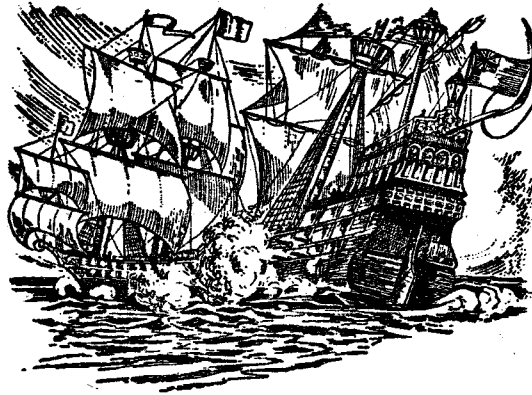


THE COMMUNICATOR



VOL. 6
Nº 1

EASTER
1952



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THE COMMUNICATOR

The Magazine of the Communications Branch, Royal Navy

EASTER, 1952

■ VOL. 6. NO. 1. ■

ONE SHILLING & THREEPENCE

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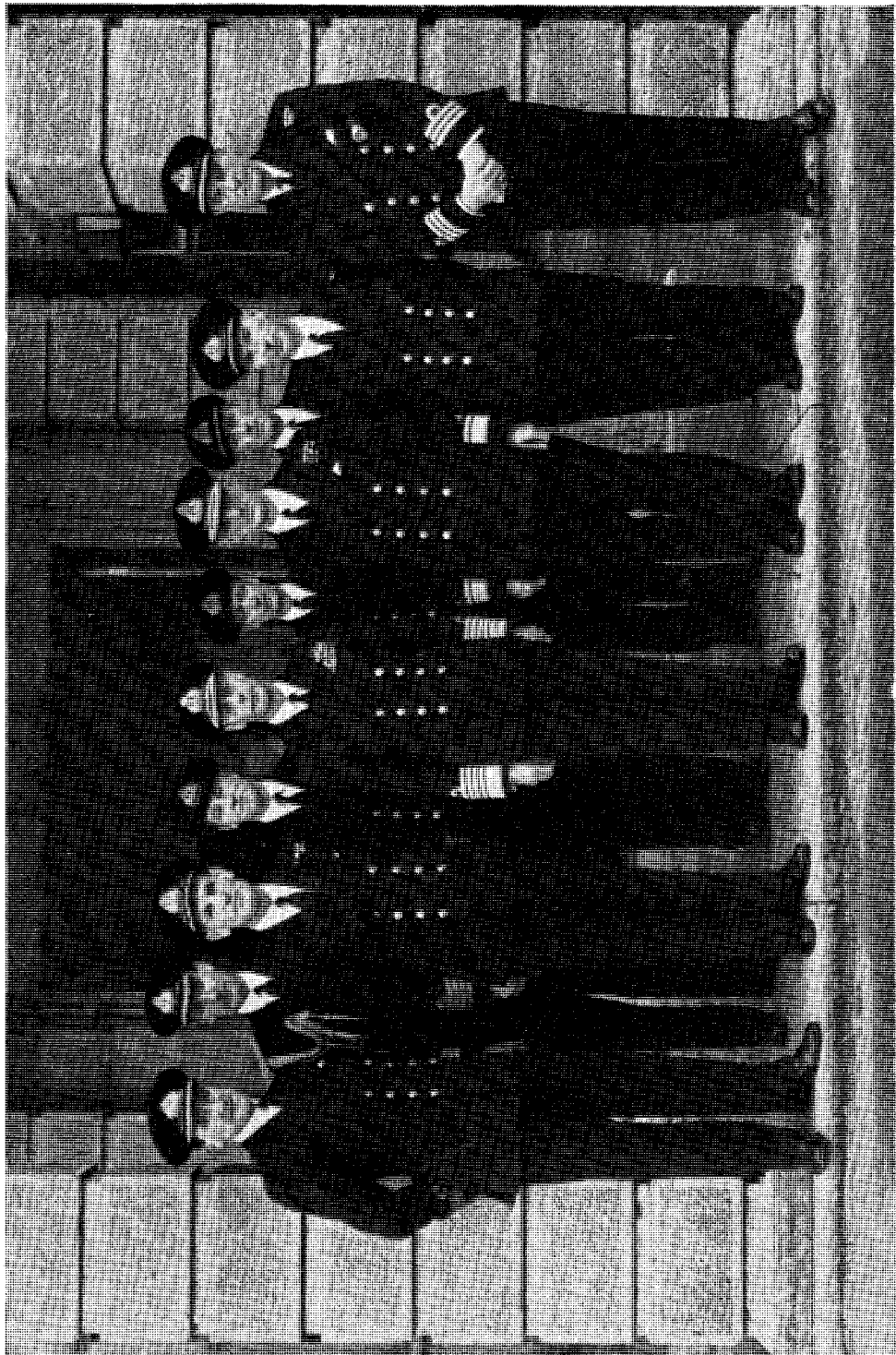
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Visit of H.M. King George VI to Lydney on 30th October, 1942

HIS LATE MAJESTY, KING GEORGE VI

Our thoughts, during the past weeks, have been overshadowed by the tragic death of His Majesty King George VI.

It is probably little known by Communicators that the King qualified as a Signal Officer during the First World War. He always took a keen interest in communications and visited the Signal School in October 1942.

It was the hope of us all that His Majesty would be able to honour us with a visit during one of the Annual Reunions held by Signal Officers. An invitation to this effect was extended in 1951 but, owing to a very full programme, His Majesty was unable to accept. He conveyed in his message his best wishes to all those at the Reunion. Those present begged, with humble duty, to offer their loyal greetings and to thank His Majesty for his kind message.

It was with pride that 3 Officers and 100 Ratings from H.M.S. *Mercury* played their part in lining the route for the Funeral Procession on 15th February 1952.

LIBERTYMEN

One of the most eagerly awaited pipes in our Navy is "Libertymen Fall In." If one goes on to the Messdeck a few minutes before this most welcome announcement is made, what a scene of rush and bustle and preparation is unfolded. Lockers are open, suits are being brushed and pressed, cap tallies set correctly, tapes adjusted and, in short, every precaution is being taken to ensure that all will pass muster when inspected by the Officer of the Watch and that upon none will fall the dread pronouncement "Go back and get properly dressed."

Then comes the process of each going his own way. No longer are they all members of one Ship's Company, each with his allotted status and duties, but until the morning, or until after the week-end or leave period, they are libertymen. Freed from the onus and responsibilities of their communal life in the ship, they proceed ashore as individuals. They make their several ways, some to go home to wives and families, some to see a sweetheart or a friend, others merely to have a run ashore. How grand to think that for to-morrow morning at any rate, there will be no "Charlie" and no invitation, polite but inexorable, to rise and shine!

This does not mean, however, that those who proceed so blithely ashore do not realise that they still have loyalties and responsibilities. The very uniform they wear is a reminder that they are expected to conform to a high standard of behaviour and conduct. Even though libertymen, with freedom of choice and action, they take with them the standards and principles which in many cases have been instilled in them since they were boys in a Training Establishment. They are free and yet they are bound—bound to those things which they know to be right and proper.

So it is in our relationship with God. We are all God's libertymen. He has given us the priceless gift of free-will. We are at liberty to follow Him and to endeavour, albeit falteringly, to walk in the steps of the Master, or we are free to turn our backs upon

Him and to go our own way. Experience shows, however, that this so-called freedom must be qualified. The example of those who have claimed the right to be free and have ended up by being the slaves of the very things which seemed so desirable to them, teaches us that the boundary between liberty and licence is very narrowly defined. The heart of the Christian Gospel is that, if we are willing to forego our so-called liberty and enter the Service of God, we shall find in the words of the Collect that "His Service is perfect freedom." Well may we pray with the hymn-writer:

"Make me a captive, Lord, and then I shall be free. Force me to render up my sword and I shall conqueror be.

I sink 'neath life's alarms when by myself I stand. Imprison me within thine arms and strong shall be my hand."

PADRE.

EDITORIAL

It is surprising how many things there are that can go wrong in the printing and distribution of a Magazine of this nature. The editorial staff are slowly but surely finding them out. Those that we can, we shall eradicate to the best of our ability, but as the points cover anything from the rise in the basic wage of a printer to the time that parcels take to reach the Far East by sea, it can be seen that all is not within our power.

It is a fact that parcel mail to the far corners of the earth is slow beyond belief. To help the Far East, who seem hardest hit, we are going to send out all orders as individual copies in the hope of reducing the time. Signal Officers will be inundated, therefore, with COMMUNICATORS, but they are asked not to mind. One station has already come to its own conclusion on this subject and orders all copies individually. We are quite prepared for others to follow their lead.

It has been suggested in some quarters that the price

of the Magazine is too high. This is supposed to be a kind way of saying "the price should be reduced." At the present moment any reduction in price would reduce the quality of the Magazine to the equivalent of "Tiny Tots." In these days of high prices and with no subsidy we will be hard put to it to maintain the Magazine at its present price and we may well be forced to reduce the standard of paper. This is written before the Budget Speech, which it is hoped will not affect the future disastrously. The closing date for contributions for the Summer Number is Monday, 23rd June, 1952. Send in as many articles as possible, but owing to lack of space, please keep them reasonably short.

S.S. "GOTHIC"

Up to now Single Op. Periods have been a comparative paradise and during the warm afternoons one hasn't to look very far to see one of the Sparkers flaked out in the sun. L/Sig. Rust, with his newly gained hook still sparkling in the tropical sun, has professed great indignation in these make-and-mends, while he himself valiantly leads his Branch on in the making of dressing lines. One wonders how Tel. Houldsworth manages so many make-and-mends, but after all a secret is a secret.

The radio-telephone has provided everyone with a great deal of amusement during the long, long days. L/Tel. Northover always seems well to the fore when phone tests with U.K. are being held and at the mention of a call being put through to the School his excitement exceeds all bounds. No doubt there is some mysterious attraction in being married after all. As to the tuning of that great and enormous machine which makes big talk across the waters, L/Tel. Crandon amuses himself jamming the broadcast and making sparks in the rigging, which after all provides the Merchant seamen with entertainment. They would be entertained even more if they knew that the aforementioned L/Tel. used an old orange box with which to elevate himself during the tuning of the SWB 11. Those who used to see and hear the roar of his Morgan (it has been called various other things) through the School may rest assured that we will still have it with us in spirit. Never a meal of roast chicken and ice-cream passes without our attention being drawn to it.

Our photography on board is in the capable (?) hands of L/Tel. Kemp who, judging by the aroma of the most foul cigar imaginable drifting around the ship after a run ashore in Capetown, isn't finding the business paying too well. After all his style of photography has no particular appeal to those of us who have made front-page pictures in the Press.

We are sorry to say that all the kindness, consideration and sympathy given by the Clothing Store Wrens was in vain. One slip at the laundry and alas, our beautiful white, made-to-measure six suits are no longer with us. The white ran into the blue,

the blue ran into the white, Cdr. McCrum ran into the laundry, and on arrival at Capetown a rating ran over the brow with a brand-new pusser's issue.

Before we sign off, may we all in *Gothic* say thank-you to the frozen five hundred in *Mercury* for your signal of good wishes which, as a mark of interest, was received without a ZDK; and may we in turn wish you and all Communicators throughout the world all the very best, and may all your foreigners be short and sweet ones.

* * *

FROM . . . GOTHIC ROUTINE
TO . . . MERCURY UNCLASSIFIED

Eleven sun-bronzed Communicators send special radio greetings to all their friends at the Home Base.

This message comes to you as we steam northwards through the Mozambique Channel.

(Received by telephone direct from S.S. *Gothic*)

* * *

FROM . . . MERCURY ROUTINE
TO . . . GOTHIC UNCLASSIFIED

Approximately 500 frost-bitten and snowed-up Communicators return radio greetings to compatriots.

This message comes to you as the duck ice-breakers are hard at work on the static water tank.

BOOK REVIEW

MICROPHONES, by the Staff of the Engineering Training Department of the B.B.C. Published for *Wireless World* by ILIFFE & SONS LTD. Price, 15s.

Very little is said about microphones in the normal radio textbook or course; they are simply "assumed." It is therefore very satisfying to be able to read a book which deals with those microphones which are, in fact, being used nowadays and how they do their job.

For the general reader, the first few chapters, on "mike" requirements, sound waves, sound forces and electro-acoustics are in themselves very interesting, but their application to the theory and practice of microphone technique is of extreme value both to those who deal with microphones and those who have to use them.

It should be pointed out that since the book is concerned with a specialised subject, it does not deal with any general radio theory, but does in fact assume that the reader has a basic knowledge of electrical engineering and of A.C. in particular.

It is perhaps unfortunate that the book is "official" and was written by a team since—either for this or for other reasons—the result is rather too stilted and is almost too free from bias—which results in a careful lack of emphasis on the respective merits and uses of the various types dealt with.

In spite of this, the book is very carefully written and bears the mark of those experienced in the teaching. It can therefore be recommended for those who need or want to know something about "the thing you speak to."

FROM THE FAR EAST

No sooner does the Christmas Number of the Magazine arrive in this "remote corner of the mystic Orient," than I find myself hurriedly writing an article for the Easter Number.

Since last writing ships have come and gone and personnel have changed, but even so the general picture of the station looks much the same and the balloon is still flying over the neutral zone in Korea as the Peace Talks drag on. I expect by now the two Korean medals are much in evidence at Divisions in *Mercury* and the returned warriors are spinning yarns about their exploits with the United Nations in Korea. Sit up and listen you Barrack stanchions!

The Bridge Card looks a bit different than it did a few months ago with *Sydney* having just returned to Australia with *Tobruk*, after putting up a really fine show in Korea. *Glory* has now returned to her duties off Korea and we are expecting some more records to be broken by her. C.A.G. *Crane* has relieved *Black Swan* as leader of the 3rd Frigate Squadron. (We are just getting used to the new titles!) Cdr. W. G. C. Elder, O.B.E., has been relieved in *St. Bride's Bay* and Cdr. C. P. Mills has assumed command of *Concord*.

The new books are now in force in the southern half of the station and so far we have not received any reports of distraught Yeomen throwing themselves or their signalmen over the side in despair. We hope to bring the books into force in the northern half of the station very shortly. Can the delay be that the Americans, having been brought up with "Left" and "Right," cannot work out which is "Port" and which is "Starboard"?

The F.S. *Arromanches* paid a three-week visit to Singapore in early February and carried out air attacks on the island and other exercises on her way south from Saigon. Two observers from the S.T.C., Kranji, whose services were offered to the French Navy, were on board for the trip, and they were duly impressed not only by the ship's communications, but also by her operating of aircraft and general efficiency. French "Matelots", or should I call them "Sailors," have been much in evidence in Singapore during the past few weeks.

The second leading rates (Q) course started at Kranji early in February under the eagle eye of Mr. Wallis and his team of instructors; once again we have got some East Indies Station ratings taking the course. By now, with any luck, the instructors will have forgotten the "Old" books and the lot before that and the lot before that . . . or are some of them still thinking in terms of "Equal Speed Charlie London"?

The Main Signal Centre in Phoenix Park is now under the jurisdiction of Mr. Lawn, S.C.C.O., who arrived in the middle of February to relieve Mr. Kemp.

Mrs. Kemp went home in a troopship while Mr. Kemp, having been told to "get in some sea time," followed in *Vengeance*. We wish them both a good leave at home and the best of luck in the future. We are due for a big change of staff shortly and what is even more important, especially in the minds of those remaining here, we have heard a buzz that perhaps we might be getting a few extra hands to bring us somewhere in sight of our proper complement. (Editors of Barrack Standing Orders and Portsmouth newspapers please copy.) Yeoman Cunningham let his Divisional Officer know the other day that he thought a bit of fresh air would do him (Cunningham!) good; and almost before the Captain had said "Recommendation will be forwarded," along came a draft chit to sea. Now the F.C.A. is receiving all sorts of requests for further miracles to be performed.

A signal that will be remembered by many of us was that sent by Vice-Admiral Scott-Moncrieff as C.T.G.95.1 to C.T.E.95.12 on the Accession Day of Queen Elizabeth II: "On this historic occasion I trust you will arrange to salute by firing 21 live shells at Her Majesty's enemies."

H.M.S. "BELFAST"

Owing to the Korean war our movements in general have continued to alternate between periods in the operational area and in Japanese ports. At the beginning of December we had a welcome break secured firmly alongside the wall in Hong Kong. The typhoon season had passed and the weather was very pleasant. There were sporting activities, a ship's dance, a cocktail party, and in general a good time was had by all. At the end of this most of us, having spent our money, were quite willing to return to the operational area. This we did to find more reasonable weather for Christmas and the New Year and to allow *Ceylon* to have her turn to make merry in Hong Kong.

Christmas celebrations were delayed until 10th January, but in spite of this, we managed to find the right kind of spirit and the Paymaster found the usual good fare. In keeping with our late Christmas our Christmas number of THE COMMUNICATOR was also adrift. This could be traced to the selfless devotion of our staff transmitting various orders for all and sundry, with of course, the exception of the order for our "COMMUNICATORS."

Many readers are, no doubt, familiar with the Task Force system and the family-like tree of command that follows in its wake. Normally, our duties consist of being in command of the Task Element responsible for bombardment and blockade of the West Coast. Added to this, we often fly the flag of F.O.2.I/C.F.E.S. who is Task Group Commander of all units on the West Coast. It will, there-

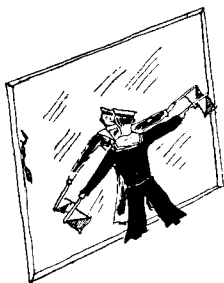
fore, be readily understood that our Sparkers are hard put to it to man the ever-mounting number of waves created ashore and afloat in the operational area and to handle the heavy traffic, a lot of which is classified.

In the midst of 1,700 groups per day out, the babble of Korean and United Nations voices over loud-speakers, dits and dahs and the grating of fruit machines, the office door frequently opens to allow the hot air to blow forth—Jack with his box on his back. The carrying of portables is just another burden of the Sparkers. Like hot-house flowers wrapped up in arctic clobber they man boat patrol and spotting waves and go away in light craft and boats.

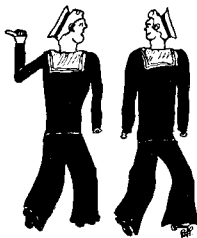
Meanwhile the Flag Deck not so mixed up in the turmoil of the office, frequently grows a Christmas tree on its desolate wastes in the form of the signalman of the watch manning another of our type 615 portables. They also have their "Jack in the Box," who is the dayman proceeding to and from the foc'sle with cable flags as the anchor goes up and down like a yo-yo.

There are spasms, when in company with various task units, when V/S can be used to relieve some of the pressure on the crypto channels, but all too soon the ships are disappearing over the horizon or dodging behind islands. However, every little counts, and our Buntings braving the elements with the temperature often in the teens are giving of their best. At the same time, although they are rarely caught for practical, it is not forgotten that our M.S.O. is manned by signalmen who continue a non-stop grind. By the number of Christmas cards they received, it appears that they are also the silent distributors of many hand messages.

In case the other ships in the Task Group are hiding their lights under a bushel and think that we are trying to steal the headlines with our big guns as well as with our communications, we would like to hand out a bouquet to the ships that relieve us and the small ships who work in the Task Group. They are also on the transmitting end of gunnery broadsides and the latter sometimes on the receiving end. In the same manner we appreciate that there are two ends in communications and the other end often has far less staff and facilities. Our admiration



"Talking to himself again"



particularly goes out to the two Dutch destroyers we have had the pleasure of serving with. We learnt to treat them in the same manner as any of our ships and at all times to expect efficiency.

We offer our heartiest congratulations to all Communicators whose names appeared in the New Years Honours and Promotions list, especially to our Flag Officer, Rear Admiral A. K. Scott-Moncrieff, D.S.O., honoured with the C.B. Also our best wishes to the new arrivals and to those who have left us recently, particularly if *en route* for "civvy street."

8th DESTROYER SQUADRON

The New Year finds the Flotilla—sorry, Squadron—still hard at work in the Korean area.

The winter weather has come round again and V/S staffs now have the additional burden of temperatures below zero, with freezing spray and slippery decks—memories of Russian convoys.

No let up has been allowed to W/T staffs, if anything they are busier than ever. The record for a private destroyer now stands at 9 lines: Broadcast, Task Group Common, R.O.K. Guerilla's Net, Tactical Primary, C.I. Primary, C.I. Secondary, Airspot, Aero Distress and a Portable SCR 61 to some Koreans ashore.

The luckier ones have had spells down at Hong Kong and Singapore and have been able to enjoy the bright lights and sports. Sasebo, almost the Scapa Flow of the East, and Kure have provided an occasional "run ashore" in Japan when in from patrol.

Best of luck to all Communicators from the 114 Communicators of the 8th D.S. We'll be home sometime and let you know how "rugged" it really was!

H.M.S. "GLORY"

(A.C.I. and C.T.E. 95.11)

The passing of 1951 coincided with the end of a two-month refit "down under" and wedding bells for a confirmed bachelor, Yeoman Tant (surprised though many may be). Our eight weeks rest and refit at Sydney, N.S.W., was enjoyed by all. Special mention for the fourteen days station leave, which was spent in many different ways: one Yeoman found employment in an oil refinery at £2 10s. (Australian) per day; another Yeoman cycled to Melbourne and back, a Ldg. Sig. and a Sig. charged batteries, but most of the staff accepted the offer to visit Australian homes, north, south, and west of Sydney and hundreds of miles apart.

The first week of 1952 found us working up from Jervis Bay with H.M.A.S. *Anzac* as plane guard. The second week found us on our way across the Great Australian Bight, H.M.A.S. *Warramunga* in company, one day at Fremantle and three at Singapore. Here we conducted a V/S exercise with our old friend,

H.M.S. *Unicorn*, and H.M.A.S. *Warramunga* using the new books. We invited the French carrier *Arromanches* to take part, but she was unable to do so; a great pity, as it would have given more meaning to the abbreviation A.C.P.

Noon on the 30th January found us rendezvousing with H.M.A.S. *Sydney* and H.M.A.S. *Bataan* off Hong Kong, to transfer some of the aircraft that we had loaned her four months previously. Then into Hong Kong harbour for a turnover of the latest set-up in the Korean theatre of operations. The Dutch Frigate, *Van Galen*, being in company and the 31st being the birthday of Princess Beatrice of the Netherlands, "Dress Ship" was the order of the day.

The first week of February found us back at our old job as C.T.E. 95.11 on the west coast of Korea, with an American, English and Australian screen. H.M.A.S. *Warramunga* was still with us—from Jervis Bay, N.S.W., to point Oboe in the Yellow Sea is distance enough to make a destroyer take a dislike to the round down of a carrier.

During our first patrol we encountered a new phonetic bloomer, after one of the destroyers had queried part of a weather report, it was discovered that a Sig. had flashed "*Fresh Air* is high over China," instead of "*Pressure* is high over China."

At the time of writing we are about to commence our second patrol and news is therefore scarce.

KRANJI

The complement of Kranji has been almost doubled since our last epistle owing to the arrival of the S.T.C. from Hong Kong and the M.S.C. "Buntings" from Keppel Barracks. So, at present, we are going through a period of settling-down to new routines, new faces and all the many changes that an expanding station brings in its wake.

To cater for this expansion, from the point of view of sport, another football pitch and a small kicking-in pitch are under construction, and, it is hoped, work will soon commence on another tennis court. The swimming bath still remains a pipe-dream, though we never give up hoping and look to more favourable consideration now that our numbers have increased.

The extension of the Kranji-club and the installation of a bar will probably have started by the time this is printed, whilst the C.R.R. will be resounding to the reverberations of automatic drills as the dockyard workers go to work on removing several of the concrete walls.

The "Singapore Communications Tennis Trophies" were hotly contested once again. The "Doubles" cup, which was won last year by Suara W/T, was won this time by Tels. Brewer and Winter. The coveted "Singles" cup was won by L/Tel. Hill.

With the "rain season" on the way out we now look forward to the football season. It was reported in the last COMMUNICATOR that we were edged into second place in the 3rd Division last year. However,

it subsequently materialised that our contestants for top honours had, in their final match, fielded players who were not officially in their team. So, this year, we go up into the 2nd Division S.A.F.A. We have also entered a team in the United Services League.

During the next few months there will be quite a large number of us here looking forward to a spell of U.K. weather and that long-awaited Foreign Service Leave—so Stand by Vic-road! We wish all ex-Kranjis the best of luck wherever they may be.

SINGAPORE MAIN SIGNAL CENTRE

The long-awaited exodus from Keppel Barracks to Kranji "Rest Camp" has actually happened and we have experienced quite a peaceful two months in the jungle as opposed to the nearness of the gay City Lights of Singapore, but now the L.O.A. has been increased once more it will surely help the travellers into Singapore with their taxi fares. We are still awaiting the erection of our Rest Room and Dining Hall at Phoenix Park, and I am certain that it will solve a lot of transport problems for now our daymen have to travel, except for make-and-mend days, to the Shackle Club in the city for dinner each day.

To get himself in good shape before he takes up his sea appointment Lt. Fitzherbert has had erected a real Big Ship's iron ladder from the M.S.O. to right outside his office door and when the Chinese boys start swishing the "strongers" around, under the ladder, the F.C.A.'s face literally beams.

Vice-Admiral Sir Guy Russell has introduced a new sport to the colony in "Padda Tennis," a modified form of tennis or, should we say, a glorified version of table tennis. Some of us should go up to Admiralty House on our spare evenings, other than M.R.N.V.R. drill nights, when we will learn just how much Admiral Russell knows about the game; then we in turn will be able to take it to Kranji and hope that Mr. Wallis, C.C.O. and C.Y.S. Cooper will have the courts ready in time.

Now let us come home to our accommodation at Kranji. In the Chiefs' and P.O.'s Mess we find our old friend, C.Y.S. "Scupper" Stannard, ruling the roost with a not *too* iron hand plus a pension number. The ping-pong table has been removed from outside our cabin window, much to the dismay of the R.A. Members, who seemed to wait till make-and-mend afternoons to try out a new ball and wondered why us oldsters from Portsmouth wanted to get our "brains" down. The West Country men are still looking for Drake's Drum—"I wonder where old Stan hid that, me beauties?" C.Y.S. Bill Puddicombe now awaits the operating table at B.M.H., here's wishing him a quick recovery, he most probably swallowed Drake's Drum. E.A. Richardson will have to watch the mess piano, otherwise old Charlie Harry, or should we say Charlie Howe, will be around with his team of removers. Soon we will have to walk around with our tongues on strings,

how about Yeoman Brand getting up and giving us a solo, "Silent Night," by request please.

Let us away now to "G" Block, the home of the Keppel junior exiles, where that old Warrior, George Lynham, sits and sucks that pipe of not-so-peaceful mixture. They even have a room for each of the four watches so that they are not disturbed by the rowdy daymen overhead. Really life is not too bad and I think that in time they will really get to like the Sparkers, their neighbours over the garden fence, because there are times when even "Matelots" want to borrow from their next door neighbours. Anyway the atmosphere is clearer, or may I say dearer, during the opening hours of Kranji Club with the "Anchor and Tiger" flowing freely for the first couple of nights after pay day.

The time has now come for me to conclude, because I know our brother Communicators in the Korean waters and in other distant lands will want space for their contribution to our own Magazine, which, it seems, in a few years will expand to book size, and why not?

ED. COMMENT:

You will find that this and other articles have been cut in length. We regret this, but our space is very limited. Unless the price of paper decreases considerably this will have to continue and we ask you to please keep articles as short as possible.

H.M.A.S. "SYDNEY"

When the renowned *Theseus* was relieved by the equally renowned *Glory*, a band was heard to play "Anything you can do—I can do better"—and so they did according to records. *Sydney* cannot boast a band, a "G" sounding on the bugle was considered to be appropriate when we took over. This record-breaking habit concerns mostly such items as numbers of sorties, bombs, accident-free landings, climbing the highest mountain, etc., etc. It would be interesting if the Communicators started on number of groups "in," "out," "missed," flags upside-down, etc., etc. The *Sydney* might start a race by claiming a monthly total of one-and-a-quarter million groups (or words) received or transmitted by all means during the month of October. Which, as someone pointed out, was equal to a 40,000 word novel every day (if anyone bothered to read all the "bumph").

Much has been related in previous issues of THE COMMUNICATOR regarding what the carrier does during this "communicator's war" in Korea. A few items of a lighter strain might be welcome this time.

In that most luxurious control system (KHB), one sometimes has the odd spot of break-through between circuit loops. This happened on our way north when Radio Telephone calls to sweethearts, wives and bookmakers in Australia were still the order of the day. It would happen between the aircraft homing wave and the radio telephone wave. Heard on the former by all on 119.7 Mc/s.:

A/C: "Request practice homing."

A.D.R.: "Transmit for homing." (Is that you darling?)

A.D.R.: "Say again." (It's so nice to hear your voice—of course I will be careful.)

A/C: "I say again—request practice homing."

A.D.R.: "Roger—transmit for homing." (Darling did you say Roger?—but you know I love you.)

A/C: "I know you love me—but what is my bearing?"

A.D.R.: "Roger—wait-out." (Send for S.C.O.)

Since the early days much has been written regarding Korean experiences—all bound up in yellow folders with red printing on the front—so it appears that until J. Stalin, Esq., has his copy—the least said the better.

It may be of interest to include our latest "craze," most wardrooms have a "craze," ours is called "Turn-over Notes." Mine are somewhat lengthy and not at all to the point (typical of most turnovers).

We are now on our way back to Australia to pick up fresh beer supplies.

THE SIGNAL BOATSWAIN'S SONG, OR NOSTALGIA

The halliards stream out in the breeze,
The locker's full of flags:

I'll chase those bunting tossers, till
My tongue no longer wags.

Now, Apples Harry fifteen hoist!
Attention when I call!

Who's answering the Flagship? Quick,
Long pad, and down 'em all.

Blue Monkey tackline Orange Beer!—
Blue Monkey, Not Blue Nuts!

Belay the Beer! Port Yardarm hoist;
BELAY!! I'll bust my guts.

The way I have to shout at you,
The way I have to bawl

To make you hear above the gale.
Long pad and down 'em all.

Division Zebra X-ray George,
Port Masthead, Pendant Nine.

Watch Glasgow: use the twenty inch!
Yes, things are going fine.

Main answer hoist! The bridge says what?
(My glass, don't let it fall.)

Of course, sir, Blue Affirmative!
Long pad and down 'em all.

Bend on Duff Pudding Harry One!

Use Hand Flags starboard side!

Hoist Uncle Charlie at the dip:

I'm getting into stride.

Here; Yeoman, use a shaded light

And make the York's recall.

I'll catch that Flag Lieutenant yet:

Long pad, and down 'em all.

F. W. C.

A VISIT TO A GUNNERY SCHOOL

The days of grappling hooks, marlin spikes and cutlasses have gone for ever, but, despite the fact that the Navy does little hand-to-hand fighting, it is necessary to instruct the Lower Deck on small-arms firing: musketry. Partly to make it clear to the younger members that those long, wood and steel instruments ranged along either side of the passages of sea-going ships are lethal weapons (conveniently situated, one would gather from nautical fiction for the benefit of mutineers), and partly to illustrate that, in extremity, small brass cylinders may be utilised for purposes other than that of housing neat cigarette lighters.

So, periodically, a number of men from a ship in dock are whipped away for a day's course at the Gunnery School. The term "whipped" is purely a figure of speech; the practice of whipping has long been recognised as decadent and replaced by an equally effective subduing process incorporated in the *method* of whipping away. A system of transportation which is contrary to the regulations of the R.S.P.C.A.

I am inclined to think that an unusual and very slight discrepancy of co-operation exists in the Gunnery School time factor. In order to make full benefit of the solitary day devoted to small arms instruction, the powers aboard ship insist that the participants arrive at the school early . . . with the dawn. However, the authorities at the school are contemptuous of the ship's organising ability, and remain convinced that no one will turn up before 9 a.m., which necessitates a short wait of, say, two hours. So the potential Dan'l Boons arrive and, depending upon temperament, either huddle together for warmth, trace patterns in the frost, or nonchalantly hurl icicles at each other through the fog, impatient for the full light.

Meanwhile, the Petty Officer in charge ransacks every corner in an avid search for a G.I. Frustrating really, because there are no G.I.'s there . . . they live at home. Still, it passes the Petty Officer's time away and gives him a useful and comprehensive survey of the place's lay-out.

Before any of the ratings have actually contracted frost bite or, at least, before it is critical, there is a buzz of life and the wheels begin to revolve. Within an hour of his arrival the duty G.I. is ready to attend his class.

There are a variety of suppositions regarding the significance of the initials "G.I.", the most popular is "Gunnery Instructor," with "General Issue" coming a close second. In actual fact it is derived from the Latin "Genus Infimae," meaning . . . no, on second thoughts, perhaps discretion is the better part of valour.

Too late for thawing to be possible anyway, the class is lured into an old abattoir recently converted

into a refrigerator, possibly with the intention of preventing students from drowsing in the heat during the lecture, and also to cool the ardour of the prospective marksmen . . . an ardour and enthusiasm which may conceivably spoil their aim. The reason for not having gunnery during the summer months is, I imagine, something technical to do with the veracity and velocity of the bullets, flight being affected by the sun's rays.

The following lecture lasts for approximately an hour. (It is prevented from lasting for an hour and a half by the lecturer's clever disuse of punctuation and unnecessary grammatical adherences.) Then the class marches in an orderly manner to the Firing Range. Precariously possessing a knowledge that if someone waves a disc on a stick at them they have inadvertently missed the target altogether and winged a migrating magpie, and that if a red flag is waved they have even missed the magpie.

Having collected ten or fifteen rounds of ammunition from a large basket, they gingerly grasp their rifles and await the order "prone position," at which everyone immediately does nothing until they receive the further order "lay down." They do so upon a waterproof sheet which was put there for the purpose before the last snowfall and commence firing. First with very little success, but improving gradually as the G.I. casually reiterates that releasing the safety catch and erecting the backsight are beneficial points to remember.

It has been suggested that owing to the inexperience of the men taking part, Firing Ranges contain an element of danger. I treat that inference with distrust. Indeed, in the whole day I spent at the school, from the time I arrived until the time I left there were, at most, only two people killed. The unfortunate sinking of a ship passing through the strip of water behind the targets was an isolated incident, caused by the mast, which carries the warning flag, being shot down by a member of one of the W.R.N.S. classes.

Whilst one half of the class peer down their sights in a vain attempt to discern the target, which had seemed so large in the abattoir, the other half cower behind the target embankment and rack their brains for the marking formula. This recollection, if it comes, is not essential because two or three retired mace-bearers walk up and down manipulating their discs with amazing speed. This flashes a message to each rifleman that he, the mace-bearer, is manipulating a disc with amazing speed.

After the prescribed amount of ammunition's worth of imaginary Indians have bitten the dust, the class retires to the abattoir for dinner, which is at twelve noon, and the P.O.'s retire to the abattoir for lunch, which is at twelve noon. The cuisine is excellent and could not be improved even by cooking. Warmed and cheered by dishing up the class returns, with renewed

interest, to the firing point at one o'clock.

The procedure for the afternoon is similar to that of the forenoon, except that the thaw has made the ground-sheets more comfortable and the firing is now rapid. If you think that rapid firing is likely to be erratic, you are right, it is. The magpies, with a fifty-fifty chance of life in the forenoon, postpone migration altogether in the afternoon.

Comes three forty-five the class collects the empty cartridge cases, with whispered queries: "How much can you get for brass toobs?" and carries its wounded to the gate. There to bandy witticisms and discuss Shakespeare until the transport arrives. Comes four forty-five they have waved the last G.I. an affectionate farewell and are discussing Shaw. Comes five forty-five they are discussing Anatomy. Comes six forty-five they are just cussing . . .

K. R. P.,
H.M.S. *Scorpion*.

LINE T/P

Very little has been written on the working of the line teleprinter networks. The average Communicator rarely comes into contact with this system of communication and cannot therefore be aware of the important part played by this comparatively modern means of handling the Navy's communications ashore.

It is not intended here to give a detailed description of the network. Its capabilities can be summed up by saying that the naval teleprinter lines handle, in the United Kingdom alone, something like 70 per cent. of the Navy's signal traffic.

On the face of it this would appear a "tall" figure, more especially so when considering the variety of signalling means employed and at the disposal of a fleet at sea.

During war time this figure may well be very much higher and, although the bulk of traffic represented comes from administrative sources, the proportion of operational traffic passed is by no means small.

Various forms of signalling have been devised and used throughout the ages. Man first signalled using his arms, but any fold in the ground rendered this invisible. Smoke signals were another early form of communication and are still used by primitive peoples. Codes were made possible by covering and uncovering the smoke columns with skins or cloth. Beacons were also used. In the fourteenth century "beacon chains" played a large part in giving warning of enemies from the Continent. The approach of the Spanish Armada was signalled by this method; the time taken to reach London was less than fifteen minutes, which was highly efficient in those days.

Various other forms of signalling are:—heliograph, semaphore, flags and, in more modern times, the Post Office sounder, W/T, R/T, and the telephone.

W/T and the telephone, extensively used by the Navy before the war as the prime means of shore communication, were both subject to certain limitations.

W/T, as is well known, is open to interception, and security can only be obtained by the encryption of all classified traffic; delays in the transmission and reception of such messages are therefore unavoidable.

The telephone, ideal for the passing of short, verbal instructions, is unsuitable for dealing with the complex types of messages encountered today.

Telephone messages take a good deal of time to pass and are often misinterpreted through phonetic errors. Before distribution, the message invariably requires to be retyped.

Line teleprinting provides, in addition to speed, a fair measure of security, an asset which very few communication systems can claim.

Teleprinters can be operated at speeds of up to 66 w.p.m.; the resultant intelligence, in the form of current pulses representing the five-unit code or Murray code—an exclusive teleprinter code—is conveyed to the distant teleprinter over land lines laid above or below the ground. This connection between the machines can be either point to point or via switchboards.

The switchboards used are similar in design to the ordinary telephone switchboard and allow complete flexibility for inter-communication between all stations connected to it.

The use of multi-ply carbon paper roll at the receiving station permits of more than one copy of a received signal in typed form suitable for immediate distribution.

Radio teleprinting, which has been developed from the line teleprinter systems, has gradually become part of a common system of communication by teleprinter and is a step which has been taken to reduce delays in transit of messages passing from one system to another.

The use of radio links, automatic switching centres, tape relay and common procedures is designed to further and simplify the integration of the complex signalling systems in use at the present day.

Although ships play little or no part in teleprinter communications, it may well be that future developments will bring ships into the general scheme as active participating units within the framework of the world-wide telecommunications network now being built up.

The future prospect of shore authorities and ships at sea dialling a number and passing their messages direct to the authorities addressed no matter where they are, be the route over the radio or line or part of each, is well within the scope of present-day possibilities. It merely marks the trend of modern times and is an endeavour to complete a new chapter in the history of communications.

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATION

H.M.S. "ACTAEON"

For the majority of the W/T Staff this will, according to time on the station, be the last opportunity we have of contributing to THE COMMUNICATOR under the signature of COM STAF ACT. Out of the five dit-dah merchants aboard four are due for relief by the time this edition goes to press. From all four go heartfelt thanks to Communicators, near and far, for favours received both on and off the record, favours that have made a very pleasant commission even easier—"Z S J" being especially deserving.

We received a warm send-off for our usual West Coast Cruise, bush fires at Simonstown occurring daily. Both buntings and sparkers humped a Type 46 around with them whilst attached to fire-fighting groups and contributed greatly to a leading official of the Local Municipality saying to the Press "With these Radio controlled parties, we can fight these fires just as one would play a game of chess and make move for move."

The Cruise itself was cut even shorter than we had previously anticipated, and instead of "visiting places away up the Congo" we found ourselves hitting every major township on the Skeleton Coast. However, we understand that *Actaeon* is to be the representative ship at the Van Riebeeck Festival in March and so are looking forward to a few weeks in Capetown.

COMSTAFACT.

H.M.S. "BERMUDA"

Carrying on from our last contribution, *Bermuda* sailed from Simonstown on 23rd October 1951, for the annual West Coast Cruise which was also *Bermuda's* first of the commission, consequently everyone was looking forward to happy stays at the various ports.

The first port of call was Luanda. The people of this Portuguese port had plenty of entertainment laid on for the ship's company, which was taken up quite well by the Communications department.

At Lagos, our next stop, we arrived ahead of schedule owing to a case of suspected appendicitis aboard. The entertainment at Lagos, being a British port, was on a lavish scale, which included week-ends at Abakuta and Ibadan patronised by the department.

The trip from Dakar to Simonstown was devoted almost entirely to exercises in preparation for the C.-in-C.'s efficiency test, which incidentally went without a hitch. The department was divided into two teams, "A" and "B," and the competition was brisk and keen. Both teams came out very even, and for our effort everyone was rewarded with a packet of cigarettes each from the F.C.O. and C.C.O.

We arrived in Simonstown on 20th December. Each watch had four days' leave at Christmas and New Year. After the festivities we settled down to the serious business of the bush fire organisation.

The bush fires came sooner than expected, in that we had six in one week, which entailed the whole of the Communication department, except the M.S.O. watchkeepers, being out night and day with type 46 portables. The 612 played an important part in the organisation. All this happened whilst one watch was on their fourteen days station leave, thus making the department shorthanded.

We wish to offer congratulations to Yeo. Evans on the event of his wedding on 12th January at Durban.

At the time of writing we are doing our annual refit and the natives are having a glorious time R.A. During the time of docking we are training a Communications Whalers Crew for the Simonstown Municipal Regatta, which will be held in May, in Simon's Bay.

CAPE EAST W/T STATION (H.M.S. "AFRIKANDER")

The New Year rushed upon us here at Cape East almost before we could tune a CS5B. Although no Social or Dance was held, everybody had a good time on their own account and several of the staff wore their hats in a funny way for a couple of days.

Old members of the staff will be sorry to hear that our piggery is on the decline. At the moment we are down to one sow, one "ci devant" boar and a small piglet. Farmers Robins and Davies made an abortive attempt at rearing chickens, but only about eleven nondescript fowls are left of the fifty they purchased.

On the other hand, the same partnership bought a dozen ducklings which are doing voraciously well. It's only a matter of time before they attack the station dogs. P.O.S.M. Davies organised a duckpond in a most efficient manner, and it is quite a sight to see them quacking their way to the pond in line ahead. Stokes' rabbits (furry) are doing nicely, and on the canine side Spot recently delivered herself of seven Heinz pups, only one of which was a dog. Recent showers seem to indicate that the bush fire season is closed and we are now standing by for the "line out" season, and I don't mean rugger.

CAPE SOUTH W/T STATION

Having got over the Christmas rush, Cape South have settled down again to a normal routine, beginning the year with numerous changes in staff.

The New Year began with a certain amount of excitement in the way of a series of bush fires which were successfully overcome with the aid of portable radio sets, Cape South acting as a link between the scenes of the fires and Bush Fire H.Q. in Simonstown. Several enjoyable "socials" have been held at a nearby hotel, helping to relieve the monotony of work and continuous watching.

The two station grunterns recently acquired from Cape East died in an early stage of life owing to the kindness of leave party ratings in feeding them on empty tins, curry and tea leaves. This disagreed with their digestion!

S.T.C. KLAVER

We are now fully operational, having been under way with our Joint Training for a little over a month.

R.N.—One Ldg.Tel. "Q" course has just been completed and part two of another commences shortly.

S.A.N.—One Yeoman "Q" course, one P.O. Tel. "Q" course and one Tels. touch-typing course are all under way.

Twenty-six ratings in all are under training.

Our "Course Timetable" for the year indicates that our small instructional staff will be fully occupied as eleven courses have been arranged.

The C.-in-C. South Atlantic Station, accompanied by Commodore F. J. Dean, O.B.E., S.A.N., walked around the S.T.C. early this month and appeared quite impressed and amused at what they saw and heard; they appeared particularly amused at the touch-typing to records class.

Some of the "older school" will recognise the names of the S.A.N. Officer and senior ratings who are here to assist with the administration and instructional duties. They are: Mr. Elon Clarke, Signal Boatswain, S.A.N., C.P.O. Tel. F. Wride, S.A.N., and C.Y.S. A. Norton, S.A.N.

We have joined in the "Witex" with *Mercury*, and when conditions permit (which is normally for most of the duration of the exercise) we get good value from it, especially the ratings on course.

We were held up for a day or two recently when bush fires were creeping (at the rate of knots) in the direction of the S.T.C.; all ratings were employed "damping down" in our particular area. During this period the type 46 came into its own, each fire-fighting party using one with which to keep in touch with "Bush Fire Control" which was situated in the centre of Simonstown. Towards the end, when the fires were getting further away from Simonstown,

we fitted a T.C.S. into our staff car and placed ourselves in suitable spots and acted as a link between the 46's and "Bush Fire Control," which was manned almost continuously by the F.C.O.

H.M.S. "NEREIDE"

At the time of writing, H.M.S. *Nereide* is being put in readiness for the East Coast Cruise. We all feel better after keeping the wall up since the 17th December! The West Coast Cruise recently completed was enjoyed by most of the ship's company, although the heat caused quite a few "Widgies."

Ports visited were Libreville, Lagos, Duala, Port Gentile, Lobito, Sapele and Calabar. Sapele and Calabar, being up-river in the jungle, broke the monotony of the usual sea trip (as also did the birthday suits of the natives!). Many "Grippe" runs were laid on by the local residents, and such trips as visits to the brewery at Lagos and the new dams at Duala, were well supported. Also present at Lagos was the Fleet Flagship H.M.S. *Bermuda*, whose Royal Marines created a lot of excitement amongst the natives when they performed the ceremony of "Beating the Retreat."

An amusing incident occurred while on passage back to Snooky. A certain member of the stokers mixed brine with the fresh-water supplies. What was said to him will not bear printing!

M.S.O. SIMONSTOWN

Despite the numerous hours of overtime, the ants, beetle borers, wood worms, various other termites (non-communicating species) and vibration of the teleprinters our office miraculously remains suspended on its piles, as it has since 18 circle ringbolt or earlier. Though recently signs of the "rot setting in" became apparent when daylight appeared where it shouldn't and the handrails became detached from the stairs. The term "It came off in my hand Chief" not being applicable.

We had a very busy fortnight a week or so back with bush fires, keeping various frequencies and the Yeoman out of bed. However, being modest, we refrain from mentioning our heroic accomplishments. Sufficient to say that "Baked Bunting" has an acquired flavour.

Shortly after arrival, our newest member (one of Pharaoh's Lean) took an instant dislike to this Paradise (?), for, when sunbathing on the local beach, he was offered "Up 'omers" by an aged lady who presumably came to the conclusion that he was suffering from malnutrition.

Finally, passing from the ridiculous to the gorbimey, one of our green non-bilingual erks entered a shop and asked for a tub of "Roomys" ice-cream. (Roomys being the Afrikaans word for "ice-cream"—for the benefit of other non-bilingual readers.)

P.S.—Will our enthusiastic motoring predecessors please return the T/P tool kits we discovered missing at a recent muster.



SLANGKOP W/T STATION

Two weeks ago it seemed likely that there would be no more contributions from Slangkop W/T. It seemed likely that there would be no more Slangkop. On 31st January a bush fire, fanned by a strong south-easterly wind, swept through the station grounds. The office and quarters were evacuated and many of us considered Slangkop doomed.

It was, for us, the climax of bush fire week. The fire had started at Red Hill the previous night and had moved steadily towards us. It had been brought partially under control, but when it was about a mile away, it flared up again and bore down swiftly upon us.

At 1320 the flames reached the station grounds and Lt. Low gave the order to evacuate. The exit was so hurried that many of the staff were heard lamenting the loss of civvies and vast sums of money—we had been paid that forenoon. Services were made to all concerned before the office was abandoned. By the time the watch on had left the office smoke was thick about them and they had to make their way through the scrub on the sea side of the buildings in order to join their comrades outside the station gates.

Although the fire blazed clear across the station to the sea, it caused only negligible damage. The only naval loss was 1 mattress cover and 1 bedspread burnt, presumably caught by a flying spark. The home of one of the post office operators, Mr. Fairman, was in danger when his hedges and the adjacent bush caught fire, but some of his colleagues extinguished the flames.

The station was re-occupied and watch re-set at about 1500. For several hours we were engaged in putting out small fires and shovelling sand on smouldering bush. Everything was covered with a thick layer of dust and ashes, which took some time to clean up thoroughly. The station presented a desolate picture, with its wide belt of blackened earth and charred shrubs. (It looks even more desolate now that we have chopped down all the remaining trees and bushes in the vicinity of the quarters.)

The Dockyard fire tender and a force of South African soldiers stood by overnight to deal with any further outbreaks, but nothing serious occurred.

The fire was given good Press coverage. P.O. Tel. Jones, who was P.O.O.W. at the time, hit the front page of, and was given promotion by, the *Cape Argus*. L/Tel. S. Thompson and Tels. Jefferson, Johnson and Hanlon were photographed wielding fire-fighting weapons and looking remarkably happy about the whole business.

Our South African Tels. left in January to return to their own Navy. Willie Saunders is now operating at the other end of the Slangkop-Salisbury Island fixed service, and Phil May is on the "Jan Van Riebeeck." The latter left us a legacy in the shape of "Ginger," a dog of uncertain lineage. Ginger mixes quite well with our old-stagers, Brick and Butch. Brick recently spent a week with the S.P.C.A.,

recovering from a bite sustained in a somewhat unsuccessful encounter with Mr. Fairman's dog.

Snakes have been fairly common around Slangkop this year, probably as a result of the long spell of hot, dry weather. C.P.O. Tel. Raven killed a 6 to 7 ft. cobra near the C. & P.O.'s Mess not long after arrival. The routine of the office was enlivened one afternoon by the appearance of a skaapsteeker, a small but nevertheless dangerous variety of snake, in the Service 12 Bay. We still wonder whether Whitehall believed the "delay due to snake in office," which we made after the skaapsteeker had met with a violent death.

Tels. Kennedy, Keeley, Weston, Hughes, Dickson, Sampson and White returned a few days ago from S.T.C. Klaver, where they had been undergoing a L/Tels. "Q" course. They are now anxiously awaiting their results.

Despite the fact that it's almost autumn here in South Africa, spring fever appears to be prevalent. Several of our members are contemplating matrimony, even up to the point of having bought the ring and named the day. We wish them all the very best of luck and happiness in their ventures.

FLAGS

The "Heraldic" nature of the code of flags has recently been pointed out. There is in H.M.S. *Mercury* a list of flags described in terms of Heraldic Blazon. We are very much afraid that this means yet another change in our standard phraseology.

Who for instance can recognise?

1. "Bendy sinister of ten pieces gold and gules; Azure a saltire silver."
2. "Party fessive of three pieces gules silver and azure; gules a pale silver."

or,

3. "Silver a lozenge throughout gules; checky (of 16 pieces) azure and silver."

Answers on page 19.

SECURITY REGULATIONS

One establishment we know of has such rigid regulations that the C.Y.S. and his class were locked in the Signal School while the rest of the classes were at "stand-easy."

* * *

FROM:—CHIEFTAIN (O.O.W.)

TO:—VENGEANCE (O.O.W.)

My *skimmer* has proceeded to you in error. Request you inform *skimmer* to proceed to the Eddybeach.

REPLY FROM VENGEANCE

To O.O.W. from Ditto. Ref. your last signal. Message not understood. Your *Captain* has been onboard for the last hour and wishes to know why he should proceed to Eddybeach.

HOME FLEET NOTES

PORTSMOUTH SQUADRON

Although we sail from the "Alma Mater's" doorstep and indeed assist her to impart the practical knowledge of how not to manoeuvre to some of her greater and lesser sons, it is felt that the activities of the Portsmouth Squadron are as little known as those of our less fortunate (?) brothers in Fayid or Kranji. The Squadron is made up of the ships which run for the training establishments in Portsmouth Command.

The leader is H.M.S. *Boxer*, ex-Tank Landing Ship, now Radar Training Ship for H.M.S. *Dryad*. She has sufficient W/T equipment for a Combined Headquarters Ship and her remote control system (apparently devised by Heath Robinson in conjunction with Emmett) is complex enough to give headaches to the most erudite technician, which it not infrequently does; the current cry being, "It's Rudolph."

H.M. Ships *Redpole* and *Starling* carry out navigational training for H.M.S. *Dryad*, which we are told, includes, when they are in company for passing out cruises, jeopardizing their lives by allowing would-be navigators to become temporary Communicators.

H.M.S. *Fleetwood* carries out trials for A.S.R.E., many of which are shrouded in a cloak of security, though it is suspected that this is to fox the C.C.O. on his visits.

H.M.S. *Finisterre* (We have guns and fire them) trains budding gunnery officers, but this does not deter her Sparkers from being very much on the ball.

H.M.S. *Contest* is submarine target ship and consequently spends much of her time at Rothesay where we are sure she keeps the Squadron communication laurels bright, judging by the state of some of her flags on return to the fold.

H.M.S. *Launceston Castle* also appears in our midst at infrequent intervals as most of her time is spent at Milford Haven where she is Air Target Training Ship.

Our most irregular visitor is H.M. L.C.T. 4063 which we see in between shipping cattle to Lundy Island or Landing Craft to Scotland.

H.M.S. *Reggio* (L.S.T.) will soon join to replace H.M.S. *Suvla* whose First Lieutenant (Cheshire) was often to be found amidst bundles of hay for hounds or aircraft for scrap obviously thinking with nostalgia of his Sig. Bos'n days.

All ships with the exception of the last four sail daily from Portsmouth, except when called upon to take part in exercises or to act as A.S.R. ship, etc., a not uncommon occurrence. Indeed it is rumoured that a certain train from the Harbour Station is timed by the passing of a certain ship.

The obvious question to the bridge-minded Communicator is, what does such a homogeneous

collection of ships look like together at sea? The answer is, we don't know, not having seen more than five ships together at any one time.

What of communications? Staffs are based on a daily running basis and are therefore extremely small. Any ship, except *Boxer*, with more than a Yeoman plus one and a P.O. Tel. plus two being considered as wallowing in luxury. However, every Monday (so-called maintenance day) morning, despite ships being berthed anywhere from South Railway to Fountain Lake Jetty, cranes being moved to mar various views, and mysterious power failures, from dockyard sources of course (It's Rudolph), the air is disturbed by strings of bunting and bursts of R.F.

There are quite a number of stalwarts finishing their *extra* time in the Squadron, so look out for a draft to a good but by no means quiet number. Anyone with the latest guff from *Mercury* with which to tub us on Monday mornings is welcome.

4th DESTROYER SQUADRON

Arriving at St. Andrews for Gunnery Trials in early September and succeeding only in making an excellent job of ploughing up the Royal and Ancient Golf Course, we sailed to serve our time at Invergordon. There we sampled the delights of all the X's and rustic simplicity of Yon Bonnie Braes, sailing for our respective Home Ports late in September. On arrival we were given thirty-six hours' leave before sailing for the Persian Gulf, but no sooner did the dreaded day of departure dawn than the trip was cancelled. Our move then was to Penzance to await the forthcoming exercise "Assess." The chortling can be imagined when it is remembered that thirty-six hours' leave had been given for nothing.

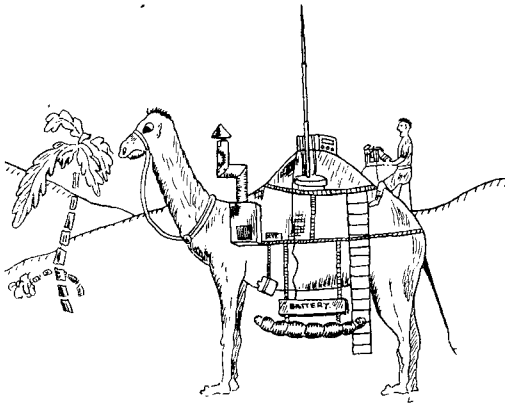
On arrival at Gibraltar we had the usual exercises and were there until 3rd November. Then it became obvious that our extra leave was to be earned. We were to join the Med. Fleet to supplement the Canal Zone ships. Doubtful pleasures of L.C.W. were experienced for two days and then, with *Corunna* in company, *Agincourt* sailed for Port Said. *Agincourt* was posted to Ismailia where we had a very enjoyable stay, always standing by, but never actually called in to assist the Army unless it was a matter of seeing off a few beers. *Corunna* was having a far worse time at Port Said as there was work to be done there. During this time, *Aisne* and *Jutland* were called away from Malta as stand-by reinforcements for the Canal Zone. Reports from *Aisne* say that Plane Guard formed their main duty, whilst *Jutland* moved back to Malta on her own.

The festive season found *Aisne* and *Jutland* in the Canal Zone with *Agincourt* and *Corunna* at Malta. The latter pair spent Christmas day with a "Jolly Roger" flying and were the target of quite a few

boarding parties. As recompense for work over Christmas, *Aisne* and *Jutland* were allowed seven days of relaxation visiting Athens and a further two days at Suda Bay in Crete, while the other two took over again in the Canal. Buntings berthing the ships at Port Said became very proficient in the use of Type 46 portables which from a Sparker's point of view was considered very good. The more the better.

Only after these episodes did the Squadron collect together, but our expected stay at Malta did not last long. Receiving a sailing signal we sailed on the same day for Larnaca, Cyprus. Capt. D.4 became a C.T.G. with a group consisting of 1 carrier, 1 cruiser and 5 destroyers, an unusual occurrence on any Station and a very busy time for the Communications Staff. During our stay at Cyprus an American "Mercator" crashed off the coast and we were put in charge of the sea search. *Chevron* recovered 14 survivors from a crew of fifteen, an excellent job for which she received a commendation from C-in-C. Med. Unfortunately a very tragic occurrence marred the day, as *Ocean's* "Sea Otter" capsized whilst taking off to assist in the search and the pilot was lost.

On 8th February *Agincourt* and *Corunna* arrived back in Silema, having been delayed by some heavy weather. We are in Malta at the time of writing. *Aisne* and *Jutland* have returned to the Canal for, we hope, their good-bye visit. Our future programme consists of a stay at Palermo, thence to Gibraltar and the homeward road. Will take even money that some exercises will be fixed for this trip to . . . Roll on 6th March and our home ports with a month's leave to come.



Home Fleet Desert Patrol

INSHORE FLOTILLA

The Christmas COMMUNICATOR left the 4th Minesweeping Squadron starting to sweep around a break in a telephone cable off Holland, whilst the 104th Minesweeping Squadron was just off for the

Baltic and the 232nd was just beginning to appear out of various yards around the coast. Unfortunately the 4th's party proved to be a long job and we soon found ourselves laying and lifting dans and getting sweeps in force 8 gales squalling to force 9. Never has the unfortunate Mr. Bell, inventor of the telephone, been called so many unjustifiable names, by so many sea-sick sailors for so long.

Fortunately, Captain (M/S) in *Bramble* decided to go and see how the 104th were getting on. So the gilded staff were able to refresh their eyes gazing at the attractions at the night clubs of Kiel, whilst some rude "S.V.C.'s" were passed on Flotilla Wave from the remainder of the Flotilla still rolling off Texel.

An interesting sight at Kiel was the German Minesweeping Flotilla of "R" boats. Most of the Captains were ex-U boat captains and wore U.S.N. uniforms. The boats had U.S.N. pendant numbers. This Flotilla regarded itself as the nucleus of the future German Navy.

After Christmas leave a French squadron of BYMS and a Dutch Squadron of M.M.S.'s. came up to Harwich for Exercise *Bandeau I*, which consisted of sweeping a minefield laid by Bomber Command and the 1st F.T.B. Squadron. C.Y.S. Hunter was chosen to go and liaise with the French sweepers for the operation, but unfortunately he smacked his lips so much thinking of the litre of wine a day that he gave himself mumps. So L/Sig. Pollard took over instead, and after all his experience at Fontainebleau M.S.O., proved himself to be just as coherent on the voice wave after his litre as before.

We shall be seeing a lot of our N.A.T.O. opposite numbers in the future. We have a return match at Den Helder in March and another at Cherbourg in May.

At present the 4th is rapidly driving Londonderry and the 3rd T.S. round the bend. They are trying to make us sweepers into convoy escorts. You should see us manning 8 V.H.F. lines with two sets. Up in the Operations Room (what we used to call the wheelhouse until Londonderry indoctrinated us) they press the buttons of type 86 remote control faster and faster and down below in the wireless office the Tels. are knee-deep in crystals. The 104th meantime is working with our rival team—the 5th M.S., as the old Fishery Protection Flotilla is now called. The 232nd is still in the same state as it was at the beginning of this article, but the 1st F.T.B. Squadron is due to join up with us on 1st March, bringing our strength up to 32 vessels.

Those of you who were beginning to think that the Admiralty only provided signal flags for decorating the shore canteen for a Ship's Company dance will be glad to know that an ocean minesweeper needs and uses 10 halyards and even a little M.M.S. can do with 8.

H.M.S. "VANGUARD"

In October, 1951, *Vanguard* arrived at Devonport for a four months' refit and once again became a Portsmouth manning commitment. The cheerful West Country faces departed and Leydene had to scrape the bottom of the barrel to provide the very barest of minima for a *Private Battleship's* complement. While the skids were being put under the "Westo" Ships company, the same was being done to the "Bloke," Cdr. (now Captain) R. F. T. Stannard, O.B.E., D.S.C., R.N., and the sorrow of losing him was only relieved by our delight on his well-earned promotion.

The main item of the refit from the communication aspect was the installation of the Remote Control Outfit K.H.A. This was a major item involving a tremendous amount of work in all Wireless Offices.

Early in December the ship was once more alerted with "Royal Cruise" and the refit became a race against time to include all the "essentials" as viewed by the different authorities who have a hand in such matters. Long-haired scientists from A.S.R.E. to put right all the items of special equipment not used since the last Royal Tour. A new buzz each day as to where we were to go and two buzzes per ditto as to who was coming as complement and who as Royal visitors. When all these matters were resolving themselves, came the very sad news of 6th February, H.M. King George VI was dead. This terrible loss to the country and the Empire was even more a personal loss to everyone in *Vanguard*, because it affected the immediate future of us all. A month later and we should have been on the point of sailing. Inevitably the furniture from *Victoria and Albert* and other special items required for a Royal Cruise were returned from whence they came. *Vanguard* sent a

party of one hundred men to Windsor to take the place reserved for the Ship's Company of the Royal Yacht during the funeral procession, and it is with great pride we record that six Communication ratings were included in that party.

Now the amended plans are clear. We are to join up with the Home Fleet and work up at Gibraltar during March and take over as Fleet Flagship during the Easter leave period. Not all the work with the special wireless equipment will have been in vain, because we are to do some special radio teleprinter trials with Whitehall Wireless during March, which it is hoped will point the way as to how to receive the broadcast when morse is a forgotten art.

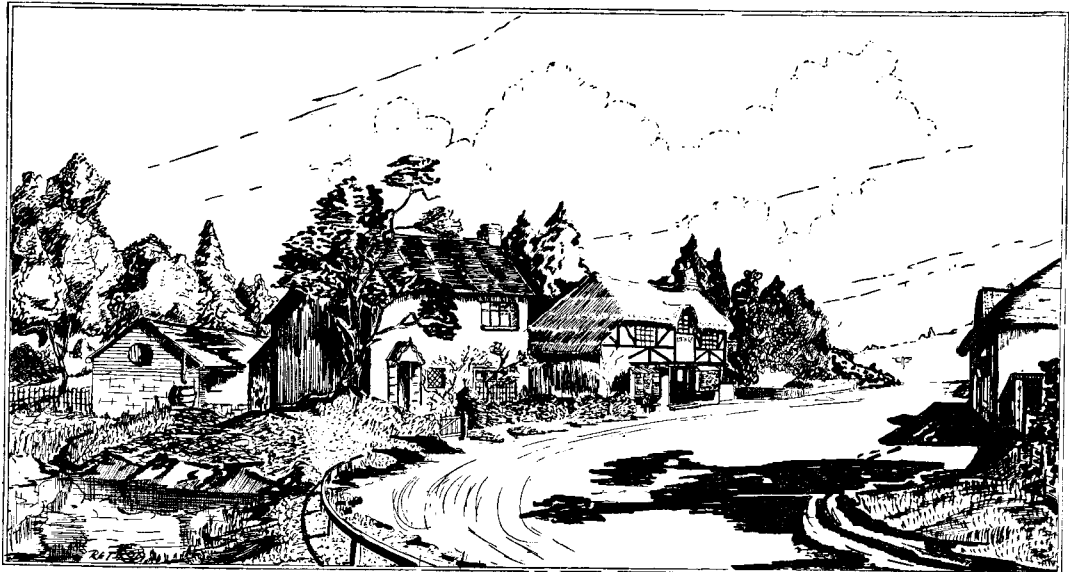
To our fellow Communicators in *Gothic* whose disappointment must, if possible, have been even greater than our own. We would like to extend our sincere sympathy and hope that the future may have great prospects for each and everyone.

H.M.S. "ILLUSTRIOUS"

We were somewhat out in our last contribution about our prospects for the latter end of the cruise. As most people now know, we carried out two trooping trips to Cyprus instead of our usual *trials* and training in the Channel.

It was a valuable experience for our Army guests and ourselves, but we feel thankful that we didn't have to go any further than Cyprus, as considerable crowding was inevitable. The weather on both outward trips was vile, until we got well into the Mediterranean, but on the homeward journeys it was quite well-behaved. There should be a moral there somewhere!

There was ample opportunity to try out long distance H.F. communication on these trips, a thing



MEDITERRANEAN

H.M.S. "EURYALUS"

At the time of our last contribution we were standing by, with fingers crossed, for a long, quiet spell in dry-dock and a return to the dreary routine of "Hop Leaf, Anchor, Blue" after our interesting and eventful stay between the banks of the Shatt-El-Arab. True enough, in we went, but the advantages of a dry-dock period in Malta soon began to diminish under the onslaught of hammer, scraper, and what-have-you, never a very pleasant background for a genuine "Ambeet" hangover. Fortunately, living conditions improved a little when a large portion of the Ship's Company removed to Verdala Barracks for the duration of the refit.

The "Comms." staff slid off in relays to S.T.C. Ricasoli for courses of various kinds and we now have a large number of budding Sigs. and Tels. aboard all waiting for the "Great Day" when they can bid farewell to the rigours of an O.D.'s life. Some of the leading hands, however, rubbing their hands with glee over the prospect of obscure "Radio Warfare" courses and even vaguer "Refresher" courses, were somewhat taken aback when met by pleasantly enthusiastic instructors and that bugbear of communicators—"New Books."

The inevitable changes have occurred or are about to occur among the staff, principally the impending relief of our S.C.O., Lt. Cdr. P. J. Warrington, by Lt. Cdr. Hornyold-Strickland, D.S.C. We would like to record our regret at losing the former, who has guided us through a commission somewhat more arduous than most and wish him the very best of luck in the future. To our new S.C.O. we extend a hearty welcome and trust that his sojourn with us will be a pleasant one (for both sides). Chief P.O. Tel. Tinkler, P.O. Tel. Hakin, Yeomen Watson and Trotter, Sigs. Darbyshire and Freke, and Tel. Simpson have all made the conversion from Strait Street to Union Street, and Ldg. Tel. "Mick" Wilton has gone to the East Indies with *Gambia* under the illusion that he will be in "Guzz" before us.

Despite the turmoil of refitting, the approach of Christmas-tide brought about the usual tension among all concerned. A ship in our state could not look forward to quite as "homely" a festivity as was the case in '50, but there was the added good feeling of a commission drawing nigh to a close and a docking period, which was getting tedious, ending. Considering all, the messdecks looked very seasonal indeed, Jack being happy of a chance to give vent to his creative genius. Nevertheless, the main topic was that it was a quieter Christmas than any of us had known. Could it be that that present-day maxim in Blighty, "There is not the money about these days," has got a grip here too?

Among other things, there was the traditional

comic football match at Corradino, very well attended by those who were warmer inside than out.

To the joy of some and acute dismay of others, came the day when a certain signal reached our M.S.O.—"Have boiler power, etc., etc."—and on 2nd January, 1952, we took the bull by the horns and had a look outside the breakwater. We chose a good day, a stiff breeze cleared all the chippings and cobwebs from the upper-deck, the sort of "sharp" day when a Bunting wonders in amazement why he never became a Sparker.

Trials, trials and more trials, and all more or less successful, much to the chagrin of the natives. In the middle of all this working up, the Egyptians got out of station and the Cairo riots had *Euryalus* back once more on a pier head jump. Shades of Abadan. We became part of T.F.56, assigned T.U. 56.2 under the care and guidance of C.T.G. 56.2 in *Agincourt* (D.4). Within eight hours of the formation of this T.U. we were Cyprus bound, to lie in readiness should the Egyptians decide to make the wrong move.

Weather almost ruined our stay at the ports of Kyrenia and Larnaka, but the "roughers" there gave the younger members of the crew a chance in liberty boats to find out what was meant by "Give me the boats." The army looked after us in their usual brotherly way. Ski-ing trips were arranged for those budding Olympic Gold Medallists and quite a few of the "Comms." were going to have a bash at this until a notice said that it would cost a pound.

The O.T.C. kept us on the go with plenty of exercises in which *Euryalus* acquitted herself well.

And so to Malta once more. The return journey proved a means of sorting out the sailors from the learners and head on into the sea we were forced to reduce speed, which made us a day late in our E.T.A. No. 6 Buoy Grand Harbour. From the "Comms." point of view the trip was well worth while; it is not very often in these austere days that we have a chance to operate as a T.U., the new books got a real christening and we have all gleaned much from the operation.

While in Malta this spell, we have looked more like a merchant ship loading and unloading stores in preparation for yet another period away from our "home" port. We should be more or less used to this now, our commission has been half-and-half all the way along.

And so we lie at No. 5 Buoy, Grand Harbour, storing and ammunitioning in preparation for our departure shortly for a destination a little further East. When we next get into Malta we *should* be on top line for "Guzz."

H.M.S. "MANXMAN"

Since our last effort in THE COMMUNICATOR the ship has moved around quite a "fair dinkum."

Moving south through the Canal attending the movements of merchant ships then northbound through the Canal from Suez, this involving a considerable amount of vigilance by the Buntings—for the first time on this commission. During this time one of our stalwarts, Tel. Wayne, was lent to the Tug *Empire Dolly* as interpreter, 1st Lt., purser, chef, rum bosun, bunting and sometimes sparker. The Tug did valiant service towing barges loaded with coal from Port Said to Suez, taking five days of hazardous travel to reach its destination. Then we suffered more heat by sailing for Port Sudan, where we embarked onboard a Mr. Pelham, the new British Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, whom we took to Jedda, the driest place we've hit so far.

Following this period of warm weather, when even the Telegraphists acquired a slight tan, we moved northwards again to shift to "blues" and the colder climate of the Northern Adriatic—Trieste being a "goal" where everyone spent seven welcome days of which very little can be remembered.

Once again the little chits from Lascaris littered the office on 12th December, precisely two months after leaving.

Christmas was spent in much jollification and imbibing. Bunting was put to good use on the mess-decks and the ship was well lit-up as well as the Staff inside. During our brief stay at Malta the Communicators, combined with the Miscellaneous, won the Ships inter-Part Football Knock-out Competition.

The New Year brought the Flag of F.O.F. Med. onboard for a short trip to Tripoli to pay the Government's respects to the new Kingdom of Libya. This also entailed exercises with the R.A.F. and Submarines which were well dealt with by the Communicators.

On our return to Malta we headed straight into dry-dock for what we thought would be a well-earned week's overhaul, followed by two weeks' self-maintenance alongside H.M.S. *Tyne*. Alas!—this bliss lasted for only two days when we suddenly had to speed to Port Said again to endeavour to quell whatever trouble might arise, making thirty knots on two boilers all the way. We are at present berthed alongside *Cleopatra* with the natives (Malta) gnashing their teeth awaiting our return to GYZ.

2nd FRIGATE SQUADRON

The only confusion that ever covers an M.S.O. in the 2nd Frigate Squadron is that caused by excess modesty. Hence our failure to wish everyone a happy Christmas in the last number of *THE COMMUNICATOR*. But the shock of chipping hammers, riveters, the whistle of compressed air and the sight of the occasional dockyard matey asleep in the M.S.O. have succeeded in helping us to overcome this shaming virtue, and we dash into print to wish everyone a capital Easter, Summer and Christmas 1952.

"We" include *Mermaid*, *Loch Lomond*, *Magpie*,

Loch Dunvegan and our guest artist, *Surprise*, the C.-in-C.'s despatch vessel, who forever lives up to her name.

We are all newly out of dock and most of us have had extensive wireless alterations and additions. We now have so many sets that we are rapidly teaching our operators to operate with the left foot as well as with the right, and serious consideration was given to fitting the receiving bays in the starboard passage due to the lack of space in the wireless office.

We have now gone through the tedious period of working up, thank heavens, and though our molars are satisfactorily through, the wisdom teeth are still causing trouble in certain ships. *Magpie*, with F.2 and staff, took part in exercises with the Italian Navy, which were a great success. It was odd, however, that we should have to borrow an American edition of our book from the Italian Navy—I refer to A.T.P.1.

We are delighted to see Cdr. R. F. Wells out here in command of *Chieftain*. It seemed quite an automatic reaction on seeing him for the first time to think of one's next job!

C.P.O. Tel. Dwane has left *Mermaid*, and in his place we welcome C.P.O. Tel. Crossman, who has left his Wrens classes at *Mercury* for a span of life on the ocean wave. And do we mean ocean wave!

As far as the other ships go—they seem to be getting bashful again.

H.M.S. "SURPRISE"

It was remarked in the last number of *THE COMMUNICATOR* that *Surprise* could not decide which Flotilla she liked best, and in fact, sometimes, we hardly know ourselves. We have been swimming for the 5th, playing cricket for the 2nd, pulling for the 5th, and then swimming again for the 2nd. We also managed to win the Flotilla Command and the Fleet Racing Whaler, but with no Communicators in the crew.

The ship has just returned from a short refit at Gib., and the Staff are refreshed (?) and ready for this year's "despatching" season, which, by all accounts, will be as hectic for us as the last. After all, it's not everyone who carries a C.-in-C.'s Flag with a signal staff smaller than a Frigate's and steams 22,000 miles a year in the Med. We do, however, take off our hats to our oppos. in the *Alert* who, we understand, do all this and fight a war as well.

Pots: "Canst thou tune the P.104?"

A.A.: "Well—I've only been shown once."

Pots: "That's ample. There are only two things to do. Now what do you always do with the crystal?"

A.A.: "Stow it away when you have finished with it."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Courses for S.I. and W.I.

Dear Sir,

In your Christmas edition I read with interest that more volunteers are required for S.I. and W.I. Courses.

Could you enlighten me as to how selections for these Courses are made? Is there a roster and points system or are ratings selected if they are fortunate enough to be in Depot at the time a Course commences?

My name was forwarded in April 1948, and during the intervening period I have not "blotted my copy book," in fact, rather the reverse. It therefore seems that, contrary to your article, there are more volunteers than vacancies.

P. E. C., Y.S. Simonstown.

ED. COMMENT:

The number of candidates in each Course for Signal and Wireless Instructor is governed by the depot requirements at the time. The final selection of candidates is made by a Selection Committee in H.M.S. *Mercury*, who have before them the recommendations and records of the ratings concerned. Ratings who have been highly recommended, that is with the letter "H" on the form 1303a, are given priority of choice. The whereabouts of ratings is not considered during the selection.

It happens, on occasion, that a rating who has received a normal recommend for Instructor, is not subsequently re-recommended with an "H" when he well deserves it. To this there are two remedies:

1. For Signal Officers to watch the progress of ratings recommended for Instructor and to re-recommend them at the appropriate moment.
2. For ratings who, having been recommended, think that they have been forgotten, to forward a suitable request to their Commanding Officers.

Comments on "The Communicator"

Sir,

As I still have three hours remaining of the middle watch, my typewriter before me lying idle and my mind in a reasonably warmed-up state, I should like to append my comments in this communication to THE COMMUNICATOR.

Firstly: What has happened to our football team? *Mercury's* pride and joy. I thumbed through the last COMMUNICATOR looking for news, but no, not one single line about their exploits and mishaps, a regrettable omission, dear Editor.

Secondly: To make for a more interesting Magazine let us have more photographs. What I would like to see are more photographs of classes on course at

Mercury, L/Sig. "Q's," Yeoman "Q's," etc., so that we can pass our destructive comment on those taking courses these days, such as "What! him going through for Yeoman? blimey, must be putting anything through these days!"

Thirdly: Why not a little corner for our own advertisements. For all our wants, sales and swops. It is amazing what one can flog through the post. However, our one main requirement is an "agony" column. Something on these lines preferably:

Drafting Commander: Nothing heard from you. Getting anxious. 2 and 5. Do write soon. Bunts.

Wanted Immediately: One signaller, need not be physically fit, must have one good eye, lucrative post Mediterranean, suit 3 badger who likes sea, nice yeoman (?) only qualification;—ability to handle scrubber, no O.D.'s. Reply in first instance to Box 123, COMMUNICATOR, *Mercury*.

I think that is my little piece. If the powers that be decide to bring in some more A.C.P.'s, would you be so good as to mark me off a plot at Clayhall? I thank you.

Sig. "MIKE" RUSSELL,
H.M.S. *Peacock*.

ED. COMMENT:

The omission of the football notes is regretted, but we felt rather like Manchester United after the Third Round Cup-tie, and we include as many photographs and cartoons as we can afford.

Long Memory

Dear Sir,

I enclose two howlers which may be of interest: Gibraltar. H.M.S. *Royal Oak*, 1925. Message to C.-in-C. H.F. Repeated to A.C.Q. from C.-in-C. Med. As received in *Royal Oak* repeating ship. C.-in-C. H.F. DEFEATED A.C.Q. from C.-in-C. Med. (Remark passed by Signal Officer, defeated at what?)

Royal Oak from *Resolution*.
R.P.C. Dinner 1945 DRESS
Dinner Jacket. T.O.O.
As written down in *Royal Oak*.
R.P.C. Dinner 1945 DRESS
THINNER Jacket. T.O.O.

GEORGE W. HARMAN.

ED. COMMENT:

Communicators haven't changed much then!

Springboks on a South Atlantic Station

Dear Sir,

I would be very grateful indeed if you could in your next COMMUNICATOR express my sincerest admiration for the decent spirit of comradeship which I enjoyed for six months while I and three other "Springboks" were on the Slangkop Station.

It would be "goodo" to add that Tel. Jefferson was a good pupil for Zulu lessons, which I readily gave; however, I am sure he was relieved that I did not try to teach him the "Zulu war cry," my version of which, as those at Slangkop know, is rather "bloodcurdling."

Wishing you, sir, and your Magazine all the very best for the future.

W. G. SAUNDERS.

EMERGENCY

Ref: EMERGENCY COURSE.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of

I am fully sensible to the seriousness of the international situation and am, of course, prepared to play my part. No doubt you will have taken into account my altered circumstances as detailed in my letter forwarded to you in the summer of 1950.

To assist you in making the necessary arrangements. I attach a list (see Appendix) of the special

gear that will be required for the duration of my course.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
R.F.M. (Mrs.)
(late 2nd Officer, W.R.N.S.)

APPENDIX

Hammock, drop-side	1
Chair, high	1
Pen, play	1
Carriage, baby, with bedding	1
Pot, chamber, small female	1
Depth charges, castor oil (for emergency use)	1
Anchor, reins pattern	1
Machine, Dhobie	1
Grease, baby's bottom for the use of	1
Powder, ditto	1
Swabs for stern	100

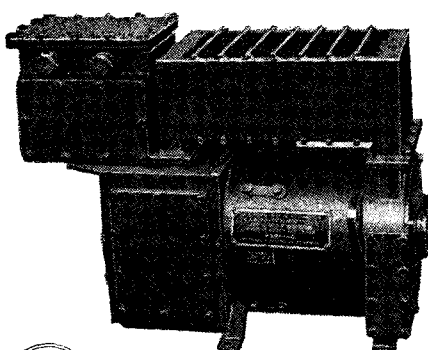
Sea chest containing following:—

Nappies	Dozens
Safety pins for above	3
Sea booties	2
Coat, duffle, 16-in. length	1
Bonnet, Balaclava	1
Sheet, macintosh	1

It is assumed that an officer will be detailed for baby-watch-keeping duties during instruction periods and bar sessions.


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H.F. Motor Alternator for Radar. Output 2 KW. 80 volts A.C. 1,500 cycles per second. Watertight. Fitted with Automatic Voltage Regulator.

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HEAD OFFICE & WORKS: ALFRETON ROAD, DERBY.
 TELEPHONE: DERBY 47676 (3 LINES) TELEGRAMS: DYNAMO, DERBY.
 LONDON OFFICE: IMPERIAL BUILDINGS, 56 KINGSWAY W.C.2.

EAST INDIES

H.M.S. "MAURITIUS" —"KENYA"

Summary of Christmas Number

Mauritius recommissioned in Walker's Dock at Colombo last April and few, if any of us, will forget the trials and tribulations of "finding our feet" and the subsequent work-up, which was carried out from Trincomalee.

After arriving at Bahrein on 7th June we had plenty of work and one Banda machine (presumably to keep things turning), but no Communications staff. However, a Yeoman and Tel. arrived at a later date by kind permission of the Drafting Commander and suitable help from B.O.A.C.

Our stay at Abadan where the ship remained moored opposite the town for three weeks is history now, but a point of interest (which again we aren't likely to forget) is that the hottest day in the Persian Gulf for five years was recorded whilst we were there—123 degrees. *Euryalus* relieved us on 21st July and we arrived back in Trinco on 8th August.

Even as we enjoyed the amenities of the Rest Camp though, an announcement was made to the effect that *Mauritius* was returning to Abadan. However, the weather proved to be cooler during our second period of duty and in this respect conditions were easier.

In all probability this article will be the last from *Mauritius*, because November will find a complete change-over of this ship's company with that of *Kenya*, which will remain as Flagship of this station whilst *Mauritius* returns to the U.K. and reserve.

Easter Number

In case the heading of this article puzzles Communicators as to whether it is a co-opted *Mauritius-Kenya* effort or the belated *Mauritius* Christmas Number with an Easter bonnet—we confess that it is a little of both. We add that we have accepted the apology of the Editor who "mislaidd" our Christmas Number just in time to miss publication!! We have since wondered what would happen should the same fate befall B.R.'s, S.P.'s and A.C.P.'s, and we hope said Editor will never be detailed for CB duties!!! In November last the S.C.C.O., one Yeoman and one Ldg/Tel. were in the advance party who were flown from Ceylon to Singapore with orders to "prepare the way" and on Thursday, 22nd November, they were in *Kenya* as she slid alongside *Mauritius* in Trinco harbour.

It is still argued whether or not we won in the change-over as regards accommodation and equipment, but it is a fact that the change-over was efficiently carried out. The work-up, too, was most successful and after spending Christmas at the Flagship moorings we sailed to enjoy our first visit

to Calcutta. A good time was had by all and we are all agreed that the New Year Dance organised by B.O.A.C. for *Kenya's* benefit was the highlight of our five-day visit.

The Fleet Communications Officer (Lt. Cdr. Wrightson) and the Flag Lieutenant (Lt. Rushbrook) started us ticking over as "Flagship" once again, but since they brought fourteen "bods" (various rates) with them we managed to cope most successfully in our new role.

23rd January found us "all at sea" Mombasa-bound, with Indian Navy ships *Rajput* and *Ranjit*, and Royal Pakistan ships *Tippu Sultan* and *Tughril* in company, forming as we did then, the Royal Escort.

We quickly found that there is no such thing as "time and place" for Communication Exercises and after forenoon exercises had overlapped the afternoon watch we were prepared for anything, and got it in the shape of shaded lamp exercises during the night! When one adds O.O.W. manoeuvres, light transfers and oiling at sea, it becomes obvious that one and all "worked" their passage!

After fuelling at Mombasa we visited Zanzibar for two days, returning to Mombasa on 4th February to await the arrival of Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh. As the whole world knows, there was a tragic ending to our Royal duties and on 10th February the escort sailed in company to exercises until *Rajput*, *Ranjit*, *Tughril* and *Tippu Sultan* went their different ways.

Gambia has now joined the 4th Cruiser Division and we first saw her in the role of "the enemy" during a NEX on the night of 17th-18th February. For this exercise we had the co-operation of A.H.Q. Ceylon who provided us with shadowing aircraft and later delivered what they termed a "devastating low-level attack" on *Kenya* and *Gambia* in company.

CEYLON WEST W/T STATION

Having made our bow in the Christmas edition of THE COMMUNICATOR, it is our earnest wish to "adorn" a column or so of the Easter number.

The many changes in personnel forecast in our last article have not yet materialised, but there are a few new faces about the place and there are about fifteen others aboard H.M.T. *Dilwara*, which is at present steaming through the Indian Ocean bound for Colombo, so there will indeed be a grand shuffle round.

There have been a few structural alterations around the station, but anyone who has been to Ceylon West will still recognise it as such. That may not be so in the near future when, among other important changes envisaged, the complete aerial layouts of the Receivers and Transmitters are due to be revised.

Christmas saw us, as usual, in a flurry of greetings telegrams, when a total of 10,122 telegrams, not forgetting the normal naval traffic, passed through our hands. This is a slight reduction on previous years, but nevertheless we feel it is still a formidable total and observing the fact that there were fewer ships in our area than in recent years and also that the additional Indian Wireless Stations participating in the area scheme are handling more traffic than of old, we are not unduly discouraged. It is worthy of note that during the Christmas period our normal complement reached an all-time low, owing to sickness, compassionate leave, etc., but in response to our S.O.S. we were very ably assisted by ratings on loan from Trincomalee M.S.O., from H.M.S. *Wild Goose* which was in Colombo Harbour refitting, and by four ratings from the Royal Ceylon Navy. Before we found ourselves so shorthanded, we had spared without relief Tel. Gardner and Sig. Gray in order that they might undergo courses for Leading Rate at Singapore S.T.C. We are gratified that they both achieved creditable passes.

There was, of course, time for jollification at Christmas, but with the coming of the New Year we were soon making preparations for the Royal Tour and, needless to say, these preparations were at an advanced stage, with the Royal Escort Squadron and S.S. *Gothic* at Mombasa, when the news of the death of His Late Majesty flashed round the world, leaving a feeling of grievous loss in its wake. Our preparations collapsed and tumbled around us.

Hardly was a beloved Monarch put to rest than we, at Ceylon West, suffered another loss; for it is with profound regret that we announce the death of a very popular "shipmate" in R.E.M. Hawke who died as a result of a snakebite on the night of 19th February. Next morning a 4-foot Polonga was found in the vicinity of the path that R.E.M. Hawke had traversed *en route* to the Regulating Office and vengeance was meted out. But, oh, what poor retribution! A firing party and pall-bearers were hurriedly organised and the 100 per cent. turn-out of mourners at the funeral of our late shipmate, on the afternoon of the 20th February at Kanatte Cemetery, was a fitting tribute to his memory. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to his relatives.

It is on that melancholy note that this article draws to a close. When it is published—if it is—the writer will be in U.K. renewing old acquaintances, as will others of our present staff, but they and those remaining behind to keep things "ticking over" at Ceylon West, once again send their very best wishes to Communicators everywhere.

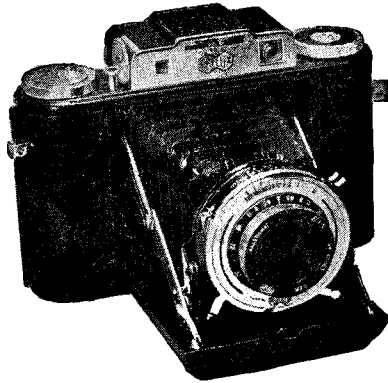
The scene, a "Sparkers" training class:

Instructor: "Define a tackline."

Reply: "A space."

Instructor: "That's right! but it has got to be joined together to haul it down."

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ADVANCEMENT NOTES

New Port Division numbers having now been issued, the figures given in our last issue as regards the estimated number of vacancies for advancement that could be expected to occur during 1952 have been superseded by those given below. (Incidentally, an error occurred in the totals shown in the last issue. Having made last minute adjustments to the individual figures for each Port, Division I omitted to make the necessary adjustments to the totals. For which my apologies.)

	PORTS- MOUTH	CHAT- HAM	DEVON- PORT
For C.P.O. Telegraphist	11 (11)	8 (14)	5 (7)
For P.O. Telegraphist . .	33 (36)	52 (40)	51 (49)
For Leading Telegraphist	43 (62)	104 (61)	83 (70)
For C.Y.S.	8 (12)	4 (14)	4 (12)
For Yeoman of Signals	41 (41)	31 (37)	20 (42)
For Leading Signalmán	86 (71)	70 (57)	49 (63)

N.B.—The figures given in our last issue are shown in brackets.

It will be seen that in some cases the differences are quite considerable and advancements to C.Y.S. and Yeoman are somewhat less than they would have been under the old Port Division Numbers. Although in some cases the numbers to be advanced are rather less than formerly expected, in others they are rather higher and the new allowances only make an *interim* change to the number of advancements. This will adjust itself by a correspondingly greater or fewer number of advancements in 1953.

ADVANCEMENT TO SIGNALMAN OR TELEGRAPHIST

The new system of advancement (see A.F.O. 2712/51) whereby ratings may be granted additional seniority as a result of examinations previously passed,

has given rise to a large number of enquiries as to whether examinations taken *after* the man concerned has reached the normal date for advancement (i.e. fifteen months in the Ordinary Rate for ex-Boy Ratings and eighteen months for others) may be allowed to count for a gain in seniority. It is intended that a gain in seniority should only be awarded for examinations in which the basic date of passing is before the date on which the man concerned would normally receive advancement and an amendment to B.R.1792, *The Signal Training Manual*, is expected to be issued in the near future to clarify this point.

In this connection it is pointed out that, in the case of the professional examination, the "basic date" of passing is the date on which the man concerned *applied* to be examined and it is important that he should establish his basic date by putting in his request to be examined in plenty of time. This will obviate hardship which may arise should it prove impossible for him to be examined until a considerable time has elapsed owing to circumstances beyond the control of the rating himself.

J. S. W.

R.N.S.S. CHATHAM

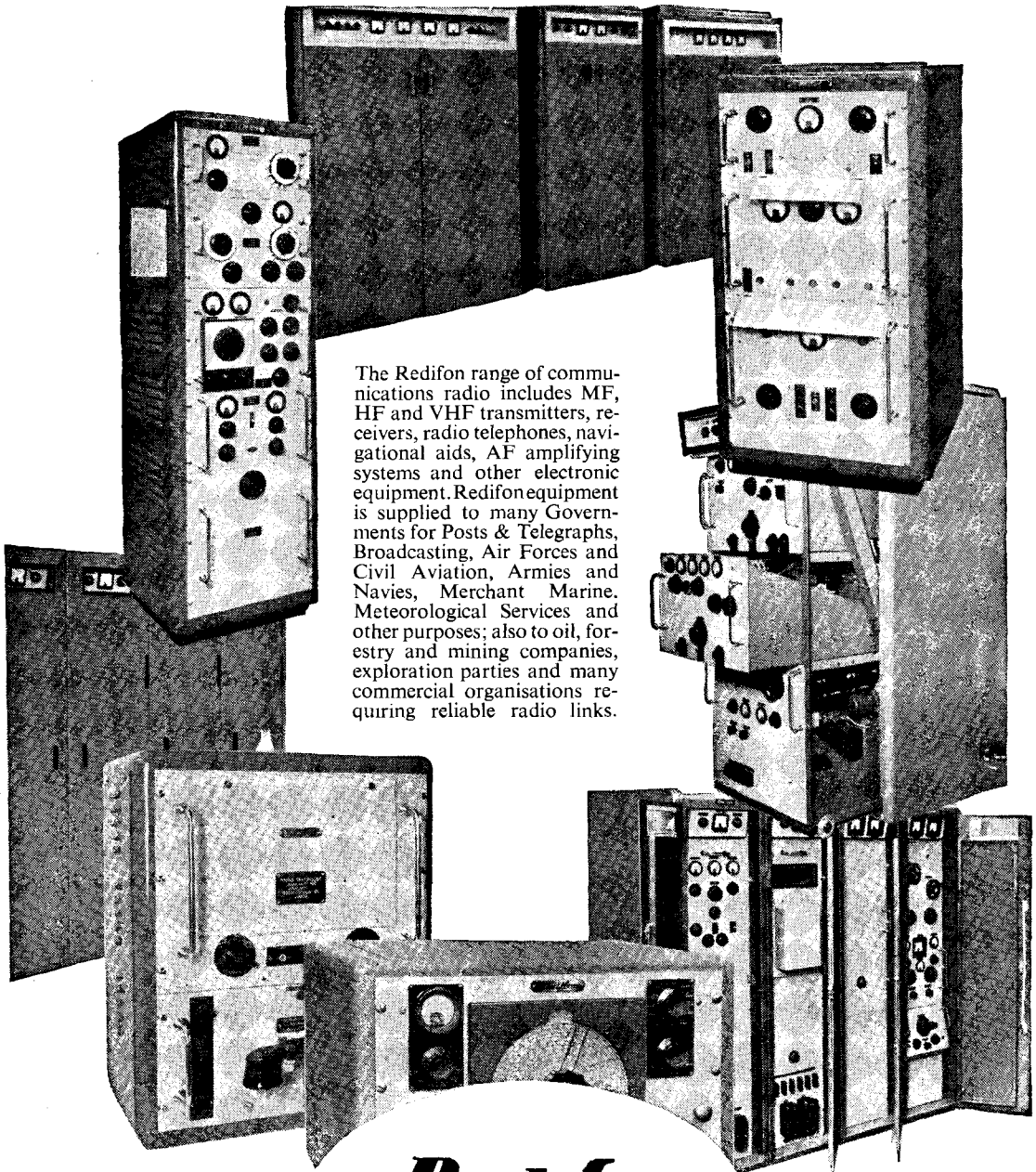
Greetings Communicators one and all. From that tiny collection of huts that adorn the Khyber Pass comes news of the doings of us blokes from "Chatty Chats."

Big events naturally take pride of place and methinks the biggest event has been the arrival of Lt. Jaques as 1st Lt. The side gate at P.A. has been widened accordingly. We prematurely forecast Wally's departure to civvy street in our last article, but he only got as far as Draftie. He now controls our destinies as Draftie's right-hand man. It is reported that the number of requests to see Drafting Commander have dropped alarmingly since he took up office. Does one see a connection in this and the fact that a "Not Granted" stamp is reported to have wandered from the 1st Lt.'s office?

O.D.'s with shaky collars can now safely enter R.N.B. as Mr. Shead has departed. His successor, however, bodes ill for any "Bods" with missing oilskin buttons.

Mr. Broad is firmly established as V.1, and prior to the arrival of Mrs. B., enthused over E.V.T. Wrens copy typing. We must point out that he doesn't (on the orders of Mrs. B.) require a sub. when duty Mondays and Wednesdays, it's just that he doesn't like duties on those particular nights.

C.Y.S. Chambers couldn't dodge behind those "scurrs" any longer and is now "happily" doing time in *Afrikander*, whilst his almost equally famous fellow Chief, who served so long in the stone frigate *Ganges*, has successfully avoided the sea again, but has now to serve much farther afield. Other



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stanchions have been rudely uprooted and H.M.S. *Birmingham* had to be fitted with anti-rolling devices to cater for some of them. Our special correspondent reports that C.Y.S. Johnson in preparation, spent his F.S.D.L. at Clacton to see if the sea had changed after all these years.

An achievement of which the School is justifiably proud is the fact that no less than fourteen Communicators had the great honour of being members of the Gun-Carriage party from Chatham for the funeral of the late King. This, in addition to the many more who lined the route, and not forgetting Mr. Broad and his Communicator assistants who made life so much easier for those who used the Clapham Deep Shelter.

We had the pleasure of extending the hearty hand of friendship to Communicators of the N.A.T.O. countries who were with us last December for a course on new books. It is reported that they didn't think our welcome quite so friendly when they joined rather reluctantly the others of the Signal School who doubled round behind the Commanding Officer as a pre-instruction warm up one particularly cold morning. These of the strange tongue were followed by others of the strange uniform when a merry band of trawlermen rejoicing in the title of Patrol Service Officers joined us for a short refresher course.

Our crowning pride in the instructional line, however, is that at last the Alma Mater has realised the superiority of us Chatham types and after doing their worst to the last C.C.O.'s course, they sent them round to us to gain some real knowledge. (Beware, you Chatham ships uphold this proud achievement and let not our halo slip.)

In spite of Commodore's Rounds, classes and the other odd jobs sent to try us, we are pleased to report that we still discover the odd Gardener/Communicator type frantically hoeing and sowing in preparation for what we all hope is going to be another mammoth flower show this coming summer.

Snatched at random from the vast files of our candid reporters, we offer these extracts for thought:

- (1) Who was the C.C.O. who spent a leave falling off his bike going into hospital?
- (2) Who was the C.Y.S. who got caught in the act of doing his "pools"?
- (3) Who was the Yeoman who on bended knee pleaded for the job of E.V.T. typing instructor when he knew Wrens were in the class?
- (4) Who was the C.P.O. Tel. who, when caught polishing the deck of the C.R.R., admitted that that was the only way he could get a recommend for Rounds?

Alas, discretion being the better part of valour, they shall be nameless.

With so many 18-monthers going out, we would

like to say to both the retained and the recalled, thank you, not just for helping us out, but for being so cheerful whilst doing it. (Not forgetting C.B.M. St. Marys leaving us for the bar!!)

Wishing all on Foreign Shores a speedy homecoming and those about to go a short commission, we once more hibernate until our next contribution.

"RUDELy UPRoOTED STANCHION."

THE SECRET LIFE OF IAN BLOGGS

Very Ordinary Telegraphist Ian Bloggs took over the forenoon watch on "FE" broadcast aboard the Far East aircraft carrier *Glory* with an air of despondency. He eyed his typewriter suspiciously, this probably being due to the fact that after having had the middle on Guam Fox he had had a nightmare on turning in during which three-ply T/P rolls with two legs and typewriters with four legs had chased him around and around the flight deck until he awoke in a cold sweat. He made himself more comfortable on his seat and gazed around him, taking in with great satisfaction the scene which was present before his eyes. A B.W.O. working at the height of its efficiency. The T.G.C. Operator said in one breath, "Pleasepotsmetransmittersgornorff" to the P.O.O.W. who was mustering the waste paper basket looking for the first 100 Groups of an encrypted "out" which had been filed there in error. The Guam Fox Operator pulled out yet another handful of hair as the ship-shore transmissions jammed NPN whilst he was making an "O." A loudspeaker boomed out "Understreet this is Longfield how do you read over," but no one knew the exact location of the mike so there was no answer forthcoming. The C.Y.S. screamed down the voice pipe from the Compass Platform, "Anything from the Screen Commander yet?" while the C.C.O. who had just entered made fruitless attempts to remove his foot from a bucket of scrubbing-out water which the Boy Telegraphist had hoped someone would drink before the Chief found out he had not emptied it.

Our Ian had by this time made friends with his typewriter, having typed, "Now is the time, etc." six times with only one mistake, and tuned in F.E.'s to QRK5. F.E.'s being on calls, Ian decided to lower his "iron curtain" to exclude the activity of the B.W.O. and get down to a serious bit of day dreaming. "One more patrol after this and we'll be relieved," thought Bloggs. "In two months we'll be having our refit in Sydney . . . Golden Sunshine . . . Silver Sands . . . Luscious Blondes . . . Plenty of Mutton . . ." and with thoughts such as these Ian proceeded individually on passage to sunny Sydney in spite of the fact that his ship was still operating off the coast of Koe-Rear (as pronounced by A.F.R.S. Tokyo).

On arrival at Hong Kong our Ian gave himself a



Full speed ahead . . .

may be justified if the captain of a ship knows that a vacant berth awaits him if he can catch the tide. V.H.F. Radio can transmit this information and, by effecting a quicker turnround of shipping, be the means of saving time and money.

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"Seven Beller" and had an excellent run ashore, big eats in the Fleet Club and lots of John Collins, his only mistake being that he forgot to book himself a bed at the Fleet Club and had to sleep—well, it doesn't really matter where he slept.

The journey to Singapore was uneventful, but Bloggs' shore leave there was going to be far from uneventful. He went ashore there with a purpose clear in his mind. His goal was the F.E. Broadcast Bay at Karanji W/T. With a B.R. "Twicer" he found sculling in a passage he put the F.E. Operator out of action, and with a heart as cold as steel commenced his devilish task. With his right hand he groped for the milled knob of the auto head and turned it until the speed gauge registered 32 W.P.M., as an afterthought he gave a couple of extra flicks and brought the speed up to an even 35 W.P.M. He stood back watching the tape whizzing through the machine as an artist would survey his first masterpiece, and a fiendish grin spread over his face as he visualised puffs of smoke arising from all typewriters of the fleet as they copied F.E.'s.

As Ian Bloggs left Singapore he thought that soon, instead of hearing "GXM4 GYL2/37 ETC" on F.E.'s, he would be listening to "The blue bells of Scotland," which was transmitted on broadcast bells by Harman W/T in lieu of a call-sign tape during silent periods (so his P.O.O.W. had told him anyway). He prepared himself for the bump which he had been informed was inevitable when one crossed the line in a ship. He actually did feel a bump, but this was the L.H.O.W. pushing past his chair as he rushed to switch off a B28 which was sending out smoke signals instead of receiving Morse signals.

Our young hero's arrival at Sydney was a heart-warming affair, flags were flying, bands playing and the crowds on the jetty jostled to and fro trying to get a glimpse of the handsome war veteran Ian Bloggs. Ian's first two weeks in Sydney were one round of social activities, civic receptions, dinners at the best hotels and personal appearances at the largest theatres. He was a popular customer at any of the Sydney bars where he enthralled the company (until six o'clock—much to his disgust). On the third week of this glorious existence he decided to give Bondi Beach a treat and honour it with his presence. Walking along the beach in his leopard skin trunks he heard a cry of "Help." Looking out to sea, Bloggs saw a female in distress, and pushing two hefty lifeguards out of the way, he rushed forward into the surf, feeling the water engulf his head and shoulders.

Ian gave a shout of terror as he felt a deluge of icy cold water go over his neck and sweep down his back. Ian Bloggs had been aroused from his day dreaming, not by the cool waters of Bondi Beach, but by a jug of "icers" some clumsy clot had tipped down his back. Perhaps this was just as well, as at that moment F.E. began "GBXZ—NR FE ETC" at their normal speed, much to the relief of very Ordinary Tel. Ian Bloggs.

G. L. W.

S.C.O.'s TURNOVER NOTES

Generalisation

1. It is comforting to know that even if others think we are always wrong, they will make a mistake in the end.
2. Always keep smiling
 - (a) When others admire your tie.
 - (b) Pull out your handkerchief.
 - (c) Say they have just had a haircut.
 - (d) Do your top button up.
3. Keep your temper when an air-type asks you if you have seen the Signal Officer. He would really like to know.
4. Don't answer if someone asks you if you have seen a certain signal. Just wait for it!
5. Don't be caught by No. 1 about "Hoisting in the Admiral."
6. Be polite to telephone operators—especially when they remind you of your own orders—*re* asking for numbers, not names.
7. The Electrical Officer is there to *help*.
The Electrical ratings are there to *help*.
Whatever the C.C.O. and C.P.O. Tel. think—you can't *help* it.

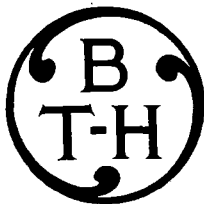
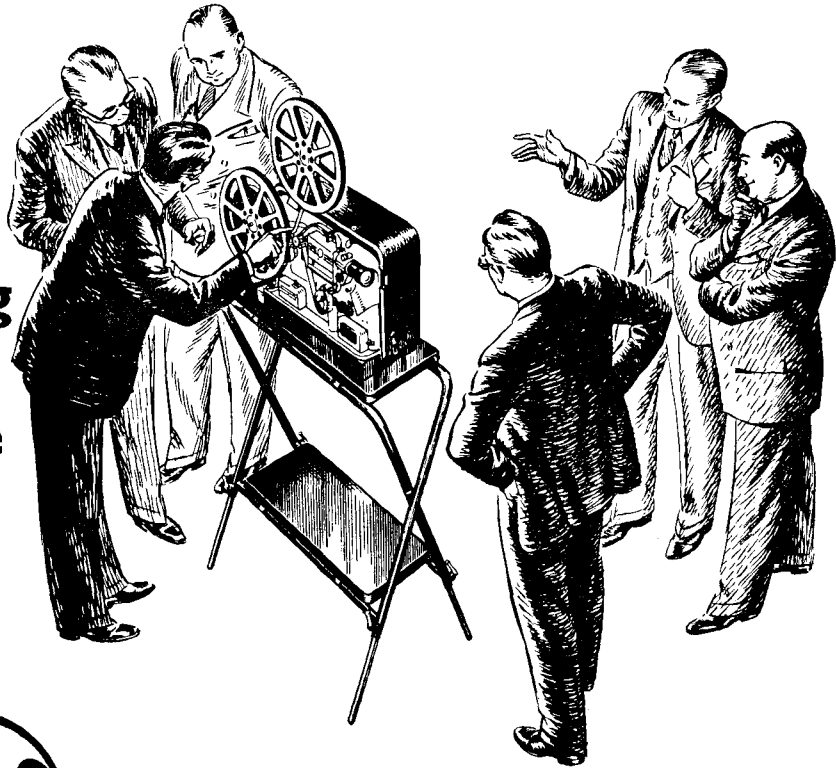
At Sea

1. Let the Chief Yeoman of Signals use the T.B.S. He likes it; he is used to it; what is more he is always on the bridge.
2. Make sure the Ldg.Sig. looks after the O.O.W.—he will be the only one who does during flying.
3. The OPS. Room voice pipe is not an ash tray.
4. The bridge ash tray is not there for you. It's for the Captain.
5. Cement friendship by routine visits to the following places in this order: T.R., Electrical Office, A.I.R., A.D.R., OPS. Room and B.W.O. Start at 0945, then you get a "cup" and a "smoke" from each.
6. Avoid like the plague the side of the bridge between the Captain's chair and the Flying Control position during flying. During land on they rush "out," and if "barriers" or crashes they rush "in."
7. If an Admiral comes aboard, see that his seat is clean. The seat cover is stowed in the M.S.O.
8. Avoid typhoons.
9. Flag deck buckets are stowed starboard side aft.
10. During the second half of a typhoon don't give up, just give in.
11. You are only allowed to slam the bridge door once. The next time the Captain may not like it at all.

In Harbour

1. Ask your steward to find out from the grapevine what you did ashore—before you go down to breakfast.
2. Teach him to balance an "Alka Seltzer" on the rim of a glass of water (and leave it by your bunk at night).
3. Leave your cigarettes in your cabin. The C.C.O. *always* has some.

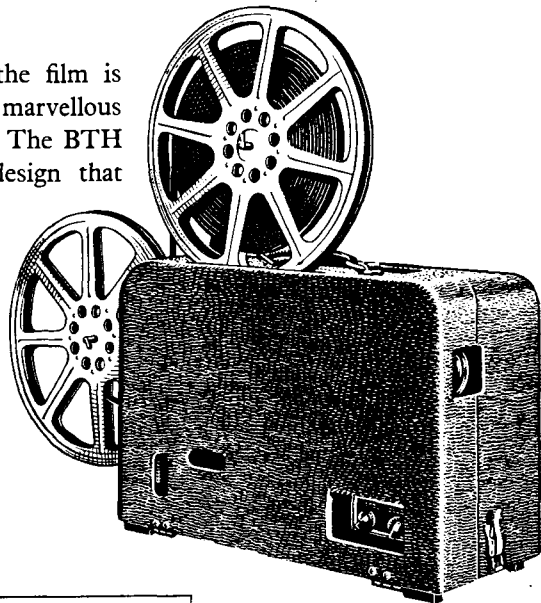
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H.M.S. "SHEFFIELD"

On our first appearance in *THE COMMUNICATOR*, it would perhaps be as well to cover briefly our activities in the past year.

We commissioned in December, 1950, after a two-year refit in Chatham, during which time the ship's wireless equipment was completely modernised. We can now put seven transmitters of the 600 series on the air at the same time on the same aerial and with remarkably good results.

To do this we have a "Christmas Tree" (Broad-band Unipole) on the top of Y turret, a "Bow Tie" (Broad-band Dipole) on the mainmast and use the mainmast itself as the grounded element of a folded monopole for the lower frequency band. Unfortunately the top of Y turret is now "Man Aloft" and the intention to spread quarterdeck awning has, on occasion, led to much altercation between the Signal Officer and the Commander over the question of the safe to transmit keys. The "Christmas Tree" also has to be struck every time we dress ship overall (record to date for striking 20 minutes and for erecting 30 minutes).

After trials on the new equipment at Portland in March, we went north to Invergordon to work up. In June the ship carried the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret from Liverpool to Belfast.

The summer was spent in visiting Rosyth, Hull, Swansea and Cardiff for the Festival of Britain. Whilst in Hull we took the opportunity of visiting our own city of Sheffield and the people there entertained us royally.

On completion of the Festival cruise we returned to Pompey, where we met several classes from *Mercury*, and after a double whack of seasonal leave, left for the A. & W.I. Station, to relieve *Superb* in October. On the way out we were hit by a hurricane, with disastrous results to the second whaler, but little else. The "Christmas Tree" and the Admiral's car withstood the onslaught well. Some way out from Bermuda we met *Superb* to carry out joint long-distance communication trials with U.K. This consisted of going round and round in ever-decreasing circles every three hours for three days and keying our own transmitters simultaneously with *Superb's* by means of a V.H.F. link. The trials we understand were extremely successful and our sets, although of a much lower power output, produced better results—there must be something in this aerial stuff after all.

After a couple of weeks in Bermuda, we joined the Americans in their biggest Fleet exercise since the war—"Lantflex 52." This was really most interesting and lasted for three weeks. Common aerial working came into its own in a very big way. At one time we had every set in the ship on the air—twelve V.H.F. and nine H.F. transmitters in all. The only snag was that the Americans have moved

up into the U.H.F. band and use it quite a lot for intercommunication and combat information nets. On completion we returned to Bermuda for fuel, it being too expensive in hard currency to fuel more than once from the American Logistics Support Group.

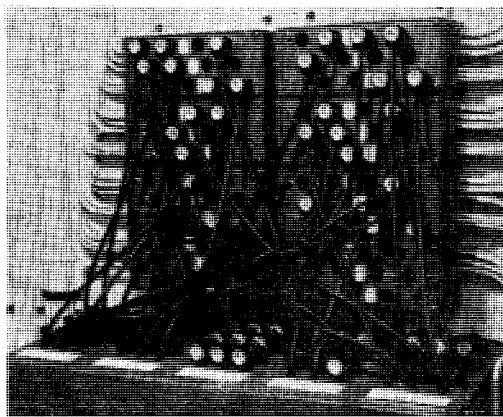
After a brief respite we visited Norfolk Va., and Baltimore, where all thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The ship's company had a pronounced southern drawl by the time we left and Confederate flags appeared in many parts of the ship.

The ship returned to Bermuda for Christmas (No—we didn't decorate the "Christmas Tree" with Neon lamps). We berthed in the naval dockyard and discovered we were having difficulty in raising Whitehall on service 17. After much scratching around we found that the culprit was a nearby crane which was fairly close to our vertically polarised Y turret aerial. On taking a field strength meter ashore, we obtained a hard over reading from the structure. One end of the dockyard is now being dredged so that the ship can berth a little further away from the crane—Ah, the power of communications.

The squadron, consisting of *Sheffield*, *Sparrow* and *Burghead Bay* departed on their various cruises early January 1952 and we had a brief occasion to try out the new signal books before we all split up. *Sheffield* has to date visited Antigua, Grenada, St. Lucia, Barbados, Trinidad, La Guaira (Venezuela), Curacao and Jamaica.

At Trinidad we were very pleased to welcome on board Captain C. L. Firth, D.S.O., M.V.O., R.N. (Retd.), who timed his visit to coincide with the arrival of the Christmas editions of *THE COMMUNICATOR*. He promptly appropriated the C.C.O.'s copy.

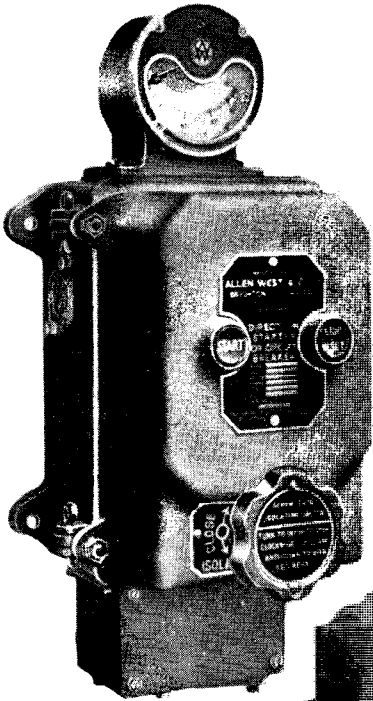
For a "Beat Retreat" ceremony put on at the stadium in Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, we were



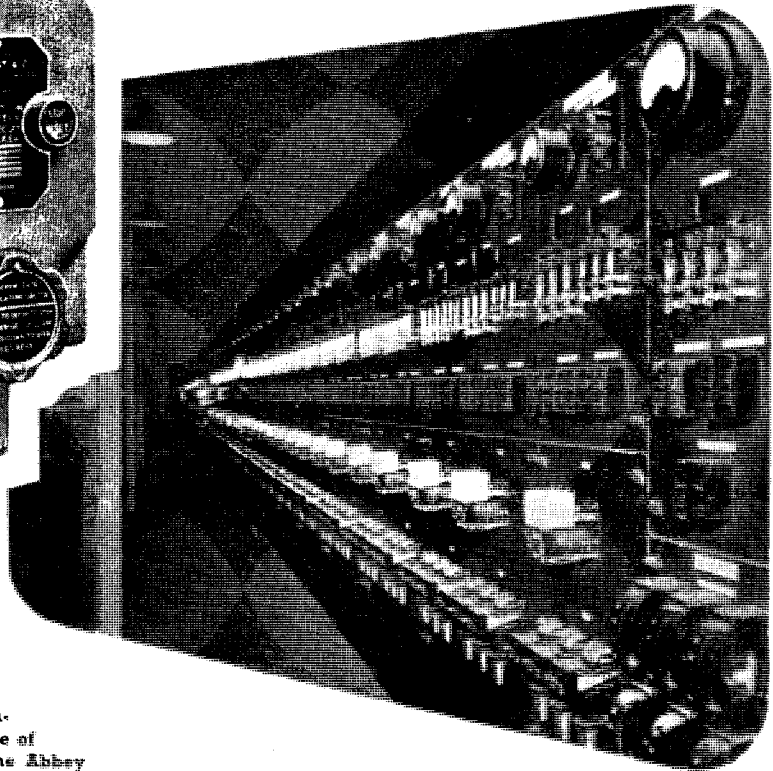
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E N G L A N D

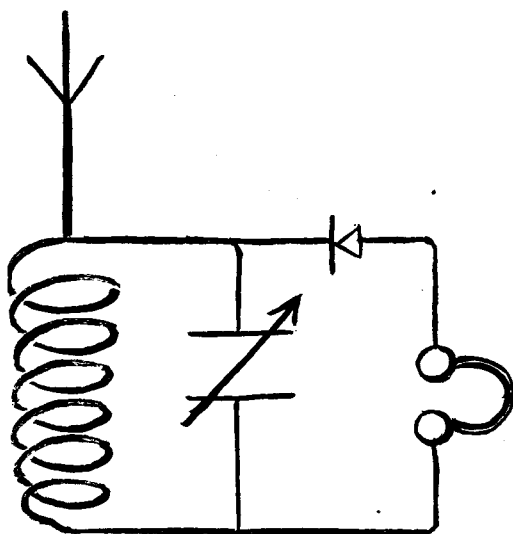
promised 60-ft. masts for the Ensign and Venezuelan flag. On arrival at the stadium it was discovered that underground electric cables prevented the sinking of these 60-ft. masts and we had to make do with 20-ft. ones, which made the sunset ceremony a little difficult with the 12 breadth Ensigns we provided. Afterwards the ship's football team played the Venezuelans and did well only to lose 3—1.

Whilst at Curacao we received the sad news of the death of His Majesty the King and our visits to the remaining ports in the cruise programme were cancelled.

At the time of writing we are anchored off Pigeon Island in Portland Bight, some 25 miles from Kingston, Jamaica. This morning we landed a heliograph team and at one time the island was entirely uninhabited by Signalmen and alligators. The heliograph was extremely successful and the party ashore were instructed to "Turn down the voltage," as the light was too bright. The wireless section of our team, however, insisted on sending in a T.B.Y. in case the sun refused to play. After another week here, alligators, barracuda and sea eggs permitting, we go to Guantanamo Bay for a fortnight, to carry out gunnery practices with the Americans, before returning to Bermuda for the Easter concentration period.

We would like to congratulate the C-in-C., America and West Indies Station, Vice-Admiral Sir William Andrewes, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., on his appointment as Deputy SACLANC, but respectfully hope that his double duties will not increase the signal traffic too much.

We extend a hearty welcome to *Vervan Bay* who arrived here in February as the relief for *Snipe* and wish her a good commission and happy A/S hunting in Guantanamo Bay.



"Why all the rest?"

DO YOU KEEP AN AQUARIUM?

Widespread interest in the hobby of fish keeping, so dear to our Victorian ancestors, has arisen in the post-war years. Aquariums have been installed in hospitals, asylums, doctors' and dentists' waiting-rooms, etc. Reports confirm the early belief that to watch fish swimming gracefully in an ornamental tank has a most soothing effect upon the nerves.

Many keen aquarists are to be found among Service personnel. It is hoped that others, who may be contemplating setting up a tank, will find the following elementary notes useful in avoiding unnecessary expense and possible disappointment.

A choice must first be made between "Coldwater" and "Tropical" tanks.

Coldwater fish (e.g. Goldfish, Shubunkins, Moors, etc.) are hardier, possess a longer average life, but may be more costly and offer less variety of form and colour.

Tropical fish are, on the whole, cheaper and more colourful, but artificial heat is required and the fish have much shorter lives than the coldwater varieties.

Most newcomers to the hobby are attracted by the tropical tank.

The beginner is advised to commence with a metal-framed aquarium, 24 in. by 12 in. by 12 in. This is a standard size made in large quantities and obtainable from any dealer. A tank of this size holds approximately twelve gallons of water. (Glass bowls, disused glass battery jars and similar containers should be avoided.)

First obtain a frame of the size given, constructed of 1 in. by 1 in. by $\frac{1}{8}$ in. angle iron. Make certain that it is square and that the welds have been ground down. Any bubble of metal inside the frame results in uneven pressure upon the glass and subsequent breakages.

All rust should be removed, and the frame given a coat of paint.

GLASS.—The following sizes are recommended:

Bottom— $\frac{1}{8}$ in. wired cast. Slate can be used, but is very expensive.

Back— $\frac{1}{8}$ in. obscure.

Front and Sides—Not less than $\frac{1}{8}$ in. and preferably $\frac{1}{4}$ in., clear glass.

In measuring the inside of the frame, a clearance of $\frac{1}{8}$ in. to $\frac{3}{16}$ in. should be allowed for cement. The side pieces fit in between the front and back, acting as a spacer.

GLAZING COMPOUND.—Ordinary putty *can* be used, but is not recommended. Use should be made of one of the many proprietary brands of compound which are available. The ideal compound never sets rock hard, but retains a rubbery consistency, thereby allowing for expansion and contraction.

The bottom is fitted first, followed by the front and back, and lastly the sides. Each sheet of glass



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should be carefully pressed into position, using a thick block of wood.

Alternatively the tank can be filled with builders' sand or water to press out the glass.

Finally, clean out and trim off surplus cement.

It is advisable to paint the outside of the back glass black or some dark colour, in order to keep out brilliant sunshine and to provide a background for fish and plants.

PLANTING.—Procure some aquarium sand (builders' sand is unsuitable) and wash it until the water from it runs clear. Then place it on the bottom, sloping the sand from approximately 1½ in. deep at the back to ½ in. at the front. The slope enables sediment, etc., to collect in the front, where it can easily be removed once a week by the aid of a rubber tube syphon.

PLANTS.—Any dealer will offer a good selection of suitable plants. Beginners will be well advised to stick to the more common types, Vallisneria, Sagittaria, Ambulia, Cabomba, Ludwigia, etc. When experience has been gained, the more difficult and expensive Cryptocoryne or Sword plants, etc., can be tried.

Plants supplied as cuttings should be weighted with lead wire, small stones or planted at an angle to prevent them floating to the top before roots are formed.

Vallisneria, etc., is supplied rooted. Such plants must be placed with the fleshy rootstock resting on the sand. If buried beneath sand level, the plant will surely die.

The tank can now be filled, using ordinary tap water or rain water. A saucer or sheet of stout brown paper should be placed on the sand and the water introduced slowly in order to avoid undue disturbance.

LIGHTING.—Like garden plants, these in the aquarium need light in order to succeed. One 60 or 75-watt globe, used for six to eight hours daily, will usually be found sufficient. Much depends upon the amount of direct natural light which the tank receives.

HEATING.—The tropical tank must be kept at a fairly steady temperature of around 75 degrees F. A heater of 100 watts, coupled to a suitable thermostat can be purchased quite cheaply.

COVER.—Some form of cover, either glass or metal, is essential. It assists in retaining the heat, in keeping the cat out and the fish in. Many fish have a habit of jumping clean out of an uncovered tank.

FISH.—About two weeks should be allowed between setting up the tank and putting in the fish. In this time the plants will have had time to settle, and adjustments to the thermostat can be made.

A selection should be made from cheaper types of

fish, e.g. Swordtails, Guppies, Zebras, Danies, Gouramies, etc.

FEEDING.—It is a well-known fact that more fish die from overfeeding, with consequent pollution, etc., of tanks, than from disease.

Dry foods, whether proprietary brands or home-made, should be augmented by live foods. The latter includes Bloodworms, Tubifex worms, Whiteworms, and that finest tonic of all, the common garden worm, finely chopped with a razor blade.

Small but frequent feeding is preferable to large meals given at long intervals. The amount given should be that which the fishes will consume in a few minutes, leaving little or none to remain and pollute the water.

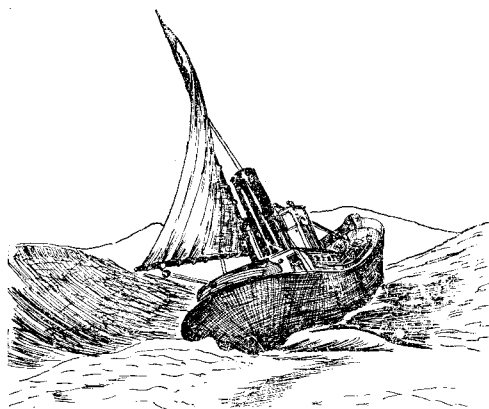
Aquarium keepers are offered a bewildering array of accessories—rocks, mermaids, divers, castles, air-pumps, filters. The beginner will do well to dispense with these when making a start in the hobby.

The aim should be to learn to keep the fish alive and the plants healthy and growing. Once this has been mastered, the budding fish keeper can expand to his (or her) heart's content.

Readers will no doubt appreciate that in a short article of this description it is impossible to more than outline the requirements of successful fish keeping.

Many small booklets on the subject are available at 1s. 6d. upwards.

W. L. D.



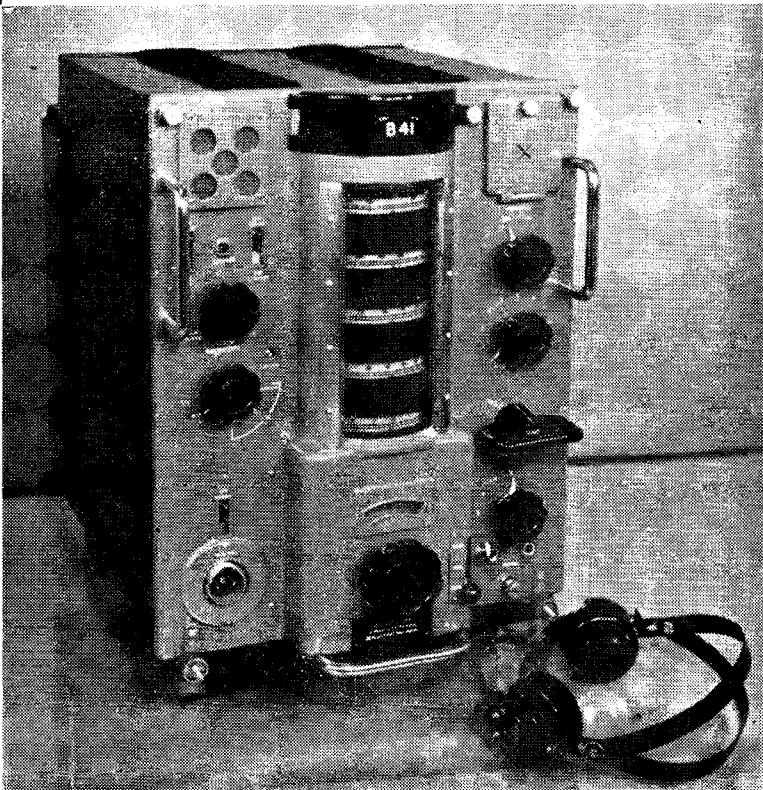
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GOING THE ROUNDS IN "MERCURY"

THE SIGNAL SCHOOL YACHT—"MEON MAID"

As most of you will already know, H.M.S. *Mercury* owns a "Windfall" Yacht, the *Meon Maid*. She is classed as a 50 square metre, this being the sail area. She is entirely maintained by the funds of the officers and ship's company of H.M.S. *Mercury*, except that this year for the first time an Admiralty grant of £52 10s. has been made towards her upkeep; however, there is no indication that we can expect this again.

During the recent winter she has undergone a major refit for the first time since her allocation to H.M.S. *Mercury* in 1948. She has been at a private shipyard and her hull and spars have been thoroughly overhauled and painted at a cost of over £300. Twenty-three ribs were found to be cracked where over-steamed wood had been used in her construction instead of wood "grown" to the necessary shape; this accounted for the major expense. The rigging has also been entirely renewed from our own resources.

All this work will undoubtedly make *Meon Maid* a more attractive cruising yacht in the coming season, and we hope that she will be fully employed. Yachtsmen are entreated to be especially careful of her fine finish, particularly the delicate sea-green sides.

Meon Maid will sleep six, or at a pinch, seven. Her capacity for short trips is twelve in fair weather and eight in foul weather.

Ratings are taken for evening cruises on as many weekdays as possible throughout the summer and they are included whenever possible in racing crews and for longer cruises. No charge is made for ratings, since the Welfare Fund of H.M.S. *Mercury* contributes to the yacht's upkeep.

Officers are charged as follows irrespective of the total number embarked:

Long cruises (four days or more)	£1 10s. per day
Week-ends—	
Saturday and Sunday	£4
Friday, Saturday and Sunday	£5
One day's sailing	£2
Dog Watch sailing	5s. per head or £1 altogether (whichever total is the less).

Officers and ratings from H.M.S. *Mercury* naturally have preference, but other Communications Officers who are qualified as "Skipper" or can prove sufficient qualification are encouraged to use *Meon Maid* on the same terms and they should not hesitate to contact the Sailing Secretary to obtain bookings. It is only by the full use of the yacht that the big outlay can be justified and a high standard of maintenance be kept up.

V/S COMMENTARY

At the present time there are a large number of jobs both ashore and in M.S.O.'s held by Chief Yeomen and Yeomen of Signals. These ratings have little need to refer to the Bridge Signal Books and, as a result, may be out of touch or out of date when they next go to sea. In one case a Yeoman had completed five years ashore before joining a destroyer and his last service in a fleet unit was in 1942.

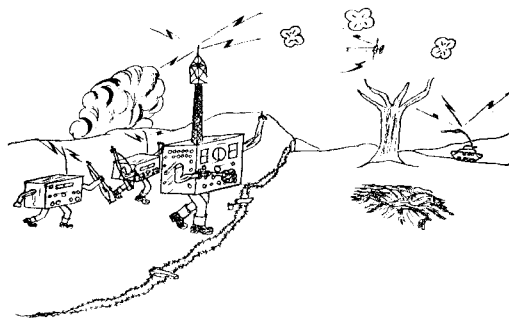
In the case of a senior rating whose service has kept him out of touch with fleetwork for a considerable period, effort will be made to bring him to a Signal School for a short refresher course when he is nearing his turn for a seagoing draft.

Notwithstanding this, these ratings are reminded that it is their duty to try and keep themselves up-to-date in all subjects in their syllabus. A particular effort is needed now to get hold of the new books and become thoroughly acquainted with them. Reference should be made to C.A.F.O. 256/51 which summarises the more important changes.

SQUASH RACKETS

Squash continues to be very popular at Leydene and the court has been in regular use throughout the winter. During the Christmas leave the court was redecorated and all players are now doing their utmost to keep the deck clean. We are hoping for some brighter lights fairly soon, anyway before next season begins (E.E.M. please note).

Wren Leveson-Gower played for the Portsmouth Command in the inter-Establishment Tournament and there were two Communicators (Cdr. Seymour-Haydon and Lt. Cdr. Spencer) in the naval team which won the inter-Service Championships in December. Cdr. Seymour-Haydon also retained the Navy Championship Cup and is to be congratulated on his place in the England side for the International matches against Wales and Ireland. Lt. Cdr. Spencer



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won the Portsmouth Command Championship, thereby keeping the Cup in *Mercury* for the second year running (Lt. Brian Shattock having won it last year).

ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL

Whilst the 1951-52 football season in *Mercury* has not produced any startling successes like last season, it has seen the consolidation of *Mercury's* position as a leading member of the First Division of the United Services League. This in itself may be considered a major achievement, when it is remembered that not only is *Mercury* one of the smallest establishments in the Portsmouth Command, but it also has one of the most rapidly changing populations.

The season was started early in August by a seven-a-side League, which produced a wealth of talent for all positions except the wings and with Mr. Roe and P.O. Tel. Jobling as the backbone, *Mercury* started in the league with a very promising team.

Our first Navy Cup match was versus *Dryad*, who had five of their last season's team, and although they had beaten us 3-0 the previous week, we managed to fight home by 1-0. The next match, the Command semi-final, saw our defeat by the R.M.'s by 1-0, their goal being a gift in the first ten minutes, due to a defensive blunder and, although *Mercury* then made all the running, the goals just would not come.

From November to February lack of light for inter-part games and the inexorable hand of the Drafting Commander, has severely hampered our League team, but now that the eleven-a-side "Crombie" League is well under way and evening matches are possible, there seems every chance of substantially improving our League positions.

As an experiment a series of Saturday fixtures in the Waterlooville and District League Division I have been arranged for an "A" team and this has been quite successful as we at present lie third in the League and are in the semi-final of the Festival Cup.

Thus, although the season is not yet over, all Communicators can rest assured that the Green-and-White quarters of *Mercury* have reached and will remain in the forefront of naval football, for there is no doubt that, if we had still been in the Second Division, we should have been unbeaten to date and that we have risen well to the higher standards of the First Division.

P.O.'s PATTEN

Before Christmas we held our usual end of term Dance, which this year took the form of a Masquerade. It was voted a great success by all, the usual amount of wallop being consumed.

This was a forerunner to the Kiddies' Party, in which that corpulent and benevolent member, Yeoman Morris, played the appropriate title roll with amazing ability.

Our usual form of monthly entertainment for the month of January was a great success, all thanks being due to the Dancing Troupe organised and trained by "The Ballet Master," Buck Taylor. Yeoman Doubleday and Yeoman Morris cut a crafty figure as they careered around in their version of the "Dansant A'Pache."

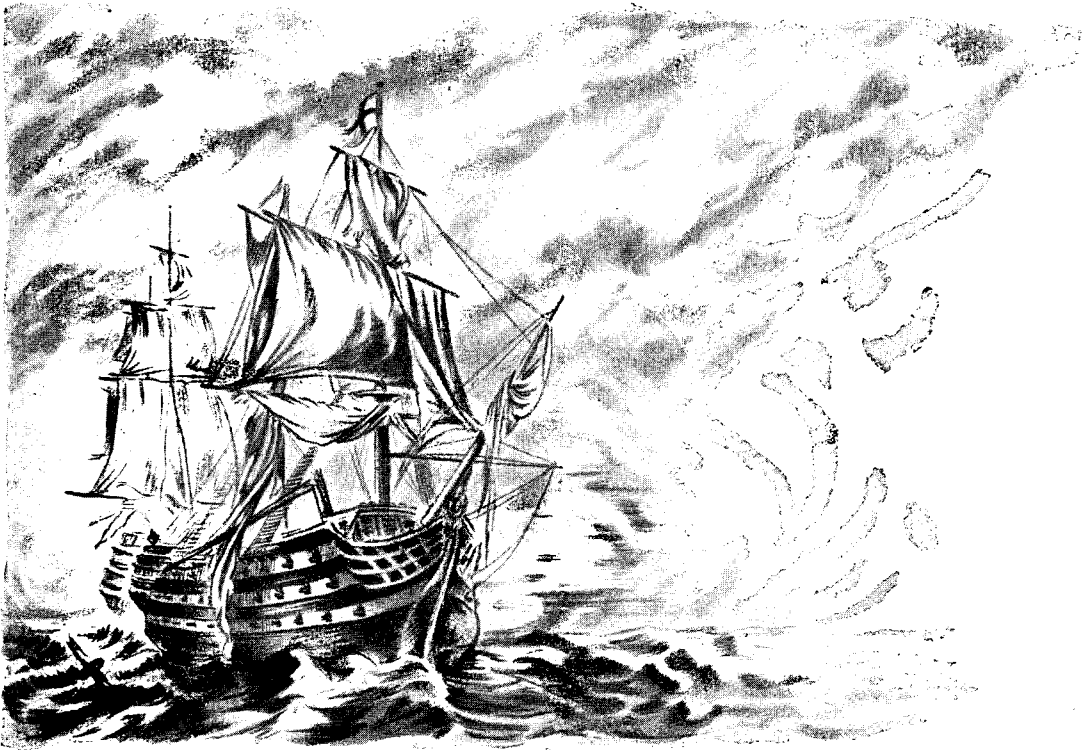
Sport

SOCCER: Eleven-a-side inter-part (for which we hold the Crombie Cup) is now under way and we have the utmost confidence of retaining same.

BOXING: Mention must be made of Yeoman



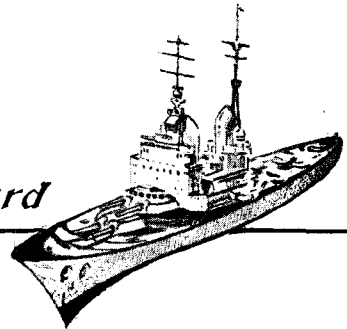
"The shape of things to come?"



None better serve

Of all the nations who link their heritage with the sea, Britain can justly claim the strongest tie — for no other land has been better served by ships or found such favour with the tides. And though time has seen great changes in our fleets, that fine British craftsmanship — which in the past has stood us well — is still a proud asset, and serves, to-day, with equal distinction in

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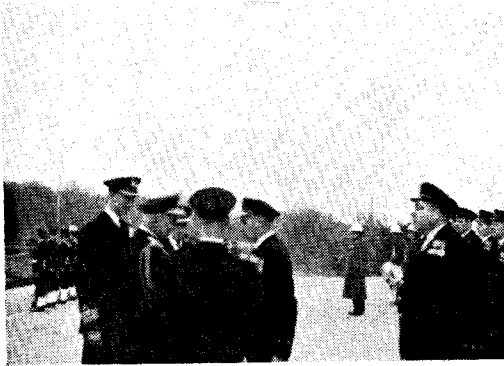
Doubleday who has been chosen again to represent the Portsmouth Command after his great and well-won victory over an up-and-coming A.B.A. Champion. We wish him all success in his future ambitions.

In other sports the Mess has been very well represented.

The time has now come for many Mess members to don the trilby and we wish them every success in their future vocations.

The Presidency is now changing hands and Yeoman Haffety who is relieving P.O. Tel. Liddle is wished every success in his new appointment.

All Mess members send their best wishes to Communicators everywhere.



C.-in-C.'s Inspection.
Presenting the B.E.Ms. to Jennings and Rockstro.

CHIEFS' CHATTER

Remember the old dark days? The Chiefs dined and wine in the Main House—well, No. 4 classroom—but the then inmates bore it all stoically because the future would produce accommodation so sumptuous that No. 4 classroom would be just a ghastly memory. That was ten years ago. Shall we briefly study progress so far?

Our present abode, temporary of course, seems to have grown on us and a recent "peep into the future" says that the mooted lounge and dining-room has run into "restriction trouble" and is now not so near. Has this disheartened us—it certainly has; but not to worry, the new cabins are progressing and having disposed of the west-end of the hut (dining-hall to you) and produced a really nice new concrete floor (sorry, deck), we are keeping the arson class going and expect to have half-a-dozen fully qualified pyromaniacs within a month. How else shall we get a new lounge and bar?

Now to what has happened since our last chat!

Roll of Honour coming up. At C.-in-C.'s inspection, Brothers Jennings and Rockstro were elevated to the peerage, that is to say, were presented with a B.E.M.

apiece. Our congratulations to these worthy "bods."

Indoor sport goes apace. "Tosh" Harding having been appointed Games Master has excelled himself, and every variety of tournament has been in progress. George Lewis goes on the Snooker Shield till next year (sort of crucified). It's difficult to get into the lounge now! Table Tennis pitch takes up the space that the snooker table does not, but we have uncovered exponents of the ping-pong of no mean ability.

The "Blood Shield" has arrived (and left). Drawn by the Wardroom, we quickly scooped it from them at Bridge, held it for a further week at seven-a-side soccer, then hurriedly accepted a challenge from the P.O.'s at Canasta and lost it. (The haste was due to a rumoured challenge from the New Entries at Boxing). We have since regained the Shield by playing snooker. Seven years in the place to qualify for the team.

Recent arrivals include C.Y.S. Mattingley and Reisey and a large number of would-be W.I.'s, and we have also opened a brand new box of C.C.O.'s "Q." Departures include the esteemed Bob Seller, also C.Y.S. Anderson, who have gone to the "happy hunting grounds" after the usual variety of E.V.T. Courses. Our late Secretary, Tom Smallwood, has taken unto himself a draft and can be located somewhere between Loch Ness and Rosyth. The preponderance of rabbits is said to have no connection.

In conclusion, may we wish our absent friends and messmates all that they desire and assure them that although some of our residents are going into their sixth and seventh whacks of "stopped draft" there need be no cause for alarm, for "School Money" is rapidly sending them bankrupt.

CHEERIO.

Anon please (I want to pass).

QUACK

The occasion was a solemn one,
There were ratings row on row,
Their collars showing shiny blue,
Bell bottoms creased for show.
The C.-in-C. was coming,
The Wrens all looking cute,
The Parade came marching smartly
To take the great salute.
Gold braid was gleaming in the sun,
As far as you could see,
White gaitered guards with bayonets
Came smartly three by three.
And as the solemn moment neared
The C.-in-C. stood back,
And from the static water
Came a loud and mournful quack.
Twas a little drake left out of things,
And to his wife said he,
"I'm sure I caused a greater stir
Than did the C.-in-C."

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LONG COURSE MAST EXAM

The final visual effort was very harsh indeed,
 Through hail and snow and wintry sun
 The Youths were made to bleed.
 Now one by one, their course has run
 To this resultant deed.

The T.C. and the Monster were waiting close at hand.
 They wept like anything to see
 The shattered shaking band.
 If all the books were wrote in Greek.
 Oh wouldn't it be grand!

"Come Long Course dears," the Monster said,
 "And talk of many things,
 Of rum and coke and halliards
 And how to signal, please,
 To merchant ships in line astern
 With flags, without a breeze."

"If seven ships with seven lamps
 Were to flash for half an hour.
 Do you believe," the T.C. said,
 "That you could raise George Bower."
 "I doubt it, sir," the victim said,
 With many a cringe and cover.

The masthead lamps were flashing,
 Flashing with all their might,
 And this was very odd, because
 It wasn't the middle of the night.
 But the Long Course had just forgotten
 In palsied, frenzied fright.

"Oh Long Course dears," the Monster cried,
 "Thank you for all your fun
 For hoisting all those signals and
 Giving us such a run."
 The T.C. cried, "More bunting please,"
 But answer came there none,
 Because, you see, between them both
 They'd eaten every one.

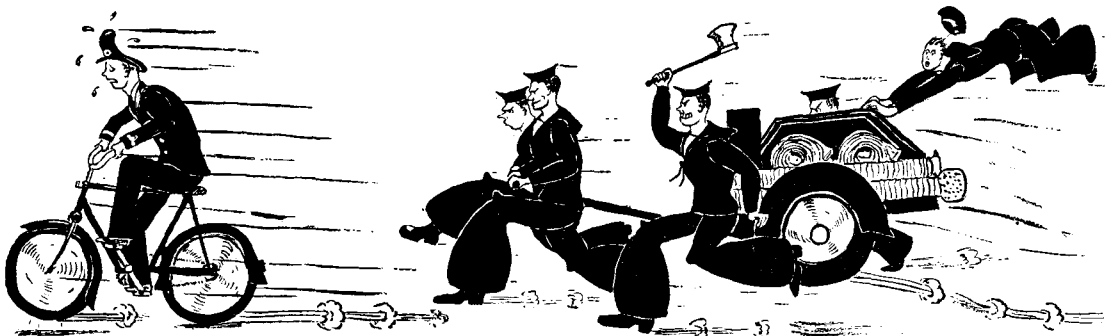
THIRTY THREE LINES OF
BAD VERSE

Dedicated to All the Authors of A.F.O.'s
 which start "—Change of Nomenclature".

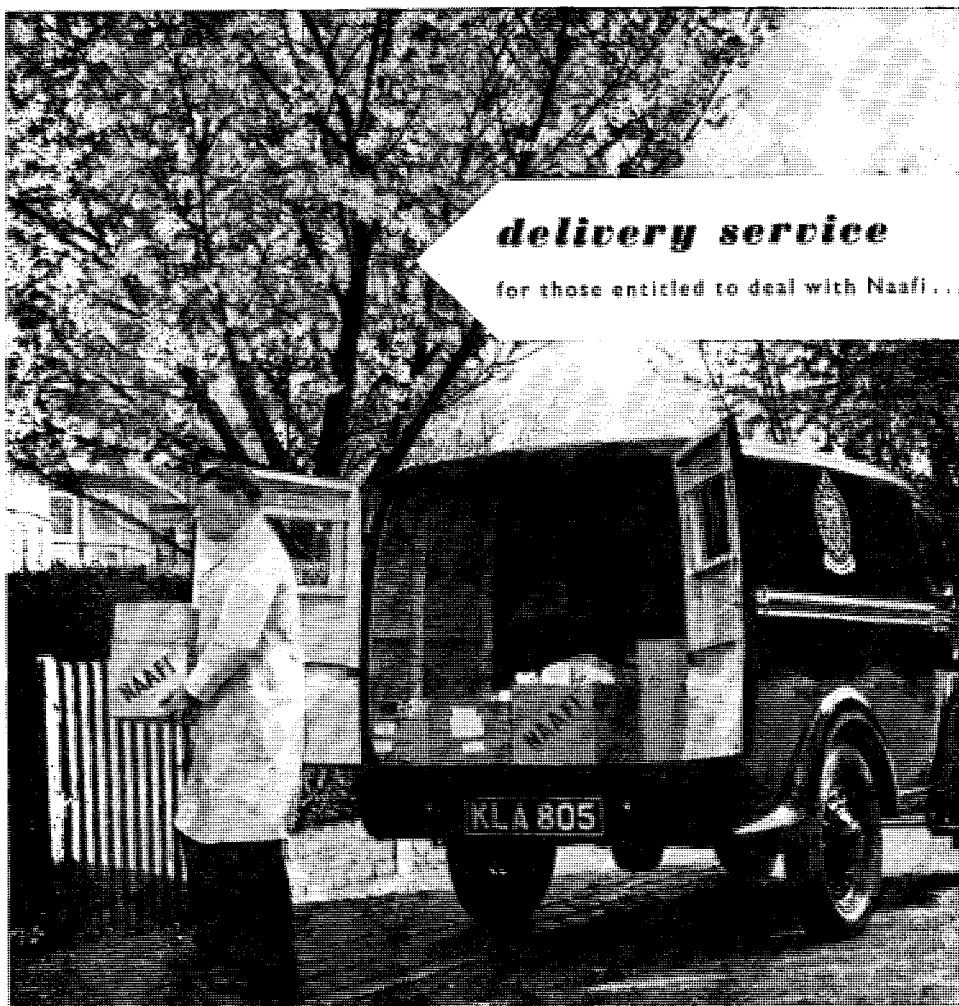
My new ambition is to be
 A Lord High Admiral of the Admiraltee,
 I'll sit all day and hardly ever say
 A word but of genial fol-de-rol-dee.
 But day and night I'll write, write, write,
 And wear large glasses to preserve my sight.
 I'll give up tiddley winks and all my games,
 And very nearly all of my pretty little dames,
 For I'll shake all men by the power of my pen
 As I change all the fine, well-established names.
 Yes, I'll change all the good old names.

I'll virginate the leader's funnel,
 And I'll paint the band right round her gunwale,
 And invent a flag that F can wag,
 And store the packs down in a tunnel.
 FOF to FOD, I'll even change the ABC;
 And as for the gunners that still go to sea,
 I'll make AA mean LA and "Surface," HA.
 And change all the jargon preceding a shoot,
 And change the expression "What is the delay?"
 For I'll change all the fine, well-established names.
 Yes, I'll change all the good old names.

As Lord High Admiral in the Admiraltee,
 I'll loll at my desk so comfortable,
 And burst into verse as I put into reverse
 The very latest changes that occur to me;
 And also all the changes to the changes that I make
 Will all be changed again for the Navy's sake.
The Times, when I die, will say of me,
 'Twas all his resource kept alive the Navee,
 For the power of his pen used to shake all men
 As he changed all the fine, well-established names.
 Yes, he changed all the good old names.



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M. G. Chichester

I. F. Sommerville

H. H. Ridler

P. T. Lawman

W. R. Wells, D.S.C.

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
M. L. WOOLLCOMBE	Lt. Cdr.	Mercury	Superb
F. A. BAKER	Communication Lt.	Sea Eagle	S.T.C. Malta
R. DANCE	S.C.C.O.	Cochrane	Osprey
E. G. B. ANNIS	S.C.C.O.	Mercury	Cochrane
I. C. MACINTYRE	Lt. Cdr.	Mercury	Tyne
J. B. D. MILLER	Lt.	Mercury	Solebay
A. N. GARTON	C.C.O.	Mercury	Dolphin
C. F. GRAY	S.C.C.O.	Mercury	Drake
R. W. WALTON	C.C.O.	Mercury	St. Angelo
P. ELLIS	C.C.O.	Swiftsure	Mercury
M. BROAD	C.C.O.	Broadsword	R.N.S.S. Chatham
Miss J. L. TURNBULL	2/O W.R.N.S.	Mercury	Mercury II
J. N. KENNARD	Cdr.	Terror	Staff of C.-in-C. H.F. (Ashore)
E. W. A. COLLINS	C.C.O.	Solebay	Mercury
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W. A. B. BLAND	Lt. Cdr.	Superb	Sea Eagle
D. O. DYKES	Lt. Cdr.	President	Devonshire
P. B. SCHONFELDT	Lt. Cdr.	Dido	Indomitable
W. L. IRVING	Lt. Cdr.	President	Drake
I. R. MASON	Lt. Cdr.	Drake	Theseus
A. R. J. ST. Q. NOLAN	Lt. Cdr.	Sea Eagle	President
A. M. RALPH	Lt.	Devonshire	Mercury
T. R. BROOKS	S.C.C.O.	Drake	Ladybird
M. T. MARWOOD, D.S.C.	Lt. Cdr.	Tyne	Mercury
D. A. FORREST	Lt. Cdr.	Theseus	Dolphin
H. S. M. WILKINS	Communication Lt.	Highflyer	President
W. J. HEATH	C.C.O.	Mercury	Newcastle
G. H. P. HUNT	Lt. Cdr.	Indomitable	Gannet
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F. R. DORE	S.C.C.O.	Dolphin	Mercury
W. J. PARKER	Cdr.	St. Angelo	President
J. M. A. ENNION	Cdr. (Retd.)	Recalled for 18 mths.	President
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N. D. C. HILLIER	Lt. R.N.V.R.	Warrior	Mercury
G. D. NUTT, D.S.C.	Lt. Cdr.	Montclare	Mercury II
C. H. PAIN	Lt. Cdr.	Cumberland	Montclare
G. D. W. RAM, M.B.E.	Lt. Cdr.	Osiris	Drake II
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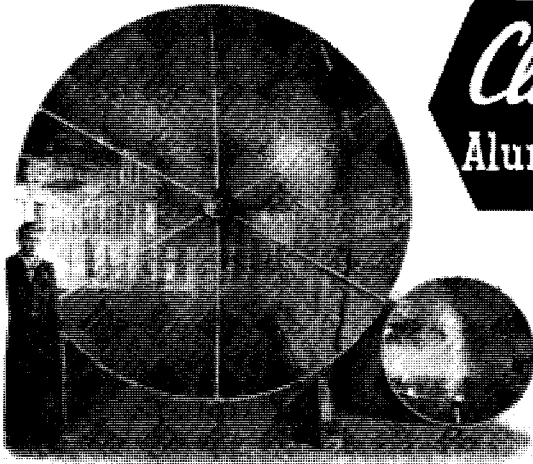
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C. D. SHEAD	C.C.O.	R.N.S.S. Chatham	Mercury (Conversion Course)
G. B. THRUM	Lt.	Solebay	Mercury
R. C. KEITH-REID	C.C.O. (Air) R.A.N.	Falcon	Blackcap
J. R. ROUND	C.C.O.	Mercury	R.N.C. Greenwich (for Courses)
J. S. H. LAWRENCE	Cdr.	President	Cochrane
J. W. McCLELLAND	Cdr.	President	Terror
J. W. MEADOWS	Cdr.	Mercury II	Vanguard (for special duties)
J. C. RUSHBROOKE, D.S.C.	Lt. Cdr.	Exchange R.A.N.	Third T.F.
M. G. CHICHESTER	Cdr.	Dolphin	Allied H.Q., Southern Europe
R. W. BRIGGS	Cdr.	Maidstone	Mercury II
D. C. PELLY	Lt. Cdr.	Mercury	R.N.Z.N., Loan
C. G. TONKIN	C.C.O.	Agincourt	Maidstone
L. P. C. WARREN	Lt. Cdr. R.N.V.R.	Recalled for 18 mths.	
C. A. JAMES	Cdr.	President	Mercury as T.C.
R. R. B. MACKENZIE, M.B.E.	Lt. Cdr.	Mercury	Cochrane
E. A. NICHOLSON	Cdr.	Loch Dunvegan	Royal Danish Navy
W. A. J. STAMMERS	C.C.O. (Air)	Goldfinch	Gamecock
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L. J. SMITH	Lt. Cdr.	Mauritius	Seahawk
K. A. TOWNSEND-GREEN	Lt.	Drake	Daring
E. F. HABGOOD	Communication Lt.	Drake II	Mercury
C. O. SADLER	Communication Lt.	Mercury	Victory
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