



*The ship's previous Captain,  
Rear Admiral Graham.*



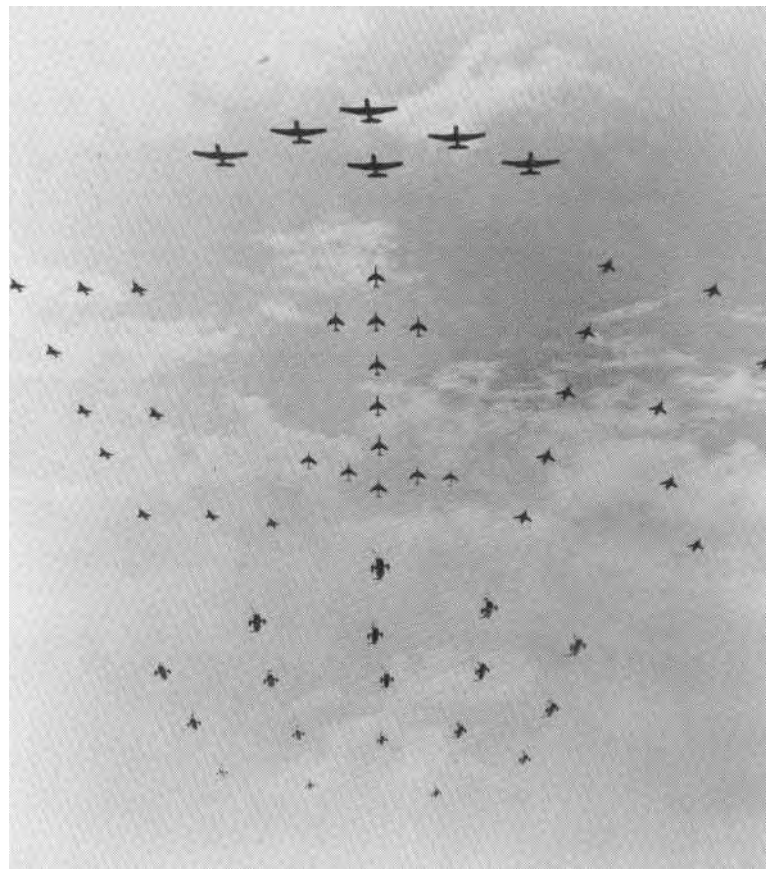
*The ship's first Commanding  
Officer, Rear Admiral  
D. R. F. Cambell, CB, DSC, (left)*

Generally they were official calls on C-in-C Fleet, but the press came too with their note books and cameras at the ready, and the radio and local TV boys arrived with their equipment of various shapes and sizes.

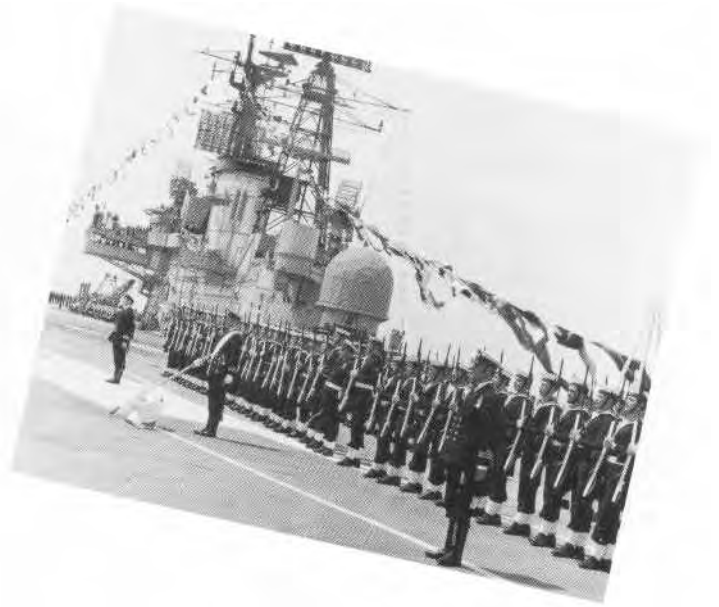
Two live television events took place from ARK ROYAL's flight deck. On the 27th, Peter Purves of BBC's

Blue Peter programme introduced a special feature and later in the evening, Sunset and the illumination of the Fleet were televised for a BBC programme 'Silver Jubilee' introduced by Richard Baker.

Everything was now ready for the big day and we all hoped for good weather.



*The Flypast Rehearsal as seen by several cameras.*



*FINAL REHEARSALS*  
*Monday 27 June*



## THE SILVER JUBILEE FLEET REVIEW 28 JUNE 1977



At last the big day arrived, and the customary poor weather which seems to plague the Queen on big occasions was also present. However we were informed that the afternoon wouldn't be spoilt by rain, but that it would be cold and windy - how right they were according to those who stood on the flight deck.

Our families and official guests began arriving during the early forenoon, and HMY BRITANNIA sailed from Portsmouth. As she passed the Spit Refuge Buoy at 1119 the Fleet fired a 21 Gun Salute, and the Royal Yacht took up her position at the head of the Review Lines.

At 1430 the Royal Yacht entered the Review Lines preceded by the Trinity House vessel PATRICIA. Astern of BRITANNIA came HMS BIRMINGHAM with members of the Admiralty Board and their guests, followed by the RFA's ENGADINE, SIR GERAINT, SIR TRISTRAM and LYNESS with the press and official guests embarked. As the Royal Yacht approached ARK ROYAL's port quarter the Alert was sounded and the ships company smartly came to attention. The guard and band did their bit whilst the remainder of us on flight and weather decks gave the traditional "Hip, Hip, Hip,









Hooray" three times to Her Majesty the Queen as HMY BRITANNIA was abreast of ARK ROYAL. That was it, for about 2 hours, and the next time we saw BRITANNIA at close hand was when she passed to starboard on completion of the Reviewing of Fleet, on her way to her position at the head of the Review Lines.

Once BRITANNIA had anchored we awaited the Fly Past by helicopters of the Fleet Air Arm led by a former Captain of ARK ROYAL, but on this occasion as Flag Officer Naval Air Command, Rear Admiral John Roberts. Unfortunately the expected flypast of 150 fixed and rotary wing machines was curtailed because of the weather conditions and we saw about 90 helicopters.

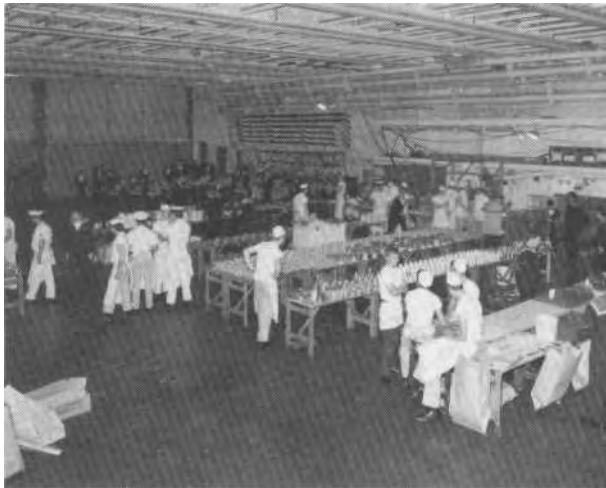
On completion of the flypast, over 200 ratings of all ranks and ages from the Royal Navy and Commonwealth Navies who had assembled in ARK ROYAL during the day

were taken to the Royal Yacht to attend a reception given by the Queen.

The Queen, Prince Philip and other members of the Royal Family mingled informally with the ratings.

To complete the day, the Queen was the guest of honour at a Banquet held in the Upper Hangar of ARK ROYAL, given by Flag and Commanding Officers. Also present were HRH Prince Philip, HRH Prince Charles and Admiral of the Fleet Lord Louis Mountbatten. The hangar had been transformed for the event by means of red and white bunting and polished decks - it really looked fit for a Queen.

So ended the historic day and the contents of the signal that we had all been hoping for were soon known throughout the ship - "Splice the Mainbrace".



*Behind the Scenes, left the makeshift galley, right, the stewards.*

The following signals were received:-

1. From The Lord High Admiral, Her Majesty the Queen, to C-in-C Fleet.

"It gave me great pleasure to review all these ships assembled at Spithead today for my Silver Jubilee Review and to receive the salute of the Fleet Air Arm. I was deeply impressed by the splendid sight of all the vessels in their lines. The smart appearance of the ships and their companies and the precision of the flypast were in the finest traditions of the sea.

"I send my congratulations to all who planned and took part in the Review.

"The Duke of Edinburgh joins me in sending our best wishes to you all as you disperse."

2. From MODUK NAVY, to all RN and Commonwealth Ships at Spithead.

Her Majesty the Queen has requested the Admiralty Board to promulgate the following message.

"To the Royal Navy and to the Flag and Senior Officers of the Commonwealth ships at Spithead:- In celebration of my Silver Jubilee and with the Royal Navy and Commonwealth ships assembled at Spithead Splice the Mainbrace - Elizabeth R. "

# FLEET STEAM PAST 29 JUNE 1977

When we weighed anchor on the 29th, the cable party discovered that there was an overhand knot in the cable, but they soon sorted this out. The ship headed for the southern side of the Isle of Wight where HMS ARK ROYAL led the steam past of 61 British warships. The Fleet were acknowledging the retirement as Chief of the Defence Staff, of Admiral of the Fleet Sir Edward Ashmore GCB DSC who was embarked in HMS BIRMINGHAM. The line of ships stretched as far as the eye could see.

During the afternoon, C in C Fleet left us with the following signal:-

"ARK ROYAL has been a worthy successor in the long and proud line of Fleet Flag Ships of Royal Reviews at Spithead. I am particularly aware of the immense effort put in by everyone at all levels to get the ship up to a standard which I have not seen surpassed and which you achieved so soon after the refit. Very well done and best wishes for the commission ahead."

All the formalities and ceremonial duties were now complete and the ship could once more assume the roll of aircraft carrier undergoing post refit trials.



*A knotty problem*



*Follow the leader*

## MINI CAG AND SUMMER LEAVE 30 JUNE to 31 AUGUST 1977

On completion of the steam past and C in C Fleet's disembarkation, the ship went into a pre-wetting trial as we continued to sail westward towards Plymouth. The morning of the 30th June saw Ark once more in Cawsand Bay where the Flight Deck Trials Team was embarked. Once all the civilian personnel were on board we were off again into the English Channel to embark the mini Carrier Airborne Group (CAG) of three Phantoms, three Buccaneers and three Gannets.

There was real excitement as the aircraft arrived and all goofing positions were manned. First, the deck landing

"spliced the mainbrace". Due to the operational programme this was the first opportunity that arose for the event. In anticipation that the order would be given, the ship had obtained enough genuine Pussers Rum and a Rum Tub to carry out a traditional Grog Issue to Splice the Mainbrace for everyone on board over the age of 18. The occasion brought back nostalgic memories to the more senior members of the ship's company as the Grog was issued and later consumed. To others, they couldn't see what all the fuss and excitement was about.

As usual the ship continued to receive its stream of



*The Tot*



practices (DLP's) took place in order to get a feel for the deck, followed by the actual hook on, and all aircraft were recovered safely during the day.

Once on board they were moved about the flight deck and the hangars followed by cold and then hot loading trials at the launch positions. The Badgers tested the jet blast deflectors, the catapults, the arrestor gear and other flight deck equipment. Everyone gained valuable experience and all was ready for the first launches and subsequent recoveries on Sunday 3rd July. For the next few days the flying trials went extremely smoothly with everyone doing their best.

However, to many, the most important occasion of this flyex period was the "Tot" issue on the 30th June when we

visitors, and two groups left their mark in one way or another in the ship. On the 30th June four BBC Radio and Record Department representatives came to see how we function. Those from the record company, BBC Enterprises, presented the ship with a commemorative disc of the record "Sailing/Wombling Song", while Radio 2 representatives gave us a selection of about 50 LP's for use on the SRE. They enjoyed their stay with us and we appreciated their kindness.

In complete contrast, the members of the Cartoonist Club of Great Britain left their mark in another way on the 6th July, and their sketches and cartoons could be seen around the ship.

During this particular phase of our trials, the ship was



*Band Concert 2 July 1977*

called upon to give assistance on numerous occasions. The first was in the early hours of 1st July when we went to the aid of the yacht PEGASA which required assistance as she was taking water. When Chief Shipwright Anthony Crampton transferred to the yacht he discovered that the water was fresh, and that the fresh water tanks had burst. The yacht was last seen heading for Plymouth. The second incident occurred on 5th July, again at night, when we were asked to look out for the motor vessel ALBATROSS which had broken down. The vessel was soon located and our engineers Lt Michael Grundy and Mechanician Bill Williamson decided that the repairs could not be done at sea and the vessel was towed to Falmouth by a second motor vessel, the JOHN MITCHELL which had also answered the distress call.

The third incident occurred on the 7th July when we were asked by the oil rig Zephyr One if diving assistance could be provided to help clear one of its anchors that had become



*One of their works of art!!*

fouled during mooring operations. A team of seven divers led by Lt Stuart McClelland were flown to the rig and within three hours had completed the job.

Throughout all the comings and goings the flying trials continued and everyone appeared satisfied with the results. The flyex in fact completed a day earlier than expected and buzzes were high that we would be alongside in Devonport before the weekend. Unfortunately our hopes were dashed and we remained secured to 'C' buoy throughout the weekend. To make matters even worse strong winds prevented the ship from entering harbour on the 11th and it wasn't until Tuesday 12th July that we finally berthed alongside for leave, post sea trial rectifications and modifications and of course Plymouth Navy Days over the Bank Holiday period. The strenuous effort made by all departments for Navy Days resulted in 31,648 visitors thoroughly enjoying their time on board during the three days that we were open to the public.



*The Oil Rig and Team.*



# 1977 AUTUMN DEPLOYMENT

## WORK UP PHASE I AND FIRTH OF FORTH 1-20 SEPTEMBER 1977

The time alongside went far too quickly and we sailed again on 1st September for the real work up to bring us up to a state of operational readiness. Drama soon raised its head for, during our first RAS with the RFA's LYNESS and OLMEDA, EM(A) Murrey and REM Tomlinson of 892 Squadron decided to go for a swim via a large wave which swept them overboard. The SAR was quickly launched and soon had the two back on board. non the worse for their 9 minutes' experience.



*The rescued safe and well*

Following the incident Ark continued its passage towards SW Ireland and up the west coast of Ireland. The ship experienced a good swell which gave rise to murmurs in the stomachs of the ship's company. Despite the sea we all managed to overcome our problems and Sunday 4th September saw the ship at the southern end of the Minches for its day cruise northwards through the Western Isles.

On arrival at the ship's old hunting grounds of the Moray Firth the fixed wing aircraft were embarked safely throughout the 5th. The flight deck personnel soon became accustomed to the aircraft on their patch, and launch, recovery, duskers, night flying and CASEX became common discussions about the ship as once more she assumed the role of a busy and exciting floating airfield. Throughout this first phase of bringing the air and ground crews up to some form of readiness, the remainder of the ship went about their own business. For the majority on board there was a lot to learn during this first phase of the ship's work up.

Of course the ship had its continuous stream of visitors and among them were the Branch leaders of two of our smallest groups. The Director of the Naval Education Service, Rear Admiral J. A. Bell CB came on the 6th September, and Colonel P. F. Baillon had a look at one of his sections, the 55 Carrier Borne Ground Liaison Section, CBGLS; both spent several enjoyable days with us.

The work up appeared to go well and we rounded this phase off with a visit to the Firth of Forth. The ship secured on Thursday 15th September to No 1 Buoy some 6 miles from Leith and on the north side of river. For the Scottish and North of England natives, there was the opportunity of a long weekend with their families. For the remainder there were receptions, visits, tours and of course shopping expeditions to the fine old city of Edinburgh. The only disappointment of the visit was the 5 miles boat ride to get ashore, and our thanks must go to the various boats crews who did their best for us.

***At anchor in the Firth of Forth.***





*Here they come again.*

*For some it is the  
same as before*

*but*

*for Flying Officer R. LOTINGA  
(centre) his first recovery  
is over.*



## WORK UP PHASE II

### 20-28 SEPTEMBER 1977

All good things come to an end and once more we were off when we slipped from the buoy on the 20th September and returned to the Moray Firth. Even before we slipped, the first of our distinguished visitors who were to visit us during the second phase of the work up was already on board. He was the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Councillor William Hudson who was maintaining, the long established link between the City of Leeds and HMS ARK ROYAL, and he enjoyed his short stay.

The next few days were very busy especially from the VIP aspect, with Wednesday 21st being the big day. First the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Terence Lewin GCB, MVO, DSC, ADC, accompanied by Mr Russel-Wood, the Deputy Treasurer of the Royal Household were embarked by helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth, then Commander His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales arrived. The official reason for the visit of Prince Charles was to gain practical experience of fixed wing carrier operations from HMS ARK ROYAL. The Prince arrived in a Buccaneer of 809 Squadron, piloted by the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Tony Morton, and the recovery at 1145 was carefully observed by the knowledgeable goofers.

During the next few hours, both Prince Charles and the First Sea Lord made separate visits to mess decks and to various parts of the ship including Flyco where the flying operations were observed. The main purpose of the Prince's visit was to experience a steam catapult launch, and he is the first member of the Royal Family to do this. After yet another photographic session by the press who were covering the event, the aircraft and its occupants were ready for launching from the waist catapult at 1545. All went well and before leaving the area, Lt. Cdr. Morton brought the Buccaneer in for a low level pass of Ark's port side.



*First Sea Lord  
during his walkabout*

The First Sea Lord departed early on the 22nd and sent us the following signal:-

"Thank you for an exhilarating 24 hours and for looking after me so well during such a busy period. Best wishes to you all for a successful workup and deployment."

The next important visitor of the week was Dr John Gilbert, MP, Minister of State for Defence and was accompanied by the Flag Lieutenant to the Admiralty Board, Lieutenant Commander C. D. Prentice. They arrived from



*Dr. Gilbert visits 4Ro Mess.*

RAF Lossiemouth on the 23rd and this visit followed a similar pattern to that of Prince Charles. However Dr Gilbert launched and then recovered on board Ark in a Buccaneer, before returning to Lossiemouth by an 824 Squadron Sea King.

Throughout the week, flying continued as normal as far as possible and other departments went about their usual routines. The week ended quietly with a typical Sunday at Sea approach, except for the weather which prevented any form of flight deck recreational activity because of the gale force winds.

One of the ship's departments, the Guided Weapons Section, had reason to be pleased with themselves during



*NATO Defence Review Committee.*





*The visit of Commander,  
His Royal Highness the  
Prince of Wales. 21  
September 1977.*

the week, as there were two successful firings of the Martel Missile at the Aberporth Range from Buccaneers of 809 Squadron launched from HMS ARK ROYAL.

The second week of this phase of the work up also had its share of visitors. The major group to visit were the NATO Defence Review Committee on the 28th. Although flying continued during the week, most people's minds were

thinking of the weekend ahead and the ship's official visit to Hamburg. On completion of night flying on Wednesday 28th September, the ship headed southwards and left the safety of the Moray Firth to cross the North Sea. By the morning of the 30th the ship was in the vicinity of the River Elbe estuary, and the start of a long day for the Special Sea Dutymen began.

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## HAMBURG

### 30 SEPTEMBER to 5 OCTOBER 1977

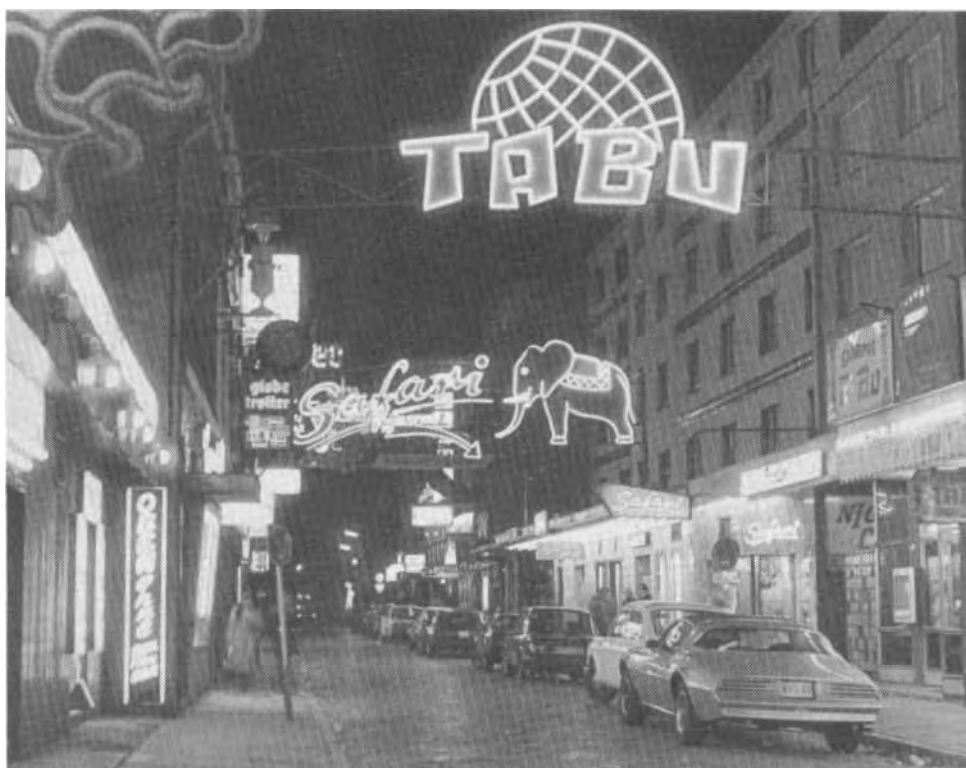
The long 70 mile journey inland took up all the remaining daylight hours and the ship finally berthed about 1900A at Hamburg. Hamburg, and what can be said about our first foreign port of call this deployment? Probably the aspect foremost in all our memories will be the awful wet weather that we had during our few days' stay, and by contrast the splendid hospitality extended to us by the citizens of The Free Hanseatic City of Hamburg.

Of course there were the official receptions both on board the ship and ashore. The City entertained the Captain and 26 officers and ratings to a Civic Lunch at the Rathaus - equivalent to the City Hall - on Monday 3rd October. Numerous visits and tours were organised and these were superbly handled by our own Detours organisation. Generally all were successful and, as they were all free, there were no shortages of volunteers.

For those that could be spared, there was the four day visit by eighteen officers and men to Berlin through East Germany. Conducted sightseeing tours of both East and West Berlin were organised by the parties' host, The Royal Corps of Transport, and the well known Berlin Wall, Brandenburg Gate and Check Point Charlie now mean something more to these men of ARK ROYAL.



#### *The Reeperbahn.*





### *The 'IVAN' visitors*

In the evenings there were the bright lights of the Reeperbahn and possibly everyone who went ashore at night went there for one reason or another, even if it was only out of curiosity. In complete contrast there was the visit to the Hamburg State Opera House to see 'Lucia di Lammermoor'. Of course, many made their own way and did their own thing, and everyone seemed to enjoy Hamburg although it was expensive for a lot of us.

To show our appreciation, the ship was open to visitors over the weekend and over 10,000 Germans and Britons

braved the showers and long queues to come and see us. The Royal Marine Band played its part by giving performances for the visitors.

By Wednesday 5th October our visit was over and at 0830 we slipped from No 8 berth and after a neat astern movement into one of the many water inlets to the dock area, the ship gained forward speed and set off on the long journey back to the North Sea and to the third phase of the work up in preparation for the Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI).

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## **WORK UP PHASE III 7-14 OCTOBER 1977**

Our return to the Moray Firth on the 7th was in poor weather conditions and very little fixed wing flying took place over the next few days. However the rotary wing continued with their flying tasks and the ship exercised Shelter Stations and other evolutions in readiness for the ORI. The darken ship canvas drapes added yet another obstacle to one's movement around the ship.

FOCAS, Rear Admiral W. D. M. Staveley arrived on board during the afternoon of Monday 10th, and it was hoped that everyone knew the various drills and procedures that might be asked of them.

Before the ORI got underway, Commander M. H. G. Layard took over as Cdr (Air) from Commander R. J.

Northard - what a time to take over, but what better time to leave!! The ORI began at 1000 on Tuesday 11th October and continued until 2230 on the 12th, and throughout the period, AGR's and life jackets were common sights. The main day of the ORI was the 12th with the emphasis on flying operations and a major NBCD exercise between day and night flying. Throughout the two days the Command kept the ship's company well informed of what was happening as the FOCAS staff moved about the ship handing out their little brown envelopes containing new evolutions.

Throughout the period everyone pulled his weight and this was evident from what Admiral Staveley said to us over