

great that everybody spent most of their time ashore. Christmas morning is also well remembered by the visit of the Divisional Officer and other Officers to the communication mess to spread the festive spirit by partaking in a few goffas, and navigating the Conga line around the messdeck. We cannot pass on without mentioning the young ginger-haired Tel. who saw pink rats in the Oasis Club, though luckily, they had disappeared the next morning ; but not so with one other member of our staff, who had to retreat to the Sick Bay after seeing 'green men' jumping over the transmitters.

We were due to leave the Gulf for a spell in Ceylon when 'hush, most secret' signals started to pour in, mainly at night. We sailed from Bahrein with a puzzled communications staff, not knowing where we were going or when we were getting there, and history was made, because the communications staff just did not know, and were stumped for buzzes. It was eventually learned that we were to steam to Mombasa to pick up Archbishop Makarios and transport him to the Seychelles, which proved to be one of the most interesting places we had visited to date and a jolly good time was had by everyone.

Now the time had come when we could all take a rest in Colombo and the hills of Diyatalawa. During the second leave period, a usurper was discovered in the camp. A Tel. had wandered up by train, installed himself and proceeded to live off the fat of the land. He was eventually discovered and properly victualled. At Colombo, we were honoured by a visit by 'the father of communicators: now the First Sea Lord, Lord Louis Mountbatten.

Next, we sailed around the corner to Trincomalee, where we met our Fleet Flagship, H.M.S. "Superb," and the communication exercises carried out with her showed that although we had been quasi-dormant for a *few* months, our brains had been ticking over and keeping up to date. The repeated victories in the exercises carried out inspired the confidence of all onboard who took part. At Trincomalee, we left 'Old Stan' in hospital, but he rejoined us in Karachi after his first flying experience.

The prestige of Royal Navy Communications was upheld throughout visits to Indian and Pakistan ports. On return to Aden, everyone knew his way around and much time was spent *on 'rabbitting'*, but after a few days, our screws were once again set in motion by a distress message from the S.S. "Corabank," who was short of fuel. Once again, we manned all waves as we rushed to her assistance, eventually reaching her and hovering around her like a fond mother until she was fuelled by the "Wave Sovereign." We then returned to our 'home from home' port of Bahrein.

At present the immediate future is uncertain, once again an air of secrecy has descended on the communication Branch, but it is felt that a little more of the familiar landscape of the Persian Gulf will be seen before finally pointing the bows of the ship towards home.

The communications football team finished fourth out of the eight-team, interpart league, which was held during the cooler period in the Gulf. Sig. Dalhy had been a stalwart member of the ship's football team, while Sig. Maryan and Tel. Whitelaw have been selected on several occasions. Leading Tel. Harder has been our representative in the ship's water polo team, and has done much to inspire enthusiasm for the sport.

During the commission about 18,000 signals actually addressed to or originated by "Loch Fada" have been handled, and generally speaking we have enjoyed it: but we look forward to our return to the U.K., regardless of the fact that draft chits are probably already awaiting us.

THE M.S.O.

The M.S.O. was very small,
One couldn't turn around at all,
The Yeoman said, "I know what to do,
I'll chop the ruddy place in two."
He produced his hammer and his chisel,
And then things began to sizzle.
Out went the desk, the shelves came down,
T'was like a shanty in old Shanty Town.
Now at last the change began,
When everything was going to plan.
New shelves, a bench that Chippy made,
Who was of course correctly paid.
The Duty board was moved, alas
The Yeoman's foot went through the glass,
But this again was soon repaired,
A piece of Perspex could be spared.
At last work was completed,
Two inside can now be seated ;
The Yeoman smiled and proudly said,
"At last, somewhere to put my bed."
So now inside we can get four,
And yes, can even shut the door.
The thing is now, what will folk say,
To the Yeoman's own 'A and A.'

THE QUARTERDECK DIVISION



From the day of commissioning, the Quarterdeck Division had been engaged in fighting an uphill battle to bring the Quarterdeck to a standard resembling its traditional smartness. In bigger units of the Fleet, the Quarterdeck is rather like the front parlour, a thing of beauty to be admired and only used on Sunday when the ship's company assemble for Divisions and Prayers. In a small ship of "Loch Fada's" size, however, it was a less

austere place and being the least congested area of the upper-deck, it became the scene of activities which would have been looked upon with disapproval by her larger sister ships.

It was often the dumping ground when stores and ammunition were being embarked, and in the evenings was transferred into an open-air cinema, so it was no wonder that the quarterdeck ratings had to be continually cleaning, polishing and painting. The constant traffic to and fro played havoc with the cement which was eventually all removed by much scraping and chipping, and the remaining bare steel was repainted. Throughout the commission, of course, the awnings had been furled and unfurled so often that it could be done with eyes closed ; whilst the ratings had secured and cast-off so many times during cruises that this procedure was now carried out automatically.

These commitments, and the repairing of the Triad Beacon at Bahrein, had normally been carried out under the watchful eyes of the Divisional Officer, Lieutenant Davies of the Royal Naval Reserve, but when his other duties had taken him elsewhere, Petty Officer Roberts had continued the supervision. Unfortunately, Lt. Davies left the ship to resume his career with the Cunard Shipping Company, and everyone was sorry to see him go.

But because this cleaning problem had kept everyone so busy, the time passed by quickly and once more the cry: "Let go aft, Sir," was heard. It was the high-pitched voice of the young Junior Seaman, whose job it was to man the telephone, sounding clearly over the quarterdeck. The wire ropes securing the ship to the jetty were cast off and the ship began to move slowly away from her berth. "Hands fall in for leaving Harbour, Sir," the high-pitched voice again, echoing this time to a note of excitement, because the frigate in which he was now serving was sailing for England, having completed her tour of duty on the East Indies Station.

The Division arranged itself in a single line facing outboard, under the direction of the Petty Officer, and the ritual of sizing, dressing and standing at ease having been completed, the new Quarterdeck Officer, a Gunner by trade, took up his normal position. He was thinking of that day in Portsmouth, sixteen months ago, when the ship had just commissioned and was proceeding to sea for the first time. These were the same men who had been allocated to the Quarterdeck Division then, and he was now responsible for their work, comfort, welfare and recreation.

The first few weeks at Portland, where the ship had been sent to work up, the rather short but intense programme of exercises, including Gunnery, Anti-Submarine and Seamanship drills, had been carried out very well and the men in this Division had played their part. They had been recommended for their efforts in towing a submarine and straddling the target with practice shells from the gun they helped to man, to say nothing of the numerous successful 'dummy' attacks on submarines. Then followed the period with the Home Fleet at Invergordon, and the visit to Oslo, with more exercises, until the ship was back in Portsmouth again preparing to leave for the Persian Gulf.

The ship was gathering speed now, having set her course for the buoy marking the channel to the entrance to the harbour, and was on her way home.

What a trip the journey out had been, with rough seas, messdecks in disorder and water everywhere, until finally in calmer weather, the ship had arrived at Bahrein. "Good place for a run ashore here, Sir," had been the comment of the Leading Seaman on that occasion. "Yes," reflected the Officer, "If you happen to be a camel". Then there was Christmas at the oil town of Kuwait. Carol-singing on the Quarterdeck and the hospitality of the British community to remember. Also the soccer tournament during that first tour of duty in the Gulf and the Divisional team had played well and shown the right spirit. The spirit had shown itself again, he reflected,

when the Division had helped in the construction of a hockey pitch on a remote island in order to have some form of recreation. It had been a quiet period during those first three months with routine visits to many ports, caving impressions on the one hand of the simplicity of life and ancient philosophy of the natives and, on the other, of the fabulous wealth derived from the oilfields.

After these first three dull and quiet months, the next had been more varied and colourful. He remembered the steaming of the ship at high speed to Mombasa to embark Archbishop Makarios and the others to transport them to the Seychelles, the ship on that occasion had been headline news in all the papers. Then Ceylon and the Rest Camp at Diyatalawa where it seemed that everyone knew how to play golf, and was determined—much to the chagrin of the caddies—to complete the course with one club and one ball.

His gaze now shifted along the rank to where one of the sailors was remarking on the 'scenic beauty', which was passing slowly in front of them, and suggesting in rather basic English just what he would have done with it. "Keep silent," he ordered, and the sailor, looking crestfallen, obeyed. It had been the same at Cochin, Bombay and Karachi, but in spite of some of the remarks and witticisms, he was sure they would be the first to agree that the hospitality received had been something to remember.

Now to the more recent experiences in the Persian Gulf, of the overwhelming heat at Bahrain and Basra, and all the other places re-visited. But soon the ship would be in the Bay of Biscay in November with the icy wind driving the rain in from the Atlantic and he wondered if the oilskins would be found again after so long.

The sound of the loudspeaker echoed across the quarterdeck : "Secure, Hands to Breakfast". It was an order from the Bridge and Petty Officer Roberts dismissed his men and followed them onto the messdecks. The coastline was gradually disappearing into the dusty haze which hung over the harbour as the Officer turned, made his way to his cabin, his thoughts now of home.

THE MIDDLE WATCH

In his place he stands unmoving.
Not a movement, seeming dead,
Muscles taughtened, legs are stiffened,
Eyes are glazing in his head.
He is waiting for his hour,
That he knows will soon arrive;
How much longer of this torture.
Can he stand, and stay alive' ?
Wind is howling all around him,
Soaking wet by pouring rain
He knows the weather has no pity,
For his solitude and pain.
Sounds beside him make him stiffen.
Time has come for which he grieved,
Then passing over information,
"James" turns in—he's been relieved!

THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT



This is the smallest department on board, but it has the most important function of safeguarding the health of the ship and all that that entails. The staff consists of the Medical Officer and a Sick Berth Attendant, whilst the sickbay is a large compartment of two cots, an operating table, medicine cupboards and so forth.

There are two sides to the work ; the first is really the most important and is best termed preventive medicine — that is, steps are taken to *avoid* disease. Such measures are seeing that the water supplies are fit to drink; inspecting the galleys and messes to see that they are hygienic and properly ventilated ; examining the ratings and X-raying them periodically to see they remain fit, and weighing them every so often to see they are not losing weight (or more usually!) gaining too much ; issuing vitamin and salt tablets, the latter because much salt is lost in perspiration in hot climates. Over the Internal Broadcasting System, short talks are given on health matters and occasionally a discussion is held on such topical medical matters as smoking and lung cancer. Life saving classes have been held, and a Blood Bank is maintained in case of urgent transfusion. Lastly a most important, though least popular, function is seeing that everyone is immunised against certain diseases like typhoid, cholera, yellow fever, small pox and tetanus, and since leaving England, over 700 of these injections have been given.

The other side of the Department's work consists of *treating* disease, and quite a variety of cases, none very serious, have been dealt with. They have varied from typhoid to toe-rot, from fractured bones to boils. X-rays are taken and developed on board, medicines are made up, slides are stained and examined, dental extractions and fillings are carried out and minor operations are performed under local and general anaesthesia. Altogether, just over 1,000 cases have been treated, but this does not mean the ship's company have not been healthy. On the contrary, the health has been very satisfactory on the whole —ratings have been encouraged to report even trivial complaints (cuts and grazes) because on the station, they can easily develop into nasty lesions if not dealt with promptly. About 40 ratings have been confined to cot, but none for long, and most for `flu, bad tummy upsets or carbuncles.

Outside the ship, the Medical Officer may often be seen collecting medical stores, visiting the local hospitals to see what facilities they can provide if necessary, or treating natives where there is no local hospital.

On one occasion, he had to be transferred (by jackstay) to an ill man on a R.F.A. tanker; a sister ship, the "Loch Lomond," was looked after for a short period while its medical officer was sick, and the health of Archbishop Makarios and his followers was cared for on the passage to the Seychelles.

The Department although small, then, is kept very busy.

Mention has not been made of all the paper work (although reports and returns take up about 60% of the time) because this is deadly dull. S.B.A. Butterfield has been working for an exam during the cruise and has taken part in the Ship's sporting activities. He has one privilege over other ratings ; he is permitted to sleep in a sick bay cot when it is not occupied by a patient or the hard-working MD.!

The result of the Ship's Medical inspection at Trincomalee was very satisfactory, but the department will feel a sense of achievement if, on arrival at Portsmouth, the relatives greet their husbands and sons with the customary, "You *are* looking well."

THROUGH THE EYES OF A NATIONAL SERVICE STOKER

As a buff stoker straight from Raleigh, I was quickly absorbed into barracks routine, and after only 10 days, I was given a slip of paper and told. "This is for you, son." Further scrutiny and numerous comments from the true salts, who kindly told me what this meant, left me in no doubt that my home for the next 18 months or so was to be a frigate by the name H.M.S. "Loch Fada." First and foremost in my mind was, what is a frigate? Could it possibly be a piece of lower deck jargon for some big ship, the "Vanguard" or the "Ark Royal" for instance? Many of the old hands in VV room were very helpful in enlightening me, especially one three-badge M.(E) 1 who on learning my ship and fate, promptly presented me with my first pair of well-worn blue tropical shorts.

The next day I was further enlightened by two gentlemen from the "Loch Fada" itself. one was called the First Lieutenant, and the other the Coxswain. Naturally, I had met a First Lieutenant whilst in training, but my only previous contact with a coxswain was the second-former who used to shout orders to the School Eight. Was there a difference? After a series of injections, I became the proud owner of a full tropical kit, although what many of my accessories were for remained a mystery for some time.

To describe my mixed feelings on the 21st June would take up more space than this book can provide, but at least I discovered that a frigate is not quite in the same class as the "Vanguard" or the "Ark Royal."

I was told I was standing on the Quarterdeck, and after a series of circular tours around the ship, during which I fell over, bumped into and swore at numerous incomprehensible items of ship's equipment, I gratefully fell upon what seemed to be a baggage store. Yes, I was quite correct, it was a baggage store, for there on the floor lay my kit bag, hammock and ease, along with several others. To my utter amazement. I was duly informed that this was the Stokers' Mess.

The next few days were a complete round of asking and being told where various places, such as the Boiler Room, the Engine Room and the Heads were situated. June 29th found me on Watch down the Boiler Room, which incidentally looked nothing like the boiler I had sketched in training, but of course nothing in the ship resembled anything I'd ever seen or done before. That day was my first taste of life on the ocean waves, and from that day, I was convinced that the Engine Room Department was not the notoriously idle branch I had previously been led to believe it was.

The months that followed formed an endless pattern of '24 on, and 24 off,' but eventually Foreign Service Leave came around and the fact that a ticket collector at King's Cross said, "Yes *Jack*, this the Newcastle train," didn't surprise me in the least, for I was a fully-fledged Jack, with all of five months' sea time to my credit. This misapprehension I was under, was rather abruptly terminated due to one small point I had overlooked, namely

crossing the Bay. To say I was sick would be a gross understatement, for after being hauled from the Boiler Room a delicate shade of pale green, I spent the greater part of the passage to Gib. Takers'. Nevertheless it was some consolation to see real sailors, and even members of the Wardroom sharing the same disposition.

But now, after almost twelve months on the East Indies Station, I look back upon an eventful and happy commission, but I am only too eager to once more return to civilian life and leave watchbills, daywork, Boiler Room and Engine Room, and Divisions behind me.

SOMALI DIVISION



In Aden, in November, 1955, the somnolent peace of the Quarterdeck was shattered by loud guttural staccato cries issuing from a portly gentleman dressed in spotless tropical rig and carrying a string of amber beads and a walking stick. Thirteen Somalis, headed by the redoubtable Mahmoud Farah had arrived.

The ship at this time was suffering badly from the effects of a long and rough passage out. Within ten days the Somalis seamen had everything sparkling and shiny new ; and as soon as the excellence of their work was noticed a hoard of vultures descended on the First Lieutenant beseeching him to allow one Somali for every special duty in the ship. Except for the venerable Abdi Rahman Warsuma, lent to the Ship's Office, Ali Adan Jama, lent to the gunnery world and Mahmoud Egeh Ali who managed to coil his 6ft. 3in. into the Wardroom Pantry these pleadings were successively turned down to the benefit of the ship's side. It is of interest to note that "Loch Fada" did not do a 'paint ship' between December 10th and May 9th, which is probably something of a record.

Under 2nd Tindal Mohammed Ghulaid of the henna'd hair, the Somali stokers have also borne cheerfully heavy burdens in the Engine Room Department, particularly when the unpleasant work of boiler cleaning is in hand.

During May, Ali Adan Jama and Haj Elmi Muhammed were drafted back to Aden on completion of their engagements. During our visit to Aden in June, Hassan Ahmed and Hassan Mohammed also departed, four reliefs being the dignified, cross-eyed Mohammed Abdillahi (known as Zahid, which roughly means "The Reverend") who is not only an excellent interpreter but also is no mean hand at "bunting-tossing, Hussein Hassan Ahmed, Mohamed Sogleh Barrh, and Noor Awad Ahmed.

As a result of our hurried departure from Aden, where the Somali Division had approximately six days leave each, a flight to Bahrein was arranged. This was immensely popular although not for all such a novelty as might be supposed, as some often fly on leave from Aden to Berbera. However, since then, many of them have suggested that we leave them behind when we leave Bahrein so that they can go home by "Nairmlane".

During the very hot month of July the Somali mess became virtually uninhabitable and even the Somalis — particularly the Chief Tindal — suffered with prickly heat. However, this did not dim his lively cheerful spirit in any way and I'm sure many of us will remember for years to come his unflattering chant about Petty Officer Roberts, while all hands were loading the Khor Kuwait builders yard.

Mention must be made of Abdi, and his appearances in ship's hockey and soccer teams. His hockey in particular has been an outstanding asset to the ship, as has also the fact that when he plays all his mess-mates come to watch and provide their own special brand of encouragement from the touchline.

Always one says after dealing with Somalis, "I don't suppose the next commission will have a hunch like that", but always one finds that the next lot are pretty good, and I hope that when the ship comes out here again the successors to Mahmoud Farah's gang will have a mess-deck more worthy of their merits.

SPORTS REPORT

During the commission, whether at Malta in the comparatively cool weather, or at Basrah during the terrific heat, "Loch Fada" has always provided sports teams. The results have not always been complimentary to the respective teams, but the aim has consistently been to play the game in the traditional sporting spirit.

SOCCER.

Football matches were started as early as June 1955, whilst at Portland and have continued to be played in all weathers and on all types of grounds throughout the commission. On the green turf pitches against other ships, the First Eleven was most successful, winning all the matches played except one, but on the hard sandy grounds in the Gulf, the successes were less frequent. There the natives were generally much too good for us, not so much in their skill but because they were accustomed to the unusual conditions, and could apparently 'last the pace.' Our team still tried to play good soccer though and often only lost by the odd goal.

Everyone cannot be mentioned, but E.R.A. Crawford. L.Sea. Johnstone. L.E.M. Brine and A.B. Stevens must be singled out for their stalwart efforts in defence, whilst A.B. Hibberd and Lieut. Davies were the most consistent forwards. Hibberd very often being the outstanding player on the field.

The 2nd XI, although not so skilful, has often succeeded due to their keenness and tremendous energy.

The Inter-part Soccer League competition during the first period in the Gulf was most popular and encouraged mans more to go ashore than would otherwise have done so. The 'Blood' matches, always when the combined Officers and Chief Petty Officers team was playing, proved very entertaining, and this team eventually completed the League as runners-up to the Electrical and Miscellaneous team.

HOCKEY.

Hockey, another popular game during the commission, has proved to be quite successful in discovering talent, although on this station it is apt to be rather demoralising as everywhere natives are met who have played the game from their prams, consequently running rings round us. Despite this however, the hockey team has given a very creditable account of itself.

The team, of course, has had to be changed slightly during the commission, but we were lucky with the final choice of goalkeeper, Junior

Seaman Feast, who has consistently played well. Macdougall. at left half, has thwarted many an opposing right wing, whilst Truesdell. at inside forward, worked the ball for every minute of the game. Abdi, his partner on the right wing could always he relied on to put in at least one unstoppable shot during the game. The Navigating Officer and Lieutenant Maitland-Dougall have always been in the thick of it for most games, whilst the Captain, unfortunately not playing now because of injuries, always gave the extra strength required in defence, with his powerful drives upheld and uncanny anticipation.

An outstanding match was against Ceylon West, who had quite a reputation in Ceylon, and after a fast and furious tussle they beat us by the odd goal. This must have shook them for in the return match we defeated them by 5 goals. Against "Superb" we were winning until they awoke and scored 4 quick goals in the last five minutes. Still it would hardly have been tactful to have defeated the Flagship with a ship's company at least five times our size.

CRICKET.

Played 14. Won 5. Drawn 2. Lost 7.

We started off rather badly by heavy defeats, but after having several practice matches the team settled clown, fielding has greatly improved and the eleven has acquitted itself very well . All matches have been played on matting and concrete pitches under rather strong sunshine, but all have been enjoyable especially when a swimming pool has been close by where coolness was sought between innings.

The batting of our wicket keeper, Lieutenant Rooke, has been the major feature of most games, only overshadowed once by that of Leading Writer House, the most successful of our 'openers.' The bowlers have improved with each game and now E.A. Kellow, with his fiery red hair, makes the batsmen literally 'wilt' as he thunders up to the wicket. Ordinary Seaman Booth, a protege of Surrey, gave a fine performance at Trincomalee, with 8 wickets for 47 runs, whilst Petty Officer Webb was mainly responsible for another victory with a hat-trick. Hibberd, who has played for us on only a few occasions, has also shone as an all-rounder.

Credit also, must go to the Electrical Officer, for the able way in which he has led the team.

WATER POLO.

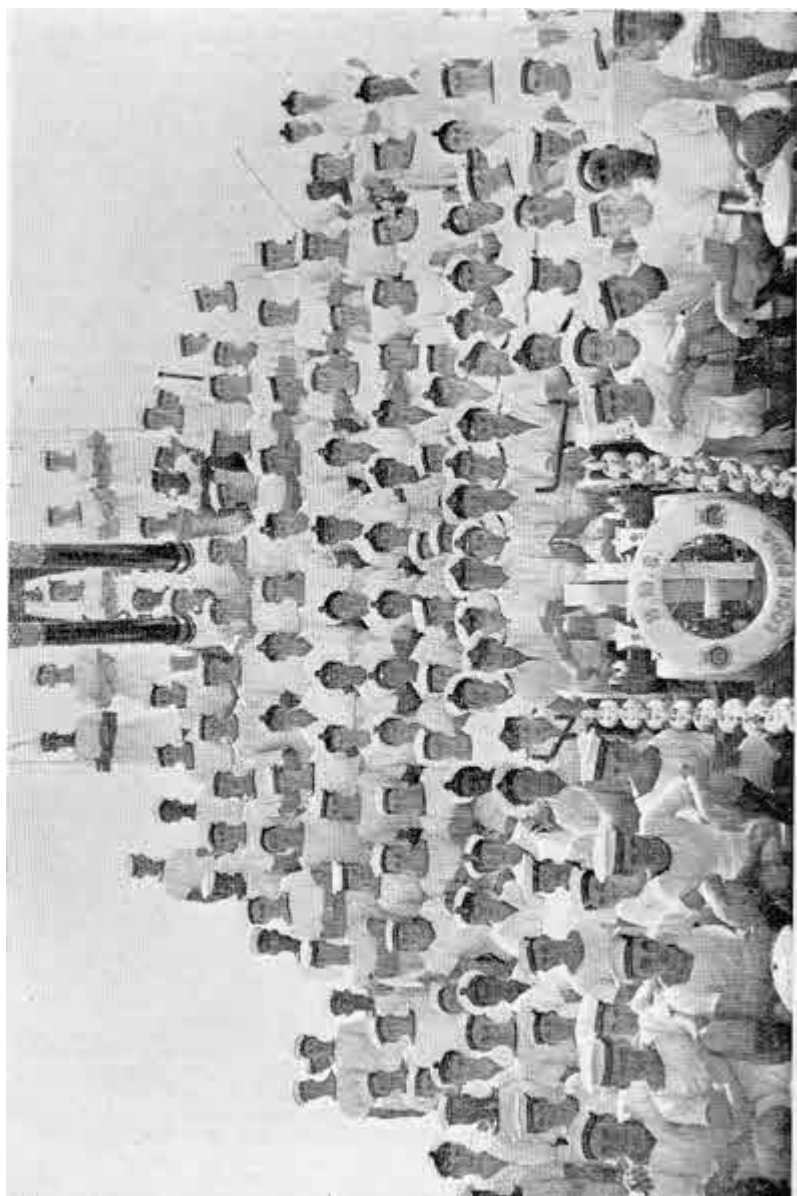
This team was formed in Aden, and although the first match resulted in an overwhelming defeat, the team played well and has continued to improve. Now they are very entertaining to watch with their quick passing, accurate shooting and excellent positional play. Congratulations to all members of the team for the wonderful sportsmanship shown even under adverse conditions, and a special word of thanks to Leading Seaman Lemks for his keen captaincy.

RUGBY FOOTBALL.

Only three games have been played-each resulting in heavy defeats, but this was to be expected when only 8 members of the team had played before. The others learned fast and our last game against the High Range Club at Munnar, proved to be quite thrilling. Our opponents insisted that they were lucky to win and attributed our defeat to the altitude (5,000 feet).

SAILING.

We seem to have visited almost everywhere at the time of year when the local sailing clubs have been closed, consequently, our sailing has been limited. At Khor Kuwai we indulged in a little picnic sailing, but the only racing took place at Trincomalee, where "Superb" and ourselves combined to heat "Highflyer" and the shore staff by a handsome margin - "Loch Fada's" boat finishing in first place. and at Karachi where we were unfortunate with mishaps; Petty Officer Judge, when in the lead, lost his mast, whilst Petty Officer Mugridge hit a buoy, which he claims should never have been there. Ordinary Seaman Satterthwaite finished in third place, a creditable performance.



Ship's Company