



AIR DEPARTMENT

# The Flight Deck



Flight Deck Division

A SMOOTH FLOW of aircraft being launched and recovered is the aim of all who work on the Flight Deck during flying operations. To most of our visitors over this cruise it is probably true to say that they have gone away impressed with what they have seen and were convinced that we did indeed launch and recover in a smart manner. Looking back over the whole commission, however, there have been times when things have not gone just as they should. Luckily, the irritation of the moment turns to amusement in retrospect. A few examples are here recorded.

#### *The lift's stuck down, sir!*

This, of course, has to happen when we have just started up a maximum range of aircraft for a fly past. Luckily it was the after lift, so only the "Skys" were inconvenienced by the hole in the deck. Much careful taxi-ing round the hole—which many thought couldn't be done—sent the "Skys", three in number, pounding down the deck with fuller than full power to make up for the shortened run. They got off, but what would have happened if all the aircraft had returned with the lift still stuck down, sir, is anybody's guess.

#### *I didn't see the mirror*

The pilot of a Sea Venom, being a conscientious type, thought he had better report that although he thought his approach was normal, he hadn't seen the light spot as he should. He was quite right, for the mirror shutters were shut!

I wonder what the pilot of the aircraft that landed in front of him was looking at?

#### *It slipped out of me 'and, sir!*

That splendid blue tractor that used to tow the Skyraiders aft. It must have been quite a splash as it disappeared beneath our wake. An officer on the quarter deck, observing the sad event, was prompted to exclaim: "I wonder if the Flight

Deck team asked anybody's permission to ditch a gash tractor over the side?"

N.B.—When the F.D.O. did a similar thing he managed to catch his on the lift, an insignificant drop of forty feet.

#### *Stand clear. Reset the wires*

The wires had been pulled to clear the after lift, a couple of centre spans had been changed, and all was ready. "Reset the wires . . ." And the result? What should have been = was found to be x. Now, how could anybody connect the starboard end of No. 3 wire centrespan to No. 4 wire and the starboard end of No. 4 wire centrespan to No. 3 wire

#### *Heard in Flyco*

(1) Will you please stop talking when I'm interrupting?

(2) Has anybody seen the Steward Commander?

(3) I'm going to strike down Exhibit 426 into the "Charlie" Museum.

(4) I know it's dashed inconvenient, sir, but if we could unrig the swimming pools, stop the deck hockey and the volley ball, and turn onto another course, we could land the "Sky" on.

#### *Paddle your own Tracker*

It seems the high speed deck operating with all the mod. cons. we've become used to was all a bit too up to date for our American friends during the Cross Operating off Manila. They brought their own batsman along with them. "Hell, Lutenant, did we used to be as bad as that?"

#### *Gather round, men*

As helicopter "Bravo" came up the lift the F.D.O. turns to the assembled onlookers, passing the time of day in Fly One. "Right, lads, round Bravo, get moving!" And to a hesitant individual on the touchline—"You too." These stern words only brought forth the reply, "I don't know what a Bravo is, as I'm a Naafi Canteen worker."

# Air Electrical Department



THE FUNCTION of the department is to maintain and repair all aircraft electrical, radar and radio equipment; with four different types of aircraft on board, this involves work on some 500 different units, not counting minor items such as lamps and switches. In addition, it is responsible for maintaining the ship's radio beacon and the Carrier Controlled Approach Radar, two valuable safety aids to flying, and for the ground electrical equipment.

It is not a large department and few of its members work "up top" where the noise is. In fact, its few members may be found almost anywhere, for its seventeen compartments—one to each member—are scattered throughout the ship. The workshop staff is, however, augmented by squadron ratings, giving a high degree of co-ordination. Like most support jobs, the work is done away from the focus of attention, and it is only when things go wrong that its presence is brought to mind.

Most workshops work is routine in character and so it is not surprising that there has been little of unusual interest during the commission. However, it could be argued that the absence of such things is the measure of efficiency. Down on Six Deck in L.R.S. and I.R.S., C.E.A.(A.) Lillington's domain, the daily alarms and excursions of life above have little effect—not even Rounds get that far very often! Our premises have been altered and expanded during this commission to such an extent that mutterings of "empire-building" have been heard in some quarters. However, the loss of our one and only air conditioning unit to the highest authority silenced this criticism. The C.C.A. Hut, the only wooden compartment in the ship, and the Sonar Workshop both made their debut at the beginning of the foreign leg in January, 1958; the principal

E.M.R. (Air) was enlarged and refitted at the same time to become what has been said to be the best aircraft radio workshop (except for that of *Victorious*) amongst all the carriers.

During the commission the Air Electrical Workshops and the E.M.Rs. (Air) have each dealt with well over 2,500 units of equipment, some 25,000 stores items being used; whilst the Battery Charging Room has turned out over 2,000 batteries mostly under unequivocally bad working conditions. The excellent supply of stores, not infrequently obtained at short notice in the nick of time, by Naval Stores has done much to make the job easier, as has also their excellent co-operation.

C.R.E.A.(A.) Kenny and his team are probably best known to the Flight Deck for their frequent tug-of-war practices with the Y.E. beacon aerial: it has been lowered so many times for de-coking that they could now do it blindfold! The hotter and drier the weather the more often it has to be done; perhaps there is something to be said for a normal English summer after all.

One of the other interesting pastimes has been keeping the bulky spares and equipment stowed in the hangar; much effort and intrigue has gone into maintaining the *status quo* in face of rival and conflicting interests.

The sudden requirement for a decorative fountain for the official visit to Rotterdam caused a diversion. Lieut.-Commander Wilson and E.A.I. Trenouth spent some hot and thirsty hours in the C.P.Os.' galley (by kind permission of Chief Cook Pratt) moulding sheets of perspex in the 400-man roasting oven. They saw no sign of the 400 men! Meanwhile, L.E.M.(A.) Disney took a party of electrical "convicts" to a quarry at Sydenham, Belfast, and brought back a good-selection of rocks to adorn the fountain, much to the chagrin

of Chief Timms, for the only stowage that could be found was in the cubby-holes in his hangar, where they still remain.

On the personnel side, the only change has been in the A.L.O. Lieut.-Commander Wilson joined just in time for "Strikeback" in September, 1957, and Lieut.-Commander Lieullette left by jackstay to H.M.S. *Sheffield* shortly after the exercise, *en route* to his new appointment at N.A.M.D.U. We have some useful mementoes of his tour in the various iron structures about the workshops that it was his hobby to manufacture personally.

C.P.O. Trenouth and R.EI. Mec. Middleditch both qualify as barrack stanchions, having joined the ship in August and September, 1956, with their previous squadrons. We have, however, heard very little of "Suez and all that"

The division's banyan at Cannouan in the Windward Islands, under the A.L.O. and the C.R.E.A.(A.), was enjoyed by all; the excellent fare prepared by R.E.As. Williams and Robinson did much to make it such a success. It is rumoured that the local *aqua rite* played its part, too. The night sailing proved highly popular, there being a lot of competition to get into the dinghy—it was a lovely night for swimming, anyway. But it was a little disconcerting to awaken in the morning to find oneself ringed around with silently watching natives of both sexes and all ages.

Inevitably, with such small numbers it was difficult to raise the large teams required for the usual sports; it was generally a question of joining up with other parts of the ship. P.O. R.EI.(A.) Thackray regularly played for the ship's Rugby 1st XV and E.M.(A.) Gray played for the ship at volley ball in the West Indies. Sailing has been one of the more popular recreations. The division mustered two ship's representatives for the Home Fleet Regatta at Bequia—the A.L.O. and the C.E.A.(A.)—and at least one in most of the sailing races held with the local clubs at the various ports of call. The C.R.E.A.(A.), R.E.A.(A.) Williams and E.A.(A.) Payne took a whaler away from Kingston, Jamaica, for three days and, it is believed, lived on the fat of the land for two of them. But the long beat back in the heat of the third, almost windless day, brought them down to earth with a bump!

Many other stories could be told, but unfortunately there is not the space for the telling. All in all, it has been a very enjoyable commission. There has been a lot of hard work, especially at the peak of the exercise periods, when the workshops have been virtually saturated and very long hours worked by all in far from comfortable conditions. But the many and varied experiences met with on the cruise have made it well worth while. To round things off, the drafting authority has satisfied almost everyone in his new draft. No doubt as time goes by, the good times will seem even better and the thin times will be forgotten. Certainly, when "old ships" meet again, as they surely will, *Bulwark's* second commission will be recalled most nostalgically.

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## MORNING !

0330 IN THE ARABIAN SEA and the morning O.O.W. has just been called.

The middle watchman—Peter—is looking forward to his bed.

Peter watches his relief wander disconsolately on to the Compass Platform.

"Hello, Dicky. Nice sleep ?"

"ugh!"

"Well, I'm not quite sure where we are—some-where here, I think." Peter lays a large hand on the chart covering about 500 square miles!

"Course ?"

"Ah, course." Peter takes a quick glance at the gyro repeater. "Course 245."

Dicky fidgets and asks apologetically, "Speed ?"

"Twenty knots," says Peter with certainty.

Dicky shines his torch on the revolution indicators — they show 2 I knots !

Next the dreadful pair gaze at the radar, which looks as though it had chicken-pox.

"Shave off, Peter ! Anything *really* dangerous ?"

"Oh, I don't think so, Dicky; they look about the same as when I took over at midnight."

"Oh!!!"

"OK, Dicky ?"

"OK, Peter."

"Night."

"Morning."



"I suppose you think that's funny ?"

# Air Engineers' Department



WHILE in Mombasa we landed a Sea Hawk and a Sea Venom.

The following copy of some of the relevant correspondence is of interest :

## LANDING OF TWO UNSERVICEABLE AIRCRAFT IN MOMBASA FROM H.M.S. "BULWARK"

1 The two planes were off-loaded from H.M.S. *Bulwark* on the 6th July, 1958, and were temporarily stowed near 4/5 berth. The Sky Raider plane was towed the same day to Port Reitz Airport by the normal road route without difficulty, and placed in a hangar made available by the Ministry of Works.

2 There was rather more difficulty in towing the Sea Venom to Port Reitz; owing to the size of the wing span folded, i.e. 23 feet, it was not possible to take the normal road route and an alternate route through the new berth extension area had to be investigated. On the 25th July, 1958, having made the necessary arrangements with all authorities concerned, the operation of towing the Sea Venom to Port Reitz Airport took place. The route followed was over the new Kipevu Causeway and through the Contractors' new berths area to join the new road connecting the Port with Kipevu. The gates together with the wire barrier enclosing the Contractors' area had to be removed by arrangement with the contractor. Likewise similar barrier gates on the new Kipevu Road had to be removed to give clearance to the plane. This new road rises steeply and it was necessary to hitch a breakdown lorry to the tractor towing the plane to ensure no mechanical failure on the steep gradient, and men took precaution of walking behind the plane with chocks in case the tow parted.

3 There was a small hold-up in traffic due to the slow progress of the team which comprised traffic police, Express Transport Co., conducting the tow, labourers to clear the route of obstructions and other officials concerned, including an officer from the Royal East African Navy in over-all charge. This team was supplemented by spectators numbering between two to five hundred at different stages of the journey. Progress was rather less than five miles an hour but traffic was cleared by the escorting traffic police.

4 At several points in the road there was little clearance for the wings of the plane, which slowed progress. At Port Reitz near the airport 20 palm trees, had, by arrangement with the Municipality, been cut down in order to get the plane through. On the airport concrete posts and wire forming a barrier to the entrance of the airport were similarly unshipped by the Municipality. These will easily be replaced.

5 On arrival at the airport the team was met by the Air Traffic Officer who guided the tow over the airfield and into the hangar where the plane was stowed in position beside the Sky Raider, and it was interesting to the Officer-in-Charge to note that the very heavy storm which had been threatening throughout the whole period, broke a few minutes after the aircraft was safely housed.

6 The plane sustained no damage during the journey to the airport and every co-operation was given by the various authorities. Some of the cocooning material has come unstuck and this will be replaced under the supervision of the R.E.A.N.

7 The route followed by the aircraft should, by virtue of the clearance made, be available for the return journey to the port of both aircraft as and when this may become necessary.

8 No charge is being made at present for the stowage of these aircraft in the hangar at Port Reitz by the Ministry of Works. There were serious disadvantages to leaving these aircraft in the port area, as no suitable covered stowage was available except at prohibitive cost which would have involved enlarging doors of existing sheds, and also in the event of trouble in the Port these aircraft might have been accidentally or intentionally damaged. Further, the Port Authorities required a guard to be placed on them. The cost of towing the aircraft and removal of the palm trees is therefore justified.

## 69 C.B.G.L. Section



CARRIER BORNE GROUND LIAISON—what a mouth-full, but what a section! We normally consist of five, two officers and three other ranks. Major Phelps, R.A., relieved Major Newbery, R.A., as officer commanding in January, 1958, while Captain Lovell, R.M., has been second-in-command from the beginning of the commission. Major Phelps unfortunately became ill in August, 1958, and was relieved by Major Pughe, 16th/5th The Queen's Royal Lancers.

Sgt. Thompson has been the unit stanchion from time immemorial, that is since August, 1956, *ad infinitum*, add Royal Marines. In January, also, our gharrie driver, Gunner Methuselah Garwood was relieved by L./Cpl. Brown (R.A.S.C.), who has somehow always liaised closely with the Supply Department. At the same time Pte. Robinson, our clerk (who represented the ship at cricket and football), was relieved by Pte. Bullen.

One might ask what we do. Here is a short list

- 1 Brief and de-brief pilots for land missions in support of the Army - and sometimes the R.A.F.
- 2 Deal with Air Photography. (No Schnapps.)
- 3 Army Intelligence, not to be confused with Naval Intelligence (which also we can do).
- 4 Naval Gunfire Support (negative Bofors).
- 5 Training in Air Control team work.
- 6 Give general instructions on the Army.

We also serve as:

- 1 Secretariat to Ops.
- 2 Map agents and cartographers.
- 3 Host to foreign V.I.Ps. (Mostly friendly.)
- 4 GODBER's gharrie service.
- 5 Chief Sherpa. (No swans.)
- 6 Neptune and all that. 7 Supplier of lemonade powder.

8 Wardroom social liaison.

9 Wardroom entertainment.

Lenders of tone and variety.

We are often referred to as "Sea Balls," though the origin of this title is entirely clear, though Major Pughe claims that it is backlash from A.L.O. days. Who can tell

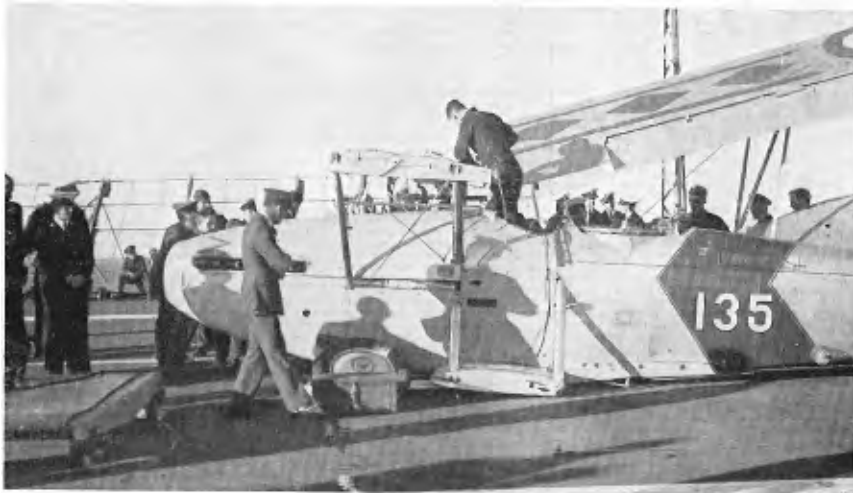
69 Section in *Bulwark* will always be remembered by such terms and deeds as "Negatroidal," twitching moustaches, non-dropped catches, "I see no problem," dented cabins and delayed air passages.

After this cruise the section disperses, which is a loss to someone, if only for the vehicle.

"Such is the breath of Kings."



Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,  
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,  
Dream of battled fields no more,  
Days of danger, nights of waking.  
SCOTT- *Dr Lady of the Lake.*



801 Osprey—"Furious," 1937  
801 in "Showboat," 1958

THE CHANGING FACE OF FLIGHT DECKS

801 Seahawk—"Bulwark," 1958  
801 over H.M.S. "Barham," Spring, 1935



# 801 Naval Air Squadron (1933-1958)



AT THE END OF MAY, 1958, 801 Squadron arrived in force at the China Fleet Club to celebrate its Silver jubilee. Having first commissioned on an uncertain date in 1933, Hong Kong seemed a reasonable enough spot to commemorate it.

It was then, when part of the R.A.F. was in the Navy, that 401 Flight in H.M.S. *Furious* became 801 Squadron and converted from Flycatchers to a mixture of Nimrods and Ospreys. With these two types the Squadron specialised in dive-bombing co-ordinated with torpedo attacks.

The first Commanding Officer was a R.A.F. officer, Squadron Leader S. L. G. Pope, who had previously made his name as a test-pilot, being in fact the first British one to save his life by parachute. He recently retired as an Air Commodore after a distinguished career in which he flew 156 different types of aircraft.

By the beginning of 1936, *Furious* had become a unit of Force "H," stationed at Gibraltar for the Abyssinian War. Consequently the squadrons were worked up, not only in their normal air /sea roles, but also to attack the Italian airfields should the need arise.

In 1937-38, 801 found itself in a trials and training role, being responsible for the weapon and decklanding training of all new R.N. and R.A.F. pilots entering the Fleet Air Arm. During this period the "Bats" system of decklanding control was tried out. The new hands took to it well, but the old hands disliked it intensely. Early trials of the Blackburn Skua, Fairey P.34 (Fulmar) and the Hawker Henley were also made and we are told that the Henley was preferred. In spite of this, when war broke out, the Squadron was given nine Skuas with which to embark in *Ark Royal*.

Then began a nomadic existence, with stops at Hatston between bouts in the North Sea, operating from *Furious* off the Shetlands, followed by fighter defence duties based on Wick.

From the Line Book we learn that in April, 1940, the Squadron re-embarked in *Ark Royal* and

carried out inland fighter patrols over Norway, shooting down at least six Heinkel III's. It also provided cover for the evacuation of Andalsnes, dive-bombed Vernes aerodrome and bombed shipping at Trondjheim.

After this comparatively quiet month a quick move was made to Detling to cover the evacuation of Dunkirk.

Subsequently the Squadron was given six Rocs to add to the six existing Skuas. In theory the Rocs acted as escort for the Skuas, but most reconnaissance pilots preferred to leave them behind. During one of these flights, Lieutenant Martin first spotted and photographed the construction of gun emplacements from which Dover was later to be shelled. Two days later these positions were attacked by 801 with a Spitfire wing escort.

The six Rocs were replaced by six Skuas, and the Squadron again started operating against targets in Norway at extreme range from Hatston until, in October, they went back to *Furious* for a night attack on the shipping at Tromso and for fighter defence while the ship ferried aircraft to Takoradi. On return Hatston, St. Merryn and St. Eval were used as bases for attacks on shipping in the North Sea and Channel.

Whilst at St. Merryn the Squadron was due to have carried out daylight attacks on the *Schamhorst* and *Gneisenau* while these ships were protected by the full anti-aircraft and fighter defences of Brest. The R.A.F. were to have provided an escort of Beaufighters, but because of the heaviness of the fighter defences they intended to turn back fifteen miles from the French coast. Under these circumstances the mission was called off.

May, 1942, saw the Squadron in the Mediterranean, embarked in *Eagle* with twelve Sea Hurricanes for the defence of the Malta convoys. On 11th August, however, *Eagle* was torpedoed and the aircraft airborne had to land somewhere else.

The Squadron disbanded and re-formed a month later at Stretton, this time with Seafires. After a



six weeks' work-up, the Squadron again came to the Mediterranean, this time as fighter escort to *Furious*, ferrying aircraft to Malta for the landings in North Africa.

It was about this time that one of the ratings holding down a Seafire's tail for its run up failed to notice that the aircraft was being marshalled out, and it took off with him still hanging onto the tail. This is the first recorded instance of a live body taking off from a carrier in this undignified position. The passenger, whose name, curiously enough, was Overhead, was landed ashore still intact.

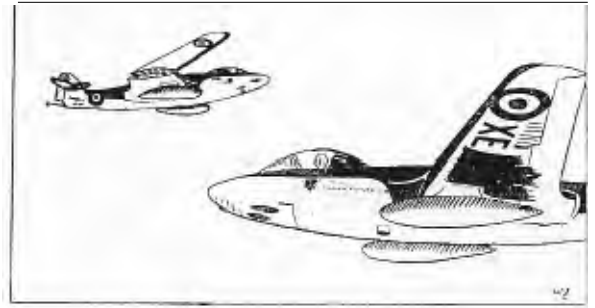
On *Furious's* return to the United Kingdom in the spring the Squadron spent the whole of 1943 and 1944 between the ship, *Machrihanish*, *Hatston* and *Skeabrae*, with one stay in *Implacable*.

During this time fighter cover was provided for the attack on *Tirpitz*, and several ships of up to 1,000 tons were sunk or run aground by cannon fire. Later the Squadron provided cover for *Warspite* after D Day.

On 15th March, 1945, with twenty-four Seafire LIII's, the Squadron embarked in *Implacable* for passage to the Far East. For work in the Pacific it had been found that an endurance of only ninety minutes rendered the Seafire practically useless.

*Implacable* was told to find some other method of fitting a jettisonable long-range tank to the central bomb rack. One hundred Kittyhawk 80-gallon drop tanks, which were literally knocking around the Admiralty Islands, were purchased from the Americans for a crate of whisky, the rust was washed out and the least dented were fitted to the bellies of 801 and 880 (the other squadron in the wing) aircraft. This gave the Seafire an endurance of 3½ hours and matched it with the Corsair and Hellcat. 801 and 880 thereafter flew on all offensive sorties while the squadrons present in the other carrier were confined almost exclusively to C.A.P.

It is worth noting that the Ministry of Aircraft Production had categorically stated that this modification was impossible.



In June the Squadron escorted and carried out strikes on Truk in the Carolines.

From 16th July until the end of the war intensive fighter patrols and strikes on the mainland of Japan were carried out, 801 being the first British unit to operate over Japan proper.

In September, 880 was absorbed into 801 and the Squadron, with some 60 officers and 48 aircraft, became probably one of the biggest in existence. It returned to England and disbanded on 3rd July, 1946.

"1st July, 1947" - in the words of the Line Book — "801 rises again at R.N.A.S. Ford." It equipped with Sea Hornets and became the first twin-engined carrier-borne fighter squadron and was used mainly for precision and air display flying. In 1948 the Commanding Officer detached with a small team to form 806 Squadron, destined to perform at Toronto and Idlewild Air Days.

The Squadron's association with Sea Hornets ended in 1951 when it was equipped with Sea Fury F.B.11's. Just over a year later, with twenty-one aircraft, 80 I embarked in *Glory* for operations in Korea. Much has been written about Korean operations and it suffices to record that on relief in May, 1953, after eleven patrols, nearly 3,000 sorties had been flown, of which about 2,000 were offensive.

801 has been flying Sea Hawks for the last four years and in that time has twice re-commissioned and twice revisited the Far East, first in *Centaur* and then in *Bulwark*. Plans for the future are still unrevealed, but it looks as though the Squadron will be back at sea again next year.



## 845 Squadron



RECENT EXPERIMENTS at Melbourne University proved that it is possible to induce a state of "anxiety neurosis" in a pig, by constantly presenting it with the unexpected.

It is gratifying to note that the members of this Squadron withstood a similar test on this cruise without becoming neurotic.

Here are a few of the tasks which were carried out by this anti-submarine helicopter squadron—a Squadron whose role it is to sit quietly in the hover at a height of twenty or thirty feet and, by mechanical means, search for submarines.

In Bermuda there is a flagpole of 110 ft. at the Royal Yacht Club. The halyard had broken



and the Club -was unable to hoist its colours. There was not a ladder on the island long enough to reach the block at the top, and the pole was too old and frail to be climbed. A helicopter was called upon, and by lowering one of our air-crew, Petty Officer Lee, on the winch wire as the chopper hovered above the pole, a new nylon halyard was reeved through the block and the colours once more fluttered from the masthead.

