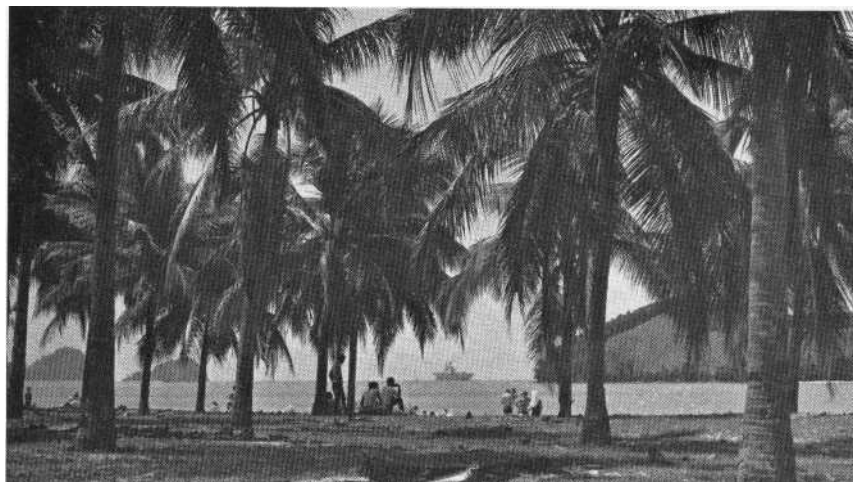


ALL AT SEA

We had braced ourselves, in Hong Kong, for the next part of the Commission - a return to Singapore, followed by exercises and then 'standing by' to cover the withdrawal from the Persian Gulf: all the time at sea. Our departure from Singapore, where we did not stop, and the demise of the Far East Fleet was marked by a steam-past and fly-past for the Commander-in-Chief. All our aircraft, and all the other ships, took part. We went straight on into an exercise - Curtain Call - with ALBION, GLAMORGAN, SCYLLA, ARETHUSA, ACHILLES, ARGONAUT, GHURKHA, HMAS SWAN, HMNZS OTAGO and the RFAs. During this time the entire fleet went to anchor at Langkawi for a few days. Although we were a long way off the beach the order of the day was 'get ashore and have fun'. For those who like a bit of organised sport there was 'It's a Knockout', for which many appropriate stunts had been devised. There were opportunities to get sunburnt, or to haggle, in the shade of the palms, for coconuts or bananas. Meanwhile, the cooks and the NAAFI staff were doing great lines with barbecued steaks and soft drinks. There was a fishing competition, too - the total catch comprising two, under six-inch, tiddlers! The Pudding-stirring ceremony was performed, and the normal daily routine of work was tempered with the usual round of Off Watch activities.



Eastern shores



The Admiral and the Commander watch 'It's a Knockout' on the beach at Langkawi



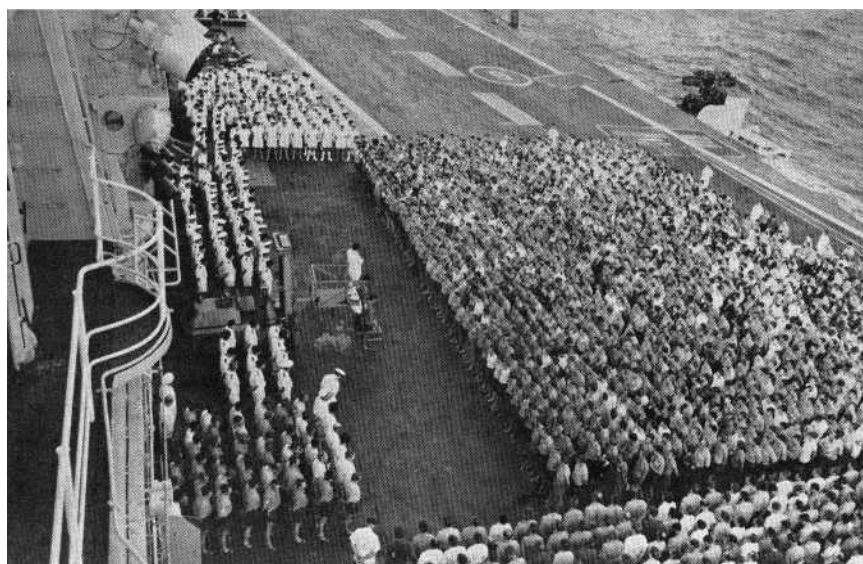
Mixing the 1971 pudding



A 'Highwayman' intermediate draw during a Singalong



Gannets overhead



Clear Lower Deck



Durban - queuing to see us

THE GULF

From the Penang Areas we travelled across to Gan for a further few days of flying before proceeding to the close proximity of the Persian Gulf. We spent most of the time within sight of the RAF base at Masira and were able to get in a great deal of flying. Allowing the aircraft to practise their bombing and rocketry was a good way of starting to de-ammunition the Ship.

The Eagle Players put on a revue in the Upper Hangar, and the Squadrons put on an air display in which even the Gannets managed to frighten us all by coming low and close, to fly, seemingly, through the maze of aerials that we carry. After the long stretch at sea we were preparing ourselves for the forthcoming visit to Mombasa. It never came. The political situation required us to remain in close proximity to the Gulf and so we resigned ourselves to an extra week or so at sea and to missing the delights promised to us in the 'Eagle Express' SPECIAL on Mombasa, issued on the same day as the announcement was made. Auld Nig was unable to refresh his 'Hazy Memories' which had become a feature of every port of call.



Later, the situation in Pakistan warranted assistance and a busy evening and night was spent in transferring stores across to ALBION which detached from us and sailed towards that troubled country with half of 826 Squadron and their aircraft on board as well. We headed towards Mombasa and, as we passed by, held our Christmas Pantomime and bade farewell to the Admiral and his staff (transferring them to TRIUMPH) as we continued to Durban, where we arrived on 22 December.

Having spent 56 days at sea, we were glad to be ashore - no real records were broken (a surprising number of men were on board and at sea for a longer stretch during the Beira Patrol), but it was a long spell that, thanks to efforts all round, went surprisingly well.



Ready for show

DURBAN

Our berth in Durban was, unfortunately, on the 'wrong side' of the docks - it was a long, hard haul around the harbour (how many railway lines to cross ?) but the boats were running regularly and the inconvenience was little impediment to the enjoyment of all. There were always crowds on the jetty just looking at the Ship, and we had record attendances on 'Ship Open to Visitors' days. The general public never quite grasped that visiting at other times was by private invitation only. There were plenty of such invites, too, as grateful men showed around their hosts.

Christmas and the New Year seemed to be one long holiday, and there were hundreds of South Africans prepared to share their time, homes and hospitality. Car-trips and coach-trips to the nearby game reserves and scenic spots were frequent, and many men travelled farther afield to the game parks of Zululand. For those who preferred to entertain themselves there was the beach and the many other attractions that any large holiday resort can offer.

Christmas came and, with it, entertainment for children. Father Christmas flew in by helicopter to give them a welcome and gifts. The shipwrights had been busy previously as we crossed the Indian Ocean and had built a splendid Wendy House and a Fort and other accessories for use in an orphanage. With the help of the staff ashore, a suitably deserving orphanage was found and the gifts were taken there and assembled. In addition, several odd-jobs were done around the grounds and buildings.

On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day itself there were the usual festivities on board for those not invited ashore. A service of lessons and carols was held in the hangar (and we'd been practising, too, with community hymn-singing on the flightdeck of an evening whilst at sea) and there was, of course, Christmas Fayre and an extra can of beer all round. Christmas in the sun may have been unusual for some, but it was certainly pleasant, and the visit as a whole was regarded - with that at Wellington - as being the best of the Commission.

We sailed at an early hour on 4 January and loitered off Simonstown long enough to pick up and land mail. We didn't stop at Ascension on the way back and, shortly after leaving that area, we were ordered to close Gibraltar with **all speed** to stand by to go to Malta.



House-building chippies



Father Christmas arrives



Lit up for Crimbo



The last of the heavies



The Captain launches the little E



Positively the last fixed-wing launch

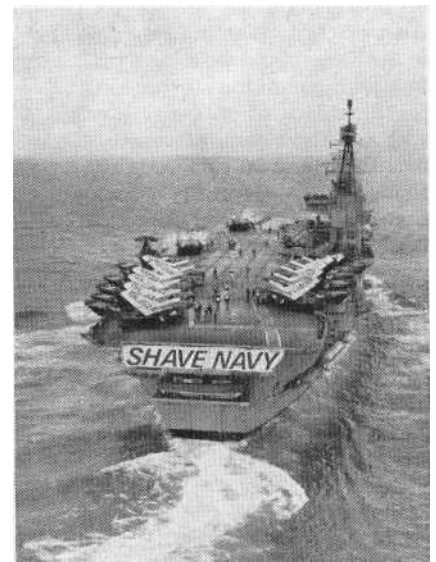
BACK IN THE CHANNEL

The thought of going to Malta caused deep gloom all around, but it was not to be so. Having been much shaken around by the hard-pressed machinery (which pleased all by its steady performance) we arrived at Gibraltar on 19 January.

True to form, the weather was changeable. On arrival, the sun shone and all was calm. As many as could, took leave and went ashore. On the next day conditions were worse and leave was not granted, so, as soon as the last-minute essential stores were embarked, we 'upped pick' and were away.

The winding-up operations were in full swing. For months, meetings had been drawing-up plans for scrapping the Ship and, more immediately, the squadrons worked hard to ensure that all the aircraft were serviceable. In spite of some rude messages and flower-power signs, that appeared on them overnight, the jets disembarked as planned (or within an hour or two of it). On the next day the Gannets flew off: not quite the last fixed-wing launch from the EAGLE. *That* was reserved for a replica of the Red Baron's aircraft, and By Golly, it went (splash). A scale model of the EAGLE was also launched, making more smoke than ever the big E could have done!

826 Squadron flew themselves off, chacons and all, and the only aircraft that remained was a Buccaneer which had had its guts removed and so was unable to fly off anyway.



No doubt the razor blades, like the Ship and its crew, will be sharp and keen'

THE END

We anchored off Spithead on the 25th and the Customs men - seemingly hundreds of them - came aboard to do and take their duty. The question everyone had been sweating over ('How much will they want for my lot?') was soon answered and the general feeling was that we were treated fairly.

Overnight the wind got up and, for a time (for those awake to it), the possibility of not entering harbour as scheduled was real. The morning dawned quiet enough, if a little wet, and we entered as planned, watched by crowds ashore. The families streamed aboard as soon as the bows were out, and leave started as soon as possible. The wind got up and blew a gale for days: how lucky we were!

Within a few days, Captain Robertson left and Commander R. F. White, who had been organising the run-down project from the shore-side for several months, took over as Commanding Officer. De-ammunitioning started, and de-storing and de-equipping got under way, helped by a huge bridge - built by army engineers - that enabled transport to drive on and off the Ship. At the time of writing, all was going smoothly and almost too fast, thanks to the detailed forward planning and co-operation from all the departments concerned, both afloat and ashore.



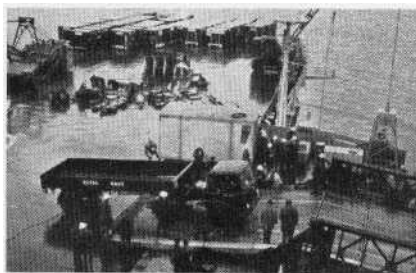
The Far East Colour is laid up on return to Portsmouth



Customs - grin and bear it



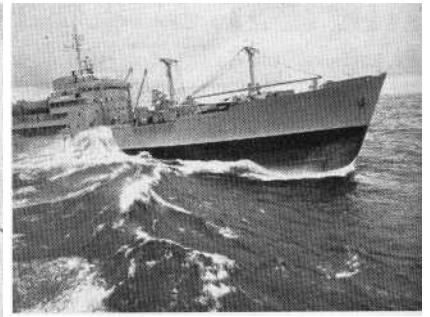
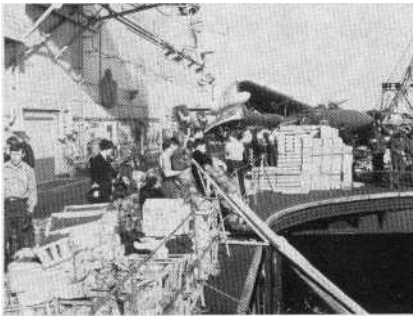
Entering Portsmouth, January 26th, 1972



The biggest brow ever is ceremonially opened (left) and de-storing starts (above)

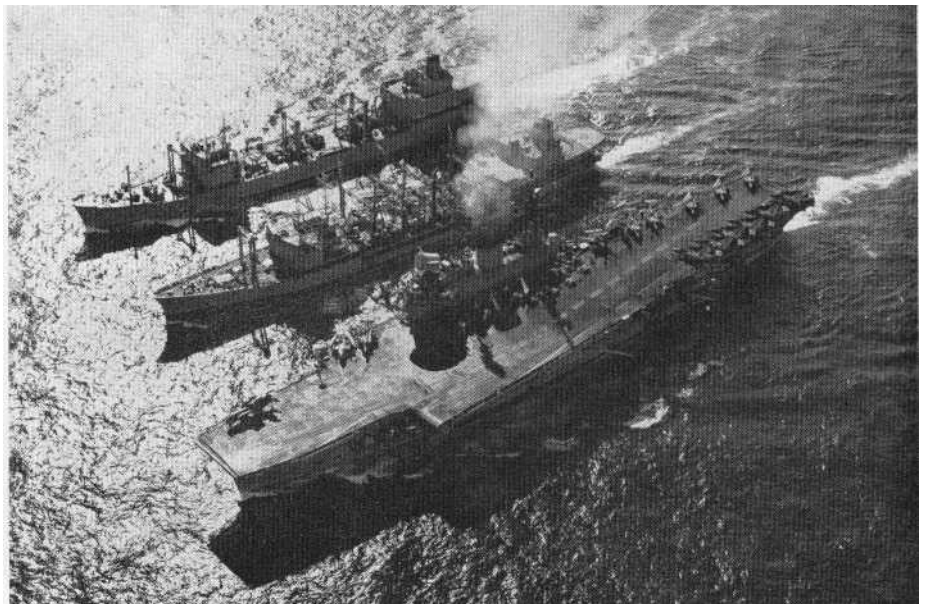
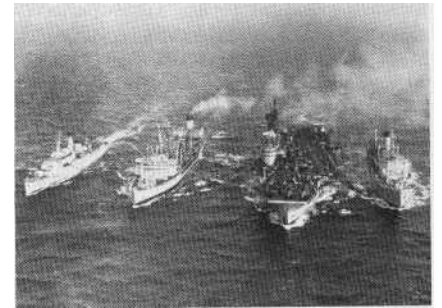


Commander White greets the First Sea Lord who came to see 'The Bridge'



REPLENISHMENT AT SEA

Used so frequently, RAS is a word in its own right, and it is an evolution that is carried out at least once a week (on Sundays) but usually every three or four days (for fuel) and weekly (for stores). During the Commission, the weather has only once or twice delayed a RAS and, solids or liquids, rough or smooth, wet or dry, the evolution takes place and involves just about everybody on board. There are opportunities for humour, too - We give Green Shield Stamps' flags have been flown and, on one occasion, the light line that makes the first physical contact was sent across on a golf ball hit by the Gunnery Officer, Lt-Cdr Pike (first shot, too!). Below is a selection of some of the ships that have served us over the past year or two - featured are the Royal Fleet Auxiliaries TIDEPOOL, OLMEDA, LYNESS, RELIANT, RESOURCE and OLNA



SEAMAN DEPARTMENT

Since the year `dot', when the first ship sailed the seas, there have been seamen. Today, in modern warships, the seaman is one of the most versatile of sailors. Here in EAGLE it has been the seaman's lot to undertake a diversity of tasks ranging from the normal securing of the ship alongside or at anchor, to assisting the Weapons Electrical Party; filling allotted billets in the Communal Party; firing the self-defence weapons; running the Ship's routine; compiling the Action Picture for the Command; and many others. The seaman lives up to the title of 'Jack of all Trades', and if he is 'Master of few' it is because of the variety of tasks he is asked to deal with. Here are but a few of the seaman's tasks explained in more detail.

The Boatswain's Party. This section of seamen was divided into two gangs, the Heavy and the Light.

The Heavy Gang was a small band of happy pilgrims who operated from the smokey den situated on 3T1 boat-space. They could often be seen in this area during quiet periods. Their everyday work included the manufacture, repair and maintenance of the ship's running and standing rigging. But the one primary task was that of providing, maintaining and rigging the replenishment at sea (RAS) equipment. These were the yellow-helmeted men you may have seen perched on top of the stump



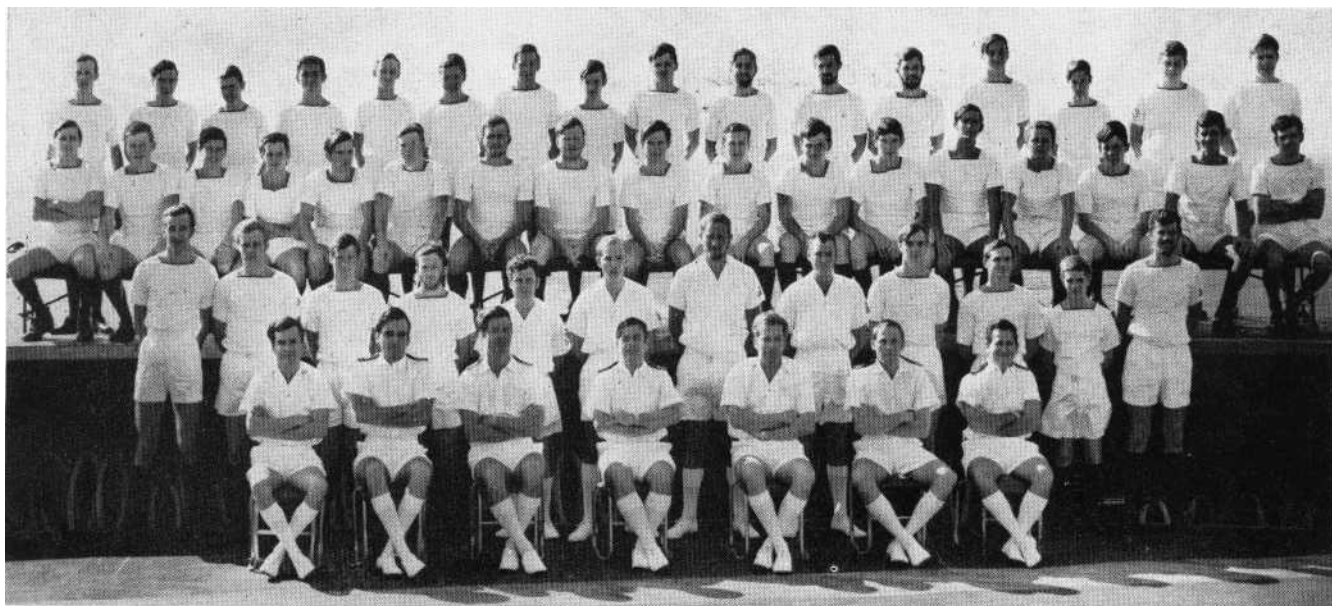
The Boatswain's Party: * AB Terry TURNELL; AB Dago KITTIS; AB Morty MOORTON; AB Des TICER; AB Peter BARCROFT; LS Taff THOMAS. ** PO Gerry Cox; CPO Sails PIDDINGTON; Lt Don MASON; PO Jim BOWMAN.

masts during a solids RAs waiting to connect the jackstays. Or you may have seen them swinging from a 'sky-hook' in one of the fuelling pockets, during a liquids RAS, waiting to connect the hose jackstay. Likewise, they were the men who performed the duties of 'buoy jumpers' whenever the ship secured to mooring buoys.

The pre-requisite for joining this small, hardworking and reliable team was a better-than-average knowledge of

seamanship; a hate for film-shows or make-and-mends; the capacity for hard work; and the willingness to wear overalls when all your chums were wearing sparkling whites.

The Light Gang was an even smaller band of pilgrims: the Chief Sailmaker and his Mate. While it can be said that 'Sails' was not actually required to make any sails, there were very few other tasks involving the use of canvas, PVC, or fabrics, which he did not undertake.



Radar Plot - Port Watch : * AB Paddy SHIELDS; OS Bins BINLEY; JS Dickie HILTON; AB Dave PRICE; OS Johnnie HOUGHTON; AB Buster BROWN; AB Dougie TASSIE; OS Middy MIDDLETON; AB Andy COUSE; AB Ivor LLOYD; AB Sharky WARD; AB Trey KEEBLE; JS Robert KELLAWAY; OS Shiner WRIGHT; AB Benny HARTY; AB Yorky HOPES. ** AB Peter BIGGS; AB Brian CRONIN; AB George RUNHAM; JS Steve NICHOLLS; AB Cassius CLAYTON; OS Barry SMITH; AB Taff WALL; AB Ginge BEARDALL; OS Jim HENDRY; OS Mac McCANN; JS Spud EDWARDS; JS Keith SAVILLE; AB Mick WALSH; AB Raymond TOWERS; LS Jack DEMPSEY; AB Nocker NOLAN; AB John DOHERTY. *** AB Vic HAMPSHIRE; LS Terry LELLIOTT; AB Jan CHILDS; LS Noddy KNOWLES; PO Taff GOUGH; PO Ted CROZIER; PO Spider WEBB; PO Terry NEWLOVE; LS George MORRIS; AB Phil CAIRNS; JS Buck TAYLOR; LS Rick MAUGHAN. **** CPO Mick POOLE; Lt Chris EARLE; Lt-Cdr Tom TAYLOR; Lt-Cdr George ATTRILL; CPO Pete LAPHORNE; Lt Brian WESTLAKE; Lt Robbie ROBINS.



Also the pride of the WEL Dept, EAGLE'S 4.5-in turrets fire a broadside to starboard. This picture is of the last firing ever in the RN from such a highly armed vessel

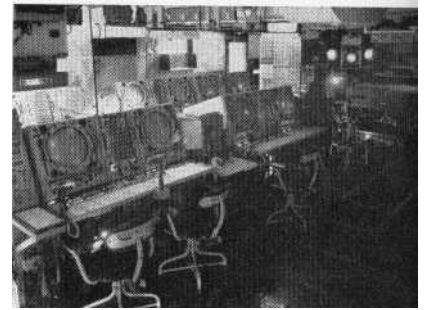
The jobs ranged from supplying and fitting the canvas swimming-baths; the court costumes, and wigs, for the Crossing the Line Ceremony; providing numerous backcloths and stage fittings for 'Sods Operas'; to coachwhipping the Commander's telescope. Apart from rabbit jobs, it was the task of this small gang to maintain and repair all the canvas and PVC fittings onboard. Not much, you might think, until you count the ladder screens; liferaft covers; weather deck screens; RAS chutes and, of course, the blue piping on the Captain's bridge chair. All these tasks have been undertaken successfully and cheerfully and one wonders who will replace the sailmaker when the last of these craftsmen leaves the Service.

The Direction department was a team of highly specialised seamen who

manned the eyes of the fleet, EAGLE'S radar equipment. The team consisted of some ten Direction Officers (led by D - Lt-Cdr George Attrill) and up to 95 Radar Plot ratings (led by the CPRI - CPO Peter Laphorne). At sea the department worked as directed by the Direction Officer, but in harbour, as they were all seamen, they worked as directed by the First Lieutenant.

Due to the complex air radars (984, 965R) and their associated computers (ADA system DAA) certain key officers and ratings joined before the Docking and Essential Defects Period (DED) in order to become fully conversant with the overall system before the new team joined during the DED. As seamen, most of the DED was spent in chipping and preserving the upper deck and painting the boats. A display was mounted for the MAYFLOWER '70 EXHIBITION at Plymouth showing the capabilities of some of the ship's radars and how the modern battle decisions are made.

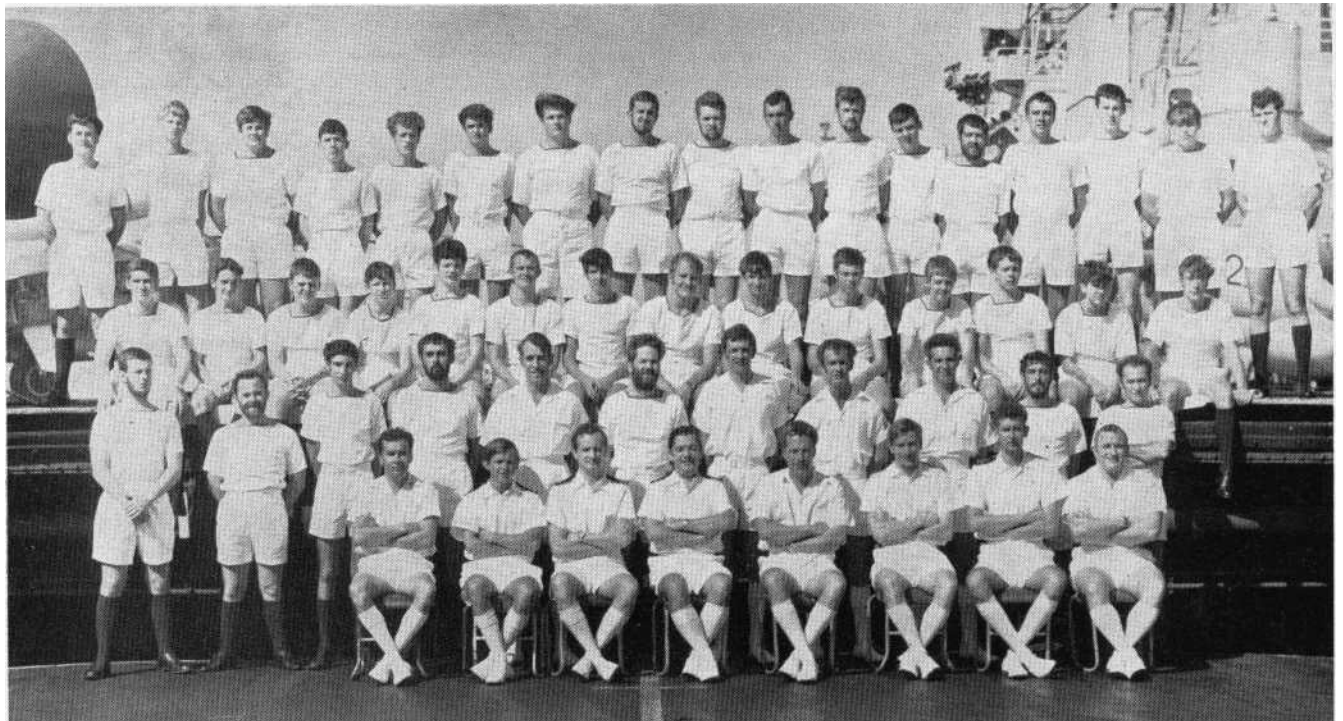
Towards the end of the DED, the usual round of Pre-Commissioning Training (PCT) on ADA started under the instruction of the Deputy Direction Officer (Lt-Cdr Tom Taylor) and the CPRI. This was promptly followed by Command Team Training (CTT) at Portsmouth, and members of the Air Squadrons (the ones who would be



Operations room

controlled on the ship's radar) joined in. During CTT the team was given a very good work-out on all the factors of the Command and Control and utilised the new procedures that were to come into the Fleet nearly six months later.

After the PCT and CTT the ship sailed for trials in September 1970. This kept the department very busy dealing with the radar performances; checking them and the radios with fleet requirement aircraft; checking the computer system out; and making sure all the equipment was in good working order. During the three work-ups the team became more and more proficient at its jobs so that at the Operation Readiness Inspection, in February 1971, it gave a good account of itself.



Radar Plot-Starboard Watch: *AB Paddy POWER; AB Tug WILSON; JS Jan BUCKLAND; JS Paddy MCMASTER; LS Ginge BIHET; OS Alan WILLIAMS; AB John JOHNSON; AB Colin PRATT; AB Steve HUXTABLE; AB Tug WILSON; AB Ginge TEAGUE; JS Jock CALDWELL; AB Dave SHIRES; LS Robbie ROBERTS; AB Bungy WILLIAMS; AB Taff MORGAN; AB Pat PATTERSON. ** AB Jim LACEY; AB Brum SHIELDS; JS Boris BEDALL; JS Martin PYRE; JS George WALSH; AB George BAIN; AB Ken KENNEDY; AB Alan FLEMMING; JS Tanzy LEE; OS Steve HAMMOND; OS Kevin CHATBURN; JS Steve GORE; JS H. T. HEIGHTON-TOWERS; AB John SEDEN. *** AB Raymond DOHERTY; LS Bungy WILLIAMS; LS John LANG; LS Jimmy GREEN; PO Father ROWLANDS; LS Wally WOLLINGTON; PO Pete BROADBENT; PO Tom SWEENEY; PO Tommy TUCKER; LS Sam MILLING; LS Shiner WRIGHT. **** CPO Mick POOLE; S/Lt Chris MASTERMAN; Lt Colin BONNER; Lt-Cdr. George ATTRILL; CPO Pete LAPTHORNE; Lt Clive CHANEY; Lt Garth MANNING; CPO Bill LEANING.

Also during the Mediterranean period, hidden talents were found within the department, proving they could play as hard as work. Members of the team joined singing groups, organised cycle clubs, took up lots of sports and eventually produced a sketch for PANOMANIA with a cast of twenty.

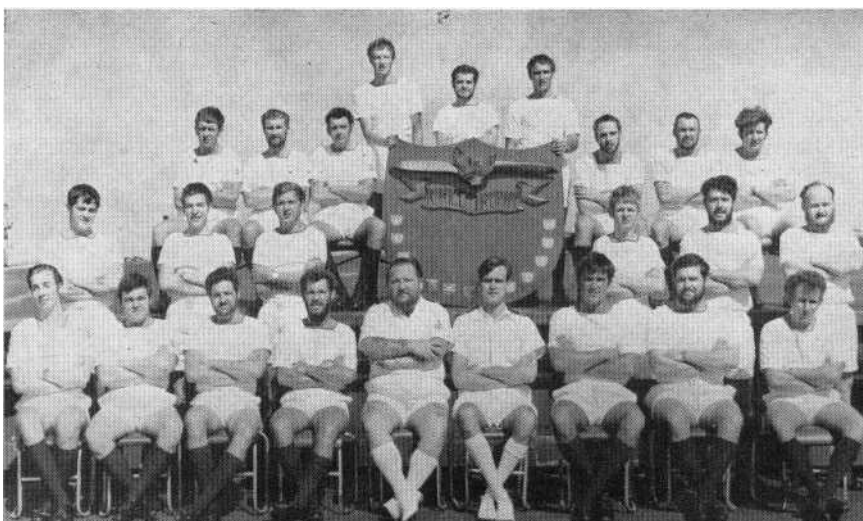
Back at Plymouth for Easter and a Self-maintenance Period, the team had to undergo another PCT due to the change-round Of D's and RP's. With this, and leave, completed, the ship sailed for a quick shake-down and the re-embarking of the Air Group. Two of the Squadrons had their own Direction Officers; the fighters (899) Lt Ron Brumhill, and the helicopters (826) Lt-Cdr Maurice Mayers. Once all were aboard, the Ship set off for the Far East.

Flying and exercises were the team's bread and butter whenever the ship was at sea, and so it is not surprising that the trip to Singapore, via Cape-town, meant more work for the Air Reporting Officers, POs Gough and Broadbent, and their assistants.

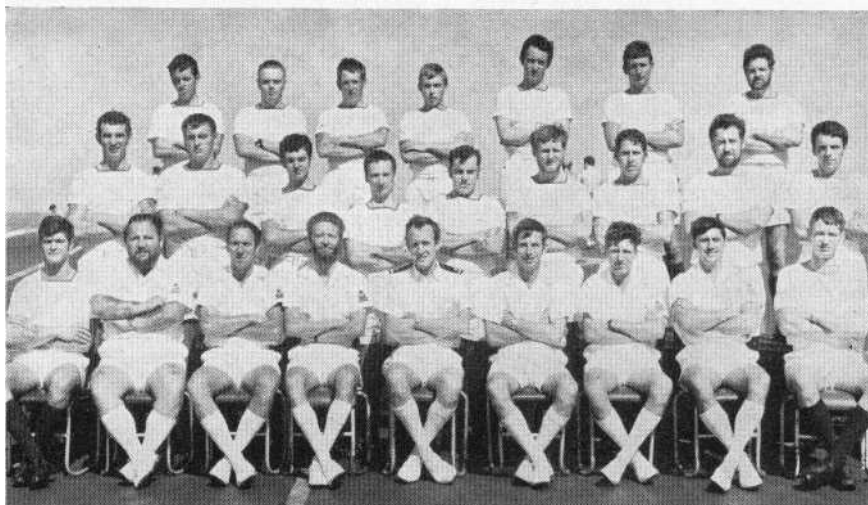
At Singapore a large number of shore activities were undertaken by the team once more. The new boys had to be shown round the sights; rabbits bought; sports played; and another show was put on. 'Vote for Crun' had fifteen of the direction team in it. Meanwhile, improvements in the system DAA were being made, and the results reported back to the ADA Rule Writing Group for inclusion in future systems. Our 'Link 14' - a system of transmitting information from the computer to small ships - was working overtime.

Next came the Australian and New Zealand exercises and once again the Direction Team, as they do in all exercises and operations, controlled the all-weather Vixen fighters against intruders and strikes on the ship. They also controlled the Airborne Early Warning Gannet aircraft that fill the gap in the ship's radar and the Anti-submarine Helicopters that hunt for submarines. They listened to the Buccaneer aircraft that stike the enemy. 'D' and 'D2' controlled the Air Defence of the Fleet, using the radars, fighters, missiles and guns to ensure that no enemy aircraft or missile got through the air defence cover. Every member of the team was vital to this task and was continually alert. The surface side of the team provided the Command with an up-to-date tactical picture of the surface and sub-surface continually at sea. During this period the team claimed their 1,000th successful interception.

The Direction Team were constantly trying out new methods of presenting the overall concept of both Air



Seacat Teams: * LS Ken VARDY; AB Polly POLLARD; LS Terry HICK; AB Smudge SMYTH; REM Jimmy GREEN; AB SteVC MCQUEENEY; AB Dutchy MOULTON; LS Jed THOMAS; AB Taff TRAHAR. ** OS Arthur FARMIOE; OS Reg FERGUSON; AB Jonah JONES (MJ); REM Les PATRICK; LS Dicky DAWSON; LS Sharky WARD. *** LS Gilly GILBERT; LS Robbie BURNS; AB Yorky BARCROFT; AB Moses Moss; POGI Griff GRIFFITHS; Lt Chris MORGAN; AB Rigger MOORTON; LS Darby ALLEN; AB Paul EALEY.



Gunnery Control Teams: * AB Chris PEARSON; AB Bagsy BAKER; OS Jumper CROSS; AB Yorky WATERWORTH; OS Anthony BUTTLE; AB Topsy TURNELL; AB Yorky BARCROFT. ** AB Taff JONES (LM); AB Pete BOYCE; OS Taff UPHAM; AB Ted THAXTER; AB SteVe STEPHENSON; AB Keith HEXLEY; AB Barney BUSH; AB Jock BERTRAM; LS John JOHNSON. *** LS Jock DUNCAN; POGI Griff GRIFFITHS; PO Buster BROWN; POGI Chats HARRIS; S/Lt John NUNDY; CPOGI OZZY OSBORNE; PO John MAIDMENT; PO Gerry Cox; LS Dicky BIRD.



Navigation Division: * LS Jan GREEDY; LS Mick ROWAN; AB Neil RUTHERFORD; AB Lenny LEONARD; ORD Ron DOOLER; AB Dad HADDON; ORD Pete PETERS; ORD Toz TOZER; AB Ginge Pocock; AB Phil JAYS. **LS Mick PRESTWICH; LS Gilly GILBERT; Lt M. H. C. AYLWARD (N2); Lt-Cdr J. F. S. TRINDER (NO); PO Robbie ROBINSON (CQM); LS Sharky WARD; LS Dicky DAWSON. *** AB Taff HARWOOD; JS Shep SHEPHERD; AB George CHURCHER (Nav Yee); JS Daisy FURLONG; OS Dennis SNELL.

Defence and tactical picture compilation to achieve greater speeds and accuracy for the Command, and have just completed trials on yet another system to see if it is compatible in a multi-threat environment.

Both the Direction Officer and his Deputy have been utilised as planners by the staffs in the Far East as they have no direction expertise of their own. This placed greater responsibility on those further down the line in the team, and it was gratifying to see the good response from all the team to this greater responsibility. It is confidently expected that 2,000 interceptions will be completed before the end of the commission, and the team will depart with the knowledge of having been in a computerised Action Information Organisation that holds its own against all-comers from any Service and from any nation.

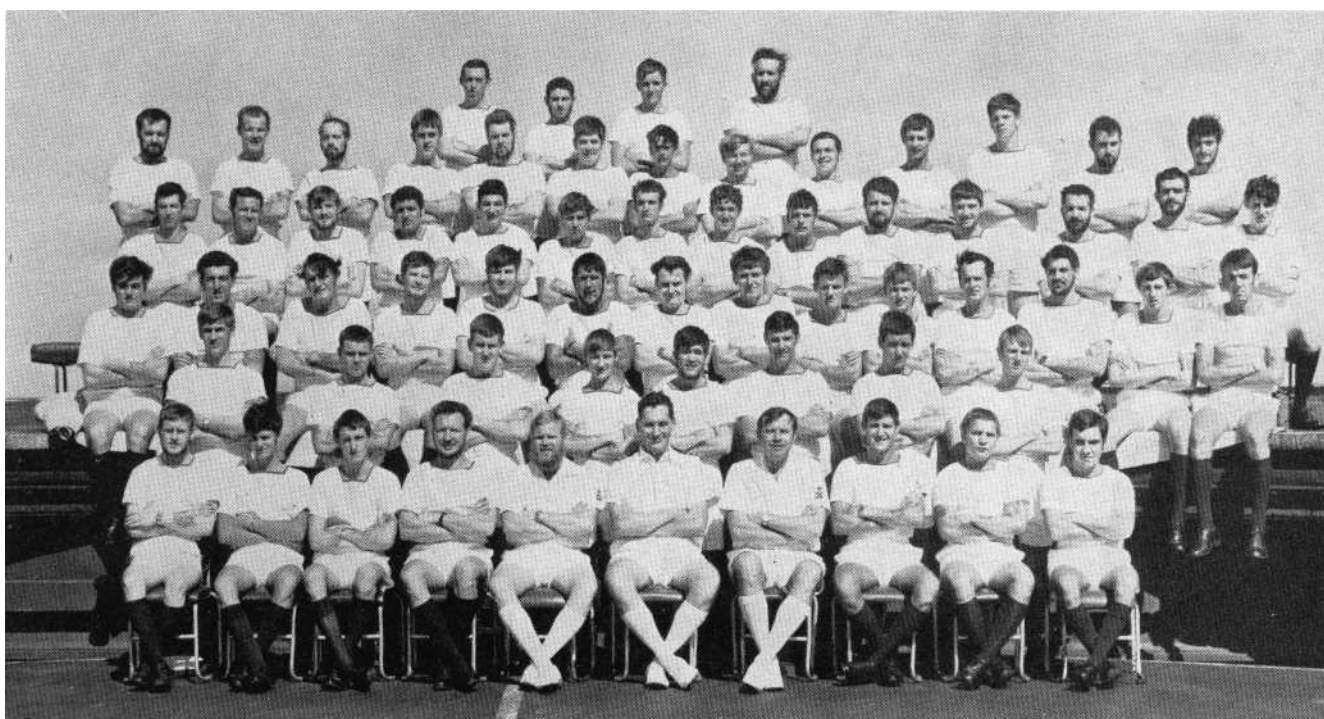
The Upper Deck Division is the composite name for the seamen who work in a seamanship job as well as their subspecialist work as an RP, TAS, or Gunnery rating. The work round the 'Parts of Ship', as they are known, is divided into Cable Deck (Lt Don Mason and Petty Officers Brady and Rayworth); Top -which includes all the PV spaces and Fuelling pockets as well as the booms and ladders forward (Lts Graham Churton and Clive



The Side Party - Hong Kong Style: * ORD Tug WILSON; PO Tommy TUCKER; Lt Don MASON; Lt-Cdr Charles POPE (*First Lieutenant*); Lt Colin BONNER; CPO David LOMAN; Capt I. G. W. ROBERTSON; AB Paddy POWER; Lt-Cdr Tom TAYLOR (*Mate of the Upper Deck*). **Jenny is standing next to PO Taff GOUGH (*Captain of the Side*) who is just behind the cake with which she and her Side Party had been presented. *** LS Jack DEMPSEY; AB Brian GLEESON; AB Ginge MULLEN; AB Jock TASSIE; AB Lofty LOFTUS.

Chaney, backed up by Petty Officers Sweeney and Broadbent) Boats (Lt Chris Earle and Petty Officer Newlove); and Quarterdeck (Lts Jock Mullen, Robbie Robins and John Corbet-Milward, and Petty Officers Maidment and Crozier). All the team are directed by the Mate of the Upper

Deck (Lt-Cdr Tom Taylor) and the Chief Boatswain's Mate (CPO David Loman). Apart from the problems of keeping all the working areas clean - not an easy task in the case of a lady as old as EAGLE - the seamen run all the boats; put out the booms and ladders; provide the gangway staff to man the



Quarters Teams: * OS Martin BECKLEY; OS Shep SHEPHERD; OS Speedy HEELEY; AB Father HADDON. ** AB John TUDBERRY; AB Willy EVANS; AB Bonzo BOYNES; AB David MANSELL; AB Butch HUXTABLE; AB Paddy GLEESON; OS Brum BARRETT; OS SCouse S. KING; AB Alan PARTRIDGE; AB Toz TOZER; OS Nick NICHOLAS; AB Keith MURGATROYD; LS Joe GOWAN. *** OS Taff DAVIES; AB Butch SYMMONS; AB Burl IVES; AB Joe HOPE; OS Dick HUSSEY; AB Yorky BRAMMER; AB Barney BARNES; AB Mac MACPHERSON; OS Jock CLARKE; AB Jacko JACKSON; AB Smudge G. L. SMITH; AB Danny LEWIS; AB Taff KITTs; OS Michael TELFORD. **** AB Terry NURSE; AB Hutch HUTCHINSON; AB Dusty FOGG; AB George BRUCE; AB Chris MANSFIELD; AB Chris BAIRSTOW; AB Lenny LEONARD; AB Jim DALE; AB Fred FITTON; AB George DOEL; AB Steve STEVENS; AB George DATE; AB Fess PARKER; AB Jonah D. D. JONES. ***** AB Jim LACEY; AB Keith LAWLER; OS Ging ROAD; OS George DAYMOND; AB Taff PARKER; OS Kaboobi DOWNS; AB Desmond TICER; AB Stan AULTON. ***** AB Jock KELLY OS Fred MCCARTHY; OS Steve PETERS; LS Father ROWAN; PO Blondie RAYWORTH; Lt-Cdr Owen PIKE; PO Perry MASON; LS Taff BOULTON; AB Arnie ARNOLD; AB Taff K. P. ROBERTS.

Seaman Department -continued

ladders; and keep the Quarterdeck in good ceremonial state for our embarked Flag Officer. At sea, seamen keep a continual 'Watch on Deck' that provides lookouts and lifebuoy sentries; mans the seaboat and, of course, ensures that the splash target is working correctly. On top of this they man both rigs during a RAS(s) as well as rigging the chutes down the forward lift and pushing the large variety of stores down it, such as beer, frozen meat, flour, and many other items. RAS(L) also requires a set of seamen to connect the rigs and tend the distance lines while all the relevant FFO, Avcat, Dieso and lub oils are pumped in. The Forward Steering Position is manned by the gangway watchkeepers and, when we are flying, the RPs (who come from the deck division) man-up the Operations Room. During Casexes the TAS ratings from the division man-up the Sonar Control Room, and during the shoots the Gunnery rates from the division man the 4.5-in guns, the Seacats, and the directors. The final part of the division's responsibility is that of the Ship's side and liferafts - this is the domain of the Side Party (Lt Colin Bonner and Petty Officers Gough and Tucker). This is the happy band of ruffians that can be seen manning the gash chute and swinging with breathtaking arrogance from nets that seem barely secured to the ship's side. In harbour they are to be seen covered in grey and black paint either adrift on a catamaran or in the Side Party Motor Cutter (although in Hong Kong they used jenny's boat a lot).

The Deck Division must have applied more paint and chipped off more rust than the rest of the Ship put together, but statistics do not record the totals. A cheerful team, they have learnt a lot about big ship seamanship that will hold them all in good stead in their future ships.



Painting - in dock

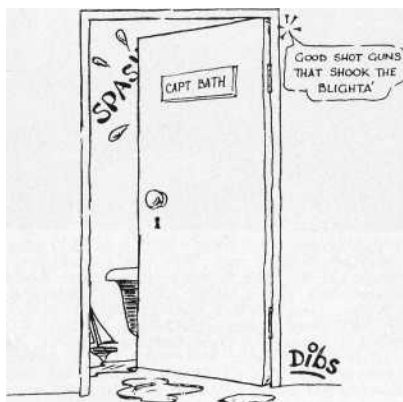
COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

The Communications Department enjoyed the commission amidst piles of paper, principally produced for the benefit of the flags: FOCAS, FOFWF, F02FEF, FOCAS again and FOF2 in a new hat all hung out those fab red and white tablecloths (consumable stores, rate book value £5.26) to help the fight against pollution by catching the soot from the funnel.



Hoisting 'The Flag'

It was fortunate that enough paper was carried, as the amount that has had to be pushed around the information factory surprised us all. The first weeks after the DED showed the sad fact that signal traffic rises from year to year throughout the service. Therefore, LRO Jan Creek, in charge of the stores palace down in to Echo, added a few thousand sheets to the stationery demand, and gave it to CY Robbie Roberts. He added a safety factor before it went up to the SCOs' office. The SCO had the last word by hastening the demand by signal before going on leave. In a few days the complete demand arrived, followed a week later by the complete demand again as a result of the hastener. We sailed, therefore, with over five million sheets of signal paper to use in seven months. It is not going slowly; two million, four hundred and thirty-eight thousand sheets have been used so far.



The original figure was based on the previous commissions' distributed traffic record. Between May '69 and January '70 the last commission handled 2,300 signals a month (21,249 in all). Old two-commission salts like R02/R01/LRO Ken Rowlands assure us that they did work last commission. On our first leg, from October '70 to May '71, we averaged 3,300 signals a month (26,159 for the period). Imagine that the patron saint of Communications was poised above the ship, as she sailed from Plymouth across the Equator, and could no longer contain himself. From June '71 to November '71, a brief six months, the average per month was 7,300 signals a month (44,111).

This means our staff for this commission should have been paid more than three times as much as the last commission's (based on productivity). We never had time to collect it.

These statistics are dull, so think instead of the marriages and babies. LRO Tom Shawyer, RS Taff Kidney, RS Dave Mahy, LRO Paddy Gavin, RO(W) Mitch Mitchell and RS Tug Wilson all became proud fathers, but RO Taff Arthur beat us all by fathering twin boys. SCO (Lt-Cdr Goring) could not match that, although he tried hard with a daughter in the Shake-down period and another daughter in the Run-down period. However, pride of place must go to SCO2 (you remember, the Killick Sparker when Nelson's father was a lad) Lt Gerry Reed who became a grandfather. He says it will not affect his golf.

Other sports activity started off with a bang with a football match against the ladies of Bodmin (Cornwall), who



In the CCR

beat us 5-1. Rugby was our next sport but it was not quite the same thing. HMS DANAE beat us, and LRO Brigham Young was only on the pitch three minutes. Football was played in every port, except South Africa with the number of wins and losses more or less even. Normally, 'Communications' have been joined to the 'Seaman Division' in major inter-departmental sports. However, for the Sports Olympiad, we broke away to be the lead sub-department of the Miscellaneous Division. The banner was raised in the MCO, and the Regulating Branch, the Band, the Sick Bay, the Midshipmen and F02FEF Staff ratings flocked to enter. Unfortunately, other members of the ship's company kept cheering us on as the 'Gash' - but we came well over half-way-up in the competition and entered every event.

Our success in other fields included young (W) Stephen 'Campers' Campion who reported a Russian submarine. It was not detected in the Electronic Warfare Office, but 'Campers' pointed out its periscope was following in the wake of the ship. It was finally identified as the splash target. On the Bunting side, an exasperated Scouse Barclay underlined REYKJAVIK as an unintelligible

garble of a place-name. Sparker extraordinary Taff Jones was asking round the office (and looking at the world atlas) to find TOTO. The signal had said 826 Squadron were disembarking in TOTO and he wanted to be first in the buzz of future ship's movements.

Call-signs are always a problem, but the following is an extract from the Submarine Safety Net Log:

From (Call-sign SCYLLA), to (Call-sign EAGLE)

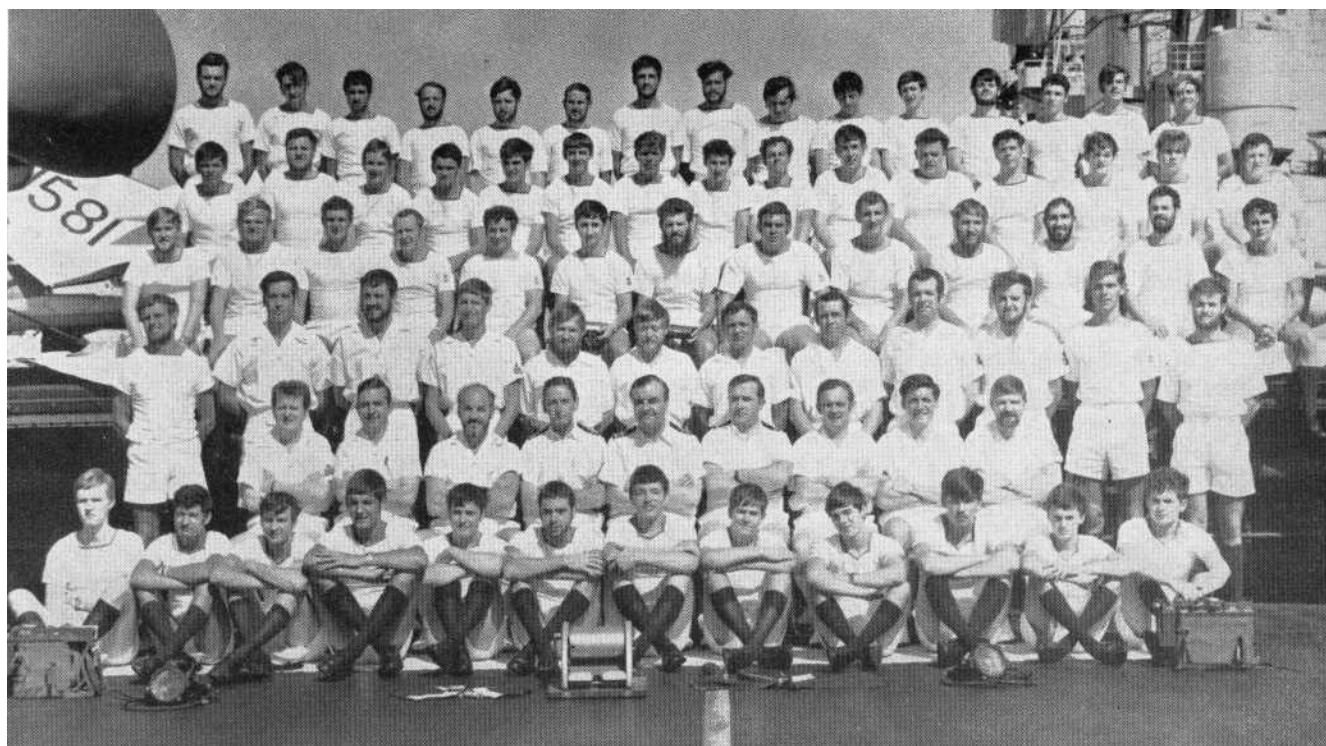
'Why have you surfaced?'

From (Call-Sign EAGLE), to (Call-sign SCYLLA)

'Beyond my capability to submerge - you want (Call-sign FINWHALE).'

For many of us, EAGLE has been our first Aircraft Carrier; for others their first ship, and for some their last. The prospect of serving in a big ship usually meets with a lot of apprehension. It was the same at first in the big E, but most in the department will agree we have had a lot of fun and some really great ports of call, where many new friendships have flourished. There is one thing to be said for big ships, during rough weather they hardly ever rock the coffee boat!

Whilst on passage from the South Atlantic to Portsmouth, EAGLE completed a continuous period of over seven days working an HF MRL directly into Whitehall TARE, the modern communications computer. (In order for it to correctly digest and process signals, the instructions that are sent must arrive perfectly - atmospherics usually distort signals from ships. Even if only slightly corrupt, the computer throws a fit.) This set up a record for a seagoing ship and is a communications milestone. EAGLE's traffic into TARE was constantly monitored and its consistent high quality won for the ship a GOLD COMSTAR award (commendation for signals Transmitted Accurately and Rapidly). This was the first-ever such award made to a ship and, in the Words of the Controller, Defence Communications Network, reflects great credit on the ship's Communications and WE staffs. It may be bragging a little, but we are proud to quote FOCAS, Who signalled: 'Very many congratulations on achieving this milestone as the culmination of your consistently high communications standard throughout this commission'.



Communication Division: * RO Lotty SHORTEN; RO Taff MORRIS; RO Bungy WILLIAMS; RO Alex BAXTER; RO Frankie VAUGHAN; RO Jim ROOT; RO Rick SOUTHALL; RO Alf GARNETT; RO George HINDMARCH; RO Mitch MITCHELL; RO Jock GALBRAITH; RO Jamie JAMESON; RO Bas BARRETT; RO Kit CARSON; RO Jenks JENKINS. ** RO Buck TAYLOR; RO Ginge WAISTER; RO Taff SPRUDD; RO ScoUse BARCLAY; RO SCOUSC WATERFIELD; RO Les JEAUVANS; RO Les LANGRIDGE; RO Davey DAVIDSON; RO Speedy WEATHERSON; RO Tanzy MUTE; RO Paddy BUGG; RO Jaycee KERR; RO Taff ARTHUR; RO Robbie ROBSON; RO ScoUse BUTLER. *** RO Scooby BEASLEY; RO Nick NICHOLSON; RO Ken CRONE; LRO Tom SHAWYER; LRO Paddy DOYLE; LRO Ken ROWLANDS; LRO Tanzy LEE-HYNES; LRO Jan CREEK; LRO Jim JEFFERSON; LRO Buck RODGERS; RO Banjo BAJONA; RO Sticky PLAISTER; RO Doc MEADES. **** LRO Brigham YOUNG; RS Nick NICKERSON; RS Allan EVISON; CY Robbie ROBERTS; RS Dabs BARLOW; CY Pete FAIRCHILD; CY Mick RICHARDSON; RS Colin DUCKWORTH; RS Tug WILSON; RS DaVe HEPPEP; LRO John VEAR; LRO Bart WELCH. ***** RS Taff KIDNEY; CRS Peter MCCOOEY; CRS Fes PARKER; Lt Jerry REED (SCO2); Lt-Cdr E. Y. C. GORING (SCO); S/Lt Arthur KERRISON (SCO3); CCY Shorty SLATTER; RS Terry FISHER; RS Happy DAY. ***** RO Bungy EDWARDS; RO Les RICHMOND; RO Smiler HINDLEY; RO Smudge SMITH; RO Sreaky BACON; RO Heiners COOK; RO Stan STUART; RO Steve CAMPION; RO Dolly GRAY; RO Doug BURNETT; RO Titch BEYNON; RO Taff JONES.