



Etna's Central Crater.

MEDFOBA

One sunny afternoon as the ship lay in a placid Sliema Creek, a strange cargo was embarked. It comprised rucksacks, tents, ropes and the like things that proclaim the outdoor life. The account below is of some episodes in that varied life.

CYPRUS:- The first Medfoba camp was ideally situated at Boghaz. One could watch a strange world pass by. Shepherds straight from the pages of the Bible drove their flocks every morning to dip in the sea nearby. A camel train bound for the wastes of the Panhandle stopped to say goodmorning. After dinner on the first day, however, the party set out for the distant mountains. The walk across the sweltering plains was punctuated by visits to the villages. The villagers were friendly as they congregated at the communal water pumps. The first evening the foothills were reached. Next morning a herd of goats, lithe as greyhounds, was driven among bodies as they lay huddled in their sleeping bags. That day the destination, lofty Kantara Castle, was reached. The Dainty party were not the first Englishmen to reach the castle. Richard Coeur de Lion had been there in the twelfth century, but there were no regrets in being so late.

ETNA:- When the ship went to Augusta for the regatta the Medfoba team set out for Etna. A walk into the biting wind was made difficult by the inability to find a firm foothold in the ashen surface. It were as if one were taking one step forward and two back. The party jester suggested that we walk backwards to the top. The final ascent, with the ground becoming warmer with every step, revealed the smoky multicoloured crater below. There had been much more to it than scaling a volcanic peak just for a lungful of smoke. We had reached the last inch of its 10,739 feet and looked forward to our next triumph .

CORTINA:- A Medfoba party stepped over the gangway at Trieste into a waiting bus. The destination was Cortina, fashionable resort in the Dolomites. The first few days were spent scrambling in the wooded hills. At sunrise on the final day the party faced a typical Dolomite peak, rising in fantastic shape and streaked with veins of vivid colourings. The way to the summit was well marked yet fairly strenuous. For a second time in the commission a party from Dainty had reached 10,000 feet.

TO VENICE - BY WHALER- As the ship's company prepared for Divisions at Trieste, the ship's whaler was provisioned for the seventy-two mile trip to Venice. On the first evening out the first international incident occurred. A darkened vessel hauled alongside. Our boats' papers were demanded. A naval paybook satisfied the interrogators that we were not smugglers but they were still puzzled at the purpose of the voyage. But how do you explain Medfoba to a foreigner? After flat calm, sea fog, and recourse to the wooden engines, the ship was reached.



The Third Phase RELAXATION

After the inspection we had a week in Malta before we sailed for Medaswex 34. A week later we arrived in Taranto, anchoring for the first few nights in the Mar Grande - the outer harbour - before graduating to the Mar Picolo - the inner harbour - where we were berthed stern to the jetty.

The exercises were with the Italian Navy, the sea was rough, and we were all heartily glad when they were over.



Herculanery visited.

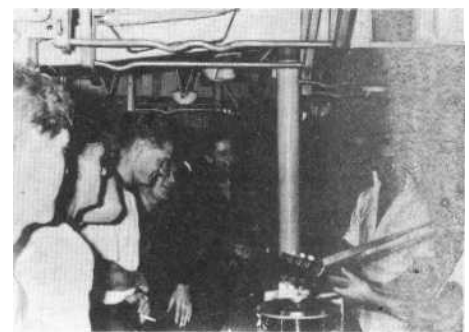


The Captain stirs it up.

We sailed with our messdecks full of dolls - not live ones of course and went through the straits of Messina. Stromboli had obliged with her customary salute.

Back in Malta, a number of families had arrived to spend Christmas there. The Captain stirred the Christmas pudding and the scene was set for the great day. As we lay in Grand Harbour, the warm sunshine and the unusual view through the scuttles made it all seem a little unreal. Nevertheless we ate, drank and later slept. The Captain and Mrs Wells made the traditional tour of the messdecks.

At the end of November we had our roughest passage to date en route for Naples, arriving there on the third of December. 'See Naples and Die' and we could not see Naples for the rain and mist. The bad weather held throughout our stay. Our time was spent in reberthing, re-securing, buying Christmas Presents and sightseeing. Pompeii, Herculaneum and Vesuvius were all visited. The U-types went to the Opera, and the majority went to see John Charles playing for Juventus against Naples.



Musical interlude.



Generals Sharp, Phillips and Pain relax with their 'troops'.

After Christmas we went into dock for a fortnight and afterwards went round to Sliema for self maintenance. In fact we did not go to sea again until we went for trials in mid-February.

During this period in Malta our sports teams were having an unparalleled run of success. The hockey team continued its series of wins. The soccer team won the Mediterranean Fleet Competition.



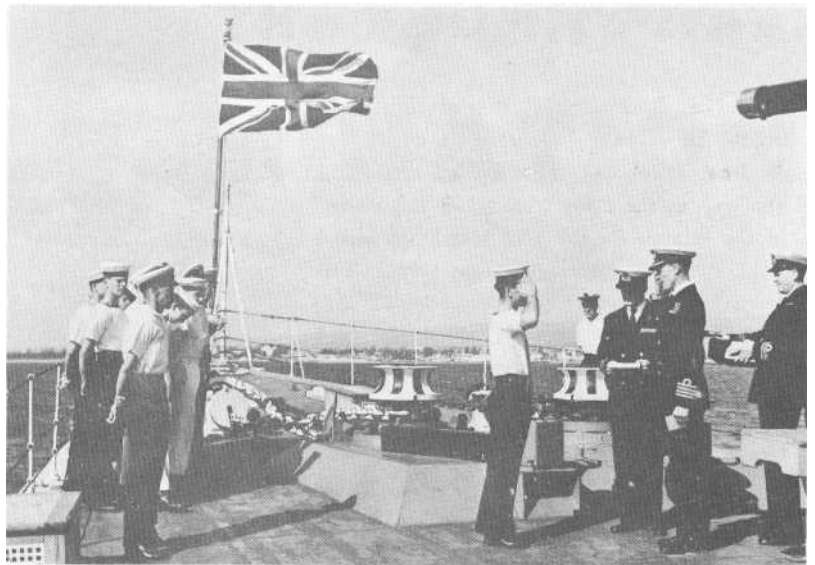
A real soldier shows us the drill.

In February we sailed for our second spell of Cyprus patrol. We spent over a week alongside in Famagusta, and while we were there we made the most of it. Our landing parties carried out intensive training in the mountains above Kyrenia, and came back bronzed and fit. Their capable instructors were our chummy regiment, the 2nd Parachute Battalion. Simultaneously soldiers came to live onboard. The feeling of mutual admiration knew no bounds.



A real sailor shows them the drill.

Well in advance of arriving in Famagusta a notice on the Canteen Hatch appealed for men with skiing experience. Many declared their experience of sheing down Strait Street but it was felt that they had been really skating on thin ice. When the ship lay alongside skiing became a fact. While some sought pleasure in the nightclubs of the Land of Keo Beer, the less hardy set out for the Troodos Mountains. It was believed that there was some good skiing to be enjoyed. On reaching the camp, the inmates were seen to walk around with faces trailing the mud. They complained of the thaw. Their moans were quickly discredited when a perfect beginners' slope was found on Mount Olympus. After a forenoon of basic instruction, the Dainty team tackled the slope. The first afternoon was spent in finding their feet - not an easy task on skiis. In the ensuing day ambition was unfettered. Skiers were making running



Gunnery Proficiency Prizes (off Limassol)



Lt. Lockwood posing.



The Dainty Ski team.

starts, skiing between trees whose breadth apart left no margin for error, some skiers even became airborne. Nobody was hurt, but there were some near things. At the crucial moment skiis would desert their owners and finish the course riderless. When the party embarked on the army truck for the homeward journey to the ship there was much talk of a skiing holiday in the Alps. After an erratic journey down the mountains, there was more talk of how lucky one was to be alive.

The ship returned to Malta in early March for a week of intensive exercises. A final week-end was spent in saying goodbye to the many friends we had made in the island. On the 14th March we sailed from Sliema Front for the last time in full ceremony. We were sailing homewards.

On the way back we spent six days in Algiers. Many had been a little apprehensive of this visit, having read of barricades and bombs in the not to distant past. This feeling was quickly dispelled by the hospitality extended to us. The supply Office reports that we spent a mere £2 10s. per head there, so we were perhaps saving it up for Pompey.

We had left the Mediterranean having won the CURZON HOWE Trophy for Naval Gunfire Support and the Fisher Cup for Surface Gunnery.

Gibraltar was the final stop on our journey homewards. After a last 'rabbit' run we were on the last leg. We steamed past the C-in-C, flying his flag in H.M.S. APOLLO, and started a large N.A.T.O. exercise involving a host of European nations. The sea was very rough, and we kept hearing of ships that had to drop out or shelter in the nearest French port. Dainty carried on, and temporarily left the exercise to land her Navigating officer, whose daughter was seriously ill. We were all pleased when we heard that she had made a wonderful recovery.

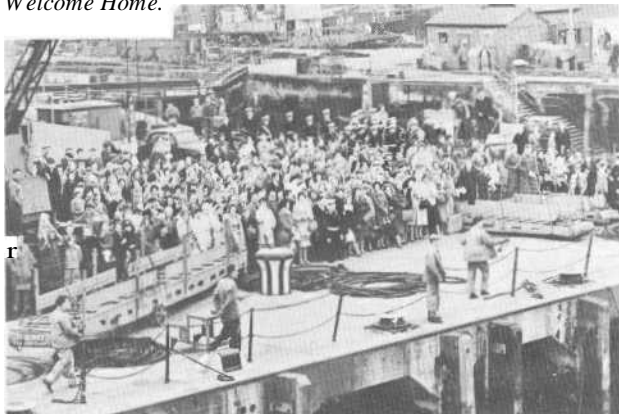


Delight in our wake

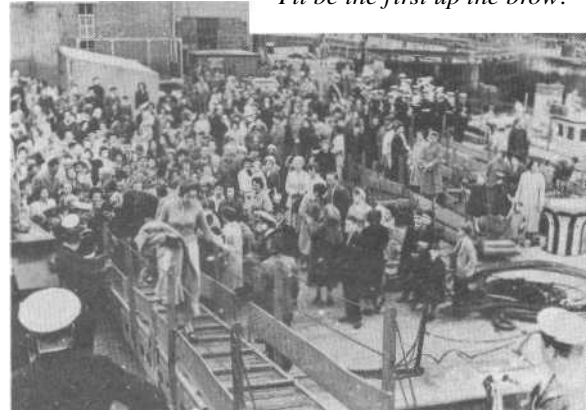
Steaming past Apollo: Homeward Bound.



Welcome Home.



I'll be the first up the brow.

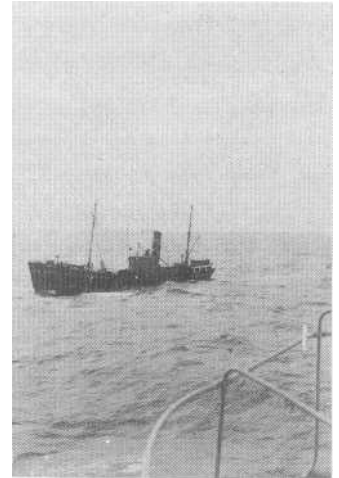




The Fourth Phase CULMINATION

'Oh to be in England, now that April's there.' It was April, 1960 and DAINTY was back in England. No advice against the vicious local grogs, like ouzoo of happy unhappy memory, would be longer necessary.

Liverpool was the first home port to be visited. The occasion was the anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic and in the packed Cathedral a most impressive ceremony was



What can we do for you?



held in memory of those who had given their lives in the long and bitter struggle which had so intimately concerned the Merseyside. Liverpool proved very popular, if one may judge from the number of draft preference cards favouring Sea Eagle. When the ship was open to visitors, children flocked aboard in their thousands. That we had a ship to sail away in will remain a mystery of the sea.

The next big episode in the life of the ship was her

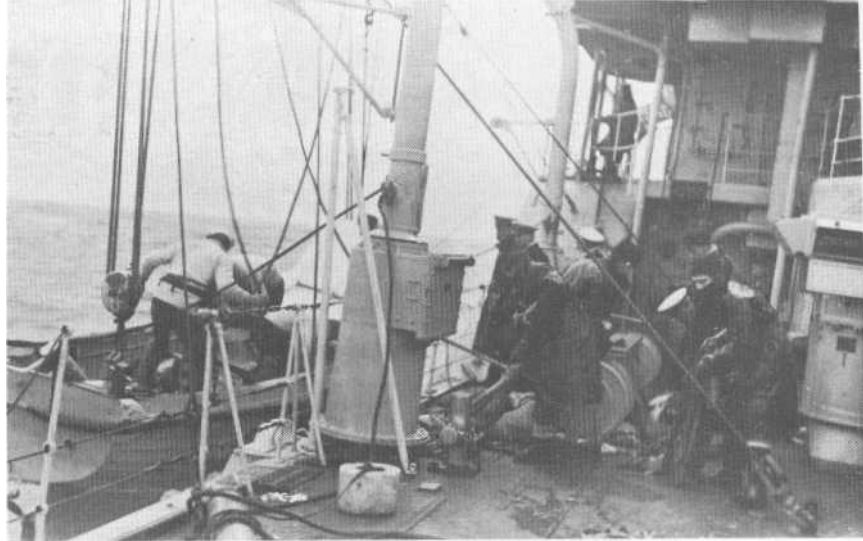
We'll lower our motor boat.....

first Iceland patrol. For nearly a century British trawlers had fished the waters of Iceland and DAINTY joined them in their natural setting off the Cape. The generosity of the trawlermen abounded. In appreciation of medical and technical aid, the liferaft would return full of fresh halibut, plaice, sole, haddock and cod.



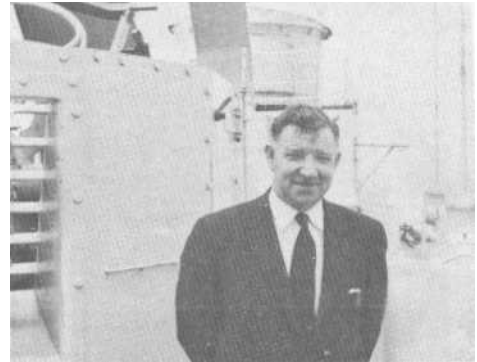
.....hoist our motor boat.....

X gundeck became the fish-deck where our liaison skipper, Mr. Green, showed his skill at filleting. It was a quiet patrol - there was good fishing in the temporarily untroubled waters. Dainty then sailed for the Portsmouth market.



.....and take the fish inboard.

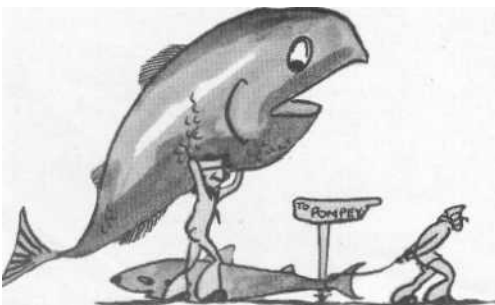
How does the sailor amuse himself on a month's patrol? Apart from listening to the trawler waveband, there were indoor games, physical training sessions, quizzes, films, tombola. A beard-growing competition lent a wisp of unfamiliarity to a number of faces. The winner, P.O. Pain, had an unfair advantage in that, on another patrol, he had imitated a famous clerical gentleman of Cyprus. It was rumoured that Fidel Castro was serving incognito in the Wardroom.



*Our popular skipper,
Mr. Green.*



He cannot speak above a whisker.



We made for the Portsmouth market.



After our return to the civilisation of Portsmouth, we sailed north to Loch Eriboll to support the army. We also fired our second live torpedo, which brings to mind the old saying, 'No good fish goes anywhere without a porpoise.'

Our first foreign visit of the Home leg was to Bergen. We were there for a weekend only. Karlskrona lay ahead and that, we were assured, was to be a second Palma.

No good fish goes anywhere without a porpoise.



Bergen

Beauty

KARLSKRONA SAGA

Our travelogue gave Karlskrona a boost. Yet it was with certain misgiving that some old salts looked on our going to show the flag there. They recalled the Swedish naval port of 1950. Then it had been rather dull with a population none too well disposed towards the British.

People and places change with the passage of time. Let it be recorded that this was one of the most enjoyable visits of the entire commission. No effort was spared by our ever polite Swedish hosts, both private and official, to make our stay pleasant and memorable.

After the customary official calls, the curtain went up on five days of sheer bliss. From the first cocktail party onboard it was reported that many of the officers did very well for themselves.



'Rather wet isn't she?'



'The officers did rather nicely for themselves'

That same evening the senior ratings went to a party. Given by the Swedish C.P.O.'s at their private club, it was a roaring success. It finally broke up at 0400. For the junior ratings there was a series of supper-dances - with bevies of Nordic beauty supplied - which needless to say proved immensely popular. Even the visits to 'places of interest' were unusually interesting and had been well arranged. A rather hilarious 'at home' was given by the Karlskrona Fire Brigade for a number of Damage Control Personnel. The hosts arrived for their guests in a fire engine.

Nothing was too much for the Swedes. Even the local newspapers ran daily

sections in English for those of us who could not read their language. The local girls were most friendly and fabulously attractive, the sandwiches and the schnapps were delicious, the handshaking and the skal both delightful customs, the official and the private invitations overwhelming - there was fun for all at Karlskrona.

In return for hospitality received ashore everyone played his part aboard. The wardroom handed out the glasses of gin. The C.P.O.'s and P.O.'s entertained the Swedish C.P.O.'s and their wives to a tea party on the forecastle.

Who made a hole in the awning



Griselda



Age before beauty



'Tell me, does he always smoke that pipe?'



'But, my dear chap, how do you recover it?'

A children's party attracted a multitude of children of all ages, some of whom were quick to light up their cigarettes after the ice creams. Another Swedish social custom?

Perhaps the highlight of the visit was for the few. A Civic Luncheon was given by the City Council of Karlskrona. Representatives of all ranks and ratings from the Royal Navy together with their Swedish opposite numbers were lavishly entertained. The function was a model of perfection. The speeches were amusing, the food and wine excellent, and the happy intermingling of the two nationalities from such widely differing spheres was a masterpiece of planning.

All good things come to an end too soon. As we slipped out of harbour on a dull Monday morning there were many sad hearts both ashore and afloat.

Two final thoughts. Firstly, was shakespeare thinking of Karlskrona when he wrote, 'Tis ever common that men are merriest when they are away from home?' Lastly, 'Why was the M.S.O. so popular?'



'Now a famous man was ROBIN HOOD'



'Watch it.'



The happy intermingling of the different nationalities.