





**H.M.S. EAGLE**  
**1967-68**

## THE ADMIRALS



**Flag Officer Second-in-Command Far East Fleet  
Rear Admiral (now Vice-Admiral) E. B. Ashmore, C.B., D.S.C.**



**Flag Officer Aircraft Carriers 1967-68  
Rear Admiral L. D. Empson**



**Flag Officer Carriers and Amphibious Ships  
Rear Admiral M. F. Fell, D.S.O., D.S.C. and Bar**

## FOREWORD



**We have covered the oceans from the Arctic to the Antipodes and from Arabia to the Orient.**

**Thousands of miles have passed under our keel, thousands of aircraft have been safely launched from our deck and thousands of people of all races, creeds and colours have visited our ship.**

**We have done our duty and been a real power for peace and goodwill in this turbulent world. We can look back on a commission of hard work, hard play and a job well done.**

**It has been a proud duty for me to be your Commanding Officer; the Captain of the Queen's largest and finest ship and I thank you for your support and loyalty over the past 18 months.**

**To each one of you and to your families, I wish good fortune, a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ernest Pope". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Captain J. E. POPE. R.N.



## COMMISSIONING DAY 6th APRIL 1967



This was very much a family occasion and pride was in the air. The Commission was given a happy and splendid start.

But for many of us, the story began earlier when we joined the 'Biggest and the Best' in Devonport during the winter 1966-67. *Eagle*, a squalid shambles, was in dockyard hands and quite uninhabitable. H.M.S. *Centaur* was the accommodation ship and life was not a bunch of roses as we had two very big ships to run and clean. At last the great day came, when on 14th March all our goods and chattels were transferred to *Eagle* and we moved into comparative luxury to get on with the big clean up. Spirits were high and much 'elbow grease' was expended to get harbour trials completed and the ship ready to go to sea in the short period of three and a half weeks.

*The Blessing is given*

The ceremony of Commissioning Day represents the beginning of a completely new phase in a ship's life. On Thursday, 6th April 1967 many wives, sweethearts, parents and families came down to the ship in their spring best to attend the simple religious ceremony in the upper hangar and to cast a jealous eye on the new rival to their affections, also decked out in a smart new outfit of all-season grey.

Captain J. C. Y. Roxburgh (now Rear Admiral) read the traditional Commissioning Warrant and in his address, invited the families to take an active interest in the ship and her activities.



*The Band played*



*The cake is admired ...*



*... and dismembered*

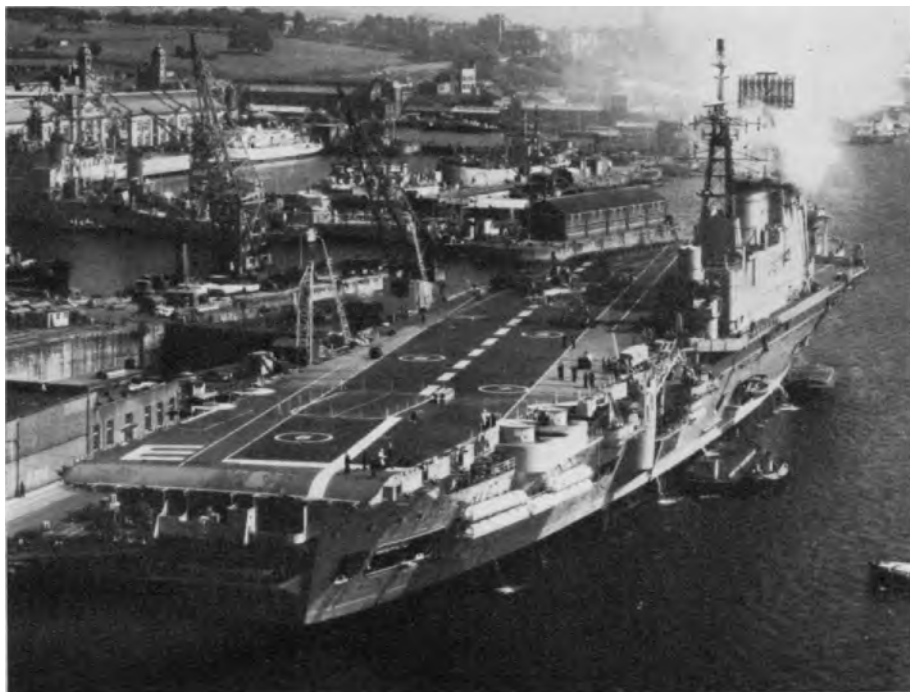
On Saturday, 8th April, with 820 Squadron's helicopters already embarked, *Eagle* left Devonport and went down river to Plymouth Sound to begin sea trials. All went well for a few days and then—disaster! 'Emergency, Emergency, Fire, Fire, Fire!' A very serious electrical fire in 'B' Boiler Room took hold and caused extensive damage. Within a week of sailing, *Eagle* was back in Devonport for repairs which were to take six weeks to

We were just in time to welcome Sir Francis Chichester south of the Lizard, as he was returning from his epic single-handed voyage round the world. He lowered his ensign in salute as *Eagle* steamed close by *Gipsy Moth* and gave three cheers.

Sea trials were followed by a further week in Devonport and then, with 820 Squadron once more on board, we sailed for an intensive work-up period in



Captain J. C. Y. Roxburgh, C.B.E.,  
D.S.O., D.S.C. \*, R.N.



Nearly ready to go

the Moray Firth, to prepare for exercises in the West Atlantic and a visit to Boston, Massachusetts.

The Mayor of *Eagle's* own city, Exeter, together with a party of city dignitaries, came with us from Plymouth to spend a day at sea with the ship and stayed for three days, much to their immediate consternation and ultimate enjoyment. They couldn't get ashore because of fog.

Fixed wing aircraft arrived in the Moray Firth and the outfit was at last complete; three weeks hard work culminated in an Operational Readiness Inspection off Brawdy by Flag Officer Aircraft Carriers and we passed.

complete.

Very disappointing—but 10 days leave to each watch dampened nobody's ardour and no Plymouth native was heard to complain. Athletes got into trim for a most successful Sports Day and Expeds explored the wilds of Dartmoor.

For several years, The children of Nazareth House Children's Home have been the favourite recipients of *Eagle* sailors' benevolence - the affection is obviously mutual, judging by the lusty cheers and sheet waving in the gardens of the Home, each time *Eagle* negotiates the Hamoaze. During our enforced stay in Devonport, an eager party of Nazareth House children came on board to receive a magnificent television set—the latest present from *Eagle*.

Very appropriately on Ascension Day (4th May), Captain J. E. Pope assumed the Supreme Pontificate of *Eagle* in succession to Captain Roxburgh and on 27th May, repairs completed, off we went again for a fortnight's sea trials in the Channel this time successfully.



820 Squadron arrives



**Sports Day**



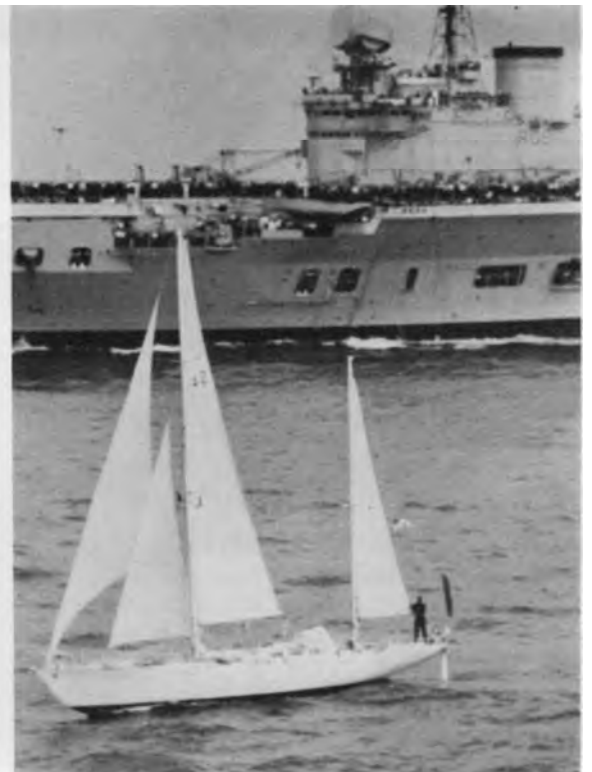
**Children from Nazareth House**

Then the Gremlins struck and the buzzes spread—the visit to America was off! Yes, it was all too true. *Eagle* was needed in the Far East fairly smartly . . . but via Cape Town!

Embryo beards were hastily removed as we steamed back to Guzz, passing the magnificent schooner *Sir Winston Churchill* on the way. A further spell of leave and *Eagle* sailed finally from Devonport on 15th August for a week's further flying practice . . . and the long trip to the Far East. First stop Cape Town.



**The man who came to dinner . . . the Mayor of Exeter**



**Gypsy Moth**



*The Stars arrive*



This was no summer cruise—the refusal of the sun to shine and heavy swells in the South Atlantic made the passage very bleak. But King Neptune and his entourage managed to hold Sessions at a 'Crossing the Line' ceremony, and numerous offenders were dealt with. Ascension Island was seen in the distance, when a pause was made for a few days' flying.



*Burial at sea*



**S.T.S. Sir Winston Churchill**



**Record RAS-vertical style**





# CAPE TOWN

8th 14th September 1967





*The  
Main  
Drag*



*' Yep . . . all over the world, Samantha . . . I go for Scotland and Ascension Island every time so far . . . but the beer's good here'*

*The  
Twelve  
Apostles  
Table Mountain National Park*





*Gan wasn't big enough*



*Back again—wings clipped and nose out of joint*

At sea again on the long haul across the Indian Ocean, an exercise off Durban with the South African Navy was curtailed due to heavy ocean swell. On 26th September *Eagle* arrived off the outlandish coral island of Gan, where the RAF have an all-male-except-for-one-woman base and an airstrip. Gan was just not big enough for one *Sea Vizen*, which had to return on board in very undignified style when *Eagle* entered the lagoon of Adu Atoll. The Flag Officer Second in Command, Far East Station, Rear Admiral E. B. Ashmore hoisted his flag in *Eagle* and after a week's flying practice the last leg to Singapore was tackled. The ship arrived at Singapore on 6th October after the aircraft had disembarked to Changi and Simbang and during the fortnight that followed, the first big spending spree was on as Christmas shopping was completed and parcels were dispatched home.

Although this was a self-maintenance period, its main constituents were bronzy-bronzy, swimming, Tiger and Chinese Chow and for many the lure of the East was realised for the first time.



*FO2FE arrives, Rear-Admiral E. B. Ashmore*



*Admiral's Divisions*

# SINGAPORE

6th—23rd October



*Cooling off*



*... then downtown*



*COMFEF calls, Vice-Admiral W. D. O'Brien*







*The Beast . . .*



*. . . Beauty!*

# ADEN

SINGAPORE

23rd October

Nine Weeks

Pleasure Whilst Covering the

From



*On patrol over Aden*



*RAS*



*VIPs. Sir Humphrey Trevelyan, the British High Commissioner and Admiral Sir Michael le Fanu, Commander-in-Chief, Middle East*



*Postman*



*Sunday-Wednesday's Potted Sports*

# PATROL

—SINGAPORE

22nd December

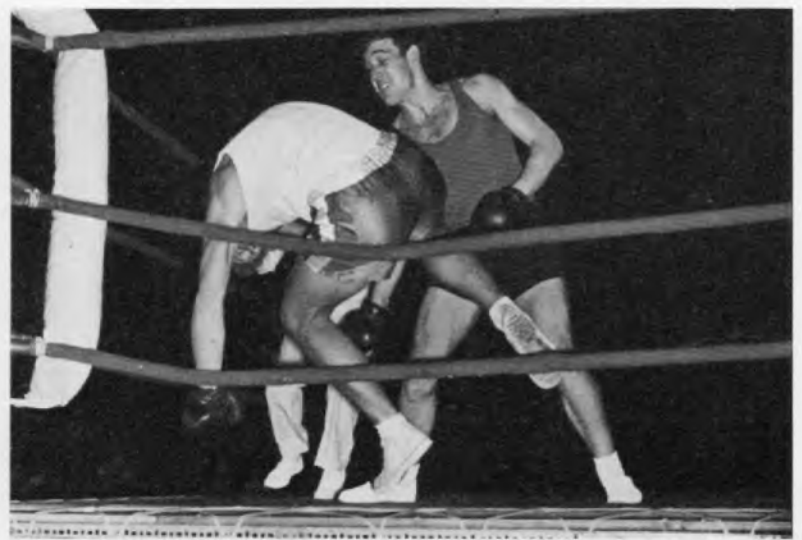
Business and  
Withdrawal of British Forces  
Aden



*Sods Opera—Guinness Grenadiers*



*Handicrafts Exhibition*



*Fisticuffs Tournament*

## GRAND CHRISTMAS DRAW. £1200 IN PRIZES!



*Grand Christmas Draw—Winning Ticket coming up*



*The £500 handshake*

# CHRISTMAS 1967 SINGAPORE



*The Captain visits the Mess Decks, Christmas Day*



*Turkey . . .*



*. . . and Christmas Cake*



*. . . and then went out to tea*





# ALAN LADDIN







*The Birds come home .*



*. . . to roost, in time for . . .*

Christmas was celebrated in traditional style with all the usual fare, carol concerts, pantomime and the tropical sun (and rain) to boot. A vast number of Eagles took local leave—some stayed in Singapore and had a leisurely week of self-indulgence whilst many travelled as far afield as exotic Penang, or the cool heights of the Cameron Highlands in Malaysia. An Exped in camp at Kota Tinggi was washed out by torrential rains, which caused widespread floods in South Malaysia, and was stranded for several days.

After four weeks of well earned rest, *Eagle* left Singapore for what was to be the last time of the commission. Aircraft were re-embarked in the Malacca Straits and a short period of practice flying off Penang Island was followed by Exercise 'Partner' in the Gan area.

F.O.A.C. flew his flag in *Eagle* for the exercise, which involved 21 ships including frigates of the Australian and New Zealand Navies and the nuclear submarine *Warspite*.

But now nothing but pleasure filled the future—Fremantle, Sydney, Yokohama and Hong Kong were to come in quick succession!!! So we made a start by steaming the 2000-odd miles to Fremantle...



*Chinese New Year, and . . .*



## **EXERCISE *PARTNER***



F  
R  
E  
M  
A  
N  
T  
L  
E

February  
12th to 27th



Alongside ...

... and on to Perth



We were soon in the News

RIGBY and the R.N

HMS EAGLE ON AUST.  
REST CRUISE



"But honey, up to now nobody's given them a reason for WANTING to stay in South-East Asia!"



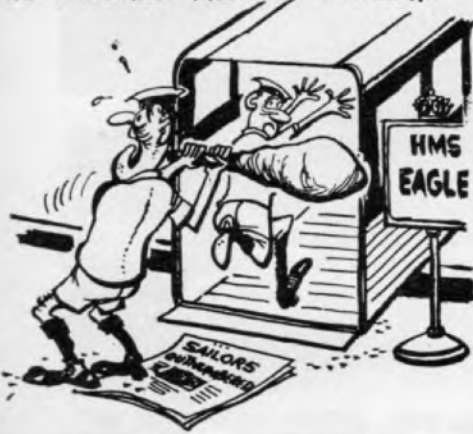


*A much appreciated Children's Party . . .*

*. . . and Flight Deck frolics*



**GET THAT GANGWAY UP! HERE COME THE LEFTOVERS FROM THE DANCE !!!**



*We were vastly outnumbered at the dance . . .*

*. . . and on Cotesloe Beach*





# To HONG KONG via COCOS ISLANDS and PULAU TIOMAN

The friendliness and hospitality of Fremantle will always be remembered; a fortnight of relaxation, swimming, sailing, fraternisation and fun.

All too soon *Eagle* was on her way—but not to Sydney and Yokohama. 'Twas to the Cocos Islands that we hied for more flying exercises and visions of the big coathanger bridge and Japanese Baths were set aside. But at least some of the Cocos Island 'natives' from the Australian Air Base there had a lucky break when they took a 'chopper' ride out to the ship for a day in 'civilisation'.

On through the Sunda Straits to Pulau Tioman. Yes, . . . flying exercises there too

. . . and the **BIG BANYAN SUNDAY**, which for many was one of the most enjoyable days of the commission. A day of bathing, basking and barbecued flesh—human and otherwise—in a superb south sea island setting.

Northwards across the China Sea, bodies were rested for the anticipated exhaustions of Hong Kong. The pall of fog which greeted us on arrival was no deterrent; the Eagles were soon ashore and at it . . .!



*Cocos Islanders*



*Pulau Tioman*



*Susie Wong land*



# HONG KONG

22nd March-6th April  
1968

*We entertained as usual*





*We went ashore . . .*



*. . . to the shops and the restaurants*



*Whilst Jenny and her Side Party got on with the work*

# POINT PATIENCE ?



*What  
a  
dive !*

Exactly 12 months after commissioning. *Eagle* left Hong Kong on 6th April 1968. Next on the list of events were exercises off the Philippines and Easter at Subic Bay . . . but after two days of flying the hot wire from Singapore hummed. *Eagle* was to proceed to the Arabian Sea area with all dispatch! Stunned, we set off on the long fast passage across the China Sea, up the Malacca Straits and across the Indian Ocean to 'Point Patience' (what a lousy joke). This was back to square one and the old Aden Patrol routine of flying days, rest days, maintenance days and Rasdays in a particularly featureless circle of open sea. So the only thing to do was to make the best of it and have some fun . . .





*They're off . . . watch!*



*Place your bets*

# REDCAP RACES



*I gotta horse*



*Rien ne va plus*



*Fire!*

# EAGLE TATTOO



*Whoops!*



*Field Gun*



*Pull! The Champs*

# CAPE TOWN AND HOME



*Farewell to Cape Town*

The passage across the South Atlantic was again bleak, but a very pleasant surprise was in store when, at short notice, *Eagle* made a 14-hour stop at Gibraltar. This was a frantic day of last-minute shopping, round and up and under the Rock, apes and caves, beer and tucker, all the more enjoyable because U.K. was just three days ahead.

Buccaneers, Vixens and Gannets flew off home to Lossiemouth, Yeovilton and Brawdy on the 17th June and 820 Squadron whirled away to Culdrose early the next morning, before *Eagle* made her way up the Hamoaze to a vast and excited crowd of families and sweethearts waiting on the jetty.

And so the long Far East leg of the Commission was completed. Frustrations and disappointments had been legion . . . but so had the good times and *Eagle* was a remarkably happy ship, with a record to be proud of. She'd been away from home for 308 days and of these, no fewer than 220 days had been spent at sea.

Four weeks later the buzzes began again . . . the 984's U/S . . . got to go to Singapore . . . Mombasa . . . Portsmouth . . . Guzz! and we went to Gan! But not for long the welcome news was released a few days later, that we were to go back home to Plymouth via Cape Town. Exuberance overflowed as, eight weeks to the day after leaving Hong Kong, *Eagle* entered Cape Town for a four-day Whitsuntide jolly that couldn't have been more well deserved.

Presents to take home were eagerly sought, and old friendships were renewed. The same hospitality and friendliness, that had been meted out nine months before was given quite as generously. Trippers took the cablecar to the icy summit of Table Mountain, visited the lovely country around Stellenbosch, or toured the magnificent Cape Peninsula. It was with many happy memories and not a little nostalgia that we sailed out of Table Bay on the 4th June.



*arrival home*

# EXERCISE 'SILVER TOWER'



*The Surveyor survey&*

n this area, broken only by a pleasant weekend at Lossiemouth and rather a lot of fog. Our first Russian escort also arrived at this time, but cunning manoeuvres on the way to Iceland lost him most successfully. After testing Iceland's air defences the Exercise proper started and the Strike Group, headed by *Eagle* and U.S.S. *Springfield* steamed towards Norway. At our northernmost point we just crossed the Arctic Circle and so 2500 Blue-Nose certificates were issued. For 10 days the aircraft flew almost continuously and a remarkably high serviceability was achieved. Not only was the force successfully defended from attack, even the 'enemy' submarines conceded this, but many long-range strikes were carried out over a large area of Western Europe. The final day or two was marred by gale force winds but we arrived in Rosyth only six hours late, for a well deserved break. The Scottish natives did particularly well for leave, the majority did not rejoin the ship

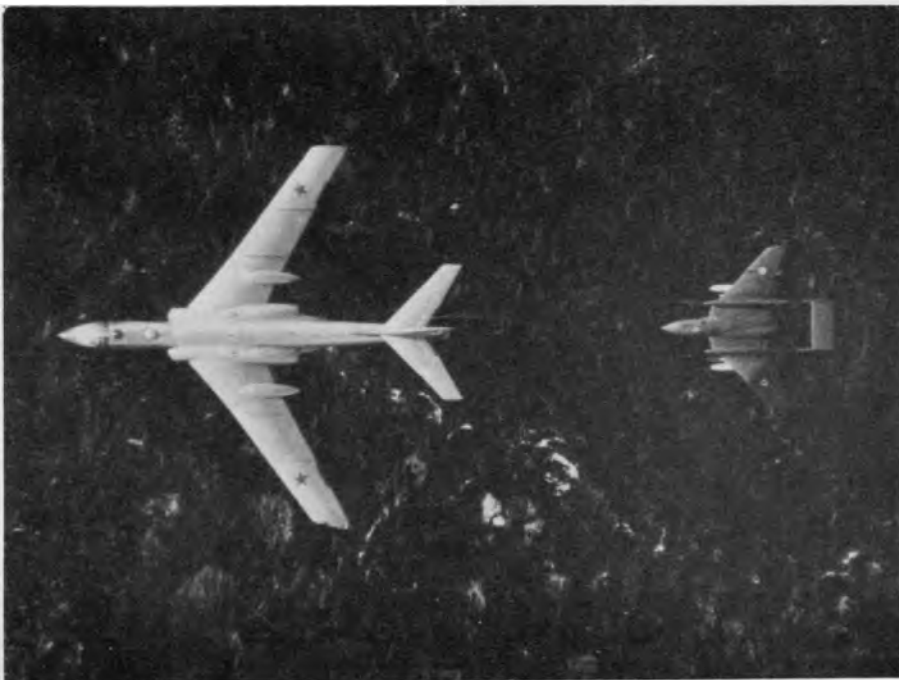
*Eagle* sailed from Devonport on a hot, windless Friday, the 23rd August, for her last commitment of the commission. This was to be her finest hour; the only strike carrier in a large NATO exercise, Silver Tower'. 820 had already embarked while we were alongside and the Gannets and Vixens arrived in misty weather in the Irish Sea. Then around Cape Wrath to the Moray Firth where the Buccaneers flew on. An intensive work-up period followed



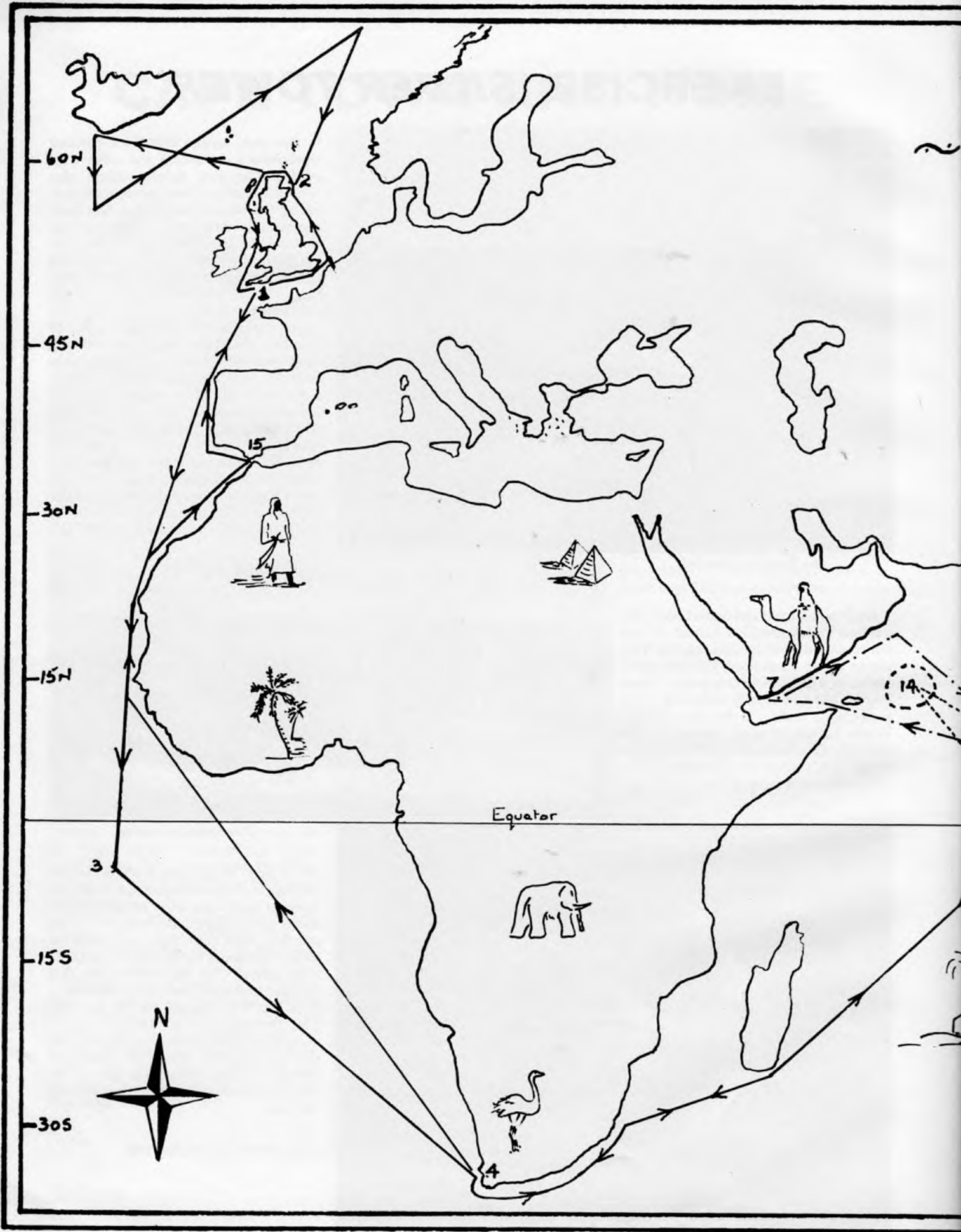
*Two uninvited guests!*

for 10 days! Many NATO officers visited the ship, and at the wash-up, the American Admiral said some most complimentary things about *Eagle's* performance in the exercise. After four days in Rosyth we sailed west-about for home. All the fixed-wing aircraft left on Wednesday, 2nd October and most were boosted off into thick fog. 820 departed for the last time a.m. Thursday and at 1630 on that day we entered Plymouth Sound, proudly, but also a little sadly, flying the paying-off pennant. A host of relatives greeted the ship and so ended *Eagle's* commission of 1967-68.

*Little Brother is watching you!*

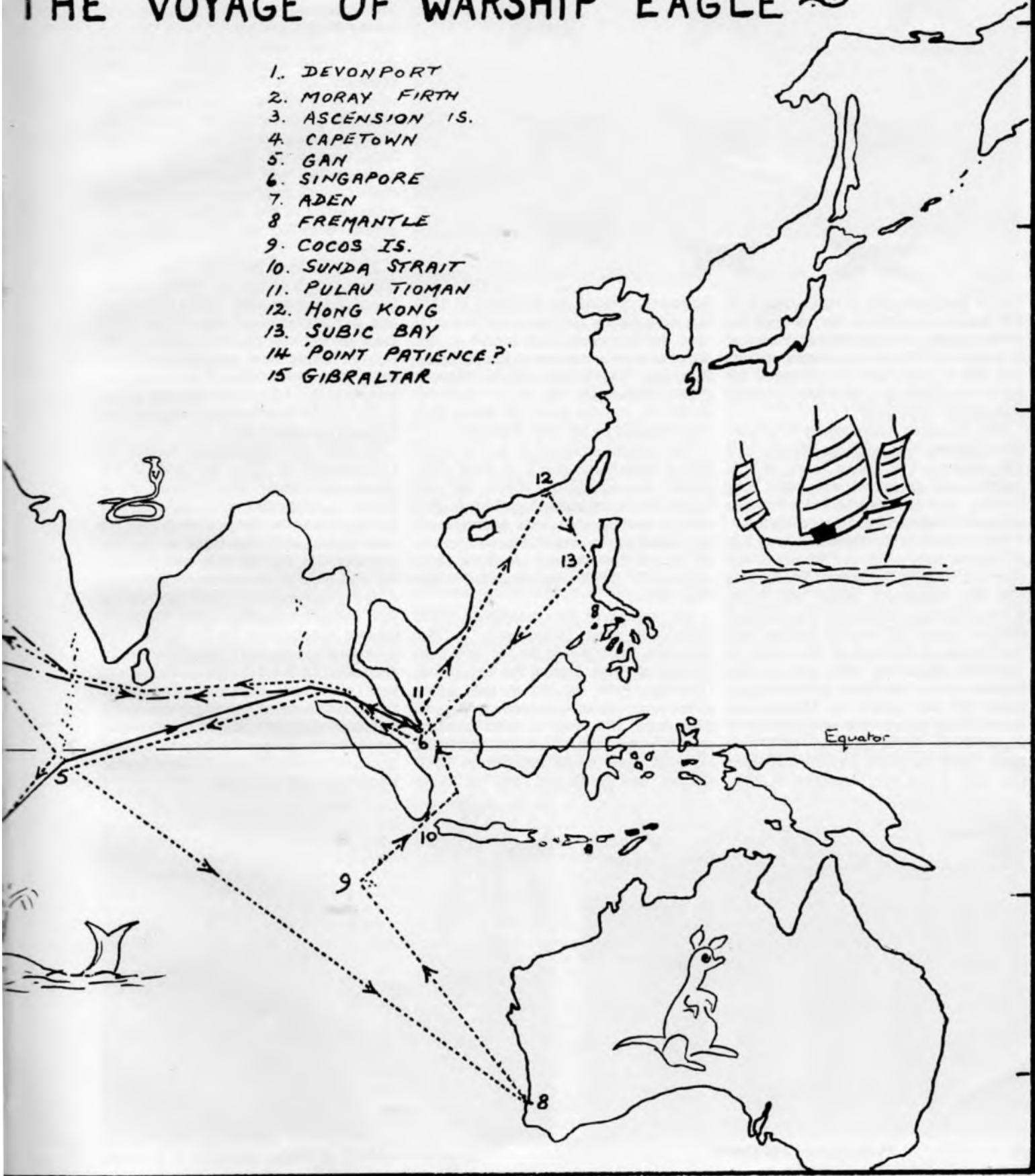






# THE VOYAGE OF WARSHIP EAGLE

- 1. DEVONPORT
- 2. MORAY FIRTH
- 3. ASCENSION IS.
- 4. CAPETOWN
- 5. GAN
- 6. SINGAPORE
- 7. ADEN
- 8. FREMANTLE
- 9. COCOS IS.
- 10. SUNDA STRAIT
- 11. PULAU TIOMAN
- 12. HONG KONG
- 13. SUBIC BAY
- 14. 'POINT PATIENCE?'
- 15. GIBRALTAR



## 800 SQUADRON



The 14 Buccaneer Mk. II strike aircraft of 800 Squadron comprise the teeth of the strike carrier. Although their primary role is long-range attack with bombs, rockets and missiles, they are also equipped for tactical and photographic reconnaissance, and in-flight refuelling.

The Squadron complement is 30 aircrew officers, four engineer officers, and 238 ratings. The major part of the maintenance personnel are kept busy looking after the complicated electronic equipment that the Buccaneer contains.

This aircraft is the latest in a long line of famous cabs which the Squadron has operated. During the Second World War 800 flew Blackburn Skuas and Roc's, Fairey Fulmars, Hurricanes and Hellcats from a variety of aircraft carriers and shore bases in all parts of the world. In 1944 the Squadron took part in the famous raid on the *Tirpitz* in Kaa Fjord. Later 800 saw action in Malaya and Korea flying Seafires (the naval version of the Spitfire). From 1955 to 1959 Seahawks were the strike aircraft and these took part in the Suez operation in 1956.

Scimitars replaced the Seahawks in 1959 in a strike/fighter role and from then until 1964 the Squadron either served in *Ark Royal* or at its home base at Lossiemouth. Buccaneer Mk. I's took over in 1964 and after a commission in *Eagle*, which included 71 days on patrol off Beira, they were replaced by the Mk. II in 1966.

This present commission has certainly been a memorable one if at times completely unpredictable. When we embarked from Lossiemouth on 15th August 1967 a small gloom cloud accompanied us, caused by the cancellation of a trip to the States. However, this cloud was soon dispelled by larger ones produced in the Met. Office.

The features of the commission which stand out most prominently in our memories must surely be the two long periods off Aden. During the first, before Christmas 1967, we did at least know when and where we were going to Singapore. This was a most pleasant month, which, apart from the festivities, included some useful flying from RAF Changi. But the second time we found

ourselves in the Arabian area it was *with* no fixed idea of our future programme. Morale however remained extremely high during both these periods, and this was due in large measure to the satisfaction derived from a ship working at peak efficiency. We in 800 remember that we were able to achieve a record standard of front-line serviceability for a Buccaneer Squadron and clocked up a startlingly high number of flying hours. These achievements will be remembered for *Eagle* 1967-68, long after the changes and uncertainties of the programme are forgotten. Socially, the visits were very acceptable!

800 must have been the most cosmopolitan bunch of aircrew officers of any Naval Squadron ever. Two Americans and a Frenchman on loan to us from their navies, and six RAF officers. We enjoyed having them, and they seemed to enjoy being with us. One of the Americans became such a Limey that when he visited a U.S. Carrier he was asked which part of England he came from!

During our disembarked period at Lossiemouth in July, we had a big change-over. Nevertheless Exercise 'Silver Tower' in September was a considerable success. It was the first opportunity of the commission, and indeed one of the few opportunities that we ever get, of using the Buccaneer to its maximum advantage. A full programme of long-range strikes with in-flight refuelling tested the maintenance organization to its limits. The intricate planning and flying of the sorties demanded all the skills and techniques of both pilots and observers. The whole Squadron was tried and it was not found wanting. Aircraft stayed serviceable, people kept smiling and a large number of simulated targets all over Western Europe were found and destroyed.



*Many Nations and Creeds*



*On the booster*



The story really begins for us in January 1967. The Squadron returned to Yeovilton after Christmas leave and began the first part of the 'work-up'. This involved the training of new crews and refreshing the old in the techniques used to live up to our motto of 'Strike and Defend'. An unusually valuable experience was provided by the infamous *Torrey Canyon*. Though the Squadron was on leave, several aeroplanes and crews were made available to bomb the wreck. The opportunity to attack a real ship with live weapons is not one which occurs very often in peacetime. More pacific activities in the period before we came to sea included demonstrations at the Biggin Hill Air Fair and the Paris Air Show. Also during the late spring, we had a sudden call to send two aircraft and crews to *Victorious at Malta* just in case she got involved in the Five Day War between Israel and Egypt.

Then at last the time came to return to our natural habitat, *Eagle*. This we did in stages. The first stage was to embark four aircraft for the deck trials. These trials are necessary to prove the flight deck machinery before the ship can start operating aircraft properly. It provided a very good introduction to the hard work which lay ahead. The second stage was to embark the remainder of the aircraft for the first work-up. Of course, it had been planned originally that there would be two such periods before we left for the Far East but the first of many changes of plan stopped this. Instead, we had to work much harder to be ready in time to go East earlier. However, there was some small consolation because we had the distinction of becoming the first Naval Squadron to fire Redtop missiles. These air-to-air missiles are the main armament in the Sea Vixen's primary task of Air Defence.

A short period at Yeovilton during the summer and we re-embarked for the Far East leg. Having to go the long way round meant that there were long periods without being able to fly. As the ship visited Cape Town on the way, this did not distress us too much, however. Ascension Island had the pleasure of listening to the noise of our engines for a few days, but this was all the flying we were able to do until the ship reached Gan. Most people probably think that the aircrew, at times like this, live a life of leisure. This is far from the truth. Apart from a full programme of briefings on what to expect in the Far East, there is always the problem of keeping up to date and fully conversant with the systems of the aeroplane which we fly. This is doubly important when there is a long period without flying because it is very easy to become rusty. The other problem is that of keeping the aircraft clean. Salt water and funnel smoke play havoc with aeroplanes and there is a constant battle to prevent



Away rockets

corrosion. It is a battle in which everyone joins, from the CO down.

This enforced 'idleness' was not to last for ever. Gan loomed on the horizon and the roar of twin Avons rent the skies again. This period was made memorable by one aircraft diverting ashore and stopping in the sea. Our hosts were smiling and about to enquire politely if the Navy found that the runway was too short when out climbed an RAF pilot. Then on to Singapore where we had our first spell ashore at Changi. The official purpose of this manoeuvre was to continue flying whilst the ship was in harbour, but the main aim of the aircrew was to soak up sun and Tiger in approximately equal amounts. A small sideline to our activities was also to foster relations with a certain airline with a familiar-sounding name.

All this was a prelude to our major task this commission, covering the withdrawal from Aden. Our role in the operation was to provide air defence for the Colony during the final stages of British rule. Happily our services were never needed in anger. However, there are two events which stand out. The first was the provision of continuous cover for H.M.S. *Appleton* during the two days when she visited the Kamaran Islands in the Red Sea. The other event was the last two days before the end. In case the Arabs decided to cause trouble while the mammoth task of pulling out the remaining troops went on, the Squadron kept four aircraft circling overhead Khormaksar all the time. We also had the doubtful honour of having the last British fighters to fly over South Arabian territory. As the last few troops left and the Colony was handed over, so the Vixens flew out to sea and back to *Eagle*.

As we sailed from the Gulf of Aden, all of us hoped that would be the last time we should see the area. Ahead was Singapore for Christmas and a repeat of the delights we left in October. On the way, there was to be a small celebration—the 1000th arrest this commission. This was a measure of what we had achieved so far, less than four months after leaving England.

Singapore again disappearing astern, we feared the worst, that Aden would be once more our stamping ground. Luck, for once, was on our side and instead we went to Western Australia. The arrival of the Squadron was well publicised when the formation fly-past over Perth and Fremantle appeared on local television. The aircraft landed at RAAF Pearce and one at least, a little unsteadily. Just before landing, Lt. White was told by the Australian controller that the news had just come through that his wife had given birth to a son. Not conducive to smooth flying!

Hong Kong followed fairly close on the pleasures of Australia. Not content with Wanchai, many of the aircrew ventured into the New Territories and peered at the Red Guards over the border, but not without the protection of the Army. Then a brief visit to the Philippines, cut short by our old friends in what is now South Yemen. But again our presence was sufficient to avoid the necessity of our services being employed in a warlike manner. The end of this particular operation brought us a new CO. He joined just in time to fly with the old CO before the ship started on the long haul home.

At last, on 17th June, the Squadron happily returned to Yeovilton. But the stay was only for two months. Back to sea again for the final stages of the commission. A work-up off Lossiemouth and then into the semi-frozen wastes of the North for Exercise 'Silver Tower'. This called for a great effort in providing continuous defence against strikes by a large variety of aircraft. This we did with great success. An additional task was imposed by the intervention of Soviet shadowers and one crew achieved notoriety when they were interviewed for American radio about their experience in intercepting a Russian Badger.

This commission for 899 Squadron has largely been a happy one. Despite the periods of very hard work and the times when we thought that land would never appear again, we have enjoyed our time on board.

Thank you, *Eagle*.



# 820 SQUADRON

Gentlemen, this is your friendly helicopter squadron, the 820th Light Pursuit Group.

Way back on 7th April 1967 we first left Culdrose for *Eagle*; we only stayed a week because of the boiler room fire. When we went back to Culdrose, we found the whole place buzzing with activity and hundreds of VIPs rushing about the place, all anxious to add their pennyworth to the saga of the *Torrey Canyon*. We merely had to take a party of M.P.s to inspect the Cornish beaches and Lt. March took Clare Hollingsworth of the *Observer* round as well.

Eventually *Eagle's* work-up began in very intense fashion as time was short. The best remembered event of this phase was the ditching of one of our aircraft. The CO (Lt.-Cdr. Tony Casdagli), the then Senior Observer (Lt.-Cdr. Tony Walsh) and Lt. Roger Mortimer were hovering at about 30ft when the engine failed. So gently did the aircraft ditch that it is believed that it will fly again—one of the very few helicopters to do so after a ditching.

During the long passage to the Cape, the ship's mail was forwarded to Las Palmas in the Canary Islands which belong to Spain. What could be easier than that two of our helicopters should fly inshore to collect it? Unfortunately the Spanish authorities didn't quite see it that way:

'Si, the helicopters could land and keep their rotors running. Si, they could load up with the mail. No, they couldn't take off again! No, there wasn't any fuel available!'

'But surely, Senior.'

'Yes but no.'

'But we've been cleared diplomatically.'

'Yes but no.'

'Look here, you can have the Senior Observer as hostage but we're running out of fuel.'

'Yes but no.' . . .

And so on for an hour! Eventually, having lied in their teeth that Gibraltar wasn't all that British anyway, the helicopters were allowed to leave. They made *Eagle* with very little fuel left.

Thence to Cape Town, Gan, Singapore and back to Aden. Ah, Aden! Dreams of empire borne upon the desert wind. Lawrence of Arabia and all that. Big fleets steaming around (though there were

*Big Brother . . .*

more RFAs than warships); helicopters flying around all over the place . . .

'There was I stuck at Khormaksar, tribesmen all round, no oil in me gear box. - -

'Hello, is that No. 4 briefing room? Good. Well the programme's changed again. You see it's like this .

'Do you reckon they'll give us a medal?'

'But Sir! Helicopters have got just as much right to land on your flight deck as any other .

'You should see this fridge I nicked  
'Bet the Crabs are making a packet out of this . .

'Hey, you, have you seen this signal? We're grounded!'

And indeed we were well, almost. Just as the withdrawal from Aden was being completed we received a signal telling us to carry on flying, but like the proverbial hedgehog-earefully. Something wrong with the mechanical parts that needed frequent and careful inspection. But the biggest part of the job in Aden had been done—in conjunction with *Albion's* helicopters a very efficient taxi and ferry service had operated throughout the Aden crisis between ships of the fleet and Khormaksar airfield.

After a very enjoyable Christmas at the new Royal Marine Barracks at Simbang, we sped off to Gan again, this time to work in Exercise 'Partner'. Our most formidable opponent was the nuclear submarine *Warspite* (of Triumph 2000 fame) and three days and nights of almost continuous flying was done from *Olna* and *Eagle*. Our reports on our successes were hastily compiled and sent off before we turned sharp left for Australia.

Perth! Embarrassing, wonderful Perth! Unending parties, sails, sunshine, beaches, birds! What a visit!

But amongst all these good times were unpleasant features. If they are left unmentioned, we won't remember this commission as it really was. The mechanical troubles of our rather tired helicopters meant that there were just fewer aeroplanes to fly, but to our maintainers it must have been like working at a treadmill. Every few hours there were oil samples to be taken, filters to be dropped, plugs to be inspected; quite often it was a case of rejecting that engine, changing it, base running the aircraft then back to dropping the filters and so on. For all

their troubles we might end up with two or three serviceable aircraft. To our maintainers a toast, for the very excellent job they did in a most frustrating period.

Despite the unceasing rain, Hong Kong was tremendous fun. The Squadron contributed its just share to the economies of Wanchai and Kowloon; it was an impecunious and happily debilitated party that got to sea just before rigor mortis was about to set in.

Off the Philippines for exercises, we were just getting into the swing of things when we were ordered to hurry back to the Indian Ocean.

The Royal Navy never 'steams' or 'goes' anywhere, it proceeds. If it is in a devil of a hurry it proceeds with dispatch. When one might suppose it to be busting a gut, it is in fact 'proceeding with the utmost dispatch'.

It is very exciting and somehow rather flattering to be ordered a quarter of the way round the world 'with the utmost dispatch'. A great scene for the history books is about to be staged in traditional style. Gad! Send a gun boat and sort them out! But for us, no such luck. Ah, no! Point 'Patience' was a ghastly anticlimax.

There we remained, never seeing land or a ship other than those of our own force, just waiting for news and practising. The Squadron did some shooting at the splash target with swivel mounted machine guns and most aircrew spent some time in *Albion* learning about the Commando organisation. The Middle East simmered but didn't require our attentions. The Squadron Line Book sums up the situation admirably:

And so our war drew to a close

Dull, Dyspeptic, Comatose.

And we, in force, returned to Gan

Per ardua ad nauseam -

And home.

Thereafter, life was just one long relaxation via Cape Town and Gib until, 10 months after leaving, the Squadron arrived back at Culdrose at 11 a.m. on 18th June 1968.

After a splendid spell of leave we prepared for the final six weeks of the commission. Long woollens were dragged out of the bottom drawer to combat the expected cold of the Arctic, but knowing the versatility of *Eagle's* programme, tropical kit was buffed up as well.



*Oh, Grandma, what big . . .*

## 849 'D' FLIGHT



849 'D' Flight has been entrusted with the provision of Airborne Early Warning around H.M.S. *Eagle* since her major refit four years ago.

In the last commission the Flight first darkened *Eagle's* skies on 6th June 1967 when the COD with two Gannet AEW3s arrived for wire pulling. They brought typical Welsh weather and at the first attempt the COD ended up by diverting to Chivenor. The wire pulling session lasted from 6th to 10th June, then the Flight retreated to Brawdy.

The Flight personnel embarked completely for the first time on 23rd June for the work-up. The aircraft were due to follow the next day, but bad weather kept the aircrew reluctantly on the ground for a further two days before catching the ship up in the Moray Firth. During the work-up, the aircraft were employed in the usual tasks of intercept control with the Vixens, AEW and strike direction with the Buccaneers, whilst the COD made itself increasingly popular by flitting back and forth to Lossiemouth with the mail.

The aircraft returned to Welsh Wales and dry Sundays on 17th July when five aircrew and one third of the maintainers changed over.

After the summer leave and a quick MADDL refresher, the new look D Flight returned to *Eagle* ready, willing and able. The second work-up was in familiar surroundings off Brawdy and causes to divert were eagerly sought and sometimes available. There followed a quiet period so far as fixed wing flying was concerned until Ascension Island; here we discovered that Wideawake did not live up to its name and several attempted practice diversions were thwarted.

Cape Town was the promised land. As usual the COD heralded our approach by flying ahead for the mail and we were quite astonished to see it return the same day.

The next FLYEX was off Durban, where the swell dampened the ardour of the jet jockeys' and we were granted the freedom of the fixed-wing skies to carry out strikes, inter and nausex, whilst the COD had a run ashore for mail and bronzy-bronzy for the COD BOD.

The 'stoveys' joined us over Gan during the five day flying exercise there, which included the first of many ship searches as well as control and distrike sorties. The aircraft disembarked to Changi on 5th October; by

the time the ground party arrived the following day, the aircrew had already taken a severe mauling from the Tiger.

The Changi period lasted just over two weeks, and included AEW, low level navigation, control and other various and devious exercises. Flying back to *Eagle* off Penang, three aircraft had to divert to the Australian Air Force Base at Butterworth for the night whilst the ship sorted out a few personal problems. Those ashore had a very good run, which would have been even better had they realised it was to be the last for two months.

We now came to the dominating factor of the entire cruise—Aden the land of sand. The Flight was actively and extensively employed in this modern mini-version of Dunkirk. At least once a day we searched the area for shipping and built up a plot, in addition to flying the normal sorties. On two occasions our aircraft ventured into Khormaksar and hid between the walls of sand bags, but there was no more excitement than—the noise of distant rifle shots.

Our two days of greatest glory were in Operation Kamaran, when the Gannets, operating over a hundred miles from the carrier, kept watch on H.M.S. *Appleton* and *Sir Galahad*, who were carrying a diplomatic mission to Kamaran Island up the Red Sea. For this operation the Flight flew 16 sorties, totalling 47 hours in two days.

The COD made numerous trips to various sandy airfields and kept the fleet supplied with mail. Our moment of un-glory came in the Aden flypast, when one Gannet clapped hands and another failed to start, leaving just two to bid farewell to our rapidly shrinking Empire.

A good Christmas and New Year rest were spent at Changi. Flying included several exercises co-operating with the RAF, as we carried out raid reporting to RAF Bukit Gombak. In addition we carried out a shipping plot to assist in a census of shipping traffic passing through the Malacca Straits.

After exercises off Gan, which were rather more interesting than usual as they included playing with surface and sub-surface vessels, *Eagle* expectantly turned south east to Australia and on 11th February three Gannets left a pitching deck for the RAAF Base Pearce, near Perth.

Whilst in Western Australia, the C.O. Lt-Cdr. J. Burton was succeeded by Lt.-Cdr. T. Goetz. When not living it up in

the Perth locality we managed to fit in a few navigation exercises over the unfamiliar terrain.

On to the Cocos Islands where the crew of one Gannet gleefully had to spend the night ashore to find that the only bright lights were those used for fishing at night in the lagoon. There was little competition for further visits!

The next major area of operation was near Pulau Tioman, where the highlight was controlling Lightnings based on RAF Tengah, Singapore; this was done very successfully. Some night flying was carried out from ashore to prepare pilots for night flying from the ship, but it is understood that other familiarisation sorties were also performed whilst ashore. The first decent air defence exercise was also planned for this period—targets were expected to include Hunters, Canberras and Lightnings; however, first the weather prevented the enemy from getting airborne, and then the weather prevented us from detecting most of those that did come in our direction.

In Hong Kong the Flight concentrated on non-flying activities, which included a very good Flight run, started at the China Fleet Club and continued in various lesser known and unmentionable places until a late hour. The COD was sent ashore for a respray; the locals got it down to its natural finish and seemed keen to leave it at that, but were finally persuaded to re-apply dark blue paint. This gave it rather a sinister appearance and the pilot had difficulty in finding his cockpit as the markings had been painted out.

Intriguing tales had been circulating for some time about the township of Olongapo, but when an opportunity for first hand experience seemed to be just around the corner we were whisked off to Point Patience' to continue our shipping plots. With sea (and nothing else) around us, the shippings plots had assumed a new importance and many long sorties were made, covering hundreds of square miles per trip; but although these were popular with the Flag and the Command, the ship's company were more impressed by three Gannets which, on 13th May, collected 52 bags of mail from RAF Masirah.

And then, at last to Gan, Cape Town and home. During the voyage the aircraft were put back in the 'shed' for the maintainers to pull them to pieces.

June 17th was an eagerly awaited day, but U.K. offered difficult weather conditions and the disembarkation looked doubtful. The biggest surprise of the day was when Brawdy provided sunshine to welcome the five Gannets, whereas the other air stations failed miserably to rise to the occasion.

The Flight was active in the genuine sporting sphere also. L.R.E.M. Armstrong was a successful member of the ship's athletic team and Lt.s' Kennedy and Beattie played regularly for the ship's first XV. Officers and Ratings were frequently locked in friendly games of volley ball and deck hockey—the friendliness being evidenced by an astounding array of slings, bandages and scars.

After another third change-over, the 24th August saw us embark in *Eagle* for a final six weeks flying in the North Atlantic and Norwegian Sea. No doubt it will be a hectic flying period; the runs ashore planned for us don't sound wildly exciting, but at least it isn't ... Sh ... you know where!

# SEAMAN DEPARTMENT

Replenishment at sea is a sort of Seaman's Field Day. There are ropes, wires, jackstays, inhauls, outhauls, blocks, tackles and a profusion of such gear which no-one really understands but which peculiarly baffles the technicians, airy-fairies, pussers and other un-nautical types.

The aim is to embark FFO, AVCAT and stores of every size, shape and description from aero-engines weighing a couple of tons, to eggs, and from bombs to brushes. Also included could be missiles and mail, films and film stars, cabbages and kings-sorry, getting carried away! RAS also ensures that the ship can stay at sea for months on end and so prevent us from getting into trouble ashore at places like Aden, Gan and the Cocos Islands.

The Seamen, of course, totally lose sight of the aim and run around cursing and shouting at each other and at everyone else in sight. They are in their element and have achieved exactly what they want:

- i They are in charge;
- ii They have involved the whole ship;
- iii They have stopped fixed-wing flying.

They achieve the latter by planting two enormous stump masts right in the middle of the Flight Deck and this really does discourage aircraft from landing. Ah, the sweet smell of success.

The Seamen savour this smell slowly. It all starts the night before when they insist on closing all the hatches and watertight doors, in such a manner as to make everyone go twice as far and twice as awkwardly when going from A to B. Of course, if they had half a chance they'd darken ship as well, and instead of the normal quota of barked and skinned shins a few twisted or broken ankles would then be obtained. Alas, darken ship is a trick more practised by the airmen but even without it the Seamen soften up the other departments and make them aware of their impending doom.

RAS day dawns bright and clear (or windy and raining which is better as only Seamen have the correct protective clothing). Blocks and tackles are rigged, rollaveyers are laid, chutes set up and all departments provide multitudes of hands at strategic points throughout the ship, in order to move the stores to their correct stowages. It is now impossible to go from A to B.

Meanwhile the Seamen are glorying in their triumph on the captured Flight Deck. *Eagle* approaches her quarry, a tanker, at high speed in order to upset the Engineers, who have already provided all boilers, extra generators and additional Special Sea Dutymen.

Then, when stationed at 120ft on the port beam of the oiler which is making 12 knots, we are ready really to embarrass the engineers. The Compass Platform orders: 'Up one turn on the starboard outer engine only'. Umpteen decks below an ERA twitches and cracks his throttle open a further half an inch. The ship increases speed by about one-twentieth of a knot and moves forward 10ft relative to the tanker. The ERA relaxes. 'Down one turn .. !'

Bored by this game the Bridge assumes guide and the stores ship approaches to station herself on *Eagle's* port side. Gun lines are fired, officers wave multi-coloured bats, petty officers shout and everyone else hauls away at the ropes. It's all good, clean fun. Soon the jackstays are rigged and the stores start to come across the inhauls, which are powered by flight deck tractors. However, it's the seamen who direct them.

The Flight Deck Officer stands stunned, watching with growing dismay as his beautiful deck becomes littered with empty packing cases, bits of cardboard, smashed eggs, apples, potatoes, cabbage leaves and flour.

Even more fun is returning supplies to the stores ship. The DSO approaches the officer in charge of the jackstay: 'We are returning a very valuable piece of equipment; do please be careful with it.'

The seaman replies confidently: 'Don't worry', and waves his bat to haul the jackstay taut. The stores ship takes a lurch, the jackstay becomes bar taut and the contents leap out of the net into the sea. The DSO rushes off weeping to find a pad of 126s.

Bomb lifts continue to race up and

down. Crates of beer whistle down the chutes rigged in the lift well and career on through the sick bay. Tractors rush back and forth. Boxes rattle along rollaveyers. Helicopters vertrep oil drums. FFO gushes into tanks and chaos is complete. The Seamen are satisfied, until the next time.

Who are these Gods? There's the First Lieutenant, who has a beard and a megaphone. One is put in front of the other and a nautical command emerges. The Bosun smiles grimly, checks the rigging and patiently explains that all loads must be lifted vertically. The Buffer walks from rig to rig telling salt-encrusted tales. Officers, whom no one thought to be Seamen, appear. Ds, Gs, TASOs and even NBCDOs all wave their bats with wild abandon. The Seamen POs, thinking of their tot and their pension, really run it all and control the real workers, the Seamen junior ratings. While they catch their fingers on spring hooks, shift loads, curse, sweat, grab an apple from a broken box and wish it was a can of beer, they are quietly singing 'Roll on my nine, roll on Guzz'.

These are the Seamen of *Eagle*. Many mock them, and supercilious technical fingers are pointed at the bollard on 4V starboard which has been chipped and painted 44 times this commission. The Seaman can afford his quiet smile; he was there hundreds of years before anything except birds flew or steam turbines had been dreamed of. He'll still be smiling when fixed-wing aircraft no longer exist and the steam turbine is but a museum exhibit.

Every seadog must have his day; the Seaman has his day when we RAS.



# AIR DEPARTMENT



*on view*

Apart from a few delays for fog in the Moray Firth and the South Irish Sea, our work-up went extremely well and formed the backbone of the whole commission. The air department and the squadrons grew up together during that time, and the fact that we did our first non-diversion flying during FOAC's Operational Readiness Inspection, albeit only a few miles off Brawdy, we took in our stride!

There is no point in running through the programme we followed, either at sea or ashore, as you can read that in many other parts of this book. But it was off Aden at the end of 1967 that the safe professionalism of everybody began to show and it went on showing right up to 'Silver Tower' in September of this year. A very great deal of thought went into the achieving of this state, and it wasn't only thought from the top. Many of the ideas for increasing safety and improving operational efficiency came from quite humble origins, and I think it was realised that this was really a team effort. No problem is solved by magic but many can be solved by careful thought and planning amongst those involved, and we were all involved.

Yes, it was boring in the Indian Ocean and at times frightening up in the North Sea and I don't much like painting the centre line! But I, for one, get a great feeling of pride from having been part of the team that made this commission cheerful, professional and, above all, safe.

*The: symbol of success*

How to distinguish this commission, just ending, from any other commission of an aircraft carrier on a Home/Far East G.S.C., I asked myself when faced with writing the air department article for this book. **Did** we come up with any 'Firsts'—did we break any records—were we any better at doing our job than any other ship?

We did come up with one 'Last', rather than a 'First'—we look like being the last carrier to do a standard Home/Far East G.S.C. If we did break any records, I was not conscious of them, for that is not the way, in my opinion, we **did** our jobs.

I'm quite sure, however, that we did do our job better than any other ship, and there are good reasons for this and they are worth mentioning.





# ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

Gentlemen,

It is with some pride that the Board of Directors of Eagle Engineering Enterprises (EEE) Ltd presents its report for the period ending October 1968.

We have set up many production records. Our main product, of course, has been propelled water. We have produced nearly 112,000 miles of it in the last 18 months; although we are able to produce water propelled in two directions we have found an overwhelming popularity in the sale of water propelled backwards. This market suits the design of our machinery and we are confident that the demand will continue.

The period covered by this report started with the company in the hands of a very old and distinguished repair organisation on the East bank of the River Tamar. Because all our domestic services were under repair our staff was temporarily accommodated by the Centaur Catering Company. This was not entirely satisfactory as we had to provide skilled staff to assist the latter company in the maintenance of its services.

During the seven months in the hands of the Tamar Yard, a considerable amount of work was carried out. One propeller and tailshaft were removed, refitted and replaced and our rudders were replaced by those of a rival concern, Ark Royal Rusting Co. Perhaps the largest job was the installation of the DAX arresting gear. This is a new device whereby an aircraft arrest is made by causing water to be driven at high pressure through holes in the side of a long pipe.

After a great deal of overtime by our staff, production trials began on 8th April 1967. Unfortunately a serious fire in It' Boiler House stopped all output but our



*150,000 horsepower at his fingertips!*

financial backers, H.M.G. & Co, were able to afford the repairs. One happy note was sounded in that Lt. S. G. Austin was awarded the MBE and Sub-Lt. B. T. Heatley received a commendation for their parts in extinguishing the fire.

Our Chairman, Cdr. A. M. J. Cumming, was relieved in June 1967 by Cdr. C. W. Awmack.

Shareholders will be interested in the activities of our numerous subsidiaries. Their products include water (fresh, hot or chilled), low pressure and high pressure air, and liquid oxygen. Others handle three types of bulk fuel, can generate more than 6400 kilowatts of electrical power, arrest aircraft in flight at a distance of 200ft and launch them again at more than 100 knots.

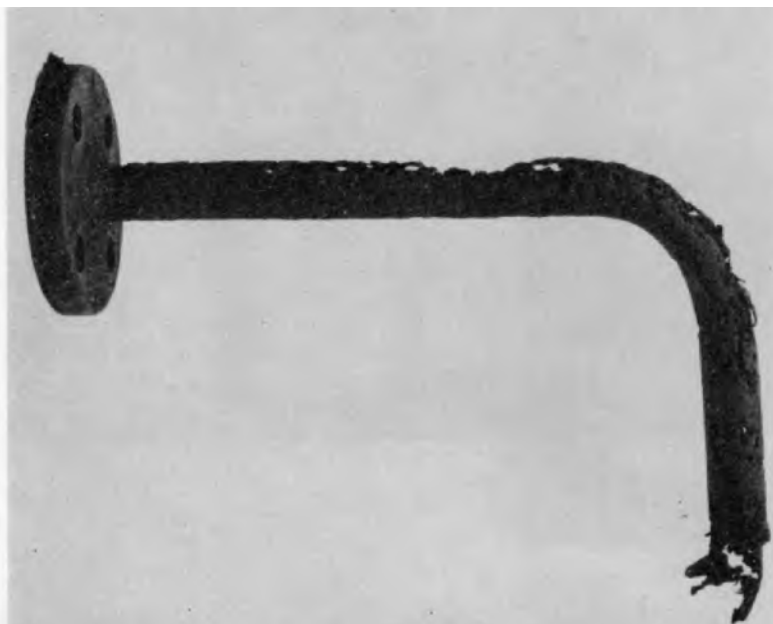
Since being commissioned, our water distilling plants have produced over 300,000 tons of almost perfectly pure

water. Domestic sales alone have reached almost 600 tons a day on some occasions! The air conditioning group have found the normal necessity of running at least two of their four 3,000,000 B.T.U./hr plants non-stop since March 1967.

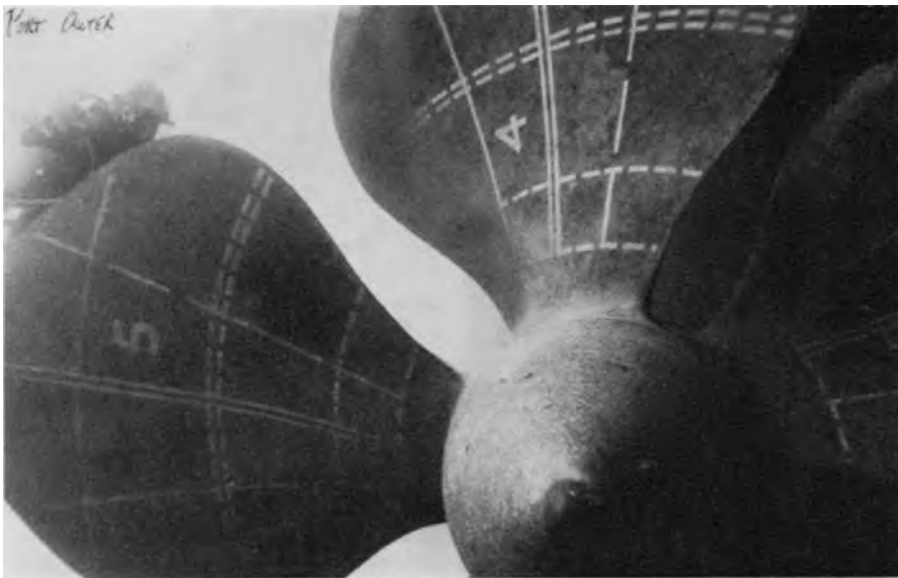
Generation of D.C. and A.C. power has proved a most successful market. Our customers, the Weapons and Electrical Co, seem able to absorb all we can produce and since April 1967 we have on one occasion only shut down to complete shore supplies.

The aircraft launching and arresting department has done well, having launched 3951 aircraft and arrested 3921. Our auditors are looking into this discrepancy! The waist catapult, the larger of the two, had its cylinders machined in Singapore and several piston changes on both catapults have been carried out by ship's staff.

During the period, the EEE Co has consumed 144,000 tons of fuel, most of which has been burnt in the eight boilers. On one notable occasion in Fremantle, some of our waste fuel oil was being pumped into a lighter which unfortunately sank. The subsequent inquiry cleared EEE Co from blame but it was a tragic sight to see the waters of the River Swan so polluted. The lighter was eventually raised from the bottom of the harbour some six weeks after our departure. Our external sales of Furnace Fuel Oil have been steady and we have supplied at times *Hardy, Carysfort, Minerva, London, Dido, Cavalier,* and the Indian Naval Ship *Telwar.*



*Some steam pipes needed repairs*



*Diving on 'Jelly Day'*

The demand for AVCAT has been good. Unplanned trials have been carried out in lifting deck tiles in accommodation spaces and the day of the Great Flood, 9th September 1967, is still talked about. This provided some useful data: the specific gravity of the ship's book is about 0.96 and it has been discovered that cigarettes soaked in AVCAT do not taste any better.

We have replenished with fuel at sea 75 times from the following suppliers: *Orangeleaf, Plumleaf, Olna, Olwen, Tideflow, Tidespring, Tidereach, Tidesurge and Tidepool.*

Since steam was first raised in February 1967, we have not shut down; so for 20 months we have continually had one or more boiler rooms on load. This has necessitated cleaning 54 boilers, the majority by the ship's staff whilst the ship was under way.

As we go to press, the Shipwright subsidiary have completed well over 4000 individual orders received on job cards since May 1967 both expertly and expeditiously. The type of work has ranged from fitting spur brackets to the yardarm to replacing leaking rivets in the ship's bottom. Maintenance of the ship's hull has been kept well up to date. Other important work has been the building of a collapsible stage for the amateur 'dramatists' together with all the associated scenery, all the odd items for Open Days and Children's Parties, not to mention Red Cap Races. There is little doubt that all this could not have been achieved without the introduction of the modern calendar which appeared to lack

Saturdays and Sundays. It is hardly surprising that this group's muscles were so well developed that their Tug O' War team won the first competition.

During a brief spell in Singapore in October 1967, the ship's divers re-tightened the propeller nut on the starboard outer shaft. Had they not carried out this difficult and dangerous job, involving the use under water of a spanner weighing more than 1cwt, it is probable that the ship would have had to dock.

Our visit to Fremantle posed an unusual problem in that the draught of

the ship had to be reduced by nearly 4ft to allow her to berth in the harbour. This was achieved by allowing all our fuel stocks to run to an all-time low and by pumping out half the fresh water tanks, thus lightening the ship by 4800 tons.

Apart from two weeks in Hong Kong and four days in Cape Town, production continued more or less smoothly until June 1968. One incident of note was 'Jelly Day'; during the morning watch, severe low frequency vibrations shook the ship from topmast to keel. To trace the source trials were carried out at varying speeds with different shafts trailing. It was decided to stop the ship and send divers down. The Indian Ocean water was beautifully clear and it was immediately apparent that the top half of the rope guard on one propeller shaft was missing. Careful inspection also showed marks on the blades. It was surmised that the piece of rogue metal, about 4ft by 3ft, had broken away and jammed between the propeller blades, but had freed itself and dropped away when the shaft went astern to stop the ship.

On our return to Devonport in June 1968, the change-over of our staff started with almost all the CERAs and Ch.M(E)s being relieved. This will be completed in early 1969.

To sum up briefly, the excellent production and reliability record of the Company has been achieved by sheer hard work and a great deal of overtime. We wish the new commission every success in their efforts to better our figures.



*The MCR. Nerve centre of it all!*

# WEAPON ELECTRICAL DEPARTMENT



*Sea Cat*

The early days of a commission are normally difficult times for the Weapon Electrical Branch, and this second commission since modernisation was no exception. Although little new equipment had been fitted during the preceding months, there were the usual problems which arise when new faces need to get to know each other and their new ship. The fact that we were living in *Centaur* and so had two ships to look after, made the maintenance task during the early months particularly difficult, but much concerted effort by all ensured that equipment and systems were ready in time for their post-refit trials.

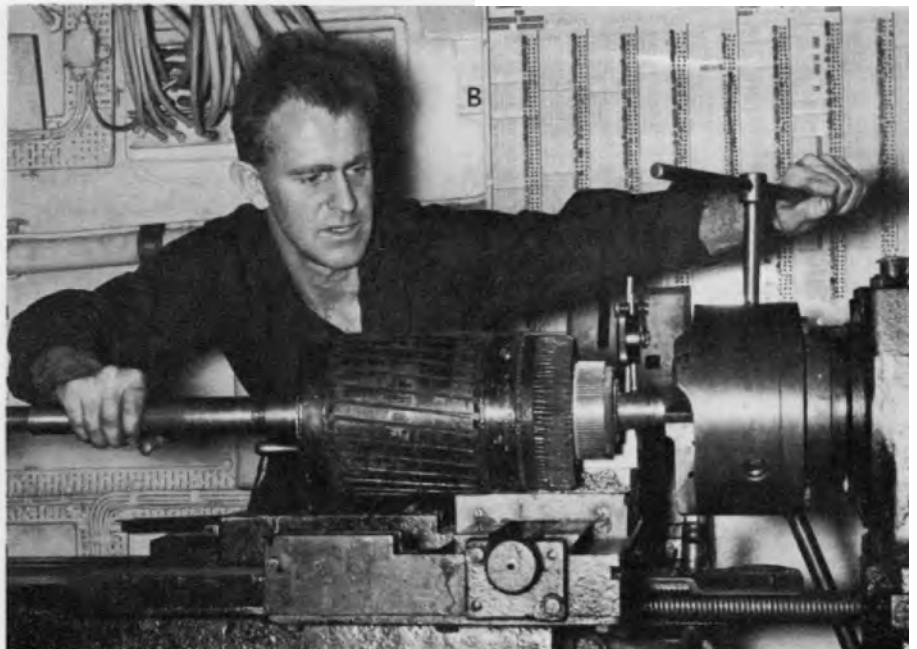
The 1st February 1967 heralded the introduction of the new, three-pronged Weapon Electrical Branch, in which all electrical ratings were categorised into one of three sub-specialisations. The Radio Electrical category remained fundamentally unchanged, so that Radio Electrical ratings retained their old titles and remained responsible for the same equipment. All other electrical ratings, however, were allocated to either the Control Electrical or the Ordnance Electrical categories according to their choice and their suitability decided by their past experience. The result of this change was that the 'heavy electrics', i.e. the generation and distribution of electrical power, gun mountings, bomb lifts, etc., are the responsibility of the Ordnance Electrical category, and weapon control systems, sonar, gyros, etc. become the responsibility of the Control Electrical

category. Because a man is now employed on the same type of work for the whole of his career, it can be expected that his expertise will improve with a consequent increase in efficiency. The new branch structure has been in existence now for 18 months and it is already clear that the uniformity introduced by the scheme is enabling the hands to be employed in a far more efficient manner.

The sea trials which were carried out during April 1967 were unhappily delayed

by a major fire which developed in 'B' Boiler Room, causing an unfortunate delay in the ship's programme. Amongst other damage caused by the fire, there was extensive burning of machinery space wiring, but this damage would certainly have been much greater but for the quick thinking, sound judgement, and remarkable courage of POOE1 Latham. His action in fighting an electrical fire in extremely dangerous conditions was a fine example to the whole department, and we were very pleased to hear that he was later awarded the British Empire Medal for his gallantry.

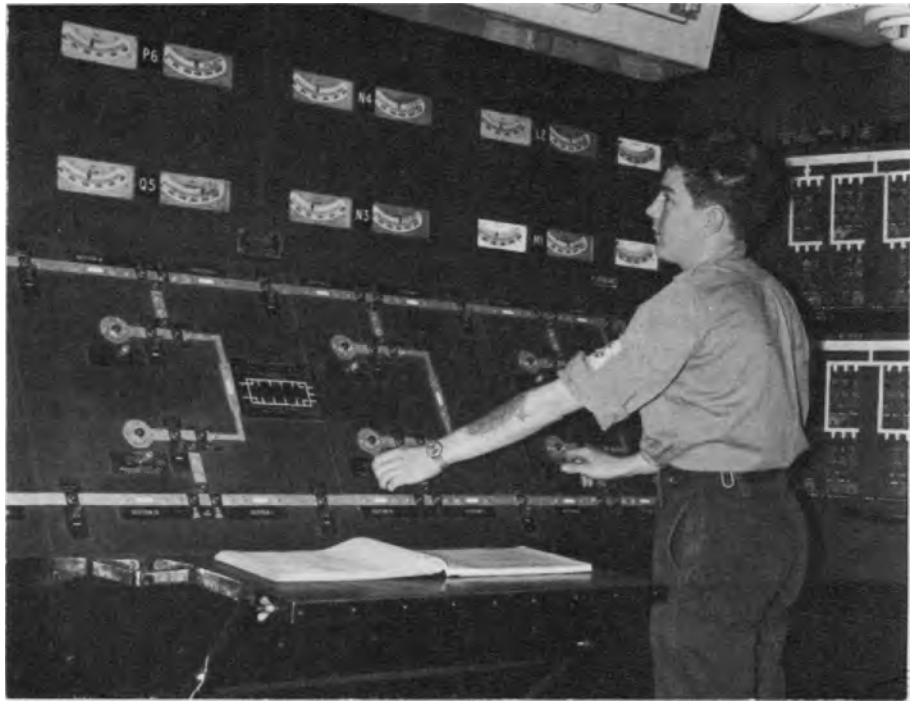
The boiler room fire and the cancellation of our intended visit to America seemed to set the pattern, for the remainder of the commission, of changed plans and uncertainty of our immediate future. However we were fortunate that the expected long periods on patrol off Aden were prematurely ended by the early withdrawal of British Forces, so that we were able to spend a happy Christmas in Singapore. The lengthy patrols represented a considerable test for all sections of the department, and the hard work under tiring and often uncomfortable conditions was rewarded by the overall availability of equipment being very high indeed. Typical of the effort made at this time was that of REA Astbury and REM Trotter who were awarded a prize from the Herbert Lott Trust Fund for their contribution in maintaining the fighting efficiency of the ship.



*An armature being set up for skimming*

Once alongside in Singapore we were able to take some well earned rest and enjoy some sport. Our soccer team, ably captained by CEA James, has always been in prominence, and as yet remains undefeated in inter-departmental games. Perhaps our greatest achievement in the sporting field was winning the Inter-Departmental Cross Country Competition held at Singapore during January. For some reason the backbone of the team came from the Radio and Radar Group, and it was REA Meakin who won the event, with REM Peerman coming in third. Our B team, captained by REMech D'Arcy, did very well indeed to finish third overall. Later on, while in Hong Kong, REM Brownlee entered and captained a bowling team to compete for the Sir David Trench Trophy, and we were later pleased to hear that his team had won the trophy, having beaten all other teams from every ship of Commonwealth navies visiting Hong Kong. The complete list of the commission's sporting successes is too long to record fully here, but other noteworthy achievements were REM Proudman's winning a bronze medal in the Junior Navy Athletic Championships, and POOEI Main's becoming Far East Fleet Lightweight Boxing Champion : both very creditable accomplishments indeed.

The ensuing months at sea gave the Weapons Group an opportunity to give further impressive displays of the ship's



*The main switchboard*

firepower. They had distinguished themselves earlier in the commission by hitting a PTA right on the nose with X system, and although Y system could never manage to achieve the same high performance the overall results for the commission were well above the fleet average. The Seacat section was permitted to fire off a generous allowance of missiles

with very satisfactory results, and it was encouraging to note how impressed the ship's company was by the effectiveness of this weapon.

Clearly the biggest single task undertaken by the Weapons Electrical Department has been the repair of the 984 Radar aerial which, in April 1968, suffered a catastrophic failure of the modulator main bearing, with considerable consequential damage to essential electric cables. Because defects of such magnitude cannot be rectified without dockyard assistance, the ship's programme was likely to be disrupted for many months ahead, and it seemed probable that the ship would not be available for the important NATO exercise 'Silver Tower' which was to take place during the autumn. However, by completing a great deal of preparatory work while still at sea, by careful planning, and by progressing work continuously day and night, the system was repaired, tested, and tuned in only four months. A very creditable achievement indeed by the Radar section.

Looking back over the whole commission, we will probably remember the long periods at sea and the many hours of toil, but will also enjoy the memories of some very pleasant runs ashore in the Far East, especially in Australia. With the impending phasing out of the aircraft carrier, it is likely that not only will the opportunities for visits to the Far East be more limited, but few of us will ever again be able to serve in a ship containing so much and such complex equipment.



*Fault-finding*



# SUPPLY AND SECRETARIAT DEPARTMENT

Headed by Cdr. Owen and the appropriately named Lt.-Cdr. Fidler, the S. and S. Department has had an industrious and successful commission.

With 2500 mouths to feed, victualling never ceases to be a problem, but as yet no one has called at the sick bay suffering from malnutrition. Indeed several have had to go on diets after having too much of the good food produced!

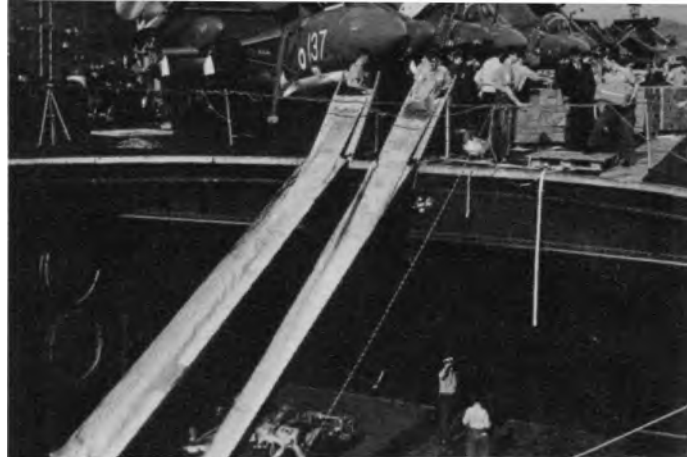
During the commission, the victuallers and the galleys have managed to keep up with the never-ending queues of Oliver Twists, and have produced approximately 4,000,000 meals, not including the 'nine o' clockers' provided by the bakery each day. Over 2,000,000 eggs have been cracked; 50 miles of sausages have been cooked and consumed; chips, and yet more chips, have taken care of 2,750,000lb of spuds. 380,000lb of sugar have been stirred into 276,000oz of coffee and tea, together with 263,000 cans of milk. The bakery has produced 374,500lb of bread, of which 24,000lb has been sent by helicopter to other ships and submarines—both British and foreign. Amongst their other successes have been giant tiddyoogies for the Mayor of Cape Town, pasties for the Commander-in-Chief, Western Fleet and 81 decorated Christmas cakes—one for each mess with the number piped on.

One of the most important victualling items is rum. 565 casks (kilderkins) have been opened, and 10,170 gallons of rum pumped up to produce 650,000 tots for thirsty sailors.

The NAAFI staff have done a roaring trade in the drink business also, having sold 2,202,312 cans of beer all of which have been personally scrutinised by the PMO on their passage by rollaveyer through the Sick Bay. NAAFI have pandered to some of our other vices, too, by selling us, amongst other things, 18,500,000 cigarettes and 171,990 bars of nutty, and in the process relieved our pockets of £244,788.

The Pay Office staff have, as usual, been looking after the interests of the

*RAS, the beer chute*



Exchequer, but have still managed to hand over £1,864,946 14s. 8d. in crisp currency notes between November 1966 and June 1968—by the end of the commission they will have given out more than the Great Train Robbers took in. The writers, when not involved in RASs, have kept their hands in with their multiplication tables as the six currencies we have dealt in have all had two rates of exchange—one before and one after devaluation.

We have twice helped out the Bank of England with our large dollar imports—the ones we didn't use at Boston and the ones we didn't use at Subic.

The Captain's Office has managed to satisfy the secretarial demands of all departments, and to deal with a never-ending flow of requests from men who thought their good conduct deserved a badge. Automation has assisted the staff in the shape of some sophisticated photocopying and duplicating machines and an ultra-modern electric typewriter. However, the chief user of these gadgets found something else more useful—the first prize of £500 in the Grand Christmas Draw.

In the Naval Stores Department, work has been at a high pace throughout the commission keeping account of 60,000 different items of stores in 35 storerooms. Items have been demanded from as far apart as Perth, Scotland to Perth, Australia. With the help of the signal department, 5,563 signals about air stores have been sent and received.

We have RAS'd from all eight solids support ships, and have taken solids as well as oil from most of the Navy's tankers—we have taken in well over 5000 loads by jackstay in 45 RASs and a lot more by 'vertrep'. On the day we left U.K., we hit the headlines with what was the largest vertrep ever carried out—

storing by helicopter from R.F.A. *Resource* when we were both anchored in Plymouth Sound. Subsequent RASs broke other records, culminating in the 370 jackstay loads we received from our 'chummy' stores ship, R.F.A. *Reliant*, on the day before we got to Hong Kong. We had five months away from a naval base from January to June, but fortunately ran out of nothing vital.

In the Wardroom, the cheerful hard work put in by both the Stewards and Cooks was appreciated by all the officers. This appreciation was shown by the presentation to each member of the staff of an engraved tankard filled with Tiger. The 'piece de resistance' from the Wardroom Galley was the dish of real sheep's eyes served to the Captain and others on the Admiral's orders during the ORI. The Captain's staff, normally the soul of discretion, distinguished themselves in Cape Town by getting their photographs in the Cape papers about twice as often as the Captain.

Sportswise, the Wardroom staff have been particularly keen and successful. A 20-man team, coached by Leading Steward Gilfillan, won the Tug O' War Cup (which was already on the Chief Steward's Permanent Loan List), Leading Steward Horsley-Wright and Stewards D. Allen and M. V. Allen all won their bouts in the boxing tournaments; the volley ball team were only just beaten in the final. The chance of a game of deck hockey was never missed.

Up Forr'd the Ship's Cooks can all look back on a job well done. Despite the tantrums of a crazy ice cream machine, the efforts of a temperamental pie maker, and disposal units that would not dispose, and despite the often hot and steamy conditions, the team came bouncing back and always produced food of a very high standard. Throughout the foreign leg, 'Don and Graham' amused everyone with their excellent cartoons, and the Singing Chefs entertained large audiences in a most professional and talented manner.

To sum up the department as a whole, it is safe to say that everyone worked hard, achieved what he set out to do, and will look back on his time in *Eagle* with happy memories.



*Cold sweet table—  
Junior Rates' Dining Hall*



*'Avon' in need of attention*

One hundred and forty-five officers and men, divided into seven sections and doing a thousand and one jobs, from servicing guided missiles to peeling potatoes, have provided the necessary workshop support to embarked squadrons and for the ship's motor transport. There is a wide variety of technical skills and grades, from two commanders, through the whole range of technical officers and ratings to two slightly surprised able seamen.

We really began work on 21st March 1967 when a Scimitar (for drill purposes only!) was brought on board for training aircraft handlers on the Flight Deck. One would hardly believe that such a flightless object would require the services of an air engineer—but it did.

In addition to the more obvious aircraft rectification work which goes on 24 hours a day if the flying programmes are to be fulfilled, 127 X-rays have been carried out on aircraft structures. Fifty-six engines have been embarked and disembarked which required many an interesting evolution at sea. Whilst we are very sorry about the ghastly noise we have to make on the flight deck during the essential ground test runs, we must point out that the biggest sufferers have been the departmental senior rates who carried out the tests and have had to stay awake at nights for most of the commission.

Items that the section has taken in its stride included the manufacture of mail carriers for the bomb bay of a Buccaneer, a barbecue for use on all those tropical beaches we nearly didn't see, and repairing the Captain's bridge chair.

The work of the Services Section has involved a multitude of tasks, from the routine handling of aircraft engineering reports to the provision of liquid oxygen for use in aeroplanes. Not the least of their worries is the maintenance of a library of some 600 aircraft technical books which require to be kept up to date constantly.

## AIR ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

The section pet is Jumbo, the ship's mobile crane. Like all big beasts he needs regular exercise which he normally gets by lifting into position, for the First Lieutenant, the stump masts used to carry the jackstay during the frequent replenishments at sea.

The Air Ordnance Section's job is to service equipment used for such diverse things as dropping 1000lb H.E. bombs from aeroplanes to transporting tens of thousands of cans of beer across the flight deck in RASs.

To enable the squadrons to drop some 4000 bombs of various sizes, 400 major inspections of bomb carriers have been carried out. On the other side of the coin, to ensure the maximum reliability of aircrew escape systems, 200 major inspections have been performed on ejection seats.

For reasons unknown to those who work therein, the section has had the unpopular chore of stowing and supplying AVPIN, a particularly objectionable highly inflammable liquid used to start helicopter engines. They would infinitely prefer to shift the beer!

In the various bays of the Air Electrical and Air Radio Section, the complex electronic equipment of aeroplanes is serviced. Components which pass through this section range from delicate instruments which require the precision of a watchmaker, to electrical generators capable of supplying enough power to meet the needs of a fair sized hotel.

Air electrical equipment from the 'find a friend' early warning Gannets and the 'drop a bomb on an enemy' Buccaneer weapon system, the Vixen air interception radar and helicopter sonar gear provide interesting diversions.

The light radio entertainment enjoyed so much by aircrews comes to them through the courtesy of the communications bay. The section battery charging room is responsible for the charging and maintenance of over 100 batteries.

The department also boasts a Guided Weapons Section. The missiles and torpedoes maintained here are used in anti-aircraft, anti-surface and anti-submarine roles on three of the four types

of aircraft embarked. These weapons are vastly expensive and so complex that they need much more testing and test equipment than the conventional weapons they replaced.

Parachutes, dinghies and most of the clobber that aircrew take with them when they climb into an aircraft are the stock-in-trade of the Safety Equipment Section. Technicalities aside, their biggest problem in the commission has been the supply of flying clothing for the hundreds of passengers who flew in 820's helicopters.

They have also been involved in producing a satisfactory dummy for use in man-overboard exercises. 'Albert', the original object of many practice rescues was a popular figure until he was lost at sea: 'Albertina', the latest (an anti-submarine mortar bomb supplied by TASO) is so ugly that no-one wants to rescue her and we are grateful to FDO2 who provided a full scale live 'exercise' when he inadvertently followed a deck hockey puck over the side.

In 'extra mural' activities, the department has been well to the fore. One of the more senior members has had the unusual job of Public Relations and Press Relations Officer.

In the first ship's handicrafts exhibition, Lt. Herbert took first prize with his home-made jewellery. Throughout the commission REM(A) Mills has given much pleasure as a member of the celebrated Guinness Grenadiers.

The department has more than held its own in the sports field. Unbeaten at rugby we were the runners-up in the Singapore knock-out competition. LREM(A) Gilfillan was the winner of the 220 yds in the Plymouth Command Athletics Championships. Whilst at sea we continued the good work by winning two of the mini-sports competitions and the team from 234 mess have made themselves feared in the deck hockey world. We have been well represented in the ship's rugby, soccer, cricket, water polo, golf and shooting teams and have provided referees and trainers for water polo, hockey and boxing.

There's no doubt about it—it's been a busy but very successful commission.



*The 'upstairs' workshop*

# MEDICAL AND DENTAL

The Captain once stated that the Medical Department was the only department in the ship which he would like to see under-employed and although we have not always achieved this aim we have done our best.

At the start of the commission the PMO was the only doctor on board, and the lack of facilities in *Centaur* restricted the scope of treatment. Full use was therefore made of the naval hospital. The transfer back to *Eagle* was completed thankfully and in March we prepared for sea.

While anchored at Charlie Buoy in the Sound two divers from *Fisgard* were brought on board after a diving accident and only two days later fire broke out in B boiler room. These incidents exercised the emergency routines right at the start.

During the work-up period we had several different medical officers with us including three RNR officers, each of whom stayed for a fortnight. Even at this stage we were asked for assistance on several occasions and doctors and patients were transferred to and from other ships, including a French trawler, by helicopter and seaboat. When the CO and Senior Observer of 820 Squadron ditched their Wessex without injuring themselves it was felt that they could not have picked a stronger team to demonstrate how it should be done. From the medical point of view this was the ideal accident, a hot bath and a glass of brandy being the only treatment needed.

The passage from UK to Cape Town provided a suitable opportunity to inoculate the ship's company against cholera and yellow fever, so for several days the sick bay was filled with a seemingly never-ending stream of bodies who were duly jabbed.

The first visit to Cape Town was very successful and the help of the South African Red Cross in providing first aid parties when the ship was open to visitors was much appreciated. It eliminated the problem of having to deal with Afrikaans-speaking patients. *Eagle* in return responded by donating blood at the transfusion centre. Only one serious injury occurred here and this was due to a motor accident.

October saw the arrival of the ship in Singapore. For many of the ship's company this was their first visit to the Far East and their first experience of the power of the 'Tiger'. Its medical effects are astonishing. The sick bay was already used to disruption caused by beer, as all beer obtained during a RAS passes through it. The noise of rollaveyers carrying about 2000 cases of the stuff made work quite impossible and when flour, peas and rain water produced a form of soup on the deck even walking became difficult.

Our surgeon, Roger Wilkes, returned to RNH Plymouth from Singapore and was relieved by Roger Doherty, a specialist in gynaecology! Professional and social contacts were made with BMH Singapore and the RAF Hospital at Changi. Both forms of contact proved very useful.

The next call was at Aden. We had many visitors including two RAF nursing sisters who came over from *Albion* for a day. Before the sick quarters at Khor-maksar finally closed down we were given a considerable amount of spare medical stores and equipment which proved very useful later in the commission. Wardmaster Sub-Lt. Lyons now rejoined *Eagle* having successfully completed the Divers Course in *Terror*. This gave the sick bay its third qualified diver.

On 11th December a small nine-year-old Arab boy was transferred from *Ghurka* whose MO had carried out some dramatic emergency surgery. He had been hit by three bullets, one of which had lodged in his brain. However, X-rays showed that its position was not dangerous and so it was decided to leave it there. He was returned to Selalah via *Ghurka* when we were relieved by *Hermes* and then we returned to Singapore for Christmas.

Canoeing in *Eagle* was centred on the sick bay and many day trips were organised in addition to the four day Exped led by the PMO from Kota Tinggi to Singapore Dockyard in January.

Following an accident in H.M.S. *Zest* off Gan an able seaman was transferred to *Eagle* where an operation for the amputation of his foot was performed. The patient was later flown home from

Gan to complete his convalescence. The operating theatre was used regularly throughout the commission and many a varicose vein was stripped and hernia repaired. We had our share of appendicectomies as well but the major operation was a nephrectomy, which was carried out on one of the Chinese laundrymen while on passage from Gan to Cape Town. We were very grateful for the rapid response by blood donors whenever we needed blood for an emergency operation.

Fremantle provided a friendly reception for *Eagle* and again about 50 from the ship gave blood. Fremantle General Hospital also gave us assistance. Their Medical Officer of Health had been in the old *Eagle* in 1933 and was most interested to visit her successor.

Further shore contacts were made when the ship arrived in Hong Kong and the BMH arranged many consultations at short notice. The CO, Colonel Robinson, and 10 of his staff later toured the ship.

When David Lammiman was admitted to BMH Hong Kong Surg.-Lt. Eardley was hi-jacked from *Manxman* to assist us until his return. Unfortunately for him we were diverted once more to Aden and so missed the promised run to Olongopo. His stay on board was considerably extended until he was flown back from Gan.

During the second spell in the 'North Indian Ocean' the mail service was very poor and morale dropped and sick bay attendance rose. There must be some correlation between the two. Surg.-Capt. Hamer joined at Gan to carry out a special investigation and left at Cape Town after thoroughly enjoying his unaccustomed sea-time.

Cape Town and Gibraltar provided no medical incidents and so the Far East leg of the commission ended in Devonport on 18th June.

Surg.-Cdr. Adamson took over for the last part, which involved the exercise 'Silver Tower' in northern waters. However, no cases of frost-bite occurred and his pet flame-thrower has been reserved for thawing cigarettes rather than fingers.

## THE DENTAL ARCH

The Dental Department, consisting of two small surgeries is situated in a small but well-worn passage on the port side.

Very large numbers of the ship's company have found their way to these spaces and the mouths of patients from South Africa, Hong Kong and Australia have been given a routine service. Several members of the crews of RFAs have also been seen.

... Some gave blood in Australia





*The Dental Arch*

rapidly caught on and ever since Jack has referred to them as Seaballs. The title was later changed to 'Carrier Borne Ground Liaison Section' but the original nickname remains.

The tasks of the sections, both sea-going and land-based, are many and varied. The primary duties of a Seaball officer are to brief the Command and the Squadrons on the military situation ashore. This includes future plans (subject to alteration at sea); own and enemy forces' order of battle and tactics; briefing and debriefing aircrew on missions flown in support of ground troops, and assisting in the preparation of reports

the staff at sea, particularly the other ranks, have never done liaison work before and they must quickly knit together into a fast moving team working with the Squadrons.

The Seaballs receive the first Naval shock when they step on board, but they soon get used to people who speak a different language, who strip to wash and insist on calling them Royal Marines. Complete absorption into the system rapidly occurs and they are soon throwing tots of rum down their heads; endlessly smoking duty-free cigarettes and winning the St. George's Trophy for trapping the grimmest-looking dragon on board during

The old maxim that 'One should put more into the job than one takes out' is well illustrated by the following record of treatments which includes six general anaesthetics in the operating theatre.

Fillings	3016
Extractions	249
Dentures	47
Miscellaneous treatments	1134
Dental examinations	2541
Attendances	6987



*The Seaballs*

**THE CBGLO's**

Just what do these Pongos do on board ?

A Major (corresponds Lieutenant-Commander) with a Jockanese bonnet and Rupert trousers; a Captain (Lieutenant) carrying a 'spare' cap badge aft; a Sergeant (PO) who looks sad but thinks Scottish football is VERY amusing; Lance Corporals (Leading Rate), two in number, the smaller of which supports Stirling Albion and therefore does NOT find Scottish football amusing but who knows what FOCAS means; the larger one depressingly cheerful at all times and adept at performing 'This old hat of mine' in a rickshaw during the rush hour in Singapore. What have all these hods to do with the RN?

Well, many years ago in 1943 to be exact it was decided that there was a very definite requirement for an interservice liaison link between ship and shore when the Royal Navy was providing air support for ground troops. For this reason a small number of specialist soldiers were embarked in strike carriers and became known as 'Carrier Borne Air Liaison Section' (CBALS). The abbreviation

on the results of such missions. A further important responsibility is to stock and maintain a vast amount of mapping (at present about 250,000 maps are held) and here the art of inter-service liaison is most keenly applied when trying to persuade someone on board to release a space or compartment for map stowage. Other responsibilities include training aircrew in the recognition of own and enemy vehicles and equipment; lectures on Army methods, tactics, and organisation; background intelligence of operational areas and organising exercises incorporating security, escape and evasion.

During exercises and live operations, part of the section works in the Ops Room and part in the Briefing Rooms. If the targets ashore are well hidden then the aircraft are brought in by the Army units ashore, although during training one of the ship's Seaballs might be landed to do this job.

The aircrew receive their first Army shock at either Lossiemouth or Yeovilton and the treatment is continued on board when the Squadrons embark. Frequently

Navy Days and saddling his oppo with her.

Extra-curricular duties could, and often do, include the production of a ship's newspaper (why Pongos are thought to be loaded with literary talent one has yet to find out); arranging flights for wives to join husbands at foreign ports there is no truth in the rumour that there is also an arrangement for the return flight to be delayed at a lonely Pongo outpost en route to UK; the provision of salmon from dubious sources for the Wardroom and the dishing out of pencils, rulers and the like to impecunious pilots.

In almost every case the Seaballs are volunteers—the Sergeant claims it was the best family planning advice he was ever given—and sometimes the truly brain-washed ones elect to serve another commission. What free time there is, is usually spent in avoiding ex-Seaballs in stations around the world who are yearning for a wet of bubbly and have the annoying habit of remembering the time of 'Up spirits', even if they recall little else from their halcyon days with the RN.



# METEOROLOGY AND EDUCATION

'Good evening, this is *Eagle* Round-Up Met. Officer speaking.' This introduction has been one of the daily events in *Eagle* whilst the ship has been at sea.

Throughout the commission the three Met. Officers and six Met. Ratings have given all their attention to the weather affecting the ship and tried to predict what was in store for us in the future.

Whilst at sea, the Met. Office was continuously manned and regular observations of the weather elements recorded and transmitted back to shore stations. Weather information from the world network of reporting stations was received on board, and analysed on charts to produce forecasts for the ship and her aircraft.

Radio-sonde balloons which carry instruments aloft to measure temperature and humidity in the upper atmosphere have been regularly released from the ship—observations are transmitted back to the ship for use by aircraft and to give the forecaster a three-dimensional picture of the atmosphere. These balloons are quite large and gave at least two alert look-outs rather a scare—one thought he'd seen an unidentified flying object (and he was quite right!)—but his mind was probably inclined towards flying saucers rather than Met. balloons! The

other thought he saw a parachute but failed to notice that it was going up instead of coming down!

All aircrew were briefed on expected weather for their sorties before they took off and all sections involved in the control of aircraft were supplied with weather information at intervals of one hour or less whilst flying was in progress.

During the Aden Patrol, *Eagle's* Met. Office took over from Khor-maksar Airfield the task of providing weather information for the final and crucial stages of the evacuation from Aden. Meteorological data for the aircraft ferrying troops out of the colony was transmitted ashore and to other air bases in the Middle East. Whilst involved in exercises with other ships, *Eagle* was always appointed as the ship responsible for the 'meteorological welfare' of the force.

Apart from the persistent fog which seemed to follow *Eagle* wherever she went in the U.K. area, and the severe gales encountered near the Shetland Islands in the final stages of the commission, *Eagle* has been remarkably fortunate from the weather aspect, and sea sickness antidotes have been in but meagre and infrequent demand.

And whilst the Met. men were studying their sea weed and fir cones, studies of a more academic nature

were proceeding in *Eagle* College.

The schoolroom, in the bowels of the ship, has been well patronised in the commission. A steady stream of students for NAMET have been coaxed along to success by the Education Officer and regular classes for G.C.E. 'O' Level and H.E.T. examinations have been held with very excellent results. Subjects taken in examinations have ranged from the usual Mathematics and English at 'O' Level to Accountancy at 'A' Level.

Language classes in German, Spanish and French have been keenly attended.

The ship's library, which contains some 3000 books, has been well used, some 500 to 600 books being on loan at most times.

Correspondence courses in a fantastically wide range of 'subjects were arranged—Hotel Management, for budding landlords, British Constitution for a few who may eventually make their mark at Westminster, and several aspects of Law, to mention a few.

*Eagle* College has had its register pretty full, particularly during the long spells at sea which provided good opportunities for many to get down to some serious study—and many were the men who had the good sense to take advantage of it.

## SPORT RUGBY FOOTBALL

Generally we can say that it has been a successful round-the-year (and half way round the world) season for the Rugby Football Club. During the period December 1966 to March 1967 all but one game was won against local Plymouth opposition. The one lost game was only by 12-10 against a full strength Okehampton side; a most creditable performance.

In August 1967 we sailed from Plymouth with our full complement of rigger players. The first port of call was Cape Town where we realised the truth of newspaper reports that 'Rugby is almost a religion in South Africa'. The two games played were lost, but we learned a great deal about the game and made a lot of friends.

On then to Singapore. Overcoming the difficulties of team-raising with two squadrons at Changi and one at Simbang, etc. we survived to enjoy a good run of

successes. Winning the 'Big Ships Cup' by defeating SM7 by 15-6 was a notable feat but after that no further challenges were received. Not even the powerful Kiwis would condescend to come forward. The only blot on the record was the loss to RAF Changi by 18-6.

No rugby at Aden but the return to Singapore gave the opportunity of a real Big Ships battle, *Eagle v Albion*. After a tense, hard and thrilling game *Albion* won by 12-3. Many of the team were selected to play for RN representative sides during both our visits to Singapore and when we finally left we were still, technically, 'Big Ships' Champions as no further challenges had been received.

Rugby was out of season at Fremantle but Hong Kong provided a few games despite the atrocious weather. Unfortunately both matches played were lost, one to the Police and the other to 1st Welch

Regiment. Our final visit, to Cape Town, gave us one South African victory at Newlands—a satisfying conclusion to the Far East leg.

Throughout the commission the side was led by Arthur Phillips, with Don Perman, Les Rowe, Dave Board and Dennis Pike as his selection committee. The 2nd XV also did very well, only losing two games throughout, which is a great credit to their enthusiasm and will to win a place in the 1st XV. A most successful Colts team was also run, the driving force being Tony Hodgson.

John Highton has now taken over as captain and has made a splendid start to the new season. Both the 1st and 2nd XV's defeated H.M.S. *Fulmar* at Lossiemouth.

We wish all *Eagle* rugby players success in the next commission.

## CROSS COUNTRY RUNNING



*Singapore Fleet Champions*

Before leaving the Far East we decided to attempt to beat the record for the Hong Kong Peak relay, then held by *Ark Royal*. This was broken on an early morning in April when we clocked 50 seconds less than the record.

Besides cross country running and road running, we were also active on the track. Two Navy champions (Parker and Bedford) were produced, together with four Plymouth Command champions (Meakin, Phillips, Austin and Ahern) and the winner of the Fleet mile in Singapore (Peerman).

We now bid *Eagle* and her flight deck running track farewell and will shortly be running in new colours on softer ground. However, the spirit and enthusiasm of the *Eagle* team of 1967/68 will be felt throughout Navy running for some years to come.

Cross country running in *Eagle* has been of a high standard from the 'off'. It began on a cold, foggy morning in February 1967, when we became the first ship in 30 years to win the Plymouth Command Championship and the Inter-Ships Cup.

Competition for places in the 1st team has as ever been keen, team spirit has always been high and whether in the 1st's or 2nd's everyone has felt part of the show.

A performance to equal the Plymouth result was the win in the inter-unit race in Singapore. *Eagle* became one of the few teams ever to beat the large RAF bases at Changi and Seletar, plus the best teams the Army could muster. We were led home on this occasion in brilliant fashion by Lt. Parker with his nearest challenger a minute behind. We later produced the Fleet Champion when O.S. Phillips led the team to victory in first place.



*Peak Relay Race*

## ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL

Prior to sailing in 1967, many ship's representative matches were played with a 50 per cent success rate. While at sea the Air Department seem to think they have priority for use of the main playing field, otherwise known as the flight deck, and so training sessions were few and far between. Despite a deterioration in the fitness of the players, the teams did well against many local sides in South Africa. While in Singapore we entered for the Big Ships Cup competition, but were beaten 2-1 by *Dido*. Many friendlies were also played here but that was the end of soccer until the visit to Aden was over. No time there for such mundane things as sports games. However, during the visits to Hong Kong and Fremantle, many fine matches took place; one against the top Division II side of Western Australia.

On the way home, return matches were held in South Africa with good results, professionally and socially. Football, now being a round the year game, continued during the spell spent in Devonport in July and August. Many civilian clubs who play in the Devon Wednesday League and the P. and D. League, were taken on and all but one were beaten. These successes were most heartening, but then off to sea again and the flight deck problem . . . However, games were played at Rosyth and Lossiemouth, the latter being beaten convincingly by 6-4. Now that we are back for a DED the Air Dept. can have the flight deck. We're in full training ashore and have already played several games, and look forward to a very active season.

## HOCKEY

Due to an unfortunate accident to the Hockey secretary, S/Lt. Brodie, in Singapore, a complete set of records for the commission does not exist. After nine months Derek is walking again and we wish him all the best for the future.

Our stay in Singapore over Christmas finished in grand style. After many fine games the ship was just beaten in the final of the 'Gun Room' Cup by *Albion*. She had had two weeks longer in port than us so perhaps it wasn't the fault of all those parties that we didn't win.

April saw us in Hong Kong. Two dozen matches had been arranged but only eight were played due to bad weather. Results: won 4, lost 4.

Both games played in Cape Town were won; that played against the Staff of Stellenbosch University being notable. Aubrey Weston provided lunch before the match and also entertained two of the team for the weekend. The match was played under new rules with a lady umpire, and despite the drizzle the two spectators enjoyed a fast open game. A very good evening at their clubhouse finished a most pleasant day.

Back in Devonport, with the squadrons away, leave and other commitments left us short of players. However, two matches of Ship's Company v. Wardroom were held. One was drawn and the Ship's Company won the other. Three inter-ship games took place; we won them *all*.

During the Lossiemouth weekend, we entered the six-a-side tournament at Kinloss, with no success, other than providing 70 per cent of the umpires. On the Monday we lost to Fulmar, who had our ex-centre R.E.A. Reid playing for them!

We now look forward to a new season, but with most of our players on leave or gone for good. We wish them the best of luck in the future.

## CHURCH



*The Bishop of Singapore meets the Chaplain*

The Church of St John The Evangelist, H.M.S. *Eagle*, situated amidships on the starboard side, is easily accessible from all parts of the ship.

The Chaplains of all denominations, Church of England, Roman Catholic and the Free Churches and Church of Scotland have used the Chapel for services during the commission. As seating capacity is limited to about 50, Sunday morning Church of England services were necessarily held elsewhere - the quarterdeck. This meant, of course, that we were somewhat at the mercy of the elements but as *Eagle* spent most of her commission in tropical waters, this generally proved to be no hardship.

In addition to Sunday services. Holy Communion and Holy Mass have been celebrated daily in St John's.

The Church is licensed for Baptisms and many have taken place during the commission. Whilst visiting Fremantle, the

baby son of a former member of the ship's company of *Eagle* was baptized on board - the family have recently emigrated to Australia.

A particularly rewarding aspect has been the number of candidates who have come forward for preparation for Confirmation. We were very honoured to be able to welcome on board the Bishop of Singapore, the Right Rev. Chiu Ban It who confirmed 12 candidates. A further seven were later confirmed by the Bishop of Hong Kong, the Right Rev. Gilbert Baker. On both these occasions, the ceremony was held on the quarterdeck of *Eagle*.

One of our outstanding memories is of the confirmation service at which five 'Eagles' were presented to the Archbishop of Cape Town. They were confirmed along with 125 coloured South African candidates before a congregation of some 1000

coloured people, on Whit Sunday 1968. The singing at this service was most stirring and impressive and the welcome given to us was quite unforgettable.

Although no clergyman is ever satisfied with the attendance at his Church and is ever ready to welcome many more, there is no doubt that attendance at Church in *Eagle* has been quite rewarding, particularly at the Parish Communion services. Whilst on the Far East leg, the number of Communicants increased steadily and Christmas and Easter Communion services were extremely well supported - well over 100 making their Communion on each occasion.

And now at the end of the commission some of us will be staying on in the ship and the majority will be going their separate ways.

Bless you all and the very best of fortune for the future.



*Confirmation by the Bishop of Hong Kong*





**Engine Room Artificer (3rd Class)**

**Lieutenant**

**Lieutenant**

**Lieutenant**

**Lieutenant**

**Chief Air Fitter (0)**

**R. P. LYNALL**

**H. J. WILLIAMS**

**C. SWANN**

**F. R. D. BOOTH**

**K. D. MACKENZIE**

**J. W. LYNASS**

**IN MEMORIAM**

