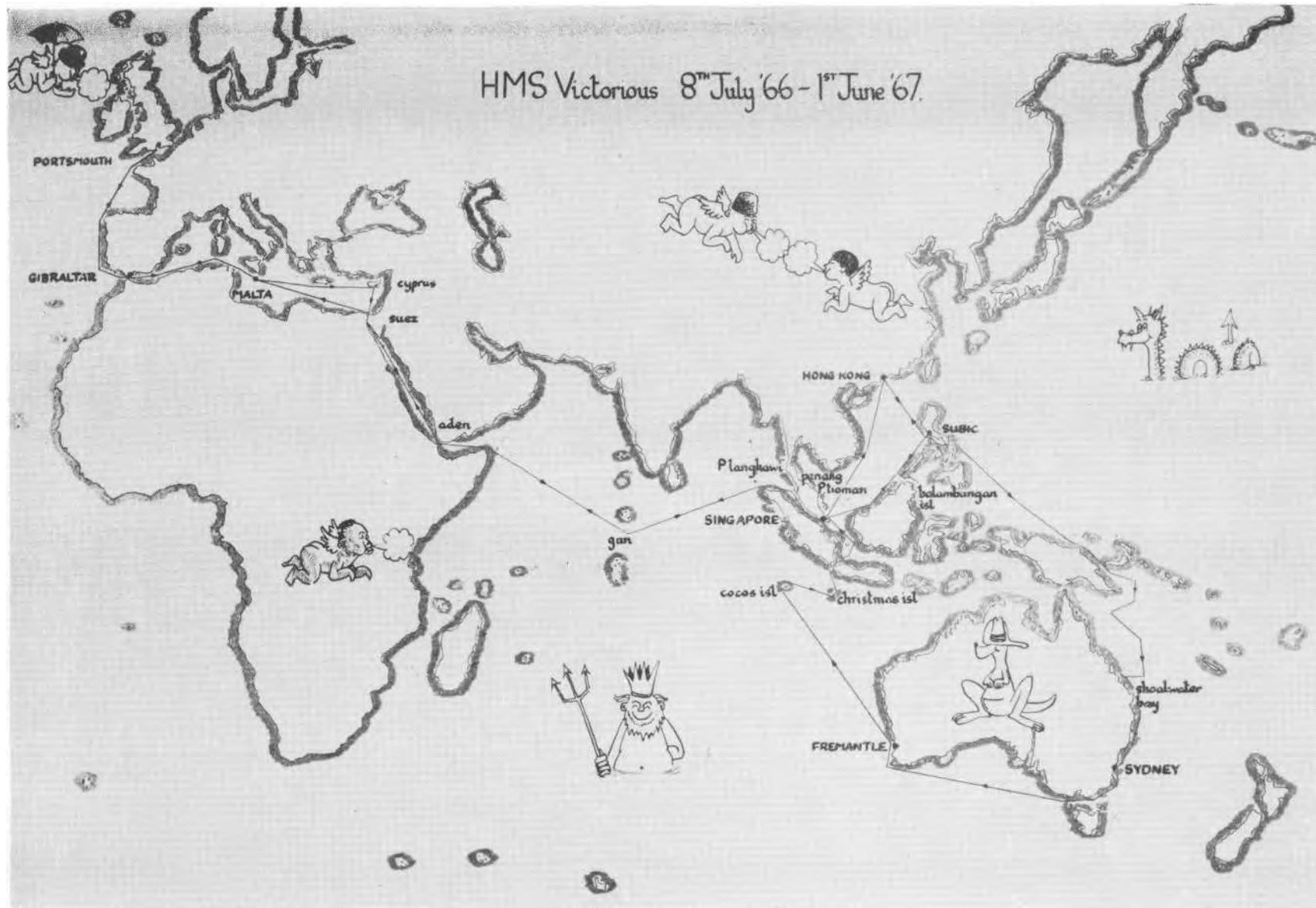


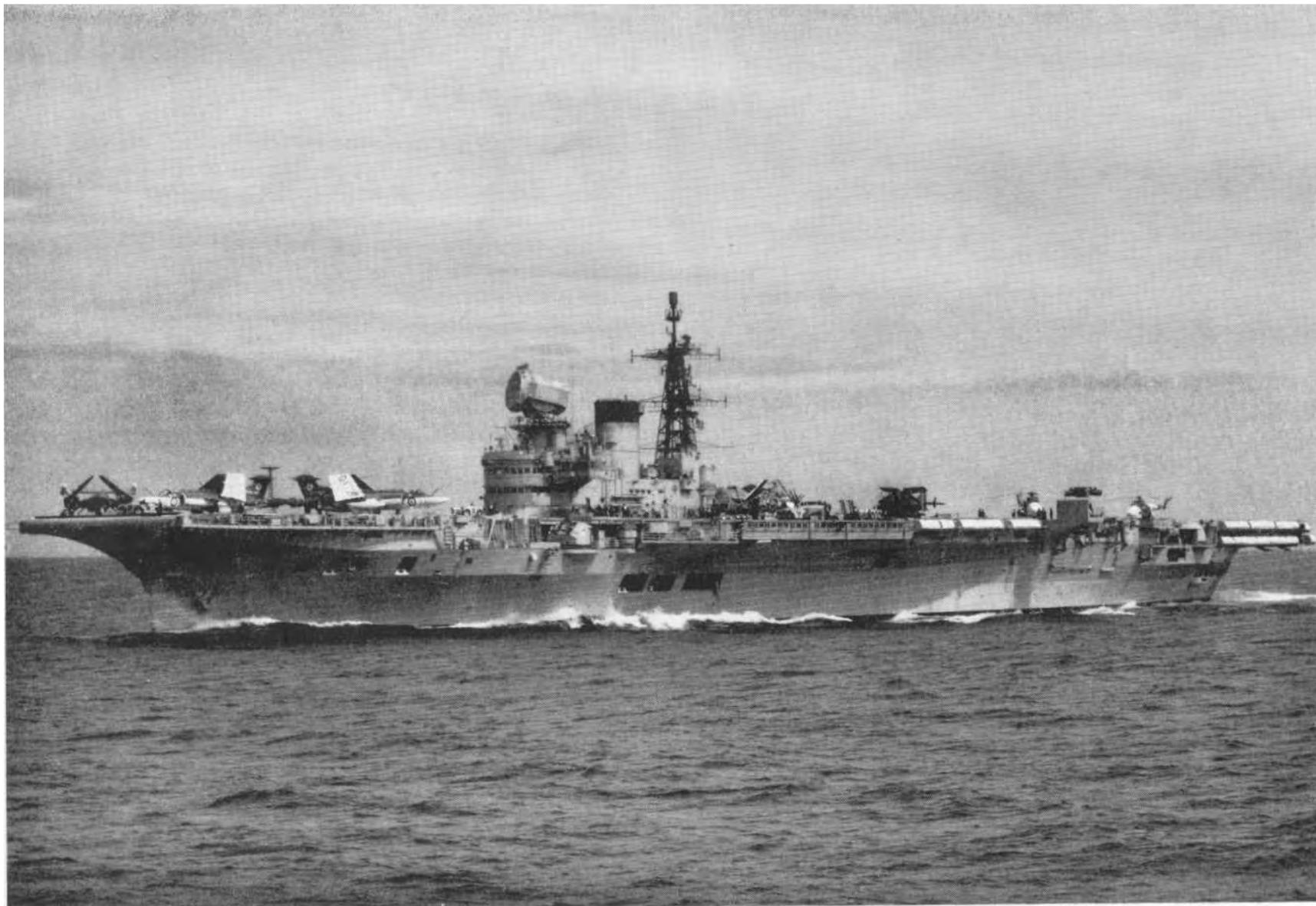
H.M.S. VICTORIOUS



1966 - 1967

HMS Victorious 8th July '66 - 1st June '67.





VICTORIOUS, 1965-67



Captain I. S. McIntosh
D.S.O., M.B.E., D.S.C.

Foreword

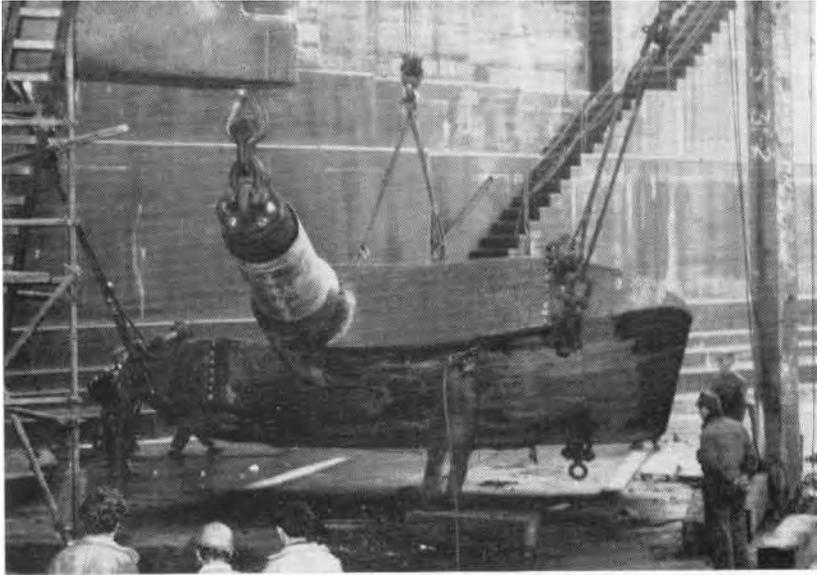
Throughout her long and vigorous life *Victorious* has had an enviable reputation as a happy, efficient and hard-hitting carrier. The commission of 1966-67 has matched and added to this record. The quality of the commission had already been established by September, 1966 when I relieved Captain Davenport and it was my good fortune to take command of a smoothly running fighting ship manned by a cheerfully capable Ship's Company. This condition can only be achieved and sustained by hard work, consideration for others, a degree of self-denial - and indeed sacrifice - and a pride in the task and the 'Ship' and Aircraft we have been given to perform it. These qualities have been present throughout and have been shown with such willing cheerfulness that this splendid command has been for me not only a great privilege but also a pleasure.

During the commission *Victorious* has steamed nearly 100,000 miles and our aircraft have flown well over a million miles. Mixed with hard work have been some fine sporting performances and some memorable visits, in particular to my own country Australia. These pages contain a record of some of the personalities and some of our activities on board, in the air and ashore. They can be only a small part of the whole but I hope that in the years to come they will serve as reminders of this commission and will help you to recall your own memories of friends and incidents in a satisfying and rewarding commission.

Good Luck to you all.

I. S. McIntosh

The Narrative



"The Rudder may not look very big"



In dock in Portsmouth Dockyard



Lyme Bay



The grey waters of Moray Firth

Narrative

The rudder may not look very big, by comparison with the size of the ship. Yet without it the story that follows could not have been told, and *Victorious* would have remained in the dry dock where she had been refitted. For 419 days the set of the rudder was to govern where we went, and took us from Portsmouth half way across the world to the land of "Down Under" and back, and into many a port and place upon the way.

It was in the cold dank days of November 1965 that the ship's company for this the 8th Commission of this veteran of aircraft carriers began to form. In the five months that followed they came singly and in batches, bringing their skills and their talents that would transform a cold mechanical complex of ingenuity into a living vital unit of the Fleet. The culmination of this assembling was the spring afternoon of April 7th, 1966, in "C" Hangar. Here in the traditional way with due ceremony and religious observance *H.M.S. Victorious* was commissioned, in the presence of a goodly muster of Admirals and dignitaries, wives and sweethearts, families and friends, together with the ship's company. No commissioning is complete without its cake, and the occasion ended with the cake so beautifully made and decorated by the Chief Cook and his assistants being cut by the then Captain's wife ably assisted by the youngest rating on board.

Five days later *Victorious* sailed for sea trials, and in the next three months everyone worked long and hard to achieve a high and efficient standard. During this time we saw Portland from the sea, a lot of Lyme Bay, the grey waters of the Moray Firth, and the edge of the Atlantic where it washes the coast of South West Wales. We had a few weekends back in Portsmouth, in spite of dredgers, and one wet weekend at anchor in Falmouth Bay. We also had a few visitors during this period, the Flag Officer Aircraft Carriers and the then Minister of Defence (Navy), Mr. J. P. W. Mallielieu, both spent some time with us. On June 10th we returned to Portsmouth with the first and second work-up period completed, and the prospect of some welcome leave before our departure for places East of Suez.

That moment came on July 8th when on the afternoon tide, on the word "Let go Head rope" a group of past *Victorious* officers slipped the Head rope, and we sailed from Middle Slip Jetty, and out to the open sea without a dredger in sight. This was the moment of truth - we were at last on our way to take over from *H.M.S. Eagle* as the operational strike carrier East of Suez. In the channel we set course southward. While on passage we had the first Spic Vic - an all-out drive to remove the last vestiges of dirt and disorder within the ship, and began preparations for the last phase of our work-up to be held in the Mediterranean.

Three days later we passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, and early in the morning paused awhile in the Bay of Algeciras. A lucky few were

*The
Commissioning
Cake*



landed to play sport, and most important was that here we received our first mail from home. It is hard to over estimate the importance of mail in a ship, and throughout the commission we were well served by the Mail Office staff and the mail organisation ashore wherever we went. But there was no time to dally, and we pushed on eastward to our exercise area off Malta. The third work-up period now began, ending in the Operational Readiness Inspection by F.O.A.C.'s Staff, and ran on into Exercise "Poker Hand" with the Americans and the Italians. This was our first taste of what was to come, and we made a good beginning.

Our readiness was soon to be tested in a small way in real life drama. A signal was received from the island of Lampedusa, where a woman was seriously ill, in childbirth. A doctor was immediately flown to the island by a helicopter of 814 Squadron, and owing to the seriousness of the woman's condition, she was embarked in the helicopter and with the doctor flown to Malta. But sadly this was of no avail, and the mother and child were dead on arrival at hospital. The following message was received from Lampedusa



Flag Officer Aircraft Carriers



The then Minister of Defence (Navy) Mr. J. P. W. Mallielieu



"Out to the open sea"



Helicopter of 814 Squadron

"Deeply moved and impressed by high sense of humanity shewn in prompt air assistance to the sick woman Perrone. I wish to express the profound admiration and gratitude felt by myself and the whole population. Your spontaneous action confirms once again your proverbial compassion towards human suffering transcending all national barriers."

Signed: Greco, Mayor of Lampedusa.

That incident may be used to serve as a fitting end to our apprenticeship, and on the morning of July 20th we entered Grand Harbour, Valetta, and secured to a buoy in Bighi Bay. The four days in Malta served as a very welcome break, and what better place is there for those out from home for the first time to experience a first run ashore? While here 4,097 went ashore and enjoyed what generations of sailors have long enjoyed on the George Cross isle. However, we could not stay, although the ship seemed reluctant to leave, and the Maltese did not make it easy by staging a work-to-rule by the tugmen. But leave we did and sailed on eastward making for Cyprus. Here we did some flying and exercises with Canberras of the R.A.F. Our COD Gannet did more, having gone ashore to collect the mail flatly refused to return, and with the help of the R.A.F. and Army had to be returned on board via a lighter as we anchored off the base at Akrotiri. This sturdy little plane in spite of temperamental lapses served us well during the commission, and we could not leave it behind.

Twenty days after leaving Portsmouth saw us at anchor in Port Said roads, and at 0700 on July 28th we joined the southbound convoy, being the 17th ship in a convoy of 19, and the long but interesting passage through the Suez Canal began. Here was for many their first glimpse of the East, and the senses of sight and smell were well exercised. All day long the Flight Deck was crowded with "goofers" and many a mile of photographic film was exposed. Another new experience was the traders with their various curios and mementos of oriental charm, many of which were made in Birmingham - still it was new and strange. But the best of all were the performances of the Gully-Gully men - these fabulous experts in prestidigitation - whose supply of young chicks seem endless, and who can produce them from the most unlikely places. Late afternoon found us in the Great Bitter Lakes, and the assembled North-bound convoy waiting. Among the great ocean-going tankers was a small patch of battleship grey - the minesweeper *H.M.S. Calton*, homeward bound, and due marks of respect were paid and good wishes exchanged. The lights were coming on in Port Tewfik as we passed, and with the sun setting in the West behind the dark mass of Jebal Ataka. After dropping the Canal Company's pilot, we settled down to steam into the darkness, and through the Gulf of Suez for the three-day passage through the Red Sea, to Aden, our next port of call.

*The
Gully-Gully
Men.*

*Experts in
prestidigitation.*



Our COD Gannet



Grand Harbour, Valetta



Suez Canal



Admiral Le Fanu and Sultan Saleh



Buccaneer of 801 Squadron



Across the Indian Ocean



... to Gan

Up to now the temperature had been bearable, but as we moved Southward through the Red Sea the thermometer rose, and just to make matters worse the Air Conditioning decided to be difficult, and the temperature in parts of the ship rose to 140° F. It was on Sunday, 31st July, that we anchored in the outer anchorage off Aden. Some sports parties went ashore and we collected our first mail for some days. On Monday we had a visit from Admiral le Fanu, C.-in-C. Middle East, and the Aden Defence Minister, the Sultan Saleh. It was here that we left the Military Attache at Khartoum who had taken passage with us, and it was no mean task to land his 2 tons of baggage as well, ferried ashore by helicopter. For the next few days we did some flying in the area, before moving eastwards.

As we set course for Gan, we passed within 60 miles of *H.M.S. Eagle* steaming up from Mombasa and a Junior Electrical Mechanic on board was able to speak with his father who was serving in *Eagle*. It was too at this point that we became the operational strike carrier East of Suez. On we went across the Indian Ocean to Gan, and while on passage some 120 of the ship's company who toil between the decks were taken on "flips" around the ship by helicopters of 814 Squadron. Also while off Gan, 814 flew a Mechanical Engineer ashore to see his father who was serving in *R.F.A. Wave Knight*. While in this area we crossed the Equator several times, but postponed the paying of our respects to King Neptune to a less busy occasion. From Gan we set course for the Malacca Straits,



The Second spic Vic

and paused awhile at the Northern end to do some flying and some exercises with the R.A.A.F. at Butterworth, Northern Malaysia and the 3rd Cdo Brigade ashore near Penang. At 0730 on the morning of August 8th three Buccaneers of 801 left us and flew to R.A.F. Changi, a distance of 1,462 miles in three hours twenty minutes. The weekend saw us anchored off the island of Langkawi and a large number went ashore and touched land for the first time since we left Malta. Before we had this welcome break, we held the second Spic Vic and two days after Langkawi at 0830 we moved alongside No. 8 berth in the Naval Base at Singapore.

The first phase of our foreign leg ended with our arrival at Singapore. Here we stayed for three weeks, and they were weeks far from idle. A lot of hard work was done, and also there was a lot of time for relaxation ashore. During this period over 2,200 took part in some form of organised sport. We began our sporting activities on a high note when on the third night in, under the floodlights of the No. 1 Terror football ground our Soccer team beat *H.M.S. Triumph*. This was a memorable game, made all the more so by the wonderful "chucking up" party inspired by the Bo'sun. Also while here our Water Polo team continued their winning way. There was, however, less spectacular, but none-the-less enjoyable activities, such as a few days in the rest camp at Fraser's Hill. For those who like their fun tough there were Jungle Warfare and Trekking courses at the School of Jungle Warfare. But time as ever moved on and on August 22nd we hoisted the Flag of F.O.2 F.E.F. Vice Admiral C. P. Mills, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.C., and September 5th we sailed to begin the second phase of our time abroad.



Island of Langkawi



Soccer Team



Water Polo Team



Singapore

*Vice Admiral C. P. Mills,
C.B., C.B.E. D.S.C.*



School of Jungle Warfare



Fraser Hill