

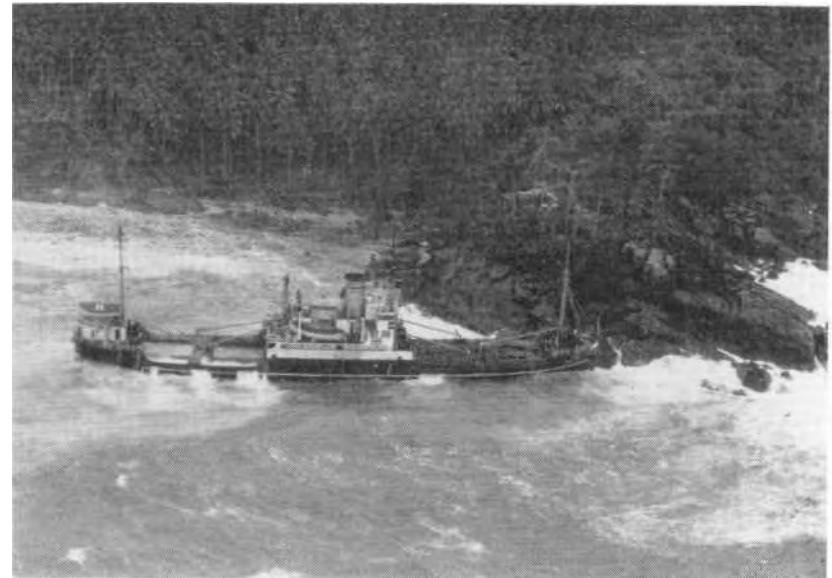
blues. The cold, however, did not detract from the visit, and Hong Kong lived up to its magic. On a Saturday morning we were entertained by Miss Anne Shelton who kindly sang to us in the Hangar. We were deafened by Chinese contract labour chipping the Flight Deck.

January 25th we sailed from Hong Kong and made our way south to Subic. It was here five days later that we had our second fatal accident, when a Sea Vixen crashed and the observer was killed. The next weekend we were alongside at Subic, and experienced once again the friendliness and hospitality of the United States Navy. On leaving a few days more flying off Subic culminating in a fly past of all types of aircraft that had been flown in this exercise period. Then on we steamed to North West Borneo, for some more flying.

Our passage, however, was not without incident. Early in the morning of February 15th we picked up a distress signal from the Bangkok registered "*Maha Thevi*" a seventeen hundred ton coastal steamer which had gone aground on the rocks off the tiny island of Permanggil, seventy-five miles north east of Singapore. At the time of the signal *Victorious* was eighty-five miles away, and proceeded at 28 knots to the scene. There were a crew of some 40 odd aboard, and two had already been drowned trying to reach the shore in the heavy seas. The weather was treacherous and at 6.0 a.m., a helicopter took off to fly to the stricken vessel. The observer was lowered and inspected the damage, and then returned to report what assistance was most needed. As a result two officers from *H.M.A.S. Vampire*, which was also standing by, were lowered by winch on to the ship, and helped to organize a bosun's chair rope rescue cable to the shore, and by this means the crew were landed. The next day, all the survivors were picked up by helicopter and taken aboard *Victorious* and returned with us to Singapore.

We spent the next fortnight in the dockyard doing maintenance and preparing for our next exercise which was the Annual Far East Fleet exercise. We sailed on March 3rd and for the next fourteen days worked hard with the rest of the fleet, with two welcome breaks on the Sundays - one at the island of Pulau Tioman, and the other at Lankawi. March 17th saw us return to Singapore and a hectic week of sporting activity followed. Easter Saturday we were at sea once more, and carried out flying exercise; off Subic, paid our third and last visit to Hong Kong, some more flying off Subic, and a final call in Singapore before sailing for home on May 4th. Somewhere off Gan we handed over our role to *H.M.S. Hermes*, and steamed westwards calling briefly at Aden, and at Gibraltar, through the Bay and up the Channel to arrive at the Outer Spit buoy Portsmouth at 0715 on Thursday, 1st June, 1967.

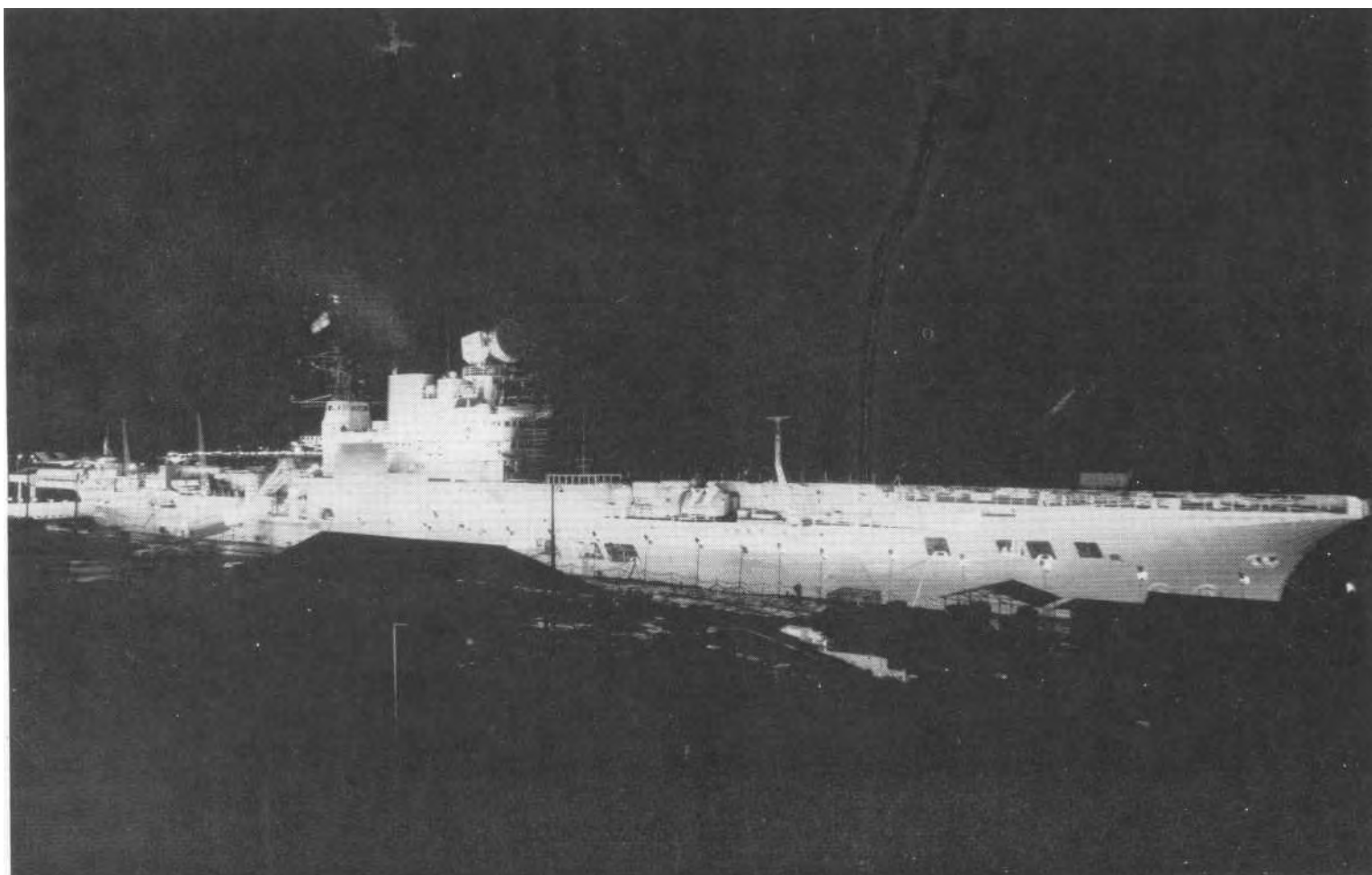
So the veteran vintage *Victorious* came to the end of another useful period of service with the fleet, and of playing her part as an instrument of peace and "a security for such who pass upon the seas upon their lawful occasions."



"Maha Thevi"



We worked hard with the rest of the Fleet



"A security for such who pass upon the seas upon their lawful occasions"

Departmental and Other Articles

Air Department

"Handle With Care"

This could well be the motto of the back-bone of the Air Department, the Aircraft Handlers. It requires great skill to succeed in moving these 20-ton monsters of aeroplanes in such confined space, knowing that one slip can cripple so easily a million pounds' worth of the Fleet's striking power. In fact, the Aircraft Handler's judgement of distance amounts almost to an art, and many is the aged Aviator of yore who goes even greyer on seeing the limits and tolerances which have to be achieved today. The tough, experienced Captain of the Flight Deck of the *U.S.S. Oriskany* could take just twenty minutes of watching our teams at work before he had to go below to restore his nerve with his oppo's tot.

The Handlers come in two shades - the bronzed fit-looking ones who live on the upper and keep winning Deck Hockey competitions, and the paler ones who toil unseen in the nether regions of the hangar. These play an equal part and they are the first to speed the planes on their way and the last to welcome them back and put them to bed in their garage. They work the clock round, and they say that some "night-owls" never see the light of day. More than any other department, the Flight Deck Handlers and their partners, the "Badgers", see the successful launch and recovery of the Ship's Aircraft, which is the end product of all the labours of the many hundreds of men below, who make the ship "Tick".

We must not forget the skills of the Safety Equipment and Photographic Sections, the Meteorological Office, the Air Traffic Controllers and the Operations Team, all expert links in the complex chain that is "Aviation".

The Safety Equipment Section can take pride that their Mae Wests, parachutes and dinghies have played a really vital part. The fruits of their efforts have been amply demonstrated on more than one occasion.

The Photographic Section hardly needs comment here, since their handywork is visible throughout this book. They have done magnificent work in and out of working hours, and their "rabbit firm" has kept everyone throughout the ship well supplied with a record of our travels. It is rumoured that the Chief of the Phot. Section was seen ordering a Jaguar in Hong Kong, however, there is no truth in this statement, it was a Rolls.

The Meteorological Office, is staffed by uncomplaining, round-the-clock, soothsayers. They produce their daily forecasts, and more often than not the weather does what they say. Their philosophy is never affected by derision, rage, or sarcasm, and they naturally have thick skins.

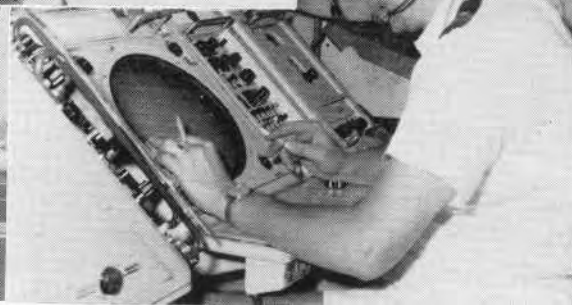
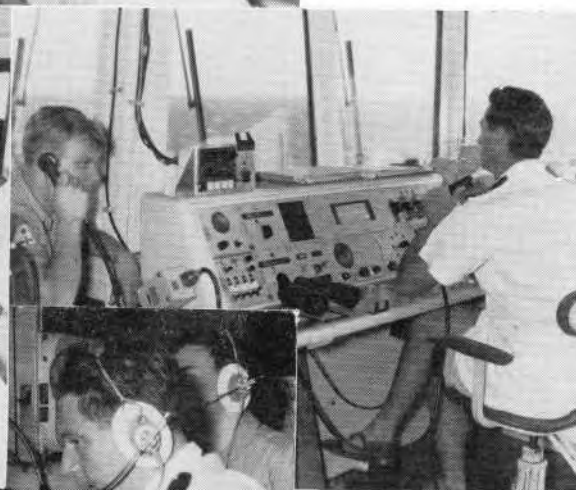
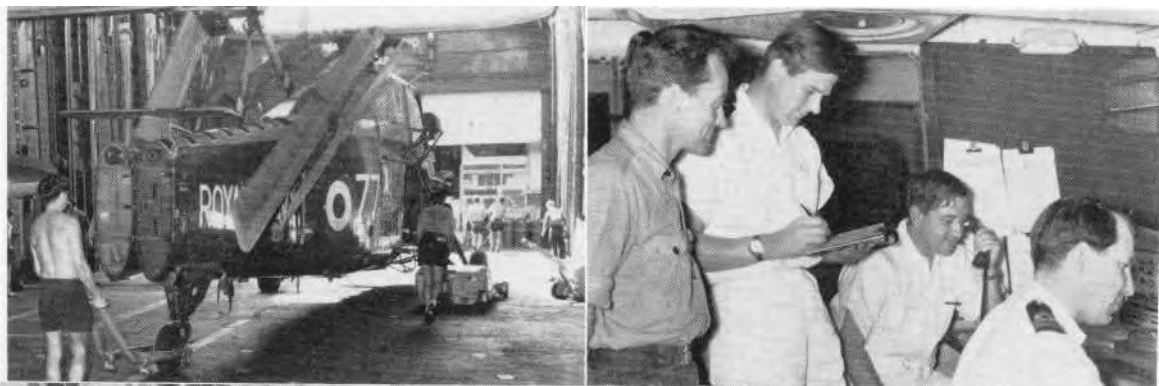
The "Back Room Boys" of the department are the Air Traffic Controllers who are ever present when aircraft are in the air. Their continual watch over those airborne, ensures the safety of our aircrew and against



Great care must be taken when packing safety equipment

insurmountable odds, they nearly always get our planes back on time.

The smallest, and sometimes the group that works the longest hours is the Operations Team. They are an unsung few who work under the scaly, bat-like wing of the Operations Officer. The brew from their "Cavern" affects us all and from this mixture stems our daily task.



All these permanent Gentlemen make up the *Victorious* "Home Air" team. They work hand-in-glove (not always boxing) with the visiting Players, the Squadrons, and the harmony achieved has been greatly due to their credits. The score stands permanently at Love-All.

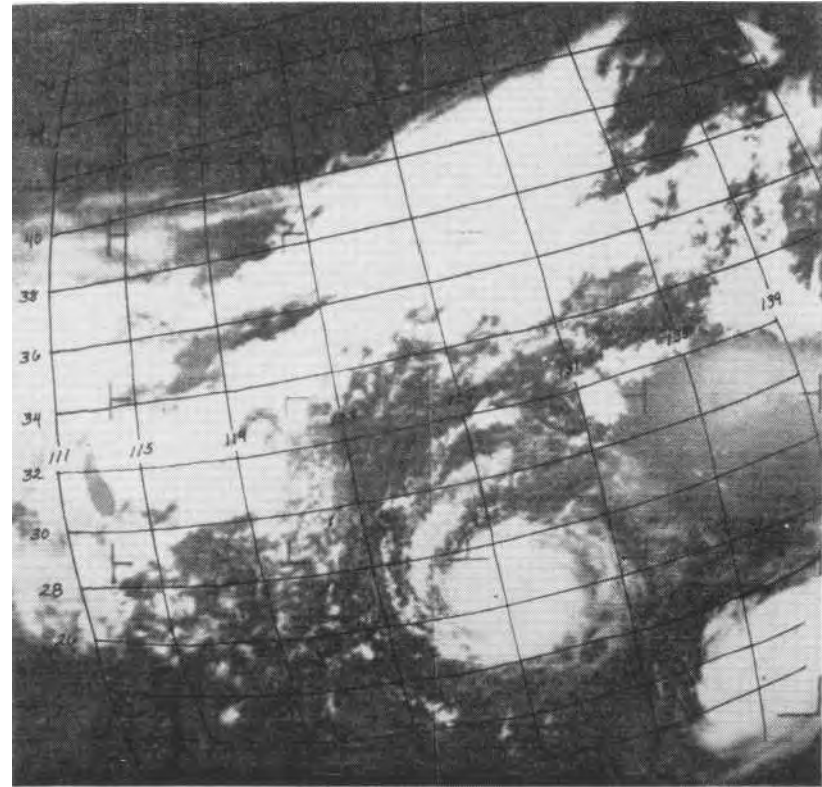
Finally, this team must take lasting credit for making a near-impossible situation work well without fuss. A situation caused by what hindsight and history, may call the most fundamental error the Navy has ever made. A decision, which at the time was made in all good faith, and for good reasons, but nevertheless a mistake. A decision which has sealed the fate of Aircraft Carriers like *Victorious*. What is this decision - it is to put small numbers of great big aircraft on small ships. You don't have to go to the *Forrestal*, the biggest carrier there is, to see what is the problem - just ask any Handler!

We have led the World in Carrier Operation Equipment, so

What's New On Deck?

The main difference is to be seen at night. The red flood-lights have gone, and we now have white; two sorts, the old lights with the red filters removed, and the new answer, expensive and very bright lights - dozens of them all over the Island, with long cowls and Quartz Iodine bulbs. The first impression is good, and they are not visible from seaward.

Then there are the new tractors, the envy of the Americans, and the best thing since the Cadillac. All-wheel power-steering, all-wheel drive, power transverse tow-bar shift, and it only weighs ten tons. The deck is a much safer place and the big tractors make sure where the aircraft go without any argument.



The first weather to be taken from a satellite to be used by a carrier

As Others See Us

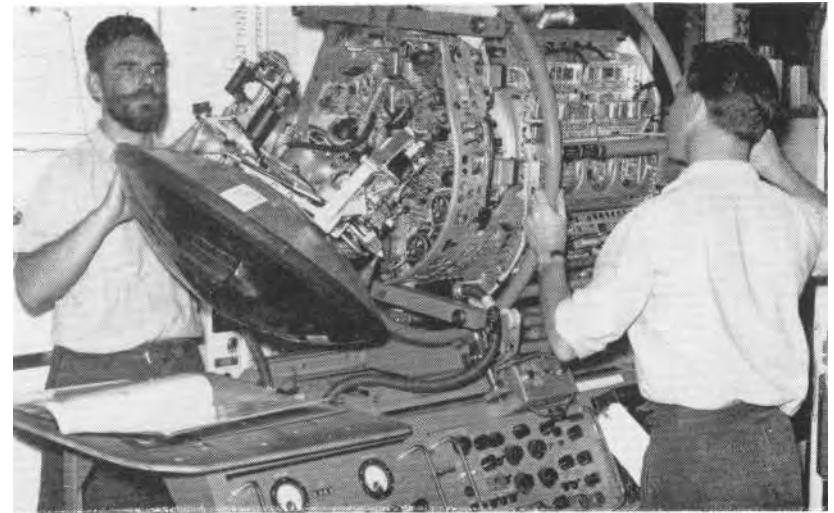
A Steward, told to take coffee to the Direction Officer, came out of the A.D.R. considerably shaken, and said "I'm not going in there again - pitch dark, green lights here, flashing red lights there; everybody talking at once and nobody answering".

Air Engineering Department

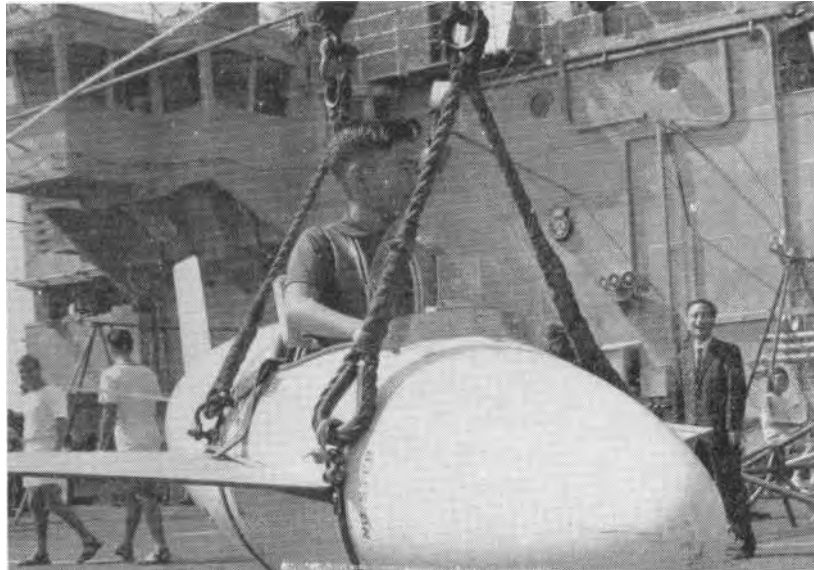
Aeroplanes are very much like women in that they demand a tremendous amount of loving care and attention. Primarily this attention is given by the squadron to which the aircraft belong but workshops support and the servicing of complex electronic equipment is the responsibility of A.E.D., who also keep a pool of spare engines and service the vast array of ground equipment needed to maintain the modern aircraft. It might be said that while the squadrons act as Family Doctors to their aircraft, A.E.D. is the Hospital.

With the British Aircraft Industry struggling to survive it has been encouraging to see the design and production of the A.E.D. "Kiddibucc", the prototype of which flew in Hong Kong. It has been agreed by all young pilots that it is Super if not sonic. Coupled with the manufacture of despatch boxes, name tallies and the wide range of aircraft sheet metal repairs carried out the "Kiddibucc" has ensured full employment in 4C workshops.

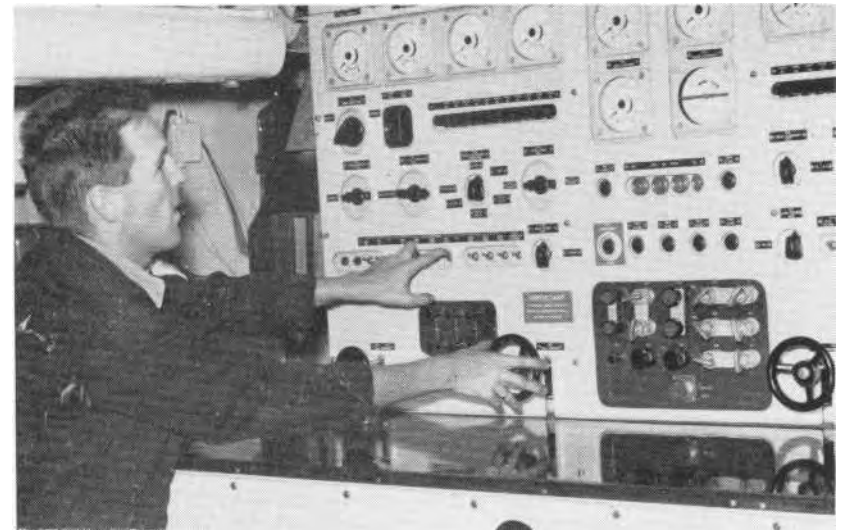
The Radio and Electrical Sections have been known to service the odd item of aircraft equipment - in fact the number runs into the thousands - and to keep a balanced picture they have also mastered the complexities of transistor radios, electronic dogs, watches and tape recorders. It is to their everlasting regret that all attempts to convert A.I. 18 to 625 lines



The odd item of aircraft equipment



Super if not sonic



Where did you learn to play that?

and colour have failed. Without generators and batteries none of the "Greenie" bits would work at all and L.R.S. boasts a generator test bench which the compartment was built around. Soon after its installation Chief was asked by a visiting Admiral "Where did you learn to play that?" and another SAMCO was born.

Every department has its "Holy of Holies" and A.E.D. is no exception. Ours is in the Hangar Box and goes under the name of Weapons Section. Only a very select few are allowed inside and this is presumed to be a noise reduction measure. The occasional weapon has been seen to emerge at dead of night wearing its Noddy Cap but they retreat at the sound of dawn trumpets or "Flying Stations".

When all else has failed aircrew depend on their "Bang Seats" and credit for their functioning lies largely with the Air Ordnance Section and AA.1 Jones. "Dai the Seat", as he is popularly known, services the seats and keeps his pipes under tool control. There is a rumour that Martin Baker have offered him and his mate a job as salesmen, for their explanatory patter with visual aids is a prize performance.

To complete the empire is A.S.U.C.O. - tucked away in a corner of A.M.C.O. and surrounded by books, signals, cards and just a few spare parts. A.M.C.O. itself is presided over by C.A.F. Cutting - if you want to find a pack about thingamabobs written by what'shisname sometime last year, Chief Cutting's memory will save the day.



Keeps his pipes under tool control

801 Squadron

The first 801 Naval Air Squadron was formed in 1932 with the Hawker Nimrod Biplane fighter and has since been in almost continuous commission. During this time ten aircraft types have been flown, seven of these, fighters. However, we now leave the "track and hack" to our twin boom friends and are the proud possessors of a new aircraft.

The Buccaneer Mk. II though very similar in outward appearance to its predecessor the Mk. I has in fact a very considerable improvement in performance and quite a number of differences under the bonnet. Being the first Mk. II Squadron to embark, "Goofers" were not long in appreciating the tremendous increase in power. Gone were the days, which many will remember, of staggering off the catapult and accelerating with the gay abandon of a tortoise.

Others were interested in witnessing a demonstration of our large radius of action. Always ready to oblige, on the 3rd June, 1966, we launched a Buccaneer in the English Channel for a non-stop return trip to Gibraltar, taking four hours and fifty minutes.

Moving on from the English Channel we experienced the first exercise of the commission. Our task was to search for units of the American 6th Fleet hidden somewhere in the Western Mediterranean. This we accomplished successfully and with smug smiles on our faces set off to

strike the first blow. Halfway to the target fourteen specks were observed in the distance closing rapidly. The two opposing strikes passed through each other almost within hand-shaking distance!

On through the canal and further East to the sultry delights, joys and atmosphere of Singapore. There we parked the aircraft at R.A.F. Changi. The aircrew joining the ranks of the film stars, living with such noticeable beauties as Terry Downes, in the luxury of the Ocean Park Hotel. Meanwhile back on the ranch tremendous efforts were made by the ground crews in carrying out yet another arduous engine modification programme. Too much work and too little play made Jack a dull boy (or something). Even so Bugis Street profits were considerably increased during our stay in Singapore.

During the ship's visits to Subic Bay and Hong Kong we were involved in a shuttle service to and from R.A.F. Changi in order that engines could be changed on the remaining aircraft, our second major modification programme. The long sortie from Singapore to Hong Kong was made more interesting by the thrill of possible arrival at Peking International, but thanks to the navigation prowess of our Observers there were no dramas.

Towards the end of October we were involved in Exercise "Swordhilt".



Inter service co-operation. Buccaneer refuels from R3 Sky Warrior

Once again our primary role of search and strike was used to the full and having successfully exhausted ourselves diving at Australian and American ships yet another role was found for us. Namely, Anti-Submarine Warfare. With great glee we were soon able to chalk up the destruction of one submarine caught napping two hundred miles ahead of the ship, and between sorties we celebrated our first birthday of the commission by ceremoniously cutting a cake on the Flight Deck.

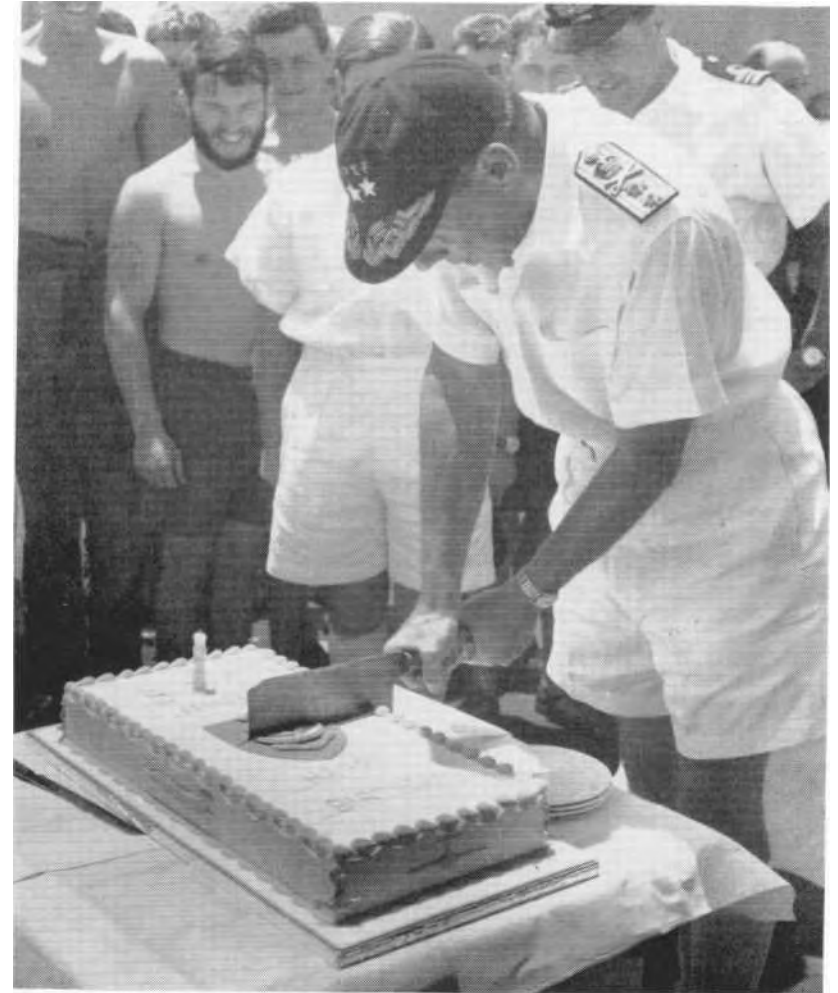
November will always be remembered as a happy month - three weeks being spent in Australia. Royally entertained from our first day in Sydney until our final sad departure from Perth. A tremendous time was had by all. The tales too numerous to relate range from chasing kangaroos (and Ranchers' daughters) to the glittering highlights of Sydney's night life, but none got married! Not even the C.O. to a Go-Go girl.

Back in Singapore our new A.E.O. had his baptism of engine changes. With the assistance of his Cat-o-Nine tails and Plummers' rack the programme went most smoothly.

With all but one of our aircraft we departed Singapore for Hong Kong, much to the relief of the locals and, one suspects R.A.F. Changi.

Further flying preceded a most enjoyable though exhausting nine days in Hong Kong. A long awaited Squadron "Run" at the China Fleet Club highlighted the visit though nearly spelt disaster for some!

At the time of writing we are again at flying stations. This time at Subic Bay. All our aircraft on board and the future looks bright for increased flying hours and a happy return home to plenty of leave.



One year old to-day

814 Squadron

The Eight Hundred and Fourteenth (Tiger Taxis)

1966 *AND ALL THIS!!!*

Victorious Temporary Embarkers: Victims

If anyone talks about the Fleet Air Arm, sooner or later the name of 814 will spring to their lips and reminiscences will start to flow thick and fast. Bold and lurid tales of bygone personalities and squadron achievements will earn the narrator a drink in almost any tavern in England, but to set the record straight for future generations of aviators, this is a factual account of "what actually happened" during our commission aboard *H.M.S. Victorious*, 1966-67.

"Tiger Taxis", the Government-sponsored, Wessex-equipped, all-weather, anti-submarine, air taxis, freighters, search and rescue - "you name it we'll try it" squadron left R.N.A.S. Culdrose to join *H.M.S. Victorious* at Portsmouth on the 8th July, 1966. A grand farewell flypast was planned that would have brought tears to the Squadron's nearest and dearest (Wives, Wrens and Publicans). However, that other well-known Cornish curse - the "Culdrose Clamp" - had done it again and we had to depart singly or in ones to join up above cloud. Eventually the Squadron arrived safely onboard, despite the attempt of Wessex 275 to perform a flame-throwing act from the starboard exhaust.



Typical abandon aircraft drill

Full of enthusiasm and aircraft (almost) the ship sailed South to the mysteries of the East, an S.A.R. brief at 0500 and a *Victorious* type routine where the days of the week are illogical and Sunday usually falls on a Saturday or a Monday or anywhere. Malta provided the first anti-submarine exercise in poor water conditions against the Italian submarine *Torricelli*, great benefit was gained by all and a very friendly liaison established, via the hoist, with the crew. (Vino verite.) In addition the first of our many logistic trips, or bread runs were eagerly undertaken. These "Squadron Jollies" as they are colloquially referred to are much in demand and the lurk list is never short of volunteers.

On the 19th July, the Squadron hit the headlines by answering an emergency call for medical help from the small island of Lampedusa. Unfortunately the call was too late but the response was very much appreciated. Between Cyprus and Gan, the Squadron enjoyed a relatively quiet period and our only diversion was the chatter of an intense Ground Training Programme of lectures, punctuated by the occasional ugly rushes to go on a "Jolly". (A consolation prize for those few listeners who could remain awake.)

It was off the R.A.F. island base of Gan that the Squadron first showed its devastating ability to disembark and six A/S helicopters flew ashore for a two-day period of fairly intensive flying. The aim was to provide A/S protection to an island base, which rumour stated was sinking back into the sea at the rate of about a foot per year. We were given a rousing welcome by the local "natives" (see picture 2) and treated to an illuminating talk by the R.A.F. on the problems of separation and their new Staff requirement for a "Seaplane".



The R.A.F. welcomed us with typical enthusiasm



' Out on the Line'

Picture left emphasises the "problem" and shows one of our ground crew out on the line.

Meanwhile back at *Victorious*, the SAR helicopter rescued a Vixen crew who ditched shortly after take-off and the ship continued Eastwards. Some thirty miles off Butterworth, six AS helicopters again flew off into the middle distance to fly down the length of Malaya to R.N.A.S. Sembawang. Comprehensive briefings, massive survival packs and lurid stores of the dangers of jungle flying lent a touch of spice to the trip, and we set out feeling almost like explorers. After refuelling stops at R.A.A.F. Butterworth, Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur and some five hours in the air, the helicopters arrived safely in Singapore. By the subtle use of the aircraft heating system, some of the younger elements of the Squadron were able to produce the "it was rugged" type of appearance at Sembawang, and this greatly enhanced their subsequent bar room stories.

A diversity of tasks were undertaken during the period ashore. Two jungle flying courses were completed at Kuala Lumpur and although the flying was exhausting, the aircrew derived a lot of satisfaction and could appreciate the value in their efforts. Some of the more "stay at home" types were sent out to do a jungle survival course and although they suffered from nerves, leech bites, incessant rain and the discomfort of sleeping on branches (a most difficult feat), most victims enjoyed the experience although we have no volunteers for another course.

On the 5th September, 1966, the Squadron re-embarked in Singapore Naval Base with a sad heart and "Tiger" eyes, but soon cheered up when



The Squadron Aircrew being ordered to disembark to Culdrose at end of the Commission

plans were made to send detachments of two AS helicopters to each of the R.F.A's., *Tidespring and Tidepool*. With true democratic consideration for the rights of the masses, Crews were selected in order of seniority and they set off for their luxurious new home, complete with swimming pool, superb air-conditioning and spacious accommodation. Oh yes, they also had to exercise with *H.M. S/M Anchorite*.

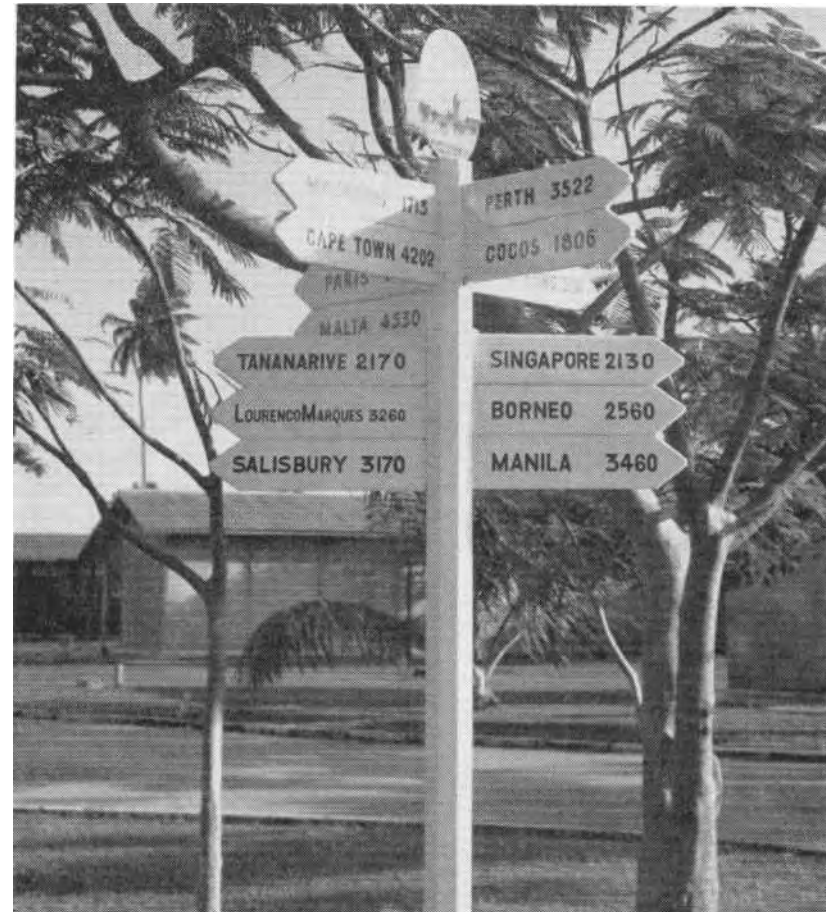
Meanwhile back in *Victorious* the workers were heading for their first visit to the Philippines. A series of exercises were planned to take place with U.S.N. forces from N.A.S. Cubi Point culminating in a two-day visit to Subic and the delights of Olongapo. In order to achieve more anti-submarine time, the Squadron planned and executed a swift disembarkation (notice the pattern) that gained the admiration of all onboard - as most of them didn't even notice we had returned from Sembawang!

It was "all go" for the last three months of 1966 with visits to Hong Kong, for water-skiing, visits to Wanchai, swimming, more visits to Wanchai, shopping, and cultural expeditions to the older parts of the island (Wanchai). The long awaited visit to Sydney and Fremantle and some more detachments to our friends in the R.F.A's. were much enjoyed. We even acquired an addition to the Squadron in the form of a Firefly aircraft during our stay in Sydney - an achievement that the Government and Ministry of Defence (Navy) are studying with interest.

On the 8th December, the Squadron once more disembarked to Sembawang for the ship's Christmas S.M.P. and to give leave in U.K. to the lucky, entitled aircrew. After the usual refamil. on Tiger ale, we got down to some more useful jungle flying training and some AS exercises from Jason's Bay. As we gird our loins for the final rush through the early months of 1967 with another two trips round the houses to Hong Kong, Subic Bay, Singapore, Hong Kong, Subic Bay and back again to Singapore, we console ourselves with the thought that nothing can last for ever - not even trips to Hong Kong, Subic ... etc., etc. ! If we follow the sound advice of our elders and betters (GET OUT), we can expect a few more interesting disembarkations - notably towards the middle of the year.

Picture opposite shows the dilemma which faces the professional "disembarker". Questions such as where? when? how many? are but a few of the many considerations and, of course, it emphasises the value of the Staff Course and an intimate knowledge of geography... .

Picture on page 37 shows the Squadron aircrew being ordered to disembark to Cudroze at the end of the commission, and to carry out that long awaited ceremonial flypast that will herald our arrival home - singly or in ones. Once more we shall lean against the bar of our favourite Helston



The dilemma which faces the professional "disembarker"

Tavern and tell anyone who cares to listen, of the fun we've had and a most enjoyable commission both in and out of *H.M.S. Victorious*. Who knows, perhaps we can even convince a few people that we were actually there - particularly our Commander (Air) who was overheard to say: "By the way Ops, which was the Chopper Squadron in *Vic* this commission?"

M.C.S.A.

893 Squadron

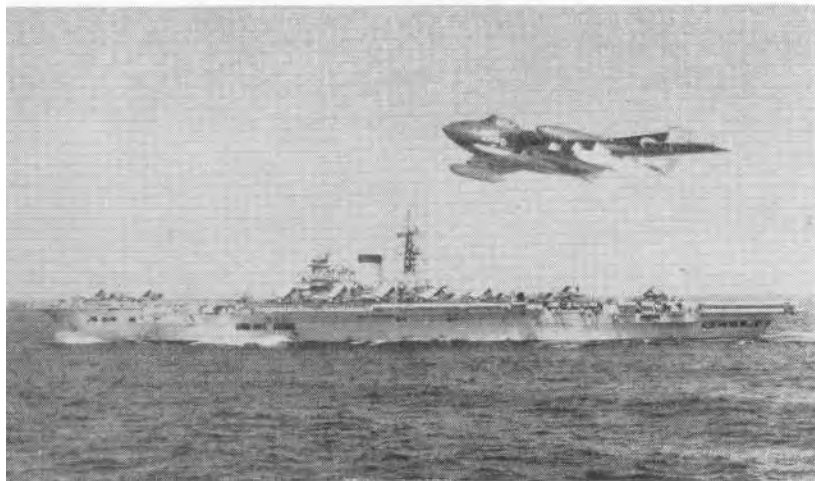
Embarking in *H.M.S. Victorious* in April for the deck trials was a new experience for most of the Squadron. Since we had been at sea in *Vic* nine months previously, two-thirds of the Squadron had left, and it was with mixed feelings that most packed their bags at Yeovilton for the first of several times. However, from our point of view (if not *Vic's* engineers) the trials went well, and the week on board was marred only by the lack of a foreign visit.

Back to Yeovilton again, and, a month later, back we came on board again. This time it was with the whole Squadron, for the first work-up, held in the Moray Firth. This was an ideal area for the work-up, with good weather and good weaponry ranges, although the real die-hards were heard to complain about lack of darkness for night flying!

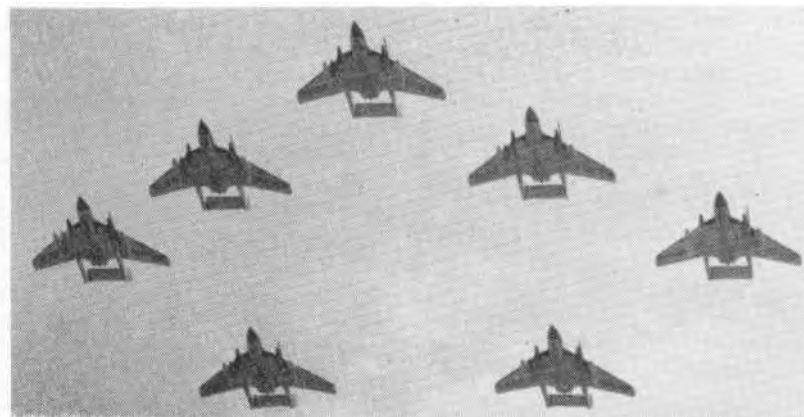
A short "foreign" visit (a week in Pompey) preceded the second work-up, held in the Western Approaches. This time it was dark enough for everyone!

We were back at Yeovilton in June, for ten days' leave and a bit of last minute flying before embarking on the foreign leg of the commission. However, all good things come to an end, and the Squadron re-embarked in early July. We are still not sure whether the presence of the Captain and Wings on our line at take off time was to wish us "Bon Voyage", or just to make sure we got those d - d things out of Yeovilton.

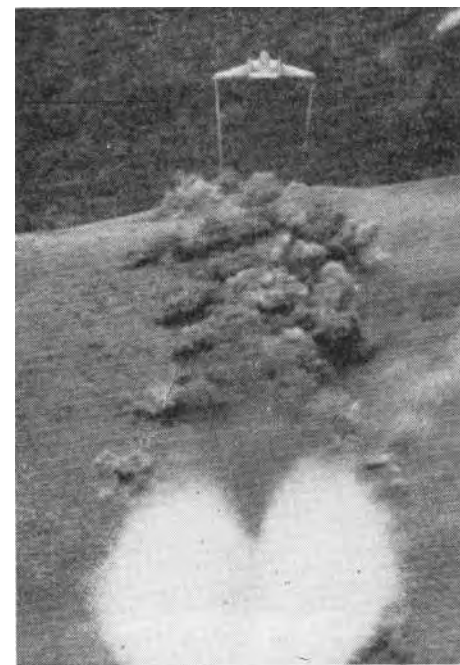
The Med. - then Pokerhand, our passing out exam. Result - we scored 103 % and sank *Independence*. However, Anglo-American relations were not strained, perhaps they sank *Victorious!*



Home !!



Monday morning service ability. Seven Vixens past the Goofers



*Never argue with 893
144 2" rockets make
quite a mess, as we
proved at Townsend
Island.*