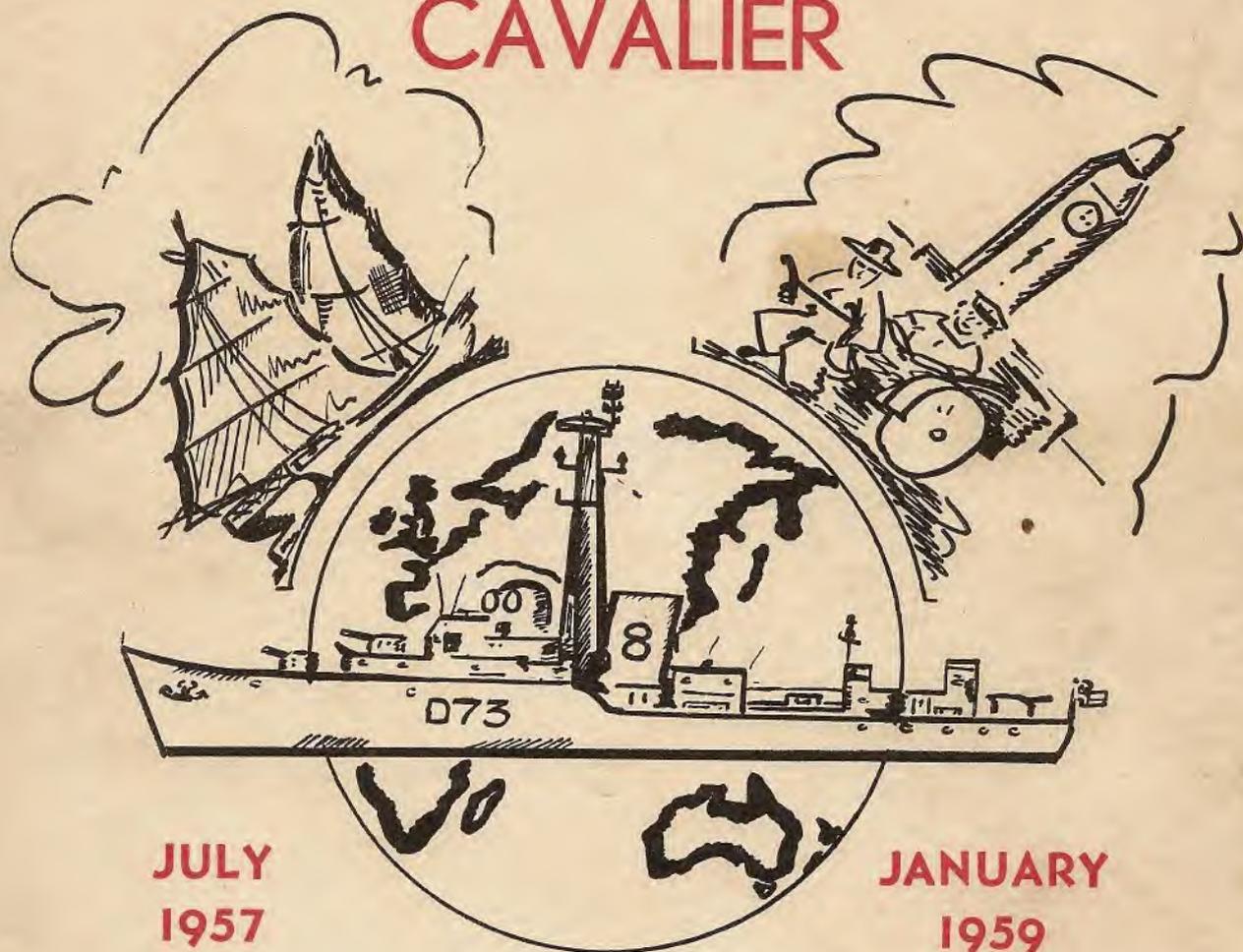


H. M. S. CAVALIER



JULY
1957

JANUARY
1959

FAR EAST STATION



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THE
COMMISSION
OF
H.M.S. CAVALIER
ON THE
FAR EAST STATION

JULY 1957 - JANUARY 1959

LEST WE FORGET



From many sources, service and civilian, I have heard CAVALIER spoken about as a friendly ship and a quiet ship, and one that gets things done well. As a Team we should be proud of that; as individuals now about to go our various ways, we should aim to foster these qualities wherever we go. They are particularly important in ships, which travel far and wide home and abroad, and meet many people of all races and creeds, many of whom are living under appalling conditions. Happy efficiency and friendship do much to help them through life, and to impress them with how life can and should be lived. I hope too, that WE have learned much from life on this Station. Not only of travel interest (of which we have had our full share), but also from the thousands of very poor and near destitute folk we have seen and met, who work so hard for so very little, and yet are still cheerful, smiling and very grateful for small mercies.

Nearly all of us tend to look back on a good Commission saying "best ship I ever served in", and unconsciously or deliberately feel or say that no future ship could be so good. This doesn't help New Commissions very much. This has been a good Commission, and I hope that all of us will go to our next jobs determined to make them as good if not better. If we do that,

taking the friendly and efficient spirit of this ship with us, then we will do much to ensure other efficient and happy ships in the service.

It is my regret that I was not able to see more of your families before we left England. There is a lonely life, with many problems and worries which we must try to understand and help. To them, I would point out that life away from home in the crowded conditions onboard ship is not all tiger beer and dance halls, though it may be ---- is -- interesting and exciting at times. Love and cheerful understanding from those at home are the real and essential tonics needed by those of us who are away. May I say thank you very much to those who have given so much in this respect during our Commission.

This HAS been "the best ship I ever served in", and as good a crowd of chaps with whom it has been my privilege to serve—so far—and I for one sincerely hope we shall meet up again. Thank you for your splendid spirit and co-operation, which has earned us the Squadron Trophy and the rightful name (in one newspaper at least) of the Laughing Cavaliers.

God bless you, and good fortune to you, your families and your friends.

TRAVELOGUE

It seems a far cry now back to that showery afternoon in July 1957 when we met for the first time. Most of us had not been east of Suez before and during the weeks and months that have followed we have spent much of our time speculating: usually on the lines, when are we going to such and such a place and what will it lie like when we get there.

Now, eighteen months and sixty three thousand miles later, we are, I think, wiser men for having been given the chance, to steam more miles, and see more places than any Destroyer has done on the Far East station for many a year. There is still speculation about those baths in Japan, but that only wets our appetite for another commission in the East.

Time has always gone quickly none more so than the first three months. Trials, a hurriedly snatched weeks leave from Portsmouth, more trials, and a rough night in the Bay, and then the 31st August found us having our last look at the U.K. There followed the pleasures of Gib, that most of us know so well, and the more doubtful pleasures of Malta which most of wish we didn't know so well. Four weeks of these Maltese games almost killed us. but October 9th found us once more making tracks Eastwards.

The Suez Canal (12th-13th October), Aden (18th October and Trincomalee (26th October), followed each other all too quickly and on October 31st we arrived, for the first time, in Singapore. This, for most of us, meant the end of the first part of the commission, at last we had arrived where we were meant to be, and could settle down to enjoy the many pleasures of the East.

Enjoy the pleasures of the East—most certainly—but settle down to do it—NO. "At the rush Cavalier" we have come to be known on the station, and after only one week in Singapore we were off on the first of our many uneconomical jaunts.

With Captain (D) giving us a good run around on route, we arrived in Sandakan on November 11th and landed our new found friends from the South Wales Borderers to whom we had given passage.

Back to Singapore, a week of strong Liaison with the F.S. "La Confiance" and then a return to Sandakan to fetch our Soldier friends. We enjoyed our two visits to Sandakan. Most of Somerset Maugham's stories could well have been written about this place.

Singapore again for a few hours and then at last we were bound, with H.M.S. Newcastle in company, for our 'Island in the Sun' Hong-Kong.

Arriving on December 12th we were in Hong-Kong until January 31st. Enough said, I feel, we had discovered that 'Honkers' is all it is made out to be, and that an evening down 'Wanchai' is worth five or six anywhere else.

Hong-Kong should always be followed by a good long rest, for us it wasn't, and Saigon was just a continuation of life in Hong-Kong. Our visit there can best be described by the phrase, 'many parties for the price of one hangover'. It did, however, give us considerable pleasure to be in Company with C in C for the first, and I may add, the only time this commission.

Singapore for two days and then a short cruise to North Borneo. Kudat and Jesselton were the two places visited, and both provided a large number of different entertainments and activities, not many of us who attended the race meeting in Jesselton will soon forget it.

A sporting weekend in Singapore and then 'Belsen'. This is the most appropriate name for the Fleet concentration and a week of weapon training which took place off Pulau Tioman (24th-28th February I. Early on the morning of the 1st March. 0345 to be exact, the Eighth D.S. were detached to proceed to Australia.

This for us was the start of the best three months of our lives. Until May 21st when we returned to Hong-Kong we roamed the Southern Seas visiting places which are to most Englishmen only parts of a dream. First it was Fremantle, the gateway to Australia, and it's beautiful parent city of Perth. We shared Fremantle with our Squadron, and later the Australian Carrier 'Melbourne' and her attendant frigate. On leaving, however, they all went away to the North while we carried on to Melbourne (22nd-26th March), Hobart (27th-29th March), and Auckland (2nd-9th. April). To do proper justice to our visits to these places one would need a magazine for each. This of course is impossible, and suffice to say that we left each very sad at doing so, and hoping that one day we may get a chance to return. We also like to think that the inhabitants of these great places liked us too, and were just as sad to see us go as we were to leave.

Our visit to Suva, capital of the Fiji Islands, could easily have come as an anti-climax after the previous months activities. The fact that it didn't says much for the friendliness of the inhabitants and the hospitality they showed us. The fact that it rained continually throughout our visit didn't seem to make very much difference. On leaving Suva we spent a splendid forenoon with King Neptune, and crossing the Date Line had us baffled for weeks.

Our time with the Grapple Squadron at Christmas Island is described elsewhere in this journal. It was a great experience, which I think we are all glad to have had the opportunity to take part in.

Christmas Island to Hong-Kong is a long haul, over six thousand miles, and we spent nineteen days doing it. For most of the time H.M.S. Ulysses was in company which made a pleasant change after such a long while by ourselves. The day we spent in Ocean Island and the half day in Manus also made welcome and much enjoyed breaks. The party given for the Ship's company in Ocean Island ranks as one of the better ones of the commission.

A rather stormbound week in Hong-Kong was followed by a trip to Singapore with the Fleet, exercise Showboat which was great fun, and the rather dismal prospect of exercise Jet.

