

H.M.S. ARK ROYAL



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FOREWORD

Captain M. P. POLLOCK, M.V.O., D.S.C., Royal Navy



Two and a half years is a long time to serve in a strike carrier - especially when over half of it has been spent east of Suez, but at least those of you who have served in *Ark* for this full time, and indeed all of us to some degree, can say that we have undertaken one of the most demanding jobs that the Navy has to offer and, I believe, done it well.

A carrier is such a large organization that there is within it an infinite variety of tasks - dangerous, glamorous, exhausting, boring, skilled, unskilled, technical, domestic. The only characteristic that they all share is that they contribute to the efficiency and smooth running of the powerful weapon which is formed by the combination of the carrier and her air group.

As I have watched you surmount the successive crises of carrier life, or go on plugging away at the same hard and dirty job for months longer than you originally expected, I have been very proud to command this great ship and her company. In saying this, I should like to include the wives, if they **will** let me. No married man, many thousands of miles away from his family, can possibly give of his best unless he can picture his home as a secure base: and who can establish this other than his wife? So to all the many *Ark Royal* wives who have done so during the long commission, I say thank you.

And what has been our reward? First, the knowledge of a job well done and another good commission behind us. Second, the knowledge that the presence of this powerful ship and her aircraft is a stabilizing influence in the troubled areas to which we have been. We too are a *deterrent* to trouble makers and, during this second leg east of Suez, have been sent to possible centres of unrest while *Malaysia* was born and while self-government in *Kenya* grew towards independence.

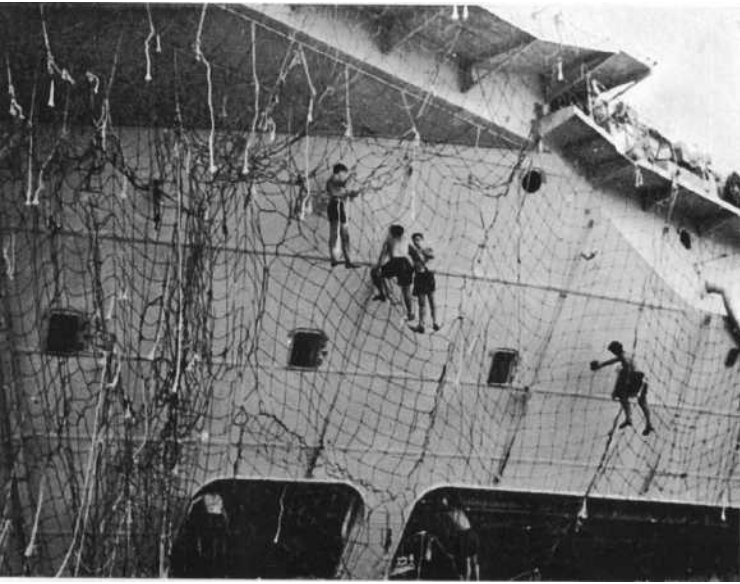
Worthwhile? Yes, of course.

M. P. Pollock



CHANGE OF OWNER

RECOMMISSIONING



CLEANING AWAY THE COBWEBS

HOW THEY SAW IT

September 1961

8th *Glasgow Evening Citizen*

Ark Royal, the Navy's most powerful aircraft carrier, will recommission at Devonport on Tuesday after a six-month routine refit, the Admiralty announced today.

8th *Gloucester Echo*

Following post-refit trials she will go to the Mediterranean station with Scimitar, Sea Vixen and Gannet aircraft on board.

8th *Coventry Evening Telegraph*

She will be the first ship in the fleet to have an operational squadron of Wessex anti-submarine helicopters.

8th *Swindon Evening Advertiser*

The Carrier has been fitted with the most powerful flight deck steam catapults in the Navy.

9th *Yorkshire Post*

When she is fully operational in the Mediterranean *Ark Royal* will have a complement of 2,300 officers and men, including aircrew from the four Royal Naval air squadrons embarked.

11th *Daily Telegraph*

When Britain's largest aircraft carrier, the *Ark Royal*, 43,340 tons, is recommissioned at Devonport tomorrow, she will have another British invention, an improved steam catapult able to deal with the heaviest naval aircraft.

11th *Bristol Evening Post*

A Dorset man, Captain Donald Cameron Ernest Forbes Gibson, will take over command of the aircraft carrier *Ark Royal* when she recommissions at Devonport tomorrow. Captain Gibson (45) has lived at Staddlestone, Halstock, Dorset, for the past eighteen months, though for eleven months of that time he has been taking a National Defence College course in Canada.

The recommissioning ceremony is planned as a *family affair*. Relatives of the ship's company, which includes many men from Bristol and the West Country, will form the biggest part of the guest list, and only a handful of V.I.P.s is expected, mostly men who have had some previous connection with the ship.

12th *Western Evening Herald*

Attending the commissioning ceremony today were the present Flag Officer Aircraft Carriers, Rear Admiral R. M. Smeeton, and Flag Officer Flying Training, Rear Admiral F. H. E. Hopkins.

RECOMMISSIONING

Navy News

The religious service was conducted by the ship's chaplain, the Reverend K. P. Evans, Chaplain, Royal Navy.

Addressing the ship's company the captain referred to the spirit which the fourth commission had inherited with the name *Ark Royal* and said that the new commission had a duty to enhance the reputation of the ship in order to pass it on to their successors.

Commissioning cakes were cut by the Captain and Mrs. Gibson, Lieut.-Cdr. Skinner (Commanding Officer, 815 Squadron) and Mrs. Skinner, Master-at-Arms Roberts and Mrs. Roberts, and Chief Air Artificer Prynn and Mrs. Prynn. The guests then adjourned to the forward end of the hangar for tea.



CUTTING THE CAKE



A FAMILY AFFAIR

FLAG OFFICER AIRCRAFT CARRIERS



REAR ADMIRAL D. C. E. P. GIBSON, D.S.C.

Having been in the *Ark Royal* for two years, part of the time as your captain and the rest as the Flag Officer Aircraft Carriers, responsible for all the carriers at sea, I am very grateful to have been asked to write a small piece in this book.

The editor asked me to say something about the duties of the F.O.A.C. which he thought might be interesting and relevant to a ship's company who have accommodated him so long.

The F.O.A.C. has a staff of aviation, operational and technical experts and is normally in operational and administrative command of the aircraft carriers on the station on which his flag is flying, he also normally commands the Carrier Task Group in large exercises conducted by the three alliances, NATO, LENTO and SEATO, though if only one carrier is present at one of these exercises it is perfectly feasible and frequently the case, that the carrier captain commands the ship and the task group. The F.O.A.C. has a permanent NATO command, i.e. Commander Carrier Strike Group Two, which is the British element of the NATO Strike Fleet.

The F.O.A.C. is responsible to Commanders-in-Chief, and to the Admiralty, for the operational and technical efficiency of all aircraft carriers, and for the standardization of methods and drills, for that reason he carries out operational readiness inspections of all these ships from time to time.

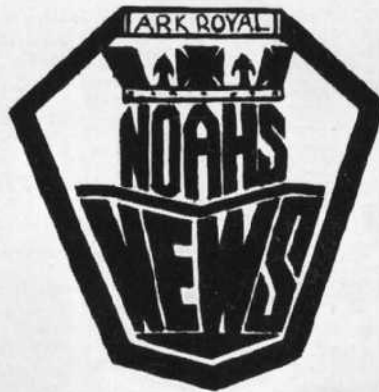
He is also responsible for the development of tactics involving both aircraft and aircraft carriers at sea.

The above is very broadly speaking an account of my duties and it will be readily understood that to carry them out it is essential that I and my staff should be always at sea in a carrier, so as readily to understand the conditions under which carriers operate and the difficulties and problems involved.

Having done what I was asked to by your editor I will interpose my good wishes to all of you in your future careers. No one can serve in the *Ark Royal* without gaining some sort of personal improvement from the spirit of this great ship. I have always enjoyed your company, though very occasionally some of your antics have caused me pain my overall impression is one of admiration and pleasure. A magnificent ship and an extremely good, well-led and well-behaved ship's company.

Good luck to you all.

READ ALL ABOUT IT



Editor : M. Marston.

Cover by : R. Fox.

THE CHRONICLE OF THE ARK.

And on the 17th day of the 11th month, the Ark did reach J-Brawl-Tar, and the merchants of the City did welcome the children of Gib-Son and did sell them many Ray-Bitts to take back to their Pashes in the homelands. But the Roz-Zers of J-Brawl-Tar were sore afraid and did scour the streets and look for the children of the Ark. For, on this island there is an Oy-Il of the boiled kind and it doth make a man witless and unafraid when drunken of.

And, lo ! many of the children of the Ark did transgress when having partaken of the Oy-Il and they were scared, but Cap-Tan Gib-Son, in his wisdom, had sent many men ashore with their waists and ankles girded with white, and the Roz-Zers did deliver the witless ones unto these men called Patt-Rolls, and the witless ones were saved.

Then, on the 20th day of the 11th month, the Ark did leave J-Brawl-Tar and did go into the heaving wastes to go to Mawl-Tar.

On the second day, when there was no land in sight, Cap-Tan Gib-Son did call unto him the Eff-Dee-Ee-Oh, also called Sha-Rok, a mighty man for he did hurl the great grey Simmy-Tars from the deck of the Ark, so that they might seek out the enemies of Brit-Tan. And Cap-Tan Gib-Son did say unto him, "Let your minions bring forth the Simmy-Tars, the Vicks-Hens, the Gah-Netts and the Chop-Pears, for they have languished long in the belly of the Ark, and have grown idle!"

So the Fowl of the Ark were brought into the sunlight, and did rejoice with loud and mighty roars, and for three days did fly off and did return until the Ark did reach the calm waters of Mawl-Tar.

(To be continued)

L.M.E. Solly

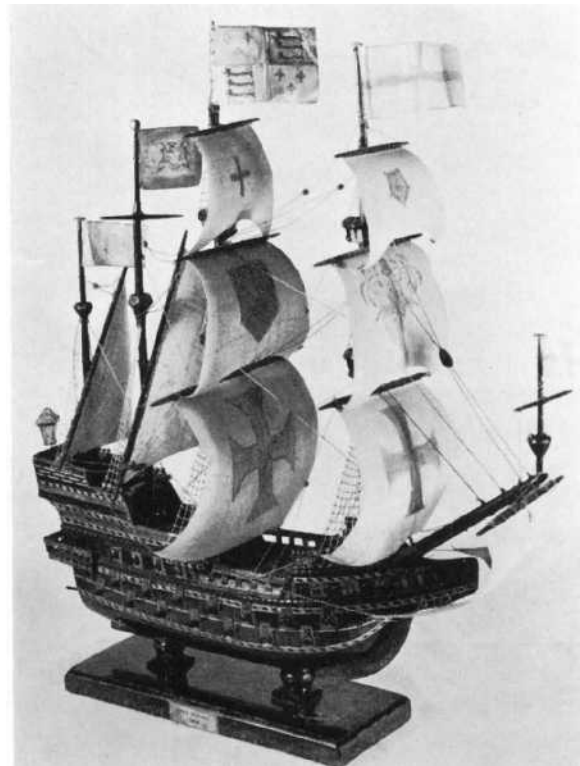
THE ARK ROYAL TRADITION

Battle Honours 1586-1941

Armada	1588
Dardanelles	1915
Norway	1940
Spartivento	1940
Mediterranean	1940-1
"Bismarck"	1941
Malta convoys	1941

It is only fitting that a west-countryman, Sir Walter Raleigh, should have commissioned the first Ark Royal. She was laid down in 1586 as the Ark Raleigh but before she was launched, in 1588, Queen Elizabeth had bought her for £5,000. In that year she wore the standard of Lord Howard of Effingham, the Lord Admiral, who wrote of her: "We can see no sail, great nor small, but how far soever they be off, we fetch them and speak with them." A prophetic statement of the role of our A.E.W. aircraft. He also wrote: ". . . and I pray you tell Her Majesty from me that her money was well given for the Ark Raleigh. . . ." and so it proved for she was to serve forty-eight years before she was finally broken up. Another interesting link with our illustrious forebear is that she, too, was usually referred to familiarly as Ark.

Of all her engagements her most famous was the first, when, in the year that she was launched, she took a leading part in all the engagements with the Armada, from the first action off Plymouth until the battle of Gravelines: she then led the chase into the North Sea, driving the beaten remnants of the Spanish Fleet beyond the Firth of Forth.



ARKE ROYALLE