

THE LAUGHING CAVALIER  
1970 - 1972  
THE END OF AN ERA



*Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the Wallace Collection.*



## BY THE EDITOR

This is a book about HMS *Cavalier*, and some of the people who have lived and worked in her. It falls into two main parts; the first being an account of the life of this ship over the last 27 years and the second a record of this the last commission.

I am sure that everybody will find something to interest them in these pages and that this book will remind you of most of the things you would like to remember.

As Francis Bacon once said, 'Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested' - I hope nobody becomes indisposed as a result of this small effort !

*HMS Cavalier.*

'It is upon the Navy under the providence of God that the safety, honour and welfare of this realm do chiefly attend.'

## HMS CAVALIER - RECORD OF SERVICE 1944-1970

HMS CAVALIER, a Destroyer of the Fleet CA Class, was laid down in February 1943, launched on 7 April 1944 and completed on 22 November 1944. She was built and engined by J. Samuel White and Co Ltd, Cowes, Isle of Wight; standard displacement 1,710 tons, length 363 feet, breadth 36 feet with an original armament of 4-4.5-in. single, 2-40mm Bofors, 4-20mm Oerlikons in twin power mountings and 2-20mm single Oerlikons.

On completion, *Cavalier* joined the 6th Destroyer Flotilla, Home Fleet. In February 1945 she took part in three operations off Norway, 'Selenium', a strike on enemy shipping, 'Shred' to provide fighter cover for a minesweeping flotilla and 'Groundsheet', an aircraft minelaying strike. She was one of three destroyers sent from Scapa to reinforce the escort of the Arctic convoy RA 64, which had left the Kola Inlet on 17 February and been attacked by U-boats and enemy aircraft, and scattered during strong gales. She joined the convoy in the evening of 23 February: thirty-one of the thirty-four ships arrived safely in the Clyde on 1 March. As a result of these actions the Ship was awarded the Battle Honour 'Arctic 1945'. When the war in Europe ended on 8 May, *Cavalier* and other destroyers of the 6th Flotilla were detached to the Western Approaches Command and based on the Clyde. In June the 6th Flotilla was allocated to the British Pacific Fleet, and *Cavalier* was taken in hand for refit at Rosyth. On completion in mid-August, the war with Japan had ended and the Flotilla was ordered to relieve the 11th Destroyer Flotilla on the East Indies Station. *Cavalier* arrived at Colombo on 29 September 1945, and on 10 November, took part in the bombardment of Sourabaya, Java, when operations began for its military occupation because no satisfactory reply had been received from the Indonesian extremists there.

In February 1946 *Cavalier* was in Force 64, constituted tem-

porarily with the Senior Officer in *HMS Glasgow*, which sailed for Bombay because of unrest in the Royal Indian Navy. *Cavalier* visited various ports on the West coast of India until 30 April, when she sailed from Bombay for Singapore. She left Singapore for the UK on 20 May, arrived in Portsmouth on 16 June and reduced to Reserve.

*Cavalier* was refitted at Portsmouth and modernised at Thornycroft's, Southampton, between 1955 and 1957. On 15 July, she was brought forward from Reserve to replace *Comus* in the 8th Destroyer Squadron, Far East, and left Portland on 31 August to work-up at Malta before going on to her Station. In February 1958 she visited Saigon with the Commander-in-Chief, Far East, who was in *HMS Alert*. In March and April she was in the 'Grapple' Squadron at Christmas Island, in the Pacific, for atomic bomb tests. She visited the Persian Gulf in August, and was refitted at Singapore between April and June 1959. When there was unrest in Gan Island, *Cavalier* was sent there as guardship for the RAF installations, and served as such from 7 to 29 August. In March and August 1960 she made visits to Australia. She was refitted at Singapore from November 1960 to February 1961, and in April took part in SEATO's biggest exercise, 'Pony Express' involving six nations, sixty ships and 100 aircraft. She later visited Japan and Manila. Another annual maritime exercise, 'Jet 62' took place in February and March 1962. On 18 May *Cavalier* left Singapore and with the Destroyer *Carysfort* visited Korea and Japan, returning to Hong Kong on 19 June. She was refitted at Singapore between July and September. With *HMS Blackpool* and *HMNZS Taranaki*, she made the first Royal Naval visit to Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean in November. The ships were on their way from Singapore to Fremantle for the Empire games.



HMS Cavalier *on her sea trials, December 1944*

On 8 December 1962 armed rebellion against the formation of Malaysia broke out in Brunei, Sarawak and North Borneo. An advance party of 42 Commando was flown from Singapore to Brunei on 9 December. *Cavalier*, returning from her Australian cruise, was ordered to proceed to Singapore at high speed. She arrived on the 9th, embarked troops of the Queen's Own Highlanders, vehicles and stores, and sailed for Labuan. Her speedy turnaround earned congratulations from the Commander-in-Chief, Far East Fleet. On arrival off Brunei she acted as a communications HQ ship, and members of her company guarded 400 rebels taken prisoner and moved to Papan Island until the arrival of *HMS Tiger* with a Royal Marine detachment. On 31 January 1963, *Cavalier* was on SAR duties for the Royal tour of Australia; she visited Fiji in February and arrived in Auckland on the 20th. She made a return visit to Christmas Island in the Pacific in March and from 25 to 27 April visited La Libertad, El Salvador, the first visit to that country by a Royal Navy ship since December 1954. She spent a day at the US Naval Base, Rodman, in the Canal Zone and passed through the Panama Canal on 30 April. For the first two weeks in May she was on the Bahamas patrol, which had been set up in April to prevent anti-Castro elements using British territory. She arrived at Portsmouth on 26 May for reduction to Reserve.

*HMS Cavalier* remained in Reserve at Chatham, Devonport and Gibraltar until April 1966, when she began to prepare for service. She commissioned and sailed from Gibraltar for Portsmouth on 22 September, arriving on 26 September, and was operational with the Home Fleet on 4 November. In May 1967 she left for the Far East. She was originally routed via the Suez Canal but as this was closed on 7 June due to the 6-day war between Israel and Egypt, she was re-routed round the Cape. She was detached for her first Beira patrol early in July and again from 20 August to 10 September. On 21 September *Cavalier*

sailed to join *HMS Eagle* for a flying exercise off Gan, accompanying the carrier to Singapore, where she arrived on 6 October and joined the 1st FE Destroyer Squadron, Far East Fleet.

*HMS Cavalier* took part in a second flying exercise with *HMS Eagle* off Gan, which began on 28 January 1968, but was detached on 29th to go to the assistance of a Greek ship *Thebean* which had requested medical attention for the Chief Engineer. *Cavalier* took the sick man on board and made a high speed passage to Gan, rejoining the exercise later. A visit to Australia took place between February and March. *Cavalier* sailed from Australia on 27 March for the Beira station and took over the Beira Patrol, with *HMS Troubridge*, between 12 and 30 April. She arrived at Devonport on 30 May and joined the Western Fleet. In July she took part in an exercise in the Forth, and in September in 'Silver Tower', a major NATO exercise in the North Sea to demonstrate the ability of national forces to integrate into an effective defence organisation. *Cavalier* left Devonport on 21 October, visiting Gibraltar, Marseilles and Toulon and taking part in 'Eden Apple', another major NATO maritime exercise in the Mediterranean, during the first half of November. She visited Naples from 16 to 20 November and arrived in Devonport early in December.

On 3 January 1969 *Cavalier* sailed to take up Guardship duties at Gibraltar. She visited Lisbon from 23 to 27 January and in March began a refit at Gibraltar, which completed on 3 October. She left Gibraltar on 6 January 1970, arriving at Portsmouth on 9 January 1970. She commissioned at Portsmouth on 6 March for service in Home Waters and the Mediterranean. In her present form *Cavalier* is armed with three 4.5-in single barrel gun mountings, the Seacat anti-aircraft missile system and two 40mm Bofor guns. She is also fitted with Sonar and two Triple barrelled ahead throwing anti-submarine mortars. The Ship's Company comprises 12 Officers and 180 men.

## OUR CAPTAINS

'They be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.' Matthew Ch. XV v.14



Commander C. A. Snell, Royal Navy.

Commander C. A. Snell joined the Royal Navy as a Cadet in 1945. He is married and has three sons.

He was First Lieutenant of HMS Launceston Castle in 1957, and from there went to HMS Diligence—a base for newly constructed Coastal Mineweepers. He then became First Lieutenant of HMS Carysfort (a sister ship of Cavalier) on a Commission in the Far East.

On returning to the United Kingdom he became Commanding Officer of HMS Russell, a Frigate employed on Fishery Protection duties, and in 1963 joined HMS Ganges (the Royal Navy's largest New Entry Training Establishment), later becoming the Training Commander. After leaving Ganges he qualified at the Joint Services Staff College before becoming executive officer of HMS Devonshire. On returning from another visit to the Far East in 1968 he worked at the Ministry of Defence in London for almost a year before taking command of HMS Cavalier in October 1969. He left the ship in July 1971 to take up an appointment at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's Staff College in Rome.



Commander P. M. Goddard, Royal Navy.

Commander Goddard joined the Royal Navy in 1955 direct from Selhurst Grammar School and has spent most of his career with the Fleet Air Arm.

After serving in the training aircraft carrier HMS Ocean, he trained as an Observer in Firefly and Sea Prince aircraft before serving in 849 Squadron (Airborne Early Warning) between 1956 and 1959, embarked in HMS Eagle and HMS Albion.

In 1960 Commander Goddard trained in Venom and Vixen All Weather Fighter aircraft and embarked in HMS Victorious and HMS Hermes before going to the United States on exchange with the US Navy flying the Phantom aircraft. He spent two years at NAS Miramar, California before returning to take up an appointment as the First Lieutenant of the Type 14 Frigate HMS Grafton in 1965.

Commander Goddard then returned to flying duties and in 1968 was appointed as the Senior Observer in the Intensive Flying Trials Unit formed by the Royal Navy on its adoption of the Phantom aircraft.

In 1969 he was the planner for the Royal Navy team in the Transatlantic Air Race and flew in the winning Phantom aircraft. Later that year he was appointed as Senior Observer of 892 Squadron (Phantoms) embarked in HMS Ark Royal.

In January 1971 he was appointed as Officer-in-Charge of the Junior Officers' Air Course at RNAS Yeovilton before assuming Command of HMS Cavalier on the 12th July 1971.

Married, with four sons, Commander Goddard lives in New Romney, Kent.

# FOREWORD

At our commissioning ceremony I made two points. Firstly, although our ship was of mature years she had a well tried machinery outfit; secondly, our weapons systems were relatively uncomplicated. In other words we stood a chance of being in the right place at the right time and fit to do a good job.

Our commitments ranged from Meet the Navy, Rescue Destroyer for *Ark Royal*, Strike Fleet Exercises, Navy Days, Mediterranean Fleet Exercises, Fishery Protection Patrols and surveillance of the Russian Fleet to transporting ex-concentration camp victims to a reunion in Alderney. All of these we met on time and never once had to retire hurt. But in addition we had twice been runners-up in the Western Fleet AA competition, we had had our 'once in a career' salvage operation in pretty grim conditions, we had beaten our only contender to prove *Cavalier* the fastest escort in the Fleet and we had won the small bore competition.

In fact *Cavalier* had gained a reputation which was envied and respected throughout the Fleet. What is more we had fun doing it. I thank every one of you for your efforts, you have every right to be proud of your achievements as the last of the Destroyer men.

Alan Snell

## WHERE WE WENT The Travels of the Laughing Cavaliers

1970			SEPT.	1st - 4th	Portland (Weapon Training)
<b>APRIL/MAY</b>		Portland Work-up.		4th - 7th	Plymouth (Mayflower)
<b>MAY</b>	8th	22nd		7th - 18th	With <i>Ark Royal</i> in Bristol Channel (includes salvage of <i>St Brandon</i> )
	24th	27th		1 8th - 26th	Exercise <b>NORTHERN WEDDING</b>
	27th	30th		28th - 1st Oct.	Oslo
	30th	31st		<b>OCT.</b>	1st - 3rd
					On passage to Chatham (FOFWF embarked)
<b>JUNE</b>	1st	3rd		3rd 15th	Chatham (AMP)
	3rd	7th		16th	Portland (Families' Day)
	8th			17th 19th	Portland
	11th	15th		21st 24th	Clyde (COQC Running)
	15th	26th		24th 26th	Greenock
	26th	28th		26th 30th	Sub-Lieutenant's Navigational Training
	29th	30th		30th 2nd Nov.	Portland
<b>JULY</b>	1st	8th		<b>NOV.</b>	2nd 6th
	9th				Portland (Weapon Training)
	10th	17th Aug.		6th 9th	Portland
				9th 11th	Portland (Weapon Training)
<b>AUG.</b>	17th			12th	Portland
	18th			13th	8th Dec. Chatham (Leave and AMP)
	21st	26th		<b>DEC.</b>	11th 19th
	29th	1st Sep.			At Gibraltar (Guardship)
				21st	11th Jan. Malta.



<b>1971</b>			<b>SEPT</b>	6th - 20th	Gibraltar (Guard Ship)	
<b>JAN.</b>	12th - 15th	Cagliari		24th - 28th	Piraeus	
	17th - 30th	Gibraltar (Inspection)		28th - 30th	Scenic tour of Greek Islands en route to Rhodes.	
<b>FEB.</b>	2nd	Portsmouth (De-Ammunition)		30th - 4th Oct.	Rhodes	
	4th - 18th Mar.	Chatham (DED)	<b>OCT.</b>	5th - 10th	Souda Bay	
<b>MARCH</b>	18th - 22nd	Portsmouth (Ammunition)		10th - 18th	Exercise DEEP FURROW	
	22nd - 24th	Portland (Weapon Training)		22nd - 2nd Nov.	Gibraltar (Guardship and Docking)	
	25th - 29th	Portsmouth	<b>NOV.</b>	5th	29th	Chatham (Leave and AMP)
	29th - 1st April	Trials in Western Approaches		29th	8th Dec.	Exercise HIGHWOOD
<b>APRIL</b>	2nd - 19th	Portsmouth (Easter Leave and AMP)	<b>DEC.</b>	8th	1 2th	Clyde (Trials)
	19th - 22nd	Portland (Weapon Training)		14th		Portland (Weapon Training)
	23rd - 26th	Portsmouth		16th	24th Jan.	Chatham (Leave and AMP)
	27th - 28th	Llandudno	<b>1972</b>			
	29th - 3rd May	Liverpool (Battle of the Atlantic Ceremony) FO Plymouth Embarked.	<b>JAN.</b>	25th - 28th	Portland (Weapon Training)	
<b>MAY</b>	3rd - 13th	Exercise NELSON'S TOUCH		29th - 3rd Feb.	Cardiff (MTN)	
	14th - 19th	Copenhagen	<b>FEB.</b>	4th - 9th	Birkenhead (MTN)	
	21st - 1st June	Chatham (AMP)		11th - 18th	Chatham (essential repairs)	
<b>JUNE</b>	2nd - 7th	Belfast (MTN)		19th - 25th	London (MTN)	
	8th - 14th	Aberdeen (MTN)		25th	Passage to Chatham (Families Day)	
	14th - 18th	Fish Patrol		26th - 21st Mar.	Chatham (AMP)	
	18th - 19th	Reykjavik	<b>MARCH</b>	22nd - 24th	Portland (Weapon Training)	
	19th - 22nd	Fish Patrol		27th	Gibraltar	
	22nd - 23rd	Akureyri		30th - 8th April	Malta	
	23rd - 26th	Fish Patrol	<b>APRIL</b>	8th - 10th	On passage to Aegean Sea	
	26th - 27th	Akureyri		10th - 20th	Exercise EASY LIFE	
	27th - 2nd July	Surveillance Operations		20th - 22nd	Athens	
<b>JULY</b>	2nd	Honninsvaag		24th - 28th	Livorno	
	5th	Peterhead	<b>MAY</b>	1st - 8th	Gibraltar (Guardship)	
	6th	Great Race with <i>Rapid</i>		12th - 30th	Chatham (Leave)	
	6th - 7th	Rosyth	<b>JUNE</b>	1st - 6th	Sunderland	
	9th - 17th Aug.	Chatham (AMP and Leave)		7th - 17th	With <i>Ark Royal</i> and at Portsmouth	
<b>AUG.</b>	17th - 18th	On passage to Guernsey		17th - 21st	Chatham (Official visit)	
	18th	Lt Governor of Guernsey's visit to Alderney		22nd - 29th	Rotterdam	
	20th - 23rd	Portsmouth		30th - 4th July	Portsmouth	
	23rd - 25th	Portland (Weapon Training)	<b>JULY</b>	6th	Paying Off Ceremony in Chatham	
	26th - 2nd Sept.	Chatham (Navy days)				

## OUR COMMISSIONING 6th March 1970

My many remarks on the theme 'it's not as bright as/big as/noisy as/rough as it used to be' have led to the inevitable invitation from the Editor (who has only been with the ship half a dog watch) to produce a short article (not more than 10,000 words he says) about Commissioning Day.

Do you remember the frantic rush to be ready, with the last phase draft arriving the previous day, and painting the iron deck by electric light thursday evening? Do you remember Rear-Admiral Parker, our principal guest, commenting with a straight face that he once commissioned a ship which was only painted on one side, but he was sure *Cavalier* was painted on both sides?

The Commissioning Ceremony took place at South Railway Jetty in Pompey, and the service was conducted by the then



*The Commissioning.*



Chaplain of the Fleet, the Venerable Archdeacon A. W. M. Weekes. The Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain and the Principal Chaplain Free Churches also attended. Among the other guests were three former Captains of *Cavalier*.

The ceremony began in bright sunlight with families and guests shedding their overcoats and enjoying the warmth. While Commander Snell was reading the Commissioning Warrant the clouds were piling up over Portsdown Hill, and by the time we finished singing the National Anthem it was starting to snow!

Reading through the printed Order of Service in March 1972 one notices how many names and faces have changed in two years, but during those two years these many different names have achieved more than we ever dared hope at the time. The ship has certainly lived up to Commander Snell's remark that he was determined that *Cavalier* should be a ship that could be relied upon more than any other to be in the right place at the right time.

Charles Freeman.