

## H.M.S. EAGLE

Since our last epistle, we've spent the festive season in our little grey home in the West—if I may use the phrase in these days of mixed complements! However, Haslemere notwithstanding, we are still very largely Westos in *Eagle*, and one wonders how much recent Naval developments like the cessation of the Nore Command will affect our social life in general. Inter-command rivalries did produce a certain amount of keenness and interest, as witness any messdeck argument in "mixed" ships—fortunately, usually on a bantering note.

On the 28th January we sailed for Gib. and the Med. in company with *Ark Royal* and the frigates of the Dartmouth TS, *Eagle* wearing FOAC's banner. En route, our rejoining squadrons had weather opposition to their return from parent N.A.S.'s which meant that when they were finally embarked we had to get a rare old wriggle on in order to make our E.T.A. at Gib. We all had a severe dose of "20-odd knot twitch" on arrival at the

boiled-oil base. Three days there produced its usual toll of thick heads, bent suits, and slight cirrhosis of the liver—a situation which gradually cured itself during “Febex” on the way to Malta. Not a really complex exercise, “Febex” more or less filled in time and got us more conversant with section M.D.

Looking in front of us is “Marjex” with the U.S. 6th Fleet where we intend to show the ‘gobs’ how to do things. Though “Marjex” only takes four days, the paperwork involved in the exercise orders must have meant a few shiny trouser-seats in the Pentagon or some other American nerve centre.

Items of interest in the sporting world have been pretty varied, most notable from our point of view being the excellent win by Sig Coombes, in the inter-departmental cross-country race. The comms team came third in points placing. The football team is still trying to have its trial match to sort out the potentials, probables, possibles, and “Why don’t you take up Uckers?” amongst us, and there is a rash of challenges to be met.

The Med. Fleet Comms. Dance has come and gone, with its usual night of freedom for alcoholic Ords to call the SCO by his nickname with only a raised eyebrow by way of retribution, and an opportunity for a certain three-badged P.O. Tel. to prove his ageless youth by having a rock ‘n roll session regardless of what the band was playing.

No prominent howlers come to mind, except perhaps the junior who said that receivers were prevented from vibrating because they were fixed on “Brazilian mountains”. Probably the same one who thought that a Turkish matelot was as Ankara-faced . . . . .!!

Oh well, the fleshpots of Toulon on the 14th March and then home for Easter leave will help to fill in time till a gentle voice in my ear says “Pots, what about the article for the Summer edition . . .”