

# VISITING AIRCRAFT



*Chance-Vought Crusader (F8)*



*Douglas Skyhawk (A4D)*



*McDonnell Phantom (F4B)*

## VISITING AIRCRAFT



*Grumman  
Tracker Cod*



*Kaman  
Seasprite*



*Bolton Paul  
Balliol*



## MOMBASA

After a fairly straightforward S.M.P. in Singapore during January we sailed for the familiar Singapore practice areas, wearing the flag of the new Flag Officer, Second-in-Command, Rear Admiral C. P. Mills, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.C., while we welcomed on board Vice-Admiral D. C. E. F. Gibson, C.B., D.S.C., now Flag Officer Naval Air Command. Then, at the start of February, we set off westwards for Gan and Mombasa in order to give H.M.S. *Eagle* a change of scene. The passage was not without its own critical moments: a Chief Petty Officer fell down the lift well but, mercifully, survived; the Spline valves gave us all, and especially the Flight Deck Engineers, a nasty time (unavailing cries of "The Buzz is Guzz") and a Naval Airman disappeared for a couple of days and was eventually discovered to have stowed himself away (on the Section Rounds route of all places!).

The island paradise of Gan, with an inner lagoon deep enough to take the S.S. *Queen Mary*, provided us with several days of diversion flying and we took over the task of *Watchdog of the West* from *Eagle*, with signalled shouts of Uhuru (Freedom) and Merdeka (Freedom). The small R.A.F. complement of Gan could not readily accept a deluge of libertymen from the *Ark* but some liaison visits and late night diversions gave a few a view of the gracious living, tropical beaches and coral gardens of this remote base.

On now to the coast of Kenya and to the welcome of

Mombasa. This town, with its harbour of Kilindini has one of the most attractive approaches in the East, with the silver beaches and the protective coral reefs stretching north and south of the harbour mouth. With a fine, new Alpha range and an attendant photographic helicopter, *Ark* passed sedately by the modern Oceanic Hotel and beside Azania Drive. By 1800 on Friday, 18th February, the official calls had commenced while a swift L.W.E. leave party was already en route for Nairobi. H.M.S. *Rhyl* and H.M.S. *Lowestoft*, who had been our escorts from Singapore, were alongside far down the harbour while *Ark* lay at a buoy, with R.F.A. *Fort Duquesne* astern. A small but efficient fleet of hired boats kept up a regular service with the shore.

Although the scope that the town of Mombasa offers is perhaps more limited than the other ports East of Suez it has three features which are not reproduced elsewhere. The first of these is the existence of miles and miles of unspoiled beach. After the muddy flats of Jason's Bay the warm, soft sand is pure delight and after a short ride in a primitive dug-out across the inner reef there are fascinating fish and formations of coral for the enterprising snorkel swimmers. It should be confessed that the majority of the superb conch and cowrie shells brought back as souvenirs were more likely than not bought from the local experts on the beach rather than picked from the

## MOMBASA



*Masks and assegaes*

ocean bed, as claimed. These beaches are enhanced by the shark-free security offered by the coral reef and by the long shadows of the palms which fringe the shore. A distant beach, a fast car and a friendly blonde might add a touch of excitement, but even the nearer beaches of Nyali and Silversands offer the superb sun, sand and swimming of an airline advertisement.

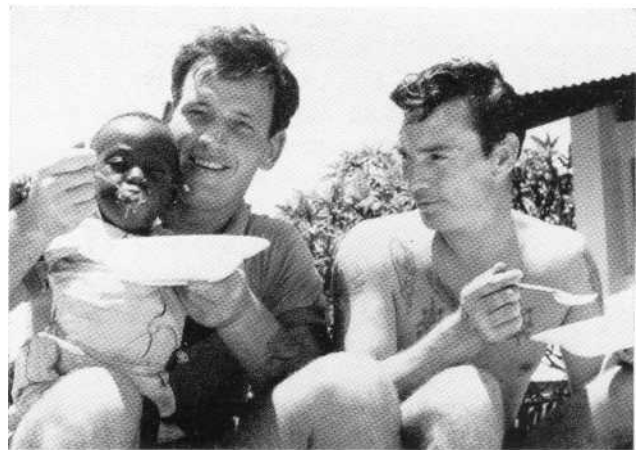
Secondly, among the distinctive delights of the area, there is the presence of the National Parks - either the close one of Tsavo or the more distant Nairobi. Several hundred took the opportunity of coach or minibus trips, setting out at 0430 to be in the Park before the heat of the day stilled the movement of the more shy beasts. How much one sees is a matter of luck - elephant, giraffe, zebra, the varieties of deer, Thompson, Grant or Sable, the diminutive Dik Dik, the wallowing hippo, the ugly wart hog. Occasionally a browsing buffalo or ruminating rhinoceros can be induced to charge - an exhilarating experience for the spectator but one which may cause an unexpected and unprovoked attack on the next innocent arrival on the scene. The predatory cats - lion and leopard - are rarely seen. The cine-enthusiasts were warned that these would only appear while they were changing their reel of film!

The last feature which is very different in Mombasa is the "rabbit run". While the remainder of the Orient sells the identical selection of cheap Japanese and Hong Kong products, together with the tax-free luxuries of Europe, the tradesmen of Kilindini and Salim Roads concentrate their attention on disposing of acres of timber - carved into fierce masks, exotic

fertility symbols, the ubiquitous gazelles - and other native products. The Regulating Office became, temporarily, a repository of weapons or an arsenal of assegaes as Jack decided, late at night, that *he had always needed* a carved wooden spear. Equally popular were the small African drums - reminiscent of "Zulu" or of Rider Haggard, perhaps. These were regarded with even less favour than assegaes by the Leading Hand of the Mess, as many of the cheaper skins had a regrettable tendency to go lousy. The prices were low and, what is more, expressed in shillings not dollars; the designs were original if somewhat primitive.

At the two week-ends the ship fell quiet as many departed up-country to Nairobi and beyond. Many families invited two or three for the week-end and the farming community of Eldoret invited a whole group of 65 - who provided an extempore Rugby team. A more serious Combined XV from the three ships battled with the Railway and Nondescript Clubs and enjoyed their hospitality; a small Squash team and a Shooting team had matches in the capital and the athletes contemplated running all the 300 miles and then thought the better of it. Twenty men of a different calibre enjoyed a quiet run to the local Brewery. Political restrictions on any attempt to leave Kenya ruled out the now traditional Exped to Mount Kilimanjaro - so the equally traditional photograph of the team at the summit is missing.

One of the more flourishing activities during the visit was Arkaid. About 200 officers and men took part in some form of practical, charitable work which included the rebuilding of a causeway at one Mission,



*General mess*

## MOMBASA

the rewiring of huts in another and a considerable amount of general maintenance and painting. Once again the Cheshire Homes came in for a large measure of this assistance. The care of children has often awakened a sympathetic response in the toughest sailor.

Lastly, one should mention the Big Game aspect - once the principal source of notoriety for East Africa, with lean rugged, Hemingway heroes fighting to a death the strong wily sailfish or felling the charging elephant with an immaculately placed bullet. The reality was somewhat different. After a very early start, one reached the favoured fishing ground and slowly trailed one's baited hook in the wake of the motor-boat. Everything was at standby for the strike - the expensive complex reel; the leather and canvas



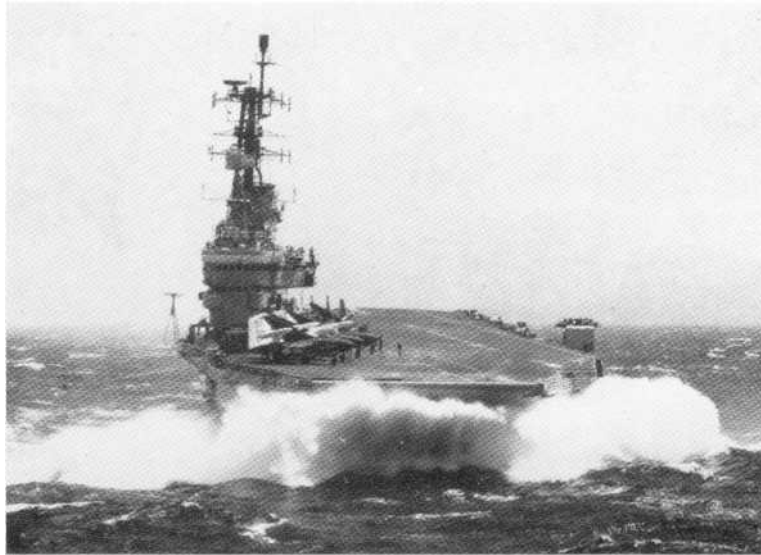
*Doctor and deer*



*Gentle giraffes*

harness so that one can take the strain off one's tiring arms and take it across one's shoulders; the strengthened foot rest against which to thrust. An hour passes; a fish rises near the bows and the African "boy" lets out a shrill cry, altering course towards the splash; another hour passes, a beer and a cigarette; finally dismal and fishless one returns to base, only to hear that the last boat had landed eighteen large ones. However, it must be recorded that our intrepid hunters - the P.M.O. and Lt.-Cdr. (Flying) - came back from their shooting trip with a most impressive array of horns and skins and their own special police guard to ensure the security of their weapons.

Towards the end of the stay in Mombasa 80 of the Ship's Company were relieved by a draft flown out from home. At the same time, Commander H. P. Janion was relieved by Commander G. I. Pritchard as Executive Officer. For some this brought the wheel full cycle since for them the start of the Fifth Commission had virtually started at Mombasa in October 1963. On the 3rd March we sailed again, believing our destination to be Gan and Singapore.

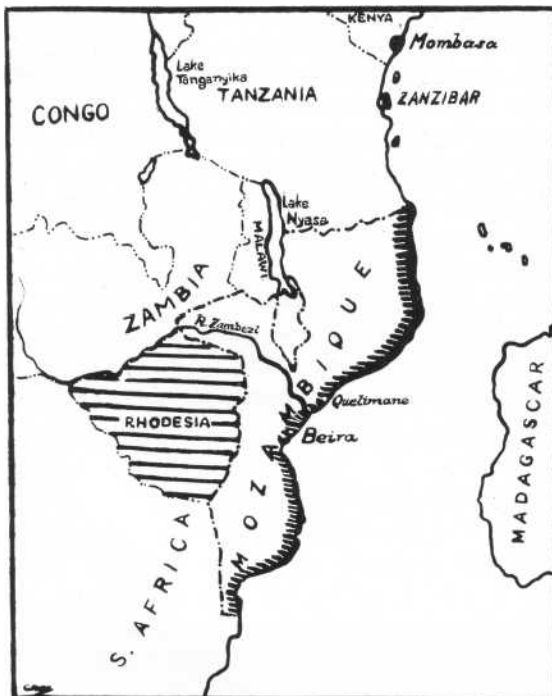


## THE BATTLE OF BEIRA

**O**n leaving Mombasa the Captain announced that the original programme of *Ark's* return to Singapore had been delayed in order that she should carry out an important operation in support of Her Majesty's Government's policy of economic sanctions directed against Mr. Smith's government in Southern Rhodesia. After Mr. Smith's unconstitutional declaration of independence sanctions had been imposed and the loss of a supply of oil was causing concern. It appeared probable that oil might be carried by sea and landed at the Portuguese port of Beira from where it could be pumped to Rhodesia by pipe line. As many nations had committed themselves to the policy of sanctions, it was

required that the nationality of any tankers carrying oil to Beira should be known. This was the task of H.M.S. *Ark Royal* and the escort forces H.M.S. *Rhyl*, *Lowestoft* and, later, *Plymouth*.

The primary means of achieving a full picture of the movements of shipping in the Mozambique Channel was to be the Gannet AEW aircraft of 849C Flight with their combination of radar search and visual identification - and their good endurance on task. These could, however, profit by assistance from the swifter *Sea Vixen* and *Scimitar* aircraft which could rapidly swoop down and identify or photograph the more distant contacts on the Gannet radar. The helicopters were used to investigate those ships which came close enough to the ship. Such combined activities of all the types of aircraft were, after all, what all our months of training had been about. Flying stations was maintained continuously for just under ten days. To keep the aircraft on the job required not only aircrew and handlers but also maintenance teams and every other service, power, electrics, stores, food and so every man found himself a part of the team, of which the Gannet was the active agent.

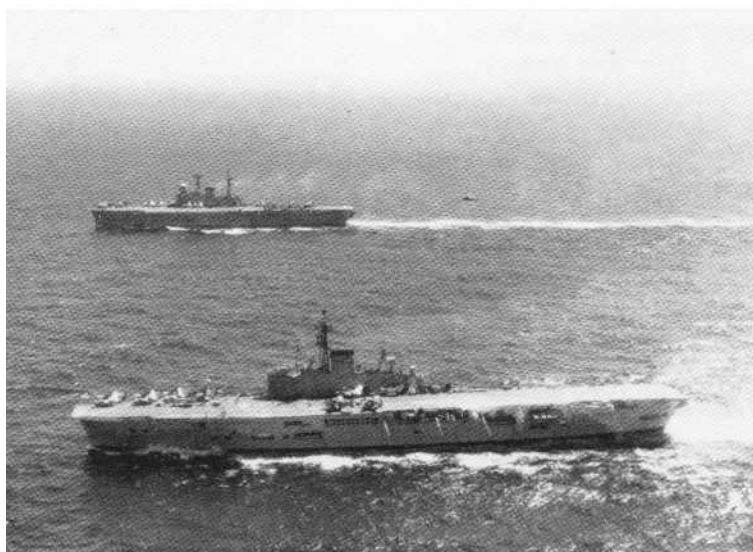


## BATTLE OF BEIRA

The operation was sustained for several days during which the weather deteriorated due to the influence of a distant storm, Ivy. This hampered but did not seriously curtail flying although it made a R.A.S. of fuel with R.F.A. *Tideflow* an unexpectedly laborious evolution. The return to northern waters seemed far nearer in these conditions of heavy sea and swell. The last quarter of the foreign leg of the commission had just been entered.

*Ark Royal's* activities had been released to the press and the Portuguese therefore felt it necessary to send a daily aircraft to supervise our movements. On the first occasion the unidentified contact, or "bogey", was intercepted by a Gannet which was conveniently placed - to the intense joy of 849C who felt they had now moved into the "fighter" world.

As the days wore on it became apparent that press and radio reports of "tankers due to arrive at first light" were not borne out by the facts. (A report that *Ark Royal* was operating her *Buccaneers* indicates the accuracy of reporting.) The arrival of H.M.S. *Eagle* to take over the task of surveillance was therefore welcome and the two great carriers steamed side by side throughout one afternoon in a mood of mutual admiration and awe. Rear Admiral W. D. O'Brien, C.B., D.S.C., who had recently become Flag Officer, Aircraft Carriers, paid a brief visit and flew his flag in *Ark* for the one day. On his return to *Eagle* we were free to resume the long interrupted passage to Gan and to Singapore, for an S.M.P. in the Dockyard, for Easter and for a final fling of oriental shopping and pleasure, before returning in May for a second, longer patrol.





# SHIPWRIGHT DEPARTMENT

You may have noticed us in and around the ship, which is not really surprising considering that we deal with a myriad of jobs that take us into every compartment from 04 deck to the keel.

The older the ship, the heavier the work load for the "chippy" staff. Our Department is subdivided into various sections. Working directly under the Planned Maintenance Officer are the Ventilation, Survey and Paint Spraying Parties. On the workshop side we have the old established Chippies, Blacksmiths, Plumbers, Boat and Paint Shops. The machinery in these is not modern and age has brought them to a temperamental stage. But, if it is any consolation, Noah built and maintained his Ark without even what we have!

From the Planned Maintenance office, the hub of the wheel, a constant inspection of over two thousand compartments is organized. This task is the Survey party's duty, a rather monotonous, ceaseless and unromantic job, but very essential in order that the ship's structure be maintained in good state. Chief Shipwright Coventry, in charge of the party, is fortunately blessed with a most cheerful disposition and a fluent knowledge of the Chinese Dialects; his staff must have been affected because they are often heard to mutter some unintelligible words, presumably Chinese! If you see a shipwright in a cage being lowered into a dark and murky compartment it is

because we've run out of canaries, and in the tropics the air can be foul.

The Ventilation Party also have a mammoth work load that keeps them busy every day, and frequently at night. There are approximately a thousand separate ventilation systems to maintain with many miles of trunking meandering throughout the ship, even in the darkest depths - it nearly drives them "airless". We have never been able to find out where Chief Shpt. Spencer, in charge of this party, gets his sun tan from. He must have one of those new fangled lamps!

Over 200 job cards a month come into the Planned Maintenance Office, the logging and returns of these are just one of the many jobs that Chief Shpt. Baker, our Planned Maintenance Chief, has to deal with. The long hours he puts in, and the diligence and patience shown in his exacting job have been most impressive. The job cards are logged under various headings viz. Early, Later and - according to some wits - Never, they are then passed to our various workshops to be dealt with at our usual lightning speed.

Our main workshop houses tactful Chief Shpt. Whyman as our Regulating Chief; one *needs* tact and diplomacy in his job, as he produces, apart from the normal ship maintenance requirements, an amazing variety of material for such functions as cocktail parties, children's parties, crossing-the-line ceremonies, pantomimes and stage shows. The occupants of the shop still try to find time to listen patiently to the constant flow of visitors who, with no job cards in their hands, but pleading on their faces come out with the old stock phrases such as, "Can you just . . ." or, "it won't take five minutes . . ." or, "I wonder if it would be possible . . ." not to mention the ever-present line of, "It was picked up on Captains Rounds."

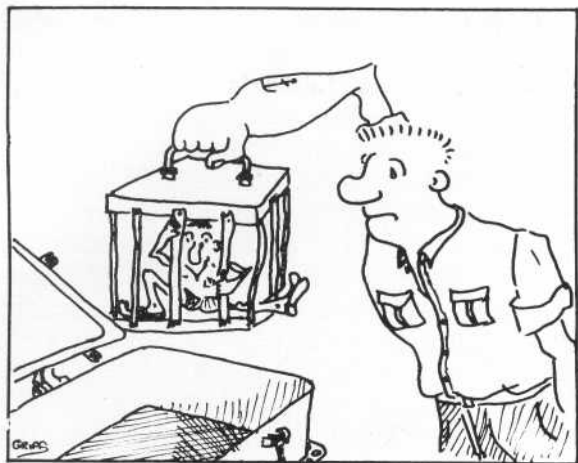
The Plumbers can frequently be found with their arms, and sometimes even their heads, exploring the insides of some most peculiar ship's fittings and holes. To come up smiling from some of these takes some doing, but they do, especially if they have found something that should not have been there anyway. With sixty bathrooms and thirty-three heads compartments to maintain, it's about the same work content as the Hong Kong Hilton although the working conditions are somewhat different. When the Royal Marine Band found themselves short of an instrument at a



*The first Shipwright*



## SHIPWRIGHT DEPARTMENT



*... run out of canaries.. .*

ship's concert in Hong Kong, a W.C. pan was given to them which when played with the aid of a copper pipe, produced unbelievably sweet tones ranging over almost the entire musical scale. One young man made a fatal mistake one day, when, on seeing a Plumber carrying a piece of copper pipe, he asked if he was going to rehearse for a musical evening!

Our musclemen in the Blacksmithing section burn, saw, weld and hammer their way through a huge number of jobs per month and have really no need of those Charles Atlas course books any more- "Have a body like mine in six months" (Chiefs and P.O.'s - 3 months).

During the ship's first visit to Hong Kong it must have been the time of the full moon; we called it "Mids' Madness" fortnight. These "young gentlemen", all budding Jim Clarks or Kamikazes, took over as coxswains of the ship's boats and left a trail of destruction on every jetty and ladder in sight and enough work on our boats to last the two boats Shipwrights for the rest of the commission. Still, one learns by one's mistakes and having one's leave stopped.

The Paint Shop Staff have not been idle either. In weight of paint issued, and presumably applied in various parts of the ship, we have added over 100 tons to the structure, thereby settling the *Ark* an inch deeper in the water. Putty now has the finest collection of station cards in the ship, Regulating Office included, but no pots or brushes.

Without the valuable help of our "mates", both M(E)'s and seamen, who perform a lot of lift and shift and hard graft jobs, we would be stuck. A big "thank you" to them for all their important and, more often than not, cheerful assistance.

On a ship such as the *Ark*, repair and maintenance is, and obviously must be, our main objective and the days of "rabbits" are past. But we hope we have given satisfaction to our customers for we *have* tried to live up to the Chippies' motto - "The difficult we do straight away; the impossible may take a little longer."



*"Another coat of varnish should do the trick"*

## COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Enlightenment is the best word to use to dispel the misapprehension that the esoteric life of the radio operators is all "wine and roses". *Au contraire* we are kept hard at it at sea maintaining the complex communications needed for the Admiral to control his fleet effectively; for the Operations and Direction teams to brief and control our multifarious aircraft safely and efficiently; for the Army ashore to receive rapid air support from our ground attack fighters; and for the R.A.F. to receive air defence fighters from *Ark*. In harbour, on a much smaller scale, but just as vital, we provide the necessary communications for the defence of the harbour against attacks by infiltrators, saboteurs and frogmen, and for local air defence usually required in areas of political unrest.

Concurrent with all the above sophisticated requirements, the mundane task of transmitting and receiving administrative, meteorological and welfare traffic, and private radio telegrams, which usually totals 250 signals daily, goes on. The major hurdle in this process is the actual message handling and distribution in *Ark*, a great work study subject, and the Main Signal Office Staff (bless 'em) require the wisdom of Solomon in making their succinct decisions on the distribution of signals and the memories of elephants when dealing with queries, however nebulously posed by our subscribers.

Two decks below in the Bridge Wireless Office the scene is like a tobacco auction only with signal pad, teleprinter paper, and tapes instead of Virginia Gold Leaf. Here the Radio Supervisor of the Watch wrestles with problems called Radhaz, outages, tracers, portables for the crash boat, an S.B.A.'s telegram, the D's SSB, air move diversion, talking to a passing Shackleton or fishing boat, placating the Operations staff, frequency shifts, and other dissimilar oddities with one thing in common - communications. Ten decks further down, below the water-line, the crypto staff encrypt, decrypt, and resolve corruptions (in cryptograms, not in the tea boat).

As we move round the globe, our methods of communication and the shore stations, via which we clear our signals, vary considerably. We are not restricted to Commonwealth Stations such as Mauritius, Singapore, and Sydney, but Washington D.C., Manila, Rome, Brest, Kolsaas (Norway), Vishakhapatnam, and many others accept our traffic willingly by radio automatic teletype, morse, or voice. Similarly, communications with diversion airfields and ports visited vary.

And what about the greatest single factor - the Man? We are split into three sub-specializations; General (G), which embraces every aspect of radio communications from long distance ship-shore to comparatively short distance local radio links; Tactical (T), which deals with intra-fleet tactical communications, which are usually UHF, i.e. short range, or visual, and an exacting knowledge of fleetwork is needed; Warfare (W), a black art which denies the enemy the use of his radio by measures such as jamming. In addition, there are unspecialized ratings who serve a communication apprenticeship, and carry out basic communication operating tasks, cryptography, and message handling before sub-specializing as (G), (T) or (W). The documentation required in the Regulating Office when an RO(T) goes from U.A. to G. aggravates the Master-at-Arms (an ex-sparker too!) to profanity over this nomenclature of rum and rate!

For advancement courses, the main academy has been Kranji W/T, where the effects of an Olympiad size swimming pool and excellent playing fields have not been too deleterious on classroom results, and a steady rate of success is maintained. One RO(U) described a receiver malfunction known as "cycling" as a "cyclone in the set", and obviously had tropical storm Agnes, when we rode off Hong Kong, on his mind at the time.

For sport we join forces with the Royal Marines Band and create an effective presence on the Soccer pitch against the other parts-of-ship teams. The Department's sportex days at Singapore, with all joining in from 17 to 40 years of age, have been more beneficial than any Johore Massage Parlour.

In conclusion, apart from the odd isolated fire, willowing air conditioning, and, let us hope, the last of water rationing, the commission so far has been a healthy challenge to us all, and we look forward to when computers and communication satellites rule the navy, although the possibility of lack of power on the catapult to launch the latter may still prevail.

# COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT



*Dear Mum, must close . . .*



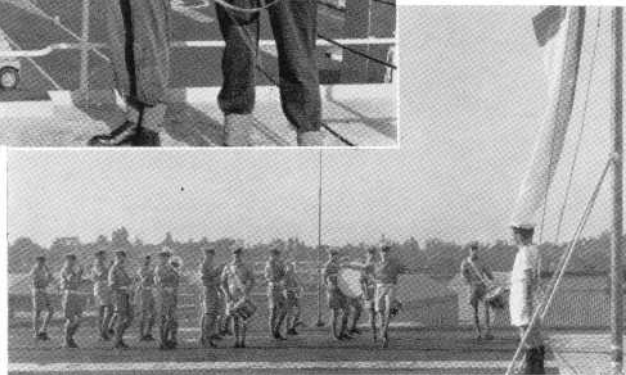
*Guess who has not seen the bad news*



*Double top to win, Sir*



*When you hit the beach, fan out, lads*



*Let's sit ihis out, Bunts*

## ROYAL MARINES BAND

The Royal Marines Band joined H.M.S. Ark Royal a week before the Commissioning Ceremony, and an agonizing week it was, too, as we rehearsed both the routine for Colours, which was to become a part of our daily life, and also for the more formal performance at the Commissioning. As if things on board were not already complicated enough, we added to the sense of confusion as we struggled from end to end of the ship, and up and down innumerable ladders, carrying instruments of a variety of shapes and sizes. Each jolly sailor that one passed had his attempt at original humour; it is remarkable how the very sight of a flute or a double bass brings out the worst in other people!

There is, fortunately, no need for us to explain what *we* do on board. We play Music. No matter what the occasion, we are there with an appropriate selection of players and tunes. If the Fleet Commander holds a Reception on the Flight Deck, we turn out in our helmets and Beat Retreat, we have done this in each foreign port we have visited. For dancing there are the *Ark Angels* and for Concert parties we have a small orchestra, together with a strange set of party pieces on bassoon or wash-board. We have provided a Palm Court atmosphere for the Quarterdeck or a Salvationist air to Sunday Half-Hour on the Flight Deck. We greet Admirals on their arrival and we cheer up the workers with gay tunes during Replenishment. We have even been waterborne to greet our good friends in *Eagle* but they did not seem to appreciate our serenade. The drum and bugle boys have also provided that outstanding musical medley which is designed to get one through the day's routine from Reveille to Last Post, but it is thought that there are still some who go to the Mail Office every time Flying Stations is sounded.

Far be it from us to restrict our efforts to the purely cultural and aesthetic role; we have given our Band President, the Gunnery Officer, assistance in some of the other tasks for which he is responsible. In accordance with long standing naval tradition we have twiddled knobs and made settings in the T.S. and have worked in the Stygian darkness of the G.D.R. The Sergeants have done their bit in the A.D.R. It has yet to be revealed what the Bandmaster does during these exercises, but he has been seen looking very important, with a clutch of papers in his hand, and a distinct air of knowing what is going on. The Air Gunner has received some help from us with his Air Weapons Supply problems. It is confidently expected that, one day, a Sea Vixen will be launched armed with a tail-fuzed trombone and a pod of clarinets.

Lastly, we have attempted to bring to the ship something of the spirit and example of the Royal Marines. Although we have learned to call floors "decks" and staircases "ladders" we have maintained our Barracks and have given a lesson or two on care and cleanliness which has earned its due reward in cakes. Our boots are bigger and brighter and our hair is shorter - but then we carry our own cobbler and barber. Big, bushy and small, sleek moustaches have declared our independence unilaterally. Nevertheless, we for our part enjoyed this opportunity to imbibe our share of the spirit of the Navy in good measure.



*Postscript.* At one of our concerts we were able to give the first performance of a work for the *Flügelpharten*, an instrument of original design. The conventional bell opening of the brass wind instrument was replaced by a deep, resonant chamber of porcelain; while the tubing is straight and of copper. The joint between the tubing and the sounding base was supported by a disused scrubbing brush. After several performances the instrument was ruined by a demand from the Naval Stores for the return of the main component for use in its designed role.

# ROYAL MARINES BAND



*Full dress*



*Half dress*



*Fancy dress*