

from "fascinating" and "interesting" to "it's a rip off". Of the organised activities, the most popular was the two days of ship's Banyans on Magens Bay Beach on the 11th and 12th May. A shuttle service of open sided "buses" took us from the water front at the USO to the beach on the north coast. Those of us who went on the Banyans agreed that they were good value and an enjoyable time was had by all. The sea was inviting and the beach very picturesque with the trees forming a back drop to the overall scene, and giving the necessary shade as protection against the sun's rays.

For those that had the time, the neighbouring island of St John was a popular attraction. Apparently St John was a quieter, more beautiful island and had better beaches than St. Thomas, and the inhabitants were just as friendly.

The Royal Marine Band of ARK ROYAL gave two performances for the locals of Charlotte Amalie in their Emancipation Park close to the island's Legislation Building. They were well received and the locals acknowledged the professionalism of the Band. In fact various types of music could be heard throughout the island from the Steel Bands, one of which gave a lunch time performance at the USO to the pop music of the night clubs.

As usual in any foreign port, Ark attracts a lot of interest and St Thomas was no exception. Organised tours of the ship by numerous groups were very popular, and our Sports Teams put up good displays against local opposition.



Banyan at Magens Bay Beach.

Despite the popularity of St Thomas with the ARK ROYALS our stay had to come to an end and on the morning of Monday 15th May we peacefully departed from our anchorage.

ON PASSAGE TO, AND WORK UP IN THE JACKSONVILLE SEA AREAS 15-30 MAY 1978

Soon after leaving St Thomas we rendezvoused with HM Ships DEVONSHIRE, ANTELOPE, and RFA's LYNESS, OLMEDA, RESOURCE and PEARLEAF which had either been visiting St Thomas with us or had been to other islands within the Virgin Islands. On completion of a massive RAS the whole group set off in a NW'ly direction towards the Jacksonville Sea Areas a distance of some 1100 miles. The route took us through the infamous Bermuda Triangle - but we survived!

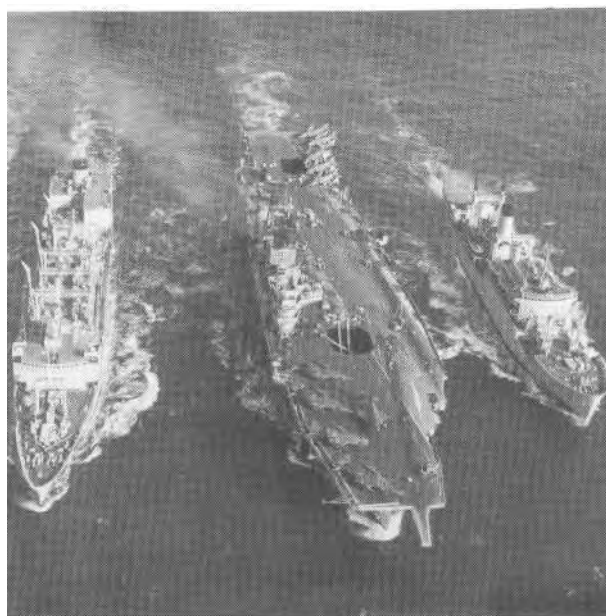
The highlight of the passage was the Flight Deck Fair on the afternoon of Wednesday 17th May. The Fair was opened by the duty vicar (the Captain) and his lady (rumoured to be Rev. Batten in drag). The members of 4Vo Mess appeared on the scene in the guise of The Court of King Neptune together with his musicians for the Ceremony of Initiation of Selected Members into the Bermuda Triangle Crossing Society. There were numerous stalls, raffles and horse racing and everyone appeared to enjoy themselves. The afternoon raised £585 for the ship's charities fund which was a good effort by all concerned.

By the afternoon of the 18th May we had arrived in the Jacksonville Sea Areas and once more the flight deck became a busy airfield. The fixed wing squadrons encountered problems during the early period with lack of wind which coupled with the ME departments boiler clean programme limited the ship's speed, and hence not enough wind over the deck was available for several sorties. Besides our problems at sea, the diversion airfields in the Jacksonville area were often fog bound first thing each morning which did not help matters.

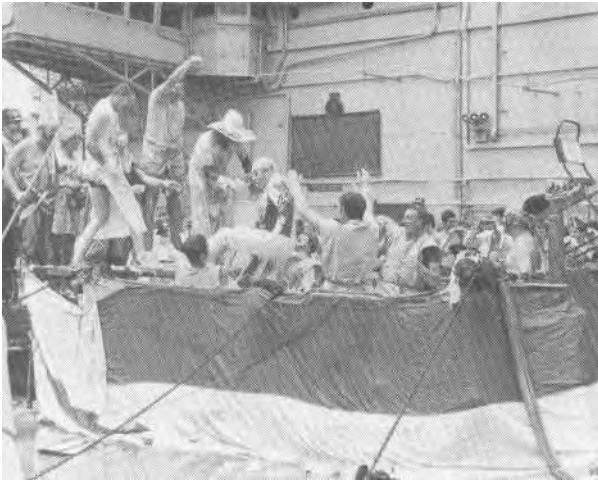
Since we have been this side of the Atlantic we had been warned about the excessive use of fresh water and so it came as no surprise when water rationing was introduced on Sunday 21st May for 24 hours until we had RASed some from the OLMEDA.

During the period off Jacksonville, the American Fleet

conducted their annual exercise to the north called "Solid Shield". The ARK ROYAL group took part on the 23rd and 24th May and in particular our role was to strike the



One of many RAS's.



The Captain gets a ducking...



... and the Fleet Master at Arms resists.



The race course.

carrier USS J. F. KENNEDY. The flying was a little more intensive than it had been of late and the Squadron's air and ground crews as well as the ship's supporting departments gained valuable operational experience under the first exercise conditions of this deployment.

However for many on board the main event of the 24th May was the grand opening of 4B heads after their redecoration by a team from the MTD department, and what a vast improvement this was over the previous decor.

Thursday 25th May saw a completely different type of flying from the flight deck when "Hands to Kite Flying Stations" was piped to announce the Grand Kite Flying competition. During the previous few days, messes, sections and individuals had been busy designing and building the kites. Well over 60 kites were entered, and the winners of the various class of kites were selected by a strong team - the Captain, the Commander and the Chaplain.

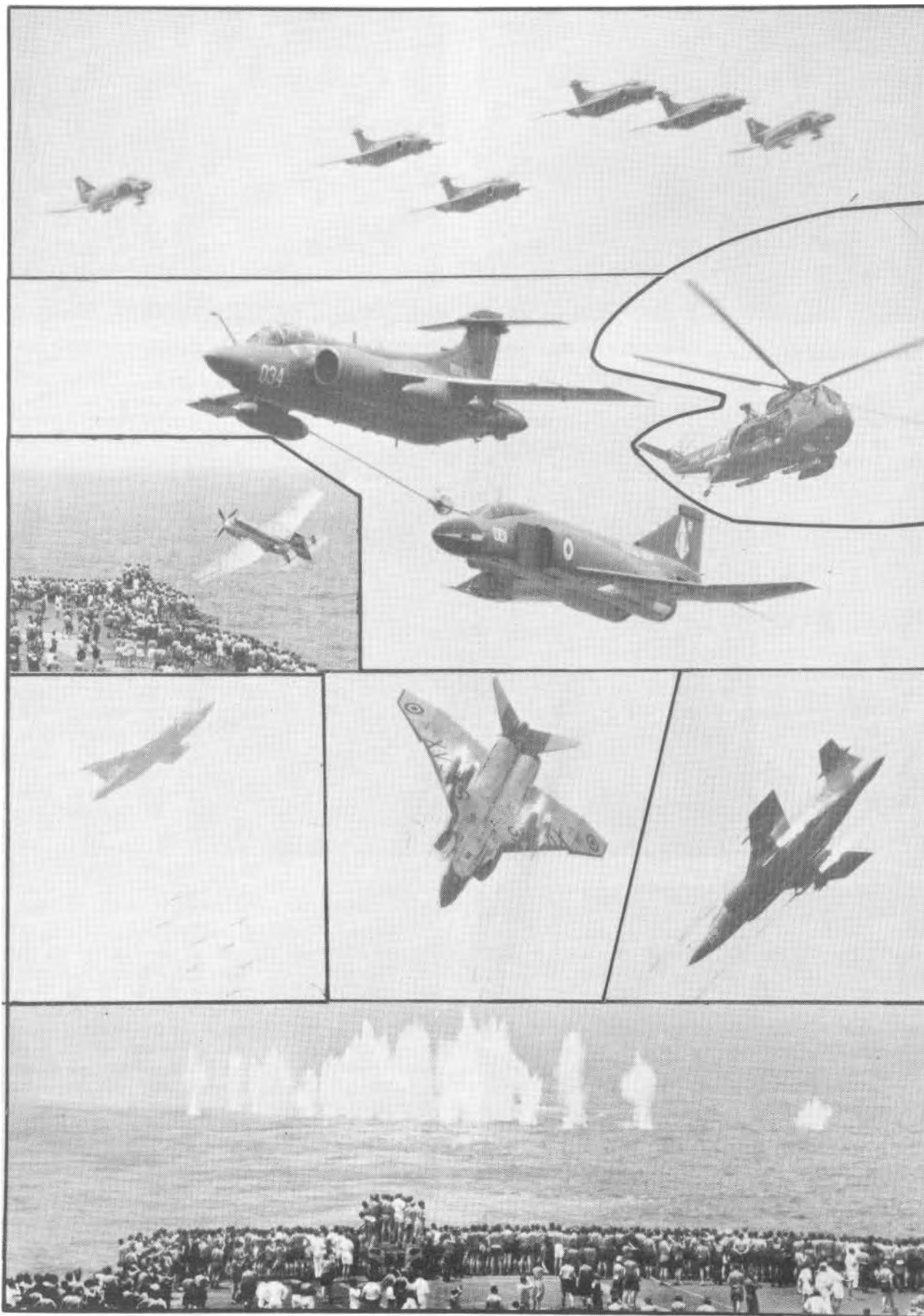
When the time of reckoning arrived and the launchings took place on the after end of the flight deck, some of the kites made graceful ascents while others found the sea a watery grave. However all agreed that it was a successful and entertaining competition.

While this leisurely sport was taking place, a completely different event took place on the remainder of the flight deck. This was the Inter Mess Sports competition for the more energetic and 21 teams took part in the 8 event competition with 6E mess eventually taking the honours.

On Saturday 27th May the air world gave a shop window display in which the Squadrons gave a fire power demonstration and mini air display. The entertainment included live rocketting and bombing, inflight refueling, ASW attacks, formation flying and solo aerobatics and those of us who witnessed this display in fine flying conditions were most impressed.

By now most people's thoughts were on our next port of call, Fort Lauderdale, and on completion of flying on the 29th we left our exercise area and headed south. By the following morning the flat, straight coastline to the north of Fort Lauderdale was clearly visible with the blocks of flats breaking the horizon.

Our entry into Port Everglades during the late afternoon of the 30th seemed very quiet with few people there to greet us. After all the stories that had spread around the ship that this would be the best run of the deployment, were we in for a big disappointment?



Shop Window Display, 27th May.



Kite Flying Stations.



FORT LAUDERDALE 30 MAY to 13 JUNE 1978

Well were you disappointed with the two weeks visit to Fort Lauderdale? It is a difficult period to record as there was so much happening, both official and unofficial, and with the ship's company of 2700 or more people, not everyone's interests in the visit can be mentioned. In general most of us found it an enjoyable visit, particularly those that managed to find a good grippo. For some it was the start of RA again as a few families flew out while we were there.

As usual there were the official receptions on board and ashore and the influence of the Navy League was apparent at these functions. The big disadvantage of our berth in Port Everglades was that we were as far away as we could have been from the main gate and transportation or lack of it was the main factor to influence people's activities.

The two tours organised by Detours met with poor response, although the day visit to the Everglades National Park was more popular than the afternoon tour of a Seminole Indian Village. One of the disadvantages of the tours were the after effects of the mosquito bites. The Sick Bay was busy with people looking for something to stop them scratching and itching! !

By far the best way of seeing the southern part of Florida was by hired car and a number managed visits to Key West, the Gulf of Mexico coast and even Disney World. For many, however, the car was a means of getting away from the Fort Lauderdale area to any of the towns and beaches between West Palm Beach in the north and Miami Beach in the south.

As expected most of us spent some time on the various beaches and the majority turned a darker shade of brown under the intense heat of the sun's rays. The beach near the coast guard station was popular with those who did not want to venture far and their thanks must go to the duty boats crews that took them across the Intracoastal Waterway each afternoon.

Fort Lauderdale offered many places of interest besides the beaches and bars during the day. Popular attractions were the Ocean World Porpoise shows, the Jungle Queen and Paddlewheel Queen cruises round the inland waterways, the Voyager Sightseeing Train tour of the city, and

the many parks and open spaces. The night life was "night life", judging by the vast numbers returning to the ship in the small wee hours of the morning, but in general most survived their run ashore. The hotels, night clubs, discotheques, bars, restaurants, eating houses and other establishments of entertainment catered for everyone's taste and were well patronised by members of ARK ROYAL.



We are sailing.



Intracoastal Exped. departs ...

On the sporting scene there was much activity despite limited sporting facilities being offered to the ship. Besides the inter departmental fixtures there were numerous games against local opposition with rugby, soccer, boxing and golf being the main competitive games. Squash, badminton and tennis were available at the local Players Club and sailing at the Fort Lauderdale Yacht Club was an opportunity not to be missed by the keen helmsman. The ship ran a very successful course for the RYA Elementary Day Certificate under the watchful eye of FCPO Allen.

In general the sports-minded upheld the good name of ARK ROYAL and put up creditable performances both on and off the field. The supporters too were out in force especially against the local soccer team, The Fort Lauderdale Strikers. Possibly the presence of former England players Gordon Banks and Ian Callagan and other English League players had something to do with this keen support.

The weather during the visit to Lauderdale was hot and sunny and the few showers that were experienced did not dampen our activities or our spirits.

In order to show our appreciation to the locals for their warmth and hospitality the ship was open to visitors over the weekend 3/4 June and 9956 people came on board. They were most impressed by the kindness of those on duty either as guides or on the stands.

On Monday 13th June, five of the ship's boats manned by 52 volunteers, left for an expedition up the Intracoastal Inland Waterway. We were to see them again on our arrival at Mayport.

As with all our visits, they must finally come to an end, and unfortunately our stay at Fort Lauderdale was over. During the forenoon of the 13th, final preparations were completed for our departure from Port Everglades at about 1500 that afternoon.



... and so do the rest of us.

JACKSONVILLE SEA AREAS AGAIN 14-23 JUNE 1978

Soon after leaving the protection of Port Everglades we went straight into a RAS with RFA's OLMEDA and LYNESS as the group tracked north back to the operating areas 70 miles off the coast near Jacksonville.

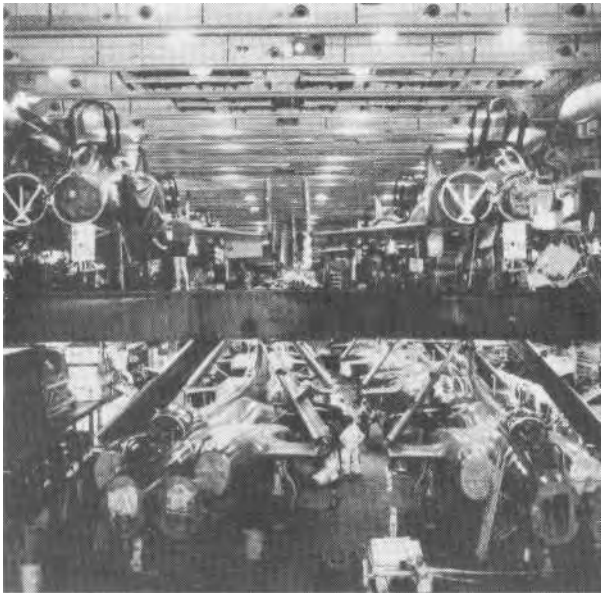
We all soon slipped back into the normal sea routine, but unfortunately after a two week break, not all the aircraft found it as easy and no Gannets flew during the first days flying on Wednesday 14th. To counter this disappointment, the flight deck recorded the 1000th fixed wing aircraft recovery of 1978 and on the following day the 1000th fixed wing launch of the year took place.

By the 15th the first of many problems for the ME department came to a head, and the water crisis which was to be the topic of conversation during this period at sea began. The problems were due to the evaporators not working to their full capacity, and the need to conserve water was brought home when water rationing was

introduced on several occasions. Despite strenuous efforts, the savings were not enough and water was RASed from any source as often as possible before the end of this session at sea. On Saturday 17th we saw the RFA FORT GRANGE for the first time. She is the first of a new type of RFA and presently carrying out intensive trials. To assist with the flying trials, three Sea Kings were despatched for a few days to join the one already on board.

Sunday 18th proved to be a testing day for Ark when she was subjected to a Full Power Trial. The trial was successful and, despite her age, a fine 29 knots was achieved. During the afternoon the ship was back to her normal cruising speed and the energetic amongst us were out in force for flight deck sport competitions.

Monday 19th June marked the beginning of ARK ROYAL's four day involvement in a Composite Training Exercise (COMPUTEX). The exercise under the direction



The Hangars.

of the American Navy consisted of serials of varying length in surface, anti-air and anti-submarine warfare. To most of us on board it was just like any normal flying period and it was difficult to appreciate that we were actually in an exercise.

Throughout the week, the water situation was critical and we took part in a 7½ hour RAS with RFA LYNESS during which over 400 tons of water were transferred.

By the afternoon of Thursday 22nd all the fixed wing aircraft had disembarked to the American Naval Air Stations of Jacksonville and Cecil Fields so that they could continue flying training while the ship was alongside at Mayport Naval Base. During the late afternoon Rear Admiral Staveley embarked and flew his flag as FOCAS for the last time.

Before most of us had arisen on Friday 23rd, yet another RAS was under way but this time it was a VERTREP of beer from RFA RESOURCE. This was the fifth successive day in which ARK ROYAL had taken part in a RAS of one form or another!! On completion of the RAS, the remaining helicopters departed as we headed towards the Naval Base at Mayport. Our entry in Procedure Alpha and with gun salutes from ourselves and from ashore assured the locals knew of our arrival for the start of a seven week Contractors Assisted Maintenance Period. Among the welcoming party were members of the Intracoastal expedition who had arrived at Mayport on the previous day.

The 52 members of the ship's company who took part in the 310 mile expedition certainly enjoyed themselves and it is hard to believe all the stories that have been told about the Intracoastal. Overnight stops were made at Coastguard Stations or in civilian yacht marinas and, despite ants and mosquitoes, most people were able to sleep after a full day in the open. Places of interest which were visited included Peanut Island, Cape Canaveral, Daytona and St Augustine. Due to mechanical faults the maintainers were kept as busy as they are on board, ensuring that the five boats were serviceable for each days passage. It was agreed by all that it had certainly been a memorable time and one that they are unlikely to forget.

MAYPORT NAVAL BASE 23 JUNE to 8 AUGUST 1978

The main purpose of the visit to the American Naval Base at Mayport was to put the ship through a Contractors Assisted Maintenance Period (CAMP). As we all knew, the Marine Engineering Department had experienced many problems while we had been at sea, and it was hoped to rectify these during the period alongside. The work involved was far more extensive than at first envisaged and the department worked continuously round the clock to get it completed in time. The daily visits of the milk tanker with fresh supplies of feed water for the ship reminded us that the work down below was still in progress. Other departments too were busy doing their own maintenance and repair work and the never ending tasks of cleaning and painting the ship continued daily. By the end of the CAMP the outside appearance of the ship was vastly improved.

Our stay in Mayport was dominated by an abundance of American hospitality plus about 400 family visits from home, making the period a truly enjoyable and memorable one. The Detours organisation did a magnificent job and was a wealth of information. The smiling face of Mrs Johnnie Cordell of the Ground Transportation Office of NAS Jacksonville was a constant reminder of the hard work and preparations that had been made on our behalf. Those that wanted to get away for the odd day or for leave managed to do so by themselves or with the help of Detours, and members of ARK ROYAL appear to have visited almost every part of the USA. Obviously the heaviest concentration was in Florida with Disney World and the Orlando area, Cape Kennedy, Daytona, St Augustine and even Fort Lauderdale being the most

popular. It can safely be said that the vast majority of us saw and did things that we had never seen or done before thus extending our own personal experiences.

During the stay in Mayport, the ship worked Tropical Routine and this gave everyone the chance for sport and recreation. From an official sporting view point there was a full and extensive sports programme which was enjoyed by those who took part. The ship produced teams to represent



At Mayport.



Sports Day.

us in many sports against local opposition and we enjoyed a varied amount of success. In house the majority of competitive sports were contained in the Olympiad Competition and this included the Swimming Gala, Sports Day and the Chain of Command Canoe Race on Lake Wonderful. The eventual winner of the six week Olympiad was the Seaman Department with the Air Engineers taking second place.

Besides all the organised sports there were many who took advantage of the excellent facilities on the base the most popular of which were golf, swimming, tennis, fishing, ten pin bowling and even darts. Away from the ship one activity that proved interesting and enjoyable was Tubing at the Ichetucknee Springs near Lake City. Obviously the beaches were a constant attraction for sport and relaxation and throughout the CAMP the keenness and enthusiasm shown by all was encouraging.

Although work, recreation and sporting activities took up a lot of time, there were many other things happening. Some even managed to escape for a week in the ship's boats on what were officially termed "expeds", although the definition of exped was often in doubt. On the other hand six members of the Communications Department walked 91 miles for charity and collected £347.52 for the St Vincent De Paul Society in Leeds which is a home for under-privileged children.



The Badger's Canoe Team ...



... and the Swimming Gala Winners.



Disney World.

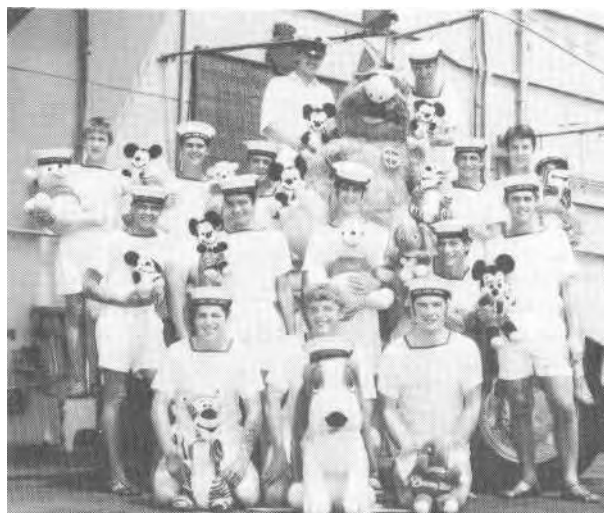
The Squadrons continued with their flying programmes throughout this time. The aircraft of 892 & 809 had disembarked to the United States NAS Cecil Fields and 849B, 824 & SAR to NAS Jacksonville before the entry to Mayport and the remainder of the Squadron's personnel joined them afterwards. Each Squadron concentrated on its own particular role and even managed a few navigation exercises to other parts of America. As with the ship, a lot of maintenance was carried out and most people took advantage of leave, sports and the great American hospitality.

As usual there was a vast amount of entertaining both officially and unofficially in the ship and ashore. The Royal Marine Band were kept busy with many performances and

they proudly flew the flag, as did our sportsmen and many other members of the ship's company on their travels around the USA. In general the majority of us were a credit to the ship and to the country.

By the time early August arrived there had been many changes in the ship's company and the bronzed and smiling faces were replaced by pale ones. As final farewells were made and the ship prepared for sea, our thoughts were once again on what lay ahead. The Squadrons too started to arrive back on board together with all their equipment from the air stations ashore.

Despite all the American hospitality and most people's liking for Florida our time at Mayport came to an end and on Tuesday 8th August we slipped and proceeded from our berth during the early forenoon and headed out to sea.



ON PASSAGE TO NORFOLK AND AT NORFOLK 8-21 AUGUST 1978

The major task once we were out into the Atlantic Ocean was to recover the fixed wing aircraft from the NAS at Cecil Fields and at Jacksonville. As with the humans, not all the aircraft wanted to leave Florida and as the ship headed north a number were left behind, but they joined us later in the week - unlike a handful of the humans. For the



Rear Admiral Herbert.

next few days flying was frustrated by very little wind and by mechanical problems on the flight deck and in the world of condensers and evaporators. Again we were subjected to water rationing as demand far exceeded supply. However by the time we reached the Norfolk Exercise Areas some flying was possible and the air world took full advantage of this opportunity.

On Friday 11th August, the new FOCAS, Rear Admiral P. G. M. Herbert OBE embarked and flew his flag in HMS ARK ROYAL for the first time. By Sunday 13th it was time for a mini CAG to disembark to the American NAS Oceana and a number of Phantoms and Buccaneers went ahead to warn the locals of Norfolk of our arrival. The reason for the mini CAG was so that the aircrew of both Squadrons could continue with their flying programme during the visit to Norfolk, Virginia.

After what seemed a few days at sea, which allowed us to find our sea legs again after the long break at Mayport, we were soon heading back to the shelter of land and to the largest naval base in the world at Norfolk. As we approached the main base of the United States Atlantic Fleet on Monday 14th, there were numerous gun salutes before we finally secured alongside under the shadow of our host ship the nuclear powered aircraft carrier, USS NIMITZ.



H.M.S. ARK ROYAL and U.S.S. NIMITZ at Norfolk.

The main purpose of the visit was for final briefing and discussions for the forthcoming major NATO Exercise Northern Wedding and the run in period Exercise Common Effort. As this only involved a small number of people, the remainder were able to appreciate the great American hospitality, continue diplomacy in the field of sport, and generally have a good last fling on American soil.

Detours with their varied attractions were once again to the fore with Washington DC and New York being very popular and many took advantage of these trips if we could be spared. For others the historical tours of Williamsburg and Jamestown were a must. Despite the fact that Virginia Beach was 20 miles away, it attracted a lot of attention especially during the evenings. For the less adventurous and those short of money, there were on the vast base many facilities available for sport and recreation as well as the PX where many last minute rabbits were sought.

Throughout the week official receptions took their toll and the Royal Marine Band was in great demand at these and other functions.

On Saturday 19th August a rare event took place, "Clear Lower Deck," when we all assembled in the Upper Hangar to be addressed by the Captain. Rumours were at a peak as to what it was about and as it turned out few of them were

correct. The Captain told us what lay ahead during the next few months and quashed all the rumours that were going around the ship and Plymouth too.

During the visit to Norfolk all departments were busy ensuring that they were ready for the next period at sea, and by our departure day, Monday 21st August all necessary preparations had been made. ARK ROYAL was the last of the British warships and RFA's that had been visiting Norfolk to leave and as we waited our turn to be escorted from our berth, each one of us was probably thinking of the last few months. The Royal Marine Band on the flight deck competed with the Band of the Commander in Chief U.S. Atlantic Fleet on the jetty and one large banner held by the Americans indicated the feelings of some of the US Navy. The sign read HSL-32 SAYS "KEEP THE ARK AFLOAT THE RAIN MAY BE COMING".

We finally slipped and proceeded during midforenoon with the tune 'Sailing' drifting in the air to bid our last farewell to America, leaving behind many happy memories. We also knew that we had done our duty as the largest and smartest British warship in America, and Rear Admiral Herbert was pleased with our behaviour.



GOING EASTLANT ON PASSAGE AND EXERCISES COMMON EFFORT AND NORTHERN WEDDING 21 AUGUST to 19 SEPTEMBER 1978

We were at sea and this time it was to be for five weeks - the longest during the deployment. In addition to FOCAS and his staff there were several new faces on board including RAF and US Navy people who were embarked for the Exercises.

During the afternoon of the 21st, the Buccaneers and Phantoms were recovered from ashore and the ship continued with her flying programme for a few days in the Norfolk Exercise Areas. So as to conserve water, a beard growing competition was begun on the 22nd and over 1200

Officer from the submarine USS SKULPIN to our own sick bay. On completion of the CASEVAC, ARK ROYAL in company with the USS MONTGOMERY left the exercise to make a fast passage towards the Azores. The intention was to complete some private flying - or was it to collect mail! However the 30th-31st were spent to the north of the island of Terceira in the Azores with the fixed wing flying a number of sorties and 824 Squadron acting in the familiar role of HDS including the tricky task of air lifting a spare Spey engine for a Phantom which diverted to Lajes on



Goodbye America.

of us took part as hirsute growths sprouted everywhere. Another novelty to occupy our minds and hands was the ARK ROYAL Grand Handicraft Competition, and while at sea many were busy preparing works of art.

On Wednesday 23rd August after a day of flying, HMS ARK ROYAL turned her back on America and headed east to join Exercise Common Effort. This combined British and American exercise had begun a few days earlier as the ships had left Norfolk. The exercise concept was to reinforce US Forces in Europe with a fleet of American Amphibious ships sailing east across the Atlantic with a screen of nuclear submarines for protection, and with ARK ROYAL providing the necessary air defence, surface search and probe tactics. 824 Squadron as usual provided an anti-submarine screen ahead of the force twenty four hours a day. The enemy consisted of UK ships and two American nuclear submarines.

Unfortunately the weather plagued the fixed wing and on 25th and 26th August poor flying conditions existed. The Meteorologists on 03N Deck were intrigued to witness the birth and development of two Atlantic depressions.

On Monday 28th, 824 Squadron assumed the role of ambulance when it transferred a sick American Petty

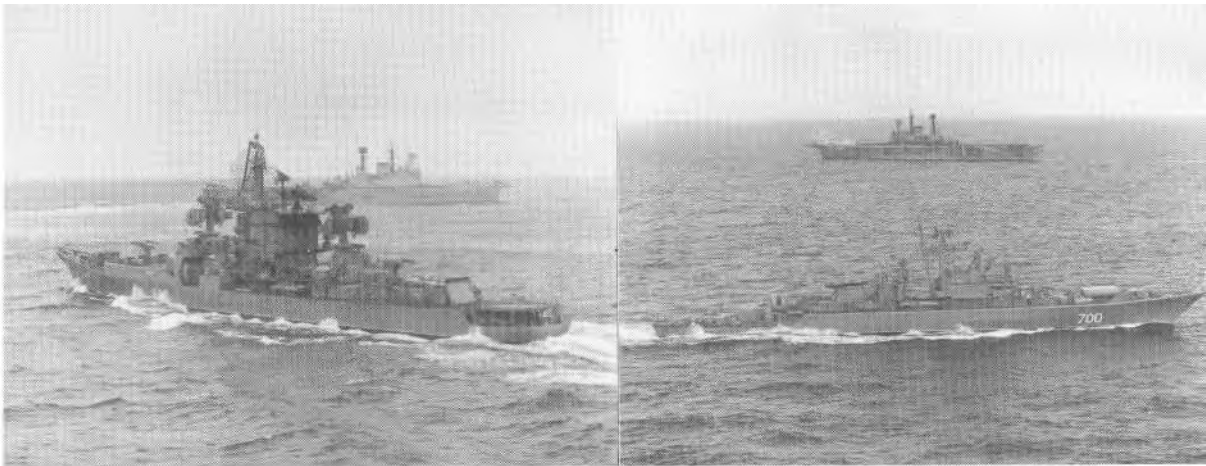
Terceira. During this period FOCAS also took the opportunity of getting airborne and he flew one sortie in a Gannet of 849B Flight.

From the Azores, we made another fast passage to catch up with the other ships that had taken part in Common Effort, and who were now heading north towards Iceland. The main feature of this passage was the NBCD exercise on Friday 1st September in which a great deal of valuable experience was gained and the whole ship benefited from the analysis of the various evolutions. At 0400Z on the 3rd September, while in the latitude of Newcastle upon Tyne, we changed from tropical rig into blue uniforms and the majority of us were delighted. Is this the furthest north that whites have been worn at sea many wondered. Sunday the 3rd was also our last chance to relax before the next major exercise which began at 1200Z on Monday 4th September.

Our start position for the NATO autumn exercise Northern Wedding was 61°N 20°W and along with the USS FORRESTAL we were the only fixed wing aircraft carriers taking part in the year's biggest NATO maritime exercise. Over 200 surface ships and submarines from Britain, America, Canada, the Netherlands, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Portugal and France were assembled throughout



The real "Reds" during Northern Wedding.



the Norwegian and North Seas for the Exercise. In addition there was much support from shore based aircraft and surface units.

The planning behind Northern Wedding was designed to test and exercise a large number of NATO options. These included marking and counter marking of hostile ships, the reinforcement of an Island Commando, anti-submarine warfare, electronic warfare and many more. As usual the scenario consisted of Blue and Orange Forces, and ARK ROYAL found herself on the Blue side. During the Exercise we travelled from the start point to the Hebrides, then east of the Faeroes, down to the Shetland/Orkney gap, back to the north reaching 64°38'N, our most northerly position this deployment, before finally returning to the Moray Firth.

When the weather was suitable each Squadron performed its own special roles, with the Phantoms of 892 defending the ship from air attack, the Gannets of 849B carrying out surface search and surveillance control or airborne early warning of contacts, and the Buccaneers of 809 probing contacts and striking if necessary. The Sea Kings of 824 flew round the clock searching for submarines and also acted in the familiar role of HDS. Once in the Moray Firth, 809 flew sorties into Norway to give air cover to the assault landing by US/UK/Netherlands Amphibious forces near Oerland.

Besides the Orange Forces in the water and in the air, the Exercise also had its real Red spectators to contend with. Russian Bear aircraft were regularly sighted and a range of ships including modified KASHIN class destroyers, KRESTA II class cruisers, KRIVAK class destroyers, AGI's and submarines were in company at different times.

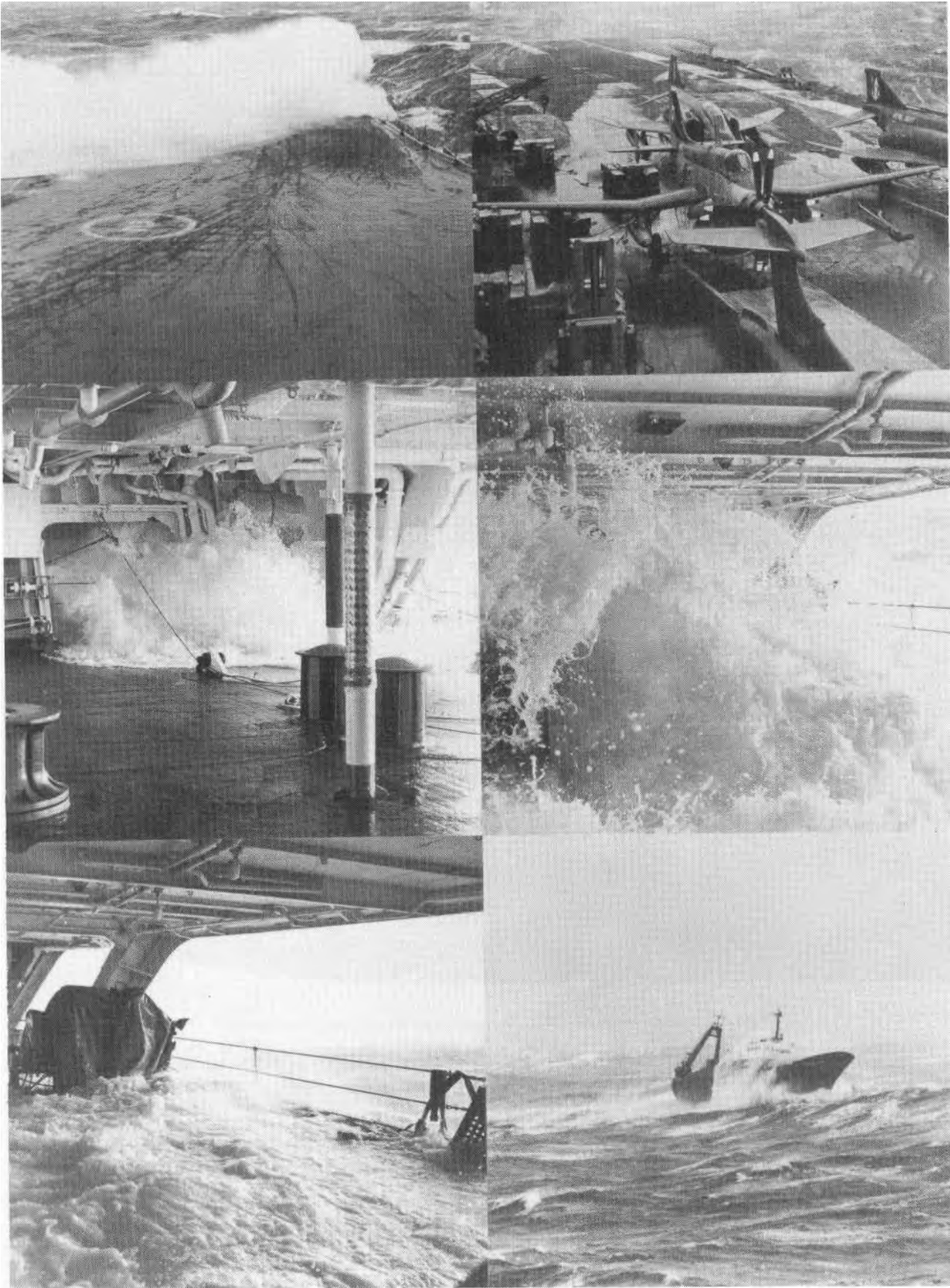
As seems to be the case, the weather played an important role in the ship's activities. If it wasn't fog, low cloud or

poor visibility, then it was the swell putting the flight deck out of limits, and all prevented flying at one stage or another. On 16th and 17th September it was the turn of the remnants of Hurricane Flossie to affect us as the storm moved NE'ly through the exercise area. ARK ROYAL suffered sustained winds of 60 knots with gusts in excess of 70 knots and the violent storm caused some damage particularly to the Quarter Deck which was open to the mountainous waves.

The exercise finished quietly at midday on 19th September when we were in the calmer waters of the Moray Firth. FOCAS disembarked during the afternoon with some of his staff and the rest of us set about preparing for our Royal Visitor the following day.



The Navigator (centre) is judged to have the best growth.



Flossie

THE VISIT OF HER MAJESTY, QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER 20 SEPTEMBER 1978



In Flyco

So it was that on Wednesday 20th September HMS ARK ROYAL welcomed Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother who came to say farewell to her ship. Her Majesty has been associated with ARK ROYAL since she launched the ship in 1950 and has returned to ARK on many occasions.

Her Majesty, accompanied by members of her Household, arrived on board in a helicopter of the Queen's Flight just before 1130 and spent four hours with us. During her visit, Her Majesty met officers and ratings informally, had lunch with the Captain and senior officers, watched the launch and recovery of some of our aircraft together with a mini flying display, and toured the Operations Room and Aircraft Direction Room. Then she went to the Upper

Hangar where about 1000 men were assembled, giving many their first glimpse of Her Majesty. Here the Captain presented her with a memento of the occasion, and of the ship, when she was asked to accept on behalf of us all a silver replica of the ship's bell mounted in its wooden tabernacle. After addressing those present in a short, sincere speech which brought a tear to many an eye, we gave Her Majesty three hearty cheers. So came to an end a sad but great occasion as the after lift took Her Majesty out of our midst to the helicopter waiting on the flight deck.

Throughout the visit we were impressed by her warmth and her interest in everyone and everything, and her visit will be remembered with pride for many years to come. The following is a copy of the signal received by the Captain



Receiving the replica of the Ship's Bell.

from Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother the following day.

"I greatly enjoyed my visit to ARK ROYAL and I was thrilled by your excellent and very exciting flying display. I was deeply touched by your charming gift of a little silver replica of the ship's bell with its beautifully constructed tabernacle, it will always remind me of a very happy day spent onboard ARK ROYAL."

ELIZABETH R