

THE VICTUALLING
STORES PARTY



The food that has been taken in over the flight-deck has found its way to the table in more varied forms than ever before. Multi-choice menus have been maintained for the first time in the life of this ship probably to the dismay of those who run the 'big eats' cafés ashore.

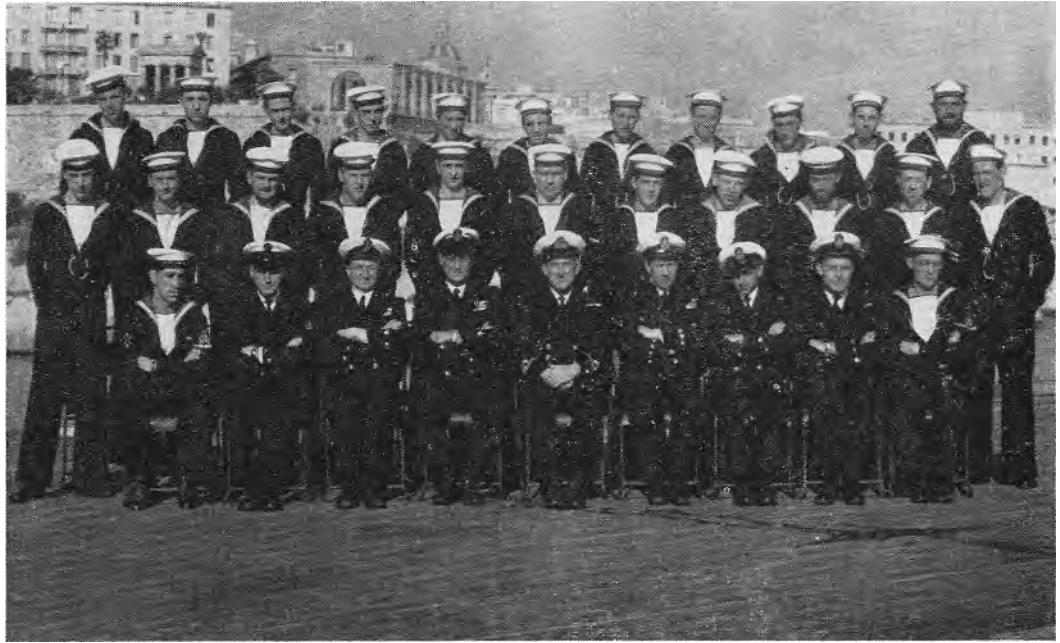
The wind of change has also been whistled-up in the pay office and payment, too, has become streamlined. This ceremony now takes place on the way to the dining-hall, which not only saves time but also removes the irritations from what ought, after all, to be a happy occasion.

These and other numerous ways of ensuring a slicker domestic organisation have made it possible to run the ship successfully with considerably fewer men than were carried during her previous commissions .



DINING HALL STAFF

THE
ELECTRICAL
DEPARTMENT



FORWARD GROUP

When we commissioned this ship it looked to many of us as though there would never be any end to the work waiting to be done. Now that we look back, with the experience behind us, we realise that we were only too right.

We are aware that there were times when you sat in your office or caboose with the lights out and wondered where all the electricians were and why somebody was not doing something about the job card which you put in three days ago. Unfortunately for us, you were not alone; in all probability you did not see the EMs working on the Admiral's lights, which were much more important than yours; and we don't suppose you noticed the EA and electrician working on that machine down at seven or nine something-or-other, without



AFTER GROUP

which the operation of aircraft would have been impossible.

However, we are not all apologies. The flight-deck for the modern aircraft has more and more electrical equipment, all of which is quite complicated; and it has been kept going with practically no interruption of the flying programme. The flight-deck Penguins have always been ready off the mark under the able direction of their leader – who managed to knock up another half-stripe at the same time. Their life is, of course, one great panic; but under the Mediterranean sun this helped to keep them from getting too browned off. We did hear that a certain rating was worried that he might get his head caught under the JBD one day. Someone else unkindly suggested that this might be a greater peril to the JBD!

Below decks there is an awful lot of ship. Early in the commission it was decided to change the old system of administering the department, and we were sawn in half like the magician's lady. A work study team made many suggestions about running things, particularly with regard to the after group, and they received many suggestions in exchange, some of which I hesitate to repeat. Nevertheless, lessons have been learned and information collected for the carriers of the future.

The Island 'R' and '1' sections have their quiet fun in their more rarified atmosphere. Their rows of radar displays, navigational gear and general operational equipment all require that faults be rectified whenever possible, with a negative lapse of time. With a life depending on every valve, so to speak, there isn't any room for a prolonged breakdown.

The ship's programme ensured that we spent plenty of time in the sun, of which we feel only an indirect but more uncomfortable effect down below – in other words, it gets hot. At one point it was wondered if an 'itsy-bitsy tiny polka-dot bikini' might be better for Father Christmas when we lit him up at Christmas time, but December's gales put the idea in its proper place, and the effort was put into illuminations instead, and was well rewarded.

In the breathless halts between the operational periods the Electrical Department has done its best on the sports fields of the Mediterranean and Scotland, winning the 'round the Rock' relay race, getting into finals in the tug-of-war, and having representatives in most of the ship's teams. Of course, we lost



ISLAND GROUP



FLIGHT DECK GROUP

goodness knows what, but the athletic prowess of the Department is unquestioned - particularly in some quaint spots around Barcelona, Palma (Ahh!) and La Linea de la Concepcion. With an empire extending from the highest point-that couldn't get under the Forth Bridge - to four feet below the keel, there has never been any lack of variety - or opportunity for exercise - in the Electrical Department.

PS.— If you were paying for your electricity by putting shillings in the slot, and at the same rate as you would at home, each one of you would have stumped up £51. 16s. 2d. in the past year.

And the Electricity Company would have collected £103,620. 2s. 0d.

Which is a lot of shillings!

THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT



The Sick Bay has often been very busy during this commission, but only rarely has this been due to sickness. This paradox is due to the fact that the *Ark* is blessed with an ideally situated sick bay which can be approached by four doors.

The port door has only been used occasionally: it is the access for casualties collected by the seaboat, who usually just require a hot bath and dry clothing.

The starboard door is labelled 'Officers and Medical Staff Only' but it is also used frequently by the Regulating staff, who seem to be under the mistaken impression that the Medical Officers would like to see some of the returning libertymen. (This is quite untrue, and in our experience the libertymen have no desire to see us either.)

The forward door is the most used. Through it stream the queues of eager volunteers for vaccination, TAB, tetanus, etc. - also quite often whole messes who have suddenly developed an interest in entomology.

The after door should remain permanently closed, as it is the access to the forward lift and is designed to collect casualties from the flight-deck. Fortunately, there have been few casualties of this nature, but there have been all too frequently cases of another kind. One of the most irritating diseases arriving by this door is flourrhoea (this means a discharge of flour, in at one orifice and out at the other); there is also split peorrhoea and many others which are most disturbing to patients and staff alike.

However, laughter is the best medicine and, in the words of an old wartime acquaintance of mine (Mrs. Mopp): 'It's being so cheerful keeps me going!'

SPORTS

There has been no lack of enthusiasm for organised sports in the ship this commission but there has been a great dearth of opportunity. Whenever chances have come up they have been seized greedily by the various secretaries, but ship's teams have always been handicapped by the lack of continuous training and practice and by the fact that it has rarely been possible for any team to be kept the same for two games running.

With opportunity being limited, it has been the policy to hold inter-part competitions rather than a large number of representative matches, in order to let as many as possible out onto the field. From this point of view we can certainly claim to have had a successful commission, even though the total of representative matches won may be disappointing. Even so, the trophies won in inter-carrier competitions is by no means disappointing.

SOCCER

Two ship's teams have been run, but of the dozen or so games played only one was won. Our teams showed skill quite equal to that of their opponents, but to little avail.

The inter-part trophy was competed for twice, in March and again in January 1961. In the first competition the Royal Marines beat the Scimitar Squadrons in the final 2-1. In the second the final was drawn 1-1, and the Engine-Room Juniors beat the Supply and Secretariat team 5-3 in the replay.

The standard of play in the finals was high and it was good to see the keenness, coupled with the good sportsmanship that characterised all the matches.

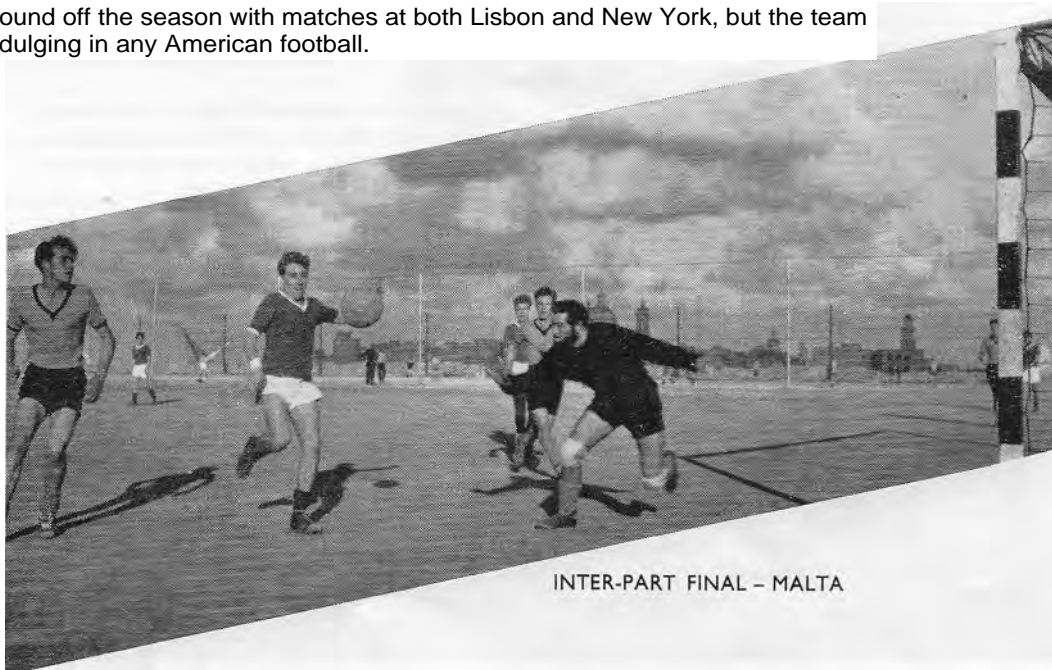
RUGGER

Early in the commission a few preliminary games were played before the ship left Devonport, and these enabled us to field a reasonable side when we visited Barcelona in May. On this occasion we beat the local champions 19-3 in a very open game. The play and the result gave great delight to a large and appreciative crowd.

At Rosyth in September *Hermes* was defeated in both the Carrier Squadron 'sevens' and in the first round of the Home Fleet Cup. Unfortunately, we could not keep this up and lost to Tyne unexpectedly.

An inter-part seven-a-side competition was run at Malta early in 1961 and one hundred and eighty players took part in a most enjoyable and energetic day. The Wardroom beat 849 Squadron in the final, and in the final of the 'plate' competition 800 Squadron beat the Air Ordnance.

We hope to round off the season with matches at both Lisbon and New York, but the team is chary of indulging in any American football.



INTER-PART FINAL - MALTA

SQUASH

The small number of enthusiasts, which includes an encouraging proportion of ratings, have been chasing around the courts to let off steam rather than as a preparation for matches. A few have been played, however, in which we have held our own — almost. We wrested the Noble Cup from *Hermes*, only to lose it immediately to *Victorious*. Plans to recapture this led to some near serious preparations, but these were foiled by *Victorious* having to delay her arrival at Gibraltar on account of a little rough weather.



BOXING

Unlike the field games, boxing need not suffer from long periods at sea. This may be why its popularity has undoubtedly increased through the commission. The enthusiasts have trained consistently and the effects have shown in the results. With little experience at first we lost all bouts in a match at Gibraltar in May. In September, against *Hermes*, we won three bouts out of eight, and ran the 40th Commando close, only losing by 13-14. Then in Malta, against the RAF, we succeeded in winning all bouts. These matches have always been good to watch and our thanks are due to those departments who provided the necessary setting for them in the hangar.

HOCKEY

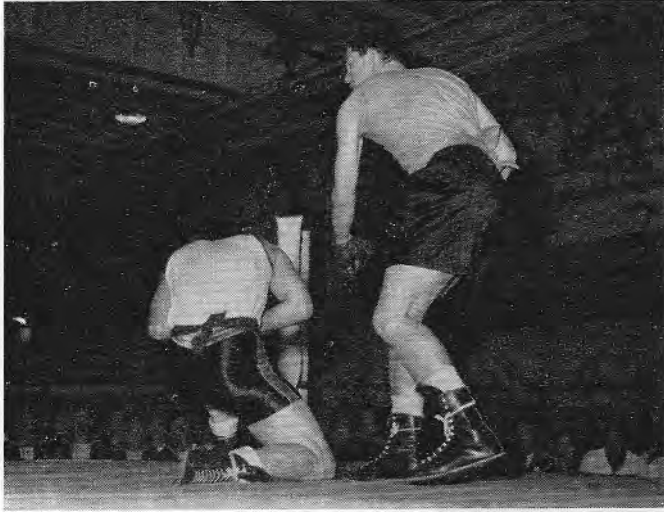
The Hockey team has had no star performers, but ability and enthusiasm has been waxing throughout the commission. Now we can put out two good, though not outstanding, teams and have won about as many games as we have lost.

A six-a-side contest was held in May in which twelve teams competed, the Flight Deck being the winners. The same team were successful in a seven-a-side knockout held at Gib in June. A further eleven-a-side knockout was run over Christmas at Malta, which was most keenly contested. In the final the Scimitar Squadrons won the final after extra time.

Playing against *Hermes* for the Carrier Squadron Trophy we were heavily beaten 7—1 but regained a little prestige by beating *Victorious* 4—1.



INTER-PART HOCKEY
MALTA



CRICKET

During our second visit to Gibraltar an inter-part knock-out competition of 20-over matches was played, the Air Technical XI beating the Scimitar Squadrons in the final.

Of the ship's matches we can look back on one particularly enjoyable day's cricket at the Marsa when we gave *Hermes* a fairly sound beating. Later on we played Victorious for the Squadron Cup in our most exciting game.

Playing on a very soft wicket at HMS *Dryad* after our matches on the Marsa concrete, we were never very impressive when batting and scored only 63. To the intense excitement of all, Vic did little better and we managed to eject them for 62, thus gaining the trophy by one run.

SWIMMING

Comparatively little swimming training has taken place, but thirty-one life-saving awards have been gained, including two distinctions and nine awards of merit.

Water-polo has proved popular, and a strong team was formed. Every match was comfortably won and the season was appropriately rounded off by our carrying off the Home Fleet Cup at Rosyth against strong opposition.

ATHLETICS

Two inter-part contests have been run for the benefit of those with an interest in athletics. The first was a 'round the Rock' relay race at Gibraltar, in which thirteen teams of seven competed. It provided a very interesting contest, and the Electrical Department 'A' team came in first, with 892 Squadron and the Engine Room Department following up.

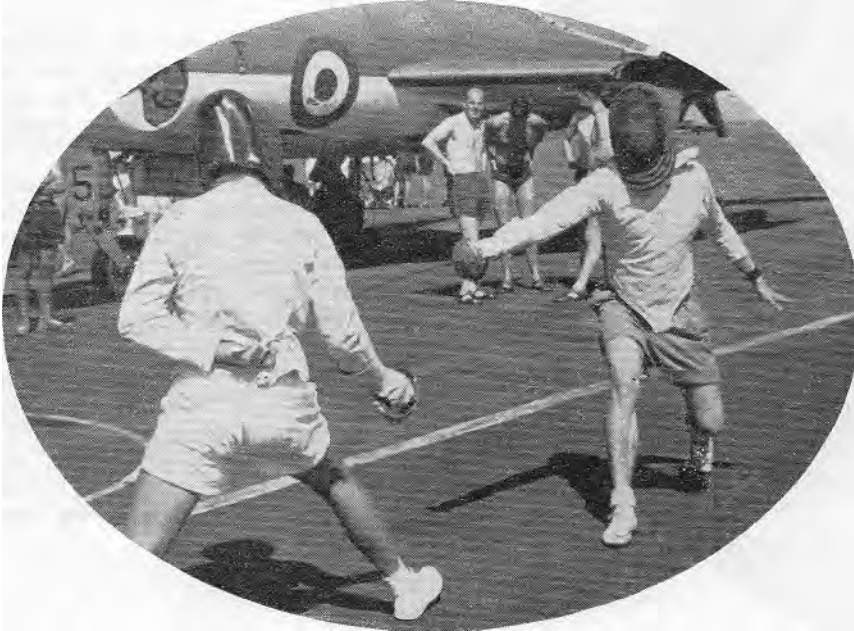
Next was a comprehensive athletics meeting staged in Malta in August. It hardly needs to be said that the weather was hot to very hot, and the track not so hot. However, some good performances were recorded in the sprints and jumps. The competition was won easily by the Engine Room Department.

For those who prefer the slower death of a cross-country, there was a race with *Hermes* for teams of forty over a three and a half mile course at Rosyth. On this occasion we had to admit to a narrow defeat, but we attribute this to a navigational error which took the team up the wrong side of a hill.

Finally, we sent a team of four ashore to compete in a village-to-village relay in Malta. With little preparation the team did well to finish seventh out of a field of fourteen.



ATHLETICS – INTER-PART
THE CAPTAIN PRESENTS THE PRIZES

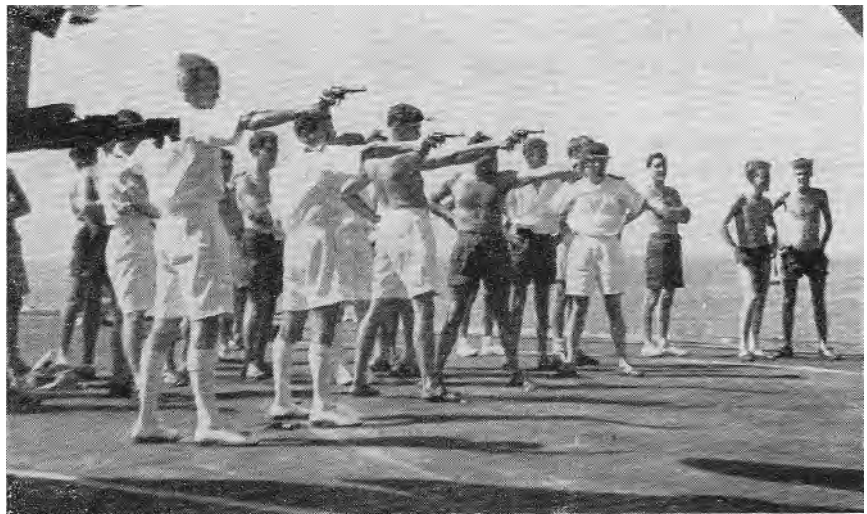


FENCING

This has naturally been confined to a fairly small number of enthusiasts, but these have taken every opportunity to practise at sea whenever there has been no night flying. Three complete novices have been trained to competition standard during the commission. The ship's team has competed in three matches for the Carrier Squadron Trophy and won them all.

DECK HOCKEY

On the very few occasions when this interesting blood sport has been possible it has been fought with the usual disregard for life and limb. Few casualties have been reported. One major competition has been arranged, and in the final of this the Flight Deck 'A' team soundly beat the Air Ordnance, to win the shield.



PISTOL-SHOOTING
ON FLIGHT DECK

VOLLEY-BALL

A great deal of volley-ball might have been played but for the unsportsmanlike insistence on using the pitch the after lift – for lifting aircraft. As it was, we can only record that the Carrier Squadron Trophy was captured from Victorious by three games to two.

GOLF

This has been largely a private enterprise activity, though one or two matches have been arranged. We did take part in the Home Fleet Competition with three notable successes. The canvas screen rigged from time to time on the AX has been the scene of some high drama, and a few novices have on occasion appeared to be trying to do the spectators, the quarter-deck and themselves some serious injury.

JUDO

The Judo Club was formed in October – rather late in the commission – and a short demonstration, organised as a curtain-raiser to a boxing match, did much to arouse interest and let the ship know a little about this more unusual sport. Its popularity has been building up and the Club is looking forward to its match at Lisbon.



CARRIER SQUADRON TROPHIES HELD BY THE SHIP

Won from 'Hermes': Seven-a-Side Rugby, Fencing, Deck Hockey, Pulling Whaler, Team Sailing,
Team Tennis, Team Golf

Won from 'Victorious': Cricket, Individual Sailing, Volley-Ball

VITAL STATISTICS

In the fifteen months since the ship commissioned, including the first five weeks in Devonport Dockyard, we have spent 253 days at sea and 203 in harbour. This is 55+ per cent at sea compared with 41 per cent for the last commission.

The total distance steamed was 80,000 miles – about three times round the world – and the 100,000 tons of fuel oil burned cost £750,000.

Nearly 2,000 tons of solid stores were embarked at sea and provided the storing parties with 100,000 man-hours of hard labour. Over 150,000 tons of fresh water has been distilled – very little of this, of course, has been drunk.

The Squadrons have flown a total of over 9,000 sorties, 450 of which were at night. The catapults have launched 2,400 Scimitars, 1,100 Vixens and 400 Gannets. Over 4,000 helicopter sorties have been flown. The total distance flown is 2,231,500 miles—five return trips to the moon.

The total payment was £776,543, of which £28,565 was deposited in the POSB, and over £2,000 contributed to charities.

The total rum issue was 637,000 tots. If consumed in one day, even by this ship's company, it would lay the entitled men so flat that . .

Twenty million cigarettes have been smoked – enough to line both sides of the road from Plymouth to John o' Groats.

Over 2+ million meals have been eaten, including about 8¼ million potatoes.

The barbers estimate that they have cut 480 million hairs, which would stretch from Plymouth to Siberia and back – if the red ones came back.

A total of 1,390 offences were recorded, divided departmentally per man per week they ranged from 1 in 36 for the Royal Marines to 1 in 61 for the Seamen. 101 warrants were read, which is an all-time low.

It costs 7d. per foot to move this ship and £1,000,000 per week to run it. Has it been worth it? And how!

