



H.M.S. VICTORIOUS
1960-62



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TRACK CHART 1960-1962

Style of dates for each year as under Portsmouth.





Captain J. M. D. Gray
O.B.E., A.D.C. Royal Navy

Foreword

It is a very great honour indeed for me, as Captain of H.M.S. VICTORIOUS during most of the time covered in this book of the commission, to be asked to write the Foreword.

That it has been a successful commission no one, I am sure, will doubt.

I will go further than this. I believe it has been a great commission. A commission that we can look back on with enormous pride and with a justifiable sense of achievement.

It has been hard and, at times, gruelling work. The conditions under which we operated when East of Suez were generally bad. During the Kuwait operation they were as tough as any in the world. All this was surmounted with a cheerful disregard of heat and discomfort. No one wavered under the strain and at the end we were able once again to demonstrate to the world the meaning of sea power and the versatility of the Aircraft Carrier.

Now we are at the end of the road, and will be going our separate ways, bound together with a proud and happy memory. To all of you I wish the very best of luck wherever you may serve in the future and also my sincere thanks for the loyal support that I have always received.

It has been a job well done.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. M. D. Gray', written over a horizontal line.

CAPTAIN.



*Rear Admiral M. Le Fanu, C.B. D.S.C.
Flag Officer Second-in-Command
Far East Station*

DURING THE COMMISSION WE WORE
THE FLAGS OF FIVE ADMIRALS



*Admiral Sir David Luce
K.C.B., D.S.O. and bar, O.B.E.
Commander-in-Chief Far East Station*



*Rear Admiral R. M. Smeeton,
C.B., M.B.E.
Flag Officer Aircraft Carriers*



*Rear Admiral J. B. Frewen, C.B.
Flag Officer Second-in-Command,
Far East Station from June 1961*



*Rear Admiral F. H. E. Hopkins,
C.B., D.S.O., D.S.C.
Flag Officer Aircraft Carriers
from January 1962*

Travelogue



In 'D' Lock



The 21st Birthday Cake



Commissioning Ceremony



Bridle-Catcher Trials

Travelogue

R.F.A. Tidereach

August to October 1960 — Refit and Trials

H.M.S. VICTORIOUS commissioned on 16th August after five months refitting in 'D' lock at Portsmouth. In fact, she was still in 'D' lock when her Company joined, but the commissioning ceremony was not held then as it had been decided to postpone it until later when it could be combined with the celebration of the 21st Anniversary of the ship's launching on 14th September 1939 at Newcastle-on-Tyne by Lady Inskip. We were moved from 'D' lock to Middle Slip Jetty on 18th August and started a very complex programme of storing, trials of flight deck machinery and everything else you can think of, which lasted right up to the moment we sailed.

On 14th September, however, storing and trials stopped for the day while the Commissioning Ceremony was conducted by the Lord Bishop of Portsmouth (The Rt. Revd. J. L. Phillips) and the Commanding Officer (Captain H. R. B. Janvrin, R.N.), before the entire ship's company and their families, and representatives of the Squadrons yet to join. Also present were Admiral Sir Manley Power (C.-in-C. Portsmouth), Rear Admiral Unwin (Admiral Superintendent), Rear Admiral Smeeton (F.O.A.C.) and Commodore Lord Kelburn (Commodore, R.N.B.).

The 22nd of September had been forecast as the Refit Completion Date as long ago as March, and it was then that Captain Janvrin had told the ship's company, "We will sail on 23rd September," — and we did. We sailed for two days steaming trials and D.G. ranging at Portland, while every piece of machinery and equipment in the ship was tried and tested.

Returning to Spithead on 25th, we fuelled with AVGAS and embarked the boffins and flyers of the Flying Trials Team. These trials, which lasted five days, were carried out in Lyme Bay by aircraft from several squadrons ashore, including 803. We also had the first of many replenishments from TIDEREACH.

While alongside in Portsmouth between 1st and 10th October the ship was fully ammunitioned and the flag of F.O.A.C. was hoisted for a week while he conducted the "wash-up" of exercise "Swordthrust". Portsmouth was full of NATO ships at this time.

Radar and Radio sea trials took place between 10th and 15th October. The ship went round and round in circles for days on end but to good purpose in that all the radio and radar equipment was finally accepted. We finished the period with a full-power trial which achieved 29½ knots.

There was a final week-end in Portsmouth, 15th-18th October, while we embarked the Squadron ground parties and then off to our "work-up" in the Mediterranean.

Centre : Scimitar Rolling

Gannet Rolling





Embarking 825



Embarking 892



Vic and Ark in Grand Harbour



Vesuvius and Pompeii

October to December 1960 — Working Up

Sailing from Portsmouth on 18th October, we embarked the Squadrons — 825 (Whirlwinds), 803 (Scimitars), 892 (Vixens) and 849B (Gannets) — and after three days flying practice in the Channel we set off for Gibraltar.

It had been arranged that the 1st Destroyer Squadron, also newly commissioned, were to do A/S exercises with us on passage, but the weather in the Bay of Biscay turned nasty and the exercises had to be cancelled. At one time we were down to eight knots to try to keep the aircraft dry on the flight deck. Blue skies in Gib between 24th and 26th put most of the damage right and gave us our first run ashore in an overseas port. After a day's flying off North Front we made a fast passage to Malta for the first work-up period.

Following six consecutive days' flying we entered Grand Harbour on 4th November and ARK ROYAL came to join us a couple of hours later in an adjacent berth in Bighi Bay. The next day we hoisted the flag of Rear Admiral R. M. Smeeton, Flag Officer, Aircraft Carriers, who transferred to us with his complete staff from ARK ROYAL.

After ten days' self-maintenance, sport and flying from Hal Far, we sailed for our second work-up period on 15th November. This kept us in the area to the south of Malta for the majority of the time, but we moved down to the North African coast off Tripoli for the squadrons to make use of firing ranges there. Unfortunately, this period was marred by the tragic loss of an A.E.W. Gannet and the subsequent grounding of 849B Flight.

On the night of 24th. November the flight deck was crowded with goofers looking at the lights as we made our way through the Straits of Messina en route for Naples, our first foreign visit. We anchored next morning in the famous bay and, in spite of the long boat trip of over a mile, large numbers of libertymen took advantage of the sight-seeing tours arranged to Rome, Sorrento, Vesuvius and Pompeii. Naples Bay is very exposed from the west and a stiff blow on our last night there stopped all boat traffic and stranded sonic 200 libertymen ashore. They found temporary accommodation in the U.S.S. CASCADE, berthed inside the breakwater, and came off in the morning.

We sailed from Naples on 29th November for our third work-up period which consisted almost entirely of three major exercises. Firstly, Royal Flush IV in the western basin of the Mediterranean, with HERMES, ARK ROYAL and U.S.S. SARATOGA, INDEPENDENCE and INTREPID. Then a fast passage to Malta where VICTORIOUS, HERMES and ARK ROYAL carried out manoeuvres in close company on 3rd December. The carriers then went their own ways, HERMES to the Far East to relieve ALBION, and ARK ROYAL and ourselves to an Army Support exercise called "Pink Gin III" in the neighbourhood of



*Remembrance
Day 1960*



*Vic, Ark
and Hemes*



*Top: The weather deteriorated
Below: Captain Gray joins*

*Top. The Divers set to
Below: We embarked The First Sea Lord*