



## THE TOP DIVISION

during the  
first  
Commission

BEFORE COMMISSIONING DAY the divisional officer, Lt. Bulger, and the Captain of the Top, P.O. Manghan, had examined and organised the messdecks allotted to the division and on 14th January 1958 the topmen were able to move in without any fuss or bother; their lockers and bunks already having been allocated and labelled.

From this time until the first sea trials period it was a matter of hard work for all concerned preparing the ship for sea — no mean task after she had languished seven long years in dockyard hands. For a very large number of the ratings this was their first experience of life in a carrier — some had never been to sea before, and those who had been in carriers swore they'd never seen one like this. It was not long however before we all began to settle down in our new home and soon the organisation began to run quite smoothly, thanks to our captain of Top, ably assisted by P.O. Batchelor.

Shortly after commissioning Marriots Chariot got "airborne" for the first time. This is a weird contraption which has proved to be the only practical way of getting at the underside of the Angled deck for

painting and maintenance. A few difficulties were experienced with it in the early days, but now that more of the topmen have got their "wings" it is a common sight when paint ship is in progress.

In February we managed at last to extract the ship from the clutches of the Dockyard and sailed for the Firth of Clyde to begin our first period of sea trials. At this time several problems were encountered, ladders that wouldn't fit in their stowages, boom boat-ropes that kept on falling in the sea, etc., etc. We also learnt, the hard way, that you can't bring an MFV alongside one of our accommodation ladders in anything above Sea State I. For further details apply to Chippy.

When the sea trials were over we came back to Pompey once again and the usual swarms of Dockyard Mateys came on board, seemingly determined to undo all the patient hours of clearing up, scrubbing and washing that had gone on between decks since our departure.

It was, however, a good opportunity for dealing with the defects which had been discovered during our time at sea, and as far as we were concerned this meant that several structural alterations could be made to the messdecks. Conditions down there had been pretty frightful at first because of their proximity to the evaporator spaces, Boiler and Drying Rooms, all of which vented great quantities of hot foul air. We also had the Laundry beneath one of the mess-decks and clearly something had to be done.

During the Easter leave period therefore, the topmen moved up one deck into some unoccupied airmen's messes while remedies were sought to improve conditions down below. This was partially achieved by building up the partitions enclosing the messes to exclude the hot air and at the same time the alterations did provide a little more privacy than had been available before. Nevertheless we were very sorry to leave our luxury accommodation, having taken a last look at the daylight through the scuttles, we descended to the catacombs once again.

At the beginning of May we had a change of Divisional Officer when Lt. Heyn took over from Lt. Bulger. In his new capacity as Mate of the Upper Deck however, the latter was still able to keep a watching brief on our activities. A new second captain of Top arrived at this time as well, P.O. Richardson. The continual change round of people in the division has been a feature of the Commission, and it has made it a little difficult to keep track of various rating's activities during the period. It has of course been necessary as there are several unpleasant jobs to be done; viz. General Mess Party

and Between Decks, etc., and these tasks must be rotated. As the months went by everybody had his turn in Part of Ship, although there seemed to be one or two who seldom got up into the fresh air. On the infrequent occasions when all the Topmen fell in for Sunday Divisions several unfamiliar faces were seen.

The summer months of 1958 were mainly taken up with the second sea trials period with the ship operating in the English Channel and anchoring each weekend at Spithead. This period will be remembered by the division for the evolution of getting out our two lower booms, the ladder in the Port For'd Gangway Space and all the associated equipment.

In the early days we had some long struggles with the unfamiliar gear, and one or two very tangled efforts resulted, but before very long we mastered the lower booms which seemed to have been designed to make their rigging as difficult as possible. Nevertheless, it was always a great relief to the D.O. when he heard "Port and Starboard Booms out" coming over the Gangway Intercomm. soon after the "G" had sounded. Our part of ship being so spread out with Boat Bays, Gangway and Mooring spaces on either side of the ship, it is always very difficult to keep in touch with what is going on; and P.O. Manghan has worn out several pairs of shoes dashing from place to place to sort out things which have gone wrong.

Summer leave came and went — far too quickly as always — and soon it was time for us to depart for the Mediterranean, embark our squadrons, and start the work up. Just before we left U.K. however, the Ship's Sports were held and the Division represented by L.S. Clarke and Jackson, A.B.s Sandford, Blackie, Gaslonde, Reid, Askey, Baker, Howarth and Mecham, achieved the triumph of winning the Tug o' War trophy in the final pull-off against the Royal Marines, who had been the favourites. As our team were mainly much lighter than their opponents, this was indeed an outstanding effort.

We sailed for the Med. on 25th September, but had to leave behind P.O. Richardson, who had a pierhead jump to R.N.H. Haslar. We never saw him again but believe he is still in circulation. After we had been at sea for about a week one of our number felt a bit homesick and decided to go back the hard way — by liferaft. It is not expected that he will travel this way again, except in an emergency.

Then began our three month's work-up in the Mediterranean with long hours of Flying Exercises and other practices. With so large a proportion of the seamen belonging to the R.P. branch, the number of hands available at sea to work about the Part of Ship was very small, but we just about managed to cope.

As time went on we became more expert at fuelling and replenishment at sea and took a special interest in the former as any mistakes could easily result in our section of the starboard side being liberally splashed with FF0.

After we returned to harbour at the end of each period at sea, all hands went over the side to repair the damage which had been caused by the weather and the various outlets which left great streaks of dirt on the paintwork. At one stage we began to wonder whether the best answer would be to continue the boot-topping right up to the level of the upper deck.

Christmas came and we spent it not at home as we had hoped but in Grand Harbour. When gathering in material for this article the author was unable to find anyone in the division who could remember very much about this period — from which the reader can draw his own conclusions.

We reached Portsmouth once again in mid-January, and there to meet us on the Jetty was our new second Captain of Top, P.O. Kingham, a veteran who is reputed to have served before the mast with P.O. Manghan. While most of us went off on leave he found himself in charge of painting the angled deck; which was as good an introduction as any to the Part of Ship.

The Easter Cruise was so short that we were home almost before we sailed, but it did give us a chance to see how we would get on in a full war organisation as was tried in Exercise Dawn Breeze. By now we were getting fairly settled in our ways, and the usual Portsmouth task of painting one side of the ship was accomplished well inside the time allowed. By now the last of the Junior Seamen who had joined the ship on commissioning had been rated up to O.D. and, up to the time of writing, a very high percentage of these

ratings have either moved one step higher up the ladder to A.B. or are merely awaiting the time qualification. Amongst our number two have so far passed the exam. for L.S. and one for P.O.

The Summer cruise of 1959 was indeed an eventful one, but all its highlights are described in other pages of this publication. The Topmen were always among the first ashore and the last to return, whether the port of call was in the Scandinavia or the New World. At the time of writing we are heading once more for Pompey and our usual berth at Pitch House Jetty. After a spell at home with our families, a really tight programme lies ahead. Not satisfied with our previous efforts, the Powers-that-Be have ordered that *both* sides of the ship are to be painted again before the ship sails on 15th September. This seemed an opportune moment for Lt. Heyn to turn over the reins of office to the new D.O. Lt. Roberts — but needless to say, P.O. Manghan will still be there shaking his head sagely and saying it can't be done. It always is — just!

#### **Top Division Sports Summary**

SOCCER — Played 11. Won 5, Drawn 3, Lost 3.

DECK HOCKEY — Only 2 matches lost during Commission. Drew with Eagle Topem 0-0. Defeated in Semi-Finals of Ship's Competition, August 1959 (after replay).

WATER POLO — L.S. Brewerton and A.B. Gaslonde were regular members of the Ship's team.

The following members of the Division also represented the Ship:

SOCCER 1st XI — Sandford

2nd XI — Askey, Reid

HOCKEY — Cadd, Simmonds

CRICKET — Simmonds, Whitman.

# THE GUNNERY DEPT

LOOKING BACK OVER the months of this first commission of the re-born *Victorious*, we of the Gunnery Department, modest men though we naturally are, can feel a certain sense of achievement. Quite a lot has been accomplished that we may take pride in.

Among the "firsts" that we have scored are:

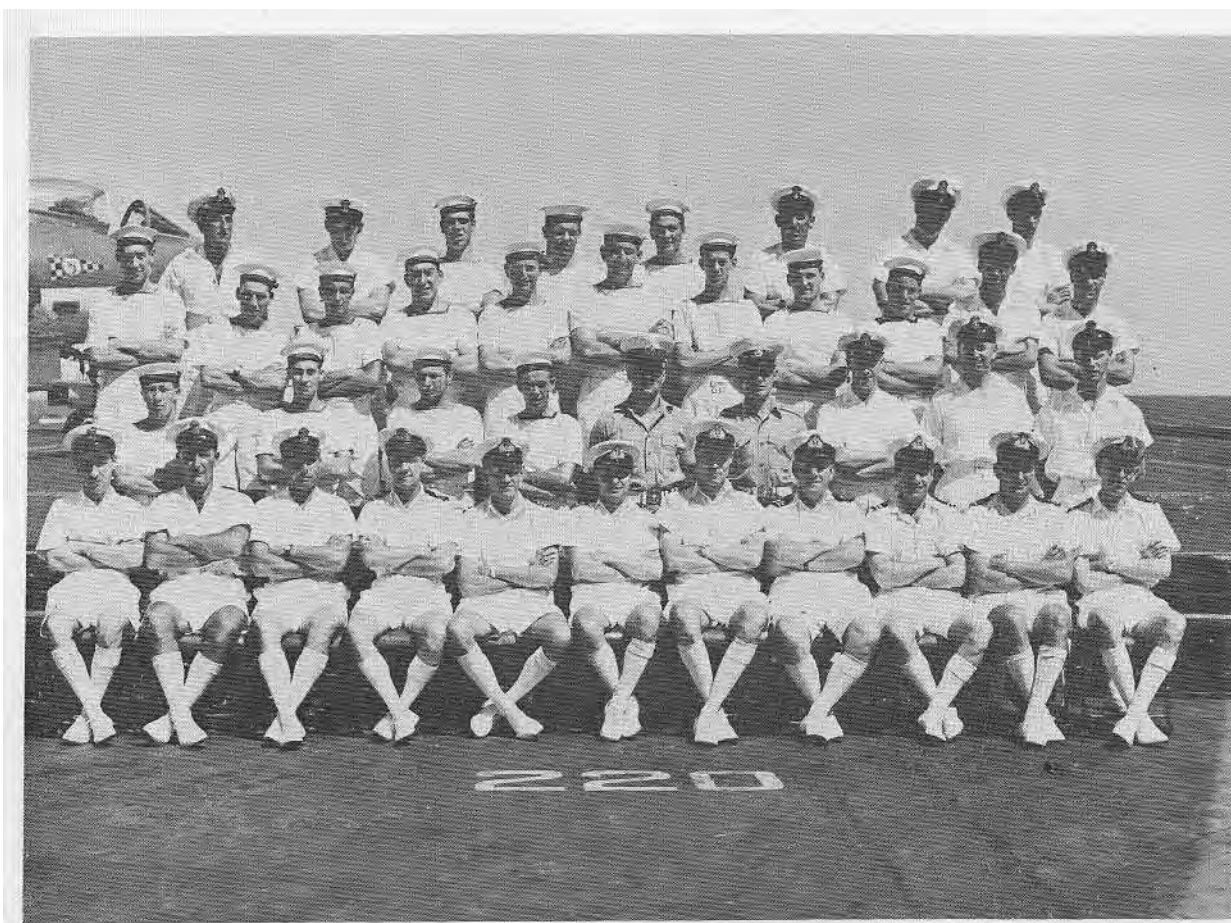
(a) The embarkation of the first guided weapons into an operational ship in the shape of the air-to-air missiles Firestreak.

(b) Helping to prepare and load Firestreak missiles for the first live G.W. firings from an operational fleet unit. The weapons were actually fired by 893 Squadrons Sea Venoms and scored 80% kills.

(c) Preparing and loading the first triple tier MK5 R/P on MK12 installations onto R.N. carrier-embarked aircraft, and thus greatly increasing their fire-power.

(d) Preparing and loading the first 30MM ammunition to be used at sea (by the Scimitars of 803 Squadron).

(e) Possessing a gun armament unique in the R.N.: British shielded U.S.N. twin 3 inch/50 mountings with G.F.C.S. MK63 control systems.



(f) Being the first H.M. ship to be fitted for a nuclear capability.

Our private gunnery system has performed very well. In to A.A. firings, 13 targets have been hit, of which 8 were shot down. Perhaps the most memorable target was the U.S.N. drone which was shot down in flames in spectacular fashion off Norfolk, Va. Our best 3-inch shoot in the 1958 Autumn Cruise was the best in the whole Royal Navy for 1958. Not bad for an aircraft carrier where the guns are only the secondary armament.

On a smaller calibre, our new pattern salutary guns have fired 224 rounds in various salutes, the most original being a personal salute to prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, which was fired for him as he lay off in a helicopter, and then came in to land through the smoke of the last salvo.

The "gravel-bellies" have brought lustre to *Victorious'* reputation by their prowess in both the 1958 and 1959 Portsmouth Command Rifle Meetings. This year we won the Tipner Shield, and were placed second for the Portsmouth Gem. Out in the Mediterranean our sharp-shooters gained seventh place in the Middle East Command Competition, defeating a number of infantry regiments at their own game.

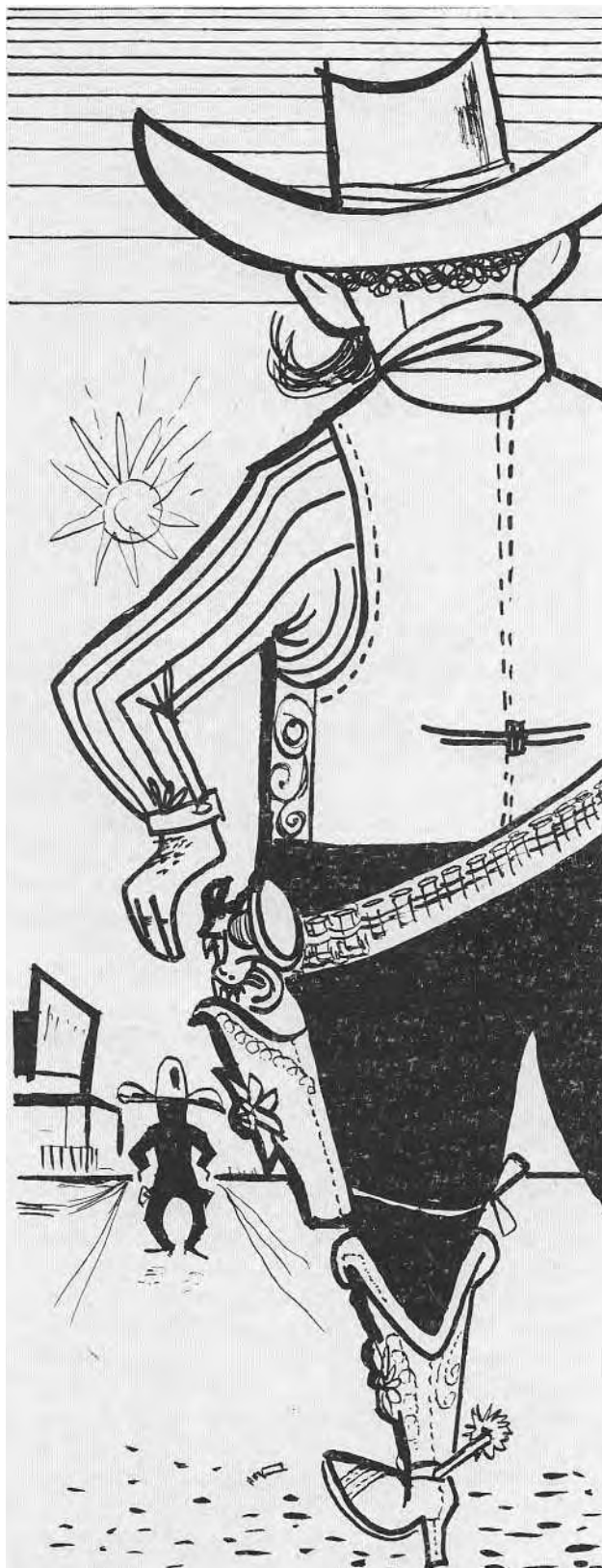
The landing party went ashore a company strong at Gibraltar in September 1958 and took over the army range for some shooting practice and a day in the sun. Later in the year they exchanged rifles for batons and shields, and under the tuition of the Royal Marines at Ghain Tuffieha, Malta, became experts in aiding the civil power, with a useful grounding in Judo.

On the personnel side, the commission has seen the promotion to date of the original Gunnery Officer, Cdr. H. M. Simeon, the second Fire Control Gunner, Lt. T. W. Collins, the Gunner (Air), Lt. G. E. Parnell, one of our G.I.'s, C.P.O. W. Gregory, and the Petty Officer of the Gunner's Party, C.P.O. A. Giddings.

Twenty-seven seamen have obtained their Gunnery Star qualification.

St. Barbara's influence extends far beyond the gunnery realm for her devotees run the Commander's Office, the Laundry, the Forward Dining Hall, Theatricals, and Sailing. With the O.C.R.M. a Dagger G, and his Sergeant Major a G.I., gunnery is not forgotten in the R.M. detachment, which means the starboard after 3-inch group.

Altogether it has been a happy and successful commission.



"YOU ARE LUCKY tO have this mess-deck — it's one of the best in the ship."

It was commissioning day and our new Divisional Officer Lieutenant Wright, gave us these words of comfort. But in the four or five dozen reluctant heroes grouped awkwardly around in what was to be the mess square — future scene of wrestling matches, uckers championships, jiving sessions and home of the dreaded yellow bunks — this jungle of bed frames, dividing boards, and gleaming lockers evoked no emotion of gratitude.

But now, after nearly two years' experience, we know that having a "no through gangway" mess with three scuttles therein puts us ahead of other seamens' messes as regards amenities, and for this we are truly thankful.

However, I must mention the night of 29th September 1958, when a sizeable chunk of the Bay of Biscay came in and did rounds of the mess via these selfsame scuttles and since then various other seas have paid us visits, but in the quest for fresh air these minor hazards are— well, minor hazards.

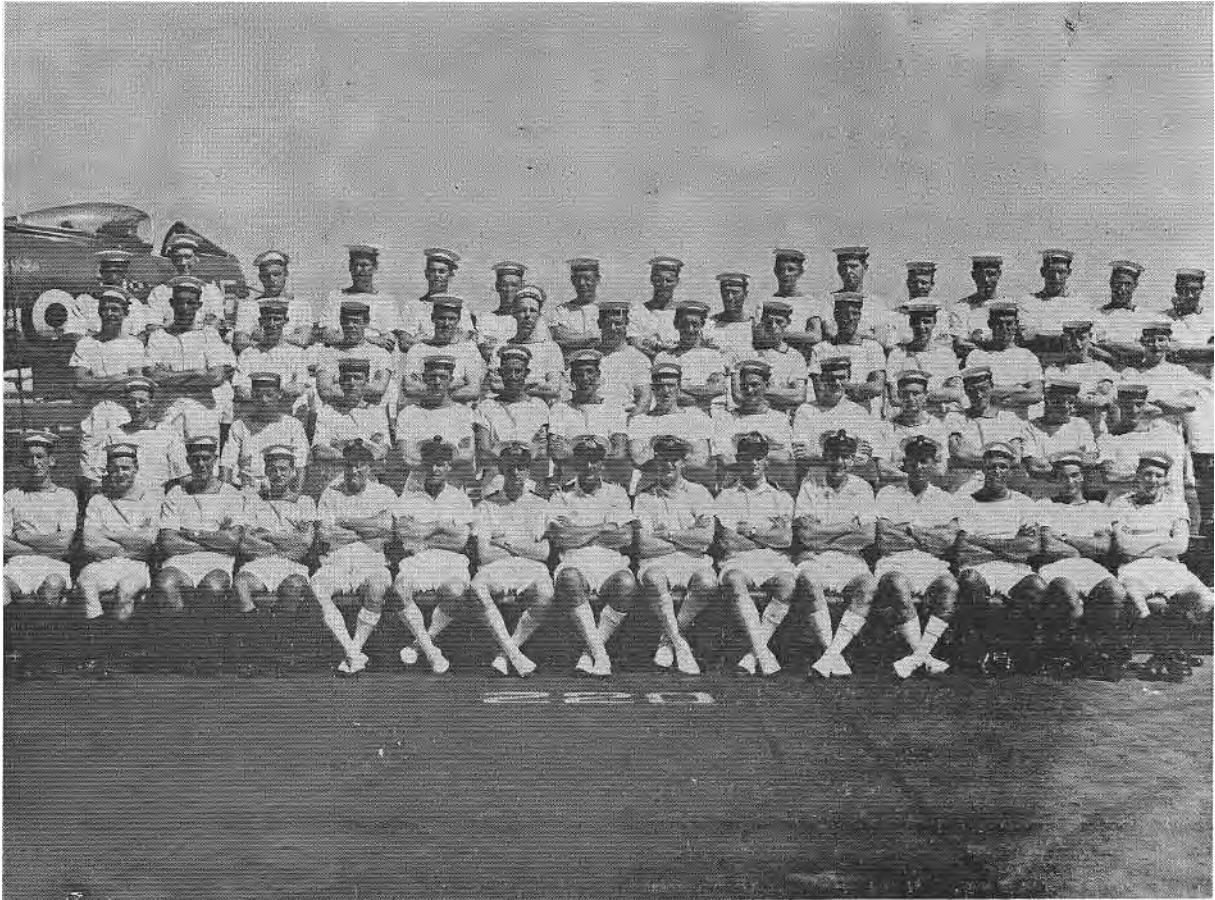
Anyway, to return to the Quarterdeck saga; under the surveillance of the Divisional Officer, P.O. Holmes and the second Captain, P.O. Reeves, began the attempt to make those polyglot bunch of men into an efficient part of ship. Whether they succeeded is not for us to say but with due British Reserve, this writer thinks quietly they made a very fair job of it.

Juniors and O.D.'s were initiated into the mysteries of getting clumsy great accommodation ladders from their stowage positions to their places of use, and learned that it was best to keep out of the way when the Weston's Purchases were being lifted into positon, because they were rusty and greasy, and one could go through many sets of clean number eights that way.

After its barren beginnings the messdeck gradually began to take on a more cheerful look. Leading Seaman Marston, as Leading Hand of the mess, with the assistance of the other leading hands, introduced several refinements such as curtains for the scuttles, curtains for the yellow bunk stowages, a letter rack, a rum glass stowage, and at the same time a lot of effort was put into keeping the cleanliness of the mess up to a high standard.

As a result of this it was frequently selected to be shown to the many distinguished people who came to see the ship during the first few months of the commission. Yes, many famous feet have trod our Bourne Plastic.

## A.X. REPORT



*Q.D Division*

The social life in the mess also began to get organised. Two Uckers tournaments were run. The majority of the members took part in these, and those not engaged at any one time formed floating supporters clubs, ranging themselves round any table at which a match was in progress to jeer, jibe and cheer. The rumour that one old stripey passed out from sheer excitement at the final is probably no exaggeration.

Our record in the field of sport testifies to the fact that some of our members who do not spend all their spare time on their bunks. We found that we could muster quite a formidable soccer team and in one purple spell during our Mediterranean cruise we netted 33 goals and conceded only 3 in five matches. In a friendly match with *Eagle* Quarterdeckmen we won 6—0, and on another memorable occasion on a rain-sodden pitch in Malta, we astonished ourselves and the opposition, who shall remain nameless, by winning 17—0. Alas, our unbeaten record came to an end when Electrical B beat us 1—0 in the Cup semi-final. Six of our men have been capped for the First and Second Elevens.

At the Ship's Sports in September we were well represented, and three quarterdeckmen between them carried off five "firsts."

What about that gory game, Deck Hockey? Well, we play a lot of that too and in the big inter-divisional tourney recently played we toiled through blood and sweat to the quarter finals.



" ONE OLD STRIPEY PASSED OUT

Let it be known too that the men of 38 Mess are also to be found at Ship and Divisional level in Rugger, orthodox Hockey and Volley-Ball and in probably any other sport and pastime you care to mention. Why, even the game of chess has a sizeable following.

Just as gratifying as having players is the fact that we also have supporters. In our soccer matches abroad, on many days when they could have turned in, our faithful chucking-up party made their presence felt vocally and with rattles and hooters, and Christmas decorations were converted into rosettes.

The personnel of the division has been constantly changing but a solid core of the original members has remained. P.O. Holmes, our much-respected Captain of the Top, has had four assistants. After P.O. Reeves came P.O. Sullivan, who remained with us for several months until he was replaced by P.O. Lee, who himself was soon succeeded by P.O. Walker, who has taken his coat off and seems to be "stopping."

Lt. Wright remained as head of the division for well over a year. Then Lt. Tuke was in charge for a short spell. In May our present D.O. Lt. Withinshaw took over.

A few of our able seamen have picked up their "hook" or passed for it; some have just picked up badges and all of our original large complement of Juniors and O.D.'s have moved up to more respectable titles. Our happy band has been graced from time to time by the presence of several National Servicemen who have brought a breath of civvy street and strange alien cultures to the mess. We are happy to report

that they are not being allowed to escape without first being pusser-ised and having their minds and vocabularies broadened, but we trust they will remember us with pleasure.

To return to the professional side of things, the most instructive period in our seamanship experience, sadly curtailed as it is on a carrier, was during our first Mediterranean cruise when there were several occasions when we moored at buoys for'd and aft with two bridles out from the quarterdeck. This entailed a lot of work and judgment, and many shouts of "two-six, heavy." On the lighter side, we are now able to paint our Part of Ship blindfolded. And as for rigging cocktail parties — well, it's just too easy.

Apart from the fact that we are seamen we are also respectively Gunner, T.A.S. and R.P. rates, and in the mess parliament the big gunnery and radar blocks were often loudly at odds, while the small T.A.S. group, rather in the position of the Liberal party, could afford to sit back and laugh at us.

On the whole, though Jack always has some grievance, it has been a very happy commission for us. Good times were had by all in places as far apart as Toulon and Oslo, Paris and New York. Even at Christmas in Malta, when we wanted so much to be at home, all hands turned with a will to mess decorating and generally making the best of it. Why, some fanatics have even signed on for the next commission; and I think we are all proud to have served in this "The Ace Carrier of the Fleet."

J. McK.





# SUPPLY & SECRETARIAT

## DEP<sup>T</sup>

"*The Pusser's Sound Off*"

THIS ARTICLE is the opportunity the Supply and Secretariat Department has been waiting for. At last "the unsung heroes," "the silent worker," are going to wake one and all by blowing a loud blast on their own trumpet. Here, briefly, all the Pussers of H.M.S. *Victorious* will show just how hard they have worked, how spiritedly they have played and how cheerfully they have lived throughout the long commission.

Everything you see around you in *Victorious* has had its start in life through the Supply Department; from the largest ring bolt in the deckhead to the browned potato chip that slides off your plate when the ship rolls; from the dirtiest handbrush that you scrub the flat out with to the money that slides into a Goffa machine. The arms of the Supply and Secretariat are long, and embrace the ship from mast top to keel. Whether it be cooking, supplying, serving or writing, the "S" department is the backbone.

For behind the everyday, humdrum life of the ship, and the special occasions too, there are a thousand and one necessitous, unrealised and taken for granted things that have to be done. Here again, of course, the Supply and Secretariat are that safe and steady backbone. The extra hours after the working day and during the night have steadily piled up throughout the commission. Whether it has been in pantries for a coming cocktail party or reception, in store rooms after a backbreaking store ship, in galleys in preparation for a special dinner on the morrow, or in Offices calculating periodic settlements or distributing a flood of freshly arrived official mail, the Supply and Sec. men of *Victorious* have worked on without respite.

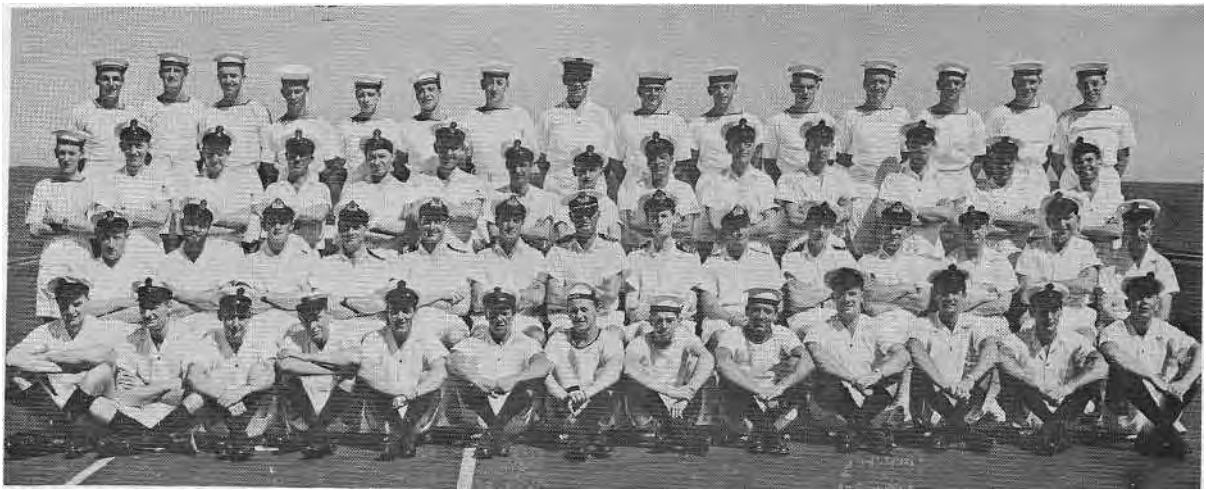
The percentage of the Supply and Secretariat Department which is seen by the rest of the Ships Company is not large. Hence the perennial drips of "the rest of them must be on a damned good loaf somewhere" is sympathetically understandable. Yet the S. and S. are rather like an iceberg — only one tenth is visible, the remaining nine-tenths are out of sight, but nevertheless still *there* and most important too.

The Non-S man will see five Cooks behind the counter who are just serving when he goes for his meal, but he never gets a glimpse of those who have worked cleaning, preparing and cooking the food for the hungry mouths, and are now starting the same unthought-of cycle of tasks in readiness for the next mealtime.

Perhaps he will next see the S. and S. on one of those happy Thursday lunch-time Pay Days, when with the bark of a number and the flash of a pay-book, he collects his hard-earned fortnight's sterling.

For the Pay-Office Writer who marks the ledger he never spares a thought or a glance, nor will his compatriots below be remembered as they struggle with altered pay codes and changing allotments amidst the main job of fathoming his next fortnightly rate. Money and Food are nearest every man's heart, high or low. Both these essentials are rooted firm and deep with the Supply and Secretariat and both are all-powerful vertebrae in H.M.S. *Victorious'* backbone.

The Victuallers to the layman are seen in two main capacities. Firstly, they have one of the most honourable and respected jobs on board the ship, for an



*S.A.'s and Writers*

S-man is always present when the messes gather around "The Queen God Bless Her" at lunch times. Here the eager rum bosun listens only for two crisply shouted numbers, not caring or realising the hours of morning work that have gone into getting the rum up from the store, correctly diluting it, or the Office work that is involved in medical stoppages, changes from G to T, or Gangway Checking. Secondly, when you intend to replenish your kit there is always the Slops. As you take your well-fitting gear and collect your change, remember the S-boys are working behind that counter, sorting out correctly-sized clothes or ordering new materials and periodically keeping check with a giant stocktaking session. Once a month the Naval Stores Department on board show their full face to the Non-S men. In one sweated hour tons of soap, soda, teepol, and rags are issued for monthly cleaning Gear. On ordinary days they rarely come to light but nevertheless in storerooms up and down the length of the ship there is a continual

round of issues, restowing and mustering. So the Ship should not run short of any aircraft spares, engine rooms' tools or electrical fittings another perpetual paperwork war of transferring, receiving and demanding stores, ploughs steadily on.

The next time you stand with your fingers crossed in hope, or your heart in your pusser's boots in dread at Captain's or Commander's Request men and Defaulters, relax and ponder for a moment. Forget the misdemeanour or the request that brought you as far as "The Table" and ponder on the work that has been done to get you there at all. The Captain's Office Writer amongst his myriad sheets of official correspondence, distribution, typing and all the ship's stationery requirements devotes many long hours behind closed office doors to YOU. All advancements, recommends, requests, complaints, discharges and arrivals have as their hub the Captain's Office. So when YOUR Service Certificate appears miraculously at the right moment in the Commander's hand, just

