

H.M.S. FEARLESS



ASSAULT SHIP OF THE ROYAL NAVY

"We can take modest pride in the fact that our commission must have made FEARLESS the most widely known, by both name and appearance, of all Her Majesty's Ships".

CAPTAIN M. W. B. KERR, D.S.C., R.N.



CAPTAIN KERR entered the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, in September, 1932, for four years training, after which he completed his Midshipman's training in the battleships ROYAL OAK, ROYAL SOVEREIGN and REVENGE. His next sea appointment was to H.M.S. WOLVERINE which he joined at the start of the Second World War.

Captain Kerr was in the cruiser H.M.S. EXETER for a year and was taken prisoner-of-war after her action during the battle of Java Sea in March, 1942. He was subsequently decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross.

After being repatriated at the end of the war he returned to sea to serve in our last battleship, H.M.S. VANGUARD, and was on board during the Royal Tour of South Africa.

Captain Kerr was then First Lieutenant of H.M. Ships FIERCE, NARVIK and DARING, and served for one year in the aircraft carrier H.M.S. EAGLE. His first command was H.M.S. ARMADA between 1958 and 1960 and then after 18 months ashore, he was promoted to the rank of Captain in late 1962 and was appointed in command of H.M.S. MEON and the Amphibious Warfare Squadron. He is now back in a similar job in command of H.M.S. FEARLESS after service with the NATO Command in Norfolk, Virginia, U.S.A.

Captain Kerr is married and has a son and a daughter.

CAPTAIN KERR writes

In my predecessor's comments on the first commission of H.M.S. FEARLESS he said that the first commission of the first of a new class of ship was a unique experience. My experience in FEARLESS has proved that this is equally true of the second commission; if anything, the experience is enhanced because as the ship became better known—both inside the Navy and outside it—she more than fulfilled her reputation of being a "can-do" ship. These things snowball, and we have proved to the hilt the old saying that the more you do, the more you are asked to do; but what is more important, we have proved to ourselves that where FEARLESS is concerned the sky's the limit. Furthermore, it is clear from the reactions of the many visitors we have continued to have that they agree with us—particularly those belonging to the other Services, and including the ones who may initially have been doubtful. And this attitude has extended even outside our own country, as we were invited to put on a demonstration for another NATO country which had shown interest in acquiring a similar ship.

The second commission has been a very full one and a very interesting one. At the beginning of our active period after the refit in Devonport, the Commissioning Ceremony was conducted by the Right Reverend E. J. K. Roberts, the Bishop of Ely. The occasion was attended by many well-wishers from all Services, and in particular by Lady Hull, the ship's Sponsor, who was accompanied by her husband Field Marshal Sir Richard Hull. Lady Hull launched the ship and has taken a keen interest in our activities ever since.

Our departure from Devonport after the refit was followed immediately by a work-up at Portland in which both sides learnt a lot, and thereafter we were kept solidly on the go from Day 1 to Day 7.

Our first task after the work-up was to act as the Conference Ship at Gibraltar for the Rhodesia Talks in October, 1968. The ship was later used in a rather similar capacity at Lagos in March, 1969.

Another FEARLESS First was in the Spring of 1969 when we had a full complement of Embarked Force on board for over two months in the Mediterranean. This was the first instalment of the force to strengthen the southern flank of NATO.

In between times, opportunities have been found for producing Calypsos, Concert Parties, and enough deck hockey to wear the flight deck thin, besides a lot of serious, and successful, sport ashore.

For myself, my two years in FEARLESS has been a wonderful experience. To have had the honour to command officers and men from all three Services has been rewarding and fascinating. And if some of the soldiers ended up by being very good sailors, and vice versa, this is all to the good. With a thoroughly integrated Ship's Company always ready, willing, and able, there is nothing we weren't prepared to turn our hand to, and we can take modest pride in the fact that our commission must have made FEARLESS the most widely known, by both name and appearance, of all Her Majesty's Ships.

In bidding farewell to the finest ship I have ever served in, let me couple this with the hope that many of us may meet again in the future—at sea, ashore, or in the air.

DIARY FOR 1968

4th July	Ship's Company Move on Board.
19th July	Commissioning Ceremony.
12th August	Sail for Acceptance Trials.
22nd August	Sail for Shakedown Cruise.
28th August	At Devonport.
3rd September	Portland Work-up.
4th October	FOST Sea Inspection.
4th October	Sail for Gibraltar for Rhodesia Talks.
21st October	Exercise Swop--Northern Ireland.
5th November	Sail Devonport for Cardiff
7th November	Sail for Bristol (Avonmouth)
27th November	Sail Devonport for Bremerhaven.
	} C.-in-C. Plymouth embarked.
3rd December	Trial Tanfield.
7th December	At Portsmouth.
11th December	Sail for Devonport. C.-in-C. Western Fleet embarked.
12th December	At Devonport.

COMMISSIONING DAY



THE RHODESIA TALKS



The one on my left thinks he's Napoleon and the one on my right thinks that he's God.



Now are you Pongos going to let me by or not?



Come here and say that.

THE RHODESIA TALKS



I wouldn't have minded preaching myself.



No Sir, I'd need more than a fiver to do that.



And they all voted Conservative.



Got any Rhodesian baccy?

THE RHODESIA TALKS



" . . . which art in heaven, Harold be thy name. . . . "



The Pipe.



What on earth do they do to these blokes at Lymington?

CHRISTMAS 1968



A stirring occasion.

DIARY FOR 1969

- 15th January Sail Devonport for Mediterranean.
18th January Sail Gibraltar for Sardinia.
31st January Sail Gibraltar for Taranto.
8th February Sail Taranto for Genoa.
13th February Sail Genoa for Cyprus Training Period.
24th February Operational Readiness Inspection by FOCAS.
3rd March Arrive Malta for SMP.
15th March Sail Malta for Gibraltar.
26th March Arrive Lagos for Biafra Talks.
10th April Arrive Devonport from Nigeria.
April/May DED Period at Devonport.
4th June Sail Devonport for East of Suez.
12th June Crossing the Line Ceremony.
19th June Arrive Capetown.
30th June Call at Farquhar Islands.
5th July Call at Gan.
10th July Arrive on Station in Singapore.
15th July Sail for Summer Frolic.
21st July Sail for Julex.
24th July At Singapore Naval Base.
8th August Singapore Town for 150th Anniversary.
13th August Sail for Happy Hunters—Borneo.
28th August At Singapore Naval Base.
15th September Arrive Hong Kong.
22nd September Arrive Tokyo for British Week.
6th October Sail Tokyo for Hong Kong.
28th October Sail for Sea Horse—New Territories.
4th November Sail Hong Kong for Singapore.
15th November Arrive Fremantle.
25th November Sail Fremantle for Singapore.
6th December Sail for Square Hole.
13th December At Singapore for Christmas and New Year.

LAGOS



Here we are again. . . .



. . . and that means the female species on board again.



And we thought we had good tans.



O.K., one more drink, then you must go.

CHANGE AT THE TOP



Day of the Hand Over.



A bit in for a dig. Captain Kerr bulldozed ashore.



What's this one called? FOCAS onboard.