

SUPPLY AND SECRETARIAT

The Paper Players

It was five minutes to eight and the writer with a sigh stood up in his mess and began to trudge his weary way towards the Captain's office to begin yet another hectic, exhausting, soul-destroying, infuriating, frustrating and yet sedentary day in that atmosphere of chattering typewriters, nagging telephones and the general burbling of zealous or desperate intruders seeking knowledge and sucking in little statistics like a vacuum cleaner on its last legs. He knew that, as the odd-job man who did neither the typing nor the Service Documents nor even the general correspondence work, he would be the tool of all and sundry who chose to grace the office with their damn-fool questions - the answers to which were either impossibly obscure or else so easy to give that one wondered why the questions had ever been asked. He shuddered as he recalled the height of the in-trays when he had thankfully taken his leave of the office the night before amid a suffocating miasma of sweat-sodden socks - the hurricane fan having suddenly given up the ghost quite inexplicably.

Reflecting, however, that his qualities of patience and tact were, to his own way of thinking at any rate, far superior to those of anybody he had ever known, he stepped boldly over the threshold into the office and put on his well-tryed smile of martyrdom.

It was perhaps unfortunate that during the night the ship had rolled heavily, for the chaos that immediately met his gaze and froze his smile was, to say the least, upsetting to his delicately balanced emotions in the early morning. Books, packs, forms, stationery, letters, envelopes and a huge assortment of odd paper were united in one glorious heap on the deck, gravity having proved itself, as always, the Great Leveller.

Before long the stern tones of the P.O. Writer and the Assistant Secretary were to be heard pitilessly enjoining the luckless writers to get cracking on the muddle. "Rounds at 1030," snarled the P.O. Writer unnecessarily.

Soon, however, all was normal once more. The typewriters rattled, the packs were shuffled about, the telephone was ringing, the Service Documents were in disarray as the Leading Writer struggled for supremacy before the daily Requestmen session and the Assistant Secretary barked orders in choleric tones, to which nobody paid the slightest attention. The writer smiled wanly as the typist next to him gave vent to an oath and in a great rage tore his papers from the machine.

"Don't waste those carbon papers," cried the P.O. Writer.

"Don't swear," shouted the Assistant Secretary.

"I don't want your gash all over my work," came the piqued tones of his fellow writer.

"I can't concentrate with all this noise going on around me," protested the Leading Writer vehemently.

"Why isn't that letter finished yet," said the Secretary sternly as he poked his head round the door.

The typist produced another oath - rather stronger than the first, but quieter.

"I must have a letter about an air exercise," shouted a Senior Officer, storming into the office at this juncture. "It took place some time last year - I can't remember what it was called."

"Yes, sir," said the Assistant Secretary, nodding sagely and assuming his worried expression.

"Come on, man! I'm in a hurry," went on the Senior Officer, showing signs of strain.

"Do you know the pack number, sir?"

"No."

"The letter number or the rough date?"

"No."

"And you don't know the name of the exercise, sir?"

"No."

The Assistant Secretary decided that this was a problem unworthy of him and promptly delegated it with his customary malice to the correspondence writer who said he was not sure that he would be able to lay his hands on it at once.

"Why not?"

The writer mumbled something about private detectives and bent to his task while the Assistant Secretary, who seemed suddenly to remember a pressing commitment elsewhere, rushed out of the

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office, saying with a gay optimism that the letter would be produced in a jiffy.

Later, a junior officer came in and said timidly: "Can I change my next of kin?"

A new officer came in and said stiffly: "Where do I sign as having read Captain's Standing Orders?"

A begrimed stoker came in and said sullenly: "Who's my Divisional Officer?"

A tall Staff Officer came in and said gaily: "Does the Chinese Tailor repair golf bags?"

A keen Divisional Officer came in and said vigorously: "What's the syllabus for Mechanical Drawing at WET.?"

The writer fielded these and other queries skilfully, asserting blithely in most cases that these were matters for another department. The tempo increased as the morning wore on. People of all sorts, shapes, sizes, ranks and mentalities rushed in and rushed out, bustling about in quest of satisfaction. By now the office team was operating smoothly. A 15-page Operation Order was rattled off by the typist who had recovered his customary aplomb; priority signals flashed through beneath

his twinkling fingers. The office gushed forth paper which was sent speeding on its way by fleet-footed messengers.

Suddenly a real crisis arose. Moments before the Secretary left for Captain's Requestmen, the Leading Writer, giving a final check to his documents, found a S.264 missing. The Secretary gnashed his teeth and tore out his hair in fistfuls while the office was galvanized into resourceful action. Telephone calls, pipes over all circuits, a rapid search in all trays and a thorough huck-out of all cupboards failed to reveal the fateful document. At this point, just as despair had set in, the writer shot out of the office and re-appeared minutes later triumphantly clutching the form. He modestly decried his initiative, as well he might, knowing that only the mail office could have revealed his true colours. He really must, he reflected, pay more attention to the enclosures to the letters he sent off as Duty Writer. He decided that next time he would volunteer for a draft to *Ark Royal*.

Yes, *Ark Royal!* It all runs like clockwork there!

AWARD OF BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL

(EXTRACT FROM ADMIRALTY NEWS SUMMARY)

It was a thrilling day for C.E.R.A. A. Ball when his wife and two children, together with other members of his family, went on board H.M.S. *Ark Royal* at Devonport to witness the presentation of the British Empire Medal to him by the Flag Officer Aircraft Carriers (Rear Admiral D. C. E. F. Gibson, D.S.C.). This award had been announced in Her Majesty's New Year Honours List. Ball, who at present lives at Crownhill, Plymouth, comes from Eccles, Manchester. He joined the Navy in 1939 and is in charge of the maintenance of the main propulsion units in *Ark Royal* as well as doing the duties of Third Engineer Officer of the Watch.



63 CARRIER BORNE GROUND LIAISON SECTION



Our primary task was preparing and co-ordinating close air support exercises; support of the army ashore being the main role of the carrier. Close air support with the Army has been carried out in many countries and with diverse units, typically:

Tripoli, in the Tahuna desert area with 2nd Royal Tanks in 1961.

Aden, in A.M. Riga with 40 Commando in 1962 and I/6 Ghurka Rifles in 1963.

Okinawa, with the 3rd Division, US Marine Corps, in 1962.

Malaya, on the Asahan Range with 3 Commando Brigade and 99 Ghurka Brigade in 1962.

Mombasa and Nairobi, with 24 Infantry Brigade in 1963.

Private exercises were also arranged by the *Seaballs*, for the squadrons, in South Malaya and Australia with the C.B.G.L.O.s carrying out Forward Air Controller duties. During the squadrons' disembarked periods, at *Lossiemouth* and *Yeovilton*, C.B.G.L.O.s assisted in the ground attack training.

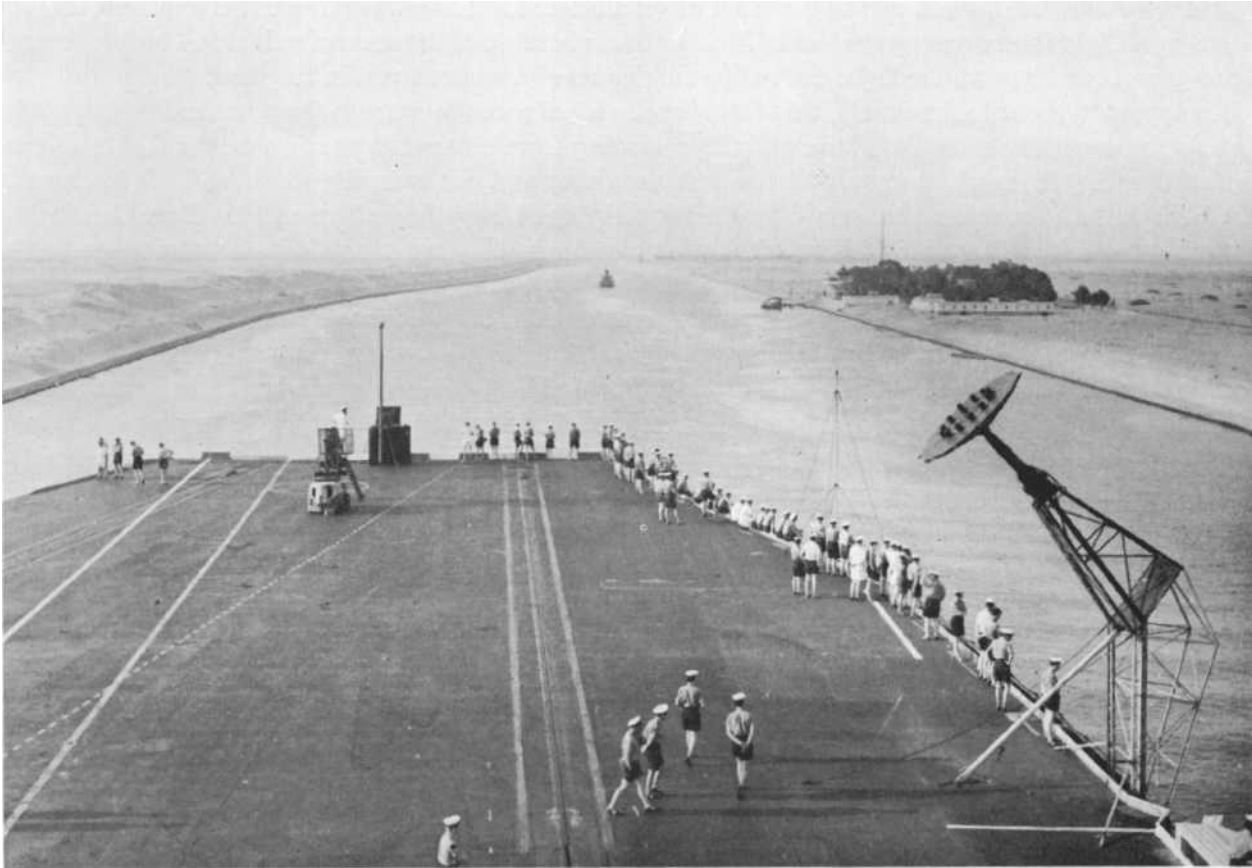
The provision of military and air intelligence was another constant requirement, for the command, the air operations staff and the aircrew. Briefing and debriefing of the aircrew provided some most interesting hours - and also caused one to wonder what actually happened on some of the sorties.

With our stock of maps (charts) which has varied from 80,000 to 150,000, the aircrew have carried out ground attack, photo recce and Tac recce sorties; not to mention that *Expeds* in Kenya, Malaya, Australia and Hong Kong have been provided with maps for planning and to use on trips from the ship.

Based on the principle that time spent on reconnaissance and liaison is never wasted, the section Land-rover did loyal service and was always a vital part of the organization, both for liaising with the services ashore and assisting the officer of the watch when stuck for *wheels*.

To have served for two and a half years in Ark Royal has been a most interesting and useful experience for each member of the section. It was of great value and we shall now all be able to explain the traditions and the message of the Royal Navy to other Pongoes.

SUEZ CANAL AND THE RED SEA



To take a ship as large as the Ark Royal through the Canal is no mean feat, because of her draught, because of her beam and also because of the endurance test which those who are responsible for our safety are subjected to.

What is involved? Suppose the ship is southbound, on its way to the mysterious Orient. The tale starts about 1800 one evening when we drop anchor off Port Said, all around us will be other vessels due to form part of our convoy and during the next few hours there will be others arriving, for we are not due to start until about midnight. Gradually night falls and all along the coast the lights of towns become visible, the biggest concentration, of course, being opposite to us in Port Said itself. Eventually we weigh anchor and the long journey starts, first of all a long dog-leg to get on to course for the run into Port Said harbour and the first bit of the Canal. We are at the tail end of the convoy, because that way we will cause least disturbance to the other ships with us; soon we are among the harbour shipping illumined by the brilliant orange lamps on shore, then quite suddenly, after about an hour and a quarter, we notice that the town has closed in on us. We can see the narrow dimly lit streets ashore, the strains of native music are heard but there are few people about at this time of night to see us pass through.

Nor is there a lot for us to see; however, at first light we find that we are travelling along the canal proper, a narrow strip of water stretching to the horizon in a straight line. The eastern shore is desolate and nothing can be seen but an endless waste of sand, swept here and there into dunes but incapable of supporting anything except the most primitive forms of life. To the west the view is less grim, a well-surfaced road runs alongside the canal, groves of trees appear which at times stretch for quite a long way along the bank, large areas are under cultivation and the irrigation system can be clearly observed. Women, dressed all in black, and men wearing the traditional long nightshirt-type garment, stand and stare at us as we pass;

SUEZ CANAL AND THE RED SEA

children, less inhibited, run down to the bank to get a closer look and wave to us. It is apparent that Ark is causing a slight furore among the locals. Perhaps this is because of the mass of pale skin which is attempting to gain a quick tan on the flight deck after the rigours of a winter spent in England.

It is apparent, if one looks closely, that there is not a lot of room to spare in the canal and to ensure that this is an uneventful passage, we have an officer spotting from a forward position on the flight deck and another spotting from aft, to ensure that we are on course and not swinging; they are both in touch by telephone with the compass platform where the captain, the navigating officer and the Suez Canal pilots control our destiny. Our speed is remarkably high and our bow wave produces a running pattern of troughs and crests along the bank. The rest of the convoy can be seen at intervals along the canal, the majority of them are tankers, all seemingly quite small but this is no doubt due to the fact that we dwarf all but the very largest of ships.

It is now that we realize that during the night, at Port Said, we took on a number of traders who begin to spread out their wares on the flight deck. Do you want a camel saddle or a pouffe, in plastic or giraffe leather, or perhaps a pair of Egyptian slippers, or a rug, or even a carpet? Do you fancy a wooden dish or a copper plaque? How about an album or a musical box? All very cheap, but isn't it a little early in the commission to be buying rabbits, after all we shall have to come back this way and if we have any money to spend, well then!

Here's something different, the *Gale-gale* man or gully-gully man (please yourself) dressed in his flowing brown robe and with a suspicious *tweet-tweet* coming from his pockets. Gather round and listen to his patter, in very good English, interspersed with his frequent cries of gully-gully-gully-gully; first of all the three-card trick, only he performs with corks and small aluminium cans; then chickens start appearing, initially in ones and twos, then four, then half a dozen and finally the place is swarming with day-old chicks. (No, they are not supplied by Commander S.) Next, a few card tricks, tricks with string, tricks with scarves and coins, mysterious tricks with interlinking metal rings, it goes on and on with each trick seemingly more baffling than the last until finally he passes round his fez and performs his final trick, conjuring the loose cash out of our pockets. Everybody agrees that he is first class and even the old salts that have seen him, or his cousin, or his brother, perform before are still just as willing to shell out to him again.



EVERY ONE A BARGAIN



GULLY - GULLY - GULLY!

While all this has been happening we have reached the end of this stretch of the canal and entered the expanse of water known as the Bitter Lakes, now we go to the head of the convoy where we shall stay until we emerge some three or four hours later at the southern end of the canal at Port Tewfik. This is not quite

SUEZ CANAL AND THE RED SEA

the end of our worries because traffic is still heavy in these waters: however, we are no longer the responsibility of the Canal Authority, so we drop the pilot, the traders and the gale-gale man and signal to the Admiralty POP.



PORT TEWFIK

Exasperation

The Red Sea,
The dread sea,
Too hot to go to bed sea.
No air sea,
Despair sea,
The flesh and eyeball sear sea.
No shade sea,
No aid sea,
The blue and grey and jade sea.
The mad sea,
Too bad sea,
The waiting, hating, sad sea.
The Red Sea,
The dread sea,
Too hot to go to bed sea.

815 SQUADRON



NAVAL
AIR
SQUADRON



READING THE COMMISSIONING WARRANT

THE COMMISSIONING CEREMONY

On 4th July 1961 the Commanding Officer, 815 Squadron, Lieutenant Commander A. Skinner, read out the Commissioning Warrant. The ceremony took place at the Royal Naval Air Station, Culdrose and in September, after an intensive work-up, the squadron embarked in Ark Royal.

The basic task of the squadron was to provide the carrier with anti-submarine protection; in such a role it has the capability of detecting, and delivering a deadly attack to any menacing submarine. Although the squadron exercised constantly they found time to experiment with and evaluate new operating techniques in order to improve their efficiency.



THE SQUADRON EMBARKS

815 SQUADRON

As a result of these experiments the night search and rescue technique was pioneered, and in November 1962 the pilot of a Sea Vixen was rescued successfully at night.



FLIGHT DECK PARTY COMPLETE THE "SPREADING" OF A WESSEX

The day starts early at sea and the Wessex helicopters are brought up to the flight deck to be *spread*; unfolding and locking the rotor blades is a job which requires co-ordination and skill on the part of the flight deck party; times of under three minutes are frequently recorded for the complete operation.



A "ROTORS-RUNNING" TURN-ROUND



TURN-ROUND COMPLETE. WAITING TO TAKE-OFF DURING "DAWN BREEZE"

Once in the air the Wessex is kept airborne, only landing on for fuel and a crew change. Again the operation can be so co-ordinated that the helicopter is back on task within five minutes.

These times are only possible because the Wessex is capable of being refuelled with the rotors still engaged.



A WESSEX "ENTERS THE DIP"

THE BOYD TROPHY



LT.-CDR. BLUETT RECEIVES THE BOYD TROPHY FROM F.O.A.H., VICE-ADMIRAL SIR JOHN HAMILTON, K.B.E., C.B.

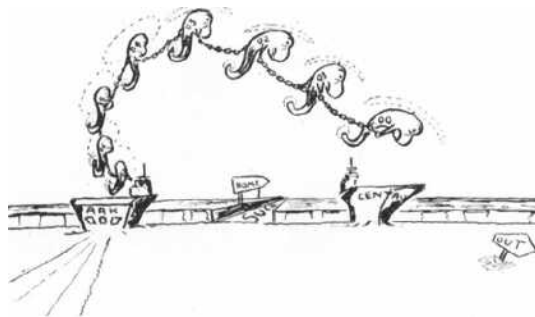
The Citation

815 Squadron was the first front-line squadron to be equipped with the Wessex H.A.S. Mk. I Helicopter. During 1962, when embarked in H.M.S. *Ark Royal*, this squadron had an outstanding record in the face of many difficulties.

They have pioneered the techniques of All-weather and Night Anti-Submarine helicopter operations and have played a vital part in progressing Night Anti-Submarine tactics in the Fleet. They gave invaluable assistance to units of the fleet in controlling helicopters by day and by night, and have formulated operating doctrines which will have important effects on the conduct of anti-submarine warfare throughout the Navy.

They have also proved the role of the Wessex helicopter in Search and Rescue at night. This trial was successfully concluded when a Sea Vixen crew from H.M.S. *Ark Royal* was rescued by 815 Squadron from the sea at night.

The enthusiasm, determination and initiative of all officers and men in the squadron are reflected in its splendid achievements in a very exacting role, and in its excellent standards of maintenance. Their performance is in the best traditions of the service and deserves the highest praise.



A.T.V.

Ark Royal is unique among ships in the Royal Navy in possessing its own internal television system. From a central studio it is possible to put out programmes to nearly eighty receivers sited in the majority of messes in the ship. By a judicious use of the two cameras it is technically possible to put on a wide variety of shows, both live and canned.

The system was originally conceived, in the time



IN THE STUDIO

of the first commission, as a means of providing a film show, using only one film, to a far greater number than could be accommodated in the small confines of the cinema. At first some four or five strategically placed screens were envisaged but as some idea of the basic cost emerged and as fairly substantial outside support was forthcoming (notably from Lloyds of London), it was finally decided to provide a far greater number of viewing points. Nevertheless it was still intended, and the policy remains the same, that the basic diet would be film shows except for the occasional live item contributed by an enthusiast anxious to play with the medium. It is worthy of note that Gibraltar TV has only two hours of live entertainment per week, though they do have a wider range of canned material than we do.

Unfortunately the studio is small which does not allow a great deal of movement in a live show, but basically all the same facilities are available that one would expect in a small commercial studio, so that given the will it is perfectly possible to learn all the techniques of television work just as efficiently as though one were in a very much larger studio ashore.

WORK STUDY

A few years ago, in common with the other services, the Royal Navy decided to introduce modern industrial methods into the Fleet, in an effort to cut down labour and material costs and to use the available men and money more efficiently. For this reason an advance party of Fleet Work Study Team 15 joined *Ark* at Devonport in January 1962. Their first job was to study the Mess Records in the Regulating Office.

After the rest of the team had joined in April at Singapore and they had finished sorting out the Reg. Office they started on the Hangar and Flight Deck. Unfortunately they took so long studying this that they were still on the job when the ship arrived back in Devonport in the middle of an

English winter; at one time it was so cold that a high-speed cine-camera froze solid. They also investigated storing routes, the rum table, the dining halls, and the Senior Rates' messes.

They even went round the ship with the Ventilation and Damage Control parties, in other words they left no stone unturned in their determination to see whether it (the stone) could be turned more efficiently.

Despite the cry "You're only after taking my hands away" they were not responsible for any premature drafts home. (Were there any?)

They intended to leave before the end of the Commission as the one thing they felt unable to work study was another English winter like that of '63.

St. Michael and All Angels

"Ye shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem ... and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

None of us realized when we received our draft chits for *Ark Royal* how much or for how long these words of Our Lord would apply to us. Perhaps we used to be impatient when we heard the words **Foreign Missions**; after all, surely the *natives* are quite happy as Moslems, Buddhists or Ju-Ju worshippers. Two and a half years in *Ark* has given us the opportunity of visiting many parts of the world and taught us differently.

The children of Malaya, who, through the ignorance and superstition of their parents, became blind as a result of malnutrition; the children of St. Christopher's Home in Hong Kong who had been left by their pagan parents, shortly after birth, in some public lavatory; the people in Hayling Chau Leprosarium who are crippled by leprosy because their heathen relatives had hidden them for too long; the African children who suffer because their tribes are continually at war. Although these children are loved and they laugh often, yet their lives are full of the misery of unnecessary suffering and the fear of unknown evil spirits.

The one gleam of light and hope for the world is the fact that in every place we have found the Church at work, often in the face of great odds, due to lack of money and manpower, yet achieving miraculous results.

Think of Mr. Chear, the Christian headmaster of St. Elizabeth School for the Blind in Johore Baru whose sympathy and skill gives hope and a way of life to the blind boys and girls in his charge; of Padre Osborne and the matron whose love for the deserted Chinese babies has not only saved them from the grave but has set them up as good citizens. Then there is the Mission to Lepers, whose doctors and nurses went out from London to build the Leprosarium on the island of Hayling Chau (which means happy healing), there they give new hope to their patients by curing them and restoring to them the use of their limbs so that they can become useful members of society. In Kaloleni, fifteen miles from Mombasa, in the bush, there is St. Edmund's Mission Hospital where Dr. Thompson and his wife have spent the last twelve years gaining the confidence of the tribesmen by healing them. In Mombasa itself at St. Luke's Church, the African priest Mr. Magu, is breaking down the barriers between the tribes by bringing them together in his congregation.

In every place the Church is bringing light into darkness. Truly witnesses have been found *"unto the uttermost part of the earth"*.

I shall always remember the great privilege of having been the Chaplain of the *Ark*; I have always appreciated the warm and often liquid welcome from the messes. So many have assisted their Church that it is impossible to name them all, though mention should be made of the Quarter Deck Division who, Sunday by Sunday, have turned their part of the ship into an inspiring church. We are grateful to the Band for their enthusiastic assistance and to the Shipwrights for their professional aid in a variety of ways, especially over the problem of the flooding of the churchyard. Above all we owe thanks to the *regulars* who have met together for worship and by their perseverance, in a multitude of ways have also been witnesses in *Jerusalem* as well as *"unto the uttermost part of the earth"*.

Opposite

THE BAPTISM OF JILLIAN ANN BRYANT. DAUGHTER OF THE MASTER-AT-ARMS, IN THE SHIP'S BELL. HER BROTHER, WHO IS ASSISTING, WAS BAPTIZED ON BOARD DURING THE FIRST COMMISSION OF THE ARK