

there was a tendency for our "regulars" to drift up to the flight deck for their night's sleep. Drastic countermeasures were taken and in no time we were again catering for full houses. All we did, in fact, was to ensure that the Forecastle was the most dangerous place in the ship to sleep. In harbour, berthing wires were stretched across the deck and the weight of the ship used to bring them up bar taut. The really popular billets were those between or under the wires. Needless to say, had one of the wires parted, the Captain's Office would suddenly have found itself completely out of stock of Hurt Certificates. At sea we suspended our heaviest shackles from the deckhead by the smallest and weakest rope we could find. These shackles were sufficient to crush any normal skull and the lucky ones slept directly under them, while late-comers had to content themselves with safer places. It was unfortunate that the more leisurely aspect of our cruise was brought to an abrupt end before we reached cooler waters. Our "regulars" may be interested to learn that plans had been approved to install large observation windows in the shell openings and for the installation of the most up-to-date system of central heating (with the exception of the staff's quarters, of course).

Chief Petty Officer N. Harris has been the "Buffer" throughout the commission, and no one can deny that he has carried out this supremely difficult task with a high degree of tact, patience and efficiency. The departure of our Captain of Forecastle, Petty Officer "Daisy" Adams, to hospital was regretted not only in the Division but throughout the ship. He proved himself a first-class seaman and also devoted a great deal of time and thought to the welfare of the ship's company. We all wish him a speedy recovery. During the latter stages of the commission we saw many changes among our senior rates. Petty Officer G. C. E. Stratton took over as Captain of Forecastle for a couple of months to be succeeded by Petty Officer G. W. Hall. Petty Officer G. P. Richards left us to take over the boat party and Petty Officer J. N. Gay took his place as 2nd Captain of Forecastle.

Our leading hands were employed in the main on Quartermasters' duties and as coxswains of our motor cutter with occasional spells in part of ship. Leading Seaman E. G. Crotty did a grand job for the ship when he undertook to provide a ship's concert party for the entertainment of the inhabitants of Mombasa. In two weeks a show was organised which, when combined with Mombasa's own contribution, won the highest of praise.

In the realm of sport we can proudly look back over a long line of achievements. During the early refit days we won the Athletics Cup. Credit must go to Lieutenant G. New (then our D.O.), Sub-Lieutenant McGregor and Ordinary Seaman T. D. Brand for their magnificent display of running, for their enthusiasm and for the encouragement which they gave to the remainder of the athletics team.

It was in Belfast that we had our greatest successes. In mid-July we reached the finals of the inter-part cricket and went on to win the shield by taking 10 wickets for nine runs from the C.P.Os. and Petty Officers. A remarkably fine exhibition of bowling was given in this game by Able Seaman D. R. Noble and Ordinary Seaman J. Foster, and the batting of Sub-Lieutenant McGregor, Able Seaman B. Bridgewater and Ordinary Seaman J. Cope also deserves mention. In October we returned to Belfast, and in the cross-country race Ordinary Seaman Brand came in first after running an immaculate race over a very difficult course. Our team was placed second, having lost first place to the Electrical Division with their shock tactics.

In the six-a-side hockey we had to play very hard before winning yet another shield. These games were very fast and required a great deal of stamina from all players. Able Seaman A. D. Ayling has defended our goal so often and with such quiet confidence that he might well feel entitled to adopt the words "Ils ne passeront pas" for his motto. In an eleven-a-side game we were unfortunate in losing the Rotating Trophy to the Royal Marines before leaving Belfast for the last time. Paradoxically, it wasn't until we reached the almost unbearable heat of Aden that we resumed serious hockey. In temperatures of over 90° we played six matches and lost only one. In this one defeat we lost the Wandering Trophy to 845 Squadron after having successfully defended it three times in as many weeks.

On the soccer pitch we have been particularly enthusiastic if not always successful. We played countless friendly games and have never let slip any opportunity of accepting or offering a challenge. Our most notable game took place in Happy-Valley, Hong Kong, when we beat H.M.S. *Melbourne* 6-2. It is regretted that we did not manage to play a side from the 1st Bn. The Royal Lincolnshire Regiment while in Aden. Both sides found that duties during the day followed by social evenings together left too little time for meeting on the soccer pitch.

On board we raised four deck hockey teams and the standard of play was extremely high. No one who was on the flight deck on the day of the inter-part final will forget the match between our "B" team and 891 Squadron officers. It was surely the most exciting and exhausting game ever seen on board, and both teams were so evenly matched that three periods of extra time were played before our "B" team concluded the game with a score of 3-2.

Another great deck hockey match took place when our crack "B" team met a side from the American carrier U.S.S. *Philippine Sea*. It is not difficult to imagine our concern as these 6 ft. tall and 3 ft. across the shoulders giants stepped down from their chopper. A rapid decision had to be, and was, made on the spot. The Americans were escorted to our mess-deck where the full weight of *Bulwark* hospitality was lavished upon them.

After lunch and the traditional—er—limers, they were invited to play deck hockey. It must be said that by this time our guests were extremely cheerful, but for some extraordinary reason had lost a certain amount of their former springy gait, and one could hardly describe their eyes as being crystal clear. Although we won the match by mere goals, there is no doubt that the Americans could claim a really great moral victory. Being their first game, they somewhat naturally devoted the first half to defence and trying to master the finer points of the game. During the second half, however, cautious defence was discarded and a series of pressing attacks launched which called for an unexpected effort by our defence in order to prevent disaster.

The Division has always taken part in every sporting activity. Able Seaman C. G. Cope was

the only rating to play regularly in the ship's golf team. Able Seaman M. A. Baker was placed third in the diving competition held during the swimming gala at Hong Kong. Even in R.T. games we won two out of the three played, and in tug-of-war we provided a willing though unfortunately far too light a team.

As the commission draws to an end and we steam westwards, it is natural that all minds should be filled with thoughts of home. It will not be until we have all split up and become scattered throughout the world in our next jobs that we shall spare a thought for our "last ship."

At least we can be certain of one thing: whenever we choose to recall some particular experience connected with this ship we shall not fail to remember the shipmates with whom that experience was shared.

The Island Division



THE ISLAND DIVISION was formed one wet, windy week in March, 1957, under the hand of Lieut.-Commander Brasch, R.A.N. We were a motley crowd, and for our insular and colonial connections were soon nicknamed the "Commonwealth Collection." Our manpower, supplemented by Her Majesty's week-end sailors, formed the nucleus of the ship's Action Information organisation, and day and night we toiled under the eagle eye of the Snod Brid, staggering out into the sunlight now and then to become mortals again on the end of a four-inch manila. Such was life.

During these early pre-work-up days sport dominated the island activities and, led on in the true Australian tradition, achieved a considerable measure of success. Not many of us will forget the day when the bowler called "How's that?" and "Out!" in the same breath, and then watched

the batsman walk away dismayed whilst the umpire looked on in blank amazement. That same gentleman can be credited with many fine deeds with hat and ball, and our thanks go out to him for both inspiration and a lively leadership.

Bulwark's first "spring hop" was rashly held on board one damp evening in June. The weather had a peculiar effect on the island company and fraternising with the fair sex was rejected for the swilling of ale. However, this misdirected practice was quickly reversed when the ship reached Ireland. Belfast drew even the most retiring from their shells and unprecedented numbers sallied forth to double the Ritz's takings.

Out "outward bound" activities had a chequered history in Ireland. Whilst a few of the Division were sailing whalers between Belfast and Strangford Loughs in a force 5 storm, others



ended up in the hands of the Ulster Constabulary accused of being in the pay of the I.R.A. Release fortunately followed a grilling, but later that evening the police must have had some misgiving over their decision. Just before midnight four shadowy figures drove furiously into the dockyard and, on being challenged, the reply was heard: "Four I.R.A. with a bomb in the back for *Bulwark*." The taxi drove on, leaving a bewildered and gaping policeman, but we heard no more of the incident and presume that he smelt the rat—beer !

South from Belfast led the ship eventually to Cherbourg, and as we approached the Brittany coastline sounds vaguely related to "Qu'est ce -que nous voulez, Mademoiselle ?" were heard to be muttered in 39 Mess. The more confident went further, but this was sufficient for the beginner. A week later our Paris observer reported awed but harmless characters of the island species roaming the Montmartre in a forlorn effort to test their vocabulary.

Summer leave was followed by a long period in arctic waters combating nature's edition of germ warfare. The Northern Lights and Asian 'flu reduced our gunners to the job of parking aircraft, whilst inside the A.D.R. the picture had a habit of fading in a maze of red arrows and dots, despite the Snod Brid's hurving. However, a short respite in Rotterdam — the Navigator's Nightmare— proved a tonic for one and all. The week-end sailors (we have a fair number of National Service "bloods" on our island) excelled in their duty. Den Haag was discovered without much difficulty, and the old policy of sharing only within the Commonwealth retained it as an island possession for the full seven days.

As the year 1957 drew to a close we bade farewell to our digger divisional officer and relaxed. Imagine our feelings when we discovered that, in his cunning, he had reproduced himself 100 per cent. and left us with a combination of the underworld in Lieutenant Weil, R.A.N., and Sub-Lieutenant Horlor, R.N.Z.N. However, it would not be for us to bear him any malice over this, for the majority learnt something from our Australian friend either by verbal battering or a physical bruising.

The Christmas leave period found us storing and painting ship in preparation for the eight-month cruise to follow in the New Year. Several new faces, particularly amongst the National Service

men, were welcomed into the Division during this period and we were all kept well occupied on departmental duties and part-of-ship work. Petty Officer Biddle's five-minute jobs became the understatements of the Atlantic crossing and the New Year.

The West Indies we all remember well for a wide variety of reasons. The swimming was grand, the rum was certainly the best we had tasted, and the people probably the friendliest we have come across throughout the cruise. One divisional activity stands out in all our memories: the banyan at Bequia. After a long tramp across the island we found an excellent beach on the edge of a coconut grove, and settled in for a grand day swimming and, of course, feasting, under a burning sun. The evening, cooking "bangers" round a blazing fire, was followed by a fair night's sleep, but we were all rudely awakened by a particularly high tide at dawn, and cries of distress were heard from a naked figure chasing along the beach in a vain attempt to recover his clothes. Needless to say, we all arrived back on board with something on, though with several individuals it looked a little scanty.

The sudden cold of Halifax quickly reduced our suntans to a pretty pallid pink, but we had little time there to do more than sample the Canadian generosity before we found ourselves in Gibraltar. There we worked harder than on any previous occasion during the cruise in preparation for the Far East. As usual, the Islanders were first into the paint-ship nets and thus first to complete the job and de-rig. Setting the example over these jobs has always been our custom!

It was not really surprising after those hectic ten days that a party from the Island, connected once again with that notorious naked figure of the Bequia beaches, had a final fling round the Rock and ended up as ten fumbling figures reeling up the gangway, and the words "Take 'em below."

During the long periods at sea on the way out East, deck hockey, several games of volley-ball, swimming and R.T. games drew the Division together on many occasions. Entering two teams, in the R.T. games very nearly brought us success, and we were only thwarted in the last event by having one member of the team who wasn't shaped like a kangaroo.

Sport again played an important part in our Hong Kong activities, and Petty Officer Stratton is to be congratulated for his excellent performances in the ship's athletics team and his place in the cricket team. Boxing, however, is the Island's strong point, and Mason's splendid performance in the Hong Kong Championships deserves particular mention. In the inter-departmental swimming gala we did not excel, possibly due to Sub-Lieutenant Horlor's absence, but Whitely, for his place in breast-stroke event, and the relay teams for their toil, take the credit for a worthy effort. Back on the flight deck again we demonstrated our talent by reaching the semi-final of the tug-of-war. How-

ever, by this stage brains were insufficient to overcome brawn and we gave way before the weight of the opposition !

Thus it was that in Hong Kong we all found something to catch our eye whether it was sport, the Tiger Balm Gardens, Deepwater Bay, or the China nights. Though it was very pleasant to be heading home again in early June, when we finally put the Chinese coastline astern, most of us left with some regret.

Our passage through the China Seas and back across the Indian Ocean was not very exciting from a divisional point of view. We had our own particular jobs, part of ship and departmental, and life went on very much as usual. Trincomalee saw the formation of the Blackjacks' Skiifie Group, which after a very short practice as a group, put on an excellent show in preparation for a Mombasa concert. Approaching Mombasa, the strange sight of boot- and rucksack-laden individuals

staggering round the flight deck was to be seen by all who cared to take the evening air. For hours we toiled regularly every day in preparation for our trial—the ascent of Mount Kilimanjaro to the roof of Africa.

During the grand ten days in Mombasa, whilst the Islanders held the visiting children spellbound on the seat of a fuel-tank aircraft, a party of ten (five from the Island) climbed and conquered the highest mountain in Africa. We returned to the ship with tales of the darkest interior fit for the best taverns in Pompey.

On arriving, the mountaineers found the ship to be a hive of industry, and learnt that, during their period of sublime ignorance up at 18,000 feet, the Middle East situation had flared up again. Three days later we sailed north for Aden instead of continuing with the cruise, and it is at this point, with future divisional plans somewhat disrupted, that the Island story must end.

Quarterdeck Division

AT THE START OF THE COMMISSION the Quarterdeck Division was :

Lieut.-Commander HUBBARD, Divisional Officer
Petty Officer GREGORY JONES, Captain of Quarterdeck.

C.P.O. Tomms	L.S. Ward	A.B. Dickson	A.B. Holden	A.B. Singleton	O.S. Barter
P.O. Dixon	L.S. Watson	A.B. Donnison	A.B. Jardine	A.B. Tongs	O.S. Cleaver
P.O. Gay	A.B. Barnett	A.B. Dragonetti	A.B. Jones	A.B. Vidler	O.S. Gee
P.O. Green	A.B. Bosworth	A.B. Everett	A.B. Lambourne	A.B. Viner	O.S. Martin
P.O. Hall	A.B. Buttery	A.B. Ferris	A.B. Lees	A.B. Webb	O.S. Randell
P.O. Littlewood	A.B. Carey	A.B. Fionda	A.B. Perkins	A.B. Westfold	O.S. Ruffell
L.S. Bateman	A.B. Carlyle	A.B. Flynn	A.B. Plumbley	A.B. Wheeler	O.S. Serocold
L.S. Heath	A.B. Clarke, D.	A.B. Gee	A.B. Ritchie	A.B. White	O.S. Swan
L.S. Henderson	A.B. Cleaver	A.B. Gurnett	A.B. Rowlatt	A.B. Whyman	O.S. Thomas
L.S. James	A.B. Cooper	A.B. Hambleton	A.B. Ryan	A.B. Wills	O.S. Veal
L.S. Rackham	A.B. Cummine	A.B. Hatcher	A.B. Shorrock	O.S. Brittain	J.S. Chable
L.S. Tilling	A.B. De La Mare	A.B. Hobday	A.B. Smith, B.	O.S. Bowie	J.S. Knight
		A.B. Hendley	A.B. Smith, R.		

A large proportion of seamen was employed on special parties and on communal duties. Quarterdeck commitments were : Main Dining Hall 3, C.P.O. and P.Os.' Dining Hall 4, Telephone Exchange 3, Side Party 2, Bosun's Party 2, Between-decks Sweeper 2, Main Signal Office 2, Gunners' Party I, Vent Party 1.

At the time of commissioning, the ship had been in refit for three months with a much reduced complement, the majority of whom had been on leave for the greater part of the refit.

As a result the ship was dirty, the ship's side badly needed paint, and the Quarterdeck was ingrained with dirt. Easter leave started very soon after the new commission joined, and all on board had to work very hard to catch up with the back-log of work.

All available seamen were first put onto the ship's side to scrape, red lead, undercoat and paint; this job took nearly six weeks, and was complicated by lack of staging and difficulties in rigging nets in dry dock. When the back of this task was broken, very little time was left to prepare the Quarterdeck for official calls and to get it looking nice for the commissioning ceremony. The Ward Room was persuaded to buy some white enamel specially manufactured for the Royal Yacht, at a bargain price. In order to get it on in the time available the majority of A.X. hands on special duties were relieved by other parts of ship, and the whole Division was employed making the Quarterdeck ship-shape. About this time the Air Department was given some very large mechanical scrubbers for trial, which we grate-

fully borrowed to clean six months of dockyard dirt off the deck.

The ship sailed for sea trials on 15th June, and Leading Seaman James quickly got in a lot of practice in handling the pinnace at Bognor (though the *Daily Telegraph* suggested that it may have been Eastbourne). About this time Able Seaman Wheeler went camping on a private outward bound expedition which ended some months later.

On completion of these trials we sailed to work up in the Channel and the Irish Sea, when the Division had a spirited tug-of-war with a helicopter while passing the grass to take *Ark Royal* in tow.

We had a good run ashore in Belfast where Les Whyman made a name for himself as a Casanova, and several others did their best. From Belfast we went to Cherbourg where the main interest for

technique. The party scaled Ben Lavers, meeting a Royal Air Force mountain rescue team and sleeping in barns.

In the new year, the programme for the foreign leg of the commission was published and caused excited speculation on our future ports of call.

Some of us for whom it was to be the first occasion away from home for any length of time found it both exciting and a little worrying, others enjoyed the prospect of a winter in the sun.

Before leaving Portsmouth, Barter, Beilby, Clark, Gatehouse, Howell, Leary, Miles, Raw and Sturdy joined, and Brittain, Clarke, D., Carlyle, Ruffell, Swan, Serocold, Toms and Viner left. "Jonah" (Petty Officer Gregory Jones) had to indoctrinate the new hands to his daily routine and teach them not to polish the B.I.A. plaque with metal polish.



The Quarterdeck Division

those who were lucky was a three-day trip to "Gay Paree." The Quarterdeck had its first taste of boxing when the Captain tried an unusual method of dealing with defaulters. After Cherbourg and a week-end in the Channel Islands, we returned to Portsmouth for the summer leave.

We sailed again at the end of August for Exercise "Strikeback," where we found that our work-up had been good value, and in spite of Asian 'flu, the ship achieved a standard which was highly commended by our Admiral and by others. We were proud to belong to her.

We took part in two other major exercises before returning to Portsmouth for Christmas leave, visiting Belfast, where we met old friends and won the inter-divisional rugger cup; Rotterdam, where Dutch hospitality made our six days great fun, and Rosyth, where Sub-Lieutenant Gullick led a party consisting of Able Seamen Fionda, Lees and Westfold, Ordinary Seaman Veal and Steward Jones on a mountain-climbing expedition. Able Seaman Hendley has been recommended for Grand Prix training as a result of his driving

When we entered the warm weather; many and varied new uses were found for the Quarterdeck. It rapidly became a church, a bar, a boxing ring, a gymnasium, a music room, a cinema, and a dormitory. Protecting screens had to be taken down to admit the maximum amount of fresh air. All this made for more work to maintain standards. The heat made mess-decks very hot and uncomfortable, but to make up for this we were seeing new countries and had some wonderful runs ashore in Trinidad and Jamaica. We were also grateful for our more restful visits to Cannouan and Bequia, where we bathed and enjoyed the sun on the beaches.

On passage from Trinidad to Cannouan two whalers, manned by Quarterdeck men, were dropped to make their own way to Cannouan where they rejoined, and later one Quarterdeck and one Engine Room whaler sailed in company from Cannouan to Bequia. The stories of their adventures are told elsewhere in this book. The fortunate few who went were deeply envied by their mess-mates.

At Bermuda the weather and prices caused most of us to sleep away our liberty. Those of us who did venture ashore enjoyed risking our lives on motor-bicycles.

After the West Indies we found the snow and sleet of Halifax very cold, especially when rigging nets for the paint-ship which the First Lieutenant had planned. The wind and rain from a storm centre which passed close to us prevented any paint being applied, and we spent our time doubling up several times over with hurricane hawsers and large wires. These were equally difficult to let go, and we will long remember the words of "Jonah" : "Now, me 'earties, let's 'ave a bit of effort on this one."

We left Halifax for Gibraltar, where we worked like beavers painting and storing and getting ready for the second half of the cruise. We were glad to leave.

Our next port of call was Aden, but before we got there an Egyptian ship carrying pilgrims to Mecca collided with our starboard quarter, to the consternation of the pilgrims and to the destruction of the paint so recently put on. We repaired as much of the damage as we could at Aden in the two days we were there, but we will remember Aden best for the fouling of our manila and berthing wires by the stern buoy, which came about when the tanker astern of us left her billet and allowed our moor to become slack. On first seeing what had happened on the following morning, it looked an impossible task to free our gear. The Gunnery Officer, however, reckoned that it would be a personal insult if he could not succeed in doing so. After several hours work, time ran out and the shipwrights had to cut us loose with torches.

Aden to Singapore was a long sea passage, during which we finally caught up with the work and had some long overdue make-and-mends. Also Petty Officer Gay left us and Petty Officer Richards took over the running of the boat party. R.T. games were not very popular, but we did manage to field a team. Deck hockey and volley-ball we played whenever possible.

We called at Manila before arriving at Hong Kong, where we again painted ship, but also found time for many enjoyable runs ashore and a great deal of shopping.

The ship's swimming sports were held here, and we were proud to come fifth behind some very much larger divisions. Able Seaman Jones was second in the diving, having tied with the winner on points. Able Seaman Steel was second in the breast-stroke and the free-style relay team won through the heats to the final. Unfortunately, it was at Hong Kong that we lost the rugger cup.

We left on the 3rd June for Singapore, where we finally said good-bye to Sub-Lieutenant Pirnie and Able Seaman Gee. We found the island much more expensive than Hong Kong, and we will best remember our stay there by Exercise "Showboat." From Singapore we sailed for Trincomalee and exercises with the East Indies Fleet and Indian and Pakistan Navies. We met them ashore at the canteen afterwards.

We held our long put-off divisional banyan party on Sober Island, which was reputed to be the home of a wild elephant, but despite getting lost more times than we care to remember, we couldn't find it. Steel, Bowie, Miles, Westfold, Cooper and White went with Sub-Lieutenant Jaques, and Wills, Thomas, Jones, Clark and Veal went the next day with Sub-Lieutenant Hughes.

During the trip to Mombasa we were initiated into the mysteries of King Neptune's court, and Steel and Barnett and one other made sure that the D.O. did not escape.

The cruise still goes on for another two months. Individual achievements since commissioning are : Leading Seaman Ward and Bateman passed for Petty Officer. Able Seamen Cummine, Tongs, Wills and Whyman passed for Leading Seaman. Able Seamen Cummine, Fionda and Wills got married.

Petty Officer Richards played for the first hockey team, Leading Seaman Ward and Able Seaman Martin played for the first rugger team, and Able Seaman Singleton played for the first soccer team.



"Clear up decks !"

Armament Division



THE IMPORTANCE of the Armament Division is immediately obvious to all, as we have no fewer than six officers to look after us, not to mention innumerable C.P.O.s., Petty Officers and leading hands. Furthermore, it is obvious that the officers all work very hard indeed, as only one of them has been able to stand the strain of a full commission, and anybody who has seen Sub-Lieutenant Penfold running round the flight deck in the dog watches can see what has happened to his brain.

Like many other divisions on board, we are half "Fishheads" and half Aviators, but our jobs are similar. We provide something which makes a noise, which impresses visiting pressmen and schoolchildren, and without which the ship might as well stay in harbour. Even the Helicopters decided a rifle was a useful thing to have around in case they found themselves sitting on the ground in the middle of an unfriendly desert.

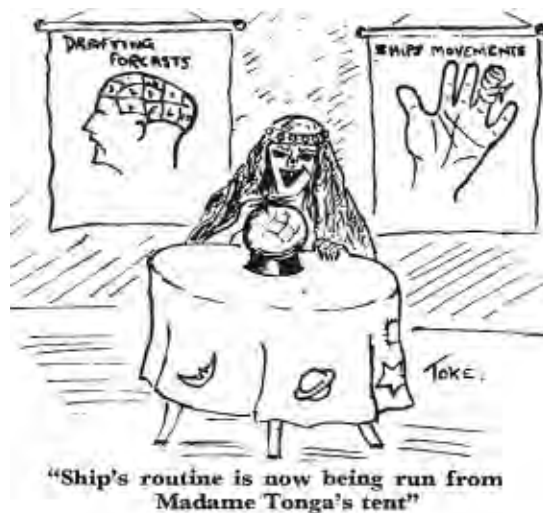
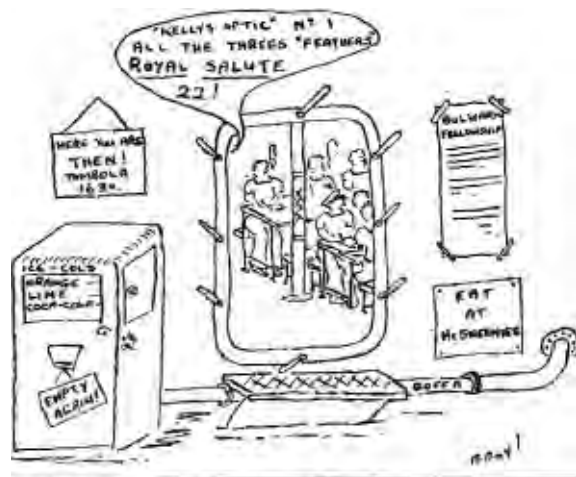
We have had our excitements, of course, but so far we have managed to avoid any real accidents. C.P.O. Beach, the Chief Gunnery Instructor, prevented the Mark 6 Bofors blowing up completely on our way across the Atlantic. In the West Indies a practice bomb dropped off on deck

and exploded, but unfortunately missed — A certain Coston gun line fired by a T.A.S.-man aspiring to gunnery fame enlivened an otherwise cold and dreary day in Halifax; guns have gone bang unexpectedly, and rockets have slithered and bumped their way down the flight deck, but these incidents enliven an otherwise uneventful existence.

On the flight deck we pride ourselves that we have always met our commitments—admittedly thanks to an opportunely timed SOS from the *Melika*; and when the weapons which we have provided have not worked correctly we have done our best to improve them, and have succeeded more often than not. Would anybody like to modify a few bomb tails for us ?

As far as the Bofors' crews are concerned we have not had much opportunity of showing our skill, but that sleeve did fall into the Pacific just after we had fired at it, even if it did take a long time to fall off.

Finally, when the Aviators beat the Fishheads at cricket in Trinidad, we thought that we had at last proved who was the best. Unfortunately the Fishheads beat the Aviators in the next match, so once again we are back where we started.



T.A.S. Department



THE T.A.S. DEPARTMENT of an aircraft-carrier does not appear to many people to play as important a role as it does in the average frigate or destroyer. In these vessels it is, on many occasions, the provider of the main armament. Here, in *Bulwark*, we provide only one of a variety of armaments for the aircraft, but—and it's a big "but"—it could be the weapon which ensures that the more "glamorous" and noisy providers have a home to come back to when they've delivered their goods !

For the main part, then, we've offered to any who cared to lift them our prepared torpedoes. The unfortunate thing for us has been that the nature of this cruise with its many ports of call made the provision of a suitable dropping area for practice "runners" quite impossible. But the work in the bodyroom went on and, if there was no work, the battle for the use of the bodyroom went on. Its attractive air of cleanliness and spaciousness drew all the space-seekers like a red light after forty days at sea. We must, at some time, have had a little bit of something from everybody stowed there. At one stage we had enough Coca-Cola concentrated to keep the American Seventh Fleet going for two commissions. (Who drinks it all ?)

Fighting off the "real-estate" agents, we managed to keep enough space to prepare and equip demolition and diving parties at Cannouan Island in the West Indies. This exercise was concluded very satisfactorily, not the least of the lessons learnt being that it is not very wise to lie for hours

in the tropics sun-bathing when you're fresh out from U.K. A very wise (now) Sub-Lieutenant will testify to that.

Have you ever tried to lay on a diving exercise ? If you are easily discouraged, don't bother to attempt it. All divers can take heart from the fact that they are absolutely vital to their departments; without them we can't paint the ship's side, the galley could run out of spuds, and all the ship's fans would break down. Despite that, we have done quite a lot of diving and the paint and the spuds and the fans went on as before. Some of the diving was interesting, but apparently not interesting enough for one keen young Sub-Lieutenant, who pleaded "Can I have some scare charges to experiment with when I'm diving on those wrecks ?" and again (same chap) "Do you think we might dive deeper than the safe limits on oxygen ?" Before diving we always seek permission from higher authority. The following exchange of signals brought a blush to the weathered features of a certain Sub-Lieutenant (S.D.) :

From: *Bulwark*

To: C.-in-C.

Propose diving alongside jetty to effect repairs to M.F.V.

From: *Gambia*

To: *Bulwark*

Suggest you repeat your surfacing signal to S.O. Submarines.

"Pingery" during the commission has had moments and the U. Cs. in the bowels of the ship have sent their beams of sound over many miles. The Captain had occasion to congratulate our -operators on one memorable occasion when they "out-operated" the more modernly equipped screen.

The daily grind of T.A.S. officers is recorded for posterity (which will never read it) in the T.A.S. Log and Progress Book, but here we are hoping that these pages will be read in years to come when names will have slipped the memory. To remind you of a few, and save too much head-scratching, who better to start with than our illustrious T.A.S. officer, Lieutenant Hallifax, who took the weight of recommissioning and getting everything ticking smoothly for the first half of the commission. Then he slipped away at Gibraltar, assisted by most of the T.A.S. party, to take part in the New York—Bermuda sailing race. He was in the boat which took third place. He also managed to collect his "half stripe" during this period, thereby avoiding a suitable alcoholic "wetting" of the new braid. During his absence the T.A.S. duties have been shared, in inverse proportion to number of stripes worn, by Lieut.-Commander Greenshields, the Senior Observer and T.A.S.O. of the helicopter squadron, and Sub-Lieutenant Rake. Petty Officer "Teddy" Howick, whose indefatigable protection of the bodyroom was matched only by the zeal he put into everything he did, including enough building of model forts to supply an army of small boys! The daring divers, Petty Officer Fry, Able Seamen Hammill, Lees and Gore, operated from another "cabooosh" that was also the envy of the space-grabbers. Able Seaman Thickett, whose A.S. compartments in the bowels of the ship were as spick and span as any hospital ward. One more we could mention (since he's got to type this) is Able Seaman Jardine—who, in between bouts of photography, played at being T.A.S.O.'s writer. Oh! don't forget Leading Seaman Henderson—he really convinced the Gunnery Department not to misemploy T.A.S. rates (shades of the Coston gun!).

And so to Aden with its hot, humid climate, this again brought the bodyroom to the fore—an armoury, no less for the Army! This time, during transit to Aden, and again later to Aqaba. On completion of this "Navy defies Nasser" trip (headlines of one newspaper!) we returned to Aden—time passed, it must have done—the Bermuda race finished, at least Lieut.-Commander Hallifax returned, Lieut.-Commander Greenshields being *en route* to the United Kingdom.

From this time we really "Tassed it up." A demolition party was flown to Loda (seven miles short of Yemen border). What a party! Demolitions were carried out on a site which was half an hour's truck journey from camp over scrub-covered, rut-ridden desert. The order of advance was as follows: In the van, armoured car, jeep with T.A.S.O.'s 1 and 2, plus escort, 3-tonner with T.A.S. party and demolition stores, 3-tonner with platoon of Aden levies, and lastly armoured car. On our second trip the rearguard armoured car suffered a fault in his machine gun and, in clearing it, fired the gun. As one of the T.A.S. party were flat on the bottom of the truck, negative Able Seaman Hobday who, holding the detonators, was unable to get a relief! Our rifles were at the bottom of the truck. We survived, but the coastal silhouette didn't—we made our mark!

Aden again and the recovery of a helicopter from the harbour by our divers, with Able Seaman Hammill doing the hard work under water—no mean feat in four and a half hours, two and a half of which were in darkness.

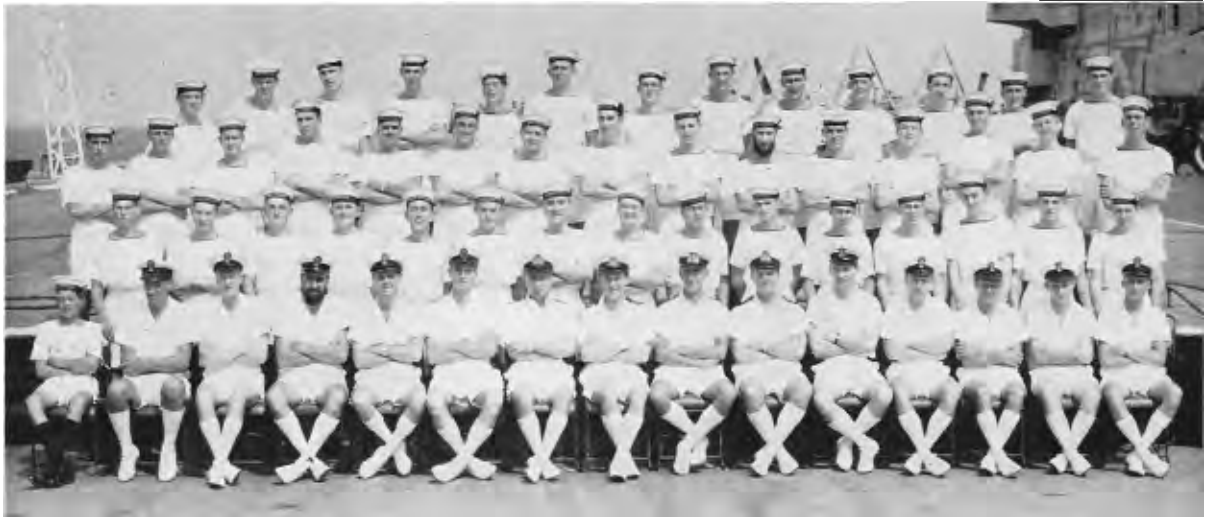
You will all remember *Melika*, and suffice it to say that divers again completed their job satisfactorily. As we leave Aden for the last time, can we poach from Cowper?

"Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place."

We have all enjoyed this commission, and if there wasn't much T.A.S. to exercise us, at least we had our share of everything else that goes to make up a near world-wide cruise.



Communications Department



"Of what avail the loaded tube,
The turbine or the shell.
If V.S. and W/T default,
The Fleet would go to . . ."

UNFORTUNATELY, V.S. AND W/T did *not* default on the day before we were due to leave Mombasa on our way homeward via the high spots of Madagascar and the Cape, and we soon found ourselves in the Arabian Sea—there to test our communication skill whilst acting as a troop transport and, more recently, as a tug. As usual, when these crises arise, people throughout the ship were seen to raise their eyebrows whenever they met one of our branch, followed by the inevitable whispered question, "When do we get back to Pompey?" The answer to that one was eventually plucked out of the ether, but it is our pride that no "buzzes" ever came from our end!

Looking back over the months, it seems, from the Communicators' point of view, that all the difficult exercises were laid on first, just to really test us, as it were. How well we remember "Strike-back" and "Phoenix," for example, where our staffs worked tirelessly for long hours and the Communication officers and senior ratings were dashing around like blue-nosed flies to try to sort out the snags of a newly worked-up department. However, it did us a power of good and by the time we arrived in Trinco for "Jet 58," we reckoned to know our stuff. In the course of these many exercises four Admirals have chosen to fly their flag in the ship, and we will have had the fifth by the time we pay off.

For the statistically minded, a monthly average of 1,270 incoming and just over 700 outgoing messages have been typed and distributed since

we left U.K. to start on our foreign leg, and something like 550,000 sheets of paper have been used up in achieving this. Of course, those figures take no account of the many hundreds of tactical messages handled. The wireless department have had some particularly interesting moments, working both service and civil stations in most parts of the world, from Piarco in Trinidad to an Army outpost on the shore of Muscat. We well remember being told, whilst off Norway, that "Rotterdam has a radio telephone call for you," and whilst in the Gulf of Oman, that "Radio Rome has traffic for you." It is comforting to look back and say that both contacts were completely successful.

The commission has not been without its lighter moments, of course. Not that we would embarrass our staff by quotations, of course, but it really is surprising what bad spellers our typewriters turned out to be. Take the example of the typewriter which roguishly missed out a space between two words and caused the rather astonishing signal: "The French naval representative will *belt* Cdr. Mauseby" to be distributed. Then there was the day that an irate Met. officer arrived in the M.S.O. to ask why he hadn't been informed that a typhoon warning hadn't been received!

However, our times together—good, bad or indifferent—are rapidly drawing to their close. The drafting establishment will no doubt split us up, but it's a small world, and most of us will no doubt meet again to talk over old times in *Bulwark*, 1957-58.