Edward Lees, David Massey, Paul Thompson, and Samantha Twigg are names already inscribed during previous Commissions. Those added during this Commission include James Herbert, Julie Peopall, Catherine Molloy, Sophie Lovejoy, Roderick Lovejoy, Sidney Reeves, Harry Waldemar Brown, Andrew Kidd, Kirsty Barrett and

Susannah Wheeler. Baptisms are essentially a family occasion and it is always good to welcome individual families into both the family of the ship and the worshipping family of the Christians in the Chapel.

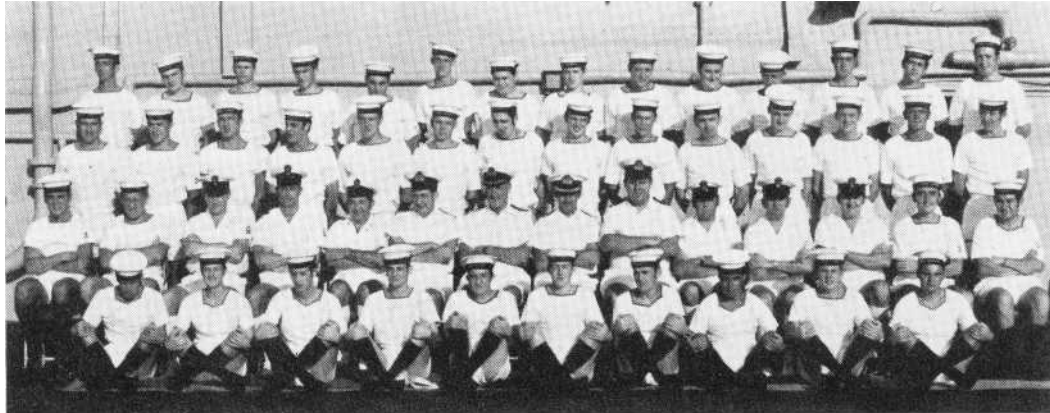
There have been two ship's Chaplains during the Commission, the Revd John Tyrell, who left to work at the Cathedral in Hong Kong and the Revd Michael Bucks. They have not spent the whole time as the only 'friends and advisors of all onboard' as a Chaplain is described in QRRN. Marine Chaplains have come and gone with their Units: The Revds John Beach, Bill Weldon, and Nigel Pond. The Revds Ken King, Ian Hulse, Mike Jones, Frank and Gerry Hurst have all spent varying lengths of time onboard as RC Chaplains.



IN MEMORIAM

Ldg. Stwd. Mak Fung Cheong
31st December 1971
CAPETOWN

ALBION'S COMMS WORLD



It was a dull January day when most of us arrived in Portsmouth to join the ship. The first few weeks were spent in settling down and proved to be quite amusing. One of our younger staff (who shall remain nameless) spent many a fruitless hour searching for the Billiard Room—the key of which was provided with admirable alacrity by HQ 1.

Our trip to the Arctic provided us with a foretaste of the task ahead. It then only remained for us to prepare ourselves for the warmer climes of the Far East Station with a here we come 'Singers' party held at Twiggy's (R02 Defroand) place. The star of this occasion was our wayward Irish DJ Prince George Armstrong who was a credit to the Guinness Brewery. This social allowed us to get to know each other properly and paved the way to the formation of our sports teams for our grand tour of the Far East. The few runs ashore prior to Singapore allowed us to acclimatise Comms wise and socially to life in Asia.

The time in Singapore was taken up by station leave, sport and the occasional trip to Aggie Weston's. On the whole we gave a pretty good account of ourselves in and around Terror's playing fields with our Football and Rugby teams playing as many ships and establishments as time allowed. We were also well represented in the ship's teams with five members in the 1st and 2nd Rugby teams and mentions in the Hockey and Football. Our A/SCO Lieutenant Straw was a king of the Golf course and could do a good impression of Arnold Palmer.

After a short jolly in Kobe, it was 'Down Under' for us. I doubt if the people of Fremantle and Perth will forget

us in a hurry, certainly not whilst the Parrot in the Australia Hotel is still alive. On our return to Singapore our Barbecue at the Dockyard Pool was quite a rave even if the rain did put a bit of a damper on it. After a short while in Hong Kong it was back to Singapore for the last time. It was an impressive sight to see the ships steam out of 'Singers' but perhaps it will be better remembered as the start of our trip home.

Christmas was close now and it was felt by all that perhaps we could do something for the children in Hospital at this time. With due speed the plans were formulated and executed, Bagsy's (R02 Baker) local Hospital being selected from the hat by the SCO. With only two months to go collecting was in full swing. At this time we were cruising off the Persian Gulf and we were in evidence in most of the sporting events arranged to keep us all sane. In the Horse Racing the punters amongst us formed a syndicate with a view to breaking the bank. With the purchase of Yellow Peril out of Spite by the Gunnery Officer and with our intrepid jockey, Amos Burke, they were all set. In the race he was only just beaten into second place but, due to expense, it was decided to put the winnings on another nag, which went down at the first fence. Oh, well!

In the Boxing championships it is rumoured that our entry Kevin (Cassius) Carr fought his way to the Semi-finals without landing a punch, only to be knocked down by a 10 foot Marine. Our contender for the Miss Persian Gulf title had a little more success as (HE) managed to scratch his way into second place.

By now the Pakistan emergency had come and gone and we were on our way home but forced to celebrate Christmas at sea. This wasn't an ideal situation but we managed to improvise fairly well. We made our presence felt at the Carol concert; as were our hockey sticks in the match the following day. It was said later that we 'marked' the opposing Heads of Departments team very well! It was however felt inadvisable for our team to take their wounds to the PMO's domain. Some days before, the Christmas Childrens' collection had been counted for the last time, and it boasted a total of £75.75p which was promptly despatched to the Sister of the Childrens' Ward of the Ipswich Hospital.

As we prepared for our arrival in Portsmouth, Gerry Repetto transferred to Argonaut for passage to Tristan Da Cunha, to have a reunion, after six years, with his family.

Our stay in Portsmouth was soon over and soon we were on our way to the Med. The work was hard and little time available for recreation but we made the most of what little we had. Kevin Carr and Ray Leadbetter gave a good account of themselves in the Gibraltar 'Top of the Rock' race, Kev coming second to a Marine.

The 'Meet the Navy' cruise around Scotland culminated in the all too short trip to Rotterdam with its easy access to Canal Street and various forms of literature. In these few weeks left before we sail North again and eventually 'do' Canada we are thinking of last voyages together and of Drafts. It has been a good commission and perhaps we will sail together again in the future.

40 COMMANDO ROYAL MARINES



For the last twenty-five years 40 Commando, Royal Marines was based outside UK but on 1 November 1971 we said good-bye to the Far East in general and Singapore in particular.

It was pleasant to be able to meet our friends and colleagues in *Albion* again and within days of you arriving at Singapore we were aboard for exercises in Brunei and Malaya. Perhaps the keynote of these deployments was the friendliness on the part of everyone and we in the Commando really did feel part of the ship - not simply the 'embarked force' as often happens.

But of course our main purpose after leaving Singapore was the covering of the British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf and most of us have the warmest memories of our time aboard. Mombasa, of course, would require a book to mention all that happened, but suffice it to say that it provided a good 'break'. We still wonder how *Albion* managed to hold us all; apart from your ship's company there were 600 of us in four Companies: A, B, C, HQ & S; 7 (Sphinx) Bty R.A., 1 troop of 59 Field Squadron R.E., Dieppe Flight and the Commando Brigade FAC Team and S.B.S. detachment! I believe I speak for everyone when I say how welcome you made us feel. Your hospitality was much appreciated, especially in view of the fact that conditions must have been far more cramped than usual.

We were disappointed that we could not get ashore in the Gulf but this was more than made up by the news that we were to fly home for Christmas. Believe it or not, this was greeted with mixed feelings; many people genuinely wanted to visit South Africa (especially after hearing of your 'runs ashore' on the way out) but it was nice to get home for the festive season - even if it was freezing! It would certainly have been nice to have sailed into Plymouth Sound as a complete entity, ship and embarked force together, but it was not to be. As it turns out you have had the last laugh because since our F.S.L. and a training period we have been employed on an operational tour in Ulster. This has kept us very busy and the four-month tour is due to finish in October '72. And the future - who knows? Probably another deployment in the New Year in a Commando Carrier in our true role of amphibious ops. But regardless of the future I am sure that I speak for all the Commando Group when I say how much we enjoyed our time with you in 1971 and how much we appreciated your efforts to help us integrate with the ship.

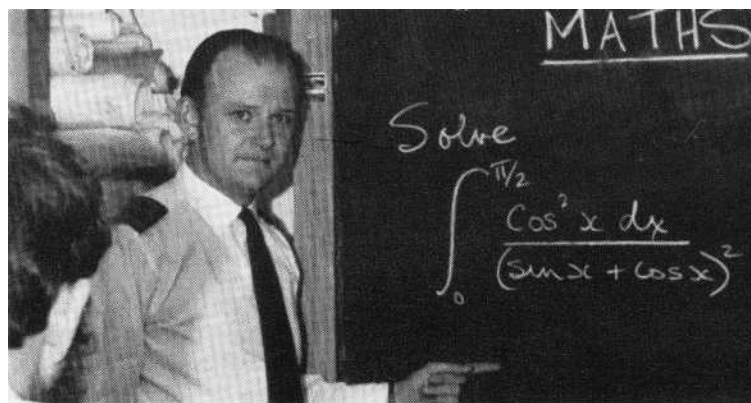
by JACKBOOT

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

After several moves, and some considerable subversive activity, the Schoolroom finally found a permanent home on the port side of the After Dining Hall (that's for the benefit of those who have been waiting there for the last nine months trying to get stamps!). The Resettlement Office soon followed in to the space aft of this and we thought we'd won. No so! Some bright spark then decided to scrap the big 'A'.

The present location is, of course, ideal, being right in the heart of the ship. However a hazard has recently developed due to the large number of Westerns we've had on board in that the entrance to the Schoolroom has been permanently blocked every morning with dead Indians - or at least their beer cans!

Despite the obstacles and exercises we've had a successful commission both with NAMET and GCE classes. Our visit to Hong Kong coincided with the 'O' levels exam and these were taken in the comfort of HMS Tamar. Unfortunately the last exams which



NAMET! Who's kidding who?

will be taken on board will occur whilst we are in mid-Atlantic so let's hope it's calm.

The Resettlement side of the house has also had its successes, Coxswain Ted Heath obtaining a PRVT in Cabinet Making and Communicator Enoch Powell taking a Civilian Attachment in Uganda.

Language study, using the Lingua-phone sets, was popular and frequently

foreign embellishments to the normal day-to-day chat have been heard coming from 5C, particularly after a RAS.

Finally a thank you to our Librarians during the commission, CPOs Brennan and Farmery for their regular service and to Ed O's assistants, AB Harris, Marine Wilson and POMEM Petty for their invaluable help.

ROYAL MARINE DETACHMENT

The Detachment formed up at Eastney Barracks on the parade ground on 22 September 1970. After drawing kit, fitting tropical uniforms and carrying out drill and weapon training, it moved to ATURM for landing craft pre-embarkation training. It was an eventful time with plenty of hard work, and exhausting runs ashore.

The Detachment finally joined HMS *Albion* on 8 December 1970.

The ship left for 'CLOCKWORK 71', and gave the LCVPs the chance to do an INDEX up the River Dart, nearly getting stuck at Totnes. On returning LIMA 1 carried away the falls, which meant returning to Dartmouth for a drink whilst the Bosun and his party fixed them. Not a very popular start to the commission!

For 'CLOCKWORK 71' the boats were despatched to Harstad for cold weather trials, and so the Detachment were the only ones to get a run ashore - not even now will they divulge the details.

The next run was in Ascension Island where the LCVP crews first learnt about liberty boats and all that is entailed in running them. Durban saw our first quarterdeck guard, and not for the last time the OCRM nearly electrocuting himself by sticking his sword into the lantern. The Sergeant Major met his merchant navy brother there, and they nearly drank the place dry between them. Our departure was not too soon! On the way up, the Detachment provided the policemen for Neptune, and made an excellent job of chasing people onto the flight deck and presenting the new boys to His Majesty.

On reaching the Far East Station we picked up 40 Commando, our soul mates to be for the rest of the year, and went to Brunei for an exercise. The LCVPs were detached up the Temburong River and had a whale of a time - their harbour area being opposite the local girls' dhobey area.

The first task on our arrival in Singapore was a visit to Tiger Breweries - arranged before even leaving UK. Exercises alternated with some excellent visits and runs ashore, culminating in our presence for the final withdrawal

from Singapore, mourned chiefly by us and the Tiger Brewery shareholders.

With 40 Commando on board, lying to a buoy in Mombasa proved a busy time for all the Detachment. For many it was also a first experience with Jungle Bunnies - for the older hands a reminder of the old days in cruisers. 40 Commando chickened out before Christmas, and left us to hold up the Royal Marines mantle - this was done by winning the volleyball (again) and a New Year visit to Capetown. On return to UK many of the Detachment trickled away to other units, and we started the build up for the *Hermes* Detachment.

The most notable effort during our West of Suez lap was running liberty boats nearly everywhere we went, which always provided an interesting time on duty. By the end of the commission each boat had run in the region of 500 hours - which is a record. Up forward, the Assault Stores department continued to pamper the embarked force and keep them supplied with all their needs - it is even rumoured that fresh honey could be produced if required.

With 100 % Scottish Sergeants' Mess our runs up North were most popular, and several mums saw the wilder side of their sons, and met their so called friends as well.



Guard Inspection - Consul General, Capetown

By the end of the Summer DAMP the majority of the *Hermes* Detachment had replaced the original detachment. The new faces fitted in well, and it looks as though the *Albion* spirit will get *Hermes* off to a good start in her first commission as an LPH.



Beach ahoy - Malaysia