

# SOCCER

**I**N our first few games in Devonport after commissioned we had a small measure of success, beating both "Vanguard" and "Warrior". In Malta we played "Jamaica" and won 4-1. However on arrival on the East Indies Station we found things very different. Our first three games at Trincomalee were lost due to the fact that the native teams were so much faster on the ball and also much fitter than us. We could hold them in the first half, but the last fifteen minutes was just that little bit too much. The fact that they played in bare feet also contributed to our defeats.

During the East African cruise, however, we found our feet, although we were playing as many as five games in six days, sometimes fielding three teams a day, we managed to hold our own against some of the crack teams of the African coast. The spirit in which these games were played was most creditable to the Ship's Company and did much to foster the good will of the people ashore.

On arrival back in Trincomalee we soon found out how much we had benefitted from these hard and fast games, for teams that had previously beaten us soundly were now themselves being thrashed by a far greater margin. In fact from our first game on 30th September until the last

on 18th November at Trincomalee the First Eleven only lost one game out of the sixteen played.

The Persian Gulf Cruise is now in its closing stages and here we have also had some grand sporting games, not to mention a few good "banyans" in the bargain !

A few words about the second and third elevens. They have always played excellent football in a good spirit and we owe them a lot for the way they have always turned out when they have been required, often at very short notice.

As a closing note here is an extract from a letter from the Secretary of the European Referees Association at Mauritius. He says, "I would like to place on record my appreciation of the sportsmanlike manner in which your teams have conducted themselves. It has done much to foster the great game of Soccer in these parts and has set an example and standard to which our teams can only strive to attain."

## 1st XI Results up to 29th December, 1955

P	W	D	L
69	33	13	23
Goals for		Goals against	
185		128	



*The Ship's Football Team at Kuwait.*

# RUGBY

**F** OCSLE and Quarterdeck Rugby teams muster in the port waist". It's unlikely that you would hear that 'pipe' on one of our largest carriers, let alone a modest cruiser. Yet GAMBIA can and did produce a team from both of these divisions which gives some indication of the real enthusiasm there has been for the game.

The credit for the initial and much of the later Organisation must go to Leading Seaman 'Tug' Wilson. Thanks mainly to his work, on March 2nd, three weeks after commissioning, the wings of the EAGLE were clipped to the tune of 20 points to 6 - a promising start. Two other matches were played and won against VANGUARD and an R.N.E.C. XV, before we sailed for Malta.

From the date of sailing from U.K. on April 1st, until we arrived at Mauritius on the first cruise of the commission, no rugby was played, as Trinco. has no facilities for it.

We had great hopes for the East African cruise and Mauritius gave up a foretaste of games to come. The first match was against a combined side from the 'Dodo' Club and the Army Garrison. We were beaten 9 -6 but did not feel

we had disgraced ourselves as this was our first game for over two months. A few days later we played the 'Dodo' Club and a 6-6 draw was a fair result for a most thrilling game. We spent an enjoyable evening at their club afterwards and right royally did they wine and dine us.

Mombasa gave us some equally sparkling rugby and our two games against the Sports Club ended in a draw 11-11 and a win 14-8. Whilst at Mombasa we were asked to supply four players for the 'East Coast v. Nile' game - worthy tribute to our standard of play which was more than upheld by the performance of the chosen four.

Dar-es-Salaam saw us really on form. We lost our first game to Tango but it must be claimed that our team was sadly depleted as another game was being played up at Morogoro at the same time. At full strength we played two 1st XV and one 2nd XV games against Dar. R.F.C. and won all three. The first of the 'series' was for the MacMichael Cup which we captured after a really close game; the lead being taken during the last ten minutes of the game when one of our backs scored a fine try. The final result was 6-5.



*The Ship's Rugby XV.*

These games were the last on the East African cruise and all were thoroughly enjoyed. The hospitality given to us will never be forgotten. In fact the mornings, after matches generally found the victors 'vanquished' !

No rugger was played at the Seychelles. There were, however, other amusements !

Back at Trinco. after J. E. T. a serious effort to get fit was made in preparation for the Persian Gulf cruise. This cruise opened with our eagerly awaited game against the Combined Services, Ceylon at Colombo. Our arduous training was rewarded when we romped home to a convincing win 23-0.

At Kuwait we notched another big victory against the Oasis Club and so it was in optimistic mood that we took the field against the Kuwait Oil Company. Our complacency was soon shattered when in a hard fought game this experienced and skilful side beat us by six points to nil. Future flagships are warned that this team is probably the strongest that one is likely to encounter on the East Indies Station.

At Basra we played a combined side selected from the four teams in that area and beat them 32-0. Abadan unfortunately could not field a side, but two teams from the ship gave an exhibition match which was very much enjoyed by the spectators including some Americans, one of whom heard to remark after the game "you sure have a rough game there".

At Karachi three games were played, all of which were won. Against Karachi the result was 8-0, against R.A.F. Mauripur 6-0 and finally we beat a combined Karachi team by 3 points to nil.

This then is an outline of our rugger during the commission. We think it is a very creditable performance and what's more we have enjoyed every minute of every game, whether watching or playing.

ON... ON... ON... GAMBIA.

#### Results

Played 19. Won 14. Drawn 2. Lost 3.  
Points for : 245  
Against 74

## HOCKEY

At the beginning of the commission in Devonport the bad weather had less effect on hockey than it did with the other sports, owing mainly to the fact that we were able to play on the excellent hard grounds at Brickfields. This was an experimental period and games were played against other ships and local shore establishments. Most of them we won but it must be admitted that the opposition was not very strong and certainly not up to the standard that we were eventually to meet on the various cruises.

A couple of games were played at Gibraltar and then at Malta we came up against some stiffer opposition. We drew with the SHEFFIELD; lost by an odd goal to a combined Commando Brigade team and reached the third round of Med. Fleet six-a-side competition, which we were very kindly allowed to enter after the official closing date.

Aden saw us playing on sandy pitches in considerable heat and then when we reached Trincomalee we settled down to a programme of games with the HIGHFLYER, Trinco. Town and the Dockyard Police on the two excellent grounds there. The inter part competition was also started but as the time was short the bulk of the games had to be postponed until after the East African cruise.

We set out on this cruise full of high hopes with what we considered to be a useful side, strengthened by two or three good players on C. in C.'s Staff. At Mauritius we drew with the M.F. & H.C. and then lost to the Dodo Club. However in East Africa the results were disappointing. We met strong Indian and Goanese sides but owing to the heavy programmes, the calls of duty and other

sports, particularly cricket and tennis, we were only once able to field a proper 1st XI side and then we beat a strong Dar-es-Salaam Gymkhana team by three goals to two in a very good game. Looking back, it probably wasn't a bad thing that the ship's side was weaker than it might have been because at least it did give those other people who wouldn't normally have secured a regular place in the Ship's Team, some better hockey than they might otherwise have got.

On our return to Trinco. the inter part competition was got under way again but of more immediate importance was the selection of an R.N. Team to take part in the inter Navy games to be held during J.E.T. After trials several of the GAMBIA's players were selected to represent the R.N. and all of them acquitted themselves well. The following played in all or some of the matches :-Inst. Lt. Cdr. Stanley (Capt.), Lt. Phillips, Mid. Bowyer-Tagg, Mid. Cazalet, Stores C. P. O. Knowling, Ldg.-Tel. Tawton, Ord./Sea. Everitt and Cdr. Stobie, Capt. Sheridan, R.M. & Lt. Palmer of the Staff Surgeon Cdr. Wilson and Chief Yeoman Smith were also selected as umpires. This is perhaps not the place to praise individual players but mention must be made of C.P.O. Knowling's performance in goal. Without him scores against us might have reached astronomical figures, not only in the R.N. games but throughout the commission. He has been, truly, the backbone of the defence.

After J. E. T. and Diyatalawa the inter part competition was resumed and some stirring games were seen. The Focslie Division eventually came out the winners when they defeated the Somalis,



who have shown tremendous keenness, in the final. The combined S. & S. & Communications team were perhaps a little unlucky as they were beaten by the Staff team who then had to withdraw, otherwise they might well have reached the final stages of the competition. The inter parts did at least one thing if they did nothing else and that was to stimulate interest in hockey throughout the ship and many were the friendly challenges that were issued during this period.

On the Persian Gulf cruise we were able, on most occasions, to field our best eleven and as a result did very well. Out of fourteen matches played, the 1st XI only lost two. The Hubara Club and Mena gave us a good game which ended in a draw and then two days later we beat the Indian Unity Club by five goals to two - a result which caused them some surprise. At Muscat we drew with the Infantry and then the following day we beat a combined Muscat XI (composed mainly of Indians) 2-0. This we understand was the first time that they had been beaten by a visiting ship. It seemed as though the whole

population of Muscat turned out to watch this hard fought game. At Karachi we found we were required to play five games in five days! In the event two of them were officially reduced to 2nd XI standard. In the three 1st XI games the honours were divided evenly - we won one, drew one and lost one. At Bombay the Gymkhana Club held us to draw in a fast game on a grass pitch - the first we have played on since leaving Colombo.

On the whole we have had a very good Ship's Team, the members of which have played some first class hockey and worked well together. The one disappointment has been that we have not really been able to cater for all those other people who would have liked to have played regularly. This state of affairs, however, is inevitable on a 'Flag showing' cruise because in each place visited the Ship is expected to produce the strongest team possible.

In conclusion our thanks go to all those who have umpired games, particularly to Chief Yeoman Smith who has done sterling work both on and off the field.

## SHOOTING

WE began to make use of the rifle range at Trinco shortly after our arrival on the Station. Self-professed Marksmen - and others; turned up for practice and we soon had the makings of a team. We found that the range was overgrown with scrub and long grass, and a periscope was very useful at 300 yards. Another appealing feature of Trinco range is the temperature. Being practically air-proof and a natural sun-trap it's the cheapest turkish bath East of Suez. However, as Coral Cove beach is just at the back of the butts, it has its compensation.

Our first competition of the East African Cruise was at Mauritius. We would have liked to have had a little more practice before this shoot as this is the annual jubilee Cup competition, and the standard of shooting is very good indeed.

Six teams competed, and the cup was won by the Civilian Shooting Club.

Gambia's shot very well, and a little more practice might well have procured the "pot".

No names no pack drill, but mention should be made of a certain tall Major who arrived on the range after a baronial lunch somewhere, borrowed a gun from one of the team, borrowed a rupee from another, bought three rounds for the egg pool competition, missed completely with the first two, shut both eyes for the third and got a pool bull. He was last seen disappearing with the kitty and a grin four fathoms wide, pausing only to scoff some poverty stricken matelots beer.

We had a revolver shoot later on in the week against the Police and the Army. Those Mauritius Coppers take life seriously, and know which way to point the revolver to produce the desired effect. They beat us, though not by such a wide margin as we beat the Army by.

A strange thing about shooting, anywhere in the world, is that cool beer always appears afterwards - to cheer the victors and console the vanquished.

Quite sensible when you think it over!

On arrival at Mombasa, we found that their 303 range was out of action during the emergency in East Africa. However, we started off with a .22" match rifle shoot against the local forces, police, and civilian shooting club. Once again the civilians proved that they have plenty of time for practice, and led the field comfortably. Their heavy-barrelled match rifles were "De Luxe" jobs too, and they knew how to use them. We gave them a lesson a few days later however, when we had a return match with revolvers and Sten guns.

We won very handsomely, in spite of a certain team member being sabotaged. Someone switched his Sten gun to "Burp" when it should have been switched to "squirt".

*Note.* - Beer followed.

Zanzibar provided a very pleasant .303" match against the local Police.

We landed very early, to get the shoot over before breakfast, and all agreed that it was an excellent idea in that climate. Their shooting was very good, but we led them fairly comfortably at the finish.

We split up afterwards and went to various people's homes for a breakfast like mother makes.

*Note.* - No beer - Too early - Pity !

Dar-es-Salaam produced the best outing of the cruise for the shooting team. A four cornered match was arranged between the Dar Rifle Club - K. A. R.s., the Police and "Gambia".

The K. A. R. have a nice range situated in the middle of a Sisal plantation, and a very keen competition ensued. The local wives brought picnic hampers, and tool kits were thrown out of car boots to make room for portable ice boxes. We established a small lead at the first range, and gradually increased it as we worked back. The match ended with quite a convincing win for "Gambia", and an enjoyable picnic lunch for all. This win for "Gambia" says a lot for the clean living of the shooting fraternity. It's a marvel that they could even see, at this stage of the cruise.

No facilities for shooting existed in Seychelles, but that didn't stop us. We rigged a portable revolver and .22" range just outside the Police Commissioner's Bungalow - not too far from the beer - and finished with two comfortable wins:

That was that, for the East African Cruise. We didn't do too badly we found competition keen everywhere, and without exception we found our opponents to be excellent hosts, as well as keen shots.

Our next taste of range work was at Diyatalawa' where over 300 of the Ship's Company did their annual rifle course. Results were fairly good and a new galaxy of marksmen blossomed forth. Conditions were not very good at times during this period, and it's difficult to try to persuade a young M(E) to point a strange piece of mechanism in the required direction, while a platoon of leeches are doing a forced march up his trouser leg.

They took it in good part though, the M(E)'s I mean -; and when they got back to camp and de-leached themselves, well - there was always liquid refreshment.

Next on the menu is the "Norfolk Cup Shoot". Rumour has it that they've discovered a few more Royals who are actually fitted with eyes, so we hope they'll come and join us, and when we'll see if we can lift this pot, and fill it full of - you're correct - beer!

# SAILING NOTES

**L**IKE all active yacht clubs, the sailing fraternity of GAMBIA can be naturally divided into five sections. Firstly there are the dinghy racing enthusiasts whose relish is the thrills of speed and competition around a triangular course in the vicinity of the Fleet.

Next come the 'Banyaners' whose whalers are loaded to capacity with food, drink and pirates, and for whom a tropical beach just out of sight from the ship is an irresistible lure, particularly if a night can be spent there around a blazing camp fire.

Thirdly, there are the ocean cruisers who enjoy (after rescue) the blessed reliefs from exposure, fatigue and seasickness and who revel in retrospect, in the hazards of offshore port to port sailing in the finest traditions of William Bligh.

Then there are the 'cadets', or those keen to learn the art of sailing; whose enthusiasm is undamped by tempest, tide or reef; whose safety and that of their craft must be guarded by benevolent authority until they have earned their coxswain's tickets.

And lastly the 'nineteenth holers' or non-playing members whose immaculate flannels, blazers and burgee ties enhanced our nautical prestige in every yacht club visited and who protected their piratically clad sailing shipmates from the Scylla of social suicide.

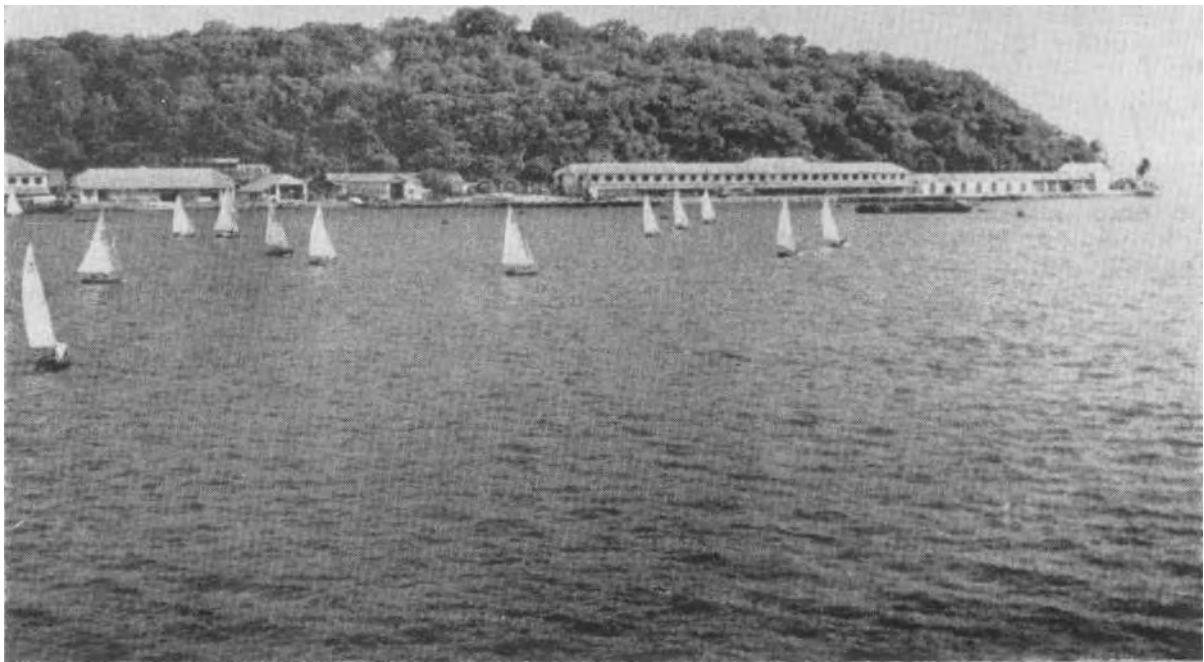
In spite of poor sailing weather and our reluctance to commit our newly varnished dinghies to the oily waters of Grand Harbour, we managed to fit in some weekend sailing picnics whilst at Malta and to stretch cautiously our new dinghy sails, so that by the time we reached Trincomalee the boats were ready to start the yo-yo routine which was to continue throughout the commission on every fine afternoon.

For the East African cruise we borrowed three additional dinghies from the 'Highflyer', and were thus able to throw in a class of boats of our own, to compete in racing events at our ports of call.

At Mauritius the local sailing season had not yet started, so we sailed the dinghies inside the shelter of the reefs which protect Port Louis, whilst the whalers sallied forth to spend thirty six hours in Tombeau Bay; the first and best of many subsequent Banyan expeditions throughout the commission.

At Mombasa we enjoyed the excellent class racing laid on for us by the Yacht Club. There were strong winds here but for those who still found fleet racing dull, steeplechasing over the reefs provided a new sport.

At Zanzibar two races were held during our brief visit, and an all-day expedition to Prison



*The Start of a Race in Trinco. Harbour.*

Island was made in the whalers. Giant tortoises provided much diversion on this delightful little coral atoll.

Our hospitable hosts at Dar-es-Salaam gave us many happy hours' sailing and racing in their large handicap fleet, and also laid on for us a passage race to, and picnic at, Moneymoon Island; such an attractive spot that we revisited it a day or two later in the whalers.

At the Seychelles we had reluctantly to cancel our races against the local sailing fraternity owing to unsuitable dinghy weather, but all the boats were away regularly in the lovely roadstead of Victoria and several whaler expeditions were made to neighbouring islands.

And so back to Trinco. and J.E.T. where one or more boats from GAMBIA were placed in each of the three combined fleet sailing races.



## INTER PART ATHLETIC MEETING MALTA

AS we expected we should be required to field a fairly strong athletic team during the commission, it was decided to hold a ship's Inter Part Athletic Meeting at the first opportunity during the "work-up" Malta. The great day was fixed for Saturday 23rd April with heats on the Friday, and the cry for entries went up. It was hoped - with a certain amount of optimism - that with any luck we should get somewhere around 150, but to the consternation of the committee, when all entries were added up they came to nearly four hundred. Even to this day no-one is sure whether this sudden enthusiasm for strenuous exercise was due to all the sprinting the natives had done at Devonport when leave was piped or the fact that the buzz had gone round that a good brand of beer was available at the Manoel Island Track. Whatever the cause may have been, it was quite obvious by the end of the heats, that the next day would promise some keen competition and close finishes.

Saturday dawned clear and sunny and everyone kept their fingers crossed and hoped it wouldn't rain. After dinner the trek to Manoel Island began and to the surprise of the organisers the first events started dead on time. As hoped, the struggle was hard and close and first one part of ship and then the other was in the lead. However towards the end it became clear that the final issue rested between the Royal Marines, the Communication branch and Electrical branch. It

was a close fight, but the Royal's just had the edge and were worthy winners of the inter Part Shield.

The two most popular events were Tug-of-War and the Veterans Race. There was a large field for the latter, and opinion was sharply divided on the favourite, one body holding that the Captain couldn't fail to win, and the Engine-room hinting darkly that secret training along the E.R.A.'s Workshop Flat, would bring Chief home first and the rest nowhere. The time for the great race arrived - beer glasses were drained and the runners took their mark, and in some cases someone else's as well. There was a cheer and they were off. At first it looked as if it were the Captain all the way, but suddenly that secret training seemed to tell, and a tremendous burst by Chief nearly did it; but the final result was the Captain by a short head. The Commander seemed to have a little difficulty in working-up to maximum power, but did so eventually to no mean tune becoming airborne just after the finish and unfortunately crashing shortly after takeoff; this spectacular feat bringing enthusiastic applause from the spectators.

After the meeting was over, the trophy was presented by the Captain to the Royal Marines, and cups and medals to winners and runners-up in the various events. So ended an afternoon that was enjoyed by all and that produced the makings of a first class athletic team.



## TUG OF WAR

**T**HE Ship's Tug of War Team have, to their credit, an unbeaten record up to the time of going to press.

The team consists of eight Royal Marines and one spare from the R.M. Detachment under their capable trainer Sgt. 'Clubs' Stelfox, R.M. The team easily won the Inter Part competition at the Ship's Sports Meeting at Malta in April on our way out to the Station and it was unanimously decided that they should represent the ship for future meetings.

Opposition has not always been strong but their hard training, good discipline and team work has been excellent.

The best match and their proudest achievement was the winning of Jubilee Cup at Mauritius. This match was a four-sided one between the

Mauritius Police, the local Garrison Troops (7th K.A.R.), an R.N. Team (C.P.O.s and P.O.s, H.M.S. Gambia) and the Ship's Team. The Ship's Team beat the Garrison in two hard pulls and the R.N. Team were beaten by the Police, also by two pulls, in the first round. In the final, Police versus Ship's Team, a terrific battle took place and by sheer determination our team won by two pulls to one. The R.N. Team helped enormously by their encouragement in the final pull which took three minutes.

During JET the same team beat the Indians, Royal Pakistan and Royal Ceylon Navies without losing a pull. They have also beaten the local Trincomalee R.N. Police and were to have taken part in the Combined Services Sports at Colombo, but unfortunately the weather washed out this event.



*The Ship's Tug of War team with Major Knight, O.C.R.M., Mne. Findom, Cpl. Henderson, Mne. Weatherill, Mne. Snelling, Mne. Little, Cpl. Probert, Major Knight, Sgt. Stelfox, Cpl. Hallet, Mne. Wale, Mne. Wells*

## SWIMMING

With no bath available at Trincomalee, and no suitable bathing from the ship, opportunities for competitive swimming have been few, but of course there has been much recreational swimming, enlivened by "goggling" for many.

At Mombasa, during the East African Cruise, there was a gala at which the outstanding event was the Captain's furious sprint which won him the Veterans' race.

During the Persian Gulf Cruise Water Polo was played at Bahrein, Ahmadi, Abadan, and Bombay, and although these were spirited, hotly contested

games, followed by return matches, we invariably found our opponents (whose only practicable Summer Sport appears to be aquatics) too good. It was particularly dismaying at the gala at Abadan, where the Ship's team was matched against an all-Persian team, many of whom it transpired were National Champions, and who were cheered on wildly throughout by a large crowd of excited nationals. Nevertheless, even in the "cold" waters of the Gulf winter, it was all good practice (and good fun) for the enthusiasts, who found time for a small interpart contest in the R.P.N. Barracks bath at Karachi.



# PERSIAN GULF CRUISE

**B**EING moored in Trincomalee Harbour for some weeks during September and October was not everybody's idea of fun and it was with a general feeling of relief, when on Tuesday, October 18th, we slipped from our buoys opposite N.H.Q. to move over to the fuelling jetty prior to sailing the next day for Colombo, and the first stage of our cruise to the Persian Gulf, Pakistan and India.

Of the ten months actually spent on the East Indies Station only two days were spent in Colombo, the capital of the country on which we were based, and I think that everybody felt what a pity it was that the stay couldn't have been longer. True it poured with rain for some hours (to remind us of Guzz) just after we had moored but this was the biggest city we had seen since we left home and a little thing like rain wasn't going to dampen our spirits. Those that could, quickly flocked ashore to gaze at the shops or play sports and then followed this up by sampling a little of the city's night life.

Our next stop, after a week at sea, was Khor Kuwai, where our Landing Parties had a good day's exercise on the small barren island there.

The same evening we set sail for Bahrain where we arrived the next day. Here we were well entertained by the members of the shore base, H.M.S. Jufair (newly commissioned) and by the Bahrain Petroleum Co. at Awali. Who will forget the picturesque 'Dhow of Jufair' which used to

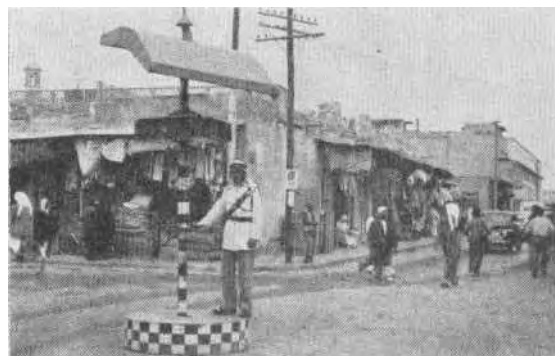
take off the libertymen, and the long jetty at Jufair along which one had to 'walk' to get to it - a jetty which seemed never ending after a good evening spent at the canteen! Bahrain was good for shopping too - probably the best in the Gulf - although the local residents, perhaps, put us off a little by assuring us that the next place that we were going to was definitely better. Actually this sort of thing occurred all round the Gulf and we were continually being told that the places we had been to or the ones that we were going to were much better shopping centres than the one we happened to be in at the time!

Our next port of call was Kuwait, the Arab town which is expanding rapidly every day as a result of the large quantities of oil which have been found in the area. The channel here is not deep enough for large ships and so we were unable to get close in to the shore. As a result the four and a half mile boat trip to the jetty rather took the edge off sight-seeing jaunts. Some of us did pluck up courage for the journey and had a look round, but many returned with their nerves shattered by the incessant blare from the horns of sleek American cars which jostled each other in the crowded streets. Even the cyclists competed in the 'make more noise' campaign, most of the bicycles having electric horns fitted to the handlebars. The battery trade in Kuwait must surely do good business!

From Kuwait to Mena al Ahmadi - the oil port for the Kuwait Oil Company. Here for the first time for many months we spent part of our stay alongside the jetty. A jetty specially built to cater for the mammoth ocean-going tankers which queue up to take on their valuable cargoes. All the organisation for our visit was laid on by the K.O.C. and many were the invitations issued by the local residents to visit their homes and their clubs situated at Ahmadi a town which has literally sprang up out of the bare desert in the last few years. There are some among the local community who were the first arrivals at Mena and who will tell you that when they arrived, not



*The Archway at Bahrain.*



*A Police Traffic Controller in Kuwait.*

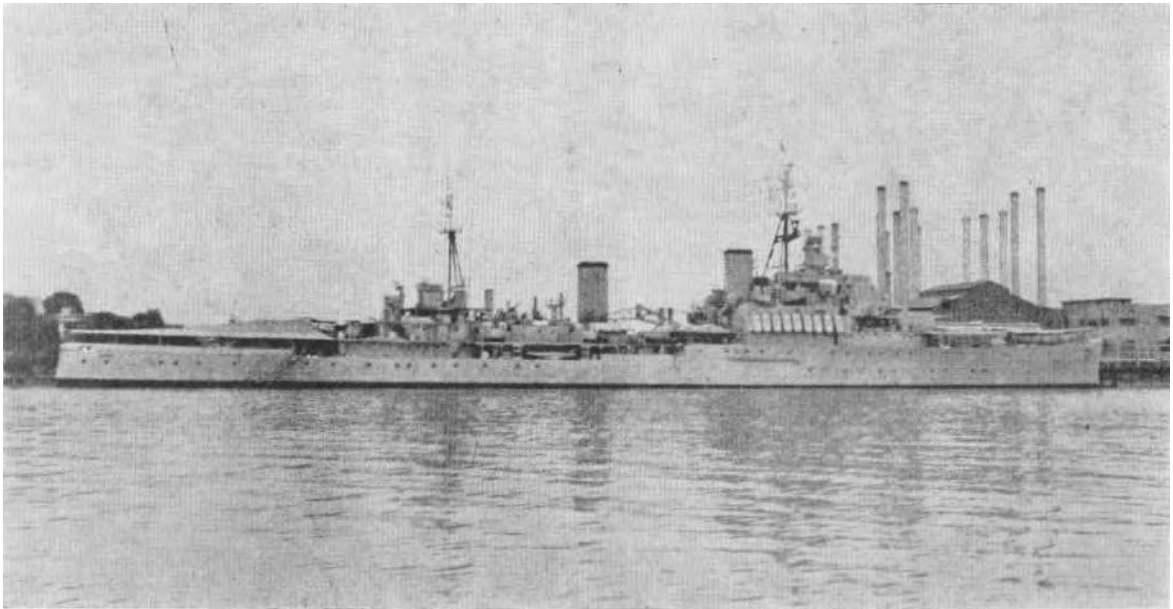
so long ago, they had to pitch their own tents on the shore and live in them for some time in the intense heat before any of the amenities of civilisation were available. Now the whole place is hustling with activity and at night the huge flares caused by burning off the waste gases from the oil wells cast their glow over the sky like beacons and serve as a reminder to all that the main reason that they are living in this desert town is OIL.

In the early hours of Monday, November 14th, after a pleasant few days at Mena, we sailed north again to arrive not long after daybreak at the entrance to the Shat al Arab. Here we embarked the River Pilot and for the rest of the day proceeded to thread our way cautiously up this navigable, but difficult estuary, down which flows the combined waters of those two famous rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates. On the way we passed Abadan and Khorramshar to which we were to return a few days later. In the late afternoon we reached the outskirts of the ancient town of Basra, and we made an impressive arrival as we steamed slowly past the shore, at the same time firing a 21-gun salute to Iraq, which was 'returned' by the not quite so modern guns of the shore battery. (Certain people on deck and facing the Shore were seen to flinch as the latter went off). We turned just above the town and then came back down to moor at buoys opposite the British Consulate. Here again we were well received and almost immediately found ourselves involved in a long list of official calls, private invitations and other entertainment. Old Basra was out of bounds to all Service personnel, but in Ashar one could see modern buildings, flanked by ancient houses, lining the waterways which teemed with small sailing craft. The bazaar was always thronged with people and at night quite a few of the Ship's

Company found their way into the two or three night clubs which offered drinks at prohibitive prices and 'belly dancer' cabarets for nothing ! Others preferred the atmosphere of the Basra Petroleum Company's Club at which we were always welcome.

On the 19th November we returned down river to Khorramshar where we fired another salute, this time to Iran. Several hours were spent anchored off Khorramshar while the full programme of official calls was got through - particularly heavy in this case because this was the Persian Naval Base.

In the late afternoon we weighed anchor once again - at least that was the intention, but somehow it got wedged under the stem, much to the 'delight'? !... of the Shipwright Officer. So we proceeded to Abadan and the next stage of our cruise rather cautiously. Two hours later we tied up alongside the jetty at this famous oil refining town. This visit was probably the most important one of the cruise, perhaps of the whole commission, as this was the first time that a British Cruiser had visited Abadan since the days of the Oil Dispute (and then it was in rather different circumstances). The huge refinery is gradually beginning to operate again under the terms of the Oil Agreement, with the help of British, American and Dutch experts, and we were interested to see what sort of reception we should get. We soon knew! Invitations, private and otherwise, poured into the ship by the hundred from all sides and those on board who are responsible for ensuring that everyone gets a fair share found themselves almost overwhelmed by the task that had been set them. However, somehow they coped, and by the end of the week large numbers had been entertained privately, had gone on organised



Abadan