

For a few of the Squadron, Malta was the first foreign country ever seen, and everyone made the most of our last run ashore West of Suez - through which we passed in late July - thus starting our Senior Observer's seventh Far East cruise! For most, the first taste of shore was on a bug-ridden beach at Pulau Langkawi, where the bugs did most of the tasting! Still, all things come to an end, and we eventually reached Singapore, and moved out of the ship to Changi.

What does one say about our Far Eastern runs ashore? Wives might be censorious if this book gave too many details - suspicious if it gave too few. Suffice it to say that Singapore is the Far Eastern equivalent of Pompey, and who's ever had a dubious run ashore there?

So on to Cubi Point, in the Philippines. A giant American base, all of the female species wore wedding rings so there was nothing available for visitors.

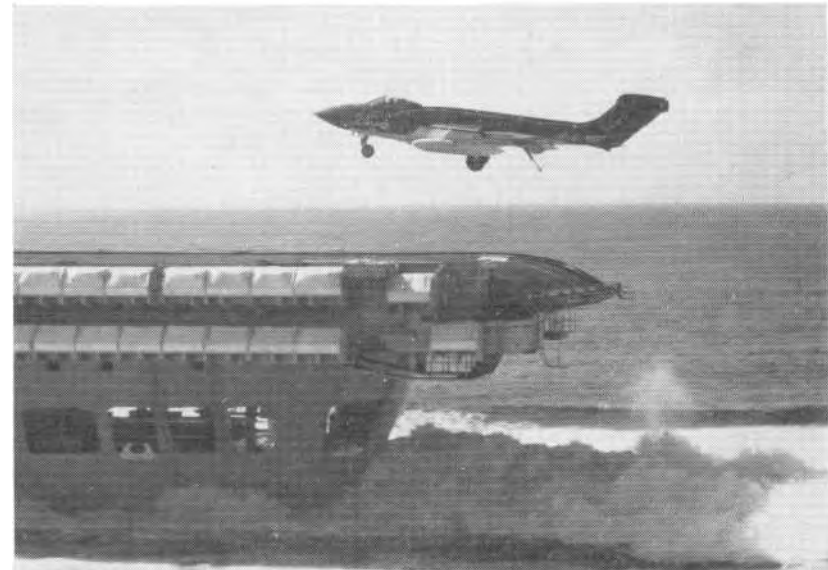
Hong Kong - and then Exercise "Swordhilt", where we were bombers, photographers, guided missiles, and now and again - fighters. The prize for winning this was a fortnight in Sydney - and what a prize it was. We cannot lie, after several months of great restraint, and lack of opportunity, we met some girls at last. Wives - get your husband to fill in the details, I dare not!

Fremantle, and then Singapore for Christmas, spent in luxury at Changi for two-thirds of the Squadron.

The last six months have been more or less a repeat of the first six, except that Australia was left out. For those staying in the Squadron, let us hope that Japan and Australia will come up next time!



Oh! Those early morning watches



246 - On sight - Four Greens



Pilot to AEO - "Sorry, its definitely U.S."

849a Flight

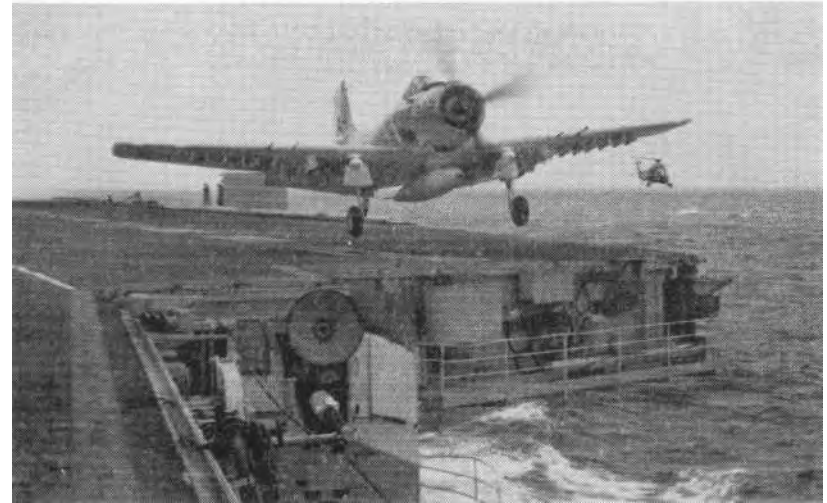
Just a few minutes after *Vic* had sailed from Portsmouth, on the 8th of July, a familiar drone was heard. 849A Flight had arrived.

Since then, for us, life has been interesting if fairly uneventful. We started off light in experience and even lighter in seniority. This has, however, proved to be a very useful team.

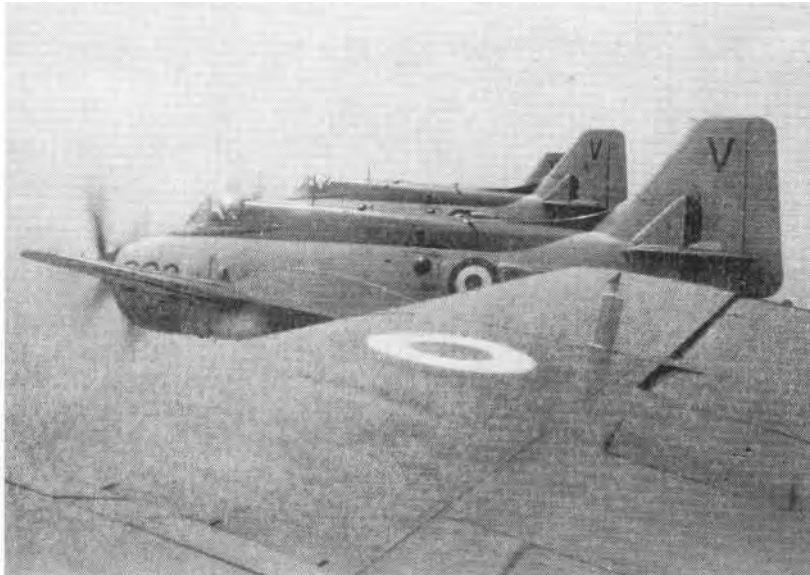
We've done all sorts of fascinating things with that versatile aircraft, the Gannet, many of them outside our normal run of the mill tasks.

Our first unusual incident occurred in the Mediterranean in July. The COD was forced to divert to Akrotiri when the port engine failed. Lt. Bewick, the COD pilot, made an uneventful landing. This left only one problem, that of getting the aircraft back onboard. This was achieved with almost unique inter-service co-operation. The Royal Air Force towed it along the road to the docks and handed the aircraft over to the Army. The record isn't clear at this point as to whether the R.A.F. then returned and repaired the bridges they had modified getting the COD there. The COD was hoisted by Army crane into a civilian lighter and thus made its ignominious return onboard.

When we finally arrived on station we varied our normal flying by taking part in crossdeck operations with *U.S.S. Oriskany*. We were hosts to two Skyraiders, whilst we sent one more of our aircraft to *Oriskany*.



Guest for a day



Echelon port



Everything down but the hook



You're straggling number five



A whole squadron formation

When we were off Singapore in September we were joined by a team to do some tropical deck trials. These were largely successful. We are expectantly waiting for new orders expanding our limitations in deck operations. The only failure was the free take off trial. This had to be cancelled after the very first attempt. In a lightly loaded aircraft it was only just successful.

On Saturday, October 29th we said goodbye to our C.O., Lt.-Cdr. J. Nash and welcomed our new one, Lt.-Cdr. W. M. Forbes.

We have proudly notched up one outstanding achievement. We've

operated the AEW Gannet further south than any other Flight. Yet perhaps our greatest achievement has been our proposal for the Gannet replacement, the "AEW7". We think we've overcome the problem of hook bouncing bolters, and have also doubled our radar cover. This is perhaps most readily apparent from the photograph.

We've now celebrated our first birthday and the "eyes of the fleet" are yet undimmed. We've "swopped" a couple of aircraft, a few aircrew, an AEO, and a C.O.; and look forward to new challenges and new successes.

Soixante Neuf

*Being an account of the more reputable activities of
69 Carrier Borne Ground Liaison Section*

One of our more polite nicknames is "Seaballs", a name steeped in gin and tradition. At cocktail parties our "friends" introduce us by this title to impressionable young girls, who blush and hastily discuss the weather.

We are also referred to as "brown jobs". Our critics say that we deserve this title because we manage to spend the daylight hours sunbathing while everyone else is working. In defence of the Section, I must point out that these rich "Riviera" tans were honourably acquired. Three of us drove nearly 3,000 miles across Australia in temperatures of up to 120° F.; the fourth member joined a beach survey party in the Cocos Islands and came back so badly burnt that he had "permission to grow" for a week. The fifth admits that he got his tan while carrying out a different sort of beach survey on Rottnest Island, off Western Australia.

Our official duties are carefully laid down by their Lordships in a

document called "Q.R. and A.I.", but even so many people wonder why we are borne at all. This question came to a head when the Fleet Works Study Team descended upon a small office in 2H cross passage one afternoon. The investigators were obviously surprised to find the office occupied and immediately produced an enormous questionnaire for us to complete. We defeated them by putting "Not known" or "Not Applicable" in every answer box.

Perhaps our greatest contribution to the Commission has been in the field of sport. Members of the Section have represented the Far East Fleet and *H.M.S. Victorious* at Swimming, Water Polo and Dinghy Sailing, while another returned from the Far East Golf Championship heavily loaded with a rose bowl and other prizes.

The Section always prided itself on being a team of fun-loving bachelors,

until one of our members fell by the wayside in Australia. We wish Sergeant Barker every happiness and hope that his example will not be followed too rapidly by the rest of us.

Much as we enjoy life on board, we take every opportunity to go ashore, not always in recognised landing places. One of our duties is to control strike aircraft onto ground targets. Naturally air-to-ground ranges tend to be in uninhabited areas and this means that the shore party has to be entirely self-supporting. By courtesy of 814 Tiger Taxi Service, a surprising number of (alcoholic?) comforts seem to find their way ashore on these occasions; it has even been suggested that we take our Section Silver with us.

On the more civilised shore runs, our Landrover is in great demand and it clocks up a surprisingly large mileage during the Commission, but it must be admitted that some of this is due to the vehicle being moved almost daily from "A" Hangar to "B" Hangar to "C" Hangar and then back again.

Two members of the Section joined the Ship in the summer of 1964, and two more that winter; between us, we have got in a fair amount of "sea time" and we admit that we have enjoyed every moment of it. We are unfortunately all leaving *Vic* but our places will be taken by five more fortunate pongoes.



K.P.'s Boys

Few of us appreciate the great service done by "K.P." and his teams of laundrymen, tailors and cobblers. We tend to take for granted the efficient laundry service, and the facilities provided onboard for tailoring



and shoe-making and forget the hard work, often under unpleasant conditions, and very long separations from their families in Hong Kong, which is the lot of our "firms". If it were not for them we would have to provide our own laundry team from the Ship's Company and would have no tailoring or shoe repair facilities onboard.

H.M. Ships on the Far East Station are allowed to employ these firms. They are controlled by the Commodore-in-Charge Hong Kong and their insurance, contracts, price lists and personal record are all carefully scrutinised. How do these firms start? Take the story of K. P. Lau or Lau Kan Pui to quote his proper name. He started as an apprentice tailor in *H.M.S. Unicorn* in 1949 and in 1953 spent a year ashore in Hong Kong doing business with ships in the dockyard. From there he joined *H.M.S. Chichester* as No. 1 Boy in charge of the Tailor's Shop and about a year later transferred to *H.M.S. Belfast*. He first became his own boss with a small tailoring firm in *H.M.S. Gambia* and finally transferred to *H.M.S. Victorious* in 1960. He now employs 44 men in the three firms in *Victorious* as well as running the firms in *H.M.S. Forth* and a business in Kowloon.

Weapon Electrical Department

*She lay in the Dockyard to greet me
A monster so dirty and grey
Her "body" all swarming with "insects"
"Good God" I loudly did say.*

*I walked up the brow in a panic
Dreading what there I would meet,
T'was a Chief with a grin so sardonic
"You'll be working each night" was the greet.*

*My Commission has passed oh so quickly
Memories I have oh so few
We worked and we slept, and we slept, and we slept
What the hell was there else left to do!*



Do You Remember?

When Tuesday was Sunday and Sunday was Tuesday so we got a "Make and Mend" on Tuesday which really was Sunday as we would be involved in the R.A.S. which was cancelled till Monday late on Tuesday which really was Sunday. Did we "Dip in".

The Bosses:



The other Harry

Grift



Dad and Deputy Dad



Grannie, Fred and J.C.



Aggie and Dan

When the "Wandering Leads" played like gentlemen in the Deck Hockey final and lost to the Flight Deck, at least they didn't drink the beer; the first time "Knowles the Nose" was ever known to refuse a wet. When "Sailor J" met a "Kai Tai" and sold his watch. When the 984 was going to be made operational by using the spare Spud Peeling Motor. Champagne in the Switchboard.



The Beasts



The Beauties



The Babes

Spick Vic's, Section Rounds, Messdeck Rounds, Departmental Rounds, Technical Rounds, Trying to find a heads open, who "FIXED" the lights ?



Our copper "L" Capone



His catches

This space is left blank to protect the innocent. Just in case we had one.



Australia



Olongopo



Photographs by :-



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Engineers, Shipwrights and Flight Deck E's

Notes from below

(or, *The Steamer Side of Life*)

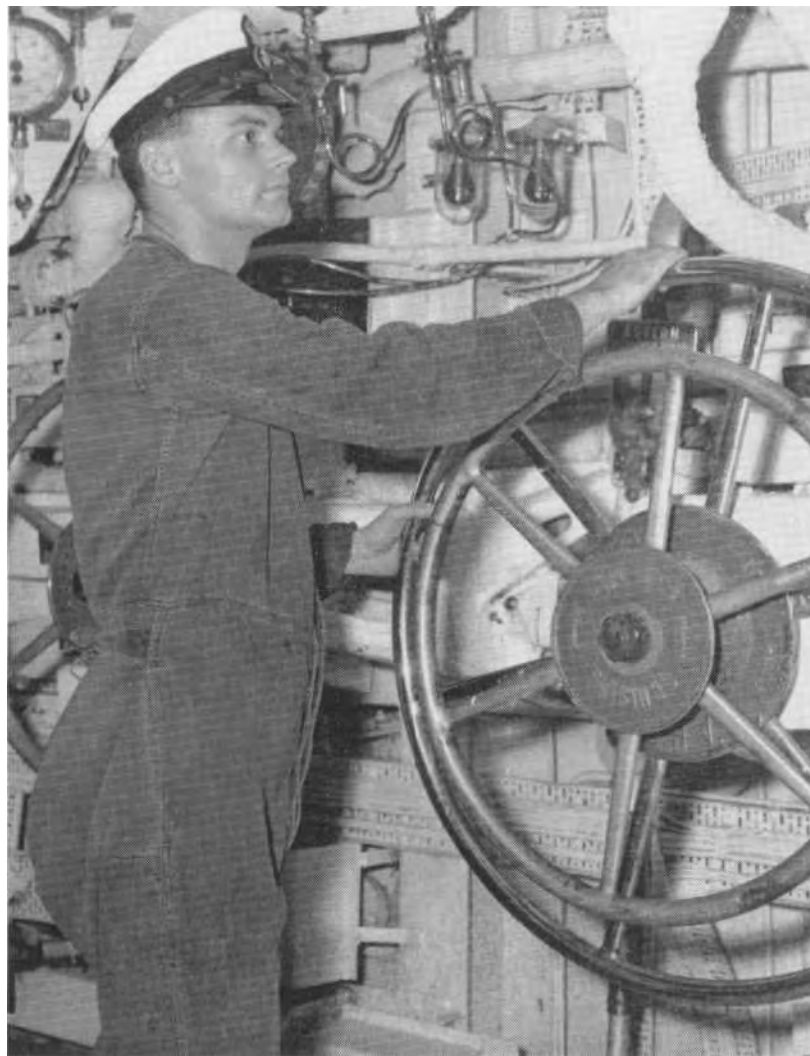
Although Commissioning Day was not until April, 1966, we would never have got going but for the work carried out by the Dockyard and Ship's Staff from the moment of our arrival in Portsmouth in late July, 1965, when having got alongside, the ship gave a sigh of relief at having made it and "blacked out".

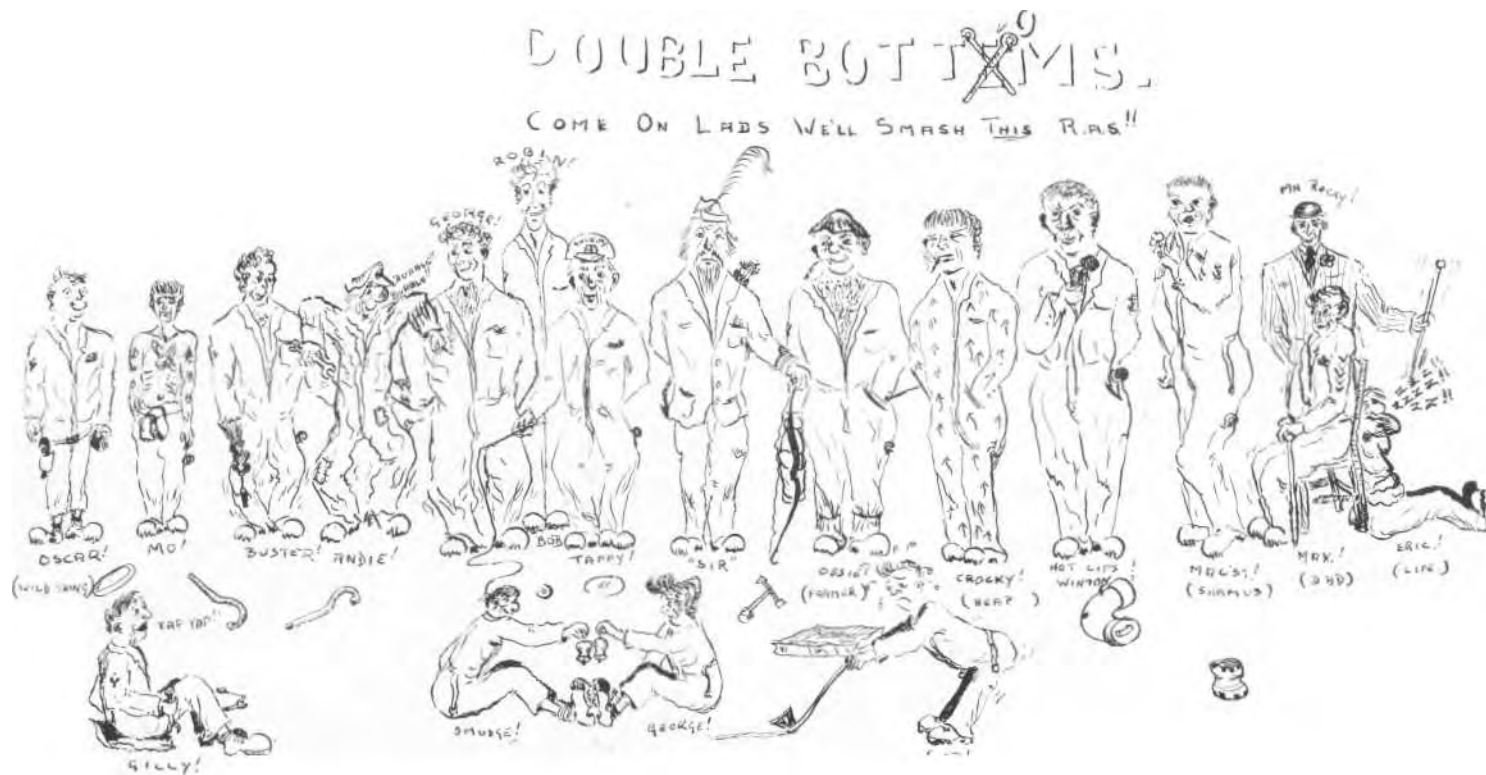
By February steam and smoke were once more to be seen issuing from the funnel in various colours, but never as black as it used to be. Contrary to rumours of the ship being behind hand and thanks to many long hours work by Dockyard and Ship's Staff alike we steamed away from Middle Slip Jetty on time in April to carry out sea trials. Two notable events occurred: the future Regulating Ch.M. (E) stepped over a hatch coaming onto a ladder that wasn't there, and descended from 5 to 6 deck faster than expected to end up outside the Chapel (a suitable place to be laid out), and our oldest inhabitant left the ship after seven years' service in *Vic*, L.M. (E) Herrington (Stan) at last was drafted.

From the word go it was obvious that many improvements had taken place below and *Vic* was pleased to be back in her element. So pleased, that on her first high power run, the Starboard Engine Throttle jammed open at 24 knots and it was two hours before she could be persuaded to slow down. Four days out and lo and behold we achieved the seemingly impossible, a full power trial and a clear funnel. Triumph was to be short lived for a few days later ominous rumblings were heard from the Starboard gearbox. A quick look at this whilst the ship was anchored in Torbay showed that Dockyard assistance was required and we returned immediately to Portsmouth.

To everyone's amazement we were back at sea within five days with a temporary repair to complete sea trials. Then back to Portsmouth for boiler cleaning and then up to the Moray Firth for flying trials, the pilots complaining how hard it was to find *Vic* now without the usual trail of thick black smoke. A brief return to Portsmouth for more boiler cleaning before a second work-up in the English Channel, when the efficiency of the department was tested by three unexpected full asterns, by kind permission of the Diving Officer, who was Officer of the Watch on each occasion.

Back to Portsmouth for leave and the Dockyard to complete a permanent repair to the Starboard engine. Then South to warmer climes. A successful full power trial was carried out in the Western Med. followed by the O.R.I. which went without a hitch. On arrival in Malta we said farewell to our recently promoted Marine Engineer Officer, Captain Inches.





A high speed passage from Malta with the inevitable steaming around in circles looking for wind to fly, quickly brought the ship on station to relieve *Eagle*, and arrive in Singapore with the shortest defect list the Dockyard remembers from a carrier. Average speed for the passage was 18 knots.

From Singapore it was to the Philippines, then up to Hong Kong and then down to Sydney and Fremantle. Most of the time being spent at high power as usual looking for wind, or rushing to make up the distance lost by steaming into wind the wrong way.

Both Fremantle and Sydney were pretty exhausting and also we found that a longstanding and dormant trouble in the Port engine had decided to get worse. Still we assumed that since we had carried out a successful full power trial, it could not be too bad. So we just went on as usual and since have successfully done many hours at high power without mishap.

We were back to Singapore for a S.M.P. and Christmas and New Year. It was the usual hard work for everyone, but notwithstanding the season's festivities a good job was done by the Dockyard and Ship's Staff.

A temporary repair being effected to the Port Engine to take us back to Portsmouth eventually.

Back to sea, up to Hong Kong and down again. After tearing up and down the South China Sea for a bit we are then in for a quiet look at Singapore before FOTEX. So far in the commission everything has been going well (written on February 18th with our fingers crossed). This is all due to hard work by everybody in the department in unpleasant conditions. Everybody is still cheerful and keeping up the good work. All is not as we would like it to be, but the important thing is that it is improving and not getting worse.

Before the commission ends we will have:

- Done about 40 million revolutions (90,000 miles).
- Cleaned boilers 26 times.
- Distilled 200,000 tons of water (and you know where *that* went).
- Generated 25 million Kilowatt hours of electric power.
- Chilled enough water to make an iceberg as heavy as the ship.

"Chippy . . . would you knock me up a . . . ? "

In days gone by, this simple request could get you the earth, or nearly, whether it was a ditty box, a rocking horse, or a double decker London bus . . . all made of wood of course. Those days are now past, with regret some think, but others know better. We might still make you one ditty box . . . but it will be about seven feet long and will be fitted with brass handles !!!

Our *Vic* is a vintage model with a varied career equalled by few, and in her long years of service she has really been rather like Topsy, she has just growed and growed. Consequently there are some jobs which often require all the time, labour, and ingenuity available in the Shipwright Department. Not the least of these tasks are providing the air you breathe and ensuring that fresh water gets from the tank to your tot. Then there are the repairs of anything from a Marine's piccolo to ship's side fittings which have been crushed by a well-meaning American tug. And, of course, there is the inevitable and never-ending replacement of lost keys and fittings.

Walking down 5M you may hear tell of Hull Planned Maintenance. It is a system for which we have proved the need in many ways, but to you it will probably conjure up a nightmare vision of trying to get work done without a Job Card. What the devil happens to the hundreds of cards that go through that office? Well, for a start, there is absolutely no truth in the buzz that Chippy No. 1 is being invalided home in May because his wrists have got so weak from tearing them up. The truth is that he has an assistant to do it for him.

The job card does ensure that the job is not forgotten even if it is never done! Usually it finds its way to the Shipwright's Office where the work is eventually programmed to be carried out, or it is entered on to a dockyard defect list. That is not the end of it though, for all completed job cards must be sent to the Ship Maintenance Authority where they are studied by a team of our own boffins, who are serving naval officers and ratings. The information that they glean from these and other

reports may very well improve the lot of sailors of the future and make our ships more efficient. On the other hand, if they receive no job cards it can only mean to them that we do no work and have no problems.

For those who are fond of statistics we shall, by the end of this commission, have completed

- 20,000 Maintenance routines and inspections on ventilation systems.
- 9,300 Maintenance routines and inspections on hot and cold fresh water systems, sanitary service and drainage systems.
- 2,480 Maintenance routines and inspections on watertight doors and hatches and watertight compartments.
- 2,500 Job card items from all departments.

Over 2,000 Keys cut and dozens of locks repaired.

And, of course, maintained a continuous survey of the hull structure.

In addition to looking after the welfare of scuppers, drains, taps, showers, ladders, boats, anchors and cables, ventilation, kit lockers, doors, locks, keys, welding, brazing, pipework, preparations for dances, sea days that didn't come off, children's parties, ship's crests, photographs, paint, built-in furniture and racks, fire and repair parties, closing down trials, citadel tests, and general liaison with dockyards. Their Lordships have now deemed it necessary for us to take an interest in the maintenance of the firemain, main suction, F.F.O. lines, capstans, magazine and hangar floods and sprays. These will yield another 2,500 routines to be carried out annually as well as subsequent repairs.

We shall probably have to change our nickname to Chip M(E)s which might seem corrupt for "Chippies Have Infiltrated Plumbers' Maze-Ergo-Shipgineers".

So you see, there is little likelihood of us being idle and less and less likelihood of a reply in the affirmative to the question posed in the heading of this article.

N.A.A.F.I. Staff

The N.A.A.F.I. Staff, although a civilian concern is very much a part of any ship's company, especially on an aircraft carrier.

Their main job is to see that the Navy's needs (within limitations) are catered for, from a boot lace to many cans of beer.

At the head of this department you have the Canteen Manager, Mr. T. Holland, who is no spring chicken with 25 years' experience.

The rest of the staff consist of Ying Ma and M. Nealgrove on the counter of the main canteen. D. Penny on the cigarette side. R. Keats and V. Lawrence in the Chiefs and P.O. bar. Po Wing Chan supplying

the icecream and soft drinks. D. Richardson the beer bo'sun, and last but not least C. Shepherd, who on pay days likes to see the colour of your money.

To back up this efficient service you have two hairdressers, Sweeny Todd type E. Whellan from the last commission, and G. Barnes.

The last of the team is the A.V.M. mechanic (no rude remarks) D. Crockford, who once again has returned to *Vic* after a hectic time onboard the *Ark*.

Badger's Bit

(Wings' well-loved wonder workers writing)

Badgers (like everyone else onboard) are the ones who *really* matter. We launch the aircraft, catch them, fuel them, lift them up and down, and provide oxygen and strange sorts of air for aircrew and weapons. Like land badgers, we are friendly creatures, but snap when trodden on, and are nocturnal by habit, which is as well, because the deck crews are very much the top of the iceberg (only 1/5 of the party) and the rest only see the light of day every other Happy hour.

Despite the other activities, aircraft launching and recovery are our main concern, and just to show how it feels here is a serial seen through a badger's evil-looking red eyes.

<i>Theory</i>	<i>Practice</i>
Z-60 Fire light shots	Z-1 Fire light shots. In the extra 59 minutes: re-make two hydraulic joints, get a Vixen shifted off the track, clear a console earth, have kittens.
Z Launch two Gannets (one is the COD going for the mail)	Z+5 One Gannet U/S. Guess which? AEW Gannet skids sideways off the CALE during turn into wind. Fit new Pilot (old one suffering from shock), lock observers in. Launch.
Z+6 Launch six Vixen	Z+10 First two aircraft arrive, spreading wings as they come. Wing locks not on. Informal dance held on wing, locks go in, 893 Deck Chief falls off, cheers drown voice of Port cat operator saying he isn't charged up yet and starboard reporting flicking flow lights. (Flicking meaning, flicking.) FDEO hammers port operator, No. 1 hammers star'bd flow switch, launch. Next two go without incident. No. 5 U/S on cat. Attempting to retract for No. 6, grab breaks out and comes rushing back without shuttle. FDEO accompanies grab back to sharp end at slow walking pace. Flyco accuse him of dumb insolence. FDEO's headset goes voluntary U/S. Launch No. 6.

All Badgers will be discharged to Netley on arrival in U.K. By the end of the commission we shall have:

- Launched 2,600 aircraft.
- Supplied 10,000 tons of Avcat.
- Produced 100,000 pounds of oxygen, of which 2,500 lbs. were actually breathed by aircrew.
- Raised and lowered each lift 3,000 times.
- Figures will prove anything, even that we are-
f's favourite four-footed friends.

Photographic Section



We, the occupants of 2J Photographic Section, have endeavoured to picturise every major event throughout the commission. To this end we have consumed 1,000 gallons of developer and sufficient coffee to make the mind boggle.

Our artistic temperament has been allowed to range over such diverse events as the Hong Kong Beard judging contest, 3,000 A.21-type photographs and sufficient ident. and "Rogues' Gallery" shots to wallpaper most of the Departmental regulating offices. We hope our pictorial efforts in the book will help to recall in some small way a very happy commission.

Captain's Office

(Motto: No buzzes here, only gen)

Being only a small department, noted for our reticence, we tender but a small contribution, covering the period of 2 years' service we are unlikely to forget.

We're not going to boast about how many letters we have typed, or how many we have received; how many queries we've answered, how many requestmen we've dealt with, how many warrants we've typed, how much bumph we've pushed around or how many packs we've chased. We haven't had the time to stop and collate the statistics. We do know we have enough to keep us busy all the day and half the night. The other half has been taken up by patrols, H.Q.1 watches, cleansing stations, runs ashore and, occasionally, by sleep.

Of all the multifarious queries we have answered, one remains firmly in our minds: "The P.O. who came in (after enquiry time of course) and told us that he had written to his wife the previous night about the Postal Order for his football pools, and it suddenly occurred to him that he hadn't received his Outfit Gratuity some 3 years before. Could we chase it up? The answer? He had received his Gratuity and he didn't win the pools.

Looking back it has been a busy commission - both ashore and aboard.



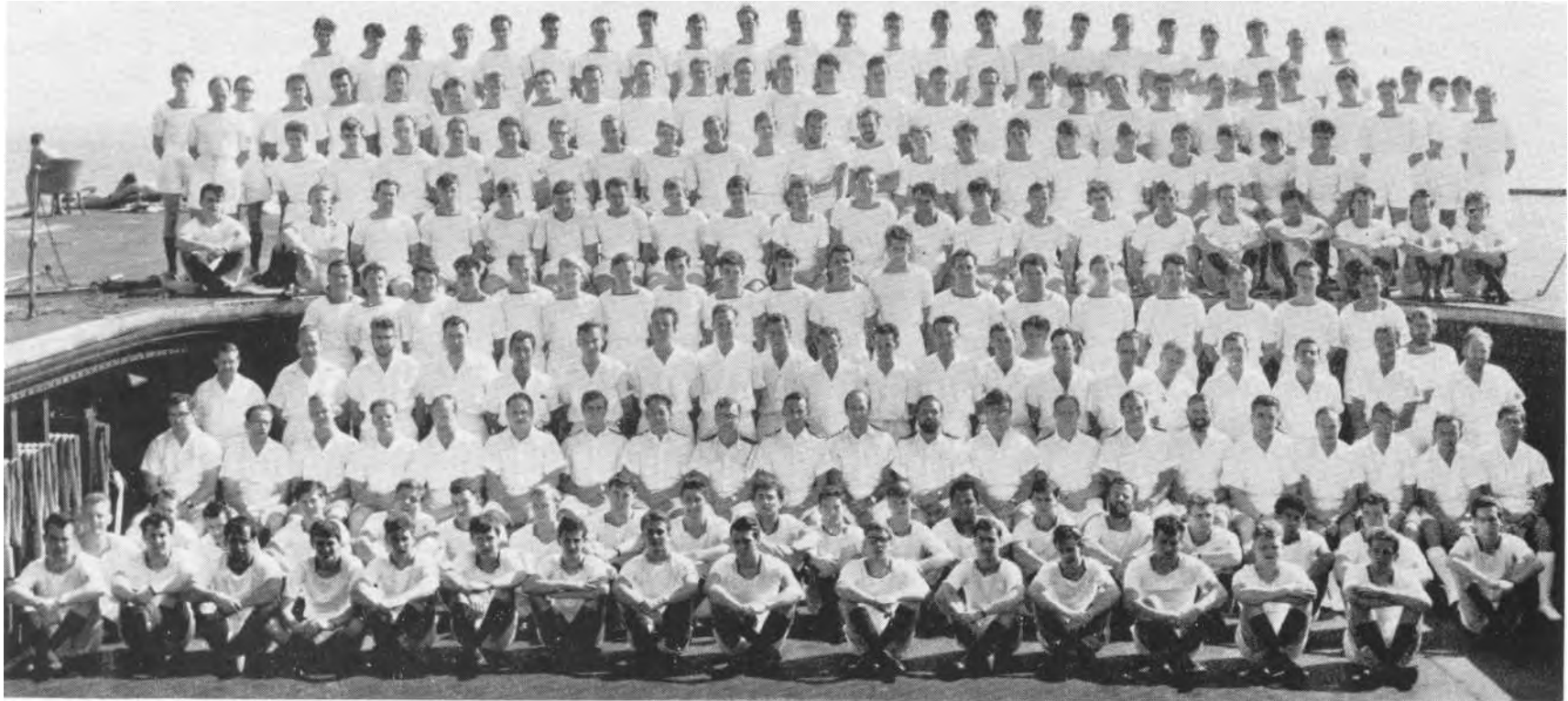
A small department noted for our reticence

Soliloquy by a Wayward Direction Officer

- "d" or not to "d"-that is the question:
*Whether 'tis nobler for the ship to suffer
The slings and arrows of outraged bogeys,
Or to scramble CAP against a hostile raid,
And by opposing, end it ?-To "d" - to watch -
• more! - and by control, to say we splash
The low ones, and the supersonic shocks
That Vic is heir to - 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished - To "d" - to watch -
• watch, perchance direct - ay, there's the rub,
For in that watch on, stop on, what raids may come ?
When we have handed o'er the homing CAP,
Then give us pause: there's the relief
That makes so little of so long a detail;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of 893,
The observer's complaints, the pilot's contumely,
The wrath of impatient D, the CCA delays,*

*The impudence of ATCO's, and the spurns
That the assistant of the unworthy takes
When he himself might his quietus make
With a cigarette? Who would be a "d",
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after this -
The unmarked fighter, the undetected raid
Which 984 can see puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than turn to others that we know not of?
Thus radar does make mockery of us all;
And though the native's cry of "New Detection"
Is shouted out, with gasping breath,
The ENTERPRISE'S pack of F4B's
And RAS's, with sonic booms disturb
And cause the death of S.O. (D).*

Supply Department



Supply and Secretarial Division

During the commission we were 211 men and 11 officers strong, including the Secretariat. This seems an awful lot but up to 31st December, 1966, nearly 500 tons of spuds have been eaten and 1,400 signals sent on Naval and Air Stores demands. £507,618 also have been paid out, 5 tons of food issued daily and 380 miles of lavatory paper supplied. Other data appears at the bottom of this article.

In most ships the Supply world is able to settle down and catch up at sea; but not onboard an aircraft carrier. As far as we are concerned the carrier saying of "six days shalt thou labour and on the seventh - R.A.S." is only too true; during this period 1,786 loads of about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a ton each have come across from *R.F.As. Fort Duquesne* and *Reliant* to say nothing of the bread and other items we have supplied to our escorts.

The Wardroom Staff have not been idle either. There has been at least one official reception in every port we've visited in addition to all the normal duties, and never have we put to sea without all cabins full of a variety of visitors who seem to like coming to sea with us!

We can look back with modest pride on our sporting activities where we have held our own well against the other departments. A Cook won the Beard contest (since, however, shaved off) and the Christmas pantomime was largely casted from the Department.

The Cash Office have sold £6,954 10s. 0d. worth of stamps and if these had all been 4d. ones means 636,360 letters have been posted, and this doesn't include all those to Australia.