



Longest Scarf

Although quite a few R.N. ships visit Liverpool each year, we were lucky perhaps that *Eagle* was the first carrier for a very long time, and the local citizenry certainly convinced us that they had been saving up for the occasion. From the first evening, a most impressive programme of entertainment ashore kept many hundreds of us busy and hundreds more found that the mere sight of a uniform anywhere around the town was often enough to ensure a great and generous welcome. In return the citizens from miles around flocked to see the ship - so much so that capacity was reached on both days we were open and thousands had to be turned away.



Cakes for the children



Football supporters



Although our departure on Wednesday, 4th was delayed by the combination of a congested river and snow showers, no-one seemed to mind and we got away that evening for a leisurely move back to Plymouth.

First taste of winter



A weekend at 'Charlie' Buoy enabled the '15-mile natives' to have a night or two at home whilst we embarked a large team of boffins for the 'Harrier' trial. This was to be our main remaining task during the next two and a half weeks. During this period we again had a most successful day showing off to eighty-odd members of the Imperial Defence College, closely followed by the First Sea Lord who arrived, fittingly, by Sea King and spent a night with us. At this time too, we were delighted to meet up with Ark Royal, fresh out of her great refit and getting down to the job of taking over from us in a few weeks' time.

Top brass



Old sea dogs



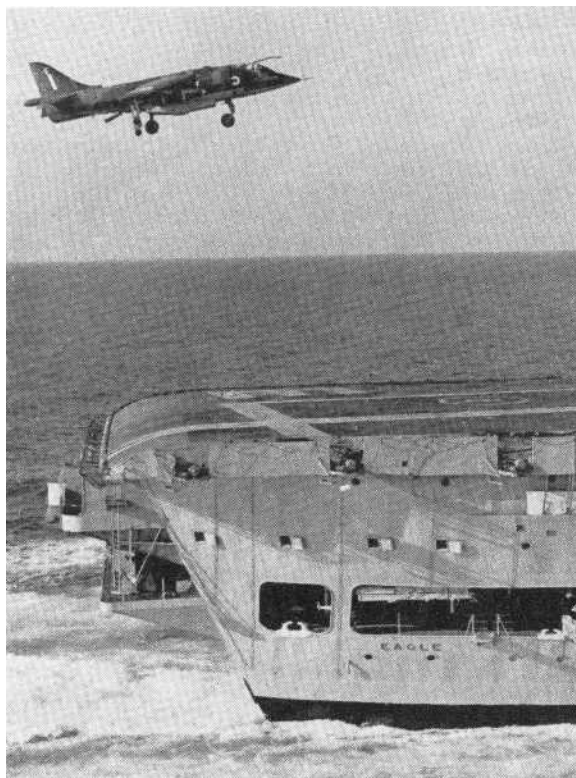
Flight deck conference, Ark Royal in the background



'Bandie' entertains the I.D.C.



New Shape



Short take-off

Slow approach

The Harrier trials were a great success and to everyone's joy, finished early, so surprise, surprise, we spent a final weekend at anchor at Spithead. It only remained to fly off the squadrons, who,

true to form, were 100% serviceable on disembarkation day and treated us to a very elegant farewell fly-past. And so, in the early morning on 25th March we came back up the Hamoaze to come

alongside in dashing and impeccable style for the last time before our mid-commission D.E.D.

We'll be back.



800 SQUADRON

It's been a challenging Commission punctuated by many embarkations and debarkations; in fact, we've undoubtedly been the cause of the revival of British Rail's interest in the 'troop train' concept which we've decided, after trying endless variations, is the least painful method of oscillating 230 men plus gear between two extremities of the U.K. However, there's seldom been serious cause to voice our unofficial exhortation 'Keep smiling', and there have been many pleasantly memorable moments.

It was a relatively inexperienced team of aircrew who embarked on 10th April 1969 for the first work up in the Moray Firth. The emphasis lay with settling down to flying from the deck, and interpretations of this varied from Peter Lewis' six diversions ashore in seven sorties, to the frivolous performance of Lts. Callow and Law who challenged No. 4 wire to an airborne tug-o-war: much to their surprise the wire not only won but graciously prevented them from performing their second scene entitled 'Under the Catwalk' in which they tried hard to give themselves a 'float test'! Such a shameless lust for publicity was barely satisfied by front-page illustrated coverage in most of the national press next morning.

It wasn't till after some late Easter leave and the Phantom trials that we were almost reunited as the ship at last headed west towards the United States. We say 'almost' because despite several attempts one aircraft failed to get aboard due to heavy seas; so it was flown back to Lossie by that 'coals to Newcastle' pair Mc-Sporran Forrest and McNifico Law, who resigned themselves gallantly to a V.C.10 flight to New York, and thence to Norfolk as a sort of travelling zoo to await the ship's arrival. It must've been hell.

Most of us have hazy but happy memories of Norfolk and Boston: those ship-open-to-visitors days with endearing enquiries such as 'Gee, now why d'ya have those targets painted on your aircraft?'. And the generosity of the natives: remember when Chief Read was seen staggering up the brow beneath a stuffed moose's head, with Chief Daley tottering behind with the poor beast's hooves made into a table-lamp? It's rumoured that soon after we left for the autumn cruise Mrs Read kindly presented a moose's

head to the Chiefs' Mess at Lossie ... It was a great treat to be in the States over 4th July, and the 'rebels' were amazingly kind to us - though Chief Lenaghan pushed his luck when, asked to sing an English folk song, he gave 'em the National Anthem ... And we enjoyed taking America for a ride now and again, like an anonymous Kiwi called Neil 'Dem Bones' Rawbone who coolly announced to a dazzled woman's page reporter that we were the Queen's Own Red-Sashed Buccaneer Squadron. At least that was an improvement on Tug's dangerous outburst 'The Queen's Own Light Paraffin Lancers', for which he came perilously close to losing his honorary Squadron membership. You know we love you, Tug.

After coming home from the States we took part in the Royal Review Fly-past over Torbay on 29th July. This was memorable for the interesting variety of emergencies that occurred just after the outwardly immaculate formation disappeared out of sight of Her Majesty: the now-famous call '3, you're on fire' resulted predictably in one aircraft in each formation arcing gracefully heavenwards till the ambiguity had been solved; amazingly, all aircraft eventually returned safely to Lossie.

Next day was the ship's Families Day, and four of our aircraft flew down to entertain with various daring little demonstrations in the glorious sunshine. During this Hugh 'The Grin' Cracroft disgusted himself by bolting for the first time, watched by his father who flew from the deck 40 years ago.

When we returned to the Big 'E' at the beginning of September it marked the start of the autumn cruise, during which we starred in 3½ exercises: 'Peacekeeper', 'Deep Furrow', 'Decamp' and 'Ranular' (you've guessed!). These gave us full scope to demonstrate our 'flexible response' with successful long-range strikes and reconnaissance sorties to targets in every West European country sporting an Atlantic/North Sea coastline except Spain and Portugal; and we overflowed parts of every North Mediterranean country bar the Communist ones (or so the Observers reckon). Allying to this a splendid record of serviceability, only a deep modesty prevents us from claiming to be the best Strike Squadron - let's say we just set the

standards for the rest!

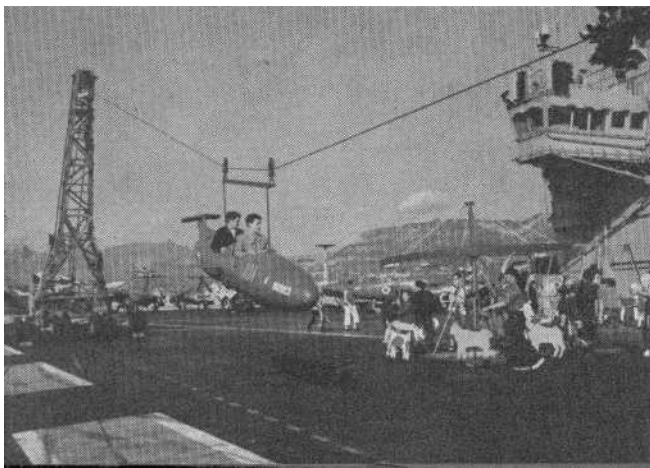
For most of us Gibraltar was an overcrowded disappointment, apart from a highly successful Squadron Run at Europa Point following a remarkable soccer match in which 'Ski' Kukulski, Lootenant U.S.N., thrilled the crowd with his startling interpretation of the rules. Both he and Jay Shower, our 'Vietnam Veterans', have earned a place in our hearts with their happy turns of phrase ranging from 'No s...t, Commander' to 'Did I done good, Boss?'; quite apart from Ski's habit of using tobacco coupons as postage stamps ...

Malta, Naples - the saga rolled on. Here and there a bonus happy event warmed our lives, such as 'Carbo Me-Plump' (McLean) passing his aircrew medical; and the presentation of a beautifully mounted airbrake tip to the deserving flight deck team '... in loving memory of so many airbrake tips so deftly removed!'

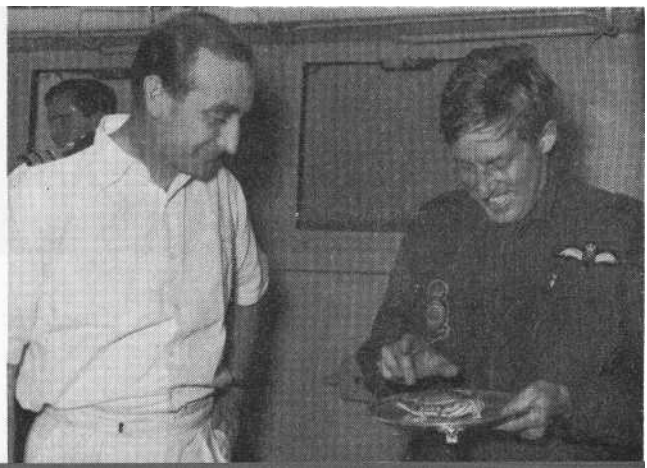
Before heading home for Christmas we were given the opportunity to toy with *Hermes*. The unfairness of this contest quickly became only too obvious, and the farce was ended when Albert Jay Shower, with 'Loaded Loins' Lucas one micro-second astern, slotted in behind a guileless *Hermes* Vixen and chuckled 'Bombs awaaaaay ...'. To add insult to injury, poor 801 Squadron had to divert two aircraft to the Big 'E', one of them piloted by none less than their CO. Chief Oulton now stepped into the limelight, for when (the then) Lt.-Cdr. Dimmock rang the ACR to enquire whether his aircraft had been turned round, our intrepid Line Chief tersely replied, 'Ve ask ze questions - you are a prisoner of war!' - and replaced the phone. However, all wounds were affectionately healed during the subsequent weekend in Gibraltar. And so, back to a wintry Lossie for Christmas; just before which David Mather and Keith Somerville-Jones were awarded the Sandison Trophy for being the most potent flannel-and-uckers combination in the Fleet Air Arm in 1969!

By the time we'd returned to the grindstone after Hogmanay we'd experienced two major shifts of power: David Mather had transferred the 'weight' to Joe Billingham, and Jonathan Tod had taken over from Tim Notley as Senior Pilot.

Joy Ride



Departure of a 'Crab'





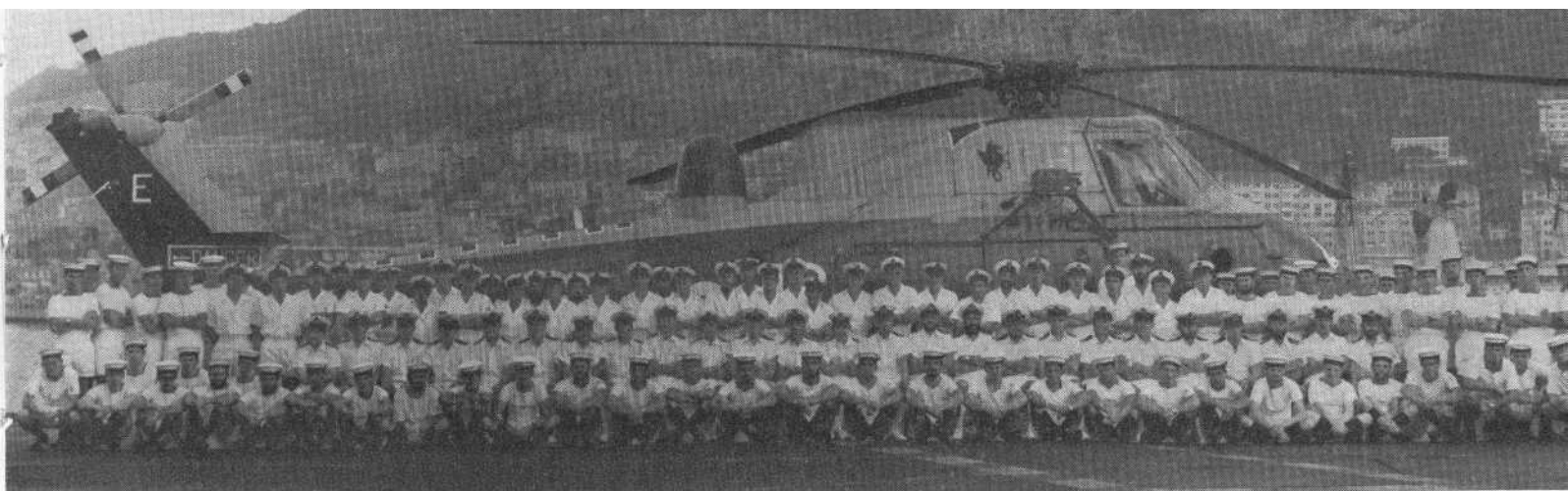
Sandison Trophy winners

Toulon is recent history and perhaps can be summed up in an irreverent anglicisation of its very name (no prizes); but at last we were rolling home licking lips in anticipation at the thought of Liverpool just over the horizon. However, fate turned cruel for the new 'fly-by-night' team plus ground party, who were either ordered at gunpoint to fly to Lossie or marched blindfolded to Lime Street Station for onward transportation to the Morayian salt mines. Yes, even those two bearded potentates Chiefs Baker and

Notley were overheard croaking that it was one of the best runs ever - and that probably takes in the Rape of the Sabine Women!

Now our final debarkation is near, and with it the end of the Commission. We've barely ever had time to settle in properly on board, but our embarked periods have been most valuable and the 'fish-heads' have done us proud: many thanks, and we look forward to being with you again in September.

826 SQUADRON



The Squadron story really starts back in October 1968 when we re-equipped with Wessex Mark 3s and we spent a busy three or four months with maintainers and aircrew all getting used to the new steeds. Life was hectic, with trials of the new gear box to be fitted in with all the business of working up in all our various activities: Casexes, Screenexes, winching, instrument flying, load lifting and even night refuelling at the hover. But by the time of the Squadron ORI we had achieved all the essential objectives.

With the inspecting teams came the usual Culdrose clag. Flag Officer Naval Flying Training was unable to land and spent part of the forenoon circling above the airfield before returning to Yeovilton. Out of all the excellent things that were planned for us, we eventually got in one Casex with the submarine *Oracle* and the Senior Pilot proved the all-weather capability by operating in Negative Red recovery conditions and actually found the sub. By 1700, even the Staff had had enough so we all returned to celebrate in the customary fashion.

The Squadron embarked for the first time on April Fool's Day. However, Lossiemouth excelled itself by calling

down snow showers marooning two of our aircraft and *Tartar's Wasp* on the flight deck of *Olmeda*. Not content with that they called upon mighty winds to maroon half the Squadron ashore. In the subsequent airlift we even got our pictures in the paper. April 24th was a red-letter day when the met. man produced low cloud and visibility which upset the fixed wing programme but gave us a nine hour Casex without interruptions.

On returning to the ship at Portsmouth, we decided a small diversion was in order. Bad weather and unserviceability led to a very smart formation shut-down on Slapton Sands. However a bowser was despatched from Dartmouth and we all finally arrived on board by 1530.

The third work up and ship's ORI went as smoothly as can be expected. The Phantoms now took everyone's interest and half the Squadron went ashore to Portland where they learned many things and increased their experience in sun-bathing.

After some very revealing Casexes with *Odin*, we arrived in Norfolk, Virginia. The highlight of the stay was an invitation by HS-3 Squadron to visit and fly with them. This Squadron recovered the crews

of many of the manned space capsules and it was a great honour to be made honorary members.

Throughout the month of July, there was great emphasis on formation flying. We flew with ourselves and then we flew with Gannets and they flew with us. The culmination of all this preparation was the fly-past for Her Majesty the Queen where we formed the right hand formation of the helicopter group and were rewarded by a free tot afterwards.

At the end of August, the first of the hierarchy changes took place in the form of a new Senior Observer followed a fortnight later by a new Senior Pilot. By no means in protest, Lt. Bailey decided to do a short seamanship course but found to his chagrin that 142 did not float long enough for him to qualify for a watch-keeping ticket.

However much the imagination of those on board was taken by the daily strikes deep into Scandinavia during 'Peace-keeper', we managed to fly for 71 of the 144 hours of the exercise losing only three of the 108 planned sorties. Submarines were found and sunk and the exercise proved a valuable experience to all who took part. 'Deep Furrow' brought us face

to face with both Greek and Turkish FPBs and night patrols around the islands became very much the 'in' thing. This provided a very pleasant break from submarine chasing by day.

The Malta stay cemented our relations with the Army. The Third Paras did some free fall drops from 7000ft over Ta'qali airstrip and we were also invited to tea during the short escape and evasion exercise in Gozo. Our other activities included picking up Shackleton crews by night from their dinghies and fetching all the bullets and rockets for the 'other element' from *Resource*. On 3rd November our new boss, Lt.-Cdr. N. Unsworth joined and was greeted in the traditional manner. We said goodbye to Lt.-Cdr. I. G. Kemp who went off to drive a desk at the Admiralty.

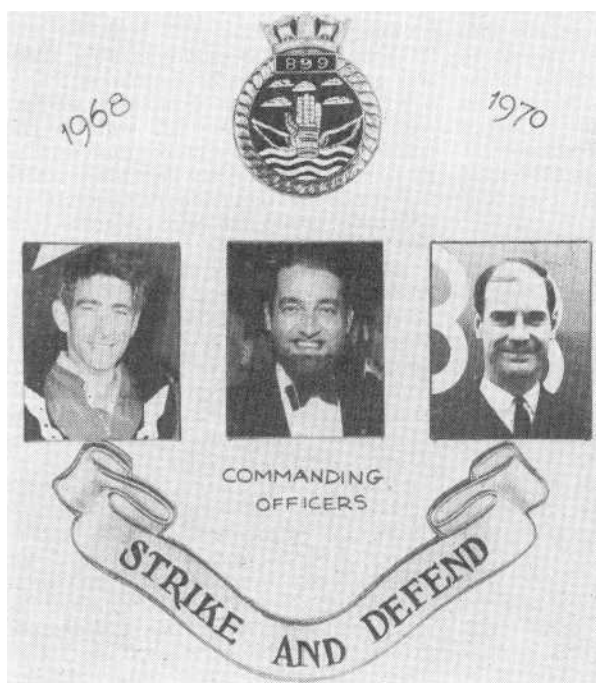
During Exercise 'Decamp', S/Lt. Warren also decided that the sea is better than the air but he too was not able to keep 143 afloat for very long. *Olmeda*, in sympathy perhaps, also had engine trouble and we only just managed to get our detachment party back in time for a last minute shopping run in Gibraltar.

Since it was decided to winter abroad this year, we made a bee-line for the south of France via St. Mawgan and Gibraltar. After many Screenexes outside Toulon we disembarked to St. Mandrier for some continuation flying and some *entente cordiale*.

We are now beginning to lose our aircraft to other Squadrons and will shortly be disbanding. However we will return after the D.E.D. with six Sea Kings - even bigger than Buccaneers we are told.



Real sea time



899 SQUADRON

The 899 hot pursuit group returned from Christmas leave and straightaway started the first work up to ensure that we remained the Navy's premier Squadron. The new year saw the announcement of 'Boss' Hunt's promotion and also the departure of Harry O'Grady to Gibraltar as Flag Officer, Rock Apes. Smooth talking Ken Black became our new 'D' and Bill Peppe departed to teach 738 Squadron students how to break nose oleos. Amidst all these disturbances the trappers passed virtually unnoticed. A hard work up culminated in a highly successful ORI, 44 sorties being flown on one day. With time to relax, FOCAS came to Yeovilton to return the Australia shield to its rightful owners.

The ghouls packed 'goofers' for the Squadron's return to *Eagle*. Their excitement was particularly intense because of the 'six-'new' pilots who were landing on for the first time. John Dixon played to the crowd by breaking a nose oleo to give the spectators the only interest in an impeccable Squadron land-on. Having found our way to the bar, cabins and briefing room, our short stay took on a more serious aspect as we continued our work up in the Moray Firth. The stay in Lossiemouth was marred by bad weather and

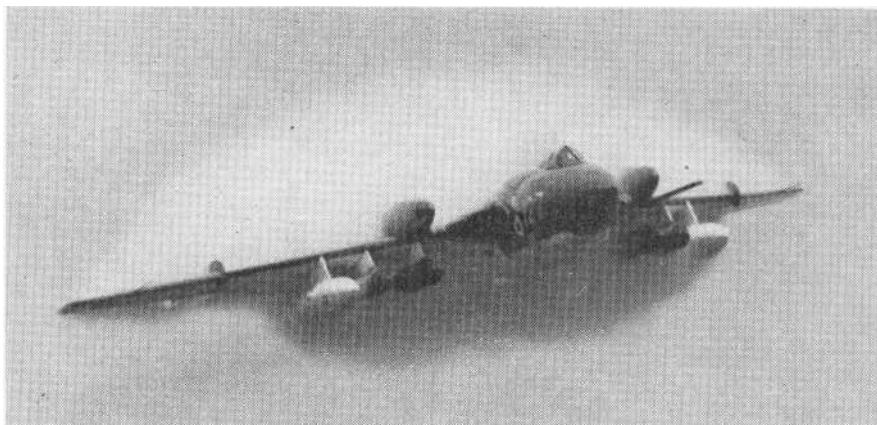
many of the Squadron were forced to stay ashore for the weekend instead of the one night planned. It was hell.

Having passed the ship's ORI and successfully completed our missile firings, we sailed for the States. Arriving off Norfolk, Virginia, we had several days' hard flying before going alongside. The first foreign run ashore of the Commission was highly successful, many of the accessories being supplied by our very hospitable hosts, U.S. Navy Squadron V.F. 41. All too soon we had to leave and spend more time at sea en-route to Boston. This period included a 'shop-window' display for the ship with the 'Boss' just clearing the flight deck on one pass. Much to our surprise Boston was every bit as enjoyable as Norfolk and we really needed the rest when we finally waved good-bye to America.

We disembarked as soon as we were within range of Yeovilton and then the flying consisted of practising for the Queen's Review Fly-past which went by without a hitch. This was followed by a rather sad occasion when we took part in a fly-past over Linton-on-Ouse to mark the passing out of the final Naval fixed-wing course. After summer leave, Lt.-Cdr. Dunbar-Dempsey had only a few days as our new CO before we were back to the hard grind at sea with flying off Brawdy. A Saturday Night at Sea inspired 'Nuttie' Walters to lead a one-man team to eliminate the young midshipmen. He was carried away to spend a week in Brawdy's sickbay.

Our first exercise of the Commission, 'Peacekeeper', took place south west of U.K. Although many sorties were flown, it was a frustrating time as there was very little trade. Among the targets intercepted were the Fishguard-Cork ferry and the Smalls lighthouse (reported to be moving rapidly). Having kept the peace next stop was Gibraltar. We flew occasionally from North Front when the sorties did not clash with the runs ashore or the 'cultural' visits to Tangiers. Dave Boag obviously had a good run there because the PMO removed his appendix and sent him to Malta after we had been at sea two days.

Exercise 'Deep Furrow' was next, the venue this time being the Aegean Sea. We flew a lot,



If you want to go fast ...

but again, there was not much trade to make it interesting. However, third time lucky and so it proved to be with Exercise 'Ranular' in which we helped the RAF to defend Cyprus. Thus satisfied, we went to Malta for a couple of weeks of gentle flying. The Mess at RAF Luqa was soon colonised and converted. Several midshipmen were given rides in the Vixen as was Chief Green. He remained unconvinced that he should change jobs. Chief Silcock also had his moment on the Malta-Gozo ferry. Being a big ship man, his stomach wasn't quite used to the rigours of small ship life.

Leaving Malta, the grand Mediterranean tour progressed to Naples after which we found a small gap in our itinerary before our next visit. This was filled by Exercise 'Decamp' against *Hermes* in which it did not take us long to assert our superiority beyond all doubt. The highlight of our return to Gibraltar was the Squadron Run. Circumstances beyond our control prevented the stripper appearing but Steward Simpson rose to the occasion and stood in as substitute. What a sight that was. After buying 'rabbits' we set off home with our Exercise 'Decamp' booty (namely *Hermes*) in company. We launched two of our Vixens late with the sole aim of leading 893 back to Yeovilton. (It was rumoured that in view of the lack of Tacan beacons en-route, they would not have

launched until Lands End was in sight.) About this time a strange new face appeared in the Squadron. When challenged the face claimed to be our very own REG Chief, Chief Pattenden, who had shaved off his 'set' for the first time in years.

All too soon it was time to re-embark for the fourth and final time. This was too much for 'Tonk' Parker who went off on another of his sporting jaunts, this time to St. Moritz for the Inter-Service Cresta Run competition. From the grapevine we learned that life was pretty rugged over there, the pressure on the nerves heavy, and the tensions high. The tobogganing he found easy and relaxing, gaining the fastest Naval time and second position overall.

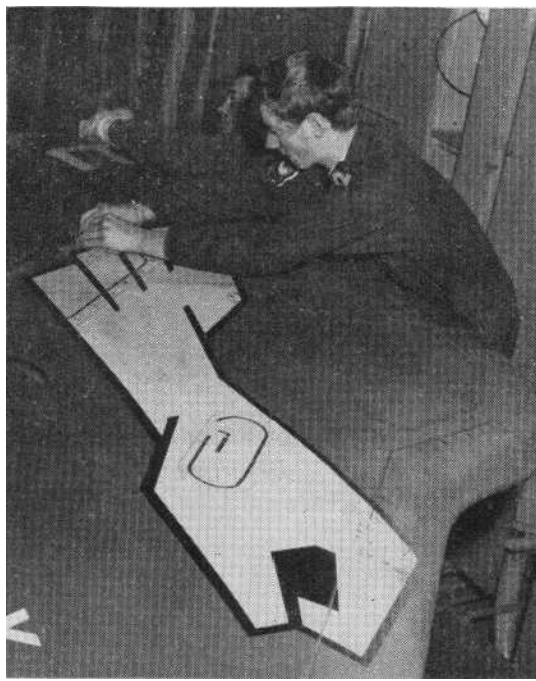
For those who had time to work, it was back to our old stamping ground, the Gulf of Lions, this time using BAN Hyeres as our diversion. We proved that 'Fanny' had no control and that the French Air Traffic team understood our English better than our French. We spent many days rocketing over the nudist colony on the Isle de Levant, but the word must have got around that 899 were in the area because not one naked French bottom did we see to fire at. Disappointed, we gave up and went into Toulon for a couple of weeks' maintenance. We had a splendid banyan that was a great success - Jon Whaley broke both his wrists.

It was hard work but we finally cracked the second CO of the Commission, Lt.-Cdr. Mike Layard replacing Cdr. Dunbar-Dempsey when we left Toulon.

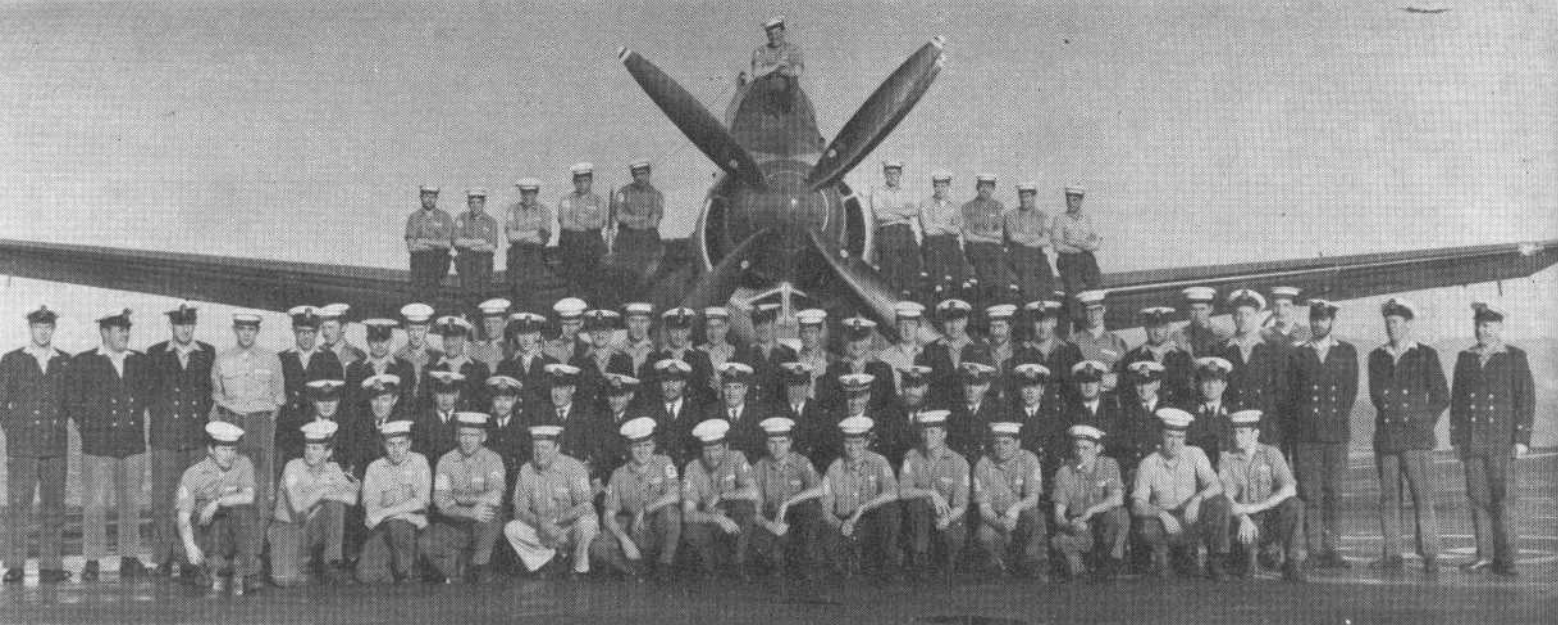
The advertisements don't lie when they tell you that you will see the whole world with the Navy. Our next port of call was Liverpool, closely followed by Plymouth. Judging by most people's faces when they returned on board, both runs were just as good as sitting in the tropics sipping 'Tiger'.

We left Liverpool so that four of our pilots could try night flying from the deck for the first time. They disproved Robin Shercliffe's theory of 'black air - no lift', by completing three or four sorties each.

Now the circle is complete and we are back at Yeovilton for the summer and the silly season, preparing once more for our return to the Mighty 'E'.



... you have to polish it first



849D FLIGHT

- 1 Of *Eagle's* aircraft most agree
The ugly is the Gannet Three
The Flight has four and also flies
The COD, our postman of the skies.
Six pilots and observers ten,
Make up the aviating men
Sixty-three supporting crew
Combine for AEW.
- 2 From dawn to dusk and sometimes
nights
Gannets launch on lengthy flights
Air raid reporting, shipping plot
Is generally our daily lot
But in addition to these chores
We often fetch the mail and stores
And many brave and trusting gents
Flew with us for experience.
- 3 The Flight embarked on April 3rd
Of '69 and soon was heard
The Double Mamba's throaty roar
By Lossie's green and pleasant shore.
The work up in the Moray Firth
Provided one excuse for mirth
One weekend at Lossie, half the Flight
Were stormbound, boatless, overnight.
- 4 That Easter we spent back in Wales,
Regaling Brawdy with tall tales
Of life at sea, and how the Fates
Decreed we'd soon be in the States.
We also frequently did fly
And practice for the ORI
Which brought us to the end of May
And Phantom trials in Lyme Bay.
- 5 Of runs ashore, the all-time greats
Were on the visit to the States
Norfolk, Boston, ports of call
Which were enjoyed by one and all
And when these visits were complete
The Queen reviewed the Western Fleet
'D' Flight Gannets in this last
Joined in the Royal Mass Fly-past.
- 6 The autumn brought a change of jobs
New CO, AEO and SOBS
Then exercises in succession
Prepared the Fleet against aggression.
The first was planned the Peace to
Keep,
The second ploughing Furrows Deep
But of corny names the best so far
Was an exercise called 'Ranular'.
- 7 Twice we visited Gibraltar,
Naples followed two weeks in Malta
But things ain't what they used to be
Down in the Mediterranean Sea.
Britannia's rapidly losing her grip
For *Eagle* was almost our only ship
From the British Fleet, so thin on
the ground
While Russians, and others, in
numbers abound.
- 8 *Hermes* joined us in November
That was an exercise to remember,
Or forget, we didn't know
Whether she was friend or foe
Till in Gibraltar both the ships
And 'A' and 'D' Flight came to grips
The conclusion of this carrier war
FOCAS declared to be a draw.
- 9 And so to Christmas and farewell
To one-third of our personnel
Their reliefs soon soon got the buzz
And later re-embarked in Guzz.
The first few days of flying off Wales
Were noted for the wintry gales
We didn't think they'd last for long
As *Eagle* headed for Toulon.
- 10 The spring cruise gave the Flight a
chance
To have a look at Southern France
And some achieved their bold
ambitions
By going on camping expeditions.
After Toulon back at sea
The weather worsened markedly
The heavy seas and howling gales
Were worse than those we had off
Wales.
- 11 Now back in England's climate cool
We left the ship in Liverpool
Our place aboard our favourite carrier
Is (temporarily) taken by the Harrier
Yer actual VSTOL can't replace
The friendly, bumbling, Anyface
'D' Flight signs off with the wish-
Best of luck on the next Commish.

By A. LONG FELLOW



Departure of the postman

THE HEART OF THE SHIP - THE HANGARS

The day the hangars ceased to function as a Dockyard Restroom so the battle to defend this ever popular piece of real estate began. Many were the bids from other departments for 'space to stow a few boxes' and equally many were the dictionaries from which they obtained the definition of 'a few'. In some cases they were extremely hard to convince that it was necessary to leave any room for aircraft at all.

There were occasions, of course, when outside events took precedence, the first being the Commissioning Ceremony when the upper hangar echoed to the responses of the Gaelic Blessing after the Captain had read the Commissioning Warrant. Since then the upper hangar has resounded to the voices of many visitors, young and old, during receptions, various open days and children's parties, from as far apart as Norfolk, Virginia and Naples. On these occasions, bids from other departments were most welcome and some first class exhibits went on show. Preparation

of the hangar to the standard required for these events however, was not without its pain and problems, for where else in the world would you attempt to convert a workshop from full production to 'Earls Court' display in 12 days, let alone 12 hours?

The undoubted high point in all these extra-mural activities was during the Queen's Review and PCWF in July 1969. What miracles the mention of these magic letters achieved. The lower hangar was converted into a television control centre and seemed to be filled to capacity with BBC vehicles, mysterious boxes and mile upon mile of cable. On the day of the ceremony, to all this was added the many who found their way to this rarely visited spot to watch the proceedings on the colour monitor that had been set up by the BBC team.

The upper hangar became a theatre for the staging of the ship's revue 'Where Eagles Dare' and a rehearsal area for the Colour Presentation Ceremony. There

was also a plan for Foul Weather Routine but we were all convinced that this would not be necessary as the weather was bound to be 'Admiralty Pattern' on the day. However it was not to be, for on the evening prior to the Review the weather 'failed to conform' and at midnight, with the hangar full of a thousand odd chairs, 500 stranded souls (and a dozen soulesses) the decision was taken to prepare for the wet weather routine. PO Wright and the entire hangar party toiled all night to achieve a standard 'fit for a Queen' and some measure of the success of their all night efforts may be judged by a study of the reflections in the deck in the numerous photographs taken during the Presentation of the new Colour.

Currently, early preparations are in hand for the Wardroom Easter Ball complete with discotheque in the after lift well. Just in case there are still any doubters, the hangar WAS used from time to time to stow aircraft, and, of course, the Huntress.

SEAMAN DEPARTMENT

There have been ships named *Eagle* in the Royal Navy for nearly 400 years and there have always been seaman on board running them. However, the seaman today is far more versatile than his 16th century predecessor. Of course, the Gunner has always been with us, whether the weapon was a bow and arrow or the 4.5in. twin turrets and Seacat missiles of *Eagle* (is there much difference?). The Gunnery Officer and his merry men will be able to tell you the difference and I am quite sure we have all been thankful for the high standard of efficiency of the self-defence weapon system of the ship (the airey-fairies sometimes miss you know), which has been achieved through hard work and in trying conditions.

The other two main sub-specialisations have come in comparatively recently, the RP branch with radar and the TAS branch with the advent of the submarine. How often have we heard the cry 'Why RP's when we have a computer system to take their place?' The RP's can assure you that they have always worked far harder than the computer especially during exercises 'Peacekeeper' and 'Deep Furrow'. The RP's were involved in every aspect of these exercises but principally in defence against Air, Surface and Subsurface attack. Besides destroying most enemy units in both exercises, H.M.S. *Eagle* managed to bag several Boeing 707's and fishing boats.

The TAS branch is quite small but no less important since they are part of our

defence against attack by submarines, using the up-to-date 184 sonar. They have proved their worth and obtained vital long-range warning of attacks.

Besides these innovations the Department has been heavily involved in, of all things, seamanship. The RAS has been a regular feature of *Eagle* life and the various teams involved have repeatedly beaten the Bogey Time. The buzz that seaman officers play ping-pong during a RAS is not true, they are signalling their colleagues on the Supply Ships. (What, you saw an officer making a clear hand signal without a bat?).

The Department was also heavily involved in PCWF from the ceremonial - G.I's Paradise - to the more routine jobs of running boats, rigging booms and

ladders etc. Another big occasion on the calendar was coming to head and stern buoys in Malta. A particular mention must go to the Quarterdeckmen in carrying out what, to most of them, was a completely new evolution. But let us not forget the Cable Party who have 'dropped the pick' on many occasions and been closed up at all times of the day or night in addition to their normal watchkeeping. Last, but not least, we have managed, with the help of other departments, to qualify one of our seamen as a splash target coxswain.

However, I'm sure you think that the finest achievement of the Seaman Department was to get the ship alongside in Devonport at the end of March for a well-earned D.E.D.



Rough weather RAS

COMMUNICATIONS

R03 J. A. M. Strangler,
2MA4 Mess,
H.M.S. *Eagle*,
BFPO Ships

Dear Felicity,

Thought I would write and tell you about a very nice thankyou letter I got from our admiral, the other day. You see, he was so pleased with the way I organised the ORI (didn't tell him about the private teleprinter link I had young LRO Stokes fix up with Sandy MacStrangler in Faslane, did I, but what the eye don't see the shiny boot needn't trip over), where was I? yes, he was so chuffed that he asked me and the Captain if we'd like to become permanent Comms test ship for NATO. I haven't been able to tell you before, because it was Secret but Jock Sutherland says it's okay now. The Captain liked this as he could wangle a trip to do another burn up on the Pennsylvania Turnpike and as I fancied it myself I agreed and so old FOCAS fixed us a trip Stateside, to check out the comms there. Poor Alfie Marks had a hell of a time with the Norfolk broadcast, until I told him it was run like tombola then he won a prize too. But on the whole the Yanks weren't too bad and I gave them 8/10.

Then we had to test out the Western Fleet for old Admiral Bush at Torbay. He was so impressed that he fixed for the Queen to come on board and give the ship a new tiddly ensign for the excellent work me and my lads were doin'. Old Yeo Gray did well there as he only lost about 10 of the 10,000 signals we handled and Yeo Zolly Farnes had a heyday selling photostat copies of the Queen's speech.

FOCAS and I then decided we'd better sort out the rest of NATO, so we fixed up this enormous exercise. We had so many nets the Russians thought we were another trawler. I had some trouble with the 'Newport News', so I sent over one of my brighter lads, RS Dave Evans and he did so well that my oppo Admiral Semmes gave him a signed coloured photo which didn't harf make old Ted Scott jealous who'd only got an ordinary one the year before. To reciprocate I sent over that one of you and me taken in the photy booth at Pompey in May. Well we checked out the NATO navies and Norwegian and German armies and a few others. Then we went down to the Med., not to frighten old Franco like SKO (you know, old Lt.-Cdr. Ellis, who takes a great interest in Comms in his spare time) put in the papers, no, but to check out the Sixth Fleet and the Italians, Greeks and Turks. I had to send over a Drongo Australian Lt.-Cdr. to the Sixth Fleet Flagship instead of going myself, but I was busy trying to fix some Turkish FPBs for the gollies to play with. Old RS Bateman and Jacko Jacobs were fair pleading to be allowed to join in. After that we went down to Cyprus to give the RAF a rub up. They were terrible, but I had a brainwave and sent for old RS Fox (the redfaced one who made improper suggestions to you in Guzz) who had stayed at home sick, and he showed the RAF a thing or two, like how to work an Elsan receiver on top of a mountain.

After Christmas we had a go at the French, where my UHF men 'Manking' Melia and Mac McClarity used to call FANNY every morning and Paddy Beckles chatted'em up in Creole. And we've been doin' lots of Jocomexes with the Army and RAF and finally got them talking the same language as us. Maybe they talk like Oily Allred, Snips Parsons, Golly Breen and Burrows but still. Perhaps I should have sent our D-J Tony Revett. Old RS Bray had to give up so many tots that he nearly went 'T' poor ole fella. In the end, the only bods we didn't set up a circuit with were the Luxemburgers and the Welsh Nationalists.

Unfortunately it's all come to an end now, but we did manage to squeeze in one more foreign when Scousers Mansfield and Watkins persuaded me to ask the Captain to 'live a little' and go to Liverpool.

I quite enjoyed my time on board really. Me an' the Captain got on just fine, he used to ask me to look out for him when he went to see his missus about her R.A. money. We had the First Sea Lord visit us the other day and he told me confidentially that he thought the Captain might get his R.A. this time. He also said that he had heard so much about me from ole FOCAS that he was sending me to help out in the Far East. Old Norman Phelps (he's the Stamps Officer who helps Florrie Ford with the Soccer) also reckons he'll be out there too. Most of my team are moving on in fact, old Lt. Briggs, who I used to help out when he was stuck, has already gone off for a rest at Lossie and I sent Mad Mick Mugeridge to qualify for officer - well, he did interfere a bit, you know.

Well Felicity my love, that's yer lot. All the lads send their love too, they can afford it with this new pay thing.

Yours till the sun sets on time as I keep telling CCY Clements,

Lots of love,

Alfa Mike

Heard in the Ops Room

'ORO this is Gunnery Officer, request clear range on a bearing of 370.'

'This is ORO, Roger, range clear.'

Pause.

'This is ORO, say again bearing?'

'Charlie this is One Three Six, radio check.'

'This is Charlie, Roger, you are loud but faint . .

Heard in the GDR

'GDP this is GDR, is the aircraft on a bearing of 100° an Etandard?' (French fighter).

'This is GDP, negative, it's a big one.'

AIR DEPARTMENT

This has not been, in any sense, a remarkable Commission but more one of solid achievement. However, it has had several highlights, we've had at least one 'first' (the British deck trials of the Phantom) and although a couple of Wessex now reside on the ocean bed, we didn't have a casualty.

The operation of an Air Group in a Strike Carrier is essentially a team effort, and as the Squadrons cannot operate without the support of the Ship's Air Department, their not inconsiderable flying achievements are a fair reflection of that support. Each member of the team has his part to play, whether it be that of Chockman, Director, or FDO, but almost never singly, always as part of the whole.

The collection of individuals who joined at the beginning of 1969, many in their first ship, were gradually moulded into an efficient organisation. This in itself was a team effort by the more experienced FDO's and Petty Officers, but perhaps especially by the busy, bustling figure of the Captain of the Flight Deck. CA Neate. He quickly became a familiar figure, spurring on the FD crews to greater efforts (and occasionally asking a gofer 'without ear defenders to 'go away!') all under the eagle eyes (if you'll pardon the expression) of 'Wings', Cdr Anson, and little 'f', Lt.-Cdr. Mike Darlington, perched up in the Royal Box. Their early dissatisfaction with things like bogey times for Barrier Drills soon began to make sense as times and standards improved, and complex aircraft movements became routine.

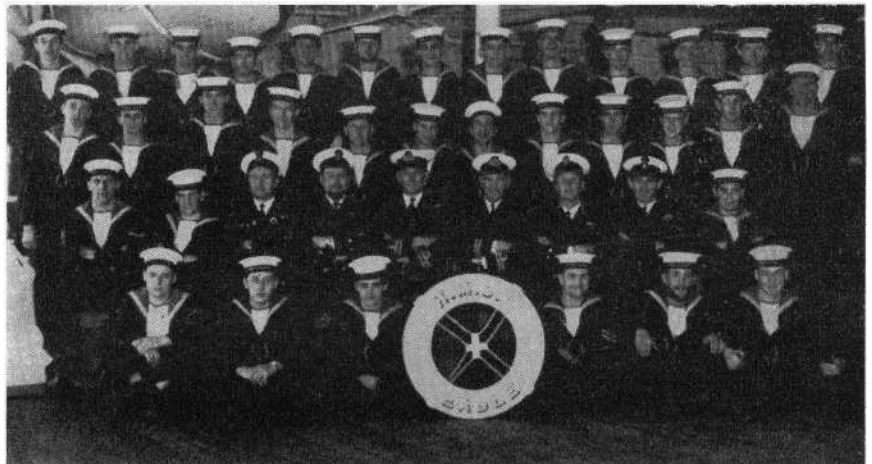
Immediately after being 'passed out' by

FOCAS in the ORI the Department was faced with the new and different problems presented by the Phantom with its strange, flat Jet Blast Deflector that had to be cooled after every launch, and its string of boffins with their differing requirements. Similarly at the end of the Commission, the smaller Harrier (but with just as many boffins), produced another challenge but, as with the Phantom, this was taken in their stride by all those involved.

The SAR Flight, for almost all the Commission under the command of Lt. Roger Mortimer, with their old Wessex Mk. 1's were invariably in evidence performing a multitude of tasks, but fortunately rarely being called on 'in anger'. They flew many photographic sorties resulting in a steady stream of photographs for the Director of Public Relations while the Photographic Officer himself, Lt. 'Tug' Wilson, contributed

enormously to the whole ship with his daily ration of superb artistic humour in *EAGLE EXPRESS*.

The succession of major exercises, 'Peacekeeper', 'Deep Furrow', 'Ranular' and 'Decamp', during the autumn of 1969 ably demonstrated the high level of efficiency of the Air Group resulting in a certain, justifiable, self satisfaction. However, perhaps even more important, in a sense, was the extremely favourable impression gained by 150 or so senior Officers of many services and nationalities of the Imperial Defence College, the 850 families and many individual VIP's all of whom witnessed first class demonstrations of the ability of the Air Group. In addition, the many hours of hard work spent preparing the ship for 'Open to Visitors' was all well worth while when considering the many thousands of people in the U.S.A., Italy, Gibraltar and Liverpool who were so impressed with all they saw.



The Weapon supply team



*CA Neate with
FONAC*

Photographic team



MARINE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

COME STEAM WITH ME

The start of our story must really go back to July 1968, when many of us arrived in the ship. But unlike joining all other ships, we had to work at the start and this work lasted for almost eight months before things really began to settle down to a ship's routine, barracks was vacated and living on board became the rule of the day.

Soon the time came for the MARENS to take their place as the driving force of the ship. Events built up; 5th March came and for once we all wore badges on our best overalls and, with steaming caps stowed away, looked the perfect matelots in uniform. Hymns were sung, prayers and Warrant were read, and then we were on our own. What would we make of it? Would we be as good as the Eagles before us, or would the Big 'E' come off best? We now know the answer, but it was not easy.

Sailing day - it had to come at last, and for all of us the cobwebs of barracks and 5 and 6 wharves were speedily shaken off and Friday, 7th March was the big 'off'. Trials and tribulations came and went and slowly the pattern of the *Eagle* Marens was being moulded.

Speed was the order of the day on 12th March when we pushed along at 236 revs. Even 'Navy News' gave us a mention, telling us that this was the fastest we had been since Builders' Trials. This helped us along to Lossiemouth and the event of our weekend with the 'Airies'. Some of us never made it but those who did enjoyed the hospitality of the Air Station to the full. There was no truth in the rumour that they liked it up there, they only stayed behind for the helicopter ride at the end. We never did find out who the key ratings were, they all looked the same to us.

'Oh Portsmouth, thou Queen of the Hampshire Coast', they took us there to mend. Some of it was done but that's only a rumour. Our President was like a member of the United Nations and all he



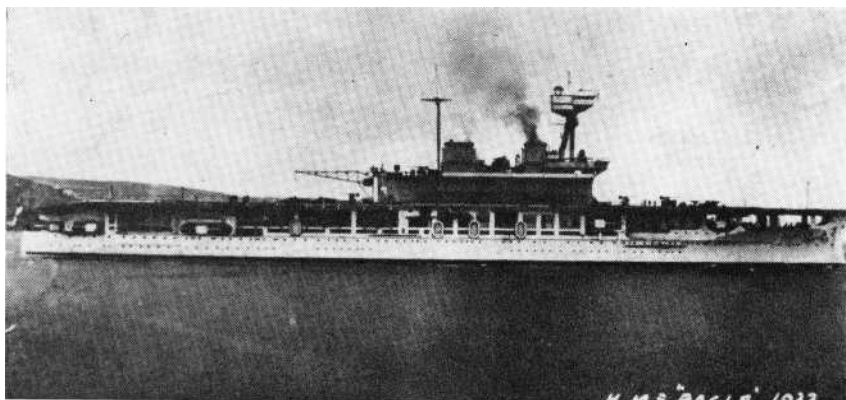
heard was 'Niet, Niet, Niet'. But various sports and activities went on and the night hawks were able to do some night flying in Soho, etc. It ended, as all visits do, with more friends and the Devonport accent weakening. This was soon regained with a brief visit to 'Charlie Buoy' before we were off once more.

May the turning and the burning
Still continue through the night,
May the Greenies keep on giving
Us our everlasting light,
May the fluids keep on flowing
Thro' their preselected pipes
And may M(E)s cease to suffer
From phlebitis, cramps and gripe,
May the Chippies keep a-chipping
At their lumps of four by two
And 'X' engine keep on making
The greatest dregs of stew;
May the Badgers keep 'em flying
From the waist and for'd cats,
And still have time to sleep all day
Like nocturnal bats;
May *Eagle* keep on steaming
Until her days are through,
'Cos I'll be gone on draft by then
And so no doubt will you.

Re-scrub at Damage Control - what a failure. The results of all our hard work were really shattered by the Staff. The rest of the O.R.I. went well and so did the rescrub.

It had to happen - it did happen - 'A' Boiler Room. At 0730 on the morning of Friday, 13th June, a mass of oil fuel came down the fan trunking and every other trunking and things looked very black indeed. The Wardroom emergency party turned out in force, but to no avail - the PO(ME)s of the watch got the commendation and pictures in the 'Navy News'. Well done! But the Seamen, Electricians and all who came to our aid had to work really hard to get the danger over. To mention a few of our helpers, let us not forget the 'Limers' king in 4 deck passageway who kept us well supplied, the cigarette people, the foam carriers and many many more. Thank you all and well done. Then Devonport came to our aid and soon the 'yardies' made everything look nice once more.

What then? - Well Columbus did it, Chichester did it and *Eagle* was going the same way - to the Americas. Memories, memories, there must be a million of them, but Norfolk Navy Yard was really something to behold. They had everything and gave us their all. Many visits were made and all tastes were satisfied, from the highbrow to the other sort. Private houses were thrown open to us and 4th July was a really splendid affair. It's not every day the next door neighbours say 'Use the pool if you want to'. Messes grew in size, tots were shared and the name swapping was wonderful, from Elmer G to Homer Bittle. So different from Dave and Mike. We loved you, we left you, but our triumphs were not yet over.



37 years ago, and we still make smoke

Boston, what a name to think of. Many opportunities were taken to visit friends and General Booth found a cousin who was really a Scotsman on holiday, so we are told. But he ran a bar and that was good enough for us. Organised sight-seeing, sailing and motoring were the order of the day and one in number Ch(M)E was found drinking in the Wardroom of the American Base at Newport, Rhode Island - they're everywhere.

How those sailors changed after the event; horns are stowed away and tales are swapped. Some fool issued Richard Prest with a car and let him loose on the turnpike. The remark of the day: 'If we are stopped for speeding remember, we're British'.

Ceremonies have to come, so to Torbay for the presentation of the new Colour to the Fleet. It rained, and how! But even so it was a good visit and many friends were made. There was a tea party for the CPOs and when the Royal Family were meeting the crowd, a Ch(M)E (from Eagle), looking at the Prince, was heard to remark, 'Gawd don't 'e need an 'aircut'. This was overheard by H.M. and he appeared at the Wardroom dinner that evening looking very smart after a quick trim.

So to leave and time to get the Big 'E' out of the system. But leaves must end and exercises begin. The first was called 'Peacekeeper', all very nice, but as with every exercise for the Steamies, it was the usual round and the usual defects. Then off away to the Med. 'S.M.P.', what a set of words these are. To us they meant more work to get the old lady ready for another hard slog. But the natives of Gibraltar were friendly to us and the names of the pubs became quite familiar. 'Deep Furrow' was the next one (not a ploughing competition in Dorset but an exercise). All sorts of foreigners were involved in this and as ever, we won, beating the wicked Bulgars who had attacked one of the NATO countries.

Then to the jewel of the Mediterranean - Malta, back to the land of the dghaia and for some, R.A. They all enjoyed it and the dinners with the ladies were well to be remembered. Mess dinners, runs ashore and the inevitable horoscope readings. But the belle of them all was the battle of 'Hydrophobia'. Stokers with rifles, good ones at that, targets to fire at and for one (nameless) the target was the sand dune protecting the butts. Strange words were spoken such as 'magpie', 'inner' and all that. Thank you to the GIs and the GOs for your patience and for not letting us hear you swear. Romps over the hills and conquests new for all. May we return again, was the general opinion.

What then, had we done it all? - Not on your life. Napoli, 'O Sole Mio' and all that. Trips to the past (Pompeii), trips to the future (the wine shop), and the learning of a new dance - the steamie



stomp (one foot on the pavement and one in the gutter). Somebody found us wandering and with the aid of a compass we were brought home. Some went to see the Pope, but not available, and to the Coliseum (no lions), but in all, a good day for the sightseers. Once more it had to end and off we went to the land of 'Chrimbo Shopping'. Money flowed like water and the scent shops were full of members of the staff covered in the stuff.

A Merry Christmas/Hogmanay to you all - at home of course. This was the season of goodwill and families and it lasted until 12th January before we heard the call of the sea once more. A call at Gibraltar and then to Toulon for a touch of the French way of living. A memory of Toulon, Y unit beat X unit at football and the losing ChM(E) was heard to remark at every goal 'Oh the pain' - and there were 13 of them. Perhaps a mention of the trip to the Mardi Gras at Nice. All had a lovely time and the expression 'confetti' was heard for many a long day afterwards. Then back to the sea and to the next port of call, Liverpool.

Pages could be written of this visit and some of the memories will never be forgotten. The two youngsters who asked to change watches because they were courting two sisters (granted), and of the

night hawks who were seen to come on board at 0600 looking a little worse for wear, but they never gave up. Congratulations to the two swimmers - the awards were made by the MAA. 'Good-bye Scouse' was all that was heard and some of the ladies are still chasing us up.

Work was still to come and they gave us the Harrier to play with. What a lot of smoke watchers we had and the old tale of only a stoker was not in it. Senior had a go and so did many more of us but it was very strange that they only went up when the Harrier was taking off or landing. Congratulations to 'B' and 'Y' Units for taking part and covering the gentry with mucky water when changing over De-Sups.

Our last word, thank you all for the trip, the P.U.s and all that. We shall ring off for now and hope that, if you do not sail next time, you will remember us who will.

POSTSCRIPT

R.F.A.s Olmeda and Olna and various shore filling stations have supplied us with 88,196.3 tons of F.F.O. at 6d per gallon. For this we still owe them £520,356 8s 3½d and they still owe us 10,407,128 green shield stamps. Eagle is therefore a very economical old girl, but she still costs about £6 per mile to run.

