

**HERMES ENGINEERING CO LTD
DIRECTORS' REPORT**

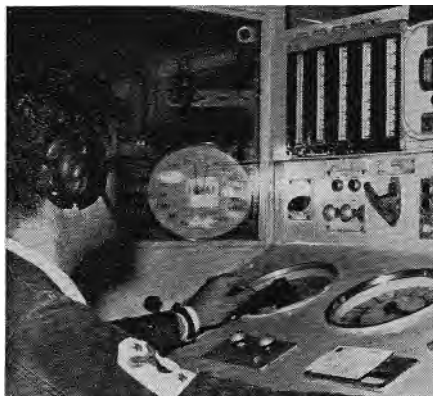
Gentlemen,

It is with much pleasure that your Board of Directors present their report for the period ending in the Spring of 1964.

The Company looks back on a most successful period of activity. As always, the main product of our organisation, and the one in almost continuous demand, has been shaft revolutions. Our Engine Room Division has produced some 50,000,000 of these, the demand being almost equally shared between those of the port and starboard types. Production on this enormous scale would not have been possible without the enthusiastic support of our Steam Production Division. They have boiled 1,000,000 tons of water, in the process of which they burnt 85,000 tons of fuel and had to clean each boiler six times.

The receiving, storing and handling of the £1,000,000 worth of fuel burnt was undertaken by a subsidiary of your company, Smith's Enterprises Ltd.

Other products that have enjoyed great demand were those of Ice, Air Conditioning and Domestic Services Division. The recent marked drop in the demand for these products is almost certainly the result of a change in climatic conditions. Your Directors are currently consulting Messrs F.O.A.C.'s Planners Ltd who will advise on this problem; these gentlemen are confident that they can restore the demand for ice and air conditioning at very short notice should the need arise.



This automation ...

Water and electricity have sold well, too well at times. This division has run the generators for thousands of hours and produced 30,000,000 gallons of water, the quality of both products being unsurpassed. Your Directors are confident that the demand will continue.

Another subsidiary of the Company, Flight Deck Engineering Ltd whose production machinery is situated some way from the main works, has also enjoyed a most successful two years. At the time of writing they have recovered 5,464 aircraft and launched 5,447. This shows a clear profit of 17 aircraft; a remunerative market for these is being sought. In addition to their main production effort, Flight Deck Engineering Ltd have run boat tours and a bar selling Avfuel, H.P. Air and Lox. While all these lines have been popular they have not as yet proved very profitable. However, a marked upsurge in the demand for Lox can be confidently forecast.

*Engineering
Department*

*.. won the majority
of the competitions'*



The Ship Repair Section, Work's Manager Lieutenant Lee, has been in continuous production coping with 200 job cards a month and a total of over 9,000 maintenance routine cards. The prototype Gazebo which has graced numerous flight deck receptions is but one of our many new products, and it may well have a future as an A.C.R.B. in the era of V.T.O.L. The fold-up, wrap-around, peg-together garage for Landrovers is still in its development stage and patent rights are pending.

The Company has been fortunate in retaining the services of our Chairman and Managing Director, Cdr. Marrack, throughout almost the whole period under review. He came to us early in 1962 and we look forward (even if he doesn't) to having him at our head for some time to come. We are all very sorry to see the departure of the two works' managers during the period. Lt. Cdr. McClean took up a similar post with a firm in H.M.S. *Eagle*, an old established company whose works have been sited in Devonport for many years. Lt. Cdr. Wheeler recently took over from Lt. Cdr. Bartlett, who left us to run an air conditioning plant, together with some other machinery, for the Eskimos. Our present Propulsion Work's Manager, Lt. Cdr. Gresham, joined us from one of our land based subsidiaries, a small dockyard at Portsmouth. There have been many other changes on the Board of Directors and in the Staff but they are too numerous to list here by name.

The Firm has been well to the fore in the sporting and social activities. Our soccer team swept all before them in the knock-out



. gives one time to think

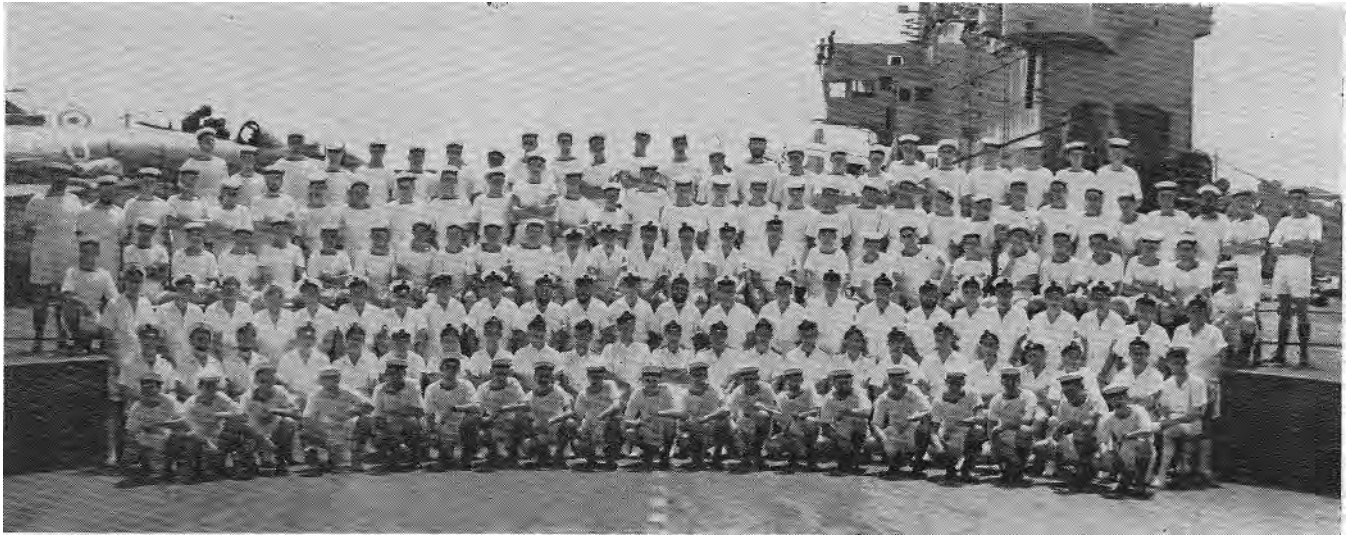
competition, beating Weapons and Radio Ltd in the final. The tug-o-war team won the majority of their competitions but were eventually defeated by ten hulking great teenagers in a later contest.

Some very successful Company dances have been held whilst at Portsmouth. The social functions organised in the Far East were usually of a smaller and more intimate nature.

It now only remains for the Chairman to lead the Board of Directors in thanking the Staff for their loyalty and hard work over the past two years and wish them well for the future.



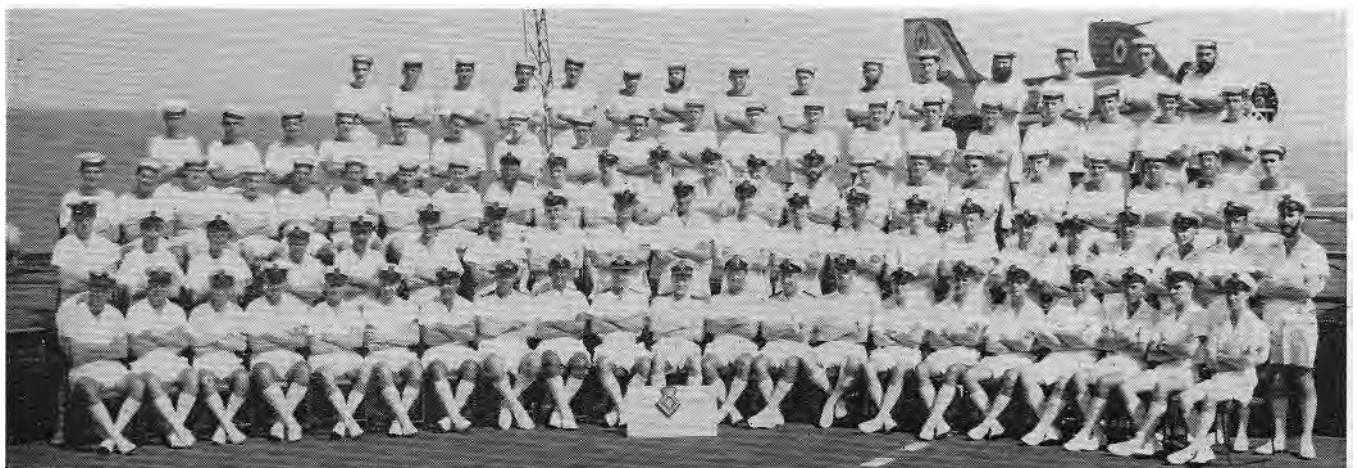
The Chippies



Both —

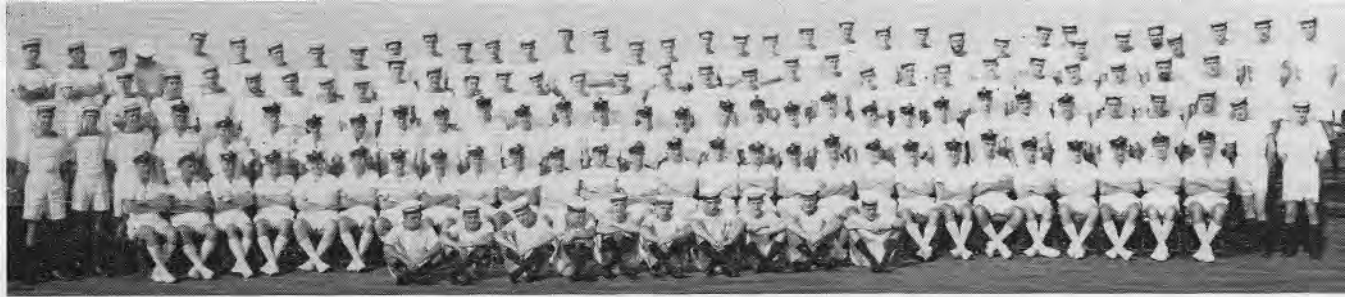


. Watches



Air Engineering Department

Weapons, Radio and Electrical Departments



The beginning of the commission was a testing time for the Electrical Department since inevitably after a six month refit and nearly a 100% change of personnel there were many wrinkles to iron out before the thousand and one electrical bits and pieces throughout the ship were all working satisfactorily.

might happen to find that someone had forgotten to return them, but it seems that there were many people in the Dockyard just as interested in the units as we were. So all hopes of having a 'real cool' W.R. & L. Department were forgotten.

Despite the severe cuts in manpower that

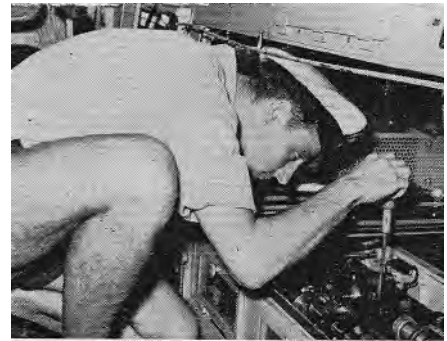
we have suffered during the commission the Department has been able to keep on top of the work load and still find time for a fair bit of sport; we reached the semi-finals of the interpart soccer competition, sailing and expediting.

Now that we are back in the U.K. and approaching the refit, the Department is busy planning the multitude of jobs that will have to be done before 1965. One thing is certain: after the refit *Hermes* will be a very different ship electrically and electronically.

Finally, we all hope that Commander Fairfax, who had to leave the ship prematurely due to sickness, is by now fully fit again and wish him well in his future appointment after his promotion.



'The screwdriver ...



... seems to do ...

Towards the end of the first leg of the commission Commander Ellingham was relieved by Commander Fairfax and shortly afterwards the then current A.F.O. regarding the structure of the Engineering Branch was partially implemented and we became the Weapons, Radio and Electrical Department. This mainly entailed absorbing the O.A.'s and adding the gun sponsons and G.D.P. to an already long list of cleaning responsibilities. About this time a new system was instituted to inform 'interested parties' of a piece of defective equipment: three whistle blasts followed by the picture of the trouble was broadcast over our main broadcast. The idea has generally worked well though some anomalies have occurred, as when the three whistle blasts followed by the words 'Flight Deck Broadcast' were broadcast over—yes, you're right first time—the Flight Deck Broadcast.

During the docking period in Singapore the Department was luckier than most in that we were able to have portable de-humidifiers fitted in certain of our compartments. It was hoped that when we left the Dockyard we



... most things'



The Chapel

HEAVENS ABOVE!

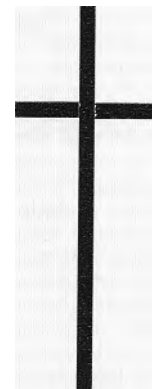
This is the title of a recent Peter Sellers film which shows how much of what passes for Christianity in the modern world falls far short of the real thing. The Rev. John Smallwood, a prison chaplain with a rich black country accent, is mistakenly appointed to the living of Holy Trinity Church, Orbiston Parva, a respectable and prosperous district. Though occasionally lacking in worldly wisdom his missionary zeal and direct approach rocked both the respectable church-going people and the so-called Christians who always excuse themselves from church attendance.

If we've had our eyes open this commission, the contrast between the church in action in other countries and our own insipid Christianity should have made us feel uncomfortable. In Hong Kong, a newcomer to the city was asked if he would like to attend a weekday service in Cantonese. He was warned that the congregation would only be a small one. It amounted to 300 people. Quite an eye-opener for someone from the U.K. In East Africa a number of us managed to get up-country and saw the missions at work. Others gave a hand in Mombasa with the clearing of a site for recreational use by a Church School and in the process gained a first hand knowledge of the local Christians. Christians overseas often have enormous difficulties to contend with, yet whilst they may lack financial resources, and on occasion, adequate places of worship, there is no mistaking their real love for God and

their joy in doing God's work. One African school teacher recently gave a whole month's salary towards the erection of a new church.

Onboard there are of course Christians too and the worship and prayer of the church has been carried on. We have even had three Chaplains for most of the commission. Baptisms and confirmations have been held in places as far apart as Beirut and Singapore. The Church of England has been fortunate enough to have her worship supported by the Royal Marine Orchestra. We must not forget either that *Hermes* has one of the most attractive Chapels in the whole Fleet. Meeting Point and the Ship's Fellowship have provided opportunities for deepening our understanding of the Faith. But how do we compare with Orbiston Parva and the Overseas Church? We haven't all the material blessings of a shore parish and we haven't all the difficulties of the Mission Field. The parishioners of Orbiston Parva didn't see their faith as having any relevance to their daily lives; the people overseas do. Looking back over the commission and at the Service in general we are faced with a question which only the individual can answer: Do those of us who call ourselves Christians really see our faith as relevant to our daily lives? Is it as important to us as our aeroplanes, machinery and office work? If not, we are wasting our time and Christianity becomes simply a note of 'respectability' and church attendance a thing to be 'done'.

IN MEMORIAM



I am the Resurrection and the Life

John XI, 25

- Edward Mason
- Robin Lunn
- John Bynoe
- Paul Austin
- Gordon Bartlett
- David Philipps
- Michael Cooper
- Leslie Scott

R.I.P.

Hermes Flashback

This report came into the hands of the editors shortly before going to press. It is the account of the well-known incident off Dakar in 1940 involving the previous Hermes, commanded at the time by Captain R. J. F. Onslow, M.V.O., D.S.C.: in his own words, he . . . considered the

conduct of Lieutenant Commander Bristowe, Mr Grant and the crew of the motor boat in the highest degree praiseworthy . . . many and quite unexpected difficulties were encountered from the very start, and all were imperturbably and successfully overcome!

On the 9th April 1942, H.M.S. Hermes went down in action in the Indian Ocean. Mr Grant was still serving in the ship, and an eye-witness has stated that Mr Grant went below to see if he could render assistance there, and the ship sank before he could return to the upper deck.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the following account of the operations of *Hermes* Motor Boat on the night of Sunday, 7th July.

1. It having been decided to supplement the aerial torpedo attack on *Richelieu* with a night depth charge attack from *Hermes* motor boat, I was given command of this enterprise with practically a roving commission. My orders were to enter the outer harbour at Dakar, passing over or around both booms as I thought best, and then to proceed alongside *Richelieu's* quarter and release my four depth charges all together. If *Richelieu* should be under way I was to drop the depth charges across her bow. If I failed to discover *Richelieu* in harbour I was to report the fact by W/T at once. After the operation I was to endeavour to get in tow of *Milford* on her patrol line, but if I could not do this by 0300, I was to proceed to the 'Force's' 0530 rendezvous..

2. Separate W/T orders were issued in case it was decided later in *Hermes* to abandon the attack.

3. The following is the account of the preliminary preparation and the actual operation.

4. During the afternoon it was decided to prepare for an attack. The motor boat was painted matt black all over. Glass was either removed or painted black.

5. The senior permanent coxswain of the boat was given the first opportunity of going with his boat and he was pleased to have the chance of doing so. I told him to select a volunteer crew as there was insufficient time to make a draw if we called for volunteers throughout the ship. I knew that there would be a very large number. The selection of the E.R.A.s, Royal Marines and the W/T rating was left to the various branches, and a crew was formed in ten minutes. Then the rumour went round and names of volunteers poured in. They had to be turned down. The crew finally consisted of:-

Lieutenant Commander R. H. Bristowe, R.N.

Mr F. W. Grant, Commissioned Gunner (T)

Cyril Ford, E.R.A. 2nd class, D/MX 49769

Albert V. Westmore, E.R.A. 3rd class, D/MX 47984

Ronald E. Tuffnell, Leading Tel. D/JX 136569

Patrick J. Kearns, Acting Leading Seaman D/SSX 16195

John Quinn, A.B. D/JX 155690

Albert Cookson, A.B. D/JX 149475

William S. Robinson, Royal Marine Ply. X1968

Gilbert T. Youdle, Royal Marine Ply. 22712

6. The fitting out of the boat for this escapade took until dark, and even then things had been forgotten and we went away without lime juice and some very delicate meals which the Paymaster Commander had prepared for the crew. The painting of the boat was done by many volunteers who seemed to delight in wrecking the Boat Officer's pride. However she was soon christened the *Hermes* coffin, and well she deserved the name if looks go for anything, which luckily, in this case, they didn't.

Then a new engine had to be shipped, this took several hours, and time is usually allowed for testing; this engine got no test. It went beautifully and it was most fortunate that it did, for the other engine was of no use at all as will be seen later.

7. Charts were then produced by the Navigator. He didn't like parting with a nice clean chart, in fact he eventually borrowed one from the Fleet Air Arm. Anyhow he had no faith in me as a navigator and thought I should be safer without one at all. This chart nearly cost the life of one of the crew before the end of our trip.

8. My next visit was to the Sick Bay, where I had a quiet session refreshing my memory on tourniquets, the use of morphia and medical comforts, and whether brandy was allowed under this name or not.

9. The whole crew then came to my cabin and discussed the objective. It looked simple. The Admiral's orders were quite plain and straight-forward. I gave the boat's crew a summary of these orders and told them our duty was to proceed inshore with *Milford* to within 10 miles of Dakar harbour, *Milford* would then give us our departure when we would then continue the rest of the trip alone. We were to drop four depth charges, all together, under the stern of *Richelieu* close to her 'A' brackets. Having achieved this, it was my duty to safeguard the crew. The boat could be abandoned, but even this latitude was not completely allowed for; I told them

that the written orders went on to say, less formally, that the Commander would prefer to see it back. Nothing could have been clearer.

10. I told the crew to black their faces with burnt cork. This they did very effectively, but it was found to be quite unnecessary as the wet black paint, with which the whole boat was covered, soon made up for any defects.

11. We were all very excited by 2100, the time of expiry of the ultimatum, and when no news had been heard by this time, we knew that we were in for an interesting night.

12. The crew manned the boat at 2100 and proceeded to *Milford* to pick up two more depth charges. Working up to maximum thrills occurred, as they should do, slowly. There was a considerable swell running for a small ship like *Milford*, and depth charges seem far heavier at night in a swell than at any other time. Mr Grant was the first victim. He took a depth charge full on the head, and was laid out temporarily, but he managed to work harder than usual in a semi-unconscious state, until one depth charge was secured in position. He had little interest in the fourth, when once it was in-board, but in hoisting it in, the port engine was wrecked and a five gallon tin of oil was burst open and emptied its contents into the stern sheets. Mr Grant then relieved himself of his dinner, and asked for a call in an hour's time. This was granted. Although the port engine had received a severe blow from a depth charge, the real damage was not discovered until the E.R.A.s had almost gassed themselves, working on it with a torch without a bulb and under an oilskin for fear the torch might show a light by mistake. No lights were allowed. Through feel only, the E.R.A.s discovered that the cylinder head had been cracked and they were unable to repair that, and so they concentrated on the faithful starboard engine which had had no test and had only just been installed.

13. *Milford* got under way at 2145 and ordered the motor boat to follow and to maintain a speed of 12 knots if possible. Depth charges slung on the side of a boat upset its stability, and it was a perilous trip in. When we thought that we were nearing our point of departure, a big ship loomed up on the starboard side of *Milford*. We were abeam to port. It looked quite big enough for *Richelieu* for it was a

very dark night. I altered away so as to be clear of any searchlight beam, and I then steered to cross the bows of this shadowy monster. *Milford* challenged, and we merely waited for her end, but the challenge was answered correctly and as the shape approached us we recognised it was *Australia*.

14. *Milford* then gave us our departure and we said good-bye. We got out of sight and stopped engines to see if our patient was fit for duty, and to make final preparations. We found Mr Grant in perfect order again, swimming in a sea of oil. Old jerseys and new jerseys were thrown down on the oily deck in the true 'Sir Walter Raleigh' fashion, but it was not enough. The coxswain was almost annoyed when his precious cabin cushions were wrenched from their beds and laid reverently in the oil pool. They did their job, for the crew could stand up again. They still had to lift the last remaining depth charge into position. This was completed and Mr Grant went to drill with his depth charge throwers. All hands were called in for this job with the exception of the Royal Marines who were manning our fore 'turret' — a Vickers machine gun in the bows. I blessed the 'Great Bear' for it was showing in the heavens and the North pole star with it. This served as an admirable compass on our way in, but had dipped below the visibility plane before emerging from our venture. We had not forgotten a compass, but it was impossible to read it without any light.

15. Although there was a bottle of 'medical comforts' on board and a good one too, no one would take a tot before the 'exercise' was completed.

16. We proceeded. Goree Island loomed in sight after what seemed hours. The time was actually 0015, and not long after this we almost ran down a destroyer on patrol outside the outer boom. We were convinced that she had sighted us and we altered straight for the nets. We dare not increase speed, which was then about three knots, as our phosphorescent wake seemed terribly obvious. She followed us, but I do not think she could have seen us for we were keeping a very careful look-out and must have sighted her long before she could sight us. The boom came into sight at last and we stopped engines and slid over it. Half the crew thought it was a mined boom and would go up in smoke as we crossed it. However all was well.

17. We muffled our engine with the boat's cover and went ahead again at dead slow speed, but it seemed as though we were steaming at 30 knots. The noise of the engine was deafening. We passed by an armed merchant cruiser and were convinced that we saw *Richelieu* ahead of her on our side of the inner boom. This struck us as absurd luck, as we had been told by the reconnaissance aircraft that she was lying inside the second boom at dusk. We had a committee meeting, and were so

convinced that it was our quarry that I gave the order to attack. We sidled in at the same speed, as we had not yet been seen by the French Quartermaster on watch who was shining a torch on the quarter-deck. Fifty feet from her stern we recognised the ship as a sloop of the *d'Entrecasteaux* class. We crept slowly off, hoping that we should not rouse suspicion, and fortunately the Quartermaster was thinking of other things.

18. We then steered for the merchant ships, for we had been told that *Richelieu* was lying at the end of a lane formed by two lines of shipping. To get there we sneaked round the inner boom and then steered up the lane keeping close to the nearest line of ships. We sighted our quarry, and as we got near her we found that a merchant ship was anchored almost dead astern of her — a rare position from which to attack.

We steered for this ship but as we approached we sighted a harbour launch under way just astern of *Richelieu*. We must either wait until she moved, or attack from the quarter instead of from the stern. It was getting late, so we decided to attack, using the same tactics as in our dummy run on the sloop. They did not work. We were challenged—red white, a pause and a repetition. Before the repetition I ordered attack at full speed. On our way into the attack we were challenged six times, and each time we did not answer we expected a shot. The coxswain's orders were to go alongside the stern and to graze the ship's port side, steering towards the bow, and as soon as the order 'over' (which denoted drop depth charges) was given, to make a dash for cover amongst the merchant ships.

Unfortunately we had not spotted a lighter lying right aft on the port side, nor had we seen a quarter boom with a boat lying at it. The coxswain saw these just in time and avoided them most skilfully. He went alongside *Richelieu* about 30 yards from her stern which we hoped was over the vital spot for which we were looking.

19. The depth charges went over as one, and the crew held on for grim death for I had promised them that I would not pick them up if they fell over from the shock. The French quarter-deck staff stood looking over the guard rails, wondering what on earth we were doing. When they realised they withdrew hurriedly uttering fearful curses. The depth charges did not function at once, and the boat was not lifted out of the water as we all had expected. In our retreat we passed close to an armed merchant cruiser which hailed us. We answered 'passant'. *Richelieu* was very quick in sending a general signal which was equally quickly answered by shore batteries and ships in harbour.

20. We expected searchlights to light up the harbour so we tried to get under cover of a merchant ship. When no searchlights were switched on we decided to get

away out of it at full speed, but it was then that our faithful starboard engine gave a snort and packed up. We were at the end of the inner boom, close to the sloop we had so nearly attacked. She was flashing up more boilers and weighing anchor, while we lay drifting for about 20 minutes and our gallant E.R.A.s worked in the pitch dark, changing batteries with the engines which had never even fired. There was a short in the self-starter which had to be put right, and it was not surprising that the crew gave a sigh of relief when the engine fired although it sounded like a thunder clap in the still of the night.

21. It was while we were lying here, waiting to be discovered, and several minutes after dropping our depth charges, that there was an audible explosion which could be plainly felt. Mr Grant said 'There they go' and this cheered us considerably during what seemed like an interminable wait for the engine to start again.

22. We now made a dash for the outer boom as the two remaining hours of darkness were invaluable. Just before reaching the boom, an auxiliary vessel, which varied in size considerably according to different members of the crew, sighted us and gave chase. She had the speed of us, but we had a far smaller turning circle. I couldn't shake her off and Mr Grant said 'Let me use my destroyer tactics'. I was only too pleased to do so as I knew that he had been a very successful gunner in a destroyer before joining *Hermes*.

23. He failed to start with and then decided that it was full speed for the nets and trust to luck, or finish.

24. We got through the nets, but our pursuer was caught up in them although within 50 feet of us at the time, signalling 'stop, stop, stop'. Just as we arrived at the nets another patrol vessel, very similar to our pursuer, took up the cry and we were sandwiched—at least we thought so. It seemed hopeless and we expected to receive a volley of fire at any moment. For both these vessels were so close and seemed very agitated. Quite undaunted Mr Grant steered his patent zigzag and we suddenly realised that our original pursuer had stopped. We lost his mate and got away, which seemed well nigh a miracle. Why neither of these vessels opened fire is a mystery. We had our foremost 'turret' manned, but I doubt if I should have opened fire in reply to such superior vessels, but I don't know.

25. We attacked the *Richelieu* at 0210 and were clear of the boom after this chase at about 0300. We had no chance then of making our rendezvous with *Milford*, so we decided to try and make our alternative rendezvous with the main force. We realised that we could not do this by 0530 but we hoped for the best if we got there late.

26. We reduced speed in order to get into

W/T communication with *Hermes*, but failed to accomplish this before 0355, when we made the following report 'Dropped four depth charges under stern of *Richelieu* at 0210'.

27. Proceeding on a north westerly course, we heard what we took to be heavy bombardment, but one of our Swordfish aircraft, flying back over us, brought us to our senses, and we realised that they had carried out their dawn attack. This bombardment, and we felt between four and seven explosions, was undoubtedly the torpedoes. As the dawn broke we could see *Richelieu* plainly at about two to three miles distance, shrouded by a pall of yellow smoke. This was not 'Lighting up', as the smoke reached right down to the water. We cheered 814 Squadron, but just previously we had got mixed up badly in really terrific anti-aircraft fire directed against them, and it seemed that the fire was coming from so many directions and was aimed so low, that the French must suffer many casualties amongst themselves. A number of red and green objects burst uncomfortably near us, and those who had them donned their tin helmets.

28. We altered course to the south again to avoid this fire. As soon as we made another bid to rendezvous with *Hermes*, a French bomber paid us an unfriendly visit, and our zigzagging would not throw her off for 15 minutes. She dropped no bombs. As the motor boat was jet black and the crew was equally black, she probably could not pick us out. We must have looked like a crowd of niggers. Being a keen wild-fowler at home, I had insisted on black faces as I had been seen too often in the dark by White Fronted geese, and I didn't want the same to

happen to the French. It struck me that there was something in common in the name, too, when applied to the Petain Government. Six times we were visited by various planes on patrol, and we went to action stations each time with the Vickers machine gun and part of our secondary armament.

29. This first plane sheered off in the direction of Goree, presumably to report. As soon as she left us we altered course towards *Hermes* again, and an armed merchant cruiser came too close to us for my liking. We were evidently much closer to Goree than I suspected. We felt we were so important by this time that if the French had a battle squadron they would have sent it after us.

30. It was at 0545 that I decided it was impossible to reach *Hermes* in her northerly position with our very restricted speed, and so I altered course for Bathurst. We first had a committee meeting and decided that we had nearly sufficient petrol to reach the port, and we had taken sufficient canvas with us to rig a sail if necessary. We could have cut a mast from the shore under cover of our Vickers, and we reached a unanimous decision to trust in our navigation over a 70 mile run.

31. It was shortly after this, while signalling the ship as to our intended movements, that the last French aircraft visited us. I shouted 'Action Stations', but Mr Grant refused to obey the order as he had hooked a tunny fish on a spinner which he trolled over the stern continually.

32. If we hoped to reach Bathurst it was necessary to have another self-refit, so we stopped engines. My chart had blown over the side and I called for a volunteer to retrieve it as we had died out fires. Eight were quickly forthcoming—Mr

Grant being still too keen on his fishing—but one dived in quicker than the rest, and within three minutes of hoisting him in with the chart, a shark—an extremely large one—swam past the boat within ten yards. We went to 'Action stations' and opened fire with rifles and a .455 revolver. These were the only shots fired during the whole operation and the enemy withdrew. We then received a signal from *Hermes* to stop engines and we knew that our fun was nearly at an end, and that we should in due course be found and picked up.

33. This occurred at about noon, thanks to the invaluable assistance of our W/T set and to our faithful starboard engine. We were very thankful to be back on board at 1204 after being away from the ship for fifteen hours.

34. The behaviour of my crew, throughout a very exciting operation, inspired very largely by Mr Grant's imperturbable cheerfulness, was exemplary. I couldn't have wished for a more cheerful, a more sporting or more loyal company, and any success which we may have achieved is entirely due to their whole-hearted co-operation.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



Lieutenant Commander

The Rear Admiral,
H.M.S. *Hermes*

It was News

Hermes Tonight was handed down to us from the first commission and we were grateful for the legacy. Each evening at sea the Tonight team broadcast on the S.R.E. and gave the latest news about the outside world, the ship's movements, announcements and gossip. Personalities were interviewed, the ship's position made known, and a weather report added to the programme. The varied backgrounds of the Tonight team, led by Instr. Lt. Cdr. Vautier, helped to give each programme a different flavour while the S.R.E. operators gave the newscasters good support.

The *Hermes Herald* was an attempt to keep us up-to-date with the world around us. The newspaper was started when we left Palma and an issue appeared each day at sea until our return from the Far East, when we let the B.B.C. take over the task. The Editorial Staff was composed of the Sub Lieutenants under training. They were supported by a team of 'experts' of whom the sports' editor (a Hampshire supporter) deserves a special mention. The cartoonist gave us a chance to laugh at ourselves and the Multi-lith operators lost many hours sleep in ensuring that we had something to read at breakfast or stand-easy.

Sports Round-Up

Despite the natural difficulties encountered in an Aircraft Carrier we have more than held our own on the sports fields of the world. This speaks well for a Ship's Company with very few 'Stars' around which to build teams. We have had our ups and downs and at times our critics have outnumbered the players, especially after a losing game. However, the selectors have stuck to their guns and few panic changes have taken place. The result has been consistency in most teams and an ability to avenge a defeat.

The highlights of the commission have been produced in the team secretaries' reports. This just leaves me the pleasant task of mentioning the long hours and hard work put in by the P.T.I., Petty Officer Jim Conroy, and to thank him for his efforts on behalf of all our sportsmen. Thanks also to all of you who volunteered as officials on various occasions; and last but not least, well done the loyal band of supporters—sometimes extremely small—but always welcome.



Our Sport's Officer—he encouraged sport in every way

Swimming and Water Polo

King Neptune would have felt very much at home with our team of swimmers and water polo players who have had little difficulty with all opposition.

Before leaving Portsmouth we were Command Water Polo K.O. Champions with very little water training.

At Malta, after a long spell at sea we suffered our first defeat against *Falcon* (unbeaten for two years), 6-2. Then at Gibraltar we had an exciting battle with *Centaur* for the Carrier Cup. We won the swimming by the skin of our teeth in the final relay (which would have been fitting for any International Meeting), and in spite of *Centaur's* reputation, our water polo team excelled itself and won by 6-2.

Back in Malta we entered for the Mediterranean Fleet Swimming and Water Polo Championships, and after a lot of hard training our swimmers walked away with all but one event. The water polo was a harder



proposition and *Falcon*, our first opponents, were confident. A fast exciting game developed and with not much to choose between either side, the score rose slowly at level pegging. After the first half *Hermes* attacked more freely and got into top gear. A really first class game was witnessed with *Hermes* worthy winners 7-4, breaking *Falcon's* record at last. Round two saw one way traffic against *Trafalgar* to the tune of 13-1, and the semi-final against St. Angelo was heated in parallel with the summer's day. Tempers were high in and on the side of the pool, but *Hermes* with their cool controlled polo won 4-2, though P.O. Brew left the water with a black eye worthy of any boxing champion. We won the final against *Ausonia* 6-3 and left no doubt as to who were the Med. Champions.

In Portsmouth again we were undisputed water polo champions after beating *Vernon* 6-5 and St. Vincent 3-2 in exciting ding-dong games against these two strong sides.

In the Far East we found little opposition against ships' teams and we 'massacred' *Albion* by 10 goals to 2. We had a first class game with R.A.F. Changi, the predominant team before our arrival, and beat them 7-3. We were the first Naval team to beat the Singapore Swimming Club, last season's Malayan League runners-up, winning 9-8 and 8-5 in two good Sunday games.

Although they did well as a ship's team, our lads gained their highest achievement when the full *Hermes* team represented the Royal Navy in the Far East and beat the Army 18-1 and the R.A.F. 10-5 to win the coveted Inter Service Trophy for Water Polo.

Athletics

Most Carriers manage one athletics meeting in a commission—we have had two. Both were held in magnificent weather, one in



'... defied the heat'

Malta, the other in Singapore. On both occasions Mrs O'Brien was there to present the prizes, and in Malta the Royal Marine Band also helped to add to the occasion by playing for us. Much credit goes to all the competitors who defied the heat and humidity while the spectators enjoyed their cokes and crushes.

Results 1962: 1st equal Engineroom and 814 Squadron, 3rd Seamen.

Results 1963: 1st 814 Squadron, 2nd Seamen, 3rd Communications and Electrical

Rugby.

Early in the commission many excellent games were played, but we were beaten by *Collingwood* in the Command final, having beaten them earlier in a 'friendly'. After arriving in Singapore we faced the Naval Base side—our second game of the season, played on Boxing Day 1962. They won narrowly, 9-5, as did the Singapore C.C. by the odd penalty goal, but by now we were adapting to the heat and humidity.



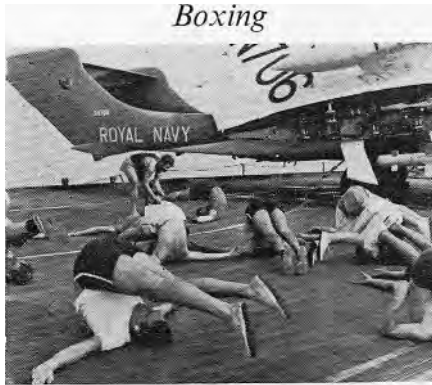
Still going strong

The strongest Army side on the island, the Royal Signals, were beaten 5-0 and seven of our players were then selected for the Far East R.N. team. We sailed for Hong Kong confident and anticipating some good rugby to come.

Our early defeats there—by the Kiwis from H.M.N.Z.S. *Taranaki* and by the Police—worked us up into a fit team. To their surprise the R.A.F. were beaten, and in our final game an inspired pack under the leadership of Lieutenant T. C. Jones together with hard-tackling backs led us to revenge and victory over *Taranaki*.

On returning to Singapore we travelled to Malacca to play the Australian Division, but found ourselves facing the combined might of the Commonwealth Brigade. The score is best forgotten, but we crossed their line three times—something no one else had managed that season.

The last series of games of the Far East leg took place at Mombasa. The 'A' XV were narrowly defeated by the Sports Club, and a few days later the 1st XV drew against the Club in a mid-week game. The stage was set for the Saturday game and a large crowd saw us inflict their first defeat of the season.



Circuit Training

Under the guidance of Leading Seaman Tillett the boxers on board kept themselves fit and ready for battle in any ring. Unfortunately, the one Ship's match of the commission, planned for Mombasa, was cancelled.

However, the following boxers reached the finals of the R.N. Championships in Singapore: O.Sea Boltwood, A.B's Snell and Byrne, N.A. Langstaff and Ellis, and R.O.2's Parr and Torrison—a worthy reward for their efforts during the dog watches onboard.

Soccer

For our first game, after being in commission only three days, we undertook to play the seasoned *Victorious* team for the Carrier Cup. Although the team had never played together before we adopted the 4-2-4 formation and ran out winners 3-0. Portsmouth Fire Brigade fell to us 12-0 and the good run continued in the Mediterranean, where a K.O. competition spotlighted new talent, and we finished our visit by beating a strong *Blake* team 2-1. Since then, however, long periods at sea have meant lack of match practice and poor results.

On our return from the Mediterranean we were hammered by R.A.F. Gibraltar—the score is best forgotten—and our stay in Portsmouth showed little improvement. The low was reached when we lost 3-1 to *Llandaff* at Aden on our way to the Far East.



Initially at Singapore our hopes were revived. We drew with 40 Commando, *Blackpool* fell 5-0, *Barrosa* 6-0 and *Terror* 8-2. Then came the Fleet K.O. Competition and after making heavy work of beating the 25th Escort Group 3-0 and *Loch Killisport* 3-1, we lost to *Terror* 3-2 in the semi-final. The humiliation of this defeat was made greater when *Terror* took the field for the final wearing our colours.

Since then we have fought hard to regain some of our lost prestige. Against *Albion* in Singapore we lost our centre-half after only three minutes play and *Albion* won 3-1, but *Hermes* won all the plaudits for a great show of guts and determination. Our stay at Mombasa on the way home produced two defeats by local teams, and a visit to Nairobi brought defeats by the 1st Staffordshire Regiment and R.A.F. Eastleigh 5-3 and 7-0 respectively. However, a sudden return to form on the last day saw us beat Mombasa Sports Club 2-0 in a good game.

We pay tribute to Sub Lieutenant Perret and his successor Lieutenant Shorthouse for their services as secretary.

Shooting

The fixtures for this sport have been few and far between. A challenge by *Centaur* at Gibraltar led to a hurried sorting out of possible marksmen, some makeshift practice in the Dockyard's tomb-like range and a .22 rifle match in which we were beaten but not dismayed. Then at Malta we entered for the island's annual rifle meeting, which included full bore shooting with sub-machine gun and pistol as well as rifle. R.E.M. Peverley won the Junior rifle championship, C.P.O. Clements the Open pistol championship and Sub Lieutenant G. Ralph the officers pistol event while E.A. Campbell came second in the Sub Machine gun event.

Much later in Singapore, we lost narrowly to the Commonwealth Regiment from Tarandak by 576 points to 575, but avenged the defeat soon after in a close match by 593 points to 591. Our final matches came at Mombasa against the police: we lost the two .22 rifle fixtures against teams that were well in practice, but held our own in the darts afterwards!

Cricket

Despite the usual problems of ship's cricket—last minute team changes, failure of transport to arrive, inadequately maintained equipment, etc.—the ship's team has had an enjoyable and successful commission. Many more matches have been won than lost, and this has often been as a result of good fielding. Matches have been played in Malta, Gibraltar, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malacca, Mombasa and Aden, on a variety of wickets and outfields, and the team has rapidly acquired the techniques of producing good cricket in strange surroundings, having had little or no practice. Owing to duties, drafts and sickness, many people have played for the ship at one time or another and so it would be unfair to mention any player in particular.

The inter-part knock-out competition was held in Malta in June 1962 and was won by 803 Squadron after a hard struggle with the Air Engineering Department.

Tennis

This sport has been well supported during our time in the Mediterranean and Far East and our first notable success was against *Centaur* at Gibraltar when we won the 'Gilbert Cup'.

The team consisted mostly of officers but C.P.O. Stork of 814 Squadron was a very good Singles winner.

To select the best team, two American Tournaments for the Wardroom and Ship's Company were held in Malta, and these were won by Lieutenant Commander Eckersley-Maslin and Commander Midgley, and Shipwrights Gardner and Gutteridge respectively.

The Far East Tennis Championships were held at the Officer's Club, *Terror*, in April 1963 and Commander Webb partnered by Commodore Blackham won the Veterans Doubles. Lieutenant Commander Eckersley-Maslin reached the Singles and Doubles Semi-Finals.

Results to date:
 2nd August 1962: *Hermes* 3, R.A.F. North Front 3.
 8th August 1962: *Hermes* 4, *Centaur* 2 (Gilbert Cup).
 14th April 1963: *Hermes* 'A' 1, *Lion* 2.
 21st April 1963: *Hermes* 3, Royal Signals, Singapore 0.
 19th June 1963: Naval Base (*Hermes*) 7, R.A.F. Tengah 2.
 21st June 1963: *Hermes* 3, *Albion* 0.

Squash

Hermes first won the Noble Cup, the Aircraft Carrier Squadron Squash Cup, on 7th August 1962, by soundly thrashing *Centaur* at Gibraltar.

This regrettably has been our only encounter with an R.N. Carrier in harbour as *Albion* is no longer eligible for this competition.

A large number of officers have played, and the P.T.I. Petty Officer Conroy, has generally been top of the ship's company ladder.

A few matches have been played, results as follows :

7th August 1962: *Hermes 5, Centaur 0.*
8th February 1963: *Hermes 6, Royal Signals Hong Kong 0.*
17th May 1963: *Hermes 2, Civilian Hong Kong 3.*

The following have represented the Navy in the Inter Services Squash Tournaments on the Far East Station :

Lieutenant Commander Eckersley-Maslin.
Commander McCarthy.
Lieutenant Commander Ramsay.

Results :

Hong Kong, 12th February 1963: Navy 3, Army 2.
Singapore, 19th March 1963: Navy 4, Army 1.
Singapore, 20th March 1963: Navy 2, R.A.F. 3.

Sailing

We have sailed practically every time the ship has stopped. There were fleet regattas at Langkawi and Hong Kong in which we were highly successful, particularly in the latter. Here, Sub Lieutenant Bruce won a 'pot' by sailing between a ship and the marker buoy to which it was moored, so shortening the course by 400 yards. We also raced against the local club on Enterprises, though less successfully.

In Mombasa the natives were decidedly friendly, and after a week of outstanding hospitality at the Yacht Club, we took them on with three Coots, one fourteen foot dinghy and one whaler. Again we didn't quite win, but what does that matter?

Basketball

The basketball team has had a most successful commission. We have lost few matches and had some first class games.

Of particular note was our game against the Royal Signals, the reigning Hong Kong and Far East Army champions. This was a very close game which produced our first defeat in the Closing minutes. The most enjoyable game played was against the Commonwealth Brigade when we narrowly won against a very good team, but most of all will be remembered the Army's tremendous hospitality.

Our team has come mainly from the air world, the backbone being 'George' Offord (803) and 'Ginge' Howard (803). Both Navy players, 'George' and 'Ginge' have been our inspiration and match winners on many occasions. Our other Navy player 'Doc' Essl has been the stalwart of the defence (and the 'Tiger'), ably backed by our most regular players Lillie and Bateman. 814 supplied us with our captain 'Lofty' Rawlinson and some American aid in Lieutenant Commander 'Dick' Goodspeed.

Thanks are due to Dobson our scorer and supporter and to Fuller who played little, but being fit ran the line most of the time.

Statistics for the record : Played 28, Won 21, Lost 7.



. dressed in their oily rags'

Tug--of- War

This is the ideal sport for a carrier at sea as it takes little space and little time to organise. However, it was left to *Corunna* to start the ball rolling, and they did this by challenging us to pull on the jetty at Palma. A seamen's team under the expert coaching of C.P.O. Barker (Buffer to you) picked up the gauntlet and soundly beat the 'large' body of men from our escort. *Corunna* wouldn't lie down and challenged us again in Gibraltar. This time the Flight Deck provided the team after some quick marshalling by P.O. Brew, and once again *Corunna* was beaten.

After this there was no difficulty in raising Inter-Part sides for a competition on the Flight Deck. The Wardroom were the worthy winners, although some stout anchor-work by P.O. Writer Lithgow in the *S S* team was almost too much for them in the Semi-Final.

In the second competition held later in the commission the Wardroom were unable to maintain the promise shown previously and were beaten in the Semi-Final by 803 Squadron. However, 803 met their match in the final which was won by the Engineers 'dressed in their oily rags'.



' ..takes little space'

Hockey

The ship's hockey team has had its ups and downs, depending on whether the squadrons were embarked, and whether C.N.D. and Admiralty had drafted all the team to our opponents. We had a satisfactory record against other ships, drawing with *Victorious*, beating *Centaur* in the Carrier Cup, and beating almost all the ships in the Far East.

We were not so successful against civilian teams. This was because they were practised as a team, reasonably fit, used to the climate and had not been on a heavy run ashore the previous night to celebrate the fact that another three weeks at sea was over. However, whether we won or came second we have had some very enjoyable hockey against some very pleasant teams, and all our hockey scars are honourable ones.

Golf

Throughout the commission a small but dedicated band of players have upheld the dubious reputation of R.N. Golf. By means of ruthless gamesmanship and manifestly bogus handicaps we even managed to win a match or two, and we were never, ever beaten at the nineteenth.

Our finest golf was played at Fan Ling, Hong Kong, our worst but most memorable at Subic Bay. Subic Bay was designed by Americans for Americans, and in addition to ski lift type ropewalks to pull weary golfers up steep slopes, featured a bar at every fourth hole or so. As the round progressed so did the golf deteriorate—but who cared?

We played on all the Singapore courses with varying success, and took on the Mombasa Golf Club three times, once against the men and twice against the ladies, which resulted in two defeats and one massacre.

But now at home—where our wives have confiscated our clubs—we have fond memories of our chequered career, and who knows, it may not be so long before we're out there again.

The Cycling Club

We have been the largest club afloat within the R.N. C.A. , and very active too, particularly during the Far East leg.

We had our first hill-climb on the Rock of Gibraltar and then, with our tails well up, landed by boat for a ten-mile Times Trial amidst the dust, chaotic traffic and camel carts of Aden.

While in Singapore we enjoyed the highlight of the commission during an up-country visit to the Commonwealth Brigade at Malacca, but a lot of hard training was done by the team of nine who made the trip. Undaunted by the impressive opposition, which included two New Zealanders short-listed for the next Olympics, a Sportsman of the Year and an Australian professional, the team lost this 30 mile race by a mere five points.

After more training at sea we had two excellent 25's and several training runs with the H.K.C.C. A number of social evenings were held in both Hong Kong and Singapore amid bowls of Chinese chow and the friendship of the Asia Cycling Clubs.

Mombasa offered plenty of relaxation and recreation, including an enjoyable 30 mile mixed start race with their cycling club.

We've no idea how far we've cycled during the commission, but it's been a lot of fun.



At Monserrat



'more training at sea'