A NAVAL CAREER

by

GEORGE CROWLEY

Rear Admiral George C.Crowley, CBE., DSC*.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

If I were asked why I had decided to write my Memoirs I would say for two main reasons. Firstly I did actually have quite an interesting time in the Royal Navy and thought an account might possibly interest my family as well as some friends. Secondly I was spurred on by my wife, Una, to write down some of the more interesting parts of my life. Apart from my Midshipman's Journal I have never kept a diary. I have, however, throughout my life, kept photographs and these have aroused my memory. Coupled with these I have had a number of Ship's Magazines such as H.M.S.Tenacious - Her Story, Horizons, the Journal of H.M.S.Newfoundland, H.M.S.Trafalgar, and "N" Class, a magazine produced after the war about the Australian "N" Class Destroyers, to which I am indebted.

I am grateful to many who have helped me to produce these Memoirs. In particular I must mention Miss Fay Gordon Hill who not only typed the main draft but also made some sensible suggestions. She has been a great help to me. The comments of Peter Colclough, now a close Australian friend, who served with me in both the Australian destroyers Nestor and Norman, were invaluable. Ted Tooley who was with me in the Walpole also was very helpful. Miss Claire Norman kindly agreed to produce the necessary prints of the photos for which I am so grateful.

These Memoirs are dedicated to my two sons Patrick and Roger and their families.

George Crowley

CHAPTER I

A CLOSE SHAVE

The story goes that the casualties in the First World War were so great that my Mother and Father, who already had four children, decided that they should have another child and so, on the 9th of June 1916 at 15 South Park Hill Road, I was born. Thus I was the youngest of five and my brother John who was nearest to me in age was about four years my senior. The house, I have since discovered, was one of the ugliest Victorian horrors in existence. Try as I will I do not remember much of my early life but I can, however, recall being sent to a kindergarten two doors down from my home and, what was far worse, on my first day getting lost on the way back. I shall always remember too, Chan, our dear old Nurse who was with us for years and years. Her real name was Camkin and she had a sweet sister called Mrs. White who lived somewhere near the Zoo. My Father was a brewer who was in partnership with his brother Cyril and my Grandfather who also lived in Croydon. This was a family business and had been so for a very long time. I think I was always a bit frightened of my Grandfather Crowley and really preferred my Mother's father, Grandfather Hooke. I always remember my own Father telling me that Grandad Hooke called a meeting at Birdhurst where he lived, to tell his relations that he had decided to marry again, his first wife having died some years previously. He said he was now going to marry Miss May Bird. Uncle Joseph, who was really rather funny as well as being clever, whispered to my father "This has really knocked me off my perch" whereupon there was a great gust of raucous mirth and the more they laughed the worse it became. Everyone I am sure wondered what all this hilarity was about. All the relations wondered what on earth would now happen to Birdhurst but in fact she was the nicest possible person and everything went on just the same. Though she was my step-grandmother she was one of the sweetest people I ever knew.

At 15 South Park Hill we used to have a Christmas tree every year and theoretically the present on the top of the tree was given to each of the children in turn. I can always remember waiting year after year for my turn, but, strange to say, I cannot recall ever having it.

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They were now both in the Middle East and a telegram was sent to which the reply came back, "Bob delighted", which was correctly interpreted as "Both delighted". It was not long after this that Cyril was killed. This was a sad blow as he was the one in the Crowley family who was a go-getter and I believe that if he had lived the Frewery would never have been sold. What actually occurred was that as the war went on it became more and more difficult to get transport to move the beer to the pubs. Another brewery, Fremlins I believe, proposed that they should deliver their beer to some of our pubs if we did the same to some of theirs thereby cutting down the transport problems. After a good deal of discussion my Father and Grandfather decided to sell. This was not only sad but really rather silly as no provision was made for either my Father, or any of his sons, to have access to becoming a director.

I think I must have been about six or seven when we heard we were going to move to Hartfield in Sussex. By this time my parents had bought a motor car, a Morris Cowley, and they were both taking driving lessons from Mr. Wadham. John and I used to sit in the back seat and it was not too long before we both knew quite a lot about driving. Soon we paid our first visit to our new house, Cotchford Wood, which was quite attractive and fairly large. It had a big sitting room, quite a reasonably sized dining room, as far away from the kitchen as it was possible to be and two smaller rooms. One was allocated as a study for my parents and the other was a nursery. There was also a good sized kitchen with a pantry, scullery and larder all leading out of it. Upstairs there was a nice bedroom for my parents, a reasonable room for Chan, two double bedrooms, quite a nice single room for my sister plus a room at the back with a bathroom and tiny dressing room alongside. The garden was, to my mind, large enough being two acres with two acres of woodland. We looked out towards the South and could see Gills Lap in Ashdown Forest most clearly. Cotchford Wood was a mile and a half out of the village, down a small not very well made up private road. There were originally not many houses in this private road and we loved it. We all went to different schools. Mary went to Woodford in Croydon and was at school with Dorothy Cox, who later became Diana Winyard, and Peggy Ashcroft. Peter went to Blundells which I do not think he liked all that much; Michael went to Easthourne College and John to Bradfield. Both Peter and Michael were good at games but John, to be honest, was less good. On the other hand he had the best education of us all, finally going to St.John's College Cambridge to read modern languages.

John and I were sent to Eversley at Tunbridge Wells. This meant bicycling, largely down hill, to catch the 8.31 train and then walking from Tunbridge Wells West to Frant Road which took ten minutes. We would catch the 6.10 back and then have the tedious and exhausting problem of biking up hill all the way home. Not too bad in the summer but ghastly in winter and even worse if one had not remembered to refill the carbide bicycle lamp. I remember once biking up the first hill and, in order to make the climb easier, I started to zig-zag across the road; down came a working man on a bike and he ran straight into me. I was knocked out and woke up in bed at Cotchford Wood; furthermore I was entirely to blame. My Father paid for the repairs to his bike and as far as I know that was the end of this stupid episode.

When I first went to Eversley the headmaster was Mr.Hill who had a Norwegian wife. In those days I stammered a bit. After each meal a boy was called on to say the Latin grace and, although I always looked away, I never got away with it. The worst thing was that because I was nervous this tended to make me stutter more than usual. It was not too long after I first went to Eversley that we heard that the Hills were leaving and in due course Stephen Goldring took over as Headmaster with his wife Joan. He was a much younger man of about twenty-eight or twenty-nine. The school was small and existed in two houses, Eversley and Beverley, and though I do not think I was taught very well I did enjoy this school very much. There was a very nice master called Mr.Mathews who was a superb hockey player of almost international standard and also a very good boxer. The two forms of sport I have always enjoyed most have been hockey and boxing. I remember not too long after coming to Eversley when I was changing from my outdoor to my indoor shoes I was suddenly attacked by a boy called Molesworth. This fight was soon stopped. However, in the break Molesworth and I were told to go up to the top room and put on boxing gloves and then told to box it out. I was so angry that I practically slew Molesworth. I learnt later that a senior boy had persuaded him to attack me.

In due course it became clear that I wanted to join the Navy. Though I have frequently been asked why, it is in fact a difficult question to answer. We lived in the country well away from the sea and, apart possibly from the odd Navy Days at Chatham, we had very little contact with ships at all. I do however remember the "Dick Valiant" series of books. These were all about a young chap called Dick Valiant and how he joined the Navy and all the terrifying and exciting things that happened to him. It is always possible

in a curious way, that becouse I was born due to the casualties in the First World War, this had some sort of effect on me. In due course I went to London for the interview for Dartmouth and passed and later went back for the exam which, if I passed, would mean I would go to Dartmouth. I did not pass - I failed. After a lot of discussion it was decided that I should go to the Nautical College Pangbourne. I believe the secretary to the owner, Sir Thomas Devitt, was a friend of my Mother. I was supposed to have an interview but this never in fact took place.

Pangbourne was a Nautical College started by Sir Thomas Devitt I think about 1917 and was basically to train boys for the Merchant Navy although there were opportunities to get a Navy nomination at about the age of seventeen and a half and this was the object of my going there. During my time we all wore the usual cadet's uniform except that we had a dark blue tab on the lapels of our collars while the Dartmouth product had white tabs. Looking back over many years I am extremely grateful to Pangbourne. It taught me to do as I was told; encouraged us to have good manners and helped us to be sportsmen. We all had special lockers for our clothes and we all had to make our own bunks; not only that, if the bunks were poorly made we were punished. What it did for me was to teach me to look after myself. Once I had a minor complaint and had to spend a few days in the Sick Bay in a ward with some more senior cadets. I never was a great singer and when I was invited to sing at some stage the results were disastrous. "Sing God Save The King" they cried. You must believe me when I tell you that I could not even do that. This resulted in my being taught to do so and it would be quite true, I think, to say that I can now sing it quite well.

In due course I was confirmed and the preparation for my confirmation was extremely well done. I can always remember that the priest who prepared us said to me one day, "You know, Crowley, what you have got to remember through life is to be loyal". I am not sure that I was in those days a very loyal person so this warning has been a great help to me. As far as games are concerned I played for the first eleven in hockey, the second eleven in cricket and the third fifteen in rugger. Probably my real strength lay in boxing at which I was very good. I used to go down to the gym most evenings in order to practise. Later on I also took up fencing and became quite good at that too. I was in Harbinger Division, probably the one division I would never have chosen, but despite this I enjoyed it very well. We used to have

a whalers rowing race every spring term and the Chief Cadet Captain, Adsworth-Jones, was determined that we in Harbinger should win. We practised and practised and because our morale was high we did well. I was the bowman and we not only won but romped home miles ahead of all and sundry.

I mentioned earlier about the Chaplain reminding me of the importance of loyalty and I said that perhaps I had not always been as loyal as I ought to have been. When I was a Cadet Captain I had a habit of criticising others including some of the Chief Cadet Captains. I was severely hauled over the coals by the Chiefs and, on reflection, rightly so. In order to obtain a Navy Nomination the entrance consisted of an interview followed by an examination. The interview carried a lot of marks and one of the methods of improving oneself was to attend interview practices. These were arranged by the Executive Officer, Commander Jackie Blair, together with all those likely to take the interview. They were extremely helpful as, after a dummy run, you were told what you did poorly and thus by degrees could improve. It was an extraordinary thing becouse I failed the first exam having had good marks for the interview. My birthday was such that I was allowed one more shot and, being so keen to get into the Navy, I took it and believe it or not I actually passed in bottom. The really extraordinary thing was that David Forbes, much brighter than I, failed. His father was dead but his mother asked the Admiralty for a copy of all the marks and when these arrived checked them discovering to her delight that they had been added up incorrectly and that David should have had a further two hundred marks. She had this corroborated by her neighbours and then wrote to the Admiralty pointing out their error and asking for a Navy Nomination for her son. This, of course, was granted her but I often wonder what would have happened to me if someone had not made this clerical error. It was indeed a Close Shave.

I had passed into the Navy by inches after my third shot and was I pleased... So in due course I caught the appropriate train to Chatham all dressed up in my brand new uniform. People have often said to me that if you enter one of the services as an officer it is dead easy compared with entering as a rating. I doubt this and especially as a result of my own experience in the Navy. Almost before the train had stopped at Chatham there was a bellow from the Cadet Gunner, Mr.Gribbon, "Get moving, get your trunks out, don't dawdle, hurry up". Before we knew what had hit us we were doubling here there and everywhere, lugging our trunks out, and heaving them into a waiting naval lorry. No taxis for us as we had to pile into the same vehicle.

It was blatantly clear that by the time we had arrived on board H.M.S. Frobisher, the Training Cruiser, life was not going to be all that easy and it certainly was not. We did three cruises in that ship, one to the Mediterranean, one to the West Indies and one to Scandinavia. We had to turn out every morning except Sundays at 5.30 a.m. and scrub decks for one hour starting at 6 a.m. On Fridays, the worst day of the week, we had to get down on our hands and knees and holystone the decks, and on Sundays we had to turn to at 6.30 a.m. to mop down the decks. Another thing we had to do was to live on a Broadside Mess and one of us was detailed off daily as "Cook of the Mess" which meant he had to lay up, clear away and finally sweep up after the meal. If this was poorly done then he was for the high jump. We were thus living in very similar conditions to the sailors at the other end of the ship.

During my year in Frobisher I learnt everything a sailor had to do and when I left I knew it all. I could splice,rope, wire, row, sail, deal with anchors and cables, climb the masts, scrub decks, work in the engine room and goodness knows what. In this training ship there were those who joined from public and grammar schools and those from Dartmouth and, though I suppose it was logical, there was always a battle between the Pubs and the Darts. Invariably the Pubs won simply because we were much keener than the Darts who had been doing naval instruction ever since they were thirteen years old.

The cruises were fun. Though we were supposed to have shore leave expiring at 7 p.m. in the evening there were exceptions and, when at Alexandria, we were allowed to have three days in Cairo. I went and stayed, I think, at the Mena House Hotel. We saw the great Pyramids, the Sphinx and the wonderful Museum. We also saw at least one night club. The cost of the hotel was, as far as I know, paid for by our parents. When we went to Stockholm we were all given leave to 11.30 p.m. I went with some others to a restaurant where we had a rattling good meal and then went on to the Tivoli Gardens which was really super fun. We did have so much fun that I have never forgotten this wonderful evening. In the West Indies I cannot remember any special late leave that we were given. I do however remember the most wonderful swimming in the most glorious hot weather.

Looking through my photograph album of my group with whom I joined the Frobisher the casualties in the war were substantial. Many lost their lives in submarines, some perished in destroyers, Godfrey Style lost an arm and some did not get beyond the rank of Lieutenant Commander. Against this, a number

reached the rank of Captain but, apart from a Canadian, I think I was the only one to reach Flag Rank. There was however one exception and that was a Bengali called Chatterji. We all nicknamed him "Chatterbox" and he finally finished up as Head of the Indian Navy.

Probably due to the fact that I had written to Admiral Henderson, whose son Ian was with me at Pangbourne, I was appointed to H.M.S.Berwick, due to sail for the Far East in three months' time. There is, as you probably know, no peace for the wicked because in the meantime three or four of us were sent to H.M.S.Barham. She was one of those great big battlewagons and I was not over thrilled at the thought of two months in this great ship. We joined and found we were in the Gun Room with a very large number of midshipmen. For the first time I discovered that senior midshipmen could be as beastly to their juniors as anyone else. I gathered that, on the cruise before I joined, the senior mids damn nearly killed a junior mid by hoisting him up the mainmast on a sort of lanyard affair. I did not care for the sub-lieutenant but I did like the paymaster sub-lieutenant called Stanning. In those days it was customary for the Captain of these great ships to have the midshipmen to breakfast and in due course two of us were invited. In fact it was really quite a pleasant occasion. When at Invergordon one of the steam pickets under a Senior Mid made a bad error going alongside the jetty and drove such a large hole in the side that it sank. Some of the stories I relate sound a bit absurd but when they sent in the second steam picket boat it made an equally silly manoeuvre and sank alongside the first one. We all then had to write in our journals how to save the day. It was in this ship that I first encountered "Dogs of War". One day in the Gun Room the cry went up "Dogs of War - out Jason!" This was a means of ousting someone from the mess for one reason or another. At this cry everybody was supposed to mass round Jason and literally chuck him out of the Gun Room. Needless to say the Jasons of this world resisted to the very best of their ability. It seemed to me that a person removed under this arrangement often got quite severely hurt.

Joining the Berwick at Devonport was a very different affair. She was a County Class Cruiser of around ten thousand tons and so, in comparison with the Barham, was much smaller. The Gun Room too was small and we only had eight seamen midshipmen and one, or was it two, paymaster midshipmen. The sub lieutenant was a very nice young man called Alexander Sinclair and later we also had another called Henley. Life on board compared with the Barham was, as far as I was concerned, almost like Heaven. We had Chinese cooks and

stewards who were really excellent and though they probably made some money out of us they did in fact feed and serve us well. The captain of the Berwick was Eric Ritchie Pent who was a pleasant man and also a keen games player. The commander called Cather was, or looked, elderly and was, I believe, a torpedo and anti-submarine expert. As I think I said previously I always wanted to join the Navy and, though I was to a certain extent halted in my tracks, it was crystal clear that Berwick, for me at any rate, was going to be right up my street. We sailed from Devonport and made our way towards Gibraltar. In those days all midshipmen had to keep a journal which had to be presented to the "Snotties' Nurse" about once a fortnight I think. In this journal we had to recount what we had done, with special emphasis on the ship and our part in it. Looking through my journal for this period I see that I had included many plans of places we visited, examples of certain facets of seamanship and pictures or even photographs of foreign ships and so forth.

Though many men, even the great Nelson, suffer dreadfully from sea sickness and the majority of my group suffered likewise, I have never ever been seasick. It was the same story as we sped southwards towards Gibraltar, the majority of the Gun Room was far from well. Though the movement of a ship, I suppose, has a direct effect on how you feel, I always believe that smells such as cooking and fuel oil have a great tendency to make one seasick. We only had a short stay at Gibraltar, a place I have always liked. There is, or was in those days, plenty to buy at a fairly cheap rate and hundreds of cafes and bars. There were three clubs; one for the officers of wardroom rank; one for the Warrant Officers and one for the Gun Room. They were nicknamed NOP (Naval Officers Pavilion), WOP (Warrant Officers Pavilion) and GOP (Gun Room Officers Pavilion). In all these clubs there were facilities for eating, drinking, changing and, I suppose, resting. I have never been very lucky at gambling but I do remember one of those machines into which you put money, twist some knobs and either you get nothing at all or a small pay out but, once in a blue moon, the machine throws out every penny it has. We were playing with one of these machines and I was the chap involved when the lights went out to indicate that the Club was about to close. I put in my last coin, twiddled a knob, and believe it or not the machine spouted out the lot. Was I lucky, or dare I say fairly lucky, as all my friends then said I was to buy them all a drink on the way back.

The seamen mids were all attached to a Division in the ship and to a certain extent we came under the Divisional Officer. I was attached to the

Foretop and my immediate senior was a lieutenant called Hopkins. He was very kind to me and I liked him very much. He gave me a book when I left two years later. We steamed out of the Mediterranean and through the Suez Canal having spent a lot in Alexandria; on through the Red Sea and believe me it was hot - I thought I would expire. The one or two small naval sloops stationed in the Red Sea had a special evening rig called, strangely enough, "Red Sea Rig". This was a white open necked shirt, blue trousers and a black cummerbund. Then a short stay in Aden and on to Colombo where we stayed long enough to play some hockey and tennis. It was not too long before we arrived at Singapore. This really is an Eastern city where the shops are full of "not too good" bargains. Here we all played games, all went shopping and some of us penetrated some of the less ordinary places. I always remember one of the senior mids having a meal in some posh restaurant and all he had to do was to sign a chit. He said after we left Singapore that he had got away without paying a sou. He got a very nasty shock because some months later when we came back there was a caller who demanded the money then and there or he would go and see the captain. Eventually we were off to Hong Kong. Now we were really on the China Station and most of us were very excited about it. We arrived off Hong Kong and passed through the Lymun Strait into the harbour. The flagship was H.M.S.Kent, another County Class cruiser, and the Commander-in-Chief China Station was Admiral Sir Frederick Dreyer, a tall, highly efficient and rather frightening man. Years later, when working for his son also an admiral, I said to him, "You know, I was a midshipman on the China Station when your father was Commander-in-Chief and we were scared stiff of him". He replied, "I bet you were not as scared of him as we were."

A midshipman in my day did two years and four months of which three months or so should if possible be spent in a destroyer. It was in a way a strange life because though under instruction you were also an officer. This meant that there were times when you were actually being taught and then times when you were in charge of a team of sailors. The more senior you became the greater the responsibility you were given. Instruction fell really into two parts. There was the academic side when we did so many hours a week with an Instructor Officer who would teach us physics, a language and ships' construction from the theoretical point of view. The object of this was to ensure that we would not be too rusty when we went to Greenwich, the aim of which was to bring us back to reality and instruct us in all these subjects. It also included a short War Course, covering staff work, lectures and discussions. The other part of our instruction was levelled at the professional side of our duties.

We would spend a certain amount of time with the Gunnery Officer, Torpedo Officer, Navigator and Signals Officer. We would also do a few weeks in the Engine Room. There we would do pipe tracing and clean the boilers, a ghastly job, at any rate as far as I was concerned. We would spend a period in each main part of the Engine Room Department and learn how to operate the manoeuvring valves etc. It taught us to appreciate just what the engine room staff had to do when given orders from the bridge. Instruction meant that we would have to run motor boats, sail whalers, work on the forecastle and take part in the many duties that came under the heading of General Drill. An important part of a midshipman's training was learning the duties of the Officer of the Watch at sea and in harbour. He was required to understudy the Officer of the Watch at sea and learn how to keep station, follow in the wake of the next ahead and be able to move the ship as required by manoeuvring signals. During his time as a midshipman he had to learn how to navigate the ship both out of sight of land as well as when coasting. This meant that he had to take sun, moon and star sights accurately and satisfy the authorities that he could, unaided, fix the ship accurately. Likewise in harbour he was expected to learn his duties including investigating offences and dealing with emergencies such as fire, weather and so forth. This really would be his last chance to learn these duties and yet still be under instruction. Funnily enough a midshipman of the watch in harbour could be quite useful. The Signal Officer of the Kent made a signal to a Sub-lieutenant in another cruiser to this effect "To Sub-lieutenant Smith from C-in-C China Fleet: Repair on board at 0900 tomorrow Wednesday. Dress frock coat and sword". The great plan was that the Signal Officer in Kent would be the Officer of the Day and he was going to have the laugh on the frock coated Sub-lieutenant. Alas, the Captain came up and took the Officer of the Watch away. The keen midshipman on watch took the frock coated Sub-lieutenant down to the Admiral who was not pleased. The Signal Officer had his leave stopped for six weeks.

Reverting back to our arrival at Hong Kong. All ships entering the inner harbour had to pass through Lymun Pass. This was a narrow entrance with quite steep rocky slopes on each side. From the Pass inwards there seemed to be nothing but junks, sampans and other water craft moving in all directions. Trade, irrespective of what the relations were between the Chinese and British governments, continued by sea between China and Hong Kong and vice versa. The moment we had secured the ship was more or less invaded by Chinese. They were looking for their friends and relations and possibly some hoping to collect items bought in the so-called "rich" West. It took some time to get

things more or less straight. Finally, I gathered, the Commander gave authority for a few firms to trade on board thereby exerting some form of control. One of the extraordinary things that would occur was when we were bound for other ports up north in China, including Weihaiwei, the number of Chinese would increase substantially and believe me it was difficult to control the import of people.

We had, like the Wardroom and the Warrant Officers' Mess, Chinese cooks and stewards. The Gun Room Mess Head Steward was Ah Ling, rather fat with a large and cheerful grin on his face. Then we had Wong Tai, the Leading Steward, equally cheerful. Wong Tai looked after the wine and kept a record of what we all consumed. Then there was Fok Ai who I suppose was a Steward. He was rather thin and wizened but quite nice. I cannot remember now the names of the two cooks. These were what I would term the Official Chinese, but as they all seemed to have their wingers or "makey-learny" it was not too easy to know how many Chinese there were working for us.

Our pay as midshipmen was five shillings a day or seven pounds odd a month. Out of that we had to pay our mess bill and our wine bill which was restricted to fifteen shillings a month. I suppose our mess bill would run to about four or five pounds a month. I was really very lucky because my father gave me forty eight pounds a year which was credited to the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. This was really spending money. I forgot to say that, over and above our five shillings a day, there were a few allowances such as Tropical Allowance which might give us another one pound ten shillings or one pound and fifty pence in new money. At least one midshipman, who was the son of a priest, had as far as I know no money from his family at all. This meant that he was invariably short. Later in the war he was killed in a destroyer in the Mediterranean.

The China Fleet consisted in my day of about eight or nine cruisers, two carriers, two and sometimes three flotillas of destroyers, and a host of sloops. In addition there were a number of submarines and a depot ship. In the Yangtse and West rivers there were quite a number of gunboats which were responsible for policing these rivers..In the Yangtse there was also a Flag Officer Gun Boats complete with staff. These small vessels usually had three officers - a captain who was normally either a senior Lieutenant or Lieutenant-Commander, a First Lieutenant and a Doctor. I have always gathered that they really rather liked their role. In addition we always kept a sloop

at Weihaiwei throughout the winter and in mid winter it would be frozen in. I understood that this job was pretty popular too.

Briefly, we would be in the south during the winter months and sometimes we would be lucky enough to get down to Australia. When it began to get hot we would move northwards calling at many ports on the way until we finally arrived at Weihaiwei. There we would have our rowing regatta and also have a concentrated period of exercises. From Weihaiwei some ships might go further north, others could go to Japan, that is if relations were satisfactory. Let me first tell you about Shanghai. This great city lies on the Wang Po which is off the Yangtse and it is quite exciting going up this mighty river. From the seaward side it is possible to see the mud from the river forty or more miles out. In those days pilots were essential. Evidently only the pilot would know the exact state of the river and all the way up there would be many junks, large sampans as well as quite a number of steam ships leaving the river. One could see trees, people fishing and many living on board their junks. As we turned into the Wang Po the ebb or flood tide was very strong. Great care had to be taken to arrive at Shanghai at slack water so that it was easy to turn round to face to seaward. All the way up you would see a large number of bodies floating down stream. So many people lived afloat, living was hard and so the death rate was enormous. On arrival we steamed past all the warships present. These included Chinese, Japanese, American, Portuguese, Italian, French and British. A little beyond the main mooring point there was space to turn, which we did as quickly as possible. Then we made our way down towards our berth. Here we secured to head and stern buoys. The aim of course was to do all this before the tide turned and we suffered from the effect of the flood or ebb which was very substantial indeed. Shanghai was in those days an international city where there was great wealth and prosperity alongside dire poverty. There was a British part, French section and American area and so on. There was nothing you could not buy if you had the money. One could travel by taxi, rickshaw or walk. Nearly all the rickshaws were pulled by men who, I understood, never lived to a great age. We were young and used to have rickshaw races which, on reflection, could not have been very pleasant for the "puller".

We used to remain about six weeks at Shanghai before we were relieved by another warship. As midshipmen we used to look at the shops and occasionally buy something. In the evenings we went to some form of night club, and in some of them you paid a small fee to dance with a Chinese girl. I remember on one

occasion having moored up the motor boat I climbed down the boom, got a sampan and went ashore to some night haunt or other. To my horror whom did I see but the Gunnery Officer, but he merely said "Good evening". Alas, in the morning I was sent for and my leave was stopped for a week. Colours in the morning was a pretty exhausting affair, as not only did the Royal Marine Band play "God Save the King" but also all the other national anthems of all the foreign warships present. Thus we were at the salute for quite a long time and were pretty worn out by the time the "Carry on" was sounded.

After leaving Shanghai we went up the Yangtse to Nanking where we stayed for a few days. Three of us went shooting which meant we had to grease our feet to make sure we did not get one of the many terrible diseases. I cannot now remember how many snipe we shot when our party was rudely interrupted by three Chinese who said we had shot one of their friends. Having looked at the body it was more than clear that he had been dead for several days. The story of our visit to China would not be complete if I did not mention Weihaiwei. This was further up north from the Yangtse and not too far from the peninsula jutting out eastwards from the area of Shantung. It was a small island and was well fitted out with games facilities. There was a club for the officers and one for the troops as well. There was a small hotel, a golf course and many other countryside attractions. It was the one place where we were allowed to eat strawberries as they did not use human manure here. We loved it. One day when we were weighing anchor we found that we had picked up the anchor lost many years previously. I always remember leaving my Rolex watch to be repaired when we were despatched at once to the Mediterranean for the Abyssinian War. A year later when back at Weihaiwei I went to collect it and there it was waiting for me. We moved westwards at high speed refuelling at various places; then up through the Suez Canal, and finally to rest at Alexandria which had incidentally only one entrance. We loved Alex as it was not too expensive, we were members of the two clubs and there were good games facilities, furthermore meals were not too expensive. We exercised from time to time but inevitably spent a lot of time in harbour. Finally we were released and back we went to China.

As the end of our two years and four months approached we had to take the dreaded Seamanship examination. We were examined by a Board who had nothing to do with our ship and there were many subjects. In due course it was over at last. Only two First Class Certificates were gained, one by Ronald David and one by myself. Before this a few of us had applied to travel back home by the Trans-Siberian Railway. The Commander-in-Chief referred this

to the Admiralty who said this would be inopportune so we all went back in H.M.S.Kent which was very similar to the Berwick.

We arrived safely in the United Kingdom and all went on leave. Meanwhile we got our uniforms changed and a gorgeous gold ring put on our sleeves. The courses consisted of about six months at the Royal Naval College at Greenwich. Here one did instruction in such things as ship construction, English, Naval History, Physics and, of course, the Junior Officers' War Course. This course was really excellent as it taught us to think. Not only did we have some first class lectures about the world situation but we also had a lot of problems to solve. Some were of the kind when after the question had been asked you had to give your views in two minutes, later explaining the reasons for your decision. Others were far more complicated than that and required much thought and study. It was really an introduction to a"baby" Staff Course. On completion of our time at Greenwich we all moved down to Portsmouth where we did courses in gunnery, navigation, signals, physical training, torpedo and anti-submarine warfare and a short divisional course. After each course there was of course the dreaded examination. These exams, and how we did, decided how long we would remain as a Sub-lieutenant before being promoted to Lieutenant. I got a First Class in Seamanship and Gunnery and Second Classes in all the other subjects. Finally we completed the courses and I was appointed to H.M.S. Wellington. I should perhaps just mention that many of us had a car of sorts. The wealthy subs had super cars, the less wealthy had old crocks. I had a dilapidated M.G. It was a two-seater with a dicky. It was red and silverine. I sold it to another sub called Douglas Woolf and I gathered that shortly after the purchase it blew up. I got a note saying "You will never ever sell me another car"... and I never did.

I had now finished my basic training and, apart from getting my Watchkeeping Certificate, was a fully qualified junior officer. In all it had taken me not much less than five years to reach this stage. Apart from the professional side it gave me a first class lead into the field of leadership - a quality so important to all officers.

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CHAPTER II

NEW ZEALAND AND THE PACIFIC

When I was busy doing courses at Portsmouth in 1936 I wrote to Admiral Henderson, who was now Second Sea Lord, asking him whether there would be any chance of my going East again once I had finished my courses. He replied that he would see what he could do. Thus after completing my courses, with a First Class in Gunnery and Second Class Passes in the others, I was appointed to H.M.S.Wellington, a Royal Navy sloop stationed in New Zealand. I was instructed to take passage in the one class liner Matororoa. I arrived on board and I suppose to tell the truth I was a little bit lonely. Finally we sailed away bound for Panama and onwards to New Zealand. The ship tended to be rather full of New Zealanders all of whom seemed very friendly so it was not very long before I found my feet. There was one very nice pair called Vogel who I believe heralded from the Wellington area. When we arrived at Panama they very kindly gave a super supper party ashore to which I was invited.

Though I had been through the Suez Canal several times, this was my first time through the Panama Canal. Whereas the Suez Canal had a drop in levels of only a few feet, here the drop was substantial and there was a large number of locks to pass through and the forests sometimes came right down to the banks on both sides. It was a fascinating trip and one I shall always remember. One day I gathered there was to be a Fancy Dress dance and my great problem was to decide what on earth I was to wear. The barber said to me "Why don't you go as Adolf Hitler ?". This was before the Second World War, concentration camps and torture. I decided to go as he suggested and for a small sum he made me up. All I did on the great day was to march around, holding my right arm at an angle, and saying "Heil Hitler". Don't laugh please but I won the first prize! One of the people I remember is Miss Ricketts who was much older than I was but very kind indeed. She in fact had several bottles of booze delivered to my cabin and it took me quite a time to discover who the very kind donor was.

On New Year's Eve 1937 we arrived at Auckland and I was met by the man I was relieving, Lieutenant Vincent-Jones, a large man who was, I felt, very happy to think he was on his way home. He had very kindly arranged a girl partner for the New Year's Eve "do" but this was not really my evening although I seem to have survived. The Wellington was only about a thousand

tons with a total complement of ninety-nine. The officers consisted of the Captain, Commander Loriston-Clarke; the First Lieutenant, Lieutenant Commander Harry Mellor; Lieutenant Nigel Willmott, the Navigator and also borne for Supply Duties; myself, a very young and pink Sub-Lieutenant; my great friend, Chief, a commissioned engineer, Bertie Hodge; the Gunner, Mr.Mott and of course a doctor, Surgeon Lieutenant Vaughan-Jones.

Auckland, which is situated in the north east of North Island, is the largest city in New Zealand and, being in the north of the country, does get pretty hot in the summer, which incidentally is our winter. The Naval Depot was across the water in a place called Devonport where the depot ship lay. She was an old hulk called the Philomel but some years later she was scrapped and a decent shore barracks was built in her place. One normally crossed from the Devonport area to Auckland by ferry some of which carried cars, lorries and other vehicles. While I was out there there was a terrible accident with one of the car ferries which resulted in several cars going over the front edge causing a number of deaths. On our side of the water there were some quite good games facilities. One must remember that in those days the New Zealand navy was tiny. The New Zealanders partially manned only two cruisers and a sweeper and they had a small shore based group. The officers were trained largely by the Royal Navy. Those who had wives usually found accommodation at Takapuna which was not more than a few miles out of Devonport. It is perhaps interesting to note that the British Isles, New Zealand and Japan are all more or less the same size. Today, give or take a small error, the population of the British Isles is in the region of fifty-five million, that of Japan is well over a hundred million while that of New Zealand is really small, being only about three million. Both the British Isles and Japan have to trade to live while New Zealand may need trade but can largely look after herself without much trouble.

I am often asked what the country was like around Auckland. To tell the truth I never travelled very far out of the general area, but as soon as you got away from the city and all its buildings you ran into farming country rather like our own in England. Though it is easy to ask what on earth did you do when at Auckland, the fact is that we were not there very much as we were moving round the coasts training.

One of the first things I discovered was that though the Wellington was stationed in New Zealand this was only part of her duties. She was used for

five months of each year training the New Zealand Naval Volunteer Reserve, followed by two cruises in the Pacific taking round the High Commissioner for Western Pacific, first to the eastern islands then back to Suva and Fiji before doing the western group. Finally we had two months refitting in Australia. One of our first tasks was to go up to Canton Island in the Phoenix Group in order to plant many thousand coconut trees, and I went ashore to the Agricultural Department in Suva to ask how we should do this. There were virtually no trees on Canton Island at all, yet Hull Island, only a hundred miles away, was covered with trees and had as a result quite a substantial rainfall. The Agricultural Department had said that there was nothing easier than to scoop a hole in the ground and put in a coconut seed. What they did not tell me was that although the rainfall in Suva was substantial, in Canton Island it was almost nil. We planted them as I had been told. Believe it or not the result was disastrous as only about five ever emerged.

Most of the Polynesian groups of islands were similar, except that some had a lot of trees, while a few such as Canton Island had almost none. They were all coral islands and there was in almost every case an entrance into the lagoon. Sometimes it was possible to sail through the entrance and anchor inside. Sometimes the water through the entrance was too shallow for entering in which case it was necessary to anchor outside. Care had to be taken, as coral at the bottom of the sea in these areas was not good holding ground, and this meant keeping steam at fairly short notice. Apart from fishing there was swimming, but there were of course sharks and barracuda which to the swimmer were almost as dangerous as sharks. Ashore there were turtles. Mrs. Turtle would go round scraping holes in the sand and sitting in each hole. She would then cover the hole with sand. In fact she only laid her eggs, a large number, in one hole all the others being a blind. The eggs would remain cooking for some time by being, I suppose, baked in the sun. Eventually the eggs would break and the baby turtles would emerge. They then had the dangerous job of getting down to the sea. During this perilous journey they were attacked by birds and other turtle-eating creatures. Once they were in the sea they were safer except for attacks by barracuda. The casualty rate is substantial.

One of the most interesting things is that trees bring rain. An island with almost no trees will get almost no rain, on the other hand an island like Hull which is well wooded seems to benefit substantially from rain, which is so important to those who live on a coral island. In almost all these islands the coconut tree is of great importance as it is the staple diet.

The trees are basically owned by families who look after them most carefully and to steal another man's coconuts is a crime of some importance. The most attractive thing about the Polynesian Islands was that all the natives appeared to be so happy. There were a few occasions when some of the natives were, in a manner of speaking, sent to jail, and then they wore odd skirty things with broad arrows on them. In some islands there was an Administrator who offered the services of some "convicts" to do such things as washing the ship's side, which they all seemed to enjoy.

In those days the object was to occupy as many of these little islands as possible which meant having one official on each island more or less for ever. We used to erect a board stating that this island belonged to His Britannic Majesty. However these notices were useless unless the islands were occupied as well. What we were doing was laying a stake for future air bases. I remember on one occasion our representative on Canton Island complained of toothache and a decision had to be taken whether to allow our doctor to remove the tooth or not. After a considerable amount of discussion it was agreed that he should remove the offending tooth. This he did, or thought he did. Imagine the horror when it was discovered that he had removed the wrong tooth.

When we went on these cruises we embarked His Excellency the High Commissioner of the Western Pacific, Sir Harry Luke, his ADC, a very nice young man called Joss Nicholls, and sometimes the Secretary, Mr.Vaskess. In many of the islands the High Commissioner would land in plain clothes but in some of the larger and, I suppose, more important islands he would land in full dress uniform, cocked hat and all, with all the ceremony to which he was entitled.

Usually there was some sort of leave for the ship's company at the various island stops. Frequently there was a dancing display in the local hut known as the "miniapi". If, when watching these dances, a native girl came and danced in front of you, you were then expected to dance to her to the best of your ability in thanks to her. Frequently various chiefs and high-ups would be invited on board and sometimes a few would be allowed to fire the saluting gun. It was usual to approach the islands not too early in the morning with many look-outs in position, thus enabling us to have as good a chance of spotting shoal water as possible. When the Wellington was able to enter into the lagoon it was wise to send in one of the motor boats first, sounding all the way. One of the great occupations for the ship's company was fishing. It was extremely easy to catch fish, as sometimes all you needed to do was to

put a nice clean hook into the water and, before you could say "Jack Robinson" you had hooked a fish. Tropical fish straight out of the sea were delicious; they did, however, deteriorate from the taste point of view very quickly. One of the major catches would be sharks. You could only catch a shark if you had a reasonable hunk of raw meat as bait and it depended on the butcher how much he would spare. If you did hook a shark it was a question of "Clear Lower Deck" to get the beast out of the water. Once above the water the usual procedure was to shoot it with a .303 bullet.

Many of the smaller islands would be occupied only by natives, but in each group there would be an administrator who would get around his islands fairly frequently.

A typical cruise would be as follows:

Arrive	Place	Depart
	Sydney	Friday 10th June
Saturday 18th June	Suva	Monday 20th June +
----------Cross Date Line----------		
Friday 24th June	Phoenix Group	Saturday 25th June
Wednesday 29th June	Nieu	Saturday 9th July
----------Cross Date Line----------		
Monday 18th July	Suva & Fiji Group	Saturday 30th July *
Tuesday 4th August	Ocean Island	Monday 8th August
Tuesday 9th August	Gilbert Isles	Monday 22nd August
Tuesday 23rd August	Ellice Isles	Tuesday 30th August
Wednesday 31st August	Rotumah	Friday 2nd September

\+ Embark His Excellency the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific

* Disembark His Excellency the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific

What the High Commissioner did was to inspect the island and meet the various chiefs, and at certain islands he would also meet the white Administrator. Our doctor would, as far as possible, treat the sick and render a report on the medical state of the island. Leave, which really meant bathing and picnic parties, was allowed, as well of course as games. In most of the islands we visited there would be football and frequently cricket teams, and the Wellington was expected to provide her own teams. It always amazed me how the natives would play a very good game of football in

bare feet. A kick from a bare-footed native was really not very funny.

To start with I was a bit frightened of the First Lieutenant, Harry Mellor, but as time passed I got to like him very much indeed. He was undoubtedly a very good Number One and ran the ship extremely well. From him I learnt a great deal. Not only did I learn the actual professional side of my duties but also how to lead, a quality which I have found to be a real asset in my naval life. Harry was good at games, particularly cricket and hockey, he was also a born actor and was always the life and soul of every Concert Party we ever did. Not only was he good at it but I too was made to perform, which I did at first rather incompetently, but later I got better and better, provided I did not forget my words.

The islanders were really divided into three groups. Those who came from the islands lying to the east of Australia who were a happy and cheerful lot, brought up largely on coconuts and fish, and were as far as I gathered never cannibals. It was those from Polynesia who eventually moved south to form the Maoris in New Zealand. Then there were the Melanesians who came from the islands more to the north of Australia. They were darker than the Polynesians and had frizzy hair. These were purported to have been cannibals. In our visits it was not possible to know whether some were cannibals or not. Certainly some natives and possibly the odd white did disappear altogether. Finally there were the Micronesians who came from the islands to the north and west of Australia. They were a smaller race, darker and almost certainly cannibals in their time.

The High Commissioner Western Pacific, who for most of my time was Sir Harry Luke, was also the Governor of Fiji. He was really a nice man who was blessed with a great sense of humour. He also, so I gathered, rather liked his food. In those days of piping peace a lot used to go on in the wardroom at nights and particularly so at sea. In those good old days Bertie Hodge, a great friend of mine, who was the Chief Engineer of the ship, was a great hula-hula dancer. Complete with grass skirt and bare bosom he would appear from time to time, a record would be put on and Chiefy used to do the most superb grass-skirt dance. Years later I insisted in ships under my command that there was to be no drinking at sea, but in those days the situation was a bit different. We had some really rowdy and, dare I say, lovely parties in the mess at sea. They were invariably run by Harry Mellor. One of the terrible snags was when we heard that His Excellency wished to come down to take part

in these misdemeanours. Sooner or later we knew this would happen and indeed it did. A party was going well when suddenly the door opened and in walked Sir Harry. After plying him with drink the party did, after a fashion, get under way again and we hoped that he had enjoyed it. Whether he approved or not we never actually heard. Often we would pick up a Colonial Administrator for a trip to another island or possibly back to Fiji. Inevitably these young chaps who had been, if anything, lonely in their islands would be tempted to have the extra duty free drink. I can remember when we had an unexpected visit from Sir Harry who was evidently far from amused. Rather a narrow and silly view I thought. Young men who have been separated from the outside world, when taking passage in an H.M.ship with duty free drink, are more than likely to have an extra one occasionally.

When one is visiting south sea island after south sea island it is difficult to describe every visit as each one has a similarity with the others. The first thing we did was to arrange to arrive at each island not too early so that good look-outs could report shoal or shallow water. Many of the charts we were using had not been checked for many years, and of course coral is alive and growing so constant checks had to be made. There were one or two occasions when we ourselves carried out what one might describe as a quick sketch survey. On arrival at the island we usually anchored and then streams of boats arrived. Where there was a white Administrator he would invariably be the first to board and pay his respects to the High Commissioner. One very interesting thing to see on many of the islands was the effect that Roman Catholic missionaries had had on the islanders. I am a member of the Church of England and am sometimes a little bit suspicious of the Roman Church. Not so in these islands. Many missionaries had built churches and schools and were carrying out a very active and good programme. They were keen to show us everything and I personally was highly impressed with what I saw. They were teaching their religion most ably. The usual food for most islanders was based on coconuts and fish. However, when we visited some of the islands we were offered "millionaire's salad". This meant cutting down the coconut tree and using the centre of the top as a salad. It was quite excellent, but when one realises that once the tree is cut down that is the end of it, perhaps the name "millionaire's salad" has the ring of truth about it.

Some of the islands were much more sophisticated than others. There were two such islands, Ocean and Nairu. Both abounded in phosphate and I can remember that Ocean Island was producing something in the region of half a

million tons a year. The water was very deep and there were enormous buoys to which we secured. If the wind shifted so as to blow us towards the land then we had to slip and get to sea. In order to mine, and that is exactly what the phosphate authorities did, one required in addition to a certain amount of what one might call "slave labour" a fair number of engineers and other technical white personnel. Most of these had wives and children which led firstly to adequate medical facilities including a hospital, and then of course schools for the children. Then shops with food more suitable to the western palate were needed. In fact there was a thriving community which, unfortunately, also required the necessary police and courts. Going to these two islands, Nauru being the biggest, was fun. There was always plenty to do and many visitors, and the people loved having a warship in and were very hospitable. Because of the large amount of phosphate mined each year there was a steady flow of shipping in and out. In those days I do not think it ever crossed my mind that the western world was really taking a lot from these islands and paying very little in return. During the last couple of years (1980-2) a fairly satisfactory action has been brought against the companies concerned and it looks as if considerable compensation has now been paid.

I think some of the more interesting islands were the Solomons, as the natives were far more primitive and warlike than the relatively quiet and peaceful Polynesians. When we arrived off a Solomon island great warlike canoes would come out to meet us with the natives or Melanesians all chanting together. Many of these islands were high and wooded and it was thought that some cannibalism went on in these higher plains. Many of the men had what I would call a short wooden peg through the piece of flesh joining the two nostrils and several of them had a safety pin through the lobe of an ear. Much of the dancing was a more pugilistic form of that which we had seen elsewhere. Some of what I would term totem poles depicted the male organs and I remember one, presumably very old, head mask. It was made of clay and grass and was worn by witch doctors in the old ceremonial dances. Furthermore these were the first islands where we had actually heard of witch doctors, and I think it was for this reason that the missionaries made very little progress. I remember a Mrs.Kooper, wife of a German, who, we understood, had lived in this area for over forty years. Though I never thought of it at the time, I now wonder whether the German had not been planted many years earlier. The extraordinary thing about these visits was that none of us had appreciated that this was a likely area for war in a few years' time. I do however remember that no British ships were ever allowed to visit the Marshall and

Caroline Islands which were occupied by the Japanese. The High Commissioner and, strangely enough, the Gunner were carried ashore in a native canoe and put gently down. At one island there was what was termed a "tame" shark kept in a pool. The shark to my way of thinking did not look too friendly. On a number of visits we were often given a present of a whole cooked pig. As far as I can recall we never actually ate these as they did not on close examination look all that attractive.

When we visited Roturmah Island there was a dance planned by the missionaries. Painted on the ground was the outline of a Union Jack and the boys and girls, all clad in skirts and, I dare say, white blouses, would dance along the lines marking out the flag. This was I think a regular "do" as we had the same dance on our second visit. In the afternoon we had loads of children on board escorted by a missionary.

Though we did two cruises of about five months in length and we met many administrators I can only remember a few. There was a very nice man at Ocean Island called Arthur Grimble who wrote a lovely book called "A Pattern of Islands" which told the story of his life in the South Pacific. It covered a great deal of the beliefs and customs of the various islanders. It is a book well worth reading and I was very pleased to hear many years later that the author had been knighted. Another great man we met was called Garvey. He was not only very nice but also highly intelligent. Many years later he became the High Commissioner of the Western Pacific and I should imagine a very good and human one too. Looking back, I often feel how lucky I was to serve in the Wellington as I got an idea of just what the Colonial Service did, not only in these islands for the natives, but when one remembers that money was not exactly plentiful I feel that great credit is due to the many administrators who were responsible for doing so much with so little.

One may well ask what did a sub-lieutenant do in a sloop. Well I had the forecastle division and thus was the Cable Officer. I can remember once when we had to moor - that is with two anchors down - which, as far as the Navy was concerned, meant inserting a swivel so that as the ship swung round the swivel took the turn out of the cable. There is nothing really difficult about putting in a swivel but one must think carefully when doing it. It means inserting the swivel into the weather cable and then bringing the inner end of the lee cable round into the weather hawse pipe, securing it to the inner end and then hauling the whole cable and swivel back through the lee hawse pipe

and connecting it. We had in those days a superb chap called Able Seaman Vickery and he was really my right hand man. Having got the swivel partially in he then said "Just knock off that skip, sir, and everything will be fine". Luckily enough I hesitated and then said "No, Vickery, if we do that we shall lose not only the swivel but both anchors and cables too". I was right and thank God so; had I made this error I do not think I would have been at all popular.

I was also the Signal Officer which did not in fact mean very much. I looked after all the confidential and signal publications which were kept locked up in safes in the captain's cabin. This was not really very onerous work except that it did involve all the cyphers and codes. You can laugh, if you must, because one day I thought I had locked up the books safely. Imagine my consternation when I was sent for by the captain who pointed out that I had left one chest unlocked. I do not believe that he ever forgave me.

I enjoyed our visits to the islands very much. In some of the larger ones we used to put on a Concert Party. Here Harry Mellor was basically the life and soul of it. I used to do quite a funny piece entitled "Cooking the Dinner". The doctor, strange to say, used to do a couple of violin solos. There was plenty of singing and jokes and generally these shows went down well.

Another job I had to do was the catering for the Wardroom food. This was not too difficult except that as soon as the High Commissioner came on board my difficulties increased. With the help of his ADC, Joss Nicholls, I seemed to get on fairly well.

Though we spent five months each year cruising round the Pacific Islands we also spent a similar period training the New Zealand Volunteer Naval Reserve. This meant sailing right round New Zealand and giving instruction to the various units. New Zealand is a great place because there is little that you cannot do there. You can play any game you like, sail, ski, climb, shoot and goodness knows what. Most people who have met New Zealanders in England say how nice they all are. This is true, although in New Zealand there is a tendency for them to look and think locally. They tend to be rather inward-looking people. We in the wardroom used to divide them up into two groups. The ones we liked best did not have such a pronounced accent as many did. Then we had the others who were much more down to earth and usually had a very strong accent, but on balance we liked them all. This reminds me of a story about a British Army

officer who was severely wounded and was in due course picked up by some Australian nurses. As he regained consciousness he asked "Did I come here to die, nurse ?" To which he got the reply "Oh no, you came here yesterday".

I enjoyed my time in New Zealand as we more or less circumnavigated both islands, stopping at dozens of small places, and of course some of the larger ones too. I think one of the most popular was Gisborne. I can remember one of our visits, when the Mayor and Corporation came on board and included in the party was a young girl who could not have been more than fourteen, if that. Drinks were offered and there was a tendency for most of the guests to ask for whisky. The captain then asked this young girl whether she would like an orange or lemon squash. "No thank you, I would prefer whisky please" she said. We enjoyed Gisborne because it was a basically farming area and everyone gave us such a great welcome, and the ship's company were entertained to the full. We loved it. I can well remember too when we went to Christchurch for the Race Week. Two or three of us went to the rather swish club before the races, and I offered the others a drink which in due course arrived. I then asked the waiter whether I could have the account. "Oh no sir, we never take the money here - just sign this chit and it will be forwarded to you". I have never been a racing man but I must record that on my first day at this Race Week I actually won quite a reasonable amount of money. We never went to Dunedin,unfortunately, which is a great Scots stronghold. I have heard that even after such a long time the Scottish accent prevails.

To the South-West of the South Island are the Sounds. Here there are the most glorious fjords with high steep cliffs rising straight upwards. Often there is an attractive waterfall tumbling down the cliff side. Probably the biggest sound is Milford which is a most picturesque place. We had a few days in these sounds and had quite a number of walks. I remember one peak, Mitre Peak by name, which is depicted on a number of bank notes. On one occasion when there was not a great deal of room, we secured our stern to two trees with manilla hawsers having anchored first.

My knowledge of the interior of New Zealand was a bit limited. I did go with Harry Mellor to Rotorua and the first thing we noticed on arrival was the strong smell of rotten eggs. This smell comes from the many hot springs and, though you cannot fail to notice the stink, after a few hours it seems to become absorbed. The hot springs are really rather fun and every so often they spout out a great stream of scalding water and steam. If you chuck a stone

down into one of these geysers it will be thrown up with all the steam a few minutes later. We liked Rotorua very much. It has a superb golf course and the hotel in which we stayed was really good. Trout fishing abounds too. I also went and stayed with my distant cousins, the Seavills. Many years ago my Father's first cousin, Walter Seavill, emigrated to New Zealand and had, I think, five children. They lived at Ngarawahia, not too far from Hamilton. Here I stayed firstly with Geoff, the younger of the two farmers, and secondly with Jim, the elder. I had to work for my keep and this was, when I arrived, mostly sheep dipping. On Sundays it was a day of rest and we were taken over to meet some other Seavill relations and to watch polo. The country was rather typical of West Sussex and it was clear that most of the farmers we met were pretty flat out. Before I ever went to New Zealand, Walter's widow and daughter, Ethel - who preferred to be called Judy - came to see us and we had liked them both. The third son, Frank, also came over to England to join the Royal Air Force. He married Helen and they had one son before he was killed in the Second World War.

Eventually all good things come to an end and I was relieved in Fiji, though my relief would not join the ship until she returned to Auckland. I had to wait the best part of a week before embarking on a liner bound for Vancouver. My final parting was when I gave the Wardroom supper at the Grand Pacific Hotel. It sounded very grand but in fact it was not all that grand and neither was the bill. I was put up in the Government House for about six days which was really heaven. I had Joss Nicholls as a friend, the meals were excellent and above all there was really nothing to do. I saw more of the country round Suva than I had ever seen before. I was evidently on good terms with Sir Harry Luke, who used to call me "sub" even though now I was a lieutenant.

Finally the great liner arrived and I embarked as a first class passenger, all paid for by the Admiralty. On my way up to Vancouver I met many Canadians and got some really excellent advice on how to cross Canada by train in order to see all I could. I was told that I must have at least a day in Vancouver, then I must go through the Rockies by day. This meant that I must stay one night at Sikhamoos which is about half way through. I was also told to have at least a day, or possibly two, at Banff and advised to sleep as we crossed the central part of Canada. A day in Quebec was essential and then, of course, a day in Montreal, where I was to embark in a liner for the final part of the journey. Already many were talking of the possibility of war with Germany and it seemed fairly certain that, unless there was a change of heart, war was inevitable. I asked a couple of Canadians how I would fix breaking my journey

at the many places suggested. All I had to do was to go to the booking officer in Vancouver and they would arrange it all. How did I book a bed at Sikhamoos, Banff and Quebec ? Here again all I had to do was to go to the Information Desk at the station and they would fix everything. I was also told that it would be sensible to have a seat booked in what they termed the Observation Car. For quite a small sum this could be arranged through the Booking Office. It usually takes three and a half days to cross Canada by train and I had nine, so there was oodles of time available.

What was the trip like ? It was in fact great, and so comfortable. The Rockies were simply wonderful and one could not help looking at them for most of the time. I sat in the Observation Car gazing at the superb views and sights. I got out at Sikhamoos for the night, going on next day. I quite enjoyed Banff but it was, to tell you the truth, a bit touristy. The middle of Canada was one blaze of wheat. Quebec was fun, though to get the best out of it it is an advantage to speak French well. Finally I arrived at Montreal and embarked in the Duchess of York for the final crossing. The ship was very empty as war seemed to be just around the corner. Half way across the Atlantic war was declared. We spent much of our time sticking paper on the portholes.

In the space of two years I had travelled out to New Zealand by liner, through the Panama Canal arriving on New Year's Eve. I had spent many months both in New Zealand and in the South Pacific Islands with two reasonable periods in Australia. I left the ship in Fiji and travelled in extreme comfort all the way home. How lucky I had been.

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CHAPTER III

W A R

I arrived back at Liverpool a few days after the start of the war and had to make my way down south. I finally reached London in the evening and caught a train for Hartfield. It was then quite dark and, as far as I can remember, there were only shaded lights in the carriages and all the blinds were down. When the train stopped at a station you could hardly see where you were. In due course I arrived at Hartfield to be met by my parents whom I had not seen for, I suppose, rising two years.

The Admiralty rang me and said that I was due my foreign service leave and would not be required for at least six or seven weeks. One never knows how these great organisations work because it was, I think, only a week later that I received an appointment to join H.M.S.Kashmir which was building at Woolston, near Southampton. I and two others were put up at a rather nice pub a few miles out. This pub was well known in naval circles as it was, in those days, first class for suppers which consisted of a choice of turkey, chicken, ham, tongue, guinea fowl and Heaven knows what. The owners were very nice and we soon learnt that provided we helped clear up after the bar had closed, we would be rewarded with a superb free supper. It was here that I learnt just how hard publicans work. They were open seven days a week and, after hours, had to clean up, get up new stock, order more stock, decide what food to give and indeed cook it. One of the snags was that, if the landlord got someone in so that he and his wife could have a holiday, it was not a cheap operation. Furthermore this hired man might do him down and lose him customers, which of course was not a good thing at all. We used to go into the dockyard by bus and it was not very long before Commissioning Day came. My captain was a man called "Hetty" King who was, I gathered, an expert on gunnery, particularly on the experimental side. The first lieutenant was Jack Scatchard and there were many others. The Captain (D) was no less a man than Captain Louis Mountbatten who was in H.M.S.Kelly. I understood that he was at first appointed to H.M.S. Jervis and while she was building he had quite major changes made to his cabin, bridge and so on. Strange as it may seem he was reappointed to Kelly which was so advanced that it was too late to make any alterations. During my service career I served under Mountbatten three times and I got to like and respect him very much. He was, needless to say, a very able man. A man who had married an extremely wealthy wife, he was of royal blood and used all his assets to full advantage.

The story goes that, when he was a Rear Admiral, he asked the Admiralty if arrangements could be made for the Queen to visit his squadron at Portland. In answer to his request he was told that the Navy had had its quota of Royal Visits that year, and that he must make further application the following year. Many would have accepted this, but not Mountbatten who then wrote a letter to the Queen in the following sense -

"Dear Elizabeth,

I am writing to ask you if you could find time to come down to my Flagship for lunch when there would, of course, be an opportunity to look at the squadron."

So the Navy had an extra Royal Visit that year.

He had a great knack of remembering names and on top of this he was always highly briefed. Even in those very early days, when he came to Kashmir he seemed to know all the officers by name. There is also the story when Mountbatten, as a Rear Admiral, was with his squadron at Malta when he was invited to go to sea in one of America's largest carriers. Imagine his wrath when he came on deck to find that the carrier had sailed. All Hell was let loose on the Flag Lieutenant,who was instructed to go on board the carrier the moment it arrived back and apologise personally to the American Admiral. When the Flag Lieutenant made the apology all the American Admiral replied was "No worry at all, we will go to sea again tomorrow especially for Admiral Mountbatten". Needless to say, Mountbatten was delighted.

Mountbatten had specialised in communications, and in his time wrote an excellent book on wireless which held its high place for a very long time. He also became interested in playing polo, and had a wooden horse made at Broadlands and got little boys to throw tennis balls at him. He soon became good at the game. He then wrote a book on how to play polo which was an astounding success.

Kashmir was one of the destroyers forming the 5th Destroyer Flotilla which had as its motto "Keep on", which I always rather liked. We had an unusual gadget termed the "Mountbatten Station Keeping Gear". Theoretically this was a sound device as it was linked to the revolutions ordered, and if, for instance, you were say 150 yards astern of station (Heaven forbid), all you had to do was to turn up the machine to plus 150 yards; this meant that the engine room then opened the manoeuvring valves to give this correction. It could be a slow, medium or fast operation. In fact I never liked it much,

and the fact that it did eventually die a natural death indicates that my views, on this occasion,were shared by others.

I was the navigator of this ship, and as such had to ensure that the ship steered the most sensible course and that the charts were kept up to date. It also meant that I had to take morning and evening sights with a sextant. To tell the truth I was always a bit nervous, at any rate to start with, but in due course I became used to it and, I dare to say, better at it.

The Captain, who had been a highly qualified gunnery expert, was not good at ship handling. Thus we had a number of somewhat alarming manoeuvres, but as time marched on so he became better and better. One of the more interesting things that happened in this ship was that while we were on patrol somewhere to the North we made a contact. The Torpedo and Anti-Submarine Officer said that he thought it was a submarine, and the Captain decided to drop one charge. Much to our amazement up came a U-boat. Believe this or not the cruising watch gun was, to my horror, sponging out at this moment. However, acting with great alacrity, they managed to fire a shell in approximately the right direction, and we captured the whole crew of U 35. In those days the news of concentration camps, torture and all the other horrors was still "hush hush", Our First Lieutenant said to the Captain of the U boat that, although he had been an enforced visitor, he might like to sign the Visitors' Book. In the remarks column he wrote "Wish you all the best of luck except against German U Boats"!

Some naval officers have a silver napkin ring on which they have engraved the names of all the ships in which they have served. Just before I left to join H.M.S.Wellington my Father gave me a plain silver napkin ring, and from time to time I had it engraved. When I joined Kashmir the ring went with me. It so happened that, when manoeuvring at night, the destroyer astern of us hit us on the starboard quarter and everything was washed out of my cabin and out of the wardroom. We managed to get into Lerwick in the Shetlands for some temporary repairs. Imagine my surprise and delight to find that the only thing left in the wardroom was my ring, which had caught up against an angle bar on the deck and had become tightly jammed; my ring was landed after that and I am happy to say I have it to this day.

My time spent in Kashmir was very valuable to me. Although we were now at war and very busy, the frustrations and risks of war had hardly sunk in.

In fact we all, I dread to say, took life too easily. Apart from this, I had suddenly become responsible for the navigation of the ship and had to deal with the Q Message organisation by which the promulgation of war hazards such as mines, swept channels and so forth were made. This was something I do not remember having been taught. I recall on one occasion, returning from way out in the Atlantic when I was Officer of the Watch, suddenly seeing land ahead. Being the navigator I knew we were miles from Scapa Flow, and after thinking for a few minutes I called the Captain. He came up and looked ahead through his binoculars. He then said "You're quite right, George; it looks rather close doesn't it ?" He decided to stop engines and we then looked at the chart. I was confident that we were at least twenty miles from Scapa and said so. This was of course before the days of radar, but the echo-sounder showed us to be in deep water. It is laughable now, for we were at least that distance from Scapa and it was only a trick of the light that had given us a few anxious moments.

I did not stay very long in Kashmir as I was taken out and sent to one of the Free French ships, Chaser 41. This was a small light wooden coastal craft with a crew of about twenty. Strange things happen in war and even in the Navy. Apart from myself as Captain, I had one other officer, a very nice French Canadian who was, I suppose, the First Lieutenant. Almost incredibly he could hardly speak a word of English but he did manage to learn very quickly. I also had three Free French ratings on board, none of whom could speak much English. They had all been given, for the time being, straightforward English names. Chaser 41 was my first command and although only a tiny little craft I was very proud. She was a diesel driven craft and you could only get about eight movements of the engines, that is to say, ahead or astern about four times before the starting air ran out. You then had to wait until the air compressor had produced sufficient air to enable you to do another eight movements of the engines. This was not really a very important matter once you knew the craft, but to start with it was just a little alarming. I had quite a nice small cabin - I hesitate to say fitted with a double bunk - but certainly larger than a single one. There were two revolvers lying about and quite a lot of wine. Shortly after a so-called "commissioning" we were all moved over to the Submarine Headquarters at Blockhouse where we came under the Captain of that Establishment. In these ships we had, of course, French machine guns but they were somewhat similar to our own. I do however remember one of the Chasers, while lying alongside an inner jetty, trying to discover just how these machine guns work - and he did. Suddenly with a burst of fire the gun went off

and some of the bullets hit the outer windows of the Captain's office. He was not amused.

I was only in this ship a short time before I was removed and sent with many other officers and men to Halifax to collect one of the lease-lend American destroyers. Before we leave Chaser 41 entirely, I must recall how this craft was on patrol in the Channel when she was attacked, perhaps by E Boats, and was lost with all hands. A sad story indeed and, but for the grace of God, I might well have gone down in her. So in due course we embarked in a great liner and made our way to Halifax. On our way across the Atlantic we were busy drawing up plans for manning these ships. This meant getting out what is termed a "Watch and Quarter Bill", and allocating duties to the Ship's Company. My Captain was an RNR Officer by the name of Lieutenant Commander Stannard who had won a VC when captain of the trawler Arab which was involved in the battle of Narvik. I had been a sub-lieutenant and a lieutenant in Wellington, and a lieutenant in Kashmir and captain of the French Chaser, but I had never been a first licutenant. In the trooper I met a nice man called Brown, nicknamed "Bruno"Brown. He had already been a First Lieutenant and was able to give me some excellent advice. We arrived at Halifax and I learnt that we were to take over USS McCalla. The routine was that we met our American opposite numbers and then went to sea with them. It was a little odd for us to hear such wheel orders as "Left 15, Centre, Right 20". The McCalla was clearly old, and I could not help wondering just how good she was going to be. Soon after this we took over from our American friends and went to sea with a small US nucleus. It did not take long to master the main methods of operation, though some doubts were expressed by the Chief (Engineer). After a few days we were ready to sail.

Most of us thought that we ought at least to have a look at Halifax and I remember that I went with one or two others to what I suppose you would call a "swish" restaurant. As we crossed the threshold the door swung open automatically. In a large tank were a fair number of lobsters swimming about. I soon discovered that one could choose one of these lobsters, after which it would be cooked for you. There is a little saying that goes like this "You can love a little owl but not a roasted fowl". Despite this saying I think I must admit that I do "love" lobster. We all chose lobsters and off they went to be cooked. It took at least an hour and so inevitably we all had, dare I say, a number of drinks which I can assure you did not spoil the taste of our chosen main dish.

Finally we sailed away bound for St.John's,Newfoundland. My Captain always seemed to wear plain clothes whichis, to say the least of it, a bit unusual in the Royal Navy. One day on our way to Newfoundland I reported to him that Defaulters and Requestmen were ready. He thanked me and started to come down to take these in plain clothes. I said "I am sorry, sir, but you cannot possibly take defaulters and requestmen in plain clothes". "Why not ? I always did in the Arab." I explained that in the Royal Navy this was simply not permitted, and that if he insisted I would immediately fall the men out. He did accept this to some extent and put on a monkey jacket and cap. We arrived at St.John's and much enjoyed our stay. I was given a lovely turkey. To complete the story, it did not look too good to me when we got back to England so I put it in the dust bin. The Chief Cook came to me and said there was in fact nothing wrong with it at all. All it needed was a decent wash. So I retrieved the turkey and it was washed and eaten at home to everyone's delight. On our passage across the Atlantic we had a terrible shortage of water, and finally the Captain and Chief decided to turn one boiler into a distillery. This did in fact produce fresh water but it more or less wrecked the boiler. We finally arrived at Belfast on Saturday with a heavy list and, for reasons which defeated me, nothing could evidently be done until Monday. Existing in a ship with a substantial list is, to say the least of it, decidedly uncomfortable. At last we arrived at Devonport and a refit was started. Shortly after the start of the refit I was relieved and appointed to H.M.S.Ashanti, a Tribal Class destroyer which was at Newcastle-on-Tyne being repaired after an accident.

I joined Ashanti, if you can call it joining, as I had to go into digs as the ship was uninhabitable. I soon discovered that there were some much nicer digs not far away and as soon as a vacancy occurred I moved. There is not a great deal to tell about my time in Ashanti except for two things. I went by service car right across Yorkshire and through the Lake District, or at least part of it, to Birkenhead where our main guns were being completely overhauled. Apart from the thrill of seeing how an efficient Gun Mounting yard was undertaking this work I thoroughly enjoyed the trip and the country. The other, perhaps less interesting, was that in my new digs I became friendly with the Chief Engineer of another destroyer and he and I had many a run ashore. On one occasion we arrived in Edinburgh, parked the car up a side street and, despite the fact that we had no pyjamas or anything like that, we persuaded one large hotel to give us a double room. In the morning,when we were feeling a little the worse for wear, all our efforts to find the car failed. In the end, by sheer luck, I did finally discover it, so all was well again.

I was only standing by the Ashanti for a short time when I was rung up by the Admiralty and told to join H.M.S.Nestor at Scapa Flow forthwith. I packed my kit and got a train going to Thurso. After a long and tedious journey I eventually arrived and got a boat to Scapa Flow. By this time I had discovered that the Nestor was in fact an Australian destroyer. When I arrived on board I was met by a fair haired Lieutenant. I asked if I could see the Captain and he replied that unfortunately the Captain was under close arrest in H.M.S.Dunluce Castle. I then asked to see the First Lieutenant, to which he replied that he also was under close arrest. I then asked what on earth was going on in this ship. He then explained that both the Captain and First Lieutenant were in the habit of drinking to excess until finally, when ordered to sea, the Ship's Company refused to move. In other words there had been a kind of mutiny. A few hours later the new captain arrived, his name was Rosenthal and a very nice man he was.

I thought at first that the Admiralty ought to have warned me of the mutiny but, on reflection, I decided that it was better for me to take over as First Lieutenant of the ship as I found her. What I gathered had occurred was that both the First Lieutenant and the Captain were heavy drinkers,and possibly egged on by the First Lieutenant, drinking set in in a big way. It appeared that lunch was seldom before about 4 p.m. or even later. The evening meal could go on until all hours. The story goes that when the Captain finally decided he must go to bed he would ascend the ladder from the wardroom and go aft towards his own flat. Next to his day cabin was a double cabin shared by the two sub-lieutenants. He would draw back their curtain and haul them into his cabin for more drinks. Having been caught twice they made a plan with the Quartermaster who, hearing the Captain ascending the ladder from the wardroom almost certainly slowly, would nip down, shake the two sub-lieutenants who would then hop into their wardrobe. The Captain would pull aside the curtain and seeing no one visible would mutter to himself "I suppose they are ashore", and march out.

It was really comparatively easy taking over this ship which only really wanted to live a normal life. It seemed that the new captain was teetotal, but I personally doubted this very much. The Chief was an Old and Bold and had no purple between his stripes. I had only been in the ship a short time when a "J"Class destroyer berthed alongside and the Chief turned out to be my old Chief from the Wellington. He very kindly asked me for the evening meal which I very much enjoyed. I left quite early and made my way back to Nestor to be

given a signal from Dunluce Castle which read like this: "Please send for your Chief Engineer who is now under close arrest". I went down to the Captain and showed him the signal and he told me to go across and see what had happened. This I now did. When I arrived on board I found the ship alive with drink and when I was taken down to the Captain's cabin I found the Commander and two or three others pretty high. The Commander offered me a drink which I refused. I then said that we had received a signal and I had come to find out exactly what the trouble was. When I continued to refuse a drink he asked me what I proposed to do, to which I replied that I was going to ring up Rear Admiral Destroyers and report the matter. He did not believe I would do this and pushed the telephone towards me. I lifted the receiver, got through and asked to speak to the Duty Staff. After I had briefly explained the situation he told me to hold on. A minute or two later he said a party was on its way and very shortly after, a boat arrived alongside with three officers and a team of ratings. I was sent back to Nestor, when I reported to the Captain what had occurred. Later there were, I understand, three courts martial and not two. Soon after this incident a new Chief called Roger Parker arrived. He had been standing by another Australian destroyer and I immediately took a distinct liking to him.

Nestor was still at Scapa Flow on the 21st May when British Air Reconnaissance reported the presence of the pride of the German Navy, the battleship Bismarck and the cruiser Prinz Eugen, in an unfrequented fjord near Bergen in Norway, and it was clear to the Admiralty that the Germans' intention was to attack all Allied shipping crossing the Atlantic. Admiral Sir John Tovey, Commander-in-Chief Home Fleet, took immediate action to concentrate British forces. He immediately diverted his Battle Cruiser Force of the Hood and the Prince of Wales, escorted by six destroyers, to cover the Denmark Strait which covers the area from the Greenland Sea to the North Atlantic. The next day he sailed his main fleet in order to sink the Bismarck. This force consisted of his flagship, the King George V, the carrier Victorious, cruisers Gambia, Aurora,Kenya and Hermione, and destroyers Inglefield,Somali,Active,Intrepid, Punjab,Windsor and Nestor. On board Nestor there was tremendous excitement as we were the Australian component of what could be a great naval engagement. This is not the place to describe in detail this great battle. Sufficient to say that we were all profoundly shocked to learn of the sinking of the Hood, one of the most beautiful of British ships, with alas hardly any survivors. Nestor in due course was sent back to Iceland to refuel and we only remained in port long enough to replenish. We then immediately sailed south-east in a heavy running sea. It seemed at first fairly certain that Bismarck had slipped

through the British screen as our plot showed most of the Allied ships but no enemy units. Although we were not likely to play a decisive role in this engagement if it took place, we were nevertheless playing an important part. I always believe in letting the ship's company know as much about an operation as possible, and so from time to time they were informed either by me or from the Operations Room. It is a strange thing that although we all hated war we still wanted to play our part in bringing it to a satisfactory conclusion. On the morning of the 25th May it seemed evident that the Bismarck had in fact been cornered, if not sunk. Our ship's company was thrilled to hear the signal of the Fleet "I cannot sink Bismarck by gunfire". Finally a signal was received from Dorsetshire saying "Bismarck sunk, am picking up survivors". This news was received with great excitement and relief. Nestor then had two more duties to perform: escorting the Prince of Wales to Scotland and later the King George V and Rodney to Scottish ports.

Largely because we were so seldom in company with the other ships of the Flotilla I have hardly mentioned them. Our Captain Destroyers (Captain D) was Steve Arliss. I think he was really quite a good (D) and the Flotilla Staff, when we saw them, were very helpful. An Australian term of endearment for a Briton was a "Bloody Pommy", another less pleasant name sometimes used was "a Pommy Bastard". At a fairly early time in Nestor we were all fitted out with a loud hailer. This was a pretty effective means of speaking over, say, fifty to seventy-five yards (with the wind). The story goes that in HMAS Napier, (D)'s ship, this was fitted on the bridge and Steve Arliss said to his Australian First Lieutenant "I will go aft (to the stern end of the ship) so that I can judge just how effective this new loud hailer is". As soon as he was in position he and the whole ship's company heard the cry"You Pommy Bastard". This brought up (D) to the bridge when he accused the First Lieutenant of making this remark, but he was told quite politely that the hailer was so sensitive that it was quite impossible to know who had said it. History does not say whether Steve Arliss knew who had shouted the insult. My guess is that in fact he did know.

July saw a change for Nestor when she was sent down to Greenock where they removed her after set of torpedo tubes, replacing them with an anti-aircraft 4" gun and tying it into the control system. This was quite a wise idea since the main armament only elevated to about 40 degrees. On the 13th of July, in company with the battleship Nelson and destroyers Cossack, Maori, Sikh and Lightning, we sailed with a convoy bound for Gibraltar. Malta was suffering

from the usual shortages and the Admiralty decided to relieve her from the west, and accordingly Operation "Substance" was planned. The idea was to run six fast merchant ships plus a troopship heavily escorted, with Admiral Cunningham making a diversion with the Mediterranean Fleet. Force H, under Admiral Somerville, now consisted of Ark Royal, Renown, Nelson, Edinburgh, Arethusa, Manchester, the fast minelayer, Manxman and destroyers Cossack,Maori, Sikh, Nestor, Lightning, Farndale, Avondale and Eridge. Admiral Somerville warned his captains that they must expect severe enemy attacks from aircraft, submarines and E boats, also the possibility of intervention by the Italian surface fleet could not be ruled out. To guard against this latter threat eight British submarines were placed on patrol to cover their exits.

The convoy sailed in the early hours of the 21st May and very soon suffered the loss of the troopship, the Leinster, which ran aground at the entrance to Algeciras Bay and it was decided to leave her behind. Nestor was on the screen when the hydrophone effect of torpedoes was heard at about 2300. Sub Lieutenant Peter Colclough, the second officer of the watch and also the ship's anti-submarine officer, reported that a torpedo was approaching. This not only enabled Nestor to stem the tracks but also to raise the alarm to the convoy and heavy escort which undoubtedly saved them. It also enabled Nestor to gain A/S contact and to carry out several attacks. Though there was a strong smell of oil there were no other indications of a kill. Full credit for this action lay with Peter Colclough and, I am delighted to say, resulted in his being awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. I think it is worth recording what Admiral Somerville, a great leader, said in his report - "The successful avoiding action taken by the heavy ships at 2315/22 was only rendered possible by the prompt action taken and the quick and accurate report from Nestor".

I think it is true that all the Malta convoys up to about mid 1943 were heavily attacked by air and frequently also by E boats as the convoy passed Pantellaria and this convoy was no exception. Air attacks not only caused the loss of the destroyer Fearless but also severely damaged the cruiser Manchester. When we were only about eight miles off Pantellaria an E boat flotilla attacked and the merchant ship Sydney Star was hit. We went alongside, the main object being if possible to rescue about four hundred and fifty officers and men bound for Malta. Since the Sydney Star had already got some boats down and one was still lying between her and the Nestor this looked like being a difficult task. However, thanks to two gallant Nestor seamen who went over the side to drag the boat clear, we came alongside and with planks were able to rescue the troops quickly.

For their courageous action both members of our crew were awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. The whole E boat attack lasted about an hour and it was a confused affair as it was dark. With the roar of the high-powered E boat engines, plus the crack and bangs of both large and relatively small arms it was indeed difficult to appreciate what was happening.

While the embarkation went on Commander Rosenthal appreciated that speed was vital as we were still very close to Pantellaria and, as soon as dawn broke, the air attacks would concentrate on us. In the meanwhile the Sydney Star had not been idle. Damage had been restricted to Number 1 and 2 holds and, though the ship had taken in a lot of water, there was no danger, as yet, of her sinking. The responsibility rested heavily on Rosenthal's shoulders as, not only had we now about seven hundred and forty people on board, but the Sydney Star had many valuable supplies sorely needed in Malta. Nestor then set course for Malta with Sydney Star following. It was not long before some torpedo bombers were sighted on the port bow and the captain, thinking they were about to attack the Sydney Star again, made a "Help" signal. Admiral Syfret then made a bold move by depleting the escort of the convoy by detaching the cruiser Hermione to assist us. It was not long before the Sydney Star, Hermione and Nestor were attacked by eight German dive-bombers as well as two high level bombers. God must have been on our side as we were straddled several times and the ships appeared to disappear in a huge cloud of water and spray. The two warships fired everything they had, and this probably assisted us as we were not really damaged at all. It was not too long before the Sydney Star signalled that her pumps were no longer holding back the water in Number 1 hold. Our captain's reply ran something like this, "I would hate to lose you now. Am considering possible beaching sites in case flooding becomes really dangerous". But somehow she managed to keep afloat and we finally entered Grand Harbour at about 1400 on the 24th July, to the cheers of crowds of Maltese manning the jetties and prominent points. It was a stirring sight and a great achievement so well earned by Commander Rosenthal. It would be pertinent, I feel, to record an extract from Admiral Somerville's report which read:

> "Hermione, Nestor and Sydney Star, having taken the route north of Malta, arrived at 1400. The safe arrival of Sydney Star reflects great credit on the Commanding Officer of Nestor, Commander A.S.Rosenthal, R.A.N. who showed judgement, initiative and good seamanship in handling a delicate situation so close to the enemy's coast and in the presence of enemy E boats. It was appropriate that the Commanding Officer and most of his crew should be Australians."

Finally I think I should like to quote the signal Admiral Somerville made to Nestor after we had arrived at Malta:

"I hasten to add my congratulations and those of all in Force H. Another piece of good work by Nestor. You have done so much for the common weal of Substance."

Although Substance was successful it was not a hundred per cent so, and it was decided to have another fast run consisting largely of fast warships which was successful. It was, however, on the 6th of August that Nestor was moved to escort Convoy OG70 bound for the Cape onwards. All was quiet for the first few days. On the fourth day the Officer of the Watch, Lieutenant Dovers, sighted a submarine on the surface. Course was altered to stem a torpedo track and the alarm was sounded. As soon as the torpedo had passed we altered back and headed for the last known position of the submarine. Contact was gained but though three attacks were carried out there was no positive evidence that the U boat had been destroyed. Shortly after this Nestor escorted another convoy back to Gibraltar.

On the 6th of September Nestor was involved in escorting a convoy bound for the Middle East. Owing to lack of facilities it was necessary for her to proceed to Bathurst and luck must have been on our side because we arrived there with only fifteen tons of fuel left. Coming out of Bathurst down a narrow channel a submarine contact was made and we attacked at once with depth charges set shallow. After this attack it was found that several of the turbine feet had been cracked and the ship was suffering from minor leaks. As the ship was now due for boiler cleaning we went to Freetown and secured alongside the depot ship, H.M.S.Vindictive. Here the ship received her boiler clean and attempts were made to repair the damage to the turbine feet. There is not much to say about our visit to Vindictive except that the Chief, Roger Parker, and I went aboard for some sort of party which no doubt we thoroughly enjoyed. The brow was from our forecastle across to the Vindictive. On our way back, and having arrived on Nestor's forecastle, Roger turned left and walked on - he had forgotten that the forecastle ended in a few yards and there was a ladder down to the iron deck. There was an almighty crash and he fell about ten feet to the deck. He broke a leg but evidently he was lucky as the break was not too serious. He was put in plaster and all was well after a few weeks.

It was originally the Admiralty's plan to send Nestor to the eastern end of the Mediterranean, but on account of the damage to the turbine feet it was decided to send her back to Devonport. After only a brief stop at Gibraltar

to refuel we proceeded direct to Plymouth arriving there at the end of September. We soon learnt that repairs would take at least six weeks, so three weeks' leave was granted to each watch and opportunities were taken to give a number of key personnel some short specialised courses.

By this time I had been in Nestor for some five months and, though this was basically an Australian ship, I was very happy in her. I liked and respected my Captain, who was nicknamed Rosy, and made excellent friends with the Chief, Roger Parker, and got on exceedingly well with both Sub-Lieutenants, J.P.Stevenson, usually referred to as Steve, a regular officer who was exceedingly pleasant, and Peter Colclough who was a reserve officer. He was not only a splendid chap but one who seemed full of inexhaustible energy. I think the highlight of our stay at Devonport was the announcement that our Captain had been awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

We spent about two months in dockyard hands, during which time good repairs were made not only to the turbine feet but also to the hull, machinery and so forth. Our armament was increased by the fitting of four oerlikons and two twin 0.5" machine guns. Finally we did trials and, after embarking a large quantity of air force stores and ammunition, as well as about six R.A.F.Officers and twelve other ranks, we sailed to join convoy WS14. Nestor was Senior Officer. The weather deteriorated and after a few days when visibility had dropped to a mile or possibly less, contact was lost with the convoy. Nestor, Ghurka, Foxhound and Chrome were steaming in line ahead when one of Nestor's lookouts reported a submarine on the surface about seven miles away. We turned towards the position and immediately increased speed. When the range was decreased to about 11,000 yards we opened fire. Soon after this the U boat submerged. The Captain then reduced speed and in a few minutes asdic contact with the U boat was obtained. We immediately attacked and dropped a pattern of depth charges, and soon after were able to make a second attack. Both ships heard a marked explosion and it was at first thought that this was a delayed depth charge. One had to appreciate at this stage of the war that U boats, when under attack, often discharged pieces of flesh and various objects in order to deceive the attacker. Soon after this Chrome also made contact, but there was still no evidence of a kill. As she was now short of fuel Chrome was ordered to proceed to Gibraltar to replenish. The remaining destroyers then carried out a square search to establish whether there were signs of oil or other wreckage. We were rewarded as we found large slicks of oil and then a substantial quantity of wreckage. Much later some of the flesh picked up proved beyond doubt that we had

successfully destroyed a U boat. It appeared that Nestor had destroyed U 127 and this was confirmed some time later when the Admiralty signalled stating that this was in fact the case. We were all delighted to hear in due course that our Captain had been awarded a Bar to his DSO, Dick Fennesy, the Plot Officer, a DSC, a Mention in Despatches to Peter Colclough and a DSM to the lookout who had first sighted the U boat. Nestor and the convoy arrived at Gibraltar on the 16th December, and to our delight Admiral Somerville came on board to inspect the spoils of our attack on U 127. After looking round he took Rosy back to his flagship, no doubt for a celebration.

Admiral Somerville was a great leader and an admiral we all admired. Not only was he an astute Commander but he was also blessed with a sense of humour. A few days later Nestor in company with Ghurka, Zulu, Foxhound and Arrow and the cruiser Dido sailed for Malta. By hugging the French Tunisian coast we all arrived at Malta safely. Though there were dive bomber attacks on arrival, no damage to the recently arrived warships occurred. Christmas Day which was celebrated alongside Canteen Wharfe in Malta was really rather a pleasant occasion. We had Divisions followed immediately by an air raid. After this all the Officers went round the mess decks to wish the troops good cheer. All the messes were decorated with flags and the tables were attractively prepared with Australian foods. At noon all the Chief and Petty Officers were invited to the Wardroom and given drinks until about 1300 (i.e.1 p.m.) It was a splendid party which I believe was enjoyed by all. I was amazed at the morale and friendliness of the whole Ship's Company.

Finally we all sat down to an amazing Christmas Dinner, considering the time available in which to prepare it. The Staff did wonders. We had Turkey, Christmas Pudding, Fruit, Nuts etc. in fact it was a great feast enjoyed by all. After a much needed rest I went and had a game of squash with Peter Colclough.

On Boxing Day we were off again but this time bound for Alexandria. Although we were straffed heavily by the Luftwaffe no damage occurred. As we got close to Alexandria we were reinforced by some units of the Mediterranean Fleet including Napier and Nizam. Needless to say news between us and our Australian sister ships was exchanged to the full. At last on the 29th December the convoy arrived at Alexandria. The last part of 1941 was not very exhilarating for the Mediterranean. The Queen Elizabeth had been sunk at Alexandria, or at least was resting on her bottom in shallow water, after an Italian frogman attack while the Valiant was in dry dock, having been severely

damaged and recently the Barham had also been sunk. Coupled with this was the fact that the enemy air effort was substantial. Thus the year 1941 came to a rather alarming end.

Before leaving 1941 it is worth mentioning that on New Year's Eve we were off the harbour of Bardia, where the army were beginning their push into the town. It was an amazing sight from the sea to see the tracer bullets and shells all over the town. After a fairly formidable fighter escort joined us we closed to bombard. We crept up the coast with Ajax bombarding all the time. On returning to the east, Nizam and Lingston joined us. We finally returned to Alexandria just in time to see the New Year in.

One of the things that always amazes is how buzzes seem to swarm through a ship - sometimes those in authority in a ship know what our next move is, but more often we do not have an inkling of what is afoot. Frequently, by some most remarkable means, the local buzz is right, but often it is way off course. Thus when we sailed early in the New Year with a farewell signal from the Mediterranean Fleet, buzzes were rampant. Some said we were on our way back to Australia, while others said,perhaps more wisely, we are on our way to Singapore. After a brief stay at Aden, in company with Nizam we joined the carrier Indomitable. After a short stay at Trincomalee the aim of this operation emerged. We were to escort the carrier close to Singapore with R.A.F.Hurricanes on board, and these were to be flown off so that they could boost up the air defences there. When some sixty or so miles from the area, the carrier increased speed, and with a good head wind the Hurricanes were flown off. Nestor at this stage was the emergency destroyer and was stationed on the starboard quarter of the carrier. The R.A.F.Hurricanes had no hooks and so it was essential that all should get away without a hitch. Alas, one Hurricane had engine trouble and it was clear that it would have to land back on the carrier, despite the fact that it did not have the usual aids of Fleet Air Arm aeroplanes. The carrier increased speed to maximum and we were all alerted to make a rapid rescue if necessary. Down came the Hurricane crashing into the barrier, largely wrecking the plane - but the pilot was safe. It was a wonderful performance and we were so relieved that the pilot had saved his life.

After this operation we made our way back to Trinco and the destroyers were refuelled from Appleleaf and Indomitable. Nestor had to get her oil from the carrier, and unfortunately an error was made as the carrier connected us up to a tank full of water instead of oil. Both boilers were put out and itwas

some time before we actually got replanished. We usually got bread when we replenished from a large warship and there was a temptation to say "Thank you so much for bread and water". All this time the Japanese were progressing fast in the Pacific and Far East, and furthermore Japanese bombers had attacked and severely damaged Darwin in Australia. While the Japanese were going from victory to victory the Far East Fleet was growing fast. We now had four battleships of the Royal Sovereign class; the carriers Indomitable, Formidable and Hermes, seven cruisers and sixteen destroyers, plus seven submarines and a number of minesweepers. On the 16th February Indomitable, Napier and Nestor sailed for Port Sudan. It was a tragic time because we learnt that Singapore had fallen. This rapid advance by the Japanese was having a direct effect on Australia and many feared it would not be too long before there would be another thrust towards Australia and New Zealand.

Port Sudan was reached on the 24th of February and at once Indomitable embarked about fifty Hurricanes and crews and, as soon as they had loaded, we all sailed again for Ceylon via Aden. After fuelling at Aden we set forth at high speed for Ceylon, both destroyers refuelling off Indomitable. Bad news was received when we learnt of the loss of Perth in the Java Sea and, not long after, we also heard that Yarra, after a sterling fight, had been sunk in the Java area by superior forces. As we approached Ceylon a large number of Hurricanes were flown off, first to the Colombo area and then in the vicinity of Trincomalee. These aircraft arrived in the nick of time because a few days later the Japanese launched a major attack against Ceylon. Although the Allies were grossly outnumbered the attack was thwarted at a loss of about nineteen or so of our aeroplanes. All this time the strength of the Far East Fleet was increasing. This expanding fleet met at Addu Atoll and from there it carried out a patrol between Addu and Ceylon. Though there were signs of our meeting a strong Japanese fleet, and we did pass within ninety miles of them, the Japanese decided to withdraw to the east. The fleet then moved on into Bombay before finally retiring to Kilindini in Kenya. As time moved on it was decided to reinforce the Mediterranean again, and Group 2, consisting of the cruiser Newcastle with the destroyers Napier, Nestor, Inconstant, Paladin, Hotspur and Griffin had an uneventful voyage back to the Mediterranean, arriving at Alexandria on the 8th of June.

It was at this time that things were not going well for the Allies. The war in North Africa was heading for a retreat, Malta was crying out for supplies, Admiral Cunningham was appointed as head of the British Naval Mission in

Washington and was relieved by Admiral Sir Henry Harwood, the victor of the Battle of the River Plate. It was decided to run a convoy from east(Harpoon) and west (Vigorous). There were to be six ships in the western convoy and eleven in the eastern under Admiral Vian. The enemy reconnaissance soon discovered the eastern convoy, and it was not long before two of the convoy were hit and were ordered to return to Alexandria. Next day a Dutch ship of the convoy was also damaged and sent back to Alexandria. She, now defenceless, was attacked by a strong force of enemy bombers and sunk within sight of Alexandria. Meanwhile the Vigorous convoy was proceeding when Admiral Vian was asked by the C-in-C the state of the escorts and how much ammunition they had. When he replied that the escorts only had about a third of their ammunition which was rapidly being used up, the C-inC decided to turn the convoy back to Alexandria. At about 1800 Nestor was straddled by three 1000 lb.bombs, one only missing by a few feet on the port side. At this time I was on the port side of the iron deck, and on the oerlikon gun was a sailor I did not much care for. He was a dirty and lazy fellow and I did not think he pulled his weight in the ship. When I heard the noise of the bomb falling I fell flat on my face, but this young man stuck to his oerlikon and I had to admit that he had more guts than I. The whole ship raised itself and shuddered as these bombs exploded and blew a large hole in the port side. The worst hit area was No.1 boiler room. All power was lost and the rudder was hard over. Several men were killed. The ship had already taken a heavy list to port, which was to some extent alleviated by turning out the boats on the starboard side and lightening the ship of all heavy weights on the port side. Our leader ordered Javelin to stand by us. It was now clear that there was a raging fire in a compartment next to a magazine, and I knew at once that we must clear that magazine immediately otherwise the ship would be doomed. I called for three volunteers and down the magazine we went. I myself was as frightened as the others, and I can tell you now that never had we worked so fast, but with many willing hands up top we soon had the magazine empty. The ship had virtually no lights at all. The main reason for this was that the main electric generators had been wrecked by the explosion and the emergency generator, believe it or not, was in the boiler room which was, of course, flooded. Whatever one may say about British ship construction this was a very stupid place to site the emergency generator. A a result of this terrible situation all destroyers similarly constructed soon had another generator placed well aft in the ship. Nestor was stopped with a heavy list and it was, to say the least, unpleasant below decks in the dark. It was then decided to get Javelin to take us in tow. From our point of view this was quite a major job, as there was needless to say no power on the capstan,and cable is extremely heavy. In due course the tow was passed and we let out about three shackles of

cable as well. The tow started. Because the ship had such a lot of water in her plus a heavy list she was a dead weight to tow. Things were made no easier since the rudder had about 30 degrees of helm on it. We tried to put the rudder to midships but this by hand was a very tedious affair. To cut a long and rather dreary story short, the tow in due course parted. We then had to struggle very hard to get out another towing wire and cable.

After a long haul the second tow was passed and in operation, but by this time Nestor, though not by any means sinking, was very much down by the bow and with a heavy list to port. It was not too long before the second tow parted also and it became clear to the Captain and myself that towing was simply not going to succeed without the use of a strong ocean going tug. We were in what was termed "bomb alley" and I knew that we would never get our ship home. I discussed this with the Captain and we both agreed that as soon as daylight emerged we would be a sitting target. I honestly believe that our ship's company were proud of their ship which had fought so well and so hard, and I know it was a sad moment when they knew that, very reluctantly, we had decided to scuttle. As soon as we saw the first glimmer of light I got as many hammocks as possible and secured them over the side to act as fenders, and when they were ready Javelin came alongside and we simply stepped into her. She cast off Nestor and swept past her dropping a pattern of depth charges. Though this shook the "grand old lady" she still remained afloat, but when this was repeated we knew the end had come. Slowly and with a degree of dignity she reluctantly decided to leave us, and there were few of us who were not saddened by her loss.

It was not easy to know who had played the major part in dealing with the situation once we were hard hit. We did know, however, that Surgeon Lieutenant Watson played a brave and significant part in courageously entering No.1 boiler room in order to try and rescue some of the team there. Only those who have had first hand experience of a ship hard hit, listing to port and in fact wallowing in the swell, will appreciate that only with considerable courage will an officer or rating enter a flooding boiler room gushing out steam. In all, two Distinguished Service Orders, four Distinguished Service Medals and eight Mentions in Despatches were won by men who had the honour and privilege to serve in His Majesty's Australian ship Nestor. Great credit is due to Commander Rosenthal. He took over a ship which had had a bad start and welded her into not only an efficient ship but a happy one. Nestor played a very full part in the war and the credit is largely due to her Captain. I,myself, not only respected Rosy as a most able captain but one who was a leader as well as being a kind and considerate man.

We arrived back at Alexandria and the officers were lodged in a local hotel and the ratings accommodated in a camp a few miles out. Strange things happen in war. Though we had lost a ship there was quite a party on the night of our arrival, and no doubt quite a lot of "booze" was consumed. The first lieutenant of H.M.A.S.Norman was in fact run over by a garry, three ribs were broken and it was clear that he would be out of the running for some time. What do you think happened ? I will give you one guess. I was immediately appointed to Norman as the new First Lieutenant. This was even before I had any clothes to wear other than those I was wearing when I left Nestor.

Before we finally leave Nestor I must just record one small episode. Most of our ship's company were being sent back to Australia, and I thought I should go and say goodbye to the Chief and Petty Officers. Another officer and I went out by service car and met them all, and it was great fun to see them all again. I was offered a drink and a glass of what I thought was "grog"(rum and water) was given to me. I had a sip and to my amazement and horror I realised it was neat rum. I suppose I should have asked for some water but it is easy to be wise after the event. Anyway I did not and before long I had drunk the lot. That is the last time I have ever had rum. I got back to my hotel by the skin of my teeth and slept for about twenty hours. This I feel was the final lesson I learnt in what was probably my most favourite ship.

Thus I became the new First Lieutenant of H.M.A.S.Norman, a sister ship of the Nestor. Her Captain was Commander Henry Burrell who had specialised in navigation and done a lot of staff work. I asked Peter Colclough, who was the anti-submarine officer in Nestor, whether he would like to come with me to Norman and he very kindly said he would.

The first operation in which we were involved was that of the invasion of Madagascar. This compared with Malta Convoys was a mild affair, though we did not, of course, know this would be the case until we actually did it. The main part of the assault in which Norman was involved was that against Tamatave. The plan was a bold one. It was for the main force to stand off and as daylight emerged to close in and call for a surrender. Norman was specially detailed to anchor in a leading position as a guide mark for the main force. To the high indignation of the navigator of the Norman, a non-specialist, a qualified navigator was sent on board to ensure that we did in fact anchor in the right spot. Everything went according to plan except that rifle fire started up as the boat went in. Then the order to open fire was given and in a very short

time a white flag was shown. An envoy boat was sent out showing a white flag but since there were insufficient signs of a full surrender, the main force of Birmingham, Mauritius and Napier opened fire, and very shortly white flags were strung up and they surrendered. Shortly after this three destroyers secured alongside and a Commando was landed. To complete the story of this attack, I had forgotten the name of the qualified navigator who was sent on board Norman. Some thirty-nine years later, when I was living in Shroton not far from Blandford, a man named Commander M.Webster bought a house in the village and I knew him quite well. It so happened that one day he told me that he was involved in the assault on Tamatave. I then asked him which ship he was in. He replied that he had in fact been lent to the Australian destroyer, Norman. I asked "Do you remember the First Lieutenant of that ship, rather a good-looking young man, I think! ?" "No, I can't remember him" he answered. "Well,Malcolm" I said, "I was the First Lieutenant of the Norman at that time". We both laughed.

Life in the Norman was quietish during the invasion of Madagascar. I do, however, remember that when we were supposed to be bombarding the coast I said to the Captain "We really cannot open fire, sir, all the children on the jetty are waving". Thank goodness we did not fire on them. We were in dry dock at Diego Suarez over Christmas and I can remember quite clearly that towards evening on Christmas Eve quite a large quantity of beer arrived on board. This was the first time we had received beer to sell to the ship's company. Because it was getting dark I rather stupidly decided to cover the beer with an old awning and strike it down in the morning. Imagine my horror to find when morning came that all the beer had disappeared. What was even worse was that painted on the port side in large white letters was "Happy Christmas George". I searched high and low for that beer and never found it. I also had to apologise to the Captain and say that I could not turn the ship's company to on Christmas Day to paint out the slogan on the port side. After the war, when I was captain of H.M.S. Tenacious, I was walking down a street in Melbourne and a man came up to me and said "You don't remember me do you,sir?" I had to confess that I did not. After telling me his name he said "You never found that beer did you?" I said "No, despite looking thoroughly, we never did find it!" He said"You left it on deck and a few of us pinched it and dropped it over the cassoon, pulling up six cases a night". I had to admit that they deserved to get away with it.

Time marches on, and in the early spring of 1943 I got a signal from the Admiralty saying that I had been selected to do the long gunnery course in a few months' time, unless I would prefer to be given command of a destroyer.

The latter was my immediate choice and I signalled back to say so. I was relieved at Durban for passage home. When I landed at DurbanI was sent for by the Naval Officer in Charge and told that I was to become Naval Provost Marshal (NPM) for a few weeks. I asked why and was told that the present NPM was under close arrest for being drunk and disorderly. Thus I became for about six or seven weeks the Naval Provost Marshal. In that short time I did in fact make quite an impact. I reorganised my small staff and quickly found out that when troopships came in there were always a number of deserters. They usually went up to Johannesburg where they got good jobs and were well paid. I discovered that they used to remain on the line, remote from the platform, and just as the train was about to move off, they leapt aboard. I soon got the measure of this one. I sent a patrol to each end, that is to say one at the front end of the train and one at the back. The patrol at the front end would move down and the deserters, seeing them coming, would retreat only to find that they were all arrested by my second patrol. I remember also, when walking through the town in the morning, I saw a sailor with his cap flat-a-back and his sleeves partially rolled up. I stopped him and told him to put on his cap and roll his sleeves down. I then asked him what his name was and he answered "Smith". I then asked for his cap which he gave me, and while I was looking at it seeing that his name was not, of course, Smith, he started to run. Unfortunately for him I outran him and brought him back to headquarters. He was a deserter.

Finally I was relieved and went by train to Capetown. There were three others in the carriage and I was asked if I would play bridge. I was not keen because I wanted to look out of the window to see a bit of Africa. They explained that unless I played they could not play, so I gave in. There is always a penalty for such things. The only person who made any money at all was me. We arrived at Capetown and I went home in a trooper.

In all, I spent two years in the Australian Navy, and though like many others I hate war, I must admit that I did really enjoy my time in these two ships. I made many friends and I like to think that Nestor and Norman were well run. Furthermore I learnt a lot and consider that I was extremely lucky to serve under Rosy. Peter Colclough is a great friend of mine to this day, and needless to say has done extremely well in civilian life.

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CHAPTER IV

F I R S T C O M M A N D

After an uneventful voyage back home and a short leave I was appointed to H.M.S.Walpole and given some courses. This was really my first real command. Though I had now spent about six years in small ships my experience of handling destroyers was very limited. I was allowed to berth Nestor once at Gibraltar but no matter how much you have been instructed, first hand experience is what is really needed. I joined H.M.S.Walpole at Harwich towards the end of October 1943. She was a First War destroyer of the V and W Class and so was getting rather long in the tooth. She was a member of the 16th Destroyer Flotilla and was employed basically on anti-E boat work, and as an escort for the many convoys of merchant ships which ploughed south full and returning north largely empty. We had a crew of about ten officers made up as follows - myself as captain, a first lieutenant as second-in-command who was a RNVR officer, a Chief Engineer who was a commissioned Warrant Officer, a Warrant Officer Gunner, a Lieutenant RNVR, four Sub-Lieutenants (some were RNVR) and a Surgeon Lieutenant. We came at first under a Commander (D) but later on he was relieved by a Captain (D) in the leader destroyer.

The plan was roughly as follows - the sea running from Rosyth to Southend and on to Portsmouth was largely buoyed and swept by minesweepers. It was also divided into patrol areas. Ships of our Flotilla and those of the 21st Flotilla, based at Sheerness, were detailed for these patrols. Usually we had to be on station by dusk. Patrols depended to some extent on the weather and there were many occasions when one was resting quietly, and I suppose hoping for a quiet night, when out of the blue came a signal ordering you on patrol at once, and you then had to weigh anchor and take up your position. The swept channels were marked by buoys which were generally very dimly lit. One must have no illusions about the navigational and pilotage risks which were considerable. The tides and currents were substantial and the weather very variable, sometimes foggy, often rough and sometimes teeming with rain. Furthermore we were on night patrol so the officer-of-the-watch and his "winger" had to be ready for immediate action. Because we tended to be basically night birds I used to have the armament manned on a two watch basis at night, and a four watch basis when at sea by day. In the event of an alarm or the suspicion of an approaching E boat the officer-of-the-watch immediately pressed the "Action Stations" bell and the whole ship turned to at the double. Two things were essential. The first, that all the officers knew exactly what their duty was, and secondly, that they did not take over until their eyes were acclimatised to the darkness. People sometimes ask how much you

can see in the dark. The answer is, more than you would think. If your eyes are accustomed to the dark and you have your binoculars focussed to your grading it is possible on many nights to see quite a lot. All the destroyers were fitted with asdic and, one must have no illusions, because even if E boats came over fairly slowly, a listening watch would invariably give you a warning. When I took over the "wallop", as she was affectionately known, we had a sort of bedstead radar aerial which gave one a reasonable cover over an area of about 140 degrees, that is to say 70 degrees on each bow. In addition to this we had what we called a "Headache Chap". He would be tuned into the wavelengths usually used by the E boats and, though they did not always have anything useful to report, there were certainly occasions when they were invaluable.

Though I was not experienced at ship handling I knew all the ropes. I had some good standing orders which made it crystal clear what the officers had to do when we were out. One of my main orders was that, when on patrol a buoy was missed, I was to be called immediately. There was one occasion when for some obscure reason I woke up and decided to go up on to the bridge. The First Lieutenant was officer-of-the-watch and I asked him where we were. It transpired that he had missed a buoy and was just hoping it would turn up. I immediately stopped engines and, after getting the forecastle party, anchored at once. Believe this or not, had we gone on another few hundred yards or so we would have been high and dry on Haisborough Sands. I practically ate the First Lieutenant for breakfast. It was very interesting that, while a number of destroyers in my group did run aground, some more seriously than others, and even the great (D) got his screws round the moorings of a buoy, by sheer luck and possibly by being careful, we had no mishaps - we did however have a few near misses.

There were two main convoys to protect. Those leaving the Rosyth area were known as the FS when going south and the FN when going north. Then there were the Channel convoys that used to run from Southend to Portsmouth known as CW going west and CE going east. Usually the 16th Destroyer Flotilla was employed on a patrol but exceptionally we would have to form part of the close escort of the CE/CW convoys. When doing the Channel convoys we used to attend the Convoy Conference which was held at the outer end of Southend Pier, which was the longest pier in Britain. From time to time we used to have a few drinks at the large hotel which was very near the inner end of the pier. This hotel had six bars, or so they said.

The procedure in the East Coast area was for the destroyers or frigates on patrol to drive off the E boats which would be endeavouring to destroy shipping either by torpedo or by laying mines in the most focal areas. The E boats would normally come over in groups and sometimes they would encourage the destroyers to give chase, so that another section could slip past into the searched channel now left empty. As either an FS or FN convoy arrived so the destroyer on patrol formed part of the escort of the convoy so long as it was in his patrol area. It would be mistaken to imagine that E boat attacks always came from seaward, furthermore they often lay close to a buoy in the hope that their presence would be missed, at least by radar, and the fact that they were stopped would deny detection by the anti-submarine listening device. It was well to remember that an E boat had effective weapons and if there were, say, a group of three, a destroyer would be unlikely to be able to take them all on single-handed with any confidence of success.

During my time in Walpole we had many actions against E boats and, although we were fairly certain we had got in some useful hits, it was not easy to produce actual evidence of damage unless of course we actually sank one of the enemy attackers. Quite soon after I joined, our foremost gun was removed and replaced by an excellent quickfiring twin 6-pounder gun which proved a first class weapon for the task. I thought it might be interesting to record one action in which we were involved. At 2047 six E boats were illuminated by starshell at a range of about 3100 yards (a mile and a half) and were engaged with all guns, and some hits from the twin 6-pounder were observed. Shortly after this the E boats withdrew. On resuming course to the eastward, when still about three and a half miles from the shipping channel, contact was regained but some doubt existed as to whether this contact was the enemy unit or not. Course was altered to close when the radar indicated that there were several echoes which we believed to be another group of E boats. Speed was increased and, when the range was down to about 2100 yards, the target was illuminated by starshell. It was then clear that this contact was in fact a different group and we opened fire with everything we had, and hits were observed from the Pom poms and particularly from our twin 6-pounder. Though so often in this kind of warfare it is difficult to know just how well you have done, there was in this case no doubt at all. One E boat was clearly sunk and another shortly after blew up. In all it was a most satisfactory action from our point of view. It was rather nice to learn later that Lieutenant C.E.Tooley, for his most distinguished conduct was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and I was awarded a Bar to mine.

From time to time certain towns and their districts were asked whether they would like to adopt a warship. It so happened that Ely and District were asked whether they would care to adopt H.M.S.Walpole. This offer came about as a result of Ely having contributed in Warship Week the sum of £269,000and they were thrilled at the thought of adopting a destroyer. Apart from the exchange of a plaque from them and the gift of the ship's crest from us the matter appeared to have died a natural death. This was not so, however, as I and the Wardroom, in consultation with the ship's company, agreed that we should ask for a small team from Ely, possibly led by the Bishop or the Dean, to come and visit the ship, talk to the ship's company and stay to lunch. I first of all asked Captain (D) if it would be possible for the Walpole to be in on a certain date and he assured me that, provided there was no dire emergency, this could be arranged. We then sent the invitation which was accepted with alacrity and in due course the great day arrived. Led by the Dean a party of ten came to Harwich and were welcomed on board. The ship was at Divisions and the Ely team were first of all led round the Divisions and at each stop the Dean gave some stirring words of encouragement and thanks. After this there was an opportunity for our visitors to look at the ship more closely and there was a demonstration of gun drill and suchlike. The Chief Boatswain's Mate - a Petty Officer - then gave the Dean a boatswain's call which I really believe he was delighted to receive. Then, after half an hour or so, we gave the party drinks in the wardroom, but how we all got in I cannot think, followed by what in those days was a very nice buffet lunch. After lunch, as always I suppose, I did say a few words of thanks and appreciation. Finally the party broke up and we wished our guests great good fortune.

In these older ships it was necessary to have the boiler cleaned fairly regularly and on these occasions we were berthed alongside at Parkeston Quay. Here every opportunity was taken to give leave in two groups, much of the actual cleaning being undertaken by a shore team borne for this duty. Most ships, including Walpole, kept the Chief (Engineer) in the ship for this period, leaving him behind for a similar period when the cleaning was completed. It also gave us an opportunity to have a lot of minor defects corrected.

Facilities ashore at Harwich were on the whole quite good. There was a cinema, one or two bars, a junior ratings club, something similar for the senior rates and a kind of club a few miles away for the officers. I can well remember the dropping of a depth charge off the East Coast which we were allowed to do every six months. I thought it would be a good idea if we could manage to get

a few really fresh fish on this occasion and so I selected where we would go to let off our six-monthly charge with some care. God must have been on our side because we killed more cod than I had ever seen before. We simply raked them in and, though many would say that cod is a dull fish, all I can say is that when it comes straight from the sea and into the pan it tastes delicious and quite different from the usual cod bought from a fishmonger which may well have spent many weeks in transit. We had so many cod that we were able to give a large amount to Ganges, the Boys' Training Establishment, just across the water from Harwich.

As we ventured into 1944 the possibility of a future invasion of Europe seemed more and more likely. As we were more or less permanently on the eastern side of the United Kingdom many of us began to wonder what the great masses of extraordinary looking floating concrete boxes could be for, and all sorts of suggestions were made. As summer began to approach and stacks of books and documents arrived, all sealed and not to be opened until ordered, the possibility of an invasion became, at least to me, a certainty. Finally I was ordered to open some of the invasion orders which showed quite clearly where the invasion was going to take place. It was interesting to note that, even if the enemy did get hold of the plans I had, it would not have been possible for him to have known when the invasion was going to be mounted. Furthermore there was a great deal of evidence that it was likely to take place in an area quite different from the one shown on the plans. The amendments to these plans were substantial and I had to get one or two officers, who were sworn to secrecy, to help me carry out the necessary corrections.

When the invasion started Walpole was due to escort a convoy on the beaches on D + 3. As we were to start from the Harwich area this meant we had to sail at least two days before. The routes were all clearly laid down and those leading towards the landing areas were slightly different from those leading away. This was to reduce the risk of collisions, since the volume of shipping both inwards and outwards would build up significantly. Despite a slight weather hitch which postponed the starting date the invasion was on and, once the signal was made initiating the start, any chance of arresting it was impractical. The routine was that we escorted the convoy keeping the ships moving together as closely as possible. I can remember quite clearly one American ship badly behind station and, after chivvying him up, he made a signal back saying "Don't be too hard on me - I've only done a correspondence course on this business". On arrival at our beach the control of the ships was taken over by the landing organisation, the escorts being required to report to a particular unit. We were then told where

to anchor and when we would be required again. Usually this would be about 1600/1700 on the same day. On arrival we could see the initial steps taken to build part of a prefabricated harbour - this at last explained what the floating concrete boxes were for. All would be fairly quiet during the day except for the odd air alert. As we now had definite air superiority over that part of the Channel and over the landing beaches, interference at least at first was r :or. Then when zero hour arrived we weighed anchor and started to round up our outward bound convoy for the journey back. On arrival off the eastern end of the Isle of Wight those ships bound for Southampton/Portsmouth and the west were detached while we turned eastward with those bound for the London area. Although I had expected that all shipping bound for the landing beaches would be attacked by every means possible, so far this was not so. At the same time it did mean that we had to keep ourselves on the alert for attack from the air, E boats, submarines and, not to be forgotten, mines. Though the work for the escorts was hard it was the greatest possible satisfaction that the worm had at last turned and we were on our way back, not only to Europe, but to victory.

There were three specific episodes that I can well remember. The first was the effect of almost dense low-lying fog. Visibility was down to a few hundred yards or even less in some places, and thoughwe all by now had radar the density of shipping was such that it was of limited value. The extraordinary thing was that our aircraft flying overhead could see the shipping clearly yet we could not. However, thank goodness, fog seldom lasts long and it was soon quite clear again. Some say that it is seldom really rough in the Channel. Believe you me this is simply not true, and it was not long after the initial landing that the weather blew up to gale force winds, and it became so rough when we were anchored off the beaches that it was quite impossible to get on to the forecastle to weigh anchor. All we could do was to raise steam and keep the ship as steady as possible. Fair weather did eventually arrive and things then went on more or less as usual.

The third strange thing that occurred was when we were proceeding in the Channel. To my amazement I saw a great ball of light looking like an aircraft on fire rushing through the sky towards the English coast. When I saw another and then another I realised that these were a form of enemy rocket or what we eventually called the "doodlebug" which, when the engine cut out, dived down on to the land exploding in a terrific shattering bang. I reported this but it was clear soon afterwards that the authorities knew all about these "doodlebugs".

In addition to my sister Mary, the eldest of five, I also had three brothers Peter, for years a favourite friend, Michael and John. We all went to different schools - Peter going to Blundells in Devonshire, Michael to Eastbourne College and John to Bradfield. While Peter and Michael were good at games, John, I think most would agree, was less so. On the other hand John was, in my view, the best educated having gone to Cambridge to read modern languages. All three brothers fought in the war. Peter joined the Royal Air Force on the administration side and spent a lot of his war days in North Africa. Michael was a territorial as a Guerilla and was in this regiment the whole war, never leaving India. John, who worked for Dunlop's, was in London and became a territorial in the Finsbury Rifles. His regiment was overnight transferred to Anti-Aircraft Command and he thus spent the whole war as an AA gunner. He asked me whether there would be any chance of his coming over to the invasion beaches in the "Wallop". I said there would be no difficulty although I could not guarantee he would necessarily get back in my ship. He accepted with alacrity and we took him over. He landed soon after we had anchored and spent the whole day prowling around looking at what was going on and generally seeing another side of life at war. Strange to say, just as we were weighing anchor, a boat arrived alongside and John stepped on board. He had had a great day and seen so much. The funny thing was that though I had been over to the invasion coast many times I never had the opportunity to land.

Looking back on my life in the Walpole I can remember two things that affected me. I used to wear a very warm little anorak thing which kept the upper part of me nice and snug though it did not really go down very far. I can recall when we got in one day sitting down in the wardroom and dozing off. When I awoke I could not get out of my chair - I had more or less seized up. All the doctors said it was a disc or something. However after twenty-four hours of warmth I had more or less recovered, though in fact it took me some years to throw off this trouble. The other thing I remember was that when I joined "Wallop" my knowledge of ship handling was very limited. However, after some months and a number of not too serious bumps, I got better and better. One day, for no apparent reason, I took Walpole out of Harwich backwards. Destroyers have great power and once you have confidence there is very little you cannot do with them. The only person who was a bit affronted was the Chief, who said in no uncertain terms that I really should not have done it without warning him first.

We did quite a lot of entertaining on board - mostly Wrens, and I think it would be fair to say there was a tendency for us to entertain more of the Wren

ratings than the officers. There was a host of ratings including plotters, boats' crew, drivers, cinema operators and so on. Many have often asked me why I never got married in the war. I am not quite sure that I know the reason why. I think I was afraid of getting married, having children and then getting bumped off, partially because I felt that I was doing a good job and, if I were married, I would be less good at it, and I suppose partially because possibly I never found the right girl - though this did not prevent me from trying.

As the war crept on we were gradually moved over to do more and more work on the European side and soon we were patrolling off the Scheldte. Looking back I had been very lucky during the war but it always seems that sooner or later the dice will be loaded against one. Thus it was, on the evening of the 5th February 1945, that in company with H.M.S.Rutherford we arrived on patrol 19 not too far from the Scheldte with Walpole stationed about a mile to seaward. This was on account of the recent number of midget submarine attacks that had taken place in the general area. The patrol was uneventful until about 0740 on the following morning when the officer-of-the-watch, the First Lieutenant, reported that there was something floating not far ahead. I was in the operations room at this moment but on my way to the bridge. He followed up his report by saying that it was a mine. I heard the order "Starboard 30" followed almost immediately by a tremendous explosion when the whole ship seemed to rise out of the water. It was clear that the mine had hit the ship somewhere amidships. An emergency signal was sent to Rutherford. Already the ship was heeling over considerably. It was soon clear that Number 1 boiler room had been flooded and that all power had been lost. When an old ship such as Walpole is hard hit there is usually a considerable amount of damage. The Chief Engineroom Artificer, the Chief having been left behind, arranged to shore up the bulkhead between the flooded boiler room and the next compartment. Although considerable efforts were made to try and raise steam in the other two boilers they met with no success. In due course the ocean-going tug Saucy took us in tow and we arrived in the vicinity of Sheerness. Tragically we lost the crew of Number 1 boiler room and all the usual steps were taken to inform the authorities and the next of kin.

Alas, the end of Walpole was in sight and it was needless to say a sad parting for us all. Two small things are perhaps worth recording. The first was that some time before the wardroom bought some quite attractive prints of old ships but then could not get them framed. I was asked if I could get them framed somehow. I asked Mr.Clements, the manager of the Boat Yard if he could help and he agreed to frame them in teak in exchange for a duty free bottle of gin.

This he did. When it was decided that the ship was to be scrapped I was asked if I would now like to have the prints. I said I would and I still have them today. The other thing is that on one of the after screen doors was a brass plate of about six or seven inches in diameter which showed a picture of a bell being rung by a hand, and in the centre of the bell was another picture of a man clasping or wringing his hands. Though at first we thought this was the crest of the destroyers in the First World War it now seems more likely that this was in fact Walpole's own crest. It is now thought it was based on what Sir Robert Walpole said in 1739 on the declaration of war with Spain "They now ring the bells, but they will soon wring their hands". I took this crest off the after screen and have it today.

The Navy is really quite unlike the Army which is basically based on the regiment. In the Navy your "regiment" for, dare I say, a couple of years is one's ship. After leaving your last ship you are soon in another and thus you have virtually a new "regiment". If one is a specialist your real home is where you took your specialist course. If on the other hand you are what is termed a "salt-horse", a non-specialist, you have no basic establishment. In Walpole there were two or three officers with whom I have kept in touch. There is Ted Tooley who lived at Hessle near Hull and his wife. I have kept in touch with the Tooleys all these years and am in fact godfather to one of their sons. Humphrey Juler, the doctor, was always a friend of mine and, strange to say, years later he became my GP at Charlbury. Finally, only about a year ago when at a concert at Bryanston School, a chap came up to me and said "You don't remember me do you, sir?" It was indeed Simmons who is now a four-ringed captain and had a son and daughter in the school. Simmons had been in Walpole with me. How well he must have been trained! I said a little earlier how sad it was to lose Walpole for ever and indeed it was a sad time for us all. Possibly the final signal from the Commander-in-Chief is worth quoting. It said "It is sad to see the passing of your fine ship. She has performed long and noble service and your commission has added lustre to her name".

On looking back over my two years in Walpole I feel I had been most fortunate. I had left a French Chaser and H.M.S.Stanley just before both ships were lost with all hands; I was sunk in H.M.A.S.Nestor and suffered not a scratch and though bullets had passed through the bridge in Walpole they had missed me. I had learnt a lot as well. I had to contend with substantial pilotage problems, tides, currents and shoal water. I learnt how to handle a destroyer well and now had two years' experience of Action Information and Plotting and had dealt successfully with many E Boat attacks. I also took part in one of the greatest invasions of Europe and lived to tell the story. Finally I had command of a happy and contented ship which was also an efficient unit of the Fleet.

CHAPTER V

H.M.S.TENACIOUS - ARMISTICE

In the early spring of 1945 I was appointed to be "Spare Destroyer Commanding Officer, Far East Fleet" and in due course embarked in a large troopship for passage to far eastern waters. I shared a cabin, if that is the right word, with twenty-two others and, needless to say, space was tight. In addition to the discomfort of the cramped conditions we had only two main meals a day which were timed on the following basis. Those who had breakfast at 7 a.m. had the evening, and last, meal at 4 p.m., and those who breakfasted at 7.45 a.m. had their last meal at 4.45 p.m. and so on. Though the meals were substantial one was extremely hungry by the time the next meal was due. This of course resulted in many, including myself, taking away a fid of food to fill the gap.

Though there were many senior officers on board I was appointed Officer Commanding Troops which, with the enormous number of troops being carried, was not an easy job. I did, of course, have some perks as it meant that I had an office to myself and a secretary of sorts as well as access to the Supreme Officer Commanding Troops, a Group Captain.

When we were in the Mediterranean the war in Europe ceased. After a long hard struggle Victory Europe had arrived at last. The order "Splice theMainbrace" was given and, strange to say, this Trooper had rum on board. I was thus faced with issuing out rum to many thousand officers and men. The great snag was to prevent the more foolhardy from "going round the buoy" and, with the numbers involved, this was a difficult task. I, as usual, used the Royal Marines to undertake the issue and I can remember quite clearly one Royal Marine Corporal passing out, not from drinking rum but simply from inhaling the fumes.

Among the many on board were a fair number of Australian troops and, when we were one day out from Perth, the Officer Commanding Troops told me there would be no leave ashore for anyone. I said I thought this was an unwise decision as the Australians had been away from home for a long time and I doubted whether they would accept such an order. Needless to say they did not and simply marched ashore past the sentries. The Officer Commanding then said that there was to be a route march through Perth of all troops on board. Again I demurred and pointed out that I did not think this was a wise idea but again I was over-ruled. The march started and, without exagerration, we lost nearly all the lower deck rates of all three services as we marched past pub after pub, and a few officers as well. O.C.Troops was livid but, when he recalled my warning, he did not dare

comment to me. In due course we arrived at Sydney and I was put up in the Hotel Metropole. This hotel was much frequented by the farming fraternity and the food was not only substantial in quantity but of a very high standard. Breakfast, for instance, consisted of fruit juice, grapefruit, eggs and bacon, with as many eggs as you liked, plus a large chop,with lashings of toast, honey or marmalade, with coffee or tea, and this gave me a most favourable impression of Australia after the stringent food rationing at home.

After a few weeks I was ordered to join Tenacious at Manus in the Admiralty Islands, New Guinea, and accordingly embarked on a trooping aircraft with many others. I said this was a trooping flight, and I suppose it was, though most of us had to sit on mail bags. When we landed at Townsville to refuel we learnt that one engine was defective. For three of four days we had to get down to the airport at about 6.30 a.m., only to discover after an hour or so that all was not well and there would be a further twenty-four hours delay. However, I made friends with a very charming Naval Chaplain and we passed the time pleasantly enough discussing religion and many other topics. At last we arrived at Manus and I was accommodated in the local mess until the next day when I arrived on board Tenacious to take over from Lieutenant Commander D.F.Townsend. Soon after I joined, the ship was alive with "buzzes" and on the 5th of July the Fleet came back from Australia and hurried preparations were made. The British Fleet consisted of one battleship, three carriers, six cruisers and eighteen destroyers, plus of course the Fleet Train Replenishment Force, yet none but the very privileged knew our ultimate destination. The Quartermaster was told to steer 040 degrees and the revolutions for fifteen knots were rung on. On our way to the north east I was told to refuel from the cruiser Achilles. All went well to start with, but then it appeared that Tenacious was not steering the course ordered and it was clear that unless immediate action was taken there would be a collision. Obviously something was seriously wrong so I decided to steer outwards and break the oil hose. It then became evident that the gyro compass had gone "off the board". Refuelling at sea is not difficult provided all goes well, but when, unexpectedly, there is a failure as in this case, instant action has to be taken to save the day.

While we continued on a north easterly course the secrecy of the operation continued, many saying "We don't know where we're going 'til we get there". Then, at last, I was able to speak to the ship's company and tell them that the British Fleet was proceeding to join up with the American Fleet under Admiral Halsey, for operations against Japan. It would thus be our duty to attack,

withdraw to replenish, and then attack again. On the 6th July we met up with the American Fleet to become the 4th Task Group. It was indeed a thrilling and imposing display of allied naval strength. Thus for the remainder of July and into August we struck the Japanese hour after hour. Over one thousand aeroplanes took part in the day strikes alone and, at the same time, the B29 Force from the U.S.Army Air Base commenced their destructive attacks. So strike after strike took place with only a short respite for replenishment. The destroyers during replenishment were very busy indeed. They had, of course, to refuel and replenish themselves and then to ferry all manner of items including spare parts for the aircraft, food, mail and everything imaginable to the carriers and cruisers. In fact it was a relief when night fell. Days lengthened into weeks and still we persisted in our attacks against the enemy. Then one day we had a break when we, in company with Terpsichore, Termagant, Newfoundland and Gambia, were detailed to take part in the first bombardment of the Japanese coast. Our target was the industrial centre of Kamaish. It was a tense moment as we approached the shores of the Japanese mainland on the morning of the 9th of August, particularly as Tenacious was the leading ship of the line. As the coast came nearer and nearer we expected the shore batteries to open fire at any moment. At last at about 12.45 we turned into line at a distance of about two miles, which to us seemed very much closer. At the same time the heavy American ships opened fire and the noise and concussion were enormous. At the same time it was not possible to see exactly how successful we had been, but we were soon to learn that aerial reconnaissance indicated that our major bombardment had been a great success. In all I suppose the bombardment had lasted for about two hours, and, as far as I can recall, we were not attacked at all, though there were a few spasmodic attacks on the American battleships. Soon after this operation we rejoined the Fleet and went about our normal, or almost normal, duties.

Though the two atomic bomb attacks actually took place on the 6th and 9th August I cannot recall hearing about them - perhaps they were not so described - but there were rumours that Japan might be considering surrender and at six o'clock in the morning, when our aeroplanes were on their way to bomb Kobe, we heard that the Japanese had surrendered unconditionally. At eleven o'clock, the time of the official Cease Fire, Admiral Halsey broadcast to the Fleet. No sooner had he started than there was a "Flash Red" and shortly afterwards a Japanese aircraft was seen diving vertically downwards towards the British carrier Indefatigable. Luckily it missed astern but this attack was sufficient to keep us on our toes - surrender or no surrender.

We thought it would be only a short time before we would all be sailing into Tokyo harbour, but this was not to be just yet. While we were waiting we ran into a typhoon. This was an awful day for us all and it is, so far as I am concerned, impossible to describe adequately. The wind rose, the sea rose, the rain poured down and, in a very short time, it was impossible to keep station or indeed to see anything at all. Radar was, of course, completely blotted out. There are rules for avoiding typhoons and I can only conclude that these were not obeyed. What I can say is that the conditions were so terrible that fighting was impossible. It was not even safe for anyone to attempt to cross the iron deck. All the British destroyers suffered some damage such as loss of boats and various equipment washed over the side. Those who have served in destroyers will know how uncomfortable they are in rough weather. Few will, I feel sure, have passed almost through the centre of a typhoon. I have heard many stories about typhoons and even heard some say that the centre is a flat calm. From my own experience this is simply not true. It was extremely rough and tempestuous weather and I had to decide how best to cope with this ghastly situation. I stopped all personnel movements on deck and then manoeuvred the ship on to the most comfortable course I could find and decided to ride the storm out. All things eventually come to an end and finally the weather began to improve, the wind eased, the rain stopped and the sea became less rough. From this experience I decided that if ever I were in command of a group of ships faced with the approach of a typhoon I would, as far as I could, follow the rules and avoid passing through the dangerous quadrant.

Once the typhoon had passed we reformed and things went on as usual. It was thus with relief that, at the end of August, Tenacious was sent round the fleet collecting mails, etc. and was then detached to proceed into Tokyo Bay. Early on the first of September, after sixty days at sea, we entered Tokyo and anchored in Sagami Bay.

The signing of the surrender took place in U.S.S.Missouri on the next day and, although we were only about a mile from her, it was not easy to see much in detail. However, with binoculars, I was able to watch the Japanese Generals and naval equivalents come on board. Clearly it was a great day for the Allies - the war, after so long and some disastrous occasions, had ended. I, for one, was deeply relieved. The British Commander-in-Chief was Admiral Bruce Fraser and on the night of the surrender he held a party in the King George V. To this party were invited all the Commonwealth (an expression not used at this time) Signatories, General Percival who surrendered at Singapore, a Captain of a

carrier, support carrier, cruiser, destroyer and a Captain from the Fleet Train. I was astonished to find that I was the destroyer Commanding Officer invited to attend this great dinner. Though this all took place over thirty-six years ago I can remember it all very clearly. The war had ended and we were, to put it mildly, relieved and thrilled. I sat next to an Air Commodore who was the New Zealand signatory and I asked him what it was like at the surrender. He said it had been most impressive to see all the high-ranking Japanese commanders coming in, saluting and handing over their swords. He said one could not help feeling very proud that we, the Allies, had won the day. New Zealand, being the most junior member of the Commonwealth, had to sign last. He explained that he had to sign three times, and when his turn came there were only two pens on the table. He had signed with the two pens and then taken his own fountain pen, a Parker, out of his pocket and signed the third paper with that. He was just about to put it away when the white-gloved hand of a U.S.Marine descended and a voice said "I am sorry, sir, but that pen has to go into the museum". It was a great dinner and I, and I dare say a few others, got a bit pixilated. Various "high-ups" made speeches and so I thought that perhaps I should propose a toast too. So I stood up and proposed the toast of His Majesty's Ship, King George V. No one laughed so I think I got away with it.

For our next job we were sent to South Japan to bring out Allied prisoners of war. We arrived at Hammamatsu, where there was a large camp, and embarked a considerable number of ex-prisoners of war. Though we were all so relieved that the war was over and our morale was high, it was certainly shaken when we saw these emaciated men all of whom had been underfed and many brutally assaulted. It had a very sobering effect on me when I realised how much these prisoners had suffered and how many had in fact died in captivity. After returning to Tokyo Bay with these ex-prisoners of war we were sent up to North China to bring out a large number of people who had been interned. On arriving at a port in the vicinity of Chingwangtoa I met a Consul who offered me a drink, saying that all he had to offer me was Russian vodka. So far as I knew I had never had vodka before and thought it would be rather fun to try it. The first glass did not seem to taste of anything much, so I did not hesitate to have another and then another. After the third I suddenly realised that it was a lot stronger than I had originally thought - I saw the red light and escaped with my life. We embarked a large number of internees aged anything from over eighty down to a few weeks. Amongst them was the Bishop of Shantung and though we were obviously short of cabins it was thought he should be allocated one. We loaded up with our valuable human cargo and set sail for Hong Kong. The next morning the First Lieutenant

came to me and said that the Bishop was not feeling too well and wondered whether he could have a tot of rum. I, perhaps rather stupidly, felt sorry for him and so he got his tot. However, when the request was repeated the next day, I had my suspicions and, though I am a strong supporter of the church, I felt that even bishops know a thing or two and so, unfortunately for him, the bishop did not have his second tot. It was a great experience bringing out the internees and, generally speaking, they were in far better condition than the British and Colonial prisoners of war we had brought out from South Japan.

During the period immediately after the signing of the armistice in Tokyo Tenacious was sent into Shanghai. On this occasion we were, I believe, only the third or fourth ship into the Wangpoo and there were no pilots. A destroyer does not draw much water so the risk of running aground is not so great as it would be in a cruiser. I kept to the middle of the river and, with a prayer on my lips, arrived safely. The tide runs very fast at Shanghai except at slack water, and by careful planning we managed to turn round and secure before the rush of the flood tide. I knew two families in Shanghai. My cousins, Bernard and Joyce Crowley lived in a pleasant house a little way from the main centre. He was the manager of Butterfield and Swire, but as the war progressed they were ultimately told that they would be interned within twenty-four hours, so they put all their valuable possessions in a case and buried it in the garden, just in time as they were interned the next day. They said that life in internment was safe but dreadfully boring and that food was very short, but their Chinese servants loyally came once a week and gave them extra food which greatly relieved the pangs of hunger. The other couple that I knew was the Manager of the Trams and his wife whom I had met, I think, coming out to New Zealand many years before. They were both Scots and very kind and hospitable. They too, like my cousins, had been interned and were now endeavouring to get their organisation running again. We had a very happy time as I frequently had them on board. The Manager of Trams and his wife were bridge players so we had several games of bridge when they dined with me. My cabin was on a deck above the bathroom and lavatories and, in my stupidity, we men went below to relieve ourselves leaving the women to use the tiny little closet which had no lavatory, only a wash basin. They politely pointed out their difficulty and a rather red-faced Lieutenant Commander had to put matters to rights. Needless to say one only makes this sort of mistake once.

While we were in Shanghai we spent a lot of our time repairing buildings, such as various clubs. Having a shipwright and several engine-room artificers

as well as some amateurish help, we soon made quite an impact. Eventually our time to leave arrived and we set sail for Hong Kong. By the time we returned there, great strides had been made to get the place back into some sort of recognisable shape, and the ship's company and officers had an opportunity to play games.

Before sailing south back to Australia I was asked to take two old missionaries with me - a brother and sister, both over eighty and the sister crippled with arthritis. After careful thought and, knowing the weather and life at sea in destroyers, I reluctantly declined, recommending that they go in a larger ship. The brother came to see me and begged me to take them. I said that it would be very difficult as there were no lavatories near my cabin, and for someone who could hardly walk it seemed to me it would be impossible. He then asked me whether I had any idea of what the life of a missionary was like, let alone what it was like to be interned by a nation which did not believe in Christianity. I gave in and said we would do our best to make them comfortable. In due course they arrived in a boat and then the trouble began since a destroyer's ladder is not designed to be climbed by someone suffering from arthritis. We rigged the torpedo davit and attached a chair to the end, instead of the usual fitting, and up she came. She was then carried to my cabin. I, possibly somewhat embarrassed, explained that there were no lavatories on this deck and no other woman aboard to help. She just laughed and said something like this "I have suffered more privations than you would imagine and the fact that you are going to take us to Australia is a wonderful thing". She went on to say that bedpans or pots would be ideal and that she would make friends not only with the Sick Berth Attendant but with the whole ship's company. I learnt a lesson that I shall never forget. The sequel to this story is that it was fairly rough on the way south but Mrs.Missionary, as I called her, was not sick and held court to every member of the ship's company who were all charmed by her.

I can remember most clearly on one occasion, soon after berthing at Hong Kong, we were instructed to proceed with all dispatch to search for a ditched R.A.A.F. Dakota. It had left Hong Kong that morning bound for Sydney and it was believed to have crashed somewhere in the vicinity of Hainan Island. When instructed to proceed "with dispatch" we did exactly that. We left at high speed and proceeded through Leimun Pass at twenty-four knots, causing a certain amount of consternation to the many water craft in the vicinity. In conjunction with the navigator, Chick Thornton, we decided to start the search well to the windward of the best known position of the crashed aircraft and then to search down wind.

Though it was a rough weather day we had the sea behind us and this saved us from damaging our ship. By the time we arrived at our starting point it was dark. I placed many lookouts and prepared to use starshell and searchlights. We were lucky because it was not too long before someone sighted a light and in a short time we had saved six survivors which was a great relief to us all. Three other destroyers joined us and a more thorough search was conducted, but unfortunately with no success.

I am always amazed how almost every ship in which I have served seems to have the ability to produce excellent entertainment. Sometimes this is in the form of a pantomime, a thrilling play, pure comedy and even a so-called "radio programme". In Tenacious we were extremely fortunate as the Gunner (T), Mr.Valentine, was an ace at producing not only a pantomime but also "Radio Tenacious". One Christmas pantomime at Shanghai was a real masterpiece. It was strongly supported by the Shanghai Dramatic Society and was really funny - nobody who saw it will forget Squire Turpentine and many others. Such forms of entertainment which involve a fair number of the ship's company are really worthwhile and everyone, almost without exception, thoroughly enjoys them.

Time marches on and, at last, we were almost on our way home. We reached Shanghai on New Year's Eve. The Wangpoo was ablaze with the signal "Happy New Year" flying from every yardarm as we entered and moved towards our berth. We only stayed a few hours in Shanghai and then slipped and sailed past the Belfast. This was a stirring moment as she gave us a great cheer as we left. So, in company with another destroyer, we sailed home stopping at Hong Kong, Darwin and down through the Great Barrier Reef. This was quite an experience as many of the normal navigational aids were still missing. By placing good lookouts with strict instructions to report any possible sign of shoal waters we managed to get through what was really a most fascinating trip without any trouble. We arrived at Sydney where we stayed for a few days and then sailed for Melbourne.

Even today I am amazed at the variety of duties ships are called on to perform. A good example is to record what happened when we were at Melbourne. We were told to take a million pounds in gold back to England. A little man came on board to explain what we had to do. I decided that we would place the gold in one of the magazines and I had a special awning rigged under the brow (gangway) and although each bag was heavy we counted them twice, once when they arrived at the brow and again when they were passed down into the magazine. In due course all the boxes were embarked and stowed down the magazine which was

locked and the key given to me. The little man then came to my cabin and asked for my signature for receiving one million pounds in gold for passage to the United Kingdom. I explained to him that I could not very well sign as all I knew was that we had received so many boxes said to contain gold, but of course I did not know what in fact each box contained. We had clearly reached an impasse. Finally he said that if I lost only one of the boxes I would never be able to pay for it. Eventually after a drink or two I decided that I had better sign. I then had a few weeks to decide what to do when we finally got back to Devonport. When we did in fact arrive there a van came alongside with a motor bicycle police escort. A man came on board and said that he was from the Bank of England and had come for the gold. I said to him that, before we started to disembark the gold,he must of course be prepared to sign a statement to the effect that he had received one million pounds in gold. He said, as I had done previously, that this was quite impossible. I then said that unless he signed or I was given a direct order to hand the gold over we could get no further. Drink is a wonderful lubricant in difficult situations because after two, or was it three, he signed and the gold was finally disembarked. That is the closest I have been to being, at least temporarily, a millionaire.

We only had five days at Melbourne when we embarked food for Britain, followed by only two days at Freemantle where most of us topped up with food and "goodies" for our families before we said Goodbye to Australia. We then had that long voyage across the Indian Ocean. Here, through the tireless efforts of the Gunner (T), entertainment abounded. He ran fancy dress parades, impromptu concerts, tug-of-war contests and every conceivable amusement. We stayed only two days in Ceylon and to everyone's great joy it was spent at Colombo and not at Trincomalee. Here many bought tea, sandals and presents before we sped on to Aden via Bombay. We had only a few hours at Aden en route to Port Said. Though it was a Sunday it was agreed that we should paint ship as this would be the last opportunity before arriving in the United Kingdom. Here there was a slight setback as one of the rating passengers was a trouble maker and he aroused some of the ship's company to object to working on Sunday. However, by diplomatic handling, all turned out well. On arrival in the United Kingdom there was, however, a Board of Enquiry and in due course I received a mild rebuke from Their Lords of the Admiralty. The Commander-in-Chief, Plymouth sent for me and said "Don't worry, we all get these sort of things from time to time and who knows they at least keep you in the Public Eye". A rather encouraging outlook I thought. After a fairly straightforward trip through the Mediterranean we finally arrived at Devonport and here, at last,

were our family and friends waiting on the jetty. This was a great home-coming for us all.

I suppose it is easy for a captain of a ship to say what a splendid ship she was but, on this occasion, I earnestly believe she was a fine ship and that we really were a first class team. The ship's officers, excluding me, wrote a little booklet called "H.M.S.Tenacious, Her Story", and I thought I would quote a piece of verse at the end of it which rather sums up the feelings of us all. It is:-

The Roger Forty-Five

Before you sleep tonight, my son, just listen to this story
About a ship which did a job, and gained no fame or glory,
I sailed in her from Portsmouth and the Tyne,
Her Lines were smart, her funnel raked, a warship of the line.
The Twenty-fourth Flotilla, and as sure as I'm alive,
There weren't a finer ship, my lad, than Roger Forty-Five.

We sailed in fog and snow and sleet from Pompey's muddy shores,
To fight a foe with slitted eyes who saw some fun in wars.
But it weren't no fun for us, my boy, to leave our friends at home.
Your mother cried, I know it well, when left upon her own.
But the Navy asks no questions, we heard her engines drive,
And off we went through Suez in the Roger Forty-Five.

We called in all them foreign ports, with niggers, Yanks and Wogs,
But give me good old London; yes, even with its fogs.
Kids we were, or very nearly; some had never been to sea.
It wasn't long before they learnt that the passage wasn't free.
For months we practised, fired the guns and saw our targets dive,
And sometimes, just a little, we cursed that Roger Forty-Five.

We steamed her on to Aden, and blimey was it hot,
The poor old greasers down below lost all the sweat they'd got.
Across the Indian Ocean to Trinco in Ceylon,
We went ashore and had some beer and found our pay had gone.
But the gods they had some pity, the fates they must have sighed,
For they sailed us down to Sydney in the Roger Forty-Five.

Ten days we had in Sydney; it bucked us up a lot,
Drinking, dancing, laughing and all that 'silly rot',
But it couldn't last for ever, we knew it had to end,
And they shoved us up to Manus, without a make-and-mend.
Working up and exercises, we were only just alive,
When they sent a signal,"Join the Fleet", to the Roger Forty-Five.

Most of us were glad by then, to know the time had come
To test our strength and prove our worth, and down the Rising Sun.
And we took our place at the end of May with all the other ships,
But we never saw much fun and we never saw the Nips.
So we started off a rumour, it spread like honey in a hive,
That no Jap would ever wait to read our Roger Forty-Five.

A month in harbour cleaning up, then off to sea again,
Full of hope to get a crack and give the Japs some pain,
And though we sailed around for weeks, seven and fifty days at sea,
We never won no medals nor gained the D.S.C.
Fuelling, striking, fuelling, striking, on and on it went,
And Roger Forty-Five, poor thing, was very nearly spent.

But the Japs had had enough by then, their last few hours had come,
So we celebrated victory with an extra tot of rum.
They signed the peace in Tokyo Bay, and we were there to see
That the Allied prisoners and women were set free.
And though they talked of Atom Bombs, how could the Japs survive
When they had to deal with ships like the Roger Forty-Five.

We did some time in China - a costly job it were -
And met a Chinese maiden, and spent a lot on her,
But you didn't have to worry, it weren't no use to save
So we spent the lot and laughed it off, none blamed the price he paid.
The ship was painted overall and packed for home in Spring,
Our Roger Forty-Five by then was wearing pretty thin.

In Darwin, Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, we'd friends in every port,
Some had girls and some had aunts, none were the bachelor sort.
And many a tear was shed the day we left the Heads behind
And some damn fool sits down and writes that sailormen don't mind.
We minded then, I'm telling you, the facts some tried to hide,
But homeward bound we soon forgot in Roger Forty-Five.

We'd sailed that ship around the world and felt in her a pride
When we sailed her into Plymouth on the early morning tide.
They stripped her down, took out her heart and stuck her on a heap.
And now, my son, you're tired I see, so you must get some sleep,
But remember what I've told you, for as long as I'm alive,
There weren't a better ship, my lad, than Roger Forty-Five.

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CHAPTER VI

P E A C E T I M E

After arrival back home I was, like the rest of my ship's company, given foreign service leave which I spent largely at home at Hartfield.

At the age of about twelve I got approval from my father to buy a four ten shot gun which I had found at a little gun and sports shop at Forest Row. It was a Belgian gun and in those days cost me only £1.17.6. You can probably imagine my delight when I shot a rabbit that very evening. I had spent quite a lot of my youth fishing, either in what we called Wright's Pond or else in the stream a mile or perhaps less below us. Pooh's Bridge may ring a bell. It was in fact a bridge long before A.A.Milne came to live at Cotchford Farm and even I can remember Christopher Robin in his pram. Most of my fishing was for coarse fish though occasionally we caught a trout in the stream. I was persuaded, largely by my godfather, Teddy Dibdin, that I might enjoy some real trout fishing and he very kindly gave me a rod and reel. Thus equipped I went down to the East Dart Hotel at Postbridge on Dartmoor where I started to learn to fish, teaching myself as best I could. However, the water bailiff came along and helped me a lot and this was thus the beginning of my great interest in fly-fishing.

After my leave I was appointed to H.M.S.Dryad to start up their new Small Ships Action Plotting Organisation. This was really up my street as I had had a lot of this sort of experience in Walpole. I would like to think that at least I contributed something. I remember lecturing three senior officers, one of whom was Rear Admiral Mountbatten, and a few days after this I read in the papers that he was going as the new Viceroy to India. A long time before I had applied for the Naval Staff Course and I was delighted, after only one year in Dryad, to receive my next appointment to Greenwich for this six month course on which there were only about thirty-five of us. Apart from learning some straightforward staff work we also had some really excellent lectures. The Director was Captain Hutton whose younger son served under me in the Newfoundland a few years later.

After the staff course I was sent to Chatham to serve as Staff Officer Movements on the staff of the Commander-in-Chief of The Nore, a rather nice admiral called Sir Herold Burrough.

Here I think I must break off to deal with a rather different part of my life. We lived, as I have said, at Cotchford Wood at Hartfield and I suppose about half a mile away down the road a new house was built just before the war.

During the war the army occupied it, but they left in about 1944 and it was bought by Mr.and Mrs.Jelf. There was one daughter called Una who had some very secret job in the Wrens to do with cypher breaking. After Victory Europe she decided she would like a different job and went out to Ceylon where she remained until after the end of the war in the Far East. She had become engaged to a Canadian and thus, when I got back from Tenacious on leave, she was shortly due to go to Canada to see for herself what it was like there. She went to Canada and when she came back the buzz spread that she had decided to break off her engagement. I was in any case interested and it was not long after that I popped the question. She said that she must have time to think about it but a few days later she said she would like to marry me. On the 5th June 1948 we were married at Hartfield Church. I had a lot of naval friends and we were all in uniform so, when we left the church, there were plenty of swords making a lovely arch for us. As I left the church someone said to me "Do you know who won the Derby ?" I said I did not even know it was Derby Day and I did not really know much about racing. "Well, you may remember the name of this winner - it was My Love". This at least gave me something to say at the inevitable speech. Finally we went by air to Juan-les-Pins.

After our honeymoon we returned to Chatham. One of the problems was that rented accommodation was expensive and we were not all that wealthy so we finally decided to take two rooms at a place called Conies, a few miles out. Conies belonged to Mrs.Peters, a widow, who was terribly kind to us. Our two rooms were not palatial by any means. There was no electric light and we relied on a paraffin lamp. There was only one loo and that was in the bathroom - for a Crowley almost a calamity - and our bedroom was rather damp. Despite everything we were very happy there and very soon I had rigged up a gas light in the sitting room. I was not on the C-in-C's staff very long when at short notice I was moved to London as the junior naval adviser to a committee called the Joint Intelligence Committee. Our job was to write papers on any subject we were given. We then went back to our Ministries to find out all we could, after which we put all our views together to produce a draft. When we had completed our work it went on to the Committee. Our team consisted of Naval, Army and Air Force officers, a member of the Joint Intelligence Bureau, which dealt with logistics, and a member of the Foreign Service with access to MI5 and MI6. The first thing we had to do was to find somewhere to live and for a few weeks we lived in part of a flat in Ebury Street. As luck would have it a friend of mine, Bruno Brown, was moving out of his flat in High Park Road in Kew, so we moved there. This flat was in many ways rather nice. True it was small, but comfortable and, not only

that, but it was very close to Kew Gardens and there is always something flowering at its best there irrespective of the time of year.

I enjoyed my job very much. My senior was a Commander Thomson who was highly efficient, but he was for many not an easy man to get on with, however if you were in the right you were half way home, and I managed to cope with him. During my two years we had to write many papers, some of them on the most difficult subjects. I think it would be fair to say that we were not always right but one must bear in mind that we were entirely dependent on what intelligence we were given and a good guess which could not be supported by evidence was not acceptable.

It was not long before Una was pregnant and on the 20th July 1949 Patrick was born. The extraordinary thing was that he had auburn hair, when both Una and I are basically mouse or the next best thing to that colour. My mother was darkish but all her brothers and sisters had auburn hair. Patrick was born at a nursing home at Hartfield. In due course Commander Thomson was passed over and I think he managed to get a job with MI5 - when Thomson wanted something he invariably got his way. Over night I became a highly efficient chap and was clearly just the man to be given the acting rank of Commander so that I could be his relief! This was exactly what happened. I was promoted for my second year to the number one position. The most important thing in this job was to have good relations with the representatives of the other two services.

After my two years I was sent to the Joint Services Staff Course at Latimer. It seemed in a way to be rather odd to send me to that course since I had just completed two years of solid joint work. I forgot to mention that by this time we had bought a tiny little house at Oxted in Surrey, needless to say on a mortgage, so when I went to the JSSC we were back at Little Orchard. I was very lucky because my course at Latimer was a full summer course and the weather on the whole was good. One of the great attractions of this course for me was trout fishing. Part of the estate consisted of a glorious river running through two lakes and there were a great many fish. I did say that I thought a fee of a pound a term, which enabled us to fish every day, was a silly charge and that it would pay the College to charge a much higher rate. I was right because it was not long after this that we lost the fishing. I did enjoy it very much and actually caught some good fish several of which were of quite a decent size. It irritated me a bit to see the odd heron playing havoc with the trout. They never seemed to be satisfied with just one fish. The course was good and despite my previous

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Arthur John Power

experience it was very helpful. There is no doubt that it is good for one to have to argue in defence of one's own point of view - and sometimes one can be wrong. It was some time towards the end of 1950 that Una was pregnant again, and after careful thought we decided to get a Swiss girl and we were extremely lucky to find Alice Crausez who was sweet. Her father was a small-time farmer in the French part of Switzerland and her uncle, who left Switzerland as quite a young man, was then Rector of Pittsburg University in America. Roger was born at Little Orchard and Alice saw him when he was not more than half an hour old. She stayed with us for a year before going back to Switzerland. After a break she went to America and was there for over two years. All this time she had a boy friend in Switzerland and when she returned from the States she married him. He was in charge of the workings of a dental factory situated in the country. Alice had two children - the boy is now studying to be a doctor and the girl is also training to be a special kind of nurse.

During the Joint Services Staff Course I was promoted to Commander. I was again lucky as the promotion was announced when we were on a short leave thus, thank goodness, I did not have to stand the whole course drinks. After the course I was appointed to the staff of the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth, as the NATO Planner. Our first difficulty was to find a house. We thought, like many others, that we would live about six or seven miles out on the Portsmouth side but, alas, we could find nothing in our price range. Everyone in the Navy lives at Alverstoke once in their lives and so we eventually found a house there in Western Way. Alverstoke is, of course, the other side of the harbour which means you either have to cross by ferry or motor some miles round. Now I was a Commander I thought perhaps work would slacken a bit but there was no chance of that as I was always busy, not only thinking out what the British views should be, but being as tactful as I could to our French and Dutch opposite numbers. This was not too difficult so far as the Dutch were concerned as they invariably took a practical view. The French were less easy as there did not seem to be much, in their eyes, which did not have some political flavour. I did however get on well with both my NATO partners. I must relate a story about one of the Dutch officers who looked after the anti-submarine side of the business. Before the war he was in South Africa, doing a mining job as a civilian. When he was called up he was asked by the Interviewing Officer what he had done in South Africa, to which he replied "I was involved in a mining firm". "Oh that's easy", said the interviewer,"you will go into the mining side". Apart from the day to day planning I was also heavily involved in NATO exercises. These had to be organised so that all members felt that they were taking an equal part and that

sought authority to have a bar up there. On the great day we all sat in comfort, possibly sipping some lethal drink, getting a perfect view of this wonderful event. The other great thing that took place at about this time was the Naval Coronation Review at Spithead. Naval ships from all over the world massed in Spithead ready for the great occasion. Much of the planning was done by the Commander-in-Chief's Staff with the assistance of a few extra officers. It was a splendid day and one we all enjoyed. H.M.S.Surprise with the Queen and Prince Philip on board sailed round the Fleet and as she passed each ship she was loudly cheered by the ships' companies which were all fallen in in what is termed the "manning ship position". Una and I were lucky enough to have seats in H.M.S. Boxer so we had a splendid view of the proceedings.

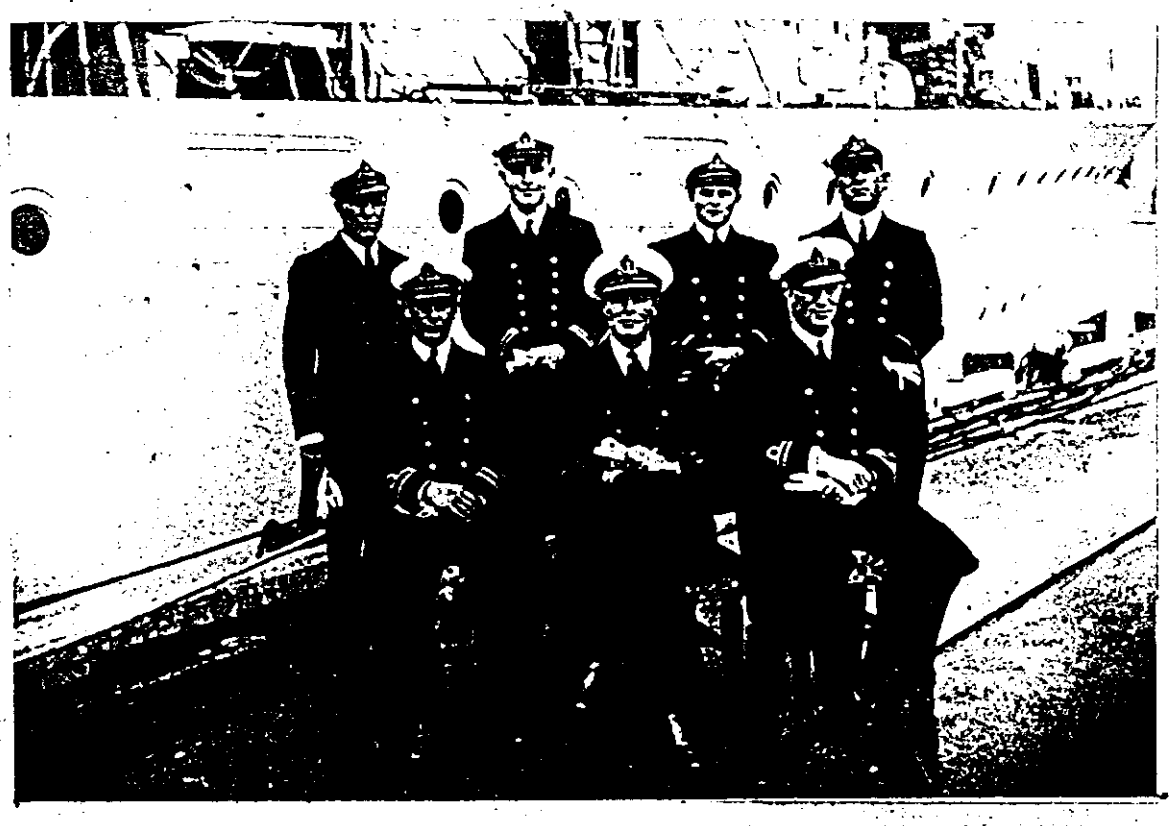
In the evening there was a Coronation Naval Review Ball to which we and many others were invited. This was really a slap-up "do" held in the Naval Barracks at Portsmouth. In addition to a large number of officers from the Royal Navy there were also many from foreign navies and we had two from the Turkish Navy to look after. This proved quite a task as neither Una nor I is able to speak a word of Turkish and they could speak no English. Communication thus was difficult. There was another problem as neither of them appeared to be all that human. Though patience is a virtue I decided after a period that ours was exhausted so we left them, possibly a bit tipsy, and went our own way. I said this was a slap-up "do". Everyone was dressed in their very best naval evening dress, the food was simply excellent; in fact I would say, possibly with the exception of oysters (it was after all June!), there was nothing you could not have. There was also an enormous choice of drinks. It was in fact the whale of a party of the very highest standard.

Perhaps I should mention something about my NATO partners. First there was the French Staff Officer, a very friendly chap by the name of Pepin Lehalleur. I should say that his knowledge of things nautical was less pronounced than his concern with the importance of the political aspects. We all liked him very much. He once gave a wonderful party at his "English" home where drink and the most superb French food abounded. My Dutch colleague was equally nice. He was called Vos von Steinweik. He was much more interested in the nautical aspect and of course in the part that the Dutch Navy was going to play. We had no regular Belgian representative. Full NATO meetings were usually held in England, Paris or The Hague. By strange coincidence the Dutch meetings always took place at tulip time and at these full meetings the heads of NATO attended. We usually had about fifteen minutes to spare so that we could get a good look at the tulips

from the air before we were due to land. Sometimes after the meeting, which was a pretty formal affair, we would have about forty or fifty minutes in a car seeing tulips at close quarters. The meetings in Paris were also fun. The only snag here, at least as far as I was concerned, was that much of the business was conducted in French. Mountbatten was an excellent linguist and I used just to keep my head above water. On one occasion I was invited to sit next to the French Naval Chief of Staff, and my heart sank, but he was so kind and spoke to me entirely in excellent English. The meals in Paris were, needless to say, superb.

Though the staff of the C-in-C was large when one included Medical, Dental and Marine officers, the Head Minewatcher and many others, the actual executive team was small. The Chief of Staff was a pleasant and able man by the name of Rear Admiral Reid who later finished up as a full admiral. My immediate boss was a Captain "Sandy" Gordon-Lennox assisted by a commander, Philip Sharp, who played a major part in the planning of our command. Then there was another commander who was the Staff Officer Operations who ran the day to day operations, movements etc., myself who did the NATO work, a Staff Communicator and a Lieutenant Commander who handled a lot of the NATO exercises. Ginally there were two others: Sandy Campbell, a Wing Commander, who was extremely nice and, last but not least, the Minewatching King. He was a charming man called Liveing who was more of a friend to us than a staff officer.

On leaving Portsmouth we moved back to Little Orchard at Oxted. I was then appointed to H.M.S.Newfoundland as the Commander, that is the Second-in-Command and Executive Officer. I prepared myself to fly out to Singapore and packed what I considered to be a small trunk. I stayed the night at the United Services Club when it was pointed out to me that perhaps the trunk would be a bit big for the aircraft. Next morning I rushed up to Marks and Spencer and bought three large expandable suitcases and repacked in the Club and sent off the empty trunk back home. We had a safe and uneventful journey out to Singapore. My new Captain was Captain M.G.Goodenough (Mike). Many people said to me that he was not the easiest "cup of tea" and that I had better know my stuff. I should say that his bark was much worse than his bite. By warning many of his defaulters and not punishing them he kept his punishment return very low. Newfoundland was in dry dock and was about three-quarters of the way through a refit. I took over from my predecessor and very soon after the Captain told me that he was being sent up the Persian Gulf to be President of a Court Martial. His parting words to me were "Be sure you do not over punish, often a warning is better than punishment." Away he went for about fourteen days. Not long after his departure, three men,



The Officers of H.M.S.Wellington - 1938

H.M. The Queen arriving on board H.M.S.Newfoundland, 1954

two seamen and a marine, were caught drinking some potent stuff in one of the bathrooms in "Newfie". They were brought before the Officer of the Day who immediately placed them on the Commander's Report. I had already discovered that discipline in the ship was on the lax side. They all received warrant punishment and the local Admiral approved that they should receive five days' cells. I then heard one or two buzzes that the new Commander was considered to be tough, that it was no good expecting to get away lightly, and two Chief Petty Officers were even heard to say "Thank goodness we now have someone who knows what he is about." In due course the Captain arrived back and his first words to me were "Have you had many punishments, Commander ?". I said that we had had a few including three warrant punishments of cells. I thought he was going to take off. However, when I explained the situation to him he calmed down and I think I actually scored a "bull's eye".

My general experience of big ships was limited but what makes a happy ship is really the same whether you are serving in a big or small unit. I got the Commanders together and we agreed that if we pulled together this would in fact indicate good leadership. Probably my best friend was the Pusser Commander, a splendid man called Geoff Henderson. He always seemed to have his ear to the ground and was always wise in his advice. The Engineer Commander was Geoffrey Pearce, and though I liked him he was not really a very dynamic person. The Doctor was a charming man and very helpful and the Electrical Commander was equally pleasant and supported us well.

It was not too long before we had the pleasant duty of escorting the Gothic with the Queen and Prince Philip on board. I always remember she had Pamela Mountbatten as one of her Ladies in Waiting. The motor boat was alongside the Gothic and down the ship's ladder came the Lady in Waiting carrying a yellow sunshade. Relieve this or not she accidentally dropped the sunshade which fell into the sea, and as far as I could see completely disappeared. She hurried up the ladder back on board when there was a brief discussion about, I assume, what to do next. In due course she came down again, with no sunshade this time, followed by the Queen and Prince Philip. When we arrived at Colombo they were invited to lunch on board. Here I discovered something I did not know, that you cannot choose what is on the menu, as this has to be arranged by the Queen's advisers. A marine guard was paraded on the jetty, our Admiral, Sir William Slater, and our Captain were also there ready to receive the Queen. The Captain had already had a couple of dress rehearsals and he had told us all that, if by any chance he forgot anyone's name he would make one up quickly and that person was to hang on to that name.

The Queen was wearing an attractive white dress and white sling-back shoes. As she came over the brow, the ship's gangway, one sling slipped between her heel and her shoe and she was sort of pawing the ground slightly. Prince Philip said "If I were you, darling, I would stoop down and put it on correctly." This she did. The lunch went well but, alas, I was not invited. We all, that is the whole ship's company, mustered on the forecastle for a photograph. The Queen was introduced to all the officers and also to a selected number of the ship's company including at least two Somalis. We had a number of them on board to do some of the cleaning work in the ship; amongst them we also had some so-called "sweepers" who I understood were a class below the ordinary Somali.

I liked Admiral Slater very much indeed. He was pleasant, able and blessed with a sense of humour. When we were cruising round the Indian Ocean he was often accompanied by Lady Slater and sometimes, when at sea, the Quarterdeck Awning used to be rigged so that she could sit on deck in the shade. I remember once when I met the Admiral on deck he asked if I would have the awning put up for Lady Slater. I had learnt by this time that the wise thing was to do as I was told. Accordingly I piped "Clear Lower Deck" and proceeded to erect the awning. In a few minutes I was sent for by the Captain and asked why I was erecting the Quarterdeck Awning and I said because Admiral Slater had asked me to rig it. "Take it down", he ordered, and this is what I did. When I next saw the admiral he said "I thought I asked you to rig the Quarterdeck Awning." "Yes", I replied, "but the Captain told me to take it down". The Admiral then went on to the bridge where there was evidently a discussion between him and the Captain. The net result was that the Quarterdeck Awning remained down. I often used to say that Captain Goodenough was six feet six inches tall in harbour but a small man at sea. His ship handling was poor to say the least.

Though perhaps I have been a bit critical, I nevertheless respected Captain Goodenough who was a great Staff Officer and a man to be reckoned with. We all knew that he was due to be relieved soon, and so we decided to hold a farewell dinner for him before we left Trincomalee in Ceylon. It was a gay evening and we all hoped he enjoyed it. There was I am glad to say a good menu of Consomme a la Celestine, Smoked Fillets of Salmon, Roast Duck, Madeira Sauce, Game Chips, Cauliflower and Green Peas, Iced Caramel Basket, Asparagus and Butter Sauce, Dessert and Coffee. Needless to say there was ample to drink as well.

When we were at Trinco we used to have a sort of competition during the afternoon when we made every endeavour to get as many of the ship's company to

take part as possible. There were all sorts of competitions such as running and then stepping on to the seat of a chair and over, usually there were about three chairs; a race with a tin plate on your head and a wooden club in your right hand which you had to wave around and if the tin plate fell off you had to start again; a hop, skip and jump competition; a sack race, a three-legged race and many others. I got a lot of officers to take part including myself. There was also beer available at a small cost. We had I think three competitions and they were very popular. There is a small island called Sober Island and on Sundays, provided you booked, you could get a tip top curry. There was also bathing, sailing and picnics. The Navy also had a camp up country and this was where we sent the ship's company for a few days' rest. I went to a place above this camp with Arthur Hutton to fish for trout. We caught a number of them which had been introduced by British settlers many years before. Some of the pools and bends had some rather alarming names such as Skeleton Pool and Leopards Beware but, thank goodness, we did not see any alarming creatures. We stayed in a wooden hut and more or less looked after ourselves.

On our way to Aden I was shown my Confidential Report, S206, which was very good. Captain Goodenough always showed his officers what he had written in these reports, but I never agreed with this scheme as there was a tendency not always to change the report downwards if the person deserved it. After we arrived at Aden Captain E.L.Thomas, Captain Goodenough's relief, was there waiting. We said goodbye to our Captain and soon after sailed with Captain Thomas in charge. I liked him very much indeed. He was a much quieter man than his predecessor and also able. He had once been a qualified navigator and his ship handling was excellent.

Possibly one of the more interesting things we had to do was to take part in a great parade in Penang. We now had an equally nice Admiral on board, Admiral Gerald Gladstone, a man I had had dealings with before when he was Captain of the Black Prince. This parade was a tri-service function and contained native troops as well as our own. Because we had the Flag on board it was up to Newfoundland to organise this substantial parade, and it suddenly dawned on me that I would have to be Parade Commander. I got hold of the Gunnery Officer, an excellent man called Mitchell, and said that while I appreciated that I would have to be in total charge I would prefer to give the minimum of orders. We had a quick dummy run and I then realised how well he had organised the whole affair, as I would in fact have to give only two orders. The first was a General Salute of Present Arms when the Governor arrived on the dais, and the second to order the whole parade to step off at the quick; thereafter I would station myself on the right

of the dais and hope all would go well. The parade did in fact go off very well indeed. In the evening the Newfoundland had agreed to darken ship and put on a firework display: another job for the Gunnery Officer. This too was pretty successful but there was one hitch. In order to prepare for this display a large number of rockets were laid on the forecastle ready for immediate firing. Unfortunately one forework fell to the ground and set the whole lot of ready rockets alight. I was with the Captain on the bridge and we wondered what on earth had happened when we saw this terrific blaze. The total effect ashore was terrific as it was a most spectacular sight. With great skill it was possible to save the day and complete the display. Earlier a cousin of Una's, Miles Hudson, came on board to see me. He asked me to come ashore after the display for a drink and some supper. So when the hiatus had sobered down I excused myself and met him at some prearranged spot in Penang.

When at Hong Kong the commanders tried hard to give our Captain, Thomas, a dinner ashore. Unfortunately it was the monsoon or typhoon season and at the last minute he decided that he must remain on board.

I suppose my memoirs would not be complete without a mention of Japan. I had of course been there before, immediately after the war ended, but now peace had reigned for a few years and the situation had improved. I might say that I have never really liked the Japanese men, though whether they hide their real feelings it is difficult to know. On this visit to Tokyo we all, I suppose, browsed round the shops and bought a few things. It was interesting to note that Japanese goods in Hong Kong were in fact a little cheaper that they were in Japan. Many people had one of the special hot baths, including the Captain, but I did not, for some reason or other. A group of about four or possibly five Commanders, including our Major of Marines, all sought out one of those female nudist displays which was quite fun.

We also had a brief visit to Karachi where we had to take part in a small rowing regatta against the Pakistanis. We had not had much time to practise but we were determined to win, so that really strenuous efforts were made and victory was ours. One day we put on a rifle drill display followed by Beating the Retreat. This proved very popular. I must record a silly story when we went to Bombay. We were, or rather the Wardroom were, asked to a drinks party given by the Europeans. As we were anchored out we all had to come in by boat, and in due course we arrived together at, I suppose, a polite fifteen minutes late. There were only two of our hosts there and they apologised profusely saying that the others would be along

shortly with the booze. Evidently Europeans by signing some chit or other were allowed a reasonable ration of drink. Within fifteen minutes all the hosts arrived and believe me there was no shortage of hooch that night.

Our next assignment was a cruise up the Persian Gulf. By this time Admiral Slater had left and was relieved by Admiral Charles Norris. He was a great man for after dinner games and on one occasion, when at Trinco, he organised a game at which there were two a side and, as far as I gathered, you hurled, or perhaps you hit, a ball over a net. After a few minutes he complained that the game was going too slowly. The next time the ball went over the net towards the Admiral it hit him fair and square on the head and he went down like a log, knocked out, and it took him some weeks before he was back to square one.

We had an interesting time in the Persian Gulf. This was a part of the world new to me. I remember most clearly when we arrived at Muscat in Oman. The first thing I noticed was that on the peak or rocky hill on the left were painted many of the names of H.M.Ships that had visited here previously. It was not long before "Newfoundland" 's name was among them. The regulations ashore were very strict. Everyone had to wear a hat and no smoking or drinking was allowed. One evening we had the Sultan - in fact his deputy arrived in his place - plus about six or seven high-ups for drinks, buffet supper and a film. The Admiral said to me "I don't expect our visitors will drink anything except soft drinks, but you must have some hard drinks behind the turret because we have got to keep going." In due course they arrived and I approached the senior man, "What would you like to drink,Sir," I enquired, "We have lemon and orange squash and tomato juice available". He replied "Haven't you got anything stronger ?" "Yes, of course we have, Sir. What would you like ?" To which he replied that he would like a double whisky and soda. In fact they all drank hard drinks. I asked him how it was that they were so strict ashore and yet behaved a little differently in the Newfoundland. "Ah," he said, "but I am not ashore now and we all have to go to the South of France for at least two months in the year to prepare for the next ten."

Everywhere we went the sheiks, at least the head ones, all came on board and were received by the Admiral, shown the ship and occasionally allowed to fire off a saluting gun. In a few places such as Kuwait, the ruler, Sheik Sir Abdulla, possibly one of the richest men in the Gulf, was preceeded by his own body guard. They wore blue trousers, scarlet tunics with about ten brass buttons down the front, buttoned to the neck, with a two inch wide white belt and a white turban affair. They looked very smart.

The Guard of the Sultan of Kuwait 1954

When we arrived at the Trucial States the Political Agent who was English arrived on board first, followed by no less than four local boats each one bringing representatives on board. On this occasion we did a little trip at sea for them. We tried to put on what we call a "shop window" but this is not easy with only one ship present. However we did do some anti-aircraft shooting at a smoke burst, discharged a depth charge, dropped lifebuoys and picked them up with seaboats, as well as giving them a Cooks' Tour of the ship. One of the visitors was a young lad aged eight, dressed in white with a very large dagger affair strapped to his waist. He was, we were told, the ruler of Sharjah, son of the Sultan. On one occasion the Admiral and one other officer were invited to a supper in, I think, Saudi Arabia. The Captain did not wish to go and so I was asked to take his place. Off we went. It was not all that easy as the head man did not seem to be able to speak much English and our Saudi-Arabian was non-existent. Finally when we got to the dessert stage I did say to him "How nice it is, Sir, to have so much lovely fruit." Whereupon he stretched forth and put an enormous bunch of grapes on my plate. I did not really know what to do but thought it would be rude to put any back, so I had to plug on and eat the lot.

Our time was drawing out and it was not long before we sailed westwards, homeward bound, with our paying-off pennant flying from the mainmast. In due course we arrived safely at Portsmouth and secured alongside. On the jetty were hordes of friends and relations but, alas, no Una as the boys had measles. Among the many was Mike Goodenough, now Rear Admiral, with his wife. He came on board and immediately asked my wife and myself to lunch at the Queen's Hotel. As Una was not there I wondered whether I should go by myself. "Of course you must come," he said. So I went and had a superlative lunch. Whatever one may say there would not be all that many Rear Admirals who would come down to welcome their old ships home.

In the evening Una rang me to say that she would be down the next day as she had found a friend to look after the boys for twenty-four hours. I booked us into the Nuffield Club and immediately began organising a dinner party on board. As the Captain had left I was able to use his, or indeed the Admiral's, cabin for this affair. I had Geoff Henderson the Pusser Commander, our Marine Officer and his wife, Major and Mrs. Jack Carter, and I think one other whose name seems rather illusive. We had a lovely dinner and everyone enjoyed it very much. I was sorry indeed to hear that Captain Thomas was not staying on, a fact that he had concealed from everyone.

After Foreign Service leave I was told that my next job would be as Drafting Commander at Chatham. The Drafting Commander has a team of Drafting Officers and Senior Writers and is responsible for the fair "drafting" of ratings to and from their jobs. We then decided to sell Little Orchard as it was already getting too small for us, and I went down to Chatham and lived in barracks to start with. We had already decided if possible to live a few miles out of Chatham and I started to scout around and finally went to look at Clare Corner at East Malling. I knocked at the door of Clare Cottage, which incidentally was much more than a cottage. A lady came to the door, dressed in a smart white dress but with no stockings or shoes on. I explained that I was looking for somewhere to live and she told me to follow her. So, still without any shoes or stockings, she marched up the road to Clare Corner which was next door. This seemed a possibility and she then explained that she had plans to do a few things to the house but we could if we wished live with them - "them" being her husband, a doctor, and four children - in Clare Cottage. We decided to accept. This lady was called Bronwen and was, without any doubt, a character. Our two children went to similar schools as the others and sometimes we would have to get breakfast for the lot, being six children and ourselves. At other times a whirlwind would appear in the shape of Bronwen who would immediately start cooking bacon and eggs for us all. She was a very clever woman and we can remember how she bought a huge house next door or almost next door and proceeded to turn it into flats, deciding on all the colours, furniture etc., none of which was, to my mind, of the cheapest. Once she got her teeth into anything she went flat out for it to the exclusion of such things as her family. We liked her in moderation and she could be extremely funny. In fact one never knew what the latest gimmick would be.

I enjoyed being a Drafting Commander and liked both the two Commodores of the Barracks to whom I was responsible. The first was Captain Collard who was extremely nice to work under. The second was Charles Coleridge. He was very different from Collard but equally nice. I always remember that he had a dinner party for about a dozen or so guests including the Commander-in-Chief and his wife. They all sat down and dinner was just about to start when the Commander-in-Chief said to Mrs. Coleridge "Why is it that I am sitting next to my wife?" She then said "I'm afraid an error has crept in." She then tapped the table and said that the seating plan for the dinner was not quite right and would everyone move round, but under no circumstances was anyone to sit next to his wife.

I had a good team to run the Chatham drafting and I like to think we did it as well as possible. It was clear to us all that because there were four drafting

authorities, Chatham, Portsmouth, Devonport and Lee (for the air world) it would be advantageous if one day they could all be combined into one unit, say under a Commodore Naval Drafting. Plans were started and in due course all the four drafting organisations were welded together at Haslemere. It was just at that time that I heard I was to be promoted to the rank of Captain. We were already thinking about buying another house, probably in the Limpsfield area, and eventually we found a Victorian gardener's cottage beyond Home Place. It was a bungalow with quite a number of small rooms. We originally thought we might knock some of the rooms together and possibly build on one more. It then became obvious that if we pulled the main chimney down, which in fact acted for several fireplaces, the roof would collapse. After careful thought we decided to take off the top of the house and build upwards. We employed a builder and decided that we would try to do this without an architect. Once we had started work I got slightly cold feet. What on earth was I doing ? Was I being seen off ? By luck I found a surveyor for a brewery in London who lived in Oxted. I called on him and asked him what he would charge to come down once a week to check the work and the final bill. He said twenty-five pounds in cash. I was so surprised and pleased that I said "Done." He saved me a lot of money and we eventually finished up with a very nice house called Home Place Cottage.

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CHAPTER VII

C L I M A X

There are always some hurdles to be taken even in the Navy. The first and probably the most important is to become a Commander and the second is to get promoted to Captain. While you can say there is also a hurdle to take to become a Rear Admiral and upwards, these in a way are less pronounced. I was, needless to say, delighted to become a Captain. I was only sorry my Father was not alive as he was always interested in how I got on in the Navy. My new appointment was as Assistant Director Plans (Allies). To get a post in Plans Division is always a plus and so I was very pleased. I commuted from Hurst Green, which was one station before Oxted, and I soon met Jack Howson who was my main contact in France and went to Paris with him. It was now clear that my main task would be dealing with NATO and my immediate boss would be Rear Admiral Desmond Dreyer. I had already had some experience of NATO planning and had a good idea of how important it was to get on with my French and Dutch colleagues. One of the most complicated things in NATO was the Channel Command which was only a small area and, in many ways, hardly deserved a triple or even quadruple set-up to run it. On the other hand clearly we had to go along with this arrangement as anything that indicated that Britain was running the whole command would not have been over popular. The work was quite hard and involved quite a lot of travelling, particularly to Paris and The Hague, with an occasional visit to Oslo. In Plans Division I took over from Philip Culmer who was an able man. He felt, as indeed many of us did, that the pay we got in the Navy was poor compared with industrial salaries, particularly when one's career was not all that long. He felt so strongly that he asked to see the First Sea Lord who was Mountbatten. To him he explained his views and those of many others. This manoeuvre led to a complete and upward revision of the pay for all the armed forces.

Although I was an Assistant Director of Plans I was also under the Assistant Chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral Desmond Dreyer, and he would take the chair of the normal day to day NATO meetings. The full NATO meetings were normally chaired by the First Sea Lord for meetings in the United Kingdom and by the other Chiefs of Naval Staff when in Paris or The Hague. Looking back I do not think these meetings were really of much importance. During my time in this post I went to Paris and The Hague frequently, both for the Full Meetings and also for some discussions. I took Una to Paris on one occasion when we stayed the night with Kenneth Hamilton who had been at Pangbourne with me. We had a very good time including a super dinner at some small but excellent French restaurant. We also had a family holiday in Brittany at a place called Beg-Meil where we stayed at

quite a nice small hotel called the Hotel de la Plage. Though we were a total of four we all shared one enormous room and strangely enough this was a great success. We took the car to France by the Cherbourg crossing and then motored down. We all thoroughly enjoyed Beg-Meil and the boys spent hours and hours on the beach. I can remember when on one occasion, fairly early in the morning, Patrick and I went down to the beach, and on the way back we saw a Frenchman carrying the biggest lobster I have ever seen in my life. The boys went to sleep fairly early leaving us free for the evening, the hotel agreeing to keep an eye out for the chiildren.

All this time we were in Home Place Cottage which was lovely. The only snag was the garden which was a full acre. I never got back in the evenings until about eight o'clock and was then too tired to do any gardening, which to be honest I did, but never really loved it. If it was wet on the Saturday I then had a major task on Sunday. I had a hopeless gardener who was little more than a pain in the neck.

Patrick was now eight and rising to ten, while Roger was two years younger. We sent Patrick to Streete Court which was only a couple of miles away so he was able to go as a day-boy, and Roger went to a smaller school in Oxted.

After two years in Plans Division I was appointed as Captain Destroyers 7th Destroyer Squadron and in command of H.M.S.Trafalgar. To anyone who had spent as much time as I had done in small ships it was a great thrill to think that I was now going to be a Captain (D). We commissioned the ship at Portsmouth in November 1959 and I had a Lieutenant Commander Ian Pearse as my First Lieutenant. He was as far as I was concerned a good Number One but I did not think he was everybody's cup of tea. Very shortly after commissioning the squadron moved down to Portland to work up. The Navy had produced a work up base there and the object was to assist ships to work themselves up into efficient units. The base was under an Admiral with a fully trained staff and each ship of the squadron was worked up to a set routine finishing with a grand exercise known as "Squarebash". I had never been officially worked up before and I decided that this was an excellent arrangement. In the war there used to be a work up base at Mull in Scotland under a Rear Admiral Gilbert Stevenson. He was a terror and he always kept ships on their toes which incidentally is exactly what is needed. On one occasion in the dead of night Admiral Stevenson crept on board a small ship from a dinghy and threw his cap on deck shouting "Fire!" The quartermaster, a leading seaman, then kicked the cap over the side. Admiral Stevenson then said "Man overboard - and you will bloody well get it." Rear Admiral, later Sir Gilbert Stevenson, died at the age of about ninety-six.

Our squadron consisted of H.M.S.Trafalgar, my ship; H.M.S.Dunkirk; H.M.S.Jutland - all of the Battle Class - H.M.S.Scorpion and H.M.S.Battleaxe, of the Weapon Class. The most interesting Commanding Officer was Henry Leach in Jutland. He was a most zealous and efficient person, blessed with a sense of humour and in due course he became not only an Admiral but First Sea Lord.

I was well served by the Squadron Staff, most of whom were also ships' officers. They were Simon Cassells, the Navigator who became a Vice-Admiral, and may well go further; Alistair Wemyss, the Squadron Torpedo and Anti-Submarine Officer; Oliver Stoney the Gunnery Officer and Kennon the Supply and Secretariat Officer, an excellent man who also became an Admiral. Then there was Bill Baseden, the Engineer Commander, whom we all liked. I appointed Wemyss as the Staff Officer Operations and he was thus responsible for arranging draft programmes and, above all, for keeping me informed of things official and unofficial.

We all survived the work-up and finally sailed for the Mediterranean. On the way out we did exercises and usually at 1600 hours (4 p.m.) we would have some small exercise such as dropping a lifebuoy and recovering it. I never let on to my own First Lieutenant what was afoot as I tried to make everything as fair as possible. From time to time we would have a general drill and on these occasions I used to run them from another ship and never from Trafalgar. This was also to demonstrate that I was not giving my own ship any special treatment. On one occasion we picked up the pilot and his crew of a ditched Fleet Air Arm plane and had a very nice letter from him after he had left us. We also had quite an amusing time when at Malta. Several Spanish warships were in and Una and I went on board one of them for a drinks party. It was great fun and we could all drink sherry or Spanish wine. It was sometimes a little hard to know what to say next and, on one occasion, Una said to one of the Spanish officers how nice it was to have really good Spanish sherry out of proper Spanish sherry glasses. A day or two later we had, I think, four Spanish officers off to lunch. To my utter amazement they, terribly kindly, brought us twelve Spanish sherry glasses with the ship's crest on them. We still have most of them now. On another occasion we had Lord Carrington, whom I had met before, for a trip at sea. He, whom I have always liked, transferred at sea from ship to ship and was accompanied by Frank Twiss, a Rear Admiral and the Naval Secretary.

We were going to be at Sliema, Malta on the 21st October, Trafalgar Day, and I asked the Governor, Admiral Sir Guy Grantham, if he could spare the time to dine with us that night. When he accepted we decided to take him from the jetty

Admiral Sir Guy Grantham arriving on board H.M.S.Trafalgar, 1960

in a whaler manned by sailors all dressed in Nelsonic rig. On arrival on board the "piping party" was all similarly dressed. It was a great success. After dinner something occurred of which I knew nothing. We were standing on the fore castle when suddenly two boats all rigged as sailing ships of the Nelson era came down-with the crews suitably dressed, and just off our bows there was a battle royal with Very lights and exploding fireworks. It was great fun and needless to say this was all arranged by Henry Leach. After their display the crews all came on board for drinks and to meet Admiral Grantham.

Trafalgar had a short refit in Malta and Una came out for about three months and we lived in a flat in Sliema. The boys also came out for their summer holidays. We hired a car, not exactly a Rolls Royce, and saw much of the island including going to Gozo where I, at any rate, slept in one of the most uncomfortable beds ever.

After refitting we went to Naples and I was lucky enough to fly Una over. We stayed at the Italian Armed Forces Club for only five shillings a day, which was certainly a gift. During our stay we went to Pompeii, Herculaneum and also took a boat to Capri. Later we went to Athens and Una flew over again. This time we stayed as guests of our Military Attache. The ship also visited Barcelona which we much enjoyed. It is curious in Spain because the evening meal is very late, sometimes in the region of 11 p.m. or even later.

When I joined the Navy meals were definitely poor and this resulted in recruiting the less good material into the Cooking Department. I am frequently amazed at the standard of meals in the Navy today. Now there has been a radical change in the standard of food. This has meant that the morale of the cooks has risen and has resulted in a definite improvement in the standard of cook entries. I have just been refreshing my memory on the Christmas dinner in Trafalgar. It consisted of a good quality home-made soup; roast turkey with sausage stuffing; gammon; roast popatoes, garden peas and brussels sprouts; Christmas pudding with rum sauce followed by fruit and nuts. Some years later I went to Lossiemouth and, being the Director General Personnel Services, I wanted to see what the food was like. I was astonished to see a large menu which included grilled steak, mushroom omelettes and several other hot dishes with a wide choice of vegetables. There was also a good selection of sweets or cheese. I was surprised and delighted to see that they had a modern micro-wave cooker so that your steak or omelette was not cooked hours before. I asked the Supply Commander how he had got the micro-wave cooker and he said they had bought it out of money received from selling "gash" and a small subscription from the Welfare Fund. Good food is certainly a plus.

I had a good inspection from Flag Officer Flotillas who was Desmond Dreyer and so, after a little less than two years, we sailed home having much enjoyed the commission.

After Foreign Service leave I was appointed to H.M.S.Raleigh situated at Torpoint just over the border into Cornwall. H.M.S.Ganges at Shotley took in the younger entries, H.M.S.Raleigh dealing with those between seventeen and thirty-two, though the majority would be between eighteen and twenty-five.

Una and I arrived at H.M.S.Raleigh and we were put up by the Captain of H.M.S.Fisgard, John Pearsall. H.M.S.Fisgard was the Apprentices' Training College which was situated immediately opposite Raleigh. Next day I took over and moved into Trevol House, the Captain's residence for H.M.S.Raleigh. Trevol was a lovely Georgian house, though like so may similar naval houses, it really needed central heating. We had a Petty Officer Steward, a Leading Cook and one Mechanical Engineer named Knight, a first class chap. I was exceedingly lucky to catch the P.O.Steward pinching my sherry on my second night. I did not punish him but told him that if I ever caught him again he would almost certainly be disrated to Steward.

I had never been involved in training before so theoretically I should have found it a difficult job,but in fact I discovered that sound commonsense was all that was really needed.

Entries arriving at H.M.S.Raleigh, if seamen, usually did a period of about fourteen weeks of which they all had about a week at sea. Those selected for the Supply and Secretariat, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering side usually did only about six weeks before going on to their specialist training establishments. Time was thus short. The establishment was divided into two parts, Part I which dealt with introducing entries into the service, teaching them to look after themselves and learning the outline of discipline which also covered parade training physical training and sport. Part 2 dealt in more detail with the work of seamen, more time in boats, and two courses of expedition training. Divisions were held every day and involved a parade with our Royal Marine Band, an Inspection by Divisional Officers and prayers lasting not more than five minutes.

The entries were, as explained above, in two groups and in charge of each group was a Lieutenant Commander. Each group was itself sub-divided into divisions each with a Divisional Officer. There was a New Entry wing under a New Entry Officer and it was here that new entries were issued with their uniform and given

their first introduction to the Navy. They were also medically examined and given instruction in how the establishment worked. If it was clear that a new entry simply would not fit, the matter was referred to the Captain, and my usual decision was that we would review the whole matter at the end of Part I. Usually, but not always, new entries did settle down after a few weeks. Meals were good and on a self-service basis. There was however one golden rule and that was that every person had to finish what he had taken; there was no question of being permitted to dispose of it in the gash bin.

One of the interesting and challenging things about Raleigh was that all entries tended to be uneasy and some did not really know what to expect. I remember most clearly a discussion with the head of the Admiralty Interview Board. He said they had a very scruffy looking entry with long hair and perhaps not quite as clean as one would have wished. The Admiral said to this young man, who seemed quite bright, "Do you really want to get into the Royal Navy ?" "Yes, Sir," he said. "Then why didn't you have your hair cut and attempt to look a bit smarter?" the Admiral asked. "Well, Sir, if I had cut my hair, cleaned myself up and then failed for the Navy I would really have lost the entire respect of my group. If, on the other hand, you do accept me I shall have my hair cut and shall look really quite smart." After discussion they decided to take this young man and I often wonder how he got on. We in Raleigh had somewhat similar circumstances to deal with. The fact that everyone is in the same boat, the chaps are busy and, apart from a certain amount of shouting, the entries are treated fairly, all helps them to settle.

In the establishment we had the Commander who was second-in-command, the Training Commander who was entirely responsible for the training, a Paymaster Commander who ran the accounts, stores, feeding, supplies and so on, a Dental Commander and a Medical Commander. We had a full and complete syllabus and if an entry was not doing well he was brought before his Group Officer, then possibly sent before the Training Commander, and sometimes sent on to me. Though we clearly had some failures the number was not great and the general morale of the establishment was high. There was always a New Entry Guard at Divisions and this I feel was a good thing. Entries in the Guard knew that they would be watched all the time while in the guard and there is no doubt that they tried very hard. At Sunday Divisions I inspected a fair number of divisions but usually could not do them all.

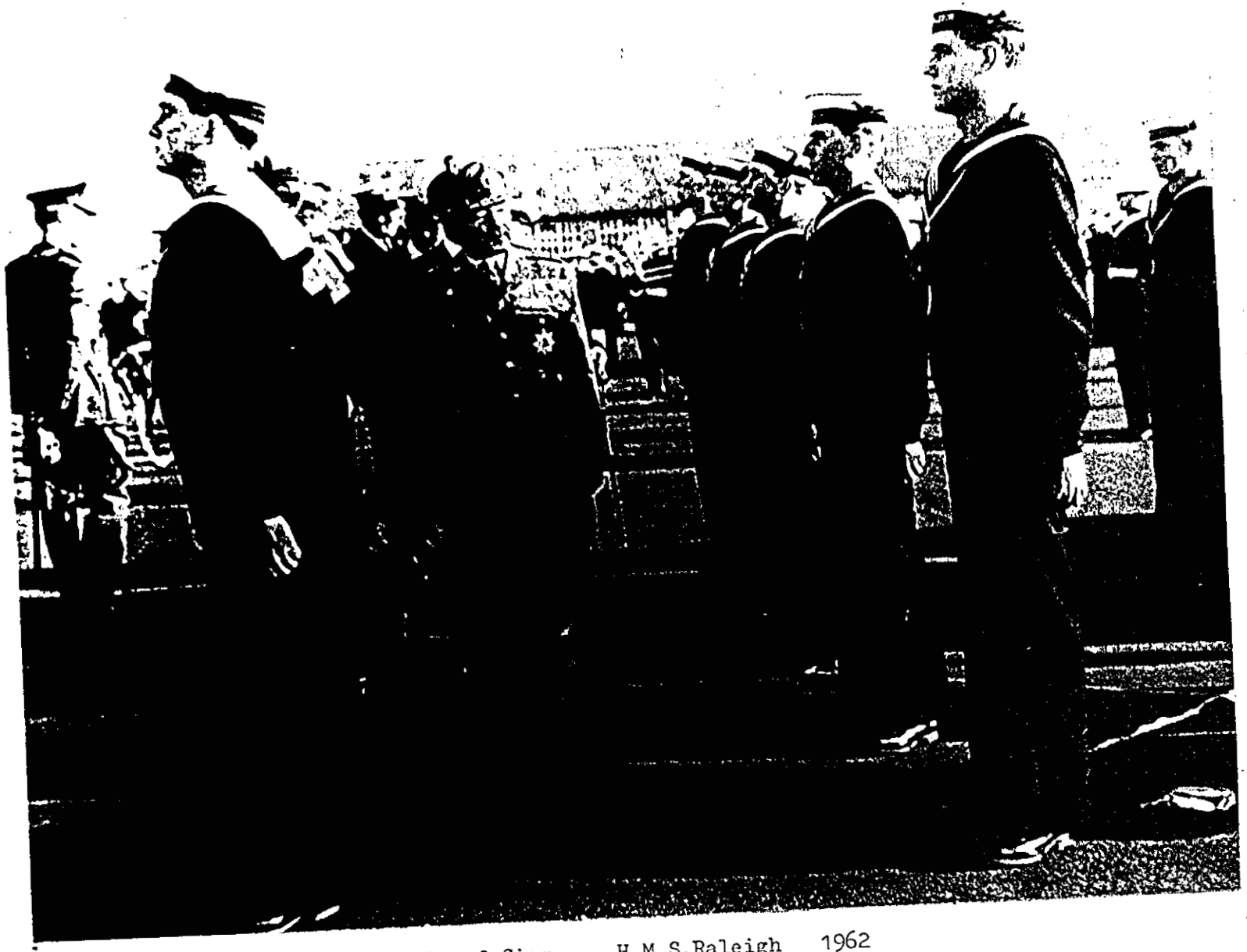
Apart from the basic instruction, time was allowed for games and every entry had to take part. Quite a lot of time was spent down on the estuary where everyone had to learn to use an oar as well as to rig, unrig and sail a three-in-one whaler.

There were two outward bound organisations. The first and more elementary was at Pier Cellars. Here a division plus two officers would be moved to a place on the coast a few miles down the way, where they arrived on Friday evening and stayed until late Sunday night. They fed themselves and were fully occupied on the Saturday and Sunday. They might be doing elementary cliff climbing or something equally challenging in boats. Sometimes they had a sing-song in the evenings and in nearly all cases they enjoyed it. The second Outward Bound Organisation was usually held on Dartmoor. The aim of these exercises was to demonstrate to these young people that they could look after themselves without much difficulty. One had to be careful on Dartmoor as there are many swampy areas.

Very soon after my arrival when I was having a glass of beer in the wardroom before lunch an elderly parson introduced himself to me. He was Canon Benskin who had a parish not too far away at St.John's. He said "I do hope now you are here,Sir, that I shall continue to be allowed to be an Honorary Member of the Mess." He was a great friend of mine for many years. I remember we had about three or four dentists and one particular one was thoroughly bad. I said to the Surgeon Commander (D) "I really think that this particular chap is a bit beyond the pale." "It's all right, Sir, the matter is already under way." Not only was this bad dentist removed from Raleigh, he was, thank goodness, removed from the Navy.

When at Raleigh I was also in charge of the Trevol Rifle Range which was quite close. This was a superb range and one used considerably by the Navy and Royal Marines. I have for years been interested in shooting and found to my amazement that I was a member of the establishment's rifle team. There were many items in the various competitions such as deliberate firing at different ranges, snap shooting at targets only visible for short periods as well as rapid firing at various ranges. In addition to rifle shooting there was revolver shooting. I used to visit the range almost every morning for about fifteen or twenty minutes before Divisions and as the revolver competition approached I did even more. I knew the Captain of the Gunnery School was determined to win this competition and I thought that maybe I, a Salt Horse, could give him a surprise. Here again there were various different kinds of shooting, including deliberate and rapid at various ranges, snap, etc. To my great delight I won this competition which, though it pleased me, showed the gunnery world that two can play at this game. I heard that the following year, after I had left, he did win the competition.

Once a year we had the Queen's Birthday Parade which involved a parade of the whole of H.M.S.Raleigh and an inspection by some Admiral. I asked Admiral



Prince Chula of Siam - H.M.S.Raleigh 1962

Desmond Dreyer whom I knew quite well. He was Flag Officer Air then and arrived in a glorious bright green helicopter plus of course Lady Dreyer, who I always thought was worth a guinea a minute. We had a dinner party that night to which we had invited the Captain of H.M.S.Fisgard and his wife, the Commanders of the two establishments and some others. I hesitate to say that the dinner was one hundred per cent perfect because the main dish which was duck was almost inedible. Though we had an excellent chef he had not realised that the duck, or this particular duck, would be thoroughly tough. However we all survived and we think everyone really enjoyed it very much.

In this establishment we had two Church of England priests, the senior one being Geoff Thornley. Geoff's elder brother was at Pangbourne with me but was unfortunately killed in the war. Geoff I liked very much. He was a great character and was friendly with all. He has now left the Navy and runs a parish near Lincoln. Then we had one Roman Catholic priest whom I also liked. He and Geoff got on very well and there was an air of cooperation between the two churches. Finally we had a Free Churchman, an excellent man called Earsley-White. We had I suppose about eight Confirmations a year and our bishop was the Bishop of Truro. We used to ring the changes a bit by having Crediton from the Exeter area. We normally had about five minutes of prayers at Divisions except on Sundays when we had Communion at 8 a.m. and morning service at about 10.30 a.m., all those under training had to attend morning service on Sundays. It always seemed to me that the priests had a good chance of making headway while at Raleigh.

I was asked by the Admiralty to invite Prince Chula who lived not too far away. He was a Siamese who had married an English girl and they had one child. Because he had married someone who was not Siamese he was not entitled to ascend the throne; he did, however, go back to Siam from time to time. He came to Raleigh twice in my time and took Divisions on each occasion. Una and I went to his home for lunch once. Later on he died of cancer. Some time later when I was at the Marsten Hospital at Sutton I saw that there was a ward named after Princess Chula. Evidently this ward was given by Princess Chula after her husband's death, to help children suffering from cancer.

Strange things happen in life. One of the Lieutenant Commanders, a keen shooter, asked the Admiral Superintendent to come over one evening to shoot duck. He came and the party all went down to a creek where they parked the Admiral's car. History does not remember how many duck they shot, but the great host, though a seaman, had forgotten that the tide comes in at high water. I leave you to imagine what occurred when they returned to the Admiral's car to find it awash!

Over Christmas we used to close down the establishment for about fourteen days, leaving only a small team for security and to deal with emergencies. On Boxing Night 1962, I was woken by Una's Mother who said that water was dripping through the ceiling. I realised that a pipe had probably burst as it had been snowing hard. I then went up to the loft to see what the situation was and I remember touching a pipe and getting an electric shock. I came to the conclusion that any further investigation in the loft was not worth it. In the early morning in deep snow I went up to the camp, which incidentally was a hutted camp with the exception of a few small brick buildings. I quickly discovered that a very large number of radiators had burst. Some had just cracked and some had actually burst breaking many windows. I decided to ring up the Manager of Navy Works who had been instructed to drain the whole system. I got on to him and said that a number of radiators had cracked and some had burst and that, as his department had drained them, I thought I had better let him know. "Don't worry me about a few radiators, after all it is holiday time." I replied "It's not just a few radiators, it is over two hundred and fifty and unless Navy Works gets moving we will have no heat for a long time." To say the least of it he was shocked. In fact it took about two months before every radiator had been repaired or replaced. I often wonder what happened to whoever it was from Navy Works who was responsible for draining the system.

One morning I could not see very well and eventually went to see our Surgeon Commander who said he thought I ought to see the eye specialist in the Navy Hospital in Plymouth. This I did and he said he thought it was only a temporary defect and would get better. He never told me that he had written on my medical papers "suspected disseminated schlerosis". Not only was he utterly wrong but it was very naughty of him not to have informed me. It was in fact a tumour in the head which appeared again in 1964.

The Commander of Raleigh was a clever engineer called Pat Turner. He and his wife Margaret were very helpful. She had been brought up in France and spoke fluent French and was also good at German. The Training Commander was a very pleasant person by the name of Hugh Janion. He did a splendid job and, though very different from the Commander, they both got on famously. Hugh was married to Monica. Later Hugh not only became a Captain but also a Rear Admiral serving as Flag Officer, Royal Yacht and was knighted on retirement from this appointment.

All ships and establishments are inspected from time to time and, apart from the Inspecting Officer's own views, his staff will examine in some detail their

part of the ship or establishment. The Commander-in-Chief's signalled report on his inspection read as follows:

"Please convey to all concerned my congratulations on a very satisfactory inspection. I was particularly impressed with the smartness and enthusiasm of all on parade and the cleanliness of all working and living spaces despite the difficulties arising out of ageing buildings. Well Done."

Needless to say I made quite sure that everyone in the whole of Raleigh was informed of the Commander-in-Chief's views. I, at any rate, was pleased.

There is a saying that variety is the spice of life and, though some might say that the regimental system is best, others, and that includes me, consider the naval system also has its merits. My next appointment was as Captain of the Fleet in the Far East. The Captain of the Fleet (COF), under the Chief of Staff, is responsible for running the personnel, accommodation and general administration of the Fleet. I flew out to Singapore to serve under the Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Brian Brayne-Nicholls, whom I already knew. Una followed a few weeks later. We were accommodated in a new house, 128 Kings Avenue. The house was modern and, though adequate, did not compare with the older houses. We had basically three Chinese servants. There was Lim, who might possibly take drugs a bit, his wife Ah Koan and one other, plus of course the usual hangers-on. They were quite adequate. One of the rather extraordinary things about Lim was that his idea of a Chinese meal was rice with a few bits of meat or vegetables in it. To do what I call a Chinese meal seemed to be beyond him. If, on the other hand, you wanted an English dish such as roast beef, there was no difficulty. About the time I arrived the Head of the Dockyard was about to leave and he with another dozen were given a super Chinese meal on the mainland. I was lucky enough to be one of the dozen and it really was one of the best Chimese meals I have ever eaten. As far as I can remember rice was served last when few of us could possibly eat any more.

Soon after I had taken over, a team of British politicians came out and were given a Cooks' Tour and a shop window demonstration. The only two I can remember were Dennis Healey and Lord Shepherd. The latter lived at Oxted so we knew him a bit since our children and his went to the same school. He was a Labour peer having inherited the title from his father, an eminent trades unionist. I quite liked Malcolm Shepherd in moderation.

I was amazed at some of the questions various Captains of ships would ask me. Some were easy to answer and some were less easy because they had a somewhat

tricky social slant. I remember when the Delhi came in with the Admiral on board who was none other than Chatterji ("Chatterbox"). I called on arrival as was the custom and it was really rather nice to see him again. He said to me "Do you think you could cash a small cheque for me, as the allowance from the Indian Government is only three pounds which will hardly get me into Singapore." "How much?" I asked "Well, I was hoping for seventy." I said I would certainly cash it if it was on an English bank, which it was, I got the seventy pounds and paid in his cheque as fast as I could - it did not bounce. Una and I went on board for a drinks party staying on for supper afterwards. I thought the drinks side would never end. It must have been about 2215 (10.15 p.m.) before we went down for supper. To my horror there were yet more drinks but at last we sat down for the meal and was I glad. I think I was less glad when it arrived as there was almost nothing to eat. I believe there were six or so of us and a dish came round containing four sardines and a scrap of lettuce. There was eventually something else, but not too much of it. Chatterji, who was clever, did in due course finish up as head of the Indian Navy and I last heard he was in business in Delhi.

I had some good friends in Singapore as both Brian and Wendy Brayne-Nicholls were kind, Dick and Sheila Paige, the new head of the Naval Yard, were great friends and Colin Madden, captain of one of the carriers was also very friendly. Life was pretty busy and I was certainly enjoying it. The Navy had a sort of camp affair up in the hills known as Fraser Hills and we and a few others all went up there for a few days. It was heaven because it was less hot and it did not rain every day which seemed to be the drill in Singapore. Being Captain of the Fleet I thought I had better go to Hong Kong and so in due course Una and I flew up. The plan, I thought, was for us to stay with the Commodore, George Simons, for a few days and then to fend for ourselves. This plan only partially succeeded as George would not hear of us staying anywhere except in his house. I had known Hong Kong fairly well for many years but Una had never been there before. It is a fascinating place and one I love. The Commodore's house was very nice and up towards the peak a bit. We were lent a car and driver by a friend of my brother's - the friend was nicknamed "China".

As so often happens these days there was some industrial trouble in the dockyard and steps had to be taken to ensure that all European property was safeguarded. I and one of the Admiralty civilians called Manman used to patrol a beat at night. Though we were always expecting someone to leap out of the bushes all was quiet. The head man in Singapore was a Chinese called Lee Kuan Yew (it is not spelt like this but this is the way it is pronounced). He was a clever man

who had been to one of our leading universities. There was a famous Admiral called Lefanu. The story goes that he rang up Lee Kuan U and said "Is that you Lee Kuan You?" "Yes," was the reply, to which he answered "Well, this is Leff Fan Yew."

Our plans were to take a week's holiday and fly up to Bangkok. But alas it did not work out this way. I was not seeing as well as I ought and saw the head naval doctor, Surgeon Captain Cujel, who said I should see the Army doctor as they had a hospital. Off I went and, after one consultation, he said he thought I ought to see the RAF doctor as he had more experience in this sort of complaint, so off I went to see him. In the meanwhile Una was very anxious to go to Australia and we knew the General was flying down there for ten days so we applied for a seat. We were told it was full up. I, however, did not stop there and rang the General's ADC and,after explaining the reasons, he said he would certainly give her a seat. Having seen the RAF Doctor three times he said he did not feel he could do anything to help but felt sure it would improve. Because my papers had "suspected disseminated schlerosis" on them the three doctors all thought that this was the trouble. Finally I went to see Admiral Dreyer and said to him that I must be allowed to go home to see a tip-top neurologist and a tip-top opthalmic specialist and could I please make a signal to that effect. He agreed and I wrote off a signal saying that I was on my way home and that the necessary appointments must be made with civilian specialists. I saw the neurologist very quickly, a charming man called Dr. Gooddy. He, having looked at me and examined me, said that I should be in hospital and within a few hours I was in the National Hospital, Queen Square. I had already convinced Una that she must go on her Australian trip come what may. After several minor operations and various tests I was operated on for a tumour by the best surgeon for this sort of thing in the country. Una first heard what had happened when she got to Perth on her way back. She went on to Singapore, had a bare twenty-four hours to pack up and get a plane back to England. On arrival at Heathrow she was paged and there were my brother John and Patrick with a sailor driver. She was driven straight to the hospital and there I was, well but very drowsy.

In due course I recovered and was moved to John's house and had several months sick leave. Meanwhile we had asked Geoff Pearce to sell our car which he did awfully well. When I had been examined by the Naval doctors and seen Dr.Gooddy again I was finally pronounced fit enough to be given another job. On this occasion they sent me to the Defence Research Establishment at West Fyfleet. I was supposed to be an adviser but there did not seem much opportunity to advise and I was more than grateful to leave. I was then sent as the Senior Naval Adviser on the Staff

of the team running Unison 1965. This was an annual exercise held in turn by each service. In 1965 it was the turn of the Royal Air Force to do the honours. We started planning in London and I got on well with my Army and RAF colleagues and liked the Acting Air Vice-Marshall. My main job was to advise on naval matters and arrange the static display. I thought that this display must be good and I had all the resources of the Royal Navy behind me. The piece de resistance was a model, life size, of Polaris and there was no doubt that this was a great attraction. Apart from the static display there was a live one as well. Here the Fleet Air Arm put on a magnificent show and one which most of the guests will remember.

I was now somewhere near the top of the Captains' List and the policy was to write to those nearing the top some months before saying they would be promoted, their chances were even or they would not be promoted. Observing that I had been very seriously ill I did not rate my chances as being very high. In due course I got the even chances letter but, just before the end of Unison, I heard that I was to be promoted Rear-Admiral and was I pleased. I had two nice letters at the end of Unison. One was from the First Sea Lord which read as follows: "Just a line to say how good it was to see you back in circulation and what a thoroughly good Unison you and your colleagues produced. With all good wishes." The other was from Vice Admiral Sir Frank Hopkins congratulating us all on what a splendid Unison we had produced.

In due course I was appointed as Director General Personal Services. There were in fact two other Directors General, one for Training and one for Manning. I was responsible to the Second Sea Lord and, strangely enough, this was Admiral Desmond Dreyer. As DGNPS I was responsible for the appointment of all officers up to and including Commander and had a team of Captains and Commanders to assist me, or in other words to do the job. I was basically responsible for all matters to do with the personnel, other than Manning and Training. It was in many ways a job right up my street as personnel had always been nearest to my heart. I visited most of the naval establishments in the United Kingdom and listened carefully to what the various Captains had to say as this is often a good way to learn what are the feelings of the Fleet.

This was really the third occasion that I had served under Desmond Dreyer and he was to me a friend and I often think that he played a part in getting me promoted to Rear Admiral.

I visited Lossiemouth in the North of Scotland. Though in the far north

it was an excellent Naval Air Station as the weather, though usually cold, was good. I was interested to meet the Petty Officer "Hawks". These birds were flown off over the field every morning and sometimes several times in order to clear other birds away as these could sometimes get into a jet engine with disastrous results. I have never been a great "double-bedder" but at Lossie there was the most enormous double bed I have ever seen and even I could find no fault with it. It evidently came out of the old Royal Yacht and had, of course, to have extra large sheets and blankets. I was most impressed with this air station and I discovered that most of the ratings who worked there enjoyed it too.

I had by now served about thirty-three years in the Royal Navy and felt that I really knew quite a lot about what went on in it. Rum was first introduced into the Navy in the days when the food for the whole ship's company was based on ship's biscuits, dried meat and fish and so forth. Very often the biscuits were full of weevils. Rum helped everyone along. In the war everyone got one eighth of a pint of rum a day. Chief and Petty Officers had it neat while the junior rates had it as grog, that is their quota of rum was mixed with three parts of water. You had of course to be over twenty to get your ration. Most people took rum and often sold their tot for the highest price they could get. Navy rum is very strong and an eighth of a pint is quite a lot of rum. Believe me when I tell you that if you have only your quota at say noon, you are less well equipped to deal with all the sophisticated equipment in ships today. Not only this, in the war the Chief and Petty Officers were entitled to buy wines and beer and the junior rates were entitl to buy beer. This could mean that in addition to your tot of rum you could also have at least a pint of beer. If it happened to be your birthday the custom was to go round the messdecks asking for "sippers". I decided that we were now past rum and that it should be abolished. I wrote a carefully worded paper explaining my arguments in favour of the abolition of rum. Some of my contemporaries said that I would never, ever get this through and, if I did, it might lead to major disciplinary trouble in the Fleet. I was not to be put off and the paper went forward to the Board of Admiralty which was split on it. The First Sea Lord said "George, as long as I am First Sea Lord you will never get rid of rum." He was right, but when Admiral Lefanu took over from him, the Board of Admiralty agreed that rum should be stopped. There were about two murmurs but, as I had always thought, the Fleet agreed. I cannot recall exactly what the compensation was but it was in the region of three million pounds. A nice sum but many thought insufficient. With this money the Navy has created a splendid club at Southwick near Portsmouth for the use of the Lower Deck. The fleet is now far better equipp than it ever was, even if I say so.

We also had a Fleet Amenity Fund and there was a problem as how best to invest this money. I thought carefully about this and then recommended an up and coming small merchant bank. Some doubt was expressed over this but, after the Second Sea Lord had seen one of the directors, agreement was reached and they became responsible, subject to one or two minor points, for the investment of this Fund, which I believe was in the region of a million pounds. In my time it did well and I was interested to learn years later that Admiral Sir Frank Twiss's son was now working in this firm.

I was lucky enough to have a superb office in the old Admiralty Building which looked over the Horse Guards Parade. Much goes on there and I had a really first class seat. The Trooping of the Colour was always very popular and on two occasions we not only had many guests including children at the main function but also for the dress rehearsal. It was also possible for those attending to have some refreshments.

The hours for working in the Admiralty and Ministry of Defence were, I understood, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Many, such as I, preferred to start much earlier than 10 a.m. and so I used to catch a train at about 8 a.m. By the time I had walked from Victoria through St.James's Park I would arrive at about 9 a.m. This meant that I had at least fifty clear minutes before the hustle and bustle of business. One morning when I was walking down to the station I slipped on some ice, fell and put my arm out. Luckily I was quite close to the doctor I supported and was in hospital in Oxted fairly quickly. I was then told it would be about two hours before the right doctor could arrive. It was so painful that I begged that something be done earlier. A few minutes later a doctor arrived and in one twist my arm was back but I had to stay in hospital for the rest of the day. A day later I was on my way down to Torpoint as I had been asked to take Divisions and speak at the dinner on Trafalgar Night. The Captain of H.M.S.Raleigh was a person called Dick White, a most able man who finally finished up as a full admiral. All went well and I hoped my speech went down fairly well.

As DGNPS I was also involved in the Royal Naval Cinema Corporation. I had a strong ally in this in the shape of Mountbatten in the Navy and a very pleasant man called Jimmy Carreras who was later knighted. Our problem was to get the best and most up to date films for as little money as possible. As Jimmy Carreras was in the film world he was very useful. The manager of our Film Corporation was a pleasant man called Bertie Pizey. On my retirement, with a man called Mr.Walter Kimpton who had helped us a lot we were given a farewell dinner at the Mirabelle.

As a result of my tumour I considered I was very lucky, not only to have largely recovered, but also to have been promoted to Rear Admiral. I thought that I would only get one job in this rank and so it was no surprise to learn that, after leaving the appointment of the Directo General Personnel Services, I was to be placed on the retired list. I suppose it is only natural to feel a little disappointed but, to be honest, I think I was in fact quite happy to leave.

My career in the Royal Navy had lasted thirty-five years during which time I had travelled throughout the world. I had served the whole war at sea and had not had a scratch. Furthermore I had enjoyed my time in the service very much.

I have often told young people that one is very lucky indeed to enjoy one's working life to the full, and there were of course for me times less pleasant than others.

The main reason why I had enjoyed my seagoing life was due to two things. First of all I had wanted to join the Navy and enjoyed it, and secondly I was extremely happily married to Una who more than played her part.

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