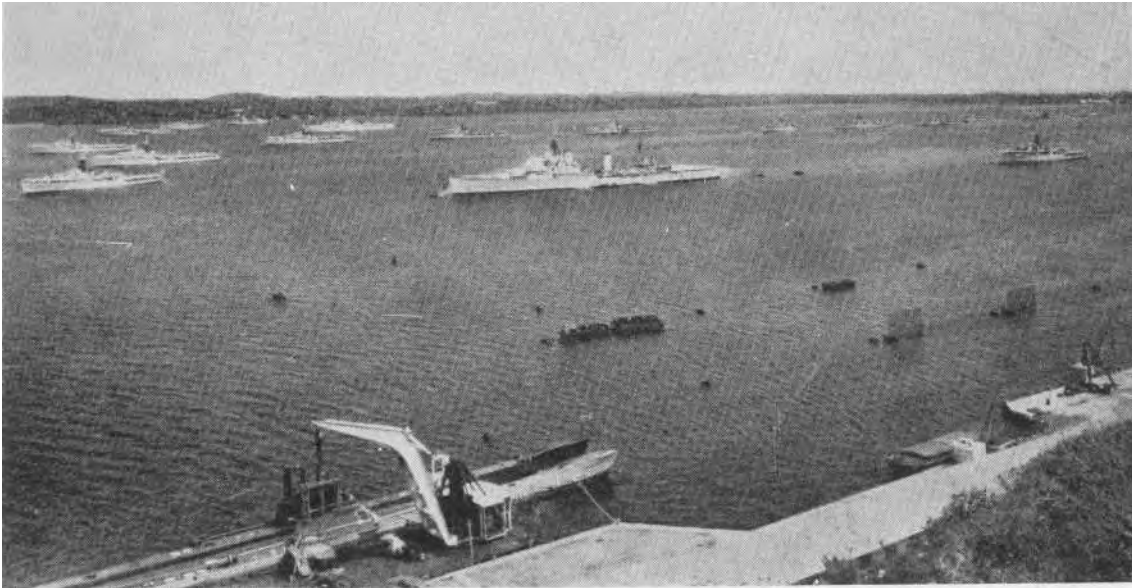


## EXERCISE 'JET'



*The combined fleets in Trincomalee Harbour.*

PERHAPS Exercise 'No Jets' would have been a better name for these manoeuvres, as they, included all the paraphernalia of modern sea warfare except, actually, jet aircraft.

In fact the name is derived from the initial letters of Joint Exercises, Trincomalee. And what, a joint Trincomalee was to become! - for in the space of a week or two after our return from the East African cruise, what space that remained in the harbour was rapidly occupied by one more cruiser - the 'Delhi' - 9 destroyers, 7 frigates, 2 submarines and 5 tankers and auxiliaries; the whole presenting a majestic spectacle of solidarity amongst the Commonwealth Navies of Britain, Ceylon, India and Pakistan, a solidarity well known to any returning libertyman who happened to find himself at the back of the queue at Pepper Pot Jetty.

However, none of the ships remained long in harbour and Gambia herself steamed 2250 miles during the course of the exercises, which crammed many of the thrills and spills of four years of warfare into four weeks.

For us, replenishment at sea was a regular feature. Beef, spuds and beautiful lady doctors came sliding across the jackstays with the regularity of children down a playground slide, whilst hundreds of tons of fuel came bubbling across to our tanks and elsewhere!

During the last two weeks, two major exercises, 'Hela' (short title 'Hell') and 'Kanda', exercised the defence of coastal and ocean convoys from attacks by submarines, air and surface craft, and these provided a continuous stream of exciting and sometimes alarming incidents for those who thought they knew what was really going on!

In the course of these exercises Gambia was hotly engaged many times, and fought a number of spirited and successful night gun actions in the classical style against the commerce raiding cruisers 'Ihled' and 'Rumiat', as well as being melted by an Atomic Bomb, twice torpedoed by the submarine 'Artemis', once by the destroyers and once (nearly) by herself. The latter offending missile dived smartly under the ship and then made off in a direction midway between Mauritius and Nairobi, until its fuel was expended when it was brought back reluctantly on board.

In harbour, our technicians and workshops assisted in maintaining the serviceability of many ships operating hundreds of miles away from their bases, and our sportsmen were well represented in every RN. team.

Exercise 'J.E.T.' gave us all a very lively August and demonstrated once again the spirit of co-operation and cordiality which exists amongst the Commonwealth Navies in the Indian Ocean.

R.D.B.

## The Church was There Too



*The Chapel on board the H.M.S. Gambia*

WHERE to begin? Possibly with our Commissioning Service on the Boat Deck at Devonport on February 8th when the new ship's company joined; more probably a month before, when we started collecting pieces of churchy equipment from half a dozen different towns, and from H. M. S. *Illustrious*, and all sorts of people worked very hard to make the ship's chapel as pleasant as it is, in the photograph above, the 'spiritual power-house' of the ship. Morning after morning the Holy Communion has been celebrated there, and the ship and everybody in her, and our dear ones, have been commended daily to the loving mercy of God. A special word of thanks must go to that body of faithful servers who have possibly been the backbone of the spiritual life of the ship. And with them such others who have offered their help in one way and another. Evensong each day has been well attended, and Compline and Preparation for Holy Communion on Saturday night have proved well worth-while. Six people came most diligently and conscientiously over a period of months, sometimes two or three times a week, to preparation classes and were confirmed at Trincomalee in July by the Bishop of Colombo, receiving Holy Communion for the first time in the Ship's Chapel next morning.

Slowly indeed but surely one soul after another has been drawn into the life of the Church here. Sunday after Sunday, perhaps once or twice in the week as well, the faithful have been at the altar to spend a precious half hour with their Lord. There are some who have never missed. People have got into the very good habit of slipping into the chapel for five or ten minutes to say their prayers in peace and quietness and commend their own souls and those of their dear ones into God's good keeping. There have been those we have tried to help with their personal problems; those who have been coming for instruction and those who have submitted themselves to live under rule and thereby manifestly growing in the spiritual life and at the same time helping to build up the soundness of the life of the Church which is in this place. And there have been those who faithfully have worked through one book after another that they have been given to read, gradually but surely growing in the knowledge of the things of God. And then there have been those many who have been drawn for the first time to the restoring joys of the Sacrament of Forgiveness of Sins.

We have used Film Strips, especially during Holy Week, and on Good Friday our Three Hours

Devotion took form of three conducted meditations on the Stations of the Cross.; and we recall the Petty Officer who stayed for the whole three hours. And there was the stoker (or do we say M(E)?) who missed his Sunday Communion and promptly came along on the Monday morning to 'make up', and the Petty Officer who after a lapse of years is now saying his prayers again and a regular communicant. And there are those two who have given so much help as Sacristans, between them being as good as a curate by regular and faithful help and support. One of the greatest joys, and inevitably so, is that we have amongst our faithful two possible vocations; two people who think that God may be leading them and calling them to the sacred ministry of the church and who one day if both they and the Church are convinced of their vocation may well find themselves priests. And what more could one hope for any man?

We have had outings and were able to arrange a number of private invitations for our Church people on board at the homes of Church folk in the various ports we visited - four of us had a very pleasant evening with the Bishop of Masasi in Dar-Es-Salaam. While at Basra we went to the supposed site of the Garden of Eden (where the Tigris and Euphrates meet) and on another day to Ur of the Chaldees - a most fascinating trip.

Complete with its Pashal Candle (given to us by well-wishers ashore) and vases of irises and multi-

coloured carnations the Chapel at Easter was a joy; and although we write this before Christmas no doubt we shall prepare for Our Blessed Lord a fit place to come to, as we come to receive Him into our hearts and souls.

We have taken Holy Communion to the sick, we have baptised the children of some of our company before we left U.K., and when we get back there are some weddings to look forward to. And wandering round the 'parish' we have always been given the kindest of welcomes. A large number have perhaps not come to church at all, but they have maybe made it known that they listen to, and have been helped by, the 'lift up your Hearts' interlude we have done on the S.R.E. each morning. Or they have had the grace to say simply, and without excuse, 'Sorry' when the occasion has demanded it - and it is a grace to be able to do that as so many have. There have been disappointments inevitably; those few who have fallen by the wayside, those we have not been able to teach because they thought they had nothing to learn, and those who have been too busy with the social round to find time for the things of God. But the good God has been abundantly gracious to us in this ship during this commission. May those souls who have been touched, some perhaps not known even to themselves, wherever fortune take them, bear fruit abundantly to the greater glory of God and of His Church.

## THE CHIPPIES' LAMENT

*Our famous Midshipman's gone into his boat,  
O'er all the wide sea there's none now afloat  
Whose tale is so wondrous and yet to be told;  
The story of Gambia's fine snottie, so bold.*

*T'was early in June that the story began,  
When a dug-out canoe by mistake he o'er ran.  
T'was sunk, three men and a tailor beside,  
The steering had failed, or so it was cried.  
Reasons in writing, the Commander exclaimed,  
Tho' it seems that the cos'n can hardly be blamed.  
The reasons came forth and plausible too,  
But money was owed for the dug-out canoe.  
Sixty rupees was the sum they demanded,  
And sixty rupees their Lordships commanded.  
But wondrous to tell and let me so say,  
Their Lordships, not snottie, the money did pay.*

*In the wonderful Seychelles, at the Isle of Mahe  
Came the second most hapless, unfortunate day.  
Our Midshipman brave drove straight on to a reef,  
Both shafts and rudder came to terrible grief.  
Oh, unlucky, poor Mid. what a terrible plight.  
A party for children was soon to take place,  
And the boat must be ready, the holes without trace.  
The shipwrights worked hard, day and night through,*

*They worked and they worked and they mended  
the screw,  
They mended the rudder and the shaft that was bent,  
Oh luckless Midshipman, the chippies lament.  
T'was nigh on a week, crossing the line,  
Our Midshipman grand got a medal so fine.  
From King Neptune, of pusser's brass,  
Honourable Order of the Coral Reef, First Class.*

*Our story's not ended, our tale's not yet done,  
As disaster befell our unfortunate one.  
When we returned to our harbour at Trincomalee  
And exercised with navies from over the sea,  
Vijaya was there, Ceylon's pride and joy,  
In her berth in the line, at a single black buoy.  
On the day of this epic, the sea-wind ran high,  
He, to run alongside the gangway did try.  
He attempted to do the best that he could  
The fearful result was of splintering wood;  
The gangway was broken, O terrible fate,  
And so to our Chippies in pitiful state.  
They worked and they worked and at last it was new.  
O Chippies lament, O Midshipman you.*

R.M.E.



## THERE'S NO BUSINESS...



**T**HE Conductor raises his baton and an expectant hush descends on the audience. Down comes the baton and the orchestra swings off into the overture - the gay melodies of Hammerstein and Rodgers' 'Oklahoma'. And once again H.M.S. Gambia's Revue Company are presenting "UP SPIRITS".

The audience are being wooed and lulled into a respective mood; one lilting tune follows another, the latecomers hurry to their seats. But backstage - Ah backstage!

If the show ran for a thousand performances or a million, the scene just before Curtain Up would still be one of complete chaos.

The producer has gone mad - he's been going mad for the last half hour but now he's quite definitely and positively insane. There are no glasses for the Pub. scene. "Where's the bottle opener? - Oh?" The flower girl dashes off the stage - "Where are you going?" "Forgotten my skirt". The M.C. is gazing up at the flies mouthing his opening phrases - "Hey don't drink all that beer at once - leave some for the scene". "Where are the flowers? - a flower girl and no flowers. What goes on? Oh! you're selling newspapers now. Oh! Why doesn't somebody tell me these things". "Chorus line up - a bit further forward. Is that all of you? We used to have more. Oh I see, the Welsh Choir are changing for their act. Well you'll have to sing up everybody - loud as you can. Crikey this is going to be crummy". "Stop that hammering. Stop that **BLASTED** hammering, Chippy. What the hell are you doing? Oh! Well take it somewhere else - outside".

One of the 'Wrens' is peeping through the spy-hole in the wings, trying to spot his girl friend. The orchestra let themselves go on the final rousing bars of the overture and suddenly order returns to the stage. The applause for the overture swells up to a crescendo and the cast exchange grins. A good audience? - the hope of every actor the world over. Well we will soon know.

The M.C. straightens his dinner jacket, gets a pat on the back and slides between the curtains.

"Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to our show. H.M.S.Gambia is proud to present UP SPIRITS. This is show business and Ladies and Gentlemen as you know . . . . ."

Up goes the curtain as everybody sings Irving Berlin's "There's No Business Like Show Business" and once more the show is on.

The 'Wrens' standing in the wings wait anxiously for the applause - "Is it a good audience? Have they wined and dined well? (matinees are murder)". And as turn succeeds turn and show succeeds show, the conviction grows that, while there may be No Business like Show Business. there's No show like 'UP SPIRITS'.



## FACTS AND FIGURES

The show was played at Trincomalee (3 times); Mauritius (2); Mombasa (2); Nairobi (3); Nanuki (1); Dar-es-Salaam (2); Seychelles (1); and Abadan. It was seen by over 5000 people and about £350 profit was made for the Naval Entertainments Fund of Kenya (used for entertaining the Ship's Company) and various Service charities.

It was played in the plush opulence of the National Theatre of Kenya at Nairobi and on a stage made out of packing cases at Nanuki; but always to packed houses and to demands for more performances. Usually the stage was cramped and dressing rooms more so. Inevitably 'artistic temperament' was sometimes displayed but everybody remained cheerful and the show was everywhere acclaimed one of the best ever presented by a ship.

Above all it was the excellent team-work of the cast, the hard and loyal work of the stage hands and the support of the Royal Marine Band and their conductor which laid the foundation of a most memorable show.

# THE CHILDREN'S PARTIES



**P**ARTIES for the local children were held at most of the places that the ship visited, and judging by the happy faces (and well filled tummies!) that went ashore after each one, they were most successful and enjoyed by all (all of the children anyway).

Much thought and a lot of hard work by people, too numerous to mention, went into the making of these parties and they deserve hearty congratulations on their efforts. Nothing was too much trouble for them and I am sure that the children will remember their visit to GAMBIA for a long time.

If you are thinking of organising a children's party on board ship, the following notes and tips gained from experience might be useful:-

**First Arrival**- Boys should be used to meet the guests: they don't have to think very much and they are right in there pitching with the children.

**Royal Marines**- Should always be used as 'Pirates'. This is quite natural to them and they enjoy it very much.

**'Chippies'** - Always to the fore for constructional work and they provide excellent material for test runs on slides and other essential apparatus used for fun and games.

**Electricians** - Allow the inventors to come to the front, but check the power used on some of their 'devices' as they are liable to leave the little blighters in a 'shocking' condition.

**Canteen Manager** - He provides excellent ice-cream, buns and drinks (non-alcoholic). Watch him as he is very partial to a few samples!

**Films** - Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse and 'Horror' Films etc. Give them ice-cream on their way into the cinema then they can really make a mess of themselves and the cinema!

**Explosive** - Build a pirate ship and blow it up (Harbour authorities to be warned).



*Testing! Testing!!*

**N.B.** - Keep your eye on the Ship's Company as by now they will almost certainly want to take some of the children for a 'ride'



*Look ! No Hands !*

**Tea** - Always to be given on the quarterdeck - it gives the Ship's Company the only chance they ever get of stamping cream buns into the deck without incurring the wrath of the Commander.

**Boat Rides** - A reserve item - preferably without the knowledge of the Boat Officer.

**Crying Children** - If you find one pick it up - it will object, but that doesn't matter. Shove it down the slide (more objection). Collect it at the bottom. Give it an ice-cream (no objection) - put it in the cinema and hope for the best.

**Final Departure** - Some of the problems are:-

Those that have lost something.

Those that have lost brother or sister.

Those that don't want to go.

Those that want to go to sea.

Those that look as though they have had too much ice-cream.

"Please I want more sweets"

"He's got two balloons, I've only got one".

## HOW TO DRIVE A MOTOR BOAT

**S**OME people get a kick out of driving a high powered sports car, or pushing a screaming jet aircraft across the sky at 600 m.p.h. But to the real enthusiast there is nothing to beat driving a motor boat. For the benefit of beginners here are a few short notes on how to handle one of these fast gleaming craft.

The first thing to remember is that you are the master of the boat, not it of you. Forget that this sleek 5 ton monster costs thousands of pounds and is quite irreplaceable on the East Indies Station. Put out of your head forever that the Motor Boat is the Commander's pride and joy and that even the slightest scratch in its immaculate paintwork will make him speechless with fury. Likewise pay no attention to booms, ladders etc. - they're very easily repaired and excessive solicitude for their welfare will only ruin your enjoyment. Nevertheless you may think it worthwhile, as an insurance policy, to cultivate the friendship of the shipwrights and the Boat E.R.A.s. Offer them your sippers and cigarettes. Show them photographs of your children to win their sympathy (borrowing photographs from those more happily blessed than yourself, if necessary). However enough of the preliminaries - lets get down to the practical details.

Getting away from the boom - The first thing to do is to point the boat in the right direction. Rev up the throttles to full speed and slam in the gears. Wheel hard over. Remove bits of broken whaler from the after cabin and let go the painter. You are now pointing aft and may proceed with ease.

Coming alongside. - Always come alongside at full speed as this gives less time for making mistakes. Assume an air of nonchalance to show the quarterdeck staff that it's all just a piece of cake. As you are passing the gangway slam the gears into reverse and **HANG ON!** - then go round

again. The sternsheetsmen will reboard the boat at the gangway.

Your first trip - The cardinal rule for boat running is punctuality. Always leave dead on time - it helps the administration of the ship's routine. The good boat runner will have checked his watch with the Navigating Officer's chronometer and knows to a split second the time he has to leave. At H minus 2 seconds, the Commander appears at the top of the ladder attired for cricket. Don't be overawed. His first foot is leaving the gangway as zero hour strikes. Right-full ahead. Don't bother to go back and pick him out of the water. He'll have to return on board to change and a wet person does so ruin your paintwork.

You're off - and now we come to rule number two. Remember the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. Ignore anything lying in the path between you and your goal - water boats, gash barges, dinghies, native canoes - ignore them. The y'll soon get the idea and keep out your way, making life very much easier. The 'Rule of the Road' is for dull, formal types and of course is far too infra dig!

On approaching a jetty, head straight for it. It's a well-known fact that if you aim straight for a thing, you can't possibly hit it - the Gunnery Branch have been demonstrating this for years! Straight in - full astern, wheel hard over, then limp slowly back to the ship to be hoisted in for repairs. Stand the Shipwright Officer your tot. Then you can nip ashore to see your girl friend instead of running liberty trips.

Miscellaneous points -

Admiral's Barge - On passing the Admiral's Barge, don't be stand-offish.

Give him a cheery wave of the hand - he'll love it! If you're really close, a cheerful "Wotcher cock" is a splendid gesture.

Admirals DO so like to be noticed.



*Some people are just plain greedy*

Lady Passengers - When ladies step on board your boat, pull your cap rakishly over one eye; narrow your eyes shrewdly and survey your command with that hard nautical look (but pay no attention at this stage to the ladies. They know you are doing a difficult dangerous job and they will love you for it). Rap out your orders to the crew in short crisp terms, raising your voice slightly (but only slightly - don't shout) to make sure the ladies hear you. Once you have left the jetty, leave the wheel to someone else and nip aft to the cabin to entertain them!

Children - NEVER allow children in your boat. If however, you sometimes find it impossible to

follow this golden rule, the following hints may help.

If they cause any trouble, hit them on the head with a boat-hook.

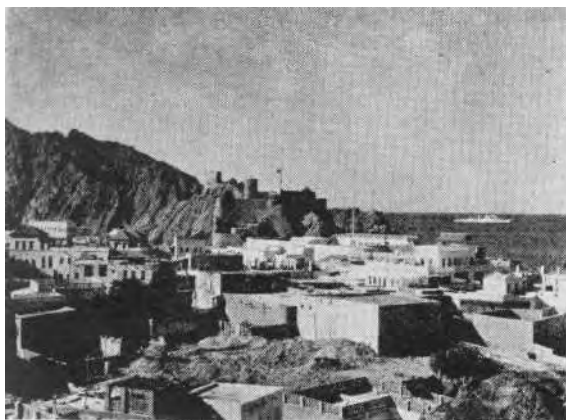
The "Hey-Mister-you've-got-your-cap-on-back-to-front" or "Coo-what-a-stinking-old-boat-this-is" type of small boy, should be taken aft on the pretext of looking at the engines and quietly thrown over the stern. Keep a few ¾ cwt. sinkers in the after cabin for this purpose.

Remember all these rules and you will be revered, respected and esteemed for the rest of the commission - even if you have to play out time as a Heads Sweeper.

B.M.J.V.

## MOMBASA MEMORIES

*(Continued from page 13)*



lifelike models of the gentle gazelle, hartbeeste, impala and other fauna of grassland and jungle. And in the dark evenings one could relax with a lager in the Rainbow Bar or indulge in a Lobster Thermidor in the Nelson Restaurant.

Mombasa, however, besides being the centre of our activities was also the gateway to Kenya. One of the disadvantages of naval visits to foreign ports is that it is not always possible to explore the hinterland. How easy it is to boast that one has been to a foreign country when what one really did was to stroll down the main street of the port or play games at the local sports club. But this particular visit was different. Goodwill and hospitality flowed into the ship and encompassed all messes. As a result, in the words of an ex-navy man in the Kenya Police who wrote to the Guzz Gazette, "members of the ship's company appeared in all parts of the colony". Bearded blue jackets filtrated into Amboselli and Tsavo Game Reserves and frightened away the elephants; occupied Nairobi and entertained the locals in the National Theatre; drove tractors over the red earth in up-country farms; bathed in the surf at Nyali and Malindi; struggled up to the snows of Kilimanjaro; sang to soldiers in Nanyuki, and went with them on anti Mau Mau patrols in the Aberdare Forest. All came back alive, full of experiences that will not be forgotten and with a deeper appreciation of some of the problems of modern colonial life.



Regretfully we had to leave on June 27th; for once not at daybreak but at the reasonable hour of 1740, so that our new friends could really give us a good send-off. They tumbled out of their offices, banks and shops into hundreds of cars, speeded along to Azania Drive, and cheered and waved from vantage points all along the low cliffs right up to Ras Serani lighthouse, as with the band playing we steamed slowly away in the setting sun.

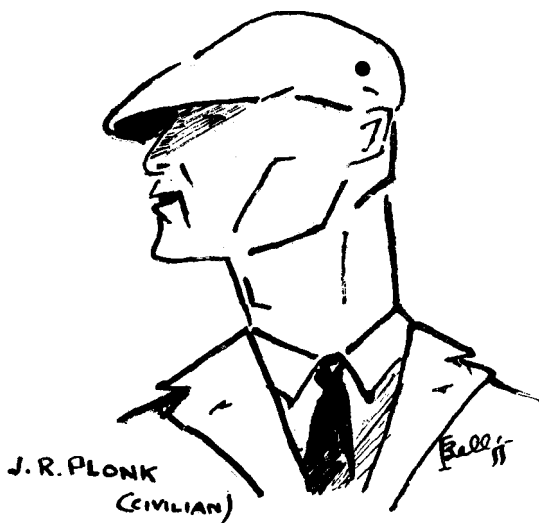
Santasan, Mombasa, jambo, jambo:

# TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MAST

(Or " . . . . ")

**L**IFE in the Forces" - a problem that faces all modern youth. To be dragged from the shelter of home, disciplined into a name and number, and churned out of the official mincing machine, is a thought that may turn many a young man's heart to a lesser thing. Come what may however, rain or snow, few escape and so comes the fatal day.

You arrive at Portsmouth, and haunted by visions of Hood and Nelson, Rodney and Drake, you face the "Gateway to the Navy". You take a faltering step and then with shoulders back and head high you step over the threshold of a new life. The gates of civilisation close behind you and J.R.Plonk, civilian, becomes O/S. Plonk, R.N. -



to be prodded, pushed, poked and measured like a side of beef; to be graded and filed, and eventually to become a 'Jack'.

But joy of joy, at last you go down to the sea in ships (Portland Harbour), and learn the jargon of the 'Andrew'. 'Oppo', 'Wings' . . . . . and a thousand and one unknown terms. You salute everything that moves and paint everything that does not. You march, run, sleep, and die a thousand deaths at the command of your instructor. You learn to know that the 'sharp end' goes through the water first and why, to eat the food given, to go ashore, to live the life, and how to be a sailor. All to soon you become T.M. - a passport to Jago's, a passport to . . . . .?!? \*? Once again you go through the never-tiring machine, to be stamped and classified, to become an unknown quantity in Admiralty files. You serve your apprenticeship to "The Art of Skiving", i.e. to be doing something when someone is there and to be doing nothing when there's not; to be first in the Dinner queue and first for rum; to be first for tea and first ashore; to be first everytime; to be there when required.

You eventually crawl under the wing of some duty P.O. and procure a special duty. You disappear into the intricate machine of Barracks life and meet the 'Old Salts', the 'badge-men',

the pensioners. To hear tales of 'when I was foreign' told with such force that all can be nothing but true. So for a while life becomes tranquil. You study and learn the way of the Navy and suddenly realise the full meaning of Darwin's "Origin of the Species".\* But the evils of the Drafting Office conspire against you and ultimately produce a ship, which to them is always "Just the job", but to 'Jan' is the greenest of green rubs.

You sail for foreign lands, sunshine and adventure. You seek out the 'Barons', 'strangle' all within sight, and 'edge-in' on all available 'grippos'. You indulge in savage 'rabbit runs' and go 'broke'; have 'gulpers' and 'sippers' and write home pathetic tales of the hardbeaten, starving and underpaid N.S. O/D. In all, you live.

Soon you realise your time in the Andrew is drawing to a close and you gaze with longing eyes at the calendar for the day you go 'outside'. You feel envy and pity for the 'seven and five' chaps, for while you will be once again J.R.Plonk, civilian, they will be sailing the seven seas, seeking new 'runs' and returning to old haunts. You may have grumbled; you may have sworn and raved, but something, however small, however inconceivable, something will have been gained by those two years. And one will remember, when the photographs fade, the body ages and the memory dulls, - "The Two Years before the Mast".

\*NOTE: Darwin's "Origin of Species" states "That life has developed and progressed by the ever continuous principle of the survival of the fittest" (and Oh, how true in the Andrew!).

A NATIONAL SERVICEMAN.

