



*No. 3 Turbo-generator*



*Well, you should have read the notice !*



*Nightwork on Deck*



*Another Point of View*



*Forward Steering Position*



*In the Hangar*

up harbour to berth at South Railway Jetty and take some very welcome leave.

Once again this Christmastide we were able to raise sufficient cash by various means — all honest! — to give to the same Children's Homes as last year goods to the value of £100 each.

We had been away from Portsmouth for 333 days, had been at sea at some time on 220 days (198 days 2 hours actual steaming time), and covered 82,000 miles at an average speed of 17¼ knots. Altogether since commissioning we had done 251½ days actual running time (285 days with some sea time) and covered 101,200 miles.

### January to April 1962 — The last lap

First leave ended during the second week in January and most of us returned, refreshed by three weeks leave, to begin to prepare for the next and last lap of the commission.

A very successful Children's Party was held on Saturday 13th in the hangar when 215 children were entertained in the traditional manner. The officers held their New Year Ball in the same place on the following Friday, and in the meantime we had been moved by tugs from South Railway Jetty to Middle Slip Jetty so as to be able to make use of the dockside crane. Then, to remind us of our true function, 825 started flying again on Monday, 22nd.

On the same day Rear Admiral R. M. Smeeton was succeeded as Flag Officer Aircraft Carriers by Rear Admiral F. H. E. Hopkins, the latter's flag being transferred to VICTORIOUS from HERMES at 0900 on 23rd January.

At this stage the publishers of this book needed this bit of it to set in type and so from here the story extends into what is at the moment of writing, the future. By the time it is read it should be the past, and it is the Editor's fond hope that it bears some resemblance to fact!

On Saturday 27th we plan to have a Families Day and then, on 1st February, the Ship's Company Dance will be held in the Guildhall where it is expected to be the success it was last year.

According to the Long Cast we are due to sail from Portsmouth for private exercises in the English Channel on 5th February and the squadrons should rejoin on the 6th. Then, after a week-end at Spithead and more exercises during the following week, we expect to visit Brest from 15th-19th February.

After a long week-end there we return to the English Channel and then make our way to Gibraltar for a self-maintenance period from 1st-13th March, and our last opportunity to close those gaps in our personal shopping that may have come to light over Christmas.



*Waiting for "Vic" to come up Harbour. 19th December*

Then comes a series of trials with the 1st Destroyer Squadron and a four-day visit to Vigo in North West Spain starting on the 19th March.

Leaving Vigo on 23rd we are due to take up position for the N.A.T.O. exercise, "Dawn Breeze", which will take place between 26th and 29th. Large numbers of ships of the N.A.T.O. countries are expected to take part and it should be a fitting climax to our commission. One further short exercise on the day after "Dawn Breeze" and the aircraft fly off to their parent stations as we make our way to Spithead.

We are due in Portsmouth on April 2nd to prepare for refit and when this happens the commission will be at an end, and this diary may justifiably end, too.

It has been estimated that in this period we will cover something like 12,800 miles and will be at sea for some part of 38 days out of 54 away from Portsmouth. If these figures turn out to be substantially correct, our final score for the whole commission up to 2nd April should be:

Days in Commission ..	594
Days away from Portsmouth ..	460
Days with sea-time ..	323
Miles steamed	114,000



*Children's Party — the slide*



*Children's Party — The train*



*Admiral Hopkins inspects the guard*



I SLEEP ALRIGHT AT NIGHTS DOC ITS THE FORENOONS  
AND AFTERNOONS I'M WORRIED ABOUT



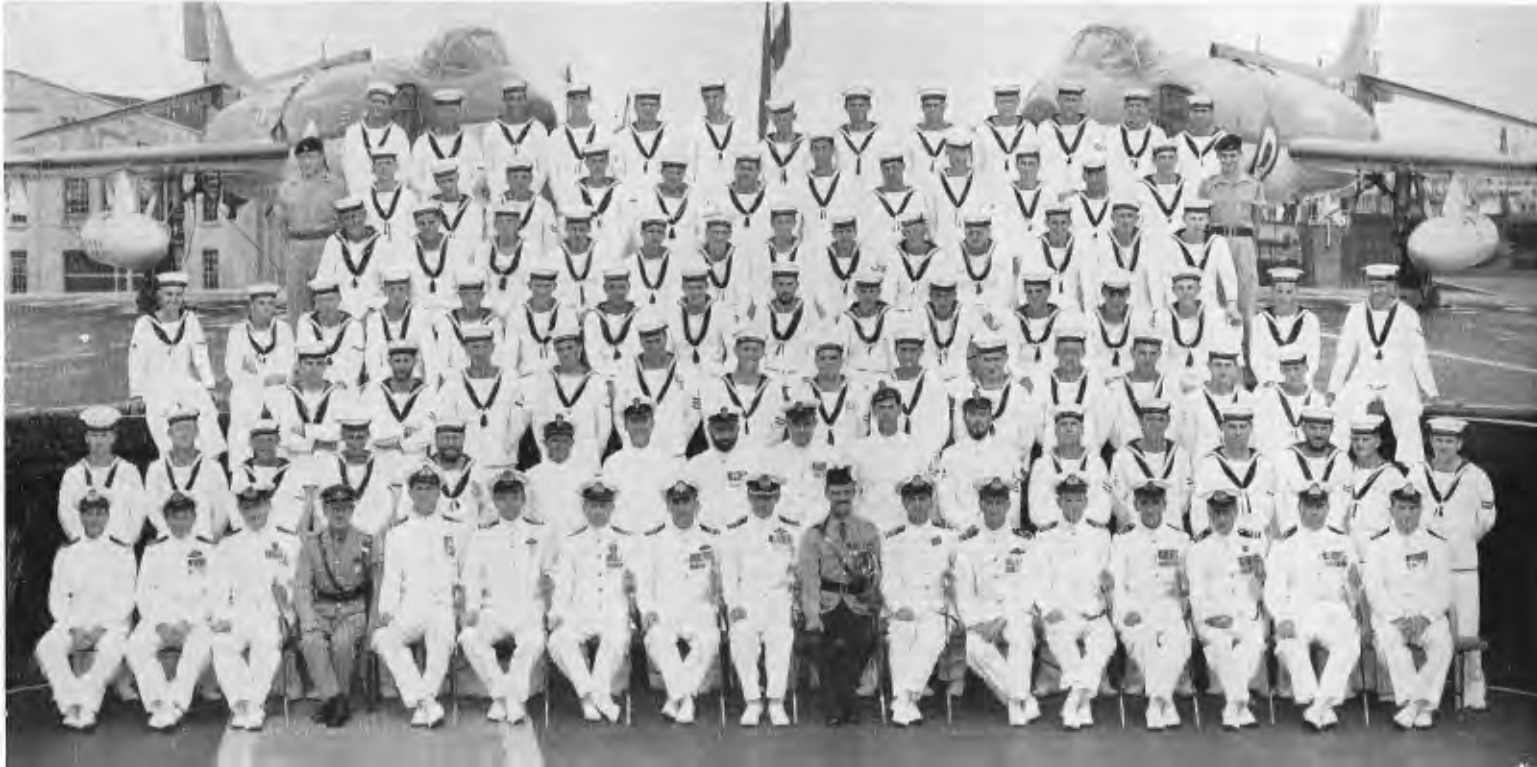
NEXT ONE OF YOU LITTLE 'ORRORS WHICH FROWS A CREAM CAKE  
AT YER OLD UNCLE TOM THE PIRATE I'LL CLEAVE 'IS  
LITTLE FLAT 'HEAD OFF WITH THIS ERE CUTLASS



I'M TELLING YER BANDIE THIS KID REALY HAS SUMPING

# The Departments

## Air Department



When we embarked our squadrons in October 1960 we became the first carrier to have 50% of its regular fixed wing complement parked on deck. With adverse weather conditions space in the hangar became more precious than a Cup Final ticket, the only exception being 825 Squadron whose slim and frail helicopters were all stowed as draught excluders between the heavyweights. P.O. Laidlaw, veteran of a hundred hangars, eased each one into place and then watched with growing dismay as a galaxy of ground equipment, drop tanks and stores poured into every crevice, transforming his cavern into a second Change Alley.

Up on the Flight Deck, the bearded Mr. Christian surveyed his teams, reduced in number once again by Work Study, and muttered quietly. One's imagination fails at the thought that, by 1984, there will probably be a division of eight Fangios driving Cooper-Tugmasters without any directors. In the months that followed how often we were to hear:

"I haven't got any hands, sir."

"But Chief, we only want to move one aircraft."

"They've got all my drivers for storing, one watch is on 'F' route, the First Lieutenant wants the Island washed down and 1 MUST paint the yellow line."

"Well, that's it, then."

Lieutenant Commander (Flying), in his elevated greenhouse, had the comfort of knowing that everyone was behind him: this was one of the best positions from which to watch the flying. It also afforded an excellent view of the numerous pieces of equipment which were destined to become airborne and sail over the side whenever the starboard catapult was used. Probably the most spectacular moment of this nature was the flight of the large steel plate, which was sent aloft from the fork lift and threatened to decapitate a number of people before being arrested by a resolute Sea Vixen.

The work-up period, in the winter of 1960, was liberally sprinkled with



exercises and everyone had ample opportunity to discover the difficulties of operating large aircraft from a slippery, shifting deck. There was the added complication of several helicopters bobbing up and down aft, taking quick sips of Avgas between the fixed wing activities: many a cartridge was fired in haste as the "Choppers" scrambled back into the air to avoid a Scimitar at "chicken".

In 1961, as the temperature rose, the conditions eased. Then it was that the white men from between decks streamed on to the Flight Deck in their underwear, assembled their camp beds and settled down to enjoy the funnel smoke and engine runs. Flying was suspended for "Happy Hour", with its salt water showers, volley ball and deck hockey:

"Can you flash up the for'd lift, we've lost our puck?"

"No, the band are playing on it at gallery level.-

"That's funny, I didn't hear anything."

For every flying day there were many more spent shuffling the aircraft to and fro and up and down, in an effort to provide the maintenance requirements or to facilitate other events in the ship's routine. With a few wings spread and a cocktail party in progress the parking space was almost as restricted as Oxford St. However, despite the arrival of new aircraft from time to time, the deck park never quite reached the nominal maximum owing to unintentional reductions. Having seen Lt. McIntyre part company with his machine, someone was heard singing, "Whoops, there goes another million or two".

Storing days inevitably left their mark, but, once the potatoes and loose nails had been cleared away, we flew again and each flying day men flowed into the Aircraft Control Room like pilgrims to Mecca; there are few places where smoking is allowed. From this centre of planned chaos, voices resounded around the Flight Deck, pouring instructions into headsets and out of loudspeakers. The handlers would freeze in their tracks, clasping their heads as if in pain, and then leap into action; the Tug-masters belched their cancerous fumes as they towed away the aircraft to destinations unknown to the ground crews.

It was sometimes difficult to convince everyone that we were night flying. One can forgive the M.(E) who was found wandering in the wire area between details:

"Have you seen my sheets, sir?"

"Your sheets? Where did you put them?"

"Down there, sir (pointing to the Victor): I was just going to turn in."

"But we are still flying."

"Oh, that's alright, sir, the noise doesn't bother me."

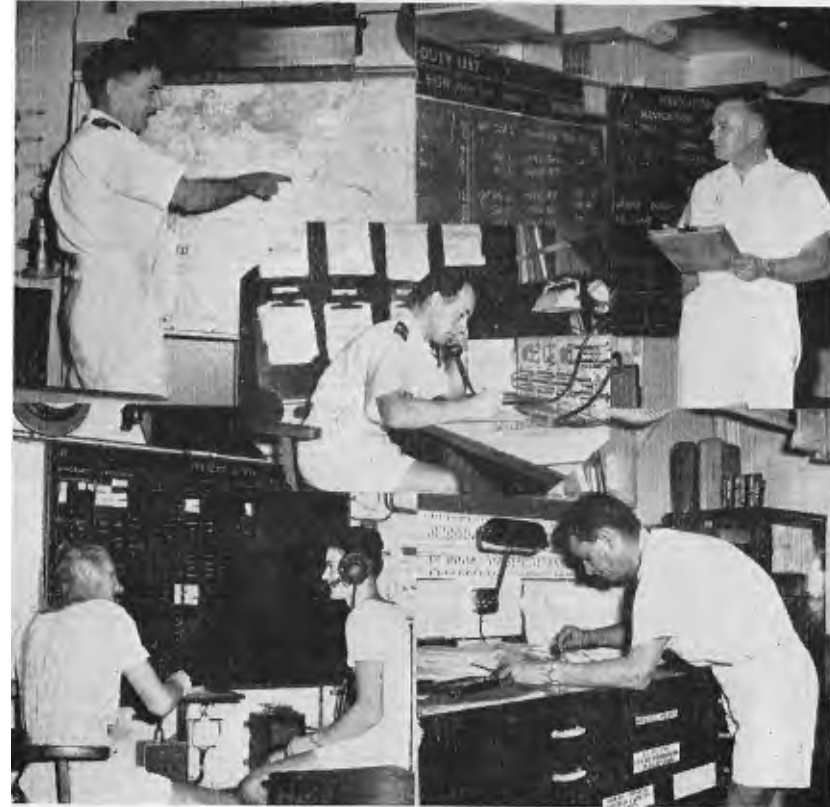
And then there was that curious white light on the starboard mirror: a recumbent rating reading his bedside novel by torchlight!

The two-watch system for the squadrons certainly kept us all wide awake: the Avon is a noisy companion. As fitted in the Vixen. it also

succeeded in burning the life rafts, removing all the grease from the flight deck machinery, blackening the crane and asphyxiating the O.O.W. by filling the ventilation systems with fumes. The Scimitar had other problems :

"Fuel danger: Avcat spill for'd of the island. No smoking on .. ."

The Operations Officers spent most of their hours in the detailed preparation of exercises, flying programmes and aircrew briefings, assisted by our meteorological office. They were, however, inextricably bound up in the planning of the whole commission. No doubt they would claim, in the style of expert anglers, that the best programmes were the ones they had to tear up. Cape Town and Mombasa formed the big catch, whilst Durban was certainly "the one that got away". C.P.O. Smith and his team wrestled valiantly with the ever-growing mound of maps, charts



#### THE OPERATIONS TEAM

Top left: Lt. D. Holroyd. Centre: Lt.Cdr. G. C. Roberts. Top right: Lt.. D. D. Gray. Bottom left: N.A. Gammer, N.A. Williams. Bottom right C.P.O. C. E. Smith

*AIR DEPARTMENT—continued*

and signals, as the ship scurried from one exercise to another. In parallel with the Operations group the unpronounceable C.B.G.L.Os. and their seaborne soldiers endeavoured to see that our flying was synchronised with exercises ashore.

The air-conditioned C.C.A. Coffee House, in the rear of the Island, has enjoyed select but regular patronage. In here is housed the power behind the dustbin, that fibre glass excrescence abaft the mast. Many hundreds of controlled approaches were made, most of them in excellent visibility hence the not infrequent dialogue between Flyco and the mirror:

"I can see two on the approach: are they both coming on?"

"No, one is C.C.A."

The photographers have been on hand for every major event and all of us have been able to enjoy the results of their work, from procedure "alpha" to cheong sams. Not all the events have lived up to expectation: one or two flypasts might have been enlarged by double exposure. P.O. Crocker and his safety equipment team, hidden in a little known corner of 4 deck, had the satisfaction of seeing their meticulous efforts well rewarded when Lt. Purvis ejected. Later in the commission, the warm waters of the East gave them a more enjoyable series of wet dinghy drills.

During those impatient months of November and December 1961, the air conditioning went back to half power, as the fair weather faded and the conversation turned to corrosion once more. This was where we came in and, after two more grey months, where we went out.

## **Air Engineering Department**



*This is the team that supports the Squadrons by operating all the Air Workshops and nursing the aircraft fixed and mobile ground equipment*





*Airframe repairs*



*Complex radar maintenance*



*Delicate instrument servicing*



*Assembling guided missiles*



*Mending ground equipment*



*Testing aircraft ordnance equipment*

## 803 Squadron



During this commission the squadron was first seen onboard during September carrying out wire pulling with two aircraft. The squadron as a whole embarked later when began the usual spate of work-up exercises. The work went well on the whole and the expectation of a World Cruise lightened the burden considerably. Our biggest snag was the loss of an aircraft on take off: quite a spectacle with both the driver (Jim Purvis) and aircraft taking the plunge simultaneously, the former aided by Martin Baker's admirable seat fortunately.

And so to leave at Lossie with four of the aircraft being fitted out with that all singing and dancing aid, the A.D.D. Came the New Year and time to leave for the Orient but first to Wales, for the New Boys introduction to the deck and a spot of weaponry. A week of this was enough and so away, with an unexpected detour to Guzz to get rid of two Vixen bitten Beasts. Dusk and entry into the night frightened some members during our passage to Gibraltar but from then on this was left to the bats.

A day in company with the rock apes and then out of the darkness and into the sunlight with a vengeance. Tans and sunburn for those on deck

and the stinking heat of the hangar and offices for the unfortunates. Perhaps as well that we had no inkling of the times to come!

Cape Town—need I say more? For the sake of hospitality we gave them a display the day that we arrived, the Squadron dropping 1,000 pounders through 8/8 cloud on TACAN. This succeeded in frightening everyone and probably did much to assist the Boers in being friendly to us. Two weeks of hazy memories--endless vistas of beaches, beer, beauties, and yet more booze. And so to sea and passage to Aden.

Feeling several degrees under, our hangovers faded on hearing of the O.R.I., but come the day we managed to acquit ourselves honourably. Flying continued apace and everything seemed to be for us: serviceability was remarkable and the results admirable but it was too good to be true. Hopes of Japan faded and the long cast smacked of little but a refit, endless exercises interspersed with two short visits to Hong Kong and a fortnight in Perth.

Aden was warm as always but the beer was cool, if too expensive, and anyway we didn't stay long. East again and more flying but by now the

serviceability had fallen a bit lower. Two members received the surprise of their lives when an E.R.U. decided to frighten them but fortunately no really serious injuries.

At the Naval Base Singapore we said farewell to 50% of the Squadron and welcomed a fresh batch. Both parties had a fairly rough time as the squadron disembarked to Tengah, leaving the Main-Check work on board. As the Ship's airconditioning was to be maintained this left the Squadron in piece-meal condition scattered all over the island accommodated in various establishments. Even with this, our first disembarkation to a strange airfield, the leavers left and the newcomers' pallid skins achieved respectable tans and somehow we achieved compromise between Tengah, Vic, the transport section and ourselves. One of the objects in disembarking was, in concert with the other squadrons and BULWARK and MELBOURNE, to produce a one-day show to open the new international airport at Paya Lebar. We provided a four plane acrobatic team backed up by a solo performer and the whole display was rounded off with a "Pink Pyjama" (i.e. an atomic effect ingeniously produced by blowing gallons of fuel into the air with dynamite).

Once more to sea, a characteristic of this commission, and off to the Bermuda of the Far East, our beloved PT.— ! With the other six thousand or so we successfully turned the place into a south seas Blackpool but with sun, iced beer, swimming, fighting, etc., it made a pleasant change. That epic, Pony Express, then called us away and so back to our aircraft. Our first tangle with the Yanks out here went well and for the short time that they stayed their aircraft were dealt with adequately, but duty called and they slipped silently away.

Live firings at Balambangan brought misfortune and after a fire warning, during ground attack, Lieutenant Edwards ejected. During his escape he severely injured a leg and four days later died in Singapore.

The firings were followed by a landing by several thousand troops and during this we covered their advance and final re-embarkation, carrying out both photographic trips and ground support roles. This brought the end of the exercise and we set off for Singapore. As the refit was pending, and there was not enough room on the island for all the ship's aircraft, we were sent to R.A.A.F. BUTTERWORTH which looked after most of us for six all too short weeks. The Aussies could not do enough for us and we lacked nothing, that they could provide. Most of our memories are pretty hazy about this period but we are not likely to forget the beer, the food, or the hospitality—or for that matter a high diving board, a bicycle, and a swimming pool! Even so the flying didn't go badly and it is worth remembering that we only lost the weaponry competition with the Sabres by two inches per pilot. Back to the ship by rail and then to sea.

Tails up and heading for Hong Kong—but wait ! Kuwait hits the fan and off we go. What a time! First an aircraft over the angle and then two

more brake failures. A time of heat rash, sweat, sand, and waiting. Up till then the inside of the ship had been tolerable but now the institution of Evening Quarters became a necessity, and the most pleasant time of day with everything from skeet to salt water showers. Working aircraft on deck was no joke either as the accessory bays became little furnaces of their own and the skins of the aircraft were hot enough to burn one—but for all our troubles we fared well as a squadron and for all the sand and heat and we made our presence heard.

By this time our next fifty per cent were due to leave and after continuous delays they left us at midnight by destroyer, and shortly afterwards flew home from Bahrein. The new specimens were delayed along the line and for two days the rest of us cursed them as we waited at the entrance to the Gulf in flat calm and with brokendown air conditioning. Finally, at dead of night they joined us and we left for Mombasa.

Mixed feelings about the place but on the whole we enjoyed it, I think. The change in climate and scenery did us no harm and the visits to game parks, beaches, and a few days off, improved life. By now Australia looked a forlorn hope and the possibilities of going up the Gulf again seemed far too nigh. But luck was with us and after a few days of beating up Zanzibar, in the interests of law and order, we sailed for Singapore.

For a short time Tengah saw a few of us and then on to Hong Kong. For those that had been there before the city had altered quite a bit with sky scrapers blossoming forth on all sides but from the spending and entertainments angle life was much the same. A squadron dinner went down splendidly and the China Fleet Club did us proud that night. All too soon though we were off for Subic.

Subic gave us a real thrash and a ship load of king size hangovers went to sea together after the weekend. Cross operations with U.S.S. TIGONDEROGA then began and apart from a little diversion the whole operation went very well. The peculiarities of the Scimitar obviously seemed a little extreme to them and our sit up and beg attitudes on the catapult left them speechless.

And so homeward bound, first stop Singapore. Disembarkation again and a rather dull ten days of routine work, and for those on the flight deck several feet too much rain. On our way past Penang we found ourselves diverted to Mombasa but only for a day so our fears of being home late were unfounded. Nice to see friends again but even better to be heading for Aden, the quickest rabbit run in any commission, and then up the Red Sea and into the Med. From now on all labours went towards the aim of flying off nine aircraft.

It has been a hard commission for the squadron but out of all the very long hours and little play we seem to have dealt with the frustrations and produced in the circumstances reasonable results.