



individuals (half the ship's company?) for more intimate sports. Port Elizabeth and Capetown were not very far behind.

Perhaps the most outstanding success was at Trincomalee, where there was a cruiser pulling regatta in which GAMBIA won every race, and I'm sure this constitutes a naval regatta record. No need to `polish our ribs ' just then.

With two interpart soccer competitions, an interpart athletics meeting and interpart deck hockey, tug-of-war, rifle shooting and what have you, it has been a most satisfactory and sporting cruise.

Like any ship which must serve a considerable commission, we have gloried in our victories and learned from our defeats in the modest variety of sporting activities. Whether you have all proved fellows at football, shot at everything bar yourself, known a bumping pitch and a blinding light, driven it devious for the nineteenth green

or just once or twice
you have thrown the dice

indeed, whatever sport was yours, whether you find it recorded in these pages or not, we have all learned the value of healthy activity and known the infectious fellowship of our partners and team-mates. It is said that he who cannot make sport should mar none, and we have all recognised once more that it matters little whether we won or lost but that we took part and that we enjoyed it to the very fullest extent.

S.O.

Whaler Pulling & Regattas

The blisters and callouses are gone, but one of our original boats remains still the tale is yet worth the telling.

Has it been worthwhile? If one considers the drawing together of the individuals into a tightly knit and enthusiastic team ably backed up and supported by the rest of the ship, there can be little doubt that it has been worth every minute.

Our crews, together with helpers, organisers and maintainers, numbered nearly one hundred and fifty during our first regatta at Augusta; and at Trincomalee about eighty were involved. To keep this number keen, enthusiastic and fit is a huge task, and sincere thanks are due to all those who made such determined efforts to get the best results.

We had two regattas and two challenge races during the Commission : the regattas in Sicily and Ceylon, and the challenge races at Malta and Gibraltar.

For the regatta at Augusta our training started during our foreign service leave at Rosyth. Our efforts at training were hampered by leave and sea-time, although every effort was made to get the crews away whenever the opportunity presented itself. Everyone found the change of climate from the rigours of an English summer to the heat in Grand Harbour trying in the extreme, and the heat seemed to produce a feeling of lassitude or exhaustion and tempers became short.

The regatta embraced the Mediterranean sea-going fleet, and though shore establishments were entered, naturally they did not score points towards the cock.

The larger ships had to provide two crews for each event, total points for the event being obtained by adding the points gained by the two crews and then halving the answer. This meant that if we were to stand a chance both our crews would have to come in the first four in each race. The cards were in fact stacked heavily against us, the destroyers and frigates having to provide only one entry were on a very much easier wicket.

The final placings put ULYSSES on top with 126 points, DEFENDER next with 107, and GAMBIA third with 951. A total of fifteen ships were engaged and we did well indeed to beat BIRMINGHAM, being first among the ships plagued by the necessity of providing two boats.

The second regatta took place at Trincomalee on Saturday, 27th February, 1960. This was really a cruiser regatta and saw in competition those cruisers taking part in Exercise JET 60.

Training began at Karachi in mid-January and we were able to take a good run at it, having four weeks in which to concentrate without interruption. Naturally we continued our training at sea whenever possible. In every respect we were a much more settled crowd. We had plenty of reserves to fall back on as only one crew was required for each category.

The ship against us were the Indian Naval Ships DELHI and MYSORE and H.M.S. BELFAST. We were concerned about our chances against BELFAST as she had recently collected the Far East Cock at Hong Kong. Further concern was felt when we heard that she had left two of her crews behind while we were at sea on exercise. Fortunately one gathers they spent most of their training time in the bar.

Observers onboard considered that we would give a good account of ourselves, but even our most optimistic soothsayer was staggered in the event. All our crews pulled excellently and the results of continuous and patient training were evident. The strokes were long and pulled through, the crews had stamina, and the coxswains steered straight courses without getting flustered. Two seamen crews were allowed in the first race and we gained first and second places, the senior crew just pipping the youngsters on the post by a matter of feet.

Each race thereafter was made up of two categories, thus the M(E)s and Electrical crews pulled in the same race. There was no occasion when we did not have the first boat home in each category. Our M(E)s' crew won the second race comfortably in the fastest time of the day, BELFAST's (M(E)s were second, and our Electrical crew were third. Then the Communications and Supply and Secretariat crews were first and second respectively, Artificers and Royal Marines first and third, Petty Officers and Chief Petty Officers first and second, and finally the Wardroom pulled off their race too. At this stage it was impossible to get any ship to take a bet and the successful punter was lucky to see his money returned if he had backed the winner on the tote.

The final points were: GAMBIA 79, BELFAST 53.5, DELHI 35.5, and MYSORE 28. We had not dropped a single point.

Next day a racing whaler event was held, open to all ships present. Nineteen took part and our M(E)s' crew pulled an excellent race to win by about three lengths from CAVENDISH, with BELFAST third. A very satisfactory ending to a wonderful regatta. Our celebrations were cut short, however, by the ship being ordered to Mauritius that night to give assistance in making good the damage caused by their second cyclone.

On two other occasions only did we race against other ships. The Barham

Cup which was competed for just before the Fleet sailed for Augusta was a race for whalers manned by E.R.A.s. Ours was not successful, but made a determined effort and came in about a third of the way down the field.

At Gibraltar on our return from the foreign leg We were invited to enter a seaman crew against ARK ROYAL, DUNKIRK, CARRON and JUTLAND.

Here our superiority was most marked although stamina was lacking. A comfortable lead of about five lengths was established, but the crew looked rather the worse for wear at the finish.

Well, there it is. A chapter of endeavour, success, and times where success was not so great, but the winning of the JET regatta in such a convincing way was a memorable milestone in our commission.

Determination and cheerfulness abetted by stamina and training brought their own results and reward enough in achievement for all who took part.

R.E.

Association Football

We have been very fortunate in GAMBIA in being able to produce a consistently strong First XI, although at present it has a somewhat different look from that in the very early days of the Commission. Several games were played at Rosyth, but new talent was not discovered until we had a spell at Gibraltar. A variety of players came to light on the bastion grounds and we began to build our Ship's Eleven.

During our refit at Gibraltar in September, 1959, our team produced some brilliant football, especially against the two Gibraltar clubs, the Prince of Wales and Gibraltar United. We also competed against teams from BIRMINGHAM, VICTORIOUS, Royal Engineers and Prince of Wales Regiment. We had to combine with H.M.S. APOLLO in the Fleet Knock-out Competition and unfortunately made an early departure, being beaten by the 6th Destroyer Squadron. The ship left Gibraltar towards the end of November and matches were arranged as we proceeded to East Africa and the Far East, and we played in Volos and in Aden; then during Christmas at Mombasa we defeated the Zanzibar touring side. While at Seychelles We were victorious against the leading club, Ascot, with almost the whole population of Mahe supporting us that day.

In Karachi, the Pakistan Air Force defeated us 2-0 (their soccer was too good); but at Colombo, the Maldives and Trincomalee the team began to settle down well in spite of recent replacements. At Trinco we played against the BELFAST for the first time and won 4-2, though shortly after, during our emergency call to Mauritius, we played the French cruiser JEANNE D'ARC, losing 2-0 in a match in which our team gave a very disappointing display. In Singapore we were able to play on an excellent grass pitch at TERROR and our team showed the Far East Fleet how football should be played. Victories were recorded against ALBION, CRANE, TERROR, and a combined TERROR and Frigates XI. It was during this period that age began to tell and a hitherto energetic and enthusiastic skipper was forced to retire (the heat, you know!) In Hong Kong several games were played against the Royal Engineers, the R.A.F. (Sai Wan) and the Northumberland Regiment. On our return to Singapore we lost a star player to hospital and more replacements were tried out.

En route for South Africa we called in at Mauritius again, where we suffered our heaviest defeat against the Mauritius Police XI, our team being weakened by



injuries. In South Africa our first call was at Durban, where we met Parkhill F.C. and the president of this club donated a silver cup to be played for between GAMBIA and Parkhill each time the ship would visit Durban. He was unaware of our future ! We beat Parkhill 5-4 and immediately offered them a return game for the cup. This was arranged and the match was played under floodlight at the Kingsmead Stadium, where again we were successful, this time by 3-2. On leaving Durban we returned the cup to Parkhill, who will challenge any British warship visiting Durban for the " Gambia-Parkhill " Cup, as it is now to be known. We also played Umbilo F.C. under floodlight there, losing 4-3, and before departure we visited Pietermaritzburg to play a representative side and were beaten 7-1. The Football Association and R.N. Association of Pietermaritzburg entertained us well. Only one game was played at Port Elizabeth, while at Cape Town our team played their very best football against Camps Bay F.C., which included two professional players from the United Kingdom, and we gained a 4-1 victory. On Union Day at the Hartlyvale Stadium we gained another 4-1 score against a representative side before a crowd of over 5,000.

On June 1st, South Africa fell astern and we pushed on for Freetown and Bathurst on our homeward leg, beating an Army XI 2-1 at Freetown and drawing both games at Bathurst.

Quite a number of performers have played in our Second XI, from which we were able to find probable replacements for our First XI. The side found a very able Shipwright Skipper, an ever-present member of the side. Whilst at Gibraltar matches were arranged between civilian clubs and the side gave a notable performance against Shamrock Rovers. In South Africa, two good games were played against Pinetown and the Customs.

Finally, though they may say that sport is sweetest when there be no spectators, we have always found our regular supporters have without doubt encouraged the team to greater effort and no match would have been complete without the " voice " and cheering support of a leading light among our seamen (where's George?).

H.E.G.

Rugby Football

Rugby has been played throughout the Commission, often in conditions quite contrary to the accepted British limitations of climate and temperature for playing the game. Half our matches have been played within the tropics, the temperature being around eighty degrees and the pitch lying fringed with palm trees. Genuine grass pitches have been something of a luxury, but win or lose, the main point is that the matches have been thoroughly enjoyed by all concerned. It has always been possible to raise a team, however short the notice (three on one occasion), and we have aimed at playing open, attacking rugby-well, as long as our wind lasted, for frequently the elements and our state of training have been against us ! A ship's team has taken the field in eleven different countries, and at least fifty different people must have represented the ship at one time or another. Our only regret is that it has not been possible to run a regular Second XV and so keep our reserves in training.

After a few trial games at Rosyth over Christmas, 1958, the Sports Officer led the ship's team into action in two matches during GAMBIA's visit to Northern Spain. The first match was against the town of Vigo and the second against Santiago University. The ship won both games by a narrow margin. Rugger was then forgotten until the ship reached Aden in December, 1959, and at this time



the Dental Officer left the ship to take up civilian practice, and this proved a considerable loss as he was our expert in the rear. Here we had our first experience of sand pitches, and an excellent pitch there was, too, When we played against the B.P. refinery at Little Aden. The sand effectively cushioned bad falls, but made for hard going once the rolled surface had been rucked up. We also had some useful trial games on the R.A.F. pitches, and prepared the way for the big games of the Commission at Dar-es-Salaam,

At Dar, over the New Year, 1960, the ship fielded three fifteens. One went up country to Kiloso and played a local team organised by the District Commissioner. In between whiles they toured the game park and were well entertained by their hosts, who were in the main players in the opposing team. The principal matches were played at the Gymkhana Club in Dar, where the First and Second XVs played two local XVs in the presence of the Governor. The First XV match was for the McMichael Cup, competed for between the town of Dar-es-Salaam and visiting H.M. Ships whenever the occasion permits. A considerable crowd turned up to watch, and though GAMBIA lost both games, at least we endeavoured to keep the play open and provide good entertainment for the spectators. Some kind words were said at the presentation of the cup about the ship having fielded three fifteens. Indeed, it was an achievement considering the host of private invitations, hockey, tennis, swimming parties, dances and banyans, all with their claims on one's time - not to mention energy !

Lack of space forbids details about our many other fixtures, although each match had some interesting or original slant. At Port Victoria in the Seychelle Islands, where the ship fielded two fifteens, many of the opposition played in bare feet. At Karachi the ship's team played a number of games on the Bath Island ground against the town and also against LOCH KILLISPORT. GAMBIA was alongside for a full three weeks and this was one of the few periods when our rugby players could take full advantage to train ashore.

In Mauritius a fixture was arranged with the Dodo Club up in the hills of Curepipe. These players were particularly skilled in ball handling and played a very fast game reminiscent of the South Africans, as we found to our cost. Our next game of note was against H.M.S.. TAMAR on the Happy Valley ground, Hong Kong, which certainly provided a change of scenery.

From a spectator's point of view the climax of the cruise was Cape Town, where the ship's visit coincided with the annual inter-varsity match between Cape Town and Stellenbosch, an important event in the rugby calendar of Cape Province. While in South Africa the First XV played six matches, one under floodlights. Two more games were played during the passage homeward, one at Freetown and the other against the Gambia colony at Bathurst. The Freetown game was historic in that it was the first game ever to be staged in the town itself. The Governor of Sierra Leone was present and tickets were sold on behalf of the Regional Playing Fields Association.

Finally, no match would have been complete without the presence and moral support of our chief selector, the Chief Shipwright, and our referees, the Chief Yeoman, with their wealth of rugby knowledge and repertoire of West Country songs.

Cricket Notes

" The hope of a season's fame ! "

GAMBIA's Cricket team - if the collection of individuals who represented the Ship during this Commission can be called a team - has not had the most



successful of seasons. Matches were almost invariably lost, and for the side to score over eighty runs in an innings was a rare feat indeed.

Why was this? Several things combined to produce this sad state of affairs, the foremost being a truly magnificent lack of TALENT. Apart from two or three accomplished Players, and the odd Gentleman, the side consisted of very enthusiastic amateurs whose spirits were always willing but whose flesh weakened at the critical moment. Other commitments, huge curry lunches provided by the opposition, beer provided by anybody, No. 9 punishment, the previous night's revels and sundry attractions also took their toll of the eleven, each to the detriment of the Ship's score and the bowlers' analyses.

Despite all these setbacks, however, there are always "eleven good men and true" ready and willing to turn out and play the game. Cricket, of our own brand, was played on rock-hard wickets under scorching sun in Dar-es-Salaam, in an Aden oil-refinery, in the rain at Trincomalee, in a Maltese dust storm, and always in a spirit of keenness that the results would not seem to justify. Not for GAMBIA the boredom of five-day Tests, but if the enthusiasm with which the team approached its game could be transmitted to the Test eleven, it would overfill the Oval.

There was one way in which the team scored over its opponents, however, lest one gives the impression that it was composed of blind cripples. It produced the best selection of assorted headwear ever seen on a cricket field.

C.L.

Hockey Notes

The inter-part Hockey League held in Gibraltar in the autumn of 1959 was well supported and the energy and enthusiasm displayed augured well for the Ship's hockey prospects. But not enough skill was present to back up these qualities, and although we have enjoyed the many games we have played, our efforts have seldom led us to victory.

The selectors have tried to build up a team from a large number of players of a similar standard, but all too frequently many of the first choices have withdrawn their names from the list for one reason or another, and it has proved difficult to raise a team. This has led to a lack of teamwork among us which has revealed itself particularly in the forward line, whose lack of combination and therefore of scoring power has been the largest single factor in our many defeats.

In general, though, we have given many goad sides a run for their money and praise is due to the hard core of regular players who have maintained their enthusiasm throughout. Several individuals have played well, in particular our representative between the sticks who has made tremendous progress and who is now a very competent goalie - perhaps he had more practice than most of us !

Finally a word of thanks to our umpire for his regular appearance with the whistle and for his steady flow of useful advice - and balls.

A.A.



Boxing Notes

The 'noble art' has been assiduously cultivated throughout the Commission, even if only irregularly practised in the odd sailor-ashore-scrap or by the anonymous marine tyro who occasionally felt obliged to enter a bout driven on by some foreign inducement which appealed directly to his head ! Our first serious competition abroad, however, was in Mombasa, where the ship's team drew with the local opposition at six bouts each - excluding that against the Kenya heavy-weight champion which lasted fifteen seconds and cannot we feel be made to count. A week later at Dar-es-Salaam the ship enjoyed a decisive victory of six bouts to three against somewhat slighter opposition and amid tremendous roars from the local populace as we appeared to be losing, and loud groans as our lads eventually took the lead.

In Singapore our boxers entered the Far East Novices Championships and though two made the semi-finals, we had little enough to show worthwhile in the way of results at this time. Durban and Capetown brought opportunities for further experience, and though no wild victories were recorded the practice was not lost. In September's Home Fleet meeting at Rosyth We entered six boxers, of whom five reached the finals in four weights, this resulting in two of our stalwarts disappointingly having to fight each other. But at least that made one win a certainty, and when the other three had competed the judges' decisions were in our favour and all four finals were ours. Maybe that black eye was worth it after all.

J.G.

No Backward-Swimmers We

Though the Commission may not have taken us through the looking-glass like Alice, at least it has given all onboard the chance to vindicate the slander that " they gave me a good character but said I could not swim " which seems to set the tone on all new entries' S.C.s.

We swam in the Baltic and the Med., at Rosia and Ricasoli, at Singapore and the Seychelles. At least two of our company went for unauthorised swims in Karachi harbour, having set off in the belief they were going sailing; while rumour has it that some of our braver spirits hovered hesitantly in the warm waters above the Maldivian reefs till sharks were sighted in the depths below.

The opportunities, however, for life-saving instruction and training have been strictly limited by the ship's commitments. Though there have been plenty of candidates, there have been regrettably only two places at which to hold classes Ricasoli Fleet Lido, Malta G.C., in September, 1959, and H.M.S. Terror Pool, Singapore, in April, 1960.

Twelve bronze medallions, 2 bronze crosses, and one Intermediate Certificate were gained as awards at these places, in addition to one qualification for Instructor's Certificate.

The floating nucleus of personnel required to play the highly exacting game of water polo were finally surfaced and flushed from their numerous warrens after several months in commission.

Training (a word few of the team seemed to have heard of) began and after clearance chits, old boy chits and straight subs had been finally organised, we sailed into the clear - did someone say, blue? - waters of the Mediterranean.

Our first game was against H.M.S. DEFENDER, and after a hard game we emerged victorious by 4 goals to 3; this gave us heart and we proceeded to lash up the Med. Fleet one by one until, alas, a small destroyer (H.M.S. ULYSSES) came in from sea to show us how to play, beating us by 8 goals to 2. (Incidentally, the ULYSSES won the 2nd League Med. Water Polo Cup.)

We then retired from the Med. Station for East of Suez and Far East Stations (greater places? - well, for some of us !) and we quite naturally expected a lot more water polo. But we were doomed men, especially as we lost one of our strongest players when the Major left us; and somehow even in these tropical places some still prefer to chase a ball on the ground rather than in the water (what is soccer, anyway?).

We did manage to have two games against Mombasa Swimming Club, which we won, and then we rested on our laurels until we reached Singapore, where our first game was against the Champions of the Far East (H.M.S. CRANE). And did we know it, losing 9 goals to nil ! - though it must be said in mitigation that certain members of our team seem to allow spirit other than that of the game to enter their bodies prior to entering the water ! Anyway, after this defeat we showed the remainder of the Far East Fleet how to play, including the ALBION, and our old friends in H.M.S. BELFAST as the CRANE had gone to sea, we were unable to have a return match, though we heard later they boasted that WE had won the Med. Fleet Water Polo Cup, this buzz being started by the GAMBIA lads !

P.M.

Fencing

In sports and journeys, it is said, men are known; and though we have bestowed no great time either in tongues or in wielding the blades, we have both travelled afield and crossed not a few swords this Commission. Fencing, however, had to be accepted among us as a somewhat sporadic sport owing to a paucity of opposition abroad.

We began with the Fleet Championships at Gibraltar in March, 1959, our most stalwart pair competing and managing to gain a second in foil, epee and sabre. This meant being chosen to represent the Home Fleet in the next phase of the Royal Tournament had the ship's programme, in fact, allowed it.

The foils were laid aside until signals from Mombasa and Dar-es-Salaam urged the formation of a more regular team. But despite enthusiastic practice we lost 'at home' to Mombasa by a narrow margin, and then 'away' to Dar. Little opposition was met thereafter till the ship returned to Africa in May, 1960,

and in Port Elizabeth we achieved our first win, only to be beaten quite convincingly by a strong Capetown team which included two internationals.

We still feel strongly, however, that our experience has shown that fencing is a most suitable sport for a ship, especially when sufficient matches can be arranged to justify team practice.

B.C.

Rifle Shooting

**"He shoots higher that threatens the moon
than he that aims at a tree."**

Our bullets may not have been made of platinum, and though few of those who shot for GAMBIA ever cared to apply the equations of motion to our projectiles, the rifle team has enjoyed commendable results considering that we have found ourselves against top class civilian shots, and teams which in almost every case have contained at least one international. We have in fact concentrated on .303 shooting, and South Africa in general paid us the very high compliment of judging us the best ship's team they had met since 1945. Our very best effort, however, was against the Gambia Police at Bathurst, whose members had not suffered defeat in two years and never till we arrived had they had to admit victory to a visiting ship. Out of fifteen matches overall we narrowly lost six, came a close second on two occasions in three-cornered competitions, and won seven complete events outright. Throughout the Commission we have had our regular supporters and thanks are due to them for the very fine spirit they have always shown, as indeed it is to those others, too many to mention, who have 'made one' often at the very shortest of notice.

F.J.F.

