

SAILORS CAN DO ANYTHING

IT HAS OFTEN BEEN SAID that "Sailors can do anything"—from transporting cattle to servicing a plane or driving a tank.

This latest claim to versatility is based on a visit by some members of the ship's company to an outlying depot of the Royal Armoured Corps near the Red China—New Territories border.

It is very pleasant to have invitations to visit various factories, estates and so on, but personally I considered the R.A.C. more than polite to entrust 35 tons of moving tank to somebody like myself; who had never even seen a tank at close quarters before. The idea of being in a position to drive one never entered my head.

The journey from Kowloon up into the hills was marred by heavy rain and fog, which obscured what we were told by our Army hosts "was quite a view." Despite the depressing weather, everyone was in exceedingly good spirits, which were if anything increased right royally (excuse the pun) by other spirits of a more potent strength when we had reached our destination.

An Armoured Regiment such as we visited has upwards of thirty-six tanks, and the tank park was, of course, our main objective. If you have never seen a tank at close quarters, I can assure you that it presents a truly formidable appearance—not so much induced by its 37-mm. gun as by the general air of solidarity and grimness. I should hate to confront one if it were hostile.

A normal crew for one of these monsters—"Comets" (*light tanks*, these days)—consists of commander, gunner, loader/wireless operator, driver and • co-driver, the latter working a ball-mounted Besa machine gun when required. But for demonstration purposes only the commander and drivers were present.

After duly admiring the intricate machinery concealed under mighty chunks of armoured plate, three of the tanks were started and moved out by their drivers—acting on similar hand signals from the sergeant (commander) as those used by aircraft directors. This procedure is

absolutely necessary, I was told, as even the most experienced driver has not acquired eyes that can see round corners; his field of vision is limited to approximately a 30 degree arc—straight in front. Once out of the confines of the shed, however, the driver is slightly better off, although directions are still necessary and are passed by the internal inter-com system.

Imagine yourself; as I was, offered a chance to drive. You clamber onto the beast and wriggle yourself; legs first, through a hatch obviously designed to pass nothing bigger than a full-sized barnyard fowl. You arrive in a made-to-measure sardine tin, but fitted with the most comfortable seat in the vehicle. Between your legs, a monstrous gear lever; to left and right, the steering brakes; below and in front, the normal arrangement of clutch, brake and accelerator. Instead of a wind-screen, a small 6-inch diameter porthole is provided for you to look through.

After instruction by an anxious sergeant—after all, it's his tank—you don the headphones and await the command, "Driver, advance." Any further directions are always prefixed "Driver," as the inter-com is general and serves all members of the crew. Getting your tank into motion is exactly the same as a normal car, but all controls are considerably stiffer, springier and (if you miss your gear change) noisier. Steering is simple: pull left, turn left; pull right, turn right. Brakes also are required to stop or slow down on the roads or a hard surface. The biggest snag is the limited vision, but in the hour or so that I was permitted to drive—in two different tanks—I'm glad to say that nothing was damaged, although I was told that I had an alarming tendency to shave the corner posts supporting the tank shed roof. I didn't know.

That was my first time in a tank and also my first experience of R.A.C. hospitality. When I say that I wished I'd joined the Tanks, what higher praise could there be.

J. B.



"He's next!"



Send-off at Mombasa

QUARTERDECK DIVISION WHALER CRUISE

IN THE WEST INDIES, and indeed the world over, landfalls look best from small boats; and the finest that I have ever seen was from one of the ship's whalers in the Grenadines. We had just slipped, and the strops swung away from us and were drawn aloft by the crane; the large dark hull of the ship slid past, leaving us in the early dawn, heaving in the trade wind swell. To the east the towering silhouette of Grenada lay, its topmost peaks swathed in a black, crouching cloud; the light of Point Saline blinked, dimmed by the coming dawn, and the early lights of St. George's could be seen against the black of the land seven miles away.

A week in a small boat in the West Indies is the nearest you can ever get to heaven; and for anyone who finds the world too much for him, and is bankrupt, or thwarted in love, or oppressed by relations, I prescribe Grenada—the authentic "Island in the Sun" of Harry Belafonte — as the perfect tonic. The little town of St. George's echoes the cosmopolitan business of Port of Spain; in its crowded market-place, teeming with hustling, nudging, chattering, laughing people and old wooden buses roaring and hooting; in its tiny steep streets, busy with tall striding negroes; and in its delightful Carenage, the anchorage below the town where the trading schooners and mail-boats and occasional merchant ships put in. Yet over all this hangs the dreamy soporific atmosphere of the West Indies, muting the noise, slurring the activity and giving the town the same sleepy character as the blue island itself shimmering in the midday heat.

Islands may be conveniently divided into two classes: islands with pubs and islands without pubs. Carriacou and Bequia are the only two in the Grenadines in the former class. Not that the others don't sell liquor—on the contrary !—but only Carriacou and Bequia actually set aside a building for the sole purpose of drinking. Whether this be an advantage or otherwise I am not qualified to judge; but we didn't really like Carriacou. Being the biggest of the group, there is, according to Whitaker's, a district officer (whatever that may be), and such officialdom on such a tiny island seemed incongruous. Also there are cars—brand new 1958 models—and having left Port of Spain for the peace of the Grenadines, it is mortifying to be chased by little men shouting "Taxi !" Who in the six-mile length of Carriacou, wants a taxi is a mystery. Perhaps the District Officer ?

A further division of islands can be made, not concerned with the distribution of pubs, but between those that sell picture postcards and those that don't. Union Island, our next call, happily falls into both the publess and postcardless category, the first such place that many in our boat's crew had visited. For the weary souls who would shun even the comparative civilisation of Grenada, or who envy the life of the hermit, or who as well as being bankrupt are being pursued by their

creditors, I suggest that they will find solace in Union Island. It is an island paradise, the perfect Coral Island of Ballantyne : about three miles long, rocky, with golden beaches set with palms and sheltered by coral reefs. There are two villages; on the flat land they grow cotton and coffee and a variety of tropical fruits; the hills support only cactus. And from these hills you get the most lovely view of the whole chain of Grenadines from Bequia in the hazy north to the indistinct blue tumbling peaks of Grenada.

What a world of beauty in these islands : in the underwater treasures, in the sunsets, in the brilliant tropical nights! There was also some kind of aesthetic quality in our lurid selection of beach-shirts : "Calypso" shirts, genuine Canadian tartan, pictures of palm trees and women, of negroes and multi-coloured turtles. Head-gear, too, far from being solely a protection from the torrid sun, served also as an adornment, and ranged from sombreros to lumberjack caps, from trilbies to deer-stalkers. In fact, our motley band might have been mistaken by the casual eye—had it not observed our pusser's radio, pusser's compass, pusser's binoculars, pusser's Aldis, pusser's torches, pusser's mess-traps, pusser's bucket and scrubber, and pusser's "compo" rations—for West Indians.

Pusser's "compo" rations! We took this form of sustenance as being easy to stow; and in time we discovered that this was its only virtue. Maybe to hungry Royal Marines, after a twenty-mile route march, these rations are satisfying, but for a lazy life at sea they are most unsuitable; and speaking as one who suffered acutely throughout the cruise from the "dog" (ex-Port of Spain !), I found them quite unpleasant. We were doubly unfortunate in living off pack "Golf," which, of the whole range of "Alpha" to "Golf," is the worst, its menu comprised entirely of "Ham. and Egg," "Mutton, Scotch Style" and "Ham and Beef." We eventually disposed of most of our "compo" rations by trading them with the natives for eggs and fruit and cake—good business on both sides, it seems—and I hope that by our munificence we have fostered good relations with the deserving people of the Grenadines. Our cooking arrangements were quite simple, and there was never any lack of wood on the beaches, or of willing islanders to help us get it. But there were a couple of occasions when we anchored after dark and had to use the accursed primus. The second time, after two hours of frenzied pumping, it yielded up a few tins of tepid ginger duff before finally expiring.

In order to augment our diet we brought a fishing line and spinner which we enthusiastically streamed, and on one occasion had a catch, but to our perplexity found it was back to front—we had hooked its tail! We were at a loss to know what to do, and our potential meal—about a yard long—was brought alongside. But we were spared any further embarrassment, for in its

struggles it beat the side of the boat and freed itself. As a penance, perhaps, we lost a man over the side, but the barracudas were as merciful as we were to our victim, and he was recovered alive and whole.

Navigation provided no real problem, for each island was in sight of its neighbour. In the dark it was not so easy: the word "light" in the Pilot is legendary, and when anchoring at night we let go when we could hear the surf or the crickets ashore, whichever sooner. There were exciting moments by day, too, such as the time when we found ourselves on a lee shore, in a heavy mounting swell, becalmed by high cliffs. But we had the oars at the ready and escaped after a hard pull.

Mustique is another dream island, though not rough like Union, but low and pastoral, with rolling hills and pleasant ordered woods and heath. After Mustique we called at Kingstown, St. Vincent, where we met H.M.S. *Barfleur*, and she was most hospitable to us. Kingstown we thought less attractive than the friendly little harbour of St. George's, and though we found we were able to buy milk shakes in vast quantity, also Sunset rum at much the same price, we were not sorry to leave for Bequia next day.

At Bequia the disputed advantage of the pub

was evident, for immediately we arrived the islanders seized us and dragged us into it. Rum at 6s. a bottle and some first-rate guitar players form a fine basis for a party, and soon the little island rang with "Coconut Woman," "Maladie d'Amour" and other favourites. We were all soon fast friends; one member of our party astounded everyone by his performance of the Limbo; another was found asleep on watch in the whaler. At eleven o'clock the island constable, who was drinking with us, firmly declared the pub closed, and we found our way back to the boat.

Bequia was our last call before rejoining the ship, and we spent the next day scrubbing out. Enthusiastic local help was volunteered, and after a lazy day in and out of the water we restored a certain amount of youth to the boat. Before we sailed we gave the remainder of our tinned food to the natives, who pressed all kinds of fruit on us, so that when we came alongside I heard the General Mess party piped for (though I might have been mistaken). We tied the boat up aft, looking—in our eyes—very spick and span, but unfortunately it later drifted under a bathroom ejector and filled up with soapy water, so perhaps it wasn't such a credit after all.

S. T. GULLICK, *Sub-Lieut.*

A CHILD'S GUIDE TO NAVAL AVIATION

AIRCRAFT FLY BY PUSHING or pulling themselves through the air. The flow of air over the wing causes what is called "lift." (Some "Wings" appear to be self-supporting, but these have a strong, secret drive, too.) This lift is like what mother gets from half a glass of sherry, or father from half a bottle. Now this is about proper aeroplanes—choppers (you know, helicopters) are different. These shouldn't really fly, but people who are good at arithmetic say that they do. So, though they look *all wrong*, and it seems like magic, it must be because of lift.

Kites also fly; that's why people say "as high as a kite."

Most aircraft have a man called a "pilot." These are self-confident young gods (no misprint intended) who are rather like taxi-drivers, going where they are told to go—except, of course, when told by "fishheads" (*ride infra*). They rather like fast cars, taxi-dancers, high spirits, or fast women, the back of taxis, and strong spirits, or any permutation of these taken two or more at a time. (If you don't understand this, ask father when mother isn't there.)

"Observers" (navigators are *entirely* different. You mustn't ask about them!) are there to watch the silly mistakes that *other* pilots make, so that their pilots can have a Jolly Good Laugh. Another thing they do is to help pilots into the *terribly high bunks* which pilots often seem to have.

"Fishheads" are very difficult to describe, but they are the ones who are not aviators and not specially trained things like dentists, engineers and electrical men (so you see they are not specially brainy people), but nice men who mostly learn to drive ships—except that with ships you don't actually drive. You tell someone else what to do, like mother when you go out in the car on Sunday.

Now if you want to know any more you can ask father, but really I expect that mother knows more about sailors than he does. So perhaps, when you are a bit older, I should ask her.

E. E. P. B.



Volcano off Azores

LE BANYAN ELECTRIQUE

Le Capitaine : CH. EL. DAVIS

Aide contre-maître : CR. EL. COCKER

OH, FOR THE DELIGHTS of a Banyan ! All that is required is a riverside bay, nook or cranny and conveyance to same. Qualifications : To eat like a horse, drink like a fish, and flexible vertebrae. The latter being most essential where one's sleeping billet may vary from hillocks, hammocks and hedgerows to being squashed in the stern of a whaler or motor cutter, with the gentle undulation of the briny bashing one's brain-box against the bulwarks.

A village seven miles out of Cherbourg provided one of the best departmental banyans. Where else could one find a sandy beach, plenty of firing, a boiled-oil shop (hardly a bottle's throw from the beach) and a wartime air-raid shelter, most excellent for sleeping.

The run out to the village by motor cutter was handled with great competence, in heavy seas, by Le Capitaine. Even so, the majority were well and truly soaked (in more ways than one).

Le Local de "Plonk" was more or less taken over for the night and much *entente cordial* was drunk. At closing time this motley shower staggered across country to find more "Sheep Dip" to quench the never-ending thirst before starting back to base.

Some people cannot leave their work on board. E.M. Baker, the major offender in this case, was given shock treatment, a hearty heave into a bed of stinging nettles.

Those still capable had a snack before retiring to the air-raid shelter to sleep it off, only to be disturbed by a French tramp, into whose home we had temporarily moved. On being presented with a bottle of "Jungle Juice" he disappeared into the night.

The beach providing large quantities of drift-wood for the fire, which was large enough to roast an ox, R.E.A. Duncan was elected "Chef de Cuisine," assisted by R.E.M. Daun. They were seen in the early hours of the morning frying eggs and bacon at a fantastic rate by "remote control." This was a frying-pan with a twenty-foot sapling extension, most essential if one wishes to retain one's eyebrows when faced with a veritable furnace.

To emerge from under one's blankets with this delicate aroma tantalising one's nostrils is most pleasant. Stomach cobwebs were washed down with milk, still warm from the cow. This treatment is guaranteed to swamp any fluctuating butterflies, although L.E.Ms. Greaves and McIlhagga and R.E.M. Jenkins required a double dose.

Overnight the weather deteriorated. This made the return trip to the ship most uncomfortable. Whether it was the movement of the boat or the indulgence in "Plonk" which caused the skyline to gyrate drastically, we shall never know.

Our trips were not always by boat. At Hong Kong an excursion to "Chek-O" bay was organised. The bus, not very elegant in looks, proved

quite capable of rattling its way up the steep, winding roads and free-wheeling down the other side, with a gasp of relief.

The highlight of the evening was a bonfire sing-song. Quality was unmistakably absent, but was compensated by quantity. A large audience gathered, and, egged on by our Choirmaster (Ch. El. Davis), rendered "Oh, My Darling Clementine." In fact, every time it was their turn to sing, up came "Clementine" (in best Chinese, of course). Our biggest lyric contributor was L.E.M. Farrar (well topped up), although everyone had a bash. Perhaps it is as well that our audience were not well up in the art of Naval language "as she is spoke" or sung. The singing ceased as the fire died (trees left, too large). Midnight found the sea full of babbling bodies. Some entered the water of their own free will, others (R.E.M. Smith and R.E.M. Dinnacombe) needed persuading. It was just too bad that they were fully clothed.

The food "whacker outer" was very ably carried out by C.R.E.L. Cocker, he being always hungry, and the bar was kept under strict control by C.R.E.L. Stockwell, who never drank *much* !

Other banyan runs, at Trinidad (where we towed two dinghies to our destination), Singapore and Trincomalee, although not overnight, proved just as successful.

There are still several moons to go before we reach cooler climates ; no doubt we shall hear the old cry, "How about a banyan ? Any chance of a trip this week-end, chief ?"



OUR AIRCRAFT

Oh, Whirley Bird, you are absurd,
The ugliest creation.
How do you fly ? Gravity, why
Be cheated by gyration
Of large rotor, small rotor,
Driven by a noisy motor ?
Newton, you did the law conceive;
This nightmare sight would you believe ?

Skyraider with your pregnant look,
I read you like an open book.
One day, when letters you have brought
And on the deck you're safely caught,
You will collapse, with labour pain,
Producing infant aeroplane.

Venom and Sea Hawk in the air,
One looks right and one looks queer.
With hearing your praises I'm satiated,
Why on earth worry, you're both outdated!
N. R. B. B.

SUB-AQUA CLUB

THE WEST INDIES, as we all know, have clear waters and plenty of fish and coral. Many people use glass-bottomed boats to view these waters, but as *Bulwark* has not the advantage of such fittings, those of us on board who wished to commune with fishes had to resort to diving.

Before we left Pompey two aqua lungs were bought and the club was started. Short training classes in the equipment were started, and in our first port of call, Trinidad, most of the members managed to gain some experience in the use of the lungs—even if it was having your head held under until you had to breath from the set. Jamaica also provided us with some pleasant outings to a nearby island where fish, great and small, could be seen.

Having left the West Indies, many people thought that our club could not survive; but despite the snow in Halifax and sharks elsewhere, many people have taken the sets away for day trips. No opportunities are being missed and much enjoyment is being got consorting with mermaids. In the Crossing the Line ceremony, even King Neptune disregarded us—maybe because he could not distinguish us from his more scaly subjects.

At Aden we assisted in mending the shark netting at some of the bathing pools. Although there had been quite large holes in this netting for some time, no shark had bothered to get in and have a look round. If he had he would only have found what we saw on the bottom of the Gold Mohur pool—a small sting ray, a lot of wire netting, and half a pair of false teeth.



Finally, we must mention the way the Siebe Gorman aqua lungs have stood up to the lot of hard use by a lot of hard users in an unhealthy climate.

Bulwark's Bacchanal

By FIDO-G.

(To any type of convenient Calypso tune)

First we went to the ,Caribbee,
And there did very fine steel bands see:
Back to back and tum to turn,
And Trinidad men make very fine rum-
Fernandes—Vat Nineteen,
Fernandes—Vat Nineteen.

Next to Cannouan and Bequia,
Slept all night under coconut tree;
Banyan, banyan all day long,
And the sun at noon he much too strong.
Fernandes—very fine rum,
jungle juice—bad for the turn.

And so we to Jamaica did go,
The splendid home of calypso:
Limbo by day and calypso by night
And never came home before it was light.
Myers—a very good rum,
But Vat Nineteen—Number One.

At Bermuda she rain and blow,
"Brrrr" at the thought of Halifax snow;
The cold was excuse for four-day "thrash."
And the motor-bike firms fixed many a crash.
Bermuda—a lot to drink,
"Scotch on the Rocks"—not hard to sink.

And so up north to ice and snow,
To "Shearwater" jetty we next did go;
Lots of glasses of bourbon and dry,
And my! oh my! how the time did fly
The Canadian—a very fine host,
Of Canada Club—we drank the most.

Across to Gib and into dock,
And many a hubby went up the rock,
Crossed to La Lin to see the view.
And the husbands lied—well, wouldn't you '
Gonzales—splendid sherry,
Byass — he make you merry.

Across the Med., way past Malta,
At Port Said we had a slight halta;
The Ghuli Man come and your eyes he quicken,
He shake your hand and produce four chicken.
No grog—very, very poor,
Very short time—no run ashore.

After Suez we had a slight bump
When Gyppo ship hit us quite a thump:
A very big hole the bump did make,
But the Army Major he never awake.
Fernandes—very fine grog,
Fernandes—and you sleep like a log.

At Aden a chance to step ashore,
Hot and dry and our feet got sore;
Into the crater to see the sights
Feelthy pictures of Arabian Knights.
Carlsberg—Danish and strong,
And Tuborg—ice cold and long.

..... Change Tune

North of the border up Communist way,
There flew some pilots who, so "briefly" knew—
no, not this way,
If we hadn't spoken
They wouldn't have known
That over the border our aircraft had flown.

And so back down to Singapore,
"Show the boat" right off the shore;
The deck bright yellow, grey and green,
A sight the "students" never had seen.
Drink Tiger--or Anchor beer,
Too much—and you feel most queer.

Trincomalee for exercise "Jet,"
With Paks and Indians together get;
Troubles ashore by the score,
Past dockyard gates we get no more:
Curfew—no time for ale,
The village—beyond the pale.

The rest of the cruise is still unknown,
Around the Union we have not yet flown;
Green Room. Rag or come what may,
And we won't be back for many a day,
To Pompey—(ah! you see a little frown) ?
It's because I know a girl in Kingston Town.

That last verse was off the cuff,
For at Mombasa a big rebuff;
Caine out of harbour and turned to the left
And of South African "jolly" we were bereft:
Back to Aden—near the trouble,
Allsopps--foam and bubble.

Singapore dock^yard with the Fleet
Old friends with Tiger ale did greet;
Across the island and into the town,
Either trousers or slitted gown:
Cheongsam—so velly Chinese,
Or pyjamas—take which you please.

"Oceanlink" and up to Manila,
Met Americans—spring chicken for dinner;
San Mig beer to wash it down,
And early next morning not even a frown.
San Mig—not so strong,
San Mig—drink all night long.

Farther up north and to Hong Kong
(Now you girls, don't get me wrong);
Chinese girls velly, velly nice
With Cheongsam dress and chow fan lice,
And San Mig—San Mig ale,
Home in the morning—tattooed and pale.

Our job was trooping with throttles bent
And to Aqaba with the Jocks were sent;
In the narrows we only made big wave,
But the newspapers said we were terribly brave!
Carlsberg--is golden beer,
N.A.A.F.I.—provides the cheer.

Next to the Oman we did go
To Talib's forces our strength to show;
But after a day a cry out rang,
"Come down and help--there's been a prang."
Ferdy—F. Gilabert—
And *Melika—both* badly hurt.

For a week we struggled to tow and clean
(For a sootier ship never was seen)
To Muscat with *Melika—very*, very slow,
She yawed and wallowed, near refused to go.
Both Bergie and Schooner ale
Clean teeth as well—or that's the tale !

Out of Aden for the seventh time
We turned to the right, the Red Sea to climb;
The Admiralty always knows what's best--
Cyprus--give the *Eagle* a rest.
But brandy and Cypriot wine
So strong—and very fine.

Guy Fawkes night in England, they say,
The Fourth of November is the day.
But who can tell so long ahead ?
Order turkeys in Malta, we'll be in the Med. !
With Hopleaf, 'cos it seems there's a risk
We'll celebrate Christmas with Anchor and Cisk.



ON SLEEPING OUT

IN THE HOT HUMID NIGHTS of the Far East the air below decks gradually drove more and more of us to seek the comparative coolness of an open-air sleeping billet. This is the story of my one and only attempt to join that happy band.

The first hurdle to overcome is to acquire a camp bed; the next is to select a billet. I was lucky in both efforts, and the first night, as I enjoyed my last cigarette, thought of the cool refreshing sleep which lay ahead. Admittedly, there would be no chance of snatching that extra forty winks as the sun would be burning my eyes out long before the hands were called, but surely anything would be preferable to sleeping in a hot tin box in a lagoon of sweat.

Negotiating die ladders to the flight deck with a camp bed, pillow and sheet, it was a joy to feel the cool breeze blowing away the mustiness of the day's heat. But steady! The forty knots of wind blowing across the flight deck does not help the initial struggle with the camp bed. These articles seem to be designed in such a way that as soon as one end is secured the legs pop out of the other end. Patience wins in the end, and the beast eventually lies docile, ready for the next stage. Laying out a sheet in a stiff breeze is akin to climbing a greasy pole—you just don't get anywhere. But at last it is possible to turn round, collect the pillow, and sink gratefully back into air-conditioned bliss. . . .

Except that when you turn round for the pillow, the sheet takes off and is soon half-way towards the stern and continuing aft at a rapid rate. A quick sprint and, if you are lucky, you will only stub your toe on one or two ring bolts and trip over an arrestor wire before the situation is retrieved.

At last you can lie down and draw the sheet round you, and all is peace. It is cool—in fact, it is jolly cold! It is, indeed, perishingly cold. You are forced to go back below for extra warm clothing.

The drama with the sheet and pillow is not so long-drawn this time, for you are getting the hang of it. Soon, snug, just at the right temperature, you can begin to doze off.

Something wakes you. You lie still, head beneath the sheet; but there it is again—a groaning or moaning sound. Somebody in pain? No, it is not that sort of noise. The only immediate certainty is that it is only barely human. You are not a coward; you do not believe in ghosts; you must get up on one elbow and have a look.

A dim shape is kneeling on the grating at the top of the ladder. Now and again it bends down, as if kissing the deck, and reproduces its eerie noise. It gets up. It comes farther along the deck towards you and repeats the process. More moans—or groans. It is the wind whistling through your crew-cut which is making your hair stand on end, and you must get up and investigate this phenomenon.

As always, the explanation is simple. A young steward had bought a transistor radio in Aden, and now assures you in broad Scots accent that he gets

good reception when he holds it against the magnetic loop which runs round the deck. And the groaning noise? He was just humming the music he was picking up on the set.

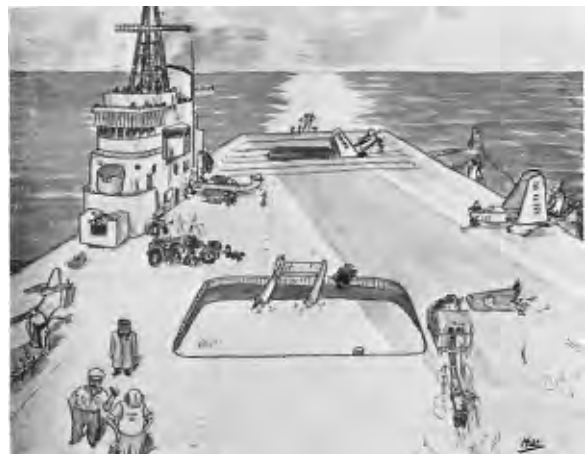
The process of resettlement after this interlude is not quite like getting used to civilian life after the "axe." But it is hard. Eventually you manage to woo slumber again until—clump, followed again by clump ! Slow, dragging, heavily booted feet are coming up the ladder. You sit up. The measured tread comes on. A hand slides upwards into view. Two more clumps as the body is raised a few more inches. Moronic, clad only in underpants and boots, it staggers into view. Shades of Frankenstein and Dracula flit across your mind.

Then you recognise the shape, remember that today was his birthday, and all is clear.

Relaxed again, getting more weary every second, sleep once more draws near. But down below someone is preparing a special treat. It reaches you in the form of a fine spray of water and some rather unwelcome particles of black, oily soot. This is the end ! With a twang of protesting metal struts, the camp bed is dismantled, sheet, pillow, the lot tucked under your impatient arm, and back you go to the secure if foetid slumber of below decks.

All that shows of the previous night's adventures, when you waken from your damp oblivion, is a black polka-dot sheet which has managed to absorb a good proportion of the flight deck's grease, and a pair of baggy eyes which deny that you slept at all.

Perhaps I was unlucky. Perhaps I was the victim of some foul plot. But often since then, as I lay in perspiring peace, I have heard the rush of bare feet and the anguished oaths of the open-air fiends rushing for shelter from some tropical downpour, and feel I can afford to smile. But I resent the noise they insist on making. Why the dickens can't they let a wiser man sleep in peace ?



"Fellow wants to meet you—something to do with a red recommend !"

VOLUNTEER BAND



Recipe.—Take about a dozen assorted naval personnel, all shapes and sizes, and about a dozen assorted brass tubes, all shapes and sizes. Combine them in the ratio of one for one and add a R.M. band sergeant as leavening and seasoning.

Result.—Our volunteer band.

Since the Royal Marine's bands were withdrawn from all but flagships, it has been the policy for carriers to form a volunteer band from the ship's company with a band sergeant to organise and train them.

Band Sergeant Jewel has ably led our musicians, who were of all states of musical ability from experienced bandsmen to complete beginners. They have all shown the same keenness and enthusiasm which has enabled the band to graduate from their early repertoire of half a dozen marches when the ship left Portsmouth to the competent

playing of popular selections and the ceremony of Sunset, together with the Corps of Drums and Bugles of the 1st Bn. Royal Lincolnshire Regiment, at the official cocktail party at Aden.

Apart from the usual playing of marches when entering and leaving harbour and the ceremony of Colours when in harbour, the band has given concerts for the ship's company and wardroom, for the troops of the Lincolns and for the ships' companies of H.M.S. *Woodbridge Haven* and her "brood" of minesweepers. Other engagements included the cocktail party, children's party and the combined variety show, "Dance and Skylark," arranged by the Little Theatre Club during the ship's visit to Mombasa.

One thing is certain: no matter how much wind has been expended to date, there will be plenty left to play the ship up harbour at Pompey.

HOME IS THE SAILOR

A PROBLEM THAT CONFRONTS the average sailor, after spending a period of time abroad, is "How do I make the best of my homecoming?" It is a subject that does not seem to be dealt with in any Naval Handbook, and yet it is, I feel, something that affects greatly one's personal pride, and ultimately the reputation of the Navy.

Classic phrases, such as "When I was in Ceylon . . .," give rise today to disbelieving and humiliating sniggers. They are hackneyed and outmoded. It is, therefore, the purpose of this article to suggest new openings, and to provide guidance on "How to impress one's relations and friends."

One factor, which deserves an article on its own, is, of course, the choice and selection of Rabbits.

If by now, however, you have not amassed the necessary Chinese coolie hats, Japanese tea sets and baubles of various sizes and shapes from Change Alley or the cheaper parts of Wanchai, then you will have to rely on sheer Personality—when you reach home. For this reason the subject of Rabbits will not be mentioned further, and I can only hope that you have adequately stocked up.

Returning, then, to our main theme, it is imperative that you bear in mind, all the time, who you are trying to impress. Mothers need to be impressed about different qualities than fathers; girl friends are not interested in the same things as older brothers; aunts do not usually approve of

your drinking exploits; kid sisters couldn't care less if you played deck hockey for the Navy, and mothers-in-law would generally not be amused if you told her about the time you met Suzie in Hong Kong . . . !

Wives

The first and foremost thing to remember is that while you have been gadding about the world, the wife has been "slaving away with the kids at home." So ease up on the wild drinking and spending sprees. Remember that you've been "saving money." Repeat frequently how much you've missed her, but don't keep saying "I wish you'd been with me when we were in Hong Kong." So does she!

(Anyway, you'd never have met Suzie if the wife had been there.) Go easy, too, on the "I'd love to have gone up-country when we were in Mombasa" line. It implies that your wife is a millstone around your neck. The best approach is very simple : It's been hell while you've been away; you have had some good, simple, cheap fun; and you've been working much too hard to write many letters.

Fiancées

The mixture as before, with perhaps even more emphasis on the "saving money for us both" story. Don't omit to tell her that you missed her every day (and, of course, forget about Suzie).

A gay man-of-the-world manner sometimes works wonders, and if you can carry it off without ruining the money-saving gambit, so much the better. Invention of a Baron (if necessary) might help, but sophistication is probably better used on second-best girls or kid sisters.

On the whole, "I was saving money for our wedding, dear" is possibly the best, but don't overdo it. She might get the idea that you're dull and miserly. And, of course, you were working much too hard to write many letters.

Relations

Generally speaking, relations are the easiest to impress. They naturally believe that you were the most important man on board and had the respect and affection of the whole ship's company. You must surely have been the Captain's right-hand man and the expert on everything from the best way to drive a Sea Hawk to the cheapest bars in Trincomalee. This makes them fit subjects for experiment, and if they don't swallow your stories, no one else will. But remember who you are talking to and don't go telling your man-hating maiden aunt all about Suzie.

Fathers generally see in their sons a younger edition of themselves, so go ahead and be a "chip off the old block." Only you know what the "old block's" tastes are (or were), so make certain that you are telling him the adventures that he can see himself having. Almost all fathers expect their sons to work hard, and most want them to have

played hard, too. You might even tell him something about Suzie — but don't make him too jealous.

You might also mention every second or third party in Kingston, but once again don't overdo it. Remember the guiding principle : *You* have had good value from *his* income tax!

To this day mothers fondly believe that their sons are the best friends with, and have unlimited influence on, the Captain. (Some even wonder why there is a Captain when you are on board.) "One word from my Billie, and the Captain went straight back to Singapore!" is a typical mother's remark. There is only one way to deal with this. A slight deprecating laugh and a mild denial should be enough to convince them that they were right all along. Play this very lightly. None of the crude "I says to the Captain . . ." stuff. Just imply that your advice was asked. . . . Before you know it, the whole neighbourhood will be writing to their M.P. to know why you are not even a Leading Hand!

Similarly on the pleasure side. Give the impression that you are a "virtuous, clean-living English boy" and once again you are made. (Unless, of course, you're Scottish—so have some sense!) Forget the night life, stick to the sight-seeing and the swimming. Oh, and don't forget—you were much too busy to write many letters.

Older brothers are sometimes difficult. If they've been to any of the places we've called at, try to remember the various bars, clubs, etc., which they will only too readily recall. It is better to stick to the places they have not been to and insist how superior they are. If they persist in telling you about Hong Kong back in 1951, then you have only one rejoinder: "Yes, it must have been quite pleasant, but the place has changed so much that you wouldn't recognise it." If Kowloon was their favourite run ashore, then you must sing the praises of Wanchai, and vice versa. But keep quiet about work; you're trying to make them jealous, aren't you ? You had so gay a cruise you hadn't much time for letters. . . .

Younger brothers can be very hard to impress, and the only way is to firmly ignore all tricky questions dealing with space ships and the killing range of megaton bombs. You may be asked the rated power of a Ghost engine Mk. i o6 at 35,000 feet, or the service ceiling of a Sea Hawk, but be very careful how you answer. The chances are the little perisher knows exactly and is trying to catch you out. You can, of course, learn by heart one or two highly technical details of jet engine performance, but beware of the obvious possibility that you might have to explain.

Unless you have met Everton Weekes or are on Christian name terms with Sir Edmund Hillary, I should avoid younger brothers. They seem to have very little time for mere terrestrial travel.

Sisters, older or younger, seem to expect a gay romantic brother, so here is your chance to expand in your suave man-about-the-world manner. The

madly gay night life of Bequia, Manila and Trincomalee, the celebrities you met (or nearly met), the millionaires who took you to those exclusive clubs and restaurants—these are all experiences they want to hear about. Use your imagination! The humblest rum-shop in Kingston can have more atmosphere and glamour than the Ritz if described properly.

The music-mad modern miss can, like younger brothers, be extraordinarily hard to impress, but you can do it. If calypso is still in fashion in your area, you are obviously going to rave about that. If not, enthuse tentatively about Chinese one-string fiddles. If she shows interest, expand a little, but don't forget to tell her about "the steel bands' urgent, impulsive rhythm in the warm flower-scented Trinidad night!" This is almost guaranteed to entrance her. From there go on to the near celebrities—"No, I didn't actually meet Belafonte, but I did hear an exquisite little calypso artist in a waterfront café in Kingston with a superb sense of rhythm. I think you'll be hearing her on wax soon." (Note that celebrities never have a Christian name to the initiated.) Avoid names if you can, and don't for heaven's sake mention that your little calypso girl did a striptease as she sang! That's just debasing art.

Neighbours and Friends

Sooner or later you are bound to hear that remark, "What, are you back home already? What a marvellous life you must lead in the Navy. Always going off round the world and then coming back home for a holiday!" One's natural reaction to this is to lash out with both feet, but in fact it is far more crushing to admit it. Don't forget that your tormentor is jealous, and the best way to impress him is to give him plenty to be jealous about. Remember that he has probably been to sunny Southsea or Blackpool for his summer holidays and endured two weeks of solid rain, so keep your suntan for as long as you can. If necessary, apply surreptitiously some of your sister's liquid suntan to maintain your superiority. Failing all else, brown shoe polish, skilfully applied, will keep you looking healthily tanned for weeks—though you'll probably have to do your own dhobeying.

A skilful technique at your "local" should give you free drinks for weeks, whilst a bad approach will antagonise the whole "pub." Don't ask for a Tiger or a San Mig. Nor is the opening request, "Have you got any arrack?" likely to endear you to the landlord. Ask instead for your "usual" and drink it appreciatively, saying, "Ah, this is much better than the stuff I've been getting recently." This gambit should (a) flatter and please the landlord and (b) induce someone to ask you to explain. That's your opening, and you can keep an enthralled audience hanging on your words for the whole evening, encouraging you with the necessary liquid refreshment. Spread out your stories as far as you can, to last as many evenings as possible,

but keep the more improbable yarns until just before closing time.

One hazard that should be avoided if possible is the amateur politician. If you are cornered, remember that the best policy is to agree with him. Before asking you your opinion on the political situation in Singapore, he is bound to tell you his views, be they Socialist, Conservative or just plain awkward. If he doesn't, ask him to repeat or explain his question. This he will enjoy doing because all politicians love the sound of their own voices, and you'll probably find that his original question can be answered simply by "yes" or "no." If not, his explanation has given you time to think and now all you have to do is to repeat back to him exactly what he said to you. Agree with him! This will convince him of his political abilities and also show him what a sensible, level-headed observant person you are. Someone, in fact, who deserves another drink. If you are forced to express an opinion, keep it vague and as meaningless as possible. Something on the lines of: "No, I wasn't able to see Mao Tse Tung [implying that he wasn't in when you called], but I did meet a very interesting Chinese intellectual in Wanchai, who told me that if there was a famine in Szechuan province this year it would make a difference." Don't tell him that the "intellectual's" name was Suzie . . . don't even mention Szechuan if you can't say it confidently. It might even be better to make tip your own Chinese names.

The most difficult problem of all concerns your naval friends and acquaintances for the simple reason that, with them, you have a lot to gain or lose. One consideration only affects the issue: "Do I want to do another trip like this last one?" If you do, play down the fun and tell them all about the hard work, the hectic exercises, the long sea passages, the heat and the difficulties of getting ashore. Lay it on so thick that when the next opportunity comes along you will have so thoroughly depressed your friends and acquaintances, they will clamour to swop drafts with you. Similarly, if nine months in the Med. is your idea of bliss, persuade your friends of the fun and thrills of the world cruise, and keep quiet about the work.

(N.B.--This negative approach may work with the Drafting Office, but for different reasons!)

A few final words of advice. Firstly, be as convincing as you can (especially with naval friends). It is always best to stick to the truth, but don't be afraid of inventing. If you have to—remember, all the best stories start did so-and-so" rather than "A friend of mine did so-and-so." Don't, whatever you do, change characters in mid-story. If you've had to manipulate the truth a little, stick to the new version—and remember it. Lastly, don't be too eager to tell your stories. Remember you are in the Silent Service and let others draw you out. Develop that shy, unassuming manner, so that everyone will say, "How modest he is! I'll bet he's not telling us a half of what really happened! I must buy him another drink. . . ."