



FROM "FATHER" TO "FATHER"



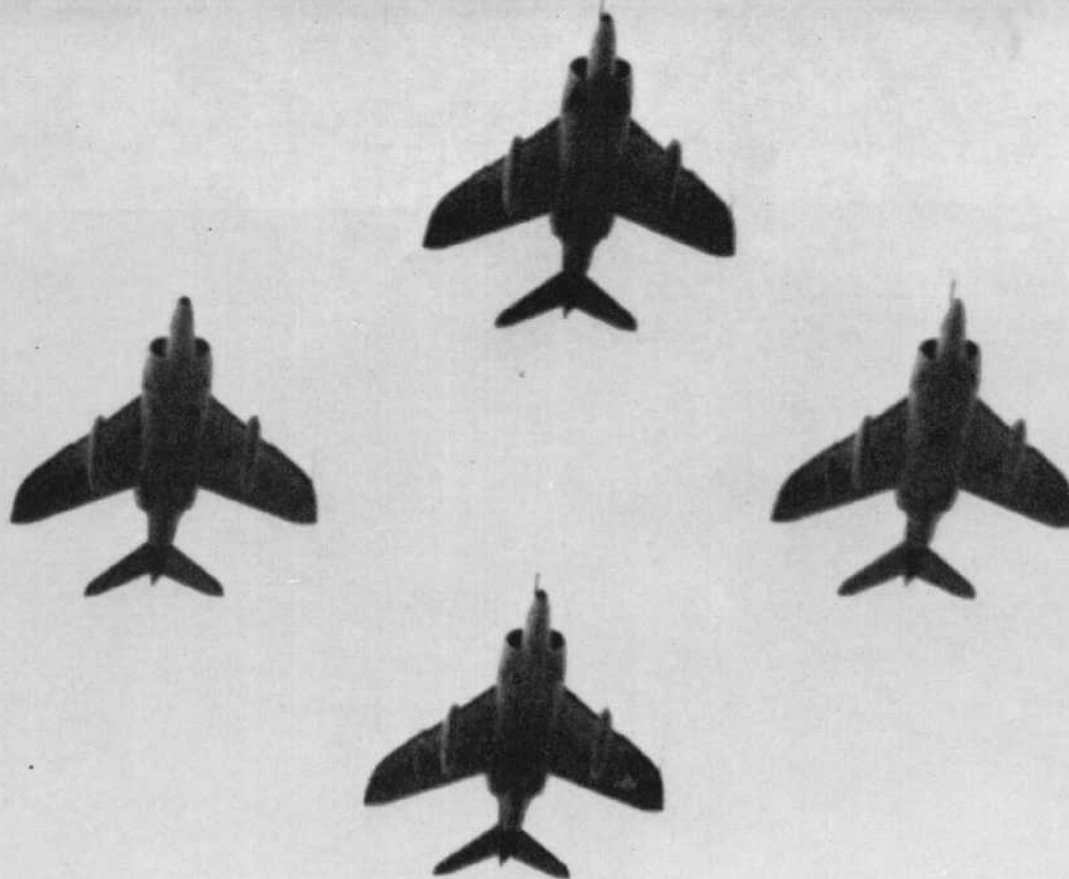
MERRY "L"



CHEER UP, CHIEF!



BOAT ROUTINE ADRIFT?



## 800 Squadron

**T**ake an ex-Farnborough display squadron and give it to a contractor's working party for a major modification programme. At the same time, start chipping rust off all that unused operational equipment and preparing for sea. Net result? One can of worms! An accurate assessment of 800'8 state when we embarked seven aircraft on 13th November 1961, leaving five to meet us in the [Med. a.s.a.p.](#)

After Subby Morris's ceremonial initiation in La Linea, we started the work-up off Malta with navigation, air-to-ground and air-to-air training, highlighted by the *Hollywood* death spin of the last R.N. Firefly drone, clobbered by one of our missiles.

Rested by spaghetti, signorinas and siestas in Naples (Rome for the Barons), we flew realistic long-range strikes in southern Italy and did lots of P.R. in Sicily, where most of us simply got lost, but a few Swots brought back very good photos of the right targets.

In Bighi Bay, within rhubarbing range of 803 in Victorious (by now we'd flown nearly as many hours as they had in their whole cruise) we introduced Malta to the famous Red Blade social technique (and the Boss won the Grimmy Trophy) before starting exercises off Tripoli.

The pride of the R.A.F. stood on Tachuna Range (North Africa) in the shape of a huge whitewashed, *you-can't-miss-it*, bombing target, which we reduced to shambles with 25-lb. pernoddy smoke bombs, thus earning bitter complaints from the crabs for using high explosives. In the same area of desert we viciously attacked army targets (Arabs, camels, patches of sand, and rocks), talked down by the ship's No. 2 Brown Job, who also complained bitterly about having sand everywhere after we buzzed him at 600 knots, low-level!

Back at Malta we put six aircraft ashore over the period and confirmed local feminine fears with something of a social commando course. We also flew a few sorties, thereby starting the legend of Jack Smith,

## 800 SQUADRON

who dropped a bomb virtually in the back garden of Mrs. Bailey. (Bailey's Dockyard.) She was upset, so we waited until Tripoli before Jolly Jack Smith (now affectionately known as *Bomber*) was let loose with another bomb, only to destroy the tent of an Arab's mother-in-law. Fortunately she was not at home, but subsequently we had to send *Bomber* off to do the A.W.I.'s course where they teach plausible excuses for such trivia.

On the long run East we deck qualified the new boys off Malta and also Aden where two more pilots were waiting for us, another A.W.I., Lieut. Marshall and Sub-Lieut. Alsop, the famous *Scimitar hydroplane* experimentalist.

Across to Butterworth, where with ground attack in full swing we did several sorties, getting nastily shot down by R.A.A.F. Sabres when our Vixen cover wasn't looking. We avenged ourselves on some *clapped-out* Canberras before hitting Singapore with a terrific line of "Baby, I've been thirty-four days at sea!"

After, once more presenting the Grimmy Trophy to the Boss, another new pilot and another one-third complement change, we set off for the Philippines, performing on the way in a SEATO exercise called SEA DEVIL, in which we were involved in striking the Philippine coast and defending the Task Force from attack by shore-based American naval aircraft. Prior to a brief stay in Manila we disembarked two aircraft to Cubi Point for a few days to prepare for a period of cross-operating with the U.S.S. *Hancock*. V.A. 212, our counterpart strike squadron in *Hancock*, adopted us when the ship went round to Cubi and showed us the delights of the B.O.Q.s as well as the architectural interests of the charming village of Olongapo. They laid on a beach bar-b-q for the whole squadron which was as good as a week's leave. The Americans never do anything by halves and never before can British sailors have been confronted with too much beer!

So to Hong Kong where Subby Morris once again fell in love but we managed to extract him from the *Fairy Land Bar* in Kowloon just before we sailed for Okinawa, after presenting the Boss once more with the Grimmy Trophy. During an exercise off the coast the Yanks struck the ship, only to lose one of their number who had a compass failure and was gaily heading for the South Pole. He *banged* out alongside a Japanese cargo liner full of long cool blondes and had a glorious passage to Manila.

Swampy and Pops Marshall, our tame A.W.I.s, distinguished themselves by firing the first Bullpup missiles from a front-line Scimitar. Not only that—they hit the target.

During the operations at Okinawa the U.S. Marines gave a spectacular display of Napalm bombing, almost roasting a four-star general in the process; we retaliated with a few *permody* bombs and by sending one of our handlers ashore, who achieved more in one sortie than anything the pilots did in eight months of flying.

After another run in Singapore the ship performed a SHOWBOAT exercise. "Surprise, surprise!" Everything worked, even the elastic in the catapults; though Geoff, our gastronomic Q.F.I., nearly dissolved when his air-conditioning failed; our bombs actually hit the target. We were quite exhausted by this fantastic effort and display of sea power and thus were forced to disembark half the outfit to Pearce airfield just north of Fremantle, for a rest, or rather for a change. More hours were worked on the social programme than any in the lower hangar. All the gorgeous women in the world are born in Perth - so they told us - and they were so right, this was especially confirmed by a certain Line Chief we all know. We flew Army support and low-level bombing sorties from Pearce, but who cared about flying.... As the ship sailed out of the morning sun Subby Morris was seen standing to attention in procedure Alfa with tears staining his best blue serge.

However, the war drums were rolling which cut short our stay in the Far East and forced us to part from the fleshpots of Singapore, though not before the Boss had once more won the Grimmy Trophy (outright winner), for the delights of the Middle East. Since the ship carried the Sphinx battery from Hong Kong we could not fly and so were able to catch up on sleep and other more social activities, such as winning the Deck Hockey competition. On the re-commencement of flying the R.A.F. asked us to give them a hand with their death-defying sorties patrolling the Yemen border; however, the Arabs heard we were

## 800 SQUADRON

coming and none of us saw anything, except Subby Alsop. A shape moved, then rose from the desert. With a war-cry he deafened his leader and pounced - the poor old Beverly staggered on its way unconcerned.

Aptly named, exercise HOLLOW LAUGH gave us the opportunity to practise once more our main role of army support, in desert country which was a far cry from the lush green of the Malayan jungle to which we had become so accustomed. We supported 45 Commando as they moved into the mountains north of Shuqra but our only score was the Brigadier's latrine screen, *while he was in residence*.

January in *Lossiemouth* found us slightly refreshed but suffering from monumental hangovers, a new Senior Pilot and a 50 per cent change in personnel. After some sort of effort at flying with snow and, in one particular case, mud up to the axles, six aircraft embarked in mid-February for exercise DAWN BREEZE in the Western Approaches, while six remained at *Lossiemouth* on B flight indoctrinating some new recruits.

After much practice and liaison with R.A.F. Valiant tankers, we embarked fourteen aircraft in Ark Royal off Majorca on 4th May. The ground party also embarked completely by air at a range of 1,200 miles, using Valiant tankers to flight refuel its aircraft. We had to use ferry pilots as three of our pilots were not deck qualified.

Two of the new boys deck qualified off Aden, the ship having made a fast passage into the area, while Sub-Lieut. Legg once more proved that you can *hang out* anywhere with our friend Martin-Baker - even disappearing into twelve feet of water in Aden harbour. Petty Officer McRorie had the R.A.F. so well organized that all the pilots who arrived at Khormaksar seeking a rest and an air-conditioned pit found themselves back on board within the hour.

And so it goes on, work, rest, play, rest, there is no end to the story.

Tow



## PIPE BAND



THE PIPE BAND

The sound of the pipes leaves nobody neutral - you call it music if a half-heard distant skirl starts your feet twitching but you call it something else if the first few notes cause you to reach for your Ear Defenders. So, it was with mixed feelings that the ship's company learnt of the formation of a volunteer Pipe and Drum Band early on in the commission, especially when they heard that although the nucleus of pipers and drummers had some experience, the majority were novices who were anxious to try their hand at controlling *drones* and *chanters*.

Despite the opposition the enthusiasts wheedled some cash from the Welfare Fund for instruments and the Royal Naval Piping Society (nothing to do with the *fresh-water-tanky*) provided some more, so that in no time at all there were twenty devotees proving that you don't have to be musical to play an instrument. In the Far East two pipers from the Queen's Own Highlanders came aboard for a cruise to help train the native talent. The time came when the band decided that *it pays to advertise* and so they provided themselves with a special uniform, consisting of a white drill tunic with naval badges of rank, leather belt and cross belt, navy-blue kilt, and hose-tops, non-regulation but quite fetching.

Two of their most interesting experiences occurred in the Philippines; the first in Okinawa when a certain Airman Second Class William Service, U.S.A.F., a member of the Glen Eagle (New York) Highland Pipe Band played with the band on the flight deck wearing his Royal Stewart tartan. A truly cosmopolitan occasion. The second was the nightly ritual that developed in Olongapo when the band would lead the revellers back to the ship, a weird and impressive sight as the procession passed bar after bar, the numbers steadily growing, some were swaying - not all in time to the music - but all solemnly determined to follow the hypnotic pibroch wherever it might lead until suddenly, Hamelin-like, all were swallowed up by the cavernous dockyard gates - but fortunately, unlike the fairy tale, this was not for ever.

Finally one must mention the contribution made by the pipes to the ceremony of *Beat Retreat*, when the sudden silence following the exquisite rendering of the Evening Hymn by the Royal Marines Band is broken by the liquid notes of the solitary piper lamenting the passing of the day. Each crystal-clear note starts a thrill that runs up and down the spine compelling us forward into the awful solemnity of *Sunset*. Not a body stirs. Every single soul, trapped in a web of enchantment, strains into the magnificent climax to this ever-inspiring ceremony, the tension made almost unbearable by the ethereal strains of the "pipes from out the night".



## SOME SHIPS



... HEAD FOR US (H.M.S. *Cavalier*)



... PUSH US ABOUT (Tug *Careful*)

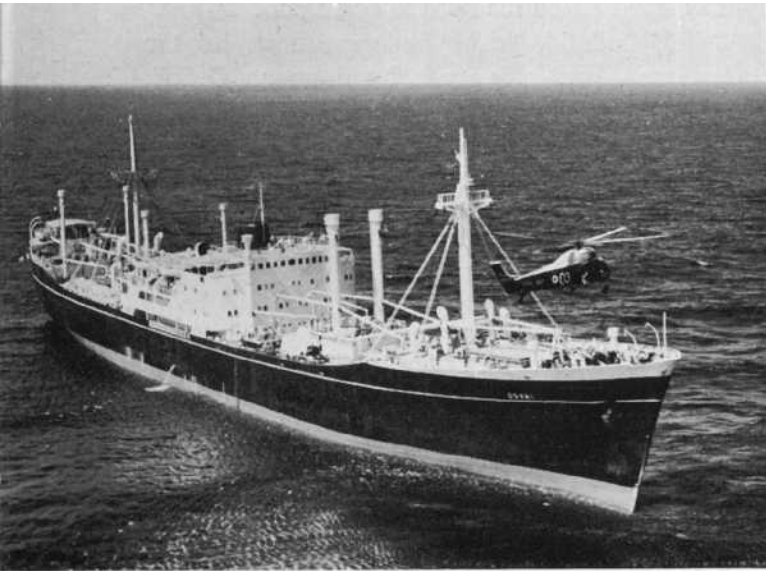


... PLAY WITH US (H.M.S. *Devonshire*)



... ARE FAR BENEATH US  
(H.M.S. *Eastbourne*)

## SOME SHIPS



.. CATCH ON FIRE (*Doai*)



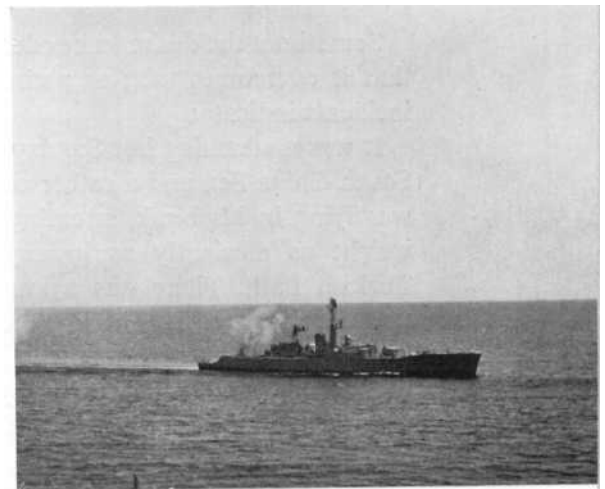
.. FEED US (R.F.A. *Fort Duquesne*)



.. TRY TO CATCH UP WITH US  
(H.M.S. *Llandaff*)

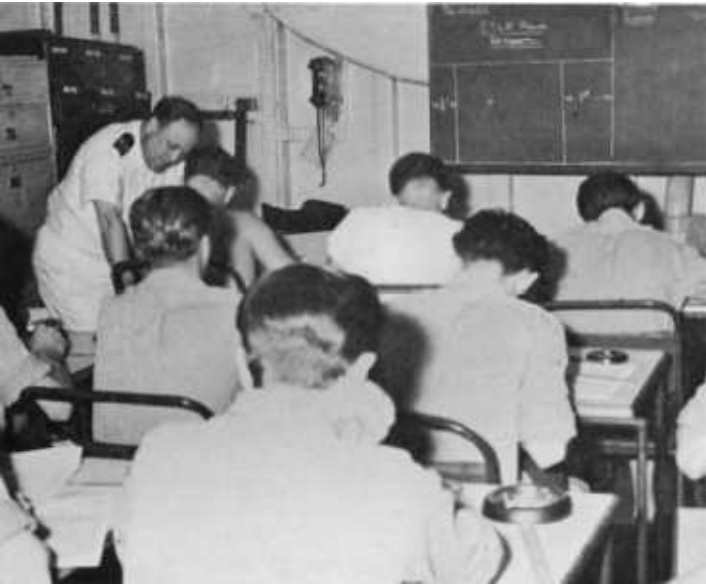


.. GIVE US .A DRINK (*La.Seine*)



..SHOW OFF NEAR US (H.M.A.S. *Yarra*)

## TALES OUT OF SCHOOL



THE "COOLROOM"

To a schoolmaster, boys will be boys, all the world over. It makes no difference that the boys in this case are aged from seventeen to forty-seven, there are still tales to tell and they always improve the more often they are told.

There was the Cook (O) who didn't know his multiplication tables, and when asked by Schoolie how he managed to work out his score while playing darts - he was a good darts player - answered: "Ah, sir, I takes me chum!" Such is comradeship!

Sometimes the desire to be educated is so strong that it overcomes tact, as perhaps the next two incidents indicate:

It was a steaming hot Sunday afternoon in the South China Sea and a rather corpulent Schoolie was lying in his bunk, sweating away his excess weight as efficiently as in any Jermyn Street Turkish Bath. There was a knock on his cabin door. He ignored it. The knocking became more insistent - it was still ignored. Now it became thunderous, and could no longer be ignored - every beat on the door expressed the determination of whoever was outside.

Wearily, Schoolie hoisted his bulk from his bunk, adjusted the towel around his middle and

opened the door. Standing outside was a rating, with his fist raised ready to knock again.

"Sir," he said, "can you come down to the schoolroom and give me a brush-up on G.C.E. Maths? The exam's next week."

"What's your name?" asked Schoolie.

"M.E. `So-and-so'," answered the rating.

"You know, I've been giving instructions in Maths, every night, in the dogs, for the past five months. And I've never seen you there. What were you doing then?"

"Oh! I was making me rug!"

"Well, b ---- off and make your b ---- rug now!" retorted a thoroughly irate I.O.

In a similar vein, there was the other case of the rating who telephoned the Schoolroom during a forenoon examination and asked: "Is there any instruction this afternoon, sir?"

"I'm sorry, lad," replied Schoolie, "this examination doesn't finish until 1245 and the next examination starts at 1400 today."

Back along the wires came: "Well, sir, you've got an hour off, sir. Can't you do it then?"

No tales out of school would be complete without the odd *howler*. For instance:

A Cook (S) in an E.T.L.R. essay on MY JOB ON BOARD THE SHIP, said: ". . . we cook the meat well to kill all the hysteria."

Then there was the E.M. who wrote: "A ship designed to fight is called a GALLON", and finally there was the classic statement by an A.B. in another essay: "Your own house is a place where a woman will always enjoy working." He'll learn!

### IPSWICH TOWN SUPPORTERS' CLUB

Few football teams would expect a Supporters' Club to be formed in the Far East; however, when Ipswich won the cup in the 1961-62 season L/Ck Powell decided it was time that the Town supporters in *Ark Royal* united. He organized the club and cajoled 2s. 6d. a week out of the members, which was used to pay for a commemorative plaque which was eventually donated to the cup-winners, to be hung at the Portman Road ground.



## SUPPLY AND SECRETARIAT



S.O. (PAY) COUNTS HIS

### WRITERS

It can be said that most pay offices have a busy time and this was certainly the case in *Ark's* fourth commission. In an Air Station or a Barracks the average ledger section holds 250 accounts. The *Ark* has five sections each with approximately 500 accounts.

Each member of the office must surely be qualified to work in any International Bank, having dealt in Sterling, Gibraltar Pounds, Maltese Pounds, Italian Lire, East African Shillings, Singapore Dollars, Hong Kong Dollars, U.S. Dollars, Philippine Pesos, Scrip Dollars and Australian Pounds.

As in any other job there have been the funny moments. Two incidents immediately spring to mind, the first involved C.P.O. Writer Pettitt riding a horse in Hong Kong, where he seemed to be more at home than in the Pay Office. The second incident concerns a P.O. Writer, who shall be nameless; in an effort to dodge paying his share of a taxi fare he found himself swimming, late at night, in Grand Harbour, Malta. This resulted in the ship's diving team making an effort to recover his glasses from the bottom of the harbour the next day. He has still failed to pass his Standard Swimming Test!



"LAYING UP" IN THE WARDROOM

### STEWARDS

The one thing the stewards of *Ark* for this commission will not have to complain about is time on their hands. For besides their normal tasks of having to clean about 150 cabins daily, cleaning Wardroom Flats, bathrooms, etc., they have served roughly 1,000 meals a day and coped with all the associated washing-up.

Since *Ark* is one of the Navy's most important units it has to play its part in international diplomacy. One way of furthering friendly relations with the local population is by means of cocktail parties. They have been held on the flight deck, the quarterdeck, and in the hangars. Such parties have been given in Devonport, Singapore, Subic Bay, Manila, Hong Kong, Mombasa, Aden, Malta, and Gibraltar. We shudder to think of the number of guests entertained at R.P.C.s, which have been too numerous to mention, along with private luncheons, teas and dinner parties, not forgetting the wedding reception for one of the squadron officers for 250 guests. The stewards attended all these parties, but they weren't among the guests!

At Singapore a further task was undertaken when, during SHOWBOAT, some 250 leading personalities of Malaya were entertained to lunch on the two days the exercise lasted.

Apparently the favourite visit for the Stewards this commission was the one to Fremantle, judging by the number of Drafting Preference Cards filled in stating: *Australia 1st Choice*. But with *Eagle* soon to recommission, who knows ... ?

# SUPPLY AND SECRETARIAT

## NAVAL AND AIR STORES

**H**idden down in the ship in all sorts of almost inaccessible places are the storerooms of the naval and air stores sub-department. It is the job of a team of twenty-four to try to keep these storerooms bulging with nuts, bolts, soap, valves, aircraft tyres, hydraulic fluid, etc., which, in a ship with such an insatiable appetite as the Ark, is no mean task. No sooner have we carefully stowed a dozen nuts than a department draws six, this means further effort to replace the issued stock. The process of fill-up, issue, top-up constitute Jack Dusty's main task. His aim is to have six months' stock in store all the time, an aim which can only be achieved when the ship has just stored - and all the ship's company are on leave.

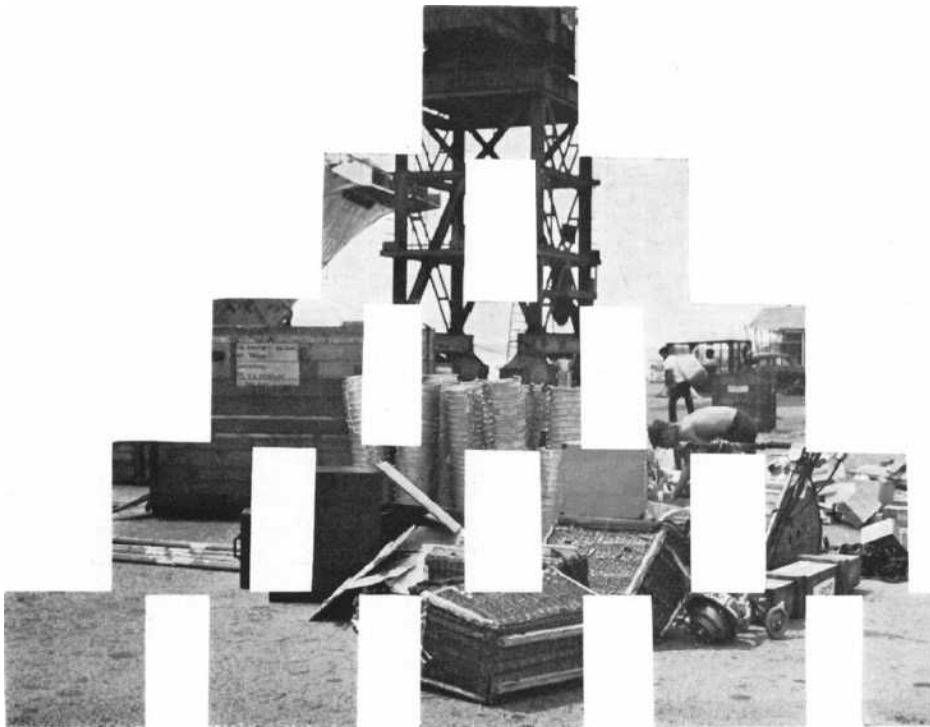
There are about 45,000 different items of naval and air stores to be accounted for. This involves a great deal of work; for instance, a single electric kettle demanded from a dockyard and loaned to a department will appear on a total of twelve pieces of paper before it can be used to make any tea.

Fortunately there is more than paperwork to storekeeping. The most popular part of the work is probably replenishment at sea, for this is the only opportunity Jack Dusty has of appearing officially on the flight deck, breathing fresh air and absorbing sunlight.

To a lesser extent storing goes on in harbour, particularly in the main dockyards. This method is not efficient and entails much more effort in the face of such obstacles as lack of hands and transport, cranes out of action because of maintenance, and lifts immobilized while they undergo repair.

Life in the stores is not without humour; high on the list of improbable tales is the one of the technical department which forwarded a priority demand for a particular item - so secret that they *refused* to tell us what it was.

All in all we like to judge the success of the stores organization by the efficient operation of the ship, for every department on board depends to a large extent on us. If the ship and her aircraft remain fighting fit and serviceable then it follows that the stores have done their job.



## SUPPLY AND SECRETARIAT

### COOKS [S]



The Galley Slaves came aboard to be greeted by the Cookery Officer with a kind fatherly introduction, they were then turned over to three respective Chiefs of Department, who made it apparent that the recruiting posters on how to see the world were not exactly true after all.

Two of the senior cooks who were idling away the last few weeks in *R.N.B. Devonport* were confronted with the task of baking and decorating 500 lb. of commissioning cakes, all varying in size, shape and weight, from the largest weighing 90 lb. down to the average of 12 lb.

Commissioning Day duly came along; for most it was a day of No. 1's, and listening to speeches while holding hands with the missus - or someone else's missus! Not so for our little band of men, for there were over 2,000 teas to be prepared.

We now had an insight into the vast amount of work that lay ahead and of the standards required, in all it took us approximately three to four months to settle down to work as an efficient team. For every mealtime we had the best part of 1,600 junior rates plus 600 senior rates to prepare and cook food for; no small feat when there were five to six hot choices and as many as ten cold joints.

Into the Mediterranean, and a signal arrived saying we were to take part in the Ships' Food Competition at Malta on 19th December. This

was a little early, for many of the staff were new entries and for most it was their first ship. However, we soon buckled down and were determined to win, confident that we would uphold the good name of *Ark Royal*.

The big day arrived and everybody was up and about earlier than usual. The team of experts, well - officers - arrived (all R.A. at Malta, mind you), and the testing and tasting began. This team had obviously had a lot of practice and came with hollow cheeks and flat stomachs. Tomato soup, fresh salmon, gammon ham and assorted salads quickly disappeared. Out came pencils and pads and down went the marks. Into the galley to taste the hots - by this time one would have thought that they would just have had a nibble, but no! Vienna steaks, peas, chips and fried plaice followed the same downward course, as did the peach flan. How they managed it all only they could tell. After the usual trip down aft and over free pink gins our fate was discussed; a week or so later the results came through. Alas we had not won (probably mean with the pink gins aft) but we had come a creditable second to *H.M.S. Blake*. Everyone was pleased and it was a flip to our morale.

We entered the second stage of the commission, after working up in the Mediterranean, with the passage to the Far East. A day after we had traversed the Canal our tropical pay started, this is called a lot of other names such as *Unpleasant Working Conditions Pay* or *Sweat Money*; the last is the most appropriate, especially when the exhaust fans start falling over daily and the galley fridge begins to part cook the various meats.

Children's parties are part of *Ark's* port routine and since being in commission we have entertained many hundreds of underprivileged children from orphanages in different countries, but the effort is always worth it, for there is ample repayment in the looks in their eyes.

It has been a long cruise and a hard one but few chefs would change their job, there is only one disadvantage to it - you can't grumble about the food!