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THE COMMUNICATOR

The Magazine of the Communications Branch, Royal Navy

EASTER, 1950

■ VOL. 4. NO. 1. ■

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Flag Lieutenant and Signal Officer to R.A., 1st B.S.,
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V2, Instructing Long Course, H.M. Signal School,
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Promoted Commander, June 1936.

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Qualified Staff College, R.N.C., Greenwich, 1938.

Commanded H.M.S. *Hotspur*, North and South At-
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On Staff of C.-in-C. Mediterranean, at G.H.Q.
Middle East, Cairo, 1941-42.

Chairman, Wireless Board and British Joint Ccm-
munications Board, London, 1942-44.

Promoted Captain, December, 1943.

Deputy Director Signal Division (Y), Admiralty,
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Commanded H.M.S. *Rajah*, trooping between U.K..
Far East and U.S.A., 1945-46.

Commanded Royal Naval Air Station, Culham,
Oxon, 1947-48.

Director of Radio Equipment, Admiralty, since
January, 1949.

A DUAL CITIZENSHIP

I go to press on the eve of the General Election and it has occurred to me that we should not allow the time of much speechmaking, larger newspapers and of political articles, party political broadcasts and all the paraphernalia of election to pass by without the realisation that there is a spiritual lesson for us to learn. With the declaration of the poll, all the energetic campaigning and much of what has been said, but, not we hope, the promises made, will be consigned to the limbo of forgotten things, but one thing stressed by all parties should have made a lasting impression on us.

That is, of course, our citizenship—the fact that we are all members of the State, or, as I should prefer to call it, the kingdom. All this talk of the Welfare State has obscured the older and more dignified conception of the kingdom—we are not and never can be a Welfare State so long as we have a King as our head in matters spiritual and temporal; we are, in fact, a kingdom—and it is poor appreciation of the wonderful lead given by our Royal Family in both these fields to leave them out of our conception of citizenship. We are, then, free citizens in a democratic kingdom and as such we are all responsible for its welfare and institutions. At a time of election it is our bounden duty to vote responsibly, fearlessly and in good conscience; and while we would not be human if we failed to consider our own interests we should be mindful of our larger loyalty to the whole community. Robert Browning sums it up:

"Here and here did England help me; how can I help England?"—say,

"Whom turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise and pray."

"While love's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa."

There lies the crux of the matter. We cannot discharge our full duties of citizenship if we leave God out of our lives and plans.

"Two worlds are ours," asserts John Keble in one of his best-known hymns, and proceeds to deplore the fact that the distractions of our earthly life so often obscure the spiritual world which is over and around us just as the sky is over the sea. This sums up the Christian belief in another world behind the one he sees. This was emphasised by our Lord when he taught that the things that are seen are temporal but the things which are not seen are eternal. Thus it comes about that the Christian always has this sense of something or someone with whom he can enter into relationship and to whom he owes allegiance and loyalty, someone outside this present world order, not discernable to the physical eye but visible to the eye of faith.

St. Paul, writing to the Philippians, stresses his belief in the dual citizenship of all true Christians. They as a Roman "colony" had the right of citizenship in a Rome many of them had never seen. The Church, he says, has also a citizenship in the heaven which none of her members has seen, but which they

will see in due course (Philippians, chapter 3, v. 20). Christianity thus is both "other worldly" and "this worldly." As St. Augustine put it: there are two cities, the city of God and the city of man. The Kingdom of God is the realm of pure love. It is a spiritual kingdom in which God's will is perfectly done.

It is clear that the earthly city cannot be governed solely by the principles of the Kingdom of God. Pure love and the willingness to make any sacrifice and to return good for evil are not standards by means of which the world can be governed. The earthly order, for instance, cannot dispense with the legal system; it needs organisation and institutions to keep society going. So Dr. Lindsay: "The morality of my station and its duties and the morality of the challenge to perfection are quite different."

But there is no conflict between the two world orders: there could not be, because both are God's creation. So the Christian is never in danger of finding himself in a precarious position, not knowing how to act because of the mutually discrepant claims of two world loyalties. These two orders, although governed by different principles, cannot be separated. Both orders are related to the same ultimate end—the glory of God.

May we as individuals and as a nation follow this strait and narrow way, for it is this road alone which, veering neither to right nor left, leadeth unto life.

PADRE.

THE CHURCH PENDANT

Padre's regrets, fine thoughts and sad conclusions expressed in "Ichabod" in the Summer 1949, Number must be shared by others; but is he correct in ascribing the origin of this old naval piece to the joint spiritual needs of English and Dutch seamen before battle?

The legend is not so widely known as its sister tradition of the broom and the whip of Tromp and Blake which dates from the same period; and there appears to be no evidence to support the correctness of either. Research evidently revealed nothing, otherwise at least some of the many writers on flag matters from Laughton to Perrin, to mention two widely separated names of those most quoted who, together with King, could have been expected to refer to the belief if worthy of credence. The broom and whip story is discounted where it is mentioned at all.

The pendant in general, or to use its original name the streamer, is the oldest of all flags proper to a British vessel of war. It dates back to the thirteenth century as seals, old paintings and documents prove, and probably earlier—to a time, in fact, when there was little, if any, distinction between King's ships and merchantmen. In an emergency all were equal to be requisitioned at will. A result of the first day's fighting against the Spanish Armada showed the necessity for better organisation and we read of "pennants to discern their company from the

enemy," other colours being mixed and confusing—not surprising with Elizabethan striped ensigns, and flags resembling each other on both sides. Here we have a very early example of the pendant as a *distinguishing* flag.

They are again mentioned in connection with the 1596 Cadiz expedition and Lord Wimbledon's 1625 venture against the same base. Apart from some pendants such as those of the Stuart livery, green and white, the general colour still seems to have been white up to this time; but now we are told that pendants of red, of blue and of white fly in that order were introduced to distinguish squadrons, though they do not appear yet to have reached the status of command flags of officers other than admirals.

About 1633 they had become stabilised as "distinguishers" of squadrons but were still displayed for "triumph and ornament" on occasions of rejoicing. By now the pendant was *supposed* to be peculiar to Navy ships. There was a lot of juggling with the marine flags of the country during the Commonwealth, but at the Restoration in 1660 the old range was revived. It is doubtful if pendants were ever temporarily abolished. They were still in use in 1653 when the order of their precedence was altered to red, white and blue, and this grading remained until the squadronic system and colours were abandoned in 1864. The year following Charles II's return, the Union pendant was created for the purpose of distinguishing vessels on detached service, or not of one of the three recognised squadrons. It was, of course, exclusive to a man-of-war and a proclamation of the same year (1661) recognised the pendant as the distinctive sign of such a vessel. Authority must have been persistently disregarded, however, as another proclamation in 1674 prohibited a merchantman a pendant of any form whatsoever. The same struggle, therefore, was being waged as occurred with the Union flag from 1634 onwards and which to this day persists to some extent. It is still a very common sight to see the Union flag as a jack at the bows of merchant vessels at their launches, and afterwards when water-borne.

But to return to the Union pendant. This was of the usual shape and length, with the St. George's Cross at the head and a slit in the fly like the others but combining the three colours of the Union flag striped longitudinally, red, white and blue. Later it came to be known as the Ordinary or Common pendant, and of it Pepys wrote "the ordinary or union pendant used by King's ships only." Because of its colouring it is easy to realise how it also became known in course of time as the Dutch pendant, but no student of flag history appears to claim it to have been fashioned either for a call to prayer between the two fleets or used for that purpose. The first Dutch war had been over some seven years when it first saw the light of day and the second conflict was still four years off. Furthermore, only a few years before it was designed the Dutch colours had

not been changed from the original orange, white and blue and many folk doubtless still thought of them in that way. Then again, why should the Dutch have consented to recognise a flag in which the St. George's Cross appears "in chief" any more than the English should have done likewise with their device subordinated to the Dutch colours? The legend, as of historical value, must fail to convince.

There was another form of Union pendant for a time with the pre-1801 Union flag described on a small scale in the head, but this has no bearing on the discussion.

The Church pendant fortunately was not lost to posterity after the 1864 shuffle. As Padre tells us, it survives in the form we know it today, without the split fly, of course, and very much reduced in length. And it is very good to note that it has not been scrapped along with other noble and excellent British naval signal pieces of first-class pedigree which have been thrown overboard from the new "Americanised" code for less suitable designs, colours or colour combinations.

A. PEACOCK.



Television Explained. By W. E. MILLER. Third Edition. (Iliffe & Sons Ltd: 5s., postage 4d.)

There is no doubt whatever about the rising tempo of interest in television—an interest that is reflected in a growing demand for books on the subject. Here is a book—now in its third revised edition—that meets the needs of those who want technical information of a straightforward nature on TV.

The book is addressed to knowledgeable members of the public who, having some acquaintance with radio circuits, are equally interested in their television counterparts; to radio service engineers as a grounding in the circuitry they will encounter in maintaining television sets; and to students in radio and television at technical colleges.

The book is non-mathematical, and is written in simple language. In addition to television reception circuits, aerials and aerial systems are fully explained, and receiver installation and operation are described and illustrated.

This new edition appears in improved format and contains much additional information on aerial systems, and, with the opening of the second television transmitter at Birmingham, some notes on frequency allocations and suppressed sideband working. Other sections of the book have been brought up to date, while actual photographs of picture faults, taken by the author specially for this edition, are included.

ROUND THE FOREIGN STATIONS

MEDITERRANEAN

The past three months have seen a number of changes in personnel serving in Malta. Among others who at Malta M.S.O. have said good-bye to Mr. Waters and Mr. Jaques, S.C.C.Os., Mr. Donovan, C.C.O., C.Y.S. Woodhead and Baker, P.O. Tels. Watson, May and Longstaff, and Yeo. Derbridge, Lifford and Morris. Derbridge has not left the station, but now inhabits H.M.S. *Saintes*. Not all the above have been replaced, as some went as a result of complement reductions, but the new arrivals include Mr. Brown and Mr. Whiffin, S.C.C.Os., Mr. Herbert-Gasser, C.C.O., C.Y.Ss. Jones and Beddows and Phil Tels. Syson and Parkyn. The last has relieved Longstaff in that lonely outpost known as Ta Zuta Receiving Station.

All the Communication staffs on the station extend their deepest sympathy to the relatives and friends of the late C.Y.S. Williams, of R.N.A.S., Halfar, who died as the result of a tragic accident, and of Yeo. Harris, who died suddenly on arrival in Malta, while on his way to take over Williams's job at Halfar.

In January the C-in-C., in *Surprise*, with units of the First D.F., carried out a cruise in the Red Sea, during which the C-in-C. was received by His Majesty King Abdullah of Jordan and His Majesty King King Saud of Arabia.

The Fleet sails on 27th February for the spring cruise, during which combined fleet exercises will be carried out with the Home Fleet. The seagoing Communicators are looking forward to seeing their "cousins" in the Home Fleet when the two fleets meet in Gibraltar, where it is hoped to repeat the annual Home versus Mediterranean Communication football match. Malta M.S.O. returns for three days in a shadow of its war-time glory for period one of the combined fleet exercises, when the arrangements will include, among other things, an extra broadcast.

In the middle of February we were very happy to welcome to Malta the French cruisers *Montcalm* and *Amirante*, the frigates *Escarmouche*, *Tunisien* and *Provence*, and the submarines *Laubie* and *Estree*. The frigates and submarines carried out sea exercises with British ships, and both they and the cruisers took part in Anglo-French harbour communication exercises. English was used on all circuits and the exercises went very successfully. The language difficulty arose occasionally, but not to any great extent, and the French flag-hoisting was as good as the British. They seemed to find no difficulty in understanding groups from the Fleet Signal Book, since not only did they go "close up" straight away for the common signals but they also seemed as quick as the British in looking up the lesser-known ones. Altogether they left behind them a very favourable impression, and some units of the Mediterranean

Fleet are now looking forward to their visit to Toulon during the cruise, where more extensive Anglo-French exercises will take place.

The 1st of January saw the extension of tape relay to include a large number of authorities. Malta M.S.O., *Forth* R.N.A.S., Halfar, and *Glory* have since been struggling with the intricacies thereof. Fixed Service 34 has hummed with lists of minor crimes concerning incorrect taping of messages, but we are now becoming accustomed to it, and (we hope) mistakes are decreasing.

This month has seen also the introduction of the single side band multi-channel equipment into operational use on Fixed Service 34 to Admiralty. Only one channel is being used for traffic, as present traffic volume does not warrant anything more. Unfortunately, within a fortnight of its introduction, the V.F. landlines in the United Kingdom gave trouble and we had to revert to single-channel equipment again, but the hitch is only temporary.

It is, however, noticeable that much more time is lost when shifting frequency with S.S.B. equipment than with the former arrangements, since the drive unit has also to be tuned. While only one channel is in use, we seem to gain little and lose quite a lot on the change. It would, of course, be a very different matter if two transmitters were available at each end, so that shifting would be instantaneous.

This season we have started a Mediterranean Communications Knock-out Football Competition. Unfortunately, owing to the bad weather recently, it is unlikely that we shall be able to play off all the matches before the season ends, but it has meant that many people have been able to play in matches who might otherwise have gone without a game. Also it has assisted talent spotting for the match against the Home Fleet Communicators. By starting the competition earlier next season we hope to complete it before the spring cruise of next year.

A notable event has been the engagement of 2/O. Beer, W.R.N.S., the "Cipher Queen" of Malta M.S.O., to Lt. Cdr. Harrell, U.S.N., a fitting match, since he is the Flag Lieutenant to Vice-Admiral Ballentine, Comsixthtaskfleet. We all wish them both the greatest future happiness.

Congratulations to P.O. Tel. Pendrey, L./Tel. Bailey, Tel. Webb, P.O. Tel. Radley and L./Sig. Burton, all of whom have become proud fathers, the first three of sons, and the last two of daughters.

In January we held a Mediterranean Communication ratings dance at the Phoenicia Hotel which was a pronounced success. It was a pity that a large part of the Fleet was away from Malta at the time, but even so, it was very well attended and seemed to be enjoyed by all. It is hoped to hold a further dance in April on the completion of the spring cruise.

We close with an item of stop press news. The winner of the Mediterranean Fleet Cross Country

Race, held on February 18th, was Tel. Morris of Malta M.S.O. When asked to what he owed his success he is reported to have replied that it was mainly due to the quality of the N.A.A.F.I. cakes sold in the Lascaris canteen and to the restful atmosphere of the C.R.R.

SIGNAL TRAINING CENTRE MALTA

Looking through the file of past contributions to THE COMMUNICATOR it was noted with interest that Fort Ricasoli was possessed of a ghost, but a description was lacking. Recent excavations in the subterranean chambers under the S.T.C. have revealed that what might have been mistaken for a ghostly visitor was in fact an obsolete piece of V/S equipment deposited here after the Battle of Alexandria, which when discovered was sporting a beard nearly three feet in length. A suggestion by the C.C.O. (W/T) that it might be the mummified remains of an old signal boatswain has been proved to be without foundation.

To revert to more recent activities, the winter season has been a period of solid, hard work for the instructional staff, and the various courses, particularly those for junior ratings have been well patronised by the Fleet. During the present month there has been a sharp rise in attendance and we can only hope that the resultant increase in numbers of keen young O.Ds. who have qualified for Signaller or Telegraphist will prove helpful to the ships concerned during the combined spring manoeuvres.

It is gratifying to be able to record that in spite of a comparatively small staff we are able to hold our own in the Establishment inter-part sporting events. This is due mainly to the zeal of Chief Yeoman Fowles and to his persuasive powers when canvassing for the support of our Fleet-mates on course. The cross-country, soccer, hockey and volleyball teams have all given a good account of themselves.

There have been few changes in staff since the last number went to press, apart from the Officer-in-charge, who can now confidently answer the telephone without expecting to be called Macpherson. There has been an influx of families and, although the accommodation position generally has improved, it will be a very happy day for naval residents when they learn that the problem of married quarters is nearer a satisfactory solution.

H.M.S. "GLORY"

We much regret not having contributed to THE COMMUNICATOR Christmas number, but we hope to be in time for future editions.

Here we are in Malta, wearing the Flag of F.O. Air (Med.), Second-in-Command, Mediterranean Fleet.

So far we have had a long period of working-up, and prospects promise this until we pay off. If the 14th C.A.G. comes on as it is doing we shall need some more aircraft.

Up to the time of writing, the Communications department has reached the semi-final of the Ship's inter-part Football Competition. Let us hope that we can pull it off.

Recently we have been on a cruise to Naples, during which some visited Pompeii and some Sorrento. It was a change from Grand Harbour and M.X. and most people enjoyed themselves. From Naples we proceeded south to exercise with the Army and R.A.F. stationed in Tripoli. Altogether everything went off well, with the exception of the receiver supplied by the Army to L./Tel. Lauder. Even so, our side "won," which proved some consolation for our efforts.

Portables have recently been landed for the commentary on the Arbuthnot Trophy, which, to everyone's satisfaction, was won by H.M.S. *Glory*. Credit must be given to L./Tel. Jones for the overtime he put in while getting these portables working efficiently.

Yeo. "Nobby" Hunt has left us, as has also L./Tel. "Mick" Towans, the first for long leave and course and the second for his "bowler." We wish them the best of luck in the future.

C.Y.S. Bill Spears has been drafted to Halfar—many Maltese "natives" would like to do the same! If Halfar could be manned by said Maltese "natives" there would be more than enough to man ten naval air stations.

D. J. T.

AUSTRALIAN STATION

In my last article I gave you a quick run round the Fleet, and what in broad outline it does, now for a little more detail, and the latest happenings here.

The combined Australian-New Zealand Naval Exercises were a great success; 1RR, 2CC, 2DD and 7FF assembled to form quite a tidy little Task Group. Exercises of all sorts and types were carried out, including general drill (the proverbial fried egg appearing in the Flagship) and replenishment at sea. The exercises took place off Jervis Bay and were divided into two-parts of a week each. In between the group went to Melbourne to participate in the Melbourne Cup festivities.

After Christmas Leave, and a short refit, the Australian Fleet augmented by a Royal Navy submarine is going over to New Zealand to play a return match.

The new Battle Class Destroyer *Tobruk*, having been built at Cockatoo Dockyard, is undergoing trials and will commission shortly.

Two submarines from the Royal Navy, *Telemachus* and *Thorough*, have just arrived out and will soon be

used by a third. They will be used for the A/S training of both ships and aircraft.

ODD ODE TO ORIGINATORS

Before you start to write a signal, please remember—
if you can
all the time and sweat and trouble put into the thing
be made;
then it's typed and then it's ormsged, then transmitted
and passed round,
on the other end are others—also sweating I'll be
bound,
Therefore please before you write it—think of those
both near and far,
If in doubt—then do not send it—save your pencil
for the Bar.

H.M. AUSTRALIAN SIGNAL SCHOOL

On the first occasion of making our appearance in *The Communicator* we would like to extend our warmest greetings to the Editor, his staff and to all *Communicators*. We have always looked forward to our copy of *THE COMMUNICATOR* to keep us in the picture at home and abroad and we now feel that it is about time we made our contribution.

It is our regret that many of you, on reading this, will have heard of us for the first time, but we hope we maintain a regular contribution about our work and sport, so that the activities of "Down-under" are not unknown to any prospective "migrants." The great boast is, of course, that we are the only *signal school* in the Southern Hemisphere. *any objections?*

Flinders Naval Depot

The Signal School is one of the many schools which make up Flinders Naval Depot. The Depot is forty-five miles south of Melbourne at the end of a single-track railway which runs two trains up and down each day—some of journey two hours. Therefore, except for week-ends, the "livers in" are more or less cut off from civilisation, but the married types who are fortunate enough to get houses in the neighbourhood come in daily via an excellent civilian bus service. The Depot is pleasantly laid out around a very large playing field, and the Signal School is in a secluded part of the south-west corner. Trees, palms and gardens abound; to take the place of the high brick walls in R.N. depots is a small wire fence on the north and west sides and a navigable creek on the east and south sides. It was originally hoped, when the Depot was started in 1917, that the largest ships would be able to come up the creek, but the dredging proved too difficult and the ships have to anchor in Riddell Bay about two miles down the creek. However, the training flotilla of corvettes and minesweepers can come up at high tide and secure

alongside the jetty, so we are not entirely divorced from the sea. A few further points of general interest before seeing what goes on at the Signal School.

The messing is on the cafeteria principle for all ratings below Petty Officer; the well-known partitioned tin trays are used in lieu of plates. The wet canteen which serves beer—the beer out here is much stronger than the stuff served out at home—opens from 1145 to 1300 and 1930 to 2100, thus not conforming to the outside pubs, which open at 0900 and close at 1800. (Ex-B.P.F. *Communicators* will remember only too well this Australian peculiarity.) Week-end leave is from 1600 Friday to 0900 Monday every week if you are not duty. Long leave of fourteen days is taken twice a year at Christmas (summer) and at mid-winter (June/July). This is quite a problem when people living in Western or Northern Australia get anything from fourteen days' to twenty-one days' travelling time and even then cannot get back because the R.T.O. is unable to obtain bookings for them on the trans-continental trains. Thus for two weeks either side of leave periods training is severely interrupted.

Communication Branch, R.A.N.

Except for ratings from the R.N., entry into the R.A.N. is by recruits between the ages of 17½ and 23 (there are no Royal Marines, Boys or W.R.A.N.S. in the R.A.N.). They can sign on for six or twelve years and in both cases can complete time (twenty-two years) for pension. Recruits Communication Branch (R/C.B.) are entered as such and join F.N.D. Recruit School, where they do a twelve-week training and disciplinary course. After passing out of Recruit School they join the Signal School for a ten-week Recruit (C.B.) Technical Course. This course is divided between school (to bring all recruits up to E.T.I standard), technical instructions in elementary V/S and W/T and all forms of practical signalling including typing. On satisfactory completion of this course recruits are rated Ordinary Signaller or Ordinary Telegraphist according to their individual wishes and the manning requirements.

The course is then split into each branch and given a twenty-week course in its own subjects to bring them up to S.S. Ordinary Signaller and S.S. Ordinary Telegraphist standard. On completion of this course, Ordinary Rates are drafted to sea and their training is from then on exactly the same as in the R.N. Time spent on rosters for courses and for advancement for higher rates is about the same as the R.N.

H.M.A. Signal School

Besides the Recruit/C.B. and Ordinary Rates Courses carried out at H.M.A.S.S., there are the usual advancement courses for Leading, Petty Officer and Instructor rates. All R.N.Z.N. ratings for higher rates also attend these latter courses. Candidates for C.C.O. and Lieutenant (C) do their training at H.M.S. *Mercury*.

Miscellaneous courses include Reserve Officers

transferred to R.A.N. who do a three-week course to the same standard as A/Sub-Lieutenants.

R.A.N. Midshipmen and A/Sub-Lieutenants do all their time and courses in the R.N.

The syllabi and length of courses at H.M.A.S.S. are exactly the same as those at H.M.S. *Mercury*, and so that both schools should maintain the same standard, copies of all examination papers set in H.M.S. *Mercury* are sent out here. The liaison is strengthened also by the alternate appointments of an R.N. and R.A.N. officer to be in charge of the Signal School.

The year 1949 was not a busy one owing to the low Recruit/C.B. intake. It is considered that this shortage of recruits/C.B. is due to the high level of employment in civilian life and also to the formation of the Electrical Branch. Intending recruits who are technically minded prefer the Electrical to the Telegraphist Branch, as this gives them a better trade when they finally go outside, and this reduces considerably the numbers volunteering for the Communication Branch.

However, in order to give you some idea of our training, the following courses were carried out in 1949:

| Communication Ratings | Course | No. Trained |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Recruit/C.B. | 5 courses of 10 weeks | 48 |
| Ordinary Signalmen | 5 courses of 25 weeks | 19 |
| Ordinary Telegraphists | 5 courses of 25 weeks | 29 |
| Leading Signalmen (Q) | 1 course of 9 weeks | 11 |
| Yeomen of Signals (Q) | 1 course of 11 weeks | 10 |
| Signal Instructors (Q) | 1 course of 13 weeks | 5 |
| Leading Telegraphists (Q) | 1 course of 12 weeks | 15 |
| Petty Officer Telegraphists (Q) | 1 course of 15 weeks | 10 |
| Wireless Instructors (Q) | 2 courses of 22 weeks | 6 |
| D/F Operators' Course | 1 course of 3 weeks | 3 |
| Total | | 156 |

You can see from these figures that we are a small concern compared to H.M.S. *Mercury*, but for a total R.A.N. Communication Branch strength in round numbers of 30 officers, 230 Signalmen and 320 Telegraphists, we can adequately deal with all our commitments.

As at one time or another nearly all R.A.N. Signal Officers have spent some of their life in R.N. and also as several R.N. officers are serving out here, a complete list of the appointments of all Signal Officers in the R.A.N. is given at the end of the Communication Gazette on page 44. We hope to be able to keep this up to date in subsequent issues as appointments occur.

In the past year we have been pleased to receive back from H.M.S. *Mercury* several lost sheep who have returned as fully qualified C.C.Os.

As a postscript we would like to mention something about mails from the United Kingdom to here. If you have any reason to send either official or private correspondence out here always use Air Mail, which takes only *six days* compared with *six weeks* by sea. If your private correspondence is for a member of H.M. Forces, the rate for a Forces letter-card (obtained from the Post Office) is only 2½d. and an ordinary letter is 6d. per half-ounce. Quite a saving!

We are always pleased to hear from any prospective migrant Communicators or from any previous students.

J. C. R.

SOUTH ATLANTIC

H.M.S. "ACTAEON"

At the time of writing H.M.S. *Actaeon* is at the island of St. Helena, the first call on our cruise, which will take us as far north as Bathurst where we shall stay for eight days. After Bathurst the *Actaeon* will continue its cruise along the West Coast of Africa by paying visits to several ports in British and French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa, finally calling at Matadi, eighty miles from the entrance to the River Congo, arriving there in time for Easter. The cruise will end when we eventually arrive back at Simon's Town during the second week in April.

It is customary for the *Actaeon* to complete one cruise along the West African coast and two cruises along the East African coast, the latter including Madagascar, every twelve months. As the West Coast cruise takes us far out into the Atlantic so that we are thousands of miles from any Naval W/T station, the telegraphists have to contend with conditions that are often far from ideal for communication purposes, but with patience and a struggle they always succeed in receiving the area broadcast.

There is one compensating factor—when we call on ship-shore we can never be sure who will answer, Halifax, Ceylon or even Hong Kong—thus providing the ships operators with plenty of ship-shore experience.

On the cruises we quite often have to communicate with foreign stations on 500 kc/s, and as the operators on these stations have often only a scanty knowledge of English we sometimes have quite amusing experiences. One such experience we had last July when working a station in Madagascar. In English *Actaeon* made "Request information whether we shall be able to berth alongside." Two hours later back came the reply: "Here is weather you asked for," followed by a long report in French of the weather in the Mozambique Channel and Indian Ocean.

At frequent intervals we carry out exercises in False Bay or Saldanha Bay with the other two ships of the South Atlantic Squadron, H.M.S. *Nigeria* and *Nereide*, occasionally being joined by one or two frigates of the South African Naval Force. During one recent period of exercises which lasted a week, the *Actaeon* held an inter-departmental competition for all-round efficiency at their work, and all Communicators will be pleased to learn that the Communication department was awarded the first prize by the Captain.

Don't, however, be given the impression that we spend all of our time at sea. On the contrary, we spend fairly long periods in harbour, during which time we have ample opportunities of visiting Cape-town and other South African cities and of making ourselves acquainted with the "Springbok" way of life. We are all now connoisseurs of South African wines and brandies, but the "Starboard Light" still holds first place as favourite.

The time spent in harbour usually sees the Communicators taking part in sporting activities, and although the department is too small to make up its own team, it is true to say that the Communicators are the backbone of sport in the ship. Yeo, Holmes and Tel. James are members of the ship's cricket, hockey and football teams, and two of the forwards in the rugby team are P.O. Tel. Ellison and L. Tel. Maltby. During a recent cross-country race on the station the entire Communication branch turned out and the ship's miscellaneous racing boat's crew is formed almost entirely from the Communicators.

In conclusion, the Communicators on the *Actaeon* wish all other Communicators a good leave at Easter and we hope that soon we shall see some of you when you relieve us on the station. Until then, Tot Siens.

L. E.

S.T.C., KLAVER

A review of our training activities for the year 1949 shows that a total of nine qualifying courses were held at the S.T.C. which were made up as follows:—Ldg. Tel. (Q), three; Ldg. Sig. (Q), two; Tel. (Q), three; Sig. (Q), one. During the year, thirty-two candidates were placed on course to qualify for the leading rate, including some S.A.N.F. ratings, and of these, twenty-six passed, two were withdrawn during course, while one other found either the weather (or the pace?) too hot and bolted into the sea. Only three failed to make the grade for leading rate. In addition, twenty-two ratings were given a refresher course of one, two, or three weeks' duration, dependent on the length of time they could be spared from their ships, after which they were generally examined for the "Able" rate, seventeen out of twenty-two being successful at first attempt. Typing results on the whole were encouraging, and out of a total of fifty-four candidates for higher rating, thirty-four passed the Morse/copy typing examination first time, and a further nine subsequently.

At the moment we are battling against costs in an effort to get our A/T equipment up to scratch, and likewise, for the benefit of V/S ratings, to instal before long a model trainer such as is to be seen in the home signal schools. By the time this article appears in print, a course of Ldg. Tels. (Q) should be well under way and further courses in the "planning" stage. If any ratings are expecting a draft to this station, we suggest they confirm that any recommendations for course or examination to which they may be entitled have been rendered, and noted also on their signal or wireless history sheets.

As we write, an air of tragedy has not yet entirely lifted from the naval base at Simons Town. Those who have spent a summer at the Cape will not need reminding of the ever-present danger occasioned by bush fires, which, in the hot South African summer, occur at all-too-frequent intervals. The bush-fire season occurs between November and April, during which time little or no rain falls in the Cape, where the mountainous country, scorched by the sun and thickly covered by annual fallings of pine needles and leaves, awaits only the spark necessary to fire the forestry. The fire is, as often as not, fanned by a fierce south-west wind and spreads with alarming rapidity along the ground and through the tops of trees to threaten property, homes and lives. Sometimes these destructive fires are started by negligence on the part of selfish or thoughtless people who carelessly discard a burning cigarette end or a lighted match, or who, for some mysterious reason, find it necessary to light a fire for picnics and then leave glowing embers to be rekindled in the breeze.

To such a small beginning we can probably attribute the outbreak of the disastrous fire which, on Sunday, 5th February, started half-way up the mountain to the south of Simons Town. A wisp of smoke at 10 a.m. was the first indication of an impending bush fire—a fire which, before it was brought under control twenty-four hours later, was to cost the lives of two naval men and leave a trail of destruction in its wake. Starting as a tiny fire in the vicinity of "Froggy Pond" and helped by a strong south-easter, the flames rapidly gained ground, with the fire fanning outwards as it advanced.

It was to Mr. Cannel, S.C.E.O., R.N. (Duty Bush Fire Officer), that the task fell of initially setting in motion the extensive organisation which exists for dealing with these outbreaks. Before long, the fire assumed such proportions that fire brigades from as far away as Capetown were called in, and eventually, as the fire approached the township, the alarm was sounded on the dockyard siren recalling yard workers back to duty. H.M.S. *Nigeria* and ships in harbour cancelled short leave and all available men were organised and landed with axes, shovels and other equipment in an effort to stem the flames threatening naval property and private houses. Sweeping onwards, the fire seemed likely to engulf the R.N.H., though fortunately it skirted the hospital grounds, and roared its way up the 900-foot hill

through trees and bush towards the wireless station at Cape South (Klaver Camp). There, the old wartime signal school situated on the outskirts of the camp, and long since given up in favour of the new S.T.C., soon became an inferno, to be reduced in a few minutes to a heap of white ash and twisted metal. The question of whether the value of the old school, when removed as scrap, justified the cost of dockyard labour involved in dismantling, was soon to be solved for all time. Happily the new S.T.C. and the wireless station escaped undamaged, but not before Comm. Lt. (Jan.) Webber had spent a few anxious moments in his capacity as Officer-in-Charge, W/T Stations, organising fire parties and directing operations.

Communications between various points were maintained by use of portable type 66 W/T sets (kept ready for such an emergency), with headquarters in Jubilee Square, Simons Town. It is estimated that 2,000 people, including civilians and volunteers, helped fight the fire over a three-mile front. A dense pall of smoke hung over the area, through which at times the sun appeared blood-red, while a film of dust and smuts settled in rooms and offices with that pungent odour peculiar to fires. To prevent sightseers hindering operations, traffic police barred all entry by vehicular traffic to Simons Town unless proved to be on bona-fide business.

As daylight faded innumerable points of red light could be seen dotted along the sides of the mountain, whilst ghostly figures of the fire-fighters moved about in the half-light, sometimes to be silhouetted against the tongues of flame, at others to be engulfed in a blanket of swirling smoke. Throughout the night squads of men went out from ships to relieve the beaters on the mountain slopes—men, weary from scrambling over difficult terrain, whose boots were burned by the scorching earth and smouldering wood, bodies black with soot and eyes bloodshot from the smoke. With the dawn breaking on the eastern horizon, gradually the south-easter dropped and the fury of the fire abated, enabling the flames to be headed off and confined to smaller areas, but not until the next forenoon was well advanced could the fire be reported as out.

Today the sides of the mountains present a forlorn picture of long, black scars interspersed with patches of trees, which, although escaping the main conflagration, were scorched in the terrific heat, turning their leaves from green to a premature gold and brown. Only on the lower slopes green trees and unscathed undergrowth remain as a reminder of the former beauty of the local landscape, and now, against a background of rocks, black from ashes, smoke and dust, gaunt sentinels of trees, stripped of all foliage, stretch their few remaining withered limbs in grotesque shapes as though in horror of the desolate scene.

With great regret we record the deaths of an officer and a rating who fell victims to the flames whilst fighting the fire. Mr. J. Harrison, Comd. Engr., R.N., of H.M.S. *Nigeria*, and Boy Slade, of

H.M.S.A.S. *Good Hope*, who together were trapped by the flames, received such extensive burns that they were removed to the Military Hospital near Capetown and later succumbed to their injuries. The body of the late Boy Slade was removed to Pretoria for burial, the funeral being attended by high-ranking naval and military officers. The late Mr. Harrison was accorded a naval funeral at Simons Town in a touching ceremony, where several hundred officers and men, including civilians, joined in the sad procession. The Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic was also present. On behalf of all Communicators we extend our deepest sympathy to the bereaved relatives and also the ships companies of *Nigeria* and *Good Hope*.

H.M.S. "OSIRIS" (FAYID W/T)

The station has not changed materially since the last number and the reduced services continue, though we managed to open up considerably for the visit of the C.-in-C. to this area. However, there have been many changes in our staff; the S.C.O., Lt. Cdr. Seymour-Haydon, and the Officer-in-Charge, Mr. Deadman, C.C.O., both of whom saw the birth of the station and put Fayid W/T on the Communications map, have left us. C.P.O. Tel. Evans had unfortunately to be invalidated home; we lost C.Y.S. Clarke to H.M.S. *Surprise*, Yeo. Shilling "retired" to Cookham, and a number of changes have taken place amongst the Wrens.

An innovation in our social activities has been the Ship's Company dance, held in the local N.A.A.F.I. Stadium, which on both occasions was a roaring success; as the first coincided with the departure of the S.C.O., it was a very fitting farewell.

Another social event was the marriage of two of our number, Tel. Rogers and Wren. Tel. Rhodes; good luck to them both.

In the sporting world we count our successes more by turning out teams rather than winning cups owing to our small numbers among a large Army and R.A.F. garrison. The football team has been struggling manfully with moderate success through a number of friendly fixtures and now at last is about to enter a competition about which we hope to have good news for the next number. *Osiris* surprised the pundits and themselves recently by turning out an athletics team which gained second place and only missed first by a narrow margin. The Wrens very gamely entered for the Women's inter-Service Egypt Hockey Competition, but as their possible opponents outnumbered them by some five hundred to thirty they had no success. With the approach of warmer days we have schemes for a grand water-polo team and hope to win the cricket this year.

Finally, in spite of the apparent competition between ourselves and Ceylon West to build up the worst reputation through *THE COMMUNICATOR'S* columns, life can be fun at Fayid.

FONTAINEBLEAU

In the last issue of THE COMMUNICATOR I sketched out roughly, the setting of Field-Marshal Montgomery's Headquarters here. I pointed out, too, how the Services of each nation were getting together in a spirit of co-operation. Since then I have noted that two well-known British journals have featured lively articles on this subject, and I do not think that I could improve on them, except to say something of our first anniversary.

This was celebrated on 30th November last. An afternoon's sport was organised by our French comrades, the main event of which was a soccer elimination contest. Games were played by full teams, fifteen minutes each way, with no break at half-time. Very fast football indeed, and the Navy XI stamped home to victory. Sports were followed by cocktails in the Inter-Allied Sergeants' and W.O.s.' Mess and a dinner. Other Allied ranks enjoyed a smoking concert in the N.A.A.F.I. bar at the British barracks. All this was followed by a Grand Bal de Nuit at the Municipal Theatre. It was, as its name implies, an all-night affair, so much so that many of the dancers didn't bother to go to bed. So our first birthday was celebrated in good fashion.

Football has, of course, been one of our main counter-attractions, and Unimer (combined Navies), despite numerous setbacks through sickness and injury, have managed to keep in a position to win the Inter-Services League. With two matches to play, we must win both of them. Should we be successful we win the handsome St. Leger Cup (so called because of its association with a race of that name), kindly presented by Rear-Admiral Dick, our Naval Chief of Staff, who, incidentally, will be known to a great many of the older Communicators. Our team this season was: Lt. Cdr. Moss; Ch. Std. Tams, Yeoman; L. Sig. Pollard, L/Tel. Bowman, Sig. Daggett; Sig. McColm, Stenog. Cook, Std. Sutherland, C.M. Potignon (French Navy) and Skryoeer Mueller (Dutch Navy).

There has been some rugger and hockey by combined Services teams, always playing away from Fontainebleau to French sides. There are no facilities for these games here.

Welfare and other forms of entertainment have been energetically pursued by extremely willing workers, not the least of whom are Mr. "Ben" Gladstone Forbes and Miss Tennant of the Y.M.C.A. Welfare Unit. We hear they are leaving us soon and they will, if they go, be a great loss to us.

There has been a continuation of the concerts I mentioned last quarter, the shining lights of which were the evergreen "Journey's End," extremely well acted and produced, and the pantomime "Aladdin" at Christmas, played with highly original patter to delighted audiences, among whom were many French people who had never seen a panto in their lives.

Living quarters for sailors, soldiers, and airmen are

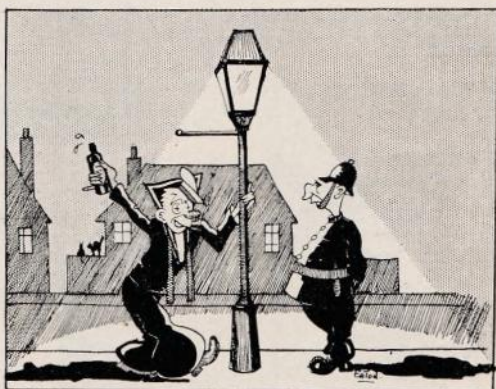
always being improved here, and monthly dances, weekly tombola, etc., under the auspices of the P.S.I. (better known to us at Canteen Committee), keep us amused.

The British Sergeants' and W.O.s.' Mess has been cracking along with a once weekly "open night" for all married families, and these have been a great success.

Entertainment by ourselves for ourselves is, of course, highly appreciated because Fontainebleau is really a quiet town with very few facilities for entertainment, such as we know it. It is, however, a pleasant spot in summer, with its great Palace, magnificent forest all around, and a swimming pool. We have already had a small dose of springlike weather, which makes us eager to shake off our dowdy winter look. So hurry up, spring!

STOP PRESS

Unimer became football league champions having a one point lead over Uniair.



"Lemme share thish bottle with you two Conshtables"

PROBLEMS FOR PARENTS

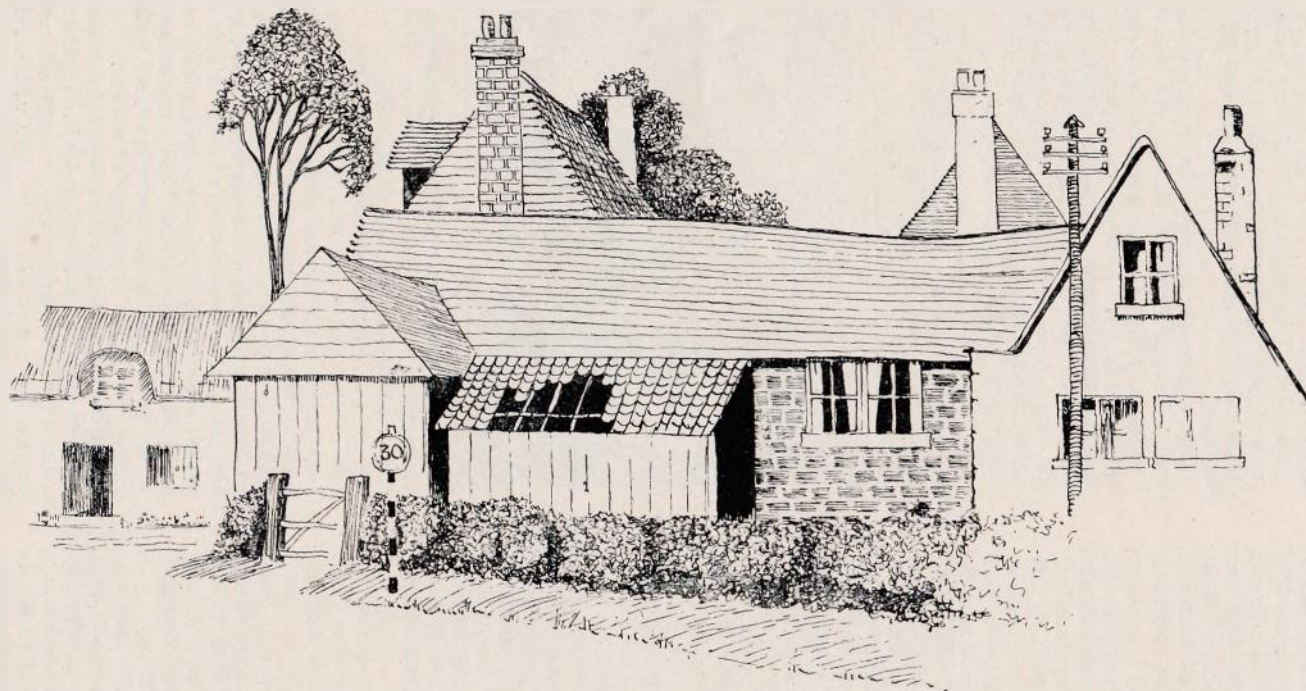
(And Benevolent Uncles)

It is instructive for children to take things apart. They want to see what makes the wheels go round. But when father gets home in the evening to find the clockwork motor—which cost him plenty—refusing to work, he mentally calls Johnny anything but an angel. And when little Janet's sleeping dolly refused to waken because Janet's private investigations have gummed the works, father—and mother—must wonder why nobody has invented something that simply *cannot* break, something that will last.

Sigh no more, ladies (and gentlemen). That something *has* been invented. Mr. Gordon C. Simpson, an ex-Communicator—and a proud father—has news for you. Please drop him a line at P.O. BOX 5955, Johannesburg, South Africa.

There is no obligation, and you will have the chance of doing the youngsters a really good turn.

(Advertisement.)



SOUTHWICK

Among the many delightful retreats within easy reach of Leydene, the ancient village of Southwick is worthy of notice. Many famous—and infamous—characters have lodged within its boundaries. To name a few: King John, Richard Coeur de Lion, Richard II, Henry de Blois, and that truly great Englishman William of Wykeham. It was at Southwick that King Charles II, whilst at worship in the little church of St. James-without-the-Priory Gate, was brought news of the murder of the Duke of Buckingham at Portsmouth.

The village boasts many beautiful spots and our artist was hard put to make a choice. As the church has been sketched so often the quiet backwater depicted above was chosen.



TRAINING AND ADVANCEMENT NOTES

Analysis of the examinations held at the Home Signal Schools show that the numbers failing are considerably higher than normal and are becoming a cause for concern.

The percentage of failures for each rate at present are as follows:

| Examination | Percentage Failed |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| For Yeoman of Signals | 15.8 |
| For P.O. Telegraphist | 16.3 |
| For Leading Signalmán | 26.0 |
| For Leading Telegraphist | 31.0 |

Ratings who failed in Morse/copy typing *only* are not included in the above percentages but are considered as having passed.

It will be seen that the position is particularly bad in the examinations for Leading Signalmán and Leading Telegraphist, and it is apparent that here in particular ratings are not making sufficient efforts to prepare themselves before they are drafted in for their course. Owing to the difficult manning position caused by the severe shortage of senior Communication ratings, it is necessary to keep the length of courses as short as possible. It is therefore impossible at the time available to give a complete resume of subjects which you should already know, and it is up to every candidate for higher rating to ensure that he joins the Signal School with the necessary groundwork to enable him to derive the full benefit from his course.

Full details of the subjects you are required to know are contained in the Standard of Knowledge tables in Section 8 of the Signal Training Manual (BR 1792), and it is strongly recommended that these should be studied carefully so that you may know what is

expected of you. In particular be sure that you are up to scratch in your practical and do not lose any opportunity of reading an exercise. You will thus save valuable time during your course which can be devoted to other more profitable studies. Don't forget that a failure means the loss of your basic date and a further delay of three months or more before you can be recommended for another course. So it is up to you to make sure of success by using every opportunity to get yourself up to date in preparation for your course. No one who makes the necessary effort to prepare himself beforehand should have any doubt as to the outcome of his course.

SEA SERVICE QUALIFICATIONS

New regulations regarding the sea-service qualifications for advancement have now been issued (A.F.O. 4325/49). In these, "Seagoing Service" (which is defined as service in a ship or tender which is either seagoing or which proceeds to sea from time to time; e.g., submarine and destroyer depot ships) is required in place of the old "Sea-Service" which allowed service in shore wireless or signal stations, combined operations, etc., to count.

The following are new Seagoing Service requirements for Communication ratings:

For Advancement

| to | Seagoing Service Requirement |
|--------------------|---|
| A.B. Rate .. | Nil |
| Leading Rate .. | 6 months since the age of 17½ |
| Petty Officer Rate | 6 months in the Leading rate |
| | or |
| | a total of 1 year since the age of 17½ |
| C.P.O. Rate .. | 6 months in the Petty Officer rate |
| | or |
| | a total of 2 years since the age of 17½ |

Until the 1st March, 1951, men may be advanced under either the old or the new rules but thereafter the new rules only are to apply.

TEMPORARY ABOLITION OF FORMS S507 FOR ADVANCEMENT TO LEADING TELEGRAPHIST

Owing to the severe shortage of Leading Telegraphists in all three Port Divisions, it has been decided that Commodores of Depots may, until further notice, issue Forms B13 as soon as ratings become fully qualified for advancement to that rate, thereby reducing the delays entailed by the use of Form S507 (A.F.O. 311/50).

Commanding Officers have to report to the appropriate depot by letter (air mail from abroad) immediately a rating obtains any of the following essential qualifications:

Basic date of passing professionally (including Morse/copy typing).

Dates qualified by seagoing service, educationally and swimming.

Reports need not be made until a rating has

passed professionally for Leading Telegraphist, when the report is also to indicate whether he possesses the other qualifications or not. When a rating acquires an essential qualification *after* passing professionally, the fact is to be reported without delay, giving the date of acquiring the qualification.

J. S. W.

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD (see page 39)

ACROSS—1, Diagrams; 5, Ballet; 10, Eiode; 11, Symphonic; 12, Lobe; 13, Bells; 14, Pool; 17, Amperes; 18, Corpen; 22, Assent; 23, Suction; 26, Mice; 28, Comic; 29, Pole; 32, Renumbers; 33, Alive; 34, Yachts; 35, Pendants.

DOWN—1, Dwells; 2, Atom Bombs; 3, Reel; 4, Mastered; 6, Ache; 7, Lingo; 8, Tackline; 9, Ample; 15, Terms; 16, North or South; 19, Promotion; 20, Gamma Ray; 21, Rum issue; 24, Women; 25, Severs; 27, Cynic; 30, Emit; 31, Yard.

SHORT RECORD



A NONDESCRIPT nonentity, a limb of the Oppressed,
I wear no badges on my arm, no medals on my chest,
But though my past is colourless, my future dim and bleak,

I cherish a distinction which is probably unique.

Of all the mass of traffic through the tortured ether
hurled

By all the busy Tels. of all the navies of the world,
No Morse of mine impinged upon a fellow-speaker's
ear—

I never sent a signal in the whole of my career.

I used to wonder meekly when "Control" would let
me in

To add my little quota to the universal din,
Then realised my destiny, surrendered to my fate—
Eternally to sit and serve by being told to wait.

But once, and only once, I found my baser self
constrained

To break the wireless silence I so rigidly maintained.
My weary watch was over, my relief was overdue—
I gently, briefly pressed the key to see what it would
do.

I often sit and wonder where that blameless dot has
gone.

If still through endless time and space it hurries
bravely on,

Disowned by its creator and dismissed its parent
ship—

Unauthorised, attenuated, lonely little pip.

But though beyond our universe its travels may
extend,

It still will bear my finger-prints on reaching journey's
end,

And beings in some unknown world may trace it
back to me

As surely as the Flagship did in 1933.

R. S.



RADIO INDUSTRY NOTES

There can be but few people who would fail to identify the National Radio Exhibition with the name "Radiolympia." In fact, the latter has become the popular term, since the Exhibition has been held every year from 1926 to 1949 (except for the war years) at Olympia. It may not, however, be generally remembered that this was not the case before 1926. In 1922 the Exhibition was housed in the Horticultural Hall, in 1923 at the White City, and in 1924-25 in the Royal Albert Hall.

It has been announced by the Radio Industry Council that the Seventeenth National Radio Exhibition will be held, from 6th to 16th September, 1950, at Castle Bromwich, Birmingham. This makes a complete break with tradition, and, although the change will probably make little material difference to overseas buyers and the industry generally, it is possible that it will be resented by many people outside the trade, unless satisfactory reasons are made public. Apart from innate dislike of what may well be considered a capricious and vexatious decision, thousands of radio enthusiasts who have hitherto regarded the Exhibition as one of their own annual

festivals may find their attendance prohibited by problems of travel, accommodation, time and expense. Naval communicators, in particular, may find it impossible to travel so far afield in their few precious hours of "liberty"; even if this trouble is overcome, many will hesitate to embark on a search for accommodation in this remote, and to them, unfamiliar, inland city.

* * * *

The radio industry has for many years looked to the National Association for the Employment of Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen as a source of reliable and competent technicians. Considerable interest has been aroused by a new clause in the Association's regulations entitling ex-Regulars of the three Women's Services to registration for employment. It is hoped that the industry, as well as the women themselves, will benefit from the resulting introductions. Men and women of the Services will be glad to learn that of the 57,250 ex-Regulars and war-time personnel who registered with the Association during 1949, 47,872 (or 83 per cent. of registrations) were placed in employment by the efforts of the job-finders attached to the Association's offices. In addition to the London offices, the Association has branches in forty-six provincial towns, including the three naval home ports. No further information is available concerning the 17 per cent. for whom suitable posts were not found, but in view of present-day conditions it is likely that at least a proportion were placed by other organisations or by their own efforts. One of the chief difficulties encountered in endeavouring to place the time-expired Service man is that of housing. Many of the men are unable, or at least reluctant, to accept a job away from their home towns owing to the subsequent difficulty of rehousing their families. This problem is, however, one which must be faced, and is particularly marked in the case of "natives" of Portsmouth and district, where there are few large industries. It is certain that few, if any, of the many vacancies available in the radio industry are situated in the vicinity of the latter port.

* * * *

It has previously been mentioned in these notes that the Radio Industry Council includes among its many responsibilities that of preparing specifications for the industry, to assist in the standardisation of its products to meet the demands of users, commercial and private, for the utmost reliability in radio and electronic products. A similar duty is performed for the Services by appropriate inter-Service bodies. A recent R.I.C. specification deals with the choice of materials for specific radio purposes, and covers an enormous range. A corresponding inter-Service specification is already in existence, and, although the matter has not yet reached the stage of consideration by the British Standards Institution, it is hoped that the relevant parts of both specifications may in due course be linked in one national standard.

A. R. J.

DEEP-SEA FISHING

In spite of their apparent advantages, few sailors go in for fishing.

Our admiral in the old *Southampton* on the South American Station was an exception and even when the ship was at sea an elaborate fishing tackle was rigged.

Abreast the mainmast a sounding boom was fitted and blocks in the dock led to the foot of the mainmast. A whole coil of signal halliard terminating in a wire trace and bait was rove through the sounding boom blocks, across the deck, up the mast and down again to a net containing three six-inch "projies" which acted as a spring when a fish was hooked.

It worked well, and three huge fish of the tunney type, all weighing over 600 lb., were caught. When a fish was hooked, up went the weights, the ship was stopped, the Admiral appeared with his rifle and dozens of willing helpers hauled the fish to the boom where a few well-directed shots made it more tractable to handle inboard, where it was cut up and served out to the messes—very good, too.

Now *Southampton* was a flagship and nothing so undignified as dhobeying could be allowed to show itself save at night; even at sea, all had to be down by 0600 or be "confiscated" as the call-boy announced.

Stoker Robinson had the morning watch, so he went to the fo'c's'le to collect his hammock and bed cover before going on. The stiff breeze carried the latter over the side. Sighing resignedly at the loss, Robinson went below to the stokehold.

Crrrrrash! up went the weights, "Tingaling" went the telegraphs. "Stop both," said the officer of the watch; "call the Admiral."

The Admiral soon appeared on deck in his pyjamas clutching his rifle. With the wind whistling through his beard he directed the activities of the small crowd which had soon gathered, even at 0400.

"Its a big 'un, sir, it don't half pull," said one lad as he hauled manfully on the fishing line.

Slowly, very slowly, the line came in and—yes, you have guessed it, it was the bed cover!

"Whose is it?" asked the Admiral. "Robinson's, sir." "Send for him!"

Robinson, clad in sweater and fearnoughts, duly appeared, wondering greatly why the Admiral wanted him so early in the morning.


"Is this yours?"

"Y-yessir."

"Well, take it, and the next time it fouls my fishing line, I'll throw it back over the side!"

POP.

KNOCKER



BY THE ART EDITOR

"Well, if it isn't old Morbid," beamed the Big Sailor as he sailed towards my table for all the world like a battleship coming into harbour. "Lately?" Suspecting a leg-pull, I ignored the query and pressed my thumb on the bell.

"What you having?" I asked, as Flossie the attendant nymph of the bar parlour hove in sight.

"B.B. split," answered the Tar.

"Say, what d'you think of the frock Flossie's wearing? I call it Easter leave."

"Easter Leave?"

"Yes. It starts too late and ends too soon."

At this corny joke the Sailor let out a roar of laughter that made the glasses on the shelves nudge each other.

"She's certainly showing a lot of acreage," I agreed, when the storm had subsided. "For all that, I think it's very becoming."

"I'll say," said the Salt. "Becoming shorter every time she washes it."

"What's the joke, boys?" asked Flossie, coming alongside with the drinks. "Fit for me to hear?"

"Old Agony Column here was admiring your frock," explained the Sailor, in his flattering way, "and was wondering if it had a name like those 'creations' in *Vogue*."

"Matter of fact, it has," said Flossie, laying down the tray. "It's called Anecdote."

"Why Anecdote?" I asked, laying myself wide open.

"Well," said Flossie, absent mindedly pocketing my change, "it's long enough to cover the essentials but too short to become boring."

The Big Sailor roared again, and slapped Flossie appreciatively where it would hurt her least.

"Everyone is in high good humour tonight," I observed. "A pity your friend Klocker White isn't here to share in the fun."

Frankly, I was fishing. I have long doubted the existence of Klocker, the super-crow, and am constantly trying to trip the Big Sailor: so far without success.

"We won't be seeing Klocker for some time," said the Salt. "At the moment he's——"

Flossie was still standing at the table, her ears sticking out like sails. Fond of her bit of gossip is Flossie.

"Beat it," said the Sailor.

"Eh?"

"Beat it. Don't you know you can get three years for listening to blokes discussing official secrets?"

Tilting her nose scornfully, Flossie retired to her citadel of bottles. When she was safely out of earshot the Sailor glanced furtively around, like a suspicious character out of Oppenheim.

"Klocker got himself a spare time job," he resumed in lowered tones. "Earned himself a few bob in the evenings. It's all against K.R. and A.Is., of course, but the hand that strokes the jaunty is the hand that rules the world. You'll keep this under you hat, of course?"

"Of course," I agreed. "What was Klocker doing, exactly? Teaching knots and splices to Boy Scouts?"

"He forgot all about knots and splices the day he left Shotley. As a matter of fact, he was ——" At this point the Big Sailor discovered his glass was empty and made a half-hearted attempt to reach the bell-push. Relieving him of the task I held up two fingers to Flossie, who replenished our glasses and, catching the expression on the Salt's face, beat a hasty retreat.

"You were saying——" I prompted.

"He was a bouncer in a dance hall at Southsea."

"Bouncer?"

"American word," explained the Sailor, "came over with Lend-Lease. Chucker-out to you. Seems this dance hall was a pretty select place, but a bunch of Smart Ales had formed the habit of drifting in and livening the place up a bit. The manager was afraid of his patrons finding another place to dance, so he advertised for a bouncer and Klocker got the job."

"But surely the manager wouldn't dream of employing a sailor?" I protested. "These K.R. things you were talking about. He would know about those?"

"Klocker was in civvies when he applied for the job, and said he was employed in the dockyard during the day. Quite true, you know. The *Intolerable* was tied up at Railway Jetty at the time."

The Sailor lifted his pint and took a pull that would have shamed a mule-skinner.

"Ah, me!" he went on in parenthesis. "Klocker

could get away with murder on the *Intolerable*. The only bloke who had him really weighed off was the Divisional Officer and he had got a draft chit three days before Knocker got this job. His relief had been delayed, so the coast was clear for Knocker.

"The first night everything went off beautifully. Knocker, looking like a duke in his claw-hammer coat and white tie, mingled with the guests. Nobody knew he was the bouncer.

" 'Money for jam,' he told me the next morning. 'The suit costs me five bob a night off old Aaronstein in Queen Street and the pay is twenty-five shillings a night. A quid clear, me beauty.'

"But the next night there was to be a pill in the jam. A tall bloke with black whiskers was one of the first arrivals. Knocker didn't see him come in, but after a time he noticed that this bloke was neither drinking nor dancing. He sat at his table without moving, although he didn't seem to object to his girl dancing.

" 'Better watch this merchant,' thought Knocker. 'Looks to me as if he's keeping sober as as to keep his head in a rough house.' Knocker had convinced himself that the whiskered one meant trouble.

"Well, the evening wore on without incident and Knocker thought he might as well relax. Then, just as he was trying to date the cloakroom attendant (a bit of all-right from Milton), bedlam broke loose, and Knocker dashed to his post in time to see the bearded type sailing into two other types. 'Just as I thought,' said Knocker to himself. 'Here goes!'

"On the principle of 'go for the biggest,' Knocker seized the whiskered one by the lower band, and figuring that a half-Nelson was better than no Nelson at all tried to put one on him. The other two had no intention of being left out of a scrap, and before you could say 'Up spirits' all hell was let loose, and Knocker was amidship. What a scrap! Knocker claims he hasn't seen the like since he tried to date the Austrian barmaid in the Klondyke at Floriania.

"According to Knocker, it was difficult to tell who was having the best of it, but when the melee was at its height, Whiskers took charge, and, managing to crawl under the table, grabbed a walking-stick.

"Knocker decided he'd had enough of bouncing and took a tentative step towards the exit, but Whiskers got the crook of his stick round his ankle and Knocker crashed, taking the other two belligerents with him. The noise brought out the manager and three or four waiters, who joined in the scrap, and the battle moved slowly towards the manager's office.

" 'What goes on?' demanded the manager, reasonably, when the door was locked behind them.

" 'This bird started a scrap,' said Knocker, pointing at Whiskers. 'I saw him bust these two gents on the nose. They were doing nothing wrong as far as I could see.'

"Then you're blind,' snapped Whiskers. 'They've patterned my companion all evening, and had the

impertinence to refer to her as "Gorgeous."'

" 'What's wrong with that?' demanded Knocker. 'She's as nice a bit of geometry as I've seen this side of an H.E.T. paper. And how d'you know they were referring to her? They might have meant you!'

"With a bellow of rage Whiskers brought the end of his stick down on Knocker's head and then drew him off a gopher that rattled his teeth. Like Chinese soldiers, the other two types changed sides when they saw who was winning, and aided Whiskers in the good work.

"As soon as he could make himself heard the manager addressed what was left of Knocker. 'White,' he said, 'I employed you to protect my patrons from undesirables and the first thing you do is assault an inoffensive gentleman. You're fired.'

" 'What about this evening suit?' demanded Knocker. 'It's ruined. Who's going to pay for it?'

" 'That is not my affair,' said the manager. 'Go!'

The Big Sailor sighed and gazed reflectively at his empty glass. "Well," he continued when I had replenished it, "Knocker felt in need of a revive, and changing into uniform called into the Golden Fleece for a pint. His spirits were rising slowly when Bogey Knight and Dusty Rhodes strolled in.

" 'Hi, Knocker,' said Bogey, 'thought you were working at the Splendid?'

" 'I was,' said Knocker, 'but there was a rough house and that stooge of a manager gave me the poke.'

" 'Well, well!' said Dusty. 'I hope you didn't make yourself too conspicuous. The new Divisional Officer arrived today and came ashore this evening. Bogey heard him tell the cab driver to take him to the Splendid. See anything of him?'

" 'What's he look like?' asked Knocker, interested.

" 'Tall bloke with whiskers,' said Dusty. 'He's got a game leg and has to walk with a stick.'

The Big Sailor sighed deeply, emptied his glass, and in a fit of abstraction started on mine.

"Well," I said, at length; "I suppose your friend is doing jankers and is unable to join us here?"

"Jankers, my eye! He's got two spare time jobs now."

"What! D'you mean to say that after all that trouble he gets himself more work? He must be crazy."

"Not exactly," said the Salt. "You see, it's this way. The Divisional Officer lives at Eastney, and is a keen gardener. Every evening Knocker goes along to trim his lawn, and weed the flower beds. Purely voluntary, you know."

"I'm sure it is. But you mentioned two jobs. What's the other one?"

The Big Sailor finished my pint and rose to go. "When he's finished with the D.O.'s garden, Knocker goes to old Aaronstein's shop, scrubs out, washes the windows and makes himself useful for a couple of hours. The old boy figures it will take Knocker three months to work off the price of that dress suit. Be seeing you."

ROUND THE HOME ESTABLISHMENTS

COMBINED SIGNAL SCHOOL

In common with other shore establishments located in the countryside, we are longing for the rigours of winter to pass so that we may move beyond the confines of office and classroom without fear of freeze- or bog-up.

The short winter evenings which impose such limitations upon our pleasures are now fast receding, and we shall soon be able again to enjoy the simple country pleasures which accord themselves to the times in which we live.

At the Combined Signal School we have suffered considerably owing to man-power shortage, we have had perforce to say "au revoir" to all our signalmen (only very temporarily, we hope), and even they themselves could not regret their departure more than we do.

Lt. A. G. Jukes, R.M., and Yeo. Rees have also departed to the outposts, and so we take this opportunity of wishing them all every success in their postings, whence we are secure in the knowledge that they will always be useful exponents of the Combined Signals Technique.

Fortunately our R.M. signallers have reached a very high standard in their practicals—so we may consider ourselves fortunate in not being left completely in the lurch.

No. 12 Basic Course (Other Ranks), with a good representation from all the Services, is now in full swing, and, as with all basic courses, the practical exercises—covering large chunks of country with walkie-talkie sets of numerous denominations, with a small strategical problem thrown in to hold the interest and lend realism to the exercise—are still the most popular sessions of the course.

As a matter of interest, basic course training also provides the trained personnel required for R.A.F. ship signal sections, and Army ship signal troops, which are required for the manning of the Headquarters ships in combined operations.

A most encouraging gathering of specialist Signal Officers of all Services were present for Exercise "Hermes" (combined ops. quiz style) in the latter part of December.

Two R.A.F. Signals Officers' Courses and a short visit by the present "C" Course were also featured during the past quarter.

At soccer the Combined Signals team are in the North Devon Junior League, and held the happy position of top of the league at the close of the year. Unfortunately, owing to postings, etc., we now occupy third place; however, we are confident of rising again and of carrying off the League Shield.

F. A. N. A.

NAVAL AIR SIGNAL SCHOOL

The Easter Term has so far given us a fair share of bleak, frosty, weather, followed by a spell of rain,

and yet more rain. Each brings its problems in the rearrangement of lectures and classes necessitated by the cry from our Squadron, now established in the wilds of Hamble, "No flying today."

Nevertheless, the many and varied courses are passing through the School at the usual brisk rate. We have said farewell to No. 1 Observers' Course, comprising Special Entry Midshipmen, after their three months' stay here (see above); and are now in the process of bringing No. 2 Course up to the required standard. The Long "C" Course were with us for three weeks at the beginning of the term, and provoked the reflection that if they master their Communication syllabus as well as they mastered our team at hockey they will indeed make their mark on the Signal world.

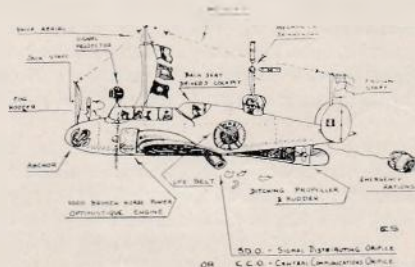
The Telegraphists (Flying), introduced last October, continue to carry out their four-week training period here, and by the time Easter arrives we shall be instructing the fifth course of this type.

Two courses from Leydene to visit us in the near future are the Indian and Pakistan C.C.Os.' Qualifying, to be followed in April by the International Long "C."

To prevent a Communication domination of courses, we carry out "refreshers" for pilots and rear-cockpit personnel from time to time, as a change from the current Observers' Course.

Last, but by no means least, the School still has visits from the Wrens Telegraphist classes, who come down daily from *Mercury* for a fortnight to learn about D/F and other aspects of the Communication/Flying world. It has been suggested that the Signal Wrens might profitably take our fortnight's instruction as well as their Telegraphist counterparts, but a final decision is still awaited at the present time. These Wrens lend a feminine touch to an otherwise all-male establishment.

Staff changes, include Mr. Fitzgerald being relieved, to pursue his study of the W/T way of life in the Fleet Flagship, by Mr. Newman from *Anson*. Lt. (L) Young has taken over from Lt. (L) Moore. Inevitable changes in the inhabitants of the Instructors' Room included the departure of C.P.O. Tel. Kennett to



Design for a replacement aircraft to accommodate the Naval Air Signal Squadron.

Implacable, Aircrewman Churlish to *Triumph* and Aircrewmen Stewart, Roberts and Spowart to the beach. In their places we welcomed C.P.O. Tel. Chambers and Aircrewmen Read, Edwards, Winters, Casey and Hammacott.

With regard to our sporting activities, the School's hockey and soccer teams more than hold their own in the inter-part leagues of *Daedalus*. The main feature of sport in this Establishment is, however, that the average chap who "likes a game but is no Stanley Matthews" gets a chance, in fact is more or less obliged, to take part in matches organised on recreational make-and-mends. The alternative to pushing a ball about at football or hockey is to assist the Agricultural Officer to grow mushrooms, or other fruit and vegetables, and rally to his call of "re-create—not recreate!"

Alterations to the School continue and, apart from the upheaval caused by a major refit to the junior ratings' ablutions still in progress, our front lawn is being dug up for the erection of a bigger and better static water tank, which, we hope, will make another excellent "Lido" in the summer.

The squadron of Anson aircraft attached to the Naval Air Signal School are now operating from the airfield of the Air Service Training Ltd. at Hamble, and it is to their publication, *Astra*, that we owe our diagram of the "Design for a Replacement Aircraft to Accommodate the Naval Air Signal Squadron." For the loan of this design we make grateful acknowledgement to the Editor of *Astra*.

To those lucky (?) enough to be scheduled to visit us in the Summer Term we shall extend our usual welcome—"Come and study in ideal surroundings—country charm only two minutes from the Solent, with cricket, swimming and tennis to afford relaxation from burning midnight oil."

To fellow-Communicators everywhere, and to all who have passed through the Naval Air Signal School, whether "fearless aviators" or "feet on the ground (or should we say ship?) types," may we express our best wishes for a happy and successful summer, blessed with the best of weather and first-class fixes on the best public-houses during your time ashore in all parts of the world?



And so, as the golden sun rises slowly in the East, we bid a fond farewell to N.A.S.S., this placid little haven of rustic refuge untouched by the advance of modern science . . .

H.M.S. "GANGES"

Our main news item is the introduction of the Draft Division. Boys no longer leave here and wait in depot for their draft notes. On completion of their course they move into their new messes, start dhokeying in buckets, learn how to make up a duff—and keep up to date on practical signalling. And it will not be long before arrangements have been made for them to sling their hammocks.

Although this is a welcome scheme, and should mean in most cases improved practical ability when a Boy reaches the Fleet, we would like to point out that the Boys have a pretty hard grind to get to the final standard, and that they only get there a few weeks before the final exam. (some, we fear, only a few days before). They therefore have no time to consolidate their gains, and any period, even a week, without practical exercises, will mean a drop in efficiency. We find that two weeks' leave is enough to drop a class average by 15 to 20 per cent. So the results on joining a ship abroad—after seasonal leave, foreign service leave, followed by a trip in a trooper—must nearly always be a bit below passing-out percentage.

The modernisation of the Signal School is proceeding slowly. The unsightly partitions which separated part of the class from their Instructor on the lower floor have been removed and new benches and keys installed. Each classroom is being fitted out with automatic transmission. Whitehall W/T very kindly send us old B.N. tapes, so we can now run our own "BN" at any desired speed.

On the V/S side, we hope to construct a new V/S procedure teacher. The Signal School extension roof, when viewed from a classroom in the main building, lies along the centre of the river. Flashing lights set up on this roof remotely controlled from the classroom would simulate ships under fairly realistic conditions. The main advantage will be that the whole class is under the eye of the Instructor.

The article in the Christmas number of THE COMMUNICATOR on advancement has been of considerable help in our lectures on that subject. The detailed figures serve to impress the great advantage of an early start on the advancement tree.

The St. George's Prize for the best all-round Boy in the Establishment this term has been awarded to Boy Tel. Hinkley, who is now on his way to the Far East. We congratulate him on making such an excellent start.

Our regards to Old *Ganges* Boys who may have by this time shifted their literary interest from the *Shotley Magazine* to THE COMMUNICATOR.

R.N.S.S., COOKHAM CAMP

It is with much regret that we pen our last contribution under the heading of "R.N.S.S., Cookham Camp." But in this, our last hour, there are few tears being shed over the death sentence; the trainees are eagerly looking forward to the many attractions

of Leydene, for, as a trainee was heard to say, "How much more interesting a divisional competition will prove if *all* Leydene trainees are included!" However, whilst the imagination of the trainees may traverse the open spaces and shaded glens of the "Mother School," the qualified Communicators of the Chatham Division view with mixed feelings the transfer to Prince Arthur Camp as the future home of R.N. Signal School, Chatham, and the less exclusive accommodation in St. Mary's Barracks. Most are very willing to trade their Nissen huts for the brick buildings of St. Mary's.

We expect to do the transfer to Prince Arthur Camp at the end of May, by which time some of our present Part II Training population will have found a new home in Leydene and the remainder will have completed their training. This will leave only the qualifying courses for Leading rates for whom some special arrangements may have to be made to avoid them being dislocated by the move. Our Instructors, now forty-six, from all three Port Divisions will be reduced to about ten Chatham Chief and Petty Officers.

The reducing of the Nore Flotilla has deprived the Cookham trainees of their week of sea training, and classes now passing out will have to find their sea-legs with their first draft chit.

The Dramatic Society recently put on "Journey's End," which proved to be an enormous success. Unfortunately our choice of plays is very limited owing to the Camp being run on monastic lines, but another production is under way and members of the cast can be recognised with towels and ice packs when going the rounds of huts. "On Approval" was a very popular show given by the Tunbridge Wells Regional Players; we are looking forward to their next visit.

Sport Activity

Sporting activities play a big part in the life at Cookham Camp and great interest is displayed in the Divisional Competition now running. Soccer, Rugby and hockey matches are played as part of this competition and frenzied cries of "Up, the Deck," "T-O-P Top" and "Come on, Fo'c'sle" are to be heard echoing through trees whenever an inter-Divisional game is in progress.

The Camp soccer teams are doing well in the Wednesday League, but the 1st XI has recently dropped a few places in the league table, the main reason being the disorganisation of the team owing to players being drafted. The 2nd XI has been very successful and is now second. The Barracks inter-Block Competition, for which we are holders of the shield, begins soon and we are fully confident of winning again. Our captain, P.O. Tel. Jobling, has been chosen to represent the Royal Navy versus the Corinthian League.

Our Rugby XV has had several matches recently and has won all of them. Two of our players, Sig. Blackbourne and O.Sig. Welch, play fairly regularly

for Chatham United Services. In addition to outdoor games, competitions are now in progress in snooker and table tennis and some very good play has been seen.

Chiefs' Chatter

Things have been very quiet at Cookham since Christmas. One notable event was the return of C.Y.S. Webb. "Webbie" had been to sea for four months and returned to inform us all how the Fleet works now.

C.Y.S. Mann arrived and left shortly afterwards to bring "Pompey" Signal School up to scratch. C.Y.S. Humphries rolled slowly through the gate and out to sea, leaving Cookham two feet higher in the water. C.Y.S. Myall has returned to "Pompey" after loaning us his very valuable services for six months.

In the radio world C.P.O. Tels. Carlow, Riddell and Hemsley are in the foreign service pool and solemnly state that they are eager to be away and get cracking.

We regret to announce that C.Y.S. "Soapie" Watson is in hospital—worn out with too much riding.

The following is an extract from a recent court circular: "C.P.O. Tel. The Viscount Hodge is appointed to H.M.S. *Mercury*."

On the entertainments side nothing much has been happening. However, March should be a full month; we have socials on the 5th, 17th and 31st. In addition, billiards, snooker, table-tennis and darts competitions, with medals for the winners, are being run, so between now and Easter it should be interesting.

C.Y.S. Rosenberg is now President of the Chief's Mess in place of C.P.O. Tel. McCann, who has retired to "Civvy Street."

COOKHAM'S DEATH-KNELL

The Knell of Cookham Camp at last has sounded;

Soon weeds will grow where words of wisdom fell.
No more the sight of trainees being hounded

Will gladden hearts like mine—as hard as h——.

Already vultures hover round the outskirts

Indeed one swooped and caught us on the hop—
Before the Wardroom earmarked various roses—

The Barracks came and dug up all the crop.

We sadly wait the coming of the tulips

And daffodils to bring us joy each day,
For where these flowers have bloomed in all their
glory,

Both they and Cookham Camp will fade away.

So, all you men who've tarried here in Cookham,

'Mid chestnut trees and spacious nissen huts,
Pray spare a kindly thought for we who's duty
It is—to see your efforts killed by cuts.

"COOKHAM FRY."

R.N.S.S. DEVONPORT

Many changes for the better have taken place of late. Junior ratings now live in "A" Camp, which is much closer to the dining-hall. It is most unfortunate that this move is not possible for the Chief and Petty Officers.

The Instructional Office is now situated in the hut which formerly housed the E.V.T. Offices, the latter having been shifted to a different site. Lieutenant Commander (C), who is also First Lieutenant of the Establishment, is ensconced in the original Captain's Private Office, the Captain having moved to the former First Lieutenant's Office. This move allows the First Lieutenant to carry out his executive duties, and at the same time, by virtue of being immediately adjacent to the Instructional Officers, keep his finger on the pulse of Communication training.

The old Instructional Office—B47—is now the Typex Room. This provides an infinitely better space than the small portion of the C.B. Office—B54—previously used.

On Tuesdays the Signal School and Ship's Company go to Divisions. This Vicarage Road camp is far from being what one expects of a naval establishment, inasmuch as layout, etc., is concerned; nevertheless, our Divisions, with the Padre and prayers, a hymn to the accompaniment of the Royal Marine Band, the Captain's inspection, and the grand finale—the march past—are very much a step in the right direction of endeavouring to reintroduce pre-war ceremonial and discipline. The Commodore inspected the Divisions a few weeks ago. He, very naturally, took the salute at the march past. Considering we were almost ankle deep in mud, he was probably impressed with the smart-turn-out and the marching of everyone.

The lack of ships in full commission is being felt

very much by the strain on our instructional resources in the training of young Ords. and Boys. Hitherto, these future stalwarts of the Communication Branch would have been at sea in the Fleet "learning their stuff" the real and hard way. Roll on, the day when we have large fleets at sea once again.

At the moment senior Telegraphist ratings are most conspicuous by their absence. Most Communicators are probably conversant with the old saying regarding the odd occasion when the ornamental lions which act as sentinels over Portsmouth Guildhall burst into roars. It is now anticipated that whenever a Chief or Petty Officer Telegraphist joins Vicarage Road and is likely to remain and assist in our work, a look of contentment will develop across the otherwise expressionless face of the figurehead of a stag which adorns our quarterdeck.

We were very pleased to be visited by Captain Crombie a short while ago. Had he come a day earlier, he would have seen how waterproof an American Nissen hut cannot be when subjected to the onslaught of a north-westerly gale.

Owing, mainly, to the inclement weather, there is little sporting activity to relate. The Establishment is about midway in the R.N.B. Inter-Divisional Soccer League. Cricket enthusiasts will be pleased to learn that a concrete pitch is being laid for our nets.

There is not a vestige of truth in the rumour that the Devonport Signal School is being shifted to St. Budeaux Barracks to share it with the Wrens.

Our congratulations to Captain Stopford and those other Communication Officers who were promoted in the recent half-yearly promotions.

In conclusion, farewell, Communicators, especially those of the West Country Division, wherever you may be; happy commissions and good communications.

A. E. B.

"QSW 500 kc/s"

(CONTRIBUTED BY THE POST OFFICE LIAISON OFFICER TO THE SIGNAL DIVISION)

Ever since the First World War the Post Office system of marine communication has maintained very close links with its naval equivalent and, as a result of the co-operation during the Second World War, the present Long Distance Scheme has been evolved. The details of this organisation with its hub at Portishead, jointly manned by Post Office and Admiralty Staff, are well known and there is no doubt that the slogan "Any British Ship, anywhere," provides a special appeal, even to the uninitiated.

The spectacular nature of the Long Distance Scheme and of Portishead in particular is, however, apt to overshadow the latter's older and smaller stations, the Post Office 500 kc/s stations. Sited and

designed to give complete M.F. coverage, both on W/T and R/T, within 300 miles of the coasts of the British Isles, all of these stations are in operation throughout the twenty-four hours and, in addition to providing services of a most variegated nature to the mariner, jointly handle an amount of telegraphic traffic which is not disgraced when compared with Portishead's somewhat astronomical totals. To the old-timer to whom the coherer and magnetic detector were something more than a joke, and to whom the crystal detector represented an astounding advance, the call-signs of some of these stations are nostalgic and give rise to a tendency to reminisce.

Who now remembers that GLD once stood for a station on the Lizard with an earth system conveniently provided by an abandoned undersea cable?

What would the "Sparks" of 1912 say about GRL, once overlooking Rosslare Harbour, but now occupying a humble corner in Burnham main station? Would the telegraphist of 1915 recognise the erstwhile naval BYG in the present-day Wick-GKR reaching out to the White Sea trawlers, or his old station, housed in a superannuated railway carriage on a Grimsby pier, in the modern Humber-GKZ? Cullercoats stands where it did and Niton is still within sight of the spot where some of the earliest experiments in "wireless" were carried out.

Yet, old as is their history, these stations with the more recent additions, have taken full advantage of technical progress and now comprise a communication system whose value to the seagoing fraternity is universally recognised and appreciated. Now, as before, their prime duty is concerned with "safety of life at sea." Both on 500 kc/s and on 1650 kc/s, watch is maintained by day and night and they cater not only for the spectacular SOS which makes the headlines, but also for the less intense XXX and the prosaic navigational warning. Not only is shipping warned of storms and the missing sea-mark, but such information reported by shipping is passed to the authorities concerned for such action as may be necessary.

A seaman on a freighter falls ill; there is the coast station ready to accept details of his symptoms and to pass these back to the medical authorities on shore so that skilled advice may be his. This service is free and many cases are on record to indicate that lives which might have been lost have been saved.

Lloyd's, too, recognise the value of these stations who advise the Corporation of all TRs, by telegraphy, and of marine casualties of every kind. By this means the underwriters are enabled to keep a finger on the sensitive maritime pulse. All these facilities are available not only to the deep-sea vessel with its complete modern W/T equipment, but also to the humble coaster with its 40-watt Voice transmitter. The latter enjoys a special privilege, for it can be connected to the inland telephone system, a facility not altogether approved of by the older masters, who are apt to brood over the days when, once at sea, they were out of touch with the "office."

Direction finding is available, both for use in cases of distress and on request from ships for navigational purposes, and most of the stations are equipped with remote aerial systems which permit of a watch uninterrupted during periods of transmission. This is of particular advantage to the R/T service, which can now be maintained independently of the more heavily loaded W/T side.

The bulk of the traffic handled by these stations consists of radio-telegrams to and from ships of every size and category, including, contrary to some impressions, deep-sea vessels. The fact that Portishead is primarily a long-distance station, liable to "skip" trouble, is only one of the reasons why it is often advantageous for ships in home waters to clear their traffic on the M.F. band. Nevertheless, close liaison is

maintained with Portishead and all TRs. are passed to the latter so that ships' bureau can be kept up to date. In order to expedite delivery of "to-ship" traffic rerouting to the M.F. stations is often employed by Portishead and, should any reader feel the urge to quote S3/50, Article 5 (b), it is pointed out that, as both Portishead and the short-range stations are controlled by the Post Office, no accounting complications are involved as far as the United Kingdom is concerned. All traffic handled by the stations is cleared over teleprinter links to the inland system, and a recent example of the continual progress is instanced by the introduction of the telegraph manual switching system whereby coast stations can be connected direct not only to any inland office of delivery but to each other and also to Portishead.

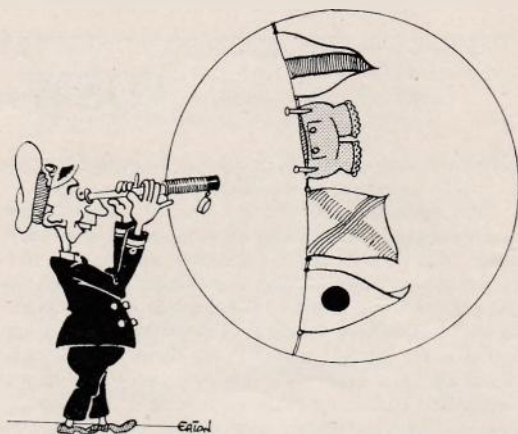
Plain statistics, though uninteresting, are often illuminating, and this article would not be complete without the following "tale of bricks," indicative of some of the activities of these stations during 1949:

| | |
|--|----------|
| Number of ship communications | 367,074* |
| Number of radio-telegrams handled | 354,103† |
| Navigational, etc., warnings broadcast (words) | 970,929 |
| Number of D/F bearings (paid) | 2,479 |
| Number of distress cases handled direct (SOS, XXX) | 257 |

* Exclusive of Cross-channel vessels, etc.

† Portishead handled 421,537 radio-telegrams during 1949.

These figures do not include all the services rendered but are perhaps sufficient to show that the 500 kc/s stations are worthy satellites of the "big fellow" whose performances are so deservedly well known.



"I've been expecting something like this ever since they introduced Wren Bunting-Tosses"

ROUND THE HOME FLEET

HOME FLEET NOTES

The Fleet assembled at Portland and, accompanied by *Vanguard* and *Victorious*, sailed for the spring cruise on the 29th January.

Throughout the passage to Gibraltar the "new regime" kept the Fleet extremely busy with a wide variety of exercises. All of these required extensive, and usually complicated, communication arrangements which sorely taxed the largely untried staffs. It became rapidly apparent that every kind of exercise is also a communication exercise. After a somewhat uncertain start, however, things settled down, and each day saw the traffic flowing faster and with more precision.

It is a profound truism that the best way to train a man is "on the job." One sympathised with those newcomers who had been projected, but a few short weeks before, from the cloistered calm of the training schools into the hurly-burly of Fleet M.S.O. and B.W.O. life, but it was fascinating to observe each day reducing the number of completely uncomprehending faces and pained expressions.

February at Gibraltar has been devoted to working-up practices of all types, and March will be taken up by combined exercises with the Mediterranean Fleet and R.A.F. During this period, we also pay short visits to ports in France, Italy and North Africa.

A quick survey of faces seen around the Fleet indicates that the Christmas leave period produced quite a general post, several august personages being torn (reluctantly?) from their Signal School moorings.

H.M.S. "VANGUARD"

H.M.S. *Vanguard* is now the flagship of the Training Squadron flying the flag of Rear-Admiral E. M. Evans-Lombe, C.B., Flag Captain, Captain G. V. Gladstone, Flag Lieutenant and Squadron Communications Officer, Lt. Cdr. B. G. Vann, D.S.C. The Training Squadron's primary concern is the training of new entry adult seamen, and in this as in everything else we try to give "just that little bit extra" to enable us to live up to our ship's motto, "We Lead": not least the Communications department with their destroyer size complement.

Even so, the ship is allowed on the training staff a qualified (C) officer, at present Lt. J. Kane, to keep a watching brief on the elaborate equipment. We pride ourselves that we could embark a Royal party or a Commander-in-Chief and his staff tomorrow without so much as calling the duty R.E.A. To achieve this is a whole-time job for the two remaining R.E.As. in the Wireless Communications party, the Chief P.O. Tel., two P.O. Tels. and two L./Tels., working together to keep all the equipment and control circuits regularly operated and tested.

Up to the time of writing we have never had a dull

moment in the department owing to having twenty-seven Communications Boys on board, but very soon we must lose all but six when H.M.S. *Victorious* leaves the Squadron and *Vanguard* requires all accommodation for *Victorious* trainees. H.M.S. *Indefatigable* is due to join us in May, when we should have room for more Communications Boys again, and we even hear rumours of a Communications Training Division in due course.

Great was our pleasure when we learnt that we were to leave the wind and the weather of Portland in winter, and spend a week at Gibraltar, sailing out with the Home Fleet at the start of their spring cruise.

Owing to shortage of senior ratings it was all but "watch on stop on" for Mr. Streets, our C.C.O., Chief P.O. Tel. Dence and C.Y.S. Leythorne and Youngjohns; but it was thoroughly enjoyed by all both afloat and ashore.

Work with the Fleet soon increased the size of our Communications howler book, some of the best of which we feel bound to pass on to you. There was the Boy who found it a laborious business decoding a fleet code message using the code; another was baffled when he could not find the call sign GGRN in it either. We had an M.S.O. watch-keeper who found it necessary to type the encrypted version of an IN message for distribution, and another who saw nothing wrong with a general received from C.S.2 at night by semaphore. A senior rating, who shall be nameless, shouted over the L.R.R. intercom: "There is a permanent mark on the receiver, Chief!" A worried M.F. D/F operator, when told that he was 180 degrees out for sense, accused his chum of connecting the sense aerial upside down. Besides all this internal trouble, we are still waiting for the Home Fleet corrections to B.J.C.P.1 and F.S.B. after receiving such interesting signals on H.F. Common as —IX IX NEGAT and | sn | as.

Nearly every evening we work Lt. Cdr. Punch's R.N.V. (W) Rs in district 2, and had little difficulty in contacting them on passage and at Gibraltar. Chief P.O. Tel. Dence likes to think that he detected the gasp of the *Mercury* operator when he came up for Witex III whilst alongside at Gib. and what is more told him that he was using the 612 ERT—true, too.

Before sailing from Gibraltar the ship was inspected by the C.-in-C., Home Fleet, Admiral Sir Philip Vian, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., who took a particular interest in our Communications layout.

On the return passage we acted as Biscay traffic cop when we stood by the French ship *Boffa*, whose deck cargo was out of control, for twenty-four hours, and directed a rescue tug to the Dutch coaster *Coolhaven*, whose engines had broken down. In two days we did more commercial working than many ships do in a commission, including voice in

French. Our tireless W.I., whose private call sign is ZUI, has a new game: he draws the attention of Burnham and Land's End operators to sections of the P.M.Gs.' Handbook.

Our next promenade from Portland was to act as saluting ship at Dover when the President of the French Republic arrived and left after his state visit.

Since one of our problems is the using of all our different equipments, thereby keeping them in working order, we should welcome any long-or short-range tests on C.W., M.C.W., R.T/P., or Voice (Simplex or Duplex); just drop a line or a SVC to our Lieutenant (C).

H.M.S. "CLEOPATRA"

SPRING CRUISE, 1950

Possibly the most significant factor of the first part of the Home Fleet spring cruise was the weather. From Christmas until departure from Portland the weather had been that of the conventional United Kingdom winter, gales, rain and gloom galore. Our advent into sunshine was on 2nd February on arrival at Gib., we found the Rock bathed in brilliance.

For the Chatham representatives the prospect of departure from home port was forgotten in the abandon of a Home Fleet Communicators' dance shortly before sailing. The success of this venture paid great tribute to the untiring zeal and enthusiasm of Mr. S. C. Draycott, S.C.C.O., of *Superb*, to whom all accorded thanks and appreciation. The cruise itself, however, began on a solemn note. Barely were we clear of Sheerness when the "Alert" to star-board brought sharp reminder of the greatest nautical tragedy of recent time.

Portland, with its traditionally appalling weather, made, for the Bunting, the prospect of departure for sunnier climes one that could only be regarded with relish.

It soon became clear that Admiral Vian lacked none of the ardour of his predecessor and it required no great feat of imagination to understand that the entire brunt of the exercises was, as usual, borne by the Communications department. The passage was not without incident; the most noteworthy was the rescue from drowning of a *Vengeance* petty officer, an epic that was not allowed to pass without praise from the C-in-C.

Gib., as usual, attracted the attention and pocket of all. The locals thrived on the patronage of the younger generation in search of "rabbits," and of the more staid hands in search of contentment that only the tankard can provide.

All ships in general have spent four days a week at sea on exercises (the onus as ever being on communications). Much attention has been paid to fighter direction, which in our case brought forth yeoman service from P.O. Tel. Mills in his

management of the V.H.F. equipment. Whilst on that ever-topical subject, it was a staggered Chief Sparker who worked *Vengeance* on T.B.S. at thirty-five miles. Despite these formidable commitments, F.C.O. did not allow all time in Gib. to be the customary "wall-time." Fridays were deemed "Fleet Exercise" days for those not engaged in the real thing. At the first attempt, on 10th February, a canteen cruiser, under the generalship of Lt. (C) Lloyd, Mr. E. G. H. Reubens, C.C.O., and with admirable staff work by C.Y.S. Trice, C.P.O. Tel. Sell and Yeo. Bird, took first place. This ordeal had a lighter aspect, however, when we were called on to hoist the number of children the Signal Officer possessed and when the C.C.O. had to race into the bowels of the ship to decrypt a Typex.

As C.S.2's annual inspection was at hand the conventional "signalmen rig jury mast, sparker's rig jury aerial" was sprung on us at unconventional times by the C.C.O. who, incidentally, considered a bare jetty an eyesore, and, before a crowd of wide-eyed "mateys," exercised marching manœuvres.

At time of writing, the Fleet has dispersed for a week, this proud unit departing for French Morocco to taste the delights of Casablanca. On arrival we required to fire:

| | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|---------|
| National Salute | .. | .. | .. | 21 guns |
| Rear-Admiral Jozan | .. | .. | .. | 13 guns |
| M. Boniface, Civil Authority in Casablanca | .. | .. | .. | 17 guns |
| H.B.M. Consul | .. | .. | .. | 7 guns |
| H.E. Si Hamid el Mokri | .. | .. | .. | 7 guns |

After returning to Gib. we will join up with the Med. Fleet for a few days' intensive exercise; our subsequent visit to Italian ports will no doubt be equally intensive. We are due to arrive in home ports late in March, having had an interesting time, becoming much browner and being very much better buntings and sparkers.

NOUGHTS AND CROSSES

The subject matter of this paragraph has nothing whatever to do with the above heading but it has a great deal to do with all of the readers of this magazine. May we draw your attention once again to the ADVERTISERS in this number of COMMUNICATOR.

We are able to produce this edition on such a first class scale because our advertisers have as usual, taken up a good deal of space in its pages. They do this as a business proposition and expect by doing so that they will attract your attention to the goods they advertise. We hope that when you are in need of any of these products, you will buy from them. Please mention this magazine when you do so as this helps all of us.

LET'S TALK SHOP!

WIRELESS COMMENTARY

A slight reorganisation of the training staff has now been effected at Leydene. It is the outcome of an attempt to reduce the failure rates which are the subject of a note on another page. It has been decided that the division into departments of the subjects taught can be taken a little too far, and that some of them overlap to an extent that makes a boundary difficult to define. So in future "P.C. & O." will once again be taught as one subject. A reorganised T2 section at Leydene will be responsible for this and the office and chair of T3 left vacant for the professor of some later and better form of Communication when this comes to be devised. T1 will remain in office, however, as the authority on all forms of Cryptography and will go on being responsible for the teaching of the high grade systems. Only the low grade systems, call signs, etc., will join Procedure and Organisation to be the combined subject.

One advantage lies in reducing the number of instructors who, at one time or another, teach any one course and conversely, of course, the number of classes that come up to any one instructor. This we hope will encourage a closer liaison between instructors and their classes than tends to be the case amid so much change.

Revised syllabi are being prepared and will soon be distributed to the signal sections and S.T.C.'s concerned.

THE S.S. AND N.S. ENTRY

During the early summer the R.N. Signal School at Cookham Camp will close. Plans are now being made to accept the adult entry of communication ratings at Leydene and the first of the new courses will start here in May. The Training Staff Officer will have the duty of being New Entry Officer added to his present ones.

WIRELESS EXERCISES

Some preliminary thought is being given at *Mercury* to the organisation of world-wide wireless exercises between the Schools and the S.T.C.'s on the lines of the exercise that takes place at present between H.M.C.S. *Stadacona* and H.M.S. *Mercury*. Three times a week contact is attempted, not always successfully, and a short exchange of signals and messages take place. Proposals for other Schools and S.T.C.'s will be made before long. Meanwhile it will be useful if a little thought can be given to the question how far such an exercise will be practicable at each place. *Mercury's* proposals will not overlook the fact that working hours for us here coincide with the time when others are rightly in their beds.

V/S COMMENTARY

Before the war no man came into Signal School for an advancement course unless he was a first-class operator, able to read and send flashing and hand-flag semaphore (to say nothing of mechanical and wigwag) at the fleet speeds.

The war, and long periods in M.S.Os. or other non-V/S complement billets, played havoc with practical standards. Now the fleets are again V/S-conscious, and the vital importance of operating ability is becoming recognised once more.

But it is a fact that about 10 per cent. of Signal ratings who took advancement courses last year failed in practical subjects, not including touch-typing; moreover, the percentage is the same in Yeomen (Q) and Leading Signalmen (Q) courses.

Another side to the matter is V/S signalling at night, which reports from sea show to be a long and cumbersome process.

Although you can be taught most things, this matter of "practical" is one that you have to do yourself. Your new entry training told you how; you must work up the speed and knowledge of procedure on your own.

Junior Signal ratings are primarily operators, and until they become such in the true sense of the word they cannot effectively hold a higher rate.

COMMUNICATION WRENS' TRAINING

It has now been decided that certain complement billets in the Home Air Command at present filled by W.R.N.S. Telegraphists and involving mainly D/F operating duties will in future be filled by W.R.N.S. Signal ratings. The Signal courses will, therefore, now last twelve weeks for touch-typists and eighteen weeks for non-touch-typists. The course will include D/F principles and equipment, more air voice procedure and operating, and the final two weeks will be spent at the Naval Air Signal School. The Signal Advancement courses have also been lengthened by one month in order to cover these subjects.

There are still vacancies on the Advancement courses. Ratings are reminded that they cannot be advanced unless they have passed a professional examination in addition to the other qualifications. Ratings wishing to take these courses should apply to their Unit Officers.

During Portsmouth Navy Days at Easter Wren Signal trainees will be working in the Dockyard. They will be seen sending souvenir messages from the public to their friends by radio teleprinter to *Mercury*, whence they will be passed on by post.

NOBIS TUTUS IBIS

The B.P.R.O. called the A.D.R. on his O.T.G. "D.O.," he said, "my F.A.P. in the B.P.R. is useless. I've tried the Air Teller through my P.C.U., but he says the A.P.O. and A.T.R.O. are obscuring his view of the M.A.D.P."

Could it be this snappy short-hand method of speaking that has made such a black art of what goes on in the Action Information Organisation? Or is it the dimmed lights, mysterious coloured lines and clicking P.P.I. tubes, making the compartments like some sinister grotto, which tend to frighten all who do not belong to its magic circle?



If we care to look a bit more closely at what is going on and stay to watch for the period of an exercise or operation, we can see that, after all, there is a logical sequence of events taking place in the various compartments of the Action Information Centre.

In the operations room, radar information in the form of bearings and distances and size of target is coming in by telephone from that surface warning set on which the "L" boys sweated so much in repairing the night before. The results are plotted and appear as coloured lines on the horizontal surface plots. The lines are not, after all, the idle doodlings of that leading hand with the spider's web badge on his arm, but represent tracks of our own ship in red, enemy in blue, and friendly in black. The alphabetical letter alongside represents the track letter, or tally by which it is known. By looking at this plot the Captain can see at a glance the position of all ships in the vicinity and what they are doing regardless of filthy weather and the darkness of the night outside.

The other horizontal plot with the chart on it shows the general situation in our area. Here those "flash" enemy reports which raise a twinge of excitement in the breast of the most hardened Tel. when they come through on ship broadcast are translated into symbols and marked down in their proper positions. The "Situation at 2200" signal that caused so much bad language from the watch that had to decode it is plotted here so that the Captain can appreciate the odds for and against him in the forthcoming battle.

Down below, the aircraft direction room (only to be found in big ships) is assuming ever-increasing importance these days when aircraft can strike fast, hard and often, and our only hope of survival lies in early warning of their approach.

Here, again, in this permanently darkened room, each buzzing phone, flashing light and garbled sentence conveys a vital message. The directing officer charge is like the leader of an orchestra controlling

his instrumentalists: each player contributes a part and the successful co-ordination of these parts produces a readily understandable melody; this is the air picture from which the best plan for defending the fleet from attacking enemy planes can be decided and set in motion. We hope there won't be quite as much noise as there is in the concert hall, though.

Vertical plots are used for displaying the air picture and the main one is unmistakeable: big and transparent, with a spider's web engraved on it. Like coloured caterpillars the positions of friendly (red) and enemy (yellow) aircraft can be seen squirming about in the web, each one with a numbered track figure alongside it for identification. Only the spider is missing, unless he be that officer or senior R.P. rating, called the Air Plot Officer, who is constantly rubbing out the tracks and moving them on to their new positions as given by the warning aircraft radar. On one side of the spider's web is an illuminated tote board very similar to the sort of thing used by "J. Bloggs of the Old Firm" on the race-course. Instead of odds, though, we can interpret from mysterious letters and symbols the identities and nature of those tracks on the spider's web.

Where does the Communication Branch come in on all this? It plays a most important, if not particularly active, part in the whole organisation. When two or more ships are in company, information is constantly being exchanged between the various plots and the controlling officers, and between ships and the aircraft they are directing about the sky. V.H.F. and H.F. control waves are the veins and arteries along which flows the life-blood of the system. Signals by flag, voice and W/T form a large part of its day and nightly diet.

In the A.I.O. all sources of information are absorbed, and presented to the Captain and Admiral in a form which is easy to take in. At the same time, data are provided for the control of our various weapons, including aircraft. This is not easily or simply done. It requires highly trained officers and ratings and an organisation at least as complex as that of a big naval W/T station. Everyone must know his job, as one weak link may slow down the machine to the point where the plot is so out of date that it bears little resemblance to the actual situation: then incorrect decisions are made or the enemy is upon us before we are ready for him.

Training of both the N.D. (Navigation and Direction) Officers and R.P. (Radar Plot) ratings is carried out at



H.M.S. *Dryad*, the nearest of the Portsmouth schools to Leydene. The present *Dryad*, like *Mercury*, is an old country house; but, being lower, it is less frequently among the clouds. During the war it was used by General Eisenhower as his headquarters for the Normandy Invasion, and in the main house is retained the original wall map used by the Supreme Commander to watch the progress of the invasion.



Originally both maintenance and operation

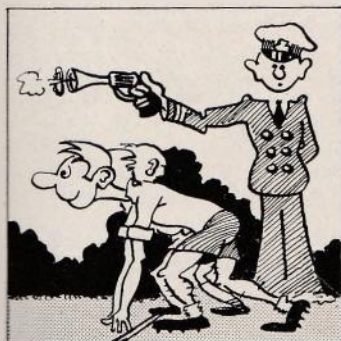
of radar sets were done by the Telegraphist Branch. In 1940 the R.D.F. Branch was formed to operate radar sets, and about 10,000 operators were trained by the Signal School. These ratings were all "hostilities only" and it was not until 1945 that the R.P. Branch was formed and training commenced for continuous-

service ratings under the administration of H.M.S. *Dryad*. At about the same time, maintenance of the sets was taken over by the Electrical Branch. There are now some 2,500 C.S. R.P. ratings and their number is increasing.

As regards the officers, the (N.) or Navigator had been a specialist executive officer in his own right for some eighty years until, in 1946, the branch was amalgamated with the (D.) or Fighter Direction Branch, which had been started up during the war. All officers qualifying subsequently have done so in (N.D.). Officers and senior ratings carry out the direction part of their training at the Royal Naval Aircraft Direction Centre at Kete, South Wales.

Of all the executive branches in the Navy today, the Communicators are undoubtedly most closely linked with the N.D. officers and R.P. ratings. The efficient working of our ships depends largely on close and friendly co-operation. It is therefore important that we know something of their job and take an interest in their activities.

IK, AN O C K, I E R, W W I H I I T I E



Eaton.

GOING THE ROUNDS IN "MERCURY"

CHIEFS' CHATTER

Number one topic must be the revival of sporting activity in the Mess. We are becoming increasingly soccer-conscious. Our first match was played on 21st February against the Wardroom in the inter-part League, the result being a 1-1 draw: a very creditable performance considering that the average age of the team was 33. We are also members of the United Services Snooker League and have played six games, winning two. We hope for more success in the near future.

We must also rate as top-line news the departure from Leydene of those two very gallant and much respected gentlemen, C.R.Es. Hancock and Hart. Percy has gone to *Collingwood* to spend his last few months and John to pension. May we, all Communicators, take this opportunity of saying to Percy and John, "Thank you for your very good company"? Other notable "outs" include C.P.O. Mitchell and C.P.O. Tel. Fenner, both out to "grass" and C.Y.S. Fletcher to Cookham. The "ins" include C.Y.Ss. Bicknell and Baker, and C.P.O. Tels. Terry, Hodges, Turner and Roy.

To you who are perspiring in the Mediterranean or freezing in the Arctic wastes we may say that recently the weather here has not been too kind. We have had a mixture of rain, wind and frost, but to you who were here during the winter of 1946-47 we have not yet had the snow. Owing to this weather we have had teething troubles with our new accommodation. It was no uncommon sight to awake and find great pools of water soaking into the rugs, mats, etc. These defects, though, are gradually being eliminated. Nevertheless, to those of you serving overseas we say that these discomforts are amply compensated by the fact that the 4 o'clock liberty boat is still running, so don't think we are dripping and are apt to forget those of you who are less fortunate than those of us still in "Merrie England." We often talk of those of you we know and hope that the time will pass quickly and that soon you may be homeward-bound.

Now our thoughts are turning to spring. It is reliably reported that the President wishes to form a bird-watching society notably to study the habits of a little bird called the "Wren." They are believed to be nesting in large numbers along that stretch of grassland known as the Broadwalk. On a more serious vein, work still progresses at the School. Amongst the senior classes are one class of C.C.Os. (Q) and one Wireless Instructors' class. So you will see some of us still work a little.

To those of you still with thoughts of Christmas, our children's party was a huge success. Some of the Mess members enjoyed it equally as much as the children. The dance, later, was a grand do, too, everything going with a swing and everyone made the most of

the last social event of the old year. Social activity in the Mess at the moment is at a low ebb but with the coming of better weather it is hoped that the social side will liven up.

At the time of going to press, election fever runs high. One hears varied kinds of election arguments amongst our members, both young and the not-so-young. It has even been suggested that a good election gag would be to advocate stronger "tots" and a double issue on "Tickler" day.

An indication of the amount put over by a certain Instructor can be judged by the following answer from one of his pupils:

Q. How often are signal books mustered over a period of three months?

A. Ninety times by an officer and 360 times by the leading hand.

SHOOTING NOTES

For the first winter in the history of Leydene we have been able to continue shooting in spite of the weather, since we now have the use of an indoor range (25 yards, with three firing points) at Horndean. We have been shooting on this range every Monday and most Fridays, with a very satisfactory improvement in standard.

Although we were too late to join the local leagues, we have had one or two friendly matches, mainly with the Royals from Eastney, and in the last match managed to score 572 against their 567 (out of a possible 600). This most satisfactory result was due mainly to two of our team, C.P.O. Tel. Illsley and Tel. Cudden, who, on being faced with opposition, promptly made excellent scores. Illsley scored 99 while Cudden (to his own great astonishment!) scored a "possible."

As soon as weather permitted, serious full-bore rifle and revolver practice commenced in preparation for the Command meeting to be held in May. We shall endeavour not only to retain the cup won last year but also to win another one to keep it company.

As far as future activities are concerned, we shall practise on the open range during the summer, with the usual monthly competitions, commence using the indoor range once more on the 1st October, and join the local leagues. Lack of practice will be a handicap, since the indoor range can only be used once or twice a week, with the usual transport difficulties. However, we have hopes of getting an indoor range at Leydene—some day.

Lastly, we have to report with regret the impending departure of our G.I., C.P.O. Sellick. The Chief has put in a vast amount of work, and the progress of the Club is mainly due to his unceasing energy. During the summer he could be seen pushing wheelbarrow loads of chalk and ashes to make our new

25-yard firing point, while in the winter his wife became a shooting widow while he proceeded the odd sixteen miles to the Horndean range. Needless to say, he was also of great value in coaching beginners (especially Wrens!) and managed to suppress his Whale Island range technique on most occasions. Good-bye, Chief, and the very best of luck to you.

R. D. E.

"MEONMAID"

Meonmaid has again been refitted in *Mercury* during this winter. Some voluntary work has been carried out, particularly in scraping and rubbing down the varnish in the cabins. In spite of the provision of a most efficient oil heating stove, volunteers have been somewhat deterred by the elements, which have certainly been unfavourable during January and February evenings. Inevitably the bulk of the work has fallen to Mr. Watch; he has renewed all standing and running rigging, turned out blocks and bottlescrews and made the necessary repairs to sails, as well as the routine work of cleansing and painting. Paint has been substituted for varnish where possible below decks with a view to brightening up the cabins.

A new spinnaker and medium foresail have been ordered from Ratsey & Laphorn and will be ready for use, for racing only, by 1st May. The cost is £85. A new mainsail will probably be required for the 1951 season, so it is hoped that the income for next season will be well up to that for 1949, £102.

The same moorings in Haslar Creek have been requested and it is hoped to have *Meonmaid* ready for booking from 1st April. The hall porter at *Mercury* keeps the list of bookings and will take details by telephone.

Charges will remain as for last year: week-days, £1 per day, irrespective of numbers in the party; Saturdays and Sundays, 10s. per member of the party. Bookings for over seven consecutive days will only be accepted provided no one else requires the yacht for the period.

Any signal officer, or officer in *Mercury* with the necessary sailing qualifications, may book the yacht, provided his crew consists of at least one other competent yachtsman and a third male number.

It is hoped that *Meonmaid* will be raced whenever possible. As in previous years, racing will not have priority over cruising bookings, apart from the Monarch Bowl and Dartmouth races. *Meonmaid* was third in last year's Monarch Bowl; this year we hope to beat *Sea Wraith* (Excellent) and *Seahexe* (Daedalus). There is a rumour that we may be able to have the same helmsman as last year.

CIVILIAN COMMENTARY

Since the last issue, the race for promotion has eased down a little and up to date we have to congratulate the two successful candidates on their promotion to Clerical Officers. These were the only

two names that emerged from the list of *Mercury* interviews, and consequently Mr. Bugg returns to the Pack Office and Mr. Bright remains in the I.B.O., the only required change being the transfer of Mr. Rance to the Transport Office.

The next obstacle presenting itself is the "Scheme B" Establishment Examination due to take place during the next few months, for which the evening classes at school are a great attraction. The general question asked now is "How do you do this one?"

Still it is refreshing the grey matter a little, but I now wonder how I reached the higher classes when school was just a grand adventure. It has been suggested locally that the more you know the less likely is your chance of being promoted; but again who wants a job with everyone knowing the same thing, and the same amount of it? Someone has got to be available to take hold of a broom or duster some times.

The civilians will be pleased to know that the three redundancy victims are once more in the production line. Mr. Fox (ex-C.B.O.) now dashes up and down stairs on a Corporation 'bus. Mr. Gardiner is at R.N.A.S., Gosport, back at his old trade, M.S.O., and Mr. Huxford (ex-Transport) is at Belmont Camp.

There are no further developments in the "Whiteley Office Committee," but we are assured by our representative that these things take plenty of time and there are still hopes.

SPORT

"Cor luv a duck," said the young sailor as his eyes skimmed over the board by the clocktower. "What on earth are they going to want us to do next?" With a look of horror his eye had caught sight of a figure, supporting two gun-carriage wheels, hanging by the arms.

With this possible exception, the spirit has been willing—if not always attended by success: training is becoming more and more an essential prelude to any important fixture.

The sports-ground position is improving. Great progress has been made with the new soccer field and two tennis courts opposite the cinema.

If you come into *Mercury* and are keen on any form of sport you can rest assured we want to hear all about you. We hear the marks obtained by forwards this winter have varied with the number of goals they have scored. Now you batsmen—some centuries!

SOCCER

At the time of going to press, the 1st XI has had a fairly successful run in the United Services League, but not quite so good as was expected. We now lie second to the R.A.O.C., our record being: played, 14; won, 9; drawn, 2; lost, 3; goals for, 53; goals against, 24; points, 20.

The Army side are a point ahead of us, but also have a game in hand, so, unless some dire misfortune hits the R.A.O.C., it is probable that we shall finish up second. Last season we finished third.

Drafting has played havoc with any chances of any eleven keeping together long enough to develop into a polished side. It has been necessary to play over forty players in the first team owing to this unavoidable handicap, and we consider that these players have, in the circumstances, earned a bouquet for having done so well.

Amongst the stalwarts who have left us after valiant service are L./Tel. Irvine and L./Sig. Pickering, both to Devonport. Irvine captained the side on five occasions and Pickering on eight. Pickering will also be remembered for "Pickering's goal"—a cracking shot from forty yards against *Hornet* which clouted the back of the net before the goalie could smell it.

Joiner Fish has been drafted to R.N.B., Portsmouth. He was our leading goal-scorer with 23 goals. He was also the table-tennis champion of *Mercury*. L./Tel. "Nobby" Halls has gone to *Rowena*, Sig. "Yorkie" Ingham to *Terror* and L./Tel. Spreadbury to time-expired.

We welcome L./Tel. Sydes in place of Fish. Sydes has scored seven goals in four games, and by goals we mean goals, not pat-ball. Another good newcomer is O./Tel. Askew.

In the cups, we were knocked out of the Charity Cup in the first round by the Royal Marines' first team, but we had a good run in the U.S. Junior Challenge Cup, losing to the Reserve Fleet in the round prior to the semi-final, after a replay.

The players at the moment representing *Mercury* are L./Sig. Cox, L./Tel. Perrett and Tel. Beattie, L./Tel. Spinks, Sig. Philip and L./Sig. North, P.O. Tel. Pomeroy, O./Tel. Askew, L./Tel. Sydes, Tel. Woodgate and L./Sig. Hawkins. C. Yeo. Roe is also a regular player, but he is recovering from injuries received in the inter-part match Chiefs versus Wardroom.

The Eleven-a-side inter-part League (for the silver cup and medals) has just started. The Buntings have beaten the Able Seamen 4-1, the Sparkers defeated the Petty Officers (the holders) by 2-0, and the Wardroom drew with the Chief P.Os. 1-1 after a thriller wherein the Commander and "Jake" Sommerville didn't put a foot wrong, and Mr. Foxlee gave us glimpses of what a fine player he must have been some years ago; there was a fine display by C.Y.S. Roe and Giddings in the Chiefs' side.

These inter-part games are very popular and they draw as big "gates" as the first-team matches and they show, in general, how great an interest soccer holds in *Mercury*. As regards grounds, another area down by the Main House has been cleared and we hope to have our show-piece ground here soon. We'll want a name for this ground as well. Our thanks are due to all those who are taking, and have taken, so much trouble in getting these grounds for us. It is greatly appreciated.

RUGBY

First of all, a word of thanks to those players who have turned out for game after game and have

never been disheartened at the results. It has taken us a very long time to register our first victory, at the expense of H.M.S. *Vernon*, and with the help of the Royal Marine element in our midst.

If the standard of play has never been high, the enthusiasm shown has been most heartening. Lack of experienced backs has been our main trouble, and when we did acquire these we immediately registered a draw to be followed up the following week with a win. We are very lucky in having a good ground at East Meon, even though the cows are not too co-operative at times. Maybe they would be if we gave them a couple of days' notice before we play a game, but with these frosty nights the problem isn't so bad.

There are three essentials in Rugby football:

1. Fitness.
2. Team spirit.
3. A knowledge of the rules.

Fitness is the ability of a player to run his body to a standstill by the end of the game, whilst maintaining his speed and verve throughout. One has to be fit to play good rugby football, as only a fit man can stand and give the knocks and hard tackles—the "clean" roughness—that make the game a joy to its adherents.

Team spirit covers so many things that it is difficult to define. The greatest team spirit is patriotism, the least is selfishness. Don't be misled by individual praise for this try scored or that attack bravely stopped; remember that alone you would be useless, and that it is only the work of others on your side which make these particular events possible.

As regards the rules of the game, it is safe to bet that less than half of those who turn out on the rugby field each week have more than a nodding acquaintance with the rules. The majority of players absorb rules by trial and error, using the referee as an unwelcome tutor, and their instruction is dearly bought at the cost of penalty goals.

In conclusion, here's to next season: may the points for (tuning for a rise) be greater than the points against (tuning for a dip).

R. A.

HOCKEY

We have had a far better second half to the hockey season—meaning that we have managed to be victorious on a few occasions. Unfortunately our practice games have been severely restricted due to rain, of which there has been plenty.

We entered the Command inter-Unit Knock-out Competition, beating *Indomitable* in the first round by 5 goals to nil, but unfortunately came out of the second round six goals to the bad, defeated by *Vernon*. Possibly this was due to our ever-changing complement. Three of our first-team players had left just before the game was due to be played.

Despite our disappointment we are still going forward, hoping to enlarge the number of our victories.

Although overshadowed by soccer, hockey has retained its popularity throughout the season—and we have never once had to withdraw through being

unable to raise a team.

In conclusion I would like to thank all who have helped, and played for, *Mercury* this season, and to wish the new Hockey Secretary success next winter.

PORTSMOUTH COMMAND CROSS-COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP

This race was run at Lee-on-Solent on 16th February over five-and-a-half miles. Our team, which consisted of four officers and six ratings, came in sixth; fifteen teams entered. The result was promising and with more thorough training we should be able to do better in the autumn. The number who came forward for this event was most encouraging.

SQUASH

Our team has entered the semi-finals of the Command Squash Championship by beating *Collingwood* by 3 matches to 2.

ENTERTAINMENTS

Having had their appetites thoroughly whetted by fabulous tales concerning the forthcoming Christmas pantomime, "Mercurians" turned out in force, and truly crammed the theatre during the all-too-short period of showing (two nights). "Aladdin and his Wonderful Amp," by unanimous opinion, was the finest *Mercury* production so far to grace our stage. C.R.E. Hancock, who once again wrote and produced the show, truly excelled himself in this his sixteenth and last production in *Mercury*. Topical witticisms found their way into the script like punctuation marks and the audience were in fits of laughter throughout. With the able assistance of a well-chosen and keen cast, Percy provided almost three hours of first-class entertainment. Hancock has since left us and gone to H.M.S. *Collingwood* for the last few months of his Service career. He is sadly missed in the entertainments world, together with Lt. Cdr. Sommerville, C.R.E. Hart and R.E. Holden, who have also left or are leaving before Easter. We thank them all for their grand work and wish them the very best of luck in the future.

The last week of the Christmas Term found the Establishment a hive of activity. All messes were busily engaged in putting on their dances and children's parties, all of which were a great success. Unfortunately the Petty Officers were a trifle over-arduous in their efforts to emulate pirates, and the first half-hour was spent in trying to pacify the children, who were most reluctant to be entertained by such a crew.

To brighten up the long winter evenings, the Entertainments Committee have relayed to the camp from *Mercury* Radio (or the Pusser's S.R.E.) several pseudo B.B.C. programmes—Twenty Questions, competitive quizzes, and a programme aptly called "Mercury Favourites." This last enables all and sundry to air their sentiments on many subjects by use of gramophone records. Also, by means of grants from the Welfare Fund, a wide variety of new records have been added to our library.

The Signal School Mess has done much towards entertaining the camp by running a whist drive in the Mess every fortnight, which is well supported and provides the lucky ones with excellent prizes.

Thursdays continue to be guest nights, starting off with tombola in the Ratings' Canteen. The energetic ones then wander off to the theatre for dancing to gramophone records. Thanks to financial assistance from the Signal School Mess, these are regularly given added lustre by the appearance of Eddie Nash and his Commanders.

Election night was celebrated in dual form: apart from the political stir we were also highly entertained by a grand variety show, whose artistes were arranged by the co-operation of our old friend Jack Warner. They included Bert Shrimpton (Radio's Musical Knut), Cal McCord (from the B.B.C. Serial "Riders of the Range"), Della Windsor (from the Sadler's Wells Opera Company), and Gordon Turner (late of the Windmill Theatre).

W.R.N.S. NOTES

We said good-bye to Chief Wren Bareham on 4th January, with a party in the Chief and P.O. Wrens' Bungalow. Chief was really an "old campaigner," joining the Service in 1939, having already served in the 1914-18 W.R.N.S., and having been awarded the B.E.M.—a splendid record indeed.

Badminton and fencing are progressing very satisfactorily and rifle shooting is still attended with much enthusiasm. We have high hopes that three of our members may be considered up to standard for the Command team.

In the inter-Command Squash Tournament at Greenwich on 17th February our team, after a struggle, unfortunately attained only third place. However, 3/O. Cooke gallantly retained some of our laurels by beating 2/O. H. Jones of H.M.S. *President*, one of the W.R.N.S. best players.

The final of the inter-Unit Netball Tournament between *Victory* and *Mercury* at the Royal Naval Barracks on 20th February had happier results, our team returning victorious from the fray with the splendid score of 16 points to 13. The match was a very close and extremely good one, and was really enjoyed by both teams.

We have a record number (nineteen) of volunteers for the Royal Tournament P/T Display, and all the young ladies concerned are busy practising their exercises in preparation for the great day when the final selection will be made. Cabins these days resemble dressing rooms at the Windmill during rehearsal! As everyone knows, *Mercury* was always fleet of foot, so here's hoping our 1950 females of the species may successfully emulate his prowess and represent us at Olympia. Maybe it is a little early for those wings to sprout on each trim ankle, but one never knows!

I should like to say "Welcome" to 3/O. V. E. Hoft, and to wish her a very pleasant and happy appointment at *Mercury*.



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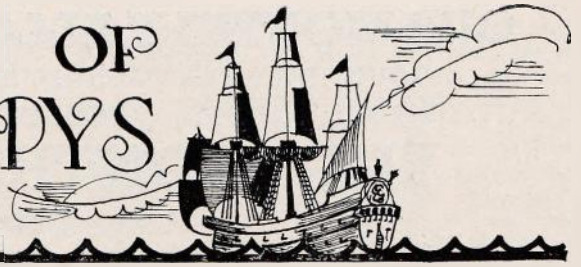


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THE NAVY OF SAMUEL PEPYS



There is a tendency for all generations of mankind to fancy that their own lot is the least enviable. It is interesting to compare our present troubled state with that of England after Charles II was restored to the throne vacated when his father's career was so literally cut short.

It is also encouraging to remember that those difficult times were the prelude to many years without a major war. Years were soon to follow when Britain challenged Holland and Spain for a share in their sea-borne trade with a success that made her the most prosperous nation of later times. This was the period when the foundations of the modern Royal Navy were laid. Future officers were to wear the straight gold braid of the professional, whereas the Admirals of a bygone age would nowadays be listed in the R.N.R. (for example, Drake), or R.N.V.R. (for example, Blake). The man who did most to bring about this change was a short, fussy, hard-working civil servant called Samuel Pepys.

This description alone does not do justice to Pepys. He was warm-hearted, good company and passionately devoted to music. His loyalty was shown by the way in which he supported his Italian music teacher at a time when contact with Roman Catholics might mean imprisonment or the attentions of the violent London mob. His zest for life is shown in the diary which he kept in a secret shorthand. He was honest with himself and recorded his vices as well as his virtues. Like his Monarch he had an eye for a pretty girl; the reader of his diary can almost share his embarrassment when he was caught by his wife paying much too much attention to their maidservant.

On his restoration, King Charles was escorted to England by the Fleet. Its commanding officer, "General-at-Sea" Montague, was rewarded with the Earldom of Sandwich. When the Navy Board was constituted, Montague's secretary found himself appointed "Clerk of the Acts" on a salary of £350 per annum. This was Samuel Pepys. At first the post was a very minor one, but his energy and ability gradually made him the most important civil officer of the Admiralty. The name of the office has since been changed to "Secretary of the Admiralty."

Pepys's first trouble was shared by many other officers of the Crown. Cromwell had replaced many Royalist administrators. Both Royalist and Parliamentarian had welcomed Charles with fervour and expected to be rewarded by lucrative posts. As might have been expected there were not sufficient of these

to go round. Pepys soon found he had a rival. He was forced to buy off his elderly competitor by offering him a large slice of his salary. He could afford to do this, since he knew he would have the power of awarding contracts and making appointments. His confidence was not misplaced and in a few years Pepys was living comfortably and had saved a considerable sum of money. He must not be judged, however, by the moral standards of our own times, and in his own day Pepys's behaviour was considered normal. In those days dishonesty of all types was rife. Rotten cordage was stolen from the yards and sold back to the Admiralty at the price of new. Captains reckoned on supplementing their pay by private trading. Some cruises were more popular than others, and, since the Communications Branch was not as effective then as it is now, the Admiralty had difficulty in ensuring that ships went where they were ordered. Pepys once met in the Strand a captain who should have been in the Mediterranean. An acid directive soon ensured that officers would take care to be more discreet in their movements even though the practice of leaving station could not be entirely checked.

The Navy's major problem was money. The King was the executive power who spent the money. He could not, however, raise it. Only the House of Commons could do this, and it was very jealous of its power and suspicious of Charles's intentions. Actually Charles was internationally far-sighted and devoted to the well-being of the Navy. Subsequent research has proved that all the money voted was really spent on the Navy and more besides from his private purse. The new Navy Board took over a load of debt. Seamen and contractors were paid by chits and there was not enough money to honour them. Pepys writes of "the horrible crowd and lamentable moan of the poor seamen that lie starving in the streets for lack of money. Which do trouble and perplex me to the heart; and more at noon when a whole hundred of them followed up; some cursing, some swearing and some praying to us." Stores and equipment had to be bought at high prices, since the private contractors who handled these matters were uncertain when or if they would collect their money. Early efforts to remedy this state of affairs were an utter failure, but Pepys never forgot the lessons he learnt in his early days.

Officers for the Navy presented another problem. Every revolution makes suspect the loyalty of officers

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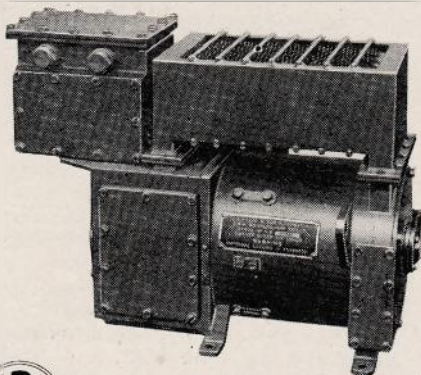
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of the armed forces. Thus efficiency in Napoleon's Navy was reduced by inexperienced officers and in the Second World War the Russians employed a political commissar on every ship to report on the captain and other officers. In the Restoration Navy substitution was inevitable of "cavaliers" for officers whose political or religious views made them unreliable. This expedient resulted in lowering fighting efficiency for the time being, but as a long-term policy it was decided to lay down foundations for training permanent officers. An order was issued to the effect that "His Royal Highness (being desirous to give encouragement to such young gentlemen as are willing to apply themselves to the learning of Navigation, and fitting themselves for the service of the Sea) hath determined that one Volunteer shall be entered on every ship now going forth; and for his encouragement that he shall have the pay of a Midshipman." In the course of many years the status of midshipman has changed from that of petty officer to that of subordinate officer under training.

The most prominent form of "impedance" in the current affairs of the day was Parliament itself. As time went by two parties arose; one party was composed largely of Royalist landowners (later called Tories) and the other was mainly made up of prominent townsmen having manufacturing or trading interests. The latter party had not forgotten its republican traditions and Charles and his supporters, like Pepys, had to pick their steps very carefully. More than one conspiracy was made to assassinate Charles; and Pepys himself owed his life to loyal henchmen and his own spirited defence when he was committed to the Tower. Much as they differed otherwise, Members of Parliament were together as one man in their obstructive tactics, in their strident criticism of the direction of affairs and in refusing to take any responsibility on their own shoulders. A naval war with Holland was popular, as there was acute rivalry in trade; liquidation of the Dutch as a maritime power seemed a more permanent solution than devaluation of currency. Wars always cost

money and Parliament resented levying taxes, so it is not surprising that as the war continued the condition of the Navy became worse and worse. Seamen were difficult to engage and numbers of "Hostilities Only" men were recruited by the press gang to fill their places. The material was indifferent and "most of the pressed men were fitter to keep sheep than to sail in such great ships." Opportunities were lost through shortage of stores and long spells in harbour had a bad effect on health and morale. "The sickness increases and the ships are pestered with women; there are as many petticoats as breeches on board some of them and that for weeks together." Disaster was needed to make the country aware of the sorry state of affairs and to shake it out of its complacency. It came from within in the form of the Great Fire of London and from without when De Ruyter sailed up the Thames and Medway as far as Chatham.

The scope of this article does not allow history to be followed into the course of the war, or the peace which followed bringing relative contentment and prosperity. Nor can much more be said of conditions in the Fleet. It must be enough to have pointed out that this was the time when the Royal Society was founded. Science and medicine were in their infancy. The cause of scurvy was suspected, but the disease was to ravage the Fleet for another hundred years. This was the time when any women who escaped smallpox was considered beautiful, and when Pepys alone of the Navy Board remained at his post in London for the duration of the Great Plague. The food, when available in adequate quantity, was also a source of complaint. Fresh meat and vegetables were the exception. The normal drink was beer, as it was for the rest of the population. This was not preference but because drains and sources of drinking water were not adequately separated. Disease resulted from this insanitary arrangement, whereas the process of brewing served to sterilise the beer. Improvement was slow and many years later Dr. Johnson could still wonder that men should join the Navy if they had enough "contrivance to get them into jail."

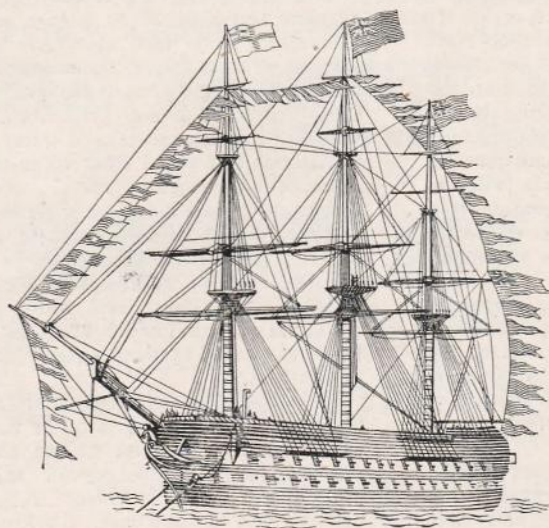
LINES ON EXPERIENCING SOLAR CORPUSCULAR BOMBARDMENT IN THE AURORAL BELT

I have a tale to tell of woe.
Dear reader, bear with me.
Perhaps, like me (you never know),
It may be you will have to go
Into this land of ice and snow
Across a frozen sea.

I'd joined Force "X" (I'd have it known
Its name I can't disclose.)
North-west I'd motored, sailed and flown
To operate my set alone
Positioned in the Arctic zone
While all around me froze.

I chose a site that would confound
The very sternest critic.
I spread my aerial on the ground
Then set it on a snowy mound
And added, lest my site be found,
An all-wave parasitic.

And so, on the appointed date,
I started my transmission
(My latitude was eighty eight.)
But what was this? I found (too late)
My wireless wouldn't propagate.
Imagine my position!



*H.M.S.
Rodney
1856*

The fundamental changes in the materials of construction and motive power introduced in the nineteenth century, sounded the death knell of the graceful wooden walls of Old England. One may regret the passing of these beautiful vessels, a typical example of which is pictured above, but, progress demands new solutions and new problems and the complexities of the Modern Navy calls for a catering organization of the magnitude and scope of Naafi—conducted for His Majesty's Forces.



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NAAFI



Please inform your friends that Naafi needs more staff for Canteens, both ashore and afloat. Applications to Staff Manager, Naafi, Esher, Surrey.

I pounded out my calling sign
For something like a week.
My rig was good, my rads were fine.
Yet could I get that set of mine
To fetch an answer down the line?
I couldn't get a squeak!

Determined still to do my stuff
I opened up a chart
And calculated MUF and LUF.
The gap between them—this was tough—
I found was nothing like enough.
It nearly broke my heart.

So there I was. What could I do
To put my message over?
My fingers froze, my nose was blue,
My heart was lead, my spirits too.
How could I get my signal through—
From where I was to Dover?

You thought my tale had ended here?
Happily, no! For see!
Into this picture sad and drear
There dropped from the ionosphere
To bear my signals loud and clear
Jimmy Sporadic E!

Now this elusive little man
In fact, if not in fiction,
While liking Iceland better than,
Say Fiji or the Arakan,
Avoids the stigma, when he can,
Of frequency prediction.

So whilst he hovered in the air
My messages got through,
But as he often wasn't there
I'd grind my teeth and tear my hair,
For how to signal anywhere
I hadn't half a clue.

And here my sorry little tale
Is very nearly through.
To see the point you'll hardly fail:
When swept by atmospheric gale
Unsure his course who sets his sail
With Jimmy in the crew.

A. L. LAXTON.

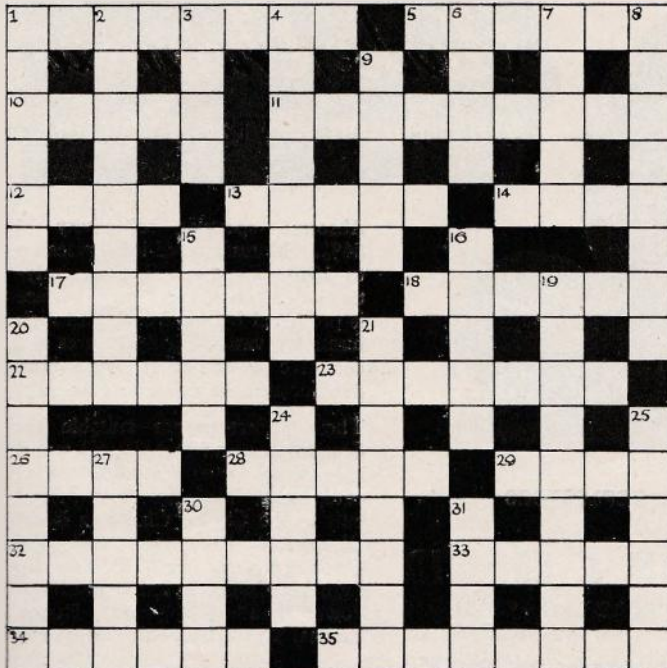
COMMUNICATIONS CROSSWORD

(See page 16 for Solution)

ACROSS—1, I drag Sam to the pictures (8). 5, Not the type of dancing done at the first part (6). 10, Eat away (5). 11, Cop my shin (Anag.) (9). 12, Only one is large in directive aerials (4). 13, They tell the time (5). 14, Watery end to looping the loop (4). 17, Much talked of in current affairs (7). 18, In sympathetic or pensive mood (6). 22, No, no (6). 23, Reverse of bringing pressure to bear? (7). 26, Blind runners (4). 28,

Funny (5). 29, See (16). 32, Changes figure (9). 33, Quick (5). 34, "Meonmaid" is a shy cat (6). 35, Flags for hanging (8)

DOWN—1, Resides (6). 2, Oh! H— they are worse. (4, 5). 3, Reverse an ugly expression (4). 4, Captained in the Merchant Service (8). 6, Tooth, ear or moust (4). 7, Number in go for language (5). 8, — (8). Singular 17 and the French are enough (5). 15, These birds should be able to alter course (5). 16, 29, You cannot go west here (4, 5). 19, Doctor in a changed portion for advancement (9). 20, Given out by 2 (5, 3). 21, Strange hand out at noon (3, 5). 24, They are "uncertain, coy and hard to please" (5). 25, Cuts without retrenchment (6). 27, Describes the author of 24 (5). 30, Put the clock back and send it out (4). 31, Whitehall dozens without Caledonia (4).





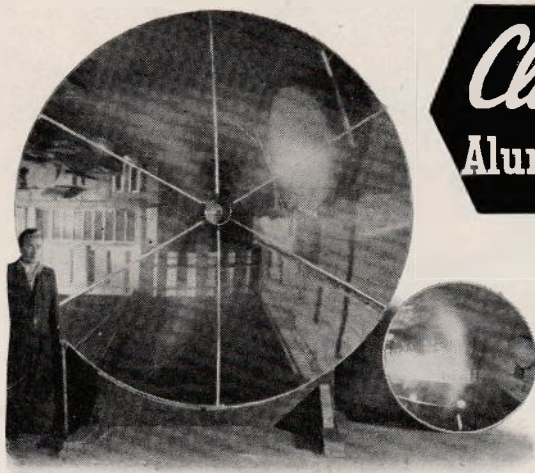
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| R. DURNFORD | Lt. | Mercury | F.C.A., Home Fleet |
| J. FARGHER | A/C.C.O. R.N.Z.N. | Lent Mercury Two years exchange Service R.N. | Ocean |
| Miss E. E. C. FARMER | 3/O. W.R.N.S. | Mercury | Dauntless |

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| P. W. W. GRAHAM, D.S.C. | Cdr. | Implacable | President (J.S.S.C. Staff) |
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| J. E. GRIFFIN, D.S.M. | C.C.O. | Mercury | Terror |
| B. HANCOCK | C.C.O. (Air) | Hornbill | Peregrine |
| J. D. HANRON, D.S.C. | Lt. Cdr. | Mercury | President (J.S.S.C.) |
| R. G. HEARN | C.C.O. | Tamar | Mercury |
| Miss V. E. HOFT | 3/O. W.R.N.S. | Victory | Mercury |
| G. T. C. HOLLISS | C.C.O. | Pembroke | Mercury (Conversion Course) |
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| L. P. HUBBARD | Comm. Lt. | Pembroke | Rooke |
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| S. A. JORDON | Ty. C.C.O. | Redjacket | Placed on Retd. list |
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| P. G. LOASBY, D.S.C. | Lt. Cdr. | Mercury | President (R.N. Staff Course) |
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| A. J. MARDLIN | C.C.O. (Air) | Falcon | Hornbill |
| W. A. F. Maybourn | Comm. Lt. | Mercury | President (B.J.C.B.) |
| J. W. McCLELLAND, D.S.O. | Cdr. | President | Wave |
| A. G. McCrum | Lt. Cdr. | F.L. to C.-in-C., H.F. | Mercury |
| D. C. MILLS | Lt. Cdr. (S) | Mercury | Jamaica |
| G. A. MILWARD, M.B.E. | Lt. Cdr. | Rooke | Pembroke (Cookham Camp) |
| G. T. MOATES | A/S.C.C.O. | St. Angelo | Mercury (Conversion Course) |
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| A. R. J. St. Q. NOLAN | Lt. Cdr. | Pembroke | Sea Eagle |
| G. D. NUTT, D.S.C. | Lt. Cdr. | Harrier | Montclare |
| H. P. PAYNE | S.C.C.O. (Air) | Daedalus | Merlin |
| A. T. G. C. PEACHEY, C.B.E., D.S.O. | Capt. | President | Placed on Retd. List |
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| R. F. PHILLIMORE, M.B.E., D.S.C. | Cdr. | Mercury | Gambia |
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| W. T. RICH | C.C.O. | Mercury | Three years Loan Service R.A.N. |
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| J. C. RUSHBROOKE, D.S.C. | Lt. | Two years Exchange Service R.A.N. | Promoted Lt. Cdr. |
| P. B. SCHONFELDT | Lt. Cdr. | Mercury | F.L. & F.C.O. to F.O.C.R.F. |
| A. K. SCOTT-MONCRIEFF, D.S.O. & Bar | Rear Admiral | Superb | President |
| A. A. T. SEYMOUR-HAYDON | Lt. Cdr. | Osiris | F.C.O., Home Fleet. |
| D. R. SHEPPARD | Lt. | Daedalus | Promoted Lt. Cdr. |
| A. SMITH | C.C.O. (Air) | Merlin | Three years Loan Service R.A.N. |
| B. Smith | Lt. Cdr. (Ce) R.N.V.R. | Mersey Division R.N.V.R. | Mercury (Ce Refresher Course) |

| Name. | Rank. | Whence. | Whither. |
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| P. J. SPROSON | C.C.O. | Mercury (Conversion Course) | Drake (R.N.S.S. Vicarage Road) |
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| E. E. STRASSER | C.C.O. | Mercury (Conversion Course) | Vengeance |
| Miss D. E. TALMA | 3/O. W.R.N.S. (Ce) | Mercury | Daedalus |
| L. R. TANTON | C.C.O. | Forth | Mercury |
| K. M. TEARE | Lt. | Condor | Promoted Lt. Cdr. |
| J. R. G. TRECHMAN | Cdr. | Mercury | Saker |
| B. T. TURNER | Cdr. | Sea Eagle | President (D.S.D.) |
| C. C. WAKE WALKER | Lt. | Pembroke | F.L. to C.S.5 |
| R. W. WALTON, B.E.M. | C.C.O. | Vengeance | Mercury |
| R. WASS, B.Sc. | Inst. Sub. Lt. | Vernon | Mercury |
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| G. R. WAYMOUTH, C.B.E. | Capt. | Victory I | President (I.D.C.) |
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| C. J. WHIFFIN | S.C.C.O. | Mercury | Staff of C.-in-C., Med. |
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| A. D. BLACK | Lt. Cdr. | A.D.N.C. | 15/1/50 |
| A. G. COOKE | S.C.C.O. (Ty) R.N. | F.N.D. | 15/12/49 |
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| R. E. LESH | Lt. | H.M.A.S. Warramunga | Sept. '49 |
| N. A. MACKINNON | Cdr. | D.N.I. | 26/10/49 |
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| I. H. McDONALD | Cdr. | H.M.A.S. Shoalhaven | 2/1/50 |
| F. MCKENZIE | C.C.O. | F.N.D. | 31/10/46 |
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| C. H. PAIN | Lt. Cdr. R.N. | H.M.A.S. Albatross | 27/7/48 |
| W. R. PHAUP | Comm. Lt. (S.W.S.) | H.M.A.S. Harman | 11/12/47 |
| J. E. POPE | Lt. Cdr. R.N. | Flag Lieut. to F.O.C.A.F. | 22/11/48 |
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