



H.M.S. LOCH FADA

1955 - 1956

GENERAL SERVICE COMMISSION



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Commander M. L. C. CRAWFORD, D.S.C. and Bar,
Commanding Officer.

Captain's Foreword

I AM very pleased to contribute a foreword to this ship's book covering "Loch Fada's" commission from June 1955 to December 1956. On looking back over the commission I think we have been very lucky. We had a good start with an excellent work up and a valuable period with the Home Fleet, during the best summer England has known for years. At the end of this period everyone had settled down in the ship and had mastered their various duties. Without being too self-satisfied, I think we could consider ourselves worthy members of Her Majesty's Royal Navy.

During our foreign service we have had a varied and interesting career. Among our many duties have been landing armed parties to aid civil power, transportation of Archbishop Makarios and his friends to the Seychelles, salvaging a valuable cargo from a sunken dhow, medical and navigational assistance to ships in distress, dismantling the shore base at Khor Kuwai, not forgetting the all-important job of showing the flag in foreign ports. With reference to this last duty, I would like to stress what an important part you all play and it is with pride I can say that I heard nothing but favourable comment at all the places visited.

Our thanks are due to all those who have contributed to the production of this book, in particular to the Electrical Officer, P.O. Electrician Freer, Leading Coder Thorpe, Leading Writer House, and E. M. Bodenham. I hope it will be a souvenir, of what I consider to have been a very happy and successful commission in Loch Fada, and I hope you feel the same about it. Maybe in years ahead it will help to recall old friends and happy times in this ship. I am sure it will do this for me.

In conclusion I should like to thank you all for your loyal co-operation which has made the privilege of commanding one of Her Majesty's Ships a very pleasant experience.

Good-bye and good luck to you all.

M. L. C CRAWFORD,

Commander.



H.M.S. "LOCH FADA"

Built by Messrs. John Brown & Co., at Clydebank.

Launched by Miss Patricia Pigott.

Laid Down-8th June, 1943. *Launched-14th* December, 1943.

Commissioned-29th March, 1944.

MEASUREMENTS :

Speed 19 knots.

Displacement 1,700 tons.

Beam 38 feet.

Length 307 feet

ARMAMENT :

One Twin 4in. Mounting.

One Twin Bofor Mounting.

Four Single Bofor Mountings.

One Double Squid Mounting.

"Loch Fada," from which the ship derives her name, is situated in the Letterewe estate, Ross, Scotland. The ship commissioned in Glasgow and until the end of the war she served in the Western Approaches and played a vital part in the anti-submarine campaign. On the 10th of November, 1944 she assisted in the sinking of U 608, by gunfire, and on the 27th February, 1945, sank the U 1118 off Lizard Head. A month later she rescued 40 survivors from a U-boat, sunk by Aircraft near Bishop's Rock Lighthouse. Later she was presented with an inscribed Bugle by the 19th Group R.A.F. to commemorate this rescue.

H.M.S. "LOCH FADA."

Home Fleet, Persian Gulf and East Indies,

At the beginning of 1955, Loch Fada, in reserve at Barry, South Wales, was in a state of preservation to the extent that most of the equipment on the upper deck was fully cocooned. A modernisation refit had been carried out on her previous to this, so it was no surprise that in February she was towed from Barry to Portsmouth to be taken in hand by the dockyard and prepared for re-commissioning. This having been successfully achieved, Loch Fada was commissioned on the 21st June and became part of the Home Fleet.

The Commanding Officer, most of the officers and a small number of ratings had already joined, but the majority of the ship's company assembled in the Royal Naval Barracks and marched to the ship headed by a Royal Marine Band. The Commodore of the Barracks took the salute as they marched out, whilst on arrival at the ship, a commissioning service was conducted by the Dockyard Chaplain.

During the following month everyone on board was very busy getting accustomed to his new ship, provisioning, ammunitioning, exercising general quarters, fire quarters, emergency stations and other minor drills : all the events which go toward making a Royal Naval ship clean, smart, happy and efficient.

After seven days, main engines were tested, the armament was operated and the seaboat's crew exercised whilst on passage to Portland. There the ship put to sea almost daily to operate asdiccs with units of the local submarine flotilla and simultaneously to carry out Damage Control exercises which invariably ended with the passage-ways being festooned with cables and fire hoses ready to trip the unwary. The occasional days spent in harbour were used to advantage by the shallow water divers in their frogmen suits, swimming and diving near the stern. Naturally there were trials and tribulations but the working-up period was successfully completed enabling the ship to return to Portsmouth on July 23rd.

Before working with the Home Fleet however, there was the important function of leave, fourteen glorious days to each watch, fully enjoyed by everyone after the strenuous efforts of the previous month. On the last day of August, the cry on the bridge, "Ring on" was heard, orders to Quarter Deck and Forecastle of "Let go" were given, and Loch Fada joined the other units of the Home Fleet, an efficient 1,700 ton Loch Class A/S Frigate, with a complement of 10 officers and 150 ratings, ready to do whatever was required of her.

Proceeding to Invergordon, exercises were carried out with "Glasgow" and the fact that the working up period had stood the ship in good stead, was proved by the way everyone acquitted himself. The twelve days there were mainly spent at sea, in company with other ships, carrying out manoeuvres, submarine chasing and replenishment at sea, whilst during the periods at anchor, most of the ship's company indulged in sport either against other ships or among themselves. During the ship's stay, the Fleet Sports where "Loch Fada's" competitors tried very hard but appeared to lack experience and the Highland Games were held. These Games were a wonderful affair and the bagpipes, the kilts, the "tossing the caber" and the Scottish dancing were new to many of the ship's company. Scotch Mist ("rain" is a better word) made its appearance and tended to damp the enthusiasm of everyone but the hardy Scots competitors.

From Invergordon the ship again made her way to Portland to take part in N.A.T.O. exercises, on completion of which she sailed for Oslo.

What a picturesque setting it was as she steamed up the Fjord-- the beautiful pine forests covered the slopes right to the water's edge and here and there were dotted the typically Norwegian white wooden huts and houses -- a sight, once seen, never to be forgotten. Entering the harbour "Loch Fada" then berthed alongside H.M.A.S. "Queenborough" at a jetty just in front of the imposing modern Town Hall.

She stayed in Oslo for four days during which time the ship was 'open' to visitors who flocked aboard in large numbers in the bright sunshine and many more came after dark to see the impressive effect of the flood-lighting which threw the ship into brilliant relief against the dark background.

Oslo, the capital of Norway, is a mixture of ancient and modern architecture with its beer gardens and up-to-date cabarets, its trams and modern taxis, its theatres and cinemas all brightly illuminated, whilst one is impressed above all by the wonderful hospitality of the Norwegians themselves. Two things of note stand out in the memory: the beautiful sculpture of Frogner Park and the sheer physical beauty and attraction of the people.

Unfortunately, the day to leave came all too soon and on October 10th the ship slipped and followed the Flagship, H.M.S. Tyne, down the Fjord, the beauty of which was lost this time because of a very dense fog. Progress being rather slow, all ships were ordered to anchor. Later "Loch Fada" was ordered to close "Eagle" to take off H.M. Ambassador to Norway and the British Naval Attache and land them at Drobak, a village about 20 miles from Oslo. Whilst doing this, the fog lifted and after landing the passengers, the ship proceeded down the fjord and took part in exercise "Running Tide", with ships from Norway, Denmark and other N.A.T.O. countries, until a break-down occurred, caused by blocked condensers. No further part was taken in the exercise so she made her way back to Portsmouth at reduced speed arriving at her home port much earlier than expected. Naturally, the whole ship's company were delighted to be back, but a little disappointed at missing an intended visit to Ipswich.

With just under a month remaining before leaving the United Kingdom, the ship underwent a final docking, leave was given, provisions and stores were embarked, final alterations were made, and the grim clay arrived. The shores of U.K. were now being left behind for twelve months, the period spent abroad of the new General Service Commission.

What a day it was too, rain, rain and yet more rain, as "Loch Fada" slipped, severing all direct links with families, friends and dockyard. Heart-breaking? Yes! but not as bad as previous commissions which had been for two and a half years. Everyone, then, resigned himself to this fact and settled down to continue to work and play, giving the ship the good name she has today.

Not much work was done during the next few days due to a gale raging in the Bay of Biscay and most of the ship's company, although trying very hard to carry on, were for the most of the time looking quite green. However, "Loch Fada" weathered the gale and Gibraltar was reached, where nearly everyone took the opportunity of setting foot on terra-firma to find enjoyment and refreshment in the numerous cabarets and tea-rooms, besides watching Spanish Dancing--a great attraction seen by many for the first time.

The cement covering of the Quarter Deck had suffered during the gale and this was repaired in time for the ship to slip and proceed on November 15th for Malta. Once again she ran into a gale--this time a moderate one but still uncomfortable enough to turn the tummy over.

On arrival, a 17-gun salute was fired to the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean (Admiral Sir Guy Grantham, K.C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.) and then "Loch Fada" berthed in Sliema Creek. She was now at the George Cross Island with its light sandstone buildings, its winding roads, numerous inlets and creeks, ghajnsas, gharrys and a multitude of churches. The Maltese are devout Roman Catholics and the many festivals of the Saints are observed with colourful processions to the Churches and Cathedrals

named after them. In the evenings, the main shopping areas normally packed with Maltese strolling arm in arm, were now packed even more as the ship's company went ashore to enjoy the night life.

After three days the ship slipped its moorings and proceeded to Port Said, gunnery and asdic exercises being carried out during the passage. There, a pilot was embarked and "Loch Fada" headed the night convoy through the Suez Canal. Anchoring in the Bitter Lake to allow the north bound convoy to pass, three rousing cheers were given by the ship's company as H.M.S. "Flamingo", one of the ships in this convoy whom "Loch Fada" was replacing, went merrily on her way home. Everyone watched enviously as their north bound "oppos" slowly disappeared from view, but consolation was taken by thoughts of the passage home in the not too far distant future.

Continuing on her way, the ship completed the Canal passage, disembarked the pilot and headed for Aden, arriving there on St. Andrew's Day. After ten days at sea the ship's company, as a whole, decided to investigate the possibilities of entertainment but were disappointed. Games against the R.A.F. and a visit to an oil refinery at Little Aden met with approval but the main interest was shopping, as attractive presents were plentiful in the shops and many of the personnel were seen returning with parcels under their arms after presumably some very hard bargaining with the local tradesmen.

The day after the Portuguese sloop "Bartolomieu Diaz" entered harbour, "Loch Fada" continued on the last leg of her outward journey to the Persian Gulf. During the next seven days, a tug-of-war competition was held on board and a .22 rifle range was set up every evening on the Quarter-Deck. The ship's first stop in the Gulf was for 24 hours at Khor Kuwait, where a bathing party landed to take advantage of the wonderful facilities at Sifa Lehsa beach ; and Bahrein, the ultimate destination was reached on December 9th, exactly one calendar month from the day of departure from Portsmouth.

After the lengthy passage out, a week was spent painting and generally cleaning the ship and the acquaintance of Jufair Canteen was soon made. An inter-part soccer league was started which, during the following three months provided considerable enjoyment, the ultimate victors being the Electrical and Miscellaneous team.

The Senior Naval Officer, Persian Gulf, was embarked for a short cruise in the southern part of the Gulf, visiting the islands of Das, Yas and Dalma.



Doctor at Sea

(see page 8)

This completed, course was set for Bahrein but soon afterwards a signal was received from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary "Wave Master" saying that she had a man on board seriously ill. The ship altered course, rendezvoused with her and transferred the Medical Officer, by light-jackstay, with his medical equipment. "Loch Fada" now returned to Bahrein, disembarked the Senior Naval Officer, Persian Gulf, re-united the Doctor with his normal duties on board and then proceeded to Kuwait where a full Christmas programme was laid on for the entire ship's personnel.

Dances and parties were pleasurably attended and many private invitations were thoroughly enjoyed by all concerned. Sporting pastimes were arranged, but the results showed lack of practice and possibly the influence of the Christmas festivities. Everyone agreed though, that Christmas, 1955, although spent away from home was an enjoyable one.



Ceremonial Guard

After such wonderful entertainment, the more serious aspects of the commission had to be faced and at Bahrein again, the "Loch Fada" Guard with another from the R.A.F. —paraded for the Annual New Year's Day Reception given by the Political Resident for the Ruler of Bahrein (His Highness Sheikh Sir Sulman Bin Hamid al Khalifa). The sporting programme continued with games of soccer against the "Bartolomieu Diaz" and the "Loch Killisport",

The January cruise began with Basrah where there was a certain amount of fraternisation with the R.A.F., and where the Basrah Petroleum Company organised a very instructive and useful visit to their oil installations at Zubair and Rumaila, some 40 miles into the Iraqi desert. At Bandar Mashur, a Persian oil port, the memories are of the Dolphin Club, which provided entertainment for many, a visit to a dairy farm and the Agha Jari oilfields (50 miles away in the mountains) where a good day was had by football, table tennis, darts and billiards teams. Bushire, formerly an important Persian trading town, was then visited and the ship's football team played against and lost to the local side in a close, fast match, but were presented with a cup for their splendid efforts. The third Persian port to be visited was Bandar Abbas where very hot walking and climbing

expeditions were made into the dusty interior. Finally the cruise ended with two days in Khor Kuwait, where there was maintenance to be done at the Shore Base and, of course the inevitable swimming.

The period of two weeks then spent in Bahrein was devoted to final preparations for the harbour and sea inspections of the ship by the Senior Naval Officer, Persian Gulf. The results of this inspection were very satisfactory but it was a comforting thought that "Loch Fada", in company with "Loch Lomond", had not been alone in her ordeal.

February saw the ship on a cruise to the Trucial Sheikdoms. At Abu Dhabi, the first stop, excellent bathing was had on the magnificent sandy beach but whilst there, a change of wind and the start of a swell heralded a "shamal". At the next stop of Dubai, the swell was so great that it was thought fit to amend the cruise, so a week was then profitably spent in Khor Kuwait at work on the Diesel Generator ashore. Leaving behind an officer and several ratings, to assemble the generator parts for embarking, a day was spent near by in Elphinstone Inlet for bombardment practice, the results of which were most satisfactory. On returning and after completing the work in hand, a piece of flat ground found on Ghanain Island was cleared and made ready to enable games of hockey and cricket to be played during the remainder of the stay.



Dismantling operations at Khor Kuwait

Continuing along the Trucial Coast, the ship again visited Dubai and whilst there, the R.A.F. at Sharjah were played at cricket and soccer, whilst a party of R.A.F. personnel spent an enjoyable day on board. Al Ajman, our next port of call, was the last visit of this cruise before returning to Bahrein.

At last the ship was ready to leave for Columbo but was delayed when a landing party was sent ashore because of a disturbance in the form of a demonstration, staged to coincide with the visit of the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. A day later a second attempt to get under way was foiled this time the reason was not known.