

HONG KONG

Fragrant Harbour - according to the Chinese, who delight in giving beautiful names and are past-masters in the art of creating beautiful things. *Pearl of the Orient* - according to the English, who are not reputedly romantic. Here in this tiny British Colony (total area less than 400 square miles) perched precariously on the south-east coast of the impenetrable vastness that is China, East does meet West, whatever Kipling may have said. Most of the two million population are Chinese but they look to the West for their trade, ever since 1842 when the island itself was ceded to the British, although there have been ups and downs, booms and recessions, the importance of Hong Kong as a commercial and trading centre has steadily increased. This is reflected in the universality of wares displayed in the shops. Were you after pearls, basketwork, leatherwork, furniture, sports gear. watches, cameras, typewriters, china, silk, silver, you named it, Hong Kong had it and usually at a price which compared very favourably with anywhere else in the world. Of course, you may have had to do a little bargaining, but this applies anywhere in the Orient, you may even have had to leave the shop several times, coming back on different days in different disguises, pretending to be buying for a friend or a friend's friend but perseverance almost certainly got you there in the end.

The discerning will have noticed that there is no mention of tailoring in the list above, it hardly needs mentioning, the Chinese are the original authors of EVERYMAN'S OWN GUIDE TO TWENTY-FOUR HOUR TAILORING. Wherever you turn, whatever the time of day, there is a Chinaman ready to whip out his tape measure. While he calls out your vital statistics, you will be choosing the material from a selection offered by his younger brother; his elder brother will be cutting out, and all the kids will be sitting cross-legged on the floor sewing up the pieces as they are thrown to them. Before you have time to take off your old suit your new one is ready to go on; of course, if you want a fitting it's extra but, if you care to have a *duty-free* or a shower while you're waiting they'll do you a shirt and underclothes to match. They're fantastic. There's just one thing to watch out for, anything you had made for your wife or girl friend might be on the small side, take that cheong-sam as an example, the Chinese like to see it skin-tight. But then, who doesn't?

Hong Kong is not only fascinating to the *rabbiteer*, there is something for everybody in this bewitching town. Sometimes the Chinese may seem to behave oddly by our standards but that is simply because their standards are different; for instance, those little birds and animals you see for sale as food in the colourful, crowded street markets, this seems abhorrent to the Westerner. The idea of taking food home alive and keeping it until required is nauseating; to the Chinaman, however, the idea of buying dead meat or fish is equally nauseating, and in that climate who can blame him. In any case it all seems rather different when you go to the Floating Restaurant and you are invited to look into the huge tank full of fish to choose which you will have for supper. I wonder if you really got the one you chose? At least you still have the chopsticks as a souvenir.

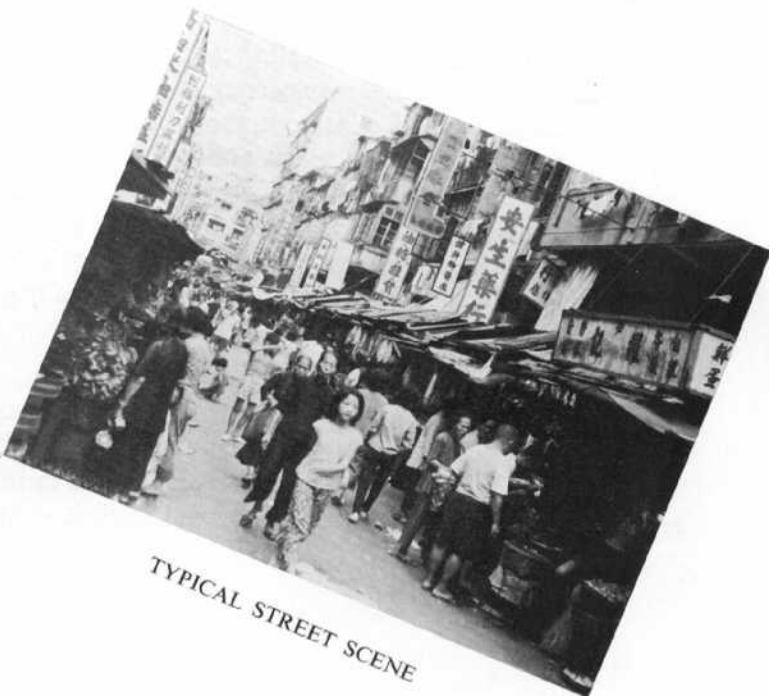
There is poverty in Hong Kong, there is squalor, particularly in the Aberdeen floating sampan slum, there is vice, but there is also vigorous, unrestrained, abounding life and vitality: you can see this in the faces of the girls in Nathan Road, you can hear it in the endless click, click, click of the Mah Jong tiles as the men gamble the days away, you can smell it - anywhere, in every nook and cranny, warm, earthy, invigorating, fascinating!



VIEW OVER ABERDEEN



JUNK



TYPICAL STREET SCENE

SERVITOR SERVIENTIUM



BOOKSTALL

Few people ashore realize the extent of N.A.A.F.I.'s activities on board a large ship. We run the Junior and Senior Rates' canteens, which supply general goods, the Bookstall which sells stationery and an extensive range of durable goods (such as cameras, watches, transistor radios and record players), also the hot and cold Vending Machines, the Beverage Bar, and the Hairdressing Saloon.

All profits made by the N.A.A.F.I. are given back to the services for the benefit of servicemen all over the world. In addition the ship's company benefits directly from the rebate which is paid each month into the ship's Welfare Fund. The average

amount is £600 per month, one-fifth of which is paid to the R.N.B.T.

N.A.A.F.I. staff, unlike servicemen, do not sign on and are able to resign whenever they choose. It is surprising, therefore, that they stay so long. For instance, Doug Leftley, an ex-Royal Marine, was Canteen Manager on *Ark Royal* for four years. He was recently relieved by Eric Revett, a ship's manager for twenty-one years, who has served on *Albion*, *Newcastle*, *Bermuda*, *Belfast*, *Gambia*, and nine others! Alan (Bookstall) Dawe and Gordon (Short Back and Sides) Durn have been on board for four years; Brian Collins and Ron Woodyard have been on for three years; the others, Geoff Harvey, Terry Tizzard and David Robbins have been on board since the beginning of the commission but that only counts as a *dogwatch* to the *old salts* of the N.A.A.F.I. Perhaps, though, the one who is most eccentric, is the Assistant Manager, Brian Wilson. He actually left Australia to join!

Two items worth mentioning are the cigarette and beer sales, the cigarettes sold per month, laid end to end, would amount to about two and a half miles of smokes, while beer sales over the same period amount to 35,000 cans. That was the RAS that was!

We hope we have been able to make your stay on *Ark Royal* a happy one, which indeed, is the aim of the Naval Canteen Service wherever the White Ensign flies.

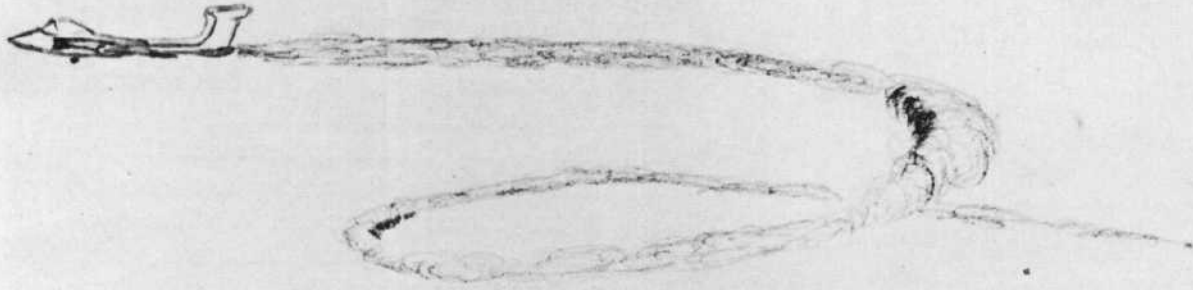
TELEVISION

Ark Royal has been featured on many television screens around the world, but the smallest company to devote a programme to the ship was Gibraltar TV. A half-hour feature covered the histories of the ships named *Ark Royal* and included interviews with two of the ship's officers. The Royal Marines Band also appeared in a couple of the programmes while the ship was in Gibraltar.

MULIE

When *Ark Royal* tied up in Fremantle she apparently sat where local fishermen normally caught their mulie which is then used for bait. The fishermen were forbidden to net there while *Ark* was alongside and this threatened to create a shortage of mulie. What is Mulie?

YEAR OF THE TIGER



890's MONSELL

890 SQUADRON

Since that bleak day in November 1961, when fifteen Sea Vixens took such noisy departure from R.N.A.S. Yeovilton, the professional exploits and achievements of 890 Squadron have been painstakingly recorded in a myriad of books, forms and official letters. But "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy".

WORK-UP

Following a brief visit to Naples, the ship spent twelve days over the Christmas period at anchor in Grand Harbour and successes both ashore and aboard were the order of the day. One squadron mess, fittingly bedecked as a continental bar, walked away with the prize hamper and, in so doing, became the number one objective for squadron officers oozing *bonhomie* and letting their belts out a notch.



But life could be hard too. Especially for the pilot who, at enormous expense, had rented himself a little lovenest within the romantic confines of Birzebuggia. Arriving home in the early hours, his arm protectively around his little woman with whom he had a silent understanding that they would play ball, he was, with reason, very put out to find a party in full swing in his abode. This, very definitely, was not cricket.

FAR EAST

Very shortly after the ship's arrival in Singapore the aircrew, with the exception of those who had done a similar course before and one invalid, accepted the *invitation* to partake of the two-day survival course at the Jungle Warfare School at Kota Tinggi.

Following a very civilized evening spent in an uncommonly well-appointed mess, the first morning saw each survivor appear in jungle greens, jungle boots, jungle hat and machete carelessly belted across the hip. A large number of embryo beards did much to add to the illusion that here was a B.B.C. TV *Swamp* epic in the making.



The day in the woods was highlighted by a multi-course meal of vine-trapped water, boiled roots and poisoned fish supplemented by 24-hour ration packs - and a jungle navex. One party, led by a veteran of the area and consisting almost entirely of observers did the only thing it could - got lost. Sleep at night, though there was plenty to discourage it, won through in the end with the help of a generous pool of rum and bottled beer.

BUS-YANS, ETC.

The first *ban-yan* from Singapore turned out to be a masterpiece of mismanagement. Two H.L.D.s chugged quietly away from the quayside bound for the paradisiacal beauty of southern Malaya. Not until the two craft reached midstream was it real-

890 SQUADRON

ized that all the Brandy and Gin was on one boat and all the Tonic and Ginger on the other. However, a somewhat unorthodox and unseamanlike RAS soon put matters to right - but perhaps it would have been better if they had not....

Though well versed in the lore of the sea and boats, one aviating salt managed to put one of the boats firmly on the beach, where it stayed for a full cycle of the tide. Refloated, eventually, at 11 p.m., it made its weary way back to Singapore with but the vague uncertainties of memory to guide it.

Though not as a result of this incident, the second *ban-yan* was denied boats and so, as a matter of necessity, became a *bus-yan*. The beer, as obtained from the N.A.A.F.I., could not be landed and so supplies had to be bought from the Armada Club. Somewhat disappointed, but determined to make the best of it, two busloads of revellers made for Changi beach and the day got better and better as it got longer. Only the naval airman, who buried his bottles (full) in the sand and spent the rest of the day vainly searching for them, returned to the ship feeling the sharp pangs of frustration and disappointment.



PHILIPPINES

Most of the *goings-on* in Manila have been retained as private memories and not until Subic Bay did activity emerge from dark corners into the light of day.

Our opposite number on U.S.S. *Hancock* threw a beach party on a massive scale. This took place on Cubi recreational beach which had just about every amenity with one, perhaps the most vital, exception. There was food and beer a-plenty and ice, something of a luxury to *Ark Royals* was given away by the dustbin full. The American Squadron Commander was seen, floating in the sea fully clothed - cap and all with a spam sandwich held high and dry - no mean feat when one considered his mode of entry. This set the pattern for many an involuntary bathe, the frequency and violence of which increased as the supplies of beer dwindled. Inspired by similar feats in telephone kiosks and minicars, twenty-four hearties found that it was possible for all of them to get to this party in one Ford Galaxy. The eight who shared the boot insisted that there was still plenty of room for more.

Came nightfall and Olongapo provided the diversion that had been unavoidably but unfortunately absent from the day's activity. The twisting in the Grandilla was matched only by the twisting in the hundred and one other bars and clubs. However, strict curfew was observed and the pipe band led the merrymakers back on board with some very un-Philippine music.

HONG KONG

The Squadron had its first proper *get-together* at the Plaza in Wanchai. For sixteen dollars a head the food and drink proved to be ample - plus, and, rising to the spirit of the occasion, the manager even saw fit to reduce by half the price of a *sticky-green*. This made the whole show very much more competitive and the organizing officer, befittingly, was taken under the protective wing of the **Pride of the Plaza**. The party continued on its merry way until about midnight, when both sides, very pleased with the way things had gone, hatched plans for a repeat performance next time in.

890 SQUADRON

OKINAWA

Here everyone sensed they were as near to Japan as they were likely to get. One could easily be forgiven for supposing that the island was uninhabited but for legion after legion of American Marines. Closer inspection revealed the whereabouts of a number of pseudo-Japanese steam baths and genuine Okinawan strip clubs. Conveniently, they were all located in much the same area and the first provided an excellent appetizer for the second.



PEARCE AND PERTH

That the visit was an enormous success can be judged by the wide Press and Television coverage given to the ship and squadron alike. This sparked off a certain amount of impromptu showmanship which gave a couple of grey hairs to our C.O. Sitting comfortably back watching the **puppets** and **poppets** on Children's Hour he was brought sharply back to earth by a flash which switched the TV cameras over to Pearce airfield, where, for the benefit of the native viewers, the *magic eye* picked out two Vixens and a Scimitar doing low-level rolls over the runway. This was the first and very definitely the last display of this sort given on the tour.

SINGAPORE

On our penultimate visit to Singapore most divisions, with respective divisional officers, took the opportunity of having a run-ashore, each group doing so on a different day. For each the

circuit was much the same whether it started at the Britannia Club, Fatties or Boogie Street, and the journey from one bar to the next was invariably used as an excuse for a vicious tri-shaw race - on at least one occasion the driver and passengers reversed roles, though not the payment. Contrary to popular belief whips were not used in either case.

U. K.

Back in December 1962 via Hong Kong, Aden, Mombasa and Gib. The Squadron spent an incredibly vicious English winter disembarked at *Yeovilton* and for many the only clear memory can be that of chipping a six-inch layer of ice from six thousand feet of runway. At the time of going to press the Squadron has been re-embarked for five weeks and is greedily licking its lips at the imminent prospect of leaving the ship in favour of twelve days at Nairobi civil airport.

WORK

It must be recorded that the Squadron did work.

The greatest hazard encountered by any crew on the trip came when the last Vixen on one recovery was used for an exercise *crash on deck*. With the observer feigning unconsciousness the crash crew eventually dragged him from his coal-hole and smartly dropped him on the deck head-first. Happily bone-domes are effective. Having witnessed this the equally *unconscious* pilot was seen to be hanging grimly on to the flight refuelling probe and thus avoiding a similar fate.



WITH THE AMERICANS

The outstanding memories of time spent with the Americans are all concerned with their generosity and hospitality, barbecues at Grande Island, water-skiing at Cubi Point Beach, lunch at the Teahouse of the August Moon, just a few examples of the spirit which we found in all our dealings with them; their tacit assumption of the role of hosts determined that we, the guests, should lack nothing for our comfort or amusement. Our closest associations were with the attack carrier, *U.S.S. Hancock*, and so it is only fitting that we should quote from her cruise book to describe this portion of our trip.

SUBIC BAY

"Let's go to Olongapo!" The cry resounded in service clubs at dark and at liberty call. For at night Olongapo presents the face of a painted lady of the evening. She is a kaleidoscope of gaily coloured jeepneys, neon signs, dingy night clubs and houses on stilts, a montage of cinnamon skin and big brown eyes, San Miguel and strange money called pesos. The air is filled with dust, new smells and excitement. Shouts and cheers echo from the cockpit; raucous laughter and coy giggles from the clubs mix with grunts and cackles from farm-like backyards and the spirited shrieks of seemingly countless children.

Yet Olongapo presents a very different face at dawn. The dusty streets are still there, filled with jeepneys and lined with clubs which seem to have faded and lost their gaiety in the new light. Now the center of activity is the open market place in the center of the town. Strange fruits called lanzones, papayas and pinnes vie with vegetables, clothing and household wares for the attention of the customer. Everywhere underfoot are the children, many clad only in an undershirt, with their happy greeting: "Hi, Joe! Hi, Joe! Hi, Joe!" repeated, broken record fashion, until acknowledged. The people are genuinely friendly, ready to like you and eager to be liked.

OKINAWA

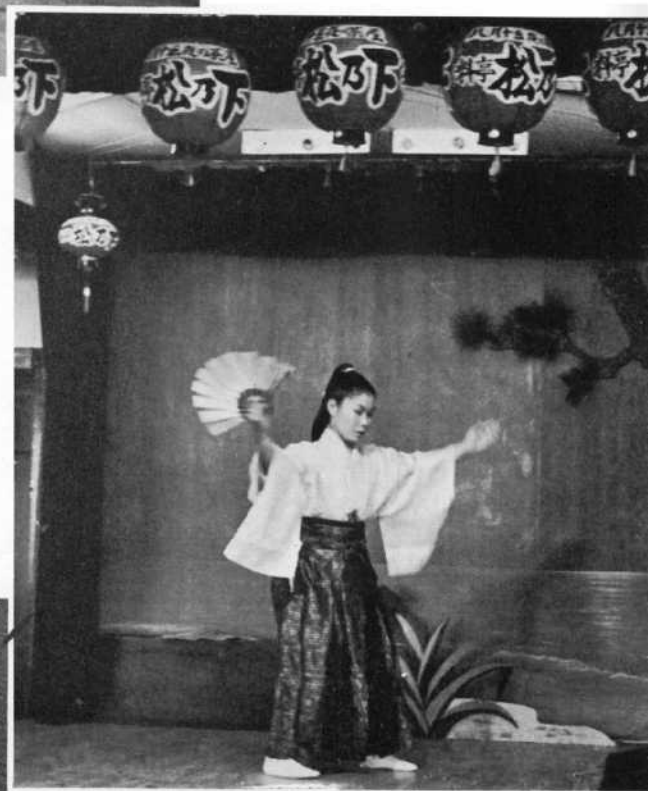
Centuries ago, sometime before the memory of man, volcanoes under the broad Pacific heaved and rumbled with the labor pains of birth. From this conflagration in the deep, Okinawa was born - born as one of the rift of islands known as the Ryuku Archipelago. Even today, the big island sits on a volcanic Rim of Fire both geologically and politically. Today the Ryukus, but particularly Okinawa, have become a pivotal territory on the margin of the Communist world. The position of the U.S. in the Ryukus is unique; the islands are neither a possession nor a colony, a trust nor a territory. The Archipelago shares the fate of many frontier territories, too small and too poor to attract attention in times of peace, but doomed to rise to international prominence during crises among the world powers. It was the scene of bitter fighting in the final days of World War II and has a long history of war and subjugation. Presently it is the United States stronghold in the Far East. The densely populated island still retains the Japanese influence acquired through centuries and Naha, its capital city, closely resembles the cities of its neighbour to the immediate north.

Naha is the seat of learning for the island and also a center for trade. Despite Okinawa's comparative poverty, the landscape is not uninviting and the island provided relaxation and a welcome change in weather from the heat of the south from which we came. The people of Okinawa are friendly and the United States Armed Forces present on the island have extensive recreational facilities which were placed at our disposal during our short stay.



U.S.M.C. BAND AT
OKINAWA

TEA HOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON



U.S.S.
BENNINGTON

