

THE

COMMUNICATOR



VOL. 2
Nº 3

CHRISTMAS
1948

V. Rose



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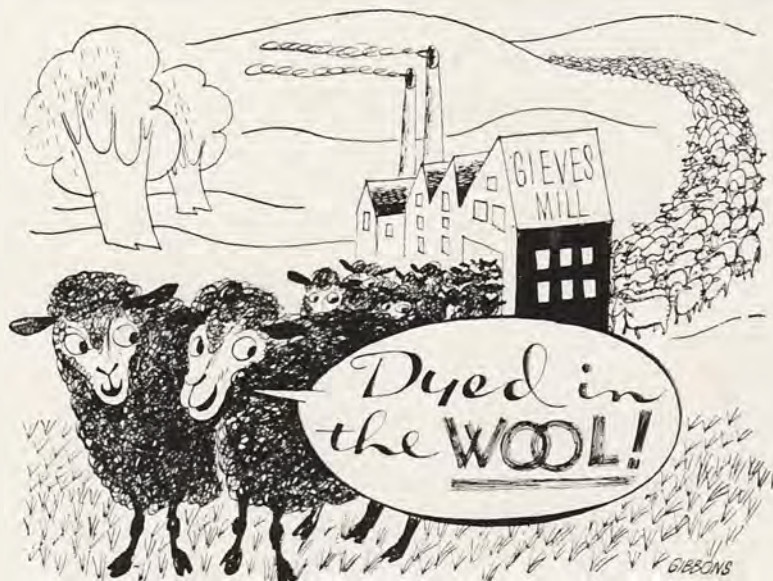
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THE COMMUNICATOR

The Magazine of the Communications Branch, Royal Navy

CHRISTMAS 1948

VOL. 2. NO. 3.

ONE SHILLING & THREEPENCE

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"THE COMMUNICATOR" IN 1949

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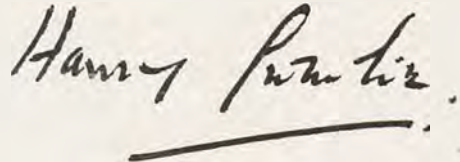
The Editor, THE COMMUNICATOR, H.M.S. "Mercury,"
East Meon, near Petersfield, Hampshire.

PUBLISHED AT H.M.S. "MERCURY"

CAPTAIN'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

A Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for
1949 to the Communications Branch

from



EDITORIAL.

There have been big changes in the editorial office. Instructor Lieut. D. Ll. Jones, the original Editor, departed in July and has rediscovered the Spanish Main; Instructor Lieut. "Joe" Fraser, Assistant Editor from the beginning, is leaving; Wren Jarrett has been ably succeeded by Wren Bentley as Secretary. For their hard pioneer work we are very grateful. We have been lucky indeed to have had "Joe" as our mentor during the change-over period. Fortunately we shall continue to benefit from the enthusiastic and able services of Mr. Eaton and Mr. Sercombe.

THE COMMUNICATOR is now rising two, a strong and vigorous child. With the same co-operation from our readers as in the past, it will be easy to keep it so as it advances towards maturity. The present position is that our world-wide circulation is gradually increasing; financially we are just holding our own.

If you have any suggestions or criticisms we shall be very glad to hear them.

Our best wishes for a happy Christmas to all our readers.

COVERS FOR YOUR
"COMMUNICATORS"

To meet a demand from readers, we have arranged for some special cases to hold back numbers of the magazine. They have been made in dark-blue morocco leather with the crest on the outside and title and volume numbers up the spine, all carried out in gold. They will not only keep your back numbers in order but will make a nice addition to your library shelves.

The cases for 1947 and 1948 issues are now ready and can be obtained from Mr. Edgar Sercombe, 2 Station Hill, Farnham, Surrey, at 18s. 6d. each. Please send cash with order.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

Though it is not yet mid-November and Christmas is still a long way ahead, it is not so far ahead that the first signs of its approach have not begun to manifest themselves. A visit to Haslar Hospital proved this.

Now, doctors have a weakness for finding learned names for simple things. It was this weakness that created the impressive title of "occupational therapy" for the simple provision of a variety of handicrafts with which to keep hospital patients amused.

In Haslar, as in all other naval hospitals, the thought of Christmas has inspired in the patients a sudden zeal to be "occupationally therapised." At any rate, there is now to be seen around most beds an ever-increasing array of stuffed toys, handbags, embroidery and other colourful articles, each one of which has been painstakingly made for some special person. Those innocent-eyed "Bambis," those belligerent "Donald Ducks," each has his particular destination where he will arrive on Christmas Day, for each is the token of the love that its maker cherishes for some child somewhere.

Christmas presents! What headaches they cause parents in these days! Yet Christmas without them is unthinkable, for they do express in concrete form a wealth of love and affection.

But why do we choose Christmas as the time to show our love in this expensive way? Christmas—that awkward time when the rates and taxes and other bills come piling in for settlement.

Well, it was God Himself who started it, for at this season, He sent down to earth the first and most wonderful Christmas Gift of all:

"I bring good tidings of a Saviour's Birth

To you and all the nations upon Earth:

This day hath God fulfilled his promised word,

This day is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord."

That Child, lying so helpless in the straw-filled manger, was God's own gift of His Son, given to lead men out of darkness into light, the token of God's great love for us.

PADRE.



Photo: J. Russell, Southsea

CAPTAIN J. H. F. CROMBIE, D.S.O., ROYAL NAVY.

Qualified in Signals, 1924-25.

Flag Lieut. and Signal Officer to C.-in-C. South Africa, H.M.S. *Birmingham*, 1925-27.

Flag Lieut. and Signal Officer to R.A. Commanding Battle Cruisers, H.M.S. *Hood*, Home Fleet, 1928-30.

Squadron Signal Officer to V.A. Commanding 1st Battle Squadron, H.M.S. *Revenge*, Mediterranean Fleet 1930-32.

1st Lieut. and V.I., H.M. Signal School, 1932-34.

Promoted Commander, June, 1934.

H.M.S. *Thruster* (in command), A/S Training Flotilla, Portland, 1934-35.

Fleet Signal Officer, Mediterranean Fleet, 1935.

H.M.S. *Boadicea* (in command) 4th D/F, Home Fleet, 1936-38.

Commander, H.M. Signal School, 1938-39.

Commander, H.M.S. *Repulse*, 1940-41.

Promoted Captain, June, 1941.

1st Minesweeping Flotilla (in command), Home Fleet and North Russia, 1941-43.

Director of Minesweeping, Admiralty, 1943-46.

H.M.S. *Vengeance* (in command), 1946-48.

H.M.S. *Mercury* (in command), 1948



THE MUSIC-HO!

When my grandparents threw those delightful summer tea parties in the garden years ago, the old man, a rugged character, would firmly refuse tomatoes, adding "I don't like 'em," and Grandmama would whisper to me, "Don't argue with him, but he's never tasted one." Then one calm, tropical night many summers later, I was enjoying an after-dinner pipe with a messmate, discussing what ballet has to offer; and he professed a hearty disdain for such queer stuff. When tobacco had turned to dust, I said, "By the way, have you ever seen a ballet?" and he paused, and replied, "Well—er—no, I'm afraid I haven't."

Now, most of us think that way about something; and I dare say we've all heard some communicator state, airily, that he has "No time for this classical music and opera stuff," without having the vaguest notion about the difference between a symphony and an opera, and probably never having listened to either. The object of these jottings, then, is to exhort such sceptics *not* to denounce the world of good music without at least giving it a hearing. After all, you often lent an ear to some disinterested saxophonist's "Starsight of a Stormy Night." Why not also try listening to the strings of a full-blooded orchestra playing that thrilling, haunting theme of Tchaikovsky's "Pathetic" Symphony, from which the melody of the "Starsight" was so blatantly cribbed?

One comes across sundry provoking or inspiring remarks on music; the fretful Cleopatra's "Let it alone; let's to the billiards," or the remark I heard from Dr. Sargent during the war: "There are only half a dozen jokes in music, and they're all bad ones." But the one which sticks most in my mind is an established music critic's conviction that "*An instant of appreciation is worth an age of lore and learning.*" It sticks because I believe in it—so far as Music for Most of Us is concerned, and because it seems well worth repeating these days, when life surges on with increasing tempo, and some of us look round rather bewilderedly for something to hang on to, besides a job. Music is one of those things, and people with no music of any sort in their systems are few and far between.

Anyway, what the critic is getting at primarily is this. It is not necessary to know A from A flat, crochets from quavers, or a scherzo from a rondo in order to enjoy what we are pleased to call Good Music. What he would much rather see, firstly, is your readiness to say to yourself: "Yes, I did rather like that piece," then find out what it was and make a point of hearing it again, or look out for more works by the same composer. (The critic and I will then glow with satisfaction.)

Picture two of us listening to a broadcast of Beeth-

oven's Fourth Piano Concerto (frightfully highbrow, of course!); when the first movement ended, a Senior Type emerged from behind the *Sporting Life* and said, "That's a jolly nice tune. What is it?" I told him, briefly adding that the tune would become even better in a moment, and resumed my listening. The *Sporting Life* was quietly lowered until the end of the concerto, and I knew the Senior Type would welcome that classic tune again. There is unlimited attraction in this steady and uninhibited collecting of musical gems, rather like rolling a snowball. One's mind soon garners other likeable items by Beethoven, and piano concertos by other composers, and so it goes on. It isn't necessary to know how snow is formed, nor what "sonata form" is, though it might be interesting to investigate both, one day.

Mark you, I've no wish to recruit an army of desperately serious converts for a campaign of intellectual snobbery. Nor would I wish you to be enslaved by uncongenial rituals merely for appearance's sake, like Admiral Dash, who frequently donned boat cloak in Malta and swept off to the opera, warmly hating it—as he once confessed to us on the bridge. Then there was the classic blunder of the old lady doing the "right thing," carefully following a performance of Berlioz's opera "Faust" from a vocal score of Gounod's! Oh, no! We draw the line at that sort of thing.

To those of you who already have a modest appreciation of a few classics, coupled with a shyness about attending a concert, I would say, "Go at the next opportunity; there's nothing quite like it." Concert halls have an atmosphere which evades all reproductions, and are no more difficult to get into than a West End cinema. Whilst walking round Westminster recently, I remembered a modest three-badge "Butch" confessing that his one life ambition was to see the Commons in session; I tried it out, and within the hour I was seated behind the Press, listening to a debate. And it's just as easy—on occasions, of course—for you to see and hear some of the world's leading orchestras and virtuosos. You might, for example, forego several pints one evening, jump on to a 52 bus instead, and go to that concert you've seen prominently billed.

Finally, if a classic takes your fancy, don't be scared of being caught out at the end not knowing what the composer was "getting at"; in many cases composers weren't getting at anything in particular, except the creation of something satisfying to them and to their potential public. If the composer was getting at something, the chances are that you'll appreciate his point as well as the impressive gent sitting next to you.

P. H. D.

THE FUTURE OF H.M.S. "MERCURY"

Anyone who has visited Portsmouth during the last six months must have noticed the range of red-brick buildings growing daily on the top of Portsdown Hill. We are tired of repeating that this is NOT the new Signal School; in fact, certain distinguished officers in *Mercury* show a tendency to apoplectic fits when the subject crops up.

It is now the Admiralty intention to purchase the site of Leydene House and to rebuild the camp as a semi-permanent *Mercury*. The funds necessary to build a new block—and to connect its annexe to a push-pull type of sanitary circuit—have been voted this year and work got away to a good start on 2nd July, when Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fraser, then C-in-C., Portsmouth, performed the ceremony of cutting the first turf. His accompanying remark to the Superintending Civil Engineer is well worth recording. Turning to



Lord Fraser cutting the sod

EXTRACT FROM LETTER

To me, an ex-communicator (1906-34), the magazine brought a whiff of days past in the branch. Days which recall the signal books of my time, ranging from the old Fleet Signal Book, the Flotilla Signal Book, to the Signal Manual and Peace Codes, etc. Of the days in the old *Impregnable* Training Ship, when we were persuaded into taking up signals as a career. When we were boosted with the idea of being the smartest-dressed, most intelligent branch of the Lower Deck. That the Chief Yeoman was the Captain's right-hand man, his confidential adviser and stand-by. And I venture to suggest that such was indeed the state of affairs in those days, and we "Buntings" did consider ourselves a distinct cut above others of the Lower Deck, and, looking back, I think we were justified in our "pride of profession."

Certainly I remained in the Service long enough to witness with regret that happy intimate relationship between the Captain and his Chief Yeoman gradually drifting away. This did not seem so much the case with the older captains, as with the younger ones, but I must say that the intimate personal relationship per-



Refreshment after labour

S.C.E., Lord Fraser remarked: "I hope you don't do with this sod what they did with a similar sod I turned in Singapore." After a pause, S.C.E. naturally replied: "What was that, sir?" "I went back two years later and discovered they had merely replaced it." However, work is well under way and it is hoped that at least one additional block will be added each year, until eventually all the Nissen huts disappear.

It is also intended that the title "H.M. Signal School" should lapse because people get confused between "*Mercury*," "Signal School" and "Leydene"; a military visitor asked us to direct him on a tour of the three establishments, and seemed disappointed when told that he had killed three birds with one stone. In future we would like to be known as "*Mercury*," please: it is regrettable that the old title "C.S.S." had to be relieved by the "Captain, H.M.S. *Mercury*"; but we shall get used to that as the years roll by.

sisted in destroyers and small craft.

It is strange to hear nowadays of the various devices used in the branch, coding machines and what not. That is to say, strange to one who was raised on cruiser arc lamps, semaphores with bottle-screws and rods, later replaced by endless chains, the Villiers secret lamp, the telegraph sounder and even the masthead semaphore.

On the W/T side (in which the "Buntings" were the pioneers) one recalls the old coherer and cowtail, the Morse inker (with memories of the cabin filled with tape when one forgot to put the switch "Off"), the magnetic detector, crystals, spark gaps, the old ABC tuners and so forth.

Just one more comment on the news in the magazine. So the "Buntings" of today cannot read semaphore? Shades of the days when no "Bunting" was considered to be "IT" unless he could read the small semaphores at the Castille Signal Station, Malta, with never a dip of the Ans. Pt. In my earliest days there, all messages were written on slates, the logs were written up in ink, and I saw the last days of the old pigeon loft.

A. D. B. (ex-C.Y.S.).

LET'S TALK SHOP!

The Communications Branch

The reductions in the number in the Telegraphist Branch have now stabilised. There is a slight shortage in the Chief and Petty Officer rates, but it is the shortage in Leading Telegraphists which causes the greatest concern. The qualifying courses for Leading Telegraphists at home are now divided into two parts. Each part of the course is self-contained, allowing candidates to join at six-weekly intervals. Candidates who fail the first part are removed from the course. It is hoped that this eases the drafting problems and enables greater numbers of candidates to be handled without increasing the number of instructors.

The rosters for Signal and Wireless Instructor are not too well filled. Recommendations on Form S.1303A are required as for other courses. In addition to Chief Petty Officers and Petty Officers, Leading rates of at least four years' seniority are eligible to be recommended, provided that they have passed the examination for the Petty Officer rate (the lower standard does not count).

S.1303 and Advancements

We should like to call attention to the importance of a strict compliance with A.F.O. 4255/47, para. 1(c). Cases are still occurring where recommendations for courses are being noted on Form S.264 or in History Sheets but for which no Form S.1303A has been received.

The Form S.1303A is, of course, all-important in connection with establishing a basic date for advancement, and hardships arise if this date is not correctly established. Steps have been taken to minimise the effects of these in cases dealt with so far, but Signal Officers are asked to give attention to this and bring it to the notice of all those concerned whom THE COMMUNICATOR may not reach. There is another point in advancement regulations that seems to escape notice. It is that junior ratings in both Signal and Telegraphist branches, in addition to passing the professional examination, must, before being advanced to Signaller or Telegraphist, qualify in the "opposite subject" and in field training. The latter must not be confused with Part I training carried out on joining. It is desirable that these qualifications should be obtained as early as possible after leaving the training establishments, although S.S. ratings normally pass "opposite subject" during their initial training.

Examinations and Touch-Typing

Since 1st July, 1948, examinations have shown disappointing results from touch-typing in senior classes. It appears that Morse typing, for example, at 25 w.p.m. is an achievement which requires a good deal of practice. This is hampered considerably by the lack of typewriters available to Communications departments and therefore slows down training progress. We recently visited a brand-new destroyer equipped with all the latest transmitters, receivers, aerials and switching gear. It was a credit to the young P.O. Telegraphist who had stood by her. But there

was no typewriter to be seen and it made one think of "the ha'porth of tar". Approval, based on the recommendations of Commanders-in-Chief, is being sought to increase the number of typewriters allowed. Unfortunately the supply position makes it impossible to follow these recommendations in full. But increases have been asked for and if allowed things should improve noticeably in the course of next year.

It is recognised that another factor is lack of electrical staff. To return to the same destroyer for a moment, all the wireless equipment was being maintained by the young Petty Officer Telegraphist, as the two L.R.E.Ms. were fully occupied on radar equipment. One realises that this is inevitable until the Electrical branch is fully manned up. Meanwhile senior telegraphist ratings must continue to keep their equipment in good working order and at the same time try to improve the Morse-typing standard of their staffs by getting hold of as many typewriters as possible and to encourage their use both for Voice and W/T, especially in exercises of all kinds.

Touch-typing on Voice Circuits

We suggest that as touch-typing becomes more widespread there is a class of circuit on which it may be used with great advantage. This is the Voice Circuit as harbour intercommunication wave on which quite long messages may be passing. Taking down these messages at handwriting speed uses up valuable time and reduces the speed of transmission to that of slow dictation. It may reasonably be expected when typewriters are used that the transmission can be speeded up to that of a slow rate of speaking. Periodic breaks in the transmission as required.

Exercises

It is thought that a brief account of activity and progress in the group of W/T exercises organised by *Mercury* under the title "Witex" may be of interest. There are two broad divisions of Witex. The first is for Wrens and Telegraphists under training, which takes place in instructional hours. The second is for all Telegraphist ratings. The form of the exercises is that of broadcast from *Mercury* to which a typical shore-to-shore organisation is attached. Apart from the outlying schools, the Home Air Command also plays its part. The Naval Air Stations operate in two groups, the Southern Group going directly into Witex. The Northern Group operates separately under its own control. It has been suggested that a link between the two should be established and this may be worked out. There are also special arrangements for use when available for bringing in the training squadron and for exercising with ships of the Home Fleet.

The exercises are designed to give as much practice "on the air" as possible and to practise cryptography. Junior ratings, in particular, it is hoped, lose at an early stage any feelings of nervousness at finding themselves on a real circuit.

In addition to this, an exercise between *Mercury* and H.M.C.S. *Stadacona* takes place twice weekly

Periodically, too, there is another with Army, R.A.F. and Combined Operations Signal Schools. These prove very successful and encourage inter-Service working and understanding.

Nor is the R.N.V.(W)R. forgotten. A start has been made and before long a full Witex will be available to them as well on those evenings when drills are taking place at their centres.

The exercise wireless office at Leydene has been reorganised and it now represents as far as possible the layout of the typical office of a ship or small base. As a counterpart there is nearly completed a typical shore M.S.O. in which it is hoped to demonstrate how the paper should flow and not lose itself on the way. There is no prize for guessing the number of trays in use.

"Record of Experiences"

Ratings who are nearing the end of their Service career and who contemplate taking up radio work in civilian life are advised to check that the "record of experience" part of their wireless history sheet is up to date before leaving their last ship or job, especially if they have any special qualifications, e.g., "Experienced Teleprinter Operator." This record may help considerably in obtaining employment. Your wireless history sheet is always available for scrutiny on application to your Divisional Officer.

Amateur Radio

A condition made by the G.P.O. to the issue of an amateur radio station licence is that the station should at all times be open to inspection by the G.P.O.'s officers. This condition is not realisable on board H.M. ships and therefore no licence can be issued.

"L" BRANCH COMMENTARY

Recently there have been many changes in the Instructional Staff. C.R.E.A. E. Coleman and C.R.E. H. F. Norman are undergoing the qualifying course for W.E.O.(R), and nine other old members are busy with the R.E.A. Conversion Course, both courses in H.M.S. *Collingwood*.

Another departure of note is that of Lieut. (L) G. Reynolds, who, in his capacity of L.3, had a very big hand in organising Shore Station Maintenance Courses, D/F Calibration Courses and Handbooks on D/F Calibration and Office Machinery. Lieut. Reynolds has gone to H.M.S. *Flowerdown*, as First Lieutenant, in which appointment we wish him the best of luck. His place in *Mercury* has been taken by Mr. C. Wild, C.E.O.(R), R.N.

Courses for Shore Station Maintenance Officers and ratings are one of the lesser-known activities of this section. These courses are intended to train personnel in the operation and maintenance of fixed service transmitting and receiving stations and the syllabuses cover a wide range of fascinating subjects, including Single Side Band working and equipment, stripping and assembly of five-unit code equipment, alignment of Triple Diversity receivers, and the maintenance and operation of high-power shore station transmitters.



Our photograph shows three members of a class undergoing instructions in the Calibration of D/F Outfits. The officers concerned are taking D/F bearings of the "M.F.V." Our second photograph shows the "bridge" from which visual bearings of the M.F.V. are taken. On a cold or wet day the pupil taking the bearings finds conditions not unlike those to be expected at sea. It has been suggested that prospective candidates for the next course, which begins on 6th December, should bring Arctic clothing!



Poetically minded readers are invited to send in suitable contributions on North Camp, a subject for an "L" Branch elegy. One of our contributors dashed off the following lines:

"In the street of a thousand AVOs. by the sign of the swinging choke,
 Stood a broken heated Re-Scrub PREM, to whom radio was no joke,
 His life had been full of 'ups and downs.'
 'Twas therefore hardly surprising,
 He never knew whether to tune for the 'dip'—
 Or was it the needles uprising?"

We are hoping for many more contributions and the best efforts may appear in the next number of THE COMMUNICATOR.

To conclude, we would like to wish all our pupils and instructional staff, past and present, a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

COMMUNICATION WRENS' TRAINING

At the time of writing the number of Communication Wrens under training is only sixty, the lowest figure for some time, but during the next few months we are expecting several new courses and before Easter we hope to have as many trainees as we can accommodate.

The second P.O. Wren and Leading Wren Telegraphist (Q) class is in progress. Prospective Leading and P.O. Wrens form one class, but we hope in future to have enough aspirants for Petty Officer to make separate classes a practical proposition. In the meantime we expect a broader outlook and greater ability from the prospective P.O. who has to undergo a longer and more searching examination.

Also under training are New Entry Telegraphist Classes 9, 10 and 11 and these will be joined shortly by W/T 12.

The day spent in H.M.S. *Boxer* continues to be a most popular feature of the Telegraphist course. The last class to go to sea were shown over the ship in small parties by very able guides and they were also able to take part in Witex I and II, which was most valuable experience.

The first batch of Wren Telegraphists have now taken over in shore M.S.Os. Wrens who had been serving in Air Command for some time were chosen for transfer rather than those who have just qualified, and upon their progress at Devonport and Londonderry depends the future demand for Wren Telegraphists at shore establishments other than Air Stations. All Wrens at present serving at Air Stations are advised to keep up their Morse, as they will need it when their turn for leaving the Air Command comes.

With the exception of three Wrens in Germany who have proved slightly elusive, all Signal Wrens have now been converted and it is hoped that they are having an opportunity to practise what they learned on the Conversion Course, so that they are competent in all sections of the Signal Branch.

The first course of New Entry Signal Wrens arrive from Burghfield in the near future. Non-touch-typists are given six weeks' instruction before they are joined by those who are already proficient. The course then

undergoes eight weeks' instruction in M.S.O. work, teleprinting, and cryptography. A steady flow of signal courses is anticipated throughout 1949.

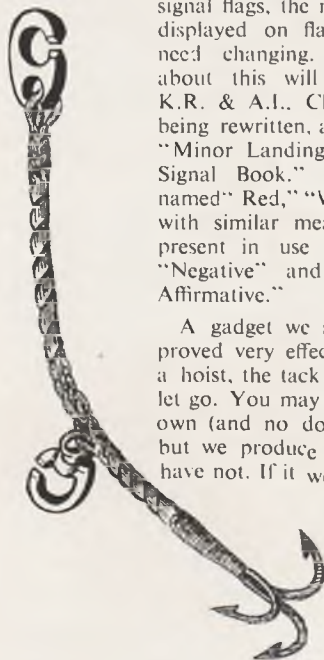
The first draft of twenty-four Wrens for the Middle East since the war left Liverpool on 26th October in the *Empress of Australia*. Composed mainly of Communication Wrens, they sailed for Port Said, where they will be on the staff of the Senior British Naval Officer, Middle East.

V/S COMMENTARY

It is hoped that the new signal books will have been distributed and introduced world-wide by the time this goes to press. New covers and securing screws are being made for the F.S.Bs. already issued, as the latter have proved too weak for the size of the book.

With the introduction of the new signal flags, the names for the discs displayed on flag officers' barges need changing. Full information about this will be contained in K.R. & A.I., Chapter 2, which is being rewritten, and also in the new "Minor Landing Craft and Boats Signal Book." The discs will be named "Red," "White" and "Blue" with similar meanings to those at present in use for "Affirmative," "Negative" and the old "Blue Affirmative."

A gadget we saw the other day proved very effective in recovering a hoist, the tack of which had been let go. You may have one of your own (and no doubt better) design, but we produce it here in case you have not. If it won't fly out sufficiently by itself to retrieve your hoist, put it superior with or without a tack-line to the "Negative" pendant.



WIRELESS COMMENTARY

The Summer Number called attention to the need for men of the Telegraphist Branch to excel now in Cryptography, Organisation and Procedure, the need for Theory and Technical in quite such detail as in the past gradually receding as the Electrical Branch comes up to strength. Technical will continue to have its devotees, no doubt, and they will be as enviable and useful as ever, but with the heavier stress on other subjects the Communication officer or rating is face to face with a difficult and typically modern problem. What need the user know?

Does a man who knows something about the inter-

nal-combustion engine get more out of his motor-car? Most garage mechanics would probably say "Yes," and the more emphatically the more refined and elegant the vehicle.

Modern naval wireless equipment is capable in good hands of a very fine performance indeed. Treat it as a box of tricks and it may play you some dirty ones; understand what you are about with each control (the very word is suggestive) and you will get results and avoid wear and tear on yourself and, equally important these days, on the set itself.

Avoid above all the snare laid for the idle, the philosophy which can be expressed as follows: "No one can know all about everything, and this technical gear the scientists produce is bound to be right above my head." Or, more fashionably and dangerously: "I couldn't care less."

In fact, the more science develops, the easier are its major manifestations to understand. Electronics is certainly one of them and is far easier now for the layman to grasp than was the welter of conflicting theories and experimental evidence of twenty years ago.

The experts of the Electrical branch are taking off our shoulders the need to know every detail of the interior of our sets, and the screwdriver and the avo will pass out of our ken; but the general principles of design and operation which lead to the intelligent

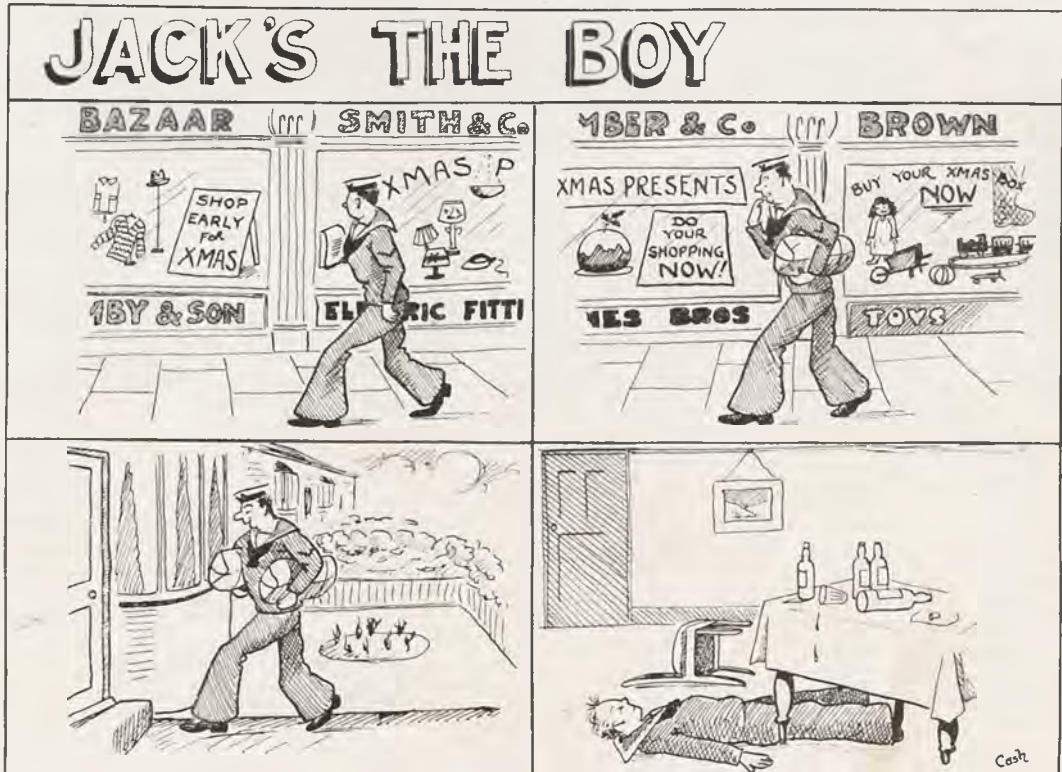
manipulation of equipment and the limitations imposed on radio waves and radio sets by Nature and man are more than ever our business and deserve as great an enthusiasm as ever in the past.

They are, of course, as fundamental. Breakdowns in wireless communications are by no means due to defects alone, and, when they are, an intelligent description of the symptoms will go a long way towards assisting the Electrical branch in ensuring a speedy recovery.

In the technical world there have been three interesting matters recently which those of you who see the English newspapers may have already read.

In America a system of high-speed signalling known as Multifax has been developed. "Gone with the Wind" was transmitted by radio in two and half minutes. Details are not available, but apparently the system approximates to television or facsimile. As such it would seem to require a bandwidth of some 60 Mc/s and be suitable for U.H.F. and optical distance only.

A radio amateur in South Africa reports receiving satisfactorily for some minutes the B.B.C. television programme. This multi-hop reflection of a frequency as high as 40 Mc/s from the F region of the ionosphere will happen for a short period only near the peak of the sunspot cycle and at the right season of the year. It serves to underline, though its cause is really basically



different, the warning note that is always sounded about the real security of V.H.F. communication sets such as T.B.S.

Lastly the Bell Telephone Laboratories in the United States have designed a crystal triode which they have called the transistor. It consists simply of a germanium crystal on the surface of which are two cat's whiskers, emitter and collector, a fraction of an inch apart. Small voltages are applied to each and considerable amplification can be arranged by suitable loading of the collector circuit. The transistor is efficient up to 10 Mc/s and the Company have already produced a demonstration broadcast receiver in which not a single valve is used. The device looks like having a big future in instruments such as hearing aids and similar devices where size and economy of power consumption are paramount considerations.

NOCTURNE

Cold was the Night
And bitter, as the heart
Of a woman thwarted in love.
So deep the Silence,
Wrapping tangible fingers
About the buildings and outhouses,
It felt, to the creeping creatures of the night,
As does a sable cloak
Flung round the shoulders of some furtive spy.
Now came the darkest hour before the Dawn,
And into this sphere
Of black mysterious Night
A figure crept:
Sinister, forbidding,
Filled with the insensate hatred
Of one doomed to watchfulness
While others rest.
Outcast, wretched,
Vilified by men,
He swore revenge
On all the sleeping world around.
A muttered oath that paled the watchful Owl
Escaped his twisted lips,
And with the cold inevitability of Fate
He chose the place to work his fell design.
On tip toe—
Not as honest men who walk with hearty tread
And click of carefree heels—
He slunk through an unguarded door
To where his victims,
Unconscious of the sword about to fall,
Lay in untroubled sleep.
Now was the moment of his triumph!
With features twisted
Like one doomed for ever
To pace the singeing floors of Hell,
He split the darkness with a hideous shout:
"Wakey, Wakey! Lash up and stow."

T. HEE

MATTERS EDUCATIONAL

*There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.*

Among the successful candidates in the recent examinations conducted by the City and Guilds of London Institute, the following from H.M.S. *Mercury* are noted with pleasure:

Lieut. P. Slevin, Irish Naval Service: Mathematics, Grade III; Telecommunications Principles, Grade IV.
C.P.O. Tel. F. P. Ridsdale (Ch.): Radio, Grades II and III.

P.O. Tel. R. C. Wagland (Ports): Radio, Grades I and II.

O. Sig. M. V. Hudson (Ports.): Flour Milling (Intermediate.)

C.R.E. A. E. Nurthern (Ch.): Radio Service Work (Intermediate).

R.E. M. A. Browne (Ch.): Radio, Grades I and II; Radio Service Work (Intermediate).

R.E. R. Heron (Ch.): Radio, Grades I and II; Radio Service Work (Intermediate).

R.E. C. Parfitt (Ch.): Mathematics, Grade II.

R.E. R. C. Parry (Ports.): Radio, Grades I and II; Radio Service Work (Intermediate).

Opportunity is said to be a tricky sort of visitor, who seldom knocks twice, and has to be grasped firmly. This is not entirely applicable to advancement in the Service, but it is better to be safe than sorry; as far as the Naval Educational Examinations are concerned, "Do it now" is a sound principle. Educational Test One has again become the key to advancement, and those who do not hold the certificate, or a certificate of exemption, would be well advised to get busy without further delay. No Communication rating need fear that this test is beyond his capacity; most of the ground was covered in the Training Service, and a few weeks' concentrated effort under skilled guidance should produce the desired result. For qualification for warrant rank, the Higher Educational Test is the goal: this is a more serious problem, since a pass is required in four subjects, most of which call for considerable study. Here again, skilled guidance is necessary, particularly in the matter of "examination technique," but the best teacher in the world cannot do more than guide. The student must do the work!

In a former issue of this journal, reference was made to ships' libraries (fiction, reference, and E.V.T.) which were in process of being brought up to date. This process is now well advanced, and a visit to the Information Room will surprise and interest those who have no first-hand knowledge of the scope of the libraries. Books, however, are no use to anyone while they remain on the shelves. Why not borrow one? If you are interested in a particular subject, consult the librarian or the E.V.T.O., who can probably obtain from the Command Library a suitable volume, if it does not happen to be available in the ship.

*A jollie goode Booke, whereon to looke,
Is better to me than Golde.*

A. R. J.



"The Red Lion," Cosham, was originally built in 1502 for the Henty family and still belongs to them. It is so well known as to be regarded as an official bus terminus of the Portsmouth Corporation; even teetotallers stop there on their way to and from *Mercury*.

This unusual view was taken from the rampart that flanks the London Road, beyond the turning to the Alexandra Hospital,

THE ATOMIC ENERGY RESEARCH ESTABLISHMENT, HARWELL

Shortly after the conclusion of the Japanese War in August, 1945, the British Government announced its decision to found a laboratory for atomic energy research in England, and in January, 1946, Professor J. D. (now Sir John) Cockcroft, who had previously been Director of the Montreal and Chalk River Laboratories of the National Research Council of Canada, was appointed Director of the new establishment. At the same time the permanent R.A.F. airfield at Harwell, in Berkshire, was chosen as the site, and in April, 1946, work on a large-scale building programme was begun.

This programme is as yet far from complete, but, by making use of four large hangars and various other buildings which were already on the airfield, laboratories and equipment for preparing many classes of radio-active isotopes have been in operation since 1947, and a great deal of both fundamental and applied nuclear research has already been carried out.

One of the first commitments of the new establishment was to construct a low-power experimental chain-reacting pile which could be used as a basis for the many investigations to be carried out before larger and more powerful piles were built. In August, 1947, such a pile, designed to run at a power of 100 kilowatts, was completed. "GLEEP," the Graphite Low Energy Experimental Pile, consists of a number of rods of pure uranium metal arranged in a regular lattice in a "moderator" of pure graphite blocks. The chain-reaction involved is accompanied by the conversion of some of the uranium to the metal plutonium, an element which does not occur naturally but which is a particularly suitable starting point for other nuclear reactions. The purpose of the graphite "moderator" is to slow down the particles (neutrons) which support the chain-reaction to the speed at which they are the most likely to produce the necessary splitting, or "fission," in uranium nuclei.

The power at which GLEEP operates is controlled by means of cadmium rods which, when dropped into the pile, absorb some of the neutrons which are thus removed from the chain-reaction. Safety measures include such rods which, when dropped fully into the pile, can stop its operation altogether.

A second and much more powerful pile, known as "BEPO" (British Experimental Pile), began operating at Harwell last July. This one is sixty times more powerful than GLEEP, and is rather more complicated in design.

The plutonium made in either GLEEP or BEPO has to be extracted from the many other radio-active "bi-products" which are produced at the same time; many of which are themselves of very great value in other branches of research. For instance, artificially made radio-active elements are often more suitable



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The 5 million volt Van de Graaff generator (named after its inventor, Professor Van de Graaff) which is installed at Harwell. To prevent loss of energy by spark discharges, the machine is enclosed during operation, in a tank filled with gas at 200 lb. sq. in. pressure. This tank can be seen at the top of the picture, having been lifted clear to disclose the construction of the generator.

than naturally occurring radium in various branches of medicine. Special "hot" laboratories are used for this extraction work in which very careful precautions are taken to avoid exposure of personnel to radiations which are known to be dangerous when in high concentrations.

Besides work on plutonium production much fundamental nuclear research is undertaken at Harwell, for which a formidable array of special equipment is being assembled. Already installed is a "Van de Graaff" high-voltage generator able to produce five million volts, which can be used for accelerating hydrogen nuclei to the very high speeds necessary for bombarding other atoms, while a large "Cyclotron" accelerator, able to deliver particles with energies as high as 200 million volts, is expected to be complete by the end of 1948. This latter machine, in which the acceleration is

achieved electro-magnetically in successive small steps on particles travelling over a slowly expanding spiral path, embodies a magnet weighing 700 tons and having poles over nine feet in diameter. It will be fed with accelerating power from a large radio frequency oscillator, and its total power consumption will be some 1,000 kilowatts. With it experiments will be possible which at present can be carried out in only one place in the world—the radiation laboratory of the University of California.

A major problem of the future is the harnessing of atomic energy to produce power for industrial, commercial and domestic purposes. The only practical method at present would seem to be by using the heat generated in atomic piles to make steam for driving conventional machinery, and it is likely to be some time before this can be done with any chance of competing with coal or oil fuel, either from the point of view of economy or convenience.

B. M. ADKINS, A.S.R.E.



"And in future, when I bring lady friends aboard,
you'll cut out this 'Jack's the boy' business"

PENSIONERS, PLEASE NOTE

In view of the difficulties in providing Electrical and Radio Electrical ratings for Reserve Fleet ships under refit, it has been approved to re-enter a number of C.P.O. and P.O. pensioners (Telegraphists among others) who can be employed on electrical duties. The period of service would be one or two years, and it is the intention that the men entered would be employed at Reserve Fleet ports. Anyone interested should apply immediately to the Commodore of his depot.

UNDER-CURRENTS

They say
 "Still waters run deep,"
 And other clichés, equally trite;
 They say
 "The first thing that occurs to them,"
 Or something equally bright;
 They are fools,
 And I shall prove it.
 Take from humanity a specimen,
 And remove it
 From further contamination.
 We shall presumably,
 On close examination,
 Disclose
 "The way the water flows."
 (Infernal phrasing, no doubt
 Hackneyed and commonplace
 Like our subject.)
 We now behold our guinea-pig
 With foolish face:
 He "doesn't care a fig"
 For anything.
 A mind of loosely woven string,
 Quite un-absorbent,
 "In one ear and out the other,"
 Sort of thing.
 Critical, or catty, if you must,
 The other fellow's invariably wrong;
 As Plato illustrated, the just
 Are strong;
 The right is might,
 They say!
 Our guinea-pig is always right.
 (An odious biped.)
 To proceed, we find
 That receptacle commonly called a mind,
 Both full and empty;
 Empty of sense,
 And hence
 The full collection
 Of rubbish.
 A cinema, the pub,
 A girl, and grub,
 A bookie's tip, a penny pool;
 Oh, hopeless fool!
 A fool, I say, a fool.
 "Quod erat demonstrandum."
 Let's "raise the roof."
 Behold the proof.
 That "They" are fools;
 But, memorandum,
 Who are "They"?
 That strikes a chord,
 They say,
 That we are "They,"
 AND I AM "THEY," OH, LORD!

WREN Z. MOYNAN.

GOING THE ROUNDS IN "MERCURY"

WARD ROOM NOTES

The autumn mists have gathered round our hilltop colony. There is much sweeping up of dead leaves and lighting of fires, and an anxious O.O.W. is wondering where he mislaid the snow-plough. A seductive voice is heard in the land, tempting beaters with bribes of beer, and the rust is being removed from skis and sledges, but most of the inhabitants are preparing to go underground.

The social round continues, enlivened by invitations to the Chiefs' and P.Os.' dances. High-lights have been the guest nights devoted to Whale Island and Burghfield, and the special celebrations connected with the departure of Captain Bonham-Carter. There have been too many notable departures to enumerate, and although the shape of the Establishment remains unchanged, apart from structural alterations for the officers' convenience, there has been a change of hue within, produced by an almost complete replacement of officers in the past year. Even your Assistant Editor is about to be extracted like a bad tooth, and we shall be the poorer for the absence of our jovial friend Captain (S) Haines.

ENTERTAINMENTS

With the advent of the winter season, and consequent dark evenings, it has been decided to resume "live entertainment" in the theatre.

Ken Dallimore brought "Round and About, 4th Edition" to Leydene towards the end of October and gave us a most enjoyable evening. Not the least hard-worked were the stage hands who were required to operate the curtain at high frequency, so slick were the changes of scene.

At the time of writing we are looking forward to a visit from the Victory Players, who are to present "Outrageous Fortune" early in December.

The approach of the Christmas season has prompted the desire for a pantomime and it is hoped to produce this on 9th December. We appear to have quite a fair proportion of talent which it is intended to employ in the production of "Wren Riding Hood."

The nucleus of a dance band has been formed by R.E.M. Greenfield which should also fulfil a much-needed requirement.

C.R.Es. Hart and Hancock attended a three-day course on play production, sponsored by the British Drama League. Representatives from all three Services were present and all agreed that the course was excellent value. Among the well-known names in the theatrical world who discoursed on the many and varied subjects, were Mr. Milton Rosmer, the well-known actor, and Mr. Alan Dent, theatrical critic for the *News Chronicle*. The main idea of the course is to give hints to Service producers, particularly in view of the forthcoming Royal Naval Drama Contest, for

which *Mercury* is an entrant. The competition consists of a presentation of a one-act play (or a single act from a three-act play) and marks are given for acting, choice of play, lighting, production, scenery, etc.. The preliminary rounds are area contests and the finals take place next spring in a well-known London theatre.

We are very sorry to be saying good-bye to P.O. Tel. Rodgers, who is on draft to H.M.S. *Vanguard*. In addition to his many duties as President of the Petty Officers' Mess and Secretary of the Welfare Committee, he has been untiring in the work he has done for Leydene entertainments.

CHIEFS' CHATTER

As exclusively forecast in our last issue, C.Y.S. Oxley and C.P.O. Tel. Hodges have now joined the "Barrow Boys," closely followed by C.P.O. Tel. Soffe. Their future movements are veiled in mystery, but no doubt Michael will eventually find a place to blow his own bugle. Oxley has joined some canal company—on the lock gates. We can now fully appreciate what a certain member meant when he said: "I wouldn't touch you with a barge pole." Quite naturally they were launched into "Civvy Street" with the usual ceremonies, and we are certain that should any member pay a visit to ex-C.Y.S. Oxley he is in no doubt whatever as to the treatment which will be meted out to his canal.

Good news is to hand regarding C.P.O. Tel. Galloway. It appears that he has left the sanatorium and is now in the process of rehabilitation.

Chaos has reigned of late with regard to Mess officials. Firstly, a relief had to be found for the late Secretary, and C.P.O. Tel. Shepherd has now taken over the yoke of office. It is courting disaster to walk into the Mess with a two-shilling piece under his regime. . . . Recently, the drafting authorities have thrown a spanner in the presidential works by announcing that he will shortly be required to don tropical rig. So we are busy sorting out a relief for George Baister. This is more unfortunate, as it comes at a time (pre-Christmas) when the President is unusually busy. However, we are forging ahead with our usual Christmas functions, and high in the list for financial backing is the children's party and dance. These are being held on 14th and 15th December. The whole programme will be much the same as in previous years, the front row being reserved for Witex and T/T Instructors.

In the sporting world we are well represented in the ship's soccer team, Wally Driver being a tower of strength and George Baister still finding the open space. Our Mess team has not done so well as expected, *Anno Domini* having being victualled in the Mess. Instead of the cry "Oil for the lamps of China" we

now have "Oil for the joints of the Chiefs." But there is no truth whatsoever in the rumour that a special parking place is being laid aside for bath-chairs.

Since our last issue we have acquired a new set of dining-room tables, which have enhanced the appearance of the "Restaurant" to a great extent.

The main topic of conversation (apart from who will be in the next W.C.Os.' course) is the success of Portsmouth Football Club. One or two of the "fanatics" are having "Heavens Light our Guide" tattooed on their forearms.

We take this opportunity to wish all members and ex-members a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year, when we hope to see some of you join the Mess again. (Don't forget your joining fee.—Sec.)

SPORT

Rugger

From eight games we've had one draw and one win, although we consider that we've not taken any terrific beatings.

One of the high-lights of the season was the game against *Excellent* which ended 9—5 against us. *Mercury's* four supporters had the thrill of a lifetime to see Sig. Worth chase a ball from his own "25," take a flying dive over Whaley's full-back, only to be beaten by the bounce of the ball on the other side.

Our win against *Dryad* didn't come easily. From a score of 3—0 for us the game went 3—9, 6—9, 11—9, 12—11, and finally 14—12.

We now have our own ground at Soberton, so that we can play home matches.

Hockey

Signal School Mess "A" Team, rallying to their leader's wolf cries, romped gaily home in the Inter-Part Knock-out, past some rather surprised and contrite Petty Officers.

At the time of writing, *Mercury's* 1st XI results are: played, 7; won, 4; lost, 3. We were privileged to have seven stalwarts in the Portsmouth Command Lower Deck Trials, but the final selections convinced us that the selectors couldn't have paid attention. However, Lieut. Simpson, of the Long Course, won a place in the U.S. 1st XI, with our unanimous good wishes. It looks, too, as though a high proportion of the W.R.N.S. Command team will come from *Mercury* (if the new Training Commander isn't looking).

Soccer

This season *Mercury* has entered one team in the U.S. League, Division II, the League management committee having decided that our team would not be strong enough to stand up against the powerful sides in Division I.

Our record in the lower division is very satisfactory. *Mercury* now stands second in the league, having won the last six matches. In the Navy Cup, we had to travel to H.M.S. *Royal Arthur* and the team put up a great fight, drawing level 4—4 after being 4—2 down ten minutes from time. In the replay at Leydene, however, we were eliminated by a better side 3—0.

In the U.S. Senior Challenge Cup, first round, *Mercury* trounced H.M.S. *Hornet* (a Second Division side) at home by 7—0, but the team's best performance has probably been the last match played just before going to press, when, travelling to *Dolphin* in the first round of the U.S. Charity Cup, we achieved a notable victory by defeating this strong First Division side by 2—1. Congratulations to Chief Yeoman Driver and his men on playing such a rousing game. By a coincidence *Mercury* has been drawn against *Dolphin* again—away—in the next round of the Senior Challenge Cup, a game which should provide some fireworks.

A special keenness is noted in the efforts of all players in the first half of the Inter-Part League where in three teams—Petty Officers, Buntings and Ward-room—all tie for the leadership with equal points. A feature noticed so far has been the preponderance of senior ratings playing in all games. All young Sigs. and Tels. are invited to "have a go." Everybody must make a start some time or other and the earlier the better. A good example is Sig. Hunt, who is playing most promising football for the first team. He must be feeling lonely amongst so many veterans. Who will be the first youngster to keep him company?

Water-Polo

H.M.S. *Mercury* entered a team in Division "B" of the Portsmouth Command Water-Polo League. After a somewhat shaky start, in which we lost the first three matches, the team settled down and were undefeated for eight consecutive games. Towards the end of the competition the acquisition of C.R.E. T. Liddell, R.A.N., and Ord. Tel. Woodrow (ex-Otter S.C.), enabled us to show a final record of:—played, 16; won, 5; drawn, 7; lost, 4.

The final match of the season provided the highlight, as we played H.M.S. *St. Vincent* at Pitt Street Baths, a team which had hitherto been undefeated. We had already played a drawn game with *St. Vincent*. The trophy was due to be presented immediately after this game.

The gallery was full of *St. Vincent's* supporters and we were well represented also, so the stage was all set for a grand finale to the season. After a most exciting game *Mercury* defeated *St. Vincent* by 2 goals to 1. Thus we became the only team to defeat the league champions.

As every match had to be played "away from home," the team's performance was very satisfactory. The following represented *Mercury*: C.R.E. Hancock, C.R.E. Liddell, Yeoman Bush, Ldg. Tel. Bernasconi, Ldg. Tel. Taylor, Yeoman Tyler, Tel. Woodrow and Tel. Osborne.

SIGNAL OFFICERS' TIES

"C" Officers wishing to purchase a Signal Officer's tie should apply to the Assistant Secretary, H.M.S. *Mercury*. Two qualities are now available: Artificial silk, 5s. 6d. each; heavy quality silk, 21s. 11d. each.

W.R.N.S. NOTES

We were all very sorry to say good-bye to Second Officer I. J. Scott, who left us in October to go to H.M.S. *Gannet*, after two and a half years as Quarters Officer in H.M.S. *Mercury*. We send her our good wishes in her new appointment.

We welcome Second Officer P. M. C. Goddard, who has come as her relief from H.M.S. *Vulture*.

Since our last report in the Summer Number, the *Mercury* Wrens have had another very successful sports season. The Inter-Unit Cricket Cup and the Swimming Cup have been added to our shelf and we reached the semi-finals of the Inter-Unit Tennis Tournament. We were also very proud to be represented in the W.R.N.S. Tennis Championships at Wimbledon by Second Officer H. N. Jones, who reached the finals of both the Singles and Doubles Championships. In inter-Service matches, we have been represented in the W.R.N.S. cricket team by Wren Down and in the W.R.N.S. swimming team by Wrens Wasey and Anderson.

Wren Swift has started a dressmaking class at Leydene and some very attractive "New Looks" are being created.

The Wrens at Soberton ran a stall at the Droxford church bazaar which was held in the vicarage garden in September. All the articles for sale were made by the Wrens and they succeeded in making a profit of £20. They also held a country dancing class in the village and gave a display at the bazaar.

Many Wrens attended the H.M.S. *Mercury* Trafalgar Day dance in Petersfield Town Hall. The dance which was run by P.O. Tel. Rodgers, was a great success and was enjoyed by everyone, but particularly by Wren Grant, who was the proud winner of a wireless set in the raffle.

CIVILIAN COMMENTARY

Leydene civilians have been fairly well represented in the recent interviews for establishment as Clerical Officers, three out of eight candidates having been successful. As only a limited number was required, this percentage of successes compares very favourably with the results of candidates who competed from other shore establishments. A glance at the list of fortunates shows quite a number of ex-Communicators, to whom we send our hearty congratulations.

Others are seeking this promotion to Clerical Officer the hard way by the normal and reconstruction examinations: may good luck attend their efforts. Their rubbing-up efforts are not without humour—we hope that a certain arithmetical student will soon catch up with "those d— x's."

Among other changes we must mention the success of two of the typists who have now become established. Our third typist, who was one of the "founder-members" of Leydene in August, 1941, has departed to A.S.R.E., Haslemere; her period of loan has been rather protracted. We were sorry to see her go.

Our Industrials also figure in the increase of numbers for establishment, one of the newly established being the sprite who came second in the Veterans' 100 Yards last July.

A change in the Industrials' leading man became necessary through the retiring of the first one on the grounds of ill-health.

To all ex-Communicators we send our best wishes for Christmas and hopes for their prosperity in the coming year.

"MEONMAID"

It is impossible to record here the number of days' sailing this season or the large number of officers and ratings, both male and female, who have enjoyed week-ends and dog watches in *Meonmaid*. Suffice it to describe some of the more momentous races in which she took part.

ROUND THE ISLAND RACE (2nd July) AND COWES WEEK (1st-5th August).—The race round the Isle of Wight was a non-naval event. Amongst a fleet of over eighty starters, we finished about twenty-fifth. Of course, we reckoned, as at least half the race was a run, that a spinaker would have made all the difference. However, we "won" a beer mug—but so did all the other yachts which finished.

Meonmaid attended Cowes Week and entered for two of the races which were specially organised for ex-German yachts. Regrettably, she did not do at all well and luckily there is not space to explain it away.

OUISTREHAM RACE (19th-24th August).—The last race of real distance was that to Ouistreham. *Meonmaid* started first. She was so close to the gun that, when another was fired to recall a little yacht that didn't look as though it was racing, we went back just to make sure. However, the wind and the tide made it easy and we lost little. As the yachts rounded the Bembridge Ledge Buoy, *Meonmaid* was lying about fourth to yachts which would all give her time and we felt that at last we might win a long-distance race—Oh! forlorn hope.

As we cleared the Isle of Wight at about 1800, it appeared from the wind and sea that we were in for a blow, so the skipper decided to take down half a dozen rolls in the mainsail before it got dark. When five and a quarter rolls were down, one who hardly deserves to be nameless (luckily that is the plan of these accounts) dropped the only reefing handle over the side. The skipper was so horrified that he forgot to swear and, were it not that a racing yacht must finish with all her crew, the "culprit" would gladly have followed the handle to its watery grave.

We tried a makeshift handle without avail and were left with our sadly reduced canvas for the rest of that night and half the following forenoon with the wind always light, sometimes dying right away. As it was a race, perhaps we should have dared all and unwrapped



"Meonmaid" rounding the buoy in the Ouistreham race

the sail in bulk, but we were seriously intimidated by reports of the weather to the westward.

So it wasn't till 1000 on the 20th, when the first mate fixed the ship by recognising a church spire which his ship had shot away during the Normandy landings, that we unwrapped our mainsail and sailed as fast as we could to catch the tide into Ouistreham. This we just did, though even our finish was not a success. It was difficult to make out just exactly what was supposed to be the finishing line and it wasn't till we got ashore that we were told that we crossed it by accident as we were entering harbour.

We came seventh out of the twenty yachts that started. As we by just ten minutes got into the lock of the canal before the tide dropped thirty feet in two hours, none of the boats we had beaten finished at all.

MONARCH BOWL RACES.—The Monarch Bowl is a challenge cup raced for by the ex-German yachts of the Portsmouth Command on points accumulated in four races. The first race wasn't bad; in the second we did badly; and, in the third, after an excellent start we came second and were left leading by a quarter of a point from our two closest rivals, *Sea Wraith* and *Sea Hexe*.

In the last race we made a reasonably good start and with the aid of our large genoa and spinaker found ourselves lying not more than twenty seconds behind *Sea Wraith* as we rounded the first mark.

Here unfortunately our triumph came to an end for, when the order was given, instead of the spinaker coming down it stayed stuck at the top beating the wind out of the other sails with its every flap. By the time this mess had been cleared up we were lying fifth with all—or nearly all—hope of beating *Sea Wraith* gone.

There is quite a good racing rule that, when in such a position as ours, the only thing to do is to try something new; but unfortunately all our brilliant ideas made us, if anything, farther behind and we finished the race fifth. That made us third on points equal to *Sea Otter* (*Vernon*) beaten by *Sea Wraith* (*Excellent*), who was first, and *Sea Hexe* (*Daedalus*), who was second.

We hope *Meonmaid* will be ready to start next year's season about the end of March.

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD

ACROSS—1, Negative Report; 9, Expose; 10, Relative; 11, Travesty; 12, Exhale; 14, Opening; 15, Bearing; 17, Engrave; 19, Heaving; 21, Spigot; 24, Sea Bream; 25, Squadron; 26, Severn; 27, Reconnaissance.

DOWN—2, Grosvenor; 3, Treason; 4, Verrey; 5, Relieve; 6, Patch; 7, Revel; 8, Destroyers; 13, Engagement; 16, River Avon; 18, Veteran; 20, Elapses; 22, Pique; 23, Guano; 24, Sinai;

TYPES WE DEPLORE III

A Sparker who lived at Penhale
Was sentenced to six months in prison
For threatening the life
Of an inn keeper's spouse
And demanding strong beer in a bucket.





WHAT ABOUT WARRANT RANK?

A promising young leading rate when asked recently if he intended to try for warrant rank replied: "I haven't thought about it. What do I have to do?"

His reply is typical of that given by a number of others when asked the same question. Surprising? Not at all! To the young man the future seems limitless and the prospects of warrant rank so remote as to allow ample time to do something about it "later on."

This illusion is dangerous; for, later on, when he does eventually think about it, he finds the time is all too short.

Every young man should give this question serious consideration *now* and, if he decides that he wants to become a Warrant Communication Officer, take the first steps towards that end without delay.

In order to be recommended for W.C.O., the regulations require you to have the following qualifications:

- (i) Have passed educationally for warrant rank.
- (ii) Be a confirmed leading rate.
- (iii) Have continuous V.G. character.
- (iv) Be not more than 34½ years of age.

The first essential, therefore, is to pass the Higher Educational Test in English, Navigation and two other subjects which you may choose. Don't let this frighten you—it is not so difficult and you are not compelled to take all four subjects at one exam; if you wish, you can tackle them one at a time as convenient, until you have obtained a pass in each of the four subjects. (Here again the importance of starting young is emphasised, for as you become older so you become stale in school subjects and find them more difficult.)

Go to your Instructor Officer and he will advise you as to the syllabus and which books to study and will give you details of the examination.

Having passed the Educational Test, you can then devote your whole time to the professional side. Not that you should have been idle in this respect in the meantime, for you cannot be recommended for W.C.O. until you have been confirmed in the leading rate. You should therefore request to be recommended for a leading rate's course as early as possible (you may do this three months after you were rated Signaller or Telegraphist, or you may be recommended earlier if you have outstanding ability).

Having attained the qualifications mentioned above, you will be reported on each half-year on form S.198 and the most promising candidates will be selected for the course. Before you can do the course, however, you will have to have:

- (i) Passed the professional examination for Yeoman of Signals or Petty Officer Telegraphist (Lower Standard exams do not count).
- (ii) Served seven years since you entered the Service.
- (iii) Completed two years' service in the leading rate (this includes acting time).

As a Warrant Communication Officer is required to carry out the duties of a junior Signal Officer, a considerable amount of the course is devoted to opposite subject instruction (Wireless for ex-Signal ratings and V/S for ex-Telegraphist ratings), but a high standard in Basic Radio Theory and Technical is not required. You would be well advised, therefore, to make yourself thoroughly acquainted with the duties of your "opposite number" department while you are waiting your turn for the course. The standards of knowledge required and the percentages to be obtained in the examination are contained in the new Signal Training Manual now being printed.

The opportunities offered at the present time are unique, as the reorganisation caused by the introduction of the Electrical Branch calls for quite a large increase in the number of Warrant Communication Officers that will be required in the next few years. Don't miss a wonderful opportunity! Remember, the younger you are promoted, the greater the benefits you will enjoy, not only whilst you are serving but in the pension you will receive on retiring. So why not "have a go"?

J. S. W.

SOLUTION TO SECRET MESSAGE

The cipher consists of three alphabets. The letters have been written in the order EDUCATION, followed by the remaining ones in their correct order. Each alphabet has been "stepped down" one letter and then taken in order 132.

I had heard in the silent frosty air a sound that brought my heart into my mouth. The tapping of the blind man's stick upon the frozen road. It drew nearer and nearer while we sat holding our breath. Then it struck sharply on the inn door and then we could hear the handle being turned and the bolt rattled as the wretched being tried to enter.—R. L. Stevenson.

KNOCKER

BY THE ART EDITOR



"Did I ever tell you about the time Klocker White went all highbrow?" asked the Big Sailor, blowing the froth off a BB split.

We were in our usual corner in the bar parlour of "The Pick and Pencil," and the talk had drifted—as it inevitably does on these occasions—to the irrepressible Klocker.

"I don't think you have," I replied. "Do tell me."

Noting a southerly wind in his pint pot, I summoned the barmaid—yclept Flossie—and became all ears.

Unfeeling friends assure me that this phenomenon actually took place at birth, but I put this down to carping, and these columns are not the place for a discussion on physiology.

"It all started through a judy," said the Big Sailor. "Funny thing, but trouble always does. If it wasn't for judies a matelot's life would be fairly quiet. An odd war or two, maybe, or some mopping-up operations, but nothing really amounting to trouble. And talking of mopping up——"

I pressed the bell.

"Nothing but trouble where they are," he continued. "They seem to pair up with it natural like fish with chips. You tied up, brother?"

I assured him that the lines on my face were natural.

"Keep away from 'em," he advised, "and you'll live happy and die quiet."

He disappeared into his glass.

The Big Sailor is not a man to be hurried, so I spent the next few moments rolling a cigarette—Erinmore, in spite of what they think in the Regulating Office.

"Mark my words, brother," resumed the sailor, surfacing. "If you do crosswords and the clue says 'Trouble in four letters' spell it J-U-D-Y."

"This time I'm telling you about, me and Klocker was up the Smoke where we'd been studying bird life at 'The Feathers' in the Waterloo Road. There was only a couple of hours left before our coach left for Pompey so we opened our pockets for inspection. Ninepence between us. Well, you can't buy a bottle of food for that so we decided to walk around till coach time. Over the bridge we went, and turned down the Strand, letting the people see a couple of members of the Service what made England glorious—and I don't want any cracks out of you!"

Putting down my lime juice, I threw out my tiny

chest indignantly, and assured him that nothing could have been farther from my thoughts.

"All right, all right. I'll overlook it this time," he said generously. "But blokes who insult matelots by making cracks——"

Summoning Dr. Flossie I ordered balm for his wounds, and waited for him to get on with the story.

"We got as far as Trafalgar Square when the rain started. There's only one civilised place to shelter from the rain, but no barman could be expected to look tolerantly on a couple of blokes with ninepence between 'em, so we hopped into the Art Gallery, figuring that no place could be drier than that. We walked past the bloke selling catalogues as if we hadn't noticed him, which was just as well because we found one outside a place marked 'Gentlemen' with only one page missing.

"Well, by and by we were looking at a picture called 'Venus Rising out of the Sea,' and admiring the way the artist had painted the shells, when Klocker sees a judy looking all over the place as if she's mislaid something. Smasher she was, new look and all.

"'You lost something, Miss?' asked Klocker, who is notoriously shy with women.

"'Well, actually,' said the female with a bay-wind-dow accent, 'I seem to have mislaid my catalogue, and I'm most frightfully interested in this water-colour heah—but frightfully. Such depth! Such breadth!'

"Me, I couldn't see any depth about it and as for breadth, well, it was all of twelve inches, and I said so.

"'Scram!' said Klocker.

"'Eh?'

"'Scram. Shove off. You're going to miss your appointment with the First Sea Lord if you don't get a move on.'

"I can take a hint as well as anybody, so I pushed off, haughty like.

"'Trouble with my mate,' I heard Klocker say as I was going 'is he hasn't got no soul. The tough job I had dragging him in to see these here pictures you'd never believe. By Jove! Look at the brushwork in this Goya. Superb.'

"I left them to it."

The Big Sailor sighed and stared into his empty glass.

"Women and artists," he spat scornfully. "Old

Knocker was all right until he got mixed up with them."

"So he saw the young woman again?" I asked, beckoning Flossie.

"I'm coming to that. Of course, Knocker didn't know the difference between a tube of oil paint and a pot of pussers crabfat. To make things worse, she was interested in poetry, and she was a member of some long-haired society for preserving the purity of the English tongue.

"Knocker had to go into training for his next date with her, and he borrowed all the books on painting and poetry he could persuade the Schoolie to lend him. It shook old Schoolie a bit, because Knocker's sole reading before this was the *Sporting Chronicle* and 'No Orchids for Miss Blandish.'

"Life became one long coal ship with him walking about spouting bits of Shakespeare, and he wouldn't say nothing stronger than 'bother' on account of his judy's interest in pure English.

"The night before his date, Knocker stayed up well into the middle watch poring over 'The Lives of the Poets' and a musical dictionary. He was dog-tired when he crawled into his fleabag at oh-two-gigolo.

"Next morning he took an unofficial guard and steerage, and was discovered by the jaunty—known as Agony Column—at 0830 still snoring like a pig. The jaunty, who had a quick way with slack hammocks, turned old Knocker over, and poured him out.

"Still half asleep, Knocker let out a stream of pure English that blistered the paintwork and made a passing gunner's mate blush to the roots of his hair.

"In due course, Knocker was brought to the Assizes with the Joss man as counsel for the prosecution.

"'Did remain in his hammock until 0830,' read out the jaunty, 'and when turned out did use abusive and obscene language to his superior.'

"'Is it a habit of yours to lie in bed till noon?' asked the Old Man, sarcastic.

"'Sir,' said Knocker,

'Full many a glorious morning have I seen

Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye.'"

"'Never mind the poetry,' said the Old Man, who had also heard of Shakespeare. 'What about these words you used? Repeat them please, Master.'

"The Joss read out a list of words that tarnished the gold on the Old Man's sleeves. The Captain wasn't going to miss such an opportunity of learning some new ones, and he asked for a repetition.

"'Dreadful,' he said when the Jaunty had finished. 'I can't believe one of my ship's company would use such words. What d'you mean by it?'

"'Sir,' answered old Knocker, 'never, during the course of a long and varied career in the service of the Crown have words of such doubtful derivation and unequivocal meaning emanated from these lips. Most of them, I am pleased to say, I am entirely unacquainted with, and their meaning is beyond the range of my comprehension.'

"'Help!' shouted the Old Man. 'What part of the country are you from, White?'

"'Liverpool, sir.'

"The Captain's eyebrows came down to their normal level.

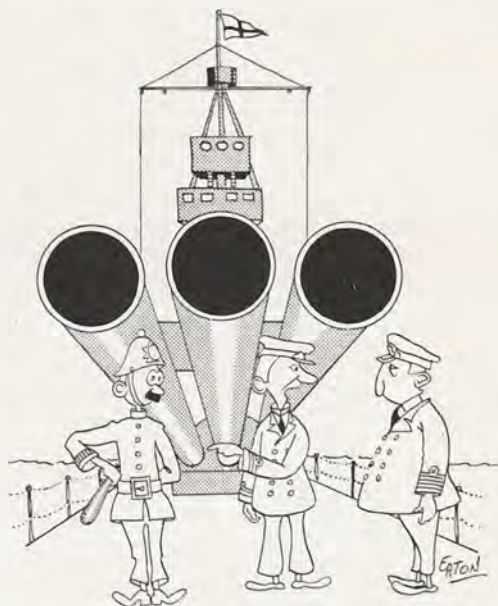
"'Fourteen days number 11.'"

* * *

"So you see," said the Big Sailor, "if Knocker had kept away from this judy in the Art Gallery he would not have got that dose of jankers. Like I've always said, judies are poison."

"Well," I said at length, "the bell has gone. You coming my way?"

"Sorry, pal," he grinned. "I've got a date with Flossie."



'He refuses to go until he's seen our firearms permit'

UNDER THE COUNTER

So many of the things we need these days seem to have disappeared under that elusive place "the counter" that it is all the more gratifying to note that our advertisers have placed, once again, their goods and services on view for all readers of THE COMMUNICATOR to see and make a note of.

We do sincerely hope that you will give all these firms your personal attention, and when you are in the market for any of the goods they sell think of the support they have given your magazine and support them in your turn. After all, we could not produce such a good magazine without their help, so they deserve well of all of you.

ROUND THE HOME ESTABLISHMENTS

NAVAL AIR SIGNAL SCHOOL

The first Warrant Communication Officers' Qualifying Course paid us a visit for fourteen days in July. The visit was welcomed and enjoyed by all concerned. The School became permeated with such phrases as "Rotating the Axis" and "Standard Aircraft Break-up Procedure." So far, the axis is not yet airborne, but one shudders to think of what might happen if W.C.Os. armed with Conduct of the Fleet, became airborne for long.

Our current sporting activities are centred about soccer and hockey, and we are fortunate in having both a soccer and a hockey pitch in our own grounds. Up to date, the soccer eleven has won its first match in the *Daedalus* Inter-Part Competition with a victory of 6-0 against the Supply and Secretariat Division. Our hockey eleven has yet to be tested as our first match in the Inter-Part was a walk-over, but training is in full swing and great results are expected. The hockey practice, in the lunch hour, has at least succeeded in unearthing the armchair regulars. Although not exactly polished, their performance on the hockey pitch is truly amazing and an excellent example to the younger generation. We are still the proud possessors of the *Daedalus* Inter-Part Cricket and .22 Rifle Shooting Trophies and hope to enlarge our collection.

This quarter has seen increased activity on the instructional side of the School with increasing changes in the Instructional staff. Amongst the more important courses dealt with were the R.I.N. and R.P.N. Long "C" Course, who delighted us with a display on how hockey should be played, Nos. 5 and 6 Aircrewmen's Courses and the No. 1 Pilot Observers' Conversion Course. The latter course was rather an experimental one, but results were good and much knowledge and experience gained. No. 7 Aircrewmen's Course is due to commence in early December. A fairly steady programme of D/F training has been maintained, with hardly a week going by without pupils. We are also due for a visit in December by W.R.N.S. from Leydene for fourteen days' air familiarisation training. Coming at the end of a fairly arduous quarter, the visit will no doubt keep us all going until the leave period.

There have been considerable changes in both School and squadron staffs and more are impending. Our irrepressible Sigbo, Mr. Argent, W.C.O., left us late one night for the sterner climate of Leydene after a long and distinguished career at the lectern and in the playing field both at Arbroath and Hillhead. He has been relieved by Mr. Fitzgerald, W.C.O.

Mr. Suggitt is now one of our pupils, converting to W.F.O.(AC), but we hope to get him back after Christmas. Mr. Marsh, W.A.O.(O), is leaving shortly to become an Air Traffic Controller. Lieut. (C) P. C. Brooker goes to the West Indies squadron. Lieuts. Standbridge and Wooding have left 783 Squadron.

Changes in Rating Instructors have been no less considerable. Aircrewman I. Tomlin, the Senior Rating Instructor, has left us for the beach, and six others have gone either to join the Electrical branch, the Aircraft Handlers' Branch or to convert to Aircrewmen. A number of qualified Aircrewmen have taken their places.

Finally, the Naval Air Signal School extends Christmas greetings and best wishes for 1949 to all aviators and Communicators wherever they may be.

R.N.S.S., DEVONPORT

We said good-bye to Lieut. Cdr. Schonfeldt early in August and welcomed in his place Lieut. Cdr. Phillimore, who is already proving a boon to a struggling establishment. Lieut. Cdr. Schonfeldt left us to join H.M.S. *Illustrious* and is now Sports Officer, Welfare Officer and Press Liaison Officer.

Mr. Timms and Mr. Bennett have been relieved by Mr. Wolfe and Mr. Kennedy respectively, both of whom appear to have settled in well. Mr. Wolfe took over the V/S Training chair, and Mr. Kennedy a brand-new job known as C.I. He is in charge of all touch-typing, voice and crypto training—all subjects which are looming larger and larger in the Communication world. His energy is matched only by his enthusiastic determination to ensure that everyone in the Devonport Division does a course—although it is not true that he asked the Commodore of the Royal Naval Barracks to come up and do a touch-typing course. Mr. Timms and Mr. Bennett are, at present, gracing the august premises of the Alma Mater being converted to technical friends.

Amongst recent innovations have been two courses for officers from ships and establishments in the Plymouth Command. They are an officers' crypto course lasting a week, and a course on the New Signal Book, which takes a fortnight. Both have been well attended since their inception in August—an average of thirteen officers and fifty four ratings are under instruction in the School each week.

Despite our paucity of numbers, Devonport Signal School has met many calls. A party of ratings was sent to Torquay to establish an M.S.O. to deal with all communications for the Olympic Regatta and Training Squadron. Mr. Wolfe was in charge of the party and we were pleased to receive a signal of thanks and congratulations for work well carried out. We were asked to supply some Chief Yeomen for operating the score-board at Wembley during the Olympic Games—Chief Yeomen E. G. Reed, D. G. Coles and C. S. Plant were our representatives. In September when the Home Fleet sailed on its autumn cruise a large-scale exercise was held as the ships passed through Plymouth Command. Once again the call came for hands, and by dint of scraping the barrel we met it—but only just.

We are now the proud possessors of two masts for flag hoisting—the inevitable crowd of dockyard mates arrived complete with gear, and, having disrupted our routine somewhat, departed a short time later leaving two signalling masts soaring into the cloudy sky. We are waiting to erect another Adastral mast which will improve our receiving aerials and also prove of assistance to the “Hams.”

A Signal School Savings Group has been formed under the leadership of Lieut. Cdr. Phillimore and is being well supported.

To provide a little entertainment we now have a 16-mm. projector working on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. The films shown, although instructional, usually have a strong general interest.

As a parting gift may we give you two genuine “howlers” from recent examination papers? Asked to explain the term “Pendants Inferior” one lad said: “It means that the ship is not being addressed but is being talked about.” In the other the question was: “Write all you know about paraphrasing.” The answer: “Message received reads ‘The cat sat on the mat.’ Message sent to press now reads: ‘Cat was sitting on the mat.’” Foreign powers see no connection with the original message!

Until next time, we at Devonport would like to say “*Au revoir*” and wish all Communicators a very happy Christmas and may the New Year bring you all everything you want most.

H. P.

COMBINED SIGNAL SCHOOL

Nos. 6, 7 and 8 Basic Courses have completed their six weeks’ training, the last one ending on 19th November. The R.N. has been poorly represented of late in these courses, but No. 8 had more or less equal representation from all three Services, in true Combined Ops. spirit, the R.N. providing two Tels., two Sigs. and two Ord. Sigs. out of a total of twenty. Three Formation Signals Officers’ courses have also been through the mill, with the R.A.F. as usual providing the bulk of the course. Royal Signals Territorial Army units are paying us frequent visits, and they are very enthusiastic, although their visits are of short duration. During July we were again honoured by a visit of U.N.O. officers from Leydene.

Briefly, a Basic Course consists of technical instruction, aided by floor models, practical exercises, in and around the camp, which are made as interesting as possible and carried out on a competitive basis, and finally Exercise “Mermaid.” This exercise consists of a wet landing on a local beach and communication across country. It takes two whole days with a resting place at a local farmhouse for the night, this latter part being the most popular item of the exercise. Recently we have had valuable co-operation and assistance from the R.A.F. Station at Chivenor in providing air strikes, which have made the exercise more realistic. The experiences of one of our W.C.Os. who took part in this exercise recently are worthy of mention. He was quite at home until the craft beached,

but from then on he became truly like a fish out of water. He spent several hours trying to find Brigade Headquarters, and when he did so they had already settled down for the night. He then found himself a nice barn, or so he thought, with plenty of hay and decided that perhaps the soldier’s life was more comfortable after all than sitting in an M.S.O. at sea. All was well, apart from an occasional creeple-crawlie which seemed to wander all over him, until the barn door blew in with a crash and landed very very near to our communicator-cum-soldier. His remarks when he returned to the camp the next day I’m afraid would not even bear submitting to the Editor!

Our R.N. Beach Signal Section, now composed entirely of Royal Marines, have been “up the Straits” exercising with the Mediterranean Fleet. We are looking forward to seeing their sun-bronzed faces and hearing their tales of those romantic spots in the George Cross Island.

Owing to economy cuts in the Services, H.M.S. *Appledore* struck her flag in April and to mark the end of a very useful unit of the R.N. the band of the Royal Marines, Plymouth, beat “Retreat.”

Recently we have lost Lieut. Cdr. B. G. Vann, who has been relieved as Naval Training Officer by Lieut. R. A. H. Panter. Shortly we shall be losing quite a few real old-timers, not only in the Service but in Combined Ops., especially C.P.O. Tel. Salter, who has served in Combined Operations in all parts of the world since about 1942. We wish him and C.P.O. Tel. Bonetta every success in civilian life. Also in the near future our First Lieutenant, Communication Lieut. H. V. Drury, will be leaving the Service. I’m sure the Communication Branch as a whole will be pleased to have seen the award of his well-merited M.B.E., but will be sorry to lose such a stalwart. He will always remain, during his retirement, W/T 1 for the Torridge inlet.

F. A. N. A.

R.N.S.S., COOKHAM

The wind has started whistling through the woods again, after the summer calm, and the Battle of the Leaves is now in full swing, with more and more time being spent in keeping the road and paths clear. In the huts under the trees the tempo of life is increasing with our additional commitments. Consequent on the closing of Fort Southwick, all S.S. New Entry Training has now been centralised here, and, at the time of writing, we have a total of eleven W/T and seven V/S training classes under instruction. This figure of 300 trainees is expected to rise in the near future, and, in addition, we have qualifying courses for Leading Tel. and Leading Sig. refresher classes, “Opposite Subject” classes and touch-typing classes, all of which leave few to man the line of defence against the ever-falling leaf.

The Command Supply Officer visited us in September and was much impressed by the touch-typing training facilities, and was still remarking on this

while touring the galleys and store rooms. The Naval Medical Officer of Health has also visited us and commented: "It was a great pleasure to visit this Establishment and see such a high standard maintained throughout. The picture is even more impeccable than last year."

We have been called upon to provide key ratings at such national occasions as the unveiling of the memorial at Westminster to His late Majesty King George V, and also on Trafalgar Day on the occasion of the unveiling of the busts of Admirals of the Fleet Lords Jellicoe and Beatty. Much credit is due to the ratings who took part in these celebrations for their outstanding bearing and appearance.

For our recreation, the C.A.D.S. has been given fresh life by the arrival of Second Officer M. C. Smith, who will doubtless be remembered by many of her old friends at Leydene, where she once served as "krrrrrr-rusher." Second Officer Smith has already produced "When we are Married," is now busy with a variety show, and it is hoped to produce a first-class pantomime before Christmas. It is very gratifying to see the keenness with which trainees and Wrens come forward to assist, and some of them show great talent.

In the film world we have now joined a private film library so that, in addition to R.N.F.C. films on two

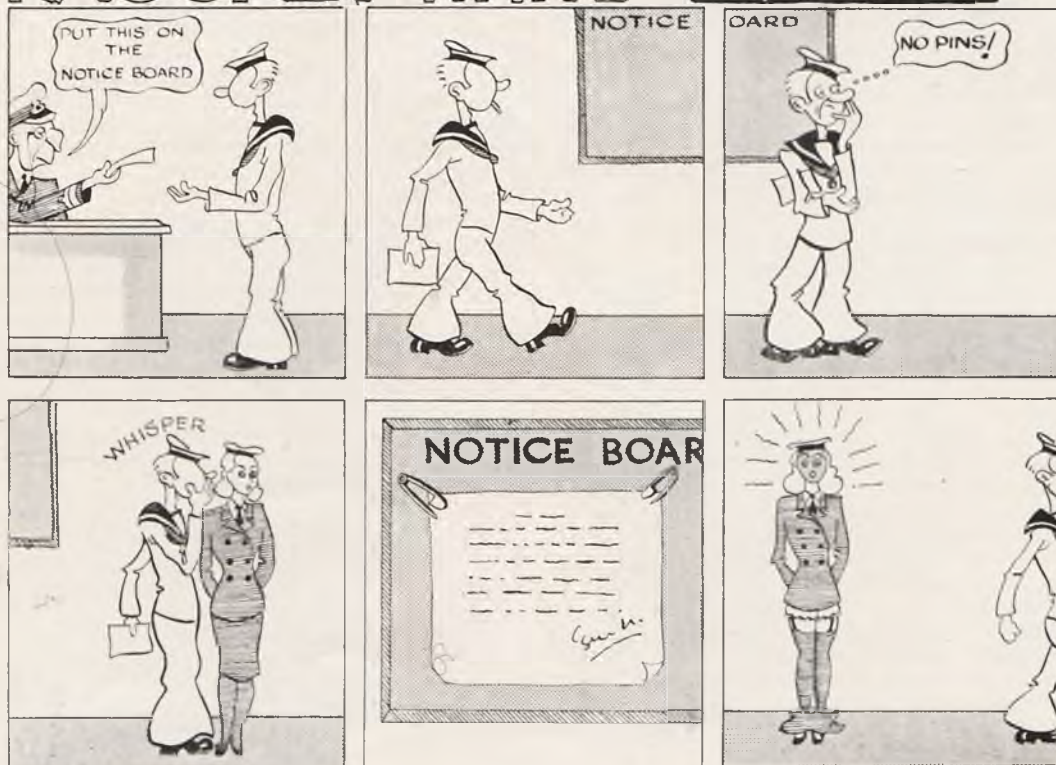
days a week, we also have other full-length films on three further days, the latter being paid for out of the Entertainments Fund. In addition a Musical Circle has been started for those keen on classical music and this is receiving unexpectedly good support.

So, on the whole, there is quite a lot to keep us amused here in the evenings, and the only pity is that no approval has yet been received to a two-year-old proposal to enlarge our present recreation hut, which is inadequate for the increasing number of young men under training here. Undeafed, we are still trying to get approval although now into the third year of effort.

For the winter, we are fortunate enough to have the use of three soccer grounds. An Inter-Hut League is consequently in full swing, and we shall be able to have some first-class matches against local teams. Already, at the time of going to press, we have won, with great ease, the R.N. Barracks Inter-Block Competition, and are lying second in the Wednesday League. Unfortunately we have not been so lucky with regard to rugger and hockey, as our nearest "home" grounds are some three miles away in the Dockyard.

We wish all officers and ratings of the Communication Branch of the Chatham Port Division and all others who have been associated with us, our best wishes for a most happy Christmas, and all success, good health and good luck in 1949.

KNOCKER WHITE by EATON



H.M.S. "ARIEL"

This term, another offspring salutes the Alma Mater and, once initiated, hopes to remain a permanent member of the family circle. In presenting our credentials, we proudly claim that many of the senior Instructors here started life as "Sparkers," and more than one officer passed through Leydene as a W/T Officer (Sp.).

Of the two senior ratings' conversion classes going through, the first consists entirely of ex-C. and P.O. Tels. from all three depots. Many past and present members of the Signal School will remember C.P.O. Tel. Davis (one time Chief of the Technical Pool), and others who passed through H.M.I.S. *Talvar* during the war will remember another confederate of his from Chatham, C.P.O. Tel. McCulloch.

Guzzonians may like to know that the darker moments of class life are enlightened by P.O. Tel. (Scouse) Town, assisted by P.O. Tel. Phillips. Among the representatives from Leydene itself, we have P.O. Tel. "Bill" Hurst (an ex-Vice-President of the S.S. P.Os.' Mess) and your humble correspondent.

The second conversion course consists of ex-C. and P.O. T.A.Gs., many of whom began life as—if I may borrow a phrase from the Captain of H.M.S. *Ariel*—"the better type of Boy Tel. turned out by Shotley before the war."

As we are largely a training establishment, sport is the keynote, and ample facilities are available for almost every game. Competition is keen, both among ratings and Wrens (sorry we left the girls out until now), and inter-divisional competitions are going on the whole time. Out latest acquirement in the field of sport is two fine hard tennis courts, one in West Camp and one in East.

Soccer, of course, holds the limelight at the moment and we are proud to announce that *Ariel* has reached the third round of the Air Command Cup, defeating R.N.A.S., Anthorn, in the second round. The draw for the third round takes place this month.

The keener types in the camp have organised an Amateur Radio Club and are at present awaiting a call sign. As soon as the station is on the air they will probably be looking for a Q.S.O. from G3BZU—so until then, cheerio from *Ariel*.

P. E. C.

H.M.S. "BRUCE"

Seasonable greetings indeed from Scotland; for what could be more appropriate than writing the contribution for the Christmas edition of THE COMMUNICATOR on the day we had our first fall of snow of the winter? Heavily laden clouds suggest that maybe more will come.

The end of last term saw the "van" of our Communication classes—201 and 202—complete course and leave the establishment for the home ports prior to sea drafting. As is the custom in *Bruce*, the Bugle Band played the classes out of the main gate; and the enthusiasm they have displayed all through their

course here was continued, as they had the signal "Good-bye and Good Luck" hoisted on a portable mast which was carried by a W/T Boy who had only relinquished the "beating of the big drum" the day previously as a member of the Bugle Band. It is not without some regret that we saw them go, but it is comforting to feel sure that our loss will be some ships' gain.

We are having busy days in the Communication Section, with more than two hundred boys eager to learn their trade. All day long the incidental music is provided by the rhythmic beat and carriage return from the typing room, while in the distance we hear that the "Teddy Bears' Picnic" is conducive to the snappy and correct arm movements of semaphore transmission. The senior W/T class live up to our motto of "By Attempt we Attain," particularly in Witex 3, where our Type 60EQR, working on 5400 Kc/s, is allowing us to participate successfully in the face of friendly competition from GXI and GXH, who enjoy a very advantageous geographical position; but we hope to have the delivery of our 89Q within the week and this should add more power to our elbow.

On Trafalgar Day, we were honoured by the official visit of F.O.S.N.I., Vice-Admiral E. R. Archer, who, as an old "C" Officer, was very interested in the modern equipment and instructional aids in communications.

As to personalities on the staff here, I feel that some mention should be made of our S.C.O., Lieut. Oxley, who, after a long career in the signal world, is still one of the most enthusiastic members of the "union" and a guiding light to our young communicators. And Chief Yeoman Floyd, who manages to turn out excellent Signal Boys with more than a little knowledge of rugby, as his divisional rugby team, well represented by Communicators, won the Divisional Rugby Tournament.

We hope to make our debut on the air soon in the amateur bands, as C.P.O. Tel. Cook (63BMH) has had his licence transferred. So we look forward to a contact with G3BZU, and also overseas "Hams."

No mention need be made of the Communication Boys' efforts at all sports; it is now the accepted fact that they are outstanding. To quote an instance: nine of the first twelve Boys home in the Establishment cross-country race wore the intelligent look of Communicators.

In closing I say, on behalf of us all here in *Bruce*, "A merry Christmas and a happy New Year to all Communicators wherever you may be."

E. E. S.

H.M.S. "GANGES"

Quite a lot of changes are being made in *Ganges* over the New Year and it may be of interest to give an account of what is happening.

The main change is that all courses are being shortened. As far as the C.S. Communication Boy is concerned this means that the course is to be cut from a total of sixty-three to fifty-two weeks, that is from forty-five to thirty-five instructional weeks. At the

FREQUENCIES

In 1948 at Atlantic City an international conference was convened which lasted for five months and at the end produced a large tome of regulations for the international control of communications in the future. Amongst many other decisions this conference divided the spectrum into many bands and allocated these bands to the various services, such as Broadcasting, Fixed, Maritime and Aeronautical, and others. It also set up at Geneva a permanent Secretariat, which is called the International Telecommunication Union, to co-ordinate future conferences and communication matters.

Atlantic City, having completed the broad outlines, left it to other international conferences to decide which particular frequency in its appropriate band was to be allocated to this airfield, that broadcasting station or the other coastal station. Broadly speaking, each particular service is allocated bands throughout the spectrum.

Atlantic City also divided the world into three regions, which very roughly, were: Region One, which covers Europe and Africa; Region Two, which is the Western Hemisphere; and Region Three, which is East of Suez, including Australasia.

The conference which was to decide the allocation of frequencies below 200 Kc/s, and from 4 Mc/s to 25 Mc/s, on a world-wide basis, was started at Geneva in January, 1948, and was given four months to complete its work. It is, however, still in progress and has now been given until May, 1949, to finish its task, which has proved to be much greater than was anticipated. This conference is known as the Provisional Frequency Board.

The regional conferences who will deal with frequencies between 200 Kc/s and 4 Mc/s have not yet started, but it is the present intention to convene the Regions One and Three Conference at Geneva in June and February, 1949, respectively, and Region Two Conference at Bogota.

The European Broadcasting Conference was held at Copenhagen and finished in September, 1948.

Of these conferences it is the Provisional Frequency Board which is most important to the Navy, although it is obvious that the regional conferences affect us to a large degree as well. In a short space it is impossible to explain the multitude of tasks which have to be dealt with by the P.F.B. Questions of frequency spacing and frequency sharing and many more technical matters have to be thrashed out and rules made, which when applied will prevent interference from nearby stations or other stations sharing the same frequency in other parts of the world. Frequency complements, which is the number of frequencies in the different megacycle bands which have to be allocated to a particular fixed service in order that that service can operate at all hours of the day and night, in summer or winter, through the whole sunspot cycle of eleven and a half years, have to be prepared for some 2,000 circuits.

All the requirements forwarded by all nations have

to be checked and reduced to a workable form and many requirements which are asked for for one particular service—say, Maritime—should have been asked for in Fixed. This entails the study of thousands of individual requirements. One great maritime power has asked for more frequencies for its own use than are available for allocation to the whole world; one small republic asked for as many frequencies for maritime use as was asked for by the United Kingdom; and one minor nation wanted ten times more frequencies for broadcasting use than it has at the moment or is likely to want in the future.

All these difficulties and many more have yet to be overcome in order that a workable frequency list can be produced. The frequency list when, or if, produced has then got to be studied by all nations concerned at an administrative conference which is due to be held at Geneva in October, 1949. If it is produced, and if it is agreed to, it will be introduced about a year after the administrative conference, about the end of 1950.

With good faith a workable answer can be found if countries limit themselves to honest demands. After all, the frequency world is working reasonably well in spite of everybody being dotted about all over the spectrum regardless of the service. It should, therefore, work a good deal better with the spectrum properly organised.

THE ROYAL NEW ZEALAND NAVY

The year has been a most important one for the Royal New Zealand Navy. We have acquired six new ships and more than doubled our previous personnel figures, the new "all-time high" being in the region of 2,500 officers and ratings.

This has, of course, made the year one of recruiting and training in an effort to cope with the new commitments. This has been particularly true of the Branch, where not only has there been a big leeway to make up in numbers, but the other "New Look" items, New Books and New Procedures have tended to increase the training tempo and cause much burning of midnight oil.

We have received an occasional draft copy of the new books from time to time through the year and these have been used to train the new entries and give a few short conversion courses. The final versions of the C.O.F. and F.S.B. have now arrived and we will be able to conform with the rest of the Navy in bringing them into use.

The ENZED Navy has therefore had a very active and progressive year and is looking forward to 1949, when for the first time in our history we will have more than two major war vessels in commission and available for exercises.

Once again the Communicators of the Royal New Zealand Navy send to their fellow-Communicators in the Royal Navies of the British Commonwealth and Empire, greetings for Christmas and their sincere good wishes for a happy and prosperous 1949.

end of the course A.C. Boys will remain in the Establishment for a further eight weeks for a "Continuation Course" of concentrated School.

Now the old course of sixty-three weeks may seem a very long one for initial training, but, in fact, only a proportion of the time was devoted to Communication training. This time was really too short for what is now required, and we have for some time been aware that it was only possible to reach the necessary standard with some difficulty, particularly in practical.

In the new course, more time has been allocated to Communication training. All the extra time has been devoted to practical instruction, and it is our hope that in future the *Ganges* Communication Boy will be a really reliable operator as soon as he gets to sea.

In this connection, we sometimes receive the criticism from ships that we appear to attach too much importance to bookwork and theory and too little to practical. We should like to take the opportunity of saying that this is definitely not so. The primary object of the professional part of the course is to turn out a good operator, and the bookwork and theory taught are the minimum required for this purpose.

The second change is the institution of a "House System". In the past, classes have been allocated to divisions in pairs and have lived together throughout their course in the same mess under the same Instructors who take them for instruction. A division has consisted of a number of such messes. In the future, one class from each entry will be allocated to each division, and on joining a division will be split up among all the messes in it. The instructors of the classes belonging to a division will be in charge of the messes which will contain some Boys from each class in the division.

The advantage of this system is that Boys of all seniorities are mixed together in the same mess, so that older Boys can assist with the training and up-bringing of the juniors. It has been found that the standard of smartness and conduct of the seniors is much improved by the fear that they may be excelled by their juniors.

In the past the mess and class have tended to be a water-tight compartment and a Boy has led his whole life within their limits. In addition, the house system enables a more economical use to be made of accommodation. The terms "division" and "mess" are being retained.

Communication Boys are now divided for School purposes into A.C. and G.C. classes instead of V/S and W/T, and do the same course as the Seaman A.C. and G.C. Boys.

H.M.S. *Bruce* is to be closed and in future all training of Communication Boys will be carried out at *Ganges*.

Finally we should like to say that we would be most grateful if the more senior members of the branch who have to deal with Communication Boys after they leave here could let us have any remarks on their usefulness and progress. It is of great assistance in running training to know whether the products are meeting requirements.

R.N.S.S. FORT SOUTHWICK

On 24th July, 1948, all training at Fort Southwick ceased and the Establishment reduced to Care and Maintenance. Ratings who had not completed their Part 2 training were, together with their Instructors, transferred to R.N.S.S., Cookham Camp. It had been evident for some time that something like this would happen owing to the steady reduction in the number of N.S. and S.S. ratings arriving here. However, we, like Mr. Micawber, hoped that "something would turn up" and at least stave off the evil hour. Alas, it was not to be: so this will, of necessity, be our last contribution to THE COMMUNICATOR.

At the moment of writing (intending "Vultures," please note) we are in a state of "suspended animation" with stores and equipment ready at short notice for the welcome call to reopen. Whether this will ever come remains to be seen. Meanwhile, we look forward with some misgiving to a winter of splendid isolation on Portsdown Hill. Perhaps—who knows?—it may prove to be not so lonely if our "confrères" from Haslemere persist in their peaceful penetration and infiltration. Come what may in the shape of ice and snow, we shall not be entirely cut off from civilisation, for a merciful Providence has left us with the odd B.28 and a 622. Should these methods fail us, visibility permitting, we could adopt an older system of communication with our rich relations situated to the northward. If we desire to travel in the opposite direction, we could, if other means of transport fail—perhaps with some loss of dignity—emulate the example of the small boys of Portchester in the use of some form of tobogganing.

We send our regards to all those who left us and went to Cookham and other places and wish them well and also continued success to THE COMMUNICATOR.

ICAHOD.



"Well, I certainly told that Patrol where it got off"

ROUND THE FOREIGN STATIONS

MEDITERRANEAN

More births can be reported from the Mediterranean Station, amongst them a brand-new harbour broadcast, local ship-shore and harbour Intercom. wave. We have, however, to report the death of the Haifa fixed service together with all its dependants. Haifa has given Malta some exciting moments during the troubles, but these were not, we are told, as exciting as those given to Haifa. On one occasion when Malta was getting angry over a late reply to an immediate QWI they learned later, to their chagrin, that certain gentlemen were trying to throw bombs through the window at the time.

We are sorry to bid the Haifa staff "*adieu*" and were surprised to see when they returned through Malta that they were healthy and cheerful after the rigours of their existence at Mount Carmel. They gave Malta good, efficient and co-operative service at all times under the most trying conditions.

With the wind-up in Palestine very many more ships have been made available for training and exercises, so that in Malta both on the Sliema and Grand Harbour sides the pace has quickened and ingenuity has been taxed to contrive new means of torture.

The first summer cruise went off well. Units of the Fleet visited ports in Italy, Sicily, Turkey, Egypt and the Greek Islands. Later on, all ships foregathered in Argostoli Bay for the annual pulling regatta. The flagship, H.M.S. *Liverpool*, became cock of the Mediterranean Fleet, but *Triumph*, Vice-Admiral Troubridge's flagship, won the Communications Whaler Cup. The departure from Aranci was made under war conditions—a dimmed light being the only communication allowed. One ship who continually used a bright Aldis for her replies, despite repeated X 67's to her, surprised the flagship later by asking whether it was really intended that she should fire a seven-gun salute. On investigation it was found that her leaving-harbour signal had been received punctuated by XB 7!

The second summer cruise which has just been completed was also a great success and culminated in the sailing regatta at Aranci Bay. This cruise was marked by prolonged exercises in the American books.

On detaching from the Fleet, Admiral Troubridge was seen to hoist a long PT 3 signal to his attendant destroyer: "We will now speak English."

Now, of course, the new books are at last in force and we are all doing our best to forget the old. It is surprising how very much better we remember them now we don't use them!

Generally speaking, we are glad to see the new books after such a long wait, and ships are settling down without much trouble. The verdict has been passed that they are infinitely preferable, even if you

do have to hold them firmly in both hands to prevent them slamming shut.

In Malta M.S.O. we now have a "Five Unit Room" as well as every other modern convenience.



MEDITERRANEAN FLEET REGATTA

The race for the Communications Whalers Cup developed into a hard-rowed duel for first place between *Triumph* and *Liverpool*. The issue was in doubt until the very end, when by a magnificent spurt *Triumph* drew ahead to win by half a length.

The winning crew (see photograph) was composed of Telegraphist ratings coxwained and trained by C.P.O. Tel. Lusted.

Triumph's signal ratings' crew, coxwained and trained by Yeoman J. Thomson, came in third, only half a length behind the leaders.

Triumph provided a broadcast commentary for the assembled fleet using T.C.S. equipment and whip aerial installed in the motor-boat. This arrangement proved highly satisfactory.

THE SIGNAL TRAINING CENTRE, MALTA

Since our last contribution Lieut. I. Mason, R.N., has left us, and, after an appropriate interval for F.S.L., has taken up his new appointment as "Communicator" on board H.M.S. *Sirius*, in which we wish him every success.

In his place we welcome Lieut. E. McPherson, R.N. Shortly after assuming the heavy responsibility of Officer-in-Charge, S.T.C., Malta, Lieut. McPherson assumed the graver one of a wife. His wedding, at St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral, Valetta, was enlivened by the presence and action of a gun-carriage team made up from the current Leading Telegraphists' class, who

duly drew the car and its passengers away from the cathedral. We take this opportunity of extending our congratulations.

Another wedding which enlivened the year was that of C.R.E. Penny to "Margaret" of the Divisional Office. Judging from the general demeanour of the wedding guests on the following forenoon a *good time* was had by all.

Of course, no *Ricasoli* team is complete without its complement of Communicators and during the summer the S.T.C. produced a tug-of-war team which beat everything in its class. They pulled fourteen matches against the best opposition they could find and crowned their achievements by winning the Inter-Shore Establishment Light-weight.

Another notable athletic triumph was that of C.Y.S. Broad, who finished a very successful season by running for the victorious team in the Inter-Service Cross-Country Championship. C.Y.S. Broad has been selected for the next W.C.O.'s course and takes with him to Leydene the best wishes of his shipmates of the S.T.C., Malta.

C.P.O. Tel. Soffe has donned a bowler hat and is instructing at H.M.S. *Collingwood*.

A remark in the last issue of *THE COMMUNICATOR* reminds us that the appearance on the Island of C.Y.S. Setford coincided with the introduction of Malta's first National Lottery.

CONFUSION

In Malta
Scent
Is an element
Which clings to your skin and your coats.
But Malta
Scent
Is a detriment
For you can't tell the chypre from the goats.

R. D.

FAR EAST

UPHEAVAL IN THE FAR EAST

The life of the British Pacific Fleet has been short but on the whole merry. Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser (as he then was) hoisted his flag as C.-in-C., British Pacific Fleet, in November, 1945, and on 15th September, 1948, the existence of the British Pacific Fleet was terminated when the flag of Admiral Sir Denis Boyd was struck as C.-in-C., Far East Station.

This final change was brought about by the Government decision that the three Service C.-in-Cs. in the Far East should all have their headquarters in the same place, and Army and R.A.F. requirements dictated that this should be Singapore.

As far as the day-to-day existence of the Fleet is concerned, this change has not been very far-reaching, since ships remain based on Hong Kong, which is regarded as their local "home port." The C.-in-C.'s

Headquarters, which hitherto have been ashore in Hong Kong, have, however, been moved to Singapore with a small staff. C.S.5 (Rear-Admiral Madden) has received the additional appointment of Flag Officer Second-in-Command, Far East Station, and deputises afloat for the C.-in-C. while the latter is at Singapore. This, in effect, means that F.O. Second-in-Command carries out the normal day-to-day administration of the Fleet, whilst all policy matters are still dealt with by the C.-in-C.

The reason for the title of this article is that it is not an easy matter to move a complete C.-in-C.'s office, split up a staff and transfer records over so great a distance as that which separates Singapore and Hong Kong, as, contrary to popular belief, these two places are considerably farther apart than London and Liverpool. The problem has been further accentuated by the fact that the entire Fleet carried out a cruise to Japanese waters, and exercises with the U.S. Navy with the C.-in-C. flying his flag in H.M.S. *London* right in the middle of what might be described as the critical period of the move. From the signal point of view, the final touch was put when, for reasons of man-power economy, it was decided virtually to close down W/T at Hong Kong and transfer the centre of operations to Singapore. Fortunately we were allowed to select our own date and this was put at one month after the transfer of the headquarters.

The general signal set-up now is that the late Fleet Communication Officer has transformed himself into the Chief Naval Signal Officer (an old war-time Eastern Fleet title), and moved with the Staff C.C.O. to Singapore with the C.-in-C. The late Flag Lieutenant to C.S.5 has been relieved of his social duties and has become the Staff Communication Officer to Flag Officer Second-in-Command, assisted by the late Signal Officer of the *London*, who has become Flag Lieutenant to F.O. Second-in-Command and S.C.A. The Fleet Communication Assistant is going home without relief.

On the W/T organisation side, Broadcast FF has been moved from Hong Kong to Singapore, where, as a temporary measure, it has been combined with the Area 8 Merchant Ship Broadcast, the two being dovetailed in alternate two-hour periods. All Hong Kong's fixed services (U.K., Japan and Ceylon) have been closed down, and all that is now left to them is ship-shore watch and a fixed service to Singapore.

It is perhaps of interest to remark that the virtual putting into Care and Maintenance of *Stonecutters* transmitting station has not reduced the number of maintenance personnel required, because in these parts transmitters remain in much better condition when they are being used than when they are lying idle.

It was announced on 23rd October that H.M. The King has been pleased to approve the promotion of Admiral Lord Fraser of North Cape, G.C.B., K.B.E. (the First Sea Lord), to Admiral of the Fleet to date 22nd October.



H.M.S. "COMMONWEALTH"

H.M.S. *Commonwealth*, the shore establishment at Kure, Japan, was transferred to the Royal Australian Navy on 1st October, 1948. All the R.N. personnel have left Japan, some for home and others for ships on the station. Before they left, the above photograph of the Communications Division was taken.

"THE GLAMOROUS EAST"

At the end of the war, when the Navy more or less evacuated the Middle East, it was decided to leave a Flag Officer (Liaison), with a very small staff, to work with G.H.Q., MELF, and H.Q., R.A.F., MED/ME. This team is now at Fayid.

For the many who have the good fortune never to have heard of it, take a look at the map of the Suez Canal and stick a pin half-way down the left-hand side of the Great Bitter Lake. It will be found to be embedded firmly into a large slice of sand. That is Fayid. There the Army, with commendable industry, using prisoner-of-war labour, have built a small town. This includes messes, shops, tennis courts, clubs, etc., all built on the Nissen hut basis.

The nearest centres of civilisation [*sic*] are Ismailia, some thirty miles away to the north, and Suez, some fifty miles to the south. Cairo, which really has something, is about eighty miles due west. Visits to these are, however, strictly limited except in the case of the S.C.O.

No naval signal communications facilities were provided for the liaison team, and for a year and a half they had to struggle against the manifold shortcomings of Army signals. By the end of 1947 it became apparent that the changed circumstances demanded more rapid and efficient communications, and thence, on 5th March, 1948, Mr. L. Deadman, W.C.O., accompanied by C.P.O. Tel. Fox, Sigs. Stubbs, Puddicombe and Baker, plus Cook Webb and twenty-five tons of

equipment, ex Minas 7, arrived at Fayid to establish a naval W/T station.

They were joined about a fortnight later by another fourteen ratings, and on 6th April Service 4 (Fayid—Admiralty) and Service 16 (Fayid—Malta) opened up.

The Army, particularly a certain Major Ken Ellis, Royal Signals, and one Captain Roy Wakely, Royal Signals, were most co-operative, and without their aid the station could never have been established in the time. Our transmitters and receivers are accommodated in Army buildings.

In the course of the subsequent six months, the S.C.O. arrived, Service 32 (Fayid—Ceylon) opened, the organisation grew to thirty-seven ratings, and Mr. Coggeshall, W.C.O., joined the strength. Automatic telegraphy equipment arrived, and has just been installed. This will provide duplex working on Services 4, 16 and 32, with one spare outfit. Trials are due to start in the middle of November.

The first Wrens for the Middle East, in fact for any foreign station bar Malta, arrived on 6th November. They consist of four Leading Wren Sigs., four Sigs. and eight Tels., and will form a very welcome addition to the staff. They are being accommodated by the A.T.S., who number some 300 already. There is no doubt that the A.T.S. authorities have set themselves out to be most hospitable. In fact, it has already come to light that some curtains for which the A.T.S. have been asking for the past two years without avail have already been fitted in the quarters allocated to the Wrens. This is the subject of some comment. It is fair to say that their living conditions, compared to the rest to the staff at Fayid, will be very good indeed. They can also expect to be inundated with invitations to all forms of entertainment. A further bulletin on their welfare and progress will be issued at a later date.

The entire naval "pocket of resistance" is accommodated in various Army messes. That means that all officers and ratings are living under canvas, except, naturally, Mr. Deadman, ("The Bosun, the cunning . . ."), who has "won" a caravan. They suffer most inferior washing and toilet facilities, and are privileged to enjoy the well-known delights of Army messing. The discussions in the Leydene Chiefs' Mess over the fortnightly mess levy of two shillings caused great amusement to the C. and P.Os. here who have to fork out 64 piastres (13s. 4d.) a fortnight each in their mess. This is not considered exactly satisfactory at any level.

Every form of sport, including a speedway, flourishes in the desert. Naval athletes, owing to their paucity of numbers, generally play in Army teams, but we have turned out our own teams from time to time for football, hockey, cricket, basketball and water polo. For those who like it there is plenty of tennis, squash, riding, swimming and boxing. The S.C.O. has recently played exhibition squash matches at Fayid and Ismailia with Mahroud el Karim, the neighbouring world champion, and they were close, hard-fought matches which proved a great attraction.

Amateur theatricals flourish. There are several companies, all of whom turn out very good shows, rang-

ing from Shakespeare to Agatha Christie.

The average bed time appears to be about midnight, except for the officers, who are lacking in stamina and are usually in bed by ten. The more adventurous characters attend several dances a week, go to the movies, or simply sit in the Mess or N.A.A.F.I. drinking "Stella" beer, a most popular local beverage which costs about a shilling for a little over a pint.

There is the normal over-all shortage of feminine company customary on most foreign stations, but there is no doubt about it that the naval contingent has few worries on this score. In fact, while interviewing one of her corporals who had been returned to camp rather late one night, an A.T.S. officer remarked: "It's a pity you can't find a nice soldier to go out with, instead of consorting with these naval types."

Fayid is constantly visited by celebrities of all three Services, British and American, but the high-spot of the year has undoubtedly been the visit of C.-in-C., Mediterranean, in H.M.S. *Liverpool*, escorted by H.M.S. *Chaplet*. The ships stayed only two days, but a comprehensive schedule was worked out which got the maximum number of sailors ashore and the maximum number of Fayidonians on board. The *Liverpool's* football team drew with G.H.Q. at 5-all, after being five goals down at half-time. They attributed their earlier disaster to the local conditions, which comprised a gale and a sandstorm. The ships, of course, were open to visitors and proved a great attraction, and the final party on board *Liverpool* was generally voted the success of the season.

A visit like that from one or more of our ships means a great deal to this small white oasis in a vast desert of khaki. So also does the branch news contained in our friend THE COMMUNICATOR.

AMERICA AND WEST INDIES

Notable this year was H.M.S. *Snipe's* cruise to the Falkland Islands and the Antarctic, when the Communications Department was kept very busy indeed. In fact, for a period of about a month, when both Guatemala and the Argentine were being obstreperous, the cryptographic staffs had their hands full. Great credit is due to P.O. Tel. D. J. Coffey, of *Snipe*, who kept *Snipe* and everyone else in the picture very efficiently.

The first real post-war commission on the A. and W.I. Squadron drew to a close with H.M.S. *Sheffield's* departure for the United Kingdom in October. We say good-bye to C.Y.S. Neale after only a short time here and to C.P.O. Tel. Johnson (practically part of the ship now) with regret.

H.M.S. *Glasgow*, as relief flagship, is particularly welcome, as she is commanded by the late Captain, H.M.S. *Mercury*, Captain C. L. Firth, D.S.O., M.V.O. The Commander-in-Chief, Vice-Admiral Sir William Tennant, K.C.B., C.B.E., M.V.O., has had his term of command extended to March, 1949.

The Squadron is on the increase again with the frigates *Bigbury Bay* and *Whitesand Bay* just joined, and *Jamaica* will be joining us soon.

Manœuvres were carried out with the R.C.N., consisting of the cruiser *Ontario* and destroyers *Nootka* and *Crescent*, in the Leeward-Virgin Islands area. The Communicators had a good run—firstly we tried the R.C.N. on the old British books, then we used U.S. books. The R.C.N. have amalgamated the V/S and W/T ratings into one. Teething and manning troubles were apparent to the detriment of V/S.

Lately when *Sheffield* was visiting Esquimalt during Navy Week the Communications whaler greatly distinguished itself by being the only winner besides the Wardroom, despite much beer in places like Mexico City, Los Angeles and Portland, Oregon!

Communicators were also well represented in the water-polo and swimming events. On occasions no fewer than four members of the ship's water-polo team have been Sigs. and Tels.

We recommend a draft to Daniels Head W/T Station for anyone keen on gardening and games. "Learn to grow tomatoes and reduce your golf handicap" by Mr. Pexton and his minions.

To those who know P.O. Tel. Dawson, he had a beautiful Bermuda wedding not long ago.

A new destroyer, H.M.S. *Broadsword*, fourth ship of her class, has been accepted into His Majesty's Service. She is a sister ship of the *Crossbow* and the *Battleaxe* who visited the West Indies and the United States of America this summer and took part in the joint exercises with the United States Navy off Key West, Florida. H.M.S. *Scorpion* is also of the same class.

The new destroyer will have a peace-time complement of 256 officers and men and she is to join the 6th Destroyer Flotilla.

* * * *

H.M.S. *Glasgow* has arrived at Bermuda to relieve H.M.S. *Sheffield* as flagship of the America and West Indies Squadron. The squadron is to be strengthened by a second cruiser, H.M.S. *Jamaica*.

* * * *

* Vice-Admiral Sir Claude Barry, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., Director of Dockyards, speaking at a reunion of submarine officers at Gosport, said that because of developments in the Submarine Branch and the submarine's greater potency, the present generation of submariners would have a greater part to play. So far as he could see, the submariners of the future would spend the whole of their time under water. From the time they left home until the time they returned they would be submerged. This, combined with the higher speed of submarines, would make them a more potent weapon than they had ever been before.

ROUND THE HOME FLEET

THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

The island dreams under the dawn
And great boughs drop tranquillity;
The peahens dance on a smooth lawn,
A parrot sways upon a tree,
Raging at his own image in the enamelled sea.

Here we will moor our lonely ship
And wander ever with woven hands,
Murmuring softly lip to lip,
Along the grass, along the sands,
Murmuring how far away are the unquiet lands:
—W. B. YEATS.

When this number of THE COMMUNICATOR appears in print it will have dawned on many people that the Home Fleet has, since early September, ceased to occupy those berths at Portsmouth, Devonport and Chatham in which the ships had come to be regarded as landmarks almost as permanent as the Home Port War Memorials. The Fleet will indeed be home again, but at least one watch of its Communicators will be on Christmas leave, with as much of the spoils of a 14,000-mile cruise to the Cape and the Caribbean as custom and ingenuity may permit.

For the Communication Branch it can fairly be claimed that the cruise will have seen more attempted than in any other branch. For every experienced Communicator knows that it is a well-established trait of naval nature to expect, without any qualification whatever, that Communications Shall Work.

This is a pleasing tribute to past Communication efficiency, but it does not make for any easy passage when that efficiency has disappeared, as it had, for all practical purposes, in the Home Fleet last August. And there can be no honest denying that the long, long trail back to efficiency, up which other departments can afford to proceed at a planned and most practical walking pace, is made anything but longer and harder for Communication departments, which are given no option but to sprint from the start.

This, however, is as we have said, naval nature, and must be supported. And supported it has been. It remains for the Communicators in 1949, despite drafting and other major obstacles like leave, to fly in the face of the fable of the Hare and the Tortoise, and remain in the van.

Exactly how much has been achieved in these last four months of 1948 may not be immediately apparent, for there is no easy measure of experience, and few are really conscious of its gradual results, at least until it is suddenly borne in upon them that they are efficient, which is still very far from being the case.

But it is worth examining the extent to which we had collapsed last August. At that time only one cruiser and four destroyers in the Fleet had been cap-

able of any appreciable movement for nearly a year. Other ships had been reduced in complement to such an extent that even regular practical exercises had become impossible. In some destroyers, total Communication complements of three, and even two, kept telephone watch and maintained the wireless equipment to the best of their ability. Under such conditions standards collapse, doctrines die, and the well-proved customs of the Service disappear. Nothing can prevent this, and nothing did.

With August came summer leave; the addition of a newly commissioned squadron of light fleet carriers to the Fleet; a sudden influx of Communication boys; as many other Communication rates as the drafting offices could find; and, for full measure, the new Signal Books a week after leave was over the new books were brought into force. Three weeks afterwards, the Fleet was at sea *en route* to the Azores, and thence to the West Indies and South Africa. It was undeniably something of an achievement.

And what have we learned since? All the lessons which we now think we knew all the time. That it is infinitely harder to be a good voice operator than a good Morse operator; that V/S is an essential channel in a balanced communication system—and often far the most efficient; that a good V/S look-out requires powers of concentration of which only highly trained men are capable; that if you can get 100 per cent. in standard buzzer exercises at twenty-two words a minute, it doesn't mean that you can get the same percentage on a broadcast at seventeen; that to be handsome (and remain efficient) it is important to remember that only a *slight* sunburn is required; that the White Ensign stands for quite a lot more than one used to think; that West Indian rum and South African blondes have this in common, that they are delicious but a bit dangerous; that the duty on nylons is rather higher than one anticipated . . . and so on.

The new Signal Books have been used with comparatively few mistakes, and this is much to the credit of the more senior members of the branch, who, unlike their less experienced and much more numerous juniors, have had to alter reactions which have really become automatic and more of the nature of reflexes. This is no place for technical comment on the books themselves, but it can certainly be said that their introduction has, temporarily at least, made the Fleet very signal-conscious. Indeed, even on tropical afternoons, an occasional staff officer has been seen devouring the Conduct of the Fleet.

In destroyers, complements have been chronically lacking in age, rates and experience, although sometimes above the reduced peace-time complement numerically. So here again an overload has been carried, and on the whole well carried, by senior ratings, who have in certain situations found themselves absolutely single-handed. And, in addition to our own

burden, we have perforce shouldered most of the wireless maintenance of the fleet, and an appreciable proportion of radar plot duties.

The business of becoming efficient can scarcely be an entirely pleasant one, and, whenever possible, the weekly Communication exercise programme has been fuller than many would have liked. But, unfashionable though the theory may be, it is on the individual that everything, including communications, ultimately depends; and the personal efficiency of every man concerned is the only yardstick by which a fleet's real fluency in communication can be measured.

The pill has been reasonably sweetened by pleasant interludes at tropical islands up and down the Caribbean, and on the coasts of South Africa and the United States, so that there has been a fair balance between work and play, and an immense amount of good has been done showing the flag.

We have, in fact, gone some way towards restoring our old Communication standards; and, from under the casuarina tree where this is written, it seems a safe bet that, come Christmas or the New Year, men-o'-war proceeding on leave from Home Fleet Communication departments will feel with every justification that they have tauter halcyons, or more amps in their aerials, than they thought possible last September; and that they will thereafter, and in consequence, to use an honoured phrase, "act according."

H.M.S. "IMPLACABLE"

Implacable had a busy time from the end of April to the end of July, acting as training carrier and trials carrier, taking part in Exercise "Dawn," and giving demonstrations to various staff colleges and other officers of all three Services. During this time 1,415 deck landings were made, including the ship's 10,000th (the pilot receiving a bottle of wine from the Captain), the first Meteor ever to land on a deck landed on board, 700 officers had a day at sea watching demonstrations, and a day at sea was also given to the W.C.O. Qualifying Course, a party of Communication Branch Wrens from Donibristle and the International Long (C) Course. One of the last-named, on being taken down the seven decks between the battle bridge and the Wardroom, remarked after going down three ladders, "In my ship, this is the end. No more floors!"

After the statement made about W/T maintenance in the last Christmas Number, it must be recorded that on 6th September the "I." Department took over W/T maintenance (at once registered by a breakdown in the warning telephones, which was speedily rectified!). Commander (L) now talks happily about "my L.T.R." and our new W.E.O.(R), unjustly named "Mr. Hack," suggested for inclusion in the "Preparation for War" orders, which are being revised, the item "Remove Signal Officer's bicycle from F.H.4 office."

Implacable is now at Rosyth undergoing a short refit and preparing to hoist the flag of the Commander-

in-Chief, Home Fleet, in the New Year. Among other things, no little difficulty is being experienced in finding a suitable position at which actually to hoist the flag. The ship is exchanging crews and home ports with *Illustrious* and hopes therefore that in 1949, with a Portsmouth crew, a close liaison will be established with Leydene.

J. A. P.

RESERVE FLEET, PORTSMOUTH

Owing to the policy of preserving and storing all V/S equipment, and the sealing of W/T offices in ships in the Reserve Fleet, the activities of the Communication Branch are necessarily greatly restricted. As a result, the total number of Communication personnel serving in this command is small.

The staff employed is divided amongst H.M.S. *Resource* (S.O.R.F.), and H.M. Ships *Argonaut*, *Adamant* and *Caprice*, all of which have a Senior Officer (Destroyers) in command.

Signal traffic is confined mainly to T.B.S. routines between *Resource* and S.O.(D)'s ships, the remainder being passed by telephone or hand message.

Owing to the acute shortage of signalmen, the M.S.O. in *Resource* is almost entirely staffed by Ordinary Telegraphists, and, although Leading Signalmen are in charge of the watches, occasional mistakes slip through. For example, on one occasion the medical guard flag together with two black balls was hoisted as "clear the channel" signal. It is not known what the Yeoman of the incoming ship reported to his Captain upon sighting the hoist; what the Yeoman of *Resource* said to the offending Ordinary Telegraphist when he discovered the mistake doesn't bear repeating.

Another amusing instance occurred when the telephone operator, endeavouring to call R.N.B., dialled his own number for about half an hour, and couldn't understand why he continued to get the engaged "buzz."

Although there is little or no opportunity for visual signalling, as much instruction as possible is given and, owing to the assistance of H.M.S. *Scorpion*, officers and men have been able to learn the flags, and many of the new hoists in the latest F.S.B.

Touch-typing classes are held every day at the Tactical School in the Dockyard, and, as a result of regular attendance, the standard of touch-typing amongst the Communication personnel in the Reserve Fleet is fairly high.

The feasibility of taking the old *Implacable* to sea and scuttling her is being considered. This wooden ship of the line, originally the French ship *Duguay Trouin*, has lain in Portsmouth Harbour for many years, where she was maintained under the charge of Lieut.-Colonel Harold Wyllie, by the Society for Nautical Research as a holiday ship for Sea Cadets, Scouts and Guides.

regret by the crew of H.M.S. *Vanguard*. Elaborate preparations to receive the King and Queen and Princess Margaret had been made on board, particularly during the shake-down cruise to Malta when the engines had full power trials, all equipment was tested and the crew practised drills and evolutions which are associated with a Royal Tour.

From the Admiralty it was announced that H.M.S. *Vanguard* is to remain in commission, but her future duties are under consideration and these are to be announced when a decision has been reached by the Board.

Frigate Becomes Floating Farmyard

In the Red Sea, the frigate *St. Bride's Bay* is visiting many foreign ports. At the conclusion of a visit to Hodeida, the port of Yemen, The Governor presented to the ship provisions which included five sheep and forty chickens.

At Perin, the island at the Southern entrance to the Red Sea, twenty members of the Aden Police were offered a passage to the mainland and their baggage included seven goats.

The quarter deck of the *St. Bride's Bay* was temporarily turned into a seaborne farmyard. Not since warships acquired refrigerating plant and were enabled to carry stocks of frozen meat has such a sight been seen at sea.

PROGRESS

In days of old when wigs were curled,
Whoever thought of flags unfurled,
Whoever thought of wing-ed word,
Speeding to lands as then unheard?
Whoever thought of metal mammals,
Conversing over sonic channels,
Guided missiles ships to hound,
Blocked by unseen walls of sound?
But all these things down through the ages
Have come to us in steady stages.
Yet more and more man will invent
Before his passion has been spent.
It would be folly not to see
That now until eternity,
At war or peace with other nations,
Essential are communications.

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More than 8,000 officers now on the Retired Reserve and Emergency Lists will shortly receive from the Admiralty a form requesting them to report their addresses, occupations and state of medical fitness.

This will mark a resumption of the normal peacetime practice which requires such officers to report their addresses annually to the Secretary of the Admiralty or other appropriate naval authority.



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TOPICS OF SIGNAL IMPORTANCE

Home Fleet to Meet Atomic "Attacks"

Units of the Home Fleet returning to the United Kingdom from the West Indies and South Africa are preparing for the most significant Air-Sea Exercises since the war.

As we go to press final details are being planned for mock warfare in which the explosion of atomic bombs will be simulated.

In addition to the surface warships returning from their Autumn Cruise destroyer, submarine and coastal forces flotillas, and Royal Naval and R.A.F. aircraft (including aircraft from Bomber, Coastal and Fighter Commands) will take part.

All forms of modern Air-Sea war tactics will be exercised. There will be every attempt to make the dummy warfare as realistic as possible and the order will be "No holds barred." Blank ammunition and torpedoes fitted with practice heads will be fired and there will be flashes to simulate the explosion of the atomic bombs.

Ship Target Trials

The Admiralty is conducting trials at Loch Striven on the effect of non-contact underwater explosions on the cruiser *Orion*, the destroyer *Ashanti* and the submarine *Ace*. The *Ace* is an 'A' Class submarine, the building of which was stopped at the end of the war, and she therefore represents modern submarine design practice and is of particular importance. These underwater explosion trials are carried out by placing a known quantity of explosive in the water at a chosen position near the target ship. The charge is detonated electrically, the immediate effects upon the target being recorded by instruments fitted within the ship, the structure and equipment of which is afterwards examined in detail so that the damage sustained can be assessed. In the case of the submarine, trials will be done when on the surface and submerged.

Navy To Abolish Its "A" Branch

An admiralty message to the Fleet announced that it is Their Lordships' intention that the (A) Branch of the Royal Navy shall be abolished and that the officers now serving in the (A) Branch shall be transferred as appropriate, to the Executive or Engineering Branches.

This announcement indicates that the Admiralty is pursuing the policy on which it embarked two years ago when the style and name of the Fleet Air Arm was changed to that of Naval Aviation, by making all those concerned with aviation within the Fleet an integral part of the Navy.

It will also mean that the letter "A" which is worn inside the gold lace curl will disappear.

Prize Money

The Prize Bill which provides for the payment and distribution of prize money from the sale of captured enemy vessels and cargo during World War II has its second reading in the House of Commons.

The Bill provides for two separate prize funds, one for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, amounting to £4,000,000, and one for the R.A.F. amounting to £1,250,000, the funds being under the control of the Admiralty and the Air Council, respectively. The Bill also provides for the abolition of prize money and prize bounty "in respect of any war in which His Majesty may become engaged after the commencement of this Act."

Mr. John Dugdale, Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty, stated that for naval applicants, forms will ultimately be made available at post offices and it will be necessary to make claims within twelve months of the date at which persons are invited to apply.

Mr. Dugdale also said that shares will be in the degree of ten for an Admiral and one for an ordinary seaman. On a rough calculation it looks as though an ordinary seaman might get between £5 and £6, a Captain between £20 and £24, and an Admiral of the Fleet between £50 and £60.

Anchor Trials

The Admiralty is conducting a series of trials to improve the design of anchors for various classes of ships and under the supervision of the Director of Naval Construction, certain types of anchor were tested on the beach at East Fleet, Weymouth, on November 22nd and 23rd. The anchors were buried in the foreshore, and then subjected to hauling pressure through a gantry and by means of purchases secured by a spider's web of chain cable to concrete blocks buried in the shingle.

Canned Bread for Naval Use

Experiments are being conducted by the Admiralty with a view to the use of canned bread as an emergency ration in the Royal Navy. In large ships, fine mechanical bakeries provide freshly baked bread for the ship's company but, in some smaller ships and submarines, there are occasions when freshly baked bread is not available. Hitherto, biscuits, under the traditional name of "hard tack" have been used in these circumstances. Exhaustive researches are being carried out to ascertain the safe life of bread in a sealed can. If tests prove satisfactory, canned bread may be tried as an alternative to biscuits.

Admiralty Drawings For Model Makers

For the use of model makers, a series of simplified drawings of a number of ships of the Royal Navy have been prepared by the Admiralty. The drawings, which are outline drawings, are to a scale of 1/50" to the foot. They show profile, plan and sections as required for the construction of waterline models. The price to be charged to private model makers is:—battleships 5/-; cruisers 4/-; destroyers and monitors 2/6d.

H.M.S. "Vanguard's" Future Duties

News of the indefinite postponement of the Royal Tour to New Zealand and Australia was received with



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SECRET MESSAGE

III

About 1600, an Italian named Porta produced a table which contained eleven different alphabet substitutions. His object was to improve the frequency suppression, the ineffectiveness of which had been the weakness of the earlier systems. He constructed his table by writing the first half of the alphabet in its correct order and the second half below it, shifting the latter along one step for each different substitution.

1	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	etc.
	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	
2	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	
	z	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	
3	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	
	y	z	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	
	etc.									

A key determined which alphabets were to be used and in which order. Suppose the key was 1 3 2, and the text "Harry had no ham."

1 3 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1
H A R R Y / H A D / N O / H A M
U Y F E J T N O B B S Z Z

It can be seen from this simple example that the chance of a letter being repeated by the same cipher letter has been substantially reduced.

Porta's system was scarcely used outside Italy, but he had formulated an idea, which earned for him the title of the "Father of Modern Cryptography." It remained for his successor, Vigenère, to produce and develop a method which provided the base of nearly all successful ciphers for the next two hundred years.

Vigenère lived in Paris and he had carefully studied Porta's table. His own tableau was one that could easily be remembered. It had the additional advantage of having double the number of alphabets and, consequently, it could have a much longer key.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
A	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	
B	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	etc.
C	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	
D	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	
	etc.									

To operate the tableau, a key word is generally taken, which is applied to the top alphabet. The text is taken from the left-hand one. If the key word was "DECK" and the text "bad cabbage," it would be enciphered as follows.

D E C K D E C K D E
b a d / c a b b a g e
E E F M D F D K J I

To break a Vigenère, the first thing to be determined is the number of different alphabets employed or, to look at the problem in another way, the length of the key word. To do this, if sufficient material is available, certain letter combinations will repeat themselves in the ciphered text. The number of letters from one

group to the beginning of the repetition in another group is counted and the resulting figures are factorised.

TUOOD NSKLR CHYQM DPUOO has sixteen letters from the beginning of one group UOO to the next one. This means that the length of the key word is two, four, eight or sixteen letters. Other factors obtained from other repeating letter combinations will all show a common figure, which is the same as the number of alphabets employed. Suppose that in a cipher of this type, the factor was found to be seven, the text would then be split into seven letter groups and written in a column, each group under the preceding one. The first letters which occur in each of the groups are then considered together and a table is made showing the number of times each one appears. The same is done with the second letters and with the third, until complete frequency tables for each of the seven alphabets have been made. Each in turn is then considered as a simple substitutions cipher and the letters will eventually fall into place.

This may sound easy and here is a simple example, if you wish to try your skill. Some useful hints are given at the end to show one correct line of reasoning, but different people may tackle the problem in different ways.

NNUCI IEQTN KVOTS NHIJS OPLSR ZUNQU
QLWJA VODVD QMINV HZBAD RRBLR
LKYJM UGWLL LRNIT QMZTL PLUCB
VCQIW KIEQI PLDCCK IEQIP XBNHI WTSES
BKHTN KKNVR DQIES BRNIJ BVQSR SCHQN
UPMMJ SBABL JAMKQ UJAVO TLWTA KVJCN
IEQVO TBEKT GTCAB LISWP KICDL CSBAU
MGSRE SVGBL IDSOT VPBIC SMAKV AQ.

Vigenère's system was the greatest advance in this art in nearly 2,000 years, but, in spite of this, the next great cipher in history was based on Henri de Navarre's frequency suppression method.

The Thirty Years War broke out in 1618 and during the struggle the Huguenots in France started an armed revolt.

This was a most serious threat to the integrity of France, and the Prince of Condé advanced with his army into the rebellious area. Condé commanded the finest of the French armies and, driving the Huguenots before him, laid siege to the town of Réalmont. The place was well fortified and he was unable to penetrate the defences. To make things worse, his army was threatened by disease, an army which France could not afford to have weakened.

Unknown to the French, Réalmont had nearly exhausted its supplies of gunpowder. The town sent out an urgent call for more ammunition in a ciphered message, saying that if supplies did not reach them very soon they would be forced to surrender. The messenger was captured, but the cipher defied all normal methods of breaking when Condé's officers tried

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to find its meaning.

They finally found a mathematician, named Antoine Rossignol, who had made a long study of cryptography. He sat down and unravelled the message in a few hours. The result was that the town fell the next day.

The next year, messages were intercepted during the siege of La Rochelle and Condé immediately sent for Rossignol, who had no difficulty in breaking down the ciphers.

Rossignol's value and capabilities were now only too obvious and he soon found himself head of the King's cryptographic department.

The safest cipher known at that time was the Vigenère, but Rossignol did not consider that it was secure enough for diplomatic purposes. Accordingly he prepared a system which was a mixture of cipher and a code. Every letter had various numbers assigned to it and, in addition to this, all common letter combinations and words were represented by various numbers.

This system was known as the Great Cipher of Louis XIV and after the key was lost, during the French Revolution, no cryptographer was able to break down the existing messages, though many tried.

It was finally solved by the French Army Cryptographic Department in 1890. They had a great deal of material to work upon and they found over 10,000 different signs in the cipher. After careful sifting of the messages, one small loophole was detected, which gave them two words. Then slowly step by step Rossignol's masterpiece was broken down.

Even now, in France, a lock which has a very complicated key is called a Rossignol, in memory of one of the greatest cryptographers who have ever lived.

W. F. P.

HINTS ON THE PROBLEM

1. First consider the letter combinations RNI and VOT remembering that the commonest letters are E and T and THE is the commonest word.

2. SBA would occur more frequently in a longer text.

3. VODV is a simple combination to solve. AND is a common word. Does DLC fit?

* 4. BL BV and the combination VPBIC should suggest something, as will SB and SM.

5. INV at the beginning and BLI should be considered next.

6. MINV at the beginning and DS at the end are the last clues.

For Solution see page 20.



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For preserving and colouring H.M. ships, scientists have developed a grey paint, which it is hoped will prove more durable than the paints previously used and will conform to the traditional colour. It is hoped to obtain supplies of the new paint in time to repaint ships of the Home Fleet before it proceeds on the spring cruise.

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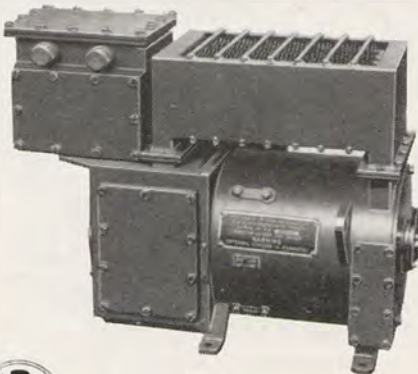
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CARGO FOR CROOKS. By COMMANDER G. M. BENNETT, D.S.C., R.N. (Collins; 8s. 6d.)

"Cargo for Crooks" is the fourth and latest novel by "Sea-Lion"—now revealed as Commander G. M. Bennett, D.S.C., Royal Navy. Commander Bennett is a Signal Communications Officer, now commanding H.M.S. *St. Brides Bay*.

The book is frankly a thriller, composed of the usual ingredients: sticky murders, smuggling, gun-running and large-scale larceny, conducted by a gang directed by the inevitable master mind whose equally inevitable destruction is brought about by the activities of a slightly moronic hero and the traditional, if somewhat incredible, golden-haired heroine. The action takes place in a post-war naval setting, and the descriptive work leaves nothing to be desired; the story moves from incident to incident with breath-taking speed and mounting tension, until right finally triumphs over wrong, and hero and heroine attain a mutually satisfactory understanding.

It is to be regretted that such a good yarn should leave the reader with the impression of faulty style and a slightly creaking mechanism. Expletives and mild profanity, used in excess, are apt to pall; there is no possible excuse for the use of a word which, in decent society, has no place outside the pages of a work on zoology; and there are far too many anatomical references. An error or two in syntax may be attributed to the proof-reader, but the latter can scarcely be held responsible for the thoughts of the hero. These, in one or two instances, are in distinctly doubtful taste.

However, it is a good yarn, and the offended susceptibilities of the delicate reader should find compensation in the glamorous wardrobe of the heroine, which is described in terms familiar to students of the better-class fashion journals.

A. R. J.

WEATHER FORECASTING. By INSTRUCTOR COMMANDER S. W. C. PACK, R.N. (Longmans, Green & Co.; 25s.)

The weather forecaster, always a suitable target for witty remarks, came into his own during the Second World War, when many operations on land and sea had to be timed to suit the weather. Yet there still appears to be a considerable doubt about what the "Met" man can do.

One reason for lack of confidence in forecasting is

the frequent vagueness and occasional inaccuracy of published forecasts. The main cause, however, is a profound ignorance on the part of the majority on how the "Met" man prepares his forecasts, and what he is up against.

With this in mind, Commander Pack has endeavoured, in some 160-odd pages, to summarise the fundamentals of the behaviour of the atmosphere and to explain how the forecaster proceeds about his work. The book will not make readers into good forecasters, for, to quote the author, "A good forecaster requires a sound knowledge of the fundamental principles, a keen and continuous observation of weather conditions, and years of experience." It will, however, enable the average man to appreciate more fully the meaning of forecasts and, occasionally, to leave his raincoat at home deliberately and not get wet.

A large amount had to be covered in a short space, and the author wisely wrote almost in glossary form, so that each item is clearly explained. This makes the book of equal value to the student, both for reference and revision purposes. To him also the appendices, giving meteorological codes and tables, will be welcome.

To both the student and those merely interested in the weather, this book, essentially practical, should be of considerable use.

R. D. E.

"WIRELESS WORLD" GREAT CIRCLE PROJECTION MAP. (Iliffe & Sons Ltd.; 2s. 6d.; by post, 3s.)

Communicators are, or should be, aware that the true bearing and distance of one radio station from another cannot be determined directly from a map drawn on the usual Mercator projection. This information is not infrequently required in long-distance work, and, although it can be calculated with sufficient accuracy by anyone who is capable of using logarithmic tables, the labour involved is apt to occupy more time than can usually be spared conveniently.

The *Wireless World* Great Circle Projection Map, of which a new edition has just been produced, was designed by the late J. St. Vincent Pletts, in the early days of world-wide radio communication, to enable the required information to be obtained with a minimum of effort. With the aid of a rule graduated in inches and tenths, the approximate true bearing and distance of any radio station in the world relative to any part of the British Isles (or the reverse) may be determined directly.

The map will be almost indispensable to the amateur short-wave enthusiast; it will prove of not inconsiderable value to communicators who may, in the course of their duties, be called upon to plan a new "fixed service" (temporary or permanent) with the British Isles as one terminal. It may be obtained from the publishers of the *Wireless World*, Dorset House, Stamford Street, London, S.E.1.

A. R. J.

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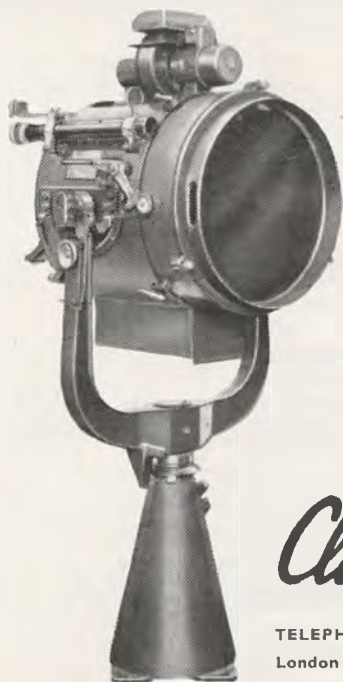
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Clarke, Chapman SIGNAL PROJECTOR

Searchlight Projectors of the signalling type are usually made in 15" and 20" diameter sizes. The illustration shows a 20" projector fitting with a high intensity carbon arc lamp and a parabolic reflector.

A motor driven ventilating fan is situated on the top of the barrel. The hand operated louvre flashing shutter is fitted behind an armour plate front glass. The Projector of steel construction is operated by hand. A shoulder crutch is provided and fitted on the back cover. Telescope and an open site is fitted on the side of the barrel.

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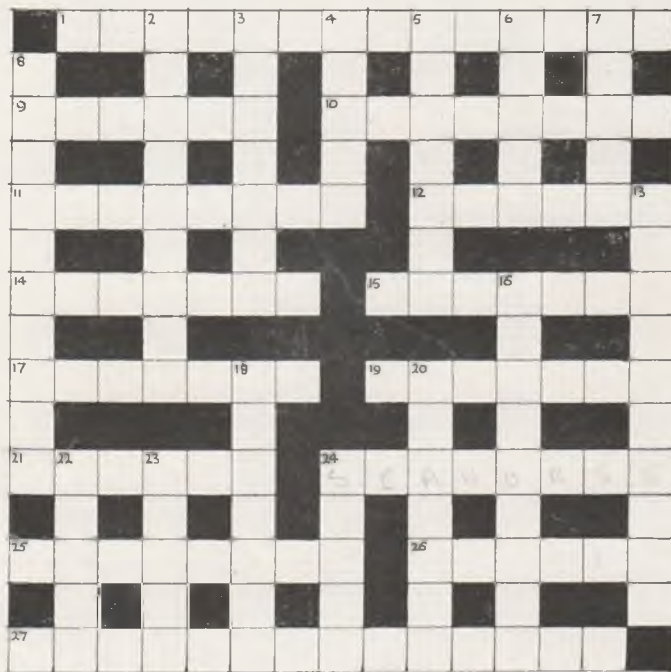
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COMMUNICATIONS CROSSWORD

(See page 19 for Solution)

Across—1, No sound of an answer (8, 6). 9, Uncover (6). 10, 15, Would the strip tease artist call this direction comparative nudity? (8, 7). 11, A garment in attempt for an unfair parody (8). 12, Breathe out (6). 14, Aperture (7). 15, See (10). 17, Etch (7). 19, Throwing in nautical fashion (7). 21, Animal in drunkard for cellarman's friend? (6). 24, This is no freshwater fish (3-5). 25, Naval force, but its leader is in the R.A.F. (8). 26, Joins it (6). 27, Scan no increase and carry on scanning (14).



14, Aperture (7). 15, See (10). 17, Etch (7). 19, Throwing in nautical fashion (7). 21, Animal in drunkard for cellarman's friend? (6). 24, This is no freshwater fish (3-5). 25, Naval force, but its leader is in the R.A.F. (8). 26, Joins it (6). 27, Scan no increase and carry on scanning (14).

Down—2, Or governs an hotel (9). 3, Reason for losing one's head and reason having lost it (7). 4, Night light? (5). 5, Ever up and lie down (7). 6, Mend but not make (5). 7, Five in a dance celebrate (5). 8, This sorry steed has the power of of many horses, however (10). 13, Battle, or, as the cynical might say, prelude to it (10). 16, A vain rover, but it sticks to its course (5, 4). 18, Over 35 on sports day (7). 20, Passes in the laps estimated. 22, Annoyance (5). 23, Manure from South America (5). 24, Evil is O.K. here (5).

Naval recruiting is being widened in many directions. A scheme for youths between the ages of 16½ and 17½ years is to be added to the old schemes of recruitment of boys and men. This eliminates a "blind spot" in the ages during which entry into the Royal Navy was not possible. Hitherto recruits have been accepted as boys from the age of 15 to 16 and as men from 17½ to 23. For the present, the numbers to be entered in this new scheme will be limited to 1,000.

Short-service commissions in the Electrical Branch are being offered for former officers of the Torpedo, Special, Electrical, and Air Branches of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve who were employed on technical duties connected with radar, wireless, air radio, air electrical, or general electrical equipment. The period of service will be five years on the Active List, to be followed by four years on the Emergency List. Officers who complete the full period of five years on the Active List will be eligible for a gratuity of £500, tax free, and, under certain conditions, *pro rata* for shorter periods.

Squadrons of Sea Fury and Firefly aircraft circled the island of St. Helena, in the South Atlantic, and flew past Government House at Jamestown, the capital, when ships of the carrier force, detached from the main body of the Home Fleet, passed close to the island on 12th October on their way to South Africa.

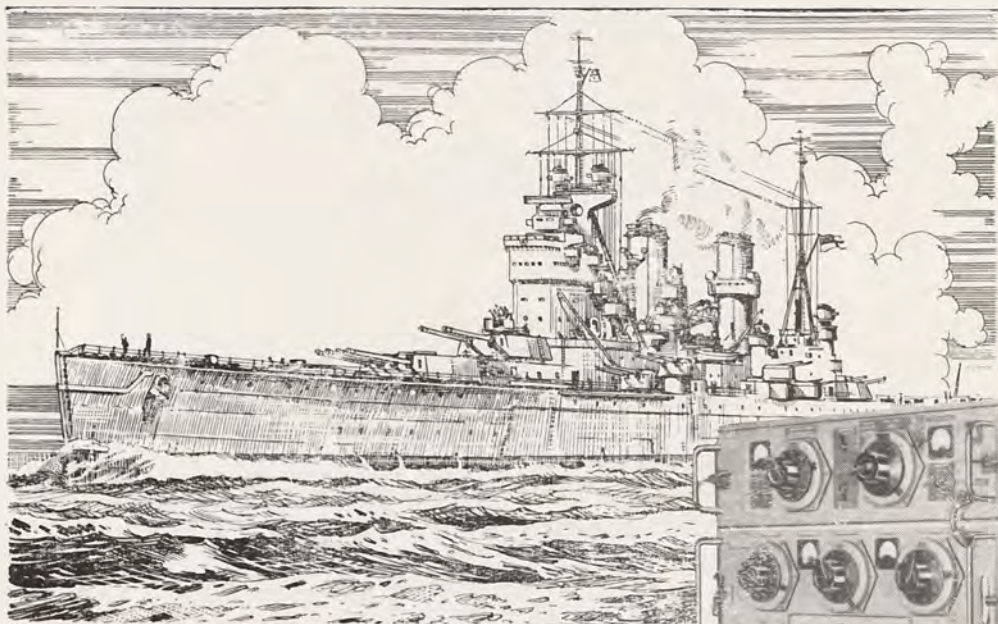
* * * *

A message from the *Theseus* stated: "So excited were the school children, many of whom had never seen an aircraft before, that at the first sound of the approaching squadrons twelve hundred left school and rushed out, their masters being unable to stop them."

* * * *

The most important naval ceremony since the war took place in Trafalgar Square on Trafalgar Day, when memorials to Admirals of the Fleet Lord Jellicoe and Lord Beatty were unveiled by the Duke of Gloucester and dedicated by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

THE NEW "VOICE" OF THE ROYAL NAVY



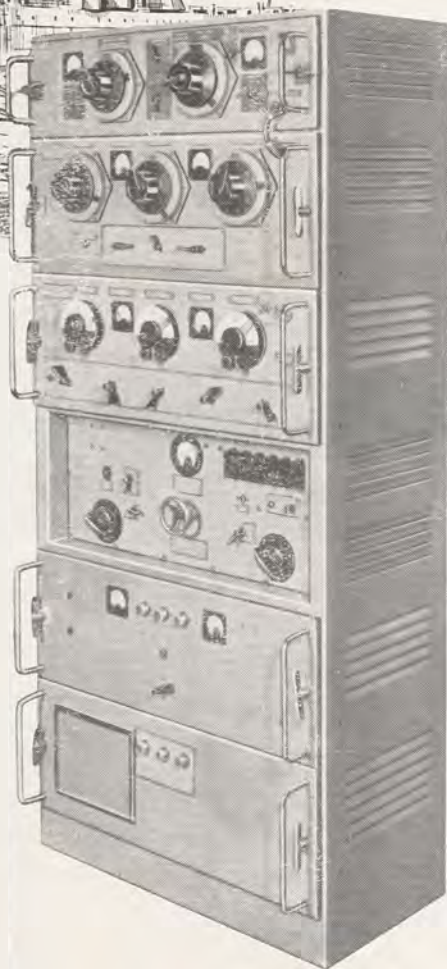
IN future, the Royal Navy will maintain its world-wide communications by means of a standard range of transmitters designed by the engineers of MULLARD working in collaboration with A.S.R.E.

These transmitters, known as the GN1600 series, are designed to provide A1, A2 or A3 types of communication over a frequency range of 200 Kc/s to 24 Mc/s with R.F. power outputs up to 400 watts.

The range, developed on the unit principle, can be assembled into one, two or three cabinets to form the required transmitters.

The high standard of mechanical accuracy of production enables the units to be interchangeable. The smaller units, which account for the majority of stages, are retractable and mounted on ball-bearing runners, making them easily accessible for examination.

Ease of operation, particularly under extreme conditions, together with excellent frequency stability and high performance makes these MULLARD transmitters ideal for use as fixed or mobile stations.



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RECENT PROMOTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—Although every endeavour is made to ensure that the information in this section is correct, we ask readers not to treat it as authoritative in the strict sense, and to grant us their indulgence if occasional errors are made.]

Name	Rank	Whence	Whither
A. E. ARGENT	W.C.O.	Daedalus	Mercury (For Conversion Crs.)
J. ADAMS	Yeo. D/JX 142384	Promoted A/W.C.O.	Mercury
G. AFFLECK-GRAVES ..	Cdr.	President	Dryad
R. J. ATTRIDGE	W.C.O.	Superb	Osprey
A. AITKEN	Lt. Cdr.	Ausonia	Ausonia (In contin.)
W. J. B. G. AYRES ..	A/C.C.O.	Theseus	Promoted to C.C.O.
T. R. BROOKS	A/C.C.O.	Drake II	Promoted to C.C.O.
A. BARLOW	W.A.O.	Falcon	Transferred to Communication Branch and re-apptd.
A. G. BROWN, D.S.O. ..	W.A.O.	Vulture	ditto.
H. G. BROWN	W.A.O.	Mercury II	Transferred Electrical Branch and re-apptd.
H. P. BRADLEY	A/W.C.O.	Mercury II	Ocean
J. L. BUCKERIDGE, M.B.E. ..	Lt. Cdr.	Nigeria	President
Mrs. J. F. BEER	2/0W.R.N.S.	Mercury	Condor
D. W. BRIGGS	Cdr.	Tamar	President
W. A. B. BLAND	Lt.	Crispin	Mercury
J. E. BENNETT, D.S.O. ..	Lt.	Mercury II	Ariel
F. A. BAKER	C.C.O.	Mercury II	Mercury
A. C. I. BURNHAM	C.C.O.	Pembroke	Mercury (For W.C.O. Conversion Course).
D. W. BERTRAM	Yeo. 21373 R.A.N.	A/W.C.O. and apptd.	Mercury for Divisional Course
C. D. BONHAM-CARTER ..	Captain	Mercury	Victory
I. M. BALFOUR, M.B.E. ..	Cdr.	Mercury	President
E. G. BALE	C.C.O.	Pembroke	Tamar
J. A. BUCHANAN-WOLLASTON	Lt. Cdr.	Sirius	Pembroke
R. D. L. BIRCH	Lt.	Montclare	Vulture
R. BENNETT	W.C.O.	Drake	Mercury (For W.C.O. Conversion Course)
C. G. BUSH	Lt. Cdr.	Afrikaner	Nigeria
G. F. BURGHEAD, D.S.O. ..	Captain	Victory I	Terror
E. B. C. CLIFF	Sgn. Lt.(D)	Victory	Mercury
W. J. J. CLAXTON	Senior Chief Officer, S.W.S.	Mercury	Pembroke
R. CARLYLE	W.C.O.(Air)	Fulmar	Siskin
T. M. L. CRUZE	Lt.	Drake	Ret'd.
G. CHESHIRE	W.C.O.	Mercury	Vanguard
R. COOMBER	W.C.O.	Mercury	Blackcap
H. A. Cheetham	Lt.	Dido	President
W. S. CLARKE	C.P.O. Tel. C/JX 138144	Promoted A/W.C.O.	Troubridge
A. J. CONDON, M.B.E. ..	Lt.	Drake	Mercury
W. G. CRABBE	Lt. Cdr.	Peregrine	Victory (Ret'd)
F. A. CULLIFORD	W.A.O.	Merlin	Transferred to Comm. Branch with rank of W.C.O.
T. W. F. CLARKE	A/W.C.O.	Birmingham	Confirmed in rank
A. T. COURTNEY	Lt. Cdr.	President	Royal Albert
N. E. F. DALRYMPLE- HAMILTON, D.S.C.	Lt.	Highflyer	Mercury
W. A. DEACON	Lt.	Mercury	Ret'd.
F. R. DORE	C.C.O.	Pursuivant	Warrior



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Name	Rank	Whence	Whither
I. EASTON	Lt. Cdr.	Dryad	Mercury II
C. J. M. ELIOT	Lt. Cdr.	Highflyer	Promoted Cdr. and re-appt.
W. P. EDNEY	W.C.O.	Excellent	Promoted A/Lt. Appointed Excellent
P. T. EDWARDS	Lt.	Anson	Phoebe
P. FARRELLY, D.S.M.	W.C.O.	Mercury II	Mercury (Conversion Course)
F. G. FOYSTER	Lt.	Mercury	Ret'd.
Miss E. E. C. FARMER	A/3/0 W.R.N.S.	President	Mercury
M. J. FITZGERALD	C.P.O. Tel. P/JX 151755	Promoted A/W.C.O.	Daedalus
D. R. H. FERGUSON	Cdr.	President	Sheffield
J. M. A. FAIRBANK	Lt.	Mercury II	Dryad
H. W. E. FELTHAM	C.C.O.	Mercury	Mercury II
A. M. GWYNNE, L.D.S.	Ty. Sgn. Lt. (D)	Mercury	To be released
L. L. GREY, D.S.C.	Lt.	Stag	Mercury
D. W. GREEN	C.P.O. Tel. C/JX 142855	Promoted A/W.C.O.	Penibroke
B. A. GALLIE, D.S.C.	Cdr.	Duke of York	Re-apptd.
G. W. GREET	A/W.C.O.	Pembroke	Confirmed in rank
R. H. GEORGE	W.C.O. (Air)	Blackcap	Nuthatch
E. A. GALE	Ty. W.W.O.	Resource addl. for Aurora	Victory I addl. Mercury
D. G. GRINDELL	Lt.	Mercury	Drake
J. T. HEADON	C.P.O. Tel. D/JX 141103	Mercury	Cleopatra
M. HODGES, O.B.E.	Captain	Victory	President
R. G. HEARN	A/W.C.O.	Tamar	Confirmed in rank
R. H. HUGHES	W.C.O.	Excellent	Promoted Lt. and re-apptd.
H. E. HALES	W.C.O.	Gambia	Sussex
D. A. C. HUBBARD, C.B.E.	C.C.O.	Mercury	Promoted Lt. and re-apptd.
G. F. C. HOLLISS	W.C.O.	Mercury	Pembroke
R. H. HENSMAN	W.C.O.	Mercury	Mercury
C. J. HARLE	Yeo. 23134 R.A.N.	Promoted A/W.C.O.	Mercury for Divisional Course
W. J. HEATH	W.C.O. (Air)	Nuthatch	Gamecock
J. B. R. HORNE, D.S.C.	Lt. Cdr.	St. Angelo	St. Angelo (In contin.)
R. H. HUGHES	W.C.O.	Excellent	Promoted A/Lt. re-apptd.
C. H. P. HUNT	Lt.(A)	Pembroke	Transferred to Exec. Branch. appt. Pembroke (In contin.)
T. A. DE V. HUNT	Lt.(A)	Seahawk	Promoted Lt. Cdr. Transferred to Exec. Branch and re-appt.
T. H. HORNYOLD- STRICKLAND, D.S.C.	Lt.	St. Angelo	Montclare
L. C. J. HOWARD	W.A.C.	H.M. Naval Depot Australia	Transferred Exec. Branch and re- apptd.
B. HANCOCK	W.A.O.	Goldcrest	ditto.
N. W. HARRIS	A/W.C.O.	Newcastle	Confirmed in rank
C. A. JAMES	Lt. Cdr.	Superb	Diadem
S. A. J. JORDON	Ty. W.C.O.	Mercury	Highflyer
D. W. JACKSON	Lt.(L)	Mercury II	Glasgow
S. T. JACKSON	C.A.O.	Daedalus	Transferred to Comm. Branch and re-appointed.
J. A. J. JOHNSON	A/C.C.O.	Anson	Mercury (Conversion Course)
D. LI. JONES, B.Sc.	Inst. Lt.	Mercury	Sirius
H. KELLY, M.B.E.	C.C.O.	Mercury	Promoted Lt. & re-apptd.
C. J. J. KEMP	C.P.O. Tel. P/JX 142047	Promoted A/W.C.O.	Illustrious
C. KENNEDY	C.Y.S. D/JX 133997	Promoted A/W.C.O.	Drake, R.N.S.S., Devonport

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Name	Rank	Whence	Whither
P. D. LLOYD	Lt.(A)	Mercury	Transferred to Exec. Branch appt. Mercury II.
M. H. LETHBRIDGE	Lt. Cdr.	Highflyer	Mercury
P. T. LAWMAN	Lt. Cdr.	Victory	Ocean
M. T. MARWOOD	Lt.	President	Promoted Lt. Cdr. and re-apptd.
I. R. MASON	Lt.	Pembroke	Sirius Promoted Ltd. Cdr.
J. R. MCKAIG	Lt.	President	Crispin
THE EARL MOUNTBATTEN OF Burma, K.G., P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., K.C.B., D.S.O., LL.D., D.C.I.			To be—
THE MARQUIS OF MILFORD HAVEN, O.B.E., D.S.C. ..	Rear-Adml.	Lent to Government of India	Officer Commanding First Cruiser Squadron
C. P. MILLS	Lt.	Pembroke	Placed on Retired List.
A. S. MORTON	Cdr.	President	Daedalus
Miss A. M. McDONALD ..	Lt.	St. Angelo	Troubridge
F. M. MURRAY	3/0W.R.N.S.	Mercury	President (H.M.T.E. Dauntless)
F. MOSEDALE	W.C.O.,	Mercury	Mercury (Conversion course)
A. J. MARDLIN	R.A.N.		
E. A. MOSEDALE	W.C.O. (Air)	Bambara	Sanderling
K. MORTON	W.A.O.	Falcon addl. for Goldfish	Transferred to Comm. Branch in rank of W.C.O. and re-aptd.
K. D. McCLEARY, M.Sc. M.I.E.E.	W.A.O.	Bambara	ditto.
SIR MARSHALL G. C. WARMINGTON, BART ..	Yeo. D/JX 157247	Promoted A/W.C.O.	Belfast
G. D. NUTT	Instr. Cdr.	Mercury	Glasgow
W. D. NEWMAN	Lt. Cdr.	Ocean	Victory
J. C. NEWING	Lt.	Newcastle	Phoebe
J. S. K. ORAM	P.O. Tel. C/JX145792	Promoted A/W.C.O.	Anson
A. L. ORR	Lt.	Forth	Transferred Exec. Branch and appt. Forth for duties with S/M Flotilla Vanguard
R. B. KNIGHT	Lt. (L)	Dryad	Mercury II
P. KEITH-WELSH	Lt.(A)	Mercury	Transferred to Exec. Branch and apptd. Pelican.
A. KENNETT	Lt. Cdr.	Illustrious	Mercury II
B. H. KENT	Cdr.	Sirius	Sirius
R. E. KENT	Lt.	Mercury	Agincourt
J. KANE	A/C.C.O.	Pembroke	Mercury
J. LAWN	Lt.	Mercury	Zephyr
H. LIDDLE	C.C.O.	Illustrious	President
J. W. LEADER	W.A.O.	Seahawk	Transferred to Comm. Branch and re-aptd.
D. R. LEWIS	C.C.O.	Duke of York	Promoted Lt. & re-aptd.
H. PASLEY-TYLER	Lt.	Mercury	Transferred to Exec. Branch and re-aptd.
R. A. H. PANTER	Cdr.	Mercury	Saker
J. E. POPE	Lt.	Troubridge	R.N.S.S. Cookham Camp
D. MC. D. PATCHETT ..	Lt.	Mercury	H.M.A. Naval Depot, London
C. PALK	W.A.O.	Sea Eagle	ditto.
E. D. PLIMMER	Lt. Cdr.	Victory	Reverted to Ret'd List.
D. A. PYNTER	A/W.C.O.	Crispin	Confirmed in rank
C. W. ROBERTSON	Lt.	London	Transferred to Exec. Branch and re-aptd.
J. R. ROUND	Lt.	Vengeance	Promoted Lt. Cdr. and re-aptd.
R. C. KEITH REID	A/W.C.O.	Mercury	Solebay
	W.A.O.	Gannet	Transferred to Communication Branch and re-aptd.

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J. C. RUSHBROOKE, D.S.C.	Lt.	Mercury	Theseus
A. M. RALPH	Lt.	Pembroke	Cossack
A. E. RYAN	A/C.C.O.	Mercury II	Mercury (Conversion Course)
W. T. RICH	W.C.O.	St. Angelo	Implacable
H. K. SERGEANT	Lt.	Tamar	Tamar (In contrn.)
C. O. SADLER	C.C.O.	Pembroke	Mercury
T. C. M. SILVERTHORNE	C.P.O. Tel.	Promoted A/W.C.O.	Chequers (D/FI)
	C/JX 135001		
A. F. SYMONS	C.P.O. Tel.	Promoted A/W.C.O.	Jamaica
	P/JX 145785		
L. SLOANE	C.Y.S.	Promoted A/W.C.O.	Implacable
	P/JX 153124		
A. SMITH	W.C.O.	Gamecock	Condor
W. F. STRATTON	Ty. Lt.	Mercury II	To be released
E. E. STRASSER	A/W.C.O.	Bruce	Confirmed in rank
R. C. STEWART	A/C.C.O.	Pembroke	Placed on retired list.
A. V. SHELLEY	Ty.A/C.C.O.	Pembroke	Release cancelled (Med. unfit)
P. B. SCHONFELDT	Lt. Cdr.	Drake	Illustrious
C. D. SHEAD	W.C.O.	Superb	Diadem
The Hon. D. P. SEELEY	Lt.	Mercury	Chequers
W. A. STAMMERS	W.C.O.	Daedalus	Gamecock
G. E. SAMPSON	Lt.	Boxer	Dryad
H. W. STREETS	W.C.O.	Osprey	Vanguard
S. R. THORPE	Chief Officer	Terror	Pembroke
	S.W.S.		
L. I. TANN	A/Cd. Shipt.	Mercury	Promoted Cd. Shipt.
J. TIMMS	W.C.O.	Drake	Mercury (Conversion Course)
K. M. TEARE	Lt.	Implacable	Condor
B. G. VANN	Lt. Cdr.	Drake	President
S. H. WALKER, D.S.C., R.D.	Lt. Cdr. (S)	Mercury	N.O.I.C. Wilhelmshaven
R. WRIGHTSON	Cdr.	Dryad	President
C. B. H. WAKE WALKER	Lt.	Pembroke	H.M.N.Z.S. Cook III
L. A. WOLFE	A/C.C.O.	Malabar	Drake
E. S. WICKS	C.A.O.	Daedalus	Transferred to Comm. Branch and re-aptd.
E. R. WATLING	C.C.O.	Pembroke	Promoted Comm. Lt. and re-aptd.
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K. N. WALTER	Captain	Victory I	St. Angelo
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