

ADEN



On the long run down the Red Sea, as the temperature and humidity slowly increase and life becomes slower and more uncomfortable on each succeeding day, one's thoughts turn slowly towards Aden and what it has to offer, as the first *run ashore* in the Middle East.

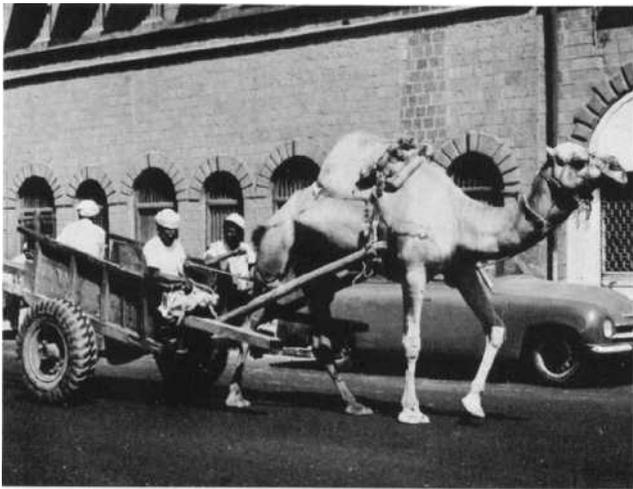
Eventually, at the end of yet another blazing day, during which the sun has shone unceasingly from a sky of cloudless blue we arrive at our allotted anchorage, *Elephant's Back*, 1.8 miles, we put down the *pick* and look around. First impressions are that we have contrived to arrive in the middle of a Hollywood set, something designed for the sequel to *Ben Hur*, there is an air of unreality about the massive mountains which dominate the landscape, they look like cut-outs and not very good ones at that. On one side the harsh brown outline is set against a flat blue sky, no clouds to soften the effect, to give depth and persuade us that it is really 3D; on the other side a completely bogus-looking sunset is trying to impress us but obviously the man from *Technicolor* was never called in to advise, he would certainly have insisted on a more realistic use of colour. Twilight fades quickly here and by the time leave has been piped it has been dark for quite a while; we don't go ashore in a heaving, pitching, puffing M.F.V. but in a much more elegant flat-bottomed water-bus, which can hold about one hundred passengers.

It is a long slow ride to the shore, all of half an hour, but quite pleasant with just a slight sea running as a result of the rapidly dying sea-breeze which is a regular daily feature of the weather in Aden.

We land at Steamer Point, which is the port proper, skip on to the jetty, through the stone archway which proclaims itself *For King and Country*, on past the *Post Office for Visitors* - which is never open - and turn to the left in order to get into the town. Fifteen yards, twenty yards, cross the road and there is our first shop and our first Arab tout trying to entice us inside. Not that we need much enticing, the problem is simply one of selection, because if you want watches, cameras, tape-recorders, transistor radios, toys, or any of the other electrical and mechanical miscellanea which pour out of the factories of the civilized world, then this is the place to come and buy. This is Aladdin's Cave brought up to date, but you needn't rub yourself raw on a purloined A.E.L. and the only magic code-word you need to get you in here is "How-much?", which for the best effect you should say with your fist clasped tightly round your wad of East African currency. Nevertheless if you insist on doing your shopping here, on the Crescent, then there is little point in trying out your skill as the original Wizard of Barter; you might knock them down a little but you won't do very much business this way.

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If you really want to see just how much saving you can make, then you must turn aside into the native streets which run at right angles to the Crescent. These are squalid indeed and now it is necessary to hold just a little tighter on to whatever cash you've got. It can be fun here, arguing the price, moving from one shop to the other, playing off one against the other, and what is more you can save a pound or two in the long run, that is providing you can ignore the voice of your oppo continually telling you that it would be cheaper in Singapore or Hong Kong. In some cases he may be right but it is difficult to better the prices in Aden for European goods, it is a Free Port and it isn't really far to Europe so freight charges are not high. Because all the shops shut for four hours in the middle of the day, opening about 1600, they are in no hurry to shut in the evening and some are still open at midnight but, after a while, laden with purchases or just tired of window-gazing a drink seems to be indicated.



ANCIENT . . .

Now that our eyes are less concerned with shop windows we can turn our attention more to the inhabitants; there are of course a large number of service men with their families; there are also a number of Indians, the women looking as attractive as ever in their distinctive, colourful saris; there are coal-black Somalis but, as one would expect, the overwhelming mass of the people is Arab. There is a remarkable number of women to be seen, all dressed in their long dark robes

with their faces veiled, busily going about their business; by contrast the hordes of Arab males seem to have nothing to do. Dressed in the universal loose shirt, baggy pants, and turban, but without shoes on their feet, they are everywhere - they lean against the walls, they sit on the steps of the shops, they lie on the low stone walls and many of them lie on the ground itself, oblivious to the passage of time. Some of them will attempt a little apathetic touting, but for the most part they remain unabashed, unambitious spectators of a world in which they have no stake, the goats have more life in them. The goats are indeed a fascinating sight, far more numerous than dogs in the West, they roam the streets with absolute authority, apparently disdaining ownership (though it would doubtless be dangerous to attempt to carry one off), they sleep sprawled in whatever scrap of shade they can contrive, they are an inevitable part of any memories of the Adeni scene.



. . . AND MODERN

Satiated, we make our way back to the ship, satisfied that although Aden may not be the finest run to the East of Suez it does have a certain fascination, and tomorrow, even though we have decided not to go on the trip to Lahej, there will be an opportunity for a swim at the Mermaid. After all it is not everywhere in the world that one can swim on one side of a net with a shark possibly lurking on the other side.

SPORT



Problem

Picture

WHAT GAME ARE THESE YOUNG MEN ABOUT TO PLAY?

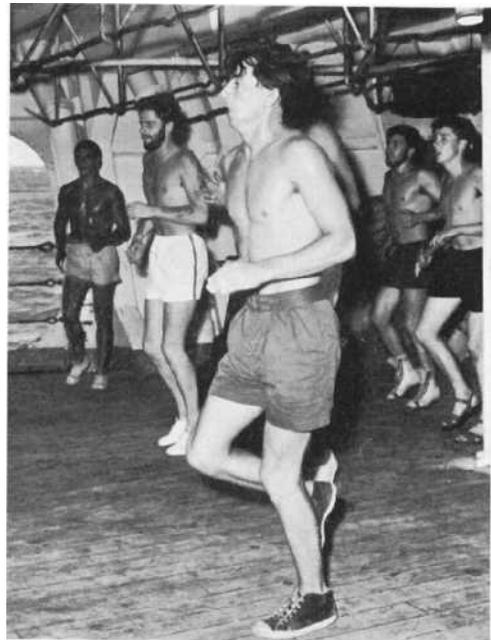
Soon after commissioning, trials were held for soccer, hockey and rugby; these showed a wealth of individual talent which required welding into teams. The first weeks spent at Portland and Devonport provided opportunities to field representative teams against opposition of varying strength and the results were encouraging. During the work-up period in the Mediterranean the teams continued to improve after further experience of playing together. Here the opportunity was taken to have the first shot at some of the Aircraft Carrier Squadron Trophies. *Centaur* provided the opposition and the results were

	<i>Winners</i>	<i>Runners-up</i>
Soccer Knock-out	890 Squadron	Engine Room (Junior rates)
Hockey Knock-out	890 Squadron	Wardroom
6-a-side Hockey	Seamen B	800 Squadron
7-a-side Rugby	Engine Room (Senior rates)	Wardroom
Cross Country	Wardroom	Seamen

Santos Trophy (Under 18's Soccer)	Won 4-0
Fellowes Cup (Fencing)	Won 14-11
Cape Town Cup (Tug-of-War)	Lost 0 2
Renown Cup (R.M.'s Tug-of-War)	Lost 0 2

During a brief stay at Naples, the 1st XI Soccer team played the Italian Navy, losing 2-1 ; however, the Rugby XV had a convincing win.

Christmas 1961 was spent in Malta and five inter-department competitions were held over a period of three weeks.



KEEPING FIT AT SEA

SPORT

Also during this period a grand sporting festival between *Ark* and *Hal Far* was arranged for 16th-17th December. Originally twenty games were planned but only eight were played, *Ark* won five while *Hal Far* were successful in the other three. The most memorable sporting occasion during this time was a boxing match between ourselves and representatives of the rest of the Royal Navy in the port. This was held on home ground but we got off to a bad start and by the interval were losing, five decisions to one. At this point, the tide turned and we were eventual winners 6-5.



GETTING OFF TO A BAD START

In March, at Aden, we had another encounter with *Centaur* for Squadron Trophies.

Curacoa Cup (Badminton)	Won 6-0
Cruiser Cup (Basketball)	Won 14-2
Oland Cup (Boxing)	Lost 4-2

With the warmer weather, thoughts turned towards using the flight deck for recreation and between periods of flying it was possible to indulge in deck hockey, volley ball, fencing, judo, tug-of-war and other activities. Indeed on the passage across the Indian Ocean we were able to *stake a claim* on the flight deck one Saturday afternoon and a most successful session of Potted Sports, together with a tug-of-war competition, was organized. The Engine Room (Junior rates) beat 890 Squadron in the final of the tug-of-war, while Seamen (Port) won the Potted Sports; 800 Squadron were the runners-up.



POTTED SPORTS



POTTED SPORTS



POTTED SPORTS

SPORT

Our spell in the Far East found us playing all sorts of games in all sorts of places. In Manila it was soccer, with the various elevens acquitting themselves well against the local opposition. At Subic Bay, sport varied from bowling through boxing and golf to volley ball. In two days thirteen games were played resulting in nine victories for *Ark*.

At Singapore in June a water polo competition was held which was won by a combined 831-849 Squadron team with the Seamen as runners-up. The competition revealed the fact that we had some very good players on board, this was borne out when the resulting ship's team achieved some excellent results although they were able to play few matches. Unfortunately we did not do very well in the Fleet Athletic Championships which were held about this time, we could do no better than sixth in a field of eleven; this result simply confirmed that there is no substitute for training with the right equipment on an athletic track if one is to put up a reasonable performance. This facility has always been denied us.



FLEET ATHLETIC CHAMPIONSHIPS



FLEET ATHLETIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

In August, while at sea, seventeen teams entered for the interpart deck hockey shield. Once more 800 Squadron showed their versatility and sporting strength by winning this competition, they defeated the Air Department in the final.

A very full programme was arranged for Fremantle, twenty-two games in one week, these included Badminton against the Hilton Park Ladies, Archery at the Perth Archery Club, Fencing against Western Australia F.C., Clay Pigeon Shooting against the Perth Gun Club and all the usual run of sporting activities. From Fremantle the ship returned to Singapore and another full programme which included the Fleet Water Polo Competition, in this we were runners-up to *Laburnum*. Friendly games of soccer, hockey, water polo, basket ball and fencing matches were held with other Fleet units.

A visit to Hong Kong always brings forth many challenges from the various sporting associations ashore. During our visit the following results were achieved:

Hockey	1st XI beat Queen's Surrey Regt. 2-0.
Cricket	1st XI beat R.A.F. Kai Tak by 106 runs. Beat Queen's Surrey Regt. by 3 wkts. Lost to Hong Kong C.C. by 4 wkts.
Soccer	1st XI beat Hong Kong F.C. 3-2.
Basketball	Drew with Tamar 32-32. Beat Taranaaki 22-12.

SPORT

After Hong Kong the ship returned to Singapore for a short period, during which our small band of wrestlers engaged in a charity match against a shore-side team.

The final visit of this leg of the commission was to Mombasa, where we virtually got a sport quart into a pint pot by playing twenty-two matches in four days. The programme included most of our regular teams, but the focal point was the boxing match against Coast Province A.B.C. This event was given considerable publicity in the local press. The local sporting columnist headed his report "Plucky Navy boxers lose to aggressive Coast team". They certainly were aggressive (one even had a go at the referee) and we were well beaten by nine decisions to three. Two of our boxers received special prizes, Marine Kellow as the most promising boxer of the evening and Petty Officer Goodwin as the best loser. Goodwin's bout was undoubtedly the best of the evening and must have been a very close thing.

Christmas 1962 and a six-week stay in Devonport saw an interpart soccer knock-out competition. It is still very much a mystery how any games were played under the freezing conditions which prevailed. Played they were though, and the final was due to take place between Air Engineers and Engine Room (Junior rates), at this stage the weather overwhelmed us and after three postponements at home the final was ultimately played three months later, overseas, success rewarding the efforts of the Air Engineers.



INTER-PART SOCCER WINNERS

Harking back to the short spell in Home Waters, *Ark* had contrived to make its contribution to representative sport at the highest level. Six soccer players represented the Plymouth Command, three rugby players played for the Fleet Air Arm and one hockey player was chosen for the Navy team.



A.B. BROWN

Our team in the Command Cross Country Championship was sixth out of thirteen entries, A.B. Brown did well to finish second in a field of 110 runners. He, together with Midshipman Sandes, was eventually selected for the Plymouth Command Team to run in the Navy Championship where they came eighth and thirty-eighth respectively. As a result Brown was selected to run for the Navy in the Inter-Services Championship.

Great things were planned. We had entered a team in the Plymouth Command Fencing and Tetrathlon Championships, boxers were keyed up for the Navy Championships and we had hoped to compete in various Command and Service sporting functions. Unfortunately this was not to be, in March we sailed for Gibraltar and another spell East of Suez.

SPORT

Before leaving England for Gibraltar, during one of his regular speeches to the ship's company, the Captain said what an excellent place the Rock was in many ways. This proved to be very true as far as sport was concerned, because for the greater part of our six weeks' stay there *Ark* was the only ship and consequently we had as much access to the sporting facilities as we required. With only half the ship's company aboard at any one time there were far more allocations available than were needed and everybody had their fill of sport. Representative games were kept to a minimum since, without the squadrons and half the ship's company, we could hardly be expected to acquit ourselves well; however, just before sailing, with a more representative body on board we did play and beat the best of the Service teams at soccer.

Our wrestlers made a great reputation for themselves. The *Gibraltar Chronicle* reported:

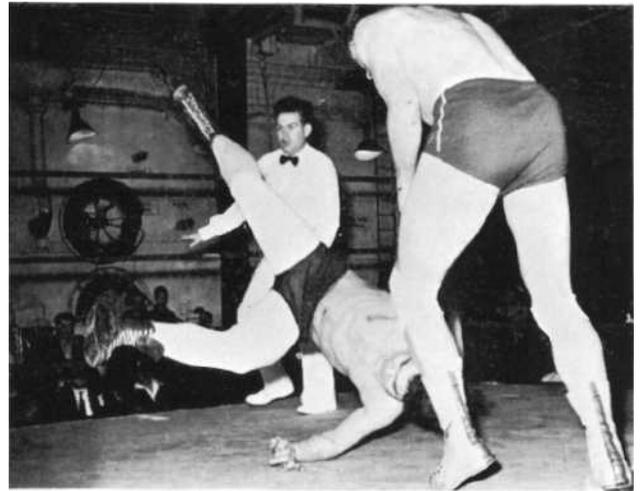


"WOLFIE" AND HIS CUBS

FINE: WRESTLING DISPLAY BY CARRIER MEN

"Tuesday night's Free Style Wrestling Display given by H.M.S. *Ark Royal* at the Garrison Gymnasium was a good example of real organization. It must have taken a lot of hard work to produce such a successful show which commenced at eight and finished at eleven.

"This was probably the first time ever that such a big-scale wrestling display was seen on the Rock,



THE "IRISH WHIP"

and for that our thanks go to the men of the aircraft carrier. I was surprised to see such a large number of ladies present, but I suppose women love strong men.

"All those who took part deserve praise but most goes to the *Wolf of Badenoch* (*Invershin*) in the person of Petty Officer Baldwin, the organizer.

"Baldwin, who coached his boys, has fought professional in England and has fought a draw with King Kong, the 28-stone heavyweight champion of Malaya.

"The light heavyweight contest between Tony Harrison (Sheffield) and the *Wolf of Badenoch* was most entertaining. In Highland dress, Wolf swaggered into the ring to the music of drums and bagpipes. Undoubtedly a great showman, Wofie was full of tricks; first he pulled some hairs from his opponent's chest and presented them to the referee. The bout was won by the Sheffield man.

"Referee R.E.A.2 Kingshott (*Ark Royal*) worked hard in the ring for two hours and fifty-six minutes, with only four minutes' break out of the ring."

On leaving Gibraltar, the Captain sent a signal to Flag Officer Gibraltar which started thus: "The *Ark Royal* leaves Gibraltar as a giant refreshed." The many sporting facilities available and the opportunities taken to get out and play certainly helped a great deal in providing this refreshment.

SPORT



FIRST XI IN ACTION

Of the thirty-five days which followed our departure from Gibraltar only four were spent at anchor, two miles off Aden. Sport at Aden is very restricted for a ship the size of *Ark*, simply because there are not the grounds or facilities to be had for such large numbers. Added to this, the heat of May is not conducive to energetic activity and so, apart from swimming, little else was achieved. It had become apparent to the various sports secretaries that, due to the many changes which occurred in Gibraltar, it was time to think again about representative teams; trial matches were planned for each game. Soccer got off to a flying

start and three trial matches were actually played, with the result that several new players were found and a final trial was arranged for Mombasa. Other sport secretaries were not so fortunate, and were compelled to put off their trials until the ship's arrival in Mombasa.

With memories of the previous visit in mind plans were laid to renew many sporting acquaintanceships in Mombasa during the visit in June 1963. In addition, the opportunity was taken for getting under way with the cricket, water polo, soccer and hockey interpart competitions. It would take up too much space to detail the results of all the matches played ashore but teams represented the ship at soccer, rugby, hockey, cricket, basket ball, squash, fencing, golf, tennis, .22 shooting, and sailing, not forgetting table tennis, badminton, water polo and wrestling. It was the first time that this last sport had been staged in Mombasa and it went off very well indeed.

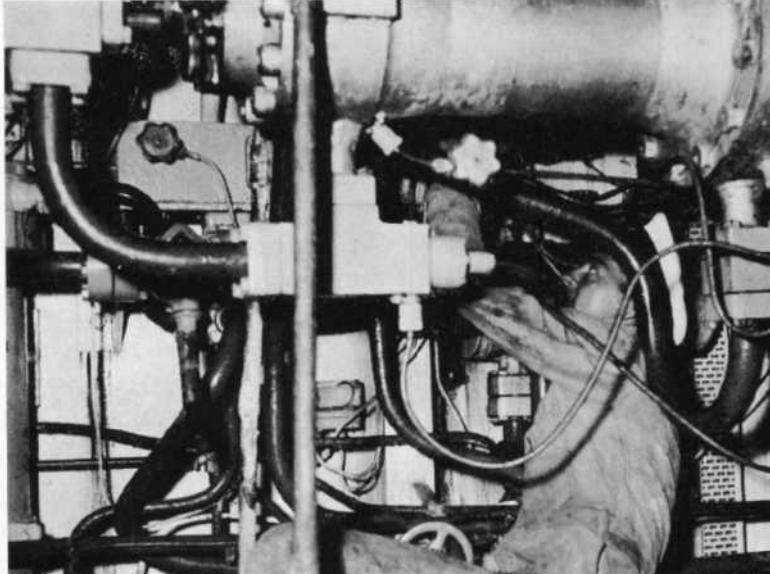
So although the commission has time to run, as we go to press, leaving the sporting record incomplete, it is clear that the sportsmen of *Ark Royal* have never shirked a contest, have never failed to acquit themselves creditably, have often succeeded magnificently and despite lack of opportunity to train and practice have contrived to demonstrate an outstanding spirit in sporting encounters everywhere.



Problem Answer

0-PIN BOWLS

FLIGHT DECK ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT



A NIGHTMARE

To many the name *Flight Deck Engineer* immediately brings to mind an engineer or mechanic who has something to do with aircraft, but we are not in any way connected with the maintenance of aircraft.

To launch even one Sea Vixen requires a great deal of complex machinery which in turn demands many hours of meticulous maintenance from a very large crew of both Senior and Junior ratings. The idle *goofer* from his vantage point on 04 deck may have attempted to count the number of blue-overalled, white surcoated figures nipping in and out from under the aircraft as it is perched ready on the catapult. To get his figures right he should know that each catapult has a deck crew of one E.R.A., one P.O.(M.E.) (he's the man bobbing up and down in the *howdah* at the edge of the deck), one L.M.E. who supervises the fitting of the *holdback* assembly which prevents the aircraft from leaving the catapult too early, and two E.M.s who actually hook on the heavy stop which pulls the aircraft down the track.

All orders signalled by the No. 1 of the crew are relayed via the *howdah*, either by push-button or voice, to the real hub of the machine - the Catapult Machinery Room. Here - away from the glamour of the flight deck - another team man the electric, hydraulic, and steam *nightmare* which makes up the Steam Catapult. It will be seen that to push a Sea Vixen, or any other aircraft, off the flight deck at about 110 knots after travelling only fifty yards or so requires a considerable number of men. Multiply this number by four so that the department can work around the clock and you have some idea of our size!

Now we have managed to launch the aircraft, let us turn our eyes to the other end of the flight deck, here we see an empty waste except for five wires. A very simple device to the uninitiated - a piece of elastic, maybe? The Arresting Gear units are actually massive pieces of equipment, hung high on the deckhead of the upper hangar. Each of the four units consists of a hydraulic system, working to many thousands of pounds pressure, several dozen large sheaves and approximately one-third of a mile of special steel rope. To operate this equipment there are seven men in each watch. The *end-product* is the arrest or deceleration of an aircraft from about 130 knots to rest in a very short distance.

We provide a number of other vital services such as purified air, and gaseous and liquid oxygen, we also maintain the two lifts, but, nevertheless, the essential function of the F.D.E.D. is "Get 'em off!" and "Catch 'em as they come".

Commission Diary

1961

SEPTEMBER 12th Recommissioning Ceremony in Devonport Dockyard.

OCTOBER 7th Leave Dockyard. Tie-up at Charlie Buoy.
9th Post-refit inspection by C.-in-C., Admiral Sir Charles Madden, K.C.B.
10th to 13th Commence full-power trials.
14th to 15th Weymouth Bay.
17th Flying Stations for the first time. Commence flying trials.
27th Devonport. Commence pre-foreign service leave. One week to each part.
31st ~~F.O.A.C.~~ hoists his flag.

NOVEMBER 1 3th Depart Devonport. Embark 800, 815, 849C, and 890 Squadrons.
1 4th Commence passage to Gibraltar.
1 6th Six jets diverted to North Front when the weather suddenly deteriorated.
1 7th to 20th Gibraltar.
23rd Malta area to begin Phase 1 of work-up.

DECEMBER
1 st to 5th Visit Naples.
5th to 8th Phase 2 of work-up.
8th to 10th Grand Harbour. Flag of ~~F.O.A.C.~~ transferred to Victorious.
1 0th to 16th Continue Phase 2 of work-up.
1 6th Begin three-week S.M.P. in Grand Harbour.
25th Christmas in Malta.
27th } Out of the Ark, a revue.
28th }

1962

JANUARY 5th Commence Phase 3 of work-up and Arkex 2.
9th Finish Arkex 2 (52-hour continuous exercise) and start for home.
1 2th Six-hour stay in Gibraltar.
1 5th Charlie Buoy.
1 6th Up harbour. Leave.

MARCH 2nd Out of Dry Dock.
9th Charlie Buoy. Embark 815 Squadron from Culdrose.
10th Proceed to sea. Embark 800, 849C, 890, and a new squadron, 831.
1 5th to 19th Flying in Malta area. Visit by Rear-Admiral J. F. D. Bush, D.F.C., F.O.F. Med.
20th to 22nd Passage to Port Said.
23rd Commence transit of Suez Canal.
24th Into whites for the first time.
27th Anchor 4½ miles off Aden. Start L.O.A. Meet Centaur.
27th to 31st Flyex, using Khormaksar as diversion.
31st Commence passage to Penang.

APRIL 7th Potted Sports on flight deck.
9th Arrive Penang. Commence Flyex with Butterworth as diversion.
1 2th Singapore. Alongside in No. 8 berth. Thirty-four days at sea.
1 6th Hoist flag of F.O.2.F.E.S., Rear-Admiral I B. Frewen, C. B.
24th Sail for Fantail and Sea Devil.