



H.M.S. FORMIDABLE

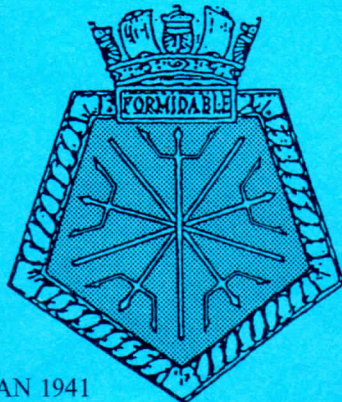
THE SIXTH ROYAL NAVY SHIP OF THE NAME

1940 - 1953

BATTLE HONOURS

USHANT 1778

THE SAINTES 1782



MATAPAN 1941
CRETE 1941
MEDITERRANEAN 1941
NORTH AFRICA 1942 - 1943
SICILY 1943
SALERNO 1943

NORWAY 1944
OKINAWA 1945
JAPAN 1945

MARITIMEQUEST

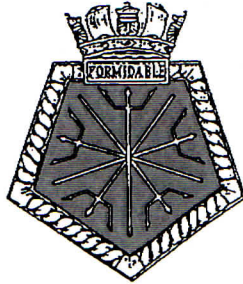
HMS Formidable by Anderw W. Ramsay (11 May 1923 – 28 January 2020)

Andrew served in Formidable during the Second World War. He wrote this book as a tribute to all the men her served with and those who were lost. Only 20 hard copies of the book were printed and were distributed to former crewmen. This copy was given to MaritimeQuest by Sandra Meacock and it was Andrew's wish that it be made available to everyone through the site. We thank Andrew and Sandra for allowing MaritimeQuest to publish this book to the site.

Michael W. Pocock

For more information and photographs of HMS Formidable visit:

http://www.maritimequest.com/warship_directory/great_britain/pages/aircraft_carriers/hms_formidable_67.htm



This photographic story of HMS FORMIDABLE, a World War II Fleet Aircraft Carrier has been prepared by Andrew M. Ramsay who served on the ship from September 1942, until February 1946 as an Able Seaman in the Aircraft Handling Party.

To give a more complete picture of the ship's service during those turbulent years, several members of 'The Formidable Association' have given me the use of photographs from their own collections together with their personal experiences.

My thanks are due to:

Rex Bolton, Writer 1946 - 1948,
(Designer of The Roll of Honour).

Thomas H.R. Campling, Lt. RNVR 1940 - 1943.

Dennis Edwards, Lt(E), RN 1944 - 1946,
(Designer of cover).

Frank W. Jones, RM, 1940 - 1943.

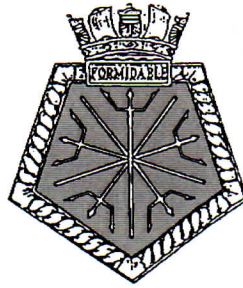
Joseph Jones, AB, 829 Sqdn., 1940 - 1941.

Harry Paterson, AB, AA2, 1940 - 1946. R.M.

Judy Pierson, 3rd. Officer, WRNS.

The Naval Museum of Alberta, Canada.

This book is dedicated to the memory of all our shipmates who did not return home.



PART ONE

August 1939 - August 1942

The Launch

Commissioning

Speed Trials

Scapa Flow

South Atlantic

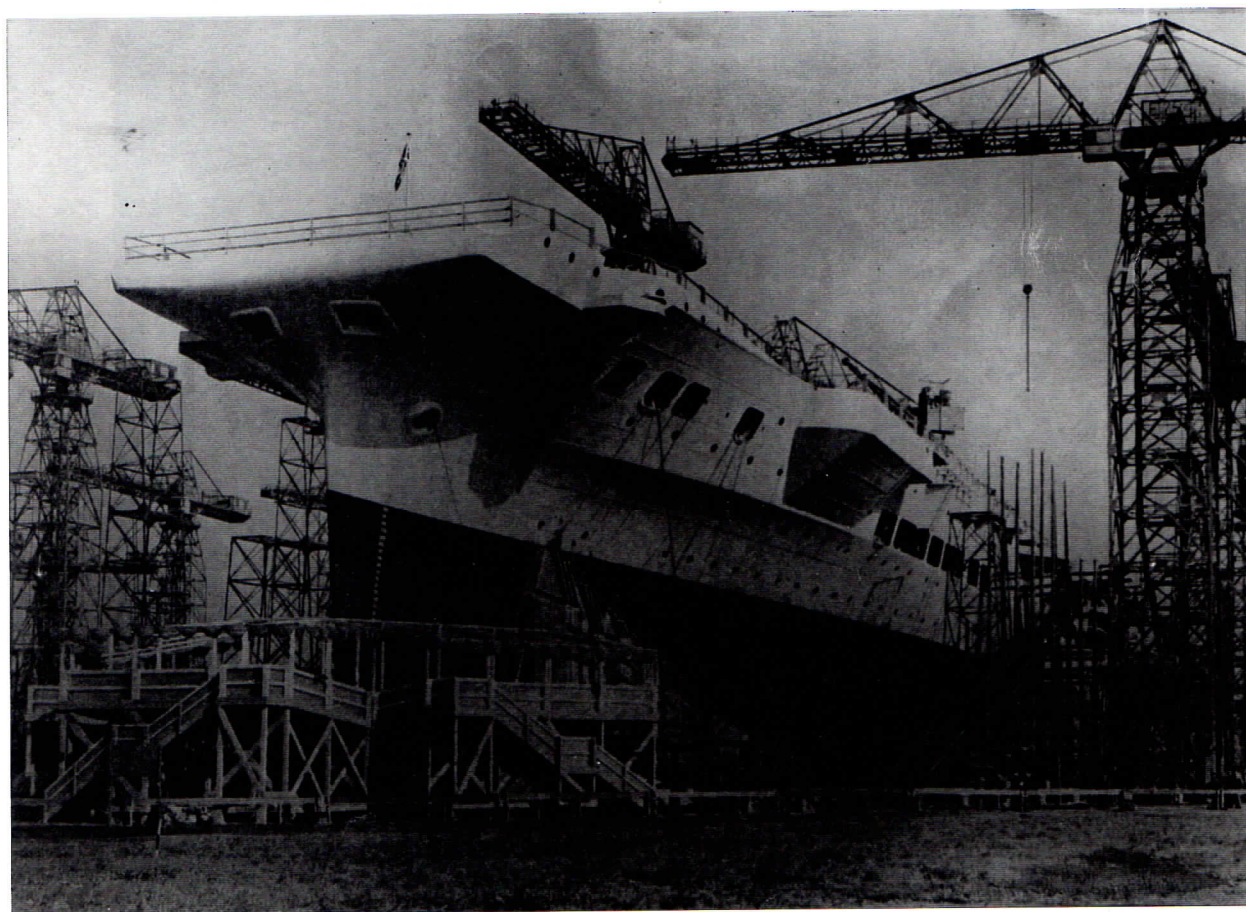
Indian Ocean

Battle of Matapan

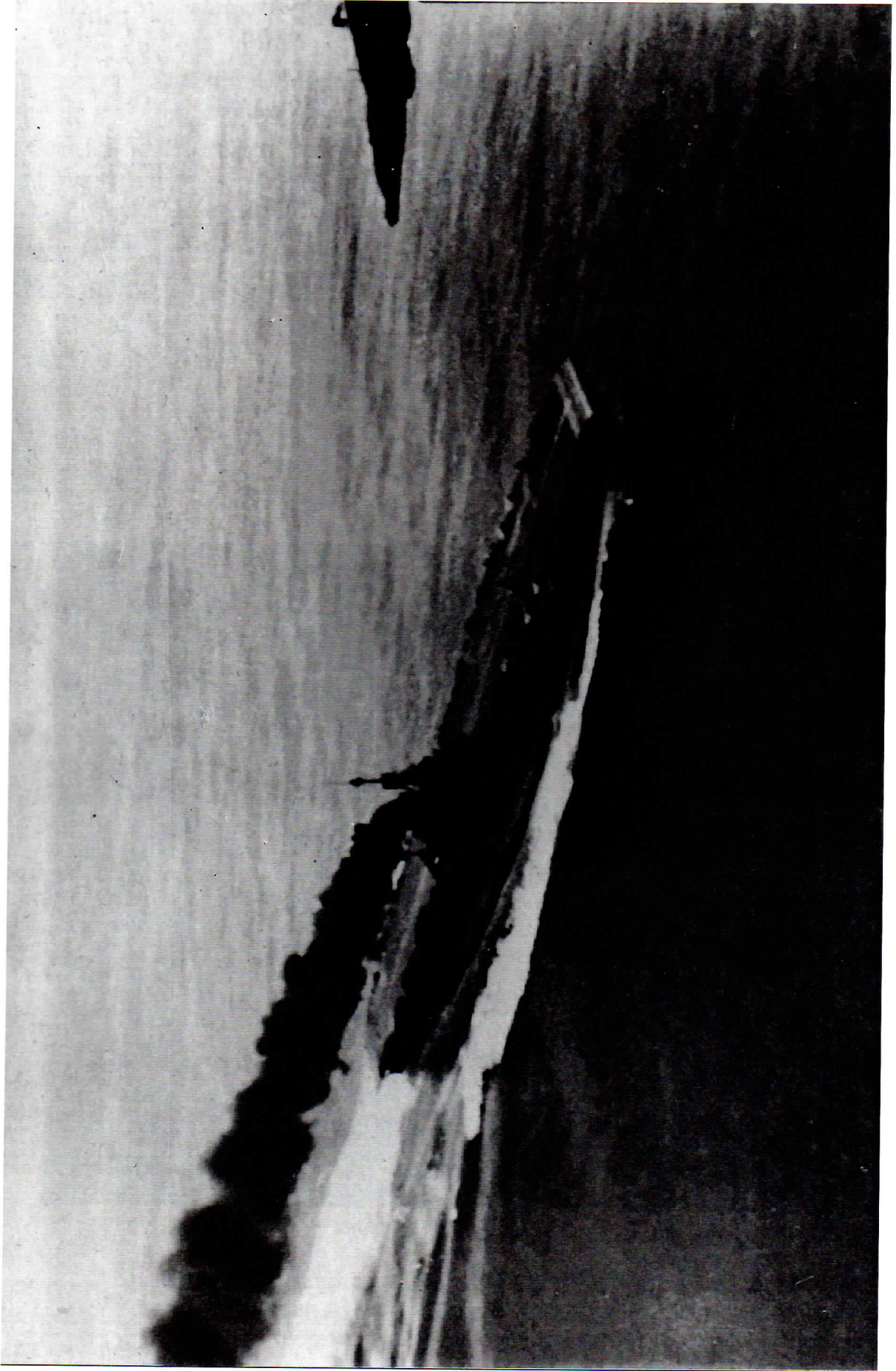
Battle for Crete

Eastern Fleet 1942

Builder :	Harland and Wolff, Belfast
Class :	Illustrious, Fleet Aircraft Carrier
Same Class :	HMS Illustrious and Victorious
Displacement :	23,207 Tons Standard
Length Overall :	30.5 Knots
Armament :	16 4.5" Guns (8 x 2) 48 40mm Guns (6 x 8) 12 40mm Bofors (12 x 1) 34 20mm Oerlikons
Launched :	17th August 1939
Commissioned :	31st October 1940
Reduced to Reserve :	1947
Scrapped :	1953



. . . A new Aircraft Carrier, HMS FORMIDABLE, yesterday launched herself when a supporting cradle collapsed throwing debris amongst shipyard workers and spectators, killing one woman and injuring several other people. . . .



HMS Formidable doing speed trials in Irish Sea December 1940

HMS FORMIDABLE'S JOURNEY INTO NAVAL HISTORY.

THE BATTLE OF MATAPAN March 28/29 1941.

Formidable's Squadrons, Albacores 826 and 829, Fulmara 803.

1940	December	18	Formidable sails for South Atlantic:
		28	Searches for surface raider on way to Capetown.
1941	February	2	Albacores bomb Mogadishu.
		13)	
		21)	Squadrons attack Massawa.
March		1)	
		17	Albacores bomb Tripoli harbour. Fulmars shoot down two enemy aircraft.
		28/29	Albacores score hits on Italian battleship and cruiser.
May		26	Formidable badly damaged during evacuation of Crete.
			Fulmars shoot down several Stukas.
July		24	Formidable leaves Mediterranean for repairs at Norfolk, USA.

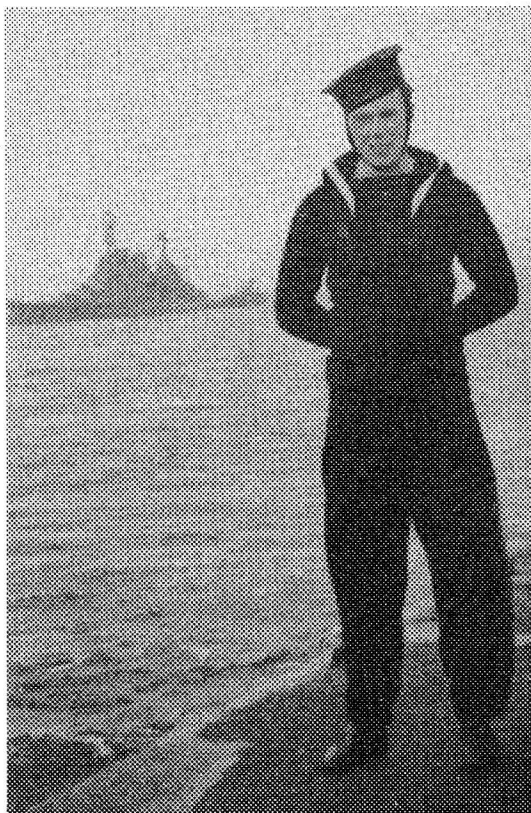




Pilots of the 829 Albacore Squadron, 1940



Observers of the 829 Albacore Squadron, 1940



Joe Jones AB, at Scapa 1940
HMS Hood in background

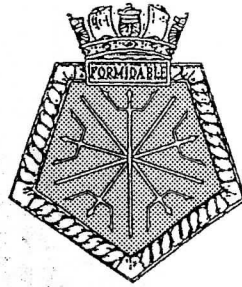


Flightdeck Party, 829 Albacore Squadron

Seamen and Stewards,
Scapa Flow 1940



Cleaning the 4.5 guns



JOSEPH JONES AB.

I joined the Formidable in October 1940, just prior to her being commissioned on October 31. The ship was completed by the end of November and doing speed trials, gunnery and other exercises in the Irish Sea early December. After returning to Belfast for further stores and ammunition the Formidable sailed for Scapa Flow where she dropped anchor near HMS Hood. As a seaman attached to 829 sqdn., I was put in the Flightdeck Party. Aircraft now on board were 826 and 829 Albacore squadrons and 803 a Fulmar squadron.

With an escort consisting of the cruiser, HMS Norfolk and five destroyers the Formidable left Scapa on December 14 and sailed into the Atlantic. Captain Bissett informed the crew that we were leaving the UK and we wouldn't be able to get word home for a long time. The destroyers turned back after a week at sea, the Formidable and Norfolk carrying on in a southward direction.

A few days after a Christmas at sea with burnt offerings, there was a fire in the galley, word was received that a convoy was under attack from a raider. The two ships changed course towards the last given position of the enemy ship. There was no sight of the raider but we came across HMS Berwick in a damaged condition and with a number of casualties. About two days later we caught up with the convoy and HMS Devonshire also joined the group as we made for Freetown where we arrived some nine days later.

New Years Day had also passed us by and after a few hours shore leave to each watch the Formidable and Norfolk were back at sea carrying out a sweep for the raider before continuing to Capetown. Nearing the Cape the ships came on a Vichy French vessel whereupon the Norfolk promptly put a prize crew onboard.

On leaving Capetown the Formidable headed into the Indian Ocean, this time escorted by the cruiser HMS Hawkins. After touching in at Mombasa the ships continued north to Aden, taking the opportunity to attack Mogadishu in Italian Somaliland. All our aircraft returned safely. We arrived in Aden on February 6, 1941. Using the port as a temporary base we sailed into the Red Sea from where our planes struck at the Italian Naval Base, Massawa, with bombs and torpedoes returning again to Aden. Over the next two weeks our aircraft made several attacks on Massawa for the loss of two aircraft and their crews.

Stopping in at Port Sudan for a short break the Formidable headed up the Red Sea to the Suez Canal and finally joined the Mediterranean Fleet at Alexandria. We were soon in action in the Med being continually attacked by German aircraft, however there was no sign of the Italian Navy. We also seemed to have more than a fair share of deck-landing crashes resulting in injuries to the airmen and we had a particularly sad time when a 4.5 gun accidentally fired into another turret. The dead were buried at sea.

The Formidable was back in Alex when the cruiser HHS Orion came into port after being bombed and severely damaged by enemy planes. A large number of her crew were killed or injured. Volunteers were called for round the fleet, to help clean her up. A large ration of rum was issued to each man before they began their terrible task.

The Battle of Matapan took place on March 28/29 1941 when the Formidable's aircraft carried out attacks on the Italian Fleet. Hits were scored on the battleship Vittorio Veneto and the cruiser Pola, the Pola was later sunk. Next morning happened to be my birthday, I was 20, but I'll never forget the pitiful sight of the Italian sailors in the water.

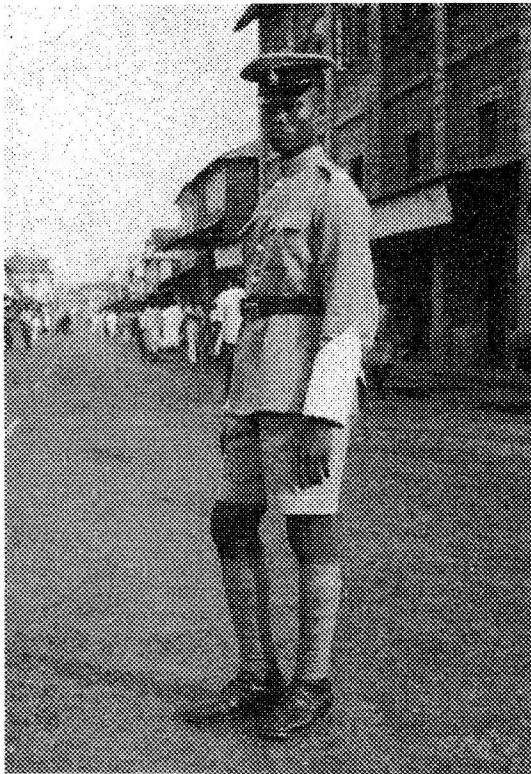
Back in Alex I spotted a familiar face. It was Charlie Williams a local lad now serving in the Royal Marines on board the cruiser HMS Gloucester, she had also taken part at Matapan. Whilst we had a great celebration we never met again. Charlie was killed on May 23 when his ship was sunk during the evacuation of Crete.

Barely a year after Dunkirk the Navy was again called upon to evacuate our troops under heavy air-attacks. The Formidable's planes launched several strikes against enemy airfields at Scarpanto in an attempt to break up the attacks on the fleet and evacuation beaches, but to no avail. With her escorting destroyer, HMS Juno already sunk the Formidable came under an increasing number of attacks from Stuka dive bombers. Although our Fulmars shot down four enemy aircraft the the ship was considerably damaged in the bows and cabledeck. A 1000 lb bomb also penetrated XI turret and came out the side of the ship. Limping back to Alex the squadrons were disembarked to a nearby airfield at Dekheila where they lived in tents that seemed to be overrun with lizards and scorpions.

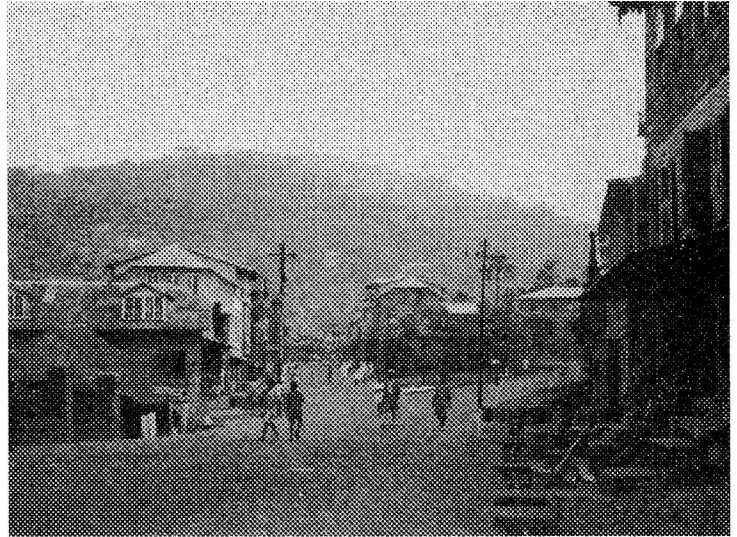
Temporary repairs being completed the ship set out for the Naval Yards at Norfolk USA, at a speed of 10 knots. Two squadrons 803 and 826 joined the Desert Airforce whilst 829 stayed on board to provide A/S cover. With stops at Mombasa and Capetown the Formidable sailed to Kingston, Jamaica, where 829 disembarked to HMS Buzzard, a Royal Naval Air Station, until the ship's repairs had been completed at Norfolk.

During our time in Jamaica two Canadian regiments took us under their wing and we were shown round the island. The Commodore of the station took very ill and was on the critical list. We rehearsed for his funeral for two weeks before he made a recovery.

Repairs finally completed, in company with our sister ship, Illustrious, the Formidable set out for the UK on December 14 1941.



Policeman in Freetown, Sierra Leone

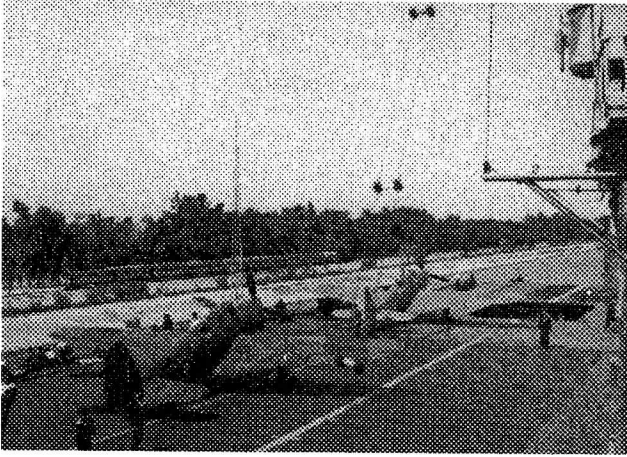


Street scene in Freetown



King Neptune makes a call as Formidable crosses the Line for the very first time, in 1941

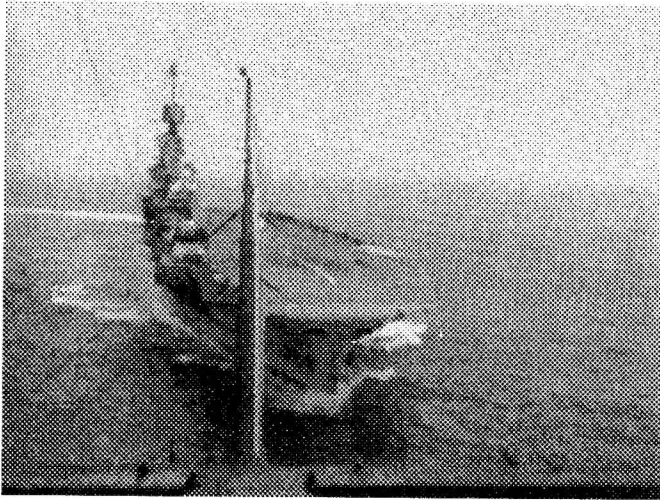




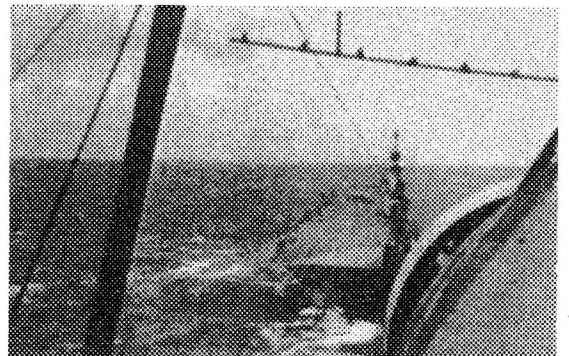
Formidable enters Suez Canal with Fulmars on deck



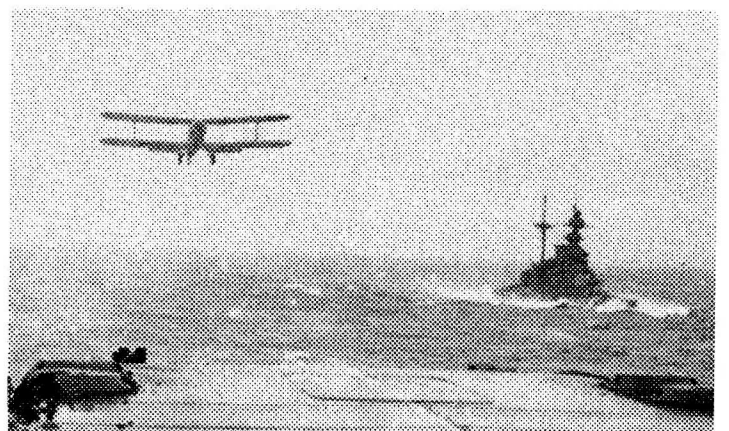
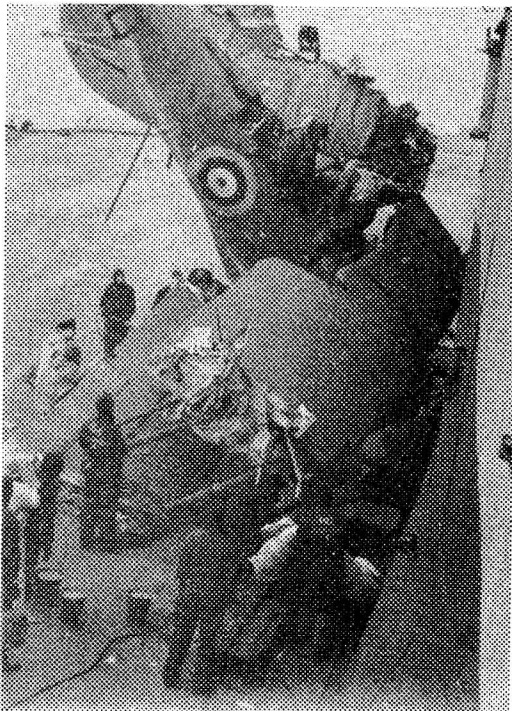
In the Great Bitter Lakes



Swordfish takes off

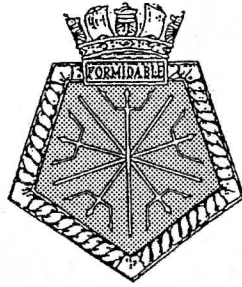


Swordfish lands on



Queen Elizabeth on port quarter as Albacore comes home.

Oh Dear!!



HARRY PATERSON AB AA2.

Harry, or Pat as he was called, joined the Formidable in August 1940 and served on the ship until the end of the first trooping mission in 1946.

Harry tells of the night of March 28 when the East Mediterranean Fleet were off Cape Matapan. The Formidable accompanied by the battleships Warspite, Barham, Valiant and other units were in pursuit of the Italian Fleet. As the ships were at defence stations, I was on Pl pom pom for the first watch, 8pm till midnight. It was quite a light night, partly moonlit. We were second in line, astern Warspite, Admiral Cunningham's flagship. Suddenly we noticed quite clearly Warspite's main armament train on the port beam. The other two battleships followed suit.

We hadn't a clue what was happening, but we had an idea the Italians couldn't have been far away as we had been in pursuit all day. By the way, our torpedo carrying aircraft had crippled the Italian battleship Vittorio Veneto earlier on in the day but she managed to limp back to her home port under cover of darkness.

Back to the situation; all of a sudden searchlights switched on and illuminated three Italian cruisers only a few thousand yards away point blank range actually. Then all hell broke loose! Our capital ships let go with 15" salvoes. The enemy ships were overwhelmed and afire from stem to stern. The poor Italians never knew what hit them. I think all their guns were trained fore and aft.

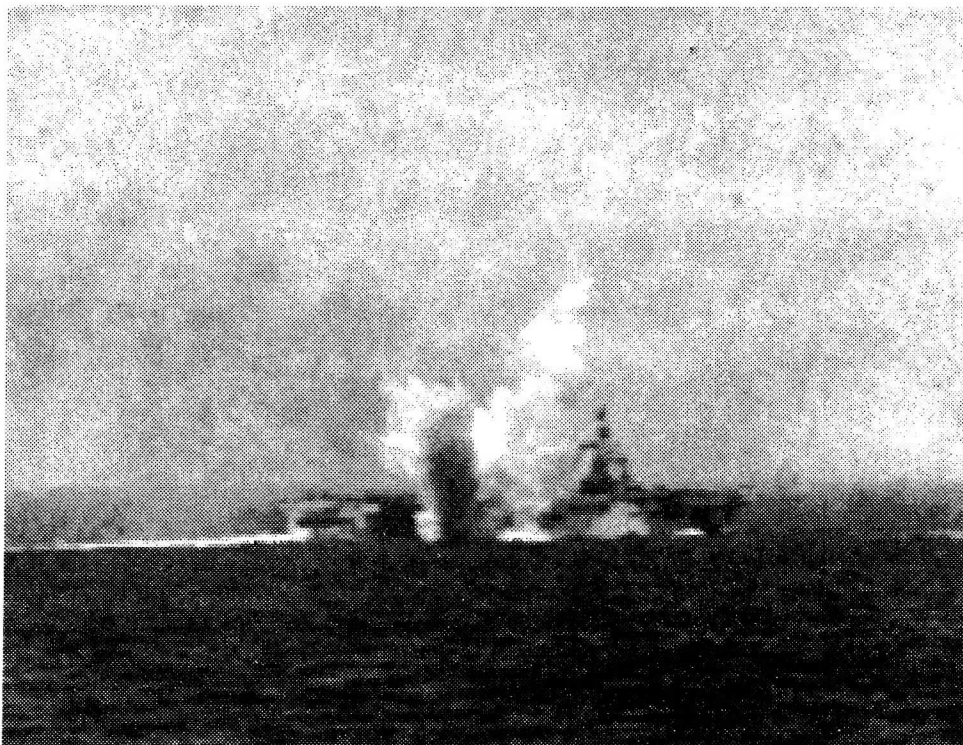
We started popping away with our 4.5 guns when we received that famous signal from the Warspite (C in C), "Formidable get to hell out of it, you are the only carrier I've got". Hard to starboard and exit Formidable from the scene.

After the battle a signal was made to the nearest Italian port that a hospital ship and others should be sent to pick up survivors from the three cruisers.

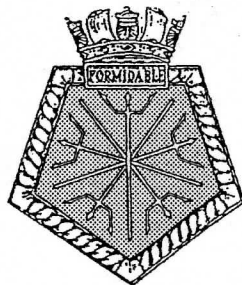
The response next morning was an attack by German JU88 aircraft. All attacks were beaten off with no damage to our ships as we returned to Alexandria.



Harry Paterson



Formidable under intensive air attack after Matapan



T. H. R. CAMPLING Lt. RNVR.

Another Night to Remember — The evening of March 27 1941 in the Eastern Mediterranean was very dark and the sea calm with only a light wind. At 20.00 hours the Gunnery Control Party of 'B' Director in HMS Formidable closed up for the first watch. They comprised the Layer Trainer, Range Taker, Boy Communications and myself as Gunnery Control Officer.

We had left Alexandria Harbour hurriedly the previous evening and flown on our squadrons of Fulmar fighters and Albacore torpedo bombers, after which we proceeded westwards in company with the battleships Warspite, Valiant and Barham and a powerful destroyer escort.

The next day March 28 had been hectic with our aircraft operating continuously since dawn. The reason for the sudden departure of the fleet from Alex was the receipt of information that units of the Italian battle fleet were at sea and the Formidable's aircraft were intended to attack them, which they did with some vigour and success. Throughout the day the ship's company had been closed up at action stations or at a high degree of readiness, but as dusk fell and flying operations ceased (there being no night flying at that time) a relative calm descended on Formidable as we continued steaming westwards in line ahead with the battleships.

'B' director was one of four in this class of carrier and controlled the forward port side battery of two 4.5" twin turrets. A feature of 'B' was that it was situated almost beneath the catapult gear and had to be at flightdeck level when flying was in progress. However in this position the view was considerably obstructed for gunnery purposes, to remedy this the director could be raised and lowered hydraulically about six feet. The result was that when flying was in progress it was necessary to constantly raise and lower the director.

We had been closed up for about an hour and so far as we were concerned all seemed to be quiet and peaceful as we continued our westward course at a speed of about twenty knots. Warspite was leading the column followed by the Valiant, then came Formidable and astern of us was Barham. After the rigours of the day there seemed to be a slight feeling of anti-climax in that, despite the heroic efforts of our airmen, the Italian Fleet had got away.

It was the custom for the Air Defence Position (ADP) above the bridge regularly to call up the director during the watch to test communications and when about 21.00 the 'phone buzzed we in the director assumed that this would be another routine call. Imagine our surprise therefore, when word was passed down that there was a report from Warspite of unidentified surface ships a few miles distant on the port bow. I immediately passed on this information to the transmitting station and the turrets, ordering them to 'stand to'.

A tense silence followed for several minutes, then everything seemed to happen at once. We saw a group of coloured flares fired from Warspite, which were in fact the night challenge signal, then, almost immediately the battleship's searchlights were switched on to reveal to our amazement three sleek-looking light grey warships, their guns trained fore and aft. Within seconds there was an ear-splitting roar as the 15" guns of our battleships opened fire at almost point blank range. The result was immediate and devastating. I vividly recall seeing a complete turret of the leading ship disappear over the side. Masses of flame and smoke soon enveloped all three ships.

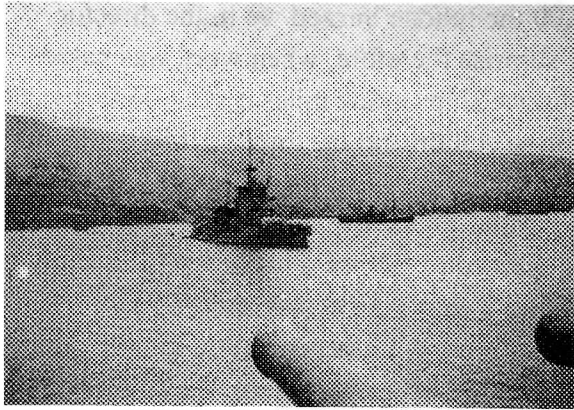
Although we received the order to open fire the order was almost immediately countermanded as Formidable turned out of line to starboard. One salvo was in fact fired by Formidable, and this must have been one of the few occasions during the last war when an aircraft carrier used its main gunnery armament against an enemy warship! As we retired from the scene severe explosions continued with white flashes and the orange glow of fires lighting up the sky. The enemy ships were actually three Italian cruisers, Pola, Fiume and Zara, all of which were sunk. The rest of the night passed in relative peace so far as the Formidable was concerned though the following day was a very different story.

At about 15.00 word was passed to the director from the ADP that a large group of unidentified aircraft was approaching the fleet from the north west. The ship went to action stations. When first reported the aircraft were some seventy miles away, but the distance rapidly reduced and it became clear that the fleet was about to be attacked. The weather was fine with a hazy sun and it was difficult to make out details as they were high up and against the sun. We received orders to open fire in 'Barrage', this meant setting the fuse to burst at close range above the fleet. At the same time every other ship seemed to do likewise and a curtain of bursting shells appeared above us, forming an umbrella at about two thousand feet. We then heard the scream of the dive bombers, soon identified as German JU87s, as they dived mostly against the Formidable, or so it appeared to us. We caught fleeting glimpses of bombs rushing past us to be followed by enormous columns of water rising from the sea, causing the ship, all 23,000 tons of her to lurch and shudder. The noise from the barrage made up from our own 4.5 guns and multi-barrelled pom-poms and the guns from the rest of the fleet, the scream of the diving bombers and the rattling sound of shrapnel from bursting shells hitting our steel flightdeck was deafening. Miraculously we were not hit though there were several very near misses. A number of enemy aircraft were shot down.

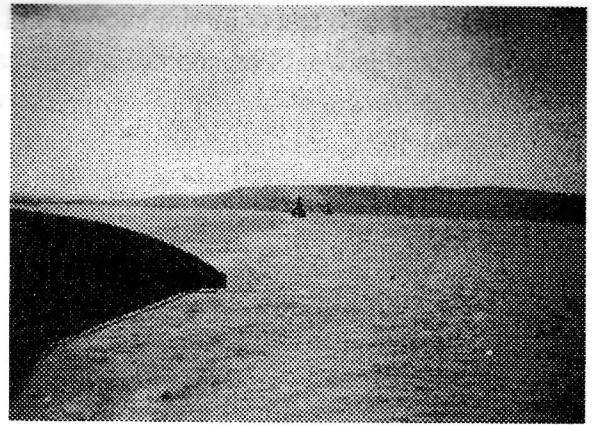
Our task completed we returned to Alexandria to receive a warm welcome from numerous shipping of all kinds in the harbour. The whole action was shortly afterwards given the name "The Battle of Matapan".

Historically it was the first fleet action between major naval units since the Battle of Jutland in 1916.

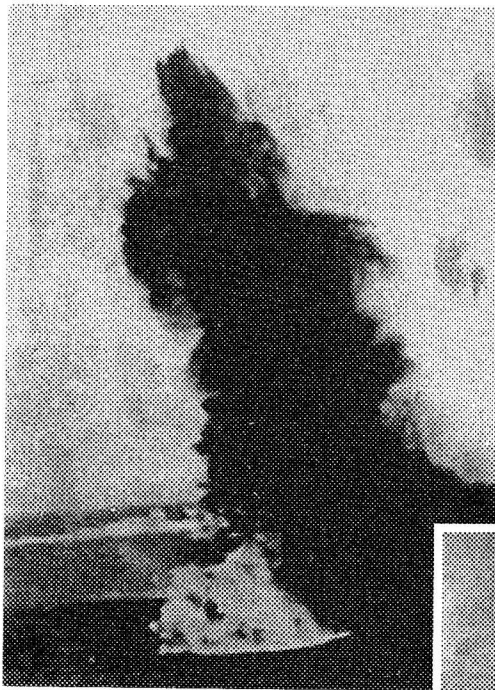
The Evacuation of Crete, May 1941



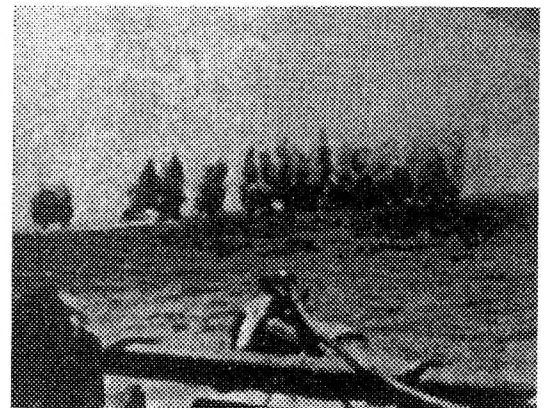
Warspite in Suda Bay



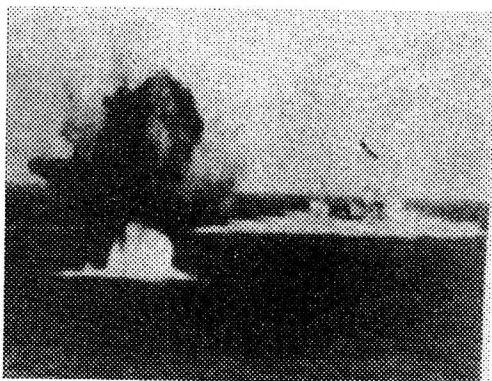
Braham and Valiant leaving Sudan Bay



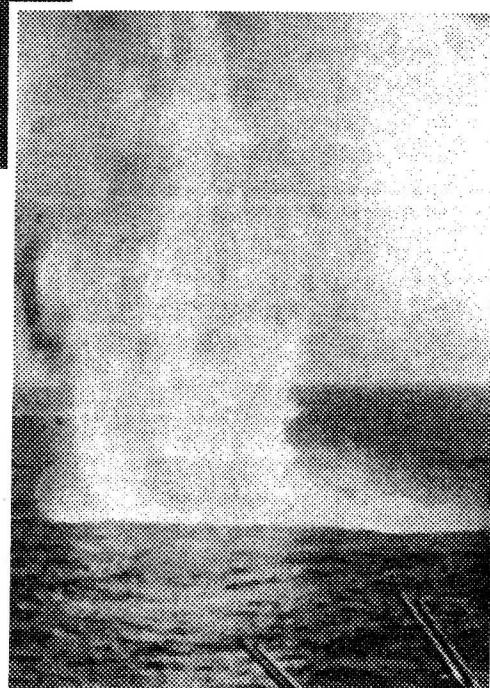
Air attacks intensify



The Barham survives a savage attack



Queen Elizabeth appears again



Another near thing



FRANK W. JONES RM.

Frank Jones, Royal Marines, joined the Formidable in October 1940 and left the ship in November 1943 when the ship was at Belfast for a six month refit. A loader on the right-hand gun in XI turret he tells about the action off Crete when the Formidable was attacked by relays of Stuka dive bombers during May 26, 1941.

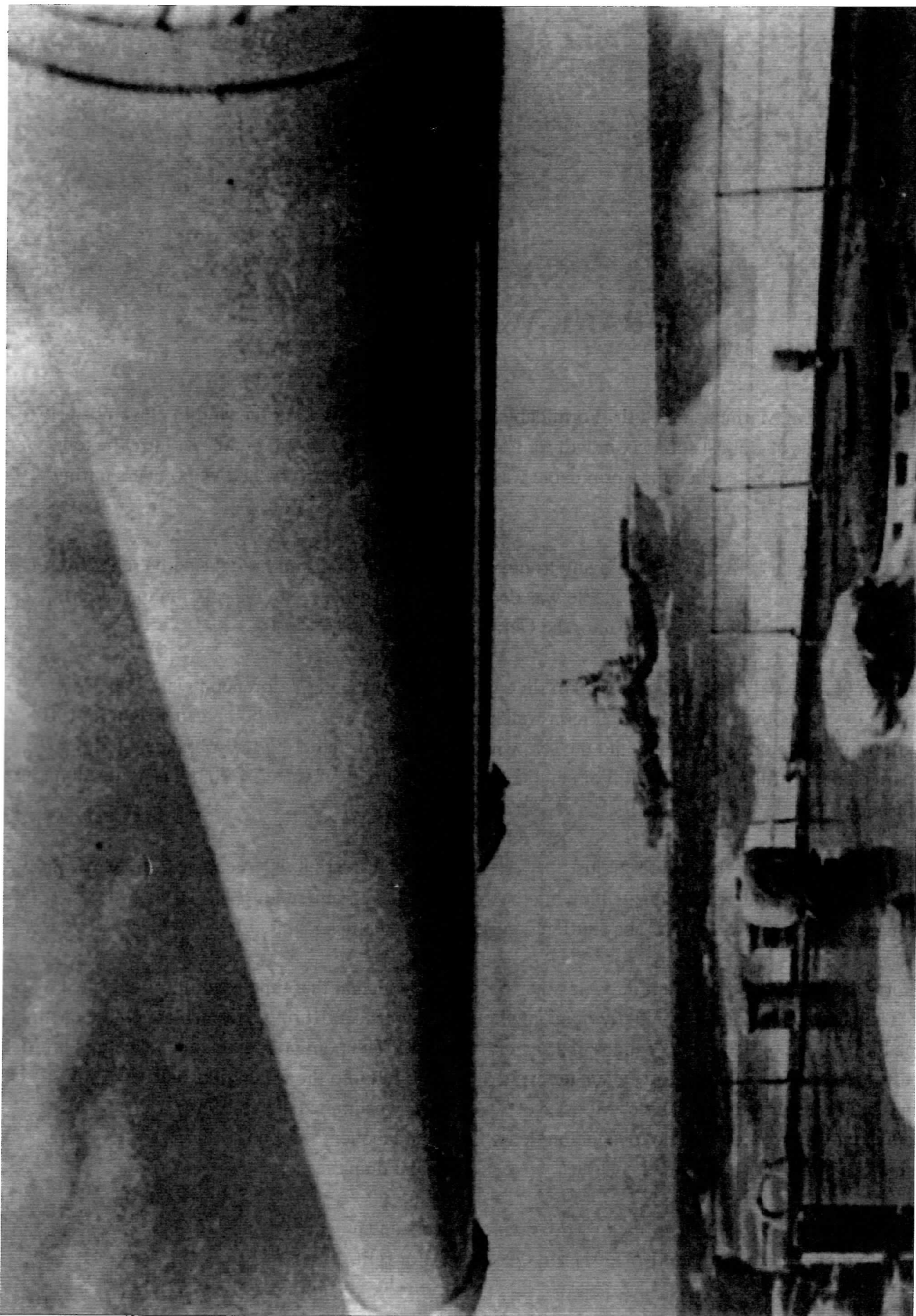
During one of the last efforts to get as many troops as possible off Crete, and to give some relief from bombing to the smaller vessels, Formidable was detached from the fleet with the mission to send her aircraft off on a dawn attack on Scarpanto, the German airbase.

Formidable was heavily engaged by relays of dive-bombers all through the forenoon watch, she was finally hit by two bombs just as the afternoon watch was changing over. One bomb came right into XI turret, through the pump space then into the sea, where it exploded shattering the A bracket on the starboard shaft and filling the stern full of shrapnel holes. This bomb crushed two marines to death on its way through.

The second bomb struck the flightdeck just forward of the armour plating, it penetrated well below the cabledeck where it did terrific damage blowing the bows apart as the fire and repair parties were changing over in the bow section. They suffered very heavy casualties.

The Formidable managed to steam into Alexandria Harbour, which at that time was full of damaged ships. The harbour was attacked nightly in an attempt to finish us off. During one such attack the enemy dropped mines one of which was caught in a searchlight beam. The pom pom gunners opened up on it but only succeeded in shooting the parachute off it. The mine fell into the water alongside, and then settled gracefully under the Formidable. All the electrical power was immediately cut-off, we were later towed away by a tug, then tied up to a coaling jetty. Egyptian labourers were unloading a collier into lighters. From then on we breathed coal dust, ate coal dust and drank it in our tea.

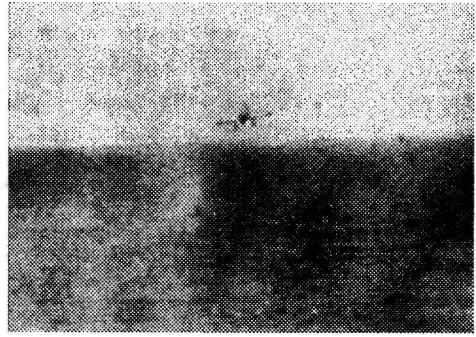
When a temporary bow had been fitted by our own engineers and any crew hands available, to haul plates onto the bow, we sailed to Norfolk Navy Yard, USA for refit.



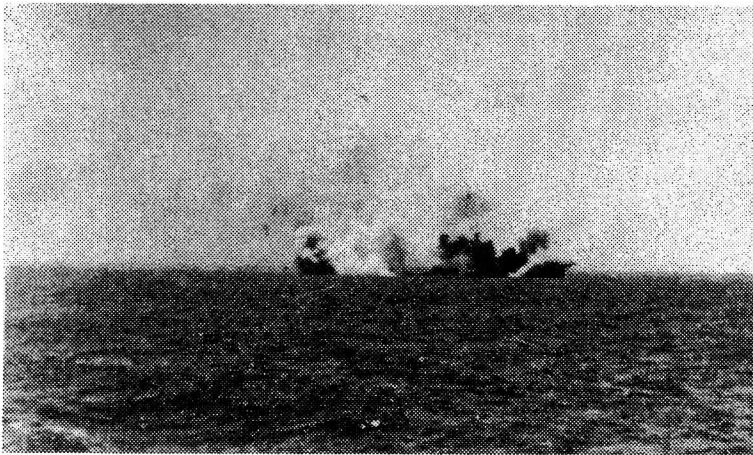
Indian Ocean 1942, Formidable as seen from the Warspite



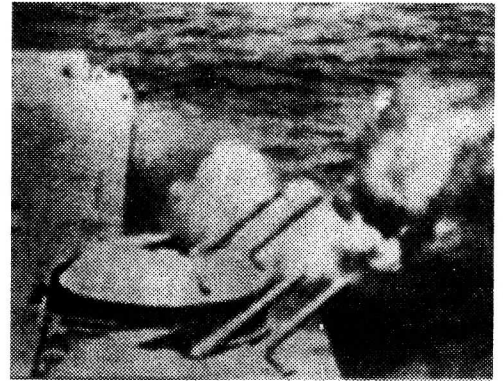
Near Miss off Starboard bow



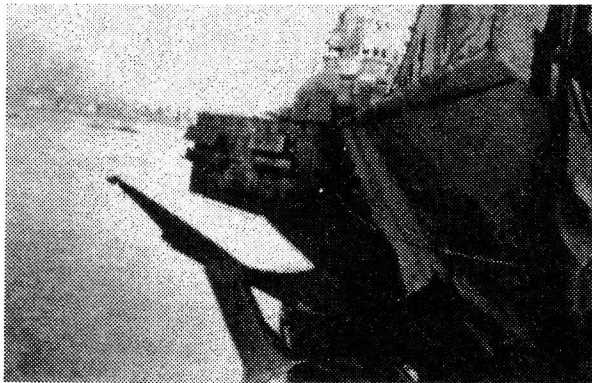
Stuka attacks Formidable



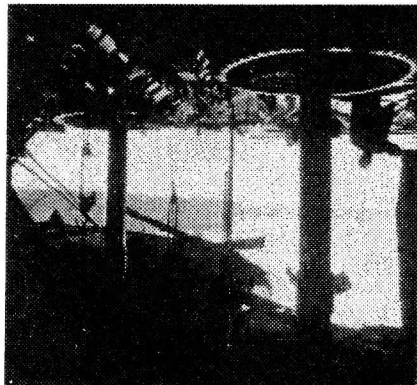
Formidable hit fore and aft



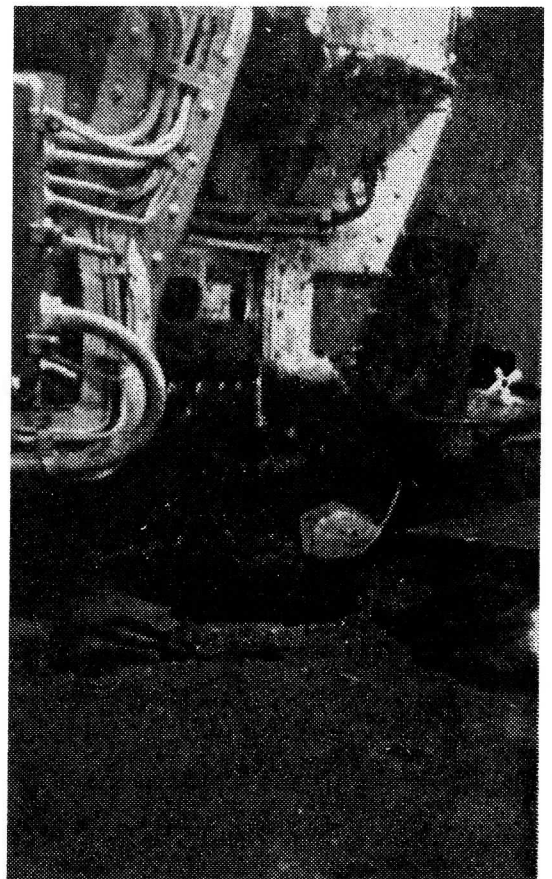
Bomb hits XI turret



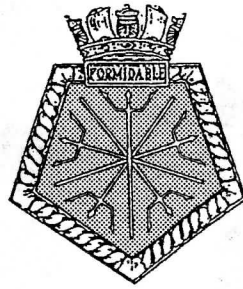
Bows and cable-deck blown apart



The damaged bows and turret



Inside XI turret



PART TWO

September 1942 - November 1943

Rosyth

Scapa Flow

Operation Torch

Operation Husky

Operation Avalanche

Arctic Circle

NORTH AFRICA.
OPERATION TORCH,
November 8 1942.

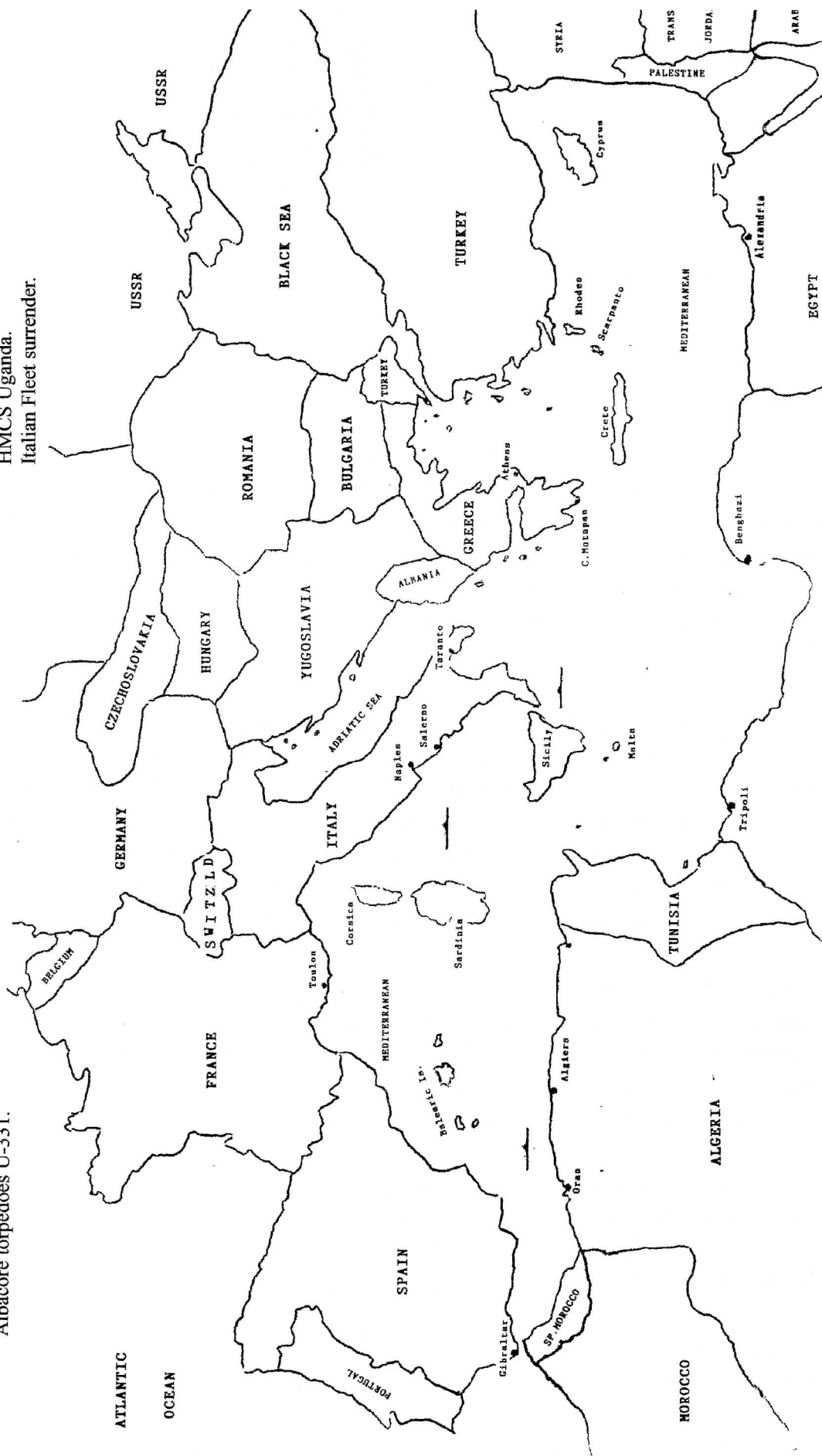
SICILY,
OPERATION HUSKY,
July 10 1943.

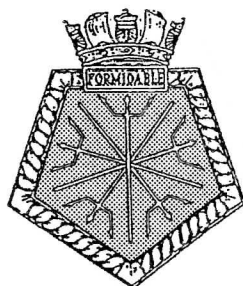
Formidable's Squadrons for all three operations,
Albacores 820, Seafires 885, Martlets 888 and 893.

Nov. 6/7 Italian torpedo bombers attack fleet.
Albacores bomb French army fort.
Albacore torpedoes U-331.

ITALY (SALERNO).
OPERATION AVALANCHE
September 9 1943.

Sep 8 Formidable survived attacks by thirty torpedo bombers.
Fleet guns shoot down six enemy planes.
Martlet shoots down flying boat.
Radio controlled bombs damage USS Savannah and
HMCS Uganda.
Italian Fleet surrender.





ANDREW M. RAMSAY AB.

You know it's strange the way things turn out. On August 18 1939, having no connection with the Royal Navy, I cut this item out of the Edinburgh Evening News. Three years later as an ordinary seaman I was drafted to the Formidable then lying at Rosyth and found myself covering my eldest brother John's back during Operation Torch. My older brother, Tom, was by this time a prisoner of war in Java.

From the "News" of August 18, 1939.

A huge crowd at Harland & Wolff's yard in Belfast yesterday afternoon saw the new aircraft carrier Formidable launch herself killing a woman and injuring about 20 other people.

On joining the Formidable in September 1942 the new draft were soon at work to provision ship. I well remember a particular side of beef I carried on board. It was stamped 'New Zealand 1939'. No BSE in those days!! Being assigned to what was then called the Flightdeck Party I was in the star-board nettings awaiting the very first planes I had ever seen land on a ship. The aircraft were Martlets flying from Haston in the Orkneys. What happened next shook me rigid. The first two Martlets skidded on landing and disappeared over the port side. Bloody Hell !!! The third plane also went over the port side but fortunately jammed on boat davits. A lucky young pilot.

Back to Operation Torch. In company with Victorious, we left the Clyde and flew on our remaining squadrons, 820 Albacores, 888 and 893 Martlets and 885 Seafires. Well out in the Atlantic the Formidable joined up with Force H under the command of Vice Admiral Syfret. The fleet consisted of the battleships Rodney and Duke of York, the battlecruiser Renown, the carriers Victorious, Furious and Formidable with numerous cruisers and destroyers.

I particularly remember those first few nights in the Mediterranean, we were securing Seafires on their outriggers in the darkness as Italian torpedo bombers weaved in and out between the fleet and troop convoys. The thunder of guns, flares, smoke and those very determined Italians. Talk about Dante's Inferno! I'm not surprised we used up a months supply of ammunition over two nights.

Another thing that comes to mind is the time in May 1943, we were stuck in Gibraltar with engine trouble. In a way it was quite laughable. Late one night or was it early morning, I was called out as a member of the duty boats crew. Italian frogmen had breached the harbour defences. Two had already been captured and incarcerated in the bowels of the²² Rodney in an attempt to make them disclose

looking for bubbles whilst the Commander tossed explosive charges over the side trying to force the enemy to surface. With no weapons on board I think we were meant to hit them over the head with a boathook or baler.

With the engine trouble overcome the ship left Gibraltar and headed into the Atlantic causing increasing speculation as we sailed ever northwards. However two-thirds of the way home, about June 20, the Formidable sighted a large fleet. It was the Warspite, Valiant, Nelson and Indomitable with cruisers and destroyers. This new Force H, Formidable included, was formed to take part in Operations Husky and Avalanche. After a number of exercises in the Atlantic the fleet returned to Gib where some mail was waiting for me, including the local Edinburgh newspaper with this item:

The invasion of Sicily on July 9 was covered by Force H on the east coast where the Eighth Army were to be landed. It was expected or rather hoped that the Italian fleet may make an appearance. By July 16 the Indomitable and the cruiser Cleopatra had both been torpedoed by Italian aircraft. When the landing had been consolidated we left the area for Malta where we realised in some small measure what the Maltese had gone through over the last three years as we came under nightly air-raids.



Salerno was a very different proposition. Again Force H, with the Illustrious replacing Indomitable, was the main covering force whilst closer inshore were a dozen or so escort carriers supporting the actual landings. These were strongly contested by the Germans, a result of which we transferred a number of our Martlets to the inshore group of carriers. There were two new weapons in use at Salerno, the Allies had a landing barge converted into a rocket ship in a similar manner to the trucks the Russians were using on the Eastern Front. The other weapon was German, they had radio-controlled glider bombs, which they used to great effect. The USS Savannah, HMCS Uganda and the Warspite all being damaged by them. I had earlier seen the 10,000 ton Savannah at Mers-el-Kebir. The Warspite and Formidable also came under heavy attack with several near misses from a group of about 30 torpedo bombers.

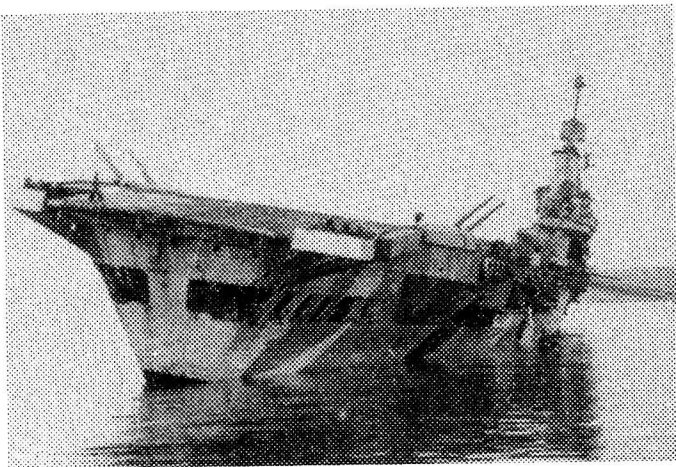
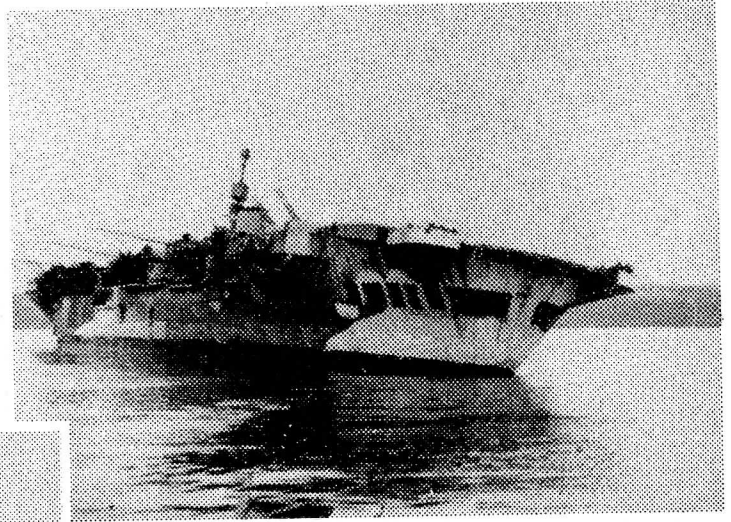
Back to Malta where we found the now surrendered Italian fleet lying off the Grand Harbour.

Our time in the Med was now over so we sailed for Gib and the UK arriving in the Clyde on October 18 1943. A week later we set out for Scapa where we joined the Home Fleet to cover convoys to and from Russia, at the same time keeping an eye out for the Scharnhorst which was in the vicinity. During this operation the Formidable called in at Akureyri on the north of Iceland where I took advantage of two hours shore leave. Back at sea on November 2 the Formidable headed for the Norwegian Coast where our aircraft carried out attacks on the Tirpitz. Although unsuccessful other attacks were made on local shipping and other targets. With the fleet was the US carrier Ranger.

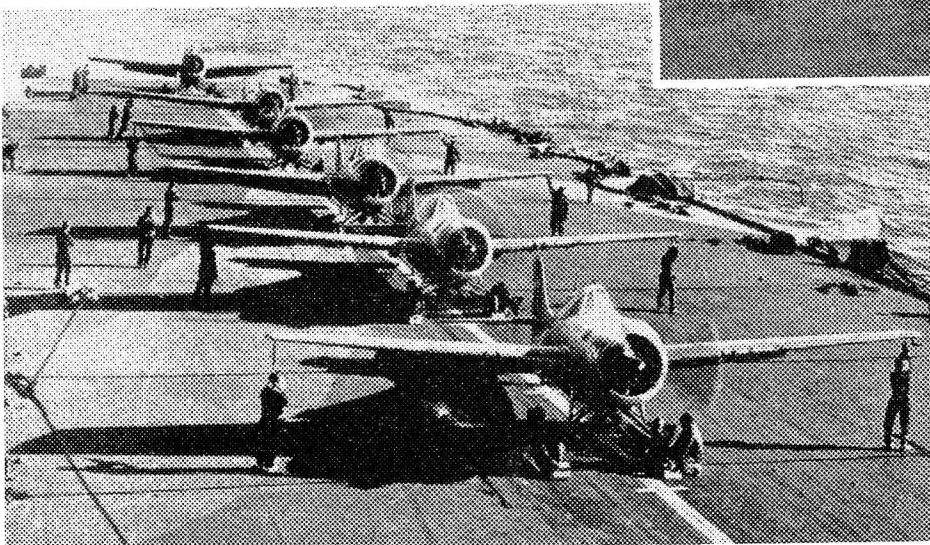
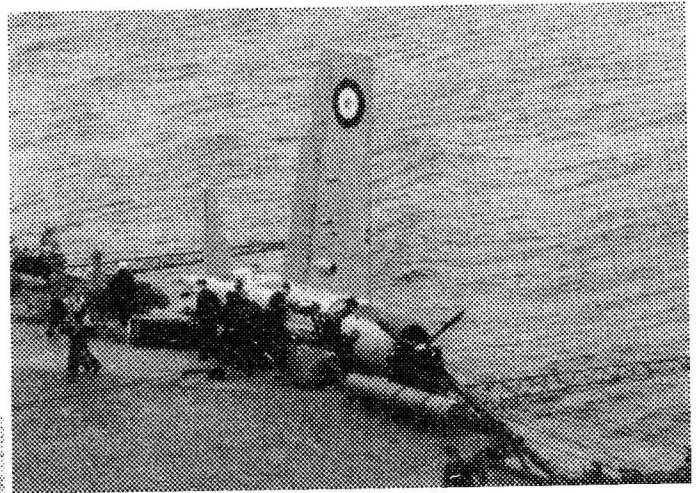
So ended the First Commission as we sailed for Belfast and a six month refit.

continued on page 47

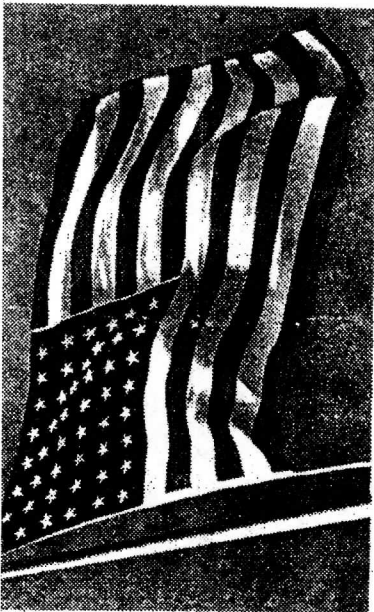
Damage control Exercise,
Scapa Flow, October 1942



A lucky escape



Martlets ranged for take-off



Message du Président des Etats Unis

Le Président des Etats Unis m'a chargé comme Général Commandant en Chef des Forces Expéditionnaires Américaines de faire parvenir aux peuples de l'Afrique française du Nord le message suivant:

Aucune nation n'est plus infiniment liée, tant par l'histoire que par l'amitié profonde, au peuple de France et à ses amis que ne le sont les Etats Unis d'Amérique.

Les Américains luttent actuellement, non seulement pour assurer leur avenir, mais pour restituer les libertés et les principes démocratiques de tous ceux qui ont vécu sous le drapeau tricolore.

Nous venons chez vous pour libérer des conquérants qui ne désirent que vous priver à tout jamais de vos droits souverains, de votre droit à la liberté du culte, de votre droit de mener votre train de vie en paix.

Nous venons chez vous uniquement pour anéantir vos ennemis — nous ne voulons pas vous faire de mal.

Nous venons chez vous en vous assurant que nous partirons dès que la menace de l'Allemagne et de l'Italie aura été dissipée.

Je fais appel à votre sens des réalités ainsi qu'à votre idéalisme.

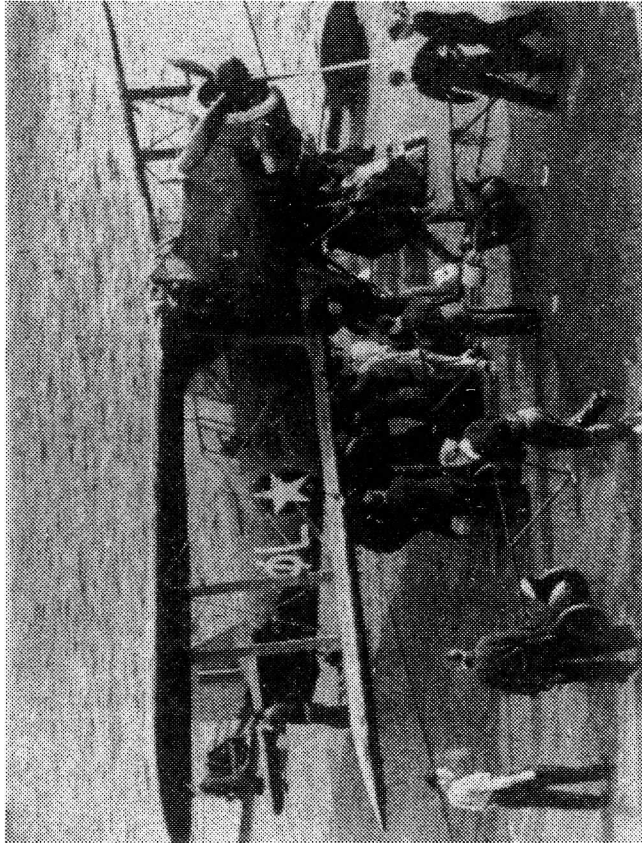
Ne faites rien pour entraver l'accomplissement de ce grand dessein. Aidez-nous, et l'avènement du jour de la paix universelle sera hâté.



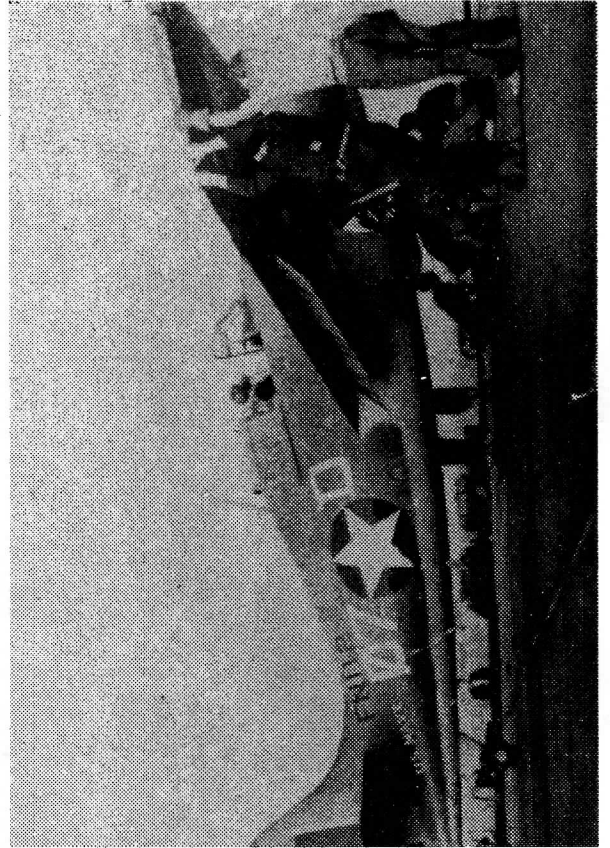
Dwight D. Eisenhower

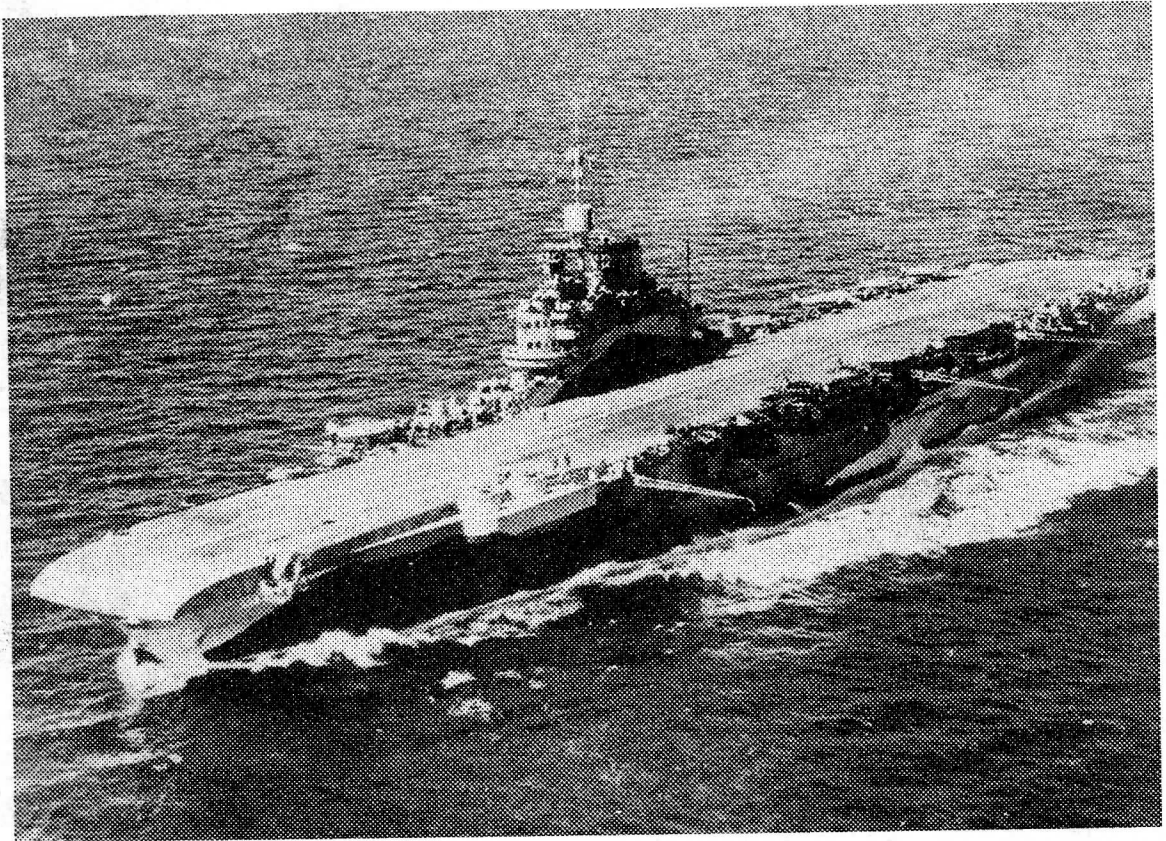
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER
Lieutenant Général, Commandant en Chef
des Forces Expéditionnaires Américaines.

Propoganda Leaflet also in Arabic

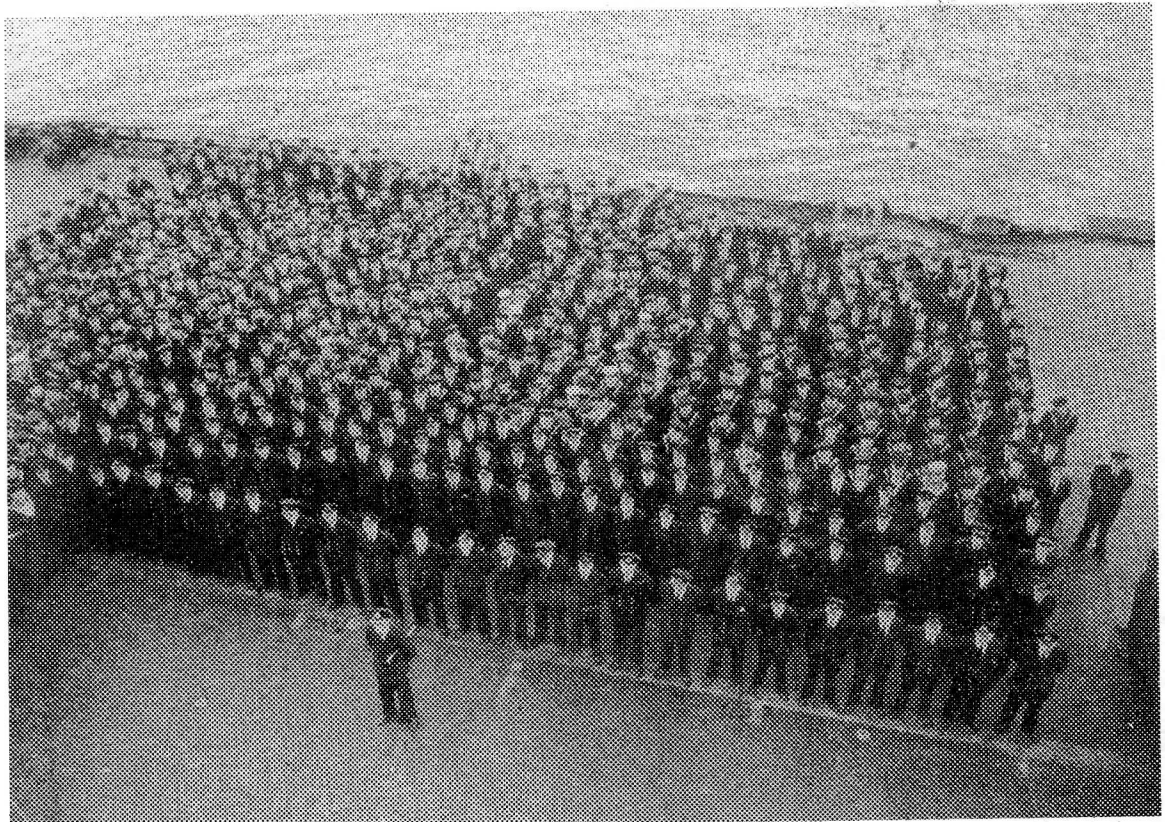


Operation Torch,
November 1942
Royal Navy see stars!!





The Ship!



The Crew



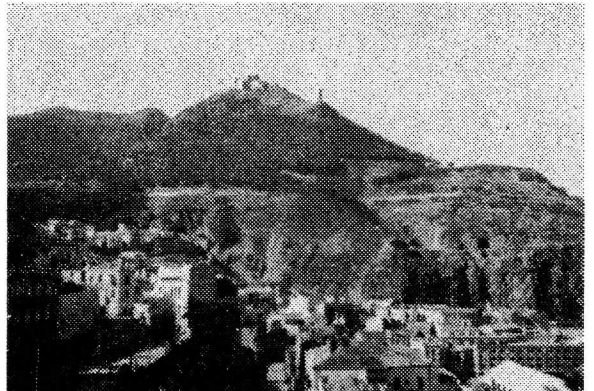
French Naval Patrol, Oran 1942



Orange Seller



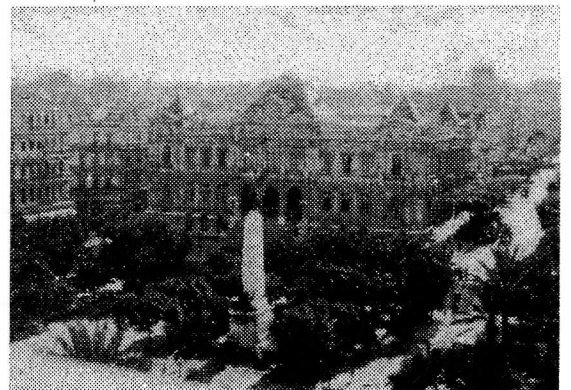
It's your turn to pay for the pictures



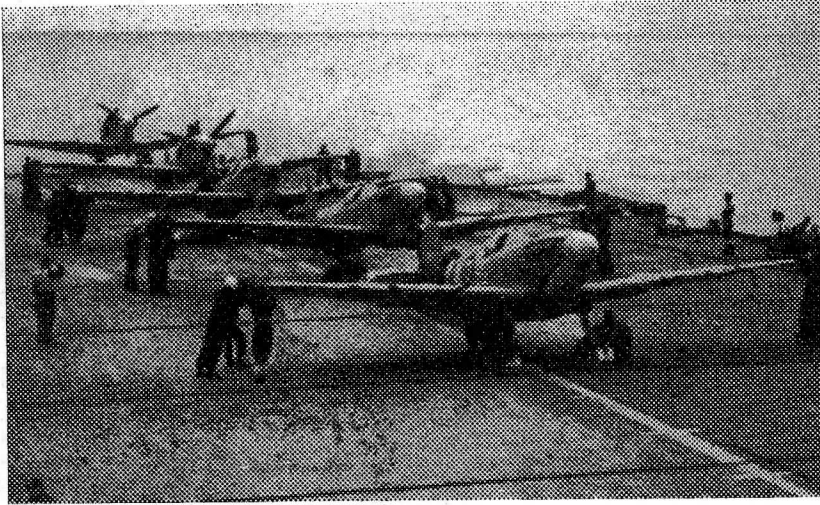
French Army Fort



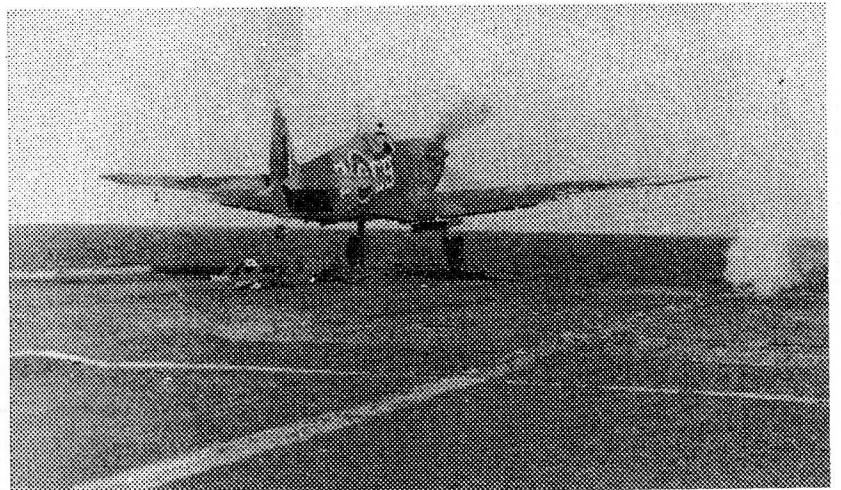
Griffen,
Ramsay and
Mason



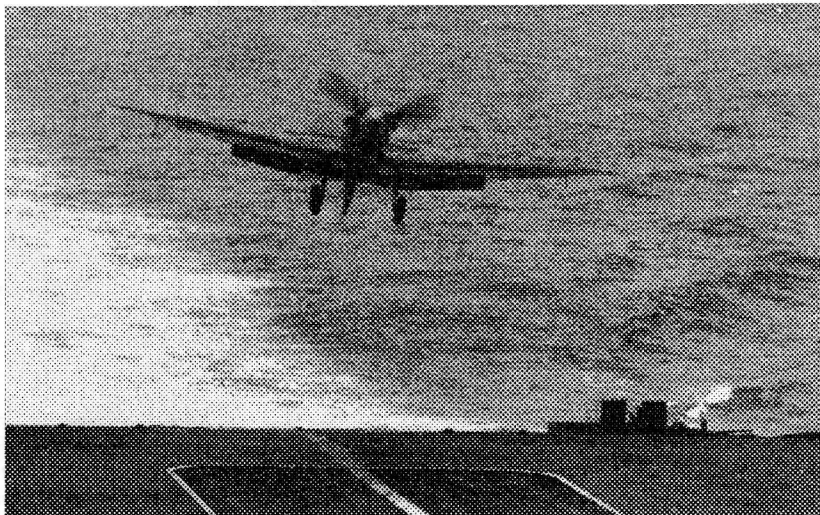
La Place du Marechal Foch



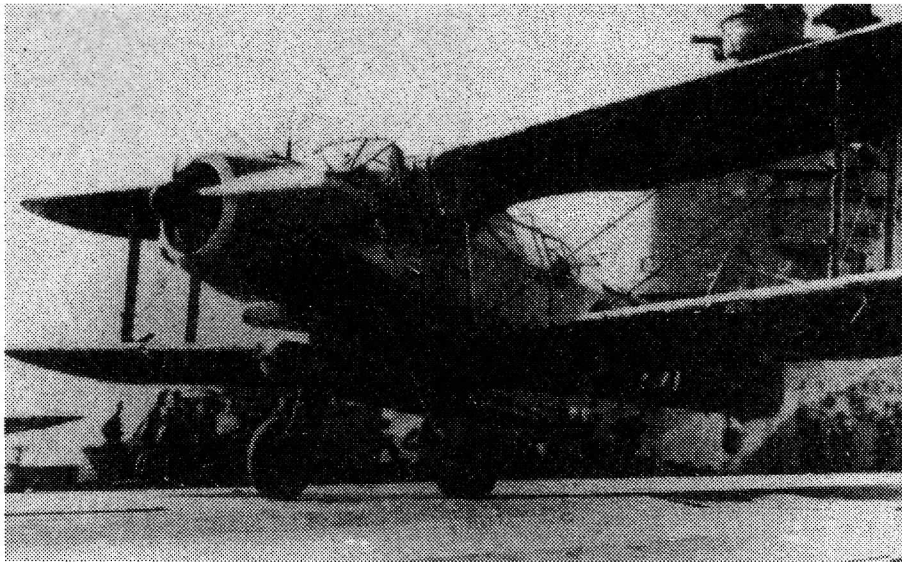
885 Squadron ranged for take-off



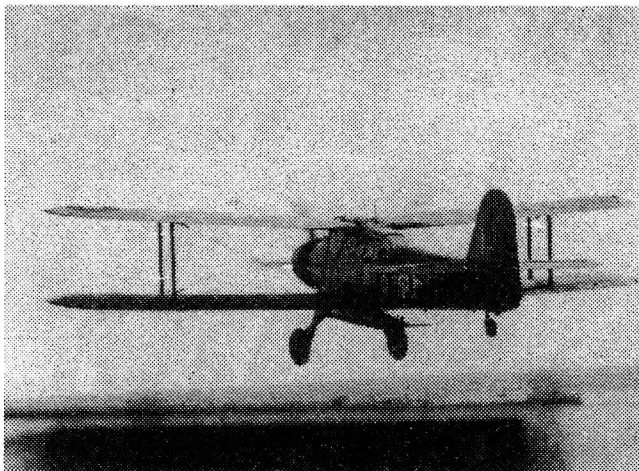
Seafire catapulted off



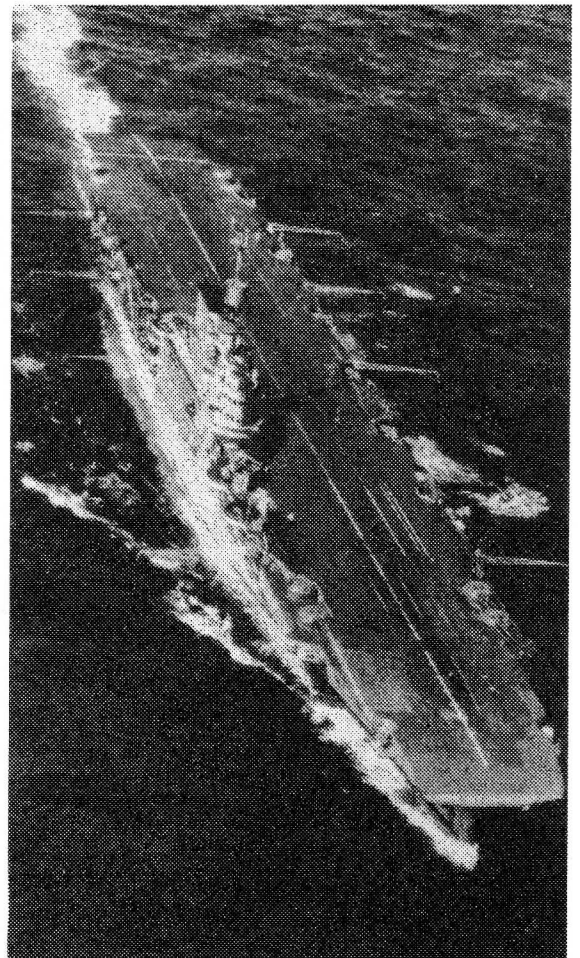
And back home again



November 17 1942, an 820 Sqdn., Albacore torpedoed U331. This U-boat had previously sunk HMS Barham a year earlier



Airborne



Prepare to land on aircraft



Catching the wire

"LONDON COMES TO FORMIDABLE"

XMAS PARTY



John Gielgud Beatrice Lillie
 Edith Evans Elizabeth Welch
 Jeanne de Casalis Phyllis Sturley
 Michael Wilding



What a Team!



COME TO THE WEST END IN THE LIFT WELL
 Doors open 1745. Fun starts 1815.

What a Show!



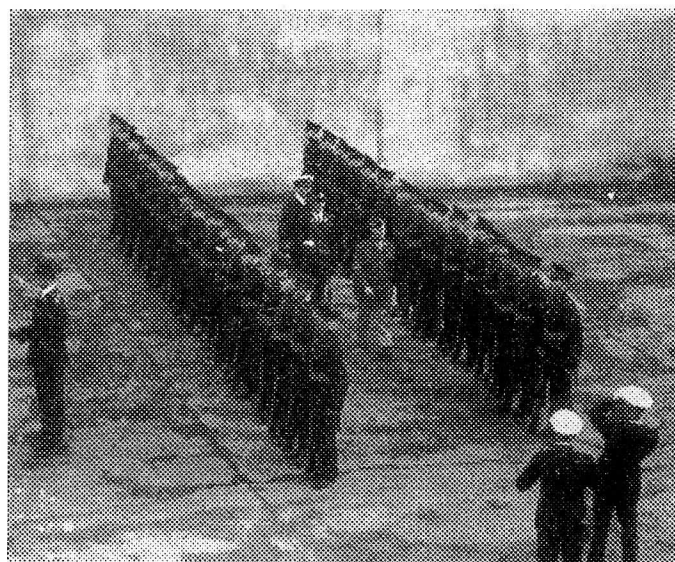
A jeep load of talent

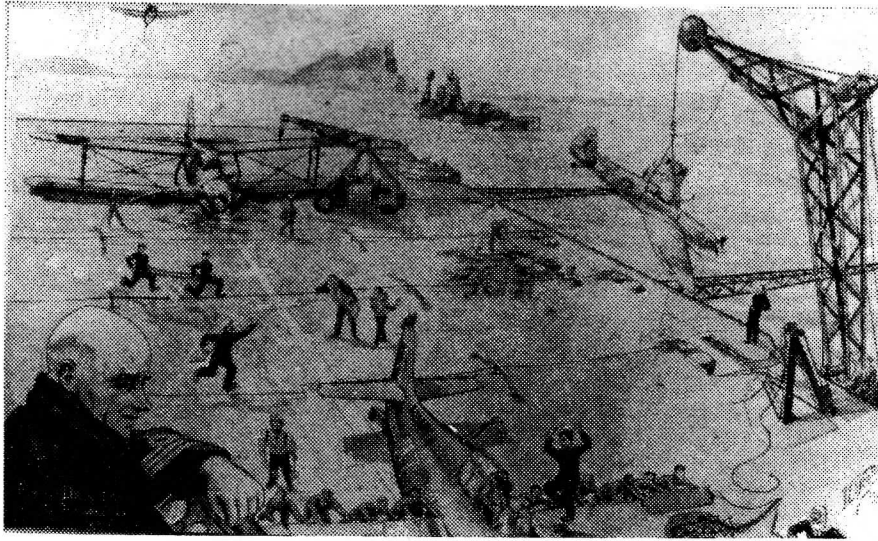


General Fredenhall US Military Governor of Oran, visits Formidable

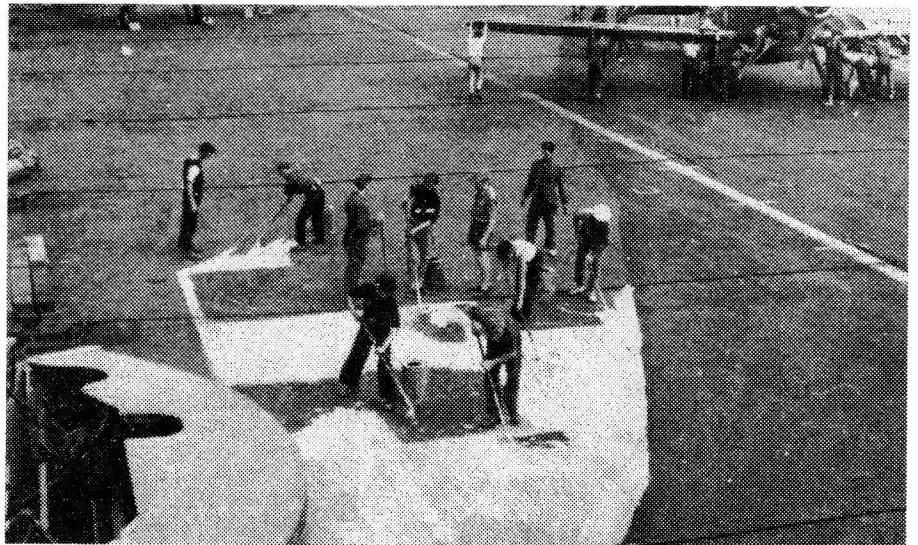


Captain Talbot with the General





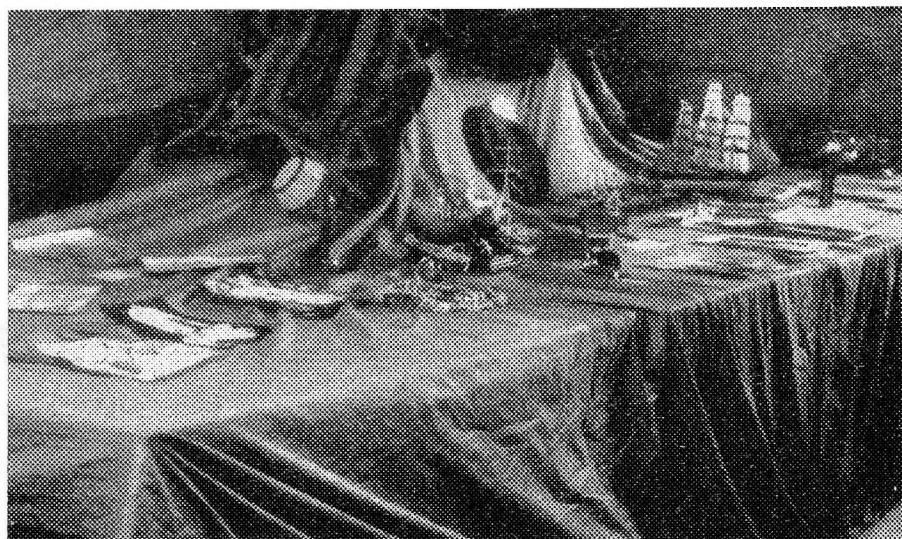
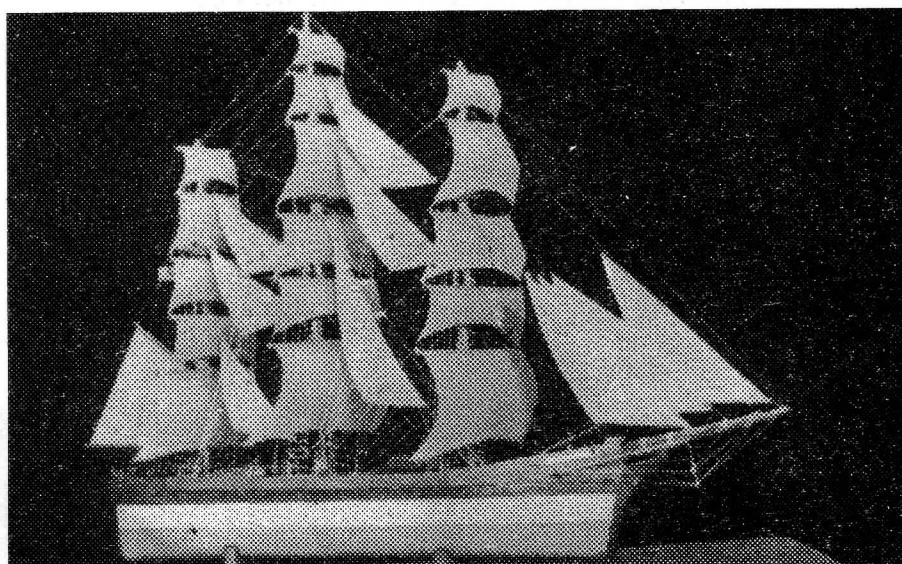
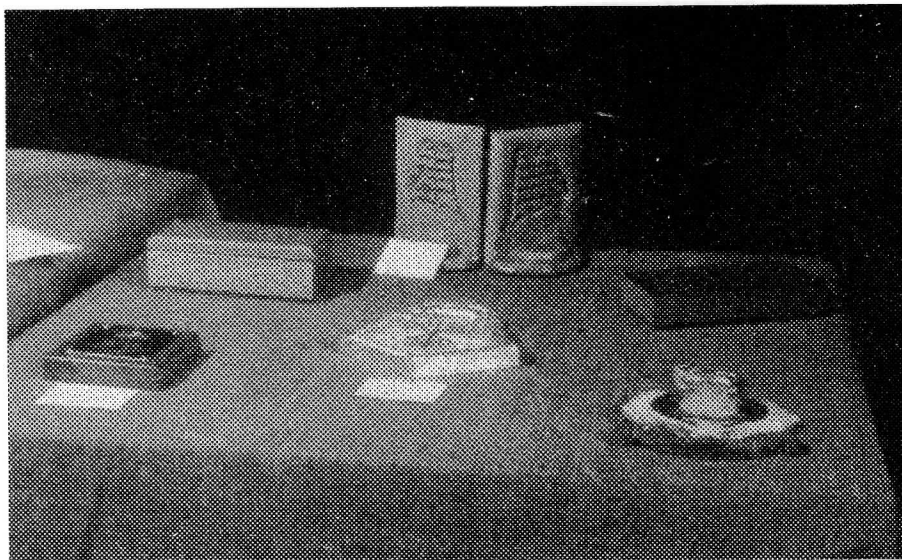
'Flightdeck Fracas' by S/Lt. Scott RNVR, an 888 Squadron Martlet Pilot



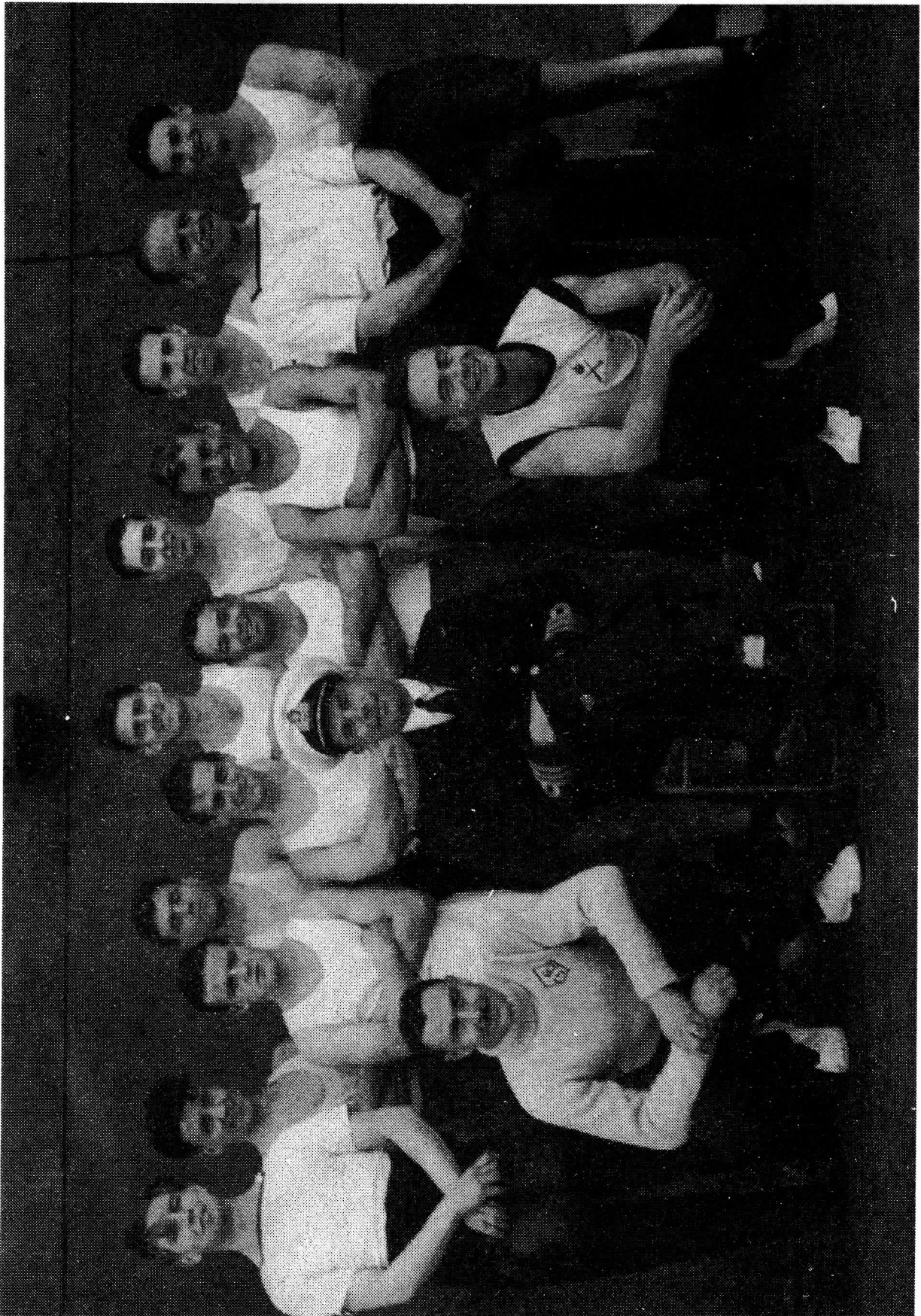
AHP at work



AHP cooling down

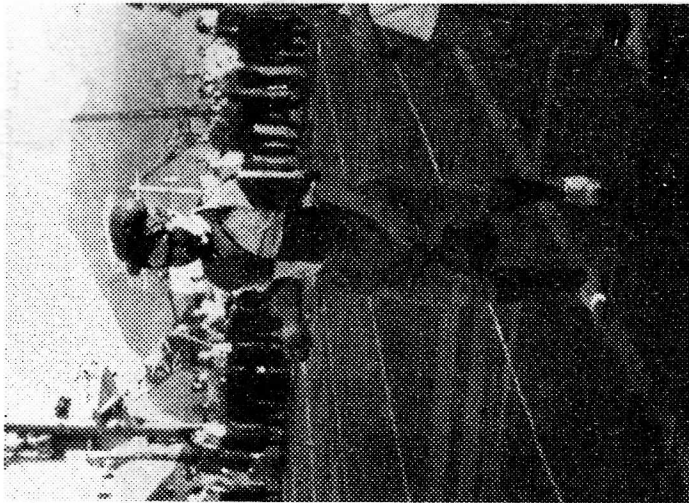


Sailors Hobbies, HMS Formidable 1942 - 1943

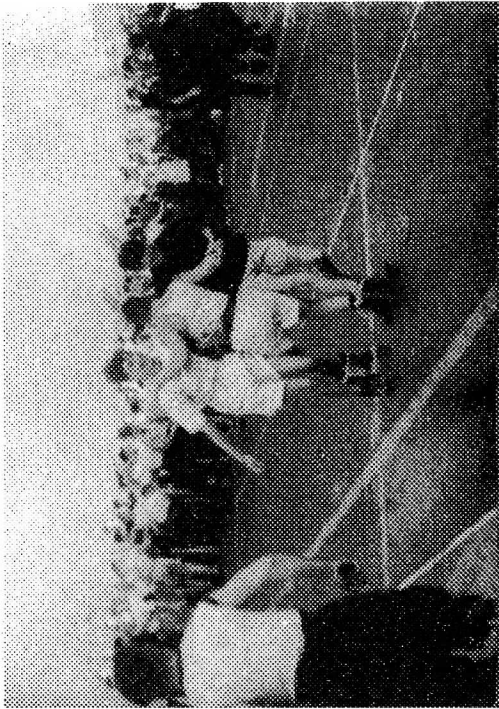


The Formidable Boxing Team with Commander Thistleton-Smith, 1943

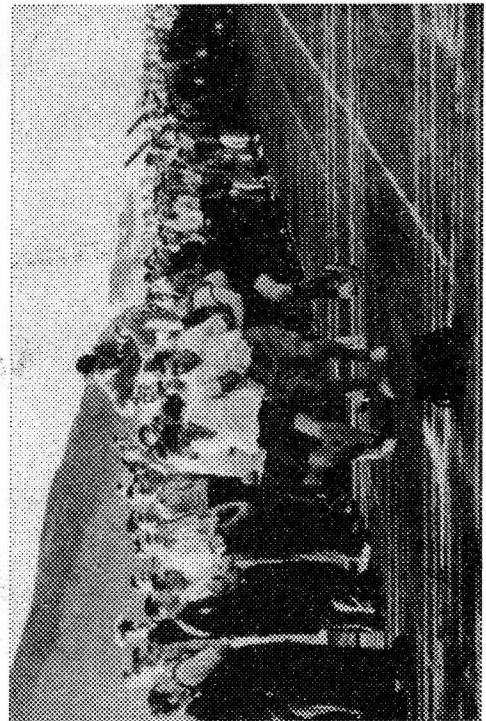
Lt/Cdr. AHP on the ball



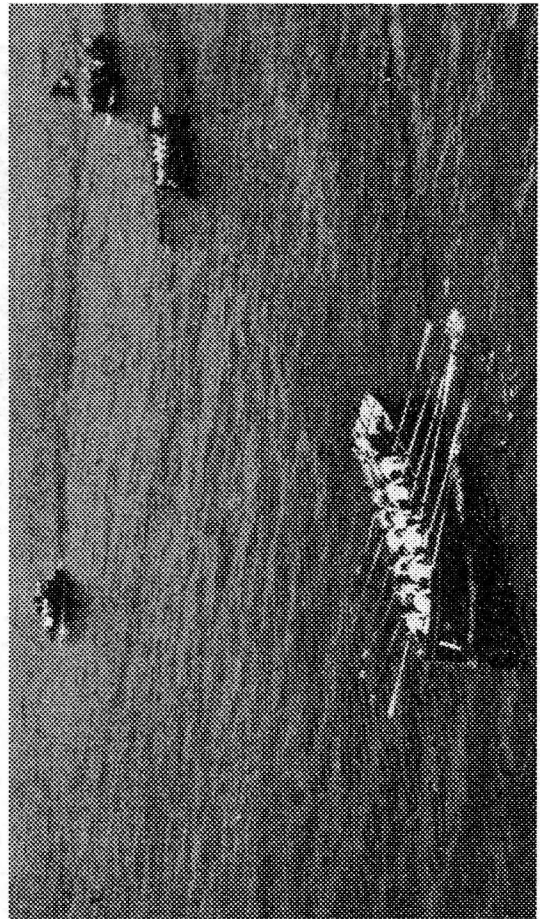
A four legged race

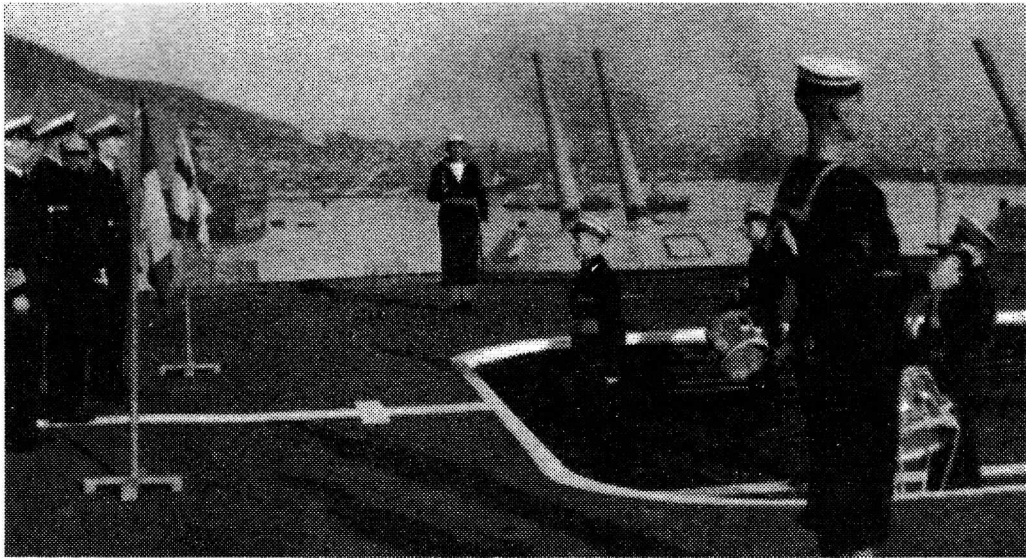


A chariot race



Not the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race

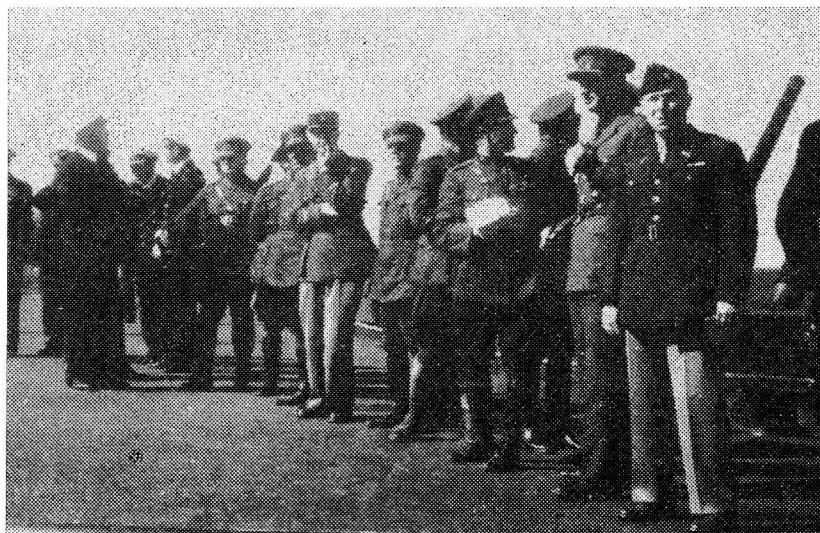




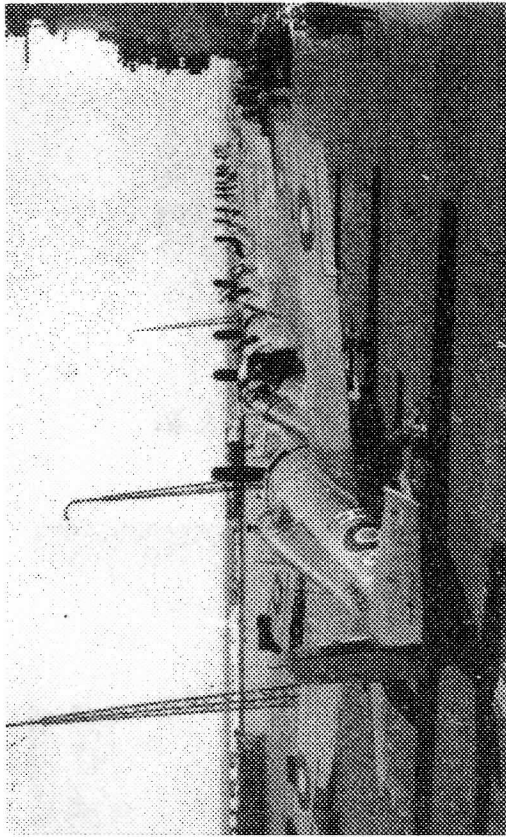
Admiral Cunningham salutes the Royal Marine Band



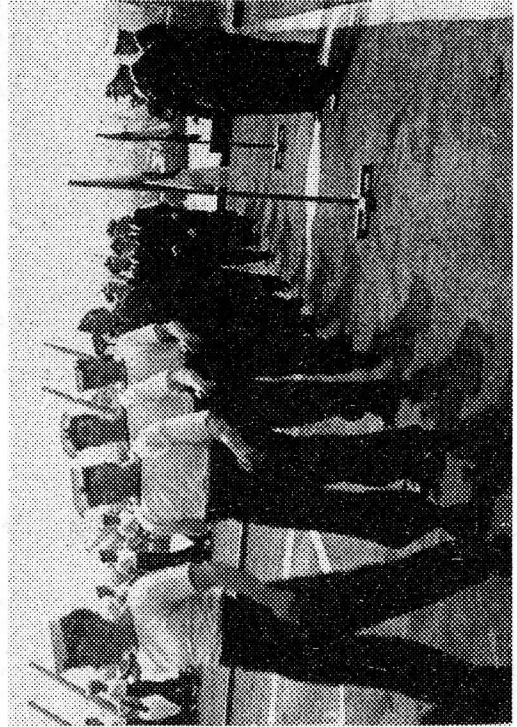
Taking the Salute during a march past, May 1943



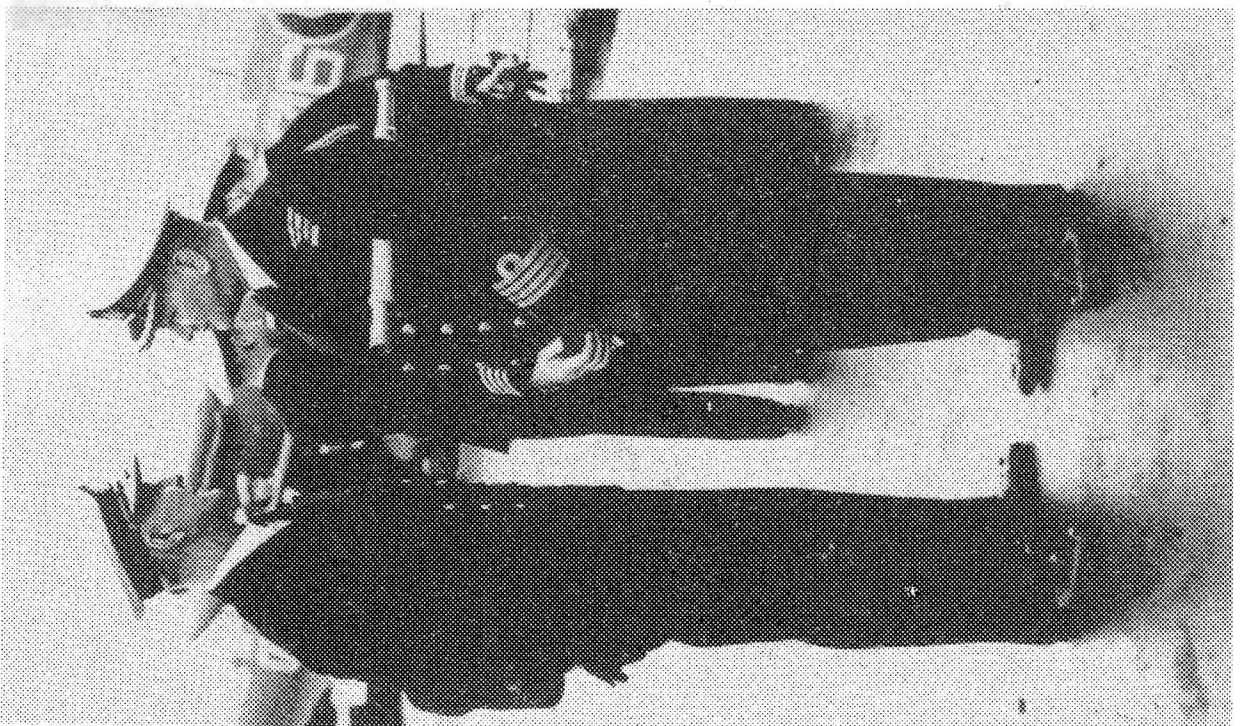
Allied Officers visit Formidable



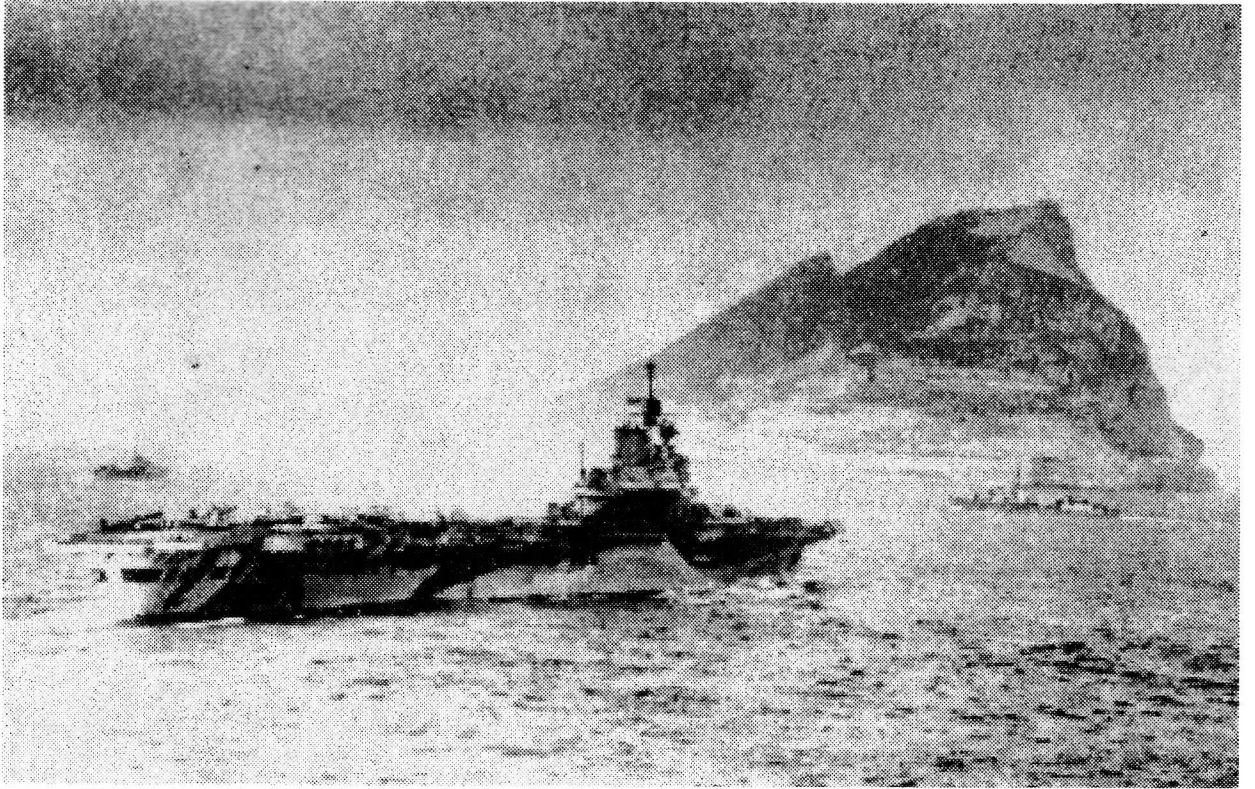
'Putting on the Style', Algiers



AHP march past Admiral Ramsay



The Captain with Admiral Syfret



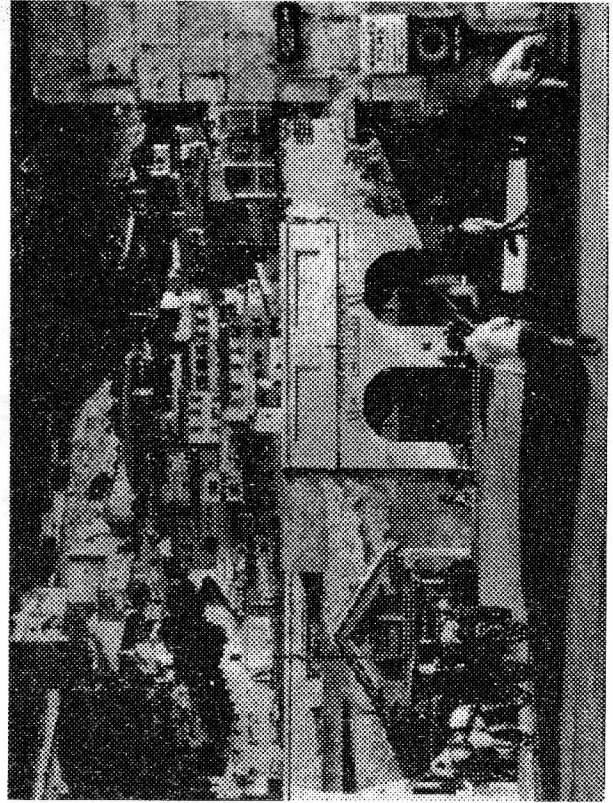
HMS Formidable with destroyer escort, spring 1943



A visit to Algiers



Pipes and Drums of the Black Watch, May 1943



The Water Gate, Gibraltar

HMS FORMIDABLE




SPRING PARTY

BUSH BEMBERT

THE HUNTER at 24000.



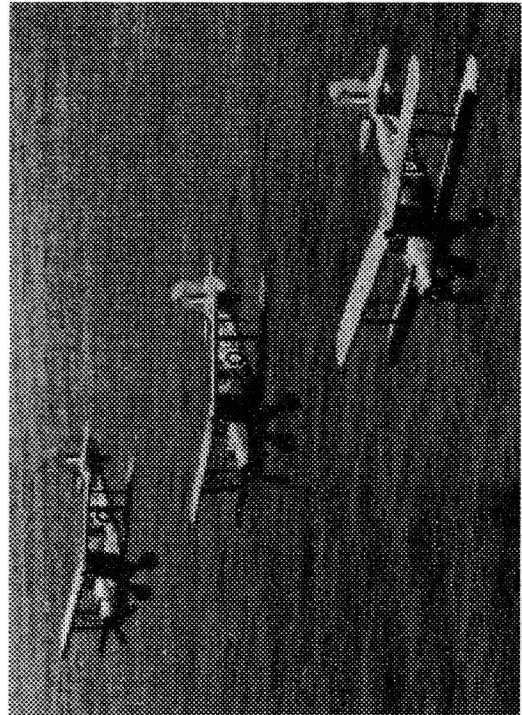
**Boathouse Lillie
Bondage Bickare
Violet Leigh
Kay Young
Mac Craven
Richard Haysby
Nicholas Phipps
Leslie Hensup
and others at the Dance**

To the Springs at young's jumps party

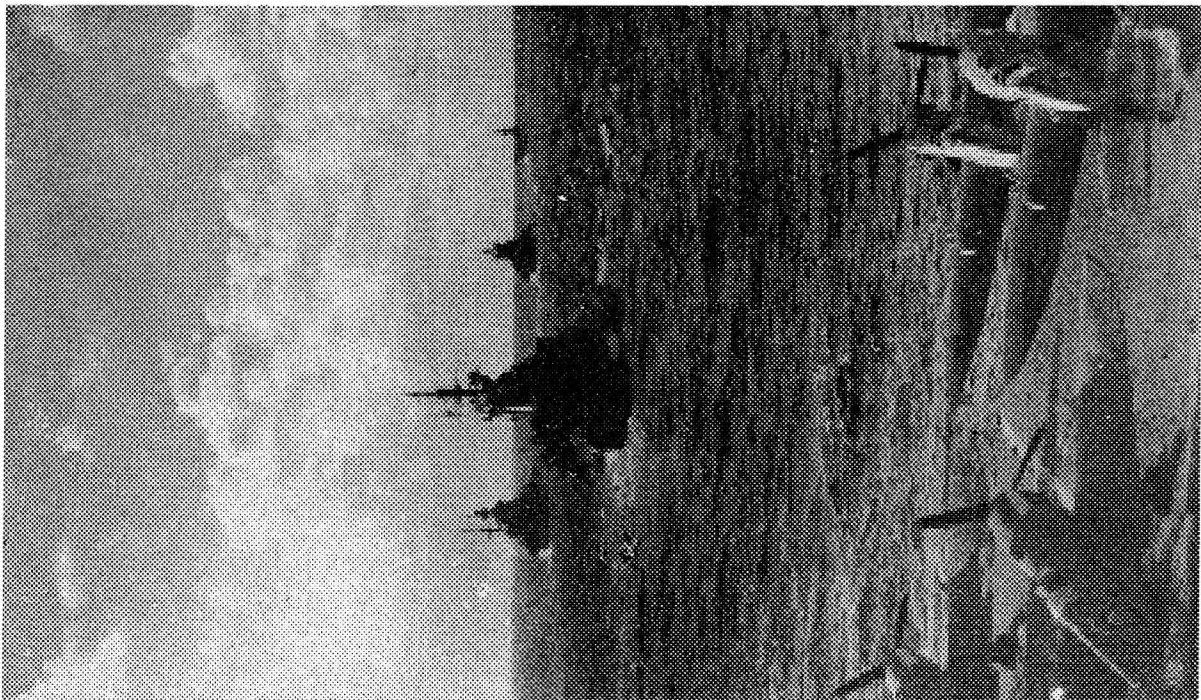
And what a party!!



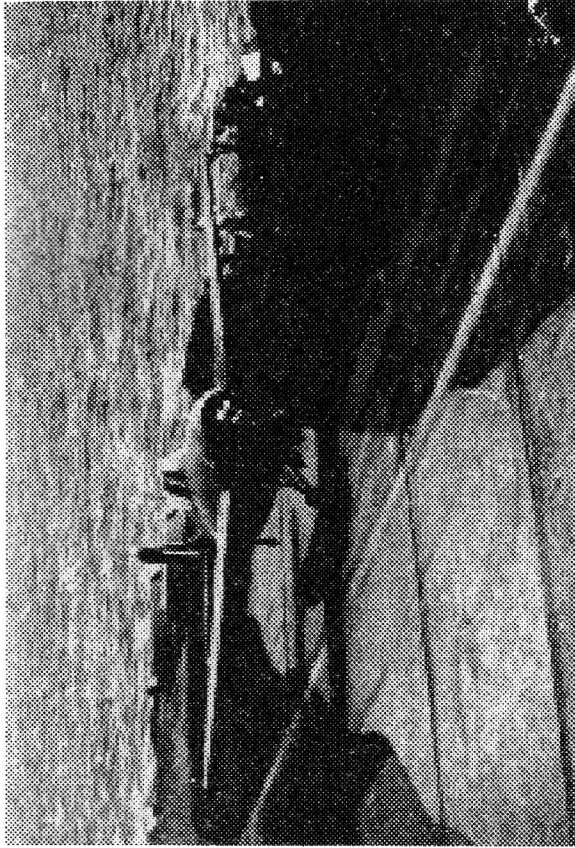
Albacores being armed for Sicily



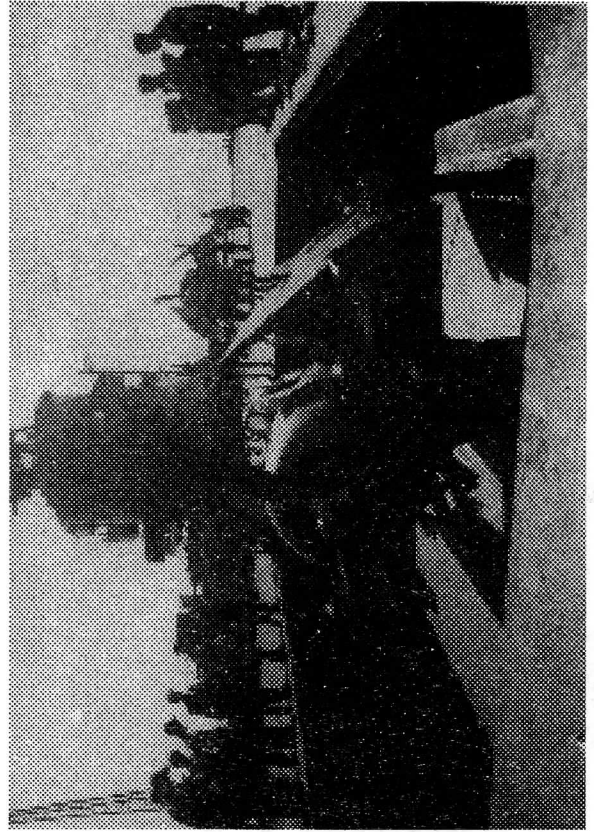
A Formidable flight comes home



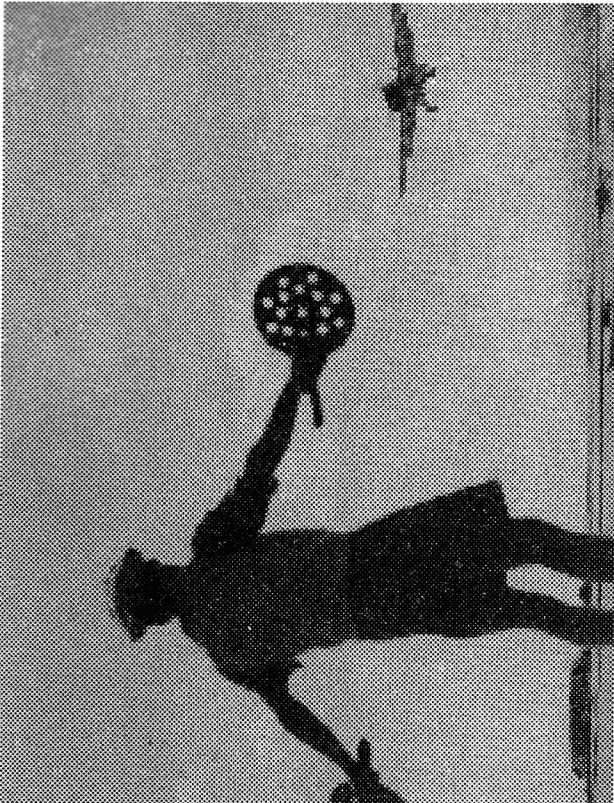
Operation Husky, Force H, July 1943
HMS Indomitable, Nelson, Valiant,
Warspite and Formidable



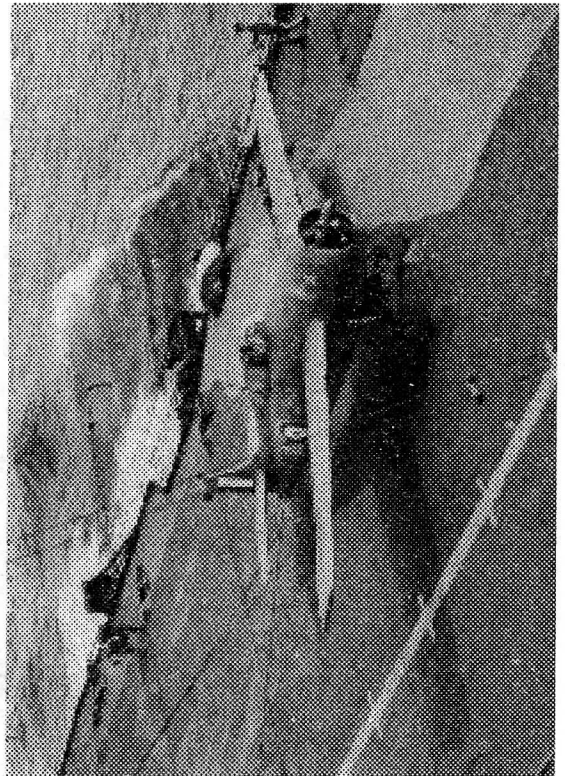
Safely down



Into the hangar



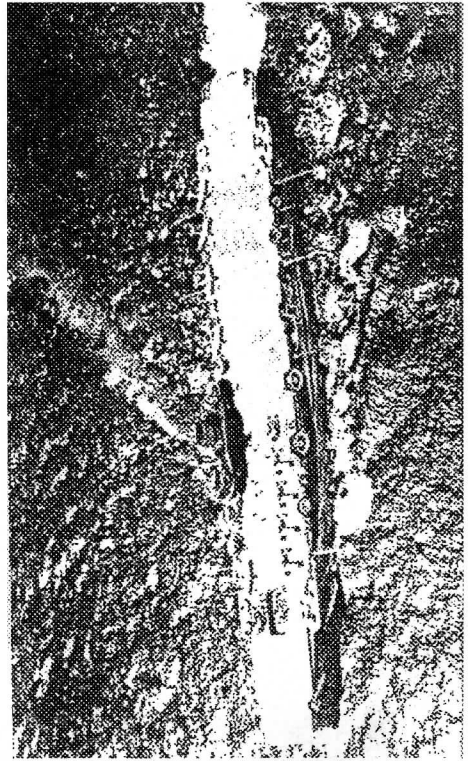
Bats brings in a Martlet



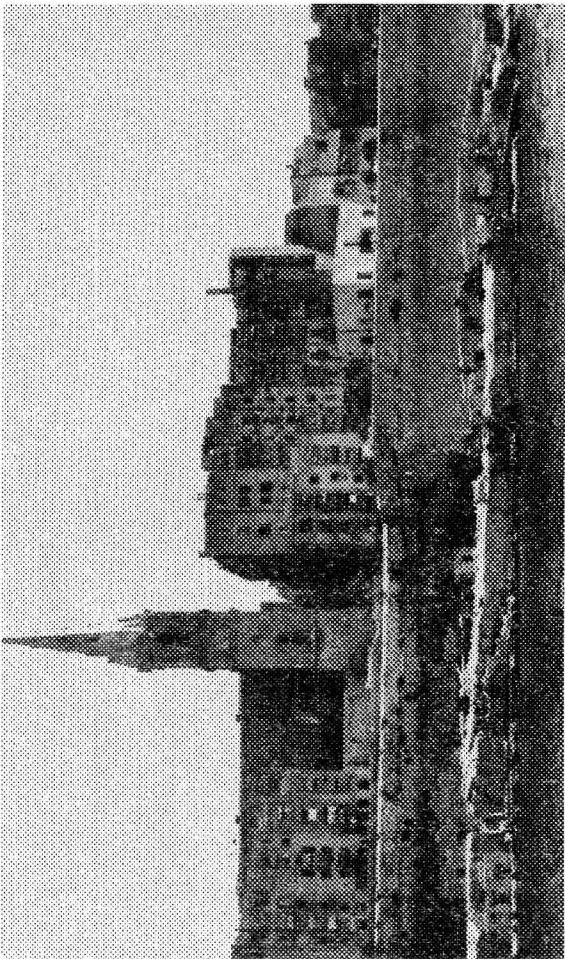
Catching the wire



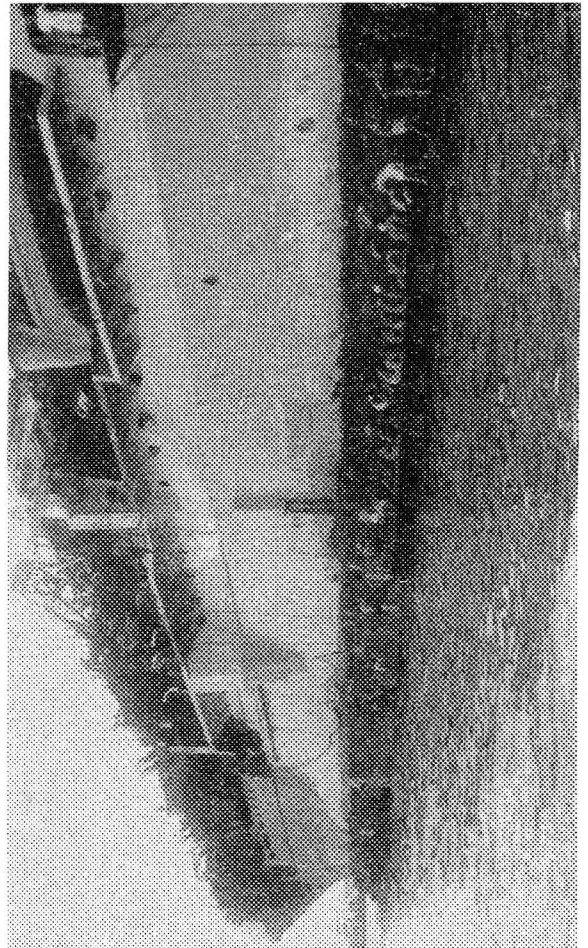
Night air raid on Grand Harbour



Formidable on way to Salerno



Valletta from Sliema



All hands to paint ship

MED STATION (H) C IN C ADMIRALTY.
CONFIDENTIAL

C IN C MED.

I have this day informed the Board of Admiralty that the Italian Fleet now lie at anchor under the guns of the Fortress of Malta, so ending a chapter of the War.

For over three years the Royal and Merchant Navies in close concert with the sister-services have fought the Battle of the Mediterranean so that our object has now been achieved, and the MED is once more fully in our control. The way has been long. We have had our great moments and our bad times when the horizon looked black. During that time except for a short break it has been my privilege and pride to command the main forces at sea in the MED. At this moment when all for which we have worked so long has at length come to pass, I offer every Officer and Man in the Royal and Merchant Navies who has contributed to this achievement my thanks and admiration for the resource and resolution and courage which has made these things possible. In so doing I address my words to those whom it is my honour to command but let us not forget what we owe to the sister services, in particular to the devotion of those in the R.A.F. to whose loyal help we owe so much of what has been achieved.

= 11 1688B



H.M.S. FORMIDABLE.

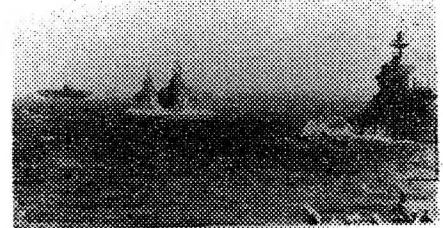
To:-
FORCE "H" in COMPANY

From:-
F.O."H".

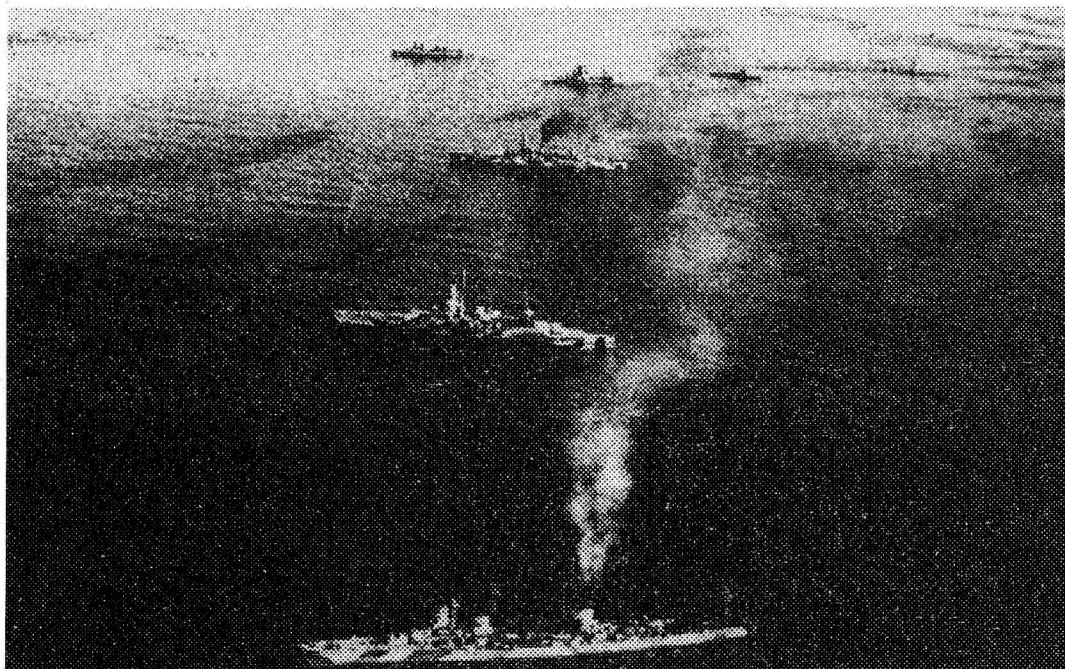
1. We are returning to MALTA having accomplished our objects in the very important operations still in progress near NAPLES.
It has been a strenuous period especially for the AIRCRAFT CARRIERS whose work has been excellent and I wish particularly to commend the Fighter Pilots, Air crew, Deck Landing parties and fighter direction teams on their efforts.
2. The shooting down of 3 aircraft certain and 2 possible on the night 8/9th Sept: was evidently a sharp warning to the Enemy. The beating off of these attacks was due to the good gun discipline of the Fleet, and in particular the accurate shooting of the Destroyers, also RADAR and Air Fighting teams.
3. I wish also to express my appreciation of the ENGINE ROOM technical departments of all Ships whose lot under present circumstances is arduous.
4. The communication department have done excellent work and services without which the co-ordination of operations and the rapid manoeuvring of the Fleet would not have been possible.
5. With the ITALIAN FLEET in the Med, FORCE "H" their long standing opponents, may well feel proud.

41348.

13/9/43.



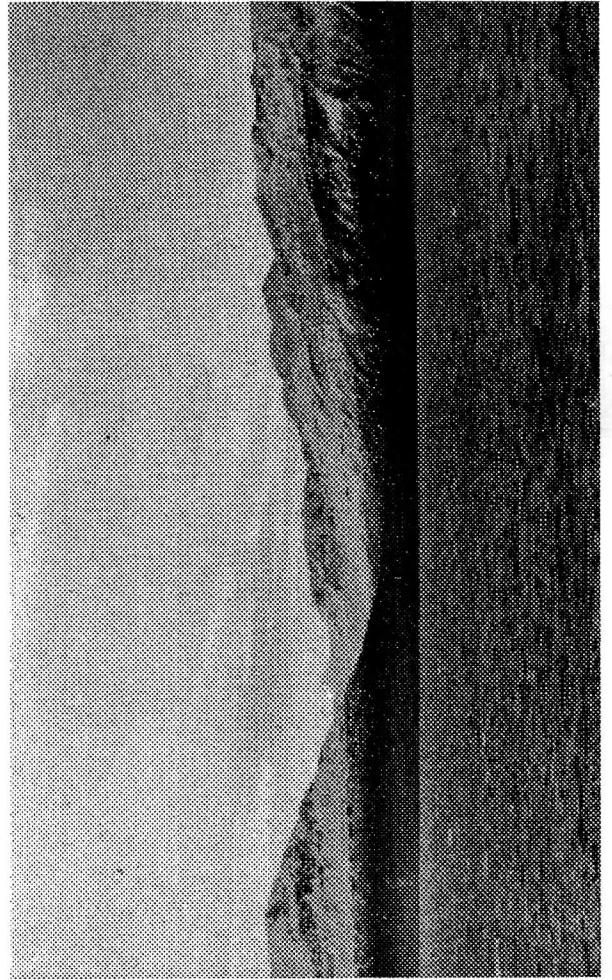
Signals from C in C Med. and F.O."H".



The surrendered Italian Fleet lying off the Grand Harbour, September 1943

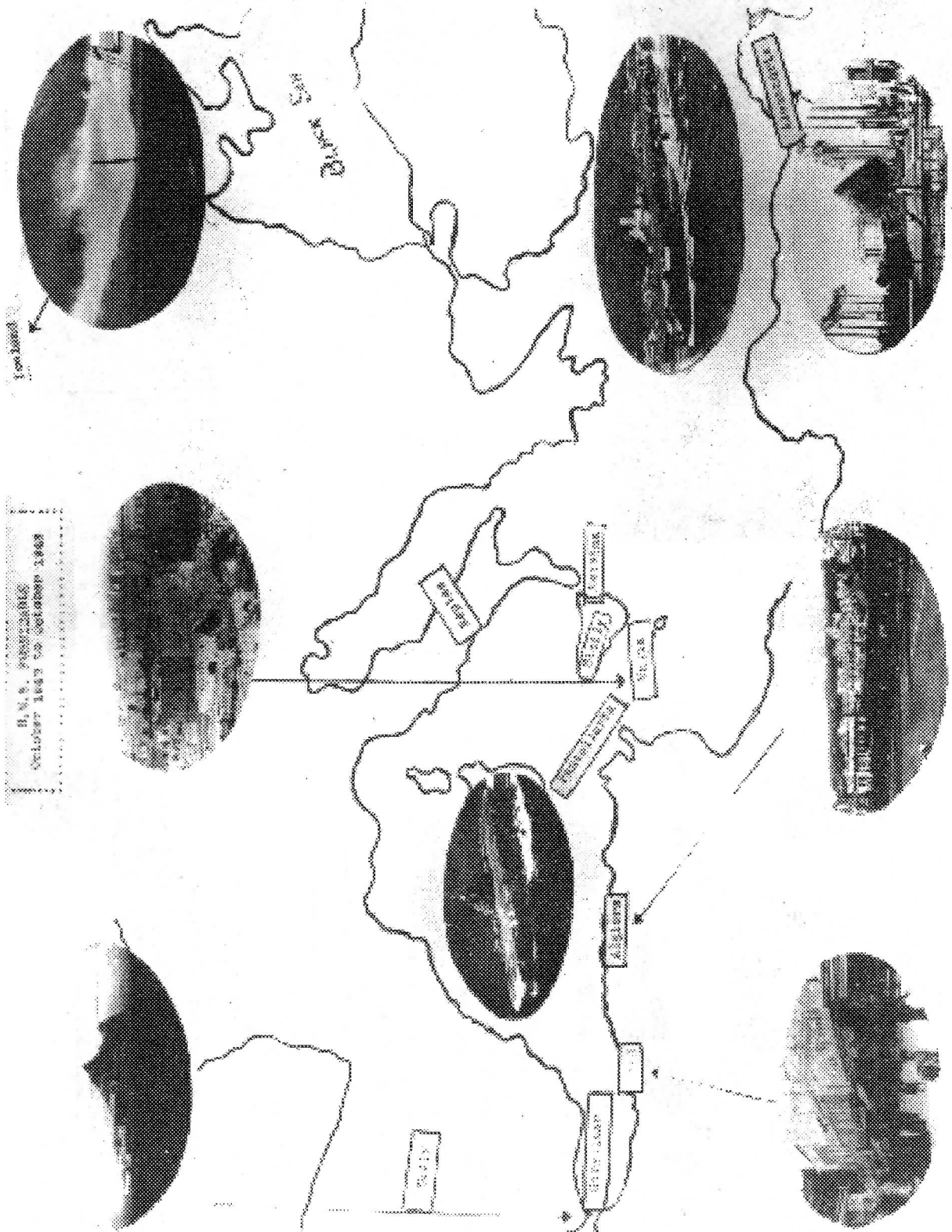


In Atlantic waters

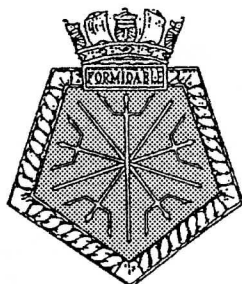


Approaching Akureynri, Iceland, October 1943





The end of the first commission



PART THREE

November 1943 - February 1945

Belfast

Operation Mascot

Operation Goodwood

Gibraltar

Alexandria

Suez Canal

Bombay

Ceylon

Crossing the Line

HOME FLEETS ATTACKS ON TIRPITZ.

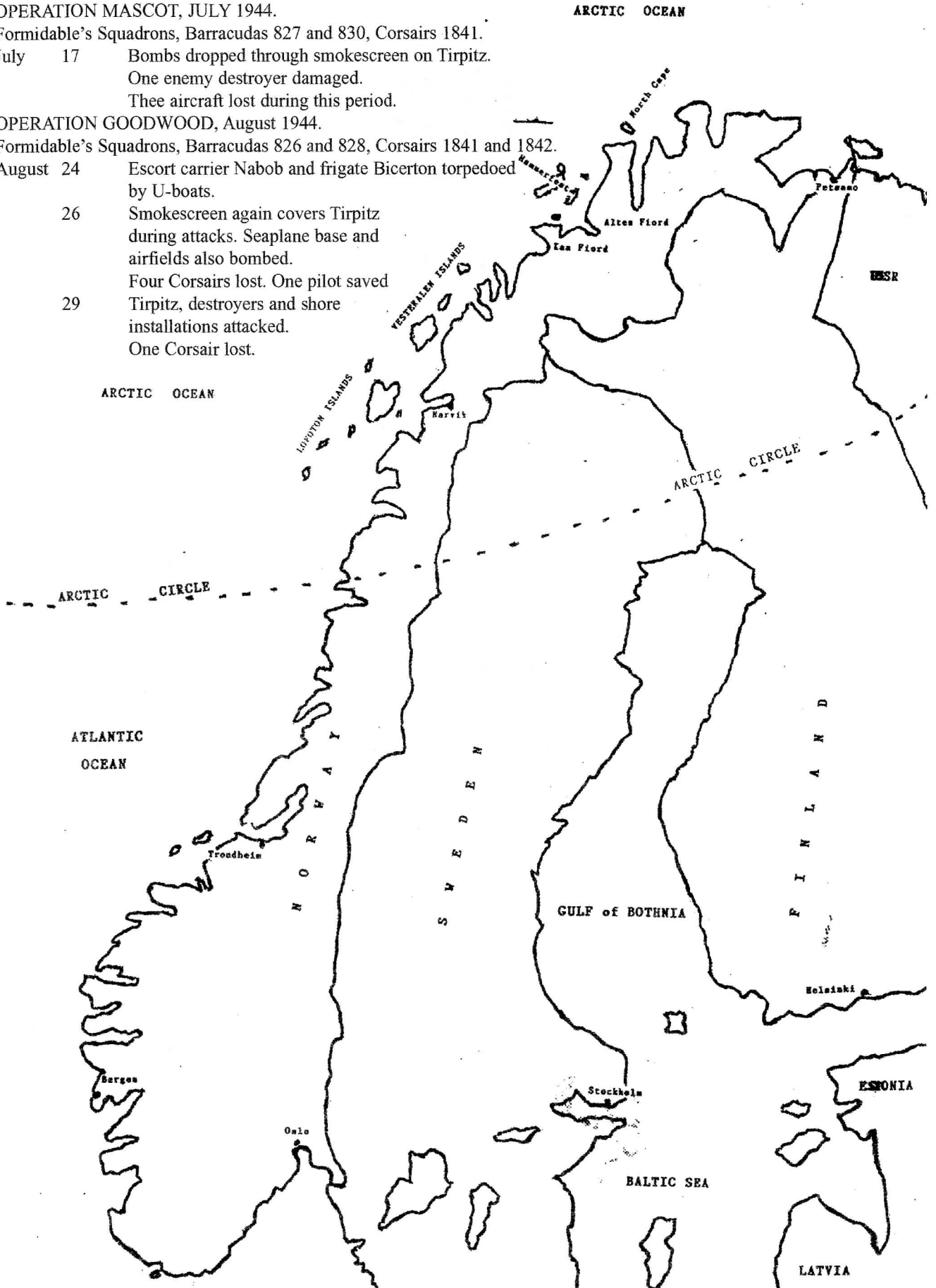
OPERATION MASCOT, JULY 1944.

Formidable's Squadrons, Barracudas 827 and 830, Corsairs 1841.
 July 17 Bombs dropped through smokescreen on Tirpitz.
 One enemy destroyer damaged.
 Three aircraft lost during this period.

OPERATION GOODWOOD, August 1944.

Formidable's Squadrons, Barracudas 826 and 828, Corsairs 1841 and 1842.

August 24 Escort carrier Nabob and frigate Bicerton torpedoed by U-boats.
 26 Smokescreen again covers Tirpitz during attacks. Seaplane base and airfields also bombed.
 Four Corsairs lost. One pilot saved
 29 Tirpitz, destroyers and shore installations attacked.
 One Corsair lost.



continued from page 23

Belfast in November 1943 had an undercurrent of unrest. Some parts of could be down-right dodgy for service people. No sooner than the ship had docked I was detailed to be one of a landing party armed with Sterlings, an upmarket Sten gun. Fortunately we were never called upon.

Things generally come home to roost and so it was with matelots swinging the lamp about the Casbah in Oran and Algiers, Sister Street in Alex or the Gut in Valletta. A particular Lady (who shall remain nameless) demanded in Parliament that sailors home from the Middle East should be forced to wear yellow armbands as a warning to the 'Flower of England'. About the same time a very senior cleric claimed that one in four women from 16 to 25 had sexual relations outwith marriage. I have never been sure whether I was lucky or not. I always seemed to date the other three.

With the ship being torn apart and rebuilt the messdecks were cold and damp and used mainly as a place to sling your hammock. Eventually a dockyard canteen was taken over for our meals and I spent a month helping to serve 1,200 meals a day in a much warmer atmosphere. Whilst there may have been a bit of unrest and more people on average in the rattle I believe it was of sheer boredom and poor living conditions. Any talk of a possible mutiny was grossly exaggerated. I do remember at the beginning of the Second Commission that a large number from one watch failed to return from leave. It should also be remembered that some of those men had lost families and homes in air raids.

After our new squadrons 827 and 830 Barracudas and 1841 Corsairs had flown on, the Formidable undertook Operations Mascot and Goodwood in July and August 1944 against the Tirpitz with the Home Fleet including HMS Duke of York and Indefatigable. For Goodwood the Barracuda sqdns were 826 and 828. The Corsair squadron 1842 also joined the Formidable. Our new aircraft were much heavier and the strikes were larger than previously flown from the Formidable. It was a case of 'Call out the Marines'. With great vigour the Royals helped out the Handling Parties over the next two months. We were truly in 'The Land of the Midnight Sun' as we 'spotted' our planes on deck at lam ready to be armed and fuelled for a dawn strike. At one period during Goodwood the fleet were sailing in a thick fog with visibility about the length of our flight deck when the 10,000 ton cruiser, Berwick, appeared on our starboard side. A collision seemed imminent. The incident passed after a few well chosen words.

Setting out for the Pacific on September 16 1944 the Formidable had engine trouble at Gibraltar. Again! We were delayed there until January 16 1945. There was plenty to do at Gib. Organised runs over the Rock, swimming at Catalan Bay, a hangar dance with 2,000 sailors and 80 wrens or nurses. Talk about changing partners. The officers put on a show and I managed to arrange two flights. The first in an Avenger, a real sight seeing trip. Avengers had replaced the Barracuda squadrons. The other flight was in a Boston, a bit hair-raising, 14 passengers clinging on for dear life as the pilot practised dive-bombing a submarine. I also managed to get a trip in a destroyer to Casablanca to help bring back refugees evacuated in 1940.

On leaving Gib the Formidable sailed to Alex, through the Suez Canal into the Red Sea and on to Aden and Ceylon where we stayed about three weeks. From there we 'Crossed the Line'. Further south the ship went to action stations and our 4.5 guns tried to shoot down Venus thinking it was an enemy aircraft.

continued on page 63



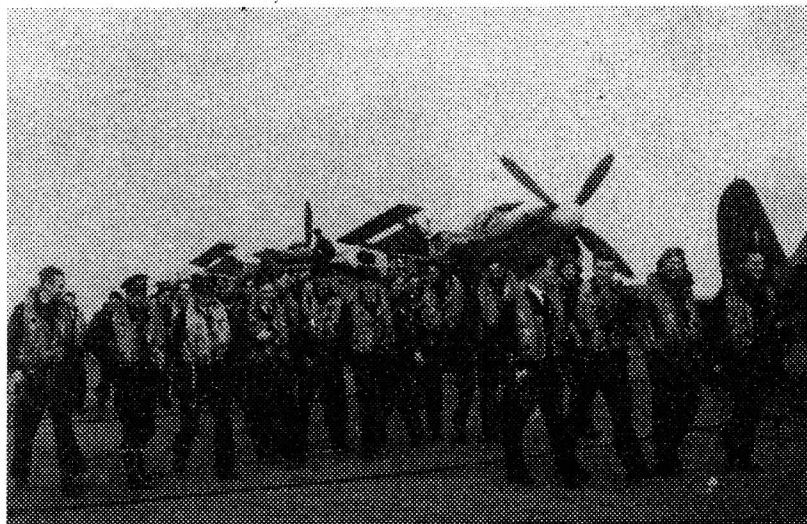
Formidable's Sailors and Marines in Belfast on Red Army Day 1944



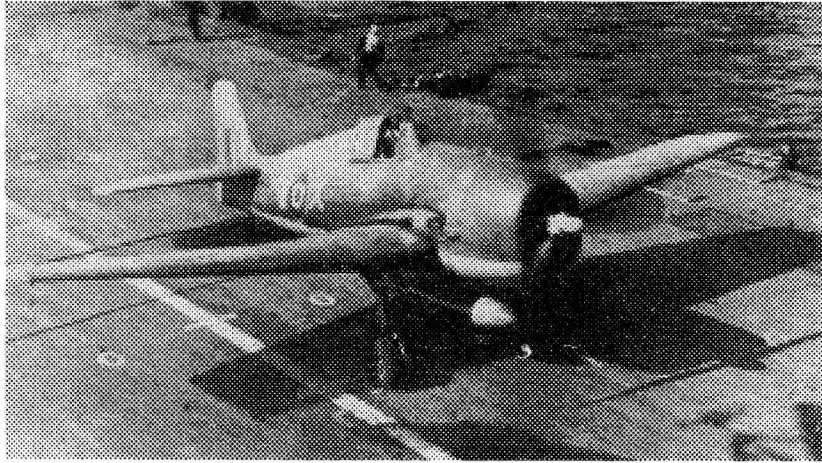
Pilots, 1841 Corsair Squadron, July 1944



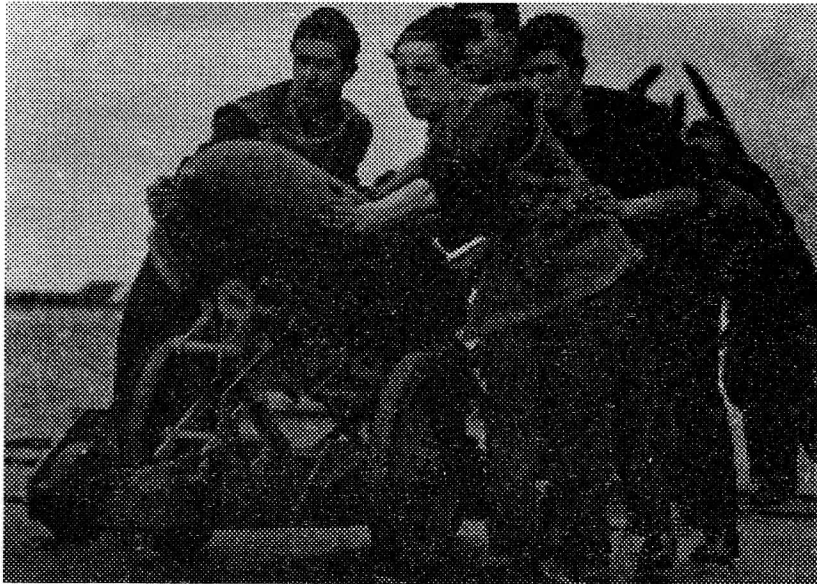
Ground crews, 827 & 830 Barracuda Squadrons, July 1944



Aircrews, 826 & 828 Barracuda Squadrons, August 1944



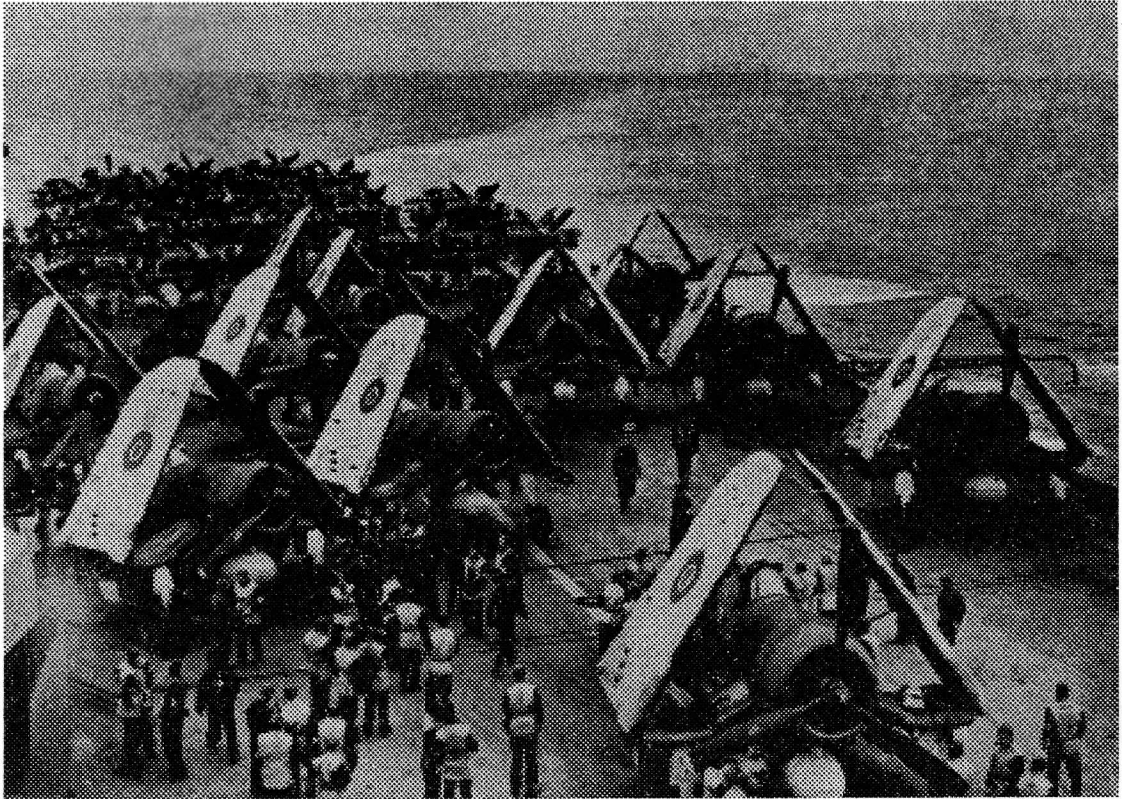
Hellcat, 1840 Squadron, taxiing up the deck



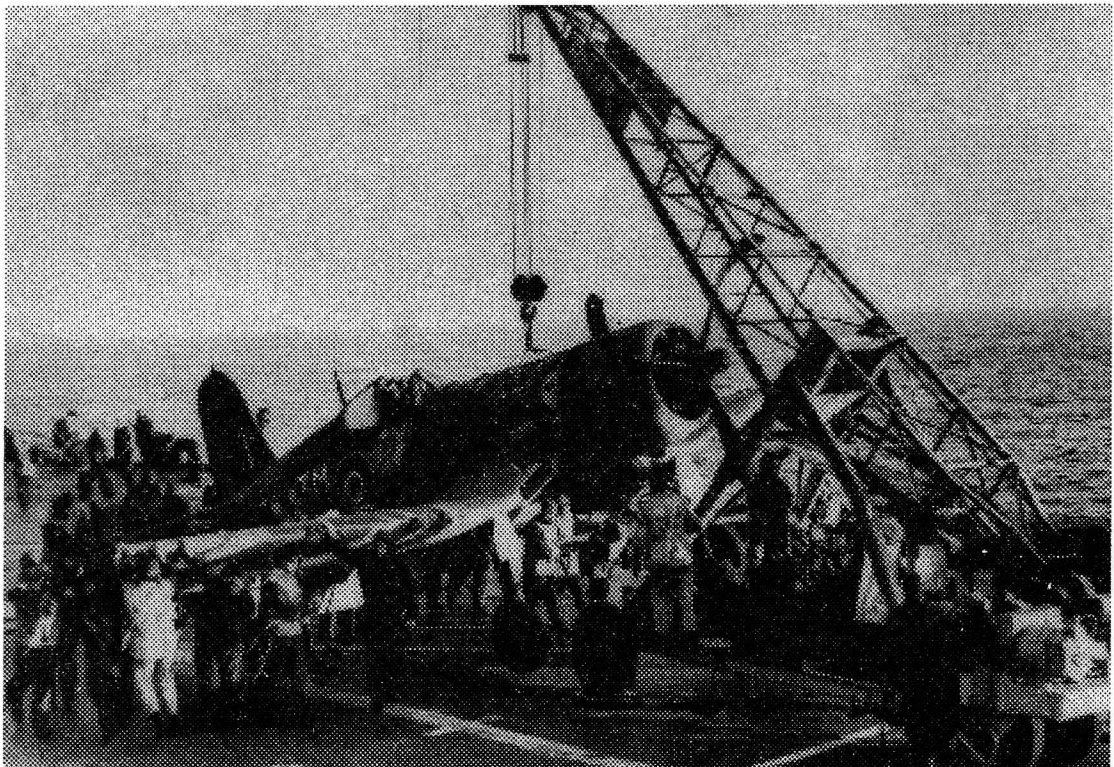
More bombs for the Tirpitz, July 1944



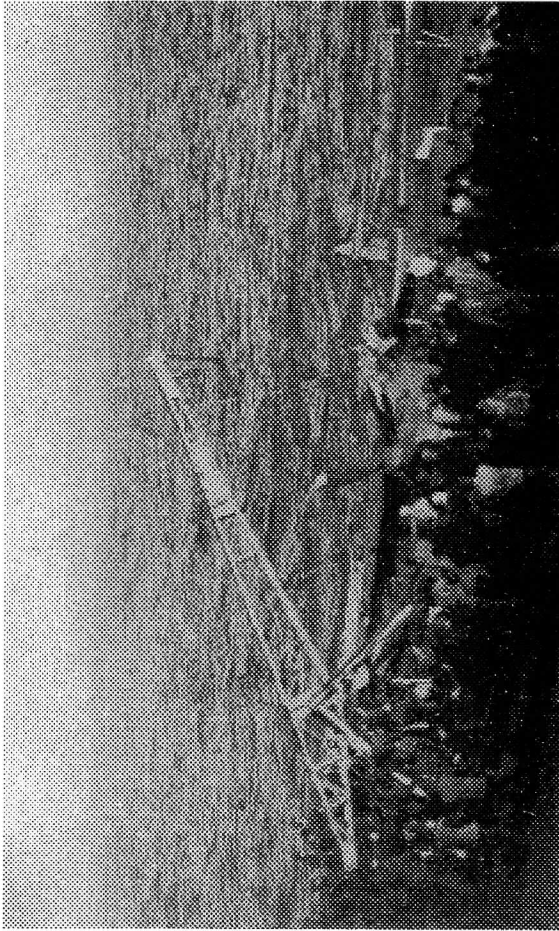
Barracuda gets bomb load



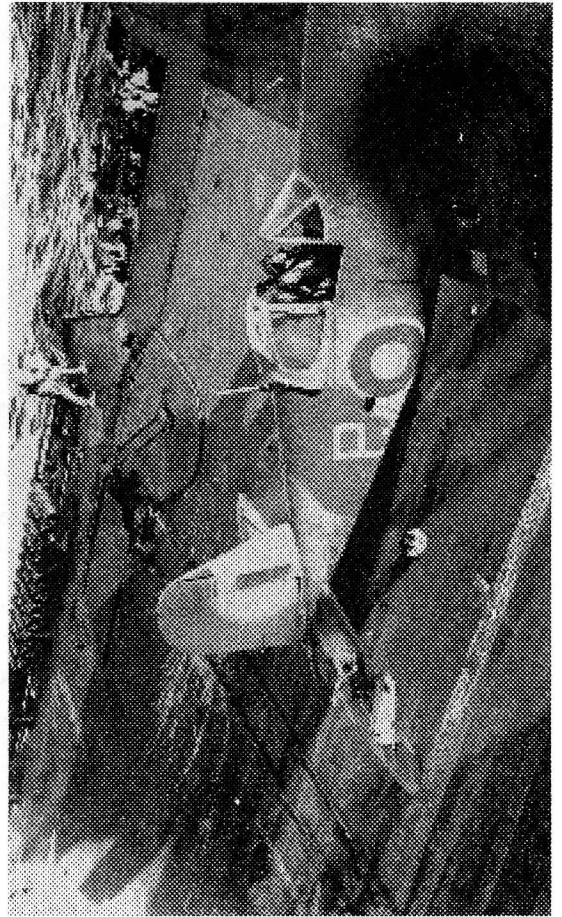
A Formidable Strike Force, Operation Mascot



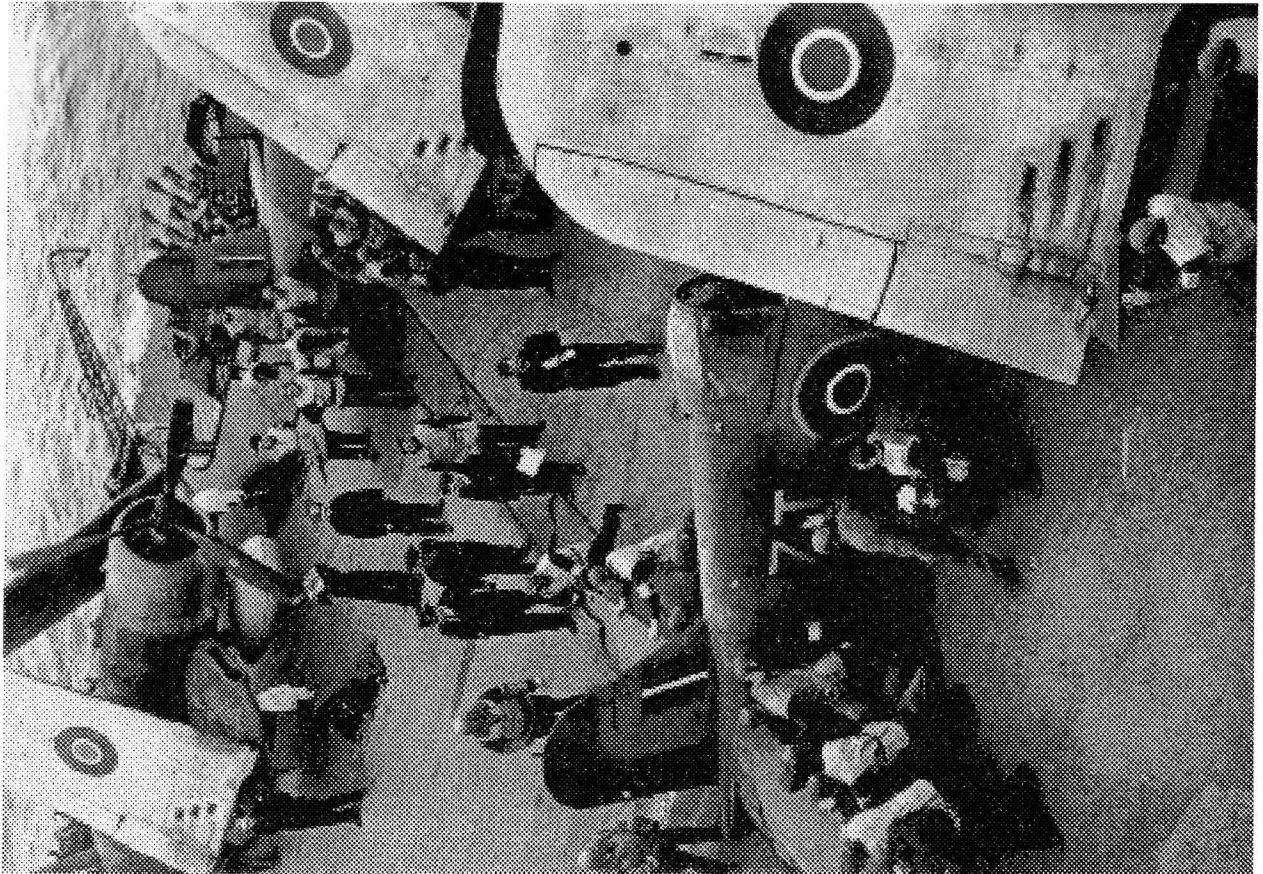
Corsair comes to grief



Crashed Barracuda being dumped

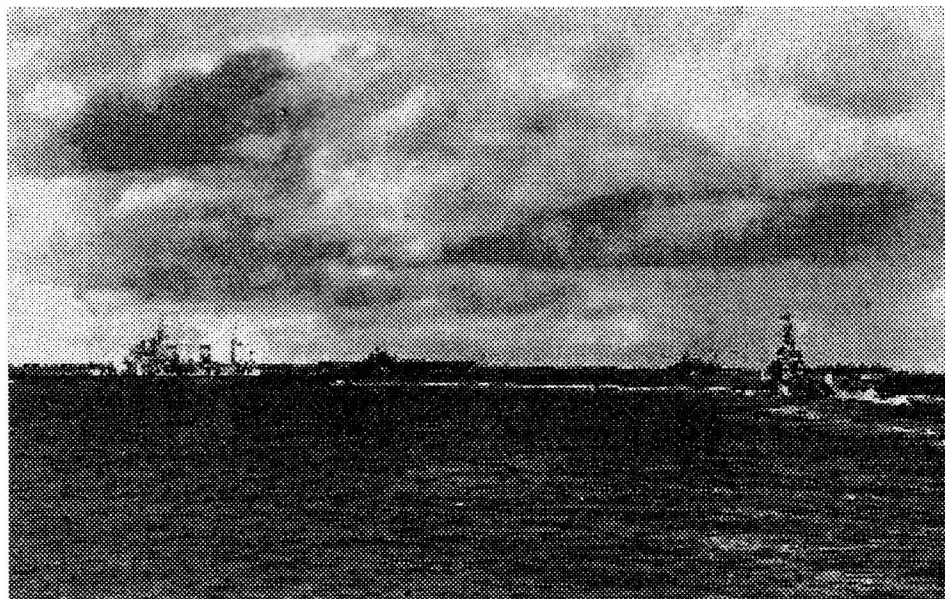


Flak damaged

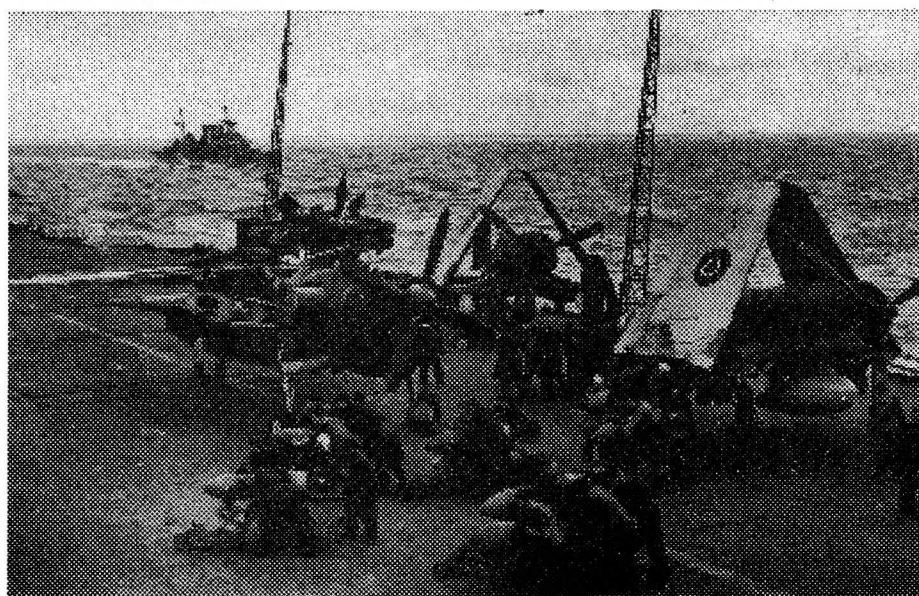
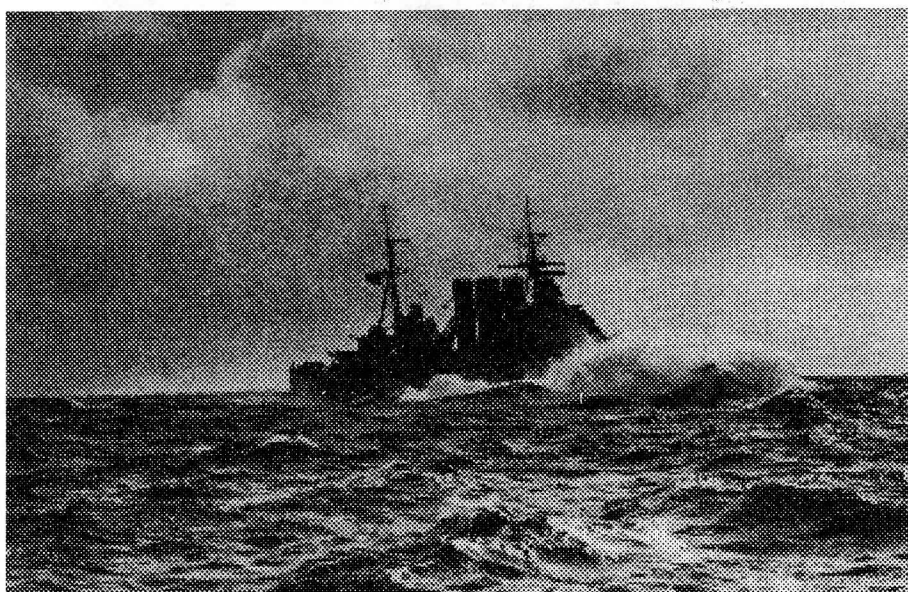


Marines help 'spot' aircraft

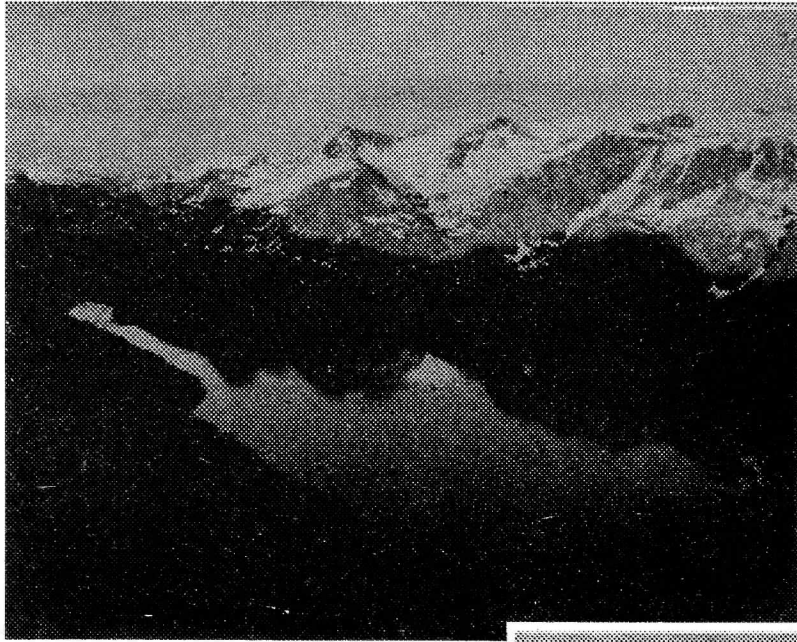
Duke of York, Formidable,
Berwick and Indefatigable
Operation Goodwood,
August 1944



The Berwick in heavy seas

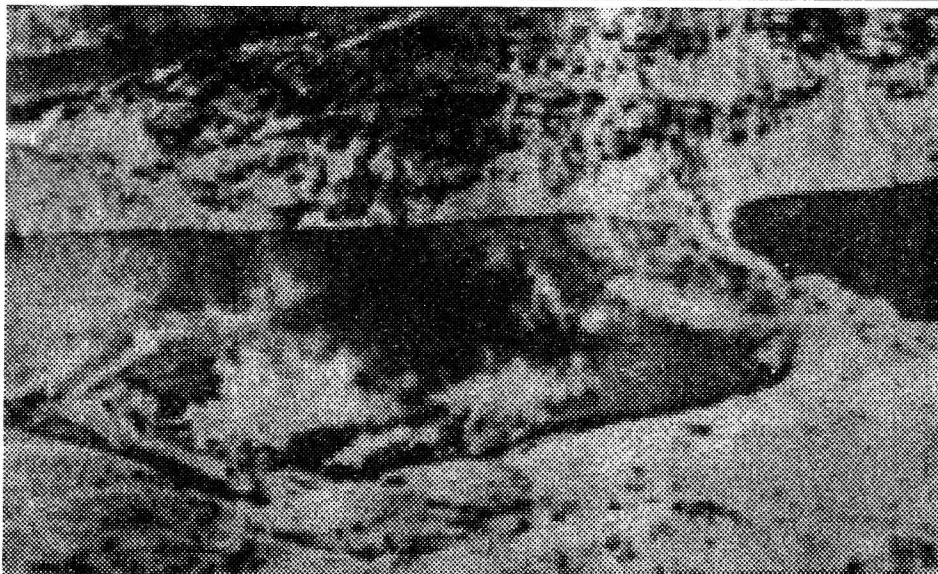
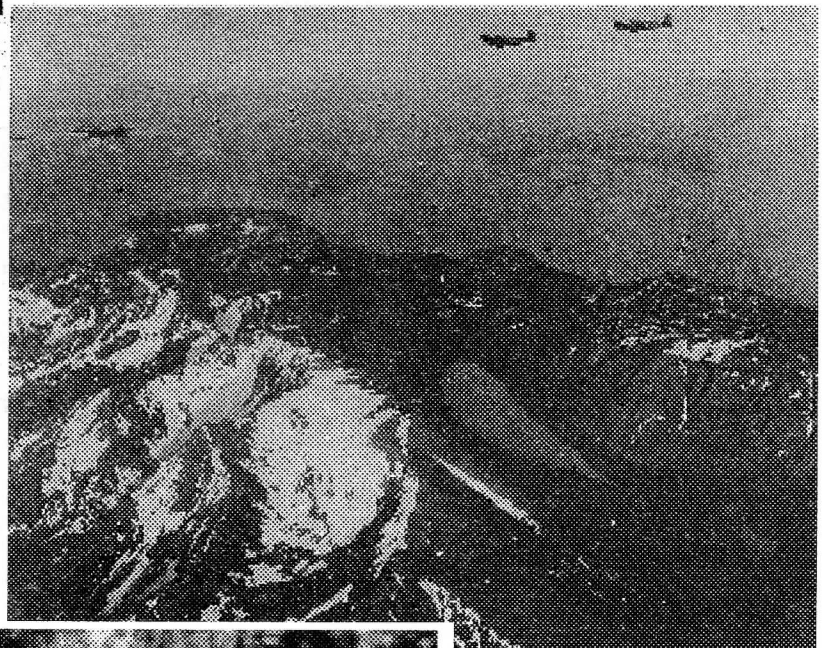


Preparing strike for
Operation Goodwood

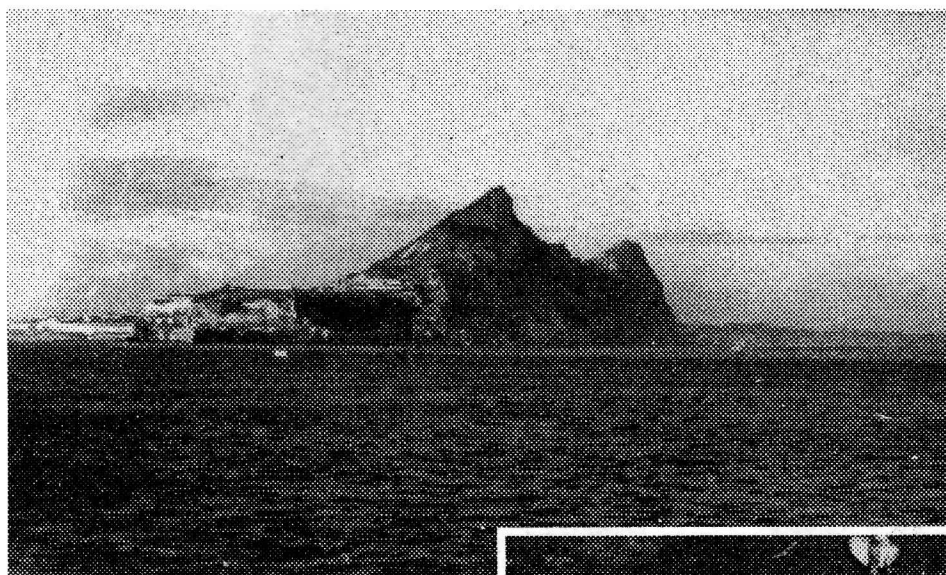


Lang Fiord, Norway,
August 1944

Barracudas over Alten Fiord

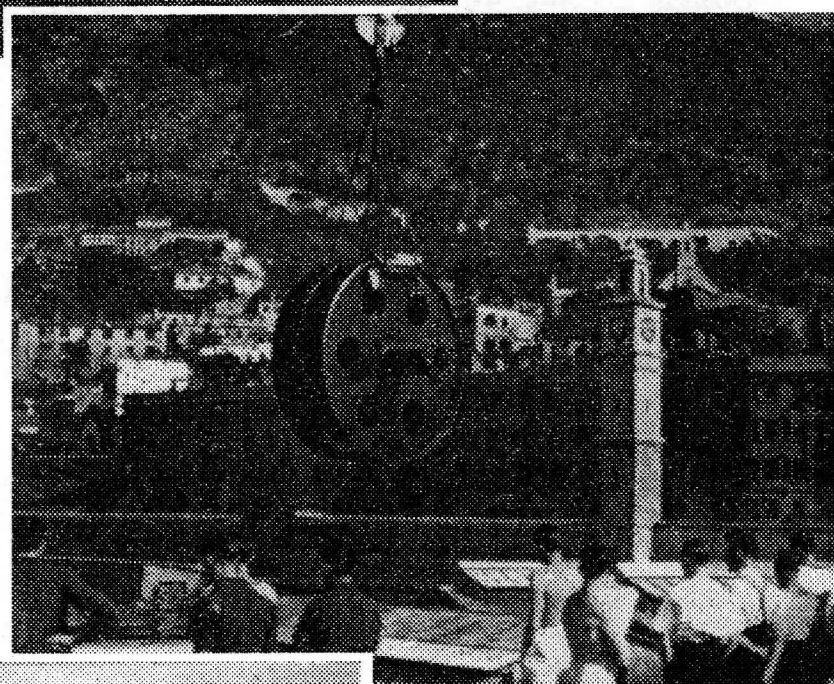


Tirpitz disappears under a
smoke-screen

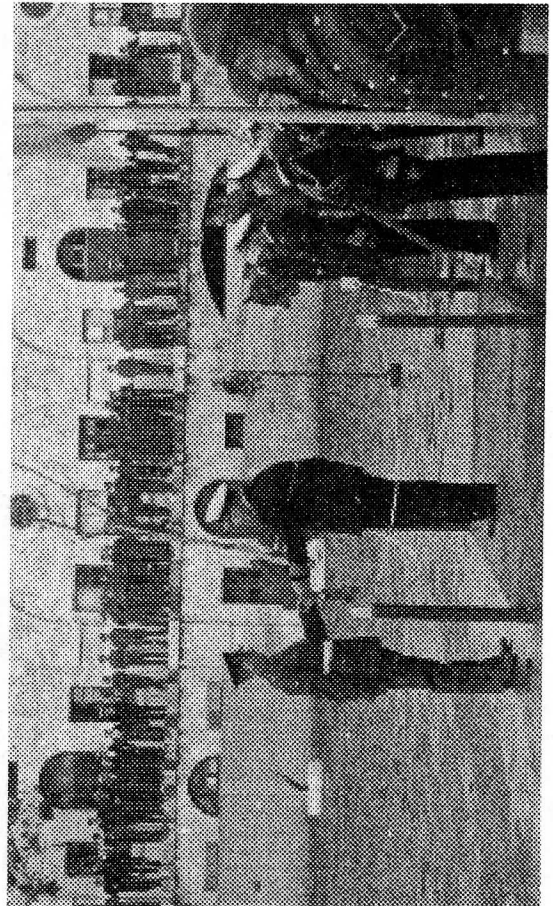
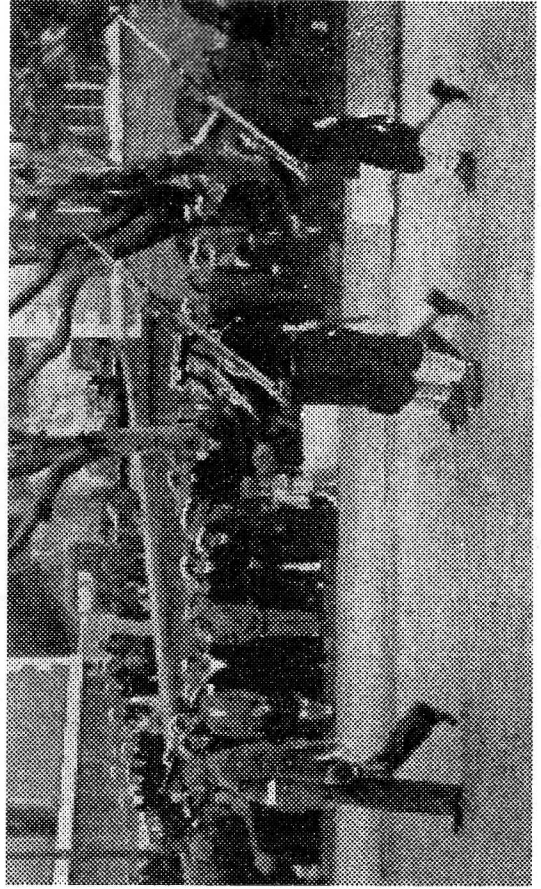
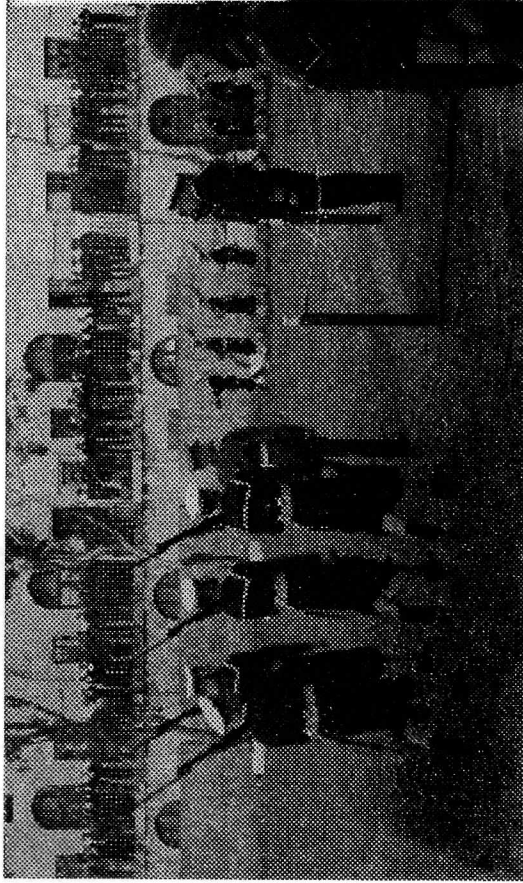


Gibraltar from the
Mediterranean

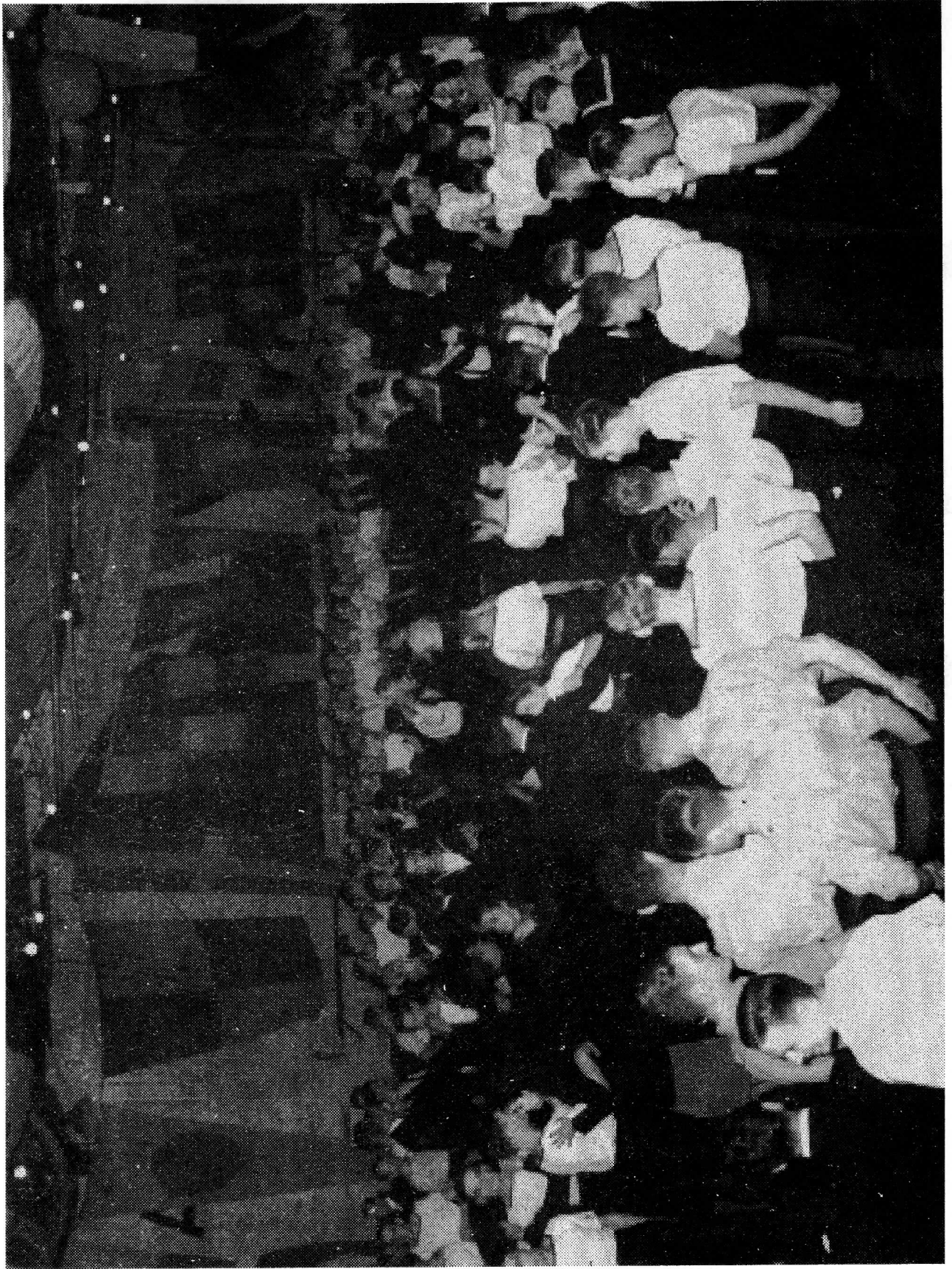
The Gear Wheel, brand new
from Barrow



Gibraltar looking towards the
Spanish Hills



Ceremony of The Keys, Gibraltar 1944. A Formidable Honour



Excuse me Jack, my turn now. Or words to that effect!



H.M.S. "Formidable"

Christmas Dinner 1944.

:- Menu :-

Breakfast

Corn Flakes. Mixed Grill.
Rolls. Marmalade.

Dinner

Tomato Cream Soup.
Roast Turkey & Stuffing. Boiled Ham.
Potatoes. Cauliflower. Green Peas.
Christmas Pudding and White Sauce.
Apples. Oranges. Mixed Nuts.

Tea

Christmas Cake. Mince Pies.

Supper

Cold Roast Legs of Pork. Pickles.
Cheese. Biscuits.

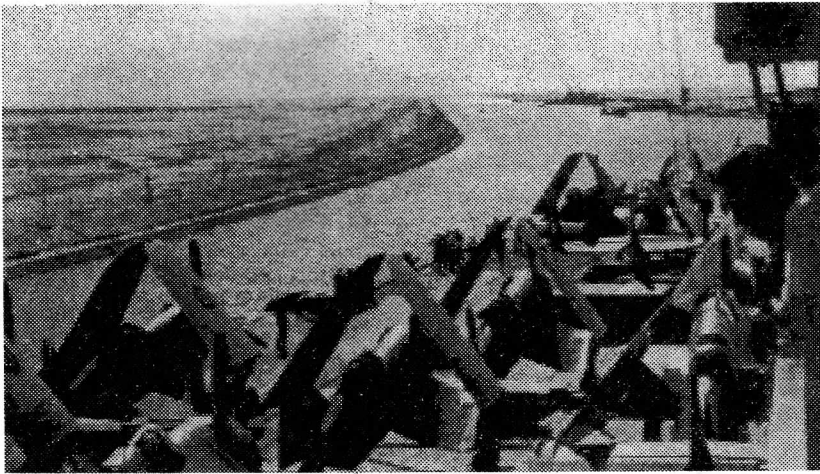
What a feast!!



1944



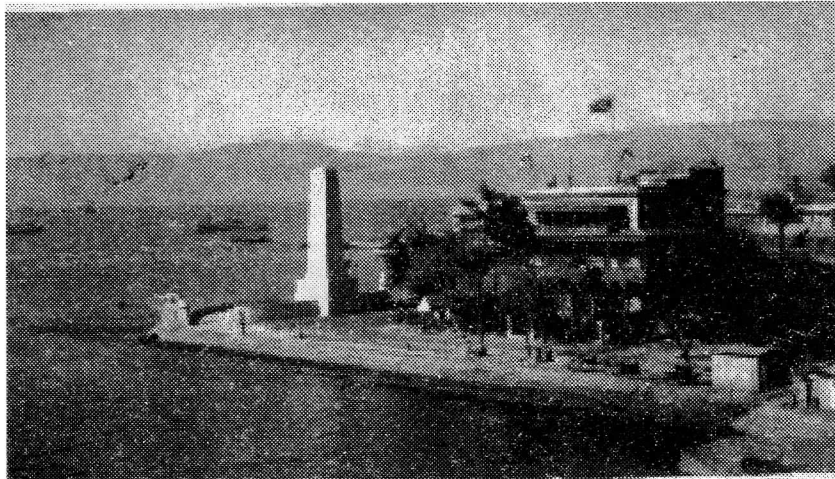
The Officers Pantomime "Yuletide by Numbers"



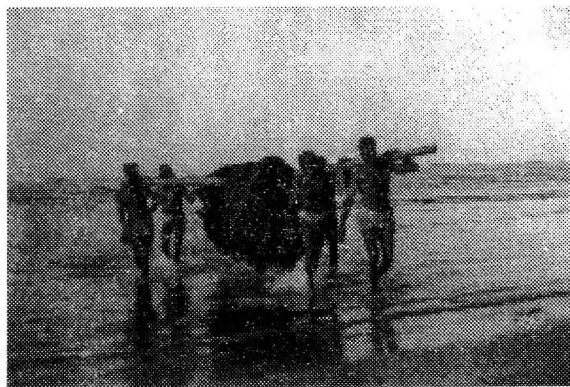
The Suez Canal, January 1945



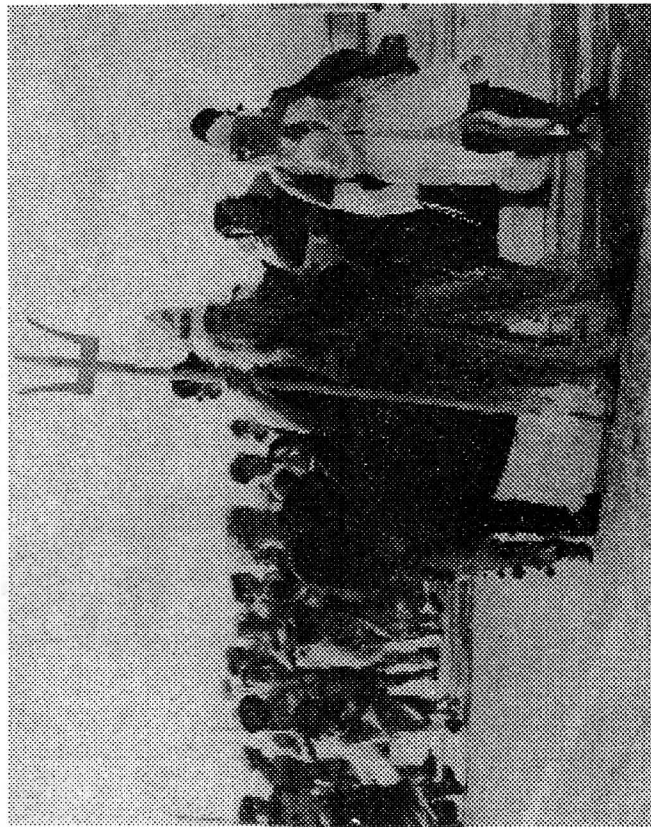
A Native Craft



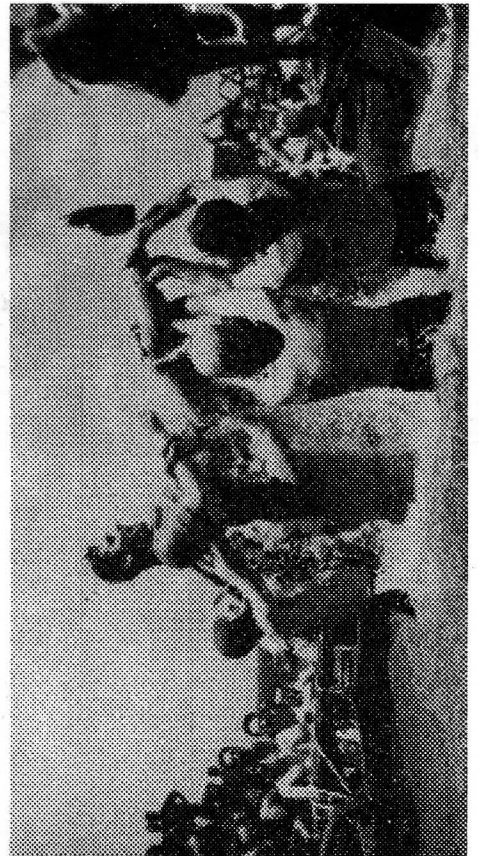
Port Suez



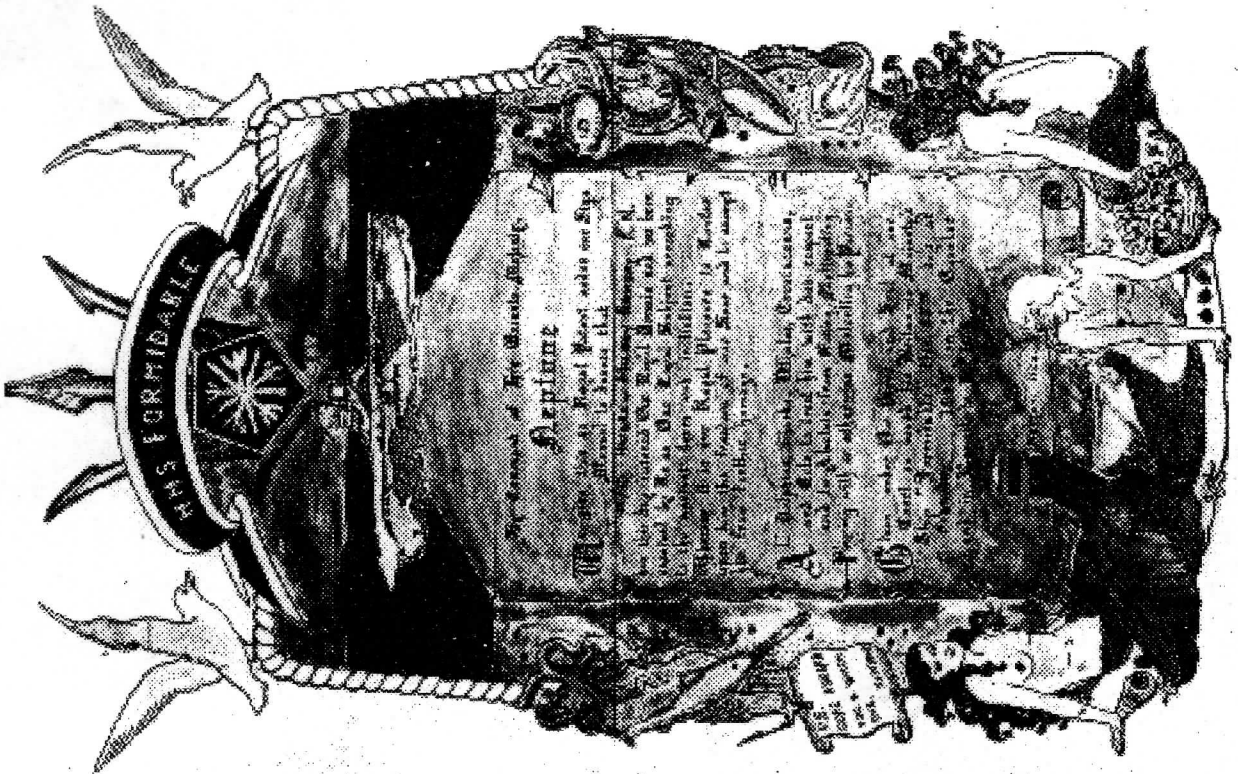
Scenes from Ceylon, 1945

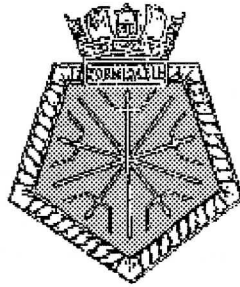


The Court of King Neptune



A Victim





PART FOUR

February 1945 - August 1945

Sydney

British Centre

Homers

Manus

Leyte

Fleet Train

Sakishima

Japan

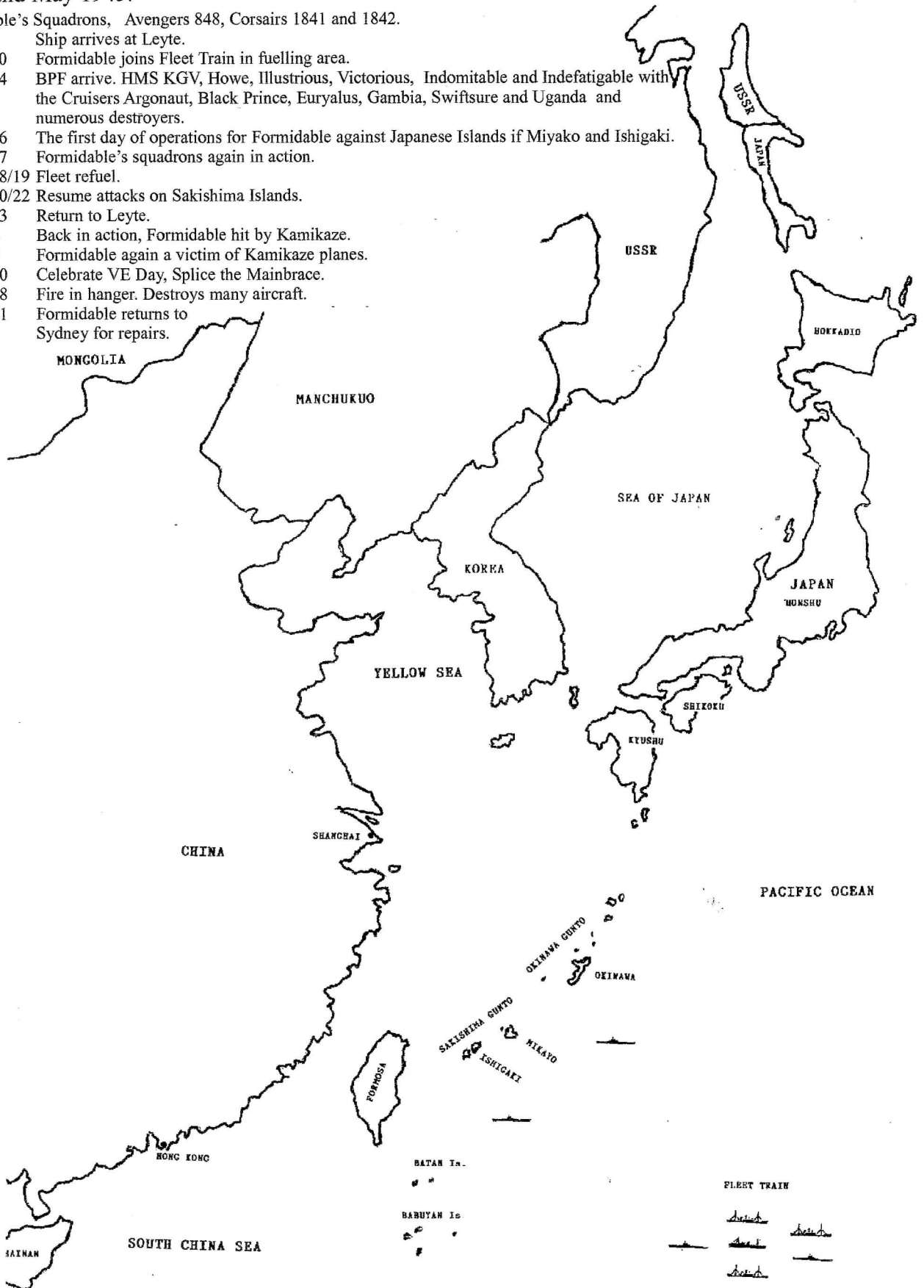
Victory

BRITISH PACIFIC FLEET OPERATIONS SAKISHIMA GUNTO

April and May 1945.

Formidable's Squadrons, Avengers 848, Corsairs 1841 and 1842.

- April 4 Ship arrives at Leyte.
- 10 Formidable joins Fleet Train in fuelling area.
- 14 BPF arrive. HMS KGV, Howe, Illustrious, Victorious, Indomitable and Indefatigable with the Cruisers Argonaut, Black Prince, Euryalus, Gambia, Swiftsure and Uganda and numerous destroyers.
- 16 The first day of operations for Formidable against Japanese Islands of Miyako and Ishigaki.
- 17 Formidable's squadrons again in action.
- 18/19 Fleet refuel.
- 20/22 Resume attacks on Sakishima Islands.
- 23 Return to Leyte.
- May 4 Back in action, Formidable hit by Kamikaze.
- 9 Formidable again a victim of Kamikaze planes.
- 10 Celebrate VE Day, Splice the Mainbrace.
- 18 Fire in hanger. Destroys many aircraft.
- 21 Formidable returns to Sydney for repairs.



continued from page 47

Sydney, March 9, 1945. The warm-hearted Australians took us into their homes. The British Centre, paid for and manned by the citizens of Sydney, catered for almost every need of British Servicemen and women. Apart from meals, dancing and other entertainment, there were invitations to spend leave in their homes. Homers as they came to be called. I chose the Wilkinson Family in Scarborough, South Coast New South Wales, a small mining village.

On leaving Sydney, the ship sailed for Manus in the Admiralty Islands in company with HMCS Uganda. We had two surprises. The crew were allowed to write home and say where they were. The other was a welcome, of sorts, to the Pacific, for the men of HMS Formidable from Tokyo Rose.

From Manus we set out for Leyte where we met the Fleet Train, a floating Supermarket. They could, and did, supply anything that was asked of them. The anchorage was so large with what seemed hundreds of ships that I was always relieved as boats crew, when our coxwain found his way back to the Formidable.

With Leyte behind us the Formidable sailed North to the oiling area, there we waited with the tankers and their escorts, after refuelling, for the arrival of the fleet from the operational zone. Two days later, having relieved the Illustrious, we were in action with our aircraft striking at Japanese airfields on the islands of Ishigaki and Myako just east of Formoso. Although a bit busier, life on the flightdeck continued more or less as before with preparing strikes and CAPs.

All that was to change, however. On May 4 at about 11.30 a.m., I was working on the flightdeck near the starboard crane when I heard, then saw, an aircraft with red roundals swoop over our bows from port to starboard. I must have done a hundred yards in under 9 seconds to the handling party shelter. I barely made it before the place erupted as the Kamikaze struck after circling the island.

The Handling Party lost three men in this action. PO Lamb died a few days later from injuries. Act L/S Millard although in the centre of a packed shelter, was also a victim as was a mate of mine, Harry Ventham. Five days later a second Kamikaze struck the Formidable, fortunately with fewer casualties. On May 10 the fleet celebrated VE Day by Splicing the Mainbrace. Back in action May 12/13 our Avengers and Corsairs again struck at the enemy airfield on the Sakishama Islands in support of the Americans at Okinawa.

After every two days in action the fleet would retire to a refuelling area where we also replaced damaged aircraft and took on other supplies. It was during one of those periods May 18 disaster struck in the hanger. A gun or guns from an aircraft were accidentally fired into another plane. A dangerous fire ensued. With the hanger fire curtain badly damaged during the Kamikaze attack on May 4 the fire proved difficult to contain. However some strenuous work by the hanger crew aided by the sprinkler system the fire was extinguished. That evening, as dusk fell, all the aircraft in the hanger were ditched over the side by the handling parties. The Formidable was in action again with a greatly reduced number of planes before returning to Sydney on May 22 for repairs.

Besides repairs, the ship was fitted put to become Admiral Vian's Flagship for the attack on Japan. Leave, of four days, was given to each watch and with three messmates I enjoyed our time at Brisbane Water. One weekend as a duty guide, service personnel could visit the ship, a call came from the dock-yard gate. Two Land Army girls had arrived to see over the Formidable. On the way back to the ship I

surmised that they had been in conversation with a three badge stoker or the like, the previous evening. The girls insisted on viewing a certain object. Naturally I refused and made some excuse. After all, there is a time and place for everything. Unfortunately libertymen were lining the dockside awaiting inspection. After the usual whistles and catcalls the girls complained that I had refused to show them "The Golden Rivet". Nobody would believe that a senior officer had taken it ashore. Never mind, the girls did enjoy a piece of navy cake (pussers) at teatime on the messdeck.

The British Pacific fleet left Sydney June 27 and sailed North to Manus carrying out various exercises including a Corsair releasing its drop tank containing explosives in the sea. A chilling forerunner of napalm. In addition to our usual aircraft we had on board 6 Hellcats, 1844 Squadron from Indomitable undergoing arefit. These aircraft earned their board and lodging. By July 16 the fleet had joined up with and became part of the American Third Fleet under Admiral Halsey for direct attacks on the Japanese Home Islands.

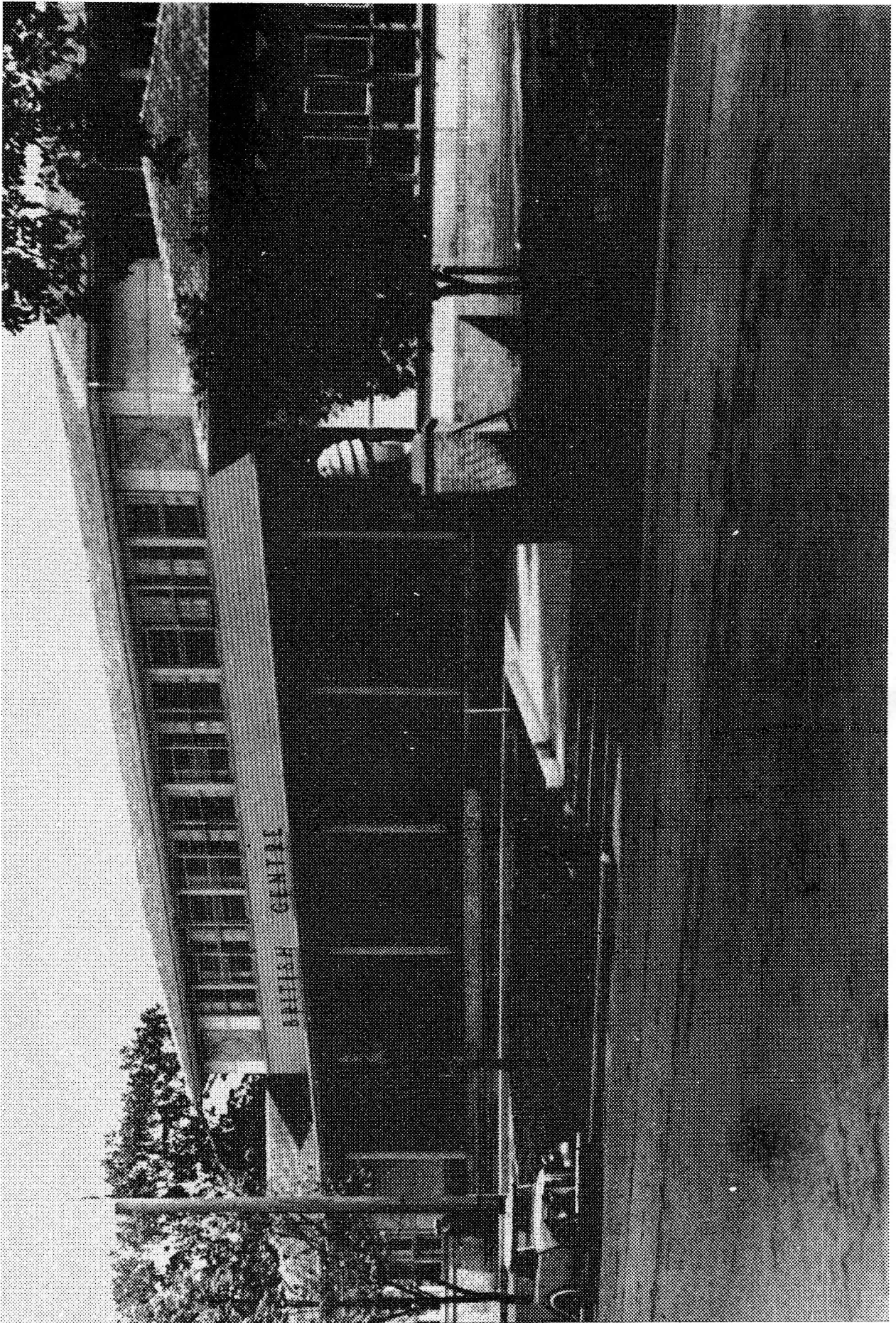
The Formidable's Corsairs led the Royal Navy's attacks on July 17 and 18, but due to increasingly bad weather our Avengers were grounded until July 24. Our 848 Squadron were the first Royal Navy bombers to bomb Japan. The atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima August 7 and the scientists speaking on San Francisco were of the opinion that the city would be untenable for 75 years. August 9 a second bomb was dropped, this time on Nagasaki and Lt. Hampton Gray was shot down whilst attacking an enemy destroyer in Onagawa Bay. He was later awarded the Victoria Cross. S/Lt. Alan Maitland 1841 Squadron was killed on August 10, our last day of operations.

Leaving a token force to take the surrender of Japan, the Formidable returned to Sydney with the carriers Implacable and our sister ship Victorious escorted by destroyers Grenville, Urchin, Undine, Urania. The reception was tremendous, resulting in a victory march through the city.

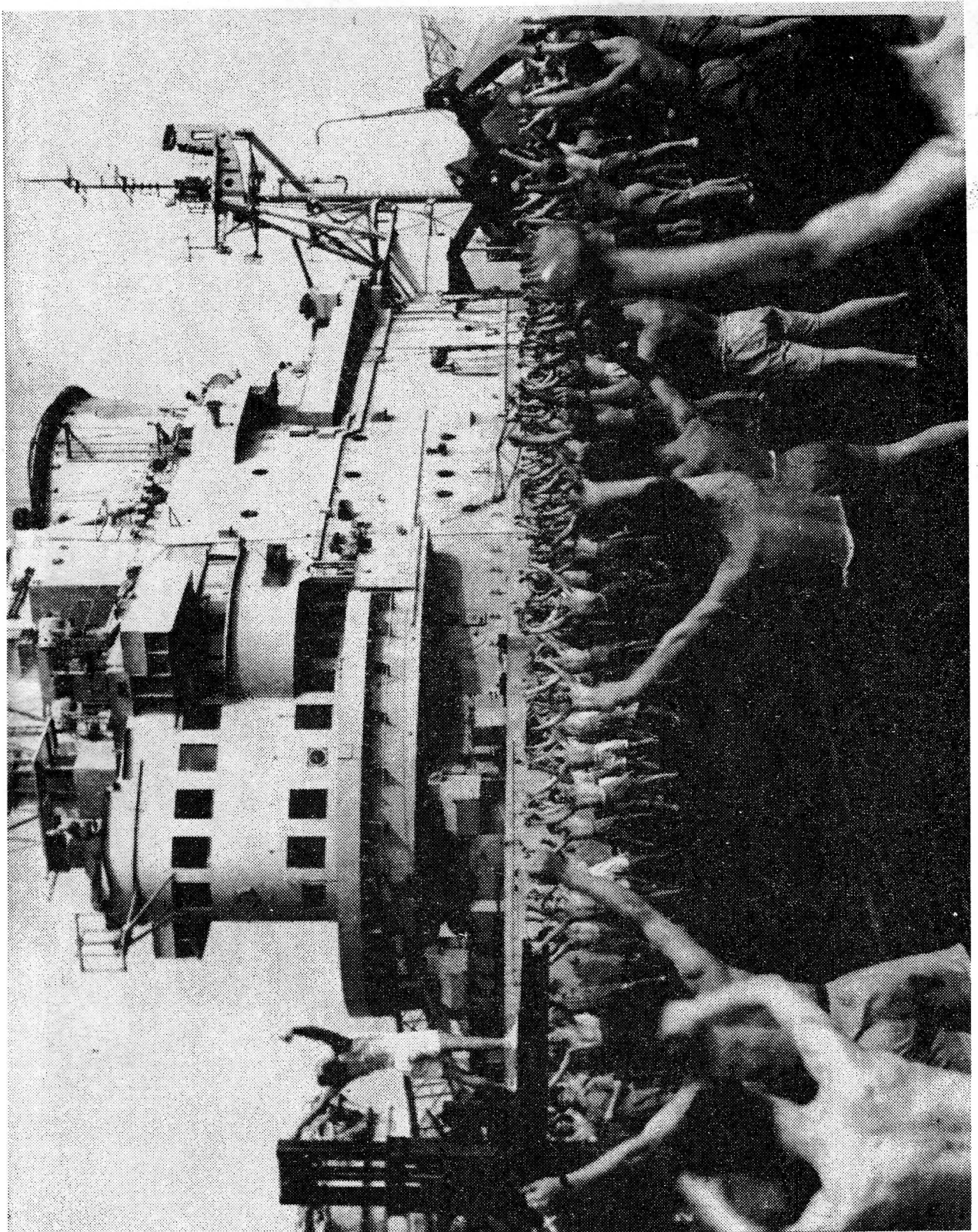
With all our aircraft now off the ship our hanger was turned into a hospital and massive dormitory with about 1200 beds as the ship prepared to bring home former prisoners of war to Australia. We sailed for Manila with Queen Alexandria's Royal Naval Nurses, VAD's and Red Cross Welfare Officers. The flightdeck had canvas swimming pools installed, deckchairs by the hundred, practice cricket nets and a huge cinema screen. On the way out our female crew enjoyed the "Crossing the Line" ceremony(?) The ship's crew relaxed as deck hockey took over. I was goalkeeper for the AHP Second Team and we managed to reach the semi-final without conceding a goal. Such was the interest, matches could have over 2000 spectators. The S/Lt. AHP lost a fiver on the result of that semi-final.

Our second trip to pick up Indian ex-prisoners at Rabaul. We returned them to Bombay. The Indian Soldiers required special eating arrangements so field kitchens were installed on the flightdeck and we were introduced to colourful Indian films. With our guests disembarked at Bombay, we took on Indian troops for Batavia in Java for peace keeping purposes. From Java we sailed to Tarakan, Borneo to uplift Australian Troops for home.

Back in Sydney the crew prepared for home with a ship's dance and last visits to our Australian friends. Formidable left for UK via Freemantle and Capetown arriving at Portsmouth February 6 1946. I last saw my friends in 1995 when on a tour with Pacific Fleet Veterans. By October 1997 they had crossed over the horizon leaving pleasant memories spanning 52 years.



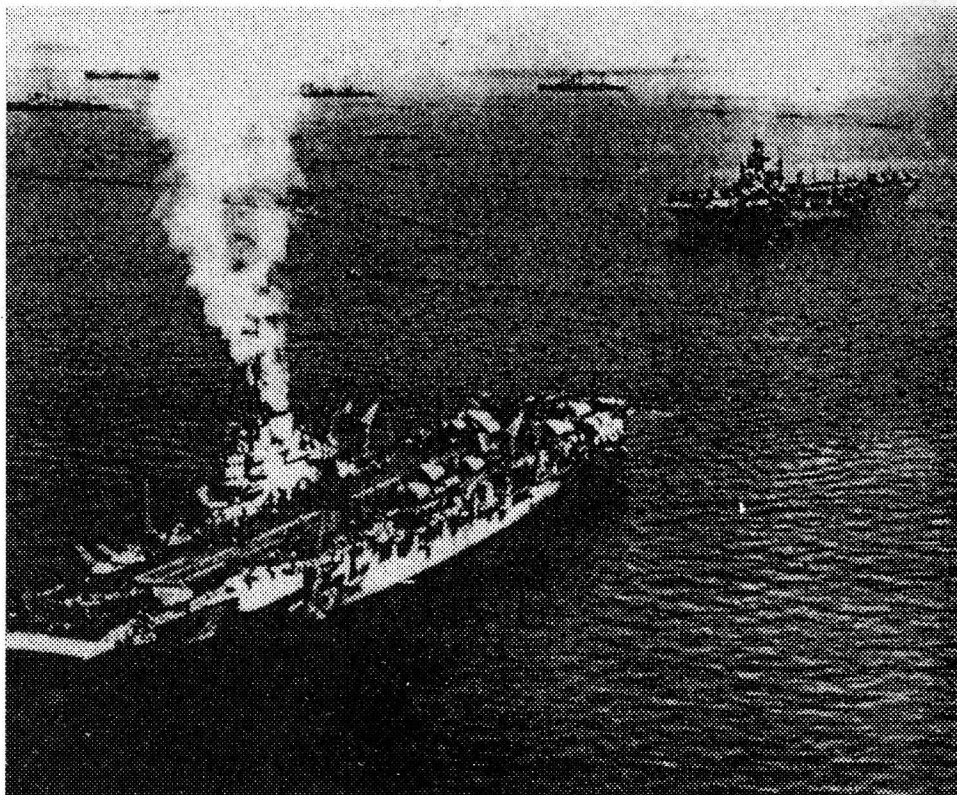
The British Centre, Sidney. A Home from Home.



Fighting fit



HMCS Uganda, our escort from Sidney to Manus



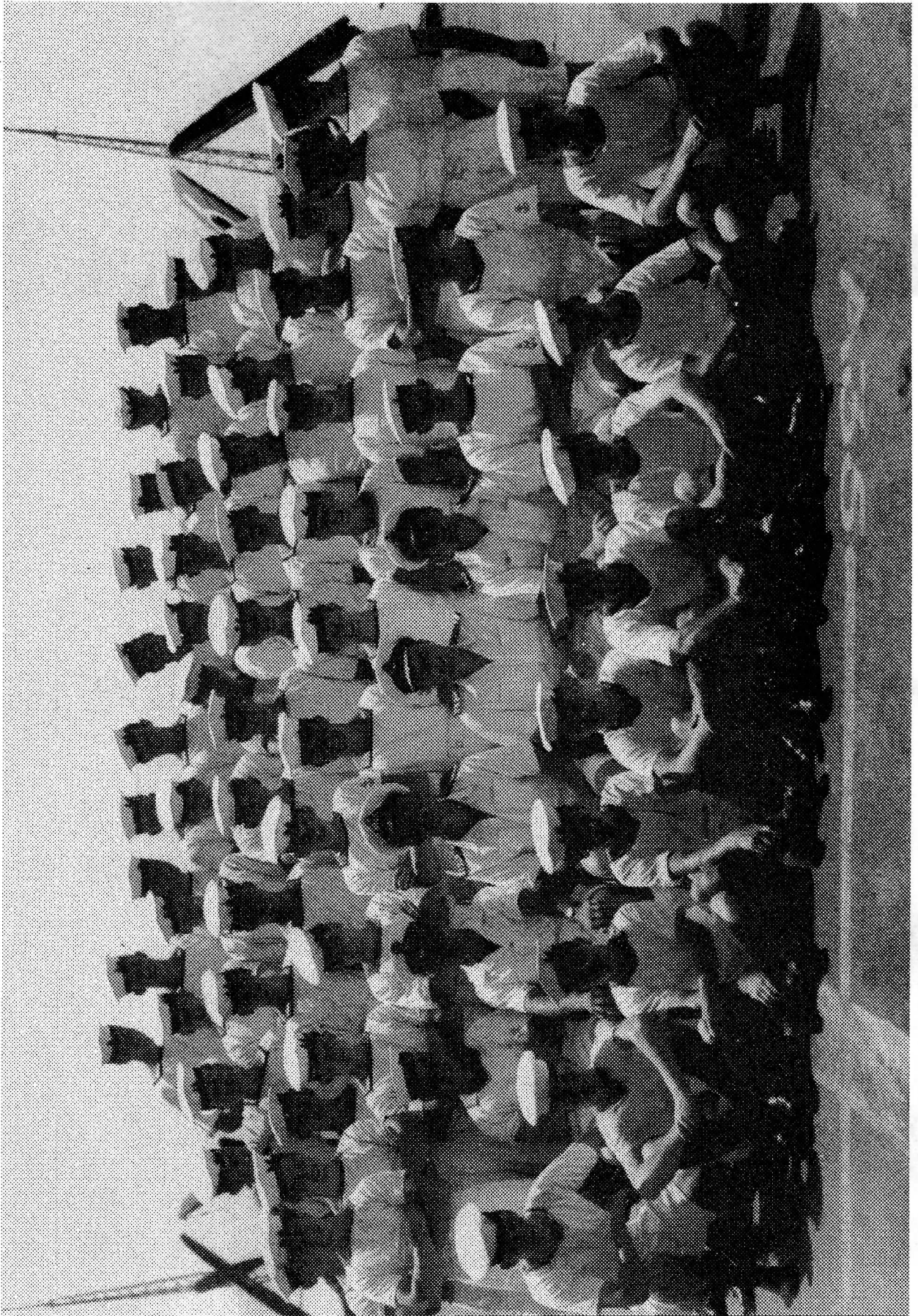
Formidable at Manus with the Indomitable astern



Tokyo Rose

She welcomed the men of the Formidable to the Pacific - well sort of.

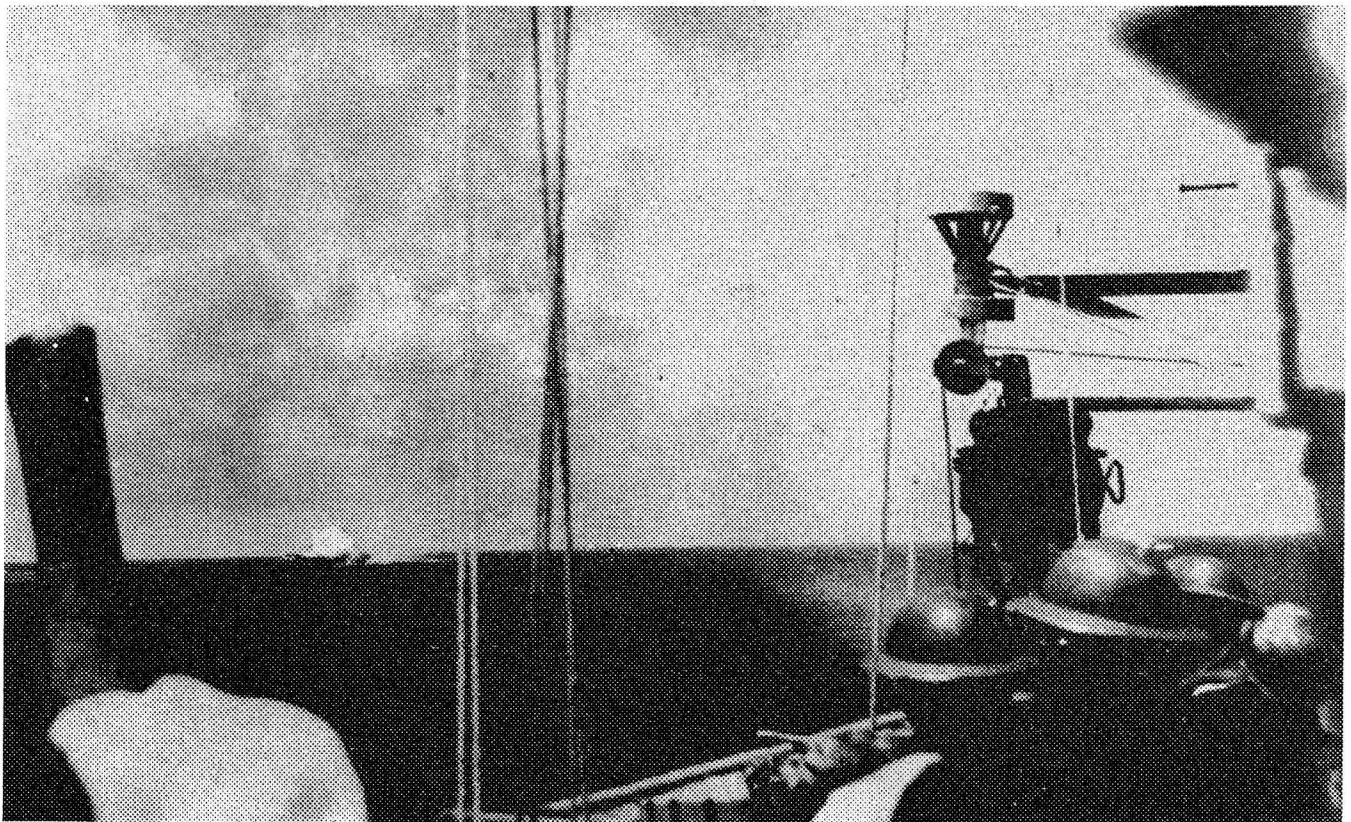
After being convicted of treason in 1949 Iva Toguri D'Aquino served nearly seven years in prison. In 1977 she was pardoned by President Ford



The Aircraft Handling Party, April 1945
The most efficient deck crew in the fleet



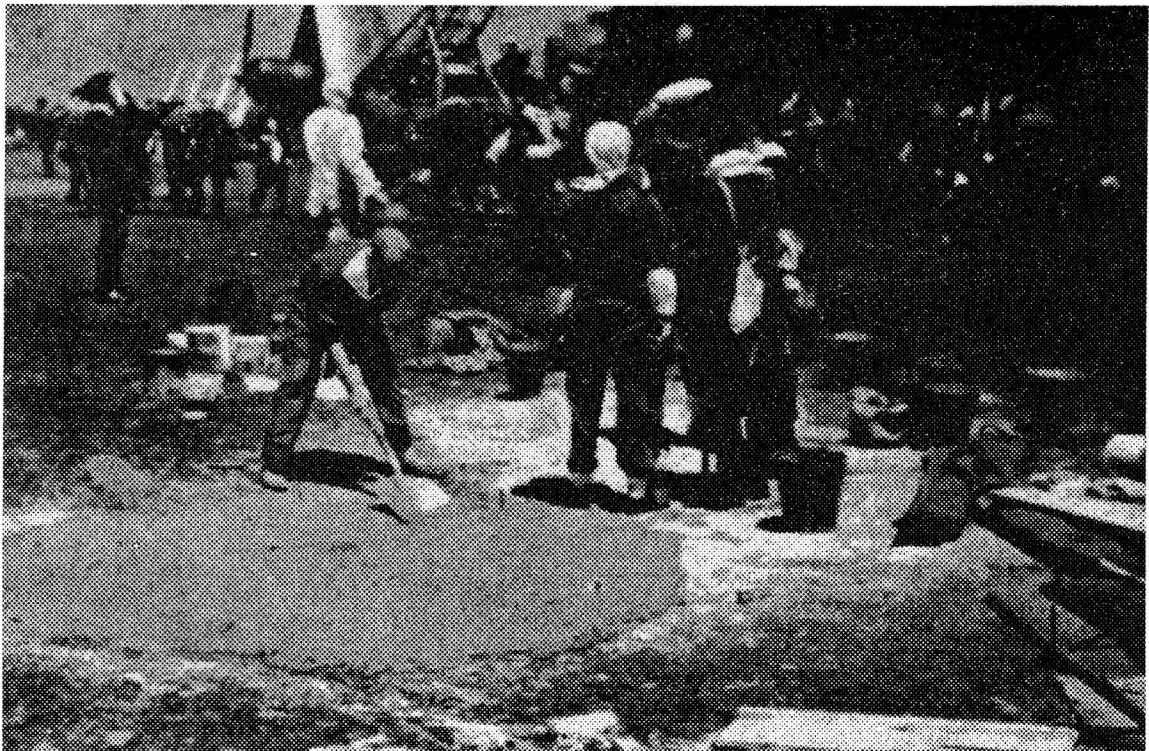
Under attack! Kamikaze drops in on Formidable, May 4 1945



The strike as seen from the Indomitable



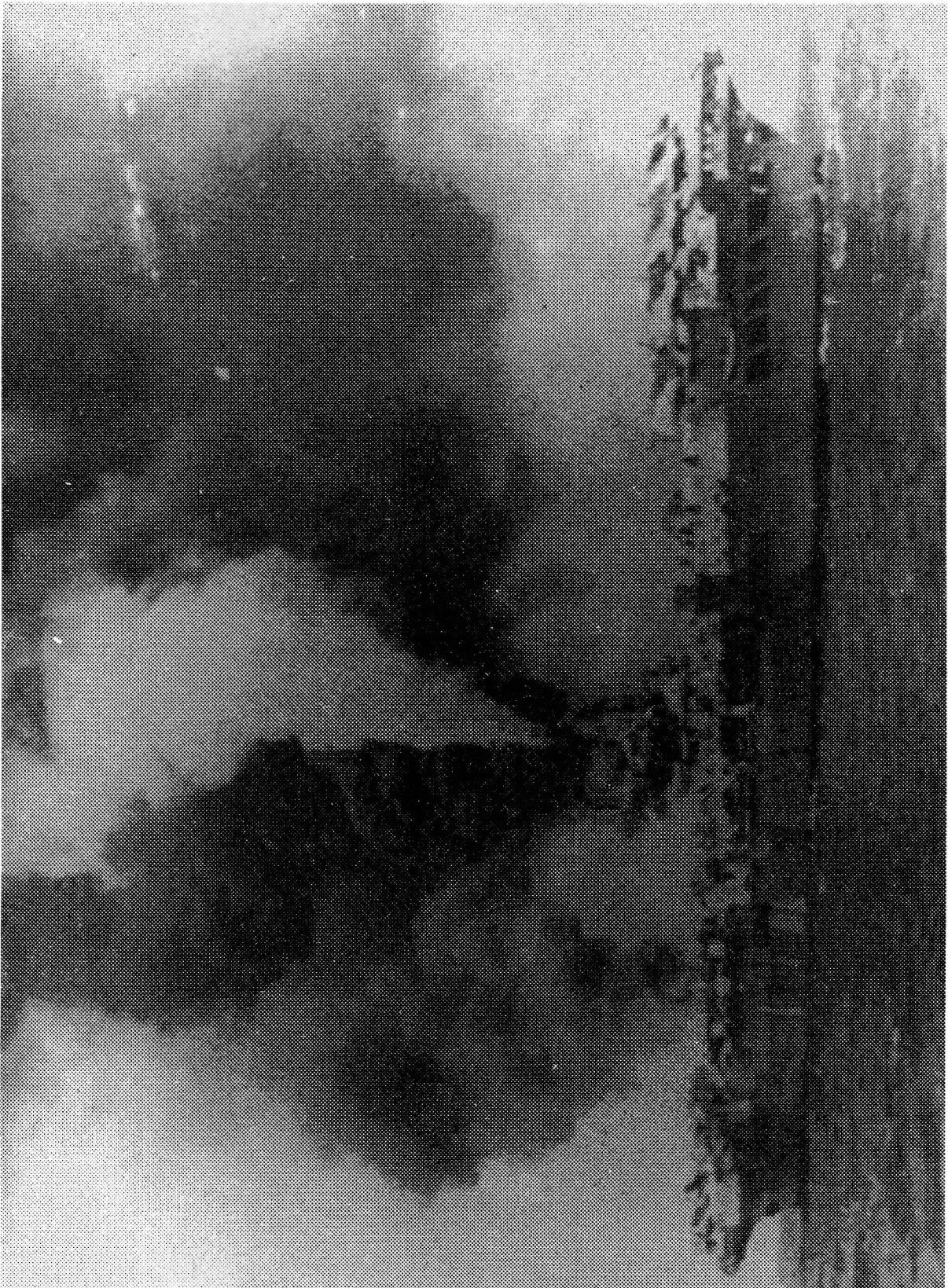
The remains of a Corsair



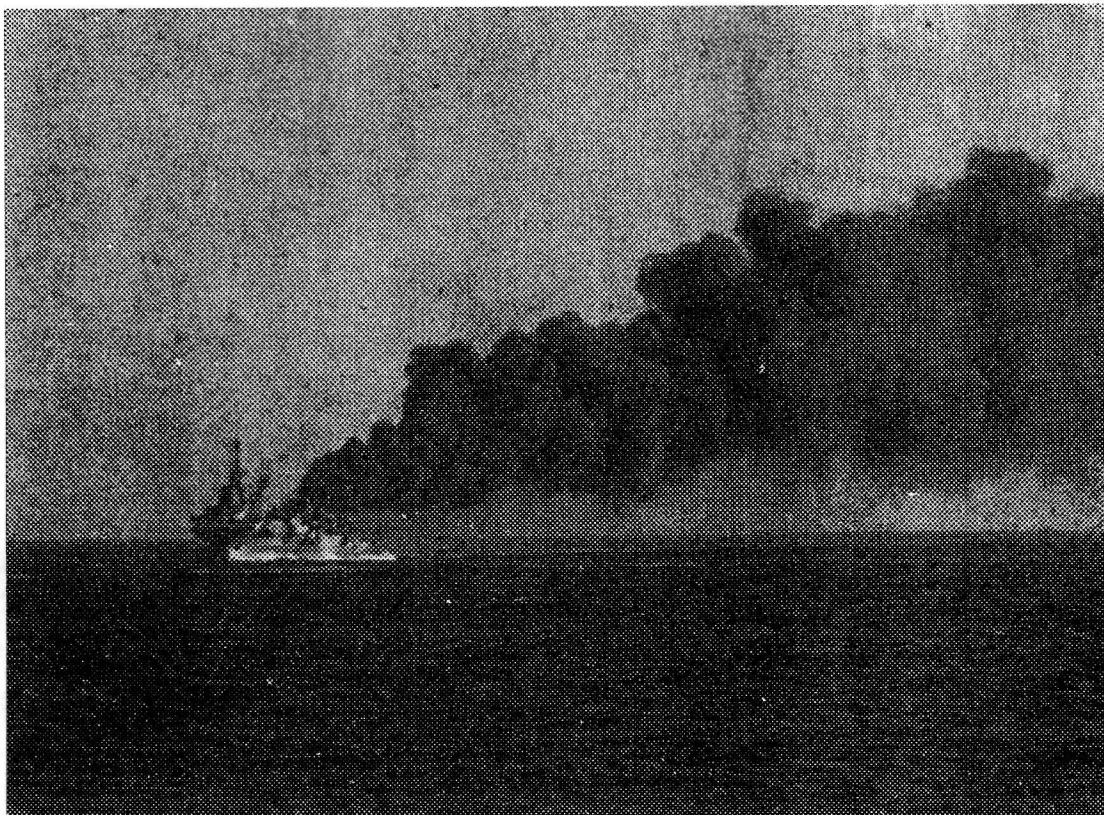
Filling in the bomb hole



Clearing away the foamite and wreckage, May 4 1945



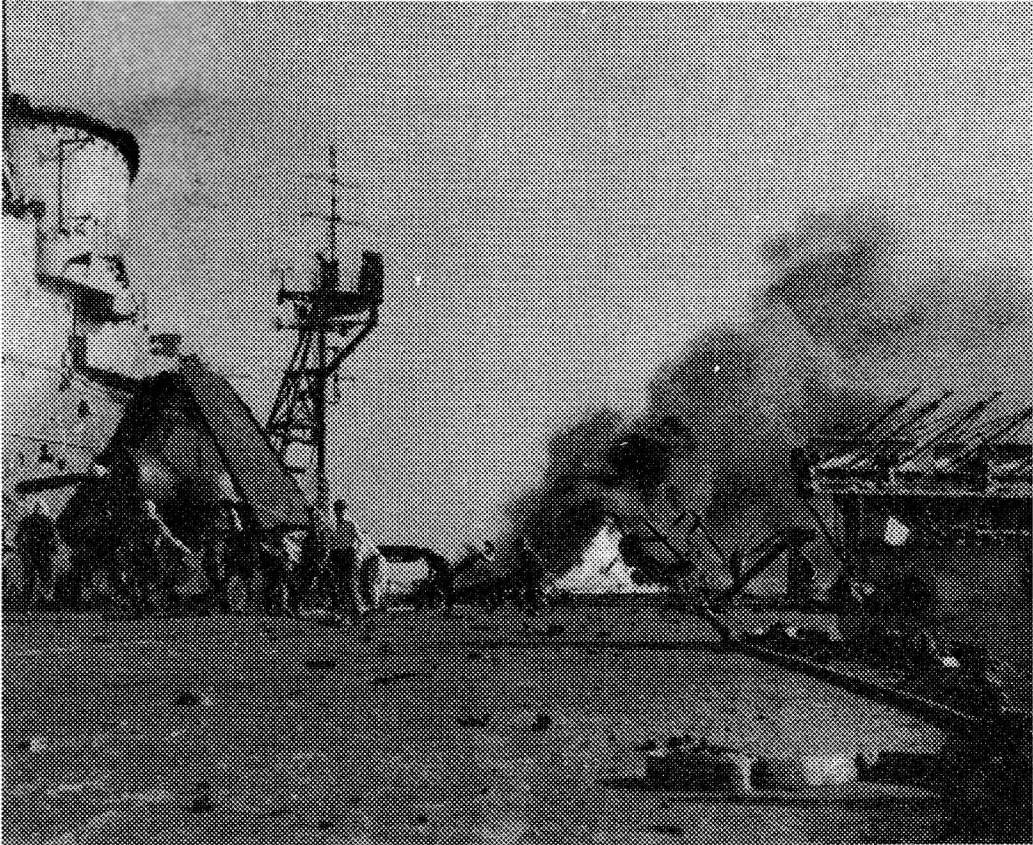
An encorts-eye view of Formidable about noon, May 4 1945



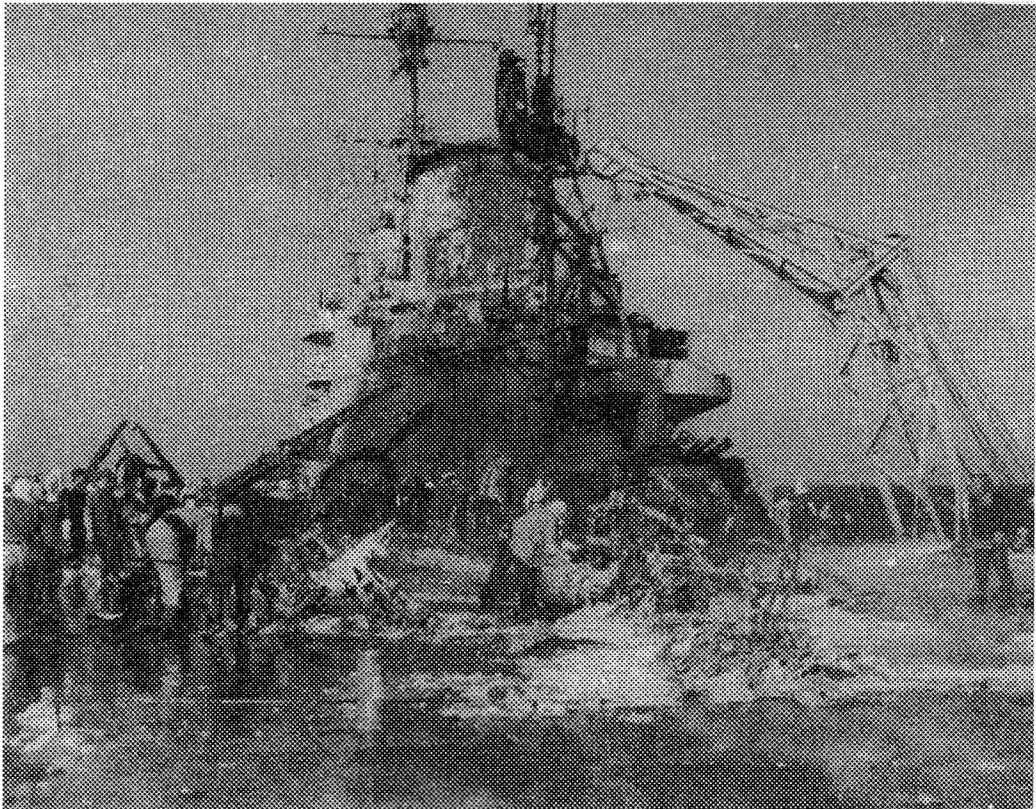
The Formidable after kamikaze hit on May 9 1945 at about 1700



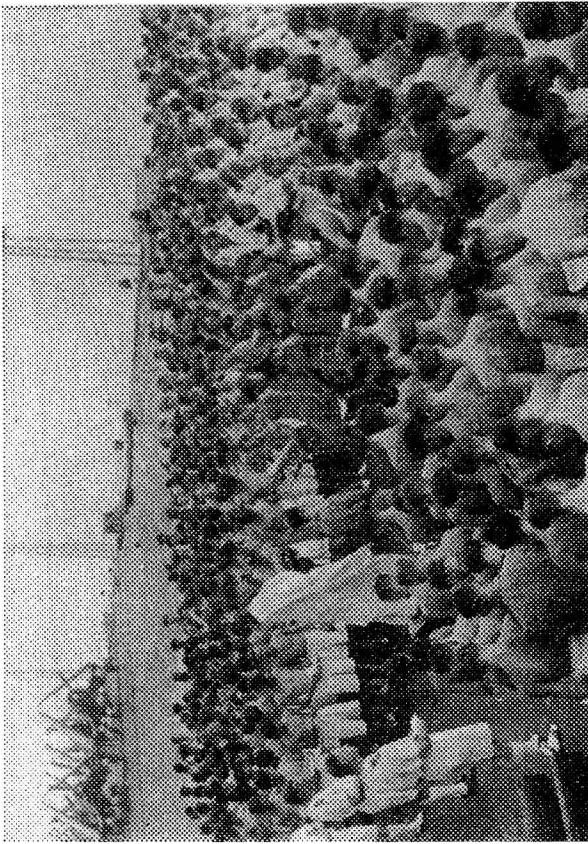
Formidable as seen from the Indomitable with the Howe on horizon



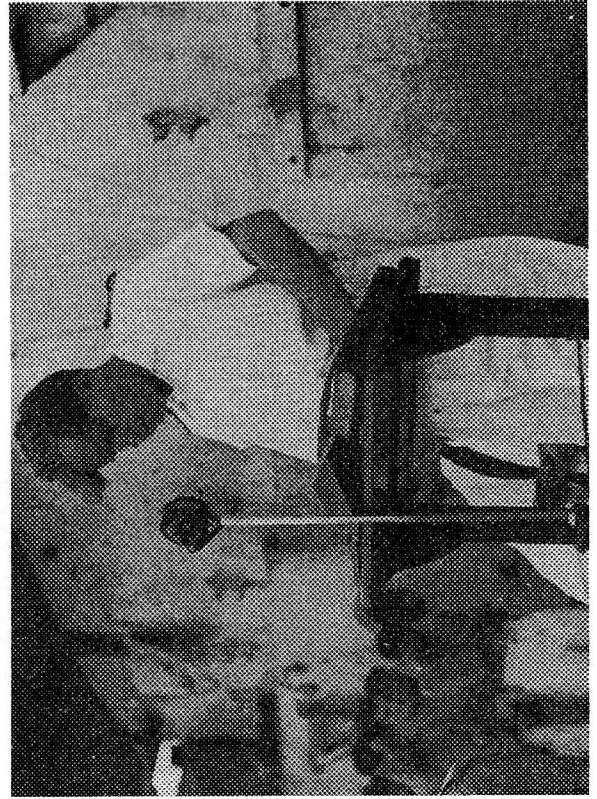
Saving a Corsair



Clearing up the mess



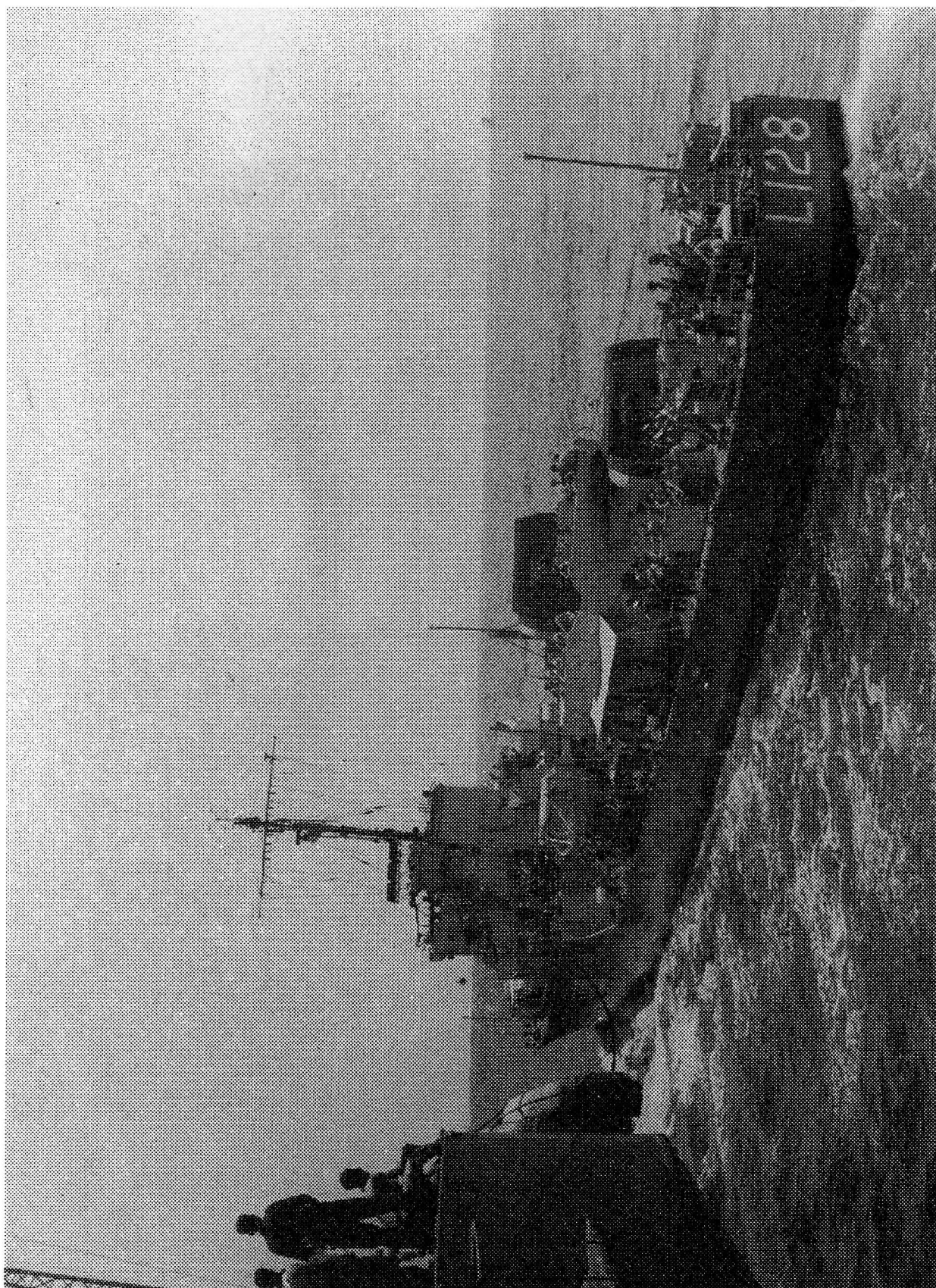
Prayers for our dead and wounded, Sunday May 13



Captain Ruck-Keene reads the lesson



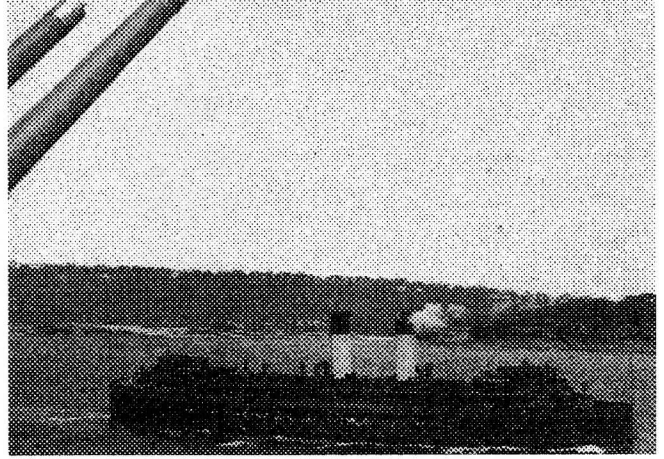
Killed in action May 4 1945
Harry Ventham, a messmate



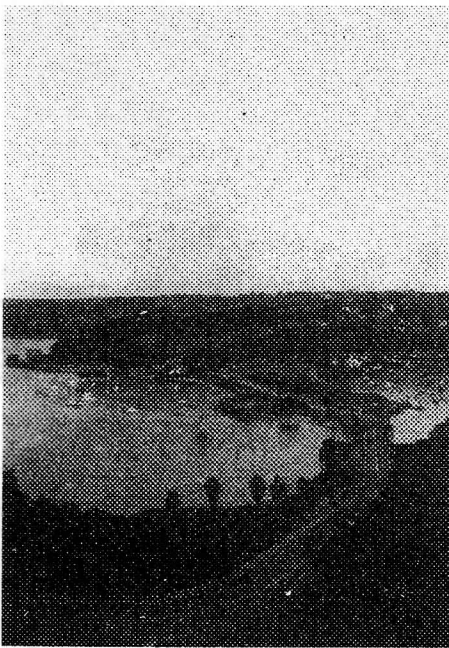
Our escort takes on oil



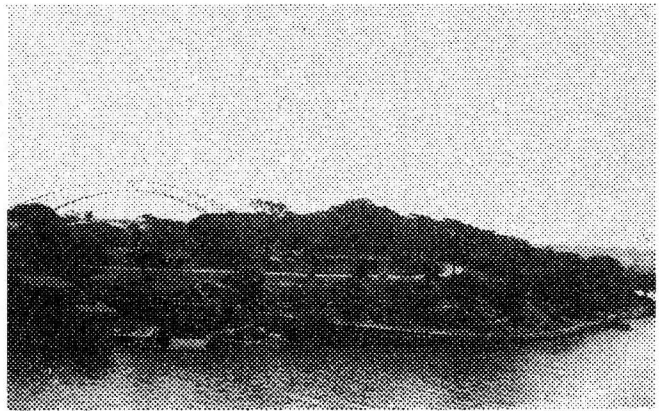
Formidable at Woolloomooloo



The Manly Ferry



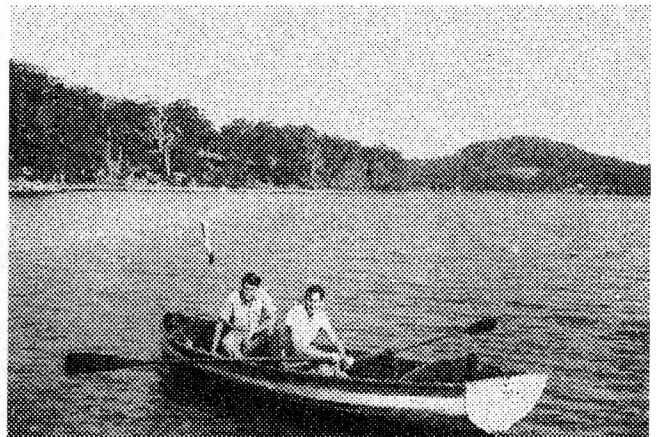
The Spit



The Domain and Bridge



The Orphan Rock, Katoomba



On Brisbane Water

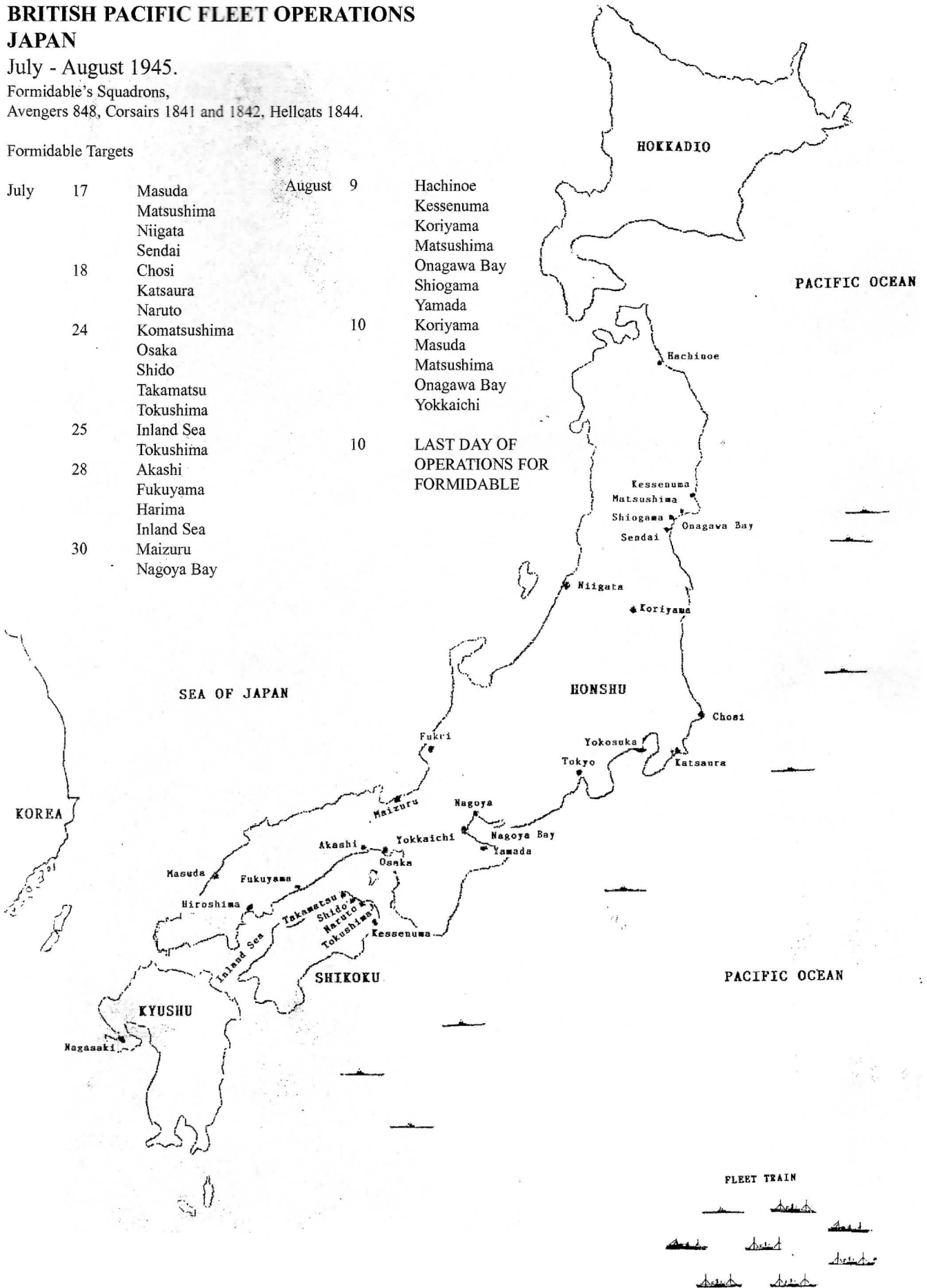
**BRITISH PACIFIC FLEET OPERATIONS
JAPAN**

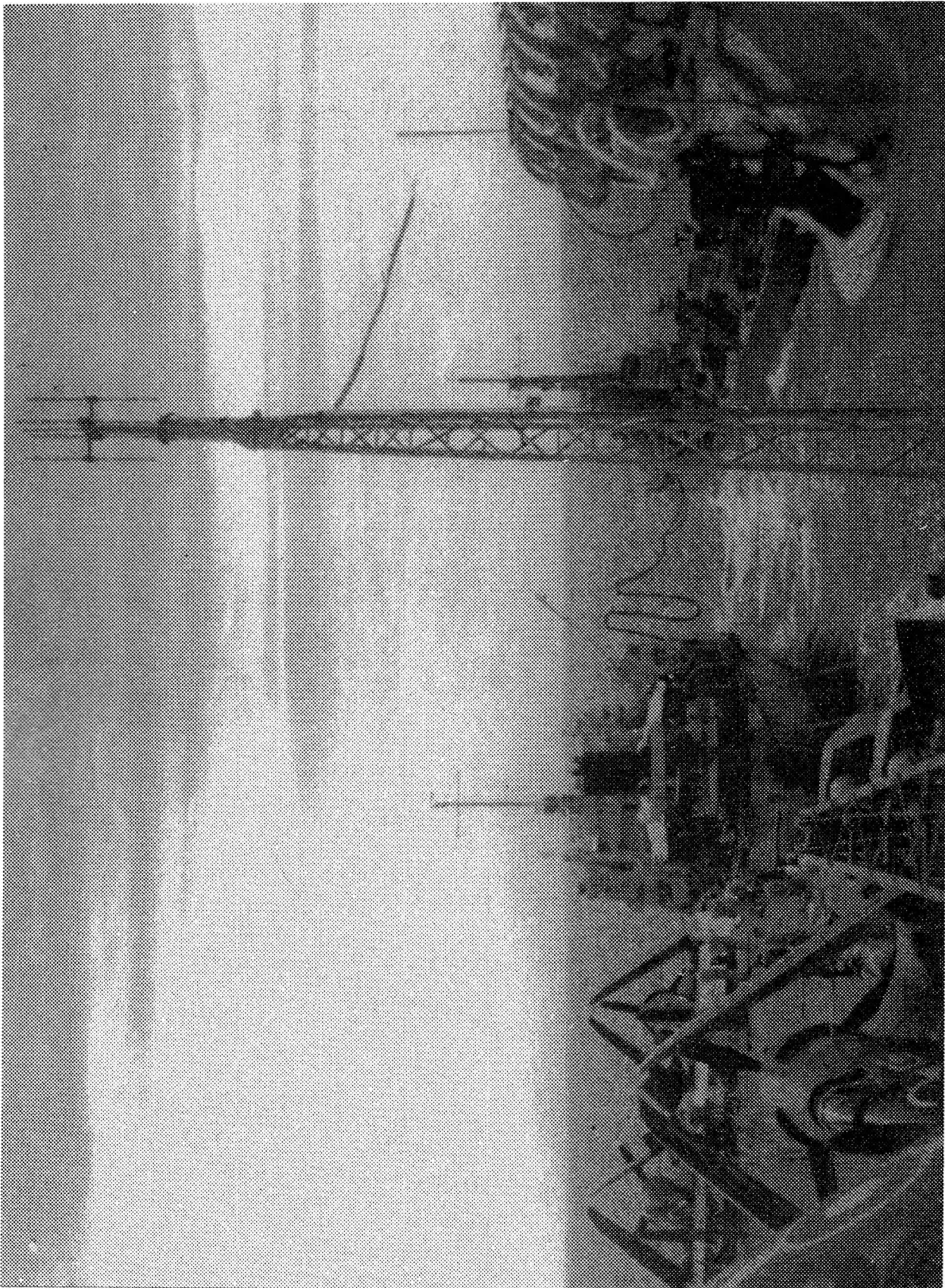
July - August 1945.

Formidable's Squadrons,
Avengers 848, Corsairs 1841 and 1842, Hellcats 1844.

Formidable Targets

July	17	Masuda Matsushima Niigata Sendai	August	9	Hachinoe Kessenuma Koriyama Matsushima Onagawa Bay Shiogama Yamada
	18	Chosi Katsaura Naruto		10	Koriyama Masuda Matsushima Onagawa Bay Yokkaichi
	24	Komatsushima Osaka Shido Takamatsu Tokushima		10	LAST DAY OF OPERATIONS FOR FORMIDABLE
	25	Inland Sea Tokushima			
	28	Akashi Fukuyama Harima Inland Sea			
	30	Maizuru Nagoya Bay			

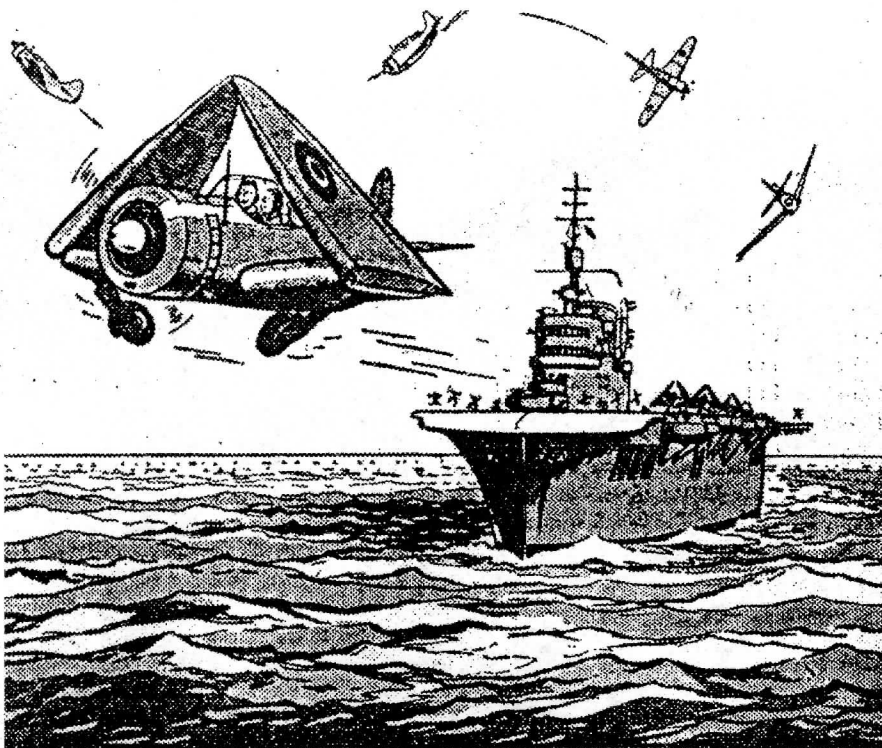




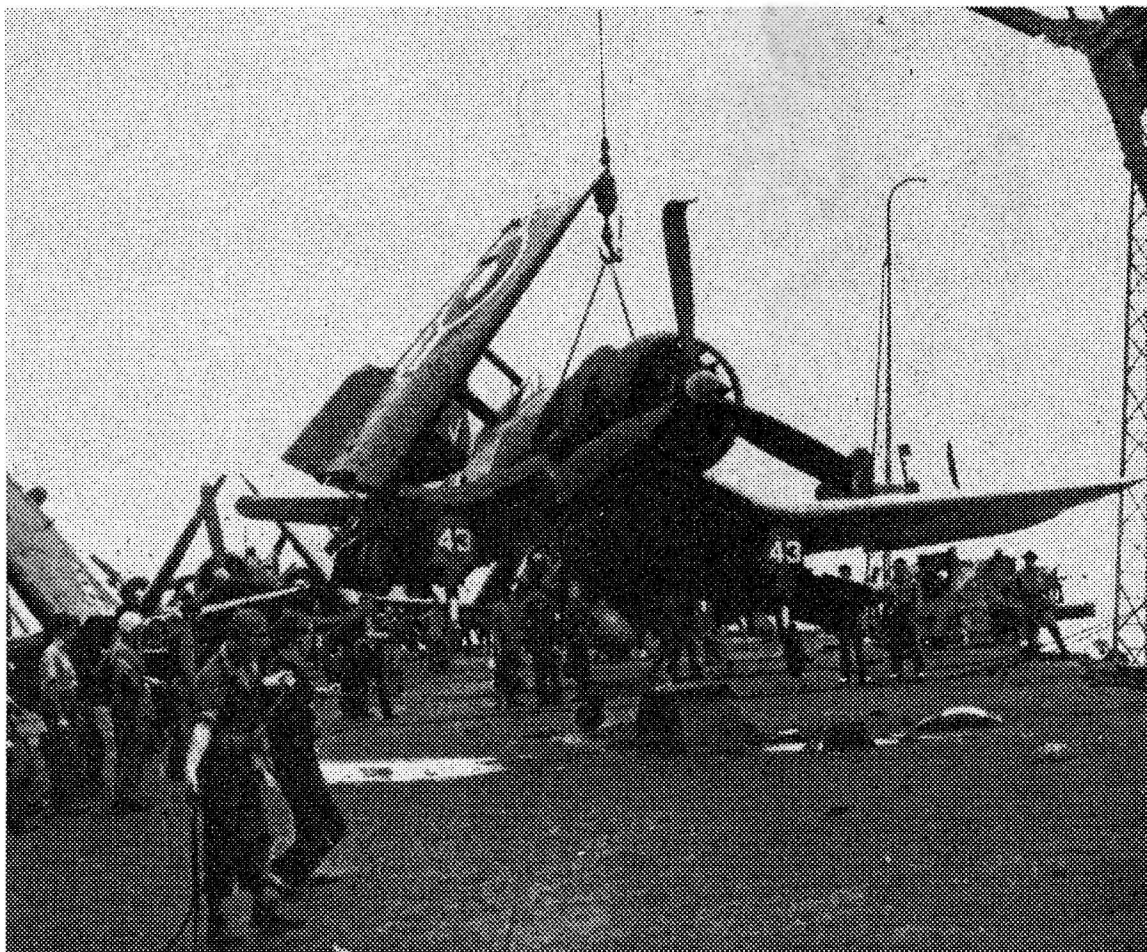
Fleet Train oiler brings fuel to Formidable and escort off Japan, July 1945



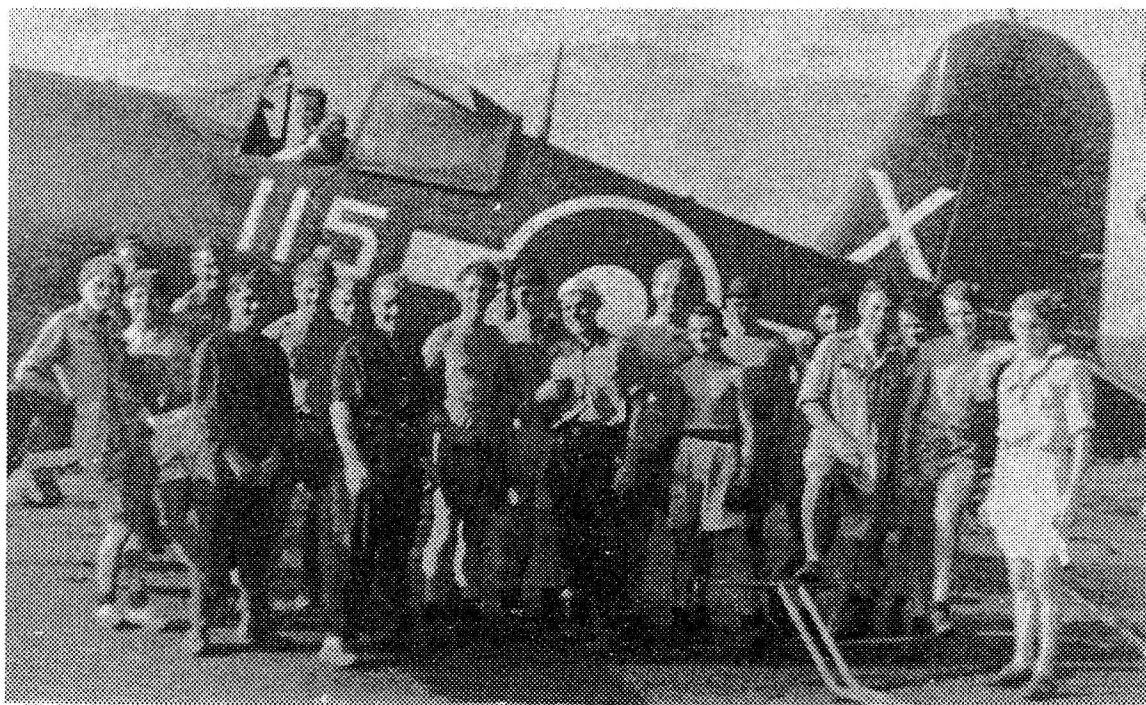
"I thought I had seen everything"



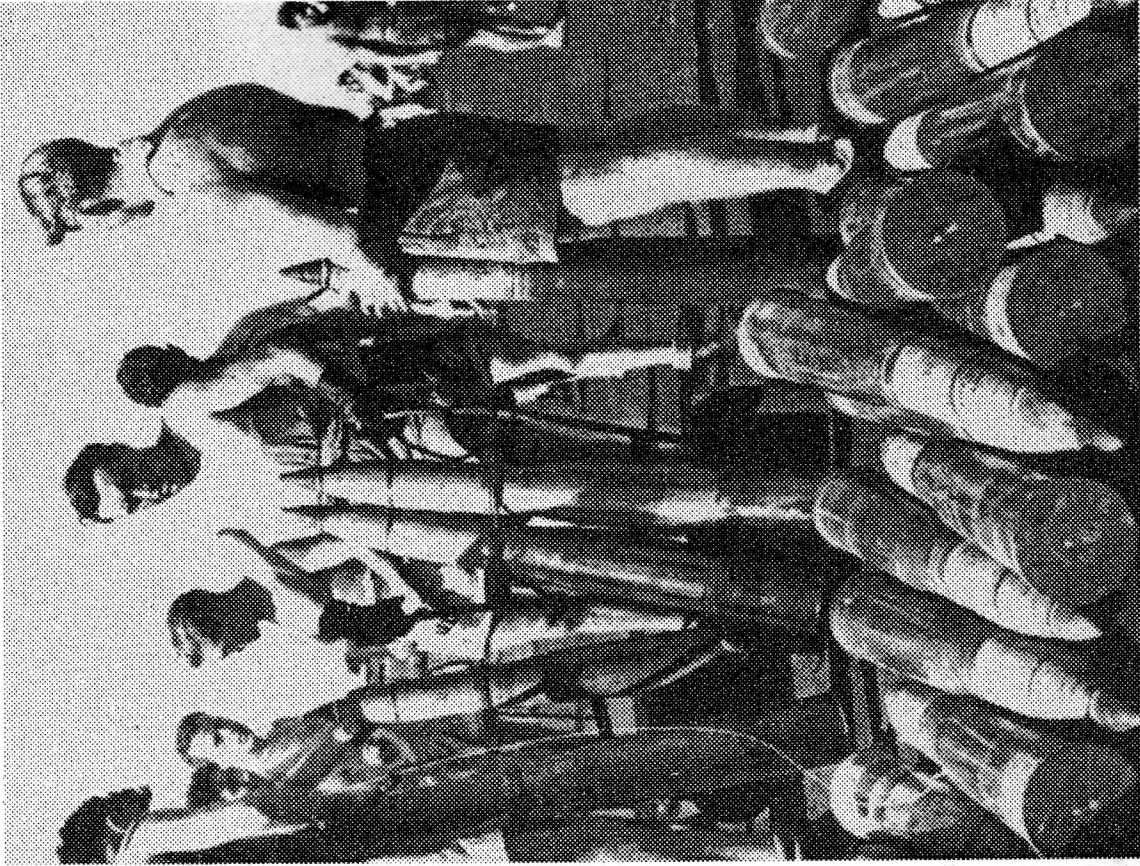
"I used to be terribly absent-minded before I joined up"—
Roland Davies "Sunday Dispatch."



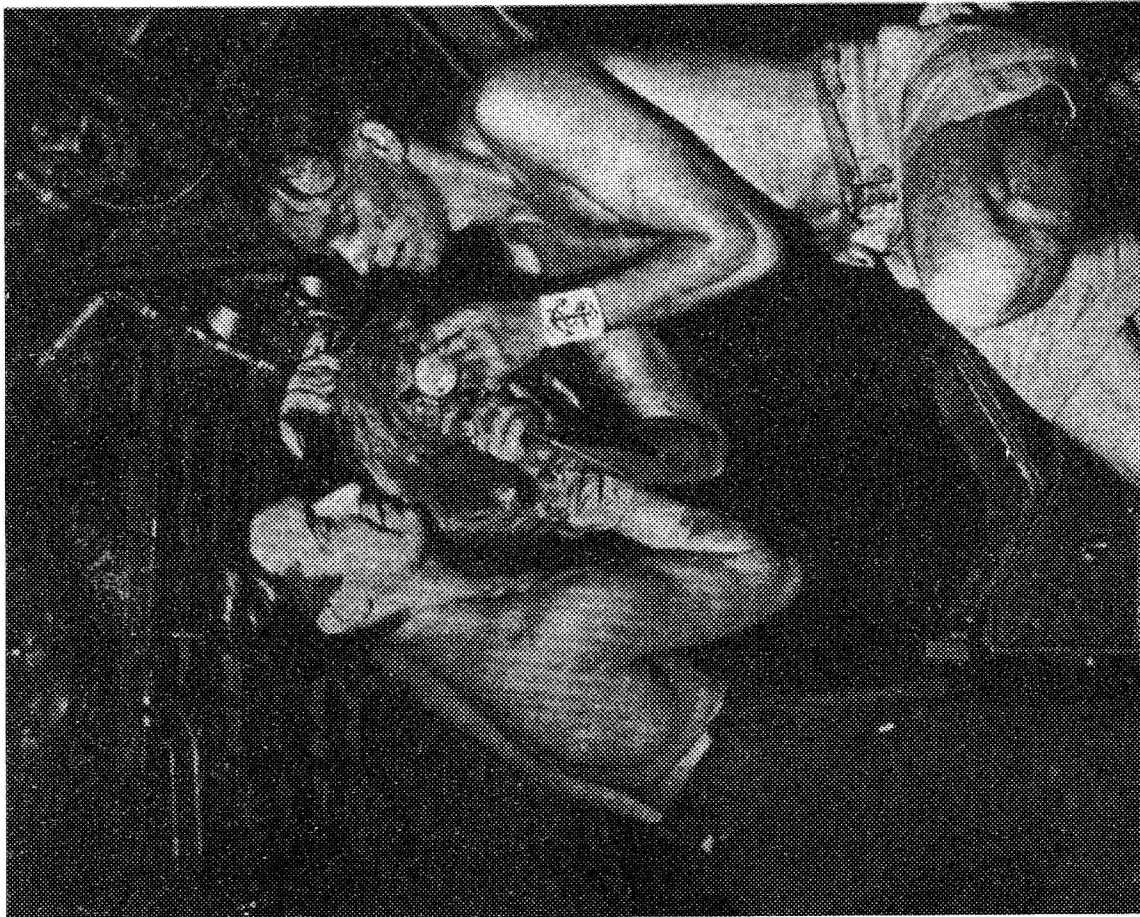
Over the side with it



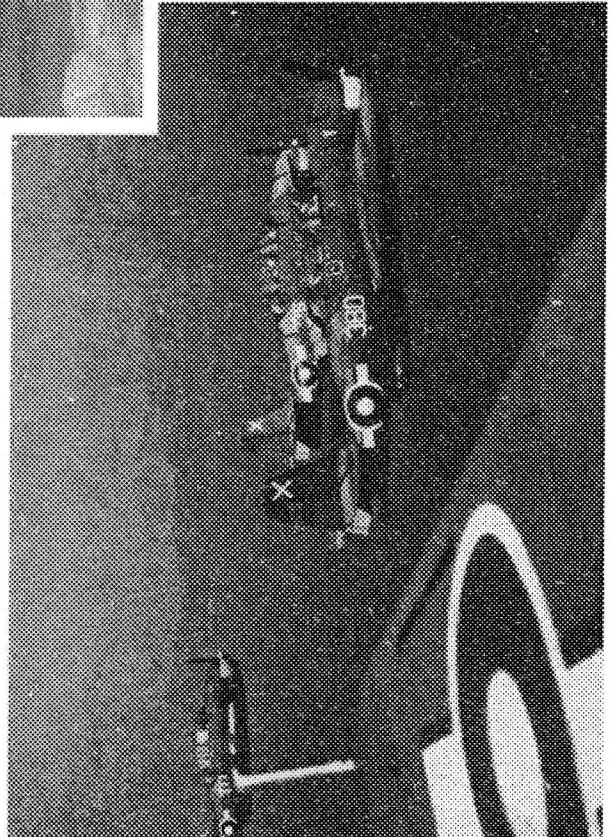
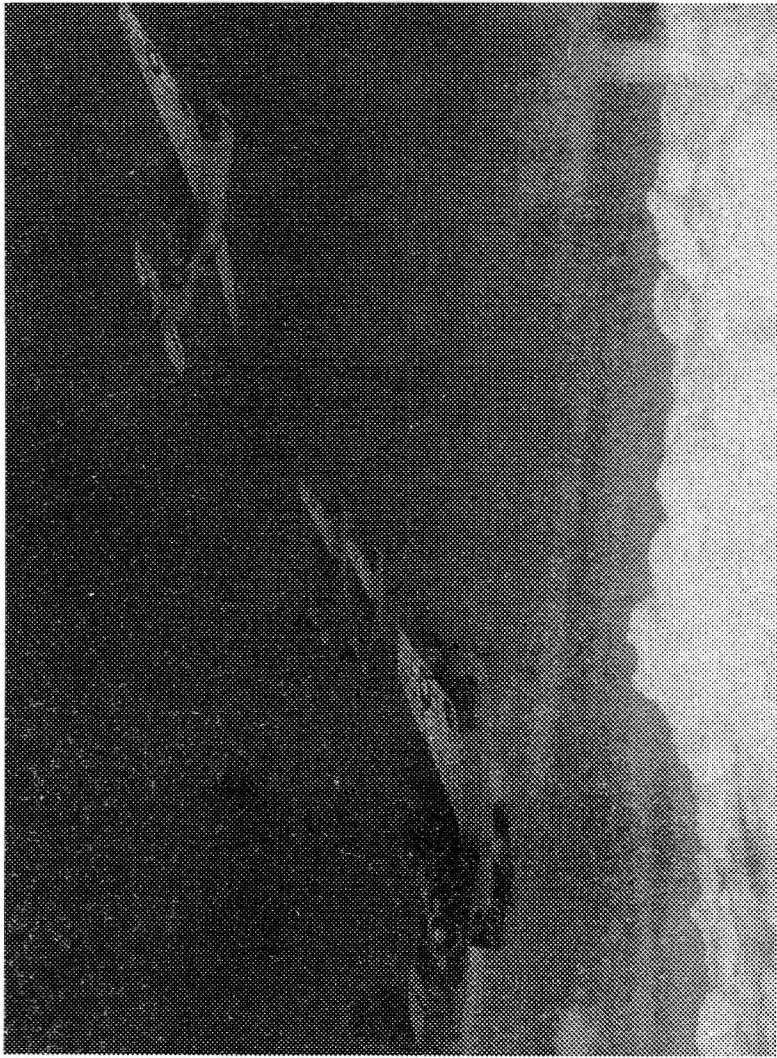
Starboard Watch AHP relax for a moment



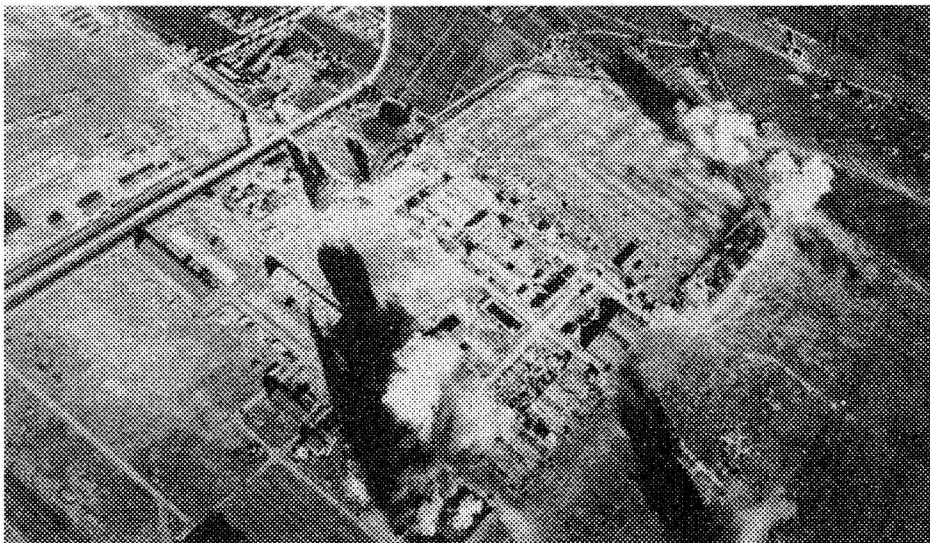
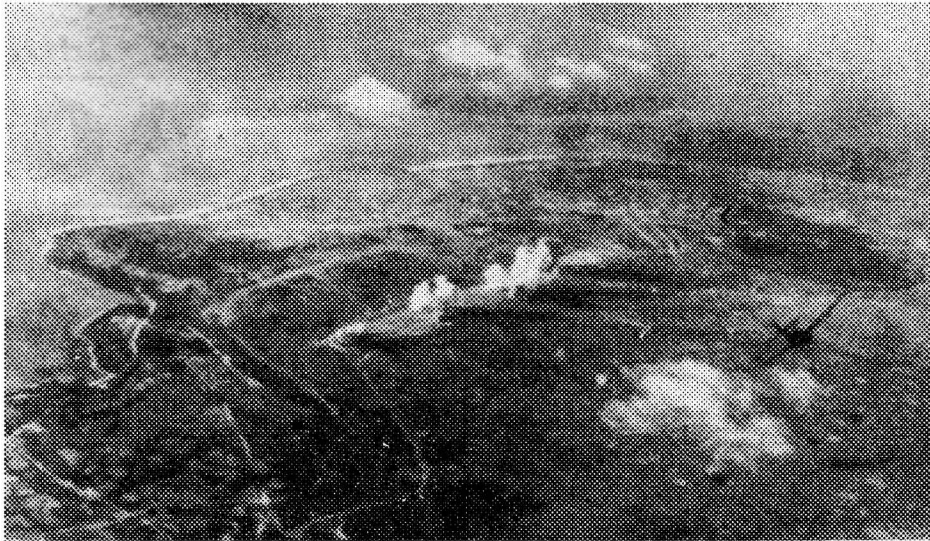
AHP Seamen Ward and Foley help ammunition ship



Air mechanics load bomb into an avenger



Formidable's 848 Squadron attack Japan for first time, July 24 1945



848 Squadron attack Tokushima airfield, July 24 1945



Corsairs strike at enemy shipping in Onagawa Bay, August 9 1945



Special Sunday Magazine Edition

PACIFIC POST

No. 17

SUNDAY, AUGUST 6, 1945

FREE TO THE FLEET

Japan May Be Playing The "Last Card" Of Her Homeland Defence With The ...

SUICIDE PILOT

By BRIGADIER R. F. JOHNSON

British and American naval authorities seek the meaning of the Japanese "Kamikaze" technique, the new approach to the age-old suicide cult of the Orient.

What is it that sends the Jap aviator, consecrated to death, swooping in a crash-dive against heavily armed war-ships?

He knows that only one in ten will live through the A.A. barrage, only one in a hundred will score a hit, and not a single one will survive.

Jet Torpedoes ...

Crash diving is not new. The Japs have practiced it since the war began, in nose-or-outrigger attacks, on tempting targets. But in the early days it was the sacrifice of one pilot on a single target; in the present, on a whole fleet.

This new technique is different. From hundreds of pick-a-track "plane flying" at 100 thousand feet the jet-driven "Baka" torpedoes are launched in a swarming herd; not one direct hit

has so far sent a fast carrier, battleship or cruiser to the bottom.

Each, three-to-a-crew, believes in no all-out the Japs use. Technique as minutely drilled as their own saves the ship. A duck, a crawl, a rearing maneuver of whirling debris and dense and the asbestos-lined fire parties have their noses on the white-hot furnace-point which a second tap was a jet-plane and a man.

That white-hot furnace point is the end. The Jap suicide pilot knows it long, long before the landing which sends him off on his last flight. Months before he has been training for an attack to succeed, but for this attack, this moment of death.

He was consecrated to it in a priestly ceremony. Weeks before he had looked from his parent's place he was a marked man. His family had been told of his death—though death was weeks ahead. Torpedoes do not present themselves every day.

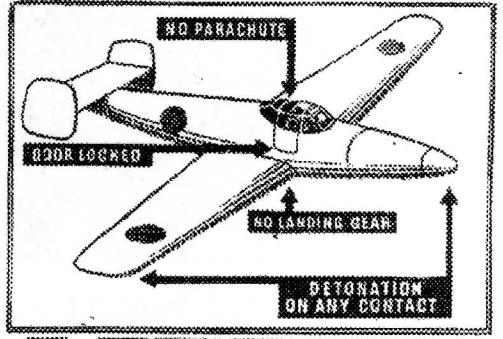
five hundred mile-an-hour dive. They make only one.

The pilot is locked in his cockpit. There is no "way out." He has no parachute. He has no landing gear. The fuselage and wings carry a ton of high explosive, with what is technically known as an "all-ways" fuse, set to detonate the moment the way on his nose dive is checked—by the hammer-blow of an A.A. shell; by impact with the water as he hits the sea, or, in the case of a hundred chance, on the enemy warship's deck as he dives home.

Cold Heroism ...

The pilot is not in the sinking of an Allied carrier or the escort destroyer "Baka" torpedoes are launched in a swarming herd; not one direct hit

THE 'PLANE



THE HAZARDS OF MIDGET SUBMARINES

By Rear-Admiral H. V. THURSFIELD

Recently the King invested two British naval officers, Lieutenants Basil Place, D.S.C., R.N., and Donald Cameron, R.N.R., with the Victoria Crosses awarded to them for their remarkable exploit in shabbling the German battleship, Tirpitz, as she lay in her Norwegian anchorage in Alsen Fjord, in September, 1943.

Those who choose her anchorage found probably the most secure retreat in the world for a ship of war. It was 100 miles from the nearest British base, and safe from attack by land-based aircraft. It was over fifty miles from the nearest sea, approachable only through narrow fjords.

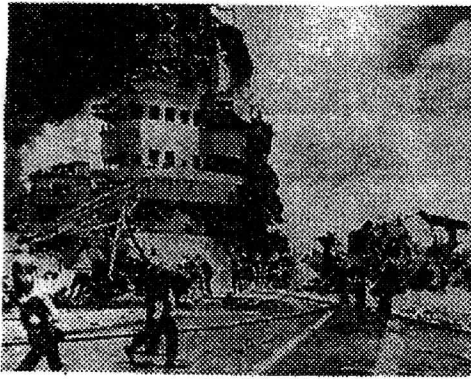
Counting clear of that, he then looks in the Tirpitz's own log that various maneuvers—some fine of course—had been made while it. He was able, although he was not in the way of action, to see where the ship and to see changes—she was toward and away.

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THE ATTACK



AUSTRALIAN GIRLS HAVE R. N. HUSBANDS

Five members of the ship's company of one of H.M. Ships now with the British Pacific Fleet off the shores of Japan have married Australian girls since they left the United Kingdom for the Pacific.

In Christmas Day, 1944, Leading Seaman William Ernest Hales, twenty-one, of Watson-on-Thames was invited to a home in Sydney. He met twenty-year-old Agnes Frances Short. They fell in love and on Monday to the day after Hales arrived in Australia, they were married.

To Live in Australia? ... Shortly afterwards, Leading Seaman Hales was drafted to a cruiser. When next he is given leave, he and Mrs. Hales will discuss whether they will live in England or Australia after the war.

A shipmate, Able Seaman John Talbot of Wellington, Shrotonite, who married Miss Marie Short, of Sydney, has decided to make his home in New South Wales, it is possible.

They met because Miss Hunt, when employed by a meat company, enclosed a note stating her name and address, as a tin of bully beef which was sent to the Middle East.

Not With Bully Beef ... The tin was opened by Able Seaman Fred Glass, C. W. Yates in the Western Desert, but he and his younger brother John began correspondence with Miss Hunt.

The Man ...

The local newspaper had related his military practice. Months before they set themselves to for their last flight, the Jap suicide pilot was already he equidistant of the dead.

Their collision comes up with it, the complete, tactical realization of a nation which knows it is doing it, a nation whose history stories have been encouraged since as the experience of the adventure. The Navy—devoted, the knights who average their dead and dead, the task accomplished, committed here—his with the accident event; this tale to the Japanese child is what Hales had to be not in a moment of time.

It holds a grim lesson for our forces which will draw home the death blow on Japan. That is how they will fight.

The Price Paid ...

But the strategists who will direct the attack will have to ponder another problem. If this is the price Japan is required to pay to keep our ships from her shores—the flower of her pilots, plants that cannot be replaced—does it mean that this is her last card?

Japan's coast defenses, their strength and location have been a mystery, or our keenest technical observers.

Suppose a two-confident Japan had not the defense of her coast to her own defense goes to sea?

Can this be the meaning of the Kamikaze Corps and their lives to death?

Sailors Have Girl 'Pen Pals'

They lonely girls of Manchester are now writing to fifteen lonely sailors, half a dozen serving in H.M.S. Kempenfelt, and the rest stationed with the Fleet Air Arm at Lee-on-Solent, H.M.S. Daedalus.

It all began when a rating in H.M.S. Kempenfelt, a destroyer, accepted by Manchester, wrote to the Mayor asking him if he could put him in touch with a girl 'pen-pal'. When the Mayor agreed to find the girl the rating must have told his friends. But how H.M.S. Daedalus come to a 'match-up' is not revealed.

Two Girls—One Rating ...

Two girls have been assigned to each other and some confess that they are something the prospect of a future wedding.

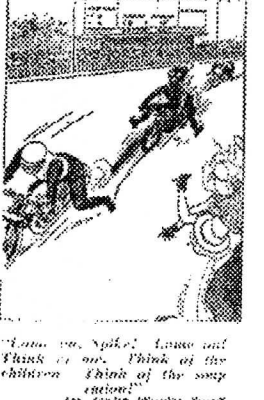
Delayed Depth Charges ...

They are not so much with torpedoes, but with two enormous depth charges each, designed to be let go to the bottom, underneath the ship to be detonated, and so splitting of a great hole.

Dived at Dawn ...

Lieutenants Place chose the entrance to the fleet anchorage where there was a cluster of small islands in their anchorage. Through he had no doubt that these islands once or twice a German boat went in or out, he was not seen. The others chose more secluded spots. All three spots at dawn and again for the inner recesses of the fjord, where the Tirpitz was lying.

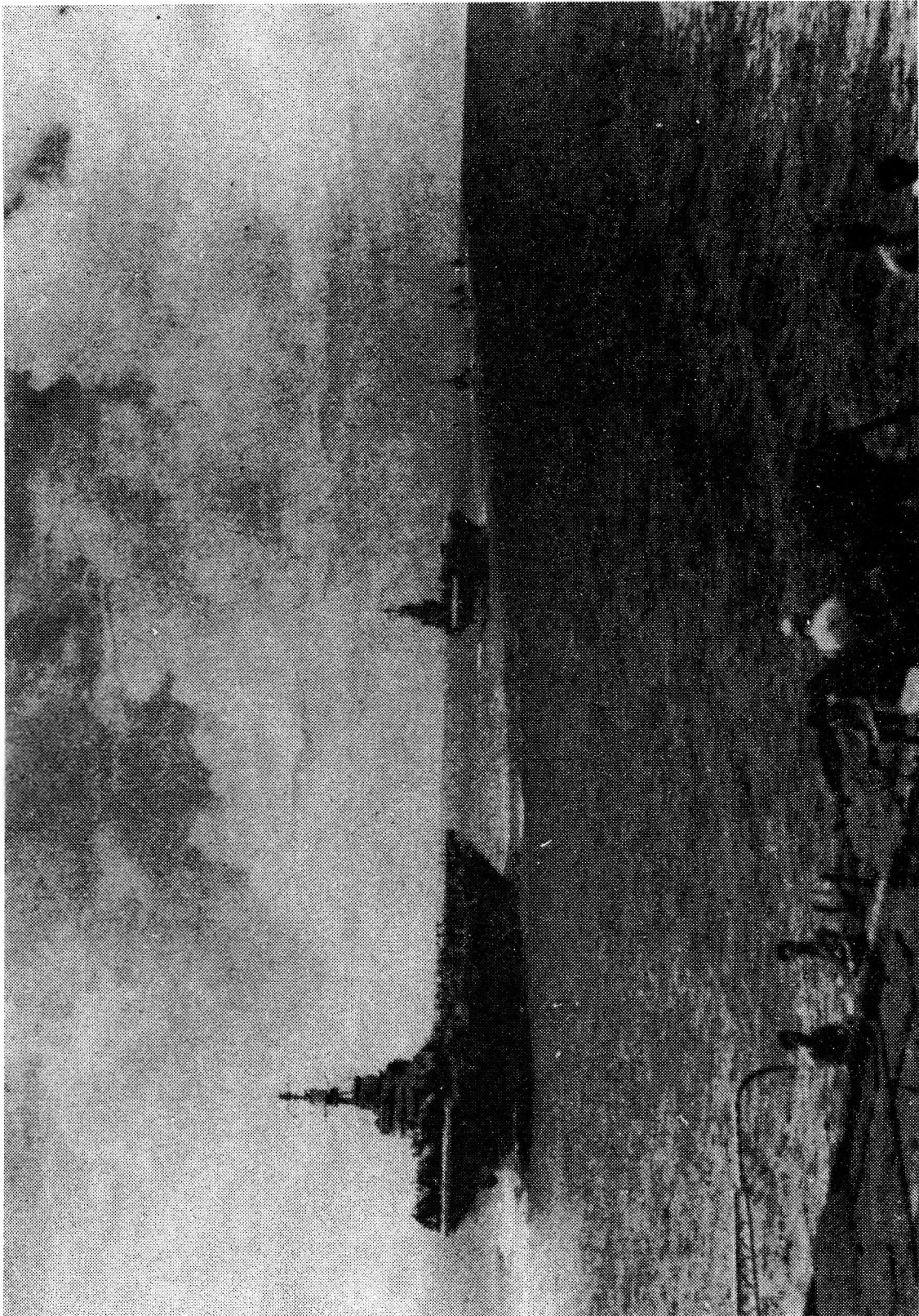
SPEEDWAYS AGAIN



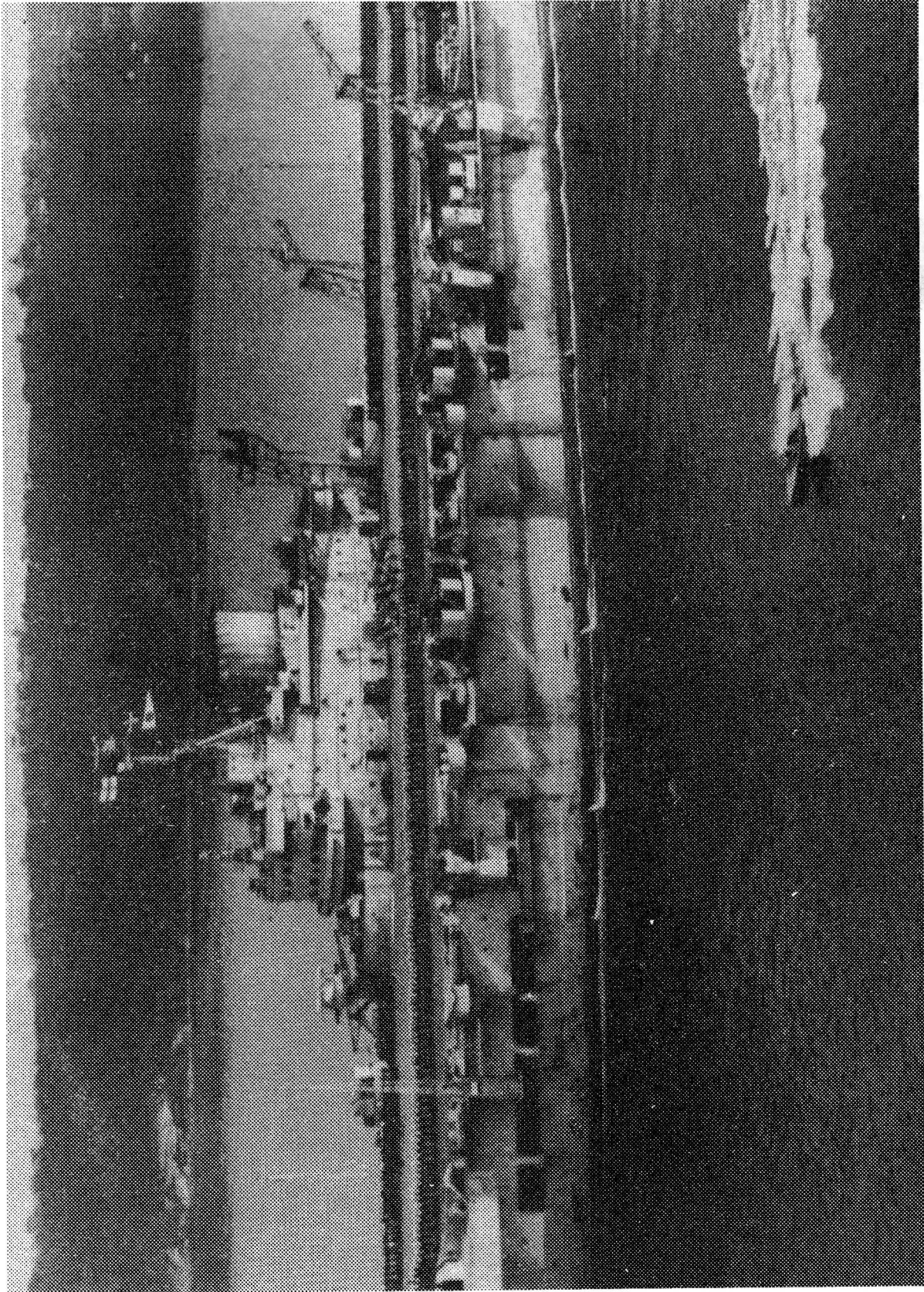
Think of the speed!



Splice the Mainbrace, VJ Day, August 15 1945



The First Carrier Task Force led by HMS Formidable, Flagship of Vice Admiral Sir Philip Vian.
In line astern are Implacable, Victorious and destroyers Grenville, Undine, Urchin and Urania

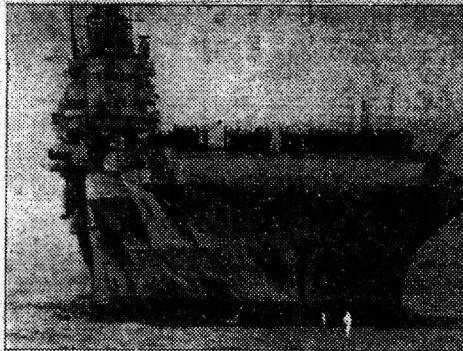


HMS Formidable, Flagship of the First Carrier Force BPF,
enters Sydney Harbour in triumph August 23 1945

British Naval Task Force Makes Spectacular Entry Into Sydney Harbor



Victorious Fleet Heralds Portion of a British task force, comprising the great British aircraft carriers Formidable and Implacable, with destroyers Urchin, Grenville, and Urdine, entered Sydney Harbor through cuts "made today on their waters" from the "Invincible" operation. They had taken part in the operations close-in against the Japanese home islands. Urdine attacked the first enemy vessels and caused their damage points.



Flagship HMS Formidable, one of Britain's great aircraft carriers, seen entering Sydney Harbor today as flagship of the fleet which, operating after taking part in the attack on Japan.



In Port: Deck crew of HMS Formidable greet the crowd as they walk for the great carrier in back view from Japanese waters today.

Sydney's Welcome To Fleet

Sydney's welcome to units of the victorious British Pacific Fleet task force which arrived today direct from the area where it dealt mortal blows at Japan began feebly, but gained in tempo as it progressed.

ON time to the minute, the ships appeared out of the grey mist at the Heads at 8 a.m. and were greeted by Catalinas and other service aircraft which dipped and wheeled in enthusiastic salutes.

Small boats of the Royal Australian and South Islands made up in excitement what they lacked in numbers, shouting and waving furiously as the vessels approached.

Anti-aircraft gunners on the carrier Formidable led the majestic procession, followed by the carrier Implacable and three escorting destroyers.

Salutes passed on their decks gave the "V" and "thumbs up" signs and showed cheer greetings. Even the Avenger aircraft, which had been flight deck with their wings folded in the semblance of a "V" seemed to be unitedly saying "V for Victory."

Small Boat Escort

A disappointing feature of the welcome at the Heads was the absence of privately-owned small craft, only launches in the vicinity being those of the harbor master and two hired launches crammed with waving women and children.

As the force passed through the boom small boats and launches of all types and sizes approached from portholes as if by magic and skirted about the warships.

Various vantage points below the boom deck had their gathering of enthusiastic citizens, mostly women and children, waving flags, scarfs, pennants and handkerchiefs.

At Middle Head, Clifton Gardens and Bradley's Head, thousands fied with each other in the frenzy of their greeting as each ship passed.

Naval craft had up at Garden Island were also crowded with cheering backyard workers and naval personnel.

CO Got DSC

Lieut. Commander D. Parker, commander of the Corsair Squadron, was decorated for brilliant leading of anti-shipping and anti-airfield strikes in the Inland Sea area.

Canadian Sub-Lieut. W. Atkinson, Helms pilot, gained his DSC for attacks on Jap torpedo planes.

On July 26, Atkinson and Sub-Lieut. R. F. Mackie, of NZ, intercepted six Japs heading towards the Fleet at dusk.

Atkinson blew one to pieces, shot down the next, and overshot the third, but turned and damaged it.

The ships are berthed as follows:—Formidable, No. 3, Woolloomooloo; Implacable, No. 2, near Garden Island; Grenville, No. 4, Woolloomooloo; Urdine and Urdine, Kurrawa Point.

Late this afternoon the carrier, Victorious, escorted by the destroyer Uranus, is due.

The carrier will berth at No. 5 buoy, near Garden Island; Grenville, at No. 4, Woolloomooloo; Urdine and Urdine, Kurrawa Point.

Lieut. P. S. Brewer, of Hull, had "a wonderful time" when he found six Jap four-engine flying-boats and eight float-planes unprinted in a secluded bay near NW Hornby.

"They were sitting there, they burned beautifully," according to a fellow-pilot.

HIT THE JAPS AT HOME



LEFT: Lieut. Commander Richard Bigg-Wither, of Pembury, Kent, commander of a Corsair Squadron, who shot down a Japanese fighter with his first burst during a raid on Moizuro. **RIGHT:** Sub-Lieut. Robert Wilson, of Bath, Somerset, observer, said that in an Avenger strike against Takahama airfield and Harima shipyards he saw a case of "queuing up to go to and bomb." Both men arrived in Sydney today in the aircraft-carrier Formidable.

R.N. SHIPS HERE TO-DAY

Avengers and Corsairs of the returning units of the task force of the British Pacific Fleet landed at a New South Wales naval air station yesterday. Aircraft-carriers and destroyers will reach Sydney to-day and be given a suitable welcome.

Planes of this force took part in the first heavy bombardment of the Japanese home islands.

At 8 a.m. to-day the carriers Formidable and Implacable (each 23,000 tons), escorted by the destroyers Grenville, Urdine, and Urchin, will enter Sydney Harbour. The 23,000-ton carrier Victorious, accompanied by the destroyer Uranus, is expected later to-day.

Vice-Admiral Sir Philip Vian, D.S.O., in command of the carriers in the task force, is flying his flag in Formidable.

The ships have been at sea for more than three months, and their crews will be given leave in Sydney.

Shipping in the harbour will greet the warships with sirens. Many ferries will swing in close to the warships as they pass, but as the arrival of the first vessels is at a peak hour ferries will not be available to meet them at the Heads.

V.A.'s To Travel On Aircraft-Carrier

The 11 V.A.'s leaving today for the Far East on a P.O.W. mercy mission will have the unique experience of serving on a British warship.

The girls were selected from 100 volunteers to serve on the aircraft-carrier Formidable.

Yesterday they were widely excited about their adventure.

They had to leave jobs at last minute notice.

Among the party were stenographers, clerks, a doctor's assistant, and a full-time V.A.

Only member of the party who has taken a sea trip before is Miss Noell Pitt, who visited New Guinea some years ago.

Families pooled coupons to buy clothes for them, as V.A.'s provide their own uniforms.

Youngest member of the party 25-year-old Betty Gilling, of Strathfield, is founder of the N.E.W. Institute for Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Children.

Several of the married V.A.'s laughingly declared that their husbands were more thrilled about the trip than they were. "We don't know whether to be pleased about that or not," they said.

PLANE VANISHED WHEN JAP "SUICIDE" RAIDER HIT DECK

By Our Own Correspondent
Fleet Air Arm pilot 26-years-old Lieut. (A) Laurence Frank Auckland, R.N.V.R., serving with the British Pacific Fleet, waited to take off in an Avenger from the deck of his aircraft carrier.

As he was called up to taxi forward an aircraft swished overhead.

"I saw round red discs on it and knew it was a Jap," he said. "My engine was running, but I couldn't do anything because there were planes in front of me. The next thing I knew the Jap had hit the deck twenty-five yards ahead of me."

"You bet I hopped out pretty quickly, and after the mess had been cleared up, I went back to find my plane. It had gone—disappeared completely. I reckon I had a lucky escape."

Auckland comes from West Cross, Swansea. He was a pupil of Swansea Grammar School, and was one of the first batch of fifty Naval militia men called up in April, 1939. Since then he has seen action all over the world.

MARCH THROUGH STREETS
A march of the ships' personnel through Sydney streets is favoured by the Lord Mayor, Alderman W. Neville Harding.
"The fullest honours should be accorded to these men," he said last night. "The public realises that the men of these ships finished their job in the Western Hemisphere to come into the Pacific and face a new and terrible form of attack by suicide planes. They have undoubtedly shortened the war and have been directly responsible for saving many Australian lives."
"The work of these units of a great task force has made it possible to contact prisoners of war about whom many of us have been mentally tortured during the past three years."

Sydney Roars Great Welcome To Mighty British Carriers

Straight from the final bombardment of Tokio, five units of the British Fleet carrier task force received a true victors' welcome in Sydney today.

JAP ATTACK ON FLEET THWARTED

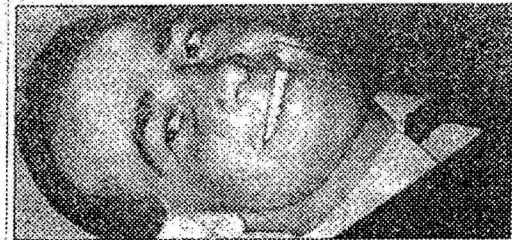
How an enemy torpedo attack on the British Pacific Fleet carrier force off Japan was thwarted by what has been described as the most timely submarine attack in the history of the Pacific.

The attack was made on the carrier *Formidable* returned to Sydney today with other units of the Task Force.

Commander of *Formidable*, was accompanied from the A.L.F. to the R.A.A.F. and sent to the R.N. for the action against Japan.

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Sub-Lieut. Stirling, NZ Corsair pilot of HMS *Formidable*, suffered a stiff neck when his plane crashed into Ousewa Harbor, New Zealand, on July 22. He is flanked by his life raft and stowed sail and was later picked up by a US submarine.

Enormous Damage

On this one day—

- 224 Jap aircraft were destroyed, and 141 damaged on the ground;
- Nine small vessels were sunk, including a submarine;
- Twenty-five small vessels were damaged;
- Forteen locomotives and 11 tankcars were destroyed.

Hitoshima was "rescued" for the first atom bomb, and carrier pilots were told to keep away from it, according to men on the *Formidable*.

"We guessed there was something really dire for Hitoshima," said Sub-Lieut. R. E. Chapman, leader of the *Formidable* carrier force.

United States and Dutch warships could not make up for it with vigorous attack on the Japanese.

Eighty-odd Japanese and speed-boats charged around the carrier as they moved in.

"Dressed Ship"

Coming down the Harbor, the British crews "dressed" ship, facing outwards along the decks.

As they passed other ships they saw the White Ensign, bough blew and others saluted.

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Conquerors Cheered: Section of the crew of the great aircraft-carrier HMS *Formidable* as she berthed in Sydney Harbor today.

CROWDS EXPECTED TO WATCH SHIPS' ARRIVAL

Crowds are expected to watch the arrival of units of the British Fleet which recently took part in the final assault on Japan.

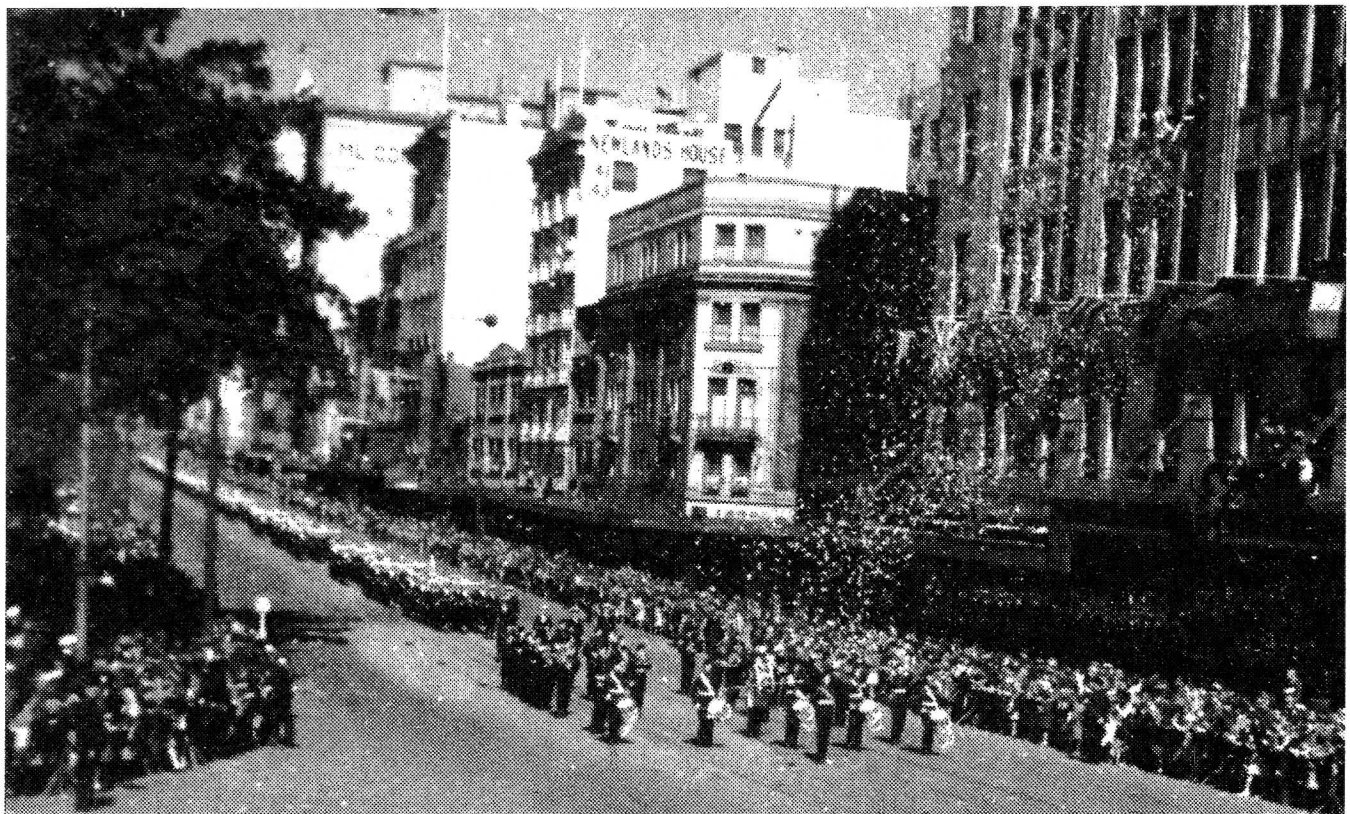
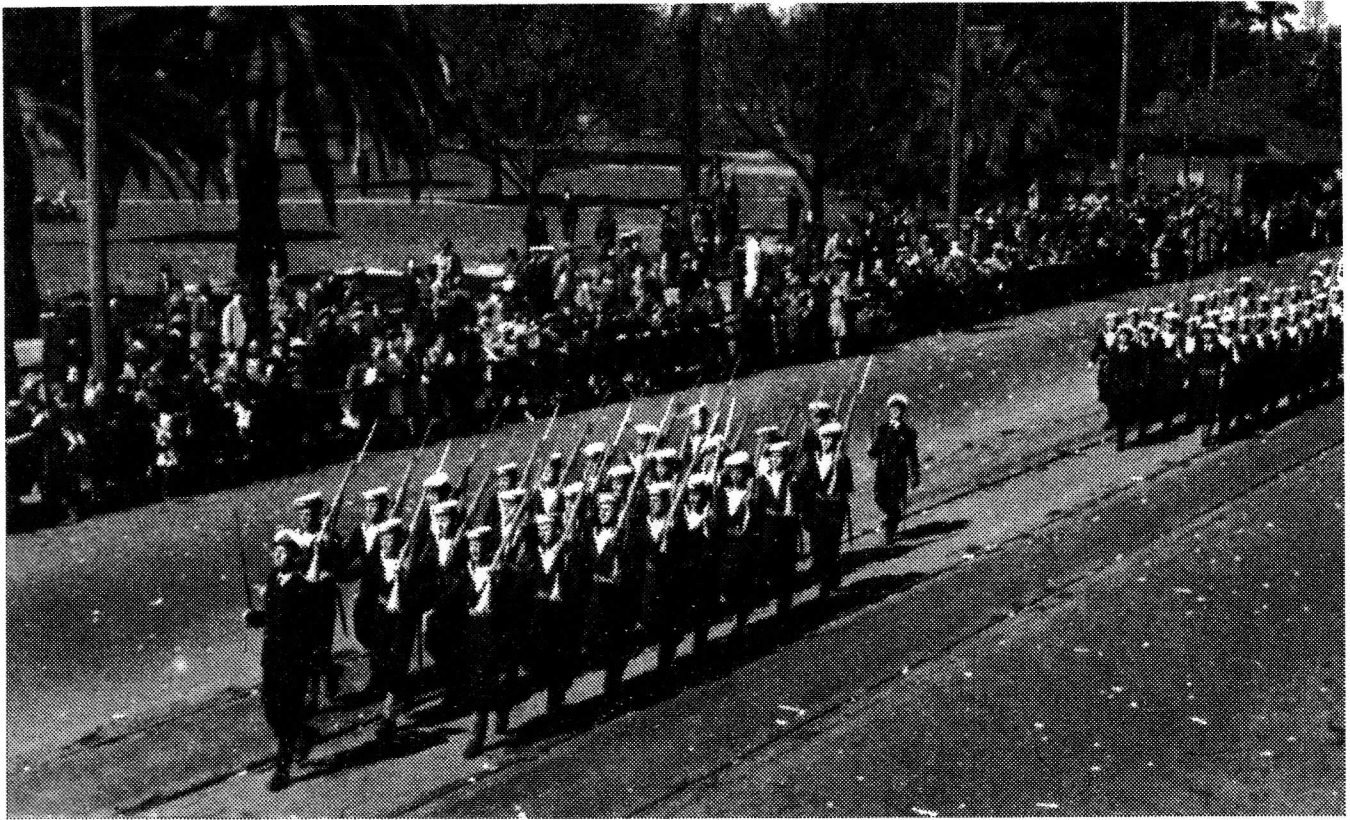
Five British warships will arrive at Sydney Heads at 9 a.m. They are the 21,000-ton aircraft-carrier HMS *Formidable* and HMS *Indomitable*, HMS *Uganda*, HMS *Upholder*, and HMS *Uranus*.

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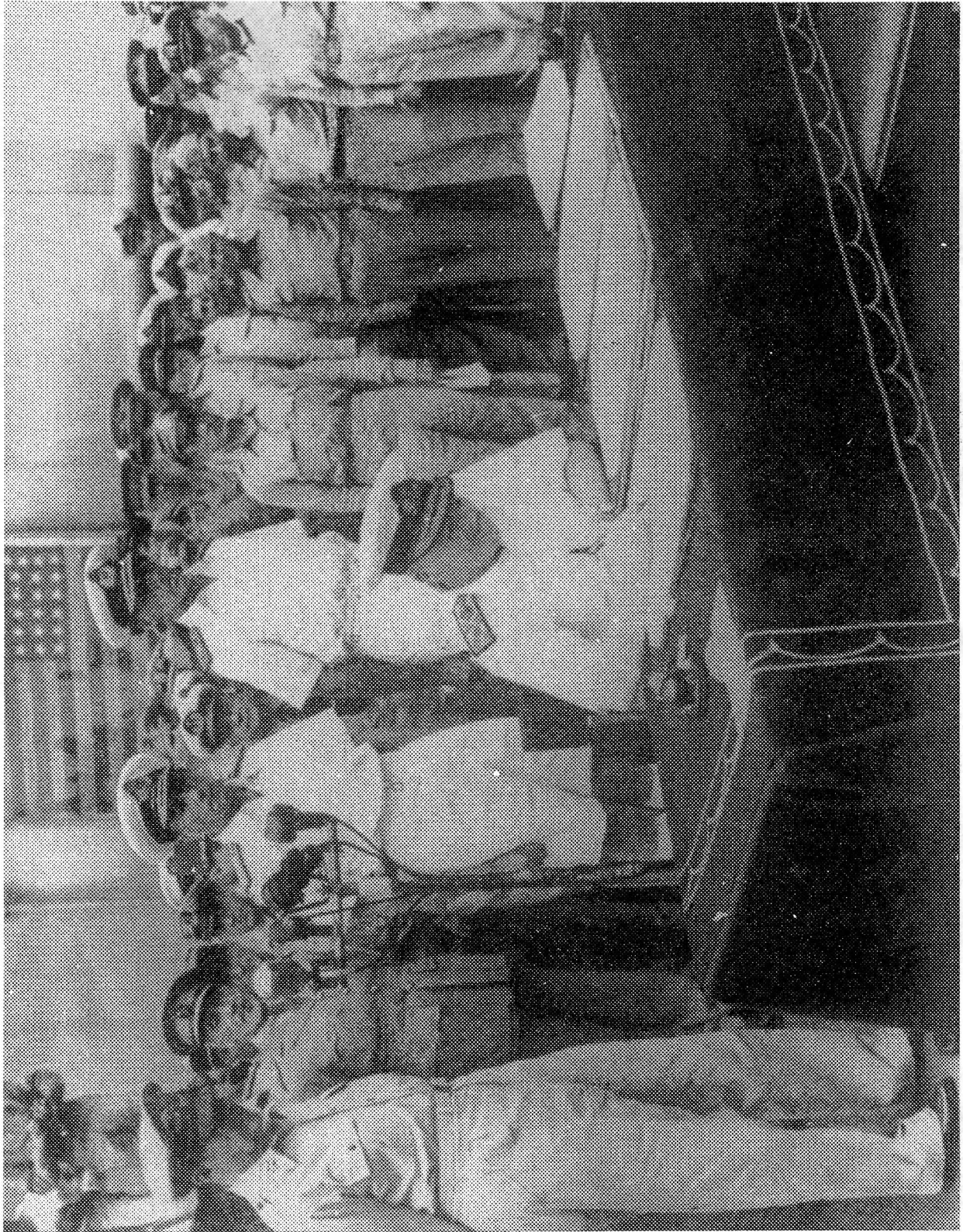
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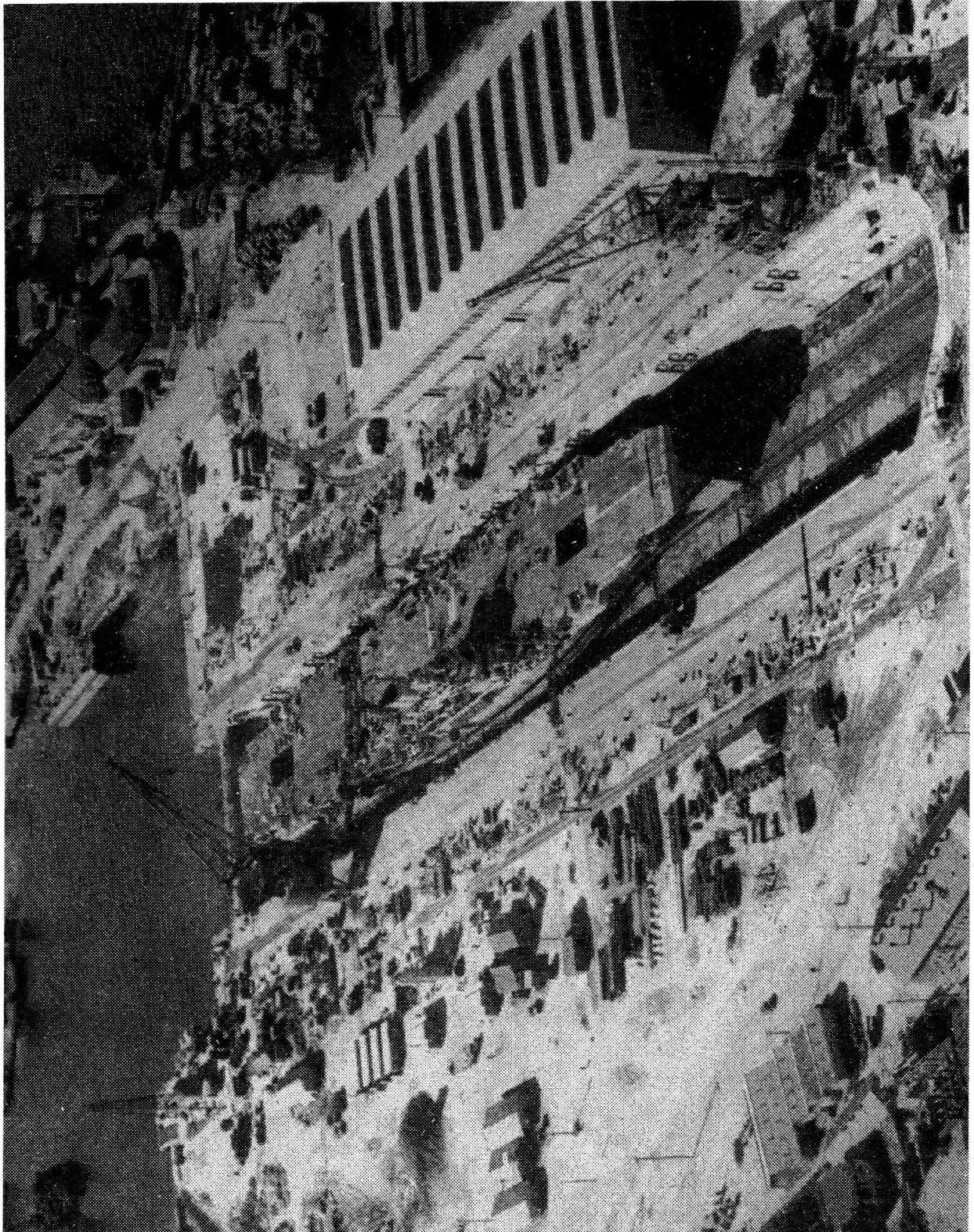
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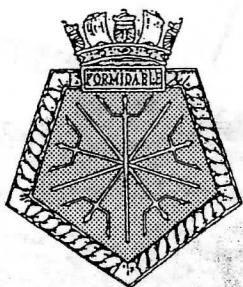
A Victory Parade through Sydney by men of the British Pacific Fleet



Admiral Rawlings looks on as Admiral Fraser signs Japanese surrender.
Tokyo Bay, September 2 1945 on board USS Missouri



HMS Formidable in the Captain Cook Graving Dock, Sydney, September 8 1945



PART FIVE

September 1945 - February 1946

Angels of Mercy

Manila

Returned Prisoners of War

Rabaul

Bombay

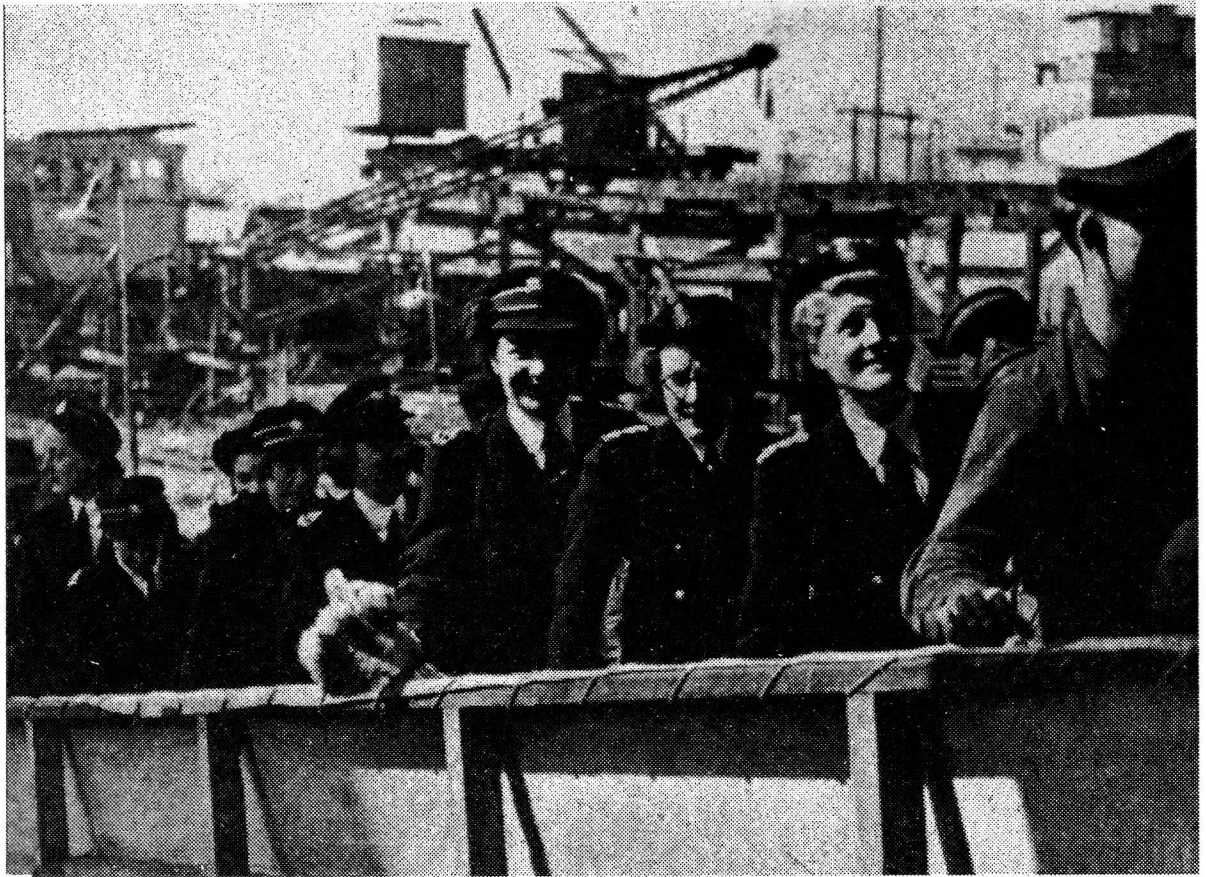
Batavia

Tarakan

Thank You Australia

Capetown

Portsmouth



ANGELS OF MERCY - Queen Alexandria's Naval Nurses
V.A.D.'s and Red Cross Welfare Officers



A giant bedroom for Returned Prisoners of War

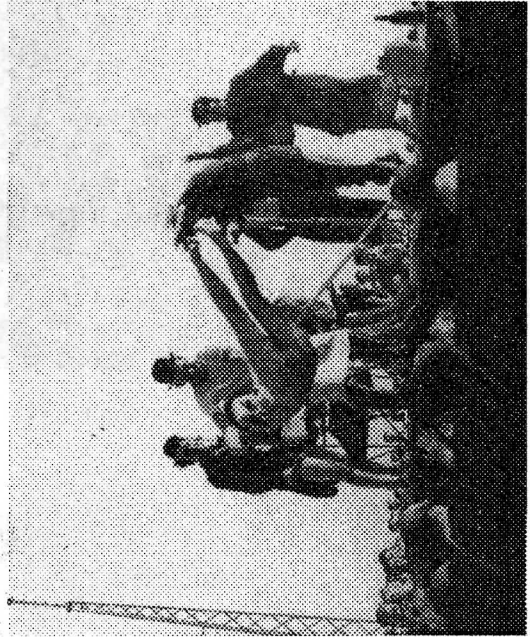
SHIPBORNE MERMAIDS — NOMINAL ROLL

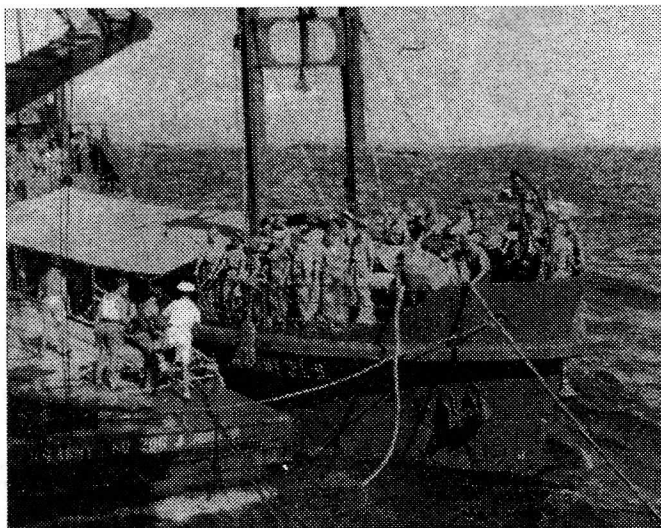
M. Grant	Nursing Sister (Seaman)	J. Alderson	Assistant Quartermaster
G. Marshall	Nursing Sister	N. Pike	Assistant Quartermaster
C. F. Cooke	Nursing Sister	M. Lanco	Assistant Quartermaster
K. Thomas	Nursing Sister	E. Gilling	Assistant Quartermaster
P. Hobbs	First Cross Welfare Officer	E. Jardine	Superintendent V.A.D.
G. M. Hoffmann	First Cross Welfare Officer	F. M. Gumpson	Senior V.A.D.
F. Buckwell	First Cross Welfare Officer	J. B. Peadar	V.A.D.
J. Richardson	Second Cross Welfare Officer	E. McDonalds	V.A.D.
A. Robinson	Communicant	B. J. Gray	V.A.D.
C. Jackson	Assistant Commandant	W. E. Marron	V.A.D.
E. Allen	Assistant Commandant	A. Taylor	V.A.D.
M. Mearns	Quartermaster	A. G. Hunt	V.A.D.
I. King	Assistant Quartermaster		

* Diggers. † Females.

THE CHARACTERS

Ensign	Stephen	H. H. Potter, Chief Yeoman of Signals, P. IX 32206	Poole	POX 151 Sgt. G. Lang R.M.
Chief Artist	Arthur	A. B. Barton, Royal Navy		POX 209 Cpl. L. J. Stokes, R.N.
Queen Amphitrite		F. H. F. Martin, Sick Berth Attendant, P. MX 35200		POX 385 Cpl. L. Thorpe R.M.
Chief of the Court		Phyllis O'Garra, Royal Navy		RABEK 584 Muson. G. J. Parnell, French
Les Barber		Leutenant - Commander Walton Popham, M.B.E., R.N.V.R.	Guard and Buglers	PLFX 421 Sgt. W. J. T. Pearce, R.M.
And Barber		A. McGuinness, Leading Seaman, P. SX 2853		POX 109 Cpl. A. Hurry R.M.
Doctor		F. T. Mack, Store Chief Petty Officer, P. MX 4881		POX 146 Marine G. Edwards
Decks		B. A. Duffell, Petty Officer, P. J 1198		PLXX 246 Marine J. W. Ward
		J. T. Chubbuck, Petty Officer, P. SX 18445		CHIX 418 Marine J. A. Sevidice
		J. Sheel, Petty Officer, P. JX 14482		POX 18205 Marine W. B. C. Gattis
		C. J. Gifford, Petty Officer, D. SX 14405		POX 18387 Marine N. A. Colton
				POX 12848 Marine K. P. Collier

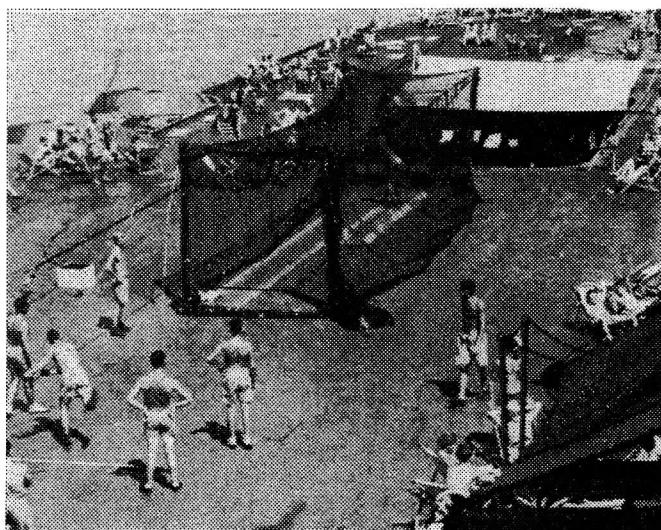




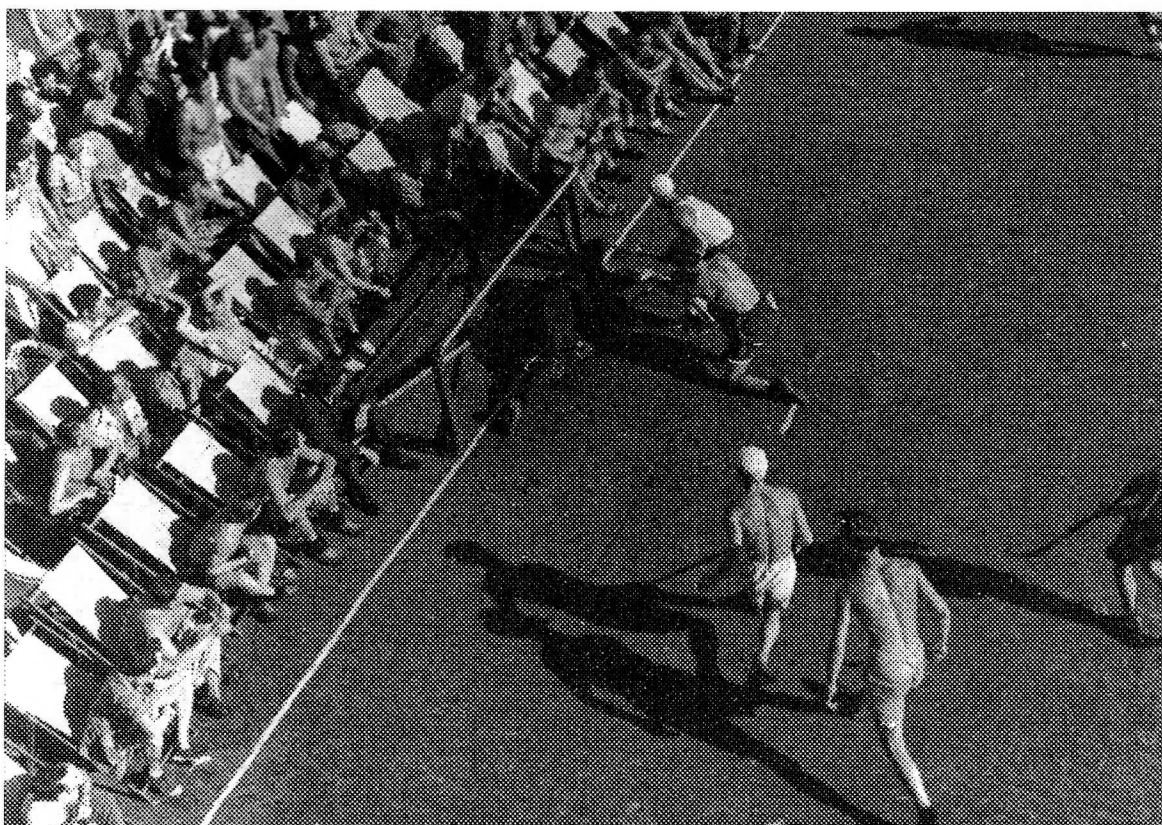
manila Bay, October 1945. Australian POWs come on board



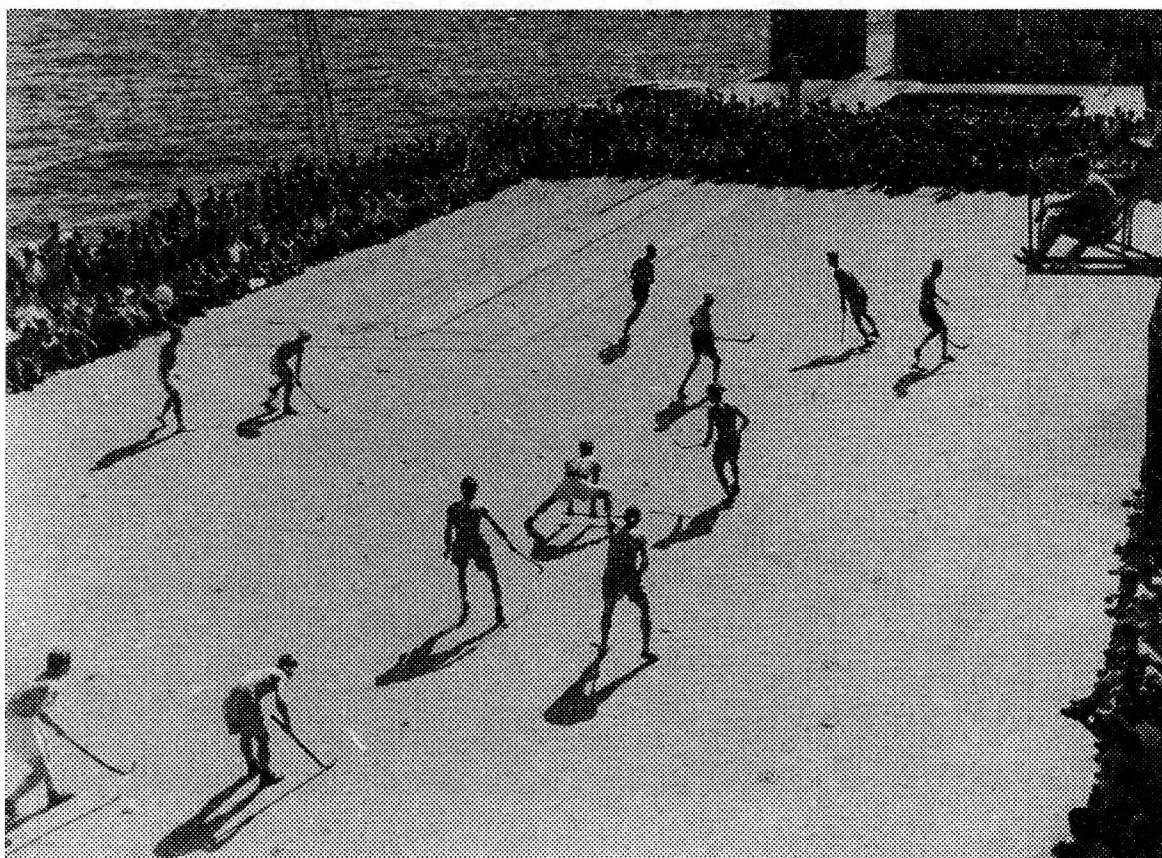
Red Cross distribute nutty and other comforts



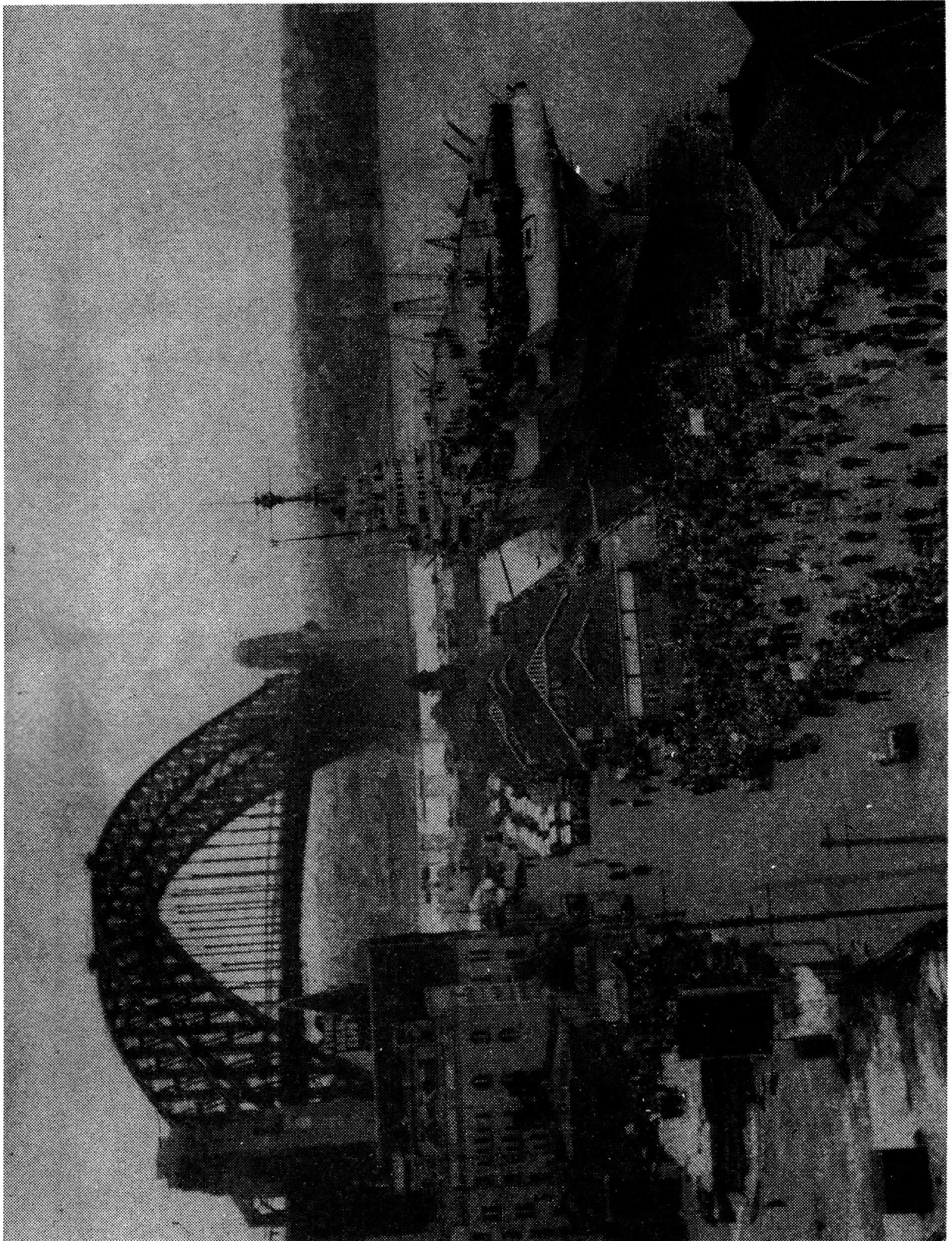
Diggers prepare for the next Test Match



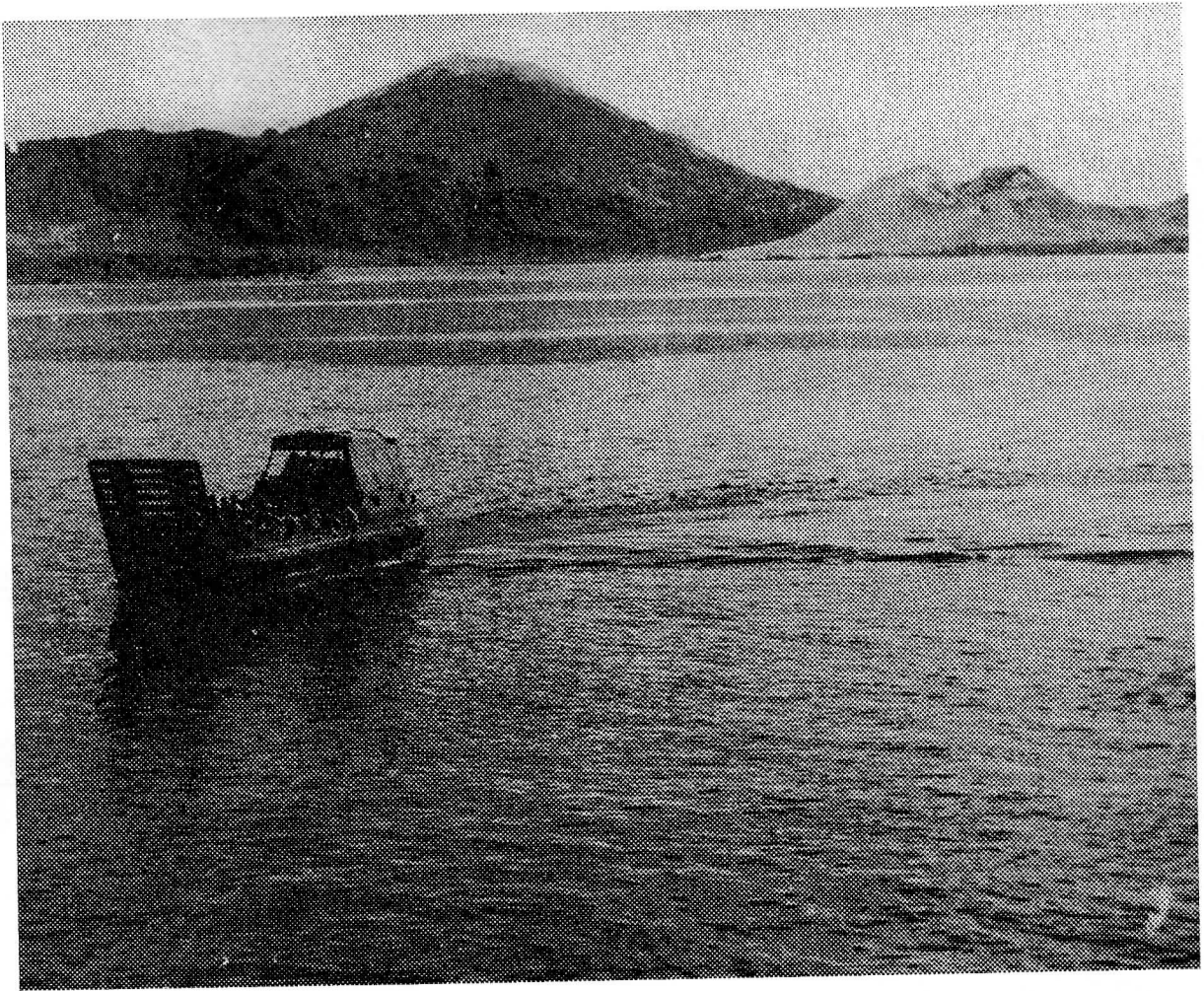
No way through - this time



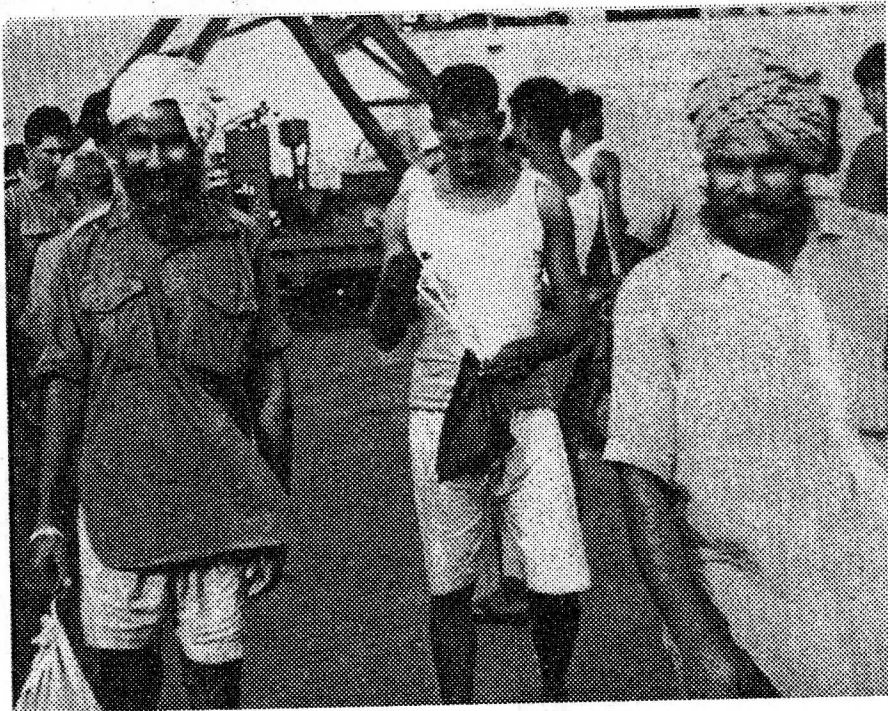
The AHP Hockey Teams fight it out for a place in the final



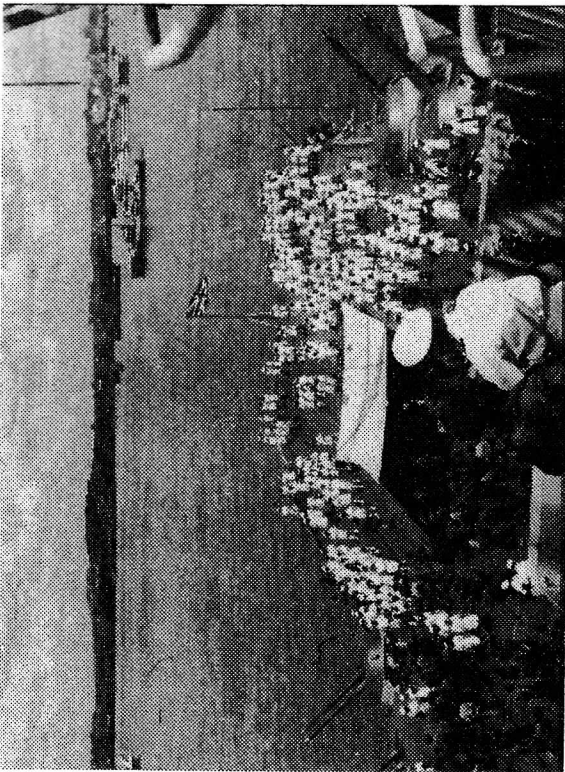
Welcome Home



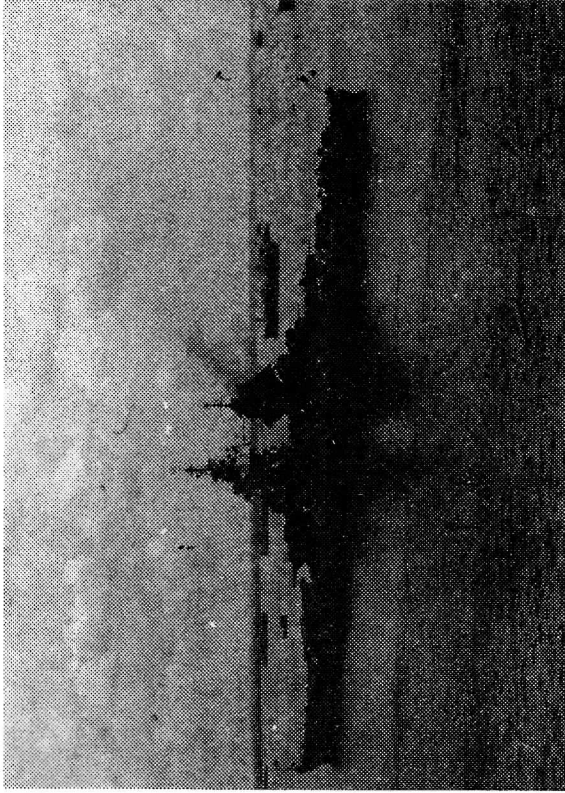
Former Indian prisoners board Formidable at Rabaul



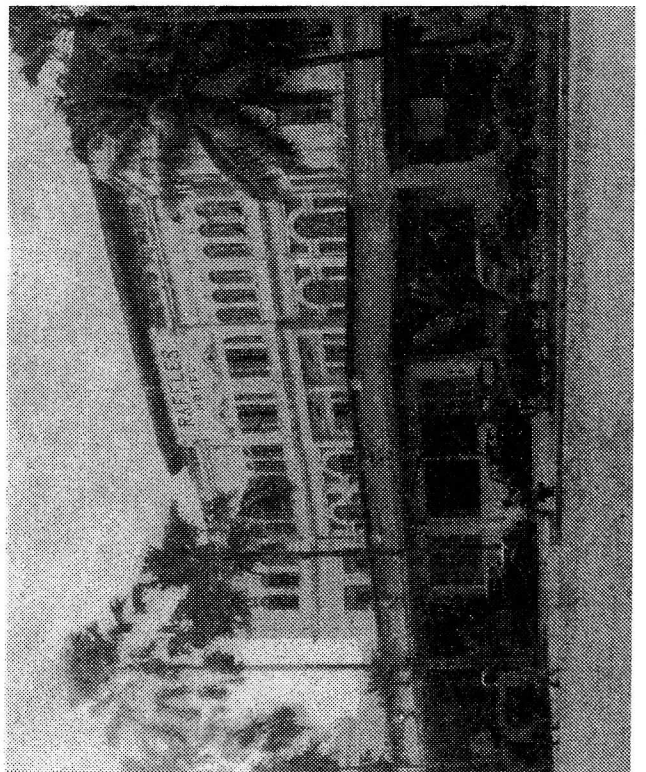
Free to go home



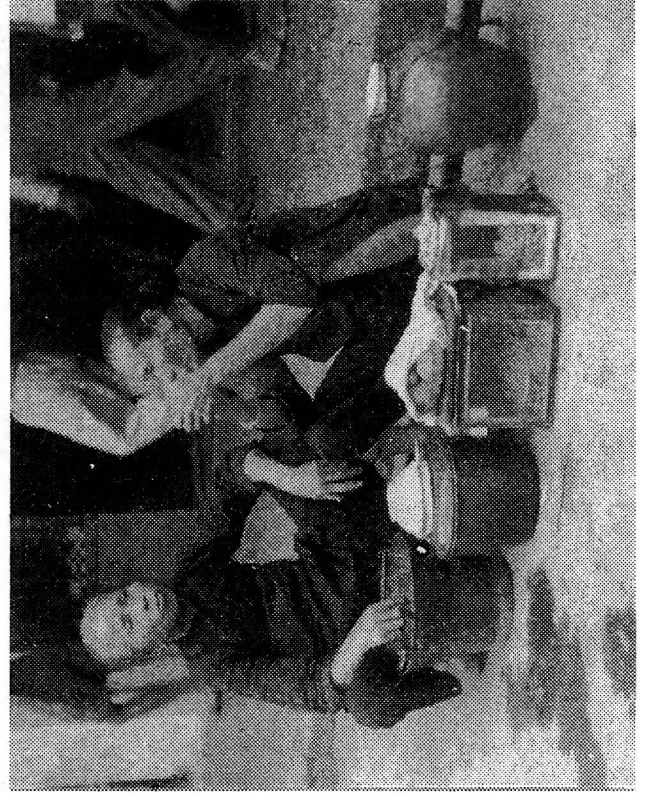
Formidable approaches Singapore



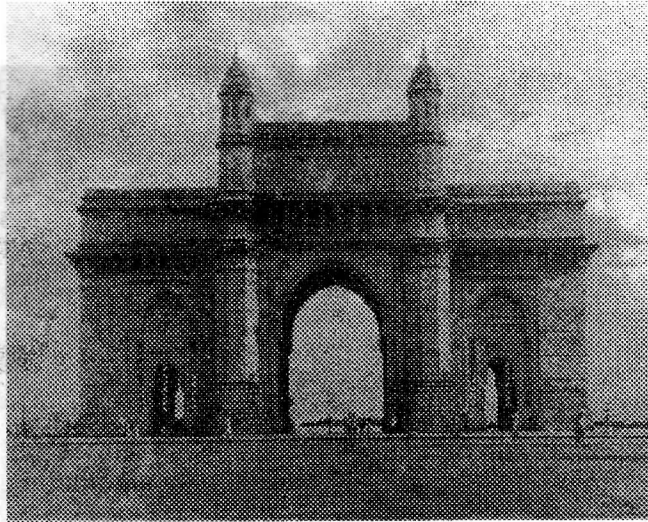
The French battleship 'Richeleau'



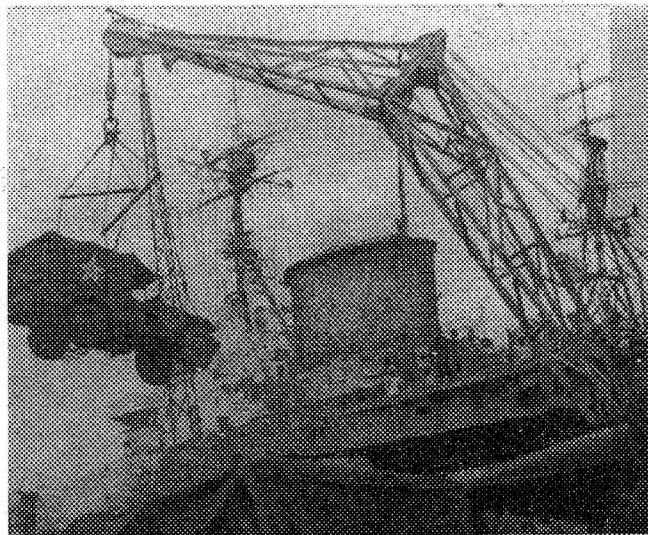
Raffles Hotel, November 1945



A Singapore street scene, 1945



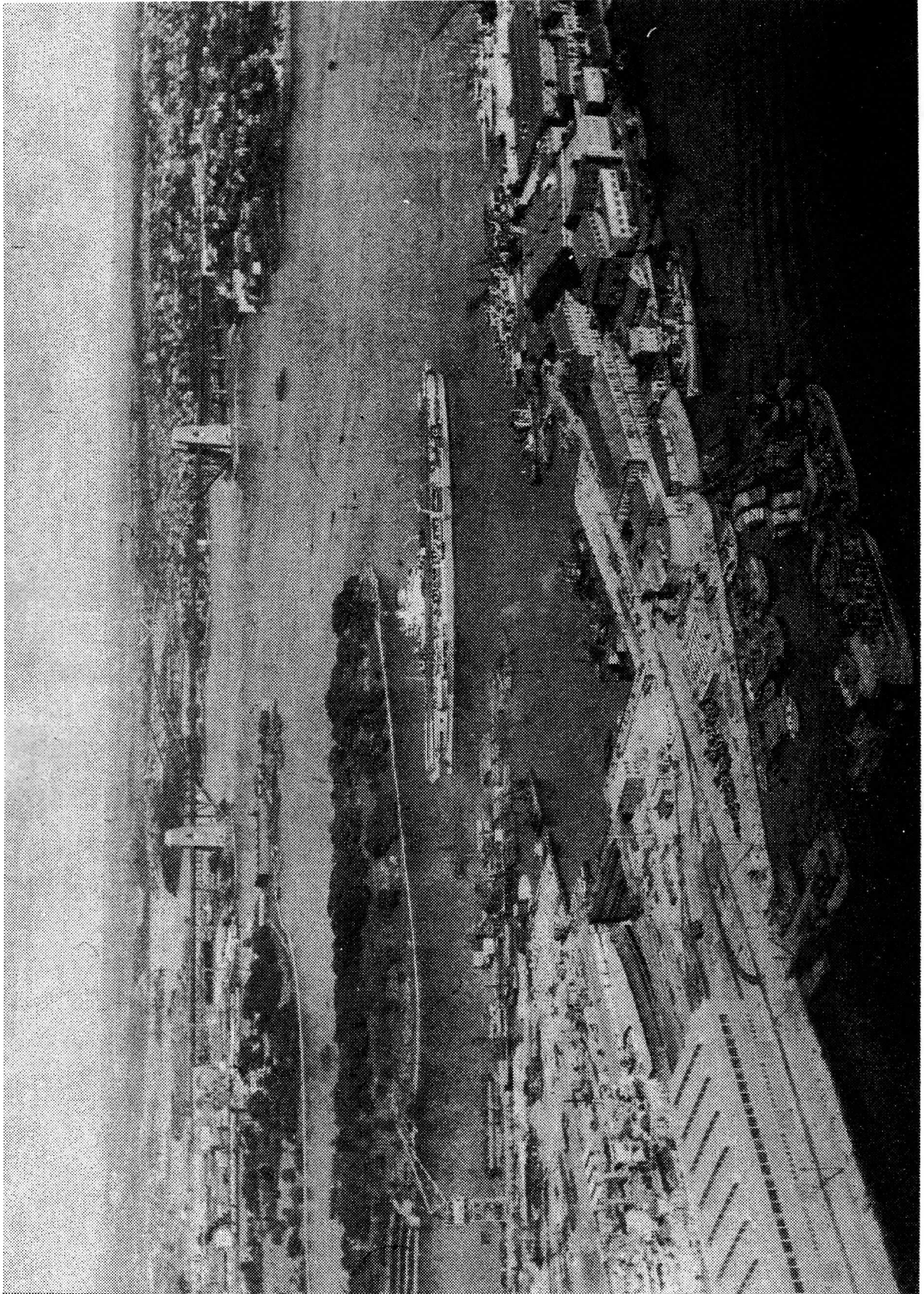
The Gateway to India, Bombay



There was a troopship just leaving Bombay bound for old Java's shores



Indian Army Band entertain on flightdeck



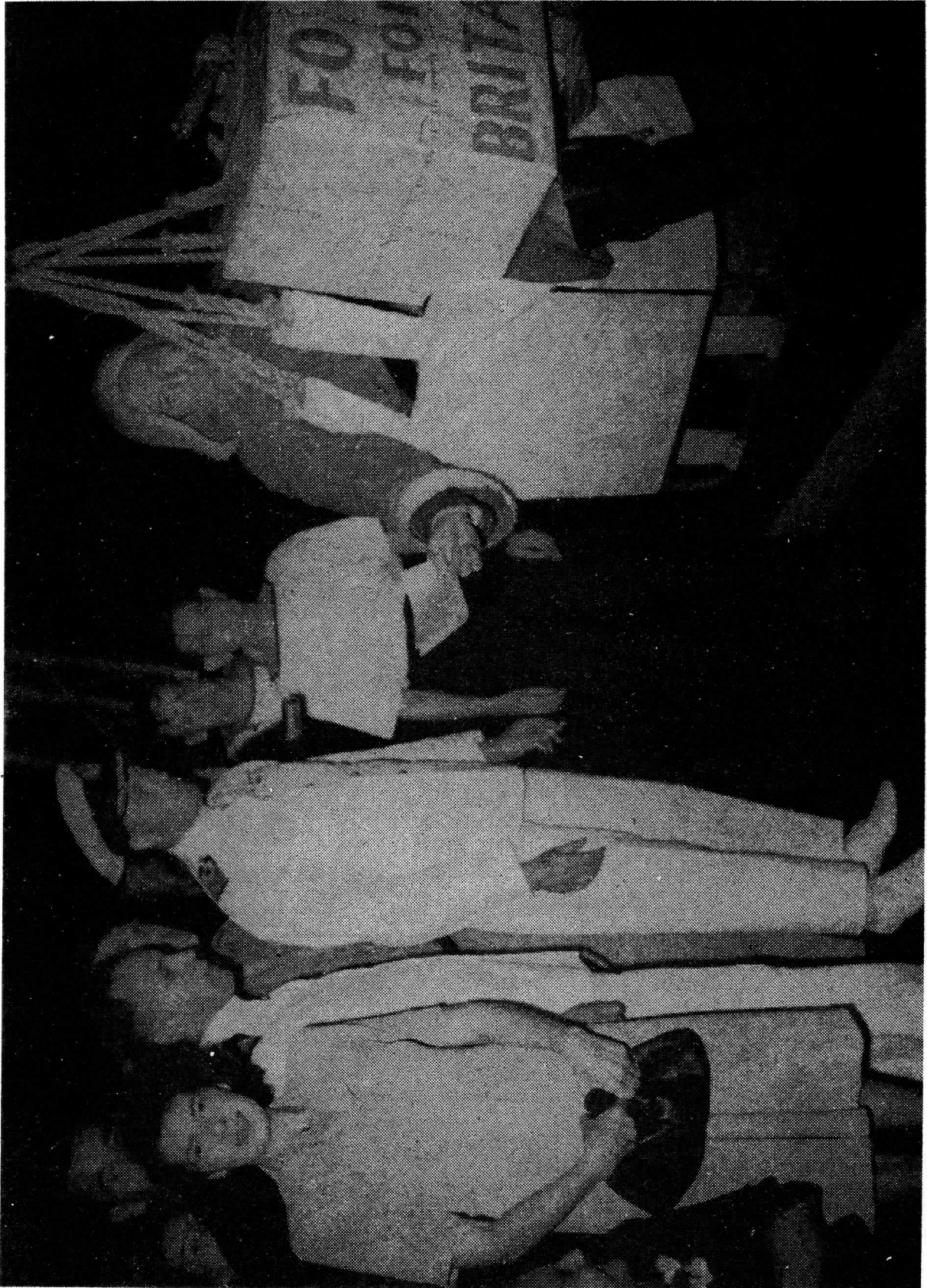
Formidable heads for Woolloomooloo with Australian 9th Div. troops from Tarakan, Borneo.
In foreground, the KGV occupies the Captain Cook Graving Dock



First the Ticket

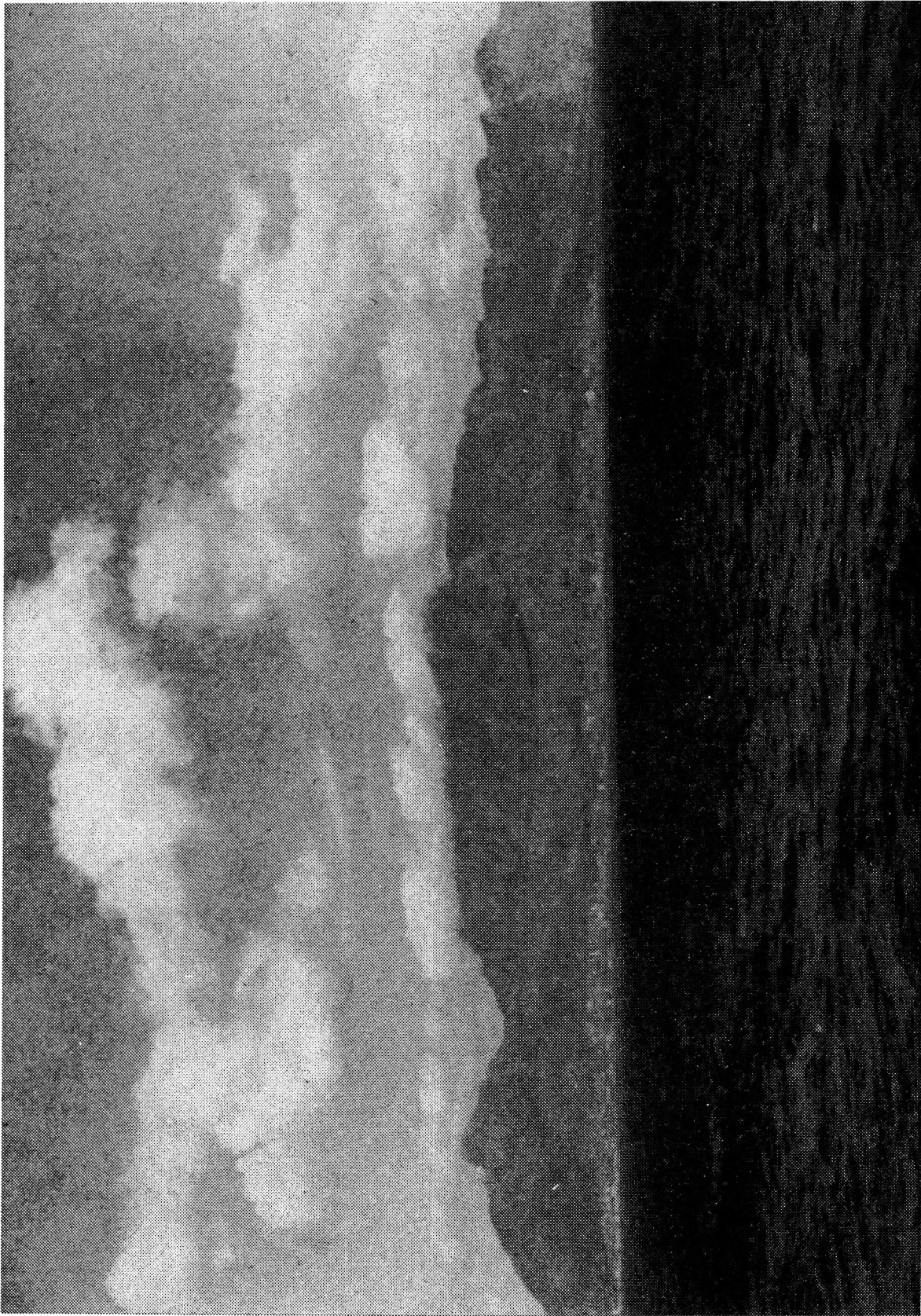


On with the dance - in the Hanger and on the Flightdeck

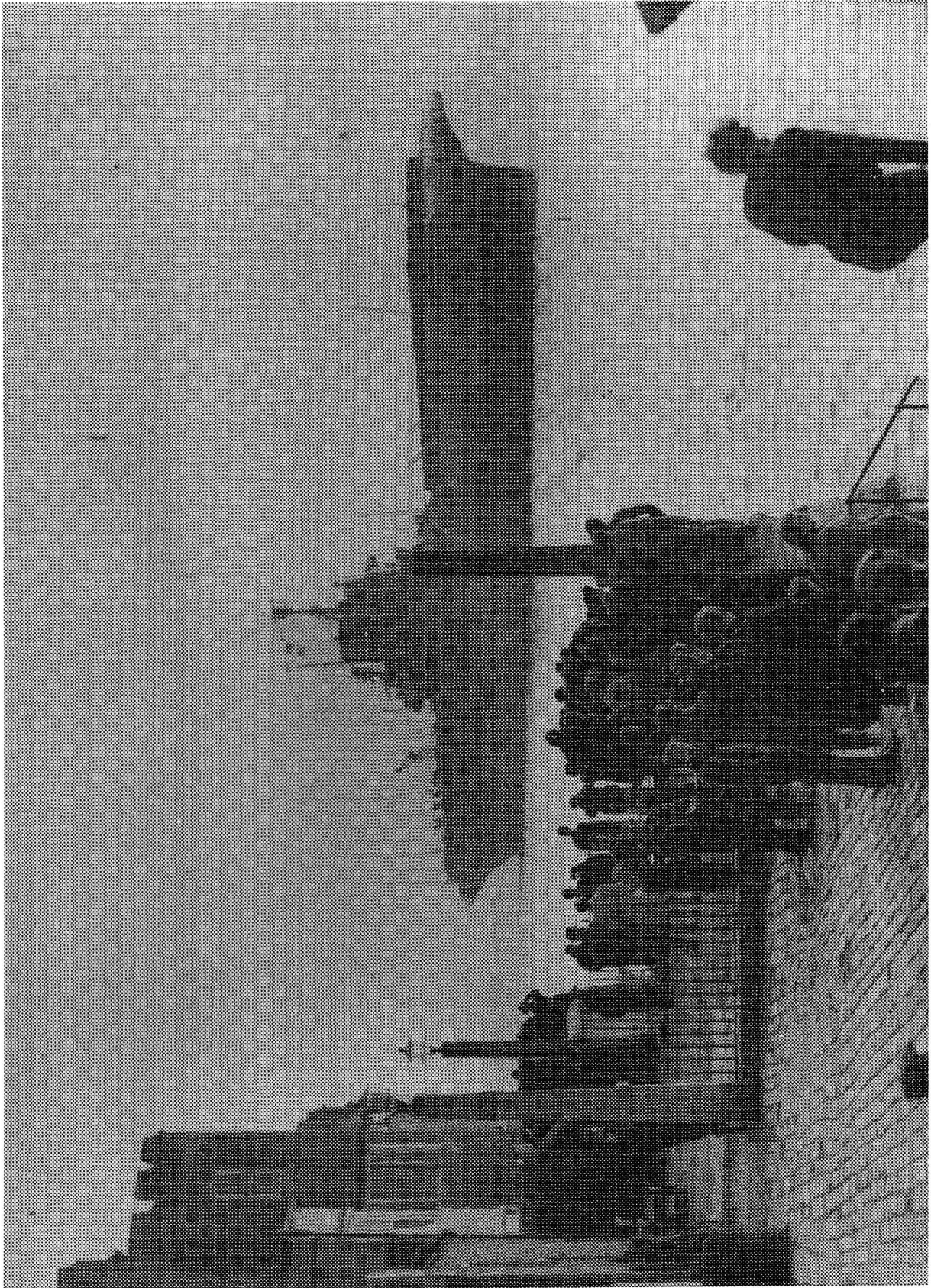


Food parcels for Britain. A very generous people the Australians





Capetown, January 1946. What a wonderful welcome!!



Welcome Home Jack

★ EVENING NEWS, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1944

ROYAL MARINE SERGEANT STOLE MARCH ON SHIPMATES

Swung On Lorry From H.M.S. Formidable

AFTER travelling from the Far East to Portsmouth in the aircraft carrier Formidable, a Royal Marine sergeant swung through the air in a motor lorry to meet his wife and family on the South Railway Jetty in the Dockyard, yesterday afternoon.

Sergeant Stanley Copus, of Stirling Street, Portsmouth, was lowered in a lorry from the flight deck by the Formidable's crane and thus stole a march on his shipmates, for he was greeting his wife and small daughters (four-year-old Anne and two-year-old Mary), before the bows between the ship and the jetty had been hoisted into position.

In the meantime a great crowd of relatives and friends of the 2,300 crew and passengers waved a welcome as the carrier was berthing. Over their heads streamed one of the largest paying off pennants ever seen in Portsmouth.

BOY PASSENGER

Watching the proceedings from a gun-platform was the youngest and only civilian passenger on board—11-year-old Richard Malone, son of Surgeon Commander and Mrs. E. E. Malone, of Northwood Hall, Eltham. He "celebrated" his trip from Australia where he had been staying throughout the war with his uncle, by contracting chicken-pox on the way home. His father is serving in H.M.S. Anson in Far Eastern waters and he was welcomed home by his mother, who left him to come back to England in 1941. Some of the 12 Queen

Alexandra's nursing sisters who were also passengers helped to look after Richard during his short illness. Three of the sisters had spent three years and eight months as prisoners of war in Japanese hands at Hong Kong. One of them, Miss Olga Franklin, of Bromley, Kent, said that during the last two years of their captivity their diet consisted solely of rice and vegetables.

200 TONS OF FOOD

Formidable brought home 200 tons of food as a gift to Britain from the peoples of Australia and South Africa. Her hangars were converted into mess-decks to accommodate the 600 naval "zeppelers" whom she brought with her. She is shortly to make another "trooping" trip to and from the Far East.

During her last commission, which began in May, 1944, the Formidable travelled 112,823 miles in 6,118 hours' steaming time. In July and August 1944 she took part in two operations against the Tirpitz, which was lying in Alten Fjord, in which she lost four pilots. She left home waters on Sept. 15, 1944, and joined the British Pacific Fleet carrying out strikes against Japanese airfields at Ishigaki and Miyako.

The Japanese replied with "kamikaze" (suicide bomber) attacks and the Formidable was hit twice—on May 4, when she lost three officers and six men killed and five officers and 41 men wounded, and on May 9 when one man was killed and four wounded. Owing to her heavily armoured deck she was able to continue flying operations within a few hours of each attack, but a large splinter which penetrated to a boiler-room burst an emergency steam pipe, temporarily reducing her speed to 18 knots.

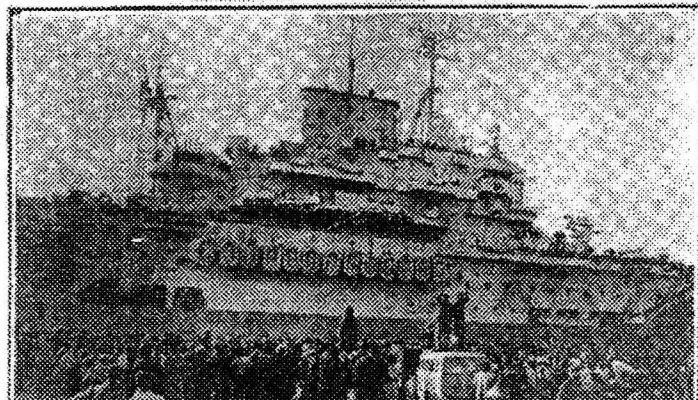
WOUNDED PETTY OFFICER

Among the injured was Petty Officer F. G. Brady, R.E.M., of Kingsley Road, Southsea. In a stretcher on a wooden platform he was pulled by wires from the Formidable to a destroyer and later transferred to a hospital ship. He was flown to Sydney and considers himself lucky to have recovered in time to rejoin the Formidable for the homeward journey. At Portsmouth yesterday he was met by his wife, mother, father and baby son, Keith, all of whom joined him for tea in No. 8 Mess.

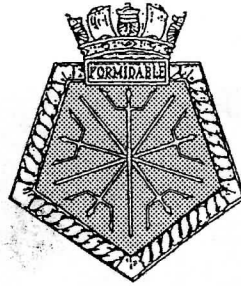
On May 18 last year the accidental firing of a Corsair's guns into the fuel tank of an Avenger caused a fire in the hangar, which contained aircraft and bombs. Many aircraft were made unserviceable from the sea-water sprays which put out the fire, but the ship was able to operate as originally planned.

Towards the end of last year, the Formidable took 1,300 ex-prisoners-of-war from Manila to Sydney (for which a hospital was constructed in the hangar), 1,200 Indian prisoners-of-war to Bombay, Indian troops to Batavia, and 1,200 Australians from Borneo to Sydney.

The many decorations won



It's great to be home again



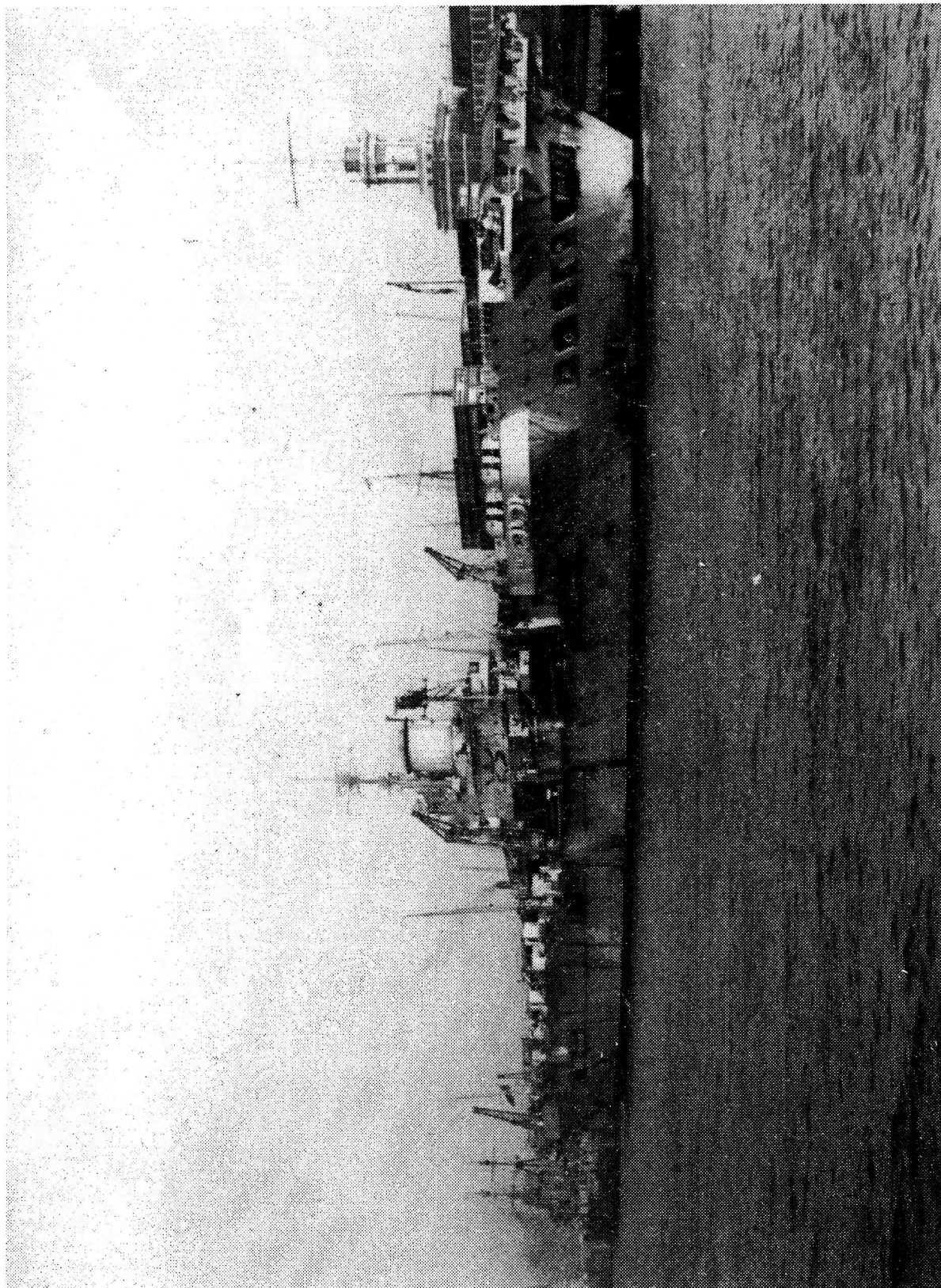
PART SIX

March 1946 - May 1953

Trooping

Reserve

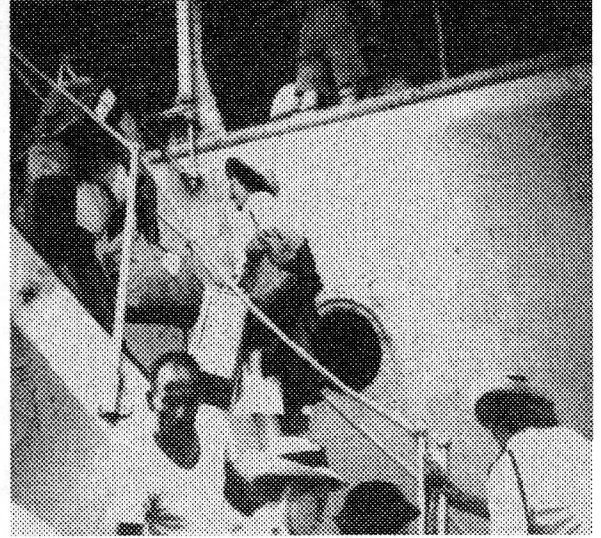
The Last Farewell



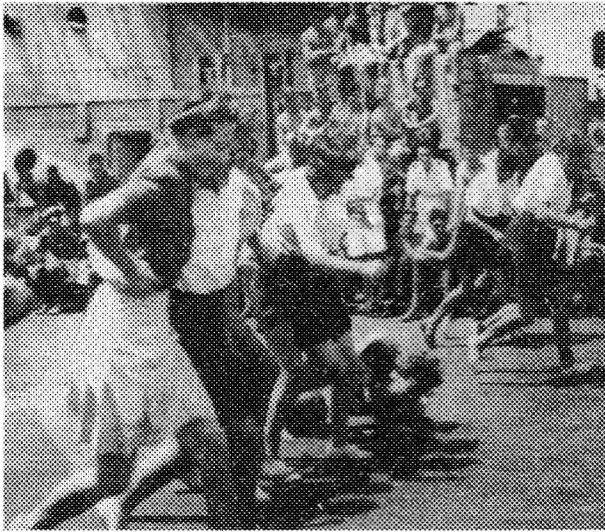
Portsmouth, March 1946, Formidable prepares for trooping duties



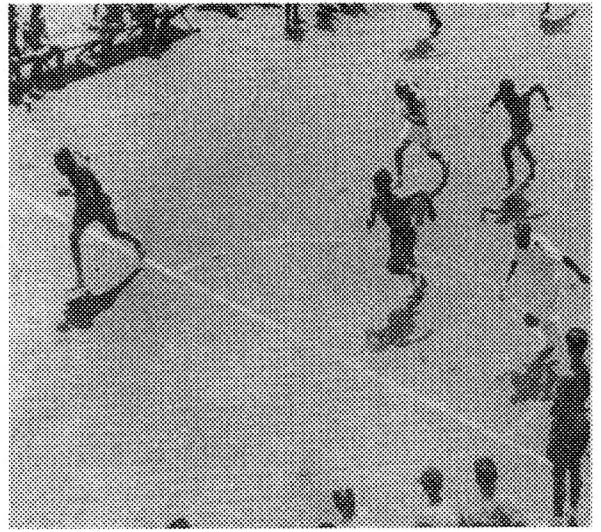
Let's go home. WRENS at Colombo



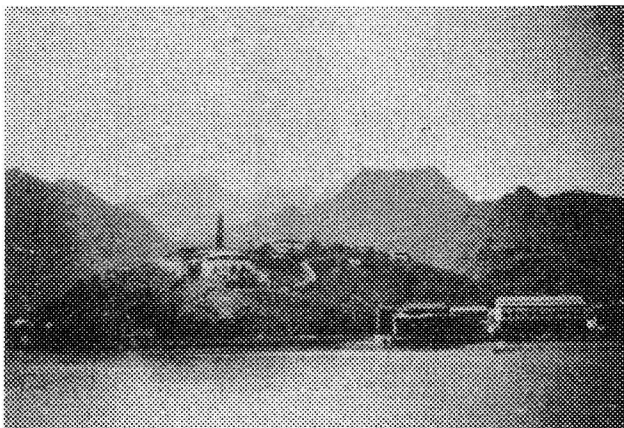
Boarding Formidable, July 1946



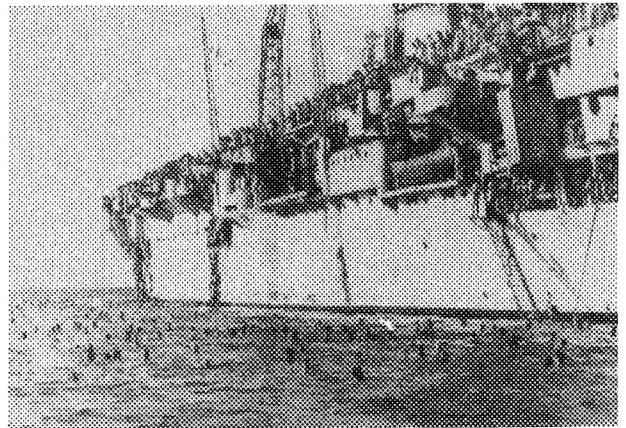
Sports Day - first the lassies



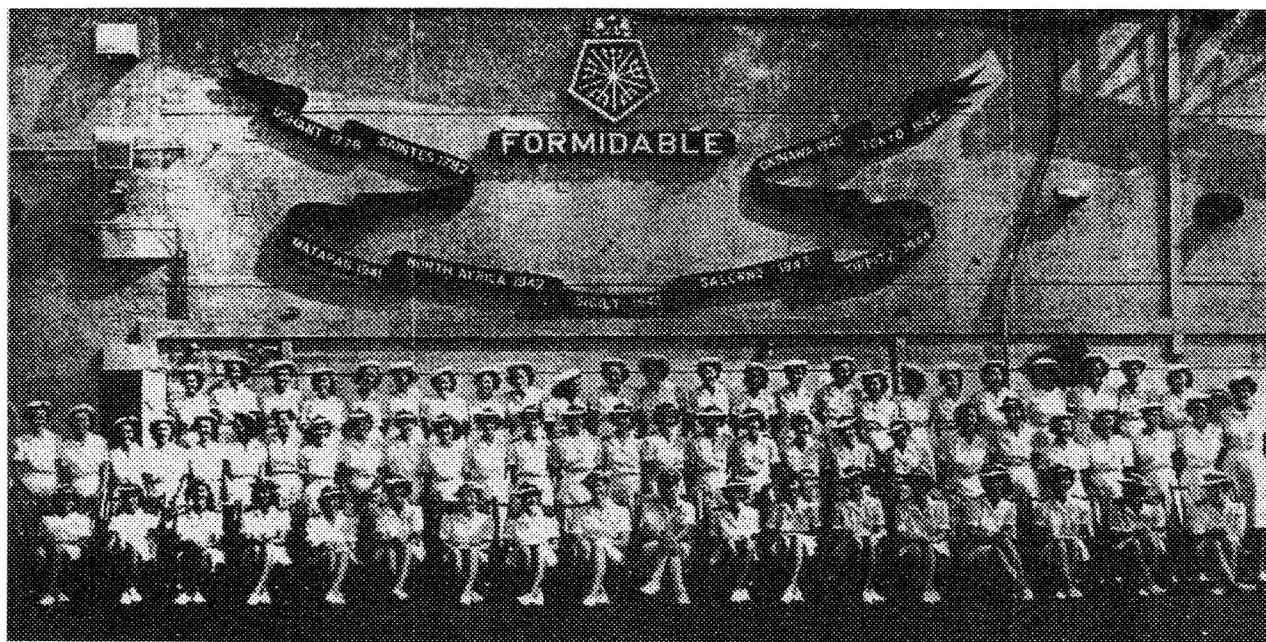
Then the laddies



The Barren Rocks of Aden



Mixed bathing in the Bitter Lakes



WRENS returning to Portsmouth from Colombo, Ceylon, July 1946

IN EVENING HERALD, Friday, January 31, 1947.

RARE SPECTACLE FOR H.M.S. FORMIDABLE

Plymouth Glittering With Sunshine On Snow

IT IS ALMOST a Naval axiom: that ships returning from the Far East are greeted at Plymouth with rain or mist, but when the great aircraft carrier Formidable dropped anchor in the Sound today over 2,000 people aboard saw the harbour in its picturesque snow setting.

When the sun broke through there was a marvellous play of light and shadow, presenting a picture not readily forgotten by those who, from sunny climes, saw the Westcountry in its unusual winter mantle.

LAST TROOPING MISSION.

Formidable, due to sail for Portsmouth on Sunday, was right on time in spite of difficult weather conditions in the later stages of her voyage, the last of her trooping missions.

She brought home some 1,200 officers, ratings, and civilians. A notable passenger was Rear-Adml. P. Ruck-Keene, C.B.E., D.S.O., formerly Flag Officer-in-Charge, Ceylon. The rear-admiral came ashore in the barge of the Chief of Staff (Capt. W. R. C. Leggatt, D.S.O.) to the Commander-in-Chief, Plymouth Command.

In addition to a number of officers, 318 ratings were landed the port for the Devonport depot.

48,000,000th TURN OF THE "SCREWS" Brings Carrier Home

AS the fleet aircraft carrier Formidable berthed alongside the South Railway Jetty, in Portsmouth Dockyard, this morning, each of her propellers revolved for the 48,000,000th time, it is estimated since she started troopng duties on September 17, 1945.

Her arrival marked the end of the Royal Navy's great human operation, for which the aircraft carriers were converted, to bring Naval and other personnel home from abroad.

It is expected that the Formidable will now be laid up at Rosyth, joining in reserve the other carriers Indomitable and Indefatigable, (now at Portsmouth) and the Victorious (at Devonport).

Due For Refit

She is due for a refit when one of the big yards can accommodate her.

The Formidable was the first carrier to start troopng, and the last to finish.

This job has kept her at sea for two Christmasses in succession.

She has steamed, on these duties, a total distance of 106,934 miles, at an average speed over the period of 8.9 knots.

The tips of each propeller have travelled 397,000 miles, she has carried 13,718 passengers, the oldest of whom was 73, and the youngest four weeks.

Over 1,200 Passengers

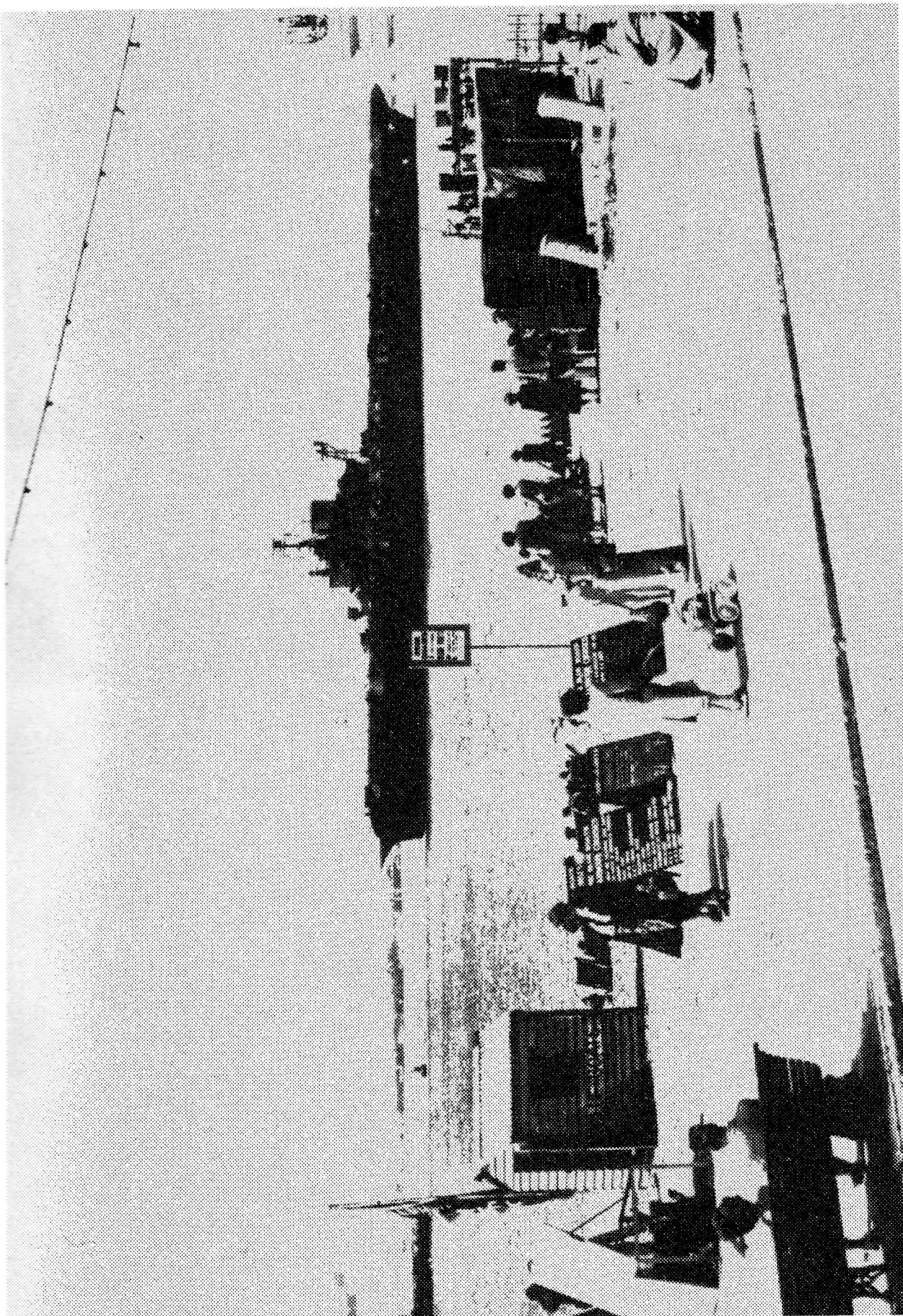
For her last trip from Hong-Kong, with calls at intermediate ports, she brought home more than 1,200 naval passengers and a few civilians, who included two women and five children.

trips was Senior V.A.D. N. Coates, who thus relieved the ship's officers of a good deal of anxiety.

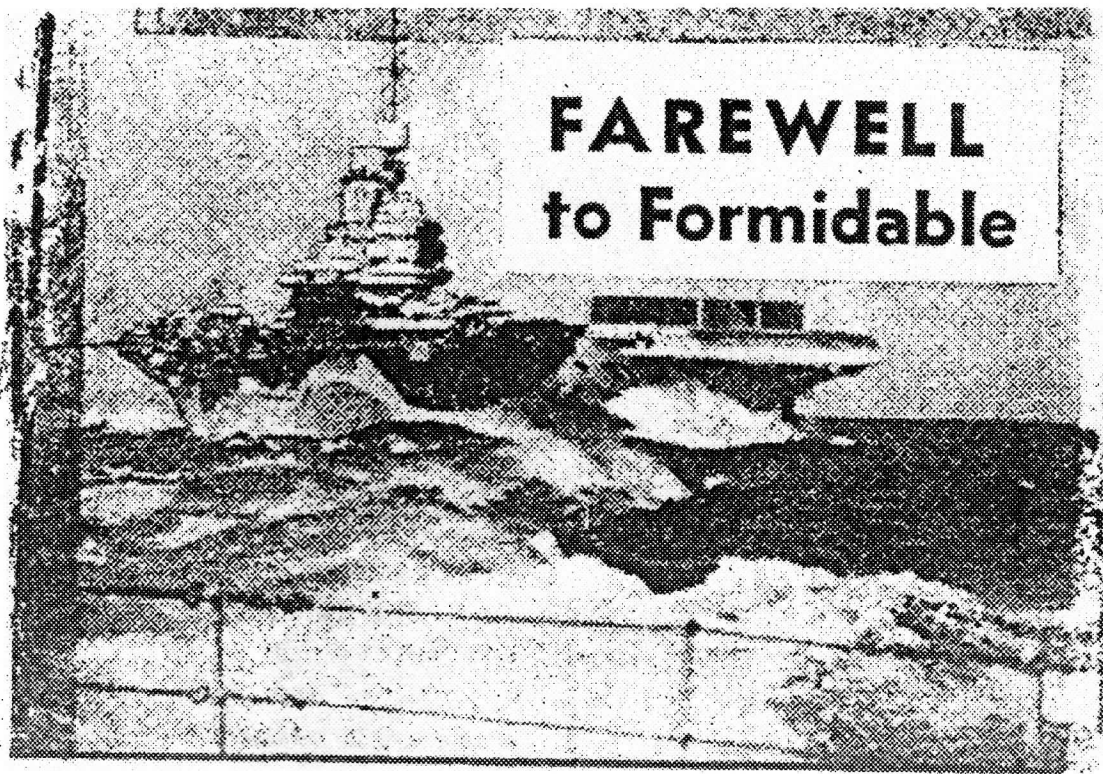
The ship called at Devonport over the week-end to land more than 400 passengers.

Also disembarked at Devonport was Sir Pelham Warner, of cricket fame, who travelled home from Gibraltar. Another passenger was Rear-Admiral P. Luck-Keene, retiring Flag Officer, Ceylon.

Commanding Officer of the Formidable is Capt. C. P. Menzies, D.S.O. Her executive officer, now Capt. D. H. Fuller, was promoted from Commander while the ship was abroad on December 31. He is leaving the Formidable this week.



Reduced to Reserve, the Formidable leaves Portsmouth for Rosyth, Spring 1947



Carrier to be broken up

Express Naval Reporter

THE Formidable, second oldest of the Navy's surviving fleet aircraft-carriers, a tiercel and eyesore in the Solent for the last six years, is to be scrapped.

In recent years, rusting and unkempt, the Formidable has been moored off the mother bank near Ryde, in close-up view of the passengers of the great Transatlantic liners.

Originally the Admiralty intended to reconstruct her—a £2,000,000 three-four-year complete modernisation similar to that now being done on another 12-year-old, 29,000-ton carrier, the Victorious.

"This would not be justified now that the Eagle is in service and the Ark Royal is building," said the Admiralty yesterday.

The Ark Royal, 36,800 tons, is

expected to be completed next year.

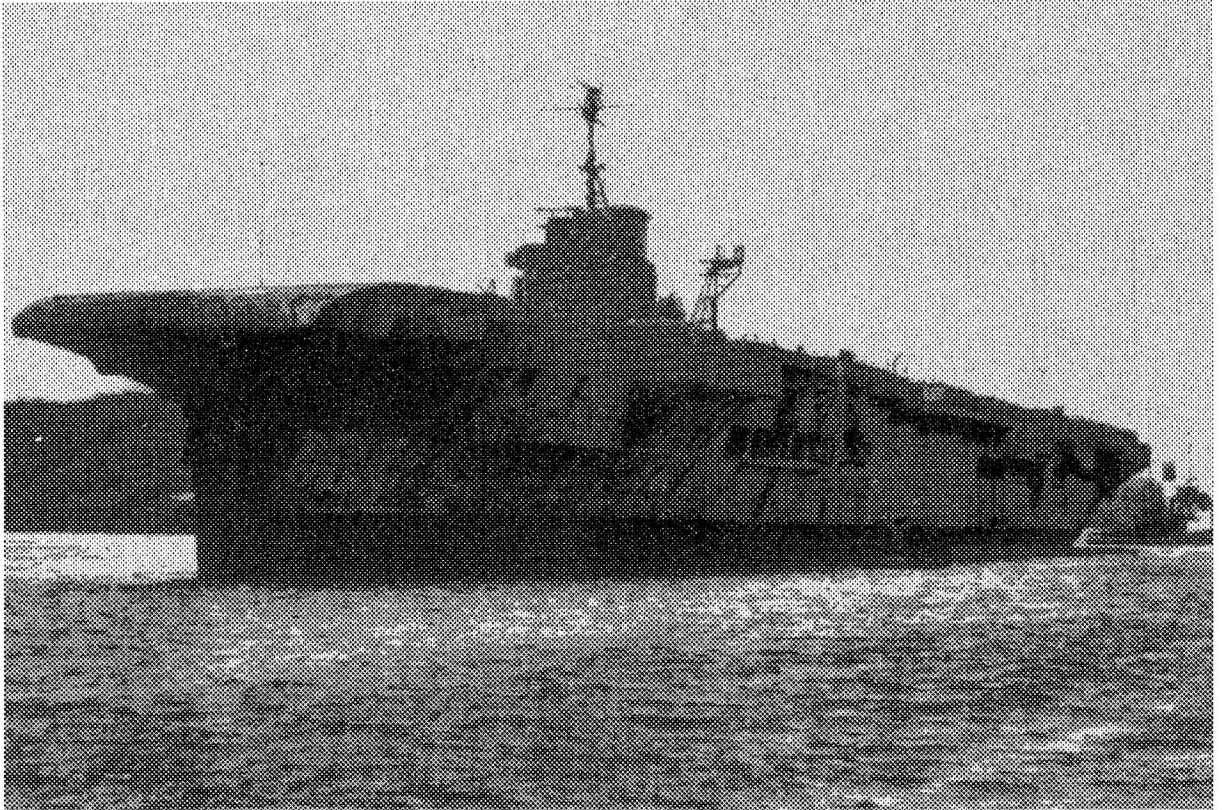
Brand new, the Formidable was in all the Mediterranean triumphs and disasters from Matapan to Crete, where she was bombed and set on fire.

She was repaired in the United States, fought the Salerno-landing radio-guided glider bombs—then refitted for the Far East.

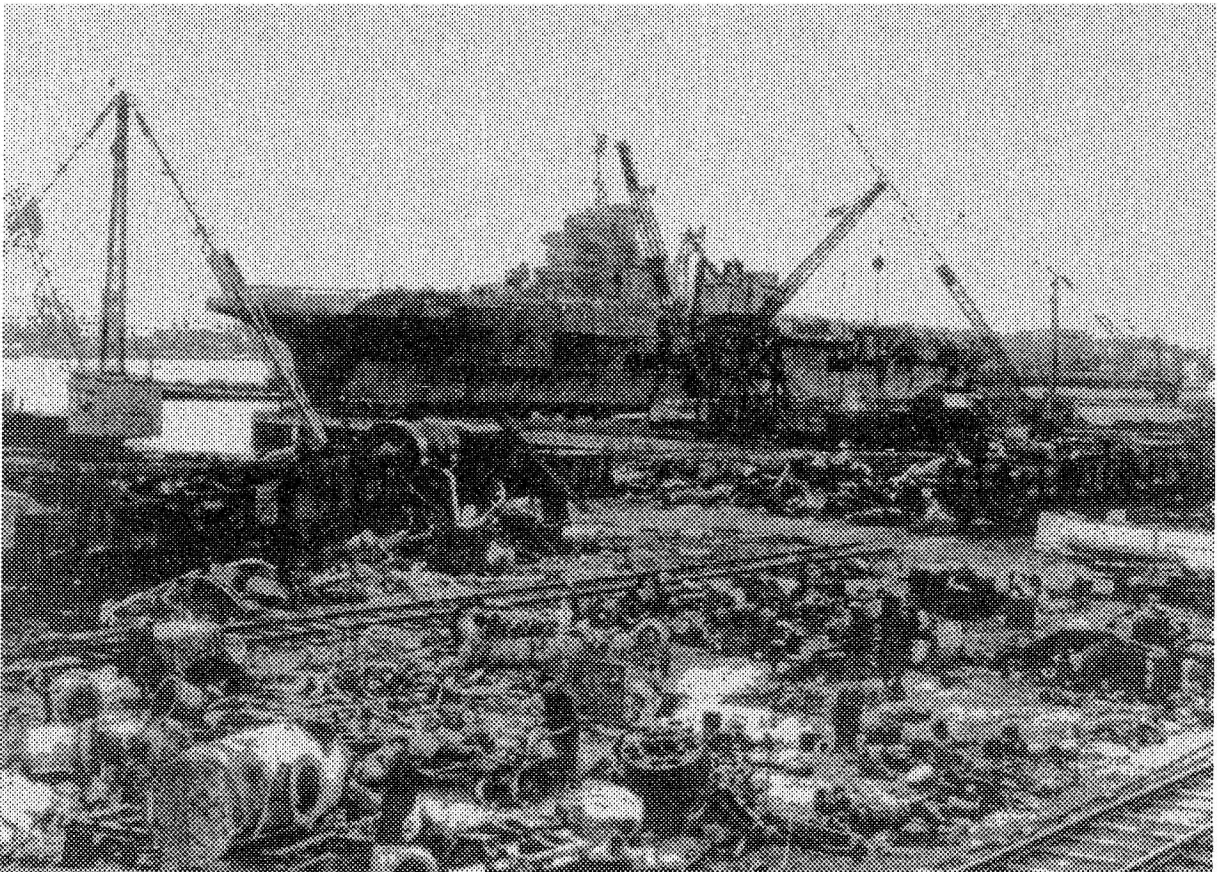
Formidable was the first British carrier to strike at Japan. She taught the Allied navies how to fight the Jap suicide bombers.

And there her V.C. was won—by Lieutenant Robert Hampton Gray, D.S.C., of the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve.

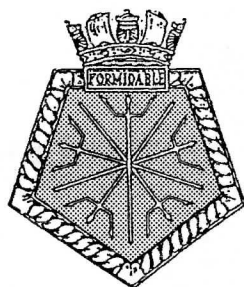
After the war the Formidable ferried home the liberated prisoners of the Japs, then she was relegated to trooping. She has been laid up "in reserve" since 1948.



Formidable arrives at Inverkeithing for breaking up, May 12 1953



The End - Formidable is moved by tugs alongside dismantling jetty



PART SEVEN

August 1995

Fifty Years On

Veterans in Sydney

We Will Remember

The Forgotten Fleet

There are those who won't acknowledge
Our British kith and kin
Who in years of lonely courage
Braved Blitzkreig's lethal din.

Yet before that threat was over
The Second Front begun,
The British Royal Navy
Joined our fight with Rising Sun.

They came to honour promise,
That Churchill earlier made,
From Arctic waters, tropic heat,
The British anchors weighed.

They came, two hundred thousand,
To Ceylon, Woolloomooloo,
war-hardened British sailors,
To that promise now come true.

King George the Fifth, Formidable,
Swiftsure and Quiberon too,
A mass of lethal firepower,
For the task they must see through.

They beat the Kamikaze,
Took the battle to Japan,
At Tokyo Bay surrender,
Then evacuation plan.

From prison camps and hellholes,
Came diggers now released,
The war-torn British carriers,
Took them home to care and peace.

There are some who don't acknowledge,
These huge forgotten fleets,
And who, for some divisive end,
Wrote their own history sheets.

But facts are here on record,
Hypocrisy laid bare,
The British weren't found wanting,
I know - 'cause I was there.

JR Holder, HMS King George V (On behalf of
near 250,000 sailors and wrens, in near 600 ships
and establishments of the British Pacific and East
Indies Fleets, 1943 to 1946).

Mr Holder now lives at Sussex Inlet and sent the
above to The Illawarra Mercury for publication in
this special 50th anniversary edition.



Veterans on Parade in Sydney, August 12 1995



Dick Sweet and Andrew Ramsay with Association Wreath



Sydney War Cemetery, "Rockwood", Sunday August 20 1995



From 'The Hampton Gray Memorial', Naval Museum of Alberta

Remember ye with thanksgiving
 and with honour those men of
H.M.S. FORMIDABLE who went forth in the
 service of their King & Country during the
 years of the Second World War 1939-1945 and
 returned not again.

Commanding
 Captain Ld. D. B. A. M. King
 C.R.N.C. C.B.E. 1942
 Captain Talbot A.D. 1944
 A.D.C. D.S.O. 1942
 Captain Kuch-Karu D. B. King
 C.R. C.B.S. D.S.O. 1945
 Captain Ketchum G.C.D. 1940
 D.S.O.



Officers
 Captain Duckley P.N. Marsh
 D.S.O. 1941
 Commander Longueville C.R.S. O'Brien
 O.B.E. 1947
 Commander Thompson F.W.D. Taylor
 D.S.C. 1944
 Commander Hall W.D. Halliday
 R.N.N. O.B. 1940

At the going down of the sun And in the morning
 We will remember them

22240 HIE James A.E.D. Sigs	28541 Hiltner Charles E. D.S.A. R.C. 1942 Sigs	30000 Hogg James L. D.S.O. Sigs
1. 143 Gleave Harold A. Sigs Della O'Brien 1941 Sigs	30141 Jack Southwell Sigs	30142 Hutton James N.A. 2 Sigs
1. 145 Fairhead Kenneth J. Sigs Della O'Brien 1941 Sigs	30342 Devitt Jack Sigs	31143 O'Connell John A. Sigs
18.149 Jt. Gordon C. Sigs Sigs	31243 Rogers John W. Sigs Sigs	31144 Dingley Eric D. Sigs Sigs
17.141 Doolan Cecil F. Sigs Sigs	31343 Goulandt Arthur Sigs	31145 O'Sullivan John Sigs
11.141 Lee John E.C. Sigs Sigs	31344 Thomas Samuel L.S. Sigs	31146 Kellie Alexander Sigs
18.141 Stodd John D. Sigs Sigs	31345 Downham Patrick Sigs	31147 Smith Michael L.E. Sigs
18.141 Cooke Roger H. Sigs Sigs	31346 Chamberlain Gordon Sigs	31148 McPherson Robert L.S. Sigs
18.141 Brankaren G.L. Sigs Sigs	1. 141 Heward Kenneth Sigs	31149 Campbell David Sigs
18.141 Agnew Robert B. Sigs Sigs	1. 145 Christie Robert Sigs	31150 Gordon Arthur Sigs
20.141 Shaver John H. Sigs Sigs	31347 Brockton William Sigs	31151 White Douglas Sigs
20.141 Brown Eric J.H. Sigs Sigs	31348 Lee Donald Sigs	31152 Brown Alan Sigs
20.141 Brown Charles Sigs	31349 Hamilton John D. Sigs Sigs	31153 Bell John F. Sigs Sigs
20.141 Coffey Thomas Sigs	31350 Brown David L.S. Sigs	31154 Chang Robert Sigs
20.141 Martin Kenneth Sigs	31351 Lee Peter Sigs	31155 William Herbert Sigs
20.141 Green David R. Sigs Sigs	31352 Hansen Harry Sigs	31156 McAuley Thomas Sigs
20.141 Hartman Alfred Sigs	31353 Wilson James Sigs	31157 Wilson Peter Sigs
20.141 Gifford William Sigs	31354 Coyle Sibylla Sigs	31158 Conway John Sigs
20.141 Owen Thomas D. Sigs Sigs	31355 Joyce Harold C. Sigs Sigs	31159 Darnley Charles Sigs
20.141 Josephson R.L. Sigs Sigs	31356 Hall Jack Sigs	31160 Duggan Sigs
20.141 Bennett Thomas Sigs	31357 Jensen Frederick Sigs	31161 Smith Sigs
20.141 Speck William Sigs	31358 Taylor Stuart Sigs	31162 Hinkley George Sigs
20.141 Knox Alfred S. Sigs Sigs	31359 King Edward B. Sigs Sigs	31163 Tapp Donald Sigs
20.141 Boxer Henry J. Sigs	31360 King Edward B. Sigs Sigs	31164 Mackin John E. Sigs
20.141 Gordon Thomas Sigs	31361 O'Brien William J. Sigs	31165 Anderson Sigs
20.141 Stoker D. Sigs	STEWART KENNEDY Sigs	31166 Stewart John Sigs
20.141 Chalmers Thomas Sigs	31362 Rice Lewis Edward Sigs	31167 Stewart Douglas Sigs
20.141 Wright Walter Sigs	31363 Butler Thomas Sigs	31168 Francis Alfred C. Sigs Sigs
20.141 Keating Bernard Sigs	31364 Van Doren Sigs	31169 Hamilton George Sigs
20.141 Adams Alfred Sigs	31365 Woodhouse Sigs	31170 Ryan James T. Sigs Sigs
20.141 Murray George C. Sigs	31366 Thompson Donald Sigs	31171 Gray R. Hampton Sigs
20.141 DeBorfield Edward Sigs	31367 French John Sigs	31172 Agnew Garth Sigs
20.141 Heine Alfred Sigs	31368 Walker John G. Sigs Sigs	31173 Hamilton Sigs

The God who when I once departed
 left me of Europe in a great and glorious victory
 and thus we acknowledge in spirit eternal and true
 heavenly life victory in the presence of God in the
 future. The name of the Lord is blessed and praised
 forever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever
 Amen.

Builders of
WARSHIPS
and
**MERCHANT
VESSELS**

Engineers

Shiprepairers



PHOTOGRAPH BY
MICHAEL

HARLAND & WOLFF

LIMITED

