

Neptune's just joined', and coming from Scouse Dougherty that was a cheek.

We deployed to the Far East from Portsmouth on 13 October and after a stop at Gibraltar to 'collect' the *Naiad*, we arrived in Simonstown and lost the Navigating Officer Lt Ambrose who got married. The Op's Room crew sighed a sigh of relief realising that in future exercises we could get the fags out without an arm with two rings on shooting out of the dark into the depths of your fag packet.



In the ships' sports in Singapore, being a small division, we did well in the small events. Our Scots/Italian RP Topsy Turner won the sack race but only because he thought the Mafia was behind him after his union dues. Pete Cooch did well, coming second in the 400 metres, and the division came third in the Football.

Ozzy Osmond and Pete Coach are due to leave for higher things, mainly 12,000 feet in a VC-10, a bus ride to the top of Portsdown Hill and a 1's and 2's course at *Dryad*.

A vote of thanks to the RS who thinks all RP's are deaf and can't speak very well. Looking at some of them he might be right.



Yokohama, March 1971

OUR COMMUNICATORS

The commission started for the Comms department one rainy day in September in Chatham Dockyard. That is all except R02(G) Cleverdon who didn't fancy the idea and didn't bother to come, and RS Atha and LRO(T) Thompson, on hearing that their Lordships were after them for running a wire service on HMS *Undaunted* and making cuddly frogs on the Royal Yacht, skipped the country and joined the ship in Norfolk, Virginia.

The Yeoman told us how thirsty he was standing there and R02(W) Moor was 100 % positive that Drafty had made a mistake. But after a quick cup of tea, a go at the *Daily Mirror* crossword and a tot in *Pembroke*, that cleared us for the rest of the day.

The Comms staff soon found a place higher than any other branch onboard, the Foremast. When RO2 Shuter fell off the back of this heap of congealed rust and was swinging like Peter Pan on his safety harness, the only encouragement he received was a swift shout to wipe the black paint that he'd spilt of the grey on his way down. Painting in a blizzard was a new experience for most of the sparkers, but we soon got the hang of it and the ship hasn't been the same since.

The delights of Chatham kept the lads happy for the six months we were there and many lasting attachments were made, mainly attached to a member of the Kent Police Force. Much to the surprise of LRO(W) Guilding and R03(G) Meehan, they found that the air in Gillingham High Street was free to the access of all persons without payment, or that's what it said on their charge forms after being trapped for dropping a Fish & Chip paper.

We finally managed to get clear of the Dockyard wall and that caused the Admiralty Hydrographer a bit of a problem, as he thought we were an extension to Farewell Jetty and had to alter all his charts. After a Weapon Training Period we arrived in Portland to keep the messages flying while the rest of the ship did the work-up. We were already worked up and only came along for the runs ashore in Weymouth. R02(G) Bolton had a run ashore as far as Penzance, but he did get out of FOST's Divisions.

At about this time, R02(G) Deacon left us to join the Sub Navy for the sub-standard accommodation and a substantial pay increase. R02(W) Roberts also left us to swop with R02(W) Clarke in HMS *Cleopatra*. RO1(G) McGovern joined and became a staunch football supporter with the help of a couple of bottles of veeps and R02(G) Derrick taking the place of Cleverdon, who had been given up for lost, brought the fighting shout of 'Blue Watch' back into front line service.

Portland didn't frighten us at all and that also goes for R02(G) Simpson who told the Clubswinger that the only way that he was going to get the weekend coach list in half an hour before the bookings closed, was by carrier pigeon if he didn't use the correct message form. Pony Moor also made a slight tactical error by misrouteing a signal to HMS *Dolphin*, telling Fort Blockhouse to RAS(L) on our port side in the middle of the North Sea. Many generations have tried to shift the 'Block' but it hasn't moved yet.

After Portland we spent a pleasant month in Gibraltar where the staff got plenty of time on the beach and in the bars and we had a new arrival in the branch . . . The Funnel. Something was said about bringing us into line with the other parts of ship. The only line we could make out, was a straight one between the Fore and Mainmasts with the funnel in the middle and we panicked a bit in case we got the PRI's bed stowage as well.

Our next port of call on leaving Rosyth was Copenhagen, where R03(G) King (IRA) managed yet again to get a grippo and a dolly, which amazes us as we can't even understand what he says most of the time. JRO(W) Green joined us just before sailing and distinguished himself by coming back adrift on his first run ashore in a foreign country. R02(W) Harries also distinguished himself by his immortal statement to a crowd of Gunners he was ashore with :—!! If you're ashore with an RO, you've got to drink like an RO!! The Gunners put him in a taxi and sent him back onboard half an hour later.

After teaching the Dutch and French how to run a successful coffee boat and communicate at the same time, watching an Air Sea Rescue Launch run over our last tot and becoming the

record holder of the most Radio Telephone calls made by a British Warship in one month, Chatham welcomed us again prior to sailing for the FES. As we all know it took a good downhill push to get us out of there, but our problems saved us from doing plane guard for *Ark Royal*, which would have meant a lot of extra work for us as we would have had to handle all her traffic as well as our own while she was flying.

In Gibraltar we made the tie up between *Naiad* and ourselves which was to become famous, especially when the teleprinter broadcast became too weak to print. The morse broadcast we changed to resulted in *Naiad* asking us for so many parts of signals that it became a bit like twenty questions. Simonstown put us back on our feet again and LRO(G) Graham found it a most timely and striking experience; mainly because he got struck and had his watch swiped. JRO(T) Walker joined us that week and it took a couple of days before he realised that you have to turn to in the mornings and that seeing the world before you're 18 (as the advert says) doesn't mean that you can go ashore anytime you like. The *Griqualand* incident on our way up the coast proved quite conclusively that a 634 portable radio doesn't float, especially when its being dropped from a helicopter but it did give RO(T) Winchester the theme for another song, which he sang during the ship's concert at sea.

Beira put us into three watches and the Seamen into six. Having to contact a tanker with a sick man onboard was a bit of a problem as not many of the crew could speak English and it was a case of 'Why for you call me . . . of when my name she is Fernandez Agelino Pedro Gonzales Joseppi del loco Delacabasa Hey'. But someone triumphed by putting RO(T) Mathewson on the circuit as he could talk the hindleg off a donkey.

Singapore gladdened everybody's hearts. R02(T) Hodgkinson found out that when a taxi driver says that the taxi won't go and the engine makes a grinding noise he's kidding, otherwise you get left in the middle of nowhere as the taxi makes a rapid

recovery and thunders off down the road, leaving you with only a couple of hungry Bombay Runners for company. R02(G) Naughton got the Herbert Lott award for a continued effort to watch the sunrise over Bugis Street and intends to show it's not a fluke, by making a repeat performance. JRO(T) Stocker joined us in *Terror* and upset their Master-At-Arms by trotting around the barracks in a towel and flip flops. On finding that we had to pay for food and lodgings in HMS *Terror*, a request was made to start a Kampong Village outside Canberra Gate. This was refused, however, as it was thought that returning to this natural state would be a bit much for some and we might lose a few.

After becoming an Aussie for a day in 'Febex' and a week in dock, we found ourselves in Hong Kong. Here R02(T) Mathewson and Johnson and R02(W) Fowler, the last of the Sparkers and Buntings, who joined us from HMS *Hampshire*, departed, leaving a hole in the ship's football team when Quoringe Johnson went and a bit more coffee in the coffee boat when Foxy found his flying home machine.

Yokohama proved to be busy, as we were relaying traffic to RFA *Tarbatness*. Since she was partaking in PX43', her signal load was tremendous. Hong Kong next, which did wonders for the profits of Pinky the Tattoo Chink, as quite a few of the staff ended up there. Bangkok was the highlight of the year for our aquanaut R03(G) White, who spent a few hours a day pulling polythene bags out of the ship's inlets and getting covered in all kinds of Thai sewerage.

This resulted in FO2FEF making a signal stating that '*Dido* has you know what stuck up her you know where'. We're not quite sure where she's got it but by the time the lads leave the *Dido*, I'm sure they will have found it.

Mirror, Mirror on the wall,
Who's the fairest of them all,
You are sparks, without a doubt,
Thank you mirror, Roger out.



473. Hong Kong, March 1971

473 AND ALL THAT

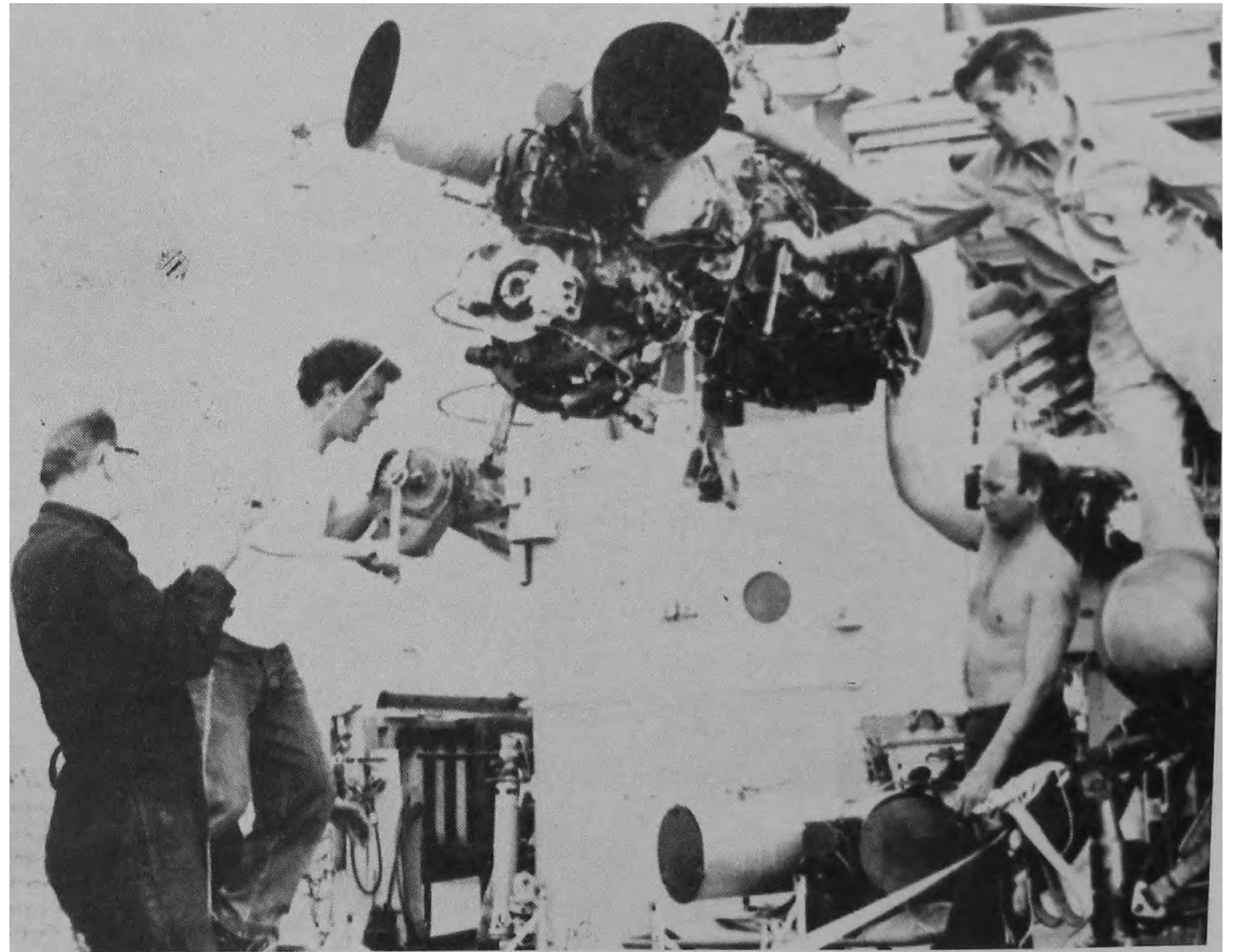
This commission the prodigal Wasp has returned to 'mother' from Portland (twice), Lee-On-Solent, Bolton, Gibraltar, Simons-town, Simbang (three times) and Kai Tak, much to the dismay of the Sports Officer and the Buffer. Mind you it hasn't all been hard graft. In between disembarkations, your latter day TSR 2 has sunk numerous submarines (paper and otherwise), countless FPB's, delivered many bags of mail, has been an ambulance, a target for starshell an airborne spotter, a Flag taxi, replenished ESSO's shop, been an airborne fire engine, invented dunking radio, taken many very reverend gentlemen nearer Head Office, brought relief to millions during the Malaysian floods, and has been a Shackleton. Any inconvenience caused is much regretted and we apologise to all users of the sports pitch, parade ground and sun patio. Thanks also to the oldest and the shortest (HCO's and DO s).

Another Editor's Note:

`Bridge this is Flight Deck.'

`Bridge'

`Helicopter on the swat, spivel on ! ! !'



Our's is going to be the only twin-engined Wasp in the business

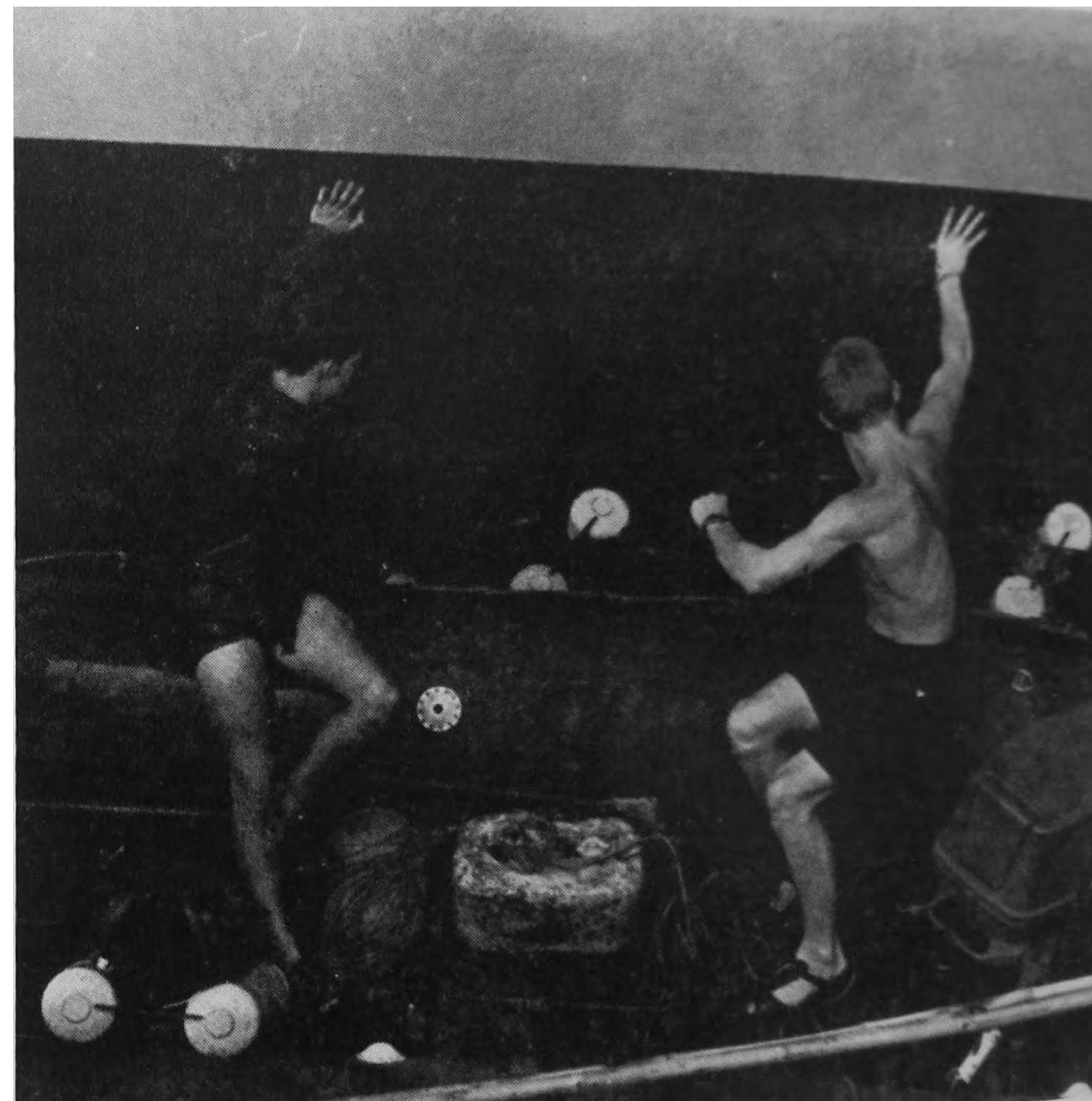
`DIVING IS ABOUT TO COMMENCE'

We started with six divers, some left, others joined and five completed the diving course while onboard. We are now 12 strong.

First dives as a team were in the murky waters of No. 3 Basin, Chatham. From there we graduated onto the clearer and sometimes warmer waters of Portland, Gibraltar, Simonstown, Singapore, Hong Kong, Yokohama and Bangkok. The team has dived everywhere the ship has visited, carrying out various tasks ranging from searching for a variety of objects dropped over the side, to clearing inlets chocked with polythene bags. Most of the diving has been interesting and varied, but perhaps none so unusual as the dive in the underground lake in the the heart of the Rock of Gibraltar.

Those members of the teams, past and present, who between them have set up a World Record for losing nose clips are

Lt. Cdr. Gibbons	LS Sneeling
Lt. Blakeley (<i>Diving Officer</i>)	AB Knight
Mid. White	AB Cadwell
OE.MECH(O)1 Whitwell	OS Chattington
PO Barnard	REM Hacking
LS Gorton	RO3 White



'I said four hells not four pulls'

Whilst in Faslane the ship's divers sent the following signal

From DIDO to COM CLYDE: 'Request permission to dive in Faslane Bay and Gareloch.'

Reply from COM CLYDE to DIDO: `Approved, what arrangements have you made for surfacing?'

THE MARINE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT



Commodore Hong Kong visits ME's Messdeck

The start of the Commission saw Lt. Edwards at the throttle, assisted by Lt. Blakeley and an almost brand new (to the ship, that is!) set of Artificers, Mechanics and Stokers. A relic from the past was Chief Stoker Milli!' who enjoyed *Dido* so much in the previous commission that he, would you believe it, actually volunteered to go to sea for another commission.

Surviving the trials and tribulations of a Chatham refit, the team moved on to greater glories at Portland. The department acquitted itself well during work-up, approaching all tasks with cheerfulness and enthusiasm.

Our stay in Gibraltar saw Lt. Carpenter taking

possession of the Engineers' office. This period in Gibraltar also saw a great deal of time and effort put in by all members of the department, some of it onboard. On sports day 3K mess Tug-of-War team proved itself to be more than just eight pretty faces. Having survived the rigours of Gibraltar Guardship, we moved on to the Clyde, to play with Submarines.

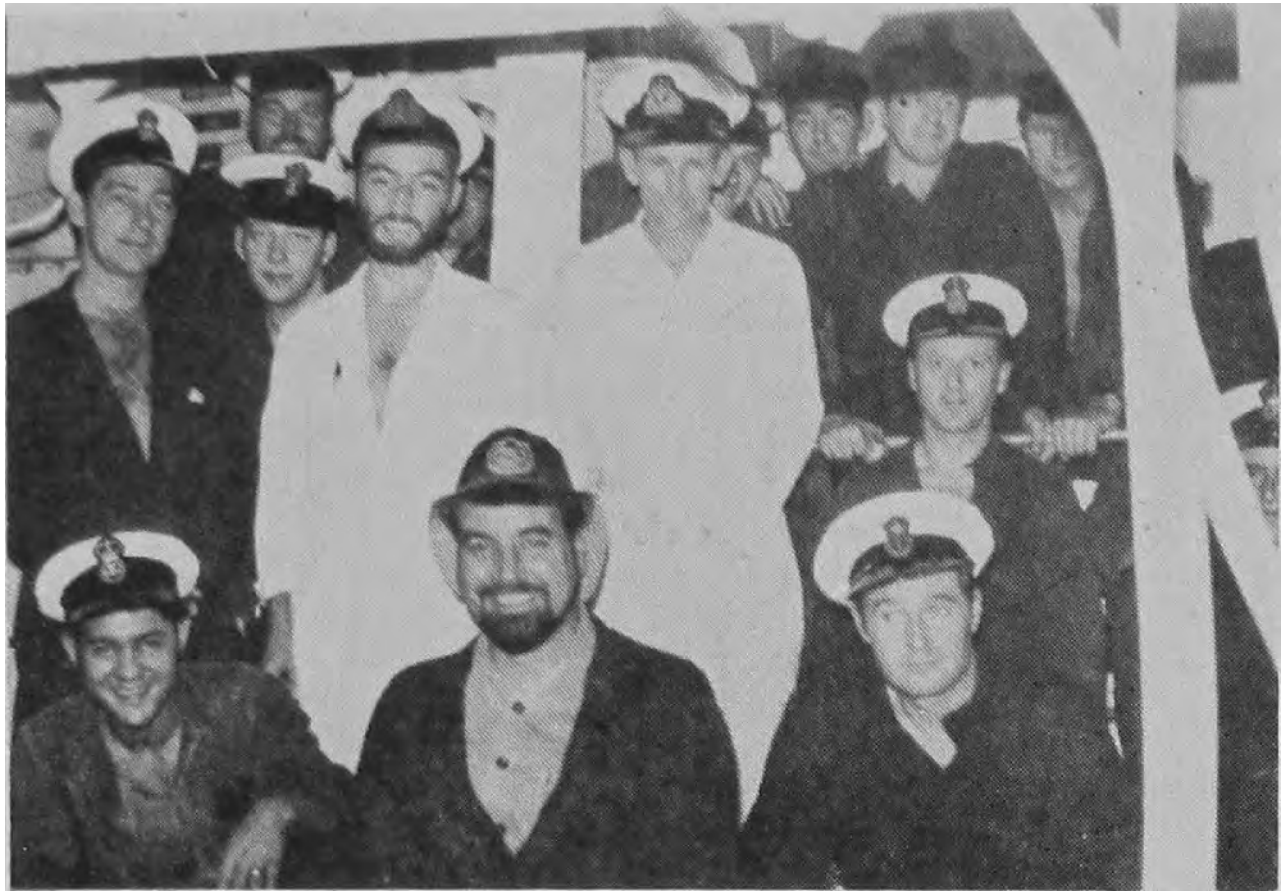
This proved to be a quiet period for the M.E. Department, all the action being outside the machinery spaces for a change. Then back to Chatham for summer leave, and an assisted maintenance period, when the cry soon went up to 'Open up a couple more boxes of stokers'.

Visits back to Rosyth and Portsmouth for 'Families Day' took us up to August when we sailed as escort to the Royal Yacht. During the tour onboard by the Royal Family, Princess Anne visited that place where Angels and Seamen Officers fear to tread, the Engine Room.

After a visit to Copenhagen, it was back to Chatham for our pre-deployment assisted maintenance period, before sailing for the Far East.

A call at Gibraltar to renew acquaintances was followed by a week in Simonstown. Rumour has it that the Chief Stoker has been there before, but this seems doubtful, since he got lost ashore soon after we arrived, and didn't find his way back until just before we sailed.

Shortly after leaving Simonstown, we sighted a small South African coaster, listing heavily and on fire. Our offer of help accepted, an intrepid fire-fighting team from the M.E. Department was sent across. After two hours of valiant effort, spurred by the thoughts of glory to the ship, credit to the department and salvage money, they had to beat a hasty retreat when the coaster started to explode.



The Goodies



The Baddies



MEM's Gibraltar

But it was exciting while it lasted.

During Beira, the M.E. Department took a full part in all the various activities and with few exceptions, joined the sunshine league. It soon became difficult to tell the difference between those that spend their time above, and those that work below.

Christmas Day in Singapore saw the youngest member onboard, JMEM Barlow traditionally exchange places with the Captain for the day, and tour the messdecks. We remember it well even if he doesn't.

A sorely needed maintenance period followed before the ship sailed from Singapore. A visit to

Japan was enjoyed, but most people were looking forward to two weeks in Hong Kong, and most people were not disappointed. During this time in, the machinery spaces received a much needed facelift, and the Engine and Boiler Rooms particularly sparkled when we left Hong Kong.

The visit to Bangkok resulted in work round the clock, clearing inlets choked by polythene bags which floated down the river. A sight of relief was breathed by all when we finally left the muddy waters of Bangkok.

And finally, back to Singapore for a final assisted maintenance period to get us into good shape for the long trip home.



Swimming Gala, Singapore



THE FUTURE

It is much easier for a new Captain to write the last two paragraphs of a commission book, after only five weeks onboard, if that ship happens to be *Dido*. For the theme of the ship, and of this book, has always been one of enormous enthusiasm and cheerfulness, no matter whether this was in the fleshpots of Yokohama and Hong Kong or at sea in the roughers on the way there and back.

This is your legacy to us who have only recently

joined the ship. Some of us will have had a taste of what will inevitably be known as the 'old commission' ; no doubt we will spend much time remembering what it was like. But at the same time we have even more to look forward to, in particular the STANAVFORLANT and the exciting prospect of representing the Royal Navy in a multinational force. Wherever *Dido* goes she will continue to be a happy and efficient ship, the best in the fleet.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Simon Argles".

C. S. ARGLES