

' *Primus Video* '

or

' *I have an oil fired TV Set* '

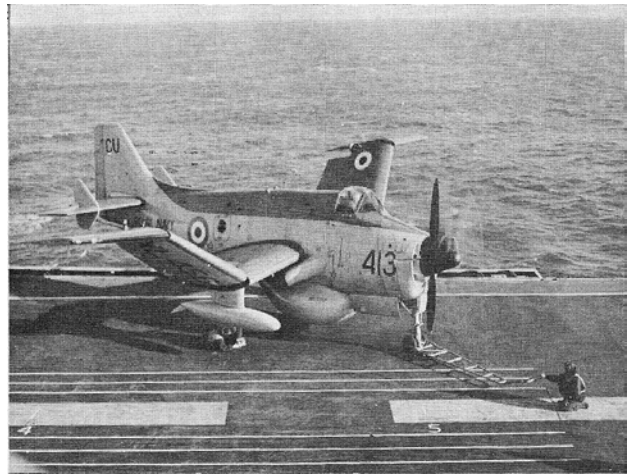
Readers of this slim volume will have read of where *CENTAUR* went and what she did, so what about the part played by that pot-bellied, multi-purpose aircraft, the Gannet AEW Mark III, and their Masters — the BEES?

The Gannet, in spite of its appearance, is not a flying washing-machine. It is our job — or role, if you fancy aerobatics — to patrol a "barrier", spot low flying aircraft and report them to a startled ADR, and then to holler for a Vixen, if any happen to be around. A stream of curt orders makes your fighter trundle off in the right direction, a gnat-like voice says "Judy!", and before you can unwrap your second boiled sweet there's another in the bag. Fast or slow, they are all grist to the mill — "Shacks", "Willie Fudds", "Fords", "Phantoms", and the occasional innocent Fokker — we've had them all. In addition, we don't turn up our noses to the odd shipping strike.

A nice placid life, you might say; coffee and sandwiches in the back seat; the driver flicking orange peel all over the place while contemplating the infinite up front? Not quite so, but we do have our fair share of amusement. The radar, or "telly" is a complex piece of equipment which even our creamy-smooth deck landings can cause to hiccup and send volts and amps sulking into dark corners. The engine dislikes being ignored and has been known to wet itself mightily right in front of everybody, for no apparent reason, and has to be led away to the hangar for changing. The first credit for carrying out the task as successfully as we have goes without saying to the ground crews under the AEO and CAA. We are only a Flight, not a Squadron, so their numbers are limited.

Our overall impression of the Commission is — "splintery". While we have been held together on board for various dramas, such as the *Lakonia* incident and the landings at Dar-es-salaam, it seems that for large periods small portions of the Flight have been dashing off in different directions carrying out special tasks. For example, ending two aircraft to an R.A.F. station at an hour's notice, while the associated ground party was sent tearing up the Malay peninsula by chopper, plane, bus and jeep.

Our path must be marked by milestones of unclaimed laundry'. In Singapore the Flight personnel lived in Naval barracks, Army barracks and R.A.F. accommodation with teams converging to work each morning from all points of the compass. Small teams have been sent to *Ark Royal*, Tengah and Kai Tak. At Kai Tak we were trapped by a typhoon for three days and only escaped starvation by eating the R.A.F. inhabitants' Christmas Dinner which was dragged out of the store. As we go to print there is more talk of further "splintering". However, it is both a challenge and a change for us.



... not a flying washing machine ...

Operationally, our greatest fulfilment must have been the watch we kept over the Malacca Strait in the latter half of 1964. This was pure AEW and carried out mostly at night. The fact that little happened is probably the greatest compliment that our presence could merit. Our job is to keep the peace, not go looking for trouble. The numerous and varied tasks also included anti-smuggling patrols, low flying over the jungle, parachuting goodies to the Army, and those innumerable long-distance mail runs. Ground observers are sometimes worried at the sight of a Gannet buzzing past with a stationary propeller, not knowing that there is another fan revolving in almost the same spot. We have become offensive enough to fly through the fiercest opposition, cast toilet-rolls at the enemy, and escape unscathed under the pursuing fighters. One high spot was a hitch up in Nairobi from whence we could fly over the plains and do interceptions with elephants, carefully avoiding the taller giraffes and Liz Taylor's safari wagons. On the debit side, an aircraft was lost while searching for another downed aircraft. Happily the crew were soon recovered from their textbook ditching, having little time to go through their dinghy packs for souvenirs. Another one made a more spec-



... contemplating the infinite up front ...

tacular splash after a night bounce and the crew was picked up by HMAS *Vampire* after a small private firework display.

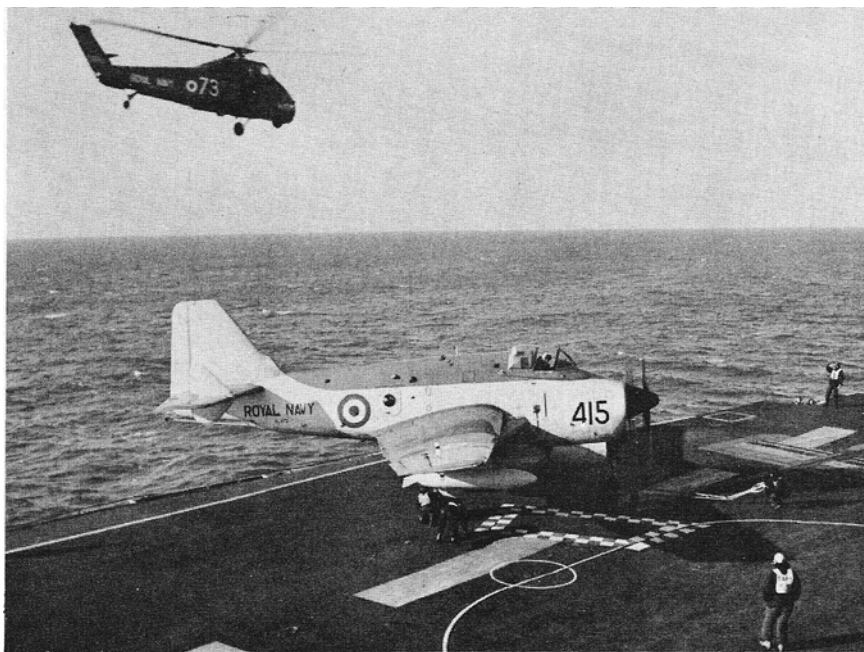
Distinguished passengers have been numerous and have included, naturally, the Captain and others of the ship's hierarchy, and occasionally the odd Admiral. There have always been more volunteers to fly than seats available but our own maintainers have occasionally gone up to admire their handiwork. Compassionate cases have had to be landed and even S.O. (Cash) with the ship's company pay. An Admiralty psychiatrist, who was investigating aircrew recruitment, was treated to a ride down the catapult and that must have been worth twenty interviews.

Long lists of names and places are recorded elsewhere and reminiscences are too numerous to print here. Many faces have come and gone over the past eighteen months, but 849 goes on for ever. We have had the U.S.N. with us throughout this trip, their numbers increased recently from one to two. They have added some colour to the place and just a hint of the Confederacy. Our wheels have touched down on twenty-two different airfields so far, never missing the long straight concrete bit, people have fallen into monsoon drains whenever they have been available, a dozen or so have represented the ship at various sports, and our Senior Rates have proved that a Pusser's cutter is much tougher than an R.A.F. launch when coming alongside each other.

Now we are about to disband, for Bees must hibernate in the winter in U.K., but a fresh swarm will rise next year to be on hand for the mating season.



.. distinguished passengers ... "



... up the Malay peninsula by chopper, plane ... "

81 Squadron

Commanding Officers

Lieutenant Commander J. R. T. BLUETT

Lieutenant Commander G. A. BAGNALL

Lieutenant Commanders

J. D. TETLEY

A. G. CLARIDGE

D. H. JACoBS

J. P. GUNNING

Lieutenants

J. H. WEBSTER
J. McCORMICK
D. S. MALLOWCK
J. H. BREWER

A. C. TABER
J. M. STEWART
A. B. HORTIN
G. J. P. WOOD

R. B. M. WILKINS
N. G. TRUTER
V. R. LITTLEWOOD
R. G. SAKER

R. F. RYAN
J. P. MOODY
R. H. J. GENT
H. C. FOSTER

B. A. NAYLOR
A. W. ELLIS
J. CARRICK
A. K. C. NG

Sub-Lieutenants

A. B. BIRD
P. J. CoOMBES
A. D. HENDERSON

G. N. F. BROUGHTON
G. E. TURPIN
R. G. L. PALMES

J. ZWOZNY
M. FRETWELL
P. KINGSTON

J. R. CORKE
D. F. MACDONALD
R. WARREN

J. M. BELL
N. J. J. COCKS

Chief Petty Officers

Andrews, K.
Barnett, W. A. L.
Brooker, B. F. E.
Bolam, P.
Butterfield, R. J.
Bradley, D. A.

Collette, M. J.
Cresswell, J.
Clarke, J.
Freeman, C. J. A. R.
Hardman, D. J.
Hoare, A.

Jones, M. T.
Johnson, G. E.
Joyce, T.
Jennings, A. W.
Mooney, W. H.
Pritchard, R. A.

Puckey, D.
Swinny, E.
Stevens, P. J.
Spragg, A. G.
Smith, C. D.
Salt, F. C.

Turnbull, W.
Uwins, J. L.
Williams, S. R.
Wyatt, D. B.
Withers, R. A.

Petty Officers

Allen, L. G.
Armitage, G. H.
Buchanan, J. R.
Boyllette, R. E.
Bostock, J. E.
Burgoyne, J.
Beer, H.
Beardshaw, D. J.
Crowther, H. D.

Crouch-Baker, E. S.
Davies, J. C.
Deere, T. K.
Evans, E. J.
Farthing, C. R. S.
Gascoyne, R.
Gooding, J. D.
Graham, W. L.

Hough, A.
Hetherman, P. A.
Hobbs, P. A.
Hillyer, D.
Hood, J. E.
Humphries, R.
Kearney, G.
Kearney, J. J.

Larcombe, C. B. J.
Leech, G. E.
McAndrew, R.
Monk, R. J.
Matthews, P. E. J.
Moore, P. N.
Nicholson, T. W.
Pearson, K.

Parker, J.
Pudge, N.
Robertson, C. L.
Semper, S. A. F.
Sweet, D. J.
Sherratt, J.
Thomas, P.
Weightman, B. E.

Leading Rates

Armitage, I. B.
Anderson, J. B. W.
Anderson, M. F.
Aitken, J. G.
Bunn, I. S.
Bucknole, R. W.
Beadle, R. O.
Banks, D. C.
Ball, C. F.

Bird, A. J.
Banner, W. A.
Barber, D.
Britton, A. R.
Cowroy, R. F.
Collins, J.
Cusworth, G. A.
Cree, R.
Friggens, P.

Filer, H. F.
Granam, W. L.
Garvin, T. A.
H umpleby, G.
Hanson, A.
Holden, T.
Hitchcock, D. N.
Hewitt, J. B.
Ingram, F. J.

Joyce, D. H.
Kitchener, C. A.
Lander, R. J.
Lister, T. L.
Larcombe, C.
Maguire, D. J.
Pennington, G. E.
Raymond, M. D.
Randall, J.

Smedley, M. K.
Sturrock, S. A.
Trivett, J. L.
Wragg, P. J.
Wear, J. J.
Woods, N. D.
Widdowson, F. W.
Wilson, T. E.
Yeoman, H. B.

Junior Rates

Abbott, T. A.
Antrobus, B.
Bowley, R. J. S.
Bye, D. J.
Barker, R. V.
Bending, C. G.
Baxter, R.
Burns, T.
Bonner, M. K.
Benefield, J. L. S.
Bone, D. M. L.
Barnes, G.
Curling, C. J.
Charity, A. N.
Clarke, B.
Cole, B.
Campion, M.
Commons, B. L.
Courtenay, S. F.
Colebourne, W. D.

Cosford, P. F.
Cross, T. J.
Crumley, W. D.
Day, R. W. J.
Day, J. M.
Drew, A. G. T.
Douglas, A. F.
Davis, R. F.
Dunthorne, K. F.
Downes, T. R.
Edwards, M. J.
Easterling, G. M.
Fisher, T. W.
Fitzsimons, T. P.
Falcus, G.
Fell, G. F.
Finn, M. S.
Gathercole, J. A.
George, B. R.
Greensmith, G. E.

Gallagher, C. E.
Hatton, R.
Hooks, W. H.
Handley, W. A.
Hanlon, R. J.
Henshall, A. J.
Hopkins, B. H.
Handley, M.
Higginson, G. F.
Jennings, M. R.
Jeannette, A. S.
Jones, R.
Johnson, B. J.
James, D. A.
Keech, M. J.
Lane, H.
Le Moignan, P. H.
Leveridge, N. M.
Luff, C. W. F.
Lyons, R. J.

Moffatt, B.
Merrett, R. F.
Morgan, V. C.
McConnell, B. G.
McKenzie, J. A.
Mallett, P. J.
Macalister, D. J.
Naylor, J. A.
Nicholson, R. W.
Oldacre, P. J.
Peakman, A. J.
Pink, D. A.
Ramsay, P. D.
Rose, D. R.
Robson, H.
Smedley, D. W.
Splaine, D.
Smith, P. J.
Sutton, C.
Stone, T.

Slater, A. H.
Swash, G. R.
Sanders, P. J.
Tyzack, B.
Turton, A. J.
Tott, J. G. W.
Tolladay, A. D.
Trickey, R. C.
Tait, G. E. H.
Thorne, M. W. J.
Wright, M.
Weinling, R. P.
Willis, J. T.
Welch, J. L. W.
Wells, C. A.
Williams, K. G.
Wigglesworth, D.
Wallis, G. N. J.
Willis, J. A.
Weeks, R. J.

At Sea and Ashore with 815



815 Squadron were happily camping out at Aden with their six Wessex Mark I's awaiting their new mum, HMS *CENTAUR*, when the pace of a local war quickened. The Senior Observer flew to a conference in *CENTAUR*, whilst several aircrew volunteered to bicycle up the Dhala Road, and sort out the vintage blunderbuss-armed tribesmen, but the Transport Section adamantly refused to issue "Pusser's Reds" until they had been fully modified for desert warfare! The cabs were "Commandorised". The aircrew bullet-proofed and armed and Operation "Nutcracker" was under way.

The trouble centred on the Dhala Road some 40 miles North of Aden. Dissident tribesmen, probably Yemeni inspired, had repeatedly attacked convoys on this route from their hide-outs in the mountains of the Jebel Radfan, and the plain of the Wadi Misrah. However, retribution was about to be handed out by Middle East Command. The Federal Regular Army, supported by British tanks, scout cars, guns, and R.E. Units, was ordered to clear the Thumier area of the thousand or so armed tribesmen. The Army was to be

supported by Hunters from Khormaksar, and fed and transported by 815 Squadron Wessexes, and 26 Squadron Belvederes.

The Thumier area and the Wadis were not too difficult to clear, but as the tribesmen retreated to the Radfan Mountains the task got trickier. The normal routine was for the Hunters to soften up a rebel stronghold with extremely accurate rocket and cannon fire, followed by a mortar bombardment, and then, when enemy heads seemed to be scarce, Wessex flew in advance troops to capture the site, often a 5,000-foot peak, with rare turbulent air that demanded great caution, and the added worry of possible enemy fire. It was challenging and rewarding flying, but was quite straightforward compared to riding a camel – which many aircrew tried.

The take-over bid worked. The tribesmen were either amalgamated with the Radfan rocks, or forced out of business with retreat in disorder their only solution. Patrol outposts had been set up and supplied with stores, and on the 14th January, 1964, the Squadron withdrew from the campaign having flown 125 sorties,

and air-lifted 615 passengers and 76,000 lb. stores. The Army seemed very grateful, especially for the evacuation of the casualties, as the heat and the dust discouraged injured people from hanging on to their lives.

With dusty cabs and dry and dusty, throats and some fantastic dry and dusty Radfan tales, 815 Squadron embarked in HMS *CENTAUR* from Aden on 15th January. But *CENTAUR* was no anti-submarine carrier and 815 "Commando" Squadron was soon in action again, landing the mobile Marines in Dar-es-Salaam to sort out the Askaris who had seen fit to have a real fiesta with real blood. A very promising cabin gunner, Lieutenant Moody, scored a great victory with taxi driver Lieutenant-Commander Claridge, when he forced a mutineer to surrender from the hover (Askaris hover bottoms up!) and captured the mutineer's firearm from a nearby native who was showing it off to his womenfolk. On the first day 417 troops and 18,500 lb. of stores were ferried inshore.

814, in *Victorious*, relieved us on task and after a short stay in Mombasa we sailed to Singapore and disembarked to R.N.A.S. Sembawang with four aircraft, having lost two to 814 over a rather serious game of "Uckers", and on 20th February we "pinged" a submarine for the first time in three months.

We rejoined our ageing "Mama" on 1st March for "Shop Window" where many dignitaries and newspapers were indoctrinated on – "What's the use of an aircraft carrier without helicopters!" Wessex 306 over-indulged in Hong Kong and despite frantic winding and heaving on all the collectives sank quietly to her maker just after the O.R.I.

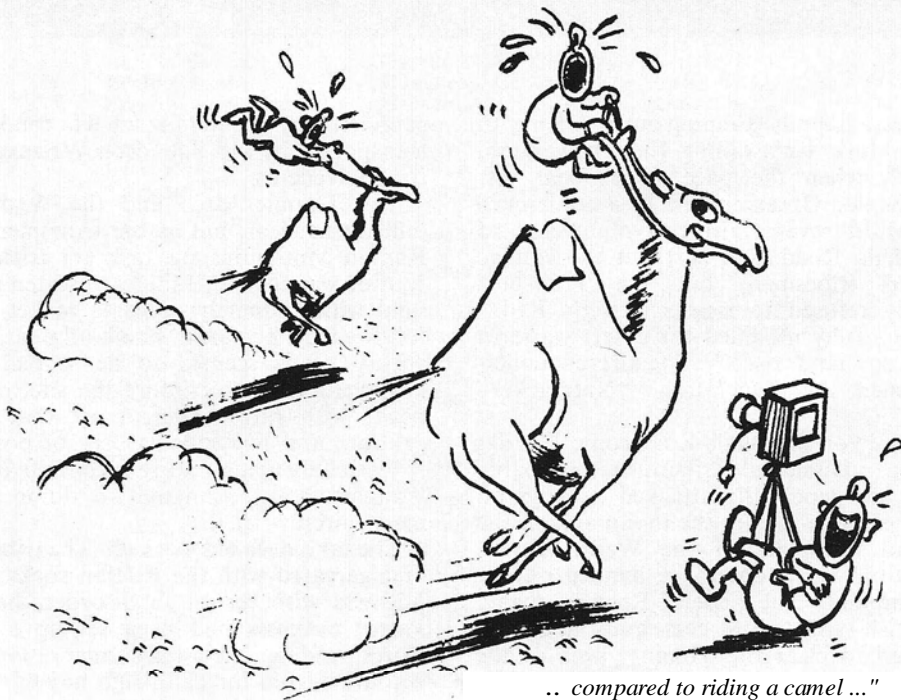
Radfan trouble erupted again in early May and 815 donned their warfaring clothes and chopper seats and established a base at Khormaksar on the 22nd May. The situation was similar to the January episodes but

better organised. So, full of buoyant morale, aircrew and maintenance crew got cracking with doing everything in their powers to help 45 Commando and the East Anglians wage this sniper's war. Pilots were checked out on how to make realistic bullet holes in Wessex fuselages, and observers on how to run an efficient home-delivery grocer's business around the local mountains. It is believed that no enemy bases were supplied with food, arms, and water but some of the "friendlies" looked mighty suspicious after months in the "Lost World" of the Yemen. The Belvederes of 26 Squadron took the full strain again on the 22nd June, when 815 dragged their desert-tanned bodies back on *CENTAUR* for a spot of duty free-ers, after 300 hours of operational flying, transporting 2,500 troops, 400,000 lb. stores and 25 casevacs hither and thither.

After a quick wash and kip on board, 815 took to the tri-shaws in Madras where they learned that the only way to win a tri-shaw race with your drunken "oppo" was to pedal the damn thing yourself! By the way, tri-shaw passengers are reminded there is a veritable fortune under the seat if you feel around!

Exercise "Buttercup" in July found us in a heyday of submarines and ships including one with its own semi-automatic ball suspender, and another with the Captain's airborne barge acting as a torpedo carrier. A good and very beneficial exercise this was. A day later a good Sarbe homing was carried out on a ditched Gannet trio despite protestations from the Sarbe operator that he could see two Wessexes fast disappearing over the horizon. Reciprocal? . . . my rotor!

During our August rest at Sembawang the Squadron was approached by the Malaysian Government concerning patrol duties, and after a long Far Eastern bargaining session we agreed not to charge £1,000 an hour for one helicopter flying a dawn and dusk patrol over the Straits and this was bitterly disappointing for



.. compared to riding a camel ..."

the Squadron Fund officer. To achieve a three-hour patrol we played at being big time jet jockeys, using drop tanks and a long shuddering take-off down the main runway of Sembawang – whichever that is! It was about this time we tried a sniff and snort hockey match with the Submariners; the side scoring a goal having to down a large Martini. Many goals were scored but few remember very much about it!

Martini was not Wessex 305's favourite drink for she choked herself to death close to CENTAUR during the September exercises. Splendid amusement for the fight deck was this, especially as the S.A.R. Whirlwind "Bloop bloop" did not understand why she should get airborne and so allowed a Squadron aircraft plenty of wet winching practice.

Pulau Tioman is a wonderful place for a banyan, but how inconvenient when you have waded through the surf with your case of champagne, set up a royal lunch on the tropical sand, sent out R.P.C.'s to the local monkeys and parrots, and are on the point of popping the first bottle, when some idiot sits on the ship's siren button. General recall? – nonsense we say, they only do that in wartime! But we were wrong.

September is a lovely month in Hong Kong and the things that happen in Hong Kong! Whatever you wanted, you only had to pay for it. Expensive? Only when the whole Squadron found something to celebrate every night of the week! We were very set on beating 892's record run from the top of the Mandarin to the top of the Hilton, but unfortunately Commander (Air) would not authorise the 200-yard flight.

Operational flying raised its glorious head in early November when some "body" sighted a possible unidentified submarine. A 36-hour search commenced, providing valuable round-the-clock operating experience but, alas, none of the contacts obtained materialised into a real live enemy submarine. During this patrol a Wessex was used as night planeguard, as no ships were available. That night coincided with a tropical storm, but we were grateful for the responsibility and felt quite confident that we could retrieve



... things that happen in Hong Kong . .

fellow aircrew from the sea at night, using normal night S.A.R. techniques.

The Wessex barter trade in Singapore had slumped and during our final visit in late November, we were quite happy to get rid of our smart machines for ones which were no longer fit to fly even Commandos in exchange for a dozen horse's necks or so. And also during this visit we poured our Senior Pilot aboard an airliner for the U.K. after convincing the Airport Authorities he was quite drunk enough to fly.

Five vintage Wessexes, three with 1,000 hours up, staggered on board on the 25th November bound for home, and our prime intention was to get them 100 per cent. fit for the disembarkation off Culdrose. It's a nice cruise that £380 job from Singapore to Portsmouth, with the ship's officers holding the odd party to entertain the passengers, and passengers encouraged to join



... holding the odd party ...'

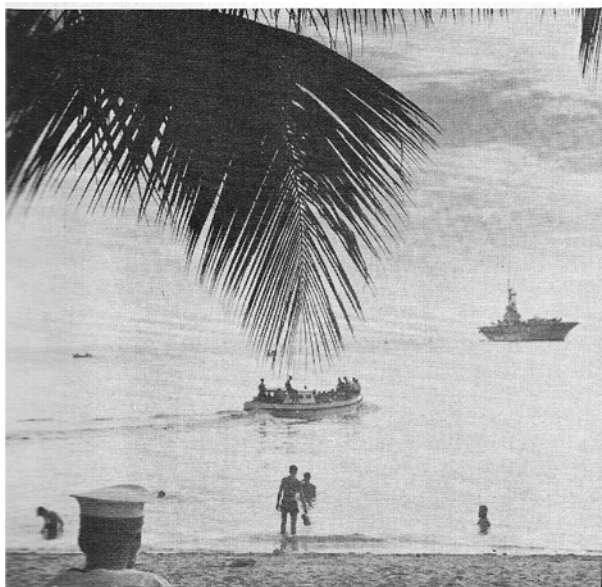
in all the activities like sunbathing, deck hockey, volley ball and even concert parties. The Squadron had a hilarious time rehearsing their act, but it all went differently on the night, and none of us understood what all the laughter was about in the audience.

Off the Lizard, the 20th December dawned rough and windy and many fingers were crossed to get the started, but even the aircraft had caught the Christmas spirit and we were soon safely home in the hands of the zealous customs.

Quite a year, 1964, and the Squadron felt that our integration with the CENTAUR system had been wholly successful and very rewarding. During the year we had flown 1,500 sorties and nearly 2,000 hours and lost four aircraft, the latter being a trifle expensive, but then it's amazing how depreciation de-values this to the reasonable thousands.

We should have liked to stick with CENTAUR during their programmed arduous campaign in the Mediterranean, but instead we have adopted another home-based aircraft carrier – HMS Lofoten. Now, in June, with six almost new aircraft we are bound for the Far Eastern Theatre (with comic turns thrown in, we trust) in HMS Ark Royal.

Seamen



Boat service



Paint ship

Executive Officers

Commander D. W. BAZALGETTE

Commander G. Y. TEMPLE

Lieutenant Commanders

G. A. SIMPSON
M. P. GRUBB
D. C. ALLEN

A. J. D. COXON
R. W. MOLAND

C. G. LE MESURIER
D. G. EDWARDS

J. P. A. JAMIESON
B. K. WHITECROSS

Lieutenants

R. C. BECK
J. E. CULLEY
P. E. GOODMAN
R. K. LEDSON

M. C. BRIDGMAN
T. H. S. HAIGH
P. D. R. MORIARTY
V. R. LITTLEWOOD

G. H. BRIDGER
M. H. HOARE
I. F. MASSIE
J. BUCKSEY

R. A. FISHER
J. D. G. CUNNINGHAM
J. P. R. SAUNT
W. G. BARKER

Sub-Lieutenants

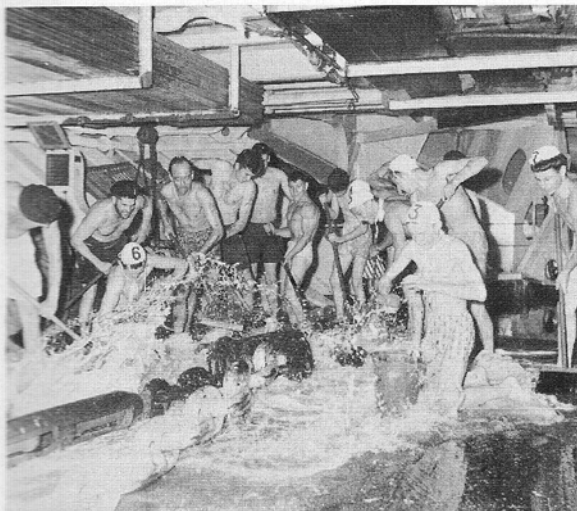
C. J. E. MONCKTON
J. HARRIS

R. D. BRUMHILL
J. P. BREWIN

E. G. FARMER
A. J. P. GODBER

J. M. DANIEL

Cable party push the oggin back



One of the ninety replenishments



Chief Petty Officers

Bowen, S. S. Becconsall, G. H. Corns, H. C. Scott, H. G. Robinson, W. H.

Petty Officers

Webster, G. D. Pepper, G. Jones, D. Piddington, D. A. Bowen, E. A.
Dean, R. P. Faiers, S. G. Smith, B. W. Tonkin, G. C. Watts, G. R.
McConnell, R. J. Tongs, J. E. Mitchelmore, A. J.

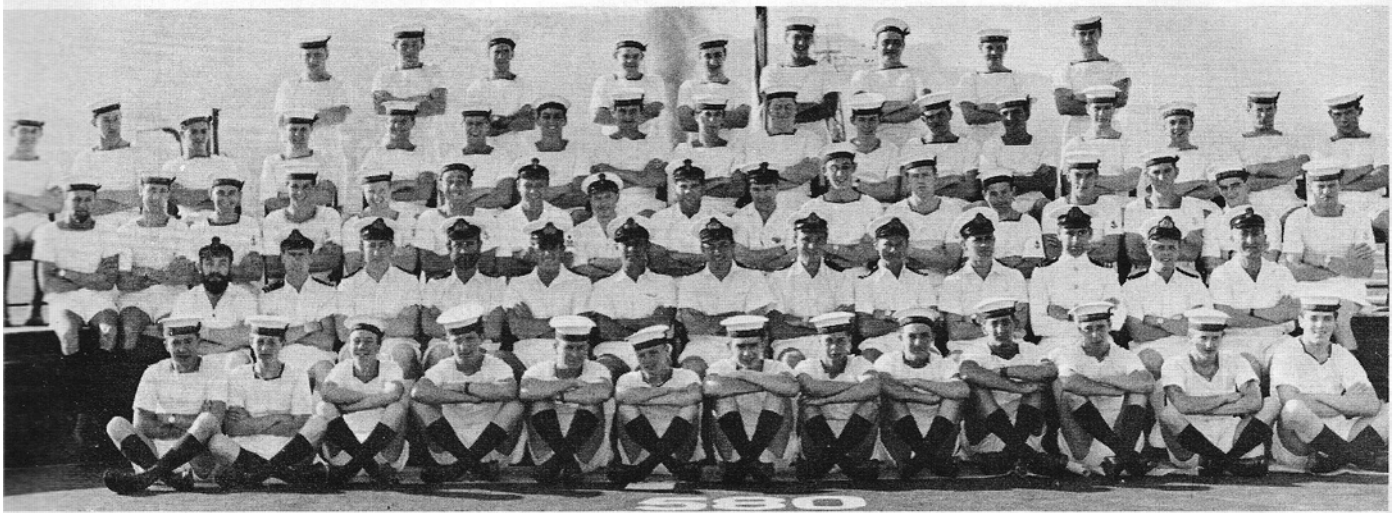
Leading Rates

Ross, F. Robson, R. Penn, G. A. Naylor, D. A. McCormick, P.
Kell, B. Hartley, E. A. Godfrey, A. E. Brown, J. W. Beck, M. C.
Wiggett, M. H. White, M. J. A. Simpson, J. M. Clarkson, R. J. Garrett, B. E.
Bowers, G. Revell, G. Sellars, R. A. Warren, J. S. Pudner, P.
Abbott, C. R. Bleaney, M. B. Mitchell, F. J. Vardy, J. T. Gage, F. W.H.
Witham, W. A. Hargreaves, L. McFall, R. J. Mitchell, G. D. Fleming, D. P.
De'ath, A. J. Doyle, T.

Junior Rates

Randall, P. J. Nurse, T. L. Latham, R. R. Hammel, M. Gray, C. R.
Elliott, J. C. Baxter, J. W. Atterton, D. A. Wilson, I. T. Joyner, G.
Glew, F. W. Wright, A. P. Stothard, K. Richards, B. Palfreyman, J.
Kats, R. A. Gibbons, B. H. Evans, R. E. Bell, H. S. Small, J. F.
Rimmer, K. W. Rutherford, K. Hague, J. Collie, J. C. C. Barmby, C.
Brown, J. G. Wilson, D. R. Allen, C. Allen, M. J. McCulloch, L. J.
Attale, P. Kenny, C. B. Bedwell, J. C. Stokes, G. Jackson, J. P.
Ellis, J. H. Williamson, T. I. Greenwood, J. Pamplin, J. H. Hathaway, D.
Drury, M. T. Barnett, T. Cattaneo, D. Hartley, K. R. Hooton, F.
Haydon, G. S. Hooper, A. J. Hopwood, D. J. Keating, M. A. Lalonde, F. L.
McQuarrie, D. Male, C. G. Seeker, R. J. Tutt, W. J. Wilesmith, D. A.
Neville, J. C. Taylor, J. Osborne, H. J. Davidge, F. G. Clark, D. W.
Searle, A. D. Walker, R. Critchley, B. E. Allen, B. J. Griffiths, R.
Hurren, N. J. Warren, R. A. McFarlane, D. R. Gram, R. E. Cooper, T. F. R.
Arrowsmith, J. V. Phillips, W. T. Shirley, T. C. Hepple, J. M. Hopkins, J.
Emmerson, R. P. Holmes, R. L. Page, R. S. Lennard, D. A. Hughes, A.
Behenna, A. Hay, R. T. Miller, H. S. Taylor, F. N. Roberts, J. H.
Round, F. Maggot, G. K. Webb, R. Beaton, J. A. Hutchinson, L.
Cairns, T. C. Tryhorn, R. N. Swanger, R. G. Hume, C. R. Parker, T. D.
Cork, J. A. Hardy, L. Tarver, G. J. Borez, J. R. Frazer, K. H.
Galliford, T. S. Jenkins, G. Churchill, R. G. Faulds, W. W. Oakford, R. J.
Colla, D. A. Thurstan, R. C. Saywell, C. D. Weir, W. Eva, R. E.
Norman, J. M. Holloway, F. G. Morrell, J. N. Newport, A. D. Robbins, S. J.
Spurle, W. E. Sullivan, L. Spencer, A. Antcliffe, M. K. Bolton, J. W.
Williams, B. J. Bunn, S. J. Barnard, B. J. Holtom, M. F. Walker, E.
Monteney, G. Hudson, P. A. Maggot, G. K. McKay, J. H. Bibby, P. D.
Small, V. R. Moorey, D. A. W. Baxter, B. Dewberry, R. Gardner, A. J.
Harris, M. D. Lee, T. C. Whitehead, A. W. Watkins, G. Brown, G. A.
Singleton, A. G. W. Rice, C. M. Somerville, J. J. Morash, D. L. McVicar, W.
McCleary, R. G. Smith, G. F. Dix, T. R. Simons, R. J. Smith, B. A.
Foster, J. D. Palmer, R. G. Allen, E. L. Lightfoot, R. E. Astle, P.
Irving, R. Campbell, J. P. Grant, B. Morse, N. E. Fulcher, G.
Shipman, B. J. Wardle, D. J. Baxter, K. L. Brand, J. J. Lloyd, R. D.
Braddick, G. J. Richards, P. I. Dawkins, P. G. Evans, R. Fieldhouse, G. H.
Fowler, M. G. Massey, J. M. Smith, H. D. Shaw, D. R. Brignall, J. B.
Davies, M. Statham, J. Couch, J.

965 Squadron



In the island, is a room tastefully decorated in duck-egg blue, bathed in restful ultra-violet light, with an air of hushed activity and intense concentration. The ship's time is 0957, ADR time is 0958, GMT is 0959, FLYCO time is 0943, and the right time is somewhere between all four. But whichever time takes your fancy, you can't be far wrong if you say it's "coffee time". Acknowledged as being the best "boat" in the ship, most branches have sampled the excellent brew at some time or other.

In between times, 965 Squadron, the R.P.s and Direction Officers, run the Operations Room and Aircraft Direction Room. It would be fair to say that these two compartments are the nerve centres of the ship at sea and especially during exercises. We do, of course, get added help from 892 and 849 Squadrons and, occasionally, FLYCO.

"With it" is an expression we used when we started in August '63 and now, just two years later, we still are with it, but we are more with the times and it's now "Gear" instead. Someone remarked, "You don't have to be mad to work here but it helps" — as the commission progressed we realised that "many a true word. . . ."

We do not have the most modern radar in the Fleet, or indeed, the most modern display facilities, but all in all, we've done everything we've been asked. We were not only an integral part of the Air Defence System of Malaysia, but the Fighter Protection and Control for the capital, Kuala Lumpur. We've taken part in exercises with the U.S. Fleets in the Mediterranean and the Pacific and with all the R.N. Carriers except *Hermes*.

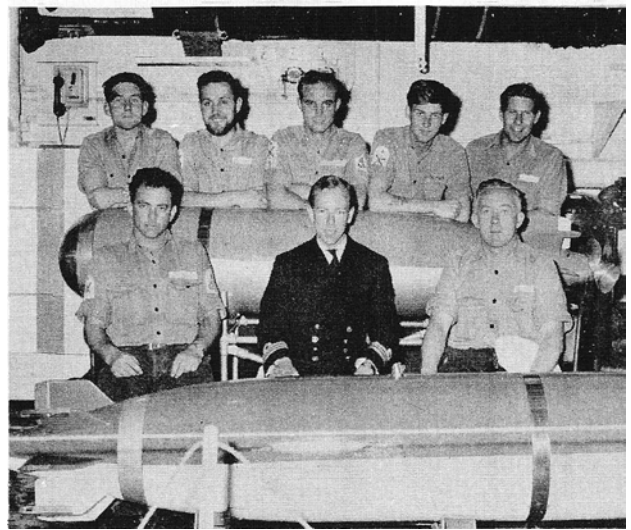
The fighter controllers have attempted 1,800 interceptions, achieving a moderate rate of success. In addition, four fishing vessels and one lighthouse have had rather nasty shocks from our fast pursuit groups. A sense of humour helps us think and, luckily, most members of the squadron have demonstrated that they've got one — to a greater or lesser degree. We all have our resident comedians, and a watch in the ADR has never been dull — on the other hand . . . "tense" is a word we only use just before "up coffee boat". We are also seamen and in this capacity we run the fo'castle, quarterdeck, boats, general ship administration, sport, recreation facilities, exped., security and the SRE. We RAS quite frequently too — which provides us troglodytes with a little sun and, more often than not, light entertaining relief in the form of "you know who."

TAS Party

The space aft of the door marked 3SA1, home of the TAS party, must be the envy of many other departments in the ship. During the commission, we have opened our portals to varied activities such as choir practices, concert rehearsals, model railway clubs, a Ladies Powder Room (supplying the french chalk ourselves), etc. We have acted as a depository for senior officers' furniture purchased abroad! We also have interests in the Sonar Control Room (Slop Room flat) where, by the way, your daily intake of calories can be boosted at the "Cafe La Londe" — charges very reasonable.

We boast of being a model of integration between "fish-heads" and "airy-fairies", for here we owe allegiance to both sides. Ship-wise we are responsible for supplying torpedoes to our Wessex squadron and to any small ships who feel they might like some. The actual servicing of the torpedoes belongs to AED, and to this end, we harbour a fugitive from that department. The whole system works fine, even when cleaning up for rounds!

During the first leg of the Commission, we did have our serious moments — due to the whims of President "Soek.", and we had the pleasure of preparing our products ready to fire in anger if the need arose. Our apologies should be recorded here to the patient watchkeepers in HQ1 who were doubtless driven a little further round the bend by the inadvertent ringing of the Torpedo Battery Alarm. Their frantic phone calls, expressing concern for our well-being, were answered in each case with the reassurance that we were alive and active, even if our torpedo batteries were very



much the opposite.

There may be a better reason, but we can't help feeling that 815 Squadron's refusal to join us for the second leg of the Commission surely must be due to our reluctance to let them play with our practice torpedoes. There was one spell last year when we relented, but we paid for our folly, and the TASO had to invent a plausible excuse to placate the wrath of the Armament Accounting Officers for the loss of two "fish".

We would ask a favour of the Petty Officers of 19 Mess, above us. Next time your mess begins to fill with blue smoke — DON'T PANIC. In all probability the Divers, and others concerned with the Gemini outboard motors, are probably doing "basin trials" in the fish tank — our newest acquisition.

In passing, may we record a vote of thanks to the Royal Marine Band, whose practice sessions, somewhere down below, have never failed to make us feel that "all is well with the world".

