

Working up the armament

mess he often helps to break the ice himself. So does a game of Crib, which most people can play. I reckon that being able to play crib is one of my biggest pastoral assents. The other is probably my camera, which is kept fairly busy on most trips. Most people like having their photo taken and I like having a record of the people I have met, and the friends I have made. As I write, I have just completed my first " 2nd D.S. Album " and it looks as if there are going to be at least two more.

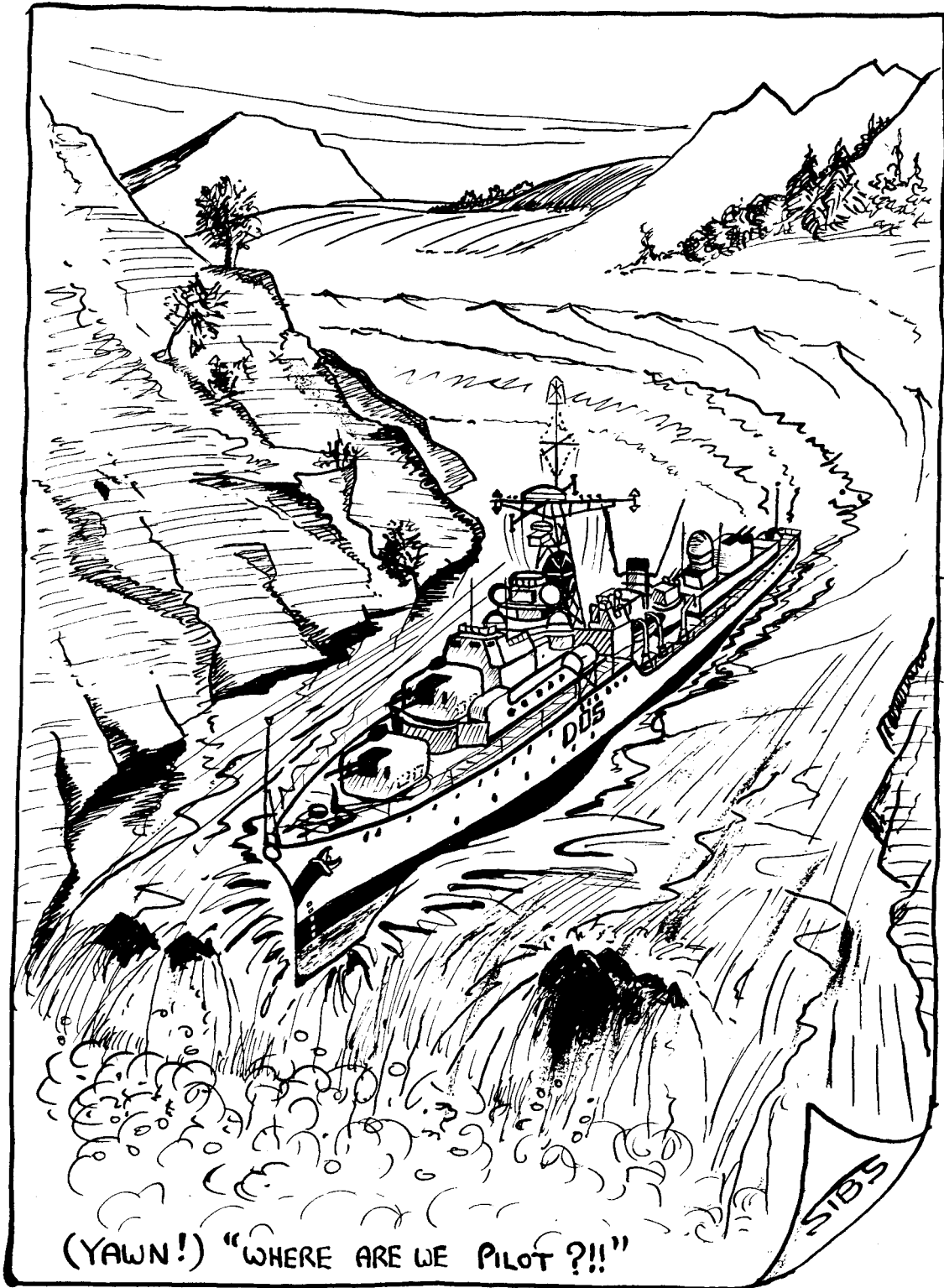
The Chaplain on his visits has to be inquisitive, as you have discovered. I like to know all about people, where they live, what they were doing before they joined, whether they are married with a family, and so on. At times I forget and ask an unmarried man how his wife is. These lapses are bound to happen.

Gradually I discover all sorts of interesting and useful facts about people - Able Seaman Fox is, like myself, a keen railway enthusiast ; P.O. George Parry wants to be confirmed (after slight pressure from the Padre) ; L.S.A. Wallace plays the accordion

(useful for Church Services) ; T.O. Peter Leigh wants to become C. of E. ; M(E) Geoffrey Pearson is my namesake (I'm Geoffrey Pearson Thornley) ; L/Cook Jack Alcock is keen on Crib (and usually victorious).

It's a fascinating job, mine, because it's all to do with people, and people are intriguing. They are often unpredictable, sometimes frustrating, but always interesting. One young M(E) - Ralph Seal - told someone he thought " I was lovely," a thing which no one else has ever called me ! A.B. Archie Donnelly has the best Scottish accent I have yet heard. He talks the brawling of " Oor Wullie " in the Sunday Post. It interests me to discover that A.B. John Begbie is related to J. Moulant Begbie, the leader of the B.B.C. Scottish Orchestra, and things like that.

Part of my job is to visit sick people in hospital and long term patients one gets to know pretty well. A.B. Ian Wright had a long spell in Bighi and looked rather yellow for much of it. Cook(O) Alfred Cassar was there for quite a while after a serious injury



The ocean was full of ships

on the football field. I was there at the time and it is the only occasion on which my car has been used as an ambulance. The other long timer was my old friend L. Sea Bob Williams, who went in with a slipped disc only a few days before the ship left for home, and didn't himself get home until nearly two months later; a cruel piece of ill fortune which he met with characteristic cheerfulness.

"What shall I more say?" to quote the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. This has inevitably become mainly reminiscent, but memories are often happy things and I have many such of Daring. One pleasant feature of the commission was that quite a few wives came to Malta for shorter or longer spells. Mrs. Mills, the Captain's wife, gave a very good tea party for some of them just before Christmas, to which I was asked, and it was a great pleasure to meet them. We were shown some of Commander Lea's excellent films of the commission. I always enjoy meeting the wives of my parishioners and it was a great pleasure to spend an evening with the Captain's family more than once (Mrs. Mills is an old friend of my sister's) - also the First Lieutenant and Mrs. Barcham and L. Sea and Mrs. Hibberd (Hib's boss). These things form part of the most pleasant aspect of the Chaplain's life and helps to make him feel part of the ship's family. As far as Daring is concerned I must say I felt I "belonged" almost from the word "go" and I would like you all to know how grateful I am."

SUMMER IN THE MED

On 20th June we were visited by The Flag Officer Flotillas, Mediterranean (Rear Admiral Ewing), before sailing for a N.A.T.O. Exercise ("Whitebait") off Libya. During a lull we had our first bathe over the side. The jelly fish gave us a great welcome.

Forty-six ships took part in this exercise and the ocean looked rather crowded at times.

A week later we were back in Malta for the week-end to prepare for our next duty, which was Cyprus Patrol, and this we commenced on 6th July.

We saw many of the ports of this beautiful island, but this was very much a "duty run," and the opportunity to go ashore was limited. However, we were free from patrol duties most afternoons and conditions were ideal for bathing from the ship's side. The Army ashore were most hospitable and entertained us royally one week-end although we weren't quite so welcome when



The Boarding Party

our boarding party, armed to the teeth and looking very ferocious, boarded one of their yachts, looking for arms smugglers.

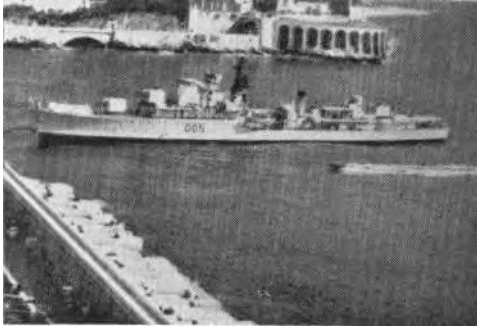
We interrupted our patrol to pay a visit to Athens on 16th-18th July, with other units of the Mediterranean Fleet. This was the first of many places which we visited of great historical interest and it was almost impossible to take a picture of the Acropolis without a naval uniform appearing in it somewhere.

Our duty at Cyprus was concluded on 26th July and we set course for Malta. By this time the majority of the ship's company were, like all handsome men, slightly sunburnt.

We reached Malta on 29th July and immediately began final preparations for the Fleet Regatta. It was a week of aching muscles and blistered hands for all those taking part.

The Regatta was held at Augusta on 4th August.

After the Regatta and a week-end in Malta, the ship sailed for Monaco - an eagerly awaited visit. The Casino, of course,



An eagerly awaited visit

was a lure for those of us who had dreams of breaking the bank, but nobody succeeded in doing so. However there were plenty of other attractions and the girls didn't seem to mind the fact that we weren't millionaires. Perhaps the novelty appealed to them. After five strenuous days the ship sailed on 18th August and on the way back to Malta, anchored in Palmas Bay, Sardinia.

Here three-quarters of the ship's company filed into the boats and were landed on a deserted stretch of beach for a banyan. They took vast quantities of food and beer with them and when the boats returned, several hours later, it was evident that a very good time had been had by all.

The following three weeks were spent at Malta much to the delight of the "natives," whose number was steadily increasing by this time. Those long, hot, sunny afternoons, which are now only a memory, were spent in swimming, sunbathing, fishing, sailing, or just doing nothing and enjoying it. It was during this time that a very successful banyan was held in Gozo.

GOZITAN WEEK-END

During a week-end about half the Engine Room junior rates with several Engine Room Petty Officers went on this visit to Gozo. With them were the Commander (E), Lt. Blood, S/Lt. Simmons, and L.S.A. Wallace. Apart from the personal pleasure of having L.S.A. Wallace and his accordion with us, his presence also ensured plenty of victuals.

We had the use, for the week-end, of Ausonia's M.F.V. and we made for a small beach just above Ramla in Gozo that Commander (E) remembered from a previous commission. These beaches have a habit of losing their sand from one year to the next, but fortunately all was well and we found this ideal little beach perfectly suited to our needs. The water was crystal clear and ran gently over white sand which sloped steadily up the beach. A sandy beach without rocks is a very rare thing in Malta or Gozo. The beach and its approach were contained inside two arms of rock in which lived all shapes, sizes and colours of fish.



The gear for the camp was ferried ashore in two dinghies and soon one small tent and four large ones were pitched and the coke braziers were burning well. We had an enormous supper, splendidly cooked by S/Lt. Simmons and Petty Officer Robson, and saw the day out with swimming and singing to the accompaniment of L.S.A. Wallace's music.

Most of us slept tolerably well, particularly the shipkeepers who spent the night in the M.F.V. The rest of us had a little trouble with the enormous and voracious flies for which Gozo is justifiably renowned. However, the flies resulted in most people getting up a lot earlier than otherwise and taking advantage of the wonderful weather. Breakfast was another enormous and well cooked meal - we seem to recall the Senior eating three fried eggs with several sausages and bacon !

The rest of the day was spent mainly in the water, skylarking or fishwatching through the many masks available, or pulling round the area in the dinghies, or just lying in the sun. At tot-time we had a tot each of Gozo wine supplied by a local Gozitan as advance payment for any food we might leave behind. We also helped some Gozitan fishermen to take their boat from half way up the cliff where it was stowed, down to the water. On their return, unhappily empty handed, we helped them take the boat back again. The boat was very heavy and they must have been glad of the unexpected help.

By midday it was getting so hot that the sand was really painful to bare feet, and we ate our lunch sitting in the water.

We started packing up after lunch and were away by about 1500, all feeling a lot better for being away from it all for a bit.



We got considerable extra pleasure in retrospect from the fact that it was just about the last week-end we had in Malta that year with really perfect weather.



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AUTUMN 1959

Just when we had reached the stage of telling each other that we were glad we joined, we were brought back to earth by Septex and two weeks' hard work at sea off Malta.

At the conclusion of the exercises we sailed for Venice where we arrived on September 21st.

The city was a source of fascination to most of us, with its numerous canals and quaint bridges. Even if a ride in a gondola was too expensive for most of us, the water bus was cheap and, in many ways, more fun. One party disappeared in the direction of the Italian Dolomites and weren't seen again for five days. but those who stayed behind found plenty to interest them in the numerous museums and art galleries if it was wet, or admiring the glassware displayed in the shops when it was fine.



Dubrovnik, 1959

Leaving Venice on September 26th, the ship arrived at Dubrovnik a day later. We found the Pearl of the Adriatic a great contrast to our previous port of call - both the city and its inhabitants were very subdued compared with their Italian counterparts. Entering the walled city was like a journey back in time. The little narrow streets, completely devoid of traffic, together with the appearance of its populace gave one the impression that very little had changed in the last 200 years. But if the city lacked bright lights it had a beauty and charm which, set in the magnificent scenery of the unspoilt countryside that surrounded it, justified its reputation.

One fortunate party of sightseers travelled by coach through the ruggedly beautiful Yugoslavian countryside to the state of Montenegro.

Dubrovnik was also the scene of one of the more exciting episodes of the commission. During the early morning of 29th September a fierce gale sprang up. Daring was anchored near the breakwater. Strong winds gave the Officer of the Watch reason to believe we were dragging. The ship was forced to weigh and proceed to sea in a fierce storm. The freak nature of this was brought home to us by the sight of Cross-

bow riding happily at anchor in a more sheltered spot. She made a welcome "hotel" for many of our libertymen who were left behind. It was later learnt that the wind force had reached 42 knots.



Replenishing

After a rough passage to Malta the ship replenished with fuel and stores and joined the ships of the Mediterranean fleet for exercises with the Spanish Navy. This was an interesting period for us all. Lieutenant Blood, the Senior Engineer, was lucky enough to spend a week in one of the Spanish destroyers as Liaison Officer.



Replenishing

La Troc



Memories of the romance of Palma

This exercise was followed by two outstandingly successful visits to Palma and Port Mahon in the Balearics. Mention of these names alone is sufficient to bring enigmatic smiles to many faces. Everyone must surely have their own memories of these ports and anything written here could only be inadequate.

After the Balearics the ship did more exercises with the Fleet before visiting Tunis. A British Trade Fair was in progress. The juxtaposition of the poverty of a typical North African town and the products of a highly industrialised European community must have highlighted for many the problems of Africa. It was an absorbing place.

Tunis was the last visit for some months. All onboard now had to turn their minds to the forthcoming inspection by the Flag Officer Flotillas, Mediterranean (Rear Admiral Ewing). Much hard work was put in by the ship's company. The weather was not kind. Weapon training commitments still had to be met. The Flag Officer's

obvious satisfaction after his harbour and sea inspections on 4th and 6th November was, therefore, most welcome.

From inspections to exercises the full and varied life in the Mediterranean Fleet continued its pattern. November 20th found Daring with other units in Taranto for a lengthy exercise with the Italian Navy. These exercises were interspersed with runs ashore in Taranto and an excellent chance to do Christmas shopping. Many children of ex-Darings will still be treasuring the beautiful dolls purchased in Taranto.

The time at Taranto was followed by a brief period exercising with Victorious. This was a good opportunity to see much of the Navy's newest and most expensive air-arm equipment.

On the way from Victorious's exercises to Civita Vecchia, disaster overtook us in the form of a fractured oiling connection at R.A.S. Stations. The upper deck for almost the length of the starboard side was flooded



Rome, 1959

by oil. Much hard work was put in by a cheerful ship's company to get us ready for Civita Vecchia. It was a busy night despite the terse, dissembling entry in the log "1910, Anchored off Fiumicino. Cleaned ship of oil." "Weighed at 0600 to rendezvous with Battleaxe."

The visit to Civita Vecchia with its proximity to Rome was most enjoyable. The weather was poor except for one brilliant Sunday when many people from the ship "did" Rome.

On the 11th December. Daring led the 2nd Destroyer Squadron and other ships of the fleet in a farewell steampast the Flag Officer Flotillas, Mediterranean, in Tiger. We then entered upon a period of nearly ten weeks in and around Malta broken only by a visit to Bone during January.

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MALTA INTERLUDE

Of course the ship was not idle in this time. We refitted, docked, did weapon training and starred in a film. This latter was a shiphandling film for junior Seamen's instruction. The film unit kept us all busy. Not only did they want sea shots from odd and sometimes hazardous positions but they also insisted in dressing people up in unusual uniforms. Christmas came during this period. Some Darings went to Krendi. Others preferred to enjoy the festive season on a more liquid element.

January 15th was a memorable Families Day. It was quite rough. All the families that came to sea enjoyed themselves. Even those that were sick felt they had experienced most of what the sea had to offer.



Christmas, 1959



Christmas, 1959

The ship had arranged torpedo firings, squid firings and a light jackstay transfer with Striker. Ordinary Seaman Hathaway distinguished himself by being transferred to the LST over a rough sea. Many wives had to be assured this was not a form of punishment.

While in Malta at this time the inter-ship sports fixtures for the winter season were played. Daring was unlucky to lose the

Soccer final after extra time by 4-3. In the hockey, the ship's team was eventually knocked out by Girdleness after a marathon contest. The rugby team was always a strong force. It could boast that it was only beaten by one sea-going ship in ten games. Teamwork was the keyword of the rigger side. In the seven-a-side our individual stars were fewer and we were soon knocked out.

In mid-March our maintenance period was over. We finally said good-bye to Malta and our many friends there on March 14th, 1960. With most of the Second Destroyer Squadron we made passage for Algiers.

This proved an excellent visit. The weather was superb. Algiers was an attractive and hospitable town to us. A full programme of sports and entertainments made a fitting sequel to our Mediterranean foreign visits.

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Bremen