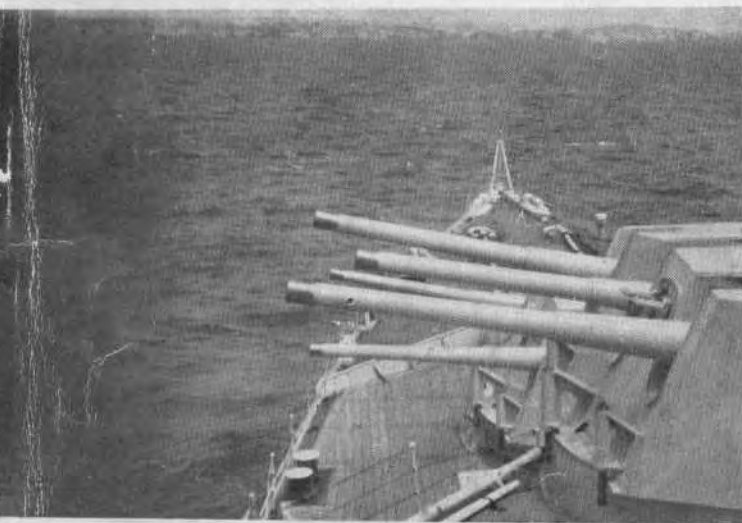
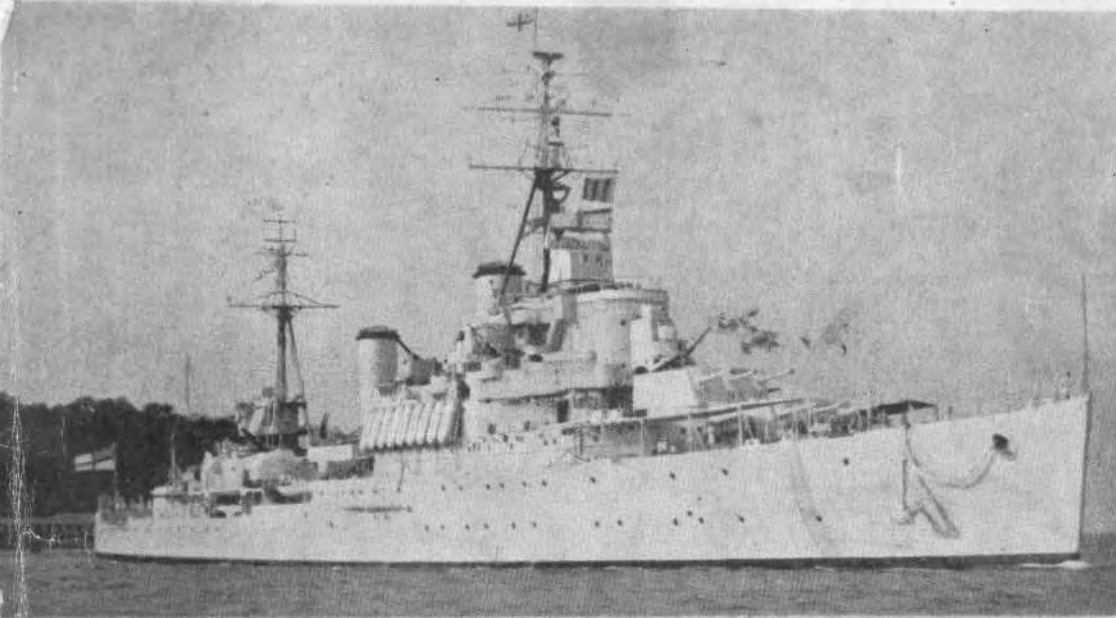
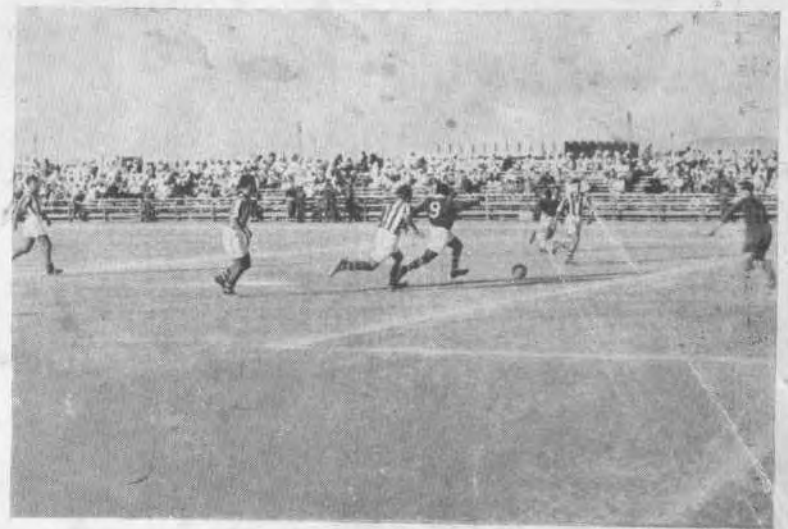


H. M. S. GAMBIA

FEBRUARY 1955

MARCH 1956



EAST INDIES STATION

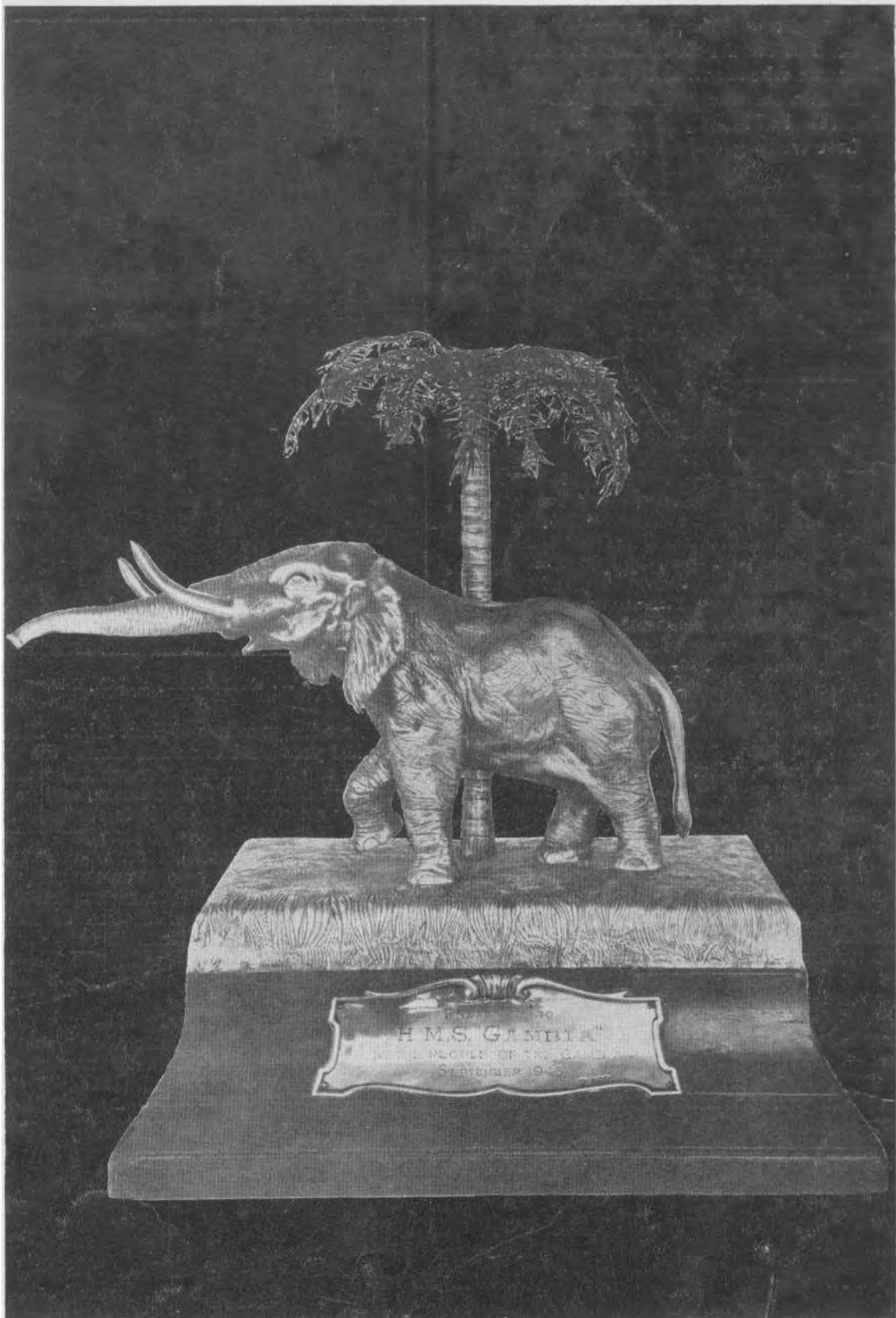
As this magazine had to be published before GAMBIA left Trincomalee on December 31st, 1955, it was not possible to cover the last stages of the commission, viz. the cruise to Calcutta and Madras and the passage back to the United Kingdom.

To all those who have contributed to the magazine, many thanks, particularly to Leading Airman McCarthy for photographs: to Coder (Ed.), James for assisting in the checking and arrangement of proofs and to the publishers, the Ceylon Daily News for their help and cooperation.

For any errors or omissions, my apologies.

*P. O. Stanley,
Editor.*

The photograph opposite portrays the African Elephant, national emblem of Gambia and badge of the Ship, cast in silver and presented to H. M. S. GAMBIA by the people of Gambia in September, 1946.



**"God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine-
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet
Lest we forget - lest we forget! "**

These words from Kipling's *Recessional*, written some sixty years ago, sound strangely out of date to us today, for we no longer think of ourselves as holding "dominion over palm and pine". Rather do we think of a great growing partnership between the many peoples, of different races, creeds and colour, who together constitute the British Commonwealth of Nations and Empire.

But the idea underlying the verse which I have quoted is not out of date. We who have been privileged in the last year to visit so many of the countries of the British community of nations have, I think, often been conscious of what Kipling meant. We have been aware that our position is not one of right or dominion, but of duty; that we are not masters, but servants; not overlords, but trustees - trustees for a Great Idea; trustees for what is perhaps the greatest experiment in human relationships that the world has ever seen. And we have been aware that the measure of the success of our country will be not what we get out of the Commonwealth and Empire, but what we put into it.

As sailors, we can play no small part in strengthening this great partnership between old nations and new, between brown, black and white, between Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and Christians. It cannot be too often stated, or too strongly emphasised, that among the many ties that bind so great a diversity together, the ceaseless movement of merchant ships trading between its many component parts is the most tangible and the most indispensable one. For these ships are the very life-blood of the Commonwealth. The great ocean passenger ships, the "dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke stack", the tankers from the Gulf, the dhow from Aden or Zanzibar, the cargo liner and the tramp steamer - all these different types and many more besides are engaged year in and year out on that constant interchange of goods, of raw materials and manufactured products, on which the Commonwealth thrives and grows in stature and wealth and well-being.

We in the Navy, together with our comrades in the air forces and other navies of the Common-



Capt. W. EVERSLED, D.S.O., R.N.

wealth, are the guardians of these ships. Our life in the last year has lain on and around the great artery of empire that runs through the Mediterranean and across the Indian Ocean, and on the subsidiary arteries that join it to southern Asia and East Africa. Wherever we have been we have been made most welcome because we are seen to be "a security for such as pass on the seas upon their lawful occasions", and because our hosts have recognised in us the determination of British people that the seas shall remain open for the shipping on which their standard of life - and indeed their life itself - depends.

And I believe that the bearing of the men of this ship, whether on ceremonial occasions of state or on the football field, whether on exercises with other navies or at informal parties in friendly ships and friendly homes, whether on duty or on liberty, has been such as to leave a sense behind them that the guardianship is in good hands.

If that is so, we have indeed played our part.

H. M. S. GAMBIA

H M.S. Gambia is one of the Colony Class Cruisers which came into service at the beginning of the last war. She was built by Swan, Hunter and Whigham Richardson at Wallsend-on-Tyne and was launched by Lady Hillbury in November 1940.

Her first commission, from 1942-1943, was spent with the Eastern Fleet in the Indian Ocean under Admiral Sir James Somerville, when the Royal Navy had been driven out of the Pacific by the Japanese after the loss of the PRINCE OF WALES and the REPULSE. This Fleet was all that lay between the Japanese and Ceylon, Africa, and the Middle East.

Her next commission was from 1944 to 1946 when she was manned by men of the Royal New Zealand Navy. She was first of all in the Eastern Fleet and then as the tide of war turned against the Japanese she became part of the famous British Pacific Fleet under Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser. She took part in the Okinawa campaign when the Japanese defended this very strong island fortress practically to the last man; bombarded the Japanese coast, fired the last shot of the Pacific War, and was finally present in Tokyo Bay for the surrender of the Japanese Fleet.

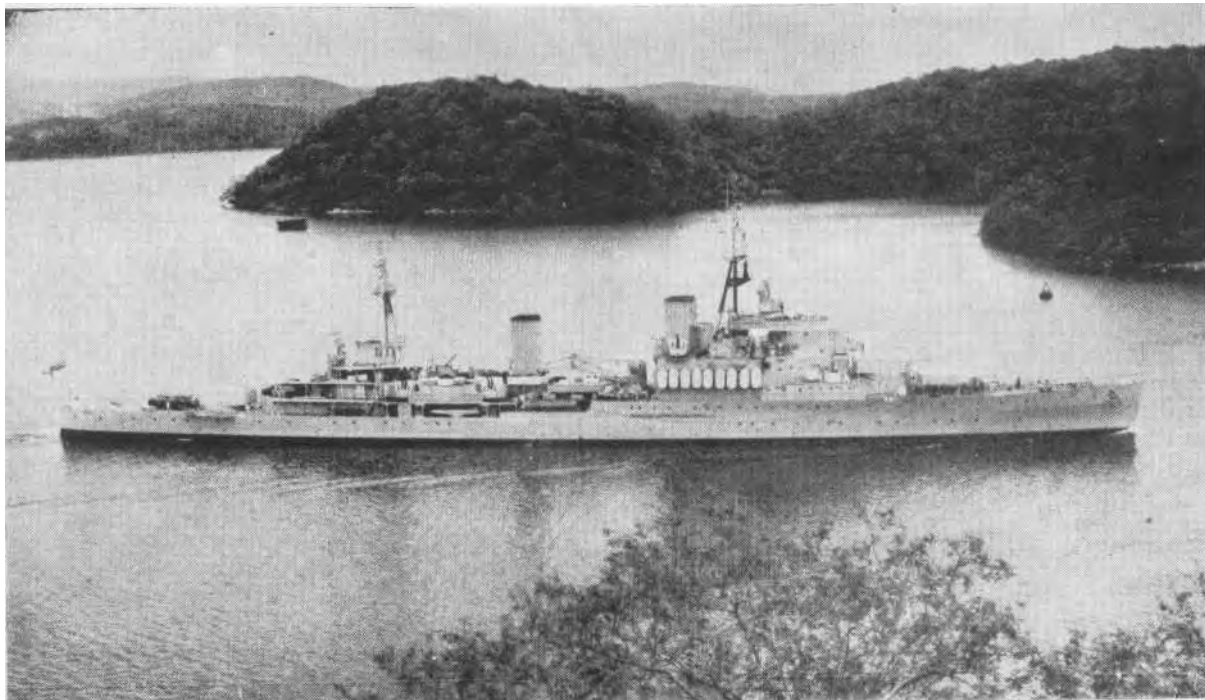
In 1946 GAMBIA was recommissioned by the Royal Navy. She continued to form part of the Pacific Fleet, spending most of her time in Japanese waters, while the Allied Occupation of Japan was being stabilised and the Far East Station got back to a peacetime footing. At the end of this commission she returned to United Kingdom to refit in 1948.

Recommissioned again in 1950 she formed part of the First Cruiser Squadron in the Mediterranean. She saw service in the Persian Gulf during the dispute with Persia over the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's Refinery at Abadan, and also in port Said during the trouble over the Suez Canal Zone. She also took part in the normal fleet activities and during a replenishment exercise collided with PHOEBE as a result of which she sustained slight damage to her bow.

GAMBIA recommissioned again in the United Kingdom and once more joined the Med. Fleet, returning to England for the Coronation Review at Spithead. This was followed by a spell of duty at Port Said. Then came the earthquake disaster in the Greek Islands, when GAMBIA was the first ship to the rescue at the stricken town of Zacynthos in the island of Zante.

A highlight of this commission occurred when the ship formed one of the escort into Malta which welcomed the Queen on her return from her Commonwealth Tour. Another event of note was the winning of the Med. Fleet Regatta, thus becoming 'Cock of the Fleet'. Later, at the end of the commission she brought the Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia to England for his State Visit.

Now another commission is nearly over. For the greater part of the past year GAMBIA has been the Flagship of Vice Admiral C.F.W. Norris; C.B., D.S.O., Commander-in-Chief, East Indies Station, based on Trincomalee, and has visited East-Africa, the Persian Gulf, Pakistan and India. It is about some of the people and events connected with this commission that you will read in the pages that follow.



Gambia entering harbour



FUTURE FLAGSHIP COMMISSIONS

Moving Ceremony Aboard Cruiser

(From Our Special Correspondent)

LYING in Dry Dock at Devonport beneath heavy wintry clouds, H.M.S. Gambia was re-commissioned today. This marks the start of a General Service Commission for this 8000 ton cruiser, destined to become the flagship of the Commander-in-Chief East Indies Station.

Starting early this morning batches of the Ship's Company arrived at regular intervals from the Royal Naval Barracks and moved into their new home. Then at 11 a.m. they were assembled on the Boat Deck for the commissioning ceremony.

First a short religious service was conducted by the Chaplain (Reverend D. Welsh) with music provided by the Band of the Royal Marines, Plymouth. Included were the traditional hymns and the moving prayers for the safety of sailors at sea.

Afterwards Captain W. Evershed D.S.O., R.N., addressed his new Ship's Company and gave them an outline of the programme for the Commission.

The ship, he told them, is nearing the completion of a refit and would sail for Malta at the earliest possible date, which would be in about four weeks. At Malta the ship would work up in company with H.M.S. Newfoundland, also newly commissioned (for service in the Far East). The work-up would be a period of intense activity as weapon-training facilities in the East Indies are very poor. After the work-up the two ships would sail in company for Trincomalee, exercising on the way.

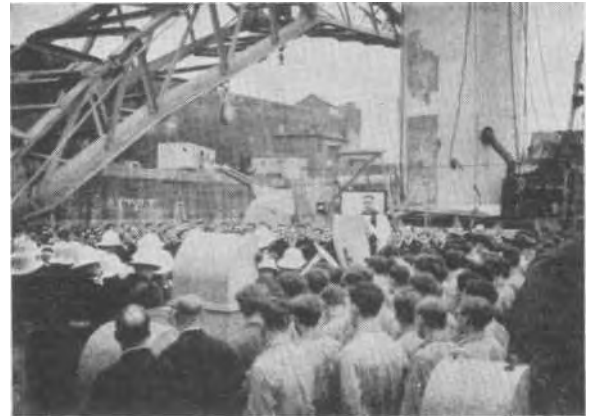
* **Weather**

A deep depression is moving rapidly into the Plymouth area. Forecast. Dull, overcast becoming gloomy. Winds of gale force from the South West. Frequent snow, hail and blinding rain squalls. Visibility very poor. FURTHER OUTLOOK. Worse if possible.

The Captain then proceeded to describe life, on the East Indies Station. He pointed out that it was a very large station, spanning two continents, many countries and a multitude of different races, religious outlooks and political creeds. The Ship's Company would have the good fortune to see most of them. Flag showing is not an idle pleasure cruise but an important aspect of our foreign policy. The White Ensign is still held in very high regard and Britain's best ambassador abroad was undoubtedly the British sailor in traditional and well-loved uniform. He told his audience never to forget this fact. But, he went on, that is, not, to say that you will not enjoy

yourself. He hoped that a most memorable and enjoyable year lay ahead. Many new places to visit, new faces to meet, endless opportunities for almost every sport, and the knowledge that H.M.S. Gambia would be performing a vital function for the cause of peace.

The tight packed ranks of sailors broke away, talking thinking and wondering. For many the lure of the East beckoned excitedly. Among the older members of the Ship's Company there would be the stresses and strains of separation from loving families. And so as the first few drops of rain spattered across the deck. H.M.S. Gambia was re-born.



Commissioning Ceremony



Clear Lower Deck



SPECIAL EDITION

8th MARCH, 1955

CRUISER'S SAILING DELAYED

Engine Defects

MEAN EXTRA LEAVE

On board the cruiser GAMBIA AT Devonport today, the Captain cleared Lower Deck to make an important announcement to the Ship's Company. The ship's programme, he informed them, had been upset by an engine defect which would delay sailing for about three weeks. This unfortunate development had started a chain of reactions which would affect the ship's programme for the next three months. The date which could not be altered was the start of the cruise to East Africa scheduled for May 27th. The delay in sailing would mean the abandonment of the ship's private cruise to Indian ports, thus robbing the ship of its only chance to get away on its own. The work-up period in Malta would have to be reduced and even more important perhaps, the ship would lose the great benefit of working up in company with H.M.S. Newfoundland.

However, he said, all these annoyances must be borne. Repair facilities in the East Indies Station were very limited and distances between ports are enormous. Therefore the ship must be in a peak of condition, mechanically, before departure. Saving up his good news to the end, the Captain

went on to announce that one week's leave would be granted to each watch. He hoped that everyone would enjoy themselves and that on return they would be able to settle down and proceed with the commission.

The elation at the thought of an extra and unexpected leave was tempered by the knowledge that goodbyes already taken must be made again and that families settled for the 'duration' would have to be unsettled.



Overtime in the Boiler Room



Unstuck



ON BOARD H.M.S. GAMBIA AT GIBRALTAR

(By Our Special Correspondent)

The snow and frost of England seem far away as this ship lies alongside the Navy House in the pleasant spring sunshine of Gibraltar. For many of the Ship's Company this is their first 'foreign' port, and a better introduction to the wider world could not be found than this ancient historic fortress whose craggy rock towers over the town and dominates the wide sweep of the bay.

Here the modern and ancient worlds meet in an exuberant cosmopolitan bustling whirl. Great gleaming blocks of flats look down on dark narrow streets. Sleek chromium-plated cars jostle gharries. Black-haired flashing eyed girls-short swarthy men - thousands of sailors from the powerful ships of the American Sixth Fleet that lie across the harbour - overall lies that subtle intangible essence that is Gibraltar.



The 'Rock'

Main Street, Gibraltar is a second home to the British sailor. Its shops stock everything from all over the world. Watches, cameras, jewelry, clothes of all descriptions, stockings for the girl friend (you won't be seeing her for eleven months). But be careful Jack - the Yanks are in and the prices are up. "But for you Jack - no we don't put the prices up (not much anyway)".

Already at five in the evening the strumming of guitars and the fascinating clatter of the castanets comes through the Western type swing doors of the bars. At the entrances to the shops eager salesmen compete for the custom of the newly arrived sailors.

Down past the square, the shadows lengthen over the baked earth of the football pitch where the GAMBIA XI are playing their first away game. Other members of the Ship's Company have gone to explore the Rock on foot or by Bus Tour; to see the scene of the epic siege of 1779-1782, when a small British garrison withstood the combined forces of France and Spain. They may see some of the famous Barbary Apes, and legend has it that, as long as there are Apes on the Rock, the British will stay.

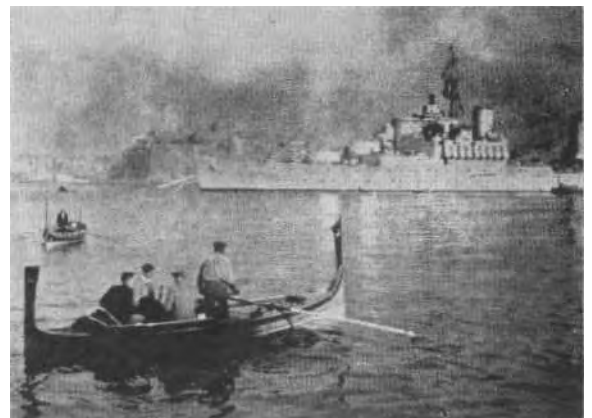
Lights begin to twinkle along the hillside. The shops in Main Street are now a blaze of light, while above the babel of voices the guitars rise to a frantic crescendo.

"Step inside Jack - Lolita is about to perform".

Malta G.C.

THE familiar blue skies reflected in the blue waters seemed to have deserted the Island when we steamed into Grand Harbour on Good Friday morning to the accompaniment of squally showers. Joe Tonna, that great old friend of the Navy, who knew practically every Senior Officer when they were Sub Lieutenants, was one of the first on board. "This weather" he exclaimed with a violent gesture, "It is terrible. A month ago we were bathing - now look at it". People may have blamed it on the Atom Bombs but the more discerning among us soon came to recognise it as 'GAMBIA weather'.

However, weather or no, we were not destined to stay in Grand Harbour for long. Early on Easter Monday, while the rest of Malta relaxed, the ship slipped out for the first week of the



Returning by Dghajsa. A favourite method of getting to and from the ship of Malta.

(Continued on page 19)